Travel and Mobility in Hellenistic and Early Roman Palestine

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The aim of this project is to conduct interdisciplinary research on travel and mobility in Hellenistic and early Roman Palestine (332 BCE – 70 CE). The project will examine not only practicalities of travel and mobility in the context of Greco-Roman civilization, but also their significance for ancient culture in Hellenistic and early Roman Palestine, including social, economic, cultural, and religious developments. In practical terms, the main research questions to be posed are: What were the main highways of travel in Hellenistic and early Roman Palestine? Who traveled where and how, and for what purpose? What was the human experience of travel? What information and material goods were exchanged as a result of mobility, and how did this exchange matter for the social, economic, cultural, and religious life of ancient Judeans and their interaction with neighbors?

To achieve the project's aims, three distinctive methodologies will be employed to study travel and mobility: a philological-historical analysis relevant to ancient history, use of remote sensing (RS) and geographic information systems (GIS), and archaeological survey. Within these methodologies, several specific research objectives will be pursued in an attempt to answer the research questions. First, a philological-historical evaluation of all written sources on travel and mobility (literary, paleographical, and epigraphic) will be conducted with regard to their information on itineraries or any other practicalities of travel and mobility (e.g., modes of travel, nature of roads, social, economic, cultural, and religious aspects of mobility). Second, RS and **GIS operations** will be conducted with the aim of discovering actual or suggesting potential routes between the main centers of the kingdom of Herod the Great (using a multisource approach: archival cartographic sources, archival aerial imagery, archival satellite imagery, modern aerial imagery, modern open-access satellite imagery, very high resolution and multispectral satellite images, GIS simulations [esp. least cost paths], and archaeological data). Third, fieldwork will be conducted to verify the features suggested on the basis of remote sensing studies and to record topographical and archaeological features with GPS. Fourth, a GIS database of routes and travelrelated infrastructure will be created. Fifth, modern socioeconomic theories and spatial methods will be applied to the aforementioned database to explore the integration and hierarchy of the network of roads and related sites and to examine the spatial patterns of this network. As a **result**, it is hoped that the project will facilitate a better understanding of the material conditions of travel and mobility as well as their role in shaping social, economic, cultural, and religious aspects of daily life in Hellenistic and early Roman Palestine.

As for the philological-historical evaluation of all written sources (research objective no. 1), the following most important groups of sources will be examined: (1A) the Septuagint (LXX); (1B) LXX (deuterocanonical) Biblical books; (1C) the Pseudepigrapha; (1D) Philo; (1E) Josephus' *Antiquitates*, Books I-XI; (1F) Josephus' *Antiquitates*, Books XII-XX; (1G) Josephus' *Bellum* (and *Vita*); (1H) the New Testament; (1I) early rabbinic traditions; and (1J) papyrological and epigraphic evidence.

The conduct of research objective no. 1A will be allotted to a PhD student. The aim of the study of the Septuagint (only the Greek books that have counterparts in the Hebrew Bible) is to analyze the linguistic terminology of travel and mobility in the LXX and to check for the presence of possible textual changes in the depiction of Biblical itineraries. The analysis of the linguistic terminology will focus on the Greek translations of key Hebrew travel terms (especially motion verbs, e.g.: ארח, דבר, בוא, עבר, הטה, רוץ, בוא, ישר, types of roads: מסלול, מסלה, נתיבה, ארח, דרך, ישר משעול, משעול, מוד, החוב, מעברה, מעברה, מעברה, מעברה, and modes of travel and transportation: מבר, סוס, כרד, בקר, גמל, רכב, בקר, עגלה, עגלה (צב, עגלה). Furthermore, the analysis of Biblical itineraries will revolve around the most important cases (esp. Gen. 12:6-9, 13:1-2, 28:10-19, 35:1-27, 37:12-18; Josh. 10:10-28; Judg. 19; 1 Sam. 13:16-18, 14:31; 2 Sam. 5:22-25, 15:1-16:23; 1 Kings 12; 2 Kings 3:8-27, 4:8-44, 6:11-20, 9:1-37, 10:1-36; Jer. 41). What is more, this study objective will also analyze several chosen examples of routes mentioned in the Hebrew and Greek Biblical texts (e.g., the ascent of Beth Horon and the Beersheba – Jerusalem – Jenin highway) on the basis of both literary data and published archaeological material to test a widely held conviction on the general continuity (or possible discontinuity) of routes from the Iron Age to later periods, especially the Hellenistic period. Overall, the study of the LXX should show whether, and to what degree, the changed conditions of travel and mobility in Hellenistic times influenced the LXX authors of the Bible.