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## *Chapter 14*

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# THE ACTUAL TEMPLE SITE FROM 638 TO 1099 C.E.

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**T**HIS AREA of the *real* Temple Mount was located in *southeastern* Jerusalem where the Jews lived for 460 years (from 638 C.E. to 1099 C.E.). The Abbasid period of Muslim rule began in 750 C.E. With the Abbasids the fortunes of the Jewish population in Jerusalem began to deteriorate. And about 800 C.E. we have documents that give authentic Jewish eyewitness appraisals of what was happening in Jerusalem.<sup>305</sup> For the period of the Abbasids and later Fatimid rulers, Jews were NOT allowed to enter any Muslim holy place. This meant that the Haram esh-Sharif with its Dome of the Rock was completely off limits to Jews. They could, however, continue to live at and around their own Temple Mount located near the Gihon Spring. Indeed, in the time of the Fatimids (953–975 C.E.), we read that the area of the Temple Mount of the Jews was then in a ruined state and not being

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<sup>305</sup> Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.224.

respected like as under the Umayyad Dynasty when Muslims were friendly to the Jews. We have a contemporary report from Rabbi Ahima'as, an Italian Jew, visiting Jerusalem for pilgrimage. Note the following translation that mentions this pilgrim.

“At that time there was a Jew named Rabbi Ahima'as who went up to Jerusalem, the glorious city, three times with his vowed offerings. Each time he went, he took with him 100 pieces of gold, as he had vowed to the Rock of his salvation, to aid those who were engaged in Torah study and for those who mourned *the ruined House of His Glory...*”<sup>306</sup>

Note that the Rabbi spoke of the Temple as “ruined.” The fact that the Temple of the Jews was then in a *ruined* state dovetails with another reference from the same document concerning an appeal to Jews in the world to help Jews in Jerusalem. This was the famous Rabbi Paltiel, head of the Jewish people in Egypt under the rule of the Fatimids. What is amazing in our present context is that Rabbi Paltiel made an astonishing appeal to Jews regarding what was left of the *Sanctuary* then in existence in Jerusalem. He spoke of the ruined *Sanctuary* as very much in evidence [and that Jews were able to worship within its precincts]. He said that money should be sent to Jerusalem in order to supply

“oil for *the inner altar of the Sanctuary at the Western Wall*; and for the synagogues and communities, far and near: and for those who were mourning *the loss of the Temple* [however, the partial Western Wall of the Holy of Holies was left standing], those who grieved and mourned for Zion; and for the teachers and their students in the Yeshiva [in Jerusalem] and for the scholars of Babylon in the Yeshiva of the Geonim [in Babylon].”<sup>307</sup>

This reference is most revealing. Though it was evident the Temple was then in *ruins*, and Rabbi Paltiel readily admitted that the Jews had *lost the Temple*, and there were a group of people mourning the “loss of the Temple,” he nonetheless asked that money be given supply “*oil for the inner altar of the Sanctuary at the Western Wall.*” This clearly means an Inner Altar was then in

<sup>306</sup> Ahima'as 1924: 65, translated by R. Harari, in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.224.

<sup>307</sup> Ahima'as 1924: 95–97, italics mine, translated by R. Harari, in Peters, *Jerusalem*, p.225.

operation at what was still called a “Sanctuary” [another Jewish name for the Temple]. He even located the Sanctuary as being in that ruined area. The precise location the Rabbi sanctified was *the Inner Altar located at the Western Wall on the southeast ridge*.

