The Politics of Israel's Past

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The Politics of Israel's Past

The Bible, Archaeology and Nation-Building

edited by
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Abbreviations

AASOR	Annual of the American Schools of Oriental Research
ABRL	Anchor Bible Reference Library
ANET[3]	*Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament* (ed. J.B. Pritchard; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969, 3rd edn with Supplement).
Ant.	Josephus Flavius, *Antiquities of the Jews*
Apion	Josephus Flavius, *Against Apion*
BA	*Biblical Archaeologist*
BAR	*Biblical Archaeology Review*
BASOR	*Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*
BIES	Bulletin of the Israel Exploration Society
BMCR	*Bryn Mawr Classical Review*
BTAVO	Beihefte zum Tübingen Atlas des Vorderer Orients
BTB	*Biblical Theology Bulletin*
BWANT	Beiträge zur Wissenschaft vom Alten und Neuen Testament
BZAW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CBET	Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology
CIS	Copenhagen International Seminar
DBAT	*Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament*
DMOA	Documenta et monumenta orientis antiqui
DTT	*Dansk teologisk tidsskrift*
ESHM	European Seminar in Historical Methodology
FBE	Forum for Bibelsk Eksegese
GL	*Ginzach Leumi* (The Israel State Archive, Jerusalem)
GTC	Government Touristic Company
HA-ESI	*Hadashot arkheologiyot—Excavations and Surveys in Israel*
HANE/S	History of the Ancient Near East/Studies
HLS	*Holy Land Studies*
IAA	Israel Antiquities Authority
IDAM	Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums
IEJ	*Israel Exploration Journal*
JBL	*Journal of Biblical Literature*
JNES	*Journal of Near Eastern Studies*

JNF	*Keren Kayemet Le-Yisrael* (Jewish National Fund)
JSHJ	*Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*
JSOT	*Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*
JSOTSup	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series
JPS	*Journal of Palestine Studies*
JSP	Judea and Samaria Publications
JTS	*Journal of Theological Studies*
LAI	Library of Ancient Israel
LHB/OTS	Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies
NEA	*Near Eastern Archaeology*
NovT	*Novum Testamentum*
PEQ	*Palestine Exploration Quarterly*
RB	*Revue biblique*
SHANE	Studies in the History of the Ancient Near East
SJOT	*Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament*
SNTSMS	Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series
ST	*Studia theologica*
TA	*Tel Aviv*
VTSup	Supplements to Vetus Testamentum
War	Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War*
ZAW	*Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*

Contributors

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Terje Oestigaard is an archaeologist, currently working at the Nordic Africa Institute in Uppsala, Sweden. His main research interests are political archaeology, death and water studies. His publications include *Political Archaeology and Holy Nationalism: Archaeological Battles over the Bible and Land in Israel and Palestine from 1967–2000* (Gothenburg University, 2007), *Horus' Eye and Osiris' Efflux: The Egyptian Civilisation of Inundation ca. 3000–2000 BCE* (Archaeopress, 2011), and the forthcoming books *Water, Christianity and the Rise of Capitalism* (I.B. Tauris) and *The Source: Rituals, Beliefs and Traditions along the Blue Nile* (with Gedef A. Firew).

Emanuel Pfoh is a post-doctoral fellow at the National Research Council (CONICET) and teaches in the Department of History of the National University of La Plata, Argentina. His publications include *The Emergence of Israel in Ancient Palestine: Historical and Anthropological Perspectives* (Equinox, 2009) and *Anthropology and the Bible: Critical Perspectives* (edited for Gorgias Press, 2010). His research interests are the historical and political anthropology of Syria–Palestine in the Late Bronze Age, the history of Israel and Palestine in the first millennium BCE and the politics of biblical scholarship.

Firas Sawah is an independent scholar based in Homs, Syria. His publications include 'Jerusalem in the Age of the Kingdom of Judah', in *Jerusalem in Ancient History and Tradition* (ed. T.L. Thompson; T. & T. Clark International, 2003).

Gideon Sulimany is an archaeologist interested in the place of archaeology in Israeli society and its role in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Since 2008 he has been a member of the Emek Shaveh Organization, and between 1990 and 2008 he held various positions in the Israel Antiquity Authority. Between 2000 and 2005, he served as the Jerusalem district archaeologist. His main excavation is in the Muslim cemetery of Mamila. Among his publications are *Survey of Israel, Map of Nes Harim* (with D. Weiss and B. Zissu; IAA, 2004) and 'Archaeology and Professional Ethical Codes in Israel in the Mid-1980s', *Journal of Hebrew Scriptures* 10/4 (with R. Kletter, 2010).

Thomas L. Thompson is Emeritus Professor of Old Testament at the University of Copenhagen. Among his best-known works are *The Historicity of the Patriarchal Narratives: The Quest for the Historical Abraham* (W. de Gruyter, 1974), *Early History of the Israelite People: From the Written and Archaeological Sources* (Brill, 1992), *The Bible in History: How Writers Create the Past* (Jonathan Cape, 1999), and *The Messiah Myth: The Near Eastern Roots of Jesus and David* (Basic Books, 2005). His major interests have been related to the history of Palestine and biblical narrative.

Philippe Wajdenbaum earned a PhD in Social Sciences at the Université Libre de Bruxelles. His doctoral dissertation was published under the title *Argonauts of the Desert: Structural Analysis of the Hebrew Bible* (Equinox, 2011). Using the structural analysis of myths developed by anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, Wajdenbaum focuses on comparing biblical narratives and laws with classical Greek literature, from the perspective of a likely Greek influence on the redaction of the Hebrew Bible during the Hellenistic era.

Keith W. Whitelam is Emeritus Professor in Biblical Studies at the University of Sheffield. His publications include *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (Routledge, 1996), *The Emergence of Early Israel in Historical Perspective* (with Robert B. Coote, reprinted Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2010), and *Holy Land as Homeland? Models for Constructing the Historic Landscapes of Jesus* (editor, Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2011). He was joint editor of the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament.* His major research interests are in the history and archaeology of ancient Palestine, cartography and travel narratives of Palestine, and the social and political influences that have shaped biblical studies as a discipline.

Preface

Emanuel Pfoh

If memory serves me well, the essential idea for this book came to me one spring evening in 2009, when I was a guest in Niels Peter Lemche's home in Sweden. My main intention was to bring to the fore the close interconnections between the archaeology of Palestine (so-called biblical archaeology), the role of the Hebrew Bible as a historical source for reconstructing or writing the history of 'ancient Israel', the prospects for a critical history of ancient Palestine, and issues of modern nationalisms and identities in Israel and Palestine. Thomas L. Thompson supported the project at once and was a key player in helping me to organize it. As time passed, the realization of my original idea into a collective book was well on its way until problems and misunderstandings suddenly appeared (some of them are still a mystery to me); I lost my former co-editor together with a few contributors, and the project for a moment collapsed. Fortunately, and with the support of Niels Peter and Thomas, and then Philip R. Davies and Keith W. Whitelam, the project continued and now it has finally materialized.

I want to thank these scholars for their academic and personal support, especially Keith, who kindly agreed to participate and co-edit the book with me, and to the rest of the contributors for taking up and discussing issues considered 'problematic', to say the least, in the fields of biblical studies and the archaeology of Israel/Palestine, but which must be acknowledged and dealt with because they directly or indirectly have an impact on both current biblical scholarship and the political and cultural present of Israel and Palestine.

On more formal grounds, I wish to thank Jim West, who read the papers, smoothing the English in some of them and enhancing their language style.

Introduction

Emanuel Pfoh and Keith W. Whitelam

During the U.S. Republican primary elections in 2012, Newt Gingrich claimed that Palestinians are an invented people. Gingrich was appearing in an interview on The Jewish Channel on U.S. cable TV. In response to the question, 'Do you consider yourself a Zionist?'—to which one might expect the answer to be 'yes' or 'no'—he replied that Israel had a right to a state. 'Remember', he said, 'there was no Palestine as a state. It was part of the Ottoman Empire. And I think that we've invented the Palestinian people, who are in fact Arabs and are historically part of the Arab community, and they had the chance to go many places.' He went on to say that President Obama's efforts to treat the Palestinians the same as the Israelis is 'favoring the terrorists'.

Gingrich's ignorance of history or of how national identity is constructed is a perfect illustration of why the issues discussed in this collection of essays are so important. What underlies his claim is a very important principle: the idea that a nation without a past is a contradiction in terms. If the Palestinians do not possess a past, they cannot possess a national consciousness or be a people. Therefore, they have no right to a land or a state. Hence his reply to the question, 'Do you consider yourself to be a Zionist?', was that Israel has the right to a state. The corollary to Gingrich's assertion that the Palestinians are an invented people is that they can be expelled because they have no right to be there, a policy that is advocated by many Israeli political figures and parties.

A number of the papers in this volume examine how historical images—presented as simply given, self-evident and even indisputable—are employed in political readings of the past and used as a legitimizing tool. Deconstructing modern biblical discourses on the Bible's production and the history of ancient Israel enables the exploration of critical approaches to ancient Palestine's past, to the history of the peoples of the region, to the history of the biblical text(s) and, last but not least, to the modern

political uses of biblical narratives as legitimizing land ownership and nationalisms.

Emanuel Pfoh deals with three of these interrelated aspects: the contexts of Western historiographical production related to biblical images, the politics attached to archaeological practice in Israel/Palestine, and the cultural aspects of Zionist nation-building, as related to uses of a distant ('biblical') past, archaeological artefacts and monuments and imaginative geographies. He concludes with a brief examination of the issues involved in trying to write a non-nationalist history of ancient Palestine.

The relevance of genealogies and tribes, as used by biblical authors in the Hellenistic period, is highlighted by Ingrid Hjelm. She shows how such fictive models—which had little to do with historical realities from the Iron Age and later periods—worked as an organizing principle in the Old Testament for arranging narratives. The invention of this literary structure involving the tribes gave the biblical authors a paradigm, she concludes, that could fit any political or ideological situation they wished to depict.

Philippe Wajdenbaum approaches a new understanding of the literary nature of biblical narratives by linking its production in Hellenistic times directly to Platonic writings, especially the *Laws.* Wajdenbaum appeals to structural anthropology to argue that it is possible to detect correspondences and parallelism between Greek and biblical literature. He focuses on how traditional biblical studies has continued to neglect these relationships.

Thomas L. Thompson's first paper sketches the history of al-Quds/Jerusalem from its earliest times to the Hellenistic period. He examines the discrepancies between biblical depictions of the city and subsequent archaeological investigations and the ways in which these have often been harmonized by biblical scholars and archaeologists. He sketches a history of the city that reflects the pattern of settlement that is common to the impoverished and arid area of the southern highlands of Palestine in which it is located. He concludes that al-Quds has a long and possibly continuous history as a holy city since the Middle Bronze Age, but, before the Hellenistic period, its settlement attained a significant size and bore a major political or economic importance for the region as a whole only for a short period in the seventh century BCE. He also questions, once again, the historicity of a return from exile in the Persian period or its usefulness for understanding the origins of Judaism.

Firas Sawah's paper and Thompson's response to it examine this last question in greater detail. Sawah draws on the biblical traditions to stress the importance of the themes of exile and the return to the land in crafting a religio-ethnic identity for Judaism as reflected by accounts in Ezra and Nehemiah. He concludes that Jerusalem in the Persian period emerged as the focus of Yahweh-worshippers everywhere. Thompson challenges this

'postexilic' understanding of the origins of Judaism based on biblical paraphrase. He stresses the mythic nature of the notion of return, the importance of this theme as cultural memory and the lack of evidence for such an event in the archaeology of Palestine, especially in Jerusalem.

James G. Crossley offers a critique of New Testament studies in looking at the underlying ideological structure bolstering scholarly (re-)constructions of Israel, Galilee, 'the Land'. He examines the power of ideology at work in scholarship to show how scholars—using the work of Bruce Malina as an example—do not necessarily know what they are arguing and can unintentionally buy into dominant discourses about the Israel–Palestine conflict.

Niels Peter Lemche analyzes how official versions of history have been presented in modern Israel as an argument for land possession. He shows how religious and secular perspectives are intertwined in Zionist historiography and modern Israel's national myth that see a direct continuum between ancient Israel and the modern state. He also examines how cultural memory changes or fades and suggests that as the impact of national histories as foundation myths fade a new myth will need to be created. He concludes with the hope that this will be the first step toward a new common identity that may one day allow for peace in that part of the world.

The papers by Gideon Sulimany and Raz Kletter analyze the practice of archaeology in Israel. Sulimany explores the rationale of Israeli archaeology in East Jerusalem after 1967. In particular, he examines the activity of Yigael Yadin, Avigad Netzer, Benjamin Mazar and Yigal Shiloh, showing how their scientific interests coincided with a political Zionist vision of reclaiming sovereignty in the city by excavating strata from the first and second temple periods while neglecting other archaeological phases (for example, Muslim). Kletter scrutinizes documents from the state archives of Jerusalem dealing with the first decades of Israeli archaeology, exposing the politics of excavators and authorities by a close reading of the primary sources (letters and official papers).

Terje Oestigaard explores the ways in which archaeology is used to create and justify the nation-state. He explores the roles of nationalism, ethnicity and heritage archaeology in enabling people to experience and take part in the past. He shows the power of the past and archaeology when it is mobilized on political grounds, but he also warns that a rewriting of Palestinian history 'needs to be based on sound archaeology without falling into the nationalist trap'.

Nadia Abu El-Haj analyzes how an examination of genetics studies in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s treated the Jewish population of Israel as a single population with a shared (ancient) origin and as a collection of subpopulations that had migrated to Israel from various points of (more recent) origin. This project was part of the state's nationalist project, guided

by biblical traditions and an attempt to merge all population groups into a single polity.

Finally, Keith W. Whitelam examines how the Iron Age—because of its peculiar interest to Western scholars—has been treated as a special period that is cut adrift from the history of Palestine. He explores exclusivist, national narratives—Zionist and Palestinian—that reinforce this notion. He argues for an integrated history of Palestine, along the lines of recent discussions of British history, that does not privilege one particular period over others.

The essays in this volume deal with the ways in which the history of ancient Palestine and ancient Israel have been constructed as part of nationalist or exclusivist narratives. They expose the interconnections between the religious and cultural uses of biblical traditions, the practice of archaeology in Israel/Palestine and the writing of histories of this region. Understanding the social and political contexts in which biblical pasts and the history of Palestine are produced is vital in the struggle over memory and a means to challenge the erroneous views of politicians like Newt Gingrich.

Some Reflections on the Politics of Ancient History, Archaeological Practice and Nation-Building in Israel/Palestine

Emanuel Pfoh

Every work of a scholarly nature is produced under particular historical circumstances, whether ideological, political, economic and/or socio-cultural, which shape the interests and the modes of creating and reproducing a particular knowledge.[1] Such a truism, proper of a critical sociology of knowledge,[2] is, however, underestimated by many scholars working on different aspects of ancient history or archaeology, especially in the field of biblical studies and the so-called 'biblical archaeology'. As a result, the knowledge produced about the history of Israel in ancient Palestine, for instance, depends on interpreting the Bible as if it were a direct source of factual information about the past, obliterating the cultural gap between our modern Western worldview and the one behind the production of the biblical narrative; or also on using interpretative models, such as the idea of a 'nation-state', in order to understand socio-political structures and practices in the ancient Levant, ignoring the alternative ways in which non-Western

1. Cf. de Certeau 1974: 4-5: 'Toute recherche historiographique s'articule sur un lieu de production socio-économique, politique et culturel. Elle implique un milieu d'élaboration que circonscrivent des déterminations propres: une profession libérale, un poste d'observation ou d'enseignement, une catégorie de lettrés, etc. Elle est donc soumise à des contraintes, liée à des privilèges, enracinée dans une particularité. C'est en fonction de cette place que des méthodes s'instaurent, qu'une topographie d'intérêts se précise, que des dossiers et des questions à poser aux documents s'organisent.… On a montré que toute interprétation historique dépend d'une système de réference; que se système demeure une «philosophie» implicite particulière; que, s'infiltrant dans le travail d'analyse, l'organisant à son insu, il renvoie à la «subjetivité» de l'auteur'. See further, and more recently, on this Berkhofer 1995: 202-42.

2. See, for instance, Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992.

politics are constructed and displayed in society, as we can witness in the ethnographic and ethno-historical records of the Middle East.[3]

The present article deals with four interrelated aspects involving epistemological awareness: (1) the contexts of historiographical production, (2) the politics attached to archaeological practice in Israel/Palestine, and (3) the cultural aspects of Zionist nation-building, as related to uses of a distant ('biblical') past, archaeological artefacts and monuments and historical geographies, with (4) a necessary post-colonial addendum on the prospects for a Palestinian history of ancient Palestine.

The Contexts of Historiographical Production

For each assertion, argument or proposal, there must be a comprehensive context of interpretation giving sense to it and sanctioning it as valid. One cannot do without the other.[4] Thus, the historical and the archaeological discourses have their meaning within a certain (ideological, socio-economic, etc.) context. The context informs the historian of historiography not about personal particularities or choices of scholars of the past (this is a job for psychologists) but rather about the general social background of a certain work of scholarship, or even the more narrow scholarly background in which such work functions. So, most historical works from the nineteenth century had 'the nation' or 'nationalism' as a main topic of interest and research; after the economic crash of 1929, a relevant proportion of modern historiographical production shifted from 'social or general history' to 'economic history'; and so on (see Duby 1974).

The modern discourses of 'biblical studies' and 'biblical archaeology', of course, do not escape from this assertion, as Keith W. Whitelam has shown in his *The Invention of Ancient Israel* (1996). In fact, detecting the elements that constitute the epistemological structure of biblical studies (in broad terms, a Western, Christian, white, male-centred discourse, anchored in Europe and the United States) allows, in principle, for an understanding of the results and conclusions regarding the 'history of Israel' and the text of the Hebrew Bible we have had for the last two hundred years: we have a hegemonic discourse about the 'history of Israel' rather than about the 'history of Palestine'; and we have an understanding of the Hebrew Bible centred mainly on how 'we' (the Western world) identify culturally with the biblical narrative rather than on how biblical stories are socio-culturally more at home within the ancient Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds.

3. I have dealt with these issues in Pfoh 2009.

4. Cf. de Certeau 1974: 4-16, who understands this as the 'social place' (*lieu social*) of any particular historical discourse carried out through a particular historiographical practice.

From a socio-anthropological point of view, the social world of the Bible is culturally alien to us, a fact often neglected by modern interpreters and readers; and from a strictly historical point of view, the presence of the Bible in our modern societies is due essentially to human political and ideological factors of cultural transmission and not to any divine, teleological, supra-historical command (Lemche 2009). It can be then proposed that a theological reading of the Bible differs notably in method and epistemology from historical or anthropological readings of such a 'cultural artefact' (cf. Pfoh 2009: 58-68).

Also, from a critical point of view of a sociology of knowledge, any preference for biblically oriented topics, or for the primacy of the biblical story of ancient Israel, when addressing the historical past of Iron Age Palestine, speaks first of the place the Bible has in contemporary American and European societies and how this constitutes the methodological choices to be made within these contexts of meanings. It is then necessary to differentiate how the Hebrew Bible refers to the past and how modern scholars can reconstruct the past of ancient Palestine. An approach like this, however, does not necessarily involve any anti-religious or anti-Bible agenda.[5] Instead, it secures the results of studying critically the history of the biblical text(s), its relation to the history of Palestine, of Israel, of Judaism(s), Christianity and Islam.

Realizing how traditional biblical archaeology (from the 1920s to the 1970s) and early Israeli archaeology (from 1925, with the founding of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and then from the 1950s to the 1980s, sponsored by the State of Israel) and their search for the historicity of the biblical narrative shaped a particular manner of understanding the past of ancient Palestine brings about the acknowledgment that such shaping of the past left alternative and yet most historically valid pasts out of the possibilities of historiographical construction. A coming of age of historiography in biblical studies implies criticism and reflexivity in the field. And this epistemological awareness is the presupposition needed for future critical histories of the region.

In this sense, I would propose a general analytical disposition according to what the third generation of *les Annales* historical school calls historical anthropology, that is, an interpretative perspective 'in which history makes use of the methods of anthropology in order to reach the deepest levels of historical realities, whether these be material, mental, or political, while tak-

5. This is in spite of what may be inferred from reading H. Avalos's *The End of Biblical Studies* (2007), which poses problematic yet legitimate questions to the field of biblical studies.

ing care to preserve the structured unity of humanity and of knowledge'.[6] It is according to this principle that we can gain not only critical knowledge about the historical realities of Israel in the Iron Age and in the following periods, the texts of the Bible, and the history of ancient Palestine in general, with a proper historical methodology not dependent on the Bible's emplotment of Israel's past in Palestine,[7] but also it is possible to take into account the social and ideological backgrounds for the production of historiography in modern and contemporary biblical studies, including the practice of archaeology (see further the proposal in Pfoh 2010).

The Politics of Archaeological Practice

It is perhaps through a critical analysis of the archaeological practice carried out in Palestine, especially the so-called biblical archaeology, that we can exemplify the results of an explicitly ideologically driven scientific discipline during a great part of the twentieth century. Archaeology was the scientific means to prove the historical accuracy of biblical narrative, and by 'unearthing the Bible' its authority was utterly sanctioned as valid. It is obvious now that the scientific component of this biblical archaeology was indeed relative, since it did not operate through a proper scientific method of discovery of something new but instead by the apologetic premise that the biblical stories were in fact anchored in ancient Near Eastern history; and it was through archaeology that such history-anchored biblical truth was recovered. In biblical archaeology, archaeology was subsumed to a modern reading of the Bible, attempting to prove it historical to some extent, hence its epistemology was ultimately apologetic, not critical (see Thompson 2013). Nevertheless, and despite its corrupted scientific methodology, biblical archaeology has unfortunately not disappeared in the greater field of biblical studies but survives now under the rubric of 'historical' or 'new biblical archaeology', changing its name but not its epistemology.[8] In some

6. Le Goff 1992: xiv. For an integral outlook of this perspective, see the three volumes of *Faire de l'histoire* (Le Goff and Nora 1974). This does not entail, however, a primacy of cultural history over socio-economic history (cf. Dosse 2005: 163-77), but instead a critical integration of all these aspects in historical interpretations.

7. Compare, among many recent works, the anthology edited by Coogan, *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (1998), which mimics the biblical periodization of Israel's past in its reconstruction of historical Israel. It is most evident that such a history of Israel is dependent not on primary sources (archaeology, epigraphy) but on the Bible; also, this modern biblicist version of Israel's past has hijacked ancient Palestine's past. Cf. Whitelam 2002a: 288-94.

8. See, for instance, Dever 2001; Hoffmeier and Millard 2004; Levy 2010. I refer, in contrast, to the general criticism found in Thompson 1996. The shortcomings of biblical archaeology are rightly exposed as well in Oestigaard 2007: 29-93.

way, and although many parts of the biblical narrative have been shown to be non-historical by critical scholarship, it still seems to be legitimate to draw on biblical materials, images and depictions of the past in order to pursue archaeological and historical studies of Iron Age Palestine. Besides the sociological reasons for this to happen,[9] an issue of methodology and results is at the centre of this problem.

One particular flaw affecting the results of biblical archaeology's epistemology is its lack of problematization of analytical concepts for describing historical processes or social conditions. In particular, the concepts of statehood and ethnicity have been pervasively used in recent treatments of the biblical United Monarchy of David and Solomon and the question of identity in Iron Age Palestine, enabling historical interpretations that go well beyond what archaeological remains allow to deduce from them. For instance, the opening paragraph in Carol Meyers's depiction of the transition from kinship to kingship in ancient Israelite society is telling in its wording:

> For nearly a century at the beginning of the Iron II period (ca. 1025–586 BCE), *most of Palestine was organized as a national state*, with a dynastic figure—a king—at its head. . . . The formation of a state in Iron Age Palestine, however its benefits and liabilities might be evaluated, was an extraordinary event. Never before in the millennia of sedentary life in the Eastern Mediterranean had a territorial state existed in that land. And following the dissolution that would occur fairly soon, *never again until the mid-twentieth century would this narrow stretch of the ancient Fertile Crescent be home to an autonomous cultural entity under local leadership* (Meyers 1998: 165; the emphasis is mine).

The idea of a cultural, historical and ethnic continuity between that ancient Israelite nation-state and the modern nation-state of Israel is in this paragraph more than explicit, notwithstanding the difference between the endogenous process that led to the emergence of a socio-political organization called 'Israel' in ancient Palestine (Pfoh 2009: 161-73) and the modern context of the late-nineteenth–early-twentieth-century colonization and occupation of Palestine by European Jews, most of them of Zionist ideology, ending up in the founding of the State of Israel (Prior 1999).

Also in Baruch Halpern's description of the Solomonic state we can find an anachronistic transposition of concepts describing a socio-historical reality, which is impossible to detect by analysing the archaeological record itself:

9. I believe it essentially has to do with the religious background of many biblical scholars, but also their academic affiliation to theological and religious seminaries and schools, which fund their research. This matter deserves a systematic study on the sociology of knowledge of biblical studies.

> Solomon's state was essentially a shell, with tax remission and territorial cession at his base. It was a forerunner to the great monumental city-states of 9th-century Syria only because *it represented the first western state formed up as a territorial, national, ethnic identity, based on a nativist impulse (Saulide Israel) converted to internationalism for a time (David and Solomon)*. The facade, of course, gave out, like other modernizing facades have tended throughout history to do. It left, however, a legacy of aspiration—an identification of the Davidic kingdom with all Israel—that, too, is an abiding reality, otherwise unattested in the ancient world, whose weight as evidence is not sufficiently understood by those who dismiss the concept of a United Monarchy (Halpern 2000: 120-21).[10]

In a similar vein, Avraham Faust has recently proposed a new example of the need of an Israelite state for understanding Israelite ethnogenesis, paraphrasing the creation of modern nation-states and, in doing so, following closely the narrative in the books of Samuel–Kings:

> We are left to conclude that ethnicity results, one way or the other, from statehood. This is not to say that a certain group must live within the physical boundaries of a state in order to have ethnic identity. It must, however, exist within the orbit of a state (Faust 2006: 137).[11]

Each of these examples shows an extreme over-interpretation of the archaeological record of Early Iron Age Palestine, guided ultimately by the stories found in the books of Samuel–Kings. Although it cannot be argued by reading these quotations themselves that the arguments follow a Zionist political motivation—distorting what could be a more objective and less chauvinist interpretation of the archaeological record—it can be certainly suggested that the aforementioned arguments and descriptions contribute to maintain and support the uninterrupted connection between the ancient Israelites and the modern state of Israel,[12] something proclaimed officially on the website of Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

10. This statement certainly recalls the rhetoric in W.F. Albright's *From the Stone Age to Christianity* (1957), especially Chapters 3–4; cf. Long 1997a; 1997b.

11. See further the critique of Faust's book in Pfoh 2009: 164-73; and Lemche 2010.

12. As Whitelam (1996: 234) writes: 'The periods of the "emergence" of Israel in Palestine and the development of the Israelite state . . . define the essential nature of Israel, its sense of national identity, which is portrayed as unchanging throughout subsequent periods of history connecting the past with the present'. Cf. already the criticism in Glock 1995. The recent book by I. Finkelstein and N.A. Silberman, *David and Solomon* (2006), can be certainly read as a plea for connecting such biblical figures to modern Israel, and not only to the Western world, as a political myth by means of a cultural tradition transmitted through time, as can be noticed in assertions like 'the legend of David and Solomon expresses a universal message of *national independence* and transcending religious values that people all over the world have come to regard as their own' (p. 6; my emphasis); for a review of this book, see Thompson 2006.

> Above all archeological research clearly reveals the historical link between the Jewish people, the Bible and the Land of Israel, uncovering the remains of the cultural heritage of the Jewish people in its homeland. These visible remains, buried in the soil, constitute the physical link between the past, the present and the future of the Jewish people in its country.[13]

This interpretative strategy was thoroughly analysed in Whitelam's *The Invention of Ancient Israel*, exposing how the ancient Israelite state of David and Solomon depicted in the Hebrew Bible was conceived of and recreated by modern and contemporary biblical scholarship depending essentially after the features that characterize modern nation-states. Whitelam also noted the role of these modern historiographical representations in legitimating an image of the modern state of Israel as ultimately defensive, non-imperialistic and based on a heritage of more than three thousand years (Whitelam 1996: 122-70). As H. Avalos (2007: 151) affirms, following this analysis:

> Proving the existence of an Israelite kingdom or 'state' as far back as possible is crucial for current arguments about the legitimacy of the Israeli state. Regardless of the validity of such motivations, we certainly do see that claims to the land of Israel are argued on the basis of the supposed existence of a 'state' or a 'kingdom' as far back as possible.

It seems evident that biblical archaeology (American and Israeli) is better prepared to detect a full-blown national state than, let us say, a chiefdom or a hierarchically organized tribal society in the archaeological record of Iron I Palestine, because what determines such socio-political distinction is precisely the biblical stories of a United Monarchy ruling over a Israelite nation and not a proper observation of the material evidence—the Hebrew Bible, we must remember, does not belong in the Iron Age as an artefact (cf. Pfoh 2008).

These examples of current historiography show the importance that yields such archaeological materiality for modern Western society, including Israel, which possesses interest in knowing about that part of the past in Palestine. What this also eventually demonstrates is the ideological, political and cultural interest in what is being dug out of the soil for what it represents symbolically to modern people. Finally, and beyond any criticism toward the methodology in their historical reconstructions, these examples represent ultimately an ethnocentric approach to ancient Palestine's past, according to which what is already known and then supposedly confirmed by archaeology (i.e., the biblical past) is preponderant over the otherness we

13. Http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Facts+About+Israel/History/Facts+about+Israel-+History.htm (accessed on February 28, 2012).

can discover about the societies of ancient Palestine by following a sound historical methodology.

Zionist Nation-Building and Palestine's Past

In her important study *Recovered Roots* (1995), Yael Zerubavel presented a thorough understanding of the historical and sociological constitution of national collective memory in modern Israel by means of commemoration. According to Zerubavel, 'the Zionist views of the past first emerged as counter-memory to traditional Jewish memory in Europe. As they developed, they constructed the master commemorative narrative of the society of Zionist settlers who immigrated to Palestine in its vast majority from Europe, inspired by the nationalist ideology that called for a revival of Jewish national culture and life in the ancient Jewish homeland'.[14] This 'national' revival depended not primarily on belonging to a religious community, as was the case in pre-modern times, but on belonging now to a *national* community, a modern idea retrojected into the most ancient (biblical) past, creating a line of continuity and a bond to the land of Palestine—or in biblical-Zionist terms, *'eretz yisra'el*.[15] Accordingly, the practice of archaeology by Jewish settlers in British Mandate Palestine and later in the state of Israel was a most important nationalist tool for recovering the 'roots in the ancient past and the ancient homeland' (Zerubavel 1995: 59), for connecting an ancient and a modern national community and thus claiming legitimacy to inhabit the land.[16]

The politics implied in the practice of archaeology in modern Israel, especially between the 1950s and the early 1980s, had a tremendous importance in the Israeli nation-building process. As Amos Elon indicated: 'Archaeology often converged with nationalism in the new nation-states created in Europe after the Great War, but perhaps nowhere else did archaeology loom so large, or for so long, as in Israeli life until the early seventies' (1997: 36). Further, as Yaacov Shavit also wrote, archaeology during the early years of the state of Israel 'had become a popular national cult, a cornerstone of Israel's civic religion, and a formidable component in its symbolic repertoire. Ancient excavated sites became objects of secular-national pilgrimage. Collectively, they constituted a new mandatory touring itinerary, tantamount

14. Zerubavel 1995: 12. A master commemorative narrative is 'a broader view of history, a basic "story line" that is culturally constructed and provides the group members with a general notion of their shared past' (p. 6).

15. On the secular-religious tension within Zionism, see Prior 1999: 63-97, and on the biblical justification for Zionism, pp. 151-75; also Sand 2009: 250-92; 2012: 177-253.

16. This procedure, blending nationalism and archaeology, is ubiquitous in modern nation-making; see Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Kohl, Kozelsky and Ben-Yehuda 2007.

to a remapping of the land, both symbolic and real. This new map was conveniently stretched over the pre-1948 map of non-Jewish settlement in Palestine.'[17] This rationale included as well the creation of a mental national territory for the state of Israel and its new citizens, which was carried out through a process of de-arabization of Palestinian toponymy and the official replacement ('restitution') of places in the cartography of Palestine with Hebrew (biblical, when possible) names. This process had a direct antecedent in the work of the Jewish Palestine Exploration Society, which in 1922, and in cooperation with the British Mandate of Palestine, produced the first list of Hebraized geographical places and accidents of Palestine.[18]

This process must be explained and analysed as nation building taking place, crafting according to the modern principles of nationalism a legitimized belonging to a particular territory by appealing to history: the biblical past informs the Zionist present of the moment, and archaeology can prove it. And it may equally be related to the manufacturing of 'imaginative geographies',[19] the social and collectively constructed mental scenarios through which reality is set. As Derek Gregory notes, imaginative geographies are performative, that is, they produce the effect they name; 'its categories, codes, and conventions shape the practices of those who draw upon it' (2004: 17). A clear example of this is illustrated by Western (European and American) imaginative geography of Palestine as the Christian Holy Land by means of mapmaking, tourism and religious pilgrimage. As Burke O. Long indicates:

> Cartography not only illustrated the biblical story. It also carried certain culturally specific understandings of society and politics, to which the story referred. In a word, the map constructed familiar, rather than alien, social realities, and so reinforced spiritual and cultural identification with a reputedly unitary ancient biblical people.[20]

First Europeans and then Zionists both appropriated the Palestinian landscape and placed within it their cultural preconceptions and religious (and nationalist) expectations. In this way, the mental landscape of Palestine also shaped the social realities and identities of the local peoples inhabiting the land, leaving them precisely outside of that imaginative geography called 'the Holy Land', or considering some of them (rural villagers or Bedouins) as ethnographic remnants of a biblical world already disappeared.

17. Shavit 1997: 50. See also Abu El-Haj 2001.

18. Cf. Benvenisti 2000: 11-54; Abu El-Haj 2001: 85-98; Ra'ad 2010: 175-95. See further, on the Judaization of the Palestinian landscape after the 1948 war, Falah 1996; Pirinoli 2005; Bar 2008.

19. For this term, see Said 1978: 54ff.

20. Long 2003: 199; see also Whitelam 2008; Aiken 2010.

As Shavit further observes about Zionist imagination of the past in Mandatory Palestine:

> Archaeology's transformation of biblical stories, from the theological, literary, and allegorical realms into reality, fueled a cyclical process: the more credible the Bible became as a historical account, the more it served historical-national ends, increasing demand for yet more archaeological verification. Biblical story was not the only subject spun about like this. Almost every known trace of the periods of the First and Second Temple and of the Mishnah-Talmud era was unearthed and installed prominently in the now historical-national awareness. Of course, there was nothing fabricated about the artifacts and history emerging from the ground. What was manufactured was the linkage between them and the present, between ancient Hebrew history and modern Israel.[21]

The constitution of a national culture through archaeological practice in Israel affected considerably the ways in which the most ancient past was represented. For instance, it is only by following closely the biblical narrative that the first Israeli archaeologists referred to the Bronze Age period (ca. 3300–1200 BCE) as the 'Canaanite period' and the subsequent Iron Age period (ca. 1200–586 BCE) as the 'Israelite period' in Palestine, assigning different ethnic markers to sites belonging to each period and, thus, identifying an Israelite presence in the archaeological record, replacing the former Canaanite one:

> The convergence of ethnic name and era was an essential component of the national-historical grammar, one that reached far deeper than a narrow nationalist commitment to the quest for the ancient Israelites. Like the Israelite period, so too was the earlier 'era' categorized according to ethnic label: 'Canaanite Period (Bronze) I–III'. In other words, the specific nationalist commitment to uncovering evidence of ancient Israelites was itself generative of (and embedded in) a broader epistemology that assumed distinctly demarcated archaeological cultures. The archaeological record was understood to contain remnants of identifiable nations and ethnic groups all the way down. Those ethnic-chronological distinctions, in turn, were the lens through which archaeological data would be made to make historical sense (Abu El-Haj 2001: 106-107).

This nationalist type of archaeology in Israel was hegemonic until the 1980s, when new results under a new generation of archaeologists began to appear, making less direct and self-evident the connection between biblical scenarios and archaeological realities. Nowadays, and since the outcome of the 1967 war, only religious fundamentalist groups, such as the Gush Emunim, continue to use archaeology as a means to prove the historicity of the

21. Shavit 1997: 56. Cf. also Abu El-Haj 2001; 2002; Kletter 2006: 314-19; Sand 2009: 107-15.

Hebrew Bible and with it the political legitimacy of Jewish occupation of Palestine, in this specific case the West Bank, which is seen as the birthplace of ancient Israel.[22]

In any case, and given that current Israeli archaeology does not work under the premises of early Zionist nationalism, it must be noted that the criticism of previous scholarship is not aimed at judging on moral grounds how Israeli nation-building, as a social collective phenomenon, created a relationship with Palestine's past through a historicized view of biblical narrative and by using archaeology as the scientific legitimizer of modern Jews belonging to the land. Rather, it is the lack of awareness and criticism found in many quarters of current historical and archaeological disciplines—mainly from academic *loci* from the United States and Israel—of how such a socio-historical process informs and affects the practice of creating the past archaeologically or historically.

Is It Possible to Write a Non-Nationalist History of Ancient Palestine?

History as an academic discipline was born in nineteenth-century Europe, as part of the rise of modern nationalism. As such, the very idea of talking about *the* past—nationalist history creates but one official version of the past—was related to society as a nation, or as an ethnic or ethno-national identity (see Sand 2009: 54-63). Nowadays, such a nationalist version of the past is seriously challenged by multiple developments that have occurred within the field of historiography during the twentieth century. There is not *one* past to be reconstructed, but as many pasts to be constructed as historians—or, it might be better to say, the variety of the past depends on the interests of the historians and, at some point, of society or some groups within it.[23]

Critical research in the fields of archaeology and biblical studies during the past forty years has arrived at two important results, at least: (a) biblical Israel, as depicted in the Old Testament, does not evoke a real, historical society in Iron Age Palestine; (b) religious and nationalist-oriented studies on 'ancient Israel' have prevented until recently the elaboration of alternative versions of ancient Palestine's past, let us say, more 'objective' history

22. Cf. Feige 2007. Both the early Zionist and the post-1967 religious fundamentalist interest in archaeology represent a way to connect with the past of ancient Israel, although, in the latter case, in a much more (religiously) sectarian way.

23. See, for instance, the works of M. Sahlins, *Islands of History* (1985), on Western and non-Western modes of constructing historical events about the arrival of Captain Cook in Hawaii's islands; and F. Hartog, *Régimes d'historicité* (2003), analysing different modes (*régimes*) of historicity, according to different historical periods.

of the region not dependent on the Bible's narrative (see Whitelam 1996; Thompson 2013).

This development in the field of biblical studies and the archaeology of Palestine can be read in parallel lines to the development of the modern Israeli–Palestinian conflict, at least since the arrival in Ottoman Palestine of the first wave of European Zionist settlers in the 1880s, and more evidently since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 (see Prior 1999: 177-210; see also Finkelstein 1995). Appealing to a biblical past, a biblical scenario (*'eretz yisra'el*), and a continuity between the ancient Israelites of the Bible and modern Jewry was fundamental in the strategy of nation building in the newly founded Jewish state, as noted above. Yet the past retrieved by Zionism was strictly ethno-national, not allowing for other forms of identity to be expressed. As Zerubavel writes:

> The desire to recover the Hebrew nation's ancient roots was a major motivating force in the construction of the Zionist master commemorative narrative. Yet in this process, Zionist collective memory suppressed other groups' memories that were in conflict with its own reconstruction of the past. Zionism, especially in its dominant socialist bent, struggled to discredit the memory of the non-Zionist religious Jews, arguing that it had led the Jews to a state of cultural stagnation, political inaction, and victimization that was characteristic of Exile. . . . Zionism suppressed the Arabs' memory of centuries of life in Palestine by ignoring its presence. Zionist memory portrayed the land as empty and desolate, yearning for the return of its ancient Hebrew inhabitants.[24]

One of these memories suppressed by Zionism collective memory is, of course, Palestine's indigenous people. The direct ancestors of modern Palestinians have been living in Palestine for centuries, as ethnographic studies and the archaeology of settlements and villages from at least the Ottoman period demonstrate (see Glock 1994). The construction of modern Palestinian national consciousness—to paraphrase the subtitle of Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity* (1997)[25]—starting at least in the late Ottoman period, and supplemented by the first encounters with Zionist settlers, and later by the memories of the *nakba* and life in the refugees' camps in Syria, Jordan and Egypt since 1948, has also brought the possibility of creating a historical narrative of the Palestinian people's relation to the past of the region. N.A. Silberman writes about this development:

> Until recently, archaeology played an insignificant role in the crystallization of Palestinian Arab national conciousness. From the early stages of the national movement at the turn of the [twentieth] century, most Palestinian Arab intellectuals concerned with the history of their people pre-

24. Zerubavel 1995: 215. Cf. Sand 2009: 250-313.
25. See also Kimmerling and Migdal 2003.

> ferred literary studies and ethnology . . . , leaving excavation to foreign scholars or participating in archaeology in strictly logistical or technical capacities (Silberman 1997: 71-72).

However, as has occured in the crafting of so many other national pasts,

> The shift in the Palestinian consciousness from traditional approaches to the past to recognition of the value and importance of nonreligious archaeological monuments began to gain momentum with the emergence of the prerogatives and institutions of a nation-state (Silberman 1997: 74).

Such an ideological movement (that is, to dig up in search of the nation's most ancient roots) seems to be a logical step in order to recover the cultural and historical heritage of a certain people or nation. Yet, this situation represents a most important challenge for the Palestinian people: how to retrieve such a past without falling into the same chauvinistic handling of the past that the Zionists, willingly or not, fell into during the process of Israeli nation-building?

A possible way to overcome the shortcomings of traditional nationalist archaeologies and their mishandling of cultural heritage, for the Palestinian people—it is proposed—could be found, along with reclaiming the Palestinian material heritage of monuments and places, through the empowerment of Palestinian *cultural memory*.[26] J. Assmann indicates that 'the concept of cultural memory comprises that body of reusable texts, images, and rituals specific to each society in each epoch, whose 'cultivation' serves to stabilize and convey that society's self-image. Upon such collective knowledge, for the most part (but not exclusively) of the past, each group bases its awareness of unity and particularity' (1995: 132). In this sense, resorting to history or archaeology—in its Western usage—is only one valid strategy of collective or cultural memory for strengthening national identity. In fact, it can be argued that there is no need to find archaeological or historical traces of 'pre-modern Palestinians' in order to reclaim the right of modern Palestinians to exist as a nation or to inhabit the territory of Palestine. Besides their cultural and historical heritage, the sole fact that a collective group of people recognize themselves as 'Palestinians' marks the very existence of such a people!

