

6 come from “the presence of the Lord” (3:19). “Elijah” has the function of “turn[ing]” the children to the fathers (Mal. 4:6). This function is applied to John the Baptist in Matthew’s record (17:11-13), and Luke strikes an echo with the ‘fathers and children’ aspect of the forerunner’s ministry with regard to John the Baptist and the apostles (Lk. 3:8; Acts 3:25).

We conclude, therefore, that what is happening in Acts is the same as what is happening in

Luke’s Gospel. The ‘Spirit of Elijah’ brings a broad view of the work of a prophet to Luke’s whole story, whether John the Baptist or the apostles. Even though Luke does not attribute miracles to John the Baptist, this does not diminish his participation in this ‘Elijah’ latter-day bestowal of the Spirit. In the case of the apostles, the broader witness of Elijah is reflected in the accounts of their confrontation with the Jewish authorities, and their miracles.

Gleanings from the Land

Tony Benson

Natural dyes

THE DYING of cloth in different colours is a very old practice. Before the development of modern technology, dyes had to be obtained from natural sources, mostly plants; today they are mostly obtained by synthetic means. Dr Zohar Amar of the Department of Land of Israel Studies and Archaeology at Bar-Ilan University in Israel is studying the production of dyes in ancient Israel in a multi-disciplinary approach, combining Biblical and rabbinical texts, archaeology, botany and biology.

The most extensive Bible references to dyed cloth are in relation to the tabernacle, in which blue, purple and scarlet cloth was used extensively. All three dyes were obtained from animal sources, not plants. Blue and purple were obtained from molluscs and scarlet from a parasitic insect living on oak trees. Until recently the species of insect was unknown, but Dr Amar’s research has shown that the scales of one particular species of insect, living on a species of oak called the Kermes oak in Israel, produces a bright orange-red dye. A cheaper way of producing blue dye naturally

is the indigo plant, a plant in the pea family which used to grow wild around the Dead Sea and was cultivated in Israel in the nineteenth century. It has become popular recently in the USA for dyeing jeans and may be reintroduced to Israel.

A plant widely used today in the Middle East for dye is henna, which produces a red-brown colour. It is referred to twice in the Song of Solomon: “My beloved is to me a cluster of henna-flowers [AV, camphire] in the vineyards of En-gedi” (1:14, RV; cf. 4:13). It once grew wild in the Jordan Valley/Dead Sea area, and has recently been reintroduced at En-gedi. Another important plant for producing dye is the saffron crocus, also mentioned in the Song of Solomon (4:14), from which a yellow dye is obtained. As the dye is only produced from the elongated styles of the flowers, it is very expensive. Its former production in Britain is witnessed by the place name Saffron Walden, a small town in Essex. It is now used more to colour and flavour oriental food.

All these and more are being investigated by Dr Amar and his colleague, who are, like many Israelis, keen to find out more about the land occupied by their forefathers.

Source: “Natural colours”, Heidi J. Gleit, *Eretz*, Apr.-May 2006.

The Babel legacy

EVER since God confounded communication between men by introducing different languages, man has had the problem of translating from one language to another. An additional problem occurs when words are transferred from one alphabet to another (transliteration), as from Hebrew characters to the Latin alphabet, used for English and many other European languages.

The Latin alphabet has twenty-six letters, including five vowels; Hebrew has twenty-two letters and no vowels. Hence there is no exact match between the two and no standard conventions for transliterating from Hebrew to English, as can be seen, for example, by comparing the spellings of Hebrew words transliterated into English in Young’s and Strong’s concordances respectively.

The problem is apparent also when the Israelis today transliterate Hebrew names into English. For example, instead of Isaac and Rebekah, as in our Bibles, we have Yitzhak and Rivka.

There is a particular problem in Israel today because there is a legal requirement for road signs, including place names, to appear in three languages, Hebrew, English and Arabic. Unfortunately there is no convention for transliterating the Hebrew names into English. For example, the Israeli city of Petah Tikva, east of Tel Aviv, is also spelt Petah Tiqwa and Petach Tikva. The name means 'door of hope', and was given by nineteenth-century Jewish settlers who took it from Hosea 2:15: "I will give . . . the valley of Achor for a door of hope". To compound the problem, *Young's Concordance* transliterates the Hebrew words for 'door' and 'hope' as *pethach* and *tiqvah*.

In an attempt to resolve the problem in respect of place names, the Knesset (Israel's parliament) decided in December 2005 that rules should be determined for transliterating place names into English in a consistent way, and the Academy of the Hebrew Language was charged with the task. It is expected that it will come up with a simple system that will enable place names to be transcribed into English on road signs in the same way right across the country. This will be done on a rolling programme over five years.

