



Jaffa, fishing place
Jaffa, Loulanqiyat
Jaffa, la rive

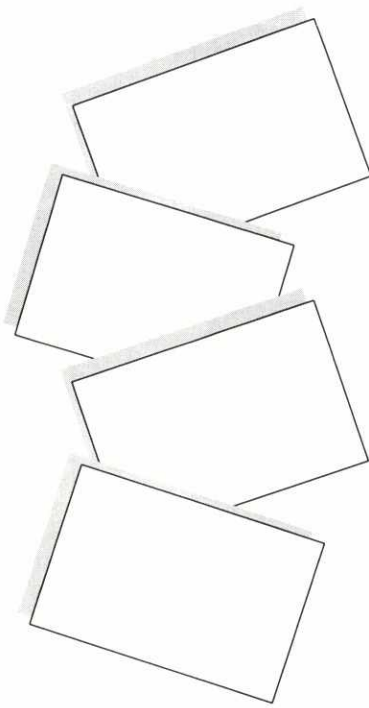


THE LANDSCAPE OF PALESTINE: EQUIVOCAL POETRY



Edited by
Ibrahim Abu-Lughod
Roger Heacock
Khaled Nashef

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Birzeit University Publications

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Roger Heacock and Khaled Nashef, editors
The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry

Layout and cover design: Khaled Nashef
Printed by Al Nasher Advertising Agency, Al-Birch

Cover: 1. Jaffa, Landing Place: Edition Fr. Vester & Co. No. 132, undated; 2. Wild Flowers, Khirbet Birzeit; Photo: Khaled Nashef; 3. Settlement in the West Bank: "Kohav Yaakov"; Photo: AP, Maya Hasson; courtesy *al-Quds* daily newspaper; 4. Landscape in the region of Ramallah; Photo: Amy Barako

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In Memoriam
Eqbal Ahmad
1933-1999



Eqbal Ahmad: Chicago, 1971

SCHOLAR, TEACHER, AND TRUE FRIEND OF PALESTINE

On May 11, 1999 at the age of sixty-seven, the phenomenal Pakistani scholar and activist for liberation passed away in Islamabad, Pakistan, of complications arising from cancer in the colon. While his death deprives the poor and oppressed of this world of a brilliant, keenly analytical defender, Palestine and the Palestinian people will grieve for losing a compassionate friend whose loyalty and devotion to Palestinian justice was strikingly clear in their moments of despair as he counseled the true path of liberation.

Eqbal was born in the province of Bihar in the Indian Subcontinent as it was succumbing to the forces of worldly political ambitions of a small minded political elite that was determined to partition its soul. With the

British retreat, the two states of India and Pakistan emerged leaving behind a fractured body and soul and more than a million people dead and dispossessed. Fundamentally traumatized by the bloody violence accompanying the emergence of the two states, Eqbal grew up quite rapidly in Pakistan, completed his high school and college education at Forham Christian College and obtained a Master's degree at the University of the Punjab in Pakistan. With the support of a Rotary Fellowship, he continued his studies at Occidental College in Los Angeles, Calif., and in 1957 was admitted, with fellowship support, for graduate studies at Princeton University's Department of Politics. There, in addition to his training in politics, he took advantage of Princeton's offerings in Islamic and Arabic studies. For his doctoral dissertation topic, he chose to address the growth and development of the labor movement in North Africa with particular focus on the Tunisian Labor Movement. Eqbal was uniquely qualified to handle the field work entailed in such a task: well trained in the social sciences, he commanded the relevant languages of French and Arabic, was knowledgeable in the literature issued by national scholars and the French "orientalists" and fully versed in the course of colonialism in the Third World. It took him little time to become a familiar figure in North African nationalist circles especially the Algerian movement of national liberation then at its height and using Tunisia as a sanctuary.

Moved by the Revolution and observing its transformative effects on the colonizer and colonized, he committed his intellectual energies to it and drew important lessons from its course, lessons that were to serve him well as he later on addressed various movements of national liberation world-wide. His systematic study of the Labor Movement enabled him to reach significant conclusions on the nature of social and political alliances that are formed in the course of the political struggle against colonialism. Deeply affected by the interaction with the foremost theoretician of national liberation, Dr. Franz Fanon, he became in effect the critic par excellence of all Third World regimes that betrayed their own people by forming bureaucratic/military alliances to entrench their radical nationalist authoritarian political systems usually in concert with a hegemonic power. Eqbal's trenchant and lucid writings, especially those contributed to the *New Yorker*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, *MERIP*, *The Nation*, the London-based *Race and Class*, the Parisian monthly *Afrique Asie*, both of which he co-edited, pointed out the serious pitfalls of relying on authoritarian regimes for development and liberation.

By the time Eqbal completed his doctoral dissertation titled *Politics and Labor in Tunisia* and obtained his Ph. D. in 1967, he was already well-

known, and achieved some prominence as an intellectual activist in the promising circles of Third World/Civil Rights/Peace movements in the United States. He taught initially at the University of Illinois, Urbana, then at Cornell University, Ithaca, N. Y., and became a familiar lecturer on the University circuit. His themes were clear: peace in Vietnam, liberation for colonized people – Palestinians, Africans, especially in the apartheid regimes of South Africa and Rhodesia and those controlled by the Fascist Portuguese dictatorial governments – Mozambique, Angola, Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde – , and of course the struggle for equal rights for oppressed minorities, native and black Americans. To enable Eqbal fully to develop his ideas and meet the growing needs of the University population for critical analysis and understanding of the world-wide struggle for liberation, the newly established Adlai Stevenson Institute for International Affairs at the University of Chicago awarded Eqbal a Resident Fellowship for 1970-1972; simultaneously he was a senior Fellow of the Institute of Policy Studies, Washington, and founded and directed its international branch, the Transnational Institute in Amsterdam. That freed him from his normal teaching duties and enabled him to write, lecture and participate more extensively in activities that contribute to peace, justice, equality and national liberation.

Clearly Eqbal's opposition to the war in Vietnam, his severe and forthright criticism of American foreign policy (evident early in his contribution to *No More Vietnams: The War and the Future of American Foreign Policy*, New York: Harper & Row, 1968) world-wide but especially its alliance, in the Nixon-Kissinger era, with racist, authoritarian regimes – Israel, South Africa, Pinochet, the Shah's Iran, Diem's Vietnam, Salazar's Portugal, etc. – placed him on the "enemies" list of the Nixon Administration. It was not accidental that the FBI arrested Eqbal in 1970 along with his Peace activist friends the Berrigan Brothers and their allies and charged them, in January 1971, with the absurd and mindless plot to kidnap then national security Advisor Henry Kissinger and blow up the heating systems of Federal buildings! Although the case was thrown out by the Federal Court in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, some two years later (March, 1972) at a cost exceeding two million dollars, the government had nevertheless, inflicted serious damage on all and particularly Eqbal since he was part of the Third World population who "dared" to question American hegemony. Although a prominent intellectual and political thinker and writer, the allegation inhibited universities from benefiting from his solid contributions as a teacher, scholar and activist. It was his former colleague and friend, Dr. Adele Simmons who, as President of the newly established and innovative Hampshire College in Amherst, Mass., availed herself of the

opportunity of enriching the intellectual life of the college by recruiting Eqbal as Professor of Politics. There he taught for fifteen years. He retired from the College formally in 1997, became Professor Emeritus. He continued to lecture, participate in seminars and devoted a good deal of his time and attention to realizing his dream of founding a truly visionary university in Pakistan. He named the projected university Khalduniyya (in reference to the Arab philosopher of history Ibn Khaldun), to signify its commitment to learning and scholarship and thus to differentiate it from those universities that have mushroomed around the third world that are constrained by patriarchal and oppressive political systems.

Eqbal was an important figure in Palestinian and Arab circles, those in the United States, in Beirut, Amman, Cairo and eventually in Palestine itself to which he journeyed twice since 1994. Not only did he speak on their behalf, address rallies, confront the Zionists and their imperialist supporters, expose their racist ideology, but additionally he provided cogent analysis of the shortcomings of the Palestinian and Arab thinking and policies of the political leadership. He challenged them to rise above their provincialism, their myopic vision and to connect themselves with truly progressive forces and groups irrespective of ethnicity, affiliation and identities. He did so not as an outside observer but as a genuine member of the community. He was a featured speaker, always ready to share with representative Arab and Palestinian institutions in the United States. Thus he spoke before and was active with the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, the Institute of Arab Studies, the General Union of Palestinian Students and the many community associations throughout the United States. His vision was constant: just as it was possible for Indians and Pakistanis to coexist on a footing of equality, he counseled that Palestinian Arab and Israeli Jew can also find their way to achieve mutual justice and self-fulfillment.

The world of scholarship and communication will miss Eqbal's steady and clear analysis; the Palestinians will miss their loyal and empathic friend and so will other communities who have reciprocated his commitment and humanity. His legacy shall endure. He is survived by Julie and their daughter Dohra Khadija Ahmad, a graduate student of Literature at Columbia University and several nieces and nephews in Pakistan.

Acknowledgments

Neither the Conference *Landscape Perspectives on Palestine* nor this volume would have been possible without the decisive input of the distinguished participants whose valuable contributions were readily recognized.

The Conference Committee was able to accomplish its work largely as a result of the support and cooperation of the University. President Hanna Nasir gave generously of his time and counsel and provided solid backing. His warm welcoming and concluding remarks at the conference signaled the full commitment of the University to the generation of knowledge and to international academic cooperation. Special mention should be made of Ms. Tania Nasir and Prof. Basem L. Ra'ad who from the beginning enthusiastically promoted the idea of organizing a conference with "landscape" as a theme. The Conference was sponsored by the Faculty of Arts of the University. Dr. Said Zeedani, then the Dean of the Arts Faculty authorized the formation of the Conference Committee, giving it full backing and support; his successor, Dr. Mahmud Mi'ari gave just as much. The support of both was crucial to the success of the Conference and we wish to convey our appreciation to them. Ms. Wissam Abdullah helped considerably as liaison and organizing officer and performed the myriad tasks of organization and administration exceptionally well and thus deserves our thanks. We also wish to express our appreciation for the assistance that other officers of the University extended: Ms. Siham Afaneh of the Financial Department, Mr. Ghazi Muhsen of the General Services Department, Mr. Albert Aghazarian, Ms. Lubna Abdul Hadi, Mr. Yasser Darweesh, all of the Public Relations Department, who helped in disseminating the necessary information, organized the liaison volunteers, and helped considerably in the smooth running of the conference.

We are also deeply appreciative that the Ford Foundation, in the person of Dr. Steven Lawry, Regional Representative for the Middle East and North Africa, and Ms. Sharry Lapp, Program Officer, saw merit in our funding proposal. The Foundation's generous grant, supplemented by smaller ones from the Welfare Association and the Arab Bank, enabled the University to mount what turned out to be a superior conference, and issue the present volume of selected essays.

Foreword

Birzeit University convenes, from time to time, international academic conferences to examine significant questions. Such conferences serve additional purposes as well: they enable international scholars to form important links with Palestinian scholars, assess the climate for conducting scientific research in Palestine and to do so in cooperation with Palestinian scholars and universities. Such joint endeavors facilitate closer academic cooperation and international understanding.

The University convened its Fifth International Conference, November 12-15, 1998 (see *Appendix*, pp. 255-257), coinciding with the tenth anniversary of the Palestinian Declaration of Independence. Appropriately, the theme chosen for the Conference, *Landscape Perspectives on Palestine*, was intended in part to call attention to the urgent developments affecting the Palestinian landscape, historically as well as in the present. More than fifty distinguished national and international scholars were either asked to present papers on specific issues or responded positively to the call for papers issued by the Conference Committee, composed of the following faculty members: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod (chair, Graduate Program in International Studies), Khaled Nashef (coordinator, Palestinian Institute of Archaeology), Vera Tamari (Fine Arts Program), Basem L. Ra'ad (English Department), Kamal Abdulfattah (Department of History, Geography and Political Science), Ghassan F. Abdullah (Institute of Law), Abdulkarim Abu-Khashshan (Arabic Department), Rema Hammami (Institute of Women's Studies) and Roger Heacock (Department of History, Geography and Political Science). These scholars were drawn, as would be expected in addressing this multidisciplinary field, from several academic disciplines: history, geography, art, archaeology, literature, law, and social sciences.

While the principal leitmotiv of the conference was concerned with the Palestinian landscape, how it is being forcefully disfigured, disconnected by hostile elements and transformed literally and in the imagination, clearly the participating scholars, experts in their varied fields, brought a comparative dimension to their contributions that was essential for developing alternative perspectives for landscape studies, and for apprehending those changes that have transformed landscapes across history, time and space. The tension that characterizes the relationship between those that pursue policies aiming at dispossession, excision and supplanting the dispossessed, and contending communal formations, does great violence to the landscape, and this was made strikingly clear by the visual presentations at the conference that drew on varied human experiences world-wide.

Without question the contributions to the conference were original, well-grounded theoretically and fully supported by extensive historical and other empirical data. Some of them emphasize continuity and reflections, positive or negative, on the landscape of Palestine; others illustrate, quite tellingly, the discontinuities brought about by the overwhelming power of adverse policies and behavior of conquering states. Both the contributions at the Conference and the discussions that were stimulated by the presentations demonstrated the attractive and generative power of Palestine as a concept, as memory and as a reality. It was that power that made it possible and feasible for scholars of varying intellectual commitments whose interests spanned wider geographic regions to bring the Palestinian landscape within their purview and thus make a unique contribution to the growth of Landscape Studies.

The immediate impact of the Conference was evident from the opening session: Kamal Nasir Hall, where conferences are usually held was filled to capacity; the overflow, greater than the entire audience in the hall, had to be satisfied by watching the proceedings on close circuit television. The presentations, of uniformly high quality and immediate relevance, irrespective of time and place, contributed to a sense of engagement rarely achieved in academic conferences. Useful to mention in this context is the resolve of Birzeit University to introduce Landscape Studies to its graduate curriculum. It is our hope that the first graduates of the Program on Landscape Studies will make their first intellectual contributions through the Landscape Conference to be held at Birzeit in the year 2002!

The subtitle we have chosen, *Equivocal Poetry*, is a concept formulated by W. J. T. Mitchell in his seminal essay *Imperial Landscape* (see p. 253). It suggests the ambiguity but also the temporal and spatial profundity of the landscape. This is precisely the ambition of the present volume, and we leave it to our readers to judge whether our aspiration has been fulfilled.

The Editors,
June, 1999

CHAPTER ONE

PROLOGUE

PALESTINE: MEMORY, INVENTION AND SPACE

Edward W. Said

Over the past decade, there has been a burgeoning interest in two overlapping areas of the humanities and social sciences: memory, and geography, or more specifically the study of human space. Both of them have spawned an extraordinary amount of interesting work, work that has emerged from out of these topics as in effect to create new fields of study and inquiry. The concern with memory, for example, has branched out to include such increasingly prevalent forms of writing as personal memoirs and autobiography, which nearly every fiction writer of note has attempted, to say nothing of the outpourings of academics, scientists, public figures, and so forth. The national fixation on recollection, confession, and witness has gone the whole gamut from public confession – as in the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal – to various studies of the meaning of collective memory, extended reflection and analyses of instances of it, plus numerous chronicles embodying it. I shall have more to say about that later. In addition, and somewhat on the margins, there has been a serious sometimes bitter inquiry into the authenticity of certain memories, as well as, at the other, calmer end of the spectrum, a remarkable academic analysis of the role of invention in such matters as tradition and collective historical experience.

Some examples of intense, and even anguished controversy are the following: Was Anne Frank's diary really hers, or was it so altered by publishers, members of her family or others in its published form so as to conceal the disturbances in her domestic life? In Europe there has been a great and often acerbic debate over the meaning of the Holocaust, with a whole range of opinions trying to ascertain what happened, why it happened, and what it tells us about the nature of Germany, France and several other involved countries. The celebrated French classicist Pierre Vidal-Naquet wrote a powerful book some years back called *Assassins of Memory* about French deniers of the Holocaust, and more recently the Papon trial in Bordeaux raised uncomfortable questions related not just to memories of the Occupation but the centrality of French collaborators

with the Nazis, and what it said about French selective memories of the Vichy regime. In Germany of course debate on the testimonials of the death camps and their philosophical, as well as political meaning periodically receives new infusions of controversy, fuelled most recently by the publication of the German translation of Daniel Goldhagen's book *Hitler's Willing Executioners*. In the United States consider the anger provoked among representatives of the official culture and members of the government by the Smithsonian Institution – seen correctly as a sort of embodiment of official memory in the country – in its unsuccessful attempts to mount exhibitions, one about the Enola Gay, and another on the African-American experience. Earlier there was a furor over an impressive exhibition at the National Gallery of American Art, "America as West," which set out to contrast representations of the land, the Indian natives, and the conditions of life in the Western US during the 1860s with the way the land was being forcibly settled, the Indians destroyed, and the transformation of a once peaceful rural environment into a predatory urban one. Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska decried the whole thing as an attack on America even though he avowed that he himself had not seen it. In any event all this raises the question not so much only of what is remembered, but how and in what form. It is an issue about the very fraught nature of representation, not just about content.

Memory and its representations touch very significantly upon questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority. Far from being a neutral exercise in facts and basic truths, the study of history, which of course is the underpinning of memory, both in school and university, is to some considerable extent a nationalist effort premised on the need to construct a desirable loyalty to and insider's understanding of one's country, tradition, and faith. As is well known, there's been a robust debate on the matter of national standards in history, in which issues such as whether George Washington or Abraham Lincoln should be allowed more time than they have at present in history curricula, have generated very angry arguments pro and con. Similarly as Howard Zinn has suggested in his work, there has been skepticism expressed as to why the study of American history should glorify only the big deeds of big people and neglect to mention what happened to the small ones, the people who built railroads, worked the farms, sweated as laborers in the enormous industrial companies that lie at the heart of this country's immense wealth and power. (He redresses this imbalance in his impressive *People's History of the United States*, which has already sold well over half a million copies). In a recent article he goes even further. Having been asked to participate in a symposium on the Boston Massacre (March 5, 1770 in which British troops killed five colonists) Zinn reflected to

himself that he wanted “to discuss other massacres because it seemed to me that concentrating attention on the Boston Massacre would be a painless exercise in patriotic fervor. There is no surer way to obscure the deep divisions of race and class in American history than by uniting us in support of the American Revolution and all its symbols (like Paul Revere’s stark etching of the soldiers shooting into the crowd). I suggested to the people assembled at Faneuil Hall (the wall around us crowded with portraits of the Founding Fathers and the nation’s military heroes) that there were other massacres, forgotten or dimly remembered, that deserved to be recalled. These ignored episodes could tell us much about racial hysteria and class struggle, about shameful moments in our continental and overseas expansion, so that we can see ourselves more clearly, more honestly” (*The Progressive*, August 17, 1998).

These remarks immediately transport us to the vexed issue of nationalism and national identity, in which memories of the past are shaped in accordance with a certain notion of what “we,” or for that matter “they” really are. National identity always involves narratives – of the nation’s past, its founding fathers and documents, major, seminal events, and so forth. But this is never undisputed, or merely a matter of the neutral recital of facts. In the United States, for example, 1492 was celebrated very differently by people who saw themselves as victims of Columbus’s advent – people of color, minorities, members of the working class, people, in a word, who claimed they had a different collective memory of what in most schools was celebrated as a triumph of advancement and the collective march forward of humanity. Because the world has shrunk, communications have been speeded up fantastically, and people find themselves undergoing the most rapid social transformations in history, ours has become an era of a search for roots, of people trying to discover in the collective memory of their race, religion, community, and family, a past which is entirely their own, secure from the ravages of history and a turbulent time. But this too has provoked very sharp debate and even bloodshed. In the Islamic world, how one reads the orthodox tradition (*sunnah*), is being debated, as are the questions of how one interprets stories about the Prophet that are basically memories reconstructed by disciples and friends, and how one can derive an image of contemporary Islamic codes of behavior and law that is consonant and in accordance with those precious early, in fact aboriginal memories. Similar questions arise in interpretations of the Christian Gospels, as well as the Judaic prophetic books: these have a direct impact on matters of community and politics in the present. Some of this lies behind the much-touted controversy over family values that

have been vaunted by political candidates, moral philosophers, and public scolds.

To this whole matter of memory as a social, political and historical enterprise has been added a complication, to which I referred above, namely, the role of invention. In 1983 two distinguished British historians Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger edited a book of essays by various other well-known historians entitled *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge, 1983). I won't try to summarize the ideas in this subtle and rich collection except to say that what was being studied was the way rulers, social, and political authorities in the period since about 1850 set about creating such supposedly age-old rituals and objects as the Scottish kilt or in India the durbar thereby providing a false, that is, invented memory of the past as a way of creating a new sense of identity for ruler and ruled. In India, for example, the durbar was said to be a great ceremonial pageant designed to be implanted in the Indian memory – whose status as “tradition” was a total fiction – though it served the British colonial authorities to compel Indians to believe in the age-old history of British imperial rule. “In Africa, too”, writes Terence Ranger, “whites drew on invented tradition in order to derive the authority and confidence that allowed them to act as agents of change. Moreover, insofar as they were consciously applied to Africans, the invented traditions [such as compelling Africans to work as laborers on European gentlemen's farms] of nineteenth century Europe were seen precisely as agents of modernization” (220). In modern France, according to Hobsbawm, the demise of Napoleon III's Empire, the emergence of a politicized working-class as evidenced in the Paris Commune, convinced the “moderate Republican bourgeoisie” that only it could head off the dangers of revolution by producing a new kind of citizen, “turning peasants into Frenchmen ... [and] all Frenchmen into good Republicans”. Thus the French revolution was institutionalized in education by developing “a secular equivalent of the church ... imbued with revolutionary and republican principles and content”. In addition, there was “the invention of public ceremonies. The most important of these, Bastille Day, can be exactly dated in 1880”. Thirdly, there “was the mass production of public monuments,” of two main kinds – images of the Republic itself such as Marianne, and images of the “bearded civilian figures of whoever local patriotism chose to regard as its notables” (271-2).

In other words, the invention of tradition was a practice very much used by authorities as an instrument of rule in mass societies when the bonds of small social units like village and family were dissolving and authorities needed to find other ways of connecting a large number of

people to each other: the invention of tradition is a method for using collective memory selectively by manipulating certain bits of the national past, suppressing others, elevating still others in an entirely functional way. Thus memory is not necessarily authentic, but rather useful. The Israeli journalist Tom Segev shows in his book *The Seventh Million* that the Holocaust was consciously used by the Israeli government as a way of consolidating Israeli national identity after years of not paying much attention to it. Similarly, the University of Chicago historian Peter Novick in an as yet unpublished study of the image of the Holocaust amongst American Jews, shows that before the 1967 war and the Israeli victory against the Arab states, American Jews paid very little attention (and in fact tried consciously to de-emphasise it as a way of avoiding anti-Semitism) to that appallingly horrible episode. It is a long way from those early attitudes to the 'construction of the Holocaust Museum in Washington. Similarly the controversy surrounding the memories of the Armenian genocide, is fuelled by the Turkish government's denial of its role.

My point in citing all these cases is to underline the extent to which the art of memory for the modern world is both for historians as well as ordinary citizens and institutions very much something to be used, misused and exploited, rather than something that sits inertly there for each person to possess and contain. Thus the study and concern with memory or a specifically desirable and recoverable past is a specially freighted late twentieth century phenomenon that has arisen at a time of bewildering change, of unimaginably large and diffuse mass societies, competing nationalisms and, most important perhaps, the decreasing efficacy of religious, familial, and dynastic bonds. People now look to this refashioned memory, especially in its collective forms, to give themselves a coherent identity, a national narrative, a place in the world though, as I have indicated, the processes of memory are frequently, if not always, manipulated and intervened in for sometimes urgent purposes in the present. It's interesting to contrast this more modern, and somehow loosely malleable form of memory with the codified, rigorous art of memory in classical antiquity described by Frances Yates in her marvelous book of the same name.

Memory for Cicero was something organized and structured. If you wanted to remember something for a speech you were about to give, you imagined a building with all sorts of rooms and corners, and in your mind's eye you subdivided the parts of the memory you wished to recall and placed them in various sections of the building; as you spoke you walked through the building in your head, so to speak, noting the places and the objects and phrases as you went along. That way order was

maintained in the memory. The modern art of memory is much more subject to inventive re-ordering and re-deploying than that, as we shall soon see.

As for geography, or geography, as I want to use the word, as a socially constructed and maintained sense of place, a great deal of attention has been paid by modern scholars and critics to the extraordinary constitutive role of space in human affairs. Consider, as an easy instance, the word globalization, which is an indispensable concept for modern economics: it is a spatial, geographical designation signifying the global reach of a powerful economic system. Think of geographical designations like Auschwitz, think of what power and resonance they have, over and above a particularly specifiable moment in history or a geographical locale like Poland or France. The same applies to Jerusalem, a city, an idea, an entire history, and of course a specifiable geographical locale often typified by a photograph of the Dome of the Rock, the city walls, and the surrounding houses seen from the Mount of Olives: it too is over-determined when it comes to memory, as well as all sorts of invented histories and traditions, all of them emanating from it, but most of them in conflict with each other. This conflict is intensified by Jerusalem's mythological – as opposed to actual geographical – location, in which landscape, buildings, streets and the like are overlain and, I would say, even covered entirely with symbolic associations totally obscuring the existential reality of what as a city and real place Jerusalem is. The same can be said for Palestine, whose landscape functions in the memories of Jews, Muslims, and Christians entirely differently. One of the strangest things for me to grasp is the powerful hold the locale must have had on European crusaders despite their enormous distance from the country. Scenes of the crucifixion and nativity, for instance, appear in European Renaissance paintings as taking place in a sort of denatured Palestine, since none of the artists had ever seen the place. An idealized landscape gradually took shape that sustained the European imagination for hundreds of years. That Bernard of Clairvaux standing in a church in Vezelay, in the heart of Burgundy, could announce a crusade to reclaim Palestine and the holy places from the Muslims never fails to astound me, and that after hundreds of years living in Europe Zionist Jews could still feel that Palestine had stood still in time and was theirs, again despite millennia of history and the presence of actual inhabitants. This is also an indication of how geography can be manipulated, invented, characterized quite apart from a site's merely physical reality.

Simon Schama's book *Landscape and Memory* chronicles the toing-and-froing between specific geographical locales and the human imagination. Surely the most compelling aspect of Schama's book is that

he shows in dozens of different ways that forests, villages, mountains and rivers are never coterminous with some stable reality out there that identifies and gives them permanence. On the contrary, as in the example he gives of his family's original village in Lithuania, most of its traces disappeared; he finds instead through the poetry that Mickiewicz wrote about the place how Jews and Poles "were snarled up ... in each other's fate" despite the fact that they were "necessarily alien to each other" (30). Geography stimulates not only memory but dreams and fantasies, poetry and painting, philosophy (as in Heidegger's *Holzwege*) and fiction (think of Walter Scott's *Highland* novels), music (as in Sibelius's *Finlandia* or Copland's *Appalachian Spring*).

But what specially interests me is the hold of both memory and geography on the desire for conquest and domination. Two of my books, *Orientalism* and *Culture and Imperialism* are based not only on the notion of what I call imaginative geography – the invention and construction of a geographical space called the Orient, for instance, with scant attention paid to the actuality of the geography and its inhabitants – but also on the mapping, conquest, annexation of territory in both what Conrad called the dark places of the earth, and those most inhabited and lived in, places like India or Palestine. The great voyages of geographical discovery from da Gama to Captain Cook were motivated by curiosity and scientific fervor, but also by a spirit of domination, which becomes immediately evident when the white men land in some distant and unknown place but when the natives rebel against them. In the modern era Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* is the essential parable of how geography and conquest go together, providing an almost eerie prefiguration of historical figures like Clive and Hastings in India, or scientific discoverers like Murchison in Africa decades and decades later.

These experiences enable complicated memories for natives and (in the Indian case) Britishers alike; a similar dialectic of memory over territory animates the relationship of French and Algerian accounts of the 130 years of French rule in North Africa. We should never have left or given up India or Algeria, say some, using strange atavistic sentiments like the Raj revival – a spate of TV films like *The Jewel in the Crown*. *A Passage to India*, *Gandhi*, the fashion of wearing safari suits, helmets, desert boots – as a way of periodically provoking nostalgia for the good old days of British supremacy in Asia and Africa. Whereas most Indians and Algerians would likely say that their liberation came as a result of being able after years of nationalist struggle, to take hold of their own affairs, re-establish their identity, culture and language and, above all, re-appropriate their territory from the colonial masters. Hence, to some extent, the remarkable emergence of an Anglo-Indian literature by Anita

Desai, Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy, and many others, re-excavating and re-charting the past from a post-colonial point of view, thereby erecting a new post-imperial space. It is easy to see the fact of displacement in the colonial experience, which at bottom is the replacement of one geographical sovereignty, an imperialist one, by another, native force. More subtle and complex is the unending cultural struggle over territory, which necessarily involves overlapping memories, narratives, and physical structures. No one has studied this more powerfully than the late Raymond Williams in his classic book, *The Country and the City*. What he shows is that literary and cultural forms such as the ode, the political pamphlet, different kinds of novel derive some of their aesthetic rationale from changes taking place in the geography or landscape as the result of a social contest. Let me explain this more concretely. The mid-17th to 18th century genre of country-house poem, with its emphasis on the house's calm stateliness and classical proportions – "Heaven's Centre, Nature's Lap" – is not the same thing in Marvell, Ben Jonson, and later, in Pope. Jonson draws attention to the way the house was won from disturbing, encroaching peasant populations; Marvell in a more complicated way understands the country-house as the result of a union between money, property, and politics; in Pope the house has become a sort of moral center and later in Jane Austen's novel *Mansfield Park* it is the very embodiment of all that is benign and actively good in England. Property in all four writers is being consolidated; what we watch is the gradual triumph of a social dialectic celebrating the virtues and necessities of a propertied class, which itself seems to stand for the nation at its best. In each case the writer remembers the past in his own way, seeing images that to her/him typify that past, preserving one past, sweeping away others. Later writers, say, the urban novelists like Dickens and Thackeray, will look back to this period as a sort of rural paradise from which England has fallen; the beauties of the field are replaced by the grimy, dark, sooty industrial city. Both the retrospective image and the contemporary one, says Williams, are historical constructs, myths of the social geography fashioned in different periods by different classes, different interests, different ideas about the national identity, the polity, the country as a whole, none of it without actual struggle and rhetorical dispute.

All of what I have been discussing here – the interplay between geography, memory, and invention, in the sense that invention must occur if there is recollection – is particularly relevant to a twentieth century instance, that of Palestine, which instances an extraordinarily rich and intense conflict of at least two memories, two sorts of historical invention, two sorts of geographical imagination. I want to argue that we can go

behind the headlines and the repetitively reductive media accounts of the Middle East conflict and discern there a much more interesting and subtle conflict than what is customarily talked about. Only by understanding that special mix of geography generally and landscape in particular with historical memory and, as I said, an arresting form of invention can we begin to grasp the persistence of conflict and the difficulty of resolving it, a difficulty that is far too complex and grand than the current peace process could possibly envisage, let alone resolve.

Let us juxtapose some relevant dates and events with each other. For Palestinians 1948 is remembered as the year of the *Nakba* or catastrophe when 750,000 of us who were living there – two thirds of the population – were driven out, our property taken, hundreds of villages destroyed, an entire society obliterated. For Israelis and many Jews throughout the world 1998 has been the 50th anniversary of Israel's independence and establishment, a miraculous story of recovery after the Holocaust, of democracy, making the desert bloom, and so on. Thus, two totally different characterizations of a recollected event have been constructed. What has long struck me about this radical irreconcilability at the origin of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is that it is routinely excluded from considerations of related subjects concerning ethnic or collective memory, geographical analysis, political reflection. This is most evident in studies of the German catastrophe as well as of ethnic conflicts in former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Ireland, Sri Lanka, South Africa and elsewhere.

Take Germany first. There is little doubt that it is important to prevent assassins of memory from denying or minimizing the Holocaust; but it is also important not to forget to show the link, well-established in contemporary Jewish consciousness, between the Holocaust and the founding of Israel as a haven for Jews. That this link also meant the disestablishing of the Palestinians from their homes and farms is practically never stated, although for Palestinians it increases the agony of their plight: why, they ask, are we made to pay for what happened to the Jews in Europe by what was in effect a Western Christian genocide? The question never emerges out of the debate in or about Germany, even though it is directly entailed by such facts as the enormous amount of money paid by Germany to Israel in Holocaust reparations, and has surfaced again in the claims against Swiss banks. I have no hesitation in saying yes, Germany and Switzerland ought to pay, but that also means that Palestinians over the past fifty years whose own losses are staggering deserve a hearing too, especially since to us these payments to Israel go to consolidate Israel's hold not only what we lost in 1948 but on the territories occupied in 1967. The Palestinians have never received even

the slightest official acknowledgment of the massive injustice that was done to them, much less the possibility of staking material claims against Israel for the property taken, the people killed, the houses demolished, the water taken, the prisoners held, and so forth. There is also the complex, almost equally dense and far-reaching matter of Britain's responsibility. What strikes me as more significant is the refusal in the Israeli official narrative to take account of the state's complicity and responsibility for the Palestinian dispossession. For years and years an assiduous campaign to maintain a frozen version of Israel's heroic narrative of repatriation and justice obliterated any possibility of a Palestinian narrative, in large part because certain key components of the Israeli story stressed certain geographical characteristics of Palestine itself. Take the key notion of liberation: so strong was the story of Jewish independence and re-emergence after the Holocaust that it became virtually impossible to ask the question, liberation and independence from whom? If the question was asked it was always answered as liberation from British imperialism. Or, as the story got elaborated, it was defense against invading Arab armies that wanted to crush the young state. The Palestinians thus faded into the encircling and menacing obscurity of "the Arabs," the fact that they were actual residents occluded and simultaneously denied.

Perhaps the greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people has been over the right to a remembered presence, and with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality, at least since the Zionist movement began its encroachments on the land. A similar battle has been fought by all colonized peoples whose past and present were dominated by outside powers who had first conquered the land, and then re-wrote history so as to appear in that history as the true owners of that land. Every independent state that emerged after the dismantling of the classical empires in the post World War Two years felt it necessary to narrate its own history, as much as possible free of the biases and misrepresentations of that history by British, French, Portuguese, Dutch or other colonial historians. Yet the fate of Palestinian history has been a sad one, since not only was independence not gained, but there was little collective understanding of the importance of constructing a collective history as a part of trying to gain independence. To become a nation in the formal sense of the word, a people must make itself into something more than a collection of tribes, or political organizations of the kind that since the 1967 war, Palestinians have created and supported. With a competitor as formidable as the Zionist movement, the effort to re-write the history of Palestine so as to exclude the land's peoples had a disastrous effect on the quest for Palestinian self-determination. What we never understood was the power of a narrative history to mobilize people

around a common goal. In the case of Israel, the narrative's main point was that Zionism's goal was to restore, re-establish, re-patriate, and reconnect a people with its original homeland. It was the genius of Herzl and Weizmann to draft thinkers like Einstein and Buber, as well as financiers like Lord Rothschild and Moses Montefiore into giving of their time and effort in support of so important, and historically justified a scheme. This narrative of re-establishment and recovery served its purpose not only amongst Jews, but also throughout the Western (and even in some parts of the Eastern) world. Because of its power and appeal the Zionist narrative and idea (which depended on a special reading of the Bible) and because of the collective Palestinian inability as a people to produce a convincing narrative story with a beginning, middle, and end (we were always too disorganized, our leaders were always interested in maintaining their power, most of our intellectuals refused to commit themselves as a group to a common goal and we too often changed our goals) Palestinians have remained scattered and politically ineffective victims of Zionism, as it continues to take more and more land and history.

Just how deliberate and sustained has been the assault on the history and consequently the dominant public memory of Palestine, and how much attention has been paid over the years to the re-construction of Jewish history to suit the purposes of Zionism as a political movement, is made stunningly clear by the Scottish historian of the ancient Near East, Keith W. Whitelam, whose book *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (Routledge, 1996) is of paramount importance. Not being myself a scholar of the ancient world generally, nor of ancient Palestine in particular, I cannot make a judgment about every one of the points that Whitelam makes; but I am able to judge what he says about modern scholarship on ancient Israel, and there I was very impressed with his careful, but nevertheless extremely audacious argument. In effect Whitelam is talking about two things: one, the politics of collective memory, and two, the creation by Zionist scholars and historians of a geographical image of ancient Israel that is shaped by the ideological needs and pressures of the modern Zionist movement.

As I suggested above, collective memory is not an inert and passive thing, but a field of activity in which past events are selected, re-constructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning. In her 1995 book *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*, the Israeli-American historian Yael Zerubavel shows how before the late nineteenth century the story of Masada was unknown to most Jews. Then in 1862 a Hebrew translation of the Roman sources of Masada in Josephus's *Wars of the Jews* was published, and in

a short time the story was transformed by reconstruction into four important things: “a major turning point in Jewish history, a locus of modern pilgrimage, a famous archaeological site, and a contemporary political metaphor”. When General Yigael Yadin excavated Masada after 1948 the expedition had two complementary aspects, an archaeological investigation and “the fulfillment of a national mission”. In time the actual place was the site of Israeli army ceremonies, a commemoration of Jewish heroism as well as a commitment to present and future military skill. Thus was a dim, relatively unknown incident in the past reformulated consciously as a major episode in the nationalist program of a modern state; Masada became a potent symbol of the Israeli national narrative of struggle and survival.

Whitelam presents a remarkably analogous picture of how the history of ancient Palestine was gradually replaced by a largely fabricated image of ancient Israel, a political entity that in reality played only a small role in the area of geographical Palestine. According to Whitelam, ancient Palestine was the home of many diverse peoples and histories: it was the place where Jebusites, Israelites, Canaanites, Moabites, Philistines and others lived and flourished. Beginning in the late 19th century, however, this more complex and rich history was silenced, forced aside, in order that the history of invading Israelite tribes, who for a time suppressed and dispossessed the native peoples, became the only narrative worth considering. Thus the extinction of the indigenous population of Palestine in the Late Bronze Age became an acceptable and gradually permanent feature of a sort of triumphalist Jewish history for scholars like W. F. Albright, the leading historian of ancient Palestine during the early twentieth century, and made it possible to silence native Palestinian history as it was supplanted by the history of the incoming Israelites. Albright goes so far as to condone the destruction of the native inhabitants of ancient Palestine in favor of superior people: “From the impartial standpoint of a philosopher of history,” he says, “it often seems necessary that a people of markedly inferior type [i. e. the ancient Canaanite Palestinians] should vanish before a people of superior potentialities [the Israelites], since there is a point beyond which racial mixture cannot go without disaster”.

In its remarkably frank expression of racist attitudes this statement by a supposedly objective scholar, who also happened to be the most influential figure in modern Biblical Archaeology, is chilling. But it suggests how in its desire to overcome obstacles in its path, even to the point of retrospectively condoning dispossession and even genocide, modern Zionism imposed a sort of retrospective teleology. Whitelam proceeds to show how scholars like Albright and many others went on in

their writing to construct “a large, powerful, sovereign and autonomous ... state [which was] attributed to its founder David”. Whitelam shows how this state was in effect an invention designed to accompany the Zionist attempt in the twentieth century to gain control over the land of Palestine; thus “biblical scholarship in its construction of an ancient Israeli state is implicated in contemporary struggles for the land”. Whitelam argues that such a state was far less important than its champions in the present day say it was: “The invented ancient Israel has silenced Palestinian history and obstructed alternative claims to the past”. By inventing an ancient Israeli kingdom that displaced Canaanite Palestinian history, modern scholars have made it nearly impossible for present-day Palestinians to say that their claims to Palestine have any long-term historical validity. Indeed such pro-Zionist scholars have gone on to assert that ancient Israel was qualitatively different from all other forms of government in Palestine, just as modern-day Zionists said that their coming to Palestine made an “empty” desert land turn into a garden. The idea in both ancient and modern cases, is identical, and of course violently contradicts the far more complex, pluri-cultural identity of the place.

Whitelam is quite right to criticize my own work on the modern struggle for Palestine for not paying any attention to the discourse of biblical studies. This discourse he says was really a part of Orientalism, by which Europeans imagined and represented the timeless Orient as they wished to see it, not as it was, or as its natives believed. Thus biblical studies, which created an Israel that was set apart from its environment, and supposedly brought civilization and progress to the region, was reinforced by Zionist ideology and by Europe’s interest in the roots of its own past. Yet, he concludes, “this discourse has excluded the vast majority of the population of the region”. It is a discourse of power “which has dispossessed Palestinians of a land and a past”. Whitelam’s subject is ancient history and how a purposeful political movement could invent a serviceable past which became a crucial aspect of Israel’s modern collective memory. When the Mayor of Jerusalem a few years ago proclaimed that the city represented 3,000 years of unbroken Jewish dominance, he was mobilizing an invented story for the political purposes of a modern state still trying to dispossess native Palestinians who are now seen only as barely tolerated aliens.

Along with the idea of Israel as liberation and independence couched in terms of a re-establishment of Jewish sovereignty went an equally basic motif, that of making the desert bloom, the inference being that Palestine was either empty (as in the Zionist slogan a land without people for a people without land) or neglected by the nomads and peasants who facelessly lived on it. The main idea was to deny the Palestinians not just

a historical presence as a collectivity but also to imply that they were not a people who had a longstanding peoplehood. As late as 1984 a book by a relative unknown called Joan Peters appeared from a major commercial publishing house (Harper & Row) purporting to show that the Palestinians as a people were an ideological, propaganda fiction; her book *From Time Immemorial* won all sorts of prizes and accolades from well-known personalities like Saul Bellow and Barbara Tuchman, who admired Peters' "success" in proving that Palestinians were "a fairy tale". Slowly, however, the book lost credibility despite its eight or nine printings, as various critics, Norman Finkelstein principal among them, methodically revealed that the book was a patchwork of lies, distortions, and fabrications, amounting to colossal fraud. The book's brief currency (it has since practically disappeared and is no longer cited) is an indication of how overwhelmingly the Zionist memory had succeeded in emptying Palestine of its inhabitants and history, turning it instead into an empty space that, Peters alleged, was flooded in the middle 1940's with Arab refugees from neighboring countries attracted to the place by the hope of prosperity under Jewish settlers. I remember my rage at reading a book that had the effrontery to tell me that my house and birth in Jerusalem in 1935 (before Peter's flood of "Arab" refugees) to say nothing of the actual existence of my parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents and my entire extended family in Palestine were in fact not there, had not lived there for generations, had therefore no title to the specific landscape of orange and olive groves that I remembered from my earliest glimmerings of consciousness. I recall also that in 1986 I purposefully published a book of photographs by Jean Mohr, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* for which I wrote an elaborate text whose effect with the interconnected pictures I hoped would be to dispel the myth of an empty landscape and an anonymous, non-existent people.

All along then the Israeli story buttressed both subliminally and explicitly with memories of the horrors of an anti-semitism that ironically took place in an entirely different landscape, crowded out the Palestinian history in Palestine and out of it because of Israeli geographical and physical displacement of the people. The justified feeling of "never again," which became the watchword of Jewish consciousness as, for instance, the massively publicized Eichmann trial revealed the scope of the awfulness of the Holocaust, pushed away the deepening sense of the need for Palestinian assertion that was developing in that community. There is something almost tragically ironic about the way in which the 1967 war on the one hand intensified the assertiveness of a triumphal Israeli identity and, on the other, sharpened the need among Palestinians for organized resistance and counter-assertion. Only this time Israel had

occupied the rest of Palestine and acquired a population of almost two million people that it ruled as a military power administering an additional subject population (20% of Israel's citizens are Palestinians). Newly excavated memories from the Jewish past emerged – the Jew as warrior, as militant, as vigorous fighter replaced the image of the Jew as scholarly, wise, and slightly withdrawn. The change in iconography is brilliantly chronicled by Paul Breines in his book *Tough Jews*.

With the rise of the PLO first in Jordan then after September 1970 in Beirut a new Palestinian interest in the past, as embodied in such disparate activities as organized historical research, the production of poetry and fiction based upon a sense of recovered history, formerly blotted out but now reclaimed in the poetry of Zayyad, Darwish, and al-Qassem, in the fiction of Kanafani and Jabra, as well as painting, sculpture and historical writing such as Abu-Lughod's collection *The Transformation of Palestine*. Later work like the compilations of Walid Khalidi – *Before Their Diaspora* and *All That Remains* – Rashid Khalidi's study *Palestinian Identity*, Sabry Jiryis's *The Arabs in Israel*, Bayan al-Hout's study of the Palestinian elites, Elia Zureik's *The Palestinians in Israel*, and many others, all by Palestinian scholars, gradually established a line of dynastic descent between the events of 1948, before and after the catastrophe, that gave substance to the national memory of a Palestinian collective life that persisted, despite the ravages of physical dispossession, military occupation, and Israeli official denials. By the middle nineteen eighties, a new direction had begun to appear in Israeli critical histories of the canonized official memories. In my opinion their genesis lay to some considerable extent in the aggravated, but close colonial encounter between Israelis and Palestinians in the occupied territories. Consider that with the accession to power of the right-wing Likud in 1977 these territories were renamed Judaea and Samaria; they were onomastically transformed from "Palestinian" to "Jewish" territory, and settlements – whose object from the beginning had been nothing less than the transformation of the landscape by the forcible introduction of European style mass housing with neither precedent nor basis in the local topography – gradually spread all over the Palestinian areas, starkly challenging the natural and human setting with rude Jewish-only segregations. In my opinion, these settlements, whose number included a huge ring of fortress-like housing projects around the city of Jerusalem, were intended visibly to illustrate Israeli power, additions to the gentle landscape that signified aggression, not accomodation and acculturation.

The new trend in Israeli critical history that I mentioned a moment ago was inaugurated by the late Simha Flaphan, but then continued in controversial scholarly monographs and books by Bennie Morris, Avi

Shlaim, Tom Segev, Ilan Pappé, Beni Beit Halahmi. Much of this work I believe was fuelled by the Palestinian *Intifada*, which put an end to the idea of Palestinian silence and absence. For the first time a systematic critique of the official version programmatically revealed the crucial role played by invention in a collective memory that had ossified into unyielding, almost sacralized and, with regard to Palestinians, dehumanized representation. Far from Palestinians having left or run away because they were told to do so by their leaders (this had been the prevalent argument for the suddenly depopulated landscape in 1948) these historians showed that according to Zionist military archives there had been a cold-blooded plan to disperse and exclude the native population, spiriting them away so that Palestinians would not clutter Israel with their non-Jewish presence. Far from the Jewish forces having been a small, outnumbered and truly threatened population, it was shown that these forces were greater in number than the combined Arab armies, they were better armed, they had a common set of objectives entirely lacking among their opponents. As for the Palestinians, they were effectively leaderless, unarmed, and in places like Jerusalem – which I recall vividly myself, since I was 12 at the time – completely at the mercy of the Haganah and the Irgun whose undeflected purpose was to clear them out unequivocally, as we were indeed. And far from there being a policy of “purity of arms,” the stock-in-trade phrase for Israeli military policy, there was a series of massacres and atrocities designed specifically to terrorize the greatly disadvantaged Palestinians into flight and/or non-resistance.

More recently, the distinguished Israeli social historian Zeev Sternhell has re-visited the official state archives to show with extraordinary force in his book *The Founding Myths of Israel* (1998) that what was presented to the world as a socialist democracy was not in fact that at all, but what he himself calls a nationalist socialism designed above all to create a new community of blood, to redeem the land by conquest, and to submit the Jewish individual to a collectivity of almost messianic fervency. Thus in fact Israel was profoundly anti-socialist, and rather than encouraging individual rights and an egalitarian concept of citizenship in fact created a theocracy with a rigorous limit to what the individual was and could expect from the state. The Kibbutzim – long heralded as a unique social experiment in egalitarianism and innovative sharing – were, says Sternhell, window-dressing, extremely limited, and circumscribed in their membership (no Arabs were ever allowed to be members). Israel is now the only state in the world which is not the state of its citizens but of the whole Jewish people wherever they may be. Not only has it never had until the present any international boundaries, Israel also has no

constitution, but a set of Basic Laws, one of which, The Law of Return, entitles any Jew anywhere the right to immediate Israeli citizenship, whereas Palestinians whose families were driven out in 1948 are allowed no such right at all. 92% of the land is held in trust by an agency for the Jewish people; this means that non-Jews, especially Palestinian citizens of Israel who constitute a population of one million people and are almost 20% of the state, are simply forbidden to buy, lease or sell land. One can imagine the outcry in the United States if land was only permitted to Christian whites, for example, and not to Jews or non-whites.

Thus the dominant pattern in thought about the geography of Palestine, for a millennium and a half inhabited by an overwhelming majority of non-Jews has been the idea of return: to return to Israel for Jews who never went there was to return to Zion, and an earlier state from which Jews had been exiled. As Carol Bardenstein notes in a sensitive study of the way the same images of prickly-pears, oranges, trees and return thread their way into discourses of memory for Jews and Palestinians, the problem with the Jewish one is that it eliminates from the landscape the former Palestinian presence.

I had the opportunity to visit a number of sites of former Palestinian villages that have been variously reshaped through tree-planting and related JNF projects, in ways that would appear to promote “collective”, if selective, forgetting. If one visits the site of the destroyed village of Ghabsiya in the Galilee, for example, upon closer scrutiny the trees and landscape themselves yield two very different and contesting narratives converging on the same site. One has to rely on landscape readings, because little else remains. What is most readily visible to the first-time visitor are the JNF trees planted on the site – the recognizable combination of pine and other trees that have grown over the past four decades in a manner that makes it seem as if perhaps that is all that was ever there (Bardenstein, p. 9).

Let me speak in very brief conclusion about what the interplay between memory, place and invention can do if it is not to be used for the purposes of exclusion, that is, if it is to be used for liberation and coexistence between societies whose adjacence requires a tolerable form of sustained reconciliation. Again I want to use the Palestinian issue as my concrete example. Israelis and Palestinian are now so intertwined through history, geography and political actuality that it seems to me absolute folly to try and plan the future of one without that of the other. The problem with the American-sponsored Oslo process was that it was premised on a notion of partition and separation, whereas everywhere one looks in the territory of historical Palestine, Jews and Palestinians live together. This notion of separation has also closed these two unequal communities of suffering to

each other. Most Palestinians are indifferent to and often angered by stories of Jewish suffering since it seems to them that as subjects of Israeli military power anti-Semitism seems remote and irrelevant while their land is taken and homes are being bulldozed. Conversely most Israelis refuse to concede that Israel is built on the ruins of Palestinian society, and that for them the catastrophe of 1948 continues until the present. Yet there can be no possible reconciliation, no possible solution unless these two communities confront each's experience in the light of the other. As the stronger community it seems to me essential that there can be no hope of peace unless Israeli Jews acknowledge the most powerful memory for Palestinians, namely, the dispossession of an entire people. As the weaker party Palestinians must also face the fact that Israeli Jews see themselves as survivors of the Holocaust, even though that tragedy cannot be allowed to justify Palestinian dispossession. Perhaps, in today's inflamed atmosphere of military occupation and injustice, it is too much to expect these acknowledgments and recognitions to take place. But, as I have argued elsewhere, at some point they must.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE

THE MOUNTAIN AND THE PLAIN: SOME THEMES OF CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN PALESTINIAN LANDSCAPES

Malcolm Wagstaff

INTRODUCTION

Landscape has long been a central concern of geographers. They have been interested in explaining its development in terms of physical and social processes, as well as in describing its character and categorizing landscape *types*. They have used the concept in their pursuit of *regions* and to organize their information. Over the years geographers also became interested in the aesthetics of landscape and its appreciation, but also in questions of landscape conservation or preservation.

More recently, under the influence of cultural studies, geographers have recognized the ‘constructed’ quality of landscape, the product of human imaginations, sometimes evolving in group consciousness in some organic way but often imposed for some perhaps political reason. Think of the archetypal image of the English landscape, rolling downs, wooded valleys, rippling streams, smiling fields and tranquil valleys used in wartime propaganda (Rose 1995). Or think of Palestine ... a land of milk and honey, the blooming desert.

My purpose here is to attempt something more modest, more traditional. It is to explore some themes of continuity and change in Palestinian landscapes. To structure my remarks, I will examine the proposition that change and continuity in Palestine are associated with different types of terrain, specifically that the lowlands have been the scene of *change* over time, whilst the uplands have experienced *continuity*. The proposition owes something to Sir Cyril Fox's *The Personality of Britain*, first published in 1932.

I will not be offering anything particularly new, either in terms of concept or in terms of research. I shall simply remind my readers of things already well known, and I shall draw heavily upon the work of

three fellow geographers: Wolf Hütteroth, Kamal Abdulfattah and David Amiran.

TERRAIN

Since at least the work of their Palestinian colleague, al-Maqdisi; active in the second half of the fourth century of the Islamic Era/the tenth century of the Common Era, geographers have recognized three or four parallel zones running north-south through the terrain of *ash-Sham*, particularly Palestine (Le Strange 1890:15; Brice 1966:207, 208:217-26; Fisher 1961:391-404). These are (Fig. 1):

1. The Coastal Zone
2. The Central Uplands
3. The Valley of the Jordan River, the Ghor

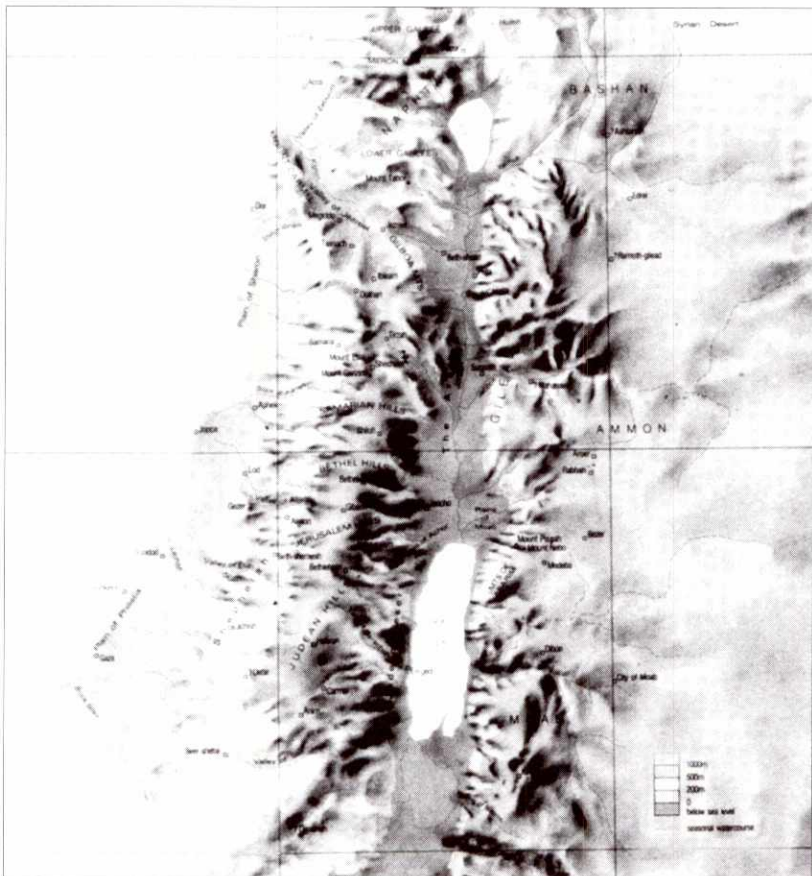


Fig. 1. Terrain of Palestine

The Coastal Zone consists of a plain, some 5-15 km wide north of Mt. Carmel but widening to 40 km in the latitude of Gaza. It is characterized by coastal sand dunes, swamps, parallel ridges of sandstone (*kurkar*) and tracts of cultivable land, particularly along the eastern margins.

The Central Uplands are broken into major units of different character lying north and south of a succession of depressions running for some 60 km inland from the Bay of Haifa to the Jordan Valley and known collectively as the Merj Ibn Amir and the Nahr Jalud or the Plain of Esdraelon and the Valley of Jezreel (Fig. 2). North of the depression the north-south ridges of the Lower Galilee rise to about 590 m (Fig. 3). To the south, the upland is broken first into distinctive mountain groups rising up to 900 m, separated by *wadis* and basins. George Adam Smith characterized Samaria as essentially "open" country (Smith 1966:219). Projecting from this area towards the Northwest is the range of Mt. Carmel (up to 548 m high). Then to the south, there is plateau, with hills rising above the general surface to more than 1000 m south of Bethlehem and falling by "broad undulations" (Smith 1966:190) into the dissected country of the Negev. "... the prevailing impression of Judaea is of stone" (Smith 1966:207), the dryness enhanced on the east by a rain-shadow effect which has created a tract of "wilderness" (Fig. 4). To the west, this southern tract of upland is separated from the coastal zone by the rolling country of the Shefelah, a zone some 45 km long and up to 15 km wide (Fig. 5).

East of the Central Uplands is the Jordan Valley. This is a rift valley, 5-22 km wide, cut down with steep slopes to 210 m below sea level at the surface of the Bahr Tabariya (the Sea of Tiberias or Galilee) and 400 m below sea level at the surface of the Bahr Lut (the Salt or Dead Sea). It runs for some 180 km from the vicinity of Biblical Dan to the head of the Dead Sea. Within it meanders the Jordan River, at most 30 m wide and a maximum of perhaps 3 m deep.

In broad terms these terrain zones have remained stable as landscape units, but they are associated with distinctive themes of change and continuity.

PHYSICAL CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

The Coastal Lowlands have experienced considerable geomorphological changes over time. Sea level has fluctuated, and the smooth coast has been remolded time and again from sands brought north from the Nile delta (e.g. Bottema et al. 1990). Rising sea levels, together with sediments washed in from the hills, have ponded up streams and rivers, creating swamps. But the flat land in this zone can be reclaimed without much

difficulty, whilst the light sandy soils are easily worked. The coastlands have, therefore, enjoyed considerable agricultural potential over many centuries.



Fig. 2. The Valley of Jezreel from the North

The Plain of Esdraelon/Valley of Jezreel (Fig. 2) has also experienced sedimentation, impeded drainage and swamp formation. The Jordan valley has suffered from tectonic activity (e. g. Niemi and Ben-Avraham 1994), whilst the abandoned channels to the east of the present course of the river show that the Jordan has shifted westwards over time. Some of its meanders are active, and the river is undermining some western slopes. Flash flooding from side valleys brings local change (Schattner 1962). The level of the lakes has fluctuated (Ben-Arieh 1965; Klein 1982).



Fig. 3. Jezreel from the East



Fig. 4. Judaean Hills



Fig. 5. The Shefelah

In the history of human occupation the Central Uplands at first experienced physical change as woodland was cleared, agriculture spread

and soil erosion began (Bottema et al. 1990). Since then there has been a remarkable physical stability. This has been enhanced by the construction of artificial terraces along contours and across valleys (Fig. 4). Zvi Ron (1966) has argued that the terraces, so characteristic of upland landscapes in Palestine, increased infiltration of water, checked runoff, decreased erosion, and increased the cultivated area. But Gibson and Edelstein (1985) have shown that the terraces were not necessarily built to contain erosion. They were deliberately constructed in a predetermined fashion with material brought from elsewhere and dumped behind the walls. Gibson and Edelstein (1985) have assigned construction dates back to the Bronze Age. Once constructed, though, the terraces have stabilized the landscape and, until recent times, human occupation of the Uplands has depended upon the rehabilitation or reconstruction of terraces systems. These are essentially fragile, and they are preserved only so long as certain conditions are fulfilled. These are, first, a population level above a certain critical threshold, for terraces require constant maintenance; second, farming methods of a traditional character in which mechanization is limited; and third, perhaps, the continuity of a certain pattern of cropping involving dry-farmed cereals, vines and olives.

