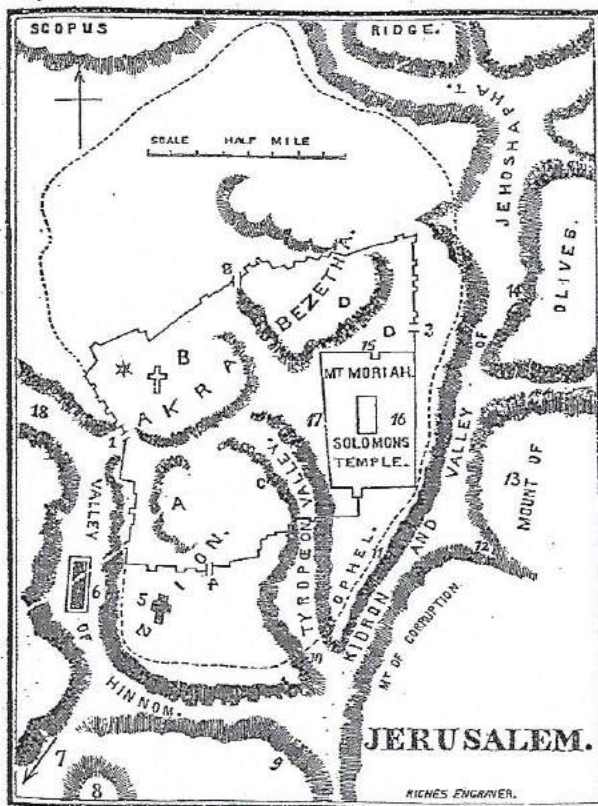
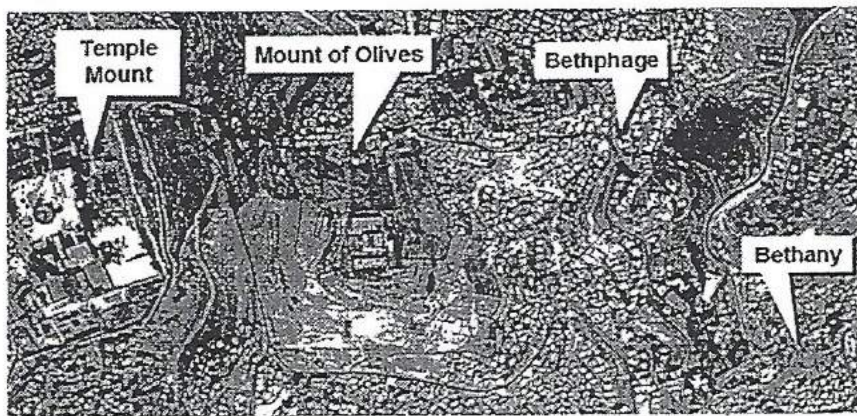
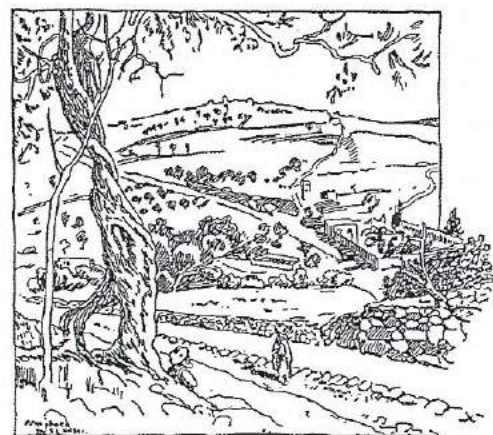


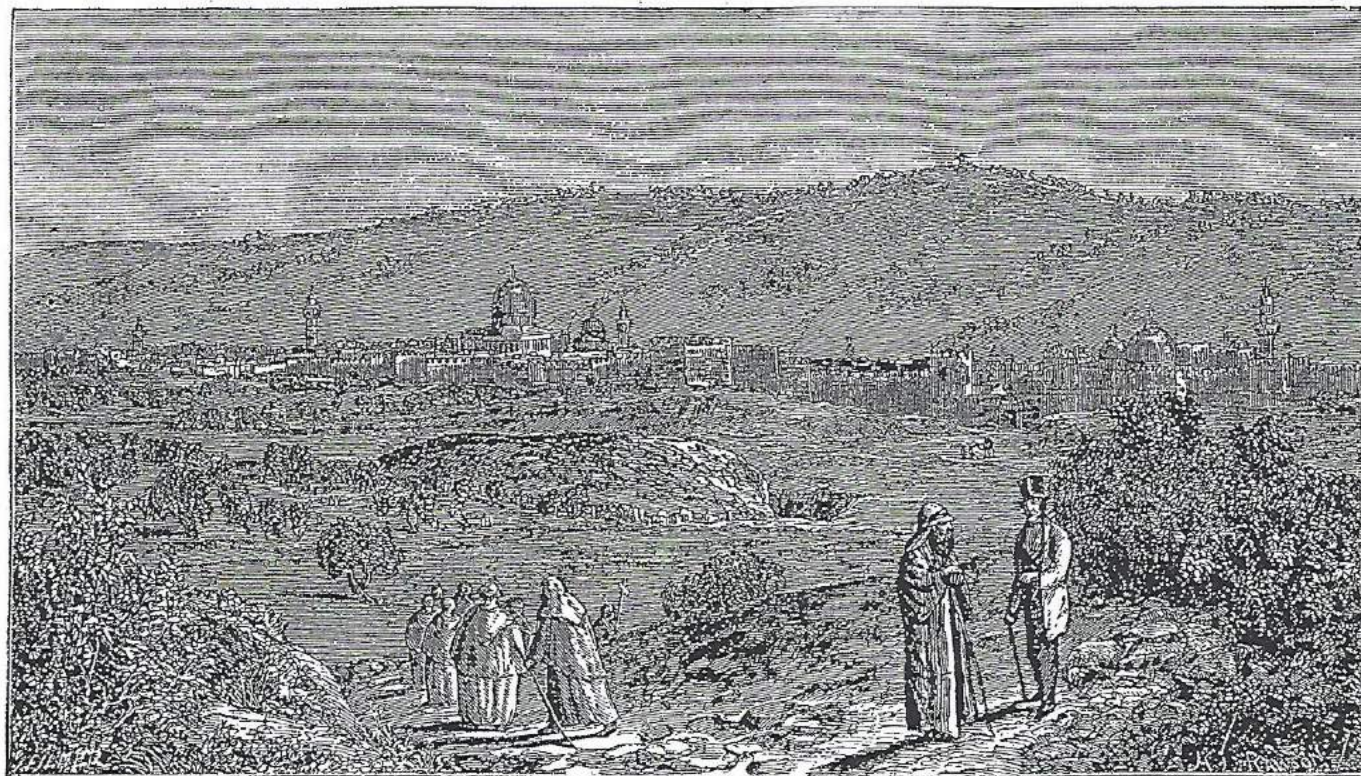
Mt. of Olives – The Scene of the Climax of World History



