

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 travel-related 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.

