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# REDISCOVERING OTTOMAN PALESTINE: WRITING PALESTINIANS INTO HISTORY

BESHARA B. DOUMANI

A critical evaluation of historical works on Palestine and the Palestinians during the Ottoman period is a vast and varied topic.<sup>1</sup> This essay does not attempt a comprehensive overview, nor does it provide the outline for such a project.<sup>2</sup> Rather, it seeks to initiate a debate by making a number of tentative arguments in response to the following question: What are the underlying ideological assumptions and historical contingencies that have determined the contours of inquiry into the modern history of Palestine and the Palestinians, and what are the necessary first steps towards constructing an alternative history?

In dealing with the first part of this question, I argue that the seemingly irreconcilable traditions of historical literature on Palestine—Zionist versus Arab nationalist, Orientalist versus Islamicist—actually operate within a single discourse. While each camp reaches opposite conclusions and passionately promotes its own particular set of historical villains and heroes, they share similar assumptions about the Ottoman period, tend to have a narrow view of what constitutes history, follow similar periodization, and generally agree in their definition of active forces of change.

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Consequently, our knowledge of Palestinian history is highly uneven, and the intersecting points of research present us with an almost surreal portrait. On the one hand, thousands of books and articles have focused high-powered beams on particular periods, subjects, and themes deemed worthy of study. On the other hand, entire centuries, whole social groups, and a wide range of fundamental issues remain obscured by dark shadows.

For example, many Israeli, Arab, and Western historians have long argued that the Ottoman period, particularly from the seventeenth to the early nineteenth centuries, was one of decline and stagnation until the coming of the West and the promulgation of Ottoman reforms from above. They posit such a sharp historical break between the "traditional" and "modern" periods that continuity is denied and the past becomes strangely irrelevant. Even Islamicists who speak of the "Golden Age" of Islamic justice under Ottoman rule agree that the "old" world was shattered, and that the modern history of Palestine began with the arrival of external elements whether in the shape of Napoleon in 1798, the "modernized" Egyptians of Muhammad Ali in 1831, or the first wave of European Jewish settlers in 1882. It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that there is not a single English-language monograph on seventeenth-century Palestine, and only two on the eighteenth century.

Similar generalizations can be made about the kind of history written. Despite the growing number of social and economic histories, the focus, by and large, has been on political events, personalities, and administrative structures. The latter are crucial areas of investigation, but in the paucity of bottom-up as opposed to top-down studies, the native population has tended to be excluded from the historical narrative: the major lacuna in the historiography of Palestine during the Ottoman period is the absence of a live portrait of the Palestinian people, especially the historically "silent" majority of peasants, workers, artisans, women, merchants, and Bedouin.

The second part of the above question deals with the construction of an alternative history. No doubt there is an urgent need to write the Palestinians into history, especially in light of the ongoing intifada, which has aptly demonstrated the collective power of ordinary people to precipitate changes of historic proportions. Furthermore, understanding key issues in twentieth-century Palestinian history, such as nationalism and class relations, necessitates a detailed investigation of the social, economic, and cultural changes in Palestinian society during the Ottoman era, particularly the so-called "dark ages" of the middle period. In addition, local sources that bring the voices of the Palestinians themselves to the fore—Ottoman court records, private family papers, and oral history—deserve greater attention from scholars than they have hitherto received.

Just as important as casting a wider net of research interests, however, is the need for a reconsideration of the way this history is theorized. Rediscovering the underlying connections between past and present and erasing the artificial lines between "external" dynamics and "internal" rhythms of change make it imperative to deconstruct the assumptions of modernization

theory—heir of nineteenth-century Orientalism and the dominant paradigm informing most works on the history of Palestine—and to formulate an alternative approach.

The paucity of theoretical works in the field of Middle East history, the dearth of comparative studies, and the fact that the field of “new” Ottoman history is still in its early (though very vigorous) stages, make the task of outlining a new theoretical model for understanding the transformations in Palestine during the early-modern and modern periods a precarious one. This essay aims only at raising a number of questions that might focus debate and point to potentially fruitful lines of inquiry.

### *Biblical Rediscovery of Palestine in the Nineteenth Century*

Over the last hundred years, both Zionists and Palestinian nationalists have embarked on a process of historical (re)discovery of Palestine’s past, a task fueled by an intense and unrelenting political drama. Projecting current nationalist feelings and aspirations backwards, both sought to create a nation through an historical “nationalist charter.” But before embarking on a detailed consideration of the Palestinian/Arab nationalist and Zionist historiography of Ottoman Palestine, and the terms of reference they share, a brief word must be said about yet another process of discovery which set the stage for both—the European biblical rediscovery of Palestine.

For Europeans, the nineteenth century was the discovery century *par excellence*, for it witnessed the extension of (primarily) British and French economic, political, and cultural hegemony over the nonindustrialized world. Yet, the inhabitants of “other” societies rarely occupied a central place in the consciousness of nineteenth-century European historians, whose narratives, instead, were dominated by tales of brave conquests and enlightened rule by white Christian males. “Natives”—black, brown, and yellow—were portrayed either as resisters to the forces of progress, or romanticized as the pristine remnants of a passing traditional society.

The case of Palestine follows this basic trend, but its image in the eyes of nineteenth-century European historians was further complicated by this country’s unique religious/symbolic significance to the West as the home of Judaism, the birthplace of Christianity, and the heartland of the Crusader adventure. Small in size and of unexceptional economic potential, the dominant image of Palestine was that of the “Holy Land,” waiting to be reclaimed both spiritually and physically. Pilgrims, businessmen, government representatives, and tourists all landed on its shores in increasing numbers, but often with a single fervent wish in their hearts: to traverse an unchanged landscape where biblical journeys could be endlessly reenacted.

The combination of these factors resulted in a voluminous but highly skewed output of historical literature. More was written on this small region than any other in the Middle East with the exception of Egypt. Yet, the focus was extremely selective and the gaps glaring. One example is chronology: a

graph of nineteenth-century books on Palestine according to the periods they cover would show two rather conspicuous spikes perching over the biblical and Crusader periods. These were the eras deemed most significant because they were the most directly linked to European history. The intervening and following centuries, mostly characterized by Arab/Muslim rule, were largely ignored despite the fact that it was precisely during these centuries that the basic structures of contemporary Palestinian society, economy, and culture were forged.

A second example is the preponderant number of works on Jerusalem. The religious, administrative, and symbolic significance of Jerusalem is such that in the minds of many the history of the Holy City was practically synonymous with the history of Palestine as a whole. This tendency has cast a shadow over the rest of Palestine, particularly the hill regions of Hebron, Nablus, and the Galilee for which, until today, we have few sources and even fewer interested historians. Furthermore, Jerusalem is a unique city and its experiences cannot be generalized, especially not to the rural areas where over 80 percent of the population lived.<sup>3</sup>

The third and most important example is the lack of interest in the history of the people who lived on that land. The dominant genres at the time—travel guides<sup>4</sup> and historical geography<sup>5</sup>—focused primarily on the relationship between the physical features of Palestine and the biblical events described in the Old and New Testaments.

The amazing ability to discover the land without discovering the people dovetailed neatly with early Zionist visions. In the minds of many Europeans, especially Zionist Jews, Palestine was “empty” before the arrival of the first wave of Jewish settlers in 1881-84. “Emptiness,” of course, did not denote, except for the most ignorant, the physical absence of the native population. Rather, it meant the absence of “civilized” people, in the same sense that the Americas and Africa were portrayed as virgin territories ready for waves of pioneers. The famous Zionist slogan, “a land without a people for a people without a land” was, therefore, but a manifestation of a wider European intellectual network characterized by chauvinistic nationalism, racial superiority, and imperialistic ambitions. The political implications of the deep-rooted unwillingness to deal openly with the question of the native population were such that the fundamental political rights of the Palestinian people, not to mention their very existence, are still a matter of contention even today.<sup>6</sup>

Of course, the indigenous inhabitants were not entirely invisible. They regularly appeared in nineteenth-century photographs and postcards as decorations and icons of ancient times: the shepherd tending his flock, the woman drawing water from a well, the peasant plowing his field.<sup>7</sup> They also filled a variety of roles, often exotic stereotypes of the Orient—the pompous pasha, the harem girl, the devious merchant—in traveller books and the popular press.<sup>8</sup> Most importantly, perhaps, Palestinians were the subject of ethnographic studies on peasant society, custom, and religion.<sup>9</sup> More often than

not, however, these valuable studies aimed not so much at investigating Palestinian society as it actually was, but rather at documenting an unchanging traditional society before its anticipated extinction due to contact with the West.

The image of European-inspired progress against a bland backdrop of Ottoman/Islamic decline combined with the very real discontinuities caused by the sharp intrusion of the Zionist movement and British occupation to obfuscate the crucial connections between Palestine's Ottoman past and its present. The burden for historical transformation was placed on outside forces, thus creating the crude dichotomies that informed, until recently, much of the literature on Ottoman Palestine: traditional/modern, internal/external, and passive/active.

Beginning in the 1950s, original research, based primarily on central Ottoman archives and local sources, has considerably blunted the sharp edge of these dichotomies and added a gradation of shades to the stark white/black images of the past. Nevertheless, the increasingly sophisticated debate between Israeli and Arab nationalist historians still takes place within the general framework of Ottoman decline and Western progress originally constructed by nineteenth-century European Orientalist scholars.

