

The Issue of Cross-Border Infiltration to Petra by the Young Israelis during the 1950s as Reflected in Modern Hebrew Prose

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Abstract

During the first decade following the establishment of "Israel", *Petra* ('The Red Rock') was perceived in the Israeli consciousness as the most remote, daring, and dangerous place that could be reached. Armed with this perception, fifteen Israeli young men and women crossed the Jordanian border with *Petra* as their desired destination, but only three returned alive. In its first section, this article outlines the birth and formation of the 'Red Rock' myth among the Palmach generation and its adaption by the next generation. The second part is devoted to examining the reasons that prompted those Israelis to undergo the hike to *Petra*, and how modern Hebrew Literature reflected the episode of hiking to *Petra*, starting from the first decade following the establishment of "Israel" until the 1990s. The researchers appended their study with a conclusion comprised of the most important results that have been reached.

Keywords: Hikes, Petra, Palmach, Modern Hebrew Prose, Red Rock.

1. Introduction

In the early 1950s, during the years when *Petra* was just a distant legend and song, bold and adventurous young Israelis driven by the challenge and excitement of crossing the border, evading the Jordanian Legion, and climbing the mountains on the other side crossed the border into Jordan to see the secret of *Petra* with their own eyes. Most of them did not come back alive. Following these events, the Israeli government banned the song "*The Red Rock – הַסֵּלֶע הַאֲדוּמִים*", written by Haim Hefer⁽¹⁾ חַיִּים חֶפֶר and sung by Arik Lavi אַרִיק לָוִי. But the ban on playing the song and even the expected punishment for those who went to *Petra* did not help. The exasperation of Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion - דָּוִד בֶּן-גּוּרִיּוֹן, who ordered the appointment of a committee to investigate the death of four travelers who were killed six months before, did not help either. On the contrary, the ancient Nabatean city continued to be viewed as a myth by younger generation, and the ban on playing the song only added to the wonderful myth (Safir-Vitz 2014).

Seeing *Petra*, the ancient capital of the Nabateans, which is located in the southern part of Jordan, was the ultimate dream of the young Israelis during Israel's first decade. During that decade, thousands of

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young Israelis dreamed of coming to *Petra*. According to the claim of the Israelis, only fifteen persons dared to go on this trip and fulfilled their dream, ten men and two women were killed in separate journeys after they crossed the Jordanian borders on their way to *Petra* between 1953 and 1957, and only three of them made it back to Israel (Shafran 2008; Markovich 2019; Bar-Aon 2005).

Nessia Shafran נְסִיָּה שַׁפְּרָן was one of the earliest Israeli researchers who studied the issue of *Petra* hiking. In her study “*The Red Rock: Looking back*”, (1979), published in Hebrew *הַסְּלֵעַ הָאֵדוּם: מְבַטֵּל* (לְאִהוּר), *Shafran* emphasizes the impact of the hikes to *Petra* as a cultural experience and an important myth in Israeli society. In her article, *Shafran* נְסִיָּה (1979) deals with the phenomenon of hiking to *Petra*, its growth, and its development during the 1950s. She also reviews general information about the groups that took part in the hiking to *Petra* at that time, who died from them, and those who returned alive to Israel.

Among the researchers who dealt with the subject, it is worth mentioning *Yakoov Markovitzky* יַעֲקֹב מַרְקוֹבִיטְצְקִי, lecturer in the military and local history in the Department of Palestine Studies at the University of Haifa, who stresses in an article entitled “*Petra dream—going to die*” *הַדְּרוֹלֵכִים: הַדְּרוֹלֵכִים* (2005) that the issue of hiking to *Petra* during the 1950s expressed of the collective experience of many young people during the years in which the values of the newly established State were shaped. In another article, *Markovitzky* מַרְקוֹבִיטְצְקִי (2019) maintains that, during those years, many members of the “generation of the state” did not find their place in the young state of Israel. The mass immigration *הַעֲלִיָּה הַהַמְּוִנִית*, which started after the establishment of Israel, caused the decline of collectivity and an emphasis on the needs of the common and the pioneering norms and supported a path of career and personal success at the same time (p. 177). The urban culture and the view of money as a universal measure were an expression of social success, and this took the place of self-fulfillment (178). For many of those people, the materialistic existence after the war did not provide suitable content and ideas, and they turned to look for new challenges. *Markovitzky* מַרְקוֹבִיטְצְקִי (2019) adds that most of those who hiked to *Petra* in the 1950s belonged to one of the two prominent young groups in the first decade of the state of Israel: a generation in the land⁽²⁾, that is, the generation of the Palmach⁽³⁾, and the generation of the state (177).

Shafran נְסִיָּה (2010) shows how myths, even cults, around *Petra* were created in Israel from a socio-cultural point of view, when hiking to *Petra* was the dream of the mythological *sabra*, especially in the first two decades of Israel. According to her, this led to a dangerous attraction of young Israelis who tried to cross the border to reach *Petra* in the 1950s: only three people are known to have returned safely after fulfilling this dream and arriving in *Petra* on foot, alongside a dozen young men and women who died before reaching the desired destination.

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Shafran's book "*The Red Rock: the forbidden journeys to Petra* הסלע האדום: המסעות האסורים" (2013) preserves the biographical story of those who hike to *Petra* while documenting the ethos, myths, values, and crises of Israel in the first decade of the state.

The present study aims to highlight this issue by answering the following questions:

1. What are the main reasons that made the Israeli youth hike to Petra in the 1950s?
2. What was the attitude of the Israeli public toward this phenomenon?
3. Why did government agencies in Israel intervene to prevent the publication of this phenomenon?
4. How did the writers in Modern Hebrew Literature deal with this phenomenon in their literary works?
5. Who are the most prominent writers who dealt with this issue in their literary works?

2. The illegal hikes to Petra

The Red Rock city of *Petra* was rediscovered in 1812 AD by the Swiss traveler and orientalist *Johann Ludwig Burckhardt*, who named himself Sheikh Ibrahim Ibn Abdallah during his intensive travels in the Middle East. The natural beauty of Petra is fascinating and breathtaking. Therefore, *Petra* officially became a World Cultural Heritage site in 1985. During the period preceding the foundation of Israel, *Petra* had been the destination of several trips. The most famous one was conducted in 1929 in a motor convoy by Jewish students and teachers from Palestine (Peters 2015, 108). However, only in the 1950s was the way to *Petra* considered "the trek of treks" (Havrelock 2011, 259). Many veterans were thrilled to accept the challenge of reaching *Petra*; this feeling and longing for *Petra* were encouraged in informal circles. The attraction of *Petra* is derived from "the Zionist ideology of heroism through defiance" (Peters 2015, 108-109).

