The Biblical Space and Jewish Identity
Pnina Arad, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev

Introduction

The earliest known Jewish pictorial map of *Eretz Israel* is a woodcut that shows the Exodus and the wanderings of the Israelites into Canaan (the only known copy is preserved in the Zentralbibliothek in Zürich). A long text in Hebrew that is written on the map's right-hand side gives evidence to its production in Mantua in ca. 1560. The title of this text — the first verse of Numbers 33 ("These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt") — and some quotations from Numbers 34 that are included in the map associate this map with these two biblical chapters, which concisely describe the journey of the Israelites in the desert and define the borders of the Promised Land. Furthermore, a reference given in the long text to the mapmakers' specific source — two exegetical drawings of Canaan that Rashi made for his commentary on Numbers 33 and 34 — associates the map not only with the biblical description of Numbers 33–34 but also with Jewish exegesis on these two chapters. Yet, some written/visual motifs that are included in the map and which have no reference in the biblical description or in Rashi's exegetical imagery turn the biblical topography into an emblem of salvation.

The *Genealogy of the Patriarchs* (*Yiḥus ha-Avot*) is a Jewish Palestinian list of holy places that was composed by an anonymous writer towards the end of the 15th century especially for Jewish pilgrims. It records the Land-of-Israel tradition of holy places in a consistent geographical order from south to north that creates a journey from Hebron to the Galilee; it ends with a list of some Jewish holy places outside the land of Israel. In the sixteenth century the text was copied on long scrolls and was attached by illustrations of the holy places. In this form it was no longer intended for pilgrims; it became a visual representation that conceptualized topography in terms of holiness and offered its viewers with a contemplative movement in the sacred topography. Significantly, like the map conceived in Mantua, this illustrated representation included some pictorial motifs that endowed the sacred topography with meanings of salvation.

Both types of imagery call to question the way in which the biblical topography was conceptualized by Jews in the sixteenth century and the role they played in constructing Jewish identity at the time.
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A map showing the Exodus and the wanderings of the Israelites to Canaan, Mantua ca. 1560 (Zürich, Zentralbibliothek, U 3, 2).
An illuminated manuscript of *Yihus ha-Avot* (detail), Safed 1564 (Jerusalem, The National Library of Israel).
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Bible, Book of Numbers, chapters 33 and 34: 1–12

Numbers 33
1 These are the journeys of the children of Israel, which went forth out of the land of Egypt with their armies under the hand of Moses and Aaron.

2 And Moses wrote their goings out according to their journeys by the commandment of the LORD: and these are their journeys according to their goings out.

3 And they departed from Rameses in the first month, on the fifteenth day of the first month; on the morrow after the passover the children of Israel went out with an high hand in the sight of all the Egyptians.

4 For the Egyptians buried all their firstborn, which the LORD had smitten among them: upon their gods also the LORD executed judgments.

5 And the children of Israel removed from Rameses, and pitched in Succoth.

6 And they departed from Succoth, and pitched in Etham, which is in the edge of the wilderness.

7 And they removed from Etham, and turned again unto Pihahiroth, which is before Baalzephon: and they pitched before Migdol.

8 And they departed from before Pihahiroth, and passed through the midst of the sea into the wilderness, and went three days' journey in the wilderness of Etham, and pitched in Marah.

9 And they removed from Marah, and came unto Elim: and in Elim were twelve fountains of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they pitched there.

10 And they removed from Elim, and encamped by the Red sea.

11 And they removed from the Red sea, and encamped in the wilderness of Sin.
12 And they took their journey out of the wilderness of Sin, and encamped in Dophkah.

13 And they departed from Dophkah, and encamped in Alush.

14 And they removed from Alush, and encamped at Rephidim, where was no water for the people to drink.

15 And they departed from Rephidim, and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai.

16 And they removed from the desert of Sinai, and pitched at Kibrothhattaavah.

17 And they departed from Kibrothhattaavah, and encamped at Hazeroth.

18 And they departed from Hazeroth, and pitched in Rithmah.

19 And they departed from Rithmah, and pitched at Rimmonparez.

20 And they departed from Rimmonparez, and pitched in Libnah.

21 And they removed from Libnah, and pitched at Rissah.

22 And they journeyed from Rissah, and pitched in Kehelathah.

23 And they went from Kehelathah, and pitched in mount Shapher.

24 And they removed from mount Shapher, and encamped in Haradah.

25 And they removed from Haradah, and pitched in Makheloth.

26 And they removed from Makheloth, and encamped at Tahath.

27 And they departed from Tahath, and pitched at Tarah.

28 And they removed from Tarah, and pitched in Mithcah.

29 And they went from Mithcah, and pitched in Hashmonah.

30 And they departed from Hashmonah, and encamped at Moseroth.

31 And they departed from Moseroth, and pitched in Benejaakan.
32 And they removed from Benejaakan, and encamped at Horhagidgad.