Modern Jewish scholars reviewing these texts state that Jews in Jerusalem considered this “Sanctuary” as a reference to a Synagogue located in a *cave* with an entrance very near that “Western Wall” of the ruined Holy of Holies.<sup>308</sup> To go into that underground synagogue on the Temple Mount worshippers were referred to as “going down there” or “going down to the *kanisa* [synagogue].”<sup>309</sup> Indeed, about 540 C.E. it was noticed by Christians who saw this area of Solomon’s former Temple that a single *cave* was to be found at the original Temple.<sup>310</sup> This *cave* HAD NOTHING to do

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<sup>308</sup> Two modern works best describe the discoveries from the Geniza documents relating to Jerusalem in the crucial periods in which we are interested. They focus attention to the “Inner Altar of the Sanctuary at the Western Wall” and the synagogue located in a *cave* on the Temple Mount. These works are: Gil’s *A History of Palestine (638–1099)*, pp.536, 607, 639, especially 647–53; and Joshua Praver and Haggai Ben-Shammai’s compilation of articles, *The History of Jerusalem*, pp. 54–55, 80, 81n, 174–75. These two works are monumental in scope. Once it is realized by scholars that the “Temple Mount” to Jewish authorities from 638 to 1099 C.E. referred to the *southeastern* region of Jerusalem in and around the Gihon Spring, the accounts in these two works take on a true and clear meaning. The Jewish scholars themselves were unaware of the full import of their work due to their belief that the Dome of the Rock was the location of the former Jewish Temples. But a whole new way of looking at Jerusalem during that 400 years comes to light when the falsity of the Haram location is finally realized. These two volumes are indispensable for research. All persons interested in Jewish history during this period definitely must have these two volumes in their library. They show, when understood correctly, that the *southeastern* area of Jerusalem was where Jewish authorities in the pre-Crusade period located their own “Temple Mount.” The Haram and the Dome of the Rock were NEVER reckoned to be the Temple site by Jews in this period. During this period, the Haram was even OFF-LIMITS to Jews. But the Jewish authorities and laity were able to settle near and worship at the true site of their former Temples located in the *southeastern* section of Jerusalem near the Gihon.

<sup>309</sup> Gil, *A History of Palestine (638–1099)*, p.647.

<sup>310</sup> In a Christian account of the early 6th century called *Breviarius* (a short account) of Jerusalem we are told that south of the Church of the Holy Wisdom “you come to the Temple built by Solomon, but there is nothing left there apart from a single cave [emphasis mine]” (Wilkinson, *Jerusalem Pilgrims Before the Crusades*, p.61). Back in 333 C.E., the Bordeaux Pilgrim spoke of a “pierced

with the *cave* built in the “Rock” under the Dome of the Rock. That particular *cave* in the “Rock” was chiseled out in Muslim times, and in no way could it be the *cave* described in the Geniza records. This is because of the clear evidence that no Jews were allowed into the Haram area from the time of the Muslim Abassids (750 C.E.) to the Crusades.

Exactly where was the *cave* of the Gineza records that was adjacent to the “Western Wall” in the *southern* part of Jerusalem? Let us look further.

We are told by Maimonides (about 1180 C.E.) that at the spot where there was “the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies,” there were also underneath the standing wall some “deep and winding tunnels.”<sup>311</sup> This was on the *southeast* ridge. After entering an initial *cave*, the Jews encountered branches to that *cave*. They led downward. This means that below the “Western Wall” on the *southeast* ridge there were deep and winding “caves.” At this spot beneath the Western Wall (where the caves were) there was a Sanctuary with all the appearances of a Synagogue with an Inner Altar associated with it.

At this very spot was the gate of the Temple called “the Priest’s Gate.” No “Priest’s Gate” was ever mentioned in literature connected with the Temples that existed in Jerusalem from the time of Solomon to Herod. But in the final days of the Talmudic period

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stone” (which could mean a *cave*) at the Temple site. This *cave* became a prominent fixture to Jews who came to the Temple site after the time of Omar in 638 C.E., up to the time of the Crusades. We now have the Jewish documents from the Geniza in Egypt, referred to in the text, that such a *cave* was used as a synagogue in southeast Jerusalem where Jews felt David had built his altar. This *cave* was near the Western Wall. It was located in the Jewish quarter of the city after the time of Omar, the Second Caliph. The *cave* was then a synagogue.

