

*Copenhagen International Seminar*

# **A NEW CRITICAL APPROACH TO THE HISTORY OF PALESTINE**

**PALESTINE HISTORY AND HERITAGE PROJECT 1**

Edited by  
Ingrid Hjelm, Hamdan Taha,  
Ilan Pappé, and Thomas L. Thompson



# A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine

*A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine* discusses prospects and methods for a comprehensive, evidence-based history of Palestine with a critical use of recent historical, archaeological and anthropological methods. This history is not an exclusive history but one that is ethnically and culturally inclusive, a history of and for all peoples who have lived in Palestine. After an introductory essay offering a strategy for creating coherence and continuity from the earliest beginnings to the present, the volume presents twenty articles from twenty-two contributors, fifteen of whom are of Middle Eastern origin or relation.

Split thematically into four parts, the volume discusses ideology, national identity and chronology in various historiographies of Palestine, and the legacy of memory and oral history; the transient character of ethnicity in Palestine and questions regarding the ethical responsibilities of archaeologists and historians to protect the multi-ethnic cultural heritage of Palestine; landscape and memory, and the values of community archaeology and bio-archaeology; and an exploration of the “ideology of the land” and its influence on Palestine’s history and heritage.

The first in a series of books under the auspices of the Palestine History and Heritage Project (PaHH), the volume offers a challenging new departure for writing the history of Palestine and Israel throughout the ages. *A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine* explores the diverse history of the region against the backdrop of twentieth-century scholarly construction of the history of Palestine as a history of a Jewish homeland with roots in an ancient, biblical Israel and examines the implications of this ancient and recent history for archaeology and cultural heritage. The book offers a fascinating new perspective for students and academics in the fields of anthropological, political, cultural and biblical history.

**Ingrid Hjelm** is Associate Professor Emerita at the University of Copenhagen and former Director of the Palestine History and Heritage Project (PaHH) (2014–17). She is author of *The Samaritans and Early Judaism* (2000) and *Jerusalem’s Rise to Sovereignty* (2004), and, with K. Whitlam, T.L. Thompson, N.P. Lemche and Z. Muna, *New Information about the*

*History of Ancient Palestine* (Arabic; 2004); with A.K. de Hemmer Gudme (eds.), *Myths of Exile* (2015); and, with T.L. Thompson (eds.), *Changing Perspectives 6 and 7* (2016).

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**Thomas L. Thompson**, Professor Emeritus, worked at the University of Copenhagen from 1993 to 2009. He was Research Fellow for the Tübinger Atlas des vorderen Orients from 1969 to 1976. He has produced more than twenty books, five of which have been translated into Arabic, and 170 lesser works related to the history of Palestine and biblical literature, the best known of which are *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives* (1974), *The Settlement of Palestine in the Bronze Age* (1979), *The Early History of the Israelite People* (1992), *The Bible in History* (1999), *The Messiah Myth* (2005) and *Biblical Narrative and Palestine's History* (2013).



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**A New Critical Approach to the History of Palestine**

Palestine History and Heritage Project 1

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Palestine History and Heritage Project 1

**Edited by  
Ingrid Hjelm, Hamdan Taha,  
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# Preface

This is the first in a series of some ten volumes projected for the PaHH project to write a comprehensive, evidence-based history of Palestine with a critical use of recent historical, archaeological and anthropological methods. This history is not an exclusive history but one that is ethnically and culturally inclusive, a history of and for all peoples who have lived in Palestine. The population of Palestine before the First World War was ancient. If one allows for the recurrent immigration and emigration endemic to Palestine's geographic role as land bridge between Africa and Asia, Palestine has supported the indigenous population with a remarkable continuity since the Neolithic period. Nevertheless, its people never belonged to or developed any particular, singular, dominating ethnicity. Palestine as homeland has never been limited to any particular folk with but a single language or culture. Rather, it is a land of many peoples, living in its many, very diverse, small sub-regions. Our historical perspective is inclusive of the various cultural, religious and ethnic traditions reflected in this region's complex history, not least that this history might support a common, interrelated heritage for all who live in Palestine.

After an introductory essay offering a strategy for creating coherence and continuity in our history from the earliest beginnings to the present, the volume presents twenty articles, divided into four parts. The first presents a discussion on the ideology of scholars in the historiography of Palestine; the legacy of memory and oral history; a brief history of Palestinian scholarship; and a discussion of the minimalist-maximalist debate in biblical and archaeology studies, which has acted as a catalyst in de-theologizing traditional histories. Constructs of Palestinian national identity are discussed. These have oscillated between different forms of belonging and loyalty, as evidenced in the needs of stressing Palestinian particularity, while, at the same time, insisting on a national identity larger than that of the land of Palestine. Re-evaluation of Palestinian school textbooks gives important information on how Palestine is reframed in the post-Oslo period.

Part 2 offers four essays on the transient character of ethnicity in Palestine, including questions regarding the ethical responsibilities of archaeologists and historians to protect the multi-ethnic cultural heritage of Palestine. Neither what we know of the political structures of Bronze and Iron Age Palestine,

misleading assumptions about ethnically defined cultural traits, nor review of genetic research supports assumptions of demographic continuity. Paradoxically, if a theme of continuity is to dominate the history of Palestine, our focus must be on that constancy of population changes, reflecting the land's crucial geographic location at the North-South and East-West crossroads.

Part 3 builds on themes relatively new to archaeological research. It highlights landscape and memory in researching sites as *lieux de memoire*, concentrating on recently destroyed villages and mosques. Community archaeology is a new method to support protection, preservation and promotion of heritage sites, and bio-archaeology can give valuable information of lifestyle and culture at all times but is especially valuable in regard to pre-text societies.

Part 4 closes the book with an exploration of the "ideology of the land" and its influence on Palestine's history and heritage. Biblical, Rabbinic, Christian, Zionist and modern scholarly ideologies of the land are treated in four chapters, coming full circle with the book's opening focus on historiography and tradition.

We have chosen to use the term "Palestine", generally, because it is the most consistent name of the area, stretching from as far north as Sidon to the Brook of Egypt and from the Mediterranean into the Transjordan, with its ever-changing borders since the Bronze Age. It is testified in inscriptions from Ramses III, with increased regional comprehension in the twelfth-tenth century BCE. From the Assyrian period onwards it is the most common etic collective designation, manifested in the Roman period and in continuous use until 1967, whence the name became a modern political term for areas that are not Israel or that are occupied by Israel. Our use relates to the various meanings of the name throughout three millennia, in which many polities have co-existed, including the ancient kingdoms of Israel, Judah, Edom, Sidon, Ashkelon, Gaza, Gezer, etc. in addition to later Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine provinces, and the imperial polities established from conquests by Sassanid Persians, Arabs, Seljuks, crusading Europeans, Ayyubids, Mamelukes, Ottoman Turks and the British Commonwealth. At times, local polities grew larger and comprised a considerable part of Palestine.

PaHH is an international and interdisciplinary project, at present counting some forty members (half of which are academically situated in the Middle East or of Middle Eastern origin), related to or working at academic institutions in Palestine, Europe, Africa and North and South America. Conferences and workshops have been held in Ramallah in 2014, 2015 and 2017, and in Copenhagen in 2016. The project has enjoyed support from the Universities of Copenhagen and Exeter, and several Palestinian universities and institutions in addition to the H. P. Hjerl Hansen Memorial Fund for Danish Research on Palestine and The Danish House in Palestine. We thank all partners, contributors and the publisher for making this volume possible.

November 5, 2018. The editors

# Abbreviations

AE	<i>American Ethnologist</i>
AJPA	<i>American Journal of Physical Anthropology</i>
AMR	<i>American Historical Review</i>
ANET	J. B. Pritchard (ed.) 1969 <i>Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament</i> . Princeton: Princeton University Press, 3 <sup>rd</sup> edn.
ASOR	American Schools of Oriental Research
BA	<i>Biblical Archaeologist</i>
BAR	<i>Biblical Archaeological Review</i>
BASOR	<i>Bulletin of the American School of Oriental Research</i>
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients
CA	<i>Current Anthropology</i>
CBR	<i>Currents in Biblical Research</i>
CIS	Copenhagen International Seminar
CMIP	Centre for Monitoring the Impact of Peace
CWA	<i>Current World Archaeology</i>
CUP	Cambridge University Press
DBAT	<i>Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament</i>
DDT	<i>Dansk Teologisk Tidsskrift</i>
EA	El Amarna Tablets (Knudtzon, J.A. 1915. <i>Die Amarna Tafeln</i> . Leipzig)
EAEHL	<i>Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land</i> . E. Stern (ed.).
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
FBE	Forum for Bibelsk Eksegese
IEJ	<i>Israel Exploration Journal</i>
IES	Israel Exploration Society
IJS	Institute for Jerusalem Studies
IPCRI	The Israeli-Palestinian Centre for Research and Information
IPS	Institute for Palestine Studies
JAOS	<i>Journal of the American Oriental Society</i>
JCA	<i>Journal of Contemporary Archaeology</i>
JEA	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>

JHS	<i>Journal of Hebrew Scripture</i>
JPR	<i>Journal of Peace Research</i>
JPOS	<i>The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society</i>
JPS	<i>Journal of Palestine Studies</i>
JQR	<i>The Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JSJ	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
JSOT	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament</i>
JSOTS	<i>Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplements</i>
JSS	<i>Journal of Semitic Studies</i>
KJV	King James Version
MLR	<i>Mediterranean Language Review</i>
MOS	Medieval and Ottoman Survey
NAR	<i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i>
NCV	The New Century Version
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OLA	Orientalia Louvaniensia Analecta
OUP	Oxford University Press
P2P	People-to-People programme
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCDC	Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre
PEF	Palestine Exploration Fund
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organisation
QDAP	<i>Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine</i>
RSW	Red slip ware
SAP	Sheffield Academic Press
SBL	Society of Biblical Literature
SBTh	Studies in Biblical Theology
SJOT	<i>Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament</i>
TAVO	<i>Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients</i>
UCP	University of California Press
UF	<i>Ugarit Forschungen</i>
WA	<i>World Archaeology</i>
ZDMG	<i>Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft</i>

# Introduction

## Creating coherence and continuity: suggestions and illustrations of methods and themes

*Thomas L. Thompson*

### Introduction

The Palestine History and Heritage (PaHH) project is an international and interdisciplinary project, which, through a revision of the traditional, biblically based, ethnocentric history of the region, supports a critical view of Palestine's history from the earliest human occupation to the present. Rooted in archaeological, ethnographic and anthropological research, our project intends to produce an evidence-based history in support of a culturally inclusive approach to the heritage of all who have lived in this region. This project views the distinct sub-regions of the land as an interrelated whole. Relationships, reflecting political, economic, linguistic, religious and intellectual life in the region, are understood as dynamic aspects of a shared heritage.

The project has the goal of registering and preserving knowledge of the region's geography, toponymy, history and culture. Such an effort is urgent as the changes that have taken place since the foundation of the State of Israel have rapidly displaced indigenous Palestinian heritage, rooted in ancient Near Eastern, Greco-Roman, Samaritan, Jewish, Christian, Islamic and secular traditions. An inclusive re-evaluation of the region's history and culture is needed to support its heritage. This discussion of principles supports coherence in our effort to resist further colonization of the cultural memory of Palestine that is rooted in exclusive and racist constructions.

Our historical narrative for Palestine's history is to be marked by sub-regional diversity and difference over millennia. Such diversity requires that we have a broader perspective than that which a national or ethnicity-defining narrative can support. Writing a meaningful and coherent account of Palestine's history and heritage also demands that we go beyond competitive origin stories, rooted in ancient and medieval theological traditions. We draw rather on those aspects, which both clarify and define structural continuities, cardinal themes and methods supporting coherence, and reflect fundamental economic and geopolitical change and development over millennia.

The PaHH project is as interdisciplinary as it is international, and we need, therefore, to take up the demanding task of respecting diversity, breadth and complexity. We must develop terminology, chronology and

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perspectives that are consistent and compatible. This must be carried out in each individual contribution and throughout the project as a whole. Cooperation, openness to change and revision and flexibility must be introduced while maintaining respect for the scholarly integrity of those who contribute to this history. This is a multi-vocal and inclusive history, and neither a utopian nor national history. It is a regionally oriented, landscape history. The working group for each volume is to be organized by its principal authors, and it is this group, together, who have the task of and responsibility for planning and producing that volume. They will be supported by an editorial board, which has the responsibility to secure the academic quality of the work.

In an effort to illustrate what I view as cardinal themes and methods, supporting an organizing coherence and continuity in the PaHH historical narrative, I offer the following chart as representative:

Ensuring coherence and continuity in methods and themes<sup>1</sup>

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Projected Volumes</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Working as a group	(One to Two volumes for each period)	1 <i>Macro-history</i>
Creating a comprehensive glossary for personal and geographic names that is ideologically inclusive and coherent	<i>A History of Palestine 1: From the Earliest Beginnings to the Chalcolithic Period</i>	A history from without: normal history
Encouraging the use of personal and place names appropriate to their chronological context		a Where: geography and climate b When: time scale, periodization c What happened: sketching the overall political and cultural history of Palestine, the effects of Imperialism and influences from neighboring lands: warfare and battles, material life, religion and cult, language and literature
Using period-appropriate boundaries of Palestine and its regions	<i>A History of Palestine 2: Palestine from the Beginning of the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period</i>	d To whom did it happen? Demography and ethnicity Cycles of sedentarization and de-sedentarization Settlement patterns of regionally dominant patron towns, with client villages, hamlets and encampment
Discussing multi-cultural landscapes		The concept, origins and function of the city in Palestine
Writing evidence-based history		Deportation/exile and resettlement/immigration and emigration
Defining Palestine as inclusive of the Transjordan, Gaza, the Jaulan and the Wadi 'Araba	<i>A History of Palestine 3: From the Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Roman Periods to the end of the Rashidun Caliphate: 198 BCE-661 AD</i>	Colonies and colonization Changing ethnicities Languages and change of place and personal names
Orienting our historical narrative to an understanding of Palestine as an interrelated whole		

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Projected Volumes</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Interpretation of settlement patterns from their cultural, economic and political contexts	<i>A History of Palestine 4: The Omayyad and Abbasid Caliphates and the Mamluk Sultans: 661–1516 AD</i>	e What was the result? Politics, economy, subsistence and trade Political and economic continuities and dependencies Palestine's Mediterranean economy and the regional contexts of hunting, herding, horticulture and grain agriculture
Using post-colonial perspectives		Patronage polities Changes in land use, water preservation, irrigation and soil; water resources: wells, terracing and drainage systems
Defining religiously, linguistically and ethnically inclusive perspectives	<i>A History of Palestine 5: From the Ottoman Empire to the Arab Revolt</i>	Region-wide continuities in language and economy, food and shelters Trade, trade routes and markets
Relating settlement patterns to climate, topography, soils and water resources		
Interrelating small-regional landscapes	<i>A History of Palestine 6: From the Early 1900s Sinai and Palestine Campaign to the Present</i>	2 <i>Micro-history</i> A history from within: inter-regional histories Sub-regional continuity and change Lieux de memoire
Defining geographically determined continuities and separations		
Using multi-vocal perspectives		a Physical daily life: Geography and landscape, nature and civilization, architecture and settlement structures, occupations, food and clothing, water systems, equipment and goods, technological developments, economy, trade and markets
Focusing on everyday life: gender determined roles, social and family structures		b Social daily life: Family, gender and class structures, language, institutions, sickness and health, fortifications, war and peace, law and legal structures
Giving voice to missing identities		c Mental daily life: Culture and education, intellectual history, literature and religion, secular and religious practice and cult, sports and entertainment, language, terminology and names The development and change in religious bodies and institutions; religious ideologies: critique, change and continuity
Deconstructing concepts of ethnicity and nationalism in terms of inclusivity and multi-cultural values		
Defining the coherence and development of intellectual history		
Presenting the common ground, development and change in religious traditions and practices		
Tracing the developments and reiterated themes of religious texts, shrines and pilgrimages		
Including an awareness of cultural memory		

In an effort to clarify how these methods and themes support coherence and continuity in the *PaHH* historical narrative, throughout a projected six volumes, I offer six examples of how interrelated methods and themes might help hold our project together.

### ***1 Settlement patterns and landscape***

On the fringe of steppe and desert, with its center lying across the border of aridity, Palestine has a periodically vulnerable agriculture with radical shifts in climate, bringing famine, overgrazing and a recurrent development of malarial swamps. Its traditional Mediterranean economy created a deep dependency on local and international trade. However, the intrinsic instability of patron-client political structures has, over the centuries, fostered cycles of sedentarization and de-sedentarization across a much-diversified region.

Influenced by altitudes ranging from the Dead Sea's surface, ca. 429 m below sea level, to Mount Jarmaq's, 1,208 m above sea level, and a mean annual rainfall of ca. 50 mm in the southern Negev, compared to the Upper Galilee's ca. 800–1,000 mm, Palestine's climate ranges dramatically between Mediterranean, steppe and desert within very short distances. Such variations, given the considerable regional diversity of Palestine's topography, support the development of its Mediterranean economy toward small-region-oriented economies of herding in steppe and arid regions, horticulture on the slopes of the hill country and grain agriculture in the coastal plain and inland valleys. A consistent interpretation of the geographical context in the chronological narrative of our sub-regional histories would enhance both the coherence and the continuity of such sub-regional histories as they are related to a Mediterranean economy. We might relate settlement patterns, soil quality and availability of water resources in the different steppe and desert regions to animal domestication and trade routes. The settlement patterns in highland areas may be viewed in regard to terracing and the olive industry, while the pattern of settlement in the lowlands might be described in relation to grain agricultural, drainage and irrigation systems. We need to identify shifts in the border of aridity and the impact of drought on cultivated areas. As we will see, the development of market towns with their specialized crafts supported both local and interregional trade since at least the early Neolithic period, and such closely related polities of patronage have been characteristic of Palestine up to the present day. Archaeological excavations of these patron towns, together with a post-processual analysis of the associated region's settlement patterns, provide, for example, essential evidence for developing an understanding of the continuity and coherence of the Bronze and Iron Ages in Palestine.

### ***2 Palestine's sub-regional histories***

On Syria's southern fringe, Palestine is deeply divided from east to west by the Great Rift Valley, which separates the Cisjordan from the Transjordan.

This deep rift, stretching some 6,000 km from the Biqaa Valley in the north to Mozambique in the south, was created by the continental drift of Africa from Asia. This distinguishes Palestine through the complexity of its sub-regions. Among the most clearly defined are the coastal plain, itself split, north and south, by the Carmel range. The northern part forms a small coastal plain, beginning with the Haifa Bay area and its opening to the Jezreel Valley in the east, and the narrow coastal Plain of Acre, lying west of the Upper Galilee, forming a small but important strip of land, opening to the coastal towns of Lebanon and Syria. South of the Carmel, Palestine's broad central and southern coastal plains support the overland trade route to Gaza and beyond by linking the overland trade route from Lebanon, Syria and Mesopotamia to Arabia, Egypt and North Africa across the northern coast of Sinai (Thompson 1975: 9–13, 1982a).

Above and east of the Plain of Acre, the highlands of the Upper Galilee separate Palestine from the Lebanon range. Further to the east, within the Rift Valley, the Hula Basin lies open in the west to the Litani River and Lebanon's fertile Beqaa Valley, and, in the east, to the Anti-Lebanon of Syria. South of the Upper Galilee of the Cisjordan, the rolling hills of the Lower Galilee, with their rich vineyards and orchards, lie across the northern rim of the broad stretch of lowlands with the well-watered and rich soils of the valleys of Jezreel, Beth Shan, Northern Jordan and Wadi al-Fari'a. East of the Galilee and south of the Hula Basin, we find the fresh-waters of the low-lying Sea of Galilee. The development of irrigation and drainage, supporting Early Bronze agriculture in the malarial marshlands of the lower regions of the Jezreel and Beth Shan valleys, overcame serious barriers to agriculture, which came to support the most densely settled regions of the Bronze Age.

In the Transjordan, a broad highland plateau of fertile land rises toward the east and south above the Jordan rift. This plateau is sharply cut by a series of deep gorges, which drain the plateau into the Jordan. Here were formed the large but historically relatively isolated regions of Bashan, Gilead, Ammon, Moab, Edom and – further to the South – the vast peninsula of Arabia.

In the Cisjordan, south of the Jezreel, lie the central highlands of Palestine: an upland which stretches from Jenin and Nablus to Ramallah. Plateaus and inter-montane valleys, such as in the area surrounding ancient Shechem (Tell Balatah), with rich soils and abundant water, supported a rich and balanced agriculture since the mid-third millennium BCE, centered in grain and field crops. Orchards of olives and grapes on the terraces of the gentler slopes supported small highland towns and villages, while the more arid eastern slopes were given over to herding. Terracing and the development of slaked lime cisterns opened up new regions in the Iron II period, particularly along the western and southern slopes (Thompson 1992b: 221–239).

Further to the south lie the Jerusalem saddle and the southern highlands, which stretch to Hebron and the grasslands of the Northern Negev. Over

the centuries, this region supported a wide range of field agriculture and horticulture, including fruit, nut and olive trees and vineyards. Settlement in the region was sharply limited above the rich soils of the foothills and was subject to periodic famine. Grazing – especially of goats and sheep – formed a major portion of the economy. The arid and eastern slopes of the central and southern highlands lay within the rain-shadow, caused by the deep Rift Valley, creating the Judean desert, an arid strip of badlands stretching between the Wadi Fari'a, and the Araba, south of the Dead Sea. Within the Rift Valley, itself, the badlands are interrupted by the well-watered, rich and fertile oasis of Jericho, just north of the Dead Sea. South of the Dead Sea, the Araba with its immature soils separates the Judean desert and Negev from Arabia, stretching southward to Aqaba and the Red Sea.

Immediately south of the southern highlands lies the Northern Negev, with the rich grasslands of the Arad and Beersheba basins, supporting over millennia a dimorphic economy of grain agriculture and transhumance herding. Further to the south, the northwestern slopes of the central Negev highlands supported limited forms of transhumance agriculture and herding in EB IV/MB I, which was highly dependent on techniques of water storage and irrigation. In the Nabatean to the Byzantine periods, such technology enabled the development of very large towns and permanent settlement.

The western slopes of the Jerusalem saddle and the southern highlands are dominated by the rich, rolling foothills of the Shephelah, which has supported a wide range of agriculture and an intensive, trade-oriented olive oil industry, which in the Iron II period supported demographic expansion.

The multi-variant landscape, sketched earlier, is defined by some forty sub-regional profiles, each requiring its own history (Thompson 1979; Thompson, Goncalvez and Van Canghai 1988: 3). Each sub-region exhibits unique developments in economy, politics, language, religion and material culture which demand that we formulate a historical narrative and which adequately and appropriately sketch the multi-cultural nature of Palestine's indigenous societies. Rather than great cities, ancient Palestine developed market towns, often restricted in growth because of their relative isolation. Palestine's politics follow structures of patronage for a period of some 10,000 years, not the politics of a nation-based state, as Giorgio Buccellati once argued (Buccellati 1967, 2013; cf. Pfoh 2016a; Pfoh and Thompson ch. 11).

In its role as Asia's land-bridge to Africa, providing overland routes between Egypt and Syria and Mesopotamia on the one hand, and Arabia on the other hand, Palestine has never been without interest to its much more powerful neighbors, including Lebanon and Syria in the north; the Great Syrian Steppe and Arabia in the east and southeast; Sinai and Egypt in the south and southwest; and Cyprus, North Africa, the Aegean and Anatolia in the west by sea. This multifaceted context has created a structural dependence on its neighbors. Not only was Palestine dependent on partnerships with its

more powerful partners in sea trade from very early times, but major overland trade routes, passing through the land, were often directly controlled by greater powers. Such imperial interests often involved foreign military presence. The population, clients and patrons, was ever subject to the possibility of deportation, exile and resettlement; colonially motivated immigration; and emigration, all of which affected the political, demographic and ethnographic character of the population, demanding that the continuous transformation of the society needs to form a recurrent leitmotif throughout the narrative of our history. As a “history from within”, our project must deal with imperial presence, influenced by a competitively shifting center, revising and recreating the demographic and economic orientation of Palestine’s sub-regions.

### ***3 Palestine’s multi-cultural history***

Because of its sub-regions’ unique associations, Palestine’s regional landscapes offer a multitude of distinct economic, cultural and political contexts, definable by their openness and engagement with the greater cultures, related, for example, to the eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Syria, Mesopotamia and the Egyptian Delta as well as the large, sparsely populated, arid regions of the Syrian steppe, the Negev, Sinai and Arabia. Palestine’s associations with such cultures have defined its multi-cultural character. At its most dramatic, such involvement created recurrent events of deportation/exile and resettlement as well as various forms of colonial immigration and emigration. This seriously affected the political, demographic and ethnographic character of the population to such an extent that its transformations must form a leitmotif of our history.

In describing the variety of Palestine’s distinctive, small-regional landscapes – each reflected by its own distinctive culture and history – it is important that we support a multi-vocal perspective throughout our historical narrative. Rather than focusing on a political history dominated by elites and marking the decisive watersheds of a comprehensive past, affecting the whole of Palestine as it is reflected in retrospective literary and religious traditions, the central core of our history must be dedicated to the subaltern histories of daily life insofar as they are reflected in contemporary remains, giving voice to the sub-cultures hitherto largely silent (Thompson 2016; Dever 2017). We must write our history from many perspectives, with terminology, chronology and methodology that are coherent.

### ***4 A Mediterranean economy and patronage***

The PaHH project will view the land of Palestine as a coherent and inter-related region with historically shifting boundaries, structured within *la longue durée*. The PaHH project will facilitate a discourse of power and counter-power, especially as these reflect an understanding of Palestinian

identity, with its deep roots in the region's multi-cultural character. The development of the specialized crafts and market towns of a Mediterranean economy (Thompson 1999: 115–119), supporting a predominantly sedentary population with both local and interregional trade, dates at least from the time of the stable Neolithic towns of Jericho and Beidha (Thompson 1992b: 171–300; Pfoh 2016a, 2016b). As Emanuel Pfoh and I have argued (Pfoh and Thompson ch. 11), the longevity of the place names of stable major towns in Palestine, such as those mentioned in the Execration texts and Amarna letters, can be coordinated with the continuity of settlement remains on Palestine's tells. Contemporary texts, directly related to political and social structures in Bronze Age Palestine, can be brought together with contemporary economic archives, which have been excavated in Ugarit, Mari, Nuzi and Amarna, to illustrate the existence of patronage systems, controlling the economic and legal systems throughout greater Syria. Moreover, both settlement patterns and evidence for the coherence and continuity of cultural forms on excavated Late Bronze and early Iron Age sites show a good number of often continuously settled market towns, which controlled small sub-regions over centuries. Such stability is suggested for Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Tantur, Jaffa, Acre, Hebron, Lachish, Jerusalem, Gezer, Shechem, Beth-Shan, Megiddo, Tell Keisan, Hirbet al Ureima,<sup>2</sup> Hazor, Dan and others. These sub-regional market towns provided the landscape for an indigenous pyramid of patronage over a *Hinterland* of subordinate towns, villages, hamlets and encampments within a sub-region of Palestine. This structure supported three dominant but regionally distinct forms of land use in Palestine's Mediterranean economy, centered in field crops and grain agriculture in the lowlands; horticulture in the hill country, especially olives, fruit trees and vineyards; and herding in the highlands and steppe (Thompson 1992b: 177–181; 1999: 115–129).

Intellectual and religious traditions also illustrate and reflect the existence of a coherent pattern of patronage between the king or patron and their patron deities, such as Hadad, Ba'al, Chemosh and Yahw. Ritual texts, correspondence and literature give unequivocal evidence for such patronage concepts influencing and supporting Palestinian politics. The Mesha stele speaks, for example, of the god, *Chemosh*, in the role of Moab's divine patron, who instructs his client-king Mesha by leading him into battle against *Bit Humri*. Very brief inscriptions from Kuntillat Ajrud and Khirbet al-Qom address the god, *Yahw*, as the patron of the towns of *Samaria* in the central highlands and of *Teman* on the southern steppe (Schmidt 2016).

### **5 Religion and intellectual history**

In the PaHH history, biblical and quranic traditions are not to be understood within a perspective of eventual history but rather as central, integral aspects of intellectual history. With its secondary, small-regional, intellectual environment, derivative of and dependent on the great cultures of

the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds, as is reflected in its architecture, literature, cult and art, Palestine's cultural and intellectual life – though markedly secondary in its development, when compared with the high cultures of its neighbors – has reflected recurrent cycles of interpretively innovative and critical originality as well as, at times, reactionary backlash. One of the most central problems in developing continuity and coherence in Palestine's historical narrative is dependent on how we deal with the mythic character of the origin stories, theology and critical thinking. Such developments have often affected the identities of Palestine's population in terms of adherence to religious communities and, not least, their response to critical developments in philosophy and rhetoric in the Greek and Roman worlds.

Biblical and quranic traditions are central contributions to Palestine's *intellectual* heritage. Our commitment to an inclusive and multi-cultural historical narrative raises the need to resist exclusive religious and cultural claims of supersession, which are endemic to their reception as foundation texts for sectarianism. Rather than viewing Palestine as a contentious landscape for conflicts between distinct and competing monotheisms, with a common antagonism to what is often condescendingly understood as ancient polytheistic “paganism” or modern secularism, our inclusive and multi-vocal history of Palestine will mark the common ground and functions of a continuously interrelated tradition in which even radical, critical understanding and revision can be interpreted as a reform of a contemporary religious and intellectual heritage.

One of the central problems in developing continuity and coherence in our historical narrative lies in questions of religious origins. As orientation and homeland for the Samaritan Pentateuch and Joshua; a comprehensive setting for Judaism's TaNaK, Septuaginta, Mishnah and Talmud, as well as for the Christian New Testament and earliest Bible; and, finally, as the focal center of the religious and intellectual world of Islamic revision in the Quran, Palestine is the ideological center of a closely interrelated heritage. Our project's commitment to an inclusive and multi-cultural historical narrative raises the need to resist competitive and exclusive tendencies toward sectarianism, common to universal and monotheistic traditions.

Our inclusive and multi-vocal history of Palestine, seeking to be a voice promoting understanding and reconciliation, may well stand or fall on how we deal with Palestine's religious heritage. This issue has become even more sensitive within the growing influence of a politically divisive populism, which exploits fears of an inescapable “clash of civilizations” (Huntington 1997) and a threatening Armageddon-evoking doomsday (Sizer 2004; Hagee 2007), which, promoting a Zionist agenda as it does, also projects its ruin. We need to write a “history of responsibility” and describe with integrity the religious discourse of the ancient past, that we might give voice to an adequate understanding of the “contemporary theologies” implicit in these literary traditions (Gregersen 2008; Salama 2011).

**6 Deconstructing ethnicity**

The PaHH project intends to communicate the richness of Palestine's past, free from destructive and racist projections of ethnicity. Rooted in an understanding of Palestine's "indigenous" population over millennia, our aim is to describe an ancient heritage and identity of the many peoples who have lived in Palestine. The biblical origin story of the patriarch Jacob, in which Yahweh changed Jacob's name to Israel so that he might take up his role as eponymous ancestor of twelve tribes whom God had chosen to conquer Canaan had been thought, until the 1960s, to have been historically confirmed by archaeology's interpretation of the early Middle Bronze period (Thompson 1974). When Zionist and biblical scholars brought such an Israel out of Egypt at the end of the Late Bronze Period, the soon-to-be-former Canaanites of this land were transformed by the Bible's mythic allegory into a similar twelve-fold people of Canaan and his sons (Gen 10:15–20). Mythic story was transformed into historical event! Sixty years ago, this myth of origins was understood as an actual, historical, nomadic migration of *Amurru* ("Amorites") from Mesopotamia. Such biblical archaeology, however, misunderstood Mesopotamian inscriptions as referring to an actual people (Dever 1966; cf. Thompson 1974). "Amurru", in such inscriptions, rather, signifies "westerners": just anyone – shepherds or kings, farmers or nomads, from the west, that is, greater Syria. Rather than a history of the early Middle Bronze period, one had only the Bible's origin story.

There are two approaches to be followed in deconstructing essentialist claims of ethnic or national groups in our history. (1) Judaism is a religion, and Jewishness refers to one's adherence to that religion. It is neither an ethnicity nor a national designation. It is based on and defines a religious allegiance or conversion. (2) Those who once lived as part of the Iron Age II patronage kingdoms of Israel/Bit Humri, on the one hand, and Judea, on the other hand, can hardly be uncritically understood as the ancestors of much later Jews of Judaism. Historical Israel was never Jewish, though it may well be associated with Samaritanism. Yet Samaritanism, too, is first of all a reference to a religious affiliation and not an ethnicity (cf. Hjelm ch. 3). The population of the kingdom of Judea may well be referred to as Judeans or Judahites. However, this neither implies a common ethnicity nor identifies them as "Jews", that is, as members of a religious affiliation of any later period. There is no clear line of ethnic continuity (Thompson 1992b).

It is helpful in understanding how ancient Palestine developed distinctive peoples in successive periods, bearing identities, which survived over long and short durations, if we reconstruct the interrelationship of a given sub-region's landscape with the fluctuating stability and change in climate, economy, social structure, political form, language and religion, variously witnessed throughout Palestine's history. For example, attention to the

agricultural potential of regions in regard to a shifting border of aridity allows us to reflect on a considerable change in the population of sedentary settlements within a geographical spectrum distinguishing the desert from cultivated regions, marking periods of increased sedentarization, such as EB II, MB II and Iron II, against other periods of intense desedentarization, such as in EB IV/MB I and the Late Bronze/Iron I transition periods.

These “intermediate” periods reflect shifts in settlement patterns based in changes in inter-Palestinian strategies of survival. They illustrate historical continuity rather than simply patterns of displacement, invasion or population change.

The Iron I sedentarization of the central highlands, for example, reflects an economic transformation of the central hills, re-establishing the sedentary structures of a Mediterranean economy in this region (Thompson 1992a). Finkelstein’s analysis of the earliest Iron I settlements in the central highlands marks the differences of these settlements in terms of a chronological development from the early sedentarization of nomads east of the watershed to later developments as one moves westward. The differences in Iron I regions of settlement, rather, mark variants in climate in three very distinct agronomic regions. Herding dominated the arid zone of the highlands east of the watershed in both earlier and later periods. Grain and field agricultural, however, was dominant along the highland plateau and in inter-montane valleys, while the steep western slopes required terracing and developed horticulture all along the steep western slopes of the central highlands, which was dominated by a terraced-based horticulture (Thompson 1992b: 221–239, *contra* Zertal 1986 and Finkelstein 1988).

New, early Iron I, small-village agriculture, centered in field crops, olives and village-based herding, also existed in the Galilee. Palestine’s fertile central valleys, the Shephelah and the coastal plain are all largely linked to earlier Late Bronze settlement. These are regions which witnessed recovery of many market towns and had a pottery and material culture, reflecting considerable continuity with LB. A recovery of sedentarization of the southern highlands and of much of the Transjordan, however, did not begin until well into the tenth century. Jerusalem, for example, hosted a very limited population during LB and did not recover the size and importance of Middle Bronze settlement until Iron II, some three centuries later than the settlements in the central hills. That is, the recovery of agricultural settlement and the development of a patronage kingdom in the Judean highlands were comparable and perhaps related to the similar settlement and political organization of Edom in the Transjordan and not of much earlier Samaria. Indeed, the history of Jerusalem was different from that of Samaria. Like Bosra, Jerusalem’s resettlement was closely tied to Assyrian expansion into southern Palestine and Philistia in its effort to support Arab trade routes in Palestine in the eighth and early seventh century BCE. In regard to the development of potential ethnic constructs, Judea, with its patron deity,

Yahw, had common religious ties with both Samaria and Edomite Teman, and shared cultural and economic ties with the whole of southern Palestine, from Moab and Edom to Ashkelon and Gaza.

Northern coastal Palestine's economic, political and cultural life reflected Phoenicia's cultural ties with Philistia but was considerably distant from that of Israel's central hills. The regions of the eastern Galilee and the central valleys of Beisan, the northern Jordan and the Jezreel were culturally all more closely associated with Syria than with the central or southern highlands. Early inscriptions suggest Aramaic linguistic ties rather than a dialect of "Canaanite" (= Hebrew), as one finds in the northwest, central and southern regions of Palestine, such as Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Judahite and Israelite. We need to consider that Assyria's direct annexation of the entire coastal plain from Tyre to Gaza in 734 BCE was quickly followed by Tiglath Pileser III's destruction of Damascus in 732 BCE, which led to Assyrian control over Northern Palestine. This occupation was quickly stabilized by establishing provincial centers at Megiddo and Tantara, separating and isolating large regions of Northern Palestine from the central highlands and bringing the coastal region under the cultural hegemony of Phoenicia, while the northern valleys and lower Galilee fell under Syrian control.

The Transjordan regions of the Jaulan, Bit Ammani and Moab were similarly oriented to Syria rather than Bit Humri. Edom, in contrast, was linked to Judea and a chain of small patronage towns of the South, who were Assyrian clients, all closely tied to the Arabian trade network. The political influence of the patronage kingdom of Bit Humri/Israel – though it is known to have competed with both Moab and Damascus for political hegemony and may also have competed at times for influence in regions to the north of the central highlands, on both sides of the Jordan – was essentially a patronage polity of the central hills. Any greater boundaries, reflecting shifting politics of patronage and military alliances, were limited in both duration and influence. Assyria destroyed Samaria and took over the central highlands in 722/720 BCE. The vast majority of the population of the central highlands remained in the region under the Assyrian province of *Samerina*.

In terms of ethnicity, one might define the central highlands as a relatively coherent region. However, the large town of Gezer in the northern Shephelah and the regional importance of Gezer as a patron town in LB and possibly also MB hardly support any coherent ethnicity which linked the identity of the northern Shephelah with Gezer's patronage, either to the population of the central coastal plain or to Bit Humri (Finkelstein 1990; Pfoh and Thompson, in this volume).

In regard to ethnic identification of the Galilee during LB and the Iron Age, it is clear that the material culture of the Lower Galilee is closer to that of the Jezreel than to that of the central highlands. Upper Western Galilee is more closely linked to the Lebanon, especially the Biqa' Valley, than to

the Palestinian regions further south. The coastal strip from Tell Keisan to Acre, however, is, culturally and economically, tied to Tyre and Sidon, rather than to the patronage kingdom of Israel in the central hills or even to Bit Humri's successor in Samerina (2016; Hjelm and Thompson 2002).

When we consider ethnicity in the southern hills, we should note that Sennacherib's support of his client in Ekron against Judea's king Hezekiah led to his attack on the towns and villages of Judea in 701 BCE. A massive destruction was created throughout Judea, including the Shephelah's dominant town of Lachish, the former LB competitor to Jerusalem. As a result of Sennacherib's attack, most of Jerusalem's *Hinterland* was lost. The patronage of its villages and towns was given to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza. The deportation of the population of Lachish and the villages in the highlands, the southern Shephelah and the northern Negev transformed the region.

Recovery, including the rebuilding of Lachish and many of the older towns of Judea, around the mid- seventh century, opened the population of the southern hills to a broad integration with the people living in the southern coastal plain of Philistia, the northern Negev and especially the patronage kingdom of Edom. It was this recovery – closely linked as it was to the infiltration and sedentarization of the peoples of the northern Negev and Edom – which found a corresponding expansion in the growth of Jerusalem's population onto the western hill of the city in the mid-seventh century BCE.

In the early sixth century, the southern highlands were attacked once again when Jerusalem and the whole of Judea were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. After Jerusalem and Judea's destruction, the populations of both Edom, which had functioned as a faithful client of Nebuchadnezzar, and the southern steppe migrated gradually into southern Cisjordan. A cultural continuum developed in the South, embracing regions on both sides of the Jordan. The coherence of this development intensified after the capital of Bosra was destroyed by Nabonidus, and a common culture was eventually created across the entire breadth of southern Palestine from the Transjordan to the southern Mediterranean coast (Thompson 1992a, 2013a, 2013b). This broad, symbiotic region, bringing villagers and herders under a single patronage polity, integrated a considerable diverse population of sedentary and non-sedentary peoples. They first found a center in Hebron and later – with greater coherence – in Lachish, which became the prosperous center of first the Persian and, later, the Hellenistic province of Idumea. This radically changed the character of the region, uniting a people who had once formed several distinct polities in the Iron Age.

Jerusalem, however, and the province of Yehud hardly recovered from the Babylonian destruction. Throughout the Persian period, Jerusalem was an impoverished, depopulated religious center. Neither its population nor its political or economic influence in the southern highlands and the Shephelah was recovered until Jerusalem was finally rebuilt by Antiochus III.

In the periods following the destruction of Jerusalem and the massive Assyrian and Babylonian deportations of 701 and 597–582, the eventual consolidation of Lachish at the center of the province of Idumea makes it extremely difficult to speak of the existence of a *Jewish* ethnicity, which somehow brought an ethnic continuity and identity to the population of southern Palestine. The cultural polity of ancient Judea had long ceased to exist, and Jews were not its only heirs. Judaism's rise to religious hegemony has its substantial, historical point of departure in an armed, religiously motivated Maccabean rebellion in Jerusalem, which eventually led to military conquests over Idumea, Samaria and the Galilee, and part of Transjordan. Through the Maccabean rulers' subordination of and, at times, forced allegiance and conversion to Judaism and its temple, religion created an exclusive transformation of Palestine's multi-ethnic population.

## Notes

- 1 I am indebted to Sharif Kanaanah and Ingrid Hjelm for their suggestions and corrections to this chart.
- 2 The ancient names of the towns on the sites of Tell Keisan and Hirbet al 'Ureima are unidentified.

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## **Part 1**

# **Historiography**

- 1.1. Emic and etic historiography and tradition within various disciplines



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# 1 Palestinian historical narrative<sup>1</sup>

*Hamdan Taha*

## Introduction

Palestinian history has been a widely debated arena of ideological struggle over the past century dominated by two competing narrative trends: an indigenous Palestinian or a settler-colonial Zionist perspective. This chapter aims to situate the Palestinian historical narrative in the last century within a dramatically shifting political context.

Such narratives have generally been based on religious and ancient texts as well as on Arab and Islamic sources, such as the works of the fourteenth-century historian Ibn Khaldun, who established a methodological basis for Arab historiography in his “Introduction” to world history (*Muqquadimah*), and the volume on prominent cities by the fifteenth-century Mujir ed-Din al-Hanbali in *The Glorious History of Jerusalem and Hebron*. Many books have been written about shrines in Palestine, particularly in and around Jerusalem. Other sources include accounts by religious pilgrims, eighteenth- and nineteenth-century European explorers and contemporary archaeological surveys and excavations.

Palestinian historiographies from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries have been provided by Abdul Razaq el-Bitar (Syrian), Hasan el-Bureini, Hassan el-Husseini, Khalil el-Muradi, Michael el-Sabbagh and Ibrahim el-Urah. El-Husseini’s work on the notables of Jerusalem in the twelfth century is probably the first modern Palestinian historiography (Abu Amneh 2008: 1–2).

At the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a new generation of Palestinian historians emerged, among whom were Ahmad el-Khalidi, Abdullah Mukhlis, Issa al-Sifri, Mohammad Darwaza, Subhi Yassin, Ihsan el-Nimer, Omar el-Barghouti, Khalil el-Sakakini, Abdullatif Tibawi, Qadri Touqan, Mahmoud el-Abedi, Arif el-Arif, Mustafa el-Dabagh, Tawfiq Cannan and Dimitri Baramki. Although they were without formal training, they used many sources and were often more innovative than their European and American counterparts (Foster 2011: 5–6).

The past four decades have witnessed a growing interest in the documentation of Palestinian historical narratives, which has generally focused on

the Ottoman and British Mandate periods, the 1948 Nakbah and the ensuing era of Palestinian nationalist and revolutionary politics. The Nakbah is the defining event of modern Palestinian history, shaping it as a narrative of survival. The first Palestinian review of historiography was A. Abu Ghazaleh (1971), *Palestinian Historians under the British Mandate*, which details two dominant trends: traditional Islamic and Arabist. T. Khalidi (1981) has reviewed Palestinian historiography from 1900 to 1948 and ascribed the wealth of work from the nineteenth century to the Arab Renaissance (Foster 2011:2–4). From the 1980s, we see many new Palestinian works; e.g. by Rashid el-Khalidi, Walid el-Khalidi, Khalil Athamina, Adel Manaa, A. el-Kayyali, Salim Tamari, Beshara Doumani, Issam Nassar and Maher el-Sharief. El-Sharief (2016) has provided one of the most updated reviews of Palestinian historiography.

The difficulties of excavating the Palestinian past are daunting as the physical and vocal presence of Palestinians has been erased (Doumani 1992).

The first Palestinian historiography of archaeology is D. Baramki's introduction to Palestinian history and architecture (1969; further, Shaath 1987; Ibrahim 1990). The work of Nadia Abu el-Haj (2001), though focusing on Israeli archaeology, should be regarded as a seminal contribution to the history of archaeological work in Palestine. The revival of Palestinian archaeology over the last two decades has been documented, *inter alia*, by the present author (Taha 2008, 2010, 2013). Furthermore, the insights of Keith Whitelam, Thomas Thompson and Edward Said have influenced a whole generation of Palestinian historians and archaeologists.

### **Historiographical work before the Nakbah**

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Palestinian students of the *Nahda* (Renaissance) movement dealt with Western historical and archaeological research. Drawing on history and philology these early studies reflect the new historical awareness of Palestinian intellectuals.

Before the Nakbah, Palestinian historiographical work concerned a wide range of themes. Many books were written on world history (e.g. Ruhi 1922; Thibyan 1923; Dahdah 1926; Harami 1935; el-Sabagh 1935; Ziadeh 1945–1946 and Tamimi 1943). Arab history and, in particular, the history of Bilad al-Sham were major themes in Palestinian historiography as reflected in the works of M. Darwaza (1887–1984) and D. al-Miqdadi (1898–1961), who were among the leading authors of textbooks in the Arab World in the 1920s and early 1930s (Corbett 2014: 122). Their books drew on a variety of available resources, enabling both national and pan-national narratives. Darwaza (1923, 1934) wrote the first modern history of Arab nations in the 1920s and 1930s, narrating the origins of the Semitic peoples and the rise of Islam. M. al-Abedi (1938) and S. Hathwah (1945–1947) wrote textbooks for elementary schools in Palestine. General books on Arab history and culture were authored by Adil Zu'ayter (1945). Ahmad Khalifa and Radi Abd al-Hadi co-authored

the *History of Arab Kingdoms* (1946) and Khalil Totah wrote two books in English and Arabic about the history of Arab Education (1926, 1933).

The Arab *Nahda* and the relationship between Arab nationalism and Islam were primary themes for Antonius (1938), Haykal (1943), Ziadeh (1945, 1946) and Darwaza (1948–1952). Other aspects of Arab history and heritage, including Arab historiography (Ziadeh 1943, 1945), were addressed by a number of Palestinian historians.

The work of J.H. Breasted, in particular, his 1916 book *Ancient Times* (Arabic 1926), strongly influenced a generation of Arab and Palestinian historians (Corbett 2014: 121–122). Breasted contended that Arabia was the ancestral cradle of all Semites, who shed their Bedouin ways and developed urban-based civilizations across the Middle East. In this narrative, Hebrew nomads wandered from Arabia into an urban Palestinian society, originally established by the Semites of Canaan. Breasted thus provided post-war Arab intellectuals a pan-national origin, predating the narrative deployed by the Zionist movement and giving unity to ancient and modern Arabs, including Arab Jews. Echoing Breasted, Palestinian historians traced Arab origins to Semites, emerging from the Arabian Peninsula. Corbett noted that in 1919, Muhib al-Din al-Khatib published a synthesis of this “Semitic Wave Theory” in a Damascus newspaper. In 1920, an editorial in the Palestinian newspaper *al-Quds al-Sharif* differentiated between Palestinian Jews, as part of the community, and European Jews, as outsiders.

Arab historians, after the First World War, were combating colonialism, especially Zionism in a number of books about the history and geography of Palestine and Syria (e.g. al-Sabagh 1923, 1944; al-Khoury 1930; Kattan 1945). Between 1908 and 1914, Palestinian authors began to write about the history of Zionism (e.g. Najib Nassar, Ruhi al-Khatib, Issa al-Isa, Bulus Abud and Saadi Bsisu). The concept of *Ard-al Muqaddassa* (Holy Land) was introduced into Palestinian historical writing by Khalil Baydas, while the issue of orientalism and the relationship between East and West were addressed by Rawhi el-Khalidi and Bandali al-Juzi (Khalidi, T. 1981: 70).

### ***History of Palestine***

The historical and geographical concept of Palestine was addressed by local historians at the end of the Ottoman period. One of the first general studies on the history of Palestine was Rafiq al-Tamimi and Ali Bahjat, *Wilayat Bayrut (The Wilayat of Beirut)*, 1916. Khalil Totah and Habib Khoury co-authored *Geography of Palestine* in 1923, and Omer S. el-Bargouthi and Khalil Totah co-authored *Tarikh Filastin (The History of Palestine)* in 1922. Being one of the first Arabic works of its kind, this book is also the first modern synthesis of the history of Palestine, Drawing on Muslim, Christian and Jewish sources, set within a detailed pan-Semitic narrative of common origins (Corbett 2014: 121). It was used as a textbook throughout the Arab world.

Other history books about Palestine were published by the Library of Jerusalem, *Maktabat al-Quds* (1934), Akram Zeetar and Darwish el-Muqdadi (1935), and for elementary schools by Ali al-Shureiqi and Sidqi Hamdi (1949). A number of historians contributed textbooks (e.g. al-Abedi 1943; Darwaza 1936; Ziadeh 1943, 1947; Anabtawi and Ghunaim 1943). Others contributed to thematic issues as historical geography (Marmarji 1948), Islamic history (Jawzi 1928, Tibawi 1928) and the Crusader period (Tamimi 1945). Ahmad S. Khalidi wrote an eponymous biographical account about *Men of Governance and Administration in Palestine* (A. Khalidi 1966), preceded by a work on the time of the al-Rashidun Khalifate to the fourth-century A.H. (A. Khalidi 1947). He also edited a series of medieval books and manuscripts (1946) and wrote one of the first books on archaeology in Palestine (1943).

The contemporary history of Palestine was a primary focus of early Palestinian historians (e.g. Sakakini 1925; al-Dajani 1936; Aqel, Najm and al-Nas 1939; al-Sifri 1937; Haykal 1937; Ghandur 1938; al-Bitar 1947). Tawfiq Canaan wrote two books on the Palestine problem during the Palestinian Uprising: *The Palestine Arab Cause* (1936a) and *Conflict in the Land of Peace* (1936b). In the later book, Canaan refuted Zionist claims that Jewish immigration was benefitting the Palestinian people, and in the former work, published in English, Arabic and French, he described British policy during the 1936 Uprising as “a destructive campaign against the Arabs with the ultimate aim of exterminating them from their country” (Canaan 1936a; Nashef 2002).

### ***Historiography of Palestinian towns and villages***

Another concern in pre-1948 historical works, motivated by the creeping erasure of Palestinian land by Zionist settlement, was the historiography of towns and villages. T. Khalidi (1981: 68) includes among the early group of Palestinian historians of the topographical genre Asaad Mansour (1862–1941), Arif el-Arif (1892–1973) and Ihasn al-Nimr (1905–1985). One should also mention Abdullah Mukhlis (1878–1947), the director of the Department of Awqaf in Jerusalem, who dealt with Joseph’s Tomb in Nablus and the shrine of Amrou Ibn el-Aas, while also writing histories of al-Aqsa Mosque, Safad, and Bethlehem.

Some of the first histories of Jerusalem were written by Khalil Sarkis (1874) and Asper al-Ghareib (1918). Khalil Totah and Bulus Shihadah (1920) wrote a series of archaeological guides for Jerusalem. Mansour wrote about the history of Nazareth and Mount Tabor (Foster 2011:58). Jamil Bahri published a book about the history of Haifa (1922), Arif al-Shareif wrote about the history of Hebron and Jerusalem (1939), N. Makhoul (1941) wrote a monograph on Acre and D. Baramki (1953) wrote on Hisham’s palace in Jericho. Arif el-Arif wrote a series of books about Palestinian cities: Gaza (1943), Askalan (1943), Bir es-Seba (1934) and Jerusalem (1947, 1951). A guide for Palestine was provided by Stephan and Afif (1942). In 1927,

Mikhael N. al-Akkawi published a book about Daher el-Umar, who was the eighteenth-century ruler of Akka and Safad. Another illustrative example of a regional historian is Ihsan el-Nimer, whose *History of the Nablus Mountain and Balka* (1938) is a meticulously documented, popular and multicultural history. We may also include Machareous (1904), Saksak (1928) and Shihadah (1925) on the history of churches in Palestine; M. Yunis on al-Husseini's socio-economic history (1946) and Ilyas Marmura's pioneering 1936 study on the Samaritans. Noteworthy is also a series of historical and theological dictionaries compiled by some authors.

### ***The first generation of Palestinian archaeologists***

The first generation of Palestinian archaeologists and ethnographers emerged in the early twentieth century, among them Yusra, Dimitri Baramki, Naim Machouly, Salem K. el-Husseini, Jalil Baramki and N.G. Nassar. N. Machouly studied at the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and was appointed Inspector in the Department of Antiquities from 1920 to 1948. He excavated several sites, including Isfia, Kh. el-Sunbara, Kh. Koraza and Jish, and conducted restorations at Qalat el-Qaren (Montfort). He published his reports in the *QDAP* and authored *A Guide of Acre* (1941). Visiting his sons in Beirut in 1948, he was unable to return to his village, Kafr Yasif and he died in Beirut in 1976.

Al-Husseini, Inspector of Antiquities in the Jerusalem area, left behind a series of published archaeological reports (al-Husseini 1935, 1938) as well as unpublished reports, including an article on the excavation of a rock-cut burial cave at Beit Nattif in 1945. It was published later (Zissu and Klein 2011: 196–206) without proper acknowledgement. Nassar (1948) published a widely quoted catalogue of “The Arabic Mints in Palestine and Trans-Jordan”.

Two archaeologists of particular note are the Baramki brothers. Jamil Baramki served a few months in 1939 as Keeper of the Archaeological Museum. He drew into the discipline his younger brother Dimitri, who is frequently called the first Palestinian archaeologist. Dimitri Baramki started his career as a field archaeologist in the Department of Antiquities in Palestine and was promoted Inspector of Antiquities in 1929. In 1934 he earned his B.A. degree in Archaeology from the University of London and his PhD there in 1953. He excavated numerous sites across Palestine, including Tell el-Hassan, Telul Abu Alayeq and the Umayyad palace of Khirbet el-Mafjar in Jericho, which was the subject of his pioneering doctoral dissertation. After the Nakbah, Baramki worked as acting curator of the Palestine Archaeological Museum (1948–1949), before returning to Jericho with the American School of Oriental Research until 1951, when he joined the American University of Beirut (Whitcomb 2013; Whitcomb and Taha 2013).

The involvement of Palestinian women in archaeological fieldwork began with some of the first excavations in Palestine. Although their names did

not appear in reports, photos show women in the excavations of archaeological sites such as Tell Taannek, Tell el-Sultan, Tell Balata and Gezer. Between 1928 and 1935, the cave of Shuqba and Mount Carmel Shuqba were excavated by the British archaeologist Dorothy Garrod, who worked with a team composed primarily of local Palestinian women (Garrod and Beate, 1937; Garrod 1942). The very first Palestinian female archaeologist we know was Yusra, from either Ijzim or Jaba' in the Haifa region. Both villages were demolished and depopulated in 1948. Yusra became the most expert of the women employed by Garrod and was appointed forewoman. She worked alongside Jacquetta Hawkes and Kitson Clark. In 1932, whilst working at Tabun Cave, she found a tooth which turned out to be part of a human skull, known as (*Tabun I*), belonging to a female adult Neanderthal. Her finding was one of the most important human fossil discoveries ever, yet her lasting contribution to early archaeology went unacknowledged and her story forgotten, until it was taken up recently by Pamela Smith (Callander and Smith 2007).

### ***Palestine Oriental Society and ethnographic studies***

The Palestine Oriental Society was established in 1920 with the assistance of the American Assyriologist, A.T. Clay. In 1932 there were 191 members, only 10 of which were Palestinian. The number of Palestinians never exceeded 19 (Glock 1999: 309). The Society sponsored *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society (JPOS)*. Although the Palestinian contribution to the journal was very strong in the first years, it declined in the 1930s. Of 335 articles published in the *JPOS* from 1921 to 1948, only fifty were by Palestinian scholars, mostly by Canaan and Stephan.

At the turn of the twentieth century, a circle of Palestinian intellectuals based in Jerusalem embraced the figure of the peasant as the soul of the nation. Tawfiq Canaan, Omar el-Barghouti, Stephan H. Stephan, Elias Haddad and Arif el-Arif were all active in recording native Palestinian culture and peasantry, concerned that this culture was under threat from the forces of modernity (Tamari 2004). El-Barghouti contributed several studies on Bedouin law and common law to the *JPOS*. Among his books is *Al-Qda ind al Badu fi Filastin*, 1929. Another member of the *JPOS* circle, Stephan, was the librarian and curator of the first Palestinian museum, which made significant contributions to the study of peasant life. He worked extensively with literary and oral traditions, comparing contemporary Palestinian folk songs about love to the Song of Songs in the Bible (Corbett 2014: 122). Deploying a holistic vision of culture, they understood Palestinian culture to include not only Arab but also Canaanite, Philistine, Hebraic, Nabatean, and Syrian-Aramaic culture. Haddad made significant contributions to the study of blood feuds, peasant factions and pedagogy, while el-Arif co-authored an ethnographic book in English with Harold W. Tilley (el-arif and Tilley 1944).

Tawfiq Canaan (1882–1964) established himself as a well-versed researcher in the field of ethnography and Palestinian studies. He was an active member of the *JPOS* from its beginning and came to folklore through epidemiology (T. Khalidi 1981: 65; Nashef 2002; Tamari 2004). Canaan’s work linked folk and religious traditions to the landscape and all its components, such as water, fauna, homes and monuments. He produced more than fifty articles in English and German on folklore and superstition and more than thirty-seven medical studies. He knew researchers such as Bauer, Dalman, Granqvist and Albright and portrayed the situation at the turn of the twentieth century as “the European civilization, which is bringing to Palestine many a blessing, is eradicating at the same time beautiful and sound moral principles” (Canaan 1927: v; T. Khalidi 1981: 65). With the progress of the Zionist project under the British Mandate, Canaan and his colleagues Stephan, and al-Barghouti felt a need to defend Arab culture and challenge Zionist attempts to highlight only Jewish antiquities (T. Khalidi 1981: 65). Canaan was interested in biblical studies, particularly the Old Testament, as one of the main sources for his studies of past and present Palestinian cultures. He shared Dalman’s idea that one cannot understand the Old Testament without studying Palestinian folklore. His articles (Bourmaud 2012) appeared alongside those of English and Jewish writers, most notably Eliezer Ben-Yehuda’s and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi’s. His belief in the survival of ancient ethnographic features in Palestine was not guided by a desire to invoke a right of antiquity in legitimizing the presence of Palestinian Arabs (Tamari 2004). While Ben-Zvi looked specifically for traces of Jewish presence, Canaan was bent on underlying continuities. His main referential corpus was the Bible, but he also compared practices in the Quran. His work, like that of Dalman, exemplified close and intimate connections between Palestinian and Biblical traditions. In 1948, Canaan lost his house and his library in Jerusalem, as well as three manuscripts ready for publication (Mantoura 1998).

### ***The Mandate Department of Antiquities and the Palestine Archaeological Museum***

The Department of Antiquities was established in 1920 and the Palestine Museum of Antiquities, displaying the collection of the Ottoman Museum in Jerusalem, was inaugurated in 1921 in a building called “Way House” (Laurent and Taskomur 2013: 30–32). The politics of the Department mainly fell in line with British policy to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine and affirm Jewish presence there. Although Palestinian Muslims, Christians and Jews worked together in the Department (Hallote and Joffe 2002: 86), only a small fraction of Palestinians were entrusted with senior positions (Corbett 2014: 126).

The building of the Palestine Archaeological Museum that opened in 1938 was enabled by a grant of 2 million USD, given to the Department of

Antiquities in 1928 by John D. Rockefeller. The new museum collection was intended to include material that shed light on the history of humankind in the land of Palestine (Cohen-Hattab and Shoval 2015: 53). Between 1922 and 1935 the British administration encouraged the creation of a museum for Islamic Art as well as one for Jewish Art, aiming clearly to formalize two separate narratives of one shared history and culture from both groups. In 1948 the Department of Antiquities ceased to exist and the Palestine Archaeological Museum was handed over to an international trust between 1948 and 1966. Its last curator, Assem Barghouti, was in the museum with a number of employees when it fell into the hands of Israeli military forces in 1967. He recorded its last moments before the Israeli occupation of Jerusalem (al-Barghouti 2012: 34–59).

### **Palestinian historical narrative in the post-Nakbah era, 1948–1967**

Three new entities were established on the ruins of the Mandatory Department of Antiquities: the Israel Department of Antiquities controlled 72% of Palestine, which became Israel, while the Jordanian Department of Antiquities controlled the West and East Banks, and the Gaza Strip fell under Egyptian Administration. There was no independent formal body to care for Palestinian antiquities and many Palestinian archaeologists and historians found themselves in exile.

#### ***The Israeli Department of Antiquities and the destruction of Palestinian heritage***

In 1948, the name of “Palestine” was replaced by “Israel” and approximately one million Palestinians were expelled from the areas proclaimed as belonging to the state of Israel. A campaign of ethnic cleansing involved the destruction of more than 600 towns and villages. This operation is now acknowledged as ethnic cleansing and cultural genocide (Benvenisti 2002; Pappe 2006).

The Israel Department of Antiquities was founded in 1948 as part of the Israeli Ministry of Labor and later transferred to the Ministry of Education and Culture (Hallote and Joffe 2002: 86). The new Department sought to further cooperation with international organizations and promoted itself as a progressive body. The American archaeologist P. Delougaz testified in 1954 that “the Antiquities Law of Israel is the most liberal of any Near Eastern country, not only fair but most generous in division of antiquities” (Kletter 2006: 93–94). The main task of Israeli archaeology was to demonstrate the connection of Israeli settlers to the land of their putative ancestors (Hallote and Joffe 2002: 86) and establish the historicity of ancient Israel in Palestine (Corbett 2014: 18). Excavations such as those at Masada served to connect the Israeli present with a mythic past (Zerubavel 1995). Native

Palestinians were viewed as members of an alien culture to be removed. The work of expulsion and destruction was partially documented by some Israeli archaeologists. Meron Rapoport writes that “during the 1950’s, the nascent state set about destroying historical sites left behind by other cultures, particularly Muslims” (Rapoport 2007), equating Palestinian culture with “Muslim” in Zionist discourse.

Only a small part of such destruction occurred in battle. Most took place in later years and decades (Rapoport 2007; Heacock 2008: 73), led by David Ben-Gurion within a policy of expulsion and destruction. Moshe Dayan, an army officer, involved in the destruction of Palestinian heritage, including the destruction of the historic core of the coastal city of Majdal, infamously admitted “there is no single settlement that was not established in the place of a former Arab village” (Heacock 2008: 72). The Fatimid shrine of Mashhad Nabi Hussein, dating to the eleventh century CE and associated with the tradition of the burial of Hussein Bin Ali, the grandson of the Prophet Mohammad, was blown up by the Israeli army in July 1950, as part of a broader operation that razed mosques in Yavneh and Isdud (Rapoport 2007). When in August 1948 the army demolished ancient Tiberias with its Jewish heritage, synagogues were destroyed as well as mosques (Kletter 2006: 57–63; Rapoport 2007; Heacock 2008: 73).

There is ample documentation to show that the destruction of Palestinian cultural heritage was deliberate and systematic, prompted by acute political sensitivities. In a letter written on the instruction of Foreign Minister, Golda Meir, and addressed to the Head of the Department of Antiquities, Avraham Dotan wrote, “(I)n the past 9 years, many ruins have been cleared. However, those remains now stand out even more prominently in contrast to the new landscape. Ruins that are irreparable or have no archaeological value should be cleared” (Kletter 2006: 57; Rapoport 2007). The justification for such crimes was often psychological and emotional; “(T)hese ruins were causing a depressing impression of a once-living civilization” (Rapoport 2007; see Kletter 2006: 58). Thefts of antiquities followed the establishment of the state of Israel, including the museum collection at Caesarea, rare archaeological collections at the Notre Dame Monastery in Jerusalem, antiquities shops in Jaffa and Jerusalem and a University of Chicago site at Tell Megiddo, which Israeli soldiers looted. The levelling of villages began as the fighting ended, with the destruction of villages near Tiberias and Mount Tabor, Zior’in, Umm Khaled and Al-Muzeirra.

Under growing pressure and after great damage to Palestinian heritage, including hundreds of villages, Ben-Gurion agreed in 1950 to establish a government committee for sacred and historical sites and monuments. The committee stated in a report in 1951 that certain sites had to be preserved as “whole units” including sites in Acre, quarters in Safad, small sections of Jaffa and Tiberias, Ramle and Lod and a few sections of Tarshiha (Mayer and Pinkerfeld 1950; Kletter 2006; Rapoport 2007). Nevertheless, destruction continued without abatement. In 1954, the historic cities were

demolished in full compliance with the Israeli Law of Antiquities, pursuant to the British Law of 1929, which stipulated that only buildings built before 1700 were to be considered “antiquities” and protected.

### **Palestinian narratives: the Nakbah generation**

The expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland has been the defining event of Palestinian historical narratives. Among the Palestinian historians of the Nakbah generation, born and raised in Palestine, we may include several of those mentioned earlier in this chapter: Darwaza, el-Dabagh, A. el-Arif, T. Canaan, D. Baramki, Ziadeh, I. Abbas and Tibawi in addition to Sami Hadawi, Yusef Sayegh, Anis Sayegh, Irfan Arif Shahid and Ibrahim Abu Lughod. They were all active on the eve of the Nakbah and most gave witness to the catastrophe and were themselves forced into exile. Collectively, their work was encyclopaedic in its vision and played a critical, though sometimes overlooked, role in preserving the historical memory and cultural identity of the Palestinian people. Hadawi served as an Official Land Valuer and Inspector of Tax Assessments under the British mandatory government. He devoted his life to studying Arab losses of land and property during the Nakbah, documenting the deliberate nature of the effort to expel Palestinian Arabs from their land and seize land and properties, while lying about the victims of this policy. Hadawi dedicated his book *Palestine: Loss of a Heritage* to his wife Nora, “who died in exile, deprived of home and property”. In his preface, he quoted the Gospel of John 8:32: “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (Hadawi 1963: 1).

Hadawi’s contemporary, al-Arif, produced a long list of historical and ethnographic works, among which were *Al-Nakbah and the Lost Paradise (1956–1961)* and *A Detailed History of Jerusalem (1961)*, in which he traced the history of the Holy City. Al-Arif undertook ethnographic research on Bedouin tribes (1934, 1944). His home in Bir al-Sabe’ was turned into an Israeli museum after the Nakbah (Qleibo 2017).

Darwaza wrote over thirty books on different aspects of Palestinian life, including, in the late 1920s, the first modern history of Arab nations. His research was wide ranging, covering the Palestinian cause, but also the history of Arab countries. His work included the history of Jews in Palestine and Arabia (1969), through which he debated Zionist claims on Palestine. In his memoirs, describing the city of Nablus in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he traced social transformations with an exhaustive description of his hometown, its mosques, residential quarters, orchards, industries and inhabitants (Choueiri 2001).

Born in Jaffa in 1898, el-Dabagh is known for his encyclopaedic work *Biladuna Filistin* in eleven volumes. One volume deals with the general history and geography of Palestine and the remainder presents the local history of Palestinian towns, villages and regions and history textbooks about

Palestine. He rooted Canaanite culture in Arab tribes, who migrating from the Arabian Peninsula established urban centres in the region, thereby providing an ethnic connection between Arabs and the land. The prophet Ibrahim provided a spiritual connection between Palestine and Islam through his son Ismail (Corbett 2014: 173–176). El-Dabbagh emphasized that Israelite polities had never controlled the whole region, that their rule never exceeded seventy years and that they were integrated into other peoples of Palestine. El-Hindawi used the same narrative in his *History of Palestine*, referencing Breasted's account of an urban Canaanite community invaded by wandering Hebrews (Corbett 2014: 175–176). Tibawi wrote about many aspects of Palestinian, Syrian, and Jerusalemite history (1956, 1969a, 1969b). Tuqan (1941) wrote about Arab scientific heritage to utilize heritage as the vehicle of progress (Abu Ghazaleh 1972: 116). Irfan Arif Shahid, a prominent Palestinian historian of the Byzantine period, focused on the relationship between the empire and Arabs of the fourth–sixth centuries CE. Nicola Ziadeh, a specialist in the history of Syria and North Africa, published more than forty books in Arabic dealing with Arab and Islamic culture. The literary historian Ihasn Abbas was acknowledged as a custodian of Arabic language and culture, whose scholarship dominated the Middle East (Conrad 2005).

Archaeology preserved the cultural identity of Palestinians in shifting geopolitical settings. Following the Nakbah, some archaeologists chose to live outside Palestine, but a group also gathered around the Palestine Archaeological Museum. D. Baramki returned for a short period to Jericho with the American School to excavate Khirbet el-Nitla and Tulul Abu al-'Alayeq. The two Inspectors of Antiquities at the Mandate Department of Antiquities, Naim Machouly and Salem el-Husseini, moved to Lybia. Among female archaeologists, Najwa al-Husseini participated with Pritchard in the Tell el-Sa'idya excavation in Jordan in the 1960s. Zeinab al-Husseini worked as the first curator of the Ethnographic Museum in Jerusalem, established by Hind el-Husseini in 1960. Yasmin Zahran worked in United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and founded the Higher Institute of Islamic Archaeology at Al-Quds University and left a series of historical novellas for posterity.

### **The historical narrative between the 1967 occupation and the 1994 Oslo Accords**

In 1967, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza were occupied by Israel, ensuring Zionist control over the whole of Western Palestine in addition to the Golan Heights and Sinai. In occupying Jerusalem, Israel seized the Palestine Archaeological Museum and its objects, including the Dead Sea Scrolls. The premises of the Palestine Department of Antiquities in East Jerusalem came under occupation of the Israeli Department of Antiquities and Museums (Hallote and Joffe 2002: 88). Most Palestinian employees of

the museum and the Department of Antiquities were fired. Efforts to support the Palestinian historical narrative were continued by the Palestine Research Centre in Beirut, academic and non-governmental organizations in the Occupied Territories and Palestinian historians in the diaspora.

### ***The Palestine Research Centre***

Following the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the Palestine Research Centre was formed in Beirut to attend to the demanding tasks of preserving historical memory and national identity. Its main focus concentrated on social and political aspects of Palestinian history. It was founded by Professor Fayez Sayegh in 1965 and published in *The Journal of Palestine Studies: A Quarterly on Palestinian Affairs and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, with assistance from the University of Kuwait.

The Centre was dedicated to documenting and preserving the history of the Palestinians. It focused on the pre-1948 period as well as on the documentation of stories of Palestinian refugees and the revolutionary movement through the collection of archival documents and autobiographies (Amour 2011). After the death of Fayez Sayegh in 1980, Anis Sayegh (born in Tiberias in 1931) was appointed Director and chaired the Centre and the Institute of Palestine Studies. He became the driving force behind *The Palestinian Encyclopaedia* (Amour 2011). The Centre commissioned Dimitri Baramki to write an introduction to the archaeology of Palestine in which Baramki bemoaned the long-standing European “emphasis on the archaeology of the Old Testament period at the expense of other periods unrelated to the Bible” (Baramki 1969: iii). As noted by Baramki, 400 years of Old Testament history was treated as the only important period in the history of Palestine, while 6,000 years of settled life, prior to the establishment of the United Kingdom of Israel and Judah, was regarded as a preparatory era for the final triumph of the state of Israel (Baramki 1969: iv). Baramki pointed out that it is apparent from a survey of archaeology in Palestine that the land was the home of many divergent peoples from the appearance of *Homo sapiens* in the thirtieth millennium BCE to the twentieth century CE. In spite of various invasions from different nations and races, there always remained a residue of the original inhabitants of the country. In no instance was the indigenous population of the country annihilated. They were absorbed by those who settled in the country (Baramki 1969: 239).

In Baramki’s view, history had often forced Palestinians to change their identity and creed and a Palestinian entity has endured, which should be preserved as belonging to all Palestinians, be they Jews, Christians or Moslems. He felt that a state such as Israel, based on the tenets of one faith, is inconceivable in the twentieth century. Just as American, English and French Jews, living in predominately Christian countries, enjoy the same rights as other citizens Jews should not hold a privileged position over their Moslem or Christian compatriots in Palestine (Baramki 1969: 242).

Other foci of the Research Centre were ethnography and toponomy. The best illustrative example is provided by the work of Yusra Arnieta. Her book *Al-Funun el-Shabiya fi Filastin (Palestinian Folklore)* recorded and documented various aspects of Palestinian heritage, including popular songs, music, customs, traditions, festivals, social and religious seasons and costumes, sayings, proverbs and featured brief descriptions of architectural heritage. The Centre also played a great role in conducting research on social, economic, political and educational aspects of Palestinian society. This circle in the diaspora included Mahmoud el-Ghoul, an expert in ancient Semitic languages, and Kamel Asali, a historian of Jerusalem, who wrote a series of significant books about aspects of Jerusalem's history and culture in the Islamic period (1981–1990).

Another important research forum is the independent Institute for Palestine Studies (IPS), established in Beirut in 1963. Its main concern is analysing and documenting Palestinian affairs and the Arab-Israeli conflict, publishing more than 600 books as monographs and documentary collections in English Arabic and French as well as scholarly journals: *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *Jerusalem Quarterly* and *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filistiniyyah* (<http://www.palestine-studies.org/>).

### ***Palestinian universities in the occupied territories***

Archaeology was introduced at Birzeit College in the early 1970s by Paul Lapp, director of the Albright Institute in Jerusalem. During his decade-long stay in Jerusalem, he had become sympathetic to the viewpoint of the native population (Sherrard 2011:160). Lapp's courses developed into a teaching programme and the establishment of a Department of Archaeology. In 1976, A. Glock, director of the Albright Institute, came under the wing of the Lutheran Church in America, to help Palestinians develop archaeological skills necessary to "dig-up" and understand their own past rather than rely unduly on foreign and Israeli archaeologists (Glock 1999: 302–323). The Department undertook the first archaeological fieldwork by Palestinians since 1967 and conducted a series of salvage excavations at Tell Jenin and Tell Taannek (1976–1986), with the objective of securing training for students of archaeology.

In the 1980s the Department trained a group of Palestinian students who play an important role in developing academic programmes in archaeology and public sector intervention in the field. Among these are H. Salem, N. Jubeh, H. Bearat, A. Melekian, M. Jarallah, A.Yahyia, Gh. Ziadeh, H. Nur-el-Din, M. Hizmawi, O. Abed Rabo, W. Shareif, I. Sarie, S. Houdehieh and the present author. Most obtained MA and PhD degrees in archaeology from Jordanian, Egyptian and European universities.

In 1994, Khalid Nashef was appointed director of the Institute at Birzeit University, where he rebuilt the Institute, established its library and published *The Journal of Palestinian Archaeology*, producing four volumes between 2000 and 2002 before ceasing publication.

The Institute's first excavation was carried out at Khirbet Bir Zeit under the direction of Nashef and Abed-Rabo. It excavated later at Khirbet Syeh, Tell el-Tell and Kh. Askariyeh. In 1992, the Institute of Higher Islamic Studies was established by Y. Zahran at Al-Quds University, offering an MA programme. The university also established a basic programme in archaeology and conservation of historic buildings. A series of excavations were conducted at Kh. Um el-Sharayet, Tell el-Tell, Kh. el-Tireh and Kh. el-Carmel. Yusuf El-Natshe, the director of Islamic Waqf's Department of Archaeology in Jerusalem, co-authored a major work on the history of Jerusalem entitled *The Architecture of Jerusalem*, edited by Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand (2000). Other archaeological programmes were offered at al-Najah, Hebron and the Islamic University in Gaza. In this way, Palestinian universities have contributed to educating a new generation of Palestinian archaeologists.

### ***Palestinian narrative inside the Green Line (Israel)***

Inside what became known in 1948 as Israel, the official state narrative denied the existence of a Palestinian people and its history. The new state imposed this historical narrative in schools and media. The day of the Palestinian Nakbah was declared the day of Independence. In this context, a number of Palestinian historians worked to preserve the identity of Palestinians, remaining under Israeli rule, who were labelled by the state as "Arabs" or "Israeli Arabs". A new generation of historians also emerged, comprising scholars who were born in Israel and lived in and studied at Israeli universities. Among these are Emile Touma, Khalil Athamina, Suleiman el-Bashir, Muhsen Yusef, Sharif Kanaana, Shukri 'Arraf, Adel Manaa, Nur Masalha, Johnny Mansour, Musleh Kanaana and many others.

Touma, born in Haifa in 1919, was a Palestinian politician and historian who wrote fourteen books about the history of Palestine. Demonstrating the cultural continuity of the Palestinian people on their land, he worked to refute Zionist myths of Palestine as an eternal, trans-historical homeland of Jews, whose return made it a home to no other people. Athamina wrote his thesis on the history of Palestine during the early Islamic period and Manaa specialized in the Ottoman and contemporary history of Palestine, Jerusalem and the Arab-Israeli conflict and its narratives (1986, 2003, 2016). Another indigenous historian of international reputation of the post-Nakbah era is Masalha. Perhaps best known for documenting Zionist planning and preparation for the ethnic cleansing of 1948, Masalha's interests cover Palestinian historiography, the Bible and Zionism, Holy Land toponomy, colonialism, subaltern studies and the history of Palestine (Masalha 1992–2018).

A series of village histories were written by Palestinian historians inside the Green Line. Among these are 'Arraf, a geographer and historian who wrote about the history of Kawakab Abu al-Hayja, among other works

(1993, 2004); Hadad, who wrote about the Village of al-Bassah (1985); and Aqel and Masarwah, who wrote about Taybet Bani Sa'b (1989). Their works are discussed by Doumani in his 1992 article "Rediscovering Palestine: Writing Palestinians into History". Sahera Derbas documented, through film, the history of three villages in the Haifa region, Tirat Haifa, Al-Barwa and Salma, using oral history and interviews with the displaced inhabitants of those villages as a way to preserve the memory of the places.

Palestinian ethnographic studies inside the Green Line are represented by the major works of Sharif Kanaana, who wrote about the social history and ethnography of Palestine. He was the initiator of the Demolished Villages Project in Palestine, and the editor of the Palestinian ethnographic journal *Al-Turath wa al-Mujtama* (*Heritage and Society*) for many years.

In the last three decades, a new generation of indigenous archaeologists has also taken up the study of archaeology inside the Green Line. Among these are Mahmoud Hawari, Elias Khamis, Kamil Sari, Tawfiq Daadle, Walid Atrash, Raffi' Abu Rayyan, Hamoudi Khalayleh and Hana Aboud. In 2018, for the first time in the history of the state of Israel, an archaeological journal in Arabic was issued, *Hajar el-Zawiya* (Corner Stone), edited by Atrash and managed by a committee of mainly Arab scholars. This journal provides a new forum for archaeological research in Arabic and may be taken as an indirect acceptance of local narratives after seven decades of denial.

### ***Memorial histories: documentation of demolished villages***

In the mid-1980s, nearly four decades after the Nakbah, an important part of the local historical narrative was represented by memory books about demolished villages and towns, based on oral history. These records focus on available documents (maps and photos) and consist generally of a description of the village, its topography, social lineage, education, culture, etc. The aim was to draw a mental map of the villages before the Nakbah and preserve their historical memory. The books were authored by a range of institutions, associations and individuals. A major documentary work on Palestinian demolished towns and villages is Walid Khalidi (ed.) 1992, *All That Remains*. It is a multidisciplinary account by more than thirty researchers describing in detail more than 400 Palestinian villages destroyed during the 1948 war.

For her book *Palestinian Village Histories*, Rochelle Davis (2007, 2010) collected and examined over 120 village books and conducted interviews and ethnographic research in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Israel. Palestinians have since the Nakbah carried their village names, memories and possessions with them into the diaspora, transforming their lost past into local histories in the form of "village memorial books", recounting family histories, cultural traditions and the details of village life. Treating the memorial books as collective autobiographies, Davis explores how such

history is written and contested as well as the roles that Palestinians' conception of their past play in contemporary life.

Examples of such memory books are those written about six villages in the Jerusalem area: on *Ein Karim* by Attiya Attiya, *Lifta* and *Beit Mahseer* by Othaman Saleh, *Deir Abban* by Abdul Aziz Abu Hadba and *Al-Walajah* by Aziz Abu Khiara. Mohammad Said, Musleh Ruman and Ibrahim Awadelah each wrote a book about the village of Soba. In the same vein, Kamal Abdulfatah co-authored with Wolf-Dieter Hütteneroth *The Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria* (1977), and Salman Abu Sitta, who dedicated himself to the mapping of historic Palestine and advocate for the Palestinian "Right of Return", supervised *The Atlas of Palestine: 1917–1966* (Abu Sitta 2010).

Another documentation project of Palestinian demolished villages was initiated, supervised and edited by Sharif Kanaana at *The Center of Documentation and Research* of Birzeit University from 1985. The series, entitled *Palestinian Demolished Villages*, featured an ethnographic collection of photos of villages which were demolished by Israel between 1948 and 1952. Thirteen studies were published under the direction of Kanaana and seven by his successor Saleh Abduljawad, a historian at Birzeit University.

### ***Ethnographic museums and revival of ethnographic studies***

The legacy of early Palestinian ethnography continued after the Nakbah in works of Yusra Jouhariah, Fayez el-Ghoul, Hani el-Ammad, Omar Sarisi, Rushdi el-Ashhab, Nimer Sirhan, Salim Mubayyid, Musa Alloush, Widad Qawar, Hanan Munayyer and Maha Saca. Their works represent a continuation of more than a century of ethnographic research by T. Canaan, Stephan, Dalman and Granqvist. The first ethnographic museum was established in Jerusalem in 1960 by Hind el-Husseini. Zeinab el-Husseini was its first curator, while Najwa el-Husseini collected artefacts. The Museum of Beituna el-Talhami in Bethlehem was established by the Arab Women's Union in Bethlehem. The charitable society of Iansh el-Usra in el-Bireh was established by Samiha Khalil in 1965. A research centre and a periodical, *Al-Turath wa al-Mujtama'a (Heritage and Society)*, was issued in 1974. The publication programme included a series of occasional studies on different aspects of Palestinian society. The journal served as a primary forum for ethnographic and sociological research over the last five decades, with over sixty volumes published so far, involving researchers such as Abdullatif el-Barghouti, Sharif Kanaana, Nabil Alqam and Abdulaziz Abu Hadba. Some classical Palestinian ethnographic work has also been translated and published in the journal. The work was supplemented by an ethnographic exhibition at the centre's museum.

In 1996, the Tawfiq Canaan Museum was established at Birzeit University. The exhibition and museum catalogue was prepared by Nashef, Vera Tamari, Leila Mantoura, Wissam Abdullah and Gisela Helmicke

(Nashef 1998). In the last decade, three main publications were produced: Hanan K. Munayyer, *Traditional Palestinian Costume*, 2011; Widad Kawar, *The Threads of Identity*, 2015; and Ishaq al-Hroub *Atlas of Palestinian Rural Heritage*, 2016.

### **Revival of Palestinian archaeology, 1994–present**

In 1992, following the Madrid Conference, a symposium was organized by the Arab Thought Forum in Jerusalem about the state of archaeology in Palestine and its future prospects. Proceedings were published in the journal, *Shu'un Tanmaawiyyeh* 2/2 (1992). Formal discussions began with the establishment of a Technical Committee for Archaeology within the ambit of the technical negotiating teams. The Committee members were Marwan Abu Khalaf, Mouin Sadeq, Ali Ziadeh, Nazmi el-Jubeh and the present author. The committee drafted an outline plan to guide negotiators in discussions concerning the Archaeology File for the Interim Agreement. In 1992, this *ad hoc* committee launched the national Campaign for the Preservation of Archaeological and Cultural Heritage in Palestine.

The Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH) was re-established in August 1994 (Taha 1998–2013). Despite a shortage of qualified personnel and a lack of logistical means, DACH affords Palestinians, national independence in exploring the history of Palestine based in primary, archaeological sources, a prerogative reserved until recently to foreign and Israeli archaeologists.

In 2018, the Palestinian president signed a new law for the protection of material culture in Palestine, replacing disparate archaeological legislations inherited from Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Israeli rule. The new law moves beyond narrow definitions of antiquities to include many different categories of cultural resources: archaeological sites, historical buildings, vernacular architecture and cultural landscapes that are evaluated holistically within physical and cultural contexts. International collaborations with DACH have included joint Palestinian-Dutch excavations at Kh. Bal'ama, the joint Palestinian-Italian excavation at Tell el-Sultan in Jericho (Nigro and Taha 2006), the Palestinian-Swedish excavation at Tell el-Ajjul (Fisher and Sadeq 2001) and the Palestinian-French excavation at Anthedon and Tell el-Sakan (Miroshedji and Sadeq 2001). Other examples of international cooperation include the Palestinian-Norwegian excavation at Tell el-Mafjar in Jericho; the Palestinian-Russian excavation at the Site of the Sycamore Tree in Jericho; the Palestinian-American excavation at Khirbet el-Mafjar 2010–2015; and the Joint Palestinian-Dutch expedition at Tell Balata, 2009–2013. These joint projects have contributed to building a new post-colonial model of cooperation in archaeology based on mutual respect and interest. The Department of Antiquities has managed to undertake more than 600 salvage operations in Palestinian areas, especially in historical urban centres, rural areas and areas under high pressure. Another main

task has been the conservation of the most endangered archaeological sites and historic buildings, with projects implemented throughout the country. These projects have included major archaeological sites and historical buildings as well as mosques, churches, monasteries, sanctuaries and traditional buildings. Some of the well-known, previously excavated sites in the West Bank and Gaza were left without protection during the years of occupation, including Tell Ta'annek, Tell el-Fara, Tell Dothan, Tell Balata, Tell el-Nasbeh, Tell el-Tell, Khirbet Radana and Tell el-Ajjul (Taha 1998). During the last two decades, a series of minor archaeological and ethnographic museums have been established: the al-Bad Museum and the Riwaya Museum in Bethlehem, the site museum at Hisham's palace, the Samaritan Museum at Mount Gerizim, the Dura Museum and museums in Rafah and Gaza, in addition to the large, national museums, such as The Arafat Museum and The Palestine Museum. The promotion of the Palestinian archaeological narrative has been furthered internationally through exhibitions abroad. An exhibition of archaeology in Gaza was organized in Paris in 2000. The exhibition *Gaza at the Crossroad of Civilizations* was organized in Geneva in 2006. It toured to the city of Oldenburg in Germany in 2009 and Stockholm in 2010.

