

Persecution or Participation? Christians During the Bar Kokhba Revolt

רדיפות או השתתפות? הנוצרים במשך ימי מרד בר כוכבא

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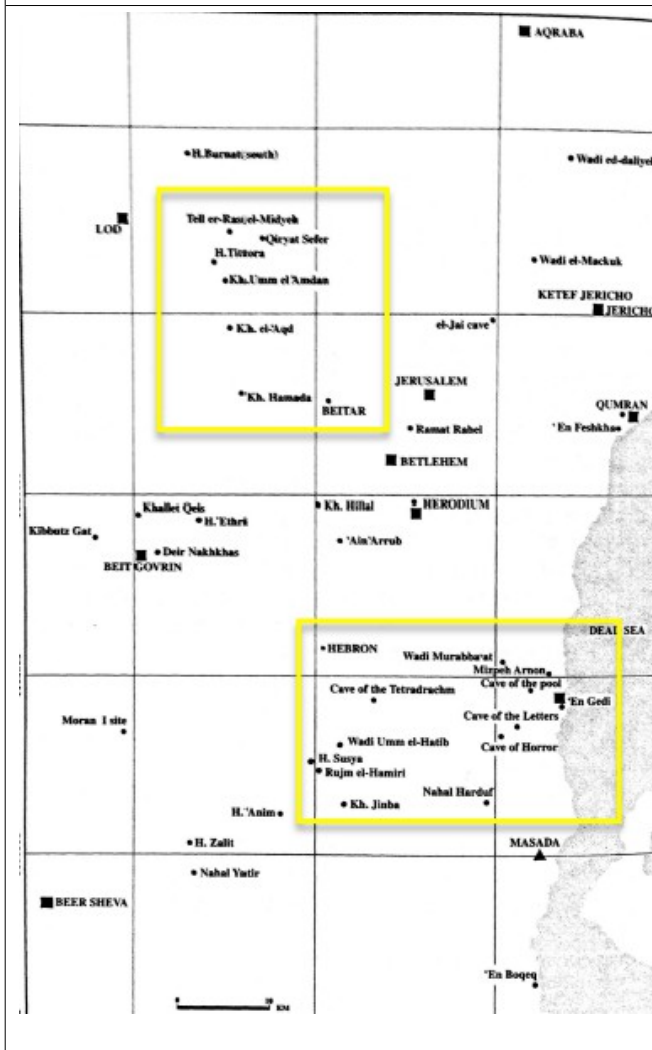
1) Persecution of Christians During the Bar Kokhba Revolt

Justin Martyr, *First Apology* 31 (ca. 150-155 CE)

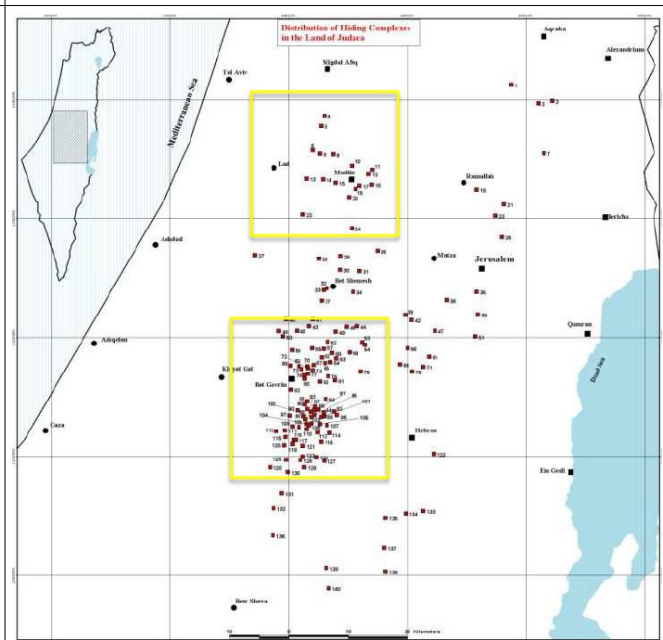
But these Jews, though they read the books [of the Prophets], fail to grasp their meaning, and they consider us as their enemies and adversaries, killing and punishing us, just as you [the Romans] do, whenever they are able to do so, as you can readily imagine. In the recent Jewish war, Bar Kokhba (βαρξαχέβας), the leader of the Jewish uprising, ordered that only the Christians should be subjected to dreadful torments, unless they renounced and blasphemed Jesus Christ.