The manufacturing of a national Israeli past, appealing to the Bible's stories about the ancient Israelites, left the local population of Palestine out of the political present but also out of the constructions of Palestine's

26. See Ziadeh-Seely 2007. The recent book by B. Ra'ad, *Hidden Histories* (2010), is to be seen as an effort for providing Palestinian nationalism with a sound historical and cultural background, gaining strength against Israeli cultural nationalism, and also making a plea for creating an awareness among the Palestinian people of their cultural heritage by means of a mental decolonization (pp. 156-59). Cf. also Thompson 2011a.

past. This does not imply that Palestinian nationalism as it is understood today should be traced back to the ancient 'Canaanites' of the Bronze Age because this would imply a direct connection of a 'national' consciousness through millennia, impossible to be demonstrated and at odds with anthropological understandings of ethnicity and identity, which are historically and culturally ever changing.[27] And the same applies to religious-nationalist interpretations, in Israel and the Western world, claiming a direct, uninterrupted socio-biological connection of 'national' consciousness between the 'ancient Israelites' and modern Jewish people.[28] To accept any of these connections uncritically would imply to adopt a national narrative as a historical explanation; or, in ethnographical terms, to accept the native discourse, the *emic* perspective, as our own scholarly discourse, the *etic* perspective (Pfoh 2010). In this sense, methodological self-awareness and epistemological reflexivity about the present conditions in which the ancient past is imagined, studied and constructed can never be stressed enough.

But, my main argument is against the nationalization of archaeologies. Biblical and any kind of national archaeologies in Palestine must be overcome and replaced with a broader scope of the ancient history of the region. Within this context, a regional archaeology of Palestine and a critical history of Palestine can and must be pursued, showing the historical and cultural

27. Cf., from an archaeological perspective, Jones 1997; Oestigaard 2007; and from an anthropological perspective, Eriksen 2010.

28. Any appeal to ancient 'Canaanites' as proto-Palestinians in pre-classical times in a nationalist sense, in order to reclaim land ownership, falls into the same faulty path, when seen from a critical historical perspective, as the resort of seeing 'biblical Israel' as the direct historical forerunner of modern Israel; see notably Lemche 1991; 1998. Unfortunately, fundamentalist Zionism still uses the Bible as a title deed to the land (see Prior 1999); and according to Ziadeh-Seely (2007: 342-43), the Palestinian National Authority considers the Canaanites to be ancient Palestinians in a nationalist manner. See further Khalidi 1997: 149: 'In contradiction to these Arabist and Islamist views, there is mainstream secular Palestinian nationalism, grouped together under the umbrella of the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] and represented for the past three decades by a variety of its constituent organizations including Fateh, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and others. These groups, which have probably represented the views of a majority of Palestinians since some time in the mid- or late 1960s, emerge from a relatively recent tradition which argues that Palestinian nationalism has deep historical roots. As with other national movements, extreme advocates of this view go further than this, and anachronistically read back into the history of Palestine over the past few centuries, and *even millennia,* a nationalist consciousness and identity that are in fact relatively modern' (my emphasis). This is not to deny the existence of a Palestinian people in terms of identity and attachment to the land of Palestine; it is better a reminder of how the political present usually shapes national versions of the past.

continuities and discontinuities of this region and embracing 'the poly-ethnic nature of Palestinian cultural history'.[29]

Two final points can be made, summing up our discussion, but which need to be eventually expanded and discussed in further detail: in the first place, the most ancient historical and archaeological records of Palestine need not be reclaimed or recognized either as exclusively 'biblical Israelite' or 'Canaanite Palestinian/Arab'. This past, in general, belongs to all the peoples of modern Palestine/Israel, and in particular even more to native people living for generations in the land: let us think not only of the Palestinian people, but also of the Samaritan Jews living in Israel, whose religious tradition and presence in the land go back for millennia. Such is the shared heritage of monuments and traditions—not less the biblical ones—upon which different cultural memories are built. A cultural history of Palestine of the last five thousand years is yet to be written, showing critically the relation between the ancient religious traditions of this region and modern Jews, Christians and Muslims.

Second: so far, and after two hundred years of Western exploration of Palestine by European powers and scholars,[30] we have had *Western* versions of ancient Palestine's past. Most, if not all of these versions, deal with 'ancient Israel', the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible and the background of early Christianity. A modern *Palestinian* version of ancient Palestine's past, as related to the Palestinian people, is notably lacking—at least in the West and as an alternative to the Western narrative of the region's history.[31] This, however and as I tried to argue, does not call for a new historical-nationalistic account of ancient Palestine disputing the Zionist version in the same political terms; but instead speaks in favour of writing a native Palestinian history of ancient Palestine as a cultural narrative of identity and heritage, less focussed in Western concerns and more in local realities. As Whitelam (1996: 234) wrote, and supporting both of the points I am making: 'The construction of the past . . . is a struggle over the definition of historical and social reality. If we can alter the perspective from which these are viewed to show that the discourse of biblical studies has invented a past, often mirroring its many presents, then it will be possible to free Palestinian history and progress toward a rhetoric which will allow alternative constructions of the past. It will also free previous and subsequent periods from control by Israel's past.'

29. Cf. Glock 1994: 83; also Ziadeh-Seely 2007. See on ancient Palestine's ethnicities, Thompson 1998; 2013.

30. Cf. Silberman 1982; Glock 1994: 72-79; Davis 2004; and the much more critical approach in Whitelam 1996.

31. As noted, Ra'ad's *Hidden Histories* is an exception toward such an accomplishment.

Final Thoughts

My first argument in this paper concerned the writing of critical history. In order to understand the results of previous historiography, one must understand the historical context of its production. Thus, we can liberate ourselves from reproducing anachronisms and also advance new knowledge about the past. A history of Palestine without following slavishly the biblical story of Israel seems to be the way to achieve a critical understanding of the history of the region in ancient times, but it implies also thinking about how the Bible came into being and why and how it uses the past to convey a theological message belonging to an ancient society—that such message survived through time is another story, which cannot affect our historical epistemology.

Philip Davies (2007: 173) asks: 'How far can we translate the ancient cultural memories into our own modern critical version of history, rather than just co-opting them into our own cultural memories (which is their legitimate function within Jewish and Christian worship and the respective identities that these regions entail)?' I am not sure if the translation of ancient cultural memories into a post-Enlightenment understanding of the historical past can be fully achieved. My proposal would rather be to understand the biblical stories without transforming them into a rationalized paraphrase of the product of an ancient mythic mind, and instead allowing for their cultural otherness to be manifested. Then an evaluation of their use as historical sources for the history of Palestine is pertinent: beyond a set of clear 'corroborations' with other Near Eastern sources (see Grabbe 2007: 123-215), it is clear to me that the Hebrew Bible cannot be a primary source for the history of Iron Age Palestine and it must be treated accordingly (Pfoh 2009: 47-58). A final move would entail thinking about how we deal with the past, historically and in terms of Western collective or cultural memory, evoked in biblical narrative. Thus, it is imperative to reflect on 'our fundamental need to create meaningful narratives, ignore inconsistencies, silence some stories, and elaborate others; by our enormous capacity to forget and live on, and remember and live on, and take this dual process for granted; by our inexhaustible efforts to continuously reconstruct our memory of the past between words and silences, images and void', as Zerubavel (1995: xvi) writes. All this has a direct impact on the manner in which we write about history and construct ancient pasts.

During most of the twentieth century, the practice of archaeology in Palestine was subjected in a hegemonic way to the world of biblical narrative, affecting its results in a considerable manner and becoming thus *biblical archaeology*. Biblical archaeology was marked first with religious fervour and then with nationalist pride. Either way constitutes something apart from a sound address of Palestine's past and its societies. The focus on the bib-

lical world as revealed by archaeology, or on the role of archaeology in connecting a distant past with a national present served first religion and politics. We can learn by scrutinizing the history of biblical archaeology and early Israeli archaeology not to follow such misleading paths, in terms of scholarly results; but also how these disciplines shaped the intellectual appropriation of ancient Palestine by the West and by the state of Israel. Historians need to acknowledge the contexts of historical interpretation and of historiographical production in order to address the history of ancient Palestine, in which we find the origins of biblical narrative but also other ancient realities often neglected or silenced, in proper and critical terms: a history of ancient Palestine in its own right, and not just as the historical background of the history of biblical or ancient Israel.

Tribes, Genealogies and the Composition of the Hebrew Bible

Ingrid Hjelm

1

Biblical Israel is a metaphor for a confederation of twelve tribes that owes its existence to literature written and collected in the fifth to first century BCE. The origin of these tribes is placed in a distant past, a 'once upon a time' reality. From long lists of genealogies its exact placement in history's course can only be established by counting backward to an even more remote past, namely, the creation of humankind at the beginning of everything. The Masoretic chronology owes its origin to the rededication of Jerusalem's temple in 164 BCE (Johnson 1969: 32 and table 262; cf. Thompson 1974: 14-16) and has its anchoring points in datable events in the Assyrian and Babylonian periods. From creation evolved the generations that eventually led to the birth of an eponym, Jacob, also called Israel, whose twelve sons became the tribal ancestors of the Israelites. The construction is literary and comparable to the geographical 'twelve kings of Hatti land' and the 'twenty-two kings of the sea-coast' mentioned in Assyrian royal inscriptions (Luckenbill 1926–1927; Grayson 1972–1976; 1987–1996; cf. Hjelm 2009: 14, 18). These play the standard roles of revolting and subdued enemies such as we find also in Egyptian literature's 'nine bows' (Hjelm and Thompson 2002). Neither represents ethnic or stable confederations, but vary according to actual circumstances. The postulated ethnic and political unity of the biblical tribes, whose centre was the ark that was first carried around and later placed in Jerusalem's temple, has some similarity with the amphictyonies known from Greek sources (Noth 1933). Any attempt at proving the existence of such an all-Israelite amphictyony, however, has been indisputably rejected by the forerunners of the Copenhagen school.[1] It

1. Hjelm 2004a: 21 n. 91: 'H. Friis, who wrote her prize essay on the subject in 1968 (unfortunately not published until 1986 as *Die Bedingungen for die Errichtung*

also shares similarities with the genealogically oriented prologue to Greek (hi)stories, such as found in Hesiod's *Catalogue of Women*, leading up to the 'Panhellenic tradition of the Trojan War, to which many of the heroes of the various genealogies on both sides of the hostilities are related' (Van Seters 1988: 22 [reprint 2011: 356]).

The biblical discourse on Israel's origin is not progressive, though its surface makes it appear as if it were (Hjelm 2003: 200). It is philosophical; inclusive and exclusive. How can a single ancestor (Abraham, whose genealogy can be traced back to the first man created in the image of God) and a line of firstborn be established from Palestine and the many people in its vicinity? How can a single people be established as a people of God (Gen. 11.10-26) with whom Yahweh establishes his covenant? Although the author's intention is to establish a line of firstborn as a way of identifying Yahweh's people, to be given the biblical land of Canaan, he also creates the 'nations', namely, the Ishmaelites, Moabites, Ammonites, Midianites, Ashurites, Letushites and others,[2] in a segmentary lineage belonging to the lineage of Abraham but not to that of his wife Sarah, which is exclusively reserved for the line of the patronymic ancestors Isaac and Jacob/Israel.

From Genesis 1's creation narrative the story moves quickly through events in Adam's lineage to a listing of his genealogy in Gen. 5.1-32. The

des davidischen Reichs in Israel und seiner Umwelt (Dielheimer Blätter zum Alten Testament, Beiheft 6; Heidelberg: Diebner, 1986); Friis, "Eksilet og den israelitiske historieopfattelse", *DTT* 38 (1975), pp. 1-16; N.P. Lemche, *Israel i Dommertiden: En oversigt over diskussionen om Martin Noths "Das system des zwölf Stämme Israels"* (Tekst og tolkning, 4; Copenhagen: G.E.C. Gads Forlag, 1972). See O. Bächli, *Amphiktyonie im Alten Testament: Forschungsgeschichtliche Studie zur Hypothese von Martin Noth* (Theologische Zeitschrift Sonderband, 6; Basel: Fr. Reinhart Verlag, 1977) for references to the earlier discussion. The consequence of this deconstruction of the Bible as history found far-reaching expression in Lemche's monographs, *Early Israel: Anthropological and Historical Studies on the Israelite Society before the Monarchy* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1985) and his *The Canaanites and their Land: The Tradition of the Canaanites* (JSOTSup, 110; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1991), and in P.R. Davies, *In Search of Ancient Israel* (JSOTSup, 148; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1992), respectively arguing that neither the biblical Canaanites nor the biblical Israelites were historical. A less noticed forerunner of many of the arguments brought forward in these disputes about the *Sitz im Leben* for the biblical books was B.J. Diebner from Heidelberg, who since 1974 had published several articles in *DBAT*, opting for a postexilic dating in the Persian and Hellenistic periods for most of the biblical material; see T. Römer, "Bernd-Jörg Diebner und die 'Spätdatierung' der Pentateuch und der historischen Traditionen der hebräischen Bibel", *DBAT* 30 (1999) (= *Begegnungen Bernd Jörg Diebner zum 60. Geburtstag am 8. Mai 1999* [ed. C. Nauerth and R. Grieshammer]), pp. 151-55'. See also Thompson 1992a: 41-45 (esp. n. 42).

2. Many more are mentioned in the genealogies of Abraham's children with his second wife Keturah (Gen. 25.1-6) and the children of Ishmael (Gen. 25.12-18).

list projects the survival of Noah and his wife, his sons Shem, Ham and Japheth and their wives, who become the ancestors of the worldwide population (Genesis 6–10). The descendants of Ham include the cursed and hated Canaanites (Gen. 9.25-27), while his brother Shem becomes the ancestor of the selected and blessed Israelites (Gen. 10.21-31). The genealogies thus project a conflict that is basic to the entire Old Testament. Also the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians (Gen. 10.6-15), and standard groups of people that the Israelites 'must drive out' are listed as Ham's descendants (10.16-18). The 'Table of Nations' in Genesis 10 shows 'the relative kinship of all the known nations of the world and the position of Israel in relation to them' (Johnson 1969: 77). The sum of these is seventy and thus a clear sign of the composite character of the table and an origin in the Persian period (Johnson 1969: 77 n. 4). After the fall of Babel, Shem's genealogy continues with Abraham's lineage (Gen. 11.10-32) and prepares the reader for Abraham's story and the Promise of the Land, which eventually leads to the national story (stories), which scholarship most often adumbrates and paraphrases as 'History of Israel'. The genealogies thus combine the Primeval Narrative with the Abrahamic and Mosaic cycles. Noah's third son, Japheth, is given little attention in the Old Testament, and it is the descendants of Shem and Ham that inhabit the scenes on which the biblical authors have staged their tragedy about the Israelites. The origins of the genealogies are plentiful, and some might reflect historical figures; but the biblical use of genealogies as an organizing principle is literary and fictional.

Biblical literature basically revolves around the tribes' co-operation and conflict, love and hatred, war and peace, inclusion and exclusion in endless stories of fighting for religious and political supremacy, for land and for wealth. The prize for such fights is the loss of unity, of innocence and purity. Eventually it also involves a denial of a common origin, a 'those with whom we shared our origin are long lost, so who are you?' question to neighbors and former 'relatives' (Hjelm 2003: 208). In Ezra's and Nehemiah's anti-Persian parody on ethnic cleansing, not only the former inhabitants of the Israelite kingdom, later known as the Samaritans, but also the Transjordanian peoples have fallen victim to a devastating policy of ethnic demarcation (Ezra 9–10 and Neh. 13.23-31; Thompson 2003).

2

The continuous narrative from Genesis to 2 Kings falls into distinct parts that place Israel within and outside a Promised Land, which they leave, come back to and leave again. These parts involve a selection among the tribes that allows for the shift of supremacy between the tribes of Joseph/Ephraim and Judah, geographically echoing some aspects of the Iron Age

kingdoms of Israel[3] and Judea[4] that we know from real history. Their existence is attested in neo-Assyrian and Babylonian sources from the ninth to the eighth century and from the eighth to the seventh century respectively (Hjelm 2009). After the Assyrian conquest of the kingdom of Israel/*Bît Humria* around 722 BCE it became an Assyrian province and was named *Samerina* after the restored capital, Samaria. A comparable status was maintained also during the Babylonian and Persian supremacy, and the name was changed to its Aramaic form *Shomron/Shamrin*, attested abundantly on coins, inscriptions, papyri, etc. (Magen, Misgav and Tsefania 2004; Hjelm 2005; 2010a).

Judea continued its status as a vassal kingdom under the Assyrians and was exterminated by the Babylonians in 597/587 BCE. The Akkadian name of the kingdom was *ya-á-du, ya-hu-du* and *ya-ku-du*, which in its Aramaic form was written *yehûd* or *yahûd.* During the Persian administration it formed part of the fifth satrapy, the *'abar naharâ*, known also from neo-Assyrian inscriptions since Tiglat-pileser III as *Ebir Nāri* (literally, 'across the river' [Euphrates]), which according to Herodotus (*Histories* 3.91) contains 'the whole of Phoenicia and that part of Syria which is called Palestine, and Cyprus' (Briant 2002: 49).

Mass deportations as a means of subduing conquered peoples and hindering rebellion was a widespread administrative measure taken by all the empire builders of the first millennium BCE (Saggs 1984; Oded 1979). It affected Judea more than it affected Israel/Samarina and had as its immediate result that, first the Assyrian siege of Judaea and Jerusalem around 701 BCE and, second, the Babylonian conquest of the Kingdom of Judea at the beginning of the sixth century BCE left the countryside and the capital almost totally depopulated.[5] Both were thoroughly razed by the Babylonian armies, whose leaders quickly lost interest in Palestine. The Persian takeover in 539 did not alter circumstances much. They exploited whatever possible, but did not take care to improve infrastructure or create subsistence for whatever minor population that had remained in Yehud or recently returned from exile. The repopulation of the region went slowly and, by the mid-fourth century, most of the province of Yehud 'was inhabited by Edomites, not Jews' (Stern 2004: 274). Jerusalem's temple seems to have

3. Biblical Samaria/Israel; although never explicitly mentioned by tribes, the ideal Northern Kingdom includes the remaining ten (eleven) tribes, which settle on both sides of the Jordan. Historically, the borders change according to political circumstances both before and after the Assyrian occupation; Moabite (Mesha-stele): *Israel*; Assyrian: *Sir-i-la-a*, *Bît Humri*, *Samerina*; Persian: *'Abr-Nahara, Shomron, Shamrin.*

4. Biblical: Judah (and Benjamin).

5. For a discussion of the range of depopulation, see Hjelm 2005. See also recent contributions by Israel Finkelstein: 2008a; 2010.

been in existence in the fifth century BCE,[6] but it was not until the beginning of the Hellenistic period that the city expanded to a size beyond that of a minor temple city (Stern 2001: 581; Lipschits 2003: 330).

Although Judaea had much in common with its northern neighbor Samaria (Knoppers 2004; 2006), these regions did not form a political unity. The Babylonian conquest had not affected Samaria as much as it had Judaea. Its population remained intact, and it did not suffer the impoverishment that had become the fate of Judaea. Any attempt at political cooperation between the two groups, however, was prohibited by the Persian administration. Such cooperation, as well as the development of common literary and cultic traditions, did not occur before the Hellenistic period. From archaeology it is now concluded that the reign of Antiochus III in the third-second centuries BCE supported an enlargement of the Yahwist temple on Samaria's Mt. Gerizim and the development of a large temple city around it. The temple was in existence already in the early Persian period and served as a regional cult site in Samaria (Hjelm 2005: 167-71; Magen, Misgav and Tsefania 2004; Magen 2008). A similar development might have occurred in Jerusalem, but for this we have only the dubious testimony of the first-century Jewish writer Flavius Josephus (Jos. *Ant*. 12.132-53; cf. Hjelm 2000: 234-35).

3

From the time of the Seleucid takeover around 200 BCE, Jewish authors fostered ideas of independence and dreams of 'the twelve tribes' and 'the Promised Land given to the fathers'. Literature of the second century elaborated on utopian visions of nationalism and greatness in prophetic writings, and Jerusalem and its temple were made the most important symbols of national political independence. Influenced by Hellenistic history writing, Jewish authors of the second century BCE retold the past with similar interest in national, territorial, cultural and religious matters as did their Hellenistic colleagues (Mendels 1987; 1992). Such also implied ideas of cult centralization that during the expansion of the Jewish borders became disastrous for other Yahwist cult places (Hjelm 2004a: 209).

Giving voice to the wish for the development of a single religious center in Jerusalem, the literature became idealistically descriptive of what was not yet created. The literature both argued defensively for a re-establishment of an idealized past which once had one temple, one priest-king and a united people in Jerusalem, and denigrated other cult places that had a strong connection to the most beloved strands of the tradition (Hjelm 2000: 277;

6. Finkelstein 2010: 44. Hjelm 2010a: 34. Attestation of Jerusalem's priesthood is found in the Letters of Elephantine, esp. the Letter of Recommendation from 407 BCE; see Cowley 1967; Porten *et al*. 1996; Porten 2003: 128.

2004a: 197-98, 258-63; Thornton 1996). This, however, was not entirely different from the biblical tradition's denigration of past institutions, which in the Deuteronomistic History's elaboration of the Shechem and Bethel traditions rejects these prior to the establishment of the cult in Jerusalem (Hjelm 2004a: 195-210). That Jerusalem itself is rejected at the close of that story forms part of a theological discourse on sin and punishment that governs the entire narrative in the books of Kings.

Counterclaims to this rejection are raised within the Deuteronomistic story in narratives that underscore Jerusalem's election and inviolability (Hjelm 2004a: Chapters 2 and 3 and pp. 239-48). In 'David's census narrative' of 2 Samuel 24, Aruna's threshing floor is dramatically selected as the place for Solomon's temple, and in the 'Hezekiah narrative' of Isaiah 36–39 and 2 Kings 18–20 the temple's protective force is put to the test. Both these narratives are troublesome regarding the redaction of the Deuteronomistic History, and both have close thematic and linguistic intertextual links with the Moses narratives in Exodus–Deuteronomy and the Abraham narratives in Genesis. In both narratives, north–south competition forms their immediate literary context. While 2 Samuel 24 averts the threatening divisiveness, which had been brought up by David's desire to settle the controversies between Israel and Judah that were caused by Israel's support of Absalom's rebellion against him, in Isaiah 36–39 and 2 Kings 18–20, Jerusalem's surviving remnant is contrasted to the disappearance of Israel, which these authors claim. Although the Hezekiah narrative is presented as a narrative about Jerusalem against the empires of the world, its more specific purpose is related to the unsettled question about the fallen Samaria and the saved Jerusalem. In his saving of a remnant, Yahweh has affirmed his centre (Hjelm 2004a: 36). The selection leaves the tribes of Judah and Benjamin as the true heirs of the tradition (Hjelm 2003: 206). Eventually they also find themselves driven into exile, but this is made a virtue, as those left behind, termed 'the people of the land', the *'am ha-'aretz* (2 Kgs 24.14) are claimed to be of foreign origin or a mixed population (Ezra 10.2, 11 and Neh. 10.29-32).

It is post-exilic Judaea's 'encounter' with these peoples that poses the greatest problems for the biblical writers' struggle with questions about secular and religious ethnicity. While the books of Ezra and Nehemiah give explicit voice to these struggles, rejecting any relationship with these past relatives, most of the remaining books of the Bible implicitly seek to establish a common past in which hierarchy and heritage are accounted for. This account, however, mostly favours one group against the other, Judaeans against Israelites (Hjelm 2004a: 208). The preference has survived in literature and in scholarship to the effect that both in church and academia, Jerusalem is always made the centre of the Land.

4

The genealogical structures that govern the synchronized narrative about Judah's past introduce a history that has little to do with the real past of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judaea. That story's play with names, numbers, events and judgments is so obviously literary that it is hard to understand how it could ever have been mistaken for real history (Hjelm 2010b). The number of Israel's and Judah's kings is 19 each plus Saul, David and Solomon, which they share. Israel's 19 plus 3 kings stem from 9 plus 2 different houses, while Judah's 19 plus 3 kings stem from two houses only: Benjamin (Saul) and Judah (David). In Israel the 19 kings reign for 240 years, while Judah's 19 kings reign for 390 years. The average length of reign is thus 12.5 years for Israel and 20.5 years for Judah. Both lists expose literarily structured length of reigns for individual as well as groups of kings (Lemche 2001c). These structures place the reformist kings Jehu (Israel) and Jehoash (Judah) in the middle, forming both a compositional and a thematic centre. Their reigns are characterized by a removal of the Omrides and the Baal cult from both Israel and Judah, and a restoration of the Yahwist cult (Hjelm 2004a: 52-54, 62-64).

Apart from the Israelite king Jehu, who has family ties with the kings of Judah, the characterization of Israel's nineteen kings is utterly negative: 'He did evil in the eyes of Yahweh': ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה. In contrast, half of Judah's kings are said to have done right in the eyes of Yahweh: ויעש הישר בעיני יהוה. Before the cessation of the Israelite kingdom, Judaean kings related to the northern kingship are given the same judgment as the Israelite kings: ויעש הרע בעיני יהוה. The Judaean king Ahaz appears as a significant exception as the only Judaean king who is given a negative form of the southern formula in 2 Kgs 16.2 ולא־עשה הישר בעיני יהוה אלהיו כדוד אביו. After the cessation of the Israelite kingdom, the negative judgment formula reserved for these kings and their associates is transferred to the Judaean kings, all of whom 'did evil in the sight of Yahweh', except Hezekiah and Josiah, who both did right according to all that David had done. In sum, that gives nine הישר and nine הרע clauses for the Judaean kings. Although fashioned in a glossary way, the judgment formulas are as integral to the narrative as a whole and so consciously phrased that they cannot be ascribed to later redactors. They are the structure that concludes and determines the stories they comment on (Hjelm 2004a: 48-66).

In spite of Jehu's and Jehoash's similar reforms (Hjelm 2004a: 63) and Jehu's familial relationship with the kings of Judah, the kingdoms did not unite, and the judgment of 'faithless Israel', whose kings 'walked in all the ways of Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, and in the sins which he made Israel to sin, provoking the Lord the God of Israel to anger by their idols', is dramatically spelled out and made paradigmatic for the narrative as a whole

(see further in Hjelm 2004a: Chapter 2). Jeroboam's sin was not the alleged idolatrous cult, which Jehu had removed, but the division of the Davidic–Solomonic kingdom (Hjelm 2004a: 66-82). The partition of Israel's tribes, whose unity in the biblical stories about Israel within the land was viewed as one of exception (Hjelm 2004a: 30, 37-39), is the matrix that has directed the entire narrative in Genesis–2 Kings. Disunity became the norm both before and after the Davidic–Solomonic kingdom, because the authors of the Deuteronomistic History mirror it against the 'golden age' of a united Solomonic kingdom. Whatever happened in real history, it is the author's implicit argument that 'once upon a time', we were brothers, we had a common origin and a shared past, which we have lost. This is literature and has nothing more to do with history than has Solomon's ruling over 'all the kingdoms from the Euphrates (*'eber ha-nahar*) to the land of the Philistines and the boundary of Egypt' (1 Kgs 5.1; see Hjelm 2004a: 40-41). Within this territory, 'Judah and Israel dwelt in safety, everyone under his own vine and under his own fig tree from Dan to Beersheba' (1 Kgs 5.5). The geographical image is that of the mighty Persian satraps ruling the fifth satrapy: the *'abar naharāh* with its districts of governors (Liverani 2005: 96). In Solomon's case, such districts are twelve in number as are the months of the year, and each has the obligation to bring supplies to the royal court for a whole month each year (1 Kgs 4.7). These districts, however, do not encompass the whole of *'abar naharāh*, but an Israel stretching from north of Judah as far as Hazor and including three Transjordanian districts. A thirteenth governor (נציב) is stationed in Judah (4.19). The biblical image of the *'eber ha-nahar* does not reflect 'a model for national unification, but rather a dream of being able to match the great powers' (Liverani 2005: 96). The unification theme of Solomon's rule over Israel and Judah upholds an image of two separate regions such as we know from the Iron Age kingdoms. The political image of Solomon's rule is the well-known icon of the victorious and just king who has created peace and brought happiness to every citizen within his realm.

This theme is articulated in numerous enthronement songs and biographical inscriptions from all over the Levant from as early as the third millennium BCE (Liverani 1990; Thompson 2002; 2005: Chapters 4–5). Its stock motive of bringing every citizen back to his own place is also made one of the basic themes in 1 Maccabees, a quasi-historical book about the Maccabean wars, from the first century BCE. The book's similarity with biblical figures, narratives, themes and composition is conspicuous (for a literary analysis of the book, see Hjelm 2004a: 266-88). Its main theme is the story of the Hasmonaean[7] family from the outbreak of the revolt against the

7. The name, otherwise unknown, occurs for the first time in Josephus, *War* 1.36, who calls Mattathias 'son of Asamonaios'.

Seleucids (ca. 167 BCE) until the end of the reign of Simon (141-134 BCE) and the ascension of his son John Hyrcanus I (134-104 BCE).

The victory song celebrating Jerusalem's liberation and Simon's appointment as *strategos* and high priest make use of the Davidic–Solomonic appraisal of enlarging the country (1 Macc. 14.5-6), cleansing it from internal and external enemies (14.7, 13, 14), bringing home captives (14.7), making the land fruitful (14.8) and peaceful (14. 1, 8, 11-13), (re)-establishing joy (14.11), law (14.14) and the temple cult (14.15). While the peace of the classic victory song is eternal, this song celebrates peace in Simon's lifetime only. The paradise-like land with plenty of food is prepared for war as the young put on 'splendid military attire'; the towns are 'supplied with food' and 'furnished with the means of defense' (14.9-10); and the king's 'renown is spread to the ends of the earth' (14.10). Albeit the eulogy reflects eschatological visions of a 'new Jerusalem', the author does not suggest that 'plowshares be transformed into pruning hooks' or that 'young people dance in the streets', such as are found, for example, in Jer. 31.13 and Zech. 8.5 (Hjelm 2004a: 286).

Such is also the continuation of Solomon's reign. The peace was short lived, and the schism between Israel and Judah inevitable, when the story moved from historicized fiction to fictionalized history.[8] The novelistic prooemium was necessary for the compositional structure of Kings' synchronic narrative about the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judea. Their (hi)stories were presented as a negating reflex of a greatness that was lost. The division of the tribes inaugurated the period of disfavor that eventually led to the cessation of both kingdoms and their people's rejection from the land.[9]

5

The invention of the tribes as a literary structure gave the biblical authors a paradigm that could fit any political or ideological situation they wished to depict. Ethnicity was created on the basis of the existence of peoples already living in the various regions. Their social models are genealogical and territorial tribes whose organization was fluid with members added and excluded as called for by ideological and political circumstances (Liverani 2005: 302-305). The biblical twelve-tribe system with their equal territories, drawn by lot, is clearly utopian (Liverani 2005: 305). Its involvement with the Iron Age kingdoms, provinces and administrative districts depict

8. The latter nomenclature is used by Thompson (1992a: 9) in his critique of O. Eissfeldt's search for a historical nucleus in biblical narratives.

9. For the concept of God's favour (*raḥuta*) and disfavor (*phanuta*) as history's cause in Samaritan literature, see Dexinger 1989; Hjelm 2000: 244-45; Anderson and Giles 2002: 123-25.

genealogical relationships that hardly reflect any historical reality. In grand theological compositions, the model offered both divine and ancient origin and a continuous pedigree of the Jewish people. The embellishment of this paradigm in writings such as Josephus's allowed him to state that

> In my history of our Antiquities, most excellent Epaphroditus, I have, I think, made sufficiently clear to any who may peruse that work the extreme antiquity of our Jewish race, the purity of the original stock, and the manner in which it is established itself in the country which we occupy today. That history embraces a period of five thousand years, and was written by me in Greek on the basis of our sacred books (*Apion* 1.1).

Tribal affiliation is not a standard characterization in ancient documents or inscriptions. Most people are identified by name, father's and grandfather's names and maybe town, such as found in most material of the first millennium BCE, including legal documents among Elephantine and Wadi Daliyeh papyri and votive and funerary inscriptions. Of the four hundred votive inscriptions dating to the third century BCE found on Mount Gerizim, for example, none carries a tribal name. I cannot recall any Palestinian inscription with a tribal name. The authors of ancient literature based and derived their narratives, themes, metaphors and geo-political perspectives from reading about rather than from living in the societies their literature constructs. This is well known to everyone who has studied the literary traditions of the ancient Near East. Reiterative narration is the most common feature of ancient literature, whether Palestinian (both biblical [Old Testament and New Testament] and non-biblical), Egyptian or Mesopotamian. God did not create peoples or maps; authors did.

In Search of Platonic Israel

Philippe Wajdenbaum

'The fact is, the business is very simple indeed, and I make no doubt that we can manage it sufficiently well ourselves; but then I thought Dupin would like to hear the details of it, because it is so excessively odd.'

'Simple and odd', said Dupin.

'Why, yes; and not exactly that, either. The fact is, we have all been a good deal puzzled because the affair is so simple, and yet baffles us altogether.'

'Perhaps it is the very simplicity of the thing which puts you at fault,' said my friend.

'What nonsense you do talk!' replied the Prefect, laughing heartily.

'Perhaps the mystery is a little too plain,' said Dupin.

'Oh, good heavens! who ever heard of such an idea?'

'A little too self-evident.'

'Ha! ha! ha!—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!'—roared our visitor, profoundly amused, 'oh, Dupin, you will be the death of me yet!'

E.A. Poe, The Purloined Letter (1845)

In Edgar Allan Poe's short story *The Purloined Letter*, while the Parisian policemen searched the Minister's house for months, they were unable to find the compromising letter with which he would blackmail an important lady. Private investigator Dupin immediately suspected that the case was perhaps more simple than what the trained policemen thought, or even *so simple*, that they could not fathom what he, Dupin, would find out: the letter was left in plain sight on the Minister's desk, the most obvious and only place that the policemen did not search. *The Purloined Letter* is, according to Pierre Bourdieu, the paradigm of the social scientist's work (Bourdieu 2001: 357). Most of the time, the sociologist will enunciate truths about society that will seem at the same time trivial and sacrilegious. In turn, the sociologist may be very naïve in believing that society is ready to welcome that truth which he claims to reveal (Bourdieu 1997: 226). The soci-

ety knows and at the same time refuses to know such a truth. The secret upon which rests the whole social order isn't guarded by anyone, and this is why it is so well kept (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970: 250 n. 35). Rather, this 'secret' is the result of what Bourdieu calls *symbolic violence*, a force which is at the core of the educational system, and which is the ability of a pedagogical authority to perpetuate an arbitrary teaching, of which the arbitrary character cannot be recognized as such either by the students nor even by the teachers, who are themselves former students. Because of this phenomenon's circular nature, the arbitrary content of the teaching will remain unknown (*méconnu*) to students and scholars alike, up to the point that it will be made unthinkable (Bourdieu 1982; 2001). While Bourdieu first constructed his theory of symbolic violence, his purpose was to demonstrate that the teaching system reproduces the class hierarchy by excluding students from lower classes and keeping the students from upper classes—even if schools and universities claim to give equal opportunities to everyone —in order to make the latter the future elite of society, including university teachers, who are recruited because they were the most docile students. Therefore, the content of teaching is never an objective one, but rather the representation of the upper class's interests and ideology, imposed on other classes who are not given the intellectual means to refute this arbitrary representation, which will therefore be recognized as legitimate. However, Bourdieu extended this theory of the general teaching system to all fields of knowledge, such as art (1975), philosophy (1997), science (1994) and religion (1971). Most of Bourdieu's subsequent studies consisted in a sociology of his own colleagues, university scholars from France's great high schools (*hautes écoles*) and universities (Bourdieu 1984; 1989). In the present paper, I would like to apply Bourdieu's concepts to biblical studies, as an attempt at a reflexive sociological study of this field, in trying to demonstrate that the question of the Bible's origins might itself be the paradigm of symbolic violence.

Emanuel Pfoh suggests that sociology and anthropology be considered as valid tools for biblical studies, notably by using the 'emic' and 'etic' distinction (Pfoh 2010; see also 2009). While the 'emic' approach refers to explanations of a culture by its own participants, the 'etic' approach is the explanation by social scientists. Pfoh rightly writes that most of the previous theories dealing with the origins of the Bible were but 'rationalized paraphrases' of the biblical history, thus belonging to an emic approach. Pfoh therefore suggests using etic approaches as well, for instance by comparing ancient Palestine's past and biblical literature with data brought forward by ethnology—but without any preconceived idea of the expected result. In the same respect, Pfoh suggests extending anthropological critical approaches to the field of biblical studies in differentiating what biblical studies say of themselves (*emic*) and what can be said of this field from a distant and soci-

ological point of view (*etic*). The present paper will follow this path in both exploring the Bible's similarities with Platonic literature and questioning the curious fact that biblical studies have so seldom discussed these issues.

While the tradition holds that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch and that other biblical prophets wrote the succesive biblical books, this tradition has been challenged in the last centuries by critical biblical scholarship. However, according to anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss, 'any myth is constituted by all its variants' (1958). This means that modern interpretations of a myth, as scientific as they can get, are to be included among the other versions of the myth. Previous generations of biblical scholars have searched for the sources of the Bible either in the Bible itself, in trying to determine the four sources according to the documentary hypothesis (the JEDP; Wellhausen 1963), or sometimes from texts from the ancient Near East. It has been argued that Mesopotamian texts such as the *Gilgamesh Epic* and the *Enuma Elish* may have been the indirect sources of what were to become the first narratives of Genesis 1–11. The quest for the Bible's sources probably started with Spinoza's theory: the single writer of Genesis–Kings based his work on previous 'documents' that he would have collected and assembled (Spinoza 1991 [1670]: Chapter VIII). Spinoza thought that the history from Genesis to Kings was a continuous and coherent one, and that the caesura between the Pentateuch and the Former Prophets was due only to the tradition. That single writer was, according to Spinoza, the scribe (and biblical character) Ezra. Three centuries later, Spinoza's 'single writer' eventually became Martin Noth's 'final redactor', who would have bound the Tetrateuch (from Genesis to Numbers, comprised of the JEP sources) to the Deuteronomistic History, comprising the books from Deuteronomy through Kings (Noth 1991). Noth considered the Deuteronomistic History the work of a single redactor, whereas the four first books of the Bible remained understood as a composite work comprised of previous 'sources' or 'documents'.

However, this diachronic model of the composition of the Bible was challenged starting from the late 1960s, as biblical studies entered the 'post-modern' era. According to Thomas Römer, the controversy against the documentary hypothesis led to a 'Pentateuch crisis' (2004), since several voices claimed that the source model was not tenable, for these sources have never been observed outside of the logical circle which created them.[1]

1. Rendtorff 1977. Around the same period, scholars started questioning the historicity of the patriarchs. See Thompson 1974; Van Seters 1975. For the circularity of biblical scholarship's assumptions, see Davies 1992. The present paper is titled as a homage to Davies's work, since I will try to show that 'biblical Israel' is in fact a 'Platonic Israel', whereas 'ancient Israel' remains the chimerical invention of modern biblical scholars.

In other words, the changes of theonyms, the changes of style, language, and theologies, the redundant stories, were not seen any longer to be sufficient evidence that the Bible as we know it is the work of redactors who edited various documents—nor, inversely, the work of editors who redacted them.[2] It is noteworthy that the documentary hypothesis, which in its primary form by Jean Astruc identified only two distinct documents, A and B,[3] grew from the late nineteenth century (Wellhausen) to the mid-twentieth century (Noth) into an increasingly sophisticated theory, dismantling chapters and verses of the Bible by attributing them to four sources and more.[4] It is also noteworthy that this hypothesis, which originally challenged traditional views of the Bible's authorship—namely, that the biblical prophets wrote it; a hypothesis which was at first rejected by more traditional scholars, slowly but surely grew into a new dogma among scholars who probably saw themselves as moderates.[5] A 'moderate dogma' is an oxymoron, and this is perhaps why the documentary hypothesis should remain only a hypothesis, which, if it claims to be scientific, must be falsifiable. Yet, no biblical scholar can afford the luxury of not debating the documentary hypothesis before exposing his or her own theory.

While the purpose of this collection of essays is to discuss modern Israel's nation-building policy and its links with biblical studies, I believe that

2. See Van Seters 2006. Van Seters explains how the notions of redactors and editors are unclear from one biblical scholar to the other. Either the editors preserve the works they edit or they allow themselves to emend them. The idea of redactors or editors editing various literary strata is derived, according to Van Seters, from Homeric criticism in the seventeenth century. While classical scholars have abandoned this model of the Hellenistic editors of Homer, Van Seters asks why biblical scholarship still holds a similar diachronic model as valid for the Bible.

3. For a recent synthesis of the early beginnings of biblical criticism, see Gibert 2010.

4. Noth's theory has been qualified by identifying two distinct layers in the Deuteronomistic History, Dtr. 1 and Dtr. 2. See Cross 1973.

5. N.P. Lemche describes the progress of biblical scholarship as a 'trench warfare', in which, every time that a new theory challenges the traditional views on the Bible's historicity or origins, the most conservative among scholars will admit to such a new theory only when forced to by (lack of) evidence. But this position will become the new 'trench' in which they will remain as long as possible, until forced again to retreat in the next trench, which has been dug by scholars deemed at the time as nihilistic. This is the reason why the recent theories called 'minimalist' are for now rejected by so-called 'maximalist' and some 'centrist' scholars, although these hypotheses are but the logical continuation of the historical-critical method originating in Wellhausen and Noth. See Lemche 1998: 151; 2005. Joëlle Ferry expresses the same concern about the hypothesis of the alleged two or three authors of the book of Isaiah. What was at first a hypothesis has become a dogma—while a literary unity can be found in the book of Isaiah as we know it. See Ferry 2009: 7.

the other contributors, whose works have been sources of inspiration for my own research, have a much better knowledge in this matter than I could possibly have. My concern as a socio-anthropologist lies not so much in what is said of the Bible but rather in what is unsaid, for I believe that what Bourdieu calls the symbolic violence is at work in every field of knowledge, but even more so in the particular field of biblical studies, in which the border between ideology and critical science is often blurred. Having understood from scholars such as Philip R. Davies, Thomas L. Thompson and Niels Peter Lemche that the Bible should not be considered as a textbook of history, and that it may have been written not before the Persian or even Hellenistic era (Lemche 2001b; see also Thompson 1999), I have constructed, during my Ph.D. years at the Université Libre de Bruxelles, a theory that could be more or less ironically named the 'Hellenic documentary hypothesis', meaning that the Hebrew Bible possibly draws its 'sources' from the Greek classical texts (Wajdenbaum 2010a; 2010b; 2011). Such a hypothesis can only be demonstrated through extensive comparison of texts, chapter by chapter and even verse by verse—much like the classical documentary hypothesis tries to achieve, except that in the case of this research, the alleged 'sources' are verifiable and identified as the main Greek authors, namely, Homer (Ulysses' return to Ithaca in the *Odyssey* as the main source for the Joseph story in Genesis 37–50; the *Iliad* as the main source for battle scenes in Samuel);[6] Herodotus (the *Histories* as a source for several stories in Genesis, Exodus, Judges, Samuel, Kings and Esther);[7] Euripides (his remaining and lost tragedies as sources for several biblical episodes, such as Isaac's binding in Genesis 22 or Jephthah's daughter's sacrifice in Judges 11); and, most importantly, Plato as the principal source of the Bible's political philosophy. Israel's twelve-tribe organization and the

6. From a classicist's point of view, the comparative works of Bruce Louden (2006; 2011) are extremely relevant in finding out biblical and Homeric parallels. Facing the number and accuracy of these parallels, Louden believes it likely that the Bible borrowed some material from Greek and possibly Homeric sources; and he questions why scholarship has previously been so little eager to discuss these evident parallels.