All this has opened up a debate, however. The purpose of the current exercise is to provide tourists and Israelis whose first language is still English with easily understandable road signs. Travelling at speed on a busy road is not the time and place to have to work out a name on a road sign. Purists on the Academy have objected to this, however, because in the system expected to be proposed each Hebrew letter does not have an equivalent letter in English. This

would only be possible by the introduction of additional signs, called diacritical signs, which are placed above or below letters to indicate that they should be pronounced in a different way. An example is the *cedilla*, used in French, Portuguese and Catalan. This method, if properly understood, would enable Hebrew words in English letters to be pronounced properly. (Something I noticed on my first visit to Israel, in a party with a guide, was the fact that the guide pronounced place names familiar to me from the Bible in a rather different way, to the extent that at times it took a while for me to grasp what place was actually being referred to.)

Man's efforts to solve this problem will at best only be partially successful, however. We must wait for the Kingdom, when, as God says through Zephaniah, "I [will] turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve Him with one consent" (3:9).

Source: "Hebrish or Engbrew", Talya Halkin, *International Jerusalem Post*, 14-20 Jul. 2006.

Oil in Israel

OVER the years I have heard several stories of hopes of a big oil strike in Israel. Several times wealthy American businessmen, convinced from their understanding of the Bible that oil is there to be discovered, have come to Israel expecting to find it. You tend to read about their arrival and their hopes but not about how the search turned out. Clearly, if such searches were successful, we should have heard more about them. One such unsuccessful search was based upon a complete misunderstanding of a Bible passage.

On the basis of Deuteronomy 33:24, "Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him dip his foot in oil", it was said that oil would be found in the tribal territory of Asher, the Mediterranean coastal region of northern Israel. However, oil in this verse is clearly olive oil, and the reference is to the suitability of this area for olive trees to grow.

There is one indication in Scripture, however, of oil deposits in Israel. The earliest indications of the existence of oil underground came from seepages, generally referred to as bitumen. In Genesis 14 we read of "the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea)", and of the fact that this area "was full of bitumen pits" (vv. 3,10, RSV). This is, of course, the area of the Dead Sea, and these bitumen pits were presumably seepages of bitumen to form surface pools. The colossal conflagration which wiped out Sodom and Gomorrah is presumably linked with the existence of this flammable material, though of course brought about by God. On the basis of this there should be oil deposits somewhere in this area, and in fact there are. The question is, How much?

Close to the road which climbs westwards from the southern end of the Dead Sea towards Arad is a site known as Zuk Tamru 3, which a few years ago supplied a total of 170,000 barrels of oil, but was closed down because low oil prices made it no longer viable to produce it, especially as the oil was of poor quality. This amount was not in fact very significant; Israel uses about 220,000 barrels of oil a day. The rising price of oil more recently has made it attractive to start extracting oil again from this site and to look for further oil in the area, and a



**View of the barren landscape between the Dead Sea and Arad.
It is in this area where oil deposits have been found**

site called Zuk Tamru 4, a little to the north, is reckoned to have several million barrels which could be extracted.

Eli Tannenbaum, a geologist with a firm called Ginko Oil and Gas Exploration, reckons, from studying the geology of the area, that there should be hundreds of millions of barrels of oil there. The problem is finding it, and then discovering how easy it is to access it and what the quality is like. Nevertheless there is the potential here for Israel to be self-sufficient in oil, a possible factor in how prophecy will be fulfilled.

Even more oil is locked up in shale in the Negev. (Shale is a sedimentary rock formed by the compression of layers of clay.) Extracting oil from shale is a difficult process, requiring massive amounts of water (scarce in the Negev, and indeed in Israel generally) and causing extensive pollution and emission of greenhouse gases. Nevertheless, plans are afoot to build a massive plant for extracting oil from shale in the Negev, near Dimona, widely believed to be where Israel has its nuclear facilities; but whether they will

ever go ahead is a different matter. There is pressure instead from environmentalists to take advantage of the sunny skies of this desert area to produce electricity from massive arrays of solar panels. Israel is apparently a leader in this technology, and Avi Brenmiller, chief executive of a company called Solel, claims he could produce all Israel's electricity by this means from a nine-mile square site. Again there is the potential here for Israel to free itself of some of its dependence on imported oil and natural gas, from which its electricity is currently generated.

Source: Various articles in the *International Jerusalem Post*.

Tel Aviv nears its centenary

WHEN at Passover in the year 1909 a group of Jewish immigrants to Palestine decided to build a garden suburb to the north of the cramped Arab town of Jaffa in which they lived, they surely did not realise how it would grow over the next hundred years. It was called Ahuzat Bayit at first, but was soon given

the name Tel Aviv, meaning 'the hill of spring', by which it is known today. In 1921 the British authorities, who had become the rulers of Palestine after driving out the Turks in the First World War, incorporated it as a city in its own right. It later incorporated Jaffa within it, so that the official name of the municipality is Tel Aviv-Jaffa, or Yafo, as the Israelis spell it today.