The attitude of the Israeli public toward the illegal hikes to *Petra* was complex. In the eyes of many, hiking to *Petra* symbolized the Israeli native. In the last few years of the 1940s and the first years of the 1950s, the *Sabras* סַבְרָאִים were a minority in Israel, which came to be peopled by new immigrants who had just arrived. Already in the early 1950s, the Jewish population in Israel doubled and the indigenous Jewish population became a minority in his country. But this minority was considered the elite section of the population, an object of imitation that all others wanted to resemble (Shafran 2010). Hiking to *Petra* symbolized for many Israelis the Israeli indigenous culture. It was associated with the ancient cultures of the peoples who lived in the area (especially Canaanites and Nabateans), cultures that fascinated the natives of the land, strengthened the indigenous identity of those born in Palestine, and helped to distinguish them from the new immigrants (Teff Seker 2012). Thus, *Petra* became a magical-mystical destination, and the journey to it confirmed the love of the young people for land and their deep connection to the area (Shafran 2010).

As noted above, there were several attempts by the Israeli youth to infiltrate to *Petra* through the border with Jordan. These attempts extended during the years 1953-1957. There were two roads for travelers trying to get to *Petra*. The first passes through *Wadi Musa* and is located north of *Beer-Menucha*⁽⁴⁾ בֵּיר-מְנוּחָה. Although it leads directly to *Petra*, this road is a dangerous one because there is a

police station at the exit from *Wadi Musa* to *Petra*, and anyone caught by the police there has little chance of escaping. The second road passes *Wadi-Hushiba* and reaches a point about 8 km south of *Petra*, from which a path leads to the city itself. This road is longer but safer than the other one (Shafran 1979).

In the 1920s and 1930s, many Zionists came from Palestine to *Petra* in small and large groups. One such traveler was *Rachel Yanait Ben Zvi* ⁵ רַחֵל יָנַיִת בֶּן-צְבִי, who visited there with her husband *Yitzhak Ben-Zvi* ⁶ יִצְחָק בֶּן-צְבִי in 1934 and wrote enthusiastic travelogues describing the beauty of the place. However, the travelers of the 1920s and 1930s were not natives of the country. Most of them are natives of Eastern Europe and came to Palestine driven by the Zionist vision. *Nessia Shafran*, in her article “*The Red Rock—looking back*” (1979), talks about the books that the country’s explorers and researchers have written during the 1920s and 1930s. She mentions that “their books are not merely informative; they are explicitly trending, and their stated purpose is to bring the country closer to the hearts of its inhabitants who have just come [immigrated].” She adds that “the travelers of the 1940s, members of the Palmach generation, were educated on these books. Unlike their predecessors, they were already born in Israel [Palestine], and the problem of identity ... does not exist for them.” The first five people who died on the way to *Petra* were members of the Palmach. They took part in the war of 1948, and some were even wounded during the battles. By August 1953, there were still no hikes to *Petra* involving the myth of death. A few months earlier, *Rachel Saborai* רַחֵל סַבֹּרַי and *Meir Har-Zion* ⁷ מֵיר חַרְצִיִן, both members of the Palmach, were the first Israelis to cross the Israeli border, reach the Red Rock City and return safely (Azoulai, 2007). *Rachel Saborai* died in 2016, at the age of 90. She entered the Israeli Pantheon in 1953 when she arrived at the site in Jordan and came back alive. Years later, she struck on sin; “*almost all those who went to Petra in our wake did not return*” (Bar-Aon, 2016). *Saborai* never reconciled with the legend of *Petra*. She says:

“To this day, I do not forgive myself. Petra became a death trap. Almost all those who followed us did not return. If Meir and I had not gone there, their lives might have been saved and I would not have lost Gila Ben Akiva, my close and beloved friend, who insisted on coming to Petra. Like me.” (Bar-Aon 2016)

Hiking to *Petra* did not seem to many distinct travelers much more dangerous than hiking in the *Negev*. The five who were killed in 1953 lost their lives near the *Beer-Madkor* police station before they reached *Petra* in circumstances that have not yet been fully resolved. They were typical representatives of the so-called “Palmach generation”. They were all with a more or less similar biography. The central experience of their lives was the war of 1948 (Shafran 1979). However, before the battles broke out and its members became fighters, they were, and remained, hikers (Peters 2015, 103). This was emphasized in a speech remembering the 60th anniversary of the foundation of the Palmach on May 23, 2001, in the Knesset (the Israel Parliament):

“The Palmach was a school for knowing the land and for the love of the homeland. The Palmach taught us to love the land and guided us along its paths. As a part of it, we climbed on Hermon [Mount] and went down to Arabah. We climbed Mount

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Samaria and went slid downwards to the Jordan Valley. we wandered around in the wide open spaces of the Negev and discovered the craters [...] we climbed to the Masada." (Rahavam 2001)

The journey of the five turned the hike to *Petra* from a challenging experience that reflects admiration of the marvelous architectural past of a magical Nabataean city located across the border into a hike that carries with it a tangible death penalty. After this hiking, *Petra* could not again captivate the Palmach generation, who had grown up meanwhile. The younger generation, who were born in the late 1930s and reached adulthood in the mid-fifties, took their place in the assimilation of the mystical experience of the place (Markovitzky 2019, 177-178). After the death of the five members of the Palmach generation on the way to *Petra*, no one from that generation tried to reach it. Those who went to *Petra* in the second half of the 1950s were members of the younger generation, who were born in the late 1930s and came of age during the Sinai Retribution Operation (Shafran 1999, 493).

In 2007, after over fifty years of this incident, dozens of family members and friends came to the *Palmach House Museum* in *Tel Aviv* to inaugurate the ceremony in memory of those five who were killed: *Eitan Mintz, Yaakov Kleifeld, Gila Ben-Akiva, Arik Mager and Miriam Monderer*. This memorial ceremony was the first of its kind held by the *Palmach House Museum* for those who were killed in 1953. The memorial plaque inaugurated at this museum contains photos of the five young people combined with photographs from *Petra* (Azoulai, 2007). Yet even when the five crossed the border on no purpose first, and not by mistake as everyone first assumed, the attitude towards them remained somewhat ambivalent. Along with condemnation of crossing the border in violation of the law and risking their lives in vain, the five were also seen as a symbol of patriotism (Shafran 2008).

After the incident in which the five were killed, seven other young Israelis died in four more cases, all of whom were fascinated by the stories about *Petra's* spectacular beauty and sought to fulfill their dream. These events reinforced the image of *Petra* as a tangible danger to the public, and the establishment banned the Play of the song "The Red Rock" which was written by *Haim Hefer* and sung by *Arik Lavie*, so as not to encourage more young people to cross the border and go to a place almost "no one has ever returned from" (Azoulai 2007).

