

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

This is the first comprehensive history of Palestine from the Muslim conquest in 634 to that of the Crusaders in 1099. It is a translation and revised version of volume I of *Palestine during the first Muslim period* which was published in Hebrew in 1983 and presents an authoritative survey of the early mediaeval Islamic and Jewish worlds.

Professor Gil begins by reviewing the political and military events in Palestine before and after the Arab invasion. Later chapters explore the Abbasid, Ṭulūnid, Ikhshīdīd and Fatimid periods, during which time Palestine was an almost perpetual battlefield for states, armies and factions.

Against this backdrop of conflict and administrative changes, the author portrays the everyday life of Palestine and its inhabitants. He looks at the economic history of Palestine – its agriculture, transport facilities, exports and systems of taxation – as well as the religious status of Jerusalem, the nature of Islam's tolerance towards Jews and Christians and the status, leadership and customs of the Christian populace. Specific attention is paid to the history of Palestinian Jews under Muslim rule. Professor Gil details their topography, economic activities and religious life; he explores the Karaite and Samaritan communities and discusses the role of the most prominent Jewish institution, the yeshiva.

*A history of Palestine, 634–1099* is based on an impressive array of sources. Professor Gil has carefully read the more than 1,000 documents of the Cairo Geniza collection and these are paralleled by Arabic, Syriac, Latin and Greek material. This monumental study will be read by students and specialists of mediaeval Islamic and Jewish history and religious studies and by anyone interested in the history of the Holy Land.

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

---

A history of Palestine, 634–1099

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099  
Moshe Gil  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

# A HISTORY OF PALESTINE, 634–1099

Moshe Gil



Translated from the Hebrew by Ethel Broido



Cambridge University Press  
 978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099  
 Moshe Gil  
 Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
 The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
 40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
 10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

This is a revised edition of *Palestine During the First Muslim Period (634–1099)*

Originally published in Hebrew by Tel Aviv University in 1983

First published by Cambridge University Press, 1992  
 as *A history of Palestine, 634–1099*

English translation © Cambridge University Press, 1992

First paperback edition published 1997

Photoset and Printed in Great Britain by Redwood Books, Trowbridge

This book was published with the assistance of grants from the following:  
 The Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture, the Louis and Minna Epstein  
 Fund of the American Academy for Jewish Research, and the Taylor-Schechter  
 Geniza Research Unit, University of Cambridge

*British Library cataloguing in publication data*

Gil, Moshe  
 A history of Palestine, 634–1099.  
 1. Palestine, 640–1917  
 I. Title  
 956.9403

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data*

Gil, Moshe, 1921–  
 [Erets-Yiśra'el ba-teḳufah ha-Muslemit ha-rishonah (634–1099), 1, Iyunim  
 historiyim. English]  
 A history of Palestine, 634–1099 / Moshe Gil.  
 p. cm.  
 Translation of v. 1 of: Erets-Yiśra'el ba-teḳufah ha-Muslemit ha-rishonah  
 (634–1099).  
 Includes bibliographical references and index.  
 ISBN 0 521 40437 1 (hardcover)  
 1. Palestine – History – 638–1917. 2. Islam – Palestine – History. 3. Jews –  
 Palestine – History. I. Title  
 DS 124.G5513 1992  
 956.94'03 – dc20 90–20807 CIP

ISBN 0 521 40437 1 hardback  
 ISBN 0 521 59984 9 paperback

## CONTENTS



<i>Preface</i>	page xiii
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xxi
<i>Glossary of Hebrew and Arabic terms</i>	xxv
Introduction	1
<b>1 The conquest</b>	11
Muḥammad and the vision of the conquest	11
The causes of the Great Jihād	12
The tribes and the population of Palestine	16
The first incursions; Dhāt Aṭlāḥ, Mu'ta	21
Muḥammad and the Palestinian tribes	24
Dhāt al-Salāsil	25
Tabūk	26
The treaties with towns in the south of Palestine	28
The expedition of Usāma b. Zayd	31
The great invasion	32
The expedition of 'Amr ibn al-ʿĀṣ	38
The expedition of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd	40
Ijnādayn	41
Additional conquests	43
The battle of the Yarmūk	45
The dismissal of Khālīd ibn al-Walīd	48
The capitulation of Jerusalem	51
The completion of the conquest	57
The attitude of the population towards the conqueror	60
The episode of the Temple Mount and the return of the Jews to Jerusalem	65
<b>2 Islam strikes roots</b>	75
Events in Palestine to the end of Umayyad rule	75
Natural disasters	89