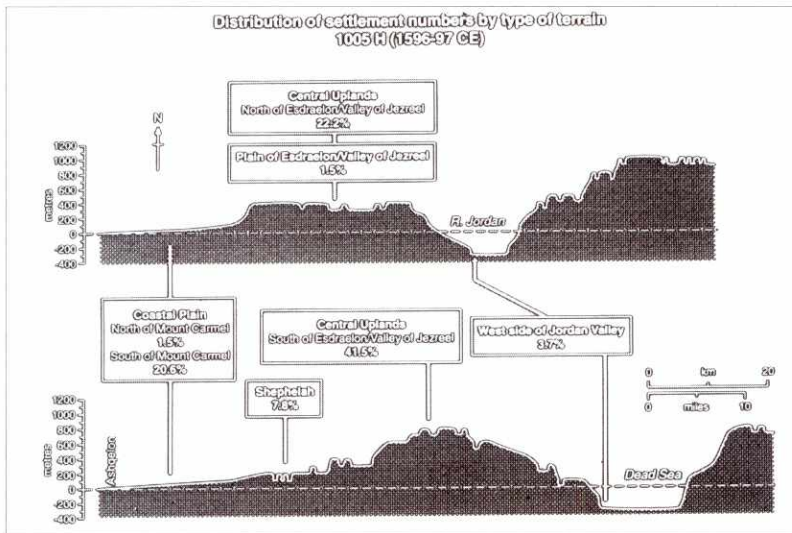


Fig. 6. Distribution of Settlement Numbers by Terrain Type, 1005 H. (1596-97 C. E.)

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN HUMAN OCCUPATION

In terms of human occupation we can associate themes of continuity and change with particular types of terrain. To explore this theme I have re-

worked the village data from 1005 H. (1596-97 C.E.) originally published by Hütteroth and Abdulfattah (1977). I have chosen the source because it contains reasonably reliable and comprehensive data. There are various perils in re-working someone else's data, but what I have done for present

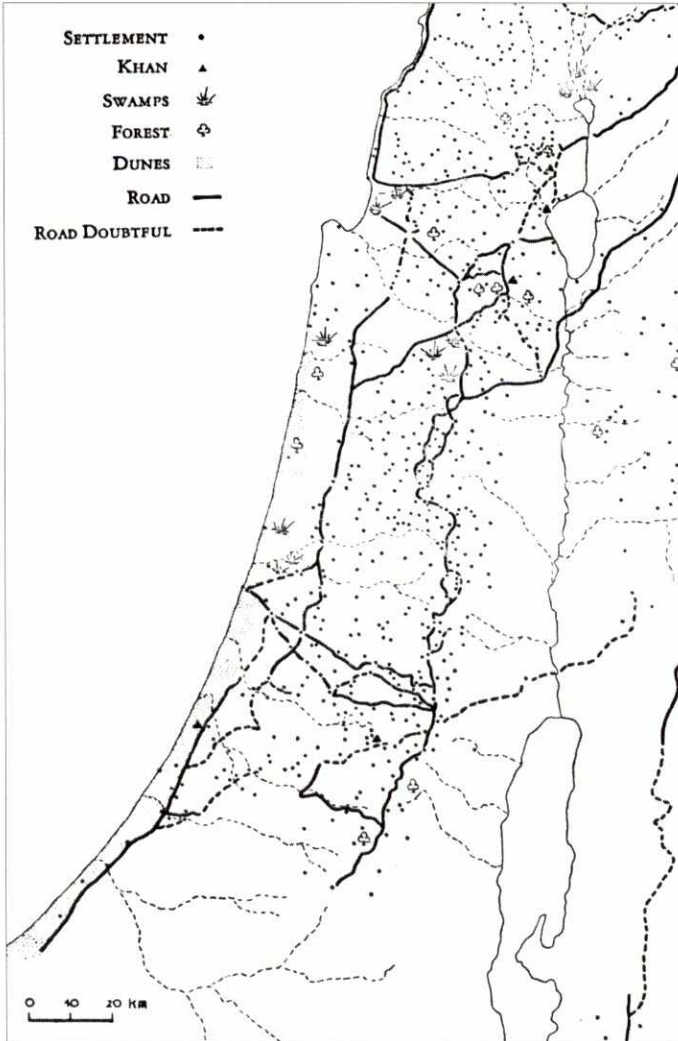


Fig. 7. Palestine in the First Half of the 19th Century

purposes is to re-plot the Ottoman data as transcribed and located by Hütteroth and Abdulfattah according to my cartographical definition of terrain zones.

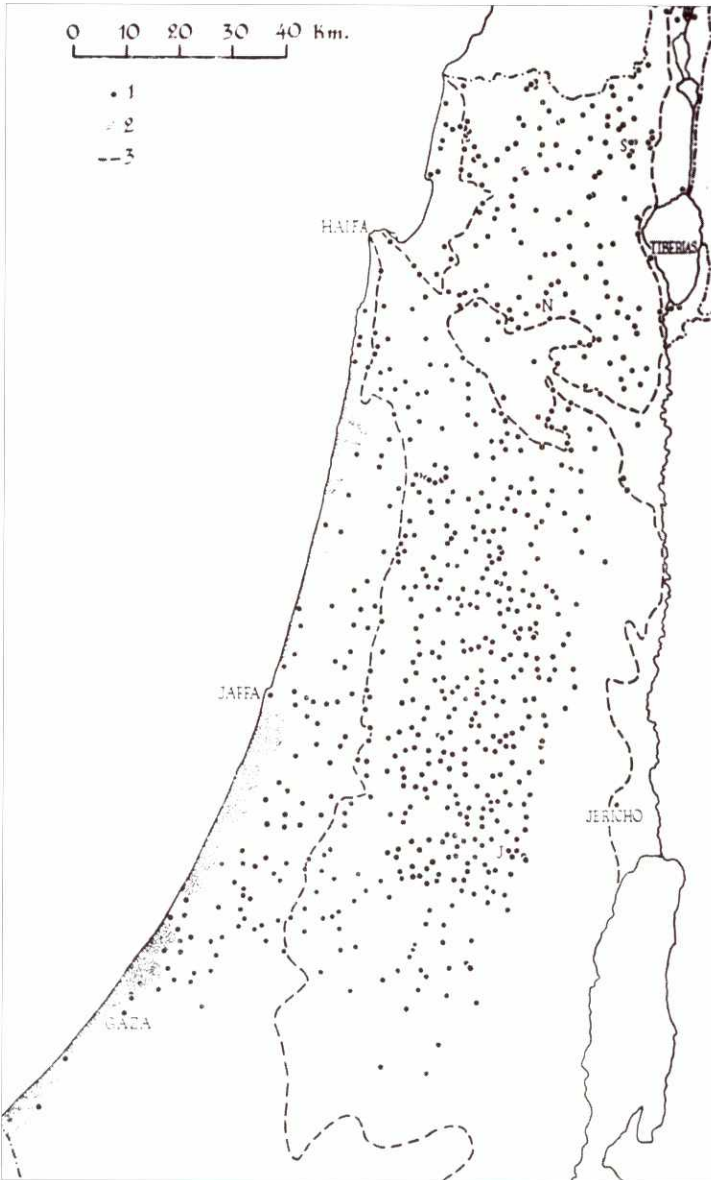


Fig. 8. Settlements in 1875

In 1005 H. (1596-97 C. E.), then, we find a concentration of settled communities (towns, villages and hamlets) in the Uplands – about 64 per cent of the total identified, more to the south of the Esdraelon/Jezreel

Valley (42 per cent) than to the north (22 per cent). The communities were less than 3 km apart and populations were mostly below 500 people (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977, 47). Just over 22 per cent of all the late sixteenth century settled communities were located in the Coastal Zone. Most (about 21 per cent) lay south of Mt. Carmel. Only 1.5 per cent of the total settled communities was found in the Esdraelon/Jezreel Valley. Nearly 4 per cent of the total was situated in the Ghor, west of the Jordan. Thus, the pattern over all is the reverse of the one which might be expected, "taking into account the natural conditions of Palestine", as Amiran observed in 1953.

Moving forward in time to the late eighteenth century and the work of the French military surveyors, we find, despite the limitations of their maps, essentially the same spatial pattern (Amiran 1944; Karmon 1960; Margalit 1963) (Fig. 7). There was a concentration of towns and villages in the Central Uplands. The Coastal Zone north of Jaffa was apparently entirely devoid of permanently settled communities, whilst relatively few villages and hamlets were found between the ports of Jaffa and Gaza. A few settled communities were situated along the margins of the Esdraelon/Jezreel Valley, and some were located in the Jordan Valley, though mostly towards its northern end and near the Sea of Galilee.

The maps of Western Palestine produced by Conder and Kitchener in the 1870s show the same broad patterns, though in more accurate detail (Conder and Kitchener 1881) (Fig. 8). The total number of settled communities was lower than in the late sixteenth century, but those towns and villages that did exist tended to possess larger populations in the 1870s, suggesting that some concentration of population had taken place. The changes in the number of villages and hamlets since the late sixteenth century were most marked in the Jordan Valley and the Coastal Zone. According to Hütteroth and Abdulfattah (1977), a 30-40 per cent decrease was apparent to the south, though a few completely new foundations had been established. In the Jordan Valley there was almost complete abandonment in the south and a decline of more than 70 per cent in the vicinity of the Sea of Galilee. The Central Uplands shared in the overall decline in numbers, but generally it was in the 20-30 per cent range. The Lower Galilee experienced a decline of only 10-20 per cent.

The data on settled communities suggests continuity in the Central Uplands since the late sixteenth century and change in the lowlands. David Grossman (1983), however, has also argued for a history of instability and flexibility in site occupancy in the Uplands. Like most commentators on the decline in the numbers of settled communities in the Ottoman provinces during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Hütteroth and Abdulfattah (1977) attribute the decreases in Palestine to

insecurity. They explain the differential patterning in the scale of decline to variations in the degree of exposure to attack. Thus, the Uplands were represented as fairly secure because of the nature of the terrain. Amiran (1953) pointed to the occupation of locally elevated sites, especially in Judaea, and noted how villages and hamlets tended to be situated away from the through routes. Grossman, though, drew attention to site abandonment due to local feuds and warfare.

In the Coastal Zone and the Esdraelon/Jezreel Valley, by contrast, we have more open terrain, which historically was crossed by major regional routeways. These were associated with the movement of armies, as well as the transmission of epidemics, though we might note *en passant* that no major army passed this way between the Ottoman army on its way to conquer Egypt in 1516-17 and the French army in 1798. More significant for the insecurity argument might be the association of the lowlands with nomads and their predilection for raiding and feuding. Even in the late sixteenth century 93 per cent of all registered nomadic communities in Palestine were located in the Coastal Zone, 50 per cent south of Mt. Carmel (Hütteroth and Abdulfattah 1977). We might add, for good measure, the existence of swamps in the Coastal Zone and the Esdraelon/Jezreel Valley and their association with malaria. Insecurity and the risk of illness, then, have been used to explain the disproportionate decline in the number of settled communities in the lowland areas.

Amiran (1953), however, recognized that this explanation does not fit the intermediate country of the Shefelah. Although forming only 7 percent of Mandate Palestine, this area contained 22.2 per cent of the 2,048 abandoned sites of all periods then known. Amiran's explanation had two parts. First, the transitional character of the Shefellah meant that it was less exposed to threats than the Coastal Zone, but not quite as secure as the Uplands. Secondly, a dependency upon wells for water supply suggested that, since wells became blocked through neglect when a village was abandoned, it was easier to sink a new well and choose a new site for habitation than to reoccupy an old position when people moved back to the area. The houses were predominantly of mudbrick, in any case, and it rapidly dissolves after a few winters' rain. In this way, abandoned sites proliferated.

By contrast, in the Uplands, where stone is the main building material, the shells of abandoned houses often survived and could readily be brought into use. The sites of villages were fixed in any case by access to springs for water supply, access to terrace systems, which defined the cultivable area, and a wish to preserve the better quality land by not

I wonder myself whether the changes experienced in the history of settled communities in the lowlands are not better explained with reference to economic cycles and the location of political authority in the wider region. When the number of settled communities began to increase again in the nineteenth century (as they did even before the arrival of Jewish settlers from Europe in the 1880s) (e. g. Beaumont, Blake and Wagstaff 1988, Fig. 3.8, p. 133, pp. 439-49), the expansion tended to be located in the lowland, particularly in the Coastal Zone and the Esdraelon/Jezreel Valley. This was where the underused land was at the time. The Coastal Zone was particularly important because of its access to the ports, through which demand for agricultural produce was mediated and met. It was also in the lowlands that the necessary labor was available in the form of nomadic communities whose lifestyle gave their members time to add agricultural work to their activities. Sedentarization of the nomads was as much the result of economic and tenurial changes as the consequence of coercive action during the Egyptian occupation (1831-40) and the subsequent Ottoman reform (*tanzimat*) period.

Change was less radical in the Uplands. This is because development of the economy resulted in the re-occupation of deserted sites and shell villages, as well as the stabilization of occupancy in one or other of the villages which Gasteyer (this volume pp. 97ff.) has shown had previously been occupied only seasonally. Demand for agricultural produce such as cereals was met by intensifying land use in already cultivated areas and this was achieved through reducing the fallow period and making more use of manure. A shift away from communal forms of landownership and working followed the introduction of the Ottoman Land Code in 1858. This insisted on the registration of land in the name of a single individual (Fisher 1919; Tute 1927) and led to the expansion of share-cropping (Firestone 1975).

CONCLUSION

The economic and social changes of the nineteenth century produced consolidation in the settled landscapes of the Uplands, but thoroughgoing change in the lowlands, a process advanced after 1882 notably by settlers and completed with the destruction of Arab villages after 1948 (95.5 per cent of the 81 'obliterated' Arab villages are located in the plains) (Falah 1996 and this volume pp. 97ff.). Since 1948, the patterns of occupation in the lowlands have stabilized, particularly as urbanization has proceeded in the Coastal Zone. Since 1948, and particularly since 1967, a new pattern of change has come to the Uplands. First, most of the 140 'completely destroyed' Arab villages are found in the Uplands (Falah 1996 and this volume pp. 97ff.). Secondly, following their occupation of

the West Bank in 1967, the Israelis built strategic settlements above the Jordan Valley as a 'defensive' measure. Then they infilled the spaces between these frontier settlements and the armistice lines of 1948-49 which defined the state of Israel (the so-called 'Green Line'), choosing for preference the elevated sites which the classical literature in human geography has always associated with defense but which, in the Palestinian context, can also be seen as symbols of dominance and defiance. The historic patterns of continuity and change in Palestine are being reversed.

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MANATHIR TABI'IYYA: PERCEPTIONS OF LANDSCAPE AND LANDSCAPE CHANGE IN THE SOUTHEASTERN WEST BANK¹

Stephen Philip Gasteyer

INTRODUCTION

This paper describes results of field research carried out during the summer of 1997 on perceptions of landscape change in the northeastern Hebron district. The impetus for this research came from years of working with applied scientific institutes in the West Bank trying to impact issues such as desertification. As a result of this issue numerous projects had been put in place aimed at “environmental restoration” or “landscape rehabilitation”. My question was “rehabilitation is what?” Answers that I got almost all had to do with descriptions of the land 500 to 6,000 years ago in literature or scriptures. There was little indication as to the extent to which these descriptions had to do with local perceptions of landscape². Building on a well established body of social sciences literature on the social construction of nature, and conflicted views of nature³, I set out to look at the varied perceptions of landscape change in a relatively well defined area in the West Bank.

¹ This paper is taken from my thesis, written in partial completion of my Masters of Science degree in Sociology from Iowa State University. I would like to extend special thanks to Zahi Jarradat, Kamal Abdulfattah, Rema Hammami, Penny Johnson, Salim Tamari, Hani Abu Sbieh Daraghmi, Sofian Sultan, Jad Isaac, and Avi Schmida, for their help as I carried out this research. I would also like to thank my advisors, Cornelia Flora, Jan Flora, and Lita Rule for their advice and input in making this a presentable and sociologically relevant piece of research, and Catherine Grosso, who spent long hours helping me in editing the thesis.

² Fairhead and Leach 1996 have well documented the risks of basing environmental conservation, management, and rehabilitation on assumed landscape history without appropriate attention to local perceptions.

³ I used the work in geography of Downs and Stea 1977, Cosgrove 1984, Schama 1995, and others, and work in sociology of Greider and Garkovich 1994, and Fraudenburg, Eriqle, and Gramling 1995 among others.

Because of my own past history of research in the area, I chose to look at the northeastern Hebron district, focusing on perceptions of the land



Fig. 1. Hebron and Environs

surrounding the villages of Beni Na'im and Sa'ir, and the hamlets and refugee camp in Wadi Arroub (Fig. 1). I also spoke with the Bedouin of Arab al-Azazmeh, east of Beni Na'im, and Arab al-Rashayda, east of Sa'ir and Wadi Arroub. This permitted the inclusion of Bedouin, refugee, and fellaheen (villager) perceptions of landscape. Palestinian and Israeli scientists involved in either oversight or implementation of landscape restoration or environmental conservation in the areas were likewise interviewed.

I chose to look at the change in landscape from 1948 to 1997, hypothesizing that, for obvious reasons, 1948 would be a memorable year for all those interviewed. The local residents among the latter were all over 65 years of age, meaning they would have been at least 15 in 1948. To carry out this research, I worked with a well known resident from one of the communities to conduct open-ended interviews with the fellaheen,

- 7 Israeli landscape scientists (one woman)
- 6 Palestinian scientists (all male)
- 27 fellaheen farmers (two married, six single women)
- 8 fellaheen herders (two married, one single)
- 7 Bedouin herders
- 11 refugees (one married woman)

Fig. 2. Sample Breakdown⁴

Bedouin, and refugees. Interviews with six Palestinian scientists and seven Israeli scientists were carried out. I was only able to interview a small number of Bedouin, because of the inaccessibility of the Bedouin communities and the fact that there were only a small population of them old enough to meet the sampling frame (Fig. 2). The literature on perceptions of the environment indicates gender to be a significant factor. Therefore, while my numbers are limited, I also interviewed a number of women amongst the fellaheen, and one woman with her husband in the refugee community⁵. There were two Israeli women scientists, though their perception of landscape change did not seem to differ dramatically from that of the men.

Two distinctions are worth noting here. The fellaheen, while they all both herded and farmed, tended to define themselves as either primarily herders or primarily farmers. This distinction made a difference in landscape perceptions especially in Beni Na'im. The second distinction of note are Israeli scientists, who could be divided among those involved in joint research with Palestinian scientists and those not involved in joint research with Palestinians. This distinction made less of a difference in the perceived landscape change than in terms of accounting for how the land came to be in its current state. For instance, while all agreed that the land was never terribly valuable in ecological terms, and since 1948 had significantly degraded, those involved in joint research would say that the establishment of Israel and the influx of exiled Palestinians in 1948 was a major cause of this degradation. Those not involved in joint research asserted the problem of land degradation to be one of Palestinian mismanagement of resources.

⁴ All interviews were carried out in the villages, hamlets, or refugee camps in the presence of other, usually younger villagers.

⁵ For this observation I drew on the work of Nazarea et al. 1998, Fortmann 1996, Buenavista and Flora 1994

After carrying out the initial interviews, which often involved sketch maps of the area, I returned to do follow up interviews with those I felt to be particularly representative and articulate about perceptions of landscape. Here I used a modified cognitive mapping process, using the 1936 British survey map at 1 to 20,000. I asked local residents to help me draw their perception of the land onto these maps. In Beni Na'im I also recorded their perception of the landscape for 1997. I asked the same questions of scientists and transposed their perceptions, as well, onto these maps. For the 1997 perception, almost all of the scientists I interviewed referred me to already existing land use maps (Pl. 8).

LAND USE HISTORY AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Among the first discoveries made in carrying out this research were those regarding the land use patterns of the fellaheen in the Beni Na'im, Sa'ir and the hamlets of Khirbet Shyoukh and Arroub (in Wadi Arroub). Suffice to say for the purposes of this paper, that the fellaheen in this area lived a semi-transient existence up through the 1940s and some asserted until 1967. They would farm the area around their village in the warmer months and descend to the east to farm and herd their animals for the winter months. The main difference between the herders and farmers was that fellaheen farmers would talk about the labor involved in tending to fruit trees in the spring while the herders talked of having little to do in the spring after the harvest.

The Bedouin of Arab al-Rashayda followed a transhumance route with their animals that started and returned to the eastern slopes below Sa'ir and Wadi Arroub. The Bedouin of Arab al-Azazmeh came to the area east of Beni Na'im as part of the transhumance before 1948 but only settled there in 1948, following their expulsion from traditional lands near Bir es-Sabi'. In both cases, it seems that while the young men and some of the women would depart on transhumance, others in the tribe would stay in the area and farm, providing the staple crops. It is worth noting that none of the Palestinian scientists I spoke with were old enough to remember the area in 1948, and three were not from the Hebron district. Only one of the Israeli scientists was old enough to remember the area in 1948 – but only as a soldier fighting at Gush Etzion. Only two of the seven had been in the area since the *Intifada*.

RESULTS: DIFFERENCES IN OVERALL GENERAL PERCEPTIONS

Fig. 3 outlines the differences among the groups regarding perspectives on landscape change. Based on analysis of the interviews, this chart represents common themes among members of each of the groups. It is evident that there are significant spatial and temporal differences among

| Social Group | Frame of Reference | Geographic area of expertise (self-defined) | What is important in assessing landscape? | What is the environment? | What causes desertification? | How has soil quality changed in 50 years? |
|-----------------------|------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Refugee | Lifetime (50-80 years) | Camp + 3 mile radius; former village area | Level of agricultural production; trees; water | Everything that makes up life | Less rain | Greatly improved by chemical agents as evidenced by increasing agricultural production |
| Fellaheen | Lifetime (50-80 years) | Camp + 5 mile radius; winter grazing areas in Jordan Valley | Lifestyle; level of agricultural production; trees; forage; water | Everything that makes up life | Less rain; restrictions on land use (overgrazing, etc.) | Much worse because now chemical agents are required for agricultural production |
| Bedouin | Lifetime (50-80 years) | Transhumance route (30-40 miles) | Forage; plant life | Everything that makes up life | Less rain; overgrazing; restriction on land use | No change/not relevant |
| Palestinian Scientist | 100-6,000 years | West Bank and environs ^a | Where plants and animals appear and their density and diversity; level of agricultural production | Animals; plants; biodiversity | Population density; overgrazing; soil erosion; "the occupation"; less rain | Much worse due to erosion, overgrazing ^b , and settlement activities |
| Israeli scientist | 100-6,000 years | Israel and scattered knowledge of West Bank | Where plants and animals appear and their density and diversity | Animals; plants; biodiversity | Population density; overgrazing; soil erosion | Much worse due to erosion caused by overgrazing; population pressure |

^a *Area of expertise among Palestinian scientist varied between an area as limited as specific sites in the southern West Bank to an area as broad as Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. Scientists trained in agricultural engineering tended to have a more narrowly defined geographical area of expertise*

^b *Opinions concerning overgrazing depended partially on the political beliefs and activities of the scientist interviewed. Israeli scientists involved in joint Palestinian-Israeli research were much less likely to place the full responsibility for erosion on overgrazing. Likewise, Palestinian scientists involved in joint research were less likely to blame desertification solely on the occupation*

Fig. 3. Analysis of Landscape by Group Affiliation

the groups. While the refugees, fellaheen, and Bedouin all limited their professed knowledge to their lifetime and the area they lived and worked in, scientists tended to view the world through a significantly wider lens. We see under “what is important in assessing landscape?” and “what is environment?” a difference in perspectives about the value of landscape. While the local populations, including the refugees, are at once utilitarian and holistic in their assessment of landscape, scientists are more likely to look at the elements of landscape change – though Palestinian scientists tended to be more utilitarian than the Israeli scientists.

In the question “what causes desertification?” the three local groups all indicated that drought has been the major cause of change, whereas both sets of scientists indicated human causes as a major part of the problem. Note that the Palestinian scientists, fellaheen, and Bedouin all would assert that the Israeli restrictions on land use have (either directly or indirectly) caused overgrazing, while the Israeli scientists simply stated overgrazing as a major ongoing problem. It is my interpretation that this difference has a political dimension. Israel has confiscated an estimated 85 percent of the Eastern Slopes for military and settlement purposes since 1967, leaving little area for continued grazing of animals (ARIJ 1994, Chapter 7). Furthermore, Palestinians asserted that many of the Bedouin nomads in what is now Israel came into the West Bank with their animals following the 1948 war because they were forced out by the Israeli forces—significantly overtaxing the range area. Not only did I see evidence of this with the Arab al-Azazmeh, but it is documented in the literature on the Palestinian Bedouin (Falah 1991; Tamari and Giacaman 1997).

It is interesting to note the differences in the response to the column regarding soil quality. We see how the perception of the refugees, who now have no land of their own and have only worked as farm laborers since 1948, differs from that of the fellaheen and the scientists. The Bedouin saw the question of soil as effectively irrelevant, as soil quality, they believe, is connected to plants, which result from rain. The linkages, in fact, are not terribly different from those made in rangeland science – though the cause-effect arrow is reversed (Johnson 1995; Naveh 1994).

SPECIFIC DIFFERENCES OF PERCEPTION

Having established general trends in landscape perception, I wanted to see how these trends would bear out if tested statistically. Four elements that I focused on in my research were as follows: 1) perceptions regarding the change in forested area and non-cultivated trees; 2) perceptions regarding changes in the amount of pasture plants and wild plants in the area from 1948 to 1997; 3) perceptions regarding soil; and 4) perceptions regarding changes in water from 1948 to 1997. While I will simply give

an overview of findings for the purposes of this paper, I should note here that the write-ups of interviews were coded and difference of means tests undertaken so as to determine the trends in each group. I tested the statistical significance of these trends using analysis of variance (ANOVA) tables. All of the findings that I present here were found to be statistically significant.

The perceptions of the change in the forested area varied both within and among groups. For instance, fellaheen farmers in Sa'ir and Khirbet Shyoukh asserted that there were more fruit trees in the towns then there had been in 1948, but that there were substantially less non-cultivated trees such as oak, and carob. They also asserted that the forest at Wadi Arroub was larger in 1948. Refugees, on the other hand, asserted the area to have been relatively barren of trees in 1948, especially the hillsides around Wadi Arroub, though the forest is said to have been full-grown.

Not only were there fewer fruit trees planted in the villages, but also the hillsides, according to the refugees, were devoid of wild trees. The fellaheen in Beni Na'im had similar perceptions of the changes in tree growth to the fellaheen in Sa'ir. The area, however, is climatically quite different, and as a result even now the area planted in fruit trees is far less than in Sa'ir. Still, both fellaheen farmers and herders in Beni Na'im talk about the loss of dry land species such as rotem (*Rotemus rotema*).

Bedouin in both Arab al-Rashayda and Arab al-Azazmeh talked about loss of grazing land and also loss of dry land tree species. A significant amount of the area formerly planted with field crops or grazing land has been planted in perennials as a means of protecting the land from confiscation. Particularly, in the Beni Na'im area, the Arab al-A'zazmeh mentioned an expansion of the area planted with olives and other fruit trees onto land that had formerly been planted with a wheat, barley, lentil, sorghum, fallow system¹.

Among the scientists, those Israelis involved in joint research with Palestinians tended to have the same perception as Palestinian scientists, that, with the exception of the forest at Wadi Arroub, the wild plants and trees had diminished. Israelis not involved in joint research tended to emphasize the improvement of wild plants and trees in Israeli established natural reserves. While they would say the condition of the environment had gotten worse since 1948, they would say the problem was only really in those areas where there were not restrictions on local interaction with nature. Where reserves had been established that excluded Bedouin and fellaheen herders, the condition of the range had improved, they asserted.

¹ This pattern of change in land use has been born out by other studies of land use in the West Bank such as ARIJ 1996, PIALES 1996.

This was disputed by other Israeli and Palestinian scientists. Indeed, scholars of range management and desertification have cited other cases where the range areas had not improved after isolation from herding pressure. Domesticated herded animals had become part of the ecological cycle they hypothesize (Johnson and Lewis 1995; Hambly and Angura 1996).

The question of water in the Middle East is of course very contentious. Thus it is here that we would expect the most typical divisions between Palestinians and Israelis. In fact, what I found was that Israelis generally avoided the issue altogether. All of the Israeli scientists and half of the Palestinian scientists perceived the rainfall level to have stayed relatively stable over the last 50 years. Almost all others asserted that rainfall had diminished over the same period. While all except one Israeli didn't comment, all Palestinians perceived water availability and quality in the area to have diminished. As evidence, refugees and fellaheen pointed to the now bone dry cistern in Wadi Arroub, which all locals say was full in the 1940s (at least for part of the year).

The implications of gender became clear in considering landscape change as it impacted quality of life. It was most often women who raised issues of changes in tasks carried out, mostly associated with agriculture, and the increased pace of life that has come with entering the wage-labor economy. Likewise, they mentioned foods or medicines lost with the degradation of biotic material and the changed agricultural system. While all Palestinians talked about the ongoing violation of quality of life due to the occupation – confiscation of land, restriction of movement, arbitrary arrest – women also raised negative impacts due to not walking and the lack of certain kinds of foods in the diet. When interviewed together, men would tend to agree, but after women raised the issue.

DRAWING PERCEPTIONS

After the initial interviews, I tried to map out these perceptions with representatives of each of the social groups mentioned above. Here, I will only cover the most salient maps for showing differences among the social groups identified. Pl. 2 shows us Wadi Arroub in 1948 from the perception of the fellaheen farmer. They describe the area at extremely fertile, with a forested hillside above and to the south, the Wadi basin planted year round with fruit trees and vegetables, and large areas on the walls of the valley planted with field crops, olives, and grazing land. This same area, when described by refugees (Pl. 3), looks quite different. While vegetables still appear in the base of the Wadi and the forest still exists on the hill at the mouth of the valley, the walls of the valley have small amounts of cereals and pastureland and large areas of barren land.

Palestinian scientists (Pl. 4) asserted that the forest must have been considerably younger and smaller in 1948. They also classify the pasture area as *Pistacia climax*. Israeli scientists (Pl. 5) also identify *Pistacia atlantica* as the index species, but label the predominant ground cover as scrubland.

The case of Beni Na'im provides a nice example of how these differences in perception are both pertinent for present day and historical interpretations of landscape. While I was unable to do this in Wadi Arroub for a variety of reasons, in Beni Na'im I recorded mapped perceptions of landscape as remembered in 1948 and as seen in 1997 for each of the social groups².

The social groups differed somewhat in the case of Beni Na'im. While there are no large refugee populations in the area, a significant portion of the fellaheen identify themselves as primarily herders. As it turned out, their perceptions of the landscape as it would appear on a map were very similar to those of the Arab al-Azazmeh Bedouin. As a result, I combined these perceptions into one representative map and include two others to represent the views of farmers and Israeli and Palestinian scientists in 1948 and farmers and all scientists in 1997.

Suffice to say for the purposes of this paper that the herders remember there being more grazing land and the farmers more cropped land around and to the east of the village (Pl. 6). The scientific perceptions followed similar patterns to that of Wadi Arroub except that the indicator species in the Beni Na'im area is *Pistacia palaestina*³.

The 1997 perceptions are interesting, however. Effectively there were only three groups, fellaheen farmers, fellaheen herders and Bedouin, and scientists, as is explained above. In all three cases, they portray a dramatic increase in the built area, but there is disagreement over the extent of this area, which areas are built and which are planted or pastured among the herder, farmer, and scientist perceptions. Interestingly, the herders note land as cultivated with fruit trees that farmers don't mention (Pls. 7 and 8). Aerial photographs show that these perceptions could both be true as, for instance, quarries exist with terraced cultivation immediately adjacent. The scientists' perception is most interesting as they all, except one Palestinian scientist, referred me to the land use map prepared by the Israeli Natural Reserves Authority, Land Use Map 1993 (Pl. 9). This was presented as being the best available map on land use in the area. However, we can see that there are two problems with it. The first is

² Here, my work builds on Downs and Stea 1977 in asserting that maps of places are ultimately social constructions.

³ Copies of these maps are included in the thesis at Iowa State University.

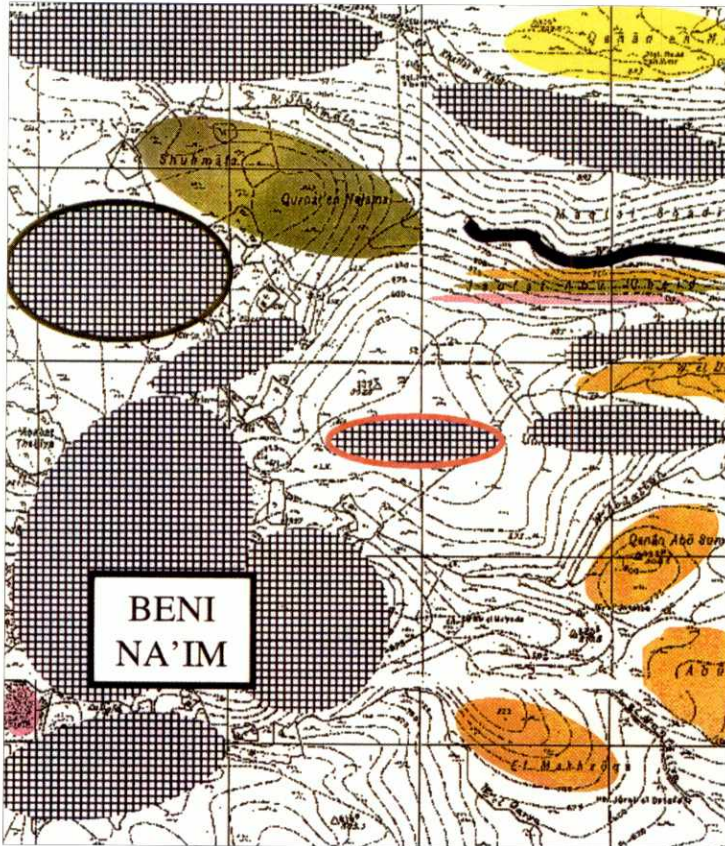
relatively minor, which is, that there is substantially more built area in the earlier map. This may well be due to the time lag from 1993 to 1997. The second is more serious, as the map classifies the whole area east of Beni Na'im as scrubland (in other words, land that lacks productive value!). It may or may not be coincidence that significant Israeli settlement expansion has occurred in this very area (ARIJ 1997).

CONCLUSION

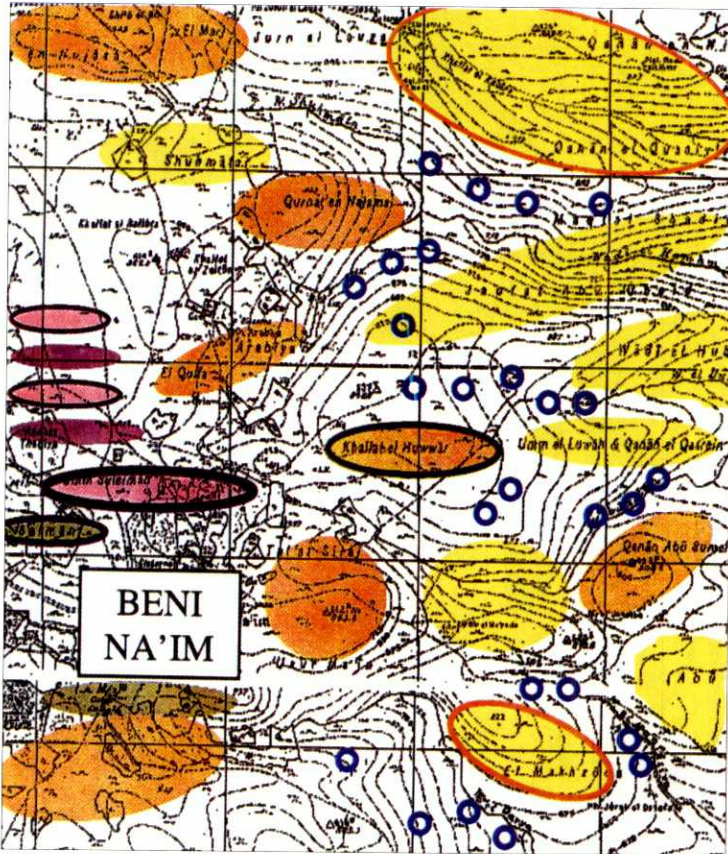
I would like to conclude by asserting that there is no one way of perceiving nature and landscape. Indeed, I believe that this research shows that the perception of landscape is influenced by prevailing interaction with the land, as well as political beliefs and group affiliation. Clearly, this is not unique, as the likes of Cosgrove (1984), Williams (1990), Mitchell (1994), and Greider and Garkovich (1994) have also made similar assertions. In terms of development, the methodological implications are that better management of natural resources must incorporate the lifescape (in other words the socio-economic and political dimensions of life in the area) as well as landscape (the biophysical environmental interactions) (SANREM CRSP 1995). The desirability of soliciting local participation in landscape management and rehabilitation is well documented (see for instance Byron 1994, Gündel 1996, Lynch and Talbott 1995). However, soliciting participation in management will require understanding the different perceptions of landscape.

Too often, those carrying out or making policy regarding landscape take into account only the scientific perceptions, without recognizing that there may well be multiple perceptions of the important elements in a given area. We should understand group affiliation, political opinion and prevailing or changing interaction with the land as lenses through which perceptions are formed, bringing some things into focus and leaving others out. The field of ecology easily accepts this notion with regards to scale, as the researcher looking at plant population dynamics in the four-by-four plot is expected to see certain things that the ecologist looking at the whole watershed would not and vice-versa (Grant, Pendersen, and Marin 1997). I would amend this slightly to say that the angle is also important. This is to say that one set of people focusing on one set of interactions may well miss other interactions occurring in the same place; thus, the importance of incorporating multiple (specifically local) perspectives into our landscape analysis. As we have seen demonstrated above, there may often be more than one local perception of landscape – and this diversity must be accounted for in our research and implementation of projects⁴.

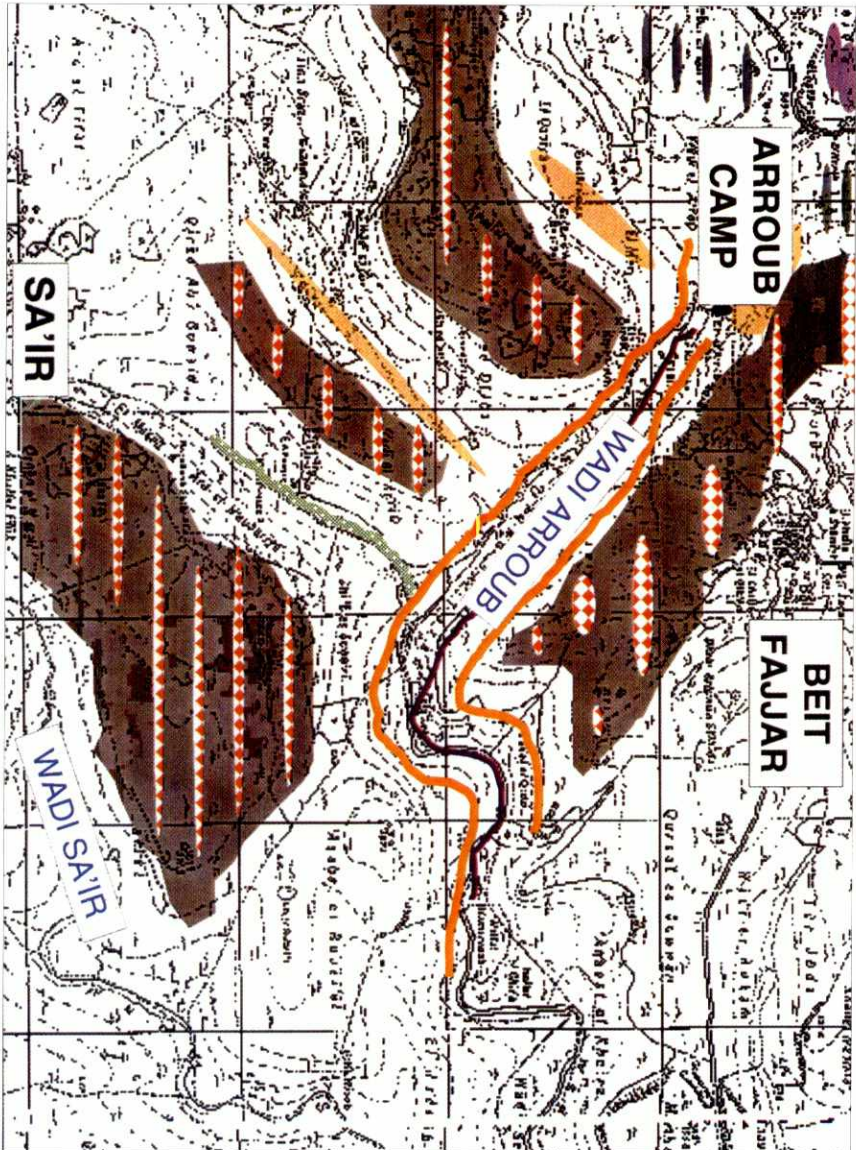
⁴ I have built on the research of SANREM CRSP 1995, but also of authors including



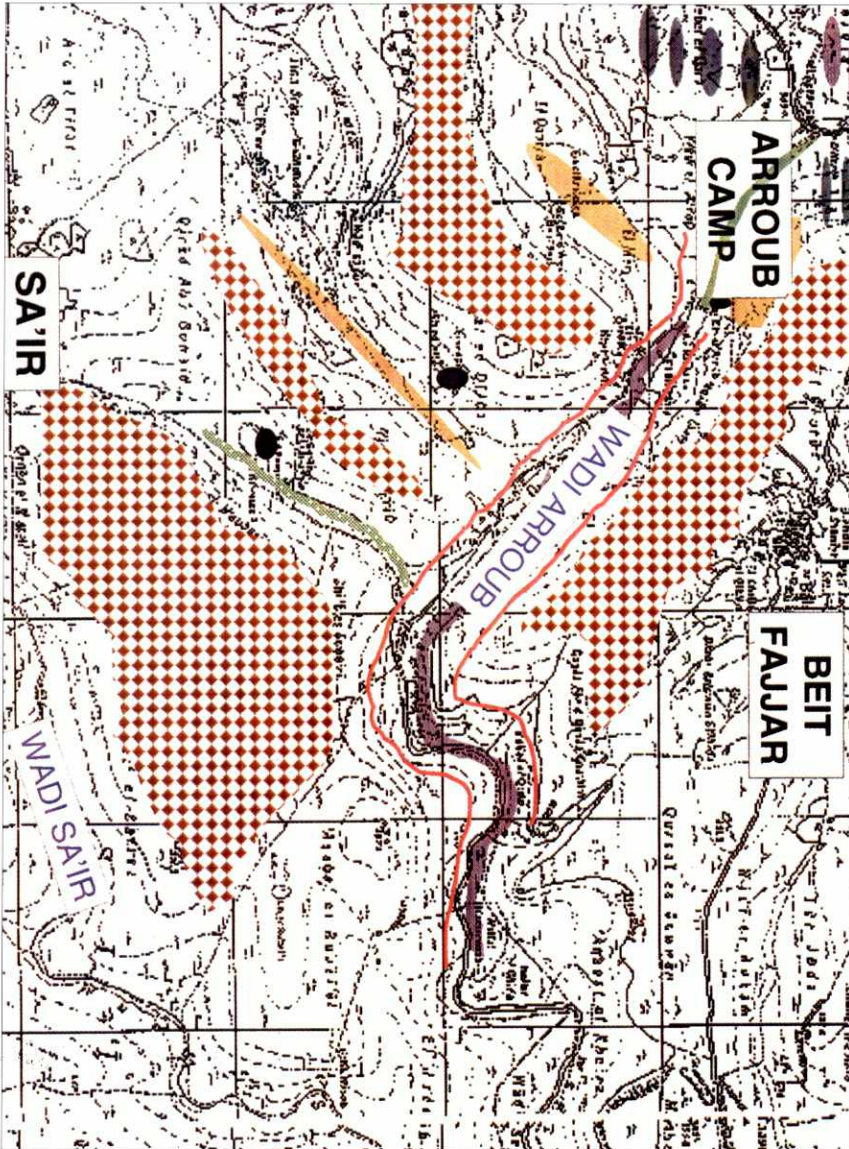
Beni Na'im and Environs in 1997: Fellaḥ-Farmer Perspective



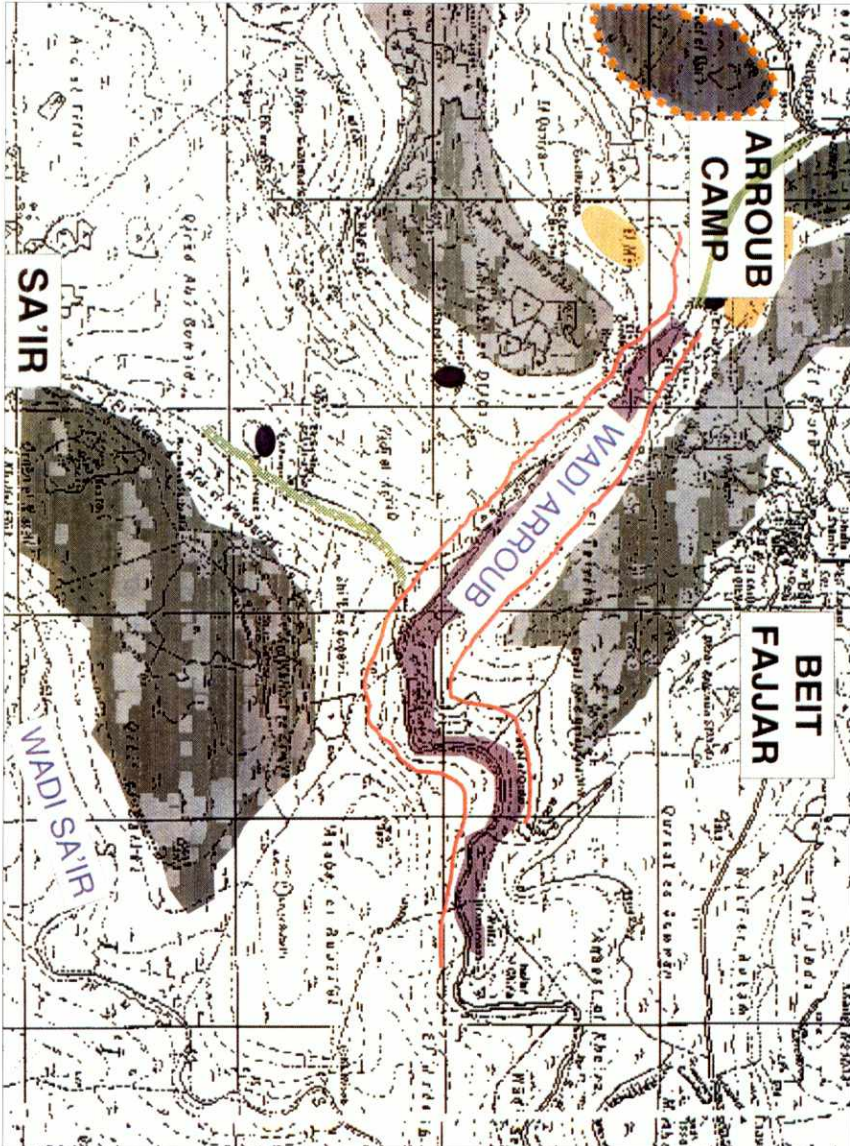
Beni Na'im and Environs in 1948: FellaH-Herder and Bedouin Perspective



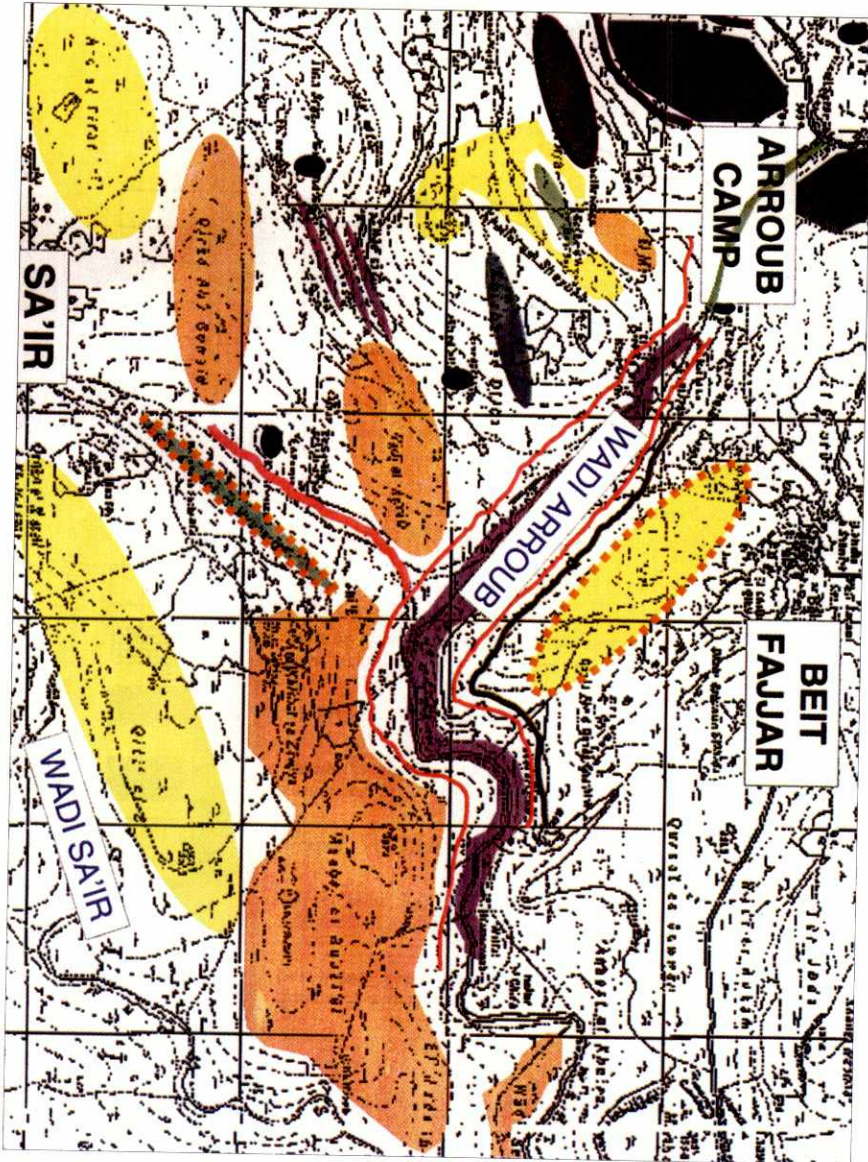
Wadi Arroub in 1948: Israeli Scientist Perspective



Wadi Arroub in 1948: Palestinian Scientist Perspective



Wadi Arroub in 1948: Refugee Perspective



Wadi Arroub in 1948: Fellaḥ-Farmer Perspective



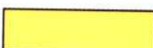
Fruit trees. Stone fruits (including plums, apricots, and almonds), as well as other fruits (including apples, pears, and figs).



***Pistacia atlantica*/*Pistacia palaestina*.** Scientists names these indicator species to identify pasture.



Cereals. Land tilled using a rotated cropping system. Crops included wheat, barley, sorghum, chickpeas, lentils, and often a fallow year.



Pasture. Areas used by herders and farmers for grazing.



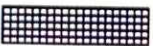
Vegetables. Where vegetables were grown, usually adjacent to a water source.



Forest. Definition ranges from coniferous forest to dense stands of low-lying dryland trees.



Olives. Olive orchards.



Built up areas. Includes residential areas and industrial areas including quarries.



Cisterns, Springs, and Wells.



Shrubs/Single Trees. Refer to species including *Retama roetam* and *Ziziphus spina-christi*.



Grapes. Vineyards.



Barren land. Refugees used this term to describe the emptiness of the hills in 1948.



Scrubland. Israel scientists used this term to describe dry grasslands with sporadic bushes and rock outcroppings.

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Having said this, we should understand the role of power in the portrayal of landscapes and land use. The last map clearly asserts a political position about landscape and land use, and through this, an implicit assertion about land rights. Rather than simply accepting the "best available" data in the form of a map, alternative interpretations probably need to be presented. A model may well be the work of Ecotrust and others in Canada, who are using technologies such as GIS to map First Nation and aboriginal perceptions of landscape and assertions of land rights – drawing heavily traditional knowledge provided by community elders to assign ownership and values to the land (see Aberley 1993; Olive and Carruthers 1998). In many ways, I believe this expands on the work of Freudenburg, Frickel, and Gramling (1995), who have asserted that there exists a "conjoint-constitution" between the biophysical and the prevailing social context. I would say this social context is defined by the political position, land use, and social interactions.

In closing, I would like only to state that my research in the southeastern West Bank should be viewed as a first step. There are many other research components that warrant further investigation, such as gender and landscape perception, differences of perception among age groups, and the relationship between stated perceptions of landscape and social action regarding the land. It is my belief that this type of research could both lead to better management of natural resources and greater claims of ownership over natural resources for Palestinians.

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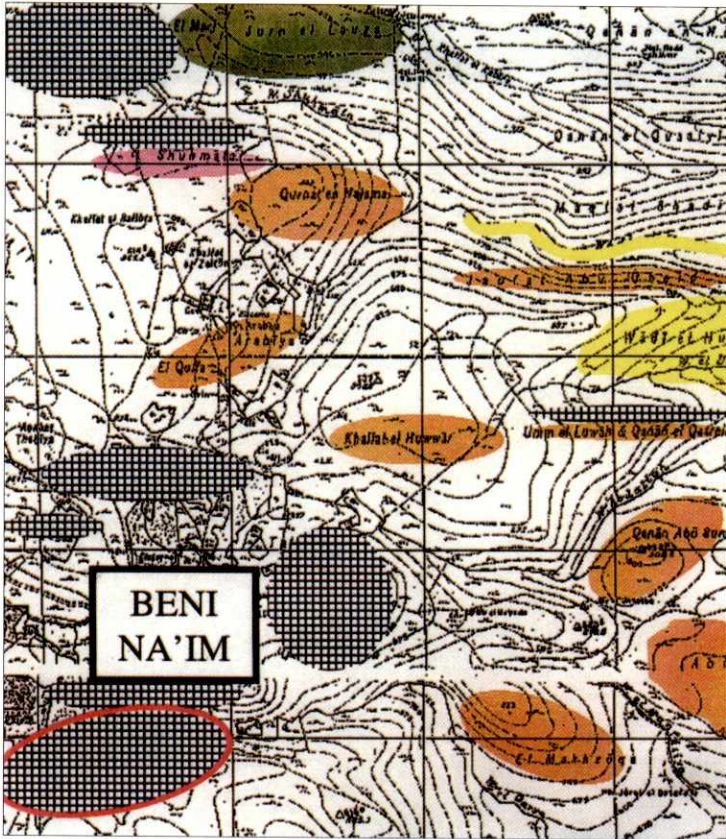
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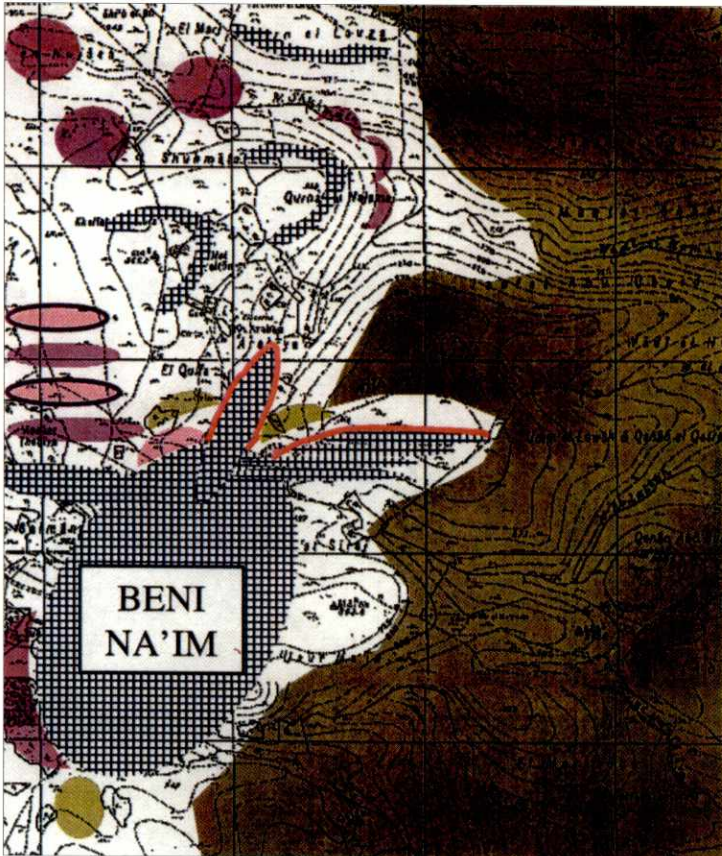
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Beni Na'im and Environs in 1997: FellaH-Herder and Bedouin Perspective



Beni Na'im and Environs in 1997: Israeli and Palestinian Scientist Perspective

CHAPTER THREE

EXILE

THE EXILIC IMAGINATION: THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LANDSCAPE OF PALESTINE FROM ITS OUTSIDE

Glenn Bowman*

What I will consider in this paper is the landscape of Palestine as a certain kind of raw material which serves as a canvas on which persons and communities inscribe images of the place as one in which they can conceive themselves living. For the most part the focus is on identity construction in exile. Implicit in the idea of imaging a place from outside its borders is the project of then exporting those images to the territory and implanting them there – imposing them on the peoples already resident on that land. I thus want to consider the implications of taking images of a terrain formulated without regard or informed knowledge of the specificities of that domain as models for actions be carried out on that territory and its peoples.

What I am interested in opening up as a general problematic is whether our idea of the construction of place in place – the kind of standard connection of territory and identity that we see for instance in Emile Durkheim's and Marcel Mauss' *Primitive Classification* (Durkheim & Mauss 1963) – is an accurate representation of how we come to imbue a place with identity. I want to suggest that we should rethink the etiology of the identity of places, rejecting as naively realist the concept that place finds its identity through presence and considering as an alternative the idea that constructions of place from positions of exile might serve as appropriate models with which to understand the constitution of all articulated concepts of social space. I base this proposal on the assumption that attributing an identity to some thing or some one is constitutive; it does not simply relay an already existing character but *posits* a character for that object or person. One *constructs* a being

* The author is currently involved in an extended study of identity formation and transformation in Beit Sahour funded by the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

through representation, and such construction assumes a use to which that entity will be put or a relationship which might be established with that entity. If this propositional character of representation is accurate – and I hope the following examples suggest it is – then there is always a gap between the entity and its representation. In this paper I reify that gap as the separation of exile in order to make visible the violence which both provokes representations and devolves from them. I here foreground exile as a precondition of identity and suggest that this supplement – this odd “outside work” of going into exile, constructing an image of place, and then going back and imposing it – reveals representations of place as, at least initially, discontinuous with the territories they claim to mirror.

