



Paintings, drawings and texts by Dr. Julie Loewenthal-Rosenthal



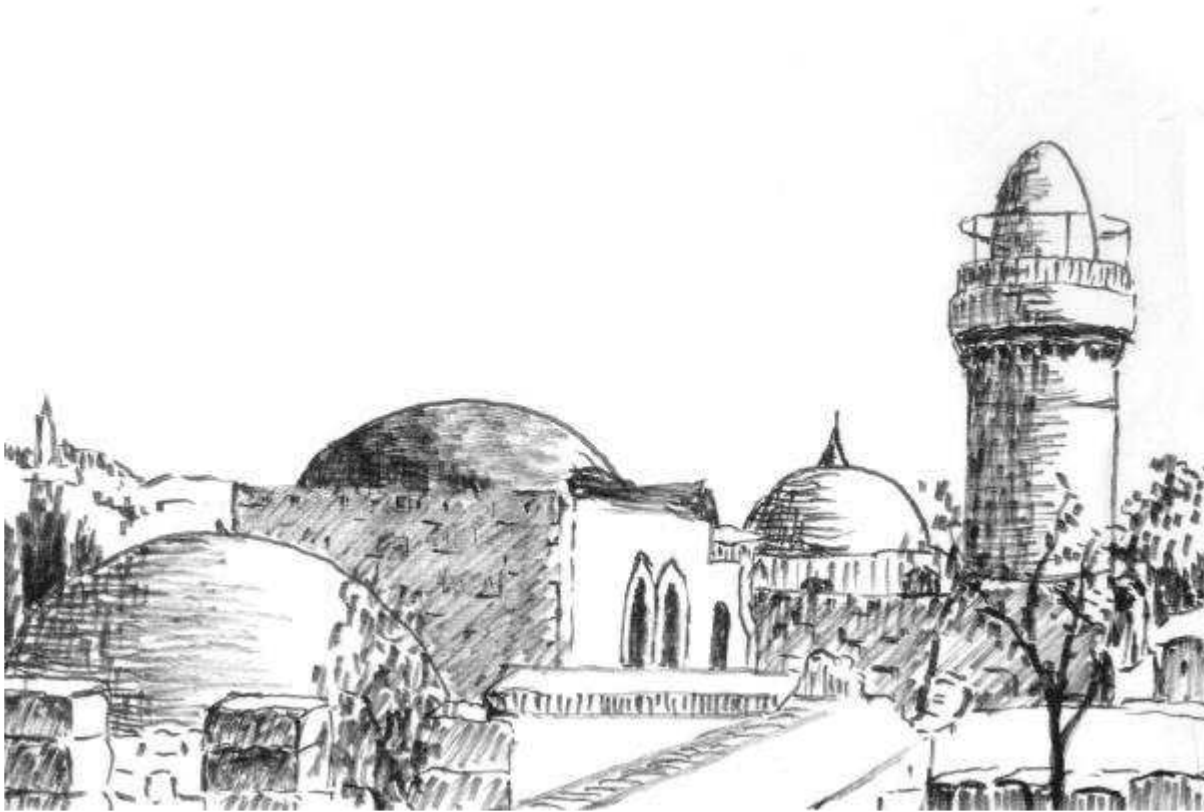
Ein Karem suburb of Jerusalem

(Photo: Jacob Rosenthal)



Lake Tiberias

(Photo: Jacob Rosenthal)



The old town of Tiberias

(Photo: Jacob Rosenthal)



In the old town of Jerusalem

(Photo: Jacob Rosenthal)



In the old town of Jerusalem

(Photo: Jacob Rosenthal)

The following story was destined for the Israeli newspaper "Jerusalem Post" but it is not known whether it was ever published. It is reflecting an experience the author's son Jacob made during his time as an engineer aboard of an Israeli cargo ship.

Somebody suggested once in the "Jerusalem Post", that sailors should be encouraged to write about their experiences at sea. I thought that to be a very good idea. Though not all sailors may turn out Joseph Conrads or Forresters, nor will all the stories be as fascinating as the mutinies on the Caine or the Bounty, tales of seafaring people have always an atmosphere of adventure, an aura of romance, a quality of sensation and excitement. That they can sometimes also be funny proves the following story.

It happened a rather long time ago, in fact in die fifties before the outbreak of the Korean war. It was the time of Senator McCarthy's anticommunist witch hunt, when an Israeli freighter sailed to a Russian Black Sea port to load cargo destined for the USA. Russia was then still sealed off from the western world by an iron curtain and much interest and curiosity was expressed when the sailors took leave. But the expectations to get a glimpse of that mysterious country were not fulfilled. The port was small and a little village behind it. Beyond that one was not allowed to travel. The ship was quickly loaded. In the evening the Israeli sailors were welcomed by an official and entertained in the international club (intended for foreign seamen as in most Russian ports). An English speaking hostess was assigned the job of entertainer, but it seemed that she got too involved in the fun of singing and dancing with the Israeli boys in the eyes of her superiors and after a short time she was ordered out.

Afterwards the officers were shown a small library and the engineer was presented with Turgenev's "Fathers and Sons" as a token of hospitality which he took with a polite thank. Returning to the ship, however, he was stopped before ascending the gangway by a Russian guard who asked for a receipt of the book by the library, as it was strictly forbidden to take anything out of the country without documentation. There was of course none and the guard confiscated the book. The engineer did not care much, he had a Hebrew translation at home. So he forgot the whole thing and turned in. In the middle of the night - at 2 a.m. - he was suddenly roused from his sleep by a knock at the door and summoned to the captain's cabin. Sleepily he staggered up the staircase but got immediately wide awake when he entered the room. There stood the ship's master, somewhat undignified attired in his night shirts, his face red with anger and at his side a Russian police officer, in whose hands he spotted his Turgenev. The officer saluted and apologised: "Sir, take our sincere regret and excuse the error of the guard!" With these words he handed the engineer the offensive book and left. Also the latter made a rather hasty exit, escaping the captain's fury whose remarks remain better unsaid.

But the narrative does not end there. The vessel proceeded to the United States. No sooner had they anchored in Baltimore when our man was again called to the skipper and introduced to a visitor: a local FBI-man looking for subversive material. The captain as well as the cop implored the engineer to hand over his Turgenev. But he refused. "This is an ordinary foreign language edition of a Russian classic", he said "I am ready to bring you another copy from any bookshop on Allenby Road in Tel Aviv, free of charge, if it helps you to win the Cold War. This one, having by now gained a certain curiosity value, will stay with me!"

And there it is still on his bookshelf at home somewhere in Israel.