The city's first mayor, the dynamic Meir Dizengoff, commissioned Professor Patrick Geddes to produce a master plan for the development of the city. With great far-sightedness he produced a plan with wide boulevards and long streets suitable for a city of twenty times its then population of 20,000. This enabled the city to expand into the large metropolis of today. The population of the Tel Aviv-Jaffa municipality is 'only' 370,000 people today, considerably fewer than Jerusalem, but it is the centre of a conurbation with a population of over 1.5 million, by far the largest metropolis in the country, and the centre of its finance and commerce. It is the best illustration of the fulfilment of Ezekiel's prophecy of the restoration: "I will multiply men upon you, all the house of Israel, even all of it: and the cities shall be inhabited, and the wastes shall be builded" (36:10). It is some consolation, when stuck in a traffic jam there around midday on a Friday as people are making their way home for the Sabbath weekend, to think of the fulfilment of this prophecy.

Even the ancient city of Jaffa has undergone a revival under modern Israel. It is now occupied by both Jews and Arabs and is home to 45,000 people. There has been much restoration of its old houses and streets, the old port has been turned into a

marina, and restaurants and art galleries have opened to attract the tourist trade. Until Herod built Caesarea to the north, it was the major Mediterranean port of Israel, being the place where timber from Lebanon was landed for Solomon's temple (2 Chron. 2:16), and the place from which Jonah took ship in his vain attempt to escape his Divinely appointed task (Jonah 1:3). In more modern times it was the original port of Palestine before ports at better locations, such as Ashdod and Haifa, were developed.

Today the revived ancient city of Jaffa and the new city of Tel Aviv exist side by side as an illustration of the miracle that is modern Israel. As Tel Aviv's centenary draws near, plans will be developed to celebrate it, and, unless the conflict which leads to our Lord's return causes them to be abandoned, we shall hear much more of them in the future.

Source: "Welcome to Tel-Aviv-Yafo", supplement to the *Jerusalem Report*, 3 Oct. 2006.

Looking for En-dor

1 SAMUEL 28 records how Saul, before his death in the battle with the Philistines on Mount Gilboa, consulted "a woman that [had] a familiar spirit" at En-dor (v. 7). The record says that the Philistines were encamped at Shunem, on the north side of the Valley of Jezreel, and the Israelites on Mount Gilboa, on the south side (v. 4). En-dor was located *north* of Shunem, so in order to consult the woman Saul had to go round the back of the Philistine forces. Hence he went at night, not only to hide from the Israelites what he was doing but also to escape detection by the Philistines. This



Picture: Tony Benson

Looking south over the city of Tel Aviv from a hotel roof. Less than 100 years ago this was sand dunes

remarkable situation illustrates the value of looking at a Bible atlas to find the location of places mentioned in the Bible.

The name En-dor occurs twice more in the Bible. In Joshua 17:11 it is referred to as a town within the boundaries of Issachar but part of the territory of Manasseh, and in Psalm 83:10 as a place where the enemies of Israel were defeated, in context either the Canaanites under Sisera or the Midianites, most probably the latter since they were encamped not far to the south when Gideon and the 300 defeated them. Chronologically therefore 1 Samuel 28 is the last reference to En-dor in Scripture, and there are hardly any references to the place in later non-Biblical sources.

Nineteenth-century travellers to the Holy Land, keen to find places associated with the Bible, discovered an Arab settlement in the area bearing the name Indur. Given that Arab place names often preserve the ancient Jewish names, it was reasonable to conclude that Indur was ancient En-dor. By the time of the Second World War the village had

a population of 600. In the War of Independence of 1948 it was abandoned by its Arab inhabitants and occupied by Jewish forces to preserve the vitally important route from the coastal plain to the Sea of Galilee with its many Jewish settlements. A kibbutz was founded at that time about two miles to the north, and the Arab village became ruins. The kibbutz was given the name Ein Dor in commemoration of the ancient town near by.

A short distance from the ruins of the Arab village there is a tell called Hurvat Zafzafot, with a spring at its foot. Some archaeological investigations have taken place here, and remains from Roman and Byzantine times have been discovered, including what appears to be a piece of stone from a synagogue. Nothing has yet been discovered from Old Testament times, however, and it remains to be seen whether future excavations will reveal remains from this town where Saul received the devastating news that he was shortly to fall in battle.

Source: "The ballad of Ein Dor", Asaf Leshem, *Eretz*, Jun.-Jul. 2006.