7. Concerning Herodotus's *Histories* as a possible direct source of Genesis–Kings, see Wesselius 2002. This theory allows the inclusion of other classical authors as possible direct sources for the Bible. Other recent studies claim that the Bible is dependent on Greek-language sources. Russel Gmirkin discusses how the Mesopotamian-like myths in Genesis probably derive from Berossus's *Babyloniaca*, written in Greek in the late fourth century BCE, and collected in Alexandria's Library. The Exodus narrative would in turn be dependent upon Manetho's *Aegyptiaca*. For Gmirkin (2006), the Septuagint translation is a *terminus ad quem*; therefore he places the redaction of the Pentateuch in the early third century BCE, in Alexandria's Great Library.

government of the sole divine law are, I believe, modelled after Plato's last utopia planned in the *Laws*.[8]

The demonstration of the Bible's literary dependence upon Plato's *Laws* can be achieved only through extensive comparison of their similar laws. There are around fifty, sometimes appearing by series in the same order in both texts, which can hardly be a coincidence. In both the Bible and the *Laws*, the aim is to establish a twelve-tribe, law-governed Ideal State that is, more or less explicitly, the imitation of divine justice in the human world.[9] Plato's *Republic* discusses the dialectics comparing the State as a soul or an individual on a grander scale (Plato, *Republic*, 368e–369a)—just as Jacob–Israel, from a man with twelve sons in Genesis, becomes a state of twelve tribes in the book of Joshua. Moreover, the story of the Israelites freed from Egyptian slavery, brought to the Promised Land by Moses, who had encountered God alone in the wilderness, can be read as an enactment of Plato's famous Allegory of the Cave in the *Republic (*514b—517b*)*. Plato depicts prisoners in a cave who believe that the shadows they see on a wall are deities. One of them is freed and realizes when outside that the light of the sun is the idea of the good (508c–509a), a metaphor for the single god who created the universe, as stated further in the *Republic* (595a–597e), as well as in the *Timaeus* (a dialogue which, in fact, might also be considered as a source for the creation narrative in Genesis; Niesiołowski-Spanò 2007). This well-known Platonic allegory might be the philosophical source underlying the Exodus story. Biblical Israel will come to its demise because of the successive generations of kings growing unfaithful to the divine laws that their ancestors had sworn to respect forever, as seen in Judges, Samuel and Kings. The covenant of Israel with Yahweh in Exodus 24 is profoundly similar to the oath taken by the kings of Atlantis to respect the divine laws forever, engaging their offspring, in Plato's *Critias*—the tale of an Ideal

8. I owe this idea to Professor Yaakov S. Kupitz; see Kupitz 1997.

9. See Plato, *Laws*, 745b-c for the territorial organization of the land, divided by lottery into twelve plots given to twelve tribes after a military conquest. The twelve plots will then be divided into smaller plots given to paternal families, which will transmit them from fathers to sons and they will not be allowed to sell them. This is very similar to Lev. 25.1-24 about the prohibition against selling the plots of land forever (although they can be leased until the Jubilee), and to Numbers 1 and 26, as Moses takes a census of the twelve tribes in order to divide the land of Canaan. Joshua 14–19 depicts how, after the military conquest, the land was indeed divided by lottery into the twelve tribes and subdivided according to paternal families. Both Plato's *Laws* and the Bible even specify that a daughter may inherit her father's property on the condition that she marries a man from her own tribe or family, in order to maintain a patrilinear transmission (*Laws*, 924a-b; Numbers 27 and 36; Joshua 17—the story of the daughters of Zelophehad). As we cannot discuss all the parallels here, for they are numerous, I refer to my previous publications on the subject.

State that could have prevailed forever, had not the successive generations of kings increasingly neglected the laws and virtue, until the supreme god decided to destroy it—much like biblical Israel and Judah.[10]

It cannot be proved, however, in the space of a chapter, that the Bible is directly dependent upon the Platonic dialogues (and some will argue that it cannot be proved at all). But we may use the argument of a *reductio ad absurdum* in pointing to unstated and 'repressed' elements in biblical and classical/philosophical studies alike. While sceptical scholars of such a theory would claim that, were it to be correct, someone would have come up with it long before—we will return to this argument by stating that it is precisely because that seemingly simplistic theory had not been enunciated or even thought of before, that it is the objective truth of the Bible's Platonic origins, which goes along with a Freudian-like denial.[11] But, as per Plato's consideration that a State or a society is like an individual on a larger scale, this denial being collective, it is multiplied into immense proportions when considered on the level of the whole so-called Judeo-Christian civilization. Therefore, the sociologist may be tempted to see himself as Plato's 'philosopher' in the *Republic*, the one freed from the cave of ignorance and compelled to go back inside and try to explain to his comrades that the shadows they like to contemplate and interpret (the Bible) are mere projections of another reality (the Greek classics and Plato's philosophy as the sources of the Bible), that they are unable to even imagine, for they have only known this situation their whole life. But one cannot criticize Platonic ideas by using Plato's literary techniques and metaphors, for therein lies the great paradox of Plato's conception of the Ideal State, in that it is merely another cave of ignorance, where knowledge of the objective truth is the privilege of the educated elite while the people are told myths, a noble and necessary lie much needed to maintain the harmony of the social classes.[12]

10. For the oaths for accepting the divine laws in both texts, compare Exod. 24.1-11 and Plato, *Critias*, 119d–120c. Bulls or oxen are sacrificed and their blood dashed on the participants.

11. Let us notice here that Freud himself believed that the origins of the Jewish religion were foreign, a fact which, according to Freud, had been repressed in the collective memory. Even though Freud recognized at the end of his survey that his historical explanation of an Egyptian Moses was not satisfactory, he remained certain of his psychological interpretation and waited for another decisive factor to be discovered (Freud 1967 [1939]). It is also noteworthy that upon reading the Greek classics and especially Plato's *Laws*, one may experience what Freud referred to as the Uncanny (*das Hunheimlich*), this feeling of strange familiarity appearing when repressed memories surface back into consciousness.

12. See Popper 1980 [1945], for the criticism of Plato's Ideal State as the forerunner of modern totalitarian regimes. I am arguing here that biblical Israel is itself modelled after Plato's state in the *Laws*. Given the importance of the Bible in Judaism and

It is quite striking that Bourdieu's criticism of the educational system somehow fits with Plato's own intended educational program for the Ideal State, in both the *Republic* and the *Laws*.[13] The founder of the Ideal State must use mythology in accordance with the laws in order both to illustrate them and to persuade the people, without the use of force, that these laws are of a divine origin and should therefore be observed willingly.[14] If one were to observe Plato's advice in the *Laws*, one would tell a story of a people who received these very laws from God but who were eventually punished for disobeying the laws, until God destroyed the country (as seen in Plato's *Critias* and in Kings). In other words, one would write a story very much like the one we read in our Bibles.

Before questioning why biblical scholarship does not seem to have investigated this crucial parallel, we may conversely question classical scholars and philosophers, for it seems reciprocally that none of those who studied Plato's *Laws* either saw it as the objective look-alike of biblical Israel.[15] According to these scholars, Plato's Ideal State in the *Laws* is a less celestial and more grounded version of the *Republic*, which remains the apple of modern philosophers' eyes. In fact, the *Laws* have for long been dismissed as a poorly written and uninteresting late dialogue of Plato, which he wrote after he was rebuked three times from Sicily, where he supposedly tried to actually establish his Republic with the hopeful support of local tyrants—ineffectively.[16]

It is assumed by classical scholars that Plato elaborated his State from Athenian, Spartan and Cretan laws and customs (Morrow 1960). Therefore the three protagonists of the dialogue are an anonymous Athenian, some-

Christianity, we are somehow living under the 'Spell of Plato', precisely because we ignore this fact, being in the position of the cave's prisoners.

13. Bourdieu was well aware of this and cites the *Republic* in *La Reproduction* (1970: 208) as an example of social stratification legitimized by the use of mythology—since Plato metaphorically represented the different social classes by metals of declining values, as in Hesiod's myth of the races (*Republic*, 415a-b). Bourdieu also mentions how the Greek schools of philosophy were the forerunners of the Western teaching system (1970: 225).

14. Plato, *Laws*, 718d; 817a-d. On the use of mythology as a means of persuasion in order for the people to accept the laws as divine, see Brisson 1994. See also Mouze 2005.

15. See, for instance, Strauss 1966; 2005 [1963]; Pradeau 1997; Balaudé 1995; Bertrand 1999; Rogue 2005; Sineux 2005; or the recent translation in French of Brisson and Pradeau (2006). It is very puzzling that these rich and deep studies of the *Laws* at no single point ever refer to their striking similarity with the Pentateuch. Reciprocally, the same can be said about biblical studies regarding Plato. This mutual ignorance is the object of our criticism, and, as we will explain further, the paradigm of Bourdieu's symbolic violence.

16. See the introduction to the French translation by Brisson and Pradeau, pp. 7-8.

how replacing the character of Socrates from the previous dialogues, a Spartan, Megillus, and a Cretan, Cleinias—the three of them thus reflecting the 'mixed constitution' of Plato's State. While several laws used by Plato probably stemmed from the Athenian law code, partly attributed to the great Solon, the moral and educational principles were drawn from Spartan institutions.[17] Crete, where the dialogue is taking place, is referred to as the homeland of King Minos, the great lawgiver who received his laws directly from his father, Zeus.[18] It has been discussed whether the *Laws* were a genuine Platonic dialogue or the work of Plato's disciple(s), namely Philip of Opus. However, recent studies agree that the *Laws* are in accordance with the previous dialogues and are not to be seen as a secondary version of the *Republic*, but rather as a complementary one, the *Republic* being the original 'idea' and the *Laws* its actualization in the sensible world.[19] Despite this now obsolete debate on the *Laws'* authenticity, a debate which remained confined to the small circle of scholars who do not dismiss it as Plato's least philosophical dialogue, it did not cross the minds of the aforementioned scholars that this text was the result of several sources written in different eras, and which were compiled and edited by a final redactor. In other words, classical scholars did not invent from scratch a documentary hypothesis for Plato's *Laws*. Yet, their biblical colleagues, facing a text that speaks, just like the *Laws,* of a flood followed by a patriarchal era, itself followed by the issuing of the first laws and ending with the project of a twelve-tribe state governed by the very same laws—did invent for still obscure reasons the idea that the Pentateuch was a mixture of literary strata originating from 'monarchic' and 'exilic' eras, and which was finally edited during the 'post-exilic' era. The early Persian era, where the final redaction of the Pentateuch supposedly took place according to the documentary hypothesis, is exactly the time right before Herodotus, Euripides, Socrates and Plato lived. Perhaps classical scholars, since they were working on a text so similar to the Bible, should have considered that the Spartan and Cretan characters represented earlier stages of the *Laws*, genuine sources of 'ancient Dorian Greece', while the legislative parts of the Athenian speaking would be a later addition written after Plato's return from 'exile' in Sicily. S for Spartan and C for Cretan would be 'pre-exilic' sources, whereas A for Athenian would be 'post-exilic'. Philip of Opus would be the *Laws'* final redactor, let us call him Ph. R.

17. This can be verified by comparing Book VII of the *Laws* with Xenophon's *Constitution of the Lacedemonians*. Both Plato and Xenophon were disciples of Socrates, and their writings often mirror each other.

18. Plato, *Laws*, 624a-b.

19. This is the main thesis of Mouze (2005). Plato himself explicitly describes the city of the *Laws* as 'second best', alluding that the best one is the *Republic*, a city of gods (*Laws*, 739e).

We shall stop the farce here, for the point is made, I believe, that the biblical documentary hypothesis has no scientific grounds, for it is neither verifiable (the alleged sources were never observed outside of the biblical text itself) nor falsifiable (if they are not to be found *in essence*, then no one is able to demonstrate that they never existed—which is a logical fallacy that biblical studies needed to address and eventually suppress). There are perfectly similar laws in Plato that can be found in Exodus,[20] Leviticus[21], Numbers[22] and Deuteronomy;[23] thus the parallelisms transcend the alleged P and D sources of the Pentateuch. How are we to explain these parallels, if, on the one hand, the Pentateuch is the mixture of JEDP, and on the other, the *Laws* are an original text by Plato, written around 350 BCE, based on Athenian law and Dorian customs? We are facing a logical challenge. When about fifty laws are common between two texts, with some in the same order in both texts, there are only three ways of dealing with this. The first one consists in denying the parallels, which is in my view quite impossible, or, rather, dismissing the relevance of the parallels in making them the result of mere chance. One may believe that the twelve-tribe states governed by

20. For instance, children of slaves shall belong to their masters (Exod. 21.4 // *Laws*, 930d-e); murder and outrage to parents shall be punished by the death penalty (Exod. 21.12-17 // *Laws*, 872d–873b); if someone injures someone else by hitting him, he shall pay for his recovery (Exod. 21.17-19 // *Laws*, 876e–877b); a master may kill his own slave (Exod. 21.20-21 // *Laws*, 865c-d); if an ox kills someone, it shall be killed and so his master (Exod. 21.28-32 // *Laws*, 873e); a thief breaking in at night can be killed (Exod. 21.37–22.3 // *Laws*, 874c); one shall pay if he lets his flocks graze on his neighbour's field, and if a fire arises (Exod. 22.5-6 // *Laws* 843d-e). See how most laws of Exodus 21 closely correspond to the section of pages 870 and following of Plato's *Laws*. (This is the standard pagination by Marsilio Ficino, used in most editions of Plato.)

21. For instance, priesthood (purity of bloodline and physical integrity of the priests, *Laws*, 759a-d // Lev. 21.1-4); foreign slaves (*Laws*, 777b-d // Lev. 25.39-47); not to sell the land (*Laws*, 741b-c // Lev. 25.33); prohibition of male homosexuality by associating it with incest (*Laws*, 836c–842a // Lev. 18.22). Note that right after these laws on sexuality, Plato discusses agrarian laws, such as not moving the boundary stones (*Laws*, 843a-b // Deut. 19.14) and the free gathering of fruit in the neighbour's field (*Laws*, 844d–845d // Deut. 23.24-25; 24.19-22). The law concerning flocks grazing in one's neighbour's field appears right between these two laws (see above).

22. See above, for the twelve tribes and distribution of the land.

23. For instance, cult centralization (*Laws*, 909d–910a // Deut. 12.1-14); death penalty for a cult against the law (*Laws*, 910b-c // Deut. 17.1-7); prohibition of witchcraft under penalty of death (*Laws* 932e–933e // Deut. 18.9-14); a judge cannot accept gifts (*Laws* 955c-d // Deut. 16.18-20); false witnesses shall be put to death (*Laws*, 937b-c // Deut. 19.6-19); honesty of merchants (*Laws* 916d // Deut. 25.13-16); protection of orphans from any abuse by their tutors (*Laws*, 927b-e // Exod. 22.22-24 and Deut. 24.17); a father may disown his son so long as he exposes his reasons to the elders (*Laws* 928d–929d // Deut. 21.18-21); lending with interest shall be forbidden (*Laws* 742b // Exod. 22.25 and Deut. 23.19-20), and many more.

supposed god-given similar laws are 'universal', something that one could expect to find anywhere in the world. To those who dismiss the parallels, we would therefore have to ask: if the study of parallels between similar texts is irrelevant, why then are these very texts relevant at all? Why would the Bible be more relevant than Plato's *Laws* for our society, if they speak of the same matters?[24] Why would one text be the corpus of at least two great religions, therefore making it the object of infinite publications and exegesis (the Bible), whereas the other would be deemed as a late, non-philosophical text by the man yet revered as the founding father of the West's philosophical tradition, and studied only by a few professional philosophers who do not see how much it looks like the Bible (Plato's *Laws*)?

The second way to handle these parallels is to consider, as I do, that the *Laws* (written around 350 BCE) precede the Bible and are its philosophical source, since the Bible's first (and fragmentary) manuscripts—the Dead Sea scrolls—ever found so far do not predate the late Hellenistic era. This argument leaves a period of two centuries for Greek culture to spread in the ancient Near East, through the conquest of Alexander and the foundation of Alexandria's Great Library, where Greek classics did in fact become 'classics' through the process of canonization. In this perspective, the Bible would be the result of the Hellenized elite of Judea wanting to acquire a reflection of Greek culture and adapting it to their own culture in order to create a national epic that incorporates properly Judean religious laws, which do not appear in Plato,[25] into a grand narrative of the birth, life and death of a Platonic-like state that ran to its downfall—thus considering the *Republic*, the *Laws* and the *Critias* as the philosophical and narrative framework, or *blueprint*, for Genesis–Kings. This second option exposes its supporter(s) to sarcastic incredulity from those who hold the first position. The third position, indeed, is that of the Church Fathers.

As stated earlier with Bourdieu, the secret upon which the social order rests is not a hidden one. Just as Poe's *Purloined Letter*, it is left in plain sight and yet remains unseen. Most biblical scholars are probably familiar with the debates that arose during the Roman era concerning the Bible's authenticity. This debate, which lasted for several centuries until Christian-

24. See Avalos 2007. Avalos argues that modern biblical studies have tried to maintain the Bible as a relevant text for modern society, while it belongs to the ancient world and should therefore not be considered any more relevant, if relevant at all, than other texts from the same period of time. Avalos also heavily criticizes the faith-based biases in biblical studies, and calls for their end as an independent academic discipline.

25. Such as the feasts, the eating prohibitions, the weekly rest, circumcision, and others—precisely those very laws that still prevail today in Jewish life, and that probably existed before the Bible, as partly witnessed in the papyri of Elephantine. See Mélèze-Modrzejewski 1991.

ity triumphed over Greco-Roman religion and philosophies, is never considered as relevant for a modern discussion of the Bible's origins, while, as we will see, it does offer the most simple and yet most plausible answer. As in Poe's story, the scientists or scholars, despite being (overly) knowledgeable, neglected the possibility that the simplest solution was perhaps the best one.

The first writers who apparently knew of Plato and the Bible's similarity were Hellenized Jewish apologetic writers, Philo of Alexandria and Flavius Josephus.[26] Both, in addressing a Greco-Roman readership, tried to persuade them that the Israelites were given from God a constitution that was the essence of what Plato later came to imagine by himself—or that he even borrowed directly from the Scriptures. The 'theft of the Greeks' was invented in order to respond to accusations of plagiarism that came from Greek authors, who did notice that the Bible looked very similar to Plato's philosophy. Later, Church Fathers such as Clement of Alexandria (in the *Stromata*), Origen (*Contra Celsum*) and also Eusebius of Caesarea continued in the same line of reasoning with Philo and Josephus. But as they were addressing a readership who by then held Plato as a divinely inspired philosopher, the so-called Neo-Platonists, the Church Fathers had to push their comparison beyond the general outline drawn by Jewish writers; they had to get into the details of similar ideas, and eventually of similar laws.

Eusebius of Caesarea, in his *Preparation for the Gospel*, summed up the work of Philo, Josephus, Clement and Origen into a detailed argumentation about who came before whom between the Bible and the Greek authors, and why 'pagans' should reject traditional Greco-Roman religion and even Platonic philosophy: because they were not worshiping the single god who had revealed himself first to the Israelites and later to the Christians.[27] Plato, writes Eusebius, was the closest pagan author who approached the divine truth, but he did not give up 'idolatry'; therefore the Bible was not only anterior but also superior to Plato. In Book XII of the *Preparation*, Eusebius compared the *Laws* of Plato and the laws of Moses in the Pentateuch (and he has remained, until the twenty-first century, the only scholar to have done so in an extensive way), and he did notice that both authors started their books with the narrative of the flood, followed by a patriarchal era (Plato's Book III of *Laws* and Genesis), and only after that were issued the first laws,

26. For Philo, most of his work consists in adducing parallels between Platonic philosophy and the Bible. Josephus specifically discussed the borrowing by Plato from the Bible in *Apion* 2.222-24.

27. For the incorporation of citations of Philo and Josephus by Eusebius, see Inowlocki 2006. Again, I feel bound to question why, as do scholars who study Plato and the Bible separately, the author does not discuss the relevance of the parallels between Plato and the Bible displayed by Eusebius—as if the form mattered more than content.

and a twelve-tribe ideal state was founded—either in an imaginary manner, as per Plato's three protagonists in Books IV to XII of the *Laws*, or 'in reality', as did Joshua in the eponymous book, after Moses received its plan in four legislative books (Eusebius of Caeserea, *Praeparatio evangelica*, XII.15). For the candidate to conversion, the argument was almost impossible to refute with the overabundant number of similar laws and stories. According to Eusebius, Plato only copied the plan and the laws of biblical Israel, which, he believed, did exist centuries before Plato. Precisely, writes Eusebius, the last prophets of Israel lived right before the rise of the most important Greek authors, those we now call classical (ibid., X.8). If anyone copied the other, it was Plato who copied Moses—according to Philo, Josephus, the Church Fathers and Eusebius.

Eusebius's *Preparation for the Gospel* was written in the early fourth century, the precise same time when Constantine converted to Christianity, being the first Roman emperor to do so, and who was to be followed by many others.[28] It took a few more centuries for the Roman Empire(s) to become fully Christian. In the sixth century CE, the Eastern Roman emperor Justinian had the Platonic Academy, which had existed for a millennium, closed forever (Brun 1960). As a result, there were no more Platonic philosophers to claim that the Bible was a Platonic text, as there were in the previous centuries, when Christianity was still a minor sect.

I have explained above that there is no reason why Plato's *Laws* should not be the object of a documentary hypothesis, for it displays the same laws as found in the Bible. A fortiori, there is no reason for the existence and the persistence of the biblical documentary hypothesis—except if one is to say that Plato found a completed Bible to plagiarize in the fourth century BCE, therefore following Eusebius's argument, and agreeing, willingly or not, with a Christian teleology. Some will argue that the direct dependence of the Bible upon Plato is an untenable and undemonstrable theory, and that a moderate position should hypothesize a 'third term', a conceptual 'common background' from the ancient Near East from which both Plato and the Bible would have indirectly drawn. This alleged common background would only serve implicit apologetic purposes, being a modern paraphrase of the Church Father's position—much like biblical scholarship, in its attempts to be critical, only produced rationalized paraphrases of the Bible. From an empirical and positivist point of view, this alleged common background is

28. See Veyne 2007. Veyne's point of view is a rather apologetic one: Constantine converted with a true heart and no political agenda. Thanks to him, 'our world became Christian'. Precisely, this conversion of the Roman Empire is what I consider as one of the leading and final steps in imposing the idea that the Bible does not owe anything to Plato—but that the contrary is true, as per Eusebius *et al.* Unconsciously, this mentality prevails in our modern times.

not needed, for we have seen that classical scholars agree, independently of any apparent knowledge of the biblical debates, that Plato's *Laws* are based on Athenian laws and Dorian customs that are well attested in Greek literature and even epigraphy.[29] In other words, because Plato's *Laws* predate the Bible in terms of manuscripts, and because it appears as the exact *blueprint* that one would use in order to write *a Bible*, I believe that it is the most plausible candidate to be *the Bible's* direct and ultimate philosophical source. Let us bear in mind that Judea was a Hellenized province for two centuries—after which it became a Roman province, with, in between these two dominations, the short-lived Hasmonean state. If the theory of the Platonic inspiration of the Bible is correct, this means that Platonism was defeated by its own offspring. Platonic philosophers who accused the Bible of being late and inspired by Platonic texts failed to realize that the Bible was nothing less than the perfect achievement of Plato's philosophical and political project—or maybe some of them did realize it and accordingly converted to Christianity.

Returning to Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, we may now understand that a pedagogical authority, be it the rabbis in early Judaism,[30] or the Church Fathers in early Christianity, is able to impose an arbitrary content of teaching upon the masses of students, who will not be granted a critical access to the full knowledge—therefore each generation of scholars will grow increasingly ignorant of the very fact that they ignore the arbitrariness of what they teach. In other words, at least from Philo to Eusebius, encompassing more than four centuries, the Bible and its supporters, either Jewish or Christian (or both, as the first Christians saw themselves), maintained, through the use of a comparative and chronological argumentation, to convert to biblical religion without the use of force more and more people from a Greco-Roman audience and readership—until Plato and his philosophy were banned and replaced by what is merely their actualization in the sensible world: Plato's philosophy is the *idea* of the Bible, and conversely, the Bible is Plato's offspring. This is the core of our civilization's denial

29. Plato's *Laws* may be compared to Demosthenes' works, which cite the Athenian law code; see Gagarin 2000. As for Crete, the famous laws of Gortyne have been discovered; see Dobias-Lalou 1999.

30. For instance, the Talmud of Babylon specifically forbids the teaching of 'Greek wisdom' (*B. Qam.* 87a and *Soṭ.* 49b). Rabbi Elisha Ben Abuyah is described as a Hellenist who entered the hidden secrets of the Torah (the 'Pardes'), and consequently became the most famous apostate of Judaism (*Ḥag.* 14b). This *haggadah* works as an efficient warning against studying Greek philosophy. Later, Maimonides went against this prohibition and tried to reconcile the Bible with Aristotle's philosophy in his *Guide for the Perplexed*—yet he seemed to have carefully avoided comparing the Bible with Plato. In all these examples, whether allegorical or historical, we see the 'symbolic violence' at work.

of its own roots; for university scholars are the product of an ideology and yet claim to be neutral—therefore, both classical and biblical scholars have mutually ignored the fact that the Pentateuch and Plato's *Laws* are mirroring literatures. This was due primarily to the fact that the Greek classics are studied as the remnant of the ancient Greco-Roman world, whereas the Bible is still studied mostly by theologians who believe it to be inspired by God and originated in an exclusively 'oriental' or 'Semitic' world—therefore without any trace of 'occidental' or Greco-Roman influence. This assumption is what we may call 'arbitrary', but it seems 'legitimate' for everyone. It appears as if the phenomenon theorized by Bourdieu finds its best application in the case of biblical studies. However, the consequences of this theory of the Platonic inspiration of the Bible encompass the apparent and false separation between Judaism and Christianity, between the Old and the New Testament.

The *Laws* are the only Platonic dialogue that is not Socratic, for Socrates does not appear in it and is replaced by the Athenian Stranger. However, the earlier Platonic dialogues tell us of this man, Socrates, who taught a divinely inspired philosophy, claiming that the gods the Athenians worshipped were illusions, mere projections of a greater idea, the supreme god who created the universe.[31] As the Athenians were not ready to welcome this new understanding of the world, they put Socrates on trial, on the accusation of impiety, of denying the existence of the gods. Socrates was sentenced to death and accepted his fate, saying that perhaps the gods would send a new man like him (Plato, *Apology*, 30d–31a). He refused to escape (Plato, *Crito*) and consoled his friends weeping at the spectacle of his death, telling them that death was not the end, for the soul is immortal; and if it is pure of stains from the bodily appetites, it may come to life again in human form (Plato, *Phaedo*). Shocked by their master's unjust death, Socrates' disciples, Xenophon and Plato, took it upon themselves to write down his teaching, for he had never written anything. Recently, some scholars have noticed that Socrates in the earlier Platonic dialogues looks very much like Jesus in the Gospels.[32] He too was sentenced to death by religious and civil authorities

31. As in the famous Allegory of the Cave (Plato, *Republic*, 514b—517b). This allegory may itself be the philosophical framework of the Exodus narrative. Moses is first freed from Egypt (the cave), meets God in the wilderness (the Idea of the Good) and is compelled to go back into the Egyptian prison to free his comrades and bring them a higher spiritual horizon, which, in the Bible, is the twelve-tribe ideal state governed by divine laws—modelled after Plato's second utopia. Exodus operates a narrative transition from the *Republic* to the *Laws*.

32. See Lenoir 2009. Lenoir compares Socrates and Jesus with insight and accuracy, but refers to Buddha as a needless 'third term', not taking into account that the Gospels were written in a Hellenic context, which was probably not the case of the sacred Buddhist texts. A more scholarly work is by Delorme 2009. Delorme argues that the

who were unable to apprehend the divine essence of his mission, and he accepted his fate, and preached that death was not the end because the soul will come back to life. Stupefied by his unjust death, his disciples wrote down their master's teachings, for he had left no writings of his own. These teachings were the four Gospels. Platonic dialogues follow the inverse course of the Christian Bible: the Early Platonic dialogues speak of Socrates' unjust death, and the later dialogues end with the project of the foundation of the Ideal State in the *Laws*, in which Socrates is absent. Conversely, the Christian Bible 'starts' in the Old Testament with the foundation of a very similar State as conceived by Plato and 'ends' in the New Testament, because that State has failed in its mission, with the character of Jesus, the righteous suffering servant dying unjustly in the remnant of Israel. While in both Plato's *Laws* and the Pentateuch the law is the access point to divine virtue for humans, Jesus renders the law obsolete, and preaches what is presented as a more spiritual religion. Already in the Platonic dialogues, Plato alludes to the divine character of Socrates, either in his defence against his accusers, in the *Apology*, or by comparing him to Eros, the principle of motion of the soul, in the *Symposium* (Plato, *Symposium*, 215a–222c). While the Platonic Ideal State is the reflection of divine justice in the sensible world, Socrates himself is the philosopher extracted from the cave, the one who received the divine inspiration and mission to guide his people to the Light of the Sun, the Idea of the Good, God. Therefore, we may establish an analogy: Socrates is to the Platonic Ideal State what Jesus is to biblical Israel. Both can be best reflected in Isaiah's poem of the suffering servant (Isaiah, 52.13–53.12). It is assumed that the writers of the Gospels' intentions were to make of Jesus the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecy (Nodet 2002). But we may in turn hypothesize that Isaiah's suffering servant himself is modelled after the character of Socrates in the Platonic dialogues. 'He had no beauty' (53.2), 'we did not consider him' (53.3), and 'he let himself be put to death for our sins' (53.5-7). Whereas the Gospels do not say that Jesus was ugly, Plato's *Symposium* says so of Socrates, by comparing him to a Satyr (Plato, *Symposium*, 215a-b).

If we assume that the Old Testament is a Platonic book, then we must question the New Testament, for the latter's chronology and language are far less problematic than its predecessor concerning the possibility of a direct Greek and even Platonic influence. The writers of the Gospels lived at

Gospels were indeed written in a Hellenic context, and therefore their authors could not ignore Greek classical texts such as Euripides' *Bacchae*, nor the Platonic dialogues telling of Socrates' unjust death, nor Aristotle's *Poetics*, which was used, according to Delorme, as a manual and model for writing the Gospels. See also Louden 2011: 258-82, where Louden shows how the Gospels display many Homeric motifs probably borrowed directly from the *Odyssey*, especially in Luke. See also Taylor 2007: 68-75.

least four centuries after Plato, and wrote in Greek for a Hellenic readership. It is likely that if Platonic philosophy was the root for the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible, there existed scholars in Judea who mastered that philosophy, and perhaps who continued their production along several generations, during the Roman era.[33] One must avoid the temptation of writing history backward, yet we have to acknowledge the fact that the Bible has been and still is the ground of the so-called Western world's religious and philosophical tradition. However, modern philosophers of this same Western world like to present the Greek philosophers as the founding fathers of modern rationality, against religious superstition, often including Socrates and Plato in the picture, as if they were, as Socrates' accusers claimed, atheists. But the Platonic dialogues show that at least Plato himself was a theist, and probably even a monotheist, who did not want to end up like his master, and therefore carefully disguised his ideas by making the traditional Greek gods the creatures of a greater nameless deity, sometimes referred to as the Demiurge. This is another of the numerous paradoxes of the Western world's denial of the very Platonic origins of its own religion. It is the objective truth that cannot be expressed because of the burden of two millennia of teaching oriented to the idea that the Bible is a revealed oriental text—even for those who claimed to approach it with a critical methodology, for they have failed to start from the beginning, from what was known all along: that there is nothing closer to the Bible, much closer indeed than any text from the ancient Near East, than Plato. Acknowledging such a truth is like staring at the sun; one cannot stand it without having to turn one's eyes away at some point. The metaphor is not exaggerated, for it is exactly the measure of this refusal to know that has driven our society in the ignorance of the very fact that Plato, 'the greatest philosopher', wrote a code of law which is the look-alike of the Pentateuch!

Bourdieu has theorized the possibility of such of a complex phenomenon, based on the ignorance (*méconnaissance*) that is at the same time the product and the basis of the pedagogical system. Biblical studies have always been intertwined with theology, and there is still much effort needed to distinguish between faith and a genuinely secular criticism of the biblical texts (Lemche 2008). It appears that previous critical theories, although they intended to challenge the traditional authorship of the Bible, played the role of a screen, preventing scholars from considering a Hellenistic dating of the Bible and direct Hellenic influence on the Bible. While Davies,

33. Let us notice that the head of the Platonic Academy during the reign of the Hasmoneans was a man called Antiochus of Ascalon—a native of Judea-Palestine who was fully Hellenized up to the point of leading the Platonists and being the master of Cicero. Philo is the most obvious example of a Hellenized Jewish scholar familiar with Platonic philosophy during the Roman era.

Thompson and Lemche have rightly argued that historical reconstructions of ancient Israel's past have been merely rationalistic paraphrases of biblical history, in which miracles were suppressed, we may in turn interpret the documentary hypothesis, in all its irreconcilable variants, as being itself a rationalistic paraphrase of the prophetic authorship of the Bible, in that Moses, Joshua, Samuel and so on are replaced by the enigmatic J, E, D and P sources, still belonging to the era which the Bible relates. Perhaps, it is because Christianity knows of four versions of the divine ministry of Jesus, all equally inspired by God, that modern critical scholars came to believe that the Pentateuch (or Hexateuch, or Tetrateuch, depending on scholars), just as the Gospels, was conceived of four sources. J, E, D and P were arbitrarily set to four because of an implicit correspondence with the four Gospels, for the grounds of the documentary hypothesis underlie an often-explicit supersessionist ideology.[34]

As D is associated with Josiah's reformation, which is part of the biblical narrative (2 Kings 22–23), the Deuteronomistic History theory remains a theological assumption in the guise of a scientific and critical hypothesis. The hypothesis of the D source written at the court of Josiah is but a modern version of Moses writing the Pentateuch himself, since both Moses and Josiah are biblical characters. While there exists material evidence for the latter's existence, some scholars have jumped at this chance to make him the supervisor of the redaction of the alleged Deuteronomistic History, without any tangible evidence of the Bible's existence in this era, other than the disappearance of cultic places outside of Jerusalem in the late seventh century. This fact is in no way direct nor even indirect evidence of the Bible's early redaction. Still, Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman defend this idea in their now famous *The Bible Unearthed* (2001), and here—at last—we may discuss the role of biblical scholarship in modern Israel's national ideology.[35] It is in my view legitimate that the Jewish people wanted to recreate a state as their homeland, and that state had to be in Palestine and nowhere else. There was a Judean presence in the area in the first millennium BCE that is well attested through archaeological evidence, thus regardless of the Bible as a historical document. Even though, as Shlomo Sand argues,[36] there is a possibility that many modern-day Jews are not the direct descendants of these Judeans but rather of converts to Judaism, modern

34. On the supersessionist premises of biblical studies, see Lemche 2005: 12.

35. Some may notice that Israeli kibbutzim are remote descendants of Plato's utopia—yet I am arguing here that biblical Israel incarnates it already.

36. Sand 2009. Sand's theory departs from the late redaction of the Bible during the Hasmonean era, as per Thompson. Sand's theory thus matches my own, for both posit that biblical religion did not exist before the late Hellenistic era, and accordingly developed mainly through conversions.

Israel's legitimacy lies on a symbolic level. The Jews have always identified themselves with the people of the Hebrew Bible, and even if that claim is based on faith rather than fact, the two other great religions that spread from early Judaism, Christianity and Islam, have themselves recognized the Jews as the people of the Bible. In other words, from a symbolic—or emic— perspective, Israel is the homeland of the Jews, even if they were away from it for a long time—or even *because* they were away from it for a long time, as the Bible is articulated on the notion of exile and return. For psychoanalyst Daniel Sibony (2003), Christians and Muslims share a cultural and symbolic debt to Jews, the debt for their respective religions, for which a small piece of land in the Near East should be a fair price. However, argues Sibony, Christians and Muslims are, each in their own way, in denial of this cultural debt, either because of the 'substitution theology' of the former or because of the 'falsification theology' of the latter. The denial and repression of this 'cultural debt' are sometimes the source of hatred against Jews. This was already the thesis supported by Freud concerning the rise of anti-Semitism in Europe in the 1930s: some Europeans hated the Jews because they actually hated Christianity, which repressed their pleasure in life, but as this hatred could not be expressed, it was itself repressed and transferred onto what was considered as the source of Christianity, Judaism (Freud 1967 [1939]).

It is my own argument that the repression at the core of the Bible's origins is in fact much deeper—hence the source of a more invisible symbolic violence—as both Judaism and Christianity are in the absolute and conjoined denial of the Hellenic and Platonic origins of both the Old and the New Testaments. Therefore, we may question why Israeli-Jewish scholars (for instance, Finkelstein and Silberman) would want to match their archaeological findings with a theological theory produced by Protestant scholars (Von Rad and Noth)? And why is the so-called centrist position so popular among a broad audience outside scholarship? The answers lie again in Bourdieu's notion of symbolic violence. The scholarly theory of the documentary hypothesis, in the version of Noth's Deuteronomistic History, is now the form imposed by the pedagogical authorities, comprising university scholars and peer-reviewed journals—a form that cannot be avoided in any scientific discussion, including the present one. Scholars are compelled preferably to recognize or at least to challenge that theory in order to be in turn recognized as scholars and have access to what will be considered as legitimate teaching by students and perforce by the broader audience—because the latter happen to be themselves participating in the symbolic violence, having the means to access the objective truth (most people are literate today, which was not the case in the previous centuries—they may read Plato's *Laws* and see how close they are to the Bible), yet they refuse the possibility of knowing this truth and therefore delegate their critical judg-

ment to specialists that they recognize as such.[37] Therefore, the specialists' task is not so much to be genuinely critical of the biblical texts and traditions, but rather to provide a theory that is a compromise between untenable fundamentalist readings of the Bible and the seemingly disappointing idea that the Bible is a Hellenized, Platonic and all-too-human production. It is therefore likely that 'minimalist' arguments, and their consequences such as the present theory, would not be welcomed in some quarters of Israeli scholarship, but not any more nor any less than in Christian scholarship. For even if there are Jewish scholars aiming to create a modern Jewish biblical scholarship,[38] international recognition is still dependant upon the approval of Christian peer-reviewed journals, publishers and Christian universities.

Bourdieu refers to 'an institutionalized circle of ignorance', which creates a denial, and a field of interpreters who are prompt to 're-ignore' that which is denied, in their craving for academic positions. Eventually, the field will reproduce the initial denegation, instead of 'denying the denial' and explain its objective truth (Bourdieu 2001: 368). Bourdieu's circular formulations are only due to the circularity and the complexity of the very phenomenon he sought to describe. The dominant ideology will accuse as ideology those who try to express its objective and hidden truth. In other words, conservative and 'maximalist' scholars will accuse 'minimalist' scholars of having a political agenda, while the latter only claim is to objectivity—rightfully in my opinion. Since biblical studies have almost always been in the hands of theology, that discipline has never been as critical as it pretended to be, and therefore the divergent theories about the origins of the Bible, even though they apparently challenged the most conservative opinions, actually and eventually led to a *status quo*. The documentary hypothesis, in all its variants, is a theological hypothesis that replaces Moses and the prophets as biblical authors by anonymous scribes; yet these imaginary scribes are still thought of as being divinely inspired, and therefore faith has been maintained and preserved in the face of the challenges brought by modern science. Jews and Christians are content with the belief that the Bible is currently treated with the methods of science—thus they live in the illusion that they may reconcile their faith and science. The *illusio* is another key concept of Bourdieu, which is the force that drives social actors

37. Bourdieu always stressed that the symbolic violence is only obtained with an active but unconscious complicity from those who undergo this violence, as they go without realizing their alienation (Bourdieu 1989: 12).

38. This is the program of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem, guided by Professors Yoram Hazoni, Daniel Polisar and Daniel Gordis, for a genuine Jewish scholarship that emphasizes how the Western philosophical tradition is inspired by Jewish thought, mostly through the Bible.

into believing that the social game is worth playing—forgetting and denying that it is but a game (Bourdieu 1996: 153).

In spite of this symbolic violence, in the eighteenth century Voltaire did notice that the Old Testament was probably inspired by Greek myths and even by Plato—and wrote this with much irony in his *Dictionnaire philosophique* (1764). In the nineteenth century, Nietzsche understood quite well that 'Christianity is a Platonism for the people' (1997 [1886]). However, Voltaire and Nietzsche were never part of the field of biblical studies, precisely because they chose not to participate in the scholarly process of being recognized by theologians and university scholars. Therefore, at least two occasions were missed in failing to acknowledge the accuracy of these two philosophers' conclusions—they are still revered and admired in the current fields of philosophy and literature, while scholars of those fields are not familiar with biblical matters. The documentary hypothesis—since it is still the paradigm that scholars need to discuss and preferably acknowledge in the hope of being published in the most highly rated peer-reviewed journals, and therefore be granted research fellowships and be a part of scholarship—shows it to be a very useful tool for the most conservative quarters in preventing the emergence, at first, of the hypothesis of a Hellenistic dating of the Bible such as supported by Lemche and Thompson, and, second, the recent emergence of studies supporting the direct and predominant influence of Greek-language literature on the writing of the Bible, such as those of Wesselius, Gmirkin and the present author. This is not to say that the Platonic roots of the Bible are consciously concealed by scholars for the sake of the Jewish and Christian faiths. Rather, these strive to obtain, through the complete pedagogical system, from school to university, a mental submission that will make the 'secret' hold on by itself, without any cherubim with flaming swords guarding its path, for the secret of the Platonic origins of the Bible is not hidden but left in plain sight, just as was the *Purloined Letter*.

What We Do and Do Not Know about Pre-Hellenistic al-Quds[1]

Thomas L. Thompson

Politicized Archaeology

One of the reactions to the news releases from the recent excavations in al-Quds by Eilat Mazar in the summer of 2005 about 'a monumental building' on the top of Mount Ophel, the eastern hill south of the Old City, and its identification as the palace of King David of biblical legend was the prediction that the mere possibility that this 'discovery' is what it is claimed to be would be sufficient to carry the debate over the historicity of David for years to come, providing the excavators with another piece of evidence that would help affirm that David really existed. That debate, however, was derailed when Margreet Steiner pointed out that the walls of this newly 'discovered' palace had already been uncovered in other excavations during the last 140 years of archaeological research in the city (Steiner 2009). One of the walls of this so-called palace complex, for example, had been excavated by the British in the 1920s. It dates to the Hellenistic period, some eight centuries later than the tenth century BCE, when most would look for a historical David. The largest of the walls, belonging to this 'palace of David', on the other hand, is some eight centuries earlier than the excavators place David, namely, from the Middle Bronze Age! Most of the walls identified as belonging to the 'palace' are not only from different buildings, they had already been excavated in the 1920s and 1960s and belong to the Hellenistic city and not to any earlier construction. A critical review of the evidence shows that no coherent building has been found, let alone a palace dated to the tenth century, attributable to the reign of David. There is hardly enough

1. This lecture is dedicated to the students of al-Quds University. It was first presented on December 16, 2009, at the International Colloquium *al-Quds in History* on the occasion of the celebration of al-Quds as the Arab Capital of Culture 2009 at the National Museum in Damascus from December 15–17. It is first published in the colloquium's proceedings in Arabic.

substance in this remarkable discovery to engage any serious archaeologist longer.