33 And they went from Horhagidgad, and pitched in Jotbathah.

34 And they removed from Jotbathah, and encamped at Ebronah.

35 And they departed from Ebronah, and encamped at Eziongaber.

36 And they removed from Eziongaber, and pitched in the wilderness of Zin, which is Kadesh.

37 And they removed from Kadesh, and pitched in mount Hor, in the edge of the land of Edom.

38 And Aaron the priest went up into mount Hor at the commandment of the LORD, and died there, in the fortieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the first day of the fifth month.

39 And Aaron was an hundred and twenty and three years old when he died in mount Hor.

40 And king Arad the Canaanite, which dwelt in the south in the land of Canaan, heard of the coming of the children of Israel.

41 And they departed from mount Hor, and pitched in Zalmonah.

42 And they departed from Zalmonah, and pitched in Punon.

43 And they departed from Punon, and pitched in Oboth.

44 And they departed from Oboth, and pitched in Ijeabarim, in the border of Moab.

45 And they departed from Iim, and pitched in Dibongad.

46 And they removed from Dibongad, and encamped in Almondiblathaim.

47 And they removed from Almondiblathaim, and pitched in the mountains of Abarim, before Nebo.

48 And they departed from the mountains of Abarim, and pitched in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho.
49 And they pitched by Jordan, from Bethjesimoth even unto Abelsittim in the plains of Moab.

50 And the LORD spake unto Moses in the plains of Moab by Jordan near Jericho, saying,

51 Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye are passed over Jordan into the land of Canaan;

52 Then ye shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, and destroy all their pictures, and destroy all their molten images, and quite pluck down all their high places:

53 And ye shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land, and dwell therein: for I have given you the land to possess it.

54 And ye shall divide the land by lot for an inheritance among your families: and to the more ye shall give the more inheritance, and to the fewer ye shall give the less inheritance: every man's inheritance shall be in the place where his lot falleth; according to the tribes of your fathers ye shall inherit.

55 But if ye will not drive out the inhabitants of the land from before you; then it shall come to pass, that those which ye let remain of them shall be pricks in your eyes, and thorns in your sides, and shall vex you in the land wherein ye dwell.

56 Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.

Numbers 34: 1–12

1 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying,

2 Command the children of Israel, and say unto them, When ye come into the land of Canaan; (this is the land that shall fall unto you for an inheritance, even the land of Canaan with the coasts thereof:)

3 Then your south quarter shall be from the wilderness of Zin along by the coast of Edom, and your south border shall be the outmost coast of the salt sea eastward:
4 And your border shall turn from the south to the ascent of Akrabbim, and pass on to Zin: and the going forth thereof shall be from the south to Kadeshbarnea, and shall go on to Hazaraddar, and pass on to Azmon:

5 And the border shall fetch a compass from Azmon unto the river of Egypt, and the goings out of it shall be at the sea.

6 And as for the western border, ye shall even have the great sea for a border: this shall be your west border.

7 And this shall be your north border: from the great sea ye shall point out for you mount Hor:

8 From mount Hor ye shall point out your border unto the entrance of Hamath; and the goings forth of the border shall be to Zedad:

9 And the border shall go on to Ziphron, and the goings out of it shall be at Hazarenan: this shall be your north border.

10 And ye shall point out your east border from Hazarenan to Shepham:

11 And the coast shall go down from Shepham to Riblah, on the east side of Ain; and the border shall descend, and shall reach unto the side of the sea of Chinnereth eastward:

12 And the border shall go down to Jordan, and the goings out of it shall be at the salt sea: this shall be your land with the coasts thereof round about.
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וְאֵת בַּרְנֵעַ:
בְּעֵינֵיכֶם בנֵי צַלְמֵי לְצֵאת הָאָרֶץ לְשִׂכִּים יָם מִקְצֵה מֵהֶם אל לָרֶשֶׁת מַשְׂכִּיֹּתָם נֶגֶב כְּנָעַן
בְּנֵי תּוֹתִירוּ בִּשְׁנַת - והיֻה יְרֵחוֹ בְּעַרְבֹת: תַּרְבּוּ צְדָדָה אֶל תִּתְנֶחָלוּ לָכֶם צִנָה והָיָה לָרַב באִים מוֹאָב יִּהְיֶה הַגְּבֻּל: לָכֶם אֱדוֹם יְהוָֹה מִפְּנֵיכֶם לָכֶם:
בִּגְבוּל זה דִּבְלָתָיְמָה מִפְּנֵיכֶם עַקְרַבִּים תּוֹצְאֹת שנה וּגְבוּל בְּעַרְבֹת בְּהָרֵי אֲלֵיהֶם - ישֵׁב עַל מוֹאָב על עַל מִצְרָיִם הָאָרֶץ הָעֲבָרִים - בְּצַלְמֹנָה וּמְאַת הַיְשִׁמֹת הָאָרֶץ הַגָּדוֹל וִישַׁבְתֶּם בְּעַלְמֹן בְּגוֹרָל: בְּחֹר - בְּפוּנֹן וּוַיַּחֲנוּ בְּלָכֶם מֵעִיֵּי בְּהֹר צָפוֹן ב - והיֻה גְּבוּלה הַגָּדוֹל וִישַׁבְתֶּם בְּעַלְמֹן בְּגוֹרָל: בְּחֹר - בְּפוּנֹן וּוַיַּחֲנוּ
וְיָצָא הַגְּבֻל זִפְרֹנָה הָיוְתֹצְאֹתָיו חֲצַר עֵינָן זה - יִּהְיֶה לָכֶם גְּבוּל צָפוֹן;
וְהִתְאַוִּיתֶם לָכֶם לִגְבוּל קֵדְמָה מֵחֲצַר עֵינָן שְׁפָמָה;
וְיָרַד הַגְּבֻל מִשְּׁפָם הָרִבְלָה מֵקֶדֶם לָעָיִן וְיָרַד הַגְּבֻל וּמָחָה עַל - כֶּתֶף יָם - כִּנֶּרֶת קֵדְמָה;
וְיָרַדוְ הַגְּבוּל הַיַּרְדֵּנָה וְהָיוְתֹצְאֹתָיו יָם הַמֶּלַח זֹאת תִּהְיֶה לָכֶם הָאָרֶץ לִגְבוּלֹתֶיהָ סָבִיב:
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The genealogy of the patriarchs and the prophets and the righteous may they rest in peace in Eretz Israel and outside the land "may God bless us through their merit" Amen!

These are the journeys of the children of Israel who shall go from strength to strength in order to prostrate themselves on the tombs of the righteous may they rest in peace, weeping and supplicating, praying and asking for mercy for themselves and for their brethren in the Diaspora. May God, blessed be He, accept our prayer and hasten our redemption, Amen, so may it be His will.

Hebron in the land of Canaan, which is Kirjath-Arba, there is the Cave of Machpelah, where the patriarchs of the world are buried: Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Itzhak and Rivka, Jacob and Leah may they rest in peace, and this is their form. And on the cave there is a wonderful and handsome edifice which is the edifice of King David may he rest in peace … And in front of the city, on the top of the mountain, there is a handsome edifice, where Jesse King David's father may he rest in peace is buried, and this is its form … And at the foot of the mountain, near the city, there are three wells of water, attributed to the patriarchs may they rest in peace. And near the city, amongst the vineyards, it is Alonei Mamre, there are the house of Abraham our father may he rest in peace and the tree under which the angels ate and the stone on which he sat when he was circumcised. And on the way between Hebron and Jerusalem is Halhul, where Gad, David's prophet, may he rest in Peace is buried. Tekoa, where the Prophet Isaiah may he rest in peace is buried, and this is its form … Jerusalem was destroyed because of our sins … The Temple was destroyed because of our sins … Tiberias which is Rakkath [Joshua 19: 35] lies on the sea of Tiberias… Rabbi Akiva and his wife may they rest in peace are buried on the top of the mountain … and Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai and Rabbi Hiyya … and just below there are the tombs of Rabbi Moshe ben Maimon [Maimonides] and Rabbi Maimon his father and Rabbi David his grandson may they rest in peace, and this is their form. Also Rabbi Tarfon and Rabbi Shmuel ben Tibbon may they rest in peace are buried in Tiberias… These are the righteous outside the land may they rest in peace

Edrei, where Eldad and Medad may they rest in peace are buried. In the city of Shushan Mordecai the Jew may he rest in peace is buried… In the land of Ashur,
there is the River Hiddekel, where the Prophet Ezekiel may he rest in peace is buried …
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ייחוס האבות והנביאים ויקיר להם עלייה על כבירם על אזורם של ייחוס

אלמא מסעיה בן יששכר אחיו כל השלום על כבירם עלייה על כבירם של ייחוס

בבית ובהתפונחות ולכבודו של ייחוס עלייה על אזורם של ייחוס

טבריה זו רקת היא עומדת על י핵 טבריה ובירושלים חורב בחום עלייה על מבת דברי ורבים ומגינים ורבים ומגינים

אלה המצילים בשלום יוכיחו"ה

אורני שם קוברת אדם ומייד ע"ה. בשושנה והנה שם קובר פרдачи היהודי ע"ה... באהרץ אשור

נח르 חקיקל שם קובר יוחיאל הנביא ע"ה...