2. The Area by the Spring. Below the tel is an alluvial covered terrace with evidence of occupation from the Neolithic (7th millennium) onwards. In 2007 the Israel Antiquities Authority undertook a small salvage excavation on a section of the terrace, and exposed remains from the Intermediate Bronze Age. In 2012 an airborne LiDAR scan revealed architectural remains and new excavations were commenced in 2013 directed by Jennie Ebeling of the University of Evansville and Norma Franklin of the University of Haifa.


Norma Franklin

Jezreel Valley

I. Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

II. Judaism

The fertile valley of Jezreel (MT יֶזְרֵאֵל) is the name of a large plain in Northern Israel. The name “El/God sows” reflect this fertility of the region. The valley is surrounded by hills and mountain
ridges: the Samarian highlands and Mount Gilboa, the Mount Carmel range, the slopes of lower Galilee. To the East the valley stretches to the Jordan basin. The area that has continuously been inhabited from the Chalcolithic age onward, can be considered as part of the original kernel of the “Israelite” settlements. The area is of great importance for trade routes supplying a relatively easy access from the via maris to the inland Aramaic kingdoms. The valley was the scene of many military confrontations. The battle of Megiddo between Egypt and a coalition of Canaanite chieflands took place in the 15th century BCE. The Bible narrates encounters in the valley between Gideon and an eastern coalition (Judg 6:3) and between King Saul and the Philistines (1Sam 29). 2 Kgs 23:19 relates that Josiah died near Megiddo when overplaying his hand in the conflict between the rising power of Babylonia and Egypt. All these battles gave rise to the expectation in Christian Eschatology of a final battle between “good” and “evil” at Armageddon (the mountain of Megiddo).


Bob Becking

II. Judaism

The Jezreel Valley was the first large tract of land bought in Palestine by the Zionist movement. For a crucial period of about thirty years, from the beginning of the British Mandate in Palestine in 1921, until the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the Valley (as it came to be called in modern Hebrew, Ha-Emeq, with the definite article) became a center of Zionist agricultural settlement and a hub of the kibbutz movement. Many of the new settlements and kibbutzim were given ancient or biblical names, such as En Harod (Judg 7:1; 1935), Kfar Gideon (Judg 7:1; 1923), Beit ha-Shita (Judg 7:22; 1935), as well as Barak (1956), Devorah (1956), and Kibbutz Yizre’el (Jezreel itself) (1948). Some of the Jewish settlers also felt a personal connection to biblical characters associated with the Valley; for example, one of the first settlers of Nahalal changed his name to Aharon Ben-Barak.

The accomplishments of the Valley’s settlers, particularly their fight to drain the malarial swamps, were celebrated by the Zionist movement. Some of the most important modern Hebrew poets, such as Avraham Shlonsky (1900–1973), who lived in En Harod, and Uri Tsevi Grinberg (1894–1981), wrote poems on the topic of the Jezreel Valley. Grinberg, in one poem, even invited Jesus to pick up the plow and join the settlers in the Valley (“In the Valley”/ “Leve”), quoting in Stahl: 77). By contrast, some more recent literature and scholarship (Shalev, Bar-Gal/Shamai) seeks to demythologize the settlement of the Valley.

One of the most popular modern Hebrew folk-songs is the “Song of the Valley,” by Nathan Alterman (1910–1970) (Troen: 62). It was written for a 1934 Zionist movie, To a New Life (Le-hayyim Hadashim, dir. Juda Leman; the film was sometimes called Land of Promises), and set to music by Daniel Sambursky (1909–1975). The song, a dark lullaby, begins with a pastoral evocation of the valley, and the soft sounds of the wheat fields and the sheep. In the chorus, the poet asks the question from Isa 21:11: “Watchman, what of the night?” Then the night’s silence is broken by a gunshot, and a man – perhaps it is the watchman – is killed.


Joseph Davis

See also → Megiddo

el-Jib

→ Gibeon, Gibeonites

Jibril

→ Gabriel

Jidlap

Jidlap (MT Yiddlap; LXX Ielōḏeq, but Alexandrinus: Ieƚōḏeq) is the seventh son of Milcah and of Nahor (Gen 22:12). Hence, he is the nephew of Abraham and the uncle of Rebekah and Laban. The preservation of his name in the list of the twelve sons of Nahor suggests that the name could represent an Aramaic clan or territory. However, with the exception of this Priestly list, there is no further evidence for this claim.

Etymologically, the Hebrew root d-l-p means “to weep” or “to be sleepless.” The name seems to be an old sentence name with prefixing conjugation, where you have to add El as subject. The primary meaning is not clear, Josephus graecified the name to Ιωβλας λογας (Ant. 1.153).


Florian Depping