Great damage has been inflicted on archaeological and historical sites in the West Bank, especially in Jerusalem and Hebron since 2000. Sites have suffered from bombing, shelling and other Israeli incursions, some of which have been total. A wide range of historical sites in Gaza suffered repeatedly from Israeli military activity in 2009 and 2014. Another major threat has been the Separation Wall constructed by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territories, including in and around Jerusalem. As implemented to date, the Wall transforms Palestinian population centres into a series of disconnected blocks and currently enables 462 Israeli settlements in the West Bank to control more than 900 archaeological sites and features. If the Wall is completed as planned, Israel will control more than 4,500 archaeological sites and features, including approximately 500 major archaeological sites, constituting half of all of the cultural resources of the Palestinian areas. Notably, hundreds of archaeological sites in Area C, which is under exclusive Israeli security control, have been looted and plundered, and there is an active illegal trade in cultural property.

In 2011, UNESCO recognized Palestine as a full member state. The acknowledgement crowned a long journey that began when Palestine was first given observatory status in 1989. Following Israel's sustained military assaults on major Palestinian towns in April–May 2002 (Taha 2009), particularly the prolonged siege of the Nativity Church and the destruction of the old core of the city of Nablus, the World Heritage Committee expressed its concern over the possible destruction and damage of Palestinian Heritage at its twenty-sixth session in Budapest (June 2002). The committee recognized the outstanding universal value of Palestinian heritage and approved a plan to assist the Palestinian Authority in establishing an inventory of

potential World Cultural and Natural Heritage places. The present list includes sixteen cultural heritage sites, three natural sites and one mixed site. The list reflects the cultural and natural diversity of Palestine and its national and international connections. Between 2012 and 2017, three sites (Bethlehem, Cultural Landscape of Battir and Hebron) were inscribed on the World Heritage list. The last two decades have thus witnessed a revival of Palestinian archaeology, even as it remains under occupation.

## Note

- 1 Due to limits of space, not all the mentioned works are listed in the bibliography. Many of these can be found online in Foster (2011).

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## 2 **Palestinian identity**

### The question of historiography

*Issam Nassar*

#### **The writing of national history**

The construction of a Palestinian national identity, like all national identities, is a process rather than a static reality. The Palestinians today are a recognized national group, whose membership extends to all those who lived/live in what became the official borders of the country since the start of the British conquest and subsequent mandate over the country after World War I. The arbitrariness of the borders, as borders often are, excluded those whose lives were connected to Palestine, but their villages ended up outside of the designated official boundaries. Residents of the northern villages, whose center of life was connected to a city within Palestine, found themselves members of a different national group, which came to identify itself with Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and even Egypt in the case of the southwest. Such instances demonstrate the connection between nation state and national identity. Nevertheless, nationalism is not a matter of simple designation of borders or citizenship in a particular state, for a pivotal element of the national identity is connected with how people imagine themselves and their presence in the land. National groups are not merely defined by the historical circumstances of their inclusion within a national state, but by the sense of historical belonging to that group. Such historical belonging is based on the construction of a common national narrative by historians as well as by elements of collective memory preserved, invented and passed on from one generation to the next.

Accordingly, it has been the task of the nationalist historians to provide nations with a sense of historical legitimacy. In their work, they create a distinction between the dead past and the living present through the construction of historical chronologies that divide the past into different periods assumed to have beginnings and endings (de Certeau 1988). The result makes the nation appear as messianic, not only because it “consummates all history”, but also because it presents itself as the end of history (Benjamin 1968: 256). In this sense, narrating the formation and development of national identity is almost entirely an academic exercise in “historical teleology”, rather than a search for the actual historical roots of a nation.

It is a process that begins from an already known conclusion: the nation; that is, the historian selects events and employs them retrospectively. It is not surprising, therefore, to find different narratives, reflecting the evolution of each nation, as each national historical narrative depends on what a particular historian has chosen for a starting point and significant events. Of course, the historian does not always make such a selection consciously. It is rather a process where interests intersect with ideology, the structure of knowledge and historical imagination, all of which influence the historian and his narrative.

The people of Palestine, as well as their neighbors in the greater Syrian region are, more or less, the descendants of those who had inhabited the region at various times in its long history, but their emergence as national groups, in the modern sense, is a quite recent development. Earlier associations with the land are not to be described as national in the sense the term is understood today. Nationalism was not possible before the emergence of capitalism, which, in itself, is a relatively recent phenomenon in world history. The construct of nationalism fulfilled the need for capitalism to secure its economic borders, dominate its own markets and construct an ideology to maintain control. In turn, being in control has implied a marriage between the system of government and the economic interests of the bourgeois class.

Nevertheless, the need to dominate economically and politically does not, of itself, create a national group, what Benedict Anderson has described as the “imagined community” (Anderson 1991: 6). Further intellectual developments were essential to the creation of nationalism. As Anderson explained in his compelling book, *Imagined Communities*, “print capitalism” paved the way to the emergence of nationalism, as was the case in Europe where the earliest nationalisms appeared (Anderson 1991: 37–46). The printing press enabled the dissemination of ideas among an ever-growing reading public in ways that solidified their sense of belonging to national groups, particularly once books had begun to appear in vernacular languages rather than in Latin and Greek, as had most earlier books. Publishing in the vernacular gradually fixed local languages in common formats, grammar and structures. At the same time, it enabled large groups of people to read the same books, published in their own tongues. While German readers were busy reading Martin Luther’s *Disputatio Declaratione Virtutis Indulgentiarum* (*The Disputation of Martin Luther on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*), extracts of which became known as the *95 Thesen* (*Ninety-Five Theses*), both in German translations and in the latest books by Schelling, Schopenhauer and Hegel, to name a few, French readers were consuming books written by Voltaire, Rousseau, Hugo and Flaubert. Even the Bible was translated into the vernacular. Readers of French, German or any other language created a common imagination, particular to each language group, and thereby paved the way toward a national consciousness.

However, such national consciousness was not simply created on the basis of a common language. It was also created on the basis of a shared historical narrative, which, in the age of capitalism, amid a growing shift of the populations from countryside to city, provided a sense of belonging to those who faced the alienating conditions of work and life in urban centers. The historical narrative, largely the creation of historians, selectively presented grand events from the past and attributed them to the nation, in its march toward independence as a national state. The historian of the French revolution, Jules Michelet, did not view the unfolding events around him as results of historical possibilities, but as an end of the march of the French nation toward the fulfillment of its fate (Michelet 1847). The present for him could not be understood on its own merits alone, but within the greater understanding of the predestined glory of the nation: "He, who would confine his thought to present time, will not understand present reality" (cited in Bloch 1963: 35). Not long after Michelet wrote these words, the German philosopher Hegel saw the nation state as the stage of history when the spirit of the world (*Geist*) achieves its full self-consciousness (Hegel 1977; orig. 1807).

However, in my view, far from reaching self-consciousness, its destined glory or what Americans call "manifest destiny", nations emerged through numerous intendants throughout history. They came about at certain stages of development, which made their creation possible, rather than as the culmination of the fulfillment of primordial needs. At the same time, not all national histories followed the European example presented by Anderson. As Partha Chatterjee pointed out, Anderson's model cannot be reconciled with the anti-colonial nationalisms of the world outside Europe. "Anti-colonial nationalism", in Chatterjee's words, "creates its own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before it begins its battle with the imperial power" (Chatterjee 1993: 3–13). As Ernest Gellner has argued, "nationalism", rather than being primordial entities, which developed over time, "invents nations where they do not exist" (Gellner 1964: 169). In the Arab East, for example, in the age of nationalism, various possibilities existed, based on the emergence of a variety of national ideologies, among which were pan-Arabic, Syrian and Ottoman nationalism, to mention but a few. However, the movements, which were the most successful, were those that functioned within the framework of the colonial partitions of the region.

Despite the differences in "modular forms", as Chatterjee described Anderson's framework, it remains true that nations are imagined political communities, whose members are not connected with either blood or personal ties. Nations are connected with political imagination, through which adherents think of themselves as being part of a given nation. Still, nationalism, as much as it is based on collective imagination, still uses, selectively, historical facts to root itself in history and present itself as primordial and external at the same time. Nationalism is a product of socio-economic, political and intellectual conditions, grounded in particular movements of the past.

### **Palestinian national identity**

The emergence of Palestinians as a national group, in light of the above, cannot be solely based on biological roots or continuous habitation of their homeland, but primarily on when, and how, they began to imagine and articulate themselves as belonging to this national group. At the same time, such imagination ought to be considered within the historical context in which it developed. In other words, the fact that the people whom we call Palestinians today are the descendants of the various groups that inhabited Palestine throughout its history is not enough to unpack the history of their national identity. Rather, their collective imagination of themselves and the rhetorical shifts, through which they came to be members of this imagined community, are essential.

The people of Palestine, in itself a territory whose borders changed throughout its long history, belonged historically to various groupings, be they religious, tribal or regional. They were also subjects of empires, but they became Palestinian, in the national sense, only in the modern period. Nationalism, itself, is a modern phenomenon as mentioned above and the people of Palestine started to see themselves as a national group only in the last century or so. Before that, they belonged to either regional or imperial orders, while being members of various religious and regional groupings. The first signs of the emergence of specific national identities occur over the course of socio-economic development in Palestine and the changes that took place within the context of the Ottoman Empire that ruled the territory since the early sixteenth century. Furthermore, events connected with the role of colonial European powers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries contributed significantly to the emergence of their national identity.

In his essay on “From ethnic group toward the modern nation: the Czech case”, Miroslav Hroch suggested a “schema” that can help us rethink the historical development of national identities, when he divided the history of the emergence of nationalism into several pre-nation states in the period, when a group of intellectuals first contemplate the idea and pave the way to its emergence (Hroch 2004). The appearance of the idea, according to Hroch, was followed by the formation of a political group or groups, which began to agitate for the national idea. A third phase transformed the idea itself within a mass movement. Taking the route of Hroch’s schema should not be understood as implying that all national identities followed the same path. It is intended, rather, to suggest how the idea of nationalism first evolved.

In the case of the Levant, in the second half of the nineteenth century, the path toward national identity began with the fast spread of printing and the establishments of schools in the greater Syrian region. This was done by the Ottoman state itself, in particular, after the passing of the Education Act of 1869, establishing public schools for the first time. However, even before

the public-school system emerged, various missionary schools were already wide-spread in *Bilad al-Sham*, including Palestine. The nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of *al-Nahda* (or Renaissance) *literati*, as, for example, Butrus al-Bustani, in the region, which is now Lebanon, who placed great focus on modernizing the Arabic language. Al-Bustani was among the first to use the term nation in conjunction with the idea of secularism. In ca. 1860, in his publication *Nafir suriyah* (“Clarion of Syria”), he called for “the attention of the nation’s ... that the reform of their overall condition and their country is dependent on unity” and warned that “intercommunal hate is very detrimental” to the nation (Sheehi 2004: 54). True, al-Bustani’s nationalism had rather a Syrio-Lebanese character than a Palestinian one. Nonetheless, his notion of nationalism is among the earliest in the region that included Palestine. The very existence of the idea of the nation, along secular lines, in itself, presents a beginning for the various nationalist discourses, which eventually emerge in the region.

Signs of nationalist imagination at the time were connected with the transformations taking place within the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman reforms, known as the *Tanzimat*, which culminated in the Ottoman citizenship law of 1869 and in the emergence of parliamentary life in 1876, present the foundation for the gradual surfacing of a form of Arab nationalism, which was coupled with an Arab renaissance. The two elements of the *Tanzimat* period, which laid the foundation for the emergence of a separate non-Ottoman identity in Palestine, were the reorganization of the districts (*Sanjaks*) and a reform in education, with the latter paving the way for the *Nahda* movement.<sup>1</sup> The first newspapers appeared in Palestine shortly after the *Tanzimat*, with *Quds-i Şerif*/*al-Quds al-Sharif* being, most likely, the first Arabic language newspaper to appear in the district of Jerusalem in 1878. The paper had Arabic and Ottoman Turkish sections, with Ali al-Rimawi as editor of the Arabic one (Ayalon and Bashir 2018). However, *Quds al-Sharif* was in reality “the official mouthpiece of the Ottoman authorities in Jerusalem; its principal objective was to disseminate government ordinances and edicts” (Ayalon and Bashir 2018). Still, it must have enabled an exchange of ideas about the country and its future. It was a pivotal moment, in which viewing a community particular to Palestine began. Members of the educated community in the country were also reading books and newspapers published in Cairo and in Beirut. However, the more specifically Palestinian newspapers did not emerge until the first decade of the twentieth century, following the Young Turk Revolt in 1908.

On the other hand, the *Tanzimat* reforms led to the transformation of the sub-district of Jerusalem from one that was part of *villayet al-Sham*, or the district of Damascus, to an independent district reporting directly to the central authorities in Istanbul and known in Turkish as *Kudüs-i Şerif Mutasarrıflığı*. The district dispatched its own representative to the Ottoman Parliament in Istanbul, *Majlis al-Mab’outhan*, and Jerusalem had its own municipal council. This signaled a shift in power in Palestine that

benefited the notables of Jerusalem at the expense of the rural feudal landlords in whose hand the power had resided in previous centuries.

At the same time, the birth of Zionism and its adoption of Palestine as the site for its future Jewish State had a significant influence on the nature of the identity that would eventually be formed. The danger of the Zionist project and the interaction between the Palestinian population and the arriving Zionist settlers had a great impact on how Palestinians saw themselves and later on developed their national project. In 1908, the writer and former Ottoman official in Jerusalem, Najib Azuri, proposed the idea of expanding the *Sanjak* of Jerusalem to include northern Palestine, explaining that this was necessary for developing the land of Palestine (Khalidi 1997: 28–29).

It is worth pointing out that Azuri's vision of Palestine corresponded to the country's borders as they were to be drawn a decade later by the British. When the British drew the borders of Palestine after it has fallen under their control in 1917 and 1918, they were inspired by the maps produced by the Palestine Exploration Fund's *Survey of Western Palestine* in the early 1870s, which in turn was based on the Bible (Conder and Kitchener 1998).

Similarly, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the danger of Zionism for Palestine became an issue, with which newspapers published in Palestine regularly dealt. Newspapers, like *al-Karmel*, *Filasteen* and *al-Munadi*, all, without exception, conducted one campaign after another against the Zionist movement and its project in Palestine, demanding that the country remain for its people and politically independent. In 1914, Najeeb Nassar, the most prominent of Palestinian journalists and owner of the Haifa-based *al-Karmel* newspaper, asked the Arabs of *Bilad al Sham* (Greater Syria) to support the people of Palestine, whom he called "Palestinians". In 1914 Nassar wrote: "We, your Palestinian brothers, share with you all your difficulties. So why don't you, at least, feel with us a little the disasters raining on us... and on our country" (*Al-Karmel*, June 12, 1915).

Nassar's text reveals recognition of the borders of the Palestinian region. It also reveals the awareness of the difference between this and another, neighboring region: the rest of Greater Syria. This awareness intensifies after the Balfour Declaration in 1917 and during the British Mandate period, in general, when it starts to take a political turn. In 1923, for instance, in its founding statement, the National Arab Party announced that its goal was "preserving Palestine for its people [...] and establishing a constitutional government over it" (Mahaftha 1989: 225). Although the Arab identity of Palestine continued to constitute an important part of Palestinian discourse during the Mandate period, this discourse focused more and more on the particularity of Palestine. In other words, despite the fact that Palestinian particularity was rooted in historical conditions preceding intensive Jewish settlement activity, it crystallized as a consciousness only after the Palestinian encounter with Jewish settlement.

Nonetheless, it is important to remember that the fight against Zionism has not always been framed in terms of exclusive Palestinian identity but has

often appeared with the call for a larger Syrian one. The enigmatic educator Khalil Sakakini warned against excluding the Palestinians from the larger Syrian identity. Writing in his diary on January 2, 1919, Sakakini stated:

I was visited today by Yousef al-Issa who informed me that we [members preparing for the first Palestinian congress] decided to use southern Syria instead of Palestine. I [Sakakini] was pleased with this because it moves in the direction of a [special] relationship between Syria and Palestine and declares a new trend in the public opinion to oppose the trend that says Palestine is for the Palestinians.

(Sakakini 2004: 60)

Sakakini's concern was due to his belief that if Palestine were left on its own, it would not be able to successfully combat Zionism. Indeed, the congress was held in Jerusalem on February 3, 1919, and issued a protest statement that would be sent to the Peace Conference in Versailles in which the signatories protested against the plan to create a Jewish homeland in accordance with the Balfour Declaration of 1917. The statement was signed by delegates from cities across Palestine indicating that they represent "all Muslim and Christian residents of Palestine, which is made of the regions of Jerusalem, Nablus (and) Arab Acre" (Documents of the Palestinian National Movement 1918–1939: 3), while describing Palestine as southern Syria. A few months before the congress of 1919, another statement was sent in 1918 by a similar group to General Allenby, the British officer who occupied the county toward the end of World War I. In this statement, the Muslim-Christian committee in Jaffa declared that the signatories spoke on behalf of "the Arab Palestinians" (Documents of the Palestinian National Movement 1918–1939: 3).

Although a clear path to the articulation of the Palestinian identity was being followed, a certain level of vacillation and ambivalence regarding identity itself was apparent. On the one hand, the people of Palestine clearly saw themselves as constituting a coherent group, particularly in relation to Zionism and British Colonialism, but they also seemed to have kept the door open for a more inclusive identity, which would have kept them as part of Syria. However, as the partition of the region became unavoidable, with Britain controlling Palestine and Transjordan and France controlling Syria and Lebanon, the dominant Palestinian discourse shifted rhetorically toward a more specifically Palestinian identity, which highlighted links with a larger Arab identity as opposed to a Syrian one. Faced with the reality of British colonial rule and the increase of Zionist immigration, the Palestinians were establishing their own institutions, political parties and associations and were describing them as Palestinian.

The development of a Palestinian national consciousness did not produce its own nation state, as was the case with the Arab neighbors of Palestine. Palestinians rather went through a period of disruption and discontinuity

as a result of the events of 1948, which Palestinians and other Arabs refer to as the *Nakba*; i.e., the catastrophe. No doubt a tragic event on different levels – familial, personal and national – this catastrophe resulted in, first of all, the dismantling of the social structure of a significant part of the population of Palestine, who became refugees. Second, the disappearance of urban centers from the lives of those Palestinians who remained in Palestine, who were transformed from city dwellers into groups living on the margins of the cities of others. These two consequences mark a turning point in the nature of Palestinian discourse and its continuity. The first significantly aided the emergence of Palestinians as a distinct group, united by their shared experience of displacement. The latter put an end to the development of a Palestinian collective imagination, which had previously been formulated in the cities.

These two issues are closely related, but the first is especially important because it encouraged the emergence of a new kind of Palestinian identity. The disappearance of local identifications as a result of uprooting accelerated the confirmation of a Palestinian particularity, which can be termed national. After all, as Homi Bhabha correctly noted, the “nation fills the void left in the uprooting of communities and kin” (Bhabha 1994: 139–140). The exodus and the forced expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 and the eventual erection of refugee camps all over the Middle East presented the perfect context for the transformation of the old Palestinian local and communal belonging into a nationalist one. The construction of such a new form of a living *locality*, which is far more complex than the *old community* and far more symbolic than *society*, to a great extent, altered “the meaning of home and belonging” (Bhabha 1994: 140).

The uprooting of the Palestinians, in this sense, affirmed a kind of particularity and created a condition, ripe for the development of a new kind of national imagining. Therefore, seen within the framework of Palestinian national discourse, the *nakba* (catastrophe of 1948) represented more a *rhetorical shift* than a beginning or an ending of an era. The identity that had seemed so clear before 1948, which had been finessed and expressed by the intellectuals of the city elite, was terminated with the end of the cities. The destruction of more than 400 Palestinian population centers led to the loss of the old local trait and its replacement with a new kind of belonging; i.e., to the refugee experience as distinctly Palestinian. It is important to notice that this experience, and the rhetorical shift that accompanied it, did not affect all Palestinian Arabs in the same way. While it maintained the Palestinian as “the Other”, it did so in relation to new groups: namely, neighboring Arab countries. The exclusion of refugees from all other identities being formed around them deepened such feeling of “otherness”.

Residents of Eastern Palestine, apart from the refugees, did not experience this exclusion in the same way. Significantly, Palestinian identity was “at its weakest in Jordan and the West Bank, its emergence delayed until Israeli rule replaced Jordanian rule” (al-Budieri 1998: 18). This new identity took

longer to take root in the West Bank mainly due to the active and repressive Jordanian policy of Jordanizing Eastern Palestine and its people. Hence, the complete adoption of the Palestinian identity, in this part of Palestine in the period that followed the war of 1967, was the result of a combination of circumstances, which included both Palestinian political activity coming from abroad and the repressive policies of the Israeli occupation since 1967, which distanced the West Bank, socially and economically, from Jordan. In other words, Palestinian self-awareness in the West Bank appeared later in comparison with Palestinian self-awareness in the Diaspora and it was the product of special events and developments that did not affect the inhabitants of the refugee camps outside the West Bank. Mussa al-Budeiri best reflected this when he wrote

Growing up in ‘Jordanian’ Jerusalem in the 1950s, what strikes me most today is the total absence of Palestine and Palestinian things in my worldview, both as a child and as an adolescent. True, on my daily trip to school, I walked in the shadow of the wall built by the Jordanian army presumably to protect people from Israeli sniper fire . . . East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as the name implied, were no longer Palestine but Jordan; ‘Palestine’ was over there, beyond the flimsy wall that started at Damascus Gate and stretched all the way to Shaykh Jarrah.  
(al-Budieri 1998: 39)

Although it is not possible to be certain of how representative al-Budeiri’s description is of the feelings of the population of east Jerusalem at the time, the fact remains that it is a position that reflects at least the sentiment, which existed among segments of the West Bank residents. It is no secret that the residents of the “West Bank” (both urbanites and villagers) were quite aware of the distinction between themselves, “the residents”, and those who arrived during and after the war in 1948, “the refugees”. The notion of a Palestinian collective identity, which then emerged among the refugees and dominated modern Palestinian national discourse, was essentially based on the refugee-camp experience. A legal framework emerged for determining who is legally a Palestinian and who is not, connected to the Oslo Peace Agreement, centered on those who currently live in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, creating a situation, which will only make future studies of Palestinian identity more confusing because it excludes Palestinians, who do not reside in these areas. West Bank-Gaza centrism, in this sense, can only be described as a colonization of historical Palestinian discourse.

### **The question of historiography**

It is safe to make the claim that the historiography of modern Palestine rarely focuses on the discursive shifts in relation to the development of national identity, but has been largely fixated on the political history of the

Palestinians, particularly on the struggle against Zionism and Israel. Only a handful of studies, among the many volumes written on the history of Palestine and the Palestinians, devote much attention to the question of identity.

A close look at the studies that focused, directly or indirectly, on the question of identity exposes, at best, disagreements among historians on the origins and evolution of the Palestinians as a people. The different attitudes toward Palestinian identity range from total negation of its existence, as in the case of mainstream Israeli historiography, such as that of the Israeli historian Benzion Netanyahu, Benjamin Netanyahu's father, who clearly declared that there is nothing called a Palestinian people, when he stated that

There are no two peoples here [in Palestine/Israel]. There is a Jewish people and an Arab population. ... There is no Palestinian people, so you don't create a state for an imaginary nation. ... They only call themselves a people in order to fight the Jews.

(Belikov 2009)

On the other extreme, we find some Palestinians who insist that the identity has a long historical presence that goes back to the Canaanites and/or Phoenicians (al-Hout 1991; Ra'ad 2010). Such two extremes do not stand on solid grounds and will not be addressed in this short study.

Historians of Palestinian identity are faced with a number of difficulties, which could blur their ability to narrate a coherent history of the development of the idea itself. Among those, we can point to the intersection of the history of Palestine with that of neighboring regions, the problem of periodization and the urgency in combating Zionist and Orientalist claims about Palestinians and their identity.

Author of a major work on the question of Palestinian identity, Rashid Khalidi (1997) rightly maintains that one of the main challenges facing historians of Palestinian identity, today, is the fact that the emergence of a distinctive identity on the political level intersects with, but does not completely depend on the exclusion of Palestinians and on their becoming "the Other" for national groups, who not only view themselves as notably different from Palestinians, but whose historical narrations can attest to that. This is exactly what makes the study of Palestinian identity, though based on its own textual sources, a difficult task. The historian of Palestine, therefore, cannot depend on "Palestinian sources" alone but must also rely on, and borrow from, historical texts belonging to other nations of the region because such textual sources often employ the same historical events on which the Palestinian narrative is trying to base itself. There are many examples of this. For instance, is it possible to claim that the period of Arab renaissance at the end of the nineteenth century and the period of the political emergence of Arab national thought during World War I are exclusive only to Lebanese history, to Palestinian history or to any other single history? Is it possible to claim that Jewish history in Palestine is a matter relevant only to Israeli

history and not a part of the history of the Palestinians? Are not these historical issues echoed in several historical texts of different groups in our region?

The other difficulty that faces the historian in our case is related to the issue of time and periodization. Time is always the subject of history, as the German historian Reinhart Koselleck has pointed out (Zammito 2004: 124). However, historical time, though it does function within the cycle of time in general, is connected with the narrative of the historian, and cannot be reduced to the “natural time”. The time of the nation, as Anderson pointed out, is what Benjamin described as “the homogenous empty time, in which simultaneity is, as it were, transverse, cross-time, marked not by prefiguring and fulfillment, but by temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar” (Anderson 1991: 24). It is the time, as Anderson explained, which can be seen in the newspaper and the novel in a manner, which enables readers to conceive of it through the narration. It is the time particular to the nation, not in relation to any larger historical context, but to the time embedded in the story we read. Time, in this sense, is related to narrative, which, in the words of Lawrence Stone, “is taken to mean the organization of material in a chronologically sequential order and the focusing of the content into a single coherent story, albeit with sub-plots” (Stone 1979: 3). In other words, the history of the imagined community of the nation is dependent, not on a linear time, as in messianic time, but on narrative time in which a beginning and an end are established by the historian. As different historians write different narratives, their temporal points of departure and closure can easily be dissimilar.

The way time of the nation differs in various historical writings on Palestine can be easily explained by considering how some see the start of the history of the Palestinians as connected with the rise of Islam and its spread to Palestine in the seventh century, as opposed to those who see it as connected with the Ottoman conquest of the country. In this context, we can clearly see three main trends in the use of historical time and periodization among the historians of Palestine. The first relates to the Islamic history of Palestine, the second to the Ottoman and the third to the nationalist.

Historians whose point of departure is the Islamic conquest, seen in the Islamization and Arabization of the people of Palestine, envision an identity that is rooted in religious history and produce narratives, which make events such as *al-Ohda al-Omariyeh* (or the convent of Caliph Omar) in the seventh century as an important milestone in the narrative. The convent, though we lack solid evidence that any event took place, dates back to the arrival of the Muslims from Arabia to Palestine in 638 CE, when the caliph granted the freedom of worship to the Christian residents of Jerusalem. Thus, the idea of a tolerant policy becomes an integral part of the narrative, which includes other events such as the liberation of the city from the crusaders in 1187 at the hands of *Salah El-din*. This narrative, presented by many Islamist historians, such as Muhammad Amara in his book, *The Islamic Nature of the*

*Conflict over Jerusalem and Palestine*, views the Ottoman period as a natural continuation of Islamic history and sees Palestinian identity as primarily an Islamic one (Amara 1998). In its narrative structure, this type of periodization is not dissimilar to that of the Zionist narrative, which sees the Jewish history of Palestine as its basis.

On the other hand, historians, who take the emergence of the nationalist movement in response to Zionist colonization as their point of departure, such as is the case with historian Abdel Wahab al-Kayali, the people of Palestine became Palestinians only when they offered resistance to the Zionist program. Similarly, the historian Elias Shoufani argued that

the evidence pointed to the fact that the Zionist settlement, supported by the European consuls, and with the collusion of some of the Ottoman officials, increased the national feelings and the construction of the nationalist awareness among large segments of the people of Palestine.

(Shoufani 1998: 300–301)

Muhammad Muslih, whose study of Palestinian nationalism is perhaps the first to appear, argued that Palestinian nationalism was “ushered into its own independent existence mainly as a result of the chaos and disarray of the larger Arab nationalist movement after the fall of King Faysal’s Arab government in Damascus between 1918 and 1920” (Muslih 1988: x). Therefore, a sharp distinction between the Ottoman history of the country and the nationalist one is apparent in their narration. The pivotal junctures in such a narrative are usually the events during and after the Great War, including the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, and the various revolutions that took place in the twentieth century, such as the 1929 revolt or the 1936–1939 Great Revolt.

Still, historians whose point of departure is the transformations that occurred during the period of Ottoman rule take their points of departure in relation to changing socio-economic structures in Palestine and attempts at modernizing the country during the last Ottoman century. Beshara Doumani, Adel Mana, Alexander Schölch and Khalidi are among the various historians whose work contributes to this type of periodization. The point made by such historians, despite some differences among them, is that the roots of modern Palestinian identity go beyond the first encounter with Zionism and include the last centuries of Ottoman rule in Palestine. Doumani stated the case clearly when he wrote:

The formation ‘Palestine’ in the consciousness of the native population was not simply an automatic response to foreign encroachment and rule, or the uncritical absorption of European definitions of Palestine along biblical lines. The idea also had regional and local roots. It was not a coincidence, for example, that the central Ottoman government established an administrative entity with borders practically identical

to those of Mandate Palestine on three brief occasions during the nineteenth century: 1830, 1840, and 1872. Moreover, local economic networks that integrated the cities with their hinterlands; peasant mobility and clan relations; and commonly shared cultural practices such as the annual Nabi Musa pilgrimage that enjoyed 'national' participation, were some of the factors that contributed to a shared collective historical memory and sense of identity.

(Doumani 1992: 9–10)

Doumani's work suggests that the development of identity can be traced to as early as the turn of the eighteenth century. Khalidi shares this view, though, unlike Doumani, who traced the roots of identity to the socio-economic transformation and encounter with Ottoman authorities and the landowning class, he suggested instead that the earliest manifestations of the identity were connected with the early encounters with a hostile European Christianity. While both historians agreed on the period in which the process started, they each saw its development in relation to different locations within Palestine. The mere emergence of the idea of the land of Palestine with defined borders, similar to those relied on later by the British Mandate, reveals that in some circles the idea of a Palestine distinct from its neighbors did exist. A number of historians accept this view, believing that the Palestinian image of the boundaries of their national group was a product of conditions, which indeed existed in the nineteenth century. However, they do not agree on the main reason behind such an image. Among those historians is Khalidi, who argues that the centrality of Jerusalem in the popular imagination of the Muslim, Christian and Jewish residents turned it into a symbol for all other places in Palestine and turned visiting it into an important part of the religious identity of the residents of Palestine (Khalidi 1997: 28–29). Other historians who share Khalidi's view usually point out the importance of the administrative status of Jerusalem in the lives of the people of the region from the middle of the nineteenth century on. They point out that Jerusalem was the administrative and political capital for all nearby areas, particularly in the period after 1887, when it became the capital of an independent *Sanjak* carrying its name, which sent delegates to *Majlis al-Mab'outhan* (the Ottoman Parliament). Therefore, as Kimmerling and Migdal point out, such a special administrative status for Jerusalem was important for the eventual birth of an independent Palestinian identity in the aftermath of Ottoman rule (Kimmerling and Migdal 1993: 68–69). Kimmerling and Migdal based their argument on an essay by Butrus Abu-Manneh, in which he argued that the autonomous status of Jerusalem "was of tremendous importance for the emergence of Palestine" (Abu Manneh 1978: 25).

While agreeing with the general sentiment that the emergence of Palestinian identity ought to be examined based on developments related to the later part of Ottoman rule in Palestine, Doumani does not accept that this was

due to the centrality of Jerusalem in Palestinian life. Instead, he argues that historians of Palestinian identity ought, first and foremost, to examine the

economic, social, and cultural relations between the inhabitants of the various regions of Palestine during the Ottoman period . . . [should want to understand] why Palestine became a nation in the minds of the people who call themselves Palestinians today.

(Doumani 1995: 245)

Keeping that in mind, Doumani points out that Palestine “produced large agricultural surplus and was integrated into the world capitalist economy as an exporter of wheat, barley, sesame, olive oil, soap and cotton during 1856–1882 period” (Doumani 1995: 4). In this context, it was Nablus, and not Jerusalem, which, in the nineteenth century, constituted the main commercial center for villages in a region, stretching from Hebron in the south to the Galilee in the north. Its trade relations with the Greater Syrian hinterland, particularly Damascus, made *Jabal Nablus*, in effect, the center of Palestine.

On the other hand, there are historians who argue that the European consciousness of the region in general, and of Palestine in particular, as a holy land, as has been expressed in writings of European travelers, missionaries and archeologists in the nineteenth century, played an important role in shaping a local recognition of the distinctiveness of Palestine and its geographic unity, even though its frontiers were not clearly and accurately drawn. Schölch stated this case when he wrote:

One can easily assume that in the second half of the nineteenth century the image of Palestine as a unit (as “The Holy Land” or “The Land of Israel”) was more precise and more strongly formed among Europeans than it was among the local population and the Ottoman administration.

(Schölch 1993: 16)

Schölch goes on to show that in the second half of the nineteenth century, the port of Jaffa –because of its connection with Jerusalem – was Palestine’s window to the world. Using Ottoman and European statistics, Schölch argued that from this port Palestine exported to Europe and imported various products. Consequently, Jaffa played a central role in shaping and constructing a particular and independent “meaning” of Palestine as an entity separate from its surroundings (Schölch 1993: 134–142).

The different narrations of the emergence of Palestinian self-identification outlined above do not necessarily suggest that such identification was prevalent among the majority of Palestine’s residents. Rather, these narrations only point out the material conditions that laid the foundations for the eventual emergence of a Palestinian self-identification. There is almost a consensus that the loyalties and identifications of the residents of Palestine at the end of the Ottoman period were not national, but more a combination of

local, regional and religious affiliations. The Ottoman, Arab, tribal and religious identities coexisted among the urban elite and the residents of villages, who often assumed local identities (Khalidi 1997: 63–88). This multiplicity of identities did not necessarily reflect any kind of conflicts. Loyalty to the Ottomans did not negate being proud of Arab heritage or defending Palestine against foreign greed. This coexistence of loyalties has always accompanied Palestinian discourse and later became one of the characteristics of Palestinian identity.

## **Conclusion**

The history of Palestinian self-consciousness cannot be characterized as chronological in the sense that with the passing of time it was continuously strengthened. On the contrary, Palestinian self-identification often appears to have oscillated between different historical forms of belonging and loyalty. Sometimes, in the same event, the historian finds evidence of Palestinian particularity while, at the same time, he also finds insistence on a national identification broader than that of Palestine. This multiplicity was obvious during the late Ottoman and British Mandate periods, as mentioned above, as well as in the 1950s and 1960s, at the height of Arab nationalist ideology. A case in point would be the Arab Nationalist Movement, the activist group, whose main concern was the liberation of Palestine from the Zionist movement, a concern which was articulated in its political platform in the language of Arab nationalism. The movement was established in the early fifties by a number of Palestinian activists, such as George Habash and Hani al-Hindi. It declared that the liberation of Palestine is not possible without Arab unity.<sup>2</sup> Interestingly enough, the same movement changed its rhetoric in 1967, following the Arab defeat, and transformed itself into a group with a clearly Palestinian message when it became the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

From the late 1960s on, Palestinian identity would be solidified in the discourse of Palestinian nationalism, as articulated by movements like Fatah and the PLO. A gradual and painful process of disengaging Palestinians from the larger Arab context became apparent. Such a development, as important as it is, is not the subject of the current study, which attempts to focus on the historiography of the writing of the history of the Palestinian identity. Still, before closing, it is important to stress the point that this article is not about whether Palestinians possess a legitimate identity or not. It is my conviction that the Palestinians constitute a national group with political and national rights that ought not be ignored, no matter how they read their history. The issue of how legitimate a nation is may be relevant for international law, but from the perspective of history it is meaningless and futile.

The main point in this article, however, is that nations “lose their origins in the myths of time and only fully realize their horizons in the mind’s eye”

(Bhabha 1995: 1). The question is not whether historians – of Palestinian identity in this case – can actually come to agree on the origins of their nation, so much as what kind of nation they envision they have. It is precisely in regard to this last point that the type of narration of the nation's history is what matters most. For not only does it present a certain vision of the past, but in many ways, it forms the foundations on which the nation views its present and its future. Understanding how elusive, ambivalent and plain national identities are is essential to realize that they are and always will be subject to change. What makes it hard in the Palestinian case is that, due to dispersion, the change is now affecting different parts of the community differently. The mere creation of an authoritative history of the nation will, in such a case, no doubt result in the marginalization of certain Palestinian segments.

## Notes

- 1 The term *al-Nahda*, in its Arab imperial context, referred to the emergence of a movement of *literati*, during which Arabic publications began to appear.
- 2 See the interview of George Habash with Mahmoud Soueid published in Soueid (1998: 11).

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### 3 History of Palestine versus history of Israel? The minimalist-maximalist debate

*Ingrid Hjelm*

#### **Introduction**

The 1993 posthumous publication by Gösta Ahlström, *The History of Ancient Palestine from the Paleolithic Period to Alexander's Conquest*, was presented as a novelty in Western scholarship's historiographies on the Syro-Palestinian orbit. Rather than writing just another version of the too numerous histories of ancient Israel and Judah from a biblical perspective, Ahlström endeavored to write his monumental history of the peoples of Palestine "freed from the biases of biblical writers, which is difficult" (Ahlström 1993: 10). A forerunner of Ahlström's work was the comprehensive, but outdated, work by A.T. Olmstead, *History of Palestine and Syria*, from 1931.<sup>1</sup> Neither Ahlström nor Olmstead succeeded in freeing their historiographies from being influenced and directed by biblical chronology and geography as well as by dynastic and demographic patterns. One just needs to look at their chapter headings for evidence of this. Ahlström, more than Olmstead, had a wealth of extra-biblical sources and archeological remains at his disposal with which to reach a greater balance between biblical presentations and real history. Especially his history of the Bronze and Early Iron Age (ca. 400 pages) cast serious doubt on the usefulness of biblical sources for reconstructing the histories of the region and identifying its peoples.<sup>2</sup> Greater trust is put in the biblical presentations of the political history of the first millennium BCE. Here biblical sources take center stage, when available, albeit evaluated in light of other material (ca. 500 pages). Although Ahlström's book keeps a wider eye to neighboring areas and international history, it is not truly a history of ancient Palestine (Whitelam 1996: 149–151). It rather stands with one leg in the camp of historical critical method in biblical research and another in the camp of the most fervent critics of using the Bible for historical and archaeological interpretation of the past. Not moving to the extreme of these positions, which after the book's publication became termed maximalist or minimalist representations in the mid-1990s' fierce discussions over the then newly found *bytdwd* inscription, Ahlström's work today rather represents a middle ground with great appeal to mainstream scholarship in both historical

and biblical research, not least because of its wealth of archaeological and epigraphical information. When Ahlström, however, wrote his history in the late 1980s, it was on the cutting edge of challenging the all-Israel ideology and re-invigorated the history of Palestine as a topic of research. The battlefield left open by Ahlström was not so much the doubtful historicity of a biblical pre-monarchic origin and history of “Israel”, but the impending question of the historicity of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom and the ethnographic and political history of the biblical kingdoms and peoples in ninth–fourth-century Palestine.

Both before and after Ahlström these issues were of such scholarly concern that Keith Whitelam in his sweeping critique of silencing Palestinian history stated that

The search for ancient Israel has been of such primary concern within the discipline because the historical critical assumption has been that it is these periods [the “emergence” of Israel in Palestine and the development of the Davidic-Solomonic state] which provide the loci for understanding and defining much of the biblical material. The irony is, however, that current reassessments by Ahlström, Lemche, Coote, Whitelam, and Thompson are likely to lead to the view that it is the period of the Late Bronze-Iron Age transition, which will come to be seen as the defining moment in the emergence of Palestinian history as a subject in its own right.

(Whitelam 1996: 71)

### **The search for an origin of the biblical Israel**

Reflective of Whitelam’s critique are titles and compositions of histories of ancient Israel that focus on the biblical, historical or ancient Israel rather than on Palestine as a whole (Hjelm 2016b). J. Alberto Soggin’s *A History of Israel from the Beginning to the Bar Kochva Revolt*, from 1984, has the united monarchy under David and Solomon as its starting point. He subsumes both Israelite and Judaeon history under the traditional terminology “History of Israel”, albeit officially the name only related to the so-called “North”; that is the Kingdom of Israel, which ended with the Assyrian conquest in 722–720 BCE and became the province of Samarina (Soggin 1999: 3). Theologically and ideologically, the name has much wider connotations, because of the Jacob/Israel stories, encompassing larger areas and time span in ancient literature and modern perceptions. Questioning the historicity of the David traditions, the united monarchy and an “all Israel” ideology (Soggin 1984: 40ff.), one is not surprised to find that the second and third revised editions of Soggin’s book from 1984 and 1999 bear the title *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*. Soggin comments on Whitelam’s lamentation of silencing Palestinian history, but finds that lack of sources makes it

difficult to write the history of other peoples.<sup>3</sup> He also recognizes the impossibility of writing histories about the two kingdoms on the basis of biblical sources, which “are not historical texts in the modern sense of the word, but testimonies of faith” (Soggin 1984: xiii). This problem was raised in the first session of the European Association of Biblical Studies’ seminar on historical methodology, “Can a History of Israel Be Written?” (Grabbe 1997), in an implicit response to Thomas L. Thompson’s conclusion to his review of Soggin and Miller that “The issue of whether a history of Israel can be written, at all, must indeed take center stage in all future discussions” (Thompson 1992: 110). Thompson’s own contribution was not so much “can”, but “how” a history can be written (Thompson 1997). Struggling to establish a usable methodology, it is telling that the final meetings of the European Seminar in Historical Methodology (ESHM) seminar returned to the basic problem of writing the history of Israel’s early beginnings in the Late Bronze to Iron IIA periods based on archaeology (Grabbe 2008) and textual material (Grabbe 2010). The two volumes implicitly confirm the difficulties of combining the two, when the 2008 volume basically consists of articles written by scholars who have not participated in or show any awareness of the seminar’s former discussions about methodology. The final volumes of the seminar (Grabbe 2010–2011) discuss historiographical problems in relation to the concept of a biblically designed ancient Israel versus a historical ancient Israel.<sup>4</sup> While the 2010 volume, by and large, implicitly argues that the “history of biblical ancient Israel” is a valid topic for historical enquiry, the 2011 volume exposes that this topic has become increasingly questionable and divisive among scholars.

The search for Israel’s origins in the Late Bronze-Early Iron periods was the focus of Niels Peter Lemche’s monograph, *Early Israel* from 1985. His very comprehensive research, however, turned out negatively in regard to finding any pre-monarchic structures which can be interpreted as belonging to a defined political entity called “Israel” (Lemche 1985: 406). The book seriously challenged the historical reality of any biblical concepts earlier than the monarchy. Consequently, his *Ancient Israel* from 1988 set the reign of David as the earliest possible “*terminus a quo* for a pan-Israelite ideology”, which, however, might not have been effective before centuries later and represent “the late Israelite construction of the early history of Israel” (Lemche 1988: 108). In spite of the critical stance taken by Lemche in his 1988 book, the Hebrew Bible was still his main source of information for Israelite history and religion in the first millennium BCE. His great challenge to standard scholarly creations of an “ancient Israel” came with his 1991 and 1998 books about the Canaanites and Israelites. Here he argued that these “ethnic” groups were presented in both biblical literature and scholarly constructions as literary figures rather than real peoples of the first millennium BCE.

If Lemche had hesitated in following his own opinion of the Bible as a Hellenistic book (Lemche 1993)<sup>5</sup> in his *Ancient Israel*, the full impact of a growing agreement of the lateness of the formation of biblical sources and

ideology in the Persian and Hellenistic periods became clear in Lemche's 1996/1998 book, analyzing the Pentateuchal narratives of Israel's prehistory against the political, ethnographical and cultural history and geography of Syria and Palestine in the Bronze Age, based on archaeology and epigraphy. Rather than harmonizing these disparate sources, Lemche declared the biblical narratives in the Pentateuch to be literature and theologoumena serving the needs of a foundation story for the development of early Judaism in the late Persian period. This argumentation has been taken even further in Lemche (2008), which, deconstructing the historical critical method in biblical studies, demonstrated its shortcomings as a method in both the reading of the Old Testament and the writing of Israelite, Judaeen and Palestinian history on the basis of the Hebrew Bible.

John Maxwell Miller and John Hayes's *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* begins with the period of the Judges as the Bible's earliest historical kernel reflecting an "authentic tradition" about Israel's origin. This origin is not to be found in the biblical twelve-tribe confederation, but in the "melting pot" of Late Bronze-Early Iron Age feuds for political and geographical supremacy among indigenous and immigrant tribes in Palestine (Miller and Hayes 1986: 78–79). Skeptical about "the historiographical value of the biblical story about the united monarchy" (p. 200), which they nevertheless present in about seventy pages, their focus is on the traditions and history of the independent Israelite and Judaeen monarchies. This move from an "all Israel" history to a greater focus on the regional histories was already made in Hayes and Miller (1977). At their publication, both books were seen as quite radical, but today one would rather find that they represent mainstream positions. It is more a history of biblical Israel and Judah than it is a history of these ancient kingdoms (Miller and Hayes 1986: xviii; cf. Whitelam 2012: n. 5).

Coote and Whitelam (1987) solidified the existence of the united Davidic kingdom in its claim of early Israel's emergence from literary activity in Davidic courts (pp. 147–148). Searching for an early Israel, however, the book's conclusion, that the formation of the Davidic state was a result of changed environmental and political circumstances, is directed entirely by biblical narratives' composition and periodization. The Israel found by Coote and Whitelam was not the origin of the historical Israelite kingdom, known also as Bit Humria in extra-biblical sources from the ninth–eighth century, but a united kingdom, which is as much part of a mythic past as is its invention of an early Israel (Whitelam 1996: 156).

### **History of Israel versus history of Palestine**

Thomas L. Thompson's *Early History of the Israelite People. From the Written and Archaeological Sources*, from 1992, rather deconstructed any history told in the Bible and attempted opening up avenues to the literary and intellectual matrices of biblical tradition (see also Thompson 1999). The book's

main purpose was a development of “an understanding of the history of ‘Israel’ within the context of a comprehensive regional and historical geography of *Palestine*” (Thompson 1992: 401). As noted by Lemche, both Ahlström’s and Thompson’s titles are misleading. Ahlström, because “*Palestine*” is only his focus in regard to the pre-monarchic period and Thompson, because “the last thing he planned was to write a history of the Israelite people. As a matter of fact, Thompson’s book is much closer to Whitelam’s demand for an independent Palestinian history” (Lemche 1997: 125 n. 4). Rather than establishing an “Israelite people” in the Late Bronze-Iron I transition, Thompson concluded that a biblical concept of a pan-Israelite people cannot be ascertained before the Persian period:

However, if our biblical traditions are an historical refraction of a real past, Israel’s origin as a people needs to be associated with the unification and integration of the central highland with the lowland valleys, the Judean highlands, the Judean coast, the Shephelah, the Galilee, Gilead in Transjordan, and the southern steppelands, and this never occurred in history prior to the Persian period at the very earliest.

(Thompson 1992: 315–316)

The population inhabiting the central highlands of the ancient Kingdom of Israel/Bit Humria could in no way be equated with a biblical “Israelite people”. The search for an ethnically definable people was as questionable for Thompson, as it was for Whitelam in his critique of searching for an ancient Israel in cultural remains devoid of clear ethnic markers (Whitelam 1996: 35). Despite its negative results,<sup>6</sup> the search has in many instances promoted false dichotomies between Palestine’s many peoples and regions.

Such discussions were taken further some fifteen years later in Emanuel Pfoh’s research on the emergence of Israel from an anthropological perspective within a Syro-Palestinian context (Pfoh 2009). Evaluating demographic and cultural developments within a political system of patronage, it was Pfoh’s conclusion that the Late Bronze-Iron I development from imperial rule to autonomous regional entities went through kinship-based patron-client relationships, which eventually formed Palestine’s petty kingdoms in the Iron II period. The assertion that Israel progressed from tribe to chiefdom to state, such as reflected in Joshua -2 Samuel, could not be maintained (Pfoh 2009: 70–82). From archaeological and anthropological theory perspectives it was questionable to speak about state structures in the Iron I, wherefore “Iron I periods in Palestine’s highlands cannot be understood in terms of an Israelite proto-history, the prelude of Iron II’s Israel and Judah” (Pfoh 2009: 173). This is an important point, because it separates the history of Palestine’s petty kingdoms from the traditional and biblical all-Israel perspective (see also Thompson 1992: 412–415). The patronage system, investigated by Pfoh, also permeates the Bible’s narratives (Pfoh 2009: 153), but this does not mean that it reflects societal structures of any given period (Pfoh 2009: 80–81).

It rather reflects a “particular Syro-Palestinian ontology” which may be the only way of portraying the monotheistic deity as “the ultimate cosmic Patron, ruling over his earthly creatures” (2009: 158; for an in-depth analysis of patronage and politics in Syria-Palestine, see Pfoh 2016).

### **The united monarchy**

Questions about the historicity of the Davidic-Solomonic kingdom reached its nadir with the finding of the Tel Dan fragments in 1993 and 1994. Rather than once and for all confirming the existence of the kingdom (Biran and Naveh 1993, 1995; Biran 1994), uncertainties related to the archaeological context, authenticity and interpretation of the inscriptions threatened to remove its foundation (Lemche and Thompson 1994; Thompson 1995a, 1995b).<sup>7</sup> As with so many other archaeological findings, neither could these fragments support biblical presentations of a glorious united kingdom in the tenth century BCE. When almost at the same time, renewed archaeological investigation into the strata of the so-called Solomonic cities Megiddo, Gezer and Hazor did not confirm the tenth century dating of these as Solomonic building projects, but rather showed that they should be considered part of the Omride kingdom in the ninth century<sup>8</sup> the air quivered with excitement, to say the least. The debate cemented the minimalist-maximalist positions with accusations of “revisionism”, “anti-semitism”, “anti-zionism”, “anti-biblical” and “nihilism”, on one side, and “fundamentalism”, “evangelism” and “bad scholarship”, on the other side (Whitelam 2002; Banks 2006: 211–218).<sup>9</sup> Moving from a discussion of methods in history writing, the Bible’s role as witness to its own histories, rather than its ancient mental history, became the primary issue. Not only did it become almost “illegitimate” to deny or criticize the Bible’s historicity, but also to discuss its origin later than the Babylonian Exile, although the Dead Sea Scrolls had made it absolutely evident that no Hebrew Bible existed that early.

However, the approach, taken by the so-called “minimalists”, is a basic demand in scientific history writing and called for if biblical scholars are to be included in the guild of historians (Banks 2006: 234). Rather than being continuously condemned as an ideologically driven program, minimalist approaches have gained increasing acceptance

by a fairly large number of scholars in response to the collapse of ‘biblical archaeology’, and the absolute necessity of reconsidering the way in which archaeological data and biblical texts are best related in the search for a critical history.

(Davies 2015: 139–140)

Seeking a mediating position and salvaging some historicity of the Bible, many scholars cautiously opt for the existence of a minor Davidic kingdom or chiefdom in the tenth century BCE, testified by the Tel Dan inscriptions

from the early eighth century BCE (Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 128–145, 2006: 261–281; Athas 2003: 298–309; Liverani 2005: 96; Finkelstein 2007). Amihai Mazar, who disagrees with Finkelstein’s low chronology, argues for the origin of the biblical narratives and the Tel Dan inscription in a Judean kingdom of a larger entity, which, ruled by the less prominent kings David and Solomon, was too short-lived and undeveloped to be detected in archeological excavations (Mazar 2007). Mazar’s model for his reconstructed figures is not the Omrides but the fourteenth-century Apiru leader Labayu of Shechem, known from the Amarna Letters (Mazar 2007: 139). The seeming genius of Mazar’s analysis, however, is his Modified Conventional Chronology (MCC), which includes both the United Monarchy and the Omride Dynasty in a lengthy archeological period from ca. 980 to 840/830 BCE, denoted Iron IIA (Mazar 2007: 122–123). Convenient as this archaeological *longue duree* with its “greater flexibility of dating” may be, it is unfalsifiable and therefore inconclusive in answering historical questions regarding only one or two generations of polities.

According to Margreet Steiner (2001), the paucity of architectural remains found in tenth-century Jerusalem, of which the stepped stone structure is the most impressive, does not support hypotheses of Jerusalem as a capital of a larger state. It should rather be compared to other small towns, e.g. Megiddo, Hazor, Gezer and Lachish, with similar characteristics: large fortifications, ashlar masonry, public buildings and few residential quarters. “Based on archaeological record alone, one would rather assume that these settlements were the seats of the governments of several small regional states that only later fused into the historically attested states of Israel and Judah” (Steiner 2001: 53). Steiner describes Jerusalem of the tenth–ninth century as “a small fortified town, located on the top of the hill, with some public buildings and little room for residential areas” (Steiner 2001: 52). Steiner’s tentative suggestion that Jerusalem, nevertheless, was more than a small provincial town (cf. Thompson 1992; Steiner 2001: 113) is given full weight in her later conclusion: “Judah was a state” (Steiner 2008: 201). It was comparable to Israel in architectural grandiosity in “the beginning of Iron Age II”, which comprises the tenth–ninth century in the old high chronology and ninth century in the new low chronology (Steiner 2008: 196).<sup>10</sup> Steiner’s argument regards the question of whether Judah became a state before the eighth century (Jamieson-Drake 1991; Thompson 1992; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001). There remain several problems in Steiner’s conclusion in regard to exact dating of comparable structures in Judah, ranging from the tenth–eighth century, based mostly on high chronology (Steiner 2008: 196–197). Finkelstein, Fantalkin and Piasetzky (2010: 39) date similar structures at Jerusalem, Beth-Shemesh, Lachish, Arad and Beer-Sheba to the late Iron IIA, and consider these “the earliest evidence for state-formation in Judah”. However, geographical delineation and relation between fortified towns and regions is not something we can simply assume on the basis of similar structures in Palestine. From

archaeology alone, one might well argue that Judah was not only “dominated by the prosperous Omride Dynasty” (Finkelstein, Fantalkin and Piasezky 2008: 41) or a “Filialkönigtum” (Frevel 2015: 157), but formed part of a huge Omride/Israelite kingdom from Arad to Hazor in the ninth century BCE. Its capital, however, was not Jerusalem, but Samaria (see also Davies 2010).

### **Hens and eggs: the Bible and Ancient Israel. Which came first?**

The mediate position in regard to questions about the united monarchy is the stance taken by the Italian Assyriologist, Liverani, who, nevertheless, relegates the biblical Davidic-Solomonic kingdom to his part II, “An Invented History”, in *Israel’s History and the History of Israel* (Liverani 2005). In this part, he discusses the creations made by the Jews in the Persian period; namely, the books they wrote about their prehistory from creation to the end of the Solomonic kingdom. This means that the invention of the Israelite people, with their tribal divisions, the exodus, wandering in the desert, covenants and Law, settlement in the Promised Land, period of Judges and the early kingdom down to the division of that kingdom, all are paradigmatic of political, social, cultic and literary circumstances from the late neo-Assyrian to well into the Persian period, rather than any earlier periods narrated in Genesis to 2nd Samuel. In contrast, in his part I, “A Normal History”, from the Late Bronze/Iron Age transition until the end of the Babylonian empire, Liverani, much like Ahlström before him, moves from having founded his history of Palestine on extra-biblical sources and material to establishing his entire histories of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah from the biblical Books of Kings with added extra-biblical sources. Although implicitly claimed to be epistemological, it is, however, a matter of conviction that it is only in the period of the “divided” kingdoms that the authors had “reliable official documentation at their disposal”, with which they, influenced by Babylonian Chronicles, formed the synchronistic history of the kingdoms in a “scanty yet precise way, chronologically well related in detail and without using legendary material” (Liverani 2005: 228). On form critical grounds, one must agree with Liverani that the parallels with Babylonian chronicles are substantial enough to assert a literary *a quo* in the Babylonian period (Liverani 2005: 229–230). However, form does not yield or guarantee reliability, *per se*, and an early *a quo* dating does not contradict the possible later *ad quem*, suggested by other scholars.

Liverani’s attempt at “referring literary texts to the time in which they were written and not the period they speak about” (Liverani 2005: xvi) is both insightful and stimulating. One must, however, question the very existence and form of biblical texts in the seventh–fifth century BCE used by Liverani for both his normal and invented histories. Final forms of these did not appear before the Hellenistic period at the earliest and not before well

into the first millennium CE do we have the basic texts we use for modern research. The deconstruction models outlined in Liverani's book represent only one aspect of debates about biblical texts.

### **New evidence regarding the Bible's formative periods**

Archaeology has not only challenged the historicity of a biblical Israel and the united monarchy, it has also questioned our knowledge about the post-exilic provinces Shomron/Samaria and Yehud, which eventually came to understand itself within an "all Israel" perspective (Hjelm 2000, 2004; Knoppers 2013). The relationship between these entities and especially the course of early Samaritan history was the topic of Hjelm (2000). Analyzing and discussing ancient literary sources, she concluded that the history told by the biblical tradition, Josephus and generations of scholars could not reflect reality and that the Samaritans, rather than being Mesopotamian immigrants or an offshoot of renegade Jews from Jerusalem, basically were descendants of the ancient kingdom of Israel. Samaritans and Judeans were always separate peoples, who, in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, had either Gerizim or Jerusalem as their main cult place. What were at first simple geo-politically "ethnic" terms (Samaritans/Samaritans and Judaeans/Jews) became religious designations, when Samaritans and Jews in the Persian and Hellenistic periods began a long-term fight for religious and political supremacy. Both the kingdom of Israel and the province of Samaria were politically and economically larger and more prosperous than Judea/Yehud (Stern 2001: 319), and it was only in the later period of the Hasmonaean kingdom that Judea gained enough power to force Samaria into a unity under Jerusalem's supremacy. Excavations on Mount Gerizim since 1982 unearthing structures of a major Persian Period Yahwistic cult place from the fifth century BCE and its enlargement in the Hellenistic period gave a picture that has substantially changed Samaritan history.<sup>11</sup> The Samaritans seem to have been responsible for the first version(s) of the Pentateuch, and they might have co-operated with the Jewish priesthood and lay people to finalize it (Nodet 1996: 12, 191, 381; Hjelm 2000: 282–285, 2015), before John Hyrcanus destroyed their cult place and its surrounding city Luzah in 110 BCE. The excavations at Mt. Gerizim give the earliest and fullest evidence of religious practices which we also find in the Bible. The distribution of sacrificial bones, votive inscriptions (Magen, Misgav and Tsefania 2004; Gudme 2013) as well as other artifacts belonging to cultic activity correspond with prescriptions found in the Pentateuch, without any traces of syncretistic influence (Hjelm 2016a). For a period of more than 350 years in the Persian and Hellenistic periods, there was a Yahwist cult place just a day's journey north of an impoverished Jerusalem, which was still struggling to recover from the Babylonian blow (Stern 2000). Jerusalem's temple seems to have existed in the fifth century BCE, but it was not until the beginning of the Hellenistic period that the city expanded to a size larger than that of a minor temple city (Lipschits 2003: 330; Finkelstein 2008).

In addition to these archaeological achievements, *Proceedings* (2003–2011) from four different congresses focusing on Judaea in the Babylonian and Persian periods have added so much new information that we can no longer speak about these periods as dark ages.<sup>12</sup> Albeit focusing on Judaea, the information, much of which have been provided by leading Israeli archaeologists, affects our understanding of Palestine as a whole in the Persian period (Knoppers 2013). Given its complexity, it will be a reductionism ad absurdum to discuss this re-evaluation within parameters of a maximalist and minimalist approach.

### **Fundamentalist and maximalist responses**

Maximalist or, perhaps more correctly, fundamentalist responses to the ongoing debate about the historicity of the Bible came in publications, which sought to assert “Israel’s” biblical past. The most rigorous of these scholars advocate a general trust in the Bible as a historical document from the Patriarchs onward and reject modern opinions about the biblical books as literary and theological documents produced some time in the Persian-Hellenistic periods.<sup>13</sup> Faithful to Albright’s reading the Bible with the spade, Biblical archaeology is the exception that is most often brought up as providing evidence of the Bible’s historicity. This simple method of relating texts to material, however, resists a sophisticated reading of biblical material,<sup>14</sup> and a non-biased interpretation of stratigraphy and artifacts<sup>15</sup> as well as proving the case through falsification.<sup>16</sup> Distorting Karl Popper’s principle of falsification to a question of verification, which has been “the new rallying call for those who would defend ‘biblical history’” (Whitelam 2012: 491), does not remove the unsettling experience that archaeology too often has proven biblical narratives wrong. It is not sophisticated reading of biblical texts, bias or non-verification, which has cast doubt on the united monarchy; it is Israeli archeology (e.g. Kochavi 1972; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 123–145; Ussishkin 2003a, 2003b). Neither have the biblical texts brought to life the forgotten Israelite kingdom of the Omrides, which has appeared through archaeology and non-biblical sources (Finkelstein 2013). Biblical misrepresentation of ancient history is not a modern or postmodern invention. It is inherent in the material, which by all means must be classified as secondary in regard to historical reconstruction of the past. The basic problem is not whether there are elements of historical truth in our tradition (there probably are several), but whether the tradition is operating within such a “protestant” *ad fontes* mode of authentic objective presentation. Biblical archaeology serves the purpose of reassessing a “history” rather than searching and creating it (Zevit 2004: 3–19). In order to bring the discipline under proper academic auspices, Dever in the early 1970s suggested that the term be changed to “Syro-Palestinian Archaeology” “pursued by cultural historians for its own sake” (Dever and Paul 1973; Dever 1985). The suggestion was not approved, nor did Biblical

archaeology become scientific, and the reassessment of its methodologies and assumptions in Hoffmeier and Millard (2004), unfortunately, confirms that. Claiming an *a priori* authority of the biblical texts and resisting any attempt at critical evaluation, as Provan, Long and Longman (2003: 56) do, is comparable to Josephus's claim for his tradition's historicity based on age and *akribia*. However, their method is that of the ancient Greeks: persuasion through rhetoric (Hjelm 2014).

With the heated debates about historicity and the use of the Bible for archeological, epigraphic, ethnographic and sociological interpretations not much room was left for the still more pertinent issue of "history of Palestine" versus "history of Israel". The few titles containing the name "Palestine" (Weippert 1982; Freedman and Graf [eds.] 1983; Pfoh 2009, 2016; Thompson 2013; Masalha 2018), or as preferred by some scholars "Canaan" (Noll 2013), just confirm the matter.<sup>17</sup> Neither did Davies's advice of a distinction between three Israels – historical, biblical and ancient, which have little to no-relevance to each other – gain prominence in the debates. The disproportionate attention given to "biblical" and "Israelite" history, which in most cases is told from a "Judean" perspective, over against other peoples in Palestine, is still prevalent. Scholarly focus on *Ancient Israel* has both silenced *Palestinian history* and served agendas promoting the formation of a modern Israel (Whitelam 1996). It is, however, not only "Palestinian", or perhaps more correctly "non-Jewish", history which have been silenced but histories also of the Bible's own peoples, and here perhaps most notably those of the descendants of the ancient kingdom of Israel (Hjelm 2000, 2004, 2016a). It is somewhat ironic that a majority of both maximalist and minimalist titles contain the name "Israel", "Ancient Israel" or "Biblical Israel" when, in most cases, the historical Israel is discussed only within the parameters of a paradigmatic and literary all-Israel ideology.<sup>18</sup> As noted by Davies, "'ancient Israel' is neither biblical nor historical", but a creation based on historical investigation of a literary product: "In seeking to impose what is *literary* upon a time and place that are *historical*, biblical scholarship and its own 'ancient Israel' betray both literature and history" (Davies 1992: 16). This problem becomes evident when we consider that the only Israel in history is the non-Jewish Iron Age kingdom of Israel, the name of which became *Samarina* and its population termed Samaritans/Samaritans. Officially, Judah/Yehud were never called Israel. Most notably, it was not the official name of the state in the Hasmonean period, when most of Palestine was conquered and came under Jerusalem's sovereignty.

Coins of the Persian through the Ptolemaic periods refer to the area as 'Yehud' or 'Yehudah', the name of the Persian satrapy harking back to the Iron Age name Yehudah. The Hasmonean coins refer to the 'High Priest and the Council of the Jews (or Judaeans)'.

(Hendin 2013: 283; see also Goodblatt 2006 and Goodman 2005)

This is the more remarkable, since the Hasmonaean coins were circulated “South and North as well as East of the Jordan”, reflecting the political situation of the first century BCE, when “the entire region was under the control of a single governing authority” (Meshorer 1982: 97). The earliest evidence of possibly official use of “Israel” is a few silver coins from around 70 CE, but the intention of the legend remains uncertain (Goodblatt 1998: 26–28). Later, Bar Kochba would call himself “prince of Israel” and use the phrase “house of Israel” in his letters from 132 to 135 CE (Goodblatt 1998: 28–35). Neither can be considered an official title designating a state or a larger region. The name was used theologically, ideologically and literarily. It is easy to understand why it was chosen for the modern state of Israel, but why did literati in Yehud want to become “Israel” in the Hellenistic-Roman period and, of course, as wondered by Goodblatt (1998), why was it not chosen as a name for the Hasmonaean state?

### **Discussing historical facts and possibilities**

Taking seriously the crisis in biblical studies, clever maximalist approaches have been taken by authors of recent textbooks which, rather than postulating or defending an asserted “biblical” history, focus on its methodological shortcomings. Not writing a comprehensive history based on a “qualified correspondent truth” advocated by Megan Bishop Moore in her 2006 book (Moore 2006: 183), Moore and Kelle (2011), Kurt Noll (2013) and Christian Frevel (2015) discuss in a balanced way comprehensive sources, biblical and non-biblical, for writing histories about Israel’s, Judah’s and Palestine’s past. Neither book writes the history, but leaves it to the reader to evaluate positions and sources on a given topic. Much in line with what has been advocated by several scholars in Grabbe’s historical methodology seminar, these authors point toward new ways of presenting possibilities for history writing. As text books for teaching basic courses in Bible and theology, they are preeminent. Such is also Reinhard Kratz’s textbook *Historisches und Biblisches Israel* (Kratz 2013), which discusses biblical and historical aspects of first millennium pre-exilic Israelite and Judaeon history in order to explain the origin and background of the Samaritan and Jewish traditions from Elephantine, Gerizim, Jerusalem, Alexandria and Qumran. Aware of the changing paradigms for history writing, Kratz’s book focuses predominantly on origin and development of biblical thought and Judaism (Judentum) in post-exilic communities in Palestine and the diaspora, and the literature they produced. In regard to the discipline of history proper, the aforementioned publications offer very good introductions to the problems of writing “Israelite” history, especially because, generally speaking, secular historians are unfamiliar with these and base themselves uncritically on the Bible when dealing with the history of Palestine (e.g. Mitchell 1991; Kuhrt 1995; Briant 2002). The historian, however, whether based in faculties of theology or humanities, must obey proper source critical and

analytical methods in search of a history, of which the Bible and the “concept of Israel” is a product. The dominant role traditionally given to this concept must be replaced with an objective search for the regional histories of ancient Palestine and their relation to the Iron Age Kingdom of Israel and its development into yet other regions, polities and cultures. At its height, this non-Jewish Israel comprised peoples and ethnicities, regions, cultures and languages with roots in the still more ancient Canaanite or Palestinian and Trans-Jordanian soil.

## Notes

- 1 Rappoport (1931) is basically a novelistic paraphrase of biblical literature garished with ancient documents and inscriptions. “Histories of Palestine” usually begin with the Hellenistic-Roman periods, rather than with the Bronze and Iron Ages. Both Olmstead and Rappoport chose “Palestine” as a general designation because it was the traditional name of the area at their time.
- 2 Olmstead, on the contrary, sought to confirm, explain and supplement the Bible’s traditions about the pre-monarchic periods by use of extra-biblical “evidence”.
- 3 1999 3rd rev. ed.: xiv. Ahlström (1993: 10), on the contrary, found it almost impossible “because of the enormous wealth of material for certain periods and certain areas”.
- 4 Earlier volumes of the EHSM seminar: Grabbe (ed.) (1998–2007).
- 5 See also Lemche (2016; Wajdenbaum 2011, 2016; and Gmirkin 2016, 2017).
- 6 Thompson (1992: 315; Finkelstein 1996a), reviewing his earlier position, 1988, and refuting Dever (1995a, 1995b). On this see also the discussions in Dever (2001: 40–44) and Faust (2006: 20–29).
- 7 For a thorough investigation of the debate and the artifacts, see Athas (2003).
- 8 Finkelstein (1996, 1998, 1999); Ussishkin (1997); Ussishkin and Woodhead (1992, 1994, 1997); Finkelstein and Silberman (2001: 342–344). For later references, see Franklin (2008).
- 9 The debate mainly took place in journals (SJOT, BASOR, BAR, JSOT, JBL, Bible and Interpretation) and at SBL and EABS conferences. For references to these discussions, see Banks (2006: 202–222); Moore (2006: 75–135). See also Edelman (ed.) (1991; Whitelam 2002), and with extensive bibliographies: Pfoh (2009) and Ska (2015). The Changing Perspectives subseries of the Copenhagen International Seminar (2011–) presents the change in the field in monographs and collected volumes.
- 10 For the opposite opinion that Jerusalem was unfortified until the latter part of the eighth century and that “Jerusalem of the ninth century was a small, poor settlement, while other contemporary settlements in Judah, first and foremost Lachish level IV were already fortified towns containing large public buildings”, see Ussishkin (2007: 139, 2003a, 2003b).
- 11 Naveh and Magen (1997); Magen (2000, 2007, 2008); Magen, Misgav and Tsefania (2004.); Hjelm (2005, 2010); Knoppers (2013).
- 12 Lipschits and Blenkinsopp (2003); Lipschits and Oeming (2006); Lipschits, Knoppers and Alberty (2007); Lipschits, Knoppers and Oeming (2011).
- 13 The most rigorist defenders of the Bible’s historicity are Kitchen (2003); Provan, Long and Longman III (2003) and Deist (1993, 2000), while Dever (2001, 2003) and Faust (2006) are more elective in their use of the Bible.
- 14 Kitchen (2003: 497) bewails 200 years of scholarship’s move toward “a spirit of inquiry that sought to go beyond just reading the Hebrew Bible wholly ‘on the

- surface”’. See also Dever’s hideous diatribes against so-called postmodernism in (Dever 2001: 10–27).
- 15 Faust’s distinction between Israelites and Philistines is based on a scholarly hypothesis of early Israelites as non-pork consumers (Faust 2006: 37). It is, however, not the Old Testament, but early Jewish (esp. *Books of Maccabees*) and Christian literature, which problematize pork consumption.
  - 16 E.g. Provan, Long and Longman (2003: 54–56); cf. Whitelam’s critique of Provan, Long and Longman (Whitelam 2012).
  - 17 More than 99% of books from the twelfth–twenty-first century with “Palestine” in the title deal with contemporary history, of which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict takes center stage.
  - 18 Such is evident in Ska’s list of “Histories of Ancient Israel from 1970 up till 2013” and his twelve points of main questions treated in recent times (Ska 2015: 426–431).

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## 4 De-theologising medieval Palestine

### Corpus, tradition and double critique

*Joshua A. Sabih*

#### **Hellenistic paradigm: “past”, “Middle Ages”, “heritage”**

##### *Preliminaries: is “Middle Ages” theological terminology?*

Two postulates cannot be dismissed when post-medieval scholars want to deal with the question of the medieval: the alterity of the Middle Ages (Spiegel 1997) and the concept’s Eurocentrism in terms of content and world view. Both express a Eurocentric-diffusionism model of world history and geography (Blaut 1993, 1992). Neither European nor non-European “Middle Ages” are “spaces of waiting and virtual death” as Renaissance humanists construed them (Spiegel 1997: 59). A third postulate is that the *other* both within and without the European Middle Ages is the Arab-Islamic world and civilisation, including medieval Palestine’s history. Therefore, I do not consider the European paradigm of the Middle Ages useful for Arab-Islamic Palestine. Instead I propose Laroui’s “Hellenistic era” paradigm, as in the Hellenistic era, the medieval Arab-Islamic era was a literary polysystem, in which constituent literary systems were autonomous, interdependent and mutually interferential (Even-Zohar 1990; Laroui 2009).

Let me begin by addressing Taylor’s statement: “The only history that is worth reading is *contested history*” (Taylor 1992: viii). Taylor’s evaluation of history as worthiness is a recommendation: “dear reader, read no other history but contested history, i.e., worthy hi-story”. Taylor’s contested history conceives every “historical beginning of things, *not* the inviolable identity of its origin. It is the dissension of other things. It is disparity” (Foucault 2004: 74). Since contested history is “a dissension of things and their disparity” or *difference*, to use Derrida’s term (Derrida 1997), is the only history worth reading, we must ask, “what is unworthy history like?” In Taylor’s enunciation: history that is not contested history is nevertheless history. This “history nevertheless” will be what conceives every “historical beginning of things [as] the inviolable identity of its origin”. In the sameness of all things: beginnings and origins are identical. But isn’t every historical beginning an articulation of a crisis? A presupposed end? This is

what Foucault might have meant by dissension and disparity. What would the historical beginning of “Palestine” be? What would be the concept of Palestine, its past and heritage? Are they different from the “historical beginning”? Can we consider Biblical narrative about imagined “Philistines” a literary source for the textually oriented history of Palestine?<sup>1</sup> One would consider such a position a fundamentalist’s acceptance of the Bible as a historical document (Thompson 1999, 2013). In Hagio-aggadic literature, we often meet what I call the etymological fallacy of the term Palestine we meet in modern Judaeo-Zionist historiography.<sup>2</sup> Roman use of the term “Palestine” is here asserted to be a Roman conspiracy against Jews, motivated by their hatred for Jews and their wish to eradicate every memory that connect the name *Eretz Yisrael* with Jews? In all such attempts, ancient Jewish and modern Israeli historiography define the name Palestine in terms of biblical etymology and political theology. One cannot fail to notice that the biblical narrative about the Philistine (the story of the Jew, David versus the Philistine, Goliath<sup>3</sup>) is that “inviolable identity of origin” (Foucault 2004: 74) reiterated in medieval Rabbinic literature and modern religious Zionism’s discourse on the Palestinians.<sup>4</sup> Identifying the Philistine as foreigner and wanderer (Abulafia 2011) and, today, Arab, modern Israeli historiography turns the Palestinian into a theological and ethnic enemy, a refugee in a clear emulation of medieval Christian theology towards Jews. As we shall see, selective rejection of medieval Palestinian heritage by secular and religious Zionism rejects the very notion of the Arab-Jew, the medieval Jewish-Muslim link (Khatibi and Hassoun 1985; Raz-Krakotzkin 2005).

### ***The indexical “medieval” in “medieval Palestine”***

First, a semantic game. The notion “middle” in the expression “Middle Ages” does not come out as a middle of “ages” but a middle between at least two things, both touching and keeping things from each other. It is comparable to a no-“mans”-land: an intermediate buffer zone. It can also stand for a transient historical period between a prior end later beginning. Being Middle Ages – in the plural – presupposes that there must be more than one middle between age. “Middle Ages” – as we shall see – was meant to depict the intellectual history of Europe, but it was universalised. Europe was far from the economic and intellectual centres of the world. One can only imagine how Europe viewed itself as being “Middle Ages” (Burr 1914; Edelman 1938). Brague rightly assumed that this “does not apply to the non-European cultural worlds” (Brague 2006: 57). With “Middle Ages” you never know which middle or which age is referenced, whence the confusion that surrounds this problematic term. Others have been proposed to avoid the inadequacy. “Pre-modern” is one of several challenges that universal history has faced: finding adequate terms and concepts that are applicable to all societies in one big family.

Another “Middle Ages” is the Arab-Islamic Middle Ages, refusing to be the European Middle Ages – paraphrasing Brague’s quote. Any approach to a non-European Middle Ages should be attentive to the term’s “Eurocentric diffusionism” (Blaut 1993).

What would an Arab-Islamic “middle age(s)” be? Since medieval Palestine was integral to this Arab-Islamic “middle age”, what would it be like? Where and when can we find that historical beginning of medieval Palestine that would be the end of something-else-Palestine? If the historical beginning is always dissension – that is an end of something and a beginning of something else – then the conquest of *Aelia Capitolina* by the Muslim caliph Omar I (634–644) will be that historical beginning: a dissension from Byzantine Palestine. Most historians of medieval Islam in Arabic sources agree on a significant difference: the conquest and subjugation of al-Shām (greater Syria), Egypt and Iraq did not introduce an immediate Islamisation. The existence of Arabs among the rural and urban populations is undeniable (Mann 1920; Gil 1992). The medieval past – as all pasts – is mediated. The historian does not resurrect that past as it *was but* reconstructs it within and from a present!

Intrinsic to de-theologisation is the double task of debunking claims that the Arab-Islamic Middle Ages was exclusively theological and deconstructing the theology of inheritance that perceives Palestine, its history and past, as if it were a privileged site for which all laws are suspended, as in Zionism’s claim that both the Jewish people and the land – *Eretz Yisrael* – were in exile between 70 and 1948 (Raz-Krakotzkin 2007; Piterberg 2008; Sand 2014). Building on Derrida’s conceptualisation, “privileging one sign or element above others, is fundamentally, or rather structurally, *theological*” (Anidjar 2008: 13–14). A de-theologisation of medieval Palestine must engage three areas of study: (1) textually oriented history, (2) tradition as a polysystemic site of negotiation and (3) double critique as theory and praxis of de-colonisation and de-zionisation. De-theologising, however, is not a theory of secularisation, but a theory that deconstructs theologies. De-theologising Zionism means bringing to the fore its political theology, according to which Zionism reiterates its theology of inheritance in an occult language, claiming Jewish sovereignty over the land and its invented past. Domination of the Palestinian requires an “exceptional” interpretation of religion as a political tool. One must notice Zionism’s paradoxical position when it rejects Palestine’s medieval past and cultural heritage, but appropriates medieval Maimonides’s halakhic decisions regarding the issue of sovereignty as a binding argument upon Jews to establish a Jewish state through war. De-zionising Palestine’s history means denouncing Zionist claims as a theology in secular garb.

Such also applies to de-theologising Palestinian historicist discourse that eternalises the ethnic Arab – the Palestinian – and the history of the land in a narrative of cyclic catastrophe that bears traces of a theology of inheritance. Embedded in the latter, one finds the law of abrogation upon which

theology of inheritance builds its worldview. In short, de-theologising medieval Palestine means subjecting it to the gaze of double critique (Khatibi 1974; Sabih 2015). Whether we speak of the historical beginning of medieval Palestine or the narratives about its history, past or heritage, one should *always* be alert to the slippery descent of the theological, particularly in secular and scientific garbs. One of these slopes is the perception that the Middle Ages is a theological period, and the medieval history of Palestine is a history of transition from its golden Biblical past to the modern re-establishment of Jewish sovereignty.

### **A fictionalised past in Israeli and Palestinian literature**

Discussing reception of “the past” and “history” in modern Arabic and Hebrew fiction informs our understanding of reception and appropriation of Palestine’s medieval heritage and the relationship between the literary and documentary. Among the modalities of literary appropriation, one finds, *inter alia*, the historical novel and the hybrid, futuristic-historical novel. The Palestinian Arabic and Jewish past – or rather the Muslim-Jewish link – is the topic of our novels here. In modern Hebrew literature, as distinct from Jewish, the diasporic past and heritage have not always been appreciated (Hever 2001; Anidjar 2008). In Zionist literature, diaspora is pathology in the literary works of Yosef Haim Brenner. Negation of exile and diaspora negates the diasporic past and heritage!

In Shimon Adaf’s novel *Kfor* (Adaf 2010) the diasporic past and its revival testify to the failure of the Zionist modernistic history, equating progress with secularism and returns to history with a negation of exile. The future conceived by early Zionism was a secularised Jewish society devoid of diasporic gentile roots. To articulate an understanding of the past and the need to call upon it in a new literary form – the novel – which denies its fictionality has contributed immensely to blurring the classical boundaries that once separated literature and history (Darraj 2004, 2008). This tags an old saying: “He, who does not know – or converse with – the past will not be able to converse with the future”. Conversing with the past is obvious, but conversing with the future is a privileged domain of fiction. In the futuristic historical novel, one embarks on a detective-like mission to investigate the past to find a model for surviving an intolerable present. Such remodelling of the future with a fictionalised past is the subject of Adaf’s novel.

In Ahmed Awad’s, *Akkā wal-mulūk* (*Acre and the Kings*), the latent future or potential history, lies in the defeat and betrayal trope, associated with the failure of the Arabs to defend Palestine in the face of medieval European crusaders and – implicitly – modern Zionism. The trope of the *naksah* (the catastrophic defeat of Arabs in the six days war) has characterised post-1967 Arabic novels. They represent an ideology of escapism. A returning to the past, which in Awad’s novel re-tells a story of medieval Acre, its siege and

fall to the crusaders, using the lens of medieval Arab-Islamic historiography and Western historical fiction. In a paratext, Awad divulges the intimate relationship between the novel and history.

The reader may find it difficult to distinguish what is novelistic from what is historical. He can, however, read this [text] as both, since both readings are correct. Here, history and novel exchange positions in order for each one to say what the other does not, or to complement each other in saying what has been silenced.

(Awad 2005: 6)

### ***Shimon Adaf, Kfor (Nuntia), 2010***

In his novel, *Kfor*, the Israeli writer Shimon Adaf (Adaf 2010) tells the story of an orthodox community in 2510, almost 500 years into the future. That community is the only surviving Jewish community. In a time of high tech, the community is struck with weird ideas in the author's "turning back" to or "reviving" the Mishnaic period. This period, a well-preserved past, is the only past that contains a secret that helps preserve the Jewish community from mutations, complete assimilation or dissolution into a gentile society represented by Adaf's employment of a polyphony of lects and languages: Aramaic, Moroccan Arabic, Hebrew and Latin, a memory of Hellenistic times. The narrative form, a logbook with 145 entries, following the logic of place and time (heb. *'eyfu* and *matay*: *where* and *when*) begins and ends its narration in logs 1 and 145. The main character *Yehezkel*, a heavily symbolic biblical figure, opens a construct of its author's world on the debris of other worlds, texts and languages, transcending time and place. As a hybrid genre, *Kfor* blends prose and poetry, history, tradition and science fiction. This writing is not foreign to medieval literature. Notions such as "past", "history" and "heritage" are enticed into Adaf's narrative game. Blending several literary genres, Adaf narrates the past as if it were the future. Blurring boundaries separating the past – the Mishnaic period – and the future, implicitly, questions the very notion of history as a preserved past or heritage. What triggered Adaf to subject the notion of history to his critique, *la mise en crise*, is his personal experience of Moroccan descent – an Arab Jew and a native of Sderot, a development town. His erudition in traditional learning, world literature and philosophy fill the novel. *Yehezkel* expresses many autobiographical elements. The biblical symbolism of the name – a prophet with futuristic visions – functions as a *tsadik* figure of Moroccan Kabbalistic Judaism. It is no wonder that the progressive concept of history clashes with tradition as heritage: "I felt like I was living in two separate times, past and present overlapping" (Tidhar and Adaf 2016: 61). Adaf contests the foreclosure of the pre-modern past from the Jewish-Israeli-Hebrew subject. In his conversation with the past – reviving the Mishnaic and Talmud worlds, their languages and Halacha – one finds

what Foucault calls “dissension of things, disparity”, an historical beginning of something else.

I return to the era of the Mishnah [...] when Judaism was a *raw thought*, *embryonic*, and the boundaries of Jewish identity were still fluid. It is not a big surprise that the sages of the Talmud [...] were *fascinated* with [...] *important figures* in the Mishnaic era having *gentile roots*.

(Tidhar and Adaf 2016: 62)

Conversing with the past as a condition for conversing with the future in Adaf’s *Kfor* celebrates a suppressed memory of Talmudic sages’ fascination with Judaism’s important figures with Gentile roots, and the Talmudic era as the historical beginning of Judaism. Traditionally, the era ends in the early sixth century. However, this era should be seen to have ended with Maimonides and Rabbinic Judaism’s victory over the Karaites. Maimonides’s Arabic commentary to the Mishnah, *Kitāb al-sirāj* (*The Book of Light*) and later his Hebrew code of law *Mishnah Torah* celebrate the end of the maturity of medieval Arab-Jewish thought.<sup>5</sup> The reception and appropriation of Palestinian Jewish sages, including those with gentile roots, and their legal and haggadic heritage in medieval Arab-Islamic religious literature: Quran exegesis, Hadith and Judaeo-Arabic literature are undeniable. The gentile roots of medieval Jewish thought encompass diverse intellectual heritages, including Greek philosophy, Indian theosophy, pre-Islamic Arab cultures, etc. The reception and appropriation of the past takes form in Adaf’s fiction as a narrated *past-as-reiteration* rather than as a *reiterated past*. It is a discourse of denunciation of the “demands of history” working under the logic of progress. Knowing the past is postulated as an epistemological, literary, affectional condition for knowing the future.

### **Ahmed Rafiq Awad, *Akkā wal-mulūk* (Acre and the Kings), 2005**

In his second historical novel, the Palestinian writer Ahmed Rafiq Awad (b.1960) narrates, *inter alia*, the story of medieval Acre in one of its most troubled and distressed moments through the lens of “historical” testimonies gleaned from medieval Arabic sources. He begins with *The Travels of ibn Jubayr: Being the Chronicle of a Mediaeval Spanish Moor Concerning his Journey to the Egypt of Saladin, the Holy Cities of Arabia, Baghdad the city of the Caliphs, the Latin kingdom of Jerusalem, and the Norman kingdom of Sicily* of the famous Andalusian geographer and traveller ibn Jubayr (1145–1217). He continues with other medieval texts, such as the work of the Arab chronicler ibn Khillikan’s *wafayāt al-’al’yān wa-anbā’ abnā’ az-zamān* (*Deceased Luminaries and the Stories of the Sons of Time*), a biographical dictionary, the chronicler and Qur’ān exegete Ibn Kathir’s *al-bidāyah wal-nihāyah* (*Beginning and End*) and al-Asfahani’s *al-faṭḥ al-qusī fī al-faṭḥ al-qudsī* (*Qussian Eloquence on the Conquest of Jerusalem*) (al-Asfahani 1965;

Ibn Khillikan 1972; Ibn Kathir 1991), in his description of Acre's siege and fall to the European crusaders. "Pathological" defeat by internal betrayal is the trope of a number of such novels described by the Palestinian historian Darawzah (1888–1984). Comparing the present with the past, he "concluded that the Arabs who defeated Jews in the past, shall defeat them again in the future" (Darraj 2008: 207). The exile and defeat that mark the Palestinian present evoke a *déjà-vu*, following a cyclic history of *de jure* victorious Palestinian. Two types of Christians are presented: the native and the European invader. Reviving historical Acre of the crusades, Awad presents a fictional remapping of identities in which religion does not determine relationship to the land. Both Christian and Muslim Palestinians were colonised.

