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Highlight for April 2010



*Flowers of the Holy Land*. London: A Atallah Frères [1900?]. Classmark: Printed Books SPEC Y.90.3.379

This small book of twelve pressed flower designs was a popular souvenir of Jerusalem, produced in the late 19th and early 20th century for pilgrims and other visitors to the Holy Land, including soldiers serving in the area during the First World War. The publisher, Atallah Frères, a Palestinian Arab company, also produced many souvenir postcards, and some copies of *Flowers of the Holy Land* were made with coloured views of the sites interspersed with the pressed flower designs.

This copy is bound in olive wood boards, with a red leather spine bearing the embossed title, *Flowers of the Holy Land*, in English and Hebrew. The marquetry-style panelled design on the upper cover surrounds the word Jerusalem, also written in English and Hebrew; the binding design and colours vary on other copies. The book opens at the left-hand edge, as usual for books in Hebrew (and Arabic), reading right to left. In this copy, the page edges are marbled, with a floral design printed in purple on the endleaves, and the title page, with the text given in Hebrew, English and German, printed in green.

The twelve pages, each representing a holy site, are thin card, on which a design has been drawn in pencil, and created by sticking on a background of foliage, decorating it with single petals and occasionally whole flowers, protected by interleaved pages of tissue paper. This copy appears to be aimed at a Jewish market: each page is headed in Hebrew, with the same wording repeated beneath in German, English and French; no specifically New Testament sites are included.

The twelve sites in Liverpool's copy are:

1. Jerusalem (horseshoe-shaped design)
2. Mount Zion (Star of David design)
3. Mount Moriah
4. Siloah (bouquet-shaped design)
5. Hebron
6. Mount Carmel
7. the Mount of Olives (olive tree design)
8. the Jordan valley (wooden cup filled with flowers)
9. the Mount of Gerizim
10. Saron (bouquet-shaped design)
11. Tiberias
12. Saffed (bouquet-shaped design, see right)



In other known copies, presumably aimed at a Christian market, crosses were included in the designs for Mount Moriah and Mount Carmel, and in the Bethlehem design substituted for the Mount of Gerizim; copies are also known with text in Greek, and sites including Bethlehem, Nazareth and the Valley of tombs of Jehosaphat.

Similar contemporary publications include Harvey Bartlett Green's 1899 *Wild Flowers from Palestine* and *Pressed Flowers from the Holy Land* (London and Lowell, Massachusetts).

These commercial productions were modelled on a vogue for personal pressed flower albums created as holiday souvenirs, such as the album held in the Rathbone Papers (RP XXV.3.1), created by William Rathbone VI and his first wife Lucretia Wainwright Rathbone. Originally labelled with their initials and the years of their marriage (1847-1859) the scrapbook contains mounted pressed flower designs annotated with the place and date of collection. It forms a record of the itineraries of their annual holidays in England, Scotland and on the Continent, giving the company and occasions of the walks on which the flowers were gathered, from their honeymoon in the Lake District in September 1847, to their South Coast holiday in 1859, including 'Our return to New Brighton May 1859' - the month of Lucretia's death, a little over a week after the birth of their fourth child. The last few pages have sheets of blue blotting paper still in place.

## References:

Description of *Flowers of the Holy Land* based on notes produced by Judith Riley, Collections Access Dept, Liverpool Museum.

See also F. Nigel Hepper, *Illustrated Encyclopaedia of Bible Plants* (Leicester, 1992).

Website: <http://sca.lib.liv.ac.uk/collections/index.html>

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Rathbone Papers: <http://sca.lib.liv.ac.uk/collections/colldescs/rathbone/index.html>