Let me discuss first life lived in place. I would argue that to a very large degree an everyday life lived in a territory is not the same as that being articulated in an identity discourse. One carries out a number of practices such as reproduction, growing and consuming objects, and moving through its spaces. All of the elements of this dispersed terrain of sociality coexist and constitute an environment in terms of which one acts, but such an environment rarely, if ever, coagulates – without a further stimulus – into an articulation of identity. When Durkheim and Mauss in *Primitive Classification* argue that concepts of space are themselves projections of social practices, kinship networks, demographic concentrations and the like, they contend that classification devolves from practice in place, from that diffused yet structured domain of activity and perception which Bourdieu, drawing on Mauss, called *habitus* (see Bourdieu 1990:52-97). What I am here arguing, however, is that systems of classification and of practice which emerge from a *habitus* are not the same as identities. When one calls something an identity one is already fetishizing, picking elements out of that wider range of sociality, that general range of action people engage in, that very diffused sense of everything one does in the course of one’s everyday life. One is – in articulating an identity – pulling out of that dense fabric of interwoven elements certain figures, symbols, activities, entities that serve as vehicles for saying “this is who we are”. These are metonyms – parts which come to stand for the whole – and to comprehend identity we need to understand such processes of abstraction and reduction.

Antagonism¹ is fundamental to the process of fetishization which underlies identity, because one tends precisely to talk about who one is or what one is at a moment in which that being seems threatened. I begin to call myself such and such a person, or such and such a representative of an imagined community, when something seems to threaten to disallow it.

¹ At the core of my thinking on this problematic is a concept I have drawn from the

Identity terms come into usage at the instant one comes to feel for some reason that they stand in for a being or an entity one has to fight to defend. Let's take an example drawn from Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* – a brilliant book masked by an off-putting name. The authors point out that a peasant working on the land would not in the normal course of things refer to himself or herself as a peasant but would *become* a peasant – begin to articulate an identity as “peasant” – at precisely the moment at which a landlord comes along and says “I am selling this land, get off the land” (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985:125). With that threatened expropriation of the land certain aspects of everyday life explicitly tied to dependency on the land come to the fore of consciousness, and serve to ground the constitution of a new politicized identity as “peasant”. Peasantness – with its connotations of a specific relation to a land-based mode of production – here becomes an identity, something political and articulate, something to struggle for. The peasant, threatened with the loss of the land, which allows him to be a peasant, raises the link of land and self to the status of an identity.

The move Laclau and Mouffe reveal is quite curious in the fullness of its philosophical implication. When an identity is initially formulated an essential part of that formulation is the imminence of its negation. What one talks about with the positivity of an identity – the real essence, the real being, what is articulated as identity – is primarily the negation of a threatened negation. I “am” who I would be if I could be rid of that which endangers my being. In other words identity has at its very core an antagonism which brings it into being by the threat it poses to the possibility of its emergence. Consciously, of course, I imagine my full self as that which will blossom when the antagonist disappears, but in a sense that full self means nothing without the antagonist, because the antagonist is a major part of it – in fact its precondition.

Let me illustrate this by discussing material drawn from Liisa Malkki's study of Hutu refugees in Tanzania (Malkki 1995). Malkki worked on two different sites with two distinct groups of Hutus who had fled from genocidal Tutsi violence in Burundi between 1972 and 1979². One group was located in Kigoma, an urban setting wherein the refugees struggled to assimilate themselves into the host country's economic and social networks so as to avoid being deported into Burundi. The other was located at Mishamo, a large and isolated refugee camp where people who

² Malkki carried out her fieldwork in 1985, and as her book was coming to press further violence broke out in Burundi with more Tutsi violence against Hutus. That 1993 violence destabilised neighbouring Rwanda setting off there the Hutu violence against the Tutsis which shocked the world in 1994 and 1995.

had fled from Tutsi violence had been gathered from all over Burundi. In the camp the refugees formulated very strong, very purist, very essentialist conceptions of Hutu identity. They articulated a deeply collective identity which allowed no room for individual variation or divergence. In the cities, to the contrary, identities were very individualistic. There Hutu refugees sought to marry Tanzanian nationals so they could get citizenship, and consequently their driving concern was to hook themselves into the networks of everyday urban Tanzanian life. They had no investment in asserting a Hutu identity since such an assertion would work against that integration. In the camps, however, a deeply mythical sense of who the Hutu are was elaborated which manifested itself in a ritualistic and ideological agenda for remaining pure and united in anticipation of returning to and redeeming the homeland. The camp Hutu concretized their definitions of themselves by setting themselves off with antipathy from the city refugees whom they characterized as willing to abandon the nation to save their own skins (which is probably an accurate portrayal since the nation, after all, did not have the same meaning to the city Hutu).

At one stage in her presentation of these polarized Hutu identity strategies Malkki presents some very interesting phenomena existing in Hutu narratives. First of all, the Tutsi are imaged by the Hutu in their myth-histories as horrific negators:

"The Tutsi" as a homogeneous category ... had created the violence, perversity and defilement. "They" are therefore seen as the source of the almost unimaginable evil and of the destruction of "the natural" as constituted in collective memory through the refugees' fifteen years of exile (Malkki 1995:93).

It is not surprising that the Hutu constitute the Tutsi as such horrific antagonists (the myth in this sense can be seen as simply reflecting history), and yet Malkki goes on a few pages later to point out that Hutu myths of primordiality reveal that the Tutsi are the original and originary figures of mythology and that the Hutu effectively derive from them by negation:

In the mythico-history, the Tutsi were cast in many mythico-historical domains (such as the encoding and enacting of the body maps) as the primary subject, while the Hutu were cast as the symmetrical opposite, as that which the Tutsi were not (Malkki 1995:103).

The Hutu, in other words, come into being precisely as an antidote – something after the Tutsi, different from the Tutsi, better than the Tutsi –

which will, both in the mythology and by projection in time, come to replace the Tutsi. Deep within Hutu identity – seemingly before it even was awakened from its pre-conscious reverie – is the figure of the Tutsi which simultaneously threatens and enables the emergence of the Hutu.

I here assert that identity is something founded precisely on the anticipation of its disallowal; identity, I claim, is formulated after and in response to awareness of the threat of extermination. It's not that I have an identity and something comes along and threatens it; it's that something comes along and threatens and the threatening makes me constitute myself defensively as an entity (or part of a collectivity) organized to fight against that threat. In one sense it is precisely antagonism that draws together the dispersed elements of self or community in order to constitute a political unity the elements of which share a common need to defend themselves against that antagonism (I've written about this in my work on the *Intifada*: Bowman 1993). Identity is mobilization towards struggle given form by the configuration of what it anticipates struggling against, and that mobilization will often dissolve the salience of differences which – in everyday life – might have restricted collaboration and interaction.

Elsewhere I've examined the forms communities mobilized for struggle take in response to experienced antagonism. In my above-cited work on the *Intifada* and in work I carried out simultaneously on diasporic Palestinian identity I was interested in the political, social and conceptual organization of Palestinians in the various locales of exile³. In my *A Country of Words* (Bowman 1994) I examined identity discourses of Palestinians in the Lebanese refugee camps, amongst diasporic Palestinian intelligentsia in the cities of the west, and of people “inside” in order to assess the different ways three different groups of Palestinians constituted their identities differently in three very different milieus. In all three cases a return to Palestine was imagined as a moment in which identities impeded by various forms of oppression and repression could be realized, but I was aware of the problems likely to emerge when the scattered peoples of Palestine, with their very different formative sets of experiences nominally unified under the banner of Palestinian nationalism, gathered together in a single place called “Palestine”. The differences in the way they'd learned to conceptualize themselves as Palestinians would, I contended, make it hard to integrate those various identities into a single national community. The fact that my prediction

³ I included the West Bank and Gaza as sites of exile because, even if you are living on the territory of the homeland, if you live under occupation that is not the place you feel is your place; it may nominally be the homeland, but it cannot be home until the threat the other poses is terminated.

lamentably has proved to be true is something I will try to address in my conclusion.

I want now to look at the way communities experiencing antagonisms in exile imagine the places in which said antagonisms would be extirpated and the fullness of identity can emerge. It seems that, in situations of exile, imaging the place to which one would return after the struggle is a very important element. This essay will draw on recent work I've been engaged in which looks at images of exile and images constituting exile. The three situations I want to talk about are as follows. The first is the return from the Babylonian exile of the people who came to be called Jews as a result of that exile. I will argue that the moment of Judaism's formation was deeply implicated in exile and that the return of a small portion of the exilic population to Judaea and what was at that time – because of its own occupation – called Samaria consolidated a conception of a people which was new to the area. Exile, I will argue, was both a constitutive moment in the construction of one particular conception of the people of Israel (a conception monumentalized in the Old Testament) and simultaneously the grounds for the disenfranchisement of another portion of the originary population. The second case I want to examine is that of Theodor Herzl, the chief progenitor of what has proved to be one of most powerful conceptions of Zionism if not actually the dominant mode. There were other Zionisms, but his form became extremely influential in giving shape to the state of Israel. I want to present an argument both about the way his identity – and that which he projected onto the Jew he hoped would emerge within a Jewish state – was shaped by 19th century Vienna and the way that identity, transmogrified into a dominant strain within statist Zionism, gave rise to severe problems, particularly when inflicted upon Sephardic and *Mizrahim* Jews, Jews who came to Israel from the Arab world. The third topic, with which I will close, treats the very contemporary problem of what happens when hegemonic groupings within the Palestine Liberation Organization return from exile and impose themselves, in the organizational form of a proto-state apparatus, on Palestine and the people who have been living there under Israeli occupation. These are the three sets I will look at and, insofar as I have already elaborated the theoretical framework within which I will place them, I can get on with detailing the empirical material.

It is quite interesting to look at recent work around early biblical history; research carried out over the past ten years or so has substantially disrupted traditional ways of thinking about the historicity of the Bible. One particularly pertinent argument is that of Niels Lemche in *The Canaanites and their Land* (Lemche 1991) who claims not only that the

Bible is for the most part written after the Babylonian exile but also that writing reworks (and invents) the entirety of the previous Israelite history – including the exodus, the conquest of Canaan, and the existence of the Canaanites – so as to reflect and reiterate the experiences of those returning from the Babylonian exile. He contends that the Canaanites are not the originary inhabitants of the land encountered as the Israelites fleeing from Egypt came in from the desert but are instead retrospective projections of the people the “Jews” returning from the Babylonian exile found living on the land when they came back – in other words those Judaeans who were not exiled by the Babylonians when the elites of Judaea were expelled in the sixth century. Lemche’s argument doesn’t go down well with people who want to take the biblical chronicle as writ; it calls for a rethinking of all of the categories mobilized not only by biblical literalists but also by nationalists who want to shape contemporary Middle Eastern identities in primordialist terms.

Contemporary rethinking of the emergence of Judaism posit that all of the Middle Eastern religions until the period of the return from the Babylonian exile – i. e., until the sixth century before the Christian era (BCE) – are more or less polytheistic. In the area of what will become Palestine people worship *Baal*, as well as various other divinities who are in effect “departmental” gods – gods dealing with rain, fertility, storms, and the like. At moments of perceived antagonisms devotion focuses on national gods who are in effect war gods. Yahweh, the figure that develops into the monotheistic god of Judaism and its successor religions, is such a war god, and he comes into prominence precisely when collectivities are forced to draw themselves together to struggle against an other collectivity which is either aggressing – or subject to the aggression of – the people who live in the territory Yahweh protects. In the period prior to the Babylonian exile numerous invasions and less bellicose movements of people across the area that becomes Judaea and Israel brings into the purview of the local inhabitants a number of other gods which serve their respective worshippers in various ways. At times inhabitants of Judaea and Israel would adopt some or all of those gods into their own pantheons either because conquest had proven those gods more powerful than their local ones or because evidence showed that worship of those gods could benefit those who worshipped. The adoption of other gods – religious syncretism – is likely to occur when a people acknowledges the power or influence of the people of those gods.

In the eighth century BCE the populations of Israel and Judaea⁴ engaged in quite considerable syncretism, in part because of a history of

⁴ Israel is the northern part of Palestine and comes to be called Samaria after the Assyrians defeat it and expel its elites in 722 BCE. Judaea is the southern part of

conquest and in part because of their interactions with other communities through trade. At around this time, however, syncretism became explicitly problematic to certain priestly groups within Israelite society who began to advocate henotheistic Yahweh worship. This clique came to see the presence of Phoenicians and others in the area as a threat to the economies on which it depended, and promoted opposition to rather than worship of foreign gods. Whatever the sociological reasons for the emergence of what comes to be termed the “Yahweh-Alone” movement (and I would suggest this movement shares substantial characteristics with movements we would term nationalist)⁵, its demand was that people should predominantly worship Yahweh. The worship of other local and subordinate gods was permissible, but Israelites were called upon to worship their own national gods and to turn away from the gods of other people. Yahweh is here being elevated from a “departmental” god who comes into action in warfare to a God who in effect stands fetishistically for an emerging national identity and who is promoted by a priestly clique concerned to center worship on the shrines it controls⁶.

In the eighth century Israel was conquered by the Assyrians and – as was standard practice at that time – the dominant social groups of the territory were deported. The political leadership as well as the dominant priesthoods (the syncretist priests) were creamed off and driven into exile, leaving the peasantry behind to continue to work the land and render it productive for its new rulers. The Yahweh-Alone movement was at that time a peripheral movement and its priests were not associated with the dominant circles of Israelite society; therefore when those circles were sent into exile the Yahweh-Alone priests were left behind. A large contingent of them fled south into Judaea where they became increasingly more influential. In the sixth century BCE Judaea too was subject to three successive invasions, in the course of which (between 590 and 582 BCE) the elite of that society – this time including the Yahweh-Aloneists – was deported to Babylon.

The Babylonian exile was not a particularly arduous exile. Judaeans were settled in agricultural areas near to the major cities where they were

Palestine and, while several times subject to military defeat and selective deportation, maintains its name and for the most part its sovereignty until the Roman conquest.

⁵ The classic study of the “Yahweh-Alone Movement”, from whence much subsequent scholarship has derived, is Lang’s *Monotheism and the Prophetic Minority* (Lang 1983).

⁶ The Yahweh-Alone movement, in the period leading up to the destruction of the kingdom, was centred on shrines such as Shechem and was marginalized by official state policies which sought to consolidate and strengthen rulers’ holds on power by giving royal patronage to shrines such as Bethel where all of the gods of the Israelite

allowed to reconstitute themselves as coherent communities (one of the main settlements of Judaeen exiles was called Tel-Abib). In the course of the three generations of the exile many of the deportees married into Babylonian society, took on Babylonian names and integrated themselves – as merchants and artisans – into the social networks of the surrounding communities. Even more salient was the fact that many of the exiles took to worshipping Babylonian gods in recognition of the fact that those gods had proven more powerful than the god which should have defended them. The communities which aggregated under the leadership of the Yahweh-Alone priesthood (not unlike the Hutus of the refugee camps in Tanzania) saw such assimilation and syncretism not only as social death for themselves as Judaeans but also decided against their god who, without a community with a distinct identity which he existed to protect, would simply disappear (along with the need for his priesthood). They resolved to maintain an absolute and exclusive commitment to Yahweh who they were sure would lead them back to the land from which they had been expelled. They prescribed blood purity as a means of maintaining the borders of the national community, thus proscribing inter-marriage with the communities which surrounded them. They also established a series of exclusivist rituals which set themselves off from their neighbors, and these not only included a surrogate form of temple worship but also a distinct calendar which ritualistically enabled them to exist in a different time frame than the communities with which they shared space. All of these diacritical devices served to mark and maintain difference, but did not prevent them from trading with and thus being able to sustain themselves amongst the Babylonians.

In about 530 BCE Cyrus, who had conquered the Babylonians, allowed those exiles who wished to return to Judaea to do so. The returnees made up, in fact, a very small contingent as many of the descendants of those who had been deported declined to return⁷. Those who did go back did so with high expectations; the Bible recounts their stories which prophesized how Yahweh would lead the returnees back into a beautiful land flowing with milk and honey and how the mountains would level out to provide them with an easy path for their return. These also told that when the returnees arrived in Judaea they would find an empty land wherein they would rebuild the cities, erect temples to Yahweh alone, and live there in peace and plenty. It didn't work out that way. The land which “greeted” the returnees was not, after all, that empty land prophesized by their ideologues but the site of a fully functioning society of Judaeans. The

⁷ As Norman Cohn indicates “the Diaspora had come to stay – and that, no doubt, is why it is customary at this point to drop the term ‘Israelites’, with its territorial associations, in favour of the term ‘Jews’” (Cohn 1993: 157).

Judaeans who had been left behind when the elites were expelled had subsequently taken over and developed the lands and properties of the deportees. H. M. Barstad, in his recent *The Myth of the Empty Land* (Barstad 1996), marshals archaeological and textual evidence to show that throughout the period of the Babylonian exile Judaea hosted a fully functioning indigenous society carrying on and developing the traditions its ancestors had shared with the ancestors of the returnees. That society, like the one which had existed in the 580s, was religiously syncretistic and may, in fact, have become even more so as the remaining Judaeans would, unrestrained by the exiled Yahweh-Alone priesthood, have taken up the worship of some if not all of the gods of their conquerors. The returnees, who had developed a fiercely purist conception of Yahweh-Aloneism during the exile, were deeply troubled by their encounter with these syncretist others who were, at the same time, even more Judaeans than they were.

Open hostility soon broke out between the two groups. The descendants of those Judaeans who had been left behind were less than enthusiastic about turning over their lands to and accepting the rule of people who were, after three generations, effectively strangers – and strangers with pretensions, while the returnees responded with horror to the presence on “their” land of syncretists who claimed Judaea was theirs. Over the four phases which made up “the return” (and which extended over one hundred and twenty years) cultural and religious antagonisms, as well as struggles over property, arose between the two groups. Two biblical books, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, chronicle an extended encounter between the two populations in which the antagonism felt by the returnees for the residents was so fierce as to nearly bring about open warfare. For the chroniclers, who were of the party of the Yahweh-Alone priesthood, the resident Judaeans were not wayward kin but foreigners endangering the returnees with the seductions of apostasy and syncretism. In *Ezra* Yahweh says to one of his prophets:

The land which you are entering, to take possession of it, is a land unclean with the pollutions of the peoples of the lands, with their abominations which have filled it from end to end with their uncleanness. Therefore give not your daughters to their sons, neither take their daughters for your sons, and never seek their peace or prosperity, that you may be strong, and eat the good of the land, and leave it for an inheritance to your children forever (Ezra 9: 11-13).

In 520 BCE the priests of the resident peoples approached the returnees to ask if they could join them in building a temple to the god – Yahweh –

that they, like the returned exiles, revered. The biblical account of this exchange tellingly disenfranchises the resident Judaeans not only by representing them – as they offer collaboration – as “adversaries” but also by turning them into foreigners – people who are presented as the descendants of peoples who had been settled in the land after the Judaeans had been exiled:

Now when the adversaries of Judah and Benjamin heard that the returned exiles were building a temple to the Lord, the God of Israel, they approached Zerubbabel and the heads of fathers' houses and said to them, 'Let us build with you; for we worship your God as you do, and we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of Esarhaddon king of Assyria who brought us here'. But Zerubbabel, Jeshua, and the rest of the heads of fathers' houses in Israel said to them, "You have nothing to do with us in building a house to our God; but we alone will build to the Lord, the God of Israel" (Ezra 4: 1-3; emphasis mine).

Effectively then the returning exiles reconstructed in the land to which they returned precisely the antagonistic situation they had encountered in Babylonia and in terms of which they had constituted their pure Yahwist identities. The resident Judaeans were endowed with the identities of the seductive and syncretistic others who had surrounded the exiles in Babylonia and who had been seen as threatening the exiles with spiritual extermination, and the returning exiles constructed against their antagonistic allure the same defensive apparatuses with which they had protected their Judaeans identities in Tel-Abib and the other cities of the exile. The returnees established criteria of ritual purity (with regards both to Temple worship and to other domains of public and private ritual) which served to exclude the residents and – one hundred and twenty years after the first wave of return – racially purified the collective body which some had sullied by treating kin as kin. Ezra, under prophetic instruction, carried out a blood cleansing in the course of which those of the returnees who had married resident Judaeans were forced by threat of excommunication and loss of all property to “put away all these wives and their children” (Ezra 10:3 and *passim*). This radical inscription of a racial divide between the two Judaeans communities was the origin of the conception of “the Canaanite” which is later inscribed in the books of the *Torah* as the evil which attempted to impede the originary construction of an Israelite people. Lemche writes that

the “Canaanites” embraced that part of the Palestinian population which did not convert to the Jewish religion of the exiles, the reason being that it had no part in the experience of

exile and living in a foreign world which had been the fate of the Judaeans who were carried off to Babylonia in 587 BCE. The Palestinian – or rather old Israelite – population were not considered to be Jews because they were not ready to acknowledge the religious innovations of the exilic community, that Yahweh was the only god to be worshipped. Thus the real difference between the Canaanites and the Israelites would be a religious one and not the difference between two distinct nations (Lemche 1991:162, n. 12).

The program of the clearing of the high places of Canaanite abominations which the Torah chronicles and celebrates is, Lemche contends, a projection into mythological history of the policies of cultural cleansing and ethnic disenfranchisement that the descendants of those who returned from the Babylonian exile carried out against those who had remained in the land. The violence Yahweh repeatedly commands his followers to impose on the Canaanites throughout the first five books of the Old Testament is more likely the expression of an ideological *desideratum* than an echo of a literal policy carried out after the Babylonian exile against the Judaeans, but the rage with which the returning exiles greeted those who had remained in place suggests the extent to which exilic constructions of identity can be antipathetic to the ways of life of the worlds from which their fabricators had been separated.

The link that Durkheim poses between demography and divinity is actually broken in the evolution of Judaism in so far as the people on the territory of the god are no longer seen to be, by definition, deserving of the protection of the *Baal* on whose territory they reside. A people may exist on the territory of the god, but they can be driven out – by the god acting through self-proclaimed followers – if they don't make manifest proper allegiance to the god or sufficient obedience to its will. What proves more significant here than residence is a community's obedience to the authority of its god. It is that adherence to the will of a divinity which Judaism – exceptionally among the religions of the region in that period – posits can and should be maintained even beyond the borders of the god's land. Emerging out of a field of religions which are essentially territorial, Judaism presents itself as a religion which can be adhered to anywhere but which renders redemption conditional on obedience to divine authority. That reinterpretation of the relation of territory and divinity (through which territory becomes a reward for rather than a condition of devotion) along with the foregrounding of extra-territorial obedience to divine dictate renders Judaism perpetually susceptible to transformations of its community and its character effected by self-

proclaimed prophets who claim to know the will of god better than their predecessors. The sole criterion for claiming to be the chosen of God is here certainty, and such self-righteous surety tends to be more prevalent in sites of exile – whether physical or spiritual – than on home territory.

This disarticulation of territoriality from access to the divine has, for instance, allowed Christians to assert that the Jews are no longer the proper “Israelites” because the original chosen people have betrayed their mandate to obey Yahweh’s commands. Yahweh has, according to Christian theology, rejected the Jews and chosen a new people to whom he gives his support and the rights to his territory. Christianity’s asserted claim to appropriate not only the Jews’ place in the divine plan, but also the territory God allegedly gave to the Jews gave rise, in the fourth and fifth centuries of the Christian era, to a Byzantine imperial program of building up Jerusalem and the Holy Land (purged of Jews) as a Christian version of the land of God-given glory the Babylonian exiles had expected to find in Judaea a millennium earlier. Constantine and his successors declared and to some degree made manifest the intention of building up Palestine as a paradise on earth focussed on Jerusalem, rebuilt as a magnificent domain of temples for the enactment of communal liturgy⁸. This program can be seen as one of the earliest of the modernist projects insofar as it reveals not only a plan to homogenize the ritual of a universalizing religion but also the assertion of a direct and legitimizing link between the will of divinity and the organization of the secular order. Throughout the fantasies of pilgrims as well as in the rhetorics of crusade which developed after the Persian and Islamic invasions one finds precisely the idea that Palestine is a land for a God-chosen people to “return” to. There is, of course, more to say about the relation of European Christians to Palestine, particularly with reference to the way those “spiritual exiles” have, until the present day, striven to impose over the actual holy places images of the Holy Land they’ve composed “at home”, but that topic is deserving of fuller treatment on another occasion (but see Bowman 1991).

Instead I want to discuss another case of exile and return which reflects the formative influence of a substantially different antagonism but which is, nonetheless, in the dynamics of return it posits, quite similar to the cases discussed above. This is the case of Theodor Herzl and the ideas he produced in the second half of the 19th century about the place of Judaism in – and beyond – Europe. It is problematic, I know, to examine the work of a single person as though it is somehow representative, although if we

⁸ See the 4th century pilgrim’s text – *Egeria’s Travels* – for the holy city as a site where both time and space are organised according to the dictates of divinity (Willkinson 1971: 123–147).

consider the appeal of Herzl's writings to his contemporaries as well as to many of those who came after him, it is hard to dispute that the articulations of identity he elaborated seemed to many to speak to and of their own experiences as Jews in Europe. Herzl may not himself be "representative" but in his literary productions as well as in his ideological and polemical writings he succeeded in articulating very clearly for many Western and Central European Jews descriptions of their situations and what troubled those situations. Here, however, I actually am interested less in the specifics of Herzl's discourses than in the conflicts and contradictions which gave shape to the life which produced them.

Theodor Herzl was very much a product of Enlightenment thinking and was deeply invested, throughout his life, in the mid to late nineteenth century metropolitan idea that the progress of European enlightenment would in time dissolve cultural differences between peoples and produce a universal cosmopolitan humankind. Herzl's concept of the Enlightenment subject was profoundly anti-nationalist, and we are therefore faced with the seeming contradiction that the father of Jewish nationalism was a devotee of Enlightenment universalism. Jacques Kornberg, in a recent book entitled *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Kornberg 1993), suggests a means of resolving this conundrum in pointing out that Herzl's abiding concern, particularly in the early years of his adulthood, is with "de-Judaizing" himself. Nineteenth century Vienna – like many sites of modernist cosmopolitanism of the period – engaged itself in simultaneously advocating Enlightenment Humanism and circulating stereotypes of "the Jew". Such stereotypes were not, however, characterizations circulated only by and for anti-Semites; they also circulated amongst Jews who themselves aspired towards assimilation.

For Herzl, who was deeply committed as a young man to belonging to Austrian duelling clubs and other social groups which were not traditionally welcoming to Jews, the problem of how to render his "Jewishness" unproblematic was a matter of deep concern. His means of resolving that problem was to split "the Jew" in two. One type of Jew, the one with which he identified himself, was the Enlightenment Jew who carried his Jewishness in the same way an Austrian or a Frenchman bore his national origins, as an evident yet fundamentally irrelevant aspect of an all-round educated person who deported himself with grace and self-possession. The other Jew, whom he loathed, he characterized as the *Mauschel* – an "Eastern" Jew who is dirty, money-grubbing, pathologically self-interested, hook-nosed and cringing. He even distances himself as a Jew from the *Mauschel* by, at one point, uprooting

the “other Jew” in a manner not dissimilar to the strategy of nominal exile carried out by the Babylonian returnees against the indigenous Judaeans; he laments that “at some dark moment in our history some inferior human material got into our unfortunate people and blended with it” (Theodor Herzl, “*Mauschel*” in *Zionist Writings: Essays and Addresses*, Vol. I, pp. 163-165; quoted by Kornberg 1993:164). It is interesting reading through Herzl’s writings – his fictions as well as his essays and journalistic pieces – because he will often use appallingly anti-Semitic characterizations in his representations of Jews and Jewishness. What clearly emerges in these works is the opposition between the ghettoized mentality of the “Asian Jew” and the progressive *persona* of the new Jew who is struggling to be born. The ghetto Jew, frozen out of participation in European national movements as well as processes of modernization and enlightenment, has developed in relative isolation. As a consequence this Jew has developed a mentality concerned primarily with economic gain and self-advancement, manifest in obsessive money hunger and a self-debasing humility which is simultaneously an arrogance. Against this stereotypical character Herzl poses the Jew who is coming into being, the Jew who is just like everybody else, a totally assimilated, totally proud member of European society – the Jew, in other words, with whom he identifies himself.

The virulence with which Herzl mobilizes these categories – which one feels uncomfortable even relaying – makes one aware of the profound threat the Jew he rejects poses to his identity. Much of this, it would seem, devolves from Herzl’s anxiety that others, to whom he presents himself as a European, might reject his self-presentation and reduce him to the Jew he despises (“you may think that you are just like everybody else but you’re just a Jew”). This fear that others might see him as coming from the place of the *Mauschel* may, as well, reflect a more complex anxiety that the *Mauschel* is, in fact, within him. Whatever the configuration of his anxieties (one cannot psychoanalyze a dead man, although Kornberg’s sensitive and nuanced readings of Herzl’s private and public writings does reveal telling symptoms), it is clear that Herzl’s sense of self is put at risk by the presence in popular perceptions of Jewishness of the figure of the *Mauschel*.

The possibility of being taken for an “Eastern Jew” was for Herzl an antagonism, and he evolved a program of identity formation in his personal life as well as programmatically in his writings for obviating that possibility. That program explicitly involved the discarding of Judaism:

Herzl emphasized Judaism’s foreignness to Europe, its incompatibility with European culture ... In emphasizing

Judaism's Oriental character and foreignness to Europe, Herzl was closer to anti-Jewish polemicists who claimed Jews were too alien to European culture to make integration possible. But while they argued that Jews would always constitute a self-segregating Oriental nation, Herzl argued that Jews would gladly shed Judaism as the price for equality (Kornberg 1993: 24).

Herzl generated a number of proposals to dissolve the self-interested isolationism of the Jewish character by integrating Jews into universalizing projects which would force its transformation into something more cosmopolitan and enlightened – i. e., something more European. Among Herzl's plans to realize what Kornberg calls "his goal of Jewish assimilation through Jewish self-transformation" (ibid., 125) was that of promoting mass Jewish enlistment in the project of Austrian socialism which – nominally anti-Semitic in its hostility to Jewish distinctiveness – would eradicate that distinctiveness by making Jewish socialists an integral part of the German culture it promoted as a norm for all of Central Europe. Another even more explicit cessation of the stigma of Jewishness was the motive behind Herzl's proposal for an orchestrated mass baptism of Jews into Christianity⁹. Like other assimilating Viennese Jews such as Theodor Gomperz, Herzl considered religious Judaism an anachronism could only continue to isolate Jews from the mainstream of European culture. Herzl saw Christianity less as a faith than as the core heritage of Enlightenment Europe, and as such considered it the foundation of a common culture capable of unifying all Europeans. Assimilation through intermarriage and conversion was a strategy which had already been followed by many Jews, but Herzl felt such gestures by individual Jews were ultimately self defeating because they served only to perpetuate stereotypes of Jews as craven opportunists attempting to take advantage of any opportunity for the ends of self-betterment. He proposed instead an act by which Jews affirmed their collective identity at the same moment as they terminated it; the last generation of Jewish fathers would accompany its sons to a public site where a great collective baptism of the latter would take place. In this manner Judaism would monumentalize itself in a grand gesture of self-abnegation whereby the

⁹ Kornberg cites several locations in Herzl's published and unpublished *oeuvre* where this project is elaborated: in the published work most saliently *Briefe und Tagebücher* I:507-508, 511-512, and 516-517 (Herzl 1983). The project is mentioned in the first volume of his diaries (Patai 1960: I 7-8). Herzl developed the idea in a body of notes under the title "*Die Resorption der Juden*" in April 1893 (they are in Jerusalem's Central Zionist Archive); it appears these were to have been published

last Jews would gain the respect of gentiles as they proudly transformed their sons into full Europeans.

Herzl was finally forced to abandon such strategies, which had been grounded on a confidence that Enlightenment Europe would welcome Jews into its community if Jews were to discard the Jewishness which distinguished them, when in 1895 – after three decades of liberal rule the Christian Socials, an overtly anti-Semitic party which had begun its climb to power in the previous decade, won a firm majority in the Vienna city council elections. The Christian Socials instituted policies of Catholic revivalism and Jewish exclusion, and Herzl (already sensitised by the Dreyfus affair to the resurgent appeal of anti-Semitism in Europe) was suddenly forced to acknowledge that no matter how un-Jewish or un-*Mauschel* he and other Jews would become, no matter how much they would work to transform themselves to effect assimilation, they would never be allowed to co-exist within European society except as ghettoized others barred from entry into the institutions of the dominant culture.

Herzl responded quickly with an elaboration of the fundamentals of the program he called Zionism. The speed of invention seems less surprising when it is recognized that all Herzl did was to displace the policies of Jewish transformation he'd already elaborated to a site – any site – outside of the bounds of a Europe which would not accept them. Herzl's Zionist state was not a state informed by the Jewish religion but a state in which Jewish citizens could function as full citizens without suffering exclusory discrimination in any domain of social activity. Herzl in effect argued that as Jews were made "Jewish" by exclusion, they would have to leave Europe in order to stop being Jewish so that they could become European. The Zionist state, wherever it was to be established, would be a place where Jews could act just like other Europeans and, by so doing, purge themselves of the ghetto mentality of the *Mauschel*. In the wake of the election which tolled the death knell of his ambitions of direct assimilation, Herzl announced the program for establishing a European state outside of Europe: "In the election the majority of non-Jewish citizens – no, all of them – declare that they do not recognize us as Austro-Germans. All right, we shall move away; but over there too we shall only be Austrians" (Patai 1960: I, 246-247, quoted in Kornberg 1993: 178).

Herzl's Zionist program borrows from the Enlightenment modernism he revered not only the concept of secular egalitarianism but also the idea that it is the job of the state to create a citizenry out of the raw material of the *demos*. Herzl's conceptions of the *Der Judenstaat* – the state of the Jews – is not culturalist like that of the Russian Zionists whose ideas fed into the realization of existing Zionism; while they argued that the course

of Jewish realization entailed gathering Jews together as self-sustaining groups in communes from whence a real and undistorted Jewish spirit would emerge, Herzl contended that it would be the state – operating according to principles mapped out for it by an enlightened minority – which would shape the new Jew (Kornberg 1993:164-169). The Zionist state would ask for the other nations of the world to send their Jews to it (thus eradicating the ghettoized Jews of the Diaspora) so that that state could turn them into something else, purging them of the Jewish character which centuries of disenfranchisement had fostered and producing out of those gathered masses and according to plan a proud, European people. For Herzl anti-Semitism would be extinguished by exterminating the Jewishness it despised.

Several other strains of thought fed into the development of existing Zionism, and many of these sought to protect Jews from anti-Semitism rather than to deprive anti-Semitism of an object by eradicating the type of humanity to which it was antipathetic¹⁰. However Herzl's heady modernism, which combined the *desideratum* of collective transformation with the simultaneous extinction of what many considered medieval anachronisms – the *Mauschel* and the anti-Semite, resonated strongly in the imaginations of those who subsequently prepared the ground for and then began the building of the state of Israel. The violence which the state came to organize against Sephardic and *Mizrahim* Jews became an integral part of the program of Herzlian Zionism as these “Eastern Jews” came in effect to stand in for the Eastern European *Ashkenazi* – the original recipients of Herzl's disdain¹¹ – when the latter's predominance at the First Zionist Congress forced compromises to be made in the Zionist program. What survived the compromises which allowed the launch of the World Zionist Federation (see Vital 1975: 354-370 on those compromises) was consensus among the modernizing elements of the Zionist program that one of the fundamental purposes of the Jewish state was the destruction of a Jewishness its organizers considered archaic and distasteful. Political alliances with Eastern European Zionist parties resulted in official policies protecting the cultural particularities of the original objects of the Herzlian project's zeal, and committed Europeanist Zionists had therefore to rediscover the *Mauschel* - the enemy whose existence underwrote the project of Zionist transformation - in another place. That place was the Middle East.

¹⁰ See, for a comprehensive survey, Vital's *The Origins of Zionism* (Vital 1975).

¹¹ To the extent that he invented for himself a Sephardic genealogy with which to distance himself from his family's Bohemian and Moldavian roots (Kornberg 1993:

Israel, in the early years of its existence, pushed very hard to “gather” Jews from all over the worldwide Diaspora, but particular attention was paid to Jews who had lived – in some cases for millennia – in the countries of the Middle East. Some of these were *Sephardim* – Jews originally from Spain who, after its fifteenth century *reconquista* and its attendant religious “purification”, had been scattered throughout North Africa – while others were *Mizrahim* – Jews who had, in many cases since the time of the Babylonian exile, lived in Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, and other sites as far flung as Ethiopia. Israel worked out various ways of bringing these “Eastern Jews” out of their native countries and into the new world in which they were to be transformed into Israelis; in some cases it negotiated population transfers by economic and political trade and in others, as with Iraq, it orchestrated apparent anti-Jewish activities so as to frighten well-established communities into leaving. When these people arrived in Israel, often in mass population transfers, they were treated as *Mauschel* – archaic, ghettoized Jews with no sense of modernity, of identity, of civilization – and the state immediately set in train processes of remaking them as human beings, as Europeans. The tragedy of course is that in most cases they were not what modernizing Zionism needed them to be; they were very often wrenched out of societies in which they had belonged to well-integrated, sophisticated and relatively wealthy urban elites in order to be plunged into state-orchestrated collective projects in Israel designed to transform them into pathetic, unsophisticated and uncivilized anachronisms which were the appropriate recipients of projects designed to strip their bestiality away from them and remake them in the image of European Jews. Two striking books approach the tragic irony of this situation from two very different directions. One is Ammiel Alcalay’s *After Jews and Arabs: Remaking Levantine Culture* (Alcalay 1993) which celebrates the Levantine Arabic-Jewish culture. Europe and Europe’s colonial extension, Israel, had to destroy it because neither could accept an Enlightenment culture which not only predated the European Enlightenment but which also by its example disproved the arguments about the impossibility of Jews coexisting equally with non-Jews, used by Europeans and Israelis to justify abandoning Enlightenment humanism. The other is Gideon Giladi’s *Discord in Zion: Conflict between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews in Israel* (Giladi 1990: original in Arabic, 1988) which ferociously details and critiques the arrogance of the programs with which European Zionists strove to uproot and destroy the culture, language, and society of Sephardic and *Mizrahim* Jews. Alcalay, in his lamentation for a destroyed culture, chooses to quote at length Giladi’s interview of a Jew from Bagdad in which she describes a specific instance of just such cultural destruction taking place as she and her family arrived in Israel in 1948:

We were wearing our Sabbath clothing. We thought as the plane landed that Israel would welcome us warmly. But goodness how wrong we were. When the plane had landed at Lod airport, a worker approached us and sprayed us all over with DDT, as if we were lice-infested. What sort of welcome was that? We thought they were spitting in our faces. When we disembarked from the plane, they herded us into a train, which was so crowded that we were stepping on each other and our fine clothes were dirtied. My husband was crying and so was I. Then the children started crying and our sobs went up to heaven and cast a pall over the train. Since it was a freight train it had no electric light, but as it sped along we thought of the death trains which had taken European Jews to the Nazi camps. Finally we reached the "Shar'ar Ha'aliya" camp and we were taken in by other families, then they wrote down our names and "gave" us new Hebrew names. "Said" became "Hayyim", "Su'ad" became "Tamar", and I was renamed "Ahuva" and so on ... Shar'ar Ha'aliya Camp had been a British army detention center before it became an immigration camp. The Israeli security authorities had reinforced the camp's security by doubling the height of barbed wire around it and installing a direct telephone link to the Israeli police in Haifa port. There was a police force of sixty constables, four sergeants and an officer to supervise the immigrants who were housed in tents or tin-roofed barracks. As I wandered amongst these tents an elderly Iraqi way-laid me. "I have just one question", he said, "are we immigrants or prisoners of war?". My tongue was tied and I could not reply (Alcalay 1993:37-38, and see also Giladi 1990:103-104).

Here, in the opening stages of a process designed to cleanse the new immigrants of the culture they came with, the language they spoke, and to a large degree even the memories with which they had made sense of their lives, we witness the violent consequences of a situation in which European Jews who were trying to assimilate into Enlightenment models saw themselves as primarily threatened by another form of Judaism which was both part of them and something which undermined radically the identities they wanted to establish for themselves. This conception of identity informed the setting up of a state designed to overcome that "bad self", even if that bad self had in effect to be invented so that that state could ideologically legitimate itself. Israel, which posed itself as bringing the Jews of the European Diaspora back to their true selves as proud nationalists, in fact created two major exilic populations from out of the

indigenous populations of the region in which the state was founded. One of these – forced into literal exile outside of Palestine as well as into effective exile from their homeland within the borders of the Israeli state – is of course the Palestinians who could not by definition exist as a people on the territory of what the Zionist settlers saw as “a land without a people for a people without a land”. The other exilic population created by the arrival of the European Jews was the Jews already resident in the Middle East who, by being invented as necessary antagonists by the incoming Europeans and thus subjected to the cultural genocide that underlay those “returnees” programs of self realization, were forced into living in a Jewish state which proved to them a more radical exile than anything they had previously experienced.

I’d like finally to draw some insights out of the previous examinations which may be of use in understanding the establishment of a Palestinian National Authority in large part organized and directed by returnee Palestinian exiles on what was until recently known as the Israeli Occupied Territories. I cannot here analyze in depth the forms of antagonism encountered in exile which gave shape to the identities with which these exiles returned (although my forthcoming *Constitutive Violence* does attempt such an analysis), but hope to throw light on the reluctance of the Palestinian National Authority to affiliate itself with and draw on the knowledge of those Palestinians of the “interior” who persevered through the long years of oppression and *Intifada* until Oslo effected the return of the outside.

In September 1970, in the course of a blood-letting which came to be known as “Black September”, King Hussein and his Bedouin troops shattered the power of the Palestinian *fedayeen* who had, in the wake of the Israeli 1967 conquest of the West Bank and Gaza, taken shelter in Jordan. In the intervening period the various factions of the Palestinian resistance had not only used Jordan as a base for attacks on Israel, but had also – in the words of David Hirst – “swaggered around the streets of the royal capital ... [and] openly proclaimed their ambition of replacing the Hashemite kingdom with their own revolutionary order” (Hirst 1978: 307). Within a year the loyalist Jordanian forces had brutally expelled the guerrillas from the country, and established in the consciousness of *Fatah* and its affiliates an enduring awareness that they – as the organizational expression of the Palestinians in exile – could no longer entertain the idea of coming to power in another state which could serve as a base from whence to organize their return to Palestine but would have, from then on, to exist as an exilic political group living separate and autonomous in the midst of other peoples in other states. The PLO’s long tenure in the Lebanon was organized in precisely these terms, with the guerrilla

organizations working to establish what was in effect a mini-state within the encompassing framework of the Lebanese state. The Palestinian cadres strove to perpetuate themselves as autonomous groups deeply committed to maintaining their organizational integrity and their powers to survive and develop on foreign ground while supported in large part by funds gathered from the Palestinian Diaspora and other extra-territorial sources. One of the effects of this relative autonomy was the fostering of antipathy between the *fedayeen* and their increasingly unwilling hosts; there's a considerable body of stories circulating about problems caused by the arrogance of the heavily armed PLO cadres confronting Lebanese citizens amongst whom they lived but whom they viewed in largely instrumental terms. When the Palestinian political presence in the Lebanon was terminated in 1982 much of the PLO's organizational apparatus was transferred to Tunis where the concepts of organizational autonomy and integrity continued to predominate¹².

During the PLO's period in Tunis a number of catastrophic events – some contingent (the collapse of Soviet Union) and others the result either of external interference (the assassinations of Abu Iyad and Abu Jihad) or of internal misjudgments (the loss of financial support from the Gulf states as a consequence of support for Iraq in the Gulf War) – threatened the organization with bankruptcy and collapse. With the secret Oslo negotiations Israel threw the PLO a lifeline, offering in effect to maintain the organization and its leader in power in return for a promise of security for Israelis in the West Bank and in Gaza. When Arafat was allowed to enter into Palestine and the Palestine National Authority began to be set in place, the moves were seen by many “inside” Palestinians as the culmination of the seven years of largely unarmed guerrilla struggle they had effectively waged against the Israeli military, tying it down to the extent that the government had been forced to sue for peace. Subsequently, however, the inside has found itself dominated by an imported organization, with top-heavy security apparatuses, which has moved in and told those who had been involved in organizing and fighting the *Intifada* that there was little place for them in the new order, that those coming in from the outside were more knowledgeable than those who'd lived under occupation, and that they should allow the Authority to get on with running itself and policing the nation (see, for

¹² One group of those expelled from Beirut were settled in Southern Yemen where its members began to work closely with local institutions – hospitals, schools, universities and the like. Interviews I've carried out with returnees from this group reveal very different attitudes towards local Palestinians, and a much more critical take on the anti-democratic and nepotistic policies of the mainstream Authority.

the post-Oslo political developments within the Territories, Usher 1995:60-83 and Robinson 1997:174-200).

A people who had developed sophisticated and progressive structures of representation and mobilization beneath the oppressive gaze of the Israeli occupation now finds itself under the rule of a group which has stripped it of authority while simultaneously fostering a system of corruption and nepotism which enriches its leadership at the expense of the people whose interests it claims to represent. What some people inside are increasingly expressing is the belief that they are once again under an occupation, although this time by a group of people who identify themselves – but only in name – with those who have steadfastly remained on the land. According to this view control is currently exercised by a group that put together its concepts of survival precisely around the idea of its need to maintain autonomy, integrity, and organizational holism in the foreign territories in which it was forced to take up its exilic residence. When it moved into the Palestinian territories it simply moved into another territory where it continues with the same strategies of maintaining identity, power and autonomy in the midst of and against yet another occupied people, this time Palestinian. Now, however, that they are doing so on home territory, these cadres are making some of the people on the inside feel progressively and desolately more exiled from *their* homeland.

I would like to close by stating that when you imagine a landscape or a territory, what you imagine is a *mise-en-scène* – a place in which you can envision yourself as being able to enact certain kinds of activities. With homelands imagined from exile we encounter *mises-en-scènes* constituted as sites where exiles will be able to be themselves because the antagonisms which prevent that self-realization in exile will have disappeared. My argument is, however, that images of essential identity – of who people *really* are – are themselves constructed as responses to encounters with antagonisms. These images are already so constitutively involved with the antagonists which they are imagined to counter that when exiles come to play out their real selves “at home” they can only recognize those selves when invoking the antagonists whose overcomings give meaning to their identities. When, therefore, exiles return to what they envisage as their homelands what they most often end up doing is re-establishing once again the terrain of the exilic space in which they came into self-consciousness. A fundamental part of that space is the antagonistic other, and if that other has not followed them home from exile they have to find another to take its place, and this is the role so often imposed by the returning exile on those who remained in place.

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KULTHUM AUDA, PALESTINIAN
ETHNOGRAPHER:
GENDERING THE PALESTINIAN
LANDSCAPE

Garay Menicucci

INTRODUCTION

Several recent works on modern Palestinian history have noted the transnational character of the process of constructing Palestinian national identity consciousness¹. This process of Palestinian identity construction has been typically situated within the context of dichotomies involving *self* and *other*, kin and stranger, Palestinian and Israeli, locality and region, the Arab near abroad and the ever intrusive Euro-American far abroad. Diaspora Palestinians outside the Arab World or the Western European and American regions have rarely been acknowledged to have contributed to the project of constructing the Palestinian collective memory. More marginal yet has been women's historical memory in nationalist discourse and within academic disciplines such as

¹ "Clearly, this relationship between the definition of the self and of the other is characteristic of many peoples in the Middle East and elsewhere, particularly those in the numerous nation-states established since World War I. For all of these peoples, transnational identities (whether religious or national), local patriotism, and affiliations of family and clan have competed for loyalty." Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1997, p. 10: "Recent academic work on history as a cultural construction tends to conceive of memory as a collective project that is crucial to the consolidation or construction of group, community, or national identities. Such antiessentialist works conceptualize memory as a site of hegemonic struggle, as a fluid ideological terrain where differences between dominant and subordinate are played out. They prove invaluable to our efforts to understand the popular dimension of memory, but are nonetheless marred by a tendency to neglect memory's transnational dimension. If we are beginning to recognize the global dimension of economy and culture, we must also reconceptualize memory and history as (partial) transnational constructions. The Palestinian situation requires that we conceive of memory as a multidimensional, displaced, and local-global construction." Ted Swedenberg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995, p. xxix.

anthropology and ethnography which seek to recover memory experiences².

Kulthum Auda represents an interesting example of a Palestinian woman intellectual who has largely been ignored in the scholarly literature because her emigration from Palestine in 1914 ended in what was to become the Soviet Union. Since the demise of the Soviet Union in 1991 and Russia's continuing eclipse as a major military and political influence in the Arab World, there has been diminishing academic interest in almost every facet of the Soviet experience. Yet just at the time when Kulthum Auda came into her own as a linguist, literary scholar, and ethnographer, the Soviet Union was embarked on a bold experiment to reshape, and in some cases to create, national cultures within its own borders as well as to champion national liberation outside. Dozens of Bolshevik Orientalists fanned out across the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Siberia in the 1920s to invent literary languages for minority peoples with oral cultural traditions so that mass literacy could instill the ideals of the revolution and loyalty to the new state. Women's literacy campaigns and propaganda against patriarchal control of women in the family were an integral part of the social experiments to reconstruct national cultures. In areas of the Soviet Union where Islam was the dominant religion, the Bolshevik authorities sponsored militant women's liberation campaigns. In Asia and the Middle East, the Bolsheviks through the auspices of the Communist International sent organizers to help establish local communist parties and to make good on its ideological promises to support national liberation. It was within this context that Kulthum Auda returned to Palestine in the summer of 1928 to conduct ethnographic research on Palestinian birthing practices and peasant traditions related to drought.

Arriving in Palestine almost 15 years after her emigration, Kulthum Auda viewed the Palestinian landscape from an entirely new perspective – one that was shaped by her direct experiences of World War I, the Russian Revolution, and the Russian Civil War. But above all, Auda viewed Palestine in a gendered manner. She was a woman who had defied patriarchal traditions in deciding her own career and her own

² "If we place Middle East anthropology within the larger context of both feminist anthropology and Middle East studies as a whole the picture is rather dismal. As regards feminist studies and feminist anthropology, L. Abu-Lughod states: "...the anthropology of Middle Eastern women is theoretically underdeveloped relative to anthropology as a whole. More disturbing is its theoretical underdevelopment relative to feminist anthropology which itself...has not kept pace with feminist theory or scholarship in other disciplines' (1987:40)." Julie Peteet. *Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p. 4.

marriage to a foreigner. Palestine under the British Mandate and under increasing threat from the Zionist movement, triggered in Auda images of women's subordination. In her work on traditions related to drought, she persistently conjured up images of land as a woman's body. She discovered feminized visions of land in the proverbs and rituals of Palestinian peasants who associated fertility of the land with women's reproductive capacities.

SHAPING A FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS

Kulthum Auda traced her own awareness of gender discrimination to the circumstances of her birth in 1892 and prevailing Palestinian attitudes favoring boys over girls:

“Mother was not happy about my appearance in the world. I was the fifth daughter in a family where there was not one boy. Mother always said to me: ‘And who is going to marry you, my gloomy one. The rest of your life you will remain a servant to your future sister-in-law.’ This was not an empty phrase. In those distant years, if a girl did not marry she remained in the family in the position of a servant and could only rarely work for herself in the teaching profession. And it was incredible that the girls who went into teaching actually had some kind of physical handicap or were very ugly. In other words, the woman who did not marry and did not succeed at anything else, taught”³

As a young girl in the Palestinian town of Nazareth, Kulthum dreamed of becoming a teacher so that she could “earn her own bread and not ‘become a servant to her future sister-in-law.’”⁴ Not many schools were open to Palestinian girls except those that had been established by the Russian Orthodox Palestine Society beginning in 1882. By 1914, the Palestine Society was operating 101 primary schools in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine as well as two teacher training colleges in Nazareth (for boys) and Bait Jala (for girls). Kulthum began her education in the Palestine Society's primary school for girls in Nazareth. The school was staffed by Palestinian graduates from the Beit Jala teachers' college. These young women became a model for Kulthum in her own desire for independence from her family:

“I constantly heard the words of my mother that I was ugly, that no one would marry me, and I decided that in order not to end up like that I would study and become a teacher like them.

³ K. V. Ode-Vasil'eva, “Bzglyad v proshloe” [A View from the Past] in *Palestinskii Sbornik* [The Palestinian Collection], Issue 13(76), Moscow-Leningrad, 1965, p. 171.

⁴ *Ibid.*

I had to study and study in order to enter the teachers' college. How early this burden was placed on my shoulders! At five years old I was already an adult in my own thoughts. In the winter evenings many women gathered with their needlework at our home and sat around a kerosene lamp set up on some kind of high stand and listened to stories which my mother knew how to tell. The children gathered around my aunt as she roasted chestnuts over a fire. The split chestnuts would fly up in the air and fall somewhere causing laughter and cries of excitement. And me? I sat on a box under another kerosene lamp fixed to the wall and studied my lessons. Often I woke up already in bed where I had been carried from the box after I had fallen asleep by my tender hearted aunt”⁵

Kulthum entered the teachers' training college in Beit Jala in September 1900 when she was eight years old. The trip to Beit Jala first caused Kulthum to think of the Palestinian landscape in terms of the difficulties for women to negotiate it. She remembered many years later:

“To travel to Jerusalem from Nazareth was no easy matter. There was no paved road. People traveled slowly by path through the mountains. They arrived in Jerusalem only after four days. Usually several people joined together to travel by this route. They rented horses or donkeys with drivers and set out on the route. Youngsters were frightened to death. They spent the night wherever they arrived [at dark]. There was not always water along the route and if the supply of water that you brought with you finished, it was necessary to wait until the next populated spot or marsh until you could drink. The road went through the town of Nablus which was primarily inhabited by Muslims at that time. Not one woman or even a girl could be seen with her face showing. Our parents usually sent a telegram to acquaintances and they met us with veils which we put on as we approached the town. The difficulties of the trip were enormous, but they were insignificant compared to the burning desire to study which possessed me”⁶

The Russian Orthodox Palestine Society's schools were distinguished from other European and American missionary schools in that the language of instruction was Arabic. Russian was taught only as a second language. In the Beit Jala school, Russian was the language of instruction after the third year. The school formed a community of women and the

⁵ Ibid., pp. 173-174.

⁶ Ibid., p. 174.

only men involved in instruction were the religion teacher and the Arabic language instructor. The head mistress was Russian. The girls mixed freely with the Russian women instructors. Female education included obligatory lessons in cooking, sewing, and domestic chores, but also geometry, physics, chemistry, history of the rise of Islam and the Caliphate as well as the history of Arabic literature. By the standards of the times, it was a patriotic curriculum. Kulthum completed the Bait Jala teachers' training college in 1908 and immediately began teaching in the girls' primary school in Nazareth.

Kulthum was stubborn in exacting her will in deciding her own personal life. Her education and economic independence enabled her to challenge tradition. While teaching at the Nazareth girls' school, she met a Russian doctor employed by the Russian Orthodox Palestine Society and they married against the wishes of her father. She had not been expected ever to marry in any event. The marriage only went ahead after the intervention of extended family members⁷. The couple married in the summer of 1914. Years later, she would devote part of her published work to the theme of mixed marriages between Muslims and Christians and Arabs and non-Arabs⁸. For the rest of her life she was uncompromising in support of Arab women's right to choose their own spouses based on love and mutual consent.

IN RUSSIA

In 1914, Kulthum Auda embarked on a fateful trip to Russia on what was supposed to have been a short honeymoon. "In 1914 I arrived in Russia with my husband of two months. My arrival in Russia coincided with the beginning of the first imperialist war [World War I] and I remained in Russia for the rest of my life"⁹. After the outbreak of World War I, Kulthum Auda worked with the Russian army as a nurse in Serbia. She was accompanied by one of her sisters and they returned to Russia in 1916 where Kulthum then worked for three months on the Russian front. From 1916 to July 1917, she lived with her husband on the island of Kronstadt near Petrograd [later Leningrad and now St. Petersburg]¹⁰.

⁷ Interview with Nasri al-Jouzy, Damascus, May, 1992. Nasri al-Jouzy was a nephew of the Palestinian historian Pandeli al-Jouzy and an acquaintance of the Auda family. He was educated in Nazareth and was 12 years old when Kulthum Auda married.

⁸ "Otrazhenie bita sovremennoi arabskoi zhenshchiny v novelle" [Reflection of the Daily Life of Contemporary Arab Women in the Novel] in *Zapiski kollegi vostokovedov* [Notes of Orientalist Colleagues], vol. 5, Leningrad, 1930, pp. 293-306.

⁹ K. V. Ode-Vasil'eva, "Moi vospominaniya ob akademike I. Yu. Krachkovskom" [My Reminiscence of Academic I. Yu. Krachkovskii] in *Palestinskii Sbornik* [The Palestinian Collection], Issue 2 (64-65), Moscow-Leningrad, 1956, p. 129.

¹⁰ Tsentral'ni Gosudarstvenni Arkhiv Oktiabrskoi Revoliutsii (TsGAOR) [Central State Archive of the October Revolution] now part of Gosudarstvenni Arkhiv Russko

Kronstadt was the main base of the Russian naval fleet on the Baltic Sea. She resided there at the height of revolutionary ferment among sailors. The Kronstadt sailors were some of the most fervent supporters of the Bolshevik Revolution. As she herself admitted, Kulthum was deeply affected by the Russian Revolution:

“War and then the October Revolution changed my whole life. In July 1917, I left for the Ukraine to be with my husband who worked there as a doctor. I returned to Leningrad in the spring of 1924. Having lost my husband, I firmly decided to remain in Russia despite the appeals of my brother and sisters who by no means could imagine how I could live and raise three children in a foreign land without constant help. They could not understand that Russia was no longer foreign to me, that I loved it as I also loved the Russian people, and that I had found my own place in life in this country, in the revolution, which in those years I more readily felt with my heart than I understood with my intellect”¹¹

The period of 1920 to 1924 was a crucial time for shaping Kulthum Auda’s political ideas. It coincided with one of the most difficult phases of the Russian Civil War during which she worked in the Ukraine as a nurse amidst a typhoid epidemic. She was also a regional organizer for the Department for Work Among Women of the Communist Party known by its abbreviation *Zhenotdel*¹². This was an anomalous task for a Palestinian woman to undertake when she had only been in Russia for six years. Initially, the main project of the Women’s Department was to mobilize women to support the Bolshevik side in the Russian Civil War. This was no easy task for a Palestinian woman especially in the provinces far away from the main centers of support in Moscow and Petrograd:

“In the major cities the department instructed its teenaged recruits in Marxist feminism, encouraged them to believe in their abilities, and generally provided them a warm welcome to the party. Life for Zhenotdel workers in the provinces was more difficult, since they worked as small teams in isolation, often with little support from the local party committee. Many

Federatsii (GARF) [State Archive of the Russian Federation], Moscow, F. 7668, op. 1, d. 2919. This material is part of an autobiographical statement prepared from October 9, 1934 to October 18, 1935 as part of documentation required by the Qualification Commission of the Committee for Supervision of Scholarly and Educational Institutions under the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

¹¹ *Moi vospominaniya*,... *ibid.*, p. 130.