Adaf and Awad narrate a *past-as-reiteration*, using the literary method of trans-textuality. Both relate the literary and the documentary – so dear to historicists – through negotiation rather than negation. Having said that, I have no illusion that the choices of the authors represent the polyphonic textual corpus of Hellenistic and medieval times. Negotiation is restricted solely to the question of the literary and documentary. The "other", Roman and Arab, becomes, in Adaf's novel, a legal and linguistic-figure, integrated into Jewish tradition, whereas, in Awad, the European crusader provides a narrative of the Palestinian exiled in his home-land.

### **Conversing with the "Middle Ages" in determining Palestine's past**

Conversing with the past provides a "double critical" perspective. This Janus-like conversation presupposes discursive exchanges between *living* parties. The wide range of metaphor scholars use in describing the past *provides answers to our questions*. What is this conversing past? With Palestine's past, the question teases. What is this conversing polyglot past of Palestine? For the present, competing or warring parties, many or the same past made to look like many are not to be confused with an original past. The "Middle Ages" as historical epoch has its own pre-medieval past. In continuing my earlier discussion, being in the middle means being in the process of doing something. It presupposes a "prior" and a "post" as constituent parts of the middle. A potential prior unfolds in the middle and bears the signs of becoming post-middle. In *Au moyen du Moyen Âge: Philosophies médiévales en chrétienté, judaïsme et islam*, Remi Brague describes the Middle Ages as "the only historical epoch that perhaps never accepted being the Middle Ages. It always wanted to be the Renaissance from the beginning" (Brague 2006: 77–78).<sup>6</sup> What do the Middle Ages teach about cultural reception or appropriation of heritage, and to what end? Brague's statement: "A middle ages (in French *moyen âge* is in the singular) wanting to be Renaissance" refers, *grosso modo*, to cultural appropriation modalities of Greek Philosophy in medieval traditions; namely, the reception of pre-medieval Greek and Hellenistic heritage in medieval Christianity, Judaism and Islam. A reception

as “inclusion” in the Western tradition and “digestion” in the Arab-Islamic tradition. Brague’s hermeneutic paradigm, not escaping the cultural scripts of “Eurocentric diffusionism”, will help diagnose this punctured “wanting to be renaissance” of Brague’s Middle Ages. If the Middle Ages were a person, we would easily infer that the Middle Ages suffers from mock and prejudice or that the Renaissance he refers to lays immanent in the Middle Ages as a post-medieval Middle Ages becoming Renaissance. Detecting an embedded “Eurocentric diffusionism” in Brague’s hermeneutic of the two distinct cultural appropriations makes the modern appropriation of the Islamic Middle Ages non-sensical. Brague’s digestion metaphor – being a form of inclusion according to the laws of interference and canonisation/de-canonisation in Polysystem theory – is actually a post-colonial concept, congruent with other post-colonial concepts, deconstructing cultural scripts and applying concepts such as hybridity, bilingualism, etc. I prefer Laroui’s more fitting “Hellenistic era” as a paradigm (Laroui 2009). Medieval reception of Biblical texts, Greek mythology and philosophy, and Persian religion in Arab-Islamic civilisation has engendered a polysystemic tradition of its own, beyond a single confession.<sup>7</sup> For many years, Islamic reception of biblical and post biblical heritage has seemed redundant for scientific reasons.

### ***“Middle Ages” in Zionist historiography***

“Middle Ages” is a universal concept in modern writing. The term first delineated European intellectual history but ended being a value judgement hierarchising the Middle Ages with the “everlasting” epithet, “dark ages”: a time best forgotten. Zionism adopted this attitude because it considers it a time and space in which the Jew was outside history; that is, without sovereignty over the land and therefore unworthy of study. Raz-Krakotzkin thinks Zionism’s paradoxical conception of history provides its own political theology: Jews were not the only one in exile. *Eretz Yisrael* was there as well (Raz-Krakotzkin 2007; Piterberg 2008). The “return to history” and the “negation of the past” began when political sovereignty was re-established, and the Jew was born. Not all pasts are equal or the same.

In Zionist historiography, medieval Palestine becomes *partially* and *ideologically* interesting when Zionism attempts to conceptualise the “Jewish people” as ethnos and the historicity of Jewish nationhood. In the idea of the modern Palestinian, the Arab provides solidarity between the Christian and the Muslim in opposition to the Jew, portrayed as European settler. The medieval is the only “true Hellenistic paradigm” in which the Arab-Jew can experience the possibility of becoming Palestinian, Arab and Jew at the same time. Derrida’s biographer, Benoît Peters, wrote about Derrida: “*ce petit Juif noir et très arabe*”. The medieval saw the emergence of new identities such as the Arab-Jew and the Muslim-Jewish link. Such identities have been replaced by the Muslim-Christian after the establishment of the state

of Israel. Re-appropriating the medieval Palestinian Arab-Islamic heritage means a return to the Muslim-Jewish or Arab-Jew link. That means, for instance, reading Maimonides as an Andalusian, Moroccan, Egyptian and Palestinian thinker, whose heritage does not belong exclusively to religious Zionists, who have been trying to purge his thinking from traces of Arabness (Schwartz 2009; Stroumsa 2009). Medieval Arab-Islamic space guaranteed free movement and settlement within its boundaries, which was the space within which 90% of World Jewry lived as, *inter alia*, a legal subject in a confessional community.

### *The “Middle Ages”, a deposit of conflicting interpretations?*

It is interesting to know that the concepts corresponding to “Middle Ages” in modern Arabic is *al-`aṣr al-wasīṭ* (the middle epoch) or *al-qurūn al-wustā* (the middle centuries) and in Hebrew it is *yemey ha-beynayim* (the middle days). These expressions are in fact calque translations of *medium aevum/media tempestas*. It is widely believed that Christopher Kellner (Cellarius) used the term in his tripartite periodisation of world history. He meant that the Middle Ages began with the first “Christian” Roman emperor, Constantine (Burr 1914; Edelman 1938; Brague 2006). Imperial Christianity would then be a medieval phenomenon in Kellner’s periodisation along with Talmudic Judaism and Islam. Both Modern and Classical Islamic historiographies conceive their history as prior and post *Hijra* – Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina in 622. History worth writing down was dynastic history, the biography of the prophet, religious and political authorities, *tabaqāt* (generations) literature: poets, Sufies, etc. “Human geography” was conceived in early Arabic literature as a specific genre called *ansāb al-`arab* (Arab genealogies). It was a “book keeping” of the state’s ethnic policy. In “History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text”, Gabrielle Spiegel concludes:

In the final analysis, what is the past but a once material substance, now silenced, extant only as sign and as a sign drawing to itself chains of conflicting interpretations that hover over its absent present and compete for possession of the relics, seeking to inscribe traces of significance upon the bodies of the dead?

(Spiegel 1992: 208)

How does the past come to us? Unmediated? That is, without its immediate future. The “Middle Ages” that had turned into “a sign drawing to itself chains of conflicting interpretations”. Are the Middle Ages simply a deposit of conflicting interpretations, which we in the post-Middle Ages can or should dismiss as irrelevant? The Islamic Middle Ages of Palestine are a new beginning: an end of an era or a cyclic catastrophe. With few exceptions, the past and present of Palestine in medieval and modern historiographies are construed as part of a universal history of salvation and theology of

inheritance. Some scholars have proposed the term Mediterranean society as the space of which medieval Palestine is part (Goitein 1967; Gil 1992; Langermann and Morrison 2016). The appropriation and articulation of Palestine's pre-medieval past by medieval historiography – in Arabic, Hebrew, Latin and Syriac – seem to show how these competing historiographies came about in what Spiegel calls “the social dimensions of textual production” and the “ideological mystification of texts”. Both the “past” and the “past of the past” are appropriated by modern regimes of knowledge, as a sign turned into *heritage*. Reading the Palestinian heritage should begin with “a denunciation of the saintly trilogy governing Middle Eastern issues: Zionism, Arab reactionary regimes and Imperialism” (Lionnet 2011: 398). Law and theology make their presence felt when theology suspends law in the garb of legal language. With Derrida, I say: “Here, therefore, a double and paradoxical prescription” (Derrida 2014: 34). As a legal sign, the inherited past stands for only one thing; namely, a material substance that *survives* death and is *worth* passing on through genealogy or a certain form of affiliation and, as it were, to a legal inheritor a legal inheritance. In the case of Palestine, it is a theologised inheritance in the garb of divine law; that is, a law suspended by the logic of theology. This is the language that theology of inheritance and salvation use in regard to Palestine as a divine heritage (Ps 37:29; Is 65:9; Q21:105). Any suspension of law introduces a taxonomy of violence. Here we should remember other taxonomies of holy war, jihad, war of independence, messianic war, etc. War and violence politics are often described as a *Reconquista* under various euphemisms (Flori 2002). In short, “the task of the theologian is less about defining who God is, than about judging humans” (Laroui 2009: 12), who institute war as a suspension of law and theology. Approaching the questions of theology, law, the medieval and Palestine from a post-colonial perspective means de-theologisation, as in de-colonisation and deconstruction.

### **Literary corpus**

Dealing with the past as an inheritance for the historian of the “pre-modern”, textually oriented history of Palestine under Islamic rule means for scholars of Palestinian history and heritage that our task is about exploring

- a “the social dimensions of textual production” of the immense corpus of and about medieval Palestine, irrespective of questions of genre, language, religious affiliation and any exaggerated concern with the relationship between the past and contemporary ideological or dogmatic affiliations;
- b “the text’s mode of production and surplus of significance” (Clark 2004: 163).

I postulate a different interpretive paradigm for medieval Palestine: the *Hel-lenistic Paradigm* for the Middle Ages in the Mediterranean as a whole, and

Palestine as locale. We know very well that medieval geography and history of Palestine is in many ways integral to Africa, Asia and Europe. With the Hellenistic paradigm, I mean “a new Hellenistic era in which mythology, metaphysics, theology and positive sciences co-exist and mutually influence one another” (Laroui 2009: 11). This paradigm consists of co-existence between various disciplines and fields of inquiry, but also of various traditions, literary systems, confessions, political and social institutions and economic modes of production: a paradigm that allows confessional communities (Islam, Judaism, Christianity, etc.) to canonise their foundational textual traditions and regimes of belief. I would actually argue that it is the medieval “Hellenistic era paradigm” that could help best elucidate issues of “symbiosis”, text production-dissemination, canonisation, etc. For instance, the mutual influences between various traditions have created not only new individual literary systems but a common corpus of texts for all social agents across the boundaries of confessions, ideologies and lects. Here I propose revisiting the romanticised and politically motivated notion of *symbiosis*, *convivencia* and *golden age* (Goitein 1955; Cohen 1994; Wasserstrom 1995; Derrida 2014).

### ***Old versus New Philology***

Any conversation with the heritage of medieval Palestine needs to frame the medieval *polyphonic context* and its *pluralistic textual materials* that I call *corpus*. With corpus one needs not worry about the distinction between literature, documents and artefacts, but “we must find a way to situate this corpus, constantly and firmly in a determined period of time” (Laroui 2009: 10). This corpus bears the bodily marks of both its own age and its genealogy. It is not an ageless “substance of material”. The textual corpus – as a privileged site of philological inquiry – has yielded positive results due to the work of philologists in finding, collecting and editing thousands of manuscripts, belonging to the realm of the “Semitic library”. However, the shortcomings in the contribution of traditional Semitic philology lie in two distinct areas: semantics (the fiction of the authorial intention) and cultural scripts (the Palestinian as “native informant”).

Within semantics, traditional philology has dealt with the texts’ mode of production as synonymous with “authorial intention”, and in most cases conflated text with context.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, Elizabeth Clark’s reading of Spiegel hits the mark, when she states that in addition to conflating text and context, social order is absorbed into “textuality”, and “political and social practices are treated as *cultural scripts*” (Clark 2004: 164). In traditional Semitic philology, the voice of the native is considered devoid of any meaning of its own. It is simply an artefact, a silent text, whose original meaning only the Western philologist is able to restore. In her discussion about “discursive production”, Gayatri Spivak speaks of the paradoxical status and function of the notion of the “native informant” – the “colonised” – as it “is

crucially needed by the great texts, and it is foreclosed” (Spivak 1999: 4). By foreclosure, she, borrowing the concept of Lacan, means what “relates to a Freudian ‘primary process’ embodying two complementary operations: the *Einbeziehung ins Ich*, introduction into the subject, and the *Ausstoßung aus dem Ich*, expulsion from the subject. The Real is or carries the mark of that expulsion” (Spivak 1999: 5).

This paradoxical position towards “native informant” can, for instance, be seen in Semitic philology’s textual criticism, according to which “native” texts are corrected if their language variety is different from the normative grammar, instead of being treated as linguistic markers of a language variety of the native speaker. Restoring, for instance, Judaeo-Arabic texts back to their so-called “original form” is sometimes dictated by the extra-textual perceptions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries’ European editor/philologist about European Jews. They were considered either as a “national minority” or as a distinct race with non-European cultural and racial features. Such is nowadays projected on Arab Jews and their literary and linguistic production. Even the Jewish-European scholars of the *Wissenschaft des Judentums* era have not escaped this orientalist perception (Heschel 1998). In Arab-Islamic societies, these extra-textual perceptions were imposed on socio-linguistic, literary and historical phenomena: Judaeo-Arabic and the Arabic literature of Jews (Steinschneider 1897; Shohat 2015, 2017). For instance, the Karaite *pesher* in biblical exegesis is construed as a manifestation of an early Zionist/nationalist movement of liberation rather than as a messianic pietistic move (Margoliouth 1889; Ben Shammai 1991). The way forward resides in breaking away with the philological philosophy of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and some of its patronising techniques for the sake of empowering the agency of the native (Driscoll 2010). On the latter point, despite its early shortcomings and pretensions, *new* or *material Philology* is useful since it is a dynamic theory and praxis that helps deal with such a huge, diverse and polyphonic corpus as the medieval textual history of Palestine.

### *Negotiating competing traditions*

The medieval cultural heritage of Palestine is part and parcel of broader intersecting histories, traditions and ideologies. Mapping all variegated textual corpora is the first and most decisive task for scholars of various disciplines: from New Philology to literary criticism, cultural studies and post-colonial historiography. Choosing the term *corpus* is not an arbitrary choice, but an expression of a strategy of bi-directional critique (double *critique/critique double*). The task and aim is to de-centre all centres – every centred tradition/literary system – and reconstruct, instead, a space of negotiation for competing traditions: Islamic, Jewish, Christian, Samaritan, etc. and literary systems such as Arabic, Aramaic, Coptic, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, etc. In other words, we are not looking for a corpus as an equivalent

of the nineteenth-century European historiography's "archives as a repository of *facts*" (Spivak 1999: 203), but rather such substantial material with which the present reader – any reader – can converse.

My conviction as a trans-disciplinary scholar is that while recognising the hegemonic relationship and the hierarchic stratification of the various literary systems emanating from various historical periods and genealogies that constitute the medieval corpus, a privileged hearing should be given to the literary system of *the minor* and its counter-narrative. By *the minor* I mean the de-canonised traditions and corpora of this imagined past, their literary systems and the various language varieties that the minor often wrote in. The minor in the Deleuzian sense, however, means the unavoidably political writings of a minority in the language of the majority (Deleuze and Guattari 1986). The questions that confront every historian of Palestine is: "how was this tradition built? By whom? For whom? And for what purpose?" Of course, we speak here about various traditions: Rabbinic, Karaite, Samaritan, oriental Christian, European Christian, Sunni Islam, Shia Islam, etc. The issue of tradition and its centrality conflates with two other histories: dynastic and eventual histories of Palestine. While the dynastic history has a conquest character of the successive ruling powers in Palestine, regional and global, the eventual history is the domain of local events, literature, religion, law, etc. It is within the confines of eventual history and heritage that we find the minor literary systems that often escape the control of dynastic historiography. In many discussions about the demography of Palestine in late antiquity and Early Islam, such as we find in Moshe Gil's *A History of Palestine (634–1099)*, Jews, Samaritans, Christians and Muslims take cyclic turns: rise and decline, leave and return. This is the reason why Karaites – mourners of Zion – who went back to Jerusalem to establish a Karaite academy of the seventy scholars – modelled on the institution of the seventy elders (Num 11.16) – was construed as a potential, though premature, Zionist return to history.<sup>9</sup> However, the concept of the minor has nothing to do with minority versus majority and demography.

In 1954, Shelomo Goitein, an Israeli historian of Judaeo-Arabic cultural heritage and a proponent of Arab–Jewish "positive symbiosis", asked this very important question: "What would Jewish and general history benefit from a systematic publication of the documentary Geniza Papers?" (Goitein 1954). Goitein and the "Princeton school" are right in urging scholars of medieval Islamic history to reintegrate the "Documentary Geniza" (DG) that covers almost a thousand year period (ninth–nineteenth centuries) as witness for both Jewish and Islamic Mediterranean and Palestinian history. It is indeed an indispensable multilingual archive that could contribute to the rewriting of Palestine's past. Re-integrating DG in mapping the corpus of the textually oriented history of medieval Palestine and the entire region, or at least from the ninth century onwards, means recognising that DG is not exclusively Jewish. As a matter of fact, DG is a shared *lieu de mémoire*,

an archive or a *bibliotheca*. Regardless of Goitein's nationalist intentions, dealing with medieval Palestine historiography begins with being aware of the pitfalls of asymmetric sources, canons and identity politics.

### **De-theologising Palestine's medieval heritage**

"Indeed, Occident, I am a split self, but my identity is an infinity of games of desert flowers" (Khatibi 1971: 181). Embedded in the terms/concepts *de-theologising* and the *medieval* are a series of enunciations, acts and representations that interrelate in a relentless bi-directionalism (Sabih 2015). The latter's strength, Khatibi's *critique-double* – a "combatant" theory of de-colonisation – resides in the vulnerability of the critical mind of the Enlightenment not being able to subject itself to its own critical gaze. Double critique is after all "putting itself and the object under investigation in crisis at the same time...In this sense, *critique is double*: critique of the intrinsic laws and critique of the societal laws" (Khatibi 2002: 319).<sup>10</sup> It has also become a theory of de-theologisation with no other option than giving in to simultaneous waves of ergative movements and acts: empowering and self-empowering, centrifugal and centripetal; beginnings with immanent potential unfolding of their own. In other words, this double critique makes its object come out of the shadows of theologised thought, both overt and covert, while exposing itself as theory and methodology as *mise-en-crise* of the circular, linear and punctual critiques. To illustrate how double critique may work: Palestine's medieval past has no single beginning but many, no single past but many, no single origin but many. In recognising many beginnings, the medieval – as a datable corpus – becomes a moment and mode of conversation with its many pasts. As mentioned earlier, medieval as a sign provokes a series of contradictory positions: "dark ages", "golden age", "modern age" and other "ages", which appear as forms of positivistic philosophy of history. Often these "age"-periods are presented in the garb of secularism, despite their being heavily theologised. Considering Palestine and its past(s), the task of post-colonial scholarship is to place history outside the realm of eschatology and any forms of teleology. Given the temptation to become foundational and dogmatic, double critique becomes the very expression of the *will* to de-centre, de-colonise, de-theologise, de-zionise and de-nationalise all centres. In this Hellenistic era, it is not enough to purge Palestinian heritage of "Eurocentric diffusionism" (Blaut 1993: 2000); one must be critical of the very idea of *centrism*. Today we have an inheritance from the discourse of the *Enlightenment*, opposite and prior to the secular and scientific.

In the lexeme *critique* there is the cardinal idea and praxis of *la mise en crise* and all indexical markers that stand for liminality in and through which the end of something and the beginning of something else meet and negotiate the terms of the take-over that the pairs end/beginning and beginning/end make. For example, the exchange between divine and human

agency is a role-play through which modern conception of history and historiography would articulate its imbedded theological idea of the omnipotent, whether it is politics, law or ethics. The narrative of historiography as an “exclusively” modern and Western scientific field of inquiry builds its rational foundations on the notion of *critique* within the secularised logics of God/Man agency. My proposed theory of de-theologising at the level of its modi: *enunciation*, *act* and *representation* are serious attempts to deconstruct all dichotomies such as an omnipotent centre versus a weak periphery that are often inherent to political history. This becomes clear in Palestine’s political history of canonised literary systems, and is the reason that any practitioner of a double critique theory should realise that he or she stands before a manifold heritage. In addition to pre-Hellenistic, Hellenistic and Arab-Islamic heritage, one should consider the heritage of the “native” and the “land”. On this latter point, it would be worth considering the theoretical premises of the New Philology.

The inevitable questions that I ask when speaking about the Palestinian as *the* native and *the* indigenous are: “is it possible to explore the idea of an ethno-history of Palestine? Is it possible to talk about a “substance material” that constitutes the heritage of native and indigenous?” In the waves of Palestine’s colonisation, how did the dynamics of *nativisation* work (Masalha 2016)? In this regard, one wonders whether the statement of Ibn Hazm (d.1064) about the Samaritans should be understood as an expression of nativism “...because [Samaritans] forbid that any one of them should settle outside *Palestine* and *Jordan*” (Ibn Ḥazm 1929: 1, 94). One wonders why Ibn Hazm did not mention Egypt (*Miṣr*) and Syria (*al-shām*), knowing that Samaritan communities used to live there also. Or is Ibn Hazm talking about Samaritan halachah of nativism rather than concrete human geography? Or is the Samaritan a polemical figure in his critique of Rabbinic Judaism? We certainly know that the Samaritan community in Nablus/Gerizim stands as a figure of the “native” and “indigenous”. Its heritage in modern Palestine is undergoing an increasing zionisation, according to which the Samaritan halachah of “nativism” is used as historical argument in Zionism’s master narrative: Jew as native, with the Israelite Samaritan as a sign of continuity with the Israelite in the land – a living witness for the Israeli Jew in opposition to the Palestinian as authentic native.

What does it mean to subject the medieval past of Palestine to double critique as a *theory* and *method*? As a theory of de-colonisation and de-theologisation, double critique means deconstructing the notions of *origin* and a unique beginning of the past. Instead, one must consider conversing with the past in its various appropriations in forms of enunciation and representation, and subject them to the necessary operation of de-theologisation. That is confessing the impossible!

However, one can never cease to challenge the impossible in the case of Palestinian and Israeli historiographies. Perhaps the issue of the naming policy of “Palestine” and the polysemy of its various names could be a good

place to begin. The past of Palestine in regard to naming policy and actual names of Palestine still functions in today's Palestine/Israel. It is important to know how Palestine as name/names has been enunciated and represented in everyday use, in literary and documentary texts, in various traditions, in historical constructions and in eschatologies. Each name is "a sign drawing to itself chains of conflicting interpretations that hover over its absent present and compete for possession of the relics, seeking to inscribe traces of significance upon the bodies of the dead" (Stone and Spiegel 1992: 208).

## Conclusion

There is a huge need for trans-disciplinary scholars working together on identifying, mapping and critically interpreting the vast literary and documentary corpus in reconstructing Palestinian heritage. It is the way forward if we wish to debunk ideological claims in the guise of truth. Vital, in this regard, is de-ontological. This task implies that one should not ignore political sensitivities, most of which are fit for *un roman noir*. Standing on the threshold of this research project about the medieval textual oriented history of Palestine – as "past of the past" – I would like to make the following propositions for the volume that shall deal with the medieval cultural heritage of Palestine:

- a Context: explore the social dimensions of de-theologising Palestine's heritage.
- b Text: mapping the corpus for the textually oriented history of medieval Palestine.
- c Trans-textuality: identifying the *minor* and articulating its literary system into a cohesive integrating polysystemic and trans-disciplinary conversation with the present.

## Notes

- 1 One cannot help thinking of Golda Meir and her infamous statement that there are Jews and Arabs, but no Palestinians.
- 2 By "etymological fallacy", one means one can trace and retrieve the original meaning of a word, which constitutes its unchanging identity. Take for instance the term "Palestine" and its biblical etymology *plesheth* and the various possible etymologies. In hagio-aggadic texts, phonetics and graphemes are manipulated into semantics that support certain ideologies and worldviews at the level of words. Usually hagio-aggadic literature conflates origin, etymology and identity through the lens of narrative and law. One can mention for instance the story of Babel in Gen.11: 1–9, or the biblical figure Ishmael as the first Arab in medieval Rabbinic, Karaite and Islamic literature; see Bakhos's interesting study *Ishmael on the Border: Rabbinic Portrayals of the First Arab* (Bakhos 2006), or the fascinating study of Kilito on the various stories in Classical Arabic about the *Tongue of Adam* as the first Arab poet and the split-in-two tongue of the serpent as the origin of lying – speaking in two tongues (Kilito 2016).

- 3 In regard to the Goliath figure and its representation in the Israeli imagination, see for example the sixth myth “Defenceless Israel Faced Destruction by the Arab Goliath” (Flapan 1987: 187–199).
- 4 We find similar strategy in the story of the villain “Sāmīrī” figure in the Qur’ān as the instigator of calf worship at the time of Moses and Aaron (Q 20: 85–97). Ironically, Muslim Palestinian’s identification of the Samaritan minority in today’s Palestine is framed by the Qur’anic Sāmīrī narrative (Sabih, forthcoming).
- 5 On the the reception of Maimonides in modern Jewish-Israeli thought, see (Masalha 2007; Sabih 2016).
- 6 Le Moyen Âge est une époque, peut-être la seule époque de l’histoire, qui n’a jamais accepté d’être un Moyen Âge. Il a toujours voulu être une Renaissance, depuis le début (Brague 2006: 77–78).
- 7 It is fundamental to acknowledge that the medieval Arab-Islamic space was a fertile site of negotiation that allowed various traditions – Jewish, Islamic, Christian, Samaritan, Karaite, Mandaic – to re-emerge and develop autonomously within a process of interdependence and mutual recognition. The reception and appropriation of, *inter alia*, the Biblical heritage in these traditions are two out of many outstanding examples of how medieval Arab-Islamic civilization became a site of negotiation, not negation (Adang 1996; Frank 2004; Sabih 2009; Goldstein 2011; Weigelt 2017). For the reception of the Bible in medieval European Christian exegesis, see Dahan (2008).
- 8 See the excellent discussion about *text* and *context* in post-structuralism in Elisabeth Clark (2004). Particularly, her Chapter 7 “Text and Context” presenting the debate between Gadamer and Derrida would be of interest to scholars who are working on ancient and pre-modern history.
- 9 For a discussion of Zionism’s foundational myths, see Khatibi (1974); Raz-Krakotzkin (2007, 1994); Piterberg (2008). On the reception of the Bible in Zionism, see Masalha (2007).
- 10 La critique comme mise en crise à la fois d’elle même et de l’objet dont elle s’occupe...En ce sens aussi, la critique est double : critique de sa loi intrinsèque, et celle de la loi sociétale” (Khatibi 2002: 319).

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## 5 History, curriculum and textbooks

### Reframing Palestine in the post-Oslo period<sup>1</sup>

*Nadia Naser-Najjab and Ilan Pappé*

#### **Introduction and conceptual framework**

The Oslo Accord signed between Israel and the PLO in September 1993 brought to the world the Palestinian Authority (PA). This political body was meant to rule the areas within the West Bank and the Gaza from which Israel withdrew, unilaterally, under the terms of the Peace Accord. The PA assumed roles and responsibilities in almost every sphere of life but was constantly monitored, criticised and curbed by Israel and the international community whenever it was alleged to have exceeded its powers and ambitions. One of the most contested areas was education. Before the Israeli occupation in 1967, Palestinian education was under the control of Jordan in the West Bank and under Egypt in the Gaza Strip. In 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Palestinian education came under Israeli military control.

When the first textbooks were produced by the PA, they were immediately condemned by official Israel and its friends in the United States as texts of incitement which undermined the peace process. The subsequent controversy that has surrounded the Palestinian curriculum touches upon themes and concerns that go well beyond the relatively confined field of education policy. As the subsequent engagement demonstrates, the development of a Palestinian curriculum has evoked questions and concerns that correspond as much to the study of politics as to that of education. The question of education, far from being an uncontroversial or self-evident concern, was, in the Palestinian context, a politicised issue from beginning to end.

The battle over the orientation of the textbooks produced by the PA transcends a factual debate about truth: namely whether or not the books do, in fact, incite against Israelis and Jews. It exposes the failure and internal contradictions of the peace process between Israel and Palestine in general and that of the Oslo peace agreement in particular. Through a closer look at this issue, one can appreciate the irrelevance of the peace process as a means of reconciliation between the two sides. The Israeli and international reactions to the textbook issue and the Palestinian

response to these reactions indicate the gap between two basic narratives and the framing of the origins, essence and ways of resolving the conflict in Israel and Palestine.

In this chapter, we are particularly interested in the criticism directed at the textbooks from an allegedly liberal Zionist NGO, even though it has Palestinian membership in it. Through an examination of this particular criticism, we can engage a more general conversation about two possible perceptions of the relationship between power and education.

In this regard, two different perceptions of power seem to be at play. The power of education over politics appears as a perception held by those criticising the Palestinian text books, but the power of politics over education is the one we expose as lying behind that criticism, including when such power is exercised by an allegedly “peace and coexistence” organisation. This second form of power is familiar from Foucault’s deconstruction of the relationship between power and knowledge (Foucault 1991). The power in this second sense is not imposed directly, but through a discourse of peace and democracy, which denies the right for a Palestinian narrative in the name of these two noble ideals. Since part of the pressure was also articulated in the name of enlightenment and progress, one can see the power of cultural hegemony at play, in the Gramscian sense,<sup>2</sup> as an attempt to silence a Palestinian educational voice in the name of cultural superiority, modernity and scholarship.

We also examine this critique while recognising a possible alternative way in which an NGO, devoted to peace and reconciliation, could have engaged a Palestinian attempt to produce an educational narrative in the wake of the Oslo Accord: for instance, by offering a Gadamerian fusion of horizons (Gadamer 1975), by creating a bridge narrative, rather than by destroying the narrative of the occupied and dispossessed.

But, above all, the inability of a liberal Zionist NGO, with Palestinian members in it, to respect or even tolerate Palestinian input into a future educational narrative, for the sake of peace, is the inevitable, natural outcome of the Zionist project in Palestine. Zionism, even in its liberal manifestation, is a settler colonialist movement and, as recent research has adequately shown, this ideological perspective informs its approach to the native population and its national desires. As will be explained in this chapter, Zionist settler colonialism was able to impose, politically and economically, its will on the disempowered Palestinian leadership through the Oslo Accord. It failed to do so in the realm of education.

The Israeli criticism of Palestinian textbooks focused on those sections that represent the Palestinian national narrative. This narrative was hardly visible in all other aspects of the Oslo Accord. While the PLO was willing to surrender to an Israeli dictate in the overall political framework of the accord, this surrender could not easily be translated into a ‘tamed’ textbook that would have been acceptable to Israel and international observers.

Economically and politically, the post-Oslo reality has been shaped by Israel's absolute control of every aspect of Palestinian life, even in areas, which have been allegedly controlled by the PA (Area A and parts of the Gaza Strip, according to the Oslo II agreement). This has left the PA in control of over less than 40% of the West Bank. Areas A and B have been fragmented into more than 200 cantons, bisected by roadblocks, checkpoints, settlements and, eventually, the Separation Wall built in 2002. The Oslo Agreement, as an interim agreement, left the issues of: Jerusalem, the Palestinian refugees, Israeli settlements and borders, to the final phase within five years. Final status issues, however, remain unresolved to the present time and the Israeli settlements create facts on the ground and compromise the possibility of establishing a contiguous Palestinian state with full sovereignty.

However, in the field of education, Israel found itself unable to exercise such power directly – hence the criticism from official Israeli spokespersons. As we shall show, the condemnation of the PA's attempt to allow its narrative to be fully displayed in its textbooks and curricula frustrated Israeli liberal and leftist Zionist NGOs and activists who had assumed that political and economic surrender was an act of peace, which should have led Palestinian educators to give up on their national narrative as part of the Oslo Accord.

The educational battle raged between the official Palestinian educational agency committed to the Oslo Accord and the most ardent supporters of the accord in Israel, such as NGOs like IPCRI, which we examine here more closely. This dispute exposes the gap between the framing of Palestine by the two sides of the conflict and unpacks the charade of the Oslo accord. IPCRI is an acronym for the Israeli-Palestinian Centre for Research and Information. It was established in 1988 as a joint venture of Palestinian and Israeli peace activists, but, in essence, it was a front organisation for the Zionist left in its search for a two state solution.<sup>3</sup> IPCRI is a non-profit think tank that, which, in its own words, combines research with peace-building and advocacy initiatives across Israel and Palestine.<sup>4</sup>

Following the Oslo agreement, IPCRI has been integrated into the "People-to-People" (P2P) programme, which is stipulated by the accord to support from below diplomatic efforts from above (Article VIII of Annex VI of the Oslo II Agreement): "The two sides shall take steps to foster public debate and involvement, to remove barriers to interaction ...". The P2P activities were entrusted to the hands of Norwegian organisations assisted by funds from the European Union, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Canada Fund, other sources, etc. (Hanssen-Bauer 2000: 35–40; Endresen, 2001: 13).

The bi-national nature of IPCRI should not mislead us. The hegemony in this organisation, as in all the Israeli-Palestinian NGOs springing up after Oslo, was Israeli. The impulse to advance reconciliation and coexistence through neutral venues, which were supposed to be free from stereotypes and prejudice, was noble. But the political asymmetry between Palestinians

and Israelis was also reflected in relationship with the NGOs, as can be gleaned from Yifat Maoz's excellent analysis of them in 2000. Dominance of the Israelis has been seen not only in joint NGOs but also in the overall imbalance between NGOs on both sides. The Israeli NGOs have been more competent than Palestinian ones. The Israeli side has been more experienced in proposal-writing and seeking funds than its Palestinian counterpart, and this has given the Israelis a privileged position with funding agencies (Maoz 2000). Such dominance has been recognised by the Norwegian P2P Programme Coordinator:

When the People-to-People Programme began, Israelis dominated the dialogue in terms of the number of organisations involved, organisational efficiency, donor access, proposal writing, and willingness to [enter into] dialogue.

(Endresen 2001: 22)

The alleged reason for leaving monitoring projects such as textbooks in the hands of Israeli NGOs was their professionalism. However, in reality, it was the same balance of power that dictated Israel's conception of peace to the Palestinians in the Oslo Accord, which granted a monopoly to the Israeli NGOs in the examination of textbooks.

The accord, as a declaration of principles and as an expanded Norwegian and American exercise in reconciliation, as manifested in the P2P framework, did not attempt to create a bridge between two national narratives, concerns or aspirations. It was an Israeli dictate to the occupied Palestinians, sanctioned by the Norwegians and the Americans and presented as a genuine peace treaty. It has been in the field of education that the dictate has been resisted (as it has been unsuccessfully resisted, militarily, in the second Intifada in 2000 and, perhaps, with a greater measure of success, by the Hamas government in the Gaza Strip since 2006).

The framing reflects two opposing conceptualisations of the conflict itself. The peace NGOs in Israel, such as IPCRI, have viewed the conflict as one raging between two national movements. The two movements, in this perception, are very different in essence and quality. One, the Zionist, is a European, modernised force and the other, the Palestinian, is a more primitive form of nationalism, working within the framework of an "Arab" or "Islamic" political culture. Therefore, in every aspect of their efforts at reconciliation, the advanced side generously concedes land, rights and authority to the less reliable, developing national movement. This creates the understanding that educational products such as textbooks have to be supervised and coached by Israelis, devoted to the peace process. While such a balance of power forced the Palestinian leadership to accept, grudgingly and probably wrongly, Israeli impositions on their security, foreign policy, economy and social development, they seemed to draw a line when it came to educational matters.

### **Israeli and Palestinian textbooks: differing historical narratives**

Geographically, the liberal Israeli version frames Palestine as consisting of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, alone, whereas in the Palestinian narrative, both Israel and the occupied territories are Palestine. In the liberal Israeli narrative, the Palestinians, demographically, are merely the people who lived in the occupied territories, whereas, in the Palestinian narrative, Palestinians include the Palestinians in Israel as well as the Palestinian refugees and exilic communities.

In the liberal Israeli view, the narrative in post-Oslo textbooks should not dwell on the past at all. At the same time, that narrative should recognise both the ancient Hebrew past of the land and the Holocaust. Textbooks were also expected to recognise Zionism as a national Jewish movement. The Palestinian narrative, as it has appeared throughout the years and has made its way into the textbooks, has viewed Zionism as a settler colonialist movement, which brought a catastrophe on the Palestinian people in 1948, in the Nakbah, for which the Zionist movement would have to be accountable and the state of Israel responsible in the form of compensation and/ or repatriation of the Palestinians who had been expelled by Israel from the land. The liberal Zionist narrative has blamed Palestinian and Arab leaders for what it has described as a voluntary flight of the Palestinian population and has absolved Israel from any responsibility for the disaster.

Finally, the liberal Zionist narrative has not recognised the legitimacy of the Palestinian armed struggle and has defined it as pure terrorism. The Palestinian narrative, however, has considered Palestinian resistance over the years, including after Oslo, as part of a legitimate, anti-colonialist struggle. The fact that the Palestinian leadership, the PLO, accepted the need to lay down arms, negotiate and accept a Palestinian state limited to only parts of Palestine does not negate the above narrative framing of the land, its people and their struggle.

In every respect, the Israeli narrative has won the day on the ground, but it has failed to make an impact in the field of education. Conceptually, this imbalance raises some empowering questions for the possible role of education among the world's most disempowered national movements and also implies what the theoretical literature has defined as "feeble resistance". This is a way of navigating through an unwanted reality to empower, even if slightly and temporarily, and often, even individually, a sense of dignity, independence and liberation. In fact, we argue that the liberal Zionist NGO, spearheading its criticism on the Palestinian textbook, in the period under review, has included Palestinian members who had joined it not because they accepted the Zionist narrative, but because a dominated Israeli NGO provided some freedoms, which otherwise have been absent in the lives of Palestinians in the occupied territories during a post-Oslo reality.

So, which Palestine was supposed to appear in Palestinian textbooks during the post-Oslo era? As Ali Jarbawi, one of the leading members of the Palestinian curriculum team, has put it

Which Palestine should we teach? Is it historical Palestine over its whole geographical area, or is it the Palestine that will emerge out of the political agreements signed with Israel? How to deal with Israel? Is it only a neighbour state or one that was established on Palestinian land?

(Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre 1996: 454)

### **The Palestinian mission**

The PA assumed formal responsibility for Palestinian education with its establishment in 1994. The creation of a Palestinian curriculum as an undertaking, which touched upon questions of content, teaching, methodology and the application of teaching materials, was a crucial stage, in both a symbolic and practical sense, in the development of a Palestinian educational system. As such, a Palestinian Curriculum Development Centre (PCDC) was established in collaboration with United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and mandated with the responsibility of developing teaching materials with a strong emphasis on the specifically Palestinian culture, history and identity. It was committed to the basic chapters in the Palestinian national narrative as they appeared in the PLO's Declaration of Independence of 1988. That document accepted the partition of Palestine as a possible solution, but stressed the need to recognise it as a necessary evil for the sake of peace, but one that neither altered what had happened in history nor the affiliation of all Palestinians to the whole of Palestine. The PCDC was committed to promoting critical thinking and pedagogy alongside national consciousness and orientation (PCDC 1996; Moughrabi 2001; Brown 2002).

The PCDC was willing for the curriculum to reflect the era of peace and reconciliation, which followed the Oslo agreement. However, since the signing of the Oslo agreement, political realities were far from being peaceful and Palestinians faced grave predicaments on a daily basis. Israel continued building settlements in the West Bank, which isolated Jerusalem, fragmented the West Bank and broke its connection with the Gaza Strip. According to Khalil Tufakji, the "Palestinian areas were being gradually transformed into agglomerations encircled by settlements and bypass roads" (Tufakji 2000: 54).<sup>5</sup>

The situation has deteriorated since 1996, when Benjamin Netanyahu was first elected Prime Minister. In September 1996, he began to construct a tunnel beside the Al-Aqsa mosque/Al-Haram al-Sharif. For the first time since the signing of Oslo II (1995), there were bloody clashes between Palestinians, including the Palestinian police force, and the Israeli army. In March 1997,

Netanyahu's decision to build a new settlement on a site on Jabal Abu-Ghnaim in east Jerusalem created another crisis between Palestinians and Israelis.

There seemed to be some respite with new American involvement that produced the Wye River agreement of 1998.<sup>6</sup> However, this was a limited arrangement that divided the city of Kahlil (Hebron) between settlers and the locals. Once again, a memorandum catered solely to Israel's security needs and perceptions (Aruri 1999: 18; Hanieh 2001).

When time came, allegedly, to discuss the issues at the heart of the conflict, such as refugees, settlements, the fate of Jerusalem, borders and the future sovereignty of the Palestinian state, it was clear that such a discussion was not going to materialise. The Camp David Summit of 2000 was broadcast as a summit for finalising peace. In essence, however, it was the last attempt to force Yasser Arafat to declare a total surrender to the Israeli peace dictate. He refused and, in the volatile atmosphere which ensued, all that was needed was a single spark to ignite the fire. The Israeli opposition leader, then, Ariel Sharon, decided to visit the al-Aqsa mosque in September of 2000 and all Hell broke loose. The second Intifada began.

The Israeli response to the uprising deteriorated Palestinian realities yet further. During the next decade, the entire political scene would change. Hamas would take over the Gaza Strip, and the matrix of oppression and control of Israel over the West Bank would disrupt whatever remnants of normal life remained in the West Bank. It was hard to imagine the textbooks reflecting a different reality which would accord with the demands of the Israelis and those who supported them (Roy 2004).

This was especially difficult because education was so hardly pressed by these developments. In 2000, according to the United Nations, some 500 barriers restricted student movement within the West Bank. Collective punishments, such as curfews, and Israeli incursions contributed to the closure of schools. From 2003 to 2004, a total of 1,152 schooldays were lost in the West Bank (Palestinian Monitoring Group 2005). The majority of Palestinian students faced challenges of considerable scope and intensity. These obstacles have in turn impacted significantly educational development, attendance and learning.

Schoolchildren and students within Area C risked physical attack from settlers, and some classes in these areas were conducted in caravans and tents, due to lack of available school space. There was also a high dropout-rate in these areas (which was particularly pronounced among female students) (UNICEF 2011). In some cases, children had to walk more than five kilometres to get to their schools. In other instances, children needed to cross the Separation Wall. Teachers routinely encountered the same obstacles.

In East Jerusalem, problems were of a different nature. Students, here, were under the Israeli Ministry of Education's authority and the censorship of Palestinian national identity was manifested in a well-publicised controversy, in which the ministry's staff made a series of changes to Palestinian

textbooks. As a consequence, the Palestinian logo was replaced with the logo of the Jerusalem municipality, while the Palestinian flag was deleted. In addition, all sections related to Palestinian history and the Nakbah were removed. In some cases, censored pages were left blank in the textbooks.

The situation remains the same at the time in which we write this chapter. Around 3,414 Jerusalem-based students have been separated from their schools by the wall. There are currently 5,000 children who are not registered as students at all, due to a lack of teaching space. In addition to those students who are enrolled, some 2,300 have been affected by a lack of classroom space (UNICEF 2011: 6).

Education in East Jerusalem has been significantly impacted by the construction of the Separation Wall and by the sealing off of the city from the rest of the West Bank. As a consequence, around 150 communities, with approximately 290,000 Jerusalem ID holders, are currently isolated behind the Separation Wall, a situation which is ultimately likely to accelerate further decreases in East Jerusalem's Arab population (which, since 1967, has substantially declined under Israeli occupation) (UN/OCHA 2013).

Worst hit has been the Gaza Strip. In the latest attack on it, in the summer of 2014, 118 schools were damaged, while twenty-two schools were completely destroyed, and ninety-five schools have been used as shelters for the 190,000–215,000 Palestinians who were displaced from their homes. Moreover, according to the UN, some 190,000 children have needed psychological support as a result of the war and loss of family members and relatives. Before the war, the education sector already suffered a shortage of about 200 schools. This has been despite the fact that the schools have operated on a double shift basis (UN/OCHA 2014).

The Palestinian mission has been to both remain loyal to Palestinian culture, heritage and identity and reflect the reality on the ground, if it would wish to be relevant to the society and its education it wished to serve.

IPCRI's declared mission has been "to promote democracy, tolerance, peace and pluralism". By implication, IPCRI has asserted that "(education should) develop students' skills in problem solving, conflict resolution (and) critical thinking, (thus enabling) them to deal with problems that have more than one correct answer". Loyalty to Palestinian history and narrative and adopting a reflective view of the reality in which students lived did not fall within the view of IPCRI, within the list of such noble aspirations. However, it is impossible to understand the double talk and insincerity of IPCRI if one does not first describe how the Palestinian books were generally received.

### **The accusations of incitement**

The accusations against Palestinian textbooks began among pro-Israeli groups in the United States. Reports by these organisations and individuals claimed that Palestinian textbooks incited violence and hatred against Israeli Jews and, thus, did not promote values of peace, tolerance and

coexistence. These were used in Israeli propaganda and lobbying campaigns against the PA. Since the PA was dependent on external funding, these accusations also affected Palestinian efforts to recruit money to develop, among other things, the educational system.

One of the leading figures in the United States, condemning the textbooks, was Senator Hillary Clinton. Following the failure of the Camp David summit in 2000 and in her first Senate campaign, Senator Clinton continued to criticise Palestinian textbooks. She declared that all “future aid to the Palestinian Authority must be contingent on strict compliance with their obligation to change all the textbooks in all grades—not just two at a time” (Henry 2000).

Her positions were supported by the Centre for Monitoring the Impact of Peace (CMIP),<sup>7</sup> an American non-governmental organisation, one of whose directors, Itamar Marcus (1998–2000), resided in an Israeli settlement on the West Bank (Moughrabi 2001; Brown 2002). He alleged that

Ever since the PA became responsible for education in 1994, Palestinian children have been learning from their schoolbooks to identify Israel as the evil colonialist enemy who stole their land ... the new PA textbooks fail to teach their children to see Israel as a neighbour with whom peaceful relations are expected.

*(The New Palestinian Authority School Textbooks  
for Grades One and Six, Centre for Monitoring  
the Impact of Peace, November 2000)*

Chris Patten, the British politician on the Foreign Affairs Committee of the European Parliament, who had served as the EU commissioner for External Relations from 1999 to 2004, vehemently rejected the accusation that his organisation had effectively endorsed and promoted anti-Semitism. He stated: “It is a total fabrication that the European Union has funded textbooks with anti-Semitic arguments within them in Palestinian schools. It is a complete lie”. In subsequently observing that “some critics may not be particularly interested in the facts, preferring to try to fit reality to their theory rather than the other way round”, he effectively summarised the essential matter at hand (Patten 2002).

Nathan Brown<sup>8</sup> subsequently reiterated Patten’s observations when he investigated the original claims. He explicitly stated

The Palestinian curriculum is not a war curriculum; while highly nationalistic, it does not incite hatred, violence and anti-Semitism. It cannot be described as a peace curriculum either, but the charges against it are often wildly exaggerated or inaccurate.

(Brown 2002)

According to Brown’s review, by the omission of the Jewish narrative in the historical or the present context, the Palestinian curriculum avoided

controversial issues related to the Oslo agreement and the consequence of the facts on the ground, which included the Israeli settlements and the permit system that interrupts the contiguity of the 1967 territories. It seems in some cases that the condemnation was based on what was supposed to be in the textbooks, but was not necessarily there; not that mentioning permits and contiguity was tantamount to anti-Semitism. In 2000, a group called “Jews for Truth Now” accused Palestinians of incitement against Israel in the Palestinian school curriculum. The group claimed that a Palestinian textbook entitled *Our Country Palestine* teaches Palestinian sixth graders that Israel should be destroyed. The group advertised this in *Ha’aretz* in Israel, as well as in newspapers in the United States and other countries. Khalil Mahshi (2000), then General Director of International and Public Relations at the Ministry of Education, investigated the matter and found that the claimed reference did not exist. Moughrabi (2001) found similar results. Nevertheless, the advertisement was met by an unquestioning audience. CMIP reprinted the accusation and published a report that was translated into several different languages. As a result, two main funding sources for developing Palestinian curricula decided to shift funding to different projects, one from Italy and another from the World Bank. According to Na’im Abu Hommos, the Minister of Education,

The World Bank officially told the Palestinian Ministry of Education that the money destined for books for 7, 8, 12 and 14 year-olds, as well as for teacher training for these same years, would be allocated to other activities.

(Morena 2001)

The PA’s Ministry of Education (2001) responded to CMIP and refuted the allegations. It ascertained that mentioning Israel as an occupier is a fact accepted by the UN. The Ministry emphasised that it did not intend to describe Israel as an occupier once peace was reached and the occupation ended. More importantly, the Ministry urged that

[t]he donors and the other UN member states should be courageous to voice their honest opinion about reality here in Palestine as they learn it first hand through the presence of their representative bodies. They should not be coerced into silence by unofficial lobbyists from any side. We expect them to use due process before they take positions and pass judgments. The first step in this process is to seek and find out the truth. This requires talking to all parties concerned and not accepting one-sided and biased reports.<sup>9</sup>

Despite suffering from what might, outside of the uniquely fertile soil of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, be taken to be a terminal affliction – namely having no basis in actual fact – the allegations were to find a renewed life

and impetus in subsequent years, a development which says as much about the politics of the conflict as ostensible concern. Both Ariel Sharon (in 2004) and Benjamin Netanyahu (in 2013) repeated these allegations. Foreign donors, having been browbeaten and shrilly accused of effectively promoting anti-Semitism, were compelled to re-evaluate their own funding arrangements, with the consequence that prior funding arrangements were rescheduled and realigned.

In 2004, Sharon stated that Palestinians should stop incitement against Israelis in the Palestinian media and in the Palestinian curriculum as pre-conditions for negotiations (Mualem and Benn 2004). As a matter of fact, one of Sharon's fourteen reservations to the Road Map for peace in 2003 was that Palestinians stop incitements (*Haaretz* 2003). Prime Minister Netanyahu repeated the same request in January 2014 (*Jerusalem Post* 2014).

### **IPCRI's mission**

Thus IPCRI took upon itself, as part of its greater overall mission to solidify the peace process through promoting values of democracy and reconciliation, to look at the textbooks produced by both sides in the post-Oslo era. While the Israeli textbooks escaped unscathed, the Palestinian ones were severely criticised. Overall, the Palestinian textbooks exposed many samples of "ambiguity" and "confusion" regarding peace and Israel. The aim of the studies is to ensure that the curriculum teaches peace and pluralism, to influence students and to encourage reconciliation and co-existence. IPCRI studied most Palestinian textbooks and different grades, but only the first–eighth-grade Israeli textbooks for one academic year.

The three IPCRI reports on the Palestinian textbooks were presented to the public Office of the US Consulate General in Jerusalem (but it is not clear whether the reports on the Israeli textbooks were handed in as well). The reports covered the period 2000–2005. The first report evaluated the newly completed Palestinian textbooks for the school year of 2000–2001. The evaluation covered grades 1, 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8. The second report covered grades 4 and 9, school year 2003–2004. The third report evaluated the fifth and tenth grades, school year 2004–2005.

The books were analysed thematically and were viewed as potential contributors to civil society, peace, tolerance and diversity. The evaluation thus studied the curricula of language art, religious education, history, civil education and national education. The second report, which focused on the Palestinian books alone, included examining human rights and the relationship to the state of Israel and Jewish people. The report on Israeli textbooks did not analyse the national Israeli narrative in relation to the Palestinians because, and according to IPCRI, this topic is not covered in the selected textbooks. As we shall see, the Palestinian textbooks were especially criticised for not including the Israeli narrative, without any consideration of the grade level.

The Palestinian textbooks were analysed for their “content” and “communication” of the messages conveyed. The second report focused more on the content and symbolic material in relation to the concept of civil society, including peace, human rights and democracy.

The third report focused on history education and geography in relation to the region. The report paid special attention to the notions of Palestine, homeland and Jerusalem. Such efforts were meant to assess the image and representation of Israel and Jews in the textbooks and whether they referred to relationship with the state of Israel and topics related to peace agreements.

Let us first look at the analysis of Palestinian textbooks. Overall, one can say that some positive attributes were found, which we describe here as “A for Effort”, but the balance sheet was negative. The positive side was the aspiration to prepare proper textbooks. The negative side was the failure to implement these aspirations. This condescending attitude is of course reminiscent of lofty modernisationist attitudes and colonialist approaches to education in the non-Western world.

### **A for effort**

The reports do concede they have not found direct incitements or hatred. The curriculum was praised for its stress on the need to accept the “other”. The problem, however, which the reports mentioned again and again, was that these general notions were not associated with Israelis and Jews.

The reports acknowledged that concepts of peace, democracy, pluralism, respect for other cultures and universal human values in general were highlighted and stressed in the Palestinian curriculum. However, such concepts were not extended to include Israel and Jews.

It seems that these relatively positive remarks were not central to the report, but were written by additional reviewers and not the main body of researchers. Neither were they integrated into the major part of the analyses of the three reports. Hence, we have very little to add to this section if we want to represent faithfully the spirit and word of the reports.

### **F for failure**

The tone of the reports was set in the first of the three reports in an evaluation by an Israeli educator, who wrote

The reviewer pointed out the references (or lack thereof) to Israel, Israelis, Jews, Judaism, and Zionism that he found problematic from an Israeli point of view. Subsequently, a Palestinian and international team analyzed the textbooks, keeping in mind the remarks made by the Israeli educator.

(p. 20)

Accordingly, it was explained that the report was written in order to

serve as an incentive to reform the educational system in the direction of multicultural and global education, much of which is included in the promising, foundational dimensions, as well as in the five-year plan for the reform of the Palestinian educational system.

(p. 20)

In order to achieve that, according to the reports, the Palestinian curriculum needed to be changed. At the time of the reports it was evaluated as “inclusive” and nationalist. The reports concluded that the curriculum, despite its effort to encourage respect for other cultures, religions and ethnic groups, failed to mention Jews in particular. For example, in teaching the Koran and the Hadith, tolerance towards other religions was encouraged, but the reports criticised the Palestinian curriculum for not mentioning Judaism in this context. The report assumed almost a sinister plot behind the omission: “This lack of reference is perceived as tantamount to a denial of such a connection, although no direct evidence is found for such a denial” (Report II: 4).

It is very clear IPCRI did not wish to be identified with the more brutal condemnations of the book. Hence, it is not always clear whether the possibility of incitement, as mentioned earlier, is cleverly disguised by the Palestinians, or whether this is the unfortunate outcome of the sloppiness of the authors of the textbooks. In general, the reports stated that the curriculum did not incite explicitly for hatred or violence against Israel or Jews. However, one could not be surprised if the books were considered inflammatory or if one were to “consider the calls for liberating the Palestinian land/territories as instances of incitement” (Report II: 7). Even if the books did not incite, they appeared to incite, which was bad enough.

In a similar vein, the third report explicitly expresses a concern that the refugees’ dream of returning to their homeland was not sufficiently qualified or mitigated (Report III: 35). The essential consideration was not therefore their rights *per se*, but, rather, their subsequent re-articulation and reconstitution within the framework of conflict resolution.

The technique should now be clear to the reader. There is an impulse to respect others and pursue peace in the Palestinian textbooks, but this was not applied specifically to Jews or Israel. It seems, however, that most of the attention was paid to the framing of Palestine in the books and how it is juxtaposed with what IPCRI feared would seem to be an incitement.

### **Framing Palestine: the right and the wrong way**

In several places, the conclusion of the report was given in clear language. In a more detailed analysis, the formula was more vague and focused on the possibility that incitement could be inferred from the text, even though the intention to incite was not there.

The first summary comes at the very beginning of the third report:

In the treatment and coverage of the history and geography of the region, the new textbooks continue to show some elements of imbalance, bias and inaccuracy. In some textbooks the Arabs' exclusive claim to the ancient history of the region is emphasized and several passages including references that reflect a continuous Arab presence in the greater Middle East region, with, however, a noted lack of reference to the historical and contemporary presence of the Hebrews/Israelites/Jews in the region.

(p. 3)

Whereas, in the report itself, an ambiguous way of saying the same thing can be found

[The curriculum] cannot be described as a war curriculum. Neither is it a peace curriculum. The textbooks do not contain calls for the destruction of the State of Israel. However, students are exposed to texts that promote the religious and national duty of loving and defending the homeland and the Palestinian culture.

(p. 63)

Here are a few examples, which evolve around the way the Palestinian textbooks frame Palestine geographically, politically and emotionally.

*The first example* refers to Jerusalem. When discussing Jerusalem, there is no mention of the Jews and Judaism or of the city as the capital of Israel. The reports, moreover, criticised the curriculum for referring to Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, but not also as the capital of Israel. Thus, the history and historical facts covered were, in the eyes of the report, "selective". In the report on Israeli textbooks, the reviewers claim that they displayed a diverse view on Jerusalem as they mentioned that the Temple Mount, "where the Dome of the Rock is located, is holy to both Jews and Muslims". Jerusalem thus constituted the core of the conflict between Israel and the Arab world in general, and between Israel and the Palestinians in particular (p. 68).

Moreover, the reports accuse the curriculum of not clearly referring to the state of Israel and that "in some contexts, Jews, in historical and modern-day contexts (occupation, Zionism, settlers) are negatively represented in Palestinian textbooks" (Report I: 7). The reports found that Israel was referred to as an occupying power and as the cause of Palestinian suffering. The curriculum also encouraged students to liberate and defend their land. This was translated by the report as calling for violence.

*The second example* deals with the notion of homeland. Palestinians were expected to present multi-perspective narratives instead of focusing on Arab and Palestinian identities, when engaging with the concept of homeland. The homeland, according to the critique, was not defined in the context of

the present political reality and within the guidelines of the UN resolution and the peace agreements signed with Israel. Report III gave examples of such vagueness in wording and/or referring to the pre-1948 historical Palestine. For example, the curriculum mentioned the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994 on parts of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. When referring to the pre-1948 situation the report gave examples of villages destroyed by Israel and the refugee problem created. The review considered the homeland concept as ambiguous because it addressed the issue of Palestinian refugees, their suffering and their dream to go back to their homeland, “without qualifying it” (p. 35).

It seems that this report expected the Palestinian curriculum to ignore pre-1948 Palestine altogether. The second report was alarmed by the fact that the textbooks referred to Israeli cities such as Jaffa and Acco as part of their homeland and that Israel was not mentioned on any map. Neither is Palestine. Report I explains this

The rationale for this approach, as explained by political officials and educators alike, is that Israel itself has not yet marked its borders and that no final agreement has been reached with the PLO and the PA as to the final status of the borders between the two political entities.

(p. 39)

But the report insisted that: “This, however, does not mean that maps, included in the textbooks, should be left without labels that reflect the historical as well as the present-day political reality” (p. 39). Report III admits that

Whereas physical geography is almost comprehensive, however [the] political geography of the region still suffers from elements of vagueness and imbalance, especially as it relates to direct references to ‘the State of Israel’ as a geographic and political entity.

(p. 7)

The report’s prior criticism of “vagueness” and a lack of clarity also failed to acknowledge that the broader peace process was itself predicated upon the principle of constructive ambiguity (a point which was vividly illustrated by the fact that the initial terms of agreement between the two sides essentially boiled down to an acceptance to undertake further negotiations). One could indeed make a strong case that it was precisely this “vagueness” and lack of clarity which functioned as a condition of possibility for the peace process in the first place.

Although Report I states that the Palestinian homeland in the present context is defined as the West Bank and Gaza Strip, presented in dotted lines or coloured, the report on the Israeli textbooks explains the absence of Palestinian places or borders because the maps “are presented mainly

in the context of the new Zionist settlement in the Land of Israel” (p. 20). The reviewers further justify this as the maps are about geographical and not political borders, or as not relevant to the period. For some reason this argumentation was not allowed in the Palestinian case.

*The third example* refers to present-day realities as they were reflected in the curriculum. The report mentioned critically that the curriculum referred to the policies of Israel in the occupied territory such as restriction of movement, confiscation of land, house demolition and other measures. In fact these references were depicted as part of the negative aspects of the curriculum. So it rebuked the book for the way the present realities appeared there. “Generally speaking, Israel, Israelis, Zionism and Zionists are depicted as occupiers, invaders, aggressors, infiltrators, usurpers, and oppressors” (Report III: 14). Again, though this was a liberal Zionist report, it is stated that this could be inferred as incitement. As in the analysis of this theme, the report states clearly:

No evidence was found of direct calls for the destruction of Israel. Except for calls for resisting occupation and oppression, no signs were detected of outright promotion of hatred towards Israel, Judaism, or Zionism. If the lack of ample references to the State of Israel in the body of the texts and on the maps (might be understood) as denial of its existence, no evidence was found that points to an intentional attempt to do so.

(Report II: 5)

Report III also acknowledges that the curriculum encouraged dialogue and tolerance, but non-Arabs are not included or mentioned. Moreover, the report accuses the curriculum of being vague in calling for resisting the Israeli occupation as that might be perceived as calling for the liberation of historical Palestine.

### **The curriculum that should have been**

The reports are very didactic in tone and offer the way liberal Zionists would have dealt with the issues at hand. The reports emphasised the significance of critical thinking and exploration in education, which they failed to see in the Palestinian curriculum. Thus, more information should be provided about Israel, Jews and the peace agreements. One can conclude that, based on the evaluation of such reports, the Palestinian curriculum is expected to rebrand Israel and reframe Palestine. Report II, for example, recommended, “... the struggle to end occupation should be used as a vehicle to teach students about peaceful and non-violent actions, conflict reconciliation and conflict resolution” (p. 38).

It further expected the curriculum to highlight the interactions and cooperation between Palestinians and Israelis in different fields, such as

education and health. All in all, the curriculum, as far as IPCRI was concerned, should be a song of praise for the Oslo Accord:

The concept of peace with Israel is not mentioned in the textbooks. The peace process based on the Oslo Accords, the Wye River Memorandum and the Anti-Incitement subcommittee – whose purpose was to reduce tensions and create a positive atmosphere of positive cohabitation – are not referred to in the 5th and 10th grade textbooks.

(p. 27)

This is also related to a negative review of how international peace efforts were reviewed in the textbooks. The curriculum was scolded for mentioning the UN resolution,<sup>10</sup> without referring to the partition plan or the recognition of Israel's right to security and borders. It also wished to re-write the Palestinian version of events of how the second Intifada erupted.

Overall, the reports suggested that the Palestinians adopt a more scholarly and professional approach to the text. Report I explained extensively the need to address the theoretical framework of intolerance, prejudice and discrimination. The Report emphasised the role of education in changing attitudes. Moreover, Report III stressed that peace education should be part of the curriculum and that "... the challenge for educators, however, is to replace a belief in peacekeeping with a commitment to peace-making and peace-building strategies to address the multifaceted forms of violence that exist in the region" (pp. 28–29).

The lack of scholarly soundness in the books is pointed out also by the third report. It gave the impression that Palestinian curriculum lacks accuracy in history education in suggesting that:

... textbooks should introduce objective, up-to-date, comprehensive, and historically accurate information and accounts free of inciting, inflammatory, and offensive language and rhetoric and of elements of bias and of stereotypical images and representations.

(p. 41)

Had these textbooks been written by the new Israeli historians and post-Zionist scholars who dominate the knowledge production on Israel and Palestine world-wide today, these "inaccuracies" would have been endorsed by updated and critical research.

The reports also recommended that the Palestinian curriculum should adopt a pedagogy which encourages critical thinking and exposes students to different perspectives and historical narratives. This is mostly specified as including Jewish and Israeli perspectives or mentioning their historical roots.

And how should resistance to oppression be framed? The curriculum is criticised for rejecting oppression and occupation and encouraging resistance and defending the land. Report III refers to this as calling for violent

resistance. The examples of peaceful resistance with reference to international models like India and South Africa are considered isolated and insufficient (Report III; 34).

In short, the reports concluded that: “It is essential to promote a culture of peace, coexistence, cooperation, and tolerance in spite of all the adverse circumstances that prevail. These efforts should be concerted and should cover all aspects of life” (p. 43). Therefore, the reports recommend that history education should teach about the other, emphasise the present political reality of post-Oslo and refer to the legitimate rights of Palestinians and Israelis. Needless to say, if the rights of Palestinians were mentioned in a hypothetical revised report, the possibility that this would infer incitement would be raised once more.

To sum up: the report did have a bottom line, as mentioned before, and did not leave the final word in ambiguity. The report concluded that representation of Israel and Jews was biased, especially in relation to the historical roots of Jews in the Middle East. At best, it seems that the textbooks did not include Jewish history at all, neither of ancient Israel (which it was not meant to do, because the textbooks were dealing with modern history) or of modern times (p. 36).

### **The Israeli books under the microscope**

IPCRI found little fault with Israeli textbooks. One of its main explanations for this was the random selections it claimed to have used for both text books. Nevertheless, somehow the random search of Palestinian books revealed incitement while a similar random search of Israeli books saw little problem in them.

Thus, the IPCRI report states: “Because we examined the books that are intended for 1st-8th grades, the question of the national Israeli narrative and how it relates to the Palestinian narrative is not particularly relevant” (IPCRI 2004b: 3). If there were any criticisms, it was a remark that concepts of peace, pluralism and reconciliation were not gleaned from Biblical stories. The report accepted that Arabs, in general, did not make their way into Israeli textbooks on history or culture. This absence was justified in the following way:

However, in view of the fact that these textbooks are designed for students in Jewish State-education elementary schools, they deal predominantly with the history of the Jewish People, with Zionism, and with Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel.

(p. 10)

It is worth mentioning that any evaluation of Israeli textbooks was treated not only with bias, but in favour of the Israeli curriculum. This is despite the studies available that found Israeli textbooks racist and inciting against Arabs and Palestinians. So, while IPCRI found no fault with Israeli textbooks, critical Israeli scholars were far less impressed. A study of 124 Israeli

textbooks by Professor Daniel Bar-Tal at Tel Aviv University (1998) found that Arabs were described as “hostile, deviant, cruel, immoral, unfair, with the intention to hurt Jews”.<sup>11</sup> Nurit Peled-Elhanan’s study of sixteen books, on geography, history and civil studies (2012), found that Palestinians were represented as primitive; that the myth of terra nullius was uncritically reproduced; and that the Israeli massacres of 1948 were relativised as an unfortunate, although necessary, precondition for the establishment of Israel.

It is striking that the standards recommended to Palestinians, and the absence of which the reports lamented in the current textbooks, were not expected of the Israeli narrative. While the Palestinian narrative was condemned for being reductionist, the simplified historical account was praised as evidence of encouraging good relations with neighbours in the report on the Israeli textbooks. As a matter of fact, the examples referred to are not only inaccurate but also condescending.

The most astonishing part of the report on Israeli textbooks is that obvious fabrications and distortions were repeated without criticism. One of the stories the report referred to, in regard to Israeli textbooks, was about a Zionist settler who avoided buying land close to Arab “settlements” so as not to incur the envy of the Arab inhabitants (p. 12). The Zionist settler also permitted Arab neighbours to continue to use the spring water on “his” land. Even when negative examples were given of stereotyping of Arabs, positive examples were followed immediately and based on the reviewers’ interpretations, which would be considered as presenting diverse images of Arabs (see pp. 14–16).

While the absence of Israel from the Palestinian textbooks was condemned, the absence of Palestine from the Israeli textbooks was justified. The reviewers related the absence to the grades studied and the period covered.

## **Conclusion**

IPCRI’s attitude to the Palestinian textbooks was very clear from the outset. In its eyes, Palestinian education could not legitimise resistance or a struggle against occupation. Moreover, from IPCRI’s point of view, any reference to resistance and struggle were framed as incitement. Accordingly, if resistance or even a striving to change the *status quo* of a decades-long occupation and colonisation is delegitimised as an educational mission, the IPCRI expects a cherishing of the *status quo* to be the main objective of the Palestinian educational system. As noted, for political and economic reasons, the PA submitted to this logic of the “peace process”, which, educationally, however, even the most cooperative Palestinian educators found very hard to accept.

The framing of references to a past or present struggle as incitement exposes an even more profound discord between the liberal Zionists of IPCRI and the Palestinian national educators. There can be no reference, in the eyes of IPCRI, to the core issues that produced the struggle in the first place. Therefore, the criticism insinuates that existing Palestinian grievances are somehow

artificial or self-induced. Palestinians are thereby denied any political agency insofar as they appear as unthinking recipients, as an inert mass, which can easily be cultivated and instrumentalised for purposes other than their own.

In closely engaging each of these instances, we get a sense of how the education debate (and the conflict resolution framework of which it is part) has become politicised. The instrumental adaptation of incitement appears, to this extent, as a means through which broader forms of violence are enabled, legitimised and enacted. State violence by Israel is not questioned in Israeli books, by IPCRI or anyone else condemning the Palestinian textbook in the post-Oslo era, but any form of Palestinian resistance is depicted as harming chances of reconciliation. Peace, therefore, demands nothing of Israel, in terms of struggle and violence, but it must magically disappear from their Palestinian arsenal, though the occupation continues (or in fact has become worse, as has been the case).

The critics focused on the pre-Oslo agreement chapters of the Palestinian textbooks and insisted these should depict 1967, and not 1948, let alone 1882,<sup>12</sup> as the starting point of their narrative. In essence, this surveillance and control wiped out the Palestinian narrative. There is no engagement with knowledge here for the sake of reconciliation or mutual understanding. As was pointed out by Edward Said: “The Palestinians are expected to participate in the dismantling of their own history” (Said 1984).

The examination of these textbooks by IPCRI or by anyone else who condemn them as incitement was not based on any factual or professional scrutiny. Chris Patten, the EU Commissioner for External Relations, explains

it was alleged that we were funding textbooks [and] that [they] were untrue, we denied it. There was even a report by the EU Heads of Mission in Jerusalem refuting the allegations in terms, a report which is publicly available at the Council web-site! Did this change anything? Alas, no. The story comes back again and again and again with the regularity of clockwork.

(Chris Patten 2002)

The IPCRI reports were a far more complex examination than the explicit condemnation voiced by official Israel and the United States. But long reports have a bottom line and in this it was a verdict of bias that was translated by politicians into an accusation of incitement. Hence a supposedly more balanced, and academic, view carried at the end of the day the same message expressed more vulgarly and bluntly by politicians – the Palestinian textbooks and curricula are biased in a way that endangered peace and reconciliation.

The complex approach was framed in the following way. The textbooks and curricula were praised for an overall attempt to be loyal to principles of peace and pluralism, but failed to do that when they focused on history (the very essence of every national narrative). Take out a Palestinian version

of the history of Palestine from the textbooks and they would have been praised for the positive impulse.

Palestine was reframed by sheer military, political and economic force in the Oslo Accord and beyond its failed attempt at establishing peace. The only space where this imposition was resisted, and therefore so harshly criticised, is education. The gap between historical framing and narrative has been ignored by peace brokers ever since 1967 and depicted as an obstacle for peace. In fact what the issue at hand proves is that this very gap is the reason for the conflict, and if it cannot be breached between the most moderate Palestinians and liberal Zionists, we need a new framing, which to our mind only the settler colonialist paradigm offers. Settler colonialism situates IPCRI's endeavour as part of the ongoing project of erasing Palestinians through imposing and replacing the narrative of the colonised by that of the coloniser.

## Notes

- 1 The article is a revised edition of Nadia Naser-Najjab and Ilan Pappé (2016).
- 2 For a thorough introduction to Gramsci's works and theories, see Adamson (1980).
- 3 President Arafat held a press conference on 14 December 1988 at which he denounced violence, accepted the UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, and recognised the State of Israel and its right to exist.
- 4 <http://www.ipcri.org/index.php/about> (accessed 03 February 2018).
- 5 Khalil Tufakji is Director of the Maps and Survey Centre, Orient House in Jerusalem.
- 6 Netanyahu and the PLO signed the Hebron Protocol in 15 January 1997 to prepare the Israeli redeployment from the city.
- 7 Subsequently renamed The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education.
- 8 Professor of Political Science at George Washington University.
- 9 Palestinian Authority, Ministry of Education. "The Palestinian Curriculum and Textbooks: A clarification." Ramallah, 12 May 2001, available on the MIFTAH website: <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=3060&CategoryId=21>.
- 10 The reports refer to "the UN resolution" without specifying which one or ones. They probably meant UN Security Council Resolutions 242 (22 November 1967) and 338 (22 October 1973). The reports thought that UN General Assembly Resolution 181 (29 November 1947) was missing, which deals with the partition of Palestine.
- 11 "The Rocky Road Toward Peace: Beliefs on Conflict in Israeli Textbooks". *JPR* 35/6: 723–742.
- 12 The first immigration of Jews from the diaspora (known in Hebrew as "Aliyah") began in 1882.

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## 1.2. The roles of memory and oral history in history writing



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## 6 Oral history's credibility, role and functionality

### From the Arab Islamic tradition to modern historiography

*Mahmoud Issa*

One of the main reasons for choosing this topic on oral history is the debate about the credibility and sustainability of the use of interviews to document the history of individuals in regard to past or present events. Some classical historians reject an oral approach to history, arguing that the rules for dealing with oral accounts are too lax, compared to a traditional historiography, entailing strict and well-disciplined principles, particularly those dealing with written archival materials and documents collected by state authorities and institutions over centuries.

My interest in oral history arose some two decades ago when I began to investigate the history of the Palestinian village of Lubyā,<sup>1</sup> one of the 601 villages,<sup>2</sup> demolished in 1948 and documented by researchers from Zochrot.<sup>3</sup> In all, there were only two articles from this period, written by Yousef al Youssef<sup>4</sup> in the Lebanese weekly newspaper: *al-Hurriyya*, specifically dealing with Lubyā, plus a few scattered papers and a single older booklet, written by Ibrahim al-Shihabi, who generously gave me the only copy he had at the time (Al-Khalidi 1992: 526–527; Al-Shihabi 1994).

#### **Qualitative research interviews**

In the late 1990s, I attended a course in “interviewing as a research tool” at Aarhus University, with the late Steiner Kvale. Kvale had succeeded in establishing “research interviewing” as a discipline, fully adhering to the conditions and demands of scientific methodology, especially if one defines the main goals of the research as acquiring new knowledge and modes of understanding society. In Kvale’s definition, interview is “interview”: an exchange of views between two persons speaking together on a theme of common interest (Kvale 1994: 2). Research interview is defined as “an interview, which proposes to obtain accurate descriptions of the lived world of the interviewee in interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena” (Kvale 1994: 3). Qualitative research interviews involve alternative concepts of social knowledge, of meaning, reality and truth in social science research (Kvale 1994: 17). From the very beginning, a series of technical steps and methods are necessary.<sup>5</sup> Two contrasting

metaphors of the interviewer compete: as “a miner”, who “unearths valuable metal, seeks objective facts to be quantified”, much as one “seeks nuggets of essential meaning”, without the subject’s interference: accumulating “quantitative data” and “objective facts”. This is totally different from the “metaphor of a traveler”, which describes an interviewer as one who understands his journey; that is, the interview, as a combined and rich tale to be told later by one who explores “the many domains of the country as an unknown territory”. The traveller seeks his own questions, following the old Greek method of “a route, which leads to a goal”, through conversation with the people concerned: “wandering together with them” in accord with “the original Latin meaning of conversation”. The first “metaphor of the miner” brings the interview into the vicinity of human engineering, confirming the modern concept of social sciences of knowledge as given. The second “traveler metaphor”, brings the interview “into the vicinity of humanities and arts”, confirming the postmodern constructive understanding that involves “a conversational approach to social research” (Kvale 1994: 2–3). In my research, I have chosen a methodology, which adheres to the “metaphor of the traveler”, with all the implications, richness and variations that have produced new knowledge and have provoked new reflections about social issues. Following this interview methodology, I have extensively reconstructed the social narrative of the demolished village of Lubyā.

### **First physical encounter**

After my first visit to the ruins of our village with my parents in 1994 and after I had heard the story of the village from my father, I reflected on his understanding of the village after half a century of forced exile. I faced a considerable lack of substantial material for a history of Lubyā, in spite of the fact that Lubyā had been the largest village in the district of Tiberias and the second largest village in the Galilee. The constant questioning “where do you come from” convinced me, both theoretically and empirically, to begin another “long journey”<sup>6</sup> of discovery and disclosure into the hidden stories of this tiny, suppressed and marginalized modern history, using primarily oral history methods and qualitative research interviews. Such interviews are different than other professional interviews such as journalistic, philosophic or therapeutic.<sup>7</sup> It entails different goals and structures of questioning and interacting as well as the production of a different kind of knowledge.

My earlier research had resulted in a book in Danish and two documentary films on Lubyā, three other inspired international research topics, and a series of articles and lectures in different European universities and elsewhere. This research influenced many others, mainly Lubyān refugees, to redefine their own identities accordingly, especially those who are born outside mandate Palestine, in the post-Nakba era, in exile. Personal

and collective identities take on different dimensions and interpretations as expressed by Lubyans in the many electronic sites, documentary films and interviews I shared with them in each their different dispersed place, worldwide.

I became an enthusiastic supporter of the discipline, even as those who oppose it are vehement in disqualifying the entire approach and excluding it, partially or entirely, from real history. The stories I document from the displaced Lubyian refugees from eleven countries are, in my opinion, the most credible and authentic sources for living micro-stories, which share fundamentally in the understanding not only in the lives of the interviewees, but the entire macro-story of the history of Mandate Palestine. The result is not merely the comprehensive body of incidents, statistics and geographical locations most objective data-gathering demands in traditional social sciences. It is a reconstruction of essential aspects of human life stories and scattered tales that cover not only the years of exile and its ongoing suffering, but personal stories reaching back generations before the 1948 Nakba, together with collective memories of the wider area of Lubyia.<sup>8</sup>

Engagement in constructive dialogues with interviewees and their descendants was the appropriate methodology to document the micro-stories of this tiny village with the history of its land plots, names of its valleys and caves, marriages, burial customs and the living stories of its inhabitants. The challenges for researchers are how to record these stories; what questions to ask; how to design the interview; what techniques to employ; how to verify, compare and analyse information; and, finally, how to write the report.

### **Resisting oblivion**

To quote the words of Jan Vansina, a pioneer in research on oral traditions in Africa, especially in the field of ethno-history (Vansina 1985, 2004): “Official history is exclusive: elite, kings, rulers, emperors, literate. Oral history is immediate history” built on “reminiscences, hearsay and eyewitness accounts” (Vansina 1985: 8).

In the past, history was the property of the winners. Today, history and heritage belong to everyone. It no longer exclusively reflects the lives of the elites, kings, rulers, emperors, literate, upper class, the rich and the few, but belongs also to the marginal: the poor, the illiterate and the colonized. Gender perspectives and women have also been excluded. A quick glance at the hundreds of oral interviews by Faiha Abdulhadi with Palestinian women in the thirties and forties of the past century confirms the huge loss in the official archives, which rarely touches this vital topic.<sup>9</sup> Colonized people generally, and Palestinians in particular, have been denied the right to self-determination or the right to tell their lifetime history and experiences, due to the systematic colonial violence imposed for centuries in Africa, Latin America and Asia. Thousands of place names have been changed. Even the

name of “Lubya” has been cancelled and replaced by “Lavi”, when a new settlement was built on Lubya’s land. A second settlement named Giv’at Avni was built on the eastern side of the village in 1992–1993. The Jewish National Fund (JNF), with support from the Women’s Zionist Organization of South Africa, planted a pine forest on the remains of Lubya and named it “The Forest of the Republic of South Africa” (Benvenisti 2002). On the 18th of July 1949, “a group made up of nine scholars, well known in their respective fields of cartography, archeology, geography, and history, gathered at the prime minister’s office in Tel Aviv”. Their mission was “to assign Hebrew names to all the places - mountains, valleys, springs, roads, and so on”. Two members of this committee, who had been appointed in 1920 as advisers to the British mandate government on all matters relating to the assignment of Hebrew names, had fought to persuade the authorities to restore biblical Hebrew placenames to the map of the country in place of Arabic names currently in use (Benvenisti 2002: 11–12). It was in this context that the biblical “Lavi” came to cover the name “Lubya”, as with a hundred other places that were renamed to match biblical names.

### **Collective memories and landscape as *Lieu de memoire*: other theoretical and practical approaches to oral traditions**

On May 1, 2015, a group of South African Jews, together with Palestinian Lubyans from Scandinavia and people from the Zochrot organization, demonstrated in Lubya to protest the renaming of Lubya to “South African Forest”<sup>10</sup>: a pine forest, intended to cover the crimes committed against the people of Lubya by hiding any remaining witness to the past. The year before, in 2014, some 40,000 people from mandate Palestine gathered in Lubya to protest against the injustices done to the Palestinian refugees and their uprooting from their homes and fields since the Nakba in 1948, when two-thirds of all Palestinians were expelled in one of the largest ethnic cleansing operations since the Second World War.<sup>11</sup> After nearly seven decades, the collective memories of this tiny village are still active and resisting oblivion.

The accumulation of data on events could not replace the meaning of the lively stories concerned. A vital example to illustrate the necessity of telling and documenting the stories of the oppressed majority through oral testimonies of the victims aiming at achieving amnesty, reparation and rehabilitation is the experience of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). This outstanding example must be followed for any just and durable solution to the fate of twelve million Palestinians, 5.5 million of whom are refugees, living in fifty-two camps in and around mandate Palestine.<sup>12</sup> They are denied the basic international rights of compensation, reparation and return to their homes of origin. Even in an international attempt in 1993 of what is known as “the Peace Process”, refugees have been excluded from exercising their right to vote.<sup>13</sup> Hearing the stories from the subjects directly, the refugees themselves set the terms for a durable and

sustainable solution for the refugees concerned, as Richard Falk, special envoy of the UN, has argued after interviewing refugees in the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)'s refugee camps in 2001.<sup>14</sup> What is history, if it does not reflect the peoples' lives and their aspirations?

Theories of "memory" and "identity" developed by the social-scientific French school, mainly those of Maurice Halbwachs and Pierre Nora, constitute the theoretical and conceptual framework for validating an oral approach and collective memory as well. Of special importance is Halbwachs's theory on collective memory (Halbwachs 1992), most notably, his main argument that there is not only an individual memory, but also a group memory that exists outside of and beyond the individual. In this respect, the six memories that elderly Lubyans most often recount are the battle of Hittin in 1187, Lubyas as the birthplace of the famous Muslim scholar Abu Bakr al-Lubyani, the death of Damascus Governor Suleiman Pasha in Lubyas in 1743, Napoleon's march on 'Akka in 1799, the role of the Lubyas, Khalil Ibrahim Azzam, in the battle against Napoleon and the "stone of Jesus".<sup>15</sup> Almost all elderly refugees I interviewed recounted one or two of the aforementioned events and myths. Recently, after fifty years' absence, Haj Muhammad Samir Karzoun has drawn a map of Lubyas with all the houses and their owners. "I woke up one day at night; I could not sleep. I took papers and started drawing. Here is the map".<sup>16</sup> When I compared the draft of this mental photo with that of the aerial photos taken by the British in 1945, I found it near identical, but livelier with names and houses of all the Lubyans who lived there before the village was demolished.<sup>17</sup>

A genealogical tree (Issa 2005: 49) of one family goes back to al-Hassan, the son of Khalifa Ali, in the seventh century and demonstrates the symbolic attachment to the past that cements identity construction, especially for those living in exile. Another such tree is that by Yousef Abu Dhais of Atwat's family tree (Issa 2005: 37, 49).

Pierre Nora's apprehension of history and "landscape" as "les lieux de mémoire"<sup>18</sup> in *Realms of Memory* (Nora 1996: xvii) involves a variety of possible meanings and interpretations, including three types of memory: archival, duty and distance. In my interviews with elderly Lubyans, locations of 126 places in Lubyas were named<sup>19</sup> along with the sources and meaning of most names. Nine religious places and five caves (with their precise locations on the map of Lubyas) confirm Lubyans' use of "landscape as *lieu de mémoire*" after some seven decades.<sup>20</sup>

Oral research can be analysed and interpreted in a systematic way through the postmodern theory of hermeneutic and phenomenology,<sup>21</sup> because it is so flexible that people of all ages can use techniques of asking and listening to create and preserve their cultural heritage and interpret the multi-layered significance of an account. Interpreting a dialogue is central to the postmodern theories of Derrida, Foucault and Leotard. To understand human societies, the individual, whether literate or not, is becoming the centre of social

development<sup>22</sup> as clarified by the “traveler metaphor” of Kvale, mentioned earlier. Even in an old and stable monarchy such as Denmark’s, a network of different groups related to the National Museum have conducted projects to record the history of modern Denmark through interviews, which will be presented as part of modern Danish history that later generations might learn what their parents and grandparents had thought and done in the past. Other initiatives incorporate the life stories of recent refugees as well.

### **Oral tradition<sup>23</sup> in Herodotus-Gilgamesh and Mu’allaqaat**

Some scholars argue that oral history is and will remain one of the main sources of our conceptions and understanding of different facts and myths. Some have argued that oral history is as old as history itself, especially before the advent of writing in Mesopotamia and Egypt in the fourth-third millennium BCE, as a means of communication and documentation. The fifth-century Greek historian Herodotus (484–425 BCE) is widely referred to as the “father of History”, the first in ancient times to treat historical subjects and inquiries, and orally collected material systematically and critically, as in his *The Histories*.<sup>24</sup> Many of Herodotus’ stories were controversial among later Greek historians, such as Aristophanes (450–388 BCE). Thucydides (460–400 BCE) was the first to use interviews with soldiers as a technique in his documentation of the Peloponnesian war. Both these authors dismissed Herodotus as a “story-teller”. Nevertheless, his dubious status as the “father of history” has continued. The tradition of oral story-telling, especially through myths, fables and epics, such as the epic of Gilgamesh, is well rooted in the Greek region of the Mediterranean. As stated by William Harris,

Most modern scholars believe that even if a single person wrote the [Homeric] epics, his work owed a tremendous debt to a long tradition of unwritten, oral poetry. Stories of a glorious expedition to the East and of its leaders’ fateful journeys home had been circulating in Greece for hundreds of years before *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey* were composed. But once we began to consider that the Homeric poems could be more or less than a received ancient text as literature, the way was open for other connections and new lateral interpretations. The most impressive of these was the hypothesis that Homer’s writing was in some indirect but interesting way connected with the writings which go under the name *The Epic of Gilgamesh*.<sup>25</sup>

The pre-Islamic oral poetry, al-Mu’allaqaat,<sup>26</sup> shared cultural, traditional and linguistic traces with other countries as argued by the late Arab-Moroccan philosopher Mohammad Abid al-Jabiri in his four-volume work: *Naqd al-‘Aql al-Arabi (Critique of the Arab Mind)*; al-Jabiri 1984, 1986, 1990, 2001). In the era of the seventh Abbasid Kalif al-Ma’moon (786–833 CE),

translation and documentation was a flourishing industry. When the classical scholars of Alexandria, Damascus and Bagdad disagreed about a saying or the wording of a text, they travelled the long distance to Mecca and Medina to hear from the original inhabitants there how they pronounce a word or a sentence directly. Were the illiterate playing the masters of Arabic with their remembered verses or sayings at the time of the prophet, but primarily through the language of the Quraysh tribe? The question posed by Al-Jabiri and others is still relevant today, open to scholars of both oral and the written compositions, as the language of the Quraysh tribe, preserved in the holy text of the Quran, became the standard for classical Arabic.