In the 1960s, teenagers used the myth of *Petra* as a dream district, but its real danger has been taken away. The hikes to *Petra* exhausted themselves, and the challenge became so impossible. In the 1960s, hiking to *Petra* is a story told in the campfires of shrinking youth movements, or on school trips down to *Eilat*, in front of the monument erected in memory of that hike to *Petra* (Shafran, 1979).

After the signing of the peace agreement between the Jordanian and Israeli sides in 1994, many Israelis visited *Petra*. It is worth mentioning that *Rachel Saborai*, one of those who did infiltrate the borders to *Petra* in 1953, returned to *Petra* three times between 1994 and 2007, but, as *Saborai* mentioned, "without the dark clothes to camouflage, and without inciting on the way" (Azoulai 2007).

3. Hebrew literature and hiking to Petra

The issue of hiking to *Petra* was treated in Hebrew Literature. At first, many poets dealt with that issue in their poems. After that, by the end of the 1950s, it began to appear in prose works. The first work to handle the issue was the short story entitled “*On the Way to the Red Rock*” *בדרך לסלע האדום* by *Yehoshua Bar-Yosef*. It should be mentioned that during that decade, tens of newspaper articles dealt with the issue (Shafran 1999, 490). After that, the film industry in Israel saw the potential inherent in this issue, and in 1960, the film “*Blazing Sands*” *חזולות הזרוב* was produced. “*Blazing Sands*”, which was directed by the German director *Raphael Nussbaum* *רפאל נוסבאום*, presented a melodramatic story inspired by the 1950s fad of crossing the border to Jordan to reach *Petra* (Zerubavel 2013, 312). In the sixties and seventies, interest in the issue of hiking to *Petra* faded, but during the following decades, Israeli writers, the novelist in particular, began to deal with this issue again (Shafran 1999, 504).

3.1. *Yehoshua Bar-Yosef: On the way to Red Rock* *בדרך לסלע האדום*

The Israeli author, playwright, and journalist *Yehoshua Bar-Yosef* *יהושע בר-יוסף* (1912-1992) was born to a Haredi Jewish family in *Safed* in 1912. As a child, he left *Safed* with his mother and moved to Transylvania in Romania where he spent the years from 1916 to 1930 and studied in a yeshiva. In 1930, he returned to Palestine and settled in the Haredi Jerusalem neighborhood of *Mea Shearim* *מאה שערים* (Bar-Yosef, 2004: 156-157). *Bar-Yosef* belongs to the writers of the third immigration *העלייה השלישית*, and he was the only writer among them who was a native of Palestine (Shaked, 2000: 98). Yet, unlike his contemporaries, *Bar-Yosef* did not experience the crises of immigration that formed the subject of his contemporaries (Shaked, 2000: 109). Consequently, he focused in his work on the tension between the concepts of conservative religious society and secular society, the crises of faith that plague the *Haredeem* *הרדיים*, as well as the struggles to save their world from the temptations of modern society (Bar-Yosef, 2004: 156).

Bar-Yosef was the first of the Israeli writers to reflect on the issue of hiking to *Petra* in His Literary works. In his novella “*On the way to Red Rock*” *בדרך לסלע האדום* (1959) appears mythological Sabra trying to reach *Petra*. About two years before the story was published, six young men died in two separate hikes to *Petra*. This was a record year in terms of the number of victims. It should be mentioned that in the same year also some attempts to reach *Petra* were made. The story was therefore written very close to the events when the affair of the hiking to *Petra* was on the immediate public agenda (Shafran 1999, 496).

The story “*On the Way to the Red Rock*” appeared in a collection of stories that included three other stories. It deals with three people going to *Petra*. The story of the hiking is interpreted through the mind of *Mickey* *מיקי*, the protagonist of the story, in a long internal monologue of about fifty pages, which is unfolded while hiking to *Petra*. The reader becomes acquainted with the character of the other two only through the reflections of *Mickey*.

Mickey is the only son of an educated and established family from Tel Aviv who served in an elite unit. His parents are enlightened and intelligent people. They have everything, but they are not happy in their lives. In this respect, Mickey says:

"אבא מורה בתיכון, ואמא נותנת שיעורים לזמרה. שניהם די עסוקים ודי מתעניינים בספרים ובבעיות שונות. רואים כל הצגה של תיאטרון, יש להם מינוי לתזמורת והולכים לסרט רק אחרי שקוראים ושומעים עליו משהו מיוחד. מרוויחים די [...] בכל זאת משהו רקוב אצלם מן היסוד. אנני יודע מה. הם פשוט לא מאושרים, מתהלכים תמיד עם פרצופים ריקים. אף פעם לא שמעתי אותם שרים לעצמם [...] לא נהנים מכל מה שיש להם." (Bar-yosef 1959, 9)

"Dad is a high school teacher, and Mom gives singing lessons. Both are quite busy and quite interested in books and various problems. They see every theater performance, have a subscription to the orchestra, and go to the movie only after reading and hearing something special about it. They earn quite a bit [...] Nevertheless, something is fundamentally rotten with them. I don't know what. They are just not happy, always walking around with blank faces. I never heard them sing to themselves [...] not enjoying everything they have."

Mickey is disgusted with his parents' life. He refuses to pursue his studies and learn a profession, and prefers to engage in all kinds of casual jobs in Eilat. In this respect, Mickey says:

אני עובד בכל מה שמזדמן לי [...] לא אכפת לי להיות נהג או פועל-בניין או חוצב בקומפרסור או עובד עם גאולוגים. כל עוד אני מרוויח שאוכל לזלול סטיק בריא ואוכל להסתובב חפשי בכל המרחב הזה-די לי. המדבר הוא ריק כמו הנשמה שלי ואני מנסה ללמוד דרכו את עצמי. הוא ריק ולא ריק. גם אני כך. (Bar-yosef 1959, 12)

"I work at whatever I get a chance [...] I don't mind being a driver or a construction worker or a compressor cutter or working with geologists. As long as I earn that, I can devour a healthy stick and I can walk around searching in this entire space –that's enough for me. The desert is as empty as my soul and I try to learn myself through it. It is empty and not empty. So am I."

Mickey likes to travel in the desert because there he can do whatever he wants whenever he wants.

Besides this, he has experience in desert trips. He says:

"אני פשוט מרגיש כאן טוב יותר מאשר בעיר [...] אין הר שלא עליתי על פסגתו. אין בקעה וערוץ ומישור ונחל ואפיק ומעיין שלא הייתי בהם ולא הכרתי אותם מקרוב." (Bar-yosef 1959, 12)

"I just feel better here than in the city. [...] There is no mountain I haven't climbed to the top. There isn't a ravine, a gorge, a plain, a stream, a river, or a spring that I

haven't been to and didn't know closely." He also left the army to be completely free to travel as he pleased:

"עזבתי את הצבא ואת הג'יפ ואת הדרגה כדי שאהיה חפשי לגמרי לטייל להנאתי."