### *Palestinian Historiography*

Palestinians were the last to begin writing on the history of Palestine as defined geographically by the British Mandate. Why? The answer depends, in part, on the problematic of what is meant by "Palestine," and in whose minds, in what form, and at what time it was consciously articulated.

On the one hand, an administrative entity called Palestine did not exist during the Ottoman period, and before the balkanization of the Middle East following World War I, most Arab writers generally thought of Palestine as the southern part of *bilad al-sham*, or Greater Syria, and it was in this context that they discussed its history.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, a cohesive Palestinian intelligentsia was slower to develop and smaller in number than was the case in Mount Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt. This was due to the fragmented political culture of the period, among other factors.<sup>11</sup> Most importantly, nationalist ideology, which views the world through the prism of the territorial state was, in the nineteenth century, more developed in Europe than in the Arab East.

On the other hand, the formation of "Palestine" in the consciousness of the native population was not simply an automatic response to foreign encroachment and rule, or the uncritical absorption of European definitions of Palestine along biblical lines. The idea also had regional and local roots. It was not a coincidence, for example, that the central Ottoman government established an administrative entity with borders practically identical to those of Mandate Palestine on three brief occasions during the nineteenth century: 1830, 1840, and 1872.<sup>12</sup> Moreover, local economic networks that integrated the cities with their hinterlands; peasant mobility and clan relations; and

commonly shared cultural practices, such as the annual Nabi Musa pilgrimage that enjoyed “national” participation, were some of the factors that contributed to a shared collective historical memory and sense of identity. Just as important were the economic, social, and kinship networks connecting the well-to-do merchants, religious leaders, tax farmers, and political elites of the various urban centers to their contemporaries both within Palestine and in other towns and cities of Greater Syria. In short, the existence of an Ottoman “Palestine” can neither be categorically denied for technical/administrative reasons nor uncritically assumed by nationalist fiat. Rather, the emergence of Mandate Palestine was a complicated historical process that combined European penetration, Ottoman rule, and indigenous social, economic, and cultural networks in ways that were to have grave implications for future developments.

In any case, there is no doubt that, among Palestinian intellectuals at least, the process of nationalist self-definition was well underway by the turn of the century. After the Young Turks came to power in Istanbul in 1908, the number of outlets for the growing intelligentsia multiplied, mostly in the form of newspapers, pamphlets, journals, and school textbooks.<sup>13</sup> Quickly, these forums became the preserve of those writers concerned with the immediate political battle against foreign colonial settlement. In short, Palestinian writers joined numerous other historians in the Arab world and beyond who were involved in a globally pervasive phenomenon—the nationalist rewriting of history.<sup>14</sup> The publication of historical monographs began in earnest in the early 1930s. The output was intense, variegated, and spontaneous; all the important trends in Palestinian historiography at the present can be traced to the Mandate period. The two most important genres, discrete but interconnected, I have labelled the “Call to Battle” and the “Affirmation of Identity.”

These two genres do not represent the entire spectrum of Palestinian historiography, especially as it became more sophisticated with the crystallization of the Palestinian national movement under the leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in the late 1960s. Rather, they codify the two major trends in the broad sweep of the field. In both genres, however, the majority of works published during the Mandate period were not written by trained historians, but by journalists, lawyers, politicians, and school teachers—all of whom were deeply affected by the intense political atmosphere, and motivated by the need to confront a sophisticated and resourceful adversary.

### *The Call to Battle*

As one might surmise, the “Call to Battle” genre focused primarily on exposing the goals, strategy, and methods of the Zionist movement, the motivations of British policy, and the sources of Palestinian resistance, and thus paid little attention to the Ottoman period.<sup>15</sup> Nonetheless, authors of the genre did make a number of common generalizations that must be examined,

if only because their works are widely read and because their views of the Ottoman period are pervasive among the Palestinian public.

The “Call to Battle” genre refers to narratives by authors such as Najib Nassar,<sup>16</sup> ‘Issa al-Sifri,<sup>17</sup> Yusif Haikal,<sup>18</sup> and Wadi‘ al-Bustani<sup>19</sup>—all of whom were involved in the national movement, when they wrote detailed political monographs targeted at fellow Arab intellectuals eager to be informed about the complexities of this fast developing conflict. The same applies to those who followed them, including Emil al-Ghuri,<sup>20</sup> Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwazah,<sup>21</sup> Subhi Yasin,<sup>22</sup> Akram Z‘eitar,<sup>23</sup> and ‘Abd al-Wahab al-Kayyali.\* The short shrift generally accorded to the Ottoman period by these authors stems not only from their preoccupation with countering British and Zionist claims, but also from their Arab nationalist approach to history: on the one hand, the Ottoman period was dismissed as backward and as having suppressed Arab culture, and on the other hand, the existence of Palestine and a Palestinian national consciousness was assumed *a priori*. What is interesting in their treatment of the Ottoman period—generally confined to brief descriptions of the administrative and demographic structures of Ottoman rule circa 1880, projected backwards to stereotype four centuries of rule—is that their frame of reference is basically the same as that formulated by their adversaries in terms of causality, periodization, and the Ottoman legacy. As with the Europeans and the Zionists, the interpretation centers on the idea of Ottoman decline and views local history as stagnant and inconsequential until the arrival of the Europeans.

‘Abd al-Wahab al-Kayyali’s well researched and tightly organized *Tarikh Filastin al-hadith* (The Modern History of Palestine) (1970) is the quintessential example of the genre and easily the most widely circulated political narrative on the subject.<sup>24</sup> Like the other authors of the genre, Kayyali begins his actual narrative in 1882, and the brief chapter on the geography and history of Palestine from the Canaanites to 1882 is devoted primarily to a history of the Zionist movement and the “imperialist ambitions” of Britain. The history of the land and its people, especially during the thirteen centuries between the Islamic conquest and the first wave of Jewish settlement, is hardly mentioned.

The following chapter, “Arab Resistance to Zionism before the First World War,” begins with a mixed review of the Ottoman legacy: He reproduces the standard Arab nationalist assertions that the Ottoman state was feudal, backward, and oppressive, yet he stresses the prosperity of Palestine before the first Jewish *aliya* (pp. 37–38). He argues, for example, that Palestine during the Ottoman period was characterized by a feudal regime in which a few landowning families, controlling extremely large estates, ruled over an undifferentiated, impoverished, and backward peasantry (p. 38). He credits the 1858 Ottoman Land Code with establishing private property and large land-

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\* See below.



ownership practically overnight, and accuses the Ottoman state of heavy taxation. He also blames its land codes for allowing Palestinian property to pass into the hands of foreigners, such as the Lebanese Sursuq family, who in turn sold it to the Zionists.

In fact, these statements are inaccurate and misleading. First, the 1858 law's primary concern was to protect state property and small peasant holdings, and was actually biased against the formation of large estates.<sup>25</sup> That its consequences often contradicted its aims can only be explained by studying changes on the ground, not laws imposed from above. Second, small peasant landholdings characterized the majority of agricultural land ownership then, and still do till this day, especially in the hill areas. There were regional differences, but those are never addressed in this genre, even though an understanding of them is crucial to explaining why the pattern of Zionist settlement and the borders of the 1947 partition plan took the shape that they did.

Third, the emergence of a market in land and the rise of an urban-based large landowning class were rooted in long-term transformations that *preceded* the promulgation of the 1858 Land Code. Indeed, recent evidence shows that the purchase and sale of nominally *miri*, or state land, was taking place as early as the late 1830s.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the lands that the Sursuqs and others purchased from the Ottoman government were not arbitrarily chosen. Rather, their availability was determined by a number of interconnected factors such as expansion in cultivation due to increased commercialization of agriculture, population growth, centralization of Ottoman rule, improved access of urban merchants to the rural surplus, and the massive indebtedness of peasants.

Fourth, taxation under the Ottomans was never as heavy nor as efficiently and regularly collected as under the British. On the contrary, much of the surplus expropriated from peasants in the form of taxes in cash and kind went into the coffers of local leading families, not the Ottoman state. Fifth, until the late nineteenth century, most Palestinians enjoyed a great degree of self-rule. The Nablus region, for example, was governed by native families continuously for most of the Ottoman period. This is only one of many unexamined long-term factors that explain Nablus' central role in the 1834 rebellion against Egyptian rule, in the 1936–39 rebellion against the British Mandate over Palestine, and in the ongoing intifada against Israeli occupation. Finally, the integration of Palestine's economy into the European-dominated, capitalist world market was not a result of Jewish immigration or British imperial actions. Indeed, if one criterion was vigorous economic growth in agricultural production for export to Europe, Alexander Schölch has convincingly shown that the takeoff period preceded Jewish immigration by at least three decades.<sup>27</sup> In fairness to Kayyali, however, it should be recalled that, like other authors of this genre, he did not set out to examine the Ottoman period in detail. In addition, when he wrote this book, little was known about the social and economic transformation of Palestine during the last century of Ottoman rule, and even less on the dynamics of peasant

production. Indeed, most of the above issues have yet to be systematically addressed in history books on Palestine.