The so-called gaps in the ancient history of al-Quds—such as the absence of any evidence of a town in the tenth century—are not due to a lack of archaeological engagement or clarity in the material finds. We have been digging in al-Quds for more than a century. Large areas have been carefully and systematically uncovered, and the quantity of the remains analysed, interpreted and published are immense. Even the usual complaint of historians that excavators are interminably slow in publishing what they have found does not apply to al-Quds, where what has been found in the major official excavations throughout the city is both clear and well known. The tendentious claim of having found a palace of David is rather a typically misleading product of the intense politically motivated interpretation of archaeology in Palestine, bringing a distortion to normal research which has dominated archaeological research in the city since the early 1990s and whose growing influence in international biblical and historical scholarship should concern us (Thompson, Gonçalves and Van Cangh 1988; Zerubavel 1995; Prior 1997: 175-207; Abu El-Haj 2001; Kletter 2006; Oestigaard 2007; Masalha 2007; see also more recently Thompson 2008; 2009a).

At the core of this serious problem is the commonplace understanding of biblical archaeology that the Bible's traditions should be central to any historical understanding about ancient Palestine and al-Quds before the Hellenistic period. Both historians and archaeologists commonly expand and harmonize what they do know about the history and development of al-Quds with traditional and biblical accounts of the city, which originated only centuries later. An archaeologist or a historian who does not clearly and sharply distinguish between what we know and do not know about the past—and about the remains of the past we uncover in a dig—cannot produce dependable history. It may seem that we know surprisingly little about history of the area in or around al-Quds during most pre-Hellenistic periods, and what we do know may seem debatable. It is also true that, after many years of archaeological exploration, the historical interpretation of several periods still evoke considerable controversy. I would argue, however, that such uncertainty and controversy have been created by politically motivated views of the past rather than by sound historical and archaeological interpretation. Four such controversial periods are (a) the Early Bronze IV/Middle Bronze I intermediate period; (b) the Late Bronze–Iron I gap in settlement; (c) the Early Iron Age; and (d) the long period between the destruction of the Iron II city by Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of the sixth century and the building of a Hellenistic city in the second century BCE. For each of these periods, reliance on the historical relevance of biblical and other traditional histories of antiquity, such as that of Josephus's *Antiquities of the Jews*, continues to encourage interpreters to dispute any

coherent historical reconstruction based on an independent interpretation of archaeological finds. For each of the four periods mentioned above, there is very little confusion or doubt in distinguishing what we know and do not know about the pre-Hellenistic history of al-Quds. Archaeologists have simply not found what they have been looking for. As will become clear in the brief sketch of this history below—and as could be expected—the history of the city we know reflects quite closely the pattern of settlement that is common to the impoverished and arid area of the southern highlands of Palestine in which it is located. al-Quds has a long and possibly continuous history as a holy city since the Middle Bronze Age, but, before the Hellenistic period, its settlement attained a significant size and bore a major political or economic importance for the region as a whole during but a single short period in the course of the seventh century BCE.

The Holy City

In the best of times, the geographical area around al-Quds provides a very poor environment for any greater agricultural settlement than that of a large village. From the perspective of ancient technology related to inter-regional trade or of the ancient agricultural potential of the local soils, climate and water supply available, this area is hardly the kind of place that could be expected to develop a great city in the ancient world. It was far from the north–south trade routes, but rather lay at the northern end of the arid and often barren Judean highlands, situated at the head of the very rugged Ayyalon Valley, close to the watershed, which separated the eastern desert from the steep and deeply fissured western slopes of the hill country. With quite limited possibilities available for agriculture and very poor access to its spring, ʻAin Umm al-Daraj, the site of ancient al-Quds was provided with an extraordinarily poor physical context for the development of a regional political center (Thompson 1979: 48-50). The first human remains in the area have been found from the lower Paleolithic period (ca. 400,000 years ago; for this and the following, see Strange 2007). Some few remains have also been found from the Neolithic and early Chalcolithic periods, but these are very limited and perhaps related to seasonal use of the region by herders. Permanent agriculturally based settlements are found first in the late Chalcolithic period, around 3600 BCE. These are located over an area about 300 x 100 metres, just west and southwest of the spring, which provided more than sufficient water for the village and its animals. This settlement was abandoned ca. 3050 BCE at the beginning of the Early Bronze period, and there is a gap in settlement which lasts throughout the remainder of this period.

This gap reflects well the general absence of agricultural settlements along the highland ridge or the rugged upper western slopes of the southern

highlands. While a few graves have been discovered near al-Quds from the EB IV/Middle Bronze I intermediate period, around 2000 BCE, no settlement has been associated with this period. During this intermediate period, an extended period of drought seems to have moved the border of aridity, separating grazing from agricultural lands, to the north of al-Quds, with the result that only very few areas in the southern highlands, where rich, deep soils and sufficient spring water was available, supported village agriculture. Most of the region was given over to sheep and goat herding (Thompson 1979: 64-65; 1992a: 181-92; for the periodic shifts in the settlement of the Palestinian hill country, see Thompson 1992b). That the worsening of the climate had forced the population to abandon agriculture and shift to herding had been strongly disputed during the mid to late 1970s and early 1980s because biblical archaeological interpretations then understood the reduced settlement of the Palestinian highlands during the intermediate period as the direct result of what was thought to have been an invasion of migrating 'Amorites' from Mesopotamia, during this intermediate period, which was then described as the 'patriarchal period'—an understanding which associated the biblical stories of the wandering patriarchs of the biblical narratives of Genesis with a historical invasion of 'Amorite' nomads from Mesopotamia (Thompson 1974: 52-88). The period, ca. 2000 BCE, had also been identified with the names of Palestinian towns and their rulers that had been found on a number of Egyptian inscriptions called the 'execration texts', ritual texts, which had been used for cursing Egypt's enemies from both Libya and Palestine.[2] In the 1970s, I was able to show that these Egyptian texts had been written during the short period between about 1810–1770 BCE (Thompson 1974: 98-105). They could not, accordingly, reflect the settlement of invading nomadic 'Amorites' during Palestine's intermediate Bronze Age some two centuries earlier. It also could be shown that no such 'Amorites' had migrated from Mesopotamia to Palestine. The terms MAR. TU and *Amurru,* which were commonly translated with the biblical name 'Amorites', did not in fact refer to any specific ethnic group, to which we might give the name 'Amorites'. It was rather the general term in Akkadian used to describe a wide spectrum of people in southern Mesopotamia, some of whom may originally have come from the west (*Amurru*/'Amorite' = 'westerner') while the origins of others bearing this description and belonging to tribal groups referred to in the archives of the ancient city of Mari were to be associated with a large region of the great Syrian steppe, near Jebel Bishri, southwest of Mari (Thompson 1974: 67-74).

My dating of the 'execration texts' allows us the possibility of identifying one of the Palestinian place names, *Rushalimum* ('[The god] Salem's

2. There are three collections of such inscriptions, published respectively by Sethe 1926; and Posener 1940; 1966.

High Place')—or perhaps better read as an Egyptian spelling of the name *[U]rushalimum* ("the town/place of [the god] Salem')—as the first known name of al-Quds with the Middle Bronze II fortified settlement on the Ophel, just southeast of the Old City. With a spring, sufficient to provide adequate water for a couple of thousand people and their animals and the development of water-tight cisterns at this time, *[U]rushalimum* was able to develop a central market town on the basis of a Mediterranean economy, based in herding, olives and fruit (Thompson 1992a: 177-80) and governed by a relatively simple patronage system (on patronage, see now Pfoh 2009: Chapter 4). As the border of aridity returned to the plains south of Hebron and the development of water-tight cisterns, making the storage of water in the area's fissured bedrock possible, agriculture not only returned to the area around al-Quds but spread through most of the southern highlands, enabling the development of olive and fruit orchards in many areas of the highlands' western slopes. On the Ophel, a small town developed, protected by a massive defensive wall, excavated by Kenyon in the 1960s (see Steiner 2001). Although the press announcements concerning the very recent excavation of an additional twenty-four metres of this wall hardly support the claim of the excavators to expand our knowledge about the Salem of the Bible's 'patriarchal period' significantly, the early-eighteenth-century name of the city, if applicable, does warrant the suggestion of the existence of a religious cult centre, dedicated to the regional deity, Salem, somewhere in the immediate area—though, as yet, no temple or signifying religious objects have been found. The understanding of *[U]rushalimum* as a market town supporting the region's Mediterranean economy well fits what we know of the climate and settlement patterns of the southern highlands during the Middle Bronze period, which spread agriculture and supported an expansive growth in the population throughout the region.

Al-Quds in the Amarna Period

Drought conditions returned to the eastern shores of the Mediterranean during the Late Bronze Age. Frequently referred to as the 'great Mycenean drought', this ecological crisis seriously undermined the flexibility of many towns to withstand unusually difficult circumstances. When the ancient town of Ugarit on the Syrian coast, for example, had been destroyed by earthquake in 1182 BCE and then plundered, the drought may well have been a significant cause for the city's lacking the capacity to rebuild, in spite of the site's very favourable location. The drought increased instability throughout the region and was particularly severe in the many marginal areas of the southern Levant. Surface surveys have demonstrated that settlement collapsed throughout most of the Palestinian highlands during the Late Bronze Age (Thompson 1979: 39-50). Desedentarization was most marked

in the historically arid, southern highlands of Judaea, between Ramallah and Hebron. Small village agriculture, which had spread the Middle Bronze II population of Palestine throughout both the highlands and the lowlands, was abandoned in the Late Bronze period, as the sedentary and agriculturally productive part of the population shifted to the more stable environment of larger settlements, while the border of aridity moved northward and much of the highlands were given over to the more flexible strategies of seasonal pastoralism (Thompson 1979: 48-50). The failure of the agricultural settlement of *[U]rushalimum*/*Rushalimum* to continue into the Late Bronze period reflected this shift as the Judean highlands were quite thoroughly desedentarized during the whole of the Late Bronze Age and most of the Iron I period. Surface surveys have clearly indicated that, in the areas north of al-Quds, only the foothills and a very few highland valleys were able to support significant sedentary agriculture before the beginning of the Iron Age (Thompson 1979: 45-48; 1992a: 221-38, 288-92; Finkelstein 1988).

It is something of a surprise, therefore, that six of the fourteenth-century Amarna tablets (EA 285–290) were written by Abdi-Hepa, the king of *Urushalim,* to his patron, Egypt's pharaoh. The letters inform us that Abdi-Hepa controlled an apparently clearly defined area of the southern highlands, located, for example, over against such towns as *Ashqaluna* (= Tall Asqalan) on the coast far to the Southwest, *Lakisi* (= Tall ad-Duwer) and *Gazru* (= Tall al-Jizr) in the foothills to the southwest and west respectively, *Kaila* apparently to the southeast and *Sakmu* (also Sikmimi = Tall al-Balatah), far to the north near modern Nablus in the central highlands. While the Late Bronze remains of these ancient towns are well known, no comparable material remains from the Late Bronze Age, not even pottery, have been found to suggest that Abdi-Hepa's *Urushalim* is to be found on the Ophel or anywhere near the former Middle Bronze Age town. A few graves from this period were found on the Mount of Olives and northwest of the Old City, and a very few building remains have been found southwest of the city. North of the Damascus gate, on the grounds of the École Biblique, some remains from an Egyptian temple from the nineteenth dynasty have been found. Nevertheless, we have not been able to locate Amarna's *Urushalim*. The name clearly continues that of the Middle Bronze city, and, from the texts, we could understand it as having been a small patronage stronghold, somewhere in the southern highlands, between the western foothills and the watershed. From such a stronghold, Abdi-Hepa apparently was responsible for controlling Egyptian interests in the highland area (see the discussion in Steiner 2001: 39-41).

The lack of Late Bronze pottery on Ophel or its slopes makes the suggestions of a fortress or small settlement immediately above the Ophel up on the Haram unlikely. Given the instability of settlement throughout the southern highlands during the Late Bronze Age and, as no trace of any vil-

lage or town in the immediate area of al-Quds has yet been found, one should consider the possibility that the cult-oriented name of the Middle Bronze town moved, with the abandonment of this agricultural settlement, to Abdi-Hepa's stronghold somewhere nearby, which had the primary responsibility for ensuring Egyptian interests in this steppe area. The region around al-Quds was so poorly suited for agriculture in the best of times that the lack of an agricultural settlement during the Late Bronze drought might be expected. The movement of towns and their names is also not unknown to Palestine in antiquity. For example, there are successive transfers of the administrative capital for the central highlands, a role that could be traced back to the Amarna period's *Sakmu.* According to biblical tradition, the first such transference went to *Penuel* and from there to *Tirsa,* before, finally, a political capital for the region was established and whose existence at Samaria can today be archaeologically and historically confirmed from the mid-ninth century (cf. 1 Kgs 12.25; 14.17; 15.33; 16.6, 15, 23; see Becking 1992). Here, it remained throughout the Iron Age and Persian period and well into the Hellenistic period. A similar move of an administrative centre occurred when the Iron Age II town of *Urushalimmu* was destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar at the beginning of the sixth century. Though as yet unconfirmed by archaeological or historical evidence, Jeremiah describes a move of the political centre for the southern highlands to the town of *Mizpah* (perhaps Tell en-Nasbeh; cf. Jeremiah 40–41). Perhaps dependent on this tradition, the legends of Nehemiah speaks of *Mizpah*, but not *Jerushalem*, as the centre of an administrative district during the Persian period (Neh. 3.15).[3] Furthermore, the abandonment of older settlements and the transfer of their names to new locations are well known to Palestinian toponomy. Such was the case with Akka, Beisan, Jericho and Shechem.

The City of David?

The gap in settlement on Ophel continued well into the Iron I period, following a pattern that governed most of the Judean highlands. There is no town from the Iron I period. There was certainly no city of Jebus, nor was there any historical conquest of the city by the legendary David during the tenth century BCE (2 Sam. 5.5-10).[4] The Judean highlands were only very sparsely settled during the Iron I period. There was, therefore, no kingdom of Judaea at this time, and there certainly was no capital of a 'United Monar-

3. Using strategies of 'cultural memory', Philip Davies's recent work exploits such a possible shift in the Judean capital to explain the biblical concept of 'Israel' as embracing both the kingdoms of Israel and Judaea: Davies 2007; 2008.

4. Concerning the multiple biblical stories of Jerusalem's conquest, see Thompson 1999: 44-45.

chy' in al-Quds. The very few remains that have been found do not support the existence of even a small market town at this period. The gap, which began with the Late Bronze Age drought, continues to affect the southern highlands until the Iron II period, sometime around the middle of the ninth century BCE, when the region was gradually resettled and Judaea came into existence in the form of a small patronage monarchy. For the Iron I period, we have a few remains of a house on Ophel. These remains had been earlier misdated to the Middle Bronze period. However, on the basis of some shards from storage jars, it can be dated to the transition to the Iron Age, sometime in the twelfth or perhaps better eleventh century BCE. Above this house, an immense system of stone terraces was built, apparently to secure the foundation of a fortress that would have lain at the top of Ophel—a construction that could well have defended deteriorating Egyptian interests.

Such an understanding corresponds well to what we know about the Iron Age settlement of the rest of the southern highlands, whose climate and settlement history was significantly more arid than the central highlands. While the Nablus area had seen a rapid expansion of new agricultural settlements during the Iron I period and expansive new settlements throughout the areas of the central highlands from Ramallah northward, the sedentarization of the more steppe-like Judaea did not begin to take hold until the very end of Iron I, when the border of aridity again moved southward and allowed a return to a Mediterranean economy. The regions around *Lakisi* and *Gazru, not Urushalim,* were the economically important areas in the greater region of Judaea. They controlled the settlement of the lower hills, while the highlands provided little more than grazing land for their shepherds. A stepped stone terrace and some few remains of what was perhaps a public building from the Early Iron II period have been found above the terrace structures and dated uncertainly to the late tenth or perhaps early ninth century.

In contrast to the quite limited finds from al-Quds in the Iron I period, the Iron II period found a market town developing in the course of the late ninth century BCE. This town was known in later Assyrian texts as *Urushalimmu.* The original settlement on Ophel expanded toward the end of the ninth century onto the southwestern hill and was defended with a thick defensive wall and two towers (Steiner 2001: 42-116). It was, however, without large or extensive public buildings. Its rapid growth toward the end of the eighth or beginning of the seventh century and the eventual development of quite a large town seem to reflect the town's growing importance in the Judean highlands, not least after the destruction of Lakisi and many of the towns of Judaea by Sennacherib in 701 BCE, a destruction from which Judaea as a whole did not recover for some five centuries. It is at this time that *Urushalimmu* seems to have been incorporated into the Assyrian economic system, apparently in a role as a collection centre and supplier of olives. The absence of large or public buildings should counsel historians to caution in

assigning too much political or administrative importance to the city during this time.

If the late ninth or early eighth century inscription(s) from Tall al-Qadi is genuine,[5] what is likely a place name on one of the fragments, *bytdwd,* the form of which follows the pattern of place names of such towns as 'House of Bamoth', 'House of Medeba', 'House of Diblataim' or 'House of Ba'al Meon', which Moab's King Mesha claims to have built in the inscription on the near contemporary Mesha Stele (see Smelik 2003). If *bytdwd* were understood to signify a 'House of the Beloved' (disputably, a divine epithet of Yahweh; Lemche and Thompson 1994; Thompson 1995a), the name could well be understood to refer to *Urushalimmu's* function since the Middle Bronze Age as a holy city. If *bytdwd,* however, were understood, with the majority of historians, as 'House of (the eponym) David', it would rather suggest that the political structure of the town was that of a regional family patronate, much as Beth Bamoth, Beth Medeba, Beth Diblataim and Beth Ba'al Meon of the Mesha Stele were. Either understanding would help explain the lack of any large or public buildings in *Urushalimmu/bytdwd* during the Iron II period. One might reasonably argue for the likelihood of a temple in the Iron II city up on the Haram, dedicated to the regional deity Yahweh. Although such a temple is not known with certainty to have existed, the names of the city, *Urushalimmu* and, perhaps, *bytdwd,* suggest that the site primarily had a religious significance.

Evidence for Exile and Return?

The destruction of *Urushalimmu* and its immediate environs in 597 BCE by Nebuchadnezzar, and the deportations which followed, left the city and the Judean highlands which supported it thoroughly devastated (for this and the following, see Lipschits 2003). Within a three kilometre radius of the city, there was a drop from as many as 134 Iron Age find sites to merely 15 during the Persian Period. Such statistics are confirmed by the discontinuation of many family tombs and a very sharp drop in the quantity of Persian period pottery. Although the region to the north of *Urushalimmu* was also adversely affected, the city itself lay in ruins throughout the whole of the Neo-Babylonian period. Most fortresses and settlements in the Judean highlands were abandoned and followed by a considerable settlement gap. Tall ar-Rumeida (Hebron) and Tall Mshash were abandoned at the beginning of the sixth century and remained unsettled throughout the Persian period. At

5. For the first publication of the inscription fragments, see Biran and Naveh 1993; 1995; for comprehensive discussions of the following discussion and debate, see Athas 2003, and Hagelia 2006. For the most recent discussion of its authenticity, see Lemche 2003.

Lakisi, the last Iron Age stratum, which had been destroyed early in the sixth century, shows no evidence of settlement renewal until the mid-fifth century, when, however, *Lakisi* was no longer a part of the province of *Yehud*, but had been made the center of the province of *Idumea*. Little increase of population is discernible in the region as a whole during the whole of the Persian period, during which the settled area of the province of *Yehud* hardly measured more than about 150 dunams altogether and, accordingly, could hardly have had a population of more than about 3,000 people. If there had been, in fact, a return from exile in the Persian period, resettlement left no visible demographic trace whatever. No 'return to Zion' left an imprint in the archaeological evidence. Current estimates of the size of *Urushalimmu* in the Persian period from fifth-third centuries have dropped considerably from Albright's estimate in 1949 of ten to fifteen thousand to estimates of merely four hundred to a thousand (for an overview of archaeological finds in Judah and Jerusalem during the Persian period, see Lipschits 2006; 2009).

There is no evidence whatever for a Persian city wall with or without its many gates, as described in the legends of Nehemiah. As Finkelstein has argued, not a single trace of this wall has been found (Finkelstein 2008a). Certainly, the book of Nehemiah's story about the building of a twelve-gated wall for the city is a product of fiction. Rather, the city first became a large and important urban and administrative center in the middle of the second century BCE under Antiochus III. Although one should not conclude that al-Quds was entirely empty during the Persian period, what remains have been found have survived only in fills between later buildings or along the slopes east and west of the *Ophel* ridge (for this and the following, see Finkelstein 2008a; Lipschits and Tal 2007). Few architectural finds attest to any kind of urban centre in the Persian period before the construction of the Hellenistic city in the second century BCE. There are no traces of rich tombs and no signs of rich cultural material, pottery shards or stamp impressions. From the western hill—where the city would be expected to expand if it had attained any significant size—only a few shards and other small finds have been recovered in later fills. In the so-called 'Tower of David', no remains whatever are earlier than the second century. This entire area was abandoned throughout the Persian period. The western hill also first saw resettlement in the second century. It does seem that part of the *Ophel* and the northern part of the western hill witnessed some form of occupation during the Persian period among the ruins of the Iron Age town. However, quarry remains indicate that at least one area of the western hill lay *outside* the city at this time. Generally speaking, the Persian period remains that have been found indicate the existence of a small impoverished settlement along the narrow ridge on the spur below and south of the *Ophel*. The main area of occupation has been estimated from a minimum of around 20 dunams to a maximum of 50 dunams. There were, however, very few finds in these areas

and a population estimate of 1000 people must be judged quite optimistic. The lower estimates of as few as 400 people as suggested by Finkelstein are, perhaps, to be preferred (Finkelstein 2008a). It is important to note that this relative gap in the settlement of al-Quds is not surprising as one must certainly consider that the population of the whole of the southern highlands which lay within the province of *Yehud* had a considerably diminished population throughout the entire period from the sixth to the second century.

We do have evidence, however, of the recognition of *Yirushlem* (an Aramaic form of the Babylonian *Urushalimmu*) as a 'holy city' in the Persian period. Among the letters from the fifth century Egyptian garrison town of Elephantine is the reference to a request, sent by the Jews of Elephantine to both the high priest Yohanan in *Yirushlem* and political officials in Samaria, written in the hope of obtaining permission and help in rebuilding a Yahweh temple for the garrison in Elephantine (Porten 1968). On the one hand, the reference to Samaria's officials supports the understanding that the Persian period settlement of *Yirushlem* at this time lacked both politicians and a political role comparable to Samaria's. On the other hand, the address to the high priest of *Yirushlem* suggests that the "city" had its centre in a temple of Yahweh, undoubtedly small and, ideally, somewhere above the *Ophel* on the *Haram*. The existence of such a temple would provide both the primary focus and the function of *Yirushlem's* diminished population as in service of the temple. That reference to the high priest might take precedence in the letter over the political leaders of Samaria might also reflect a status of high prestige, as we know from excavations that Samaria had had its temple on Mt Gerizim from as early as the fifth century BCE (Magen 2008).

The conclusion that the destruction of *Urushalimmu* at the beginning of the sixth century and the following deportations were as definitive as they were thorough and lasting is inescapable. There is no evidence of recovery during the Persian period and there is no evidence for any return of the population from exile. The drastically diminished occupation of the city over this very long period in which the city lay in ruins, reflecting a gap in settlement and absence of any effort to rebuild the town throughout the Persian and the early Hellenistic periods is a history which is supported to some extent by the closely similar settlement history of the Jerusalem area in the Judean highlands as a whole (Lipschits and Tal 2007). It can, I believe, be argued that Persian period *Yirushlem* had primarily functioned as a 'holy city': a temple amid ruins, unwalled and undefended before the second century BCE.

Tentative Conclusions

In my *Early History* of 1992, I argued that the historical evidence related to imperial practices of deportation did not warrant the assumption that there was a firm connection between the people who had been deported from Jeru-

salem by Nebuchadnezzar and those who had 'returned' from Mesopotamia to Palestine during the Persian period (Thompson 1992a: 339-51). However, it now seems that this distinction between 'exile' and 'return' needs to be sharpened considerably. The distinctions between the literary constructs of 'exile' and 'return', which are so central to biblical tradition related to the deportation and population transference in Palestine's past, needs to be made more emphatic. The historicity of such a return as has been expressed so variously in biblical tradition from Isaiah and Jeremiah to 2 Chronicles and Ezra needs to be opened to a more thoroughgoing analysis. The gap of settlement on the Ophel suggests that some four hundred years separate the destruction of the Iron Age city of Urushalimmu and the deportation of its population from the city's restoration through the construction of the Hellenistic city around the beginning of the second century BCE. The revisions now required by our historical understanding seem to be very substantial. It is no longer possible to assert as I did in my earlier work that the origins of Judaism and the Bible's intellectual matrix are rooted in Judaism's self-identity as the *returning remnant* of Israel, which is so eloquently expressed throughout the Hebrew Bible (Thompson 1992a: 415-23). As historical event and point of departure, a return from exile in the Persian period is no longer apparent and can no longer be assumed. Even less can it continue to function as an historical explanation for Judaism's origins.

The Faithful Remnant and the Invention of Religio-Ethnic Identity

Firas Sawah

Until the seventies of the last century the prevailing opinion among scholars of Israelite religion was that monotheism distinguished the religion of Israel from the religion of the neighbouring cultures since the days of Moses, who had received 'the commandment and the law of the Lord' on Mount Sinai and had carried them to his people and who had made a covenant to worship Yahweh alone (without the rest of the gods) and to abide by his Law.

Today, however, archaeological evidence compels us to realize, more than ever, that Jewish monotheism did not emerge as an established doctrine before the Babylonian exile in the sixth century BCE in the hands of a group of theologians who considered the reality of what befell the kingdom of Judah as a total collapse in every aspect of their recreation of the past in the light of the present. Hence, the compilation of Judaism's Hebrew Bible began, and it took nearly two centuries for the book as a whole to reach its present extent.

All the facts we have today indicate that the dwellers of the Palestinian highlands who founded the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah had never heard of a 'law of the Lord' revealed to Moses nor of a covenant with Yahweh made by their alleged fathers. Their reverence for the numerous Canaanite gods was not considered a deviation from the true religion of Yahweh but was part of their life as a group within the Canaanite culture. The god Yahweh, who had come to Canaan from the desolate southern mountain regions and who had become a national god for both the kingdoms of Israel and Judah, was, despite his high stature, only one member of the extensive pantheon, embracing a number of gods and goddesses. He may have first developed within a pastoral group in the Sinai, which had been led by a mysterious figure called Moses before settling in the Palestinian highlands at the beginning of the twelfth century BCE, along with other clans who had come to these regions from elsewhere in Palestine, filling a population vacuum caused by a climate disaster that had struck the eastern

Mediterranean during what is now referred to as 'the Mycenaean drought' (Thompson 1992a: 215-21).

In the process of integration with the old Canaanite pantheon, a strategy of absorption and identification was adopted by Yahweh's adherents. He was first identified with El, the Canaanite god, so much so that, finally, he was frequently referred to by this name, and El's old consort, 'Asherah, became Yahweh's. Yahweh was also identified with Baal, acquiring both his titles and traits to such an extent that it became difficult to distinguish between the two deities.

When Judah's kings finished building a large temple for Yahweh in Jerusalem in the late eighth or early seventh century BCE as an icon for his authority, a 'Yahweh alone' movement appeared at the hands of a group of theologians, which was intensified under the influence of a prophetic movement. Its priorities were to fight polytheism in all its guises and 'return' the people to the worship of Yahweh in his temple in Jerusalem. In spite of the intensity and urgency of their prophetic language, the movement remained a minority. No great numbers listened to them; for their message was too radical and extreme to be accepted widely.

Isaiah was the most important personality in that prophetic movement. He was a contemporary of King Hezekiah (729–686 BCE). And perhaps his ideas lay behind the founding of the first great religious reform launched by Hezekiah, opposing the worship of other gods, especially the goddess 'Asherah (2 Kgs 18.4).

Behind this extensive movement against icons, we can hear the thunderous voice of the prophet Isaiah. In the late eight century, during the reign of Hezekiah, another prophetic voice also arose: the voice of Micah, a contemporary of Isaiah for a period, who, like Isaiah, condemned the worship of other gods (Mic. 1.5-6).

Nearly a century after King Hezekiah's unsuccessful reform, the 'Yahweh alone' movement found support from King Josiah, who ruled a few decades before the end of the kingdom of Judah at the hands of Nebuchadnezzar the Chaldean, and again launched a religious reform movement, now broader than the movement of Josiah's predecessor, Hezekiah. It was driven by the visions of this group, supported by the great prophet Jeremiah, a younger contemporary of Josiah, who lived to witness the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple. During that period, he roamed the streets of Jerusalem, calling for the worship of Yahweh, who was forgotten by the people and the rulers, and condemning the worship of other gods (Jer. 2.4-6; 3.12-14; 7.29-30).

The reform of Josiah began with a story that is significant to the first efforts at transcribing the scriptures. In the course of a partial restoration of Jerusalem's temple, which was overseen by the high priest Hilkiah, an old papyrus scroll was found and identified as the book of the Law of Moses.

Hilkiah gave the book to the scribe Chavan, who read it and, showing it to the king, read it aloud to him. When the king heard the words of 'the book of the law', he tore his clothes, and ordered the priest Hilkiah, along with a number of the temple servants, to go to the prophetess Huldah, who lived in Jerusalem. When they showed her the scroll, she confirmed its authority and assured them that the wrath of Yahweh will soon be enflamed against the city, since the people had forsaken Yahweh and provoked him by burning incense to other gods. The king then went up to the temple and sent for the elders of Judah and Jerusalem ('all the people, both small and great') and stood on the pulpit to read the whole of the book of the covenant which had been found in the house of the Lord. When he finished reading, he made a covenant before the Lord to keep the commandments and testimonies written in the book, and this was confirmed by his people. He then began to stamp out all worship of other gods both from within and outside the temple (2 Kings 22–23).

We can conclude from this narrative that the 'Yahweh alone' movement had begun at a relatively early time to supply the worship of Yahweh with ideological bases that would give it superiority over the worship of other deities, as well as to create, in a more distant past, roots relating to Moses, a figure concealed within the mist of history, which they refurbished and to which they attributed the creation of their new faith. It is clear that this forged document had been buried, with the concurrence of Josiah, in a site that had been slated for restoration by the members of this group that it might serve as a 'manifesto' for the reform movement. This story also provides us with a unique witness that the people of Judah, with their rulers and priests, had never known a 'law of Moses'; nor had their fathers before them. This law and the faith behind it had begun to take shape amidst a conflict between the 'Yahweh alone' movement and the worship of other deities, in an effort to establish a centralized worship in the temple of Jerusalem, as well as to repeal the authority of other religious centres spread throughout the kingdom. Although we know nothing of the content of this 'book of the law', because the redactor of 2 Kings does not tell us anything about it, there is no doubt that it provided the foundation upon which theologians during the Babylonian Exile built the nucleus of their law.

In his first campaign against Jerusalem in 597 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar, the Babylonian king, removed Jehoiachin, the king of Judah, from the throne, because of disobedience to Babylon, which had been instigated by Egypt. He was replaced with his uncle Zedekiah. Forced to pay a large tribute, he was carried into exile along with nearly ten thousand scribes, officers, smiths and craftsmen from the population of Jerusalem (2 Kgs 24.10-17).

The news of this campaign in Nebuchadnezzar's chronicles is concise and lacks any mention of exiles being carried away to Babylon:

> Year 7, Month Kislimu: The king of Akkad moved his army into Hatti land, laid siege to the city of Judah, and the king took the city on the second day of the month Addaru. He appointed in it a new king of his liking, took heavy booty from it and brought it into Babylon (*ANET*[3] 564).

The prophet Ezekiel was among the exiles of the first campaign against Jerusalem. In Babylon, Ezekiel continued his condemnation of Judah for its deviation from the worship of Yahweh and for its idolatrous practices, even after the exile and humiliation that had befallen its people (Ezek. 6.1-7).

After nearly a decade, Nebuchadnezzar decided to settle, once and for all, his conflict with the kings of Judah, when he received news regarding the attempt of Zedekiah, the new king of Judah, to establish military alliances in the region in an effort to revolt against Babylon. In the year 587 BCE, Babylon's king launched an extensive campaign against the Syrian south, which reached a number of Palestinian kingdoms, among them Jerusalem, against which the Babylonian army laid siege.

When hunger intensified and provisions became scarce, Zedekiah and his family tried to escape with the help of his finest soldiers. The Chaldeans, however, captured him and brought him up to Nebuchadnezzar, who 'gave judgment upon him and they slew the sons of Zedekiah before his eyes and put out the eyes of Zedekiah and carried him captive to Babylon'. Jerusalem, however, which did not open its gates after the attempted escape of her king, was stormed by the captain of the Babylonian army, according to the redactor of 2 Kgs 25.8, 9, 10, 23.

Despite the unavailability of a Babylonian record depicting the last campaign against Jerusalem, Kathleen Kenyon, in the 1960s, revealed traces of destruction and fires on the site of Jerusalem relating to the early sixth century BCE, and a break in habitation which lasted for nearly a century (Kenyon 1974: 166-72; Finkelstein and Silberman 2001: 294-95).

Nebuchadnezzar's campaign directed a fatal blow to Judah and destroyed its political, economic and social structure, and, above all, its religious life. The temple of Jerusalem, which was, despite polytheism, a symbol of national identity, was also destroyed. The finest people of the country, such as teachers, administrators, soldiers and priests, were taken captive, and those who remained in the land to work in farming and provide tribute to Babylon were in a state of poverty. Defeated and disoriented, they were without hope, even in their old gods who had been unable to defend them.

But this total disaster, which ended the political entity so-called 'ancient Israel', caused the deepest crisis in the history of Judah's religion. It led to the destruction of its ancient structure and laid the foundation for a religion quite different from what Israel and Judah had known in their past, based now primarily on the teachings of the prophets who had called for the worship of the god Yahweh and the renunciation of the worship of other deities. Their voice was the only one that remained vibrant in the wake of

devastation and destruction. While the elite in exile questioned the reasons for the disaster, the voice of the prophets gave them an answer: Yahweh had destroyed his people and deserted his temple in which he had dwelt among them, because they had sinned and turned away from him.

As a result, a widespread scholarly movement instigated in exile rewrote history through a new perspective with a newly forming religious and ideological outlook. This scribal movement led, finally, to the production of biblical books, rewriting the past in the light of the present through a selectivity that combined historical facts with ideological elucidation. Whenever such facts were not available, they were fabricated. We do not exclude the books of the prophets, which are supposed to narrate the works and the words of the known prophets of the past. The current form of the books of the prophets are the product of a prolonged editing and reediting process that combined the reflections of the prophets with those of scribes, giving expression to their late religious and historical visions.

When the elite of Jerusalem left their demolished and burnt homes, they carried with them what was light and valuable. Some of the scribes brought also what could be saved of the court manuscripts in scroll form, in an effort to salvage the cultural legacy of the former kingdom. These scrolls preserved the information necessary for the future biblical redactor in their work. Some of them however pointed out such sources by their specific titles, such as:

The Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num. 21.14)
The Book of Jasher (Josh. 10.13; 2 Sam. 2.18)
The Book of the Acts of Solomon (2 Kgs 11.41)
The Book of the Chronicles of the Kings of Judah/Israel (1 Kgs 15.23; 2 Kgs 1.18)
The Book of Samuel the Seer (1 Chron. 29.29)
The Book of Gad the Seer (1 Chron. 29.29)
The Book of Nathan the Prophet (2 Chron. 9.29)
The Prophecy of Ahiah the Shilonite (2 Kgs 9.29)
The Book of Iddo the Seer (2 Chron. 12.15)
The Book of Jehu the Son of Hanani (2 Chron. 20.34)

The conditions of the exiles of Judah in the lands of Babylon were relatively comfortable. Civil Babylonian authorities settled them in the southern region of Nippur, giving them state lands to cultivate. They paid taxes into the treasury, and their affairs were managed by their elders, some of whom were able to reach high positions in the state bureaucracy. Except for their sense of alienation and nostalgia for the past (see Psalm 137), they had little to complain of. The Judahite intellectuals enjoyed all the suitable conditions for reflection and dialogue. They formed councils and they wrote. A group of them, some of whom were former priests, drew the conclusion that

the catastrophe that had befallen Judah was not blind destiny or simply the result of Assyria's greater military might, but it was the work of their own god, punishing them for their sins. The future lay in repentance and confession, in a return to the Lord and in learning from the past.

Such a projected feature appears, in its clearest forms, in the book of Jeremiah, in the pedagogical form of questions and answers (Jer. 5.19; 9.12-16; 16.10-12). This debate, which Yahweh is seen to establish with his people, is not restricted to the books of the prophets. Deuteronomy (28.1-37) too predicts, from the days of wandering in the desert, what will ultimately become of his people. Yahweh confirmed his covenant with his people in the first days of the Exodus from Egypt, when he gave them the commandments and the Law on Mount Sinai. But Israel was disobedient from the beginning and did not listen to the word of the Lord, so the Lord had sent to them a number of prophets (Jer. 7.26-28). So Yahweh's curse came upon them, as written in Deuteronomy. Yahweh used the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar as a tool to punish and destroy Judah (Jer. 27.5, 6; 32.3, 4, 29, 31).

Biblical scribes developed a new notion in the books of the prophets. Yahweh left his limited domain as a god of Israel who helped them against their enemies. His influence now expanded beyond Judah toward Babylon, the dominant power of the time, and started to use other kings and generals to fulfill his aims.

The deep awareness of sin and the acceptance of its punishment demands repentance, because it marks the Lord as forgiving. The biblical scribe puts a dirge on the lips of the prophet Jeremiah (Lam. 5.1-22). As Yahweh had often declared that he will return to those who return to him, a hope is born: 'Therefore now amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of the LORD your God; and the LORD will repent of the evil that he hath pronounced against you' (Jer. 26.13). The redactor of Isaiah announces this forgiveness with joy (Isa. 40.1-2).

This remorseful remnant, scattered in exile, is helpless and cannot achieve, through its own strength, freedom from exile. It cannot rebuild its demolished home. If the gods they had worshiped in the past could not prevent the disaster, is Yahweh, after they have worshiped him alone and received their repentance, able to save them? Yahweh's answer to such questions is crucial (Isa. 41.8-12).

These select theologians, deliberating on the reasons for the disaster, began to realize that in order to save his small and depressed people who were in the hands of the mightiest universal power of the time, Yahweh must, himself, be supreme: a god who controlled the whole world, not merely the little land of Palestine. The more this faction was aware of its humiliation and lack of power, the more they believed in their god's supremacy. In the past, the 'Yahweh alone' movement had elevated him to the stature of 'God of the gods' (Josh. 22.22; Pss. 50.1; 97.7; Isa. 44.6, 24; 45.21).

From his new status, Yahweh dooms Babylon with destruction and forces it to release his people, for there the gods of Babylon collapse before him (Isa. 46.1-2; 47.1-5). In this way a god, in a small and shattered kingdom in the Syrian south, was elevated to the stature of 'the only God, the creator of heaven and earth', so that he could govern the world and manipulate history in order to liberate his people and return them to their land. He uses Cyrus, elevating him to a messiah, to annihilate the Babylonian Empire and send the Judean exiles back to Jerusalem (Isa. 45.1-3).

This entire tremor caused by the emergence of Cyrus on the global stage was only to release the children of Israel (Isa. 45.4-5). And Cyrus entered Babylon victorious to release the exiles in order to rebuild the temple of Jerusalem in their own land (Isa. 44.24-28).

So it was in the first year of Cyrus's entry into Babylon (539 BCE) according to the redactor of the Book of Ezra: 'the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing, saying: Thus saith Cyrus king of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem' (Ezra 1.1-3). Following that, the exodus from Babylon is described in the same manner as the first exodus from Egypt (Isaiah 20–21).

But all that did not lead the biblical redactor to pure monotheism, but only to the threshold of monotheism. Their only God, in spite of his apparent absolutism, remained a god for Israel alone and not a god to the rest of the nations of earth. Raising him to this rank was only to raise Israel itself among the nations, because Yahweh is her god and in her is his dwelling. Here, the biblical redactor expresses his future aspirations that all peoples will turn into slaves bowing down before Israel and licking the dust of her feet (Isa. 14.1-2; 45.14; 49.22-23; 60.1, 14). And there is Yahweh taking from Israel the task of conquering her enemies, so he crushes them and wades in the blood of the peoples (Isa. 34.1-3; 49.25-26). Yahweh returns from fighting the nations, his clothes stained with their blood (Isa. 63.1-6).

The Rise of Biblical Religion

The exile of the people of Judah has its historical context in the large-scale deportations carried out by the kings of the Assyrian Empire and, on a smaller scale, by the kings of the New Babylonian Empire. This displacement policy included tens of subjugated nations that were moved from their homelands and replaced by different ethnicities in order to undermine the ethnic structure of the rebellious regions and to suppress their national spirit.

When the Persians inherited the Babylonian Empire they did not practice the right of the conqueror on the lands and wealth of the defeated, because they were dealing with nations that had already been subjugated and disciplined. Their policy rather focused on gaining support by allowing the captive nations to return to their homelands to retrieve their ethnic and religious identity, as well as to participate in a comprehensive plan to revive the general economy of the empire. Contrary to the Babylonians and Assyrians before them, the Persians adopted a decentralized system of government, which allowed the people the greatest possible independence in civil affairs, while stemming any separatist ethnic tendencies.

After Cyrus's victory over Babylon (539 BCE), he accuses the former rulers of Babylon in a long transcript of injustice, tyranny, subjugating and deporting the people and offending the gods. He claimed that the Babylonian god Marduk, who had abandoned Babylon with the rest of the gods, had invited Cyrus to save the people and restablish order. Marduk had handed Babylon over to him, and the people had welcomed him without a fight. Therefore, Cyrus declared his plan to rebuild the holy cities with their temples, from which the images of gods had been taken, and to return the displaced with their gods to the cities that his predecessors had destroyed, writing in the text's epilogue:

> I returned to these sacred cities on the other side of the Tigris, the sanctuaries of which have been ruins for a long time, the images which used to live therein, and established for them permanent sanctuaries. I also gathered all their former inhabitants and returned to them their habitations (*ANET*[3] 315).

In spite of the propagandistic function of this political statement, directed as it is to the peoples of the empire in an effort to win their allegiance, its application has already started, and the operation of returning the nations and the gods to their homelands went actively during the reign of king Cyrus and his successors after him under the slogans of 'modernization' and 'reconstruction' within a decentralized administrative system which helped to rule vast areas of the empire with high efficiency and lower costs. It also helped to introduce Persian codes and laws in the different states after having given them a local flavour.

In this effort of the Persian administration to create subsidiary regional entities, who would receive Persian laws and rules willingly, and to unite them with the body of the empire, the Persian administration developed an analogy between the local gods, in the new communities that had been created or revived, and the Persian god of heaven Ahura Mazda, the only true God preached by Zoroaster. In this way, the regions of the empire would be consolidated through a single legislative and legal system and, correspondingly, through a single god, whose names and manifestations vary from region to region, uniting them under the concept of 'one god' for the whole empire.

In this historical context and intellectual climate, we can understand the biblical news reports in both Ezra and Nehemiah relating to the return of the Judean exiles and the rebuilding of the temple of the Lord in Jerusalem. Although we do not possess any Persian document that confirms permission to the Judean exiles to return to their homeland, we have no reason to call the broad lines of this story into question, as it is consistent with the overall framework of Persian policy. The decree on the return of the exiles, which the biblical redactor attributes to Cyrus, is in line with the spirit of the historic political statement announced by Cyrus on the eve of his entry into Babylon (Ezra 1.1-2).