(Bar-yosef 1959, 13)

"I left the army, the jeep, and the rank so that I would be completely free to travel for my pleasure."

Micky is not ready for any commitment, both in the professional field and in his personal relationships. He does not want to have a family and children. During his monologue, Mickey says:

"ואני רוצה להוליד ילדים? אני רואה את זה כאידיאל להקים בית ולגדל ילדים [...]
חלומות בלילה! שום חשק אין לי

לכך. אף פעם לא חשבתי על זה [...] בכלל, לא חשבתי על בית וילדים." (Bar-yosef)
1959, 31

"and I want to have children? I see it as an ideal to build a house and raise children [...] dreams at night! I have no desire for that. I never thought about it [...] at all, I did not think about house and children." In another place in the story, he says:

"אם אחזור לאילת, אקרא לה. לא נקים בית. לא נלד ילדים. אקח אותה לטיולים שלי."
(Bar-yosef 1959, 3)

"If I return to Eilat, I will call her [Norit, his girlfriend]. We will not build a house. We will not have children. I will take her on my trips."

The reason behind his fear of commitment is that he:

"להיות חפשי. ללכת לאן ומתי שרוצה." (Bar-yosef 1959, 34)

"Wants to be free. To go wherever and whenever he wants."

On his journey to Petra, he sets out in the paratroopers' shoes. After military service, he goes down to Eilat:

"מטייל ברגליים בכל שביל וחור. אין הר שלא עליתי על פסגתו. אין בקעה וערוץ ומישור ונחל ואפיק ומעיין שלא הייתי בהם ולא הכרתי אותם מקרוב. זה משהו. זה בשביל הצבא וזה בשביל עצמי [...] כל אחד רוצה להיות אחד ויחיד בשטח מסויים. וזה השטח שלי."

(Bar-yosef 1959, 12)

"Hiking on foot in every path and hole. There is no mountain that I have not climbed. There is no valley, channel, stream, or spring that I have not been to and did not know closely. This is something. Both for the military and myself [...] everyone wants to be only in a certain area. And this is my territory."

In this way, *Mickey* tries to do the activities that the Palmach generation did in the 1940s. After seven young people were killed trying to reach *Petra*, he wanted to be the one to return alive from the dangerous Place:

"מה מושך אותי למסע הזה? רק הסכנה והחיפוש אחר הפחד המתוק? או אולי התשוקה להתרברבות הנפוחה שלאחר הטיון המוצלח. שבעה הלכו ונהרגו ורק אחד חזר בחיים וזה במקרה. מיקי יצא עם שני חברים וחזר בשלום." (Bar-yosef 1959, 18)

"What attracts me to this journey? Only the danger and the search for the sweet fear? Or maybe the desire for inflated bragging after the successful trip. Seven went and were killed and only one come back alive and that was by accident. Mickey went out with two friends and returned safely."

He wanted to prove to himself and others that he:

"הוא מכיר את המדבר כמו חמש אצבעותיו." (Bar-yosef 1959, 18)

"Knows the desert like his five fingers."

A significant part of the monologue is dedicated to the sexual part of his relationship with his girlfriend, *Nurit*. They spent the night before he walks to *Petra* together. The ending of the story is unheroic. The three characters of the story meet their death without being able to fire a single shot at their enemies:

"אין על מי לירות. נבלעים כמו שדים בסלעים. נולדו בין הסלעים הללו. יודעים מבטן ומלידה איך ליהפך חלק מהם. הרובים מיותרים. רק מכבידים. יהרגו אותנו לאט לאט מרחוק בלי שנוכל לירות ירייה אחת." (Bar-yosef 1959, 48)

"There is no one to shoot. Swallowed like demons in rocks. [They] were born among these rocks. [they] know from birth how to become a part of them. The guns are unnecessary. Only burdensome. They will oil us slowly from a distance without being able to fire a single shot."

Before death, *Mickey* hopes that their crushed bodies be carried back home to urge the youth not to imitate them and mess up their lives:

"אולי דווקא יחזירו אותנו שסועים ומרוסקים שהבחורים בארץ ילמדו לקח ולא יעשו כמונו. שלא ילכו אל פטרה. שלא ישחקו עם המוות. שלא ייהפכו את החיים שלהם לרוליטה." (Bar-yosef 1959, 49)

"Maybe they will bring us back torn and crushed so that the young men in Israel will learn a lesson and not do like us. To let them not go to Petra. Not to play with death. Not to turn their lives into roulette."

Therefore, it can be assumed that the moral that appears at the end of the story *"That the young men in Israel will learn a lesson [...] that they will not go to Petra"* is the main motive that led to the writing of the story.

In a column he published in *Maariv* newspaper, the journalist *Uri Dan* called *Petra* a “disease”, and he tried to step into the shoes of the travelers there “What do they have? What are these crazy people going to *Petra* for? [...] If they want to travel, they will travel to the *Negev* and the *Galilee*. But in the diary of a veteran explorer, it is written: the tours in the *Negev* are tiring [...] even *Ein Gedi* came out of the nose” (Safir-Vitz 2014). Through the story, we can deduce some of the motivations that drove *Mickey* to hike to *Petra*. The most important of these reasons according to Shafran (1999) are the following:

A. The wish of death.

In the middle of the road, *Mickey* suddenly realizes that his and his friend’s paratrooper shoes left traces in the field. After that, he suggests to his friends that they return to the country and that he would continue his way toward *Petra*, but his friends refused to return. He remains undecided about continuing the walk to *Petra* or returning to the country:

“אני הולך בכוונה תחילה לקראת הקסם של המות? אני תכננתי את כל מחשבותי בעניין זה מתוך התשוקה הפנימית שלא ידעתי בעצמי אל המות? לא ידעתי את התשוקה, רק נגלתה לי פתאום העקבות שהשאירו אחורינו. אם זה כך או כך אז זה מעניין מאוד. וזה בהחלט ייתכן. ברגע הזה, למשל, לגמרי לא אכפת לי שאמות. לא. לא אכפת לי. ואולי אינני חושב מספיק על משמעות הדבר, אבל באמת לא אכפת לי. היו לי הרבה רגעים כאלה. בלי סוף. לא חושבים על הבשר שיירקב ועל הדברים שמאבדים. לא חושבים על כלום רק על זה שתבוא מנוחה גדולה מוחלטת. מנוחה מן המחשבה על המשמעות שלי ועל הטעם של החיים ועל זה שאין לי מנוחה [...] החלטתי ללכת הלאה ולא לחזור.”