Nevertheless, Kayyali's generalizations continue to resonate widely, despite the fact that they suffer from a serious contradiction: conditions under Ottoman rule are described in extremely bleak terms while at the same time the reader is presented with a rather ideal portrait of a prosperous Palestinian society before Zionism. Kayyali's solution is a romanticization of peasant society, yet another strong tendency in nationalist Palestinian historiography. In his words:

. . . despite the backward and oppressive conditions that limited the productivity of the Palestinian peasant . . . his energy and competence were an object of praise by visitors to Palestine from travellers, historians, tourists, and artists. [Furthermore] concrete indications prove that Palestine, before the Zionist invasion, flowed with resources and profits.<sup>28</sup>

Kayyali's portrayal of pre-1882 Palestine as a satiated and prosperous society is not based on careful study, but rather on a nostalgic and defiant vision of the past that is typical of nationalist historians. Similarly, his portrayal of Palestinian resistance to Zionist settlement and British occupation does not delve into the roots of Palestinian nationalism, because his framework of analysis assumes that Palestinian nationalism is but a hybrid of Arab nationalism and a response to Zionist colonization. Despite some recent studies, this view remains largely unchallenged even though it cannot begin to explain the economic forces, social character, or deeper cultural underpinnings of Palestinian solidarity and identity that have sustained the hundreds of thousands of refugees living in exile, and that have contributed to the emergence of a national movement under the umbrella of the PLO.<sup>29</sup>

With few exceptions, the "Call to Battle" genre blames Ottoman rule for setting the stage for disaster, presents the Zionist movement as the dynamic actor, and portrays Palestinian resistance as inevitable, self-explanatory, and passive, with the possible exception of the 1929 uprising and 1936–39 rebellion. Throughout, the 1880s is the standard starting point, with the next punctuation mark being the British occupation in 1917.

As with any genre whose primary goal is to justify a nationalist struggle by mobilizing against an enemy, the "Call to Battle" genre's primary concern is with the "Other." Internal contradictions, differences, and developments are glossed over. In one of those ironic moments of intellectual history, a single idea—Ottoman decline and Western-initiated modernization—provides the indispensable foundation for competing and seemingly irreconcilable traditions of Palestinian and Israeli historical literature. Consequently, we are not much closer to understanding the modern origins of Palestine and the Palestinian people.

### *Affirmation of Identity*

The "Affirmation of Identity" genre is the more important for rediscovering the roots of Palestinian history. Faced with a denial of their right to self-

determination—in essence, their history—many educated Palestinians during the Mandate scavenged for every scrap of information that would prove the Arabness of Palestine, indeed, their existence as a people. By turning inward in their search for self-definition, in contrast to the “Call to Battle” genre’s outward thrust, authors such as ‘Umar Salih al-Barghuthi,<sup>30</sup> Khalil Totah,<sup>31</sup> Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi,<sup>32</sup> As‘ad Mansur,<sup>33</sup> Ihsan al-Nimr,<sup>34</sup> Augustine al-Marmaji,<sup>35</sup> Abdullah Mukhlis,<sup>36</sup> and later on, Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh,<sup>37</sup> Muhammad ‘Izzat Darwazah,<sup>38</sup> and ‘Arif al-‘Arif,<sup>39</sup> produced a diverse collection of historical works ranging from city narratives (often the author’s hometown), to multi-volume biographical dictionaries and historical geographies.

Many of these authors were descendants of old landowning, notable, or conservative merchant and religious families who achieved positions of power, status, and wealth during the Ottoman period. This tended to give them a more sympathetic view of the Ottoman legacy, in contrast to the authors of the “Call to Battle” genre who were frequently members of the emerging modern middle class. They also drew on indigenous traditions of scholarship (biographical dictionaries, local histories, and so on). Finally, their background gave them familiarity with local Palestinian archives, because their families’ positions and properties were registered in letters of appointment, *waqf* charters, bills of sale, *hasr irth* (inheritance estates), and other documents shedding light on the administrative, social, religious, and cultural institutions of the early-modern and modern periods.

It was thus that, in their search for the Arab roots of Palestine, they pioneered the use of long-ignored local sources, such as the Ottoman court records and family papers, now recognized as indispensable to any study of Ottoman Palestine. They also tapped the collective memory of their compatriots through oral history, documented the rituals of daily life through first-hand observation, and made invaluable comments on the physical and cultural environment of the urban centers. Finally, it is in their works that we meet Palestinians from all walks of life: rural clan *shaykhs*, urban notables, merchants, artisans, peasants, and other social elements whose histories have long been marginalized. Indeed, by going beyond political narrative to delve into the rich details of Palestinian life and culture during the Ottoman period, this genre has laid the foundations for a rethinking of the modern history of Palestine.<sup>40</sup>

Given their perspective, it is not surprising that many members of this genre effectively turned Orientalist assumptions on their head: decline and oppression was associated with the coming of the “West,” while justice and peace were attributed to the period of Islamic rule. For example, in his four-volume study *Tarikh Jaba! Nablus wa al-Balqa’* (History of Nablus Mountain and al-Balqa’), published between 1937 and 1975, Ihsan al-Nimr argued passionately that the eighteenth and early nineteenth century constituted what he called “the golden age” (vol. I, p. 139). Nablus, he insisted, was

prosperous and ruled by noble, just, and protective native sons, including, as he frequently pointed out, some of his own ancestors.

The power, wealth, and status of the Nimr family—which was based, among other things, on leadership of the local *sipahis* (Ottoman cavalry) and *timar* holders (fiefs granted by the Ottoman state)—declined precipitously as a result of Egyptian rule, the *Tanzimat*, and British occupation. It is not surprising, therefore, that as far as Nimr was concerned, Ottoman reforms and British rule, far from ushering in modernity, stability, and prosperity, actually brought chaos, civil strife, exploitation, corruption, and stagnation.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, he specifically challenged the dominant view that Palestine was in a backward state until the 1831 Egyptian invasion, which is widely credited with ushering in the modern period.

To support his argument, Nimr utilized oral histories, Ottoman court records, archives of the Nablus municipality, and an extensive knowledge of genealogies, people, and places. He also compiled a large number of private family documents ranging from letters of appointments and contracts with peasants to business and personal correspondence. His original research on all aspects of the Nablus region—politics, economy, culture, social life, and the physical environment—brought to light a wealth of information, and preserved the collective memory of an entire generation that experienced the transition from Ottoman to British rule. The key to his contribution, one can easily argue, was not the merit of his historical arguments, which were often weak, but rather his imaginative and resourceful utilization of a wide range of sources; just as important was his concern for details about all aspects of daily life. Moreover, Nimr was correct in proposing that Nablus, a town of the interior, witnessed a decline in power, prosperity, and independence after the Egyptian invasion—at least in contrast with the growing size and commercial importance of Beirut, Jaffa, Haifa, and other coastal cities connected to the spiraling trade with industrialized Europe.

'Arif al-'Arif, whose *al-Muffassal fi tarikh al-Quds* (The Detailed History of Jerusalem) (1961) early on became a basic reference, also waxed poetic about the past, lamenting the days of a golden Islamic era untainted by foreign influences. His book, like Nimr's, effectively utilized local sources to present a rich tapestry of life in Ottoman Jerusalem. But 'Arif's nostalgia for a pure Islamic past, unlike Nimr's, was not based on concrete historical arguments. Rather, it rested on his distaste for the ideological uncertainties and popular politics of modern life, and, more importantly, on his exaggerated notion of the role of the *al-mahkama al-shari'ah* (Islamic law court) in Islamic society:

Generally speaking, the people lived in prosperity, comfort, and security. There was nothing to disturb the even tenor of their existence in Jerusalem or in the other towns of Palestine. There was no radio or television, nor were there newspapers, and people heard very little news, and then only occasionally. . . . They held their heads high, and the entire administration

was in the hands of Muslims and their *qadi*, who . . . wielded unlimited power.<sup>42</sup>

In reacting to Western claims about the inferiority of the East by simply reversing the value judgement on the modern period, 'Arif and a multitude of other similarly minded historians only reinforced the basic Orientalist assumption: the old world was shattered by external forces. In that sense, Islamicist and Orientalist paradigms are but two sides of the same coin. Both draw a clear and inviolable line (as do many Zionist historians and Palestinian authors in the "Call to Battle" genre) between past and present, glossing over historical continuities. This is not to say that there were no discontinuities, for few regions in the Middle East have been as shaken by historical earthquakes as Palestine. Rather, the intent here is to emphasize that the legacy of the Ottoman period is much more problematic, subtle, and deeply rooted than the above dichotomies would allow.

The works of Ihsan al-Nimr and 'Arif al-'Arif also demonstrate what has remained till today one of the earliest and most vital trends within this genre—the large number of works on specific cities and towns. This trend's importance is twofold. First, it has illuminated the histories of areas central to the Palestinian experience but long neglected by Eurocentric historians concerned primarily with Jerusalem and the commercial coastal cities. This does not mean that Palestinian authors do not share these priorities; in terms of numbers of publications by Palestinians, Jerusalem has received the lion's share because of its symbolic significance,<sup>43</sup> and the coastal cities of Jaffa and Haifa<sup>44</sup> are the next most frequently studied. All three cities grew the fastest since the mid-nineteenth century, were the first to feel the brunt of large foreign communities, and were home to most of the Palestinian intellectuals during the Mandate period. Nevertheless, Palestinian authors have also pioneered the study of other, less academically popular places, such as the two declining coastal cities, Gaza and Acre,<sup>45</sup> as well as the interior cities and towns of Safad,<sup>46</sup> Nazareth,<sup>47</sup> Jenin,<sup>48</sup> Nablus,<sup>49</sup> Ramallah,<sup>50</sup> Hebron,<sup>51</sup> and Bethlehem.<sup>52</sup> In fact, the number of city and town histories has been quickly growing over the past two decades.

