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THE AGE OF ISAIAH: BIBLE, HISTORY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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The rise of Assyria, destruction of Israel and siege of Jerusalem

The opening verse of the Book of Isaiah places the life of the prophet Isaiah in its historical setting, which is the particular focus of this article: “The vision of Isaiah son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah”.

Of all the prophets, Isaiah had the closest relationship to royalty. According to tradition his father Amos and King Amaziah of Judah were brothers (Megillah 10b), making Isaiah and Amaziah’s son King Uzziah first cousins. Isaiah’s activities and influence were at their peak during the reign of King Hezekiah, Uzziah’s great grandson. Tradition also relates that Hezekiah’s son Manasseh was responsible for murdering Isaiah (Yevamos 49b).

The table below provides the dates of the kings referred to in this article and in respect of the kings of Judah and Israel, as per the approach of *The Biblical Encyclopaedia* (editor Haim Tadmor, Bialik Institute, Jerusalem, 1962, Volume 4, Columns 301-302). The overlapping dates of King Uzziah’s reign are discussed further on.

King of Judah	Date - BCE	King of Israel	Date - BCE	King of Assyria	Date - BCE
<u>Uzziah</u>	785 - 733 ²	Jeroboam II	789-748	Tiglath-Pileser III	745 – 727
<u>Jotham</u>	758 - 743	<u>Menahem</u>	747-737	<u>Shalmaneser V</u>	727 - 722
Ahaz	743 - 727	<u>Pekah</u>	735-733	Sargon II	722 - 705
Hezekiah	727 - 698	<u>Hoshea</u>	733-724	Sennacherib	705 - 681

Isaiah lived in a time of prophets – concurrently with Isaiah in Judah were Micah and Hosea while Amos prophesized in Israel during the time of Jeroboam II and Uzziah.

The Book of Isaiah is fragmented and not in chronological order. Much of it is obscure and abstruse and commentators have struggled with much of its content. While the book is characterised by chastisement, condemnation and rebuke it is counterbalanced by consolation, solace and hope. It also contains historical detail especially in relation to Isaiah's dealings with King Ahaz and King Hezekiah.

Aspects of Isaiah's life and the history of the period are also to be found in *Kings* and *Chronicles*.

The early prophecies of Isaiah stressed moral and ethical conduct and were severely critical of aberrant social behaviour and moral decadence; a rebellious people: "An ox knows its owner ...but Israel does not know" (Isaiah 1:3), disdain for insincere offerings: "Why do I need your numerous sacrifices?" says the Lord. I am sated with elevation—offerings of rams and the fat of fatlings" (1:11); evil behaviour: "remove the evil of your deeds" (1:16); dishonesty and corrupt business practices: "Your silver has become dross, your heady wine diluted with water....each of them loves bribery and pursues payments" (1:22-23); arrogance and haughtiness: "every proud and arrogant person and ...every exalted person ...will be brought low" (2:12); idolatry: "And the false gods will perish completely" (2:18); immorality and licentiousness: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, walking with outstretched necks and winking eyes; walking with dainty steps, jingling with their feet" (3:16); hedonism and debauchery: "Woe to those who rise early in the morning to pursue liquor, who stay up late at night while wine inflames them" (5:11); deceitful actions: "Woe to those who pull iniquity upon themselves with cords of falsehood, and sin like the ropes of a wagon" (5:18); injustice: "They acquit the wicked because of a bribe, and strip the righteous one of his innocence" (5:23); exploitation of the poor: "Woe to those ... rob the justice of the poor... so that widows be their spoil; and they plunder orphans" (10:1), and decadent lifestyles "... [saying] 'Eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'" (22:13)

In the mid-19th Century three ancient Assyrian cities – Nineveh (on the outskirts of modern-day Mosul), Nimrud (previously Calah – 30km south of Mosul) and Khorsabad (previously Dur-Sharrukin - 15km north east of Mosul) were discovered and excavated. A treasure trove of historical sources were unearthed which illuminate, clarify and contextualise the biblical account from an Assyrian perspective. In the words of Alex Israel, "The ...wealth of archaeological and Assyrian records... verify, enrich and sometimes challenge aspects of the biblical account." ^[ii]

The Geopolitical background

Around 800 BCE, about fifty years before Isaiah began prophesizing, Judah was an ailing state under hostile attack from King Hazael of Aram (also referred to as Aram-Damascus or Syria) and too weak to protect itself. The rise of a new superpower Assyria (situated in what is today the area around Mosul

in northern Iraq) changed everything. Aram was forced to transfer its armed forces from its southern borders of Judah and Israel to its northern border with Assyria. This release of pressure on Judah and Israel enabled both kingdoms to survive.

With the threat of Aram removed, Judah's economy thrived and it was able to build up its military strength. This allowed King Amaziah to reassert control over Edom and these territorial gains comprised copper and iron mines and important trade routes. For some inexplicable reason – being heady with success is given as one possibility - Amaziah challenged a reluctant King Jehoash of Israel to a battle (II Kings 14:8). The battle took place at Beit Shemesh, with disastrous consequences for Amaziah and Judah – Amaziah was defeated and captured, and as payment for this misadventure, Israel appropriated the Temple treasury (II Kings 14:11-14). During the 200-year period of the divided kingdom Judah and Israel didn't clash often but four instances are recorded.

King Uzziah and a Golden Age

Uzziah replaced Amaziah as king of Judah and his reign as king of Judah (52 years according to II Kings 15:2) coincided with that of King Jeroboam II of Israel (whose forty-year reign was the longest by a king of Israel). This period, regarded as a golden age for both Judah and Israel, was characterised by expanding territory and enhanced security and prosperity, as well as peaceful relations between Judah and Israel. Judah's territory grew by defeating Ammon and Moab to the east and the Philistines in the west whereas Israel defeated Aram and conquered Damascus. The important trade routes of the Via Maris (*Derekh HaYam* - between Egypt and Mesopotamia) and the Kings Highway (*Derekh HaMelekh* - from Egypt across Sinai to Aqaba through Jordan to Damascus) were both under the control of Judah. The security and prosperity achieved during this period had not occurred since the days of David and Solomon and would not come to pass again. Israeli archaeologist Israel Finkelstein details archaeological finds dated to this period evidencing substantial building at Megiddo, Hazor and Gezer.^[iii]

Isaiah began to prophesy around 750 BCE “in the year of King Uzziah's death” (Isaiah 6:1) which most commentators interpret to be the year in which Uzziah contracted leprosy (which would be 758 BCE). This interpretation is necessary, for if the reign of Uzziah was indeed 52 years there would be no space for Jotham (16 years; II Kings 15:33) and Ahaz (10 of his 16 years; II Kings 16:2). Interpreting Uzziah's death as meaning the year he contracted leprosy and abdicated in favour of his son Jotham allows for 26 years of Uzziah's reign to run concurrently with those of Jotham and Ahaz.

As Uzziah became more powerful Isaiah expressed his concern about the immoral behaviour taking root - exploitation of the poor, income inequalities, greed, corruption and hedonism. According to biblical tradition Uzziah's fall is attributed to his arrogance as well as his unwarranted interference in the Temple.[iv]



**Uzziah reinternment inscription
(Israel Museum)**

Kings records sparsely about Uzziah: that he reigned for 52 years (II Kings 15:2), did what was “proper in the eyes of Hashem...” (15:3), was afflicted with leprosy (15:5), and was buried with his forefathers in the City of David (15:7).

Chronicles provides more details, including that Uzziah extended the borders of Judah, built up and equipped the military, recorded victories over the Philistines, received tribute from Ammon and was exceedingly powerful. It also records that this power led to haughtiness, so that he entered the Temple to burn incense in place of the priests and as a result Hashem inflicted him with leprosy (II Chronicles 26). He was this “buried with his fathers in the burial field which belonged to the kings, for they said, ‘He is a leper’” (II Chronicles 26:23). The burial in Chronicles conflicts with Kings, where it clearly states that Uzziah was not buried in the City of David like the other Judean kings but in a burial field which belonged to the kings. Irrespective of where Uzziah was originally buried, it appears that his body was later disinterred and transferred to another place. This is evident from the Aramaic inscription now in the collection of antiquities of the Russian Church on the Mount of Olives which reads as follows: “Hither were brought/The bones of Uzziah/King of Judah/Not to be opened.”[v] Based on its language and script, the inscription has been dated to the end of the Second Temple times. Its provenance and the location of Uzziah's reinternment is unknown but it was known in the Middle Ages in the time of Benjamin of Tudela.[vi] [vii]

Jotham, who became king when Uzziah contracted leprosy, is dealt with so fleetingly in II Kings and II Chronicles that it would appear that not much of significance took place during his reign. Nevertheless Jotham's righteousness was venerated both in the Talmud and by Rashi, who said of him: “He had not a single flaw.”[viii]

King Ahaz and Tiglath-Pileser III

From the mid-8th Century BCE Assyria began to assert itself, becoming the unrivalled super-power threatening the entire region. The Assyrian people in all likelihood shared the same Semitic background as those of Babylonia and many researchers suggest that the origin of what historians more specifically refer to as the neo-Assyrian nation was population migration from Babylonia to Assyria after which a new independent nation was established, not dissimilar to the origins of America as an offshoot of Britain.[ix]

Tiglath-Pileser, a ruthless and capable man, was the effective founder of the neo-Assyrian Empire and enforced harsh tributes on the nations of the region. An inscription dated to 738 BCE lists numerous tributaries, including “Menahem of Samaria” and “Rezin of Damascus.”[x] [xi] Another Assyrian text also refers to Menahem: “[As for Menahem I ov]erwhelmed him [like a snowstorm] and he ...fled like a bird...”[xii] The Bible records that King Menahem of Israel paid Pul (the Biblical name of Tiglath-Pileser III) a tribute (II Kings 15:19).

Around 734 BCE, the severity of the tributes led King Pekah of Israel and King Rezin of Aram to rise up in revolt against Tiglath-Pileser. They pressured King Ahaz of Judah to join the alliance but he refused.

Isaiah met with Ahaz “at the edge of the channel of the Upper Pool” (Isaiah 7:3). This would have been the outer open-air channel running from the Gihon spring along the Kidron Valley floor to a pool at the southern end of the City of David. It was later abandoned during Hezekiah’s reign and replaced by a tunnel leading to the Siloam pool. The visible traces of this channel mark its termination at the dry upper pool, “a mute witness to the dramatic encounter between Ahaz and Isaiah.”[xiii] Isaiah informs Ahaz of the plot of the kings of Israel and Aram to depose him and place the son of Tabeel (no doubt, a man with an anti-Assyrian and pro-alliance outlook) on the throne (Isaiah 7:3-6). Isaiah urges Ahaz not to join any alliances and advises him to be “calm and still; fear not”, disparagingly referring to the protagonists as “two smouldering stumps of firebrands” (Isaiah 7:4).

After being rebuffed by Ahaz, Israel and Aram attack Judah and “do battle against Jerusalem; they besieged Ahaz” (II Kings 16:5). In a precarious situation and despite Isaiah’s opposition to alliances of any sort, Ahaz appeals to Assyria for assistance: “So Ahaz sent messengers to Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria, saying: ‘I am your servant and your son. Come up, and rescue me from the hand of the king of Aram and from the hand of the king of Israel, who are attacking me’” (II Kings 16:7).

The intervention of Assyria brings peace to Judah and its security is restored – neither Israel, Aram nor Philistia pose any military threat. But the price of peace was costly: “Ahaz took whatever silver and gold was found in the Temple

and in the treasuries of the king's palace, and sent a bribe to the king of Assyria" (II Kings 16:8). An Assyrian inscription dated 734 BCE records a tribute paid by "Jehoahaz of Judah" and other regional kings which included "gold, silver...linen garments with multi-coloured trimmings...all kinds of costly objects...the (choice) products of their regions..."[xiv] [xv] [xvi]

A further consequence of Judah's vassal state status is that Assyrian cultural and religious practices were adopted. Although Assyria did not impose its religious and cultural practices on its vassals where these were found to be attractive they were introduced voluntarily. For this Ahaz is rebuked in the Bible: "He did not do what is proper in the eyes of Hashem....he even passed his son through fire....He [also] sacrificed and burned incense at the high places...." (II Kings 16:2-4). Chronicles also records that Ahaz "consigned his son to fire" (II Chronicles 28:3). After Tiglath-Pileser conquered Aram, Ahaz met him in Damascus where he saw an altar which he introduced into the Temple in Jerusalem (II Kings 16: 10-14).

Whilst the Assyrian inscription refers to King Jehoahaz of Judah, in the Bible he is referred to as Ahaz. Some commentators argue that the prefix Jeho, which is God's name, was removed in the Bible due to Ahaz's idolatrous behaviour.

Israel – the destruction of the northern kingdom

After the death of Jeroboam II Israel fell into decline – this period was characterised by political instability, assassinations and six kings in 25 years before the northern kingdom was finally destroyed.

Amos prophesized in Israel during the period that Isaiah prophesized in Judah and he railed against a debauched society where social injustice prevails and an immoral wealthy class exploits the poor:

"...Who oppress the poor,/Who crush the destitute,/Who say to their husbands,/'Bring, and let's party.'" (Amos 4:1)

"Who lie on ivory couches,/...Eating the fattened sheep of the flock,/...And anoint themselves with the choicest of oils." (Amos 6:4-6)

The above-noted rebellion of Rezin of Aram and Pekah of Israel was quickly suppressed by Tiglath-Pileser of Assyria, and by 732 BCE it was over – a defeat from which neither of the rebellious parties would ever recover. Assyria's conquest of Aram's capital city Damascus is referred to in II Kings 16:9: "The king of Assyria went up to Damascus and seized it, exiling its [inhabitants] ...and killed Rezin". Tiglath-Pileser conquered the bulk of the territory of Israel on both sides of the Jordan, incorporating large tracts of it as Assyrian provinces while leaving mainly the mountains of Ephraim under the puppet king Hosea. The Bible records the Assyrian actions against Israel: "In the days of Pekah king of Israel, Tiglath-Pileser king of Assyria came and took ...Hazor,

Gilead, and the Galilee – all of the land of Naphtali – and he exiled them to Assyria” (II King 15:29). Chronicles 5:26 records the place names in the Assyrian Empire to where the Reubenites, Gadites and half the tribe of Manasseh were sent into exile.

Assyrian records reflect the events: “Israel (lit.: Omri-Land”) ... all its inhabitants (and) their possessions I led to Assyria. They overthrew their king Pekah and I placed Hosea as king over them. I received from them ...as their [tri]bute”[xvii]

After Tiglath-Pileser III died in 727 BCE, his son Shalmaneser V became king of Assyria. II Kings 17:3 records that Shalmaneser exacted a tribute from Hosea: “Shalmaneser king of Assyria went up against him; and Hosea became his vassal and sent him a tribute”. Sensing an opportunity to extricate Israel from the harsh Assyrian tribute Hosea sought assistance from Egypt: “Then the king of Assyria discovered that Hosea, had betrayed him, for he had sent messengers to So, the king of Egypt, and he did not send up his tribute to the king of Assyria....The king of Assyria then invaded the entire country; he went up to Samaria and besieged it for three years....the king of Assyria captured Samaria and exiled Israel to Assyria (II Kings 17:4-6).

In 722 BCE, near the end of the campaign against Israel, King Shalmaneser V died and was replaced by Sargon II. An inscription of Sargon reads: “I besieged and conquered Samaria, led away as booty 27 290 inhabitants of it.”[xviii] The destruction of the northern kingdom is dealt with extremely briefly in the Bible: “In the ninth year of Hosea the king of Assyria captured Samaria, and he carried the Israelites away to Assyria...” (II Kings 17:6). The year 722 BCE marks the end of the destruction of the kingdom of Israel and the exile of the ten lost tribes.

The number of deportees listed as 27 290 may seem relatively small, but Assyrian control and an influx of foreign populations made it impossible for Israel to reinstate itself as an independent entity. Significant emigration took place from the territories previously part of Israel to Judah, with archaeological evidence showing that by around 700 BCE, Jerusalem had expanded by three or four times its former size.[xix]

The Bible refers to foreigners being resettled in Samaria: “The king of Assyria brought [people] from Babylonia and Cuthah and Avva and Hamath and Sepharvaim, and settled [them] in the cities of Samaria in place of the Children of Israel....” (II Kings 17:24).

This matter is also referred to in an annalistic report of Sargon II: “I crushed the tribes of Hamud, Ibadidi, Marsimanu, and Haiapa, the Arabs who live, far away , in the desertI deported their survivors and settled (them) in Samaria.”[xx] This foreign population became known as Samaritans and their status is unclear – the matter has been debated as to whether they were genuine converts to Judaism who practised idolatry or gentiles who adopted

some Jewish customs. The question of the Samaritans is discussed in the Mishna and later by the Tanna'im and there is disagreement on this matter – some consider them to be gentiles whereas others considered them to be Jews. But by the close of the Mishnaic period, there seems to have been a rupture between Jews and Samaritans.^[xxi]



Israelite prisoners being taken into exile after defeat of the Northern Kingdom in 732 BCE – British Museum

King Hezekiah's religious reforms

Hezekiah succeeded his father Ahaz as king of Judah in 727 BCE and is considered to have been amongst the greatest of the kings of Judah – second only to King David. “He did what was proper in the eyes of Hashem, just as his forefather David had done. He removed the high places, shattered the pillars, and cut down the Asherah-trees.... Amongst all the kings of Judah, there was no one like him, either before him or after him” (II Kings 18:3-5).