(Bar-Yosef, 1959: 26-27)

“Am I deliberately walking towards the magic of death? I planned all my thoughts on this matter from the inner desire that I did not know myself for death. I didn’t know the passion. I just suddenly discovered the traces we left behind. If it is one way or the other, then it is very interesting. And it is certainly possible. At this moment, for example, I do not care that I die. No. I do not care. And maybe I’m not thinking enough about what this means, but I don’t care. I had many such moments, endless. They don’t think about the meat that will rot and the things that are lost. They don’t think about anything except that there will come a great and complete rest. Rest from thinking about my meaning and the taste of life and the fact that I have no rest [...] I decided to go on and not return.”

B. The enchantment from the Nabateans⁽⁸⁾.

In many places in the story, *Mickey* expresses how impressed he is with the Nabateans, and how he is fascinated by their way of life and links himself to them:

“ואליהם ואל מצבותיהם אני נמשך כאל אגדת קסמים. אני מהרהר בהם לעיתים קרובות מדי. פעמים רבות אני רואה עצמי אחד רוכב על גמל קל-רגליים לארכו ולרחבו של

מדבר-ערב וחזור עמוס בשמים ותבלינים לביתי המבוצר והמפואר ושפחות זריזות ונשים בעלות עיניים יוקדות רוחצות גופי וסכות בשרי בשמן המור. אני רוצה להיות במקומם."
(Bar-yosef 1959, 20)

"I am drawn to them and the remains of their tombstones like a magic fairy tale. I think about them too often. Many times I see myself as one of them riding a light-footed camel to its length and breadth of the evening desert and returning loaded with perfumes and spices to my fortified and magnificent house and agile maids and women with burning eyes bathe my body and rub my flesh with myrrh oil. I want to be in their place."

Elsewhere in the story, Mickey points out that even the ancient Nabataean rituals fascinate him.

And he pretends to be himself for the ultimate victim, and the Red Rock for the altar on which he will be sacrificed:

"הסלע האדום הוא המזבח המולך שלי [...] ולא חשבתי כלל על המוות הצפוי לי." (Bar-yosef 1959, 20)

"The Red Rock is my holy alter [...] And I didn't think at all about the death that awaited me."

Besides that, there is admiration for vegetable agriculture:

"גם את המדבר הכניעו. צברו מימיו המעטים בבורות חצובים בסלע. הטו את האפיקים לרצונם. למדו את סוד האדמה. ידעו כיצד לאגור מים תחתונים מן הגשמים המעטים בחורף ואדמתם הניבה יפה ... הנבטים הללו מעסיקים את דמיוני מאז ירדתי לנגב. אנשים שהפכו מדבר לגן פורח." (Bar-yosef 1959, 19)

"The desert was also subdued. Accumulate its little water in pits carved into the rock. Bend the channels to their will. Learn the secret of the earth. They knew how to store groundwater from the brief rains in winter and their soil yielded beautifully ... these Nabataeans have been occupying my imagination since I went down to the Negev. People who turned a desert into a blooming garden."

C. The love of danger.

"פחד-שווא הוא מן הדברים המתוקים בעולם. זה מתחיל עוד אצל ילדים קטנים. כשאדם יושב במקום בטוח והוא קורא על הסכנות האיומות בהן נמצאים אחרים, הוא נהנה הנאה משונה. אנו אוהבים את הפחד כשהוא משמש רק כמין תבלין לריגוש הלב. בשביל זה בעצם יצאנו לסיור הזה. זהו מה שקוראים כיף אמיתי." (Bar-yosef 1959, 16-17)

"False fear is one of the sweetest things in the world. It starts with small children. When a man sits in a safe place and he reads about the terrible dangers others are in, he enjoys a

strange pleasure. We love fear when it is only used as a kind of spice to thrill the heart. That's what we went on this tour for. This is called real fun."

D. Love for the desert with everything in it. At the sight of a flood in the desert, Mickey felt:

"כאילו ראיתי מראות אלוהים [...] אילו הייתי לפני שלושת אלפים שנה הייתי רואה בזה סנה בוער באש." (Bar-yosef 1959, 14)

"As if I saw visions of God [...] if I had lived three thousand years ago, I would have seen it as a pine tree burning on fire." Elsewhere in the story, Mickey emphasizes his love for the desert by saying:

"אני אוהב את המדבר. אוהב את הצבעים האחידים העזים שאינם נותנים לדמיון להשתעשע בכל מיני. המדבר הוא ריק עמו הנשמה שלי ואני מנסה ללמוד דרכו את עצמי. הוא ריק ולא ריק. גם אני עך. המשותף הזה מושך אותי [...] אני פשוט מרגיש כאן טוב יותר מאשר בעיר [...] פה אני עושה מה שאני רוצה ומתי שאני רוצה, ובעיר אני משתפך בתוך הזרם הכללי הממלא את הרחובות." (Bar-yosef 1959, 12)

"I love the desert. I love the bright solid colors that don't let the imagination run wild. The desert is as empty as my soul and I try to learn myself through it. It is empty and not empty. So am I. This commonality attracts me [...] I just feel better here than in the city [...] here I do whatever I want and whenever I want, and in the city, I flow in the general flow that fills the street."

E. The desire to have something to tell friends.

"התשוקה להתרברבות הנפוחה שלאחר הטיון המוצלח. שבעה הלכו ונהרגו ורק אחד חזר בחיים וזה במקרה. מיקי יצא עם שני חברים וחזר בשלום." (Bar-yosef 1959, 18)

"The desire for inflated bragging after the successful trip. Seven went and were killed and only one come back alive and that was by accident. Mickey went out with two friends and returned safely."

The engraving of their names on one rock in Petra is considered by Mickey to be one of the most important tasks of the journey:

"בחשכה נתגב אל הבקעה הפתוחה נראה מה שנראה ונחרוט את שמותנו העבריים במקום בולט ונסתלק אחת שתיים. לא נחכה לאור הירח. נראה מה שנראה באפלה." (Bar-yosef 1959, 36)

"In the dark, we will sneak into the open valley and see what we see and engrave our Hebrew names in a prominent place, and leave immediately. We will not wait for the moonlight. We will see what we see in the dark."

Even in military training, they will cite his experience:

"בכל הקורסים של הקצינים יביאו אותך כדוגמה חיה." (Bar-yosef 1959, 18)

"In all the courses of military officers, you will be brought as a living example."