## CONTENTS

The religious status of Jerusalem	90
The achievements of the Umayyads	104
The administrative division	110
Muslim personalities in the Umayyad period	114
The tribes	130
<b>3 The local population and the Muslims</b>	<b>139</b>
The protected people	140
The taxes	143
The responsibility for the life of the dhimmī	158
Dress regulations	158
Freedom of worship and its limitations	160
Professions and offices	161
Matters of inheritance; Muslim courts	163
The population and localities	169
<b>4 The economy</b>	<b>224</b>
Land and agriculture	224
Occupations	229
Book production	232
Exports	236
Internal trade	241
Imports	242
The representative of the merchants	248
Seafaring	249
Commercial methods	252
Measures and coins	257
The Maghribis	260
The economy of Jerusalem	277
<b>5 Palestine from the beginning of Abbasid rule to the</b>	
<b>Fatimids</b>	<b>279</b>
From the revolution to al-Ma'mūn	279
The days of al-Ma'mūn and his successors	294
The Abbasid caliphs and Jerusalem	297
The sixties of the ninth century	299
More about Muslim personalities during the Abbasid period	301
The period of the Ṭūlūnids	306
The Ismā'īlīs: Qarmaṭīs and Fatimids	310
The Invasion of Tiberias by the Qarmaṭīs and the	
return of the Abbasids	312
The Ikhshīdids	316
Muslim personalities in Palestine during	
the period of the Ṭūlūnids and Ikhshīdids	328

## CONTENTS

<b>6 The Fatimid conquest: the war of sixty years and other events during the eleventh century</b>	335
Fatimid advance northwards (a)	335
Fatimid retreat (a)	337
Fatimid advance northwards (b)	339
Ya'qūb ibn Killis	340
Fatimid retreat (b)	342
Fatimid advance northwards (c)	343
Fatimid retreat (c)	343
Renewal of the Byzantine offensive	344
Fatimid advance northwards (d)	348
Fatimid retreat (d)	349
Fatimid advance northwards (e)	350
The attitude of the Muslims in Palestine towards the Fatimids	352
Events of the year 979	354
The episode of al-Qassām	355
Events in Palestine 981–983	358
Jewish personalities in the Fatimid administration:	
Manasseh b. Abraham al-Qazzāz; Palṭī'el	359
The episode of Bakjūr, 983–988	364
The events of 996–997; internal war in Palestine	366
The cruelties of al-Ḥākīm	370
First war of the Jarrāḥids (1011–1014)	381
Second war of the Jarrāḥids (1024–1029)	385
Forty years of Fatimid rule	397
The invasion of the Turcomans	409
The situation in Palestine during Turcoman rule	414
Events in Tyre	418
Brief chronological summary	420
Muslim personalities during the last generations of the period	421
<b>7 The Christians</b>	430
The Christian leadership after the conquest	430
Christendom in Jerusalem	435
Christianity in other Palestinian localities	442
Christian sects	447
The patriarchs and other personalities in the Church of Jerusalem	454
Ritual and customs	464
The authorities and the Christians	469

## CONTENTS

Aid and reconstruction	478
Christian pilgrimage	482
<b>8 The Jewish population and its leadership</b>	<b>490</b>
The problematics of Jewish leadership in the Middle Ages	490
The Palestinian yeshiva in ancient sources	495
Palestinian customs	501
The organisation of the yeshiva and its titles	505
The status of the yeshiva and its prerogatives	508
Peace-making	511
The judicial prerogative	516
Excommunication	522
Aid for individuals	525
‘Palestinians’ versus ‘Babylonians’	527
The exilarchs	540
Relations between the Palestinian yeshiva and the communities in Palestine and the diaspora	545
The Jewish leadership and the Fatimid authorities	549
Calendrical matters	562
Yeshiva and community	569
Communal leaders in close contact with the yeshiva	575
The <i>negidīm</i>	595
Aid for the yeshiva and the Jewish population of Jerusalem	601
‘Aliyā (immigration to Palestine) and pilgrimage	609
Burial in Palestine	631
The Jewish quarters of Jerusalem	635
The <i>geonim</i> of Palestine	653
The affair of David b. Daniel	750
The yeshiva, last pages	774
<b>9 Karaites and Samaritans</b>	<b>777</b>
The house of ‘Anan and the beginning of Karaism	777
Karaism in Palestine in the tenth century	784
The Karaite <i>nesī’īm</i>	790
Beliefs and opinions	794
The social structure of the Karaites	807
The Karaites and their leaders in the eleventh century	809
The Samaritans	820



Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099  
Moshe Gil  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## CONTENTS

<b>10 The Crusaders' conquest and the fate of Palestinian Jewry</b>	826
<i>Chronology</i>	839
<i>Bibliographical index</i>	862
<i>General index</i>	912

## PREFACE



These studies are based mainly on the sources left to us by the three communities living in Palestine between the Arab conquest and the Crusades: the Jews, the Christians, and the Muslims. Among the Jewish sources, the Cairo Geniza documents occupy first place, owing to both their quantity and their authenticity, for these were actually written by contemporaries of the period, some of whom played important roles in the events I am dealing with. These documents, referred to in this book as 'my collection', are printed in two additional Hebrew volumes, in their Judaeo-Arabic original, with translations into Hebrew and commentaries. The reader who wishes to examine these original texts and is familiar with Hebrew and Arabic, will find them in vols. II and III of my *Ereṣ isrā'el ba-teqūfā ha-muslimūt ha-ri'shōnā*. Accordingly, references are made in the present book to the 'Hebrew Index' of those volumes, by which the indexes at the end of vol. III of my above-mentioned book are meant. A supplement to these volumes was published in *Te'uda*, vol. 7 (1991), containing twenty-five additional texts. In the footnotes of the present book, references to these Geniza documents are indicated by numbers in boldface type, using the same numbers as those of the documents in the above-mentioned collection. In referring to the supplement in *Te'uda*, the number is accompanied by the letter a or b, also in boldface. My collection comprises 643 documents in all. More than a third were edited earlier in their entirety and 43 in part.

The text of the present volume is arranged by numbered sections, each consisting of one or more paragraphs. The reader will find that footnotes generally correspond to entire sections rather than to smaller pieces of text. Entries in the bibliographical and general indexes refer to section numbers rather than page numbers.

A detailed description of the Cairo Geniza can be found in the first volume of Goitein's *A Mediterranean Society*. I have read most of the Geniza

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

documents in my collection in the original but was unable to do so in a few instances, such as those located in the USSR and some of those kept in the Dropsie University Library in Philadelphia. Many of these manuscripts were examined by me by means of ultra-violet rays and with the aid of special photographic facilities.

The Muslim sources of the Middle Ages are first and foremost the chronicles; following them are the biographies, geographical literature, monographs, and so on. I also used many texts which are still in manuscript form. The interested reader may find details concerning these Arabic texts in the bibliographical index at the end of this book, and further information regarding the authors and their works is available in the well-known books by Brockelmann and Sezgin, which deal with the history of Arabic literature. Most of the information on political and military events, as well as on Muslim personalities of the period who lived in Palestine, is derived from these Arabic sources, whereas the chapters on the localities, the conditions of the dhimmīs (especially on the subject of taxes) and on the economic life of the period, are based to a large extent on information culled from Geniza documents.

As to the Christian sources, these include Byzantine writers, especially Theophanes, and Syriac literature (i.e. Christian Aramaic), which contributed its share on some vital points in the description of the political and military events. The Arabic writings of Christian chroniclers, especially Sa'īd ibn Biṭrīq and Yaḥyā ibn Sa'īd, are important from both the overall historical point of view and that of the history of the Christians in Palestine. The Greek sources of the Jerusalem Church, especially those compiled by Papadopoulos-Kerameos, provide the information (which I regret is rather poor) on the history of the Church and the Christians in Palestine during this period. The reader will undoubtedly note that these historical studies are mostly discussions focusing on the sources at the researcher's disposal. This applies to any period or subject dating from antiquity or the Middle Ages, for the student cannot presume that he is presenting a complete or continuous history, as it is obvious that wherever there is an absence of sources, there will be a void.