<sup>311</sup> Recall that the terms “Mount Zion” and the “Temple Mount” are synonymous. They refer to the same place — to the spur of the southeast ridge where the original “Mount Zion” and its northerly extension called the “Ophel” were located. Later, I will show that all the Temples were located on the “Ophel” (the “humped mount”) prominence over and around the Gihon Spring. But for now, note that in Isaiah 32:14 (where “Ophel” is translated “forts” in the KJV), Isaiah said some of the main geographical features of the Ophel were its “caves” (KJV: “dens”) located underneath and within the mountain ridge.

(5th century C.E.), we read of a “Priest’s Gate” associated with the “Western Wall” of the Holy of Holies. This Holy of Holies must be the remnant of the Inner Sanctuary from Temples built in the time of Constantine and Julian. Note the comments of Moshe Gil.

“The Midrash mentions the Priest’s Gate together with the Western Wall and the Hulda Gates; the latter were certainly situated *in the south* [emphasis mine], according to the *Mishna* (Middot I:3). On the Priest’s Gate, it is said in *Shir ha-shirim rabba* (to the Song of Solomon, ii:9, ‘behold, he standeth behind our wall:’) [that is] ‘behind the Western Wall of the Temple, why? For the Lord has sworn that it will never be destroyed.’ In *Numbers Rabba* (xi:3): it is “the western wall of the Temple’ that has never been destroyed; and also *Lamentations Rabba*. The version in the Song of Solomon Rabba should therefore be viewed as an interpretation, as if it intended to say: the western wall has never been destroyed, the proof being that the Priest’s Gate and the Hulda Gate were not destroyed.”<sup>312</sup>

As Moshe Gil states, these geographical features surrounding the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies “*were certainly situated in the south.*” They were nowhere near the Haram or the Dome of the Rock (which, as is well known, had been off limits to Jews for almost 200 years). These *ruins* of the Sanctuary area on the true Temple Mount were located far to the *south* of the southern wall of the Haram. They were on the *southeast* ridge. And while the “Rock” of the Dome of the Rock had a single *cave* associated with it, in no way could that small *cave* be called, as Maimonides did, “deep and winding tunnels” (that is, several *caves*). There were no “deep and winding tunnels” under the Dome of the Rock.

[This exact geographical feature is prominently displayed today in the archaeological garden constructed by the Israeli Antiquities Department located over the Gihon Spring. In March, 1999, I toured the whole area and the full tunnel system with my daughter Kathryn. It is easy to find the site. There are, indeed, several caves and tunnels (one or two could easily house a number of people for synagogue services). Beyond the first caves there are some complete and incomplete tunnels (and a shaft in the rock) that reach

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<sup>312</sup> Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099* p.642.

down toward the Gihon. The geography of the region fits perfectly the description of *that* “Western Wall” mentioned by Maimonides, and also the descriptions found in the Geniza documents. And NOTE CAREFULLY: this area is about a third of a mile south of the Dome of the Rock.]

Beside these “deep and winding tunnels” at *this* particular “Western Wall,” there was a gate of the Temple (over the Gihon Spring) called the “Priest’s Gate.” This gate was, to the writers of the Geniza documents, a part of the *wall* (the “Western Wall”) of the Holy of Holies. In one Geniza letter are references to the synagogue located inside the *cave* next to the collapsed wall. Note what Moshe Gil records about this matter.

“In the same [Geniza] letter, Joseph ha-Kohen mentions alongside the synagogue the *cave*. Despite the letter’s poor condition, it is easy to discern that ‘the *cave*’ is used as a synonym for the synagogue. Indeed, ‘the *cave*’ is frequently mentioned in the sources as the place where the Jews of Jerusalem congregate, and it is clear that they are referring to the synagogue. Solomon ben Judah writes to Ephraim b. Shemaria that on the morrow after receiving his letter, they hastened to declare his rival excommunicated in Jerusalem: ‘On Monday, we and a large public gathering *in the cave* and we took out the scrolls of the Torah and banned all those ‘that decree unrighteous decrees’ (Isaiah x:1). After mentioning the collapse of a wall [the Western Wall] which caused damage to the synagogue, he writes, following the work of reconstruction, ‘the *cave* was restored.’ As to the collapse, it occurred on the first day of Passover, when the synagogue was full of people, but no one was injured. It seems that he is referring to the collapse of part of the Temple Mount wall, that is, the Western Wall.... This collapse is explicitly mentioned in Ibn al-Jawzi, who links it with the earthquake which occurred on 5 December, 1033 C.E.”<sup>313</sup>

All these geographical details from Jewish records (some from the Geniza collection were contemporary with the events) showed that the Jewish Sanctuary on the Temple Mount (then in *ruins*) was NOT at or within the Haram, because Jews had long been prohibited from entering that area. The original Temple was over the Gihon Spring.