*were pressured to concentrate on the more important tasks that should properly engage all good communists; some were harassed verbally and physically. It is a sign of the appeal of the Zhenotdel that despite the difficulties surrounding it, thousands of young women signed up to work for the department during the civil war years*¹³

There is no record that Kulthum Auda became a communist party member, but her activity in Zhenotdel would indicate close party associations through her participation in one of its mass organizations. By the time Kulthum joined Zhenotdel, the organization had assumed avant garde feminist positions championed by its outspoken leader Alexandra Kollontai. In party publications, Kollontai “rhapsodized about a coming world in which everyone would live in communes, women would be free to choose whatever sorts of romantic relationships met their needs, and dedication to the ‘great laboring family’ of the collective would be more important than ‘ties to relatives’”¹⁴. Kollontai’s emphasis on the personal side of women’s liberation could not but have had a very direct appeal to Kulthum Auda who had to battle her family’s objections to marry the man she loved. Reliance on the collective rather than relatives must have also hit a sympathetic cord since Kulthum was constantly reminded in her childhood that she would always have to occupy a subservient role in the family to a married brother and his wife. Her intensive exposure to the Bolshevik women’s liberation movement must have given her enough confidence to decide that she would be able to manage as a single mother after her husband’s death and not have to return to the control of her family in Palestine.

When Kulthum Auda returned to Leningrad in 1924, she searched for work in her chosen occupation as a teacher. While she was still a teacher at the Nazareth girls’ school, she had happened to make the acquaintance of one of Russia’s greatest Arabic literary scholars, Ignatii Yulianovich Krachkovskii. She revived the acquaintance when she first arrived in Russia in 1914 and then Krachkovskii found her a job teaching Arabic language in 1924 at the Leningrad Institute of Living Eastern Languages¹⁵. The establishment of the Leningrad Institute in 1920 was not intended merely to serve disinterested academic goals. The education received at the institute was supposed to assist cadres in bringing the revolution to Asian and Middle Eastern countries as well as to national minority areas of Russia:

¹³ Barbara Evans Clements, *Bolshevik Women*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 209.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 227.

¹⁵ *Moi vospominaniya...*, *ibid.*, p. 130.

“The goal of the Institute is to offer the possibility to persons preparing for practical activities in the East or with ties to the East in each of the fields of economics, administration, politics, agitation, diplomacy, pedagogy, et al., to acquire what is necessary for a knowledge of Oriental studies and to proceed to a systematic school of Oriental studies, but also to prepare teachers and qualified instructors for practical courses in Oriental studies ...”¹⁶.

The Leningrad Institute was staffed with prominent Orientalists like Krachkovskii, Oldenberg, and Marr who had made their peace with the new revolutionary regime in Russia. Some of them like Marr, propounded radical linguistic theories based on materialist interpretations of culture. Many were involved in creating new literary languages for minority peoples who had now come under Bolshevik control. Language training was intimately tied to construction of the new Soviet culture which included preservation of minority traditions that were compatible with communist ideals of collectivism, egalitarianism, and the dignity of labor. The field of ethnography was intimately linked to the new linguistic studies. The overall ideological impulse was to crush hierarchies and to blur the distinctions between the instructors with received knowledge and the human objects of study. One Leningrad ethnologist, Karl Luks, whose work was associated with tribal peoples in the Soviet Far East, expressed the new trend this way:

“We are not doing ethnography in the old sense of the word. All words that end in ‘—logy’ or ‘—graphy’ are bound up in that process or activity, call it what you like, that divides subject from object, ‘us’ (the scholar or researcher) from ‘them’ (the studied, our wards), who in the best instance we ‘feel for.’ We want to erase this line between subject and object, between us and them. The process of serious Soviet native work is really the nativization of you and me, in keeping with the ideas of the party. And gradually, from the first few natives who come over to the Soviet way of life, there will be dozens, then hundreds, and then thousands. The objects of study must become subjects!”¹⁷.

The new Marxist social scientists were imbued with the notion that their role was not simply to observe and record social phenomena, but to intervene actively to change culture in tune with revolutionary goals.

¹⁶ A. N. Kononov and I. I. Iorish. *Leningradskii Vostochnii Institut* [The Leningrad Eastern Institute]. Moscow: Nauka, 1977, p. 23

¹⁷ Bruce Grant. *In the Soviet House of Culture: A Century of Perestroikas*. Princeton:

Traces of this general attitude can be found in Kulthum Auda's first major academic work which was an Arabic reader with an Arabic-Russian dictionary¹⁸. The work is filled with texts of progressive writers who were part of the Arabic literary renaissance, the *Nahda*. She was particularly interested in the works of Qasim Amin on women's liberation which had been translated into Russian before the revolution by her mentor Krachkovskii. Her reader was filled with advocacy of progressive social values that blurred the distinction between subject and object as Luks had promoted. In highlighting the Qasim Amin texts she was asserting herself as the subject-teacher.

Kulthum Auda promoted her own political values in a more direct way in her Arabic language teaching. The Leningrad Institute of Living Eastern Languages and its successor the Leningrad Eastern Institute which published her Arabic reader were affiliated with the Communist International. Graduates of the institute were sent into the field to conduct revolutionary propaganda in Arab countries and to assist in establishing communist parties. In addition to her teaching duties, Kulthum took courses in Arabic Studies at the Eastern Faculty of Leningrad State University beginning in 1926. She began teaching in the Eastern Faculty in 1928¹⁹. Finally, she herself traveled to Palestine in the summer of 1928 ostensibly to conduct ethnographic research on Palestinian folk customs. Her trip to Palestine coincided with attempts by the Comintern to Arabize the Palestine Communist Party. There is no public record that indicates that Kulthum was a party member, but she worked in an institute that trained Comintern cadres and she was closely associated with Palestine Communist Party members after her return to the Soviet Union that same year. French intelligence in Palestine accused Kulthum of being a communist agent:

*“Our consular agent in Nazareth has become aware of a woman who sometimes calls herself Claudine Vassilias and sometimes Ode Kaltoum, and who is a communist agent, seeking to penetrate Syria. The consulates in Palestine have been warned”*²⁰

¹⁸ K. V. Ode-Vasil'eva, *Obratzi novoarab. Literaturi (1880-1925)* [Samples of Modern Arabic Literature (1880-1925)], Leningrad: Leningrad Eastern Institute, 1928.

¹⁹ TsGAOR, F. 7668, op. 1, d. 2919.

²⁰ Ministère des Affaires Etrangères, Serie E Carton 312, Dossier 4, Jan. 1928-Aout 1929, Palestine: Jerusalem 9 Juillet 1928, Haut-Commissariat de la République Française en Syrie et au Liban, Service des Renseignements, Poste de Jerusalem, Bulletin de Renseignements, No. 261. Another Palestinian in Russia, Pandeli al-Jouzy, also made a trip to Palestine in 1928. Al-Jouzy emigrated in 1891. He married a Russian woman and taught Islamic law at Kazan University. He moved his family to

Of more direct concern to Kulthum was the status of women in Palestine as evidenced by the essays she published upon her return to Russia.

IN PALESTINE: GENDERING THE PALESTINIAN LANDSCAPE

Kulthum Auda's ethnographic research was concerned with birthing practices and traditions concerning drought. The two subjects were intimately related since Palestinian rituals associated with birth and drought prominently involved women as symbols of fertility. The land itself was often imagined as a woman's body. Kulthum selectively focused on Palestinian folk traditions that reflected women's social status.

Drought was of special concern to Kulthum because of her upbringing in Nazareth which heavily depended on agriculture for its prosperity and because of her later medical training as a nurse in Russia. She noted that the majority of Palestinians "live exclusively from rain water and therefore drought causes not only hunger and thirst, but also creates unsanitary conditions"²¹. Most of the rituals associated with drought employed women who were meant to catalyze supernatural forces that would cause rain.

In the Galilee region, when drought occurred women would lead groups of children in a march through the village after the main meal of the day. The women and children would chant songs pleading for rain. The women in the front of the crowd would support hand mills on their heads or baskets with roosters in them. In some villages women formed a procession with pitchers of water on their head. Some of these processions were led by an old woman on a donkey holding a hand mill. The old woman might also carry a baby girl in her arms. The women leading the processions were commonly contrasted by roosters. Either the women themselves carried roosters in baskets or sometimes roosters were tied to the back of donkeys upon which the women sat. A popular saying had that: *In saha el-dik fil-lail bada'a el-matar was-sel* (If the rooster crows at night, the rain comes pouring down.)

In southern Palestine, girls carried an effigy in their village processions. A woman's dress was attached to a pitchfork and the head was tied with a

Baku in Azerbaijan after the Bolsheviks established their authority. He taught in the Eastern Faculty of the Azerbaijan State University. He was the author of *Min tarikh al-haraka al-fikriyah fi-al-islam*, Jerusalem, 1928. Ignatii Krachkovskii, *Ocherki po istorii russkoi arabistiki* [Essays on the History of Russian Arabists], Moscow: USSR Academy of Sciences, 1950, p. 185. Al-Jouzy was followed by British police during his visit. He made another visit to Palestine in 1930. Interview with Nasri al-Jouzy, Damascus, May, 1992.

²¹ K. V. Ode-Vasil'eva, "Obichai svyazannie s zasukhoi i palestinskikh arabov" [Palestinian Arab Customs Connected with Drought], *Sovetskaya etnografiya* [Soviet

scarf or *hijab*. Women went house to house with the female effigy and villagers gave the effigy butter or flour. The effigy was sprinkled with water from a jug and people said: "God give you rain." Women and girls would sometimes take the effigy to one of the prosperous villagers and the head of the household would slaughter a goat or a lamb. The effigy would be sprinkled with blood of the slaughtered animal with the head of the household saying *li waja allah. Hatha min shan umm al-ghaith* [Thanks be to God this is the happiness of Umm al-Ghaith (mother of rain)]. Kulthum Auda noted that a majority of popular songs and sayings concerning drought appealed to Umm al-Ghaith, the mother of rain. This was true for rain-making traditions in both Christian and Muslim village traditions. Kulthum speculated that the appeal to Umm al-Ghaith was carried over from both pre-Islamic and pre-Christian religious practices when fertility goddesses were often at the center of the cosmology of settled agriculturalists in Palestine²².

Kulthum Auda's collection of drought sayings and rituals was published in 1936 without commentary. It was published at a time when she herself was under some suspicion for her association with members of the Palestine Communist Party who had returned to Russia and were beginning to be investigated. Most of them were arrested and executed by the end of the 1930s. Auda was herself arrested for several months in March 1938²³. After 1932, Marxist methodological debates in Arab Studies had ceased and were not to appear again in Soviet social sciences until the late 1950s. While Kulthum's published work on drought emphasized a feminized peasant vision of land, it lacked any overt sign of advocacy that was readily apparent in the other two published works that were a result of the Palestine trip.

An article published the same year in the journal *Soviet Ethnography* on Palestinian birthing practices was directly tied to the previous one²⁴. At the time of its publication, Palestine was deeply affected by the largest wave of Zionist immigration since the onset of the British Mandate. The demographic change caused increasing peasant landlessness, a decline in health standards, and a massive rebellion that engulfed the whole country for three years. Kulthum was particularly concerned with Palestinian birthing practices that contributed to high infant mortality rates and the

²² *Ibid.*, pp. 129-131.

²³ Galina Udalova, "Alexandr Moiseyevich Shami/Ilya Naumovich Teper 1893-1938." Unpublished manuscript, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, 1989, pp. 84-86.

²⁴ K. V. Ode-Vasil'eva, "Obichai, svyazannie s rodami I otnoshenie k novorozhdennomy y severo-palestinskikh arabov" [Customs Associated with Births and the New Born Among the Northern Palestinian Arabs]. *Sovetskaya Etnografiya* [Soviet Ethnography], No. 3, 1936, pp. 93-97.

deaths of women in childbirth. In this sense, there is an explicit intervention of the ethnographer as purveyor of cultural change rather than mere observer.

In remote villages in the Galilee, an older woman relative acted as midwife at the time of birth. During labor, women were seated in special birthing chairs called a *jorah* or pit. Peasants explained to Kulthum that the reason that the birthing chair was called *jorah* was because "a woman at that time is located on the brink of life and death. Evidently, this place is a descent to the grave"²⁵. Kulthum speculated that the symbol of the pit and the birth chair were related to pre-Christian and pre-Islamic practices. As a former nurse, she was critical of unhygienic rituals that older women undertook during the process of childbirth. The woman's sexual organs were lubricated with olive oil in order to ease delivery. If labor was prolonged, salt was applied with a view to expanding the pelvis. Kulthum noticed that the application of salt caused swelling and made the birth even more difficult. All close female relatives would remain in the room during childbirth and at every contraction would cry out *'ayyane waladek shadde* (For the strength of your son).

Because of the discrimination she felt in childhood, Kulthum Auda outwardly condemned practices that showed preference for male children. The wish for male children was almost universal. Although the midwife would remain silent during childbirth, at the first possible moment she would give a sign indicating the gender of the child. If the child were a boy, she would lift her *hijab* above her forehead. If the child were a girl, she would bow her head and knit her brow to indicate her service to the family, but also to signal her guilt. If a boy was born, one of the women rushed to where the father was waiting to inform him. Family and neighbors then presented him with gifts. If a girl was born, the women would take pains to leave the room as quickly as possible one after another. Even the midwife would leave almost immediately. The woman giving birth was left by herself. She was not expected to remain in bed to recover, but rather to return immediately to work. If a boy was born, the mother remained the center of attention and was allowed to recover from the birth for an extended period. The preference for male children was also indicated by the celebrations arranged for male circumcision if the family were Muslim. The circumcision celebration occurred at an indeterminate time which was suitable for the family. Discrimination against girls occurred among Christians in baptism rituals. Boys were given a public baptism ceremony; girls were baptized in secret.

Despite the fact that large families were preferred, contraception was recognized as legitimate in certain cases since there were rituals related to

it. When a woman did not want to have anymore children she was given seven cotton seeds to swallow. But more common were customs associated with reducing infertility. If a woman were childless, she was presented with part of a child's afterbirth wrapped in wool and topped with a candle. She was supposed to step over the candle and afterbirth three times so that fertility would be passed from one woman to another.

Kulthum Auda noted that infanticide was still a practice that was all too common among Palestinian peasants:

“How can such hatred for a girl when she is born be explained? Hatred for girls among the Arabs is long standing. In ancient times, baby girls were often buried alive in sand and only later was this custom prosecuted under the law. Over the course of thousands of years this feeling did not weaken. And if today they do not bury girls in sand, then they often practice other means for their destruction. ...Often the mother-in-law is involved in a plot with the midwife against newborn daughters. The midwife either poorly or not completely ties the umbilical cord of the newborn so that death ensues. Sometimes even the mother is involved in this if she has many daughters”²⁶

Kulthum attributed the subordinate position of women to traditions related to material culture. For Bedouin who were involved in constant warfare, women's physical weakness served as a hindrance to the fortunes of the tribe. Women were always potential victims in military conflicts. In settled populations, the seclusion of women was an economic burden to the family even if peasant women carried the double burden of domestic labor and work in the fields. All births of girls in peasant families were unwanted. In urban areas, female labor in the formal wage sector had only begun to be employed in the previous 20 years and then only on a modest scale. Kulthum pessimistically reported that material conditions negatively influenced common attitudes towards women. Women were plagued by a lack of rights, the laxity of divorce for men, and the constant threat for married women to be returned to the charge of their relatives. She concluded that only a socialist system in Palestine would liberate women from the hostile conditions they faced.

The most vivid impressions of Kulthum Auda's experience of her sojourn in Palestine were contained in notes on Arab women in contemporary literature that she published just two years after her return to the Soviet Union²⁷. Much of her essay is in the form of random

²⁶ Ibid., p. 97

²⁷ K. V. Ode-Vasil'eva, "Otrazhenie bita sovremennoi arabskoi zhenshchiny v novelle" [Reflection of the Daily Life of Contemporary Arab Women in the Novel].

reflections on the depiction of Arab women in contemporary fiction, but it also includes pointed analysis of the political situation for women in the circumstances prevailing at the end of the 1920s. Kulthum expressed her extreme disappointment that Palestinian women had not been as politically engaged as women in Syria and Egypt.

Kulthum looked to the Syrian Muslim woman Nazek Abed as a model for Palestinian women. Abed had organized a militia contingent to support Faysal's defense of Damascus against the French occupation. She was sent into internal exile by the French and then escaped to Palestine where she continued her agitation against the French occupation. As a result of women being actively engaged in all aspects of struggle against the French occupation, women's associations abounded in towns throughout Syria and they had long ago "crossed the boundaries of philanthropy" which had been the typical domain of women's public activities. She lauded Syrian women's participation in protests and public demonstrations against the French occupation. In contrast, Palestinian women were relatively absent from the public arena:

*"Despite the fact that Palestine since the war finds itself in similar circumstances as Syria, women continue to sleep until now. Even the World War and the English occupation have done little to change their lives. Only in the wake of recent events in Palestine, when innocent blood was spilt on the streets, were women roused. The English authorities did not allow them to engage in a demonstration on foot. Women went through the streets of Jerusalem in 50 automobiles to visit the High Commissioner of Palestine and to demand the abrogation of the Balfour Declaration which has brought misfortune to the Palestinian Arabs"*²⁸.

Kulthum Auda was also enthused about Egyptian women's militant entry into the public sphere. She noted that Egyptian women had participated in the 1919 public demonstrations against the British occupation and that women had been among those who had died. She singled out the Egyptian feminist leader Huda Sharawi as an exemplary figure for her successful struggle against mandatory public veiling of women. Sharawi led a campaign to gain access for women to institutions of higher education and Egyptian women were among the first Arab women to break the barrier to university admissions for women. Kulthum

also lauded Sharawi's struggle for divorce cases to be heard in civil courts and against polygamous marriages.

In her analysis of feminist trends in Arabic literature, Kulthum Auda did not limit politics to the formal public sphere. For her, the personal life of women had equal value to women's access to public political participation. In this she foreshadowed the cry of the Women's Liberation Movement in the West in the 1960s: "The Personal is Political!" For Kulthum, a woman's right to romantic love was just as important as a woman's right to be free from exploitation in the workplace or to formal political representation:

*"The modern Arab woman wants to love and to be loved. She knows that family life ought to be built on mutual love, since divorce, polygamy and every insufficiency touching the Egyptian family has its origin in the lack of trust and love between the spouses. How could love arise between two young people if the conditions for them meeting are forbidden? Indeed, the struggle against veiling was the best instrument for the promotion of a healthy Arab family. Separating young people from one another also leads to another evil. It leads young men to debauchery since without women they do not meet any women other than those of loose behavior"*²⁹

Kulthum implicitly argued for creation of the necessary social conditions for Arab young people to have the possibility of developing healthy sexual relations based on love. The alternative for her was the pervasive perpetuation of prostitution which was fueled both by women's poverty and victimization, but also by the lack of fulfilling sexual relations between Arab men and women in marriage. She noted how prostitution, in particular, had become a prominent theme in contemporary Egyptian fiction and that it reflected a serious social problem.

Kulthum also touched on two other themes in Arab fiction that reflected her own personal situation: mixed marriages and the personal effect on women of the massive wave of emigration from Syria and Palestine before and after World War I. In regards to mixed marriages between Arabs and non-Arabs and between Christians and Muslims, she argued for a woman's right to choose her spouse, religious tolerance, secular marriage options, and an end to patriarchal control of women in the family. She was repulsed by instances of Christian families killing daughters who were about to marry Muslims. The problem of emigration affected women in that they were often left behind in Syria and Palestine

²⁹ Ibid., p. 302.

while their husbands searched for a better life in the Americas. Not only were women abandoned with children to support, but women were left with a life of personal loneliness. Men had mobility while women were stationary and not in control of their personal and economic conditions. Having emigrated herself and married a non-Arab, Kulthum could empathize with the sense of alienation that was often an inevitable part of bicultural living circumstances.

CONCLUSION

Kulthum Auda had very ambivalent feelings about her experience in Palestine in 1928. When she looked at the Palestinian landscape in gendered terms, she was not very optimistic about the future. She remarked rather candidly in her article on the daily life of contemporary Arab women:

“The Arabs have understood that without the liberation of women there cannot be freedom and progress. However, it is still not possible to speak about the complete liberation of women. In order to destroy centuries of oppression there would have to be a real revolution or the appearance of some kind of dictator like Mustafa Kemal in Turkey.”³⁰

In Palestine, Kulthum Auda’s hopes for a real revolution that would serve to mobilize women to achieve their own complete liberation did not occur in the 20th century. Kulthum’s cynical alternative of a benevolent dictator who would impose women’s liberation has also not come to pass. Kulthum never returned to Palestine after 1928. She went on to become a prominent Soviet scholar of modern Arabic literature. She died in 1965 without seeing her hopes for Arab women come to fruition. But how striking it is that her aspirations for Arab women in the 1920s still have such contemporary relevance!

CHAPTER FOUR

1948 AND AFTER

THE TRANSFORMATION AND DE- SIGNIFICATION OF PALESTINE'S CULTURAL LANDSCAPE*

Ghazi Falah

INTRODUCTION

The process of cultural landscape transformation in this paper is examined within the context of one party's systematic attempts to eliminate the other's attachment to their former habitat. Places are conceptualized here as a locus of Palestinian culture and national identity, the vessels of a collective memory of the region's palimpsest-like cultural landscape. Their obliteration constitutes a de-signification of that landscape. Understanding that process involves an articulation of factors central to the very nature of Israeli society and political claims to the land of Palestine – a process marked by Israel's continuing denial of the reality of the Palestinian cultural landscape. That denial has a long history. Thus, the Israeli prime minister Golda Meir stated that Palestinians had never existed:

“There was no such things as Palestinians ... It was not as though there was a Palestinian people in Palestine considering itself as Palestinian and we threw them out and took their country away from them. They did not exist” (The Sunday Times, June 15, 1969, p. 12).

Subsequently an Israeli minister of education translated this fiction into official policy: It is important that our youth should know, he told Israeli schoolteachers, that when we returned to this country we did not find any other nation here and certainly no nation which had lived here for hundreds of years (cited in Gilmour 1980, 12). In a speech at the Technion (Israel Institute of Technology) in 1969, Moshe Dayan (Israeli minister) conveyed a different picture:

* An expanded version of this paper was published in Falah 1996. I would like to thank the Institute for Palestine Studies (Washington, D.C.) for permitting me to use some of the empirical data and documents held in the Institute.

“Jewish villages were built in the place of Arab villages. You do not even know the names of these Arab villages, and I do not blame you because geography books no longer exist, not only do the books not exist, the Arab villagers are not there either ... There is not a single place built in this country that did not have a former Arab population” (cited in Haaretz , 4 April 1969).

It is true that the villages in question were depopulated during the war, but often fully furnished houses were left behind, abandoned in haste. The Palestinians did not leave an empty space behind as they were expelled, but a place heavily imbued with significations. Their cultural landscape and material heritage are reflected in hundreds of years of sequential occupancy, while they have been separated from their homes for the comparatively much shorter span of some five decades. One might expect that, without outside interference, the majority of the physical structures and houses would have remained relatively intact, whatever the ravages of time and weather.

The present paper attempts to answer the following questions: What happened to the 418 depopulated Palestinian villages (see Khalidi 1992) left behind? What does the cultural landscape of these villages look like today? How have the new occupants treated these abandoned places? What is the degree of cultural landscape transformation on a regional level?

SOURCE OF DATA AND METHODOLOGY

From 1987 to 1991, I was involved in an Institute for Palestine Studies (Washington, D. C.) research project on the Palestinian villages occupied and depopulated by Israel in 1948. In addition to my role as project consultant, in which I helped compile the definitive list of depopulated villages, numbering 418, I conducted field research in the villages, visiting over one-third of the 418 village sites twice. On the first visit, the precise location of the village was identified and a detailed report on the current land uses and status of the remaining physical structures prepared. During the second visit, a professional photographer, who photographed the site from various vantage points and angles, accompanied me. Anywhere from five to thirty photographs were taken of each site visited. The remaining two-thirds of the depopulated villages were similarly surveyed and photographed by a research team from Birzeit University. It should be emphasized that this study focused only on Palestinian villages occupied and depopulated during the 1948 war. Palestinian cities and towns and the four German (Templer) settlements which were also occupied and depopulated during the same war were not dealt with.

It should be also pointed out that the classification of the empirical data is related to 407 of the 418 villages in the original list. Eleven villages were inaccessible because the village and its immediate vicinity have been closed off and turned into military areas. In such areas, no photographs are allowed and only authorized individuals are permitted entry. Neither I nor the Birzeit University teams sought to obtain permission, and these villages were excluded from the survey. Our primary concern at that time was completing the survey with low profile publicity to avoid any unexpected interruption or harassment from Israeli authorities.

AN EMERGING REGIONAL PATTERN OF DESTRUCTION AND OCCUPANCY

For the 407 villages studied, six degrees or levels of destruction emerged from analysis of the field research data, including a clear regional orientation. These levels are divided into two overall categories – complete destruction and major destruction – each of which has three subcategorical degrees.

COMPLETE DESTRUCTION

In this category, the three degrees of destruction are: (1) complete obliteration wherein hardly any relics remain; (2) complete destruction, with no walls standing, but with rubble of the original houses clearly identifiable; and (3) houses are mostly demolished, but the rubble contains some standing walls, although no roofs are intact. These three levels of destruction comprise over two-thirds (67.2%) of the Palestinian villages depopulated during the 1948 war. The nature of destruction in each level will be described below, indicating the post-war forces generated in the processes of destruction. Finally, the regional pattern that emerged upon analysis will be explained.

At the first degree of destruction, the village site has been leveled and turned into a completely new form of landscape. Hardly any traces of building materials can be found on the original site. In some cases, building stones were removed from the original built-up area. Generally, physical obliteration here is the product of radical changes of land use. The villages' cultural material disappeared in due course after the area was converted into fishing pools (e.g., al-Ashrafiyya and Masil al-Jizl in Beisan sub-district; al-Mansura and al-Dawwara in northern Hula, Safad sub-district). In the case of Ijlil al-Shamiliyya (Jaffa sub-district) the whole site was absorbed into a large garbage dump belonging to the nearby town of Herzliyya.

There are 81 villages in this subcategory, the second largest, constituting 19.4% of the total depopulated villages. The main sub-

districts for this degree of destruction are: Beisan, Safad, Gaza, al-Ramle and Haifa. These sub-districts comprise a large portion of the plains area in Palestine, suggesting that complete obliteration and destruction were associated with the plains and flat area. That hypothesis is further substantiated by the map shown in Figure 1. According to Figure 1, with the exception of two mountainous villages, both named al-Mansura (one near the Palestine-Lebanon border, the other in Mount Carmel), all the villages are in the plains area, the majority located below the 200-meter

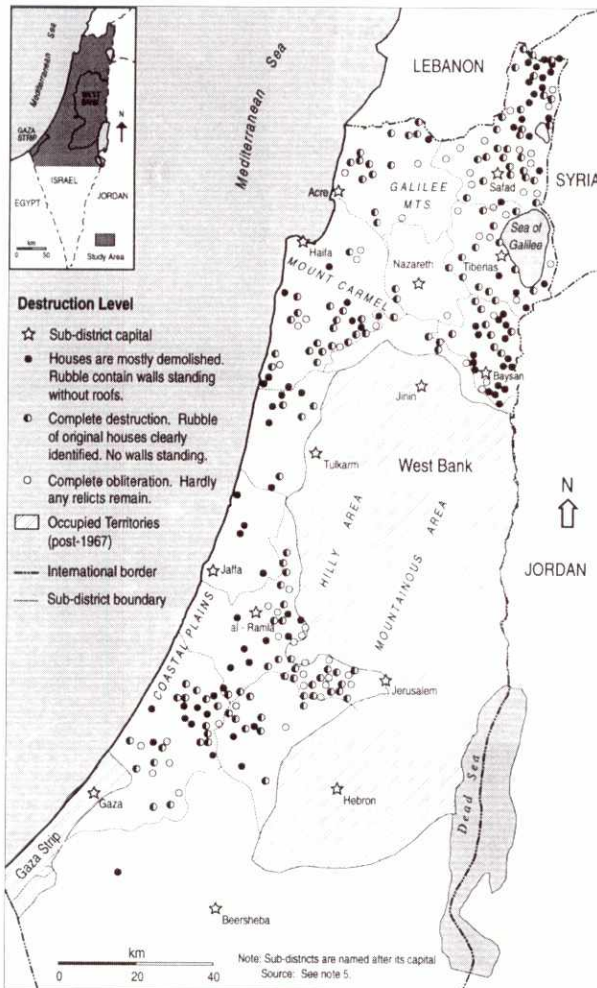


Fig. 1. Palestinian Villages depopulated in 1948: High Levels of Housing Destruction as observed in 1987-1990

contour line. They are concentrated in two main areas – one around the town of Baysan and the other north of the former Lake Hula. Four of the villages in this subcategory were concentrated at the southwest edge of Marj Ibn Amir plain, and the rest were scattered south-north along the coastal plain. In fact, villages with this level of destruction are closer to the Mediterranean coast than villages with other degrees of destruction.

Historical and geographical factors contribute to the political process of obliterating and eliminating a people's cultural heritage. Historically, villages in the plains areas of Palestine have been small, sometimes even inhabited seasonally, as opposed to the hilly and mountainous areas characterized by medium-size and large villages. Obviously, since small villages have small built-up areas and less cultural material, it is easier to purge their remains. It should be emphasized that the building materials for houses in the plains villages are traditionally different from hilly and mountainous villages. Solid stone houses with concrete roofs are more common in rocky areas since the raw material is produced within the local physical environment. In contrast, houses in the villages on the plains were often made of less durable materials, including adobe brick and wood for roofs rendering them more vulnerable to human destruction. The second degree of destruction (where rubble remains but no standing walls) forms the largest subcategory, accounting for one-third of all the depopulated villages. The 140 village sites included in this subcategory are clearly visible in many parts of the countryside. From the highway, for instance, one can easily spot cactus bushes growing on slopes and hilltops, as well as abandoned olive groves – both clear indicators of past human habitation. Field work indicated that some sites were hidden among thick plantations of forest, apparently planted in the early years of the state after the houses were leveled. In some of these, the site itself is left empty with the forest all around: seen from higher hilltops nearby, such sites resemble small islands located in the middle of a sea of green forest (e.g., the villages of Umm al-Zinat in Haifa sub-district, Sara and Khirbet al-Lawz in Jerusalem sub-district). At other village sites in this subcategory, wild bushes and thorn grasses, combined with a higher flammability due to past habitation, can create environmental hazards, with spontaneously combusting grasses in the summer heat spreading to nearby areas. As most villages in this subcategory are located close to Jewish settlements, forests, or crop fields, attempts by local Jewish settlements or forestry authorities to control the problem have resulted in a situation where these sites are undergoing continuous change: controlled fires are arranged periodically, and bulldozers are often sent to the site to mix soil with stone and burnt grasses. Such village sites are widespread.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of villages in this subcategory, most of which dot the hilly areas of Palestine in the northeastern and western slopes of the Galilee mountains and eastern lower Galilee, Mount Carmel and the Rawha hills. Large concentrations of these villages also are found in the hilly areas between the coastal plains and the Jerusalem mountains. The third degree of destruction resembles in many ways the second level discussed earlier, except that some houses among the rubble still contain walls with windows and doors clearly identifiable. The spatial distribution of these villages also followed the same pattern. Figure 1 shows that the locations of villages in the second and third subcategories are situated more closely to each other than to the first degree category of destruction. Yet why do some destroyed villages still have walls standing, while others do not, when they are located within the same region? Four reasons can be suggested. (1) The specific locations of the village sites, either on slopes of mountains or hilltops, make access for bulldozers difficult. Whatever destruction has occurred, therefore, is either by hand or left to the impact of the environment. (2) The villages in the third subcategory are usually small or medium-sized, and generally are situated farther from nearby Jewish settlements than villages in the second subcategory, which show comparatively greater damage. Because of the greater distance, then, there is no immediate environmental danger, and most of these villages are fenced in and neglected. (3) Some of these villages, together with the area around them, have been allocated for grazing the cattle of Jewish settlements or individual Jews who have occupied the site for many years. Since the site is in Jewish hands, there is no particular need on the part of the authorities to interfere in the site or destroy what remains. (4) There are some sites (e. g., Ayn Ghazal in Haifa sub-district; Islin and Aqqur in Jerusalem sub-district) covered with thick forests, with crumbled walls among the trees. At these sites, forests were planted among the remains of the houses in the early years of the state, and once the trees grew, bulldozer access was impossible without destroying the trees as well. Ironically, forests were planted here to conceal the site, yet ultimately those same forests protected the walls from further destruction, hindering full de-signification. In summing up this category of total destruction, it is evident that human interference is the major cause for changes in the landscape. Geographical factors also play a moderating role, in both directions – in some cases accelerating the process of obliteration, and in other cases preserving and protecting the site from further destruction.

MAJOR DESTRUCTION AND PARTIAL OCCUPANCY

The 126 villages represented in this category comprise some 30% of the total depopulated villages and are divided into three subcategories. The

first subcategory consists of sites where most of the houses are demolished, but with at least one house standing with its roof intact. In this subcategory, no Jewish family is currently occupying the site. In

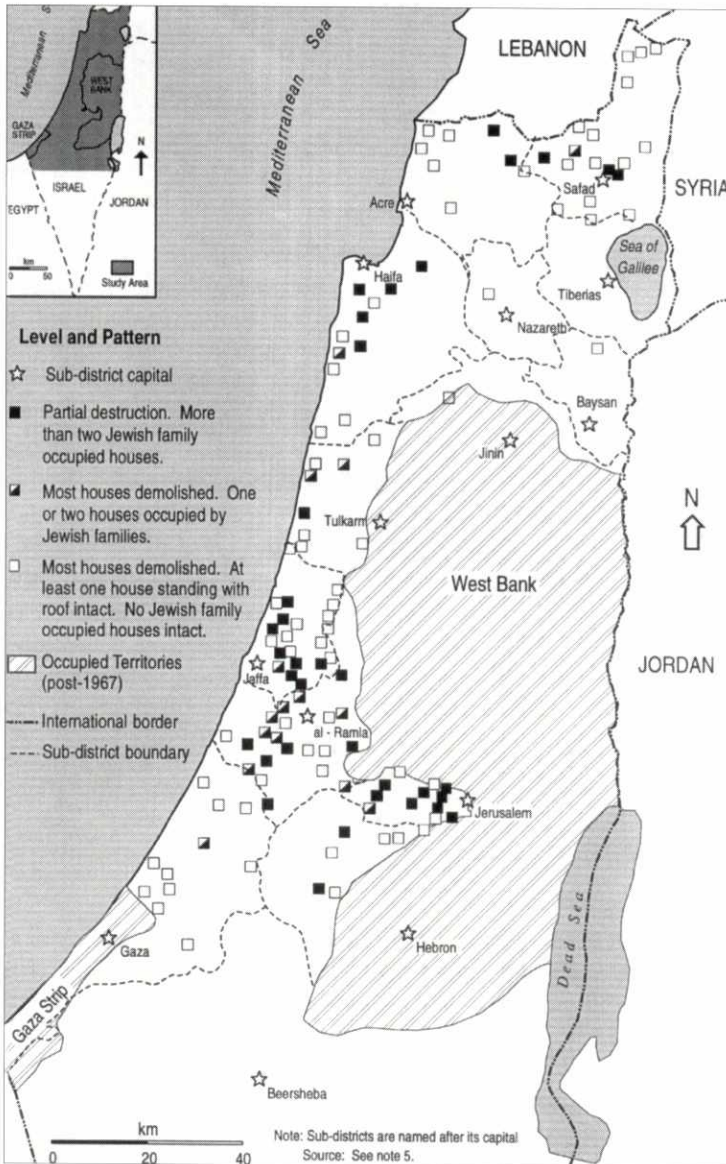


Fig. 2. Palestinian Villages depopulated in 1948: Major Housing Destruction and Partial Occupancy as Observed 1987-1990

the second subcategory, most houses have also been demolished, but one or two houses are occupied by Jewish families. The third subcategory is one of partial destruction, with more than two Jewish families occupying houses. The first subcategory, containing 74 villages, is the largest. It is not clear, however, why houses in this subcategory remain intact while the rest of the village houses were demolished. Moreover, this is the only subcategory that does not exhibit a regional pattern (see Figure 2). The villages are unevenly distributed over various areas with different topography. This suggests the necessity to look for alternative reasons linked to the characteristics of these houses themselves. I suspect there are three main factors underlying the survival of these structures down to the present day.

First, it is likely that some houses in some villages were actually used for residential purposes after 1948 for short periods and later abandoned or used as warehouses. This also suggests that some villages in this subcategory previously belonged to the second or third subcategory mentioned above. The villages of al-Lajjun (Jenin sub-district), Safsaf (Safad subdistrict), Saffuriyya (Nazareth subdistrict), Kafr Saba (Tulkarm sub-district) are examples. Second, it is possible that the remaining houses in this subcategory were not located precisely within the built-up area of the village, but rather at its edge or a short distance away. This suggests that when bulldozers were sent to raze the village houses, these houses were left untouched because the actual purpose had already been achieved. A third possible reason is that the remaining houses were uncharacteristically large, some of them two-storey units designed to reflect the wealth of their owners. In fact, these houses are found in small villages in the plains area where entire villages sometimes belonged to wealthy individuals. Thus, because these houses were different from the others in the village, they may have been left untouched, to be used later by Jews for various purposes. Houses in the villages of al-Manshiyya, Wadi Ara (Haifa sub-district), Ghabat Kafr Sur and Bayyarat Hanun (Tulkarm sub-district) and Ijlil al-Qibliyya (Jaffa sub-district) fall within this group.

The last two subcategories, where the majority of the houses have been demolished but some houses are currently occupied by Jewish families, differ only in numbers of houses remaining and occupied. They are similar in their distribution patterns: in both, Jewish settlements have been built on the village sites themselves or immediately adjacent. Some of the surviving houses remain exactly as they were, while others have been renovated and new additions made to the original structures. These may be villages with only one or two occupied houses subsequently abandoned. Some of the Jewish settlements built on the village sites took

the original Arabic name of the village phonetically altered to sound Hebrew. Elsewhere, I have given the names of 56 of the 418 depopulated villages that were assigned to new Jewish settlements built on or near the original Arab site (Falah 1991). Figure 2 shows the spatial distribution of villages in these last two subcategories. One can note a strong correlation with the major pre- 1948 Palestinian cities. In fact, most of these villages are located in the suburbs of cities which were occupied in the 1948 war, where large numbers of Jews moved in to take over the abandoned Arab housing stock, generally of high quality. Thus the nearby villages with suitable houses received a spillover of these Jewish families seeking good housing. The villages in the third subcategory were not located beside major urban centers generally occupied in the immediate aftermath of the 1948 war as part of the Zionist settlement strategy formulated at the time, whereby Jewish immigrants were sent to occupy vacated Arab villages to prevent the Arabs from returning (Morris 1987, 170-196).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

When the Portuguese colonized, they built churches; when the British colonized, they built trading stations; when the French colonized, they built schools (Gordon 1962, 7). In the case of Palestine, I would submit that when the Israelis colonized Palestine, they destroyed most of what they found, and claimed they made the desert bloom.

This paper has attempted to examine the events of the 1948 Israeli-Palestinian war as catalytic agent for the transformation of Palestine's cultural landscape. For the Palestinians, the ruins of the villages continue to represent a significant element of lost cultural topography. Not only do they provide the incentive for restoration, and for a return to origins (Jackson 1980, 102), but they also constitute the best material evidence for refuting Israel's claim that they are not part of Palestine, that the Palestinian has in effect been obliterated from the Judaicized landscape.

This paper constitutes a modest attempt to authenticate Palestine's geographical record. The extensive data, a portion of which have been classified and cartographically presented here, comprise a veritable treasure trove for future research in historical geography and the processes of de-signification. Most Israeli geographers today are, for reasons rooted in the sociology of knowledge, hard put to provide the international scientific community with a complete and unbiased picture of the empirical realities of the Palestinian cultural landscape and its transmogrification since 1948. An accurate accounting would clash with their dominant ideological and geographical paradigm, both shaped by – and a formative component in – the discursive regime of Israeli nationalism. However well-intentioned, as members of a society that carried out and benefited from the dispossession of the Palestinians, they

cannot be expected to provide objective ideology-free interpretations of the cultural relics of that violent dispossession or the historical events surrounding it. One could perhaps raise the converse objection about Palestinian researchers, but the massive empirical evidence of the photographic and narrative record cannot be denied. One could contend that the element of subjectivity in Palestinian geography is offset by its debunking thrust: i. e., the disclosure of hard data that others have deliberately camouflaged or at best ignored in the consolidation of their hegemony.

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FROM BRIDE OF THE SEA TO DISNEYLAND: THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE IN THE BATTLE FOR TEL AVIV'S "ARAB NEIGHBORHOOD"

Mark LeVine

INTRODUCTION: JAFFA AND TEL AVIV AFTER THE 1948 WAR

In 1947 United Nations General Assembly Resolution 171 partitioned Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. Despite being surrounded by Tel Aviv and other Jewish towns within the territory of the proposed Jewish state, the city of Jaffa, because of its majority Arab population and status as the cultural and economic capital of Arab Palestine – its “Bride of the Sea” – was included in the territory of the Arab state.

At the end of the war all of the 26 Arab villages in the Jaffa sub-district were destroyed; the city of Jaffa “totally collapsed,”¹ losing 90% of its pre-war Arab population of 70,000 souls. For Prime Minister Ben Gurion, Jaffa was to be re-settled entirely by Jews: “Jaffa will be a Jewish city... War is war”². On April 24, 1950, Jaffa was officially united with Tel Aviv.

According to one architect who participated in the capture of the neighboring village of Salameh, “from the beginning the Municipality decided to *erase (limhok)* historic Salameh and build completely new houses in their place”³. The discourse of “erasure and reinscription,” one of the guiding forces behind modernist planning, was a major theme in the planning and architecture of Tel Aviv. This erasure of the existing Arab presence was a pre-condition for the symbolic and physical survival and development of Tel Aviv. As such it was given biblical justification, as a passage from Amos greets visitors to the Tel Aviv Museum, located in the home of Tel Aviv's first mayor, Meir Dizengoff: “I will restore the

¹ Ori Stendel, *The Arabs in Israel*, Brighton, UK, Sussex Academic Press, 1996, p. 54.

² Quoted in Tom Segev, *1949: The First Israelis*, New York, the Free Press, 1986, p. 75.

³ *Ha'ir*, 2/v/97, p. 24. However, newly arriving immigrants quickly moved into the abandoned houses, and the plan was not carried out.

fortunes of my people Israel, and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them"⁴.

THE SYMBOLIC FUNCTIONS OF TEL AVIV AND JAFFA

The symbolic and discursive functions of Tel Aviv and Jaffa within the Zionist enterprise have always been as important as their economic and political functions, and have greatly influenced the current political-economic situation in Jaffa described above. On the one hand, "modern", "clean", and "well-planned" Tel Aviv was from the start contrasted with "backward," "dirty", and "unplanned" Jaffa. Other American and European publications have also contrasted "secular", "normal", "cosmopolitan," "unabashedly sybaritic," and most important, "modern" Tel Aviv with "holy", abnormal Jerusalem⁵: "a visitor wanting to see what the 50-year old Jewish state is really all about would do well to plunge into the casual, self-consciously secular and thoroughly modern metropolis on the sea back where the dunes used to be" – as if Jerusalem and the seemingly interminable conflict it symbolizes are in fact a mirage on the "Sahara Desert"⁶ upon which Tel Aviv was imagined, then built. In a similar vein, the Chief Architect of Tel Aviv titled her recent book on International Style architecture in Tel Aviv *Houses from the Sands (Batim Min Ha-Hol)*.

Not surprisingly, the discursive erasure epitomized by the symbolism of sands and the changing of streets names has lasted till today: As the *Economist* explained in comparing Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, "Unlike Jerusalem, Tel Aviv contains hardly any Arabs. It has swallowed the old Arab port of Jaffa, but in the main it was built by Jews, for Jews, on top of sand dunes, not on top of anybody else's home"⁸.

THE TEL AVIVAN IMAGINATION OF JAFFA

Such precise renditions of Tel Aviv's creation mythology by the Western media have had a profound impact on the way Jaffa has been imagined by Israelis and foreign writers during the past ninety years, because from the

⁴ Amos 9:14.

⁵ Corby Kummer, "Tel Aviv: Secular City, Where Israel Meets the Modern World." *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 1995 issue; cf. "Survey of Israel at 50," *Economist*, 25/4/98, p. 18, and Serge Schmemmann, "What's Doing in Tel Aviv," *New York Times*, 21/12/97. Kummer continues, "If you want to stroll down an Israeli street lined with quirky, forward-looking shops, or sit back and enjoy a relaxed meal in a restaurant that cares about elegance and service, Tel Aviv is the place." Cf. "Survey of Israel at 50," *Economist*, 25/4/98, p. 18; *Le Monde*, 25/4/98.

⁶ As a 1941 article described it (Tel Aviv Municipal Archive [TAMA], 4/3565, article by L.V. Beltner titled "City of the Jews" dated 8/41).

⁷ Interestingly, the pre-1948 Jewish community of Jaffa feared that Tel Aviv wanted to "swallow" it (TAMA, s/42a, 26/4/26 meeting of Jaffa Vad).

⁸ "Survey of Israel at 50," *Economist*, 25/4/98, p. 18.

birth of Tel Aviv the landscape of Jaffa has remained central to the Tel Avivan self – and thus “Other” – definition. If Arabs were discursively (and ultimately physically) erased from Tel Aviv, the process was even more determined in Jaffa. Two contemporary depictions of Jaffa, one negative and one quaint and “aggressively restored,”⁹ have framed its envisioning.

On the one hand, Jaffa has been and continues to be visualized as poor and crime-infested. The neighborhood is the site of many crime or war movies and television shows since the 1960s¹⁰ because “it resembles Beirut after the bombardments – dilapidated streets, fallen houses, dirty and neglected streets, smashed cars”¹¹. This image is reinforced by the media and government depictions, and to a lesser extent reality, of the neighborhood as being a major center for drug-dealing in the Tel Aviv metropolitan region.

The other image of Jaffa, specifically designed for tourist consumption, is also based on its being “ancient”, “romantic”, “exotic”, and “quaint”. “Old Jaffa... is the jewel of Tel Aviv,” is how an official brochure described it¹². Such depictions of Jaffa are linked to its re-imagining as a historically Jewish space, one that was “liberated from Arab hands,” as the museums and tourist brochures inform visitors¹³.

These visions of Jaffa are connected to Jaffa’s place as a historic, archaeological, and thus tourist site within Tel Aviv: “Old Jaffa” is portrayed as “a port city for over 4,000 years and one of the world’s most ancient towns, Jaffa is a major tourist attraction, with an exciting combination of old and new, art galleries and great shopping ... Great care has been given to developing Old Jaffa as a cultural and historical center...”¹⁴.

In fact, the “city of the sands” (as Tel Aviv has long been known), imagined without a past or history, required Jaffa to complete its identity:

⁹ Corby Kummer, *The Atlantic Monthly*, December 1995.

¹⁰ Including the popular *Jaffa Portraits* crime series, which aired on the “family channel” (Helen Kaye, “A ‘Portrait’ of Aviva Marks,” the *Jerusalem Post*, 25/3/97, p. 7).

¹¹ Andre Mazawi, “Film Production and Jaffa’s Predicament,” *Jaffa Diaries*, 9/iii/98.

¹² Official “Tel Aviv-Yafo” guide of the Ministry of Tourism and Tel Aviv Hotel Association, 1997.

¹³ State of Israel, Ministry of Defense, Museums Unit, *Brochure of the Museum of the I.Z.L.; Eretz Israel Museum, Guide to Yafo, for Self-Touring*, Tel Aviv, 1988.

¹⁴ Ministry of Tourism, *Official Guide to Tel Aviv*, 1997, pp. 23, 32. This theme of the beauty and quaintness of Jaffa at night was already being used in articles in the local Hebrew Jaffa paper, *Yediot Yafo*, as far back as 1963 (See “There’s Nothing Like Yafo at Night,” *Yediot Yafo*, 7/63, p. 4).

“Once Tel Aviv became Tel Aviv-Yafo the young city all at once acquired itself a past – the 3000 years of ancient Yafo ... [and] was ready for the great leap forward which transformed it into a metropolis. Yafo ... one of the oldest cities in the world, acquired a future and renewed youth, with widespread progress streaming its way from its youthful neighbor”¹⁵.

JAFFA AS IMAGINED BY ITS ARAB RESIDENTS, PRESENT AND PAST

Not surprisingly, Jaffans protest how their city has become little more than “a margin on the name of Tel Aviv” since 1948¹⁶. One reason is that pre-1948 Jaffa was considered the “jewel” of Arab Palestine, and was continually depicted in the Palestinian press as the country’s most beautiful and important Arab city. As *Filastin* described it, “No one doubts that Jaffa is the greatest Arab city in Palestine, and it is inevitable that visitors to Palestine will stop by to see the model of Palestine’s cities”¹⁷ – that is, Jaffa was a symbol and the epitome of Palestine’s urban landscape.

Yet the erasure of Jaffa has come to be accepted by many Diaspora Jaffans – particularly those returning to visit the city in recent years – who have come to regard present-day Jaffa as a “figment of the imagination”¹⁸. For some, Tel Aviv has even displaced Jaffa in the Palestinian imagination; thus when the facilitator of a peace mission in Palestinian-controlled Nablus asked people what their vision of peace was, a Palestinian artist replied “visiting Tel Aviv and watching the sunset”¹⁹.

On the other hand, the attachment of the remaining Arab population to Jaffa has grown significantly during the past two decades; in part in line with the larger trend toward increasing Palestinianization of Israeli Arabs in the wake of the reuniting of all of Mandatory Palestine after the Six Day War, and then the outbreak of the *Intifada* in 1987²⁰. Yet this nationalistic re-imagining of Israeli Arab identity also added greater

¹⁵ Tel Aviv Municipality, *Tel Aviv: People and their City*, Tel Aviv, 1974, pp. 3, 5-6.

¹⁶ *Al-Ayyam*, 19/5/97. Story on the Jaffa Internet Discussion group.

¹⁷ *Filastin*, 9/5/46, p. 2.

¹⁸ Salim Tamari and Rema Hammami, “Virtual Returns to Jaffa,” in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 27, #4, Summer 1998, p. 73.

¹⁹ 4/98 meeting sponsored by “Face to Face”. Other bourgeois Palestinians with the ability to travel freely in Israel also have told me of their fondness for visiting Tel Aviv.

²⁰ Eli Rekhess reaches a similar conclusion of increased “Palestinianization” of Israeli Arabs in the wake of the Six Day War in his seminal *The Arab Minority in Israel: Between Communism and Arab Nationalism, 1965-1991* (Heb.), Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1993, p. 84. Cf. Izhak Schnell, *Perceptions of Israeli Arabs: Territoriality and Identity*, Brookfield, Vt.: Ashgate Pub., 1994, p. 2.

relevance to the question of territoriality²¹. In fact there have been several violent protests in Arab Jaffa during the 1990s, and most recently, leaders of the Arab community have called for Jaffa's municipal independence, a demand that has won some support among Jewish residents of Jaffa who also see themselves as excluded from the Municipality's plans for the neighborhood.

Thus in response to continued attempts by the Tel Aviv Municipality to evict long-time Arab residents of Jaffa, the community's leadership threatened a "housing *Intifada* in the streets ... declaring with a loud voice that we are planted here and that they will not be able to uproot us from our homes the way they uprooted the orange and olive trees"²². This focus on rootedness is deeply imbedded in the Jaffan, and the Palestinian, psyche – thus an art festival in Jaffa last year featured a painting done by a young Jaffan artist, Suheir Riffi, who depicted a mother, nursing her child, rooted into the earth and connected to a dilapidated home.

GLOBALIZATION, ARCHITECTURE, AND PLANNING IN TEL AVIV-YAFFA

The specificities of contemporary Jewish and Arab imaginings of Jaffa have influenced the way the Jaffa-Tel Aviv region has experienced the impact of globalization and the attempts by Israel's leadership, and Tel Aviv's in particular, to make Tel Aviv into a "global" or "world" city. The drive to "globalize" Tel Aviv by the city's leaders is understood as being part of their increased desire to shape and deploy a unique identity, separate from the rest of the country, especially from Jerusalem. These leave planners, architects, and commentators to wonder "what to do with a world city that is so different from the rest of the country in which it is located"²³.

ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING IN TEL AVIV AND JAFFA DURING THE 1980S-1990S

Not surprisingly, much of Israeli planning literature has avoided any discussions of the Arab minority that would disturb the apolitical suppositions upon which it is based, focusing instead on planning as "change-oriented activity" in order to "shift attention away from the document – the plan – to the political process whereby intentions are

²¹ As Itzhak Schnell writes, "The substance of nationalism is a combination of ethnic identity with the right to territorial sovereignty" (1994, p. 26). Cf. Azmi Bishara, "On the Question of the Palestinian Minority in Israel," (Heb.) *Theory and Criticism*, 3, 1993, pp. 7-20. Also see his "The Arab-Israeli: Readings in an Incomplete Political Discourse," *Journal of Palestine Studies* (Arabic version), 24 (1995), pp. 26-54.

²² Rabita Archive, public declaration of Rabita, 24/6/97 entitled "We will not Leave Because We are Planted Here" (*lan naruh, inna huna munzari'un*).

²³ Talia Margolit, "Cities of the World, Twin Identity," *Ha'arets*, 2/v/97, p. B6.

translated into action”²⁴. Thus in the most recent edited volumes on planning in Tel Aviv, a chapter on “Conflict Management in Urban Planning in Tel Aviv-Yafo” consisted of a case study on underground parking in stores in central Tel Aviv²⁵.

It is, however, precisely the documents, or texts, of planning that are most revealing and interesting, particularly when such planning takes place in “frontier” regions. As Oren Yiftachel has explained, borders, or “frontiers,” do not have to be national/international, nor do they have to be in sparsely populated areas. They can also be “internal” (especially in the post-independence period of settler colonization movements such as Israel) within cities, and be discursive/cognitive as well as legal/administrative. Yiftachel defines frontier as “an evolving cultural, political and geographical entity,” and internal frontiers as “a region within a state where an ethnic minority forms a majority, and where the state attempts to expand its control over territory and inhabitants”²⁶.

Within frontier regions, “spatial policies can be used as a powerful tool to exert territorial control over minorities ... on an urban scale, majority-

²⁴ Raphaella Bilski et al., eds., *Can Planning Replace Politics?: The Israeli Experience*, Boston, Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1980. The closest they come is to point out that “it may safely be assumed, for instance, that the political leadership will not approve any national plan that fails to point out how the primary objectives of the Zionist ideology are to be achieved, such as settlement of the country’s arid areas.” The deployment of the geography of “arid areas,” i.e., uninhabited areas, is not by chance, as “making the desert bloom” was from the start a central justification for Zionist colonization enterprise, while the use of such visually evocative examples eludes the reality that hundreds of built-up Arab villages were “emptied” as part of the “settlement” of the country. To take another example, in a chapter on “Urban and regional Planning in Israel,” the discussion begins in the post-1948 period and thereby has a clean slate, since almost all major Arab towns, like Jaffa, no longer had an Arab presence after the war (Moshe Hill, “Urban and regional Planning in Israel,” in Bilski, ed., 1980, p. 259).

²⁵ “Conflict Management in Urban Planning in Tel Aviv-Yafo,” in D. Nachmias and G. Menahem, 1997. The best example of this lacuna is the two volume edited collection by D. Nachmias and G. Menahem, *Social Processes and Public Policy in Tel Aviv-Yafo*, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, specifically Arie Shachar’s “The Planning of Urbanized Areas: A Metropolitan Approach and the Case of the Tel Aviv Region,” (Heb.) in Nachmias and Menahem, 1997.

²⁶ Oren Yiftachel, “The Internal Frontier: Territorial Control and Ethnic Relations in Israel,” *Regional Studies*, 30 (5), 1995, pp. 494, 496. Ian Lustick has lucidly explained how majority-minority relations in Israel are characterized by “control and exclusion” (Ian Lustick, *Arabs in the Jewish State: Israel’s Control of a National Minority*, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1980, pp. 69, 77, 84, 88). Also see Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel*, trans. By Inea Bushnaq, New York, Monthly Review Press, 1976, and Aziz Haidar, *On the Margins: The Arab Population in the Israeli Economy*, New York, St. Martin’s Press, 1995.

controlled authorities can exercise (more subtle) forms of spatial control, through land use and housing policies, with the effect of creating segregation between social groups"²⁷. This is particularly true when the Government takes "almost all the power out of the hands of local Arab communities to plan their own development"²⁸.

The goal of analyses of planning in the Jaffa-Tel Aviv region must be to clarify the complex web of relations between governmental, semi-governmental, and pseudo-governmental organization and institutions that control the planning system in Israel. The number of institutions involved and the complexity of their relations²⁹ indicate that the planning is, despite claims to the contrary, highly politicized and ideological. What is new in this equation is the increasingly prominent role of private interests in planning and development in Israel, and in Jaffa in particular, and their close working relationship with the Government.

In terms of the processes of gentrification and its underlying ideology, in Tel Aviv and Jaffa by the early 1980s a third generation of "renewal" efforts, defined as "reviving the region as a space for living in the center of the city by drawing a mainly young population to it," began in the older neighborhoods of Neve Tzedek and Lev Tel Aviv. Both featured architecture that made them attractive for gentrification. Lev Tel Aviv, having already undergone extensive reconstruction in the 1930s, featured the International Style buildings that put Tel Aviv on the architectural map. Neve Tzedek featured much older buildings and attracted a Bohemian crowd trying to escape both the austere, ideology-loaded modernist architecture and the postmodern fetishization of consumption³⁰.

Architecturally, this has been expressed in a renewed appreciation of the city's older architecture, which can be interpreted as part of the general trend in "postmodern architecture," reacting against modernism's clean break with the past, to employ a type of "historicism; historical quotation; an architecture of memory and monuments ... a search for

²⁷ Yiftachel, 1995, p. 498.

²⁸ Local planning committees are appointed by the central Government, thereby facilitating land seizure by the state, or land exchange in which Arabs are pushed to lands not slated for Jewish development.

²⁹ Oren Yiftachel has charted the Israeli planning system in such a manner as to demonstrate the interrelationship between official, semi-governmental, and pseudo-autonomous planning, supervisory and ownership organizations (see Oren Yiftachel, *Watching Over the Vine-yard: The Example of Majd al-Korim*. [Heb.] Raanana. The Institute for Israeli Arab Studies, 1997, p. 116).

³⁰ Yona Ginsberg, "Revitalization of Two Urban Neighborhoods in Tel Aviv: Neve Tzedek and Lev Tel Aviv." (Heb.) in Nachmias and Menahem, 1993, p. 151.

'character,' unique features, visual references"³¹. As important, it can be explained as part of the process in which architecture, and art in general, has become "a commodity ... catering to consumer tastes"³².

As such the "renewal" of neighborhoods like Neve Tzedek can be best understood not as "preserving" the past but rather as "rewriting or inventing" it, since buildings and districts are "renovated," "restored," or "rehabilitated" to correspond to ideal visions, or landscapes, of the past and satisfy contemporary needs and tastes by incorporating new technologies and designs³³. Moreover, if we view Jaffa as a "frontier region," it further becomes clear how the "spatial policies" of the Municipality are used as a powerful tool – much like the power of Orientalist discourse as described by Said – to exert territorial control over and physically shape this discursive yet material space³⁴.