Hezekiah reversed the idolatrous practices of his father Ahaz's era (II Chronicles 31:1), repaired the Temple (II Chronicles 29:18), fostered unity between Judah and the remnant of Israel (II Chronicles 30) and according to the Talmud promoted Torah studies (Sanhedrin 94b). Assyria was unperturbed about religion in the vassal states and archaeological evidence for these reforms were excavated at Tel Beersheba where a magnificent horned altar of hewn ashlar (forbidden under Jewish law: Exodus 20:22) was found, dismantled and incorporated into a wall. Israeli archaeologist Yohanan Aharoni who directed the dig believes that his Beer-Sheba altar was one of the altars which was dismantled as part of Hezekiah's religious reforms. One of

the stones has clearly engraved upon it a curling snake - a fertility symbol widely employed throughout the ancient Near East.[xxii]

One can well imagine Isaiah having a close relationship with Hezekiah during this period and playing a role in the reforms. Jewish tradition has it that Hezekiah was a star student of Isaiah's.

The peaceful relations fostered during the reign of Ahaz between Judah and Assyria continued after Hezekiah came to the throne. Hezekiah became king in 727 BCE, the same year that Shalmaneser V succeeded Tiglath-Pileser III, and the policy of fealty to Assyria was maintained during his reign and the reign of Sargon II, who became king in 722 BCE. It was only after the death of Sargon II in 705 BCE, when Sennacherib became king that Hezekiah rebelled against Assyria.

Hezekiah's foreign policy caused tension and later a split with Isaiah, who was vehemently opposed to rebellion or surrender. Isaiah was particularly incensed with Judah's anti-Assyria alliance with Egypt (Isaiah 30:1-3; 31:1) and Babylonia (Isaiah 39) as well as the fortification of Jerusalem (Isaiah 22:9-11). The Bible reports that as a result of Isaiah's despair he went "naked and barefoot for three years" (Isaiah 20:3). Maimonides claims that this was merely a prophetic vision and whoever thinks he actually walked naked and barefoot is of "weak mind." Bin-Nun and Lau interpret the event as literal.[xxiii]

The conflict between Isaiah and Hezekiah with respect to international alliances was raised in a lecture given by Professor Yehuda Elitzur in Ben-Gurion's series of Bible lectures (1965). Ben-Gurion raised the obvious question: "So faith requires us to eschew any covenant [with another nation]?" Elitzur replied: "Heaven forbid, Heaven forbid...right now, you are not worthy of being an empire." Bin-Nun and Lau interpret this to mean that international treaties must be undertaken at the right time, and must stem from internal strength at home.[xxiv]

King Hezekiah prepares for Assyrian attack

In preparation for the Assyrian siege of Jerusalem Hezekiah covered up the Gihon spring located outside of the city to the east and cut a 533 metre tunnel through the hill of the City of David in order to divert its waters to the Siloam pool located within the city's expanded walls. "He, Hezekiah, stopped up the upper source of the waters of the Gihon, diverting them underground westward, to the City of David...." (II Chronicles 32:30; II Kings 20:20). Today it is possible to walk through this tunnel – a half hour walk in shin-deep water.

At the point where two teams met, tunneling from opposite sides, they celebrated their achievement by carving an inscription in the rock. The inscription, among the oldest records written in Hebrew, reads as follows:

“[...when] (the tunnel) was driven through. And this was the way in which it was cut through:- While [they were] still [excavating with their] axes, each man toward his fellow, and while there were still three cubits to be cut through, [they heard] the voice of a man calling to his fellows, for there was a fissure in the rock on the right [and on the left]. And when the tunnel was driven through, the quarrymen hewed (the rock), each man toward his fellow, axe against axe; and the water flowed from the spring toward the reservoir for 1200 cubits, and the height of the rock above the head[s] of the quarrymen was 100 cubits.”[xxv]

This Siloam Inscription was accidentally discovered in 1880 by Jacob Eliahu, a 16 year-old son of Jewish converts to Christianity. A Greek trader heard about the find and roughly cut out the inscription, breaking it. He was arrested by the Ottoman police, who confiscated the inscription and sent it to Istanbul where it can be viewed in Istanbul’s Archaeological Museum.



Siloam Inscription - Archaeological Museum, Istanbul

Lachish

The Bible records that “Sennacherib king of Assyria attacked all the fortified cities of Judah, and captured them” (II Kings 18:13). It is the subject of an evocative and much quoted poem, *The Destruction of Sennacherib*, by Lord Byron: “The Assyrians came down like the wolf on the fold/and his cohorts were gleaming in purple and gold.” Assyria’s attack on Judah quickly overran the countryside before besieging Lachish, the second most important city in Judah, and the last hurdle on the way to Jerusalem. Sennacherib destroyed Lachish in 701 BCE and was so proud of this victory that the throne room of his palace at Nineveh commemorated the conquest with huge reliefs carved on stone panels. These were excavated by Sir Henry Layard in the mid-19th Century on behalf of the British Museum, where the 13 panels now reside.

Excavations at Lachish have identified the siege ramp (first recognised by Yigal Yadin), as well as such items as scales of armour, sling stones and iron

arrowheads at the foot of the city wall where the fighting took place. The relief shows the storming of Lachish, and includes siege ramps, siege engines (with battering rams) and infantry, attacking the city gate and wall. The Lachishite defenders, standing on the walls, equipped with bows and slings can be seen tossing stones and burning torches on the attacking Assyrians. The relief also depicts a gruesome scene of captives being impaled on the city wall and the sad scene of Judean refugees leaving through the city gate being exiled and Sennacherib on his throne.



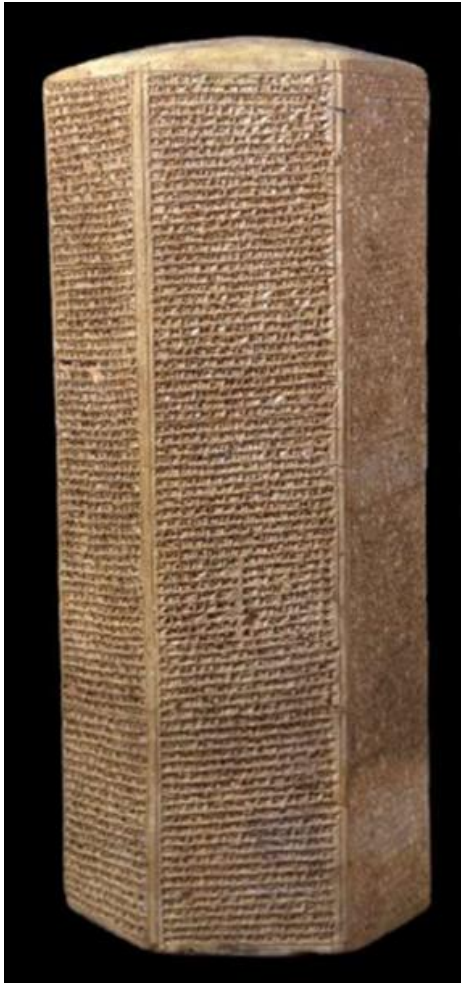
Lachish panels, British Museum

The Israeli archaeologist David Ussishkin, who directed a dig at Lachish, is of the view that the detailed relief gives an accurate and realistic picture of the city and the siege – the strength of the fortifications and the ferocity of the attack.^[xxvi]

Siege of Jerusalem

The Bible records that after Sennacherib attacked “all the fortified cities of Judah, and captured them” Hezekiah sent messengers to Sennacherib at Lachish, sued for peace and paid a tribute (II Kings 18:13-16). The harsh tribute did not seem to pacify Assyria. Sennacherib sent Rabshakeh from Lachish to Jerusalem, where he met with Eliakim son of Hilkiah (who was in charge of the palace), Shebna the scribe and Joah son of Asaph the recorder at the channel of the upper pool. Rabshakeh issues an ultimatum of surrender and deportation or conquest and death (II Kings 18:18; Isaiah 36).

Once the war between Judah and Assyria had begun Isaiah's relationship with Hezekiah was restored and Isaiah becomes a source of consolation and encouragement (Isaiah 37). Isaiah urges Hezekiah not to be frightened by the words of Rabshakeh and to stand firm and promises that Jerusalem will not be captured (Isaiah 37:5-7). He sent a message to Hezekiah expressing his contempt for Sennacherib: "Because you provoked Me, and your arrogance has risen into My ears, I shall place My hook into your nose and My bit into your mouth, and I shall make you return by the route on which you came" (Isaiah 37:29; II Kings 19:28).



**Prism of Senacherib,
British Museum**

The Prism of Sennacherib, an hexagonal prism found at Nineveh, describes his military campaign in 701 BCE against Phoenicia, Philistia and Judah: "As to Hezekiah, the Jew...I laid siege to 46 of his strong cities...and conquered (them) by means of well-stamped (earth-)ramps, and battering-rams Himself I made a prisoner in Jerusalem, his royal residence, like a bird in a cage.... Thus I reduced his country, but I still increased the tribute...beyond the former tribute..."[xxvii] Despite the boasting language no mention exists of how the campaign ended. The Bible reports that a miraculous intervention resulted in the deaths of a major portion of the Assyrian army and so Sennacherib returned to Nineveh. "An angel of Hashem went out and struck down 185000 [people] in the Assyrian camp....So Sennacherib...returned...[to] Nineveh" where he was murdered by his sons (Isaiah 37: 36-38 and II Kings 19:35-37).

Isaiah (31:5) prophesizes: "Like birds in flight, so will the Lord of Hosts protect Jerusalem. He will protect it and deliver it. He will spare it and rescue it". Could this be a direct retort to Sennacherib's jibe at Hezekiah: "a prisoner...like a bird in a cage"? Alex Israel thinks so, adding that until the Assyrian documents were found it was not possible to appreciate the significance of Isaiah's language. In his view these words of Sennacherib are one of Biblical archaeology's most famous contributions to our understanding of Tanakh.[xxviii]

Seal impressions of King Hezekiah and Isaiah

Archaeological excavations directed by Eilat Mazar in 2009 in the Ophel discovered 34 bullae (seal impressions stamped on a piece of soft clay).[xxix] The Ophel is the area between the Temple Mount and the City of David and in Hezekiah's time, David's Palace in the City of David and Solomon's Palace in the Ophel had already been functioning for 200 years. One of these bulla was impressed with the personal seal of King Hezekiah – the seal impression mentions his name, the name of his father and his title and reads as follows: "Belonging to Hezekiah, (son of) Ahaz, king of Judah."



Seal of King Hezekiah

A few metres from the bulla of King Hezekiah there was found another seal impression which is thought to have belonged to the prophet Isaiah. This bulla is damaged and reads as follows: "leyesha'yah[u] Nvy[?]" – which translates into "[belonging] to Yesha'yah[u] prophet" – Isaiah being the Anglicised version. Mazar mentions that finding a seal impression of the prophet Isaiah next to one of Hezekiah should not



Isaiah's Seal (tentative)

be unexpected as no other figure was closer to Hezekiah than the prophet Isaiah. In the Bible the names of Hezekiah and Isaiah are mentioned together 14 of the 29 times that the name Isaiah is mentioned (II Kings 19-20; Isaiah 37-39). Mazar concludes that while questions still remain about what the bulla

actually says given difficulties presented by the damaged area, the close relationship between Isaiah and Hezekiah, and the fact that the bullae were found next to each other, strongly suggests that the bulla belonged to the prophet Isaiah.

Shebna

Shebna was one of the high court officials during the reign of Hezekiah. At one time he held the office as the “steward ...in charge of the [king’s] house” (Isaiah 22:15) and in the famous scene where Sennacherib’s emissary Rabshakeh meets with the three representatives of Hezekiah, he is described as a scribe (II Kings 18:26, 37; Isaiah 36: 3,22). Isaiah is instructed to castigate Shebna for “that you have hewn yourself a tomb here ... on high ... and carves out of the rock an abode on the cliff” (Isaiah 22:15-16). In ancient Israel it was customary to be buried in a subterranean grave. Isaiah’s words imply that Shebna’s grave was conspicuously cut out of the rock-face, at a height, as was the practice of the aristocracy.[xxx]

In 1870 Charles Clermont-Ganneau, a French archaeologist excavated a partially destroyed tomb high up on the cliff overlooking the Kidron Valley and the City of David. Over the entrance to the rock cut burial chamber was an inscription that he could not decipher so he cut it out the rock and sent it to the British Museum where it still resides. The inscription was finally deciphered in 1953 by the Israeli epigraphist Nahman Avigad: “This is [the sepulchre of ...] –yahu who is over the house....Cursed be the man who will open this.” Avigad’s argued (based on a suggestion by Yigal Yadin) that this was the tomb of Shebna/Shebnayahu mentioned in Isaiah even though the first part of his name is missing and only –yahu is preserved. He was able to date the inscription to the time of King Hezekiah by comparing its letters to the Siloam Inscription discovered in Hezekiah’s tunnel. Almost all scholars have accepted Avigad’s argument.[xxxi]

A damaged seal impression belonging to Shebna was found in a storeroom at Lachish in a dig under the direction of Israeli Yohanan Aharoni between 1966-8. The seal inscription is damaged but has been identified as probably belonging to the same Shebna.[xxxii]

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 26a) records that Shebna headed a pro-Assyria party and treacherously betrayed Hezekiah by informing Assyria that he and his followers sought a peace agreement with them. This subversive behaviour no doubt also provoked Isaiah’s ire.

How many Isaiahs?

Many scholars are of the opinion that the book of Isaiah as canonised must have been written by at least two different men. Chapters 1-39 by Isaiah ben Amos who lived in the eight century BCE and chapters 40-66 by another

prophet who lived in exile in Babylon in the mid-sixth century in the days after its conquest by the Persian King Cyrus. This prophet is referred to as Isaiah II

Orthodox rabbis substantially view the Book of Isaiah as having been written by one prophet, and explain the time discrepancies by attributing the latter chapters to prophetic powers.^[xxxiii] However, Abraham Ibn Ezra hints that because chapters 40-66 contain historical material subsequent to the time of Isaiah, it is likely that these chapters were not written by him and JH Hertz opines that this question can be considered dispassionately as it doesn't impact dogma or any religious principles^[xxxiv] etc. Yoel Bin-Nun is unconvinced by this hypothesis, arguing that during the Babylonian exile the Hebrew language was heavily influenced by Akkadian and Aramaic as reflected in the prophetic language of Ezekiel. He maintains that the Hebrew of chapters 40-66 of the Book of Isaiah is entirely different to the Hebrew of the Babylonian exile.^[xxxv]

Isaiah in Jewish Liturgy

The words of Isaiah are a daily companion during services and the most quoted prophet in the prayer book. Some of his most memorable words include:

“Blessed are You, Hashem, our God, King of the universe, Who gives strength to the weary” (40:29)

“Holy, holy, holy is Hashem, Master of Legions, the whole world is filled with His glory.” (6:3)

“For from Zion will the Torah come forth and the word of Hashem from Jerusalem” (2:3)

The Book of Isaiah has also contributed more haftarahs (15 out of 54) than any other prophetic book.

The Attraction and Legacy of Isaiah

The early prophecies of Isaiah are characterised by chastisement, condemnation and rebuke but they lay down a strong and unwavering moral and ethical compass of appropriate behaviour. This moral message expressed in succinct and sublime poetic language is as relevant today as when Isaiah proclaimed them 2700 years ago.

Isaiah counterbalanced his rebuke with words of consolation, solace and hope including: “The remnant will return” (10:21), “A staff will emerge from the stump of Jesse and a shoot will sprout from his roots” (11:1), “Behold, the king will rule for the sake of righteousness and the officers will govern for justice” (32:1), and “Comfort, Comfort My people” (40:1).

Isaiah could rightly claim his place as the poet laureate of the Jewish people and was possibly the first to issue prophecies relating to the concept of universal peace:[xxxvi]

“They shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more” (2:4).

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard lie down with the kid, the calf, the beast of prey, and the fatling together, and a little boy shall herd them” (11:6).

Isaiah’s principles can be summarised in his declaration: “Zion will be redeemed through justice and delivered with righteousness” (1:27). His lofty idealism found expression in the State of Israel’s Declaration of Independence which reads: “The State of Israel ...be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel.”

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HAS THE HEBREW BIBLE BEEN ACCURATELY RECOPIED AND TRANSMITTED THROUGH THE AGES?

Simon Berg

***Simon Berg**, a sales manager for a multinational pharmaceutical company, has written and lectured extensively on the Dead Sea Scrolls. His book *Insights into the Dead Sea Scrolls – A Beginner's Guide* (2009) provides a concise, scholarly overview of the subject.*

“And even if we had an autograph copy of, say, the Book of Ezra, it would not answer all our questions, for it was created at a time (2400 years ago) when writing was imprecise – even before the invention of punctuation.”... Preface to the JPS Tanach.