Oral traditions have deep roots in the region, whether in Greece, greater Syria or Mesopotamia. Today, one can still hear children learning Old Aramaic by heart in the Ma'lula village near Damascus., Being an ancestor to modern Arabic it represents the last vestiges of Western Aramaic, which Jesus spoke in Galilee two millennia ago. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were circulated for centuries, telling the tales of the glorious expeditions to the east and the heroic acts of its semi-divine heroes.

### **Al-Bukhari (810–870): pioneer in verifying interview narratives**

These classic examples of ancient poetry mentioned earlier are used as an introduction to present the Islamic scholar, Imam al-Bukhari, and his methods for verifying the credibility of the prophet's words and deeds, collected through oral testimonies in the Hadith. In the seventh century and later, a great controversy dominated the meaning and authenticity of the collected *hadeeth*; that is, the oral speeches of the prophet Muhammad and the *al-Sahaba*, a group of followers, who accompanied him in his prophetic mission. Recollecting all the *hadeeths* of the prophet from oral traditions of his companions, during the long period that elapsed, when they were first identified and registered, poses a serious question concerning both their accuracy and authenticity. It took scholars many years of investigation, analysis, and comparison to come to an agreement concerning what was believed the final version of the words of the prophet. Al-Bukhari, the Islamic historian, was one of the most well-known and prominent literary figures of the classical period, who challenged the authenticity of hundreds of the different versions of the *hadeeths* that were recited after the death of the prophet. In his six-volume work, he reduced the numbers of *hadeeths* to less than two-thirds. His analysis demonstrates the highly credible and well-researched methodology that he and classical researchers had employed in dealing with the most authentic of the oral accounts of the prophet and his companions. In many cases, al-Bukhari travelled hundreds of miles on horseback to hear someone, who had been recommended as a reliable and confident source of the *hadeeths*. One could say that al-Bukhari was a pioneer in establishing techniques and modes of verifying oral accounts and histories, before qualifying them as a credible source.

### **Objectivity in historiography?**

With the advent and advancement of printing, the role of the written word and the validity of its testimony took almost a religious connotation in the plausibility and authenticity of documents as a reliable source of history. In recent years, however, with the development of colonialist and sub-cultural studies, questions began to rise concerning the validity of documents as the only source for establishing the historicity of events. In the end, it was the victorious in the debate that designed, wrote and preserved the archives. Quite a few modern historians, as mentioned earlier, have begun to question the “objectivity” of such “events” and the subjectivity of recording and registering accounts of so-called “objective” events. It has become obvious that we are obliged to answer the fundamental question: who made history, and who had the legitimate authority to register events of the past? What about the experiences and the accounts of the “illiterate”, the “marginal”, the “colonized” and the “oppressed”? Can these groups be considered to be an inclusive part of modern historiography? What are the best means of registering and preserving their version of history? Subjectivity and the personal tendency of “those in power” in presenting their version of historical facts create doubt about the entire concept of “objectivity”.

South Africa’s oral testimonies are example of oral testimony’s validity in history writing. Only recently did South Africa’s oral tradition begin to be appreciated as an independent discipline with its own theories and research methodology, especially once people realized the inadequacy of traditional historical methods. In November 2003, I participated in a tour of South Africa to study what South Africans have done regarding the restitution of land and property over the last ten years of the post-apartheid era. Land Commissioner Tozi in Pretoria told us that they would employ oral history techniques to identify the plots of land of the black people, who had neither written documentation nor titles for their expropriated land. Family genealogies and marked cemeteries of the individual’s ancestors would be included as proof for claims.

### **Lack of proper Palestinian interest in oral tradition**

The use of oral history is fundamental in regard to our own Palestinian historiography, because of the lack of bureaucratic files concerning our recent past. The problem has become paramount, because the strong and dominant discourse of the Zionist movement has prevailed and, to a large extent, has succeeded in marginalizing the indigenous people’s rights. When the Israeli Army entered Beirut in 1982, the first goal of their mission was the confiscation of all archives in the Palestine Research Centre.<sup>27</sup> Hundreds if not thousands of books have been written to analyse the Palestinian situation from almost all perspectives: historical, social, economic, psychological and political. Among their authors are some well-known international

Palestinian scholars. Nevertheless, with few exceptions, one fundamental and critical aspect is still absent; namely, the recording of history directly from its authentic voices of its participants. The rural majority of the Palestinian people, the *fellaheen*, the farmers, who lived all aspects of life in their fields, homes and villages, whether in peace or at war, imposed on them by external forces, are absent from “historical” documents. They are called in the Israeli’s special language – never used by other colonial powers – “present absentees”. Not only male, but also female voices are absent, neglected and marginalized. The narratives of the neglected, the marginalized and the exiled are absent from history. Until now, we have only official Palestinian documentation from scattered interviews and books based on oral testimonies and official Israeli version of the events. Our question still remains: why didn’t the Palestinians accomplish the main task of collecting oral stories of the thousands who have been expelled from their homes, lands and farms? Is it because of the illiteracy of the rural population in Palestine, among many other reasons? I do not believe so, but let us suppose that this is correct. We should then ask: where were our intellectuals and revolutionaries? Why is it that those Chinese and Vietnamese intellectuals wrote hundreds of books about the participation of Chinese and Vietnamese peasants in their revolutions, and Palestinian intellectuals did not? A prior and vital question is whether we want to know our modern history. Moreover, do we believe in new definitions of culture and history as concerned with the majority of people’s voices, far from elite concepts, perspectives and versions of history?

The following example will illustrate what I mean. When Sharif Kana’na, professor of anthropology at Birzeit University, first presented his proposal of starting a project to record the histories of the destroyed villages, the reaction of his colleagues was cynical and mocking: “Looking for the dead debris of the past”? Nevertheless, Kana’na insisted on sending his students to the remains of the villages in Palestine to meet the survivors and to record their narratives. The results are impressive, and Kana’na’s recordings comprise twenty-seven demolished villages, the history of which is now documented. Other colleagues have followed in his steps, among whom is Saleh abd al-Jawad, who undertook the huge responsibility of documenting the villages’ historiography since the 1948 Nakba.<sup>28</sup>

Another documentarist to be remembered is Sahira Dirbas, who alone, without institutional support, wrote three books about demolished villages in the Haifa district (Salama, Tira and Birwi), based mainly on oral interviews. She is still doing her independent research, not least the impressive documentary films on Palestinian women.<sup>29</sup>

Our question remains. Are these private initiatives enough to fulfil the minimal requirement of rewriting modern history on the base of personal experience? After seventy-one years of uprooting and exile after one of the largest ethnic-cleansing operations in modern times, we have only some 130 books with scattered documentaries about the Nakba and the villages demolished. To illustrate our lack of basic information on this recent history,

one must be aware of the fundamental gap in our documentation. For the past sixty-five years, our academics have adopted the number of 418 villages destroyed in or after 1948. However, in 1998, Salman Abu Sitta created a well-documented map showing 531 localities, including localities and hamlets in the Negev desert. In 2015, two researchers from the Zochrot office concluded that 601 villages were demolished and documented.<sup>30</sup> Many thanks are due the personal engagement of the late Gassan Shihabi, who published a series of books on demolished villages at his own publishing house: Dar al-Shajara- in al-Yarmouk Camp, Damascus.<sup>31</sup> Given the huge loss of documents, due to the sudden uprooting of the population from their homes and lands, there is only one way to fill the gap: to record the lives of the pre-1948 generation through oral history as quickly as possible. According to the last estimate of a Palestinian demographer, Palestinians aged over sixty-eight are between 3.3% and 3.9% of the entire population. This would make the pool for our sources around 210,000, counting only those living in Palestine and Arab host countries, as Rosemary Sayigh has suggested in the editorial to *Al-Janna* magazine,<sup>32</sup> which concentrated on Palestinian oral history.

### **The case of reminiscences from Lubyia<sup>33</sup>**

Reminiscences are perhaps the most typical product of human memory.... Reminiscences are a bit of life history. Everyone holds such reminiscences. They are essential to a notion of personality and identity. They are the image of oneself one cares to transmit to others.

(Vansina 1985: 8)

More than thirty old men and women from Lubyia, whom I have interviewed in the last twenty years, have died. Without their reminiscences, part of the historiography on modern Palestine would be lost. Nevertheless, a lot has perished. One of the main resources of my research, Abu Majid Fayiz el-Fawaz, who was not tired of recounting stories filling up twelve hours of tape recording, addresses the following piece of passionate poetry, expressing his longing to see Lubyia, to those who were able to visit Lubyia.

*The poem in English (my translation):*

Kiss its soul kiss the stones  
 If you pass by the sweet Lubyia  
 You will be melancholic at its sad ruins  
 Go to the northern suburb  
 And visit the village suburb by suburb  
 When the Israeli forces tried  
 To invade Lubyia  
 Tanks and airplanes and mortars

And machine guns shooting rapidly  
The numbers were one to one hundred  
The battle was from door to door  
We stuck in their throats a pick  
Disrupting their roads and strengthening the besiege  
Until Qawuqji<sup>34</sup> forces came  
And delivered the land by orders from above.<sup>35</sup>

Of course there are many theoretical and methodological problems that need to be studied by those who want to work on oral interviews. I faced a series of problems when I began to register the accounts from Lubyian refugees. A few examples of these problems are listed and discussed later.

- 1 Methods of qualitative interviews without preparing official questionnaires, but using semi-structured questions.
- 2 Preparation of relevant questions and structuring the topics.
- 3 Choice of place and time for the interviews without intervention or interruption from other family members.
- 4 Verification and cross-questioning, especially when there are two versions for the same event, making it normal to have different accounts from different perspectives. In such case, the different accounts of the same event should be left to the researcher to verify and compare the information and get the wholeness of the scene.
- 5 Use of written documented material, whether British, Israeli or other documentation, is helpful when available. Examples of the attacks to invade and capture Lubyia in 1948 were described in detail by Hagana officers, with reference to detailed maps, manoeuvres, losses and employed tactics. I also interviewed two Israeli officers who participated in the battle against Lubyia, which gave me a greater ability to compare and verify the credibility of the stories.<sup>36</sup>

The critical approach to the collected tales should not exclude “scandalous” stories, as Abu Majid named them. For example, a few wealthy Lubyians who were unwilling to pay their debt to a shopkeeper in the village, Muhammad Thyab (from Burj al-Shimali refugee camp in Lebanon, who held accounts of the debt until 1998), and the story of the killing of a brave revolutionary, Saleh Taha, by another Lubyian, who belonged to a strong tribe in the village and was not held responsible for his act and escaped justice. A series of other incidents such as “honour killings” were also suppressed or not spoken about openly in the community. It is the job of the researcher’s critical evaluation to analyse and report all the views of the different people interviewed.

When recounting, one must consider the psychological impact of remembering past memories, especially when marked by trauma and tragic events, lapse of time of more than half a century between the event and its newly

recorded oral accounts, fear of persecution as a hindrance to vividly remembering the past. One Lubyian, Abu Sameh al-Samadi, was called by the police of a country after giving interview on the spot of what happened in 1948 and received a warning not to come back again, as he told me.<sup>37</sup> All these technical obstacles are easy to master if one takes into consideration all the aforementioned points before starting the research interviews. Without the memory and voices of the elderly Lubyians and their will to resist oblivion and keep remembering their past, there will be a huge loss both for human history, in general, and for personal loss of identities of approx. 50,000 Lubyians, dispersed to the four corners of the world, waiting for justice to take place by allowing a return to their homeland, reparation and compensation.

I would like to end this article with two quotations: one by Euripides (484–407/406) BCE – “There is no greater sorrow on earth than the loss of one’s native land”. The other is by Milan Kundera, juxtaposing memory and forgetfulness: “The struggle of people against power is the struggle of memory against forgetting” (Kundera 1980: 5). Oral history is a continuous battle field for millions who have been marginalized, deprived of power, denied the right to recount history of their lives. Imagine a history without the eyewitnesses and reminiscences of the victims of the massacres in: Armenia (1915–1923), Bosnia (Srebrenica 1995), Algier (War of Independence 1951–1962), the Holocaust (1938–1945), South Africa (1818–1994), Kurdistan (Halabja 1988), Myanmar’s Rohingya, where around 800,000 were displaced from their houses in a few months in 2017, – almost identical to the numbers of Palestinians uprooted from their homes in 1948 – and, finally, up to seventy documented massacres in Palestine (1947–1948)<sup>38</sup> in such places as Dier Yassin, Tantura, Sufsaf, Lod, Lubyia, Ailaboon and Dawaymi, to mention only a few.

## Notes

- 1 Lubyia is a village in the Galilee roughly 10.5 km southwest of Tiberias. The Danish Research Council for the Humanities and the Danish Institute in Damascus sponsored the research project: “Lubyia: A Palestinian Village in the Middle East”, 1995, 1996 and 1999. Part of this research was published in Issa (2005).
- 2 Six hundred one villages were identified by two researchers from Zochrot. This estimate supersedes that of 531 in Abu Sitta (2010) and 418 documented in al-Khalidi (1992).
- 3 Zochrot (“remembering” in Hebrew) is an NGO working since 2002 to promote acknowledgement and accountability for the ongoing injustices of the Nakba, the Palestinian catastrophe of 1948 and the reconceptualization of the Return as the imperative redress of the Nakba and a chance for a better life for all the country’s inhabitants (<http://zochrot.org>).
- 4 Yousef al Youssef (1938–2013), an author and critic, originally from Lubyia, who passed away three years ago in Lebanon after he had left his home in the Yarmouk Camp in Damascus.
- 5 The seven main phases mentioned by Kvale (1994: 54) are theme, design, interview, transcription, analysis, verification and report.
- 6 The first was a sailing journey with Joseph Conrad’s fiction, my PhD thesis (Issa 1995).

- 7 Different kinds of interviews are: personal-news-literature such as drama, novel, novella-religious-journalistic-academic: oral exams-in court-therapy dialogue-qualitative research interview (Kvale 1994: 12). Each has its own methods and techniques.
- 8 Lubyas is also compared by Thomas Thompson to a window for "investigating Palestine's Subaltern Heritage":

In structuring this theoretical and methodological framework, we wish to describe an inclusive and critical history of the landscape of eastern Lower Galilee as a representative model for the small-region-oriented Palestine History and Heritage project. Lubyas/ Lavi (Pal. Coord.: 1905.2424) consists today of the remains of a Palestinian village, destroyed in 1948. Some three thousand Palestinians were expelled. This process of depopulation, destruction and dispossession has not succeeded, however, in wiping out the memory of this village and its surroundings. Today, it provides us with a microcosm for the some 600 other demolished villages from mandate Palestine, which have left some 5.5 million refugees today.

(Thompson, paper presented to the members of the Palestine History and Heritage project in 2017)

And further by Thompson:

The village functions as a looking glass, through which we might glimpse the historical associations which once existed in Palestine from a subaltern perspective. As we understand it, this village was but one of many within the greater landscape of the Galilee, emerging as a palimpsest in which a mosaic of prehistoric, ancient and more recent Palestinian remains visibly mixed with contemporary and twentieth century Israeli architecture.

To see more on the PaHH project consult: [http://teol.ku.dk/pahh/english/about\\_the\\_project/](http://teol.ku.dk/pahh/english/about_the_project/).

- 9 Faiha Abdulhadi's four volumes on Palestinian women's historiography, depending mainly on oral interviews with women, are a landmark in documenting the historiography of Palestinian women since the 1930s (Abdulhadi 2006a, 2006b, 2007, 2009).
- 10 The CNN report on this event can be seen at: [http://mahmoud.dk/?page\\_id=1315](http://mahmoud.dk/?page_id=1315).
- 11 The committee on displaced Palestinians in Israel demonstrates every year in one of the demolished villages to keep the memory of the Nakba alive and unforgettable.
- 12 According to The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, in 2013, two-thirds of the Palestinians live outside mandate Palestine. In Europe alone, there are some one quarter million Palestinians.
- 13 Diaspora Palestinians had no right to vote during the two elections after the Palestinian Authorities took responsibility for the West Bank and Gaza, in accord with the 1993 Oslo Accords.
- 14 Richard Anderson Falk is Professor Emeritus of International Law at Princeton University and Visiting Distinguished Professor in Global and International Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara. In 2001, he served on a three-person Human Rights Inquiry Commission for the Palestine Territories, appointed by the United Nations.
- 15 Lubyans believe that one large stone in Lubyas had once been a resting place for Jesus travelling from Nazareth to Tiberias. Abu Mahir Hajjo, a Lubyas living in Deir Hanna, accompanied by other elderly Lubyans showed me this famous stone when I visited the area.
- 16 Interview with Karzoun in Yarmook refugee camp, Damascus, 1998.
- 17 See a photo of the map in Issa (2005: 30).

- 18 A *lieu de mémoire* (site of memory) is a concept popularized by the French historian, Pierre Nora, in his three-volume collection *Les Lieux de Mémoire* (published in part in English translation as *Realms of Memory* [1996]). A ‘Lieu de mémoire’ “is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or work of time has become a symbolic element of memorial heritage of any community”, as defined by Nora in the link: [http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/Joan\\_of\\_Arc/OLR/03\\_PierreNora\\_LieuxdeMemoire.pdf](http://faculty.smu.edu/bwheeler/Joan_of_Arc/OLR/03_PierreNora_LieuxdeMemoire.pdf).
- 19 The area of Lubyā is 39,629 dunams (Khalidi 1992: 526).
- 20 For the names, see [http://mahmoud.dk/?page\\_id=554](http://mahmoud.dk/?page_id=554): 188–190.
- 21 Founded by Husserl, and further developed by Heidegger and Sartre.
- 22 It is interesting to read Giambattista Vico’s vision of the science of the common nature of nations, and how it moved in three stages: from gods to heroes to human (Vico 1988).
- 23 “Oral tradition is a narrative describing or purporting to describe eras before the time of the person who relates it”: (Miller 1980: 2; Vansina 1985: 209). Oral traditions are no longer contemporary, “they have passed from mouth to mouth for a period beyond the lifetime of the informants”, while the sources of oral history such as reminiscences, hearsay or eyewitness accounts concern events and situations “that are contemporary; that is, they occurred during the lifetime of the informant” (Vansina 1985: 12).
- 24 For Herodotus’ predecessors, see Dewald and Marincola (2006).
- 25 Fragments of Gilgamesh in Babylonian script (ca. 2000 BCE). The larger tale, however, is known from the twelve cuneiform tablets found in the library of Assurbanipal (668–626 BCE). <https://community.middlebury.edu/~harris/Humanities/homer.html>.
- 26 The Mu’allaqāt is a group of seven Arabic poems, often considered the best of the pre-Islamic era. “The Suspended Odes” or “The Hanging Poems” offers the traditional explanation that these poems were hung on the walls of the Ka’ba, after having been recited orally, until the following year’s poetry festival, like precious gems hanging in the mind and watched in silence (Eksell 2006: 158).
- 27 See Bo Dahl Hermansen’s detailed article in this volume. There are many accounts, which confirm the collective remembrance among today’s Lubyans, especially regarding the battle of Salah El Deen El Ayoubi (1137–1197) on Lubyā’s land on the 4th of July 1187, ending in the resounding defeat of the crusaders.
- 28 <http://lawraq.birzeit.edu>.
- 29 <http://al-akhbar.com/node/272980>.
- 30 <http://zochrot.org/en/site/nakbaMap>.
- 31 Official documents about refugees of 1948 are kept in the UNRWA archives in Gaza and Amman in unsafe conditions. In 2013, a contract was signed between the Danish foreign ministry and UNRWA to digitalize these documents (more than one million) and keep them in the Danish Royal Library in Copenhagen.
- 32 Al-Janna, Arab resource Centre for popular Arts, Beirut (2002).
- 33 <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Tiberias/Lubyia/index.html#> Links (41 articles, 156 pictures, 2 videos, link to Wikipedia, Facebook, maps and names of Lubyans living worldwide could be read and seen on the aforementioned link). Also on my homepage <http://mahmoud.dk> two documentary films Lubyā: “Ancestor’s land”, 1995 and “A village under forest”, 2013; photos and manuscript of Lubyā’s historiography can be seen both in Arabic and English, together with many articles on Lubyā’s historiography.
- 34 Fawzi al-Qawuqqi (1890–1977) was the field commander for the Arab Liberation Army (ALA), in Arabic named: the Salvation Army, appointed by the Arab League to lead voluntary forces from different Arab countries to help

Palestinians. On the 18th of July 1948, Lubyā fell to the Israeli Hagana forces after ALA had left Lubyā without fight.

- 35 Unfortunately Abu Majid was one, among hundreds of others, who died without the chance to see the ruins of his home or to receive the minimum gesture of justice that he had awaited for more than six decades in his refugee home in the Yarmouk camp in Syria.
- 36 [http://mahmoud.dk/?page\\_id=554](http://mahmoud.dk/?page_id=554).
- 37 Interviewed in the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, Nov. 1989.
- 38 <http://www.1948.org.uk/the-massacres/>. To learn more about other massacres since the Balfour declaration, see Suarez (2017).

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# 7 The cultural and linguistic background of the naming of objects and agricultural installations in Palestine

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## **Introduction**

The daily life of Palestinians and their exchange with their topographic and agricultural environment have produced a large number of names for artifacts (tools and objects) and agricultural installations. These names have been used in the agricultural and the domestic domains in the Palestinian colloquial. They have been passed down from older linguistic strata of Semitic and non-Semitic languages, as a result of the vast number of cultures and peoples that have inhabited the area throughout its history. The names were handed down partially from older generations or they were created over time. In both cases, they have been preserved in the local popular memory and they express the shape and function of the objects and installations. The studied names and terms exist in the geographical sphere of pre-1948 Palestine. To ensure sufficient coverage of these names a survey was made in ethnographic literature (e.g. Canaan 1916: 164–178; Dalman 1928–1942, 2001; Behnstedt and Woidich 2012). In addition, I gathered some names through interviews with elderly native people in the area around Hebron. The artifacts (618 tools and objects) are all traditional instruments, compound tools, vessels, and containers, which have been used in agricultural and/or domestic contexts.

The agricultural installations have played an effective role in the economy of the area due to their varied uses. They were used for local and commercial food production; the protection of crops from birds, animals, and thieves; the facilitation of harvesting and threshing; the storage of produce after the harvests; and the ensurance of proper water storage and use, and as land division markers. Some of the installations are still in use with the traditional working method of animal labor. However, many farmers have incorporated modern technologies in their operations, replacing animals with mechanical equipment. About 127 terms have been used by locals to express indoor or outdoor agricultural constructions and installations utilized in agricultural production.

The naming of the artifacts and agricultural installations was influenced by many natural and cultural factors. It is clear that the etymological and

lexical counterparts of these names originated in many ancient Semitic and non-Semitic linguistic strata. This article offers no ethnographic descriptions of the form, material, or function of each of these artifacts and agricultural installations, nor does it trace their etymologies, lexical counterparts, meanings, and origins in ancient languages. I focus, rather, on the cultural and natural factors that motivated the people to name them as they did, and present briefly their lexical origin (ancient Semitic languages and non-Semitic languages), based on the quintessence of my previously published works (Halayqa 2013–2016). My main study (Halayqa 2014) had the purpose of investigating:

- 1 The anthropological background that contributed to the naming of the artifacts and installations and exploring the factors that affected the names of the tools, and motivated the people to create these nomenclatures.
- 2 The linguistic strata these names refer to and exploring any connection between the dominant ancient Near Eastern languages in the area with the current spoken colloquial. This, in turn, will contribute to the preservation of cultural continuity as a result of the transmission of these ancient linguistic features.

The ancient languages reflected in the textual material are the non-Semitic languages (Egyptian [Coptic], Greek, Latin, Persian, and Turkish) and the Semitic languages divided into:

- Northwest Semitic: Canaanite with its subdivisions (Phoenician, Punic, Ammonite, Moabite, Edomite, Hebrew), and Aramaic with its subdivisions (Old Aramaic, Official Aramaic, Nabataean, Palmyrenean and Syriac)
- East Semitic: Akkadian (Babylonian and Assyrian)
- South Semitic: Ethiopian, Old South Arabic, and Classical Arabic.

The study, at large, displays the interference of the languages of the area with historically mixed communities reflected in the tool names, as well as cases of multilingualism in that many Semitic and non-Semitic languages had been used in small geographical loci. In the following, I present a survey and categorization of some of the 618 tools and objects analyzed in detail in Halayqa (2014).

### **The usage of tools and installations**

The instruments, vessels, objects, and agricultural installations in the study are only those used in domestic contexts and agricultural activities. They are categorized according to fields of usage.

***Domestic usage: furniture and objects***

The tools and objects in this section include those used as furniture on a daily basis in all types of dwelling places: houses in the cities, in villages, and the tents of the Bedouins. Other types of tools included here are those which were used in domestic spinning, matting, and embroidery for the needs of the community.

***Household utensils and domestic tools***

This section includes the utensils, containers, vessels, and tools that were used to hold dry substances; to store grain and dried fruits; to cook with and serve food in; to serve drinks such as water, tea, and coffee; to transport and provide water; to produce food; or to hold liquids (like oil, vine syrup, wine, honey, and milk).

***Equipment for light, fires, and ovens***

The tools and instruments used to produce fire for cooking, warmth, and light, as well as all kinds of ovens associated with each community are contained in this section.

***Water installations and tools***

Although rain and underground water sources in the area are relatively scarce, they were tapped into and used. This resulted in an urgent need to simultaneously utilize and maintain all available water sources. Aiming to have continuous access to water in order to provide it to man, animals, and plants, the inhabitants were forced to adapt to their environments. Thus, they developed many methods for water use, through which many tools as well as water installations were employed. A general overview of the cultural contexts of these water sources has resulted in categorizing them into natural water sources, artificial water sources, and irrigation facilities.

***Natural water sources***

This category includes water resources, which were naturally formed without human intervention and provided water for man, animals, and plants. This includes permanent water sources, such as *šr̄'a*, *nahr* 'rivers' and *'idd*, *'ēn*, *nab<sup>(a)</sup>* 'springs', and seasonal water sources, such as *šallālale* 'waterfalls'; *wād* 'seasonal brooks'; *sēl* 'torrents'; and *gh̄ir* 'natural rock cavities', which temporarily held rainwater.

***Artificial water sources***

The first artificial water source is made up of natural hollows and cavities which were modified to become water reservoirs for human and animal use

(*hrubbale*). The second consists of pits, which were dug in the ground to catch rainwater, thereby ensuring water availability throughout the year (*miṣnaʿa*, *ḡilubb*, *bīr* ‘well’); these man-made pits are common since each traditional house has one of these pits. The third artificial water source is made up of water installations of different sizes, composed of stones and mortar or cement (*birka* ‘pool’, *ḥazzān*, *sihriḡ* ‘reservoir’), constructed almost above ground.

### *Irrigation facilities*

The irrigation system was mostly used in flat areas and consisted of three mechanisms. First, channels were either dug or constructed to carry water from nearby water sources to irrigate fields and provide water for inhabitants (*qanā* ‘channel’, *mizrāb* ‘gutter’). Second, an irrigation apparatus was installed to draw water from underground wells to irrigate fields (*nāfūrale* ‘fountain’, *sāqiyale*, *nāʿūrale* ‘waterwheel’). The third mechanism was an installation established by a religious institution as an act of goodwill so that water was given freely to the public, members of the community, and travelers (*sbīl*, *mašarbiyyale* ‘watering installation’).

## **Animal breeding and animal products**

### *Animal breeding and animal-related equipment*

Animals have also played a pivotal role in the agricultural communities and were extensively used in all domestic and agricultural activities. Working animals such as cows, camels, horses, mules, and donkeys were used to plough, thresh grain, and transport man and his crops. The milk- and meat-producing animals had been extensively utilized and they yielded foodstuffs and other animal by-products for consumption. Animal farmers developed many methods to ensure the continuous and healthy breeding of their livestock. One method was the construction of seasonal or permanent establishments, as was the case with farmers of plant-based goods. In this sense, many tools and animal-related objects were used to enable people to benefit from their animals.

### *Bee and bird farming*

The products of bees and birds were in high demand; thus, they were very lucrative for trading purposes. Wild birds such as doves, partridges, and sparrows among others were hunted, while chickens and geese were raised domestically. The protection of these birds against thieves and predatory animals was ensured through the construction of special installations built of mud, wood, and small stones. Clay coops were built for birds (*burḡ*, *ḥumm*, *qlkilunn*, *ʿišš* ‘bird coop, nest’) and niches were built in the walls of houses or carved in rocks (*tāqlka* ‘columbarium’). Clay hives were built for bees (*minḥalale* ‘beehive’).

### ***Animal breeding and animal products***

Regardless of whether their animals were used for labor or food production, farmers had to take various measures to ensure the regular and healthy breeding of their animals. It was essential that they protected their animals from thieves and predators and kept them safe and warm during the cold winter months. For these reasons, three different types of installations were constructed. The first type included indoor or outdoor enclosures built of dry stones, wood and sometimes clay and straw (*ḥazīr(ale)*, *ḥuššale*, *xanūnale*, *zrībale*, *štābl*, *šqlkīfale*, *šīrale*, *kufra*, *yāḥūr* ‘stable’). The second type of installation was formed in natural rock cavities that were modified by the addition of walls and doorways (*šqlkīf*, *‘iriqlk* ‘rocky shelter’). This type of installation could also be dug and used seasonally (*mḡāra*). The third type of installation was in the form of a booth in which one could turn milk sour, churn butter, and produce cheese (*kilušk* ‘booth’).

### ***Hunting and weapons***

The tools and objects listed here are those used as domestic weapons or in the outdoors to protect one’s produce from thieves, animals, and birds during the maturation and harvest periods. They were also used as a means of self-defense and protection as well as for hunting, slaughtering, and skinning wild and domestic animals.

## **Agricultural activities**

### ***The plough and its harness: sowing and tilling***

The plough played a continuous role in the cultivation of the area, because the farmer performed two terms of ploughing annually: winter tilling (once or twice in November/December) to plant seeds, and summer tilling (two or three times from March to May) to plant vegetables and trees. When planting grain, handfuls of the seeds were usually scattered on the ground and then covered by earth, thus resulting in ploughing furrows. However, when planting corn or chickpeas, a special tool called *būq* ‘trumpet’ was fixed to the plough, which enabled the seeds to descend into furrows, thus simultaneously planting and ploughing. This section covers the names given to the ploughing utensils as well as all of its equipment, whether being a yoke pulled by a pair of animals, or a plough pulled by a single animal.

### ***Farming and gardening***

This section includes the terms for objects and tools, which were used to clear and remove stones from rugged areas. It also includes the terms for tools, which were used to prepare soil for planting, or to transport soil to the poorer areas in order for the inhabitants to enlarge the size of their land for cultivation.

***Tree supports, pruning, weeding, and chopping***

Contained in this section are the names of the wooden or metal tools that were used to keep vines and olive trees, among others, standing upright to avoid heat and insects. Included are the instruments that were previously used to prune trees and weed out grass and thorny plants, as well as tools used to chop firewood.

***Digging and cutting***

This sub-section contains the names of the tools and objects used in digging pits for planting trees and vegetables, for preparing seedbeds, as well as those used in the digging, constructing, and plastering cisterns as water reservoirs.

***Harvesting and gathering***

All instruments that have been used during harvesting are given in this section. The wheat and barley harvests began in May/June and were performed by hand or with tools. A bunch of wheat or barley stems tied together with straw was called *šmāl*. With specific harvests like those of lentils (called *qaṭānī*) no *šmāl* was needed to be produced. A group of *šmāls* was called *gimir* ‘sheave’, and many sheaves heaped or gathered on a field was called *hila*. The harvested grain was gathered on the ground of the cultivated fields or transported to an earthy or rocky threshing floor (*ḡurun/bēdar*) in or outside the fields. The harvest of fruits and vegetables was carried out in the summer, while the olive picking season was in October-November. Both these activities involved every member of the family. In harvest, one might use one’s hands, tools and vessels to pick and gather the produce.

***Threshing, winnowing, sifting, and grinding***

All members of the family took part in the harvest and threshing processes by using different tools to complete their respective duties. The harvest was piled up on the threshing floor in heaps called *kōlēma*. Each heap was taken to be threshed; the process in which the dry wheat or barley was threshed is called *ḡsār*. A heap of wheat or barley after it had been threshed is called *tarḥa*. A pair of work animals was brought to trample on the heap for hours. Sometimes the animals were harnessed to a threshing tablet *noraḡ*; this was another threshing method.

The winnowing stage came after the threshing was completed. It was a process in which a threshed heap of hay and grain is continuously tossed into the air by using a five-pronged wooden fork. In doing this, the lighter particles of hay were detached and carried away by the wind, whereas the heavy seeds would fall to the ground, separating the seeds from the hay. Winnowing took place in the early mornings or in the evenings depending

on the movement or direction of the wind. This process was called *tyāb*. After being winnowed, the outcome was a heap of grain, *ṣalībā*, with small particles of stones and soil. This heap was then sifted further to remove the small particles from the grain. In the next stage came the grinding in which hammers, pestles, and grinding stones made of wood or stone were used to produce flour and groats for private and commercial needs.

### ***Produce measuring, weighing, and distribution***

In regard to the trading or distribution of produce between harvesters, portions of crops and products were allocated to family members, tenants, debtors, and money lenders. This was done by using standard sized domestic vessels and containers as measuring units made up of a very rustic, self-made metrological system rather than metric or imperial measuring systems. Tools and body parts were also used to weigh quantities or measure distances.

### **Agricultural installations**

#### ***Establishments for agricultural production***

As the Palestinian economy was mainly dependent on agriculture, farmers were motivated by food consumption needs to create and adopt many methods of food production and storage. This gave rise to the construction and continual reuse of many agricultural establishments in order to facilitate and accelerate the production process. By applying these methods, the farmers' chances of regular and sufficient crop production increased significantly.

#### ***Post-harvest food production***

Many of the constructions used in agricultural production had been in use also in earlier periods and their specific functions were later modified and reused (*bōbariyye* 'store'). The topographical nature of the area played an important role in the interaction between man and nature. The flat, rocky surfaces located on hilltops and mountains were often selected as places where farmers and fieldworkers could carry out the post-harvest food production and storage processes (*bēdar*, *ḡurilun* 'rocky/earthy threshing floor', *miluṣṭāḥ* 'drying floor'). Naturally, the areas with adequate water sources and fertile soil played an unquestionable role in food production (*miṣtal*, *miṣkabale* 'seedbed').

#### ***Transportation and storage of land produce***

After the crops were harvested, threshed, pressed, or processed<sup>1</sup> and transported to the dwelling place, they were usually put in vessels and storage

facilities. This ensured their availability for local consumption and trading. In addition, it served the purpose of permanent or temporary storage for surplus grains, other foodstuffs, and liquids in each house to assure food security; the stored food could be consumed throughout the year. Therefore, many implements, containers, and vessels were used in the transportation and storage of grains.

For such purpose, tools were invented to be used in the transport, storage, and division of the dry and liquid products. Farmers had to observe strict measures to protect the fruits of their labor. For such purpose, farmers either built new constructions of stones, mud bricks, and mortar (*šūnale*, *hāšil*, *bāykih* ‘store’) or dug pits in the ground, in which they stored their produce (*šōma<sup>a</sup>* ‘store’, *maḷiṭmara* ‘silo’). The majority of these constructions were built as small detached buildings near the dwelling places, or as buildings annexed to the house or sometimes even occupying part of it (*hōš* ‘courtyard’, *rāwyale* ‘store house/box’, *miṭban* ‘store of hay’). In addition, the farmers also made use of the ancient ruined sites located near the agricultural fields in order to store and protect their produce. They could either reuse the existing silos, wells, walls, and ancient agricultural buildings for permanent or temporary storage (*bniyyale* ‘unroofed building’), or reuse the stones found at these ancient ruined sites (*hirbale*) to build new installations. Also utilized were some buildings that were erected on the commercial routes connecting the cities and villages (*hān* ‘caravansary’).

### **Land markers and protective establishments of land produce**

These installations were erected either inside buildings or in the fields of the countryside, and they were either of a permanent nature and operated continuously from harvest to harvest or seasonally built, used, and then dismantled. Their construction was carried out by peasants, craftsmen, and shepherds, whose lives were dependent on the agricultural and pastoral economy.

#### ***Land markers and partitions***

These measures, taken by landowners to affirm their ownership and divide the land between their respective inheritors, were communicated by the use of dry stones as markers. These stones were the principal material used to build rough walls to indicate land borders (*hēt*, *rab<sup>a</sup>*, *ras(li)m*, *rāmale* ‘border marker’). The stones were either piled on top of each other in a manner similar to a cairn (*ruḡi(lu)m* ‘crain’, *qa’qūr/la*, *qinluṭṭara* ‘piled up stones’), or a single large stone was used occasionally (*ilammāyale*, *taluhm*, *hdād* ‘stone as border marker’), and sometimes marks were simply carved in the stone (*alāmale*, *nimrale* ‘mark’). In areas where large stones were relatively rare, trees, shrubs, and thorny plants were used to construct fences and mark ownership.

***Preventive measures against soil erosion***

The natural and geological composition of the area determined the materials used to build the protective structures. On mountains, where slopes are common topographical features, stony walls were erected transversely. This created agricultural terraces for plantation, prevented soil erosion, and ensured rainwater retention (*ġidār, sūr, sinsalale* ‘stone wall’). In addition, these walls were often used as land markers. In flat areas, fences built of shrubs and thorny plants (*syāġ* ‘fence’) were used simultaneously to indicate the borders of the land and as means of protection against animals and thieves.

***Protection of crops during maturation and harvest***

The harvesting process usually lasted one to two months in the summer and it required the continuous presence of workers in the fields. Several protective measures were carried out in order to guard the ripe crops from thieves, birds, and animals, thereby ensuring a fruitful harvest. One of these protective measures was to build temporary (*qaṣer* ‘tower’, *kūḥ* ‘hut’, *miṅṭara* ‘guarding tower’) and permanent simple agricultural constructions such as huts, booths, and tents (*ḥarbūš(ale), ḥuṣṣ, ʿirzānll, ʿrīšale šattāra* ‘booth’, *ḥēmale* ‘tent’)<sup>2</sup> in the fields during harvest time. These establishments were useful in that they offered a temporary living space for the landowner or fieldworkers, while also ensuring that the harvest was completed in a timely manner as the fieldworkers’ traveling time was greatly reduced.

**Cultural and natural factors that have influenced the naming of tools and installations**

My study has disclosed that natural and cultural factors have created specific names, which represent various linguistic strata. Some lexemes have been adopted into the current vernacular from different languages and employed with the same meaning. Others have been loaned and phonetically modified to indicate an exact, a close, or a derived meaning. It is not possible to know the period in which these words were incorporated into the Palestinian vernacular. The output from my study resulted from studying the interference of the languages in areas with historically mixed communities and divergent oral or written cultures. Multilingualism in many Semitic and non-Semitic languages has been present and used in small geographical loci, where many linguistic influences were consciously or subconsciously adopted by the locals such as it is reflected in the tool names. Studying the influence of social and economic contact, political relationships between the ancient kingdoms, commercial routes, religious affiliations, and other ways of interaction, it became clear that such communication influenced the

linguistic features of the naming of tools. Finally, the different topography, the fauna and the flora of the areas, influenced the creation of factors that affected the naming.

### ***Cultural factors:*<sup>3</sup> *word list***

Cultural factors such as the various daily domestic (cooking, baking, etc.) and agricultural activities (irrigation, cleaning, ploughing, and harvest) and ownership of land (division, selling, buying, as well as renting out the land) that were performed by the inhabitants affected the names. The functions of tools and installations also influenced their names.

#### *Domestic activities*

Kneading, baking: e.g. *mila<sup>c</sup>ḡanale* ‘kneading trough’, *tannūr* ‘baking oven’, *miluqlā<sup>c</sup>* ‘iron or wooden rod short hook’, *qile<sup>c</sup>* ‘(weight) stone’, *mraq* ‘wooden rolling pin, make thing thin’.

Cooking, frying, roasting: e.g. *dallale* ‘copper coffee pot’, *ṭabbāḥ* ‘movable hearth or stove’, *miḥmāsale* ‘round roasting pan, roasting’, *miqla* ‘metal pan, frying pan’.

Scooping out, scraping: e.g. *miḡrafale* ‘wooden ladle for dishing up, scooping out’, *mali<sup>c</sup>laqale* ‘wooden or metal spoon’, *minšalāl* ‘fork or ladle, scooping out’.

Spinning, neighing: e.g. *miḡzal* ‘spindle’, *mi<sup>c</sup>lassalale* ‘large metal needle’, *seriḡale* ‘double basket designed for pack animals’, *sarḡ* ‘horse’s saddle’.

Tying, wrapping: *ḡabil* ‘rope’, *ribiq* ‘cord with a number of loops used to tie sheep during milking’, *zurtale* ‘looped rope or thread or tab’, *ṭmāq* ‘wrinkle, rumple’.

Setting fire, lightening: e.g. *banūra* ‘ceramic or tin lamp’, *srāḡ* ‘ceramic or metal lamp’, *qaddāḡa* ‘lighter, a piece of steel’, *mišbāḥ* ‘ceramic or glass lamp’, *mōqadale* ‘hearth or an outdoor fireplace’, *nawwāsale* ‘small glass lamp with a soft light’.

Sitting and seeing: e.g. *siḡḡādale* ‘rug on which one prays’, *ṭarrāḡa* ‘cushioned seat’, *kursī* ‘chair or seat’, *wsādale* ‘pillow’, *qu<sup>c</sup>ud* ‘ceramic cooking vessel’, *mrā* ‘mirror’, *šawwāfale* ‘blinker, wooden board’.

#### *Physical activities*

Shutting, opening: e.g. *zarāqale* ‘horizontal bolt which locks a door’, *qalufil* ‘metal or wooden lock’, *laluqqāṭa* ‘short wooden bar’, *sukkara* ‘simple lock’, *miskār* ‘shutter’, *miṭṭāḡ* ‘key made of iron’.

Leading, directing, dragging: *missās*, *minsās* ‘goad’, *miqra<sup>c</sup>a* ‘whip used with working animals’, *nāḡūz* ‘sting, head of oxen goad’, *nīr* ‘yoke’, *nayāra* ‘cross-beam’, *ḡārūr* ‘pulling pole’.

Carrying, transporting: *ḡid(i)l* ‘child’s cradle, a small carpet’, *ḡammālale* ‘carrier’, *kārra* ‘chariot, cart’, *s/ṣaḡḡāra* ‘rectangular wooden box’,

*minqalale* ‘circular plate, transmitting’, *maleštīl* ‘double basket made of reed or straw’.

Riding, swinging, rotating: e.g. *rulakkābale* ‘three wooden forked poles’, *rkāb* ‘stirrup’, *milurğēḥa* ‘hammock, or a movable or immovable cradle for children’, *bakara* ‘pulley’, *dūlāb* ‘water wheel’.

Filtering, drying: e.g. *ḥarīṭa* ‘sack made of cotton’, *miršaha* ‘worn-out cloth made into collar-like, absorbing sweat’, *mišfā(yale)* ‘strainer, filter, or colander’, *minšafale* ‘large towel, drying’.

Marking: *mīsam*, *wasm* ‘branding iron, marking’, *nimrale*, *alāmale* ‘border mark in land’.

### Instruments

*māris* ‘rope, a narrow rectangular piece of land’, *ḥabalale* ‘rope, walled cultivated terrace’, *qaṭʿa* ‘piece of anything, any piece of land’, *nīr* ‘yoke beam, one row of trees equal to the yoke beam in width’.

### Architecture

Buildings and remains indoor and outdoor (ancient or modern): used in harvest and storage such as *burg*, *kufra*, *sqlkīfale*, *bniyyale*, *ḥirbale*, *ḥān*, *qaṣer*, *ḥuṣṣ*, wall: *ḡidār*, *taluhm*, *hēt*, *rabʿa ruḡi(lu)m*, *sinsalale*, *sūr*.

### Agricultural activities

Hiring of land: *škāra* ‘hired land’.

Watching of fields: *minṭara* ‘watching tower’.

Burning of thorns: *ḥarīqa* ‘locus of land resulted after burning the thorny plants to gain more space for cultivation’.

Cultivated/uncultivated land: *māra* cultivated piece of land with grain, *amār* cultivated land, *mizraʿa* farm, sown land, *ḥarāb*, *šilf(a) būrl(a)* ‘uncultivated/empty land’.

Storing of grain and fruits, dug pits, or small constructions built above the ground: *mitban* ‘store of hay’, *šōmaʿa*, *ḥāšil*, *rāwyale*, *bāykih*, *ʿanbar*, *šūnale* ‘store of grain’.

Irrigation installations and activities: *nāfūrale* ‘fountain’, *nāʿūrale* ‘water-wheel’, *nahr* ‘river’, *sēl* ‘torrent’, *šallāl(ale)* ‘waterfall’, *qanā* ‘channel’, *iššrīʿa*, *nabʿ(ʿa)*, *ʿidd* ‘spring’, *sāqiyale*, *mizrāb* ‘gutter’, *saqī* ‘artificial irrigated land’, *bayyāra* ‘watered orchard’, *baʿl* ‘rain-watered land’.

Watering, drinking, feeding: e.g. *dalelo* ‘water bucket, pail’, *raššāš* ‘water tube’, *šarbale* ‘drinking vessel’, *šallāf* ‘counterpoised lever implement for drawing water for irrigation’, *miluhqān* ‘goblet or metal funnel’, *alīqale* ‘nosebag’, *miʿlafale* ‘feeding trough’.

Constructions for storing rainwater: *sbīl*, *ḥazzān*, *mašarbiyyale*, *mišnaʿa*, *birkale*, *šahrīḡ*, *ḥazzān*; dug pits for storing water: *bīr*, *ḡilubb* ‘well, cistern’, *hrubbale* ‘cavity transformed to well’ *ḡhīr* ‘basin’.

- Tilling and digging: e.g. *raddād* ‘steering rope of the plough’, *rayyāh* ‘plough’s double steering rope’, *saḥḥāb* ‘pulling chain’, *kābūsale* ‘presser or the grip of plough’s handle’, *mihrāt* ‘plough’, *baḥḥāšale* ‘narrow hoe with pointed edge’, *ḥarrāra* ‘small shovel’, *fahḥāra* ‘digger, digging tool’, *man-kūš* ‘small pickaxe’, *nakkāšale* ‘small double-headed hand axe’.
- Breaking, drilling: e.g. *berrimale* ‘drill’, *ḥasīm(ale)* ‘pointed end of the ploughshare’, *šāqūf* ‘rock, stone breaker’, *‘atalale* ‘crowbar’, *kammāšale* ‘pair of pliers’, *mismār* ‘nail’, *miqdaḥ* ‘drill or borer’, *mhaddale* ‘large hammer’, *nuḥul* ‘iron crowbar’, *yazmīl* ‘chisel’.
- Cleaning: e.g. *ḡārūf* ‘hoe’, *qāḥūf* ‘scraper, hoe’, *qawāšale* ‘pick with a metal fork’, *miḡrafale* ‘spade or hoe with broad plate’, *‘zaqa* ‘hoe’, *miqašaṭale* ‘mop, or a stick with a rubber scraper, polisher or scraper’, *miknasale* ‘broom made of a bundle of straw’.
- Harvesting, picking, catching: e.g. *ḥarrāṭa* ‘wooden stick used to pick olives’, *šuršāra* ‘iron sickle’, *qaṭafale* ‘small lunate sickle’, *milqaṭ* ‘iron tongs’, *miṅgal* ‘unserrated large sickle’, *ḡaddādale* ‘thin wooden stick for picking olives’, *šank/ḡal* ‘metal hook’, *ḥaṭṭāf* ‘snatcher, metal or wooden hook’.
- Cutting, pruning of trees: e.g. *ḥalūš(ale)* ‘kind of knife’, *šafra* ‘sharp metal blade’, *šāṭūr(a)* ‘cleaver’, *m(i)qašš* ‘pair of scissors’, *qaṭṭā‘a* ‘wood cutter’, *munšār(a)* ‘saw’, *šarḥ* ‘cleaver’, *miḥlāḡ* ‘sheep shearer or shearer of cotton’, *mišraṭ* ‘sharp serrated knife’.
- Threshing, beating, winnowing, sifting: *ḡuri/un*, *bēdar* ‘threshing floor’, *miṭraq* ‘thin branch of oak for beating wool or driving animals’, *šārūṭ* ‘wooden stick’, *mulihbāṭ* ‘wooden stick for beating’, *sarūdale* ‘coarse cereal sieve’, *ḡurbāl* ‘sifter’, *kurbāl* ‘coarse sifter’, *mid/drā(yale)* ‘winnowing fork’, *mu(n)ḥil* ‘kitchen sieve’.
- Grinding, crushing: e.g. *irḥā* ‘rubbing stone to grind, hand-mill’, *ḡurun* ‘mortar’, *ḡulḡūl* ‘roller, cylindrical stone for grinding’, *ḡārūšale* ‘hand-mill’, *durdās* ‘cylindrical basalt stone for grinding’, *ṭāḥūnale* ‘hand-millstone’, *mdaqa* ‘pestle, hammer’, *hāwin* ‘mortar’, *mihbāš* ‘wooden pestle’.
- Weighting, measuring of grain: e.g. *qabbān* ‘scale, steelyard’, *kēlale* ‘cylindrical metal vessel’, *mīzān* ‘cast iron balancing scale’, *mikyāl* ‘metal vessel for weighting’.
- Storing of food: e.g. *ḥābyale* ‘clay container, box’, *ḥilazānale* ‘wooden cupboard, cabinet attached to wall’, *qiniyyale* ‘glass bottle for storing’, *kīs* ‘medium sack’, *malisfaṭ* ‘arched niche, cupboard or closet’, *malitwa* ‘niche, a cupboard to put mattresses’.
- Supporting of trees: e.g. *rkīzale sānūdale* ‘support, wooden pole’, *‘alāmūd* ‘pole, column’, *mismāk* ‘forked pole’.

### *Food production*

- Product: e.g. *malī‘šara* ‘press oil and grapes’, *midbase* ‘molasses’, *mištal*, *miškabe* ‘seed bed’, *miluštāḥ* ‘drying of fig, tomatoes product’, curdling, churning, *ḥaḡāḡdale* ‘churn, churning’, *mirwab* ‘large goat skin’.

Hunting: *bēraq* ‘rectangular cotton sheet’, *ḥarbale* ‘wide spear or lance’, *šar-akale* ‘snare or trap for birds’, *faḥḥ* ‘tarp, snare’, *ṭabar* ‘pointed double-edged axe’, *mišyadale* ‘snare, trap’, *muqle<sup>a</sup>* ‘catapult, slingshot’, *nuqēfale* ‘slingshot’.

Animal breeding: booths, wooden constructions for animals, *kilušk*, *yāḥūr*, *zrībale*, *štabl*, *ḥuššale*, *xanūnale*. Pens, *šīrale*, *ḥažīr(ale)*, birds *‘išš* ‘nesting place’, *qlkilunn* ‘bird coop’. Breeding bees: *minḥalale*, ‘dwelling place for livestock’ *‘izib*.

### Manufactured material

Organic: *ḥēšale* ‘canvas, big sack made of canvas’, *qartūs* ‘paper, cornet made of thick paper’.

Inorganic: e.g. *baḥšale* ‘stones’, *tanaka* ‘yellow brass, petroleum tin’, *ḥadīdale* ‘iron, piece of iron’, *rašāšale* ‘lead, bullet, shot’, *šam<sup>e</sup>* ‘wax, candle’, *šāḡ* ‘tin, baking sheet of tin’, *qzāzale* ‘glass, glass vessel’.

The material that the tool temporarily or permanently contain food stuff: e.g. *zulubdiyyale* ‘butter, bowl’, *sukkariyyale* ‘sugar, sugar can’, *‘as(a) liyyale* ‘honey, honey jar’, *mimlaḥa* ‘salt, salt can’, *mikḥalale* ‘stibium, small glass/ceramic bottle to hold *kohl*’.

### Sheets or cloths

*dibbiyale* ‘fringed carpet woven of wool’, *s/sufra* ‘sheet, dining table, dining mat’, *ḡafra* ‘carpet, shaggy woolly sheet or carpet’, *sifla* ‘lower curtain of the tent’, *rwāq* ‘the back curtain of the tent’, *ḡlāl* ‘sheet or worn-out cloth used as cover or beneath an animal’s saddle’. Sheets, covering, or shading material for booths used as agricultural installations: *ḥēmale*, *‘rīšale*, *šattāra*, *‘irzānll*, *ḥarbūš(ale)* ‘booth’, *kūḥ* ‘hut’.

### Numbers and fractions

*faddān* ‘pair of oxen, yoke’, *farid* ‘one, single plough’, *fardale* ‘(single) large sack’, *rub<sup>e</sup>diyyale*, *rub<sup>a</sup>* ‘one quarter, cylindrical metal vessel’, *sidsiyyale* ‘one sixth, cubic tin vessel’, *‘ošr* ‘one tenth, cylindrical vessel’, *nuššiyale* ‘one half, metal cylindrical vessel’.

### Natural factors:<sup>4</sup> word list

Many natural features found in surrounding areas affected the tool names. Man’s personal acquaintance with the landscape and his daily contact with it led him to describe the state of the land he dealt with in order to differentiate it (rugged or plain, high or low, fertile or poor, cultivable or non-cultivable; with deep or poor soil, the surface of soil, covered by stones, rocks or vegetation). Therefore, specific terminology was created to describe the

land. In addition, it has been noticed that the users of the names borrowed names from animals, trees, and things, which existed in the surrounding landscape and applied them to their tools because of similarity in shape and function between the tools and animals.

#### *Topographic features*

Hollowed: *baq<sup>a</sup>albqī<sup>c</sup>* ‘piece of land in wide valley’, *nuqra* ‘hollowed out area or land’.

Narrow: *mizrab/zarb* ‘narrow terrace, small piece of land with irregular shape’.

Flat/rugged: *shal* ‘flat, plain’, *wa<sup>a</sup>ar* ‘rugged surface with rocky masses’.

Pebbled land: *kurkār*, *ṣarār/muṣrāra*, *buhṣa* ‘land with poor soil and covered with pebbles’.

Free stones: *ilammāyale*, *ḥadd*, *ras(i)m*, *rāmale* ‘single stone as border mark’, *qa<sup>a</sup>qūr*, *qinluṅtara* ‘piled up stones’.

Rocky shelters: *ṣqlkīf*, *ṣiriqlk*, *mḡāra* ‘(natural) cave’.

#### *Soil character*

Thickness: *simḥa*, *smīna*, *ḡmīqa* ‘land with deep soil’.

Thinness: *rqīqa*, *qarqabāš* ‘land with poor soil’.

Surface: *mṣaqaqa*, *mfall<sup>a</sup>* ‘creviced land’, *rabad* ‘hard massed soil, clods’, *mōfra*, ‘dry soil’, *mōḥlal/wahel*, *mṭayanalṭīn* ‘wet soil’.

#### *Flora*

The names of some plants were borrowed by people to refer to the tools that are made of those plants.

Trees: e.g. *ḡōzale* ‘walnut, wooden or copper pot’, *ḥēzarānale* ‘bamboo, bamboo stick’, *zānale* ‘terebinth, the wood of the beech, poker, fire stoker’, *karmiyale* ‘vine, circular wooden bowl’, *merḡūne* ‘coral, straw basket’, *mīl* ‘oak, small, thin wooden stick used to apply kohl’, or land famous for some plants – *ḥrāš*, *hīš* ‘woodland’, *karim* ‘vineyard’.

Branches: e.g. *lōlab* ‘pith of the date palm, shoot, large wooden screw’, *ḥabāra* ‘branch, wooden bar’, *ṣibbiyye* ‘branch, long wooden stick for harvesting olives and almonds’, *arūs* ‘wooden branch, large press beam’, *ḥašā* ‘wood, wooden stick’, *ḥūd* ‘branch, wood, wooden plough’, *qurmiyyale* ‘tree stump’.

Leaves: *ḡrīd* ‘fresh palm branch, metal chain’, *ḥūṣa* ‘palm leaves, kitchen knife’.

Vegetation: e.g. *bustān* ‘orchard’, *ḡnēna* ‘small garden’, rows of trees – *šōra*, *ḥāriz* ‘part of land between two rows of vegetables or trees’, *miqta* ‘field of vegetables often cucumber’.

Herbs: e.g. *ḥaṣīrale* ‘grass, herb, leek, mat woven’, *ḥaššāšale* ‘grass, herbage, small toothless sickle’, *‘aššābale* ‘grass, herbage, small hand axe for weeding’, *fiḡlale* ‘radish, pointed end of the shank’, *qanwale* ‘reed, stick with various purposes’.

Thorny plants: *ṣabbāra* ‘cactus, can used in picking its fruits’, *ṣabriyyale* ‘cactus, ceramic container’, *mintāš* ‘*Poterium spinosum*, double pickaxe’, *šōkale* ‘thorn, prickles, fork’.

Straw: *qaššāšiyale* ‘straw an axe’, *maqššale* ‘broom made of a bundle of straw’.

Seed: *bizrale* ‘seed, shot, cartridge’, *ḥarṭōš* ‘cartridge, cartouche, shot’.

### Fauna

Mammals: *ḡahiš* ‘young donkey, wooden carrier’.

Birds: e.g. *baṭṭa* ‘duck, a small jug’, *ḥamāmale* ‘dove, grip of the plough’s handle’, *ṣūš* ‘chick, metal peg nailed into a press beam’, *‘ašfūr(a)* ‘sparrow, wooden pin tied to the end cord of the yoke’.

Reptiles: *kurkā* ‘turtle, copper bell’, *ṣalbūt* ‘tortoise, rounded or oval stone’.

Insects: e.g. *dabbūra* ‘wasp, pointed large hammer’, *namliyyale* ‘ant, low table or closet against ant’, *nāmūsiyyale* ‘mosquito, mosquito net’.

### Human and animal anatomy

The names of the human and animal body parts were extensively used and given to tools, because of their similarity in shape or because that tool was made of a material taken from the body.

Body parts: e.g. *iḡir* ‘foot, leg’, *baṭāniyyale* ‘belly, woolen blanket, cover’, *burk* ‘knee, plough beam’, *ḡanīb* ‘man’s side, oil basin on the side (lateral)’, *dān* ‘ear, wooden pins which compress the shank’, *‘ēn* ‘spring’.

### The physical shape of the tools

The physical appearance of the items expressed by adjectives or substantives is borrowed to refer to some of the tools like:

Flat: e.g. *bsāt* ‘carpet, sheet’, *balāṭale* ‘rectangular or circular stone slab’, *balṭale* ‘hatchet’, *taḡit* ‘bed’, *daffale* ‘rectangular wooden tablet’, *ṭabliyyale* ‘rectangular wooden board’, *lōḥ* ‘wooden tablet’, *mēdale* ‘dining table’.

Hollowed: e.g. *būq* ‘trumpet, funnel’, *ḡūnale* ‘round bowl’, *ḥōḡ* ‘basin’, *mil uqur* ‘circular or rectangular portable stone basin’.

Pointed, sharp: e.g. *‘ibrale* ‘iron needle’, *zaqqūt* ‘pointed end of the oxen goad’, *sīḥ* ‘metal spit with pointed end’, *sikkale* ‘ploughshare’, *sikkīnale* ‘knife’, *sēf* ‘sword, saber’, *fās* ‘axe’, *bēnsa* ‘small crowbar’, *kazmale* ‘double-headed axe’.

Circular, rounded: e.g. *iḥwā* ‘collar’, *ḥālūq* ‘ring’, *tōq* ‘ring’, *‘iḥurwale* ‘loop’, *qalāwale* ‘collar composed of a pair of sacks stuffed with straw’, *klīl* ‘collar, crown’.

Hooked (crooked, forked): e.g. *ḥanafīyyale* ‘water tube or pipe’, *‘aqafale* ‘wooden V-shaped hook’, *miḥḡānale* ‘stick made of oak with horizontal grip’, *šā‘ūb(e)* ‘wooden two-pronged fork’.

Pierced: e.g. *ḥurrāmale* ‘perforated stone’, *ḥarazle* ‘single bead’, *ḥlāl* ‘pointed wooden pin’, *miḥraz* ‘large needle, awl or punch’, *miḥlā* ‘small bag with two handles’.

Fragmented: e.g. *ḡāzeri* ‘wooden bar’, *qartlḡdale* ‘cylindrical piece of wood’, *qaṭmlbale* ‘wooden cross-bar’, *kāsir* ‘wooden side poles’.

Twisted, spiral: e.g. *ḡōdalle* ‘mattress stuffed with wool’, *ftīlale* ‘wick of lamp’, *(i)rša* ‘rope of a bucket’, *zemām* ‘cord, horse halter’, *zilunnār* ‘belt’, *znāq* ‘short cord or band, nose rope’, *‘dār* ‘band tied on a camel’s head as part of its halter’.

Transparent: *šāšiyale* ‘(rectangular) cotton sheet’, *šāf* ‘cylindrical glass vessel’, *šīšale* ‘glass bottle-like’.

### The linguistic strata of the words

I have attempted to trace the influence of ancient Semitic and non-Semitic languages in defining the linguistic strata of these names. As mentioned, some terms have been borrowed in the current vernacular from different languages and periods and employed with the same meaning, while others have been borrowed and phonetically modified to indicate an exact or a close meaning. It is impossible to say precisely when these lexemes were incorporated into the colloquial. The study of the names of the tools, objects, and installations showed a considerable contribution and a large percentage of loaned words from Semitic languages such as Akkadian (Akk), Canaanite (Can), Aramaic (Aram), Arabic (Ar), and Ethiopian (Eth) or common Semitic, while non-Semitic languages like Egyptian (Eg), Greek (Gr), Latin (Lat),<sup>5</sup> Persian (Per) and Turkish (Turk) have made a small contribution.

#### Semitic languages

<i>Tools</i>	<i>Akk</i>	<i>Can</i>	<i>Aram</i>	<i>Ar</i>	<i>Eth</i>	<i>Common Semitic</i>	<i>Unknown Semitic (?)</i>	<i>Total</i>
618	43	29	78	159	4	101	40	454
100%	6.9%	4.7%	12.6%	25.7	0.6%	16.4%	6.5%	73.4%
Installations		15	35	37	1	19		107
127		11.8%	27.5%	39%	0.8%	15%		84.3%

## Non-Semitic languages

<i>Tools</i>	<i>Eg</i>	<i>Per</i>	<i>Turk</i>	<i>Gr</i>	<i>Lat</i>	<i>Fr</i>	<i>It</i>	<i>Eng</i>	<i>Unknown</i>	<i>Total</i>
618	6	55	26	35	10	8	3	1	20	164
100%	0.10%	9%	4.2%	5.7%	1.6%	1.3%	0.5%	0.1%	3.2%	26.6%
Installations										
127	2	12		4	4	1			1	20
100%	1.7%	9.4%		3.1%	3.1%	0.8%			0.8%	15.7%

## Notes

- 1 This included olive pressing, cooking molasses, producing wine and sweets, or drying plant products, such as raisins and figs to have them as food reserve during the winter.
- 2 The main building materials used to construct the temporary establishments were wooden branches for the walls, canvas for the roofs, and rugs and worn-out cloth for the rooms. In contrast to this, the permanent establishments were built of dry stones and sometimes with mortar.
- 3 Halayqa (2014: 201–206).
- 4 Halayqa (2014: 206–212).
- 5 Including French (Fr) and Italian (It).

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## 8 The production of alternative knowledge

### Political participation of Palestinian women since the 1930s – a case study<sup>1</sup>

*Faiha Abdulhadi*

#### **Introduction**

While mainstream history is written by the victorious (Sayegh 1980), social history is the story of ordinary people who make history. It is the history of marginalized women and men. When history is written from a popular and democratic perspective, it documents the experiences of ordinary people overlooked by formal history, and involves people in formulating their own history, highlighting the voices of the voiceless. In this way, another narrative emerges alongside the official one, in agreement with the recorded narrative at times, and disagreeing with it at other times. As it adds its stories, the narrative contributes to the production of an alternative knowledge of reality, the events and the men and women who created those events.

This study aims to rewrite history from a perspective that discloses and documents the effective participation and experience of women who played a major part in history, but did not participate in the act of writing history. Narrating women's experiences challenges and leads to an interaction with dominant discourses' stereotyping portraits of female vulnerability and subordination. It contributes to the production of an alternative discourse, which makes women visible and gives them a voice.

A feminist oral history makes space for women to express their views and to touch base with their feelings and emotions. This is accomplished through an interview that is attentive, participatory and characterized by empathic listening. A feminist approach to oral history is grounded in a deep understanding of women. It approaches women through women, to listen consciously to their voices and make them heard. As a multidisciplinary perspective, it makes use of a wide range of disciplines, revealing the artificiality of the separation between academic disciplines, which prevents a deep knowledge of women (Tonkin 1995). This research approach provides freedom and flexibility for both female researchers and female narrators, rendering a deeper knowledge of the psychological nature of women (Gluck and Patai 1991) and deconstructing the predominant values which traditionally befall women as a major component in history making. Thus, a new set

of values can be formed, allowing the integration and the harmonization of the experiences of women and men (Elsadda 1999: 168).

In this study I have attempted to listen to two contradictory voices of women: the public voice, which they have practiced for so long, and the hidden voice, which they have long learned to suppress.

What women reveal about themselves does not reflect an objective description of their lives, but tends to originate from a cultural background and a cultural content that has a historical authority, which limits and restricts the activities of women. Accordingly, uncovering the language and meaning that women utilize in their daily lives helps us become aware of social forces and ideas, which have an impact on them (Anderson et al. 1987: 103).

A feminist perspective pays attention to body language and related emotional reactions: to the movements of hands, feet and face, generally, as well as to the details of eyebrows, lips, eyes and mouth. It asks women about the meanings of the expressions they use, especially those used to describe themselves.

### **The political contribution of Palestinian women in the 1930s**

This paragraph introduces some of the research findings of a project aimed at documenting the roles of Palestinian women since the 1930s (Abdulhadi 2006a). The aim was to make women visible and shed light on the history of women's struggles for the benefit of future generations of young Palestinian and Arab men and women, enabling women to actively participate in compensating for the loss of the Palestinian archives and preserving knowledge. Over the course of the project, the prominent status of Palestinian women, from the 1930s to the mid-1960s, became evident – a status that has been deeply entrenched in popular Palestinian memory. Furthermore, the research has included the names of many women who have been overlooked in written history, despite their presence in the memory of many of their contemporaries.

Previous research on the political participation of women from the 1930s until the mid-1960s was found to be marginalizing and somewhat neglecting their political role. We therefore selected this period, the geographical areas of interest and the gender of the narrators. The vast majority of the 155 narrators interviewed were women. The unequal ratio of men to women did serve the purpose of the project as it enabled us to record the political participation of women in the 1930s while recognizing a need to record also the accounts of some of the men who had been their contemporaries, particularly in the 1930s.

In our research, we have relied on populated areas, taking into consideration the distribution of narrators in each area in accordance with two age groups: over seventy-five years old and over fifty-five years old. In addition, we took into account the division of women into urban, rural, educated and illiterate groups.

The study attempted to cover the greatest areas of Palestinian presence, both inside and outside of Palestine, such as the West Bank, Gaza Strip, 1948 areas and Jerusalem in Palestine as well as in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. Seventeen women researchers participated in the research project.

In order to probe into some of the blind spots in mainstream history writing regarding women's political participation, the following questions were asked:

- 1 Did women participate in politics during the period investigated?
- 2 If yes, was the participation of women fundamental?
- 3 What were the roles of rural women in politics?

Responses to the questions confirmed the participation of Palestinian women in political life in the thirties, and their contribution was considered to have been essential, not marginal or insubstantial as many mainstream historians have claimed (al-Shihabi 1994).

Mainstream history (Mughanam 1986) has acknowledged the participation of urban women, highlighting their great courage in standing up against the British occupation forces as they submitted petitions and wrote articles in local newspapers. It also documents their participation through the Palestinian Women's Union, founded in 1921; in the Palestinian political conferences, where women's meetings were held as well as their contributions to Arab women's conferences, held in support of the Palestinian cause. For example, Palestinian women formed a large delegation participating in a conference held by Huda Sha'rawi in Egypt in 1938. Rural women, however, have not been recognized adequately. They played a different role from urban women and participated effectively in many forms of armed struggle. Nevertheless, mainstream history writing recognizes only one aspect of their participation: providing the revolutionaries with food and water and transporting weapons and ammunition. Also previous oral history narratives have not succeeded in altering such a recurring stereotype of the role rural women played in the thirties as the account of their involvement has been reduced to one of providing supplies for the revolutionaries, transporting weapons and inciting the men going to battle. This is partly due to predominant cultural values that encouraged women to understate their actual achievements.

The initial responses of women narrators to questions about their roles differed significantly from their responses after an amicable bond had been established with the interviewer.

INTERVIEWER: *What did women do when you were a kid?*

The narrators gave quick and similar responses:

- Absolutely nothing: they milk, churn, lie on the rugs in the fields; that's what we Arabs do, we're all farmers.

- Our work is preparing food, drinks, meals and feasts; it all revolves around housework.
- They knew nothing about politics or anything. No one ever saw them. They used to harvest and head home. We weren't open-minded like nowadays.

However, when the narrator felt more comfortable and ready to open her heart and mind to set tradition aside, she would elaborate and reveal her active participation in the struggle. It sheds light not only on her individual contribution but also on the role of many rural women then.

In an interview with Khadra Mustafa al-Sari, she insisted at first that women were not interested in anything but farming.

INTERVIEWER: *Tell us about the women at that time.*

KHADRA: *The women? In the cities, they were in the Black Hand group.<sup>2</sup> The girls would carry baskets; that was in Haifa. The women and the girls would take food and water and go up the mountains.*

INTERVIEWER: *What did they do exactly?*

KHADRA: *They would go with the Black Hand group.*

INTERVIEWER: *Did they fight with them or just go along?*

KHADRA: *No, they were into it, tied to them [the young men]. We would aim and fire at a certain place.*

INTERVIEWER: *And did they participate in the firing of weapons with the men?*

KHADRA: *No, they'd go along at the ready. No one knows them. Whenever something happens, they know about it. They'd throw guns, take guns, put them in the baskets and cover them with greens.*

After limiting the role of women to food and water, the narrator Shams al-Taity answers the researcher's question about women and their political work by saying: "Hamida Abu Rayya would fill the baskets with weapons, carry the weapons and set out. The soldiers would be standing at the gates and she'd pass through with baskets full of weapons. That was at the time of the British."<sup>3</sup>

Even though she also understated the political role of women, the narrator, Hamida Abu Rayya, is a typical example of such participation according to her own testimony and the testimony of other women. In her answer, she explained her work in detail: "When my dad joined the revolutionaries we had a carpet which we used to hang in our house like that, he rolled the rifle in it, wrapped it, went down to the cave below, buried and covered it, and then came up."<sup>4</sup>

Through the research it became apparent that Palestinian women have made major contributions to political life both in the city and in rural areas. While the role of urban woman focused on political activism, the role of rural women focused on militant activity.

### **The political participation of women in the 1940s**

The research revealed how extensive the political participation of Palestinian women in the forties was (Abdulhadi 2006b). Despite the decline in the prominent role in the armed struggle of rural women, they maintained their organic political participation: acting as liaison among revolutionaries and transferring messages and important information. They also sustained their roles as instigators, drawing attention to the dangers of selling land and continued challenging and clashing with the British forces and defending the villages, when they were attacked by Zionist gangs. Meanwhile, urban women focused on social work, connected with political activism a type of cultural work, which was closely connected with politics. They participated in politics through non-organizational public protests, such as their extensive participation in mass demonstrations and boycotts of foreign goods. They also made remarkable contributions to field hospitals by caring for the wounded.

In the 1940s, active women's associations and unions emerged, assuming various roles. In all cases, however, they were politically concerned, whether directly or indirectly. The associations were primarily involved in teaching, rehabilitating girls socially and raising political awareness, by means of sewing, embroidery, literacy courses, organizing political and educational lectures and first aid training, which qualified some girls for work in field hospitals.

The research explored the role of the Chrysanthemum Flowers Society, revealing the notable militant and political activities of its female members, who were engaged in militant work as well as in nursing during the association's short life span. Although the Chrysanthemum Flowers Society was not obscure, its political and militant roles were not well known. The current research sought to fill in the gaps in this history.

At the beginning, the Chrysanthemum Flowers' activities were charitable, much as in a social club. These later evolved into organized militant work. The founder, Mahiba Khurshid, explained how this shift took place after she witnessed, with her own eyes, the death of an innocent Palestinian child. The association got its name, which indicates life, beauty and constancy, from a French book the founder had read, which referred to the Scarlet Pimpernel of the French revolution. It also evokes chrysanthemum flowers, which are found in many parts of Palestine. It is a flower with petals shaped like shells, for which the city of Bethlehem is famous, symbolizing the beauty and the freedom of nature and openness. It also reflects the Chrysanthemum daisy, which has a long life span: yet another emblem and symbol for the militants. In English tradition, it stands for fraternity, sacrifice and asceticism.

The research was able to correct the names of the association's two founders: Mahiba and Nariman Khurshid. There were contradictory references to the name of the organization's leader, sometimes referring to her as

“Juhayna” and at times as “Arrabiya Khurshid” (Abu Ali 1975; al-Khalili 1977: 78), while one reference called her “Mahiba Khurshid” (al-Dajani 1989). The research also managed to discover the nature of the association’s chief line of work, regarding which there were conflicting descriptions as well. According to some references, they were a group of female nurses, whose members enlisted to accompany the revolutionaries and provide them with supplies and weapons (Abu Ali 1975: 47). Other references describe them as forming a military troop, without, however, further elaboration on their military role (al-Dajani 1989: 166).

The research extensively examined the year of the Displacement of 1948 and, thereby, revealed the prominent role of women in maintaining the perseverance and tenacity of the Palestinian family. It also examined the economic, social and psychological suffering, which they tried to overcome. In fact, they stood up to every attempt to undermine the family and shared the economic burdens with every possible means, resisting often devastating psychological effects.

In terms of social changes which accompanied the women’s political struggle, as early as in the thirties, a more visible presence of women as well as a rise in their role was observed, despite the social rigidity, which continued into the forties, especially in rural areas. The number of literate women increased, and families relying on girls as economic providers became a widespread phenomenon, which also hindered the marriages of many of them. Some families were also keen on teaching their girls music, painting, sculpting and dancing. Politically pioneering women started demanding women’s rights and invaded some fields of work that had previously long been monopolized by men. Among these were journalism, public speech, production of radio programs, writing and directing of plays and other performances, presentation of exhibitions and giving of political and social speeches. In this context, the increasing presence of active women in the consciousness of the narrators seemed organic and coherent in both political and social reality.

### **The political contribution of women from the 1950s to the 1960s**

Written records of the struggle of Palestinian women in the 1950s and the 1960s are extremely limited in their content, despite the fact that for the first time in history, women were active in Arab political parties (Abdulhadi 2009). Our research investigated the role of Palestinian and Arab organizations and federations, which supported the role of Palestinian women and sought to maintain their identity and sense of belonging. Some of these organizations were highly visible outside the country, such as the Arab Palestinian Women’s Union in Lebanon, founded in 1952, the Palestinian Women’s Federation in Cairo, founded in 1963 and the Association of the Returnee in Syria, founded in 1963. The General Union of Palestinian

Women was founded in Jerusalem in 1965, as one of the bases of the PLO (itself founded in 1964).

The research revealed an increase in women's participation in political work in the fifties. Immediately after the Displacement of 1948, according to most female narrators, social work became closely connected with political work as a result of the types of activities they engaged in. While the social aspect prevailed over the political, after 1948, the latter gained a larger scope in women's work beginning in the mid-fifties through associations, unions, federations and political parties. Women's associations became more interested in social development as providing sources of livelihood. Instead of providing material support for the evicted, they opened more literacy classes, founded more nurseries and workshops for sewing, embroidery and knitting, cared for the families of martyrs and detainees and organized fundraising parties, organized by women's societies and charity markets. They also paid more attention to educational aspects, organizing lectures and political and social discussions.

While women's unions focused on social activities, serving indirect political purposes, the parties made a clear connection between their political work and social methods. In their testimonies all of the narrators confirmed women's active political participation in demonstrations beginning in the mid-fifties.

With the increasing number of educated women, women's cultural participation expanded and women's political participation increased. The areas of creative writing and journalism became more diverse. More women presented programs and the number of cultural committees in clubs and women's associations increased, where women were not just participants, but also founders. In addition to the increasing participation by women in local journalism, women stood out in specialized journalistic work.

Women maintained their political role by working in cultural-social clubs, founding cultural-political clubs and developing their relationship to writing. Despite their diverse scope, politics was the link, which connected all activities. Some women participated in theatrical production, direction and script writing as well as the training and developing of women's work in journalism. After taking up theatrical production and journalism as a hobby, some women studied journalism and theater production at an academic level at the universities.

Women's radio work, which started in the early fifties, continued and increased in the early sixties, as it became more specialized in academia and in practice as a number of women worked in the radio as a profession. According to the narrators' testimony, many female political activists participated in radio work as a political activity, rather than as a professional one. From the mid-fifties, more women became interested in first-aid training because of its relation to social-medical work and military work.

In the mid-fifties and early sixties the correlation between military and medical fields was sustained as military work gained momentum with the

foundation of the PLO<sup>5</sup> in 1964. The role of women in organizing Arab political parties persisted as they continued working as members of the Communist Party and the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party with a remarkable level of participation in the Arab nationalist movement beginning in the mid-fifties. Since the mid-sixties, according to the narrators' testimonies, and after the foundation of the PLO in 1964, Palestinian women have participated in the women's movement within the Palestine Liberation Front.<sup>6</sup> A Women's Committee was also established within the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah) when the latter was founded in 1965.

One of the research objectives was to examine the organizational affiliation of Palestinian women with Arab political parties. Previous researchers have noticed familial relations among the titles of active female party members and male politicians. This has led to the conclusion that women's membership in these parties was driven by kinship rather than ideological conviction. According to the testimonies of several female narrators, their ideological affiliations with the parties were separate from the affiliations of their brothers, fathers, uncles or husbands. However, they did not deny being influenced by the ideas discussed at family gatherings.

In her testimony, the narrator, Nawal Hassan Hashishu, confirms that she chose to marry someone who shared the same ideas and political affiliations, saying that she met her husband after becoming a member in the Arab Nationalist Movement: "The most important thing I had in mind was that if I were to marry, it would be to someone who shares the same line of thought, like me."<sup>7</sup> The testimony of the narrator Suhailya Yassin Abu Rishah similarly shows that she joined the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party as early as 1947, before meeting her husband, 'Abd Allah al-Rimawy, a party leader, and it also shows the narrator's leading position and personality.

### **The role of Palestinian women from the mid-sixties to 1982**

Our research also explored the participation of Palestinian women in the armed Palestinian Revolution since 1965, their foundational work in the National Palestinian Front in 1970, their prominent role in the First Palestinian Uprising (the First Intifada) in 1978, their work in establishing pioneer feminist frameworks in the late seventies and the role of the General Union of Palestinian Women from its foundation in 1965 to the Beirut Invasion in 1982 (Abdulhadi 2015). Fifty oral interviews were conducted with women who played a prominent role in the politics of 1965–1982, or those who witnessed women playing a prominent political role during that time. The women were classified into two age groups: women older than sixty years and women older than fifty but younger than sixty years, who witnessed the period from the mid-1950s to 1982. They were selected from Palestine (the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the 1948 areas and Jerusalem), and from the diaspora in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt. The interviews also covered Palestinian cities, villages and camps.

The narrators' testimonies reveal how early Palestinian women engaged in Palestinian militancy by joining the Palestine Liberation Army. From 1965 to 1967, women's participation in demonstrations continued, chiefly against the Jordanian government. They protested against the detention of national activists and such government policies as Habib Bourguiba's visit to Jordan in 1965, and the events following the Samu' massacre. The narrators' testimonies point out the active academic and political role of female teachers and students during that historical period. They took part in printing and distributing leaflets, and the number of women participating in other kinds of political work and joining political parties increased.

The political participation of Palestinian women witnessed a surge after the Palestinian Revolution in 1965 with an increased involvement in their work within the armed resistance groups. This participation brought tangible social changes, as more women joined the military line of work. The cause of women, however, was never put forward as an independent cause, and the priority remained with militant work, despite the fact that some Palestinian factions acknowledged the importance of social change and adopted progressive slogans, which depicted women as partners in the liberation battle.

The narrators pointed out the nature of the dominant social notions at the time, which had resulted from a conservative and closed society. They talked about the difficulties they faced and that they were determined to confront and challenge them. The women talked about how they were discriminated against; treated as people who needed to be under the permanent guardianship of men; forbidden to work, choose their partners, or leave their house except for emergencies. Their work was limited to certain jobs and their potential was underestimated.<sup>8</sup> Describing the social changes that occurred after 1967, some narrators mentioned a decrease in dowries, an increased interest in education, the strengthening of social relations, the singing of national songs on social occasions and resorting to early marriage in some families.<sup>9</sup>

The political work at the time required both genders to carry out the necessary tasks, entrenching an image of women as partners, not subordinates. The narrator 'Abla Abu 'Ilba talked about the impact of the cooperation between young men and women in political work and how it dictated a different style of living:

From day one, there were regular mixed meetings . . . including boys and girls. The person in charge could be a man or woman, so we didn't care much who was in charge, as long as the person was competent. Demonstrations were mixed; meetings were mixed, and there were educating meetings in the barracks (houses with metal ceilings) of al-Husain camp, which were also mixed, and educating meetings where we not only studied the national Palestinian cause, but also new ideologies, Marxism–Leninism, and the experiences of world revolutions in Vietnam, China and Latin America. . . .

All this . . . was joint work. I never ever found difficulty in dealing with this atmosphere. It was a very natural atmosphere, because the general values and nationalism . . . were above all considerations.<sup>10</sup>

Through their political work, women challenged and refused the notions of shame, disgrace and inferiority associated with their gender.<sup>11</sup>

The impact of their participation in military work reflected a partial change in the view of the nature of women's work and ability. The narrator 'Aisha Jabir Na'im talked about how the military operation she executed in 1969 changed her family's view of her work, replacing a sense of disgrace with a sense of pride.<sup>12</sup>

The women's testimonies show the impact of the 1967 occupation in the west bank of the Jordan River, the Gaza Strip, Sinai and Golan. These events prompted an increase in the number of Palestinian women joining in political and military actions. Women participated in political demonstrations, carried messages and weapons, wrote and distributed political leaflets, worked in secret commando groups (*Fedayeen*), provided evicted persons with supplies and helped families of the martyrs and detainees.

According to some female narrators, women were instigators, after the 1967 war, in urging the people not to migrate. Moreover, they were active in the movement to boycott Israeli goods immediately after the occupation, and in demonstrations. They were also efficient participants in the teachers' strike, seeing it as an effective weapon of peaceful and popular resistance. The female narrators mentioned that after 1967 women were trained to carry weapons, did organizational work, studied nursing and took first-aid field courses. Women were determined to take part in fighting all kinds of Israeli aggression on Palestinian or Arab lands, by all possible means. In the Battle of Karameh in particular,<sup>13</sup> women carried out political and organizational tasks, acting as liaisons and nurses. After 1967, women were active participants in militant work – especially in the Gaza Strip – thanks to the military training classes the girls had taken in Gaza before 1967, which helped qualify them for military work after the 1967 occupation.

After 1969, women's participation in military work increased as more of them joined the Palestinian armed resistance groups. According to the female narrators, the parallel increase in women's political participation was influenced by their enlistment in armed resistance groups, especially in camps. Some narrators talked about the social transformation caused by the Palestinian armed activity. They reflected on the lives of camp residents and the deep sense of identity they derived from this transformation. In addition to military training, women took part in leading training camps, transferring weapons, guarding locations and executing military operations. With the increase of women's active organizational work, their involvement in Palestinian armed groups and Palestinian and Arab political parties also increased.

Palestinian women also continued their social-political work within the general framework and structures of women in syndicates. They took to feminist work in connection with the political, forming popular feminist committees as well as centers. They served in the field as medical respondents, liaisons and patrollers. They led political demonstrations and organized sit-ins. They also worked in the cultural field, including radio and other media, wrote political statements, presented petitions and helped raise funds. During armed battles, they formed relief groups, in addition to their communications and broadcasting work.

As members of the General Union of Palestinian Women, they pursued their feminist syndicate work together with their general syndicate work. After they co-founded the General Union of Palestinian Teachers, they continued to serve in the General Union of Palestinian Writers, the General Union of Palestinian Students and the Palestinian Red Crescent agencies. They also contributed to the General Union of Palestinian Doctors, helped found the Palestinian Doctors Union in Egypt and were members of the preliminary committee of Palestinian Doctors Union in Egypt.

During this same period, Palestinian women played a remarkable cultural role within the structures of volunteer committees, which were carried out through charity associations, syndicate unions and various political groups. The notion of cultural work gained greater importance in the testimonies of the female narrators about this period. They demonstrated a deeper understanding of culture and its close connection with politics. Women also had several functions related to the media, within the framework of their syndicates, including the celebration of special political occasions, the forming of artistic groups, the writing of media releases, the organizing of political discussions and organization of conferences, including participating in local, Arab, as well as international conferences. In parallel with their political participation during this period, the fact that the media women belonged to resistance groups resulted in the politicization of whatever radio shows they produced or presented. According to the testimonies of several narrators, there was an increase in women's participation in political demonstrations, associated with sit-ins.

Other Palestinian feminist associations were also established in the 1970s and 1980s. The Islamic Charity Association for Women was founded in 1974 as a social association without political activities.<sup>14</sup> Kamila Nayef al-Mady reported that:

The Women of Umm al-Fahem Association was founded in 1984—especially after the split of the Abnaa' al-Balad Movement (Children of the Homeland) in 1983, which largely affected the strength of the feminist movement. It was founded by al-Ansar, a breakaway movement which split from Abnaa' al-Balad.<sup>15</sup>

The association's activity focused on establishing model nurseries and organizing exhibitions and cultural events.<sup>16</sup>

In the late seventies, the women's wings of the large organizations, working under the umbrella of the PLO, provided a feminist framework. Their main target was the political organization of women, through strengthening ties on a large scale. The organizers tried to reach women, working in the factories and the fields, as well as in their homes in villages, cities and camps. Many women joined these organizations, which paved the way for their broad participation in the First Intifada, which began on the 9th of December 1987.