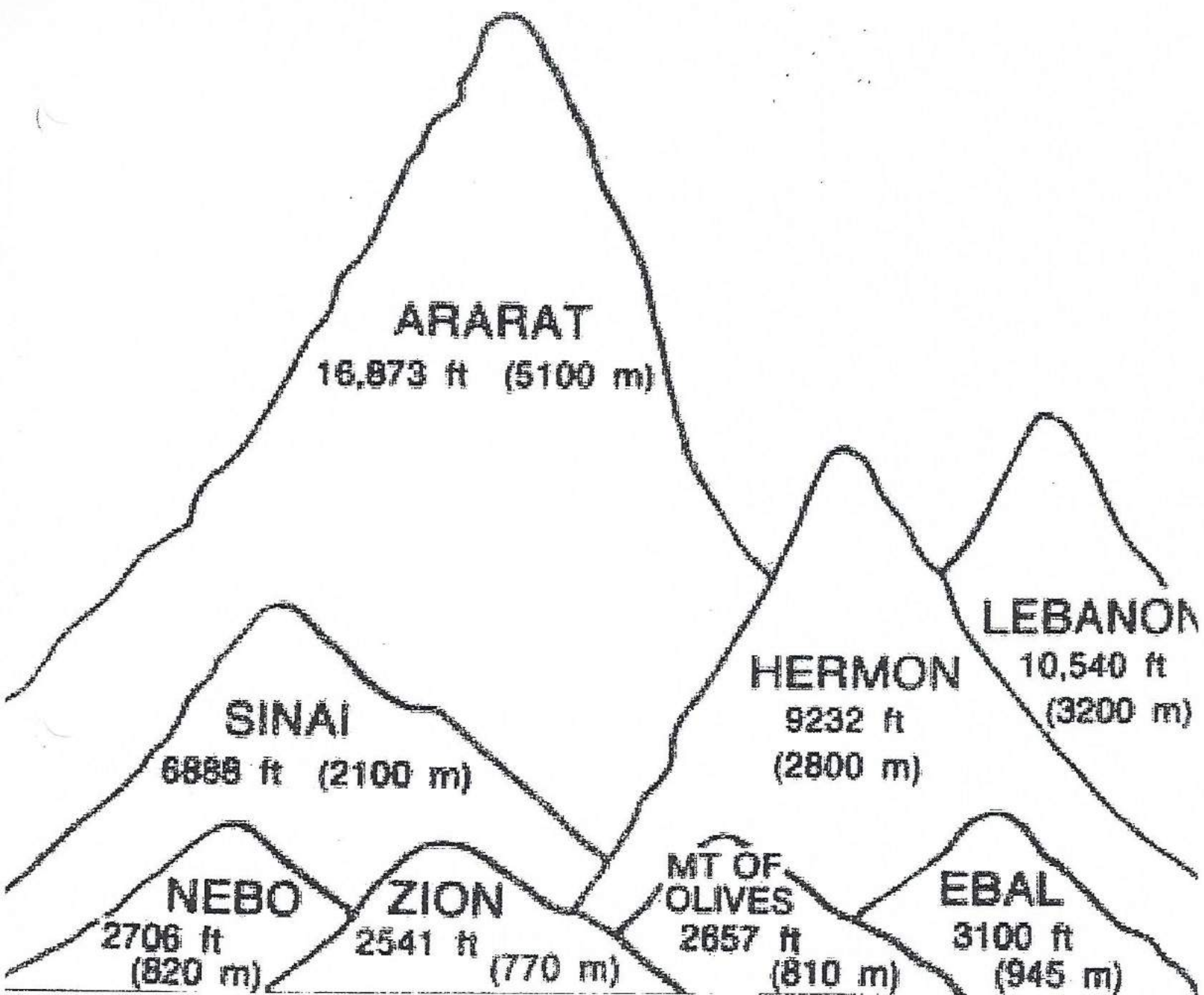
PLAN OF JERUSALEM AND ITS ENVIRONS.