Kings II 22:8: *And Hilkia the High Priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, “I have found the Book of the Law in the House of the Lord.” And Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan and he read it.*

Ibid. 23:2...*and he (King Josiah) read in their ears (to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem) all the words of the Book of the Covenant which was found in the House of the Lord. This was 67 years after King Manasseh had systematically destroyed all the Torah Scrolls in the land. (1)*

The background to this very moving event describes this book, believed to have been the Book of Deuteronomy, one of the five books of the Torah discovered in the First Temple. This took place 100 years after an invasion from the north by Assyrian Kings and the pillaging of the Temple which took place in 722 BCE. The description of King Josiah reading and learning about the contents the Torah for the first time, implied that the Jews had essentially abandoned their Judaism during this period, up to and including the eventual withdrawal of Assyrian influence from the Kingdom of Judah around 620 BCE. This date also implies that at least as far back as King Josiah, a written copy of the Torah existed in the First Temple, and about 650 years after the traditional date of the Exodus.

The Hebrew Bible, the *Tanach*, has only been in its final and present compilation and redaction for the past two thousand years. It contains twenty-four books divided into three sections: Torah (the so-called Five

Books of Moses or Pentateuch), *Nevi'im* (Prophets) and the *Ketuvim* (Writings). The latter two sections make up the 'nach' part of the Tanach.

My objective is for the reader to question whether there are any differences in the *Tanach* (combination of *Torah* and *nach*) text of today, compared to the text from the *Tanach* in the Temple of Solomon, and I will also look at the balance of the texts and contents that make up the *nach* text on its own. Furthermore, I will present other versions of the *Tanach* and additional Holy Scriptures used by the Jewish people during the Second Temple era.

An essential criterion is for all of the Hebrew Bible and specifically the Torah, to establish that it is the original (Holy) text, word for word, letter for letter and all symbols, punctuation and column structure. In other words, there have been no differences and changes to the aforementioned criteria. In terms of the Hebrew Bible, what we thus read is regarded as being the original Hebrew or the **Masoretic text**, which was, and is the only text used by organized Judaism from the 1st Century on and after the destruction of the Second Temple.(2)

What we read and have accepted, for the past couple of thousand years, has been essentially due to our unquestioning faith. We believe that what is written in the Hebrew Bible is exactly the same as when it was originally received and composed. By now I'm sure you are wondering where I am going with this? So let me assure you that by the time you have completed reading this presentation, your faith or belief will have remained much the same, with however a greater insight to the meaning of the concept of original and Holy scripture. Scripture implies 'holy' text and the bible being the collection or canon of the works of scripture. Therefore there are different bibles for different religions.

Dead Sea Scrolls:

The biblical part of the Dead Sea Scroll collection found in the ruins of Qumran above the Dead Sea, consists of about 220 out of a total of 930 scrolls out of a corpus of 25000 fragments in varying lengths of completion. These were purportedly partly written by the Essenes residing there and the balance having been brought there from Jewish libraries mostly from Jerusalem. Only the one Isaiah scroll was in a complete form. All books of the bible were represented, some having around 20 copies of the same book or psalms. All, except for the Book of Esther and very little of Ezra/Nehemiah were found. These biblical scrolls dated mostly prior to the first millennium and perhaps as early as 250 BCE. They are thus the oldest known recorded biblical texts found. Interestingly, their contents were even older, as no doubt they were all copies of copies of much earlier scrolls.

Before the DSS were found it was not a confirmed *fact* that the Masoretic text existed before the first century CE.

Professor Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, calculated that had all these biblical fragments been collated to complete sections of the Hebrew Bible, they would have amounted to ten complete Hebrew bibles - not that many, considering the Essenes were at Qumran for about 150 years in total.

Now this is where we come to the crux of the matter. Were they copies of copies? Whose copies? And critically how accurately were they copied? To provide the reader with some sort of time reference, the events at Sinai took place approximately 1330 BCE. So the earliest biblical Dead Sea Scroll could well have been a copy of a scroll dating back 1000 years from the 'first' Torah and 500 - 600 years after King David and in some instances only 300 to 400 years after some of the last prophets. The discovered copies of the Book of Daniel amongst the scrolls are believed to have been written during the actual early formation period of the Essenes (14) who wrote many of the scrolls.

In addition to many of their own legal text scrolls and other works directly associated with the Essenes discovered at Qumran, many are widely believed to have come from outside the region, mainly from Jerusalem. Thus the implication is that the scriptural / biblical scrolls discovered there, were to a greater or lesser degree also used by the Jewish people in the Kingdoms of Judea and Israel and later Palestine. Poignantly, there were basically similarly-varied copies of the biblical scrolls of the Tanach in usage outside Qumran, in addition to other holy scriptures used by the Jews. Some of these works we have long known about, for example the works of the Apocrypha and other religious works composed during the Second Temple times that were not eventually included in the Hebrew Canon. The Books of the Maccabees are another example. These works did not aspire to be Divine but rather to be inspirational during those critical times of persecution by the Romans and Greeks.

These 'additional' scriptures form collectively what is termed Pseudepigrapha. In addition to Apocryphal works there were about 600 other scriptural pseudepigraphic works that were used but not known of prior to the discoveries at Qumran. This is most probably one of the most significant outcomes of Scroll research, and fills the gaps previously left to speculation with regard to Jewish scripture, thought, prayer and observance.

Thus there were many, many variations of Judaism practiced and significantly differing from the practice and worship of Judaism today. The Judaism of the Pharisees which later became known as Rabbinic Judaism,

is the essential and core Judaism of the past 2000 years. The development and inculcation of Sephardic, Ashkenazi and Lubavitch practices for example, still retain most of the basics of belief and are followed today. Thus the reader will begin to appreciate the significance of the word 'Masoretic'. This word will come up time and again.

So, where is all this heading? Before I introduce the reader to some of the findings, I would like to add further intrigue by adding that only by about 850 CE did a *final* Masoretic text become established culminating with the Aleppo Codex, which will be covered further on in this paper.

Examples of some works are known as *proto*-Masoretic works i.e. related to, but some being abbreviated or variated sections from the Torah. Such works had additional wording in some verses that were used by some sects of Jews.

Some comparative examples from Qumran biblical scrolls vs. Masoretic:

Masoretic Genesis 1:19: "*And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered into one place, and let the dry land appear'. And it was so*".

Proto-masoretic: "And God said, 'Let the waters underneath the heavens be gathered together in one gathering, and let the dry land appear'. And it was so".

Masoretic Leviticus 3:11: "*Then the priest shall burn these on the altar as a food offering by fire to the Lord.*"

Proto-masoretic: "*And the priest shall burn on the altar; it is the food, for a pleasing odour, of the offering made by fire to the Lord*".

In this example we also come across an *additional* insertion of other material following verse 24.

Masoretic: Numbers 27:23 – 24: "*So Moses did as the Lord commanded him. He took Joshua and had him stand before Elazar the priest and the whole congregation; And he laid his hands upon him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hand of Moses.*"

Proto-masoretic: "*And Moses did as the Lord commanded him; and he took Joshua the son of Nun, and set him before all the congregation; and laid his hands on him, and commissioned him as the Lord spoke by Moses*".

This shows that there were at least two editions of the book of Numbers circulating in Judaism during the Second Temple period.

Masoretic: Exodus 7:18 “*The fish in the river shall die, the river itself shall stink, and the Egyptians shall be unable to drink waters from the Nile*”.

Proto-masoretic: “*And the fish in the dust of the Nile shall die, and the Nile shall stink, and the Egyptians shall wary of drinking water from the Nile.*”

According to an analysis by Prof Emanuel Tov of the Hebrew University, out of 52 eligible Torah scroll texts, 46 were suitable for analysis. The outcome was that 57% of those texts followed the masoretic writing! To further break down: Masoretic Torah = 24% and ‘other’ = 33%. (3)

The ‘Writings’ or *nach* portion of the Hebrew bible had a significant number of differences or variations. There were shortened versions of the Prophets; of note are the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah. However, were these two examples in fact simply shortened versions or actually two *versions* used at the time? This is a critical question and serves as one of hundreds of examples of the different texts that were in use during that period. Interestingly the Angelic praises in Isaiah 6:3 “Holy, Holy, Holy” is repeated twice and not three times as in the text we use today. This is seen in The *Great Isaiah Scroll*, an original Dead Sea Scroll discovered in Cave 1 and a copy of which is displayed in the *Shrine of the Book* of the Israel Museum. Multiple variations in wording are read in many of the biblical museum texts.



The Great Isaiah Scroll

There is now what is recognized to be a complete text missing from the end of the book of Samuel 1 chapter 11, that reappears in scroll coded 4QSam. This has now provided greater clarity for the events previously described. Remarkably the Jewish historian Josephus (37-100 CE) accounted the same details in his history of the Jewish People, the *Jewish Antiquities*. Psalm 145 was also discovered to have a 'missing verse' (4) between verses 13 and 14. A number of Christian Bibles have already made these changes or corrections to their latest editions.

So what could account for some of these numerous proto-Masoretic differences? The notion of an 'original' text was unknown to the people of this era. Each scribal copy constituted a *distinct* version of the text. This was probably due to *composition-by-stages*, as some of the scribes intentionally incorporated new material that helped interpret their own relevance to the text they were copying. Words could have been inadvertently omitted in the course of transmission. This is referred to as *textual corruption*, which could have occurred due to the scribe copying from a damaged copy. Possibly some words in the copy were illegible and replaced by words which were thought to be the correct ones.

In order to avoid this occurring during the Temple era, scrolls copied from a master copy named a "*corrected scroll*" or *sefer muggah*. For this purpose the Temple employed professional *maggim* or correctors. In addition, a second precise or corrected copy known as the "Scroll of the King" also existed; this accompanied the king wherever he went. (Deut. 17:18 19)

Prof James H Charlesworth of Princeton University, at a Biblical Archaeology Seminar held at St. Olaf College Minnesota USA, gave one of his lectures titled 'Has our bible been copied accurately?' "This," he said, "pre-supposes that there was therefore *one original text*, from which all others were copied." According to Charlesworth, there was no one original or primary text. "What we want is the least corrupt (distorted) bible, i.e. the earliest version, the earliest evidence."

Targumim Onkelos and Jonathan

They are the Torah and the Prophets translated into Aramaic respectively in the early 2nd Century CE. In Talmudic times readings from the Torah within the synagogues were rendered verse-by-verse into the Aramaic translation. In many Hebrew Tanachim today, the Torah section has alongside it the Onkelos Aramaic translation. This is used when there were found difficult passages and it served to minimize ambiguities to assist with the understanding of the text. Onkelos was a Roman convert to Judaism.

Following the return of many of the Jews from Babylon after their capture 70 years previously, Hebrew ceased to be the spoken language and was replaced by Aramaic.

Nehemiah was put in charge of rebuilding the surrounding wall of Jerusalem after its destruction and the return of the Jews from captivity in Babylon. During his time (+- 480 BCE) the majority of Israelites as recorded in the Bible (Nehemiah 8:8) could no longer comprehend or read Hebrew. Thus translations were necessary. The original Hebrew Tanach was translated into the Aramaic language of the time.(19) There no longer exist copies of these early translations, which were of an earlier dialect of the Aramaic language than that recorded by Onkelos. Today Aramaic still appears in the Yemenite Tanach in the books of Ezra and Daniel.

There were two other well-known bibles that were also in usage at the time:

The **Septuagint** is derived from the Latin *septaginta* meaning seventy, or the abbreviation LXX. This is the oldest Greek version of the Hebrew bible originating during the friendly rule of Ptolemy II Philadelphos of Egypt (285 – 246 BCE) for the benefit of the large Greek-speaking Jewish population of Alexandria, Egypt, who had become estranged from the Hebrew language. It helped the Jews to strengthen their religion and Jewish identity. It also allowed non-Jews to understand the monotheistic religion of the Jews and have access to Jewish Scripture. (18)



Ptolemy II Philadelphos of Egypt

The Septuagint preceded the Dead Sea Scrolls regarding the Torah section in particular, with the *nach* section being completed over the following decades. The motivator was Demetrius of Phalerum, a statesman, philosopher and governor of Athens who had to escape to Egypt. There, he once again became prominent during the rule of Ptolemy 1 and later became one of the founders of the Great Library of Alexandra.(5) It was his suggestion that the ‘Law of the Jews’ should have a place at that library.

Legend has it that six scholarly elders from each of the twelve tribes were dispatched by the High Priest Elazar in Jerusalem, and over a period of 72 days completed the translation of the Torah, and later, having reconciled the differences by mutual comparisons, and submitted it to Demetrius,(6) Legend has it that all of the seventy two scholars came up with the identical translations. Prof Tov believes that the enterprise simply grew stage by

stage, firstly as an official project and subsequently was continued by individuals. The actual Torah translation may have been under the auspices of the High Priest.

The Septuagint was not simply a literal translation. In many passages, the translators used terms from the Hellenistic Greek that made the text more accessible to the Greek readers, but they also subtly changed its meanings. Elsewhere the translations introduced Hellenistic concepts into the text.(7) To “set a cat among the pigeons,” there is the possibility that in fact the text of the Septuagint does reflect a more accurate translation, as it is older than the Dead Sea Scrolls! After the translation was read to the Jewish community, the leaders pronounced a curse on anyone who might seek to change it in anyway, since this was the authorized Greek translation of God’s Law. It later formed the “soil” from which Christianity grew and was used by the Apostles.

It remained for centuries a work on its own! It became a Torah not only to the Hellenized Jews of Alexandria but to the Jews of Palestine and later also the early ‘Christian Jews’. It was eventually rejected by the Jews with the rise of Christianity. Even today it is used in places as a ‘Targum’ to assist with the interpretation of words in the Torah. The Septuagint eventually became a complete Hebrew Bible. Later, additional works from the Apocrypha and other scriptural works originating from those Second Temple times (by Jews) became part of its canon, and are used by certain major Christian churches today. The books in the LXX are arranged differently from their position in the Hebrew Bible. Some fragments of the LXX were also discovered in the caves of Qumran.

It is interesting to note that Psalm 145 (referred to earlier) of the Masoretic text is written in anachronistic format i.e. the first verse begins with the letter A and the second with a letter B and so on. Except that a verse beginning with the letter *nun* or ‘N’ is absent. However it does appear in one of the psalm scrolls of the Dead Sea Scroll collection *and* in the Septuagint. This also applied to the missing verse from Samuel 1 Chapter 11 as appears in the Dead Sea Scrolls referred to earlier. The book of Jeremiah is approximately 5%-20% shorter than the Masoretic version and also appears as a different version.

Another example of differences between the Hebrew text and the Septuagint appears in Isaiah 7:14, where in the Dead Sea Scrolls and subsequent later Masoretic texts the words “*Behold the young woman* (Heb. *Alma*) *will become pregnant and bear a son, and you will name him Immanuel*”, a divinely inspired name. Yet in the Septuagint in place of the term “*young woman*”, the words were replaced by “*virgin*.” Christianity uses quotes from the book of Isaiah to endorse the coming of Jesus and the fulfillment of the prophecy, particularly as in this example.

The Samaritan Pentateuch

Extract: “The Samaritans separated (during and post the Babylonian exile of the Jews) themselves socially from the Jews, who in return shunned them.” Denied access to Jerusalem and recognition of not being *halachically* Jewish (Jewish legal law), Samaritan worship was centered on their temple on Mount Gerizim. This temple was razed to the ground around 100 BCE by the Jews for religious reasons. Then a system of worship was instituted by the Samaritans similar to that of the Temple at Jerusalem. It was based on the Torah possibly on copies that had been brought by Jewish priests that had left the Jerusalem temple for those on Mount Gerizim. Thus their Pentateuch was preserved among the Samaritans, which they read as one book and still used today.



Mount Gerizim, circa. 1900

The Samaritan Pentateuch is written in an early Hebrew script of the **Samaritan** alphabet, a direct descendant of the Paleo-Hebrew alphabet (a very ancient **script** used by the Israelites around the 6th – 5th Centuries BCE), which in turn is a variant of the earlier Phoenician alphabet. The earliest recorded Torah is believed to have been copied in this script.

Interestingly, some of the Qumran biblical manuscripts found were to be closer textually to the Samaritan Pentateuch than the Masoretic Torah. This is surprising, as the Samaritans were regarded as having separated or estranged themselves from the Jewish people at large. Comparatively, there are about 6000 differences to the Masoretic Torah. Also included is content in their law to build an altar on Mt. Gerizim.

Of the 6000 differences, 2000 are identical to those found in the LXX! From some recent biblical academic opinion arose the understanding that the differences to the Masoretic Torah are not a case of textual differences peculiar to the Samaritan version, but probably it is a Pentateuch in its own right and was the text of the day. It was not only used by the Samaritans and their descendants but was at the time also considered an authoritative Jewish text.

