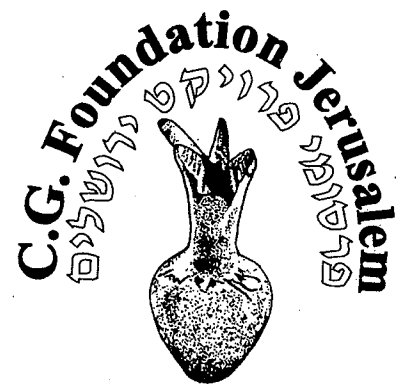


IN ZION AND JERUSALEM
THE ITINERARY OF RABBI MOSES BASOLA (1521-1523)



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THE ITINERARY OF RABBI MOSES BASOLA
(1521–1523)

Edited with Notes and an Introduction by
Abraham David

Translated by Dena Ordan



C. G. Foundation Jerusalem Project Publications
of the
Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies
of Bar-Ilan University
Jerusalem 1999

*With appreciation and love
to my wife Chava
our children
and grandchildren*

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Preface

This volume comprises yet another link in the chain of editions of historical sources that I have edited and published in the course of my intensive study of the history of Jewish immigration and settlement in Eretz-Israel in the late medieval period. Over the years I have not only undertaken to publish previously unknown texts, but also to set before the public new editions of already published historical treatises (travel books, letters, etc.) that merit renewed textual and historical discussion. Rabbi Moses Basola, a renowned sixteenth-century rabbi and kabbalist who lived in Italy, recorded his impressions of his journey to Eretz-Israel (1521–1523). Written in Hebrew, this treatise appeared anonymously several times under the title: *Eleh Masei* ("These are the travels"). It was first published by Rabbi Jacob ben Moses Hayyim Baruch in Livorno (Leghorn) in 1785. In 1938, Israel's second president, Itzhak Ben-Zvi, laid the foundation for a critical edition of this treatise when he published an annotated edition based on a manuscript housed in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem (Heb. 8° 1783). Ben-Zvi also succeeded in identifying its author. Nonetheless, the intervening sixty-year period has seen significant progress in the field of Land of Israel studies. New material has come to light and a variety of scholars have substantially advanced our knowledge of the Land of Israel in the early Ottoman period (1516 on) through their learned books and articles. In addition, interest in pilgrim accounts has intensified both in Europe and the United States. I now consider the time ripe for a new look at this important pilgrim's account which until recently has not been available in any European language. It was only a decade ago that a Spanish translation was published, followed by a translation into French in 1994.

It is therefore with great pleasure that I present this new bilingual English-Hebrew edition to the public. The Hebrew version of the text presented here is based on the manuscript utilized by Ben-Zvi, with some corrected readings. In order to bring this work into the broad purview of the English-reading

public I have seen fit to append an introduction and extensive textual notes to the English section of this book alone.

This volume is being produced under the aegis of the C. G. Foundation Jerusalem Project of the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies of Bar-Ilan University headed by Professor Joshua Schwartz. It is my pleasant duty to thank Professor Schwartz not only for agreeing to publish this volume but also for graciously acceding to all requests with regard to its preparation and publication. To the translator, Ms. Dena Ordan, go my profound thanks for her unstinting efforts to accurately render the introduction and the text in English, as well as for her pertinent editorial suggestions and advice regarding the book's format.

Several individuals have been of notable assistance to myself and the translator. It gives me great pleasure to thank Professor Maria Modena of the University of Milan for her invaluable aid in the clarification of the meanings of the Italian words found in the text. I must also tender thanks to Dr. Aron di Leone Leoni of Milan for bringing to my attention Latin and Italian archival documentation concerning Moses Basola. Nor can I fail to express my appreciation to Mr. Uri Melammed of the Academy of the Hebrew Language who vocalized the two prayers included in the Hebrew text and whose expertise in medieval Hebrew helped elucidate the connotations of specific Hebrew expressions. Naturally, these scholars bear no responsibility for any mistakes. My thanks also to Dr. Zohar Ammar of the Martin (Szusz) Department of Land of Israel Studies at Bar-Ilan University for identifying botanical terms used in the text.

Others have also made a significant contribution to this book. It is with deepest appreciation that I thank Ms. Miriam Waldman for preparing the maps. To Mr. Rafael Weiser, director of the Department of Manuscripts and Archives in the Jewish National and University Library, and Ms. Rivka Plesser of the same department, my thanks for their help and for their permission to again publish this text based on the above-mentioned manuscript. Last, but not least, I am grateful to Mr. Shimon Chen of Graphit Publishers for undertaking the actual production of this complex work.

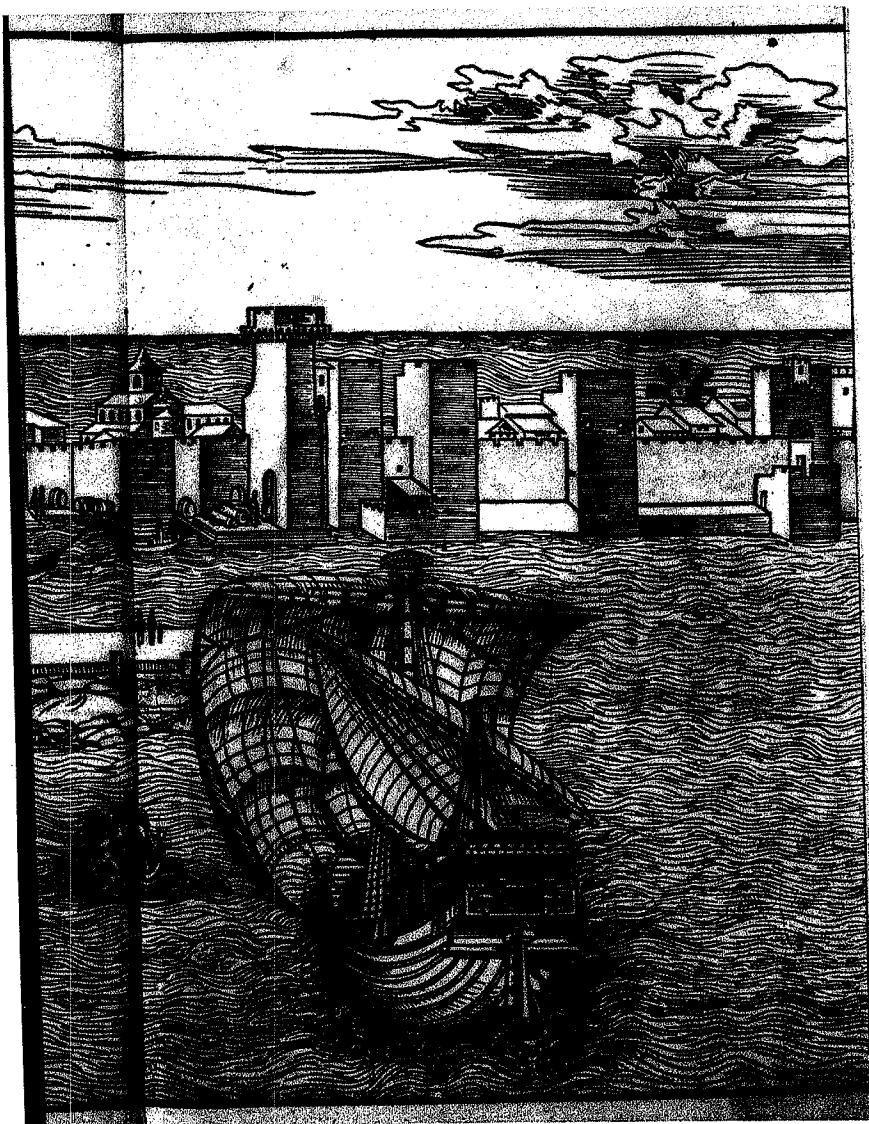
Abraham David

Jerusalem, December 1998

Translator's Note

I set before me as my goal the production of an accurate and readable English version of this text while attempting to preserve the spirit of the Hebrew original. With this in mind, I decided to restrict the use of square brackets in the text to actual additions: dates, biblical and talmudic citations, and the like; at the same time, I have taken the liberty of adding a word here and there to facilitate the flow of the text without square brackets. With the same end in mind I have tried to keep the transliteration system simple. For personal names and Hebrew terms I have generally adhered to the spelling and system utilized in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. For Arabic terms I have relied on the works of Bernard Lewis and Amnon Cohen. With the exception of π and v , I have elected to omit most diacritical marks. One notable exception is the indication of v in Arabic place names. I ask the reader's forgiveness for any inconsistencies that may have resulted.

IN ZION AND JERUSALEM



Drawing of a galley
Reprinted, by permission of the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem, from
Bernard von Breydenbach, *Peregrinatio in Terram Sanctam* (Mainz, 1486).

Introduction

These are the travels of a wise clever man whose name is not known
who went and made a circuit of Eretz-Israel in 5282 [1522].

—*Shivhei Yerushalayim*

The vagaries of historical accident often provide us with but limited ability to sketch the lives of historical figures, even those much acclaimed during their day. It is only within the past sixty years that Moses Basola, author of the travel book presented here in translation, has come into the public eye. His leading position in the forefront of the Italian rabbinate notwithstanding, Basola's halakhic decisions were never collected and survived primarily in the works of his contemporaries, his travel book was originally published anonymously, and, with the exception of one or two mystical sermons and a short commentary on a kabbalistic treatise, none of his kabbalistic works or sermons are extant. I rely on the scant data extant to inform my portrait of the man, who, like other contemporary Italian rabbis of his ilk, was no mere ivory tower scholar. The little we do know reveals a man of many facets. He appears to have been a dedicated teacher who continued to take an interest in his former students. In addition to his duties as a rabbi and head of a yeshivah, he was a leading protagonist in some of the public affairs that rocked the Italian Jewish community. He was also a financier who owned a bank and had a business partnership with his son. And, not only was he famed for his halakhic expertise, he had a firm reputation as a kabbalist as well. Most importantly for our purposes, he was a venturesome traveler—endowed with a strong sense of curiosity and keen powers of observation. To these we must add the considerable literary skills and informative style that afford the reader much pleasure in the perusal of his travel book.

This introduction is divided into two sections. The first section compiles the information available on Basola's life; the second examines the history and content of his travel book.

A. Biographical Sketch

I have already noted the paucity of biographical data for Moses Basola. The sketch presented here has its basis in details culled from his travel book, additional treatises authored by Basola that remain in manuscript,¹ and information found in the writings of his contemporaries.

As his surname indicates,² Basola's family origins are to be identified in Basel, Switzerland. The addition of Zarfatti³ to his name on some of his halakhic decisions indicates, however, that his family had a prior French background. In all likelihood one of his ancestors left France when the Jews of central and northern France were expelled in 1394, later settling in Basel less than a century before Basola's birth.⁴ Many French expellees found refuge in the neighboring lands, including Italy and Switzerland.

Moses Basola was born in Italy, presumably in 1480.⁵ His exact birthplace is, however, not known. From the age of nine he resided in Soncino, where his father, Mordecai ben Reuben Basola, was employed as a proofreader in the Joshua Soncino press.⁶ A responsum written in Asti in 1576 by Basola's

¹ For Basola's biography and a summation of his intellectual influence as a rabbi and *posek*, see Lamdan, "Basola."

² In the Hebrew sources his name appears in several forms: בסולה, בוסולה, בוסולה, בוסולה. In Latin, it is Vasilea. In Hebrew sources Basel is באזיליאה. See Lamdan, "Basola," 4.

³ He signed several *pesakim* משה בסולה בכמהר"ר מרדכי צרפתי. See *ibid.*, 124, 139, 146. See also a *pesak* published in *Mattanot ba-Adam*, no. 141, pp. 208–12.

⁴ See below for Basola's probable date of birth. His appreciation of his French heritage is reflected in a letter to his student Rabbi Jacob ben Yehiel Piccione (see n. 8 below). He commented: "How good and pleasant it is that you will pray according to the French rite, for in the Italian rite there are many vain things from which one should distance himself as east is from west" (177).

⁵ According to Gedaliah ibn Yahya: "Rabbi Moses Basolo the head of the yeshivah in the Marches went to Eretz-Israel and died there in 1560 at the age of eighty" (*Shalshelet ha-Kabbalah*, fol. 65v). This gives us 1480 as the year of his birth. See also Lamdan, "Basola," 6 n. 11.

⁶ Mordecai Basola came to Soncino in 1489. On his role as a proofreader, see Heller, *Printing the Talmud*, 84–86; Lamdan, "Basola," 4–5. In 1513 he wrote a grant permitting Rabbi Judah ben Jacob of Modena to serve as a slaughterer. This grant is found at the end of

student Abraham ben Meshullam of Sant' Angelo indicates that Moses Basola studied with Joseph ibn Shraga, the outstanding late-fifteenth- and early-sixteenth-century kabbalist from Argenta, author of a kabbalistic commentary on the prayers.⁷ Thus, Basola almost certainly spent his formative years in Argenta (near Ferrara) as a student of Ibn Shraga.

Although we can trace Moses Basola's relocations in various cities in central and northern Italy as an adult, by no means can we establish a precise chronology of these moves. One thing is certain: as his travel book indicates, from late summer 1521 to spring 1523 he was on his pilgrimage to Eretz-Israel. Before embarking on this trip he evidently lived in Fano,⁸ where he expounded Torah. In a letter to a former student, Basola assessed the level of scholarship there: "When I recall all the students I have taught from my youth to the present I remember their measure, I understand their nature. Many sons have acquitted themselves well in the Written and Oral Law."⁹

At an unknown date Basola moved to Pesaro, where he was employed as a teacher. A letter sent from Sabbioneta in 1533 by Basola's close friend Azriel Diena contains the following salutation: "To the honored teacher and sage Rabbi Moses Basola—may his descendants live long, Amen—who is a banner to the people of the city of Pesaro."¹⁰ In this same letter, Azriel Diena

Mahzor Minhag Roma, MS. Parma, Biblioteca Palatina, 1146 (2075) (IMHM, no. 13152), fol. 197r. See also Lamdan, "Basola," 5. He signed this document "Raphael Mordecai ben Reuben of Basola." Evidently, he took the additional name Raphael (for the angel possessing curative powers) in the course of a serious illness.

⁷ The responsum states: "I heard this from the *gaon* Rabbi Moses Basola of blessed memory, an eminent kabbalist, who heard it from the kabbalist of Argenta" (*Mattanot ba-Adam*, no. 39, p. 90. See also Lamdan, "Basola," 7). Ibn Shraga was a Spanish expellee who found refuge in Italy. See Scholem, "Forged Zohar Fragment," 262–65; Scholem and Beit-Arié, *Maamar Meshare Qitrin*, 22, 24–25.

⁸ Basola mentions Fano twice in his travel book (fols. 66v, 75v), along with other Italian cities: Rimini (68r); Verona (73v); and Bologna (78r). He also mentions Venice several times; evidently, he stayed in this city prior to embarking on his pilgrimage. Temporary stays may have formed the basis for his acquaintance with the other cities he mentions. An undated letter to his student Jacob ben Yehiel Piccione of Viadana attests that Basola definitely lived in Fano from 1519 to 1525. In this letter, Basola touched upon daily customs and sent regards to his friend Azriel Diena, who lived in Viadana from 1519–1525. See Lamdan, "Writings," 172–73, 175–86. On the name פיינו, see *Mattanot ba-Adam*, 50 n. 18.

⁹ Lamdan, "Writings," 175. I have translated the passage according to her suggested interpretation in n. 2—TRANS. For the letter, see nn. 4, 8.

¹⁰ This letter concerned Joseph da Arli (of Arles). See Azriel Diena, *Responso* 2, no. 187, pp. 162–65.

In 1535 or shortly thereafter Moses Basola received ordination from Azriel Diena.¹³ After his ordination and sometime before 1540, when he issued a halakhic ruling concerning levirate marriage, Basola moved to Ancona.¹⁴ During his lengthy stay here, Basola headed the local yeshivah.¹⁵ From the honorifics “Rosh ha-Golah” (exilarch)¹⁶ and “a commander of peoples in the holy congregations of the Marches”¹⁷ with which he was addressed, we can infer that not only did Basola hold the prestigious position of head of the Ancona yeshivah, he also served as the district rabbi.¹⁸ But, as I noted in the opening section, Basola’s interests were not confined to the rabbinic sphere. The combination of fiscal activity and rabbinic office was not rare among Italian rabbis.¹⁹ A recently discovered Latin document

[illegible]

Latin document concerning Basola's involvement in banking (6 March 1554)
Ancona, Archivio di Stato, Notaio A. Manfredi, vol. 754, fol. 78r. Courtesy of Aron di Leone Leoni.

¹¹ Ibid., 164–65.

¹² See Lamdan, “Basola,” 17. Moses Nissim of Foligno was an important banker in the Duchy of Urbino and the Marches District. See Boksenboim, introduction to Azriel Diena, *Responsa*, 1:30; idem, *Letters of Jewish Teachers*, 24; idem, ‘*Parashiot*,’ 33.

¹³ As inferred from a letter sent by Azriel Diena to Moses Nissim of Foligno in which Diena asked for the latter’s assistance in finding two rabbis in Pesaro who would agree to ordain Moses Basola: “Look for two rabbis in addition to myself who will agree to this...let me know who they are.” For the text of the letter, see Boksenboim, ‘*Parashiot*,’ 271–72. See also Lamdan, “Basola,” 29.

¹⁴ For the ruling, see *Mattanot ba-Adam*, no. 141, pp. 208–12. See also Lamdan, “Basola,” 31–32.

¹⁵ For Gedaliah ibn Yahya’s observation that Basola headed the yeshivah in Ancona which influenced the entire district of the Marches, see n. 5 above. See also n. 22 below.

¹⁶ In a collection of sixteenth-century documents (MS. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, ENA 4199, Rab. 1094 [IMHM, no. 43206], fol. 68r) we find the “wording of the divorce that I Abraham of Ancona wrote according to Moses Basola, leader of the exile (Rosh ha-Golah), may God preserve and protect him.” This divorce was written in “the year 5304 to the creation [1544].”

¹⁷ Gedaliah ibn Yahya, *Shalshelet ha-Kabbalah*. See n. 26 below.

¹⁸ Rabbi Yehiel Trabot is mentioned as holding this position in a letter sent to Samuel and Aaron of Cingoli c. 1515. This letter was published by Sonne, “General Synod,” 655–58. Based on this source, Lamdan concludes that Basola was the appointed rabbi for the entire city of Ancona (“Boycott of Ancona,” 145 n. 21). Bonfil, on the other hand, argues that there was no community-appointed rabbi in Ancona during the sixteenth century (*Rabbis*, 171–72).

¹⁹ Many rabbis had banking interests in Renaissance Italy. The following figures come to mind: Obadiah of Bertinoro who owned a bank in Città di Castello in the 1480s (Toaff, *Gli*

indicates that Basola fit this mold. He was involved in financial ventures with his son Azriel, and from 1554 owned a bank in the city of Rocca in the Marches.²⁰ This facet of his personality finds expression in the text of the travel book, in the close attention paid to currencies and exchange rates.

From mid-1557 to mid-June 1558 Basola was in Pesaro.²¹ Evidently, at a later date he returned to Ancona where he remained until leaving Italy permanently.²² While serving in the rabbinate of Ancona and the surrounding district, Basola also took an intense interest in public affairs, on both the local and international levels. Not only did he promote local efforts to raise money for the purpose of ransoming a group of "Safed captives" who had been seized while en route from Salonika to Eretz-Israel in 1554,²³ he also took a strong stand against the planned international boycott of Ancona promoted by the Ottoman sultan's courtiers, Don Joseph Nasi and Dona Gracia Nasi. The courtiers' plan to shift the center of commerce between Italy and the East from Ancona to Pesaro was sparked by Pope Paul IV's execution of twenty-five *conversos* who had settled in Ancona.²⁴ Basola joined other rabbinic figures and the Anconan and Levantine merchants whose livelihood was threatened (and who feared the wrath of the local authorities) in opposing the shortlived boycott that began in July 1556. Basola himself sent a letter to Constantinople—most likely addressed to the Nasis, the moving spirits behind the boycott—requesting its cancellation.²⁵

ebrei a Città di Castello, 61) and Basola's contemporaries Yehiel Nissim of Pisa (Rosenthal, *Banking*), and Gedaliah ibn Yahya (David, "Gedaliah Ibn Yahia," 115–16).

²⁰ A notarized Latin document dated 1554 (MS. Ancona, Archivio di Stato, Matr. 754) testifies that Moses Basola purchased the bank from the brothers Jacob and Isaac Abrabanel of Ferrara. See Leoni, "Nuove notizie sugli Abravanel," 181. In this document (*ibid.*, 202) Basola is referred to as "Rubi Moyse Angeli de Vasilea hebreo." Angeli is the Italian equivalent for Mordecai.

²¹ See the discussion below (p. 24) of Basola's involvement in the dispute over the printing of kabbalistic works, which was centered in Pesaro.

²² See Judah Aryeh Modena's testimony below, n. 27.

²³ For a laconic report, see Zunzin, *Nahalat li-Yehoshua*, no. 40, fol. 46v. For a more detailed examination of this incident, see Bashan, *Captivity and Ransom*, 116–17. On Basola's involvement, see Lamdan, "Boycott of Ancona," 153–54.

²⁴ See Sonne, *From Paul to Pius*, 30–45 (see 16–17 for a list of sources and studies); Toaff, "Nuova luce sui Marrani di Ancona," 261–80.

²⁵ Rabbinical figures were lined up in both camps. Those involved were mainly from Ottoman lands, including Eretz-Israel. One of the boycott's most outspoken critics was Joshua Zunzin, the rabbi of the Italian congregation in Constantinople. In his responsa he describes

The strong opposition to the boycott apparently contributed to its brevity.

In 1560 Basola sailed from Venice for Eretz-Israel as Gedaliah ibn Yahya reports: "Rabbi Moses Basola... went to Eretz-Israel and died there in [5]320 [1560] at the age of eighty."²⁶ He received a warm welcome upon his arrival in Safed and was given due honor by its sages.²⁷ It seems likely that his nephew, the noted kabbalist Mordecai Dato, accompanied him.²⁸ Basola died shortly thereafter and we have no further information concerning this brief period of residence in Safed.

Of Basola's direct descendants little is known. Our main informant on this subject is Judah Aryeh Modena, who wrote in his autobiography: "I began to learn the alphabet from a certain so-and-so, who was called Hazanne-to...and after that from Rabbi Azriel Basola, son of the gaon Rabbi Moses of blessed memory."²⁹ Elsewhere in this work he noted: "Because my parents wanted to keep me with them at home, God provided us, in Nisan 5342 [March–April 1582], with a young Italian who had just come back from Safed. His name was Moses, the son of Benjamin della Rocca, the son of the daughter of the gaon Rabbi Moses Basola...and I acquired a useful teacher from whom I learned much."³⁰ Based on Judah Aryeh Modena's remarks,

this episode, briefly mentioning Moses Basola's involvement. See Zunzin, *Nahalat li-Yehoshua*, nos. 39–40. For Basola, see no. 40, fol. 46v. For a summation of this affair, see Roth, *Doña Gracia*, 134–75; Lamdan, "Boycott of Ancona," 135–54.

²⁶ Gedaliah ibn Yahya, *Shalshet ha-Kabbalah*, fol. 65v. A slightly different version of this statement is found in MS. Moscow, Russian State Library, Günsberg 652, fol. 131r.

²⁷ See Judah Aryeh Modena, *Ari Nohem*, chap. 26, p. 84: "I heard that the honorable Rabbi Moses Basola of blessed memory...left Ancona, where he served as head of the yeshivah all his days, for Safed, may it be speedily rebuilt, and he was a great sage in kabbalah. On the Sabbath almost all the sages of Safed came to greet him, for they knew his reputation. Among them was Rabbi Cordovero, who was then a youth, and kissed his hands."

²⁸ On the family ties between Basola and Dato, see Tamar, *Studies*, 19 n. 46; Lamdan, "Basola," 75. On the possibility that both came to Eretz-Israel together, see Tishby, "Cordovero," 129, 136; Jacobson, *Exile and Redemption*, 13.

²⁹ Cohen, *Autobiography*, 82. Judah Aryeh Modena also mentions that Moses Basola was his teacher's father in his *Ari Nohem*: "I heard that Rabbi Moses Basola of blessed memory, the father of my teacher Rabbi Azriel Basola of blessed memory..." See n. 27 above.

³⁰ Cohen, *Autobiography*, 86. See also Modena's *Ari Nohem* (n. 27 above): "And I heard that Moses Basola of blessed memory...my teacher's, Rabbi Moses della Rocca of blessed memory, mother's father..." Modena composed an elegy on the occasion of his teacher's death. See Modena's collected sermons, *Midbar Yehudah*, fol. 80v, where he refers to his teacher as Moses Basola della Rocca. It seems that the latter resided in the city of Rocca where his grandfather owned a bank in the 1550s. See above.

we can conclude that Basola definitely had at least two direct descendants, a son, Azriel, and a daughter, whose name is not known. The Solomon Basola mentioned in 1567 in the context of the dispute between the Dato brothers during that decade may also have been related to Moses Basola and was perhaps another son.³¹ Basola's nephew Mordecai Dato, whose close ties to Basola were noted earlier, was in all likelihood his sister's son.

In the Rabbinate

Of Basola's many students only four are known by name: Abraham ben Menahem Rovigo,³² who referred to Basola in 1544 in a letter as "my champion, my teacher, and my rabbi";³³ Abraham ben Meshullam of Sant' Angelo, a kabbalist, teacher, and copyist of many manuscripts,³⁴ who lived in various locations in northern Italy and cited Basola in halakhic, homiletic, and kabbalistic contexts;³⁵ Jacob ben Yehiel Piccione;³⁶ and Immanuel of Benevento.³⁷

But we have already seen that Moses Basola was more than a teacher and mentor. He took a central role in some of the halakhic debates and affairs that electrified Jewish society in Italy and elsewhere. Although Basola's

³¹ See Boksenboim, 'Parashiot,' 367. I have already noted the family ties between the Basola and the Dato families.

³² An outstanding Ferraran sage of the latter half of the sixteenth century. See Kupfer, "Rovigo," 142–62; *Mattanot ba-Adam*, introduction, 18–19.

³³ *Mattanot ba-Adam*, no. 191, p. 279.

³⁴ See Kupfer, "Printing the Zohar," 302–18. For a comprehensive discussion of this figure, see Boksenboim, *Letters of Jewish Teachers*, 44–52.

³⁵ He signed a pesak at "the behest of the gaon...Moses Basola." See Kupfer, "Printing the Zohar," 304. See also *Mattanot ba-Adam*, no. 39, p. 90. (See above, 15). One of Abraham ben Meshullam's sermons was based on Basola's ideas. It is found in the collected sermons of Rabbi Abraham of Sant' Angelo, MS. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, Mic. 5470, EMC 218, fol. 181v.

³⁶ On his letter to this student, see n. 8 above. Piccione was then living in Viadana where he was studying with Azriel Diena, as Basola noted: "I prostrate myself from afar...before...the gaon Rabbi Azriel Diena, may God preserve him, and you my son should sit in the dust at his feet to absorb his fount of wisdom." See Lamdan, "Writings," 175–86. It appears that this letter was sent sometime in the early- to mid-1520s (*ibid.*, 172). Lamdan here relies on Boksenboim's assumption that this letter was written during the week *Ki Tisa* was read in 1523 (introduction to Azriel Diena, *Responsa*, 1:62 n. 5). Since in the spring of that year Basola was in Eretz-Israel this assumption is unfounded.

³⁷ See 24–25 below.

halakhic decisions have never been collected, some have been preserved as independent documents while others were appended as approbations to rabbinic decisions issued in his day. Both types can be found in the collected responsa (published and manuscript versions) of his contemporaries.³⁸ These responsa indicate that Basola's opinions elicited a strong reaction from his contemporaries, ranging from approval to disapproval.³⁹ Although limited in number, these pesakim reflect Basola's prowess in halakhah and highlight his prominent position in the forefront of the Italian Jewish rabbinate, as an active player in the internal communal affairs that rocked Italian Jewry and had ramifications outside Italy as well.

These *causes célèbres* covered a broad range of issues. Two involved the removal of individuals from the rabbinate, including Joseph da Arli (of Arles) and Moses Provençal, each of whom was denounced more than once. Another concerned a property dispute. Basola also voiced vociferous objections to the *takkanot* issued by the General Synod in 1554, and was a chief protagonist in the controversy over the printing of kabbalistic works. As these and the broken engagement that evolved into the Tamari-Venturozzo affair were among the hotly contested rabbinic issues of the day, I will elaborate further on each.

Joseph da Arli was removed from the rabbinate on two occasions. In the 1530s da Arli, who lived in Ferrara, was accused by contemporary sages of engaging in actions unsuitable for a rabbi, including the unlawful acquisition of gain and lack of respect for his fellow rabbis. Although some of the greatest Italian sages of the day, including Azriel Diena and Meir of Padua (Maharam of Padua), were involved, this episode's details remain obscure.⁴⁰

³⁸ See *Mattanot ba-Adam*, no. 45, pp. 96–97; no. 141, pp. 208–12; no. 190, pp. 276–79; Boksenboim, *Rieti Family*, no. 179, pp. 208–9. Other halakhic decisions by Basola have been preserved in manuscripts, including: *Bat Rabbim*, responsa compiled by Abraham Yagel, MS. Moscow, Russian State Library, Günzburg 129 (IMHM, no. 6809), fols. 5v–7v; London, Montefiore Collection 480 (IMHM, no. 7281), fols. 480v–481v; Jerusalem, JNUL 8° 3904, fols. 1r–2v, 25v–26v; a *haskamah* to a decision by Jacob Israel Finzi Recanati, Montefiore Collection 113 (IMHM, no. 4627), fol. 94r. Pesakim from London and JNUL appeared in Lamdan, "Basola," appendixes 5, 7, and 8. Other halakhic decisions by Basola will be considered below.

³⁹ For a summation, see Lamdan, "Basola," 31–47, and appendix 6.

⁴⁰ The total picture remains unclear, although several scholars have analyzed this episode and published the related halakhic decisions. See Marx, "Josef of Arles," 171–84; Kupfer, "Joseph of Arles," 117–32; Azriel Diena, *Responsa* 1, nos. 114–15, pp. 347–55; 2:xxiv–xxix;

In this first attempt Basola was only a minor player, as it preceded his ordination. In 1547, when he held the post of rabbi of Ancona, Basola played a more substantial role in a second attempt to remove da Arli from the rabbinate. Da Arli, then head of the yeshivah in Siena, again faced charges of forgery and of insulting his fellow rabbi Jacob Diena, the son of Azriel Diena. Diena named da Arli a heretic in turn. Maharam of Padua ordered that Joseph da Arli be removed from the rabbinate until such time as he conciliated Jacob Diena, with the approval of other rabbis including Basola.⁴¹

In that same year Basola was involved in the removal of another rabbi from the rabbinate: Moses Provençal, one of the outstanding Italian rabbis of the sixteenth century, head of the Italian congregation in Mantua. In 1547 Provençal was accused of attempting to introduce reforms in the prayer rite: in the recitation of "and inscribe for a good life"⁴² and in the *havdalah* service for a festival that begins on Saturday night. Maharam of Padua and Moses Basola joined forces in removing Provençal from the rabbinate. Some time later, however, for reasons that remain undetermined, Provençal was restored to his former standing.⁴³

In 1551 Basola was a signatory to an arbitration ruling in the matter of the hotly disputed distribution of the estate of the wealthy businessman Samuel Abrabanel, who died in Ferrara in 1546. The contestants in this case were Samuel's widow Benvenida and their three sons: Jacob, Judah, and Isaac.⁴⁴

nos. 182–87, pp. 148–65; *Kuntres Rivot ba-Shearim* in Boksenboim, 'Parashiot,' no. 27, pp. 289–91; nos. 31–32, pp. 298–303; no. 35, pp. 306–10; nos. 40–42, pp. 318–26. Basola, for his part, played a role in convincing Azriel Diena to reinstate da Arli in 1534 after the latter was removed from *haverut* (Azriel Diena, *Responsa* 2, no. 187, pp. 162–65); on the other hand, Basola came out against da Arli in the controversy over the Rosa da Montalcino and Isaac da Noto engagement in 1534–35. In this case, Basola, like his mentor Azriel Diena, backed the woman's claim that the engagement had been annulled (see Azriel Diena, *Responsa* 1, nos. 114–15, pp. 347–55; *Rivot ba-Shearim* above), whereas Joseph da Arli took the husband's side and declared Rosa a deserted wife.