In fact, if architecturally Tel Aviv has become a "tragedy"³⁵ because architects are afraid to build imaginatively there, Jaffa has become the space where the imagination, although remaining under Government supervision, has had freer reign. That is, as "picturesque" has become the architectural fashion, the Government realized that "old, dilapidated Arab neighborhoods have an 'oriental' potential". Thus the function of the numerous rehabilitation projects of the past two decades has been to expand commerce, tourism and hotels in line with the "specific character" of the area³⁶. More specifically, "today the slogan is, 'Gentrify!' As land becomes available, it is sold on stringent conditions that only the wealthy can meet"³⁷. Thus the current style among the Jewish architects practicing in Jaffa is to build with arches, "thousands of arches, wholesale," as one architectural critic put it³⁸.

The end result of this process, according to architect Yitzhak Leer, has been expressed in "the systematic erasure of the identity of the city of Jaffa as an Arab city"³⁹. This may seem ironic given the "oriental" feel of current building styles, but in fact Jaffa had to be emptied of its Arab past, and Arab inhabitants, in order for architects to be able to re-envision

³¹ Nan Ellis, *Postmodern Urbanism*, London, Blackwell, 1996, pp. 91-92.

³² Ellis, 1996, pp. 91-92..

³³ Ellis, 1996, p. 65.

³⁴ Yiftachel, 1995; Lustick, 1980.

³⁵ "Yafo is Disneyland, the North is a Tragedy," (Heb.) *Ha'ir*, 12/6/97, p. 24.

³⁶ Andre Mazawi, "Spatial Expansion and Building Styles in Jaffa: Past and Present," (Heb.) in A. Mazawi, ed., *Art and Building in the View of the Paintbrush*, (Heb.), Jaffa, Center for Arabic Culture, 1988, pp. 4-11.

³⁷ *Challenge*, May-June 1998, pp. 12-13, 18.

³⁸ *Ha'ir*, 20/6/97, p. 32.

the region as a “typical Middle Eastern City,” and construct new dwellings/buildings based on this imagined space, “oblivious to the fact that such a city only ever existed in the world view of the architects”⁴⁰.

It is within this framework that Peter Kook has explained why recent attempts to “preserve” Jaffa cannot be taken at face value: “This is not ‘preservation’ (*shimor*), this is Disneyland. The old city and the new projects that attempt to preserve the Arab architecture are cheap imitations, more decorative, intended for tourists ... It’s for entertainment or amusement (*msha’sha’a*), so why not?”⁴¹.

TOURISM AND THE NEW MARKET DISCIPLINE

As the world economy and the peace process have faltered, Israel’s Finance Minister explained that the key to continued economic growth in the country was the real estate market, of which the Tel Aviv metropolitan region is the center. This has clear implications for the current “renewal” efforts in Jaffa, as the Municipality has even less freedom or incentive to commit scarce resources to rehabilitating a poor minority community that is sitting on valuable land whose marketization is seen as essential for the country’s economic health⁴².

The influence of the market discourse is readily apparent in current planning in Jaffa. Thus top city officials have responded to complaints by the Jaffa community that too many young Arab couples can not afford to live in Jaffa by explaining that “the market is the market,”⁴³ and admitting that “selling some apartments more cheaply would hurt profits”⁴⁴. Often, when new building is allowed, it is only on the roofs of existing structures, in order to keep as much vacant land as possible available for development.

Moreover, several of the bodies directly responsible for the rehabilitation of Jaffa for the Arab population were privatized beginning in the mid-1990s. Until then, as much as 90% of the housing units in Jaffa were partly owned by the Government⁴⁵, and a large part of the real estate in Jaffa was in the hands of quasi-governmental companies such as Amidar and Halmish. Then responsibility for several major projects was transferred to private developers.

⁴⁰ Andre Mazawi and Makram Khoury Machool, “Spatial Policies in Jaffa, 1948-1990,” (Heb.) in Haim Liski, ed., *City and Utopia*. (Heb.), Tel Aviv, the Israeli Society for Publishing, 1991, p. 66

⁴¹ “Yafo is Disneyland, the North is a Tragedy,” (Heb.) *Ha’ir*, 12/6/97, p. 24.

⁴² Architect Yosi Tager, quoted in *Ha’ir*, 18/4/97, p. 43.

⁴³ Quoted in Ali Waked, “Place for Worry,” *Ha’ir*, 20/9/96, p. 1(9?).

⁴⁴ *Ha’ir*, 15/8/97, p. 34.

⁴⁵ Nissim Shachar, *Jaffa: At a Fork in the Road*. (Arabic) Jaffa, Rabita Publications, 1997, p. 37.

One was Jaffa's port (home to a fishing industry supporting 250 families), where the most recent planning calls for building expensive residences and hotels that would include up to four thousand apartments⁴⁶, with the goal of "resurrect[ing] and develop[ing] old Jaffa's harbor as an area of tourism, recreation and sea sport"⁴⁷. The Official *Tel Aviv-Jaffa* guide of the Ministry of tourism explains in its section on Jaffa that "the old city today is alive, her buildings and alleys restored amidst cobbled streets and green parks as a thriving artist's colony... great care has been given to developing Old Jaffa as a cultural and historical center while preserving its Mediterranean flavor. Archaeological sites rest within small parks and plazas, and museums abound. ... Jaffa Marina has been established in the heart of the ancient port ... the marina [part of the development project – M. L.] offers all a sailor could desire: safe modern docking facilities, communications, friendly, efficient service... and convenient access to all of Israel, Land of the bible. Visit Old Jaffa anytime. By sunlight and starlight, it is the 'jewel' of Tel Aviv"⁴⁸.

"Project *shikum* (Rehabilitation)" is another project ostensibly designed "develop and rehabilitate" Jaffa (along with other neglected and poor neighborhoods and communities in Israel). It was turned over by Tel Aviv's mayor to a private developer, Yoram Gadish, in 1996, and when mismanagement and concerted local opposition led the Government and Municipality to terminate Gadish's contract, a new private company headed by former Tel Aviv mayor Shlomo Lahat was awarded the contract to continue the neighborhood's gentrification⁴⁹. The relationship between the Tel Aviv Municipality, a historic and tourist landmark inhabited by Arabs, and a private development company headed by a former mayor is identical to the situation in East Jerusalem vis-a-vis the "City of David" project, headed by former mayor Teddy Kollek.

In an interview with the author, representatives from the Gadish company while it administered Project Shikum revealed the thinking underlying both the Jaffa and Jerusalem projects – and thus the discourse governing Israeli planning on both sides of the green line. According to

⁴⁶ *Ha'ir*, 15/8/97, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Quoted in *Al-Sabir*, 24/12/97, p. 8. For more information on the continuing battle between the fishermen and the Municipality, see *Al-Sabir*, 7/1/98, p. 4; 12/1/98, p. 9. For another description of the situation see "The Fishermen are Furious at the Closure of the Port," *Al-Sabir*, 18/3/97, p. 9.

⁴⁸ Ministry of Tourism, *Official Guide to Tel Aviv*, 1997, pp. 23, 32.

⁴⁹ Lahat was a vocal proponent during his mayoralty of continued "judaization" in Jaffa as well as vigilance against attempts by the local Arab community to gain more control over the neighborhood. For a description of the declared goals of the company, named Ariel Real-Estate-Yafo, see their November 1998 publication in

Gadish, the goal of the project was “to develop Jaffa because Jaffa is not developed ... that is, develop infrastructure, sewers, streets, schools, etc., and to develop the empty lands in Jaffa. We want to revolutionize Jaffa (*‘Ihafah et Yafo’*), to change Jaffa from a neighborhood with so many problems to a tourist city – there’s lots of potential for development into a tourist city ... But you need to have a plan, and like New York or anywhere, sometimes you have to destroy a building as part of development for public needs, and we’re working with a committee of architects and the Municipality... However, there residents want to keep the status quo because development increases prices, and their children won’t be able to live and buy apartments there; also Arabs won’t go to other cities like Bat Yam, Herzliyya because there are no services for them. They *can* go to Lod and Ramle, but they’re not *ready* to go and don’t want to develop... but with Jews [Jaffa] becomes more beautiful and develops”⁵⁰.

THE ANDROMEDA HILL PROJECT

The paradigmatic example of the intersection of new global, market-based postmodern architectural discourse in Jaffa with almost century-long Zionist/Israeli imagination of the city is the Andromeda Hill project, where units start at well over \$ 300,000. Constructed on property at the top of the Ajami Hill, with a commanding view of the port and ocean below, Andromeda Hill bills itself as “the incomparable Jaffa... the New-Old Jaffa,” as its flagship advertisement in Hebrew and English describes it.

To help orient prospective customers to the landscape of Andromeda Hill, the Andromeda Hill website’s virtual brochure explains that “historic Jaffa” lies to the north of the development, the “picturesque fishermen’s wharf of Jaffa” to the west, and the “renewed Ajami district, where the rich and famous come to live” to the south. The Hebrew version stresses the architecture of the place even more, in line with the greater importance of architectural discourse in Israeli culture⁵¹. Moreover, the section of the website entitled “The Legendary Jaffa” recounts the Greek legend of Andromeda, which was set on a large rock facing the city outside of Jaffa’s port, and explains how “Andromeda became a symbol of awakening and renewal, and it is not by chance that the project was named ‘Andromeda Hill,’ expressing the rebirth of old Jaffa.”

When asked why and how the architectural design and advertising campaign was chosen for Andromeda Hill, one former employee

⁵⁰ Author’s interview with several representatives of Gadish, 13/7/97.

⁵¹ All quotes from Andromeda Hill web site: www.andromeda.co.il/home.html.

explained that “the Municipality decided on the style – the windows, the columns, the materials – after going around Jaffa and looking at the buildings... The style was very eclectic – Arabic from the beginning of the century influenced by European (specifically Italian) architecture ... arches were a main symbol in a project of this size... We didn't use real stone [except in a few places] but rather a man-made material called ‘GRC,’ which is fake stone⁵². In terms of the ads, you have to think about who's going to buy there... they expected people from abroad to buy it. Jaffa today is not a nice place, you have to think about the future, what will be attractive. People aren't living there because of the sea, because there's sea all over Israel, they're living there because of the nostalgia, the atmosphere”.

The Andromeda Hill discourse, like that of Gadish, exemplifies the conflation of architecture and planning, market forces and Government control, that comprise the forces at play in the continuing “war over land” in Ajami⁵³. Kook's equation of Jaffa with “Disneyland” is telling, as one of the leading proponents of Global America recently opined that, “the wretched of the earth just want to go to Disneyland if given the chance”⁵⁴. Yet like Disneyland for most of the world's poor, the “virtual reality”⁵⁵ that inhabits the space of contemporary Jaffa can only be viewed from beyond a “secured gate” by most residents of Ajami.

CONCLUSION: SPATIALIZING ARAB JAFFA

More than a century ago Theodor Herzl explained what was necessary to create a Jewish state in Palestine: “If I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct”⁵⁶. Five decades later, at the height of the era of modernist planning, the Swiss architect and city planner Le Corbusier - several of whose disciples became prominent Zionist planners and architects - quoted a famous Turkish proverb to epitomize the modernist ethic: “Where one builds one plants trees. We root them up”⁵⁷. From a similar but more critical perspective, Henri Lefebvre has explained how “the ‘plan’ does not remain innocently on paper. On the ground, the bulldozer realizes ‘plans’”⁵⁸.

⁵² Made out of silicon. It is less expensive, lighter, and easier to use.

⁵³ Ali Waked and Ronen Zartzki, “I, Rifa'at Turk,” *Ha'ir*, 9:5 97, p. 14.

⁵⁴ Tom Friedman, *New York Times* Op'ed page, 16 8 98.

⁵⁵ Cf. Tamari and Hammami, note 19 above.

⁵⁶ Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, New York, Scopus Publishing Co. 1943, p. 84.

⁵⁷ Le Corbusier, *The City of Tomorrow and its Planning*, trans. By F. Etchells, London, the Architectural Press, 1947, p. 82.

⁵⁸ Henri Lefebvre, *Writings on Cities*, trans. and ed. by Eleonore Kofman and

This paper has demonstrated that Jaffa can be understood as both a space of negation and identification for Tel Aviv. This ambivalence towards Jaffa can also be seen in terms of the ambivalent relations of the Israel state towards its Arab communities. Moreover, the contested space of Jaffa and Tel Aviv epitomize the complex manner in which architectural movements are inscribed in the politics of national identity in Israel: erasing "tradition" (through International Style) and reclaiming it (through discourses of heritage promoted by postmodernist architecture), both expressed in economic as well as political idioms in the process of constructing the political identity of the nation-state of Israel. This is the dynamic governing the politics of urban design in contemporary Jaffa.

The link between the metaphors of buildings and housing, and erasure, with the necessary steps to the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine was always clear to the country's indigenous inhabitants⁵⁹. In fact, the impact of the concerted efforts to erase Jaffa's Arab character has had a profound effect on the way residents experience the city; artists paint Jaffa as empty and vacant, while the leadership attempts to reclaim the city by referring to streets by their original Arabic names as opposed to the Hebrew names given them by the Municipality after the post-1948 annexation of Jaffa.

Jaffa's Arab community has long been cognizant of how the discourses of planning and development are being used for national-political purposes. Thus its leadership objected to the Jaffa Slope project when announced in 1985 by explaining that the development policies of the Tel Aviv Municipality and national Government agencies had generally involved using "legal" and "planning" mechanisms to destroy homes and expropriate land from Arabs⁶⁰.

In fact, as the former head of the Rabita⁶¹ explained, the policies of the Tel Aviv Municipality have only strengthened the ties of most of the Arab community to Jaffa and its Arab identity⁶². Thus a 1997 festival jointly sponsored by local Jewish and Arab grassroots organizations in support of a large group of families threatened with eviction from their

⁵⁹ Cf. Susan Slyomovics, *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village*, Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998, p. 29.

⁶⁰ Labor Archives, V/329/2, 20/11/85 report by Rabita. In response to the plan as proposed, Rabita suggested the immediate cessation of house demolitions and working to preserve more buildings.

⁶¹ Rabita was formed in 1979 "to protect the Arab Jaffan essence of the Ajami and Jebaliyya quarters [against] the plans of the authorities whose goal is to transfer us off our land" (Public flyer from Rabita dated 20/1/86, Rabita Archive, General File).

⁶² Interview with author, May 1997.

land was called the “Sumud Festival” – *sumud* being the well-known Palestinian slogan for remaining rooted on the land against repeated attempts to evict them, and featured a poster of a bulldozer with a fist, rooted in the earth, blocking its way, and a caption reading “Here we Remain ... We are not alone.”⁶³ Over that, in Hebrew: “Kerem ad-Delaq is on the map” – refusing to make way for a new landscape built on their exclusion.

Prevented from expressing its identity through design and planning of its lived environment, Jaffa’s Arab population has articulated its identity through “*spatializing* social activity”⁶⁴, the only form of architecture⁶⁵ available to them since Arab residents are prohibited from planning or building their lived environment. By constructing an alternative landscape, or “poetic geography” to that of Zionist/Israeli Tel Aviv – that is, one that is based on the entry of past events into the present as materials with which to imagine and construct the present and future⁶⁶ – the Arab community has “cognitively redefined the borders of Jaffa,” which today have expanded to include parts of Tel Aviv, such as Neve Tzedek, that historically lay outside Jaffa’s borders⁶⁷. This has provided the impetus to the recently intensified calls for “autonomy” or municipal independence from Tel Aviv⁶⁸.

Jaffa can also be understood in terms of Henri Lefebvre’s concept of “representational spaces,” that is, spaces which are linked to the clandestine or underground side of social life – the space of inhabitants, as opposed to planners and political authorities⁶⁹. Lefebvre characterizes this dimension of space as “imagined”, and it is thus here that the possibility of “re-imagining” the spaces⁷⁰ of Jaffa and Tel Aviv can most

⁶³ For Arabic reporting on the festival see *al-Sabir*, 25/7 and 8/8/97.

⁶⁴ Lefebvre, 1996, p. 188.

⁶⁵ In the sense given to it by Lefebvre as “a social practice among others” (1996, p. 189).

⁶⁶ Juval Portugali, *Implicate Relations: Society and Space in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Boston, Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1993, p. 140. Geography is poetic in the sense that the past is brought to the present in a new, imaginative configuration, and thus creates a new reality (p. 62).

⁶⁷ Interviews with leaders of Rabita in 1997 and 1998, cf. Ali Waked, “Politely, Quietly, Jaffa Keeps its Distance (Mitraheket),” *Ha’ir*, 4/4/97, p. 42. Reino Tzaror, “We are Autonomous, from Today,” *Ha’ir*, 9/v/97, p. 19.

⁶⁸ Interviews with leaders of Rabita in 1996 and 1997, cf. Ali Waked, “Politely, Quietly, Jaffa Keeps its Distance (Mitraheket),” *Ha’ir*, 4/4/97, p. 42. Reino Tzaror, “We are Autonomous, from Today,” *Ha’ir*, 9/v/97, p. 19.

⁶⁹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, New York, Blackwell, 1991, pp. 33, 39.

feliculously be entertained. Lefebvre's analysis helps us to see that in studying the spatial system of Ajami and Arab Jaffa, we are confronted "not by one social space but by many ... the worldwide does not abolish the local,"⁷¹ however much it might have wanted to.

CHAPTER FIVE

POWER

AL-MAJD WAS- SUMOOD: LANDSCAPES OF GLORY AND RESIGNATION¹

Roger Heacock

INTRODUCTION

Marcel Proust, the greatest author of the western world in the twentieth century, explains how, when as a boy he finally managed to write a short literary text, he felt like a chicken which had just laid an egg and wanted to crow for joy. While in no way comparing myself to that universal giant, I too feel delighted with the discovery I made in carrying out the present research. What I discovered, and what I hope to show here, is that the economic, social and political implications of landscape and landscaping are enormous, and that aesthetic conceptions can powerfully affect and over-determine (in French *surdéterminer*), that is to say, add great potency to the forces which shape the history of civilizations. I will try here to show how this happened in specific cases which can also be seen as constituting general categories of the landscape of glory and the landscape of resignation.

THE INVENTION OF EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE

Landscape emerges in Europe, hundreds of years after China, as an autonomous object suitable for imitation in Renaissance painting, notably in the north, and specifically in Flanders, where it reaches heights never since surpassed in the work of Peter Brueghel the Elder, particularly in his descriptions of winter landscapes (mid-sixteenth century). The message embodied in these works would in itself justify a long presentation, because it marks the introduction in Europe of a mode of reasoning and ethical/political criticism which spawned the school of landscape art.

LANDSCAPES OF GLORY: AL-MAJD

What concerns us here is the fact that landscape, as well, later on, as seascapes, likewise originating in the Low Countries (but in the Spanish

¹ I am indebted for research assistant and photography to Alexander Kielmansegg in Vienna.

as opposed to the Austrian Netherlands, that is to say, in Holland rather than Belgium) became an autonomous *actor* during the northern Renaissance. Very quickly it passed over into the political domain, and was, in the seventeenth century, appropriated as an instrument by the French monarchy in the person of Louis XIV. He used landscaping to further his strategy of relying on the propaganda, while he worked to create the reality, of absolute monarchy. This was not always easy, given the difficulties he had had in imposing his rule over the feudal aristocracy, and in convincing the very literati whom he assiduously wooed in pursuit of legitimacy.

*"Amusez les rois par des songes,
Flattez-les, payez-les d'agréables mensonges:
Quelque indignation dont leur coeur soit rempli,
Ils gouvernent l'appât: vous serez leur ami"*
(La Fontaine 1985 [1668])²

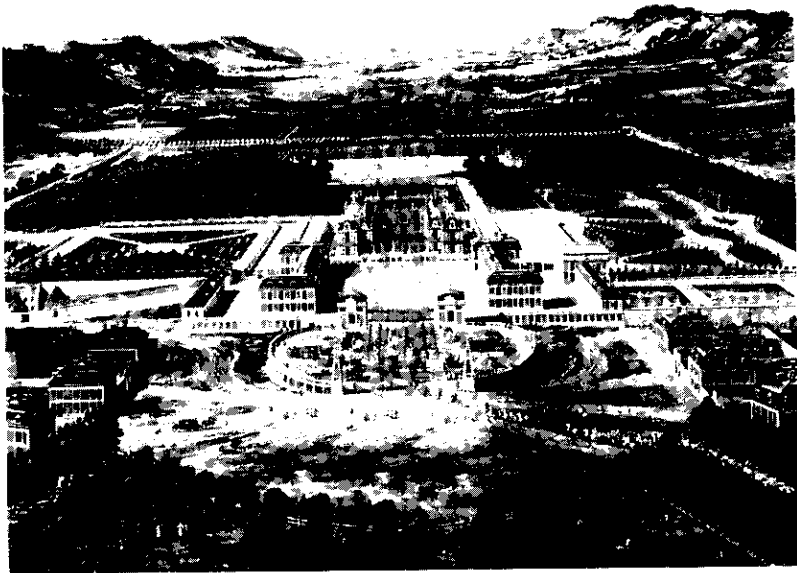


Fig. 1. Versailles: Landscape of Glory

Thus spoke Jean de LaFontaine (in his *Fable* entitled *Les obsèques de la Lionne*). Nonetheless, Louis XIV worked tirelessly to impose himself as

² "Amuse the kings with dreams. Flatter them, pay them with pleasant lies: However full of indignation their heart may be, They will swallow up the bait: you will be their friend."

the Sun (king), in relation to the World of his country and its people. “The attraction of Versailles was Louis himself, and it was very like the attraction of the sun he made his symbol ... Louis deliberately and with deadly seriousness created the mystique of the State” (Blitzer 1968: 62).

As the *lieutenant of God on earth*, he shone down on his subjects, who slowly circled around him in a carefully choreographed around-the-clock ritual. What was true in his chambers also had to be true in the wider firmament of the meticulously sculpted royal gardens at Versailles. Landscape, for Louis XIV, necessarily meant victory, the victory over a feudal system whose dominant pictorial and psychological symbols came from the heavens or the underworld. The defeat of the feudal *fronde* meant the victory of the earth over astral and subterranean forces. It implied the inauguration of the reign of glory (in Arabic, *majd*), as he said himself: “My dominant passion is certainly love of glory” (Blitzer 1968:63).

His architects, engineers and gardeners, led by Le Vau, Le Brun and Le Nôtre, inspired by this vision, effected a conceptual breakthrough at Versailles, and established the basic principles of the landscaping of glory, which brought together the past, the present and the future in one triumphant swoop. Well before Versailles had even been completed, “Europe gasped at this unrivaled display of French refinement” (Elliott 1992:106). At the same time this internal/external landscape helped Louis XIV finish the job of destroying the political power of the French aristocracy, by making it possible to gather them all in and thus keep them under permanent observation, his own and each others’ (Mitford 1966:87-95). The Hall of Mirrors (seventeen bay windows, seventeen mirrors) symbolizes the mutual monitoring which Versailles entailed. And the gardens, with their various alleys, wooded areas, canals (Louis XIV was part Italian!), fountains and villas, provided ample opportunities for intimacy, which replaced the void left by political impotence. This was surely one of the reasons why, according to the rather critical protagonist of the Age of Reason writing in his *Le siècle de Louis XIV*,

“healthy philosophy didn’t make as much progress in France as in England and Florence; and if the Academy of Sciences rendered services to the human spirit, it did not put France above the other nations. All of the great inventions and the great truths came from elsewhere.

But in eloquence, in poetry, in literature, in the books of morality and entertainment, the French were the legislators of Europe ...” (Voltaire 1966 [1756] Vol. 2: 45)

Nonetheless, this inner and outer architectonic model was thereafter imitated all over Europe and America (Goubert 1966:174). One need look no further than Nymphenburg in Munich or Schoenbrunn in Vienna, at Windsor castle and Buckingham palace, and also the White House in Washington, which imitates the original frontal house of Versailles, without the great counter-reformation and aristocratic wings, but with its equivalent of such rooms as the Hall of Mirrors, in the baroque Oval Office of the president for example.

It is no coincidence, then, that the official creation of the United States of America (1783) and the German Empire (1871) occurred at Versailles. Its bourgeois counterpart in France was the landscape of the Champs-Élysées-Place de l'Étoile in Paris, representing the Napoleonic and republican landscaping of victory. These seek their distant inspiration, no longer in the aristocratic Middle Ages, but in Greco-Roman antiquity. There is a striking resemblance, in particular, to the main alley at Tadmur (Palmyra) in Syria. But the Champs-Élysées model resonates through the ages in such places as the Washington Mall (a kind of parade of monuments and outsized heroes, notably Abraham Lincoln, who is himself modeled after the greatest and biggest statue of all time, that of the Olympian Zeus by Phidias), but also for instance in the Ramallah Manara-Mughtaribeen Squares and connecting avenues.

LANDSCAPES OF RESIGNATION: AS-SUMOOD

The Arabic *sumood* literally signifies steadfastness, and it has been applied to the decade in the history of the occupied Palestinian territories which preceded the outbreak of the *Intifada* in December, 1987. *Sumood* was the "Third Way" advocated during those years by the Palestinian writer Raja Shehadeh in his personal journal of the same name, and which is replete with haunting visions of a tortured, beautiful and yet alienating Palestinian landscape. But that steadfastness was revealed to be a form of resignation and then abandoned for the creative praxis of the uprising. And it is *sumood*, that is to say, apparent steadfastness overlaying a deep-seated resignation, that I choose to call the paradigm which stands opposite that of *majd* or glory.

This historical antithesis to the aesthetic-political system based on glory found its formulation later on, in the nineteenth century, the period of decline, preceding the fall, of a variety of empires which had participated in creation of the landscape *genre* and in its political uses. And the ultimate incarnation of the landscape of resignation model is the Vienna Woods. These woods surround the Austrian capital to the south, west and north all the way to the Danube river. They block Vienna off from its German and Bohemian prolongation, so to speak, and reinforce the

exclusive connection with countries to the east and south, Hungary and the Balkans.

The Vienna Woods are a conscious re-creation (whose purpose is precisely recreation) of a European 'virgin forest' (a Garden of Eden), executed in the wake of the Habsburgs' *Nakba* of 1866, when in a few short weeks, Prussian armies expelled them from Germany, over which as Holy Roman and then Austrian emperors they had assumed 'for eternity' the hereditary right to rule.

The fact of the matter is that these woods had been scheduled for piecemeal destruction and replacement by the trappings of industrial modernity: they were being sold, parcel by parcel, to private entrepreneurs, whose intention was to cut them down to make place for the standard, late-nineteenth century industrial infrastructure around the city of Vienna, capital of one of the most heavily populated countries in Europe (60 million people).



Fig. 2. Vienna Woods

They were saved by a single person, it turns out, and one can map the systematic campaign which Joseph Schöffel mounted to preserve and renew the Woods. He succeeded, after years of struggle, having been countered, opposed, sued and even physically threatened by the developers whose projects he was frustrating (Mossler 1972:51-72). He was a former military man, an officer who decided to hang up his spurs in the wake of the humiliation of 1866 at the hands of the Prussians. It is

then that progressively the project, or rather the crusade of saving the Vienna Woods became his obsession. He had to move veritable mountains in order to save the woods from disappearance, attach them to the Vienna municipality, and see to it that they would never be zoned for building (Schöffel 1905:106-137). The fact that he was able to succeed is a tribute to his determination and a sign of the trauma the Habsburgs' military defeats, in particular at the hands of the Prussians, had wrought upon him, and the translation of that trauma into unbridled energy at the service of an obsession. And the townships situated in the vast area of the Vienna Woods expressed their thanks to him by erecting a monument in his name (on a hilltop in Purkersdorf in the Woods), with the following truly martial dedication:

“Zur bleibenden Erinnerung an Joseph Schöffel, dem mutigen und uneigennütigen Retter und Beschützer des Wienerwaldes, zu Ehren seines siegreichen Kampfes in der Sache des Rechtes und der Wahrheit ...” (Schürff 1932:14)³

The important thing here is the extraordinary link between this model of the landscape of *Sumood* or resignation following defeat, and the future history of Vienna, Austria and the world. This history verifies the dual model I have propounded here, of a landscape of victory or power, versus one of resignation, loss of power, and shows how they are operative at the level of historical events.

The Rousseauist universe of the Vienna woods, as artificial as anything the landscaping of glory had ever come up with, hearkened back (this was Schöffel's vision, among others) to a pristine world in which the 'natural' order of society and of things had prevailed, a lost world which would likely never return except in memory. After all, for Schöffel, the results of the war against Prussia in 1866 had signified the "eradication of the name of Austria" (Schöffel 1905:105). The purpose of the Vienna Woods then, in their conception and in their use-value down to the present time, is precisely the maintenance of a memory, a nostalgia, a sense of eternity based on the misty, irrecoverable past, lending the strength (through the citizen-wanderers, and they are legion on every weekend of the year) required to endure the eternal limbo to which historical decline has relegated their country. The Woods are dotted with tributes to the historic glories of Habsburg arms, for example the Leopoldsberg, dedicated to the mythical proposition that from here, western civilization was saved and preserved from the Ottoman-Islamic threat in 1683. In the Woods one

³ "In lasting memory of Josef Schöffel, the brave and selfless savior and protector of the Vienna Woods, in honor of his triumphant struggle at the service of Right and

also finds memorials to the soldiers who fell in World Wars One and Two. The World War One memorial displays the inscription (Fig. 3):

“VON SOLDATEN FÜR SOLDATEN
DEM ANDENKEN DER VOR DEM FEIND
GEFALLENEN DER VERBÜNDETEN
ARMEEN ÖSTERREICH-UNGARNS,
DEUTSCHLANDS, DER TÜRKEI UND
BULGARIENS DANKBAR GEWIDMET”⁴

This then was Schöffel’s work, motivated by that terrible defeat of 1866. And the effect of this accomplishment on world history was not negligible. For Vienna, alone among the great capitals of Europe in the later nineteenth century, was unable to modernize in the same way as, for example, London or Paris, by surrounding itself with the kind of industrial suburbs which powered the military-industrial complexes of the other great powers. Vienna remained a pre-industrial city in economic and especially in social terms, something reflected in its rich late-nineteenth century culture. And this fact influenced the later history of the region, and the world, which was partly determined by the pre-modern outlook of Austro-German and Czech parties and individuals, not least among them the young Adolf Hitler, in the years preceding World War One. Landscape, in this momentous case, conditioned the course of history. Defeat therefore bred a landscape of resignation and endurance. In the Austrian case, this landscape in its turn prefigured a political and also psychological transformation: the inner landscape (thicket or jungle) discovered by Freud’s breakthroughs and, finally, the collapse of the existing world order in World War One, all of which is superbly synthesized in the classic *Fin de siècle Vienna* (Schorske 1981). As another scholar puts it:

“The intimate home and figurative setting of the Viennese youth [before World War One] was the Garden. Behind its symbolic interpretation there was just a trace of the golden age of prehistoric innocence and a faint reference to paradise lost. The Garden meant either what it is by primary definition, a closed-off piece of preserved nature or, metaphorically, a place of solitude and retreat ...” (Hanák 1998:68)

⁴ “BY SOLDIERS FOR SOLDIERS
GRATEFULLY DEDICATED TO THE MEMORY OF
THOSE IN THE ALLIED ARMIES OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY
GERMANY, TURKEY AND BULGARIA
WHO FELL BEFORE THE ENEMY”.



Fig. 3. Monument in Vienna Woods

These paradigms, that of *majd* and that of *sumood*, both find their evident application in the history of Palestinian landscaping, re-landscaping, and landscape perceptions. *Sumood* (steadfastness) in fact, as we have seen, turned out to be a form of resignation in the face of the aggressive exploitation and settlement policies on the part of the occupier, so that *sumood* was dropped in favor of the active resistance of the *Intifada*. Take the landscape of glory, and these, in the last half-century, have tended to be monopolized in Palestine by the Israelis as they moved forward in their campaign of conquest: think of the sequence of avenues in Jerusalem which symbolically expunge and re-appropriate the former no-man's land, re-named "Tank Street" and "Paratrooper Street" by the victor, which cut like a swathe through East Jerusalem ever since 1967, flanked by the Israeli police academy and police headquarters, as well as futuristic sculptures, and culminating in Ammunition Hill at the left and the first post-1967 Jewish settlement in occupied lands, French Hill, on the right.

And take the landscape of *sumood*, of which there are so many examples in modern Palestinian literature, but one prototype of which is the extraordinary book by Mary E. Rogers, *Domestic Life in Palestine*, published in 1862 after trips in the mid 1850s. She was the sister of the British vice-consul in Haifa, whose successors, one almost feels it already, would some day become the proconsuls of Palestine.

In her sublime description, depicting an incredibly rich and flourishing landscape, she projects a profound resignation onto the existing people of

the land, the Arab Palestinians, whom she found fascinating, but in every respect decadent, destructive and passive in relation to the peoples who preceded them on the land thousands of years before, and even more those who, one can literally feel it in her account, are going to follow in the future, the Europeans.

Here is a short excerpt, in which Rogers describes the road from Jaffa towards Jerusalem:

“This pleasant sandy path led us for three or four miles between beautiful fruit gardens, where the palm-tree, laden with golden fruit, towered high above all other trees; oranges, lemons, pistachios, apricots, almonds, and mulberries were ripening; the pomegranate-tree showed its thick clusters of scarlet flowers; and acacias, locust-trees, tamarisks, silvery olives, and broad-leaved fig-trees flourished. It was about half-past six when we reached the open country beyond the extensive and well-cultivated gardens of Yafa. The sun was going down behind us, over the sea; the far away hills towards which we were journeying (east by south) were crowned with glowing red, while purple night shadows were rising rapidly; we passed through fields of mallows and gardens of cucumbers, with tents of little stone lodges for the gardeners scattered here and there.

The sun went down; vultures and kites were sweeping through the air; and as the darkness increased, our little party, consisting of six muleteers, our servants, and ourselves, assembled together to keep in close company for the rest of the way.

We could distinguish parties of field labourers and oxen at rest by the road-side, and sometimes we came to a rude threshing-floor, where, by the light of a bonfire of weeds and thorns, we saw Rembrandt-like groups of rough-looking, half-clad peasants, some of them sleeping, and others lighting their long pipes with the fragrant embers. Our muleteers were singing monotonous and plaintive songs, only interrupted now and then when the jogging mules disarranged their burdens by jolting against each other, and the drivers would cry out, “Ai-wa! Ai-wa!” (Rogers 1989:14)

Because the Palestinians are disempowered and usually have been, one looks in vain for examples of actual *sumood* landscaping, which in the case we studied of the Vienna Woods required all of the attributes of sovereignty for its implementation. But in the literature one readily finds

such examples, literary landscapes: there come to mind works from the 1970s and early 1980s, for example Sahar Khalifeh's *Wild Thorns*, first published in 1976 as *As-Subbar*. The mental landscape of the novel is characteristically that of *sumood*:

"The smell of baking bread and burning dung filled the air. Cool evening breezes rustled the branches of the plum tree. Beneath the towering walnut, men sat round a fire boiling a pot of sage tea ... 'This land's yours. Take it back with United Nations resolutions. Take it back with poetry and songs of return. Kneel in prayer to God a million times. God gives victory only to those who seize it.'

Cool breezes, the smell of the oven fire and burning dung. In the distance a reed flute serenaded the wheat, now ready for harvesting. Usama's eyes filled with tears of longing. The heart always tends towards waywardness and madness, he told himself, and that flute reminds you of weddings yet to come. Hands clasped in readiness for the dance, brightly coloured scarves floating, feet tapping the ground and sending the spirit soaring, high as the seventh heaven. But a plane takes off from an Arab airport bound for Lisbon; a government flings you from one airport to another. Other countries spit you out, and your own land receives you at last" (Khalifeh 1989:179-180).

The most characteristic rendering of the landscape of *sumood* is found in Raja Shehadeh's 1982 *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank*, a mode as noted above which the author perhaps more than anyone else defined and exemplified, before the times and he himself radically transformed their outlook (he gives equally eloquent expression to these developments in his consciousness and in the Palestinian *Zeitgeist* in subsequent writings):

"But what about my feelings for Ramallah, the hills, the Jericho oasis? It is not true to say that I am like Abu-'Isa, tied for my security to a particular plot of land. I own no land. Still, there is a difference between the way I used to love the land around me and the way I do now.

Sometimes, when I am walking in the hills, say Batn el-Hawa unselfconsciously enjoying the touch of the hard land under my feet, the smell of thyme and the hills and trees around me -- I find myself looking at an olive tree, and as I am looking at it, it transforms itself before my eyes into a symbol of the samidin, of our struggle, of our loss. And at that very moment, I am

robbed of the tree; instead, there is a hollow space into which anger and pain flow” (Shehadeh 1982:87).

After *sumood* gave way to the *Intifada* in 1987, the dominant form of landscaping was destruction for the purpose of resistance:

“The children who have scattered stones all over the roads and alleys of Palestine will some day rebuild the thousand-year-old walls they demolished ...” (Nassar and Heacock 1990:315).

By analogy, one can observe the inexorable result of Austria’s project in mental landscaping:

“The Viennese Garden was not able to provide security for long for the seekers of solitude. To use Carl Schorske’s description, the Garden “exploded”...What [the Austrian avant garde before World War One] termed as art was the representation of psychological reality, desires, fears, and suffering. The aesthetic treatment of death was now eclipsed by representing the relationship between death and erotics in the dark tones of brutality and aggression. Decorative beauty and aesthetic suffering that had been the Garden now gave way to distortion, mythic perversion, and the absurdity of attainment” (Hanák 1998:94-95)

One is still waiting to see whether the new Palestine will produce a style more akin to the landscape of *majd* or of *sumood*, or whether it will yield something else altogether. In the meantime, one should note that both of the pervasive models here described are precarious, by pointing out that Versailles, which at its high point under Louis XIV was peopled by 45 000 courtiers, is presently frequented by a similar number of curious tourists every day, many of whom come from the Far East or the Far West!

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CHAPTER SIX

MAPS AND TRAVELS

RENAISSANCE CARTOGRAPHY AND THE QUESTION OF PALESTINE*

Nabil I. Matar

Jerusalem may have another Jerusalem

Kenneth Koch

In the past few decades, the study of cartography has been transformed into a critique of ideology, cultural archaeology and social history. What are the rules that “allow the construction of a map,” asked Michel Foucault, and much has been done since that question was raised to examine the “cultural production of maps”. As a result, maps are no longer viewed as “value-free images” or natural acts of graphic scientific measurements but as acts loaded with propositions, questions, and projects, and armed with the “weapons of imperialism”¹.

This paper will suggest that the question of Palestine was posed cartographically in Europe long before it was posed politically or colonially. Centuries before the stirrings of Zionism, in 1570, a Dutch collector and colorist of maps by the name of Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598), published in Antwerp the *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* thereby beginning what historians have described as a new era in European cartography². That year, I propose, witnessed the establishment of the

* I wish to thank Drs. Rudolph Stoeckel for the Koch poem, Alan Rosiene for his assistance with the Latin texts, and Jane Patrick who always reads and comments.

¹ J. B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” *Cartographica* 26 (1989), p. 4 and “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” in *The Iconography of Landscape*, ed. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: CUP, 1988), pp.227-312. See also John K. Wright, “Map Makers are Human: Comments on the Subjective in Maps,” *Cartographica* 19 (1977): 8-12.

² A. E. Nordenskiöld, *Facsimile-Atlas to the Early History of Cartography*, trans. Johan Adolf Ekelöf and Celements R. Markham (New York: Dover Publications, 1973), p. 124; Braun & Hogenberg, *Civitates Orbis Terrarum*, intr. R. A. Skelton (Cleveland and New York: World Publishing company, 1966, p. v); for a study of Ortelius’s 1570 atlas, see C. Koeman, *The History of Abraham Ortelius and his “Theatrum Orbis Terrarum”* (New York: American Elsevier Publishing Company, 1964) pp. 23-35; for the impact of the atlas on the European imagination, see also John Gillies, *Shakespeare and the Geography of Difference* (Cambridge: Cambridge

prototype of the cartography of Palestine – a prototype that portrayed Palestine as a land with no inhabitants, and with no political or social identity, a land that was, in the words of twentieth-century Zionist ideologues, “without a people” and therefore ready to be appropriated and colonized. It was in the *Theatrum* that the myth of a de-Arabized and silenced Palestine was colorfully, cartographically and therefore deeply planted in European religious and geographic thought³. For between 1570 and 1624, Ortelius’s *Theatrum* appeared in Latin, Spanish, English, French, Dutch, Italian and German, and in about 47 editions⁴, and influenced cartographers and thinkers far beyond its time. The historian of cartography, Kenneth Nebenzahl, has stated that Ortelius’s maps of Palestine became the “models” for early modern cartography, while “Ortelius’s personal interest in the Holy Land ensured that Europe’s curiosity about the geographically mysterious Near East would not lose its intensity”. Jerry Brotton confirmed that the way in which Ortelius created and presented geographical information has continued “to influence the field of geography even today”⁵.

Consisting of fifty-three plates with fifty-six maps, all of them drawn by mapmakers whom Ortelius scrupulously credited, the *Theatrum* was an elegant folio intended for the rich Dutch and international traders who wanted to ponder the world’s expanding markets and natural wonders. Significantly, the wonders which Ortelius chose to include were not of mythic creatures and locations, the maps were precise and detailed, with no monsters or prodigies, but with coastlines, rivers, islands, and terrains, and with ships and whales decorating the vast emptiness of seas and oceans. The wonders of the world were measurable, empirical, and verifiable, reflecting the European age of navigation, exploration and standardization.

Of course the world to Ortelius and his audience was chiefly European. Although the *Theatrum* opened with maps of the globe and the four continents, from plates 5 to 45, it presented European countries and islands, provinces, duchies, and counties. Only from plates 46 through 53 did the European world give way to Russia, the Levant and North Africa, and the rest of Asia. This extra-European world, about which the

University Press, 1994), *passim*.

³ J. B. Harley. “Maps, Knowledge, and Power.” in *The Iconography of Landscape*, p. 282.

⁴ R. V. Tooley. *Maps and Map-Makers* (New York: Dorset Press, 1990, first publ. 1949), p. 30. See also Tooley, “Maps of Palestine in the Atlas of Ortelius.” *The Map Collector* (June 1978): 28-31.

⁵ Nebenzahl. *Maps of the Holy Land* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1986), p. 85; Jerry Brotton, *Trading Territories: Mapping the Early Modern World* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press), p. 152.

mapmakers had limited information, necessitated that Ortelius add legends and illustrations in a manner that he had not done in the European maps. The map of Russia, for instance, based on the travels of the English trader Anthony Jenkins in the 1550s, included vignettes of camels, tents, horsemen and bowmen; the "Oceanus Orientalis" showed mermaids with mirrors, and monstrous whales attacking a ship. Despite these differences, the maps of both Europe and the extra-European world employ the most recent and up-to-date information in geography, "nova" and "recentior" and "novissima" were repeatedly used in the titles to assure readers of accuracy, contemporaneity and order.

In plate 50, Ortelius introduced a map of the Ottoman Empire, from the Austrian borders through Anatolia and the Levant to North Africa. Included in the Levant was a reference to "Ivdae" – confusedly shown as a kind of administrative division in the Ottoman Empire of the sixteenth century, it lay below "Soria," and next to a vignette of two ships in battle. In a map showing the vast stretch of the Empire, "Ivdae" could not but have had little prominence. As a result, and aware of his audience's interest in the land of Christ, Ortelius immediately introduced in the plate following a map of "*Palestinae sive totius terrae promissionis nova descriptio*" by the German mapmaker Tileman(nus) Stella (1525-1589). Like the rest of the maps in the *Theatrum*, it was a copperplate engraving, drawn and colored by Ortelius who also added the cartouches.

Stella's original copperplate engraving of 1557 (republished in 1559) is cluttered with flower and leaf decorations, cartouches in both German and Latin, vignettes of ships and a coat of arms, all of which occupy nearly one third of the map. The coastline extends from Byblos in Syrophenicia to the Nile Delta, and from the Mediterranean coast eastward as far as Syriae Pars and Moab. Stella's purpose in preparing the map could not have been either navigational nor topographical, his was neither a portolan map nor a map which could serve, as other maps did, in travel or contemporary studies⁶. Instead, his map showed the many miraculous and divine locations and signs on the Israelite exodus. *Itinera Israelitarum ex Aegypto loca et insignia miracula diversorum divinarum descripta*. All the details in the topography of the land, the vignettes, and the place names served to confirm the route of the biblical exodus. With pious precision, Stella traced the Israelite departure from Mansio to Suchot to Etham, to the crossing of the Red Sea (showing, in a small illustration, the drowning and destruction of the Egyptians), the trail then picked up across the miraculous waters at Marah and then Elim, continuing

⁶ R. A. Skelton. *Maps: A Historical Survey of their Study and Collecting* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1972), p. 28.

serpertinely all the way to Almon, Diblathaim and finally to Abarim, north east of a banana-like Dead Sea.

In preparing his map, Stella drew on two earlier mapmakers, Jacob Ziegler (1470-1549) who had produced a *Tabula Universalis Palaestinae* in 1532, and Gerard Mercator (1512-1594) who had produced in 1537 a map of *Terra Sanctae* showing the territories of the twelve Israelite tribes and the route of the exodus. The latter map, along with Stella's, was the first in the history of European cartography to chart the course of the exodus, no maps before the sixteenth century had attempted such supposed historical accuracy. The reason for this innovation was the new Reformation theology with its emphasis on the literal interpretation of the Old Testament. Martin Luther had discarded the multi-layered allegorical and analogical methods of Catholic interpretation and had insisted that the scriptures be read within the context of their historical, linguistic and geographical parameters. Stella, having studied at Luther's university, Wittenberg, and having been a student of Philipp Melancthon, the heir of Luther in Germany, adopted this method of interpretation⁷.

But what makes Stella's map depart from the historical geography it purports to depict is the route of the exodus on which the historical claims of the map rest. For there was no itinerary, either in the Book of Exodus nor in archaeology, of the exodus route nor of the supposed 41 stops on the route. Furthermore, Stella's map is not only of Canaan; it is also of the Toranic kingdoms of Judah and Israel, of Graeco-Roman and of New Testamental Palestine. It shows the sepulcher of Pompey to the west of the Israelites' 24th stop in their exodus, while one of the cartouches locates in the Sinaitic desert the precise site of "Tabulae Covenienti". The map couples "Ammonitarvm regio" with Greek and Roman cities, "Caesarea" and "Ptolemais," "Hieracleum" and Rhinocolura; there are even references to Cairo, "Caira," a city founded by the Muslims, along with the Turkish administrative division of "Tripolis regio" and "Saracene regio" (using a term that did not exist in Hebrew or Canaanite/Aramaic).

Ortelius copied and colored Stella's map while retaining the superimposition of names: "Iudaea" and Samaria were mixed with Sarepta and "Cana minor," along with "Sepulchrum Pompei," the twelve divisions of the land among the sons of Jacob, Rhinocolura, "Tripolis regio," and most prominently, the exodus route. But while Stella had viewed his map as a biblical document (as his title shows), Ortelius intended his map for a modern atlas containing a summation of "contemporary", not biblical or classical knowledge — knowledge that

⁷ Nabil I. Matar, *From Myth to History: The Exodus* (London: Routledge, 2007), 107.

Ortelius often gathered from travelling correspondents⁸. In such a modern atlas, there was no place for the superimposition of past names on present geography: Ortelius was well aware how place names changes and how important it was for the cartographer to document those changes. When he selected the map of Italy, for instance, he chose one that was “*novissima*,” and in his preface, he listed the old place names, “*Antiqua*” and next to them, the new names “*Recentia*”; he showed how “*Latium*” had become “*Campagna di Roma*” and “*Magna Graecia*” “*Calabria Superiore*” (pl. 32). In the last pages of his *Theatrum*, he included a list of old place names, “*recentibus eorundem nominibus explicata*” (b 11). In Italy and elsewhere in the world, there was a past to be differentiated from the present and archeological sites that had changed into contemporary names.

Not so in Palestine, where there were only layers of the past, where the land was a palimpsest, and where the accretion, instead of the replacement, of place names spatialized history. Although Ortelius approached his map collecting project with the sensibility which, half-a-century later, translated into the Baconian revolution, and although readers such as his patron friend Aegidius Hooftman used the “up-to-date” cartographic information in their international trade and travel⁹, in the case of Palestine, and only in that case, did Ortelius’s subjective goal define cartographic reality. Only in that case did Ortelius present a thematic rather than a general map¹⁰, an “ideological document” and a piece of “persuasive communication”¹¹ about the meaning, the boundaries and the reality of a meta-Palestine.

A map of such a meta-Palestine would have been passable had it been the only available map to sixteenth-century cartographers – as was the case for instance with the “*Terra Avstrais Nondum Cognita*,” a land about which there was no information, only cartographic speculation, as Ortelius’s map of America shows. But the previous plate in the *Theatrum* had shown “*Ivdae*” in that part of the Ottoman Mediterranean which was constantly fought over by battling ships – a real and cartographically known place.

Furthermore, many maps before Ortelius’s had shown an Ottoman-dominated Palestine, the 1484 map that was included in the Braun and Hogenberg’s atlas *Civitates Orbis Terrarum* (which began serialization in 1572 until 1618), had clearly shown who was in control of Jerusalem and

⁸ Tooley, *Maps and Map Makers*, p. 29.

⁹ Brotton, *Trading Territories*, p. 171.

¹⁰ See the definition in Norman J. W. Thrower, *Maps & Man* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 64-65.

¹¹ J. B. Harley, “Deconstructing the Map,” *Cartographica* 26 (1989), pp. 9 and 11.

the rest of the land. At the forefront of the map stand Turks donning their well-recognized turbans in an act of assertive presence. Even Ottoman maps produced by those orientals who were supposed to be irrational and unempirical, showed more accuracy than Ortelius's¹².

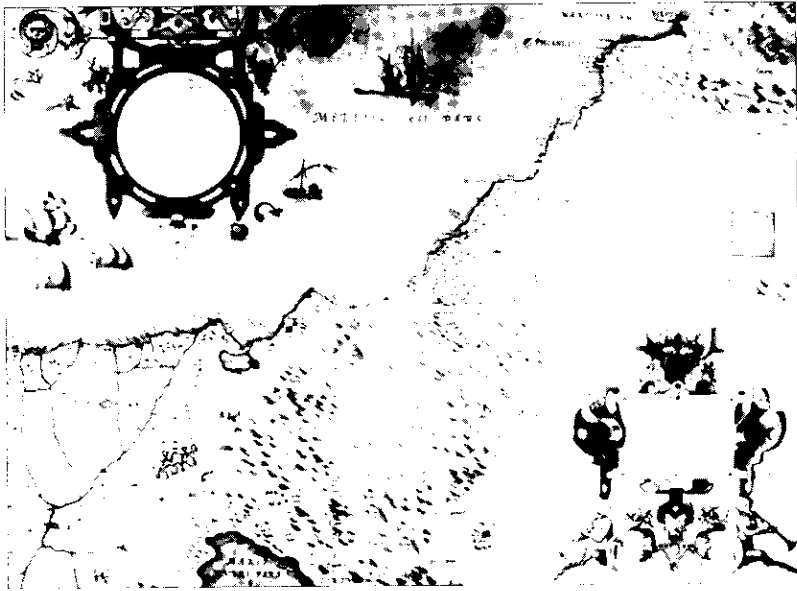


Fig. 1. Map of Palestine according to Abraham Ortelius, 1570

Ortelius presented what purported to be a new map of Palestine, “*nova*” not because it incarnated geographical information, but because it incarnated things which were not, and showed a nonexistent land just as seriously as Italy or Bohemia or Silesia¹³. Ortelius was preparing his atlas at a period in European history that coincided with “the creation of the modern sovereign state”: cartography was needed to disseminate information about power and borders. Maps created the states because they provided visual documents about authority, jurisdiction and spheres of influence that were definitive, codified and exclusive¹⁴. In the

¹² See for a study of Ottoman cartography, Kemal Ozdemir, *Ottoman Nautical Charts and the Atlas of Ali Mucar Reis* (Istanbul: Marmara Bank, 1992); for a specific description of Palestine, see U. Heyd, “A Turkish Description of the Coast of Palestine in the Early Sixteenth Century,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 6 (1956): 201-216. Numerous descriptions of Palestine survive in Arab-Islamic sources, see the translations in Guy Le Strange, *Palestine under the Moslems* (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1890).

¹³ See especially for this idea, André Corboz, *Diogenes* 121 (1983), p. 25.

¹⁴ G. R. Elton, *The Tudor Revolution in Government: Administrative Changes in the*

Theatrum, Ortelius was deeply aware of political demarcations if only because Spanish readers would carefully scrutinize his representation of the Spanish-occupied Netherlands. But while he was cautious about reflecting contemporary political reality in Europe, he presented Palestine as a myth, never changing, ever present, never evolving, above time or terrain, unfettered by history or people.

That Palestine had a sixteenth-century validity of its own, and that it had its own society and place names did not seem to matter to Ortelius, after all, he had included the map of Palestine not because Palestine was part of the Levant or the Ottoman Empire, but because it was part of Israelite meaning. That is why the exodus occupies the center of the map, and is hedged in by two colorful cartouches at the top left and at the right. “*Palestina*” was important only insofar as it served a biblical purpose, without that purpose, the land had no value. The cartouche, which Ortelius added, confirms this religious utilitarianism.

“The moste auncient name of this lande was called Canaan of the sonne of Cham, whose sonnes diuided it among them selues. Theyre names were Sydon, Hethaeus, Jabusaeus, Amorraeus, Gergesaeus, Hammathaeus, & this lande held this name, vntill the Israelites possess it. But Canaans posteritie, being partelie killed, partelie subdued, it began afterward to be called the landde of Israel, of Iacob the patriarch. Ptolomi, and others, call it Palestine, of the Palestines, whom holie scriptures too call the Phillistines, at this day, it is called the holie land”¹⁵.

There was nothing about Palestine “at this day” except its religious history. Palestine, for Ortelius, was a predicate of Toranic Judaism. Theology determined cartography.

Ortelius established the cartographic representation of Palestine in the following manners:

1. He presented a map that gave legitimacy to a land that did not exist, and made geographical what was fideistic¹⁶. The map reified a meta-Palestine and concretized sacred into visualizable space; it also

Reign of Henry VIII (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), p. 3. For the Function of maps in the early modern period, see Peter Whitfield, *New Found Lands: Maps in the History of Exploration* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

¹⁵ The translation is by Humphrey Cole who reproduced Ortelius’s map in English in 1572: A. S. Osley, *Mercator* (New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 1969), plate 51.

¹⁶ For the authority of the printed map, see J. B. Harley, “Cartography, Ethics and Social Theory,” *Cartographica* 27 (1990), esp. p. 4.

delegitimized sixteenth-century Palestine while legitimizing a biblical image in a realm outside empiricism and categorization. Whereas to Stella it had been a land traversed thousands of years earlier – the brownish effect of the copperplating imbues it with oldness and distance – to Ortelius, that same meta-land assumed cartographic reality despite its not reflecting geographical, political or religious contemporaneity.

It is not that Ortelius was ignorant of the changes on the ground or that the books he read about Palestine were outdated¹⁷. When he wrote about Persia, for instance, he referred the reader to recent books that described (in the 1606 English translation of the *Theatrum*) “the manners, customs and behavior of the people” (p. 109). As he praised the Persians, he did not describe the Persians who had been mentioned in the Hebrew Scriptures, but the Persians of his own day: “It is by nature a Gentleman-like and honourable Nation, very ciuill and courteous, loving learning liberall sciences”. Similarly, in the case of the Ottoman Empire, the reader was referred to books which described “the greatness that now it is of” (p. 110) – the emphasis being on the word “now”, “*hodie*,” since Ortelius brought the wars of the Ottomans up to the year 1566. When he wrote about Barbary, he referred to the “people generally of this whole country (who) are of a brownish or tawny complexion. They which dwell in cities, are very ingenious in architecture and such like Mathematicall inuentions” (p. 114). In Barbary, there were people with specific complexion, talents and abilities. Indeed, as he mapped America, which had only been recently colonized by Europeans, Ortelius did not show the map of native Americans but of Europeans, change in America was part of history, even if history had started less than eighty years before the *Theatrum*. Neither change nor history occurred in Palestine, even if thousands of years had passed.

2. There is little doubt that by choosing Stella’s map of Palestine, Ortelius desired to author a specific response in his audience. The map offered the classically- and biblically-educated audience a confirmation of their religious belief despite its blatant cartographic inaccuracy. In the third of his additions to the *Theatrum* in 1584, Ortelius replaced Stella’s map with another map of Palestine, derived from the 1570 “wall map of Peter Laicksteen [fl. ca. 1556-1570] and Christian Sgrooten [ca. 1532-1608]”¹⁸. The inaccuracy of this latter map is even greater than that of the

¹⁷ Some of the travelers’ accounts which Ortelius mentioned are the following: Jacob Ziegler, *Terrae Sanctae, quam Palaestinam nominant* (1536); Georg Rithaymar, *De Orbis Terrarum sitv compendium* (1538); Pierre Belon, *Les observations de plusieurs singularitez et choses memorables: trouuees en Grece, Asie, Iudee, Egypte, Arabie* (1553); Guillaume Postal, *De vniuersitate liber* (1563).

¹⁸ Nebenzahl, *Maps of the Holy Land*, p. 86.

one by Stella. Even Ptolemy's map, reproduced a century earlier, had been geographically better. Ortelius clearly had no idea how Palestine looked, but accuracy was irrelevant since the land that he was mapping was not really a part of the Ottoman *wilaya* of Syria, but "*Terra Sancta*," where the twelve tribal divisions of the land still appeared, despite the anachronistic cartouches of nativity, crucifixion and resurrection. Neither knowledge of geography, nor of chronology, nor of history was needed to map Palestine. Ortelius took "visual and conceptual possession"¹⁹ of Palestine precisely because he did not know how Palestine, actually, visually, or conceptually looked. In this respect, Ortelius had not depicted Palestine: he had invented one.



Fig. 2. Map of Palestine according to Abraham Ortelius, 1584

Ortelius included the maps of meta-Palestine in his modern atlas because in his view, the land belonged to the Europeans. Since it carried a name which the Europeans had given it, "*Terra Sancta*," then it belonged to its namers and discoverers. After all, "naming" as Mark Monmonier has observed, is "a powerful weapon of the cartographic propagandist"²⁰.

¹⁹ Richard Helgerson, "The Landscape Speaks: Cartography, Chorography, and Subversion in Renaissance England," in *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), p. 327.

²⁰ Mark S. Monmonier, *How to Lie with Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996), p.110.

It was the Europeans, in Ortelius's view, who had made the land holy, and by making it holy, they had laid claim not only to its holiness but also to its soil. In the way that names in America had been Europeanized and subsequently its lands possessed by the Europeans, so was Palestine de-Arabized and its name sacralized, in the expectation of European possession. By renaming America, as Colin Calloway has stated, Europeans instituted a process of "dispossessing indigenous populations" and effectively excluding "Indians from the New World they created on parchment and paper"²¹. Similarly, European cartographers such as Ortelius renamed Palestine "*Terra Sancta*" in order to legitimate the same process of dispossession and obliteration. In his preface to the map (in the 1606 English translation of the *Theatrum*), Ortelius wrote the following:

"That which the ancients [note ancients] called Palestine and Phoenicia, all the Europeans generally now call The HOLY LAND, under which name they comprehend that whole country which God gave unto the Israelites by the name of the Land of Promise, to them and their seed"

The land did not have a name, only an "ancient" and presumably unused one in these modern sixteenth-century times: the name HOLY LAND belonged to the Europeans who "now" gave it to the land. As lands which the Europeans did not possess in the New World became nameless "*terra incognita*," signifying the link between knowledge and domination, so did the land of Palestine become a "*terra sancta*" signifying the link between European sacralization and European domination.