From the late seventies to the mid-eighties, political participation of Palestinian women grew, with an increased awareness of the necessary connection between social and political struggles, in order to maintain the gains of women's rights, bringing about a radical social change. They were well aware of the difficulties in the social and political struggle, but, because of their increasing participation in military work, the "women became stronger, more robust, and braver, and they had feelings of pride and vigour. Women acquired more courage and an ability to face difficulties and find solutions to the problems they encountered."<sup>17</sup> Because of this development in the personality of Palestinian women, with the power and vigor they acquired, they became able to challenge, confront and rebel against the social restrictions, which limited their ability to contribute politically.

## Notes

- 1 The article is a revised version of the author's lecture given at the conference, *Oral History in Times of Change: Gender, Documentation, and the Making of Archives*, Cairo (2015), published in Cairo Papers magazine, May 2018.
- 2 "The Black Hand" (Arabic: الكف الأسود, translit. *al-Kaff al-Aswad*) was an anti-Zionist and anti-British Jihadist militant organization in Mandatory Palestine. It was founded in 1930 and led until his death in 1935 by Syrian-born Sheikh Izz ad-Din al-Qassam.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black\\_Hand\\_\(Mandatory\\_Palestine\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Hand_(Mandatory_Palestine)).
- 3 Interview with Shams al-Teitiy. Born in 1919, Alarroub Camp – Hebron, field researcher: Lamyā' Shalaldeh, dated: 08.11.1998, archive: 4–5.
- 4 Interview with Hamida Abu Rayya. Born in 1922. Samu' – Hebron, field researcher: Lamyā' Shalaldeh, dated: 20.11.1998, archive: 3–4.
- 5 The PLO is a political organization, recognized by the United Nations and the Arab League as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people inside and outside Palestine. It was founded in 1964 after the First Arab Palestinian Council in Jerusalem, a result of the Arab League's resolution in its first summit meeting in Cairo in 1964, to represent the Palestinians internationally.
- 6 Ahmed Jibril founded the Palestine Liberation Front in 1959, and it initially enjoyed Syrian support. In 1967, the Front merged with the Heroes of Return (affiliated with the Arab Nationalist Movement) and the Young Avengers, forming the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. In 1968, Jibril split from the Popular Front to form the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.
- 7 Interview with Nawal Hassan Hashishu, born in 1937, Amman, Jordan, field researcher: Ruqaiya al-'Alami, dated 01.03.1999, archive: 11–12.

- 8 Interview with Rashida ‘Abd al-Hamid ‘Ubaidu, born in 1947, Amman, Jordan, field researcher: Mona Ghousheh, dated 11.08 and 3.09.2011, archive: 6, 7.
- 9 Interview with Khadija Abu ‘Arkub, born in 1943, Dora, Khalil, field researcher: Lamiaa’ Shalalda, dated 01.08.2011, archive: 27.
- 10 Interview with ‘Abla Abu ‘Ilba, born in 1950, Amman, Jordan, field researcher: Mona Ghousheh, dated 29.08.2011 and 09.09.2011, archive: 6.
- 11 Interview with ‘Abla Abu ‘Ilba, archive: 4–5.
- 12 Interview with ‘Aisha Jabir Na’im, born in 1950, Damascus, Syria, field researcher: Hala al-Ahmed, dated 05.11.2011, archive: 12.
- 13 The Battle of Karameh took place on 21 March 1968, when the Israeli army attempted to occupy the east bank of the Jordan River.
- 14 Interview with Kamla Nayef al-Mady, born in 1942, Kafr Yasif, field researcher: Ranin Jiryas, dated 12.09.2011, archive: 4.
- 15 Interview with Lubna Fawzy Ighbariya, Mahajina, born in 1959, Umm al-Fahm, field researcher: Ranin Jiryas, dated 22.1. 2012, archive: 9.
- 16 Interview with Kamla Nayef al-Mady (1942), Kafr Yasif, field researcher: Ranin Jiryas, dated 12.09.2011, archive: 4.
- 17 Interview with Kamla Nayef al-Mady: archive: 25.

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## **Part 2**

# **Ethnicity, geography and politics**



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# 9 Cultural heritage of Palestine

## Ethnicity and ethics<sup>1</sup>

*Ghattas J. Sayej*

### **The complexity of nationalism and ethnicity in Palestine/Israel**

The strategic position of Palestine between Africa and the Near East made it a crossroads for ancient empires and cultures throughout millennia. Each empire has left part of its material culture among the diverse layers of the cultural heritage of Palestine. Such diversity has also contributed to the enrichment of the mosaic of cultures and ethnicities among the inhabitants of the country. But how do these various ethnic groups value themselves in the form of nationalism? As most of us might agree, nationalism is about constructions of identities. In the case of Palestine/Israel, the situation is complicated. Palestinians (Jews, Samaritans, Christians and Muslims) lived in Palestine as part of the Ottoman Empire and thereafter as part of the British Mandate, where everyone had more or less equal rights and duties. Despite the fact that European Jews witnessed the Holocaust and extreme suffering under the Nazi regime, they became politically more dominant and superior after the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948, resulting in the suppression of the indigenous people of the country. Accordingly, by using religion as a major factor to achieve cultural differences, the actors themselves – in this case the Jews – regarded their part of the history as more significant than that of other ethnic groups/or religions (Barth 1969: 14). But how do people divide themselves according to ethnic groups? Jones (1997: xiii) defines an ethnic group as “Any group of people, who set themselves apart and/or are set apart by others with whom they interact or co-exist on the basis of their perceptions of cultural differentiation and/or common descent”.

In some parts of the world, the relationship between archaeology, ethnicity and nationalism is being misused on a pragmatic level by using archaeology in the determination of land claims and the ownership of cultural heritage (Jones 1997: 135–136). This is exactly what happened in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. Jews from all over the world unified under their faith, which became their nationality, whereafter they formed a sort of “Holy-Nationalism” (Oestigaard 2007: 11–12; Sand 2009; Ra’ad 2010: 113–114). But what about the other ethnic groups who were living and still live within the

boundaries of the Holy Land? Who has more right to declare their belonging to one specific geographic territory? Under which circumstances can we divide such territories according to ethnicity or religion?

According to the Old Testament, for instance, many ethnic groups lived within the border of what is known as the Holy Land. Among many verses discussing this issue, I will quote the following: “And the children of Israel dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, and Amorites, and Perizzites, and Hivites, and Jebusites” (Judges 3:4; KJV).

So, news about Samuel spread throughout all of Israel. *The Philistines* captured *the* Ark of the Agreement. At that time *the Israelites* went out to fight *the Philistines*. *The Israelites* camped at Ebenezer and *the Philistines* at Aphek.

(Samuel 4:1; NCV)

As it appears in this quote, the Holy Land was inhabited by many ethnic groups, such as Canaanites, Philistines and Israelites, among many others, who had different social patterns and ideologies. A narrow focus on ethnicity in this regard could be a threat to the nature of cultural diversity of the Holy Land (Anfinset 2003: 60). So, the question is why one specific ethnic group should use the Bible to acquire more rights to the land than others? However, it is not the purpose of this paper to discuss the Bible and/or to interpret its text, but rather to use it to show the mosaic of cultures and ethnicities which were widespread throughout historic Palestine. This complex history and tradition is still active at present and will be discussed later.

In this chapter, I will shed light on the complexity of the history of Palestine by highlighting how archaeology has been misused to achieve personal or national interests. I will also discuss the ethical responsibility among archaeologists in spreading awareness among the inhabitants of Palestine/Israel.

### **The historical chronology of Palestine**

The early historical chronology of Palestine stretches from the Lower Palaeolithic, around 1.4 million years ago, to the beginning of the Bronze Age at around 3500 BCE (Ahlstrom 1993: 53–54; Rollefson 1993: 72–111). During the Bronze Age (3500–1200 BCE), the ancient empires of Egypt and Asia (Hittite and Aramean) exercised their power upon neighbouring regions, including Palestine due to its strategical location as a main corridor between Egypt and the rest of the Near East. Independent Canaanite city-states were established in what is known today as Palestine/Israel and were influenced by neighbouring civilisations (Drews 1998; Golden 2009).

During the Iron Age, previously known as the “Biblical period” (1200–586 BCE), the kingdom of Judea (Finkelstein 2003), the Philistines (Assaf 2010) and Israel (Barstad 2008), among many others, played major roles in

the history of Palestine. Many small kingdoms were attached to each other from the Mediterranean in the west to the desert of Arabia in the east. These diverse ethnic groups lived side by side for many centuries until the invasions of the Assyrians from the mid-ninth century to the end of the seventh century, and thereafter by the Babylonians, who destroyed Jerusalem in 597/587 BCE and deported many of the ancient Jews to Babylon (Thelle 2014). The latter were allowed to return to Palestine when the Persians ruled the region between 539 and 332 BCE (Taagepera 1979). However, this biblical story is somewhat questionable and other scholars such as Thompson (2013) have questioned the entire exodus story (see the following).

During the Hellenistic period (333–63 BCE), Alexander the Great invaded Palestine as a part of his invasion through the entire East (Berlin 1997). After his death, the successors could not maintain the unity of the Hellenistic Empire and thus the Ptolemies took control over Egypt and ruled Palestine in the third century, whereas the Seleucids took control over Babylonia and thereafter managed to attack and rule Palestine during the second century BCE. When the Jews revolted against the Seleucid Empire and establishment of the Hasmonean kingdom in the second–first century BCE, the entire regions conquered by the Hasmoneans came under Jerusalem’s jurisdiction, and their populations were forced to become Jews (Cohen 2006; Thompson and Wajdenbaum 2014).

The rule of the Romans in Palestine (63 BCE–324 CE) is more complex, and scholars have different interpretations of this issue. Biblical archaeologists claim that the majority of ancient Jews were forced to scatter all over the Roman Empire and were subsequently not permitted to live within Palestine after their revolt against the Romans in 135 CE (e.g. Jagersma 1986). Other scholars such as Sand (2009) and Thompson (2013) did not find historical evidence of Jewish deportation. They found much evidence supporting the idea that the Jewish population remained in Palestine with maybe some of the elite being deported (Ra’ad 2010: 115). Sand also argued that the definition of Jews as a race was a legend devoid of historical foundation (Sand 2010: 30). Subsequently, Thompson debated that neither were Jews deported from Palestine, nor was there a mass exodus (Thompson 2013: 77, 95).

Following the Emperor Constantine’s conversion to Christianity, Palestine became one of the major centres of the new religion and the entire East became a part of the Byzantine Empire (324–640 CE). Most of the population of Palestine converted to the new religion, with resulting social changes reflecting the new religion and culture (Burckhardt 1949; Thompson 2013: 77, 95).

Despite the fact that Christianity was the main religion in the Levant for many centuries, many of the inhabitants of Palestine converted to Islam after the seventh century. Nevertheless, many also managed to keep their own faith and paid instead the *Jisya*.<sup>2</sup> The complex reasons for this collective conversion are not the topic of this discussion, but what is relevant is the fact that many families were divided because of their faith. Some of them

kept their old faith as Jews, Samaritans or Christians, whereas many converted to Islam (e.g. Ra'ad 2010: 115–116; Thompson 2013: 77). Thompson concluded that the religious tradition of Jews, Christians and Muslims is the same. Religion has changed from one to the other but the people stayed constant and thus they have a common heritage (Thompson 2013: 95). The point I wish to address here is that neither biologically nor ethnically can we divide the inhabitants of Palestine according to their religion. We are talking – more or less – about the same people, who changed faith according to their circumstances and interests. Many of those who were Jews converted to Christianity and thereafter to Islam. Whereas many of the current Israeli Jews who emigrated from Europe to Israel are converts – such as the Khazars – and not descendants of exile (Sand 2009). Thus the claim of many Zionist Israelis that they are descendants of the ancient Jews is inaccurate.

During the Crusader period (1099–1291 CE), the economic recession in Europe, combined with religious zeal, led to a succession of invasions of Palestine under the name of Christianity. The Crusaders managed to control the country for two centuries, and their remains are scattered all over the country, not only among the archaeological layers, but also among the current inhabitants of Palestine. When Salah el-Din recaptured Palestine, many Crusaders were landowners and well established and did not leave the country. They converted to Islam and many of their descendants still live there. In the Hebron region, for example, there are inhabitants who are of European descent but refer to themselves as Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims. They identify as Arabs because they speak Arabic, and they refer to themselves as Muslims because Islam is their faith.

For more than 400 years (1517–1918), the Levant and North Africa were parts of the Ottoman Empire and a mixture of ethnicities was the norm among the inhabitants of Palestine, particularly in the major cities such as Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre (Stanford 1976).

### **Mosaic of cultures**

Such complexity is reflected today among the inhabitants of Palestine/Israel. People from different “ethnic” groups or religions are gathered into communities across the country, and relate to themselves as a unique community. They variously define themselves according to their faith as: Samaritan Israelites (Mt Gerizim, Nablus), Ashkenazi Jews (Central Europe, who converted to Judaism in the eighth century CE), Sephardic Jews (Spain and Portugal), Mizrahi Jews (Middle East and North Africa), Karaite Jews, Christians (Greek Orthodox, Greek-Catholic, Roman-Catholic, Lutherans, Anglicans, etc.) or Muslims (Sunni). They also define themselves according to their political and ideological interests such as Israelis, Palestinians, Bedouins, Druze, Armenians, Assyrians, Baha'i and so forth.

The question is, however, why should the inhabitants of this mosaic culture be categorised according to ethnicity or religion? If so, who has the

authority to decide land ownership or civic rights among these different groups? The majority of nationalistic ideas are ethnic in their character demanding a state on behalf of the ethnic group. A conflict between ethnicity and nationalism is often a conflict between a dominating and a dominated group within the framework of a modern nation-state (Eriksen 1993: 118–119; Oestigaard 2007: 37).

### **History, archaeology and politics**

Archaeology has often been used in different parts of the world to support nationalist, colonialist and imperialist claims (Trigger 1989; Bernbeck and Pollock 1996; Yahya 2005). Archaeology is a social science and therefore can be easily misused politically. Politicisation, however, is a bias-heavy factor in archaeology, as is often the case in the Holy Land. There are few places in the world where archaeology has been given such immediacy and has been manipulated so extensively as a political and ideological tool as in the Holy Land. Archaeology has obvious religious and political associations and has been used to serve modern political goals (Yahya 2005: 67). Trigger (1989: 183) has given the following summary of Israeli archaeology:

In Modern Israel, archaeology plays the very different role of affirming the links between a recently arrived population and its own ancient past. By providing a sense of concrete reality to biblical traditions, it heightens national consciousness and strengthens the claims of Israeli settlers to the land they are occupying.

Complicating the situation, several right-wing Israeli archaeologists have used the discipline as a tool to assert their right to the land by neglecting real evidence and using mythology instead, without taking into consideration other cultural evidence and/or other ethnic groups or religions. They do not even consider the cultural attachment of those who still live in the country. Jews from all over the world have gathered themselves in Palestine and established their own nation by suppressing the indigenous ethnic groups – and/or religions – either by forcing them to leave the country and live as refugees in neighbouring countries, or to live as a small minority in their own country.

Western archaeologists working in developing countries became increasingly confronted both with the idea that the past they were reconstructing was “western” and with an articulate rejection of those pasts as being politically and ideologically motivated (Hodder 1986: 167). This “western mentality” or “political archaeology” has been implemented in Palestine for many decades. During my employment at the office of the Staff Officer for Archaeology of the Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria in the 1990s, I witnessed the destruction of the “unwanted layers”, in order to reach the “wanted layers”, at the site of Nabi-Samuel north of Jerusalem. Bulldozers

removed more than 2-metre-thick layers – over 2,000 years of accumulated deposits – because they did not belong to the “wanted layers” (Sayej 2010). Political archaeology is crucial in the Palestinian/Israeli conflict due to the fact that archaeology as a discipline has been misused to legitimise suppression and oppression against the native inhabitants of Palestine (Silberman 1982, 1995). Different ethnic groups within a nation-state are given more political rights and economic benefits than others due to their claims of inherited right from the past, although many of these claims are falsifications (Sand 2009). Political archaeology aims to expose and question the premises and the ideologies behind contemporary political hierarchies under which ethnic groups or nation-states use archaeology in their initiatives (Oestigaard 2007: 11). Whitelam describes the Palestinians as follows:

A people without history – or deprived of that history by the discourse of biblical studies – they become unimportant, irrelevant, and finally non-existent. It is an act of interpretation presented as objective scholarship, carrying the full weight of western intellectual institutions which is intricately bound to the dominant understanding of the present in which the modern state of Israel has made an “empty” and “barren” land blossom (...) the discourse of biblical studies has steadfastly refused to acknowledge that the construction of the past is a political act. Biblical scholars and archaeologists have sought to escape to the haven of objectivity effectively ignoring, or even denying, the context in which they work and the contexts in which they work is received and read.

(Whitelam 1996: 46, 128)

Palestinian history does not include only what is written in the Old Testament or what the Biblical archaeologists want us to believe. Palestinian history has a long tradition, supported by archaeological and historical sources, something which has been denied for more than a century by the discourse of biblical studies (Whitelam 1996: 69; see also Pfoh 2009). Edward Said argued in *The Question of Palestine* that “we” must understand the struggle between Palestinian and Zionism as a struggle between presence and an interpretation, the former constantly appearing to be overpowered and eradicated by the latter (Said 1980: 8).

But how did Zionism manage to falsify the history of Palestine by creating an ethnic group from a mixture of people who were mainly converts to Judaism? Sand presents in his book, *The Invention of the Jewish People*, many examples where people in central Europe and elsewhere converted to Judaism such as the people of Khazaria in the eighth century CE (Sand 2009: 218–238). Koestler, a famous Hungarian Jew who opposed all forms of racism wrote his famous book, *The Thirteenth Tribe*, in the 1970s and stated:

... the large majority of surviving Jews in the world is of Eastern European- and thus perhaps mainly of Khazar- origin. If so, this would

mean that their ancestors came not from the Jordan but from the Volga, not from Canaan but from the Caucasus, once believed to be the cradle of the Aryan race; and that genetically they are more closely related to the Hun, Uigur and Magyar tribes than to the seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Should this turn out to be the case, then the term “anti-Semitism” would become void of meaning, based on a misapprehension shared by both the killers and their victims. The story of the Khazar Empire, as it slowly emerges from the past, begins to look like the most cruel hoax which history has ever perpetrated.

(Koestler 1976: 4–5)

If such is the case, then how can many of the current Israeli Jews refer to themselves as the descendants of the ancient Jews? How can they use ethnicity as a source of alliances among themselves? According to Hitachi, an Israeli scholar, the idea of forming an ethno-nationalism is basically a political movement that struggles to achieve ethnic statehood (Yiftachel 2010: 273), and uses other measurements to support its movement. In this way, the current Jews of Israel are trying to create their own identity based on religion and falsification of evidence. Accordingly, the current status of Israeli ethnicity is no more than a political game, where a suppressor nation is stealing the land from its indigenous inhabitants by using Zionist ideology and misusing religion to create unity within their own community.

### **Archaeology, ethics and looting**

Palestinians live today in an apartheid state, where Jewish Israelis have more political, economic and social privileges than other inhabitants. In this regard, some Palestinians see archaeology as an obstacle to their own interests, because, on the one hand, the Israeli authorities are using archaeology as a tool for confiscating land, and, on the other hand, Palestinians are looting and destroying their own ancient past out of ignorance, poverty and greed. Some of these looters are even willing to destroy what is not related to their own religion, because they do not have the religious attachment to what they are looting. By removing such evidence, they believe somehow that they can eliminate the unwanted ethnic group and thus claim that Jews have no *a priori* right to live in the country. The problem with this view is that they destroy a major part of their own past (Abu el-Haj 1998, 2001: 255; Kersel 2006: 64; De Cesari 2008). So, how can Palestinians create their own past without using the same interpretative practice as Israeli biblical scholars? A possible way to achieve this is to write the history of all those groups/communities that have lived within the borders of the Holy Land, regardless of whether or not they were part of “the biblical story”. In this way, Palestinians will highlight the diverse cultural heritage of the country and widen their horizon to deal with and respect other groups, including the existence of ancient Jews. These are proclaimed by their Israeli

counterpart, although many of the current Israeli citizens are converts and do not belong to the ancient Hebrew tribes (see Sand 2009). Thus, it is possible to avoid a retroactive imperialism (Davies 1992: 31) by constructing a homogenised past where every ethnic group has its place in the construction of the history of the country. Only a pluriform past can give legitimacy to a pluriform present. If archaeology matters at all, then narratives of every group of humans in history are equally important, regardless of their faith and ethnicity (Oestigaard 2007: 150).

The current status of Palestinian archaeology has been discussed by me in Sayej (2010), and I will only briefly summarise it here. Prior to the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in 1994, many Palestinians were wary of archaeologists due to the fact that the occupying Israeli government misused archaeology to expropriate land. This issue created a gap between archaeology as a science and Palestine as a nation. Awareness of the importance of the archaeological remains as Palestinian cultural heritage simply never developed, because the majority of the population could not see the importance of cultural heritage either as a shared human past or as a store of future and past national wealth. Infrastructure to support the protection of ancient sites and funding to support the rehabilitation of archaeological sites were absent. During the last two decades, however, the ethical issue of dealing with cultural heritage has improved among Palestinian archaeologists, who are now carrying out excellent work fostering awareness, spreading knowledge, and protecting and preserving archaeological sites.

### **Concluding remarks**

How can we counter the mishandling of archaeology in the Holy Land and instead build a bridge of coexistence? The cultural heritage of Palestine represents a complex history which needs to be told without any further bias. I argue, therefore, that archaeologists have an ethical responsibility to spread awareness among Palestinians and Israelis in order to protect our common cultural heritage and build a bridge for coexistence.

Zionism has exploited archaeology as a tool to connect modern Jews to ancient Judaism in Palestine without having sufficient evidence to support such a claim, or even by falsifying it, as in the case of the Kazars. It did not even consider other ethnic groups who have existed and still exist within the borders of historic Palestine. Archaeologists need to foster awareness among Palestinians in order to educate them to appreciate their own long roots in the land and its history, as well as fostering more research related to ancient Palestine. The whole Zionist claim to connect modern Jews ethnically to ancient Jews is negated by evidence from archaeology, and knowledge of more recent conversions. Consequently, the indigenous Palestinians, though they may have changed religions, are more correctly the remnant of ancient populations. Accordingly, I add my voice to many others (e.g. Pappé 2010: 431–435) and promote a multi-ethnic

state, where the common cultural heritage can provide a mutual future for both communities. The Israeli and Palestinian societies need a shift in self-understanding, and the construction of a more accurate and inclusive history. A new identity should be based as much as possible on solid data rather than inventions, as is the case with Zionist ideology. An identity based on invention and exclusivism is damaging to the self and to the future of human knowledge. I hope that, one day, Israeli and Palestinian politicians will reach this conclusion and will contribute to protect our cultural heritage and spare the blood of our children. By doing so, it should not be so difficult to live together.

## Notes

- 1 This article has been presented at the Eighth World Archaeological Congress (WAC 8), Kyoto, Japan, 2016.
- 2 A tax paid by non-Muslim citizens in the Islamic State and equalled the *Zakat*, which was paid by the Muslims.

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## 10 Narratives, nucleotides, nationhood

The conundrum of demographic continuity and discontinuity, and the quest for historic legitimacy<sup>1</sup>

*Michael Nathanson*

### Introduction

The remote past of Palestine (ca. 3300 BCE–586 BCE) is the totality of the actions taken by its peoples making it utterly impossible to know that past *as it really was*, notwithstanding the absence of historical narratives by its peoples. The foundations and fundamentals of historiography were yet to be developed by the Greeks; Thucydides first among them. John Burrow's apt definition of these fundamentals: "*elaborated secular prose narrative of public events based on inquiry*" is Thucydidian to the core and still holds. To be sure, the Hebrew Bible's master narrative recounts the tribulations of the Children of Israel, their destiny charted by a capricious Yahweh, thus not meeting these strict criteria. Yet recent historians of ancient Palestine and the Near East, e.g., Ahlström (1995) and Kuhrt (1995), relied heavily on this overtly mythological and apocalyptic master narrative (Nathanson 2013: 658–659) to construct Palestine's Late Bronze and Iron periods. Scholars of the Copenhagen School (Thompson 1999; Lemche 2008) have convincingly argued for decades that the Hebrew Bible is not a trustworthy historical source, absent corroboration from extra-biblical documents and archaeological material. Clearly, no credible history can or should be written and consensually accepted and sanctioned unless evidence-based and cross-referenced. The post-modernist view that "the past and history float free of each other [and] are ages and miles apart" (Jenkins 1991: 7) should not be ignored. Moreover, Jenkins's notion that history is no more than "a contested discourse, embattled terrain, wherein people(s), classes and groups autobiographically construct interpretations of the past literally to please themselves" (Jenkins 1991: 23) is worth internalizing. Indeed, historians, anthropologists and archaeologists writing histories of ancient Palestine have, wittingly or not, bolstered claims of ethnic continuity between the populations of ancient Palestine and the populations of modern Israel/Palestine, i.e., of Jews (and Israelis) with Bronze and Iron Age (biblical) Israelites, and of non-Jewish Palestinians with Bronze and Iron Age Canaanites and Philistines. The construction of a narrative (in fact myth creation) that purports

an uninterrupted demographic continuity is precisely an endeavor that aims to satisfy, i.e., “please”, a group’s quest for self-identity by, among other things, legitimizing its geopolitical aspirations (Smith 1998: 22–31).

While it is customary today to refer to disparate groups of people in ethnic terms, I refrain from using the term *ethnicity* simply because its definition and meaning are far from clear or universally accepted. As Fredrick Barth sees it

... categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information, but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories.

(Barth 2013)

Ronald Cohen is no less clear when stating: “... the named ethnic identities we accept, often unthinkingly, as basic givens in the literature are often arbitrarily, or even worse, inaccurately imposed” (Cohen 1978). In other words, the usage of the terms *ethnic*, *ethnicity*, etc. is not in the least disruptive. Similarly, what constitutes continuity and discontinuity (or change) is not self-evident. These are signifiers of agenda-driven theories and concepts that are linked to core geo-political values held in common by a demographic group seeking self-identity and -definition (Falski 2012).

Deciphering the *human genome* raised expectation that *ethnicity* could be defined genetically: ergo *ethnogenesis* could be documented and timed and demographic continuity and discontinuity discerned and quantified. Unquestionably, *population genetics* corroborates a long-known key essential in the evolution of mankind. Namely, that humans have migrated near and far and across continents for a variety of reasons, and, as a result, random mating has taken place that changed ancestral hierarchy. A glance at any *phylogenetic tree* confirms that the earlier a *most recent common ancestor*, the more relatives we may claim among human groups we might know, do not know, cannot know or do not care to. Which *most recent common ancestor*, among many, we *choose* to claim as “our ancestor” depends on individual, group and national self-interests driven by sheer curiosity for its own sake, quest for historic and social self-identity and satisfying a geopolitical agenda. These self-interests have inevitably led to a collision of DNA with history and archaeology (Wailoo et al. 2012: 328–330). Scientists, to be sure, have not deciphered the human genome to satisfy our fixation with family roots (Cavalli-Sforza 2000), and geneticists do not (as well should not) determine who our respective genetic ancestors were just so we can prove a descent from storied and fictive ancestors whose genomes are unknown. Such circular thinking, we should be reminded, discredited biblical archaeology. Introducing *ethnicity*, and therefore *race*, into the mix of history and archaeology has only muddied the water.

### The meaning of *ethnicity* and the fallacy of *race*

Epigraphic and pictographic remains from Egypt and Mesopotamia suggest that self-identity and internalization of *the foreigner as the other* were prevalent in the Ancient Near East, reflecting, in the main, geopolitical fears and concerns shrouded in cultural differences. “Vile”, “wretched” and “monkey face” were frequently used insults (Poo 2005: 50, 95); in other words, the enemy became the other. The Greeks stood this formulation on its head: foreigners became enemies because by their very nature they (e.g., Persians and Spartans) “plunged into a passion for war”. Foreigners were distinguished *inter alia* on linguistic (Homer) or political (Aristotle) grounds. Herodotus, a purveyor of tall tales, introduced cultural differences: e.g., Egyptian women urinating standing up, their men crouched, and also (absurd) physiognomic markers: e.g., Egyptians’ skulls were thick (because of over-exposure to the blistering sun!) and their hair curly; Indian semen was black. To his credit, he did not interject value judgment, suggesting instead the influence of environmental factors. To be sure, foreignness (unlike physiognomic traits) was not immutable. A Persian could become Greek if he relocated to Greece, spoke Attic, worshipped its gods, abided by its social and legal norms, and remained loyal to the community (*polis*). Indeed, the Greek *oekumene* and the Hellenization of disparate *ethné* in the conquered lands came as close to the Greek ideal of the *polis*. When the *oekumene* came under Roman rule, their subjects became Romanized and the ethnic boundaries blurred in favor of living harmoniously under the unifying tenets of political governance and laws.

By contrast, the authors of the Old Testament codified ritualistic practices that demarcated the existential borders between the adherents of the Mosaic laws and the rest, which, however, did not prevent that a thorough and forced conversion into the Jewish faith was carried out with the expansion of the Hasmonean state in the second–first century BCE. The fathers of the Church institutionalized baptism and communion to separate the believers from the apostates and unite them, metaphorically and physically, with Christ’s flesh and blood. During the Renaissance the emphasis shifted from the universal to the individual and from ecclesial consanguinity to familial and “national” bloodlines they coined race. But in spite of absent supportive scientific evidence, philosophers, scientists, theologians and historians, from the 1500s to the early 1900s, struggled to define race, prove racial purity and rationalize racial superiority. All of which were theoretical constructs, which brought about human misery and calamity (Hannaford 1996: 182–184, 232–233, 274–276 and 323–324). After the horrors of World War II, *racism* in word and deed became politically incorrect and socially *verboten*. Instead, *ethné* and ethnicity resurfaced ostensibly as a value that was neutral of observable group differences, but in many instances it was a euphemism for actionable non-value-neutral biological racial differentiation. But if *ethné* and races can be differentiated biologically, i.e., genetically, the

reverse should hold true as well. Each and every group of people clustered together by sharing a high frequency of a specific variation in its genome should be regarded as an *ethné* and/or a *race*. That, of course, is a non-starter. What then is the meaning of such genomic variations?

### **The molecular basis of genetics: highlights of the historical background**

In a twist of historical irony, light microscopy was developed in the Netherlands in the late 1500s about the time when Richard Rowlands (1565–1620) introduced to the English vocabulary the term *race*; i.e., the pursuit of blood lineage. Light microscopy (Wiki: *Microscope*) allowed pioneering investigators to discover biological structures, to correctly postulate their key role in reproduction and heredity, and, ultimately, pave the way to decoding the human genome. In 1831 the Scottish botanist Robert Brown (1773–1858) discovered the cell's nucleus whose importance to cell division was sensed by Matthias Jacob Schleiden (1804–1881). Together with Theodor Schwann (1810–1882) they postulated a cell theory, stating that

- a All organisms are composed of one or more cells.
- b All organisms come from preexisting cells.
- c All cells contain the hereditary information necessary for regulating cell functions and for transmitting information to the next generation of cells (Wiki: *Cell*).

In 1866, Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) proposed that the nucleus contained the factors responsible for the transmission of hereditary traits (Dahm 2005). The same year, the Moravian monk and botanist Gregor Mendel (1822–1884) published the results of many years of experimentation with crossbreeding common pea plants. Contrary to the then prevailing theory that “inherited traits blend from generation to generation” and Darwin's, equally wrong, theory of “pan genesis” (Yawen 2014), Mendel concluded that:

- a The inheritance of each trait is determined by “units” or “factors” (*elementen*) that are passed on to descendants unchanged.
- b An individual inherits one such unit from each parent for each trait (the principle of segregation).
- c A trait may not show up in an individual, but can be passed on to the next generation independent of other traits (the principle of independent assortment).

Thus, “the human inheritance of a particular eye color does not increase or decrease the likelihood of having six fingers on each hand” (O'Neil 1997).

Schleiden, Virchow and Bütschli discovered the structures known as chromosomes in the late 1800s, and Theodor Boveri (1862–1915) clearly

demonstrated that chromosomes were vectors of heredity (in accordance with Mendelian principles) (Wiki: *Chromosome*) and that sperm and eggs contributed the same number of chromosomes. The Danish botanist Wilhelm Johannsen (1857–1927) coined the word “gene” in 1909 to describe the fundamental unit of heredity, and in 1928 the German botanist Hans Winkler (1877–1945) introduced the term “genome” (a blend of gene and chromosome) to describe “the haploid chromosome set, which, together with the pertinent protoplasm, specifies the material foundations of the species...” (Wiki: *Hans Winkler*). In 1928, the British scientist Frederick Griffith (1877–1941) performed a series of experiments in mice using pneumonia bacteria, suggesting DNA was the genetic code material and, further, that genes could be transferred, that is, one strain of bacterium could absorb the genetic material of another and “turned into” the type of bacterium whose genetic material it absorbed (Carter 2014). Electron microscopy, developed in the 1930s in the Siemens laboratories and later perfected at the University of Toronto, enabled scientists to explore and define subcellular structures (Wiki: *Electron microscope*). In 1952, Hershey and Chase provided conclusive proof that DNA is the genetic code material. A year later, the Nobel laureates James Watson and Francis Crick, based on the pioneering work of Rosalind Franklin, using x-ray crystallography, established the double helix structure of DNA. Walter Fiers at the University of Ghent accomplished the first genome sequencing, in a viral RNA, in 1976, and in 2006, the sequence of the last chromosome was completed, concluding the Human Genome Project with declared 99.99% accuracy.

### **Essentials of cellular morphology and DNA molecular structure**

The cell is the fundamental unit of life of all species, containing the same basic coding mechanism needed to maintain and perpetuate life. Said inherent mechanism can be traced to the evolution of a family of RNA molecules that could store genetic information (messenger RNA [mRNA]) and catalyze their own replication (transfer RNA [tRNA]). It is speculated that over time, a family of RNA catalysts (ribosomal RNA [rRNA]) jointly developed the ability to directly synthesize polypeptides, which are the building blocks of proteins. As the accumulation of additional protein catalysts allowed more efficient and complex cells to evolve, the DNA double helix replaced RNA as a more stable molecule for storing the increased amounts of genetic information required by such cells.<sup>2</sup>

Most cells are eukaryotic; i.e., they are nucleated (Figure 10.1); their cytoplasm contains several structures, most importantly the mitochondria. Both nucleus and mitochondria contain DNA. The DNA molecule is the basis of genetic differentiation between and within species. It consists of extremely long double helical chain of four basic organic compounds, or monomers, called nucleotides, Adenine, Cytosine, Guanine and Thymine

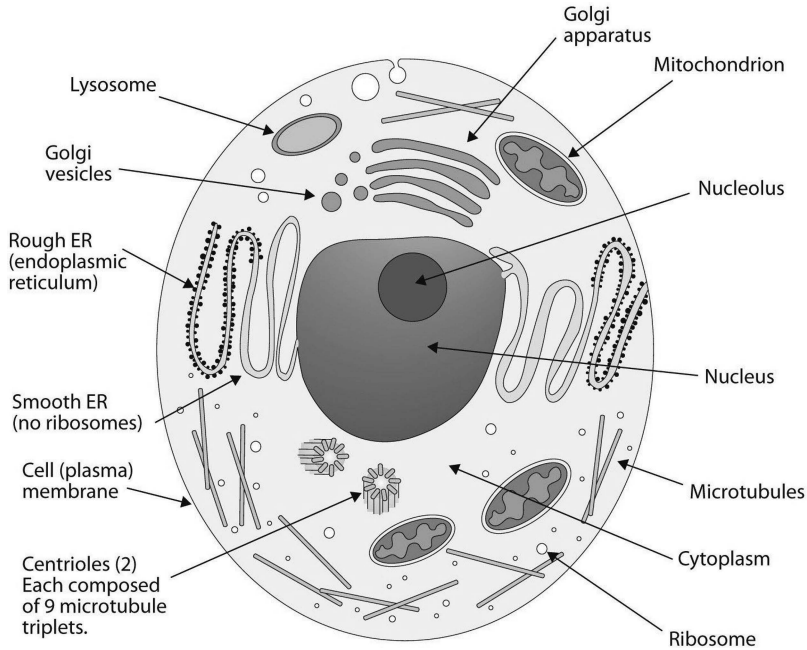


Figure 10.1 Cell diagram.

(A,C,G,T), that form two, and only two, types of base pairs (A-T; C-G).<sup>3</sup> 3.2 billion base pairs in humans, linked together by a “backbone” of phosphorylated sugar, are packed into twenty-two pairs of autosomal and one pair of sex (nuclear) chromosomes. Sixteen thousand five hundred base pairs reside in the cytoplasmic mitochondria in a circular, or doughnut, form. The vast majority of DNA (97%) is noncoding, while a small part codes for the production of proteins. The coding DNA is referred to as genes; of the total of 20,000–25,000 genes, only thirty-seven reside in the mitochondria; these are cytoplasmic organelles (i.e., having their own [double] membrane) that utilize  $O_2$  to produce ATP (adenosine triphosphate), the ubiquitous high-energy compound required for the cell to execute all its biochemical processes. The noncoding DNA (once dismissed as *junk DNA*) participates in the regulation of gene expression; i.e., when, where and how much to code. Thus, the cell is no less than a self-regulating, self-replicating, self-reproducing living organism. Cell multiplication is accomplished through the process of *mitosis*, which involves the self-replication of the chromosomes and the DNA therein. Thus the genetic code passes on from cell to daughter cells within the same multi-cellular organism. The mother and daughter cells remain diploid, that is to say, they maintain at each phase of the mitosis two sets of each chromosome. The transfer of the genetic

code from one multi-cellular organism to its next generation (the propagation of life) involves the process of *meiosis* in which the duplicated DNA crosses over from one member of one identical pair to a member of the other pair (a process known as recombination) initiating a two-phase segregation process that results in four haploid daughter cells; i.e., the nucleus of each daughter cell contains only one set of twenty-three chromosomes. Each therefore contains a single copy of each chromosome. The process of meiosis produces the haploid *gametes* (sperm cells and egg cells), which upon fertilization combine to produce a diploid offspring. A fertilized egg (a zygote) will turn into a female, if the male sperm contains an X copy of the father's chromosomes, or into a male, if it is a Y copy. Significantly, recombination occurs between the father-derived X chromosome and the mother-derived X chromosome to the effect that the offspring's X chromosomes are not the exact copies of their parents' respective X chromosomes. Thus, whereas Y-chromosomal DNA (Y-DNA) determines the paternal lineage, X chromosomal DNA becomes diluted geometrically with each generation and cannot be reliably used to determine remote ancestry. Blissfully, mitochondrial DNA (mtDNA) passes exclusively from the mother to her offspring, and serves well in determining maternal ancestry.

It is during the replication and recombination stages of mitosis and meiosis (and the asymmetrical chromosomal recombination in the latter) that the DNA chain is susceptible to inversion of a segment of the chromosome, substitution, insertion or deletion of one or several base pairs that lead to mutations; i.e., *variations* in base-pair sequences. Neutral mutations (see the following) occur also spontaneously due to faulty repair of routine breakdown of DNA sequence, which occurs in chromosomes and (with greater frequency) in mitochondria. Those induced by environmental conditions, chemical agents and drugs can be injurious, but rarely passed on to offspring. Mutations occur in both the coding and noncoding segments, and can be lethal, may or may not cause phenotypical effect, may either reduce or abolish the function of the gene or may increase its activity. Neutral mutation does not result in any of the effects cited earlier. Neutral (i.e., harmless) mutations occur spontaneously in all species at a steady rate that serves as a molecular clock. Mutations occur more frequently in mtDNA than in Y-DNA, and with varying frequencies between regions of the DNA molecule. The calculated average human chromosomal mutation rate is estimated at 0.81–1.20 mutations per  $10^9$  base pairs per year over the entire elapsed time between the last DNA mutation of each species and the last mutation of common ancestor's DNA. However, the calculated mutation rate shortens as more markers are used in haplotyping (see the following). Mutations in Y-DNA sequences are primarily of two kinds: a Single-nucleotide-polymorphism (SNP) whereby one nucleotide is altered, and a mutation in short segment tandem repeats (STR) that will shorten or elongate these typically two to five base-pair segments (e.g., GATAGATA-GATA). A DNA Y chromosome segment (DYS) containing an STR is called

locus or a marker. A combination of certain markers is called a haplotype (short for haploid genotype). The shortest haplotype is six markers long, and a twelve-marker haplotype genotyping is now being replaced by up to thirty-seven-, or even sixty seven-markers haplotype testing for extended genotyping (discovering greater number of sub clades). The mutation rate in a six-marker haplotype is 1 in 2,840 years, 1,140 years in twelve-marker haplotype, 280 years in thirty-seven-marker haplotype and 170 years in sixty-seven-marker haplotype. As a rule, the higher the number of markers in a haplotype, and the number of randomly selected haplotypes, the lower the margin of error in calculating the time to a most recent common ancestor, i.e., a founder haplotype (Klyosov 2009a, 2009b). In mtDNA mutations occur at highly polymorphic “hotspots” known as Hypervariable control regions of which there are two: HVR-1 and HVR-2. Mutations within the coding DNA (genes) result in polymorphic genes called *alleles*. Differences between given allele frequencies in disparate populations (genetic distance) determine how close they are genetically.

### **Population genetics, ancient genomes and phylogenetic haploid grouping**

Detection of mutations and variations with their frequencies in populations worldwide have allowed scientists to not only discover the underlying mechanism of diseases but also offer well-founded theories about the forces that impact human evolution. In addition to the above and *migration* (already mentioned in the introduction), the other two are *genetic drift* and *natural selection*. Briefly, genetic drift is nothing more than *chance* fluctuation of gene frequencies over several generations; the smaller a population, the greater the fluctuation. Apart from migration and mutations, which introduce new genes, genetic drift will lead to a *founders' effect* that results in the survival and final fixation of one gene, usually the most common at the beginning of the process, which leads to population homogenization. Natural selection (“survival of the fittest”) is the differential survival and reproduction of individuals due to differences in *physical* and *behavioral* characteristics. Fertility offers advantage while certain environmental conditions hinder heritability. Inbreeding (frequent in isolated populations and endogamous groups) increases the chance of homozygosity that may result in the prevalence of deleterious recessive *alleles* that may impede the fitness of an offspring to survive. These forces, individually and jointly, impact gene frequencies in populations worldwide. Frequency differentials determine the (relative) genetic distance between groups and their genetic relationship. An example (to which we will return later) is differential frequencies of several *alleles* (variants) of the Human leukocyte antigen (HLA) gene located in chromosome 6. A more direct determination of genetic patrilineal and/or matrilineal relatedness compares the number of mutations in noncoding sequences of the Y-chromosome

and the mitochondria, respectively, in two populations of same species to measure how much time had elapsed since their *most recent common ancestor* was alive. The elapsed time depends on the rate at which the DNA “letters” mutate (Callaway 2012).

Detection of mutations in Y-chromosome DNA strands and in the circular mtDNA have allowed scientists to construct a phylogenetic “Tree of Life” for each of these DNA lineages that depict when, over the course of evolution, species branched off their common ancestors. Within each species, these points of branching off are a marker for binary polymorphism that identifies each new sub clade, differing, however minutely, from its parent branch. Each first order branch forms a haplogroup labeled alphabetically and its offshoots (referred to as clades and sub clades) are designated by numeral and lower-case letters (Whittall 2014). Each haplogroup, clade and sub clade is also identified by its marker mutation numbered according to the 2002/2008 Y Chromosome Consortium (YCC) guidelines. Karafet and co-workers have presented an extensively revised Y chromosome tree containing 311 distinct haplogroups, incorporating 600 binary markers (Karafet et al. 2008). A chromosomal haplogroup K, for example, is also labeled Y-chromosome K-M9. Similarly, there also is an mtDNA haplogroup tree, each mutation given a number of the base pair involved.

### **The Y-DNA J1 (J-M267) and J2 (J-M172) sub clades of the Middle East and Mediterranean basin**

As this presentation concerns the phylogeny of Near Eastern populations, it focuses primarily on the phylogenetic tree of Y-chromosome J1 and J2. Both mutated from haplogroup Y chromosome J, which originated in Western Asia ~30,000 YBP (years before present); J’s progenitor, IJ, mutated from Y-chromosome IJK ~40,000 YBP. Y-chromosome J1 originated in the Middle East ~10,000 YBP (Wiki: *haplogroup J-M267*), whereas Y-chromosome J2 (~14,000 YBP) settled in the Middle East, Caucasus, Central Asia and southeastern Europe. Numerous phylogenetic studies have provided information about the genetic makeup of geopolitical and linguistic nationalities today attempting to assign genetic lineages to each. Gene pool composition and diversity varies with population stability. Y-chromosome J1/2 frequencies are high (>50%) in Bedouins, Palestinians, Yemenites and Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews (Eupedia: *European Y-DNA haplogroups*; Wiki: *Y-DNA haplogroups*). Lebanese and Albanians have frequencies that exceed 40%. Clearly Y chromosome J1/J2 haplogroups are prevalent in the eastern Mediterranean basin and are not population specific. Conversely, they are not the only one to originate in the Near East. Mitochondrial DNA J, J1a, J1b, T2, K, U3, K1, originated there as well. Higher than 15% U3 frequencies were found in Iranian and Iraqi Jews, but not in the general population of these countries, and only 1% among Ashkenazi Jews. Mitochondrial J haplogroup

frequencies were above 10% among Iranian and Iraqis (even higher among their Jewish population), Yemenite Jews, Ethiopians and Andalusian Spaniards (Kivisild 2004; forumbiodiversity.com).

In general, there is admixture of a wide array of mtDNA haplogroups among disparate populations. In comparison, the Y chromosome data show clustering of population groups around the Near Eastern J1/J2 and or the north (and east) African E1b1b sub clades. But the over-representation of Haplogroup L and its sub clades in the Yemenite population (and other groups in the Arabian Peninsula as well as in Ethiopia particularly) attests, in the main, to their southeastern African roots. The ubiquity of Y-chromosome J1 haplogroup and J2 haplogroup and their sub clades – J1, J1a, J1a1, J2, J2a, and so forth – down the line, throughout the Middle East and its environs, distinguishes between and within populations that are biologically related, but separated by *insignificant* mutations and *significant* cultural differences. Thus, fifth-generation cousins belonging to a tenth-order J1 sub clade do share a most recent common ancestor, but may as well be *total* strangers – living on different continents, speaking different languages and practicing different religions – except for a paper trail and/or a certified printout of a laboratory result. These genomic differences represent a microcosm of remote historic events hallmarked by ancestral migrations and crossbreeding, most likely affected also by wars, plagues, natural disasters and, not in the least, mass conversions.

Review of haplogroup frequencies distribution among disparate populations presented herein reveals too many close similarities as well as dissimilarities among and within population groups raising doubts about the meaning and usefulness of genomic data in the context of geopolitical rivalries. For example, Erich Cline (2004: 12, 33), echoed by his political counterparts, has argued that Palestinians are descendants of the Canaanites, the ancient inhabitants of territories that also included the land between the River Jordan and the Mediterranean. While it is reported (absent a peer-reviewed scientific publication) that a Y-chromosome DNA retrieved from a 2,500-years-old Phoenician mummy included a J2 haplogroup, which is not surprising, a J2 haplogroup can tie Palestinians to any of several ancient populations as well. Besides, Phoenicians and Canaanites are not necessarily (or even most likely) indigenous to Ancient Palestine. Near Eastern skeletal remains have been excavated over the years in and around the Levant, but inexplicably, with few exceptions (Kletter 2002; Salamon et al. 2010), DNA data are paltry. A mass grave containing the remains of over 210 humans was unearthed over a thirty-year period in Ashkelon. It could have yielded a treasure trove of vital information, but to date no DNA analysis has been reported (Eisenbrud 2016). Salamon et al. (2010) analyzed 6,500 years old skeletal remains from the Jericho region, which yielded significant quantities of Eurasian mtDNA R sub clades. In the past 4,000–3,000 years, the demographic makeup of Palestine's population must have shifted and the sequence of its genome altered, if only slightly, following conquests by

such diverse peoples as Egyptians, Philistines, Arameans, Assyrians, Babylonians, Achaemenid Persians, Greeks, Romans, Sassanid Persians, Arab (peninsula) tribes, Crusading Europeans, Mamelukes, Seljuks and Ottoman Turks. During the 400-year-long Ottoman rule, people were relocated from Armenia, Turkey, the Caucasus, Albania and other regions under Turkish control. Indeed, the genomes of the non-Jewish Palestinian population reveal diversity commensurate with the land's rich and turbulent history. Using the polymorphic HLA gene as markers, Arnaiz-Villena et al. (2001) measured the genetic distances between Palestinians and several populations in the eastern Mediterranean basin. Very low distances were found between the former and Ashkenazi and non-Ashkenazi Jews, Iranians, Cretans, Armenians, Turks, Spaniards, Portuguese, Algerians, Lebanese and Macedonians.

### **Concluding remarks**

Authors of a new evidence-based narrative of ancient (and modern) Palestine must accept that they will not recover its past *as it really was*, but at best create a plausible past by interpreting verifiable data employed as facts. They must also be cognizant of the fact that their interpretations might be swayed by present-day geopolitical considerations driven by an ongoing struggle for (ethnic) self-determination. Inasmuch as the parameters of *ethnicity* (either self- or externally imposed) include a given collective name, an adopted myth of a common descent and a shared history, a shared culture, an association with a specific territory, a sense of solidarity and an organized religion, *ethnicity* is meaningless as a biological signifier.

The origins of ancient peoples are almost always shrouded in mystery. Their historic names are, as a rule, given by other peoples. The beginnings of the Sumerians, Akkadians, Amorites, Kassites, Hyksos, Hurrians, Hittites, Philistines, Israelites, Aramaeans, Ammonites, Moabites, Edomites and Nabateans remain open to speculation. These demographic groups burst into the world's stage, left their mark and vanished, but not into thin air. They became other named peoples as a result of the aforementioned forces that impact evolutionary processes. Population genetics, like archaeology, can be an indispensable tool in writing a history of peoples in their lands. It may corroborate or invalidate written texts, but the DNA of ancient peoples is unavailable and therefore unknown. The near-absence of ancient Palestinian (and Ancient Near Eastern) DNA precludes any informed discussion of the characteristics of its population beyond that which is known from archaeological artifacts and ancient epigraphy. Ancient Palestine's population was always in a state of flux due to invasions and migrations. Towns and villages were frequently destroyed; their populations slaughtered, enslaved or dispersed leading to bottlenecks (Wiki: *Population bottleneck*). The genomes of their new populations undoubtedly differed. We are left only with the DNA of present populations to determine common ancestry on the basis of mutations. Thus for example, Jews

and Arabs share two most recent common ancestors (J1e and J2a) approximately 4,200 YBP (Klyosov 2010: 19–20, 28). Claims to (demographic) continuity and discontinuity should therefore be suspect as “these concepts are specific local expressions of ideology by individual historians” (Jenkins 1991: 19). Genomic analysis suggests, in the broadest terms, that many of today’s Near Eastern and European populations are descendants of a distant Near Eastern J ancestor. That is as much as we can reliably say. Paradoxically, if a theme of *continuity* is to dominate the history of Palestine, our focus must be on that constancy of population *changes*, reflecting the land’s crucial geographic location at the North-South and East-West crossroads.

## Notes

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Gail Jarvik (MD, PhD) is Head and Professor of Division of Medical Genetics, The Arno G. Motulsky Endowed Chair in Medicine, Joint Professor of Medicine and Genome Sciences and Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology. Fuki Marie Hisama (MD, FACMG, FAAN) is Professor at Department of Medicine, Division of Medical Genetics, University of Washington; Director of UW Medical Genetic Clinic.
- 2 Unless otherwise indicated, the information in this and the following two sections is primarily culled from Alberts et al. (eds.) 2015.
- 3 For graphic representations of the DNA, see Alberts et al. (eds.) 2015, and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chromosome>.

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# 11 Patronage and the political anthropology of ancient Palestine in the Bronze and Iron Ages

*Emanuel Pfoh and Thomas L. Thompson*

## **Biblical depictions of socio-political situations**

Ever since the first Western, archaeological and cartographic explorations of the Near East in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the political anthropology of ancient Palestine has been shaped in accord with biblical narrative (van der Steen 2013: 18–37). Deuteronomy 1:28, for instance, refers to mighty Canaanite “cities, with walls to the sky”, which some thought—and others still think—described actual Middle Bronze fortifications of the early second millennium BCE (Mazar 1990: 224–26)! The patriarchal stories in Genesis had been interpreted since the 1920s as referring to Amorite tribesmen from Mesopotamia as heads of relatively simple kinship societies (esp. Eissfeldt 1923, 1949, 1965; cf. Thompson 1974: 299–300). Judges through Kings was thought to reflect a socio-political evolution of “semi-nomads” in Canaan. Following the story of Joshua’s conquest, the figure of a Benjaminite strong-man emerges in the Book of 1 Samuel as Saul, a man whom men would want as their king, but who is reluctantly accepted by Yahweh. Saul failed the divine requirement of blind obedience, in the very first story of his reign (1 Sam 15)! Yahweh repents his acceptance of Saul and chooses a successor after his own heart. This choice led Saul to a reign of jealousy, suspicion and hatred. Within this discourse, centred in themes of justice and wisdom, David and Solomon, as Saul’s successors, play their versions of failed kings of a “United Monarchy”, following an ironic trope of division and separation.

This allegorical narrative of failure from Saul to Solomon is, however, frequently presented as reflecting a socio-political evolution of Palestine’s Iron Age society from Saul’s “complex chiefdom” to David’s “early state” and Solomon’s “full-blown nation-state” (Finkelstein 1996, 2001, 2006, 2013; Hoffmeier and Millard 2004)! The historicity of such an evolution is neither supported by a critical understanding of such narratives nor archaeological evidence (Thompson 2007b). This is rather a rational paraphrase of an epical origin story and such historicizing efforts have long been challenged (Lemche 1972, 1985, 1997; Hayes and Miller 1977, 1986; Thompson 1974, 1977, 1978, 1979b, 1980, 1992: 401–415; 2001, 2006, 2015; Pfoh 2009: 69–86).

### **A socio-scientific interpretation**

Both the advance in exegetical research since the 1960s and archaeological research strengthened our understanding that ancient allegorical narratives hardly provide a trustworthy template for history writing. Such narratives cannot be “corrected” with the help of archaeological research (Van Seters 1964, 1975; Thompson 1974, 1978a, 1978b; Lemche 1985; Finkelstein 1988; Garbini 1988). Beginning in the 1970s and 1980s, methods drawn from sociology, anthropology and comparative ethnography have been used to construct the social world reflected in Palestinian archaeology (Dever 1977, 1981; Thompson 1978e; Finkelstein 1990, 1992, 1996a, 2002). In this research, concepts of patronage first appeared as analytical tools in the interpretation of biblical narratives and their literary tropes (cf. Lang 1982; Lemche 1985, 1995a, 1995b; Matthews and Benjamin 1993).

Patronage is an ethnographic phenomenon that is well attested in ancient literature and in societies throughout the whole of the Mediterranean basin and Middle East since the Neolithic period (cf. Gellner and Waterbury 1977; Leca and Schemeil 1983; Maćzak 1988; Westbrook 2005). The basic structures of patronage and its terminology have been drawn from the Roman system of patronage and clientelism. However, forms of political patronage are much earlier and fictive forms of patronage have been identified in much ancient literature (cf. Thompson 1996, 1999, 2007a, 2007b). Basically, patronage is based on a political and social bond in which a patron dominates a negotiated relationship with a submissive client, who maintains a relative autonomy, conditioned by the parties involved; that is, a dyadic personal bond enables an asymmetric social exchange between parties (Orenstein 1980). The patron offers protection and assistance, whereas the client offers loyalty and submission—an exchange, which is both supported by and supports political, economic, ideological and religious functions. Such reciprocity is typically structured in accordance with principles of kinship. However, whereas in proper kinship relations a symmetric reciprocity is usually found (with exceptions: Black 1972), in relationships between patrons and clients who are not kin, reciprocity is always asymmetric and the language of kinship metaphorical, to express political bonds, such as personal subordination and protection. This hardly exhausts the use of kinship metaphors. For example, contracts of sonship (*tuppi martuti*) are used in Nuzi and Babylon and often signify property sales, which include the right of inheritance. In the sale of houses, gardens and fields, for example, the purchaser assumes the son’s role, receiving an inheritance. Similarly, a contract of partnership is analogous to creating a brotherhood (*tuppi ahatuti*). The contract creates a shared responsibility, comparable to that of brothers in regard to an undivided inheritance (Thompson 1974: 294–296). Such metaphorical functions of patronage are used in symmetric business exchange, not in the asymmetry of political patronage, which are commonly expressed in the language of father-son relationships. Not all such metaphors imply

patronage. In most traditional societies where patronage is documented, honour and prestige are values attached to political patronage. As already stated, patronage occurs in dyadic units, often multiplied in expansive relational pyramids, in which the client of a great patron may, himself, be the patron of lesser clients, who are themselves patrons of yet others (further Pfoh 2016: 123–137).

### Patronage as a conceptual and analytical tool

In the 1980s and 1990s, approaches to the social world, implicit in biblical narrative, brought the roles of patron-client into modern biblical research. At first, patronage had been understood as a feature of the scholarly construct of a “United Monarchy of David and Solomon”. More recently, it is considered rather as a feature of the two, historically distinct, Iron Age highland kingdoms of Israel and Judah. Patronage seemed useful in understanding the agricultural community of *Bīt Humrī*, especially in regard to economic and political bonds with Samaria. Patronage was also used to clarify the message of some biblical stories related to the ideology and governing dispensation of justice (see Lang 1982; Lemche 1995a, 1995b, 1996; Simkins 1999; Houston 2006; Guillaume 2012: 150–165; Pfoh 2009: 113–187, 2013; Boer 2015: 82–109). With the questioning of the historicity of a “United Monarchy” in the 1970s and 1980s, historical discourse on Iron Age Palestine (ca. 1200–600 BCE) was largely reduced to a discussion about two historically quite distinct highland kingdoms (Hjelm 2016): namely, Israel/*Bīt Humrī*, in the central highlands, established around 900 BCE, and Judah, appearing in the south in the late eighth century BCE (Thompson 1992, esp. 288–293, 408–412, 2013, 2015; Finkelstein 1995, 2013). A closer look at the political relationships of these kingdoms in the epigraphic record of the ancient Near East and, in particular, at their relationships with the political world beyond Palestine reveals that the language of subordination and the practices performed in relationships with the neo-Assyrian and later neo-Babylonian empires match well with central elements structuring patron-client relationships. The Assyrians generally followed one of two strategies in controlling defeated or conquered lands. The first involved a progressive “provincialization” of a region, following its military subjugation, involving the subsequent deportation of part of the native population (esp. the ruling elite, craft specialists, etc.) and the installation of an Assyrian governor (Radner 2010; Bagg 2011: 296–301). Alternatively, the Assyrians introduced a policy of subjugating a defeated polity by means of vassal-like treaties between the Assyrian king and the defeated king (Postgate 1992; Holloway 2002: 320–425). Rather than referring to proper vassalage relationships, such treaties are best understood as written manifestations of an imposed patronage, because the political reciprocity imposed guaranteed such a bond. Subordination was expressed by an unequal alliance. The Assyrians imposed treaties or pacts (*adū*) and loyalty oaths not

only on subject kings from conquered lands, but also over officers from their own administration (Holloway 2002: chs. 3–4). The neo-Babylonian empire continued this submission treaty strategy in the conquered territories as a material (and symbolic) means of control (cf. Tsevat 1959; Vanderhooft 2003). Between 609/605 and 539 BCE, the progressive policy of direct rule and inclusion of Syria-Palestine within the empire—apart from a relatively brief Egyptian hegemony—may also be understood through the patron-client structures of its political dynamics (cf. Jursa 2014).

In spite of some state-like features in the region during the Iron Age—most notably in seventh-century Judah—in which forms of kinship and patronage seem to be a key to understanding political dynamics (Maier and Shai 2016), the idea that the small polities of the southern Levant constituted proper states can certainly be disputed, depending on how one understands state formation. For example, John Holladay and William Dever (Holladay 1995; Dever 1997) have argued that statehood is manifest through a series of features such as urbanism (see, however, Thompson 2015: 258–260), high demography, monarchy, bureaucracy, class-based, stratified society and craft specialization. They conclude that seventh-century Judah may have formed a secondary state formation, as is also recently suggested by Axel Knauf and Philippe Guillaume (Knauf and Guillaume 2016: 85–133).

This approach, however, ignores socio-political practices of small patronage polities and their continuity over millennia. The importance of patronage in creating external alliances and organizing internal affairs through dominion and subordination is characteristic of Palestinian society and can be attested in both the Bronze and Iron Ages. The features of statehood suggested by Holladay and Dever are far more clearly present in regions such as Lower Mesopotamia. In peripheral areas, such as Palestine, with a limited demographic density, such features of statehood are barely manifest since the Early Bronze Age (Thompson 2015). The population is settled in villages and towns, not cities, and bureaucracy and class development are hardly manifest in the limited development of Palestine’s civil administration. The highlands and steppe are thinly settled, while Palestinian “kingship” does not imply any complex supporting structure. It is arguably patronage-based and negotiated rather than monarchic.

Alternative factors should be considered. Scarce resources and limited literacy poorly support an autonomous bureaucracy. One must also consider imperial limitations on indigenous polities. A socio-political structure, consisting of multi-centric polities organized on patron-client relationships, offer a better model for the manifestation of regional politics than highly centralized, monarchic states as found in pre-industrial Europe.

In considering patronage, we must attend to the long-term history of Palestine, with a considerable demographic ebb and flow, and, in particular, the continuities and discontinuities of local polities (cf. Coote and Whitelam 1987: 27–80; Finkelstein 1994; Thompson 1979a, 2016). Regionally dominant towns were associated with small, village-oriented political forms and

economies, with a considerable flexibility for demographic reduction and expansion over the course of different periods in the history of ancient Palestine, reflecting a highly fragmented political landscape (Thompson 1992a: 215–300, 1992b). The demographic growth in Early Bronze II–III, Middle Bronze II and Iron Age II stands in sharp contrast to the de-sedentarization and widespread dislocation of the population in the Early Bronze IV/Middle Bronze I and Late Bronze II/Iron I transition periods (cf. Thompson 1978c, 1978d, 1979a, 1980a, 1980b).

Palestine's fortified settlements and strongholds, especially during the Early Bronze II, Middle Bronze II and Iron II periods, suggest considerable competition among small polities for the control of resources and trade. Patterns of political fragmentation fit rather well with a sub-regionally based, town-driven, patronage model. Although archaeologists have long called such small polities “city-states” (Buccellati 1967; Mazar 1990; Strange 2000), this term is more appropriate for larger towns, such as Byblos, Ebla, Mari and Ugarit, the Greek *poleis* of the Archaic and Classical periods (ca. 800–480 and 480–323 BCE, respectively; cf. Hansen 2006). The very small polities of Bronze and Iron Age Palestine are far from cities (Thompson 2015). The fortified Middle Bronze towns are far better served by the concept of “fortress-societies”, towns with rural hinterlands of subordinate small villages, hamlets and encampments, structured within limited and contiguous sub-regions through patron-client ties of protection (Lemche 1996: 116). Even during periods in which fortifications were restricted in Palestine, as under the Egyptian dominance of the Late Bronze Age, we can attest through the El Amarna correspondence the existence of organizations with patron-client bonds. R. Gonen indicates that the significant decrease in Late Bronze sites (Thompson 1979a, 1980b), most of which were unwalled, was a direct consequence of Egyptian imperial policy of reducing the capability of resisting Egyptian control of the region. The lack of fortifications prevented Palestinian uprisings or revolts against Egypt (Gonen 1984: 70). The information conveyed by the Amarna letters concerning political conditions was exaggerated by the local petty kings, who played a game of political persuasion to gain Egyptian attention and favour. Effective Egyptian dominance in the territory rendered fortification unnecessary as patron-client politics and ideologies continued (further, Pfoh 2013, 2016: 19–27 and *passim*).

Some of the larger sub-regions of Palestine seem unified through local patronates, such as Middle Bronze Shechem in the central, Jerusalem in the southern highlands and Hazor in the Eastern Galilee, while there may have been considerable competition for the patronage of such towns as Gezer and Lachish in the Shephelah. Similarly, in Iron Age II Samaria controlled the central highlands through the patronage kingdom of *Bīt Humrī*/Israel, Jerusalem, the southern highlands of Judah, and Bozra, the eastern highlands of Edom (cf. Thompson 1992: 407–412; Finkelstein and Na'aman 2005). Such patronage hardly implies an institutional, bureaucratic consolidation of state formation but seems rather anchored on the personal ties of dependence

in a pattern which is dominant throughout the Eastern Mediterranean during both the Bronze and Iron Ages. When Egypt ruled most of Late Bronze Palestine, the Amarna letters relate a Palestinian political culture of sub-regional petty kings in Palestine, built on patron-client relationships.

### **Metaphors of patronage**

The socio-politics of patronage better explains the political rhetoric of attachment and subordination, which we find in the Late Bronze and Iron Age II epigraphic repertoire of the Levant. The idea that small local polities are understood in the metaphor “house of PN” also fits the description of the subjects of the kings as “sons” or “servants of PN”. This also helps us understand the identification of such petty kings as “brothers” and “sons” of great kings, who have come from outside the land and rule over them, projecting a hierarchical network of political kinship (see Liverani 2001: 128–138; Pfoh 2013; Porter 2016). The use of such terminology is not merely empty metaphor. It is an expression of the way in which political and economic relationships are constituted and evoked by such language. Although biological links are irrelevant in this context, they signify alliances of equality or subordination (cf. Schloen 2001; Pfoh 2016: 138–171).

There was an indigenous ontology of patronage in ancient Syria and Palestine, which explained not only the physical world (politics, economics, etc.) but also the typology and behaviour of the gods within an implied rhetoric of king and family. One might consider the ninth-century Mesha inscription dedicated by the king to the god Chemosh, because he had “delivered him from all... his enemies” (Smelik 2003; Ps 18:1/2 Sam 22:1). The inscription’s narrative begins with Mesha in a state of suffering, brought about by the anger of Moab’s god, Chemosh, against his land (Thompson 2007a, 2007b). Chemosh had allowed Omri of Israel to oppress Moab and occupy Madaba. Chemosh, however, turned with favour to Mesha, and leads him into battle. In victory, the narrative celebrates the god’s restoration of Madaba. In the stele’s rhetoric, Chemosh is the true patron king of Moab and Mesha his instrument and client. The close ties between the god, Chemosh, and Moab is theologically defining for this type of patron deity in both Syria and Palestine. The metaphysical patronage between Chemosh and his client Mesha, driving the narrative, is not only comparable to the relationships of kings to divine patrons in similar royal inscriptions (Thompson 2007a: 254–277) but is also attested in other types of inscriptions, such as the ninth-century Quntillat Ajrud inscription from Sinai. These refer to both a “Yahweh of Samaria and his Asherah” and a “Yahweh of Teman and his Asherah”. Yahweh is presented as the patron deity of two very different regions (Keel and Uehlinger 1998; Schmidt 2016). In the royal biographical inscriptions, the king is understood allegorically as having been chosen by his god to rule his kingdom. His divine patron stands by him, leads him into battle, listens to his prayers, entrusts him with his kingdom and turns the hearts of the

people to support him. He is identified as the god's favourite, the servant or, indeed, the son of the patron god, the lover of the goddess, the gardener of the god's garden or vineyard and even one who has been personally raised by the god as his son (Thompson 2007: 257–260). The king as patron is presented as one who cares for his people as a “father” cares for his “family”. A comparable allegorical ideology of political power as analogous to “family” relationships is also implied in the toponymy of some Iron Age patronage kingdoms in Palestine, understood in domestic terms, such as, for example, the polities of *Bīt Humrī*, *Bīt Ammani* and, perhaps, *Bytdwd*. A comparable ideology is also implied in the toponymy of smaller villages and towns, such as those referred to on the Mesha stele; namely, Beth Bamoth, Beth Medeba, Beth Diblatayim and Beth Baal Meon (Smelik 2003: 138).

### **Patterns of sedentarization and de-sedentarization**

Through the past century, biblical studies have supported a consensus that the Late Bronze/Iron I period of transition provided us with the context for understanding the historical Israel's origins as a nation. In the older paradigm of “biblical archaeology”, two alternative explanations were widely supported. The range of scholarly debate stretched from an interpretation of archaeology, which was consistent with the biblical narratives of Exodus and Conquest and which, accordingly, supported an interpretation of the conquest and destruction of a Late Bronze Canaanite city-state culture through a tribally organized genocide and displacement by (“semi-”) nomadic groups of Israelites (Albright 1940; Bright 1956). Alternatively, European scholarship generally supported a biblically based, historical theory of a gradual and initially peaceful infiltration of nomadic groups, who were organized within an “amphictyonic” political structure, into Late Bronze Palestine, which was followed by a Book of Judges – miming, gradual process of sedentarization (Noth 1930; Alt 1939). Since the late 1970s, however, a number of archaeologists and historians have supported the independence and separation of archaeological data from biblically driven interpretations and scenarios. Scholars began to focus on the possibilities of the Iron II patronage kingdoms of Israel and a Judah as separate and distinct from each other in both origin and development, and ultimately indigenous to Palestine. The dominating question of Israelite origins shifted increasingly towards the political and economic developments, leading to the Iron II kingdom of *Bīt Humrī*/Israel, centred in Samaria (Miller 1977; Miller and Hayes 1986; Lemche 1985, 1991; Finkelstein 1988, 1996; Thompson 1992a, 1992b). Nevertheless, even this orientation, independent of the biblical narrative, continued to centre on the radical contrasts in the Bronze and Iron Age polities rather than on their many continuities. A shift away from the biblical narrative had been taken, but an independent, historical narrative, rooted in the patterns of settlement we find in the archaeological and historical records, had yet to be addressed (Hjelm 2016). In the context

of their relationships within Palestine, such small Levantine kingdoms of the Iron Age II period, including not only Israel and Judah, but also polities of Syria, such as we find it in Damascus and Hamat and along the entire coastal region from Ugarit to Gaza, need to be considered. In contrast to such “patronage-based kingdoms”, the Transjordanian small kingdoms of Ammon, Moab and Edom, as well as the polities of Midian and Ishmael to the south and southeast, appear in the form of a tribal or even patrimonial order (Weippert 1971; Sawyer and Clines 1983; Dearman 1989; Knauf 1988, 1989). While the political characteristics of such small kingdoms have tempted most to speak of their populations as implicitly comprising “peoples” or “ethnicities”, as is so apparent in the common use of geographically based identities such as Canaanite, Amorite, Philistine, Jebusite and Ishmaelite, the implication of an enduring ethnic/national identification for such patronage-based petty kingdoms is based on biblical rhetoric and the theological concerns of biblical scholarship. No historical argument has been satisfactorily maintained for such an interpretation (*contra* Faust 2006; cf. Pfoh 2009: 161–173), even though the greater history of Palestine, involving a history of tribal and patron-client bonds, and associations over millennia, is at odds with any such implication!

Demographic ebb and flow, forming cycles of sedentarization and desedentarization, makes it very difficult to speak of political entities of Palestine as national or ethnic (Thompson 1992a, 171–300, 1992b; Finkelstein 1988, 1994). The attribution of nations to Palestine’s polities is alleged primarily in the context of discussing a essentialist conceived and unified “state” polity, which structures an intrinsic unity of settlements in some of the most clearly definable larger regions of Palestine within the Iron II period. The settlement patterns in these regions, however, over the two millennia history of the Bronze Age share those we find in the Iron II period (Thompson 1979a). It is also common knowledge that forms of pottery and material cultures from the Iron I and II periods reflect a continuity of heritage, which was substantially the direct heir of the cultures they succeeded. Iron Age ware reflects continuity with Late Bronze culture.

Since the Early Bronze began, four different periods marked demographic expansion of the sedentary population and the emergence of material stability and prosperity, EB II, MB II, Late Bronze II and Iron II. The differences in topography, water and soil resources throughout Palestine’s many small regions structured such demographic expansion and prosperity in the form of a town and market-centred Mediterranean economy. Grain agriculture and field crops dominated the Arad and Beersheva basins, the inland and intra-montane valleys of central Palestine and the whole of the coastal plain from Acre to Gaza. Olive production dominated the gentler slopes and terraces of the foothills. Fruit orchards and vineyards developed steep terraces along the western slopes of the central highlands and the rugged hills of the upper Galilee. Hunting in steppe and desert regions and herding, especially of sheep and goats, were pursued, at times developing

transhumant settlement, especially in the hills east of the watershed and the Negev. Separating these prosperous periods were three intermediate periods, responding to drought-driven economic depressions in the EB IV/MB I, MB II/LB I and LB/Iron I periods. These were marked by a widespread de-sedentarization—particularly in the hill country and steppe regions. De-sedentarization at the end of the Early Bronze period involved the abandonment of hundreds of villages and towns to less sedentary patterns, but also a widespread transition from a trade-centred Mediterranean economy to one that was more deeply involved with hunting, herding and grain agriculture, oriented far more towards subsistence. A shift towards smaller, scattered settlements in villages and hamlets in Mediterranean climate zones was clearly marked in the EB IV/MB I period—by a considerable increase of the population towards semi-permanent settlement. Forms of wadi-terracing and “run-off” agriculture were developed over large areas of the great steppe and desert regions. This transformation was most notable in the Transjordan and along the northwestern slopes of the Negev highlands. A shift of the border of aridity northwards brought about a corresponding change to transhumant forms of herding cultures (Thompson 1974: 165–170, 1975: 29–30, 1979: 64–65; Finkelstein 1994).

While the material culture and pottery of the first intermediate period supports continuity between the culture and population of the Early Bronze and Middle Bronze, the development of a trade-based, Mediterranean form of economy with a market-centred, sedentary occupation of Palestine in the Middle Bronze culture continued through the Late Bronze Age. Changes in the Late Bronze settlements were due to the decisive intrusion of Egyptian imperial interests, which held the larger towns of Palestine under Egyptian patronage and supported stability. However, the abandonment of many sites in the southern coast and northern Negev and the loss of small hamlets and villages throughout Palestine led to a collapse of sedentary occupation and agriculture in a variety of small sub-regions. Except for such few sites as Shechem, Lachish, Gezer and, apparently, Jerusalem, most of the sedentary population of the central and southern hill country was lost to intensive settlement. De-sedentarization not only marked the onset of the Late Bronze period and distinguished it from the Middle Bronze period, this depression affected the whole of the Late Bronze period, which developed signs of a prolonged, drought-driven economic failure. This culminated in the collapse of trade, affecting not only the stability of agricultural settlements but the stability of trade throughout the East-Mediterranean basin (Thompson 1992a: 205–220).

Recovery was marked by the onset of the Iron I period in the form of new settlement in the central hill country, including an expansion of small settlements in the Shechem area. Iron I, apart from the central highlands, is marked by recovery and continuity in most regions. The recovery of the coastal plain follows on the integration of new immigrants from Anatolia and the Aegean (Ahlström 1993: 288–370). This Iron I recovery, however, did not reach the highlands of southern Palestine or the Transjordan.

Continuity in the material culture and pottery with the Late Bronze Age is considerable, though regional differentiations are significant. The Beth Shan valley, Megiddo, the southern coast and the Shephelah continued to display a strong Egyptian cultural influence. Western Galilee and the coastal plain from Acre to Tantura were deeply influenced by Tyre and Byblos. Eastern Galilee, including Hazor and Dan/Tell el-Qadi,<sup>1</sup> continued to reflect strong Aramean influence from Syria and the northern Transjordan. The Jordan rift and the central highlands were in turn much influenced by the cultures of Moab and Edom.

### **Settlement patterns reflecting patronage**

It is from the texts available from the Late Bronze and early Iron Age that we have our clearest view of ancient patronage. The organization of the Hittite kingdom and the understanding of the petty kings of Syria and Palestine implied in letters to Pharaoh during the Amarna period provide evidence (Pfoh 2016: 108–137). The recurrent cycles of settlement reflected throughout the different landscapes of Palestine's small regions also reflect indigenous, socio-political features of patronage, centred in its major towns. The changes in the size of the population, number of settlements and sub-regional boundaries from one period to another determined patron-client polities in Palestine. Each region was subordinate to the exchange economy with its dominant towns and hinterland of client villages, hamlets and encampments, interacting with each other within a chain of patronage. For example, letters were written to the Pharaoh by clients in regionally dominant towns, each with a petty "king" as its patron. One finds these towns among the most stable settlements in Palestine, as, for example, Hazor, Acre, Megiddo, Ta'anach, Pella, Shechem, Gezer, Jerusalem, Hebron, Lachish, 'Ashkelon, Rehov, Jaffa and Afek. The towns of Gaza, Beth Shan and Jericho are also to be understood as related to the pyramidal structure of Egyptian patronage over Palestine. One might include the unidentified town on the mound of Tell el-Hesi, where an Amarna letter was found (Ahlström 1993: map 8).

Continuity in the toponymy of Palestine's patronates is apparent from the very earliest Bronze Age. These names appear in the Egyptian and Nubian Twelfth-Dynasty "Execration texts", ritually cursing towns by name, each with their "princes" or "chiefs". The first of these texts discovered were purchased on the Egyptian antiquities market by Kurt Sethe (Sethe 1926). George Posener later published two collections of related texts, the first discovered in Saqqara in Egypt and the other in Mirgissa in Nubia (Posener 1940, 1966). Towns known from the Amarna period appear also in the Execration texts, four centuries earlier, for example, Acre, Apheq, 'Ashkelon, Beth Shan, Shechem, Jerusalem, Rehov, Pella and Hazor. Egyptian steles were found in Gezer and Megiddo and tombs with Egyptian seals are known from Jericho. The polity of these towns of the early Middle Bronze Age also reflects forms of patronage similar to what we find in the Amarna

period (Thompson 1974: 113–117). Such cultural and historical continuity was extended through the Iron Age, as is implied by the longevity of the names of these towns, occurring both in the Amarna letters and the Execration texts and, indeed, the toponymic list of Sheshonq I's campaign in Palestine in late Iron I. Here we find mentioned among others: Rabbah, Megiddo, Ta'anak, Beth Shan, Shechem, Gezer and Rehov.

Unlike the Amarna letters, neither the Execration texts nor Sheshonq's campaign list is a simple reflection of settlements in Palestine. They reflect Egyptian views of Palestine we need to interpret. Amnon Ben Tor's understanding of an absence of MB IIA occupation at towns mentioned in the Execration texts not only dates the Sethe Execration texts far too early but also assumes an early date for MB IIA (Ben-Tor 2006: 80). An early date for the onset of MB IIB provides an appropriate context for the Execration texts. Ben Tor does not allow for the uncertain quality of archaeological chronologies, compared to the chronology we have for Twelfth and Thirteenth Dynasties' texts. There is good reason to suggest a date for the Execration texts within two generations. Furthermore, the use of Pharaonic-derived names and a palaeographic dating of our texts reflect an *a quo* dating at least some twenty years into the reign of Amenemhet III. An *ad quem* date in the very early years of the Twelfth Dynasty suggests a date of 1810–1770 BCE, contemporary to late MB IIA/early MB IIB (Thompson 1974: 106–113). The Egyptians understood Palestine as populated by small patronates, controlling the various sub-regions of Palestine. They presented the names of the towns and their leaders, which posed a problem or concern for Egypt's interest in the Levant (Ahlström 1993: 171–172; Ben-Tor 2006: 76–82).

We find similar representations of minor “kings”, interacting with their peers in the Amarna letters, offering evidence for an internal organization, rooted in kinship and patron-client bonds, in Iron II Palestine related to alliances, resisting Shalmaneser III (*ANET*, 278–79; Ahlström 1993: 577–578).

### **Stability in Palestine's patronage polities**

A continuity of small-regional patronage polities over millennia is evidenced in a comparison of the toponymy of Palestine reflected in the Execration texts with the Amarna correspondence. Many of the same names occur in the toponymic list from the campaigns of Thutmose III and the much later Iron Age toponymic list from the campaign of Shoshenq I. This continuity of Palestinian toponymy over nearly a millennium suggests that a polity of patronage is indigenous to Palestine and perhaps as old as the region's earliest towns. Continuity is also suggested by the interpretation of archaeological excavations in relation to surveys over the past three decades by Israel Finkelstein and others (Finkelstein 1988, 1990, 1992, 1996; Gophna and Portugali 1988; Knapp 1993; Taha and van der Kooij 2015). The potential of such interpretation is speculative and subjective, but it has considerable potential for illuminating the political anthropology of the region.

By way of illustration, we present fourteen towns, which in the Amarna Period dominated their regions to illustrate a patronage polity that defined Palestine's indigenous political structures:

- 1 *Acre* (158.258: Tell al-Fukhar; Akka) lies on the Mediterranean coast, ca. 600 m from the sea and some 450 m north of the Na'aman River, next to a natural bay. Acre was a sea port and principal trading centre, by both land and sea since, at least, the beginning of the second millennium. In addition to the Amarna letters, the name appears in the Execration Texts and toponymic lists of Thutmose III, Seti I and Ramses II. It is also mentioned in both Ugaritic and Akkadian documents, as well as in a letter from the thirteenth century found on the site. The town is referred to as a client of Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. According to Greek sources, Acre was a Persian provincial and military centre. The Greek city was called *Akké* from the mid-fourth century BCE and *Antiochia Ptolemais* during the Hellenistic period. The agricultural town was first settled in the EB I period, with a gap in settlement during the EB IV/MB I period. It was fortified from Middle Bronze IIA and MB IIB-C until Late Bronze I. In LB II, the town was unfortified, suggesting Egyptian hegemony in the regions. There was a diminished occupation of the site at the very end of the LB and early Iron I and IIA periods. Mostly residential structures occupied the Iron II-III period and scanty remains survive from the Neo-Babylonian period. Acre entered a period of prosperity in the Persian period (Dothan 1993; Negev and Gibson 2001). In EB and MB II, the town was most likely patron for the small village on the tell of Kh. Al-Ayadiya (164.257) in the Na'aman valley as well as the larger settlement on Tell Qabr al-Badawiya (169.257), some ten kilometres to the north. During the EB IV/MB I depression, the population of the region around ancient Acre was concentrated in the large village on Tell al-Bir al Garbi (166.256) and Tell Kesan (164.253). In more stable periods, the limits of the town's political influence beyond the plain of Acre were most likely related to trade. In its role as a market centre, Acre's influence may have stretched from Tell az-Zib (159.272) in the North to the larger town on Tell Kurdana (160.250) in the South, a site which lay some 300 m south of the Nahal Na'aman and dominated the coastal plain.
- 2 *Afeq* (143.168: Qal 'at Ras al-Ayin; Tel 'Afeq) lies on the coastal plain near the source of the Yarqon. The name appears in the Execration Texts and the topographical lists of Thutmose III and Amenophis II. It also occurs in a text from the reign of Esarhaddon, and an Aramaic letter from the early sixth century BCE. The Hellenistic city, *Peggae*, is to be identified with the site (renamed *Antipatris* by Herod the Great) and *Abu Butris* in the seventh century and later, *'Auja*. The Ottoman fortress, Binar Bashi, lies on the summit of the mound.

'Afeq was originally settled in the Chalcolithic, Ghazzulian, period. The first town, with fortifications, was built in the last phase of EB I. A LB/Iron I Egyptian estate stored grains and produced white wine. Remains from EB II were found in most areas of the mound. Only sherds and burials were found from the EB IV/MB I period and a large cemetery was found from this period about ten kilometres northeast of 'Afeq. 'Afeq was resettled in MB IIA, when it became the dominant site of the region, with city wall and watchtowers, public buildings and a palace on the Acropolis. A second palace was built 100 m west of the ruins of the first. This was abandoned late in MB IIA, before being taken over by residents in early MB IIB, when a third palace, with an area of more than 2,000 m<sup>2</sup>, was built on the ruins of the first. The LB settlement was limited to the acropolis, with a fourth palace and yet a fifth built in the fourteenth century, before being replaced by a fortified Egyptian governor's residence with two 3,500 litre wine presses after the town's conquest by Amenophis II (Gadot 2010). Two Iron I residential quarters occupied the tell after the destruction of the Egyptian fortress. Silos have been dated to the tenth century and only few remains have been found from Iron II (Eitan 1993). As one of the largest towns of the coastal plain, 'Afeq was likely patron over the town on Tell Makmish (131.174) on the south bank of Wadi al Garibi as well as the large village on as-Su'adi Fajja (142.166) and the small villages on Tell Hassan as-Sala (139.170), Jaljuliya (145.173) and Kafr Qasim (146.169). During EB IV/MB I, considerable sedentary occupation seemed to have occupied Kh. Nasha ad-Der (147.168) and, especially, Ral al-'Ain (144.167).

- 3 'Ashkelon (107.119: Tell el-Khadra, Asqalan) was a very large coastal town in the basin above an underground river, providing an abundance of fresh water and rich soils. 'Ashkelon lay at the source of the Nahr al-'Auja (Nahal Yarqon), with continuous settlement from the Chalcolithic to the Mamluke period. Occupation has been uncovered from EB, MB II, LB and the Iron Age. EB IV/MB I remains have been found near the spring. 'Ashkelon is mentioned in the Execration Texts and in the Late Bronze and early Iron Age texts. It is mentioned from the reign of Merneptah and in the Onomasticon of Amenope from the early eleventh century BCE, as well as in the Amarna letters. It appears in Assyrian texts as client to Tiglathpileser III, Sennacherib, Esarhaddon and Ashurbanipal. The Iron Age settlement was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. Pottery suggests substantial occupation through the whole of EB I-III, though little is excavated. There was a gap in occupation during EB IV/MB I and settlement was resumed in MB IIA, fortified during MB II B-C.' Ashkelon was one of the largest towns in Palestine. Fortifications and a sanctuary were destroyed at the end of MB II B. Little of LB I-II has been excavated. Iron Age deposits date from the early twelfth century and Iron II fortifications protected the town from the tenth to the early sixth century BCE. A series of warehouses illustrate

Ashkelon's role as seaport (Stager 1993). Its patronage bordered on that of Tell al-Areni (129.113). If there was a gap in settlement during EB IV/MB I, the population may have moved to the town on Tell at-Tuyur. In EB, the site dominated such smaller villages as Afridar (108.121 Kh. 'Amuda (113.112).