⁴¹ On this episode and its ramifications, see Boksenboim, *Rieti Family*, 30–33. For Basola's *pesak*, see *ibid.*, no. 179, pp. 208–9; Lamdan, "Basola," 37–38.

⁴² A formula added to the *amidah* prayer during the Ten Days of Penitence—TRANS.

⁴³ See Kupfer, "Moses Provençal," 137–60; Lamdan, "Basola," 36–37.

⁴⁴ In the Ferrara State Archives (MS. ASFe, Matr. 582, pacco 21S) there is an Italian translation of the arbitration agreement written by Basola and signed by him in Hebrew: אֲנִי מֹשֶׁה בַּסּוּלָה בִּכְמַהרָ"ר מֹרְדְּכַי צִרְפָּתִי זצ"ל גִּזְרָה וּפָסַק וּמַסְכִּים לְכָל הַכְּתוּב לְעֵיל יוֹם ד' כֵּט ל' ל' ו' א"א (I Moses Basola, son of Rabbi Mordecai Zarfatti of blessed memory, do decree and rule and

Basola was also involved in a second attempt to remove Moses Provençal from the rabbinate, this time in the context of a dispute over the delayed publication of Joseph Caro's *magnum opus*, the *Beit Yosef*. In 1558 Caro sent Moses ben Shoshan from Safed to Italy to oversee the printing of this work. A delay in publication of the *Hoshen Mishpat* section until 1559 sparked a dispute between Ben Shoshan and the well-known printer Eliezer Foa of Sabbioneta. The adversaries, who naturally had financial considerations at stake, approached Moses Provençal in Mantua for a ruling. Provençal placed Ben Shoshan in *herem*, to which the latter responded by declaring a counter-*herem* against Provençal. The leading Italian rabbis, including Moses Basola, Maharam of Padua, Jacob Israel Finzi of Recanati, backed also by Joseph Caro and other Safed sages,⁴⁵ rallied to Ben Shoshan's side and endorsed the excommunication of Provençal, again seeking to remove him from the rabbinate.

We also find Basola taking a strong stance against the social regulations enacted by the 1554 General Synod held in Ferrara under the leadership of Maharam of Padua.⁴⁶ In his critique, Basola sharply attacked each *takkanah* individually.⁴⁷

agree to all that is written above. Wednesday, 29 July 1551). On this controversy, which saw the involvement of the greatest contemporary Italian sages, see Marx, "Joseph Arli and Johanan Treves," 216–19; Malkiel, "Jews and Wills," 11–26, 50–69; Leoni, "Nuove notizie sugli Abravanel," 159–64, 197–98. For a brief description of this document, which was discovered by Leoni, see *ibid.*, 162 nn. 62, 63. Another arbitration agreement dated 18 October 1547 appointing Basola as arbitrator has just been discovered by Dr. Aron Leone di Leoni in the Ancona State Archives (MS. Ancona, Archivio di Stato, Pavesi 964, fol. 552r).

⁴⁵ This episode has merited scholarly attention and its related halakhic decisions have been published. See Sonne, "Moses b. Shushan," 8:513–19; 10:252; Kupfer, "Moses Provençal," 138; *Mattanot ba-Adam*, 29–31; nos. 104–5, pp. 189–96; Green, "Polemic," 223–40. For Basola's *pesak*, see *ibid.*, 232–33.

⁴⁶ For these enactments, published based on two manuscripts and a printed edition, with an English translation, see Finkelstein, *Jewish Self-Government*, 300–307. For a brief discussion of the takkanot, see *ibid.*, 92–95. See Sonne, "General Synod," 668–75 for contemporary reactions to the takkanot. For a comprehensive discussion of the first enactment which banned the printing of new books unless approved by three ordained rabbis, see Benayahu, *Copyright*, 80–99.

⁴⁷ Basola's critique, accompanied by a brief version of the enactments, is found in MS. London, Montefiore Collection, 94 (IMHM, no. 4609), fols. 29r–30r. They were first published by Halberstam, "Ordinances," 266–67. On Basola's objections to the first takkanah, see Benayahu, *Copyright*, 85–89. For a general discussion of the enactments and the objections raised, see Lamdan, "Basola," 48–59.

Basola was at the forefront of the dispute over the printing of kabbalistic works, including the *Zohar*, which engaged the attention of leading Italian rabbis from 1557 to 1560. Centered in Pesaro, not only did this dispute pit kabbalists against their opponents (philosophizers and halakhists); it also involved prominent kabbalists who opposed the dissemination of the basic kabbalist works as inadvisable at that point in time. Surviving halakhic decisions, letters, and edicts of excommunication (although not all have been published) shed light on the essence and roots of this dispute.⁴⁸ With the inception of the controversy in 1557, Basola first came out as a major supporter of the publication of the basic kabbalistic texts. His *pesak* on this issue is found in his approbation to the work *Tikkunei ha-Zohar* printed in Mantua in late 1557 by his student Immanuel ben Yekutiel of Benevento.⁴⁹ Basola subsequently withdrew his backing and signed an enactment issued on 3 Tammuz (19 June) 1558 banning the publication of the *Zohar*. Other rabbis, including Maharam of Padua and Jacob Israel Finzi Recanati, joined the ban.⁵⁰

In actual fact, Basola was not a strong supporter of the printing of kabbalistic works; his initial approval was evoked by the derogatory remarks of an opponent who denigrated kabbalah in general and the *Zohar* in particular.⁵¹ In any event, the rationale for this shift in opinion is found in the enactment itself: Basola feared that (1) if printed, kabbalistic works would come within the purview of the unlearned, thereby leading individuals of limited understanding to heresy; (2) that kabbalistic study would detract from halakhic study; (3) that the wide dissemination of kabbalistic works would bring them to the attention of non-Jews who lacked the knowledge to explain kabbalah to other non-Jews; (4) that kabbalistic works would be targeted by the Inquisition in Rome and would suffer a fate similar to that of the books confiscated in 1553.⁵² Basola's about-face angered other rabbis, including his student Immanuel of Benevento, who continued to print

⁴⁸ This dispute has merited scholarly attention. See Assaf, *Texts and Studies*, 238–46; Tishby, "Controversy," 131–82; Kupfer, "Printing the Zohar," 302–18; Boksenboim, *Letters of Jewish Teachers*, 14–15; nos. 143–45, pp. 270–78; Hacker, "Newly Discovered Letter," 120–30 (where he cites additional studies).

⁴⁹ See Tishby, "Controversy," 131–37, 148–51.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 158–65.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 160–62; Lamdan, "Basola," 66.

kabbalistic works in the course of that year.⁵³ Evidently Basola's *herem* was not efficacious as kabbalistic works, among them the *Zohar*, were printed shortly after its enactment.⁵⁴

Last but not least, shortly before his departure for Eretz-Israel in 1560, Basola was involved in the preparation of the prenuptial agreement between Samuel Venturozzo and Tamar bat Joseph Tamari.⁵⁵ The ensuing halakhic dispute among the Italian rabbis subsequent to the breaking-off of this match lasted for several years.⁵⁶ Thus we see that even as he was approaching eighty, Basola continued to function as an active member of the rabbinate. Like other of his contemporaries, he was clearly willing to take a public and perhaps at times unpopular stance on disputed halakhic issues.

The Kabbalist

The foregoing discussion has, I hope, shed light on Basola's prominence in the Italian rabbinate and on his wide-ranging expertise in halakhah, which we would expect a yeshivah head to possess. His involvement in the dispute over the printing of the *Zohar* not only provides evidence of this halakhic expertise, it reflects Basola's intense interest in kabbalah. Judah Aryeh Modena attested that Basola was "a great sage in kabbalah,"⁵⁷ and earlier we saw that Basola studied under the prominent kabbalist Joseph ibn Shraga of Argenta.⁵⁸ Let us recall as well that Basola's reputation preceded him to Safed, whose sages, including the kabbalist Moses Cordovero, gave him a warm reception upon his arrival there in 1560.⁵⁹

No kabbalistic works by Basola are extant however, with the exception of a recently discovered short commentary on *Nevuot ha-Yeled Nahman*.⁶⁰ It

⁵³ Tishby, "Controversy," 169–70; Lamdan, "Basola," 67–68.

⁵⁴ Tishby, "Controversy," 170–73.

⁵⁵ See Simonsohn, "Tamari-Venturozzo Divorce," 377; Lamdan, "Basola," 74.

⁵⁶ See Simonsohn, "Tamari-Venturozzo Divorce," 375–92; Bonfil, "Notes on the Tamari-Venturozzo Divorce," 19–28. See 19 n. 2 for a bibliographical note listing the relevant studies.

⁵⁷ Judah Aryeh Modena, *Ari Nohem*, 84. Basola's student Abraham ben Meshullam also termed him an "eminent kabbalist." See n. 7 above.

⁵⁸ As attested by his student. See n. 7 above.

⁵⁹ Judah Aryeh Modena, *Ari Nohem*, 84. For the citation, see n. 27 above.

⁶⁰ Found together with the text of the prophecies in MS. Paris, Alliance Israélite Universelle, H3A (IMHM, no. 2741), fols. 69r–99r. Basola's commentary is a condensed reworking of Abraham ben Eliezer ha-Levi's commentary, which is extant in several manuscripts. On Basola's commentary, see David, "Condensed Commentary," 197–98.

appears that Basola also wrote sermons with mystical content. Basola's nephew, the kabbalist Mordecai Dato, was evidently referring to these sermons when he noted: "I have seen it in the sermons of the great gaon, my uncle Rabbi Moses Basola, who spoke wondrous secrets concerning some of the words of this scroll."⁶¹ Although no collection of sermons has survived, three or four sermons by Basola are extant, including a mystical one on the weekly portion of *Mishpatim*.⁶² We can perhaps also attribute to Basola a mystical sermon on the afterlife, to which his student Abraham ben Meshulam appended the following comment: "This is according to what the gaon Rabbi Moses Basola of blessed memory said."⁶³ Two nonmystical sermons by Basola are also extant—one on the weekly portion of *Hayyei Sarah*,⁶⁴ and a second on the difference between intercalation in the Jewish and Christian calendars, which diverges from the usual sermon form.⁶⁵

Basola's contacts in the world of kabbalah extended to Christian kabbalists. He was particularly close to the French-Christian kabbalist and Hebraist Guillaume Postel, who translated the *Zohar* into Latin. A Hebrew source notes Postel's knowledge of this language: "There were two persons there [imprisoned by the Inquisition] who knew how to speak Hebrew, and said their prayers in the holy tongue, and recited psalms from the Book of Psalms daily in the holy tongue. One was named...and the other, Postillo."⁶⁶ In three letters, one in French and the other two in Latin, Postel fondly recalls Basola and his meetings with him both in Basola's hometown of Ancona and in Padua.⁶⁷ Postel also noted that it was from Basola that he learned in 1547 of the anticipated advent of the Messiah—sometime between 1560 and 1588.⁶⁸ Moreover, the Christian kabbalist indicated that his influence played a role

in priming Basola's support for the printing of the *Zohar* in 1557 (discussed above).⁶⁹

That Basola took an active interest in messianic and apocalyptic matters is indeed clear, and not just from the prior discussion. He even made a specific prediction that the "end of days" would occur between 1575 and 1578.⁷⁰ This apocalyptic leaning also found expression in his travel book. Basola prefaced his travelogue with the prediction by the well-known historian and astronomer Abraham Zacuto that the messianic age would begin in 1524: "I found this at the conclusion of Zacuto's principles [of astrology]; and it reads as follows: In 5584 [1524], in that year Israel will say 'This is our God; We trusted in Him, and He delivered us' [Isa. 25:9]."⁷¹ Moreover, during his travels Basola evinced interest in each and every rumor concerning the location of the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon River, devoting an entire section to this topic. The search for the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon river was intrinsically linked to the messianic expectations that repeatedly sprang up in Eretz-Israel during that period.⁷² Indeed, while in Beirut prior to his return to Italy, rumors of a messianic precursor induced Basola to change his travel plans. Of this Jew, reportedly in Safed, "they recounted...wondrous acts" performed while he was en route from Egypt to Eretz-Israel.⁷³ Basola, who certainly sought to engage this individual in a discussion of apocalyptic matters or the rumors of the Ten Tribes, now elected to return to Safed instead of proceeding immediately to Italy. Upon his arrival there he was

⁶⁹ See Tishby, "Controversy," 151.

⁷⁰ This prediction is explicitly mentioned in Basola's name in the brief treatise *Zemanei ha-Kez*, a short list of calculations of the "end of days" from the sixteenth century which was appended to Rabbi Yair of Correggio's *Herev Pippiyot* (MS. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Opp. Add. 4° 105 [IMHM, no. 21685], fol. 39r-v): "From 1575 to 1578 is the time of the advent of the Messiah as signified by [the verse] 'Pray send by whose hand you will send' [the Hebrew word for 'send' is equivalent to 1578—TRANS.]. This tradition is from R. Moses Basola of blessed memory." Tishby, apparently influenced by Mordecai Dato's prediction that the apocalypse would occur in 1575, and the fact that Dato was strongly influenced by his uncle in messianic matters, ascribed the nephew's opinion to Basola himself ("Cordovero," 129 n. 47). See also Tamar, *Studies*, 16–20.

⁷¹ An almost identical version of this excerpt was published twice some sixty years ago. See Löwinger, "Excerpts," 279; and Marx, "Polemical Manuscripts," 274–75. See also Beit-Arié and Idel, "Abraham Zacut," 177–79. It seems likely that Basola became acquainted with Zacuto's apocalyptic treatise during his stay in Jerusalem from 1521 to 1522.

⁷² See David, *To Come to the Land*, 88–92.

⁷³ For a discussion of this individual's identity, see sec. H, n. 2 of the itinerary.

⁶¹ In his introduction to *Migdal David*. Quoted in Tamar, *Studies*, 19 n. 46.

⁶² See Lamdan, "Writings," 173–74, 186–93.

⁶³ Found in his collected sermons, MS. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, Mic. 5470, EMC 218 (IMHM, no. 37234), fol. 181r–v.

⁶⁴ Appeared in Lamdan, "Basola," appendix 4.

⁶⁵ Ibid., appendix 3.

⁶⁶ Thus related Benjamin Nehemiah ben Elnathan who was imprisoned with Postel by the Inquisition during the reign of Pope Paul IV (1555–59). Quoted in Sonne, *From Paul to Pius*, 72. It was Baron, not Sonne, who identified this figure correctly (*Social and Religious History*, 13:403–4 n. 20).

⁶⁷ See Secret, *Le Zohar*, 55, 58 n. 1.

⁶⁸ According to Basola's calculation the word *ṭṭ* (the time of the end—Dan. 12:4, 9) stood for 190 solar cycles of twenty-eight years each. See Tishby, "Cordovero," 129 nn. 46, 47; idem, "Controversy," 150.

disappointed to find that this individual had gone on to Damascus.⁷⁴ The special appendix to Basola's travel book containing "Inquiries Concerning the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon River" will be discussed below.

In the absence of an autobiographical work on the pattern of Judah Aryeh Modena's *Hayyei Yehudah*, I have tried to assemble a portrait of Moses Basola that reflects his rabbinic stature, his wide-ranging interest in halakhah and kabbalah, his continuing relationship with his students and with Christian kabbalists, and his willingness to take an active role in the public sphere. For a further glimpse of this multifaceted intriguing personality, I will allow his travel book to speak for itself.

B. Basola's Travel Book

The book we know as Moses Basola's itinerary first appeared in a collection of treatises called *Shivhei Yerushalayim* (In Praise of Jerusalem) published in Leghorn (Livorno) in 1785 "by R. Jacob...b. Moses Hayyim Baruch."⁷⁵ This work contains a variety of short treatises, including: "These are the travels⁷⁶ of a wise clever man whose name is not known who went and made a circuit of Eretz-Israel in 5282" (fols. 15v–26v). Since that time *Shivhei Yerushalayim* has been published at least six times.⁷⁷ Our itinerary always appeared anonymously and, unlike other earlier travel books that were translated into European languages,⁷⁸ until its recent appearance in Spanish and French translation remained accessible to the Hebrew reader alone.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ See section H of the itinerary (fol. 82v).

⁷⁵ The date of publication appeared in the form of a verse from Zech. 2:16: "And the Lord will take Judah to Himself as His portion in the Holy Land, and He will choose Jerusalem once more." The words "in the Land" have the numerical value of 545 which stands for the year 1785.

⁷⁶ The title "Eleh Masei" was probably bestowed by the editor.

⁷⁷ The last edition appeared in Lvov in 1869. Also extant is a manuscript of this treatise, formerly part of the collection of Ephraim Deinard, which was copied from one of the printed editions. This ms. is presently housed in New York, Public Library, Jewish Items 44 (IMHM, no. 31171), fols. 22r–44v.

⁷⁸ For example, the itineraries of Benjamin of Tudela, Pethahiah of Regensburg, Meshullam of Volterra, and the letters of Obadiah of Bertinoro.

⁷⁹ In Spanish: José Ramón Magdalena Nom de Dieu, *Relatos de viajes y epistolas de peregrinos judíos a Jerusalén* (Barcelona, 1987), 33–38, 169–216; in French: Haïm Harboun, *Voyageurs juifs du XVI^e siècle: Moïse Bassola, Elie de Pesaro* (Aix-en-Provence, 1994).

The sole extant manuscript version of this treatise earlier than the printed editions is housed in the Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem. It belongs to a collection of treatises from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries written in various Italian hands (call number—Heb. 8° 1783, fols. 64v–91v),⁸⁰ that was owned by the Jerusalem rabbi Isaac Michael Badhab, a well-known collector of books. Our treatise was evidently copied by an anonymous scribe some time during the latter half of the sixteenth century. Like the printed editions this manuscript contains no ascription. There is, however, an allusion to the author's first name, Moses, near the end of the travel book. In an attempt to vouch for the veracity of his report, he stated: "In most of the places where I wrote 'they say' this was so that no one shall claim Moses is a liar."⁸¹

With the publication of the Ben-Zvi edition of this travel book in 1938 based on the above-mentioned manuscript, the identity of its author was definitively established.⁸² Azariah min ha-Adummim (de Rossi)'s treatise *Meor Einayim* provided the missing link between Moses Basola and the itinerary:

In Mantua, the learned Samuel da Arli showed me a pamphlet containing the journey of Rabbi Moses Basola of blessed memory to the Holy Land and the new things he saw during this journey in the handwriting of this gaon himself...and this is what the above-mentioned Moses Basola wrote: "The writing of the Cutheans is found on the coins."⁸³

An identical reference to the writing of the Cutheans is found on folio 87v of the itinerary, thus establishing the true identity of the author of our travel book. It now remains to examine "the journey of Rabbi Moses Basola...to the Holy Land" in light of what we have gleaned concerning the author's biography and his spiritual-intellectual stature.

⁸⁰ This ms. has two paginations: the first, from fols. 60r–86v; the second, from 65r–91v. I will refer throughout to the second pagination as this is the one found in the ms. itself.

⁸¹ Fol. 87v. This is an allusion to the talmudic dictum: "And I heard them say: 'Moses and his Torah are truth and we are liars'" (BT *Bava Batra* 74a). Isaac Badhab had also arrived at the conclusion that the treatise was authored by someone named Moses. See Ben-Zvi, *Pilgrimage*, introduction, 10.

⁸² For a brief review of the Ben-Zvi edition, see Shalem, "Pilgrimage to Palestine," 86–95.

⁸³ Azariah de Rossi, *Meor Einayim*, chap. 57, pp. 449–50. The reference is certainly to our treatise where we find the identical statement on fol. 87v. See Ben-Zvi, *Pilgrimage*, 10–11.

The Journey

Basola, whose conspicuous powers of literary expression can hardly fail to impress the reader, lucidly describes his journey and his visit to Eretz-Israel in strict chronological order. The book opens with his departure from Venice for the East by ship on 17 Elul 5281 (20 August 1521—65r) and concludes with his embarkation from the borders of Eretz-Israel, from Beirut, “on the sixth day of Passover” 5283 (5 April 1523—82v). Based on allusions to events that occurred near the journey’s end (69ff.), I surmise that Basola took notes throughout his journey and that the book received its final form upon his return to Italy. On the other hand, we must note that unlike other pilgrim accounts, Basola’s provides no information on his homeward journey,⁸⁴ which may indicate that he finished his treatise soon after embarking for Italy. Or, perhaps it reflects his intent (to be discussed below) to write a guidebook for pilgrims bound for Eretz-Israel; thus, he felt no need to devote space to his return journey.

Basola’s unmistakably authentic account opens with a fairly detailed but altogether lively and readable description of his experiences during the sea and overland legs of his journey (65r–70r). Like other travelers, he not only provides geographical data for the places he passed through en route, he adds interesting details regarding the Jewish communities in each. He also describes the ship on which he sailed east and its accompanying fleet (65v),⁸⁵ the nature of the cargo on board (65r), and the conditions at sea; for example, storms that both determined the route and/or caused delays (65r–66r). Basola devotes space to the prevailing economic conditions in the places he visited during the journey, citing prices, availability of certain food items, the common crops, etc. (65r, 66v–67v, 70r), and providing information on the local currency as expressed in its Venetian equivalents (66r–v, 67r–v). He also notes the special taxes the Muslim regime imposed on its Jewish subjects (67v–68v). He devotes space to descriptions of local commerce and crafts (65r, 68v, 70r–v). Nor does Basola hesitate to introduce a personal

⁸⁴ See, for example, Benjamin of Tudela’s itinerary in Adler, *Itinerary of Benjamin of Tudela*, 78–81; Judah al-Ḥarizi, *Tahkemoni*, editor’s introduction, xxxvi; Meshullam of Volterra in Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 200–208.

⁸⁵ Four or five Venetian ships generally sailed East together. See Newett, *Casola*, introduction, 43. Elijah of Pesaro noted in his travel letter from 1563: “Five galleys sailed together; three to Alexandria, and two to Beirut” (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 180). See also David, “New Sources Describing Travel,” 324–25.

note; for example, his detailed description of the severe injury he inadvertently suffered while traveling overland from Tyre to Safed, from which he recovered in the space of a few days (69v–70r).

Basola’s sea journey took him first through various Adriatic port cities and then to islands in the Aegean; he sailed via Venice, Pola, Lissa (on the Slavonian coast), Saseno, Corfu, Cephalonia, Zante, Modone, Canea (Crete), Paphos (Cyprus), Famagusta (Cyprus), and Tripoli. This was evidently the most common sea route from Venice to the East.⁸⁶ When occasional deviations from this route occurred, they could result either from weather conditions, the need to load or unload goods at various ports off the usual route, or the ever-present threat of piracy in the Mediterranean basin. The Venice-Tripoli leg of the journey took Basola a month, from 23 August to 23 September 1521.⁸⁷

From Tripoli, Basola continued his journey overland to Eretz-Israel on 29 Tishri (30 September) 1521. He proceed south via the coastal road, making stops en route to Safed at Beirut, Batroun, Sidon, Sarafand, Tyre, and Mashuk. We must note, however, that other options were available to the traveler en route from Tripoli to the Galilee. In the late fifteenth century there were two alternate routes: a land route that hugged the shore but which was more dangerous because of Corsair attacks, or a longer but safer route through Damascus. In his letter from Jerusalem (1495), an anonymous traveler noted that while in Beirut he debated which of the two to follow: “We were uncertain whether we should proceed via Damascus or Sidon, which was closer to Beirut, only half-a-day’s journey, and part of Eretz-Israel...but upon hearing that that route was plagued with Corsairs [pirates; highway robbers] I decided not to go with them...and I elected to go via Damascus.”⁸⁸ From his stop in Famagusta en route to Eretz-Israel in 1563, a

⁸⁶ We find an almost identical route described by the Italian pilgrim Canon Pietro Casola who left Italy in 1494 (Newett, *Casola*). Other pilgrims who followed a similar route are: an anonymous traveler who left for Eretz-Israel in 1495 (Yaari, *Letters*, 146–48); Elijah of Pesaro who made his journey in 1563 (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 180–84); Shemaiah min ha-Nearim who sailed from Venice to Tripoli in the early seventeenth century (David, “New Sources Describing Travel,” 329–32).

⁸⁷ This was the usual sailing time from Venice to the East. According to Obadiah of Bertinoro, it took “forty days” to sail from Venice to the East (Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 82 [Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 243]). In 1495 an anonymous traveler wrote: “We traveled from Venice to Beirut in 34 days” (Yaari, *Letters*, 148).

⁸⁸ Yaari, *Letters*, 149.

later informant, Elijah of Pesaro, passes on the hearsay information he acquired: "He who wishes to go from Tripoli to Safed should first make the three-day journey to Damascus from which it is another three-day journey to Safed. And it is necessary to wait many days in each place for a group that is going from place to place." He went on to state: "And they now say that this route is more dangerous than it used to be and quite expensive."⁸⁹ In any event it is not clear whether Basola proceeded via Sidon because it was more convenient than the Damascus route, of which he makes no mention, or because the Damascus route was already unsafe in his day.

Basola's travels within Eretz-Israel proper began in Safed, where he remained for a week, from Tuesday, the 14th of Marḥeshvan, until Tuesday, the 21st of Marḥeshvan (15–22 October) 1521. Basola provides rich detail concerning Safed, describing its geographical setting and his impression of the city's solid economic base: its diversified industrial and commercial enterprise, in which its more than three hundred Jewish households played an essential role (70r–v).⁹⁰ Basola not only pinpoints the location of the Jewish quarter on one of the slopes of the mountains surrounding the city, he also notes the presence of three synagogues that served three different congregations: Spanish Jews (Sefardim), Moriscos (Mustarabs), and Maarabiim (North African Jews).

Venerated Gravesites

But Basola the tourist had a more defined goal in mind when he embarked upon his travels in Eretz-Israel—he specifically sought out venerated gravesites. In Jewish and Muslim folklore the *ziyara*, that is, prostration at the graves of saints (biblical figures, tannaim, and amoraim) was seen as a religious ritual and the gravesites with their monuments were purportedly endowed with miraculous powers. During the medieval period and down to the present, various ceremonies, some of which were linked to specific dates, were held at these holy sites.⁹¹ The institution of the veneration of saints and

⁸⁹ Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 186.

⁹⁰ Much has been written on Safed's central role in economic activity shortly after the Ottoman conquest. For a summation, see Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 46. For the Jewish contribution in particular, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 36–40.

⁹¹ For an exhaustive study of veneration of saints in Jewish (and Muslim) tradition, see Reiner, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 215–320. For the veneration of saints in the kabbalistic

its attendant rituals were current in Basola's day and remained so for generations.

From the early thirteenth century itineraries describing venerated tombs in Eretz-Israel circulated widely. Largely influenced by earlier itineraries, later ones were in some instances but the compilation and reworking of two or three existing lists. These lists were popular and had a wide distribution.⁹² But, unlike many of the extant itineraries, Basola's travel book is distinguished by a strong personal dimension. It is an eyewitness account of his visits to these places, aimed at encouraging and guiding pilgrims to Eretz-Israel (see below). To this end, Basola also appended to his itinerary a detailed chronologically ordered list of the places he visited, including the names of the venerated saints buried in each location (83r–v).

Basola's journey within Eretz-Israel in search of venerated graves was divided into two parts: its first lap took him from Safed and its environs in the north to Hebron in the south (70v–76r) and lasted approximately a month and a half, from 21 Marḥeshvan to 3 Tevet (22 October to 3 December) 1521; the second lap concentrated on the northern part of Eretz-Israel—the Upper and Lower Galilee (79v–82r), and lasted for over a month: from *Hol ha-Moed* Passover (from mid-April)⁹³ until 24 Iyyar (21 May) 1522. On his return trip to the Galilee, Basola revisited two places where he had stopped earlier: 'Ain Zaitun (71r, 72r, 79r), where he now rented a house for the remainder of his stay in the Galilee, and Meron (71r–v, 80v) where he participated in the well-attended *hillula* at Simeon bar Yoḥai's grave. This celebration lasted for two days, starting on the 15th of Iyyar,⁹⁴ and continued in Buqai'a (Peqi'in), situated near Meron, the place where, according to tradition, Simeon bar Yoḥai and his son Eleazar hid from the Romans for thirteen years.

On two occasions during his first round of visits to venerated graves, Basola saw fit to hire a guide—in the Galilee: "I rode with a fellow Jew to

context later in the sixteenth century, see Giller, "Sanctity of the Galilee," 147–69. For the Muslim traditions, see Goldziher, "Veneration of Saints," 2:255–341.

⁹² These itineraries have been widely studied. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*; and Reiner, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 240–48.

⁹³ Basola did not note the exact date.

⁹⁴ On the *hillula* at Simeon bar Yoḥai's grave and its origins, see Yaari, "Pilgrimage to Meron," 72–101; Benayahu, "Devotion Practices," 9–40. For the date of the *hillula* see the text of the itinerary, 80v.

make a circuit of the entire Upper Galilee and [the tombs of] its saints" (72r), and upon his arrival in Jerusalem: "I hired a certain Jew as my guide to several sites" (74r). In addition to the list of venerated gravesites mentioned above, Basola included in the appendixes a special prayer for recitation at these sites that he himself composed.⁹⁵ The inclusion of this prayer indicates the existence of a distinctive ritual linked to the veneration of *zaddikim* (see below), and at the same time also dovetails with Basola's active interest in the kabbalistic realm. It perhaps also provides a glimpse of the mystical motive that directed Basola's steps to Eretz-Israel.

Basola's captivating account covers his visits to some twenty-four sites venerated in early Jewish tradition (and to a large degree in Muslim tradition as well) as the sacred burial sites of the prophets and other biblical figures, of tannaim, and of amoraim. By no means did Basola simply acquit himself with a laconic description of the places he visited; rather, he gave a full geographical depiction of each and every site's physical features: its topographical setting, the structure of its monument, the nearby flora,⁹⁶ and, where relevant, the associated legendary traditions, including Muslim ones. Some of these traditions were longstanding and can be found in earlier sources, including other itineraries.⁹⁷ Nor did Basola neglect local traditions. Alongside his personal impressions Basola recorded what he heard from local informants at each site,⁹⁸ or from his Jewish guides.

We must now ask ourselves what if any relationship exists between Basola's account and these earlier itineraries. The possibility that Basola made some use of, or at least read, extant literary sources cannot be entirely ruled out, the firsthand nature of Basola's account notwithstanding. Of the earlier itineraries to which Basola's account bears affinity, the most important for our discussion is *Yihus ha-Avot*. Although the affinity between the texts has long been recognized, it was not until my discovery that one of its

⁹⁵ This prayer is found on fol. 88r-v of the itinerary. It appeared anonymously, of course, in the editions of *Shivhei Yerushalayim* edited by Jacob Baruch, and separate from the travel book.

⁹⁶ The inclusion of the characteristic flora near each site was not accidental. Early Jewish and Muslim folk tradition ascribed great sanctity to these trees. See Ammar, "Tree Worship," 155-62. See also idem, "Venerated Gravesites," 283-84.

⁹⁷ For example, the tradition about the Muslim woman who climbed the tree (fol. 71r), or that the entry of a menstruating woman to Hillel's cave douses the lights (fol. 71v).

⁹⁸ He occasionally prefaces these remarks with "they say," or "everyone testifies," (71v, 72v) and the like.

incomplete versions was in circulation prior to Basola's pilgrimage that it has become possible to definitely determine the direction of this influence. This text, purportedly "a letter that came from Jerusalem," opens: "The genealogy of the *zaddikim* and the *hasidim* who are buried in the Holy Land, Eretz-Israel.... These are the travels of the people of Israel who went from strength to strength to prostrate themselves at the monuments of *zaddikim*." This "letter" was sent from Jerusalem in 1489 by four unknown Jews, most probably to Italy.⁹⁹ Careful comparison of this version of *Yihus ha-Avot* and Basola's travel book indicates a close relationship between the two.¹⁰⁰ It is entirely possible that Basola saw a copy of this itinerary during his stay in Jerusalem.