A comparison between the Samaritan Pentateuch and the Masoretic text shows that many of these differences represented a modernizing of the Masoretic text in terms of grammar and spelling in order that the MT could be better understood. (17)

It is still in use today by the Samaritans (who are not regarded as Jews) and have their annual Pascal lamb (Pesach) sacrifice on Mt. Gerizim. The Samaritan Pentateuch did not pose any threat to the Masoretic text, since it was described as falsification of the Jewish Torah. (7)

So far, I have demonstrated at least four Pentateuchs, including those found at Qumran, showing variations to a greater or lesser degree, all of which were used by the different factions of Judaism during this very unstable period. At this stage, I again wish to point out that the concept of an original text was not likely to be considered of paramount importance.

Up to and immediately following the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, *the* final and recognized canon of the Hebrew Bible, the twenty-four books, had been fully established. The exceptions were “The Song of Songs” and Ecclesiastes that had not yet been accepted, but eventually they were also included. Only towards the end of that first century did it become finally redacted. This also meant that the Hebrew Bible had become *standardized* i.e. no variations subsequently were used or allowed. The subsequent regrouping of the rabbinical remnants from the Pharisees in Yavneh to debate the inclusion of certain books (8) into the canon, firmly re-established Judaism and all that it encompassed. This took place under Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai in about 90 CE and is referred to as the Council of Jamnia (Yavne). It was then, that officially the Septuagint and Apocryphal books were rejected from the Jewish canon.

As the Jewish Diaspora began to spread both geographically and culturally, the threat of retaining, copying and using the same and ‘original’ bible throughout the Jewish world must have become widespread. With time and distance, there was no way of knowing whether the number of bibles all had exactly the same texts, with particular reference to the Torah itself. The concept of preserving the original biblical text first originated after the Jews returned from Babylon.

Whist I am not saying that categorically there were Torahs differing from each other, that element became recognized and eventually acted upon, albeit about eight-hundred years after the destruction of the Temple.

In the cities of Jerusalem and Tiberius 600 CE – 800 CE a group of scholars known as *Masoretes* took upon themselves to develop a system of checks and balances to ensure that the holy texts were accurately copied by scribes. Many of them were from the *Karaite* community and were excellent grammarians as well. In order to establish once and for all the *ultimate* template for the Hebrew bible incorporating Torah, Prophets and Writings, the *Aleppo Codex* was written. (11)

The **Aleppo Codex:**

A codex is a bound collection of hand-written pages which have the writing on both sides of the page as opposed to a scroll. Codices preceded books.

This codex became the official established text and later endorsed by the greatest Jewish sage Maimonides when using the codex in Cairo to reference his work the *Mishnah Torah* in the 11th Century and was designated the royal title *Keter* or Crown. The codex was first written by a Karaite Tiberian Masorete scholar Moses ben Asher and his son Aaron, who later in the 9th Century developed and added vowels to the text to ensure accurate meaning. It was recognized as the holiest Jewish work. It was written to be regarded as the most accurate version of the Hebrew Bible, both in words and spelling. Also, its layout in terms of paragraphs and style. It thus became the *final template* for the Hebrew Bible which is used to this day. In addition to developing a system of vowels, Aaron developed a series of musical cantillations (*trop*) to emphasize reverence to the words when being sung in the synagogues. During the Crusader invasion of Palestine 1100 CE the Codex was captured from Tiberius and ransomed. It was subsequently paid for and attained by the Cairo Jewish community.

In 1375 the Codex was transported back by a descendant of Maimonides in Cairo to Aleppo in Syria, where it was securely stored in a cabinet room of the synagogue for over 500 years, hence attaining its name. Immediately following the declaration of the State of Israel, the synagogue was destroyed. The following day only part of the original codex was found on the floor. That part of the Aleppo codex is now on display in the Israel Museum and has a history of intrigue that remains unsolved to this day.

The **Leningrad Codex**

The *Leningradensis* or the Codex of Leningrad is the oldest complete (Masoretic) manuscript of the Hebrew bible, written in 1009 in Cairo and

now stored in the Russian National Library. (12) This codex used the Aleppo Codex and other scribal sources to ensure its accuracy. It was written two generations after the Asher codex by a scribe in Cairo, Samuel ben Jacob. The LC reflects the sequence found in Middle Eastern and Spanish manuscripts. The *Writings* were arranged according to the German tradition. For centuries it was kept out of circulation, being unknown to historians and Bible editors. (16) In 1840 a manuscript collector Abraham Firkovich acquired the codex. He sold it and other rare Jewish manuscripts to the Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) Imperial Library.

In 1987 an international team, led by the esteemed Professor Emanuel Tov, established proof-reading of the Leningradensis, culminating in what was considered then the most accurate updated version. It was published by the *Jewish Publication Society and is based on the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* mentioned below. Today it is available titled “*JPS Hebrew – English TANAKH*.”

The **Stuttgartensia Biblia**:

Together the above codices are known as the *Asher Texts*. Following these a new biblical edition, known as the *Mikraot Gedolot*, was published in Venice in 1516–17 by Daniel Bomberg. The second edition was edited by the Masoretic scholar Yaakov ben Haim of Leipzig in 1525. They were referred to as the *Rabbinic Bibles* and included commentaries.

The Stuttgartensia Biblia was used to translate the *King James Bible* into English. This bible, which was also known as the *Biblia Hebraica Kittel* was edited by Rudolph Kittel of Leipzig in 1906 and was identical to the Asher texts. A number of editions later it was renamed *Biblia Stuttgartensia* (13).

The fifth and revised edition was printed in 2020, and also included references and comparisons to recently released material from Qumran texts. The latest editions of the *Mikraot Gedolot* have been published, based directly on manuscript evidence, principally the Keter Aram Tzova (Aleppo Codex)(202), the manuscript of the Tanakh kept by the Jews of Aleppo. There are 21 volumes of the *Bar Ilan Mikraot Gedolot ha-Keter*, edited by Menahem Cohen(9). Also available today is *Tanach Haketer/the Keter Crown Bible* published in 2006 by Chorev Publishing House, Jerusalem.

I have covered a brief history of biblical textual variations from about 2300 years ago until the beginning of the second millennium. In 1956, the *Hebrew University Bible Project* was established to assemble every known textual variant of the Hebrew Bible. The project is designed to assemble variations, not to choose one that is correct. Yet none of these earlier versions pose any threat to the now established biblical text used

today. Orthodoxy has the ability to look back and compare and cast aside texts they no longer deem accurate, and unequivocally devote themselves to scripts that are seen as Divine and original.

Thus in answer to the question posed in the heading of this article, the answer is “Yes.”

On the other hand, prior to the earliest known written recording of the Bible, we still have questions.

Summary:

- The framework of the Masoretic Text was already present in the Dead Sea Scrolls.
- 25 Scripture scrolls from sites other than Qumran (e.g. Masada, Bar Kochba caves) were also found to be identical to the Masoretic Text.
- This is as opposed to some of the Scriptural scrolls found at Qumran having variations of the biblical texts.
- Thus we understand that all the variations of the biblical texts found in the Judean Desert were regarded as being *equally authoritative* in ancient Israel in addition to those exclusively using the Masoretic Texts.
- All Scripture texts (outside Qumran) were equally authoritative in ancient Israel, except for the circles that created and perpetuated the Masoretic Text.

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Notes:

1. The *ArtScroll* English Tanach Commentary 22:8 p593
2. *My Jewish Learning* Google
3. The Scribal and Textual transmission of the Torah... Emanuel Tov
4. The Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls...Vanderkam and Flint p123
5. The Jewish Mind...Raphael Patai.
6. Meaning of the Dead Sea Scrolls... Vanderkam and Flint pp96–7
7. Reclaiming the Dead Sea Scrolls...Lawrence Schiffman p212
8. Ibid, p162
9. *Mikra'ot Gedolot "Haketer"* project, founded and directed by Prof. Menachem Cohen, former Dean of the Faculty of Jewish Studies at Bar-Ilan

10. *Scholars Seek Hebrew Bible Original Text...Anthony Weis*
11. *Crown of Aleppo...Tawil and Schneider pg.34*
12. *Ibid, p169*
13. *Ibid, p42*
14. *Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English...Geza Vermes pg. 11*
15. *The Scribal and Textual Transmission of the Torah...Emanuel Tov pg.59*
16. *JPS TANAKH... Jewish Publication Society. Preface pg.xii*
17. *The Text of the Old Testament, Peter Gentry*
18. *The Septuagint as a Translation, Matti Kuosmaane*
19. *Ancient versions of the Bible, Y. Younan-Levine*
20. Aram-Tzovaha was a biblical city in modern Syria that was recently heavily bombed, and whose name was applied from the 11th century onward by some rabbinical sources and Syrian Jews to the area of Aleppo, in Syria. It is the same city that was conquered by King David's General (Samuel II 8 verses 3-8) and known then as Hadadezer, ruled by King Tzovah. Aram of Damascus came to the assistance of the king but was defeated. Aleppo was also known in Arabic as *Halabi* where Abraham was purported to have milked his sheep to feed the poor.

MY 11TH PEN PAL - LETTERS FROM MENAHEM

Honey Gluckman

Honey Gluckman is a former lecturer in the Department of Educational Studies at JCE, now the Education Faculty of Wits. Her subjects included Philosophy of Education, with an emphasis on Critical Analysis. She is today part of the 'Granny Program' run by the Chevra Kadisha, assisting young black learners in acquiring language skills using educational games she has developed.

In 1948, as a high school pupil aged 15 years, I read an article in a Jewish journal asking people to write to prisoners in camp Gilgil in Kenya. Since I was going through a pen pal stage (I had 11 of these from all over), I decided to add to my collection. That is when I 'met' Menahem Heppner, aged (I think) 26. We corresponded for many years, with his early letters closely written on thin, now yellowing airmail paper which sometimes made certain words difficult to decipher. But, after rereading them, I realized that they form a historical record of the birth of Israel.

I have mostly kept the English he used (as a second language speaker) but have split the handwritten account into paragraphs (for easier understanding).

I have omitted many of his personal comments to me, as they are not relevant to this history. What was obvious was that he was so desperate to relieve his boredom that he was prepared to write to someone much younger than himself. As a result, his early letters were filled with paternal and at times, the slightly condescending comments of a kindly adult writing to a child.

5 June 1948

"Dear Honey!

Some hours ago, I received your letter from 8.6.48 and it's hard to describe my feelings at that moment. I was very happy and reading your letter was very delightful. You could hardly believe that this letter created a big day for me in our life. I myself wouldn't believe it if I lived outside. But it's right.

Now let's go on with the real letter. Your first question about the reasons for my being here is the difficultest and I'll keep it to the end of the letter. I'm

surprised to see your interest in politics, especially your viewpoint about the British interference there in Palestine. You are absolutely right about them and if you had seen their behaviour there as I had, I suppose the outcome would not be far as mine. E.g. being in Kenya [He comments with amusement on the fact that I have 11 pen pals]. I myself write only to family in Israel, London and S. America.

I had to break up this letter in order to go to our weekly picture. The movie is coming to us and today I saw a very nice picture [*name given – illegible*]

I'll attend now to your first question about the reasons of my being in this 'sanatorium' in the Kenya highlands. Although I arrived at this camp only one and a half years ago, let me give you the short history of our camp, which exists now nearly four years. The 'pioneers' were 250 boys exiled by the British Government from Palestine to Eritrea. Then they were transferred to the Sudan and back to Eritrea and at last, two years ago they arrived here at Kenya, "The pearl of the British Empire", as written in one of the tourist books here. When you ask me about the right which allowed them to exile Palestinian citizens to another country, well, that's too much for me. You have to forget about the existence of laws and rights when you live under British 'Administration' (that is Occupation)! It seems that for the English the right to live exists only for themselves and no other people have the right to demand the right to live. Sorry to break up your beliefs (if there were any) in the English colonial system. Let me as an example tell you my history of detention, which I hope will not bore you.

It was October 1946, (quite a pre-historical date) when I lived in Jerusalem a quiet civilian life of a native under British rule. My father is a doctor there and the days were full with 'terrorism' against the English. Every day some police or army officers were killed by 'terrorists' and the English ruled a reign of terror against the Jews without differentiation between ages and membership of party. I was a member of the Revisionist Party and commander in chief of the Betar Jerusalem. Well, this was nothing illegal because the party was a legal one and recognized by the government.

Then one afternoon in October, when the railway station was blown up by Jews, when I returned home from my work, I saw the lovely symbol of the police before our door; a police truck and two armoured cars, occupied by policemen with various arms. Just when I entered the street, I saw my father carried out under heavy escort into the car and driven out. They wanted him for only a moment, but this moment was about two weeks. As I found out later they accused him of giving first aid to 'terrorists' and put him in prison together with Arabs and plenty of bed bugs etc. The same night at 12 o'clock a second visit was paid to us and this time my younger brother and younger sister and I were taken for a 'journey' in a nice car between two dozen Tommy guns. We were driven to another prison which

was quite clean and everyone had a special chamber. For two days we got no food and then we were separately investigated about our doings and especially our father's doings. Of course we knew nothing.

On the second day afternoon, I was 'asked' by a civil police inspector in his car and driven to the central prison where I met my father in a very bad condition as he was then 58 years old. After a quarter of an hour ten of us were separated, thrown into a car and taken to the detention camp Latrun [*half way between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv*]. They took good care of us on the way. Twelve armed police guarded 10 bounded Jews. One hand was bound to the car and the other, each to the other's hand. We were not allowed to speak or to move and of course neither of us wanted to risk his life by a little bullet from their guns pointed on us.

Well, the Latrun camp is just as any other camps in the world, not bad and not good. There I spent half a year, meanwhile my family was released and only I remained the scapegoat of the 'terrorist' family. Then came the 11th May 1947 when suddenly one night we were awoken in the barracks of the camp by "His Majesty Forces." 50 of us were taken under heavy escort into trucks and the 'trip' to Kenya began. Four special airplanes awaited us and together with the guard we entered our first air journey. It was not comfortable as we were bound again and could not move from our places. Eight hours we were in the air until we arrived at Asmara in Eritrea where we 'rested' one night. The next day we continued our trip by air, again 9 hours until at last we arrived at the Capital of Kenya- Nairobi. From Nairobi to Gilgil it's a way of 7 hours, a wonderful way through jungle and mountains of Kenya. Long after midnight we arrived here and were warmly welcomed by our comrades.

Well, that's the story I have to tell and if you did not fall asleep meanwhile I congratulate your patience....One and a half years idle life in Kenya prison makes one rather dull. One does not recognize special events and one has only thoughts of the past to enjoy.

Please don't let me wait for your letters too much and answer immediately.

Well, good night.

Sincerely your devoted 11th pen pal

Menahem"



Irgun and Lehi detainees in Eritrea

At the top of this first letter is a hand-drawn picture of a fenced-in camp and a tall watchtower with lights on top. At the side is written "behind the fence". At the bottom he drew a picture of a Mickey Mouse postman holding a letter, followed by "Hurry up- postman!"

Gilgil, Kenya 29.6.48

[Drawing of a tall giraffe touching the top of the watch tower with the words "jungle meeting"]

"Dear Honey,

I just received your letter and it's impossible to put in words my joy when I found your nice photo together with 7 pages of your letter....

Just now we received a telegram from the Red Cross London about our problem of returning to Israel. It said that the colonial office had informed the Red Cross that the Jews in Gilgil are not held there for "any particular ground". That means we were sitting "just so" without reason and limit. Well, by this you see that our correspondence will not be broken in the near future as we are probably staying for some months or years more....

You asked about some sketches of you made from your photo...but my painting is specialized in landscapes...only here as I looked for a hobby, I found myself good enough for painting. But I got in and began to do some nice pictures. One of them was given as a gift to Rabby Rabinowitz on his visit to us"...

The reference is to the Chief Rabbi of South Africa's Federation of Synagogues Rabbi L I Rabinowitz. Because of a comment I had written, Menahem next replied with a four page-long political lecture on why he prefers the Afrikaner nationalists, who were against the British, to Smuts, who favoured the British Empire.

“Well! I write and write without an end... (*He encloses a brooch he made with my Hebrew initials*). Again thanks for everything and write me very, very soon! I'm waiting and anticipating your next letter!

Kenya 5.7. 48

“This will be my last letter from this place to you as we are tomorrow leaving this camp on our way to Israel! It's hard for me, even impossible to describe you our feelings! This is the day we have waited for 3 years and it's like a dream too good to be true!

If everything will be straight then we'll be in Israel at the end of the week and we'll be home with our families. For us from Jerusalem it will be another problem how to get there, but I hope that this too will be solved. You'll understand when this letter will be very short because of the excitement around us. It's too hard!

I would be very glad if I should continue our letters from Jerusalem. Forgive the shortness of this letter, but you'll understand my present mood. Only 18 hours more then we'll go! Well, that's the end of this letter and this exile too!

Please continue writing and thanks for all you've done to me before by writing your nice letters and sending your photo which made my life more easy!

Good luck and see you “again' soon!