The analogy between the God of Cyrus and the God of the new society in Jerusalem is noteworthy, as is the use, for the first time, of the title of 'God of heavens' referring to the old god, Yahweh, who assumes a local image of the comprehensive god of the Persian Empire. This analogy between the gods also is implicit in Second Isaiah's reference to Cyrus with the title 'Anointed of the Lord' (Isa. 45.1-6).

In this way the perceptions of biblical theologians in exile of a single God for the people of Israel coincided with the Zoroastrian concept of one totalitarian cosmic deity. The exiles returned and with them arrived a god who is connected only by name to the old god of Judah.

The return of the exiles to Jerusalem, 'according to the book of Ezra', was in three batches separated by long intervals, and there were also those who decided to stay in Babylon and never returned home, mostly from the second generation born in exile. It seems that the first wave of returnees have gone to Jerusalem in the same year when Cyrus entered Babylon and declared that he would allow all exiles to return.

Leading this first wave, which was not of a significant number, a prince called Sheshbazzar was appointed by the Persian administration as ruler of the province of Jerusalem, which contained, during the Persian period, only the northern part of the old kingdom of Judah. It was given the Aramaic name 'Jehud', derived from the ancient name of the kingdom. To help Sheshbazzar revive Jerusalem and build its temple, Cyrus returned the temple treasures that had been looted by the Babylonians. As for the rich exiles who were reluctant to return, they contributed gold, silver and cattle to their fellow returnees (Ezra 1.17-11).

Although the first goal of the return was to rebuild the temple, it seemed that Sheshbazzar and his cohorts were busy with the tasks of securing housing and ensuring a living. The redactor of Ezra turns already in chapter 2 to a second wave of returnees, seventeen years after the first wave, and Sheshbazzar disappears from the scene for no apparent reason.

This second wave came at the beginning of the reign of King Darius, Cyrus's grandson (522–486 BCE). It is led by the new governor of Jerusalem, Zarubbabel, from the second generation, as is evidenced by his name:

'born in Babylon'. He is accompanied by some forty thousand people (Ezra 2), a figure most scholars today question. He was also accompanied by a prominent priest named Joshua. Darius gave Zerubbabel the remainder of the stolen treasures of the temple, and gave orders to his governor at the western Euphrates to facilitate his task with the land taxes of those areas, providing him with the money necessary to rebuild the temple. Zerubbabel began construction upon his arrival in Jerusalem and completed it in the sixth year of the reign of King Darius (Ezra 3–6).

After the completion of the house of the Lord (516 BCE), the biblical story is silent on what happened in Jerusalem for nearly fifty years until the rise of King Artaxerxes (Artaxšacā I) to the throne of Persia (465–424 BCE). In the seventh year of his reign, about the year 458 BCE, a third wave of returnees was launched. The text does not mention the size of the population led by Ezra Ben Saraiah, a priest educated in the law of the Lord, according to the text. This Ezra did not come to Jerusalem as a new ruler of the province of Judah, but his duties were focused on the issues of religious and social organization of the new society. He looked after observing the rituals of the temple and performing them in the correct way, as well as after organizing the judiciary on the basis of the law that he brought with him. The text calls it 'the law of the King and the law of the Lord' (Ezra 7.6-26).

We note from this text that Ezra had brought with him two laws from Babylon; the 'law of the King' refers to the Persian codes through which the Persian administration tried to modulate the foreign relations of the autonomous provinces to ensure their loyalty to the Persian emperor; the 'law of the Lord' reflects the legislation that the new communities in the empire were formulating to manage their internal affairs, after having obtained official approval, ensuring its accord with the rule of the king. It is likely that the 'law of the Lord', brought by Ezra from Babylon, was the law of Moses, which the high priest claimed to have found buried in the temple, and had been behind the great reform of King Josiah. This document was carried to Babylon along with the other scrolls that had been saved from destruction, where it was subject to elaboration and addition in accordance with the new understanding of Yahweh religion.

Since this 'law of the Lord' was the bond that brought the people of the new community in Jerusalem together, and stresses their distinctiveness from the old society of Judah, who had been disobedient, it maintained their detachment from neighbouring, idolatrous, communities. The law had to be read in the hearing of the people, including priests, that they might understand it and abide by its covenant (Neh. 8.1-13).

The priests in general and the Levite priests in particular, who were the alleged custodians of Yahweh's rituals since the days of Aaron, as also the rest of the people, had never heard of the Mosaic law read to them. In Nehe-

miah 8, reading the book of the law lasted several days. On the twenty-fourth day of the month, the people were assembled, fasting and wearing sackcloth. They stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers, and read for the first time the story of the children of Israel from the days of Abraham to the demise of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah: how they sinned against the Lord continuously. This all-encompassing confession ends with acknowledgment of their guilt, asking for forgiveness and a covenant pledging that they will worship Yahweh alone and fulfill all his commandments (Neh. 10.1-29).

This covenant, made by the repentant remnant before Ezra the priest, is in fact the first covenant with the new Israel, in which the biblical redactors reflected on the beginnings of the story which they were inventing about the origins of Israel. The Lord made his first covenant with Abraham, and then renewed the covenant with Isaac and with Jacob, and when he revealed the law on Mount Sinai, Moses took the covenant of the Lord to his people to worship him alone and work by his laws. The rest of the biblical story is only a history of sin which ends with the destruction of Israel, the sinner.

Thus, biblical Israel comes into existence as an intellectual invention of the unique situation of the community of Jerusalem in the Persian era. This Israel does not enjoy an objective existence, subject to the process of historical inquiry, because the editorial process that led to the production of biblical Israel was not aimed at compiling a correct, historical discourse of the past, so much as it aimed to forge a discourse that gave meaning to the present. The understanding revealed to us in scripture is directed toward the past only to the extent that this past provides support and confirmation for the existing religious and mundane institutions. In other words, what appears in scripture as a historical reflection is in fact only a reflection on what is current for a new society which understands itself as heir to an old society that fell under curse, degradation and destruction. This image of a new Israel is the one that controlled the kind of events that are collected and remembered as history.

The process of creating religious identity went hand in hand with the creation of ethnic identity. To be an Israelite means that one went with Abraham, the Hebrew, from Ur of the Chaldeans in Mesopotamia to Canaan, where he lived as a stranger. One went from the land of Canaan, with Jacob and his children, to Egypt, where they lived alienated and excluded for four hundred years. One went from Egypt with Moses and heard the words of Yahweh on Mount Sinai and betrayed him and was sentenced to remain in the desert for forty years. One entered, with Joshua son of Nun, the land of Canaan to acquire the land that was promised by the Lord. One, however, lost this land, which had been given, because one worshiped, with Solomon, the gods of the peoples of the land. One

entered with Israel and Judah into a long history of curse that ended in the destruction of Israel and the loss of the ten tribes forever. One witnessed the destruction of Judah and its exile in Babylon. There one sat, with the exiles, weeping and remembering Jerusalem. With tears came the awakening and the recognition of the true God, who became aware of himself as God of the universe. With his new powers, he brought the repentant remnant back to Jerusalem to make a new history of dedication to the Lord and the worship of him alone. To be an Israelite has nothing to do with belonging to the land of Israel, so much as with belonging to the history of Israel as the repentant remnant understood it during the exile, and as depicted by the biblical redactors thereafter. The land is for the God of Israel to give and to take as he wants. It was not a uniquely important affair in the formation of the people of Israel, who were accustomed to be exiled from one homeland to another; even when Israel is in its home, but alienated from her god, this alienation renders her homeless.

When the rest of Judah returned to the ancient land of Israel, their sense of ethnicity did not come from belonging to this land but rather to a different and imagined history of Israel, which became a symbol of their identity, which no other group shared—not even those old relatives who did not go into exile and whom the redactor of Ezra calls 'the people of the land', denying any relationship between them and the 'new Israel' who returned from Babylon. Those 'people of the land' represent now a rejected history, which nobody wants to remember.

So when the priest Ezra son of Saraiah came with the third wave of returnees from the Babylonian exile, he found that many men who came with the first wave and the second one had married women from the peoples of the land and begat children from them. He cried because of the transgression of his people and fell on his face before the house of the Lord, confessing the sin of the crowd and praying for forgiveness and clemency. Then he called all the children of the exile to gather in the courtyard of the house of the Lord. When they came to him he stood and spoke to them (Ezra 10.10-12). When the men were sending off their 'strange' women and their children from them, Israel was giving up its real identity, which is deeply rooted in the land, and finds its origins in biblical history.

Today, Jews who lived about two thousand years in lands which they did not feel related to, nor felt any kinship with the peoples among whom they lived, have returned to the promised land once again. However, this land has given them so far only a false sense of ethnicity. What unites Jews arriving from their past exiles from the Middle East, Europe and Africa is not a homeland, but a myth of origins, which for centuries has been considered real history, but which now manifests itself more and more as a commemorative story, linked to history with but the slightest connections.

Excursus[1]

In my above handling of the reports of the exile and the return, and the consequent results relevant to the emergence of biblical ideology, I pursued the trace of the Ezra/Nehemiah story in its general outlines due to the lack of evidence which casts doubt on its credibility. Although the chronicle of Nebuchadnezzar's first campaign against Jerusalem did not state anything regarding the carrying away of exiles, and though we do not have any Babylonian text regarding his second campaign, leading to the destruction of Jerusalem, the reports in the biblical story of carrying away exiles in both campaigns is likely, because we know that the kings of the Neo-Babylonian kingdom had continued the Assyrian deportation policy but on a smaller scale. However, determining the number of exiles remains a problem.

Biblical information about the number of exiles is vague and contradictory. The book of 2 Kings verifies the number of exiles in the first campaign as ten thousand people, mostly from the upper social strata, but it does not give an accurate number of the exiles in the second campaign. Since it points out that Nebuchadnezzar had 'left the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen' (2 Kgs 25.12), it means that the exile included, this time too, society's elite.

Second Chronicles does not talk about an exile that took place in the first campaign, nor the exact figure of exiles in the second campaign. It only states briefly: 'And them that had escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon: where they were servants to him and his sons until the reign of the kingdom of Persia' (2 Chron. 36.20). If we refer to the book of Jeremiah, we find him talking about three thousand exiles in the first campaign, 832 in the second campaign and 745 in the punitive raid that followed the assassination of Governor Gedaliah who had been appointed by Nebuchadnezzar to manage the affairs of those who remained in the land, making a total of about 4,600 exiles. From these conflicting figures we arrive at a result that suggests that the number of exiles is less than five thousand according to the lowest estimates, and not exceeding fifteen thousand according to the highest.

But what became of the rest of the population of the kingdom of Judah? Archaeological excavations show that the region during the brief period of the Babylonian rule and the subsequent Persian era was sparsely populated and did not contain important urban centers. And the general picture of Yehud is one of a province based on subsistence and village economy. As for Jerusalem, it was reduced in size to what it was before the establishment

1. I wrote this excursus after reading an article by my friend Thomas L. Thompson, published in this book and after a protracted discussion that took place between us in Damascus in December 2009.

of the kingdom of Judah. The residence was restricted to the eastern plateau, and its population did not increase to more than two thousand at best until the beginning of the Hellenistic period (Avigad 1983: 61-63; Kenyon 1974: 172-87; Carter 1999: 286-88).

The exile was, in fact, not the important issue in reducing the population of Judah, but the gradual migration of the people. After the Babylonian armies had destroyed the political, social and economic structures of the state, and removed its leaders, scribes and craftsmen, chaos spread, peace was lost and poverty prevailed. Large segments of the urban and rural communities started to migrate gradually and search for new lands that would provide them with better opportunities of life within greater Palestine and abroad. The book of Jeremiah speaks of a mass exodus toward Egypt, after a group who were opposed to the Babylonians assassinated Gedaliah bin Ahiqam, the ruler whom Nebuchadnezzar appointed to manage the affairs of the province, and killed the small Chaldean garrison centered in Mizpah, the new capital of Judah (Jeremiah 41–43).

Just as the Babylonian exile was not the most important issue in reducing the population of Judah, the return of the exiles did not improve the demographic status of the region very much. Although some scholars question the reports of the return from exile (see Thomas Thompson's article in this book), we have no reason to deny this return, but the exaggerated number of returnees referred to in Ezra 2.64-66 is questionable. The return of exiles to Judah coincided with the new administrative system introduced in Palestine by the Persians. According to this system, Judah was divided into two parts; a northern part called the province of Yehud, which received those who chose to return from Babylon, and a southern part that had been annexed to the province of Edom.

The toponyms listed in the book of Ezra (2.21-35) and the book of Nehemiah (7.25-38) help us draw the boundaries of the Judahite region. It extends from the site of the old town of Mizpah on Tel en-Nasbah to the north to Beth Zur in the south and from Jericho in the Jordan Valley in the east to Gezer in the west. These boundaries correspond, to a great extent, with the prevalence of seals and seal impressions on shards of pottery jars bearing the name of Yehud in Aramaic script, as well as on the coins of the province, which started to appear since the late fifth century BCE (Stern 1982: 245-48; 1984: 82-86).

The creation of Yehud was in the context of the widescale operations carried out by the Persian administration, aiming at the reorganization of the empire's provinces and the restoration of the poor districts in order to recover and contribute to the payment of taxes to the public treasury. Therefore we must not rule out the reference in Ezra 6 to the financial aid offered by King Darius to Zerubbabel, who led the second batch of returnees, to rebuild the Temple of the God of Heaven in Jerusalem, which was com-

pleted in the sixth year of King Darius 516 BCE. When the people gathered together to inaugurate the new temple, many of the elders, who knew the first temple, cried when they saw the modesty of the second temple (Ezra 3.12-16; Hag. 2.1-3).

The reports on the Yehud province come to a close in the biblical story with the end of the rule of Nehemiah in 424 BCE. Nehemiah was one of the most senior members among the exiles, and reached an outstanding position in the court of the Persian king Artaxerxes 1, who appointed him as the ruler of the province in 445 BCE and entrusted him with the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, which until that time, had been desolate and depopulated. When Nehemiah completed the construction of the walls, he worked on the revival of the city. The rest of the people cast lots, to bring one family out of ten to build a house and dwell in Jerusalem (Neh. 11.1-3). It seems that Nehemiah remained ruler of the province until the end of the reign of King Artaxerxes, because the book of Nehemiah tells us about a trip Nehemiah took to the Persian court in the thirty-second year of the reign of the king in 433 BCE, which resulted in the renewal of his rule until the death of Artaxerxes in 424 BCE (Neh. 13.6). With regard to the archaeological signs of the wall of Nehemiah, Kathleen Kenyon says that the fortifications of the fifth century in Jerusalem were limited to the eastern hill, but there are no signs indicating a residential expansion toward the western regions occupied by the city when it was the capital of Judah (Kenyon 1974: 180-87).

After 424 BCE, reports from the province of Yehud come to an end, in the Bible as well as in the external sources, for a period of two centuries, except for the papyri from Elephantine Island in Upper Egypt near Aswan, which were left to us by the Judahite community that lived there. The members of that community were mercenaries in the Egyptian army since the beginning of the sixth century BCE. Among these papyri, written in Aramaic, letters written in 420 BCE were found. Those letters were exchanged between the leader of the community Delaiah, and both the governor of Yehud province, Bagous, and the governor of Samaria, Shelemaiah son of Sanballat. In the letters, the leader of the community requests their assistance to rebuild the collapsed House of God Yahu (=Yahweh) in the island. Bagous and Shelemaiah sent to him a joint letter in response to his (*ANET*: 491-92), Sabballat, who was mentioned there as the predecessor of Samaria's governor, was among the enemies of Nehemiah who opposed him in building the walls of Jerusalem (Neh. 4.1-7; 6.1-6).

We can conclude from these letters that the temple in Jerusalem was standing at that time; otherwise Delaiah would not have requested assistance from the ruler of a Jerusalem that had no temple of Yahweh.

During this obscure period, which lasted from the late fifth century to the early second century BCE, when Yehud became part of the Syrian Seleucid kingdom and its name became Judea, the population in the province

was gradually increasing as a result of its economic growth and the return of many immigrants. We have indications that the province gained more autonomy and self-governance. Since the late fifth century, imperial Achaemenid motifs and seal impressions were gradually replaced by designs in local Aramaic script. A similar change is noted in coins; there we find the gradual appearance of the province name in Aramaic. Sometime we even find coins with the governor's name in Aramaic (Stern 1982: 236-37). But it was not until the second century BCE that there was a sizeable population in Jerusalem and the rest of Judea.

This backward status of the province of Yehud, about which all archaeologists, historians and biblical scholars agree, compels us to raise the following question: How could a subsistence level rural and village economy be responsible for the prolific literary achievements that are accorded to the Persian period? And could a small Jerusalem support such a level of literary production as we find in biblical literature?

This is a legitimate question. But as Charles Carter suggests in his book *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period*, small Jerusalem was a religious center and a large percentage of its inhabitants were literate urban elites: priests, temple servants, gatekeepers and the scribal class (Carter 1999: 287). This scribal class, as we may conclude, was not the product of a backward Yehud, but the product of Judah's high culture during the late monarchic period, when Jerusalem emerged as a large metropolis with a scribal infrastructure, scribes, and schools for scribes. As Philip Davies proposes in his book *Scribes and Schools*, a group of scribes were among the exiles, and preserved in Yehud the tradition of writing Hebrew through the Babylonian and into the Persian period (Davies 1998: 79-80).

This group of scribes was responsible for beginning the canonical process that their students continued. Classical Hebrew language went into decline after the destruction of Judah's kingdom, but the temple elites used it as a sacred language in which the scripture was fixed. They used a new script (Aramaic cursive) in writing that was different from the ancient Hebrew borrowed from the Phoenician.

Jerusalem emerged in the Persian period not as a capital of a small province but as the spiritual focus for Yahweh worshipers all over the territory of Judah and beyond it, who made pilgrimage to its temple and gave their donations. This Jerusalem was the cradle of Judaism. If we reject this conclusion with Thompson (see his article in this volume) we are back into darkness concerning the origins of Judaism.

The Faithful Remnant and Religious Identity: The Literary Trope of Return— A Reply to Firas Sawah

Thomas L. Thompson

On Ethnicity and Biblical Archaeology

I recently contributed an op-ed column for the internet website *Bible and Interpretation* in which I expressed my discomfort at the significant political orientation of the field of biblical archaeology with its reconstructions of Palestine's past on the basis of biblical paraphrase (Thompson 2009b). I argued in this essay that the marked, politically directed apologetics and selectivity of biblical archaeology have been integrated with a historically problematic function of nation building in modern Israel, an integration that is, for historians, highly problematic. The political agenda of creating a 'Jewish' state has involved not only the use of archaeology to create a coherent national narrative that could represent a single coherent heritage for the new state—unfortunately, a common enough political function of archaeology in many modern nation states. The building of the modern state of Israel also involved a reinterpretation of Judaism as a unified ethnic entity, embracing Palestine as a whole. This understanding has supported claims of the state over what it understands as the Jewish heritage of ancient Palestine. This political function has been created at the expense of a much more complex heritage reflected in the history of Palestine that is free of the misinformation commonplace in the field of biblical archaeology.

The difficulties in establishing ethnicity in ancient Israel have been intensified by the very limited evidence that exists for the settlement of the region of the Judean highlands and Jerusalem before Iron II and the independence of Iron Age Judah's settlement from the earlier settlements of the highlands to the north of Jerusalem (Thompson 1992: 288-92). Alternative histories to those that have been offered by biblical archaeology have proposed fragmented, regional histories for Palestine's Iron Age and give little support for arguments of a comprehensive ethno-genesis (*contra* Faust

2006; cf. Pfoh 2009). Furthermore, the basic continuity of the population that lived in the former patronage kingdom[1] of Israel/*Bît Humri* after the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE seriously undermines a biblically centred history of Palestine. Moreover, the devastating effects of Sennacherib's invasion, destruction and deportation of a considerable portion of Judea's population in 701 BCE make it difficult to speak historically of 'the exile' or 'the return' as referring simply to the deportation of the population to Babylon in the early sixth century BCE. Understanding this deportation and later return in the Persian period as both singular and directly interrelated events not only neglects other known 'exiles' and 'returns' in favour of a Jerusalem-centred, supersessionist perspective of the past, it also neglects the need to describe the known continuities and discontinuities of Palestine's population which have been silenced in favour of creating a modern Jewish identity.

I would submit that it is during the Hasmonean and early Roman periods that Jews had become the dominant religious and political group in Palestine. It is also important to recognize, with Jacob Neusner, that Judaism in this period was essentially a complex, multidirectional religious movement, and that the most important historical processes which created its dominance in Palestine were hardly ethnic (already, for example, in Neusner 1979: 100). Far more important, in my opinion, was the political and military exploitation of an emergent Judaism during the Hasmonean period, which eventually led to a religiously motivated military conquest, including the eventual destruction of the Samaritan temple, and to widespread proselytism and forced conversions throughout Palestine.

It was with the problems of ethnicity, with a concern for the influence of biblical archaeology in mind, that I presented the first draft of my article on the remains of pre-Hellenistic al-Quds in my lecture in Damascus in December of 2009. It is also because of such concerns that I formulated my tentative conclusions with considerable uncertainty. My conclusions centre primarily in a critique of my own former understanding, which I had expressed in my monograph from 1992 concerning the central role that religious and ethnic identification had played with the ubiquitously expressed, self-identifying trope of biblical literature: Israel's 'remnant', returning from exile (Thompson 1992a: 415-23). I felt forced to challenge this earlier understanding in the conclusion of my paper because the biblical orientation of my understanding of the return as a historical event, namely, a return of former deportees to Palestine in the Persian period, as the basis for a 'post-exilic' period seems no longer apparent and certainly can no longer be used without evidence or argument. Its function as historical explanation for Judaism's origins no longer has warrant.

1. On the concept of a 'patronage kingdom', see Pfoh 2009: Chapter 4.

On Poverty, Geography and the Holy City

The brief excursus at the close of Firas Sawah's paper dealing with the creation of ethnic identity and the literary trope of the 'faithful remnant' expresses the lively and lengthy discussion about Judaism's origins that we had in Damascus. Apart from the central disagreement that Firas denies directly my conclusion that we have reason to doubt or, indeed, exclude the historicity of the return, three important arguments are raised in this excursus. First of all, Firas argues that, although the Bible speaks of a limited deportation that can be estimated at the extreme to have involved some five thousand to fifteen thousand persons, the Bible also speaks clearly and consistently of a much more important, continued impoverishment of the regions of Judea and Jerusalem, indeed, clearly witnessing to a progressive emigration from the area, leaving Jerusalem with a population of at best two thousand before the beginning of the Hellenistic period. In this regard he distinguishes between the Persian provinces of Yehud and Idumea, centred in Lachish (ancient *Lakisi*). Although I argue for even more impoverished circumstances in Jerusalem and the Jerusalem area than Firas does, our primary disagreement lies rather in the cause of this considerable and extensive depression. He suggests a post-destruction, progressive emigration, while I point to two distinct deportations carried out by the Assyrian Sennacherib and the Babylonian Nebuchadnezzar. His explanation would allow for a greater and mine a lesser continuity of the population resulting from such radical and thorough, regional displacement.

Firas refers to the toponyms in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, which, he suggests, allow us to sketch the region of Yehud from Tall an-Nasbeh in the north to Beth-Zur in the south, an important observation that not only allows us to draw on a considerable number of Yehud seals, seal impressions and coins for our historical reconstruction of the province, but also allows us to bring the potentially important hypothesis of Philip Davies (who had also spoken at the Damascus conference) into consideration. In trying to explain both the lack of significant settlement in Jerusalem following its destruction by the Babylonians as well as the considerable polemic against Bethel in biblical literature, Davies drew on what he refers to as the cultural memory that might be drawn from the reference to Mizpah in Benjamin as the location of the Babylonian garrison in Jeremiah 41–43 to suggest that the centre of political power in Judea may have shifted to Mizpah during the Neo-Babylonian period and that Mizpah, might be understood as Yehud's political centre for some two centuries thereafter (on this, see also Davies 2007; 2008). I would certainly agree—given the evidence of the seals and coins—that the extent of Yehud reaches to the north of Jerusalem, as he suggests, though I am not convinced that the toponymic references in Ezra and Nehemiah are contemporary with such seals and coins. The continuity

of the population of the Benjamin area is dependent on the fragile and perhaps even arbitrary identification of sixth-century pottery at Tall an-Nasbeh (Zorn 2003), Tall al-Ful[2] and the Benjamin area generally. Nevertheless, current archaeological understanding may well give support to Firas's and Davies's suggestions (see, above all, Carter 2003, and Lipschits 2003), pursuing the possibility that, after the destruction, power shifted northward to Mizpah and Benjamin, which governed Yehud during the Neo-Babylonian period. Such a historical construction, though lacking adequate evidence, seems attractive. On the other hand, neither this nor the geography of the books of Ezra and Nehemiah deal with the primary problem, which I see raised by my survey of Jerusalem's archaeological remains, namely, the lack of archaeologically based evidence of a return.

Apart from his discussion concerning Mizpah and Benjamin, and recognizing the 'backward' demographic and economic status of both Jerusalem and the Yehud province, Firas closes his excursus by asking how such a poor village economy, as is reflected in the excavations on Ophel, could have been responsible for the prolific literary achievements that have been suggested for the Persian period. Could such a small Jerusalem support the level of literary production necessary for the production of the Hebrew Bible? Following arguments by Charles Carter (1999) and Philip Davies (1998) regarding Jerusalem's role as a holy city and scribal centre, Firas answers positively by arguing for the necessity of a continuity with the tribal traditions which he sees to have been developed in Jerusalem during the late monarchic period, since Josiah. That is, a 'return' was historically necessary to provide continuity for the group of scribes among the exiles who had been responsible for having started the 'canonical process' that was continued by the post-exilic scribes associated with the temple in Persian period Jerusalem. Jerusalem's importance was not of a political and economic capital, but of a spiritual centre for both Judah and beyond. This was the 'cradle of Judaism'. A formidable argument! In fact, it seems very possible to support an important aspect of Firas's well-thought-out understanding, namely, the view of 'al-Quds' as a holy centre does seem to be supported by the archaeological and inscription-based history of ancient Jerusalem that my article had summarized—not least, the continuity in the history and religious significance of its name since the Execration Texts (1810–1770 BCE),[3] proposing, as it does, an explanation of the significant gaps in settlement during most of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, as well as the Persian period: periods in which an apparently near-empty Jeru-

2. Lapp 1976; 1981. I am indebted to a discussion of the dating of Tall al-Ful's pottery with Elizabeth Fried from the University of Michigan.

3. On the dating of these texts to the Middle Bronze Age, see Thompson 1974: 106-12.

salem seems to nevertheless have maintained significant religious importance. However, this understanding of Jerusalem as having been primarily a holy city and not an economic or political centre solves only some of the problems that have been raised in my article. Both the proposed continuity of a Persian-period Jerusalem with a Josianic reform in the seventh century BCE as well as any historical necessity for a continuous scribal tradition is beyond our ability to argue as long as evidence for neither is available (on the Deuteronomistic History and its dating, see Thompson 1994). The perceived need for such continuities does not address the lack of evidence for a return, which undermines our acceptance of their reality however much we now find them necessary! I argued in 1992 that the literary trope of 'return' had been the matrix of biblical tradition and the basis for Jewish ethnicity. However, it is precisely here that the issue of historicity has its rub, and it seems to me that we must reconsider our understanding of the biblical discourse on the 'return' and ask whether it is not the very literary tradition as such that was in fact Judaism's historical matrix (as intimated already in Thompson 1995b)!

A More Complex Perspective on the Origins of Judaism

I concur with Firas that, rather than understanding Jerusalem of the Persian period primarily as a functioning capital city and administrative centre, we should understand it as continuing its ancient role in the region since at least the Middle Bronze Age as a religious centre. In considering his question of whether Persian period Jerusalem was 'the cradle of Judaism', capable of producing the Bible, however, I would like to sketch a broader perspective from which we might address the question concerning Judaism's origins. For example, there are a considerable number of other sites that could be expected to play quite significant roles in the development and composition of early forms of the biblical literary tradition. There were also other sites that had played a role in the formation of early Judaism. Certainly Gerizim (frequently conflated with Bethel in the Hebrew Bible; see Nodet 1997: 174-76; Hjelm 2000: 56), with its temple already in the fifth century and an associated city estimated by the excavators to have housed some ten thousand people in the early Hellenistic period (Magen 2008: 165-206), is a serious candidate for understanding the development of an intellectual and scribal centre capable of developing the Pentateuch and other texts.[4] To the extent that a temple implies a scribal culture, one should also consider the temples of fourth-century Elephantine and second-century Leontopolis in Egypt and the temple at Araq al-Amir in Transjordan during the Ptolemaic

4. Nodet 1997; Hjelm 2000. For bibliography on Samaritan studies and the temple on Gerizim, see Hjelm 2004b.

period. Also among the intellectual centres with a high potential for developing literary traditions and texts, Ptolemaeus I's Alexandria and Qumran (or the place which produced the Dead Sea scrolls) had scribal cultures with proven interests in the composition of literary and theological works closely associated with the biblical tradition. There were also political and administrative centres within Palestine, not least Idumaea's Lachish, Samaria of the central hills and, if Philip Davies is correct, Yehud's Mizpah, all of which could be expected to have had an active intellectual society. We should also consider the major towns of the Mesopotamian diaspora, such as Babylon, Nippur and also Harran (centre of exile according to Samaritan tradition; Hjelm 2000: 258-61). In fact, the dominance of Jerusalem over Judeo-Samaritan scribal traditions is hardly obvious and seems first historically relevant after the cultural resurgence of the city during the reign of Antiochus III and especially under the Hasmoneans, which succeeded in reuniting the sacred character of the city with political power, creating a royal high priesthood, mimicking Rome: a resurgence celebrated not only by Genesis 14's story of Melchizedek but also by the Masoretic Bible's chronology, oriented toward the 164 BCE rededication of the temple (Thompson 1974: 14-15).

This more complex perspective on the origins of the Torah and the Hebrew Bible also opens richer possibilities for understanding Jewish origins. The collapse and dismemberment of ancient Iron Age Judah began already at the end of the eighth century. In spite of 2 Kings 17's story of the total destruction and deportation of Samaria's Israel, leaving Judah alone in Palestine, Assyria's incorporation of ancient Israel into the Assyrian Empire in 722 was a conquest that had in fact involved a siege of the city and a deportation of Samaria's elite, but had neither affected the continued occupation of the land by the people of Israel in any significant way nor the continuity of the political and economic role that the city of Samaria/Samarina had maintained over the region as the centre of ancient Israel. The conquest of Samaria brought about a political restructuring of the central highlands. In contrast, however, Sennacherib's devastation of the Judean landscape and the associated deportations of villages and towns in Judea eradicated the ancient Iron Age society of Judah, creating the singularly most extensive break in the history of the settlement in Palestine until 1948. Thereafter, the agricultural society of the Judean highlands and the Shephelah had been several centuries in recovering from this devastation. Apart from the possibly associated, expansive growth of Jerusalem, the population of Judah hardly seems to have recovered during the course of the seventh century before Nebuchadnezzar brought the Babylonian army to destroy Jerusalem and its temple and raze the area immediately surrounding the city. I have described these successive disasters which destroyed the state of Iron Age Judah as creating a veritable lost tribe of Judah: hardly an exaggeration! Nowhere is the highland region known to have escaped this devastation. In 701 BCE,

Lachish lay at the centre of the Assyrian-wrought destruction. Political and economic control of large parts of the Judean highlands and the Shephelah were then transferred by Sennacherib to Assyria's more loyal subjects, such as Ekron. The destruction and deportation left the area of Jerusalem, which had survived the Assyrian assault, without a supporting hinterland. This inevitably must raise questions about the continuity of the indigenous population—a continuity which, on the basis of today's evidence, can be doubted. An isolated Hezekiah in Jerusalem, caught 'like a bird in a cage', survived Sennacherib, but Judah did not survive. By the time of Jerusalem's destruction at the beginning of the sixth century, the region around Lachish seems to have recovered, and the town of Lachish itself eventually became the capital of the Persian province of Idumea. When Nebuchadnezzar and the new emperor in Babylon moved against Jerusalem, the city, its temple and the immediate environs were entirely devastated, as both texts and archaeology witness. The historical problem that is exposed here undermines a dominant but, by evidence, wholly unsupported assumption among historians about the survival and continuity of the Iron Age Judahite society through some unknown return in the Persian period. This biblically based assumption needs now to be addressed.

Some Literary Qualities of the Biblical Trope of Return

In several recent articles, Israel Finkelstein (2008a; 2008b; 2010), basing himself on an estimation of the geographic borders of the province of Yehud, the limited demographic estimates of Jerusalem and Yehud's population during the Persian period and archaeology's failure to identify any remains of a wall constructed in Persian period Jerusalem, has raised serious and obvious questions concerning archaeology's ability to identify a significant return of Jerusalem's population. The absence of any identifiable remains of 'Nehemiah's wall' in the excavations of ancient Jerusalem have drawn attention to the legendary character of the story in Nehemiah about the construction by the people of the city's wall with twelve gates (Nehemiah 3–6), allegorically welcoming the twelve tribes of Israel in their return.[5] Like 'exile', 'return' is a literary metaphor, representing a psychologically transforming 'conversion' of the repentant remnant of old Israel, launching a utopian new beginning (Thompson 1999: 31-32). Biblical stories and reflections on 'return', with its identity-creating understanding of Judaism, have the thematic goals of 'new beginnings', restoration and reconciliation which have been captured so well in the eschatological song about the return of Elijah, which closes the book of Malachi:

5. On the allegorical and legendary character of midrashic reiteration in the book of Ezra, see Grabbe 1991; 1992: 36-38; Thompson 2003.

> Remember the *Torah* of my servant Moses which I gave him on Horeb
> Statutes and regulations for the whole of Israel
> Look, I will send the prophet Elijah to you
> Before the day of Yahweh arrives: that great and terrible day
> He will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts
> of the children to their fathers
> That I not come and strike the land with a curse (Mal. 3.22-24).

A deciphering allegory of new beginnings, restoring and reconciling the unity of Israel, whose conflicts and rebellions dominate biblical narrative from its first beginnings in the common Pentateuchal narratives of the exodus and wilderness wandering, ubiquitously marks the stories of Genesis and its patriarchs as the ideological basis for a new Israel, with a universal, inclusive, monotheistic faith, bearing the promise of blessing for all mankind. Already at the closure of the Cain and Abel story, the paradigm of the theme of 'brothers fighting brothers', used throughout biblical narrative in stories dealing with conflicts among Israel's legendary tribes, which typically epitomize the historical competition between Samaritans and Jews (Hjelm 2003), a promise of new beginnings, providing a mythic closure to the brothers' primordial conflict, is projected by the birth of Seth's son, Enosh, his name signifying a new Adam and a time when men, like David, began to call on Yahweh's name (so Ps. 8.3; Thompson 2010b). This introduction of promise into the otherwise unpromising story of mankind's origins (Thompson 2009c) finds its thematic expansion immediately following the closure of the flood narrative's genealogical lists of Noah's three sons in Genesis 10, which draws on a Greek tradition of geographical eponymy to illustrate the spread of mankind into their lands, languages, families and nations across the continents of Asia (Shem), Africa (Ham) and Europe (Japheth).

With this closure of the flood narrative, Genesis turns to a reiteration of the myth of the fallen angels (Gen. 6.2), which had been alluded to ever so briefly as a cause for Yahweh's anger at the beginning of the story of the great flood.[6] It is now taken up in a folkloric aetiology for the spreading of the nations out over the known world, each according to its land and language. The tale take its departure from the threefold unity of Noah's family: Shem, Ham and Japheth, when 'the whole of mankind had but a single language and few words' (Gen. 11.1). The story's opening presents itself in the form of a rather straightforward parable on hubris, but bears with this parable an allegory on Babylon's fate. In the valley of Shinar, the people will bake bricks and build a city and a tower with its top in the heavens. The language is unexpectedly pregnant with allusions. The purpose of building the city and tower is for the people 'to make a name for themselves that they not be scattered' (Gen. 11.3-4). The allusion is to the Cain story; for it had been Cain who had built a city

6. For a fuller discussion of this and the following, see Thompson 2010a; 2011b.

before the flood and had given it the name of his son, 'Enoch' (Gen. 4.17). With such a city and tower, challenging God himself, its people will themselves have a name (cf. 'calling on the name of Yahweh' in Gen. 4.26); they will not be 'scattered' (the Hebrew evokes motifs concerning who controls destruction, deportation and exile as had been carried out against Samaria and Judah in 1 Kgs 22.17; Jer. 40.15)—the hope is not only to avoid Cain's fate but implies a boasting hubris, echoed in the story's ensuing retribution when Yahweh does scatter them over the face of all the earth (Gen. 11.8).

The Patriarchal Narratives as Allegories of Return

Through this mythic story of the 'Tower of Babel', retribution comes to Babylon for its destruction of Jerusalem. The narrative is marked by allegorical echoes of Jeremiah's closing oracle against Babylon (Jer. 50.1-51, 58) and functions as the introduction to the patriarchal narratives which begin in Genesis 11's revision of the Shem genealogy, that it might close with Terah's three sons, Abram, Nahor and Harran, in corresponding balance to Genesis 10's Shem, Ham and Japheth. The fall of Babylon marks in Jeremiah's mythic world Yahweh's victory over Lucifer's assault on heaven. The city is taken and the land turned to desert, while the people are dispersed. This inverted exile of Babylon is reused by Genesis to introduce the theme of return in the allegory of Abram's call.[7] In Jeremiah's song, when Babylon falls and the people are 'exiled', 'the Israelites return home and the Judeans with them' (Jer. 50.4). Israel returns to 'Bashan and Carmel, in Gilead and in Ephraim', while the Judeans, *together with Israel*, search for Zion (Jer. 50.4-5, 17-19). Just so, in Genesis, Abram comes with his father and brothers to Canaan from Ur, the 'city of Chaldea;' namely, Babylon, where biblical tradition places the exile from Jerusalem. Abraham is also called by Yahweh from Harran, where the Israelites had been exiled according to Samaritan tradition. He comes first to *Moreh's oak* in Shechem (=Samaria) and, through a chain of stories, wanders ever towards the story of the sacrifice of his son on Jerusalem's *Moriah* (Gen. 11. 26-12, 36; 15.7; 22.14). The never-ending story of biblical narrative begins with Babylon's fall and the promise of a new covenant with Abraham. It ends with Jerusalem's fall in 2 Kings (2 Kgs 24-25), as in Jeremiah (Jer. 27-30), introducing Jeremiah's utopian new covenant (Jer. 31).[8]

7. The implicit understanding of the Tower of Babel story of Gen. 11.1-9 that was held in antiquity hardly sees Genesis 1–11 as a narrative about the creation of the real world, as suggested in Herbert 2007; see also the response of Strong 2008. Rather, Genesis 1-11 is an idealistic construction of its contemporary theology, whose primary function is to introduce central themes of the Pentateuch.

8. My understanding of the Abraham story as allegory owes a debt to the earlier study of the 'post-exilic' implications of the Abraham stories by Strange 1996; 1997.

We do well to be surprised that the Abraham stories allude to Samaria's return because scholarly tradition has followed 2 Kings 17, with the help of Josephus's anti-Samaritan polemic,[9] all too slavishly. For both Kings and Jeremiah, the primary sin of the fathers was ever their disunity, and the idealistic hopes of Jeremiah's 'new covenant' rest in an atonement and reconciliation between Samaria and Jerusalem. In the brief chain of narrative in Genesis 13–19, which begins in conflict and division, which the excess of wealth brings to the patriarchs Abram and Lot, in their return from their exile in Egypt (cf. the reiterated variants of this motif of wealth in support of the return in Gen. 12.16; 13.2; 20.16; 26.12-14; Exod. 3.21-22; 11.2-3; 12.35-36; Ezra 1.4-11; 1 Esdras 2.6-15). Standing between Bethel and Ai, Lot chooses for his inheritance the paradise-like Valley of the Jordan, soon to become the barren Dead Sea of Sodom's destruction. The next chapter, Genesis 14, brings the story of a punitive raid from the kings of the north in which Lot is carried off into exile. He is heroically rescued by Abram and returned to his home in Sodom. The rescue of Lot finds immediate reiteration in the story of Yahweh's destruction of Sodom in Gen. 18.16-19, 38, a tale that begins in debate, with Abraham objecting to Yahweh's plan to destroy Sodom by arguing that surely the judge of this world must do right and, if, after a considerable discussion, there are but ten righteous in this city, surely Yahweh must have mercy (Gen. 18.16-33). For the sake of ten, the debate story concludes, Yahweh will spare the city. The debate scene finds its provocative counterpart in Jeremiah's desperate search through Jerusalem's streets for but 'a single man who does justice and seeks truth', that Jeremiah, too, might, like Abraham, call on Yahweh's mercy to pardon that city (Jer. 5.1)! Jerusalem's guilt is here presented as astronomically greater than Sodom's, though Yahweh's mercy was tenfold more forgiving. The story of Sodom's destruction in Genesis 19 takes up a separate and different tale type as Yahweh's messengers, affronted and threatened by the people of the time, rescue Lot and his daughters from Yahweh's fire to allow a new beginning in the birth of the eponymous ancestors of the Ammonites and Moabites (cf. the comparably harsher judgment against the tribe of Benjamin in the related story of Judges 19!). As the story of Abram's wandering from Ur and Harran to the promised land gives allegorical illustration to the utopian visions of Jeremiah's new covenant, the stories of Lot and his daughter's rescue imply an understanding of return which is parallel, illustrating Ezekiel's more eschatological vision of return. Just as the Lot stories in Genesis offer allegorical illustrations of Jeremiah's and Ezekiel's utopian and eschatological worlds, the close of the story of Abraham and Sarah in Gerar, in Genesis 20, for instance, prepares for the birth

9. On this reading of Josephus, see Hjelm 2000: 226-33.

of Isaac in Genesis 21 with its theme of new beginnings with the help of a reiterative illustration of Isaiah's delayed salvation in the Hezekiah story's famous image of children caught at the birth canal, unable to be born (Isa. 37.3; Gen. 20.17-18).

Ezekiel's very famous allegory of the two sisters, Oholah and Oholibah, pornographically exposed to rape in Ezekiel 23 to illustrate the fates of Samaria and Jerusalem in their destruction and exile, assumes and indeed builds on Jeremiah's 'new covenant's' utopian allegory regarding the destruction, exile and return of both Samaria and Jerusalem. Ezekiel 16's allegory of the unfaithful wife, though primarily addressed to Jerusalem (Ezek. 16.1-43), not only involves the elder sister Samaria but also a sister younger than Jerusalem, 'who lived to the south of you', namely, Sodom (Ezek. 16.46). As in Jeremiah 5, Jerusalem is here judged more evil than Sodom and Samaria, who, in comparison, appears even righteous (Ezek. 16.51). Therefore, Yahweh promises 'to restore the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters', along with those of Jerusalem. They too are to return to their former estate (Ezek. 16.53-58). Together with Ezekiel 47's related vision of the return of the Dead Sea to a sea of living water from the temple, surrounded on all sides by trees of life, and in agreement with Jeremiah, the stories of Lot's return from exile and rescue from Sodom's destruction, like the return of the three sisters, reflect not historical events or situations but the resolutions of the literary and theological demands of the greater narrative of Israel's rise and fall, which Genesis introduces. Like Jeremiah, Isaiah too uses the myth of Lucifer as the central metaphor of his song about Babylon's fall (Isa. 13.1–14.23). His vision is eschatological, oriented like Ezekiel toward a final resolution in his 'new creation' (Isa. 65.17–66.2).