- 4 *Gezer* (142.140; Tell al-Jizr; Gazru) is a very large tell on top of a low hill, with earliest settlement from the Chalcolithic Ghassulian and latest from the Hellenistic period. Gezer lies west of *Wadi al-'Ullaq* in the northern Shephelah. Excavations uncovered a major occupation in EB II, but no layers were found from EB III and EB IV/MB I, though much EB IV/MB I pottery has been found, and an EB IV/MB I settlement was found 700 m to the East at *'Ain Wered* and at other agricultural sites close by (Thompson 1979: 320–321; Shavit 2000, 207–208). Gezer was resettled in early MB IIA and grew during MB IIB and IIC. Fortified with a glacis, Gezer was one of the largest towns in Palestine. The region around Gezer was also densely settled, suggesting that a large number of sites lay under Gezer's patronage, with perhaps some 4,000 persons living in the region (Finkelstein 2002: 278, 279; Shavit 2000: 209–211). Gezer was under Egyptian control since Thutmose III's campaign and probably settled throughout LB (Finkelstein 2002: 280; *contra* Dever 1993: 501). No monumental structures have been found on the site. A destruction layer, attributed to Merenptah, has pottery similar to the LB/Early pre-Philistine ware. Iron I shows some continuity with earlier periods, reflecting considerable demographic and cultural stability, with a few lesser sites in the area. The early tenth century border stone, known as the "Gezer calendar", marks Gezer as having a polity in its own right. The Iron II levels at Gezer expand greatly and include a palace. The population of the countryside also expands, with many more sites occupied. Conquered by Tiglath-Pileser III, Gezer possibly fell under the control of the province of Samerina. When the Assyrians withdrew in the late seventh century, Gezer was destroyed by the Babylonians.

Finkelstein has set the large town of Gezer, the dominant settlement of the northern Shephelah, in competitive contrast with 'Afeq, some thirty kilometres to the North (Finkelstein 2002). Gezer also borders on the territory of Jerusalem on the northern watershed of the Judean highlands.

- 5 *Hazor* (203.269; Tell el-Qadeh; Hasura) was a large town of the Upper Galilee, some eight kilometres southwest of the Hula Basin. It lay on the trade route to Syria and Mesopotamia. Fertile agricultural land lies to the south of the tell, near Wadi al-Waqas and many springs. The name first appears in the Execration Texts and Mari letters. It is mentioned in New Kingdom texts from Thutmose III to Ramses II. The Bronze and Iron Age towns were built with an upper and lower city, comprising some four-fifths of a square kilometre, some four times the size of Samaria. It was the Palestine's largest fortified site in both MB II and early Iron II.

Five strata were uncovered in the Lower town, dating from MB II B to LB IIB with housing, workshops, temples and gates. On an acropolis, about the size of Megiddo, three areas were excavated, revealing major occupations since EB II and nearly the whole of the EB IV/MB I, MB II, LB and Iron Age periods with few gaps in settlement. Late in the thirteenth century, the town is destroyed by fire. Resettled in the late tenth or early ninth century, the Iron II settlement was fortified through the ninth and eighth centuries and its water source was secured with an underground system. In 732 BCE, the city was captured by Tiglath-Pileser III, its population deported and the town destroyed. During the Assyrian period, a fort was built on the tell, which was used also in the Persian and Hellenistic periods (Yadin *et al.* I–IV: 1958, 1961, 1989). While this site dominated the Eastern Galilee and controlled patronage over the towns on Tell el-Qasab (202.264), Tell es-Sanjak (202.262) and as-Sur (210.264), the remains found at Ard Qibliya (2042.2692) and Ayyalet ha-Shahar (2042.2697) are more probably extensions of the town on Tell el-Qadeh.

- 6 *Hebron* (159.103: Jebel el-Rumeida; el-Qalil) was an agricultural town, which, with the town on the large tell of Khirbet Qela (150.113) and the smaller, secondary site of Khirbet at-Tubeqa (158.110), dominated the arid, southern Judean highland, with a history of settlement strongly affected by the climate. With the earliest settlement from the Chalcolithic period, fortified towns have been uncovered from EB II and MB II and a drastically diminished settlement during EB IV/MB I, when much of its settlement apparently moved to the site of Haram Ramat al-Halil (160.107). In LB, when the southern highlands were largely empty of settlement, remains in Hebron—as in contemporary Jerusalem—were largely limited to burials, yet both were ruled by patronage monarchies under Egyptian imperial control (Kochavi 1972: 61–62). A limited settlement is witnessed at Hebron during the Iron I transition. This was followed by a revival in the late eleventh-tenth centuries and by a gap in settlement until the eighth century BCE, when an agricultural town was established on the site. It is at this time that we find silos and dwelling houses, including storage jars with handles stamped *lhmlk hbrn* (“belonging to the king of Hebron”; cf. Jericke 2003: 27). The town was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar early in the sixth century. Hebron remained unoccupied through the Persian period, with new settlement early in the Hellenistic period.
- 7 *Beth Shan* (198.212 *Tell el-Hosn*/Tel Bet Shean, Beisan/Scythopolis) lay at the base of a hill in the Beth Shan valley, between the deep gorges of the Wadi Jalud and Wadi Asi some 125 metres below sea level. The moderately sized tell lies close to the juncture of the valleys of Beth Shan, Jezreel and the Wadi Jalud, near the Pella ford. Water was abundant and rich soils allow excellent drainage and irrigation agriculture by dozens of villages and towns in one of the most densely populated

regions of Palestine. The most dominant of the agricultural settlements lay on Tell es-Sarim/Rehob (197.207: Tell es-Sarim). This settlement, with Pella, across the Jordan, reflects the character of the region's settlement. The earliest occupation of Tell el-Hosn dates from the Pottery Neolithic period. Excavations in the early 1920s and 1990s uncovered finds in the southern part of the tell, suggesting a continuous settlement from EB I to Iron II with few interruptions. In the major EB IB stratum, a public building related to the distribution of agricultural products was uncovered in several phases. The earliest had a large hall of mud bricks and wooden pillars. EB III was densely settled. There were, however, very limited occupation remains from EB IV/MB I, perhaps reflecting settlement in tents or huts, in contrast to the considerable settlement in this period at nearby Tel Josef (188.217). Settlement grew in MB IIA, early MB IIB and, after a lapse, was resettled in late MB II. There was no evidence for fortifications in the Middle Bronze period. The most influential period was marked by a succession of temples, the first from LB I. The site was occupied by the Egyptians from LB to Iron I, without any significant occupation during LB. Remains of an Egyptian governor's residence, temples and garrison have been uncovered, with a number of inscriptions from the reigns of Seti I, Ramses II and Ramses III. The Iron I indigenous settlement of the site was considerably expanded during Iron II. The town was destroyed by Tiglath-Pileser III in 732 BCE. With few remains from the Assyrian period, the settlement was abandoned until Hellenistic times (Mazar 1997).

- 8 *Jaffa* (126.162: Tell Jaffa; Yapu; Joppa) was situated on a large, high tell on the coast above a harbour. Excavations revealed settlement I from as early as 7500 BCE, with intense settlement in the MB II, LB (when the harbour was first used) and Iron Age. While the region's agriculture was dominated by the large, neighbouring settlement on Tell Yasur (131.159), Jaffa remained primarily oriented towards the sea and trade. Conquered by Thutmosis III, Jaffa was an Egyptian client until about 800 BCE, when the Assyrians took over imperial control of the coastal plain. Sennacherib used Jaffa as his military base for his siege of Lachish in 701 BCE. In the Persian period, Jaffa fell under Tyre's patronage.
- 9 *Jerusalem/al-Quds* (164.132; Uru-Salimu). Excavations on Ophel reflect limited occupation from EB I-II, mostly from caves, and some burials from EB IV/MB I. Settlement seems to begin in late MB IIA or early MB IIB, with a fortified town from *ca.* 1800 BCE (Steiner 2001). A terrace system and a building have been found, as well as a wall under the terrace system. Several places with pottery have been found from the LB/Iron I transition period. Nothing of an LB town has been found, making it difficult to locate *Urusalimu* of the Amarna letters. LB finds are largely confined to burials, although some Egyptian cultic elements have been claimed on the grounds of the École Biblique and some settlement remains have been found in the Rephaim valley. Early Iron I

remains from the eleventh century have been found on the southern part of the slope. Suggestions have been made that Amarna *Urusalimu* had perhaps been an Egyptian fortress. Little has been found from the tenth and ninth centuries, apart from a casemate wall, a stepped-stone structure and few other elements. Steiner suggests the possibility of a small fortified town on the *Haram*, which she compares to the small contemporary towns of Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer and Lachish (Steiner 2001: 24–53). During Iron II, Ophel was filled with administrative buildings and, in the late seventh century BC, there is evidence of recovery from Sennacherib's destruction of Lachish and the Judean hinterland, when Jerusalem expanded into a large town of some 50 ha.

- 10 *Lachish* (135.108: Tell al-Duwer; Lakishu) was the most dominant town of the southern Shephelah. It lay on a very large tell on the west bank of Wadi al-Gafar. Its soils were well suited for agriculture and there were several large springs in the area. The earliest occupation in the area is dated to the pottery Neolithic period, from *ca.* 6000 BCE. The tell was first occupied in EB II. After a period of abandonment or diminished settlement during EB IV/MB I, it was resettled early in MB IIA. Expanding considerably in MB IIB, Lachish was walled and surrounded by a glacis, with a cult-place and fortified palace on the western side of the tell. It was destroyed by fire in LB I. Rebuilt under Egyptian patronage, the unfortified LB town of *Lachishu* became one of the largest and most prosperous towns in Palestine, until it was destroyed in *ca.* 1130 BCE and abandoned. The site was resettled, with light fortifications and a large palace, in the tenth century, BCE. After its destruction in Sheshonq I's punitive raid, Lachish again grew to become a most important town dominating Judah. Destroyed by earthquake in 760 BCE, the town was immediately rebuilt. The new palace is the largest residence known from the Judean Iron Age. This prosperous renewal came to a close with Sennacherib's siege and conquest in 701 BCE. Following Lachish's destruction and the deportation of its population, the tell suffered a gap in occupation through the first half of the seventh century BCE. It was rebuilt in the second half of the seventh century and gradually recovered, until it was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar. During the Neo-Babylonian period, Lachish served as an administrative centre for the greater region (Ussishkin 1982; Ussishkin, Bachi and Miller 2004). In the Persian and Hellenistic periods, it became the provincial centre of Idumea and controlled most of ancient Judah, south of the province of Yahud.
- 11 *Megiddo* (167.221: Tell el-Mutesellim; Magiddu) is a very large excavated tell lying on the western edge of the Jezreel valley. The town controlled the pass between the coastal plain and the Jezreel and the trade routes between Egypt, Syria and Mesopotamia. As an agricultural town of the grain rich Jezreel Valley, Megiddo shared the boundaries of its fields with the major towns of Ta'anach to the southeast (170.214),

Afula (177.223) to the east-northeast, and Tel Shimon (170.234) and Tell Shamnam (164.230) to the North. The EB I settlement of Megiddo had a very large altar for animal sacrifice. The fortifications for this town have been dated to EB II. This town was reduced to a small settlement during EB IV/MB I, when the population shifted to such sites as Tel Shimon and Tell Shamnam. Settlement on Megiddo expanded considerably during MB IIA as the town reached its largest extent (*ca.* 12 ha.) during the MB II B period. Megiddo was brought under Egyptian patronage after its conquest by Thutmosis III and supplying the centre of Egyptian power in the region for some four centuries. A large LB palace was built (ivory plaques). This town was destroyed early in Iron I and replaced by an unwallled town. After it was once again destroyed by Tiglath Pileser III, Megiddo became an Assyrian provincial centre. One of the most important towns in Bronze and Iron Age Palestine, Megiddo was, nevertheless, not resettled after the Assyrian collapse.

- 12 *Pella* (207.206: Khirbet Tabaqat Fahl: Pihilum) is a large, high tell in the Transjordan with several springs. The tell measures some ninety dunams, on a high plateau, just south of the Sea of Galilee, overlooking a ford over the Jordan, just North of the Wadi al-Malawi. Controlling the trade route across the Jordan, Pella maintained a near continuous occupation since the Neolithic period, but excavations reached only to Iron II levels, with abundant pottery from EB II, EB III, EB IV/MB I, MB II, LB and Iron Age, as well as tombs from EB IV/MB I, MB II and LB. The town is mentioned in the Execration Texts, Amarna letters and a toponymic list of Ramses II (Thompson 1979: 222–223; Knapp 1993).
- 13 *Shechem* (176.179: Tell Balata; Sekmem) is a large flat tell at the foot of Jebel et-Tur (Mt Gerizim) on the edge of a very large valley to the East. The site was excavated in 1913–1914, 1926–1934 and 1956–1964, with “salvage” excavations in the late 1980s and, most recently, in 2010–2014. The earliest town dates to the Chalcolithic period, with major occupation from MB II and LB. The population was much diminished during EB IV/MB I (Campbell 1991, 2002). The town of *Sekmem* appears in the Execration texts and in the Amarna letters, when this regionally dominant market town controlled much of the central highlands. A short break in occupation occurred during the transition period at the end of LB and early Iron I. In Iron II, an altar was uncovered, similar to those found at Arad and Dan, suggesting a degree of cultural and religious autonomy, which seems confirmed by inscriptions referring to a *Yhwh Shomron* in ninth-eighth century inscriptions from Khirbet el-Qom and Kuntillat Ajrud (Meshel 2012).
- 14 *Ta’anach* (170.214: Tel Ti’innik/Tell Ta’anach) is a forty-metre-high tell, which lay on top of a hill overlooking the Jezreel, some ten kilometres northwest of Jenin, just southeast of the Wadi Azzam. A substantial town developed in EB II, which was considerably diminished during EB IV/MB I. In MB II and LB, this town probably fell under the patronage

of Megiddo, which formed the centre of Egyptian power in the region in both LB II and the LB/Iron I transition period. Twelve LB cuneiform tablets (Albright 1944) are not only unique for Palestine but also suggest Ta'anach's autonomy. Ta'anach was destroyed by Sheshonq I in 924 BCE.

### **The continuity and stability of sub-regional patronage**

Our sketch of the occupational history of these fourteen sites supports continuity in the historical narrative of important towns in Palestine, whereby we can understand the polities of such small-scale patronage towns as well as suggest the indigenous character of this region's polity of patronage, not least in accord with their distinct economic landscapes. Cycles of sedentarization and de-sedentarization, for example, followed patterns associated with climate-driven shifts in the border of aridity, affecting the demography of Palestine's agricultural population. Intensification and dispersion of sedentary agriculture was open to a shifting movement towards herding and transhumant migration, which provided stability and flexibility to Palestine's population (Thompson 1992b; Finkelstein 1994). Defining the nature of settlement in MB II, Finkelstein described this period not in terms of "urbanization" but rather as "a symbiotic society, consisting of large central sites, small villages and pastoral groups" (Finkelstein 1991: 43, 2002; Steiner 2001: 20), implicitly describing a form of patronage valid not only for MB II but for early antiquity as a whole, including periods of de-sedentarization in highland and steppe regions.

The term "urban" hardly describes the settlement patterns of ancient Palestine's typically small regions and the term "city" has become meaningless in its normal usage among biblical scholars and archaeologists, with reference, for example, to both the population of *ca.* 300 persons on Tell as-Saba and the 5,000 on Tell al-Qadi (Dever 2012: 106–141; cf. Thompson 2015)! With neither the size nor the complexity of the ancient cities of Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt, towns in Palestine should be understood in terms of interrelationships and change in the demography of market towns, fortresses, villages, hamlets and encampments. The settlement of Iron II, for example, typically follows the long-established settlement patterns and polities of the Bronze Age. Such small town patronage entities hardly reflect statehood or the existence of nations.

### **The ecology of small sub-regions and their landscapes**

If one were to distinguish the various landscapes in Palestine in support of anthropological interpretation, based on the ecological capacity of the various sub-regions of Palestine, one could begin with the identification of at least twenty-four sub-regions. If one included the Wadi-Araba, the Central Negev, Gaza, the Judean desert and trade routes across the Negev and Sinai deserts, one might best consider at least as many as forty different,

sub-regional landscapes, each with their distinctive economy and history (Thompson 1979: 5–62; Thompson and Goncalvez 1988: 5). Critical to the analysis of such landscapes is the integration of our understanding of the ecological capacity of an area's climate and terrain. One would include identifying available soils and water resources and the capacity of a region to exploit them. Central to most regions in Palestine is the capacity for developing a Mediterranean economy, with its trade-dependent, geographical barriers between agriculture, horticulture and herding. A region's capacity and relationship to the potentials of fishing, herding, hunting, mining and metallurgy are also highly relevant to understanding individual sites.

An aspect of this “post-processual” approach to archaeological interpretation is the integration of excavation results with an understanding of the patterns of settlement (Finkelstein 2002: 279–289), which we draw from surface surveys and our knowledge of climate history, water resources, geography and toponymy. Central to an understanding of *sub-regional* settlement is the nature of Palestine's Mediterranean economy. This economy is diverse and we need to distinguish each region. Grain- and field-crop-based agriculture of the lowland regions and of easily accessible plateaus, which are often rich with water and soil resources, are often far from regions suitable for the development of horticulture. These we often find more appropriate to the hills and slopes. We need to distinguish arid and rocky regions as we find in the southern Transjordan, areas with immature soils, as in the Judean desert and the Negev, where grazing of sheep and goats might be the preferred use of land. In the highlands, agriculture and horticulture are often dependent on terracing and water control, whether through the use of cisterns, drainage canals or irrigation ditches, as we find, for example, along the western slopes of the central hills, the northwestern slopes of central Negev highlands and the Beth Shan Valley, respectively. A Mediterranean economy is not a subsistence economy. It requires trade and the capacity for exchanging both labour and goods. Horticulture requires security. This is not simply the physical security of a fortified town, but a security sufficient for the development of orchards, requiring years before they are adequately productive. Herding, with its milk and cheeses, wool, meat and manure, not only shares a farmer's need for markets. It is a seasonally transient specialization, especially in forms of transhumance. A Mediterranean economy is centred in the sub-regional, often fortified market town, with its semi-autonomous patron, supplying villages with protection and the trades, essential to a village's efficiency.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, we might define the asymmetric relationship between a great king and a subject king as a relationship of patronage, comparable to that established between a local, regional king and heads of towns, villages and their labourers, in a chain of patronage, with each link possessing

a measure of reciprocal obligation and limited autonomy. The political structure of patronage provides us with a more appropriate analytical tool than the seriously misleading concepts of city- or national states in understanding the nature of political relationships. They help us avoid anachronistic notions of feudalism and vassalage, often used in Biblical and Assyriological studies. Patronage terminology clarifies questions of political belonging and territorial identity, questions often blurred by assumptions that in the Iron Age II period, for example, we find definable borders of “ethnic” or “national” states in the southern Levant (Buccellati 1967: 75–135, 2013: 257–261; Joffe 2002; Liverani 2002). The notion of defined borders and ethno-national states has been influenced, both explicitly and implicitly, by interpretations of the biblical narratives related to Jacob and his twelve sons and of Joshua’s stories of conquest and land distribution. It has also been influenced by the stories of the heroic leaders of the nation we find in Judges and the origin stories of priesthood and monarchy (see in Whitelam 1996: 122–175).

The historicity of such narratives would hardly be affirmed today by archaeological and socio-anthropological rules of evidence (*contra* Faust 2012). In fact, recent insights from the archaeology of ethnicity have shown how difficult it is to attach any indisputable ethnic meaning to the material culture of the Levant, except for clear stylistic differentiations, which express neither identity nor ethnicity (Kletter 2006; Oestigaard 2007: 29–93). Furthermore, in the southern Levant during the Iron Age we might have evidence for a fictional, ideological form of “functional ethnicity”, meaning an ethnic identification not based on transcendent ideas of belonging as a people, from the elite to the peasantry, but adhering, rather, to the language of political practice and territorial dependency, shifting in line with political need (see Niesiolowski-Spanò 2016: 195–202). Finally, the romantic concept of the “nation” in pre-modern times should be considered arbitrary and tenuous (Thompson 1992: 301–352; Routledge 2003).

The proper nature of archaeological data from the Bronze and Iron Age leads us to consider the interrelationship of ecological, geographic and demographic factors as central keys to mapping the socio-political arrangement of society (Thompson 2016). Topographical fragmentation concurs with an indigenous political fragmentation and poly-centricity, which is constant in the region since the Chalcolithic period (LaBianca 2009).

Sub-regional clusters of political and economic niches seem to be structured through patron-client bonds in their internal organization, but they also deploy a patron-client political logic to express subordination to higher powers, both from the Levant and beyond (Egypt, Hatti, Assyria, etc.) and to exert political dominance over neighbouring polities within Palestine. The notion of patronage allows us to describe what we may summarily call the *macro-politics* of foreign political interventions and the regional dynamics of ancient Palestine through different periods. It is, however, also a controlling factor of the *micro-politics* at the level of the communities, tribal

organization, etc. This perspective also has the advantage of shaking off biblical images and the preconceptions of modern historical writing about ancient Palestine. At the same time, it may help expose an ancient political worldview, which provides part of the intellectual background of biblical stories. This methodology also supports a proper handling of the archaeological and epigraphic data that we might produce a sound structural sketch of political dynamics in the region through different periods. This should be the basis for our understanding of the political evidence conveyed in biblical texts about kings and tribal leaders, rather than the now century-long strategy of using such literature as an interpretive guide to archaeological reconstruction.

Finally, the historical, ethno-historical and ethnographic records give evidence of patron-client relationships in Palestinian society over more than five millennia, from the Chalcolithic period to the late Ottoman and Mandate periods. Even in recent decades, ethnographers and sociologists have found evidence of patronage, organizing the political life of small rural Palestinian communities and towns. The patrons of such small social enclaves provide the point of articulation between the local community and the exterior, namely the modern state (see, for instance, Migdal 1980; Tamari 1982). Far from considering patronage as representing a form of political essentialism in local Palestinian society, such examples help us shed light on ancient political practices, their change and their persistence over time. They show precisely how patronage was a key element in the social and political organization of ancient Palestine.

## Note

- 1 In Thompson (1979), the transcription of Arabic تال follows standard Arabic transliteration *Tall* rather than the common English form *Tell*. The single-l form *Tel* is a transcription of the Hebrew תל.

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## 12 “To be an Israelite and a Judean as I want you to be”

### Material culture and ethnicity during the Iron Age

*Hani Nur El-Din*

In evaluating research related to the Iron Age, one needs to analyze the spectrum of questions raised by biblical archaeologists, not least chronological questions, which undermine their assumptions. Important are implicit assumptions related to the historical, archaeological and ethnic understanding of Israelites and Judahites. Without approaching central questions related to cultural continuity, implied by a rational interpretation of archaeological and historical facts, such ethnic presuppositions too often determine the evaluation of archeological finds.

My point of departure is the argument raised by Emanuel Pfoh and Thomas L. Thompson which relates to the continuity of material culture through the Bronze and Iron Ages. Approached within the “long-term history of Palestine”, with its “demographic ebb and flow over centuries”, this “is reflected by the continuities and discontinuities in local political structures” (Pfoh and Thompson, in the present volume: ch. 11: 6). An important aspect of such a “post processual” approach to archaeological interpretation is the integration of excavation results, with an understanding of regional settlement patterns (Pfoh and Thompson, in the present volume: 23). By contrast, Israel Finkelstein understands the long-term process in a more limited way. It is used by him only to describe the long-term character of the process of settlement in the central highlands and to justify his understanding of the population of the central hills in terms of biblical Israelites in the late Iron I and Iron II periods (Finkelstein 2013: 9–11).

The understanding of Iron Age I and II, as understood by biblical archaeologists, was that a people with a new identity and new material culture, namely “Israelites”, quickly established their presence in the land in the central hills and northern valleys of the lowlands. Here, the original Canaanite material culture and city state territorial organization, which had originated in the second millennium BCE, was transformed into the Israelite material culture with its political system of territorial Kingdoms by the late eighth century BCE (Finkelstein 2013: 36; *op. cit.*, Miller 1991: 94–95).

If we take into consideration the material culture within the Iron Age II period, and especially during the ninth and eighth centuries BCE in Samaria, and if we compare that culture with the culture of sites in other

parts of Palestine and even Phoenicia, we might better understand the development of these elements of the material culture. The chronological sequence within the Bronze and early Iron Age was considerable (Pfoh and Thompson present volume: 10) and this material culture was also regionally wide-spread long before there is evidence of any state formation, as we find in Iron Age II.

This means that there were interrelationships of many kinds and aspects, including religious, social, economic and artistic, between different polities, where identity markers were not related to ethnic identity, but more to the ties and benefits of different regional polities. Common cultural elements between the different regions in Palestine depend on location, rather than ethnicity. Contradicting Finkelstein's proposal that the regions, which in biblical traditions seem to have been controlled by the Kingdom of Samaria, extended, in the north to Hazor and in the west, included the coastal plain from Dor to Jaffa (Finkelstein 2013: 105–109), these regions comprised, historically, a single cultural region where the Canaanites of central Palestine and the Canaanites of Phoenicia cohabitated and shared economic, social, religious and perhaps political ties.

Considering the material culture of Samaria, we should expect a culture more deeply integrated with the rest of Palestine, one that was linked closely to the regions of Galilee and the Coastal plain. These communities may well have developed as an extension of the enduring culture of the Bronze Age with roots in ideological, religious and technological aspects of the Late Bronze/Iron I transition (cf. Stern 1990: 27–31, 2017: 40–48), and were integrated into distinct political entities on the basis of their economic and political power (Pfoh and Thompson present volume: 12; Stern 1990, 2001: 62–69; Pappa 2013: 1–3).

Like Samaria, Judea maintained its own cultural links within the Canaanite culture where it developed as a power during the eighth century within the regional alliances of the Assyrian empire on the one hand and the Arameans on the other hand. The political context for Judea was the same as it was for Samaria and needs to be integrated within our historical understanding of that period.

Accordingly, we can understand Samaria and Judea during the Iron II as “multi-centric polities organized through kinship and patron-client bonds. This seems to better fit the regional manifestation of power and politics” according to Pfoh and Thompson (present volume: 6), rather than a model of a highly centralized monarchic or Hebrew Kingdom as argued by Finkelstein (2013: 105–117). The continuity of the different polities inherited from the lengthy Canaanite culture, economy and religion were maintained.

We will focus on two distinct material cultures, which give us appropriate examples for understanding the cultural continuities from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age in Palestine. These do not appear suddenly within a single region and a single period alone that may be restricted to any particular ethnic identity.

### **Red slip ware and Samaritan identity**

As Finkelstein has claimed, the material culture of the last decades of the tenth to early eighth century BCE (his Iron IIA) is different from the material culture of the second half of the eleventh and first half of the tenth century BCE (his Iron I) (Finkelstein 2013: 8). Some of the differences and changes he sees in the material culture are burnished vessels, new town layouts, such as have been uncovered at Megiddo, and the very beginning of an iron industry (Finkelstein 2013: 65). According to Finkelstein

The material culture now changed completely; all features typical of the Iron I disappeared, and features of the new phase became characteristic of the material culture of the northern kingdom; they continued undisturbed until the collapse of Israel in the late eighth century BCE and even beyond.

(Finkelstein 2013: 32–33)

If we pin down this statement and test it carefully, we find that Finkelstein is making a break in the material culture between Iron Age II and I, considering the latter to be “Canaanite” culture, inherited from the Late Bronze Age. This culture has been identified at different sites in Palestine (Finkelstein 2013: 28–32) but was superseded by new technical breakthroughs, which had been introduced by the Israelites from the central hill country. For Finkelstein, this period

marks the transition from Canaanite material culture and city-state territorial organization in the second millennium BCE to Israelite material culture and a system of ‘territorial kingdom’ in the late tenth to late eighth century BCE.

(Finkelstein 2013: 36)

I would like here to concentrate on the pottery, a specific example of the material culture, which might illustrate how human culture can reflect daily life, how the potter has developed his skills in manufacturing pots and other artifacts over a long period, as well as how such changes affect his behavior.

Finkelstein has argued directly and indirectly (Finkelstein 2013: 65) that red slip ware (RSW) is a mark of an Israelite invention during the Iron Age I period. It is clear that the “red slip bowl”, which relates to more regional groups, including sites in the central hills, also spread along the coast and reached as far as the north of Galilee, where the Phoenician cities interacted with Canaanite-Palestinian cities during the Iron Age II period (Anderson 1988: 344).

The long discussion concerning the fabrication of the RSW type of pottery cannot be so simply related directly to Israelites of the ninth century as Finkelstein has proposed, arguing that RSW appeared as “a new ceramic

tradition during the Early Iron IIA period, dated to 920-883 BCE” (Finkelstein 2013: 65; *contra* Anderson 1988: 344–355; see also Stern 2015: 435–436 and Tappy 2015: 189–190). There is a long discussion yet to be engaged concerning the Israelites and historical and archaeological contexts suggested by the material culture of a site. Even RSW pottery has been referred to in archaeological literature as “Samaria Ware” by Grace Crowfoot (cf. Anderson 1988: 355). It is important to indicate that this term has to be applied more in the context of the origin and development of RSW (Anderson 1988: 355). According to Anderson, in the first volume on Sarepta,

the term ‘Samaria Ware’ should be dropped from comparative discussion. The inconsistencies established have thoroughly confused the issues involved, not only raising questions as to the origins and the development of red slip pottery in general by disregarding geographical differences, but also resulting in major disagreements over chronology. It is anticipated that the comparative forms from Sarepta, together with those from Tyre, will lead to a better understanding of this class of vessels Phoenician fine ware.

(Anderson 1988: 355; cf. *idem* 1990: 35–54; see also Enderline 1997: 489 and Pappa 2013: 4)

The majority of pottery dated to Iron Age II A–B, during the ninth and eighth centuries, came from several areas within the royal compound on the mound excavated by the Harvard expedition from 1908 to 1910, and the second expedition from 1931 to 1935. The site of the so-called “Israelite Shrine”, excavated by the joint expedition in the thirties, provided us with the most important ceramic types at that period (Sukenik 1942: 24, 1957: 137–195).

In order to trace the typology and technology of this ware, it is convenient to follow the division by Ernest Wright of the “Samaria Ware” into two categories. Ware A, which is heavier, less clean, dark in color at the core and with a darker red to reddish brown slip, is common at Samaria in pottery period III (Wright 1965: 122, 1959: 13–28). Ware B is made of a light, well-planned buff paste, with thick slip of a light red color (Wright 1965: 122), is common during the eighth century and includes the pottery periods IV–V (cf. Stern 2015: 436–437; Mazar 1990: 538–539).

It is quite certain that RSW was well known in Samaria, equivalent to it being used also at many sites in Phoenicia and the Palestinian coastal regions. The finding of RSW in large numbers in northern Palestine and within the territory of Samaria points to territorial relationships with cultural and economic ties among the peoples of these regions.

### **What does Hezekiah’s seal tell us about his religion?**

Another indication of the material culture, which goes far beyond its narrower perspective within time and space, is the scribal material. It is

important to stress that scribal material is a major indicator for our understanding of human behavior and activities. Its character is not like lithic tools, pottery, metals and residential style, which indicate some human daily activities, but it goes beyond that and gives us more precise information about human identity, be it political, social, economic or religious, and has the potential to give us an understanding of singular events within their precise dates. As Beatrice Teisser indicates: “These scribal materials, such as seals, had a vital role to play in communication, not only as transmitters of iconography and ideas of status, but geographical and ethnic identity as well” (Teisser 1996: 10).

Seals and, specifically, *bullae* played a special role during Iron Age II. How this type of material culture can be used by historians and archaeologists in their effort to support an interpretation relates to ethnicity and religion (Sass 1993). As we know, these seals cannot provide us with much historiographical information, even if they may help us provide an historical indication about personal names. At the same time, the iconography, which the seals contain, gives an indication we can use.

Regarding this, I want to discuss an oval seal impression discovered in the “Ophel” excavations, south of the Haram al Sharif in Jerusalem, conducted by Eilat Mazar. It bears the inscription in ancient Hebrew script: “Belonging to Hezekiah {son of} Ahaz king of Judah. Two wings are shown turned downwards and flanked by two *ankh* signs, symbolizing life” (Mazar 2015: 632).<sup>1</sup>

I do not wish to emphasize the script itself, its textual content, its archaeological context or whether it was discovered in the “refuse dump” of the excavation area, ninety meters south of the walls of Haram al Sharif (Mazar 2015: 632–633). I will not even discuss or argue about the personality of Hezekiah {son of} Ahaz, who pays tribute to Tiglath-Pilezer III. Hezekiah has already appeared by name in Sennacherib’s annals, the Lachish reliefs from Nineveh in the British Museum (Ussishkin 1982: 59–126) and on a number of other *bullae*. My discussion rather concentrates on the iconography, which appears on this *bullae* (Mazar 2015: 631) with its significance for the history of religion at the time, and how the biblical narration in 2 Kings contradicts the archaeological material culture and its interpretation by Israeli biblical archaeologists and historians.

For Eilat Mazar, the two-winged sun, with wings turned downward, flanked by two *ankh* signs symbolizing life symbols, indicates that the seal was created late in the king’s life and shows an Assyrian influence. According to her,

only after Hezekiah recovered from his illness was this symbol changed to (that of a) winged sun with the wings pointing downward, as if offering patronage, with two life (*ankh*) symbols flanking the wings. This motif change, that apparently was related to the profound awareness of divine providence guiding political events and Hezekiah’s personal

fate, was made, in great degree, under the influence of Assyrian culture, where the winged sun symbolized the sovereignty of the King and his rule, a symbol similarity applicable to the Judean King of that time.

(Mazar 2015: 638)

This argument is still contradicted by scholars in regard to the interpretation of the symbols on seals from the reign of Hezekiah, which generally are differentiated in groups of two- or four-winged scarabs or winged sun disks. For Mazar, the winged sun disk carries a more religious laden weight in regard to the divinity (Mazar 2015: 637), than the two- or four-winged scarabs, which signify the king and the kingdom's administration (Mazar 2015: 676). In earlier discussions of this type of bullae, Deutsch, on the other hand, insisted that both the two- and four-winged scarabs and the winged sun disk "were already quite old and bereft of any religious significance. They were used solely for their decorative value and their connotation of power should be regarded as Israelite/Judahite" (Deutsch 2002: 51). For Cross,

the two- and four-winged sun disks also appear on Hezekiah's *l'melek* handles, so the two-winged scarab with the sun disk is wholly appropriate on Hezekiah's seal. There appears to have been a tendency to solarize Yahweh in Judah in the eighth century and later.

(Cross 1999: 45)

According to scholars who have dealt with this specific question, the various contradictory syntheses, considering such symbols and their meaning, have been analyzed within a narrow perspective in order to isolate "Judah" from its cultural context and identify it as a center of pure religious thought and belief. This has nothing to do with actual religious and cultural understanding as related to Assyrians, Arameans, Phoenicians, Edomites, Ammonites or others during the first millennium BCE. If we identify this symbol, "the winged sun disc" in its context, it can be understood by its motif, which is an Egyptian creation that has influenced many parts of the Near East since the Middle Bronze Age (Teisser 1996: 95–96). According to Dominique Parayre, the winged sun is a symbol that is entirely Egyptian associated, as it is, with two different elements: a star (the sun) and a bird (the wings originally of a peregrine falcon). These Egyptian solar and royal symbols have influenced the entire East Mediterranean since the Middle Bronze Age (Parayre 1993: 27–28). Parayre has traced and categorized different impressions and seals related to winged sun disks from the first half of the first millennium BCE (Parayre 1990: 272–275). Of the winged sun disks, bipartite pierced wings can be differentiated between upper, lower and double-stylized radiant feathering. The feathers are ordinary, pointed or three in number (Parayre 1990: 272, 1993: 30). Parayre marks the pierced sun disks characterizing most of the scarabs and scaraboids, made of hard stone, as originating in Phoenicia and the kingdom of Samaria from the eleventh to the sixth century BCE (Parayre 1990: 272, 1993: 34–35).

In her book, *Egyptian Iconography on Syro-Palestinian Cylinder Seals of the Middle Bronze Age*, Teisser, emphasizing the Egyptian influence of the winged sun disk, questions the independent development of this sign in Syria

There is no evidence to suggest that the motif was not adopted from Egypt or that it was developed independently in Syria. Nevertheless, it was quickly modified there to become a Syrian symbol of mutable significance, inadvertently sharing some symbolic nuances with Egypt.  
(Teisser 1996: 95)

Teisser also pointed out that the *ankh* symbol, less used during the Middle Bronze Age, was “one of the most common of all symbols in the Syro-Levantine repertoire (13.3 percent)” (Teisser 1996: 104). She adds that the *ankh* symbol, representing life and fertility, was “most frequently found as an independent symbol, placed beside figures at an appropriate and/or convenient place in the field” (Teisser 1996: 104).

If we trace the use of the winged sun disk and *ankh* symbol, we can recognize them in many seals of the Middle and early Late Bronze age, originating in different workshops, such as the royal seal of the son of King Inilimgur of Ebla (Teisser 1996: 97, seal no. 184), the royal seal of Iamhad, dating to Middle Bronze Age III, found in Alalakh (Teisser 1996: 97, no.185), and the royal seal from Tuba, dating to Middle Bronze Age III (Teisser 1996: 64, no. 68; 67, no. 85; 97, no. 188 and 106, no. 214).

My argument is not whether the styles of the winged sun disk are to be differentiated from the four-winged *lmlk* scarab, if the style is doubled with a curved upper line and up-curving tips, or if the winged sun disk motif is placed in the upper part of the field or in the bottom register. As questioned by Benjamin Saas, who has dealt with pre-exilic Hebrew seals

If the winged sun was an unwelcome motif in Hebrew glyptic, as other celestial bodies, why was it chosen to grace an official glyptic? An important difference between the *lmlk* stamps and most other inscribed seals is in the impersonality of the former, but whether this quality could make the association with a heavenly body more permissible is far from clear.

(Saas 1993: 238–239)

It is clear that these symbols developed over a long period and reflect deep traditions of ideological and religious thought. That it appears during the early second millennium in north Syria and the Levant and continues during the first millennium BCE in the kingdoms of Aram, Assyria, Phoenicia, Samaria, Judea, Edom and Ammon, appropriately, reflects the beliefs and thoughts of the period through its glyptic art.

I think that Hezekiah is not to be seen as significantly different from the other regional kings of his time. He had comparable beliefs about the

gods, rooted in the religious thought of prehistoric Canaan. This developed through successive periods, in both north and south Canaan, where the culture of the various sub-regions influenced each other through the course of the Bronze Age: from Alalakh, Ebla and Ugarit in north Syria to Hazor, Dan and Megiddo in Palestine and in the Iron Age, such understanding came to influence the Kingdom of Aram and its associates in Syria and the kingdoms of Sidon, Tyre, Samaria, Judea, Ammon and Edom.

I do not think, as Eilat Mazar and her team have claimed, that these symbols on the bullae and imprinted on the king's jars were created late in king's Hezekiah life (Hasson 2015). This argument is hardly convincing. There is no known historical context for the claim that the king's personal seal had been changed after he was to have recovered from a life threatening plague in around 704 BCE, as has been told in the biblical story of 2 Kings 20: 1–8 (Mazar 2015: 637).

It is more appropriate, as Andre Lemaire has shown in his work on the seals, to understand this material culture within the historical context of the seals and to explain their contents (text and iconography) according to its geographical and cultural associations (Lemaire 1993: 1).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, it is important to point out that in the Middle and Late Bronze Ages, the symbols of the winged sun disk and *ankh* symbols existed as religious symbols throughout the ancient Near East and Egypt. These motifs spread throughout the Levantine region and continued to be used in the Iron Age, in Ammon, Samaria, Aram, Phoenicia and Judea. This observation can give us a proper understanding of the context for the exchange of religious concepts and its ideals, which led to overlapping similarities in religious perceptions and concepts with its beginning in polytheism for a long period extending into the end of the Iron Age, when monotheism first emerged in the second half of the first millennium BCE (see, for example, Niehr 1990; Edelman 1995).

It is important that we deal with the question of ethnicity and material culture apart from our distinctions related to different periods, especially the Bronze and Iron Ages. Obviously, we must take into consideration how we approach the issues of ethnicity and material culture. It is useful to base our analyses and interpretations on history and archaeology within a scientific and sociocultural approach. I agree with Pfoh and Thompson regarding the post-processual approach, which truly offers broad possibilities for tracing and understanding cultural change within a consideration of the “long term History of Palestine” (Pfoh and Thompson, in this volume). The questions of material culture, which I have dealt with in regard to RSW and seal iconography, are small and limited examples of how biblical archaeologists seek to confirm assumptions of an essentialist relationship between the material culture and ethnocentric claims, basing their history in unwarranted

claims of the historicity of biblical narratives. I think we have to broaden our understanding in order to understand the material culture of Palestine and integrate it within a geographic, demographic and chronological sequence and away from an all too limited and isolated perspective on ethnic identities which serve arbitrary and limited contemporary political goals.

## Note

- 1 The discovery of the bulla from 2009 has been published in the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, by Nir Hasson (2015). Mazar's discovery is not unique in regard to bullae with legends of Hezekiah, the first of which was presented in Avigad (1986: bulla 1), who did not recognize it as a royal bulla (cf. Deutsch 2002: 44). Many more bullae with similar legends have appeared on the market, but Mazar's is the single item that has been found in relation to an excavation, however, without stratigraphic clarity since it was found in the refuse dump. That Mazar presents the bulla as unique blurs the uncertainty about its provenance.

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## **Part 3**

# **Landscape, archaeology and memory in the interface between history and tradition**



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## 13 Landscape and memory

### Theoretical perspectives and the case of Lubyā as *lieu de memoire*<sup>1</sup>

*Bo Dahl Hermansen*

This chapter is based on the premise that any inclusive history of Palestine must necessarily be a counter-history. Counter to the highly exclusive Zionist-cum-Christian discourse, dominant in Western and Israeli academia for so long and currently bolstered by extremely powerful political and financial interests. This implies the necessity for a project concerned with Palestinian Heritage and History (PaHH) to draw upon aspects of Palestinian cultural heritage that are repressed in that dominant discourse. How may we counter such a powerful academic tradition? This is a question, which necessarily underlies the discussions in the PaHH project. The answer, of course, depends on the perspective of each participant and research group.

From my perspective as an archaeologist interested in the material components of memory work, the answer lies in trying to devise a history of the land of Palestine. Such a history must cover the land in its entirety; it must draw heavily on places and practices rooted in the landscape, which may count both as Palestinian heritage and as World heritage. Such a history should include at least two components:

- 1 It should emphasize the contribution of all the peoples, ethnicities and cultures, who contributed to shape the Palestinian landscape as it unfolded through time.
- 2 It should contemplate the landscape as remembered both by Palestinians in diaspora and by resident Palestinians. Thus, it should be both an inclusive and a multi-vocal history, giving voice to the silenced and taking account of the composite nature of peoples and cultures in Palestine.

Such an approach may be proposed here, so much more as it seems to be well aligned with that of at least some Palestinian researchers. It is certainly instantiated in Hamdan Taha's and Ali Qleibo's volume, *Jericho, a Living History: Ten Thousand Years of Civilization* (Taha and Qleibo 2010). Though popular in nature, it may serve as a pointer to the aspirations of official Palestine and leading Palestinian scholars. For instance, the inhabitants of the

villages of A'in Duke with their “blue black” complexion are said to be of African descent (Taha and Qleibo 2010: 32). The same applies to the villagers of Al-Gwarneh (ibid: 82). Recognition is given, here, to both these groups *vis-à-vis* other, “semitic” Palestinians (ibid.). This implies the authors’ recognition of a complex origin of the Palestinian people. Likewise, they treat both prehistoric and pagan religions, Judaism, Samaritanism, Christianity and Islam as worthy aspects of that mosaic of ethnicities and cultures, which they consider to be Palestine’s and the Palestinians’ contribution to the history of civilization. All these components are solidly rooted in places within the landscape of Jericho and its surroundings, which, when taken as a whole, I consider a memory place, a *lieu de mémoire*.

The notion of *lieux de mémoire* may be useful in the present context in order to supplement landscape theory with that discourse of power and counter-power, which must be an integrated element in any history of Palestine. In the following paragraphs, I will introduce some theoretical concepts, concerning *lieux de mémoire*, memory work and landscape theory. Then I will apply these approaches in a case study, concerned with the demolished Palestinian village of Luby, hoping to illuminate their potential for both archaeological and historical aspects of the PaHH project.

### ***Lieux de mémoire***

*Lieux de mémoire* is a notion proposed by the French historian Pierre Nora in 1979 when he and a group of likeminded scholars initiated a monumental investigation of the collective heritage of France and the French people. They targeted places, laden with high concentrations of what they saw as collective French heritage. Nora designated such places in French, as *lieux de mémoire*. According to Nora’s definition

A *lieu de mémoire* is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of memorial heritage of any community...  
(Nora 1992a: xvii)

More specifically, *lieux de mémoire* are sites – or places – in three different senses of the term: a material, a symbolic and a functional sense. Thus, for instance, a historical generation (such as the generation of 1968), an archive or a book may be considered *lieux de mémoire* if they fall within the definition, given earlier. Some geographical and archaeological sites, such as Jericho, may also belong, if, as Nora formulates it, peoples’ dreams and memories have drawn them into the sphere of this category (Nora 1992b: 14). Nora only allows two kinds of “great events” to be included in the category. These are:

- 1 events identified *a posteriori* as turning points, inaugural events or new beginnings;

- 2 events, which, while still in the process of unfolding, are invested with symbolic significance and subjected to ceremonies of commemoration (Nora 1992b: 18).

As suggested by Nora's definition, *lieux de mémoire* are associated with an intention to remember. Simultaneously, he points out that they contain representations of themselves in a potentially infinite regress due to the force of an ongoing dialectic of remembering and forgetting. This means that they are largely self-referential, and it gives the *lieu de mémoire* a dual character, as being both "a hermeneutic excrescence upon the world, defined by its identity and summed up by its name, but at the same time open to an infinite variety of possible other meanings" (Nora 1992b: 19).

It is important, in the present context, to note that *lieux de mémoire* are not eternal entities. A *lieu de mémoire* emerges and unfolds with the memory community that cultivates it, and if, or when, this community dissolves so does the *lieu*, which it used to maintain. Nora and his collaborators developed the notion of *lieux de mémoire* in the context of national history. However, subsequently the category has crossed the boundaries between nations (Morizet and Möller 1995), and scholars have expanded its operational field to encompass any social group, or "any community", as the definition emphasizes, which is generative of collective forms of memory, such as entire generations, ethnic minorities and widely dispersed communities of mobile workers or peoples in Diaspora (Olden-Jørgensen 2011: 4).

Finally, it needs only to be stated that the intention of this chapter is neither to outline all aspects of Nora's category, nor to scrutinize the extensive, but largely implicit, taxonomy of *lieux de mémoire*, which has developed over the years as the concept spread throughout much contemporary historical scholarship. Rather, it is to show why and in which ways a theory of *lieux de mémoire* may be useful for understanding how a conquered, ethnically cleansed and physically demolished Palestinian village, erased from official maps, is cultivated as *lieu de mémoire* by its former inhabitants and their descendants. To facilitate this, we need to introduce some additional notions of how collective forms of memory may work.

### **Maurice Halbwachs' theory of collective memory**

The fundamental idea behind the work of French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs (1992) is that memory is conditioned by the social framework of the group. For this reason, Halbwachs saw collective memory as being in a constant flux. He showed that collective memory operates at all levels of collectivity, such as family, religious group and social class. Concerning the mechanisms for locating and recalling the past, he was convinced that the medium of recall, and hence of memory transmission, is language (Halbwachs 1992: 43, 173). He rejected the idea that the past can itself be preserved objectively in individual minds. Instead, people recollect by the use

of words (Halbwachs 1992: 173). Thus, Halbwachs saw collective memory not as stored in the minds of individual members of the group, but as emergent in communicative interaction, drawing upon the group's social framework. The social framework was then thought by Halbwachs to provide a fund of objectified collective story material, akin to, but less spectacular than Emile Durkheim's "collective representations" (Durkheim 1947: 338), which imply such phenomena as religious beliefs.

### **Jan Assmann's communicative and collective memory**

To the German Egyptologist and memory scholar Jan Assmann (Assmann 1992: 50ff), "communicative" memory is mediated through daily communication between people and then embedded in group members' experience. Hence, it is mostly associated with strong emotions. It changes on an ongoing basis in a field of tension between memory and forgetting, and it typically survives a period of maximum three to four generations, ca. 80–100 years. At that point memory loses its grip and a timeless vacuum is reached, which, with Jan Vansina, Assmann calls a "floating gap" (Vansina 1985: 23f; Assmann 1992: 48). This gap separates communicative memory from that, which can no longer be remembered through simple communicative means, and which has, instead, to be transmitted through other means, such as "tradition" (Assmann 1999).

Another form of memory identified by Jan Assmann (2006: 15ff) is designated as "collective" (or bonding) memory. This form of memory constitutes the ties that bind the community together. Collective memory, in this sense, encompasses a broad spectrum of memory work, the aim of which is to create a collective identity, through transmission of norms and values. It often has a politically laden content, and is typically bound up with the worship of martyrs and political icons of the past. In this sense, memory is largely constructed. It can be short or even very long-lasting, but contrary to communicative memory it is not bound up with a specific generation and hence not conditioned by that cycle of memory and forgetting, which characterizes the former.

### **Paul Connerton's body memory**

While Halbwachs and Assmann view language, oral or written, as the primary medium for memory transmission, British sociologist, Paul Connerton, chooses to focus on the body as medium of memory transmission. In his work, Connerton (1987) focuses on bodily practices, spanning from highly formal commemorative ceremonies to quite informal patterns of bodily performance, such as gesture, learned behavior and ingrown dwelling patterns, all of which he considers to mediate the past. He emphasizes that it is common to all bodily mediated memory that it is performed repeatedly at a practical level, which allows it to become habitual. In this way, norms, values and dominant narratives sediment in the bodies of the members of a memory community.

The successful performance of shared memory, then, depends on repetition, sometimes rehearsal, and is ultimately habitual (Connerton 1987: 23). Habit is generally associated with motor skills and bodily dispositions, acquired through exercise and repetition, allowing the practitioner to execute a kind of action fluently. While this fluency is part of the utility of habits, Connerton argues that an ingrown habit is so closely associated with emotion and affect that to perform it is like satisfying a desire (Connerton 1987: 93). Hence, to the degree that habit memory can be said to support the dominant narratives of society, group or individual, as well as supporting rules, norms and identity, we may say that it gives people a sense of orientation in the world (Casey 1989) and does so, indeed, at a level beyond discursive scrutiny.

### The temporality of the landscape

Following the ideas of Connerton, landscape emerges as an important component in memory work. In order to approach an understanding of this, we need a brief consideration of what a landscape is and how it relates to time and memory. With my commitment to Connerton's views on body memory, I promote the phenomenological approach to landscape advocated, among others, by British archaeologist Christopher Tilley (1994). In short, this involves a focus on landscape as experienced through the human body. Hence, "place" has priority over "space" (Casey 1997: 349), because places are "centres of bodily activity, human significance and emotional attachment (Tilley 1994: 15)". While the body is thus always in place, we perceive and experience the world in movement through the landscape. Hence, experience begins and unfolds in places. Through movement along paths, it reaches out to other places, which, in this way, become landscapes or "regions of human existence" (*ibid.*). In the words of Christopher Tilley, then, a landscape may be characterized as "... a series of named locales, a set of relational places, linked by paths, movements and narratives" (Tilley 1994: 34). Time then emerges through the relations between places as *durée* (Bergson 1991: 164ff) and as *narrative* (Ricoeur 1985: 241). Thus, time, place and action merge in a process within which humans make sense of the landscape through the sensory and narrated interaction with the world. A landscape made sense of in this way must itself be understood as an agent, which constitutes and is simultaneously constituted itself, through the action of its inhabitants (Gröhn 2004: 36). This is, of course, how the ruins of a village like Lubyā can become constituent of a *lieu de mémoire*.

British anthropologist Tim Ingold developed the notion of what he called "the temporality of landscape" (Ingold 2000: 189). To Ingold "the landscape is constituted as an enduring record of – and testimony to – the lives and work of past generations, who dwelt within it, and in so doing, have left there something of themselves" (Ingold 2000: 189). In other words, a landscape is a materialization of time (Bender 2003: 103). Time, not as chronology, but as an ongoing historical process, embodied in the landscape as

traces of geological, biological and social processes, each with its own temporality and its own resonance in any given present (Lucas 2005: 41). These temporal rhythms do not run parallel, but intersect each other through humans' interaction with the material world and the greater cycles of nature. Thus, they are sedimented in the landscape as traces of the past in the form of monuments, ruins, field systems (old and new), pastures, accumulated or dispersed artefacts, middens, etc., and experienced in our lifetime through a flow of presents, which are absorbed into the past on an ongoing basis. Most competent members of a community will habitually ascribe such traces in their landscape to anthropomorphic agency in the past. Such habitual inferences, made while moving through the landscape, are generally implicit, and they sediment in the body as "habit memory" or "body memory", so-called by Paul Connerton (1987) and others. However, as Tilley points out, a landscape must be sensed or "felt" in order to be understood fully, but in order to convey what is "felt" to others, this must be made discursive, i.e. it must be talked or written about, depicted (Tilley 1994: 31) or performed, I would add. Of course, all this is contingent on social and historical contexts.

Within such contexts, together with hundreds of other Palestinian villages, Lubyia belongs to a special category: it is a repository of the silenced memory of highly traumatic events that uprooted the villagers and dispersed them and their descendants in a world-wide diaspora.

### **The Case of Lubyia**

The material remains of Lubyia are located in Northern Israel, roughly 10.5 km south-southwest of Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee on a hill, roughly 300 m above sea level (Issa 2005: 61; see Figure 13.1 on page 253). In 1946 its lands covered an area of some 39,629 dunams (Issa 2005: 62). This place features material remains with a wide range of dates. These include a relatively impressive array of ruins from classical Antiquity: for instance an ancient theatre, a settlement and an intricate system of subterranean caves. A town by the name of Lavi in this neighbourhood is known from "the second temple period" (Arikha; cf. Issa 2005: 73) and Lavi is indeed the name given to Lubyia after the expulsion of its Palestinian villagers in 1948 (Issa 2005: 59ff, 73).

An oral tradition claims Lubyia's lands to have been the location of a number of important events (Issa 2005: 32ff). Authors like Ibrahim Shihabi (1994), Muhammad Khalil (n.d.), Yusef Awad Abu Dais (1998) and especially Mahmoud Issa (2005) have now documented this tradition in writing. The events in question include:

- 1 Salah el-Dins victorious battle against the crusaders at Hattin in 1187.
- 2 The birth place of a famous Arab scholar, Abu Bakr al-Lubyani, in the fifteenth century.
- 3 The death of a governor of Damascus, Suleiman Pasha, in 1793 during a military campaign against local "rebel", Dhahir al-'Umar.

- 4 The temporary occupation of Lubyā by an Ottoman army during the war against Napoleon in 1799.
- 5 The struggle of Khalil Ibrahim Izzam against Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar after their joint victory over Napoleon.

Ad 1) The Battle of Hattin is named from two hillocks in the neighbourhood, but the battle itself is claimed by oral tradition to have been fought on the lands of Lubyā. One of the fields of the village carries the name *damya* (Arabic, *dam* = blood), which is said to refer to the blood spilled during the battle (Issa 2005: 33). Likewise, the area east of the village remains is called *al-Kasayir* (Arabic, the defeated), which is said to allude to the defeated crusaders (Issa 2005: 69).

Ad 2) Abu Bakr Abd al-Rahman Ibn Rahhal Ibn Mansour al-Lubyani was a famous Arab scholar and *mufti*, who taught Islamic religious studies in Damascus during the fifteenth century, and who was reputed to make righteous judgements, based on a legendary knowledge of the *hadith* and the *Quran* (Issa 2005: 34).

Ad 3) In the eighteenth century a local lord, Dhahir al-‘Umar, rebelled against the central authorities in Damascus, refusing to pay taxes. Sulaiman Pasha al-Azm, then governor of Damascus, set out to subdue the rebel, but died while campaigning against him near Lubyā on August 24, 1743. Dhahir al-‘Umar is considered by local tradition to have been the first Palestinian to attempt to establish an independent Palestinian polity in the region. In fact, then, the death of Suleiman Pasha would seem to connect Lubyā with the memory of Dhahir al-‘Umar (*ibid.*).

Ad 4) Napoleon first attacked the city of Akka on March 28, 1799. An Ottoman relief army, sent from Damascus, temporarily occupied Lubyā but was defeated. In the end, however, Napoleon was unable to take Akka and had to retreat from Palestine (Issa 2005: 35).

Ad 5) After Napoleon’s retreat, the victorious pasha of Akka, Ahmed Pasha al-Jazzar, fell out with one of his officers Khalil Ibrahim Izzam from Lubyā. Khalil had played a heroic role in the defence against the French forces, but Ahmed Pasha had taken his father in custody. Khalil deserted from al-Jazzar’s army in order to be able to free his father from captivity. In his pursuit of Khalil, Ahmed Pasha reached Lubyā, and routed parts of its lands in revenge (*ibid.*).

Lubyā is described in the sources as early as 1596 as a village in the district of Tiberias with 1,117 inhabitants. In nineteenth-century writings Lubyā is mentioned by several travellers and explorers. It is described in 1886 as a stone-built village on top of a limestone ridge (Khalidi 1992: 527) with an estimated population of ca. 2,730 inhabitants. While the population seems to have diminished in the beginning of the twentieth century, this description would have been valid again, when the village was attacked by Jewish forces in 1948, when it had an estimated population of 2,726 inhabitants (Issa 2005: 38).

During the period from 1936 to 1939, Lubyans initially joined forces with the Arab High Commission, established in April 1936 and headed by the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Hajj Amin al-Husayni. They supported the commission's demands for a cancellation of the Balfour Declaration, termination of Jewish immigration to Palestine, recognition of an independent Palestinian state and more (Issa 2005: 142). However, after the commission had cancelled a general strike, many Lubyans rejected it in order to participate in the "great revolt" under the leadership of Sheikh Iz al-din al-Qassam, whom the Lubyans now preferred to follow (*ibid.*). On one occasion, a Jewish revenge attack on civilians in Lubyia resulted in the killing of five or six persons, two of whom were a woman and her newly born baby. This attack was apparently undertaken by Haganah soldiers and not, as the official story went, by Irgun Zvai Leumi (Issa 2005: 150). The British responded to the rebellion by declaring a curfew and implementing a number of counter-measures, such as mass-arrests, torture, demolishing houses and military intervention. For instance, military forces repeatedly invaded Lubyia, and at one point, a control-post was set up in the village.

There were considerable Lubyian casualties during the revolt, and therefore it is hardly surprising that it took more than one attempt in 1948 for Haganah/IDF military units, including the famous Golani Brigade, to conquer Lubyia (Issa 2005: 163ff). Considerable losses were suffered on both sides (Issa 1995: 54), and the deceased were subsequently commemorated as local martyrs of the Palestinian *Nakba* (catastrophe) and the Israeli "War of liberation", respectively. Consequently, the Palestinian inhabitants felt compelled to leave the village, in order never to return as it turned out. This latter effect was reinforced by legislative means. In 1950 an "Absentees Property Law" was issued (*Laws of the State of Israel* 1948–1987a: 68–82); and in 1953 a "Land Acquisition Law" was issued, which allowed the government to appropriate the land of the village from its original inhabitants and then distribute it to Jewish settlers (*Laws of the State of Israel* 1948–1987b: 43–45). This has not prevented the expropriated land from being leased to Arabs, however, and at least one of Lubyia's former inhabitants rented lands there from 1955 until the time when Mahmoud Issa conducted interviews for his 2005 book.

The first Jewish settlers arrived in 1949 and established a kibbutz on the lands of the former Palestinian village with the Talmudic name of "Lavi" (Issa 2005: 72f). A temporary monument to commemorate the Golani Brigade's casualties was erected immediately north of the village remains, and then replaced in the late 1950s by a more permanent memorial (Ram 2004: 16). Subsequently the Israel Land Administration, aided by the Israel Archaeological Survey society, attempted to erase the remains of the Palestinian village in 1965. A pine forest was then planted on the land. These events were part of a larger operation in which a large number of "abandoned" Palestinian villages were demolished (Shai 2006). This operation was financed by the Jewish National Fund and supported by other Zionist organizations. For instance, part of the "Lavi Forest" was called the "South African Forest" to commemorate

the support from an associated foreign organization (Issa 2005: 18f, 73f). In 1982, a museum for the sacrifices and heroic deeds of the Golani Brigade was added to the Golani Brigade Memorial (Ram 2004: 16). Finally, in 1992, the settlement of Giv'at Avni was established on the eastern flank of the ruined village, and a children's playground was established (Issa 2005: 73).

After the events of 1948 most of Lubyas's inhabitants escaped with the broader migration of refugees to neighbouring countries inclusive Gaza and the West Bank, while the remainder settled within the borders of the state of Israel, mainly in the nearby town of Deir Hana. Subsequently, many left the Middle East, entirely. Surviving refugees and their descendants are currently distributed through some twenty-three countries, and many have citizenships in Western countries, which enable them to return to the village for visits. However, some 500 Lubyans still live in Israel as "present absentees".

### **Lubyas as *lieu de mémoire***

Let us now consider the status of Lubyas as *lieu de mémoire*. The Israeli/Jewish claims to the memory of Lubyas, or "Lavi" as it is now called, are based on a narrative, which, according to Israeli historian Shlomo Sand (2014: 196–230), developed through lengthy debates between members of different branches of the Zionist movement. However, Sand points out that an official narrative began to crystallize at the time of the Arab revolt, in the form of an unsigned memorandum of the Jewish Agency to Palestine, presented in 1936 (p. 206f). The document was intended to demonstrate the Jewish people's historical right to Palestine, maintaining that Jews had lived in the land continuously since Biblical times in spite of several, only partly successful, attempts at exiling them, at first by the Romans and later by the Arab conquerors. In short, the land had always been the territorial centre of the Jewish people (p. 206f), and there had never been any total Jewish absence.

To the influential Zionist historian Ben-Zion Dinur, one of the likely authors of the unsigned document (Sand 2014: 207), this had considerable consequences for the rights of the local Arab population in Palestine.

Occupation does not create historical possession. An occupier's possession of the land he conquers is valid only if the owner of that land is absent and does not object to the theft for a long period of time. But if the owner was present on his land ... pushed into a corner for hundreds of years [this] does not detract from their rights [but] rather enhances them.

(Sand 2014: 209–210)

In short, the Jews who had never really absented themselves had all the rights to the land, and the Palestinian Arabs, the occupiers, had none. Indeed the very presence, even the existence of a Palestinian people, had long been denied (Sand 2014: 205), a view maintained for a long time (Said

1995: xvi, 1, 10). Ironically, Dinur's argument bears validity for both groups and is in no way different from the demands for a right to return from Palestinian refugees.

In fact, of course, the land was inhabited by some 700,000–900,000 Arabs. To solve this “problem” there were practical solutions at hand. These included such measures as:

- 1 Armed conquest, “urbicide” and expatriation, including massacres such as those at Deir Yasin, Ayn al-Zaytun, Tantura and Dawaymeh (e.g. Rahbek 2000: 58 and n. 147; Pappe 2006: 90f, 91ff, 111ff, 133ff, 195ff).
- 2 Replacing Arab place names with Hebrew versions. Sometimes, as in the case of Lubyā, picked from ancient sources (Issa 2005: 61).
- 3 Legislation, such as the “Absentee” and “Land acquisition” laws. These were helpful in that they facilitated the appropriation of the villagers' land and transferring it to state, and then Jewish ownership, such as in the case of Kibbutz Lavi and Giv'at Avni.
- 4 Establishing memorials for events associated with the “war of independence”, such as the Golan Brigade Memorial at Lubyā/Lavi.
- 5 Operations in which the remains of villages, like Lubyā, were bulldozed and replaced by forests, such as *Yaar Lavi*.

However, the eradication of the physical remains of the Palestinian village was in vain. This is because of a general problem inherent in voids created by such means. A creative reading of German anthropologist Susanne Küchler's contribution to *The Art of Forgetting* (Küchler 1999) suggests that the intentional destruction of material things, charged with the strong emotions of a traumatic event, will inevitably leave a “place” – metaphorical and real, which facilitates the cultivation of memories, related to that traumatic event (Küchler 1999: 54, 59ff, 68).

If, as in this case, an entire village community has been forcibly removed in order to repress the memory, and memories, of its deposed population, this will inevitably give rise to alternative narratives. Such narratives may become so much more threatening to the interests of the establishment, in this case official Israel, because they emerge in a material, metaphorical and communicative void “in between and betwixt” the village ruins and the living village, which exists no longer. In this way, the memory discourse on Lubyā becomes fundamentally self-referential, and hence qualifies the village as a *lieu de mémoire* in all the three senses, pinpointed by Nora. In the material sense, the remains of Lubyā emerge as the material anchor (Fouconnier and Turner 2000: 195ff, 215) for lived and orally transmitted experience. In the symbolic sense, Lubyā is the common place of origin, and in the functional sense, Lubyā is the focus of communication for the international community of Lubyans.

As we can understand, the memory work of the Lubyān community is closely related to Lubyā as place in all Nora's three senses. On holidays, and other occasions, members of the Lubyān community make memorial visits to the remains of the village (Issa 2005: 222f). In this way, they maintain

a direct link with the materiality of the ruined village on a regular or occasional basis. Sensory, olfactory and auditive memories are recalled and habituated movement in the village landscape is reproduced on such occasions. As Edward Casey (1989) has pointed out, this gives members of the community orientation in the world, when a sense of belonging and identity is thus sedimented as body memory on an ongoing basis.

Personal names and place names can still be ascribed to plots and places in the village by oral tradition. Visits to Lubyia under the guidance of Najif Hajjo, Mahmoud Issa and Abed al-Raham Ajayni, accompanied by the eldest daughters of the two latter,<sup>2</sup> suggest to me that this tradition is now being transmitted to the youngest generation of Lubyans, both in internal exile and in the diaspora. Many places in the village landscape are known by names, often imbued with special meanings relating to the past. Mahmoud Issa has identified 141 such places. For instance, as mentioned, one field of the village lands is called *damyia* (Arabic *dam* = blood), possibly from the bloodshed during the battle at Hattin, and the same is the case with an area east of the village remains, which is called *al-Kasayir* (the defeated). From the point of view of Biblical scholarship, it may also be interesting to note that a stone located north of the village is called *Hajjar al-Nousrani* in commemoration of an occasion where Jesus is supposed to have distributed bread to his disciples there (Issa 2005: 68f).

Elderly members of the Lubyian community have drawn maps from memory. Such a map, drawn by Hajj Mohammad Samir Karzoun, is remarkably close to official village plans and aerial photos, produced when Lubyia was still a living village. It also supports oral tradition in that it ascribes family names to each plot in the village. Another important element in the construction of Lubyian identity is genealogical tables. These are structured according to patrilineal descent rules, and some families in the Lubyian community claim an ancestry that goes back to no lesser figures than the Calif Ali and his sons (Issa 2005: 36f).

Orally transmitted narratives recorded and partly published by Mahmoud Issa in the 1990s and subsequently contain a treasure trove of memories about personal experience, daily routines, landscape and social environment, as well as important stories about the remote as well as the more recent past. Even before Mahmoud Issa's work, some of these had begun to be set in writing by members of the Lubyian community, such as Yusef Awad Abu Dhais, Ibrahim Shihabi and Mohammed Khalil (Shihabi 1994; Abu Dais 1998; Khalil n.d.).

Finally, enterprising members of the community of Lubyans are now reinstating the name, and thereby the memory of Lubyia in books, alternative maps – based on documents from the mandate period – and electronic media (see the following).

The memory work over Lubyia, then, would seem to unfold through a recollection process in which habituated body memory and performance, as well as discursively transmitted, communicative and collective memory reinforce each other in a commemorative effort, which to my mind constitutes Lubyia as *lieu de mémoire*.

## Perspectives

To the older generation, now dying out, Lubyas is remembered as a locus of lived experience (Connerton 2009: 18ff), and it is romanticized in most oral histories as a paradise lost (Issa 2005: 219). To others, especially second- and third-generation refugees, these same oral histories stimulate the idea of Lubyas as a place of return (Issa 2005: 217ff), not unlike the Zionist discourse itself. However, as the elderly are dying out and the Lubyans in Diaspora increase in numbers, Lubyas is beginning to fade as a self-referential *lieu de mémoire*. Instead, the Palestinians' discourse on Lubyas becomes increasingly institutionalized, written<sup>3</sup> and electronically distributed.<sup>4</sup> Hence, it is integrated in the broader discourse of the "Nakba" and the Palestinian Diaspora. This means that giving voice to the memory of a Palestinian presence in Lubyas is the same as giving voice to all Palestinians' demand for a right to return. That, as will be well known, is met with strong resistance from powerful political and economic forces in Israel. Indeed, Canadian writer, Naomi Klein (2007: 428ff), has convincingly argued that Israel's financial sector and security industry – now dominant forces in the Israeli economy – in close association with the country's political elite, have an interest in maintaining the divisive policies prevailing since the second intifada. First, since the Russian immigration into the 1990s Israel no longer depends on labour from the occupied territories to any significant degree (Klein 2007: 430ff). Second, "It is not an exaggeration to say that the war on terror industry saved Israel's faltering economy, much as the disaster capitalism complex helped rescue the global stock markets" (ibid.). Pointedly, indeed, Klein is able to quote a leading Israeli investment banker, Len Rosen, as reference for stating that "... it's security that matters more than peace" (cf. Klein 2007: 436).

If this attitude prevails, it may be predicted that an individual village like Lubyas will dissolve as *lieu de mémoire*, as the older generation of Lubyans dies out, only to become a constituent part of the two emergent and much more powerful *lieux de mémoire* of the Palestinian Nakba and the Palestinian Diaspora – a process which is already well underway.

## Concluding remarks

In conclusion, I see such a combination of approaches to be potentially useful for giving voice to all components of the population in Palestine through time and space. It does so:

- 1 By viewing the land of Palestine as a unified whole, albeit with fluctuating boundaries.
- 2 By recognizing the composite nature of the Palestinian people and culture, instead of representing them as a homogenous mass.
- 3 By focusing on the traces of human activity in the landscape, i.e. by focusing on heritage.
- 4 By facilitating that discourse of power and counter-power, which must be central to any inclusive history of Palestine, which is also a counter-history.

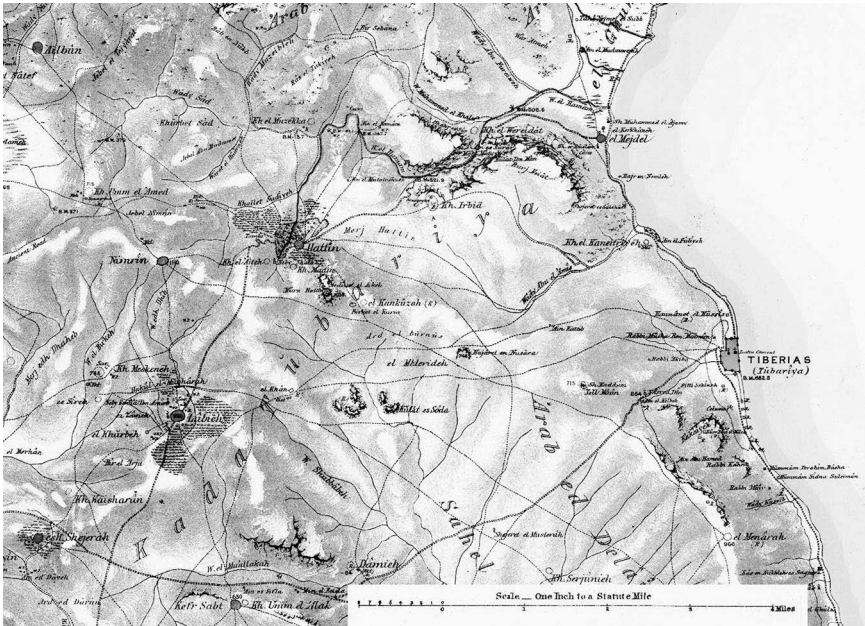


Figure 13.1 Lubyah (Lubieh) on nineteenth-century map. Notice Hattin and the road to Lake Tiberias. By Walter Besant (editor, died in 1901) – *Survey of Western Palestine*, first published in 1880 by the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Public Domain, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=7514192>.

## Notes

- 1 Earlier versions of this paper or parts of it were read at the session on Cultural Memory in the Old Testament during the EABS conference in Thessaloniki, 2011, and at PaHH sessions in Ramallah (2014; and Bethlehem 2015). I am grateful to participants and organizers of these conferences for stimulating discussions of many points in the paper, and to the editor, Ingrid Hjelm, for stimulating comments. Shorter, preliminary Danish versions of the content or parts of the content have appeared in Hermansen (2012, 2013).
- 2 Najif Hajjo was born in Lubyah, but he went into internal exile with his parents shortly after. He now lives in Deir Hana with his wife. Abed al-Raham Ajayni was born in internal exile. He now lives with his family in Deir Hana. Mahmoud Issa was born in exile. He and his family now live in Denmark, where he acquired citizenship in 1989–1990 (personal communication).
- 3 In addition to books and articles by Mahmoud Issa, relevant are also the books by Ibrahim Shihabi and Yussef Awad Abu Dhais, and the unpublished diaries by Muhammad Khalil. Also two MA theses have been brought to my attention: one from London School of Economics and Political Science by Shmuel Groag, the other from Aarhus University by Ulrik Høj Johnsen.
- 4 This includes web pages, such as *Palestine Remembered, al Nakhba 1948* at [www.palestineremembered.com/](http://www.palestineremembered.com/); electronic info-media such as Geo-Names

at [www.geonames.org/](http://www.geonames.org/) and Wikipedia at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lubya>; and documentary films such as Danish Radio (DR) documentary *Den fødrende jord* by Mahmoud Issa and South African documentary *The Village Under the Forest* by Mark Kaplan and Heidi Grunebaum at [www.villageunderforest.com/production-notes/](http://www.villageunderforest.com/production-notes/).

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# 14 Community archaeology

## Protection, preservation and promotion of archaeological heritage sites in Palestine

*Iman Saca*

### Introduction

Archaeologists, anthropologists and heritage specialists are realizing that they are unable to practice their professions without a proper understanding and appreciation of the social, political and cultural context within which they conduct their research, ask their questions and do their fieldwork. We are frequently confronted with new challenges related to how our work *both* affects *and* is affected by the communities whose heritage we are excavating. According to Ian Hodder, the real world is not independent of the observer, and archaeologists must understand how particular reconstructions are used in the context of modern society (Hodder 1986: 8). Getting involved and involving the public in our work is not only a politically correct way of conducting archaeology but also an ethical and practical responsibility. Joe Watkins and Yvonne Marshall state that archaeologists no longer have exclusive rights to the past. Various publics have a stake as well (Watkins, Pyburn and Cressey 2000; Marshall 2002). It is evident to us that archaeology is not about “dead cultures and peoples”, and there is a clear change and a shift in our understanding of the strong relation between the past, present and the future (Renfrew 2000). In today’s modern context local and indigenous, also called descent,<sup>1</sup> communities are increasingly interested and protective of their tangible and intangible heritage. This reality alters the history of power relations between the archaeologist and these communities. Many archaeologists are recognizing and addressing the social, political and ethical context of their excavations, fundings and research questions (Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998; Zimmerman et al. 2003; McGuire 2008). We also witness a steady move toward advocating the rights of local and indigenous communities, respect for alternative views, for the rights and beliefs of others and the invaluable role, which local communities can play in the protection of the archaeological and cultural heritage (Smith and Wobst 2005). This goes hand in hand with a growing concern on the part of many archaeologists for the ethical and practical implications of the field.

Through the practice of community archaeology, we archaeologists and heritage specialists can enrich our archaeological investigations through our collaboration and involvement with local communities. This approach

will give local and descent communities a sense of pride, ownership and identity by exploring their heritage and the heritage of their lands, which will translate into protection of sites. I am advocating a real involvement of communities in the archaeological process to become the basic practice of the field of archaeology, especially in regard to long-term preservation. This chapter will present Palestine as an example of a people that has been excluded from the archaeological and heritage process before 1993. Since then, they have struggled to protect and preserve the archaeological, cultural and natural heritage on their land. Through community archaeology we can ensure a real participation of Palestinians in the archaeological and heritage process leading to a sense of pride and duty to preserve and protect this non-renewable fragile heritage.

### **Definition of community archaeology**

“Community archaeology, as a distinctive set of practices within archaeology, is a relatively new development” (Marshall 2002: 211). There are two kinds of understanding of community archaeology that are not necessarily independent from one another: the first through participation and the second through collaboration. Participation comes from a long tradition of connecting archaeology and the public through public programs, museum exhibits, volunteers, lectures, teacher training and curriculum development. Collaboration, on the other hand, is the involvement of local communities in the archaeological process itself. Marshall notes that the distinguishing characteristic of this collaborative approach to archaeology is “the relinquishing of at least partial control of a project to the local community” (Marshall 2002: 211).

Within the last decades, many Community Archaeology projects of both types have been practiced. In her *Archaeology and Civic Engagement*, Barbara Little (2007) mentions at least twenty projects where archaeologists are engaged with local communities in the archaeological process. An example with both a participatory and a collaborative approach to archaeology is the work at Quseir in Egypt, led by Stephanie Moser. The project established seven major components: (1) communication and collaboration, (2) employment and training, (3) public presentation, (4) education, (5) oral history, (6) photographic and video archive and (7) community-controlled merchandizing (Moser et al. 2002).

Even with the public as participants and collaborators, archaeologists have not yet developed a clear methodology for community archaeology. Many archaeologists and heritage workers have their own interests in archaeological heritage, all demanding a part in the decision-making process. With that in mind, community archaeology-based research requires that we add a dimension to our work that requires effort and energy. While doing research and fieldwork, we need to ask: what does our work mean to those whose land the sites belong? Which aspects of our interpretation need

reconsideration? How do insights of local communities enrich our understanding? How do we involve communities and how much should they be involved? Should a site benefit the local community? Marshall stresses that community archaeology encourages archeologists to ask questions of the past, we would not otherwise consider, and to see and think in new ways about how the past informs the present (Marshall 2002: 215).

Archaeologists and heritage workers have been trying to define and identify the communities they work with. Some define them as descent or indigenuous communities residing near the sites; communities claiming ancestral descent but not residing close to the site, and local communities who do not claim direct descent. Others consider the “community” as those who are “invested” in a site, such as local educators, museum and tourism investors, governmental and non-governmental bodies and urban planners (McDavid 2002; Singleton and Orser 2003; Atalay 2007; Pybrun 2011). Such might be in direct contact with archaeologists and heritage workers, but others might represent other stakeholders. Each “community” should be dealt with differently, addressing their issues and concerns. The complexity of community archaeology demands a more integrated and inclusive approach. Professionals on various levels work together on joint projects and develop new skills, especially when dealing with education, preservation, protection and promotion of the archaeology and cultural heritage of local descent and interest communities.

A community archaeology approach was implemented at Tell Zeidan in Raqqa, Syria, Khirbet el-Mafjar/Qasr Hisham in Jericho and Al Zubara in Qatar. Al Zubara is a World Heritage site. As director of community archaeology, I adopted various strategies to reach out to the interested communities. Methods varied due to accessibility to the local population, the past and present history of the area and the availability of documentation for the different communities and stakeholders that I addressed. In Qatar, I implemented both a collaborative and participatory approach, which was used to reach various local communities and interested public, such as schools, universities, governmental and non-governmental organizations and different stakeholders. Activities were organized to inform and involve the various communities in the excavation, the UNESCO nomination for the world heritage list and the project as a whole. I also worked in a more collaborative manner with the local population nearest al-Zubara, now residing in Madinat al-Shamal and Ruwais in Northern Qatar. There was support for involving the population closest to the site to gather information helpful for understanding the site and document local traditions related to pearl fishing and seafaring. Al-Zubara had been a pearl trading center in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list>). The community project was based on the wishes of the local community to include oral histories related to the economy and socio-cultural interaction of the now abandoned villages of al-Shamal closest to al- Zubara (Saca 2013).

My experience affirmed that community archaeology should be an essential part of any archaeological and heritage project and that its engagement, especially in countries with an indigenous population and those who were previously colonized or under occupation, can play an invaluable role in promoting pride, identity and belonging as well as site appreciation and preservation.

## **The values of a community archaeology approach**

### *Interpretation and identity*

One of the main avenues, promoting the value of archaeology, is educating the “many publics” about the value of cultural and natural heritage. Archaeologists once considered these benefits self-evident as they presented the “substantive findings” of the field and assumed that the public would intuitively understand its value (Sabloff 2008). Informing and involving local communities was important but not an archaeologist’s primary goal. Accordingly, the objectives and the value of our work have not been effectively articulated nor brought to the public in a clear and accessible manner. Today, archaeology and heritage specialists must work hard to convey the importance and value of archaeology in order to further public interest and support by showing how archaeology and heritage benefits society and by highlighting the way in which the past can be used to help us think productively about the present and future.

As we practice and promote archaeology, it is essential to show people how it is relevant to today’s issues; for example in dealing with environmental changes, the history of health and disease, population movements and the origins and collapse of civilizations. Archaeological and cultural heritage sites and landscapes are tangible reminders of the stories, which make each location and community unique. Recognizing a shared history brings people together and fosters a sense of community and responsibility toward that community and its heritage. Highlighting the values of shared heritage can promote efforts to build and sustain relationship and promote a sense of belonging, not only to a local heritage, but human heritage as a whole. According to Shereen Lerner “stewards are not only professional archaeologists but citizens who have an understanding, appreciation and respect for heritage value” (Lerner 1991: 104).

Public engagement in archeological processes can be achieved through enriching the site’s history, within its modern social and political context. Schwindler’s work with Native Americans demonstrates the possibility of producing holistic interpretations of the past through the integration of Western scientific methods and non-Western perspectives (Swindler et al. 1997). Schmidt and Patterson challenge the false distinction between scientific, mythic and historical domains of knowledge and appreciate the interplay between archaeological remains, written accounts and oral traditions,

rather than perceiving them as different domains of knowledge (Schmidt 1995: 14; Brady and Manas 2003). This approach creates an opportunity for a mutual education of the local community and archaeologists (Anyon et al. 1997; Echo-Hawk 1997; Watkins 2000: 171). Ideally, the public should have the opportunity to use, discover, delight in and draw meaning from archaeological and cultural heritage, supported by reports and publications, written and presented in a manner easily understood by the general public.

### *Use and preservation of the site*

Another means of highlighting the values of archaeological heritage is for archaeologists and heritage workers to acknowledge the economic value of their work and the interest of local communities in this aspect. Recognizing that archaeological and heritage sites are finite, irreplaceable and non-renewable resources and that heritage tourism to sites and landscapes is increasing, it becomes obligatory for archaeologists and heritage specialists to understand the effects of this rapidly growing industry and to inform the public about the pluses and minuses of heritage tourism (Pyburn and Wilk 1995). Both Slick (2002) and Chambers (2000) stress that archaeologists can no longer afford to distance themselves from addressing heritage tourism issues for two main reasons: (1) a practical reason since they are in a position to determine the “sustainable” future of some sites that they have helped establish and (2) an ethical reason as archaeologists are becoming increasingly aware of the responsibilities to the communities in which they become engaged and the need to include these communities in the planning process, explaining to the community economic and physical cost and risks to them and the site. The public should be aware of both the long-term and short-term economic implications of heritage tourism (Chambers 2000: 203; Slick 2002).

Not including the public in the heritage development process will lead to stereotypical or simplistic economic expectations. A community-based approach to tourism development explaining the cost and benefits of heritage tourism is a prerequisite to sustaining archaeological and heritage work. Understanding these issues will result in slowing down, stopping and even eliminating site destruction and preserve finite non-renewable sources for the tourism and heritage industry.

### *Education*

As an archaeologist and educator I feel that illuminating the educational value of archaeological heritage is paramount. Educating and involving the local and indigenous communities, the general public and stakeholders of the archaeological process is a guaranteed method for heritage protection, appreciation and preservation. As archaeologists, we often fail to reach the general public. Even university-level students have a very narrow

understanding of archaeological heritage and very few can discuss the values of archaeology beyond learning about past cultures. There is a need to communicate these values not to the minority who understand, but to the majority who are excluded from the archaeological and heritage process. The public should be informed of the value of archaeology as both a heritage and a science (Hester 1989). A local community that is aware of the value of heritage and its importance to the past, present and future is also responsible toward heritage preservation and protection and more appreciative of archaeology and the archaeological process as a whole. According to Lerner,

...bringing the excitement of archaeology to the public is part of our mission in preservation and education....preservation of the past is accomplished not only by saving the physical remnant of previous cultures, but also the value of learning about the past.

(Lerner 1991: 107)

Only through education will the public realize the non-renewable nature of archaeological sites and associated material. Once the material has been removed from the ground, whether through archaeological excavation or looting, development, erosion or other processes, it is gone. The greatest damage of looting sites and trafficking in artifacts is the loss of information and our inability to interpret the data. The importance of context needs to be clearly explained to the public. This process of communication should be collaborative, continuous, multi-dimensional and constantly evaluated and updated to meet the needs of the local communities. Education should be a joint effort between archaeologists, heritage workers, educational institutions, and governmental and non-governmental organizations. A successful long-term education plan should target three constituencies: students and teachers, the general public and special interest groups.

Students can be approached through:

- schools especially through curriculum and classroom material and activities
- summer camps and other hands-on activities
- visiting archaeologists in schools
- visiting archaeological sites and writing reports on such visits
- publications suitable for various age groups
- volunteer programs
- and, most importantly, educating teachers.

For the general public we can create and organize:

- volunteer programs where participants get certifications
- public events, reinforcing the value of archaeology and the ethics of preservation

- workshops and hands-on activities
- site tours and free museum visits
- the media to promote our work
- archaeological experience
- understanding and respect for the archaeological heritage of Palestine
- the value of public contributions, especially oral history about sites, and the public's role as a community in protecting this non-renewable heritage.

Special interest groups should be provided with information on sites, their location and history, importance and potential development. Educational efforts targeting legislators, developers and government agencies will help increase awareness and enhance the ethics of preservation. This will allow for coordination efforts and the identification of national strategies and objectives for development and preservation. Archaeologists and heritage specialists can work with governmental and non-governmental organization to reach out and work with stakeholders and interest groups.

An investment in educating these constituencies will lead to the preservation of archaeological resources, and, in the long term, discourage unwarranted activities. To be truly successful we need to evaluate the effectiveness of our community archaeology and public education and offer programs on all levels. This will help facilitating new and creative programs, targeting these constituencies.

We have a responsibility to educate and involve the public in our field-work, research and projects. We also should acknowledge the value of communities to our work, because it not only promotes education, site protection and preservation, but the knowledge that we gain from local and indigenous communities immeasurably enriches our understating of the people, cultures and sites, we are working to document and preserve (Atalay 2006, 2012).