Returnees to Israel bringing Sefer Torah from Gilgil detention camp, July 1948
(source: <https://blog.nli.org.il/en/hoi-exiles/>)

Jerusalem 8.8.48

“Dear Honey

I’m living now in a quite different world than before. It’s called freedom but it’s a battle even when it’s officially ceasefire. Especially in Jerusalem, it’s a very strange cease fire while the shooting in the old city is going on every hour, day and night. There is a military censorship now, for it is possible that our letters are going through Arab countries and we must be careful not to give them valuable information about military objects. Until now, all this life seems to me as an unbelievable dream. Less than a month ago, life was more comfortable but harder to bear. It’s difficult to explain to you as you will never understand the position in Israel today.

In Jerusalem, everyone is a soldier and is doing his duty. Two weeks after my arrival in Jerusalem, I’m already a fighting soldier and doing my duty as an officer in Irgun Zwai Leumi’s army which now exists only in Jerusalem, while in the other parts of the land, the Irgun ceased to exist and the members joined the Israeli army.

You must understand that in Jerusalem and especially in the old city, its war. We, the Irgun have much posts there and have to guard the Arabs from capturing our positions...

Now I’m back again in our camp, back from the front. It’s very interesting how Jerusalem today is divided into 2 different parts. The Jewish modern

city is now quiet and its peace and life are going on. The old city and surrounding is in war. The Arabs are trying to take Jewish positions back and so there is every day fighting and shooting.

Well, I wanted to tell you about our way home. We were told about our journey only 36 hours before the departure and they didn't tell us where we were going.

Then the day arrived when we stood ready before the gate. First we were driven from Gilgil to Nairobi, the capital, in armoured cars behind wire. In Nairobi, we stayed one night on the airfield and the next morning, we were loaded onto planes.

The airplanes carried us 8 hours to Codycross [?] the capital of Sudan. It was very hot there and we stayed again one night under guard. From this place, we again were carried by airplanes to Tobruk, the British post on the Mediterranean. There we went on a ship, one of those on which the refugees were transported to Cyprus. It was a very bad ship and we were put into cages and heavily guarded by soldiers. [?] days we were at sea and at last we arrived at Tel Aviv our harbour where we were met by a Jewish cruiser.

You cannot imagine how our feelings were when this happened. It was wonderful! So we came home! I stayed a week in Tel Aviv and after that I went to Jerusalem. Well, now I am home and once again a free man with the right to do everything."

Write me again quick and I'll answer promptly.

11.1.49 Jerusalem

Although I received the last letter you sent to me to Kenya after my leaving there, I postponed my answers until today. The last three months I was awfully occupied, not with fighting actually, but with fighting ideologically. I was working for the movement I belong to. ... After the declaration of our state, the Irgun Zvai Leumi, the national Military organization, headed by Menahem Begin, the big 'terrorist' joined the Israeli army because there could not exist any private military forces in a free state and especially no underground movement. So our leader created a new legal party under the auspices of the former Irgun, which is called now "TENUAT HAHERUT"-Freedom Movement. Our chairman is Menahem Begin who is assisted by former member combatants. Our youth is called "BNEI EZEL" Sons of Ezel. You will understand there is much work to be done before the elections of our first parliament....let it be said that in many points we disagree with the policy of our present govt. headed by Mr. Ben Gurion. It is difficult to explain our ideas in a letter as there is strong political (not only military)

censorship and I don't want you to receive this letter cut into pieces. My part in all this political stuff is the propaganda for Bnei Ezel, managing a monthly booklet. The quiet days of our Kenya life have passed forever."

20.5.49 Tel Aviv

I'm now living in Tel Aviv, our temporary capital. It's impossible to believe the difference now existing between two so near cities, Jerusalem and T.A. It's another atmosphere, another life, in short another world. There is life here while in Jerusalem there is no life. It's like a dead city. On evenings, the streets are almost empty and the centre including the three main streets seems very poor. Only a few hundred metres away there is the old city, still in the hands of the Arab legion, not passable for Jews.

I was in Jerusalem on the first two days of the feast and the city was full of tourists who came to look at the ruined places where fighting was carried out only a short time before. Entering one of the shops, I overheard an amusing talk which shows exactly the big difference of atmosphere between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Two people, surrounded by a lot of luggage were in the shop and in German, they asked the man behind the desk to tell them where they could find the bus going to the Wailing Wall (old city). With an astonished look, the shopkeeper answered there is no such bus as the old city and the Wailing Wall is over a year in the hands of our enemy. Well, they said, very surprised, then tell us please how we may visit Rachel's tomb (about 8 kilometres from Jerusalem on the way to Bethlehem, and from the beginning of the fighting in the hands of the Egyptians). The man and I could not suppress our laughter and we told them that this place too was in Arab hands.

With an angry tone, the two people said to us, "Well, don't laugh at us as we are not from here and could not know things like this before."

Well, we thought, they must be tourists from overseas, S.A. or America. So we asked them, "Where are you from?"

"Tel Aviv," was the answer. Tel Aviv is about 70 miles from Jerusalem.

Some time ago, we had a meeting of all "Kenya boys" in Tel Aviv where we met the chief Rabby Rabinowitz from S. Africa who visited Israel. It was very nice to meet him on another base and in other circumstances than a year ago in Kenya. Most of us were accompanied by girls, wives, etc and we showed them the film taken by us then. Our people ... were surprised by the good conditions we had. Some asked, "Why did you have to come back from such a convalescence camp?" Well, we know that not everything that shines is gold....

Thank you very much for your jersey for which I'm waiting for now very eagerly. I hope it will arrive soon. Normally Pesach is a spring feast in Palestine, but today it like Chanuka, the feast of winter. I really need a thing like that very badly in such a strong winter as now. It's just awful. Just imagine, in April, still snow in Jerusalem!

Meanwhile, the question of Akaba is settled and we've got it. But you write that it seems as if

Britain is interfering again. When did it stop from interfering?

Well, dear Honey! This will be enough for the time being.

Shalom and write me soon

Tel Aviv 25.5.49

"Dear Honey!

This week I received your nice present- the long awaited jersey- and I can't express my joy and pleasure ...it suits me very well and the colour is wonderful.

Now I have some news for you concerning myself...I'm engaged to a very good girl and maybe very soon we'll marry. It depends on a flat which today in Israel especially Tel Aviv, is a very hard problem. Every day after work I and my fiancée are going to search for a place to live in, but I hope that shortly we'll find something suitable and then we'll marry on Sukkoth in Jerusalem. I hope that we'll make some photos and I'll send you a snap of me and my future wife.

Now concerning something more generally. I'm doing very well in Tel Aviv. It's a nice place and much place for amusements are here. I like most of all the beach where I sit and bathe most of my free time. With our Kenya friends I meet often for we have organized some club....

Well please forgive me when I don't answer your letters immediately, but please keep answering me quick please!

Tel Aviv 1.8.49

"Let me give you a short picture of the big and first parade of our army on Dr Herzl's death day two weeks ago. I'm sure that nobody could imagine such a success and such an army after only a year's time. Never before has a nation shown such a thing in such a short time. The parade passed the place in one and a half hours and there was every unit and formation a

modern army needs: Navy, Air force and even pigeons for post connections. It was really magnificent to see our first army and all of us may be proud of being a citizen of Israel....”

[Then, in response to what I must have written, there follows a long commentary on the different relationships between Jews ‘in exile’ (us) and their gentile neighbours, and the relationships between the state of Israel and other countries. He contends that while the first question is a matter of feelings, the second is a matter of politics and interest. The first one...will explain the appearance of antisemitism... but relations between Israel (an autonomous country) and other countries are based upon the interests of those countries.-upon politics and because of this it may appear that even an antisemite will appear as pro- Israeli because if he votes for the founding of Israel, he will have somewhere to send the hated Jews and so get rid of them...]

Well, that’s enough for today but don’t let anything you disagree with influence or interfere with our correspondence.

Be well and answer quick,

Tel Aviv. 29. 10. 49

“Dear Honey!

At last after a week’s time then I am married I have time to thank you for your cable you sent me and which I received exactly on the wedding day. You will hardly imagine what a big crowd there was on the wedding, but it was wonderful and my wife and I, we were a week in Haifa on Mt. Carmel and we had a nice time. Now we are back in Tel Aviv and normal life began for us....Thank you again in my wife’s name who don’t know English.

After this, the long letters stopped and were replaced by annual Shona Tova cards.

In 1970, Sam and I visited Israel and finally met Menahem and his wife Malka. We met at Menahem’s small restaurant in Jerusalem. We came in and sat down at a table and after a while a woman rushed up and said, “Is it you?” It was indeed us. So we met Malka.

30.4.74

“Dear Honey,

All of us are well. Our son of course is in the army but we see him often and

he is well. We had a hard time and it is still not over. The war is still going on in the north. We are very happy to learn from your letter that we will meet shortly in Jerusalem for a longer time than last time and meet your children too. Please write soon and tell us more about your program here.

From my crowded diary: "25.6.1974. Met Menahem and walked and talked. Malka ill with cancer. Had lunch at his restaurant, then toured the old city, all 5 of us. Supper at Heppners.

Met Gidon, Menahem's son. A nice lad. Then we all went to his flat. Malka marvellous . Smiles her lovely smile, but in obvious pain whenever she sat down. Gidon and Menahem did everything for her. Talked till nearly 11, with children talking to Gidon".

"27.6.1974. Ate at Heppners. Met his daughter, Edna and son in-law Hillel, Gidon and girlfriend who left early. Malka looked a bit better. God restore her to health. Lovely people".

16.5.75

"Dear Honey,

This letter should have been written since Rosh Hashana ...Malka was always telling me to write....First of all, Malka is feeling much better. She is doing a lot at home...(Page torn) She also spends a few hours a day in our restaurant meeting people and helping me. We all hope that this will continue to go this way and we will have a future again.

Edna and her husband are going to settle down in Jerusalem. ... Gidon is going to get married on the 2nd December and also will live in his flat in Jerusalem, of course. We will have the whole family around us. We got greetings from you through your friends who came to our shop.

The economical situation is very difficult and there are lots of problems of all sorts but as long as we are healthy, nothing is going to hurt us... Now both of us are very happy and look on every day as a present of God ...

Yours Malka and Menahem"

Jerusalem 7.1.76.

"Dear Honey and Sam

It took a long time to decide if I should send you this letter because it is to be a sad one. Malka is no longer with me and did end her sufferings for

good. She passed away into her eternal sleep on the 28th November 1975 just two days after her 49th birthday and on the same day of Edna's 5th anniversary of her wedding. The last event she enjoyed was Gidon's wedding and she kept all her strength toward this event. The 2 months after it were very hard on her and the last three weeks she was in hospital and I was beside her until the end which was very quiet and peaceful. Now at last she rests and for me a hard time is beginning but somehow I will have to adjust myself to this new life after 26 happy years, really happy....'

Yours with love,

Menahem"

Thereafter, apart from some Shona Tovah cards, after more than 30 years, the correspondence petered out. I tried to contact Menahem, but to no avail. Friends who visited Israel also could not find him.

As my busy life went on, I no longer thought of him until, clearing out old stuff recently, I found his letters and memories returned.

R.I.P. Menahem, my old pen pal.

As ever,

Honey

BLANCHE DUGDALE ... ZIONIST PAR EXCELLENCE

Glenda Woolf

***Glenda Woolf**, a frequent contributor to *Jewish Affairs*, is a novelist and essayist whose articles and stories on Jewish themes have appeared in Jewish publications worldwide. Her novels, published under the name Gita Gordon, include: *South African Journeys* (2002), *Flashback* (2007), *Mystery in the Amazon and Scattered Blossoms* (both 2008) and *Guest House* (2012).*

One name is missing from the history of the early struggle with the British for the creation of a Jewish state. It is that of Lord Arthur Balfour's niece. Born Blanche Elizabeth Campbell Balfour in 1880, she became Blanche Dugdale after marrying a wealthy landowner's son. To those close to her, she was always known as Baffy.

Blanche 'Baffy' Dugdale's dedication to the Zionist cause was based on the double foundation of her religion and her interest in politics. Her activities and thoughts are well documented in her diaries, kept from early on till almost the end of her life.

A diary entry is quite different to a speech or a history book. Entries are written down as they occur. There is no altering of facts blurred by time. Blanche Dugdale's diaries provide a unique story of the bitter fight during the 1930s between the Jews wanting their own independent homeland and the English hierarchy fighting to prevent it. Straddling both worlds is Baffy herself, an aristocratic woman with connections in high government circles and close friendships with Zionist leaders. It is clear from the diaries how hard and persistently she fought for the realization of a Jewish national home.



**Blanche Dugdale with her children,
Michael and Frances.**

Early in January 1937, evidence of Dugdale's interaction between Jewish Zionists and the influential British establishment can be seen. This was the time following the devastating Arab attacks that began in April 1936 and which led to the British government's establishing a Royal Commission under Professor Earl Peel. The Commission was coming to the decision that a solution to the Arab violence against the Jews would be to separate the warring parties by establishing two states, one Jewish and one Arab, with a British enclave in Jerusalem. The diary entry for 18 January reads: *"January 18th - London...went to Zionist Office where were Arthur Lourie and Lewis, he just home from Palestine. He talked for half an hour about the Royal commission, but had no conception of what the Reports will be".* Later that day, Baffy met with Walter Elliot, Conservative MP for Kelvingrove and at that time Secretary of State for Scotland. Although not explicitly mentioned in the diary, there is the suggestion that there would be a linkage to the halting of Jewish immigration: *"I told him that nothing will keep the Jews out now - but if they think the basis of immigration unjust they will come in illegally somehow or other - and Britain will lose the asset of their loyalty".* The entry of 25 January records a discussion at the Zionist Office as to who should give evidence to the Royal commission in London.

All though February, Baffy discusses the issue of Partition with Chaim Weizmann and others. The entry for 1 February reads, *"Chaim returned yesterday from Palestine...because he has a hunch he ought to be here while the Royal Commission is cogitating its report.....It appears from something Coupland said to him that there is a possibility of*

recommending, not Cantonization, but an actual division into two halves making the Jewish portion a real Jewish State..... The Jews would be fools not to accept it, even if it were the size of a tablecloth.....” On 2 February she writes: “When Walter talked on the telephone this morning he said the Heathcote-Amory (Willy Peel’s secretary in Palestine) had told him a Jewish State was under discussion.

As the weeks progress, Baffy’s optimism becomes muted: “March 2nd.....What makes me most nervous most foolish and is the growing rift between Chaim and Ben-Gurion – who is making most foolish and intransigent speeches in Palestine”.

All through March and into April, Baffy was busy visiting the Zionist offices, discussing the news with Weizman and talking to government ministers:

March 2nd That the Royal Commission will put forward the Jewish State as one recommendation.....Things are evidently coming to a head - and the Jews must walk like Agag. It will never do if this idea is prematurely bruited abroad, and it must not seem to be inspired by the Jews.....What makes me most nervous is the growing rift between Chaim and Ben Gurion.....

April 9th Jos Wedgewood to lunch. We discussed Palestine---he is not very favorable to The Scheme....

April 14th. Spent most of the day at Zionist Office. Discussion sterile and fruitless. Only Chaim and Lewis see that the Scheme must be accepted.

April 27th...Chaim....told me of a long talk with Coupland the night before....Frontiers fairly satisfactory to Chaim.....Complete Independence.....Chaim told me he would go as far as he could - but would not break with the Jewish Agency.

Baffy does not agree with Weizmann on this issue. She ends ominously: “Great events lie ahead. The Jews in the plains – so it must be before Armageddon”.

It should not be thought that Baffy spent so much of her time on Zionist activities because she was short of other interests. She had been involved with the Tory party, but at this time disillusioned with it had joined the Labour party and was being considered as a candidate for Central Southwark. She was an executive member of the League of Nations Union. She further visited friends in their stately homes, and in late March 1937 went on a motoring tour of Northern France. Yet all through the months, almost every day, there is some mention of Zionist activity (e.g., “May 21st.....Very disquieting telegram from Jerusalem that the Royal commission does not intend to recommend a contiguous frontier with

Syria – in fact it means to withhold all Upper Galilee. If this is so it is fatal, and the Jews cannot acquiesce”).

The next week was a busy one. Baffy met with government ministers to discuss the Palestine question. She flew for an overnight stay to Paris to view the Palestine Pavilion at the exhibition, and on returning to England, attended a crucial meeting: *“May 31st. Went up to Zionist offices at 11.am for a conference. Present Chaim – Ben Gurion – Katzenelson – Arthur – Brodetsky – self – later on Peter.....Chaim told us he had decided to refuse a frontier which leaves Huleh, Tiberias, and the adjacent colonies and Safed outside. All agreed to this”.*

That same afternoon Baffy went to the House of Commons to talk to Walter Coupland about Palestine. It is clear from the diary entry of that day just how valued she was in Zionist circles and how integral a part she was in the movement due to her friendships in government circles and the use she made of them.