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<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, p.648.

In fact, if people had used only the Bible to go by, there never would be doubt where the original “Mount Zion” and its adjacent mount Ophel were located as the location of the Temples. This brings us to consider the opinions of certain Jews known as Karaites who claimed to abide by the teachings of the Holy Scriptures alone. (And they had nothing to do with Rabbinic Rabbis who believed in accepting traditional beliefs *added* to Judaism since the canonization of the Jewish Bible in the time of Ezra.) These Karaite Jews came on the scene in the ninth century of our era. Many of them gravitated to Jerusalem during this period. These Jewish sectarians did not get along well with the Rabbinic Jews who had been in the *southern* Jewish quarter of Jerusalem since the time of Omar. But even though there was hostility between the two groups, the Karaites had enough sense to settle in the same general area (yet somewhat to the east) as the Rabbinic Jews. After all, both groups wanted to be near the area of the Temple Mount.

### **The Karaite Sectarian Jews Come to Jerusalem**

It was in the late Abbasid period that an important development took place among the Jews of Jerusalem. This was the arrival of Jews who divorced themselves from the teachings of the Rabbinic authorities in the Talmuds. They supposedly founded their beliefs only on the teachings of the *Tanak* (the Old Testament). Because of their insistence that *only* the teachings in the Holy Scriptures were important, the Karaites become further witnesses that the *southeastern* region of Jerusalem was where the former Temples were located. When they came to Jerusalem they took up residence in the *southeastern* part of the city, and most of them (because Rabbinic Jews already lived over and around the Temple Mount near the Gihon) moved to a village named Silwan, just east of the Kedron Valley from the former City of David.

Several documents from the Geniza collection show the Karaites' interest was only in the *southeastern* part of Jerusalem. This is significant because they were concerned only in what they believed was *biblical* Jerusalem, and not to traditional sites that the Christians and Muslims considered holy. The Karaites made *no attempt* at settling in the northern part of the city near the Haram

and the Dome of the Rock. They also made *no attempt* to live in the western part of Jerusalem on the *southwestern* hill that was of Christian interest or in the *northwestern* part near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre (also of Christian interest). Their areas for living during the 200 years they spent in Jerusalem was in the *southern* region near the Rabbinic Jews, but more particularly they settled in the village of Silwan on the *southern* slope of the Mount of Olives. This area of Karaite settlement is shown in Dan Bahat's *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem*.<sup>314</sup>

The reason the Rabbinic Jews and the Karaite Jews (normally adverse to one another in theological and societal matters) congregated around the *southeastern* sector of Jerusalem was both were aware the ruined Temple Mount was in that region. To them, the Temple Mount had nothing to do with the Haram or the Dome of the Rock. A letter written at the end of the tenth century from Jerusalem by a Rabbinic Jewish authority asked for donations of money to help Jewish people in Jerusalem has survived. The Jews lived in the midst of Muslims, Christians and other non-religious groups that made the environment where the Jews settled, and even the Temple Mount, an unsavory place to live. When one reads the account carefully, it is easy to see that *this* Jewish elder was NOT speaking about the Haram and the Dome of the Rock when he refers to the Temple and its grounds. Note what he stated.

“Greetings to you from the faithful Lord, the eternal city [Jerusalem], and from the head of Sion’s yeshivas, from the city in which the seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin sat with their students before them ... the city which is now widowed, orphaned, deserted, and impoverished with its few scholars.... Many competitors and rebels have arisen [the Karaites], yet it yearns for the day the All-Merciful Lord will redeem it.

