

Habitation of Palestine What others have said

"Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel extended over 1400 years... It was the Jews who implanted the culture and customs of the permanent settlement".

Ibn Khaldun (Arabic: أبو زيد ولي الدين عبد الرحمن Arab historian, 1377

"Palestine is a ruined and desolate land".

Count Constantine François Volney, French author and historian (Travels Through Syria and Egypt in years 1783, 1784, 1785, London 1788, vol 2, p142

"The land in Palestine was lacking in people to till its fertile soil".

Thomas Shaw, British Archaeologist, 'Travels and Observations', London, 1767

"The country is in a considerable degree empty of inhabitants and therefore its greatest need is of a body of population".

James Finn, British Consul, Report to Foreign Office, 1857

"Jerusalem is one of the most unhealthy of cities, and fever is its principal disease. Orientals and Europeans, immigrants and natives, alike suffer; and during the sickly period of the year almost one fourth of the population become ill".

The Lancet, 1864

"Above all other countries in the world, [Palestine] is now a land of ruins. In Judea it is hardly an exaggeration to say that...for miles and miles there is no appearance of present life or habitation".

Cook's Tourist Handbook for Palestine and Syria, Thomas Cook & Son, Ludgate Circus, E.C, 1876

"A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of life and action. We never saw a human being on the whole route".

Mark Twain, 'Innocents Abroad', 1887

"Rosh HaNikra, marking the border between the provinces of Syria and Palestine, was guarded by a small company of Turkish soldiers. The platoon

had to be changed every month because malaria sickened/debilitated everyone after ten days”.

Report of J.Cropper ‘The Geographical Distribution of Anopheles and malaria fever in upper Palestine’, 1902

"The area was under populated and remained economically stagnant until the arrival of the first Zionist pioneers in the 1880's, who came to rebuild the Jewish land. Jewish development of the country also attracted large numbers of other immigrants - both Jewish and Arab”.

Report of the British Royal Commission, 1913

“Palestine is notoriously malarious and, during the summer months some localities such as the Jordan Valley, the coastal plain, and the Vale of Esdraelon have the reputation of being barely habitable”**.

‘A Brief Record of the Advance of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force under the command of General Sir Edmund Allenby, July 1917-October 1918. Produced by the Government Press and Survey of Egypt 1919

“The People west of the Jordan are not Arabs, but only Arab speaking. The bulk of the population are fellahin: that is to say agricultural workers owning land as a village community or working for the Syrian effendi. In the Gaza district they are mostly of Egyptian origin; elsewhere they are of the most mixed race”.

“Syria and Palestine” – London HM Stationery Office 1920

“Malaria stands out as by far the most important disease in Palestine. For centuries it has decimated the population and it is an effective bar to the development and settlement of large tracts of fertile lands....There are few regions actually free from it”.

First Annual Report of the British Mandate Department of Health, 1921

“The villagers [of Samaria Village in the Beisan Area] state that not one child out of ten born in the village ever reaches maturity. [Malaria] carries them off before they are ten years of age”.

Report of ‘Malaria in Samaria Village’, 9/12/1922

“Palestine is a small country and, as a whole, thinly populated...malaria...has always been very prevalent, particularly at Jerusalem, Acre...and in the Valley of the Jordan”.

***“Malaria Commission. Reports on the Tour of Investigation in Palestine in 1925’
League of Nations Health Organisation. Geneva***

“During the British occupation of Palestine in 1917, 90% of all British soldiers entering Beisan in the Jezreel Valley, Palestine, came down with malaria within their first ten days in the area, thus attesting to its endemicity”.

Report of ‘Malaria Survey of Beisan’, 1923

“There are various records of Circassian, Jewish and German settlements having been ‘wiped out’ or abandoned on account of epidemic malaria during the thirty years preceding the war, while in the best watered parts of the country, the numerous ‘tels’ indicating the sites of former Arab villages showed the effect malaria has had in reducing the Arab population”.

Proceedings of the Twelfth Meeting of the Antimalaria Advisory Commission, Jerusalem, 27/5/1926

“For the sake of convenience it is usual to speak of the Moslem population as ‘Arabs’, though actual Arab element in the blood of the people is probably confined to what is really a landed aristocracy”.

Report of the Commission on the Palestinian Disturbances of August 1929, p6, HM Stationery Office 1930

“The Syrian absentee landlords in some cases...find cultivation of their lands so unremunerative....Malaria decimates the population, or so enfeebles it, as to completely nullify nature’s rich gifts”.

***First Report on Agricultural Development and land Settlement in Palestine’.
Director of Development, Jerusalem, 23/12/1931***

“In a number of areas where intense endemic malaria had resulted in no population for generations, recent schemes (of Malaria control*) have created large tracts of cultivatable land....Very large areas of what is recognised by all as some of the most fertile land in the country have been reclaimed after centuries of waste, by the antimalaria measures undertaken....Many large tracts which until recently meant nothing but death to those venturing into them, have now been reduced into rich and fertile land free from all danger to health”.

Dept of Health, British Mandate, ‘A Review of the control of Malaria Palestine 1918-1941

"This illegal [Arab] immigration was not only going on from the Sinai, but also from Transjordan and Syria, and it is very difficult to make a case out for the

misery of the Arabs if at the same time their compatriots from adjoining states could not be kept from going in to share that misery”.

Palestine Royal Commission Report, London, 1937

“The road leading from Gaza to the north was only a summer track suitable for transport by camels and carts...no orange groves, orchards or vineyards were to be seen until one reached [the Jewish village of] Yabneh....Houses were all of mud....The western part, towards the sea, was almost a desert....The villages in this area were few and thinly populated. Many ruins of were deserted by their inhabitants”.

Eyewitness account in the Report of the Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, Chapter 9, para 43

*In the early 1920s, the Haifa Malaria Research Unit, under the control of the Jewish scientist Dr Israel Kligler, maintained by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and acting in co-operation with the Health Department of the British Mandate in Palestine, was formed to assist with the control of malaria in Palestine.

Mandate Palestine (today comprising, Israel, the West Bank, Jordan and Gaza), is one of the few countries in the world which has been certified completely free of malaria by the WHO and, as a result, the Jewish and Arab populations have grown exponentially.

** Population of Palestine (including what are now Gaza, Israel and the West Bank)

1922	757,182	<i>British Mandate census</i>
1947	1,845,000	<i>United Nations estimate</i>
2011	12,600,000	

For more details, rare photos of Palestine a hundred years ago, maps:

www.eradication-of-malaria.com

“Residents of the REGION mainly concentrated in cities: Jerusalem, Acre, Safed, Jaffa, Tiberias and Gaza. In most cities, the majority of residents are Christians, Jews and others, very few Muslims who generally are Bedouin, seasonal workers who came to serve as Seasonal workers in agriculture or building.

Nablus: 120 muslims, 70 Samaritans; Nazareth: 700 people - all Christians; Umm al-Fahm: 50 people-10 families, ALL Christian ; Gaza: 550 people- 300 Jews,250 Christian(Jews engaged in agriculture ,Christians deal with the trading and transporting the products); Tiberias: 300 residents, all Jews; Safed: about

200 inhabitants, all Jews; Jerusalem : 5000 people, most of them (3,500) Jews, the rest - Christian (1000) Muslim (500).

Palaestina ex monumentis veteribus illustrata" - a detailed geographical survey of Palestine in 1696 written in Latin by Adriaan Reland, published by Willem Broedelet, Utrecht, in 1714.