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Yehushua Bar-Yosef presents the hiking to *Petra* as a definite anti-heroic act. He understands the magic of the desert landscape, the magic inherent in the Nabataean past, the attraction to death, and the other motives that enchanted the young Israeli of those years. His hikers to *Petra* are not mocked characters. But they are not heroes either: certainly they are not idealistic figures who are drawn to the desert only because of their burning love for the land. The reasons that led *Mickey* to *Petra* stem foremost from the personal mental anguish of a young man who cannot find his way in life. Despite his external charm, *Mickey* is a guy who failed to grow up and accept the obligations of the adult world (Shafraan 1999, 502-503).

Many critics of Modern Hebrew Literature have addressed the reason why *Mickey* tried to go to *Petra*. The critic *Asher Nahur* אשר נהור sees that *Mickey* walks to *Petra*, first, because of boredom. In this respect, *Nahur* says:

“*Bar-Yosef* deals with the boredom of life that was emptied and burned precisely after the establishment of the state” (Nahur 1959).

Gershon Shaked, a researcher of Modern Hebrew Literature, among the most prominent critics of Hebrew Fiction and winner of the Israel Prize for the study of Hebrew Literature, says in his review article “*The Other Side of the Coin* של המטבע של ה'צד האחר'” (1959), that *Bar-Yosef*’s story was written out of a desire to reveal the roots of reality. *Shaked* claims that the young heroes go to their death through their hiking to *Petra* “because they are disgusted with the way of life and especially with the interpersonal relationships of their fathers and mothers [...] *Mickey* is driven to death by his disgust with his parents’ family life, which is expressed in a petty-bourgeois routine on the one hand, and in a feeling of helplessness and loss of existence on the other hand” (Shaked 1959, 9).

According to letters by hikers to *Petra* written to friends and family members, one of the important motives for the four persons who actually went hiking to *Petra* in March 1957 was the frustration that everyone felt since they did not take part in the *Sinai* operation; Some of them even had feelings of failure regarding their military service. This motive, as *Shafraan* (1999) has pointed out, is not mentioned at all in *Bar-Yosef*’s story.

3.2. *Amos Oz; A Perfect Peace* מנוחה נכונה

In the sixties, the issue of hiking to *Petra* became a story that is told in youth movements or on school trips that pass by the monument in memory of those who lost their lives going to *Petra*. The Six-Day War brought new travel challenges, and the myth of *Petra* became a thing of the past. However, in Hebrew literature, hiking to *Petra* was not yet completely exhausted, and in 1982 *Amos Oz*’s⁽⁹⁾ novel *A Perfect Peace* was published. In this novel, *Oz* re-examines the myth of hiking to *Petra* (Shafraan 1999, 504). This novel is one of the most prominent books in *Amos Oz*’s work. It was published in full in 1982, but several chapters of it were published in 1972. The novel, both in terms of the period it describes and in terms of its sensitivities, is essentially a novel of the 1960s, reflecting pre-1967 Israeli society. Its story begins in 1965, and the six-day war marks the division of time described in it. The war is described only

marginally, although it is clear from the story that it heralds the beginning of a new era (Shafran 1999, 504-505).

Jonathan (June) Lifshitz, the protagonist of the novel *A Perfect Peace*, is a 26 years old youth born and raised at the fictional kibbutz *Granot*. *Lifshitz*, is disgusted with the routine life of the kibbutz, a life where everything is predictable and he feels constricted by the limit of the kibbutz life. Looking for something that could lend content for his life, he decides to leave his wife and his home to start a new life, and he tries to go to *Petra* (Peters 2015, 112). He feels he must flee from a protected, orderly and desolate place—the Kibbutz, to another, attractive and destructive place—the desert, as a kind of rebellion against society.

It is noticeable that in this novel there is tension between two options, the commitment to the collective basic values in Israeli society, represented by the Kibbutz framework, on the one hand, and, on the other, the search for personal fulfillment and individualism. The latter option is made possible through the escape to the desert. The plot of the novel mainly tells the story of *Jonathan*, a young kibbutznik, who finds himself stressed and depressed in the boring kibbutz. His relationship with his wife and parents is in crisis. Already at the beginning of the novel, *Jonathan* is planning his escape from the dull life he sees in the kibbutz and the problematic connection with his wife to “another place אחר מקום”. Before he leaves, we only know that he wants to escape to a different place from the places he knows (Oz 1982, 9). *Jonathan* explicitly says that he does not care where he goes. The main thing is that he wants to travel to a place not similar to a kibbutz:

”מוכרח כבר לקום וללכת. לאיזה מקום. לא אכפת [...] לאיזה מקום שאפשר להיות בו

לבד וקורים בו דברים בלי תוכנית [...] ולהיות אדם חופשי.” (Oz 1982, 184)

“I have to get up and go. To Wherever. I do not care [...] someplace where you can be alone and things happen without a plan [...] and be a free person.”

Jonathan runs away to the desert, and when a booklet by Azaria Alon עזריה אלון on *Petra* falls into his hands—he decides to cross the border and go there. *Jonathan's* choice to flee to *Petra* reflects the destructive dimension of his aspiration and the absurdity of choosing “another place”, which symbolizes death for self-search (Balaban, 1986). We see that *Jonathan's* reflections before leaving for *Petra* also include thoughts of his impending death, he says:

”אבל מה שנשאר לי לעשות עם עצמי אחרי שנתתי להם כל מה שהיה לי, זה ללכת

הלילה או מחר בלילה לפטרה ולמות.” (Oz 1982, 279)

“But what I have left to do with myself after I have given them all I had is to go to Petra tonight or tomorrow night and die.”

In the last few pages of the novel, we read *Jonathan* retrace his steps at the last minute. He crosses the border, and while walking in the desert, he first comes in actual contact with his emotions. Out of the turmoil of his emotions, he fires toward the moon with all the ammunition in his possession. In the desert silence that ensues after the shootings he shakes all over, his teeth are stiff, he vomits, and when he calms down a bit, he suddenly realizes that he is standing exposed in enemy territory, without ammunition,

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where guys like him have been massacred. He retraces his steps and starts to cry. He stays in the desert for two months. Eventually, he returned to the kibbutz. At the end of the novel, as *Shafran* (2010) says, *Jonathan's* hiking to *Petra* becomes “a hiking of catharsis, in which he first comes into actual contact with his feelings.” She adds that although the protagonist of the novel has not reached the Red Rock, “he no longer needs it: he returns to the kibbutz and his wife, to the perfect peace.” *Jakob Freund* (1984) has this to say of *Petra's* specific place in this novel. He says:

“*Petra is a kind of taboo, a forbidden place, and space beyond reality. The hero's walk to Petra is a desperate attempt to escape the overcrowded cosmos and without firing a single shot at them before his death, the protagonist of Oz's novel also did not reach Petra and ventures into the forbidden spaces. But this journey is doomed to failure.*”

Through the comparison between the protagonist of the story of *Bar-Yosef* and the protagonist of the novel by *Amos Oz*, we can note that both of them could not reach *Petra*. *Mickey*, the protagonist of *Bar-Yosef's* story, failed in reaching *Petra* and was killed by the Bedouins without firing a single shot at them before his death. The protagonist of *Oz's* novel also did not reach *Petra*, but, although he was haunted by fear, he returned to the kibbutz alive. His journey to *Petra* becomes a journey of cathexis, where he first comes into actual contact with his feelings. Although he did not reach *Petra*, he no longer needs to: he returns to the kibbutz and to “*A Perfect Peace*” (*Shafran* 1999, 508).