Second, this trend, fed and sustained by the strong local identification of many of the authors, has forcefully posed the question of whether the history of Ottoman Palestine should begin with the premise of difference rather than homogeneity. This is not to imply that Palestine was composed of isolated, self-sufficient communities, for that was not the case. Rather, the decentralized nature of Ottoman rule, the remarkable continuity of both rural and urban ruling families, and geographical and agricultural peculiarities giving rise to varied rituals of everyday life were some of the factors that combined to impart a distinct cultural flavor, mythology, and historical memory to each village, town, and city and, at the larger level, to clusters of villages and entire regions. While outside observers may see these differences as largely irrelevant, they were very real for those who experienced them on a daily basis.

The importance of local bonds can be seen in the recent attention being paid to village histories, which have proliferated since the early 1980s. Ironically, just as these local bonds were being seriously undermined by deepening nationalist loyalties and the urbanization of rural life, spontaneous and uncoordinated individual and collective efforts were marshalled to preserve local memory and pride through the production of dozens of monographs on such places as Jericho,<sup>53</sup> Birzeit,<sup>54</sup> al-Bassa,<sup>55</sup> Sa'ir,<sup>56</sup> Bani Na'im,<sup>57</sup> al-Rama,<sup>58</sup> al-Dawaymeh,<sup>59</sup> and al-Taybeh.<sup>60</sup> Many of these "hometown" studies are amateurish works, often printed at the author's expense. Almost all paint a romantic and idealist portrait. Yet, while the authors' training and objectivity might be impaired, their intimate knowledge of their immediate environment and ability to tap the collective historical memory of the town's elders have made accessible, for the first time, that most elusive sphere of Palestinian history: the rural experience.

Another early trend in the "Affirmation of Identity" genre, albeit a less vigorous one, was the production of multi-volume reference works, often covering all of Palestine from ancient times to the present. Some were biographical dictionaries listing the important men of Palestine, especially during the Ottoman period. The majority, however, can be loosely described as historical geographies. The best known and most frequently used of the latter type is Mustafa Murad al-Dabbagh's monumental eight-volume work, *Biladuna Filastin* (Our Country Palestine) (1947–1966), which documents in zealous detail the landscape of Palestine in effort to prove its Arab character. The major drawback of this and similar works produced prior to the 1960s,<sup>61</sup> is their overly ambitious comprehensiveness, fetish with documentation, and most importantly, weak historical context. Much of the information is collapsed into an unyielding mass with little regard to change over time, as if the more information stuffed between the pages, the weightier the argument. Nevertheless, these reference works have been invaluable to multitudes of students and scholars who turn to them on a regular basis. This type of work is no longer produced by individuals. Rather, various research centers—such as the PLO Research Center (Beirut), the Institute for Palestine Studies (Beirut, Washington, D.C., and Paris), and the Arab Studies Society (Jerusalem)—have taken over the task of generating multi-volume works ranging from encyclopedias and city histories to compilations of documents.

While these collective enterprises are professionally done and extremely useful, the major problem Palestinian historians face today is not in locating evidence testifying to their existence as a people, or to the justness of their cause, but in regaining the initiative in interpreting their own history. The "Affirmation of Identity" genre has pioneered the expansion of subject material and sources relevant to a rediscovery of Palestinian history during the modern period. Since the 1960s, however, the initiative for the rediscovery of Ottoman Palestine has shifted from Palestinian authors to their Israeli counterparts.

### *Israeli Historiography of Ottoman Palestine*

Both in terms of quantity and quality of output, Israeli historians now dominate this field. The reasons for this shift have to do with differing objective circumstances, and the divergent agendas of both peoples in the post-1948 period. The overwhelming majority of Palestinian intellectuals found themselves outside Palestine after the 1948 and 1967 wars. Adjustment to life in exile, preoccupation with daily survival, inaccessibility of key local sources, and the lack of indigenous and stable academic institutions were compounded by the consuming task of rebuilding a new national movement, not to mention the increasing ideological pull of Arab nationalism, which downplayed and stereotyped the Ottoman period altogether.

The young Israeli state, meanwhile, already had in place an extensive system of academic institutions. Moreover, well-established historians—mostly European immigrants steeped in the German Orientalist tradition—were in the process of training the post-1948 generation. Izhak Ben-Zvi, the second president of Israel and himself an amateur historian, established the Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Eretz Israel, the only research institution devoted to the study of Palestine before the establishment of the Israeli state.

The major focus of Israeli historiography, of course, is not the Palestinians but the Jews. Specifically, Israeli historians were busy creating their own nationalist historical charter and trying to prove the undying connection between Jews and the land they called their own. Even before the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, many Zionist scholars were studying Ottoman Palestine. The basic motivation was the practical realization that understanding the Ottoman legacy was crucial to the successful establishment and expansion of a state infrastructure. One of the most pressing tasks, for example, was transforming the old system of land relations. This was the topic of Avraham Granott's important study *The Land System in Palestine: History and Structure* (1948).<sup>62</sup> Granott was the managing director of the Jewish National Fund and an expert on land purchases. His study of land ownership and organization from the mid-nineteenth century onwards remains a primary reference for those interested in the defining key features of Palestinian society and economy. In Granott's words,

... a knowledge of conditions prevailing before the establishment of Israel is vital to anyone interested in the history of our country, and is essential for all those concerned with its future—the man of action helping to develop Israel's economy, the legislator who works out a new code of land laws, and anyone who has a part in shaping the agrarian economy of the new state. All these must trace earlier developments and follow the roots into the past (p. viii).

Another legacy of the past with profound implications for the successful colonization of Palestine was the indigenous inhabitants' pattern of settlement. In a series of three influential articles, another government official, D.H.K. Amiran, asked why Palestinians historically concentrated in the hill

areas even though the coastal regions were more fertile.<sup>63</sup> In formulating an answer, he glossed over the social structure and historical development of the local population and focused instead on the “lack of security,” which he ascribed to Bedouin raids and “Palestinian backwardness” (specifically, the inability of Palestinians and the Ottomans to use modern means of agricultural production and to deal with malaria). His conclusion that “it was not the land that was bad, but the fact that it was occupied by people or administered by governments who did not make proper use of it” (p. 260) does not do justice to his overall contribution to this subject. It does, however, reveal a common underlying assumption and a key ideological argument: Palestine was a neglected land rescued by Jewish colonization.

It is important to discuss further the “lack of security” argument advanced in Amiran’s articles because it is central to most Israeli histories of Ottoman Palestine. Moshe Ma’oz’s often quoted work, *Ottoman Reform in Syria and Palestine, 1840–1861*, begins with the assumption that the law and order imposed by the Egyptians when they occupied Palestine in 1831 “. . . brought about an end to centuries of confusion and backwardness and opened a new stage of stability and modernization.”<sup>64</sup> He goes on to say that Ibrahim Pasha, son of Muhammad Ali and the commander of the Egyptian forces, was able to “. . . alter the social structure of the country” by undermining the old feudal order, opening Syrian society to the West, and centralizing the apparatus of government and administration (p. 19).

Ma’oz’s narrative of Palestine as a passive victim of Ottoman decline whose modern beginnings were a result of external events—beginning with the Egyptian invasion in 1831, continued by European-imposed Ottoman reforms, and capped by Jewish settlement—is based on assertions about the “lack of security,” the “absence” of strong central control and rational state bureaucracy, “ignorance” of the concept of citizenship for all, and “disinterest” in public works. The obstacles to modernization, in his opinion, were also internal: “Bedouin pillage,” “rapacious pashas” (Ottoman governors), “bloody factionalism,” and the incompatibility of Islam with Western forms of government and administration (pp. 8–10).

A detailed critique of these generalizations lies beyond the scope of this essay. Suffice it to say that they are based on two paradigms that were quite accepted at the time: Ottoman decline and modernization theory. The first assumes that the growing weakness of the center vis-à-vis Europe necessarily meant that the periphery was also in decline, hence the “dark ages” of the middle period of Ottoman rule. The latter, likewise based on a Eurocentric assumption, is that all societies must proceed along a universal, linear path of development identical to that of the “West.” Both paradigms gloss over the complexity, dynamics, and historical development of the indigenous society, and both posit a sharp break with the past.

Just as important, neither paradigm is based on concrete evidence. For example, Ma’oz, echoing the unmitigated hostility towards Bedouin evident in much of the literature, accuses them of being



... the chief cause of the destruction of the countryside and the subsequent ruin of agriculture and commerce. These powerful nomads *infested* the Syrian provinces, *pillaged* caravans and travellers along the roads, *ravaged* large pieces of cultivated land, and even *dared* to raid villages that were situated on the outskirts of big towns (p. 9, emphasis added).