In the maps of the *Theatrum*, only Palestine has no inhabitants who can give their land a name. This obliteration of native population coincides with the sixteenth-century European encounter with the other, whether in America, Africa or Asia. But while all encounters, as Tzvetan Todorov has indicated²², either marginalized, appropriated or demonized the other, this encounter obliterated the other. The other, be they the "Philistines" or the "Palestines" in Ortelius's cartouche, were simply not there, or indeed, made not to have been there, neither on the ground nor in the map. Conveniently for Ortelius, no medium could effect such total obliteration better than cartography, for maps, by their very nature, have "a genius for omission"²³; in this case, the omission of people and identity, and the silencing of history.

²¹ Colin G. Calloway, *New Worlds for All* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997), p. 12.

²² *The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), p. 185.

²³ Martin G. S. Lowy, *Myth of the Machine* (New York: Wiley-Interscience, 1978), p. 10.

Was there a political design behind this obliteration? "Beware of maps prepared to substantiate a pet theory!" wrote John K. Wright²⁴. "Maps," declared Hans Spiel, "can be drawn to symbolize changes, or as blueprints of the future ... Maps can be symbols of conquest"²⁵. There can be little doubt that Ortelius's map was presented as "a blueprint of the future;" for the age of Ortelius was the age of colonization and empire, of European mapping of the world in preparation for taking possession of it. Although there could have been no European enterprise to conquer Ottoman-dominated Palestine during Ortelius's lifetime, since it was Europe that was being conquered by the Ottomans, the map did serve as a blueprint for a prophetic prospect of conquest.

The exodus route on Ortelius's Stellan map confirmed faith in biblical inerrancy. But the exodus, in the Christian reading, was not only a historical event, but a prophetic event that pointed to and anticipated the exodus of the soul from the condition of sin to salvation, and the pilgrimage toward the promised hereafter. An itinerary on a map opened up the possibility of "closet" traveling. Something that Mandeville had done and those many after him had imitated where the reader or viewer followed not only a geographic but also a religious and intellectual progression²⁶. The exodus on the map became a journey of the soul.

This conflation of faith and cartography, journey and mimesis, led to the emergence of one of the strangest heresies in the sixteenth century, that the exodus was a prophetic anticipation of the "Restoration" of the Jews to the Promised Land in preparation for the Second Coming. This heresy grew rapidly in the late 16th and in the 17th centuries, especially among writers in England and later in New England²⁷. Among twentieth-century historians, the question as to why and how that heresy emerged has been answered from a predominantly Proto-Zionist perspective²⁸. But such an answer is more a product of ideological agendas than historical

²⁴ "Map Makers are Human: Comments on the Subjective in Maps," *Cartographica* 19 (1977), p. 10.

²⁵ "Magic Geography," *Social Research* 8 (1941), pp. 310-311.

²⁶ José Rabasa, *Inventing America: Spanish Hystoriography and the Formation of Eurocentrism* (Norman, Oklahoma: U. of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 196.

²⁷ See my "The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought: from the Reformation until 1660," *Durham University Journal* 78 (1985), pp. 23-36; "The Idea of the Restoration of the Jews in English Protestant Thought: from 1661-1701," *Harvard Theological Review* 78 (1985), pp. 115-148.

²⁸ See for instance, Nahum Zokolow, *History of Zionism*, 2 vols. (London: Longmans, 1919); Barbara W. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword: England and Palestine from the Bronze Age to Balfour* (New York: Baltimore Books, 1956, 3rd ed. 1983); Regina S. Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots in Western History* (London: Zed Press, 1983). See my critique of this claim to Proto-Zionism in "Protestantism, Palestine and Partisan Scholarship," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18 (1989), pp. 52-70.

investigation. After all, how could European writers have proposed what openly contravened New Testament teachings? Not only had the New Testament declared the fulfillment of all Old Testament prophesies, but it had degeographized faith. No land was required for belief, and holiness was not predicated on place but on repentance. Within the scope of such a theology there was neither meaning nor need for Restoration.

In light of the Ortelian map, the question that has been so perplexing can now be answered. The idea of the Restoration of the Jews to Palestine emerged in European thought as a result of the sixteenth-century mapping of the exodus. As readers looked at Ortelius's meta-Palestine and conceived it Palestine, they looked at the exodus and conceived it, not just as an event of the past, but a prophetic prospect. As the Israelites have conquered the land of the Philistines, so would they conquer the land of Palestine: as they had taken possession of meta-Palestine, so would they of Palestine, perhaps using the same itinerary in their pursuit of conquest. It was the Ortelian map that made possible the cartographic legitimization of heresy.

Buyers of the *Theatrum*, some of whom ventured to the ends of the earth in search of trade, who weighed and measured, counted and bargained, once they stared at Ortelius's maps of Palestine, completely suspended their disbelief and removed themselves from truth to faith, and from measurement to proposition. By a devouring (to use T. S. Eliot's word) association of sensibility, they yoked Palestine to "*terra sancta*" in a synthesis that produced a meta-land.

Ortelius taught Europeans to view Palestine as a meta-Palestine, a holy land without history, people and, given the inaccuracies of the maps, even geography. He ensured that Palestine would never be "believed" as a real place with real inhabitants, only as a palimpsest of what the Canaanites and the Toranic scriptures had inscribed – and of what those scriptures could be made to inscribe in the prophetic future. The *Theatrum* transformed Palestine from a reality into a potentiality whose actuality lay in the realm of eschatology.

It would not be difficult to list scores of travelers and visitors to Palestine from the sixteenth century on who came to the land but never saw its society or identity, who traveled in an Ortelian meta-geography and who, despite sleeping, eating and walking with the inhabitants, always denied those inhabitants both reality and legitimacy. Ortelius's attitude toward Palestine made possible an English traveler such as Fynes Morryson, who visited Palestine at the end of the sixteenth century, but filled scores of pages with distances between cities and villages, neither

seeing nor commenting on anything else²⁹; or a traveler such as Thomas Sandys in 1610, whose map of Palestine shows it to be vacant of people³⁰; or of Samuel Purchas, whose collection of travels in 1625 expanded England's knowledge of the world, but who still included, in his very modern accounts, maps of Canaan and the exodus³¹; or of Robert Morden who published in 1693 a book entitled *Geography Rectified* and in the unit entitled "Of Turkey in Asia" wrote about "Canaan" and, rectifyingly, included a map showing the twelve tribal divisions of the land³².

From the eighteenth century on, cartography improved in its methods, measures and premises. It perfected the representation of topography and terrain which made it as much an instrument of empire as armies and technology. But Palestine would continue to have a viciously unique status – the status of a meta-land. In 1946, two New Yorkers published a book, the purpose of which was to teach *Modern Hebrew*. As part of their Zionist agenda, they included photographs entitled "Colonists in the Emek Gaily Dance the Horah" and "A Woman in New Palestine," the latter showing a young and muscular woman astride a tractor, with noticeably fine legs, and gazing at the horizon of a New Palestine. It was a "New" Palestine for the simple reason that the map of Palestine which they included, and which was published in 1946, when the population of Palestine was over a million Arabs, showed a Palestine that was an empty land and that was still geographically Toranic.

Jerusalem does hide another Jerusalem, as Kenneth Koch writes, a Jerusalem that witnessed Christ's resurrection and the Prophet's ascent on his Mi'raj, Palestine also hides another Palestine, a "New Palestine" that, in the words of W. B. Yeats, slouched toward Bethlehem ... to devour it.

²⁹ Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary Containing his Ten Years Travel* (Glasgow: James MacLoehose and Sons, 1907).

³⁰ Jonathan Haynes, *The Humanist as Traveler: George Sandys's Relation of a Journey begun An. Dom. 1610* (London and Toronto: Associated University Presses, 1986), p. 16: "The map [by Sandys] nowhere recognizes Turkish or Arab Jurisdiction – "The Lesser Asia" is still divided into territories called Phrygia, Lydia, and the rest, and the Levant into Phoenicia, Galilee, and so on. One might conclude (with justice) that the Muslim presence was thought of as a shadow over the land rather than as an historical actuality to be assimilated".

³¹ *Purchas His Pilgrimes* (1652). "Hondives his map of Terra Sancta." p. 1204; "Hondives his Map of the Israelites peregrination in the Desert." p. 1378.

³² Robert Morden, *Geography Rectified* (1693, 3rd ed.), p. 358.

PALESTINIAN LANDSCAPE
AS DESCRIBED BY FRENCH
TRAVELERS OF THE XVIIITH AND
XIXTH CENTURIES

Dominique Eddé

Having successively read quite a number of French travelers' writings on Palestine, I must confess that, as a result, I got a feeling of oppression close to discouragement. However brilliant or poetic some of these narratives are, taken together, they appear to me as out of proportion, overloaded with affected pathos and ludicrous ambition, marked by a common tendency to project superiority, communicating at the end the depressing impression of a repetitive discourse about a saturated land.

It is true that the phrase alone "Holy Land" is a program in itself. God, in Palestine, is a constant temptation, an almost physical one and few are the travelers who resisted it. Most of them have had their private and privileged meeting with God, private with far-reaching meanings, profitable and fascinating for the rest of the world: one by one, they wrote it down as a unique, irreplaceable experience. Every single corner of the Palestinian landscape, from the least ray of light to the last piece of stone, has offered an inexhaustible pretext for fantasy and literature. By literature I mean the field of all writing, extending from the most factual to the most lyrical, including obviously the best and the worst. Among the best, yet irritating poetical prose, is Chateaubriand's. I quote him: "Extraordinary aspects reveal, everywhere, a land worked over by miracles: the burning sun, the impetuous eagle, the sterile fig tree, all poetry, all figures of the Holy Scripture are there. Every name contains a mystery; every cave declares the future; every summit resounds with the tones of a prophet. God himself spoke in these places. The dry torrents, the split rocks, the half-open graves attest the prodigy; the desert seems still dumb with terror, as if, since it heard the voice of the Father Eternal, it didn't dare break the silence". An account just as impassioned but much less convincing is to be found in Lamartine whose trip to the Near East at the age of 42 (in 1832), coincided tragically with the death of his daughter. "Here is Zion! here is the palace!" writes the poet, "Here is David's tomb, the place of his inspirations and of his delights, of his life and of his rest! For me a doubly holy place, of which this divine singer

has so often touched the heart and ravished the mind. He is the poet of feelings! The king lyrics! Never did the human fiber resound with such intimate harmony, so penetrating, so grave ...". Nothing impedes Lamartine's progress to ecstasy. His identification with David is scarcely disguised; the Arabs all around hardly exist, "our Arabs" he says when he condescends to evoke their presence: "Their civilization is synonymous with murder and pillage". Chateaubriand is not less comprehensive: "These Arabs who infest the deserts", he writes, "if they always kept their mouths shut, nothing about them would expose the savage; but as soon as they begin to speak, one hears a loud and noisy language". As for Arab women, his statement is merciless: "One must contemplate them from a little distance, be contented with a general view, and avoid details".

What about the landscape? One must wonder. Let me quickly refer to the definition of "landscape", as given by the dictionary. In *Collins*, "landscape is everything that you can see when you look across an area of land". It seems appropriate to say that the word "everything" covers, in the case of Palestine, mirages as much as realities. "Everything you can see" includes what the landscape makes you dream of. A vision more than a view, a state of mind more than a state of things, an experience of time more than an experience of the present. But let us be fair, this inspired and religious approach to the landscape belongs specifically to the French XIXth century. And it sometimes yields beautiful and unforgettable pages of description. Thus Chateaubriand's writing about the Dead Sea and the Jordan river: "Imagine two long assembly lines, running parallel to north at noon, without a deviation, without a bend. The Levant mountain, called mountain of Arabia, is the highest; seen at a distance of eight to ten leagues, it looks like a huge perpendicular wall, very similar to the Jura by its form and by its azure color; you can't imagine a summit, not the least peak, but only, here and there, light inflexions, as if the painter's hand who drew this horizontal line on the sky, had shaken in a few places". I wish to add, at this point, a personal recollection of a conversation I had with Jean Genet in the late seventies. "If you want to read splendid pieces of French literature," he said to me, "you should read Chateaubriand's *Le génie du christianisme*, Victor Hugo's *Choses vues* and Gerard de Nerval's poems". Considering the very classical French language of Genet, I wasn't totally surprised by his advice, but what I found amazing and extremely interesting was that his three proposals concerned writers with whom I was in deep political disagreement. Belonging, more or less, to the same period of history, two of them had been directly involved in the Near East. It became to me clearer, with time, that, in his war against imperialist Western writers, Genet had chosen the arms of those, among them, whom he admired the

most. An understandable and fascinating ambiguity which is also very present in Edward Said's works about culture and imperialism, never more critical and sharper is Said than when he deals with his favorite writers: Conrad, Dickens, Jane Austen, Flaubert and others.

May I here propose, as an example, a short comparative reading of Chateaubriand and Genet on Palestine. First, speaking of Bethlehem's people, Chateaubriand writes: "One of them used a peculiar method to make the wood catch fire: he mounted the woodshed, lowered himself onto the fire; his tunic rose with the smoke; he then straightened himself brusquely; the air blown out by this sort of pump, brought a brilliant flame out from the fireplace". Second, being on the bank of the Jordan River in the company of Palestinians, Genet writes: "Taking birth in the lights of Galilee, The Milky Way formed an arch, which, overhanging me, overhung also the whole Jordan valley and, dispersing itself, ended in the Saudi desert. Lying down in a blanket, I participated in this spectacle, probably more than the Palestinians for whom the sky was the common place". Written in a very similar language, these two quotations are significant about the radically different "distance" that both writers establish between them and the people around them. During the XVIIIth and XIXth centuries, the implicit answer to the question "to whom does the landscape belong?", is: "to the traveler", that is to the civilized and educated man who sees and appreciates what the natives don't. The postulate of Zionism "a land without a people for a people without a land" is thereby endorsed and encouraged before time. The rendering invisible of people is complete, it is not only an intellectual invisibility, it is a physical one. Bedouins or Arabs, male or female, all human beings are seen as part of the landscape: shades, color spots, walking ghosts in a desert. And if a writer like Pierre Loti (French Orientalist of the late nineteenth century) happens to be enchanted by Islamic achievements, happy to describe the "fairy splendor" of the Jerusalem Mosque, he strangely enough shows it to us as if it was an empty piece of art, situated in some closed museum. As for the Bedouins, here is an exemplary quotation of how, altogether mixed with goats and camels, they bring their exotic touch of color to the painting: "A woolen rope around their brow and a veil's corners shaped into animal ears; archaic and charming groups; groups of svelte wild men who, meeting us, show us, in a welcoming salute, teeth of porcelain. Lined and tied up camels and innumerable goats, led by small shepherds with gazelle-like eyes". Much more investigated are Loti's pages about the Jews, an anti-Semitic piece of anthology. I quote: "Penetrating the heart of Jewry, my impression above all is a sick feeling, almost terror. Nowhere had I seen such an exaggeration of those kinds of clothes, rags and rabbit skin's merchants;

nowhere such sharp pointed noses, so long and so pale. Each time one of these old backs, bent under fur and velvet, half turns towards me, a new pair of eyes looks sideways at me, underneath glasses, between hanging curls, I feel a little surge of surprise and disgust." Loti's anti-Semitism is no exception.

Maupassant, the French novelist, wrote in his book about Algeria in 1881, "As soon as you penetrate to the south of the country, the Jewish race reveals itself under its most hideous aspect which makes us understand the savage hate of certain people against this one, and even the recent massacres". And on the same page, in an earlier paragraph, Maupassant writes without the least inhibition: "This shapeless bundle of dirty linen which embodies the common Arab woman ...". Applied to these writings, the word "racism" is obviously appropriate but there is, in my opinion, more to be seen. What struck me indeed all along my reading is the full incapacity (close to paranoia) of most travelers to put in a native's behavior or expression a content which is not addressed to them, neither a "welcoming smile" nor a "sideway look", but an independent life with its own memory, pain and joy. Something different, as illegible as a language that you simply don't know. Therefore it is no coincidence if I, myself, have been unable to deal with the subject as an objective record of descriptions and images. Talking of images, I have been impressed by the place given in all narratives to trees, all kinds of trees. It is as if the solitary tall plant with its hard trunk, branches and leaves was, for the traveler, the silent and docile substitute for human beings, a vertical presence with its perfect arrangement of light and shade, a reliable companion. Palm tree, fig tree, olive tree, pomegranate, yellow rush, oaks, nopals, brambles and reeds, they are all given a name, a personality, and even more, a soul. Thus, in his very interesting (maybe the most human and richest of the 19th century) traveler's book *La Syrie aujourd'hui*, published in 1884, Dr. Lortet, Dean of the Medical Faculty of Lyon, gives us many lively almost human descriptions of trees among which is this one: "In north-west Hebron, there is a huge green (Quercus Palæstina) oak ... The growth of green oaks is extremely slow; if you compare the diameter of its trunk to that of the palm, whose precise age is easy to calculate according to the number of ligneous concentric strata, one can conclude that it is two thousand years old. It is known in the country under the name of Mamre. At its base, the trunk has a circumference of 22 feet and a half; it is first divided in three branches, and then each one of these divided, a little higher into two others which extend to 83 feet from the trunk, one of them is so long that, in order to protect it from breaking under its own weight, it had to be held up by stakes. Under this wonderful tree grows fine green grass watered by a

spring which runs nearby ... Maundeville in the 14th century and Belon in the 16th had already described this oak, maybe the biggest in all Palestine, which is today perfectly healthy and vigorous”.

Much more prosaic and down to earth is le Comte de Volney, who traveled to Egypt and Syria in 1781 at the age of 35. In his book *Orientalism* Edward Said writes: “Volney’s *Voyage* is an almost oppressively impersonal document. Volney evidently saw himself as a scientist, whose job it was always to record the ‘état’ of something he saw”. After Voltaire and Montesquieu who each in his own way made statements about the Orient and Islam, Volney belongs indeed to the secular, rational and non-lyric Age of Enlightenment, the French eighteenth century. Possessed by the same unconditional rejection of Islam, he brings us, in return, a new analysis of Oriental despotism. He first refutes Montesquieu’s thesis, which imputed oriental laziness and incapacity to the climate and he undertakes a long study of the concrete mechanism of progress (western progress being related, according to him, to the invention of printing). What is new in Volney’s approach is the fact that he includes the contemporary in a philosophy of history. He is also the first to establish a general theory of Near Eastern history from a personal experience on the ground. We should not forget that he learned Arabic (how much and how well it is difficult to say) in the Lebanese convent of Mar Hanna in Choucir. The Volney who boards the ship for Alexandria, in 1781, for a two year and four months voyage, is a man fully involved in the French revolution. The emancipation of France must lead, in his mind, to the liberation of the rest of the world. The spirit of the crusades is dead, something new must be invented. Running away from the old clichés and preconceptions, Volney is nevertheless going to fall into new contradictions. Against the idea of a European military action in the Ottoman provinces, he is also convinced that the reign of despotism in these countries is due to Islam and that, consequently, no change can come from inside. Eleven years older than Napoleon, Volney will meet the young unknown officer in 1791. This first encounter will inspire in him the famous statement: “If this man is helped a little by events, he will be Caesar’s head set upon Alexander’s shoulders”. Whether Volney was fully aware of it or not, he participated actively in the birth of a new kind of foreign policy and his influence on Napoleon’s Egyptian expedition was decisive. As Henry Laurens puts it in his book *The Intellectual Origins of the Egyptian Expedition*, “it is the testing of a new colonial spirit whose aim is no longer limited to economic exploitation, but motivated by a drive for the westernization of the rest of the world”.

What about Volney's writings on the landscape? If one leaves out his lyrical meditations on Palmyra's ruins, he is the author of sober and matter of fact descriptions which sometimes remind me, in terms of dryness, of Ibn Battuta's laborious narrative, four hundred years before. But Volney can also be very expressive and bright. Thus for instance his beautiful pages on winds, on their different nature and names, their temperature, their speed, their lasting quality and their seasons.

Let us now compare the visions of Jerusalem of the French travelers. I shall begin with Volney: "Walking through mountains which become, step by step, more rocky and more arid, we reach a city, which as many others have seen before, is a great example of human vicissitude: looking at its fallen walls, its filled – in ditches, its ruined fences, one can hardly recognize the famous metropolis for which the most powerful empires struggled, which for a while challenged Rome itself and which, by a strange return of fate, receives today, in its fall the tribute of homage and respect; it is hard, in a word, to recognize modern Jerusalem".

Talking of Jerusalem's houses, "low and heavy square blocks, without windows and without chimneys", Chateaubriand concludes: "Looking at these stone houses, enclosed within a landscape of stones, one wonders if these are not the chaotic monuments of a cemetery in the middle of a desert". More crude is Flaubert's first impression of the city: "Jerusalem is an open grave surrounded by walls; the first peculiar thing we encountered was a butchery. In a kind of separated courtyard, covered with rubbish heaps, a big hole; in the hole, curdled blood, entrails, excrements, brown and blackish guts, almost sun-baked, all around. It stank very much, but such free filth was beautiful. The first thing we saw, in the holy city, was blood", thus spoke a clever and fine judge of the situation. It is as if the all-powerful myth of holiness, present in all places in Palestine, suddenly weighs too much, and, strangely enough collapses just where it is supposed to be at its summit, that is in Jerusalem. Twenty years after Flaubert, Eugène-Melchior de Vogüé will soften and reduce the feeling of decay and desolation expressed by his predecessors: "Out of the corpse lying in this grave, the soul has survived", writes the thirty four year old diplomat in his *Voyage au pays du passé*.

I shall end this series of quotations with the unexpected statement of a non-French writer: the Russian Gogol, who went to Palestine for a short stay on his way from Naples to Odessa in 1848. "Somewhere in Samaria, I picked a wild flower," he writes in a letter to a friend, "somewhere in Galilee, another one. Surprised by rain, in Nazareth, I spent two days there, forgetting that I was in Nazareth, exactly as if I was in some post station in Russia".

By way of conclusion, I would like to add a few personal words. Being myself a Lebanese, my first encounter with Palestine took place before the civil war in the Palestinian camps of Sabra and Chatilla in the early seventies. I was teaching French there and, thanks to my students, learning Arabic ... I recall above all their way of evoking their cities and villages in Palestine. They were keeping it alive as one maintains a fire by blowing on its embers. These hundred of thousands of refugees, still living in miserable conditions in exile, are forever linked organically to their native Palestinian landscape.

LITERARY SNAPSHOTS:
MARK TWAIN'S *INNOCENTS*
ABROAD AND
WILLIAM THACKERAY'S *NOTES OF*
A JOURNEY FROM CORNHILL TO
GRAND CAIRO

Lynne D. Rogers

With the industrialization of England and the end of the civil war in America, international travel became more accessible and desirable for British and American middle class citizens. Under his favorite pen name Titmarsh, William Thackeray published *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo* in 1846 and Samuel Clemens known by his pen name, Mark Twain, joined the famous first Cook tour to Europe and the Holy Land in 1867. Before they left for the Middle East with the intention of publishing their journals, both writers were popular cosmopolitan journalists known for their humor and originality. The highlight of their voyage was unquestionably the Holy Land. The date of their departure marks the beginnings of the transformation of travel into the modern tourist industry now recognized as the world's largest commercial industry.

Modern anthropologists have suggested that mass tourism, which poses as a cultural exchange, is actually a process of cultural homogenization. Others claim that the touristic ritual objectifies the visitor into a passive spectator, a discovered source of funds, and objectifies the host, into a seen object and an active seeker of funds, thus, hindering, if not eliminating the possibility of meaningful human exchange. In her book, *International Tourism*, Marie Françoise Lanfant characterizes tourism as a "dynamic that brings together regions of the world normally placed by social discourse in significant opposition to each other: post-industrial society and underdeveloped society; modern society and traditional society; urban society and rural society" (Lanfant 1995:3). This dynamic becomes further complicated for the western travel writer visiting the Holy Land, a pre-industrial society and the cradle of Christianity, an

integral component of the foundation of modern Western society. Twain and Thackeray's cruel disappointment in the Holy Land, proportionate to their anticipation, is partially pre-determined by the structure of tourism and sightseeing. In *The Tourist*, Dean MacCannell observes that sightseeing is destined to produce dissatisfaction: "Sightseeing is a kind of collective striving for transcendence of the modern totality, a way of attempting to overcome the discontinuity of modernity, of incorporating its fragments into unified appearance. Of course, it is doomed to eventual failure: even as it tries to construct totalities, it celebrates differentiation" (MacCannell 1976:19). Thackeray and Twain are doubly doomed; first by the sightseeing transcendence and then by the spiritual consequences of that particular sight, the Holy Land. It is one thing to be disappointed by the size of the Mona Lisa but quite another to imagine Jesus at home.

In reading the British and American travel books of the Middle East, one wonders why anyone would have ventured here at all and can only conclude that the imaginative and spiritual power of the Arabian Nights and the Bible consistently overpowers the constant deluge of travel 'tell-alls' which market themselves as truth revealers while re-inforcing stereotypes seemingly written in stone. Both texts are humorous rewrites of previous travel books which were popular reading in the late 19th century and as critics have repeatedly pointed out, reveal more of their own cultural consciousness than that of the Holy Land.

Lawrence Durrell, also a travel writer and novelist, wrote "the target of the travel writer, his task is to isolate the germ in the people which is expressed in their landscape" (*Irreverent Pilgrims*, 156). Despite their distinct cultural contexts, Twain and Thackeray share parallel responses to the Holy Land. A pattern of three landscapes emerges in each text. These landscapes are triggered not only by the nature of tourism with the inevitable disillusionments, but also by the crisis of perceiving and representing the Holy Land as an underdeveloped country. They cannot reconcile the Christian base of their society to the destitution they find in Bethlehem and Jerusalem. Despite their disdain for the reality of the Holy Land, which stands in blatant contradiction to their societal values, they cannot completely reject the Holy Land, for then logically (if it is possible to use that word in connection with faith), they would also have to discard Christianity and subsequently, their own societal values. However, one possible solution is to kidnap Jesus and to absorb him into their own cultural and imaginative landscape. This feat of mental and linguistic dexterity is accomplished by partitioning one geographical area into a triadic polyphonic landscape of people, spiritual crisis and selective reconciliation.

The first partition is the peopled landscape populated generally by rogues, thieves and beggars with one exceptional group who epitomize the Christian virtues which the travel writers feel should be reflected throughout the area and who validate a prolonged civic relationship with the Holy Land. The second landscape is the vast, desolate, lonely landscape, which is seen primarily during the daylight and can be read as the sight of the author's spiritual and intellectual crisis. Descriptions of this second landscape contain none of the condescending irony found in the peopled landscape. The absence in the geographical area left by the narrator's vacating the Holy Land of its holy significance manifests itself in the barren nature of the second landscape. Within the texts, the second landscape becomes problematic because it contradicts the descriptions of the other two landscapes. The third landscape, the poetic landscape of selective reconciliation appears predominantly at night or from a distance and fosters a connection between Palestine, the geographical territory, and the inspirational realm of Arabian Nights and finalizes the relocation of the Bible to their homeland.

In 1844, Thackeray left almost on the spur of the moment for his voyage subsidized by friends of the Peninsular and Oriental Company. Fitting into the fashion of Victorian tastes, Thackeray's *Notes*, published two years later, received favorable reviews and went into two printings in the first year of publication. His narrative re-iterates the obligatory remarks on the dire poverty, the prevalent dirt, and the petty political squabbling conducted by the religious figures in the sacred sights accompanied by the ungracious laments sung by the beggars outside. Drawing on Edward Said's *Orientalism*, critics Robert Lougy and J. Russell Perkin have discerned two conflicting narrative voices within the text. For Perkin: "Titmarsh is alternately pleased by the exoticism of the east and disappointed when it fails to live up to the expectations created by poetry and fiction" (Perkin 1990:300). However, Perkin omits the Bible as a source of Thackeray's expectations. In Lougy's Lacanian reading of the text, he detects an unsuccessful altruistic voice "and his most potent voice (which) often derives from racist and aggressive tendencies that are never far from the work's center" (Lougy 1989:232). Lougy asserts Thackeray "tries to conceal the specific within the general" (245). Thackeray, known as a novelist for his panoramic representations of society brought to life with cutting detail, avoids human detail in his peopled landscape. His rendering of the Holy Land citizens is one of disagreeable "hordes". He describes an anonymous village outside of Jerusalem as "A village of beavers, or a colony of ants, make habitations not unlike those dismal huts piled together on the plain here. There were no single huts along the whole of the road: poor and wretched as they are,

the Fellahs huddle all together for protection from the other thieves, their neighbors. The government (which we restored to them) has no power to protect them and is only strong enough to rob them." (Titmarsh 1845:92). The insect thievery permeates the entire social structure and apparently understanding on Thackeray's part does not lead to Christian charity. As Thackeray enters Jerusalem, the conditions of poverty only deteriorate. He continues: "As elsewhere in the towns I have seen, the ghetto of Jerusalem is pre-eminent in filth. The people are gathered round the dung gate of the city. Of a Friday you may hear their wailings and lamentations for the lost glories of their city" (207).

For MacCannell, the tourist experience must include poverty and decay alongside the marked sights "to provide a moral stability to the modern touristic consciousness" (MacCannell 1976:41), in this case an imperialistic consciousness aiming at lending authenticity to the sightseeing experience. Thackeray's narrative of poverty as authentic depiction claims to refute the romantic image of the Holy Land even though previous travel books concur with his descriptions. Although both Thackeray and Twain claim that the biblical lands have not changed since biblical times, they cannot imagine or place Jesus Christ, the reason for their pilgrimage, into their peopled landscape. Can he or his readers see the Savior at the door of one of these huts? In order to maintain their image of Jesus, they sever him from Jerusalem and Bethlehem and locate his spirit in the foreign missionaries, their first step in the cultural reabsorption. Truly British, Thackeray mocks the American missionaries, yet fortunately finds solace in "our religious colony of men and women (who) can't fail to do good, by the sheer force of good example, pure life and kind offices... Each of their houses is a model of neatness, and a dispensary of gentle kindness; and the ecclesiastics have found a modest center of civilization in the place" (228). All hope is not lost for the small enclave of British missionaries is properly preserving the native spirit of Christianity. While this spiritual displacement spares the doctrine, the manipulation takes its toll on the narrator. One can read the second landscape as a projection of the crisis inspired by the usurpation of Jesus from the Holy Land.

Thackeray again describes the landscape leading to Jerusalem: "The mountains round us dark, lonely, and sad; the landscape as we saw it at night (it is not more cheerful in the daytime), the most solemn and forlorn I have ever seen. The feelings of almost terror, with which riding through the night we approached this awful place, the center of the world's past and future history, have no need to be noted down here. The recollections of those sensations must remain with a man as long as his memory lasts; and he should think of them as often, perhaps as he should talk of them

little” (199). The only possible source of Thackeray/Titmarsh’s terror is internal. Several times during their journey, he has stated that they are only armed with umbrellas and in no real physical danger. The travelers brave only temporary physical discomfort and financial harassment. Like the sight of poverty, the illusory dangers heighten the ‘authenticity’ of the voyage upon return yet present no real peril to the pilgrims. Thackeray feels so safe, he ventures to walk around alone and unarmed: “I made many walks round the city to Olivet and Bethany, to the tombs of the Kings, and the foundations sacred in the story. These are green and fresh, but all the rest of the landscape seemed to me to be frightful. Parched mountains, with a gray bleak olive tree trembling here and there; savage ravines and valleys paved with tombstones – a landscape unspeakable ghastly and desolate, meets the eye wherever you wander around the city. The place seems quite adapted to the events which are recorded in the Hebrew histories. It and they, as it seems to me, can never be regarded without terror. Fear, blood, crime and punishment, follow from page to page in frightful succession. There is not a spot at which you can look, but some violent deed has been done there; some massacre has been committed, some victim has been murdered, some idol has been worshipped with bloody and dreadful rites” (210). In contrast to the benevolent calm of the Tower of London, the Palestinian landscape inspires terror and the sole evidence of the Old and New Testament is the scant oasis of greenery which is immediately diminished by this fear. Consequently, Thackeray’s visual experience of poverty and his subsequent inability to appreciate Palestine as a Holy Land results in a perception of the landscape rooted in historical aggression rather than theology. Even though the quest of his trip is to see and to touch the wellspring of Christianity, Thackeray’s narrative avoids any intellectual inquiring concerning the implication of Christianity, as an ideology, in creating this ghastly ghost town. Up close, the physical, historical and psychological reality is exceedingly unpleasant and Thackeray can only take refuge in his appreciation of the poetry of the Holy Land when viewed from a distance. In contrast to the immediate and unsettling reality, when Thackeray is separated from it by the night horizon and his forthcoming departure, he can refer back comfortably to the Arabian Nights to create his third landscape, the landscape of selective reconciliation.

Thackeray’s visionary landscape of reconciliation appears as he prepares to leave, to distance himself from the peopled and desolate landscape. Then, he can recognize the beauty of Titian’s colors in the sky: “A yellow moon was still blazing in the midst of countless brilliant stars overhead; the naked and misery of the surrounding city were hidden

in that beautiful rosy atmosphere of mingling night and dawn. The city never looked so noble; the mosques, domes and minarets rising into the calm sky" (231). A landscape notably without church steeples and hidden by the nightfall. At one point, he is able to perceive Bethlehem as picturesque yet he devalues his vision to the reader: "But you, Dear M-, without visiting the place, have imagined one finer; and Bethlehem, where the Holy Child was born, and the angels sang 'Glory to God in the highest, and peace and goodwill' is the most sacred and beautiful spot in the earth to you" (223). Thackeray's address to the reader implies that Bethlehem can no longer be a sacred spot for him. His Christian innocence momentarily lost on his trip can be salvaged if he extinguishes the bond between Jesus and his birthplace. Thackeray begins his trip with his focus on the Holy Land and ends by connecting Palestine only to the Arabian Nights. He again confides to the reader: "If it be but to read the Arabian Nights on getting home, it is good to have made this little voyage and seen these strange places and faces" (181). His omission of any Biblical reference in his final evaluation of his journey underscores his severance of Christianity from the Holy Land. Thackeray's final landscape allows the writer to return home with his rescued Christian values and his experience of the 'authentic' exotic, which justifies his voyage and narrative.

Neither Thackeray nor Twain are remembered for their rigid religious conviction. Consequently their reactions to the Holy Land and the success of their travel books indicate a proximity to popular opinion. Dewey Ganzel writes: "Other Americans had traveled abroad and written of their journeys with judgement and wit, but Clemens was one of the first to embody in his account a national consciousness no longer restrained by geographical isolation and cultural adolescence, a consciousness intellectually vital and magnificently brash, the evidence of America's coming of age" (Ganzel 1968:32). Unlike his Quaker City companions, Twain attended church out of a desire to please his wife and his letters reveal a cynicism towards organized religion. Nevertheless, even his secular leanings were no protection to the disillusionment of the Holy Land.

Twain joined Cook's first tour to sail on the Quaker City to Europe and the Holy Land. Nelson H. Graburn in *Tourism: The Sacred Journey* describes Cook as a Baptist minister and social reformer who "combined his visions of dramatic travel and the promotion of sobriety, with the chance to profit financially from the opportunities for taking townspeople to the countryside or abroad" (Graburn 1977:25). Twain also profited from the trip. His *Innocents Abroad*, the most widely read travel book in the American canons, made him over three hundred thousand dollars and

established his literary reputation. Twain's travel book, a compilation of his letters and diary, was assembled and considerably toned down on his return home. In the text, his deprecating mockery escalates with his arrival in the Holy Land. Critics attribute his darkening mood to his cholera in Damascus, his concern over the loss of half of his letters in Constantinople or his movement from fun-seeker in Europe to pilgrim in Palestine (see Michelson 1980: 397; Ganzel 1965:133). Twain's disapproval of the Holy Land was compounded by his irritation with the religious hypocrisy and petty stubbornness of his fellow travelers. For critic Harold McCarthy, Mark Twain's voyage "proved to be a serious, exhausting affair driving Twain to a savage assessment of the Pilgrims that was, in part, a reaction to the bitter recognition that his own concept of Christianity had been a wistful dream" (McCarthy 1970:250). Although Twain has moments of admiration and awe, as upon his visit to Baalbek in Lebanon, his pervasive disenchantment extends over the setting for the Bible and the Arabian Nights.

A harsher variation of the triple landscape emerges out of Twain's narrative. Twain's American cultural consciousness and nationalism colored his perception of the diminutive size of Palestine in relationship to its historical significance and in comparison to the vastness of the United States. Bennett Kravitz, Professor of American Studies at Haifa University, claims that for Twain "The Holy Land is simply too small to be real" (Kravitz 1997:60). Like other literary critics of American literature, Fuad Sha'ban and Bennett Kravitz characterize 19th century American nationalism as rooted in Puritanism and missionary in nature. Sha'ban observes: "One of the most enduring characteristics of 19th century American nationalism was its outlook and missionary nature" (Sha'ban 1991:21) and he continues "The idea of establishing the kingdom of God, or God's American Israel as it was called, was a dominant American religious vision throughout American history" (10). This cultural consciousness embraced the rediscovery of the Holy Land (21) and partially explains the popular interest in Cook's first tour. Twain's disapproval of the Holy Land enhanced his own nationalistic pride. Kravitz concludes: "If America in the pilgrim's mindset is the new Israel with the chosen people, how could the old Israel be anything less? Though clearly a disappointment to Twain, biblical geography can also be interpreted unconsciously as a confirmation of American greatness" (Kravitz 1997:58). Twain boarded the Quaker City with his American literary tradition and the restored confident bravado following the end of the Civil War. Critic Jeffrey Steinbrink observes: "The possibility of his being simply overwhelmed by a sense of the vastness of the Old World history, however, was undercut by his confidence – in 1867 – that the

United States was the land of the present and the future” (Steinbrink 1983:282). Twain’s patriotism, his constant companion on his voyage, strips the Holy Land of not only its biblical heritage but its romance as well.

His peopled landscape and landscape of desolation share similarities with Thackeray’s sentiments. His first landscape is populated with the same character types of Thackeray’s including one small exemplary religious group. Like Thackeray, Twain’s peopled landscape contains one qualified bright spot. Unlike Thackeray who finds this ray of civilization in the British missionaries, Twain is disgusted by his fellow American missionaries who live in “relative luxury” amidst poverty (Ganzel 1968: 248). Twain discovers his oasis of humanity in the Palestinian priests of Mar Saba. His first reaction to these men living in the monastery is that “they have banished the tender grace of life and left only the sapped and skinny mockery ... They are dead men who walked” (447). Yet in his gratitude for their hospitality, Twain recants his first impression writing: “There is something human about them somewhere. They knew we were foreigners and Protestants, and not likely to feel admiration or much friendliness toward them. But their large charity was above considering such things. They simply saw in us men who were hungry and thirsty and tired and that was sufficient” (448). Twain’s perception of their ‘something human’ is a meager recognition of their humanity matched only by their stark existence. Twain’s remaining peopled landscape is filled with those without “something human”.

Like Thackeray, he derides the religious squabbling, is inconvenienced by the poverty and avoids specific human observation through a general and disparaging overview. He portrays the Arabs as quarreling dogs (361), men who abuse their horses which they ride while their bare-footed women walk (353). He also uses animal imagery to describe Jerusalem, a “chicken coop upside down” under the Moslem flag of poverty (416). Twain reiterates Thackeray’s chagrin in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. He observes; “History is full of this old Church of the Holy Sepulchre – full of blood that was shed because of the respect and the veneration in which men held the last resting place of the meek and lowly, the mild and the gentle, Prince of Peace!” (427). Foreshadowing a popular contemporary parallel, the Palestinians remind him of Indians: “They sat in silence, and with tireless patience watched our every motion with that vile, uncomplaining impoliteness which is so truly Indian and which makes a white man so nervous he wants to exterminate the whole tribe” (350). Arriving in the Holy Land with his American self-righteous sense of hustle bustle still intact, Twain extends his disfavor towards the Bedouins. For Sha’ban, the Bedouin is usually attractive to Americans:

“Perhaps the Arab of the desert was a reminder of the past innocence of America before the advent of political, cultural and industrial maturity. In a sense, the Arab provided an outlet, an escape to the world of romance and simplicity” (Sha`ban 1991:185). Yet for Twain, just one “glance at the genuine son of the desert is to take the romance out of him” (407). Like Thackeray, Twain never feels in the slightest physical danger and remarks that “neither Bedouins nor ordinary Arabs have shown any disposition to harm us” (402). He only fears being “shot accidentally by one of them” (402). He mocks both them and himself when he writes “But I believe the Bedouins to be a fraud now. I have seen the monster and I can outrun him. I shall never be afraid of his daring to stand behind his own gun and discharge it” (358). Twain’s jest empties the last remnant of romance from the Holy Land.

Twain’s published reactions to the indigenous population as well as his traveling companions were toned down considerably. Richard Bridgman quotes Twain’s personal journal; “In his notebook Twain burst out: “The people of this region in the Bible were just as they are now – ignorant, depraved, superstitious, dirty, lousy, thieving vagabonds”” (Bridgman 1994:45). While in *The Innocents Abroad* Twain writes “Palestine is not changed any since those days, in manners, customs, architecture, or people” (373). The lack of change, the experience of traveling back in time for the westerner, is both the source of attraction and revulsion. Despite the discrepancy between Twain’s personal and published reaction, the text does not conceal the stifling effect of Palestine on his imagination.

In addition to his incredulousness over the small size of Palestine, like Thackeray, Twain is struck by the desolation of the landscape, which unlike the Bible or Arabian Nights, is beyond imagination. He awards Palestine a dubious travel award: “Of all the lands there are for dismal scenery, I think Palestine must be the Prince” (454). Twain sees none of Titian’s colors in the sky, instead: “The Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee sleep in the midst of a vast stretch of hill and plain wherein the eye rests upon no pleasant tint, no striking object, no soft picture dreaming in a purple haze or mottled with the shadows of the clouds” (454). He describes the failure of the landscape to inspire: “A desolation is here that not even imagination can grace with the pomp of light and action” (386). The landscape is stripped of any signs of nature: “But alas, there is no dew here, nor flowers ... nor birds ...” (361). Twain’s response to the disappointing landscape is not colored by the projected terror of Thackeray but by a disconcerting mental sterility which reflects Twain’s evacuation of cultural values from the Holy Land. In this perceived vacuous geography, Twain’s imagination goes blank. Over and over

again he emphasizes the impotence of his imagination. He complains: "Anyone can imagine the Annuciation, but none can in Nazareth" (392). He cannot picture Jesus in Nazareth; he can only "frame ...a vague faraway idea of the majestic personage" (399). Standing at the Jordan River, he confides: "I cannot comprehend this; the Gods of my understanding have always been hidden in the clouds very far away" (350). Twain's savior no longer resides in the Holy Land.

Twain's third landscape is further removed than Thackeray's spot of selective reconciliation for Twain is unable to assimilate the terrain to either his Biblical or literary imagination. His discontent is so profound that his landscape of reconciliation to the past is reduced to a futuristic sentimentality. Twain acknowledges only the possibility of the landscape of reconciliation and he projects it to a removed time and space. However some form of reconciliation is imperative to give meaning to his travel narrative. Unlike Thackeray who posits the value of his voyage in the *Arabian Nights*, Twain finds the positive aftermath of his voyage in Europe and America. Twain explains to his reader: "Our experiences in Europe have taught us that in time this fatigue will be forgotten; the heat will be forgotten; the thirst, the tiresome volubility of the guide, the persecutions of the beggars—and then, all that will be left will be the pleasant memories of Jerusalem, memories we will call up with increasing interest as the years go by, memories which someday will become all beautiful when the last annoyance that encumbers them has faded out of our minds never again to return" (437). His personal growth in Europe allows him to recreate a favorable impression of the Holy Land. For Forest G. Robinson, Twain will not remember rather, because "A memory that functions in this way is, of course, misnamed; for what Twain describes in these passages is not remembering but forgetting" (Robinson 1986:59). Nevertheless, despite Twain's acute dismay in Jerusalem, and subsequent memory lapse, he predicts the city will become a beautiful memory for the pilgrims.

His disenchantment with the Holy Land is so pervasive that the reconciliation can only occur in the comfort of home in the form of an edited memory. Despite his acute dismay in Jerusalem, he predicts the city will become a beautiful memory for all the pilgrims. Temporarily saddled with an impotent imagination, Twain realizes his memory will create a landscape of reconciliation, which he does not share with the reader. If the reader is fortunate to have maintained his own fertile imagination, he may refer back to the *Arabian Nights* or the Bible. However, Twain's *Innocents Abroad* leaves the reader with a final image of severance, of vacating the spirit of the Holy Land from the landscape.

In attempting to understand American foreign policy in the Middle East, examining just the political and economic interests is not sufficient, and unfortunately, the place of the Holy Land within the cultural consciousness of America is often neglected. Mordecai Richler ominously writes: "Twain couldn't know that something like 135 years later the right-wing editor of *The Jerusalem Post*, David Bar-Illan, would brandish Twain's condemnation of Moslem rule as a license for Israel's sole possession of the city" (13). Both Twain's and Thackeray's inability to see the germ of the Bible in the terrain of the Holy Land set a dangerous precedent in their travel narratives of erasing Christianity from its birthplace. Although Twain observes that "Travel is fatal to prejudice, bigotry and narrow-mindedness and many of our people need it sorely on these accounts" (489), unfortunately, *The Innocents Abroad* and *Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*, despite their humorous irony, serve to reinforce rather than diminish "prejudice, bigotry and narrow mindedness". Ultimately, the cultural evacuation of Jesus from Palestine can be used to justify the unchristian foreign policy of predominantly Christian countries towards their international neighbor.

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CHAPTER SEVEN

ART AND CINEMA

THE LANDSCAPE OF PALESTINE IN ARABIC ART

Samia A. Halaby

Our subject is the landscape of Palestine in all its historical and political dimensions from the earliest times to the present. It is very beautiful – a land full of our ancestors which in its turn nurtures us. We, Palestinian Arabs, have lived with it for millennia. In the most substantial part of our consciousness we feel that we are a part of a larger population and land entity with Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. This has obvious historical roots. And nationally, with them we share being Arabs. But for now, we Palestinian Arabs are either exiles or we are prisoners in some small parts of Palestine held there by foreign invaders who also hold most of our land and profit by our work.

I have chosen to write about our art and particularly about landscape pictures of Palestine within the larger context of the art of the Arab world. Historically, landscape pictures can be descriptive of their subject matter in either a general manner or they can be precise and specific. That is, they can refer to views of land without reference to specific location or they can be an empirical observation of specific locations. For example, one can paint a painting from memory of the type of landscape in and around Birzeit without it being one specific location. There would be olive trees and stone walls and rocky mountains arranged in the typical ways of this area. This would have the flavor of the surroundings of Birzeit. Meanwhile if an artist sat at al-Manara Square in Ramallah and painted the square it would be a specific landscape of specific things which do not occur in this precise arrangement any other place. Although we do not normally demand specificity from landscapes, we do know that scientific and empirical observations represent an important step in the historical development of culture.

Landscape views of the general type are extremely ancient in origin such as those from the ancient art of Egypt and Iraq and China. Prehistoric views showing animals and trees and hunters even if they have limited formal syntax are also landscapes.

There are also landscape views which are neither general nor specific. This third type is the abstract picture based on nature. They represent not what the eye sees of appearances but rather what the mind understands of the rhythm and measure of nature. Abstract painters, of course, think that that is a higher more sophisticated level of visual thinking than empirical observation. And it is of course scientific in its attitude. Similarly, in most of our human disciplines, the ability to use principles abstracted and distilled from reality which can apply generally is more useful and more advanced. For example in mathematics it is obvious that to know how to add is more valuable than possessing the answer to the sum of a set of numbers.

According to the present state of our knowledge, landscapes of a general type showing local flora and fauna were created in Palestine and near surroundings as long ago as 7500 years BCE. That is, as long ago as nine and half millennia before our time there are examples of rows of men and of animals painted on rock faces. Several examples, found at Tleilat al-Ghassul in southern Jordan, date from approximately three and a half millennia BCE. One of them is described as being of "a large eight-pointed star with gazelles, birds, and humans". Another example is of rows of human figures which appear to be masked. They were found on the interior walls of buildings which seem to represent homes (Bienkowski 1996:6). Another example made of granite and influenced by Mesopotamian art comes from Beisan and represents a hunting scene consisting of a lion and a dog. It dates from 1460 to 1360 BCE. There are also many examples of flora and fauna on ancient pots made by ancient Palestinians such as the Canaanites and others. Although these ancient landscapes are general, they do represent the natural life and the peoples who were our ancestors and who occupied the land of Palestine.

Ancient landscapes from regions of modern Syria and Lebanon are more numerous, and of course from Egypt and Iraq there are monumental examples from major civilizations. I present one example from among the accomplishments of the Phoenicians, because of the geographic proximity. This example is a dagger shield which comes from Byblos. It is a landscape of people and animals found at the "Temple of Obelisks" and dates from the 20th or the 19th century BCE.

On the other hand, landscape views of specific places are a more recent historical development. They imply an advancement in knowledge. Some of the earliest landscapes referring to specific locations were done in the Levant and date from the 2nd to the 8th centuries AD. They are a part of a larger body of work much of which was created during the Byzantine period, but have attributes unique to the early formation of Arab culture

from the various ancestral tribes and empires of the area. I will call them the early Arab mosaics in this paper as they properly deserve to be called.

Christian panel painting had its origins among the ancient peoples of Syria, Palestine, and Egypt all of whom became the modern Arabs. It is not only on the basis of these mosaics that this statement is made but on the basis of the existence of wall paintings, burial panels, and icons in the earliest Christian churches in Egypt, Palestine, Greater Syria, and Turkey. A very special find was made at the church in Jerash, in modern Jordan, of two small icons dating from 531 AD (Piccirillo 1993, pl. 129).

The early Arab landscapes were executed in mosaic and their most mature flowering was during the period of the 4th to the 8th centuries. Greek was the language used for the many inscriptions in these mosaics to give the date, the religious administrator, the patrons, and amazingly sometimes the names of the artists who created them. These inscriptions show that the clergy of the churches were both spiritual and administrative heads and used the Greek language and Greek names. Aramaic was sometimes used. The Lower Church of Al-Qwesme which lies 3 kilometers south of Amman is noteworthy in that it contains an inscription in Aramaic which mentions two patrons, a man and his wife who, it is presumed, contributed to the building of the church. What is significant is the obviously Arabic names of the patrons who are Abd Ghaythu and Habbiba¹. This serves to remind us that although the official language of the Church was Greek and many in the congregations used Greek names, the population of the area was essentially early Arab in its makeup.

Returning to the concept of the empirical landscape, one can find early landscapes of specific sites as early as the Han Dynasty in China such as the clay tile from Szechwan which is believed to be a view of the "Salt Mine at Ch'ung-lai" (Loehr 1980:1-2). There are many landscape views among the ancient pictures of Crete, Greece, and Rome. Although I could not find detailed information, in my judgment several of them seem to be of specific locations. It is important to point out that excluding the eastern Mediterranean in ancient times, European painting arrived at the specific landscape long after the landscapes of Palestine and Syria. While we cannot describe the Arab mosaics as being a first in the area of specific landscapes we can describe them as being some of the first such landscapes of history.

These unique Arab and Palestinian landscapes are contained in the mosaics found on the floors of ancient churches, mosques, palaces and

¹ The script has been translated and reads: "May the lord Jesus Christ bless this place and all among us who love him. Amen, because to him it is that Stephen sings. Abd Ghaythu (and) Habbiba. Amen".

shops throughout ancient Arabia, Palestine, and Syria. On first view one is impressed by how much these mosaics share with neighboring arts surrounding Palestine. These mosaics exhibit attributes learnt from ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, one cannot miss the ancient Greek and Roman qualities in the mosaics. Most of all they fall within the larger tradition of Byzantine mosaics. All these influences from neighbors are typical and natural to the formation of all art.

But along with the above mentioned influences these mosaic pictures also contain a new and a fresh innocence – a special pictorial power. One might even call it clumsiness when it is contrasted to the streamlined excellence of ancient Egyptian, Greek, Mesopotamian, and Roman art. Yet this clumsiness reflects the confidence and energy of a new social order coming to flower among the ancient Palestinians. All those arts which neighbored Palestine came from societies which relied on slavery for their economic life. At the time of the mosaics under question, Palestine was entering into the more advanced social phase of feudalism. This is what gives the Palestinian mosaics their special quality of confident inventiveness and innocence.

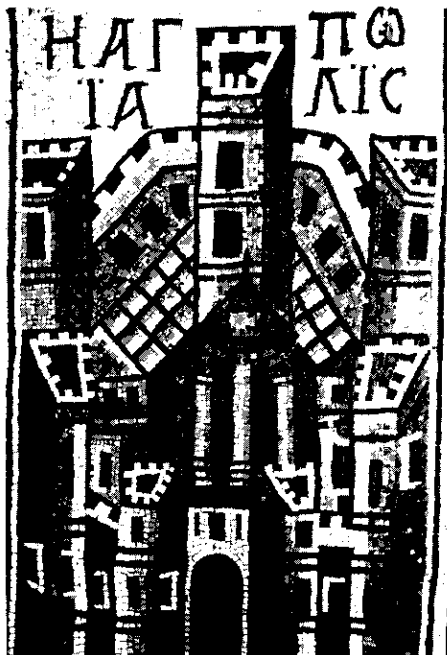


Fig. 1. Mosaic representing Jerusalem (Hagia Polis), Church of St. Stephen, Ma'in (Jordan), 8th cent. AD

The progress of this new social order, freer and more advanced than ancient slavery, that is Feudalism, is further matured with the coming of

Islam in the early 7th century AD which itself then accompanies the further maturation and growth of the art of Palestine and leads it to a highly developed pictorial art of geometric abstraction.

Mosaic floors are almost all of what survived of most of these churches. There are not as yet studies which might reveal how the walls were treated and if the form and subject matter of possible wall pictures were different from those on the floors. Three unique and historical attributes are contained in this mosaic art of Palestine. These three are, one, the formal space of a floor picture which shares the syntax of a carpet; two, the representation of specific empirical landscapes as noted above; and, three, the beginnings of geometric abstraction in the pictorial language.

An examination of the floor of the Church of St. Stephen in Ma'in, located in modern Jordan just south of Amman, dating from the 8th century AD, demonstrates these three attributes. The appearance of a rich Persian carpet is unmistakable. The large rectangular central field is organized into rows which are landscape scenes of natural objects in horizontal sequence one row below another. Within other examples, sequencing might rotate along the four sides of the rectangle. This is a landscape format which has its origins in ancient Egypt. There are very important formal, spatial, and organizational principles which are found in the pictorial logic of the carpet format and the format of sequential rows. Treatment of these is too specialized for the scope of this study. It is enough to point out that mankind's earliest landscapes were not organized necessarily as we would expect them to be today with our habituation to film and the camera.

There is usually a border which is divided into sections containing geometric motifs or views. At Ma'in our example contains sections of unusual pictorial views, landscapes, of cities and towns. Some of these are: Jerusalem (Hagia Polis in Greek equals Holy City which equals al-Quds in Arabic), Nablus, Qaysaria (Caesaria), Ashkelon, Gaza, Amman (Philadelphia), Madaba. In other mosaics at other locations there are views of Beisan, and Jericho, both very ancient cities of Palestine. These mosaics are landscape representations of specific cities and towns on either side of the Jordan River.

These mosaic examples are different from later European Christian representations. The difference, I believe, lies in the fact that these are some of the earliest Christian paintings and that the religion was as yet fresh and pure and not encumbered by bureaucracy or the many later layers of saints and myths which were not part of the original religion. What is pictured in these mosaics is local flora and fauna of ancient Palestine and Syria, the activities of humble craftsmen and peasants, as

well as the earliest saints. A simple honesty shines through their faces and through the delight with which these shapes are executed. There are no presentational pictures demanding worship such as the "Crucifixion" or the "Virgin and Christ Child;" nor are there frightening pictures of frontal personages standing in triumvirate formation commanding us into obedience. One has the sensations of voluntary and pleasant community participation.

One mosaic which has typical Byzantine presentational frontality and is prophetic of later European painting is the mosaic at the monastery of St. Catherine in the Sinai. Built by the emperor Justinian, it dates from the 6th century and is presentational in nature with a central Christ and St. John and St. Elyas on either side. These mosaics were not applied only to the floors of sacred edifices. Archaeologists are finding them also in palaces, baths and shops. But it seems that it is the church on which the community extended most of its efforts. After the coming of Islam many Christians and Jews converted to Islam. There was not a replacement of the population by outsiders but rather a large scale conversion of the local population to Islam which was considered a renewal of Christianity which itself was seen as a renewal of Judaism. With this change we see the political, social, economic, and cultural maturing of the then nascent Arab World in Palestine. At this same time substantial new Omayyad Arab villas and palaces were built in modern Jordan which contained mosaics of the type under discussion. Indeed, mosaics of this type which date from this early period exist to this day on the interior of the Dome of the Rock² and on the courtyard walls of The Great Mosque of Damascus³.

Omayyad murals at Qusayr al-'Amra, and Qasr al-Hallabat, and of Khirbet al-Mafjar near Jericho, in both Jordan and Palestine contain illusionist pictures representing landscapes in the traditions of the early Arab art of mosaics of the first eight centuries AD.

The third attribute of these early Arab mosaics, that of geometric abstraction is of special significance. It seems that the ancient Arabs, prior to the ascendancy of Islam in the Arab World, expressed a clear aesthetic tendency towards abstraction. This can be seen on the floors of several churches. Examples are the triple Churches of Saints George, Cosmos, and Damianus at Jerash dating from 526 to 534 AD; and the Church of St. Menas, the Egyptian martyr, at the village of Rihab in modern Syria dating from 635 AD. The floor of the Church of St. Menas

² Built between 685 and 692 AD early in the Omayyad period. A good pictorial treatment of the Dome of the Rock can be found in Nuseibeh and Grabar 1996.

³ Built between 706 and 715 AD during the first Omayyad Empire.

is pure in its exclusively geometric patterns and abstractions⁴. At the Omayyad palace al-Hallabat the pictures are also strictly abstract and geometric like some of the earlier churches.

As a tangent observation, it is important to note that these buildings were small and humble in contrast to the palaces and castles of ancient societies because in contrast to the ancients the new social order did not rely on the labor of slaves for its economic life. And its ruling layer was less centralized and more numerous as a percentage of the whole. The development of and the causation behind Arabic art cannot therefore be divided into Christian and Islamic. To understand what is happening we must not be blinded by the idea put forward by historians that the Arabs came to Palestine and somehow replaced or overwhelmed the local population. This is how the oppressive history of the West and Israel might describe it trying to make us seem like foreigners in our own land⁵.