It seems perhaps that Basola also made use of another list of venerated gravesites, of which a partially preserved copy from the Cairo Geniza has recently been published.¹⁰¹ Like Basola's travel book, this document contains a partial reading of the famous inscription from the synagogue in Kfar Baram: "It is written on the entrance of the synagogue, inscribed in stone in square [Assyrian] writing: ...¹⁰² may there be peace upon this place and in all dwelling places of Israel,"¹⁰³ which closely resembles the version quoted by Basola: "May God grant peace in this place and in all the dwelling places of Israel" (72v-73a). A previously unknown list found in a fifteenth-century manuscript contains a version of the inscription identical to that on the lintel

⁹⁹ This early version is found in MS. Rome, Casanatense Library, 222 (3104) (IMHM, no. 74), fols. 13v-16r and can be dated to 1489 based on a reference to the Jerusalem synagogue: "The synagogue is ancient and they always pray there. About fourteen years ago it was destroyed by the Muslims due to our sins, and through a great miracle the Jews came and rebuilt it." This clearly refers to the destruction of the synagogue and its rebuilding in 1474/75 known from other sources. See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 68-69. A later reworked version of *Yihus ha-Avot* titled *Iggeret Yihus ha-Avot*, based on the earlier one, was in circulation in 1537 and was evidently first published in Heidelberg in 1659 and subsequently by Michlin, "The Letter Yihus ha-Avot," 209-23. On the later version, see Zucker, "*Yihus ha-Avot*," 191-208. I too will refer to this treatise as *Yihus ha-Avot*, even though this was not the name given by its Jerusalemite writers. I intend to publish the earlier version in the near future.

¹⁰⁰ Parallel, albeit not totally identical reports are found in several places, for example: the description of Mercy Gate (74v); the burial site of the Davidic kings on Mt. Zion (74v); and the upright burial of Rabbi Meir (82r). Other examples are noted in the text apparatus.

¹⁰¹ Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 85-108: List A.

¹⁰² Indecipherable word. Ilan (*Tombs of the Righteous*, 94) reads תולטה which has no meaning. Perhaps it should be read תולטה. This matter requires further investigation.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

housed in the Louvre (Paris).¹⁰⁴ While it is not impossible that Basola saw and copied part of the inscription himself,¹⁰⁵ the difficulty it presents in decipherment may have led him to use a literary source for his reading. This matter, however, requires further study.

But live Jews also have their place in Basola's account. He notes the Jewish presence in some of the sites he visited, often providing data on the size of the Jewish population and its congregational affiliation. In addition to describing the more varied congregational breakdown of the Safed and Jerusalem Jews, Basola informs us that in 'Ain Zaitun, Shechem, and Kafr 'Inan the Jews belonged to the Morisco-Mustarab congregation (71r, 73v, 79v). Concerning Meron and 'Ammuqa, Basola commented on the absence of Jews, stating: "no Jews live there" (71r, 72r). Whereas the Jewish presence in the villages cited by Basola is substantiated by other sources, both Jewish and Muslim, the demographic data are not always in agreement with these sources.¹⁰⁶

Jerusalem

Basola visited Jerusalem twice. His first visit lasted for three weeks, from Monday, the 11th of Kislev (11 November) until the 1st of Tevet (1 December) 1521 (74r–75r). He then proceeded south to Hebron, less than a day's journey away, noting Hebron's small Jewish presence, only eight or ten households (75v–76r). He returned to Jerusalem two days later, on the 3rd of Tevet (3 December). His second stay in Jerusalem lasted for four weeks, until the 1st of Shevat (30 December) 1521 (76r–77v). During this period, he rented a room in "Pilate's House" (76v) which was located near the northwestern corner of the Temple Mount. Christian tradition viewed this building as the residence of the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate, as the spot where Jesus' tribulations began. It is not clear whether Basola resided here during his initial stay in the city.

Jerusalem was the highlight of Basola's pilgrimage and the length of Basola's description is commensurate with this status. He starts with a

¹⁰⁴ This inscription has been published by Zohar Ammar. See his "Venerated Gravesites," 288. See following note.

¹⁰⁵ The full text of the inscription has been published several times with minor differences. See the text, sec. C, n. 29.

¹⁰⁶ See David, *To Come to the Land*, 24–35.

physical portrait of the city, first describing the graves of the prophets, located by Jewish tradition in the Valley of Jehoshaphat (Kidron Valley) and on the Mount of Olives, and the gravesites of the kings on Mount Zion (74r–v). He then proceeds to delineate at length and in great detail the ancient urban configuration of the city: various sites on the Temple Mount—Midrash Shelomo, the Temple Gates, the surrounding wall, the Western Wall—Mount Zion, the Siloam Pool, the burial cave of Simeon ha-Zaddik, the Citadel of David, the city gates and bazaars. Alongside these prosaic descriptions Basola incorporated various traditions assimilated from local informants.

Basola also provided an expansive portrait of Jerusalem's Jewish community (74v, 76r–77v): its location—from Mount Zion until near the Temple; its size—some three hundred households; its congregational breakdown—Ashkenazim, many Sefardim, Mustarabs, and Maarabiim; its economic status; and its institutions—the synagogue (later mistakenly ascribed to Nahmanides) and the yeshivot. At that juncture, two yeshivot operated in the city, one for Sefardim headed by David ibn Shoshan and Abraham ha-Levi, and the other for Ashkenazim, headed by Rabbi Israel and Rabbi Peretz. Basola also mentioned several prominent communal figures, giving precedence to the last Egyptian *nagid*, Isaac Sholal.

Return Trip to Damascus and the Galilee

At the conclusion of his stay, Rosh Hodesh Shevat (30 December) 1521, Basola left Jerusalem, intending to return to Italy. He reached Safed only eight days later after experiencing delays due to heavy rains that washed out the roads. A week later, on the 17th of Shevat (15 January) 1522, he left for Damascus, arriving in two days. He almost certainly took the northern route via Jisr Banat Yakub (Geshar Benot Yaakov) to Banias and then to Damascus (77v–78r). He remained in Damascus until the 5th of Nisan (2 April) 1522. Basola evidently found Damascus impressive as he describes it in detail: its centrality in the economic sphere, in commerce in particular, and its sights (78r–v)—the wall, the citadel, the bazaars, the early Umayyad mosque, Gehazi's tomb. As for Jerusalem, Basola paints a portrait of the Jewish community there with its five hundred households and three beautiful synagogues—a Sefardi one, a Morisco one, and a Sicilian one, and names the community's leading sages. Two additional synagogues were located

nearby: one at the edge of the city called 'Unb, and one a mile outside of Damascus in a place called Jawbar, where the Mustarab congregation numbered some sixty households. While in Damascus, Basola considered the possibility of returning to Italy via Turkey. Upon being advised however of the greater danger, expense, and length of this route (79r), he returned to Safed, arriving there on the 9th of Nisan (6 April) 1522. He resided in 'Ain Zaitun, where he rented a house (79r). Several days later, during Ḥol ha-Moed Passover, he began his second round of visits to venerated grave-sites in the Upper Galilee and Tiberias (79v–82v) as noted earlier.

For reasons left unstated Basola's second stay in the Galilee lasted for many months. It was only in mid-Shevat (early February) 1523 that he left Safed for Beirut (82r) where he boarded a Venetian ship that docked at Le Saline (Larnaca) in Cyprus. He had planned to sail to Venice via the port of Famagusta which he reached on horseback. However, Basola returned to Tripoli, which he reached on Purim (1 March) 1523, providing the reader with no explanation for this step. He then proceeded overland to Beirut. Upon his arrival there he heard of "a certain Jew who had come from Egypt, proceeding from there to Gaza and Jerusalem, the Holy City, and then to Safed. And they recounted the wondrous acts he performed" (82v).¹⁰⁷ Basola decided to return to Safed in order to meet this individual, but, as we saw earlier, was disappointed. In any event, Basola now elected to remain in Safed for the first days of the Passover holiday, leaving for Beirut on the second day of Ḥol ha-Moed, and arriving the next day. On the eve of the seventh day of Passover (5 April) 1523 he sailed for Venice from Beirut.

Appendixes

Basola did not confine himself simply to a description of his travels. To his itinerary he appended several additional sections devoted to matters in which he took a personal interest during his stay in Eretz-Israel. Their inclusion again highlights the firsthand character of his account. The first of these appendixes examines the "*Takkanot* and local customs" in Jerusalem (84r–86r), some of which Basola reportedly saw inscribed on a tablet in the synagogue. Initially, he notes five regulations governing social matters and two additional ones related to the religious-ethical sphere. To these he

appended three regulations issued by the Jerusalem community governing communal affairs that were not inscribed on the tablet. He then went on to note the special customs of the Jerusalem synagogue. These included the prayer rite which closely resembled the Sefardic rite.¹⁰⁸ Basola listed several significant differences between the prayer rite in Jerusalem and the Italian one with which he was familiar and also noted the status of the precentors in the synagogue. Three additional paragraphs treat aspects of Muslim-Jewish relations in Jerusalem. The first is related to commerce; the other two deal with instances where the Muslim prohibition against wine affected the Jewish minority, which was permitted to use wine.¹⁰⁹ Basola offers his personal observations on the cases involving wine as well as on internal disputes in the Jerusalem synagogue. Once again the reader benefits from his keen powers of observation.

The second appendix is devoted to "Inquiries Concerning the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon River" (86v–87v). Basola attempted to trace every sign or hint of the presence of the Ten Tribes, whose discovery was perceived both by Basola and by his contemporaries Abraham ben Eliezer ha-Levi and Israel ben Yehiel Ashkenazi as a harbinger of redemption. Basola compiled several traditions about the descendants of the Ten Tribes who reputedly lived near the unidentified Sambatyon River, opening with a tradition (transmitted by a Babylonian Jew he met in Beirut) that placed the river in Babylonia where the Benei Moshe reside. Basola also cites rumors he heard while in Jerusalem concerning the presence of the descendants of the Ten Tribes in the land of Cush, noting in particular that one such individual, who had been taken captive and was later redeemed in Egypt, subsequently came to Jerusalem.¹¹⁰ This same individual reportedly told Nagid Isaac Sholal that "that there are many Jews in the south, kings and nobles who fight at intervals with the Indians." It seems likely that he was referring to the Ethiopian Jews who were involuntarily forced to take a part in the Christian-

¹⁰⁸ This further substantiates the superior status of the Sefardim who settled in Jerusalem following the expulsion from Spain and especially after the Ottoman conquest. On their social and numerical superiority, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 64–69.

¹⁰⁹ During the Mamluk period, a special wine tax was imposed on the *dhimmi*, as a means of limiting the use of wine (and thus its potential consumption by Muslims as well). See David, "Jewish Settlement," 58.

¹¹⁰ The question of this individual's identity has been debated by scholars. See the text, sec. J, n. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Regarding this individual see my previous remarks, and the text, sec. H, n. 2.

Muslim wars in that land.¹¹¹ Basola also mentions rumors he heard in Safed and Jerusalem that the descendants of the Ten Tribes were to be found in Sangli, that is, Cranganhore in Malabar, southern India (Cochin). Basola also reported two episodes that the Muslims interpreted as evil omens but that the Jews viewed as harbingers of redemption. The first took place on the Temple Mount during Sukkot, 1519, when the half-moon on the Mosque of Omar changed direction: instead of facing south (Mecca), it turned to the east. The second was the toppling of a tree that according to Muslim tradition had been planted by Mohammed.¹¹²

The third appendix contains two personal prayers.¹¹³ The first is the prayer to be recited at the monuments of *zaddikim* (88r-v) that I mentioned earlier. Its inclusion here strongly implies the existence of an established liturgical rite at venerated gravesites. I believe that, if not an actual innovation, this prayer represents a ritual not widely practiced in an earlier period. Although special prayers to be recited at the grave of Samuel in Ramah (Nebi Samuil—north of Jerusalem)¹¹⁴ and at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron¹¹⁵ are known from Cairo Geniza documents, these prayers are specific to places endowed with particular sanctity. By no means do they belong to the genre of standardized prayer suitable for recitation at the monument of any *zaddik* that we find in Basola's travel book. I conclude on this basis that such standardized prayers were apparently not in circulation before this period.¹¹⁶ Later in the sixteenth century, the importance of rituals

¹¹¹ See David, "Letter of Israel Ashkenazi," 119–20.

¹¹² Other contemporary witnesses attest these harbingers of redemption. See David, "Letter from Jerusalem," 53–55, 59–60.

¹¹³ These two prayers, notwithstanding their strong ties to the milieu of Eretz-Israel, were not included in Ben-Zvi's edition. They were, however, published several times in *Shivhei Yerushalayim*, fols. 37v–39r, where they appeared separately from the travel book and were not attributed to its author.

¹¹⁴ See Assaf, "Old Prayers," 71–73; Seidel, "Old Prayers," 135–38; Kook, "Prayers," 102; Zoulay, "Prayers Recited," 42–53; Werblowsky, "Prayers," 237–53.

¹¹⁵ The collection of prayers *Li-Yeshenei Hevrona* is located in MS. St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Antonin 101 (IMHM, no. 68459), various folios.

¹¹⁶ A fourteenth-century Ashkenazi source notes the custom of praying at venerated gravesites in Jerusalem and elsewhere. These prayers, however, were solely based on biblical quotations pertaining to repentance. See Grossman, "Ashkenazi Letter," 194–95. A single prayer to be recited at venerated gravesites was appended to a treatise devoted to calendrical matters, MS. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale, Heb. 1032 (IMHM, no. 15724), fol. 29v. This prayer, which dates to the fifteenth or the early sixteenth century, opens as follows; "May it be

at venerated graves was enhanced under the influence of the Safed kabbalists.¹¹⁷

The second of the prayers composed by Basola was intended for recitation opposite the Temple Mount (88v–90v). Pilgrims to Jerusalem in the medieval age recited prayers at the gates of Jerusalem. A sample of these prayers has survived in the Cairo Geniza.¹¹⁸ Basola himself may have recited the prayer found in the text daily at daybreak from his room directly overlooking the Temple Mount (76v).

The concluding section of Basola's travel book contains useful shipboard advice to travelers embarking for Eretz-Israel from Venice. As he put it: "He who desires to go to the land of life [Eretz-Israel] via seafaring ship should sail on a Venetian galley only, for they are safe from Corsairs and storms at sea." He advises the traveler where to find a comfortable cabin, at the same time noting what to avoid: the cargo hold, for example. He dispenses practical advice regarding the water supply: it is best that the passenger himself refill the barrels at each port; it is also advisable to pay the water captain two or three marchetti to keep the barrels filled, whereas a payment of two or three marcelli to the cook will ensure that he makes room for the Jewish traveler's pot. Basola also suggests that Jewish travelers pay the *comito*, the top deck officer responsible for the sailors, a ducat, so that "he will look after them and deliver them from the ill-disposed ones among them." Similar and even more detailed advice of this nature is found in other travel books, Christian and Jewish alike. These pilgrim accounts include descriptions of the *realia* of the times and shipping routes—the route from Venice, distances between ports, length of stay in each port, and the like¹¹⁹—technical information on the structure of the ship, with emphasis on where the best cabins are located, advice on how to obtain food and its quality, and further data concerning the captain and the crew.¹²⁰ In this respect Basola's itinerary belongs to a larger genre.

Your will our King, King of Kings, to have mercy on Israel and on me." I believe this prayer to be the exception that proves the rule.

¹¹⁷ For a summation, see Yanon, "Influence of Sufism," 170–79. There is, however, no evidence of liturgical activity in the context of this ritual. Albeit, this question merits further study.

¹¹⁸ See Fleischer, "Pilgrims' Prayer," 298–327.

¹¹⁹ Basola also includes this type of data in his description of the voyage from Venice. See sec. A of the itinerary.

¹²⁰ See David, "New Sources Describing Travel," 321–29.

Aims and Objectives

Although we have briefly sketched Basola's life and the contents of his travel book, we have yet to address what motivated Basola to undertake the arduous pilgrimage to Eretz-Israel and to record his impressions. The reader is struck by the strong sense that Basola felt compelled to record his experiences during his trip to the East and his prolonged visit to Eretz-Israel and by the distinct impression that, from Basola's point of view, the trip was a success, despite suffering severe injury en route to Safed (69v–70r). This trip evidently fulfilled his desire to become acquainted firsthand with the Land of Israel from Safed and its environs in the north to Hebron in the south and to pray at venerated gravesites, primarily in the northern part of Eretz-Israel. He gives explicit thanks to God for enabling him to make this trip: "I praise the Lord who counseled me to go up and to see Eretz-Israel in its destruction, and the Lord showed me the entire land. Thus may it be His will that I merit the privilege of seeing it rebuilt and the Temple established" (87v).

It appears that for a deeper underlying motivation for Basola's pilgrimage we must take a closer look at the role of messianic expectations in his life. I have already noted Basola's intense interest in apocalyptic reckoning and his expectation that the messianic age would soon commence, an interest that found expression both in Basola's curiosity regarding the incipient signs of redemption that took place in 1519 on the Temple Mount, and in his attempts to make inquiries concerning the descendants of the Ten Tribes (appendix 2). This surmise receives additional confirmation from Basola's citation of Abraham Zacuto's prediction of the "end of days" in the preface to his travel book, although Basola's own calculations predicated a later date for the opening of the apocalyptic era (as we saw above). We cannot rule out the possibility that at that juncture he already had in mind to settle in Eretz-Israel but was disappointed in his hopes. His dream came to fruition some forty years later when he moved to Eretz-Israel at the age of eighty.

But we cannot dismiss Basola's book simply as a travel diary that records the impressions of the pilgrim as he prays at a venerated gravesite or basks in Jerusalem's unique urban atmosphere. Rather, Basola envisioned his treatise primarily as a useful guide whose purpose was to provide western European Jewish pilgrims and potential settlers in Eretz-Israel with helpful information for planning their voyage to Eretz-Israel. He attempts to remove potential obstacles from their path, particularly those based on lack of experience in

foreign places so different from their homelands. We must also note that improved conditions in Eretz-Israel consequent upon the Ottoman conquest provided an impetus for pilgrims and settlers to make their way east.¹²¹

By their very nature, Basola's lively descriptions leave no doubt as to the true aim of his treatise in which the traveler and his needs remain tantamount. The account of the sea voyage contains matters of interest to the traveler: climatic conditions; the ship's layout; distances between ports; topographical descriptions of the urban ports where the ship docked; the basic commodities available in each port and their lower prices as compared to his native land. Moreover, for those places where a Jewish community existed, Basola makes certain to provide data regarding the condition of the Jews there. Consistent with his interests as a banker and financier, Basola also notes the currency in circulation, comparing it to the Venetian one. Nor does Basola ignore the difficulties attendant upon the land journey: taxes on merchandise, the special toll paid by Jews proceeding via caravan from Tripoli to Safed, danger from highway robbers. And, as we have seen, he specifically devoted a section of his treatise to detailed advice for travelers following the pilgrim route to Eretz-Israel.

Basola's descriptions of his travels within Eretz-Israel also conform to what I see as his broad aim. There is a reassuring ambience in his detailed physical descriptions of his travels to pray at venerated graves, sites he himself visited, to which he further adds local color in the form of stories and traditions. For Jerusalem, he provides a more expansive portrait both of its ancient sites, and of its current social and religious practices, comparing the local Sefardic-type rite to the Italian one (appendix 1). Moreover, the inclusion of his personal versions of prayers to be recited at venerated gravesites and when viewing the Temple Mount in the context of a travel book is also indicative of Basola's intent: to create a useful handbook for the pilgrim-traveler.

Consistent with this conception of creating a practical guidebook, it appears that either Basola himself or an anonymous copyist, who may have received instructions directly from Basola, also gave thought to preparing the text for publication. Examination of the manuscript provides graphic evidence for this intent: (1) new paragraphs are indicated by writing the first word in the right margin; (2) a list of venerated gravesites arranged in

¹²¹ See David, *To Come to the Land*, passim.

chronological order of Basola's visit was appended to the description of his travels (83r-v; before the appendixes); (3) after each prayer (appendix 3), the author or the copyist added a brief rubric for an additional liturgical ritual (88v, 90v); and (4) an imaginary map of Eretz-Israel was attached to the manuscript. While the map has no direct connection with Basola's book, as many places mentioned in the book are missing from it and some that appear are spelled differently, its inclusion may well indicate that the manuscript was being prepared for publication.¹²² While, as we have seen, this book was not actually published until two-and-a-half centuries later and then anonymously, it is still possible to identify many of the sites and sights Basola describes. I can only hope that the reader of this English translation will imbibe the flavor of the travel account bequeathed to us by this rabbi and will derive benefit from his keen eye and his practical nature.

THE ITINERARY OF RABBI MOSES BASOLA

¹²² Ben-Zvi simply noted that this map showed the places visited by this tourist (*Pilgrimage*, 23). On the problematic connection of this map to the text, see Shalem, "Pilgrimage to Palestine." Shalem concluded that the map indeed belongs to the travel book (*ibid.*, 90-93). An opposing point of view was taken by Benvenisti, "Map," 115-23, where he argues that the map was actually closely connected to Estori ha-Parfi's *Kaftor va-Ferah*. See also Vilnay, "Hebrew Cartography," 74-75.

[A. The sea voyage from Venice to Tripoli]*

[65r] In the name of the Lord, the God of Israel, I boarded the galley^a on Tuesday, the 17th of Elul 5281¹ [20 August 1521] the weekly portion of “blessed shall you be in your goings” [Deut. 28:6]. May God in his mercy bring me to my destination in peace, and return me to my home in peace,² in fulfillment of the biblical verse: “The Lord will guard your going and coming” [Ps. 121:8].

The galley is seventy cubits in length and approximately eighteen in width. I saw most of the goods loaded on it³ with my own eyes as my berth was

* Due to the difficulty of determining the exact spelling of the Italian words interspersed by Basola in the text, we have provided the modern spelling of these words without, in most cases, attempting to reproduce his spelling. Especially problematical are the exact transcriptions of *yod* and *vav*, *resh* and *dalet*, *kaf* and *bet*.

^a *galea*—has been translated as “galley” throughout.

A. The sea voyage from Venice to Tripoli

¹ All of the years in the itinerary appear in shortened form, with no indication of the millennium. For the sake of clarity the millennium has been added throughout the translation without square brackets—TRANS.

² We are unable to ascertain where Rabbi Moses Basola resided upon his return to Italy. From his account, it is clear that he lived in various towns in Italy. See the introduction, and the notes below.

³ At that time, and in an earlier period as well, travelers and pilgrims sailed on Venetian cargo ships bound for the East. Their main destinations were the port cities of Alexandria, Tripoli, and Beirut. See Grabois, “Passengers,” 160–61, 164.

situated in the cargo hold;^a these included woolen garments⁴ of every color and much kersey.^b There was no black clothing, only a little, for in the land of Syria they do not wear black, not even as a sign of mourning; nor is it customary to wear yellow.^{5c} There was also black velvet^d and tawny silk.^e The wares are mostly coral^f and notions,^g much paper, tin, lead, copper,⁶ and silver ingots, wooden utensils and decorated restored^h boxes, and pottery vessels with corks.⁷ⁱ

We left Venice at 16 hours on Friday,⁸ and traveled in a steady wind for an entire day and night until noon on Saturday, when a strong wind and storm blew up against us at sea, blocking our progress^j until 21 hours. Then both the wind and the sea died down and we approached the landward side. All night we were propelled by land breezes, and we reached Pola⁹ safely at sunrise on Sunday the 22nd of the month [of Elul—25 August].

Pola is an ugly, long, and narrow ancient^k city, whose small population befits its size. Its houses are lovely, and just outside the city there is a good

^a *gebba*

^b *carisee*

^c *giallo*

^d *verluti*

^e *rasi lionati*

^f *coralli*

^g *merceria*

^h The meaning of this word is uncertain. It may be *resiontate* or modern Italian *restaurate*.

ⁱ *stopparo*—probably meaning corks or stoppers.

^j *serrati*—hemmed in.

^k *antica*

⁴ The Hebrew words *beged/begadim* have been translated as garments or clothing, although they may also denote cloth—TRANS.

⁵ In Islamic lands, however, discriminatory legislation required that Jews wear a yellow turban. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 50. As the Jewish presence in Syria was marginal, there was little demand for this color clothing.

⁶ It was not possible to determine whether the two adjacent words should be read separately as translated above, or together, as copper ore.

⁷ Most of the consumer goods mentioned here are known from other sources. See Ashtor, *Levant Trade*; David, "Trade with Venice," 1–29.

⁸ Evidently, Basola spent three days on board prior to embarking from Venice, most likely due to inclement weather.

⁹ A port city on the eastern shore of the Adriatic Sea, in the Istria district. Additional Hebrew sources indicate that at times vessels sailing east from Venice docked here. See the letter of an anonymous traveler (late 1495) in David, "New Sources Describing Travel," 325; Elijah of Pesaro's letter (1563) in Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 180–81.

freshwater spring. Near the spring there is a large round building with arched^a windows. It is marvelous. It is called the arena^b and they say it was Orlando's palace.¹⁰ On the other side of the city, about a half mile distant, is another building that they declare was for his love trysts. They assert moreover that a passage led from one to the other, and that both were constructed by demons. Along the path between them are box-like stone sepulchers,^c some three hundred in all; a few still contain bones. The non-Jews there are good-natured and do not despise Jews,¹¹ even if they wear green.¹² Food is plentiful and cheap.¹³ But the bread is black; it is palatable nonetheless. This is also the case [65v] in Corfu and Zante. The currency in circulation there is the same as in Venice. We embarked from Pola together with the lead ship,^{14d} which is a galley exactly the same in length and width as the other one called an escort ship.^e The commanding officer in charge of both is stationed on the lead ship, by his order they dock and by his order they set sail. This lead ship reaches Pola eight or ten days in advance of the escort ship. From that point on, they sail together and do not part company.¹⁵

^a *volte*

^b *l'arena*

^c *sepulture*

^d *capitania*

^e *conserva*

¹⁰ This is the ancient Roman amphitheater which is still standing. For another brief description of Pola that also mentions Orlando's palace, see Elijah of Pesaro's letter (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 180–81). See also Fischer, *Das römische Pola*, 123–39.

¹¹ This may indicate that there were Jews residing in Pola at that time. Earlier, however, on his return journey from Eretz-Israel in 1481, Meshullam of Volterra noted that no Jews resided there. See Yaari, *Meshullam of Volterra*, 86 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 207).

¹² The Jewish turban was yellow. However, contemporary Hebrew sources refer to it as green. See David, "Letter of Israel Ashkenazi," 118. I surmise that the reference is to a yellowish light green.

¹³ In 1563 Elijah of Pesaro noted that he was unable to purchase any food (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 181). Evidently, conditions had changed by the time he made his trip, perhaps because of drought or some other disaster.

¹⁴ The commanding officer's ship. Three or four additional ships sailed under his command. The function of the ship that brought up the rear, called the *conserva*, was to defend the entire fleet. A similar description appeared in Elijah of Pesaro's letter (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 169–70). In his letter (1495), the anonymous traveler recommends traveling on the lead ship (David, "New Sources Describing Travel," 325–26).

¹⁵ In 1495 the anonymous traveler also noted that it was the practice for Venetian ships from

With God's gracious assistance we left Pola at 15 hours on Tuesday the twenty-fourth of that month [27 August] in a moderate wind. On Wednesday and on Thursday as well, it was calm,^a and we traveled mainly at night propelled by land breezes. At daybreak on Thursday we were opposite Lissa, a hundred miles distant from Pola. There I saw two rocky promontories called *scogli* in the middle of the sea. They are inhabited by Slavonians.^b Two Slavonians from the second promontory, which is called St. Andreas, boarded the ship in order to solicit funds in the saint's name. On Friday and Saturday there was a favorable wind, and on Sunday morning we reached Saseno, which is one hundred miles from Corfu. Near nightfall we were eighteen miles from Corfu. At that point, the sea narrows to the width of a river, and it is hemmed in by mountains on both sides; in one place its width is no more than a mile. And with the Almighty's help we reached Corfu safely on Monday night, which was the first night of Rosh Hashanah 5282 [2 September 1521]. Corfu is seven hundred miles from Venice.

Corfu has a very large, wide and long outlying district,^c where all the varied shops^d are located. Within the citadel walls,^e mainly Jews reside; their houses are ugly and narrow. Recently many Jewish homes were knocked down in order to construct two walls with a trench between them. Because of our iniquities, a large beautiful synagogue was also destroyed. Due to the lack of space, many Jews went to live in the outlying district. The entire congregation numbers some two hundred households, and there are three synagogues: one in the outlying district and two inside the walls. The majority of the Jews are Greek,^f and the minority Sicilian.^g The second outer wall is built on bedrock and there are two strongly fortified citadels.

^a *bonaccia*

^b *slavoni*

^c *borgo*—Note that where "outlying district" appears again in this paragraph it reflects the use of *borgo*.

^d *botteghe*

^e *castello*

^f *greci*

^g *siciliani*

the same fleet to sail separately and then meet in Pola from whence they sailed together (David, "New Sources Describing Travel," 325).

¹⁶ Little data have survived on the Jewish community in Corfu during the period under consideration, when it was under Venetian rule. See Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 17:81–83, 332–33.

[66r] The currency in circulation there is Turkish aspers;^a fifty-three equal a Venetian ducat. And the *marcello* is equivalent to one hundred *tornesi*, that is four aspreys equal four *torni*,¹⁷ and each asprey equals twenty-four *tornesi*, which are Venetian *bagattini*. They also use the new Venetian coin¹⁸ but there is a difference of ten *tornesi* to the *marcello*. We traveled on from there on the Fast of Gedaliah, but in the absence of wind, our progress was slow. It remained thus all day on Thursday, but early Friday night a fair strong wind blew up and we sailed all night. At daylight we sailed past lofty mountains on the left called Cephalonia, fifty miles from Zante. With God's gracious assistance we reached Zante safely at 21 hours on Friday, the 5th of the month [of Tishri; 6 September 1521].

Zante is a distance of two hundred miles from Corfu¹⁹ and it is an elongated, narrow district^b almost a mile long, with low dilapidated houses. There are some thirty Jewish households there and one synagogue.²⁰ Everything is cheap there, fowls in particular. Ducks^c are plentiful.²¹ The currency in circulation is exactly the same as in Corfu. Above, on the summit of the mountain, there is a large fortified walled enclosure where the governor^d has his residence. On the summit there are also beautiful gardens where a variety of vegetables are cultivated. We left Zante after the Sabbath's end. On Sunday, the seventh [of Tishri; 8 September] we passed Modone which is a distance of one hundred miles from Zante.²² They say that it marks the

^a *aspri turcheschi*

^b *borgo*

^c *anatre*

^d *governatore*

¹⁷ I believe that this phrase should have been erased; unlike other phrases in the ms., it was, however, not crossed out.

¹⁸ In all likelihood the new Venetian ducat.

¹⁹ The same distance was noted by Elijah of Pesaro (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 183) and by the traveler Shemaiah min ha-Nearim in his early-seventeenth-century letter (David, "New Sources Describing Travel," 331).

²⁰ Elijah of Pesaro noted: "In it there is one Jewish congregation comprised of some twenty households" (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 183). Little data have survived concerning this Jewish community. See Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 17:84, 333–34.

²¹ The ready availability of fowl in Zante is mentioned by Elijah of Pesaro who notes, however, that "everything sold is expensive" (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 183).

²² Cf. Elijah of Pesaro: "Modone is 150 miles from Zante" (*ibid.*, 184).

halfway point on the journey from Venice to Beirut.²³ On Monday the eighth [of Tishri; 9 September] there was a calm.^a We made but little headway. On Monday night there was rain and an unfavorable wind from midnight on. On Tuesday morning, the eve of the Day of Atonement, we were opposite a rocky island^b named Cerigo, a large round promontory^c in the middle of the ocean which is two hundred miles from Zante.²⁴ Then a strong northerly wind came and we were forced to ride out the waves and to make a detour around the island of Candia [Crete]. For all of the Day of Atonement and the following night the wind was strong and the sea stormy. But we felt no fear, for a galley is seaworthy in a storm. On Friday the twelfth [of Tishri; 13 September] we were at the other tip [66v] of the island of Candia, at the city called Canea;²⁵ from there until the tip of the island of Cyprus which is called Baffo [Paphos] it is four hundred and fifty miles by way of the Gulf of Adalia.²⁶ We sailed through it all of Saturday and Sunday without sighting land. The wind was strong. On Monday morning, the first day of the holiday [of Sukkot] we were opposite Baffo which is two hundred miles from Famagusta. At daybreak on Wednesday the seventeenth [of Tishri; 18 September] we reached Famagusta safely, praised be the living God. They say that the distance from Zante to Famagusta is a thousand miles in a straight line through the Rhodes Canal. But our route was three hundred miles longer.²⁷

Famagusta is a large city like Fano, surrounded by fortified walls with two exceedingly strong beautiful gates and lovely houses within. The attractive main street fronts the governor's court and the beauty of his palace fits its setting. Meat, that is, prime sheep and geldings, is exceedingly cheap and

^a *bonaccia*

^b *isola*—the translation "island" reflects the use of *isola* throughout.

^c *scoglio*

²³ Cf. Elijah of Pesaro: "Modone...is the midway point on the journey from Venice to Famagusta" (ibid.).

²⁴ The island of Cerigo lies northwest of Crete.