Research literature on Palestine – including the period under discussion – is very rich, but it is not the purpose of this book to serve as a bibliographical guide. In the following studies, I have made a point of referring to those research works which provide essential explanations and meaningful opinions. Complete details on these sources can be found in the bibliographical index. There have been attempts in the past to sum up the historical information on the period, such as M. Assaf's book on the history of Arab rule in Palestine, and Goitein's article on Jerusalem during the Arab period. Among the more specific studies, there are those of

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

De Goeje (the *Mémoire*) and of Caetani (*Annali*) on the Arab conquest. The papyri of Nessana, published by Kraemer, shed additional and significant light on the early Muslim period, and the works of Lammens and Shaban on the early caliphs are also worthy of mention.

In the area dealing with geography, Le Strange and the collection of sources in his *Palestine under the Moslems* are considerably helpful, as are Avi Yonah's work on the geographical history of Palestine, Dussaud on the topography of Syria, and the encyclopaedic enterprise of Z. Vilnay (*Ariel*).

In the context of the study on the status of the dhimmīs, the comprehensive article of Ashtor (Strauss) in the *Hirschler Jubilee Volume* should be mentioned, as well as Tritton's work. With regard to having recourse to the Muslim courts, one should mention, in particular, the pioneering work of J. Mann, within the framework of his series of articles on the Responsa of the Geonim, in addition to the works of Hirschberg and Goitein. The study on the masorettes of Tiberias is, to a large extent, based on the works of earlier students: Mann, Kahle, Klar, Dotan and others. Referring to the studies on the localities of Palestine, one should naturally mention the work of Braslavi and Sharon.

In the chapter dealing with economics, one should take note of the works of Cahen on matters of landed property in early Islam and of the extensive work of Goitein, *A Mediterranean Society*, which sums up the economic data contained in the Geniza. As to the identification of plants and condiments, I relied on the works of Meyerhof (the editor of Maimonides' book on medicines), Ducros, and of Zohary. With regard to textiles, the work of Serjeant should be noted. In the new book by Lombard on textiles in the Muslim world, the reader will find additional material which I have used here only minimally.

In the episode concerning Charlemagne and his connections with the caliph of Baghdad and with the Christians in Jerusalem, I had extensive research literature at my disposal which I have documented in chapter 5, note 13. As to Egyptian rule in Palestine, from Ṭūlūnid times until the end of the period being described here, the books by Wüstenfeld and Lane Poole are still authoritative on the subject, helping and serving as a serious basis for research into the events, though they do not go into detail concerning what was happening in Palestine. For enquiry into the Ismā'īlīs – the Qarmaṭīs and the Fatimids – the studies of Ivanow, B. Lewis and Madelung, are important. Attention should also be drawn to the recent works of Bacharach in the field of monetary history and the history of the Ikhshīdids. Particular importance can be ascribed to the profound studies of Canard and especially his book on the Ḥamdānid dynasty and his

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

articles on the Fatimids. The works of Wiet and the recent work of Bianquis also merit attention.

On questions concerning the Christians in Jerusalem, the works of Riant are worth mentioning: the methodical listing of sources dealing with the Crusaders, in which there is also a section on the period preceding the Crusades, and his research on the donation of property to the Holy Sepulchre; Vailhé, and especially his articles on the monastery of Mar Saba and on the *graptoi* brothers; also Pargoire, in his book on the Byzantine Church; Janin, and his essay on the Georgian Church in Jerusalem and a number of Jerusalem patriarchs; Amann, for his exhaustive article on the Jerusalem Church; Peeters and his articles on the Persian conquest, some of the important sources he edited and his book on the Oriental background to Byzantine hagiography; Leclercq, for his articles on holy places in Palestine, as well as his comprehensive article on Palestine.

It is now over a century since the finest students of Jewish history began probing into the Geniza documents. Were it not for these documents and the dedicated work of these researchers, we would know very little about the Jews of Palestine during this period. Foremost among them was A. Harkavy, with his notes and additions to Graetz, the Geniza sources which he edited in various places, and his outstanding contribution to the research on Karaism. Also A. Neubauer, with the sources he edited, particularly the Scroll of Aḥima'aṣ. Similarly notable is his *Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts* in Oxford, which served as a guide to researchers, as did the Catalogue of the British Museum, published by G. Margoliouth. These were followed by S. Poznanski in his many articles, notably those on the Karaites and the Geonim of Palestine. S. Schechter, who rescued the Geniza, edited important texts from Palestine or relating to Palestine, in his *Saadyana* and elsewhere. H. J. Bornstein brilliantly collected the information available on the dispute of the calendar between Babylonia and Palestine in his articles and edited related fragments from the Geniza. R. Gottheil, who at the beginning of the century had already begun to deal with texts from the Geniza, collaborated with W. H. Worrell in 1927 to edit the collection of Geniza documents kept in the Freer Gallery in Washington. H. Hirschfeld edited Geniza documents, his major contribution being studies on a number of Karaite personalities. In the mid-1920s, Jacob Mann, the most important student of the Geniza in his time, began to publish his studies. Apart from his many articles, he compiled two volumes of extensive material from the Geniza pertaining to Palestine, accompanied by profound historical studies. The majority of those documents in my collection which were edited previously were mainly edited by Mann. Until today, his works form a firm basis for any additional research on the subject. A contemporary of Mann was