3.3. *Ruth Almog: Horses* סוסים

In the 1990s there was a return to dealing with the issue of hiking to *Petra*. During this decade, several attempts were made by young Israeli people to reach *Petra*. According to *Shafran* (1999), several factors brought hiking to *Petra* to the public agenda. One of these factors was the signing of the peace agreement between Jordan and Israel, which brought many Israelis together in a proper way with the object of their former dreams. Another was the celebration of the country's jubilee year, which led to much occupations in the 1950s. The third factor was the multiple interests of the “new historians” in the formative years of the state. And finally, there was also the coming of age of the generation that grew on the *Petra* myth in childhood (517). Thus, in 1994, mainly after the peace agreement with Jordan, many articles appeared in the Israeli press dealing with the issue of hiking to *Petra*.

Ruth Almog⁽¹⁰⁾, one of the most prominent Israeli writers, addressed the *hike* to *Petra* in one of her most important short stories entitled “*Susim*” (*Horses*), published in 1993. The main character in this story, *Oscar*, arrives in Palestine accompanied by his mother during the 1950s after they survived the Nazi events (the Holocaust) in Germany. He was sent to a boarding school and from there to a kibbutz, but he does not integrate into any of these frameworks. After that, *Oscar* finds his fix in the army. He joins a patrol and is sent into the desert to chase down infiltrators (*Shafran* 2010).

After that, *Oscar* feels like a true young Israeli man, and one day a comrade tells him about *Petra*:
“אתה לא יודע מהחיים שלך. פטרה, זה הדבר האמיתי.” “*You don't know from your life. Petra, this is the*

real thing.” Oscar asked with a loud voice: “מה זה פטרה?” “What is Petra?” Another mate who has listened to the conversation said: “פטרה זה לא בשביל סבונים.” (Almog 1993, 405). According to *Peters Dominik*, the word “soap” must be considered as the keyword of this dialogue—besides *Petra* (2015, 112). Through this story, *Almog* shows that, despite being an elite soldier and although he “used to think that his skin was suntanned, his body made of strong muscles and his hair golden from the sun of desert”, Oscar will not be equal to his comrades of the Sabra generation (those who were born in Palestine) (Peters 2015, 112). It seems that most of those who tried to walk to *Petra* can be said to have gone because they could not achieve the military aura during their military service. For these, walking to *Petra* saw a certain compensation (Shafran 1979).

Oscar wanders through old bookstores, learns everything he can about *Petra*, and ends up going on a dangerous journey. Along the way, he gets caught in a huge flood, and at the very last moment, climbs a hill and saves his life. After his escape from the flood in the desert, he realizes that *Petra* is a legend and nothing more. He reconciles with his past, and there is no longer any need for him to conquer *Petra*, the stronghold of Israeliness. He finds his fix by weeding the wild grass around the shack that his late mother left him and by planting tomatoes and cucumbers (Shafran 2010).

In this short story, *Almog* represents not only the rejection of the social pressure on (Holocaust) survivors in parts of Israeli society in the early years of statehood, but also the absurdity of the myth surrounding *Petra* by then, and shows how an Israeli who was not born as a *Sabra* finds his own identity. In *Almog’s* short story, the clandestine hikes to *Petra* mutate into relicts half as old as time (Peters, 2015: 113).

3.4. Yehonathan Geffen: *Petra* פטרה

There are also several other literary works that treat hiking to *Petra*. One of these works is the play “*Petra*” written by the Israeli author, poet, and playwright Yehonathan Geffen גפן יחונתן, who was born in 1947. In 1998, this play, which deals entirely with the case of the hike to *Petra*, was staged in the *Cameri Theater* תיאטרון הקאמרי. The play tells the story of a ridiculous journalist who brings together three heroes of reprisals from the 1950s to recreate with them their miraculous journey to *Petra*. While the journalist tries to get the reaction of the pioneers of the journey to *Petra*, the three decide to go on the journey without her. During the journey, the myth of *Petra* is shattered, and the truth is revealed: the three were not really in an elite unit, did not reach the Red Rock, and one of them killed a friend during that journey. The journey of the three aging men turns into a ridiculous skit in which, in the end, they shoot each other (Shafran 1999, 504).

4. Conclusions

During the 1950s, groups of Israeli youth tried to break through the border with Jordan to reach *Petra*, “The Red Rock”. These attempts and the different motives behind them were reflected in Israeli

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prose, poetry, and television works. Of the many works by Israeli writers and poets dealing with this phenomenon, the short story “*On the Way to the Red Rock*” by *Yehoshua Bar-Yosef* is the best.

This study reviews this phenomenon and the reasons that prompted the Israeli youth to undertake the perilous journey to Petra during the 1950s, as well as the most important literary works that dealt with this phenomenon. Eventually, this study concludes that:

- During the period following the establishment of the State of Israel, *Petra* was a magical-mythical destination, and hiking to it is perceived as reflecting the love of the land and the original connection to the area. This concept is also clearly presented in Israeli Literature written from the 1960s onwards.
- The young people who went to *Petra* can be divided into two major groups: the members of the Palmach generation and those who did not belong to that generation. The first group went to *Petra* in 1953. The second group went in 1955-7.
- In Modern Hebrew Literature, those who go to *Petra* during the 1950s are described in two ways: as mythical Sabras who grew up in the old pioneer sector, loved to travel in the country, and served in elite units, or else as young people who grew up on the fringes of Israel and tried to give themselves a native identity and enter the heart of Israeliness by going to *Petra*.
- The study has shown that in his short story “On the Way to The Red Rock”, *Yehoshua Bar-Yosef* presents the hiking to *Petra* as a definite anti-heroic act. His hikers to *Petra* are not mocked characters. But they are not heroes either. They certainly are not idealistic figures who are drawn to the desert only because of their burning love for the land. The reasons that led *Mickey*, the protagonist of his story, to *Petra* stem foremost from the personal mental anguish of a young man who cannot find his way in life. Despite his external charm, *Mickey* is a young man who failed to grow up and accept the obligations of the adult world.
- The study has shown also that the Palmach generation had a powerful influence on the members of the following generation, who were born in Israel and did not take part in the wars and actions carried out by the Palmach generation. Some members of the following generation felt they were inferior to the Palmach generation, who took part in the 1948 war and other actions. That’s why they tried to infiltrate *Petra* in the first decade after the establishment of the state of Israel.
- The Israeli writer *Yehoshua Bar-Yosef* was the most prominent writer who treated hiking to *Petra* in their literary works. *Bar-Yosef* devoted an entire literary work to this issue, namely, the short story “On the Way to The Red Rock”. For other Israeli writers who dealt with this issue in their literary works, such as *Amos Oz*, *Ruth Almog*, and others, this subject was a secondary theme.
- Some of the literary works that were issued in Israel against the background of the issue of the infiltration across the Jordanian border to reach *Petra* during the 1950s impacted Israeli society. There was fear that these literary works would set examples which might encourage other groups of Israeli youth to embark on new adventures across the Jordanian border. Hence, some literary works, on top of which was Haim *Hefer*’s poem “*Oh the Red Rock*”, were banned by the Israeli Prime