2) The Purpose of the Bar Kokhba Revolt

Distribution Map of Bar Kokhba Coins (2001)



Distribution Map of Hiding Complexes (2008)



Large silver tetradrachm (Year 1), and Small silver denarius (Year 1) – see Mildenberg (1984:124, 172)



“Jerusalem”



“El'azar ha-Kohen”

3) Bar Kokhba as Messianic Leader

Talmud Yerushalmi, <i>Ta'anit</i> 4:5 (ca. late 4 th – early 5 th century CE)		P.Yadin 54:1; <i>Bar Kokhba Letters</i> (ca. 132-135 CE)	
תני ר' שמעון בן יוחי עקיבה ר' היה דורש [במדבר כד:יז] דרך כוכב מיעקב דרך כוזבא מיעקב. ר' עקיבה כד הוה חמי בר כוזבא הוה אמר דין הוא מלכא משיחא א"ל ר' יוחנן בן תורתא עקיבה יעלו עשבים בלחייך ועדיין בן דוד לא יבא	R. Shimon b. Yohai taught. Akiva my teacher would expound [the verse] “A star [Kochav] shall go out from Jacob” (Num. 24:17) [as] “Koziva shall go out from Jacob.” When R. Akiva saw Bar Koziva, he said: “This is the King Messiah.” R. Yohanan b. Torta said to him, “Akiva, grass will grow between your jaws and still the son of David will not come.”	שמעון בר כוסבה הנסי על ישראל ליהונתן ולמסבלה שלום	Shim'on, son of Kosibah, the <i>Nasi</i> over Israel to Yehonatan and Masabalah: Peace!...
Josephus, <i>Judean War</i> , 2.433-4, 442 (ca. 79 CE)			
At this time a certain Menahem son of Judas – the one called the Galilean, a most formidable sophist who had berated the Judeans back in the time of Quirinius [legate governor of Syria, 6 CE] because they were subjecting themselves to the Romans after God – took his acquaintances and withdrew to Masada. There, after he broke open the armory of King Herod... he returned to Jerusalem quite like a king (<i>basileus</i>) and, after becoming commander of the civil strife, he began organizing the siege [of the loyalists in the palace of the Upper City]... Both the reduction of the secure places and the death of the high priest Ananias deluded Menahem to the point of savagery: thinking that he had no rival in affairs, he was an unbearable tyrant (<i>turannos</i>).			

4) Bar Kokhba as Authoritarian Leader

P.Yadin 54:2, <i>Bar Kokhba Letters</i> (ca. 132-135 CE)		Eusebius, <i>Chronicle</i> (ca. 325 CE; preserved in Jerome, <i>Chronicle</i> , ca. 380 CE)	
וכול גבר תקועי די יתשכח לותכון, בתיה די אנון שרין בגוהן יקדון, ומנכן אעבד ית פרענותה	And any Teko'an man who is found with you [i.e. in your vicinity] – let the houses in which they reside burn down, and from you I shall exact punishment...	Kochebas, duke of the Jewish sect, killed Christians with all kinds of persecutions [when] they refused to help him against the Roman troops.	
<i>Apocalypse of Peter</i> 16 (ca. early 2 nd century CE, Ethiopic)			
And I was joyful and believed and understood that which is written in the book of [Jesus]. And I said to him, “My Lord, do wish for me to make you here three tabernacles, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah?” [see Matthew 17:4] And he said to me in wrath, “Satan makes war against you, and has veiled you understanding” [see Matthew 16:23], and the good things of this world conquer you... a tabernacle, which the hand of man has not made, but which my heavenly Father has made for me and for the elect.” And we saw (it) full of joy.			