We the Rabbanite community, a pitiful assembly *living in the vicinity of the Temple site*, regret to inform you that we are constantly harassed by those foreigners *who overrun the Temple grounds*. We pray: ‘How long, O Lord, shall the adversary reproach? Shall the adversary blaspheme Your name forever?’ (Psalm 74:10). Our sole comfort shall be when we are once again

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<sup>314</sup> See pages 81 and also 87.

permitted to walk freely about its gates, to prostrate ourselves in prayer for Jerusalem's total liberation *with its Temple restored*.... Yes, there is a synagogue on the Mount of Olives to which our Jewish confreres gather during the month of Tishri. There they weep upon its stone, roll in its dust, encircle its walls, and pray.

It was God's will that we found favor with the Ishmaelite rulers. At the time of their invasion and conquest of Palestine from the Edomites [the Romans/Byzantines], the Arabs came to Jerusalem and some Jews *showed them the location of the Temple* [italics mine]. This group of Jews has lived among them ever since. The Jews agree [that is, these Jews *still agree*] to keep the site clear of refuse, in return for which they [the Jews] were granted the privilege of praying at its gates. They [the Jews] then purchased the Mount of Olives [the whole Mount of Olives where the Jews had their synagogue was *purchased* by the Rabbinic Jewish community], where the Shekinah is said to have rested, as we read in Ezekiel 11:23: 'The glory of God went up from the midst of the city and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.' ... Here [on the Mount of Olives] we worship on holy days facing the Lord's Temple, especially on Hoshana Rabba [the Day of Trumpets]. We entreat the Lord's blessing for all of Israel wherever they might reside. All who remember Jerusalem will merit a share in its joy.

Everyone can partake of it by supporting Jerusalem's residents. Life here is extremely hard, food is scarce, and opportunities for work very limited. Yet our wicked neighbors exact exorbitant taxes and other 'fees.' Were we not to pay them, we would be denied the right to *pray on Mount of Olivet*.... These intolerable levies and the necessary frequent bribes compel us to borrow money at high rates of interest in order to avoid imprisonment or expulsion. Help us, save us, redeem us. It is for your benefit too, for we pray for your welfare."<sup>315</sup>

One of the first places the Jewish authorities wanted to secure to themselves (if possible) was the Mount of Olives as a part of their inheritance in Jerusalem. So, over the years, the Jews finally were able to purchase the whole of the *southern* spur of the Mount of Olives. This part of Olivet was important for Temple services.

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<sup>315</sup> A. Holtz, *The Holy City: Jews on Jerusalem* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1971), pp.122-3.

## Geniza Records Show Temples Located in South

The historical importance of the Geniza documents is immense in understanding that the original Temple site was in *southern* Jerusalem on the *southeastern* ridge near and around the Gihon Spring. I have already mentioned these early letters and documents, and their worth should not be underestimated. These literary remains have been uncovered in Egypt from the Cairo Geniza. They are a horde of over 200,000 pieces of manuscripts dating from the tenth to the twelfth centuries, and refer to events back to the time of the Caliph Omar who conquered Jerusalem for Islam. They were discovered just over a hundred years ago. Many are still to be translated and presented to the general public. But a great quantity has already been rendered into English and modern Hebrew. They are opening up a new historical understanding of Medieval Judaism.

The Geniza documents testify to architectural remains of the Temple in the *southeastern* area of Jerusalem near the Gihon Spring. This was the central reason why Jewish people from Tiberias who returned to Jerusalem with the allowance of Omar the Second Caliph in 638 C.E. stated confidently that they wished to reside in the *southern* part of the city.<sup>316</sup> We will now look at these historical discoveries that confirm the original Temples were located over and around the Gihon in *southeastern* Jerusalem.

