

I have never cited this information in objection to, or in refutation of, the efficient-runoff (soil-crusting) theory of Evenari *et al.*, nor have I made any attempt whatsoever to evaluate the information. My actual words regarding the experiments were these (2): "The results, of course, are tentative and we await confirmation and elaboration by the sponsors of the experiments. Yet, had these experiments proved that cleared *hammada* did in fact increase runoff, they still would not have proved conclusively that the *teleilat* were the

result of a conscious effort on the part of the farmer to increase runoff. They would only have proved that it was *scientifically demonstrable* to increase rates of runoff by clearing stones from the *hammada*."

In other words, my interest focused solely and exclusively upon whether these experiments, successful or not, could in any way prove that the ancient farmer stripped slopes of their stone cover in order to enhance crusting and thereby increase rates of runoff. I believe they did not and will not.

The article in which the foregoing statement appeared was entitled, "The ancient agricultural remains of the Central Negeb: Methodology and dating criteria," and the report of the soil-crusting experiments by the Hebrew University and the Soil Conservation Service was cited to support a methodological position which I have steadfastly maintained and which I believe is grounded in scientific logic: namely, that observations on the function of ancient agricultural installations which cannot be supported by ancient or modern analogies must be regarded as speculative. It is from this position alone that I object to the soil-crusting theory of Evenari *et al.*, for not one of their citations (3) provides the slightest support for the theory.

This was the point I wished to make with respect to the experiments undertaken by the Hebrew University—no other. And as for my own view on the stone heaps (*teleilat el 'anab*), I am not so wedded to my theory—which I only maintain is more plausible than others—that I would not divorce myself from it if sound and substantive evidence were adduced in support of the efficient-runoff (soil-crusting) theory or any other theory. But above all, let evidence and testimony, not invective and detraction, prevail. *Absit invidia*.

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References and Notes

1. *Science* 134, 1751 (1961).
2. *Bull. Am. Schools Oriental Res. No. 160* (1960), p. 27.
3. *Science* 133, 979, ref. 36 (1961). The citation of B. Hellström has no bearing whatsoever on the soil-crusting theory, and the installations he describes do not in the slightest resemble the stone heaps of the Central Negev.

Evenari informs us that he sees no reason for making additional comments on this subject.—Ed.

Center for Retired Scientists

It is pleasant to read that C. W. Weiant proposes a "center for retired scientists" [*Science* 135, 961 (1962)]. There are a number of suitable locations in Mexico and Central America. As an alternative to Weiant's Jalapa. I would like to suggest Tapachula, which lacks the "Nortes" so numerous in Jalapa.

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