**General Sir Arthur Grenfell Wauchope,
High Commissioner to Palestine and
Transjordan 1931-8**

All through June there was much to do. On the 9th, Baffy went to a meeting at the Zionist Office in the morning and had lunch with Weizmann. The afternoon found her in meetings at the House of Commons. She ends her long day thus: *“June 9th.....We are at the eleventh hour now. After dinner at a small meeting at Henry Melchett’s B.G. declared he would fight for Partition under our minimum conditions – e.g. full sovereignty – all N. Galilee – access to Haifa- (and he adds), at least some token rights in Jerusalem. This is very important.*

What is important to note here is how Baffy manages to bring together, at a social occasion of dinner, the Jewish and British politicians:

June 14th Chaim came here about 10.....I drove him to the war Office where he was going to see Creedy (Sir Herbert Creedy, under-secretary of

State for war, 1920- 1939).....Then I went to the Office....and we worked on final draft of Chaim's letter (to Ormsby Gore, setting out the minimum requirements of a Jewish State)... went off to the House of Commons to attend a luncheon in honour of Ramsay MacDonald....I went back to the Office to make sure Chaim's letter is ready for posting tonight. Final draft quite good.

June 22nd. I have seen the Report, (Savoy Grill around midnight)....There is one thing that may wreck it all, for it is recommended that immigration be limited to 12,000 for five years.....Ben Gurion is very gloomy – I fear he is beginning to play politics. Chaim is in Paris....We are only at the beginning of our troubles.

In that assessment she was correct. There were more discussions in June and then:

July 1st. God! What a day! Went to Zionist Office and found Chaim raging, after a telephone talk with Boyd (Billy Gore's secretary) in which he learned he was not to get the Report....until three days before publication. I have never seen him so angry..... I blame Billy for the folly of denying Chaim the Report. Especially as I know that the Cabinet, though unwilling, did not forbid it being shown to him.

July was a busy and stormy month and the discussions, both at the Zionist Office and with British officials took up much of Baffy's time: "July 20th Palestine debate took place in the House of Lords from 3 to 7 and then adjourned. Peel made a pro-Arab speech - Lord Dufferin speaking for H.M.G. a very tactless one --- Lord Samuel made a kind of 'Brit Shalom' proposal which will bring down on his head the wrath of Jewry".

July was filled with meetings, and on the last day of the month Baffy flew to Zurich to attend the Zionist Conference: "July 31st. Chaim is extremely hopeful - says the calculations are that 70 per cent of Congress will be for Partition".

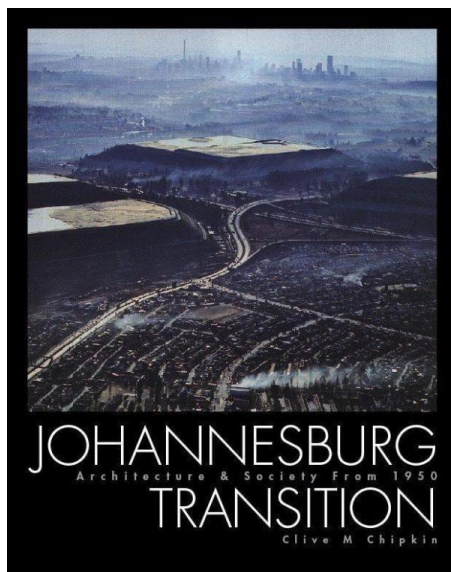
So ends a dramatic month, filled with optimism, unfortunately not to be fulfilled. However, what is clearly seen in these diaries is both the passion for Zionism and the important work that Blanche 'Baffy' Dugdale did for the Jewish national cause.

A JOHANNESBURGER TO THE CORE - REMEMBERING CLIVE CHIPKIN

Kathy Munro

Kathy Munro is an Honorary Associate Professor in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of the Witwatersrand. Trained as an economic historian, she enjoyed a long career as an academic and in management at Wits. She is a member of the Board of the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation and a docent at the Wits Arts Museum. This article has been adapted from her obituary on Clive Chipkin that first appeared in the Heritage Portal on 16 January 2021 (<http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/obituary-clive-michael-chipkin>) and is reproduced here with the kind permission of same.

Clive Michael Chipkin, who passed away peacefully on 10 January 2021 at the age of 91, was an esteemed architect, architectural historian and heritage activist. A truly extraordinary person, he lived a rich and full life and meant much to friends and colleagues in the heritage and architecture communities.



Clive was born on 21 March 1929 in Johannesburg, the city he made his own. His books *Johannesburg Style: Architecture and Society 1880s to 1960s* (David Philip, Cape Town, 1993) and *Johannesburg Transition: Architecture and Society from 1950* (STE Publishers, 2009) are seminal monographs which made his name. They represent a lifetime of research, extraordinary knowledge and critical analysis. In 2013 his alma mater, the University of the Witwatersrand, recognized his scholarship with the award of an Honorary PhD.

Johannesburg Style quickly achieved iconic status and is regarded as a work of great distinction. Eric Itzkin, Head of Heritage in the Johannesburg City

Council and author of *Gandhi's Johannesburg*, describes it as a work of genius. The title, *Johannesburg Style* was meant to signify that Johannesburg has a characteristic way of doing things. Clive dissected how the colonial capitalist city with an entrepreneurial culture evolved – this was the unique style of Johannesburg.

The two Chipkin Johannesburg volumes give an understanding of the making and shaping of the city of Johannesburg's and its cultural, social and historical underpinnings. They show a remarkable breadth of knowledge and the capacity to pose difficult questions about the roots of design and the shaping of architectural styles and fashions. How did international styles come to the city? For example, why and how did Brazilian architecture come to Hillbrow? These works are authoritative and commanding. Together they have set a high standard of serious scholarship in the study of architectural history in Johannesburg.

Clive's lens was architectural history, but his breadth of scholarship was such that he enabled the reader to see the city and its buildings with a fresh understanding about why certain styles were adopted in particular periods and why the city has been rebuilt through successive waves of capitalist expansion. He was particularly enthusiastic about Modernist architecture in Johannesburg, because he was a product of the flowering and nurturing of those ideas at Wits in the forties.

The site of study is Johannesburg but the analysis of how and why a mining camp was founded in the 19th Century which over a century grew into a sprawling African metropolis and magnet for settlement is of international importance. Clive drew on a rich and diverse array of sources across architecture, politics, economics sociology and history to explain the development of the city through 120 years. Sources were meticulously collected, annotated, indexed and filed in a huge personal archive. Both books were superbly illustrated and some drawings were his own.

Clive's work generated a great deal of interest and introduced a new and serious approach to the study of Johannesburg and its architecture. These studies have been a stimulus to further work among younger scholars in architectural history. His work has been compared to the best of architectural and social history of other cities, such as London and Berlin and been recognized among the best of urban history. Everyone quotes Chipkin. Johan Swart of the University of Pretoria told me he consulted his Chipkin volumes virtually weekly. Clive was a contributor to special Johannesburg editions of *ADA 14* (1996) and *Bauwelt* (Berlin, 1997). SABC 3 created a two part TV documentary series in 1997 on *Johannesburg Style*. His readiness to participate in public debate about architecture and his ability to educate a broader public has strengthened a critical appreciation of heritage as expressed in the built environment.



Clive Chipkin leading a tour of the Ridges of Johannesburg for Brown University students, 2018 (Kathy Munro)

What was the background to the making of Clive Chipkin that enabled him to write these two books?

A Yeoville Childhood and School Education at KES

Clive was born in Johannesburg in 1929 in a semi-detached house in Yeoville-Bellevue at 116b Francis Street. He later lived with his parents at number 8 Bedford Road. The year of Clive's birth was the year of the "Great Stock Exchange Crash" in the USA that preceded the world wide Great Depression of the thirties. Clive knew about economic anxiety as a child as his father lost his job and had a hard fight back to financial security. Throughout his life he carried an awareness of the impact of hardship on people's lives. This concern explained his desire for a more equitable society. He always showed compassion to the less fortunate who he encountered. He would give regular handouts to the disabled beggar at the Hyde Park Corner traffic lights and had a string of regular beggars in Parkview who relied on his support.

Clive lived in Yeoville until 1949, later contributing a delightful reminiscence to the book, *Politics and Community-based Research, Perspectives from the Yeoville Studio, Johannesburg* (edited by Claire Benit Gbaffou, et al, Wits University Press, 2019). He described Yeoville as "a lovely middle class suburb, little detached houses, with verandas that faced the street and people, a lot of social life occurred on the veranda, you sat on the stoep and watched the street." Clive remembered Yeoville as much more rural and that at his grandmother's house at 93 Francis Street, although there were no longer any horses or carriages, there were stables on the property; survivals from a past age.

Of his high school, King Edward the Seventh (KES), Clive described it as "Edwardian in architecture; Edwardian in ethos; and Edwardian in education", reflecting, "it was no surprise that I later took easily to deciphering Edwardian architecture and Imperial ethos". He took great pride in his old school and what it represented.



Old photo of KES (SA Builder Magazine)

Clive related that he found a small pile of late 1930s copies of the *S A Architectural Record* on his father's bookshelves. This this gave him his first glimpse of Modern Movement Architecture in the Transvaal and about that time the erection of a new block of flats, Radoma Court designed by architect Harold Le Roith, gave him an awareness of the then new international movement dropped into the middle of Yeoville-Bellevue. He later said, "it was not a damascene moment", but he realized change was happening as economic recovery and a new optimism remade the Johannesburg of the 1930s.

The Architecture student at Wits

In the post-war years Clive went on to study architecture at Wits. He said he took some time to figure out what architecture was all about and more importantly how it related to the wider world. This was not always apparent from lectures. Clive was a curious student and university gave him the opportunity to audit lectures in other disciplines far removed from architecture but he looked for connections in disparate ideas and grew through asking unorthodox questions. Interrupting his studies in architecture, he took the route of combining study and work for a period, working for a builder and gaining practical experience under a Scottish foreman. Later, in 1954 he later joined Bernard Janks' architectural practice, where he was one among many juniors. Here he met Alan Lipman, who took him in a new direction by asking Clive to sign the Stockholm Peace Accord and offered a political education in Marxist ideology. Clive said "some of it stuck". He returned to Wits and completed his degree in 1954 with a thesis on housing.

The Young Architect at Wayburne and Wayburne and his travels to England, Europe and India

In 1955 Clive began working in the Wayburne and Wayburne architectural office in the city. He became a friend of Lionel 'Rusty Bernstein' who, with Bram Fischer, helped draft the Freedom Charter. Clive remembered 1955 as the year of the Congress of the People in Kliptown - it was another education and a political influence in his life. He recalled that his finest architectural contribution was the ablution block he designed for the event.

In 1957, Clive achieved his professional membership of the Royal Institute of British Architecture (ARIBA) in 1957. The previous year, he had attended the Congress Internationaux D'architecture Modern (Summer School) in Venice. In 1956-7 he gained experience abroad when he worked for the London County Council.

Clive then set out to travel through Europe, hitch-hiking through the continent and afterwards travelling to New Delhi. There he discovered the making of imperial architecture of Edwin Lutyens and Herbert Baker and drew the connections to the architectural vision behind the Baker designed, Union Buildings in Pretoria. Returning to South Africa, Clive then wrote about India in his early article for the *SA Architectural Record*. The Indian sojourn influenced Clive's thinking; he realized that the links between imperial cultures resulted in a cross fertilization of ideas in architecture and society. He talked of the fragrances of India and East Africa remaining with him.



Early view of the Union Buildings, Pretoria

First architectural practice

In 1958, Clive opened his own first practice at 302 Hollandia House Johannesburg. Initially it was a tiny largely struggling practice. He described it as being "overworked and underpaid". Over time, the practice handled larger scale industrial and merchandising buildings, major development programmes, apartments and office blocks, central facilities buildings, clinics, houses, and historical buildings. Clive designed University Gate flats in Braamfontein in 1960. He worked for Trident Steel

Company as a commissioned architect but ultimately chose to drop this association when new owners took over the company.

The firm was engaged in the overall industrial planning at Cape Gate, and designed a series of industrial and social amenities buildings at Vanderbijlpark (1984-1998). He enjoyed an excellent more than ten year association with this firm and had a close working partnership with Isaac Joffe. It was a period characterized by productive outcomes and a wonderful team spirit. *Leadership Magazine* of August 1991 described the work of his mature practice as supplying “socially responsive amenities, one of vision and hope”.

A Man of the Fifties and Architects against Apartheid, 1986

At the memorial service for Clive, his son Ivor described him as a “fifties man”, full of hopes for the remaking of the post-war world. He had retained that attitude of optimism and hope for good changes ahead in society at large and in the remaking of his city through architecture.

Clive’s practice both rejected and contested apartheid and never participated in any government, provincial or municipal work during the apartheid era (1948-1994). This mirrored his own values. In 1986, he was a founding member of the group “Architects Against Apartheid” (see *Architecture SA*, March/April 1994 p 17-18) an informal pressure group that challenged their colleagues to support radical changes to the Architects’ Act of 1970 and the Code of Conduct of the Institute of South African Architects. This group, that included architects such as Chipkin, Hans Schirmacher, Henry Paine, Ivan Schlapobersky, and Lindsay Bremner among others, tried to make colleagues aware of how the gross application of apartheid ideology to architecture was distorting the moral and ethical basis of the profession in South Africa. Clive was co-author of the *Declaration of Human Rights* (1986) relating to the architectural profession which resolved that it was unethical to participate professionally in the design and planning of apartheid buildings. Although their resolution to a special meeting of the Transvaal Provincial Institute of Architects was dismissed, many members of the group subsequently faced harassment and surveillance.

After 1994, he was responsible for the design of two South African Police Service buildings commissioned by the Department of Public Works – Boipatong (2001) and Mooifontein (2003) and for works of restoration in Heidelberg. In addition, his practice designed numerous low-cost rural houses on a pro bono basis and provided extensive honorary professional services in housing. His heritage work ranged from the renovation of Edwardian buildings in the 1960s to Inanda House, Illovo (1999). He has been a consultant for renovation work at the University of the Witwatersrand and to inner city renovation programmes.



Inanda House (High Street Auction Company)

Author and Scholar

Clive began his writing about architecture in the fifties. Three particularly noteworthy articles came out of his travels to India: *New Delhi* (Nov 1958), *Chandigarh* (Dec 1958) and *India* (Dec 1959), all published in the *South African Architectural Record*. There were other important articles such as *Baroque Background* (Sept 1962); *The Diffusion of Victorian and Edwardian Architecture* (Jan. 1964 and Feb. 1964) and *Beyond the Cape* (March/April 1985). (Also all published in the *S A Architectural Record*). Some of these articles anticipated his approach of using comparative analysis of methods and styles across continents and cultures. He was the author of more than 50 papers and articles.

In 1972 Chipkin contributed to the major heritage and architectural study of Parktown (*Parktown, 1892-1972, a Social and Pictorial History* – coordinated by Helen Aron with substantial contributions from Arnold Benjamin (later the author of *Lost Johannesburg*, 1979), Clive Chipkin and Shirley Zar, published by Studio Thirty Five Publications, 1972). Of that wonderful group of collaborators only Shirley Zar remains with us. It was a landmark portfolio of photographs of a disappearing Parktown and a book of essays that was the start of Clive's major research on Johannesburg.

Clive recently completed an article on Parapet Houses and the Rondavel in Africa and this contribution will be published in a new *Encyclopedia of Vernacular Architecture of the World* (Bloomsbury Press) edited by Randall Bird in 2022. He has also generously written an essay on interpreting the architect, Hermann Kallenbach's three known rondavel houses in Johannesburg. This will be included in my upcoming biography of Kallenbach.



Satyagraha House designed by Herman Kallenbach (The Heritage Portal)

Valerie Francis Chipkin as Clive's partner in life and in the creation of an archive

In his years of writing and research, Clive was assisted by his wife, Valerie Francis Chipkin (nee Krain) and together they created an impressive archive. They were married from 1959 until her death in 2015. She was the original mind behind organising the archive. The couple had three children: Peter, Lesley and Ivor. One interesting sidelight was that Clive and Val came close to purchasing the Rex Martienssen modern movement house (designed in 1940) in Greenside filled with Le Corbusier elements. Clive wrote extensively about the pioneering architect of the Modern movement in Johannesburg and his house in *Johannesburg Style* (see pages 181-184). But Valerie decided that an iconic house that could not be altered for their own family needs was not for them.

In 2015 Clive donated his research archive to the University of the Witwatersrand. The archive room was named the *Valerie Chipkin Archive*. An exhibition based on his archive and curated by Sally Gaule was first assembled and mounted in 2016, but that effort was put aside because of the *Fees Must Fall* campaign. It was upsetting to have to take down an exhibition that could have no visitors at that troubled time on campus. In fact we even thought of an online opening to save the exhibition - a prophetic anticipation of our new zoom culture! 2017 saw a fresh start and a new exhibition, was set up in March 2017. The opening event was a triumphant moment as Clive's own intellectual home, the School of Architecture and Planning at Wits University, honored him with a celebratory event on the 22nd March 2017, one day after Clive's 88th birthday.