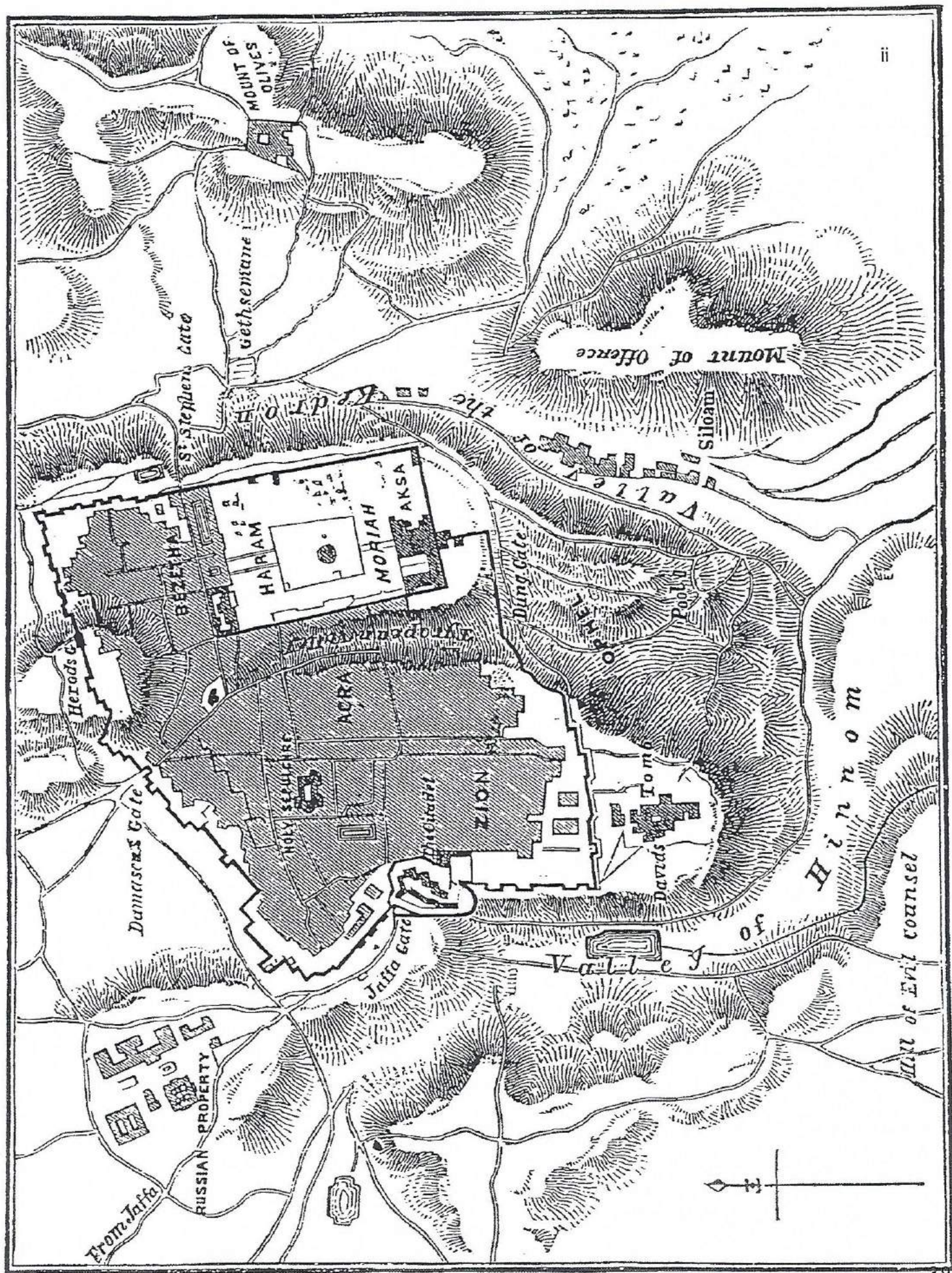


MOUNT OLIVET.



The Mount of Olives. (From a photograph by the editor.)





Mt. of Olives – The Scene of the Climax of World History

1A. The Designations for Olivet:

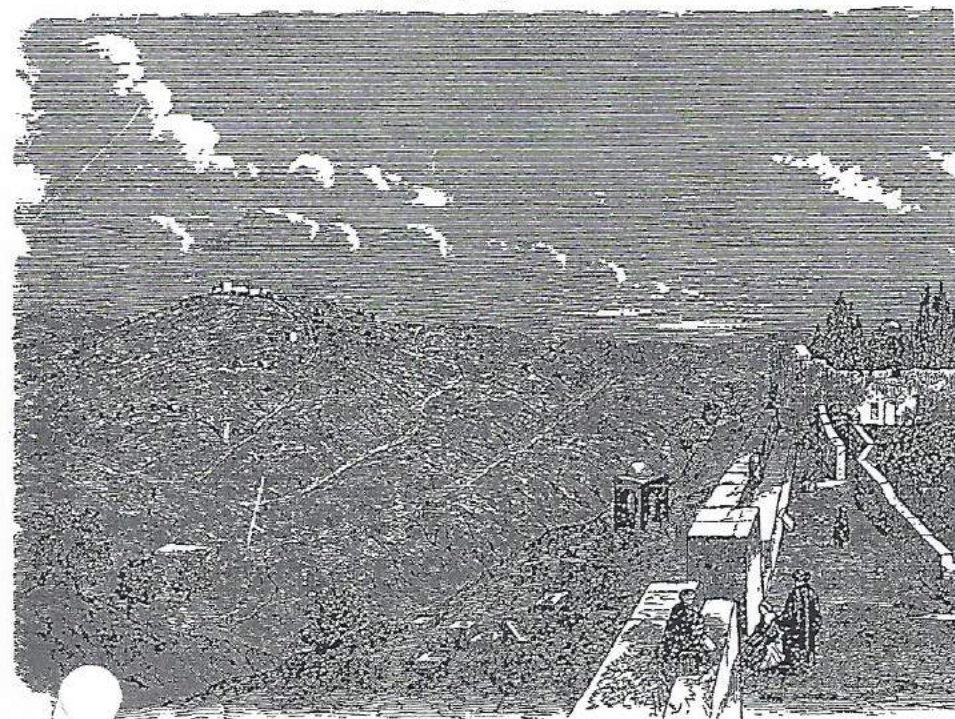
Olivet comes to us through the Vulgate *Olivetum*, "an oliveyard." Josephus frequently uses the expression "Mount of Olives" (e.g. *Ant.* VII, ix, 2; XX, viii, 6; *BJ.* V, ii, 3; xii, 2), but later Jewish writings give the name *har ha-mishhah*, "Mount of Oil"; this occurs in some MSS in 2 K 23:12, and the common reading, *har ha-mashhith*, "Mount of Corruption," m "destruction," may possibly be a deliberate alteration... In later ages the Mount was termed "the mountain of lights," because here there used to be kindled at one time the first beacon light to announce throughout Jewry the appearance of the new moon.

To the natives of Palestine today it is usually known as *Jebel et Tur* ("mountain of the elevation," or "tower"), or, less commonly, as *Jebel Tur ez zait* ("mountain of the elevation of oil"). The name *Jebel ez-zaitun* ("Mount of Olives") is also well known. Early Arab. writers use the term *Tur Zait*, "Mount of Oil." (James Orr, Gen. Ed., *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publ. Co., 1960, 2186.)



Dein König kommt in niedern Hüllen
Sanftmütig, auf der El'lin Hüllen,
Empfang ihn froh, Jerusalem!
Trag ihm entgegen Friedenszweige,
Bestreu mit Weizen seine Steige,
So ist's dem Herren angenehm!

2A. The Topography of Olivet:



Viewing the mountain thus, two principal summits and two subsidiary spurs may be described. The N. summit is that known as *Karem es-Sayyad* (the vineyard of the hunter), and also as the *Viri Galilaei*; it reaches a height of 2723 feet above the Mediterranean, and is separated from the S. mass by a narrow neck of land traversed to-day by the new carriage road. As far back as 530 this hill is spoken of as Galilee, and in the *Acts of Pilate* (about 350) a mountain near Jerusalem called 'Galilee' is mentioned. It is said to have first received its name *Galilaia* because the Galilaeans attending the feasts used to encamp there, or as Saewulf (1102) says, it 'was called Galilee because the Apostles, who were called Galilaeans, frequently visited there.' The S. summit, of practically equal height, is the traditional Mount of the Ascension, and has for some years

been distinguished by a lofty tower erected by the Russians. Here, too, Constantine erected his Church of the Ascension in 316 on the site where now stands its successor (erected 1834-5) of the same name. Here also is the Church of the Creed and the Paternoster Church, the latter a

modern building on the site of one of that name destroyed long ago. Scattered over the summit is a modern Moslem village—*Kefr et-Tur*—which combines with the noisy conduct of its rapacious inhabitants in spoiling the quiet beauty and holy associations of this sacred spot.

A small spur running S. is sometimes known as the Hill of the Prophets, on account of the interesting old 'Tomb of the Prophets'—a sepulchre generally believed, until recently, to have been originally Jewish—which is situated there; and the other somewhat isolated spur to the S.E., on which stands the wretched, half-ruined village of *el-Azariyeh*, on the site of Bethany, should, for reasons given, be included in the Mount.

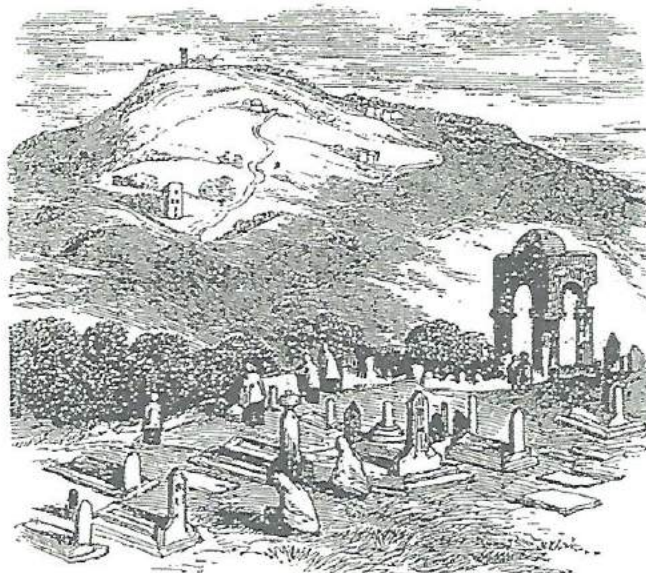
Along the W. slope facing the city lies the reputed Garden of Gethsemane (part, too, of the Mount, cf. Lk 22)...of the Latins and its Greek rival; and a little higher up the hill to the S. the great Russian Church of St. Magdalene. The greater part of the slopes of the S.W. part of the hill is filled with a vast number of graves, those from the valley bottom till a little above the Bethany road being Jewish, while higher up are some Christian cemeteries. The Jews have a strong sentiment about being buried on this spot, the slopes of the 'Valley of Jehoshaphat' being traditionally, with them and with the Moslems, the scene of the resurrection and final judgment. (James Hastings, Ed., *A Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1917, 207).