²⁵ Basola makes no reference to the Jewish community here. On the Jews in Canea including the period under consideration, see Markus, "Jews in Canea," 161–74; Arbel, "Able-Bodied Jews in Chaniá," 21–33.

²⁶ Named for the Turkish port of Adalia (present-day Antalya).

²⁷ Elijah of Pesaro also noted: "We docked at Famagusta which is 1,300 miles from Zante" (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 184).

eggs and fowl are plentiful. The city is also renowned for its pomegranates, grapes, and a variety of vegetables. Only bread was expensive then because of the invasion of grasshoppers that year, but upon my return trip bread and grain were very inexpensive. Most of the galley's crewmembers purchased wheat then to import to Venice. There, and in Corfu and Zante as well, a Jew will not touch bread or other foodstuffs unless he first purchases them, for the Greeks do not eat or drink anything a Jew has touched.²⁸ The Jews there are few and ill-natured; there are approximately twelve Jewish households. There is hatred and conflict between them and most of them drink forbidden wine. They are Sicilian. In front of their handsome well-appointed synagogue there was a *sukkah* in which I ate and slept on the ground all the days of *Hol ha-Moed*. I thank God for his goodness.²⁹

Most of the gold currency there is of different denominations, and the value in *bisanti* is indicated on each. A *bisanto*, namely twelve *marchi*, has the same value as a *sesto Ferrareso*.³⁰ [67r] The Venetian ducat is worth but twelve *marcelli*, but for merchandise it is valued at thirteen *marcelli*. Gazan³¹ coins are in circulation, just like the others. And the new Venetian coin³² has the same value as a *marcello*, and *quattrini* called *querce* are in circulation, four to a *marchetto*, forty to a *marcello*. The wellwater is by and large not fit for drinking,³³ but there are many watercarriers who sell potable water; they

²⁸ For a comprehensive description of life in this city and its buildings, landscape, climate, economy, social structure, etc., see Elijah of Pesaro's letter (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 186–96). Some reference to the city's economy is found in the letter of the anonymous traveler (1495) (Yaari, *Letters*, 147–48). On the "Greek" clergy's abstinence from food touched by a Jew, see also Elijah of Pesaro (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 192).

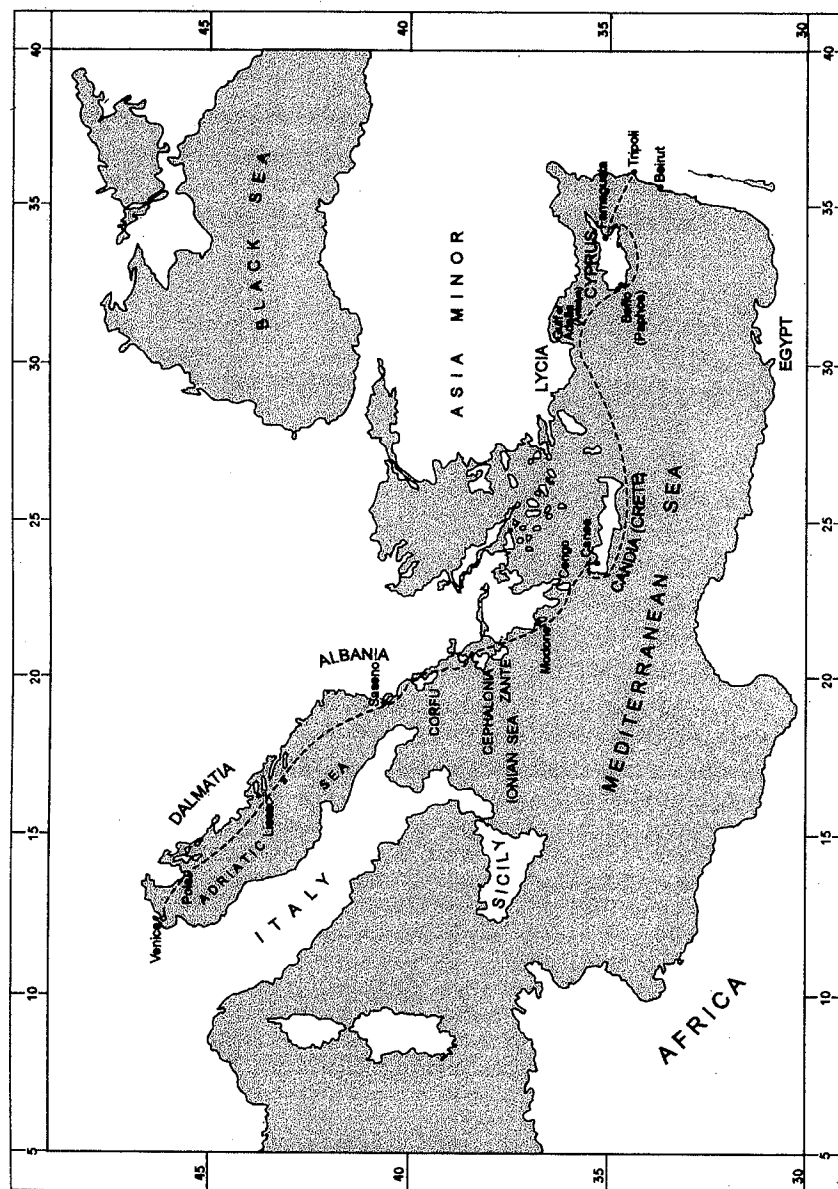
²⁹ Elijah of Pesaro is relatively expansive concerning this Jewish congregation (ibid., 189–91). He notes a population of "twenty-five households" (188). Like our author, Elijah of Pesaro underscores the moral laxness of the Jewish community there: "There is hatred, jealousy, competition, and enmity among them" (ibid.). Also: "I would not be won over to that people [Jer. 15:1], for they are men of wealth and deceit and enter an alliance with no man, worthless and reckless fellows who do not have the fear of God before them" (190). On the Jewish community in Famagusta under Venetian rule (1481–1570), see Roth, "Jews in Cyprus," 289–93; Baron, *Social and Religious History*, 17:78–79, 331; Arbel, "Jews in Cyprus: New Evidence," 23–40.

³⁰ A Ferraran coin.

³¹ Apparently, coins minted in Gaza.

³² See n. 18 above.

³³ This was also noted by the anonymous traveler: "The water is not good [for drinking]" (Yaari, *Letters*, 147).



Basola's maritime route from Venice to Tripoli (1521)
Map by Miriam Waldman

charge a half-marchetto per *soma*.³⁴ There is also a place to which many ships transported earth from Eretz-Israel; in ancient times they used to bury notables there, and it is called *campo santo*. This is a sign that the holiness of Eretz-Israel is universally recognized.³⁵

On Sunday night, which was the night of Hoshana [Rabbah], we traveled on from there. Because it was rumored that there were Turkish checkpoints^a at sea, the galley took on two hundred mercenaries and two light galleys^b accompanied us. Praised be the living God we proceeded unharmed and reached Tripoli safely on Monday, Shemini Azeret, the 23rd of September 1521. We left Venice on the 23rd of August;³⁶ accordingly an entire month passed between embarkation and docking in the aforementioned places.

[B. The overland journey from Tripoli to Safed]

Tripoli is renowned for its grapes, figs, and pomegranates. There are some who claim that it is part of Eretz-Israel, that it is to be identified as Sinim [Isa. 49:12].¹ But truthfully speaking, this is not the case. Its houses have beautiful interiors, and there are fountains in all the bazaars and in most of the houses. It is adorned by gardens and lemon and quince orchards, and is situated a mile and a half from the seashore. The air is not good for those who are not used to it; nor is the water especially healthy. Its plazas^c are covered bazaars, with shops^d on either side stocked with all manner of

^a *posti*

^b *galea sottile*

^c *plazzi (piazze)*

^d *botteghe*

³⁴ A vessel carried in a packsaddle.

³⁵ I found no other source attesting to this custom. *Campo santo* (sacred land) is Italian for cemetery. Perhaps the importation of soil from Eretz-Israel explains the use of a term indicating a high degree of sanctity.

³⁶ See the introductory section where Basola states that the ship left Venice three days after boarding on 20 August 1521.

B. The overland journey from Tripoli to Safed

¹ The use of Sinim for Tripoli was common in an earlier period and is attested in Geniza documents, for example. See, among others, the documents published by Gil, *Palestine*, 3:373, 532.

wares, and beautiful well-affixed portals^a like the ones in Venice. In general the city is filled with good things, cheaper than elsewhere in Syria.

[Tripoli] marks the point where the currency [67v] in circulation in all of the land of Israel begins. It was then the *muayyadi* [*medino*],² of which sixty-five equalled a Venetian ducat or one hundred and fifty dirhams.³ In the current new coinage, every medino which is called *qita*⁴ in Arabic is equal to five dirhams, and thirty qitas are a Venetian ducat, while ten qitas are fifty dirhams which is the local ducat: every Venetian ducat is worth three ducats in Damascene coinage. The dirham is four copper pennies. The gold ducat minted in Damascus called a *sultani*⁵ is equal to one hundred and forty dirhams, or twenty-eight qitas. These are the only four coins in circulation in these cities: that is, the copper penny called *fals*,⁶ and the qita which equals twenty fulus which are five dirhams, and the sultani which is twenty-eight qitas or one hundred and forty dirhams, and the Venetian coin called *qubrusi*⁷ which is thirty qitas or one hundred and fifty dirhams.

The Jews in Tripoli number some one hundred households, they are Sicilians, Spaniards, and Mustarabs. The majority speak Italian and have workshops and retail stores. Every adult male pays yearly taxes in the sum of nearly one gold ducat. This is the *kharadj*.⁸ There are no other tax burdens, although each shopkeeper^b pays a monthly fee of six dirhams to the watchmen who light the street lamps and keep a close watch. This is so in all of Eretz-Israel.⁹ They produce white wax there. A *raṭl* thereof, which is equi-

^a *portali*

^b *botteghe*

² The *muayyadi*, named for the Mamluk sultan al-Muayyad Shaykh, was in circulation in Egypt during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. See Balog, *Coinage*, 9–10, 74. European merchants referred to it as *maydin* which reflects Basola's spelling here. See Stillman, *Jews of Arab Lands*, 277 n. 3.

³ Or dirhem. On its weight and value, see Hinz, *Islamische Masse und Gewichte*, 1–8; Balog, "History of the Dirhem," 109–46.

⁴ On the changing values of the qita, see Cohen, *Economic Life*, 48–53, 92–95.

⁵ A very common coin in circulation in the Ottoman Empire.

⁶ A common copper coin in the Middle East. See Balog, *Coinage*, index.

⁷ On the *qubrusi* which was minted in Cyprus and circulated in Eretz-Israel as well, see Cohen, *World Within*, 1:40–41, 71, 123.

⁸ Poll tax (also known as *djizya*). For this tax during the Ottoman period, see Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 70–72; Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam*, 20–21, 24–25, 104–7.

⁹ Another reference to the compulsory payment to the watchmen by all of the Jewish

valent to six Venetian liters, is valued at sixty dirhams. Everything is sold by weight, even fruit, and this is the case in all of Eretz-Israel. Fowl is a bit expensive and geese are nearly impossible to find, but the meat of geldings is delicious. It costs eleven dirhams per *raṭl*, almost one marcello, and this is the case in all of Eretz-Israel. They have but one permanent synagogue there.¹⁰

Everyone—man, woman, or child—who disembarks from the galley in Tripoli pays four dirhams, and for each trunk or item of freight, even if it is duty-free, the fee is ten dirhams. As for dutiable items, the duty for each one [68r] is collected at Beirut rates. Therefore, the merchants do not unload their merchandise on land; rather they engage in trade^a on the galleys themselves. This is also because the stopover there is brief, only four to five days.

I left Tripoli on Monday afternoon, the 29th of Tishri [30 September], with the group bound for Beirut. We spent the night in a large khan^b in a place called Batroun, which is a third of the way. We slept outdoors, for that is the custom. On Tuesday, Rosh Hodesh Marḥeshvan [1 October] we left for "it was good" [Gen. 1:10, 12]¹¹ and we reached the river called Ibrahim,¹² which they say dates from the days of our patriarch Abraham—may his memory be blessed. Its waters are cold and very fresh, and it is spanned by a simply beautiful marble bridge; lovelier than the one in Rimini. We stopped for the night in the middle of the valley while it was still light. At night God sent a driving rain, and we were lying on the ground exposed to the elements without a tent.^c This is a third of the way, and we continued our journey at daylight. Five miles from Beirut there is a high bridge, fashioned like a dome, over the river called Alkalb.¹³ Long ago there was a stone dog there that was

^a *traffico*

^b *casale*

^c *tenda*

quarter's residents in mid-sixteenth-century Jerusalem is found in David ibn Abi Zimra, *Responsa*, no. 752.

¹⁰ On the Jewish community in Tripoli during the late Mamluk period, see Strauss-Ashtor, *Jews in Egypt and Syria* 3, index. Important data on this community in the sixteenth century have survived in the *responsa* literature and in various documents from the Cairo Geniza.

¹¹ Tuesday was considered an auspicious day because the phrase "it was good" appears twice in the creation account in Genesis—TRANS.

¹² This river marks the halfway point between al-Batroun and Beirut.

¹³ Situated in northern Beirut.

fashioned through witchcraft. If brigands came via the sea or the forest it would bark exceedingly loudly. The brigands knocked it down and it is still down there in the river below. At that spot, every Jew is taxed ten dirhams; this is the tax known as *khafar*¹⁴ and there are many such on the roads in Eretz-Israel.¹⁵

I reached Beirut safely on Wednesday, towards evening. Every Jewish adult male who disembarks from a galley in Beirut pays seventy dirhams which is approximately one-half of a Venetian ducat, whereas there is no charge for women and children.¹⁶ Overland travelers from Tripoli also pay nothing. In Beirut, trunks and personal belongings are not subject to duty if they are not [68v] commodities intended for sale. And books are entirely duty free. Merchandise^a is taxed at a rate of ten to a hundred, while garments and hats and anything worth a ducat or more are taxed at six to a hundred. The commodities taken on there for export to Venice include large quantities of silk, which comprise the bulk of the goods, along with many spices, scammony, and spun cotton. Unspun cotton, however, is transported by cargo ships and not by the galleys due to the lack of space. They also carry anchors,^b lifesavers,^c cotton cloths^d called *botoni*,¹⁷ wax, musk,^e raisins,^f and gemstones.

Beirut is a large city near the sea. There is little trade^g there, except when the galleys arrive, and then the cost of living is high. Its surrounding area is also pleasant, graced with a multitude of lemon, quince, and olive trees. Nearby, on the Sidon road, there is a plain full of masts; they are pines.^h At a distance of three miles there are good, healthful freshwater springs. The Jews

^a merce

^b ormezzi

^c ciammellotti/ciambellotti

^d tele

^e musco

^f zibibbo

^g traffico

^h pini

¹⁴ Toll or protection tax. See Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 72.

¹⁵ On the payment of *khafar* in Eretz-Israel, see David, "Letter of Israel Ashkenazi," 118; Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam*, 141–44.

¹⁶ That is, no poll tax.

¹⁷ *Sic*—should read *cotoni*.

there are Sicilian and number some twelve households.¹⁸ There is a prominent man [Jew] under the governor named Abraham Castro who stands at the customs gate, he determines what is taxable and does as he pleases.¹⁹ I left Beirut on Friday, the 10th of Marḥeshvan [11 October] and it was almost dark when I arrived in Sidon. It is a day's journey via the plain which borders the seashore for most of the way. And the *khafar* is paid three times on the way, each payment is ten dirhams, making a total of thirty dirhams for the journey from Beirut to Sidon.

Sidon was once large, but now it is but a little place [Gen. 19:20]; some of it has been submerged under the sea, and some of it has been destroyed. There are twenty Jewish households among its some five hundred houses. Most of them [the Jews] are Mustarabs who are benevolent and treat guests hospitably, which was not the case [69r] in all the places that I passed through. They have a small handsome ornate synagogue where I rested on the Sabbath, for which I thank the good Lord.²⁰ Wednesday is market day.

A quarter of a mile from the city I saw Zebulun's Tomb.²¹ Originally, it lay between two large columns and a carob tree, but the Muslim potentate built a domed house above it. On the grave itself there is a ledge covered with a black cloth and there are lamps in front of it in his honor. And the two columns are still there, one has been incorporated into the building and is visible through the window, while the other still stands outside the building. Near that tomb there is a large old building; its arches^a are still standing.

^a volte

¹⁸ Little data have survived on the Jews in Beirut during this period. See Strauss-Ashtor, *Jews in Egypt and Syria*, 2:121–22. Some information has been preserved in contemporary responsa. See, for example, Moses Trani (Ha-Mabbitt), *Responsa*, part 1, no. 76; part 3, no. 163.

¹⁹ The Abraham Castro mentioned here is not his contemporary by the same name who resided in Egypt and was director of the mint. On the latter, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 140–41. For the Abraham Castro who served as a customs collector in Tripoli and Beirut, see Arbel, *Trading Nations*, 29–54.

²⁰ On the Jewish community in Sidon, see Strauss-Ashtor, *Jews in Egypt and Syria*, 2:484–85. Documents relating to the Jews of Sidon in the sixteenth century have been preserved in the Cairo Geniza; see, for example, MS. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, Mic. 9160, 3; Cambridge, University Library, Or. 1081, 1, 72. Data have also been preserved in the responsa literature; see, for example, David ibn Abi Zimra, *Responsa*, no. 182; Moses Trani, *Responsa*, part 1, no. 108; part 2, no. 151; part 3, no. 62.

²¹ For additional sources that place Zebulun's Tomb in Sidon, see Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 86–87; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 114–16.

They say that it was Solomon's—may his memory be blessed—*bet midrash*. In front of it there is a freshwater well. The water is drawn by means of a flywheel with buckets.

I left there on Saturday night for Safed. Eight miles from Sidon is Sarepta²² and Elijah—may his memory be blessed—is at the top of the mountain. It is still called thus. Near the sea there is a house which is called Elijah's house. They say that the city was formerly on the seashore, but because of the threat of sea pirates they moved to the mountain top and settled there. On Sunday we passed near Tyre. Even though this is not the direct route to Safed, the camel driver chose this route both because it passed through the plain and because it was on his way home.

Most of Tyre is submerged in the sea; otherwise it would be an exceedingly large city. All its houses and bazaars were built in the sea like in Venice, and the Christians [Italians] call it Venezia Vecia.²³ When I had occasion to pass by there again I made a circuit of it,²⁴ for it is still large, and there are large ancient buildings there, and large churches built in Roman times, similar in design to the [69v] Italian monasteries.^a Only a mile away, in a village called al-Mashuka,²⁵ there are underground aqueducts formerly used to bring water to Tyre. I paid ten dirhams khafar there. On Monday night we slept at the summit of a high mountain near another village, and at daybreak watch we began moving, arriving at mealtime at a village named Ramiya.²⁶ The camel driver wanted to lodge there, for this was his home.

We set out for Safed on Tuesday before daybreak. At sunrise I was riding on a camel, seated on the saddle packs. While I was engaged in reciting the *Zemirot*²⁷ and preparing to don my phylacteries, we were passing through a broad valley with a large nut tree. Three camels were roped together, and I was on the middle one, when a branch of that tree struck me in the face,

^a monasteri

²² Present-day Sarafand, which lies on the seashore south of Sidon. Latin sources refer to it as Sarepta. See Vilnay, *Ariel*, 7:6409–10.

²³ Ancient Venice.

²⁴ See below, fol. 82r–v.

²⁵ This can perhaps be identified as Mashuka, near Tyre, which is mentioned in a fifteenth-century Arabic source; alternately, Basola may have been referring to Nebi Mashuk, on the outskirts of Tyre. See Vilnay, *Southern Lebanon*, 24.

²⁶ Located in the Tibnin subdistrict.

²⁷ Selected psalms recited preparatory to the main body of the morning service.

knocking me backwards to the ground. I landed on the ground, forcefully striking first the back of my neck, and then my spine. I was stunned by the blow to my brain and my bones were sundered by the blow to my spine. I fell with such great force that my sternum split and I was like dead for half an hour. I commenced the confession several times, but was unable to recite it. It was only with great difficulty that I recited *Modeh Ani*,²⁸ etc. And I have written this in order to recall God's mercies, for I experienced several miracles: first, that I did not die from the force of the backwards fall; second, that the last camel did not trample me with its hooves; third, for the Muslims had it within their power to kill me and take my cash, saying that I had died from the force of the blow, for I was breathless. Two wicked Jews who were with me continued on ahead, distancing themselves more than two miles from me, while I was left alone with [70r] two Muslims, and who was to instruct them what to do? And they, in God's tender mercy on me, took care of me. They bound up my ribs and placed me on the camel and brought me to Safed, a distance of twelve miles. All the while I was groaning incessantly from the pain in my sternum and fainting, for I was certain that my sternum was broken and that there was no cure for my injury. And thus I proceeded and wept, prayed and made my confession. And when I reached the city there was none to take pity on me; even if I cried aloud no one took notice, and I was wavering and wandering on earth [Gen. 4:14] until God opportunely brought to my hand a widow from Prague²⁹ and she bandaged and medicated me. Blessed be the Lord who did not forget his mercy and redeemed my soul from perdition [paraphrase of Gen. 24:27; Job 33:28].

Safed is the northernmost district of the land of Naftali, with a strong walled enclosure at the mountain-top.³⁰ The walled enclosure on the peak is surrounded by four mountains, two inhabited entirely by Muslims, and the slopes of the other two are completely covered with Jewish homes.³¹ They number more than three hundred households.³² The city has three syn-

²⁸ The prayer of thanks recited upon waking.

²⁹ The Hebrew has the abbreviated form: מפרא. I differ here from Ben-Zvi and Yaari who read this word as Ferrara, for in most cases where an apostrophe appears in the text it indicates the deletion of a single letter. Thus I restore "Prague."

³⁰ The early-twelfth-century Crusader citadel, whose remains are still visible today. See Benvenisti, *Crusaders in the Holy Land*, 199–204.

³¹ For the location of the Jewish quarter in Safed, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 95.

³² Ottoman *tahrir* registers indicate that in 1525/26, the Jewish population of Safed

agogues: a Sefardi one, a Morisco one, and a Maghrebi one³³ known as "Elijah of blessed memory's synagogue," for it is ancient, and they have a tradition that Elijah—may his memory be blessed—prayed there.

The city is filled with an abundance of good things and excellent foodstuffs: grain, wine, and oil in great abundance and cheap for he who purchases everything in its season. If it were not for the large amount of oil and grain that they export from there to Damascus, it would be worthless. All manner of succulent fruits are available there, and whatever is not available locally is imported from Damascus. Trade is widespread in this region, with shops^a for woolen garments, haberdashery,^b and spices. Many Jewish shops specialize in these three ventures; they import the haberdashery and the spices from Damascus and sell them in the city [70v] and at the time of the galleys they go to Beirut to purchase garments and other items. Many Jews make fixed rounds of the villages in order to sell notions and other peddleable wares, thus they are able to fill their houses with all manner of good things. In addition, there is profit to be made in the purchase of cotton,^c thread, wax, and scammony when they are cheap and their later sale at an opportune moment. Jews also sell fruits and vegetables, oil, cheeses, and other items in the bazaar. He who so desires can deal in grain, wine, and oil, each in its proper season. Generally speaking, there is much more trade^d in this land than in Italy, for the Muslims purchase more willingly from Jews than from

^a botteghe

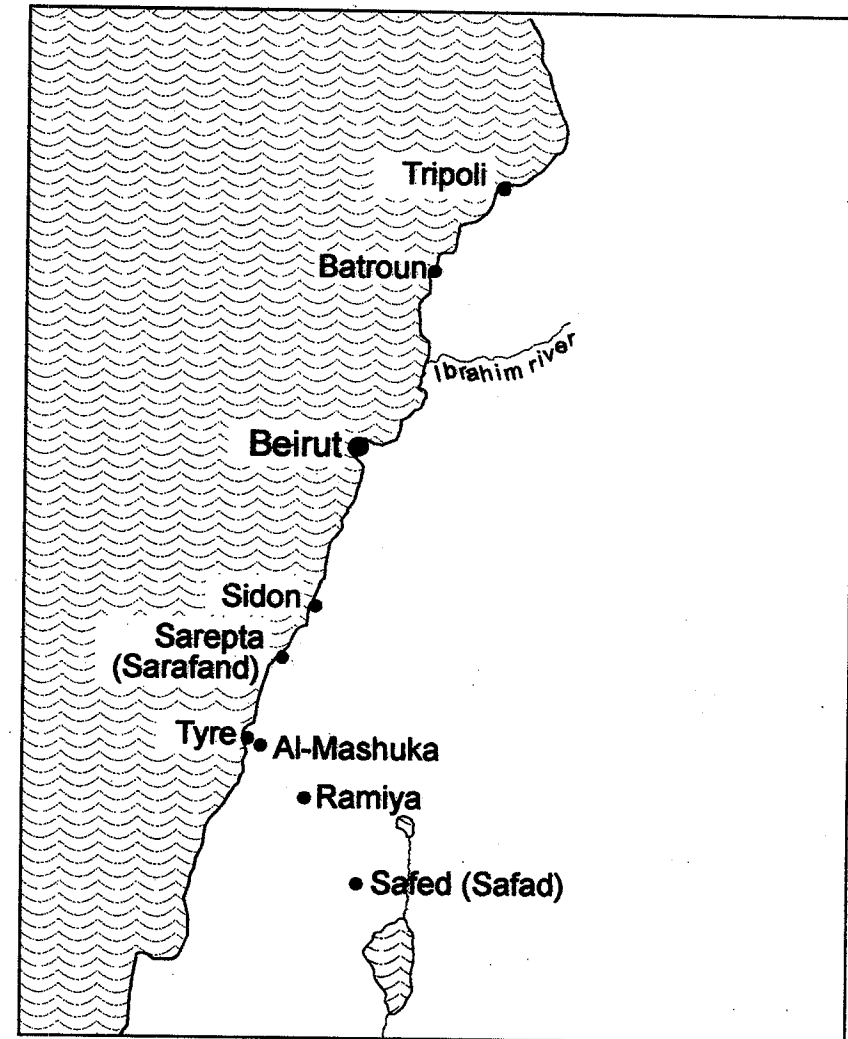
^b merceria—has been translated as "haberdashery" or "notions" wherever it occurs in this section.

^c cotone

^d mercadantesca

numbered 233 households. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 97–99. If, however, we take into account the presence of tax evaders, the two sources seem to be compatible. The demographic data noted here must also be examined against the background of outbreaks of anti-Jewish violence shortly after the Ottoman conquest that caused many of Safed's Jews to flee the city in early 1517. These riots occurred when supporters of the Mamluks attacked representatives of the Ottoman regime upon the dissemination of rumors that the Ottoman sultan had suffered defeat at the gates of Cairo. See David, "Pogrom of 1517," 190–94; idem, *To Come to the Land*, 97. Evidently, despite this setback, a few years after the beginning of the Ottoman regime the Safed Jewish community had been rehabilitated and had even grown in number.

³³ These were evidently the three main congregations in Safed at that time. There were, however, additional smaller congregations: Ashkenazim, Italians, Hungarians, among others. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 100–114.



Basola's land route from Tripoli to Safed
Map by Miriam Waldman

others.³⁴ But he who has no capital to invest in trade must be a craftsman. There are four types of craftsmen in demand in Eretz-Israel as a whole: weavers,³⁵ silversmiths, leatherworkers, and tanners, also builders. He who has the strength to be a *per diem* worker in this last field is well paid. A tailor also earns his living. On the other hand, one cannot expect to hire himself out as a teacher or as a house servant or as a shop assistant. Nor can one live at public expense, for the poor are many. Therefore, he who possesses neither craft nor funds should not leave Italy, lest he regret his actions and return, and a word to the wise is sufficient.

[C. A guide to venerated tombs in the Galilee¹]

I will now record the location of all the tombs of the righteous and the prophets where I prostrated myself and prayed at their gravesites. Blessed be the Lord who granted me this privilege. May he grant me as well the privilege of seeing Jerusalem rebuilt; and may the Redeemer come to Zion [Isa. 59:20]. Amen, may it be God's will.

[71r] On Tuesday, the 21st of Marḥeshvan 5282 [22 October 1521] I entered the building erected on Hosea ben Beeri's grave;² of the Jewish graves, it is the furthest from Safed. The *muallim* Zedaka the Karaite who lives in Damascus erected a handsome ornate house on it and a lamp burns there continuously, kept lit by donations from the travelers who come to

³⁴ For additional evidence of Jewish involvement in commercial activity in Safed, see David de Rossi (Min ha-Adummim)'s letter (1535) in Yaari, *Letters*, 187 (abridged English version in Stillman, *Jews of Arab Lands*, 290–92); David, "Jews in Mediterranean Trade," 21–28; idem, *To Come to the Land*, 38–40.

³⁵ The textile industry in Safed, especially wool and silk production, underwent rapid development in the early years of the Ottoman regime. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 37–38.

C. A guide to venerated tombs in the Galilee

¹ Throughout this section, extensive reference will be made to three scholarly works that summarize these traditions: Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*.

² Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 61–63; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 225–27; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 337–38. For another tradition citing Hosea's burial in Safed, see Gedaliah ibn Yahya, *Shalshelet ha-Kabbalah*, fol. 19r.

prostrate themselves there. Opposite there is a sealed burial cave; some claim that that is where his father Beeri is buried.

I was in 'Ain Zaitun [Ein Zeitim], a village a distance of a mile from Safed. There are some forty Jewish householders there,³ all Moriscos, and there are twenty-six Torah scrolls in the synagogue. Just an bowshot away from the village lies the tomb of R. Judah bar Elai and his son R. Yose.⁴ On the grave there is an almond tree that dried up three years ago. There is also a large field of olive trees nearby, a charitable endowment to the *ḥasid*—may his memory be blessed. They say that once a Muslim woman climbed the tree on the grave in order to gather almonds, upon which the other women told her to first ask the *ḥasid*'s permission. But she showered them with curses. She fell off the tree, breaking all her limbs. She then pledged the gold bracelets on her hands to the *zaddik*,⁵ purchasing olive trees with them. Subsequently others made pledges as well, and at present he [the *zaddik*] has four hundred olive trees. This episode of the woman took place about sixty years ago.⁶

On Thursday the 23rd of the month [24 October] I rode to Meron, a village half-a-day's journey from Safed. Midway there is a village named Qayama. Nearby, on the road, the son of R. Yose of Yokereth is buried.⁷ His father punished him for bringing forth figs not in season, as it is written in *Perek Seder Taaniyot Elu* [BT *Taanit* 24a]. The Muslims call it al-Mānosh.⁸ Meron is a fruitful place, with a good spring, but no Jews live there. There I saw the burial cave of R. Simeon bar Yoḥai and his son [Eleazar]—may their memory be blessed, but it is sealed, there is insufficient room to gain entry.⁹ On the cave above there are [71v] two lovely drawings opposite each other; R. Simeon bar Yoḥai's is slightly closer to the outside.

³ This figure is consistent with the data from Ottoman *tahrir* registers. The 1525/26 census showed a Jewish population of forty-two families. See Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, 9.

⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 142–43; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 352–55; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 312–14. On the special ceremonies held on the eve of Rosh Ḥodesh at Judah bar Elai's gravesite in the latter half of the sixteenth century, see Meroz, "Circle of Moṣhe ben Makhir," 54–56.

⁵ Judah bar Elai.

⁶ That is, circa 1462. This legend appeared in an earlier source, the letter of the anonymous traveler from 1495 (Yaari, *Letters*, 152).

⁷ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 156–57; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 363–64; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 357.

⁸ The "punished" in Arabic.

⁹ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 179–81; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 324–43; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 281, 286–87.

Afterwards, I descended the slope near Meron where the burial cave of Hillel the Elder and his students is located. It is a beautiful, large burial cave with vaults on either side. Each vault contains three stone sarcophagi with raised lids, and there are a total of eighteen sarcophagi in the cave. Hillel's is opposite the entrance. Outside the entrance, just as you enter the recess in the mountain there are two additional vaults with sarcophagi, one on the right and one on the left. The middle of the cave is spacious; there is standing room for more than three hundred people. The lid of Hillel's grave is slightly tilted, as are some of the others, and it is possible to insert a hand. They contain fresh water, which I drank. I found this remarkable. First of all, where does this water come from? And moreover, since it is stagnant, how can it be good to drink? And an even greater wonder: everyone swears that when a large group prays there the water immediately rises and spills over onto the ground.¹⁰ But in my day it was not so. They also say that another miracle occurs there, that if a large caravan of Jews comes, and each one lights lamps all around the interior of the cave and a menstruating woman enters, the lamps are immediately extinguished.¹¹ Everyone testifies and swears that this is the truth, but I did not witness it.

