

65 Joppa

Names (also known as)

Jaffa, Japho, Joppe, el-Qala, Yafa, Yafo
Hebrew : “yafo”, now frequently called Jaffa

Etymology

Name means “beauty, beautiful” in Hebrew.
Joppa is Latinization of 4th century Greek.

The town was mentioned in Egyptian sources and the Amarna Letters as Yapu. Mythology says that it is named for Japheth, one of the sons of Noah, the one who built it after the Great Flood. The Hellenist tradition links the name to lopeia, or Cassiopeia, mother of Andromeda. Pliny the Elder associated the name with Jopa, the daughter of Aeolus, the god of the wind. The Arab geographer Al-Muqaddasi referred to it as Yaffa.

Location/Description

Jaffa is located 30 miles (48 km) south of Caesarea. The modern city of Tel Aviv is immediately to the north so that the metropolis is called today Tel Aviv-Yafo.



Scriptural references

Old Testament

Josh. 19: 46, 2 Chron. 2:16; Ezra 3:7; Jonah 1:3

New Testament

Acts 9:36,38,42,43; 10:5,8,23,32; 11:5,13

Famous characters

Jonah
Tabitha (Dorcas)
Peter
Simon a Tanner

Brief history

In Arab times, the harbor of Caesarea silted full of mud and so once more the natural harbor of Jaffa prospered. But it soon became the centre of wars between the Crusaders and the Arabs, until finally in 1268 it was conquered by Sultan Baybars who stripped it of timber and marble for his new Cairo mosque. Less than a century later his successors purposely destroyed the harbor and the city to deny any new Crusaders a foothold in the Holy Land. But again it was rebuilt.



During Ottoman times, Jaffa prospered once more as it imported rice and sugar and exported soap, olive oil, spices and cotton. Vast citrus groves encircled the city. Jaffa was destroyed by Napoleon who ravaged the inhabitants of Jaffa in his disastrous Israel campaign of 1799. The St. Peter's Church and monastery are said to stand on the place where Napoleon camped in Jaffa. Even though Napoleon did not leave a single soul living in the town, several statues commemorate his presence.

Some of the main monuments in Jaffa date from Ottoman times, like the clock tower from 1906, meant to mark the anniversary of the Sultan. One of the Jaffa rulers rebuilt the city

wall, its fountains and its gates, which led to the main roads to Jerusalem and Nablus, and the al-Mahmudiyya Mosque. The English built the harbor lighthouse.

Soon the city began to spill over its walled boundaries, when Jews immigrated to Israel and the first Jewish neighbourhoods of Tel Aviv (Neve Zedek and Neve Shalom) were built soon after.

The Ottoman rulers destroyed the ancient walls drastically in order to settle the new inhabitants in the new 'suburb.'

During Israel's War of Independence, much of Jaffa was destroyed. In 1965 a process of reconstruction began.



A sculpture in the old town refers to the Jaffa orange, which first entered Israel in the 18th century (imported from Portugal) and that seemed to grow well in the Jaffa area. The sculpture is called the Hovering Orange Tree, in the centre of Old Jaffa. It is supposed to be a symbol of Israel's prosperity, and some see in it a metaphor for the Jewish people, hanging between heaven and earth with their sufferings.

Peter came to Joppa from Lydda to raise Tabitha (Dorcas) from the dead (Acts 9: 36-42). While in Joppa, the apostle stayed at the house of Simon the Tanner. This is where Peter had the vision on the roof of the large sheet being let down. (Acts 9:43-10:23) signalling him to go with the messengers to Cornelius.

Jaffa was the main port of entry during the Turkish period.

The modern population is 60,000.

Religion

Jewish majority (mainly from Mid-Eastern and North African countries). Sizable Arab Christian, Muslim population.



Sources:

www.jewishmag.com

www.bibleplaces.com

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jaffa>

(Compiler- Ian Macfarlane)