3A. The Savior and Olivet:

A.W.G. Masterman, in the article cited above, has a superb summary of the Savior's relationship to Olivet:

Although, with the single exception of Jn 8:1, all the incidents expressly connected with the Mount of Olives belong to the Passion week, there can be no doubt (Lk 21:37) that this quiet spot was one beloved and frequented by the Master. Here He withdrew from the city for rest and meditation (Jn 8:1) and for prayer (Mt 26:30 etc.). Once we read of His approach to the Mount from the Easter side 'unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives' (Mk 11:1; Mt 21:1; Lk 19:29). Over a part of the Mount He must have made His triumphal progress to the city (Mt. 21, Mk 11, Lk 19), and on this road He wept over Jerusalem (Lk 19:40-44). During the whole of that week 'in the daytime he was teaching in the temple; and at night he went out and abode in the Mount that is called of Olives' (Lk 21:37)—the special locality on the Mount being Bethany (Mt 21:17, Mk 11:11). Crossing over from Bethany, Jesus illustrated His teaching by the sign of the withering of the barren fig-tree (Mt 21:18, 19; Mk 11:12-14; 20-22), and on the slopes of this hill, with the doomed city spread out before them, Christ delivered to His disciples His wonderful eschatological discourse (Mt 24:3ff; Mk 13:3ff). Then here, in the Garden of Gethsemane, occurred the Agony, the Betrayal, and the Arrest (Mt 26:36-56; Mk 14:26-52; Lk 22:39-53; Jn 18:1-12). Lastly, on the Mount, not on the summit where tradition places it, but near Bethany, occurred the Ascension (Lk 24:50-52; Ac1:12).

To these incidents where the Mount of Olives is expressly mentioned may be added the scene in the house of Martha and Mary (Lk 10:38-42), the raising of Lazarus (Jn 11), and the feast at the house of Simon (Mt 26:6-13; Mk 14:3-9; Jn 12:1-19); for, as has been shown, Bethany was certainly a part of the Mount of Olives. (*Ibid.*, 208).



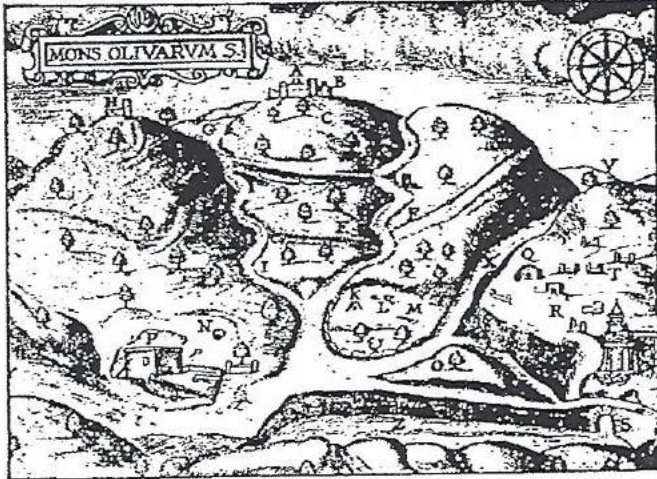
THE MOUNT OF OLIVES



4A. The Ascent to Olivet:

1b. The paths to the Mt. of Olives:

It is worthwhile to reproduce here a pilgrim's account:



Leaving the garden, we commenced the ascent of the Mount of Olives. This mountain lies directly east of the city, from which it is separated by the deep valley of Jehoshaphat. Its height [sic] above this valley varies from five hundred to seven hundred feet. It is a little more than one hundred feet higher than Mount Zion, and near two hundred and fifty feet higher than the Temple area on Mount Moriah, so that it overlooks the whole of the city. The Arabs call it *Jebel et Tur*. The summit directly east of the city is the traditional place of the ascension of Christ. It slopes down beautifully toward the valley of Jehoshaphat on the west, and again toward Bethany on the east. Viewed from Zion, it has a most beautiful and graceful outline, and is one of the most commanding objects about Jerusalem. This hill, once

so beautifully covered with gardens and olive orchards, now presents the same desolate aspect that forms so prominent a characteristic of Jerusalem scenery. Of the palm trees of the valley, not a single one is left, and the two gigantic cedars that once stood near its summit have disappeared. Only a few scattering olive trees are seen upon its sides, and an occasional fig tree takes root in its scanty soil. Great boulders of variegated flint are scattered about in every direction, while here and there a little patch of ground, enclosed by a frail and tottering wall of stone, is sown to barley.

There are three paths leading from Jerusalem over Olivet. One is a foot-path, leading directly up the mountain side; another, and easier one, the common road for beasts of burden, leads around the southern brow of the mount; while still another but much less used, winds around the northern slope. As we ascended, I stopped on the way to gather some portions of a low, thorny bush, from which many suppose the mock crown of the Savior was made. The monks of Mar Saba manufacture and sell to pilgrims, crowns from a tree that bears a long, sharp thorn, which they believe to be the kind used on that occasion.