Afterwards I proceeded to the mountain opposite, where Shammai and his wife are buried.¹² At the summit there is a building made of exceedingly large stones, each wall is a single stone slab, and the slab that forms the roof is six cubits long and four cubits wide, and half a cubit thick. I cannot conceive how human beings set this stone in place. Inside that building two hollow stone sarcophagi [72r] are visible through the window. Below that same building there is a handsome burial cave with eleven niches all around where his students were buried. In the village above there is a synagogue built by Rabbi Simeon bar Yoḥai. Its facade is still standing.¹³

¹⁰ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 129–32; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 289–93; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 281–82. The water ceremonies near Hillel's burial cave on the 15th of Iyyar were well known in the medieval period, but were evidently no longer practiced in Basola's day. See Reiner, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 295–305.

¹¹ The case of the menstruating woman also appeared in an earlier source, the letter of Isaac ibn Latif from the latter half of the fifteenth century (Yaari, *Letters*, 96). See also Reiner, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 300–301.

¹² Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 129–32; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 293–95; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 281–82.

¹³ This is also noted in *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 15r.

I returned to 'Ain Zaitun the same day, and at daybreak I went to Safed, because Friday was market day. On Sunday the twenty-sixth [of Marḥeshvan; 27 October] I rode with a fellow Jew to make a circuit of the entire Upper Galilee and [the tombs of] its saints. We came to 'Ammuqa, a place that certainly fits its name. First you climb a very high mountain and then you descend to the valley, where there is a village of about sixty households, but no Jews. Near the village is the grave of Jonathan ben Uzziel.¹⁴ It has a stone marker built on it—to which a large stone gutter was later added—and a mulberry tree¹⁵ renowned for its beauty and for the thickness and breadth of its branches, the like of which cannot be found.

From there we proceeded to Nabratin where R. Jacob of Naboraya and R. Eliezer ha-Modai are buried near each other.¹⁶ And we turned and came to Dallata. There R. Ishmael the son of R. Yose is in one garden, and above, on the summit of the mountain, is R. Yose his father. There are no structures on their graves, only a mound of stones.¹⁷ We proceeded next to 'Alma, which is a large village in a fruitful plain full of all good. It has a Jewish congregation of some fifteen households,¹⁸ and a synagogue, where I prayed in the morning. Then I visited all the graves of the *zaddikim* there. Above, near the mountain, in the middle of a field there is R. Judah ben Tema's tomb,¹⁹ which is sealed. Further up toward the mountain, there is a large burial cave, with an inner chamber where [72v] his students were buried. On one side of the cemetery is R. Eleazar ben Azariah; on his grave there is a tree of the kind called pistacia²⁰ from which oil is extracted. At a small distance from there, in the direction of the road, lies R. Eliezer ben Hyrcanos; there is a fine monument on his grave which is in a vineyard. Nearby on this road lies R.

¹⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 152–53; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 295–96; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 321–22.

¹⁵ *Morus alba*.

¹⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 161; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 375–76; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 294–95.

¹⁷ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 157–58; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 360–62; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 202–3.

¹⁸ For unknown reasons the Jews of 'Alma are missing from the Ottoman census of 1525/26; they do appear, however, in the 1555/56 and 1572/73 censuses. See Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, 9.

¹⁹ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 144–45; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 376; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 200–201.

²⁰ *Pistacia palaestina*, from which turpentine is extracted. Basola used the Hebrew word בוסתן, also found in earlier sources as בוטם. See Ammar, "Venerated Gravesites," 286–87.

Eleazar ben Arakh;²¹ his grave is marble and has a large stone lid. They definitely state that about forty years ago the Muslims removed the lid in order to make a millstone, that many people carried it away to a distant place. Yet the following day they found it on the grave. Everyone testifies to this. Nearby lies R. Yose ha-Kohen,²² surrounded by a stone gutter.

A mile from there, in the direction of the second mountain, is the burial cave of the Babylonians. There lie Rav Hamnuna and Rabba bar Huna²³ as *Moed Katan* [25a] relates. It is small and lovely—there are eight burial niches inside. And we went on to a place called Ras al-Aḥmar; R. Zimra is buried there at the summit of a high mountain,²⁴ and a tomb has been erected over him. Due to its great elevation, from this spot a person can see the entire Galilee.²⁵ From thither we proceeded to Gush Ḥalav, which is called al-Jish. On the road opposite the village lie the adjoining monuments of Shemaiah and Avtalyon.²⁶ The sons of Sennacherib²⁷ are buried there as well, one in the village above, and one on the road not far from Shemaiah and Avtalyon.

Afterwards we went to Kafr Bir'im, which is a large village. The prophet Obadiah is buried there;²⁸ his tomb is marked by a large stone gutter below which lies his burial cave. Nearby there is a building in ruins, only two of its doorways remain standing. The following is chiseled on the lintel of the small portal in square writing: "May God grant peace in this place [73r] and in all the dwelling places of Israel."²⁹ And I was told that on another stone,

²¹ On both Eliezer ben Hyrcanos and Eleazar ben Arakh, see Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 121–24; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 303–5 (ben Hyrcanos); 374–75 (ben Arakh); Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 316–19.

²² A student of Johanan ben Zakkai. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 158–59; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 303; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 320.

²³ Both were Babylonian amoraim who came to Eretz-Israel. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 132–33; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 377–78; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 319–21.

²⁴ This is found only in *Yiḥus ha-Avot*. See Michlin, "The Letter Yiḥus ha-Avot," 222.

²⁵ This accurately describes this lookout point, the site of present-day Moshav Kerem ben Zimra.

²⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 184–85; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 288–89; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 198–99.

²⁷ Adrammelech and Sarezer. According to talmudic tradition, they converted to Judaism and Shemaiah and Avtalyon were their descendants (BT *Gittin* 57b; *Sanhedrin* 96b). See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 184–85; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 257–58; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 195–96.

²⁸ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 99–100; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 213–14; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 195.

²⁹ This is the small third-century synagogue on the eastern side of Kfar Baram whose

which fell down, it was written: "Do not be surprised at the snow that comes in Nisan [March-April], we saw it in Sivan [May-June]." They say that this was Obadiah's [bet] midrash. In the village above there is a synagogue that was built by R. Simeon bar Yoḥai; its facade, with its entrances, is still standing.³⁰ He built twenty-four synagogues in the Galilee.³¹ At a little distance lies Queen Esther under a mound of stones, an oak tree^a marks the spot. Nearby there is another tree next to a mound of stones.³² This is the grave of R. Phinḥas ben Yair.³³ I was in 'Aqbara where R. Yannai and his two sons R. Dostai and R. Nehorai are buried;³⁴ their burial cave is in an orchard. There is a freshwater spring in front of the cave, but the underground chamber has collapsed and cannot be entered. The orchard is a handsome one, full of quinces and lemons—it is the one mentioned in *Moed Katan* [12b]. In the village above, there is a synagogue in ruins; two three-cubit-high walls, of large stones, are still standing. It was built by R. Simeon bar Yoḥai.

^a rovere

remains were still visible in the nineteenth century. The inscription mentioned by Basola is presently housed in the Louvre. Basola's citation is partial and not entirely accurate. The full inscription reads: "May there be peace on this place and in all the places of Israel, Yose the Levite, son of Levi made this lintel. May his activities (or: property) be blessed. Shalom" (Naveh, "Ancient Synagogue Inscriptions," 137). A slightly different reading was suggested by Klein, *Jüdisch-palästinisches Corpus Inscriptionum*, 78–79. This inscription and its content are mentioned in two additional lists of venerated tombs: (1) a document from the Cairo Geniza published by Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, List A, 89, 94, which has a version almost identical to the one cited here; (2) a previously unknown list found in a fifteenth-century manuscript (MS. Moscow, Russian State Library, Günzburg Collection, 258 [IMHM, no. 47887], fol. 366v). This version more closely resembles the authentic inscription found in the Louvre. (Published by Ammar, "Venerated Gravesites," 288.) It is not clear whether Basola actually deciphered the inscription himself or copied it from another source. See introduction.

³⁰ This was noted as early as the thirteenth century. See Assaf, "The 'Totzaot Eretz-Yisrael,'" 60.

³¹ The tradition that Simeon bar Yoḥai built twenty-four synagogues appeared earlier in Samuel ben Samson's letter (Yaari, *Letters*, 80). See also Ammar, "Venerated Gravesites," 281, 288–89.

³² Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 54–55; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 256–57; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 192–94.

³³ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 175–76; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 356–57; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 195, 348–49.

³⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 159–60; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 388–89; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 315–16.

On Tuesday, the 5th of Kislev [5 November], I set out on my way [Ps. 85:14] for the holy city of Jerusalem, may it be speedily rebuilt in our day. I was in a village called Yauqu. Nearby I saw Habakuk of blessed memory's grave, a handsome tomb over which a building has been erected.³⁵ Then came Kafr Hittin where Jethro is buried.³⁶ The Muslims have built a mosque above his grave. It marks the halfway point between Safed and Kafr Kanna. And I reached Kafr Kanna safely towards evening in the company of many Jews who came there from Safed for market day, which is on Wednesday. And it is a good place, all manner of goods are available at reasonable prices, and the Jews make good profits. The Jewish community there consists of some forty households.³⁷

On Wednesday morning I went to the grave of the prophet Jonah ben Amittai, [73v] which is in another village a mile distant from Kafr Kanna,³⁸ on the summit of a high mountain.³⁹ A large distinguished building has been erected on his tomb, which is in Muslim hands. It is necessary to pay the guard four or five dirhams, also to provide oil for light, and I entered in order to pray. On the other side of the mountain slope there is lovely small burial cave where R. Simeon ben Gamliel is buried.⁴⁰

That very same day, towards evening, I rode towards Shechem. I spent the night in a village called Nasira [Nazareth], the place of Jesus the Christian, which is a parasang from Kafr Kanna. They say that there is a bathhouse with hot water where his mother immersed herself.⁴¹ We slept on the ground under a large canopy⁴² and departed three hours before daylight, traveling

³⁵ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 65–66; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 235–36; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 210–11.

³⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 87–88; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 147–49; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 216–17.

³⁷ On the Jewish settlement in Kafr Kanna as reflected in Hebrew sources, see Ben-Zvi, *Remnants of Ancient Jewish Communities*, 347–48; David, "Journey of a Jewish Traveler," 223–24. The Ottoman census from 1525/26 counted fifty Jewish families here. See Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, 9. See also David, *To Come to the Land*, 33.

³⁸ There are two traditions concerning the burial site of the prophet Jonah. One places it in Hebron, or in its vicinity; the other in Kafr Kanna. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 77–78; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 230–31; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 291.

³⁹ The village of al-Mashad.

⁴⁰ His burial place has been alternately ascribed to Kafr Manda, Kafr Alma, or Shazur. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 178; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 307; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 267.

⁴¹ St. Mary's Well, an ancient well in the center of Nazareth, a venerated Christian site.

⁴² The meaning of the Hebrew is uncertain. Perhaps Basola meant under the sky.

all day through a large valley like the countryside^a near Verona. I paid khafar in two places, thirty-six dirhams at each. At sunset we halted in the middle of a valley until after midnight, when we proceeded. We arrived safely in Shechem at daybreak on Friday, which is market day. I paid twenty dirhams khafar there.

Shechem is a large city, but it is a wasteland nevertheless, a desolate ruin due to its great antiquity. Yet it has a large population,⁴³ and the land is blessed with many springs and fruits and everything is inexpensive. The Jewish community there numbers some twelve Morisco households.⁴⁴ I remained there all day Friday and on the Sabbath too. On the Sabbath I walked to the monument of Joseph the Zaddik which is almost a mile distant from the city, in the plain beyond Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal. It lies between two tall columns, a cubit-and-a-half high, and is fronted by a lovely stone floor.⁴⁵ The Samaritans erected a building above it several times, which fell, but the floor remains.

I saw Mount Gerizim and Mount Ebal, which are near the city. Mount Gerizim [74r] is to the south and Mount Ebal is to the north and a plain lies between them. Mount Gerizim has many trees and springs, whereas Mount Ebal is totally desolate. There are Samaritan graves on the lower slopes of Mount Gerizim.⁴⁶ They worship and sacrifice the paschal sacrifice there,⁴⁷ and keep the image of a dove there as the first chapter of *Hullin* [6a] states.

I left Shechem on Sunday and lodged in a village named Singil under a large canopy.⁴⁸ I paid ten dirhams khafar on that road. In the early afternoon of Monday the 11th of Kislev and [the 11th] of November 5282 [1521] I

^a *campagna*

⁴³ Lit.: "It is great with people"—Lam. 1:1.

⁴⁴ At a later date, the Jewish population of Shechem increased. The 1538/39 Ottoman census noted the presence of seventy-one Jewish families in three neighborhoods and affiliated with additional congregations. See Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 145–49; David, *To Come to the Land*, 27.

⁴⁵ The grave of Joseph the Zaddik is located near Shechem, at the edge of Kafr Balata. The tradition concerning Joseph's burial in Shechem has biblical roots. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 79–82; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 107–13; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 365–66. On pilgrimage to this site, see Reiner, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 290–91.

⁴⁶ This is the old cemetery where several Samaritan high priests are buried. The new cemetery is also located on the slope of Mount Gerizim.

⁴⁷ On the summit of Mount Gerizim.

⁴⁸ See this section, n. 42.

arrived in Jerusalem, the holy city. There I tore my clothes⁴⁹ and wept for the destroyed and desolate unbuilt city. Within the city the khafar tax is two dirhams. On Monday, the 17th of the month I hired a certain Jew as my guide to several sites.

[D. Jerusalem and its environs]

Jerusalem is situated on a mountain opposite the Mount of Olives. A narrow valley lies between them; this is the valley of Jehoshaphat to which I descended.¹ At one end there is a large hole, where what appears to be some sort of cave is visible. They say that this is the mouth of Gehenna [Gehinnom] which will open in the future, when Gog comes.² Below it there are Jewish graves; the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives are full of graves, and there are some on the slope of the mountain of Jerusalem itself. Half a mile below is the spring of Shiloah [Siloam]. And there are many lovely gardens in that plain, irrigated by the springwater that emerges from the mountain of Jerusalem. But its source is unknown. They say it emerged from the Temple. On the summit a once-handsome domed building is visible; they say that that was where King Solomon—may his memory be blessed—minted coins.³

At the base of the Mount of Olives, I saw the burial cave of the prophet Zechariah; it is very handsome. Its twelve columns and its pyramidal top are entirely hewn from the living rock of the mountain, all from the same rock.⁴

⁴⁹ It is the accepted halakhic norm that he who enters Jerusalem makes a rent in his garments as a sign of mourning. "[On seeing] Jerusalem in its [state of] ruin, one recites: *Our holy and our beautiful house, where our fathers praised Thee, is burned with fire and all our pleasant things are laid waste* [Isa. 64:10], and rends his garment" (BT *Moed Katan* 26a) [English translation: I. Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud: Seder Moed* (London, 1938)]. See Maimonides, *Code: Book of Seasons*, "Laws of Fast Days," chap. 5:16–18; *Shulhan Arukh: Oraḥ Ḥayyim*, no. 561. See also Weingarten, "Jerusalem Rebuilt," 163–67.

D. Jerusalem and its environs

¹ On the Kidron valley, which lies between the Mount of Olives on the east and the Temple Mount to the west, see Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:42.

² In the medieval period, the Arabs referred to the Kidron Valley as Wadi Juhannam. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 2:280.

³ Perhaps Basola was referring to "Solomon's Stables," a subterranean vaulted space near the al-Aqsa mosque, on the southeastern corner of the Temple Mount. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:270–71; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:792.

⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 63–65; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 241–47; idem, *Jerusalem*,

Nearby is a cistern called *Bir Bintan* [Pit of Daughters]; they say that the Israelite virgins threw themselves in it at the time of the Destruction. Close by are two lovely burial caves [74v], one with burial recesses all around and the other with benches.⁵ Below them is a wide tower that comes to a pyramidal point, this is Absalom's Monument which is mentioned in the book of Samuel [2 Sam. 18:18].⁶ Above, near the summit, is the burial cave of the prophet Haggai; it has large, long, broad chambers. The upper of the caves is the prophet Haggai's burial chamber—may his memory be blessed—and below are his students and others besides.⁷

On the summit of the Mount of Olives, there is a large building. Inside, the prophetess Hulda lies in a marble grave in a lovely pavilion.⁸ There too one must pay the Muslim guard a four-dirham entrance fee, and pay for oil for light, for lamps burn there continuously. And when a person stands at the summit of the Mount of Olives and looks across at Jerusalem, he can see the entire Temple, its courtyard and its roofs. On the same side, that is, in the east, the Temple has two sealed iron gates that are somewhat sunken into the ground. They are called the Gates of Mercy.⁹ They say that bridegrooms entered through one, while mourners came through the other. And near the southern side of the Temple there is a building called *Midrash Shelomo*.¹⁰

2:250–55; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 243–45; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:750.

⁵ This is the Tomb of Bene Hezir near the Tomb of Zechariah. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 2:246–49; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:750. The "Pit of Daughters" (בֵּית בָּנוֹת) is not known to me from any other source.

⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 69–72; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 200–201; idem, *Jerusalem*, 2:239–44; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 241–42; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:750.

⁷ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 67–68; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 237–40; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 245–46.

⁸ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 68–69; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 215–18; idem, *Jerusalem*, 2:367–72; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 246.

⁹ An almost identical description of the Mercy Gate is found in *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 14r. See also Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:204–11; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:793.

¹⁰ This is the al-Aqsa mosque which the Crusaders named *Templum Salomonis* (The Temple of Solomon). Originally used as a royal palace by the rulers of Jerusalem's Crusader kingdom, from 1119 its southern part, and later the rest of the building, was handed over to the Order of the Poor Knights of Christ of the Temple of Solomon, or the so-called Templar Order. See Schein, "Christian Perception of the Temple Mount," 184.

Outside of Jerusalem, to the south, is Mount Zion.¹¹ The nagid,¹² may his Rock and Redeemer preserve him, informed me that in Jerusalem itself the Jewish neighborhood extends from Mount Zion until near the Temple,¹³ and this stands to reason. This is the correct interpretation of the verse "Zion, in the far north" [Ps. 48:3]. On Mount Zion there is a place for priests similar in appearance to the monasteries^a in Italy;¹⁴ adjoining it is a locked house with an iron door. They say that David and Solomon—may their memory be blessed—are buried there.¹⁵ Nearby there is another house, also with a locked iron door; they say in addition that all the kings of the house of David are buried there.¹⁶ The Muslims never allow anyone to enter these two places. On the same side there is a strongly constructed citadel with a wide low tower which is called the Tower of David.¹⁷ And Jesus' grave lies to the west of Jerusalem, between two churches that face each other. There is a bazaar between them and, in front of one of the churches,¹⁸ there is a small plaza.^b

^a conventi

^b piazzeta

¹¹ See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 2:181–225.

¹² Isaac Sholal, the last nagid in Egypt, settled in Jerusalem in 1517, immediately after the Ottoman conquest, and resided there until his death in late 1524. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 150–51.

¹³ The Jewish neighborhood in sixteenth-century Jerusalem was nearly contiguous with the present-day Jewish quarter. See Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 80–81, 94; David, *To Come to the Land*, 57–58.

¹⁴ This building, known as *Custodia Terrae Sanctae*, belonged to the Franciscan order which settled in Jerusalem in 1336. On the Franciscan order at that time, see Lemmens, *Die Franziskaner im heiligen Lande*; Schein, "Custodia Terrae Sanctae," 47–54.

¹⁵ The tradition that David was buried on Mount Zion (and not in the City of David) has a thousand-year history and has been accepted by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The putative burial site is located under the Coenaculum, the traditional site of the Last Supper. See Arce, "El sepulcro de David," 105–15. See also Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 89–94; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 182–96; idem, *Jerusalem*, 2:190–203; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 243, 251; Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 185–86.

¹⁶ Perhaps Basola was referring to *Heikhal David*, the traditional site for where David placed the Ark of the Lord first noted in *Tozot Erez-Yisrael*. See Assaf, "The 'Tozaot Eretz-Yisrael,'" 56. This site is also mentioned by Estori ha-Parhi, *Kaftor va-Ferah*, 2:559, and in *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 14r.

¹⁷ See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:217–30; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:727, 777, 795.

¹⁸ The Church of the Holy Sepulcher. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 2:26–53; Benvenisti, *Crusaders in the Holy Land*, 68–70; Mazar, *Mountain of the Lord*, 245–46, 255; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:779–781, 797–98.

On Friday [should read: Monday], the first day of Hanukkah [25 November 1521] I rode to Ramah, which is six miles from Jerusalem. I paid [75r] six dirhams khafar. There is a large palace with arches^a on the grave of the prophet Samuel—may his memory be blessed. They say that it is a Roman building.¹⁹ At one end of the house there is a room where the Jews pray and light lamps in honor of the prophet—may his memory be blessed, for they have a tradition that the burial chamber and the grave are located behind the wall that they face when they pray. There is an attendant who holds the key, and he goes there on Mondays and Thursdays to light lamps, and everyone who comes there gives him four or six dirhams.²⁰ This building is at the summit of the mountain; as its name [Ramah] indicates, it is very lofty. A mile opposite, there is another mountain top which is almost as lofty, and this is the meaning of "from Ramathaim-zophim" [1 Sam. 1:1] for from there one looks afar. This is the hill country of Ephraim. On the mountain slope there is a *mikveh* hewn in the rock, three by three and paved with stones. It is entered through a window, and it contains springwater. They say that Hannah—may her memory be blessed—immersed herself there. They also say that she is buried with her son and her husband Elkanah.²¹ On the way back I saw the burial cave of the Sanhedrin, which is two miles distant from Jerusalem. This burial cave has a large opening and burial niches within on three sides. A small opening in the center leads to another burial chamber, which makes four in addition to one which is below. All are hewn in the same rock.²²

^a אַרְכֵּי—the meaning of this word is uncertain.

¹⁹ Jews and Muslims share the tradition that identifies Samuel's burial place north of Jerusalem, in the place known in Arabic as Nebi Samuil. For these traditions, see Elitzur, "Sources of the 'Nebi-Samuel' Tradition," 75–90. See also Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 113–16; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 165–76; idem, *Jerusalem*, 2:426–36; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 361–62. See also Reiner's comprehensive discussion in his "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 306–20.

²⁰ On the Jewish community there during the period under consideration, see Vilnay, previous note; Cohen, *Jewish Life under Islam*, 101–4; Reiner, "Pilgrims and Pilgrimage," 310–15; David, *To Come to the Land*, 58–59; idem, "Jerusalem Jewish Community," 167–68.

²¹ This mikveh is also noted in *Tozot Erez-Yisrael* (Assaf, "The 'Tozaot Eretz-Yisrael,'" 58) and by Meshullam of Volterra (Yaari, *Meshullam of Volterra*, 75 [Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 193]). In *Tozot Erez-Yisrael* (ibid.), only Hannah is mentioned as being buried with Samuel.

²² These are the large Sanhedrin tombs, located near present-day Ramat Eshkol, as opposed to the small Sanhedrin tombs near the Tomb of Simeon ha-Zaddik. On the large Sanhedrin tombs, see Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 177; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 278–80; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 2:752. On the Small Sanhedrin tombs, see Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 281; idem, *Jerusalem*, 2:311–12.

On Sunday, Rosh Ḥodesh Tevet 5282 [1 December 1521], I left for Hebron. On the road, a distance of five miles from Jerusalem, is the tomb of our matriarch Rachel—may her memory be blessed. The monument on her grave has recently been rebuilt. On the tomb there is a dome supported by four pillars.²³ From there to Bethlehem it is a mile which is the distance called *kivrat arez* [Gen. 35:16, 48:7; 2 Kings 5:19]. In Bethlehem I saw the priests' convent,^a there is none to match it in Italy, with its sparkling marble floor, and its twelve tall and exceedingly thick columns on each side. It has [75v] rooms, and upper chambers, and gardens within.²⁴ In Bethlehem there are many Christians called *cristiani della cintura*;²⁵ they comprise more than half of the city. They wear a blue^b miter on their heads: there are many of them in Jerusalem as well. In Nasira they constitute the majority, and near Safed there is a village named Yarun where they are half the population. There are large numbers of them in Damascus and Beirut as well. They are Christians who settled there in ancient times, and their brand of Christianity differs somewhat from that of the Christians in Italy.²⁶ Bethlehem is not surrounded by walls; only on one side, at a distance of three miles, there is an ancient wall. I saw three very deep pools, equal in length and width to a Fano street. They say that these are the pools of Solomon mentioned in Ecclesiastes [2:6].²⁷ There is also a large spring fronted by a building for watering the animals, similar to the one near Pesaro.²⁸

I reached Hebron in the first hour of the night. The distance from

^a convento

^b azzurra

²³ Rachel's Tomb is located on the outskirts of Bethlehem. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 105–8; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 98–107; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 189–91. For an examination of medieval pilgrimage to the tomb against the context of the later development of a cult surrounding the figure of Rachel, see Sered, "Rachel's Tomb," 107–12.

²⁴ The Church of the Nativity. See Harvey, *Structural Survey of the Church of the Nativity*; *New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations*, 1:205–9.

²⁵ The Greek Orthodox, here called Christians who wear a girdle.

²⁶ Who were Roman Catholic.

²⁷ These are "Solomon's Pools," a large reservoir located outside of Bethlehem from which aqueducts brought water to Jerusalem as early as the Hasmonean period. During the Mamluk period pipes were used as conduits. The source of the water was the Etam spring. See Patrich, "Sadducean Halakha," 25–39. On the use of the pools to supply water to Jerusalem in the early Ottoman period, see Salama and Zilberman, "Jerusalem's Water Supply," 91–106.

²⁸ This is Ayn Salih, a spring located near Solomon's Pools. See Press, *Topographical-Historical Encyclopaedia*, 4:718.

Jerusalem to Hebron is more than twenty-two miles. The following morning I prayed in the synagogue.²⁹ There is a courtyard where eight or ten householders live, and that is where their synagogue is. I went to pray at the Tomb of the Patriarchs. The Muslims have erected a large palace over the Cave of Machpelah with four entrances, one facing in each direction.³⁰ Near the doorway closest to the governor's dwelling there is a hole where the Jews pray; they say that it extends into the cave itself.³¹ Opposite is the building where they bake the bread for the Muslims' sin offering,³² eight thousand loaves daily. Nearby I saw a very large mikveh with four large square columns, and it is wondrously deep, with a stone ladder to descend by. They say that it was our matriarch Sarah's ritual bath.³³ [76r] At the summit of the mountain opposite Hebron is the burial place of Jesse, David's father.³⁴ It has a handsome building with a small window that looks down on the burial cave. They say that once they threw a cat through the window and it emerged from the hole in the Cave of the Patriarchs. The distance between them is half a mile.³⁵ Abner's grave is in the middle of Hebron;³⁶ the Muslims built a mosque above it.

²⁹ During this period, the Jewish neighborhood was located to the north of the Kazzazin quarter. See Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 106, 108–11; David, *To Come to the Land*, 24–25.

³⁰ For a comprehensive treatment of the Tomb of the Patriarchs, see Avissar, *Hebron*, 255–94. See also Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 39–44; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 71–98; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 208–10.

³¹ The "hole" where the Jews were allowed to pray is mentioned in earlier Hebrew sources, in Obadiah of Bertinoro's letters for example. See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 63 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 233). See also Avissar, *Hebron*, 276 n. 2, 291.

³² It was an ancient Muslim custom to bring bread and lentils to Abraham's grave and distribute them to the poor. This ceremony was known as *al-simat al-Khalil* or *'adas al-Khalil*. See *EI*, 4:957. Basola makes no mention of the lentils. This custom is referred to in additional Hebrew sources. See Yaari, *Meshullam of Volterra*, 69 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 185); Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 63 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 233); *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 13v.

³³ *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 13v notes that the mikveh where Sarah immersed herself is "on the road to Jerusalem" and is called *Ein Sarah* (Sarah's Spring).

³⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 83–85; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 198–99; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 206–7.

³⁵ For another tradition that fixes the length of the cave that runs from Jesse's tomb to the Tomb of the Patriarchs at ten miles, see Yaari, *Meshullam of Volterra*, 70 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 187).

³⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 45–46; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 201–2; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 205.

And I returned to Jerusalem on Tuesday the 3rd [of Tevet; 3 December]. Near Jerusalem I visited Simeon ha-Zaddik's burial cave.³⁷ I made a circuit of the holy city of Jerusalem and the Temple, may it be speedily rebuilt in our day. And although Jerusalem is destroyed and desolate, a minute portion of its total beauty is discernible in its handsome houses and bazaars even so. It has four covered bazaars with domes:³⁸ a Muslim one where woolen and linen dry goods are sold;³⁹ a Jewish one, mostly notions^a and spices;⁴⁰ one for vegetables; and one with all manner of foodstuffs and fruit.⁴¹ There is an additional bazaar, more attractive than all the rest, filled only with cotton stores.⁴² At one end of this bazaar there is a gate to the Temple.⁴³

^a *merceria*

³⁷ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 182–83; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 273–78; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 252–53.

³⁸ *Yihus ha-Avot* mentions only three bazaars: "Jerusalem...has three bazaars. One is the bazaar of the merchants who sell silk and purple garments and all kinds of clothing; in the central bazaar they sell all types of food; and the third bazaar is the spice merchants' bazaar, the vendors of all kinds of spices" (MS, fol. 14r). Obadiah of Bertinoro describes four bazaars: "Jerusalem...still contains four very beautiful, long bazaars....They are all covered with dome-shaped roofs and have windows...with the stores opening in every direction...Each is separate; [there is] the merchant bazaar, the spice bazaar, the vegetable market, and the market where cooked food and bread are sold" (Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 72; Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 236–37). In actual fact, Jerusalem had three markets at that time. Evidently the merchant bazaar referred to by Obadiah of Bertinoro was the dry goods market mentioned in *Yihus ha-Avot*. Obadiah, like Basola, divides the food market in two sections: a vegetable market and a cooked food and bread market, whereas Basola mentions a vegetable market, and a market where all types of food and fruit are sold. Both provide a similar description of the structure where the bazaars were housed, which serves to the present. Amnon Cohen notes that the total number of bazaars founded in Jerusalem in the early Ottoman period certainly exceeded four. See Cohen, "Trade," 7–12.

³⁹ This is the bazaar called *suq al-tujjar* in Arabic, that is, the merchants' bazaar which *Yihus ha-Avot* describes as a dry goods market, although other commodities were evidently sold there. See Cohen, "Trade," 7–8.

⁴⁰ *Suq al-attarin* in Arabic. See Cohen, "Trade," 7, 10–11; idem, *Economic Life*, 6.

⁴¹ *Suq al-khudar* in Arabic. See Cohen, "Trade," 9–10; idem, *Economic Life*, 7. See also n. 38 above.

⁴² This is actually a fifth market located outside the structure that housed the main bazaar. Called *suq al-qattanin* or *suq al-qutn* in Arabic, this market was evidently founded soon after the Ottoman conquest. It was housed in the khan in close proximity to the wall of the Temple Mount, which belonged to the al-Aqsa mosque during the Mamluk period. See Cohen, "Trade," 8–10; idem, *Economic Life*, 7.

⁴³ This gate is known as *bab al-qattanin* in Arabic. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:277–78.

The Temple has twelve gates on its western and northern sides,⁴⁴ but the eastern side, which is outside of Jerusalem opposite the Mount of Olives, has no gates; only the Mercy Gates which I mentioned above that have been locked and are never opened. On the southern side there is a house attached to the wall that they say was Midrash Shelomo.⁴⁵ Near one gate, on the north side, I saw a large deep pit^a like a pool. It is called *Birq-al-Dam*. Some say that the blood of the sacrifices flowed into it, for it is located in the Temple wall, while others claim that it is called thus because it was filled with the blood of the victims killed by Nebuzaradan to appease Zechariah's blood as recounted in *Perek ha-Nizakin* [BT *Gittin* 57b].⁴⁶

Of the remaining Western Wall, only [76v] one section, forty or fifty cubits in length and halfway up, is from the days of Solomon, but not the entire western side. The stones are distinguishable by virtue of their size and age. From the halfway point and up it is of recent construction.⁴⁷

In the holy city of Jerusalem, I rented a room in a large house called Pilate's House.⁴⁸ From the upper chamber where I lived I could see the entire Temple including the courtyard. No other house in Jerusalem boasts as good a view as this one; God brought it opportunely into my hands [paraphrase of Exod. 21:13]. Each morning at daybreak I faced the Temple and recited the prescribed prayers before going to the synagogue.⁴⁹ Blessed be God for granting me this privilege.