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

A. Marmorstein, who dealt mainly with the history of the Gaonate in Palestine and also edited documentary material from the Geniza, although unfortunately there were considerable misinterpretations and imprecisions in his work, which to a large extent justified the sharp criticism which came from the pen of Jacob Mann.

At the same time as Mann, S. Assaf was extensively editing Geniza documents, among them texts relating to Palestine, and one must note in particular the various kinds of deeds and letters which he included in his writings. In the framework of his articles, he also edited documents written in Arabic, whereas the scientific work this involved – that is, the deciphering and translation – was done by his colleagues at the Hebrew University, Baneth and Ashtor. The American Jewish scholar J. Starr, who died at an early age and was known primarily for his research on Byzantine Jewry, edited in 1936 a number of letters of the Maghribi Israel b. Nathan (Sahlūn). E. Ashtor (having earlier published under the name of Strauss) worked mainly on Geniza texts touching on Egypt, but also included a number of documents from Palestine in his writings, where one can find important material pertaining to the history of Palestine and its Jewish population during the period under discussion. Mention should also be made of B. Chapira, who edited documents from Palestine in some of his articles in Hebrew and French. S. M. Stern, an important scholar of Islamic culture, contributed a notable article to this special field of research, in which he edited texts dealing with the dispute of Nathan b. Abraham.

Since the 1950s, the foremost among the scholars of our day has been S. D. Goitein. As is evident from the list of works included in the bibliographical index, he studied various aspects of the subject under discussion here. He identified many texts relating to Palestine, and although he did not edit them all, he dealt with them in his many writings. Paramount in importance are the volumes of his *Mediterranean Society* and a collection of merchants' letters. He was the first of the Geniza students to base his studies on a large number of the Geniza documents written in Arabic, either in Hebrew or Arabic script (the latter being generally extremely difficult to decipher). He was also the first to organise the Geniza documents into coherent groups according to their writers, paving the way for continuous and systematic research of the documentary material in the Geniza. The significant systematic research work he carried out for many years on the history of the Jewish population in Palestine on the basis of the Geniza documents, a work which was dispersed and housed in innumerable places, is now assembled in a comprehensive collection, *Ha-yishuv* . . . Among his students, one should note J. Eliash, who in 1957/8 edited some important documents from Palestine;

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

N. Golb, who dealt mainly with Egypt, though his works serve to clarify details in letters from Palestine; M. A. Friedman, who in his articles and his great book on the Palestinian marriage deeds revealed their peculiarities and continuity, discussing in great detail the various terms, as well as places and personalities in Palestine, mentioned in those marriage deeds; and M. R. Cohen, who published some important articles on Ascalon, on aspects of the *negīdūt* (including information relating to Palestine), on the dispute of Nathan b. Abraham (including a Geniza letter which sheds light on the affair), and also a comprehensive book on Jewish self-government in Egypt, with a discussion on several important topics relating to Jewish personalities in Palestine shortly before the Crusaders' conquest.

Among the contemporary students of this period, one must mention A. Scheiber, who published a number of important studies, including Geniza documents relating to Palestine, chiefly from the David Kaufmann collection in Budapest. These studies were later assembled in one book, his *Geniza Studies*. Of considerable significance are the works of S. Abramson on the Geonim of Palestine and on Elḥanan b. Shemaria, which also include Geniza documents. E. Fleischer, whose major area of research is that of poetry and the *piyyūt*, including naturally the Palestinian poets, has in one of his articles rendered an important contribution to our knowledge of the personality of Daniel b. Azariah, the Nāsi and Gaon.