Aside from the obviously negative value judgements, this view completely ignores the multitude of economic, political, and cultural connections that linked the Bedouin with the settled regions. The Bani Sakhr and Huwaytat tribes, for example, have for generations sent thousands of camel loads annually to Nablus, supplying the city's merchants and soap manufacturers with *qilli*, a raw material crucial to the city's soap industry.<sup>65</sup> They also provided raw wool, *samn* (clarified butter), horses, camels, and other primary products in return for iron, textiles, and other manufactured items. A network of political agreements further tied the Bedouin to the urban centers, which were keen on safeguarding the *hajj* procession and routes of trade. The interruption of these activities, it must be stressed, was the exception, not the rule. Besides, the distinction between Palestine's Bedouin, the majority of whom often engaged in various forms of agriculture, and peasants who were highly mobile at the time, is often too blurred to allow for uncomplicated analysis. All of the above gives credence to Talal Asad's argument, which views the Bedouin as part of an overall economic system, unified by a structure of domination based on the extraction of surplus.<sup>66</sup>

Other important driving forces that have sustained the interest of Israeli historians in Ottoman Palestine are revealed by the research trends evident in the many anthologies of their works over the past two decades.<sup>67</sup> *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, edited by Moshe Ma'oz, is the first and most comprehensive.<sup>68</sup>

One overall set of concerns in this anthology involves understanding the demographic and political terrain which existed before Jewish colonization. How many Arabs were in Palestine? Who were their leaders? How did they relate to political authority? What were the fiscal and administrative structures of Ottoman rule? How did Arab Muslims deal with Christians and Jews? How did foreign rule shape political attitudes? These issues were, and remain, clearly relevant to decision makers in the Israeli state who have the responsibility of drafting government policy vis-à-vis the substantial Palestinian community under their control. Not surprisingly, many of the scholars published in this and subsequent anthologies also doubled as "Arab experts" employed by the state in official capacities as advisors on Arab affairs. In addition, many scholars of Arab and Islamic history, especially the more nationalist post-1948 group of Israeli Ottoman historians—such as Moshe Ma'oz and Amnon Cohen—also wore another academic hat, that of the political scientist, authoring books on such current topics as contemporary Palestinian political organizations and Syrian politics under the Asad regime.<sup>69</sup>

The second set of concerns evident in that first anthology deals with the history of Jewish communities in Ottoman Palestine and, by extension, of

urban life in Jerusalem, Safad, Tiberias, and Hebron—the four cities in which they lived. Although the Jewish communities constituted but a fraction of the entire population, we know much more about them at this point than about any other group that lived in Palestine during the Ottoman period. Indeed, a significant portion of what we know about the “non-Jewish” residents is a direct result of research on the Jewish community.<sup>70</sup>

This first anthology also reflected a deep concern with sources. In fact, Israeli scholars were the first to systematically mine the central Ottoman archives, opened to researchers in the late 1940s, for the study of Palestine. Uriel Heyd<sup>71</sup> pioneered these efforts, and he was quickly followed by Moshe Ma'oz, Amnon Cohen, Haim Gerber,<sup>72</sup> and a host of other Israeli researchers. Their collective work greatly increased our knowledge of the administrative, fiscal, and political superstructure of Ottoman Palestine, but paid little attention to social and cultural issues, and largely failed to deal with the indigenous population except for the notables. This top-down strategy of historical narrative on Ottoman Palestine was partly due to the nature of the sources themselves. The central Ottoman archives reflected the concerns of the administrative center, and presented a largely bureaucratic vision as to what should, instead of what actually did happen. Another factor was the pervasiveness of the institutionalist approach that characterized most of the literature on Ottoman history. It is no coincidence, for example, that regardless of differences in opinion about historical villains and heroes, the writings of Arab historians who worked with the central Ottoman archives at the same time shared a similar approach.<sup>73</sup>

More recently, Israeli Ottomanists have been paying greater attention to local Palestinian archives. This trend was motivated both by the desire to historicize the old *yishuv* (Jewish community in Palestine), and by the growing popularity of social and economic research in the field of Middle East studies in general.<sup>74</sup> Local archives, rich in data about property transfers, lawsuits, and matters of personal status, lend themselves greatly to both objectives. Ottoman court records are particularly valuable because the court served all residents regardless of religion, class, or gender, and maintained detailed records of all the cases brought before it daily. The court also served as a public records office of sorts, in which copies of administrative correspondence, *waqf* charters, and accounts of the various affairs of mosques and other religious institutions were kept. Amnon Cohen was the first of the Israeli Ottoman scholars to look into Jerusalem's Ottoman Islamic court archives while researching the city's sixteenth-century Jewish community in the early 1970s. Since then, a number of his colleagues and students have followed suit. For the historian with patience, such records provide detailed and intimate snapshots of urban life during Ottoman times, and even reveal long-term trends in social, economic, and cultural transformations.<sup>75</sup>

Over the past two decades, many Arab scholars have also delved into central and local Ottoman archives, particularly historians connected with 'Ain al-Shams University (Cairo), Damascus University, and the University of Jor-

dan. Currently, the most dynamic Arab center for the study of Ottoman Syria is the University of Jordan.<sup>76</sup> Specifically, Muhammad Adnan al-Bakhit and his colleagues, in addition to training a large number of students, have established the Center for Documentation and Manuscripts, which houses an impressive archival collection, including microfilm copies of all the Ottoman court records of Palestine. The fact remains, however, that most of the basic reference works on Ottoman Palestine have been, and continue to be, produced by Israeli scholars. This has proved to be a double-edged sword for those interested in rediscovering modern Palestine and writing Palestinians into history. On the one hand, the generally high academic standards and pioneering field work have greatly increased our knowledge. On the other hand, Israeli domination of the field has served to reinforce categories of knowledge and particular lines of research that shed light on some aspects of the Ottoman past and neglect others. The entire middle period of Ottoman rule has received scant attention, and the social groups that constitute the majority of the population have been largely ignored. Hence, the need to reconstruct the history of Ottoman Palestine.

### *Writing Palestinians into History*

As with all forms of intellectual production, the writing of history is organically linked to and affected by the ideological environment and historical context of the author, often shedding more light on the times of the writer than on the intended subject. The historiography of Palestine is a classic example of this phenomenon. As a land of great symbolic significance to adherents of the world's three monotheistic religions, and as the common objective of two competing national movements, its past has been subjected to multiple and, at least on the surface, contradictory traditions of historical interpretation. Throughout this century, the interplay between power and knowledge has produced a series of tunnel visions, each of which questions the legitimacy of the other. Yet, and as far as the Ottoman period is concerned, these tunnel visions, far from resembling parallel highways that never meet, actually intersect, in that they generally agree as to what is important to study and what is not.

Writing the indigenous population into the history of Ottoman Palestine is called for not only as a worthwhile academic project in its own right, but also because it is a prerequisite for a fuller understanding of present realities and a necessary element in the process of empowerment through knowledge. This project must operate simultaneously on three interdependent levels. First, systematic interrogation of the hitherto under-utilized primary sources that have preserved the voices of the inhabitants: Ottoman court records, family papers, physical evidence, and oral history. Second, the casting of a wider research net that takes into account the middle period and the disenfranchised social groups long excluded from historical discourse. Finally, the development of theoretical research frameworks based on the organizing

principles of political economy and recent advances in cultural history, as opposed to Orientalist and modernization theory paradigms.

For example, one of the major debates that has dominated works on Ottoman Palestine revolves around the question: when did the modern period begin? Most scholars have settled on the Egyptian period (1831–40) as the turning point. Ibrahim Pasha, we are told, restored law and order, gave minorities equal rights, established a unified “rational” state structure, advanced commercial and political relations with the West, and paved the way for the reassertion of central Ottoman control. Alexander Schölch added another dimension to the debate when he argued that, in addition to the political and administrative changes brought about by the Egyptian occupation and Ottoman reform, the key factor was the integration of Palestine into the capitalist world economy, a process which he located in the 1856–82 period.<sup>77</sup>

Yet one can raise serious questions about all the above generalizations. The Egyptian period, far from ushering in law and order, was punctuated by violent uprisings and followed by decades of bloody internecine conflicts, for the Ottoman government was not able effectively to centralize its rule until the 1860s. Moreover, most of the institutional changes that the Egyptians tried to effect were either abandoned or had no chance of succeeding due to fierce resistance and the short period of their rule. True, the Egyptian period witnessed the demise of some ruling families and the rise of others, and it also marked a turning point insofar as it created new means of controlling the population—conscription, a head tax, and generic administrative councils. But none of these “achievements” sprang from a vacuum. What the Egyptian period accomplished, it did by crystallizing a series of longterm developments that were already taking place.

The same holds true for economic integration. As recent research on Syria, Iraq, and Egypt has shown, if modernity is to be defined by changes in agrarian and urban–rural relations due to the growth of commercial agriculture, development of private property in land, and the emergence of a new ruling class based more on wealth than political office, then one can trace this process at least as far back as the eighteenth century, and not to some overnight transformations resulting from foreign occupation or top-down reforms.

The key point here is that some aspects of “modernity” surfaced long before they were “initiated” by outside stimuli, while “traditional” modes of organization survived much longer than is usually admitted. The social formations in the Arab East, including Palestine, were not houses of cards easily collapsed from the outside. On the contrary, they were deeply rooted though flexible and dynamic networks that interacted with externally imposed changes and filtered them into the rhythms of everyday life. Hence, there is a need for a more flexible periodization of Ottoman Palestine that would take into account not only the long-term socioeconomic and cultural changes, but

also the fact that these changes were often felt in an uneven and contradictory manner depending on factors of class, gender, and geographical location.