Clive Chipkin and his archive before its removal to Wits

During the last few years of his life Clive held a Visiting Research Fellowship in the School at Wits. He was warmly welcomed by the school to work in the library and return to his own archive. The gift of the archive to Wits was an extraordinarily generous gesture but also part of preserving the legacy of the City. The Wits architectural archive has expanded in the last six years. It has also received donations of archives from the late Anthony Lange, the late Brian Altshuler and Neil Fraser, now retired to Montagu. The archives of the late Gerald Gordon will also be coming to Wits.

Clive Chipkin as tour guide to the Witwatersrand ridges of Johannesburg, 2018

Clive was a Johannesburg man all his life. Over nine decades he closely and critically observed a changing city and wrote about and interpreted the city with a fondness and a personal love of place. He argued that the cycle of creation, destruction and renewal in the city was part of a natural order. The city evolved at its own pace; the city had its own dynamic. His task was to document the architecture and architects and to pin down the stories of the people who with their vision, entrepreneurship, capital and energy turned a mining camp into an African metropolis. He was a sharp minded heritage critic and never allowed nostalgia to cloud his judgment.

He loved nothing more than expeditions to find out what had happened to specific buildings and suburbs. Clive led an unforgettable tour of the ridges of the Witwatersrand Ridges of Johannesburg for a visiting group of American students in August 2018, and this later became a special tour for the Johannesburg Heritage Foundation. Each participant received a copy of Clive's hand-drawn maps of the Ridges we visited and the route followed. These watercolour maps were specially crafted by Clive for these events. They are now a charming and unique memento of Clive and his city.

Clive wanted to explain the location of Johannesburg in relation to its geography and its topography. He always felt the ridges of the city are unique and it was his dream to celebrate the spectacular view sites of Johannesburg with a series of stunning Johannesburg celebratory large art work, blue plaques and story boards. He reminded me to look again at the broad sweep of the landscape of the city from each

of the compass points. He was also very conscious of the much earlier, Stone Age inhabitants of the Melville Koppies and the Linksfield Ridge. Clive admired the work of the archaeologist, the late Revil Mason and wanted to raise awareness of the continuity between pre–history and history.



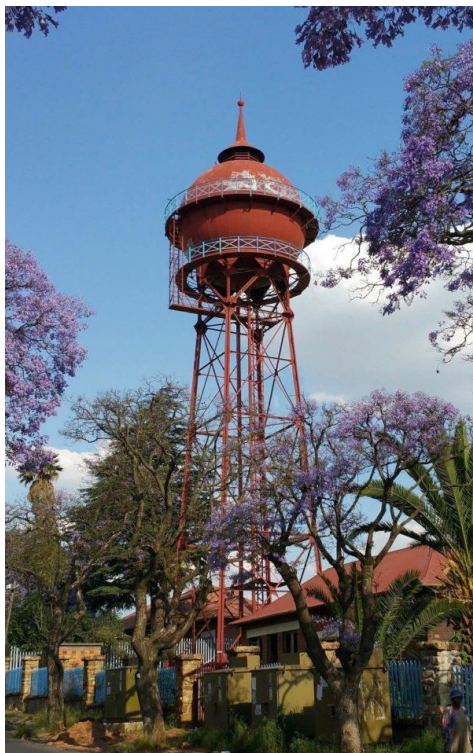
Johannesburg skyline from the east (Heritage Portal)

In 2015 Clive wrote a sensitive essay for the book *The Johannesburg Gasworks* (edited by Monica Lauferts and Judith Mavunganidze , published 2015 by Fourthwall books). Again it was another landmark piece of writing. He was also commissioned by Tsica Heritage Consultants in 2016 to document and advise on the history of and the future for the heritage buildings found within the orbit of the Corridors of Freedom route, a renewal and densification project of the City of Johannesburg. He worked with Monica and Judith and his report contains some of his ideas about ideal quality housing types for the renewal of old Johannesburg. In 2016 Clive also contributed to a Johannesburg Heritage tour, *Cathedrals of Industries* in 2016 when we devised a tour to cover New Doornfontein, inner city banking, the classic modernist Lion Match Factory in Industria and the very English Gas Works abutting Auckland Park (a classic item of industrial archaeology).

It was a joy to be with Clive on jaunts to track Cape Dutch gabled houses in Saxonwold and to mourn the ruin of a Leith house that had fallen to fire in Parktown. We walked his Yeoville, explored the Obels building, Beacon Royal and tracked down the Le Roith apartment blocks. Clive was enthusiastic and supportive when I found the 1913 Yeoville Water Tower blueprint and encouraged me to acquire this treasure, research and write about the Tower (he was quite happy for me to give the Tower a new date and provenance). He put me on to finding the origins of the meccano-like steel construction in Dortmund and recognizing the German firm, Aug. Klönne as the designer. When the Grand Station Hotel was lost to fire, we ventured out to inspect the damage and meet the people who lived there and now lost their homes and possessions. The building's blackened shell was no longer grand and no longer a

station hotel, but Clive peeled back the layers of history and went on to tell me all about the parallels between the Jeppe Station (across the road) and the London underground stations of the 1930s and the work of Charles Holden. We studied and traced the history of the series of three Shell Oil Company office headquarters. Clive gave me his personal experience and his take on the city and its evolution.

Clive was always generous in sharing knowledge and sparkled with curiosity and lively conversation. He was the most wonderful friend – compassionate, kind, funny, a great conversationalist as we bounced ideas off one another. I feel privileged to have been mentored by Clive and to have enjoyed his friendship from the time we met when his second book was launched at Boekhuis, Melville in 2009.



Yeoville water tower (Heritage Portal)

Marcia Leveson pays tribute to Clive: “Clive was always an adventurer and discoverer. We explored so much and he taught me so much – so many different and varied Joburg suburbs, the surrounding areas – off-beat places, Magaliesberg and surroundings and in Cape Town - my home town – he showed me aspects like the Egyptian influence that I had never noticed before, and I was able to introduce him to things I knew. He was always ready for a climb, a scramble, a hike, a new place to explore. He was a teacher, learner, and sharer. We shared other adventures by our endless conversations on every subject, not only architecture, our shared sense of humour and empathy, our crazy fun together. He was endlessly and massively supportive – not only to me but to everyone.”

Clive as the teacher and mentor to architects of the City

Clive was a mentor and friend to many architects - Fanuel Motsepe, at the memorial event paid tribute to the education Clive gave him. The architecture and heritage communities have lost a giant of a colleague whose career as architect and historian of the city spanned seventy years. A number of tributes have come in from architects who worked with Clive or were mentored by him or came to know him as a friend – Henry Paine, Heather Dodd, Marcus Holmes, Brendan Hart, Yasmin Mayet, Hannah Le Roux and Brian McKechnie, among others.

At the time of his passing Clive had completed a third volume, *Johannesburg Diversity*. The manuscript is under discussion with a prospective publisher. In this final volume to complete the trilogy, Clive wanted to draw together the many reflective threads of a lifetime both as an architect and scholar. The new book is also

very visual; it is a pictorial record and interpretation drawn from his impressive archive. We hope that this book will be published in 2021.

Clive is survived by his three children, Peter Chipkin, Lesley Hudson and Ivor Chipkin and their spouses, Jelena and Carol and the grandchildren - Daniel, Liat, Noa, Rosanna and Sarah. Peter Hudson, husband of Lesley who passed away suddenly in 2019, was a very dear friend of Clive. Clive is also mourned by his close companion Marcia Leveson.

Thank you to Ivor Chipkin, Lesley Chipkin, Marcia Leveson, Sally Gaule and Keith Munro for their input and comments.

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JACOB WILLIAM BEHR - TEACHER AND HEBREW SCHOLAR

Harold Behr

Dr Harold Behr is a retired child psychiatrist and group psychotherapist. He emigrated from South Africa to the UK in 1970.

I have often felt that the passing of my father, Jacob William Behr, deserved to be marked by more than just the statutory notification plastered on the notice board of his apartment block in Netanya. His heroic efforts to introduce Hebrew into the South African Jewish community and to build bridges between Jew and Gentile and between English speakers and Afrikaners have made me proud to be his son. Hence this brief tribute, written more than forty years after his death. As to the question, 'Why now?' I can only respond with a rhetorical question, borrowed from Hillel's famous maxim: 'If not now, when?'

Born in 1902 in the Lithuanian shtetl of Linkuva, J W Behr was the only child of devoutly observant parents. His father had been ordained as a rabbi and was a teacher in the local *cheder*, so it must have taken an act of considerable renunciation for his son to have embraced a secular identity as a young man. The family left Lithuania for South Africa in 1913 and settled in Benoni, a mining town to the East of Johannesburg, where his father obtained a position as shochet and taught at the local Talmud Torah. In 1925 both his parents died within a few weeks of each other. Having been nurtured in a scholarly milieu, he saw his future in education.



Jack Behr and his mother Leah Breine, in Linkova, Lithuania circa. 1912

A year later, Jacob married his half-cousin Betty Levin, and went on to train as a teacher at what was then known as Normal College, a teachers' training college in Johannesburg. Along the way he acquired two MA degrees, one in English from the Transvaal University College (later the University of South Africa) and a second from Pretoria University, where he studied Semitic languages under Professor B. Gemser, a distinguished biblical scholar. His thesis was titled 'The writings of Deutero-Isaiah and the Neo-Babylonian Royal Inscriptions', a subject which, I gathered, wrestled with complexities surrounding the authorship of the Book of Isaiah. Professor Gemser and Jacob worked well together. My father helped him in the translation of a book of modern Hebrew short stories into Afrikaans and always spoke admiringly of his mentor. He was awarded his degree in Semitic Languages with distinction.

References for jobs tell their own story. A reference in support of his application for a teaching position from his professor of English Language and Literature describes him as "a close student, a sedulous worker, and very conscientious, one who should, if he does himself justice, prove a scrupulous and successful teacher of English. I can unreservedly support his candidature for the post he seeks." Another reference from the Head of Department at the Witwatersrand Technical College in Germiston, where my father taught for two years, records him as having "rendered valuable service and his results have been excellent....He has a quiet, unassuming bearing with an ability to get the best results even from surly-natured students. I have found him of the greatest assistance," the reference goes on, "and it is a pleasure to testify to his fine qualities." [1]

The Second World War saw my father enlist in the South African Home Guard, the 'Dad's Army' of those days. This would have involved him in the protection of public buildings and installations from attacks by fifth column saboteurs but as far as I can remember he never reminisced about those experiences. I later discovered that he had achieved the rank of lieutenant, suggesting that he could wield an authority in the outside world which stood in striking contrast to his laissez faire philosophy on the domestic front. To me, my sister Evelyn and my mother, conflict avoidance seemed to be his watchword. If my naughtiness ever crossed a line, which it frequently did, he would sometimes punish me with an angry silence which could go on for days.

My mother was quietly proud of her husband's achievements but constantly berated him for what she saw as his lack of ambition. In her mind this betokened perpetual consignment to a lowly economic status inside the bubble in which White South Africans lived. As a master of Yiddish invective, she often called him '*a nar*' (a fool) and '*a luftmensch*' (someone with his head in the clouds). For his part, my father would retort, '*Du lebst in a cholem*' (You're living in a dream).

With hindsight they both had a point: my father's solution to life's problems was to put his head down and concentrate on performing his teaching duties to the best of his ability. The word 'ambition' was not in his vocabulary. In his spare time he would study Hebrew or Russian, work in pewter or etch in linoleum. My mother, on the other hand, dismissed that sort of thing. She believed that anything which did not have to do with the betterment of the family's position was a waste of time and that no goal was out of reach provided one knew how to pull the right strings. He was the hard-working pragmatist, she the driven visionary.



Jack Behr as principal of Forest Hill Primary School, Johannesburg (circa 1955)

When it came to instilling in me a knowledge of Hebrew, my father was both patient and persistent. When I was about four or five he playfully introduced me to the dots and dashes of Hebrew vowels and the strange shapes of the Hebrew alphabet. Words like ‘*sus*’, (a horse), ‘*degel*’ (a flag) and ‘*gamal*’ (a camel) were linked with graphic pictures and made an indelible impression on me. Throughout my school years he led me through passages of biblical text and modern stories, occasionally yielding to my fretfulness but always returning the next day with a carefully prepared list of words or a chart of grammatical rules. By these means he set the stage for my Barmitzvah in an Orthodox Synagogue, coached me through Matriculation Hebrew and flagged up my lifelong interest in the Hebrew language.

As far back as I can remember, religious fasts and festivals received no more than a token nod from him. It was at my mother’s behest that we celebrated Passover, feasting well, tasting the requisite dishes, munching Matzos and reading from the Haggadah, and it was she who maintained the custom of lighting the Sabbath candles. Although he eschewed ritual and observance my father was deeply rooted in his Jewish identity. He was steeped in Jewish literature and his abiding passion was the study and teaching of the Hebrew language. He was also committed enough to Zionism to take his family to Israel, although it was my mother who was the driving force behind the move. Her dream was to benefit from the legacy of a land purchase made by her father, a fervent Zionist who had stipulated in his will that his land in the then Palestine would only pass on to those of his children who settled there.

My family never belonged to a synagogue, although on High Holy Days my father would shepherd us to services held in a temporarily converted school building. He knew his way through the Machzor but I have no memory of him actually murmuring prayers or singing along with the rest of the congregation. He would look around at the worshippers with mild curiosity, showing me ‘the place’ in the Machzor whenever I prompted him to do so but otherwise professing a lack of interest in the

proceedings. He once wrote in a letter to me: “As you know, my going to ‘shool’ has only a social significance.” But he began that same letter with a traditional greeting written in impeccably-vowelled Hebrew: ‘Le-shana tova tikateyvu ve-teychateymu’. After I left South Africa for the United Kingdom in 1970 we became closer to each other, paradoxically, through the exchange of letters. Perhaps we both felt more comfortable with the written than the spoken word. He would write dry, humorous accounts of family life and would often enclose newspaper cuttings on topics which he thought might interest me, including book reviews, accounts of goings-on in the Jewish community and news items about South African politics. He also sent me the occasional copy of *Jewish Affairs* and *Buurman*, an Afrikaans publication [also published under the auspices of the SA Jewish Board of Deputies – ed.] dedicated to the promotion of Jewish-Afrikaner relations. I see him as having straddled two worlds during the course of his life, that of education, in which he found his true calling, and the introspective world of Jewish thought, which he drew upon for guidance. His literary creativity expressed itself in a handful of poems and short sketches which he submitted to the Hebrew magazine ‘Barkai’, his identity hidden behind the *nom de plume* of Yaakov ben Zwi. His cultural life was centred on the Histadrut Ivrit, an organisation devoted to the development of Hebrew in South Africa, in which he was actively involved. After his retirement he was content to spend his time with his family and his books, ‘pottering about’ as my mother might have put it. He coached Bernard and Rosemary, my sister’s two children, through their adjustment to the new Hebrew-speaking world in which they found themselves, and his pedagogic talents, infused with grandfatherly affection, were applied equally to Adam and Rafael, my own two children, during our biannual holiday visits to the family. Watching him with his grandchildren, and remembering my own experiences as his son, I have learnt that the telling of stories without the expectation of performance is the most wonderful way of educating a child into a love of language and literature.



Cheder group, Linkuva (circa 1906). My father at centre with badge on cap. His father, Rev Hirsche Leib Behr, bearded, second teacher on left.

In 1977, having said goodbye to South Africa after sixty four years in teaching, he began planning his own adaptation to the familiar yet unfamiliar world of Israel. He even set about acquiring the rudiments of Arabic. But his illness restricted him and he was limited to the company of his immediate family and one or two relatives who visited him in Netanya. One of these was his cousin, the poet Michael Ben Moshe, whose company filled him with pleasure and with whom he shared memories of their birthplace, Linkuva, with mixed emotions. My father, died at the age of seventy seven on 1 October 1979 in Laniado Hospital, Netanya, following a long history of coronary artery disease. The date of his death coincided that year with Yom Kippur, although that fact probably would not have meant much to him.

NOTES

[1] Yet another reference, written much later in his career by the man he was to succeed as principal of Forest Hill Primary School in Johannesburg, tells that "...He has a very pleasant manner with the children and has won their affection and respect. His discipline is effective and based on a positive rather than a negative approach. His contact with staff and parents has been marked by a tactful firmness and a readiness to co-operate....no class has passed through his hands without benefitting considerably...As far as the extra-mural activities of the school are concerned Mr Behr has, owing to the shortage of male members of the staff, done more than his fair share of the work, cheerfully and unselfishly." And it ends, "Sorry as I would be to lose Mr Behr as Vice Principal of this School, I would like to see him obtain recognition of his abilities and qualities by well-deserved promotion."



THE LITHUANIAN SLAUGHTER OF ITS JEWS

Sorrel Kerbel

- *Dr Sorrel Kerbel, D.Phil (UCT), is editor of Routledge Encyclopedia of Jewish Writers of the Twentieth Century, 2003 and 2010 , and a contributor to the Memorial book of Rakiskis, Rokiskis Lithuania, Bakalcuk-Felin, M, Jewishgen.com, 2018.*

And if I were to light a yellow candle, it would serve to remember and honor the portable hell of *The Lithuanian Slaughter of its Jews* by Leyb Koniuchowsky, 2020. His book of testimony from 121 survivors is a wonderful achievement that will allow readers in English to learn for themselves what happened in so many small villages, (shtetls or shtetlach in Yiddish) in the Lithuania of World War II. We read detailed and graphic testimony from tiny villages, not the main Lithuanian cities, where just a few Jewish families lived side by side with their Lithuanian neighbors. A very few eye-witnesses escaped to tell their tragic stories.