The universalistic ideology expressed in the Abraham stories and epitomized in the promise to Abram in Gen. 12.3 ('I will bless those who bless you, but him who curses you I will curse; because of you, all the families of the earth will be blessed') finds its reiteration in the Jacob and Esau narrative.[10] The story starts in a Cain-and-Abel-echoing conflict of brother against brother: in greed, manipulation and deceit until his life is threatened by his brother (Gen. 27.41) when Jacob flees and seeks refuge in Harran, in which exile all his children save Benjamin were born (Gen. 29.15–30.24; 35.16-20). Jacob's return to Palestine is marked most emphatically by his reconciliation with Esau (Gen. 33.1-11). This scene is reiterated in the reconciliation of Joseph with his brothers (Gen. 45.1-15). Jacob's return from his Mesopotamian exile is also marked by the renaming of Jacob as Israel (*yisra'el*), because he 'strove *(sarita)* with both God

10. Explicitly, in Gen. 27.29, with plot-oriented expansions in Gen. 18.18; 22.18; 26.4 and 28.14

and men and prevailed' (Gen. 32.29; cf. the variant episode, without the folk etiology, in Gen. 35.9-15).

In closing my response, it would be well to consider how this exploration of possible allusions to the past within the patriarchal narratives (Thompson 2010a; 2011b), supports the understanding of cultural memory,[11] which Philip Davies has found reflected in biblical traditions about Mizpah in Benjamin as taking over Jerusalem's political role during the Neo-Babylonian period (Davies 2008; 2009). The analysis, however, begs the question of whether a story such as that of Benjamin's birth in Palestine in Genesis 35 alludes to such literary narratives as we find in the Gedaliah stories of 2 Kings 25 and Jeremiah 41–43 rather than by actual context-giving events in antiquity as so interestingly explored by Davies. Similarly, does, for example, the story of Jacob's flight to Harran allude to identity-supporting associations among the population of Samerina with 'Israelites' who had been deported to Harran, as Strange (1997) has suggested, or rather, as I have argued in another context (Thompson 2011b), do these tales belong to a self-conscious, myth-creating literary discourse, reflected in such texts as 2 Kgs 17.6; 18.11; and 1 Chron. 5.26, in which the 'Habor on the river of Gozan', to which Samaria's people are deported, alludes to the Hubur as 'the river of death', so closely linked with the figure of Tiamat (van den Toorn 1995; also Galter 1995). Within biblical tradition—in Ps. 72.8—'the river' or 'the river of death', that is, the Euphrates, is linked to 'the ends of the earth', and marks a messianic or eschatological reversal of what had been lost in the garden story (Gen. 2.15; 3.23-24; see Thompson 2012). Comparably, in 2 Esd. 13.39-45, God helps the deportees from Israel find refuge in the land of Arzareth, beyond the river of death, 'where no human being had ever lived' and from where they will return when 'the Most High once again stops the channels of the river of death' (2 Esd. 13.47). In Rev. 9.14, this river forms the boundary between the living and the dead (see Hjelm 2004a: 134 and n. 238). So, we need to ask: Do the stories of Abraham and Jacob identify a historical context for these narratives within the context of return in the Persian or early Hellenistic periods or do such implied references reflect allusions to literary texts?[12] I believe that we need to reconsider whether there is in fact any implicit reference to or acknowledgment of an actual historical return in the biblical use of this literary trope. Insofar as the literary trope of 'return' refers to utopian, idealistic and mythic literary scenarios, is the absence of evidence for any such return in the archaeological remains of Jerusalem sufficient grounds for doubting such a return as a historical event of the past?

11. On 'cultural memory' in antiquity, see especially Assmann 1999; 2006.
12. See, e.g., the introductory comments in Thompson 2010a.

Christian Origins, 'the Land', and the Ideological Scholarly Apparatuses

James G. Crossley

Introduction

Christian origins and New Testament (especially historical Jesus) scholarship has long had a fascination with the physical land of Israel, Galilee, Judea and so on, and the ideological tendencies are now, at least with the benefit of hindsight, relatively easy to detect. In the history of scholarship this has often involved making connections between race and/or ethnicity and 'the land'. This has taken various forms, such as Schleiermacher's 'Jewish land' as an ideal for the developing German nation state; Renan's orientalizing contrast between (positive) Galilee and (negative) Judea and Jerusalem; or certain Nazi and fascist scholars contrasting what was constructed as an essentially Aryan Galilee with Jewish Judea (for discussion see, for example, Moxnes 2001: 28-31; 2009: 35-37; cf. Casey 1999; Head 2004; Heschel 2010). Post-1967 and the Six Day War, the language concerning 'the land' or lands (for example, Judea *and* Galilee) has taken a generally positive rhetorical turn in New Testament and historical Jesus scholarship with more sensitivity toward Judaism (for example, among many others, Davies 1974; Chancey 2002; Freyne 2004; Wenell 2007) and sometimes to the extent that Christian scholars (for example, Bird 2006: 310) have taken offence on behalf of Judaism if a scholar (not un-typically Burton Mack) is perceived not to have made their Galilee sufficiently 'Jewish' by making it too 'Hellenistic', as if the two were somehow mutually exclusive. What this illustrates, as Halvor Moxnes has shown (2008), is just how dominant concepts of ethnicity (and, more traditionally, race) are in the debate, as opposed to (say) class (but cf., for example, Horsley 1996), particularly concerning Galilee, the reified 'homeland' of Jesus. As all this may imply, the case for clear ideological connections between scholarly (re-)constructions of ancient Israel, first-century Galilee, the Land, etc., and contemporary discourses concerning the modern state of Israel and Judaism

have now been well made, though some scholarly (re-)constructions are more explicit than others (for discussion see, for example, Whitelam 1996; Abu El-Haj 2001; Masalha 2007; Oestigaard 2007; Crossley 2008: 143-94; Sand 2009).

Ideological flash points are clear ways of illustrating dominant discourses. There is probably no more explicit example of the impact of dominant interests concerning the modern state of Israel in areas relating to New Testament and Christian origins studies than the case of the Palestinian American scholar Nadia Abu El-Haj. In her book *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Abu El-Haj 2001), Abu El-Haj argued that the archaeology of ancient Israel/Palestine, in theory and practice, has a nationalistic agenda positively relating to the state of Israel and at the expense of Palestinians. She was the recipient of a well-organized, high profile and vitriolic campaign to deny her tenure at Barnard College. The anti–Abu El-Haj campaign was comprised of innuendo and slurs with little in the way of serious argument (for full discussion, see Crossley 2008: 161-72). She was accused of endorsing Palestinian violence at Joseph's Tomb (for example, Maeir 2004: 254, 'Abu El-Haj describes and condones the attack, and subsequent ransacking, by a Palestinian mob . . . the gleeful tone in which she describes this act of vandalism exemplifies how her political agenda completely overcame her duties as a social scientist'; Joffe 2005: 303, 'Are scholars now in the business of advocating the eradication of 'facts' rather than their explanation?'), despite having never written anything of the sort. We can, quite simply, compare what Abu El-Haj actually said:

> It is within the context of that distinctive history of archaeological practice and settler nationhood that one can understand why it was 'that thousands of Palestinians stormed the site' of Joseph's Tomb in the West Bank city of Nablus, looting it and setting it alight during the renewed intifada that rocked Palestine and Israel in the fall of 2000. Joseph's Tomb was not destroyed simply because of its status as a Jewish religious shrine. The symbolic resonance of its destruction reaches far deeper than that. It needs to be understood in relation to a colonial-national history in which modern political rights have been substantiated in and expanded through the material signs of historic presence. In destroying the tomb, Palestinian demonstrators eradicated one 'fact on the ground'. Archaeology remains salient in this world of ongoing contestation. It is a sign of colonial presence and national rights, of secularism and science, as various groups in Palestine and Israel engage in struggles to (re)configure the Israeli state and polity and to determine its territorial limits (Abu El-Haj 2001: 281).

It is clear enough that Abu El-Haj was trying to explain the underlying reasons for such violence without ever making a moral judgment.

James Davila was more careful in his assessment of Abu El-Haj but still claimed that she provided a 'political justification of the looting of archaeological sites' in a passage which he claims 'is one of the most disturbing passages in the book' (Davila 2007). Yet the passage cited by Davila does not provide political justification for such looting. Abu El-Haj claimed that looting 'could well be analysed as a form of resistance to the Israeli state and an archaeological project, understood by many Palestinians, to stand at the very heart of Zionist historical claims to the land. In James Scott's words, looting is perhaps "a weapon of the weak"' (Abu El-Haj 2001: 255). If we follow Davila, we effectively have to rule out the idea of looting as a 'weapon of the weak' as an analytical category. Davila comes too close to equating explanation with justification.

Some of the allegations were starkly wrong in the sense they claimed the exact opposite of what Abu El-Haj argued. In the *New York Sun*, Gabrielle Birkner claimed that Abu El-Haj 'suggests Jerusalem was destroyed not by the Romans but by the Jews themselves due to rising class tensions among them. Yet, the first-century historian and scribe Josephus described in great detail the Roman siege of Jerusalem' (Birkner 2006). Despite the rhetoric of scholarly reason, Birkner got this quite wrong, and this can be shown again by simply quoting Abu El-Haj: 'Clearly we know from historical accounts (from Josephus's book *The Jewish Wars* for one) that the Roman Legion burned the city down, destroying the Upper City on the eighth of Elul, in the year 70 C.E.' (Abu El-Haj 2001: 145).

In these examples, it is clear, as has been shown elsewhere, that a certain kind of dominant pro-Israeli, anti-Palestinian agenda has dictated the reaction against Abu El-Haj, grounded in the rhetoric of scholarly credibility and 'common sense' (Crossley 2008: 161-71; Crossley 2009). What I want to do in the rest of this essay is to build on the role of credibility and look at one aspect of the underlying ideological structure bolstering scholarly (re-)constructions of Israel, Galilee, 'the Land', and so on and add something else to the simple idea of a like-for-like match between personal politics and scholarly output. In fact, the case for the power of dominant discourses can be made stronger still when we look at certain scholars who hold starkly *contrasting* personal views. In other words, we are looking at how scholars do not necessarily know what they are arguing and can unintentionally buy into dominant discourses (compare the well-known saying of Marx [1974: 78-79]: 'We are not aware of this, nevertheless we do it . . .'). For this I will focus on one of the more spectacular embodiments of such contradiction: Bruce Malina. What I think this specific example does is to show the extent of the power of ideology at work in scholarship.

Personal Politics and the Scholarly Persona

Of course, there are clear cases where a scholar's personal politics effectively match the structure of the dominant discourses on Israel. A clear example would be Bruce Chilton (Chilton 2009; cf. Bock 2003). Chilton is a particularly significant example because not only is he an internationally known scholar of the New Testament and its Jewish contexts but he is also an ordained Episcopal priest and chair of the Episcopal–Jewish relations Committee in the Episcopal Diocese of New York.[1] Chilton is also on the Executive Committee of Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East. Christians for Fair Witness on the Middle East, in its own words, 'advocates among mainline Protestants and Roman Catholics in North America for fairness in the churches' witness on issues related to the conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors'.[2] In January 2009 Chilton wrote on, and justified, Israel's invasion of Gaza in the light of issues of 'just war' and the churches. The blame is squarely laid at the door of Hamas who broke the truce with Israel in December 2008 with the escalation of Qassam rocket attacks:

> For six precious months, Hamas suspended attacks, but announced the end of its truce in December. Qassam assaults have escalated. In response Israel has targeted Qassam installations, as well as command and control centers and development sites, for sustained bombardment and destruction. . . . Israel's attacks in Gaza involve civilian casualties, although that is not their purpose. At every stage—deployment, preparation, and design—Qassam are in such proximity to residential populations that even well-targeted strikes bring calamitous results. But the aim of Israel is not the elimination of Gaza, but the end of Qassam attacks. The willingness of the Israeli authorities to halt their attacks in the hope that Qassam sites will be dismantled is a positive development (Chilton 2009).

While there was generally more criticism of Israel than in recent memory, Chilton's narrative of the starting point—namely, that Hamas broke the ceasefire, therefore Israel retaliated—was the dominant position in the Anglo-American media.

Leaving aside the issue of the vastly disproportionate number of deaths, why begin with Hamas rockets? We could take the starting point a little further back and point out that Israel broke the ceasefire on November 4, 2008, in one bombardment that killed six, or later on November 17, 2008, in another attack that killed four (Fisk 2009). So, then, November is another place we could start the narrative, and certainly the narrative about the broken ceasefire. Again, against Chilton, we could begin the narrative with the

1. See the website: http://christianfairwitness.com/about.html.
2. http://christianfairwitness.com.

Israeli blockade of vital resources. Does that not appear to be one reason that could partly explain reactions in Gaza? To establish this blockade in such a densely populated area like Gaza is deeply dangerous and so might that not be one starting point? Avi Shlaim points out,

> During the ceasefire, Israel prevented any exports from leaving the strip in clear violation of a 2005 accord, leading to a sharp drop in employment opportunities. Officially, 49.1% of the population is unemployed. At the same time, Israel restricted drastically the number of trucks carrying food, fuel, cooking-gas canisters, spare parts for water and sanitation plants, and medical supplies to Gaza. It is difficult to see how starving and freezing the civilians of Gaza could protect the people on the Israeli side of the border. But even if it did, it would still be immoral, a form of collective punishment that is strictly forbidden by international humanitarian law (Shlaim 2009).

Could we not work out a starting point around this depressing situation? Or could we look at longer term issues? Some of the rockets were fired at Ashkelon. This was one of the areas where the relatives of Palestinians were dispossessed in 1948 and moved to Gaza. As Robert Fisk put it:

> They—or their children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren—are among the one and a half million Palestinian refugees crammed into the cesspool of Gaza, 80 per cent of whose families once lived in what is now Israel. This, historically, is the real story: most of the people of Gaza don't come from Gaza (Fisk 2008).

Or why not go back to the origins of Hamas in the 1980s when Israel nurtured Hamas to function as an opponent against secular nationalism? There are, then, a range of complex issues at play and more could be added but it is anything but as simple as Hamas, seemingly emerging from nowhere, firing rockets and Israel responding. Fisk adds:

> But watching the news shows, you'd think that history began yesterday, that a bunch of bearded anti-Semitic Islamist lunatics suddenly popped up in the slums of Gaza—a rubbish dump of destitute people of no origin—and began firing missiles into peace-loving, democratic Israel, only to meet with the righteous vengeance of the Israeli air force (Fisk 2008).

Starting the media narrative at Palestinian violence followed by Israeli reaction with little or no back story has been analysed and shown in detail by the Glasgow University Media Unit (Philo and Berry 2004). Chilton's narrative clearly fits perfectly into the overlooking of Palestinians in favour of Israeli state action.

In cases such as these we can uncover the ideological concerns of scholars with relative ease. But it would be a mistake to think that the only reason someone like Nadia Abu El-Haj was criticized so ferociously was simply because of an uncritical stance toward the state of Israel among partici-

pants in the case against, or that all New Testament scholars are somehow anti-Palestinian and pro-Israeli. Rather, it is the sheer power of the dominant ideological position which runs roughshod over personal politics.

And this, as we will eventually see, is why Bruce Malina is such a good example. Malina, like this author, signed a counter petition in favour of granting Abu El-Haj tenure (Manning: no date given), and there are other explicit indications of his personal politics publically available. In 2004, Bruce Malina and his wife, Diane Jacobs-Malina (with whom Malina collaborates on certain political writing), signed an International Response to the Bush Declaration on the Palestinian Right to Return (anonymous 2004). Malina signed a petition against the appointment of General Dan Halutz, former chief of staff of the Israeli army, as director general of Kamor, the official BMW dealer in Israel.[3] In a letter to *Asia Times Online*, Jacobs-Malina wrote:

> You must have a special interest in promoting the Anglo-American-Zionist's propaganda regarding Muslims, al-Qaeda, and terrorism. You should be embarrassed for pushing such blatant propaganda. . . . Perhaps you could scare the oil-producing nations into just lying down and letting the Anglo-American-Zionist predator take whatever it wants. . . . What was Germany's chief problem from the beginning of the 20th century onwards? It threatened the British Empire's No 1 status (Jacobs-Malina, 2005).

From this it is clear that the views of Malina, along with Jacobs-Malina, are at odds with anything that might be remotely deemed 'pro-Israel' in dominant discourses.

We might even point out that there are traces of such personal politics in Malina's scholarly persona, at least in the sense of his views on Jews and Judaism in relation to the land of Israel. Malina, for instance, has played a significant role in the recent debates on translations of Ἰουδαῖος as 'Judean' and the removal from scholarship of the standard translation, 'Jew' (see below). His influence can be seen, and is explicitly referenced in, John Elliott's well-received article in the *Journal for the Study of the Historical Jesus*, which argues that Jesus ought to be variously labelled as 'Galilean' or 'Israelite', rather than Jesus 'the Jew' (Elliott 2007).[4] Malina's printed work on these social and linguistic contexts for our understanding of issues surrounding 'the Land' and ethnicity is found in his work. For instance, in

3. http://www.al-arabeya.net/halots/?act=1&theclass=&serial=&cat=&page=6.

4. Because scholarship largely ignores its ideological genealogies, it should be repeated that virtually all of the recent discussions of the term Ἰουδαῖος and its translation as 'Judean' or related terms have been dependent on the faulty *TDNT* article by K.G. Kuhn for the linguistic detail, an article betraying its fascist context. See Casey 1999.

his co-authored (with Richard Rohrbaugh) commentary on John's Gospel he argued the following:

> modern readers will think John makes reference to those persons whom readers today know from their experience to be Jews. The fact is, from a religious point of view, all modern Jews belong to traditions developed largely after the time of Jesus and compiled in the Babylonian Talmud (sixth century C.E.). As for ethnic origin, Central European Jews (called Ashkenazi Jews) largely trace their origin to Turkic and Iranian ancestors who comprised the Khazar empire and converted to Judaism in the eighth century C.E. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. Micropaedia, 5: 788; on the Internet: www.khazaria.com). Thus, given the sixth-century C.E. origin of all forms of contemporary Jewish religion, and given the U.S. experience of Jews based largely on Central European Jews, themselves originating from eighth-century C.E. converts, it would be quite anachronistic to identify any modern Jews with the 'Judeans' mentioned in John's Gospel or the rest of the New Testament . . . in all of the sixty-nine other instances in John where the term *Judeans* (Greek *Ioudaioi*) appears, there is nothing of the modern connotations of 'Jew' or 'Jewishness' (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998: 44).

It is worth noting that we get, for instance, the shift from modern Jews, at least from a 'religious' perspective, belonging to traditions developed 'largely after the time of Jesus' to the 'sixth-century C.E. origin of all forms of contemporary Jewish religion' and 'there is nothing of the modern connotations of 'Jew' or 'Jewishness'. If this argument were accurate, there would be some curious ramifications. What would we do, for example, with biblical interpretation in rabbinic literature given that there must be some continuity between rabbinic Judaism and the 'religion' that came before it? The argument that the Jews or Judeans in John's Gospel have nothing of the modern connotations of 'Jew' or 'Jewishness' depends on modern definitions of 'Jew' and 'Jewishness'. We might note that John's Gospel uses the term 'Jew' to describe, for instance, Passover (John 2), and it is fair to say that this is a festival associated by many with modern Judaism, modern Jews, and manifestations of Jewishness (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998: 45, 75). However, the point for now remains that, in the hands of Malina and Rohrbaugh, Judaism prior to the rabbis at the time of Jesus gets more or less removed, which is hardly in line with dominant trends in New Testament scholarship.

The downplaying of the contextual significance of 'Judaism' for our understanding of the world of Jesus and the New Testament more generally in Malina's work has also been noted. Markus Bockmuehl argued that 'In terms of culture and above all religion, it is at best misleading to characterize Galilee's peasants and artisans in terms of a generically "Mediterranean" social anthropology. (Cultural-studies approaches typically ignore the role of religion for the definition of identity, whether Jewish or otherwise)'

(Bockmuehl 2008: 68). Bockmuehl also made the following criticisms of Malina's book, *The New Testament World*:

> And it is Jews, after all, whose role in the 'New Testament world' arguably matters more than most. Both in their own eyes and in those of their pagan critics, they were culturally unique. Little of that distinctness, however, comes into the fore in this book. Malina refers to ancient Jews and their literature in curiously arm-waving and unspecific terms ('Semites', 'Semitic subculture', 'Ben Zakaiists', 'late Israelites'), citing the Mishnah only twice and the Dead Sea Scrolls not at all, and virtually ignoring the first-century role of the Pharisees, who (rather than the priests) were in Josephus's view the *real* 'bearers of the Great Tradition' (Bockmuehl, 2002).

That Malina's application of anthropological models contributes to his downplaying or even removal of Judaism from the ancient historical record appears in a different, but no less explicit, way in Malina's entry on social-scientific criticism for the recent *Encyclopaedia of the Historical Jesus* (which curiously omits some of the most prominent non–Context Group social scientific approaches from scholarly history):

> Malina introduced the label 'social sciences' rather than 'sociology' in a 1981 task group at the Catholic Biblical Association that he has convened annually since then. That same year his cultural anthropological introduction to the New Testament appeared. Malina also introduced members to the work of Carney. . . . The label 'social scientific criticism' was coined by Malina and Elliott after Malina pointed out the inadequacy of labelling what Elliott sought to do as 'sociological exegesis'. Elliott adopted the new label as the title of his book. . . . To make such a historical judgment [about the cultural world of the Eastern Mediterranean], the interpreter must remove the filters deriving from the historical developments called Technologism and Scientism . . . the Industrial Revolution, Sense of History, the Enlightenment, the Renaissance and Reformation . . . Islam, Christendom, Jewishness (Rabbinic and Talmudic) . . . the social scientific interpretative enterprise has produced works . . . of such superb quality . . . (see Malina, 2002) . . . By and large, the main contributors to original research employing social scientific methods are members of the Context Group . . . (Malina 2008: 578-81).

Given Malina's hostility to the 'Anglo-American-Zionist predator' and his defence of early-twentieth-century Germany, a view found in his infamous emails sent to eighty-eight biblical scholars in 2006 on, among other things, the Holocaust and Holocaust deniers (Crossley 2010: 347; Crossley 2012: Chapter 8), a case can clearly be made for Malina's personal politics interfering with his scholarship, not least in his removal of 'Jewishness (rabbinic and Talmudic)' as a useful context, a context still found to be critically useful by plenty of scholars familiar with rabbinic Judaism and the New Testament, and his views on a remarkably late creation of Judaism.

So does Malina buck the ideological trend with his personal politics and beliefs? Hardly. One of the notable features of Malina's work and the afterlife of Malina's work, including his work on 'Jew', 'Judaism' and 'Israel', is how, in fact, it ends up buying in to dominant ideological trends concerning contemporary Israel and coheres, albeit slightly differently, with politicized views of Judaism and Israel in New Testament scholarship over the past forty years. In fact, Malina-influenced scholarship not only complements such trends but goes one step further, as we can see with the issue of 'the land'. Scholars such as John Elliott who, as we have previously observed, brought such debates to the forefront of historical Jesus studies, has the centre of Jesus' Jewish, or, if we follow Elliott, 'Israelite', identity become something close to the *physical* land of Israel no less:

> his Israelite ingroup, identified him, also . . . more broadly as a member of the people of Israel, the House of Israel, not of 'Judaism'. . . . 'Jew' is still a misleading identifier of Jesus and 'Israelite' should be preferred. . . . Let us refer to Jesus and his earliest followers as 'Israelites' or members of the 'House of Israel'. . . . Let us stress their roots in Israel, not in 'Judaism'. . . . My point is that calling Jesus an Israelite rather than a Jew is consistent with Israelite usage in Jesus' time and more accurately indicates his identity and that of his earliest followers (Elliott 2007: 150-51, 153, 154).

The ease with which the shift from Jewishness moves to the land of Israel is further emphasized by Elliott's views on teaching the historical Jesus: 'After having taught a course at the University of San Francisco for over twenty years on 'Jesus the Jew' with my colleague Rabbi David Davis in which we stressed the thorough-going 'Jewishness' of Jesus, I would now rename that course 'Jesus the Israelite' (Elliott 2007: 151).

Elliott and Philip Esler, who has been prominent in pushing for dropping the term 'Jew' in Pauline studies, have made it unambiguously clear that their historical analysis has nothing to do with antisemitism and that such work even helps combat antisemitism. While their motivations can hardly be challenged, it remains significant that for all the talk of tying identity to the land of Israel and the contemporary moral implications, Elliott does not mention any concern for contemporary Palestinians. Concern for contemporary Palestinians ought to be an obvious issue if contemporary ramifications of the use of the land of Israel are to be discussed.[5] This should be no surprise given that a pro-Israel and anti-Palestinian agenda is dominant in key parts of American culture. In contemporary scholarship and American higher education, Palestinian concerns are a sensitive issue, with groups such as Campus Watch breathing down the necks of any scholars deemed pro-Palestinian. As we have seen, in and around biblical studies,

5. For further discussion of these issues, especially the political ramifications of the arguments of Esler and Elliott, including the critique by A.J. Levine, see Crossley 2009.

Keith Whitelam and Nadia Abu El-Haj have both shown in detail that there is a strong anti-Palestinian bias in scholarship (Whitelam 1996; Abu El-Haj 2001), and both have been the recipients of disturbing campaigns against them.[6] What is particularly significant for our present purpose is how far the 'Jesus the Israelite' debate has settled into the concerns of American culture in relation to Israel and Palestine and how far removed it has now gotten from Malina's personal politics on Israel. There cannot be many better examples of how cultural context can dictate the results of scholarship even when they run clean contrary to personal intentions.

This pattern is clear in Malina's co-handling of the issue of 'the land'. Above, we looked at how Malina and Rohrbaugh's assessment of the term Ἰουδαῖος in John's Gospel was partly developed through idiosyncratic views on Jewish history. What is all the more striking is how, in the sentences immediately following the quotation discussed above, the argument put forward by Malina and Rohrbaugh fits neatly into dominant views on 'the land' (which would be most unlikely to entertain the distorted views of Jewish history): whoever these people most of us would define as Jewish are, they must be tied in with *the land*. Notice just how strong, and decidedly late-nineteenth-century/early-twentieth-century sounding, the language of tying a people in with the land is ('organically', 'rooted'):

> Rather, Judean meant a person belonging to a group called Judeans, situated geographically and forming a territory taking its name from its inhabitants, Judea. Judea is precisely a group of people, Judeans, organically related to and rooted in a place, with its distinctive environs, air, and water. Judean thus designates a person from one segment of a larger related group, Israel (John 1:47, 49), who comes from the place after which the segment is named, Judea (*Ioudaia*). The correlatives of Judean in John are 'Galilean' and 'Perean', and together they make up Israel (Malina and Rohrbaugh 1998: 44).

Jewish 'religious' identity may well have been overlooked by Malina and Rohrbaugh, but it is remarkable how, for all Malina's explicit personal concerns for the problems in Palestine and Israel, he manages to co-write this up in effectively Zionist language.

This contradictory pattern is also evident in the ways in which Malina handles 'the Arab'. For all Malina's well-known opposition to stereotyping Arabs and support for Palestinians, we have an equally remarkable example of how cultural context can dictate results of scholarship even when running clean contrary to personal politics because it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Malina's scholarship has bought into the dominant (negative) cultural portrayals of 'the Arab' of the sort Malina would personally abhor.

6. For further discussion of the reception of these works see, for example, Whitelam 2002b and Crossley 2008: 161-71.

Perhaps more than anything else in Malina's work, it is the way in which the Mediterranean has become a fixed 'Other' that had wide-ranging influence and the reason why it is part of the very ideological construction of 'the Arab' Malina seeks to reject personally. The contemporary political implications of treating the Middle East and 'the Arab world', for all the sheer size and population, as a fixed entity, I hope do not need spelling out any further. But might it not be the case that Malina is constructing the Middle East as a positive entity? No. What he believes personally about the positive nature of his constructions of the Arab world and the Mediterranean is now another issue because it is clear that Malina produces some distinctive comments which are instantly recognizable for their contemporary politicized rhetoric. Among the many quotable passages where Malina makes generalizations about 'the Arab world' and 'the Mediterranean' (see Crossley 2008: 110-28) the following (which apparently holds for 'village Mediterraneans' in general) is particularly notable, not least because it comes by way of Raphael Patai's *The Arab Mind*:

> personalization of problems goes so far in the Arab countries that even material, technical difficulties accompanying the adoption of elements of Western civilization are considered as resulting from human malevolence and felt to be a *humiliation*. . . . Where the Arab encounters an obstacle he imagines that an enemy is hidden. Proud peoples with a weak 'ego structure' tend to interpret difficulties on their life path as personal humiliations and get entangled in *endless lawsuits* or throw themselves into the arms of *extremist political movements*. *A defeat in elections*, a risk that every politician must face in a democracy, appears to be such a humiliation that an Arab can thereby be induced without further ceremony to take up arms against the victor and the legal government [italics original] (Patai 2002: 63).

Clearly the sentiments of Malina's argument fit neatly into the neo-orientalism of the contemporary 'clash of civilizations' rhetoric and Western ideas of how Iraq and the Middle East are not inherently 'suited' to democracy, or at least not without 'our' help (views that have been surfacing again in light of the so-called Arab Spring). Likewise, the idea of Arab or Muslim 'humiliation' is a common category by which the problems with the strange Arab and Muslim natives in Iraq and Palestine are conveniently explained (Crossley 2008: 119-28). Indeed, Patai's work on 'the Arab mind' was used in governmental and military circles as a means to understand Iraq and was partly the thinking behind the acts carried out by the U.S. military in Abu Ghraib, despite contemporary anthropologists spurning such old-fashioned approaches to the study of the Middle East (see further, for example, Hersh 2004; Qureshi 2004; Crossley 2008: 119-28).

We should, however, also point out that one of the great ironies here is that Patai was a fairly notable Zionist of the mid-twentieth century, and

many of his ideas concerning Arabs were formulated at the very creation of the state of Israel, where Patai was then based, as is clear enough from Patai's letters and notes (Patai 1992). Patai was a son of a prominent Zionist and 'followed his own Zionist impulses' in studying for a doctoral degree (awarded in 1936) at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Thomas 1996; Ben-Amos 1997). Among Patai's many publications were his editing of an encyclopaedia of Zionism and a collection of essays on Zionist thought, both published by none other than Herzl Press (Patai 1971a; 1971b). Herzl Press is described as follows on its website:

> In wake of the Holocaust, in the wake of the establishment of the State of Israel and of the profound changes in Jewish communities in the Diaspora, it is vital to broaden understanding of the issues that govern the lives of Jews everywhere. The Herzl Press was founded to do just that. Through its publications, which deal with Zionism, with Israel, and with Jewish subjects in general, the Herzl Press aims to strengthen the ties between Jews everywhere and in Israel.[7]

Collectively and individually, these are hardly the most expected influences on someone who has claimed to be on 'the Arab side', so to speak, and so sealing the argument, I think, that Malina, not least through his use of Patai of all people, is an excellent example of how personal politics can be dramatically reversed when inserted into the world of politics, culture and higher education.

Concluding Remarks

We have seen, then, how deeply embedded in New Testament scholarship dominant cultural views on contemporary Israel and Palestine are. While there may well be examples of prominent scholars who personally hold uncritically pro-Israel views, it is perhaps more important to highlight those areas where scholars do not know what they are arguing. And there is no better example of this then the anti-Zionist (to put it mildly) Bruce Malina replacing conventional scholarly language and arguments about Jews and Judaism with some of the most Zionist language concerning the land seen in contemporary New Testament scholarship. With this context in mind we can now see just how problematic Nadia Abu El-Haj's critique of archaeology was for disciplines surrounding the study of first-century Judea, Galilee and so on. The vocal individual attacking her work and person is one thing; deeply rooted ideological scholarly apparatuses are another. This in part explains how some frankly stupid scholarly comments on the destruction

7. http://www.midstreamthf.com/books.html

of Jerusalem and violence in Nablus could pass much of scholarship almost unchecked.

But, Abu El-Haj was actually granted tenure. In light of the above we can offer some educated speculations on the nature of the ideological structure underlying the case against Abu El-Haj. It could be that one of the many reasons Abu El-Haj was able to gain tenure (unlike, say, Norman Finkelstein) was because of the starkly obvious untruths told about her and her work. The difference between claims about Jews destroying Jerusalem and Romans destroying Jerusalem are black and white. Reluctant as I would obviously be to give opponents of Abu El-Haj advice, perhaps their 'mistake' was being far too specific and should have taken the more subtle line of generally smearing her with the allegation of antisemitism as a general feature of her work without the specific examples, as was done with the more devious allegations levelled against Whitelam (cf. Whitelam 2002b). Of course, when lies are told against scholars, not least on issues of such political sensitivity as those involving Israel and Palestine, we should follow Chomsky's deceptively simple suggestion: 'It is the responsibility of intellectuals to speak the truth and to expose lies' (Chomsky 1967). Yet we should be doubly vigilant about the more 'unconscious' trends that make people endorse things they would ordinarily be in opposition to and generate a context wherein the more 'extreme' views can irrupt. And yet we should also be cautious about keeping our attention fixed on the extreme cases because one ideological function of extremes is to perpetuate the credibility of the 'normative', the 'liberal centre', the 'credible', and so on (Crossley 2012). To dismiss those who made wild claims about Abu El-Haj is fair enough, but if it is done by ignoring the underlying ideological currents it is effectively burying the scholarly head in the sand.

History as an Argument for Land Possession

Niels Peter Lemche

When I had the opportunity back in 1996 to participate in the excavations at Tel Yizreel, I gave a lecture on recent developments to the members of the kibbutz that housed the expedition. The kibbutz is a secular one, founded by members of the Palmach in 1948.

The audience was warned and prepared for a new version of the history they were taught in school, but reacted in a friendly way to most of the lecture. They had no problem with the demise of the patriarchs as historical persons: that Moses was an invention of later historiographers came as no surprise to them. However, when I told them that King David would probably have to go as well, they were seemingly concerned and protested strongly. It was obvious that at this point it became dangerous to their own self-identification. We were here at the heart of the modern Israeli non-religious notion of the legitimacy of the Israeli presence in the Holy Land.

History has since the most ancient times belonged to the arsenal of traditions used to explain 'why we are here'. Classical Greek and Roman historiography abounds with origin tales. Every colony founded by the Greeks did possess a story about its origins tracing it back to some hero coming from this or that Greek city in the homeland. The Romans had more than one such foundation story, but when the period of its emperors began, Virgil's story of the Trojan hero Aeneas won the day and became the official version. Finally, in the Old Testament we have a long explanation of the origins of Israel and a religious explanation for its presence in a country formerly possessed by several Canaanite people, Canaanites, Hivvites, Jebusites, Girgashites, Qadmonites, you name them. Israel's right to its country was purely religious: because it was given by God to Abraham as his and his descendants' everlasting possession (or at least until Israel's God cancelled his promises and drew his people into exile).

However, it was definitely not this religious legitimation found in the Bible that was a problem to the kibbutzim at Yizreel. They hardly cared. It was historical facts as they had been taught not in Yeshivas but in the kib-

butz school—exclusively secular. They could easily live without an Abraham or a Moses, but in their eyes David belonged to history, was something different: a great king of the past accessible by secular historical methodology. And when David's existence was called into question, they reacted negatively.

Now, these kibbutzniks were most likely brought up within an educational system that used history as a political means to solidify the Jewish claim to the strip of land known as Palestine, the Holy Land, and Eretz Israel. History here played the same role as it had in the Western world since the French Revolution, to produce the foundation for the new national states (see Lemche 2008: 32-36). It was their story, and in accordance with the idea of history in the Modern Age, historical research properly executed recreated the past 'as it really was'. Telling the kibbutzniks that the past 'really was not' was not very helpful to them as they had no means to substitute reality (in the modern sense) with narrative (in the post-modern sense). Many scholars have now more or less given up the idea of being able to reconstruct history as the layout of an objective series of facts that happened in the real world. Instead there is a growing understanding of the ideological importance of historical narrative as the ideological foundation which forms the basis of 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1993). Such an escape route was not available to my audience back in 1996.

History in the modern sense of the concept definitely plays a decisive role in the formation of modern Zionist, that is, Israeli, national consciousness. It is therefore of great importance to ascertain whether or not the history related in modern Israel, its version of the past, is real history in the classical sense, that is, really happened more or less as handed down in our primary source book, the Old Testament—or partly overlapping, the Hebrew Bible—or is an invented history put together with some definite motives in mind. This is a question with enormous consequences, and this is definitely not the place to address it in detail. But, still, it is not without consequence to show that the story told in modern Israeli schools used to be no more than a modern invention created for a specific political reason. It was a very strong invention as it was supported by religious people both in Israel and elsewhere who were not aware of its primarily secular orientation. However, this is part of the fundamentalist agenda, when reality is really a religious reality, and therefore valuable irrespective of how absurd it really is.

As History Was Taught in Modern Israel

In order to get an impression of the educational background of my kibbutzim at Yizreel, I may proceed by referring to an article, 'the Biblical Homeland', which I published in Danish some thirty years ago (Lemche 1983).

It was revised twenty years later for translation into Arabic (Lemche 2004). It included a series of quotations showing the official attitude to history in Israel when Zionism was at its best as the dominant ideology of secular Judaism, and it does not reflect recent developments that may have weakened the position of this ideology considerably among young Israelis. The quotations are not necessarily the best possible, but I had them at hand when writing this article and believe that they are sufficient to paint a picture of the idea of history and its importance for the modern Israeli state.

And as a note of introduction: This is not necessarily a critique of modern Israeli thinking—although a criticism of one of the foundations of modern Zionism is implied—it could equally be counted as valid for much modern political thinking, especially in a Europe that during the last century fought two gruesome wars based on similar thinking.

The Historical Argument

The year 1946 was in many ways a decisive year in the prehistory of modern Israel. That year the newly formed United Nations in a very real way invested energy in the Palestinian problem, having the issues looked over by an international commission. One response from the Jewish side was the emphasis placed on history as the vehicle that should convince also non-Jews of the legitimacy of the Jewish claim on Palestine (then the name of the British Mandate). Indeed the Balfour Declaration of 1917 included this reference to the historical rights:

> His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.[1]

This declaration did not come by itself but was urged upon Lord Balfour by Zionist leaders residing in London, including the first president of the future Israel, Chaim Weizmann. However, in 1946 there were no limits to the assertions made in claims to Palestine by official Zionism:

> The Jews were the first occupants of Palestine who brought civilization to this country. They grew into a part of the country and ruled for an indefinitely longer time than any of its subsequent rulers. During this period they created in Palestine their own state, the only native state ever to be found in Palestine. They developed the country politically, economically,

1. A facsimile of the original document can be found here: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balfour_Declaration_of_1917.

> and culturally. During this process and influenced by the country, they developed into a nation carrying its distinctive character.[2]

The quotation comes from a pamphlet published by the *Jewish Agency for Palestine* (the official representatives of the Jews during the time of the British Mandate in Palestine from 1917 to 1948), and it functioned as an official report intended for the authorities of the British Mandate. This pamphlet represents a distinctive and idiosyncratic use of the Old Testament as part of a secular political debate of the mid-twentieth century. I shall return to its individual parts below in combination with other similar extracts from Zionist historical discourse.

In this article, it is my intention to evaluate if this can really be called a legitimate use of the information of the Old Testament. It is more than likely that this argumentation represents an abuse of scholarly (that is, historical) knowledge already in existence when the pamphlet was first published. However, there can be no doubt that the modern state of Israel has since its very beginnings made extensive use of the Old Testament as a vital part of the self-legitimating of the state. Thus, David Ben-Gurion assembled around himself a circle of bright young Jewish historians with the purpose of cementing the official historical claim to possessing the rights to occupy the former territory of the British Mandate called Palestine. A few more quotes taken from semi-official publications like the Jewish Agency pamphlet already quoted will illustrate this point. It should, at the same time, be stressed that not all parts of modern Israeli society will accept this kind of argumentation. Conservative religious circles within the Jewish community will hardly find an exclusively secular political argument very convincing. The quotations are, however, representative of the secular attitude toward the Old Testament as a political document among the people who created the modern Israeli state and among people sympathizing with its cause.

However, the next example of the propaganda is not literature but the maps of historical Israel published by the publishing house *Carta* in Jerusalem in 1974.[3] Apart from a short introduction, this publication is made up of a series of maps showing the borders of Israel in the period of the monarchy (ca. 1000–600 BCE.), in the post-exilic period (ca. 500–300), in the Hellenistic-Roman period (ca. 300 BCE–300 CE), and up to modern times. In itself such a project could be sound and helpful, although some may think

2. From *The Historical Connection of the Jewish People with Palestine* (1946).

3. *Secure and Recognized Boundaries, Israel's Right to Live in Peace within Defensible Frontiers. Elements in the Consideration of Israel's Position on the Question of Boundaries* (1974).

of a comparable use of a similar type of maps in recent European history which was hardly very helpful.[4]

Problematic, however, is the map that shows the boundaries of Israel in the period of the monarchy. This map is drawn on the basis of the borders of the Davidic empire as described by the Old Testament including as much land as possible outside of the modern state of Israel. Included on this map of ancient Israel we find—apart from all of Palestine—western Syria to Palmyra, the arable part of the present kingdom of Jordan, the southern part of Lebanon to Tyre, and the northern part of the Sinai Peninsula where the border goes from El Arish in the northwest to Elat in the southeast. This map is followed by a discussion of Israel's right to secure borders, although the map shows a kingdom that, when this map was published, was assumed to have lasted for little more than forty years, in the time of King David and King Solomon in the tenth century BCE, and in spite of a growing consensus even among Israeli scholars that the ancient Israelite kingdom never included all of the territories described as Israelite on this map. Even according to conservative estimates, it lasted for only one generation, after which it broke up, and the specific Israelite territory was reduced to something of the extent of the American state of Maine, now divided between the two kingdoms of Israel and Judah.[5]

In the introduction to this collection of maps we find the following quotation:

> The history of Israel in the Middle East goes back to the origin of written history. It is the only country in this region whose people live in the same place, speak the same language, and maintain traditions and remembrances more than 3,000 years old. Only under Jewish rule of governed by Jews, this country was able to maintain its special character and geographical unity. It was conquered and re-conquered no less than fourteen times in the course of thirteen centuries. No conquest—apart from the short-lived exception of Crusader rule—meant that the country was ruled by indigenous forces. . . . In this period (from 135 B.C.E to 1948), and in spite of being forced to live in the Diaspora, the Jews maintained an unbroken relationship with their homeland that lasted for generations, praying for its redemption and celebrating its seasons, remembering the

4. We may think of Mussolini, who in central Rome, on the Via dei Fori Imperiali, placed a series of maps that showed the development of the Roman Empire in ancient times, continuing with Mussolini's planned empire for the 1930s. The first four maps are still there, but the last map was for good reasons later taken down but still exists. Via dei Fori Imperiale was part of the fascist project for reconstructing Rome, and in this way already the first four maps of the ancient Roman Empire has an ideological basis which today is rather dubious.

5. For the extension of the territory of the Israelite kingdoms, the reader is advised to consult modern Bible atlases.

> map of it and its geographical features. As a special unity, the country goes back to biblical time.