The historical facts show that Arab identity developed right here in our own land during the first millennium BCE, the first centuries AD. That development began among the tribes and city states of the Arabian peninsula during the first millennium BCE and continued through the Christian era in the areas we now call the Mashreq (The Arab East) during the first six centuries AD and matured during the Islamic centuries throughout the Arab World, both Mashreq and Maghreb (The Arab West). Thus the coming of Islam marked a point of maturation but not a division between an earlier narrative pictorial art and a later geometric abstraction. Clearly Islam as the most modern feudalist religion was the landmark event of the maturation of Arab culture from ancient times. It is crucial to see it as a time of maturation and not a break in the growth of our culture. Ample proof of this lies in the fact that the earlier Christian Arab art contained substantial beginnings of the later geometric art and similarly early Islamic Arab art contained the narrative imagery which is

⁴ Churches pertaining to this era include the Church of the Map dating from the 6th century AD, Church of the Apostles 578 AD, Chapel of the Twahl Family, the Baptistery Chapel 492 AD, and the Crypt of St. Elianes 595-96 AD, all in Madaba. The Old Diakonikon 530 AD is at Mt. Nebo with its mosaics signed by three artists. The Church of the Holy Martyrs from the middle of the 6th century AD known as Khirbet al-Mukhayyat is, village of Nebo in modern Jordan, the Church of St. John dating from 531 AD in Jerash, and the monastery of St. Catherine built by the Emperor Justinian in the Sinai. See Piccirillo 1993.

⁵ One of the most destructive Western scholars who specializes in Arabic art is Oleg Grabar. In his book on "The Formation of Islamic Art" (Grabar 1987), he goes so far as to declare that Arabic art is not art. On page 102 referring to Arabic architecture he writes "The deeper question that remains is whether, in the light of the evidence and hypotheses presented in this chapter, it is entirely appropriate to think of these monuments as works of art".

typical of the above noted earlier arts of this region. The truth then is that in pictorial art a formal line of demarcation cannot be placed to coincide with the religious change. In its place I propose the theory which fits the facts more properly. That being, that the large and gradual conversion from Christianity and Judaism to Islam was the point of a change of religion as subjective expression of a deeper historical, cultural, social and economic maturation -- that is the change in quality which comes at a certain natural point of increase in quantity.

The development of abstraction occurred in Arabic culture at this particular junction of history and specifically in this region of the world. And this development had little to do with the presence or absence of religious sanctions. The Koran had no strictures against narrative pictures yet the early Arabs devoted much to the development of abstraction. Conversely the Bible⁶ contained very heavy handed sanctions against narrative imagery and yet narrative imagery is intimately connected to Christianity. The arts seemed to disregard religious strictures. We can comfortably say that biblical strictures did not stimulate the development of abstraction among Christians anymore than did later Islamic disapproval of imagery stimulate abstraction among the Arabs.

The West as capitalist culture never really understood abstraction in the pictorial arts except as a principle of the organization of narrative imagery. Its appearance in full bloom during the twentieth century was certainly not due to religious strictures or to Western culture but rather to the cultural renewal attending the social upheaval resulting from working class revolution in The Soviet Union. Meanwhile, one can see that the first Christians did not pay attention to these strictures against narrative imagery and proceeded to lay the foundations for early abstraction.

The description above contains stress on the absence of a relationship between religious strictures and the disappearance of narrative imagery. Abstraction was a positive development with social roots and not merely a reaction to strictures of a religious nature. Western historians have generally denigrated Arabic abstraction by describing its flowering as merely a reaction to prohibitions and by labeling it as architectural decoration.

The maturing of Arabic geometric abstraction is the next phase of landscape art in Palestine. The earliest intact example of Arabic geometric abstraction is clearly demonstrated by the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem. The abstraction seen on the floors of early churches and

⁶ Exodus 20:4: "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images or any likenesses of anything that is in heaven or that is in the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth." This is one of the Ten Commandments.

Omayyad palaces is now developed to a high art on the walls of the Dome of The Rock. This is a pictorial art which is abstract, geometric, and based on the lessons of nature.

The Dome of the Rock has been regularly restored and the large marble inlays on the lower panels of the exterior were added during the Ottoman period between 1520 and 1540 AD. Thus the abstractions on the Dome cover a period from the beginnings of Arabic art to its latest periods in the form of the mosaics on the interior of the Dome to the later exterior marble inlays.

To characterize this abstraction as either pictorial or based on nature may baffle many. The development of this theory is laid out in a previous paper on Arabic art⁷. In it the principles which govern how abstraction is extracted from nature through our visual experiences are explained. The further process of how this abstraction is a developmental step in the growth of pictorial form and content is also explained.



Fig. 2. The Dome of the Rock; a View of the Outer Wall. The Lower Panels are of inlaid Black and White Marble, Early 16th Century

Within this paper on the landscape of Palestine, it may be sufficient to mention that all that is in our thoughts about the visual language is based on the things we see with our eyes. Our thoughts reflect the world we see.

⁷ Halaby, *Dimensions of Arabic Art: Time or Depth* (<http://www.art.net/~samia>).

We see and experience the measure and rhythm of nature. Our mind extracts from our visual experiences principles which are then tested for usefulness through practice and experience. We learn to measure and we test our measuring and if this measuring fails then our buildings and our plantings fail. So we learn abstract measure and abstract rhythms from nature and from the forms of our own human society and we use them as a basis for our pictorial arts. Among Arab thinkers the Sufis made it clear to us that early Arab culture admired what "the mind understands" as being superior to what "the eye sees".

Thus, if this harmony of measure is learnt from the land and the trees and the rocks, then let us not mystify its sources and honestly call it landscape. The problem is not with the art or with the artists. The problem is with us and with scholarship in art which is unable to understand visual abstraction. I believe that scholarship in art history in recent decades has shown a willingness to be blind about the sources in nature and reality of abstract art.

Thus the development of geometric abstraction as clearly exemplified by the Dome of the Rock is another historical artistic event which the Palestinian Arabs can claim to have had a major part in. Its intellectual value to world art is immense and has not yet been properly treated and documented, all western scholars on the subject notwithstanding.

Furthermore, the relationship of surface to building to the space around it and its coordination with our concept of place as landscape is an important extension of this theory. The coordination of rock and architecture in the Dome of The Rock and the way in which the Dome is located to crown the city visually is in itself another form of landscape. The Dome exudes a very Arabic concept of landmark and of city-center. It is a magnet which still today guides the hands of photographers. No view of Jerusalem has meaning without it. It is the ultimate artistic presentation of landscape. It even shamelessly adorns Israeli travel ads on American television further exemplifying its power and their jealous attempt to co-opt our culture.

While the new art of geometric abstraction was developing, the art of Christian icon painting continued to be practiced in the Arab World. Two examples from the Master of Aleppo and from the Master of al-Quds are here mentioned briefly as an interjection to point to the parallel existence of the three dimensional art of narrative illusionism in Christian Arab icons along with the three dimensional art of abstraction in Arabic art. While the Arabs developed abstraction, narrative painting using specific imagery continued as a secondary theme in Arab art history. Its practitioners were Christians who continued to execute icons though not

with the richness and originality of the mosaics shown earlier. An obvious rigidity dominated the art during the Middle Ages as it no longer reflected a period of social growth. It came to be a secondary branch of minor proportions. The smallest attempt at modernization by copying European models which had now outstripped Arab icons was and still is rejected by lovers of these icons. The Arab icons of the Middle Ages are very few. They have been studied only minimally. We still have much to learn about them.

Examples of later icons: "Entry into Jerusalem" and "Saint George Fighting the Dragon" both by Michael Mahna al-Qudsi (the Jerusalemite) dating from the second half of the 19th century. Both icons show a landscape and city view in the distance. The second of them shows a city in the distance which is very probably Jerusalem. "The Land of Palestine" painted by an unknown painter of the early 19th century has qualities of form that recall the ancient art of the Arab World and which we will see in contemporary Palestinian painting. This is the tendency to use a narrative structure of small compartments containing segments of ideas which together build up the whole of the idea (Le Musée Nicholas Sursock 1969).



Fig. 3. "The Land of Palestine": Unknown Artist, 1st Half of the 19th Century

The next strong phase of the image of the land of Palestine in Arabic art comes during the twentieth century. Watercolors and drawings were made of Palestine during the 18th and 19th centuries by European travelers. These were artistically inferior and are in truth travel documentation made to take back home to show the exotic lands which

might, someday, be conquered and owned⁸. Such colonialist "Orientalist" pictures, to my own consternation, are highly prized among contemporary Arab collectors who have learnt to see themselves in the distorted mirror which Europe holds up to us rather than the true and truly wonderful mirror of our own history. Meanwhile, art of monumental and historical proportions lies in dust in our own backyard. These are the exigencies of history.

I will turn now briefly to some of the landscape paintings of Palestinian artists of the twentieth century. A year ago when I visited Ismail Shammout and Tamam al-Akhal with Naser Soumi we were given some wonderful news by Ismail. The total of this exciting news is now on exhibition at Darat al-Funun in Amman. The discovery is a Palestinian painter who had exhibited at the 1933 National Arab Festival of the Arts, crafts, and culture which took place in al-Quds. This artist is Zulfa al-Sa'di and among the paintings shown are two landscapes, one of the "al-Aqsa Mosque" measuring approximately 14x16 inches and the other "A village of Palestine" measuring approximately 10x14 inches. Both are oil on canvas dating from just prior to 1933.

There are numerous Palestinian painters who treated the subject of the landscape of Palestine during the twentieth century. I continuously discover these artists and their work but most of the time there is very little documentation or we are told that their works disappeared with the wholesale theft of our possessions, our homes, and our lands by Israelis.

Another early twentieth century landscape painter of Palestine known more for his icons than for his landscapes was Khalil Halaby of Jerusalem. There is a set of murals by this artist which cover entirely the wall and ceiling surfaces of the Syrian Orthodox Church in Bethlehem. These were completed in 1940 and contain the traditional background landscapes typical of biblical themes. Another Halaby needs to be mentioned when landscape painting of Palestine is under consideration. That painter is Sophie Halaby who recently passed away. Sophie was a serious professional painter who studied in Europe and spent her life in Jerusalem. The landscape and the mountains surrounding the city of her birth and death are a primary subject of her lifetime of work.

During the second half of the twentieth century and in recent decades the Palestinian revolution has given new energy to the art of painting and

⁸ A shocking example is one particular work by David Roberts. It is a lithograph titled "Interview with the Viceroy of Egypt at his Palace at Alexandria March 12, 1839". The viceroy is Mohammad Ali of Egypt. The pictorial setting is typically 19th century romantic and clearly representing the average denomination of hack-art paraphernalia rather than any possible actual meeting place. These lithographs were printed by the thousand and hand-painted in the early 19th century by Roberts as a business enterprise.

of landscape in Palestine. Palestinians here and in exile are making great strides and powerful art and much of it represents the land of Palestine.

The image of the land of Palestine in the paintings of contemporary artists has many sources feeding its development. There is influence from European painting of the 19th century. But there are also the qualities of organization from ancient Iraq and Egypt which seem to be a permanent distinguishing quality in the pictorial art of the Arab World. There are the work of several artists, among them: Tamam Al-Akhal, Afaf Arafat, Ibrahim Ghannam, Mona Hatoum, Burhan Karkutli, Sliman Mansour, Muhammad al-Rakoui, Walid Abu Shakra, Omar Shammout, Laila Shawa, Suha Shouman, Naser Soumi, Vera Tamari, Vladimir Tamari, and Samia Zaru⁹.

The paintings of Ibrahim Ghannam are ones which in our century would be most typically accepted as landscapes of Palestine. Not only do they possess the illusionist syntax of land below and distant horizon and sky above but they possess the loving sentiment and detailed knowledge of village life and the life of those who till the land. We feel all the wealth of our memories of Palestine when we see the painting "*yawm el-hisad*" (Day of Harvest). It is easy to revel and relax mentally in the golden wheat and dream of dark green fig trees. A wonderful painting might sometimes be an easy chair for our mind. It is a sentiment which was first expressed by the French painter Matisse.

The installation work by Vera Tamari with the Mediterranean shores of Yafa as its background titled "Oracles from the Sea" is especially wonderful. It brings to us a yearning for the past while it contains promises of the future. Sixteen bas-relief faces made of clay stand at the shores as though they have after long years returned to look at our Yafa and witness what has happened. But it is the idea of return and most of all the fact that they are boldly located on the shores of Yafa that gives great power to this work. There is a measure of assertiveness in going back to the shores of Yafa and lay there her work and claim it with her art as our heritage. This is precisely what is important about this work and why it is significant for the future. Vera Tamari's is a landscape that is unlike the restful familiarity of Ibrahim Ghannam. It contains a newer language but is nevertheless a landscape in its essential attributes.

Two years ago I visited Birzeit University and worked for three weeks with Vera Tamari and her students. True to their visual heritage these students made amazing bas-relief pictures in papier mâché of the land of

⁹ Details of the artisits of this century come from the book by Ismail Shammout, Amman, 1989.

Palestine. They used the language of abstraction. The relationship of the land to their work is unmistakable.

There is an awareness of landscape among the children of our refugee camps that is heightened by the tragic experiences imposed by Israelis. Two such drawings by children, one of the *Intifada* and one of the Battle of Karameh, are worthy of mention. The second one (Fig. 4) is drawn by a child at least one generation after the battle itself where Palestinian refugees using simple armaments beat back a highly armed and mechanized Israeli invasion. This is a landscape of pride and tradition passed orally from parents to children.



Fig. 4. Battle of Karameh, painted 1995 by an Unknown Child, Baq'a Refugee Camp, Amman

Now I would like to make a few observations in conclusion. In the art history of the West there is a policy, the purpose of which is to rob us of the dignity which comes from being heirs to our own cultural history. It facilitates the work of robbing us of our natural resources and the fruits of our work. This policy is the habitual misnaming of our art which robs us of credit for it while giving it the appearance of being fragmented and incoherent. The sense of fragmentation is created by giving it numerous and confusing names. I have just begun collecting all these names and I have quickly collected over three hundred such names. I expect to reach seven or eight hundred such labels when I have spent more time.

Concurrent with this mis-labeling policy is a studied avoidance of using the proper national identification for our art and the art of our ancestors. You will rarely find the name Arab or Arabic in Western art history. As

one example if you look up the title Arab under art and architecture in the card catalog of the New York Public Library you will find only one book and that is because this one book uses the word Arabic in its title. It is a huge indictment of educational and cultural institutions that I could only find one book in this category and it is a further indictment that only one book in the collection bears the word Arabic in its title. Of course there are many books on the subject if one looks under "decoration" or "Islamic".

The treatment of our art on the basis of religion is supported and itself supports the practice of presenting the land of Palestine as the "land of the Bible". By presenting it as the land of the Bible and by referring to its biblical names during prayer every Sunday morning, Western Christians have come to believe that they own this land and that the "heathen" Arabs who believe in "Allah" instead of "God" are foreign intruders. So it is best, they think, that the Jews have it since they are mentioned so often in the Bible. Of course economic exploitation is completely veiled in such discourse. The "Old Testament" concept of the land of Palestine in art is amply demonstrated by a prejudicial catalogue printed to accompany an exhibition of the work of Palestinian artists in Stockholm presented by the Swedish government supposedly to help support Palestinians (Moberg 1998).

Another observation is the tendency in the West to limit information in the mass media about Palestine and The Arab World to peasant life and traditions. Our peasantry is being destroyed brutally while funds are made available to romanticize their life and preserve their culture. This is accompanied by a total silence about the destruction of our cities such as Yafa, Haifa, Jerusalem, and others. There is in the West the sentiment that the destruction of peasant life is acceptable since in a sense "we are helping them to modernize". But destruction of cities and city culture is not perceived as acceptable. Thus funding is made available to films about peasant life or for the selective preservation and documentation of village architecture. On the other hand, funds to tell the story of the burgeoning cultural and political life of Palestinian cities during the thirties, or the incredible intellectual and political developments in the refugee camps, would be almost impossible to obtain. Funds for the preservation of the architecture of our cities which are now being mercilessly destroyed by Israel would be near impossible to gain. The day when we can freely pursue the development of ourselves will come and may come much sooner than most people imagine. I wish to share with you my very strong optimism about our future and my great respect of our incredible and long history with this, our land of Palestine.

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PALESTINIAN LANDSCAPE IN FILMS AND DOCUMENTARIES*

Karl Sabbagh

INTRODUCTION

The history of my interest in the Palestinian landscape is a short one. As the son of a Palestinian father, brought up in England, it was many years before I could even consider visiting the occupied land of my ancestors. Apart from a brief visit to Jerusalem and the West Bank in 1963, I didn't visit Palestine until the late 1980's when my job as a television producer and director brought me here. It was then that I realized how important *experiencing* the landscape is, and how pale and shadowy was the impression I had had up to that point from still and moving images in the media.

I remember driving for the first time in the early morning from the airport to Jerusalem in the pitch dark and seeing faint outlines of hills, the pinprick of lights from villages, and the pale lit road signs in Arabic and Hebrew, and realizing that if things had gone differently I could have been traversing a territory that was mine in a national sense, a territory which, mile after mile, up hill and down dale, and stretching off either side of the road I was on, would have been – and was – Palestine.

During my later visits in the midst of my work I was doing here, I would take occasional opportunities to experience the landscape again. Always, the impact was strongest when I was moving – somehow time came into the equation as well as space. It was the unrolling under my feet and past my eyes for hours on end of territory which so clearly was and always had been Palestinian which struck me first. And then as I looked more closely at the characteristics of that landscape I began to ask myself what it was that was changing my perception, and producing this intellectual and emotional identification I was feeling – really for the first time – as Palestinian and why I had not appreciated it before.

* The reader is requested to imagine the wide range of video examples which accompanied the oral presentation of the present study.

THE MEDIA DECISION-MAKERS

Most people don't have the opportunity that many of us have had – to visit this landscape for ourselves and experience it. The views of Palestine and of the interrelationships between land, landscape and people are shaped by the visual media. Television and the cinema in particular can have a powerful impact on the viewers in ways of which they are not aware. They are also not very often aware of the choices that have been made by the people producing the films and documentaries, and how those choices can – deliberately or inadvertently – lead to the formation of misleading perceptions in the viewers' mind.

Every shot we see in a movie or documentary involves choices. There are three people who determine those choices: the director, the cameraman, and, in the case of drama producers, the designer. The director is someone, who, along with a producer or writer, has an overall view of the effects to be achieved and considers how best to achieve the effect by the way foreground and background are organized in the shot. He or she will place actors or presenters or interviews in such a way that they conceal or reveal whatever is behind them. The cameraman will contribute to this purpose by making his own suggestions for what to include in the shot or by his choice of the lens to use or how to move the camera if this is required. Often a shot will be set up to concentrate on the foreground – an interview, a building, some human activity – but because cameramen abhor a vacuum they will arrange the shot so that there is also something interesting in the background. How often do we see the Dome of the Rock in the background to the newsreader or presenter in television coverage of the Arab-Israeli conflict? This building has become a powerful symbol to people in the media but it is often used to symbolize little more than the geographical location of the city of Jerusalem. In fact, of course, its symbolism is very specific – of the Islamic presence in the Holy City, of the importance of Jerusalem to Muslims everywhere, of the historical connection of the Arab people with Jerusalem over centuries. But often it is used as a background to stories of Christianity, Israeli politics, Palestinian resistance, Israeli travelogues or the Bible.

I have also seen it used entirely inappropriately as an introductory shot to a story about Judaism. Here, an unthinking director – or maybe it was the cameraman on his own initiative – was seduced by the juxtaposition of the Dome of the Rock and the Western Wall into filming a shot that started on the Dome and tilted down to Jews praying at the wall, before the narration – exclusively about Judaism – began.

There is a second role the director plays in the process at a later stage and that occurs during the editing of the material. Some of the extracts consist of sequences – that is to say, a successions of shots, all filmed at a

different time and in a different order, that are chosen by the director and an editor weeks or months after shooting to be run in sequence, with music on narration or with the voice of an interviewee overlaid. Often the full effect of the director's intentions only becomes clear at this stage, where the emotional tone of a piece of music can transform the effect of a shot or sequence from tragic to comic, lyrical to animated.

With fiction or drama films, there's an additional participant – the production designer, who is responsible for creating whatever it is the cameraman shoots and the director directs. His or her role is not confined to interior sets but can involve creating landscapes from scratch and peopling them with plants, animals and people in ways that reflect far more the designer's ignorance than the realities of the situation. Camels, for example, seem to populate movie representations of Palestinian landscapes in a far greater profusion than their true prevalence reflects.

Between them, these people, and their colleagues such as researchers, producers, editors and other production staff, form the perceptions of the general public in ways which are sometimes intended, sometimes just a by-product of their own biases or lack of knowledge. What's more, they often feed each other's preconceptions, since they may draw their own ideas from the visual productions of others, perpetuating a mythology of beliefs about the Middle East which then feeds future generations of filmmakers and TV directors.

Factual programs where we are entitled to expect a high degree of accuracy, through background research, and an intelligent understanding of the issues can suffer from a tenuous contact with the facts when they are produced or filmed by people who may have little more experience of the subject matter than tourists get on a package tour. They are therefore reduced to shooting for the easy image in an unthinking use of the familiar – rather than striving for innovation, originality or insight.

SOME EXAMPLES

I have noted representations of Palestinian landscape in two types of material – fiction and fact (although often what is offered as fact in Middle East journalism is pure fiction). The kind of everyday examples – some good, some bad – that I came across in an admittedly unrepresentative sample illustrate some of the ways in which the audience's impression of the Palestinian landscape is shaped by the decisions or by the whim of the production team.

The fiction examples are taken largely from biblical movies (where the situation is complicated by the fact that many Jews and Christians believe Biblical movies present facts). For many people in the west, their view of the Palestinian landscape is derived entirely from modern Biblical

production. It is after all the Holy Land. But sometimes there is only a slight connection between the images presented to a movie going audience and the reality of the land where Christ was born. And those images are entirely under the control of the production team, whereas factual producers are required to pay some attention to the facts, to what is "out there".

There is one particular subset of films which played a peculiarly significant role in the whole Palestinian situation, and that was the cinema newsreels of the 1930s and 1940s. Here, condensation was the key. Before television these were the only visualizations of current affairs that were available to the general audience, and yet they had to be crammed into a newsreel whose total duration was about fifteen minutes with maybe half a dozen stories. In the space of three or four minutes a whole complex situation had to be summed up by a narrator, with pictures, often devoid of synchronized sound, that relied on the immediate impact of an arresting image. There was also the temptation, not always resisted, to create facts in front of the camera, so that Allenby's march into Jerusalem in 1918 or, in a similar vein, the Jewish takeover of the city in 1967 took place in front of well-established and clearly pre-organized camera position. Sometimes, this led to the recreation of events that had occurred previously when cameras were absent, allowing a fertile source of opportunities for massaging history for maximum impact.

FICTION

Several films made about Moses and the Old Testament for the cinema or television feature use the same device to convey the arrival of the Children of Israel within sight of the Holy Land. A barren piece of ground rushes by, as if the camera is travelling at speed pointing downwards. Dry earth, hard rocks and jagged stones pass by the viewer. The shot widens and tilts up, and we see a group of people standing on some sort of escarpment. As we fly over their shoulders we see what they are seeing – a vast green sward with palm trees and glimpses of pools or streams and of course no visible inhabitants. The music swells, the people exclaim, and in a few seconds the film director has made the point – these poor ragged people, previously condemned to march around on the barren strip of land we have just seen, have arrived at a well-deserved land of their own, "flowing with milk (actually from somebody else's cows) and honey (from somebody else's bees)".

The poetic license taken to make a specific point dramatically is breathtaking. In this case the director's choice was based on making visually a particular story point – the contrast between the plight of the Israelites in the desert and the land they were thirsting for. But sometimes the misuse of landscape in Biblical films arises from nothing more than

the director's or production designer's desire deliberately to present a false impression of a particular setting, purely for dramatic effect. The worst example I have come across is the film *The Greatest Story Ever Told* where scenes of the Disciples wandering around the supposedly Palestinian landscape were filmed in the very different landscape of the U. S. state of Utah. The director tells us why:

"I wanted to get an effect of grandeur background to Christ and none of the Holy Land areas shape up with the excitement of the American Southwest ... I know the Colorado [River] is not the Jordan, nor is Southern Utah Palestine. But our intention is to romanticize the area and that can be done better here"

By way of contrast, the sensitive handling of Palestine landscape in Pasolini's *Gospel According to St. Matthew* shows a real desire to reproduce landscape as it might have been at the time of Christ, although even here the director found that "the real thing" in the form of modern Palestine did not fit the impression he was trying to create and so he filmed those scenes in southern Italy.

For an excellent example of how a film director and cameraman represent today's Palestinian landscape, you only have to turn to *Wedding in Galilee* directed by Michel Khleifi. Here there is a symbiosis between the landscape and the people such that one is always intertwined with the other, giving sense of scale and relationship. There is also an intelligent use of the moving camera representing the movement of individual characters through the landscape, reinforcing the point I made above hearing about the personal experience of landscape while moving through it. And sometimes the director uses movement merely as a device to show depth, a traditional function of moving camera in films.

Moving on to documentary films, there is less opportunity for wholesale faking, although I did come across an odd example in a video made to encourage tourism to Israel. Here, certain scenes had a weird reddish haze across the top third of screen, perhaps in a misguided attempt to introduce a note of drama or awe into an otherwise banal production. The cameraman had clearly used a graduated filter of the sort sometimes used if the sky is considerably brighter than the ground. But when used properly the filter has no color – it is merely used to darken the image in decreasing manner from the top of screen and, in any case, should not be noticeable.

When we move to conventional documentary films, usually made for television, we find a range of uses of Palestinian landscape scenes usually chosen to feed the preconception of the director as to what "everyday"

Palestine is like. Thus we find a far higher proportion of camels and donkeys in television documentaries than are found in real life, and a smaller proportion of mobile phones, new cars, and smartly-dressed Palestinians. We also see scenes of Arab poverty – dirty children, dilapidated houses – sometimes juxtaposed with clean, white-plastered, orderly Jewish settlements. Sometimes this architectural chauvinism can backfire, since a sophisticated audience in the West may well find the architecture of the typical Palestinian village embedded in the countryside more pleasing than the brutalizing site and design of many settlements.

In a film like Omar Qattan's *Going Home* about a British policeman revisiting Palestine after fifty years of *Nakba*, we see a more intelligent use of long, panning shots, full of information about the townscape, accompanying a discussion between a father and his son in Gaza about dreams of returning to Jaffa and the futility of such dreams.

Having given you a brief glimpse of how Palestinian landscape is presented at second hand by the media, I'd like to close with some personal views that perhaps explain what I think is missing from – and could never be supplied by – the two-dimensional image on the film or television screen. They arose in the course of my first visit to Palestine in recent years. Various things occurred to me: First there was the scale of the landscape. The image of Palestine in the west is often presented as being a pathological territory in some way, a crowded land torn apart by endless rivalries and with barely enough room for the two communities it now houses. But the endless vistas of hills, fields, valleys, roads and paths bring home on any human scale – on the scale of any human observer – how far for the most part the natural patterns of the growth of the land have produced a varied and well-distributed pattern of habitation which seems entirely natural, the result of centuries of organic growth, brutally disrupted by global factors.

Second, the use of space in the landscape shows what a varied and sustainable country this has been and could continue to be, with the potential – rapidly being sabotaged – for a sturdy continuity of existence that derives from the variety and quality of its landscape. Potential for cultivation, for habitation, for leisure, for exploitation in all sorts of ways leaps into view as the landscape is experienced in ways that are not so apparent from looking at maps or pictures. It is a landscape and a territory that had every right to be allowed to join the twentieth century and experience controlled and enlightened development, and the fulfillment of a national identity.

Third, the visible evidence of people in the landscape struck me as a further indication of the vitality and continuity of Palestinian life. The

pinpricks of light I first saw through the darkness on the road to Jerusalem spoke eloquently of Palestinian villages, houses, individual rooms even, each with families for whom this was indubitably their land. In some ways, it is only at night that the true extent of the human penetration of the landscape is apparent. When day dawns, the lights are switched off and the honey colored stone merges with rocks, boulders and earth to minimize the true extent to which this landscape is human, and in fact Palestinian.

For there was another observation I made, a personal one and perhaps with no great significance but worth noting: there's a sense with the Palestinian landscape, that the Arabs are *in* it but the Jews are *on* it. Apart from the few historical Jewish communities, the two people – Palestinian Arabs and largely foreign Jews – show their presence in the landscape in fundamentally different ways. There are two factors here – social and political. The social factors lead to the Jewish presence being modern, artificial, contrived, often clashing with the landscape, almost as if deliberately. From single houses to whole towns, in spite of their desire to establish a firm and long-lasting presence in the landscape, the Jewish communities seem planted, resting on the land rather than embedded in it. The political factor that enhances that impression is the desire to express dominance by placing these already inappropriate communities on the tops of hills or overlooking roads in a way that emphasizes their alienation from the landscape rather than reinforcing an identity with it. The location and design of Arab communities, however, have evolved over centuries, unaffected by modernity of architecture or urban development, and largely ignoring the need to make a political point by where they are placed or how they look. And I do mean political in this case – I am not talking about the location of communities and establishments in strategically important places as a means of defense. The placing of Jewish communities is no longer a strategic necessity, in order to allow hordes of settlers to rush out from their high vantage points at the first sight of attacking bands of Palestinian Arabs, much as they might like to.

Although undoubtedly anecdotal, these personal views of Palestinian landscape were formed by experiencing it, and therefore they are *my* views and impressions, unaffected by directors, cameraman or production designers. But the art of the filmmaker, sometimes the Black Art of the filmmaker, is to use images that are often neutral and embed them in a context that then tells the viewer what to look for in the landscape and what to feel. Poverty, terrorism, nationalism, neglect, oppression, thrift, history, modernity, can all be read into the same piece of landscape if the shots are taken and the sequence edited in a certain way. I hope that by

showing you how many different contexts filmmakers provide for images of the Palestinian landscape, in a continuing stream of programs, films and news bulletins, it may help to focus other discussions we are having on the many different aspects of the Palestinian landscape.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ARCHAEOLOGY

THE ORIGIN OF TERRACES IN THE CENTRAL HILLS OF PALESTINE: THEORIES AND EXPLANATIONS*

Ghattas J. Sayej

INTRODUCTION

Agricultural terraces are human made stone walls, usually used to protect soil from erosion and to retain rain water behind the terrace wall encouraging penetration and conservation of moisture in dry farming regions (Bahn 1992:499; Frick 1985:133; de Geus 1975:67, 122; Orni and Efrat 1980:55; Ron 1966:34). By using these agricultural terraces, farmers can create many level areas on the hillsides for additional cultivation (Gibson and Edelstein 1985:143-4). The amount of labor involved in the construction of agricultural terraces suggests it would require extensive planning and organization (Edelstein and Kislev 1981:55). The interpretation and analysis of terraces has led scholars to various conclusions about their origin. Some of these conclusions inappropriately relate the Palestinian highland of Late Bronze and Iron Age I with ethnic entities without any historical support (Thompson 1992). This paper attempts to present the different theories on the origin and expansion of agricultural terraces in the central hills of Palestine.

LANDSCAPE AND SETTLEMENTS DISTRIBUTION

Typical of modern agricultural villages, the percentage and frequency of cultivation and terraced areas decreases as distance from a village increases. This typical pattern of the modern and, presumably, ancient settlements in the central hills of Palestine was determined by the availability of cultivable land. This is the reason behind the location of most of the recent Palestinian villages, as well as ancient sites, on the

* I would like to express my debt to Dr. Basem Ra'ad (Birzeit University) who encouraged me to write on this subject in the first place. I wish also to thank Dr. Gary Christopherson (Arizona University) for his fruitful comments and advice. The author is also indebted to Thomas Thompson (Copenhagen) and Malcolm Wagstaff (Southampton) who reviewed the paper suggesting some additions and corrections.

margins of the highland plateaus and at the high points of ridges bordering them. Therefore, the nature and distribution of terraces in the central hills are mainly dependent on the landscape of the region and on human factors. The farmers have to be familiar with the landscape of the region as well as with its climatic and hydro-graphic characteristics. This helps them to make the best and most effective use of their land (Finkelstein 1988:130; Ron 1966:119-122). Recent studies have shown that terracing in Palestine was introduced in the *wadis* perhaps already in the Chalcolithic period and Early Bronze I, and shifted to slope terracing in the Late Bronze Age and Iron II (Thompson 1975; 1979; 1992). Terraces, thus, characterize and typify all the central hills of Palestine from ancient times until the present.



Fig. 1. Terraces in the Region of Birzeit

TERRACES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

The central hills of Palestine have many sites from the Chalcolithic period and the Bronze Age (4500-3300, 3300-1200 BCE, respectively), such as Hebron, Jerusalem, al-Jib, Tell en-Nasbeh, et-Tell (Ai), Beitin (Bethel), Khirbet Silun (= Shiloh), Tell el-Far'a North, Tell Balata (Shechem), just to mention a few (Ahlstrom 1982:133-8; Callaway 1985:34-6; Finkelstein 1988:47-91; 1994:155-6, fig. 2, 3; Kenyon 1966:13-38; Mazar 1981:80; Silberman 1992:22). The emergence of planned farming communities, including houses with courtyards during the Chalcolithic period marks the beginning of traditional village patterns similar to those seen in Palestinian villages today. This is best seen in the large scale excavations, such as at Tell el-Far'ah North, which provide excellent plans of these advanced farming villages (Levy 1986:87-8). The intensification of fruit growing, such as olives and dates, makes its first appearance in Palestine

during this period and became integral elements of food production (Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:12; Levy 1986:103-4). Terraced vineyards and wine presses appeared during the Early, Middle, and Late Bronze Ages, and the hilly regions supplied most of the wine production in early Palestine (Gibson and Edelstein 1985:145; Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:12; Stager 1982:116). Archaeological evidence from both Palestine and Egypt indicates that wine and olive oil were among the most important goods exported from Palestine to Egypt. The rise of a stable-complex society in the Early Bronze Age opened the way to the development of specialized horticulture in the central hills of Palestine and intensified the specialization of its communities (Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:13-14).

The results of Finkelstein's survey in 1987 of the region of Beitin and Sinjil show dozens of sites from Middle Bronze Age II and Late Bronze Age (Finkelstein 1988:185-6). According to him, settlement activities during the Middle Bronze Age II were concentrated on the desert fringe and in the central part of the West Bank, while during the Late Bronze Age the number of sites decreased and activities were restricted only to the central hills. During Iron Age I and II, however, sites increased again all over the region (*ibid.* 121-202). The variation in the number of settlements between these different periods might clarify the movement of people and their expansion in the central hills, on the one hand, and in the plains and valleys on the other. There is, however, no evidence of new cities in the central hills of Palestine following the transition to Iron Age I (1200- 1000 BC). The lack of new cities might lead us to conclude that the majority of the population lived in small settlements, with the existing cities serving as administrative centers (Ahlstrom 1982:133-8). This suggests that occupation of the central hills, long before the beginning of the Iron Age, was related to terrace farming.

THEORIES ON THE ORIGIN OF TERRACES

THE UNIFIED MILITARY CONQUEST THEORY

The archaeological aspect of this theory was first mentioned by Albright in the 1930s (Finkelstein 1988: 295). This approach was closely related to the description of the conquest of Palestine by the Israelites given in the first chapters of the book of Joshua, whereby Canaanite city-states throughout Palestine were brought into subjugation in a series of battles and many of them were destroyed by fire. After their victories, those Israelite tribes which had come up from the desert out of Egypt, invented the agricultural terrace system and settled down in the central hills of Palestine (Finkelstein 1988:295). More recently, scholars such as Ahlstrom (1982) and Borowski (1987) have contended that the newcomers to the central hills in the Iron Age I, brought with them the

knowledge of terrace construction, and that this, the most important factor in the spread of settlements in the central hills of Palestine (Ahlstrom 1982: 133-4, Borowski 1987: 6, 15-8, 163-4). But, how is it possible that the Israelites as nomads were responsible for introducing and practicing terracing agriculture in the central hills of Palestine, something which needs long experience and knowledge of the landscape of the region?

In fact, intensive archaeological surveys contradict this theory. In the first place, the earliest Israelite settlements turned out to be located in the very areas where terraces were less essential, while the classic terraced regions were practically devoid of settlement sites. Second, terraces were obviously in use long before Iron Age I, especially on the western slopes of the central hills, where occupation was obviously impossible without constructing terraces. This indicates that terraces must have been built as early as human occupation in the region (Gibson and Kloner 1986:83; Gibson et al. 1991:36, 48; Finkelstein 1988:202, 309). The need to build terraces was, therefore, a function of topography and population growth, rather than an innovation by a specific ethnic group.

THE INFILTRATION THEORY

This theory, introduced by Alt, examined the occurrence of Israelite settlement against the political, territorial and demographic situation in Palestine during the Late Bronze Age, as reflected in the Bible and in the Egyptian sources. He described Israelite settlement as the peaceful infiltration of pastoral groups into the thinly populated regions of Palestine between the Canaanite city states, thus avoiding a direct conflict with them (Callaway 1985:43; Finkelstein 1988:302-3; de Geus 1975:70). Changing political conditions made it possible for those Israelites to live and work in many small terracing agricultural settlements in the central hills. These settlements were built and situated on places not ideally suited to agriculture but surrounded by fertile lands. They presuppose planning and political organization which helped them to unify themselves and establish their kingdom (Frick 1985:135, de Geus 1975:69-70, Ron 1966:33-49, 111-122).

This theory might be supported by archaeological evidence which shows an increase of sites within Iron Age I and II, all over the region (see Finkelstein 1988:121-202). However, it does not mean that terraces started at this specific period. Thus, if these Israelite tribes were locals moving into the highlands, then it is quite obvious that they would use terrace agriculture, something with which they were already familiar.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

Sociological theories were developed by Mendenhall and expanded on by Gottwald in the 1970s. According to both of them, the overburdened

groups at the bottom of the social strata of the royal Canaanite city-states rebelled against the ruling class. Domination by the upper classes caused the lowest social stratum to drop out of urban society by deserting the large cities of the coastal plain and the valleys in favor of the hill country. There these groups organized themselves in new frameworks and therein lay the origins of Israel (Finkelstein 1988:306). The knowledge of how to build terraces was the most important factor in the spread of these new settlements by the beginning of the Iron Age I (Gottwald 1979:658-9; de Geus 1975; Thompson 1979; Stager 1982).

This theory might be supported also, by the archaeological evidence. The number of sites increased within Iron Age I and II, and included the use of terraced agriculture.

THE GRADUAL TRANSITION THEORY

This theory has been pressed by Finkelstein (1988). He points out that during the 12th and 11th centuries BCE, the central hills of Palestine were the scene of a gradual transition, as groups of pastoralists became sedentaries. The Israelites came into conflict with the Canaanites who were living nearby and in the lowlands. The need to join forces in the face of enemies to assist expansion into additional areas and to defend them against other expanding groups such as the Philistines, gradually created a sense of national, religious, and ethnic awareness among the Israelites. This unification was behind the establishment of the Israelite entity (Bunimovitz 1994:193-4; Finkelstein 1988:351; 1994:177).

This new theory, according to which the Israelite nation emerged from indigenous elements of the Late Bronze Age, stands opposite to the Biblical traditions. Naturally it has produced debate among scholars. Some have suggested that the highland population of Iron Age I originated either from the disintegrating urban-rural population of Palestine who found shelter in the central hills, or from the rural-nomadic population of the central hills. Others held the view that the new settlers were semi-nomads who either lived in symbiotic relations with the Canaanite city-states, or wandered in the central hills and its eastern slopes during the Late Bronze Age and settled during the Iron Age I, following the destruction of the Canaanite urban system (Na'aman 1994:231-2).

The spread of new sites all over the central hills of Palestine during the Iron Age I and II provides an acceptable evidence to argue that those tribes who moved into the highlands regions were familiar with the terracing system. It seems likely that the destruction of the Canaanite city-states during the Late Bronze Age was behind the movement toward the central hills which were less inhabited than the plains and the *wadis*.

CONCLUSION

Exploiting lands for farming activities appeared in Palestine already during the Neolithic period (8500-4500 BCE), when people started to be dependent on an agricultural economy. A few sites from this period, such as Abu Ghosh and Tell el-Far'ah North, appeared in the central hills of Palestine (Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:4). During the Chalcolithic period (4500-3300 BCE) advanced farming villages emerged and the intensification of agricultural production is evidenced by the cultivation of fruits such as olives, dates and grapes. The development of horticulture during this period marks the beginning of terrace agriculture in the central hills of Palestine (Edelstein and Gibson 1982:54; Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:4-6; Marfoe 1979:32), and helped farmers exploit the landscape to provide food for the inhabitants of the cities during the Bronze Age, as well as for themselves.

The theories about the origins of agricultural terraces focus on the Iron Age. Many earlier sites, however, may have been destroyed or covered up by landscape modifications caused by later terracing activities (Gibson and Edelstein 1985:139-40, 153-4; Gibson et al 1991:48; Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:2). This might mean that terrace construction took place in the central hills throughout all the different periods, but it is quite difficult to date them.

In sum, the transition from the Chalcolithic period to Early Bronze Age I in the central hills is characterized by a dramatic growth in both the number of settlements and population. From an economic point of view, there was a shift from small groups based on dry farming and animal husbandry in the Chalcolithic period, to larger agricultural communities specializing in horticulture in Early Bronze Age I. The penetration into the central hills in Early Bronze Age I was stimulated by economic advantages (i.e. the demand for Palestinian olive oil and wine in Egypt). Agricultural specialization encouraged local and international trade and brought about the emergence of administrative institutions, social stratification, and large market centers. This was one of the main factors in the urbanization process that took place in the southern Levant at that time (Finkelstein and Gophna 1993:14). The wave of settlement in the central hills in the Early Bronze Age was the first in a series of such processes, the other two occurring in Middle Bronze Age II and Iron Age I. Horticulture specialization played an important role in the rise of complex societies and territorial entities in the highlands in all three periods (*ibid.*).

Thus, archaeological evidence supports the idea that agricultural terraces increased at the beginning of the Iron Age but the invention of

this technique occurred at least three millennia before the beginning of this period.

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DEMOGRAPHIC PATTERNS AND DIFFERENTIAL SETTLEMENT IN THE BRONZE AGE LANDSCAPE OF PALESTINE*

Joanne Clarke and Louise Steel

INTRODUCTION

The Gaza Research Project has been examining the Bronze Age habitation of the Gaza region with reference to textual evidence, re-examination of previously excavated material, and small-scale archaeological fieldwork within Gaza itself. Our primary aims are to explore the indigenous development of Gaza and its interconnections with Egypt, Cyprus, and the Aegean during the period of the New Kingdom Egyptian empire in the Levant. The focus of this paper however, is the patterns of Bronze Age settlement in the Gaza region in the light of new evidence.

The role played by Gaza during the Bronze Age has yet to be fully assessed. To date discussion has focused on the identification of the ancient city of Sharuhen – chiefly identifying it with the well-known site of Tell el-‘Ajjul on the Wadi Ghazzeah, among others (Kempinski 1974). But such discussions have been hampered by the lack of detailed knowledge of the Bronze Age landscape of Gaza: major sites that should be included in the argument have been excluded from the discussion and the complicated pattern of settlement in the region has been largely ignored. New discoveries in the region of el-Moghraqa, north of the Wadi Ghazzeah, have added to our knowledge of the complex pattern of settlement in the region. This paper will present some of this new

* We would like to thank Dr Moain Sadek, Director of the Department of Antiquities in Gaza for his invaluable help in setting up our research in Gaza and for allowing us to refer in this paper to sites previously unknown in the Gaza region. We are also indebted to the Municipality of Gaza, in particular the Mayor, Mr Aown Shawa, and the director of the Surveying Department, Mr Nihad Almughany for their practical support of our work in Gaza.

evidence and re-address evidence from the better known sites in the region to highlight the shifting patterns of occupation at the southernmost end of the Levantine coastal plain during the third and second millennia BCE. First, we will review the extant evidence for Bronze Age habitation, looking at the major settlements known in the Gaza region. Then we will discuss in more detail the patterns of habitation and the significance for our understanding of the Bronze Age landscape of the southern limits of the Levantine coastal plain.

THE PREHISTORIC PERIOD (J. CLARKE)

Settlement patterns in the pre- and protohistoric periods on the southern

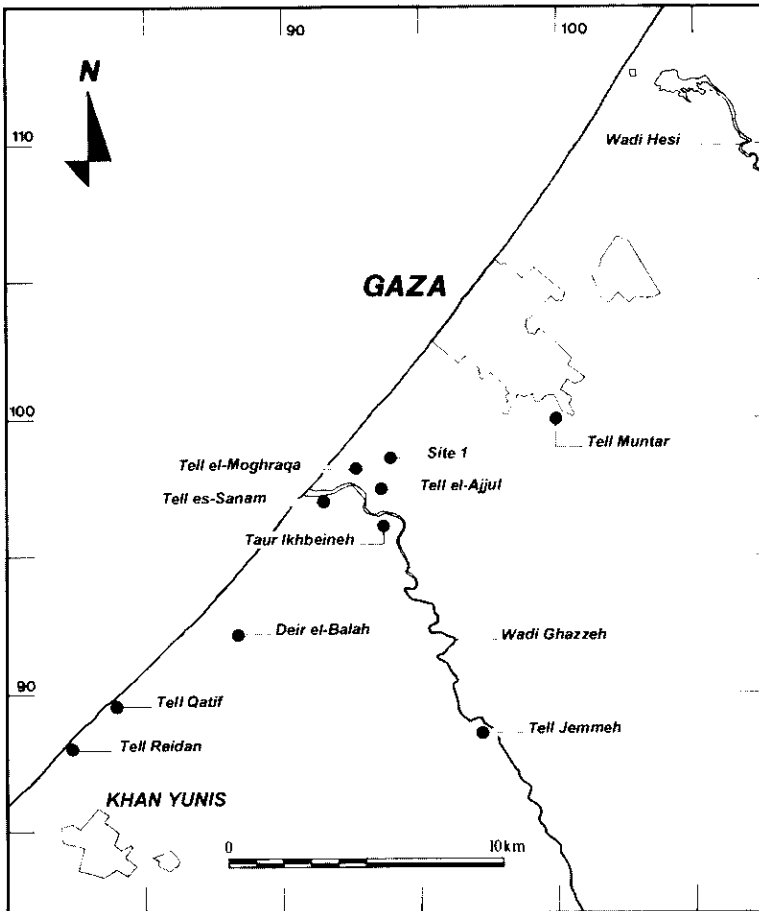


Fig. 1. The Gaza Region

coastal plain are determined by the physical and environmental limitations of the landscape. Although the focus of this paper is Bronze Age settlement in the Gaza region, a short introduction on the earlier periods will highlight the considerable physical changes that have occurred along the coastline over the millennia.

Prehistoric sites on the southern coastal plain are presumably more numerous than demographic patterns indicate. The Gaza region is virtually devoid of sites earlier than the pottery Neolithic, while even in Israel there are fewer sites located on the coastal fringe. This is due to a number of factors, the most significant being the extensive development that has occurred along the coast since the 1930's (Gopher 1993). But other factors, such as settlement location and coastline changes, also reduce the visibility of prehistoric sites. Sites of the 6th millennium B. C. have been discovered up to 18 m below present sea level (for example Atlit Yam, Gopher 1993, 57) and a Late Neolithic (Wadi Rabah phase) site, Newe Yam (Gopher 1993, 57) has been discovered 6 m below present sea level, illustrating the enormous variation in the coastal landscape since prehistoric times. Prehistoric settlement in the southern coastal plain is found over the lowland *kurkar* ridges and in the sand dunes and alluvial fans of the present coastline. The coastal sites, particularly those under sand dunes are less visible in the archaeological record than those on the *kurkar* ridges. Away from the coast, sites are located close to *wadi* stream beds, and in the low hill country behind the coastal plain, close to a water sources. Only one settlement predating the Chalcolithic is known from the Gaza region, the Late Neolithic site of Qatif (Epstein 1984), but it is suspected that a comprehensive survey of the areas around the *wadi* beds and on the *kurkar* ridges would no doubt turn up more sites of pre-EB I date.

Considerable work has been carried out in recent years on settlement patterns in Early Bronze Age (EBA) southern Palestine (Amiran 1978; Amiran and Gophna 1989; Amiran and Ilan 1996; Braun 1996; Callaway 1972, 1978; Doernemann and Fargo 1984; Esse 1992; Gophna 1974, 1992, 1995, 1996; Kempinski 1992; Mazar 1990; Seger 1989, to name only a few), but almost all of this work has dealt exclusively with sites located outside the Gaza region. The subsequent picture of EBA demographic patterns is one of a large void in settlement in and around the southern coastal region, from Rafah in the south, to Poran in the north, and inland to 'En Besor. Although it is implicitly understood that this void is due to a dearth of archaeological fieldwork in the Gaza region in general, it is also a direct result of the research design of earlier field

projects which concentrated on large Middle (MBA) and Late Bronze Age (LBA) *tell* sites (Petrie 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1952) and smaller “Egyptianizing” sites of material cultural importance (Dothan 1979, 1998). Apart from limited excavation work at the Chalcolithic/EB I at the site of Taur Ikhbeineh (Oren and Yekutieli 1992), the emphasis of excavation and survey work carried out in the Gaza region by the Israel Antiquities Authority during the late 1960’s and 1970’s was on Canaanite and Philistine occupation of southern Palestine. Consequently, the picture we have of EBA settlement seems to be concentrated away from the coast, “around the coastal plain, the northern plains, the central hill country, the Shefelah and the Jordan Valley” (Mazar 1990:94). The exception to this pattern is the apparently very large EB III site of Poran (suggested at 120 dunams), located near the coast, half-way between the Wadi Ghazzeah and Tel Aviv, but still outside the Gaza region (Amiran and Gophna 1989:113) and to a lesser extent Taur Ikhbeineh, 3km from the Mediterranean, along the Wadi Ghazzeah.



Fig. 2. Tell el-Moghraqa, EB II (looking SW)

The pattern of EBA settlement in southern Palestine is altered significantly when the site of Tell el-Moghraqa is added to the equation. The site was recently discovered by the Director of the Department of Antiquities in Gaza, Dr Moain Sadek, after construction activity in the region of el-Moghraqa had removed vast amounts of sand dunes to expose a large, primarily EB II-III site immediately north of the Wadi

Ghazze¹. Located approximately 500m northwest of Tell el-‘Ajjul and some 100 m from the coast, it appears to be around 15 hectares in area, making it one of the few very large EB II-III *tell* sites known in Israel and Palestine. Bull-dozed sections of up to 8 m in depth have been cut into the *tell* exposing occupation deposits dating from the EBA period, and pits of MBA date. The base of these cuts indicates that the habitation levels continue beneath the bull-dozed areas. Preservation of the ceramics and economic materials (shell and bone) is excellent. There are thick ashy deposits visible in the sections and well preserved burnt mudbrick. The ash deposits can reach 2-3 m in thickness, indicating similarities with patterns of destruction known from many other large walled towns of the EB II-III period (Seger 1989:117-118). On the southern, lower slopes of the *tell* there are further surface deposits of MBA material.

The identification of this previously unrecorded site has significant consequences for our understanding of the EB II-III in southern Palestine. Research questions, which would likely shape any excavation of the site, require careful thought within the sphere of EBA culture and development in southern Palestine, and the region in general. Of particular importance is the relationship between EB II and EB III deposits, and more specifically whether both phases are present at Tell el-Moghraqa. Many sites exhibit settlement discontinuity at the end of the EB II, either as destruction levels, or complete settlement shift. Southern sites tend to display a greater degree of continuity between the two periods and an understanding of the Tell el-Moghraqa sequence will aid our interpretation of the EBA in general. Also important for our understanding of the EBA is the nature of the destruction and abandonment of the *tell*, particularly in light of the decline in the number of walled towns at the end of the EB III. A coastal site of this size, located near to the southern extreme of the region, would also help to elucidate the political affiliations of Palestine during the EBA, particularly with regard to the apparent decline in contact with Egypt during this period (Seger 1989:119).

Other questions of importance will include the placement of the

¹ Dr Sadek has kindly allowed us to mention the site briefly here. The summary of the site's occupation is based on a preliminary survey of the *tell* by Dr Moain Sadek, the authors and Bob Mullins of the Albright Institute, 17th February 1999. There is some confusion as to the name of the site. It is also known as Tell es-Sakkan, due to the depth of the ashy deposits at the site. Tell es-Sakkan, however, is the name of a small mound adjacent to the eastern edge of the old city of Gaza (as marked on the Gatt map of 1888) and now the site of the municipality of Gaza.

ceramic tradition within its regional and chronological sequence. The presence of vast “destruction” deposits visible in the exposed sections at all levels, will enable the comprehensive collection of radiocarbon samples.

At the end of the EB III in Palestine, there is a well documented collapse of the large walled towns and a change in settlement type and location (Dever 1989; Gophna and Portugali 1988; Mazar 1990:152-158, among many). The causal factors responsible for the changes in settlement pattern and socio-economic practices are still debated (Dever 1989; Koehavi 1989; Rosen 1989) but essentially the arguments are theoretical, ranging from early diffusionist explanations to more accepted arguments for indigenous change (Dever 1989; Prag 1986). Whatever position is taken, the evidence still points to a sparsely populated landscape, with a return to a more egalitarian, pastoralist existence. Very few sites exhibit signs of continuity from the EB III to the EB IV, Tell Iktanu in the eastern Jordan valley being one exception (Prag 1986), and in general EB IV settlement in southern Palestine is characterized by small, ephemeral settlements of vastly different character from the preceding period.

Evidence for occupation during the EB IV in southern coastal Palestine is limited to two small cemeteries (the 100-200 and 1500) at Tell el-‘Ajjul (Petrie 1931:11-12; 1932:2), a pit containing some domestic wares within the confines of the 1500 cemetery (Petrie 1932, pl. XXXVI:1573), and a single burial at Taur Ikhbeineh (Oren and Yekutieli 1992, 363). The Taur Ikhbeineh burial “an adult in a shallow pit with a diagnostic EB IV/MB I storage jar placed about the area of the pelvis” (Oren and Yekutieli 1992:363) closely resembles some EB IV burials found at Tell el-‘Ajjul. No other aspects of EB IV occupation have been identified in the Gaza region.

The presence of extensive EB IV cemeteries in the Gaza region by extension suggests an occupation of the EB IV Gaza landscape. However, as yet there is no evidence in the archaeological record for settlements during this period². The apparent MBA cultural deposits at Tell el-Moghraqa, may on closer inspection fall early in the sequence, but without fieldwork or further analysis of surface finds, this remains speculation. Alternatively, as EB IV settlements are characteristically ephemeral, archaeological deposits may already have been obliterated

² The domestic pottery in the pit at Tell el-‘Ajjul cemetery 1500 indicates the existence of some habitation activity at the site.

from the landscape, or be as yet undiscovered. A further explanation might be that the nature of EB IV culture appears to be primarily itinerant, and therefore cultural remains might not be clearly visible in the archaeological record.

SECOND MILLENNIUM, MB-LB OCCUPATION (L. STEEL)

SETTLEMENT PATTERN

The second millennium BCE is characterized by a revival of urban life. In the MB IIA period (ca. 2000-1800 BCE) there is an almost complete transformation in the material culture of the southern Levant, evident in its settlement pattern, the establishment of urban sites, and the introduction of new architectural forms, ceramics, metallurgy and burial customs. Large fortified settlements were established on virgin ground or on long abandoned sites near rich water sources in the central coastal plain north of the Yarkon river, but in the coastal plain south of the Yarkon river MB IIA settlement was less extensive (Mazar 1990:176) and inland MB IIA sites are rare. During the MB IIB-C period (ca. 1800-1550 BCE) the process of urbanization and settlement expansion continues throughout the southern Levant. Large fortified cities are found on the coastal plain from Tell el-'Ajjul in the south to Akhziv and Kabri in the north and in the central hilly zone (cf. Mazar 1990:197). In addition to these large urban centers there are numerous smaller rural settlements, many of which were abandoned in the LBA. Culturally there is little distinction between the MBA and LBA settlement of the southern Levant but external forces had a tremendous impact on the geopolitical organization of the region, which is evidenced in its settlement pattern. From the mid-sixteenth century BCE the southern Levant came under Egyptian domination, with the conquest of Tuthmosis III (1479-1425 BCE). The Egyptians maintained control over their empire in the southern Levant through regional governors based in a number of administrative centers, such as at Gaza and Beth-Shan. Other urban centers remained under the control of local rulers, although these were still economically and politically dependent on the Egyptian pharaoh.

REVIEW OF THE SETTLEMENT EVIDENCE

Gaza: the ancient city of Gaza is a large *tell* site located on the southern Levantine coastal plain some 5 km from the modern coastline. The site has been continuously occupied throughout antiquity until the modern period and the mound of ancient Gaza is overlain by the old city of Gaza. The first historical references to Gaza are in Egyptian New Kingdom texts. Tuthmosis III refers to Gazat 'a prize city of the Governor' in his list of conquests and other Egyptian texts refer to it as 'the [city] of

Canaan'. Gaza is also referred to in later historical documents, including biblical and Assyrian sources. During the Early Iron Age (EIA) Gaza was the pre-eminent city of the Philistine Pentapolis. Because of its strategic position at the cross-roads between Africa, Asia and the Mediterranean, Gaza suffered at the hands of successive waves of conquering armies: from the time of Tuthmosis III and the establishment of the Egyptian empire in Palestine, throughout the first millennium BCE until the Roman period, when in 58 BCE Gaza was subsumed within the eastern Roman empire.

Despite the importance of Gaza from at least the I.BA, the site is little known archaeologically. This is due to the enormous problems attendant in excavating such a large *tell* site that has been continuously occupied over several millennia and is still the site of a large urban community. The only attested excavations on the *tell* are the soundings made by the Rev. Phythian-Adams in 1922, on behalf of the Palestine Exploration Fund (Phythian-Adams 1923, 1923a). Even in the 1920's Phythian-Adams noted that "Only at one spot ... is there any prospect of a really successful dig, and even this ... has its own very restricted limitations. To penetrate to the heart of the ancient city requires excavations on a very large scale. Soundings, however extended, will have no effect on this enormous mound" (Phythian-Adams 1923:12-13).

Phythian-Adams excavated three trenches on the northern limits of the *tell*, in an area where Garstang and Peters had reported the presence of ancient mudbrick walls (Garstang 1920:156-7; Peters 1921:60-1). We relocated these trenches during our 1998 survey season and have plotted them onto a map of the modern city of Gaza. Phythian-Adams uncovered four mudbrick city walls, which he labeled the green, gray, red, and brown walls (Phythian-Adams 1923a:25) and a glacis of field stones which ran obliquely into the mound (Phythian-Adams 1923:13). No Hellenistic remains were found in these excavations, suggesting a prolonged period of abandonment in the city's history following its destruction by Alexander the Great (Phythian-Adams 1923b). This apparently corroborates historical sources, primarily Strabo, who describes Gaza as *ερημος* or deserted after having been captured and destroyed by Alexander the Great in 332 BCE. It should be remembered, however, that only a small part of the *tell* was excavated and interpretations of the finds from this area can hardly be extrapolated to the entire occupation of the *tell* site.

The glacis and the brown wall were dated tentatively to the period of Alexander the Great and the red wall to the late seventh century BCE.

contemporary with Necho II (Phythian-Adams 1923b:36), or possibly either the late Assyrian or early Persian occupation of Gaza. The so-called green and gray walls are the earliest and appear to date to the mid-to late second millennium habitation of Gaza: either its LBA or Philistine occupation. The earliest pottery recovered from the site was LBA and includes imported Cypriote wares, Base Ring and White Slip (Phythian-Adams 1923a:29). Phythian-Adams noted that this layer was not very deep, which he found curious 'for it might have been expected that a great city like Gaza would have had more to show for her long history during the XVIIIth Egyptian Dynasty' (Phythian-Adams 1923:29). There is some evidence that the mound of Gaza was occupied from at least the mid-second millennium BCE, but as noted by Phythian-Adams, "The archaeological evidence indicates, therefore that while we are in the neighborhood of a Bronze Age site, we are too far removed from the heart of it to expect numerous proofs of its existence" (Phythian-Adams 1923:29). It should be noted that Phythian-Adams' excavations were on the edge of the *tell*, and only uncovered a very small area, thus we cannot state with any certainty the earliest occupation of Gaza city.