Leyb Koniuchowsky (1910-2003) was born in Alytus/Alyta and trained as an engineer in Kaunas/Kovno. After WWII and his release from the Kovno ghetto, he wandered the Lithuanian countryside looking for fellow survivors to bear witness. Those he found were in Displaced Persons camps. The book he produced acts as a memorial for all those silenced tongues who could not speak for themselves. It further contains details of shtetlach and forced labor camps never previously noted.

A Kaddish

Leyb's witnesses lived in places where the bleak pits in which they were massacred are now covered over and forgotten, and the villages themselves

are now no longer to be found on official maps of Lithuania: Adukishkish, Akmene, Anykshtsiae, Alsedzhiai, Alytus/Alyta, Anykshtsiai, Babtai, Biliunai (near Raseniai), Botik (Batakia), Darshuniskis, Daugelishkis, Dokshtas, Erzhvilik (Erzvilkas), Geruliai (near Plunge), Heidekrug (Silute, Memel/ Klaipeda), Ignalina, Jonishkis, Jonava, Jerusalemka, Jurbakas, Kalwelischken, Kedainiai, Khaltinenai, Khvedan (Kvedarna), Klikoliai, Kelm, Koltinan (Kaltinenai), at the Seventh Fort, Kovno/Kaunas, Krazhiai, Kruonis, Kruksiai, Lentupis, Laukuva, Liplauke, Luoke, Malagenai, Marcinkonis, Maishiogala, Mazheikiai, Maktubern, Nayshtot/Naishtot, Nementzine, Padibiskis, Padbrade, Pabersha, Pajuris, Pakuonis, Piktaten, Pilviskes, Ponari/Ponary, Rieshe ,Rumsiskis, Rusne, Shimkaitsia, Tawrik (Taurage), Telzh, Tirkshlaiai, Titovenai, Tverai, Tzaikinia, Sheta, Shvekshne (Sveksna), Shvetzionyz (Shventzionelai), Shilale, Silven, Skaudvile, Stakiai, Seda, Shtajatskiskis, Suderwa, Tveretszius, Tzeikiniai, Upnyas, Valkininkai, Varnia, Varus,Vainuta (Vainutas), Vendzhiogala, Versmininken, Verzhan (Veivirzhenai), Vidz, Viedukle,Vilkija, Vegerai, Vekshniai, Vieshvenai (near Rietuva).

For centuries people lived in this way. A myriad of sparsely populated small villages alongside rivers, lakes and the Pripet marshes, in the deep unspoiled countryside surrounded by farms and woods "of birch and oak, fir and pine ... their roots entwined" (here I quote Koniuchowsky's description of their natural environment, to be published later this year as Slaughter of the Jews, Part II.)

The few Jews in the countryside lived there side by side with their relatively peaceable neighbors. Then a sudden litany of terror.

Lithuania began slaughtering its Jews in June 1941, before and then after the 'official' invasion of Operation Barbarossa on 22 June when German tanks began rolling across Lithuania in two spearheaded directions into Russia. They were organized and appear to have been galvanized by a coterie of like-minded antisemitic Lithuanians.

Long before the Wannsee conference of January 1942 began determining in minute detail how to define a Jew for extinction, there were Lithuanians like Jonas Noreika and Antanas Baltūsis-Žvejys who took the initiative in this climate of extremism. In the period June-December 1941, many thousands of Jews, men, women and children, perished before the gaze, and often participation of their neighbors. Yet the record also reveals instances of individual courage and morality by brave and good Lithuanian people, "Righteous Gentiles" who hid and helped their Jewish neighbors. This offers us a glimmer of hope for the future.

To commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz In the UK in January 2020, we were shown a number of interesting films. One, a

BBC documentary called 'Confronting Holocaust Denial', featured celebrity Jewish comedian David Baddiel, who visits Vilnius in Lithuania and interviews a Lithuanian farmer's son and other neighbors. The farmer in a flat cap smiles as he remembers how his village watched their few Jews rounded up in their high street. "Yes" - he saw and heard their cries as they were rounded up.

We now know that these farmers hastily moved into the now vacant homes after their owners had been forcibly removed to ghettos and murdered after the officers had taken first choice. And we are also shown upturned Jewish grave stones with their inscriptions intact that were commonly removed from cemeteries to be used for pavements and building supplies.

But we also learn from the caring Lithuanian historian who guides Baddiel on his travels how napalm had to be used to destroy corpses in pits many years later, when even the Lithuanian peasant farmers had left to settle in cities. "It's not easy to burn a corpse". We saw Baddiel shocked - tears well up - as he hears the historian relate how bones and skulls were ground "fine as ash" to be used as fertiliser. Unimaginable.

Baddiel challenges a right-winger who has Nazi emblems in his home, to read the newspaper stories written by Sylvia Foti in her quest for the truth about her grandfather Jonas Noreika. Widely known as General Storm and honored for his resistance to the Russian occupiers, Noreika's plaque was put up in many Lithuanian centres, and streets are named in his honor. But Foti discovers verbal accounts, ghetto and plunder accounts of her grandfather's orders. In this book of testimony, we read of Jonas Noreika's influence over locals who then compelled the few Jews in these isolated villages to march out to woods nearby and having to dig their own graves in a clearing before locals would gun them down or kick them into these pits. Initially lime was poured over the mass pits where the bodies fell. There were few witnesses because the success rate in these "death by bullets" was so high. This book provides many verified witness accounts.

In the above-noted BBC documentary, David Baddiel disarms us with his humor. But here in Lithuania he shows a film of a plaque honoring Jonas Noreika in Vilnius being destroyed recently by a local lawyer, Stanislavsky Tomas, surrounded by a group of cheering students - perhaps they too had read the stories emerging in Lithuanian newspapers. Hopefully next year they will read Sylvia Foti's book, called *Storm in the Land of Rain: a Memoir Unmasking a War Criminal* (due to be published in English by Regnery History, in 2021)

In her account, Foti discovers Lithuanians who knew her grandfather who claim that he was forced to be a signatory to the deaths of many Jews. The Genocide Centre in Vilnius disputes this - their denials include the

worrying misinformation that no-one told Noreika anything nor did he see any slaughter of Jews. But when he did, according to the Genocide Centre, he started a “secret” rescue operation of Jews. Nor was he aware that the house he had acquired belonged to a Jew, and that the very underwear he received for his wife came from a Jew. His grand-daughter unmasks him as a war criminal.

Perpetrators honored

Antanas Baltūsis-Žvejys was another of the worst Holocaust deniers and killers of Jews. As District Commander of Police in Vilnius, he was ordered to guard and protect everyone including his Jewish neighbors. But on his watch they were rounded up and force-marched to clearings in the vast Ponary Forests, now a nature reserve, where men , women and children were compelled to dig their own graves in vast communal gravel pits, and were then shot by locals in possession of a gun, shot or kicked into the pits.

In publisher David Sandler’s editorial introduction (p6), we read that Leyb Koniuchowsky took yet more witness accounts from other Lithuanians after the war when he landed up in She’erit Hapletah DP camps in Germany. This term, Sh'erit ha-Pletah , requires more explanation . It derives from Biblical phrases found in the books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, and refers to those Jews who remained behind in Israel after the destruction of the First Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE. The modern phrase was adopted by Rev. Abraham Judah Klausner, an American Army Chaplain in June 1945 when he compiled a six- volume registry of Jewish Displaced Persons, and the name was taken up by delegates to the Congress of Sh'erit ha-Pletah, in Munich, February 1946, an organisation that exists today. Later, Koniuchowsky researched other Lithuanian records that he found in concentration camps at Auschwitz, Warsaw, Warsaw Ghetto, and Birkenau. Now his meticulous records have been published in February, 2020, we know that 90-95% of Lithuania’s Jews perished: a percentage that sadly exceeds that of Poland, Yugoslavia, Latvia and indeed that of Nazi Germany.

In his precise daily reports, SS Commandant Karl Jaeger of the 7th Fort at Žaliakalnis district of Kaunas also records for his Nazi masters, and now for posterity the “essential help of local Lithuanians, 4000 were liquidated in pogroms and executions exclusively by Lithuanian partisans.”

In this book, evidence is taken about the shtetl of Keidan where the Lithuanian mayor, pharmacist and hotel keeper acted entirely on their own, and were so cruel the Jews actually appealed to the Nazis to protect them from their cruelty.

The victims deserve proper memorials like Stolpersteine (stumbling stones). Not plaques and streets named after their killers, along with National awards and honors - insults that deny the truth about their victims.

About Leyb

Leyb Koniuchowsky almost gave up hope of publication of his testimonies. He bravely kept these fragile handwritten papers safely under lock and key, but shored them up within himself, so he could sleep at night after repeated rejections from publishers.

Meanwhile the killers of the countryside Jews were not arrested for their crimes in independent Lithuania. During the Soviet period, the murder of innocent victims was found to be a crime, but Lithuanians still do not acknowledge these massacres as crimes. After all, today, the names of the villages themselves are lost to memory, the burial pits covered over so arable crops can be grown there.

What is unknown is that the Lithuanian leadership proposed the elimination of Jews to Germany, and completed their genocide as an example to it. Only after the completion of the Lithuanian slaughter of its Jewry did the Nazis follow suit to implement the Final Solution.

In 1950, Leyb was persuaded to give copies of his documents to Yivo, and in 1989 entrusted them to Yad Va'shem, where they were lodged and verified so he could resume his life after so many rejections. Then many years later in 2020, in distant Perth in the land of Oz a willing publisher emerged, David Solly Sandler. He didn't ask the usual questions "Will it sell? Will it make money?" So Sandler also deserves much praise.

The book also offers a precious glimpse of the good times as well as gruesome horrors perpetrated in the second half of 1941.

Conclusion

But the extent of the Lithuanian participation in the genocide of Jews and their collaboration with Nazis continues to be downplayed in Lithuania. And so it goes...

In September 2020 the Lithuanian government is seeking to legislate their responsibility away after the summer recess this year. Is it serendipity or fate that Leyb's important publication is now published this year? A proposed resolution by an MP in the Lithuanian parliament declares that Lithuania should be absolved of responsibility for the murders of

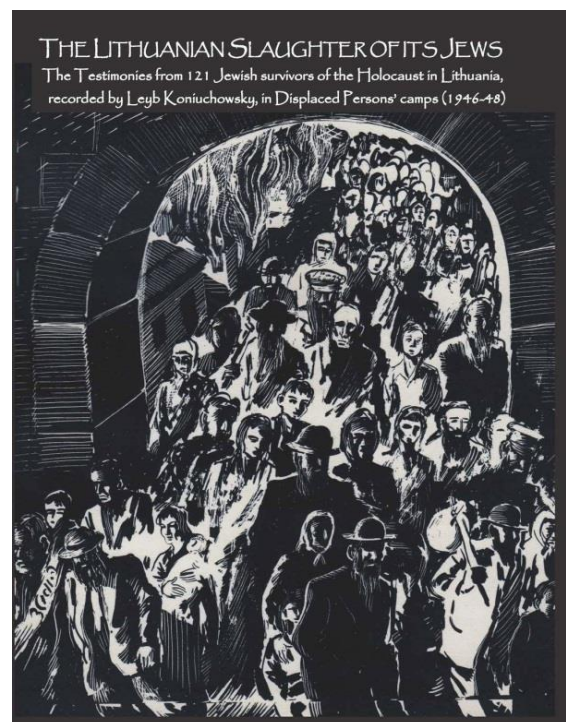
Lithuanian Jews because Lithuania had the misfortune to endure much suffering during its occupation by Soviets and then by Nazi Germany. What is the logic in this?

We hope that this resolution fails, that the Lithuanian honoring of criminals will change. “From our mouths to God’s ears” as we used to say.

Yet the Litvak Roots industry from around the world continues to boom. It is disgraceful to many survivors and their families that delegations of Lithuanian travel agents arrive in Johannesburg to appeal to wealthy Jews in South Africa for help in the restoration of Jewish graves, memorials and plaques to enhance their Jewish visitors’ Lithuanian travel experience.

The testimonies above make these positions absurd and the Lithuanian government is answerable for its lack of awareness - it is they who ought to bear the financial burden of responsibility for restoration, they who ought to understand the plight of their own Jewish victims and their existing Jews, and not be so bound up within their own Nationalist grouping that they can’t perceive the calumny of their callous distortions of truth. At the same time, we recognize that contemporary Lithuanians are not guilty of the crimes of earlier governments. We salute and honor all Lithuanians who are honest now in exposing the truth.

The Lithuanian Slaughter of its Jews: The testimonies from 121 Jewish survivors of the Holocaust in Lithuania, recorded by Leyb Koniuchowsky in Displaced Persons’ camps from 1946 to 1948, English translation by Dr Jonathan Boyarin, published by David Solly Sandler, February, 2020. Available in soft cover from the publisher at sedsand@iinet.au, priced at US\$60 (£45) including delivery; full proceeds go to Arcadia Jewish Children Home in Johannesburg.





HE DOES NOT DIE A DEATH OF SHAME

Leonard Suransky

Dr Leonard Suransky is (Emeritus) Head of Department, International Relations, and co-founder of Webster University, Ghana, Accra.

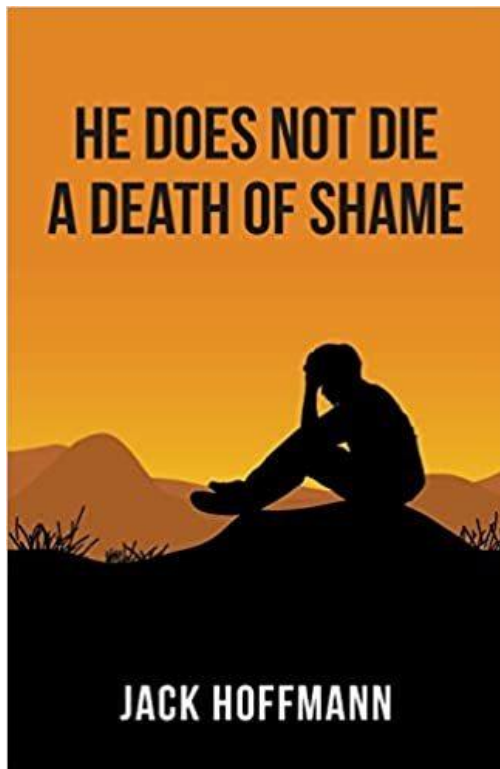
As someone who lived through the Johannesburg of the 1950s and 60s, I recommend Jack Hoffmann's novel, *He Does Not Die a Death of Shame*, to anyone from that era. Why? The author has a remarkable memory for the fine details of those heady days of our youth. The early chapters will take you back to your teenage years – and even to those of your infancy with your nanny. You may want to relive the thrills and traumas of high school, of afternoon *cheder* barmitzvah lessons, or more pleasantly, of Saturday morning bioscope escapades and comic swops. He does capture how hermetically segregated we Whiteys were from our Black peers.

The author's research is particularly impressive in two sections of the book. In the early chapters he explores the lives of the grandparent generation. Here he has arduously reconstructed the late 19th and early 20th Century history of the Jews in Lithuania. He writes graphically of both the pogroms, the advent of the Nazi beast, and of the merciless slaughter in Naishtot.

The second striking area of research relates to the recreation of exile camp life and the harsh trials of the African liberation protagonist, Mpande Gumede. We witness his training as an African National Congress cadre in the USSR, and then read of his grueling clandestine journey across Africa to infiltrate South Africa. There are chilling insights into the obstacles laid by ruthless but effective police once his team eventually arrives 'home'.

The other striking thing about this novel is the window it gives us, through the eyes of Zak Ginsberg, the white protagonist, into the training of a medical generation at the University of the Witwatersrand in the 60s under great professors like Tobias and Du Plessis. They produced a superior medical cohort that was sought after and praised wherever they landed in the world. The novel has - for a non-expert - a bewildering sprinkling of medical terminology at critical moments in the narrative, befitting a doctor-author.

Zak has his eyes opened to the iniquities of apartheid by a beautiful female Indian medical colleague. His first overt act against the regime comes with a futile attempt at correcting a twenty percent gap in the salaries of his non-white colleagues.



The author subtly hints at Zak's seeming lack of courage, through his earlier life, in taking any *action* against apartheid's cruelties and indignities. Did this unfair salary gap incident eventually persuade him to act; to take the ominous plunge of support for his childhood playmate, the son of his nanny now turned Umkhonto we Sizwe saboteur? I commend this novel as a gripping, easily flowing and informative roller coaster read. It leaves the reader with memorable insights into a shameful century of European and South African history, an era many of us lived through and an eye-opener for those who did not.

He Does Not Die a Death of Shame by Jack Hoffman, New Generation Publishing, 2019, 482pp