This quotation does not stand alone. A few more may illustrate the point made here. These quotations may have been chosen at random; they are nevertheless illuminating. The first quotation comes from a pamphlet published by the Israeli embassy in Copenhagen, *Den arabiske Israelske konflikt* ('The Arab-Israeli Conflict', Copenhagen 1977). Although it is anonymous, it is evidently written by the former foreign minister of Israel, Abba Eban (1915–2002). In the chapter titled 'To whom belongs the country?' the author speaks of Israeli (*sic!*) rule of Palestine lasting from 1447 to 587 BCE, and about Israeli home-rule in the time of foreign occupation, under the Persians and Greeks from 540 to 163 BCE, and under Roman and Byzantine rule from 37 BCE to 637 CE, a long period only interrupted by a short period of Jewish independence lasting from 163 to 37 BCE The following commentary is added to this historical 'overview':

> As it stands, historical Palestine was never ruled by the *Arabs of Palestine*. The rule of the Caliphates—a foreign Moslim rule—lasted for 435 years, Jewish rule of Palestine for c. 2000 years. The population of this territory was made up of conquering soldiers and their slaves. Only during Arab rule of the country, this ethnically heterogenous population was forced to assume the faith of Islam and the Arab language—or die by the sword. In reality, the Jews are the only survivors from the original population of Palestine, who have maintained an unbroken relationship to the country in historical time (pp. 20-21).

The last example comes from a contribution by a Danish Jew who was, at that time, a member of the parliament, Arne Melchior, the brother of the former chief rabbi of Copenhagen, Bent Melchior, and of the former adviser to Abba Eban, Werner David Melchior, from a book he published in cooperation with Svend Holm-Nielsen.[6] In the section called 'the biblical right', Melchior writes:

> The question of who have the right to Israel/Palestine must be seen in historical (including biblical historical) light and understood in the light of international law. The case of Israel has no parallel in the course of human history. . . . For about 1300 years until the demolition of the Second Temple (70 CE), Palestine was the home of a Jewish state, of Jewish kings, and prophets. . . . After that date, the majority of the people of this state were expelled. However, a Jewish population remained, in some cities and

6. Melchior and Holm-Nielsen 1978. Svend Holm-Nielsen (1919–2008) was professor of Old Testament at the University of Copenhagen 1961–1986, and thus this writer's predecessor. He was, for most of his life, engaged in the Palestinian cause (not denying his background as child in Damascus where his father was a missionary).

> districts there always was a Jewish majority (Melchior and Holm-Nielsen 1978: 35).

And later in the same chapter: 'However, nobody has made an impression on this country as the *people*, the people of Israel did . . .' (Melchior and Holm-Nielsen 1978: 37).

In the next part of Melchior's contribution, the myth of the 'empty land' is repeated, that is, that Palestine was uninhabited until the beginning of the Jewish immigration in the nineteenth century CE. Here we only have to compare the information in the German *Baeddeker* from 1891, according to which the population of Palestine counted as many as 650,000 people—only an insignificant minority being newly migrated Jews.[7] But Melchior's position accords well with the well-known Zionist slogan: A land without a people longing for a people without a land!

It is obvious that these quotations refer to an official version of the history of Palestine as entertained by Israeli authorities. They are not written by casual scholars led astray for some reason but are expressing an official attitude to history which already when written may be considered in opposition to the facts.

Let us take the excerpt from the Jewish Agency pamphlet from 1946. It opens with 'The Jews were the first occupants of Palestine who brought civilization to this country'. Now three questions remain: What is intended by 'civilization' and what is intended by the word 'Jew'? And when did it happen? The sentence sounds very much like William Foxwell Albright's infamous defence of an inverted holocaust, that the best thing that happened to the Canaanites was the fact that they were exterminated by the Israelites, because their culture including their religion, was worth nothing (Albright 1957: 280-81; on this cf. Whitelam 1996: 83-84). It may be common ground between conservative Christian Americans and Zionist activists, both reading the tirades in the Old Testament against the Canaanites as historical documents about the Canaanites rather than expressions of the bias displayed against other people by the ancient Jewish historiographers. As such it is nonsense, because the people of the southern Levant did in fact make one of the most important contributions to civilization. They invented the alphabet. We might not speak of culture and civilization in the same sense that it was present in, say the Hellenistic-Roman periods, but Palestine was in no way 'uncivilized' before the supposed arrival of the Israelites.

The next sentence runs: 'They grew into a part of the country and ruled for an indefinitely longer time than any of its subsequent rulers'. The first

7. Melchior and Holm-Nielsen 1978: 38-41. Cf. on the Baedeker information, Grollenberg 1980: 10 (English edition [not available to me] from 1980). Of course this number is small compared to present numbers, but it was about the maximum that the country could feed before the introduction of modern agricultural techniques.

part of this line is related to the often-repeated assertion expressed in the map collection from 1974: 'in spite of being forced to live in the Diaspora, the Jews maintained an unbroken relationship with their homeland that lasted for generations, praying for its redemption and celebrating its seasons, remembering the map of it and its geographical features', urging a special emotional relationship between Jews and their ancient land as described by the Old Testament. For the later Jewish national discourse this is an important feature but is hardly accepted by international law.

Again, the 'crimes' against history continue: 'During this period they created in Palestine their own state, the only native state ever to be found in Palestine'. We realize from the other quotes speaking of Jewish rule in Palestine lasting for 1,300 years that these 'historiographers' date the beginning of Jewish political rule to the Amarna Period in the fourteenth century BCE, and relate it to the appearance in this period of the *ḫabiru,* whom they identify as Hebrews—not to say 'Jews'. It is no excuse that it was once believed that there was such a narrow relationship between the SAG.GAZ/*ḫabiru* of the Amarna letters, at the time when the letters were found toward the end of the nineteenth century, but when these expressions of Zionist history writing appeared in print, no serious scholar would any longer support such an idea.[8] Today one sometimes sees it pop up on uninformed religious home pages on the Internet. My kibbutzniks at Yizreel would very much have seen the beginning of Israelite rule as beginning with Saul and David, but that would allow for only a few hundred years of 'Israelite' rule. Today we would say that an independent 'Israelite' rule did only last for, at the most, two hundred years, from Jeroboam I to the fall of Samaria in 722 BCE, keeping it separate from the kingdom of Judah, the life of which was extended by another 135 years. On top of that we would have a Jewish rule of Palestine lasting until the Roman conquest, a period of less than ninety years.

Now when the modern historiographer asserts that the Jewish rule of Palestine was 'the only native state ever to be found in Palestine', we of course see another kind of distortion: The Israelites according to the Old Testament were hardly 'natives' but foreigners who migrated from Egypt to the land of Canaan. But in the historical morass created by these historiographers such details are probably immaterial.

8. As a matter of fact, no serious student of the *ḫabiru* has believed in the equation between these *ḫabiru* in the Amarna letters and the Hebrews of the Old Testament, not since Benno Landsberger summarized the discussion in Bottéro 1954: 187-99. The term is principally a sociological one, and represents a social phenomenon found all over the ancient Near East in the second millennium BCE. It might not be without relations to the term Hebrew in the Old Testament, but it is the other way round, that a sociological term here was turned into a national one, as I showed in Lemche 1979.

The only correct part of the quotation is the part about a distinctive culture created by the ancient Israelites. This is hard to deny, as Judaism was definitely a part of life in Palestine in the Hellenistic-Roman period, although it should not be forgotten that at the same time perhaps a majority of Jews were living and doing well in the diaspora.

In the quotation from Melchior we also hear about the exile of later Jews when they were forced out of the country after 70 CE. This is a modern Jewish historical assertion that arose in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century. However, the idea is that because of this deportation, European Jews are the true descendants of ancient Palestinian Jewry, and therefore have a rightful claim on their old country. The assertion forgets a lot. Jews were not expelled from their homeland after the two insurrections against the Romans. The ensuing existence of the patriarchate that survived with its centre in Galilee until 429 CE tells a different story about the Jewish presence in Palestine also after 70 CE. The whole construction of the myth of the deportation of Palestinian Jewry has been exposed as false by the Tel Aviv historian Shlomo Sand (2009). It came into being at the same time as the Jewish settlements began to appear in Ottoman Palestine in the nineteenth century, and the assertion worked very much like the ancient myth about the exile and return, as we find it in the Old Testament (see further in Lemche 2008: 154-56).

Modern myth-making relating to the claims of the Jewish state of Israel is more or less false, but is still operative. It has been said that historical textbooks in school are 'weapons of mass instruction', and it is certainly true that this mass instruction has created a narrative that many people in Israel still regard as 'historical', adhering to the mantra of the modern world with its belief in history as the ultimate truth about the past. Other writers may go deeper, especially into the role of archaeology, and there are today a good number of studies that take the 'national hobby' of modern Israelis, that is, archaeology, to task. We only need to mention the short series of important studies by Terje Oestigaard, Nadja Abu El-Haj, Raz Kletter and others.[9] It is true that archaeology sprang forth as a national sport after the independence, led by the former chief of staff of the Haganah, Yigael Yadin. It is, however, equally true that Israeli archaeology was in those days mainly biblical archaeology and had the purpose of strengthen the historical argument by relating it to 'facts in the ground'. It is a sign of a changing attitude to archaeology that a 'holy' item such as the 'stables of Solomon' at

9. Oestigaard 2007; Abu El-Haj 2001; Kletter 2006. Cf. also Silberman and Small 1997. Silberman has in another publication shown that this did not begin with Israeli archaeology of the twentieth century. As a matter of fact, it began the moment when European archaeologists began to show interest in western Asia: see Silberman 1982.

Hazor were moved to another place to make space for continuous excavations in strata believed to be pre-Israelite.

When I claim that the myth is still operative and believed in as the final truth, there are many aspects of this 'truth'. One remarkable consequence of this is the ongoing struggle between archaeologists having their base at Tel Aviv University and their colleagues from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem.[10] The best example of this controversy has without doubt been the discussion concerning the existence of the city of Jerusalem in the tenth century BCE. The Tel Aviv position is that so far not a single piece of pottery dating from the tenth century has been found. The tenth century is according to traditional biblical scholarship the assumed date of the kingdom of David and Solomon. However, that nothing has been found in Jerusalem dating to the tenth century BCE has been violently opposed by the archaeologists from the Hebrew University, who have gone so far as to postulate the presence of monumental architecture in Jerusalem from this period (Mazar 2006; and more seriously, 2009). This interpretation has been met with serious objections from the Tel Aviv archaeologists (see Finkelstein, Singer-Avitz, Ussishkin and Herzog 2007; also Steiner 2009). As Israel Finkelstein exclaimed when asked about Eilat Mazar's excavations: 'She has found some nice structures dating from the Hellenistic Period' (oral communication at Megiddo 2010). The Tel Aviv position was finally laid down in two publications by Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman (2001; 2006). However, the public reaction to the Tel Aviv group became serious after a popular article by the Tel Aviv archaeologist Zeev Herzog in the daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* in 1999 (Herzog 1999). Here Herzog attacked everything 'holy' to the ordinary Israeli, that is, their ancient history. His conclusion relating to the biblical history of ancient Israel: It is simply not there.

Any person acquainted with the maximalist-minimalist controversy of the 1990s will know how such a statement will be received and will be acquainted with the kind of pressure put on those who do not share the opinion of the majority. Although some may still think it important to keep this

10. See the 'discussion' between Finkelstein and Mazar (2007). Being eager to distance himself from the 'minimalists', Mazar places himself together with Finkelstein 'in the center'; see Finkelstein and Mazar 2007: 29. Apart from the fact that the centre is never a good position because there you are under fire from both sides, this distribution of scholarship within a range from maximalists via centrists to minimalists is absurd. It is based on the criterion that the biblical history is a 'history' in the modern sense, something that can be reconstructed as a series of real events. If the criterion is false and the biblical story, as argued here, is not history in von Ranke's sense, Mazar's play with words makes no sense at all and he is attacking a straw man, simply because some among us do not share his basic assumption of a biblical historiography which may be 100 percent correct, or only 50 percent or less. It is a basic distortion of the nature of biblical narrative.

debate going, the positions have not really changed for more than a decade. Instead of addressing the historical problems directly, it is sensible (some scholars seem to hold) to circumvent them. I will come back to that later. However, in this connection it may be worth remembering that the proponents of 'minimalism' were accused of not being honest scholars, left-wing fanatics, anti-Zionists (if not anti-Semites) and the like (see my response to all of this in Lemche 2000). It must be much harder to live in Israel and take up a position that virtually destroys its constructed history and force a new story to be written as a substitute for the in any way obsolete old story, considered to be historical truth. This might be the reason behind some of the rather conventional ideas published in recent years by Israel Finkelstein, without doubt the best known of the Tel Aviv archaeologists, such as the insistence on the reality of the historical David—a robber chieftain roaming the Judean mountains in the tenth century BCE. We have no evidence of any such highwayman if we do not isolate one segment of the David story in the books of Samuel and declare it historical in contrast to the sections surrounding it.[11]

The Secular and the Religious Level

More interesting than to continue this kind of discussion will be to address the issue of secular and religious levels. What kind of discussion is going on? We are therefore entitled to ask: When a person joins the discussion about modern Israel's historical claims on Palestine, does he or she acknowledge that these claims are based on a biblical ideology based on theological speculation? When the Old Testament is brought into the discussion—after all it is the only source for most of the claims made by Zionist historiography—is its attitude to history respected because it looks for a divine legitimacy of Israel's right to Canaan?

It is obvious that the modern debate is basically secular. The quotations from the reflection on Zionist politically motivated historiography presented here do not pay any attention to religious claims; they are totally secular arguments. Nowhere do we read that Canaan was donated by God to Abraham and his descendants long before Israel decided to travel from Egypt to Canaan. In this way, a primarily religious discourse like the one found in the Old Testament is used in a modern political and secular discussion without any respect for its religious importance. Translated into historical terms, the reconstruction of modern historical studies of ancient Palestinian history shows that a few centuries of Israelite independence almost three

11. See Finkelstein and Silberman 2006: 261-67. The segment would be the stories in 1 Samuel about David fleeing from Saul and collecting a group of 'dissatisfied' people around him.

thousand years ago function as the legitimacy for implanting a modern state in a foreign territory.[12]

The argument in favour of Israel's right to Palestine is, however, also intentionally kept on a secular level. It is clear why this is so. The Israeli authors of the quotations listed here are, like European Jews in general, well-educated people who know that God is a difficult partner in a debate that is seemingly secular and based on historical arguments alone, without regard to religious sentiments. Of course many people in Israel and elsewhere, Jews as well as Christians, are of the conviction that the theological argument for Israel's right to live in Palestine depends on God's gift as related by the Old Testament. In Europe and the United States, such people can mostly be found in evangelical Christian communities and orthodox Jewish circles. The importance of Christian Zionism is indisputable and may even predate Jewish Zionism (see Goldman 2009).

My thesis is that people who stay within this secular paradigm of modern historical discourse are doing it deliberately, knowing that they will be supported by a majority of religious people belonging both to the Jewish and to the Christian tradition. Such people will never question the historical content of the secular theses as long as these do not contradict religious ideas based on a certain *fundamentalist* reading of biblical literature, a reading that is itself modern, that is, sprung from the modern belief in objective scholarship. In a world where democracy is also believed to rule in science and the humanities, the position that wins most supporters would be considered the primary one, not to say the right one. Support from the religious establishment, be it Jewish or Christian, will automatically in the eyes of people subscribing to this view of science make sure that the majority vote will go for their position. Then it is of secondary importance, whether or not the position is—from a strictly scholarly point of view—the correct one. The performance of a scholar like William G. Dever, that is, his heavy dependence on the language of the Protestant lay preacher, which was Dever's family background, is a very good (or bad) example for this 'striving for the majority vote'.[13]

Without knowing it, such scholars are already heavily engaged in the collapse of history by disregarding the importance of something to be truly historical in the classic sense of the word. Getting votes has little to do with scholarship. The goal—to win the debate by getting the majority vote—is much more important than getting to the correct conclusion, in this case con-

12. To cut this discussion short, I will only refer to the appendix of my *The Old Testament between Theology and History*, 'The History of Israel or the History of Palestine' (Lemche 2008: 393-453).

13. As exemplified perhaps most clearly in his long tirades against minimalism in Dever 2001.

cerning the ancient history of biblical Israel. By promoting their interpretation of history irrespective of its value as a historical reconstruction of the correct version of what happened in the past, they are placing the emphasis not on what happened in the past but on their own reconstruction, a truly post-modern position, definitely to the surprise of the people sharing such ideas.

This thesis may be supplemented by a second one, which suggests that these people are *nationalistic fundamentalists*. A true fundamentalist ('evangelical' if we should prefer this designation) will accept everything told by the Bible as true and beyond dispute. Secular fundamentalists will accept everything as told by the Bible as true, apart from its linkage to the divine. Their preferred methodology is the rationalistic paraphrase, but they hardly produce more than a new version of the biblical story understood as a kind of hypertext (cf. Liverani 1999). They are therefore unable to understand that it is the divine part of the historical argument which carries the day in the Old Testament. Everything said there should be seen in the light of the divine will behind the progress of history. The religiously constructed frame within which the events take place is far more important than the events that are placed within this frame, and without the religious frame the events become meaningless and without internal coherence. History has a meaning if we follow the outline of biblical historiographers, but to tell their story without its religious framing makes it meaningless. For scholars subscribing to this attitude toward biblical studies everything is history, such as the patriarchs of Israel, Abraham, Jacob and Isaac, who are understood to represent a historical reality just as well as the later kings of Israel and Judah, and the history of the patriarchs to be as far as its historicity is concerned just as believable as, say, the history of Judaism in the post-exilic period. Basically, they see no difference between ancient Israel and the modern state of Israel.

History in the Old Testament

It goes without saying that it is highly questionable methodologically to use the Old Testament—a document from the ancient past—as part of a modern political debate. Basic to such an approach to the Old Testament is the conviction that the Old Testament lives up to the expectations of modern European scholars and their fundamental idea about what is true and what is false (by and large this has also become the basic ideology of common man). In European tradition, something is either right or wrong—*tertium non datur*. Thus, the historical narratives of the Old Testament are expected to accord with this criterion of scholarly truth. However, can we really assume that the historical narratives of the Old Testament were composed on the basis of such an idea about what is true and what is false? Can we, on the basis of such writings as found in the Old Testament, legitimize modern Israel's claims on Palestine? Whereas modern writers and readers expect

narratives to be true, because it really happened, it may well be that ancient writers believed them to be true because they were expressing the will of God—although they may never have happened in reality. We may guess that the idea of writing objective or 'true' history in our sense was something that never occurred to them as something of importance.[14]

In a strange way evangelical biblical scholars might have got it right—at least from a theoretical point of view. They claim that we cannot leave God out of the historical discussion because, if there is a God, this God must also have a saying in what happens in history. Recently this argument came up in serious studies by a series of evangelical scholars, including such names as Philip Long, Ian Provan, and Jens Bruun Kofoed. Especially Kofoed's relatively recent study titled *Text and History* is important in this context (Kofoed 2005), but also the biblical history of Israel published by Long and his colleagues should be mentioned (Provan, Long and Longman 2003). Their argument has mostly been ignored but is really a very serious challenge to most historical-critical scholars who believe that they are engaging a secular subject but are really deeply involved in a theological discourse about the character of biblical historiography. Most of these scholars are themselves believers, and for that reason and often acknowledged, they end up in a state of being burdened with two contradictory truths. As historians they would not admit God into their histories, and as theologians, God must be in charge of everything.

Again the solution to this dilemma rests with a better understanding of the character of the biblical text. I already hinted at such an understanding above. But it is mandatory to be able to understand that history in the modern sense was not a concept that bothered ancient historiographers. 'Truth' was much too important to rely on things that may have happened in the real world, whether Odysseus on his way home was stranded on this island or that island, or whether Polycrates' ring was found or not found—cases may be amplified *ad libitum*.

In modern time it is often repeated that we cannot learn anything from history and that history never repeats itself. The ancient attitude was that we do indeed learn from history, as a matter of fact: *Historia magistra vitae* (Cicero, *De oratore* 2.9). History teaches us how to live the good or useful

14. In his *Shechem*, Eduard Nielsen includes an anecdote of how the traditional—also traditional Oriental—mind works when it comes to the question of 'truth'. A Samaritan argues that Gerizim is the highest mountain in the world. His opponent trained in the European scientific tradition denies this and points to Mt. Ebal as even higher than Gerizim. However, the Samaritan persists in his claim, and from his point of view, he is right. To him, Gerizim is the holy mountain of God, and since God lives in heaven but also on Gerizim, Gerizim must reach heaven and is accordingly the highest mountain in the world. Western man has lost this dimension to his thinking (Nielsen 1955: 48 n. 1).

life. Indeed, history informs us about the intentions of the gods when they gave life to human beings. A history without these aspects would be nonsense to ancient man. Such historiography was not critical in any modern sense. The story, that is, the instruction, was more important than what may have happened, and ancient historiographers had no problem adjusting their tales to the goal of their historiography, which was to provide the younger generations with good and bad examples for how to or how not to conduct their lives. The clearest example of this is perhaps Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* from the end of the first century CE, and he admits it bluntly in the preface to his 'Life of Alexander', placed in parallel to his 'Life of Julius Caesar'. It is worth quoting Plutarch *in extenso*:

> My subject in this book is the life of Alexander, the king, and of Julius Caesar, the conqueror of Pompey. The careers of these men embrace such a multitude of events that my preamble shall consist of nothing more than this one plea: if I do not record all their most celebrated achievements or describe any of them exhaustively, but merely summarize for the most part what they have accomplished, I ask my readers not to regard this as a fault. For I am writing biography, not history, and the truth is that the most brilliant exploits often tell us nothing of the virtues or vices of the men who performed them, while on the other hand a chance remark or a joke may reveal far more of a man's character than the mere feat of winning battles in which thousands fall, or of marshalling great armies, or laying siege to cities. When a portrait painter sets out to create a likeness, he relies above all upon the face and the expression of the eyes and pays less attention to the other parts of the body: in the same way it is my task to dwell upon those actions which illuminate the workings of the soul, and by this means to create a portrait of each man's life. I leave the story of his greatest struggles and achievements to be told by others (Scott-Kilvert 1973: 252).

The main thrust in my recent *The Old Testament between Theology and History* has to do with the failure of the historical-critical project of biblical studies. This school of thought failed simply because its hermeneutical standing was obsolete and misleading, although developed over a period of two hundred years. In spite of all talk about source criticism, historical-critical scholars have had problems understanding the character of the basic source material, that is, the historiography of the Old Testament. The alternative, the evangelical historiography, is on this point hardly better. Both critical scholars and evangelical ones are embedded in the modern world with its view of history as something that really happened. They are representing two different 'truths', which is really not very problematic before these truths are mixed together creating a logical morass for both parties. All of this has to do with the special character of Old Testament historiography and its home in ancient historiographic tradition.

A Way Out?

It is clear that seen in this light biblical historiography can never serve as a way of legitimizing anything in the modern world as long as it is believed to have happened. One major problem is that it never happened. It is not there (in the ground), as Zeev Herzog claimed. Biblical historiography as seen from an ancient perspective, that is, as an instruction for future generations, may be considered having such a legitimizing purpose and definitely was conceived with similar motives even in ancient times, that is, to explain why Jews (Israelites, the People of God), had the right to a country that had never belonged to them, at least not the major part of the country. As such, the repeated stories about the exiles, first Abraham's shortlived one in Egypt, thereafter Israel's four hundred years in Egypt, and finally Israel's seventy-years-long exile in Babylon, are foundation myths for Jewish society, no matter whether these Jews lived in Palestine itself or in the diaspora.

The movie by John Ford, *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962), ends with a scene where a local journalist interviews the congressman played by James Stewart. James Stewart explains to the journalist that he was not the one who shot the notorious bandit Liberty Valance. It was really another person (played by John Wayne), whose funeral he had just attended. At the end of the interview the journalist destroys his notes because in the West, choosing between myth and reality, they throw away reality and print the myth. Another sentence illustrating my point: Is this true or only something that happened?[15]

The dominant idea about history in a post-modern world has to do with understanding history as a narrative, and a very personal one. Modern historiography was conceived to bolster post-revolution national states and was in this sense not fundamentally different from ancient historical writing such as Livy's *History of Rome* linked to the introduction of Augustus's principate. Thus every country got its history, its narrative about a (supposed) heroic past. When this narrative became part of school books, it became common heritage in the country it was taught. Remember: History books are indeed weapons of mass instruction.

The way out of the dilemma, which also means that the historiography of the Old Testament can still be considered an argument for Jewish presence in Palestine today, will have to rely on the acceptance of the biblical story as 'true' in the way described here. If a person believes that this is his story, we have learned to accept that it is indeed his story. The problem is when two conflicting stories are in opposition, as is the case in Palestine today, with

15. I have used this expression before, in a lecture at the SBL International Meeting in Lahti, Finland, in 1997, and published in Lemche 2001b. The provenance is a review of a new edition of Icelandic sagas published in a Danish newspaper.

an Israeli narrative based on the Old Testament on one side, and a modern Palestinian on the other. Whether or not one of them is true and the other false is an issue that has nothing to do with the story as told, and this criterion of truth is a modern one to be substituted by a more involved one that takes into consideration the individual character of what is true and what false. What is truth to an Arab living in modern Israel is hardly truth to the Jew living next-door, and vice versa.

Thus it is not important if a historical-critical analysis of the narrative of the Jewish member of the state shows that this narrative has little to do with *wie es eigentlich gewesen,* as was Leopold von Ranke's program for history. Neither is it important if the Palestinian Arab's narrative is also invented and has little to do with reality.[16] The important thing is that there is more than one narrative that decides where a certain person living in this country belongs. Zionism has until recently been the decisive factor in the life of secular Palestinian Jews—Israelis. Without having to discuss Zionism at length, it stood on more than two legs. First of all, its defence of a Jewish nation destined to live in Palestine relied on the biblical narrative about ancient Israel in the ways discussed here. Second, it relied on an understanding of the nation that appeared in Europe at the beginning of the modern age, that is, from ca. 1800 CE onward. The European *Blut und Boden* ideology formed the background of the adage already quoted, that the Jews formed a nation looking for a land that was empty in order to receive them.[17] Third, it proceeded to create its own myth and rituals attached to these myths.

In her excellent study *Recovered Roots*, Yael Zerubavel (1995) deals with three such constructed myths, two ancient stories and one modern. The ancient myths concern the Jewish defence of Masada against the Romans and Bar Kochba's futile attempt at a new rebellion against the Romans. The modern example is the incident of Tel Ḥaj in northern Galilee, an incident

16. In my review of Keith W. Whitelam's *The Invention of Ancient Israel* (Lemche 1996) I had to say that in spite of all good intentions Whitelam had overlooked an important fact, that the Palestinian people was a construct provoked by the appearance of the foreign Jewish community in their own land. It does not say that the Arab inhabitants were faceless non-entities. They were not 'Palestinians' in the ethnic sense; they considered themselves Arabs, a fact that 'eluded' early Zionist historiographers. Since the division of the Middle East into several now independent states following the lines of the Sykes-Picot agreement from 1916, the new states have feverishly tried to create new identities for the people who happened to live within their confines, a concept previously unknown to the Arabs of the Middle East. If anything, borders would be territory markers between the various tribal coalitions such as the Aneze, the Shammar, and the Rwala.

17. This ideology is often assumed to have been something special for the national socialist Third Reich, but was as a matter of fact a prime mover behind European politics, almost up to this day, and in some quarters even today as we saw in the Balkans in the 1990s.

that occurred in 1920. We don't need to expend many words on these incidents. Especially Masada is well known from Josephus's description of the siege in his *The Jewish War*. Masada became the primary symbol of the young Jewish state which presented the human skeletons found there with a national funeral, and allowed the soldiers of its army to be sworn in at ceremonies held at Masada. The myth has eroded somewhat, not least because the skeletons were found in connection with pig bones and may accordingly not have been Jewish at all.[18] Also the other two 'myths' have in recent times faded somewhat in connection with a reduced interest in Zionism among young Israelis. Tel Ḥaj has turned out to be of dubious value as a national symbol, and Bar Kochba was hardly as 'heroic' as Zionist propaganda made him. Where this will lead is unknown, but it may already be happening that young Israelis—Arabs as well as Jews—will have to engage in the production of a new national narrative.

This is the best thing that could happen for the simple reason that national myths are so hard to defeat. Once taught in school and accepted by the young generation as its narrative—today it is much more normal to talk about this narrative as 'cultural memory'. In this connection historical research does not count for much. Memory cannot be attacked directly because there is really nothing to attack. However, cultural memory will, like all memory, fade away by itself as time goes by. This could be the end to history as an argument for land possession. It was not without reason that during the 1968 students' rebellion in Europe history became a major target. If history is destroyed, national coherence is also a thing of the past, and it is time to substitute national histories and identities with the new 'internationale'. In many ways it was a successful program, although the kind of 'internationale' that grew forth in Europe was probably not what the students had believed to come but was instead the European Union. At the moment we Europeans are witnessing a struggle between the old national histories and a new common European narrative. In Israel/Palestine they will have to reduce the impact of national histories as foundation myths and create a new myth. This will be the first step toward a new common identity that may one day allow for peace in that part of the world.[19]

18. See the announcement by Haim Watzman in *Archaeology*, 50/6 (November/December 1997), accessed at http://www.archaeology.org/9711/newsbriefs/masada.html.

19. There is no reason to go further into the subject of collective memory/cultural memory here. The concepts with roots back to Maurice Halbwachs (1994 [1924]) and Jan Assmann (1992) respectively may be today the hottest subject within Old Testament studies. We have at the Department of Biblical Studies at the University of Copenhagen for the last three years housed a centre of The Bible and Cultural Memory. One of the results of the work done at the centre is an introduction to the subject: *Cultural Memory in Biblical Exegesis* (forthcoming).

Israeli Archaeology in the Old City of Jerusalem[1]

Gideon Sulimany

In 1967 Israel conquered the West Bank, including the Jordanian part of Jerusalem. Very soon after the war Israel expanded the municipal area of Jerusalem ('West Jerusalem') and set Israeli law over what is known today as 'East Jerusalem'—the Old City and the Jordanian city outside it, but also extensive areas of twenty-six Arab villages that had never before formed part of Jerusalem. Israel 'forgot' to annex the inhabitants of this area, leaving them without Israeli citizenship. In 1980 they were given status of permanent residents, but not of citizens (the best description of the first years of Israeli rule in East Jerusalem was offered by Benziman 1973; cf. Benvenisti 1973).

Israel used most of the *de facto* annexed area for Israeli settlements. At first these were aimed at creating a built wall around the Old City, mainly north of it (neighborhoods such as the French Hill, Ramot Eshkol, etc.). Later the settlements spread all over the area (Giloh, Armon ha-Natziv, Ramot, Har Khoma), and recently settlers aim at occupying spaces within Palestinian municipal neighbourhoods in 'East Jerusalem' (Ras el Amud, Silwan, the Moslem Quarter, Sheikh Jarakh). The settlements required, naturally, a wide array of roads and various development works (electricity, water, telephone, sewage, etc.). At the same time, Israel limited development of Arab neighborhoods in the city by preventing approvals of development and building permits. This policy had the explicit aim of encouraging the emigration of the Arab dwellers of Jerusalem and hence, limiting their numbers in the 'united' city. In response, the Arab inhabitants have build tens of thousands of dwelling units in dense construction, without permits

1. I wish to thank Dr Raz Kletter for reading the manuscript and offering valuable comments, partly based on a study that he is currently preparing for publication. The article was translated from the Hebrew by Mrs. Fortuna el-Abbasi. My warm thanks are also due to Emanuel Pfoh, the co-editor of the present book, for his ongoing support.

and without municipal planning. The result is a spread out, separated city, a conglomerate of sleeping towns and slums (Cheshin *et al.* 1999; Dumper 1987; Imseis 1999–2000; Amirav 2009). Above this city hangs constantly not a cloud of rain but a frightening shadow termed 'the demographic balance of fear' (see Klein 2008: 63-67).

All the Old City was proclaimed an antiquities site, and a series of Israeli archaeological excavations were started in it. There are many varied publications for these excavations, but few archaeologists discussed their political aspects (Abu El-Haj 1998; 2001; Greenberg 2009; on politics and archaeology in Jerusalem before 1967, see Kletter 2006). The aim of this article is to describe Israeli archaeology in East Jerusalem through the manner of of thinking of the central archaeologists who excavated there—in such a loaded place, politically, religiously and nationally—and the results of these patterns of thought. Therefore, this article does not describe the remains that have been found, nor does it treat all the excavations, excavators and publications in East Jerusalem after 1967. Rather, we focus on several important excavations and excavators from the 'first generation' after 1967, a phase that continued until the 1980s.[2]

Yigael Yadin

Yigael Yadin never excavated in Jerusalem. However, due to his public status as a former chief of staff and his public glamour (the excavator of Masada and Hazor, a decipherer of the Dead Sea scrolls, etc.), he held crucial importance in the Israeli archaeological establishment. When a collection of articles that presented the Israeli excavations from 1968 to 1974 in the Old City of Jerusalem was published, Yadin was chosen as editor. In the introduction to the book, Yadin (1975) tells about his opinions concerning these excavations.

Yadin states that Israeli excavations from 1968 to 1974 exposed the past of Jerusalem more than the entire preceding one hundred years of research. This statement reflects the scope and intensiveness of the Israeli excavations of those years—a sort of general attack on the Old City. According to Yadin, the excavations in the Jewish Quarter were made possible by the destruction of this quarter by the Jordanians during the 1948 war. Readers unfamiliar with the details may assume that after 1948 the Jewish Quarter was completely destroyed, a sort of an empty field, where nothing was left to document or restore until the new discoveries of the new Israeli excavations. Yadin (as well as Avigad, see below) does not dwell, of course, on the not so simple nor so pleasant processes that enabled the rebuilding of the Jewish

2. For a recent summary of excavations in Jerusalem see Geva 2010.

Quarter. First, a large part of the Jewish Quarter survived after 1948 and could have been maintained rather than built from anew. Second, no effort was made to find the holders of rights to the land. An arbitrary line was drawn on the map, and the entire area was confiscated. Indeed, Jews lived in the Jewish Quarter for centuries before 1948, but others lived there too. A large portion of the houses and the plots was not owned by Jews. Third, a few thousand Muslim inhabitants lived in the confiscated area before 1967. Most of them were poor refugees of the 1948 Naqba. All until the very last one were evacuated from the area by coercion. They did receive some monetary compensation but were not allowed to stay even if they wanted to and were able to pay for a new flat (see Ricca 2007).[3] Incidentally, the Jewish Quarter prior to 1948 was settled by Orthodox 'old settlement' inhabitants (both Sepharadim and Ashkenazim). The same persons or their descendants did not return to the quarter after 1967. After rebuilding, flat prices soared, and the quarter became mainly a dwelling place for national-Zionists of the middle class upward. The rebuilt quarter symbolized on the one hand an old, 'authentic' past; and on the other hand a clean, modern present with a high quality of life. This was a symbol for the success and efficiency of the state that built it. In recent years, perhaps ironically, it has been going back into being an area of orthodox inhabitants.

UNESCO expressed worries from the unilateral changes to the historic nature of Jerusalem by the Israeli acts. This included excavations, which according to the Hague Convention for Protection of Cultural Assets should be avoided by conquerors of a conquered area (Israel signed this convention). In response, Yadin and all the Israeli archaeologists claimed that UNESCO was acting out of political, not professional, reasons. Yadin (1975) presented the publication of the volume *Jerusalem Revealed* as the best answer to UNESCO: see what nice things we have found and how much we have enriched the archaeological-historical knowledge about Jerusalem. Thus, Yadin too used the excavations as a political tool, to give legitimization to Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem. The finds and the enrichment of knowledge are turned from results of the excavation to justification for their execution. If the excavators at these places had not been Israelis, would they not discover similar and also important finds?

According to Yadin, the Jewish Quarter is a key area for the study of the city. Nahman Avigad found there fortifications from the First Temple days (Iron II period) and a dwelling complex of 'secular' Jews of the Second Temple (Persian to Roman) period. 'Secular' is a modern term of the last two hundred years; using it in the context of the Second Temple period exposes Yadin's own personal identity and his desire to find early proof for

3. I wish to thank Raz Kletter for drawing my attention to Ricca's study.

it. Thus the excavations turn into a tool for searching after and for proving modern national Israeli identity. Yadin also notes as especially important the excavation of the southern *Kotel* (Wailing Wall) area by Binyamin Mazar. He tells readers that this excavation teaches us a lot about the stratigraphy of the area and about the Temple Mount. Yadin described the atmosphere in this team, the crew's dedication and commitment, their feelings of fulfilling a historical mission. Yadin does not add details, but readers understand that this historical mission relates to a Jewish-Zionist worldview. Yadin mentions other excavations in the Old City (by Dan Bahat, S. Ben-Arieh, M. Broshi and R. Amiran), but to him the excavations of Mazar and Avigad are the most important. Another important area in his view is Silwan/Siloam village, where ancient Jerusalem of the Bronze–Iron Ages is located. This area was not yet excavated at the time. Once it would be, the picture of the city's history will be completed. The areas and periods that Yadin mentions as important show that he considers only the periods of the First and Second Temple, and mainly the areas close to the Temple Mount. Most of the articles in this book (Yadin 1975: content page) deal with these periods. The introduction ends in a quote from the Bible (Yadin 1975).[4]

Yadin's writing expresses authority and assertiveness in his way: it is the writing of an Israeli establishment person. He does not see any need to explain Israeli authority over the city and the necessity for these excavations. He has no doubt what are the 'important' periods in the history of Jerusalem, and he has no need to deal with or even mention other periods. Thus, a one-dimension story is created: two chosen periods, each with one chosen people and one holy Temple.

Nahman Avigad, Ehud Netzer and the Jewish Quarter

The popular description that Avigad himself (1983) wrote about his Jewish Quarter excavations serves as the best source for our discussion. In the introduction, Avigad opens by describing the immense impression of the 1967 war. This historical event, according to Avigad, will be remembered not just for the unification of the city, but also for enabling wide-ranging archaeological excavations in Jerusalem, a dream of many archaeologists. Avigad presents the understanding and restoration of the topography of the Second Temple period city as a key ingredient in his research questions. Since the Jewish Quarter was never excavated before 1967, it is clear that this description comes mainly after the excavations, when Avigad already found the remains (or at least some of them) and defined to himself what is 'important': the upper city of the Second Temple period.

4. The introduction lacks page numbers.

Due to the religious significance of Jerusalem, it is hardly surprising that it became a focus for exploration since the early days of archaeology in the region. Avigad mentions Charles Warren and his work around the Temple Mount as the first excavation. Warren hoped to find the First Temple. But, writes Avigad, due to the limits of his archaeological knowledge his chronological conclusions were mistaken. Avigad also notes how much the political and religious problems in the city limit its exploration: the city was destroyed and rebuilt many times, and hence, the early remains are few, not well preserved, and covered by fills of earth. Dense, late occupation sits above the fills, leaving no open spaces for archaeological work. This description clarifies that Avigad sees as important only the early layers. The present settlement, as well as the earth fills, is just an excessive disturbance.

Avigad mentions that Warren, Bliss and Dickey, who excavated in the late nineteenth century CE, met with objections and fears by the local Muslim authorities and inhabitants. As a result, these early explorers had to excavate in tunnels, to avoid the eyes of the inhabitants and the authorities. Avigad calls it the period of 'heroic archaeologists'. One feels a lot of sympathy in his words to these old heroes, and no criticism concerning their goals and the nature of their excavations. Why the sympathy? These were religious, military men (mainly Protestants), who came in order to find and prove the biblical stories, and who saw the local inhabitants as a historical interference to the exposure of the real thing—the ancient, holy city that is hidden under their houses. It seems that Avigad's sympathy originates from ideological proximity. To both Avigad and these early explorers, the important periods in the history of Jerusalem are the First and Second Temple periods; the important sources are the Bible, Flavius Josephus, etc.; these sources guide the archaeological exploration. In this way an imagined reality is created, one that exposes and restores an ancient past while ignoring a thousand-year period of Muslim rule, history and archaeology in Jerusalem. This attitude sets the ways of work of Avigad, and defined the story worthy of telling.

Immediately after the conquest of the city (or, by Avigad and the Zionist concept, the return to the Jewish Quarter), the state of Israel organized for rebuilding. All the Old City including the Jewish Quarter was declared an ancient site; therefore any development of any sort depended on archaeological approval by the then Israel Department of Antiquities and Museums (IDAM). Thus legal power was vested in the archaeologists, to be involved in the planning, and as a result, a large series of excavations started. For the restoration of the Jewish Quarter a special company was created; during the work many houses were evacuated and ruined and large open areas were formed. Thus, according to Avigad, the dream became true, and preparations for excavations started. Three archaeological bodies yoked themselves to this goal: the IDAM, the Archaeological Institute of the Hebrew Univer-

sity, and the Israel Exploration Society—in fact, almost the entire archaeological establishment in Israel at the time. The excavation was offered to Avigad and he took it as a compliment; but because of its complexity, importance and estimated long duration—as well as the fact that he was on the verge of retirement to pension—he hesitated. He agreed only after further approaches, since he is a veteran citizen and scholar of Jerusalem. For many years he studied and researched the topography of the early city, and now he was given the chance to excavate his life-long subject. Avigad saw himself as one who owns rights in Jerusalem, both as a 'local' inhabitant and a 'Western' scholar with high research credentials. By contrast, early scholars like Bliss or Warren were not locals but foreigners, and also the quality of their excavations was lower. The 'local' rights claimed by Avigad is an important factor in the archaeological deed in the Old City and in its legitimacy.

Avigad stresses the difficult professional problems of excavating the Jewish Quarter. He compares it to other, 'typical' excavations that he performed, which had short field seasons separated by long periods of study and preparation of the materials for publication. In the Jewish Quarter he excavated eight months per year, sometimes the entire year, in a constant pressure of 'five minutes before (and sometimes after) the bulldozers'. This delayed research of finds and damaged the excavation. Such procedures were forced on Avigad by the pressure to release areas for new construction (Avigad 1983: 21-22; Geva 2000: 1-30). How does Avigad explain the gap between his own description of a historical opportunity to make a 'dream excavation' in such an important site, and the hard reality of the work? Why did he and the entire archaeological establishment compromise with the planners and the developers? On paper the archaeologists had legal tools (and not just national and scientific arguments) to prevent any damage to antiquities during the building of the Jewish Quarter. In practice, the nature of the work in the first large excavations after 1967 formed a precedent, which fixed the future form of Israeli archaeology in the Old City. Avigad and the archaeological establishment failed to understand this, and their feebleness in standing up to the planners and developers proves how poorly the archaeologists could influence the process of decision-making and the execution by the various authorities in Jerusalem. It also shows the real relations of these authorities to archaeology. The order of priorities was first, second and third, building the area quickly and populating it with Israelis; everything else came later. The Israeli archaeologists accepted these priorities as a fact of life, at a high professional price.

Avigad was forced to compromise with the planners concerning not only what could be excavated, but what could be preserved—and how. There was more than one option. One could preserve remains in open areas and in closed cellars of buildings; or one could build on pillars that would enable

future excavations and preservation. In fact, most of the area was covered by buildings, and the practical meaning is a permanent covering. Avigad (1983: 46) brings as a good example the broad wall of the Iron II period. After it was discovered there was a debate; a public struggle was raised against the intention to cover the wall under buildings. Fortunately the minister of housing ordered the end of construction in this area and to leave the wall exposed. This is indeed a good example, but an exception rather than the norm!