## **The case of Palestine**

### ***From 1865 to 1993***

Palestinians have witnessed colonially, biblically and nationally motivated archaeologies, which have systematically excluded them from an archaeological process and denied them sharing their benefits or values. Due to these non-scientific impositions, archaeology was viewed by Palestinians as a luxury practiced by Westerners, but insignificant to their lives. There has been a deliberate lack of both formal and informal education in archaeology and heritage. Lack of interest ensured neglect and disinterest and looting has plagued archaeological sites. Imperialistic archaeology, especially the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), has financed various expeditions. The British mandate (1918–1948) established the Palestine

Department of Archaeology and the Palestinian Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem (Rockefeller Museum). According to Albert Glock, Palestinians were not invited to contribute to the archaeological work, and in 1869 the PEF called for the protection of sites from uneducated Palestinian peasants (Glock 1994). Biblical Archaeology, especially since the establishment of the PEF in 1865, has been the prime reason for doing archaeology in the Holy Land and the research has been geared to prove the accuracy of the biblical narratives (Glock 1994).

With the establishment of the State of Israel, building the nation and nationhood became the main purpose for doing archaeology in Palestine by the Israeli government and Israeli archaeologists. The best example is the excavation at the site of Masada between 1963 and 1965 by Israeli archaeologist and former military Chief-of-Staff Yigael Yadin. This was the excavation to prove the bond of the new nation to the land. According to Nachman Ben-Yehuda this excavation is a prime example of the connection between politics and the Zionist agenda and archaeological excavations and research and how they interacted and influenced one another (Ben-Yehuda 1995, 2002). From 1967 to 1993, archaeology in Palestine (West Bank and Gaza) was under the control of the Staff Officer of Archaeology (SOA) in Judea and Samaria, who was employed by the Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM), but answered to the military administration. Later in 1991 the Israel Antiquities Authority (AIA) was established and took the place of IDAM (Greenberg and Keinan 2009). The AIA continued hundreds of illegal excavations in the West Bank and Gaza, against UNESCO agreements, especially the 1970 and 1972 UNESCO Convention, the 1954 Hague Convention and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court. This was accompanied by the illegal removal of objects from the West Bank and Gaza and placing many of the removed items in Israeli museums (Diakonia IHL Resource Centre 2015: 15).

As a result of the aforementioned history there was no room for the voice of the local Palestinians in the archaeological process in a productive and involved manner. When involved, it was as laborers on the sites. There was a deliberate lack of formal and informal education about the field of archaeology and heritage in general and the value of the archaeological legacy of the area. Not only were the local community in Palestine not educated or involved in the archaeological process in Palestine, but the field of archaeology as a whole was used against the local community, proving archaeologically that they did not have a claim on the land. Any piece of land with archaeological remains was under the control of the Israeli state, which legitimized land confiscation in many parts of Palestine. This practice continues today with examples from Tell Rumeida in Hebron (Rjoob 2010) and the Elad group excavations in Jerusalem (Emek Shaveh 2016, 2017). With years of such political maneuverings on the part of Israel, Palestinians have developed an emotional disconnection from archaeology, a lack of understanding and appreciation for the field and an outright fear of finding archaeological

remains on one's land or in one's village or city. Many Palestinians came to view archaeology as a field practiced by "foreigners" or "invaders" and in no way significant to their lives, except for the "income" it might generate by selling finds to foreigners. Even if archaeology was not looted and sold, the general neglect and lack of interest lead to their abandonment and destruction and in many cases to the construction of new buildings over archaeological sites and structures.

### *After 1993*

Many changes occurred in the West Bank and Gaza after the 1993 Oslo I Accords. The Oslo Accords II in 1995 divided the West Bank into three regions, A, B and C, under varying Palestinian and Israeli control. The transfer of archaeological sites to the Palestinians did not occur as planned between the Israeli Civil Administration and the Palestinian National Authority. Today Palestinians have control of archaeological sites in Area A and have almost no control of sites in Area C, which constitutes 61% of the West Bank.

Palestinian archaeologists, anthropologists and heritage specialists recognized that they had inherited a very difficult situation and realized that something needed to be done. Many Palestinian archaeologists and archaeology students decided that the best course of action was to "reestablish" the field of archaeology by making one of its main goals the education and involvement of the local Palestinian public on the value and fragility of the archaeological and cultural heritage in Palestine. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities was created, and in 2000 the Palestinian Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage was established. Their approach to research and salvage excavations was scientific. Governmental and non-governmental organizations worked with issues related to archaeological heritage and cooperated with national and international organizations and universities. Joint projects were undertaken with full Palestinian participation and excavations were carried out under the highest international standards (Taha 2010). Tell Balata, Qasr Hisham, Tell el-Sultan, Jericho City, Battir Village, the rehabilitation of the Old City of Bethlehem and other projects are examples of the realization that informing and involving local communities is an integral part of doing archaeology.

In the 2000s a new generation of Palestinian archaeologists, educated at EU and US institutions, as well as local Palestinian Universities, started getting involved in the archaeological process in Palestine, with education and capacity-building high on the agenda. They were interested in implementing scientific methods in excavations and research and, at the same time, they were interested in reaching out to the public to reintroduce the field of archaeology in a "local manner" to the local public. The Ministry of Antiquities and Tourism's Department of Antiquity and Cultural Heritage, with limited resources and capacities, also played an important role in protecting

and excavating sites as well as involving the community in their projects; for example Tell Balata and Qasr Hisham (Taha and Van der Kooij 2014). The Department also conducted many salvage excavations and research excavations in cooperation with national and international institutions (Taha 2010; Taha and Van der Kooij 2014). Many non-governmental institutions were involved in the preservation of the archaeological, architectural and cultural heritage with a community-based approach to their work. For example, Riwaq, the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (PACE), the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, Hebron Rehabilitation Committee and the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalization Program. Palestinian universities offer archaeology degrees as majors and minors and, for example, al-Najah, Bir Zeit and al-Quds universities have field projects, which include community archaeology components. All these educational, governmental and non-governmental institutions working in the heritage sector have clearly realized that such community involvement benefits the field and should become an integral part of the work. These good intentions, however, are hindered by realities on the ground in militarily occupied territories, where restrictions on movement, lack of access to sites in area C and political and economic factors preclude fieldwork.

It is clear that such past and present projects had many positive implications for Palestinians themselves as well as for the projects. Some of these positive implications are: (1) pride, ownership and identity; (2) a local community that is genuinely interested in their cultural heritage; (3) an enhanced public awareness and appreciation of this fragile heritage; (4) a better understanding of the cultural heritage in Palestine and its connectedness to world heritage; (5) an involvement in various aspects of heritage management and (6) a better understanding of the heritage tourism industry. Other implication of this involvement is a community that values the preservation of archaeological and cultural heritage, observes its fragility and fosters a sense of responsibility toward this non-renewable source, eventually “creating” a generation that is highly motivated to preserve it from destruction, vandalism and looting.

## **Conclusions**

Community archaeology is not a politically correct way to practice archaeology, but it is the only way to ensure the inclusion of communities closest to a particular heritage. Through this inclusion, we can ensure the ethical multi-vocality of interpretations, preservation, protection and sustainable use of archaeological sites. Moser noted that “Community archaeology should replace the traditional colonial model of archaeological practices with a socially and politically self-conscious mode of research, aiming ultimately to incorporate different cultural perspectives in the interpretation of the past” (Moser 2002: 224). This approach allows a variety of voices to be heard and a richness of interpretation. Many archaeologists believe that

the only way indigenous people, local communities and other local interest groups will be able to own the past is through the participatory and collaborative work implemented through a community archaeology approach. This develops a better understanding, which enriches the heritage of humankind at the same time that it allows local communities to understand better their “local” heritage. The goal is to bring archaeology away from a situation where local communities have been systematically excluded from the process of discovering and constructing knowledge of their past.

### *The heritage tree*

The metaphor I use for cultural and archaeological heritage is an olive tree, and we all know the significance of olive trees in the Middle East and more specifically in Palestine. Like the olive tree, the heritage tree is deeply rooted. It was planted in the distant past by earlier generations living on the land. Its roots are deep in the ground, indicating a depth of time. The deep rootedness of the heritage tree provides evidence of a long and continuous history of inter-generational care. It creates a sense of connectedness, familiarity and appreciation to the original planters and all the caretakers who came after them up to present-day communities, who are enjoying the tree, its fruit and shade.

The heritage tree contributes to the present. People sit under its shade reflecting upon their lives, sharing stories about the tree’s past and exchanging ideas of how to make sure the tree survives and continues to grow. They share stories passed down through oral traditions; stories that reinforce the long history of the tree, from when it was planted, through all the different periods of care, celebration, abandonment and neglect. With such a turbulent history, the tree was there, providing the community with a place to come together and strengthen their identity, discuss matters of importance and survival for the generations of the future.

The older generation took it upon themselves to inform the younger of the heritage tree, how, in the past, it gave hope and strengthened unity. The tree can do the same for them, present and future. Young take care of the tree, protect it, preserve it and nourish it. Elders stress that neglect and vandalism lead to the loss of an essential, fragile and non-renewable resource, which have provided their community with identity, unity and strength. Like the olive tree, the heritage tree contributes to the future with its fruits, shade and the wood of its branches, which will be generously provided if the tree is cared for and protected. The connectedness and identity that was formed under the tree of heritage will ground the community and unite them as they forge forward into the future.

We archaeologists are the gardeners, who come periodically to check on the tree. We visit it, explore it, work the land around it and counsel the locals how and why they should take care of it. I hope archaeologists and heritage specialists understand that if the people who live closest to the tree do not see its value, its significance to their lives and the lives of future generations; if

they are not invested in the tree, no matter how much the gardener takes care of it, when he or she is gone, the tree will be abandoned, neglected and lost.

I believe that only a community archaeology approach can ensure the preservation and protection of heritage sites. The involvement of local populations, indigenous groups and the general public in the archaeological and heritage process is an essential and invaluable way for our work in Palestine. Community archaeology has a very unique and critical role in transforming archaeology into a discipline that contributes to society and human heritage worldwide.

## Note

- 1 In modern academic usage “descent” denotes a permanent social unit whose members claim common ancestry.

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## 15 Al-Nuweima mosque

### An archaeological perspective on modern history

*Andrew Petersen*

#### **The role of archaeology**

##### *The roots and problematic development of archaeology in Palestine*

Before looking at different ways of using archaeology to understand recent events, it is worth reviewing briefly the position of archaeology within Palestinian history and culture. Perhaps no other country on earth, with the possible exceptions of Italy, Greece and Egypt, can claim to have been the subject of such intense scrutiny from archaeologists. As a Holy Land to at least three world religions (four if Bahais are included), Palestine has attracted the attention of numerous archaeologists wishing to either illustrate or investigate aspects of religious narratives. Although adherents or followers of both Islam and Judaism have carried out archaeological investigations in Palestine, the earliest and probably still the most numerous archaeological projects in the country have been carried out from a Christian perspective. During the Byzantine period there was an intense interest in re-discovering the precise sites associated with either the life of Jesus or his early followers. The whole country was rapidly developed as a Christian Holy Land based on the re-discovery of locations and features mentioned in the Gospels and other books of the New Testament. Probably the most famous example was the discovery of the “true cross”, which served as a basis for the identification of Golgotha, and the associated sites incorporated in the massive new construction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. With the Muslim conquest in the seventh century, Christian pilgrims continued to visit Palestine as pilgrims and visit sites authenticated by material evidence. The descriptions by some of these early pilgrims such as bishop Arculf have become fundamental documents for later archaeologists seeking to identify particular sites or buildings (for some examples see Wilkinson 1977).<sup>1</sup> It can thus be seen that there was a direct relationship between archaeology and faith, in particular in relation to the authentication of shrines. With the advent of the Crusades from the end of the eleventh century, European interest in Palestine increased exponentially. The Crusaders were particularly keen to develop their own sacred geography of Palestine based on

their interpretation of the Bible and the identification of specific sites and buildings (see for example Pringle 2012). Although some of the Crusaders identification of sites was wrong, it laid the foundation of a long tradition of Biblical Archaeology, which has lasted to the present day.

The problems of this Eurocentric interpretation of the archaeology of Palestine have been discussed by many authors, most famously by Edward Said in his groundbreaking book *Orientalism* (Said 1978). Although not all of Said's views are accepted today, his work is still highly influential and the most eloquent critique of European and American historical investigation of the Middle East. His major observation was that Europeans have used archaeological investigation as a means of gaining knowledge and power over the various countries in the region. This was achieved in practical terms by access and control of archaeological sites and artefacts and, ideologically, by suggesting that the ancient peoples had more in common with Europeans than the current inhabitants of the region, who were seen as predominantly Muslim Arabs. Ultimately the European interest in the archaeology and history of the Holy Land/Palestine formed a basis which was used by Zionists for the creation of Israel.

Within this context, archaeology can be seen as a European or Western methodology tainted by its use for colonial and Zionist objectives. This of course oversimplifies the situation and incorrectly maligns the reputation of many individual scholars and archaeologists whose work was purely motivated by scientific interest. However as methodology and form of enquiry, "Biblical Archaeology" undoubtedly had an agenda. The power of this agenda was made visible with the creation of Israel in 1948 and the elevated position that archaeology held within the Israeli state and Israeli culture. Of course, the archaeology was primarily focussed on the "discovery" of remains, which confirmed biblical narratives and therefore provided a justification for a renewed Jewish state. Since 1948, archaeology in Israel has developed considerably and in the twenty-first century many excavations are carried out without a specific ideological or political agenda, although the context in which they are carried out may still be problematic. The ideological problems of Israeli archaeology are well known and have been discussed by many authors, although, strangely, Israeli archaeology was not discussed in the highly influential publication *Archaeology under Fire: Nationalism, Politics and Heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East*, edited by Lynn Meskell and published in 1998.

As a counter to Biblical archaeology and specifically Israeli Zionist archaeology, a number of scholars and researchers have attempted to develop an archaeology of Palestine that is ideologically neutral or emphasizes other aspects of the country's history. While some of these initiatives have been useful they are not well known beyond academia and there is a need to demonstrate that archaeology seeks to investigate all aspects of past human society and not just selected periods and ethnic religious groups. However for many in the region archaeology is still not seen as a rational scientific

discipline, but rather as an ideological and interpretive methodology, which has all the potential for manipulation and falsification evident in written documentary history.

### *Archaeology as empirical evidence*

With this rather complex background in mind, it may seem surprising to suggest using archaeology as a means of investigating the recent past of Palestine. In general, the modern fate of the country is left largely in the hands of historians using a combination of official documents, news reports and oral history. This has been a very positive method and has resulted in a huge amount of historical writing, which increasingly calls into question the official Israeli versions of history. However the use of written and oral sources has a common weakness, because counter narratives can be written which require considerable effort to discredit. In some cases it can be nearly impossible to get any agreed-upon statement of fact. Other problems with conventional forms of historical writing are derived from using documents and testimonies which reflect the perceived important issues at their time. These, however, may not be the issues which have significance in the twenty-first century.

If the technique or discipline of archaeology is removed from its Near Eastern context, it can be seen as a relatively neutral scientific discipline. For example, if we look at the archaeology of early human life, this is a respected scientific discipline, which even in an Israeli context is removed from the politics of nationalism. Probably the best example of archaeology as a potentially objective methodology is the development of forensic archaeology during the late twentieth century. Initially, forensic archaeology was simply concerned with the study of human remains buried or dumped as a result of presumed criminal activity or otherwise unexplained circumstances. However during the last thirty years, it has increasingly been recognized that the archaeological context of any human remains should also be investigated as this can provide invaluable evidence for how and when a particular crime was carried out.

### *Archaeology of the recent past*

While on the one hand archaeology may be an empirical discipline with a set of methods and agreed procedures, some form of interpretative framework is needed in order to make the results meaningful. The problems of using the Bible or “Holy Land” paradigm as part of an interpretative framework have been discussed earlier. However, there are a number of other forms of archaeological analysis which may be of use in interpreting material evidence from the recent past. Useful categories or zones of archaeological interpretation may include Contemporary Archaeology, the Archaeology of Conflict and Forensic Archaeology. None of these forms of archaeology are exclusive and a combination of different theoretical

approaches can be used. In all cases, the important methodological scientific principle is that the recording and presentation of the empirical evidence must be separate from any interpretation derived from the evidence. Just as in a court case, not only should the empirical evidence be available to all parties but also all the relevant evidence must be available for interpretation.

### *Contemporary Archaeology*

Contemporary Archaeology is concerned with “archaeologies of the contemporary world, defined temporally as belonging to the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries” (Harrison et al. 2014). In chronological terms, this obviously includes the period of time encompassing the creation of Israel, the Nakba as well as earlier events, such as the establishment of Jewish settlements in Palestine, and later events, such as the extension of the Israeli territory into the West Bank and Gaza. It is also significant that Contemporary Archaeology is concerned with “reflections on the socio-political implications of doing archaeology in the contemporary world” (Harrison et al. 2014). This has direct relevance for Palestine, where archaeology has such a rich and deep history combined with a complex socio-political context.

### *Conflict Archaeology*

While Contemporary Archaeology provides a useful theoretical environment for examining the recent past, the related category of Conflict Archaeology provides a useful means of interrogating the complexities of twentieth- and twenty-first-century Palestine. Conflict Archaeology has recently (since the 1990s) developed out of Battlefield Archaeology, which is used to examine the sites of conflict from the First World War trenches in France to the battlefields of the American Civil War (Carman 2013 and Saunders 2012). There has been considerable debate about the need for the new category of Conflict Archaeology with the main argument that it can include a much wider array of evidence beyond actual battlefields and weapons, by regarding, landscapes, buildings and even art produced for or during the conflict (see for example Saunders 2013). According to the Dutch archaeologists Jobbe Wijnen the field can also “include the human tendency towards conflict itself”. Wijnen also states from a personal perspective that the primary objective of Conflict Archaeology should be “to prevent another war from happening, even if this is impossible” (Wijnen 2015: 4–5).

### *Forensic Archaeology*

The two research frameworks suggested above – Contemporary Archaeology and Conflict Archaeology – are both broad categories in terms of the material they encompass from excavated artefacts to buildings, art objects and landscapes. However, Forensic Archaeology is a much more narrowly focussed discipline with specific circumscribed objectives and a disciplinary

background related to a number of fields outside archaeology including medicine and material science. While the application of forensic archaeological techniques is usually limited to cases where there may be human remains, the methodological rigour and the aims of Forensic Archaeology may well be useful for analysis of the recent past in Palestine. As stated, the particular theoretical outlook of Forensic Archaeology means that it must appear impartial. The fact that it operates within a legal context means that proper documentation and accountability are essential.

Each of these different archaeological perspectives provides a different methodology for investigating the recent past through material remains. Apart from their specific values, each approach has an international dimension, which means that the standards, techniques and analytical tools will be the same, whether the concerned area is in Palestine, Germany, the UK or Rwanda. This is different from Biblical Archaeology, which operates within its own specific regional and ideological framework.

### **The al-Nuweima mosque and refugee camp**

This section considers the application of ideas of Contemporary Archaeology to the specific case of the al-Nuweima mosque in or near Jericho. The al-Nuweima mosque was chosen for a number of reasons, which include the facts that it is easily accessible, there is no previous published archaeological account of the site, the building is in the process of collapse and, most importantly, for its significance as a building.

The mosque is located approximately four kilometres to the north of the modern town of Jericho and one and a half kilometres to the north-east of the ancient city of Jericho/Tell al-Sultan. The building is located on the right (east) side of the main road running north through the Jordan valley from Jericho to Beth Shean (Baysan). The half ruined building stands next to a newly built mosque (Masjid al-Abbas), presumably built as a replacement. The initial documentation of the building took place in 1994 during survey work for the Medieval and Ottoman Survey (MOS) of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem. Although the al-Nuweima mosque was not part of the MOS, it was regarded as an architecturally important building worthy of documentation. A second visit to the site was made in September 2014 during further research sponsored by the British Academy. Again the mosque was not the primary objective of the fieldwork, but was photographed for archive purposes. However, preliminary research carried out soon after the visit in 2014 indicated that there were some interesting aspects to the history of the building which might repay further investigation.

#### ***Nuweimeh or Nuweima refugee camp?***

The first consideration is the name of the building which does not appear on any official maps of the area (there may of course be maps depicting

the mosques, but these have so far not come to light). Today (2014) there is no sign either on or around the building. The only clue to the name of the building appears on a photograph taken in 1994 where a sign in front of the building states: “United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. NUWEIMEH CAMP” (Figure 15.3). According to Google Maps, Nuweima is a small village or suburb of Jericho to the north of the Wadi Nueima and near the ruins of the Umayyad Palace of Khirbat al-Mafjar also known as Hisham’s Palace (Whitcomb and Taha 2013).

Nuweimeh Camp was the smaller of a number of refugee camps in the vicinity of Jericho, which included Aqabt Jaber and Ein al-Sultan. However, there appears to be some confusion over the names of the various camps. Thus a photograph of, said to be, the Nuweimeh Camp, posted on the official UN website (Figure 15.1), appears to be a photograph of the camp at Ein al-Sultan. Whatever the precise locations of the camps, they all appear to have originated in 1948 with more than 50,000 refugees from the coastal plain. Ibrahim Ghushesh gives the following account of the foundation of the camp:

I also remember that in that very same year, 1948 on a summer night, we heard many disturbing distant sounds. In the morning we asked what these sounds were. The sad answer came back that the refugees had arrived from Ramlah and Lod to the regions of the camps of Ein al-Sultan al-Nuway’imah and others. This took place in July of 1948.

(Ghusheh 2013: 32)

It is possible that by the 1960s the various camps had amalgamated as the designation Nuweimeh Camp rarely appears in any official documentation. In this case, the photograph of the sign outside the mosque is one of the few



*Figure 15.1* Al-Nuweimeh Camp, January 1, 1961, with Tell el-Sultan in middle ground and oasis of Jericho in the background.



*Figure 15.2* Al-Nuweimeh Refugee Camp 1983.

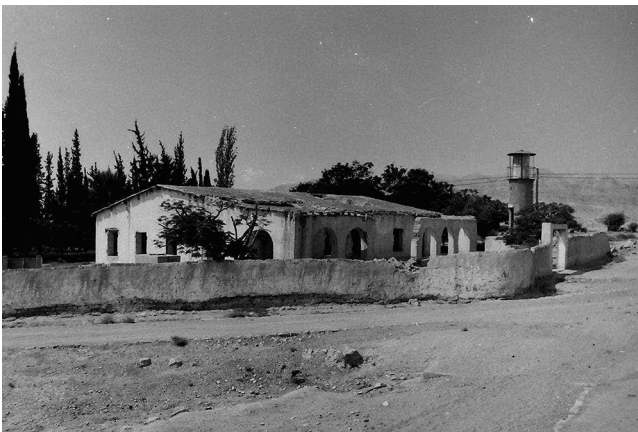
pieces of evidence that defines this area of ground at the Nuweimeh Camp. By the 1960s the combined population of the refugee camps in Jericho was 70,000. However, the camps were largely abandoned in 1967 when most of the refugees fled to Jordan (Abdul Fattah 2007: 206). Today the camps house fewer than 3,500 refugees. Although there may be some confusion about the names of the refugee camps, the fact that they were occupied for nearly twenty years and then abandoned makes them archaeologically significant. Judging from photographs and personal testimonies, the refugee camps were initially composed of tents. As time went on they were gradually replaced with more permanent structures built of mud brick, which is the traditional building material in the Jericho area. By the 1980s the remains of the abandoned camps comprised rows of crumbling flat roofed mud brick houses lining deserted streets (Figure 15.2). During the 1990s many of the abandoned remains were destroyed by bulldozers erasing the physical remains of the refugees, who had lived in the area for nearly two decades.

### *The mosque*

Against this background, the al-Nuweimeh mosque develops a special significance as evidence of the presence of refugees in the area and also of a traditional mud brick building technique, which is rapidly disappearing (Figures 15.4 and 15.5). Most of the structure is built of mud brick which is covered in plaster and painted white both externally and internally. The mosque comprises a rectangular building, twenty metres wide (E–W), by seventeen metres deep (N–S), with a portico on the north side (Figures 15.5 and 15.9). The *mihrab* comprises a deep square recess in the centre of the south wall and the prayer hall is divided into twenty bays supported by square mud brick piers (Figure 15.6). There is a well immediately to the east of the building.



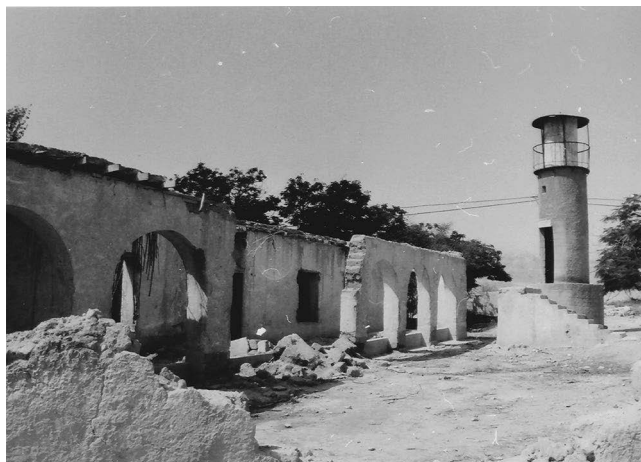
*Figure 15.3* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque with sign 1994.



*Figure 15.4* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque 1994 from East.

In front of the mosque, on the north side, there is a short free-standing minaret made of mud brick standing on a stone and concrete socle (Figure 15.5). The mosque is covered with a shallow pitched roof made of wooden rafters supporting palm frond mats covered with mud (Figure 15.8).

Whilst the mosque was beginning to decay in 1994, two decades later, in 2014, only half of the original building was still standing, with the northern part including the portico completely destroyed (Figure 15.7). It is not clear if the northern part of the building collapsed through neglect or was deliberately destroyed, although, interestingly, the minaret survived. Local enquiries may help to answer this question. However, the way the remaining portion seems to be neatly cut indicates some form of deliberate demolition (Figures 15.8 and 15.9).



*Figure 15.5* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque, portico and minaret 1994.



*Figure 15.6* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque, interior 1994.

### ***Interpretation***

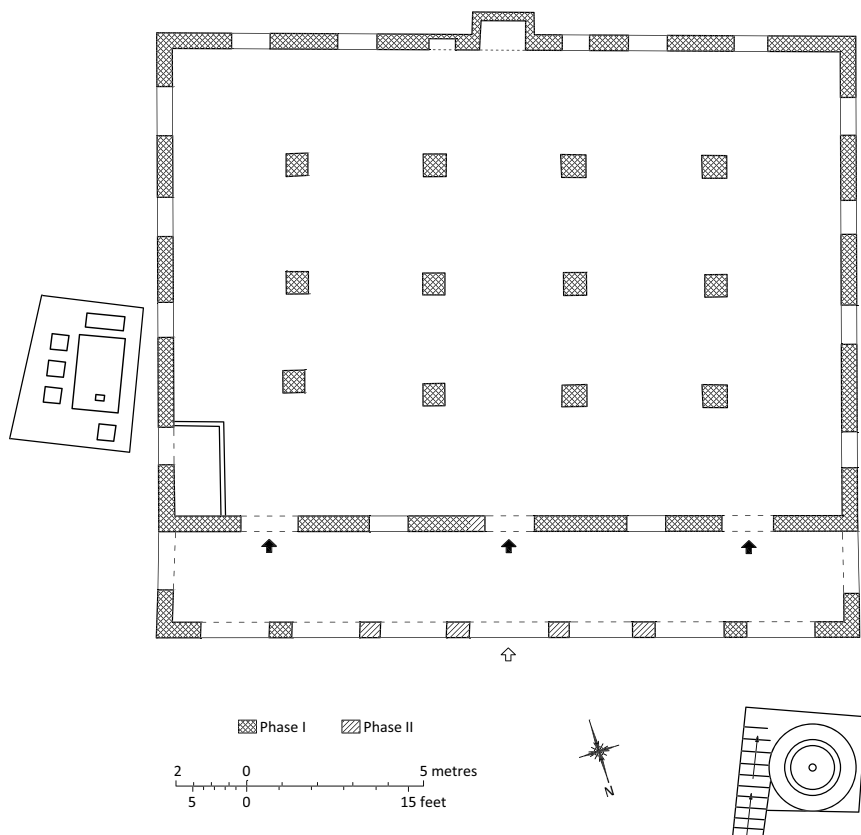
This brief account of the mosque within the context of the al-Nuweima refugee camp provides a basic description of the building, which today stands abandoned and apparently forgotten. There are a number of ways in which the mosque can be regarded as historically significant. In the first place the mosque is one of the few remaining buildings from the refugee camp, which was destroyed in the 1990s. As such the mosque represents an important physical reminder of a period of Palestinian history. While standing



*Figure 15.7* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque 2014 with portico and north wall no longer extant.



*Figure 15.8* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque 2014, detail of wall and roof construction techniques.



*Figure 15.9* Al-Nuweimeh Mosque 1994.

buildings can often appear as permanent, the demolition of the mud brick houses of the camp demonstrates that, in historical terms, these structures were ephemeral. Second, the mosque may be regarded as an example of traditional Palestinian architecture, which is no longer being built. The exact date of construction of the mosque is not known; it is likely that it was built during the 1950s. The use of mud brick in architecture is characteristic of traditional buildings in Jericho. As the remains at Tell al-Sultan testify, such techniques of construction date back more than 10,000 years. However there are other areas of Palestine where mud brick architecture was built prior to 1948, in particular the villages of the coastal plain. Whilst today traditional Palestinian architecture is associated with the stone villages of the West Bank, large parts of the settlements in coastal Palestine were built of mud brick. Within this context it is possible that the mosque of al-Nuweima represents a recreation of a now disappeared type of mosque prevalent in the villages of the coastal plain. One example of a similar form of mosque has

survived in stone among the destroyed remains of the village of Isdud. Like the al-Nuweima building the Isdud mosque comprises a rectangular prayer hall with a portico, although it is built in stone (Petersen 2001: 155–156).

## Conclusion

First of all it should be stated that my discussion of the al-Nuweima mosque is preliminary. Considerably more research can be carried out, in particular, in relation to oral history, UN archives, etc. Nevertheless the recording of the physical remains is an important part of the process and forms the basis for more detailed historical research. Although the documentation of the mosque was carried out in passing and never the principal objective of fieldwork, it demonstrates the value of opportunistic data gathering. In order to develop this project, it will be necessary to carry out a combination of targeted fieldwork together with more research in relation to oral and written sources. From a theoretical perspective it would be valuable to set the project within the wider fields of both Contemporary Archaeology, emphasizing the socio-political implications of the project, and Conflict Archaeology, looking at analogous conflicts elsewhere in the world.

## Note

- 1 Wilkinson (1977) with Arculf's drawings of floor plans of Jerusalem's holy sites on pp. 191–197.

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# 16 Archaeology as anthropology (bio-archaeology)

*Issa Sarie*

## **Bio-cultural archaeology in Prehistoric Levant**

Since Buikstra (1977) applied bioanthropology directly to the synthesis of anthropology and archaeology, bioarchaeology has been used in an interdisciplinary approach, combining such sciences as biology, anatomy, archaeology and anthropology (Sheridan 2017), while highlighting the complex, bio-cultural interaction between prehistoric people and their environment (Bar-Yosef 1983; Smith 1984; Hershkovitz and Gopher 1990; Moore et al. 2000).

Skeletal remains from many prehistoric excavations conducted throughout the Levant have been collected and documented, illuminating the bio-cultural activities, adaptations and behaviors within a larger environmental context (Ortner 2003). Age, sex and the cause of death of an individual are identified by a study of bones themselves rather than material culture. Such information may or may not accurately reflect the community's demographic profile, which archaeologists use for a general description of a site (Smith 1993; Eshed et al. 2004). The cause of death that could have been old age, violent incident or disease is also valuable information, which can provide further scientific research with essential information for an interpretation of society (Ortner and Putschar 1985; Smith and Horowitz 1998).

Bio-archaeologists note marks of stress on bones, using techniques and laboratory analysis to gain a hint of various bio-cultural activities during life, reflected in mortuary and ritual practices, diet and nutrition, health status and a reconstruction of demography and health status (disease), stress and violence (trauma), life expectancy and mortality.

(Smith and Horowitz 1998)

## **Burials and mortuary rituals and practices**

A burial is the deposition of a deceased person in a demarcated place such as a pit, grave or tomb, which has been carried out in an identifiably ritualized way. The nature of human internment practices is varied in landscape, socio-cultural bonds, cult and religious beliefs. Binford (1971) identified burials as the most frequently encountered cultural feature, reflecting the

social, personal status and occupation of the deceased. Bio-archaeologists study and determine the early manifestation of symbolic behavior and ritual, which may be associated with human remains and contribute to a reconstruction of funeral practices, such as skull removals and the use of red ochre. These find their earliest witness in the Middle Paleolithic Kebara Cave in the Carmel, dating back nearly 60,000 years, and the Qafzeh cave in Nazereth, nearly 92,000 years ago. The Epipaleolithic hunter-gatherers offer a striking phenomenon in symbolic mortuary treatments of the dead, such as using red ochre in their burial ritual and post-mortem skull removals (Maher, Tobias and Stock 2012). Such community ritual components become elaborated within the Neolithic sedentary agricultural villages of the Levant, reflecting special ritual treatments of skulls, modeled with plaster and decorated with other materials, collected and arranged in specific caches or pit-burials, set in distinctive clusters (Bonogofsky 2004). Skulls either decompose naturally or as part of a post-mortem cultic activity, in which the skull is decapitated (separated from the body) and scalped (removed flesh, skin and hair) as a preliminary step to covering the skull with plaster. Marks of defleshing appear as striations on fragments of some of the plastered Neolithic skulls of Ain Ghazal village (Butler 1989; Sarie 2010). Such cultic practices appear cross-culturally throughout the Levantine and Anatolian Neolithic sedentary societies, such as Jericho (Kenyon 1956), Ain Ghazal (Butler 1989), Beisamoun (Ferembach and Lechevallier 1973), Nahal Hemar (Arensburg and Bar Josef 1988), Kfar Ha-Horesh (Goring-Morris et al. 1995; Hershkovitz et al. 1995), Tel Ramad (Ferembach 1969) and Koşk Höyük in central Antolia (Silistrelı 1984: see Figure 16.1 on page 293). The skulls were shaped and adorned, reflecting social meaning related to the development of social and cultural norms, which may have played a major role in the Neolithic agriculture societies of the Levant (Kuijt 2000).

## **Ante-mortem cultural practices and life conditions**

### ***Cranial deformations***

Bioarchaeology also pays attention to deliberate cultural practices in life, such as cranial deformation, in which a child's head has been bound in a way that creates highly visible, and, sometimes, extreme alterations in the shape of the head. Marked and slightly antero-posterior and circumferential deformation has been practiced throughout the Near East, such as evidenced in the Shanidar Neandertal of Iraq, the Natufians of El-Wad in the Carmel near Haifa, the Neolithic of Jericho, the pottery-Neolithic of Bougras and of Tell Ramad in Syria (Ferembach 1969). Within the Chalcolithic period, cranial deformations have been found among skeletal remains in Byblos in Lebanon and Degirmentepe in Turkey.

Trephination is an *ante-mortem* cultural practice that involves cutting a hole in the skull to relieve disease or expel demons. It has been considered

the earliest form of surgery. A healed trephinated skull has been reported in the Neolithic period of Jericho (Kurth and Rohrer-Ertel 1981). Herskovitz (1987) reported a trephinated skull from the Chalcolithic period in the south of Sinai. Smith (1990) reported a case from Arad's EB period and Brothwell (1965) reports healed holes in skulls from MB.

### ***Trauma and violence***

Trauma is a lesion classified by Steinbock (1976) as a fracture, crushing injury or bone wound caused by a sharp instrument or dislocation. Physical trauma may take the form of healed breaks or fractures to bones showing secondary bone formation (Lambert 1997). Injuries to the spine, metacarpal and metatarsal areas are the most frequent, mainly due to occupational degeneration, violence or lesions from diseases such as tuberculosis. In many cases, trauma is identified through signs of healing or infection (Walker 2001). Trauma is best diagnosed using radiographs (Oztung, Yoldas and Nalbantoglu 2006) and evidence of violence trends is critical for determining the dynamic relationship between people and their environmental context, economy and social stability and deterioration (Cohen et al. 2012). The earliest indication of violence in the Near East is a healed left rib from the Neanderthal of Shanidar cave in Shanidar 3, who was apparently stabbed by a sharp object held by a left-handed individual, while facing the victim. Evidence of violence on prehistoric skeletal remains is seldom in contrast to the number of skeletal remains examined. Angel (1974) reported a healed fracture of the right arm of an early Neolithic individual from Hatoula and Kurth and Rohrer-Ertel (1981) reported fractures of long bones from four Neolithic adults from Jericho.

Ferembach (1959) has suggested violence as cause of a depressed skull fracture from Nahel Oren. Schultz et al. (2007) reported healed skull depressions of three out of twelve male individuals from Basta.<sup>1</sup> An increase in population pressure or traditions of ownership and class structures, related to the development of agriculture, has been suggested as a factor in increasing violence. Nevertheless, given how slight the evidence is from skeletal remains, archaeology does not support this assumption. Cohen et al. (2012) studied 783 skulls from the Chalcolithic to the end of the Ottoman period in Tel Aviv University's osteological collection. Trauma rates show that shifts from agrarian to urban populations reflect little impact on trauma rates, even though population rates are higher than other, archaeologically based populations.

### ***Diet and health status***

Within skeletal remains of the prehistoric Levant, bio-archaeologists pay special attention to physiological and pathological changes from different diseases as indicators of diet, food preparation and health (Larsen 2004). Infected human bones often display conditions related to particular diseases.

Inadequate diet is likely the cause of three diseases: anemia, scurvy and rickets (Ortner et al. 2001). Signs of rickets include the medial bowing of femur shafts, “pigeon chest” (*pectus carinatum*) and bone porosity, resulting from a deficiency in vitamin D during digestion or kidney failure to retain phosphate (Ortner and Putschar 1985). Skeletal remains of a two-year-old child from Neolithic Jericho show lesions attributed to rickets (Kurth and Röhrer-Ertl 1981), while Schultz, Schultz and Sherer (1991) have reported possible scurvy among remains of three individuals from Basta. Such findings also provide insight into the general health status of the Neolithic Levant.

Porotic lesions and thickening of cranial bones on the outer vault of the cranium, resulting from hypertrophy of the diploe, have been identified by Angel (1966) as porotic hyperostosis and *cribra orbitale* on the roof of the orbital bones (El-Najjar et al. 1976; Ortner and Putschar 1985; Steinbock 1976). El-Najjar et al. (1976) were the first to find a connection of porotic hyperostosis and *cribra orbitalia* with iron deficiency, causing anemia. Ortner et al. (2001) described abnormal porosity and thickness of the outer table of the skulls of children and attributed the primary pathology to scurvy. Iron deficiency (anemia), vitamin D deficiency (rickets) and vitamin C deficiency (scurvy) are known nutritional diseases of children, despite the difficulty of attributing a specific pathology to a particular cause. Although lesions of *cribra orbitalia* are most common among children, they can also be identified in adults (Stuart-Macadam 1989). Periosteal lesions of the cranium arise from more than one factor and may be attributed to more than one disease. A histological examination of skeletal remains from Sudan (Wapler, Crubezy and Schultz 2004) linked *cribra orbitalia* to anemia osteo-porosis and inflammation from eye infections. Skeletal remains of the Neolithic population of Atlit Yam exhibited eight cases of *cribra orbitalia* (Eshed 2001). Changes in the bones of two individuals have been ascribed to thalassemia, a genetic disorder caused by mutation of the beta-globin gene (Hershkovitz et al. 1991).

*Cribra orbitalia* has been identified in the Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (PPNB) level of Basta (Schultz 2008). The skeletal remains of the Neolithic people of Ain Ghazal exhibited seven cases of *Cribra orbitalia* and sixteen cases of porotic hyperostosis (Sarie 2010). Skeletal remains of a two-year-old child in Jericho show lesions attributed to a suspected case of rickets (Kurth and Röhrer-Ertl 1981). Schultz et al. (1991) reported possible instances of scurvy in the skeletal remains of three Neolithic individuals from Basta. Schultz (1987) reported that ten of thirty-five individuals from Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B (LPPNB) Basta had endocranial lesions indicative of meningo-encephalitis.

### ***Degenerative diseases***

Diseases such as osteo-arthritis, osteo-porosis and general changes associated with old age and reduced function are the most frequent marks, observed and traced in skeletal materials (Ortner and Putschar 1985).

Osteo-arthritis is identified by changes in joints, eburnation of bone ends and bony growths (osteophytes). Their locations infer patterns of physical activity. Among the skeletal remains of early agriculturalists (ca. 10,000 BP) at the site of Abu Hureyra (Syria), Molleson (2000) identified degenerative diseases such as osteo-arthritis on spines, knees and toe joints, which she attributed to agricultural labor and food processing, such as the grinding of cereals for flour. Similar lesions have been identified on the vertebrae and foot bones of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic A people of Hatoula (Le Mort, Hershkovitz and Spiers 1994), and Ain Ghazal (Sarie 1995). The late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B population from Basta developed osteo-arthritic lesions on vertebrae, shoulders and mandibular joints, associated with severe dental malfunction.

Infectious diseases indicate imbalance in interaction with the environment. They cause inflammation of soft tissues and associated bones (Mensforth et al. 1978). Diagnosis of bony lesions is difficult as different diseases cause similar types of lesions (Brothwell 1981). Many infectious diseases, assumed to have been present in the past, leave no skeletal marks. Tuberculosis may affect the skeletal system and can cause significant changes such as deformation and collapse of spinal vertebrae (“Pott’s disease”) or reactive lesions, osteo-myelitis of other joints or periosteal bone (El-Najjar et al. 1997).

Within the Levantine prehistoric population, such infectious changes have been identified in the skeletal remains of several individuals. Erosive lesions, affecting the vertebrae, suggesting tuberculosis, were reported on six individuals from the village of Ain Ghazal (Sarie 2010). At Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B Basta, seven cases of osteo-myelitis or periostitis on long bones were reported and ten of thirty-five individuals had endocranial lesions, indicative of meningo-encephalitis (Schultz et al. 1991).

Diagnosis is difficult because different diseases cause similar types of lesions (Ortner and Putschar 1985). Many diseases, however, do not leave skeletal marks: measles, smallpox, plague, influenza and other (Smith and Horowitz 1998). X-rays, chemical analysis (histology) and other laboratory methods, including DNA and molecular identification, make it possible to trace and diagnose many diseases that leave few or no skeletal signs (Dobny and Brothwell 1968). Bio-molecular methods applied to bones of a woman and child from Neolithic Atilt-Yam show morphological signs of tuberculosis (Herskovitz et al. 2008). Food production and labor stress have been frequently identified as cause of periosteal lesions, osteo-malacia, Harris lines and dental hypoplasia, which also give further evidence of physiological stress.

### **Teeth as evidence**

Teeth are better preserved and less affected by the environment after death than the rest of the skeleton, allowing bio-archaeologists to trace the physical effects of diet and activity. The complexity of the relationship of dental stress

and disease with bio-cultural interaction, diet, social economic conditions and patterns of health has been highlighted (Hershkovitz and Gopher 1990). Diet is a controlling factor in several groups of dental disease, including those due to bacteria. Dental disease and stressors, such as dental caries, abscesses, tooth loss, dental calculus (tartar), wear and hypoplasia, manifested in different age groups, provide a wealth of insight regarding health, nutrition and social organization (Smith 1984). Dental wear on the occlusal and interproximal surfaces of teeth during a person's lifetime has been correlated with age and diet (Dahlberg 1963). Wear on tooth cusps, due to mastication, is associated with a food bolus of abrasive quality, dragged between the upper and lower teeth and identified by pitted and rough surfaces (Gordon 1982).

Evidence of the cultural impact of food production on teeth has been observed on the teeth of many prehistoric remains in the Levant (Smith 1984; Molleson et al. 1993; Sarie 2010). Smith (1984) traced variable patterns and degrees of dental wear to the agricultural diet and nutritional changes among Natufian hunter-gatherers. She concluded that while hunter-gatherers showed an evenly distributed wear, agriculturalists manifested a more angular wear. Arensburg, Yakar and Smith (1978) reported cases of severe attrition on the teeth of Neolithic people of Abu Ghosh. Micro- and macro-wear of the teeth from Abu Hureyra in northern Syria were used by Molleson and Jones (1991) to differentiate between Epi-Paleolithic gatherers and Neolithic agriculturists. Molleson, Jones and Jones (1993) observed that the dentition of Neolithic people of Abu Hureyra, in contrast to the teeth of Epi-paleolithic people, was more worn and pitted due to the inclusion of ground flour. They concluded that the food of Neolithic people was coarse and hard, due to the change from the small grains of the Mesolithic to the larger grains of the Neolithic. Similar wear was observed on teeth from Ain Ghazal (Sarie 2010). This was attributed to the ingestion of abrasive foods, which required massive masticatory function as marked by the muscle insertions on the mandibular ramus and food preparation, in which grits of basalt were used for grinding and powdering the grains. Furthermore, baking bread directly on the fire caused grits of ash to adhere to the dough.

Herskovitz and Galili (1990), in their studies of the inhabitants of Atlit-Yam, a PPNC (6100–5500 BC) coastal settlement, linked dental attrition and masticatory problems to an abrasive diet. Esed et al. (2006), however, restudied the dental collection of Atlit Yam in contrast to other PPNB collections (7400–6100 BC) from the populations of Kfar Ha-Horesh, Abu Gosh, Yifthael, and Nahal Oren, and concluded that the Atlit Yam teeth manifested worn upper and lower central incisors and first molars, compared to the teeth of other Neolithic populations. They attributed the greater wear to sand, as the site was on the beach. Smith (1984) noted that some sedentary communities showed a higher degree of attrition and wear compared to that of Late Natufian populations and concluded that such communities had a similar mode of subsistence, which included hard grain products. Wear of teeth also appear from using teeth as tools by holding staves while making

baskets, leather hides, fishing nets or mattress threads. Such has been identified on Epi-paleolithic teeth from Abu Hureyra in Syria (Moleson 1994), neolithic PPNC teeth from Atlite Yam (Herskovitz and Galili 1990) and neolithic PPNB teeth from Ain Ghazal (Sarie 1995, 2010).

### ***Carbohydrates and refined foods***

Dental caries, soft decayed areas of tooth characterized by de-mineralization of inorganic and destruction of organic dental tissues, have long been linked to diets, which are high in carbohydrates and refined foods. Decalcification results from bacterial action, due to the fermentation of ingested carbohydrates (Larsen 2004). Caries and periodontal diseases are correlated with an increase in carbohydrates due to the shift to agriculture. They have been used by bio-archaeologists to understand patterns of diet and subsistence (Hillson 1986). Both the morphology and position of teeth in the jaw are important factors, affecting the presence and location of caries (Hillson 2001). Herskovits and Gopher (1998) concluded that caries frequencies are generally low in agricultural populations, while Eshed, Gopher and Herskovitz (2006) have shown that caries frequency was similar in both hunter-gatherers and early agriculturalist populations. The frequency of caries within Natufian and Neolithic populations was 6.4% and 6.7%, respectively. Molleson, *et al.* (1993) argued that there was significant change in the frequency of caries among the Epi-Palaeolithic and Neolithic people of Abu Hureyra in Syria. Epi-Palaeolithic people had fairly healthy teeth with almost no caries, whereas the teeth of Neolithic people show an increase in caries. Solell and Sharron (1992) concluded that caries frequency was lower among hunter-gatherers than Neolithic populations.

Periodontal disease is a pathology most frequently due to gingival inflammation (Hillson 1986). In hard bones, periodontal disease reflects minor changes and irregularities on the surface of the alveolar bone, in relation to alveolar crest resorption, marginal lipping, granulation, pocketing and apical abscess formation. If severe, it results in alveolar crest resorption, pocketing and apical abscess formation (Hillson 1986). Periapical lesions are located at the apex of the tooth root. Factors promoting such lesions are caries, heavy tooth wear, trauma, excessive plaque formation and advanced periodontal disease leading to infection of the pulp and ante-mortem tooth loss (Lukacs 1992).

The prevalence and patterns of periodontal disease (dental calculus, *ante-mortem* tooth loss and parabolic abscess) are often considered consequences of diet. In the Levant, periodontal disease is common in the Natufian and Neolithic periods. Herskovitz *et al.* (1995) argued that Natufians consumed more abrasive fibrous foods than Neolithic people and, therefore, generated large occlusal forces. This may also be true within the Neolithic dental collection of Ain Ghazal, where some mandibles show marked insertion of muscles on the ramous, associated with facets of temporo-mandibular

joints (Sarie 1995). Periodontal disease was a serious problem for the health of Ain Ghazal and Wadi Shu'eib's Neolithic populations (Sarie 2010). Arensburg, Yakar and Smith (1978) reported that three of eleven individuals suffered from dental abscess and ante-mortem tooth loss of first molars at Abu Ghosh. This increased to five of twelve adults, suffering from *ante-mortem* tooth loss among the Neolithic people of Atlit Yam (Eshed et al. 2006).

Low rates of periodontal disease and caries coincide with low *ante-mortem* periapical lesions and tooth loss among Natufian and Neolithic people, despite the shift to an intensive agriculture economy. This means that modes of food preparation and consumption continued, introducing new ingredients and gradual changes in the social economy.

Dental calculus is the mineralized deposit of bacterial plaque, colonizing the tooth surface (Larsen 1995). It is influenced by starchy and sticky food and acidity, causing inflammation of the gums (gingivitis), leading to periodontitis (Lukacs 1989).

The ingestion of starchy foods with uncleaned teeth thickens dental calculus because of acidity, quantity of carbohydrates and protein, as well as the duration of bacterial metabolization in the mouth, building a layer of plaque on the cervical part of the crown in contact with the gums (Lukacs 1989). Analysis of tartar provides information on the actual diet of past populations as well as their environment (Herskovitz 1998).

Several studies demonstrate a correlation between high calculus rates and a dependence on farm products (Lukacs 1989). The gradual increase of carbohydrates in the diet in the Neolithic Levant could have raised the rates and thickness of the tartar. Sarie (1995) analyzed the tartar of six individuals and was able to extract pollen grains and phtolith, indicating the plant families ingested as well as inedible plants such as sedge, used for basketry. Lieverse (1999) noted that calculus is not necessarily diet-related. Hygiene, cultural patterns of behavior and the use of teeth as tools are also factors. Herskovitz (1998) analyzed the dental calculus and was able to extract bacteria as an indicator of food and health pathogenes.

Episodes of stress, related to malnutrition or illness, can be identified in the disruption of enamel development of hypoplastic enamel defects in the form of growth lines or pits (Smith and Peretz 1986). This may result from infectious diseases such as measles, chicken pox, scarlet fever, diphtheria or respiratory infection (Seow 1991). Bio-anthropologists use this as an indicator of the episodic stress from environmental impact and morbidity, which increase with the transition to agriculture (Smith and Peretz 1986).

The study of Natufian dentition by Smith (1984) indicates an increased rate of hypoplasia associated with the expansion of agriculture and cereal consumption. The small LPPNB dental sample from the site of Wadi Shu'eib, described by al-Abbasi and Sarie (1997), reflects a similar poor standard of health. The diverse diet of hunter-gatherers continued in the later sedentary population. The transformation to sedentary life was gradual and associated with changes in diet to agricultural and dairy products.

Bio-archaeologists use the markers of the former population's skeletal and dental remains to increase information about daily life. Laboratory analysis of macroscopic and microscopic dental calculus, and phytolith and isotopic assessments of direct food ingestion have increased our knowledge of daily life within specific environments (Dobney and Brothwell 1986).

### **Age, sex, mortality and demography**

Age and sex distributions of skeletal remains can be used to create demographic profiles related to mortality and fertility (Konigsberg and Frankenberg 1992). The ratio of early to late mortality is the basic parameter (Brass 1971) that provides a description of the mortality of a wide range of human populations. The number of deaths at a given age affects the reliability of determining longevity. However, the use of fixed age intervals requires that the ages of all skeletons be known (Wood et al. 1992). Since the preservation of fragile infant and elderly bones is especially poor, both infant and adult fragmentary bones produce age biases that have predictable effects on estimates (Paine and Harpending 1998). To avoid this, Bocquet-Appel and Masset limit analysis to older age categories. The broader age divisions used might produce more reliable comparative information, related to mortality with respect to collections from other sites, especially those producing small samples (Smith and Horwitz 2007).

Reconstructing demographic profiles from skeletal remains faces the problem of sampling. Within the Neolithic period, the size of sedentary villages, bio-cultural activities and social norms are important factors to consider, despite the ambiguity of measuring such links. The state of bone preservation, mostly those of children, religious and social indicators of *ante-mortem* and *post-mortem* treatments and burial segregation, based on age, sex and location in or outside settlements, are major factors in creating a demographic profile. The number of skeletal remains recovered is small and not representative of the actual demography of a site as implied by material culture and settlement size.

The involvement of bio-archaeologists in applying criteria of metric analysis developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in constructing a height profile from skeletal remains (Howells 1973). In addition to genetics and inheritance, increases and reductions in stature throughout different periods provided evidence of nutritional change. Cranial measurements mark the relationship between the length and breadth of the cranial vault, categorized as dolichol/narrow, meso/medium or brachy/broad-headed (Buxon and Rice 1932). Changes in the cranial index occur over time and can be employed as an indicator of population change, due to different causes, such as plague or invasion (Belfor-Cohen et al. 1991). Other factors, such as climate, may also have an effect on head shape.

Within the Levantine skeletal corpus of Neolithic people, some few cranial measurements are available from sites such as Tell Ramad (Ferembach

1969), Jericho (Strouhal 1974), Nahal Hemar (Arensburg and Hershkovitz 1988; Yakar and Hershkovitz 1988) and Abu Ghosh (Arensburg, Yakar and Smith 1978). These show considerable variation, as they include some specimens with exceptionally broad crania and wide rami, in contrast to those of preceding periods. Variations in skeletal remains are also related to height and breadth. Within the skeletal remains of Neolithic Jericho, the average stature of a male from PPNB was four centimeters greater than that of PPNA (Kurth and Rohrer-Ertel 1981).

## **Conclusion**

Levantine history and culture, hidden within the archaeological and ethnographic record, are marked by diversity and continuity. Written texts, epigraphy, archaeology and ethnography have been employed for studying and analyzing material cultures and other major features of abandoned settlements, villages and towns. Scholars dealing with the archaeology and anthropology of the Levant face controversial challenges. Increasing changes, supporting the engagement of social and physical sciences in archaeology, have gradually developed with the currently increasing interest in human adaptation and complex relationship with regional landscapes and environments. Combining this interest in the development of scientific methods, techniques and methodologies to all areas of archaeology, a progressive application of a wide range of such techniques improves the quality and reliability of the information derived from archaeological research, strengthening our knowledge of the past. For far too long, archaeologists working in the Levant have dealt in a quite restricted way with cemeteries and tombs as patterns of burial customs reflected in the material recovered culture (Sheridan 2017), while analysis of human remains has appeared primarily in the appendices of reports (Perry 2012). Attention to new scientific methods has disclosed the potential and importance of human bones, flora and fauna as essential sources of information in mapping a population's bio-socio-cultural life. Such cannot be made on simple associations between human presence and artifactual remains.

Currently, bio-archaeology contributes immensely to Near Eastern archaeology, both by developing techniques for the recovery and analysis of bones, and by discussing theories and problems in which skeletal remains are an asset. In both fieldwork and scientific laboratory analysis, bio-archaeology addresses a multitude of research fields, including the study of human diet and subsistence, health and disease, family structure and social complexity.

It is difficult for an archaeologist to conduct credible field research in the Levant today, without incorporating interrelated disciplines from the biological and social sciences into his research strategy by coordinating a team, including a bio-archaeologist, anthropologist, archaeo-zoologist and botanist (Figure 16.1).

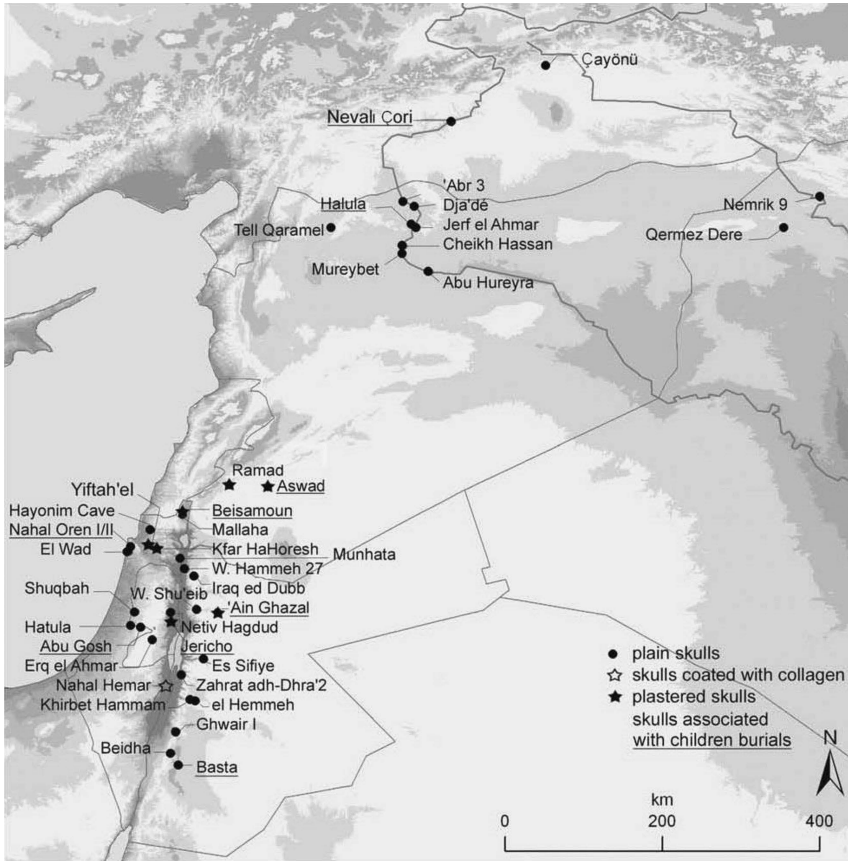


Figure 16.1 Sites with skull burials: Natufian to late Pre-Pottery Neolithic B.

**Note**

1 Sarie (2010) reported three cases of violence on the cranial vault from the neolithic village of Ain Ghazal.

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**Part 4**

# **Ideologies of the land**



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# 17 Mapping Palestine

## Biblical and rabbinical perspectives<sup>1</sup>

*Philip R. Davies*

It was one of the founding figures of general semantics, Alfred Korzybski, who made the famous comment that ‘A map is not the territory it represents’ (Korzybski 1958: 58). The phrase was adapted by Jonathan Z. Smith for the title of his most influential book (Smith 1978) and might be said to encapsulate much of the work of my friend and colleague Keith Whitelam, who has long been interested in themes of spatial and historical representations as ideological constructs (Whitelam 1996, 2013; Whitelam 2011; Whitelam and Pfoh 2013).

In recent years I have become interested in the phenomenon of cultural memory and the Hebrew scriptural canon (Davies 2008, 2013a), which can be described as an analysis of mental maps of the past. It is now generally accepted that these biblical maps for the most part have no *direct* resemblance to those drawn by archaeology: they are not ‘history’ in our modern meaning of the word as ‘what actually happened’. The effort of rationalizing biblical time-maps into the semblance of a critical modern history, as was the custom until late in the twentieth century, has thus been abandoned by all but a few scholars. Instead, we are obliged to see biblical narratives of the past as testimonies to the ways in which the creators of those texts imagined worlds and stories where their Israel and its deity played out their identities and their destinies – and would continue to do so.<sup>2</sup>

Here I want to follow Whitelam’s interest in maps and consider in a very preliminary way the spatial maps of the biblical canon, while bearing in mind that these maps also feature in contemporary cultural memory. Some of the territories in these maps correspond to historically determined regions, others are imaginary, and sometimes there is a confusion of the two kinds: in ancient times as well as nowadays, this is sometimes unconscious and sometimes deliberate and ideologically programmatic.

By way of an introduction to this analysis, I should underline the obvious point about the relationship between map and territory in the world depicted by the Bible. Despite the enormous influence of the detailed description of tribal territories in Joshua and Numbers, upon which so many modern atlases are predicated, the biblical narratives are on the whole vague about spatial boundaries and relate territory mostly to the identities

of the occupants. Ammon is where Ammonites live, Edom for the Edomites, and the same for Arameans or Israelites. The geographical extent and even placement of the 'land' (as in the case of Edom, quite dramatically shifted during the Iron Age) could move, expand and contract with the distribution of the population after which it was named, and of course boundaries between such territories were fluid and often contested. The control of a fortress might establish a kind of claim to the territory around it, but it did not prescribe a fixed space within the realm of the king to whom the soldiers were loyal. Likewise, the extent of a kingdom is most realistically defined by the populations from whom a particular king was able to extract taxes. Maps of Iron Age Palestine (or most other places) ought to reflect patronage or control rather than territory, at least until the Assyrians and their successors established provinces whose boundaries were administratively set and not constantly negotiated by force of arms. Maps of kingship, language and economic association likewise will portray ancient identities better than delineations of monarchic states. Such maps, of course, cannot be drawn with much precision and in any event would be unstable. But, to take an example, referring to Dan as an 'Israelite' city means nothing unless translated into more concrete criteria: was it controlled from Samaria? Did its inhabitants speak the language of Samaria, rather than Aram or some local dialect? Were its kinship links primarily with the central highlands? Most probably, if asked, the inhabitants of Dan would in any event describe themselves in terms of their city or their family. Would our modern label of 'Israelite' (even if only occasionally accurate) have meant much to them (this line of argument is more eloquently developed in Whitelam's *Rhythms of Time*)?

What, then, of the detailed boundary lists of the second part of the book of Joshua? Here, as with biblical genealogies, we can formulate a rule that will not lead us greatly astray: the more detailed a description, the more idealized, the more utopian, the more imaginary. This may seem counter-intuitive but only to those who do not think it through. Consider the detailed descriptions of Jerusalem's temple in Ezekiel and in the Temple Scroll. The following analysis, at any rate, is qualified by these considerations.

### **'From the Euphrates to the Nile': or 'Beyond the River'**

Although this territory makes a number of only fleeting appearances in the Bible, it plays an important role. The land that is promised to Abra(ha)m for his descendants, the one to which he and his family travel, and which is regularly named as the 'land of Canaan', is defined only once. In Gen. 12:7, when Abram is at Shechem, he is promised 'this land'. In 13:15, apparently at Bethel, from where Abram and Lot divided it between them, Abram is promised 'all the land that you see' for his descendants. In 17:8 the divine promise is of 'all the land of Canaan'. But what does that include or not include? From 21:32 and 34 it might be inferred that the 'land of the Philistines' is not portrayed as part of the 'land of Canaan' (where,

according to 12:6; 13:7 and 34:30, Canaanites lived, or Canaanites and Perizzites, but not Philistines). That the 'land of the Philistines' is not part of the land of Canaan may also be the implication of 26:1. Nowhere in the Bible are the Philistines enumerated as among the 'nation of Canaan', and yet the tribal lands enumerated in Numbers and Joshua cover the territory in which they settled.

But in 15:18 the divine land promise is a little more precise, 'from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates', while 10:19 (generally recognized as from a different source) puts it, 'from Sidon, in the direction of Gerar, as far as Gaza, and in the direction of Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboiim, as far as Lasha' – that is, including the Jordan valley, which according to Gen. 13:11 was taken by Lot. Whether the promise of 15:8 is meant to indicate all the land between the Mediterranean and the Jordan (and thus to include the 'land of the Philistines') is unclear, but the mention in 10:19 of Gaza may imply as much (though it is just possible that Gaza is meant to indicate the southern extremity of Philistine 'land'): at any rate, the Philistines are not on the 'map' of Genesis chapter 10 at all, except as having come from Crete (Caphtor). They are, of course, present in chapter 20, in the person of the semitically named Abimelech, king of Gerar. Philistia seems to be a kind of no-man's-land or even a 'state of exception' (to borrow the phrase developed by Agamben (2005)). The concept needs modification when applied to the text of Genesis, but works very well for the space left to the modern *Falastīn*.

From these various texts we gain no clear definition of the 'land of Canaan' in Genesis, but the whole territory from the Euphrates to the Egyptian border appears on two other biblical maps. One of these is of the lands conquered by David, more or less summarized in 2 Sam 8:1–14: Philistia, Aram, Moab, Ammon, Amalek, Edom. The short list provided does not permit a precise description of the territory, but it would approximate to the definition of the promised land of Canaan in Genesis 15. The other map is in Ezra. According to the decree of Artaxerxes (Ezra 7:25).

And you, Ezra, according to the God-given wisdom you possess, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River who know the laws of your God; and you shall teach those who do not know them.

Although only an incidental reference, this may supply the key the significance of the land promised to Abram in Genesis 15.

'Beyond the River' figures significantly in Ezra (13 occurrences; 3 in Nehemiah). It is, at the time in which the tale of Ezra is set, a well-defined imperial space: the satrapy to which Judah and Samaria belong. Why is Ezra portrayed as having authority to impose the law of his god over all those within the satrapy who know it? Would this not include Samaria? Apparently so, since Ezra 4:10 reports that the leaders, apparently of various

racial elements in the population of Samaria, wrote to the Persian king in protest at the rebuilding of Jerusalem. They claim to represent (or rather they are claimed to claim to represent) ‘the rest of the nations whom the great and noble Osnappar deported and settled in the cities of Samaria and in the rest of the province Beyond the River’ and who represent themselves to Zerubbabel as ‘worship[ping] your god as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of King Esarhaddon of Assyria who brought us here’ (4:2).

The depiction of Samaritan leaders as claiming to be worshippers of the same god, but as being rejected by the Judahites as ‘adversaries’ (4:1) is interesting, because the same ambiguity is met in the story of 2 Kgs 17:27–41 (the Assyrian king here being unnamed), which relates that the imported populations were taught the worship of Yahweh, but concludes that they did not, and continued to worship other gods. (Again, we are confronted with an exceptional state, or exceptional space: under the law of the god of Israel, but not part of Israel.) From the point of view of the narrative in Ezra 4, would they be classified among those who ‘know the laws’ of Ezra’s god, or not? And who else in the satrapy of ‘Beyond the River’ would potentially fall under the sway of Ezra’s laws? The aporia no doubt reflects ambiguity or dispute within the authorship and initial readership of various canonized texts over the status of Samaria in regard to membership of the same cult or deity as that of Jerusalem.

In comparing the texts in this section, we uncover a kind of convergence: the territory of the descendants of Abraham, the law of Ezra’s god/of Yahweh and the territory subjugated by David (and ruled from Jerusalem). We can now explore the historical configuration that links the satrapy and Abraham. For it can be argued that this area, called in Aramaic *‘abar nahara* and in Hebrew *‘eber hanahar* (Akkadian *ebnari*), came to acquire more than a purely geographical or administrative connotation. In biblical scholarship of the last century, the ‘Hebrews’ were widely linked to *habiru* or *‘apiru*, groups encountered in Late Bronze texts often characterized as outlaws or brigands. In the Amarna texts they are cited as the enemies of the Pharaoh’s vassal kings in Palestine. However, the identification ‘Hebrew’ is also claimed by the prophet Jonah and the first-century Jew Saul of Tarsus (Jonah 1:9; Phil 3:5). The designation was therefore obviously still in use, and with a rather different kind of meaning. Was it by now a synonym for ‘Jew’? Or, since neither Jonah nor Saul came from the tribe of Judah, did it designate a worshipper of Yahweh, or even an Israelite, who was not Judahite (i.e. a Samaritan)? But in that case, why did Jonah not use ‘Israelite’, since in the period in which the story is set, he would have belonged to the kingdom of Israel? Why, moreover, would Saul/Paul add ‘Israelite’, if it is redundant?<sup>3</sup>

The answer seems to be that *‘ibrim* was used to designate those from the territory of *‘br hnhrl’ br nhr*.<sup>4</sup> Confirmation of this is that the predominant language of this area was Aramaic, which was known as *‘ibri*, or, as

conventionally translated, 'Hebrew'. This is the case in the New Testament, which refers to Aramaic as Ἑβραῖος, but also in the Talmud, where it is called תִּירְבֵּעַ (e.g. b. Shabb 115a).<sup>5</sup> It seems natural that speakers of 'ibrit would be those referred to as 'ibrim, and the heartland of the Aramaic language was Aram/Syria, from where it became, under the Assyrians, adopted as a *lingua franca*, a practice followed by the successor empires of Babylon and Persia. Both Jonah and Saul of Tarsus could refer to themselves as 'Hebrews', for whether or not Tarsus is to be regarded as falling within this area, a member of an Aramaic speaking 'Israelite' from Cilicia would very probably use what we can precisely term an 'ethnic designation'. For just as a Jew (=Judean) might live anywhere in the Roman Empire, Judea would function as a 'home away from home', as the 'motherland'; likewise 'Across the River' could be the homeland for a native Aramaic speaker living in Asia Minor (cf. Acts 21:40; 22:2: Saul/Paul was likely a native Aramaic speaker, like Palestinian Jews). And of course, Jews/Judeans were also 'Hebrews', but (as in the case of Jonah, perhaps) 'Hebrew' was a preferred *ethnos* for one who was a worshipper of Yahweh but not a Judean (though one who would, after the Hasmoneans and Herod would have been called a 'Jew'). Even so, while Saul also calls himself an 'Israelite', Jonah does not.<sup>6</sup>

What other cultural features besides language pertained to these 'Hebrews' that made them an *ethnos*? For among those called 'Jews' of the first century CE, Aramaic- and Greek-speaking Jews apparently differed in more than purely linguistic preferences: Acts 6:1 has 'Hellenists' arguing with 'Hebrews' – i.e. Greek-speakers arguing with Aramaic speakers. But they were hardly arguing about language. As an Aramaic speaker, a 'Hebrew', Saul/Paul attracts the enmity of the Greek-speakers (Acts 9:29). What kinds of cultural differences divided the two linguistic groups does not matter here (possibly they relate, at least in part, to the degree of compliance with 'Greek customs'). The point is that the 'Hebrews' were a group to whom Jews and Samaritans ('Israelites') belonged, but also contained those who were not 'Israelite'. The status of 'Hebrews' within the biblical laws is consistent with a recognition of a fraternal relationship that deserved special treatment. Moreover, in the Persian-Hellenistic era, the 'Hebrews' not only continued to practise circumcision but included part of the Judahite and Samaritan Yahweh-worshipping diaspora: according to Niehr (1990) this population were worshippers of a high god. We may add that among whom those affiliated with the cults of Jerusalem and Gerizim (about Samaria we do not know) the high god will have been identified with Yahweh. But the common usage of ('el) 'elyon as a designation (and perhaps the decline in the use of the divine name) suggests that differences over the identity of the high god were insignificant. For at least Jerusalem and Gerizim, it was the identity of the single authorized sanctuary that mattered.

As an *ethnos*, the 'Hebrews' of 'Across the River' are provided with their own eponymous ancestor, Eber, a grandson of Shem, in Genesis 10 and 11. Unfortunately, the information given about him is confusing. In Genesis

10, he and his descendants should represent an ethnic or social group with a designated area of settlement, as with other members of the list. But only one of his sons, Joktan, is assigned further descendants or territories and these appear to lie in the region known at the time as 'Arabia': parts of Jordan and Nabatea that lay outside the region of 'Beyond the River', but where dialects of Aramaic were also spoken. According to v. 21, Shem is the 'father of all the descendants of Eber', a statement that has the effect of equating 'Eberites' with all those descended from Shem, comprising the inhabitants of the eastern part of the Fertile Crescent from Elam to Aram (corresponding closely to the range of the Aramaic language in the Persian-Hellenistic era).

In Genesis 11, Joktan is omitted entirely, while the other son, Peleg, is now furnished with a line of descent that leads to Abram (11:16–26). In Gen. 14:13 Abram is accordingly called 'the Hebrew' – a designation that, given his home and that of his family in Haran, was perfectly appropriate.<sup>7</sup> This comment brings us to the equation of Abram the Hebrew with the promise of the territory of 'Across the River' made to his descendants (namely the Hebrews). Thus, while Eber is the nominal, etymological ancestor of the Hebrews, Abraham is the ancestor from whom their possession of their land is derived.<sup>8</sup> And indeed, it is the family of Abraham that subsequently occupies this land (excluding the land of the Philistines): Arameans (he himself is from Haran, and both Rebekah and Rachel also come from the same region), Ammonites and Moabites (from Lot, who was offered, and took, part of the land Abraham felt authorized to grant); Edomites and Ishmaelites. The fact that Esau and Ishmael (identified as the ancestors of Edomites and Arabs) are each first-born sons, but dispossessed, is probably significant. Finally, there is (see later) that part of Canaan that is allotted to Jacob and his descendants, Israel and Judah. This, according to the scheme represented in Genesis, comprises *part* of the land promised to Abraham.

It remains to note that most of this region – apart from Greek-speaking districts (counterparts to the Philistines?) – was absorbed into the Hasmonean kingdom of Judah, as a result of which the name 'Judean/Jew' became attached to them. The naming might not have persisted but for the policies of the Romans and of their client Herod, who accorded 'Jews' and the cult of Jerusalem a privileged status, with the effect of making 'Jew' and 'Hebrew' synonymous, detaching it from both 'Across the River' and, later, 'the land of Judea', and, in time, ensuring that the name 'Hebrew' (=Aramaic) came to be attached to the language of the Jewish scriptures.

### **The 'land of Israel'**

It is necessary to begin a discussion of this concept by making clear the difference between two terms used in the Hebrew Scriptures: *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* and *'admat yiśrā'ēl*. Unfortunately, both terms are rendered in English (and in most modern languages) identically, thus obscuring what is an important distinction in biblical usage (though one probably lost to most modern

Hebrew speakers, for whom only *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* is in use). Moreover, it is the term in modern Hebrew for 'Palestine', which contradicts the careful biblical distinction. The first designates an area that is defined politically: that is, an area occupied by a state named 'Israel'. It never refers to the sum of territories promised or allocated to the twelve tribes of the 'people' of Israel, which was never actualized historically as a political or geographical entity. Outside the book of Ezekiel (see below) both *'ereš* and <sup>a</sup>*damah* are used of the land of the twelve tribes, but not qualified by 'Israel'.

### ***Genesis - Judges***

It is not surprising that the Pentateuch nowhere uses either *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* or *'admat yiśrā'ēl* because as yet there is no 'Israel' but only Jacob and his sons. (In Num. 32:22 the 'land' is given to 'Israel', but this is somewhere short of naming the land as 'land of Israel'.) As discussed earlier, the space in which the ancestors live is the 'land of Canaan'. But, strikingly, *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* is not found in Joshua-Judges, where the promised territory is at the centre of attention. The word *'ereš* is used alone (e.g. Josh 1:2, 11); 11:22 reads, 'None of the Anakim was left in the land of the Israelites (*b<sup>e</sup>'ereš benē yiśrā'ēl*); some remained only in Gaza, in Gath, and in Ashdod'. These three Philistine territories would apparently fall within the limits of 'the Land' allotted to the twelve tribes elsewhere, but this is surely not the reason why the shorter 'land of Israel' is not used. In Judg. 11:15 we find 'land of Moab' and 'land of the Ammonites' and in 11:21 'land of the Amorites'. So why not 'land of Israel' instead of 'land of the children of Israel' – and why is this term used just once?

An answer can be given. Avoidance of the expected *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* is for idiomatic reasons. For *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* had a very precise meaning: the land of the *kingdom of Israel* – a political entity. It is for that reason that the term is not used for a wider territory that includes Judah and Edom, and additionally we might speculate that such an avoidance was necessary in order to counter any claim that the *true* 'land of Israel' was what became the province of Samaria, and thus possibly that the Samaritans were the true inhabitants of the promised land.<sup>9</sup> It remains, then, only to demonstrate that *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* everywhere in the Hebrew Scriptures means the land belonging to the kingdom of Israel, and, by extension, the province of Samaria.

### ***Samuel – Kings***

In the books of Samuel–Kings *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* occurs four times, in each case referring to the territory of the kingdom of that name. Whether or not Judah is included does not strictly matter, since the usage permits Judah's inclusion if it is reckoned to be part of that kingdom. However, this is left unclear. The narrative mentions two distinct 'houses' (1 Sam 7:2, 3; 2 Sam 1:12; 16:3; 2 Sam 2:4, 7, 10, 11, and esp. 12:8 and 1 Kgs 12:21) as well as 'men

of Judah' and 'men of Israel' (1 Sam 7:11; 17:19; 26:2; 31:1, 7 etc.; 2 Sam 20:4; cf. Davies 2013b). Whether Saul's own kingdom of Israel is understood as including Judah is an issue perhaps deliberately unresolved in a narrative awkwardly negotiating a shift from a twelve-tribe 'Israel' in the Heptateuch (Genesis-Judges) to two contiguous societies ('houses', then 'kingdoms' from the time of Saul onwards) – a shift that is nowhere directly alluded to, let alone described or explained. If, as seems probable, the books of Samuel and Kings are consistent in this regard, then the three occurrences of *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* in 1 Samuel mean the 'land of Saul's kingdom of Israel', probably but not necessarily excluding Judah, but certainly excluding Judah from the time that David is crowned king over it (2 Sam 2:11).

Of course, the books of Samuel and Kings retain the notion of a twelve-tribe 'people' that the Pentateuch elaborates, and which the books of Joshua and Judges gradually dismantle into separate tribes (making the separation of Judah as a distinct 'house' a little easier), and create the episode of a temporarily unified kingdom of Judah and Israel ruled by David and Solomon.<sup>10</sup> But the term in these books for the unified territory of the two kingdoms is 'from Dan to Beersheba', not *'ereš yiśrā'ēl*, and not even *'ad-mat yiśrā'ēl*. 'From Dan to Beersheba' is required precisely *because* 'land of Israel' means something else. Hence, for example, in 2 Sam 3:10 we read, '...to transfer the kingdom from the house of Saul, and set up the throne of David over Israel and over Judah, from Dan to Beersheba', and in 1 Kgs 4:25 we read, 'during Solomon's lifetime Judah and Israel lived in safety, from Dan even to Beersheba, all of them under their vines and fig trees'. The use of 'Israel' or 'all Israel' in 2 Sam 17:11 and 24:2, 15 does not contradict this conclusion, since one strand of the narrative represents David as Saul's successor over the kingdom of Israel, which now includes Judah (the same occurs elsewhere and in Chronicles), but in 2 Sam 24:1, 9 'Judah and Israel' are separately acknowledged, reflecting the normative view for these books that 'Israel' does not include Judah. At any rate, 'land of Israel' is never used in Samuel–Kings to denote the combined territory of the twelve tribes, even for the reign of Solomon.

### *Chronicles*

In the light of the previous discussion, the use of *'ereš yiśrā'ēl* in the books of Chronicles should be especially significant, since the authors embrace the notion of a unified kingdom that includes not only the reigns of David and Solomon (and implicitly Saul) but also the period between the fall of Samaria and the fall of Jerusalem. But of the five occurrences of the term, three are restricted to the reigns of David and Solomon (1 Chron 13:2; 22:2; 2 Chron 2:17), following the usage of Kings. The other two are 2 Chron 30:25 and 34:7. The first of these mentions *gērîm* who 'came out of the land of Israel' to Judah, which only underlines that the Chroniclers follow the normative practice when dealing with what were *de facto* if not *de iure* separate

kingdoms. The second passage describes the activities of Josiah in reforming the cult. Having noted that he ‘purged Judah and Jerusalem’ (34:5), the following verses therefore relate to Samaria:

“In the towns of Manasseh, Ephraim, and Simeon, and as far as Naph-tali, in their ruins all around, he broke down the altars, beat the sacred poles and the images into powder, and demolished all the incense altars throughout all *the land of Israel*”: here again *’ereš yišrā’ēl* is Samaria, and, notably, the name remains even after the disappearance of the kingdom itself.<sup>11</sup>

### *Ezekiel*

Neither *’ereš yišrā’ēl* nor *’admat yišrā’ēl* is found in the Prophetic books outside the book of Ezekiel, where together they occur twenty times. Ezekiel is almost unique in its use of the term *’admat yišrā’ēl* to denote the territory of the twelve tribes: the closest approximation is in Deut 26:15. But the book also contains the three remaining instances of *’ereš yišrā’ēl*. It is therefore in this book that we should most clearly be able to confirm the distinction between the two terms. The phrase ‘Judah and the *land of Israel*’ in 27:17 clearly places Judah outside it, while in 27:18, the boundaries of the *’admat yišrā’ēl* run at one point ‘along the Jordan between Gilead and *’ereš yišrā’ēl*’ (47:18). The most curious instance is in 40:2 where Ezekiel is brought to *’ereš yišrā’ēl*, and set down ‘on a very high mountain, on which was a structure like a city to the south’. Whatever the difficulties of this verse, the conclusion has to be that this mountain is in Samaria, not in Judah – and cannot, therefore, be Jerusalem.<sup>12</sup>

### **The tribal allotments**

Although never called the ‘land of Israel’, two passages define with some exactitude the limits of territories assigned to the twelve tribes, thus defining what might be called (as in Ezekiel) the *’admat yišrā’ēl*. Num. 34:1–13 gives a description of the boundaries of the land west of the Jordan to be settled by nine and a half tribes. The more detailed accounts in Joshua 13–22 combine various data such as border descriptions and town lists to define the territories of each tribe, including in Transjordan. At present there is little consensus as to the source of the various sets of data (see Kallai 1967, 1986; Auld 1980; Na’aman 1986). Ezek 47:13–21 also provides a definition of the extent of the land, without subdividing into tribal allotments, while Chapter 48 divides the land between the tribes in a clearly schematic way. But all of these schemes, and not only Ezekiel’s, are utopian, idealistic. There was historically never a time in which such a piece of territory comprised a single state. Judges 1 is in this respect accurate in stating that the allocated lands were in most cases never fully (perhaps never at all) occupied by the

designated tribe. By combining the maximal extent of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, one may indeed arrive at a geographical space that more or less corresponds to the totality of these lists, and, as suggested earlier, there seems to be an attempt in 1 Kings 8 to concretize a twelve-tribe society into a political one, namely the single Israelite kingdom of Solomon. The Chronicler may be understood to assume the concept of a ‘land’ of ‘Israel’ comprising both Judah and Samaria, but at the moment of Judah’s depopulation by Nebuchadrezzar, his explanation of an ‘empty land enjoying its Sabbaths’ (2 Chron 36:21) cannot apply to Samaria, and thus the author betrays the same kind of *aporia* as do the creators of the books of Kings, in which the realities of two separate societies and their territories asserts itself over the imagined combined space promised to an Israelite ‘people’.

### **The land of Judah**

The final territory to consider in the biblical geography of Palestine is the land of Judah. The biblical portraits offer us a tribe, a ‘house’ alongside the ‘house of Israel’ and a kingdom, later province. These are not synonymous. The province of Judah/Yehud/Judea contained the tribe and territory (or some of it) of Benjamin: after the accounts of rivalry and enmity between Saul and David and their house and tribes, 1 Kgs 12:20–23 asserts that only Judah remained with Rehoboam, but includes Benjamin among the king’s subjects. It is clear that the territory of Benjamin *did* become part of the kingdom and province of Judah, but probably this realignment occurred after the end of the kingdom of Israel. Chronicles, along with Ezra and Nehemiah, recurrently denote the inhabitants of Judah as ‘Judah and Benjamin’ (2 Chron 11:12, 23; 15:2, 8–9; 25:5; 34). But the name of the land and of the kingdom and province remained ‘Judah’ and thus Mordecai can be described without contradiction as a Benjaminite and a Judahite (Esther 1:1). Indeed, the land of Judah seems also to have been occupied by various groups (Caleb [Josh 14:13], Simeon [Josh 19:1, 9], Kenizzites [Josh 14:14], Jebusites [Josh 15:63]). Whether there existed a genuine ‘tribe’ of Judah is actually worth questioning: the name ‘Judah’ derives from the territory itself (as do the same of some of the Israelite tribes too), and the idea of a ‘tribe’ of Judah may have originated when the population of Judah took the identity of one of the ‘sons of Israel’, namely as worshippers of the ancestral ‘god of Israel/Jacob’ (as argued in Davies 2007).

The political status of the inhabitants of this region is uncertain until the mid-eighth century. It has now been established that they were less economically and culturally developed than the population of the northern highlands, which formed a state, the ‘house of Omri’ in the ninth century (see e.g. Herzog and Singer-Avitz 2004). (The description of two separate ‘houses’ in 1 Samuel supports this conclusion, which is based on archaeological evidence.) Judah may have been ruled by a ‘house of David’: possible references to this in the Tel Dan and Mesha stelae would indicate this. But while the

'house of Omri' may also be accurately referred to as the 'kingdom of Israel', the existence of a 'kingdom of Judah' from the ninth century is uncertain; rather, the rulers of Judah were vassals of either Israel, Aram or both. There is certainly no reference in any ancient non-biblical source to a Judahite 'king' or 'kingdom' until the period in which its ruler somehow became an Assyrian vassal and thus secured independence from its local patrons.<sup>13</sup> Tiglath-pileser III mentions Judah in a tribute list (Summary Inscription 7), naming Jehoahaz (this must be Ahaz) of Judah.

Much of what had been regarded as the 'land of Judah' (and indeed as part of the kingdom) was later occupied by Edomites and formed a separate province under the Persians from about 400 BCE. It would be interesting (and highly valuable) to know whether, under the Ptolemaic kingdom, of which most of Palestine was a part, the provinces of Judah, Samaria and Edom were treated as parts of a single administrative unit. If so, the biblical portrait of a 'land of Israel' embracing both Samaria and Judah might have approximated to political reality at this time.<sup>14</sup> However, two writers from the early third century, Hecataeus of Abdera and Manetho, wrote about the Judahites without any apparent knowledge of Samaritans: the Jews leave Egypt for Jerusalem! The reason for this omission may be that Egypt had been colonized by Judahites, not Samaritans, but even so this supposes that, unlike the leaders of the Elephantine colony a century earlier, these Judahites paid no attention to Samaria and hence informed interested Egyptians only about Judah. There is, of course, plenty of evidence in the Hebrew Bible for a Judahite claim that they were all that was left of the 'people of Israel' (e.g. 2 Kings 17).

Most probably, under the Ptolemies and Seleucids, Judah retained some kind of semi-autonomous identity (perhaps fiscal) under the rule of the high priest of Jerusalem; at all events the well-rehearsed but variously interpreted circumstances before, during and after the wars of Judean independence under Antiochus IV and his successors led to a Judean kingdom that secured first independence and then sovereignty over much of Palestine. The enlarged kingdom was short-lived, though after an interval it was revived and extended in the rule of Herod the Great before it was split among various successors, though the province of Judah still extended beyond the traditional 'land of Judah', north as far as Galilee. At this period, then, 'Judah' is redefined to include what had been Samaria and Idumea, while their inhabitants (among whom we may include both Herod the Great and Jesus) were reckoned as 'Jews', i.e. Judeans. The merging of the identities of 'Israel' and 'Jew', accomplished by the Hasmoneans, remained, leaving the adherents of the cult and temple of Gerizim to be considered as practising a form of 'Judaism' that was acknowledged by other Jews in varying degrees, sometimes not at all. 'Israel' became an emic equivalent of the etic 'Jew'.