^a *fossa*

⁴⁴ In actual fact, the Temple Mount had more than twelve gates. See *ibid.*, 274–80. Meshullam of Volterra and Obadiah of Bertinoro also mention this number of gates. See Yaari, *Meshullam of Volterra*, 73 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 191); Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 77 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 240).

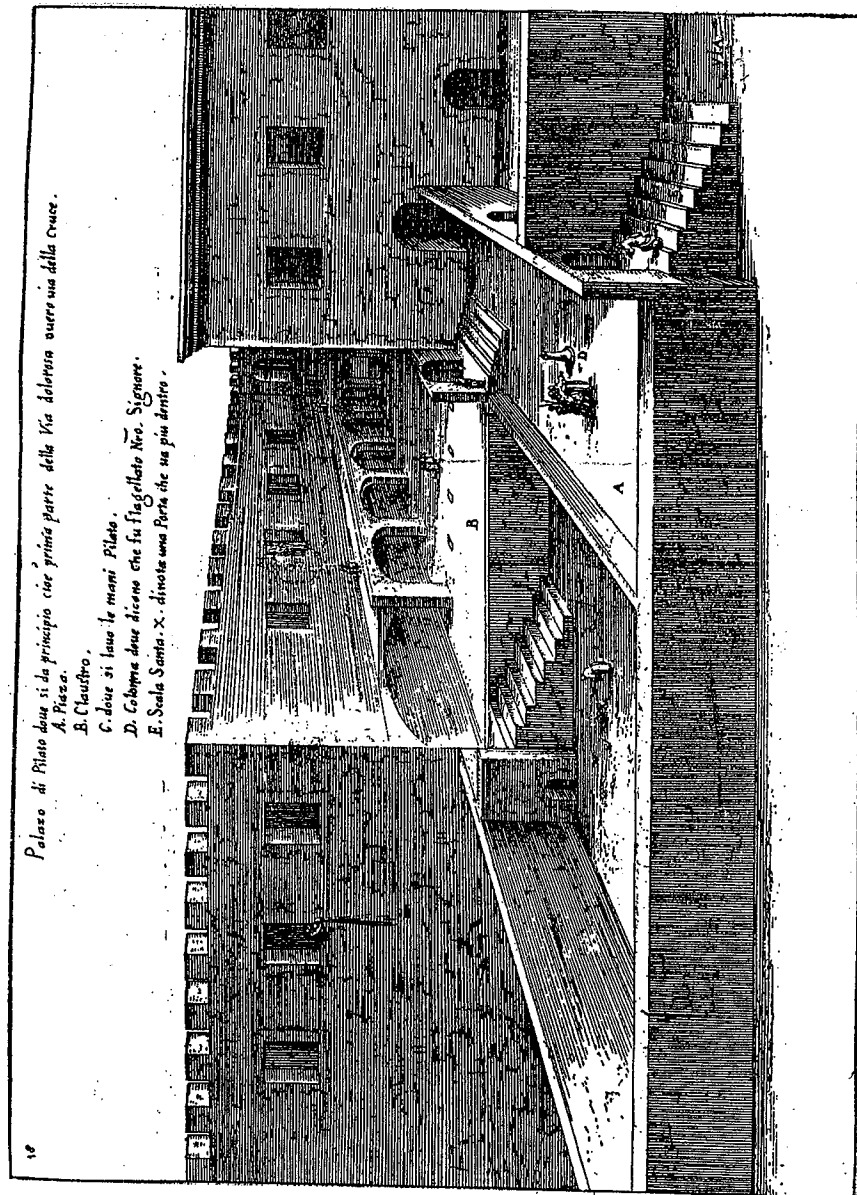
⁴⁵ On the Mercy Gate and Midrash Shelomo, see above, fol. 74v.

⁴⁶ This evidently refers to the pool located near the Gate of the Tribes (*bab al-asbat*) known as *Birkat Bani Israil* in Arabic. According to tradition, which has a talmudic basis, Nebuchadnezzar filled the pool with Jewish heads. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 2:96–97. See also Zucker, "*Yihus ha-Avot*," 197.

⁴⁷ On the Western Wall and its associated traditions, see Ben-Dov, *The Western Wall*.

⁴⁸ "Pilate's House" was located in the northwestern corner of the wall adjacent to the Temple Mount. According to Christian tradition, this was the site where the Roman procurator Pontius Pilate handed down Jesus' death sentence. This building, which is no longer standing, marked the first station on the Via Dolorosa, and is mentioned in many Christian sources. See Schur, *Pilgrims and Travellers' Accounts*, 25–26. A late-sixteenth-century diagram of the building is found in the monk Bernardino Amico's treatise (*Sacred Edifices*, 28, 78–79). Amico resided in Jerusalem in the late sixteenth century.

⁴⁹ Evidently a reference to the prayer he composed. See introduction, and sec. K below.



Pilate's House
 From a drawing in Fra Bernardino Amico, *Plans of the Sacred Edifices of the Holy Land* (Jerusalem, 1953).

Jerusalem has six gates whose doors are locked at night.⁵⁰ One is called *bab al-[a]sbat*, because the tribes entered through it when they came on pilgrimage.⁵¹ One is called *bab al-amud*,⁵² nearby is Zedekiah's burial cave which extends to Jericho, as our sages of blessed memory recounted in *Perek Helek*.⁵³ Many Jews told me that they went as far as a mile in it. It is as high as a horse and rider carrying a lance. One gate is called *bab al-qoton*; that is where cotton is processed.⁵⁴ And there are three gates on the [Mount] Zion side,⁵⁵ one of which has a Jewish guard, who opens and closes it.⁵⁶

There is but a single synagogue in Jerusalem; it is beautiful, with four supporting columns. It is sixty-three feet^a in length and twenty-eight wide, and behind the Torah ark there is a room where more than sixty Torah scrolls are housed. They pray facing east, that is, facing the Temple. The synagogue has no natural light except from the western doorway, which has a small window above it. By day as well they make use of the illumination from the lamps that they light all around.⁵⁷

^a piedi

⁵⁰ See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:187–217; Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, 287–97.

⁵¹ This gate, known in Arabic as *bab al-asbat*, is not in the city wall; rather it is an opening on the northeastern corner of the Temple Mount. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:280; Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, 295.

⁵² Nablus Gate, located in the northern part of the city wall. See Vilnay, *Jerusalem*, 1:198–200; Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, 167ff.

⁵³ This tradition is not found in tractate *Sanhedrin*; the correct source is *Erubin* 61b.

⁵⁴ This gate, known in Arabic as *bab al-qattanin*, was not in the city wall; rather it was an entrance to the Temple Mount. See n. 43 above.

⁵⁵ At that time there were indeed three gates in the city wall near Mount Zion: two gates on the southern side—Zion Gate, known as *bab nabi Daud* or *Hart bab al-Yahud* in Arabic, and Dung Gate, or *bab al-Maghariba* in Arabic; and one gate, Jaffa Gate (*bab al-Halil*), on the western side. (Vilnay [*Jerusalem* 1:189] was mistaken when he attributed the construction of Jaffa Gate to Suleiman the Magnificent in 1538/39 along with the nearby section of the wall [i.e., after Basola's visit] based on the inscription above the gate. This gate, known as *bab mihrab Daud*, was in existence as early as the tenth century and was still standing in the Mamluk period. See Wightman, *Walls of Jerusalem*, 227ff., 238ff; Tsafirir, "Gates of Jerusalem," 147–55.)

⁵⁶ This is Zion Gate, located near the Jewish quarter. See above. A similar description appeared in the letter of the anonymous traveler (1495): "And there is a city gate that is near the place of the poor Jews and the key to the gate is in the hands of those Jews" (Yaari, *Letters*, 158).

⁵⁷ This synagogue, evidently founded in the early fifteenth century, was later destroyed and rebuilt in 1475. Obadiah of Bertinoro described it at length. See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 68 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 235–36). For a diagram of the building, see the

The congregation has all types of Jews:⁵⁸ there are fifteen Ashkenazi householders, and many Sefardim, [77r] and Mustarabs, they are Moriscos, the ancient inhabitants of the land, and Maarabiim [Maghrebis] who come from Barbary, all together some three hundred households,⁵⁹ in addition to more than five hundred⁶⁰ widows who earn a good living in Jerusalem, for they pay no taxes and bear no other financial burden. They support the congregation for when they die intestate the congregation takes everything; most of the congregation's needs are provided for thereby.⁶¹ Those who receive charity number more than two hundred persons, and much charity is sent from Egypt and Turkey⁶² and elsewhere, but the Ashkenazi poor are not included—their support comes from Venice.⁶³

1598 manuscript of the treatise *Eleh Masei Benei Yisrael* that appeared in a facsimile edition published by the manuscript's owner (Roth, *Casale Pilgrim*, 47). As early as 1537 we find the mistaken ascription of this synagogue to Nahmanides. See Michlin, "The Letter Yihus ha-Avot," 213. On the contemporary building constructed on the ruins of the building described by Obadiah of Bertinoro and Moses Basola, see Tani, "'Ramban' Synagogue," 286–301; Cassuto, "Ramban Synagogue," 278–302; Izrael, "History of the Ramban Synagogue," 26–37.

⁵⁸ For the congregational breakup in Jerusalem and intercongregational relations, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 62–72.

⁵⁹ Jerusalem tahrir registers from 1525/26 indicate that the Jewish population in Jerusalem numbered less than two hundred households. See Cohen and Lewis, *Population and Revenue*, 94. On the problematic nature of these data, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 59–61.

⁶⁰ It seems improbable that more than five hundred widows resided in a community that numbered three hundred households. The reading of the Hebrew letters in the text is not certain. They could stand for the numerical value eighty-eight, a much more realistic figure.

⁶¹ Jerusalem's Jews faced a difficult situation. Under the Muslim regime, dhimmi estates were handled by the governmental authorities and were to be disposed of according to Islamic law; what remained became the property of the treasury (*bayt al-mal*). All the property of a person who died intestate went to the royal treasury. Under Mamluk rule, the Jews refused to accommodate themselves to this decree, and looked for ways and means to circumvent it. One solution emerged from Islamic law itself which permitted dhimmi to earmark funds for charitable purposes in accordance with their religious persuasion. Jerusalem's Jews thus issued a takkanah that a person with no heirs in Jerusalem should dedicate his property to charity in the Muslim courts prior to his death, this endowment to become effective upon his demise. Evidently, Basola's description reflects this state of affairs. See Reiner, "Jewish Community Leadership," 41–52.

⁶² Fund-raising by Egyptian Jews for Jews in Eretz-Israel is well documented both in contemporary Geniza documents and other sources. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 44–47. On contributions from Turkish Jewish communities, we have less information. This matter merits separate study.

⁶³ Substantial data have survived regarding Italian-Jewish philanthropic activity on behalf

Of the prominent men in Jerusalem, the foremost is the nagid, our honorable teacher Rabbi Isaac Sholal, who is crowned with the crown of Torah and the crown of priesthood, and the crown of royalty and wealth, and above all the crown of reputation due to the overwhelming amount of charity he donates to the poor and to the students in the rabbinical academy.⁶⁴ There is our honorable teacher, R. David ibn Shoshan, physician and head of the Sefardi yeshiva,⁶⁵ and with him the distinguished, modest and honorable teacher Abraham ha-Levi who is the author of *Meshare Kitrin*,⁶⁶ around whom eight or nine Sefardim gather; they were then studying tractate *Yom Tov* [*Bezah*]. There is our honorable teacher R. Israel, head of the Ashkenazi yeshiva,⁶⁷ and with him our honorable teacher R. Peretz who has just arrived from Germany,⁶⁸ and they are studying [*Bava*] *Me'zia*, and four or five Mustarabs gather there, along with R. Judah of Corbeil who is a Sefardi⁶⁹ and R. Solomon from Camerino,⁷⁰ twelve or thirteen in all.⁷¹ Every *hakham* in Jerusalem serves as *dayyan* for a year,⁷² and the dayyan at that time was one R. David Arokh—he is extremely wealthy.⁷³ There is a Mustarab dayyan named R. Isaac, and he holds this position permanently. There

of Eretz-Israel's Jews. As early as the 1520s Venice served as the central clearinghouse for funds sent from Italy and western Europe to Eretz-Israel. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 44.

⁶⁴ Basola came into personal contact with Sholal. See fol. 74v, and n. 12 above.

⁶⁵ See David, *To Come to the Land*, 144.

⁶⁶ A well-known kabbalist who was intensely involved in apocalyptic speculation. See Scholem and Beit-Arié, *Maamar Meshare Qitrin*; David, *To Come to the Land*, 138–39.

⁶⁷ Israel Ashkenazi came to Jerusalem from Italy in 1520, where he achieved a reputation as a renowned posek. See David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 95–122; idem, *To Come to the Land*, 152.

⁶⁸ No further information is available.

⁶⁹ Judah of Corbeil is mentioned below, fol. 86r, as a moneychanger (*sayrafi*) who also obtained official permission to sell wine. He is mentioned in another source, an apocalyptic missive from 1525, as the person who accompanied a Jewish tourist named David to the Western Wall. See Tamar, "Epistle from Safed," 308, 310 (= *Studies*, 84, 86).

⁷⁰ No further information is available.

⁷¹ A similar description of the two Jerusalem yeshivot is found in Israel Ashkenazi's letter (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 113). On the relative standing of each of the two yeshivot at that time, see Dimitrovsky, "Unknown Chapter," 107–21. See also David, *To Come to the Land*, 80–81.

⁷² In the early Ottoman period the office of dayyan was rotated on a yearly basis. This practice is noted in a responsum by David ibn Abi Zimra (no. 1085). A rotation system also governed the position of instructor in the synagogue, as we shall see below. On this takkanah and its significance, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 77–78.

⁷³ Lit.: "overlaid with gold and silver"—Hab. 2:19.

is an honorable man who teaches halakhah to youths in his home and he [77v] is blind. There is another honorable person by the name of Joseph Midrash who teaches young children.⁷⁴ Each ḥakham reads Maimonides for a month in the synagogue following the morning prayer service.⁷⁵ All the *ḥaverim* [scholars] listen to his voice and afterwards they proceed to the yeshivah.⁷⁶ Jerusalem is a mile long and approximately half a mile wide. And the Temple is like a small walled citadel.⁷⁷

[E. Return trip to the Galilee]

I left the holy city of Jerusalem after midday, on Monday, Rosh Ḥodesh Shevat [30 December], and I traversed the roads with difficulty for eight days until reaching Safed, for the roads were washed out by the heavy rains that fell then. On my way back I again went via Shechem and prayed at the Tomb of Joseph ha-Zaddik a second time. And six miles from Shechem I saw Mount Shomron, a beautiful mountain striking in size, height, and slope. But it is entirely desolate, there is not even a single house upon it, nor a single tree; it is completely barren. On Monday, the eighth [6 January 1522], I reached Safed safely.¹

With God's help and salvation, I left Safed for Damascus on Wednesday, the 17th [15 January]. Eight miles distant from Safed one crosses the Jordan via a stone bridge called Jacob's Bridge.² They say that this is the spot where our patriarch Jacob—may his memory be blessed—crossed when he returned from Haran. And the river is very narrow there; it later widens and empties into the sea of Tiberias [Sea of Galilee] only to emerge from there, flowing

⁷⁴ Israel Ashkenazi also mentions Joseph Midrash as a teacher of children (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 114).

⁷⁵ This rotation system is also mentioned by Israel Ashkenazi (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 116).

⁷⁶ For a comparison of the curriculum in the Jerusalem synagogue as opposed to that in the yeshivot, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 85–87.

⁷⁷ Basola is referring here to the walled Temple Mount with its lively activity.

E. Return trip to the Galilee

¹ From the continuation it appears that Basola spent ten days in Safed.

² Jisr Banat Yakub in Arabic. It served as a crossing point for Damascus-bound caravans from Acre, Safed, and other points in the Upper Galilee.

from north to south. And it is visible from Jerusalem, from the summit of the Mount of Olives; it is more than a mile wide at that point.³ From the Jordan to Damascus, the countryside^a is a very long and broad plain.⁴ And there are four khans,⁵ that is, places where the caravans lodge for the night; they resemble a walled enclosure. It is six miles from one to the other, and khafar is collected three times: fifteen dirhams on the bridge, and ten [78r] dirhams each for the other two times. I reached Damascus safely after midnight on Friday the 19th [17 January].⁶

[F. Damascus]

Damascus is a large city, twice the size of Bologna. It is surrounded by an extremely well-built beautiful wall and rampart and a moat.^b It has a very strongly fortified citadel, and many attractive bazaars. It has all types of commercial^c bazaars that are covered overhead. Its population is large, and commerce is exceedingly great there. In the bazaars one can find all manner of crafts and goods in greater profusion than in Venice; the silk industry and silk goods in particular are plentiful. And women also make a very good profit there. Generally speaking, anyone who wishes to make the effort to engage in buying and selling will be able to support his family amply, even if he has but a little capital, for profit may be extracted from many ventures. One can start a clothing shop with but a hundred ducats. The Venetians provide clothing on consignment, and he then pockets the difference.

^a *campagna*

^b *fossa*

^c *traffico*

³ Indeed, the Dead Sea, into which the Jordan flows, is clearly visible from the Mount of Olives.

⁴ Based on this description we can assume that, after crossing the Jordan, Basola's route took him north through the Huleh Valley to Banias, a major way station between Eretz-Israel and Syria (Damascus).

⁵ Two of these khans can be identified: the one at Gesher Benot Yaakov (Jisr Banat Yakub) and the other at Banias. On these khans, see Stern, *Caravansaries*, 46–47, 100–101.

⁶ The two-day journey from Safed to Damascus was noted in a letter sent in 1441 by Isaac al-Afra of Malaga to Simeon ben Zemah Duran in Algiers: "From Jacob's Bridge which is the Jordan crossing...to Damascus is two days" (Yaari, *Jewish Pilgrimages*, 110).

Another sells haberdashery^a or spices. Others take goods from the shops^b and peddle them in the city, for the daily business traffic and the number of people assembled outnumber the largest fair in Italy. Therefore, he who has a little capital and is trustworthy can obtain credit^c from the Muslims and the Venetians, and profit in any venture. A wealthy person can buy up large amounts of merchandise when it is cheap and store it in the warehouse^d until prices go up. There are also moneylenders who lend to the Venetian traders who pay [interest of] at least two to a hundred monthly, and if necessary they pay more.¹ Some require a pledge; there are others able to lend without taking a pledge, and this is true for the Samaritans as well. Some give the fixed amount of an eighteenth of a talent, or at least a fifteenth, to the Karaite called Muallim Zedaka, or to other trustworthy individuals. And a wise man has his eyes in his head [Eccl. 2:14].²

[78v] The land is most definitely well-endowed with foodstuffs, and fruits, and royal dainties, and every pleasure is to be found there. The cost of living approximates that of Venice. The houses are lovely inside with gardens and fountains and the bazaars as well have many fountains. There are two rivers outside the city, in close proximity to each other, and they are Amanah and Pharpar [2 Kings 5:12]. In another place outside the city there is a house where Gehazi is buried and that is the place of the lepers, who, like the insane, are holy in Muslim eyes. Near that house on the riverbank there is a

^a merceria

^b botteghe

^c credito

^d magazzino

F. Damascus

¹ In 1495 the anonymous traveler noted the same amount of interest, two percent per month, in yearly terms: "Among them there are [Jews] who lend to the Venetians in exchange for good pledges at a rate of twenty-four to a hundred" (Yaari, *Letters*, 151).

² This idyllic description of broad-branched economic activity in Damascus also applied to the economic situation of the Jews in Damascus. For other travelers' impressions of Damascus, see the letter of the anonymous traveler (1495) (Yaari, *Letters*, 151), and Obadiah of Bertinoro's second letter (1488) (Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 85 [Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 245-46]). See also Rivlin, *Jews in Damascus*, esp. 10-11 for Jewish economic activity. For data on the massive commercial ties between Jerusalem and Damascus as reflected in sharia court documents, see Cohen, *Economic Life*, index. On the involvement of Damascus Jews in the Jerusalem trade, see idem, "Damascus and Jerusalem," 97-104.

long grave; they say it is Naaman's.³ In the middle of the city, in the commercial center there is the House of Rimmon, a wondrous building. The dimensions of its courtyard are twice San Marco Square.⁴ The floor is made entirely of shining marble; around it are colonnades with large columns, some gilded. None but the Muslims enter it. And it has four entrances, through which it may be glimpsed.⁵

The Jews there number about five hundred households. They have three synagogues which are beautifully built and adorned—one for the Sefardim, one for the Moriscos, and one for the Sicilians. In each there is a ḥakham, who reads a little Maimonides with them every morning after prayers.⁶ Rabbi Isaac Haver is the ḥakham of the Sicilians.⁷ He is also an outstanding physician. Rabbi Isaac Masud is the ḥakham of the Sefardim,⁸ and Rabbi Shem Tov Alfaranji of the Moriscos.⁹ There is no yeshivah there for advanced talmudic studies. There is only primary instruction, each teacher taking thirty or forty pupils. There is also another synagogue at the end of the town called 'Unb.¹⁰ A mile outside of Damascus there is a place called Jawbar,¹¹ where there is a community of Mustarabs numbering about sixty households. There is a very handsome synagogue there, the like of which I have never seen. It is built in colonnades, with six columns on the right and seven on the left. Above the synagogue [79r] there is a beautiful cave in which, it is said,

³ Vilnay (*Sacred Tombs*, 211-12) cites several traditions related to this gravesite.

⁴ The famous Venetian square.

⁵ From the description it appears likely that Basola is referring here to the early Ummayyad mosque in the heart of Damascus, although unlike elsewhere in the account he fails to note that it is a mosque. On this mosque, see Creswell, *Early Muslim Architecture*, 1:100-146.

⁶ They studied Maimonides' *Code*, a practice also current in the Jerusalem synagogue. See fol. 77v. See also David, *To Come to the Land*, 85-86.

⁷ For additional information on Isaac Haver, who served as the Damascus dayyan in 1537 (d. 1541), and on his son Hayyim Haver, see Strauss-Ashtor, *Jews in Egypt and Syria*, 2:494; Benayahu, "Yosef Garson," 107-8. His son Hayyim Haver is mentioned in Gedaliah ibn Yahya's *Shalshet ha-Kabbalah*, fol. 65r.

⁸ For additional data, see Strauss-Ashtor, *Jews in Egypt and Syria*, 2:494; Benayahu, "Yosef Garson," 88, 105-7.

⁹ A sage of Spanish extraction. He and his father Moses were among the Safed and Jerusalem sages in the first decade of the sixteenth century. See Benayahu, "Yosef Garson," 87-88; David, *To Come to the Land*, 167.

¹⁰ Also called the Anabiya or Anavim synagogue. See Yellin, "Damascus Codices," 24.

¹¹ On the medieval Jewish settlement here, see Ben-Zvi, *Remnants of Ancient Jewish Communities*, 484-85.

Elijah the Prophet—may his memory be blessed—hid. The synagogue is said to date from the time of Elisha. There is a stone upon which they say he anointed Hazael. At a later period, R. Eleazar ben Arakh renovated it. It is indeed an awesome place. According to what many people told me, no enemy has ever dominated it, and many miracles have been performed there. In times of distress, Jews always gather in it, and nobody harms them.¹²

Recently, a *niepo*¹³ arrived in Damascus to bring justice to the land [Prov. 29:4], and to the holy city of Jerusalem and to Safed as well. The former rulers were removed due to their wicked deeds.¹⁴ I remained in Damascus from mid-Shevat, and the months of I Adar and II Adar [January to March], until Wednesday, the 5th of Nisan 5282 [2 April 1522] waiting for the expected arrival of the *castagna* ship,¹⁵ but it failed to arrive. Nor was there any news of the *dellamura* ships.¹⁶ When I saw that this was the case, I decided to proceed by way of Turkey, even though most of my Jewish friends advised against this, for the way was dangerous, expensive, and of long duration. Everyone said that I would be delayed on the way until after the time of the galleys' arrival, that it was preferable that I wait patiently until the time of the galleys' arrival when I could travel safely.¹⁷ And I took their advice and agreed to celebrate Passover in Eretz-Israel. I left Damascus on the above-mentioned date, spending the Sabbath at the Jordan crossing,¹⁸

¹² Data from both earlier and later periods are extant. See *ibid.*, 485–88. On an early biblical codex stored in this synagogue until recent generations, see Ben-Zvi, *Studies and Documents*, 578–81.

¹³ The title for a district ruler in the Mamluk period: *naib* in Arabic.

¹⁴ This evidently alludes to the sensational political episode of the attempted rebellion by the pasha of the Damascus province, Djanbirdi al-Ghazali, against the Ottoman sultan, Suleiman the Magnificent, which ended with al-Ghazali's execution in 1521. Consequently, all the provincial rulers were replaced as Basola notes with regard to Jerusalem and Safed as well. The new provincial ruler was the pasha Ayas who was appointed to office in December 1521, several months prior to Basola's arrival in Damascus. See Laoust, *Gouverneurs de Damas*, 151–59, 171–74.

¹⁵ Several possible explanations suggest themselves for *castagna* which means chestnuts. Perhaps it refers to the type of wood from which the ship was constructed or to the name of the ship's owner. It may also refer to the ship's cargo, based on Basola's later comment (fol. 82r) that he boarded a ship loaded with chestnuts exported from Venice.

¹⁶ The meaning of this word is not certain. It may refer to the name of the owner who could have been Moorish.

¹⁷ The galleys resumed sailing to Europe in the spring.

¹⁸ That is, Geshet Benot Yaakov. It seems likely that Basola returned to Safed via the same route he took to Damascus.

because the cameldrivers wanted to stop there on Friday. I reached Safed safely on Sunday, the 9th of Nisan [6 April]. I rented a house in 'Ain Zaitun and resided there.

[G. Further exploration of the Galilee]

[79v] During Hol ha-Moed Passover I visited Kafr 'Inan,¹ which is in the Lower Galilee, a day's distance from Safed. It has a Mustarab congregation of about thirty households,² mostly *kohanim*, and a synagogue. The place is rich and fat [Isa. 30:23], filled with all manner of good things, and there is a freshwater spring. There I prayed at the grave of R. Abba Halafta.³ It is in the plain and there is a large tree on his grave. Otherwise there are no visible remains of the grave, only a small stone gutter placed around it. Nearby are his two sons in two covered stone sarcophagi, one next to the other. The slightly larger one is R. Yose (plain R. Yose)⁴ while the other is R. Simeon.⁵

I was informed with no uncertainty that about forty years ago there was a dispute between the Muslim residents of Kafr 'Inan and the residents of Faradiya, which is a parasang distant from Kafr 'Inan, regarding the spring that flows from Faradiya to Kafr 'Inan. Each side lay claim to the water, and the residents of Faradiya wanted to dam up the water that flowed from within their boundaries to Kafr 'Inan. They had a strong claim for the source of the water was located on their land. And the residents of Kafr 'Inan had no proof, only a strong claim to rights from ancient times. Nonetheless, in court, the verdict would have gone against them. R. Abba Halafta came to a Jew from Kafr 'Inan in a dream and instructed him: "Search in my grave. There you will find a copper box. Inside there is a deed recording how I purchased the spring from Nahum Ish Gimzo, [and the agreement] that no man can dam up the water or irrigate his field until I first irrigate mine. Take

G. Further exploration of the Galilee

¹ Also known as Kfar Hananiah or Kfar Hanan. See Braslavsky, *Studies in Our Country*, 216–22.

² In the Ottoman census of 1525/26, the Jewish population numbered fourteen families. See Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, 9.

³ See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 138–39; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 90–91; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 260–61.

⁴ This is the tanna R. Yose who appears in the Mishnah without a patronymic.

⁵ See n. 3 above.

this deed [80r] and show it to the king, and then return it to its original place." They did as instructed. They searched in his grave and found it, bringing the writ before the Egyptian monarch. And the residents of Kafr 'Inan won the case. Everyone testifies that this is the truth, and many people recall this incident.

Not far from R. Abba Ḥalafta's grave is the grave of R. Jacob, the father of R. Eliezer ben Jacob *kav ve-naki*.⁶ A mound of stones marks his grave. There was a large tree on it, which fell but still remains there. There is a large heap of wood from the tree, but no one touches it. They say that once a certain Muslim loaded this wood on his donkey, but the donkey went around and around in circles. He was unable to lead it away from there until he unloaded the wood. His son R. Eliezer is buried nearby in a sealed burial cave. A large building has been erected in front of it where they pray. Above it is the burial cave of Ḥanina ben Akashia and his students.⁷ I entered it in order to pray. It has five vaults. Each vault has five graves lined up in a row, while the entrance to the cave has a stone door with which to close it. On my way to Kafr 'Inan I passed through Faradiya and prayed at Nahum Ish Gimzo's grave,⁸ which is in a field close to Faradiya. A large square mound of stones marks the monument. It is clearly recognizable as a very ancient thing, for its stones are crumbling to dust. On the way back we took a different route, proceeding in the direction of the spring until we reached its source in the mountain in order to see it.

We then made a detour [80v] to Meron, because many Jews visit venerated gravesites during the holiday. On Monday, the 24th of Nisan [21 April] I returned to Meron with ten men who made it a fixed practice to pray at R. Simeon bar Yoḥai's burial cave each month.⁹ On that occasion, I also prayed

⁶ This name refers to the nature of his teaching: "The teaching of R. Eliezer b. Jacob is small in quantity but thoroughly sifted" (BT *Yevamot* 49b). On the gravesite, see Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 161–62; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 302; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 261–62.

⁷ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 141; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 391–92; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 263.

⁸ He is usually called Ḥananiah. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 169–70; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 314–15; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 330.

⁹ In Safed, various kabbalistic practices related to worship at the tomb of Simeon bar Yoḥai developed, including the *hillula* held on Lag ba-Omer (see n. 12 below). As early as 1473, Safed Jews prayed at this gravesite thrice yearly. See Benayahu, "Devotion Practices," 12. Evidently the custom of praying at his grave on the new moon, which is depicted here, did not last for more than several decades. See *ibid.*, 19–20.

at the graves of R. Tarfon and R. Yose ben Kisma,¹⁰ both of which are visible in a field below the mountain opposite the entrance to the synagogue at the summit. Each is marked by a mound of stones. But R. Yose's has a large almond tree in the middle of the mound; they are about one hundred cubits apart. Above, near the village, is the grave of R. Joḥanan ha-Sandelar,¹¹ close to the cave where they tan leather.

On the 15th of Iyyar [12 May], which is also called Second Passover, a great caravan arrived in Meron.¹² There were more than one thousand persons there: many came from Damascus with their wives and children, as well as most of the Safed community. And the entire community [went]¹³ to Buqai'a, the village where the cave that R. Simeon bar Yoḥai and his son hid for thirteen years is located, as *Perek ba-Meh Madlikin* relates [BT *Shabbat* 33b].¹⁴ The spring is still there, but the carob tree is not. People came to Meron from the entire surrounding area, and we spent two days and two nights there in joyous celebration, and praying at all the venerated graves in

¹⁰ On R. Tarfon's grave, see Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 141–42. For Yose b. Kisma's, see *ibid.*, 155–56; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 373–74; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 285.

¹¹ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 151–52; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 346–47; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 283–84.

¹² The celebrations at Simeon bar Yoḥai's grave originally lasted for three days, starting on the 15th of Iyyar (Second Passover). (Basola mistakenly wrote the 15th of Iyyar as the date for Second Passover which actually falls on the 14th of the month.) This practice was still in force during Basola's time, when the height of the celebration was on the fifteenth. The custom of celebrating on the fifteenth was known as early as the thirteenth century. See Ammar, "Venerated Gravesites," 290. The fixing of the date was undoubtedly influenced by another custom that ceased to exist about that time, that is, the water ceremony at the graves of Hillel and Shammai. It was the custom to come to Meron on the 15th of Iyyar to pray for water. See *sec. C.*, n. 10. Two generations later, during Isaac Luria's lifetime, that is, during the early 1560s, the celebrations focused on the 18th of Iyyar (Lag ba-Omer), the anniversary of Simeon bar Yoḥai's death. At a later date, the celebrations no longer took place on the fifteenth at all; but rather on the eighteenth. Some celebrants stayed at the site for an entire week. Thus the celebration on the fifteenth fell entirely into disuse. Regarding the history of the celebrations at Meron, see Benayahu, "Devotion Practices," 23–34.

¹³ It appears that the word "went" is missing here. After the initial celebration at Meron, the celebrants continued to Buqai'a (Peqi'in) because of its association with Simeon bar Yoḥai.