Concerning the discussion on the Karaites, apart from Harkavy and Poznanski, whom I have already mentioned, one must point to the work of S. Pinsker, who more than 130 years ago edited important Karaite texts which he copied from manuscripts, accompanied by detailed commentaries. His book *Liqqūṭē qadmōniyōt* has served as an important tool for any researcher investigating the history of Karaism in Palestine; and naturally one must mention the second volume of Mann's *Texts and Studies*, entirely devoted to the history of the Karaites, a substantial part of which deals with the Karaites in Palestine before the Crusaders' conquest. Among today's scholars, there are L. Nemoy, N. Wieder, and Z. Ankori, whose outstanding works I have mentioned in the chapter on the Karaites, each in his own right.

One must also mention in connection with the work on the Geniza documents in this book four important reference books: one is that of J. Blau, on the Judaeo-Arabic grammar of the Middle Ages, which today enables us to consider the language in which most of the documents in my collection are written, as a separate dialect with known and defined characteristics. Such matters as the turning of the Arabic *tanwīn* into a separate word, or the addition or dropping of the *mater lectionis*, and many other such points, are clarified and explained in his book. The second book



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## PREFACE

is the bibliography of S. Shaked, which was of considerable help in the initial assembling of the material from the Geniza and in tracing the studies that had been made until the early 1960s. The third, the *Handbuch der jüdischen Chronologie* by E. Mahler, which helped me, by the use of its tables, to reckon the equivalents to the Hebrew dates. The fourth, G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville's small booklet, with its conversion tables of Muslim dates.

The transcription of the Arabic names and words in this book is in conformity with accepted scholarly usage. Hebrew titles and names are transcribed in a less 'orthodox' manner; both Biblical and later names and terms are transcribed according to the usage in current research, as for example in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Naturally there is a certain lack of uniformity in this, which I hope will be accepted by most readers with a degree of tolerance.

I am indebted to the directors and trustees of the libraries in which the Geniza documents and the Arabic manuscripts are preserved, for permission to study and edit the texts. Foremost among them is Dr S. C. Reif, Director of the Geniza Research Unit of the Cambridge University Library (where the bulk of the Geniza materials are found), who together with his staff and other personnel of the library there helped me immensely. My gratitude goes to Professor M. Shmelzer, the Librarian of the Jewish Theological Seminary of New York, where the large collection in the name of E. N. Adler is kept; I was also rendered a great deal of assistance by him and his staff. I am also grateful to all those directors and trustees of the other libraries in which I worked and was welcomed and aided in every respect: the Bodleian Library in Oxford; the British Library; the Library of the Alliance israélite universelle in Paris; the Library of Dropsie University in Philadelphia; the Freer Gallery in Washington; the Library of Westminster College, Cambridge; and Merton College, Oxford. Special gratitude is due to the late Professor A. Scheiber, who went to the trouble of sending me excellent photographs of documents from the David Kaufmann Collection in Budapest; Dr Helena Loebenstein, also for excellent photographs of documents from the Erzherzog Rainer Collection in Vienna; and further, my thanks go to the University Library in Heidelberg for its supply of excellent photographs; the John Rylands Library, Manchester; the University Museum of the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia; and the Department of Manuscripts of the National Library in Jerusalem.

My special gratitude goes to the personnel of the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the National Library in Jerusalem, where I was able to examine most of the texts from the Geniza and elsewhere, by microfilm. The writing of this book would not have been possible without the assistance of this institution. Also, I express my thanks in particular



Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

#### PREFACE

to the staff of the Library of the Tel Aviv University, where I wrote this book, amidst friendly people who were always prepared to help.

I am much indebted to Professor S. Simonsohn, Head of the Diaspora Research Institute, Tel Aviv University, who initiated and very devotedly dealt with the Hebrew edition of this book.

And last, but certainly not least, I would like to offer my heartfelt gratitude to my late teacher, Professor S. D. Goitein, who guided me towards this work and gave me his support – both by his words and his writings.

As regards the present English version, I am very grateful to the translator, Mrs Ethel Broido, who heroically supported all my remarks and inquiries; to Mrs Sheila Bahat, of Tel Aviv University, who read the manuscript and offered very valuable remarks; to Miss Ora Vaza, who prepared the general index; and to Dr Gill Thomas and Dr Susan Van de Ven, of the Cambridge University Press, for their devoted and skillful editorial work. The translation work was made possible by the assistance of Tel Aviv University, through the Haim Rosenberg School of Jewish Studies, the Diaspora Research Institute, and the Joseph and Ceil Mazer Chair in the History of the Jews in Muslim Lands.

