

Preface

The book presented hereby is an updated and revised version of my book *Water Shall Flow from the Rock—Hydrogeology and Climate in the Lands of the Bible*, published by Springer-Verlag in 1990. The reason for updating and revising and not just reprinting of the book is due, in the first place, to the enormous quantity and quality of the new data added since 1990. Another reason is the better understanding achieved since the book was first published, of the role which climate changes played in shaping the history of the Lands of the Bible. Albeit the fact that the impact of climate change was touched upon rather widely in the first book, still, without interweaving the new data and its interpretation, the picture would have remained partial.

Other books which I published report on these changes and their impact. In 2003, *Climate Changes during the Holocene and their Impact on Hydrological Systems* was published by Cambridge University Press. Later with Dr. M. Zohar, *Climate Change—Environment and Civilization in the Middle East* was published by Springer in 2004 and in 2007 with the same co-author *Climate Change—Environment and History of the Near East* was also published by Springer. The papers as well as chapters in books focusing on a certain period or an area or both will be cited in the following chapters.

This book takes a stand in the dispute between scholars, historians, and archaeologists, investigating the history of the people of Israel, with regard to the factual background of the stories of the Pentateuch. This dispute reached headlines after the publication of Finkelstein and Silberman's book *The Bible Unearthed*, wherein the authors proclaim that: "[A] careful critical perusal of this work—which certainly has much to say about both archaeology and the biblical writings—reveals that we are dealing very largely with a work of imaginative fiction, not a serious or reliable account of the subject" (p. 464). The author of this book disagrees with Finkelstein's and Silberman's statement. Although he did not dig archaeological sites in the Sinai and Negev, as these archaeologists did, he lived for quite a few years, in these deserts, investigating its surface and subsurface water resources. Many times he camped with the local Bedouin, learning from them about their way of life, especially how to locate a meager supply of water, sometimes brackish and sometimes bitter, in the desert. He learnt from them where and how to hit the rock for the water to come out, or where to dig a well to obtain fresh water. Many

times he ate with them their unleavened *pita*, baked on embers, and grilled quail. Many times he could fetch from his knapsack his copy of the Bible and read a chapter describing the episode which he experienced.

These experiences brought the author to the conclusion that many stories of the Bible contain an historical core, which a scientist knowing and understanding the natural environments of the region, can bring to light and share with an interested audience.

Thanks are due to Dr. Matanya Zohar, a partner in writing the books mentioned above which were published by Springer Publishing House. Zohar's extensive knowledge in the field of the archaeology of the Land of Israel and his comments were very helpful. Thanks to Yaakov Issar for his help in translating from Hebrew to English and last but not least to Margalit, wife and partner for her help and philological criticism. Thanks are due to Mrs. Marcia Ruth for editing the book.

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