Equally important is the need for detailed study of such basic issues as: the local mechanisms governing the commercialization of agriculture and development of a market in land; the material base of the "politics of notables;" Bedouin-rural-urban relations and power structures; new patterns of capital investments in the countryside by merchants; peasant indebtedness, and the rise of a new ruling class composed of merchants, landowners, tax farmers, and office holders; shifting attitudes towards a centralizing state; changing notions of justice, authority, and knowledge; increasing differentiation among the peasantry and the spread of urban religious and legal systems into village life; the concentration of wealth and its effect on family relations, such as the increasing disenfranchisement of women; the spread of a money economy and erosion of clan solidarity; local and regional trade networks, and the way merchants, tax farmers, and ruling families carved the hinterland into spheres of influence; varying attitudes to foreign economic and political penetration, and escalating religious and ethnic tensions; labor migration and the growth of cities; and intermarriage and social interaction among urban elites in Greater Syria.

Without further research into these and other crucial areas, the bare outlines of the political economy and cultural history from below will elude us, especially for the seventeenth century, for which, as was mentioned before, we do not have a single English monograph. Until Palestinians are written into the history of Palestine, it will be difficult to answer key questions about the nature of Palestinian society on the eve of the twentieth century, much less understand why its members took the decisions that they did during the Mandate period and beyond.

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#### NOTES

1. The phrase "historical works" is used here to refer strictly to studies which primarily provide an historical narrative. Travel books as well as ethnographic, sociological, or cultural studies are not included.

2. Essays on Palestinian historiography include Tarif Khalidi, "Palestinian Historiography: 1900-1948," *Journal of Palestine Studies* X, no. 3 (Spring 1981), pp. 59-76; and Yehoshua Porath, "Palestinian Historiography," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 5 (1977), pp. 95-104. Also of interest is chapter five in Adnan Abu Ghazaleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1973); and K.W. Stein, "A General Historiographic and Bibliographic Review of Literature on Palestine and the Palestinian Arabs," *Orient* (Oplanden) 22 (1981), pp. 100-112.

3. Socially and culturally, Jerusalem is much more diverse. Politically and economically, moreover, its connections to the surrounding hinterland were considerably weaker than other Palestinian urban areas,

for as an administrative and religious center, it enjoyed substantial external sources of income.

4. Baedeker's 1894 edition of *Palestine and Syria: A Handbook for Travellers*, focuses on the Jewish and Christian biblical period and the Crusades. The intervening centuries of Arab/Muslim rule are described as "... a continuous scene of war and bloodshed, accompanied by an interminable series of internecine dissensions, intrigues, and murders." (Leipsing: Karl Baedeker Publishers, 1912), pp. LXXXII-II.

5. The best known was George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of Palestine* (1894). Meticulous, thorough, and based on extensive travel and personal observation, it was reprinted over thirty times. Smith, then Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen, provided maps so accurate that they were consulted by the British government in defining the borders of Mandate Palestine during the Versailles Conference in 1919.

Smith used the Bible and archaeological remains to illustrate, in great detail, the religious significance of the "Holy Land." As far as he was concerned, the history of Palestine stopped in A.D. 634 with the Arab conquest, and did not resume until Napoleon's invasion in 1798 except for the brief interlude of the Crusades. Thirteen centuries of continuous settlement by an Arabized Palestinian population are barely mentioned, and then only to stress the inferiority and irrationality of the Orient as compared to the Occident.

6. One example is Joan Peters' *From Time Immemorial: The Origins of the Arab-Jewish Conflict Over Palestine* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984). Though not a historian, her work was hailed by the major press as an authoritative revisionist account, despite the fact that the book has been thoroughly discredited. See articles by Edward Said and Norman Finkelstein in Edward Said and Christopher Hitchens (eds.), *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question* (London; New York: Verso, 1988). For the best work on the population of Palestine starting in the late Ottoman period, see Justin McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

7. See Sarah Graham-Brown, *Palestinians and Their Society, 1880-1946: A Photographic Essay* (London; New York: Quartet Books, 1980), and *Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East, 1860-1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). Also see Annelies Moore and Steven Machlin, "Postcards of Palestine: Interpreting Images," *Critique of Anthropology* 7, no. 2, pp. 61-77.

8. Many traveller accounts, of course, provided insightful information about economic, social, and cultural life. The best known in this regard, are C.F. Volney, *Travels in Syria and Egypt in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1785*, 2 vols., (London, 1787); and John Lewis Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London, 1822).

9. See, for example, Ermete Peirotti, *Customs and Traditions of Palestine* (London, 1864); Elizabeth Ann Finn, *Palestine Peasantry, Notes on Their Clans, Warfare, Religion, and Laws* (London, 1923); Rev. F.A. Klein, "Life, Habits, and Customs of the Fellahin of Palestine," *The Palestine Exploration Fund* 12 (1881), pp. 110-18, 297-304, and vol. 13 (1883), pp. 41-48.

10. See for example, Yusuf al-Dibs, *Tarikh Suriya*, eight vols. (Beirut, 1893-1902); Muhammad Kurd 'Ali, *Khitat al-Sham*, six vols. (Damascus, 1983); and Rafiq al-Tamimi and Muhammad Bahjat, *Wilayat Beirut* (Beirut, 1916).

11. Syria and Egypt, with their large cities, were bound to produce many more chroniclers than Palestine. But why was the smaller region of Mount Lebanon much more productive? The presence of many private educational missions, and the early development of a single, centralized emirate ruled by one family over a long period of time, are the two major factors, for most contemporary historical narratives revolve around rulers who managed to pull together a centralized state within a state.

12. See Alexander Schölch, *Palästina im Umbruch, 1856-1882: Untersuchungen zur Wirtschaftlichen und Sozio-Politischen Entwicklung* (Palestine in Reconstruction, 1856-1882: Studies on Economic and Socio-Political Development), (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden GmbH, 1986). Citations are taken from the Arabic translation by Kamil al-'Asali, *Tahawulat jad-*

*hriyya fi Filastin, 1856-1882: Dirasat hawl al-tatawur al-iqtisadi wa al-ijtima'i al-siyasi* (Amman: University of Jordan Press, 1988), pp. 19-28. An English translation is currently being prepared by the Institute for Palestine Studies, Washington, D.C.

13. Rashid Khalidi, "The Press as a Source for Modern Arab Political History," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 3, no. 1 (Winter 1981), pp. 22-42; and "The Role of the Press in the Early Arab Reaction to Zionism," *Peoples Mediterraneens* (July-September 1982). For a general overview on the development of Arab Palestinian intellectuals during this period, see Muhammad Muslih, *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988). For detailed information on all the Arabic press organs during the late Ottoman and Mandate periods see Yusuf Khury, *al-Sahafa al-'Arabiyya fi Filastin, 1876-1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1976).

14. Many Jewish nationalist historians, for example, were simultaneously producing historical works which tried to prove a continuous and unbroken Jewish presence in the ancient land of Israel from biblical times to the present. See David Myers, "History as Ideology: The Case of Ben Zion Dinur, Zionist Historian 'Par Excellence,'" *Modern Judaism* (May 1988), pp. 167-93.

15. A sub-category within this genre includes books written in the English language by Western-educated Palestinians such as George Antonius, Michael Abcarius, Frank C. Sakran, Henry Cattar, Sami Hadawi and Wasif Abbushi. I labelled this sub-category "A Plea for Justice," because the authors specifically targeted European and American audiences in arguing the merits of the Palestinian case. While deserving of greater study, this sub-category will not be discussed, because it shares the major assumptions of the "Call to Battle" genre, and like it, it also focuses primarily on the Mandate period.

It must be pointed out, however, that in targeting Western audiences, particularly the liberal elements of the intelligentsia and civil service, and calling upon them to live up to their professed democratic and humanitarian ideals, writers in the "Plea for Justice" sub-category faced a dilemma: they affirmed these liberal values, but were at a loss to explain how a society based on such values can behave in the imperialistic and exploitative manner that it did. The feeling of bitterness and disillusionment are most evident in George Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (1938), and T. Canaan, *The Palestine Arab Cause* (1936). Most of these writers have attempted to resolve the contradiction by blaming unjust policies on ignorance and/or the machinations of individuals and the Zionist lobby. Consequently, the long-term material determinants of British or United States foreign policies are frequently glossed over. Few books break decisively from this tradition. Nevertheless, and in the increasingly important battle for U.S. public opinion, this sub-category within the "Call to Battle" genre, has spearheaded the drive to challenge the prevalent Zionist constructions of history, and to present a positive Palestinian perspective.

16. *Al-Sahyuniyya* (Zionism), (1911).

17. *Filastin al-'Arabiyya bayn al-intidab wa al-Sahyuniyya* (Arab Palestine between the Mandate and Zionism), (Jaffa, 1937).

18. *al-Qadiyya al-Filastiniyya: tahlil wa naqd* (The Palestine Cause: Analysis and Criticism), (Jaffa, 1937).