What must first be recognized is that Omar the Second Caliph was shown the place of the Temple near the Gihon by Sophronius,

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<sup>316</sup> See Fran Alpert, *Getting Jerusalem Together*, Archeological Seminar Ltd., p.32 for quote from the Sepher HaYishuv, emphases mine. Another important reference to this document is found in Reuven Hammer's *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p.148. As cited earlier:

"Omar decreed that seventy households should come [from Tiberias]. ... he asked: 'Where do you wish to live within the city?' They replied, 'In the southern section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.' **Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its gates, as well as to the water of Shiloah**, which could be used for immersion. This was granted them ... So seventy households ... moved from Tiberias and established settlements in buildings whose foundations had stood many generations."

the Christian Archbishop of Jerusalem.<sup>317</sup> Omar dug in the refuse and found a “stone” from which he obtained the specimen that he took to the southern part of the Haram esh-Sharif. That stone became associated with the new *qibla* in Jerusalem that Omar erected in what was called Omar’s *new* “Temple.” Jewish records tell us Omar also took ruined stones from the Temple site (no doubt rectangular ones that could still be used) to help construct his *new* Temple at the southern end of the Haram.<sup>318</sup> He took so many stones, it was common to call Omar’s new Al Aqsa Mosque at the *southern* part of the Haram as the *new* Temple of Solomon.<sup>319</sup> And soon, we find the local people of Jerusalem called the *new* Mosque “Solomon’s Temple,” and the custom lasted. The Christian Crusaders even called the Al Aqsa Mosque by that august name.

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<sup>317</sup> Some sources say some Jews accompanied them, one being an older Jew who knew the exact place for the Temple site.

<sup>318</sup> Much more than the single “stone” was transferred to the site on the southern side of the Haram. Jewish tradition has more information on what happened. In the words of a Jewish visitor in 1334 C.E., Isaac ben Joseph:

“The king [Omar, the Second Caliph], who had made a vow to build up again the ruins of the sacred edifice [the Temple], if God put the Holy City in his power, demanded of the Jews that they should make known the ruins to him. For the uncircumcised [Christians] in their hate against the people of God, had heaped rubbish and filth over the spot, so that no one knew exactly where the ruins stood. Now there was an old man then living who said: ‘If the king will take an oath to preserve the wall [probably the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies], I will discover unto him the place where the ruins of the Temple were.’ So the king straightway placed his hand on the thigh of the old man and swore an oath to do what he demanded. When he had shown him the ruins of the Temple under a mound of defilements, the king had the ruins cleared and cleansed, taking part in the cleansing himself, until they were all fair and clean. After that he had them all set up again [My italics for emphasis. In other words, Omar rebuilt with stones from the Temple site ruin ], with the exception of the wall, and made them a very beautiful Temple, which he consecrated to his God” (Elkin N. Adler, *Jewish Travelers: A Treasury of Travelogues from Nine Centuries*, 2nd ed. [New York: Hermon Books, 1966], pp.130–31).

<sup>319</sup> Like the London Bridge comparison mentioned earlier, when the stones of the Bridge crossing the River Thames were transported and rebuilt over the Colorado River in Arizona. The bridge was still called “London Bridge.” Since Omar used stones from the ruined Temple to build his Al Aqsa Mosque, it is easy to see how contemporaries called his Mosque the new “Temple of Solomon.” That is precisely what they did!

With this *new* “Temple of Solomon” (as Muslims considered it) located on the platform of the Haram at its extreme *southern* aspect, other architectural features associated with the former Temple also were transferred to the northern area. This especially applied to the names of gates that once surrounded the actual Temple site over and near the Gihon Spring and its Siloam extension. When Omar the Second Caliph asked the Jews of Tiberias where they wanted to reside, they wanted the *southern* area, directly *south* of the southern wall of the Haram. Note how Moshe Gil records this.