## ABBREVIATIONS



AA SS	<i>Acta Sanctorum</i>
AESC	<i>Annales: économies, sociétés, civilisations</i>
AH	hijra year
AHR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
AI	<i>Ars Islamica</i>
AIBL	Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres
AIEO	<i>Annales de l'Institut d'études orientales</i> (Alger)
AIU	Alliance israélite universelle, Paris
AJSLL	<i>American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures</i>
AJSR	<i>Association for Jewish Studies Review</i>
AM	anno mundi, era of the creation
Antonin	The Antonin Geniza collection, Leningrad
AO	<i>Ars Orientalis</i>
AOL	<i>Archives de l'Orient latin</i>
b.	ben, bin, ibn, bat, bint = son or daughter of
BEO	<i>Bulletin d'études orientales</i>
BGA	<i>Bibliotheca geographorum Arabicorum</i>
BIFAO	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut français d'archéologie orientale</i>
BIRHT	<i>Bulletin de l'Institut de recherches et d'histoire des textes</i>
BJPES	<i>Bulletin of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society</i> (Hebrew; = <i>Yedī'ōt ha-ḥevrā la-ḥaqīrat ereṣ isrā'ēl</i> )
BJRL	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands Library</i>
BM	British Museum
BNGJ	<i>Byzantinisch-neugriechische Jahrbücher</i>
Bodl MS Heb	The collection of Hebrew (and Judaeo-Arabic) MSs at the Bodleian Library, Oxford
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> (London)
BT	Babylonian Talmud
BZ	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## ABBREVIATIONS

CCM	<i>Cahiers de civilisation médiévale</i>
CCSL	<i>Corpus Christianorum. Series Latina</i>
Consist. isr.	The Geniza collection of the Consistoire israélite, Paris
CSCO	<i>Corpus scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium</i>
CSHB	<i>Corpus scriptorum historiae Byzantinae</i>
DACL	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i>
DHGE	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastique</i>
DK	The David Kaufmann Collection, Budapest
Dropsie	The Geniza Collection of Dropsie University (at the Annenberg Institute, Philadelphia)
DTC	<i>Dictionnaire de théologie catholique</i>
ECQ	<i>Eastern Churches Quarterly</i>
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
EI	<i>Encyclopaedia of Islam</i>
ENA	The Elkanah Nathan Adler Collection, the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary, New York
EO	<i>Échos d'Orient</i>
f.	folium
Firkovitch	The Geniza collection of A. Firkovitch, Leningrad
GAL	<i>Geschichte der arabischen Literatur</i>
GCAL	<i>Geschichte der christlichen arabischen Literatur</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HUC	Hebrew Union College (Cincinnati)
HUCA	<i>Hebrew Union College Annual</i>
IC	<i>Islamic Culture</i>
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IFAO	Institut français d'archéologie orientale
IJMES	<i>International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies</i>
INJ	<i>Israel Numismatic Journal</i>
IOS	<i>Israel Oriental Studies</i>
IQ	<i>Islamic Quarterly</i>
JA	<i>Journal asiatique</i>
JAH	<i>Journal of Asian History</i>
JAORS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
JESHO	<i>Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JJGL	<i>Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur</i>
JJS	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
JNES	<i>Journal of Near Eastern Studies</i>
JNUL	Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099

