

A HANDFUL OF ERETZ

Reservoirs to the Rescue

With the level of Lake Kinneret dipping way below the limit, and other sources equally taxed, Israel's water supply is rapidly becoming an endangered species.

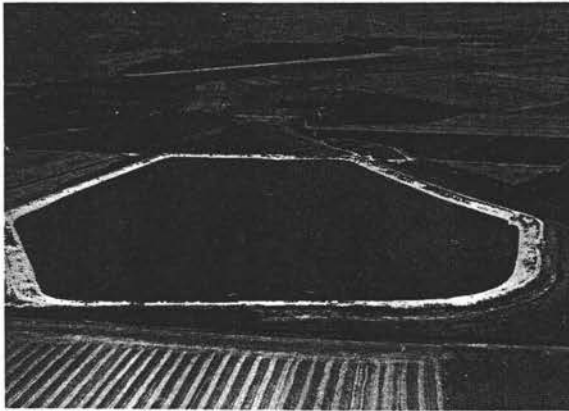
One way to improve the situation is to build reservoirs and dams to harness floodwaters, which can be used to enrich underground aquifers or for industrial agriculture.

In the past few years, the Jewish National Fund has been hard at work on this endeavor throughout the country. In the Beit She'an Valley, it recently completed the large Shif'a Reservoir, which has a capacity of 2.6 million cubic meters.

Private consumers and the irrigation systems of local settlements will soon be trading the increasingly saline water of the Jordan River for the sweeter water the reservoir has collected from the Yarmuk River and the surrounding springs. The Shif'a Reservoir will also be used for recreational purposes and fishing; the possibility of sailing facilities is under study.

The JNF built a similar reservoir in the Beit She'an Valley about a year ago, at the foot of Mount Gilboa near Kibbutz Reshafim. The Reshafim Reservoir, with a capacity of 2.8 million cubic meters, provides the surrounding settlements with water collected from the nearby Ein Moda spring.

Besides serving the settlements' irrigation needs, the reservoir is also used for fish-breeding. The edge of the reservoir is equipped with a feeding device and a special fishing net. When the reservoir empties out, the fish can be kept in a concrete pool nearby.



Yet another such reservoir was built a few years ago in Upper Galilee, near Moshav Dalton. Water from the Dalton Reservoir is used for irrigation in the local settlements. Last year the embankments forming the reservoir were raised in order to increase its capacity.

Down south in the Arava, the JNF built the Eshet Dam in the riverbed of Nahal Hiyon, near Moshav Paran, several years ago. Each year, 20 million cubic meters of water from the Negev Highlands flows through Nahal Hiyon, but ordinarily very little of the stream remains in the Arava. The water blocked by the dam turns the riverbed into a beautiful pond and enriches the underground aquifer.

With the aid of these and other water installations scattered around Israel, the JNF is helping to reduce the need to pump water from the Kinneret.

Ancient Road to the Temple Mount

About fifteen years ago, archaeologists announced the discovery of the *Cardo Maximus*, Jerusalem's main north-south street in the Roman and Byzantine periods. A section of the *Cardo*, found about 3 meters below street level in the Old City's Jewish Quarter, has become a popular touring site. Roman urban planners traditionally bisected the *Cardo Maximus* with several cross-streets. Recently, for the first time, one of these east-west thoroughfares was uncovered in Jerusalem. The find

occurred unexpectedly while the East Jerusalem Development Corporation was laying a new underground sewage system adjacent to the Temple Mount. This street, called the *Decumanus*, led to the Temple Mount and was in use from the Roman period to the Early Arab period (second to tenth centuries). Its carefully hewn paving stones contain grooves, apparently meant to prevent carts and pedestrians from sliding. The street was constructed above an earlier channel that supplied water to the Temple Mount. The route is still used today by pedestrians approaching the Temple Mount from the west. The Israel

Splendor at the Spring

The Banyas spring, on the southern side of Mount Hermon, contributes over 31 billion gallons of water per year to the Jordan River. The water bubbles

out of the rock below a cave at the bottom of the cliff. Near the cave, the ancient Greeks built a temple to Pan, the god of woods and shepherds, and called the site Panias. A few centuries later, Herod the Great erected a temple to Zeus at the spring. Two huge walls above the spring are the sole remains of Herod's white marble temple. Shortly before his death, Herod appointed his son Philip ruler of the Golan, Bashan, and Panias. Philip developed Panias and made it the capital of the north. He renamed it Caesarea in honor of Emperor Augustus, and the city was called Caesarea Philippi in order to distinguish it from the city that Herod built on the Mediterranean coast.

Some of the town's impressive buildings were uncovered recently in excavations conducted by Dr. Vassilios Tsaferis of the Israel Antiquities Authority. The complex that has come to light apparently served as the Roman city's commercial and cultural center. A large public building, constructed entirely of hewn stones, was exposed near the entrance to the Banyas Nature Reserve's parking lot. Inside the building, the archaeological team found frescoed walls and a row of columns. A basilica, facing eastward and paved with a mosaic floor, was uncovered nearby. It was partially destroyed during the construction of fortifications in the eleventh century. The fortifications, in turn, were destroyed in a large conflagration which is believed to have occurred at the site at the time of Nur ed-Din's conquest in 1164.

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