Just below where we are ascending, and near the base of the mount, the place is still pointed out where, in the days of the temple service, the red heifer was sacrificed and burnt, from the ashes of which the waters of purification were prepared (Num. xix.) By one of these paths too, probably the one upon the right, David ascended when he was forced to flee from the city under the rebellion of his son Absalom. This afflictive incident in the life of the renowned monarch is pathetically portrayed by the pen of inspiration. Absalom had managed his plans so adroitly, the court of Israel was completely taken by surprise. The reports of the wide-spread rebellion, like peal after peal of thunder, came rolling in from the surrounding tribes. The power and extent of the rebellion seems to have been greatly magnified, and the king and his servants made a hasty flight from Jerusalem. David and his associates passed over the brook Kidron, along this pathway they climbed the mount. "And David went up the ascent of Olivet, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered; and he went barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up weeping as they went." (2 Sam. xv. 30.) The result we have seen in another place, and within our very sight now stands the pillar of Absalom, and all who pass by revile his name.

(D. A. Randall, *The Handwriting of God in Egypt, Sinai, and the Holy Land*, Norwich, CT: Whitney & Kingsley, 1867, 134-135.)

2b. The view from the Mt. of Olives:

Having feasted your eyes on these, you turn and look eastward. What a scene opens to your wondering vision! There the hill country of Judea—the wilderness—lies before you in all its gloomy sterility; a mountainous region, broken into bluffs and crags, whose deep and yawning chasms form a fit hiding place for Bedawin robbers and beasts of prey. Here your eye wanders to the bleak looking mountain of Quarantanla, where the Savior, fresh from his baptism, endured his terrible temptation, and achieved his first great moral victory. Beyond this, you look down into the deep vale of the Jordan, fresh in beauty and fertility, with its long, snaky line of blue waters, around which cluster a thousand interesting associations. You follow its course along the dim distance, the width of the plain gradually expanding, until your eye catches a view of a portion of the waters of the Dead Sea, that wonderful monument, that entombs beneath its dark and leaden waves, the buried cities of the plain. Beyond all these rise up in dark and sullen grandeur the mysterious mountains of Moab, the region beyond the Jordan, on one of whose bold eminences the haughty Balak stood when he called Balaam:

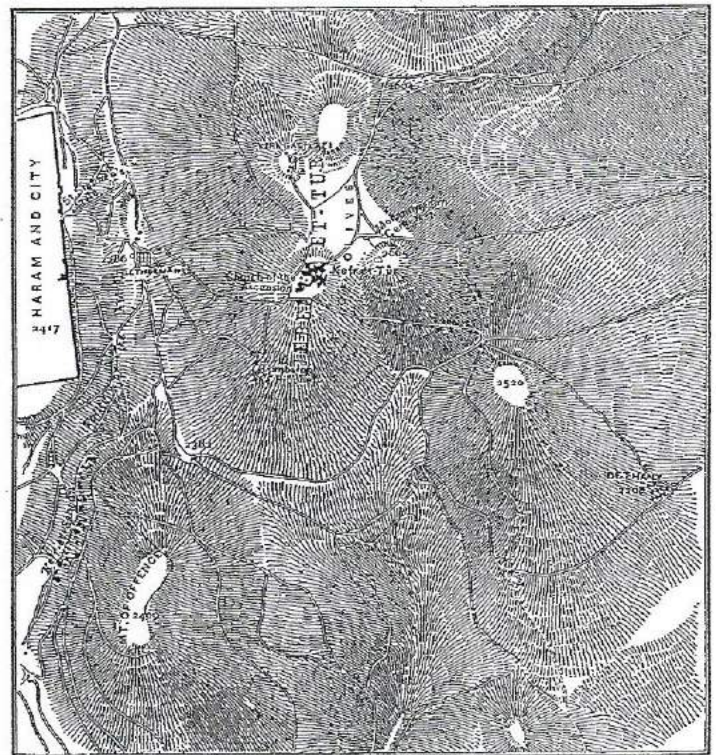
"Come curse me Jacob—come defy Israel." Almost instinctively you search out the highest peak, and as your eye rests upon it, you exclaim: "There is Pisgah! On that sublime hight [sic] stood Moses when he took his survey of the Promised Land!" What remarkable sights are before us, and what wonderful visions of the past rise around us as we stand upon this lofty summit and enjoy this extensive prospect. Were there nothing more than this, a half hour on Olivet would well repay a long and weary pilgrimage.

But Olivet has associations and lessons of a deeper interest. The path up which we toiled has often been pressed by the feet of the Son of God; beneath the shade of its olives and vines he sat and taught his listening disciples; the garden beneath us was the scene of his agony. But more