Moshe Gil

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

## ABBREVIATIONS

JPOS	<i>Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JRAS	<i>Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society</i>
JSAI	<i>Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam</i>
JSS	<i>Jewish Social Studies</i>
JTS	Jewish Theological Seminary
MAIBL	<i>Mémoires de l'académie des inscriptions et belles lettres</i>
MGH	<i>Monumenta Germaniae historica</i>
MGWJ	<i>Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums</i>
MIE	<i>Mémoires présentés à l'Institut d'Égypte</i>
Mosséri	The Geniza Collection of the Jewish Community in Cairo, kept by the Mosseri family
MPG	Migne, <i>Patrologia</i> , series Graeca
MPL	Migne, <i>Patrologia</i> , series Latina
MS	Manuscript
MUSJ	<i>Mélanges de l'Université St Joseph</i>
MWJ	<i>Magazin für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums</i>
OLZ	<i>Orientalistische Literatur-Zeitung</i>
PAAJR	<i>Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research</i>
PEFQ	<i>Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly</i>
PER	The collection of MSs named after Erzherzog (Archduc) Rainer, Vienna
PO	<i>Patrologia Orientalis</i>
POC	<i>Proche-Orient chrétien</i>
PT	Palestinian Talmud
PW	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumwissenschaft</i>
QDAP	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i>
RAAD	<i>Revue de l'académie arabe de Damas</i>
RB	<i>Revue biblique</i>
REB	<i>Revue des études byzantines</i>
REI	<i>Revue des études islamiques</i>
REJ	<i>Revue des études juives</i>
RH	<i>Revue historique</i>
RHC	<i>Recueil des historiens des croisades</i>
RHGF	<i>Recueil des historiens des Gaules et de la France</i>
RHR	<i>Revue de l'histoire des religions</i>
RIDA	<i>Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité</i>
RMI	<i>Rassegna mensile di Israel</i>
ROC	<i>Revue de l'Orient chrétien</i>
ROL	<i>Revue de l'Orient latin</i>
RSO	<i>Rivista degli studi orientali</i>

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099  
Moshe Gil  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## ABBREVIATIONS

<i>SBB</i>	<i>Studies in Bibliography and Booklore</i>
Sel.	Seleucid era
<i>SI</i>	<i>Studia Islamica</i>
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
TS	The Taylor Schechter Collection, University Library, Cambridge
ULC	University Library, Cambridge
<i>ZA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Assyriologie</i>
<i>ZAW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZDMG</i>	<i>Zeitschrift der deutschen morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>
<i>ZDPV</i>	<i>Zeitschrift des deutschen Palästina-Vereins</i>
<i>ZfhB</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für hebräische Bibliographie</i>

## GLOSSARY OF HEBREW AND ARABIC TERMS



- 'alāma*, a specific word, or formula, used by notables at the end of their correspondence.
- alūf*, a scholar appointed by the yeshiva, generally to serve as judge and leader in his community, but also a honorific title, granted by the Babylonian yeshivot.
- amīr*, a military commander.
- av-bēt-dīn*, head of the court.
- dayyān*, judge.
- gaon* (pl. *geonim*; exact spelling: *gā'ōn*), head of the yeshiva.
- ḥadīth*, Muslim oral tradition, generally ascribed to the Prophet.
- ḥāvēr* (pl. *ḥavērim*), a scholar appointed by the yeshiva as leader and judge in his community, a title granted mainly by the Palestinian yeshiva.
- heqḏēsh* (also: *qodesh*), the Jewish pious foundations, for the benefit of the synagogues, the poor, and so on.
- kunya*, the byname beginning with Abū (father of . . .).
- maurlā*, has several meanings; in the early period: a non-Arab who accepted Islam and was under the protection of an Arab tribe or clan.
- melammēd*, teacher.
- midrash*, traditional interpretation of a Biblical passage (often in an anecdotal style).
- mumhē*, a person authorised by the yeshiva to assist the local judge.
- nagid* (pl. *negidim*), in the period under discussion: leader, title granted by the yeshiva to a Jewish notable who was close to the caliph's court.
- nāsī* (pl. *nesī'im*), in the period under discussion: a member of the exilarchic family, which claimed descent from King David.
- parnās*, a community official in charge of charity, financial matters, maintenance, and so on.
- piyyūṭ* (pl. *piyyūṭim*), religious poem.
- rōsh* (Hebrew) or *ra'īs*, *rāyīs* (Arabic), head, chief, leader.
- rōsh ha-gōlā*, head of the Diaspora, exilarch.

Cambridge University Press  
978-0-521-59984-9 - A History of Palestine, 634-1099  
Moshe Gil  
Frontmatter  
[More information](#)

---

## GLOSSARY OF HEBREW AND ARABIC TERMS

*rōsh ha-shānā*, the Jewish New Year's day.

*sijill*, a decree issued by the highest Muslim state authority (usually the caliph).

*talmīd*, title of a scholar, correspondent of the yeshiva; less than *ḥāvēr*.

*yeshiva* (pl. *yeshivot*), main institution of Jewish communal leadership and learning.