The Hasmoneans did not call their kingdom 'Israel' nor their territory 'land of Israel'. In an insightful essay Daniel Schwarz has distinguished the two identities of 'Jew/Judean' as geographical/political and religious, using

as lenses the first and second books of Maccabees (Schwartz 2013). From his study it can be suggested that a strong *Judean* political ideology (which could be, but was not necessarily, Davidic) stood alongside a religious one, and might well explain the emergence of a Judean hegemony to the point of almost obscuring an Israelite identity. There is an interesting parallel in our own times in the different ideologies of religious and secular Zionism regarding what is a Jewish State of Israel. To a large degree, then, the absorption by the territory of 'Judah' of what had been 'Israel' did not simply lead to the religious (and non-political) identity of 'Israel' becoming a Judean/Jewish religious identity. It also represents a clash of religious and political traditions and ambitions that, among other things, led to the failure of Jews to achieve a satisfactory self-definition until the loss of Temple and land – and even then, sometime later. But over the issue of ancient Jewish nationalism there is a great deal of scholarly discussion (I mention only three of the more accomplished: Mendels 1992; Goodblatt 2006; Schwartz 2009), but what in this context is interesting is the strand of Judahite nationalism that is evident in the Hebrew scriptural canon and reflects an ideology older than the Hellenistic age, and the advent of 'Judaism' – not so much in the numerous boring and repetitive oracles against foreign nations, nor dreams of the destruction of imperial kingdoms, but with respect to domination of Palestine, and especially Samaria. What political ambitions did the strand of thinking that eliminated the inhabitants of Samaria from the 'people Israel' foment? The right to all the 'land of Israel, including *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl* itself? Is this the ambition that betrays itself in the legends of David's and Solomon's rule and the 'secession' of the 'ten tribes' from it?

### **The halakhic 'land of Israel' of the rabbis**

I have argued here that, unlike *'ereṣ yiśrā'ēl*, the land of Samaria, the former territory of the kingdom of Israel, the biblical *'admat yiśrā'ēl*, the lands assigned to the twelve tribes, has no historical substance. At the time when it did approximate the biblical ideal, when Palestine was effectively united by the Hasmoneans, it was not as a land of Israel, but a kingdom of Judah. The land promised to the 'people of Israel' was an ideal, in Joshua, Numbers and Ezekiel, and in the rabbinic literature the ideal was perpetuated – in an era when the land no longer contained even a 'Judah'. Just as the rabbis developed the category of 'holiness' ('defiling the hands') to demarcate scripture from non-scripture, so they defined the land given to Israel (following the lead of the book of Ezekiel and of Leviticus) as 'holy', a place in which, if Israel/Jews no longer lived there, constituted the sacred space in which the numerous divinely revealed laws applied as they did and could not in the real world of diaspora. These laws were mostly agricultural, but also included the release of debts (Sheviit 6:1), remarriage of widows (Yevamoth 16:7) and ritual immersion (Mikvaot 8:1) But crucially, the Mishnah, while it most often speaks of 'the land' without further definition, occasionally

amplifies this to ‘land of Israel’ – *’ereṣ yiśrā’ēl* – changing a meaning that had lasted a millennium.<sup>15</sup> This utopian redefinition has taken effect ever since, and found its way into modern Hebrew, even found in some English language scholarly literature about Palestine, thus giving the impression of speaking about a historically actualized space rather than a Jewish mental map. The effect is one that is most accurately defined as ‘linguistic colonization’, since it reinforces the unhistorical notion that there is some objective bond between the whole of Palestine and Judaism, rather than a halakhic or (as in the case of secular Jews) sentimental or faux-nostalgic. Whatever the felt political necessities of asserting this bond, it should not become enshrined in scholarly discussion.

## Postscript

For two millennia the matrix of biblical scholarship has been theological. The contents of the Jewish scriptures have been interpreted mainly in light of their ideas about God and their apparent records of a sacred history. This may, not too unfairly, be represented as a post-canonical hermeneutic: looking at the texts through lenses coloured by their incorporation in a ‘holy book’. But historical-critical approach requires also a historical-critical re-configuration: of a pre-canonical process, of authors writing not to teach about God but something more engaged with history, ideology and politics. Political use of the Bible contributed much to the shaping of modern Europe (and its colonies), and perhaps the foundation of a truly modern and secular appropriation of biblical scholarship is to deconstruct language about God into language about power, of which the chief applied science is politics. The *aporias* identified at several points in the preceding discussion show where a conflict or inconsistency of certain ideological positions exists that cannot be managed narratively.

The importance of analysing the historical terminology and concepts of the region long known as Palestine is that today the different spaces outlined earlier are exploited, sometimes ignorantly, sometimes deliberately, in claims for possession of the ‘holy land’. History is not bunk, but the misuse of history sometimes is. Biblical ‘history’ needs to be replaced by the kinds of historical memories we critically construct for other parts of the world; and what goes for history goes for geography as well.

## Notes

- 1 The article is a reprint of Davies (2017), who permitted its re-use for this volume before his un-expected and terribly sad death of May 31, 2018 (RIP). We kindly thank the orig. publishers for permitting us to reprint the article here.
- 2 Lest we imagine that this is a radical breakthrough, we should remember the insistence of von Rad in the mid-twentieth century that Israel’s ‘traditions’ should not be confused with its history (and that an Old Testament Theology should be based on the former, not the latter [von Rad 1975]). Tradition and memory

- are not quite the same thing, but the insight is valid and already reflects a recognition of the divergence of archaeology and biblical narrative that dawned somewhat later upon the practitioners of ‘biblical archaeology’.
- 3 In fact the explanation may be that Saul/Paul is addressing a community for which ‘Israelite’ is an in-term, while Jonah is addressed by foreigners, to whom ‘Israelite’ would mean little.
  - 4 For a fuller discussion and documentation of the equation of ‘Hebrews’ and ‘Across the River’, see Beattie and Davies (2011). What follows is an abbreviation of some of this argumentation.
  - 5 For detailed discussion of the evidence, see Beattie and Davies (2011).
  - 6 Nevertheless, Esther 1 designates Mordecai as both a Benjaminite and a Jew/Judean, on the basis that ‘Judean’ denotes the kingdom of Judah and not the tribe. If this usage was already acceptable by the first century CE, then Saul chose not to follow it.
  - 7 Nor should it be overlooked that *’brml’brm* may be a deliberate wordplay.
  - 8 On the connection between ancestor veneration and land possession, see Stavropoulou (2010).
  - 9 This polemical game is being played through the Judean scriptural canon: note how Judge 1 makes the point that only the tribe of Judah fully conquered and occupied its allotted land.
  - 10 But note that whereas both David and Rehoboam are anointed separately as kings over Judah and Israel, Solomon is not; he is presented, unlike the others, as ruling a *single* kingdom called ‘Israel’ (see the following).
  - 11 This usage persists in fact into the Roman period, and surfaces in Matt 2: 20–21, where Jesus and his parents, rather than returning to Judea, flee to the “land of Israel” (εἰς γῆν Ἰσραὴλ). Even, it may be added, in the Greek-speaking world and after both the Hasmoneans and Herod had unified most of Palestine under the name of ‘Judah’.
  - 12 Zimmerli’s commentary (1983) devotes an Appendix (pp. 563–565) to ‘land of Israel’ in the book, but does not come to grips with the fact that the book’s use of *’ereṣ yiśrā’ēl* is internally consistent and consistent with biblical usage generally.
  - 13 Judah’s entrance into a tribute-bearing status with Assyria is indicated in Tiglath-Pileser’s seventh summary inscription. See Tadmor (1994: 193–194) for text, transcription and commentary. But there is no explanation of how or why a client status was established, as the biblical accounts seem to assert. For a detailed comparison of biblical and Assyrian texts, see Siddall (2009).
  - 14 Unfortunately our knowledge of the political and administrative relationships between Samaria and Judah in the early Hellenistic period is rather poor. For description and analysis of the sources of our meager information, see Grabbe (2008: 2: 166–192).
  - 15 The most interesting discussion occurs in *Sheviit* 6:1 and *Halla* 4:8. Here we find a threefold definition of the ‘land of Israel’, in each of which the halachah is different. The three areas are: (a) the land occupied by those who came from Babylon, from the ‘land of Israel’ as far as Keziv (near the modern Lebanese border); (b) of those who came up from Egypt, from Keziv (Achzib) to the River as far as Amanah (unidentified, but perhaps a northwest of Antioch: cf. Jubilees 8:21; Exodus Rabbah 53); and (c) from the River (Euphrates) ‘as far as Amana inwards’. As a further complication *Yadayim* 4 narrates a discussion over whether the tithe for the poor should be given in the sabbatical year in Ammon and Moab, as in Egypt, or the Second Tithe, as in Babylon (note the biblical terminology). This is the one case in which the dichotomy between land of Israel and other lands is infringed. Here is a nice illustration of the theoretical nature of the rabbinic discussion.

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## 18 Land, people and empire

### The Bible through Palestinian Christian eyes<sup>1</sup>

*Mitri Raheb*

The Bible is a Middle Eastern book. I have known this for a long time and I am stating the obvious. However, I realized this in a new way after my third trip to Japan. Spending two weeks there, I was dying for two things: a piece of bread and a piece of meat. People in Japan do not eat bread and most of the food is fish, even raw fish. It finally dawned on me that Jesus could not have been Japanese. If he were, he would not have said, “I am the bread of life” (Joh. 6:35). Bread is not essential in Japan. If Jesus were Japanese, he would have said “I am the rice of life”. The biblical text cannot be understood without understanding the Middle Eastern context in general and the Palestinian context in particular.

An important element of the context that has not been given enough attention is the geo-politics. When it comes to geo-politics, one has to examine the context of the land and its native people. These two elements, land and people, are the most important hermeneutical keys to understanding Scripture and interpreting it. Abandoning these was the outcome of a historical process that deserves some attention.

The message of the Old Testament and to some extent the New is clearly tied to the land of Palestine and its peoples. Biblical revelation took place in a certain context, at a certain time and in a certain geographical location, but the writing was a prolonged process. Almost throughout its history the land was occupied by foreign regional powers. It was the native people of Palestine who received this revelation. And at the heart of this revelation was the notion of salvation from foreign powers. The land is therefore an important key to understanding the message of the Bible.

#### **The land as a fifth gospel**

Historic Palestine, the land between the Jordan River to the east, the Mediterranean to the west, the Negev Desert to the south and Mt. Hermon to the north, has a unique and interesting position isolated by natural barriers of water, desert and mountains. Yet this land is located at the crossroads of three continents and is everything but isolated. The peoples living here have an identity distinct from neighboring peoples, but have always had ongoing

exchange through trade, marriage, migration, exile and displacement with many other peoples of the region. Their identity, although distinct, kept changing, adapting to new contexts and empires.

Palestine as land has the image of being the heart of the region, the “navel of the earth”, and the center of the universe. This is seen in ancient maps like the mosaic in Madaba (Nebenzahl 1986). The land has the reputation as the epicenter of the world. However, this is myth. In reality, Palestine is a land on the margin, on the periphery of the Fertile Crescent, a borderland for diverse empires. A close look at the map will show Palestine surrounded by five regional powers who determined its fate: Egypt to the south, Europe to the west, Turkey to the north and Mesopotamia and Persia to the northeast. Throughout history, Palestine has stood in the sphere of influence of one or two of these five powers which pulled it in competing directions. Palestine’s fertile plains have been battleground for these conflicting powers and it is hardly by chance that Armageddon is seen as taking place in the land’s most fruitful valley.

Palestine is a narrow corridor with few inhabitants and resources. Due to its geo-political position, Palestine has been an occupied land by Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks, Ptolemies, Seleucids, Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Ottomans, British and Israelis. While these superpowers were well established politically, having accumulated a culture of political dominance, the native peoples of Palestine were powerless most of the time, constantly adjusting their identity within a changing context. In fact, adjustment and resistance, liberation from occupation is a connecting thread of our history from the second millennium BCE until today. It was seldom that the people of Palestine enjoyed freedom.

Whenever there was a political vacuum in the region and a chance to declare independence, they had difficulty in sharing the land and keeping its unity. When the land was unified it was occupied. Few exceptions for short periods are but exceptions to the rule: the “Davidic State” at the turn of the first millennium BCE (perhaps a wishful myth), the kingdom of the Hasmoneans (164–63 BCE), of Herod the Great (34–4 BCE) and of Daher El-Omar (1690–1775 CE). For the most part, the empire tolerated forms of self-rule, rather than a state in any real sense. Even so, internal conflict was the rule. Biblical narrative suggests there were struggles between different groups within the land: Judea, Israel, Philistines, etc. After Solomon, the land was divided, hardly marking this “United Monarchy” as anything unique. After the Assyrian occupation, two identities emerged. In the North, people became Samaritans; in the South, they were called Jews. After the death of Herod, the land was again divided among his sons, much like what occurred after the death of Daher El-Omar.

The land often came under more than one imperial power, fostering diverse identities. There was almost never an identity sufficiently strong, developed and inclusive to unite Palestine’s different peoples, enabling them to form a united and independent political entity. The influence of regional

powers over Palestine created either a buffer zone or a battlefield, where regional wars were fought. This is also true today, with the land divided between Hamas' Gaza and the Fatah's West Bank and the Israeli's Israel. None could truly survive if it were not supported by its greater patrons serving their interests.

The geography of the land has added another reason for infighting and instability surrounded as it is by semideserts on two sides. It was in the deserts that most of the Zealots and other fighters retreated to escape the control of the occupier. At the same time, these same desert dwellers terrorized the populated city centers, preventing any accumulation of power, culture or civilization from entirely succeeding. The Bedouin infiltrated the mountains and, in turn, the mountain people infiltrated the coastal plains (Tamari 2008).

If one looks at these features of Palestine, one would see how geo-politics of the region practically determine the land's fate, a fate that is very difficult to escape. Being a land under occupation, the theme of liberation was central throughout history as well as in the Bible. At the same time, control of the land and the unity of its peoples remain an uphill struggle. This is why I view the land as if it were a fifth gospel. The land presents the original setting of the biblical narrative and an essential part of the narrative. That the land suffered under occupation for most of its history provides the reason for the centrality of the theme of liberation.

### **The native people of the land as a sixth gospel**

If we consider the land as a fifth gospel, I would suggest that the people of the land constitute a sixth and an important hermeneutical key for interpreting Scripture. But the question is who are the native people of the land?

For many Christian theologians and Zionist thinkers, the answer is obvious: they are the Israelis of today. They shift between 70 CE and 1948 as if history stood still for two millennia! They equate the Israelites of the Bible with the Israelis of today as if their identity were obvious, and the land of Palestine were "without a people", waiting to be inhabited "again" by "a people without a land". This is, originally, Christian Zionist myth. Behind such understanding is a static understanding of history and a fundamentalist approach to biblical literature.

Many twentieth-century Jewish immigrants to Palestine were actually not the descendants of the Biblical peoples of Palestine who had been exiled. They were mostly descendants of North African Berber or East European Khasar' tribes, who had converted to Judaism (Sand 2009). For them, Jerusalem was much what Rome is for Catholics. One should be careful in talking of a "return" of global Jewry, as if it were a home-coming to their original land. The majority of Palestine's native people never left. Only a small minority of Palestine's people suffered deportation. Empires came, occupied the land for a number of years or decades, but they were eventually forced to leave again.

The majority of the native people remained in the land of their forefathers and foremothers. They were the “*am-ha’aretz*”,<sup>2</sup> the “people of the land” in spite of all the empires that have controlled that land throughout its history. Identities, however, kept changing in accord with new realities and empires. People changed their language from Palestinian and Phoenician West Semitic to Aramaic and Hebrew and later to Greek and Arabic. Their identity shifted from Canaanite and Philistine to Judahite/Israelite, to Hasmonaic, to Roman, to Byzantine, to Arab, to Ottoman and Palestinian, just to name a few. They changed religion from Ba’al to Yahweh. Later they believed in Jesus as the Christ and became Christians, who were first Aramaic-speaking monophysites, before being forced to become, for example, Greek Orthodox. Obligated to pay extra taxes during Islamic dominance, they became Muslims. And yet, throughout the centuries, they maintained a dynamic and flexible identity. In this sense, Palestinians of today stand in historic continuity with biblical Israelites and Judahites. Just so are the Palestinians the native people of the land. They constitute something akin to a sixth gospel. The Palestinian people (Muslims, Christians, Jews and Samaritans) with a significant continuity from biblical times until the present are the native people who survived empires and occupations. They are also the remnant of invading armies or settlers who stayed in the land and integrated themselves rather than returning to their original homeland. Palestinians are the outcome of this long and dynamic history. Their context is important for understanding the Bible. It is time to listen to the narrative of this native people of the land.

The Palestinians of today are the native people of the land, because they are not part of the empire. Their voice is not only unheard, but often silenced. Unless their discourse falls within a European framework, they are not considered dialogue partners. The Muslims of Palestine are ignored because they are Muslims and not thought of as part of the Judeo-Christian culture. Palestinian Christians are marginalized because they are Palestinians. And native, anti-Zionist Jews and Samaritans, who are neither Zionist nor Ashkenazi, are ignored as non-European. Many Western theologians want to monopolize the discourse, allowing only those Palestinians who use their frame of reference. They operate within the logical framework of the empire and will only listen to the narrative of native Palestinians if they operate within this framework. Some of them have even planted Christian Zionist cells in Jerusalem and claim to speak on behalf of native Christians, while disseminating Israeli propaganda on behalf of the Israeli state. I am not only describing Christian Zionists, but also those liberal theologians who continue to propagate Judeo-Christian hegemony. This is why Christian European theologians who develop post-colonial theologies are so few.

If we really want to understand the Bible’s message, it is of the utmost importance to listen to Palestine’s native people. Their suffering under occupation, their aspiration for liberation, their struggles and hopes are all relevant to exegesis. Reading the Bible with Palestinian eyes makes one feel as if the Bible were written for just such times as these.

## The land, the native people and the empires

That the voice of the native people of the land has been marginalized is nothing new. It is part of a long process we need to look at. Biblical writings were connected to the land and its native people. Old Testament writings made sense only in connection with the land and were addressed to its native people or those living in exile from it. The longer the exile lasted, the more distant the land became for those emigrants who began to relate to the text in a new way: allegorically and typologically. Away from the land and in the Diaspora, such emigrants and their descendants had other questions and the texts had to be interpreted anew. A deeper meaning had to be found that it might become relevant for the new generations born abroad, who knew nothing of the land except stories. The land became less relevant to the text and slowly the native people of the land were forgotten.

This is the context in which Christianity emerged, using the momentum of the Diaspora and interpreting the texts in the light of Jesus as Messiah. For Paul, a Diaspora Jew, Christ was relevant not so much to the native people of Palestine, but to the whole of the *οικουμένη* (*oikumene*, the whole of creation). Being *ἐν Χριστῷ* (“in Christ”) became the decisive, not being in the land. Christ became a key to a new understanding of the text. Without such a revision, Christianity would have been but a Jewish sect. Now it became an ecumenical phenomenon and world religion.

By the second century, Greek and Latin Church Fathers, native members of the “Empire”, used a new hermeneutics. Neither the land of Palestine nor its native peoples were necessary. With the conversion of Constantine and the Christianization of the empire in the fourth century CE, however, Palestine became once again relevant as *the Holy Land*. The emperor’s mother, Helena, made a pilgrimage to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. Pilgrims flocked to Palestine, seeking traces of Jesus. They walked where Christ had walked. They fasted and prayed in the desert, where John the Baptist had preached and where monks had settled. The newcomers loved the land. On holy ground, they built monasteries, churches and settlements. Monasteries developed and monks controlled the tourist industry. The land was like a fifth Gospel, but in a different sense. Most of these monks, their servants and those controlling tourism were immigrants. Yet the relationship of these immigrants to the land was different from that of a native people. They were a reflection of the Empire. Though physically in the land, they hardly shared their identity with the people of the land, who were theologically marginalized. Their homeland was exploited by the saints coming to the land, called holy. The native were mostly Aramaic-speaking Monophysites, Samaritans, Jews and pagans. By the fifth century, they were forced to become “Greek” and “Orthodox”, and accept their role in the new empire. Their native voice was silenced; their stories lost. Resisting, native Aramaic Christians welcomed the seventh-century newcomers from Arabia, considering them – though Muslim – liberators from Byzantine domination.

This new power was apart from the, now exhausted, traditional empirical powers, reflected in the Persian and Byzantine empires. This new Arab-Islamic hegemony filled the political gaps between these two ancient powers and gradually expanded its rule. For the new Arab-Islamic empire, the “Holy Land” was only partially holy and it was less attached to the land, which was neglected and its people marginalized.

Change came during Crusaders times. The Crusaders were captivated by “the Holy Land”, ready to die for it. They built castles on every high mountain. They controlled trade and the army and pushed back the Muslim Seljuk Turks, safeguarding Christian access to the Holy Land. They too exploited the land and plundered churches and they too were uninterested in the native people – many of whom were still Christian – for they did not fit the image they had of Christians.

The Ottomans came in 1516 and made Palestine part of their empire. The land was neglected. The native people were important only for the taxes they paid. It was first in the nineteenth century that the Holy Land again became interesting to European powers (Sand 2014). Military ambitions, economic interests and religious fervor shaped this modern era. The Holy Land became part of the orient, needing to be studied and controlled. Orientals were depicted as feminine, backward and weak, waiting to be dominated by the West and recreated in their image (Said 1978).

A new momentum was building in Europe regarding the Land of Palestine. On the one hand, there was the ancient desire of empire to control the “Holy Land”. On the other hand, Christian Europe was struggling with non-Christians within its boundaries, in this case the Jews. Presented with two options, ghettoization or assimilation, a third alternative allowed control of the Holy Land by sending the European Jews there. This was adopted by the Zionist movement and it became a political program. To be successful, a myth was stressed that the land was empty, waiting for its people to return, recreating an ancient bond between the two of a people and its land. The Jews of Europe were excellent allies. Europeans by culture, education and manners and at the same time exotic enough to better fit into the Orient rather than Europe.

French and British control of the Middle East formed the context of colonization. With the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, however, the land again became a theological topic and the “Jewish people” an important hermeneutical key to the biblical text. An entire industry was created to market the reunion of the “Jewish people” with its land. “The promised land”, “God’s elect”, “the Judeo-Christian tradition”, etc. became “*kosher*”; “Exodus” was a ship carrying Jewish immigrants to Palestine and “David and Goliath” became a symbol for the struggle between Israel and the Arab World. Jewish European immigrants became interesting to Europeans because they had similar military ambitions. The voice of the people in the Holy Land became relevant again. But it was the voice of European Jews that was meant. No one asked the Sephardic or Ultra-Orthodox Jews. Western

Christian theologians flocked to the land, now called Israel, to sit by the feet of Jewish rabbis and teachers to learn how to interpret the biblical text and how to relate to the “Jewish Jesus” and “Paul the Rabbi”. Jerusalem again became a center for theological work. More and more Church leaders told each other: “Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths” (Isa 2: 3).

No one listened to Christian or Muslim Palestinians. The natives of Palestine paid the cost for this hermeneutical exercise. They were marginalized. Their land was taken from them by force. Their narrative was stolen with theological pretext and they became aliens in their own home. Their story and that of their ancestors was distorted and hijacked. They became Canaanites, Philistines, Ishmaelites, Arabs and Muslims. Orientalism, neo-colonialism and racism were baptized in a theological discourse, claiming divine intervention! Such divine interventions are not limited to Palestine. Just so white European immigrants arrived in the American continent; the Boers colonized South Africa: and many have believed they had been sent by God to possess the land and to civilize its people (Prior 1997; Segovia 2000). The gap between political analysis and Judeo-Christian hermeneutics is striking. A war crime and violation of human rights for one group is the fulfillment of divine will for another.

### **The Bible and the native people of Palestine**

It is misleading to think that misreading the Bible was something that took place only in the West. In the long process of history, Palestine’s native peoples of the land also lost their connection to the Bible. On the one hand, Palestinian Jews, in response to the ongoing occupation of the land through the different empires, gave up their idea of political liberation. They were disillusioned and disinterested in political agendas. Only if and when the Messiah would come, would they choose liberation. On the other hand, the Palestinian Christian community became mainly Greek Orthodox, used to reading the bible allegorically and typologically. In such a reading there is no place for the land or its native people. It was the Church that displaced that native people of the land. This corresponded with the Byzantine Empire’s control of the Holy Land and conversion of the Aramaic native to orthodoxy.

In order to adjust to political developments of the region under Islam and to avoid paying taxes, the majority of the native people converted to this new religion. They lost their connectedness with the Bible and adopted the Quran. The Bible became strange to the majority of the native peoples of Palestine.

Other native people of Palestine converted to Western churches: Latin, Anglican, Lutheran and other denominations. Trained in theology in the seminaries of empire, they adopted the theology of a tradition that was

foreign to the land and disconnected from its people. The triangle of land, people and Bible lost one of its components forever.

In Europe of the Middle Ages, and especially after the so-called Second Awakening, these developments afforded the opportunity for a new understanding. A different triangle was created connecting the Bible, the land and the Jewish people of ethnic or national background. The establishment of a state for Jews gathered from different corners of the world in 1948 was seen as reversing the invented exile of 70 CE. However, this “reversal” was nothing but an invention of history (Whitelam 1997; Masalha 2007; Piterberg 2008 and Raheb 2011). Most of these newcomers to Palestine had never been part of the native people of Palestine.<sup>3</sup>

Given Palestine’s long history of occupation, Israeli colonialism was hardly new. The modern state of Israel stands in continuity with Egyptian, Assyrian, Babylonian, Roman, Byzantine, Muslim, Crusader, Ottoman and British imperialism. The expansion of Israeli settlements demonstrates this colonial endeavor as post-colonial analyses has concluded. Few theological writings take this geo-political context into consideration. The debate over Israeli occupation of Palestinian land is blurred by bad conscience and guilt about the Holocaust. The Israeli occupation – one of the longest in modern history – would not have been possible without external support. If the conflict had been between two small nations, Israeli and Palestinian, it would likely have been resolved long ago. Yet, even as the international community supplies Israel with the needed military hardware, theologians provide them with “software”: an imperial theology that supports an illegal occupation as divine plan. The people of the land, the Palestinians, pay the price for both hardware and software.

### **Faith in the face of empire**

It is high time to develop a new approach, which might become an instrument for liberation. We Palestinian Christians are called to do exactly that. A major problem with us Palestinians is not that we lost our land in 1948 although this is catastrophe (*Nakba*) in a true sense. We have also lost our historical narrative. For us, history starts in the nineteenth century. Our tragedy starts with the *Nakba* of 1948. Almost all political analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict begins with one of those two dates. On the other hand, pro-Zionist biblical-based history, whether Jewish or Christian, begins in the twelfth century BCE. The time in between is deemed utterly irrelevant and the role of the empire is purposefully neglected, as displacement theology supports the occupation.

Palestinian Christians have a unique status: what I have called a sixth gospel, which we have ignored. It is time to develop a hermeneutics, which takes our rootedness in this land seriously – a theology in which biblical history of occupation and liberation throughout our history are major elements shaping our identity. The fulfillment of the biblical promises and

our national aspiration are two sides of the same coin, not contradicting phenomena. There is no place for a theology that supports the occupation. Divine rights and human rights are to be reconciled, as it is time to read the entire Bible, the entire history of Palestine: all six gospels together.

## Notes

- 1 This article is a revised version of Raheb (2014a, 2014b).
- 2 “*am-ha’aretz*” is used in Ezra 4: 4 to describe those who remained in the land and were not exiled by the Babylonians.
- 3 The colonization of Palestine has taken very diverse forms since the late nineteenth century. Although pre-1948 settlements were generally based in land purchase until the late 1930s, colonial policies and support of the Zionist idea were devastating for rural Palestine, 20% of which was owned by landowners, who did not live in Palestine (cf. Pappé 2004, 2006: ch. 3; Shavit 2015).

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# 19 The invention of the homeland<sup>1</sup>

*Shlomo Sand*

## **Introduction**

In 1648, one year before the Baptist mother and son Johanna and Ebenezer Cartwright called on the revolutionary government in London to put the Jews on ships and send them to their Holy Land, Sabbatai Zevi, a student from Smyrna, decided he was the Jewish Messiah. Had the Jews of Eastern Europe not been undergoing an unsettling trauma at the very same time, this young Jew might have ended up as no more than one of many anonymous lunatics consumed by messianic dreams. But the brutal massacres perpetrated by the Orthodox Christian Cossack Bohdan Khmelnytsky during his rebellion against the Polish Catholic nobility instilled terror in many communities, who were quick to devote themselves to messages of imminent redemption. To better understand this historical context, we must remember that the year 1648 was also reckoned by Kabbalistic calculations to be the year of redemption.

Sabbateanism spread like wildfire across Jewish communities in many countries and recruited a large number of followers. Only after Sabbatai Zevi's conversion to Islam in 1666 did this impassioned movement cease to thrive. The wave of messianism sent ripples through the Jewish faith for years to come. Sabbatean groups continued to be active until the eighteenth century; as a direct response, Jewish community institutions became more cautious and devised mechanisms to protect against the eruption of uncontrollable cravings for imminent salvation.

Sabbateanism was not a proto-Zionist movement and was certainly not nationalist, even if certain Zionist historiographers have tried to portray it as such. More than the uprooting of the Jews from their places of origin in order to assemble them in the Land of the Gazelle (*Eretz ha-Tzvi*), Sabbatai Zevi sought to establish spiritual rule over the world (Elqayam 1998).<sup>2</sup> But many rabbis believed that Sabbateanism might cause Jews to look toward Jerusalem, to sin through a premature attempt to hasten redemption and to undermine the fragile stability of Jewish existence the world over.

The socioeconomic modernization that began in the late eighteenth century, disrupting forms of community life for centuries to come, also contributed to the hardening of concepts of faith in rabbinical power centers. More than ever, rabbis took care to avoid being swept up in the dangers of

an eschatology that promised imminent salvation. Despite its great spontaneity, its devotion to the Lurianic Kabbalah, and its aversion to individual redemption, the Hasidic movement of the eighteenth century sought, for the most part, to exercise caution regarding the temptations of the harbingers of collective salvation and the hasteners of redemption.<sup>3</sup>

### Judaism's response to the invention of the homeland

A resident of Prague prior to the emergence of Sabbateanism, Rabbi Isaiah Halevi Horowitz, known as the saintly Sheloh, was considered one of the great Jewish rabbis of the seventeenth century. In 1621, after the death of his wife and in view of the quickly approaching year of redemption (the Jewish year 5408, which coincided with 1647–1648), the rabbi relocated to Jerusalem. After living in the holy city for a period, he moved to Safed and finally settled in Tiberias, where he was buried with great ceremony in 1628. Many Zionist historians regard him as a “first swallow” who, at the onset of the modern era, decided to make *aliyah*, that is, to “ascend” or immigrate, to the Land of Israel. However, the fact that he immigrated to the Holy Land while thousands of other rabbis refused to do so teaches us more about the major differences and epistemological detachment between traditional Judaism and the emergent Zionist idea. There can be no doubt about his sense of connection to and great love for the Land. Not only did he move to a new unfamiliar place at a relatively advanced age, but he also called on others to join him, without thinking in terms of the collective immigration of all Jews.

It was in Safed that he appears to have completed writing his influential work *The Two Tablets of the Covenant* (Horowitz 1623) which takes a clear position against the option of settling in the holy place in order to live a normal Jewish life. The Land was by no means intended to serve as a refuge from physical danger. To observe the commandments there would be more difficult than anywhere else in the world, and anyone desiring to settle there had to be psychologically prepared to do so. A Jew going to the “Canaanite land” did not do so in order to settle peacefully, partake in its fruits, and enjoy its pleasures. Based on biblical verses, the Sheloh concluded unequivocally that a person who settled in the Holy Land was destined to live there as a foreigner all the days of his life. Moreover, he maintained, the Land did not belong to the children of Israel, and their very existence there was precarious.

Horowitz's depiction of becoming a settler in the Holy Land was an exact description of the exilic existence of Jews in the rest of the world. He saw moving to the Land not as a first sign of redemption but as the complete opposite: the burden in the Land was greater and heavier, and therefore to bear it, in the face of fear and anxiety, was true evidence of faith. As he wrote,

The person residing in the Land of Israel must always remember the name Canaan, indicating slavery and submission... You shall live to be sojourners in your land, in the words of David, ‘I am a sojourner on the earth’.

(Psalms 119:19; Horowitz 1623, 2.3.11)<sup>4</sup>

A century later, Rabbi Jonathan Eybeschutz, another notable textual commentator from Prague, expressed similar opposition to the temptation of moving to the Holy Land. Although accused by his rivals of Sabbateanism, he was in fact a strict adherent to Jewish legal principles regarding redemption, and was extremely concerned by human efforts to hasten it. He contended unequivocally that Jews did not want to leave “their exile”, and that doing so was, in any event, not dependent on them. “For how can I return, when it might engender in me sin?” he asked in a famous sermon in the city of Metz, which was included in his work *Ahavat Yonatan* (Eybeschutz 1875: 72; Ravitsky 1998a: 23–24).<sup>5</sup> The Land was meant to receive only Jews devoid of compulsions, who were not liable to commit a transgression or violate any of the commandments. Because such Jews were nowhere to be found, living in the Holy Land was not merely hopeless but also posed a great danger to the coming of redemption.

Perhaps most interesting is the fact that Eybeschutz’s great rival, the learned Rabbi Jacob Emden, who accused Eybeschutz of Sabbateanism, was in complete agreement with him regarding the Land of Israel. His consistent critique of all tacit or explicit expressions of messianism also included the fierce rejection of all intent to hasten the redemption. If any one person made the three adjurations of the Talmud the guiding principles of his doctrine, it was undoubtedly Rabbi Emden. He viciously attacked as foolish the failed attempt by Rabbi Judah Hahasid’s messianic group, which immigrated to Jerusalem in 1700 and is portrayed by Zionist historiography as the beginning of Jewish nationalist immigration to the Land of Israel.<sup>6</sup>

The theological fear of desecrating the Holy Land because of the major burden involved in fulfilling the commandments there was deeply rooted in Jewish religious legal thinking until the beginning of the twentieth century. Some expressed it openly, while others ignored the issue or preferred not to discuss it at all. Still others continued to glorify and extol the Land’s imagined virtues without ever considering settling there. The traditional religious institutions produced neither a movement nor a stream aimed at relocation to Jerusalem so as “to build and be rebuilt” there.

However, before we consider the rabbinical streams’ reactions to the rise of the new nationalist challenge, we must first consider one of the earliest voices of the Enlightenment to emerge from eighteenth-century European Jewry: Moses Mendelssohn. Mendelssohn, who knew both Eybeschutz and Emden personally, studied in a yeshivah and was well versed in rabbinical literature. However, unlike the two great traditional scholars, he began to diverge from the Jewish legal frameworks and to develop an independent system of thought. For this reason, Mendelssohn is considered the first Jewish philosopher of the modern era.

To a great extent, he was also one of the first Germans. When most subjects of kings and princes still did not know the literary German language, Mendelssohn, like other great intellectuals, had already started writing it with remarkable virtuosity. That is not to say he stopped being a Jew.

He was a faithful observer of the commandments; he expressed a deep connection to the Holy Land and objected to the integration of the Jews into Christian culture, even within the framework of an egalitarian religious coexistence. At the same time, however, he worked to improve the socioeconomic condition of Jews and to facilitate their cultural departure from the ghettos, which, though providing their residents with a sense of protection from the onslaught of modernization, had been forced on them. He therefore retranslated the Bible into literary German (in Hebrew characters) and added his own philosophical comments. His struggle for equal rights for Jews also led him to engage in one of the last intellectual discussions of his life.

In 1781, ten years before Mendelssohn's death, Christian theologian Johann David Michaelis launched an attack against the provision of equal rights to Jews. It was one of the first of many bitter debates on the subject that would continue into the first half of the nineteenth century. In Michaelis's approach, we can already detect a Judeophobic, proto-nationalist tone. One of his major claims against the Jews was that they already had another homeland in the East. Indeed, haters of Jews within the German territories were the first to invent a faraway Jewish national territory, long before the birth of Zionism. Mendelssohn responded immediately, fearlessly presenting his position. His view was based on principle and resonated with most devout Jews during the nineteenth century. "The hoped-for return to Palestine, which troubles Herr. M.[ichaelis] so much", he wrote,

has no influence on our conduct as citizens. This is confirmed by experience wherever Jews are tolerated. In part, human nature accounts for it - only the enthusiast would not love the soil on which he thrives. And he who holds contradictory religious opinions reserves them for church and prayer. In part, also, the precaution of our sages accounts for it—the Talmud forbids us *even to think* of a return [to Palestine] by force [i.e., to attempt to effect Redemption through human effort]. Without the miracles and signs mentioned in the Scripture, we must not take the smallest step in the direction of forcing a return and a restoration of our nation. The Song of Songs expresses this prohibition in a somewhat mystical and yet captivating verse (Song of Songs 2:7 and 3:5): "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles, and by the hinds of the field, that you stir not up, nor awaken my love, till it please".

(Mendelssohn 1995; for the German orig.  
see Mendelssohn 1972: 366)

In this passage, on the eve of the birth of national territories in Europe, Mendelssohn felt the need to clarify why the Holy Land was not his homeland. He relied on two main arguments: one that could have been taken straight from Hellenistic Judaism, which maintained that the Jews were normal human beings and therefore loved the land in which they lived; and another that drew explicitly on the Talmud, which cited the theological

excuse of the three adjurations and which, from then on, would be articulated by the Jewish Haskalah, which regarded itself as part of the emerging of the German nation. From this perspective, we can understand Mendelssohn as a milestone of sorts, bridging the gap between Philo of Alexandria, the first Hellenistic Jewish philosopher, and Franz Rosenzweig, possibly the last great German Jewish philosopher, who also categorically rejected every attempt to link Judaism to land (Rosenzweig 2005).<sup>7</sup> At the same time, Mendelssohn can be viewed as the harbinger of the large Reform Judaism movement, which also objected to proto-Zionist and Zionist ideas.

Mendelssohn believed that the idea of a Jewish state in the Holy Land was negative and destructive, and in this he was no different from the traditional rabbinate. The ascent of nationalism in Europe during the nineteenth century would not change this fundamental point of faith in any meaningful way. Aside from a few atypical rabbis such as Zvi Hirsch Kalischer and Judah Alkalai who tried to combine religious messianism with national territorial realism, earning them the praise of Zionist historiography, mainstream Jewish institutions demonstrated no openness to early expressions of proto-Zionism. On the contrary, they responded with a barrage of hostility toward the very idea of turning the Holy Land into a national homeland.

We must remember that the efforts by historical, traditional Judaism to contend with the changes of the period were not initially geared toward Zionism, that is to say, the project of collective assimilation into modernity. Rather, the initial struggles of the nineteenth century were aimed at semi-collective integration (Reform Judaism) and individual, primarily secular assimilation. Through these two latter processes, Jews sought to join the still evolving national cultures in the countries they inhabited. Legislative progress regarding equal rights for Jews in the countries of Western Europe, and subsequently those of Central Europe, accelerated the disintegration of the superstructures that had long constrained Jewish existence. The penetration of enlightened ideas of skepticism into Eastern Europe, and the sway of these ideas over the educated strata and the younger generations, began to disrupt Jewish community institutions, which sought to respond to the challenge in any way possible.

Reform Judaism began to flourish everywhere that political liberalism was well established, and at times even helped bring it about. In the Netherlands, Britain, France, and especially Germany, newly established religious communities tried to adapt Jewish practices and tactics to the spirit of enlightenment that had been spread by the French Revolution. Everything in the tradition that was perceived as counterintuitive was modified and imbued with new substance and new expression. Synagogue and prayer observances were changed, and new houses of worship developed invigoratingly original rituals.

Aside from the efforts to modernize community activities, what most characterized the Reform enterprise was the attempt to adapt it to the consolidation of nations and national cultures that was then under way. Reform

Jews, seeking their place in this process, saw themselves first and foremost as an immanent component of new collective identities. Hebrew prayers were translated into the increasingly dominant standardized national languages. In addition, Reform Judaism removed from the liturgy all references to redemption that suggested a return to Zion at the end of days. According to the Reform ethos, each Jew had only one homeland: the country where he or she lived. Jews, before being anything else, were German, Dutch, British, French, and American believers in the faith of Moses.

Reform Jews voiced strong opposition to the proto-Zionist ideas that emerged during the second half of the nineteenth century, fearing that insistence on highlighting difference that was cultural rather than religious would intensify Judeophobia and impede the cause of civil equality. Yet this opposition did not prevent the rise of modern anti-Semitism in Central and Eastern Europe. Nationalisms typically needed Jews, in addition to other minority groups, in order to delineate the still insufficiently clear-cut borders of their nations. In the end, proto-Zionism and Zionism emerged as immediate and direct responses to ethnocentric nationalism, which began to exclude Jews on religious and mythic historical grounds, and, within a short time, on biological grounds as well. But the development of political Zionism was of even greater concern to liberal Reform Jews, who expressed their fears in hundreds of publications. In their eyes, Zionism was beginning to look more and more like the flip side of Judeophobic nationalism: both streams of thought refused to see Jews as patriots of their resident homeland and both suspected them of dual loyalty.

In Germany, Reform Judaism emerged as the most populous Jewish stream, producing numerous religious intellectuals, from Mendelssohn's student David Friedländer to the learned rabbi Abraham Geiger and figures such as Sigmund Maybaum and Heinemann Vogelstein. Judaic Studies (*Wissenschaft des Judentums*), which contributed more to the study of Jewish history than did any other cultural movement during the first half of the nineteenth century, developed within its orbit. Without taking into account the impact of Reform Judaism, it is impossible to understand, for example, the anti-Zionist Jewish thinking of Hermann Cohen, the great neo-Kantian philosopher (Cohen 1916, 1977). Particularly after the Revolutions of 1848, the movement empowered groups in the United States as well, where it spread and strengthened.<sup>8</sup>

Despite their great rivalry, Reform Judaism and traditional Judaism were in agreement on one fundamental point: the steadfast refusal to regard Palestine as national property, a destination for Jewish immigration, or a national homeland. As we have seen, Jews in Western and Eastern Europe were as nationalized as other citizens, not in the sense of embracing a unique Jewish political identity but rather in the sense of being integrated into their respective individual nations. In the closing years of the nineteenth century, an important Jewish newspaper explained the phenomenon in the following terms: "On this question of love for the Kaiser and the Reich, for the state

and the homeland, all the parties of Jewry are of one opinion – the orthodox and the Reform, the ultraorthodox and the well-educated [*die Aufgeklärtesten*]” (*Der Israelit* 1898: 1460 quoted in Zur 1990: 75).

One prominent example of this dynamic was Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch, the major nineteenth-century German leader of Orthodox Judaism. At the time, he could already read and write fluently in German and is still renowned as a brilliant commentator whose talented students and followers outnumbered those of all other rabbis of his day. With the first reverberations of proto-Zionism resulting from the ideas of Rabbi Kalischer and former Communist Moses Hess, Hirsch immediately undertook to stop this deviation, which he believed was a falsification of historic Judaism and a likely cause of serious injury to it. He was concerned that those who regarded the Holy Land as a Jewish homeland and were demanding sovereignty over it would repeat Bar Kokhbas mistake from the time of Hadrian and bring about a new Jewish tragedy. He therefore reminded all Jews, lest they forget

Yisrael was given the Torah in the wilderness, and there—without a country and land of its own—it became a nation, a body whose soul was Torah.... Torah, the fulfillment of the Divine Will, constitutes the foundation, basis and goal of this people.... Therefore, a land, prosperity and the institutions of statehood were to be put at Yisrael's disposal not as goals in themselves but as means for the fulfillment of the Torah.  
(Hirsch 1995)

The notion that the Holy Scriptures had completely replaced the Land sparked developments among other traditional scholars, and when Herzl attempted to invite the Union of German Rabbis to the opening of the First Zionist Congress in 1897, he was met with resounding rejection. The situation was so serious that the Jewish community in Munich, where the congress was to have convened, flatly refused to allow the meeting to take place on German soil. As a result, Herzl was forced to move it to Basel, Switzerland. Of ninety representatives of the German rabbis, all but two signed a harsh letter of protest against the convening of the Zionist Congress.

Naftali Hermann Adler, chief rabbi of the United Kingdom, who initially supported the Jewish community in Palestine and even expressed support for the Lovers of Zion movement, immediately opposed the political Zionist colonization project and refused public contact with Herzl. The same was true of Zadoc Kahn, chief rabbi of France. Although he was supportive of the philanthropic enterprise of Edmond James de Rothschild and was initially intrigued by Zionism, French Jewry's allegiance to the French homeland was far more important to him than the new Jewish national “adventurism”.

But the most intriguing attitude of a European rabbi toward Zionism was that of Moritz Güdemann, chief rabbi of Vienna and a prominent scholar of Jewish history. In 1895, even before writing *The Jewish State*, Herzl approached the influential rabbi with the aim of securing his assistance in

making contact with the Viennese branch of the Rothschild family. His curiosity piqued, the rabbi was certain Herzl was inclined to join the struggle against anti-Semitism and perhaps also inclined to enlist the *Neue Freie Presse*, the widely circulated Viennese newspaper for which Herzl wrote, in defense of the persecuted Jews. However, Güdemann grew concerned after his visit to Herzl's home, where he was surprised to learn that the journalist had a Christmas tree (Herzl 1895). Herzl was known not to be an especially observant Jew and not even to have had his son circumcised (most likely because he regarded circumcision as detrimental to masculinity). But Rabbi Güdemann overcame his hesitations regarding the strange young *goy* and continued a correspondence with the intriguing journalist.

In his theatrically rich imagination, Herzl saw Güdemann as the chief rabbi of the capital city of the future Jewish state (Herzl 1895: 35). In this context, the significant "misunderstanding" that erupted between the two was quite telling. Although Güdemann was a traditional, not a Reform, rabbi, he steered clear of all forms of nationalism. His cosmopolitanism accurately reflected the antinationalist political and cultural aspects of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. In 1897, the year of the First Zionist Congress, the rabbi of Vienna published a booklet bearing the title *National Judaism* (Güdemann 1995). This short work is one of the most enlightening theological and political critiques of the Zionist vision ever written.

As a rabbi and a devout Jew, Güdemann did not question the biblical narrative. However, his commentary on the Torah and the books of the prophets display a craving for universalism and human solidarity. His deep anxieties regarding modern anti-Semitism made him a consistent and methodical antinationalist thinker. From his viewpoint, even if the Jews had been a people in antiquity, since the destruction of the Temple they had been nothing more than an important religious community with the aim of disseminating the message of monotheism throughout the world and turning humanity into one great people. The Jews always adapted well to diverse cultures (Greek, Persian, and Arab, for example) while preserving their faith and their Torah. Both the traditional Rabbi Güdemann and the rabbis of Reform Judaism, including Rabbi Adolf Jellinek, leader of the Liberal community in Vienna, agreed in principle that the Jews of Germany were German, the Jews of Britain were British, and the Jews of France were French – and that this was a good thing

The most important chapters in the history of the Diaspora were reflected in names such as Philo, the Rambam, and Mendelssohn. These men were not only the flag-bearers of Judaism but also shone brilliantly in the general culture of their times.

(Güdemann 1995: 27)

The nationalist egoism spreading throughout the world, argued Güdemann, fundamentally contradicted the spirit of the Jewish religion, and devout followers of the Bible and Jewish religious law should avoid falling under

the enticing and dangerous influence of chauvinism. It was precisely this path along which the Jews should not follow the gentiles: in other words, assimilation into modern secular culture – yes, but assimilation into modern politics – no. Every educated Jew knew that the basic political concepts that derived from Greco-Roman culture did not exist within Judaic culture. The charismatic rabbi did not hide his fear that one day a “Judaism with cannons and bayonets would reverse the roles of David and Goliath to constitute a ridiculous contradiction of itself” (Güdemann 1995: 28). However, because of the threat of anti-Semitism, Güdemann was not opposed to the immigration and settlement of Jews in other countries, and therein lies the basis for Herzl’s fundamental misunderstanding of the scholarly rabbi

Giving those Jews, for whom the struggle for survival in their current homeland has become too difficult, an opportunity to settle elsewhere is a praiseworthy deed. We can only ask and hope that the Jewish colonies that already exist and those that will be established in the future, in the Holy Land or elsewhere, will continue to exist and to prosper. However, it would be a grave error running contrary to the spirit and history of Judaism if these settlement activities, which are worthy of great appreciation, are linked to nationalist aspirations and regarded as the fulfillment of the divine promise.

(Güdemann 1995: 28)<sup>9</sup>

According to Güdemann, Judaism had never been dependent on time or place and had never had a homeland. Many Jews, he maintained, intentionally forgot Jewish history and knowingly falsified it, interpreting the yearning and love for the Holy Land and the desire to be buried there as a nationalist mentality, which it was not. The reason was simple:

In order to prevent the misunderstanding that Israel’s existence is dependent on the ownership of land or tied to the land of its heritage, the Bible explains: “But the Lord’s portion is his people, Jacob his allotted heritage” (Deuteronomy 32:9). This perspective, which regards the people of Israel more as God’s heritage than as the owners of this heritage, cannot serve as the basis of a nativism linked by an unbreakable bond to the land in question. Israel never relied on the autochthony or aboriginality that served the other peoples of the ancient period.

(Güdemann 1995: 20)<sup>10</sup>

It is no surprise that after the publication of this stinging pamphlet, Herzl lost all hope in both the Reform and traditional rabbis of Western and Central Europe. He also knew that he had no hope of finding support among the Jews of the United States. After all, Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, founder of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, had publicly and unequivocally classified Zionism as false messianism and had proclaimed the United

States – not Palestine – to be the Jews' true place of refuge. By doing so, he dashed all hopes of support or assistance from America's new and increasingly strong Jewish community (Weinmann 1951).

From then on, Herzl pinned his hopes solely on the rabbis of Eastern Europe, the spiritual guides of the large Yiddish-speaking population of the region. Indeed, the few traditional Jews of the Mizrachi movement who attended the historic assembly of the young nationalist movement in 1897 came mostly from the Russian empire. Unlike the rabbis of Britain, France, Germany, and the United States, who already spoke and wrote in their respective national languages, the rabbis of Eastern Europe still had their own language – Yiddish, in which most of them wrote – as well as their sacred language, Hebrew. The use of Russian or Polish met with the bitter opposition of the Eastern rabbinical establishment.

As we know, the state of Eastern Europe's Jews was completely different from that of Western Europe's. Millions of Jews still lived in neighborhoods or small towns that were segregated from those of their neighbors; moreover, by contrast to the Jews of the West, this population exhibited clear signs of a unique and lively popular culture. In such places, therefore – but not necessarily elsewhere – secularization and politicization played a role in shaping a specific culture. Political parties, newspapers, and literature were organized, managed, and published in Yiddish. Like all other inhabitants of Tsarist Russia, these Jews were not citizens of the empire but only its subjects; as a result, no significant non-Jewish local nationalism developed. And when we take into consideration the bitter Judeophobia that crystallized in these areas, we understand why it was there, of all places, that Zionism acquired its first foothold and achieved its first successes.

The pioneering, albeit marginal, efforts from the 1880s onward to settle in Palestine – while espousing no national aspirations and taking care to observe the Jewish commandments – had received a degree of encouragement from the traditional rabbinical establishment. The rabbis were most concerned with the secular socialist radicalism that had been spreading among Yiddish youth. Although the rabbinate was not overly enthusiastic about the immigration to the Holy Land initiated by the Lovers of Zion, which did include some traditional Jews, the phenomenon initially appeared to pose no significant threat to Jewish religious frameworks. Nor did the early reports of Zionist political organization arouse immediate concern. It was hoped that nurturing the longing for holy Zion would help safeguard the core of Jewish belief from the influence of the secularizing force of modernization.

Soon the rabbis came to understand that Zionism's gracious gestures in their direction were purely instrumental.<sup>11</sup> For a moment, the proponents of religion had hoped to use nationalism to their own benefit. However, they quickly discovered that even though they shared a lot with Zionism, the goal of the two movements was exactly opposite. Herzl and his colleagues in the new movement courted the traditional leadership because they were aware of its hegemonic power for Jewry. They sought to turn religious Jews

into nationalists as well and had no intention of preserving religion that was anti-modern and therefore anti-nationalist.

Between the first Zionist Congress in 1897 and the fourth in 1900, the leading rabbis of Eastern Europe spoke out in opposition to the transformative vision of turning the Holy Land into a homeland where all Jews would gather to establish a Judaic state. After years of bitter struggles between *Mitnagdim* and Hasidic rabbis, the broad-based hostility toward Zionism succeeded in unifying them into one fighting Eastern front, which included Yisrael Meir Kagan of Raduri (known as the Chofetz Chaim); Yehudah Aryeh Leib Alter (the Gerrer Rebbe, author of and also known as Sfas Enes); Chaim Halevi Soloveitchik of Brisk; Yitzchak Yaakov Rabinovich (the Rabbi Itzele Ponevezher); Eliezer Gordon of Telz, Lithuania; Eliyahu Chaim Meisel of Lodz; David Friedman of Karlin-Pinsk; Chaim Ozer Grodzinski of Vilna; Yosef Rosen of Dvinsk, Latvia (known as the Rogatchover Gaon); Sholom Dovber Schneersohn, the Rebbe of Lubavitch; and a long list of others. Each of these figures spoke out in defense of the Torah against what they regarded as the harbinger of their destruction.<sup>12</sup>

This was the elite of Eastern European Jewry, major leaders of Judaism who led large communities throughout the Russian empire. They were the brilliant Torah commentators of their age and, in this capacity, they, more than anyone else, were responsible for shaping the spirit and sensibilities of hundreds and thousands of believers. This Jewish elite broke the momentum of Zionism much more effectively than the combined influence of the Bund, the socialists, and the liberals, preventing it from emerging as a leading force among the Jews of Eastern Europe. The great rabbis did not allow Zionist activists into their synagogues or places of Torah study; they also prohibited the reading of the Zionists' writings and strictly forbade all political cooperation with them.

The writings of these rabbis reveal a skillful and sober diagnosis of nationalism. Although their conceptual tools may at times have been naive and inadequate, few secular scholars of their day articulated such sharp insights. This stemmed not from the rabbis' brilliance but rather from the fact that they were the only intellectuals of the late nineteenth century who were capable of analyzing nationalism from the outside. As foreigners to the modern era and strangers in a foreign land, they intuitively identified the prominent attributes of the new collective identity.

In 1900 a group of major influential rabbis jointly compiled and published a volume titled *The Book of Light for the Righteous, Against the Zionist Method*. Already in the introduction, the editors make their position clear:

We are the people of the book, and in the books of the Bible, the Mishnah and the Talmud, the Midrash, and the legends of our holy teachers of blessed memory, we find no mention of the word 'nationalism', neither in its Hebrew derivation from the word 'nation' nor in the intimations or the language of our teachers of blessed memory.

(Landa and Rabinovich 1900: 18)

Considering the volume's many ultraorthodox collaborators, it was evident that the Jewish world was facing an unprecedented historical phenomenon. Certainly, the rabbis explained, the Jews are a people because God chose to establish them as such; this people, however, was defined only by the Bible, and not by any authority from outside the faith. For tactical reasons, the enticing Zionists were arguing that the nation could accommodate believers and nonbelievers alike, and that the Torah was of secondary importance. This was an innovation, as the claim that Judaism was a national political grouping and not a religious one had never before been asserted in the Jewish tradition. The Zionists had also intentionally chosen the Holy Land as the territory on which a state should be established because they understood how precious it was to the Jews. They had even appropriated the name Zion with the intent of luring naive believers into becoming supporters of nationalism. For all types of Zionists, Jewry was a fossilized people that needed to be rehabilitated. However, for the authors of the volume in question, the statement meant modern Hellenization and a new species of false messianism.

Rabbi Meisel of Lodz held that the "Zionists are not in search of Zion" and had merely donned this verbal cloak in order to deceive naive Jews (Landa and Rabinovich 1900: 53). Rabbi Chaim Soloveitchik and the Rogatchover Gaon regarded them as a "cult", and could not seem to find enough words to denounce them as a whole. The Rebbe of Lubavitch warned that "their entire desire and aim is to throw off the burden of the Torah and the commandments and to maintain only nationalism, and that is what would constitute their Judaism".<sup>13</sup> The popular Hasidic leader lashed out with particular venom against the Zionists' selective use of the Bible, skipping over elements that they found inconvenient and creating a new faith in practice and in theory, a nationalized Torah that was completely different from that which had been given to Moses at Mount Sinai.

In conjunction with other books and articles, this joint publication unmistakably reflected the contention of the traditional rabbinate that Zionism represented a reproduction of individual secular assimilation on the collective, national level. In Zionism, the Land replaced the Torah, and the sweeping worship of the future State replaced the strong adherence to God. From this perspective, Jewish nationalism posed a much greater danger to Judaism than did individual assimilation, greater even than contemptible religious reform. In the case of these two latter phenomena, there was the chance that Jews would return to their original faith after being disappointed. In the case of Zionism, however, there was no chance of return.

Traditional Judaism's fear of the power of nationalism ultimately proved justified. With the terrifying assistance of history, Zionism defeated Judaism, and after World War II, large segments of world Jewry that had survived extermination accepted the decisive verdict: the principle of a state designated as Jewish and located in the Holy Land, which would be a Jewish national homeland. With the exception of a tiny community based in

Jerusalem and the great Hasidic courts in New York, most faithful Jews became followers of the new nationalism to one degree or another. Some even came to support an extremely aggressive nationalism. When the master of the universe began to show signs of weakness and possibly even death, they too, like the secular radical right, came to see human beings – that is to say, nationalism – as the all-powerful master of the earth.

*Vayoel Moshe*, an influential book by the Satmar Rebbe Yoel Teitelbaum, can be regarded as the culmination and impressive theoretical conclusion of Judaism's opposition to proto-Zionism and Zionism (Teitelbaum 1961). Although the text – the first part of which was written in the 1950s – contains very little that is new, it does breathe life into the three languishing Talmudic adjurations by prohibiting collective immigration to the Holy Land prior to the redemption; by stressing that the land of the Bible was never a national territory and forbidding settlement without meticulous observance of the clear commandments that apply to it; and by maintaining that Hebrew is a sacred language meant strictly for prayer and legal discussion, and should not be used as a secular language for business; for curses; for blasphemy; or, according to the rabbi, for military commands.

Until the birth of Zionism at the end of the nineteenth century, few Jews imagined that the Holy Land was or could become a national territory for the world's Jewry. Zionism disregarded tradition, the commandments, and the opinions of the rabbis, and spoke in the name of those who completely rejected these things and publicly expressed contempt for them. This was certainly not the first such surrogate act in history: just as the Jacobins spoke with absolute confidence in the name of the French people, which did not yet really exist, and as the Bolsheviks presented themselves as a historic replacement for the proletariat, which was just coming into being in the Russian empire, so too did the Zionists locate their imagined homeland within Judaism and understand themselves to be its successors and its mandated, authentic representatives.<sup>14</sup>

At the end of the day, the Zionist revolution succeeded in nationalizing the main elements of Jewish religious discourse. From then on, the Holy Land became a more or less defined space that should be owned by the eternal people. In short, during the twentieth century, the Holy Land became the “Land of Israel”.

## Notes

- 1 The article is extracted (pp. 178–196) from Shlomo Sand (2014: ch. 4: 177–251): “Zionism versus Judaism: The Conquest of ‘Ethnic’ Space”, and formatted to the present context. We kindly thank Verso for their permission to republish these pages.
- 2 It is also important to note that the Frankists, the largest Sabbatean movement in eighteenth century Poland, also did not regard immigration to the Holy Land as a primary messianic goal (Frank 1784).
- 3 One of the major elements that distinguishes Judaism from Zionism is their differing positions on messianism, which Judaism rejects, but Zionism remembers

nostalgically. It is no coincidence that Zionist scholars such as Gershom Scholem, Joseph Klausner, Yehuda Kaufman, and many others admired and praised historical messianic yearnings. For more on this, see Salmon (2006: 33).

4 On the views of the Sheloh, see Ravitzky (1998a: 7–9).

5 See also *Yaarot Dvash* 74 in Eybeschutz (1778–1779).

6 On the Hasidic immigration, see Barnai (1996: 40–159) (in Hebrew).

7 Like Martin Buber, Rosenzweig conceived of Jews as a blood community. However, unlike Buber, he refused to link blood to land and rejected the view of the Holy Land as a homeland:

We alone have put our trust in blood and have parted with the land... For this reason, the tribal legend of the eternal people begins otherwise than with indigenoussness. Only the father of humanity... is sprouted from the earth... Israel's ancestors, however, immigrated.

(Rosenzweig 2005: 319)

On Buber's position regarding the organic connection between land and nation, see Buber (1948).

8 It was only in 1937, after the rise of Nazism and within the liberal climate of American nationalism, that progressive Judaism began to come to terms with the Jewish nationalist idea. After the Israeli victory in the 1967 war, its identification with the State of Israel became complete, and in 1975 it even joined the World Zionist Organization. For more on this, see Meyer (1988). Unfortunately, the author of this study dedicates very little attention to the struggle between liberal Judaism and Zionism (pp. 326–327).

9 Although Güdemann uses the terms “Holy Land” and “Palestine”, the Hebrew translation replaces these terms with the standard term “Land of Israel”.

10 For Herzls response, see “The National Judaism of Dr. Güdemann” at the Ben-Yehuda Internet Project, [http://benyehuda.org/herzl/herzl\\_009.html](http://benyehuda.org/herzl/herzl_009.html) (in Hebrew).

11 For the first Jewish anti-Zionist book, see Tursz (1899). On this book and the writings of rabbis who opposed Zionism, see Yosef Salmon's thorough “Zionism and the Ultraorthodox in Russia and Poland 1898–1900”, in Salmon (1990).

12 Although I have not listed the names of rabbis from outside the Russian empire, outspoken opponents of Zionism also included most rabbis of Hungary, traditional and Reform (Neologs) alike. From Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira (the Munkacszer Rebbe) to Rabbi Isaac Breuer to Rabbi Dr. Lipót Kecskeméti, all streams of Judaism were united in their staunch opposition to Zionism. For more on Spira, see Aviezer Ravitzky (1998b). On Kecskeméti, see Yehuda Friedlander (2007).

13 Landa and Rabinovich (1900: 58). See also “Statement by the Lubavitcher Rebbe Shulem ben Schneersohn, on Zionism (1903)”, in Selzer (1970: 11–18).

14 For the best and most comprehensive study on Jewish opposition to nationalism published to date, see Yakov Rabkin (2006).

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## 20 The history of Israel... but what is this Israel?

Drawing the conclusions from recent research into the history of ancient Palestine

*Niels Peter Lemche*

### **Introduction**

When my grandchild was preparing for the Swedish national test at the end of his ninth grade of primary school, we made a test of his knowledge of Swedish history. It was an interesting experience. As stated in our Danish history textbooks: in 1658 Denmark lost three provinces to Sweden, namely Skania (Skåne), Halland and Blekinge (it was rather the Danish king who had lost three parts of his kingdom to his Swedish colleague). Following these events Denmark and Sweden fought a series of bloody wars without changing much as the lost provinces have remained Swedish to this very day. Before 1658, Skania had been Danish territory – or better settled by Danes – at least since the ninth century, and accordingly a ruler of Scania, Osfred de Sconowe, was probably among the companions of King Gotfried during his negotiations with Charlesmagne in 811.<sup>1</sup> Adam of Bremen, in 1068, described Scania as the richest, most beautiful and most important part of the Kingdom of Denmark (Adam of Bremen 1862: 10). However, my grandson knows nothing of this story, although he, as well as I, lives in Skania a few miles from a city, Kristianstad, founded by the Danish King Christian IV in 1614. According to his “historical” knowledge stemming from his Swedish textbooks, Sweden, in 1648, managed to regain the territory lost to Denmark in the preceding century. Therefore, the three provinces officially ceded to Sweden in 1658 legitimately belonged to Sweden. Of course, this Swedish version is rubbish from a Danish perspective, not because I am myself a Dane, but because there is ample evidence that the territory was part of Denmark since the days of old. Thus, the Danish archbishop resided, from 1089 to 1536, in Lund some fifty kilometers from Copenhagen, while his colleague, the Swedish archbishop, resided in Uppsala north of Stockholm.<sup>2</sup>

It is a strange fact that two nations, today so closely related, have such differences in their historical outlook. Nevertheless, the reason for the Swedish version, which in Denmark will be considered no less than a distortion of facts, is clear enough. Following the first major war between Denmark

and Sweden, “the war of Skania” fought between 1675 and 1679 (after Scania had been ceded to the Swedish crown in 1658), which the Swedes managed to win, resulted in a most cruel “Swedization” of the previous Danish territories including the butchering of the entire male population in north-eastern Skania. The, perhaps, most important and enduring part of the program for Swedization was the founding of the University of Lund in 1666, a sort of repetition of King Jeroboam I’s founding of the sanctuary in Bethel to prevent his subjects from visiting the temple of Jerusalem (1 Kings 12: 26–30).

The founding of such an institution of learning is a telling example of what I have been speaking about for years: history, understood as a weapon of mass instruction, was never a subject of the uneducated masses. History was always something created by learned people often at the instigation of the leading hierarchy, the king and his retainers with the special purpose of creating a “historical” foundation for the kingdom and legitimizing the ruler in the eyes of his subjects. We know very well how such a program works in modern history. The constant rewriting of Soviet history may serve as a hilarious example. Thus after the fall of Nikita Khrushchev in 1964, a correction was sent out to everybody in possession of the official Soviet dictionary, some forty columns of blank white paper to be glued over the article of the former chairman of the Communist party! It was really a *damnatio memoriae* in the classical Roman sense. But it is also correct to say that modern history writing was boosted by the events of the French revolution, when new states without kings were forced to invent new histories, histories without kings and princes to keep the new states together. Nothing new here, except that it happened as the modern idea of history surfaced, namely that history should aim at being an objective science pretending to present the truth and nothing but the truth of past times. Before 1791, the year when the king of France was beheaded, plenty of histories were written, but it would be a mistake to present these histories as anything but collections of tales and legends.<sup>3</sup> When Napoleon, still a man embedded in the Enlightenment, commented on history, he just said: “history is a myth agreed upon”.<sup>4</sup>

The change may not be as important as is often believed. In his movie “Who shot Liberty Valance” from 1962, John Ford let the journalist, who interviews James Stewart playing the man believed to have shot the gangster, end up tearing his interview into pieces, because James Stewart had just destroyed the tale of his own heroism by explaining what really happened: “This is the West, sir, when the legend becomes fact, print the legend”. In the sardonic ending to the movie, a railway employee greets Stewart as the man who shot Liberty Valance, just to emphasize the strength of the myth compared to historical facts. Ford comes very close to the point that memory is more important than historical facts. Therefore, when telling a story about the past, be sure that people like it. It must include a string of national (at least in the ethnic sense) highlights, something with which people can identify themselves.

## Biblical histories and historical reality

### *The David legend*

How much, then, need to be historically, i.e. factually, correct, if I am allowed to use that word? We will understand that this has normally been a major point in the acceptance in the modern world of the biblical story as factual history. There must have lived a “David” once upon a time. It is simply not acceptable to the human mind that this figure was invented, a construct based on a number of stereotypes (Thompson 2005). You cannot identify with a construction; there must be a *real* person with whom to identify. When I was digging in 1996 at Tel Jizreel in the Galilee, I gave a lecture on the history of Israel to the inhabitants of the kibbutz, where the expedition had its headquarters. It was of course a lecture that included the advances of the upcoming so-called Copenhagen School. Therefore I had to tell the good people of the Kibbutz that there never was an Abraham, that the Exodus was a myth and that there never was a historical person of the name of Moses – and they didn’t care. The people there were secular Jews, so who cared if there was no Moses and no law given at Sinai? But when I arrived at King David and told them that he most likely was less historical than Moses, they reacted strongly, because now it was the historical foundation of their own Zionism that was under attack. Their identity was bound up with the biblical story of mighty King David, and they – correctly – understood that if I was right, I had at the same time torn apart the historical foundation of the Zionist state to which they belonged. They were gentle people who did not jump onto the tables and shout or attack me physically, but it was easy to see that they were very uncomfortable with what I had told them.

So how much needs to be historically correct? As you may understand, in the modern secular world it has become a mantra that things must have happened as described in your sources. Otherwise it is a myth in the North American sense, i.e. a lie! That was the reason the North American title of Thomas Thompson’s book *The Bible in History* (1999), published the same year as *The Mythic Past*, was most unfortunate: it automatically told its North American readers that Thompson argued that the Bible was a big lie (Thompson 1999). Thompson did not make it any better when his next book was titled *The Messiah Myth* (Thompson 2005). Now it was not only the historicity of the Bible which he questioned, but the very existence of Jesus Christ! Of course every European reader will know that “myth” means legend or story, that it probably did not happen, but still is an important testimony from the past. There is a reason why North American fundamentalism arose only when the modern concept of history as about something that really happened in the past appeared at the end of the nineteenth century. So to religious conservatives it is important that history must be historically correct in order to be accepted. If David had never lived, the whole Christian gospel would be a great hoax.

So, being removed from the mythical world of old tales in order to become a historical source about the past, the Bible became the victim of modern notions of history, which can easily be seen by studying the development of the historical genre of histories of *Ancient Israel*, something which began in earnest with Julius Wellhausen's teacher Heinrich Ewald's *Geschichte des Volkes Israel* (1843–1859) and is still going on with new “histories of Israel” such as those by Christian Frelve (2015) and Ernst Axel Knauf and Philippe Guillaume (2016). All these histories were written in the spirit of historical criticism, i.e. source criticism, as invented by Barthold Niebuhr (the son of the explorer Carsten Niebuhr), and developed by historians like Leopold von Ranke and Johann Gustav Droysen.<sup>5</sup> All these scholars were convinced that if you can distinguish between primary and secondary sources, the primary sources will allow you to reconstruct the historical events of the past. Thus, if we can distinguish between the secondary sources in the Old Testament and the primary ones, the primary sources will allow us to get a fairly precise image of ancient Israel. Of course very few scholars agreed on what was primary and what was necessarily to be dismissed as secondary sources.

But what happens when it is realized that there are no primary sources in the Old Testament? One condition for a primary source is that it is not too far removed from the events which are described in said source. Now I have already mentioned the story of King David. Let us stay with him for a moment. Historical-critical scholars relying basically on the chronology presented by the authors of the historical books of the Old Testament dated David to the tenth century BCE and magically often considered the year 1000 BCE to be the beginning of his reign (you may remember the Israeli celebration of the city's 3,000 years jubilee in 1997! The city is known to be at least a thousand years older than that). Old Testament documents relating to David may, according to this viewpoint, be divided between primary sources and secondary ones. However, the version found in the Books of Samuel and in the opening chapter of Kings was considered the primary sources, whereas the obviously late Books of Chronicles were only secondary elaborations on the tradition about David in Samuel. Psalms, which includes several references to David, was in this light no more than another secondary expansion of the David tradition – although it would be quite easy to establish that not every tradition about David in Psalms can be traced back to this so-called “primary” source.<sup>6</sup>

The conclusion had to be that the sources contained in 1 and 2 Samuel, and in 1 Kings, about King David and after him King Solomon, were in essence historical documents that allow the historian to describe the time and events of David and Solomon. Absolutely hilarious were the many speculations about the “memoirs” from the court of David, the so-called “succession history”, basically 2 Samuel 8 to 1 Kings 2, which succeeded Leonard Rost's *Die Überlieferung von der Thronnachfolge Davids* from 1926, and was believed to have been composed by one of David's courtiers, because “no outsider would have had such an insight in what happened at David's court”.<sup>7</sup>

However, another category of sources does indeed exist, the archaeological “facts on the ground”, although these facts will always have to be interpreted and hardly form a “pristine” source of information. Nevertheless, the case is clear. If we can reconstruct an image of Jerusalem based on artifacts that really belong to the assumed time of David, i.e. the tenth century BCE, then a case can be made for the historicity of at least a nucleus of the information found in Samuel and Kings. On the other hand, the alternative is just as obvious. If you cannot correlate the archaeological information with what is told in Solomon and Kings, archaeology must take precedence because the evidence it produces is “contemporary”, that is, it derives from the very period under discussion.<sup>8</sup>

In this forum I hardly need to present the image of Jerusalem created by modern, mostly Israeli archaeologists and mainly from Tel Aviv University: there was no city here in the tenth century.<sup>9</sup> Hardly a village or anything similar existed here at that time. So far I have not heard of the finding of any potsherds from this period in this place, but I noted that the Israelis who searched through the dump from the temple mountain did not find anything that predated 800 BCE.<sup>10</sup> Of course this has not prevented an Israeli archaeologist, Eilat Mazar, sponsored by a notorious Zionist organization, the ELAD foundation, and engaged by the Shalem institute, described by the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz* as “a research facility identified with the Zionist right wing and with American neoconservatives”, to excavate “monumental” architecture claimed to be from David’s time (Lanski and Berman 2007).<sup>11</sup> I will never forget Israel Finkelstein’s comment on her excavations when asked by a visitor to the Megiddo excavations in 2010: “Yes, she has found some very fine monumental remains from the Hellenistic Period!” Finkelstein himself has become, might we say, “soft” in more recent years – claiming that David might after all have been a local gang leader roaming the Judean Hills (cf. Finkelstein and Silberman 2006). However, his assertion does not save the mighty biblical King David!

The conclusion must be that perhaps the most central part in Zionist assertions of the legitimacy of the Jewish conquest of Palestine in modern times, the kingdom of David, embracing nearly all of Palestine, the western part of the modern Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and large parts of Syria all the way to Palmyra, is a building founded on sand – so to speak.

Another consequence of David’s departure as a historical person is that it forced scholars to revise their dating of the stories about King David. Formerly it was believed that they belonged to his own time, or at least the time of his son and successor. Now, it must be later, much later, and how late it must be can be realized from the following paragraphs.

The example of the story about King David is perhaps the most important in a discussion of the aim and character of biblical historiography. However, it is all the same wherever you move in this historiography. For sure, there were no patriarchs as related by the Book of Genesis. This is certainly not a new idea. De Wette, 200 years ago, said the same thing,

to be repeated by several German scholars until the idea was nailed to the wall by Thomas Thompson and John Van Seters. It is also clear that the story of the Exodus is another example of the inventiveness of biblical authors, as is the story of the conquest of Canaan. Not a single part of Israel's early history will stand the scrutiny of the historian. I see no reason to spend more time on this.<sup>12</sup>

### *The Babylonian exile*

More important is the idea of an exile in Babylonia, and a return from this exile, which occupies the mind of biblical writers to such a degree that you could say that everything related to the fate of Israel before, during and after the sojourn in Palestine concentrates around the idea of this exile and return.<sup>13</sup>

The Babylonian exile is not a historical problem. We have the Babylonian text, the Wiseman chronicle in the British Museum, describing the conquest of Jerusalem in 597 (Wiseman 1956; cf. Grayson 2000: 99–102), and we have plenty of evidence about the life of Judeans in Mesopotamia including the new clay tablets from the collection of David Sofer made available to the public in 2014 (Beaulieu 2011; Pearce and Wunsch 2014). The texts from this collection are mostly about mundane matters, contracts and similar. Their origin seems, to a large extent, to be a location written variously URU ša <sup>lu</sup>*ia-a-ḥu-du-a-a*, “the city of the Judeans”, or just URU *ia-ḥu-du*, Judah-town. Several personal names are West-Semitic and quite a few are “Yahwistic”. There is nothing remarkable here, apart from one thing: these texts seem mostly to derive from the reign of the Persian King Dareios, presumably the first. Dareios ruled from 522 to 486 BC which is a bit later than the time of the return as directed by Cyrus the great after his conquest of Babylon in 539 BCE, i.e. according to biblical chronology, in 538 BCE.

The biblical version says that a massive return to Jerusalem and Palestine followed Cyrus' conquest of Babylon involving exiled Judeans. The new evidence from Mesopotamia, however, testifies to the presence of people from the West, also people including Yahwistic names, probably, fifty years later. Put together with the evidence from the homeland where the returning Judeans are just as invisible in the material remains as their forefathers out of Egypt were 700 years earlier,<sup>14</sup> when they were supposed to have conquered and settled Canaan, it is a safe conclusion that I was right when I first argued that the Babylonian exile did not end before the early 1950s, when the Iraqi Jews were transported to the modern state of Israel, evidently with the “assistance” of the Mossad. In this way the notion of the Babylonian exile is just as manufactured as everything else in the biblical story of ancient Israel. It goes without saying that this has consequences for the historicity of the two Jewish “heroes” of the Persian Period, Ezra and Nehemiah.

The conclusion to this reconstruction of a history that never was is obviously that biblical history is an invented history. This concerns not only

parts of this history but the version of Israel's history found in the Old Testament in its entirety.<sup>15</sup> The next questions will ask for the date and the reason for this invented history.

### **When, where and why was the biblical story written?**

One way to answer some of these questions was presented by Mario Liverani in his *Israel's History and the History of Israel* (2005) – a book divided into two main parts, the first called “The Normal History”, which contains a reconstruction of the history of Palestine from the Early Iron Age to the time of the Babylonian Exile. The second part, “An Invented History”, follows an “intermezzo” about the axial age. In this part, the various chapters and books of the biblical history are explained as a series of responses to the situation that confronted the “returnees”. Thus Liverani obviously sees the historical narrative in the Old Testament as “post-exilic”, but he is hardly more than scratching the surface of the problem. First and foremost, his normal history is still concentrated on issues related by the Old Testament historiographers with their almost total focusing on the fate of the two Palestinian states, Israel and Judah. Second, he does not really understand what is involved when the Babylonian exile, or at least the end of it, is shown to be no more than another historical invention. While he might have provided a broad re-evaluation of the date of the construction of the history of Israel, he cannot penetrate all the way down to the reasons that may lie behind the composition as such. It is probably more than just a series of selected answers to specific problems facing the “post-exilic” (we will stay with this term for a while) Jewish society.

At this point, I would like to refer to the reason for my own dating of biblical prose literature to the Hellenistic period. As is well known, or so I assume, it officially began with a lecture which I held in 1992 on “The Old Testament: A Hellenistic Book?” (Lemche 1993). When I presented the lecture, I was still very much in doubt about what was happening but decided, so to speak, to pull out all the stops, that is, to ask for some ultimate explanations. At that time, much effort had been invested in seeing the Persian period as the time when most Old Testament literature came into being. I found that very unsatisfying, as we know very little about this period, and, indeed, the more we learn, the less likely it is that much could have happened in writing in Palestine. So my working hypothesis was simple: let us see what happens if we assume that everything belongs to the Hellenistic period. Will it work?

Well, it worked very well, as the last twenty-five years of intense discussion about the Hellenistic roots of the Old Testament shows. Actually, the theory makes a lot of sense and bridges the alleged gap between the Oriental world and Hellas (and later Rome). The Old Testament represents very well what we also find on the ground from this period, a strange mixture of Oriental and Greek elements.

I do not need to go into details. A number of scholars since 1992 have published excellent contributions to this discussion, such as Philippe Wajdenbaum's *Argonauts of the Desert* (2011), a meticulous comparison of motives in biblical and Greek narrative. Russell Gmirkin's recent study in the *Copenhagen International Seminar* series, *Plato and the Creation of the Hebrew Bible* (2017) enters into a much needed discussion of the importance of Plato's *Laws* and their importance for the study of biblical law. I presented a kind of a *status quaestionis* in 2013 at the conference on *Changing Perspectives* in Copenhagen by reviewing several Greek themes taken up in biblical literature, while at the same time presenting much mythological material found elsewhere in the ancient Near East (Lemche 2016). Really, this is not new, as can be seen from a number of my publications over the past twenty-five years. While not disregarding ancient Near Eastern motives and traditions, the collection of historiography found in the Old Testament does not make sense except when seen in the light of the classical tradition. The authors of these narratives must have had access to and knowledge of Greek literature and literary motifs.

Now we can return to the question of the purpose and the place of biblical literature. As I keep maintaining, the biblical historiography has its center of interest in the relationship between Israel and its land, which is always viewed as a most problematic issue. Israel is never safe in its land, as it is either on the brink of leaving its country or on the brink of re-entering and re-conquering it. Apart from a prelude, the Patriarchal narratives, which also operate with the pattern of leaving and returning, the story of the Israelites in Palestine is bracketed by the story of the exodus from Egypt, and the story of the exodus from Mesopotamia. At the moment when the Israelites are preparing to move into Canaan, they are warned of being expelled again from their future land. There are of course a plethora of stories relating to events during the Israelites' stay in the country, but their fate as an exiled people always looms in the background and is always religiously motivated.

Twenty years ago I was looking to Mesopotamia as the place where Greek and Oriental tradition comingled, because there must be a place where both traditions meet. I have changed my mind considerably since then, since it is much more likely that it happened in Alexandria in Egypt. To pinpoint the intellectual environment, I may point at the *Mouseion*, a scholarly institution most likely founded by Ptolemy II Philadelphus (309–246 BCE), which also included the great library there. Thus we have an intellectual environment with the resources to create great literature, something I have always missed in the destitute nooks and corners of ancient Palestine, including Jerusalem. That the same Israeli archaeologists, who tore down David's Jerusalem, also argue that there was no settlement in Jerusalem worth the name of a city after 587, not until the beginning of the second century BC, also convinces me that Jerusalem was not the place of the composition of this literature (Ussishkin 2006; Finkelstein 2009).

As is well known from archaeologists, the Hellenization of Palestine went slowly with only a few centers established as early as in the third century, and only on the plains, but it began also to penetrate the highlands in the second century (Kuhnen 2004).

The hypothesis must be that the historiographic narrative found in the Old Testament belongs to the Hellenistic Age and most likely originated in Alexandria. Its aim was to tell people from Palestine, living here, that their true home had to be in Palestine, and that the story proves this land to be the land of their fathers. Definitely, religion played a major part of giving birth to the idea that Palestine was not really the land of Israel, but the land of Yahweh, Israel's God, albeit presented as a gift to his chosen people. Religion helps to explain the character of the tradition about Israel's land and the most violent attitude to its non-Jewish population. This is not only a matter of boundaries; it is simply a matter of the correct religion. Without adhering strictly to the Yahwistic faith as formulated in the laws of Moses, there would be no admission to the land of Israel.

Then, at the end, we have one *aber-dabei*: the role of the Samaritans or Samaritans in the formation of the non-Jerusalem-oriented traditions in the historical narrative in the Old Testament. Somehow we are not at the end of the investigation before we can also present a satisfying explanation of all the Samaria/Shechem-oriented traditions found in the Pentateuch especially. This is not the place to expand on this theme, but there are several possibilities for an explanation. The starting point ought to be the traditional competition between south and north in the central mountains of Palestine, a competition that predates biblical historiography and has traces going back to the Amarna Age when Šuwardata of Qiltu claims that "after Lab'aya of Shechem is dead, Abdi-Heba of Jerusalem is another Lab'aya who takes away our cities" (EA 280). Although this animosity between Jerusalem and Samaria (Shechem) can be found in biblical narrative and certainly dominates the post-Solomonic history of ancient Israel, it is also mitigated by the many traditions about all of Israel that went to Egypt, and returned from Egypt led by the Ephraimite Joshua Ben Nun. Since this double attitude to the Samaritans in traditions is certainly mostly occupied with the fate of Jerusalem is very pronounced in biblical historiography, we should look for occasions where a mind of neutrality may have arisen that at least temporarily covered up for the problems between the Judeans (Jews) and the Samaritans (or Samaritans). I have previously argued that Alexandria would be suitable as the place where it happened. In conclusion, and to make this short: biblical historical narrative contains a program for the (re-)possession of Palestine as a Jewish homeland. It was put together with this purpose by learned "Jews" in Alexandria. We all know how well it was done, because, even today, it has become part of our Western heritage. These, without doubt gifted, authors created the lenses through which we in the modern Western world still perceive "'realities'" of the Middle East in general and Palestine in particular.

## Notes

- 1 *Antiqvariske Annaler udgivne ved Den Kongelige Commission i Kjøbenhavn for Oldsagers Opbevaring*, B. 3: 120. Copenhagen: Der Schultziske Officin (1820).
- 2 The newest history of Scania is Gunnar Wetterberg (2016–2017), which represents a “balanced” view accepting Scania’s status as a Danish landscape, until 1658 occasionally ruled by Swedish kings. His discussion of Osfred can be found in vol. I: 231.
- 3 Which is not to say that such collections were of no interest. Thus Raphael Holinshed’s *Chronicles* from the sixteenth century became the primary source for Shakespeare’s historical plays. Toward the end of the eighteenth century, history writing began to change as evidenced by perhaps the most famous tour de force from this time, Edward Gibbon’s *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in six volumes (1776–1789), still a joy to read.
- 4 Or at least the saying has been attributed to him, although it may go back to Bernard Le Bovier de Fontenelle (1657–1757). As to the pedigree of this quote, cf. <https://quoteinvestigator.com/2016/07/05/fable/>.
- 5 Barthold Niebuhr (1776–1831), Leopold von Ranke (1795–1886), Gustav Droysen (1808–1884).
- 6 There is no reason to present evidence for this opinion as it is the version you will find in practically every introduction to the Old Testament written between, say, 1900 and 1975.
- 7 Thus Eduard Nielsen (1960: 83) inspired, or so it seems, by Bernhard Duhm (according to Georg Fohrer in Sellin and Fohrer 1965: 241). Fohrer, in the same place, also mentions other proposals for identifying the author.
- 8 But it also presents an interesting example of circular argumentation. It is assumed that David reigned in the tenth century BCE. This claim is falsified by the archaeological evidence believed to belong to the tenth century, but still the archaeological evidence is a primary source to our knowledge of the tenth century BCE if it can really be dated to this century. The problem appears when primary evidence is simply linked to the secondary evidence of a narrative from another time, and is not allowed “to speak for itself”, i.e. to be a primary witness of the tenth century BCE, which must be the principal meaning of the archaeological artifacts.
- 9 The literature is quite comprehensive, but see, for example, Finkelstein and Ussishkin, both in Vaughan and Killebrew (2003).
- 10 Cf., on the sifting of the dump: <http://digs.bib-arch.org/digs/temple-mount.asp>. Of course if you read an article like Gabriel Barkay and Zachi Dvira (2016), the responsible archaeologists are in no doubt that they have found the mighty King David himself, or at least many remains from the tenth century BCE, although none of these come from a stratigraphic context.
- 11 The ELAD organization seems now more or less in control of antiquities in Jerusalem.
- 12 Instead of presenting an extended bibliography covering the discussion about the historicity of peoples and events narrated by biblical authors, I will refer to my study, “*Back to Reason: Biblical Minimalism*” (forthcoming).
- 13 I played with this centrality of the “Exile” in my article in Gudme and Hjelm (2015).
- 14 As I asked in a lecture on Jordan in the Biblical tradition (Lemche 2001): “Where are the Babylonian Cooking-Pots?”. A similar line of argument can be found in Bob Becking (2006).
- 15 “Invented” does not imply that nothing happened. It only says that the problem is not so much, or only, about single points; it is about the framework in its totality.

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