19. *al-Intidab al-Britani batel wa mahal* (The British Mandate: Null and Void), (1936).
20. *al-Mu'amara al-kubra wa ihtiyaj Filastin* (The Great Conspiracy and the Liquidation of Palestine), (1955); and *Filastin 'abra sittin 'aman* (Palestine Over Sixty Years), two vols. (Beirut, 1971, 1973).
21. *Hawla al-haraka al-'Arabiyya al-haditha* (On the Modern Arab Movement) (1950); and *ma'sa Filastin* (The Tragedy of Palestine), (1960).
22. *Al-Thawra al-'Arabiyya al-kubra fi Filastin, 1936-39* (The Great Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936-39), (Cairo, 1967).
23. *al-Qaddiyya al-Filastiniyya* (The Palestine Cause), (1956).
24. Originally a Ph.D. dissertation submitted to the School of Oriental and African Studies in London. First published in 1970, it has been reprinted a number of times, and translated into English and French. Taught in many Arab universities, it is the only book of its kind to be published and distributed by a major Western commercial publishing firm (Croom Helm). The following parenthetical citations are taken from *Tarikh Filastin al-hadith*, ninth Arabic edition (Beirut: al-mu'asasa al-'Arabiyya li al-dirasat wa al-nashr, 1985).
25. For an outline of the debate on the 1858 Land Code, see Peter Sluglett and Marion Farouk-Sluglett, "The Application of the 1858 Land Code in Greater Syria: Some Observations," in Tarif Khalidi, ed., *Land Tenure and Social Transformation in the Middle East* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1984), pp. 409-24.
26. For details, see Beshara Doumani, "Merchants, Socioeconomic Change, and the State in Ottoman Palestine: Jabal Nablus, 1800-1860," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1990).
27. See his "European Penetration and the Economic Development of Palestine, 1856-82," in Roger Owen, ed., *Studies in the Economic and Social History of Palestine in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1982), pp. 10-87. For further discussion, see his book, *Palästina im Umbruch*.
28. *Tarikh Filastin*, p. 38. My own translation.
29. Only recently are partial answers being put forth. Rosemary Sayigh's *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Press, 1979) points to the importance of family, clan, and village solidarity as well as a collective historical memory as bases of social organization and sources of self-identity. Her data, however, is limited to refugee camp dwellers in Lebanon. Muhammad Muslih's *The Origins of Palestinian Nationalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988) is one of the first to search for Ottoman roots, looking for the social basis of Palestinian nationalism among elements of the nineteenth-century ruling elite, which he dubs "officeholding urban notables." Although informative and well researched, the first part is marred by uncritical acceptance of the reductionist generalizations common to the field of Ottoman history. Moreover, by focusing only on one small social group, he presents too narrow a view of what constitutes nationalism.
30. His best known work, *Tarikh Filastin* (History of Palestine), (Jerusalem, 1922), was coauthored with Dr. Khalil Totah. Other works include articles on Palestinian customs and folklore published in the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*.
31. Coauthored *Tarikh Filastin* with al-Barghuthi. He also coauthored *Tarikh al-Quds wa daliluha* (History and a Guide of Jerusalem), (Jerusalem, 1920), with Bulus Shehadeh.
32. *Rijal al-hukum wa al-idara fi Filastin* (Political and Administrative Figures in Palestine); *Rahlat ahl al-'ilm wa al-hukum fi rif Filastin* (Learned and Government Figures of the Palestinian Countryside), (1968).
33. *Tarikh al-Nasira min aqdam azmaniha ila ayyamina al-hadira* (History of Nazareth From Ancient Times to Our Present Days), (Cairo: Matba'at al-Hilal, 1923).
34. *Tarikh Jabal Nablus wa al-Balqa'* (History of Nablus Mountain and al-Balqa'), four vols. (Nablus: 1937-1975).
35. *Buldaniyat Filastin al-'Arabiyya* ([Topographical Historical Dictionary] of Arab Palestine), (Beirut: Jean d'Arc Press, 1948).
36. His works appeared in dozens of articles in various Arab journals and newspapers during the Mandate period. A collation of many of these works along with a biography of the author was compiled by Kamil al-'Asali, *Turath Filastin fi hitabat 'Abdullah Mukhlis ma' dirasa muffassala 'an hayatahu wa shakhsiyatahu al-'ilmiyya* (The Heritage of Palestine in the Writings of Abdullah Mukhlis Along with a Detailed Study of his Scientific Life and Personality), (Amman: Dar al-Karmil-Samid, 1986).
37. *Biladuna Filastin* (Our Country, Palestine), eleven vols. (Beirut: Dar al-Tali'a, Fourth Edition, 1988).
38. *Tarikh al-jins al-arabi fi mukhtalaf al-adwar wa al-atwar* (History of the Various Roles and Circumstances of the Arab Race), seven volumes (1959-1964); *Khamsa wa tis'un 'aman min al-hayat: mudhakarat wa tasjilat: 1305/1887-1332/1918* (Ninety-five Years of Life: Memoirs and Writings), (Damascus: al-Jam'iyya al-Filastiniyya li al-Tarikh wa al-Athar wa al-Markaz al-Juyughrapi al-Filastini, n.d.)
39. His best known work is *al-Muffassal fi tarikh al-Quds* (The Detailed History of Jerusalem), (Jerusalem: Matba'at al-Andalus, 1961). Other works include: *Tarikh Bir al-Sab' wa-qaba'ilaha* (History of Beersheba and its Tribes), (Jerusalem: Matba'at Bayt al-Maqdis, 1934); *Tarikh Ghazza* (History of Gaza), (Jerusalem: Matba'at Dar al-Aytam al-Islamiyah, 1943); and *al-Mujaz fi tarikh 'Asqalan* (Brief History of Asqalan), (Jerusalem, 1943).
40. A sub-category within this genre includes social and ethnographic studies by Tawfiq Canaan, Nimr Sarhan, and Ibrahim Muhawi, among others, on peasant folklore, religious practices, use of houses, and manners of dress. I labelled this sub-category "Preservation of Culture," because most of these works were written to counteract the negation of Palestinian culture due to occupation and dispersal. Many of these works can be found in the pages of journals such as *al-Mujtama' wa al-turath* (Journal of the Society for the Preservation of the Family, al-Bireh), and the *Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*. This sub-category will not be discussed because, strictly speaking, these works neither are nor were intended to be historical studies.
41. This is a constant theme throughout. For an idealized portrait of life under Ottoman rule see vol. two, pp. 343-59. For his opinion on reasons for decline, see vol. three, pp. 44-60.
42. "The Closing Phase of Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem," in Moshe Ma'oz ed., *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, (Jerusalem, 1975) p. 339.