¹⁴ The tradition about the cave in Peqi'in where Simeon bar Yoḥai and his son hid does not predate the early sixteenth century. See Braslvisky, *Studies in Our Country*, 172–73, 176–79. Basola failed to remark on the Jewish community here, although the Ottoman census from 1525/26 notes a population of thirty-three Jewish households. See Lewis, *Notes and Documents*, 9.

that area as I have noted. Afterwards we all proceeded to Tiberias, remaining there for four days to bathe in the hot springs and to pray at the graves of the zaddikim there.

Tiberias was a great city and its lake forms its wall as our rabbis of blessed memory state in the first chapter of *Megillah* [5b]. [81r] At present it is desolate and waste.¹⁵ There are mounds of black stones that appear as if they have been incinerated by fire.¹⁶ No man can go there for fear of the Arabs, except at the time of the caravan when many travel under the protection of the Safed niepo. Each person pays four dirhams for protection. The lake¹⁷ extends to a width of twelve miles there and its water is good for drinking, for the waters of the Jordan empty into it. This is the only drinkable water there. It is a bit lukewarm, but if one leaves water in a vessel for a day it becomes cold. There are many date trees there. A village of ten or twelve Muslim families still remains.¹⁸

The Tiberias hot springs are more than a mile from the city. We camped in tents on the nearby lakeshore. There are two adjoining chambers, one of which is a sweat bath. Boiling water that emerges from the mountain flows down the wall to the ground; it is unbearable to the touch. The heat of the water causes those who sit in that chamber to sweat profusely, more so than from the ovens called *stufe*. Although the entrance is open, having no door, the steam from the heat is dense; it is scarcely endurable. I remained inside it for half an hour in order to sweat, then I descended to the lake, to a spot where these hot waters flow into the lake. The water there is somewhat warm, and I bathed there. In the second chamber the water that flows out of the walls is not quite as hot as in the first. It flows into a large stone pool there. People jump into it, stay for a little while, and emerge, for no one can stand the heat of the water for an extended period. And there are those who cannot [81v] immerse themselves in it at all; rather they bathe in the water of the pool which they pour from a vessel. That is what I did. They say that

¹⁵ Tiberias remained in ruins until the early 1560s when Suleiman the Magnificent promoted plans by Don Joseph Nasi and his aunt Dona Gracia Nasi to resettle the city. See Braslvisky, *Studies in Our Country*, 180–215; David, *To Come to the Land*, 29–33; idem, “Renewal of Jewish Settlement in Tiberias,” 81–86.

¹⁶ These are the basalt formations typical of the region.

¹⁷ Sea of Galilee.

¹⁸ I was unable to identify this village.

these baths are restorative and strengthen the body, that they are beneficial for sciatica^a and aching joints and many other ailments.¹⁹

On Sunday, the 21st of Iyyar 5282 [18 May 1522] the entire congregation went as a body, men and women alike, to pray at all the graves of the zaddikim there, which are a mile or more apart. First we went to R. Johanan's grave which is marked by flat black stones.²⁰ Nearby, on the same side, is Maimonides' grave,²¹ and opposite it but close by is the grave of Rav Kahana.²² The three form a *segol*.²³ From there we went another mile to a burial cave with a dome-like shape; its facade is open. It has two burial niches on the right and three on the left, and two lie opposite the opening. Jochebed and her two daughters-in-law Zipporah and Elisheba are buried there²⁴ with others whose names are unknown. From there we proceeded to the summit of a mountain where the burial cave of R. Hiyya and his sons is located.²⁵ With them lies Rav Huna as *Moed Katan* [25a] relates.²⁶ It is a small burial cave, and its burial niches are sealed. We descended the mountain slope to the burial cave of Rabbi Akiba who was one of the *asarah harugei malkhut* [Ten Martyrs].²⁷ And the mouth of the cave has collapsed; it is impossible to gain entry. They say that his twenty-four thousand students

^a Basola used the Italian word here which is the same as the English sciatica.

¹⁹ For a brief survey of the Tiberias hot springs in an earlier period, see Meiri, “Tiberias Hot Springs,” 29–35.

²⁰ The Hebrew sources variously identify Rabbi Johanan as one of three sages from Eretz-Israel: the Palestinian amora R. Johanan; the tanna Johanan ben Zakkai; or Johanan ben Nuri. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 148–51; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 302–3, 314; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 227.

²¹ Although Maimonides died in Egypt, he was, however, buried in Tiberias. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 192–94; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 414–20; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 231–32. On the authenticity of the grave, see Assaf, *Texts and Studies*, 70–73.

²² Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 165–66; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 370–71; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 229–30.

²³ The Hebrew vowel *segol* has a triangular shape: . . .

²⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 50–51, 76–77, 101–2; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 145–47; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 221–22.

²⁵ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 137–38; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 366–68; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 224–25.

²⁶ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 128–29; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 368–69; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 224.

²⁷ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 173–75; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 307–10; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 232–34.

mentioned in *Yevamot* [62b] are buried on the other side of the same mountain.²⁸ And we returned to our camp, each man to his tent on the lakeshore.

Nearby in the plain there is an upright stone marker where they gather to pray every evening [82r] and morning. They say that someone named R. Meir is buried there, who swore that he would not sit until Shilo [Messiah] comes [Gen. 49:10]; therefore he was buried upright. He is not to be identified with the tanna Rabbi Meir.²⁹ Near the hot springs of Tiberias, at the base of the mountain, is Rabbi Jeremiah's grave,³⁰ marked by a few black stones, and, as I have already mentioned,³¹ all the stones in Tiberias are black. They say that it was entirely consumed by fire when it was captured by the caesar who killed the Ten Martyrs. At the summit of the highest mountain an ancient building is visible; they say that it was the palace of the caesar's daughter, the one who desired Rabbi Ishmael for his beauty.³² Also, the Muslims have a mosque with a large white tower; they say that Rabbi Akiba's wife, the daughter of Kalba Savua, is buried there, and they call it *Ha-Zekenah*.³³ We left there on Tuesday night, reaching 'Aqbara at daylight, where we rested until evening. At sunset we reached Safed safely. Many days

²⁸ This tradition appeared earlier in Estori ha-Parhi, *Kaftor va-Ferah*, 1:137 and in *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 14v. See Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 310; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 233.

²⁹ This tradition regarding upright burial is also found in *Yihus ha-Avot* (MS), fol. 14v. The source for this tradition has been treated by Kook ("Who Is Buried Standing?" *Studies*, 2:97–101) who attempts both to establish the tradition's source and the identity of the interred person, whether it is Rabbi Meir as Basola reports or Rabbi Jeremiah as found in *Yihus ha-Avot*. The difficulty in identifying this Rabbi Meir has been treated by Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 166–68; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 315–24; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 230–31.

³⁰ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 163; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 369–70; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 228–29.

³¹ Fol. 81r above.

³² The legend of the caesar's daughter who desired Rabbi Ishmael for his beauty is found in *Elleh Ezkerah*, a midrashic text on the Ten Martyrs. See *Ozar Midrashim*, 441. See also Reeg, *Geschichte von den Zehn Märtyrern*, 73–74 (Hebrew section, 62–66). No other known sources place this palace in Tiberias.

³³ Based on the homophony of *zekinah-sakhina*, Basola identified the burial place of Rachel, the daughter of Kalba Savua, with the burial place of Set (Lady) Sakhinah, who, according to Muslim tradition, was the daughter of Hassin b. Eli b. Abu Talib. See Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 174; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 310–12; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 233. See also Sharon, "Cities," 119. In an anonymous fourteenth-century travel book (MS. St. Petersburg, Russian National Library, Firkovich, Heb. I, 305 [IMHM, no. 50974]) we find an early tradition regarding the location of Rachel's gravesite here.

later I went to Fir'im, where the burial cave of Ḥoni ha-Meagel and his wife and Abba Ḥilkiyyah his grandson and Ḥanan ha-Neḥba is located.³⁴ From there I went to Ibnit, the place of the handsome burial cave of R. Judah Nesiah [Rabbi Judah II] and his students, the court that permitted heathen oil [BT *Avodah Zarah* 37a].³⁵

[H. The start of the homeward voyage]

I left Safed in mid-Shevat 5283 [late January 1523] and traveled to Beirut, because a large Venetian ship with a cargo of chestnuts was docked there.¹ I boarded it in order to return home safely. I sailed on it to Cyprus, to a place called Le Saline [Larnaca], where I remained for fifteen days while [82v] the ship took on a cargo of cotton. Then I heard that the galleys had come. Therefore I rode on horseback to Famagusta to find the galleys, in order to see whether there were any Italian Jews, or a letter addressed to me, on board. While in Famagusta I decided to return via galley, since passage on a galley is safer both from Corsairs^a and storms. I boarded the escort ship^b in Famagusta on Thursday, the Fast of Esther [26 February], and on Sunday, which was Purim 5283 [1 March 1523], I arrived in Tripoli, from whence I proceeded overland to Beirut. While I was there there was a huge uproar among the Jews concerning a certain Jew who had come from Egypt, proceeding from there to Gaza and Jerusalem, the Holy City, and then to Safed. And they recounted the wondrous acts he performed. This gave me the idea of going to Safed to find him and to celebrate the Passover holiday

^a corsari

^b conserva

³⁴ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 136–37; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 298–99; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 331–32.

³⁵ Ish-Shalom, *Holy Tombs*, 147; Vilnay, *Sacred Tombs*, 352; Ilan, *Tombs of the Righteous*, 178.

H. The start of the homeward voyage

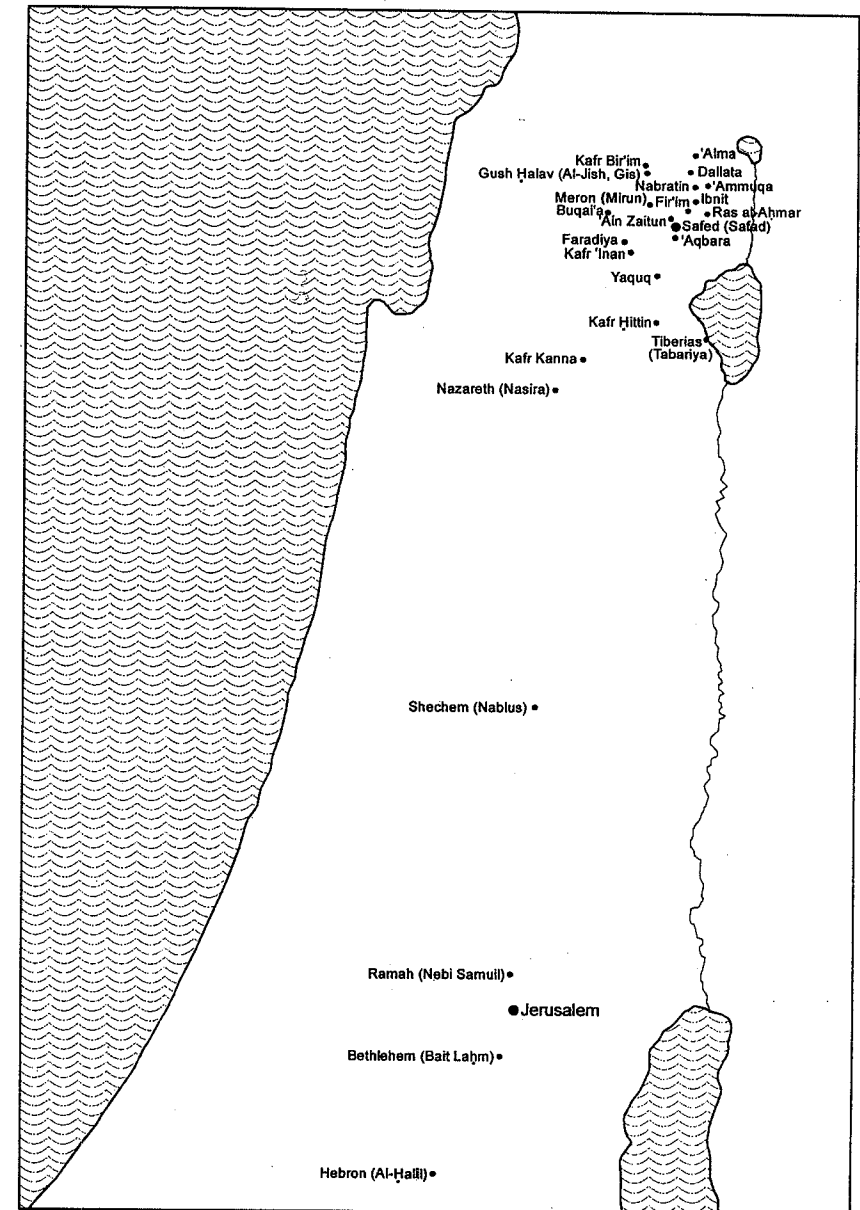
¹ Above, fol. 79r, Basola wrote that a year earlier he had awaited the arrival of the *castagna* which did not arrive, perhaps a reference to a ship with a cargo of chestnuts. See sec. F, n. 15 above.

in Eretz-Israel as well, since I knew that the galleys would be delayed in Beirut until April 5th, which was the sixth day of Passover. But when I reached Safed that man had already left for Damascus.² And I made inquiries concerning him, and recognized the truth of his ways and deeds. Assuredly, I ascertained the truth. I spent the first two days of Passover in Safed, and rode out on Wednesday night,³ reaching Beirut on Friday. On Sunday, the sixth day of Passover I boarded the galley, which embarked safely.

² The reference is not to David ha-Reubeni who visited Eretz-Israel at the same time. As Ben-Zvi (*Pilgrimage*, 77) notes, on Purim of that year Ha-Reubeni was in Gaza. See Aescoly, *David Hareuveni*, 22. Ben-Zvi assumes then that the figure mentioned here was one of Ha-Reubeni's emissaries. Yaari (*Jewish Pilgrimages*, 158) simply assumes that Basola was referring to David ha-Reubeni. A number of scholars have debated the identity of this Jew. M. D. U. Cassuto ("David Reubeni," 343) also concludes that the person in whom Basola showed an interest was David ha-Reubeni. Cassuto suggests that the activities of this mysterious figure who was interested in spreading word of the Ten Tribes were alluded to in two letters sent to Italy; the first sent from Safed by Raphael Trabot in 1523, and the second sent from Damascus at the same time. (The first letter was published by Neubauer, "Ten Tribes," 32-34.) Shohat ("Reubeni Affair," 99-100) questions Cassuto's identification of this figure as David ha-Reubeni.

Perhaps the figure Basola hoped to encounter was none other than the prisoner mentioned by Israel Ashkenazi in his letter sent from Jerusalem in 1522, where he described him as follows: "[He] had been taken prisoner at sea and changed hands repeatedly until he was sold in Alexandria, Egypt...he is almost like a Cushite [in appearance]" (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 119). This (Ethiopian?) Jew described current events in his land and the Christian-Muslim wars there, as well as the regime's protection of the Jews. In any event, it appears that Shohat's argument ("Reubeni Affair," 97-99) against Cassuto's opinion that this ransomed captive and David Reubeni were one and the same ("David Reubeni," 344; see also, 344-46) is borne out by Basola's statement (fol. 86v) regarding a ransomed captive: "When I was in the holy city of Jerusalem, a Jew from the land of Cush arrived who had been held captive among the nations." Evidently, Basola had direct knowledge of this Cushite through the Nagid who spoke to this Jew. In the context under discussion, however, it appears that Basola had no direct knowledge or contact with this figure; rather, he had only heard of his "wondrous acts."

³ Basola left Safed at the conclusion of the second day of Passover. (As the day in the Jewish calendar begins in the evening, the text reads ליל ה'—the eve of Thursday.) Basola, who traveled to Beirut overland through mountainous terrain, would have made certain to arrive before Friday evening, the beginning of the Sabbath.



Venerated gravesites in Eretz-Israel
Map by Miriam Waldman

[83r] [The location of venerated gravesites]

Location	Zaddikim	Location	Zaddikim
Sidon	Zebulun	Gush Ḥalav	Shemaiah and Avtalyon
Safed	Hosea ben Beeri	ʿAlma	R. Judah ben Tema
	his father Beeri		R. Eliezer b. Hyrcanos
			R. Yose ha-Kohen
ʿAin Zaitun	R. Judah bar Elai		R. Eleazar b. Azariah
			the Babylonians
Qayama	the son of R. Yose of Yokereth		
		Ras al-Aḥmar	R. Zimra
Meron	R. Simeon bar Yoḥai		
	his son R. Eliezer	Kafr Bir'im	the prophet Obadiah
	Hillel the Elder and his students		R. Phinḥas ben Jair
	Shammai and his students		Queen Esther
	R. Joḥanan ha-Sandelar		
	R. Yose Kisma	ʿAqbara	R. Jannai
	R. Tarfon		his son R. Dostai
			his son R. Nehorai
ʿAmmuqa	R. Jonathan ben Uzziel	Yaquq	the prophet Habukuk
Nabratin	R. Jacob of Naboraya	Kafr Kanna	the prophet Jonah b. A[mittai]
	R. Eleazar ha-Modai		Rabban Simeon ben Gamliel
Dallata	R. Yose ha-Galili		
	his son R. Ishmael		

[83v]

Location	Zaddikim	Location	Zaddikim
Shechem	Joseph ha-Zaddik	Fir'im	Ḥoni ha-Meagel and his wife
			Abba Ḥilkiyah
Jerusalem, the Holy City	the prophet Zechariah		Ḥanan ha-Nehba
	the prophet Haggai		
	the prophetess Hulda	Ibnit	R. Judah Nesiah and his students
	Simeon ha-Zaddik		
	the Sanhedrin	Tiberias	R. Joḥanan
			Rav Kahana
Ramah	the prophet Samuel		Rabbi Moses b. Maimon
			Jochebed
near Bethlehem	our matriarch Rachel		Zipporah
			Elisheba
Hebron	Tomb of the Patriarchs		R. Ḥiyya and his sons
	Jesse, father of David		Rav Huna
			R. Akiba
Additional Sites in the Galilee			R. Meir
Faradiya	Nahum Ish Gimzo		R. Jeremiah
Kafr ʿInan	R. Abba Ḥalafta		
	his son R. Yose		
	his son R. Simeon		
	R. ABI <i>kav ve-naki</i>		
	his father R. Jacob		
	R. Ḥananiah b. Aksh' and his students		

[I. Jerusalem: *Takkanot* and local customs]

[84r] *Takkanot* and *haskamot* of the holy congregation of the holy city of Jerusalem, which are inscribed on a tablet in the synagogue:¹

[1] No Jew may summon a coreligionist to a non-Jewish court unless he has warned him of his failure to comply with the law three times.²

[2] The dayyan cannot force any person to lend money to the congregation for communal needs or for any other purpose, rather such loans are made only of the individual's free will and desire.³

[3] No *baal Torah* [scholar] shall pay taxes of any type, even if exceedingly wealthy. Widows as well are fully exempt from the burden of taxes.⁴

[4] No Jew shall purchase a bad coin. If one comes into his possession, he shall not let it circulate if he is aware that it is tainted.⁵

I. Jerusalem: *Takkanot* and local customs

¹ An extant corpus of takkanot issued in Jerusalem in the latter half of the sixteenth century has been published by Freimann, "Takkanot," 206–14. Some parallel the regulations cited below.

² Paragraph 6 of the Jerusalem takkanot reads as follows: "There is a herem that must be upheld by every dayyan under the following conditions: first, that no Jew be turned over to the nations unless he has been warned three times in the presence of the seven city notables" (Freimann, "Takkanot," 208). That is, Jews could not initiate proceedings against a fellow Jew in Muslim or Christian courts, unless the latter had failed to comply after being warned by the dayyan on three occasions. Litigation in non-Jewish tribunals undermined the foundations of Jewish autonomy and repeated warnings were issued against it. See Katz, *Exclusiveness and Tolerance*, 51–55; Elon, *Jewish Law*, 1:13–18; Deutsch, "Foreign Court," 197–238; David, *To Come to the Land*, 51–52. Sixteenth-century sharia court documents indicate that this takkanah was often breached. See Cohen and Simon-Pikali, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court*, and Cohen, *World Within*, vols. 1–2.

³ Paragraph 6 continues: "There is a herem that must be upheld by every dayyan under the following conditions...that he should not place his hand upon any money, even from a bequest and not...for any person, nor for a present nor for a festive meal for a notable or any other person" (Freimann, "Takkanot," 208). That is, the dayyan could not force any individual to make a contribution against his will.

⁴ The basis for this takkanah was the tax exemption issued by Nagid Isaac Sholal's court in Egypt in 1509 for scholars in Jerusalem. Sholal's takkanah was first published in Avila, *Keter Torah*, introduction. This takkanah was in force elsewhere in Eretz-Israel, in Safed, for example. For comprehensive discussions, see Benayahu, "Tax Concession," 103–17; Hacker, "Payment of *Djizya*," 63–117. On the medieval permutations of this takkanah, see Ta-Shma, "Medieval Tax Exemption," 312–22. The underlying purpose of this takkanah was to encourage scholars to settle in Jerusalem.

⁵ Paragraph 1 of the above-mentioned Jerusalem takkanot reads: "There is a herem not to

[5] No person shall dedicate a ritual object for use in the synagogue unless it is first established that the owner possesses no greater rights in it than anyone else.⁶

[6] No one shall go to Ramah [Nebi Samuil], the place of Samuel—may his memory be blessed, inebriated from wine. The entire time they are there, it is forbidden to drink wine. This has been enacted because men and women used to go there and drink, becoming inebriated. Thus a fence was erected around the law because of the fear of offence, for the law of the land is that women go outdoors veiled and covered, but when they go there [to Ramah], they go unveiled.⁷

[7] In 5265 [1505] the rabbis of all the districts made an attempt to jointly determine the *shemittah* [sabbatical] year, since they disagreed as to whether to follow the calculation of Rashi or Maimonides. [84v] They reached an agreement and decreed that 5271 [1511] would be a sabbatical year, followed by 5278 [1518], and so on, according to Maimonides' calculation.⁸

[8] The above takkanot were inscribed in the synagogue, but the dayyan always adds decrees according to the needs of the hour, for example, setting a ceiling on the price of wine or cheese, or forbidding anyone to spend more than the specified amount on meat in order to receive a choice portion.⁹

make counterfeit coins nor to do business with counterfeit coins, and if they come into his possession, he may not fix them (Freimann, "Takkanot," 208). See also *ibid.*, 210.

⁶ This takkanah has its basis in a regulation issued by Nagid Isaac Sholal's court in Egypt in 1514. For a complete version, see David ibn Abi Zimra, *Responsa*, no. 644. Its intent was to prevent a recurrence of what happened under the "elders"—the sale or transfer of ritual objects from the Jerusalem synagogue. See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 58–59, 67–68 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 229–30). Consequently, any ritual object brought for use in the synagogue had to be donated to the synagogue; accordingly, no single person would have any rights of ownership in these objects. See David, "Historical Significance," 240–43.

⁷ On the 28th of Iyyar, the traditional date of Samuel's death in Jewish lore, it was the custom for Jewish men and women alike to gather in Nebi Samuil which had a tiny Jewish community at various times. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 58–59; *idem*, "Jerusalem Jewish Community," 167–68, 170–72.

⁸ The date of 1505 is a mistake either by Basola or a copyist. In actuality, the dispute regarding the fixing of the sabbatical year peaked among the Jerusalem sages in 1504, but we must note that Safed's sages were involved as well. The dispute emerged against the background of the different methods of calculating the sabbatical year: Rashi as opposed to Maimonides. See Maimonides, *Code: Book of Agriculture*, "Sabbatical Year and Jubilee," chap. 10:6; Rashi's commentary to BT *Avodah Zarah* 9b, lemma: ...ונשקול. The sages decided to follow Maimonides' reckoning and declared 1504 a sabbatical year. See Benayahu, "Document," 109–25.

⁹ This takkanah was clearly aimed against profiteering.

[9] No person may slaughter an animal for himself, or for others, unless his knife has first been checked by the ḥakham. There is an official communal appointee who slaughters fowl for the masses, who shows his knife to the ḥakham. This is in addition to the official slaughterer and permanent examiner in the slaughterhouse.¹⁰

[10] Contentious words shall not be spoken in the synagogue. Rather the parties should come before the dayyan, who is authorized to rule in cases of dissension. This offence carries a two-ducat fine to the treasury.¹¹

[11] It is the custom in Jerusalem, the holy city, that the privilege of lighting the synagogue on the Sabbath is sold in advance, that is, that a Jew from Jerusalem, or Aleppo, or Damascus, or some other city purchases a specific Sabbath. This costs approximately six gold ducats. This Sabbath then belongs to him for the remainder of his lifetime. On that Sabbath he lights all the synagogue lamps at his own expense, which costs approximately one-and-a-half ducats, and all of that Sabbath's honors belong to him: he may choose whomever he likes as the precentor and as the seven Torah readers, and all the deceased members of his family are given honorable mention while the living ones are blessed.¹² And if he so desires [85r] he can donate a meal to the poor. Each Sabbath is owned by a different individual. Upon such an individual's death, the privilege is sold to another. The honorable Asher Meshullam¹³ owns *Shabbat va-Era* [Exod. 6:2–9:35] and *Shabbat*

¹⁰ The aim of this takkanah was to provide court sanction for the existing arrangements for animal slaughter. On the one hand, we find insistence on supervision by a sage; on the other, an attempt to prevent unfair competition by granting official recognition to the two already appointed officials.

¹¹ This takkanah appears in different form in the corpus of regulations published by Freimann (209, par. 11): "No person shall speak in synagogue, nor shout, nor raise his voice to create confusion."

¹² A contemporary query sent to David ibn Abi Zimra addressed the issue of the privilege of lighting the Jerusalem synagogue on the Sabbath (*Responsa*, no. 1085). The person called to the Torah could honor the memory of deceased relatives with the recitation of the *el male raḥamim* prayer (or *hashkavah*). Living relatives were blessed with the *mi she-berakh* prayer recited for the welfare, health, or success of the individuals whom the person called up to the Torah wished to honor. See Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 161.

¹³ Asher Meshullam was a wealthy Venetian banker, also known by the nickname Anselmo del Banco, who assisted Jews sailing from Venice to Eretz-Israel in the late fifteenth century. He died in Padua in late 1531. See David, "New Sources Describing Travel," 323–24 n. 32. His son Jacob Meshullam converted to Christianity and was known by his Christian name: Cavalier Marco Paradiso. See Pullan, *Jews of Europe and the Inquisition*, 251–52, 265.

be-Midbar Sinai [Num. 1:1–4:20] and Rabbi Israel Ashkenazi¹⁴ lights for him and divides the honors among the Ashkenazim. I was there [on the Sabbath when] *Parashat va-Era* [was read].¹⁵

[12] It is the custom to carry a torch in front of the Torah scroll when it is taken from the ark to the *dukhan*.¹⁶ This honor is sold each year. On Thursday, the fourth day of Ḥanukkah [28 November 1521] an argument broke out between an elderly man by the name of Isaac Chayena and one of the *hazzanim* by the name of Judah Sofer.¹⁷ Each claimed that the honor was his, and while they had come before the dayyan regarding this matter, he had not yet ruled on this case. At that moment, the torch was in the old man's hand. In the course of the argument the old man was so angered that he doused the torch that preceded the Torah scroll; for that, the dayyan ruled that he could not enter the synagogue for thirty days and ordered him to pay five ducats to illumine the synagogue. He also barred him from the performance of that honor for an entire year. An announcement to that effect was made in synagogue the following day. For his role in the incident the dayyan also barred R. Judah Sofer from this honor. After the old man had been at home a week, all the ḥakhamim appealed to the dayyan, who permitted him to join the congregation as he was an important elder, and his son, who was prominent in Egypt, sent them contributions.¹⁸

[13] It is the custom among the Muslims in the holy city of Jerusalem, that when God sends no rain, to attribute this to the Jewish sin of drinking wine, and they request that the governor procure all the wine jars [85v] from the

¹⁴ Israel Ashkenazi served as head of the yeshivah and as dayyan in Jerusalem. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 152.

¹⁵ This Sabbath fell on the 26th of Tevet (26 December) 1521. Following his visit to Hebron, Basola returned to Jerusalem and remained there for nearly a month—from the 3rd of Tevet (3 December) to Rosh Ḥodesh Shevat (30 December) 1521. See above, fols. 76r–77v.

¹⁶ This was evidently the custom in Jerusalem on Ḥanukkah. As he notes immediately following, Basola was in Jerusalem for this holiday during his initial stay in this city from the 11th of Kislev (11 November) to Rosh Ḥodesh Tevet (1 December) 1521.

¹⁷ He may perhaps be identified as the scribe Judah Alexandri who, together with another Jerusalem scribe, witnessed the agreement of the Jerusalem sages to the takkanah of Nagid Isaac Sholal and his court exempting scholars from taxes in 1509. See above, fol. 84r, and this section, n. 4.

¹⁸ It seems likely that his son was Samuel Chayena, a noted figure in the Cairo Mustarab congregation. See Levi ibn Ḥabib, *Responsa*, no. 26. Samuel is also mentioned in two Geniza documents: a receipt book from 1555 (MS. New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, ENA 3726,5) and a Ladino letter sent by Joseph ibn Makhir (MS. Cambridge, University Library, Or. 1080J, 194).

Jews. On Wednesday, the 20th of Kislev 5282 [20 November 1521] the governor issued such a false accusation, but a compromise was reached in the form of a two-hundred-ducat fine in their currency. Each ducat is four marcelli. And a tax in the amount of a half-ducat was imposed on everyone who made wine, that is two marcelli for every hundred ratls of wine, which is equivalent to six hundred of our liters.¹⁹

[14] It is the governor's practice that when he has a great deal of merchandise from Egypt he consigns it to the merchants, including Jews.²⁰ At present, he has received large amounts of sugar,^a of which he consigned seventy ratls to the Jews. They divided it among the spice merchants at a price of one hundred and ten dirhams per ratl. They experienced no loss, but it was difficult for them to raise the necessary funds immediately. Such things happen from time to time, and they are forced to buy goods of poor quality in great quantity.

[15] There was an ancient decree, punishable by semi-ostracism, excommunication, and ban, that banned the sale of wine to Muslims by Jews.²¹ At a later date, but a long time ago, the decree was annulled due to the needs of the *sayrafi*²² who are close to the governmental authorities. This year²³ the *sayrafi* produced excess amounts of wine for sale to the Turks. Recently, however, they [the communal leaders] attained a ruling from the governor barring the Turks from purchasing wine, because the Turks used to go to any Jewish home to buy whatever chanced their way. The *sayrafi* came before

^a *zucchero*

¹⁹ This event took place during Basola's stay in Jerusalem. See n. 16 above. Although Islamic law prohibited the consumption of wine, non-Muslims were permitted to use wine for ritual purposes. This evoked an antagonistic response from the Muslims who attributed natural disasters and other catastrophes to the use of wine by non-Muslims. We find an additional example of such an accusation in Obadiah of Bertinoro's letter (Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 71). For more on the problematical nature of the use of wine by Jews and Muslim society's fear of its harmful effects, see n. 21 below.

²⁰ The integration of Jews in Jerusalem commerce was noted above, fol. 76r.

²¹ The early decree enacted by the Jerusalem sages banning the sale of wine to Muslims was evidently aimed at preventing Jews from being accused of inciting Muslims to consume wine. Jerusalem sharia court documents from the sixteenth century ratified an earlier prohibition against the public use of wine by Jews and its sale to Muslims. See Cohen and Simon-Pikali, *Jews in the Moslem Religious Court*, 173–76; Cohen, *World Within*, index, s.v., "wine."

²² These were the wealthy Jewish moneychangers who occasionally received a special license to sell wine.

²³ Late 1521.

the dayyan concerning this matter for a ruling as to what should be done with the wine commissioned by the congregation for sale to the Turks.²⁴ And they consigned about two hundred jars to the congregation. Each purchased according to his economic worth. The dayyan decreed furthermore that from the fast of the tenth month [the 10th of Tevet] until Purim²⁵ no person except the *sayrafi*, who were [86r] R. Eleazar Albotini²⁶ and R. Judah of Corbeil,²⁷ could sell wine; this so that they could sell the remainder of their wine.

[16] The prayer rite closely resembles the Sefardic practice.²⁸ They recite the *kaddish* after the one hundred blessings recited prior to the *zemirot*.²⁹ The *shema* is recited out loud,³⁰ as are *ashrei* and *u-va le-ziyyon*.³¹ The priests bless the congregation daily.³² They recite *va-yaavor*³³ [the thirteen attributes of God] in the morning and afternoon prayers prior to the recitation of *taḥanun*.³⁴ On Mondays and Thursdays they recite *va-yaavor* three times.³⁵

²⁴ It seems that they were licensed to sell wine by the governor and that the communal leaders, fearing anti-Jewish outbreaks, asked the governor to prevent the sale of wine. This then created a problem: what was to be done with the excess wine still held by the *sayrafi*?