Minister, *David Ben-Gurion*, and an attempt was made to prevent the screening of the movie "*Blazing Sands*" in the early 1960s.

Following the signing of the peace agreement between the Jordan and Israel in 1994, Israelis could visit *Petra* as tourists. It is worth mentioning that during the British Mandate period, *Petra* was a magnet for some Israeli politicians who visited it and described that visit.

قضية تسلل الشباب الإسرائيلي عبر الحدود الأردنية إلى البترا خلال خمسينيات القرن المنصرم وانعكاساتها في الأدب العبري الحديث

محمود العمرات، محمد نصيرات
قسم اللغات السامية والشرقية / اللغة العبرية، جامعة اليرموك، الأردن

الملخص

كانت البترا، "الصخرة الحمراء"، خلال العقد الأول من عمر إسرائيل، تمثل في الوعي الجمعي الإسرائيلي أبعد وأخطر مكان يمكن الوصول إليه. وقد تسلل خمسة عشر إسرائيلياً عبر الحدود الأردنية، في محاولة منهم للوصول إلى الوجهة المرجوة، لكن ثلاثة منهم فقط تمكنوا من العودة أحياء. وكان عدد من أبناء جيل البلماح بين أولئك الذين ساروا في تلك الرحلة إلى البترا، خمسة منهم لم يعودوا أحياء. تلخص هذه الدراسة، في جزئها الأول، بداية تشكل أسطورة "الصخرة الحمراء" بين أبناء جيل البلماح، وانتقالها، بعد ذلك، إلى الجيل الذي تلاه؛ أما الجزء الثاني فقد خصص لتسليط الضوء على الأسباب التي دفعت أولئك الشباب إلى الذهاب إلى البترا وكيفية تناول الأدب العبري الحديث لهذه الظاهرة منذ العقد الذي أعقب إقامة "دولة إسرائيل" وحتى تسعينيات القرن العشرين. وقد ذيل الباحثان دراستهما بخاتمة احتوت على أهم النتائج التي توصلنا إليها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرحلة مشياً على الأقدام، البترا، البلماح، الأدب العبري الحديث، الصخرة الحمراء.

Endnotes

- ¹ Haim Hefer (1925-2012). An Israeli Songwriter and Poet. He was born in Poland, and immigrated to Palestine with his family at the age of 11. He wrote over 1,000 Songs and Poems, and was awarded the Israel Prize for his contribution to Israeli culture. See: (Zeira, 2021).
- ² For an extensive discussion of sociological characteristics and worldview of the “*generation in the land זרור בארץ*”, see for example: (Shapira, A. 1997: 122-154).
- ³ Palmach (פלמ"ח): acronym for “*Plugot Makhatz – פלוגות מוקד*”, meaning “striking force”; it was established as a part of the Ha-Haganah (ההגנה) on 15 May 1941. See: (alkailany, 1969: 85).
- ⁴ The Arabic name of this well is “*Beer al-Maliha*”. It is located in *Wadi Araba*. Starting from 1951, The Zionist changed its name to *Beer-Menucha* באר-מנוחה.
- ⁵ Rachel Yanait Ben-Zvi (1886-1979), writer and labor leader. She was born in Ukraine and immigrated to Palestine in 1908. In 1918 she became the wife of Yizhak Ben-Zvi, the second president of Israel. See: (Shilo, 1997).
- ⁶ (1884-1963), He was the second President of Israel (1952-1963), and an early Zionist leader in Palestine.
- ⁷ When *Har-Zion* died at the age of 80 in 2014, all major newspapers bid him farewell on their front pages, and the elites of Israel eulogized him as “one of our greatest heroes” (*Benyamin Netanyahu*, Prime Minister), a “compass” (*Benny Gantz*, former Chief of staff), and a “role model” (*Moshe Yaalon*, Defense Minister). Then President of Israel *Shimon Peres* used a classical Zionist approach by saying *Har-Zion* had “one of his wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon”. *Dominik Peters*, in his article “Melody of a Myth: The Legacy of *Haim Hefers* Red Rock Song”, points out that “one could have wondered why a former soldier in the relatively low rank of a captain was paid such respect” (Peters, 2015, p. 107).
- ⁸ In the first two decades of Israel, there was a lot of interest in the Nabataeans. After 1967, the focus of public interest moved to other areas, but the Nabataeans did not completely disappear from consciousness. Three main themes appear in the literary works written from the 1950s to the end of the last century: adoration of Nabataeans as the king of the desert; indulgence in the sensual heathen culture of the germs; seeing the Bedouins as the descendants of the Nabataeans, whether backward and degenerate descendants or continuing the Nabataean heritage, or a complete denial of any connection between the Nabataeans and the contemporary Bedouins. (Shafran, 1999).
- ⁹ *Amos Oz* (1939-2018). An Israeli writer, novelist, journalist, and intellectual. He was also a professor of Hebrew Literature at the Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. Winner of the Israel Prize for Literature, the best-known and most-read Israeli author in the world. He has won many international literary prizes, including the Goethe Prize, the Heine Prize, and the Prince Asturias Prize. His books have been translated into more than forty languages (Sain, 2018).
- ¹⁰ *Ruth Almog* was born in 1936 in Palestine to parents who made Aliyah from Germany. *Almog* is considered one of the seminal women-writer in contemporary Literature (Feldman, 1999).

¹¹ the phrase “soap” (Sabon in Hebrew), which was created in Israeli slang in the 1940s and 1950s mainly referred to Nazi events (Holocaust) survivors. The phrase was an expression of ridicule for immigrants who came from Europe.

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