“A section of the Jewish chronicle mentioned above [from the Geniza documents], which was copied (or written) sometime during the eleventh century, notes that, when they [the Tiberias Jewish authorities] spoke with Umar [or, Omar] about the possibility of a renewed Jewish community in Jerusalem, the Jews asked for permission to settle in the *southern* part [my emphasis] of the city, near the gates of the ‘Holy Site’ (that is, the Temple) and near the pool of Siloam.<sup>320</sup> On receiving Umar’s consent, the Jews proceeded to build there, using construction materials that were readily available and that had previously been used in the old, now ruined structures. According to this source, the area in which the Jews took up residence is the site of the Jewish marketplace ‘to this very day’.”<sup>321</sup>

These Jewish authorities told Omar (and he accepted it) that *their* “Holy Site” (the Temple) was positioned in this *southern* area, south of the Haram esh-Sharif, and even further south, beyond the later palatial Muslim buildings built south of the Haram

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<sup>320</sup> The Holy Scriptures make clear there had to be a spring of fresh water within the precincts of the Temple. Entire Psalms and many statements in the writings of the prophets require a fresh water spring within the House of God. Without fresh spring water, there could be no formal and proper House for God to have His abode among men on earth. I will devote two chapters in the next section to prove beyond doubt that a fresh water spring was a cardinal feature of the House of God. Spring water was essential, and the Gihon Spring was adequate to provide that fresh spring water in early times. This is why the Jews demanded of Omar that they be given the ruins of their Temple in the south of the Haram to live in, and why they needed access to the Siloam water system.

<sup>321</sup> “The Jewish Community” in *The History of Jerusalem*, p.171. Words in parentheses are Gil’s.

that Professor Mazar discovered.<sup>322</sup> Besides that, this *southern* region was most important because the Jewish authorities even stated to Omar that they wished to reside near the Pool of Siloam (in the extreme *south* of the city). They had not the slightest qualm in telling Omar that vicinity was *where* the former Temples of Solomon and Herod had been located. Omar agreed.

### **Jewish Quarter Was in Southeast Jerusalem 440 Years**

That *southeastern* region of Jerusalem in 638 C.E. had ruined buildings within its precincts, and the stones from these earlier structures were used in the first decades of their return to build homes, and other buildings. Interestingly the Jewish documents also describe the remnants of a Western Wall that became very important to them. This concerned residual stones from the Western Wall of the Holy of Holies built in the fourth century in the Constantine/Julian endeavors to reconstruct the Temple. It had nothing to do with the western external wall surrounding Herod's Temple.<sup>323</sup>

This remnant Western Wall the Jews came to revere and represent as "holy" was located near the center of the Jewish quarter of Jerusalem, in the *southeastern* part of the city, over and around the Gihon Spring. Besides this wall, the Geniza documents give other geographical sites that became very important to the Jews in that period of about 440 years (from 638 C.E. to 1077 C.E.). One of the topographical features needed by the Jews was to be near the

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<sup>322</sup> Indeed, some of the college students I supervised at the excavation over the five years from 1969 to 1974 were the very ones who uncovered these Umayyad buildings in this southern region.

<sup>323</sup> It is of utmost importance to distinguish the "western wall" of the Holy of Holies, which was part of the Holy Temple itself, from the outer "western wall" (the western external wall of the squared ramparts Josephus described as circumnavigating the whole Temple complex). By the way, this reference to the "western wall" in these fifth century Jewish documents has nothing to do with the Western (Wailing) Wall of the Haram esh-Sharif (which wall is not even a part of an exact square like the Temple walls, but the walls of the Haram are a trapezium-type of rectangular walled area with unequal side lengths). True, there are some modern Jewish people who wish to identify the two "western walls" as being identical (they are members of the laity who have not seen the historical facts). This is not possible as Jewish scholars admit.

Siloam Spring (the water source being the Gihon) so they could have proper ritual bathing. The 70 families from Tiberias in the time of Omar wanted to take up residence “in the *southern* part of the city ... which is the Jewish Market.” Indeed, the main and essential reason for wanting to live in this *southern* region was to be near the Temple Mount, its gates and the Gihon Spring. The Jewish authorities told Omar they wanted to live:

“In the *southern* section of the city, which is the market of the Jews.’ **Their request was to enable them to be near the site of the Temple and its GATES, as well as to the water of Shiloah.**”

[I deliberately emphasize that the Jews said the “Gates of the Temple” were in the *southern* part of Jerusalem near the Siloam waters.]<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>324</sup> Reuven Hammer’s *The Jerusalem Anthology*, p.148 and Gil’s, *A History of Palestine 634–1099*, p.636.