²⁵ Evidently, this decree was issued during Basola's second stay in Jerusalem. See n. 15 above. This decree was in effect for only three months, from the 10th of Tevet (10 December 1521) until the 14th of Adar II (13 March 1522).

²⁶ He may have been the son of the Jerusalem dayyan and kabbalist Judah Albotini. On the father, see David, *To Come to the Land*, 159–60.

²⁷ He is the Jerusalem sage mentioned earlier, fol. 77r. See sec. D, n. 69.

²⁸ The fact that the prayer rites in the Jerusalem synagogue followed the Sefardic rite was a direct outcome of this congregation's supremacy in the kehillah following the Ottoman conquest. See David, *To Come to the Land*, 64–69. The rest of the paragraph contrasts the Jerusalem prayer rite and the Italian rite with which Basola and his compatriots were familiar.

²⁹ In the Italian rite the Morning Benedictions (*birkot ha-shaḥar*) are known as the hundred blessings and are not followed by the recitation of the *kaddish*. In the Sefardic (and the Ashkenazic) rite, *kaddish* is recited after these blessings, before beginning *pesukei de-zimra* (Verses of Song). For the structure of the morning service, see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 15.

³⁰ Some Sefardim adhered to the custom of reciting the entire *Shema* out loud. See *Shulḥan Arukh: Oraḥ Ḥayyim* 61:26.

³¹ For these two prayers, see Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 70–71.

³² The Sefardim in Jerusalem recited the priestly blessing daily, as opposed to Italy where it was recited only on festivals. For a discussion of the priestly blessing, see *ibid.*, 62–66.

³³ The thirteen attributes of God recited before *taḥanun* (the supplications). See *ibid.*, 69.

³⁴ This is the prayer "Merciful One, I have sinned; have mercy upon me and accept my supplication." In the Italian rite the confession and supplications are recited following the Morning Benedictions. See *ibid.*, 68.

³⁵ This accurately represents the Sefardi custom of reciting the thirteen attributes of God three times on Mondays and Thursdays. See *ibid.*, 69.

In the final kaddish they say *le-ḥadata alma* [in the world that will one day be renewed], etc.,³⁶ *al yisrael* [for Israel], etc.³⁷ On the Sabbath [Friday night] they do not recite *asher killah* [who concluded His work on the seventh day].³⁸ Nor do they recite *me-ahavatekha* [because of Your love]; rather they recite *ata kidashta* [You have sanctified].³⁹ They recite no *yoẓrot*⁴⁰ and on fast days they do not recite *seliḥot* until after the eighteen benedictions.⁴¹ On the Sabbath, no more than seven are called to read in the Torah. On Shabbat Ḥanukkah which fell on Rosh Ḥodesh six men read the weekly portion, while the seventh read the portion for Rosh Ḥodesh. They then recited the kaddish and read the supplementary portion [*maṭtir*] for Ḥanukkah.⁴² After the service in the synagogue, the nagid had an argument with the rabbis concerning this practice; their position was but loosely grounded in the halakhah.⁴³ During the weekdays of Ḥanukkah, the third reader [in the Torah—*yisrael*] repeats the reading of the first two [*kohen and levi*].⁴⁴

³⁶ In Jerusalem, the kaddish recited at the end of the service contained this phrase, which in other rites was recited only at funerals and at the conclusion of study of a talmudic tractate. For a brief discussion of this kaddish, see Baer, *Avodat*, 588; Pool, *Kaddish*, 79–89; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 81–83.

³⁷ This refers to the mourners' kaddish recited at the conclusion of the morning service and after study to which a paragraph beginning *al yisrael ve-al rabanan* is added. See Baer, *Avodat*, 153; Pool, *Kaddish*, 89–96.

³⁸ In the Italian rite *asher killah* was recited in the blessings preceding the Shema in the Friday night service. See Baer, *Avodat*, 183; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 92.

³⁹ Basola again compares the Friday night Italian rite to the Sefardic rite, this time with reference to the *amidah* prayer. See Baer, *Avodat*, 187–88; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 93.

⁴⁰ *Yoẓrot* are poetic additions to the blessings preceding the Shema recited on festivals. Evidently, the reference here is to Shabbat Ḥanukkah (see n. 16 above) on which Basola was in Jerusalem. In the Italian and the Ashkenazic rites *yoẓrot* are recited on this Shabbat.

⁴¹ In the Ashkenazic and Sefardic rites penitential prayers are not recited prior to the *amidah* prayer on fast days and other occasions. On the other hand, in the Italian rite supplications are recited daily prior to the "Verses of Song." See n. 34 above.

⁴² This custom is indeed attested in the Sefardic rite and among Italian Jews as well. However, the more usual practice in Italy was that five men read the weekly portion, a sixth read the portion for Rosh Ḥodesh, and a seventh, the special pericope for Ḥanukkah. The person called up for *maṭtir* then repeated the seventh pericope. See *Maḥzor Italiani*, part 1, fol. 65r; Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy*, 135.

⁴³ Evidently, this discussion centered on the question of the Torah reading for that Shabbat, that is, how many should be called up to read the weekly pericope. Note that this certainly substantiates the eyewitness nature of Basola's account.

⁴⁴ During Ḥanukkah the Torah reading comes from *Naso* (Num. 7:1–8:4): the chieftains' initiatory gifts for the completed Tabernacle. In the Sefardic rite, the daily pericope is divided between the first two readers (*kohen and levite*), while the third reader (*yisrael*) repeats the

[17] They have four permanent ḥazzanim, and each one prays for a week in turn. They are not paid by the congregation, but many of the people called to read the Torah make donations to them, visitors in particular.⁴⁵

[18] The Muslims call Damascus "al-Sham," Sidon "Saïda," Shechem "Nabulus," Jerusalem "al-Quds," Hebron "al-Ḥalil." Near Hebron, at a distance of half a mile there is a place called Ḥabra,⁴⁶ which I believe is ancient Hebron. At a later date, in order to honor the Tomb of the Patriarchs the area that was at the edge of the field was settled. For the wise person this suffices.

[J. Traditions related to the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon River]

[86v] Inquiries concerning the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon River

When I reached Beirut¹ I met four Babylonian Jews. I spoke with one of them who knew Hebrew, by the name of Rabbi Moses. He told me the truth about the Sambatyon river, which he heard from Muslims who had seen it, that it is definitely where the Benei Moshe are to be found.² He also informed me that a day's journey from his home is Neṣibin where R. Judah b. Betera is buried. He swore to me that he saw it with his own eyes and it is famous;³ that

entire pericope. In the Italian and Ashkenazic rites, instead of repeating what has already been read the third reader reads the pericope for the following day.

⁴⁵ Since the precentors received no salary from the community, and probably had limited economic resources, they were exempt from payment of taxes, including the poll tax. This state of affairs is reflected in paragraph 9 of the takkanot (Freimann, "Takkanot," 209): "There is a herem not to take the poll tax, that is, the royal kharadj, from the permanent ḥazzan in the synagogue." Moreover, the ḥazzan was entitled to receive gifts from those called up to the Torah.

⁴⁶ I was unable to identify this place, which was perhaps one of Hebron's quarters.

J. Traditions related to the Ten Tribes and the Sambatyon River

¹ Basola visited Beirut three times in the course of his journey. See fols. 68r–v, 82r–v above.

² In the late medieval period rumors concerning the presence of the Ten Tribes in the East, including the Benei Moshe (sons of Moses) who were in the land of Cush (Ethiopia?), were rife. See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 26 n. 151, 86. Basola's remarks do not indicate the ostensible location of the Benei Moshe. Perhaps his informant was referring to his homeland Babylonia. This merits further investigation.

³ This is the town of Neṣibin, present-day Nusaybin in Turkish Kurdistan. Various traditions have survived that identify this town as Judah ben Betera's burial site. See Ben-Yaakov, *Sacred Tombs in Babylonia*, 210–14.

it is well known that on the night of Rosh Hodesh Sivan as well as on the nights of Shavuot a pillar of cloud is visible on the above-mentioned R. Judah's grave and everyone in the surrounding area visits his grave annually at these times in order to witness this wonder. And this Jew who spoke with me seemed to me a good man, blameless and upright [Job 1:1, 8], by no means a liar.

When I was in the holy city of Jerusalem,⁴ a Jew from the land of Cush arrived who had been held captive among the nations for ten years until purchased by Muslims and sold to Jews in Egypt. And he came to see Jerusalem.⁵ The nagid spoke to him, and he stated unequivocally that there are many Jews in the south, kings and nobles who fight at intervals with the Indians.⁶ It is said that some have been there since First Temple times, and others from Second Temple times. The nagid, may God preserve and protect him, said that thirty years earlier, a Jew from the tribe of Simeon had stayed at his home and related that there were four tribes in his land, one of them the tribe of Issachar which studies Torah. Their *nasi* was of that tribe; he calls upon God who answers him.

In Safed I met a teacher of children who had left Aden two years earlier. He told me that in his land, in Aden, which is beyond Egypt to the south, [87r] a distance of forty days' journey on foot, there was a Jew who had stayed in Sangli for six years. This place is another forty days distant from Aden.⁷ And this Jew truthfully recounted that in Sangli all the inhabitants are royal Jews who send their servants to war, while they remain in the synagogue to pray, and they are victorious. In Jerusalem they told me that a letter had come from Sangli which related that all of its inhabitants are Jews

⁴ Basola resided in Jerusalem during Kislev-Tevet (11 November to 30 December) 1521. See fols. 74r-v, 76r-77v.

⁵ This was evidently the Jew described by Israel Ashkenazi as being "almost like a Cushite" (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 119). As Shohat has shown ("Reubeni Affair," 97-98) this figure is not to be identified as David ha-Reubeni.

⁶ In the late Middle Ages, and probably earlier as well, the Kingdom of Ethiopia was viewed as part of India which was divided into three lands: two in the east and one in the west—the Kingdom of Prester John (Ethiopia). See the excerpts from Johanan Alemanno, MS. Oxford, Bodleian Library, Reggio 23 (2234) (IMHM, no. 20517), fol. 40v. See also Aescoly, *Falashas*, 163; Gross, "Ten Tribes and Prester John," 25. Accordingly, what follows in the text evidently concerns Ethiopia.

⁷ Or Cranganhore in Malabar, southern India (Cochin). Israel Ashkenazi also noted in his letter that "Sangli ... is a distance of forty days from Aden" (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 119). See also Aescoly, *David Hareuveni*, 230.

who are ruled by a king. Although they number but fifty thousand, all are noblemen.⁸ Each has fifty or sixty servants whom he sends to war.

In Safed, one of the important elders is the Morisco dayyan. He is outstanding in his generation, an expert in Talmud and Kabbalah, a holy and righteous man. He has three sons, of whom the youngest is about sixteen years of age. Two years ago, this youth was sitting on the roof alone, when a white dove flew up to him. He caught it in his hands and saw written on one of its wings in square Assyrian script: "Lo, the Ten Tribes are coming." After reading the message, he held the dove in his grasp, intending to run and show it to his father when he felt a strong blow to his hand that forced him to open his hand. The dove flew away and was seen no more. He went and recounted these things to his father, who interrogated him closely several times, making him swear [87v] that he was not lying. He stuck to his words, maintaining that this was what happened, never deviating from his tale. What I have written is as I heard it from father and son.⁹

The rumor concerning the moon in the Temple: the Muslims have a round dome topped by a large metal pole with a distinctly visible image of the moon which faces south. They say that during Sukkot 5280 [September 1519] it turned to the east. The Muslims interpreted this as an evil omen for their faith and tried to turn it back to the south, which faces Mecca, but were unable to.¹⁰ I also heard that a tree planted in the Temple in Mohammed's day fell down at the same time.¹¹

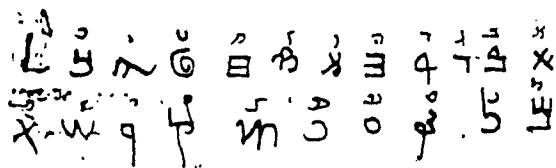
⁸ A similar description appeared in a letter sent by Abraham of Siena from Jerusalem in 1496. He wrote: "In the sea there is an island called Sangli which has some forty thousand Jewish householders, all very wealthy and learned in the written and oral law and they have a Jewish king." See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 26 n. 151. It is not clear whether the Jewish king mentioned by Basola was the same as the one mentioned by Abraham of Siena.

⁹ The same story appears with minor variations in a contemporary letter sent by Abraham Raphael Trabot from Safed to the notable Abraham of Perugia. This letter was published by Neubauer, "Ten Tribes," 32. Ben-Zvi (*Pilgrimage*, 89-90) noted the similarity between the two versions. On this letter, see Praver, "Jerusalem Letters," 143-44.

¹⁰ The Jews interpreted the changed orientation of the half-moon on top of the Mosque of Omar as a sign of redemption. The Muslims saw it as an evil omen, however. This occurrence is mentioned in three additional contemporary sources: in Israel Ashkenazi's letter (David, "Israel Ashkenazi," 114-15); in Abraham ha-Levi's letter from Jerusalem in 1520 (David, "Letter from Jerusalem," 59-60); and by David ha-Reubeni (Aescoly, *David Hareuveni*, 26). For a discussion, see David, "Letter from Jerusalem," 53-55.

¹¹ The Jews of Jerusalem viewed the toppling of the palm tree planted on the Temple Mount

The writing of the Cutheans, that is, of the Samaritans, is found on the coins.



I praise the Lord who counseled me to go up and to see Eretz-Israel in its destruction, and God showed me the entire land. Thus may it be His will that I merit the privilege of seeing it rebuilt and the Temple established. In most of the places where I wrote "they say"¹² this was so that no one shall claim Moses is a liar.

[K. Personal prayers]¹

[88r] [A prayer to be recited at the monuments of] zaddikim—may their memory be blessed.

Let the faithful exult in glory; let them shout for joy upon their couches [Ps. 149:5]. Peace be upon you and upon upon [*sic*] your final resting place our master and teacher, Rabbi ——— [insert appropriate name]. May your soul, and the souls of your colleagues, and of your students be bound in the bonds of eternal life with the Lord your God, at the foot of His glorious throne. Happy were you in this world and it will be well with you in the world-to-come. Happy were you who merited walking after your creator with a pure heart, vindicating the many by teaching Israel laws and ordi-

by Mohammed as an additional sign of redemption. This sign was also mentioned in Abraham ha-Levi's letter. See David, "Letter from Jerusalem," 60. (See also *ibid.*, 55.)

¹² The Hebrew *yesh omrim* (they say) has not been translated uniformly throughout. I have also used "they claim," "it is said," "they assert"—TRANS.

K. Personal prayers

¹ Neither of these prayers was included in the Ben-Zvi or Yaari editions of this text. As this edition is primarily concerned with the historical aspects of Basola's pilgrimage, the prayers have simply been presented in translation without footnotes and without reference to other liturgical units. Please note, however, that the language of these prayers is much more literary than that of the travel book itself and that the increased incidence of and reliance on biblical language and contexts reflects their liturgical use.

nances. Therefore your reward is great and you dwell above, in the upper spheres, with the holy angels.

May the Merciful One speed your resurrection our master, Rabbi ———, and hasten your revival. May we be worthy of seeing your face shine with celestial light. May your merit and the justice and purity of your teaching intercede for us. Your teaching will intervene for us, your merit will protect us. Please our creator and creator of the universe: open our hearts to your Torah and to the love of goodness and the paths of modesty [Micah 6:8] and grant us success in all our undertakings. May our enemies have no power over us. Do not let our feet slip. Turn to us with mercy by virtue of this zaddik's merit. Do not punish us in accord with our evil; do not mete out to us according to our works; do not repay us for our evil deeds. Absolve us of all our iniquities; forgive us all our sins; pardon all our crimes so that we may be in the company of the zaddikim who achieve both worlds. Blessed be He who returns souls to the bodies of the zaddikim and wakes them, bringing them to paradise, letting them merit the world-to-come. You created the zaddikim for the sake of your name; You sanctified them for the sake of your name; You purified them for the sake of your name; You implanted in their hearts the desire to study your Torah, and to fear your name, and to wholeheartedly fulfill your desires. Just as we merited a visit to the grave of this zaddik, Rabbi ———, may it be the will of [88v] our creator that we see him alive, that we rejoice with him and he rejoice with us. Blessed be He who keeps his word and is faithful to his covenant.

Happy are the zaddikim, happy are the righteous ones, happy are the upright and the blameless, happy are those who study the Torah, the champions, happy are the pillars of the earth. What is hidden for you? What awaits you? As it is written: "How abundant is the good that You have in store for those who fear You" [Ps. 31:20]. You have recorded in the words of the prophets what is yet to occur: "No eye has seen [them], O God, but You, Who act for those who trust in Him" [Isa. 64:3].

May your prayers protect us in our time of trouble; may your merit preserve us from the persecution of the authorities and from the ravaging soldiers. Through your merit may we be worthy of seeing the face of our messiah, and you will be alive, and we will rejoice in you and you will rejoice in us speedily and soon and all Israel will be knit together, let us say Amen.

Blessed be the memory of the zaddikim, blessed be the memory of the righteous, blessed be the memory of the humble, blessed be the memory of

the expounders of Torah, blessed be the memory of our teacher, Rabbi — of blessed memory for a blessing and resurrection. Amen.

He then makes any requests he desires and says the blessing for the dead. If there are ten [a quorum] they recite kaddish.

And this is the prayer to be recited facing the Temple, may it be rebuilt speedily in our day, Amen.

Exalted, from the first You established our Temple; before stone was laid on stone, You planted our sanctuary for eternity. You did not make earth and fields your abode for the thought of Israel preceded all your works and creations before You, the first of your creatures. As You loved our forefathers and saw their deeds, You chose their descendants to stand to serve You and to bless your name and they [89r] are your nation and your portion so that all the peoples of the earth shall recognize that your name is attached to us [Jer. 14:9] and all shall recognize and know that You, Our God, walk in our camp.

You commanded your servant Moses to build a house for your name so that You could dwell among us, as it says: "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them" [Exod. 25:8]. You chose Solomon our king, the son of David your anointed one, to build a stately house as You told his father David: "I will raise up your offspring after you, one of your own issue, and I will establish his kingship. He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish his royal throne forever" [2 Sam. 7:12–13]. And You kept your word, for your word is everlasting truth. And Solomon your servant inherited his father's throne and built this house for your name in its designated place and according to its planned dimensions. And when he had completed the work and construction of this holy house, he kneeled with his hands outstretched to the heavens and supplicated You to hear in your great mercy the supplications of all who come to pray in this house and to grant each petitioner's request, as it says: "Any prayer or supplication offered by any person among all Your people Israel—each of whom knows [his own affliction]...pardon and take action! Render to each man according to his ways as You know his heart to be—for You alone know the hearts of all men" [1 Kings 8:38–39]. And You Almighty God in your great goodness heard his prayer and the supplication he uttered before You in his worship, for You accepted his prayer and his supplication, as it says: "I have heard the prayer and the supplication [89v] which you have offered to Me. I consecrate

this House which you have built and I set My name there forever. My eyes and My heart shall ever be there" [ibid., 9:3].

Now Almighty God although because of the iniquities of our forefathers this consecrated house has been destroyed and our sins have lengthened [this state of affairs], preventing its rectification, we know that its holiness still pertains and that your presence still rests there and your covenant and promise still stand. Therefore, Almighty God shine your face on all your servants for the sake of your great name and for the sake of this sacred house. Open our hearts to your holy Torah, let us wholeheartedly revere You. Plant the Torah in our hearts and the hearts of our descendants, let it not be forgotten from our lips and the lips of our descendants. Grant us the merit to study and teach, to observe and to fulfill and to do all that is written within. Let not the Torah ever cease from our lips or from the lips of our descendants. Subjugate the evil inclination; let it not prevent us from fulfilling your holy Torah so that we may study the words of your Torah and keep and fulfill your laws and ordinances that You have chosen.

Help us God our savior for the sake of your great name and for the sake of this imposing holy house that we face as we pray. Give us the measure of our days in peace and quiet; let sorrow and sighing flee from them. Save us from all sorts of evil calamities that are in store in the world. Hide us under your merciful protective wings; protect us in your mercy. Open your goodly treasures, the heavens.

Even though we have neither good deeds nor merit [90r] to intercede for us, and we are shamed by our iniquities, nevertheless we have come to pray and to plead before You facing this house which you consecrated and we have placed before You the prayer of Solomon your servant and the promise and the covenant in which You promised in your mercy to remember us, for there is no forgetfulness before your royal throne. We cast our supplications before You. Turn to us in your great mercy; pay no heed to our sins and iniquities. Recall the covenant with our forefathers and the prayer that Solomon our king prayed and forgive all our sins and iniquities. Fulfill what You promised in the words of your holy prophets: "It is I, I who—for My own sake—wipe your transgression away and remember your sins no more" [Isa. 43:25]; "I wipe away your sins like a cloud, your transgressions like mist—Come back to Me, for I redeem you" [ibid., 44:22]. Let us repent fully before You; inform us that You find us desirable. Fill our hands with your blessings and the richness of your presents. Bless our bread and water, keep

sickness from within our midst so that we may worship You with joyous hearts. May we be fortunate to witness the rebuilding of this imposing holy house and the ingathering of your people Israel in their towns and their encampments [Num. 31:10]. Fashion a pure heart for us, and create in us a steadfast spirit [Ps. 51:12] so that we may fulfill your will with a pure heart and may be worthy of living with your righteous ones who do your will and stand before You.

Just as I your servant ——— [insert name] was deemed worthy to see your city and your land, and your Temple in their destruction, so too [90v] may I be worthy to see them rebuilt and resettled as before and the Temple rebuilt and our king standing before us and You God Almighty at its head. Save me from destruction and make my roots sprout like a well-watered garden. May I be worthy to see my desires fulfilled in my sons and daughters; be merciful to them, remember them with holy descendants and holy sons who study your Torah and your commandments, who keep your charge to fear You and to serve You all the days they live on this earth.

May it be thy will God Almighty that You grant me wisdom and knowledge and the ability to understand, to study and to teach, to obey and to do. Make me worthy to live in Eretz-Israel all the days of my life. Provide me with full sustenance, gained honorably and not scantily, by permitted and not by forbidden means. May my life be prolonged with good and pleasant things.

In Your great mercy have compassion on ——— [insert name] to remember her with mercy and to command your blessing upon her progeny that the sons who emerge from her will be Godfearing and will do your will and keep your commandments, will be busy in your Torah, and will walk in your paths. May they be blessed with your blessings and be a blessing to your people.

As for my sons and my daughters named thus or thus, decree that they merit the opportunity to build a worthy long-lasting house of which You will approve. May these words of supplication that I have brought before You, the Lord my God, come near to You and be acceptable to You along with the prayers of your righteous ones. Place my portion with that of the zaddikim who walked before You and did your will, those who inherited paradise and merit the world-to-come. May the words of my mouth, etc. [and the prayer of my heart be acceptable to You, O Lord, my rock and redeemer—Ps. 19:15].

And one adds petitions to his heart's desire.

[L. Shipboard advice to travelers]

[91r] He who desires to go to the land of life [Eretz-Israel] via seafaring ship should sail on a Venetian galley only, for they are safe from Corsairs^a and storms at sea. He who sails on a galley should make sure to take a berth, even if he is the only one who does so, otherwise all the sailors^b will expel and harass him, sending him from the frying pan into the fire, saying, go to your place, and he will be unable to stand up to them. It is extremely inadvisable to rent a place in the hold^c from the captain,^d for if the goods are plentiful and the hold becomes full, even if one cries out and pleads [paraphrase of Lam. 3:8], he will remain without a berth, and the guards will chase him away while the captain remains deaf to his cries. Even when there is not much cargo the guards act evilly. In addition, it is not possible to use a berth in the hold until all the goods have been loaded, and goods are loaded and unloaded at each port.^e Then one is evicted from his spot, constantly ascending and descending, achieving no rest.

A single person or a pair should take a small cabin;^f there are many such for approximately four or five ducats each. The purser's^g cabin is also suitable for those with small families, and it is cheap; its price is five ducats, and water and fire are conveniently close by. Those with large families should take the weapons' storeroom^h from the captain; it is a roomy place near the purser.ⁱ But there is no place on a galley better than the top deck officer's^j cabin for there is no bother or business conducted there. In addition the top deck officer^k is in charge of all the sailors; anyone found in his shadow is completely protected. The price for its rental is at least fifteen

^a corsari

^b galeotti

^c gebba

^d patrone

^e porti

^f Perhaps *scantinato*, meaning here a cabin or storeroom below decks.

^g canovero

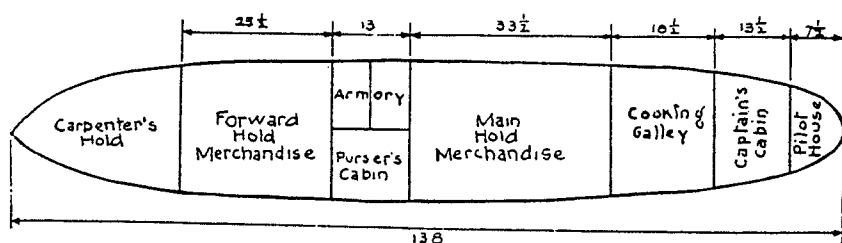
^h scandalaro

ⁱ canovero

^j comito

^k comito

ducats. The carpenter^a and the *galappe*¹ have two lovely cabins in the bow^b that are worth ten ducats each. The ship's scribe's^c cabin is similarly good and pleasant, as is the weapons' storeroom;^d it has to be rented from the captain. A person must be quick to fill the water barrels^e at each port. Even though by rights the water should be provided by the renters of the berth, one should not depend on them. If one gives the cook^f two or three marcelli, he will allow him to cook throughout the entire voyage, and will make room for his pot. And if he gives two or three marchetti² to the water captain^g he will fill the water barrels. The Jews usually collect the sum of a ducat among themselves for the deck officer^h so that he will look after them and deliver them from the ill-disposed ones among them, for it is in his power to do harm or good.³ It is essential to make this promise at the beginning of the voyage and to keep one's word at its conclusion. A word to the wise is sufficient.



The layout of a Venetian galley
Reprinted by permission, from Frederic Chapin Lane, *Venetian Ships and Shipbuilders of the Renaissance* (John Hopkins University Press Reprint, 1979), p. 25.

- ^a marangone
^b prua
^c iscrivano
^d armarolo
^e barili
^f cuoco
^g capitano dell'acqua
^h comito

L. Shipboard advice to travelers

- ¹ I was unable to ascertain the meaning of this word.
² This coin originated in the Marches, the district where Basola resided.
³ A typical example of open anti-Jewish antagonism that deteriorated into physical violence was documented by Obadiah of Bertinoro with regard to his shipmate Meshullam of Volterra who sailed with him from Palermo to Rhodes. See Artom and David, *From Italy to Jerusalem*, 43 (Adler, *Jewish Travellers*, 215).

Glossary

aliyah	immigration to Eretz-Israel for the purpose of settling there.
amidah	prayer recited daily, composed of 18 benedictions on weekdays and seven benedictions on festivals.
amora (pl. amoraim)	title given to the Jewish sages of Eretz-Israel and Babylonia in the third to sixth centuries who created the gemara.
asarah harugei malkhut	collective term for ten martyrs executed by the Romans.
Benei Moshe	lit.: the sons of Moses. Descendants of the Ten Tribes.
bet midrash	school for higher rabbinic learning, often attached to a synagogue.
Cairo Geniza	a storeroom for old and defective books and documents in the synagogue in Fustat.
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	solemn fast day observed on the 10th of Tishri.
dayyan	a rabbi qualified to serve as a judge on a rabbinic court.
dhimmi	the unenslaved population that does not embrace Islam in a country under Muslim conquest, subject to special taxes and restrictions (essentially, Jews and Christians).
dukhan	elevated platform in front of the Torah Ark in the synagogue.
Fast of Gedaliah	a fast day on the 3rd of Tishri, in memory of the

	slaying of Gedaliah and his associates (Jer. 41:1–2; 2 Kings 25:25).
gaon	outstanding talmudical scholar.
hakham	sage; rabbi.
halakhah	the legal side of Judaism that embraces personal, social, national, and international relationships, as well as the practices and observances of Judaism.
Hanukkah	the eight-day celebration commemorating the victory of Judah Maccabee over the Syrian king Antiochus Epiphanes and the subsequent rededication of the Temple.
hasid (pl. hasidim)	pious or holy person.
haskamah (pl. haskamot)	agreement to accept or renew a regulation (see takkanah).
havdalah	ceremony marking the end of the Sabbath.
haver (pl. haverim)	title given to the mature sages who studied in the rabbinical academy. In Italy, a lower level of the rabbinate.
haverut	lower-level rabbinate (in Italy).
hazzan (pl. hazzanim)	the cantor or prayer leader who officiates in the synagogue.
herem	excommunication.
hillula	celebration held at a venerated grave or to mark the anniversary of the death of a <i>zaddik</i> .
Hol ha-Moed	the intermediate days of the festivals of Sukkot and Passover.
Hoshana Rabbah	popular name for the seventh day of Sukkot on which special observances are held.
kabbalah	the Jewish mystical tradition.
kaddish	liturgical doxology.
khafar (ghafar)	toll or protection tax levied on dhimmi at various checkpoints.

kharadj (djizya)	poll tax traditionally levied on non-Muslims in Muslim states.
kohanim	Jews of priestly descent.
Lag ba-Omer	33rd day of the fifty-day period between Passover and Shavuot; a semi-holiday.
Maarabiim	see Maghrebis .
Maghrebis	Jews of North African origin.
mikveh	ritual bath.
minhag (pl. minhagim)	ritual custom; synagogue rite.
Morisco	see Mustarab .
muallim	notable; distinguished person.
Mustarab	Morisco; local Jews of Oriental origin.
nagid	title applied in Muslim countries in the Middle Ages to a leader recognized by the state as head of the Jewish community.
nasi	tribal leader; pentateuchal term for chieftains.
niepo	the title for a district ruler in the Mamluk period; <i>naib</i> in Arabic.
Passover	festival commemorating the exodus from Egypt.
perek	chapter.
pesak (pl. pesakim)	a halakhic decision handed down by a rabbi.
posek	decisor; codifier or rabbinic scholar who pronounces decisions in disputes and on questions of Jewish law.
Rosh Hashanah	two-day holiday at the beginning of Tishri; traditionally marks the New Year.
Rosh Hodesh	new moon, marking the beginning of the month in the Jewish calendar.
raṭl	a weight; approximately the present-day US pound.
sayrafi	moneychangers; Jews officially appointed by the kadi to monitor the money in circulation or to serve as treasurers for financial institutions.

seliḥot	penitential prayers.
sharia	the body of formally established sacred law in Islam, governing not only religious but also political, economic, civil, criminal, ethical, social, and domestic affairs.
Shavuot	Pentecost; Feast of Weeks. Second of the three annual pilgrim festivals, it commemorates the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai.
Shema	prayer recited twice daily that contains Judaism's proclamation of the unity of God.
Shemini Azeret	final festal day (two days in the Diaspora) at the conclusion of the holiday of Sukkot.
shemittah	the sabbatical year when the land lies fallow.
sukkah	booth or tabernacle erected for Sukkot when, for seven days, religious Jews "dwell" or at least eat in the sukkah.
Sukkot	festival of Tabernacles; last of the three pilgrim festivals, beginning on the 15th of Tishri.
taḥanun	supplicatory prayers.
tahrir	the Ottoman records of the data collected by commissions sent to survey the tax-paying population, lands, crops, and revenues in the towns and villages for fiscal purposes.
tanna (pl. tannaim)	rabbinic teacher of the Mishnaic period.
takkanah (pl. takkanot)	regulation supplementing the Law of the Torah; regulations governing the internal life of communities and congregations.
Ten Days of Penitence	the ten-day penitential period from the New Year until the Day of Atonement.
yeshivah	traditional Jewish academy primarily devoted to the study of the Talmud and rabbinic literature.
yozrot	poetic additions inserted in the first benediction that precedes the morning recitation of the Shema.

zaddik (pl. zaddikim)	person outstanding for his faith or piety.
ziyara	religious ritual of prostration or prayer at venerated gravesites.

Abbreviations

- BJPES*—Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society
BT—Babylonian Talmud
EI—Encyclopaedia of Islam
IMHM—Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts
JNUL—Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
PAAJR—Proceedings of the American Association for Jewish Research
REJ—Revue des études juives

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