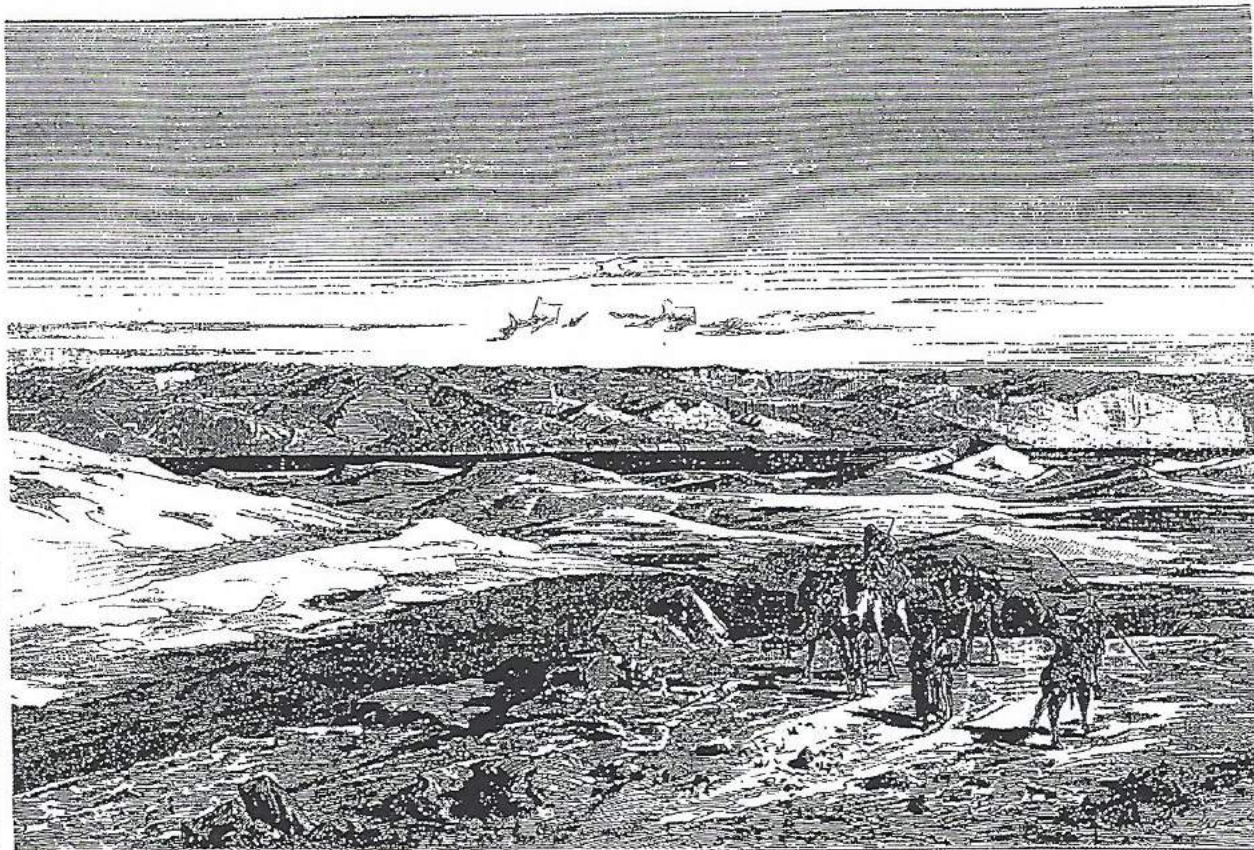
than this, it is the MOUNT OF ASCENSION! Forty days after his resurrection he led his disciples out as far as Bethany, and while he talked with them and blessed them, and a *cloud received him up out of their sight*. And while they stood astonished and awe struck, angels in white apparel stood by them: "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing into Heaven? This same Jesus which is taken from you into Heaven shall, in like manner, return again from Heaven." O Olivet! stepping-stone from which the victorious Son of God went back to glory, lifting thy majestic form above all the mountains around Jerusalem, it was fit thou shouldst be honored above them all! From the garden at thy base, to the place of ascension upon thy summit, what a radiance of glory clusters about thee! Mount of Ascension, with thee is associated the hope of glory; thou givest us assurance of the life everlasting!

(*Ibid.*, 134-135.)

