

*Jacob Ashkenazi and Mordechai Aviam*

### **Horbat Bata – A Village and Its Monasteries: Portrait of a Rural Christian Landscape in Late Antiquity**

During the first half of the fifth century CE new settlements began to appear in Western Galilee. Most were villages, yet there are quite a few indications, following surveys and excavations, that some of those settlements might be identified as monasteries. Previous studies on monasticism in Late Antiquity have overlooked the monasteries in Western Galilee. Due to the lack of literary data and the misinterpretation of archaeological finds, very little – if anything – was known about the monastic backdrop of this region. However, surveys and excavations conducted in the area of the modern city of Karmiel have revealed an unusual setting. At least seven Christian sites are scattered within the city limits, one of which, Horbat Bata, was a fortified village. In a radius of a few kilometers on the hills near and around this village are six compounds that were probably monasteries. The concentration of finds in a small area and the relatively good state of their preservation, together with a comparative study that takes into account nearby monastic landscapes in the Orient, allow us to view Karmiel as a test case for a better understanding of the relations between villages and monasteries in the Late Antique East.

*Yehoshua Frenkel*

### **An Anonymous Persian Account of Jerusalem**

*Mujmal al-Tawārīḥ wal-Qiṣāṣ* (An Anthology of Chronicles and Stories) is an anonymous Persian text (written ca. 520/1126) which contains 25 geographical and historical chapters. Chapter 23 describes the three cities holy to Muslims: Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem. The well-known ceremony of the Holy Fire, which is commemorated each year before Easter, is at the core of this chapter. The translation aims to cast light on a complex religious ritual that involved the participation of Christian worshipers and the local Muslim authorities.

*Shlomit Langboim*

### **The Colony Committees and Their Contribution to the Development of the First Aliyah Colonies, 1882–1918**

This article presents the committees of the Jewish colonies and their contribution to the success of the colonies during the period of the First Aliyah (the first wave of Zionist immigration to Eretz Israel) until 1918. Most of the committees, established during the first phase of the settlements, were democratically elected by the founders, planned the colony, and established essential communal and public services. After a short period of economic difficulties, most of the colonies came under the patronage of Baron Edmond de Rothschild who abolished the committees in order to assure more professional management. Due to that, most research on the 1880s and 1890s focuses on the contribution of Baron Rothschild and his successors – the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) to the colonies, and not of the founders.

This article intends to prove the important role of the committees even during the patronage period. The colony committees were found to be a reliable factor which contributed greatly to promoting the colonies. Four colonies were examined through archival and field research. In all of these, the committees were significant, struggling to maintain their ability to influence the future of the colonies and to create social, religious, economic, agricultural, industrial, and medical services and institutions.

*Yair Seltenreich*

### **Reciprocal Images of Teachers and Farmers in Galilee *Moshavot* during the *Yishuv* Period**

The eleven *moshavot*, Jewish rural colonies, in the Galilee region bore pronounced peripheral features throughout the entire *Yishuv* period, the decades that preceded the creation of the State of Israel. They had only a partial measure of independence, being managed by a philanthropic association, the Jewish Colonization Association (JCA) and later the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PICA). They were subjected to unstable economic conditions and were inspired by a conservative culture, which made it difficult to fully adopt and absorb the personal and collective values promoted by modern Zionism. On that basis, great tensions developed between local farmers and teachers. The teachers saw themselves as forbearers of progress, believing secularism to be a necessary condition for the propagation of a modern spirit. Those tensions also gave birth to reciprocal images, the subject of the present article - which will describe their sources and complexity, and how they reflected contradictory interpretations of a common goal – that of creating an

agricultural society in the new land. It will explain how each side combined rational conceptions with emotional and psychological needs while constructing its images. It will emphasize the prejudices and stubbornness which obstructed mutual empathy. It will show how the learned and blatant elite of teachers drew sub-images of parents, pupils, or Orientals and will point to the extent of frustration that grew over the years in the hearts of farmers, and which sometimes even led them to open acts of violence against the teachers.

Elad Ben-Dror

### **“The Last Guardian of the Ramparts of the First Hebrew Village”: Izhak Ben-Zvi and the Jews of Peqi’in**

According to its traditions, the Jewish community in the Galilee village of Peqi’in lived there without interruption since the Second Temple period. After Druze, Muslims, and Christians settled there from the eleventh century onwards, the Jews dwindled into minority status. Ben-Zvi first visited Peqi’in in 1922 and forged a firm bond with its Jewish farmers. He saw them as a symbol of Jewish continuity in the Land of Israel and the Zionist settlement as the direct continuation of the ancient Jewish presence. The Peqi’in Jewish community must not be allowed to disappear precisely when the Jews were returning to their land. To protect and cultivate the community, he established a public committee, raised funds, devised plans, and worked energetically. For various reasons, however, nothing came of his efforts. After 1938, one Jewish family remained in Peqi’in. In 1955 Ben-Zvi, by then President of Israel, spearheaded the establishment of the adjacent moshav New Peqi’in. The article reviews the annals of the last community of Arabized Jews in the country and highlights the limited cooperation that Ben-Zvi enjoyed from various agencies in the Zionist establishment, which did not attach nearly as much importance to the community’s survival as did Ben-Zvi.

*Reuven Gafni*

### **Public Prayer and Its Significance at the Hebrew University, 1917–1948**

The article examines how public prayer was conducted at the Hebrew University in 1917–1948, and the changes that took place regarding this issue throughout that period: from the early years, when no organized prayer took place at the university, through the official dedication of a Torah scroll in one of the laboratories on Mount Scopus, and up to the institutionalization – although partial – of public prayer at the university in light of requests by the religious student body.

This topic is examined with reference to the unique national status given to the university in the public mind; the different national and religious interpretations of the establishment and operation of the university by several public figures, and the transformation of synagogues throughout the country, in these years, into sites bearing a national character, no longer seen only as places for prayer or Torah study - but as institutions of national and ideological significance.

Despite the importance that could have been given to the establishment of public prayer (or of a synagogue) in the university, and despite the practical need by religious students, the university leaders preferred – for ideological and practical reasons – not to establish official public prayer at the university, and to enable prayer only in a semi-formal and implied manner. The concluding section of the article is devoted to developments when the university moved to Giv'at Ram in the 1950s, and the changes that led to the establishment of the official university synagogue on the new campus.

*Jacob Barnai*

### **Some Historiographical Clarifications upon Publication of a Volume on the 'Hurvah' and Other Studies**

The article is basically a review of *The Hurvah Synagogue: Six Centuries of Jewish Settlement in Jerusalem* (Hebrew), Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 2010, a volume of articles published in album format. However, it goes beyond the bounds of a standard review, with the objective of conducting some historiographical clarifications stemming from the publication of the book. The volume was published to mark the re-dedication of the Hurvah Synagogue in the Old City of Jerusalem which until recently was in ruins ever since it was destroyed by the Jordanians during the 1948 War of Independence. The book contains many articles dealing with the

social and cultural history of the synagogue throughout the ages, its architectural and artistic aspects, as well as methodological and professional essays such as, for example, problems related to the principles and practical aspects of the restoration and preservation of historic sites and structures. The article reviews all these issues while leveling research criticism at the facts and conclusions included in a number of articles or what was overlooked by their authors, at least in the opinion of the writer of the present article.