Fig. 3. Tell el-'Ajjul (looking SE)

Tell el-'Ajjul: The site of Tell el-'Ajjul lies on the northern banks of the Wadi Ghazzeah in the region of el-Moghraqa. It is located some 6 km southwest of the ancient city of Gaza and about 2.5 km from the modern coastline. The location of the site allowed it to control both the land and

sea routes between Egypt and Palestine (Foucault-Forest 1996:25) explaining the wealth and prominence of the site during the early second millennium BCE. 'Ajjul is one of the most important MB II cities of southern Palestine. It was founded towards the end of the nineteenth century BCE on a low prominence of sandstone marl and occupied an area of around 12 hectares (Albright 1938:337; Stewart 1974:9; Foucault-Forest 1996: 25, n.71). The site was excavated by Flinders Petrie between 1930 and 1934, under the auspices of the British School of Egyptian Archaeology. Petrie identified the site with ancient Gaza but Kempinski has identified 'Ajjul with biblical Sharuhēn (1974). The site is particularly important for its wealth of finds, especially the corpus of Middle Kingdom scarabs (Stewart 1974:45-9; Tufnell 1984:92-106, fig. 21) and the large quantities of fine goldwork (Negbi 1970; Stewart 1974:26-44).

The earliest activity on the mound of 'Ajjul is represented by a series of scattered early MBA tombs cut into the *kurkar*, near the northeast corner of the *tell* – the Courtyard Cemetery (Petrie 1932:16, pls. XLVI, XLVIII; Stewart 1974:10-11; Tufnell 1980; *eadem* 1984:8-10). The use of the burial ground appears to predate any building and settlement activity on the *tell* itself, and indeed part of the cemetery had been washed away by erosion before the first buildings were erected on the mound (Tufnell 1984:8). The main occupation of the site is MBA, contemporary with the Egyptian XII and XIII Dynasties. A large MBA city stretched over the southern half of the mound (for discussion see Foucault-Forest 1996:25-36) and the first of a series of five monumental structures, called palaces by Petrie, were built in the northeastern corner of the site.

Palace I (1932:2-3, pl. XLV) is one of the finest examples of a MBA Canaanite courtyard palace. It was built of mudbrick walls some 2 m thick on a foundation of large ashlar orthostats placed in wide foundation trenches. The plan of the palace comprised a rectangular courtyard (25x 40 m) bounded by rooms on the north and east sides. It is suggested that the building was never completed and had two main construction phases (Oren 1992:110). Palace II at 'Ajjul should in fact be identified as a 'patrician house', or a large building, more luxurious than typical domestic architecture but not necessarily the largest and most grand building within a settlement (Oren 1992:115). The building was built over the northern wing of the earlier palace structure (Petrie 1932:4, pl. XLVI). Its construction was entirely of mudbrick even though it supported an upper storey. The house was built around an inner courtyard (OG) flanked by small rooms on the north, east and west sides. Oren identifies other patrician houses at 'Ajjul in the southern quarter of

City II, which he dates to the LB I period (Oren 1992:116): Buildings AM, EAD and TCT (Petrie 1931, pl. LIV; 1934, pls. LXII, LXIII).

The last three palaces identified by Petrie (1932:5) are in fact a series of LBA fortresses (Albright 1938; Kempinski 1992a:140-1)³. The earliest of these, Fort III (Petrie 1932, pl. XLVIII), should date to the early fifteenth century BCE, to the reigns of Hatshepsut and Tuthmosis III (Kempinski 1974:148; cf. Petrie 1932, pls. V, VII no. 117). The two subsequent structures (Forts IV and V) are dated by Kempinski to the fourteenth and twelfth centuries respectively. Kempinski (1993:52) suggests that the decline of the city of 'Ajjul in the LB I (at the end of the fifteenth century) brought about the almost total abandonment of the site (see also Oren for chronology of Cities III-I) and that the only remaining structure on the site was the fort in the northern corner (Palaces IV and V), which he suggests was one of a series of forts intended to dominate the coastal road from Sinai to the northern coast of Palestine (Kempinski 1992a:141; 1993:53). The LB II period is also represented by the burials in the XVIIIth Dynasty cemetery to the east of 'Ajjul, most notably the Governor's Tomb (Petrie 1933:5-6)⁴.

Deir el-Balah: located 1.5 km from the modern coastline, 13km southwest of Gaza, and approximately 7 km south-west of 'Ajjul. Topographically the site is very different from 'Ajjul and Gaza. Unlike the former two sites, which are large *tells* used continuously over centuries (millennia in the case of Gaza) Deir el-Balah is not a *tell* site and is overlain by extensive sand dunes up to 13m in depth (Dothan 1981:127). These sand dunes separated the settlement and cemetery area, but the excavator notes that the dunes were consolidated during the Byzantine period and that during the LBA the two areas were adjacent (Dothan 1981:129). The excavator has identified nine layers of occupation dating from the fourteenth century BCE (Stratum IX) to the EIA, tenth century BCE (Stratum II): represented by Philistine and Iron Age (tenth century) pitting in the LBA levels and suggesting the presence of an Iron Age settlement in the vicinity (Dothan 1981:129). Subsequently the site was abandoned until the Byzantine period in the fourth century AD (Stratum I) (Dothan 1998:35-6).

³ The low dates attributed these forts by Albright was due to his misreading the ceramic evidence and the scarabs from the site (Kempinski 1974:148).

⁴ The authors visited the site in 1996 and 1999. The majority of the pottery that we saw on the surface of the *tell* and in the sections was MB II, although there were occasional LB I and II sherds, including imported Cypriot Base Ring I, White Shaved ware and White Slip II.

According to the excavator the finds and the architectural remains from the settlement and associated cemetery are largely Egyptian in character. This feature is also somewhat different from 'Ajjul and Gaza, which although having Egyptian elements, belong to the local Canaanite tradition. There is a large residential complex built around what appears to be an artificial lake or reservoir. This is similar to architectural complexes known from Egypt, dating to the Amarna period, in the 14th century BCE (Dothan 1981, 127-9; 1998, 36-7, 70). The finds from the site and the cemetery are also very Egyptianizing (Dothan 1979, 1998).

Tell Ridan: rescue excavations in 1973 at Tell Ridan, on the coast some 18 km south of Gaza, revealed the remains of a another second millennium BCE settlement (Biran 1974; Vitto 1975; Vitto and Edelstein 1993). The site comprised a pair of low mounds in an area of sand dunes. Most of the northern part of the settlement had been destroyed through erosion and sand quarrying (Biran 1974; Vitto and Edelstein 1993). Three occupation periods were represented on the southern mound: MB II, LBA and Byzantine. The MB II period was represented by two strata and comprised a series of domestic structures, a pottery kiln and two MBA burials. The MB II period was also represented on the northern mound. A LBA cemetery lying between the two mounds was also investigated and eight cist tombs were excavated.

These sites comprise the present state of knowledge of the MBA and LBA landscape of the Gaza region. There are a number of other sites which also appear to have some Bronze Age occupation, but of which very little is known⁵.

Tell Muntar: Approximately 2 km to the east of Gaza is the *tell* site of Muntar. Tell Muntar has been known to archaeologists for a number of years, and is included on some maps of the region. It has been referred to in some instances as the ancient site of Gaza (T. Dothan, personal communication). We visited the site with Dr Sadek in 1998 and a preliminary review of material found at the site suggests that there was some LBA habitation. The exact relationship between Gaza and Muntar is uncertain, but considering the close proximity of the two sites, and the possible overlap in occupation, this relationship is fundamental to our understanding of the ancient demography of the region.

Tell es-Sanam: A similar geographical relationship exists between Tell

⁵ This is not an exhaustive catalogue of Bronze Age settlement in the region, but includes those sites that have been visited by the authors during fieldwork in the Gaza region.

el-'Ajjul and the site of Tell es-Sanam. The mound is situated on the south side of the Wadi Ghazzeh, between 'Ajjul and the modern coastline. We visited the site in 1996 and the earliest pottery that we recognized was red-burnished ware of Iron Age date. We have been told that there is also some LBA pottery at the site (E. Oren, personal communication) but we were unable to confirm this ourselves. If Tell el-'Ajjul is the MBA/LBA port of the region then it is possible that Sanam fulfilled the same function from the Iron Age onwards. It is possible that occupation shifted from Tell el-'Ajjul to Tell es-Sanam as a result of silting of the *wadi*, but this would need to be confirmed by a geomorphologist. It is interesting to note here that this demographic pattern resembles that of the relationship between Gaza and Muntar, albeit perhaps for different reasons.

El-Moghraqa Site 1: another recently discovered site in the area of El-Moghraqa (our Site 1)⁶ is located approximately 500 m to the north of 'Ajjul and to the northeast of Tell el-Moghraqa. Topographically Site 1 resembles Deir el-Balah in that it is not a *tell* site. Moreover, it appears to be a one period site, or rather a site dating wholly to the LBA. Site 1 was located by Dr Sadek when extensive sand dunes that overlay it were removed for cultivation. The site is most significant for the large quantity of Egyptian type clay sealing pegs, one of which bears the cartouche of



Fig. 4. El-Moghraqa, Site 1, LB (looking SW)

⁶ We would like to thank Dr Sadek for allowing us to refer to this site.

Tuthmosis III⁷. The site will be the focus of future fieldwork by the Gaza Research Project.

Ziqim: A previously unknown *tell* site has been identified close to Ziqim, some 17 km northwest of the mound of Gaza⁸. This is distinct from the Neolithic (Yarmukian) site excavated at Ziqim in the 1970's (Noy 1976; 1993). The site is very large and is largely covered by extensive sand dunes. It dominates the north-south axis from Gaza to northern Canaan and is located on a *wadi*. Material of MBA, LBA and EIA date was recognized on the *tell*, including a rim sherd from a White Slip II hemispherical bowl.

DISCUSSION OF SECOND MILLENNIUM SETTLEMENT IN THE GAZA REGION

In summary, the main second millennium sites located on the extreme southern Levantine coastal plain are Gaza itself, Tell Muntar, Tell el-'Ajjul, el-Moghraqa Site 1, Deir el-Balah and Tell Ridan. There is also the possibility of some LBA habitation at Tell es-Sanam. Three specific trends can be identified in the demographic pattern of this region:

1. Two distinct types of settlement can be identified in the Gaza region. There are the large *tell* sites that are occupied over a long period of time, and there are also Egyptianizing sites occupied over shorter periods of time and which appear to be specific to the LBA. This distinctive pattern of settlement is to our knowledge peculiar to the Gaza region and to its LBA landscape.

The characteristic settlement type in the immediate Gaza region and beyond is the multi-period *tell* site. In most instances in the Gaza region these appear to have been occupied from at least the MBA, if not earlier. This is the typical settlement pattern of the wider region, for example being replicated further along the Wadi Ghazzeh, at sites such as Tell Jemmeh and Tell el-Far'ah South. The sites chosen for habitation tend to be low natural prominences – such as the scarp of sandstone marl underlying the site of Tell el-'Ajjul. Presumably these sites were chosen for their defensive location, and fortification appears to be an integral element of their MBA/LBA organization: with the construction of a series of walls at Gaza, the fosse around Tell el-'Ajjul, and a series of forts in the region.

The second type of site is peculiar to the LBA landscape of Gaza and does not seem to be replicated in the wider southern Levant. They

⁷ Dr Sadek is currently preparing the sealing pegs for publication.

⁸ The site was visited briefly by the authors and Bob Mullins in February 1999.

comprise settlements that were established on flat virgin ground and do not appear to be overlain by later occupation. These sites are characterized by a number of prominent Egyptianizing elements: notably the architecture of the so-called residency at Deir el-Balah and the stamped terracotta pegs of el-Moghraqa Site 1. These locales are closely associated with Egyptian New Kingdom expansion in this area and might be seen as a deliberate attempt by the Egyptian power to establish new sites as the focus of their authority, away from the established Canaanite centers of the region. A better understanding of these sites is crucial for any discussion of the LBA topography of Gaza and also for more sophisticated interpretations of the nature of the New Kingdom Egyptian Empire in the southern Levant.

It is perhaps significant that the establishment and florescence of el-Moghraqa Site 1 and subsequently of Deir el-Balah coincides with the gradual abandonment of Tell el-'Ajjul: between the fifteenth and thirteenth centuries BCE. Quantities of bronze arrowheads were found in the upper levels of 'Ajjul, and Kempinski (1993, 52) suggests that these are clear sign of enemy action, possibly Egyptian dating to the reign of Tuthmosis III. There might therefore have been a shift in location of the central power of the region from 'Ajjul to el-Moghraqa Site 1 in the fifteenth century BCE, followed by the establishment of a large residency at Deir el-Balah in the fourteenth century BCE. These are questions that we hope to address in future seasons of fieldwork – and a survey of el-Moghraqa Site 1 is planned for 1999.

2. Also significant for our understanding the LBA landscape of Gaza is the close proximity of large sites, sometimes less than 1km from each other, notably el-Moghraqa Site 1, Tell el-'Ajjul and possibly the earliest occupation of Sanam around the Wadi Ghazzeah, and also the close proximity of Tell Muntar and ancient Gaza. There is therefore, a distinct clustering of sites around primary water systems which suggests that access to water and control over waterways for transport played a primary role in the economics of the region. This clustering indicates that large populations could be supported within a limited geographical area. The region around the Wadi Ghazzeah is in fact very fertile and presumably was of prime economic importance throughout the Bronze and Iron Ages. It is also probable that these sites had differing economic functions. Tell el-'Ajjul, for example might be interpreted as the primary maritime port for the southern Levant and the mouth of the Wadi Ghazzeah would have provided ample shelter for seagoing vessels.

The Wadi Ghazzeah was also the natural frontier between Palestine and

the south (Phythian-Adams 1923, 12) and no doubt one reason for the clustering of large *tell* sites and forts in this region was to establish control over the southern limits of Palestine. It should also be noted that the Wadi Ghazzeah is strategically located at the Levantine end of the land route between Egypt and the Asian landmass, known as the Way of Horus. Presumably this water source would have been vital for the support of both commercial and military land routes between Egypt and the Levant (Bergoffen 1991), and a number of sites might have grown up in this region in response to trading and or military initiatives by the Egyptians.

3. Finally the close geographical relationship between pairs of *tell* sites, Gaza and Muntar and 'Ajjul and Sanam, is worthy of comment. It would appear that there was a shifting settlement pattern in the region associated with the transition from LBA to Iron I, but possibly with a period of overlap in occupation during the LBA. It is probable that occupation shifted from 'Ajjul to Sanam, a similar scenario might be posited for Muntar and Gaza. This process apparently occurred at some point at the end of the LBA. It could be related to the catastrophes that are known to have afflicted the entire East Mediterranean at the end of the LBA, and which in the southern Levant are traditionally associated with Philistine settlement. However, the possibility should be explored that economic pressures rather than military reasons were responsible for the shift in settlement. This is particularly evident at Tell el-'Ajjul, where there is no apparent violent destruction marking the end of LBA occupation at the site. Moreover, Tell es-Sanam is curiously located further down the wadi towards the sea, suggesting that silting of the wadi may have been the cause of this population movement. The exact relationship between Gaza and Muntar remains elusive due to the limited evidence available for analysis, but there is possibly evidence for a shift in settlement from Muntar to Gaza, with a brief period of overlap during the LBA.

CONCLUSIONS (J. CLARKE & L. STEEL)

Contrary to settlement distribution maps of southern Palestine in the prehistoric period, the Gaza region was presumably as densely populated as inland regions. The dearth of prehistoric sites is a result of archaeological method and site location rather than a true absence of settlement. In fact, the dense occupation further up the Wadi Ghazzeah during the Chalcolithic period indicates settlement in the area at least from the Chalcolithic/EB I transition. By nature Neolithic to EB I sites are not as visible in the archaeological record as the large walled towns

of EB II-III date, and therefore are more easily missed by survey. The topography of the Gaza region compounds this problem as many of the sites recently located have been under meters of sand dune. Sites which are not immediately recognizable as *tells*, and even some that are, as in the case of Tell el-Moghraqa will only be discovered through the removal of sand dunes for agriculture or construction.

Tell el-Moghraqa attests to the occupation of the southern coastal region of Palestine from as early as the EB II. The site is located in a region which is rich in *tell* sites of later periods. The area around the Wadi Ghazzeah is extremely fertile and of great strategic importance for trade between Egypt and the Levant. We know that contact with Egypt began in the EB I, if not earlier (for example the presence of Ghassulian type pottery at Buto in the eastern Delta; D. Faltings, personal communication), and although appearing to decline during the EB II-III this again might be a problem with archaeological methodology. The MBA deposits at Tell el-Moghraqa certainly need further work if we are to understand the nature of shifting settlement patterns, between EB II-III and EB IV and during MB II.

The second millennium landscape of the Gaza region, in the area around the mouth of the Wadi Ghazzeah, is characterized by a highly idiosyncratic demographic pattern. The patterning of settlements and the distinction between the long-established Canaanite *tell* sites and the short-lived, LB Egyptianizing sites appears to be peculiar to the region and seems to be associated to the region's close ties with the Egyptian empire. The LB settlements of apparently Egyptian type might indicate the presence of an intrusive Egyptian element amongst the local population, whereas the more typical *tell* site would appear to represent continued Canaanite occupation of the area.

Certainly, the topography of Bronze Age Gaza is more complicated than has hitherto been thought. The region is extremely rich in settlements, reflecting its economic and strategic importance as the crossroads between Asia and Africa, and sitting on the eastern rim of the Mediterranean basin. The identification of new sites in close proximity to 'Ajjul and the full publication of Deir el-Balah will have serious repercussions on attempts to identify any of these sites with biblical Sharuhem and the ancient city of Gaza. Further work is necessary to fully elucidate the important role that this region played in international connections during the third and second millennia BCE. The area is very rich archaeologically and far more work, both survey and excavation, is necessary to understand the BA settlement pattern of this region and also

the international connections of the southern Levant with Egypt during the third and second millennia BCE.

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CHAPTER NINE

EPILOGUE

LANDSCAPE AND IDOLATRY: TERRITORY AND TERROR

W. J. T. Mitchell

Landscape is "of all kinds of painting the most innocent, and which the Devil himself could never accuse of idolatry"

Edwin Norgate, quoted in Ernst Gombrich, 44

Wilderness is a hallowed clod of ground, the voice in the wilderness or the origin of speech, a wasteland, a nest of wild beasts, the raging sea, the Teutonic night ... precinct of the summer camp, the labyrinth, both a void and voiding, clearing, a clearing.

Jonathan Bordo, *Picture and Witness at the Site of the Wilderness*

The Beautiful in nature is history standing still and refusing to unfold

Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, quoted in Linda Nochlin in *Manet and the Deconstruction of a Landscape Tradition*

The purpose of this paper is to explore the paradoxical relation between landscape and idolatry, and to see if that relation can help to illuminate the intransigent character of territorial negotiations between Israel and Palestine. While it is surely obvious that religious fundamentalism is, as a general matter, difficult to reconcile with secular negotiations and political compromises, the specific linkage between landscape and religious perspectives may be worth a closer examination. My argument is, on the one hand, that landscape is a medium of representation that, historically, has been associated with the refusal of idolatry, even with an iconoclastic prohibition on graven images; on the other hand, it seems obvious that landscape is quite capable of becoming an idol in its own right – that is, a potent, ideological representation that serves to naturalize power relations and erase history and legibility. I will argue further that landscape is an idol, not just in the modern sense of ideology, but in the very terms by which idolatry is defined in the Bible – a false god that displaces the true one, and leads inexorably to the violation of every commandment, not just the prohibition on idolatry.

It may be important at the outset to clarify one thing: the landscape I will be talking about here is not the analytic tool that cultural geographers such as Malcolm Wagstaff (see above, pp. 23-35) have made the centerpiece of their interdisciplinary research, a conceptual tool for the archaeological, anthropological, and historical excavation of human ecology. That approach to landscape, what one might call the "depth" model, while clearly of great importance, is exactly antithetical to my notion of landscape in terms of "surface" model. That is, I am concerned with images, representations, and stereotypes of the landscape that, while often demonstrably false and superficial, nevertheless have considerable power to mobilize political passions. In fact, it is the very falseness and superficiality of the images I will discuss that gives them their potency, their virulence as icons of national and imperial destiny. The merely critical exposure of these idols to the light of historical analysis is rarely enough to disenchant or dethrone them; no one has ever been argued out of an ideology or persuaded by reason to give up an idol. What is required, in my view, is a working through of the idols, striking them, as Nietzsche might put it, with a hammer not in order to smash them, but to make them sound, and resonate, and divulge their own hollowness.

My notion of Palestinian landscape, then, is not that of the Middle East expert who understands the deep history of every geological and archaeological feature, but that of the tourist, the traveler who passes through the landscape as an outsider and sees only its surface. It is certainly a legitimate question. Perhaps nothing in the way of positive information about the actual land or landscape of Palestine. Nothing but a certain kind of potential for witnessing and testifying to an experience of landscape, an experience that has to be understood in autobiographical terms, as inescapably private, personal, and ignorant. Whether this ignorance is capable of playing a philosophical role remains to be seen.

That ignorance, a certain kind of willful unknowing, is central to the concept of landscape, seems undeniable. I have made this argument elsewhere (in *Imperial landscape* and *Gombrich and the Rise of Landscape*) and will simply recapitulate its main features here. The concept of landscape that dominates the discourse of Western art history is one that is resolutely focussed on visual and pictorial representation, the scenic, picturesque, and superficial "face" presented by natural terrain. Landscape is something to be seen, not touched. It is an abstraction from place, a reduction of it to what can be seen from a distant point of view, a "prospect" that dominates, frames, and codifies the landscape in terms of a set of fairly predictable conventions-poetic, picturesque, sublime, pastoral, etc. This specular construction of

landscape is routinely elaborated as a ritual of “purification” – a liberation of the visual consumption of nature from use-value, commerce, religious meaning, or legible symbolism of any sort into a contemplative, aesthetic form, a representation or perception of nature “for its own sake”. This purification, finally, is almost invariably described as a modern and Western “discovery,” a revolutionary liberation of painting from narrative and ecclesiastical symbolism that can be dated quite precisely in the 17th century. Non-Western cultures with traditions of landscape aesthetics (the Chinese, for instance) are routinely characterized as attributing a religious significance to the landscape that prevents a pure appreciation of nature for its own sake. Other non-Western cultures, especially ones that do not have a developed tradition of realistic or naturalistic pictorial representation, are seen as oblivious to the aesthetic value of landscape. The primitive or aboriginal dweller on the land (literally, the “pagan” or “rustic” villager) is seen as part of the landscape, not as a self-consciously detached viewer who sees nature “for its own sake” as the Western observer does. In addition, the native dweller is seen as someone who fails to see the material wealth and value of the land, a value that is obvious to the Western observer. The failure of the native to exploit, develop, and “improve” the landscape is, paradoxically, what makes it so valuable, so ripe for appropriation. The failure to exploit the land, its “undeveloped” character, also seems to confer a presumptive right of conquest and colonization on the Western observer, who comes armed both with weapons and arguments to underwrite the legitimacy of his appropriation of the land (according to Tertullian, the “pagan” or rustic country-dweller is understood to be contrasted with the *miles*, the soldier, and especially the Christian, crusading soldier)¹. Landscape thus serves as an aesthetic alibi for conquest, a way of naturalizing imperial expansion, and even making it look “disinterested” in a Kantian sense.

I take my presence at a conference on Palestinian landscape to be a statement about the importance of this superficial landscape “as such” as a topic to be considered seriously in its own right. This means that a certain kind of formalism, an aesthetic attitude is to be entertained, that the point of view of what Mark Twain called “the innocent abroad” – the tourist, the nomad, or the pilgrim – is to be welcomed. It indicates that we are not talking (only) about *land*, about territorial disputes, real estate claims, land and house seizures and demolitions, and all the other depredations that have been visited on this land in the name of political, racial, or religious purity. It means that we are asked to step back from the interminable disputes over zones A and B and C, over partitioning

¹ Tertullian *De Corona Militis* xi, ‘*Apud hunc [Christum] tam miles est paganus fidelis quam paganus es miles infidelis*’. OED, s. v. “pagan”.

and sectioning and restrictions on travel, over the “3 %” parcel of desert that may hold a key to the negotiations, over the archaeological digs that penetrate the land’s surface to raise up the ghosts of its embattled past.²[1] It means that we are here to think about the land, this land, as a *passage*, an imaginary and symbolic as well as a real entity, a landscape, a visible, perceptible shape that is freighted with so many associations and conflicting representations that it is a wonder that the earth’s crust does not buckle under their weight. We are saying, what I have heard Edward Said say so many times, that political thinking must not be conducted in an aesthetic vacuum, that politics must engage in complex dialectical negotiations with questions of form, affect, and sensibility, with cultural formations. We are called upon, in short, to think of Palestine as a work of landscape art in progress, to ask what vision of this land can be imagined, what geographical poetry can be recited over it, to heal, repair, unite, understand, and commemorate this place. We are asked to think simultaneously of a topology and a typology, the typicality and exemplariness of place, the codification of site, the repetition of landscape as pictorial, geographic, and poetic tropes. We are enjoined, therefore, to think comparatively of landscapes, of what we see and hear and read not only when we take “landscape perspectives on Palestine,” looking upon the nascent landscape of an as-yet-unborn nation (Palestine), but of what we see when we look out upon the world from the landscape perspective *of* Palestine. How does a country look to the world? How does the world look to a country? And how can the landscape itself be said to have a “perspective”? Does this not suggest,



Fig. 1. Timothy H. O'Sullivan.
Alkaline Lake,
Nevada, 1868

² See Whitlam 1996 for a discussion of the ideological selection process that determines some objects and leaves others unrepresented in the world.

quite literally, that the landscape *sees* as well as being seen, that it looks back in some way at its beholders, returning their gaze with a blank, impassive stare, its face scarred with the traces of violence and destruction and (even more important) with the violent *constructions* that erupt on its surface?



Fig. 2. The Last Thunderhorse
West of the Mississippi

I want to begin with the desert. Not the desert in which the Israelites wandered for forty years. Not the desert in which Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights. Not the wilderness where the desire to have a visible god generated a Golden Calf and a terrible vengeance from a jealous and invisible god. Not the vastness of the Arctic tundra, where a single tree or a stone marker (nukchuk) punctuates the emptiness like a solitary witness. It is not about the high places, the prospects that, from the Garden of Eden to the Maori totem surveying the New Zealand coastal scenery, offer up the world as a map, an infinite plane.

No: my desert is a real place in memory. It is the desert of Western Nevada (Fig. 1), the foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the sage brush plains of Carson Valley, and the ruined, irradiated soil of Yucca Flats, the site of nuclear testing during my boyhood. This desert is also imaginary, of course, It is the desert that my father, a geologist and mining engineer, assured me was once an ocean bed, now littered with the fossil traces of marine animals and dinosaurs. Far from a trackless waste, this desert is one where the past rises up in fantastic collages that



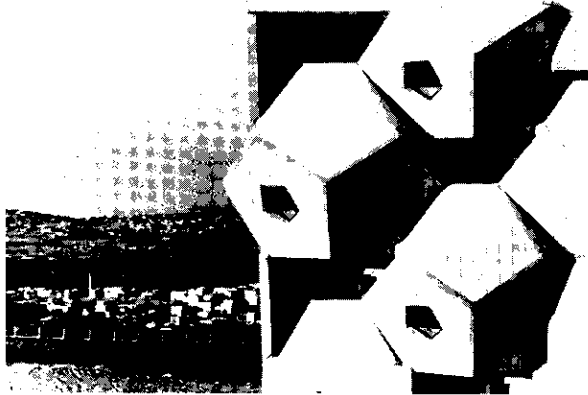
Fig. 3. Timothy H. O'Sullivan, *Tertiary Conglomerates, Weber Valley, Utah, 1869*

juxtapose history with pre-history and even with the “deep time” of geological events, mirages of vanished races locked in combat. It is the scenery that flashes by in thousands of Hollywood Westerns (Fig. 2), the endless pursuits on horseback, the flight into the badlands, the canyons and gulches, or into the high country of pinyon and ponderosa pine, or the highest country of naked peaks beyond the timberline. It is the landscape (Fig. 3) where, as a boy in the 1950s, I hid myself in the wilderness, seeking deeper and deeper refuges from civilization. I imagined that when the communists invaded the United States, they would come last to Carson City, Nevada, and they would never find me in the labyrinthine gullies and abandoned mine-shafts in the foothills. I ran in the foothills with my Paiute neighbors, and played cowboys and Indians with them on the school playground. We scorned the tourists from California (a word that was pronounced in a tone that rhymed with “porn” and “scorn” for its softness, decadence, and envy at its obvious wealth) who came to photograph the rodeos and the pow-wows. These fantasies of flight and safety in the wilderness were mixed, of course, with visions of horror and violent death. Falls from cliffs, the bites of scorpions, rattlesnakes, Gila Monsters, burial alive in a caved-in mine shaft – all these prospects mixed with the sense of safe refuge.

I still carry this landscape with me as memory, fantasy, and recurrently visited dream place. What does it have to do with Palestine? What does the American wilderness, with its Judaeo-Protestant “errands”-wandering, ordeals, treks across the desert in search of the Promised Land, have to do with Palestine? Everything clearly. Mark Twain’s post-Civil War sojourn as a newspaperman in the frontier mining town of Carson City (later described in *Roughing It*) was followed directly by his *Innocents Abroad* (1869), a “New Pilgrim’s Progress” that traces Twain’s “excursion to

Europe and the Holy Land". Herman Melville's epic poem, *Clarel* (1876), narrating his "Pilgrimage in the Holy Land," links the "Arabian waste" with the sublime seascapes of American seafaring: "Sands immense/Impart the oceanic sense" and the "Pillars of sand which whirl about/ ... True kin be to the water-spout" (177-8). Melville also quotes from Darwin, who "quotes/ from Shelley, that forever floats/Over all desert places known, /Mysterious doubt-an awful one".

Fig. 4. Jean Mohr,
Photograph: Israel,
Settlers'
Condominium in
the West Bank,
1983



Since the beginning, Americans have been turning toward their own Western frontier as a wilderness to be traversed in search of a promised land, a Zion (Bercovitch 1983:219-29). The "Great American Desert" was an *idée fixe* imposed on the reality of the fertile Western plains for several generations, as if Americans need a desert to wander in, a diasporic ordeal to purify them for the promised Canaan of California (Bowden 1976:119-148). This Canaan had, of course, its Canaanites in the form of the Indians, the Lost Tribes of Israel according to some accounts (George Catlin), aboriginal dwellers on the land who had to be dispossessed, removed, or sentimentalized as the vanishing remnants of a lost Eden. The first time I visited Israel, in 1970, I recognized it with a flash of *deja vu*, as a frontier culture, with all the rough energy and optimism of my mythical Nevada, the home of the Gold Rush, the Comstock Lode. The second time I visited Israel in 1987, it reminded me more of Los Angeles in the sixties, a walled suburb gone sour, a Promised Land gone to seed. Since that visit, my sense of Israel has been overlaid by other frontier landscapes, from the Australian outback and the solitary Bushranger to the South African veldt and the legend of the Vortrekkers. It has been overlaid by the raw avid faces of pioneers, settlers, and colonists turned toward their Promised Lands, and by the haunting, persistent faces of the dispossessed aborigines – the Paiute and Washoe Indians, the Zulu and the Xhosa, the Bushmen, the Palestinians.

But isn't it wrong, somehow, perhaps sentimentalizing or aestheticizing, to merge and juxtapose all these diverse exiles, refugees, colonized, dispossessed peoples into a kind of montage? Doesn't landscape tourism of this sort actually narrow the mind, "comparing scene with scene" as Wordsworth put it, flattening these places into a kind of picturesque victim's procession, with all historical particularity and specificity erased? Doesn't the "landscape perspective" itself reduce a place to an image, a representation? And isn't landscape, in fact, one of the great "idols of the mind", condensing national and imperial ideologies, naturalizing them into a potent stereotype for mass consumption and mass hysteria? These were the questions that forced themselves on me during my second visit to Israel in 1987 (Fig. 4), when I came to the conference on landscape as artifact and text at Bar-Ilan University, and saw a new Israel revealed, even to my passing, touristic gaze, as an occupying, colonial power, an oppressor, a police state that seemed hell-bent on violating every moral, legal, and political principle one might have hoped for from the first modern Jewish state. On that visit we were taken on an excursion to Masada, and treated to the recitation of a mantra over that landscape by our Israeli guide. Masada, we were told, is an emblem of ancient Israel's determination to die rather than surrender to the Roman idolaters. But it has taken on a new meaning in the modern world. The next time fortress Israel is surrounded by enemies, our guide assured us, it will not commit suicide alone. It will take the whole world with it into the final conflagration (Fig. 5).



Fig. 5. John Martin, *The Last Man*, 1833

This reading of the landscape is, needless to say, quite congenial to the American Christian Fundamentalists who have now entered into alliance

with Orthodox Jews on the meaning of the Holy Land. As Lawrence Wright puts it in his recent "Letter from Jerusalem" (*The New Yorker*, July 20, 1998), "the mystical concept of sacred space that shrouds the Temple Mount – and beyond that, Jerusalem and Israel itself – has for centuries served as an impenetrable barrier to peace" (48). Even as I speak, the Temple Institute in Jerusalem (what Wright characterizes as "a Jewish version of the Taliban") is collaborating with a Pentecostal Christian cattle breeder from Mississippi to breed a "red heifer," a sacrificial animal that is crucial to the rapidly approaching Second Coming.

Is it not the case that Palestine's problem is that it is being reduced to the status of a landscape: framed, hedged about, shaped, controlled, and surveilled from every possible perspective? I notice that a piece of "landscape" is now being discussed as the key to peace between Israel and the Palestinians (Fig. 6). The famous 3 % of arid land, now occupied by a few Bedouins and many lizards, is to be "given" to the Palestinians, with one catch. It is not to be developed. It is to be left as a "nature preserve" – in short, a landscape to be seen but not touched, not dwelled upon. While Israel proceeds apace, building new housing everywhere, it bestows a gift of landscapes on the Palestinians, a poisoned gift of empty space, with strings tied to it everywhere. It will be a Palestinian landscape, a landscape perspective on Palestine. They can look at it, take a perspective on it, but not live in it.

NEW YORK TIMES INTERNATIONAL WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 1998

Patch of Desert Is Key to Mideast Talks' Next Step

By Deborah Montag

IN THE JUDAN DESERT, a few miles from the border with the West Bank, a small, arid patch of land is being eyed by both sides. It is a patch of land that is being eyed by both sides. It is a patch of land that is being eyed by both sides.

It is expected to become a so-called nature preserve, with the 3% of arid land that Israel would give to the Palestinians. The main catch is that the land is not to be developed.

Israel is to give the United States special status in the Middle East as it moves its embassy to Jerusalem. The main catch is that the land is not to be developed.

Bedouin nomads are the only residents of a portion of desert that Israel has offered to turn over to the Palestinian Authority under certain conditions. An American negotiator is to resume talks this week.

A nature reserve for lizards may be a West Bank



Fig. 6. New York Times Story, Sept. 9, 1998: "Patch of Desert is Key"

Perhaps travel does broaden the mind, awakening it to the repeatability of landscape as poetic geography, scenes of terror and territory "ruralized by distance" as Wordsworth would say. The scenes of diverse "lands of

opportunity” to be opened up, developed, the desert made to bloom by chosen people who bear the white man’s burden, the manifest destiny, a historic civilizing mission, the Word of God to the soon-to-be expelled or annihilated aborigines. The original, savage, pagan dwellers must make way for the settlers; idolatry will not be tolerated, and any territorial negotiations with pagans will be regarded as idolatry. The poetic geography – the false but efficacious etymology of “territory” is “terror”, the enforcing of boundaries with violence and fear³. Melville halts in the desert to read it as a text written with stones and bones:

*Stones mention find in hallowed Writ:
Stones rolled from well-mouths, altar stones
Idols of stone, memorial ones,
Sling-stones, stone tables; Bethel high
Saw Jacob, under starry sky,
On stones his head lay – desert bones:
Stones sealed the sepulchers – huge cones
Heaved there in bulk; death too by stones
The law decreed for crime (170)*

The law, the instrument of punishment, the crime of idolatry, the altar of sacrifice, the remains of the sacrificed victim, and (need we say it?) the hardened heart of the pious fanatical sacrificer are all made of stone. Voltaire had already witnessed this scene in his *Philosophical Dictionary*,⁴ when he is transported from his “contemplation of nature” by a genie “into a desert covered all over with bones piled one upon another”, the remains of “the twenty-three thousand Jews who danced before a calf, together with the twenty-four thousand who were slain while ravishing Midianite women ... the bones of Christians, butchered by one another on account of metaphysical disputes ... the twelve millions of (Native) Americans slain in their own country for not having been baptized” (Feldman and Richardson, 153-4). It does not escape Voltaire’s notice, of course, that it is the monotheists, the iconoclasts, the “People of the Book,” Christians, Jews, and “Mahometans”, who have been principally responsible for the very concept of the “Holy War”. “As for other

³ The OED glosses **territory** 1 (ˈtɛrɪtɔːri) Also 5 teri-, tery- [adj. *territori-um* the land round a town, a domain, district, territory. Etymology unsettled: usually taken as a deriv. of *terra* earth, land (to which it was certainly referred in popular L., when altered to *terra-torium*; but the original form has suggested derivation from *terere* to frighten, whence **territor* frightener, *territorium*? ‘a place from which people are warned off’ (Roby, Lat. Gr. § 943). So F. *territoire* (1278 in Godef. *Compl.*): see also *TERRORE*]

Nations, not one of them, since the beginning of the world, has ever made a purely religious war".

I think of the Nevada landscape as a place on the far side of the desert frontier, after its violence has receded and left behind petrifying, desiccated relics (Fig. 7). Ghost towns, abandoned mines, forsaken homesteads, dry wells, lost arrowheads, and the bones of everything from cattle to dinosaurs constituted my own primal scene of nature. Central Nevada, Ely, Elko, and Tonopah, are god-forsaken landscapes where the eye gives up trying to estimate distance in endless emptiness. They are places of radical loneliness where the only image is likely to be a mirage or a hallucination brought on by thirst. It is a place of visions, in short, but not of figures, features, or forms. The image presented by this landscape is abstract, aniconic. No trees, no vertical, upright, witness figures. This is the landscape of monotheism photographed by Timothy O'Sullivan on Clarence King's U. S. Geological Survey (1867-1874), the land of the abstract, invisible god who speaks and writes, but does not show his face, who leaves his catastrophic footprints on the earth-quake riven terrain, and retreats into the invisible distance⁴.



Fig. 7. Timothy
H. O'Sullivan,
*Sand Dunes near
Carson City,
Nevada Territory,*
1867

This emptying and abstracting tendency is, of course, endemic to the very concept of landscape. The history of European landscape painting is generally told as a story of the disappearance of the figure, the erasure of narrative, allegory, and legibility in favor of a "pure" icon of nature as such. This is the landscape whose purification makes it "innocent" of all

⁴ See Joel Snyder's superb discussion of the theological assumptions behind the O'Sullivan photographs (Snyder 1994:175-201).

possible idolatry. The idol, we suppose, is a figure, a statue that surveys the landscape. The empty landscape, the waste or wilderness or void, is an iconoclastic icon: it throws down the high places and smashes the traces of indigenous or aboriginal dwelling. The desert is, as Roland Barthes might put it, landscape degree zero.

In his *General History and Comparative System of the Semitic Languages*, Ernest Renan reiterates a commonplace of geographical theology: “the Semitic peoples,” he says, “never had a mythology”. They were monotheists because the “monotonous desert landscapes led the dwellers in these deserts to develop a concept of an abstract divinity and prevented them from acquiring the imagination needed for creating myths” (Renan 1858:7). By contrast, Giambattista Vico suggests in his *New Science* that “the gentile nations,” the vast majority of the human race who did not receive the divine revelation of the one, abstract, invisible god, were “forest-bred”, and thus shut off from each other and from the open spaces of desert wandering. For the gentiles, the “order of human institutions” is rooted in the dwelling place: “first the forests, after that the huts, then the villages, next the cities, and finally the academies” (*Modern Mythology*, 56). The gentiles, living in fear of the natural forces surrounding them, created Gods out of poetical figures for these forces, and idols out of their visible, graven images. They also created a “science” of “divination” to interpret the meaning of the idols and predict the future – the very science, Vico suggests, “on the prohibition of which God ordained his true religion for Adam”. The world is radically divided, for Vico, between the polytheistic, idolatrous gentiles and the Hebrews, whose religion he sees as the root of both Christianity and Islam. Idolatry in the Talmud is principally “a formulation of the types of contact between Jews and pagans,” between the militant monotheists and the idolatrous rustic.

What came first? The Forest or the Desert? The question is probably nonsensical from the standpoint of empirical, historical geography. In poetic and theological geography it invites reflection on contrasting origin myths in the creation and history of the world: is the first landscape an emptiness, a void, a waste, or wilderness? Or is it the arboreal, garden world of abundance, the land of Milk and Honey. Blake calls these landscapes Ulro, the indefinite, homogeneous space, Generation, the Jungle with its Tygers, and Beulah land, the garden. His originary landscape is, of course, Jerusalem, the Four-Gated City of the fully liberated human productive powers, that is to say, of Imagination. Like Nietzsche, Blake understood that the God of monotheism lived in the desert, the empty places. As Vincenzo Vitiello says of Moses, “His only land and home is the absence of home” (Vitiello 1998:139).

In my second visit to Israel I purchased a postcard (since lost) designed to lure American tourists. It depicted a Bedouin on a camel crossing and dunes in the distance, framed in the foreground by palm trees suggesting a perspective from the oasis. A perfectly ordinary postcard, I'm sure, an appeal to the fantasy of the Holy Land as a kitsch icon in which the figure of the Arab serves as a stand-in for Moses – and not Moses, the Egyptian. But this particular one had a feature that only became evident on closer inspection. In the shadow of the palm tree, a coil of barbed wire. Perhaps this is what Israel has in mind with its “nature preserve” – a kind of theme park of primitive Judaea and Samaria, where the primal, originary



Fig. 8a. Alan
Sonfist: Time
Landscape, 1978



Fig. 8b. Alan
Sonfist: Time
Landscape, 1978

desert can be permitted to lie fallow, and nomads can be kept under the benign surveillance of the tourist gaze. Here the process called “making

the desert bloom” turns back on itself. “The desert grows,” says Nietzsche. “The desert of our history is created by values,” remarks Vincenzo Vitiello. It is not a product of nature, but of culture, the cultivation of waste, emptiness, the aboriginal wilderness. The paradox here resides in the temporality of landscape. We can now create what the artist Alan Sonfist calls a “Time Landscape,” a primitive site enframed entirely by modernity (Fig. 8a-b). Sonfist’s “Time Landscape” is a tiny patch of primeval Manhattan ecology that stands in the shadows of NYU’s “Silver Towers”. It shows what the forest of Manhattan Island looked like before white men arrived, perhaps even before the Indians. A window into the aboriginal past, it is younger and newer than the apartments that tower over it. It seems to foreshadow a future in which the wilderness has become a tiny inaccessible refuge surrounded by concrete and steel wilderness, the urban landscape. One can look into the past, but not touch it.

A similar double temporality governs the mythic image of the Holy Landscape. It is both the place of origin and the utopian prospect of the future, always fleeting beyond the present. This doubleness then defines a third space – the space between, of wandering, errancy, diaspora, and trial. Whether 40 years, 40 days, or 40 centuries, it is the space that must be crossed by the pilgrim, the prophet, or the nomad. The Promised Land is the greatest collective landscape mirage the human imagination has ever projected for itself. It is the promising of a land, as Wordsworth says, “ever more about to be”. At each misstep, each error along the way, Israel is punished by a jealous God who, far from offering a land of milk and honey, is a producer of desert where there once was garden, “laying waste” the land. As Ezekiel quotes Yahweh himself: “In all your dwelling places the cities shall be laid waste, and the high places shall be desolate, that your altars may be laid waste and made desolate, and your idols may be broken and cease, and your images may be cut down, and your works may be abolished” (6:6). The god named *Baal*, particularly, who is the presiding deity of the oasis, the cultivated, watered place, must be destroyed. “In Semitic religion,” remarks W. Robertson Smith, “the relation of the gods to particular places ... is usually expressed by the title Baal” (Robertson Smith 1889).

If one searches the Internet under the key words “landscape Israel” one encounters a web-site called “*Neot Kedumim*,” a window into the ideology of Zionism. Zion is not just an abstract concept, it is a place, a land, and a landscape:

Zion is the name God gave to His everlasting dwelling place. It is his name for Jerusalem. His throne. God was the first Zionist. He invented the concept. It was God who promised the

land of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (not Ishmael & Esau), and it was God who promised that He would regather the Jews and restore them to the land of Israel in the last days. For centuries, Palestine (as named by the Romans) was a land of desert and swamp. When the Jews began to return, they once again tilled the soil and the land began to bring forth its produce.

This text ("What Is Zionism & Should We Support It") lays out the program of Neot Kedumim, a theme park devoted to "Biblical landscape"⁵. "In Hebrew," the Web site tells us, "*neot* means places of

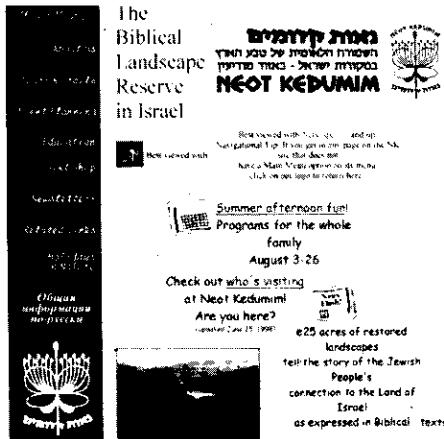


Fig. 9a. Neot Kedumim, Web Site

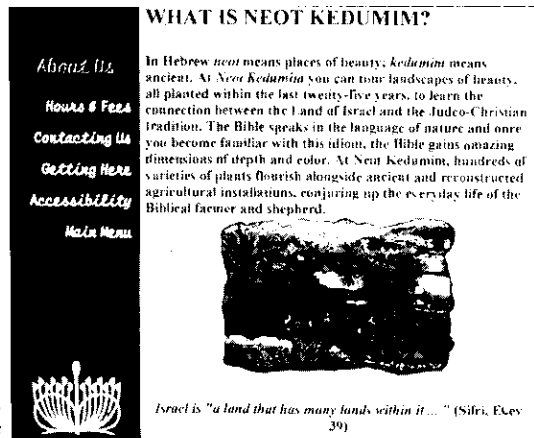


Fig. 9b. Neot Kedumim, Web Site

⁵ The site can be visited on the web at "virtual.co.il/travel/ncot/inf.htm".

beauty, *kedumim* means ancient. At *Neot Kedumim* you can tour ancient landscapes of beauty, all planted within the last twenty-five years, to learn the connection between the Land of Israel and the Judaeo-Christian tradition". If the silent absence of Arabs and Muslim traditions is not eloquent enough, the biblical texts that underwrite *Neot Kedumim* speak loud and clear. Numbers 33: 52-3 tells the arriving settler, "When you cross the Jordan into Canaan, drive out all the inhabitants of the land before you. Destroy all their carved images and their cast idols, and demolish all their high places. Take possession of the land and settle in it, for I have given you the land to possess". Obadiah 19-21 is even more specific: "People from the hill country will occupy the mountains of Esau, and people from the foothills will possess the land of the Philistines. They will occupy the fields of Ephraim and Samaria, and Benjamin will possess Gilead. This company of Israelite exiles who are in Canaan will possess the land ... and the kingdom will be the Lord's".

It is wonderful how the most literal meaning, not any allegorical interpretation, makes the Zionist program of conquest, colonization, and expulsion of original inhabitants quite unambiguous. The beautiful, cultivated Promised Land of Milk and Honey, where "the Bible speaks in the language of nature" is an imperial landscape in both its ancient and modern forms. The actual wilderness of destruction and "laying waste" is the passageway to this promise. This is a land that is inalienable in two senses: in that it belongs to the Israelites in an unbreakable contract with God, and in its expulsion of what will now be seen as "indigenous" or "aboriginal" aliens who can be subjugated or exterminated, but above all must be driven out, as they were formerly in ancient times, and now in the "last days," their land laid waste so that the desert can bloom.

The detail that is most telling, however, is the destruction of the idols of the inhabitants. The text from Numbers suggests that these idols and graven images and "high places" are not just being destroyed because they violate the second commandment, but because they constitute a rival covenant, a land deal made between the Canaanites, the Philistines and the local gods who presided over their territories. "High Places" as sites of strategic surveillance, aesthetic contemplation, and prophetic vision are especially crucial in a contested landscape. The idols, one surmises, are markers in the wilderness that indicate indigenous division of territory. When territory becomes the site of terror, it is not enough to drive out the inhabitants; the very landscape must be purged of their traces, their claims, their history, their idols.

Zionist iconoclasm has little to do with religious piety or moral disapproval of idolaters, then. It is strictly a strategy of conquest, the appropriation of territory under the cover of a moral crusade. The morai,

as distinct from political, condemnation of idolatry is reserved for the Israelites themselves, who are in danger of being seduced by idols. The idolatrous Israelite is characterized as an adulterer, and the idol as a “strange god” or rival lover who lures Israel into whoredom and abomination. The picture of idolatry as sexual transgression, promiscuity, whoredom, abominations can then be “exported”, as it were, to characterize pagans and gentiles.

A recent study of the concept of idolatry by Moshe Halbertal and Avishai Margalit argues that adultery is mainly a metaphor for any kind “intercourse” with foreigners insofar as it involves covenants, contracts, and political agreements. “The gods of different nations,” they point out, “were the guarantors of the treaties” (Halbertal and Margalit 1992:139). Polytheists, with their genial tolerance of local and national deities, have no problem with this sort of covenant based in oaths sworn in the name of different gods. “Monolaters” or “henotheists,” peoples who worship a single national deity, can find ways to respect the fact that other peoples will also have their version of the “one god”. But monotheism sets a much more demanding standard; its god is not just the one, but the only. Either the monotheist can adopt a nominalist attitude, as the early Mesopotamians did, and stipulate that “the Hittite god and the Babylonian god” are really to be understood as “the very same god” by “the signatories to a treaty”. Or one can regard any such treaty as an act of adulterous treason, a whoring with strange gods, even worse, as a direct attack on the unity and purity of God himself, insofar as it confuses his identity with alien deities. A contract or covenant with an idolater is thus the worst form of idolatry because it doesn’t just involve a straying off to a strange god, but a defilement of the one true god. This defilement is most concretely and literally realized when the idolatrous agreement concerns land, the sacred, inalienable territory that God has given to Israel. Even to negotiate over “one inch” of the sacred soil is to commit the sin that God will not forgive, and to invite upon oneself the direst of punishments. As Halbertal and Margalit put it, “The ban on idolatry is an attempt to dictate exclusivity, to map the unique territory of the one God”.

The irony is, of course, that the extreme version of this monotheism turns out to be a form of idolatry itself, not just in its “ideological” construction of a natural landscape in which history is erased, but in the very terms set down by the second commandment. *Neot Kedumim* is an image and likeness of the Holy Land, a simulacrum, a fabricated landscape. In it, landscape is quite literally being turned into an idol, and the invisible, unrepresentable God is being made visible and material. The self-deception is perfect because there is no figural idol, no “graven

image” or Golden Calf visible in the landscape, only some contented grazing cows – perhaps ultimately a herd of red heifers awaiting sacrifice. The landscape cannot be accused of being a “likeness” of God; it is merely a substitute, a metonymic symbol, the place of God. Like an altar or temple, it is the place where he appears and speaks, not an icon of him – except in a curious logic of negative representation. One represents the invisible, the unrepresentable, the transcendent, by shaping a space devoid of figures, history, and legibility. The idol is the empty, depopulated landscape itself, the “natural scene” in which God speaks the language of nature.

The line between fanaticism and cynicism is a thin one here. Breaking the second commandment, the prohibition on idolatry, is the most serious sin a believer in the Bible can commit. God spends more time explaining, emphasizing, and repeating himself with this commandment than with any other. Simple moral commandments – against killing, adultery, stealing, and lying – concerned with the relations of people to one another, are clearly negotiable. All of them will be justified, even encouraged or commanded by God, sooner or later, given the right circumstances. But idolatry is the one sin God will not forgive under any circumstances. It is the absolute crime, not a sin against other people, but against God himself and the idolater must be stoned to death for his violation of the stony law.

Given the intransigence of these beliefs, it may seem something of a miracle that any negotiated settlement over the land of Israel could ever take place, and how fragile such agreements will be. I don’t present these reflections with any hope, of course, of persuading Israeli settlers that their obsession with the land is not only a violation of international secular law, but also a violation of their most important commandment under the pretense of absolute fidelity to the commandment. I don’t expect them to be moved by the revelation that they have rendered Jehovah as a Baalim, a local lord of the place. What then is the use of my wanderings into the wilderness of landscape theory? At the end of “Imperial Landscape” I hoped for an “equivocal poetry” of place that might disenchant the evil eye that fixates and fetishizes the land in idolatrous forms of symbolic landscape. I suggested that we “know now ... that landscape itself is the medium by which this evil is veiled and naturalized”. But I concluded on a note of further uncertainty: “Whether this knowledge gives us any power is another question altogether”. I’m afraid that I’m no closer to the answer to this question than I was ten years ago, and I hope you will point me in the direction to go next with this wandering in the wilderness.

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Appendix

The Fifth International Conference, 12-15 November 1998 Landscape Perspectives on Palestine

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Opening Session:

President of Birzeit University: Hanna Nasir

H. E. Minister of Higher Education: Munthir Salah

Dean of Faculty of Arts: Mahmud Mi'ari

Conference Chair: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod

Keynote Address I: Edward Said, *Palestine: Memory, Invention and Space*

Session I:

Chair: Said Zeedani, former Dean of the Faculty of Arts

Roger Heacock, *Al-Majd wal-Sumud: Landscape of Glory and Resignation*

Lynne D. Rogers, *Literary Snapshots: Mark Twain's Innocents Abroad and William Thackeray's Notes of a Journey from Cornhill to Grand Cairo*

Dominique Eddé, *The Palestinian Landscape seen through the Narratives of French Travelers of the 18th and 19th Centuries*

Session II:

Chair: Ahmad Harb, Department of History, Geography, and Political Science

Glenn Bowman, *The Exilic Imagination: The Reconstruction of the Landscape of Palestine from its Outside*

Hani Bawardi, *The Ubiquitous Landscape: Palestine and Arab Immigrants in the United States*

Garay Menicucci, *Kulthum Auda: Biculturalism and the Palestinian Ethnographer as Subject and Object*

Session III:

Chair: Salman Abu Sitta, Researcher on Refugees and the Land of Palestine

Basem Ra'ad, *Topophilia Biblicae: Sacred and Profane Geographies of the "Holy Land"*

Nabil I. Matar, *Renaissance Cartography and the Question of Palestine*

Shukry Arraf, *The Future of Palestinian Toponyms*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Session IV:

Chair: Ali Jarbawi, Department of History, Geography, and
Political Science

Keynote Address II: W. J. T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Idolatry:
Territory and Terror*

Raif Zreik, *Exit from the Landscape: Some Considerations on the
General Palestinian Landscape in Israel*

Sharif S. Elmusa, *Under the Forest of Text: The Physical and
Symbolic Erasure of Palestinian Villages?*

Ghazi Falah, *The Transformation and De-Signification of
Palestine's Cultural Landscape*

Session V:

Chair: Abdulkarim Abu-Khashshan, Arabic Department

Sa'ud Al-Asadi, *Palestinian Landscape in Vernacular Poetry*

Abla Nasir, *The Small Continent Project: Experience of
Palestinian Youth with the Landscape*

Stephen Philip Gasteyer, *Manathir tabi'iyya: Differing*

Perspectives of Landscape Change in Hebron's Eastern Slopes

Hassan Khader, *Visions of the Palestinian Landscape*

Session VI:

Chair: Vera Tamari, Fine Arts Program

Samia A. Halaby, *Perspectives in the Pictorial Art and the
Landscape of Palestine*

Karl Sabbagh, *Palestinian Landscape in Western Cinema*

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

Session VII:

Chair: Kamal Abdulfattah, Department of History, Geography and
Political Science

Keynote Address III: M. J. Wagsatff, *The Mountain and the
Plain: Some themes of Continuity and Change in Palestinian
Landscapes*

Pierre-Yves Pécoux, *Geographical Introduction to the
Landscapes of Palestine*

Marie-Odile Guth and Alain Ceccaroli, *A Photographic Survey of
the Landscape around Bethlehem: Methodology and
Perspectives*

Session VIII:

Chair: Nazmi al-Ju'beh, Department of History, Geography, and
Political Science, Chairman

Rashid Khalidi, *Transforming the Face of the Holy City: Political Implications of Changes in the Topography of Jerusalem*

Shadia Touqan, *Preservation and Development of the Old City of Jerusalem: Future Plans*

Khalil Tafakji, *Jerusalem: Israeli Policy and its Effects on the Landscape and Environment of the City*

Mark LeVine, > *The City on a Hill: The Role of Imagination, Emigration, Immigration in Jaffa, Yesterday and Today*

Session IX:

Landscape and Archaeology I

Chair: Khaled Nashef, Palestinian Institute of Archaeology,
Director

Brian Boyd and Eleanor Scott, *The Palestine Sites and Monuments Record Project: Reclaiming Palestinian Landscapes*

Louise Steel and Joanne Clarke, *Gaza Research Project 1998: Survey of Ancient Gaza*

Hamed J. Salem, *Defining "Cultural Landscape": An Archaeological Case from the Jenin Region*

Session X:

Landscape and Archaeology II

Chair: Khaled Nashef, Palestinian Institute of Archaeology,
Director

Ghattas Sayej, *The Origins of Terraces in the Central Hills of Palestine: Theories and Explanations*

Jacqueline Balensi, *Building on Sand? An Egypto-Canaanite Artificial Island: Tell Abu Hawam (Ancient Harbour of Haifa)*

Jean-Baptiste Humbert, *Recent Excavations of the Ecole Biblique in Gaza*

Concluding Remarks:

Hanna Nasir, President of Birzeit University

Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Conference Chair

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The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry

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I want to argue that we can go behind the headlines and the repetitively reductive media accounts of the Middle East conflict and discern there a much more interesting and subtle conflict than what is customarily talked about. Only by understanding that special mix of geography generally and landscape in particular with historical memory and, as I said, an arresting form of invention can we begin to grasp the persistence of conflict and the difficulty of resolving it, a difficulty that is far too complex and grand than the current peace process could possibly envisage, let alone resolve

Edward W. Said

My argument is, on the one hand, that landscape is a medium of representation that, historically, has been associated with the refusal of idolatry, even with an iconoclastic prohibition on graven images; on the other hand, it seems obvious that landscape is quite capable of becoming an idol in its own right that is, a potent, ideological representation that serves to naturalize power relations and erase history and legibility

W. J. T. Mitchell

Birzeit University Publications

Printed in Palestine

\$ 19,00