OLIVET

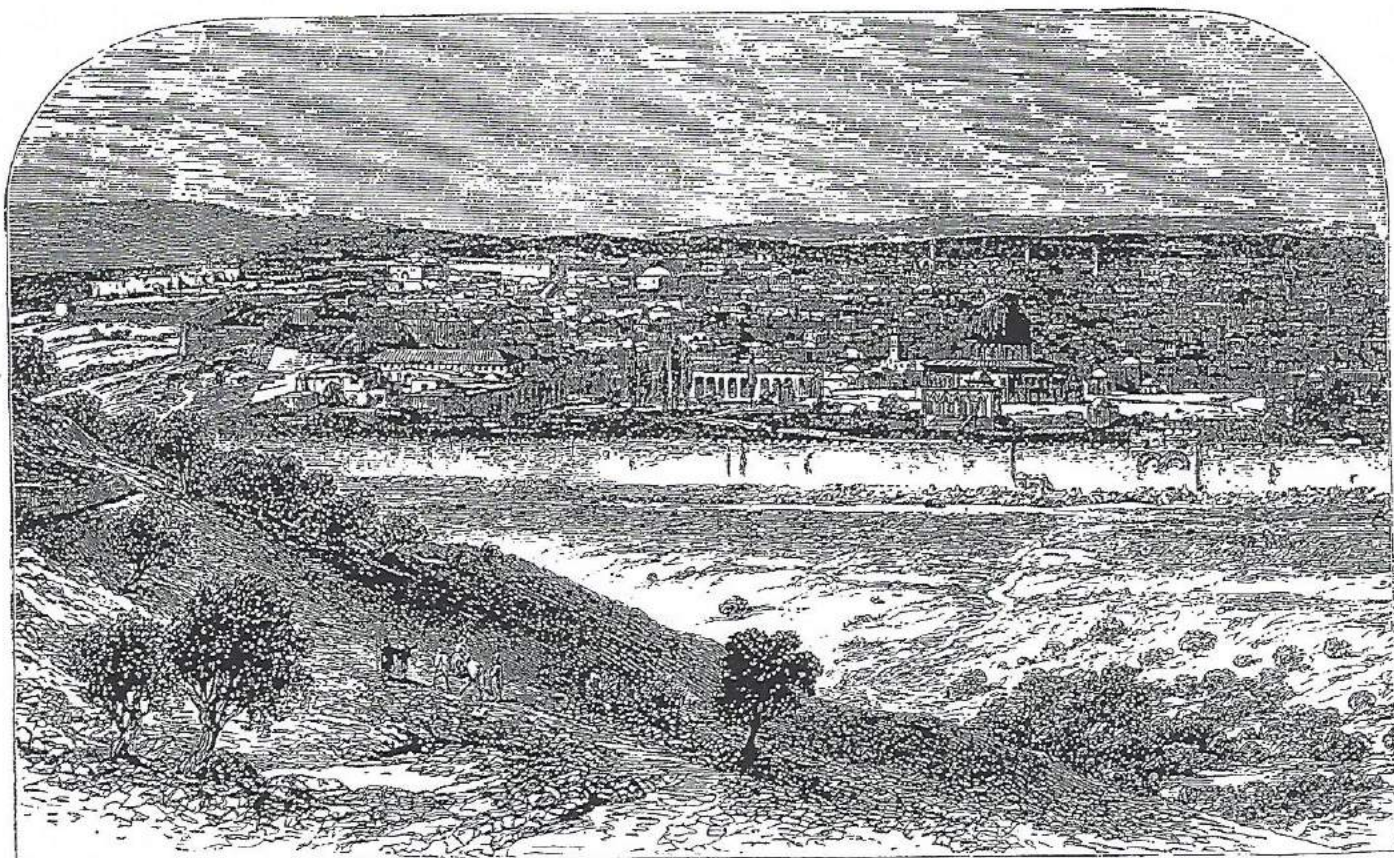


Map of the Mount of Olives, with its connections. (From the Ordnance Survey.)



Das Tote Meer vom Ölberge aus.

Eastward View from the Mt. of Olives



JERUSALEM FROM THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

Westward View from the Mt. of Olives

5A. The Theologian and Olivet:

Schaff, who has been quoted repeatedly in this manual, has, as a theologian and historian, a special gift of describing holy sites. His lengthy chapter on his visit to Olivet deserves careful reading. (The points of the outline were added by this writer.)

1b. The panorama:

There are "mountains round about Jerusalem." Like Rome, Jerusalem is built on hills and surrounded by hills. It is 2,500 feet above the Mediterranean, and 3,700 feet above the Dead Sea. From the east and from the west there is a steady ascent to it; hence the phrase "to go up to Jerusalem." It stands on the mountain ridge which runs from north to south and forms the backbone of Palestine. It is built upon Mount Zion in the southwest and the lower Mount Moriah in the east. These two hills are separated by the Tyropoeon or Cheesemongers' Valley (which is nearly filled up with rubbish). Both are surrounded by ravines, which unite with the Tyropoeon in the south, Zion by the valley of Hinnom, Moriah by the valley of the Kedron or Jehoshaphat. The best place from which to study the panorama for orientation is Mount Olivet, with the Bible in the right hand and Josephus in the left. There you see the holy city in her lonely melancholy grandeur, with her walls and towers, her churches, mosques, and dome-roofed houses. It is the saddest, and yet the most impressive view in the world.

(Philip Schaff, *Through Bible Lands: Notes of Travel in Egypt, the Desert, and Palestine*. New York: American Tract Society, 1878, 271.)

2b. The final night in Gethsemane:

When Jesus passed out of St. Stephen's Gate (the ancient Fish-gate) down the ravine, and crossed that black winter torrent called Kedron (*i.e.*, the Black Brook), which is formed by the winter rains, but is entirely dry in summer (even in April as far as my experience goes), it was far more than Caesar's crossing the Rubicon for the military conquest of the world: it was the passage which decided the moral and eternal redemption of the world. David, betrayed by Ahithophel, one of his body-guard, took the same course in his flight from his rebellious son Absalom—a remarkable parallel, the typical import of which Jesus himself pointed out. In the garden of Gethsemane (*i.e.*, Oil-press), at the foot of the Mount of Olives, he was overwhelmed with sorrow and anguish, and endured the mysterious agony with all the powers of darkness, in the stead and in behalf of a fallen race. Here he was betrayed by the Judas-kiss, which he anticipated and made meaningless. Here the heathen garrison and the Jewish temple guard combined under the lead of the traitor, against the one unarmed Jesus; and yet, made cowards by conscience and overawed by the superhuman majesty of Jesus, like the profane traffickers in the temple, they fell to the ground before his "I am He!" The same words which cheered his trembling disciples on the stormy lake and after the resurrection, are here words of terror to his enemies, and will be on the day of judgment. (*Ibid.*, 273-274.)

3b. The description of the garden:

There is no evidence to prove, but no good reason to deny, the identity of the spot now shown as GETHSEMANE. Some think it is too near the city and the thoroughfare for a place of retirement in that dangerous and dismal night. We reach it by an easy walk through St. Stephen's Gate over the dry bed of the Kedron. It lies on the slope of Mount Olivet, and is in the possession of the Franciscans. It is a garden with seven or eight majestic olive-trees, which are perhaps the oldest and certainly the most venerable trees in the world, though of course not of the time of our Lord—for Titus cut down all the trees round the city during the siege. But they may have sprouted from the roots of the original trees. The garden is enclosed by a new wall, and kept in very good order. A kind old