43. For example, Khalil Baydas, *Tarikh al-Quds* (History of Jerusalem), (1922); Muhammad Adib al-'Amiri, *al-Quds al-'Arabiyya* (Arab Jerusalem), (1971); Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, *Urubat bayt al-maqqis* (Arabness of Jerusalem), (1967); and Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi *Tarikh bayt al-maqqis* (History of Jerusalem), (Unpublished, n.d.).
44. For example, A.S. Marmaji, "Nadhra fi tarikh Yafa" (A View of the History of Jaffa), *al-Mashriq* XXVI, nos. 10 and 11, (1928); Jamil al-Bahri, *Tarikh Haifa* (History of Haifa), (Haifa: 1922).
45. Mahmud 'Ali 'Attalah, *Niyabat Ghazza fi al-'ahd al-Mamluki* (The Province of Gaza in the Mamluk Period); Salim 'Arafat al-Mbayyid, *Ghazza wa qita'ha* (Gaza and its District), (Cairo, 1987). Naji Habib Makhkhul, *'Akha wa quraha min aqdam al-azman al-'al-waqt al-hadir* (Acre and its Villages from Ancient Times until the Present), (Acre, 1979).
46. Mahmud al-'Abidi, *Safad fi al-Tarikh* (Safad in History), (Amman: Jam'iyyat 'Ummal al-Matabi' al-Ta'awuniyah, 1977).
47. In addition to Mansur's work see a rebuttal by Husayn 'Umar Hamadeh, *Tarikh al-Nasira wa qadaha* (History of Nazareth and its Districts), (Amman, 1982). Also Mahmud 'Abd al-Qadir Kan'ana, *Tarikh al-Nasira* (History of Nazareth), (Nazareth, 1964).
48. Harb Nhayti, *Qissat madinat Jenin* (Story of the City of Jenin), (Tunis, n.d.).
49. 'Arif 'Abdullah, *Madinat Nablus* (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Damascus, 1964); Akram al-Ramini, *Nablus fi al-qarn al-tasi' 'ashar* (Nablus in the Nineteenth Century), (Amman, 1978); Said Bishtawi, *Nablus wa dawriha fi al-sira 'al-Islami al-Salibi, 1099-1291 A.D./492-690 Hijri* (Nablus and its Role in the Muslim-Crusader Struggle 1099-1291 A.D./492-690 Hijri), (Unpublished M.A. thesis, Alexandria University, 1984). *Mssallam al-Hilu, Qissat madinat Nablus* (Story of the City of Nablus), (Tunis, n.d.).
50. For example, Yusuf Qaddura, *Tarikh madinat Ramallah* (History of the City of Ramallah), (New York, 1954); and 'Aziz Shahin, *Kashf al-niqab an al-judud wa al-ansab fi madinat Ramallah* (Ramallah, Its History and Its Genealogies), (Birzeit University, 1982).
51. Taysir Jabara, et. al., *Madinat Khalil al-Rahman: dirasa tarikhyya wa jughrafiyya* (The City of Khalil al-Rahman: An Historical and Geographical Study), (Hebron, 1987).
52. See Hanna 'Abdullah Jaqaman, *Jawla fi tarikh Bayt Lahm min aqdam al-azmina hatta al-yawm* (An Overview of the History of Bethlehem from Ancient Times until the Present), (Jerusalem, 1984); Jiryis al-'Ali, *Bayt Lahm: al-madinaah al-khalidah* (Bethlehem: The Eternal City), (Bethlehem, 1990); and Tuma Bannurah, *Tarikh Bayt Lahm, Bayt Jala, Bayt Sahur 'Afratan' al-Quds* (History of Bethlehem, Bayt Jala, Bayt Sahur "Afratan" of Jerusalem), (Jerusalem: Matba'at al-Ma'arif, 1982).
53. Fawziyah Shehadeh, *Ariha, dirasa hadariyah* (Jericho, a Civilization Study), (1985). This book, originally an M.A. thesis submitted to St. Joseph University in Lebanon, best illustrates the idealization of the past and other drawbacks of this genre.
54. For example, *Tarikh 'ashirat al-'aranikah fi Birzeit* (History of the 'Aranikah Clan in Birzeit) by Shehadeh Khury (unpublished manuscript written in the first half of this century); and Musa 'Allush, *Tarikh madinat Birzeit* (History of Birzeit City), (Birzeit, 1987).
55. Yusif Haddad, *al-Mujtama' wa al-turath fi Filastin: qaryat al-Bassa* (Society and Folklore in Palestine: al-Bassa Village), (Acre: Dar al-Eswar, 1985).
56. Muhammad 'Awad and Idris al-Jaradat, *al-Tariq al-munir ila tarikh Sa'ir* (The Shining Path to the History of Sa'ir), (Hebron: Hebron University, 1987); Hebron Alumni Society, *Qaryat Sa'ir: dirasah maydaniyyah* (The Village of Sa'ir: A Field Study), Village Studies Series: 1, (Hebron, 1987).
57. Taysir Mas'udi and Sulayman al-Manasrah, *Qaryat Bani Na'im: dirasah maydaniyya* (The Village of Bani Na'im: A Field Study), Village Studies Series: 2, (Hebron: Hebron Alumni Society, 1987).
58. Jorjet 'Ukian, et al., *al-Rama: Qindil Jalili* (al-Rama, A Galilean Lamp), (Acre: Matba'at Abu Rahman, 1989). This book was produced by al-Rama Local Council.
59. Musa 'Abd al-Salam Hdeib, *Qaryat al-Dawaymeh* (The Village of al-Dawaymeh), (Amman, 1985).
60. Muhammad 'Aql and Jawwad Masarweh, *Taybat Bani Sa'b bayn al-madi wa al-hadir* (Taybat Bani Sa'b Between the Past and the Present), (al-Rama: Matba'at al-Rama, 1989).
61. *Buldaniyat Filastin*, by Marmaji, preceded al-Dabagh's work. A different kind of project, but one which also aims at wide scale documentation, is 'Arif al-'Arif, *al-Nakba* (The Disaster), six vols. (1956-1960).
62. The English edition was published in London by Eyre and Spottswode Press, 1952.
63. D.H.K. Amiran, "The Pattern of Settlement in Palestine," *Israel Exploration Journal* 3 (1953), pp. 65-78, 192-209, 250-60.
64. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968, p. v.
65. For a detailed discussion of the role of Bedouin in the soap industry, see Beshara Doumani, "Merchants, Socioeconomic Change, and the State in Ottoman Palestine: Jabal Nablus 1800-1860," (Unpublished Ph.D. Dissertation, Georgetown University, 1990), pp. 327-34.
66. Talal Asad, "The Bedouin as a Military Force: Notes on Some Aspects of Power Relations Between Nomads and Sedentaries in Historical Perspective," in Cynthia Nelson, ed., *The Desert and the Sown: Nomads in a Wider Society* (Berkeley, 1974), pp. 61-74.
67. In chronological order of publication they are: Moshe Ma'oz, ed., *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1975); Amnon Cohen and Gabriel Baer, eds., *Egypt and Palestine: A Millennium of Association, 868-1948* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, and Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Eretz Israel, 1984); Gabriel Warburg and Gad Gilbar, eds., *Studies in Islamic Society: Contributions on Memory of Gabriel Baer* (Haifa: Haifa University Press, 1984); David Kushner, ed., *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social, and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Press, 1986); Gad Gilbar, ed., *Ottoman Palestine, 1800-1914: Studies in Economic and Social History* (Haifa: Gustav Heinemann Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, 1990); Ruth Kark, *The Land That Became Israel: Studies in Historical Geography* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1990). All of these works, except for the first and the last, are distributed by E.J. Brill, Leiden, Holland, and New York.
68. The anthology is divided into six parts: "Geography and Population" (six articles); "The Jewish Com-



munities" (eight articles); "The Central Government and Political Change During the Last Century of Ottoman Rule" (six articles); "Foreign Activities" (seven articles); "The Impact of Western Culture and Technology on Traditional Society in the Nineteenth Century" (four articles); and "Archival Sources for the History of Ottoman Palestine" (nine articles).

69. See, for example, Amnon Cohen, *Political Parties in the West Bank Under the Jordanian Regime, 1949-1967* (Ithaca, NY and London: Cornell University Press, 1982). This book is based on Jordanian Security Services archives which were left, intact, in Jerusalem after the Jordanian army's withdrawal from the city in 1967. See also Moshe Ma'oz, *Palestinian Leadership in the West Bank: The Changing Role of the Arab Mayors Under Jordan and Israel* (London; Totowa, NJ: Frank Cass, 1984); *Syria Under Asad: Domestic Constraints and Regional Risks* (London: Croom Helm, 1986); and *Hafiz Asad, the Sphinx of Damascus: A Political Biography* (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1988).

70. For example, Amnon Cohen's *Economic Life in Ottoman Jerusalem* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) followed two earlier monographs on the Jewish community of Jerusalem in the same period: *Ottoman Documents on the Jewish Community of Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi Institute, 1976); and *Jewish Life Under Islam: Jerusalem in the Sixteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1984).

71. See his meticulously researched book, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552-1615: A Study of the Firm According to the Muhimme Defteri* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960).

72. Amnon Cohen is the most prolific of these authors. His first book—*Palestine in the Eighteenth Century: Patterns of Government and Administration* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, The Hebrew University, 1973)—was based primarily on central Ottoman archives, and remains our major secondary source for that period. In addition to his monographs on sixteenth-century Jerusalem, he coauthored, with Bernard Lewis, *Population and Revenue in the Towns of Palestine in the Sixteenth Century*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1978). Gerber's major work on Palestine is *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem, 1890-1914* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 1985).

73. See for example, 'Abd al-Karim Ahmad, *al-Taqsīm al-Idari li Suriya* (The Administrative Division of Syria), (Cairo, 1951); 'Abd al-Karim Gharaybeh, *Suriya fi al-qarn al-tasi' 'ashar* (Syria in the Nineteenth Century), (Cairo, 1961); 'Abd al-'Aziz 'Awad, *al-Idara al-Uthmaniyyah fi wilayat Suriya* (Ottoman Administration in Syria), (Cairo, 1969); Muhammad 'Adnan al-Bakhit, *The Ottoman Province of Damascus in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1972); and 'Abd al-Karim Rafeq, *al-'Arab wa al-Uthmaniyyun, 1516-1916* (The Arabs and the Ottomans), (Damascus, 1974); Bahjat Husayn Sabri, *Liwa' al-Quds taht al-hukum al-Uthmani, 1840-1873* (The Province of Jerusalem Under Ottoman Rule, 1840-1873), (Unpublished M.A. manuscript, 'Ain al-Shams University, Cairo, 1973).

74. The latter point is reflected by the titles of two recent anthologies—David Kushner, ed., *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation*, and Gad Gilbar, ed., *Ottoman Palestine, 1800-1914: Studies in Economic and Social History*.

75. For a survey of extant court archives and an analysis of how they have been used, see Beshara Doumani, "Palestinian Islamic Court Records: A Source of Socio-economic History," *MESA Bulletin* 19, no. 2 (December 1985), pp. 155-72.

76. The University of Jordan, since 1974, has organized and hosted four meetings of The International Conference on the History of Bilad al-Sham. For information on participants and the papers presented, see Muhammad Adnan al-Bakhit, et. al., *The International Conference of Bilad al-Sham: Collective Index* (Amman: University of Jordan, 1990).

77. Alexander Schölch, *Palastina im Umbruch*. Haim Gerber, in his *Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem, 1890-1914* (1985), explicitly argues that economic growth in nineteenth-century Palestine, long credited to European immigrants, was for the most part organized by the local population. He also raises serious reservations about the pervasive view that Palestine was depopulated and overrun by lawlessness, corruption, and insecurity. See his articles, "Modernization in Nineteenth-Century Palestine: The Role of Foreign Trade," *Middle Eastern Studies* 18, no. 13 (July 1982), pp. 250-64; and "The Population of Syria and Palestine in the Nineteenth Century," *African and Asian Studies* [Jerusalem], 13, no. 1 (March 1979), pp. 59-80.