The inferior status of the archaeologists in the Jewish Quarter project is expressed also in the articles of Ehud Netzer (1972: 4; 1975). Netzer is today known mainly as an archaeologist, but at the time he was the architect who sat on the planning committee of the Jewish Quarter on behalf of the developers (the Ministry of Housing). Netzer says that the possibility was raised to stop the construction until the end of the archaeological excavations, or even to build on a huge cement block, under which the archaeological remains may be preserved. These suggestions were denied, and the quarter was actually planned without consideration of archaeological remains. The planning committee dealt with architectural elements, what to destroy or preserve, shaping the new construction, etc. Netzer mentions that the existing houses date from the Crusader period until modern times. He too failed to see them as a worthy archaeological or architectural subject for research and documentation. Neither Netzer nor the archaeologists who excavated the Jewish Quarter (or were involved in discussions about it, such as Binyamin Mazar, Yigael Yadin, and Avraham Biran) objected to the destruction of the houses. This was due to two main reasons.

First, there was the desire to create wide-open areas free for large-scale archaeological excavations (and of course, for new construction). Israeli architects at that time did not have sufficient knowledge in preserving ancient, complex urban quarters of 'traditional' stone architecture, which was more common in Europe. The Jewish Quarter was mostly cleared of its traditional architecture, and then built with modern cement and steel construction. To create an ancient atmosphere, the external surfaces were coated with stone. Israeli archaeologists also had little experience in the preservation of such quarters. Most were used to working on tells and khirbehs which were 'cleaned' of recent construction, or at least of recent local inhabitants.

A second and probably more crucial reason was the concept that the 'important' layers are those of the First and Second Temple periods. Other periods merit documentation, even if they are less 'important', but not the late Arab (Mamluk/Ottoman) periods, to which most of the Quarter's buildings belonged. Legally speaking, the archaeologists could and were obliged

to protect all antiquities, that is, all man-made objects before 1800 CE.[5] Of course, the date 1800 CE is archaeologically arbitrary, and it is often hard or impossible to prove that certain finds or buildings date before or after it. In practice, the Israeli archaeologists in Jerusalem in the 1960s and '70s did not recognize the late Arab periods as a legitimate archaeological layer. They employed a simple solution—everything 'late' was not worthy of research and preservation; it was grouped with the 'post-1800' category and thus denied protection by law. The result was the erasing of hundreds of years of Islamic archaeology in favour of the discovery of earlier, 'important' layers.

Avigad's book (Avigad 1983) is a good example of this fact: the last chapter on the Muslim and Crusader periods occupies barely seven pages out of a total of 270! Avigad (1983: 247) wrote that he did not find any remains of the Early Arabic period in the excavation of the Quarter. Regarding the Ottoman period (1595-1917, not only post-1800 CE and thus, partly also ancient and protectable by law), he honestly wrote that this period is beyond the scope of his work and that his excavations did not contribute anything to the study of this period (Avigad 1983: 255). Did he really fail to observe the connection between the destruction of the houses of the Jewish Quarter after 1967 and the lack of finds in—or the contribution of—his excavations for the occupation of the 'late' Islamic periods?

A proper study of the Jewish Quarter necessitated not just considering the ancient periods but also research and preservation of existing houses. This called for a multidisciplinary study, with the cooperation of architects, engineers, experts for preservation, anthropologists, sociologists, etc. Such research also demanded cooperation with veteran inhabitants before 1948 and study of the use of the Quarter in the Jordanian period. The planning should have been affected by such study, where the place has a historical-archaeological sequence that belongs to all the inhabitants. In practice, one segment of the past was destroyed in order to make place for new buildings, and some inhabitants were evacuated in favour of others.

The description of the 'burnt house', a structure dated to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE shows the grasp of Avigad as a Jewish, Zionist and Israeli citizen:

> The story of the burnt house, which so dramatically and vividly illustrates a most tragic and fateful chapter in the history of Jerusalem, thus comes to an end. But although the house met its end, the story itself is actually not yet complete, for in our own days two thousand years later, when the descendants of the slaughtered returned to the site, they uncovered the

5. We deal here with a period before the Antiquities Law of 1978, when there was an Antiquities Ordinance (based on British Mandatory legislation from 1930). Still, for our purposes there is no need to review details of legislation.

> physical traces of the destruction, and rebuilt their homes over the ruins. Now they too, like Bar-Kathros, can look out through their windows and see the temple enclosure where the 'previous tenant' had apparently worshiped. History has repeated itself (Avigad 1983: 137; for the final publication see Avigad 2010).

This is how Avigad makes his contribution to the Zionist narrative of the return of the people to its land after a two-thousand-year diaspora.

Kathleen Kenyon, Excavation Methods and an old Minimalist-Maximalist Debate

The British excavator Kathleen Kenyon is famous among other things for the method of excavation named after her and Mortimer Wheeler, the 'Wheeler-Kenyon' method (see Davies 2008). Kenyon was the first to employ this method in our region. The method is based on slow, exact excavating in 'squares' while leaving baulks, and mainly study and separation of all earth layers, fills and disturbances and of the sections revealed by the sides of the squares in order to understand the stratigraphy. Kenyon too excavated in Jerusalem under Jordanian rule (Kenyon 1974). She too, like Avigad, was interested in early periods and did not see the houses of the inhabitants as an archaeological layer worthy of study; and she also did not include the inhabitants in her study (except as hired labourers).

The Israeli excavators of the 1960s and '70s claimed that they were using a better method of excavation, which became known as the 'Israeli method' (Aharoni 1973). It was allegedly better because it allows excavation of large areas completely, therefore, exposure of complete structures and mending better pottery vessels—hence, dating them better (it is generally more difficult to date a sherd than an entire vessel).[6]

However, the advantages of the 'Israeli method' came at the expense of the stratigraphic accuracy, since the excavation of a complete, large area was made by avoiding the 'squares' and thus, there were far fewer sections to study, and the earth layers and disturbances were not so meticulously separated. This can be seen in many Israeli excavations of the 1950s and '60s (Kletter 2006: 304-308). In the 1970s, starting at Lachish, Israeli excavators accepted the main principles of the Wheeler-Kenyon method. Today it is clear that the Wheeler-Kenyon method is not any real obstacle to pottery mending and understanding the architecture, if the excavator takes down (by archaeological excavation) the baulks between the squares, thus completing an entire area when this is required.

6. In fact, the 'Israeli method' was not completely new, but a continuation of Albright's 'locus to stratum' method of excavation of the British Mandate period, with some changes.

Excavation methods were not the only debate between Kenyon and Israeli scholars in the 1960s and '70s. Another debate was between 'minimalists' and 'maximalists' (Avigad 1983: 26-31)—not about the United Monarchy but concerning the size of Late Iron Age Jerusalem. Kenyon and mainly British archaeologists claimed that Jerusalem was limited in size and did not include the Western Hill/Mt. Zion area. Israeli scholars claimed that Jerusalem was much larger. With the finding of the 'wide wall' by Avigad in the Jewish Quarter (and other finds elsewhere), most scholars accepted the 'maximalist' view, and Kenyon lost the debate. Hence, the excavations of Avigad in the Jewish Quarter made Israeli scholars extremely happy: these were interpreted as proof for the correctness of the Israeli interpretation of the history of the city (its size during the First Temple period), as well as for the advantages of the 'Israeli method' over the 'Wheeler-Kenyon' method (Barkay 1992; 2010). Therefore, Israeli excavators tended to skip the immediate former excavators, such as Kenyon, and mentally connected to early explorers of the Ottoman period. Furthermore, the 'victories' over Kenyon provided ammunition for diverting the debate about the excavations in East Jerusalem from the political aspects (conquest, confiscation of land, forced evacuation of inhabitants) to the scientific aspects (preferable excavation methods, better historical interpretations). The 'victories' over Kenyon served as justification for the enterprise of excavations.

In our opinion, it is clear today that the 'Wheeler-Kenyon' method is preferable scientifically and publicly in ancient, dense urban areas like the Old City of Jerusalem. It does not call for large open areas and does not come at the expense of the inhabitants to the same extent as the 'Israeli method'. Of course, it too should be extended and improved, to include also 'late' structures and to try and find interest and form relations between the inhabitants and archaeology.

In another hollow 'victory', Kenyon left Jerusalem after one season of excavation under Israeli rule (still in 1967). She did not like and did not want to adjust to the realities of the new Israeli rule, and decided to call an end to her excavations.

Fills and Secondary Use

Avigad (1983: 13) describes the early layers as covered by many fills, above which the houses of the current inhabitants are built. These fills are the result of human activities throughout hundreds of years. In a city with such a long history, when buildings serve for long periods, changing functions occasionally, an effort to understand the structures, their dates and functions necessitates also an archaeological excavation and study of the many various fills. Comparison of fills from various areas and periods may explain processes and developments in the city. Nothing of the sort

was performed by the Israeli excavators in East Jerusalem. They hurried to find mainly floors with vessels and of early periods. They removed by bulldozers many fills without detailed study. Also within houses, the fills were only partially studied, or not at all. There was a selective attitude toward the fills. Fills of the First and Second Temple periods were studied. For example, fills of *terra rosa* earth on the rock in the Western Hill, where Iron Age sherds have been found, were explored. Other examples come from the David Tower, the Armenian Garden and the Qishleh building (Bahat and Broshi 1972: 55-60; Re'em 2010). Incidentally, although technical methods improved and currently fills can be studied in detail using wet sieving, the selectivity, the definition of what is 'important', remained the same: mainly the First and Second Temple periods. Thus, wet sieving is made for fills mainly from these periods (De Groot and Padida 2010; Reich and Bar-Oz 2006). In other words, Israeli research passes the archaeology of Jerusalem through a sieve of the periods of Israelite/Jewish authority in the history of Jerusalem.

Another fascinating side of coping archaeologically with Jerusalem is the secondary use of stones. Such secondary use, such as fills, can teach about the history of the buildings, building phases, attitude of inhabitants to buildings, etc. Which periods saw extensive secondary use, which less, and why? Study of the Old City deserves a broad approach, seeing the deed of excavation not as a local story but as part of a much wider story of the entire city. Such an attitude requires stratigraphic excavation as the only tool that can clarify the history of the city, including the existing buildings as the upper layer. Significant data on the history of the city was lost as a result of the removal of the Jewish Quarter structures without excavation, documentation and preservation. A good example is the picture in Avigad's book (1983: 213) showing the secondary use of the Byzantine Cardo pillars by the Muslim buildings.

Binyamin Mazar and the Kotel Excavations

The general preliminary article of Mazar (1975) about his excavations in the southern Kotel will serve us here. This article shows no personal feelings; Mazar does not bother about telling the circumstances that enabled him to excavate this site. Mazar considers himself as the owner who has a natural right over the site. He does not mention the confiscation of the area, the destruction of the Mughrabi neighborhood and the destruction of public structures built against the Kotel (Benziman 1973: 37-46). Mazar also does not tell about the bitter debates with the chief rabbinate over the area (Benziman 1973: 155-71; cf. Benvenisti 1973: 251-61).

Mazar writes that the aim of his excavations is to clarify the stratigraphy at this important site in the city. He does not explain why this place is

important, taking it for granted that his audience knows.[7] The 'stratigraphic clarification' relates to the former excavations of Warren in this area, ignoring Kenyon and her excavations. Mazar, like Yadin, sees himself as a follower of Warren.

One can only wonder about Mazar's excavation method. The area did not face urgent building, so unlike Avigad in the Jewish Quarter, Mazar could proceed calmly and methodically, at a pace that would ensure the best results—this is, after all, a preliminary requirement for clarifying the stratigraphy, the declared aim of his excavation. Yet, the excavation continued on and on, without any break for rest and for work on the finds and their study. There is a wide gap between the scientific pretension and the actual work practice.

Mazar was proud of the exposure and preservation of the Omayyad palace (see Ben-Dov 1972: 97-101) as a proof that he is an unbiased scholar of Jerusalem in all its periods. Yet the Omayyad palace is only a professional fig leaf covering the fact that Mazar and his colleagues stood quietly when the Mughrabi quarter was destroyed. True, it was destroyed very fast, and Mazar and the archaeologists were probably never asked about it in advance. But he knew and he supported the continuation of the destruction of houses that were still left in the area later in order to enlarge the area of the excavations of the early periods and to 'clean' the area from 'late disturbances', that is, signs of non-Jewish presence.

At the same time as Mazar's excavations another dig was carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs just to the north of it, along the Western Wall. The people of the Ministry of Religious Affairs dug into and exposed underground cavities while performing a vast destruction of remains. The archaeological establishment lacked legal jurisdiction over the area, which was given to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and defined a functioning holy place. Therefore, it was outside the scope of the Antiquities Law. However, the archaeologists did not protest this and in practice shut their eyes. Finally they 'laundered' the crime by placing the dig under 'archaeological supervision'. When the Muslim Wakf employed the same method by digging the 'Solomon Stables' in the Temple Mount without bothering about archaeology, Israeli archaeologists were quick to protest against this destruction of antiquities. Some of them even blamed the Wakf for allegedly trying to destroy evidence for the early temples. Archaeologists identified with right-wing circles invested much money and effort in sieving meticulously the earth fills from the Wakf's excavations, although these fills were already dumped elsewhere and therefore, were lacking stratigraphy and exact contexts (Barkay and Zweig 2006).

7. On the Temple Mount see the recent large tome by Grabar and Kedar (2010).

Yigal Shiloh and the Siloam Village

Starting in 1978, Yigal Shiloh began excavations in the Siloam/Silwan village area. Following his excavations the area is also called 'the City of David' (*Ir David*), since here was located the ancient city of the Bronze and Iron Ages (except in the Late Iron Age II, when the city also expanded to other areas). The term 'City of David' is unfortunately loaded with political overtones, because of its use by nationalistic, religious settlers whose aims are to control and to 'Judaize' this area.

Shiloh (1984) gives several reasons for the start of his excavations. They include needs beneficial to local inhabitants (evacuation of dumps of former excavations, which were hazardous to life of inhabitants; development of roads and sewage systems), but also for Israeli rule (fencing and marking of 'state areas' to prevent building by the inhabitants). The excavation was therefore an expression of the Israeli regime. For financing, an association was established, and the main budget came from donations. The excavation by Shiloh was different from those of Mazar and Avigad. It was made in relatively short summer seasons, each around two months long, at a calm pace and with careful methods (except the conflict with orthodox groups concerning human burial in area G). The long intervals between the seasons were used for work on the finds. However, here too archaeological levels defined as late fills were removed by mechanical tools without study.

For Shiloh too, the early periods (Bronze and Iron) were the most important ones, and he also used the results of his excavations to support the biblical-Zionist narrative. Similarly, the surveyors of the tombs at Silwan note that their focus is the study and documentation of the tombs alone, without any discussion of the village itself (Ussishkin and Barkay 1986: xi).

In summary, the archaeologists of the Hebrew University, the leading scientific institute in Israel at the time, saw themselves first of all as Israeli Zionist citizens. Their profession was at the service of a search after occupational layers of the First and Second Temple periods, when there was Israelite/Jewish sovereignty in Jerusalem, in order to support the modern Zionist narrative.

Excursus: New Excavations

After a period of relief in the 1980s, excavations have resumed in the Old City in the early 1990s by the Israel Antiquities Authority, a governmental (non-academic) body. All these excavations were defined as salvage excavations but the circumstances varied. There were salvage excavations for development, such as placing electricity and sewage lines (Avni and Re'em 1999; Siion and Shahar 2010) or due to damage to antiquities by inhabitants and religious institutions (De'adle 2011; Weksler-Bdolah 2000;

Zeeligman 1999). Usually these excavations were small in scale. However, many excavations were made for the benefit of Israeli settlers (Avni, Baruch and Weksler-Bdolah 2001; Baruch and Zissu 2006).

Young Israeli archaeologists, employees of the Israel Antiquities Authority, grew up in a reality of an occupied and allegedly united Jerusalem. This generation, at least judging by their publications, does not ask itself about the legality of work in the Old City and its effects on their work and status. Despite the pretense to apolitical work, their work is dictated by political circumstances and they too received the same national-Zionist education that does not qualify them to work in such a highly sensitive and complex site.

The Israeli archaeological agenda remains as it was in the days of Nahman Avigad and Binyamin Mazar. An example is the new excavation at the *Kotel* piazza (Weksler-Bdolah and Onn 2009; 2010). These excavations are made on behalf of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Fund for the *Kotel* Tradition (a governmental association, budgeted by the prime minister's office), prior to erecting a building. The excavation lasted three years without breaks, exposing occupation layers from the Iron II until our day. Here too, the agenda was set by the considerations of those who want to build the building, not by the archaeologists. The excavation was carried out in all weather conditions and under a lot of pressure. A demand to dismantle archaeological layers in order to enable the building caused the removal of all the remains of the Islamic periods. The Roman Cardo, which was exposed in the excavation, will be preserved in the cellars of the building. The position of the Israel Antiquities Authority is strange. It promised the developers that they will be allowed to build before excavation has ended. According to proper procedures, no promises about release of an excavated area for building are given to developers until the excavations have ended, in order to avoid damage to important antiquities that may still be discovered.

In this case too, fills of a Late Iron II building were sieved and carefully studied. However, fills from the Muslim and Roman periods were not sieved. Again, 'our' remains are defined as more important and receive a preferred professional treatment. During sieving, a seal that carries the name 'Netanyahu Ben Yo'ash' was found. Netanyahu is the family name of the current prime minister, who mentioned the seal in a central place in a speech in the United States (see www.antiquities.org.il). Thus, archaeology serves as a political tool to justify the Zionist right over the past, the present and the future of the *Kotel* piazza.

Another excavation was carried out in 2007 in the *Kotel* piazza, in the remains of the Mughrabi neighborhood at the ramp to the 'Mughrabi Gate' for building a new bridge. This excavation (not yet published; directed by Barbé and Vitto, permit A5013—details in www.antiquities.org.il) was

also made in one sequence and was terminated suddenly for political reasons. The considerations that caused the start of this excavation as well as its end were never archaeological.

These new excavations in fact erased the remains of the Mughrabi neighborhood, destroyed by Israel in 1967. This was made under a pretext of archaeological salvage. It demonstrates how far-reaching the cooperation between the archaeologists and the political establishment is. The field archaeologists themselves are not those most responsible, since their status is akin to that of contractors. They execute the work but have no say concerning policy making and important decisions. However, to the best of my knowledge, no established or senior Israeli archaeologist (in the IAA, in universities, in the IES, in the museums) protested against the destruction of the remains of the Mughrabi neighborhood. Insofar as they gave no thought to this matter, they supported this destruction (see Avni, 'Why Excavate in the *Kotel* Piazza Now', in www.antiquities.org.il/article).

Summary

Israeli excavations in Jerusalem during the 1960s and '70s focused on exposing early layers, mainly the 'sovereignty' periods of the First and Second Temple, while ignoring and destroying other archaeological layers, mainly Muslim. In exposing these 'sovereignty' periods, restoring them, and presenting them to the public in a certain way, a one-sided story was created: the Jewish-Zionist story of Jerusalem. The Israeli excavators of the city dedicated themselves faithfully to this story. Probably they, or most of them, also believed in it, but this is not the important point. The archaeologists were faithful not only to this one-sided story, but also to the various demands (on behalf of the government, the army, religious bodies, planners, contractors, etc.) that were aimed at strengthening and maintaining this story at the expense of any other story. Therefore, when the state demanded to build fast and to give up excavations and preservation of remains, the archaeologists almost always gave up too, and at best made compromises with the authorities.

This relationship between the archaeologists and the state in the Old City of Jerusalem did not change significantly from 1967 to the present. One may debate whether the archaeologists were properly rewarded for their faithfulness. The authorities did not and do not see archaeology as an important priority, and its legal and public status seem only to deteriorate further and further. However, one may also observe that the state rewarded its excavators kindly: those who cooperated with the Zionist narrative, and accepted the conditions set by the authorities, were rewarded by excavation permits, budgets, possibilities for advance in academic and professional life, and also various prizes and honors.

The price paid for these prizes was heavy. The archaeologists lost professional status in the Old City. The duration of the excavation, the nature of excavating, the process of decision making (when to start, when to finish, what to preserve, what not) were all dictated by the circumstances—that is, the authorities. Furthermore, the interpretation of the finds, the story told by the archaeologists, was also limited to one narrative, dictated by the agenda of the Israeli government. The alienation of the local non-Jewish inhabitants causes damage to antiquities. There is no chance that scholars from countries other than Israel would come to excavate in the Old City of Jerusalem. One may say that Israeli archaeology in the Old City since 1967 is an ethnic, nationalistic, and religious archaeology.

With the end of the excavations of Mazar, Avigad and Shiloh in the early 1980s the first phase of large Israeli excavations in the Old City has ended. The large and most significant excavations of this phase were located in areas of direct Israeli occupation: the Jewish Quarter, the *Kotel*, the Tower of David, and from Jaffa Gate to the Zion Gate.[8] Israeli research fits the boundaries of Israeli settlement and direct control. This bias is the result of the alienation and lack of trust of the local Palestinian inhabitants, motivated by political reasons. In the end, the political circumstances dictated the archaeological research of Jerusalem, not scientific research questions. Perhaps this was so in Jerusalem in the past and perhaps it will stay like this forever; but we should understand it now. Thus, one must take with a grain of salt the words of archaeologists, who call themselves men of science with purely professional opinions that are free of political inclinations.

8. An exception was Silwan, where the excavation was made mostly in areas bought by Rothschild in the early twentieth century CE.

Archaeology in Israel, 1948–1973: Selected Documents

Raz Kletter

Many studies exist on archaeology and the history of Palestine/Israel, but few articles about the history of Israeli archaeology since 1948 have used primary sources. In the present paper I present a few documents that give a taste of the scope of archaeology in the early decades of the state of Israel.

The translations from Hebrew are by the author. Words given in transliteration (in italics) are intended to clarify meanings rather than follow linguistic rules. The spelling of places and persons is notoriously difficult. Quite a few persons 'Hebraized' their names and even used different spellings, which do not follow linguistic rules (for example, Ẓimbalist, Ẓori, Tsori). I have used common spellings when they exist. My own comments are given in square brackets.

Most of the documents come from the State Archive in Jerusalem. I thank the archive and especially the personnel of the reading room for their assistance.

At first, my plan was to present one document per year. However, this would result in a article that is much too long and dogmatic. Some disorder would fit better the subject of this paper. I therefore chose not to fulfill this plan.

1948: Sandfly Fever, Boils, and the Fate of Rockefeller Museum

As a result of the 1948 war Jerusalem became divided. The Palestine Archaeological Museum, commonly called the Rockefeller Museum (after its donor) became part of the area controlled by Jordan. The curator in charge of the museum, J.H. Iliffe, wrote the following letter to Immanuel Ben-Dor (former employee of the Mandatory Department of Antiquities, now deputy director of the Israel Antiquities Unit), on 2 September 1948:

Dear Ben-Dor,

I rang you up to-day but you were away (according to your maid).
The [Rockefeller] Museum is intact so far I am glad to say, and in fair shape. I have been living here myself when in Jerusalem, with Dimitri [Baramki] and Yousef Saad and about 15 attendants. I also established a 'pied a terre' with Harding in Amman, for the sake of communication with the outside world, etc. I shall be leaving in about 10 days en route to the United Kingdom, but shall probably retain my capacity as de jure Curator until the period of my leave expires (several months). During my absence I am hoping to arrange that Harding shall be acting Curator in my stead. . . .

I hope you are keeping well under the inevitable stress and strain; also the Kahanes, Kallners [=Amirans] Avi-Yonahs and all. I had an attack of 'sandfly fever' followed by an outbreak of boils and had to spend a few days in hospital, but am now recovered from these.

Dr Sellers, as you may know, is here as Director of the American School of Oriental Research. We are all most interested in the find of Hebrew Manuscripts [=Dead Sea Scrolls] in Palestine. Had I not been so pre-occupied with merely mechanical tasks last March and April, I should have no doubt gone and followed up Trever's photographic activities at St Mark's Convent and elsewhere. As things stand, however, I understand that various institutions are in the market for the manuscripts. I have pointed out to the Americans, and should be grateful if you could do so to anyone interested whom you may know, that as this find was made during the period of the Mandate, the Department of Antiquities should have had the first opportunity to acquire some of them. I am not sure what the legal view will be when an administration of Jerusalem is again set up. I am sorry that experience of the last fifteen or twenty years of the Museum's policy in regard to excavators, casual finds, and so on, does not seem to have produced that mutual confidence which I have always aimed at. It is disappointing (to say the least) to find Big Business taking advantage of our difficulties and in the market for things which were rightfully the Museum's. . . .

I will try and telephone you again when I have another opportunity. Meanwhile, all best wishes to Mrs. Ben-Dor and yourself, the Reifenbergs, and all our old friends, and hope we may meet again under happier circumstances ere long (Source: GL44874/16; English in origin).

Here is a dying breath of the empire. The letter is written on 'Palestine Archaeological Museum Government of Palestine' stationary, but the 'Government of Palestine' is crossed over, as it no longer exists. So is the subtitle 'Department of Archaeology'. The former subordinate at the Mandatory Department is now deputy director of the new authority. Many wishes of Iliffe in this letter never came true, but he could not foresee it at the time. The Dead Sea scrolls mentioned here became the property of the Hebrew University. The words about the 'administration of Jerusalem' relate to a

plan of the United Nations for an international administration of Jerusalem, which never materialized.

The Rockefeller Museum was more than just a museum. The magnificent building housed in addition to the museum extensive antiquities collections; archives of negatives, maps, and files of sites; the only archaeological library in Jerusalem and the best in the Levant; as well as laboratories, work rooms and offices of the Mandatory Department of Antiquities. On the eve of leaving Palestine, on 20 April 1948, the high commissioner transferred the museum to the rule of an international board of trustees, to be headed by Iliffe. The board was mainly composed of Western scholars; but one member represented the Hebrew University, Professor E.L. Sukenik (1889–1953). Jordan refused to allow Sukenik entry to its area in order to join board meetings. The board refused to hold meetings in a neutral place that Sukenik could have reached. The Israel Antiquities Unit (since 1955, Israel Antiquities Department or IDAM for short) under Shmuel Yeivin (1896–1982) tried to form some agreement of sharing or even buying parts of the Rockefeller, and Israel claimed part of its endowment from the United Kingdom, but to no avail.

Although Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, it did not interfere with the Rockefeller for many years. The Jordanians were interested in developing Amman and built a new museum there. Jerusalem saw little investments; without a Department of Antiquities, and only the limited endowment fund, the Rockefeller Museum became 'frozen'.

In 1966, Jordan nationalized the museum. The international board did not protest and signed the transfer, which meant its own death warrant. Allegedly the move was due to shortcomings in the functioning of the board, but in practice it was part of a wave of nationalism. Ironically, however, the Jordanians did not have much time to enjoy this confiscation. In June 1967 Israel occupied the West Bank and soon annexed East Jerusalem *de facto*, including the Rockefeller. The museum was not seriously damaged, though battles raged around it. Since Israel regarded itself as legal inheritor of all Jordanian assets in the occupied area, the confiscation enabled it to take direct control over the Rockefeller Museum. Since 1967, it has served as headquarters of the IDAM (from 1989, the Israel Antiquities Authority or IAA, which replaced the IDAM). Several IDAM employees had served in the same place before 1948, and in 1967 they felt like they were returning home (Milka Cassuto-Salzman, then IDAM librarian, gave a lively description of her return to the Rockefeller library).

The fate of Rockefeller after 1967 is no less intriguing. In a decision taken very soon after the 1967 war, the exhibition halls were given to the custody of the then new Israel Museum. For this and for various other reasons, which deserve a separate study, the Rockefeller Museum remains as 'frozen' today as it was under Jordanian rule. The Hebrew labels, which had been covered

up by the Jordanians, were restored. Yet in general the exhibition—although charming to scholars—remains outdated. There are relatively few visitors and no community that holds the museum dear to its heart.[1]

1950: Changing a Learned Society's Name

On 27 June 1950, David Ben Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, wrote to Dr B. Maizler (Mazar; 1906–1995), chairman of the Hebrew Society for the Exploration of Eretz-Israel and Its Antiquities:

> Dear Dr Maizler,
>
> I approve with gratitude receiving the volume of *Yediot* [Bulletin] (3-4, year 15); blessed be the Society for its scientific enterprise, which adds honor to the State of Israel and to Hebrew scientists working in it.
>
> Allow me to wonder about the translation of the society's name into English. . . . I wonder about the name Palestine that you still use. A land of this name does not exist (in my view it never existed). The origin of this name is not pure: it was given by Greeks who hated Israel. It related to an ancient tribe, of which no remains are left. It defines no area. It is meaningless. In place of it, one must simply say 'Land of Israel', if for any reason one does not want to say just 'Israel'. Several English explorers (for example Tristram) have used this name even before the establishment of the State of Israel. The Land was called under this name since the days of Joshua Ben-Nun.
>
> If you use this name, it seems to me that there is no need for the words 'Hebrew' or 'Jewish'. A society in Israel that publishes in Hebrew does not need to add at all the title 'Hebrew' to its name. As Mendele [the famous Jewish author Sholem Yankel Abramovich, 1836–1917] said, one need not add to his address the words Gospodino Yebreo—everybody knows that Mendele *Mokher Sfarim* is a Hebrew (Sources: part of the letter in BIES 16, 1951–52: 74-75; full copy GL5548/18).

During the Mandatory period the society used the common name of the Land, which had three official languages. In English, it was called Palestine, and in Hebrew, Eretz-Israel. With the new state established and after the bitter war, there was no place for Palestine; it 'simply' had to be replaced by the Land of Israel. Mazar answered Ben-Gurion on 7 July 1950:

> Honorable Prime Minister,
>
> I express hereby my thanks for his letter of 12th Tamuz this year and for his important suggestion, which I shall bring to the next meeting of the Council of the Society.

1. For the Mandatory period, Iliffe 1938; 1949; Sussman and Reich 1987. After 1948, see Cassuto-Saltzman 1965; Seale 1966; Kletter 2006: 174-92, fig. 19.

> The name [Palestine Exploration Society] was given to the Society by its founders the late David Yelin, Dr Mazia, Prof. Sh. Klein and others during 1921–22, probably under the influence of the name of the 'Anglo-Palestine Bank' and the official name of the Land at the time of the establishment of the Mandate Government. Naturally, we must abolish it as soon as possible, following the scripture, "I shall wipe out the name of Amalek under the skies" [*sic,* cf. Exod. 17.14; Deut. 25.17]. One must first mention that the name Syria Palaestina was given to the entire Land by Hadrian Caesar in order to wipe out the memory of Judea, the official name of the Land until the Bar-Kochba revolt. This name the Caesar took from Greek sources, where it was limited to the southern coastal plain (Philistia). Furthermore, in our [Jewish] sources it is spelled *Palestini* (*dukas Palestini*), also in Arabic. In fact, foreigners too continued using the name Iaudaea, even the Church fathers often state that Palaestina is Iudaea. However, Jews have recognized the name Eretz-Israel alone, and this name was well known also to non-Jews.
>
> It is therefore very desired that the society shall be called [in] Hebrew: THE SOCIETY FOR EXPLORATION OF ERETZ-ISRAEL AND ITS ANTIQUITIES, and in English ISRAEL EXPLORATION SOCIETY. This suggestion shall be made in the next Council meeting and I hope that it will be unanimously accepted . . . (Source: GL 5548/18, unpublished earlier).

If one wonders about the involvement of the prime minister in the name of a learned society, one must point out how Binyamin Mazar hastened to follow the advice, turning it into a religious *mitzvah*. The society indeed changed its name accordingly, after a discussion in the council meeting. Apparently there were some other views, but the BIES report is laconic about them.[2]

1953: The Dead Sea Scrolls Abroad

The first large exhibition abroad of antiquities from the state of Israel was arranged in 1953 and was called 'From the World of the Bible'. It received great praise and was exhibited in several places in the United States and elsewhere. The Dead Sea scrolls, acquired by the Hebrew University ca. 1947, were the key find, but their exhibition caused legal headaches, as reported in the following letter from Sh. Yeivin to Binyamin Mazar on 8 July 1953. The letter was sent from New York just before the exhibition was opened:

> Dear Binyamin,
>
> I arrived safely together with the scrolls some ten days ago, but did not write you earlier only since the technical arrangements occupied most of my time and left me no time for writing. Now I wish to dwell on two

2. Kletter 2006: 314. The IES homepage is http://israelexplorationsociety.huji.ac.il.

matters related to the presentation of the scroll segments in the exhibition 'from the Land of the Bible'.

Since in our [former] talk about it you have raised the problem, whether we do not endanger the scrolls with confiscation, which may be placed upon them by demand of the Government of Jordan, I saw fit to raise this question in front of the representatives of Israel here, before the scrolls are taken out of their hands and moved to the Metropolitan Museum. I spoke about it with members Harman and Doron. Under their proposal the matter was presented to Dr Robinson, the legal advisor of the Israeli embassy to the UN. He thought that the Government of Jordan has no chance of winning such a trial, but also that one should not ignore the possibility that the Government of Jordan would start such a trial just for the purpose of annoying. Therefore, he saw need for consulting with a local expert for American legislation, to know precisely what are the circumstances that may face us. Following his advice we all consulted together—Doron, Robinson and me—with Mr Arthur Kuhn, a local Jewish lawyer, one of the most experienced and famous for American Law. Present was also a local Jewish lawyer, Mr H. Margalit, affiliated with the matters of the Israeli Consulate. After a prolonged discussion, when all the legal points and possibilities were clarified, it was found that there is only one way to ensure ourselves against such legal harassing by the Government of Jordan, that is, the legal principle that local courts have no authority concerning trials between countries. Hence followed the conclusion about announcing the scrolls as property of the State of Israel and not some Israeli public or private institution; for then it shall be a claim between two states, which local courts cannot discuss, and not a claim by a state (Jordan) against a public or private institution (the [Hebrew] University), which local courts are authorized to discuss. Under the request of the official representatives of Israel here will be written, therefore, in the label describing the exhibited scrolls: 'property of the State of Israel'.

Naturally, from this label neither the Government of Israel nor the Antiquities Unit will have any claim of ownership or other right concerning the said scrolls. They shall remain as they have been the property of the Hebrew University and the University shall maintain all the rights that follow out of this ownership. It is done only for one goal and to ensure this aim—things explicitly so you know that there is here no bad intention, or a wish for hiding the real ownership over the scrolls, or to boast with property that does not belong to the [Antiquities] Unit. With heavy heart and great sorrow I agreed to this demand of our official representatives here, since there was no other way, according to the view of the legal experts, of presenting the scrolls to the public without risking legal acts by the Government of Jordan. [p. 2]

The legal experts also clarified to me that this declaration on the label does not legally contradict the fact that the scrolls are property of the University. Therefore, if some reports will be published in the media about this label, I ask you to take care that no shout or denial will come from the relevant [=University] authorities, lest those involved shall become a matter of laughingstock, and the effort to protect the scrolls, as far as human hands can, shall fail . . . (Source: GL44880/13, unpublished earlier).

First, some data could be found on people mentioned in this letter. Avraham Harman (1914–1992) was Israel consul in New York in 1953–55 and ambassador of Israel to the United States in 1959–68; from 1968–1983, he was the president of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem (http://harman-lib.huji.ac.il/NEW_SITE/info/avraham_harman_e.html). Arthur Kuhn, spelled here *Kyuhen* (with *yod*) is almost certainly lawyer Arthur K. Kuhn (1876–1954). Dr Walter Moses, born in Berlin, 1921, was the founder of the Ha'aretz (later Eretz-Israel) Museum in Tel-Aviv in 1958.

In the rest of the letter Yeivin asked Mazar to agree to allowing the scrolls abroad for a longer time, not taking them back during the middle of the exhibition. He promised that they will be safely returned with the diplomatic courier service. Yeivin also mentioned a 'friend' who tried to interfere with the scrolls—probably Dr Walther Moses, with whom Yeivin had a conflict concerning this exhibition.

The scrolls were later transferred to the Shrine of the Book. With the opening of the Israel Museum in 1965, the Shrine of the Book became part of its complex.[3]

1956: Selling the Antiquities of the State

Dr Bruno Kirschner was a numismatist, a private collector of antiquities and a member of the Israel Exploration Society from Jerusalem (BIES 15: 57; 18: 105). On October 14, 1956, he applied to Shemuel Yeivin, director of IDAM, with an innocent suggestion:

> To the Management of the Antiquities Department, Jerusalem.
>
> Dear Sir,
>
> I hereby allow myself to suggest that the Antiquities Department—following the custom for many years of the Museum named after Rockefeller, as remembered—will put to sale antiquities, from which the department has large quantities and no scientific or museum needs.
>
> Let the Department set in its exhibition place a vitrine where the objects that the Department is ready to sell are evaluated, including the prices.
>
> It will be needed to take care that merchants, antiquities-dealers, etc., will not abuse the chance to buy antiquities cheaply and sell them expensively. Let the sale be to private people only.
>
> With honor,
>
> (-) Dr B. Kirschner (Source: GL44873/9, No. 167)

This letter set the wheels of the IDAM administration in motion. At this period the IDAM was a small governmental unit in a centralized, 'socialist'

3. Finch 1954; Kenaan-Kedar 2006; for later debates about the publication of the scrolls, see Israeli 2008.

regime. It had little financial independence and needed approval for monetary acts. The IDAM 'convinced' the officials of the Ministry of Finance that sale of 'duplicates' of antiquities is worthy, but not profitable, since it requires fixing and cleaning the antiquities, registering them, etc. If not profitable, why proceed with it at all? It was just an excuse, in order to keep hold of the revenues, rather than having to deliver them to the Ministry of Finance. The selling was approved, and a budget item for selling antiquities was added in the IDAM finances; it appears in the books for three years. We do not think that the Ministry of Finance shared the view that the sale of antiquities is not profitable. They probably bided their time, letting the IDAM start an experiment, which they hoped would be proven profitable in the long run.

However, no item was ever sold, and no income was registered in the antiquities sale budget item. There are no documents that explain why, only vague references to 'difficulties' that forced postponements. Perhaps it was an ethical issue. Alternatively, the IDAM could have realized that it would not benefit from the sale of antiquities. The Government Touristic Company (GTC) was at the time responsible for all matters of tourism, and was involved in a sharp conflict with the IDAM concerning historical sites, their preservation and development for tourism/national gardens. The GTC was a huge and powerful enterprise, governed by Tedi Kollek. Among other things, it supervised tourist shops, thus becoming involved with and encouraging antiquities shops (which were supervised by the IDAM). It also started to manufacture and sell modern replicas of antiquities to tourists. Since most buyers of antiquities in Israel at that period were tourists, sales of antiquities might have been transferred from the IDAM to the fitting authority—the GTC. Admittedly, this is only a guess.

Kirschner politely repeated his proposals. In 1959, he writes: 'surely the IDAM had enough time during the last three years to discuss and solve the difficulties. and can give a final decision?' (GL44873/9). When Avraham Biran (1909–2008) replaced Shemuel Yeivin as director of IDAM, in 1961, Kirschner asked again. Biran, a true politician, replied with the following oxymoron: 'I think the hour has come to discuss the matter positively; but I am afraid that we will not be able to overcome the difficulties at this moment' (GL44873/9).

The idea, like a plague, returned a few times later, especially with capitalism the new idol and archaeology low on the state's list of priorities. In the 1990s the IAA contemplated the sale of sherds, but luckily never engaged in the practice. Yet, we should not forget that Israel only inherited the system of legal trade in antiquities from the British Mandatory Government.[4]

4. Kletter and Kersel 2007; Barkat 2003; Avni 2005; Gal 2005; for the IDAM-GTC conflict, Kletter 2006: 250-83.

1959: The Clean Destruction of Kolonia

Tedi Kollek (1911–2007), the legendary mayor of Jerusalem, received innumerable praises for his tolerant policy toward the Arabs of Jerusalem. He enjoyed great public relations and little is told about his earlier years as the general manager of the prime minister's office in the 1950s, a position of immense power, in which he faithfully served the Ben-Gurion regime. Together with Yosef Weitz (1890–1972) of the Jewish National Fund (JNF, *Keren Kayemet le-Yisrael*) and the Government Tourist Company (GTC, which Kollek himself headed), he was responsible for the 'evacuation' of deserted Arab villages in the area of Jerusalem. An example is the village of Kolonia/Qaluniya (near Moza, west of Jerusalem).

In 1960 new legislation for lands was passed. The Israel Land Administration was established, taking over responsibility for state lands, which included large areas that belonged to Arab villages until 1948, and later were administrated by the Jewish National Fund (JNF). Anticipating the change, Yaacov ('Jan') Yannai (probably 1911–1996, the first commander of the communication corps 1945–1949), the secretary of the Committee for Improvement of the Landscape of the Land of the GTC, applied to Yosef Weitz on 15 January 1959. He summarized in his letter a former meeting that took place with Weitz, Kollek, and David Ben-Shabtai (the legal advisor of the GTC):

> 1. We pointed out the necessity for the JNF under its new form as administration for matters of lands to undertake upon it a significant part of the works of improvement of the landscape of the land, especially in the field of cleaning and planting.
> 2. We pointed out the plan of beautifying the road to Jerusalem. . . . We raised the problem of the forest of the 40s, the farm at Shivta, planting at Avdat and the evacuation of ruins of Arab villages.
> 3. Mr Weitz expressed his interest in the said plans and claimed that his first job as head of the new administration would be to take care of sides of roads. . . .
> 4. It was concluded that Mr Weitz will handle the destruction of the village Kolonia and the planting in the area of the ruins. The GTC will transfer to the JNF the sum of 3,500 Lira for that aim. According to Mr Weitz, the above-mentioned sum covers 2/3 of the entire expense.
>
> [Signed] Y. Yannai.

Mr Weitz wanted to stress that his body contributes to the operation and is not profiting from it. Deserted Arab villages, left after the 1948 Nakba, dotted the landscape. Some were destroyed early after the war in the Galilee, near Jerusalem and elsewhere. Others became part of military firing ranges for training of the army. Many remained quite complete, slowly deteriorating by nature or looted for materials. Some buildings were being reused by the new settlers. The villages were a source of inconvenience,

since their existence contradicted the official narrative of the return to an empty land. In April 1959, Kollek complained to Weitz:

> A few days ago you told me that you destroyed the village Kolonia following what was agreed between us. To my great sorrow it is not so. Perhaps in relation to paving the road a few houses were destroyed, but remains of dozens of houses exist and nobody yet touched them. I will thank you if it will be done soon. I want you to understand that this financial effort is quite serious in the frame of the meager means at our disposal, and if we did it we are interested in a full clean operation, as agreed between us.
> With Blessing, T. Kollek.

The ruins had to be cleanly destroyed. D. Levinson of the GTC wrote Weitz again on 7 June 1959. Despite promises made earlier on several occasions, the village was left 'standing in its former condition'. Levinson threatened that the GTC will demand the money back and solve the 'evacuation of the ruins in another way'. The letter was written on official prime minister's office stationary, with copies sent to Tedi Kollek and to B. Yeshaya, the head of the Jerusalem District. On 22 June 1959 a worker of the JNF reported:

> The fact that you state in your letter that the village stands in its former position is not accurate. The entire village was evacuated and leveled except a few ruins, which cannot be approached because they are located inside worked agricultural land and on high terraces that prevented the tractor from reaching them. As for planting the area, one might assume it will be done —in the forthcoming planting season.

Yannai thanked him on 28 June 1959 and added:

> We had only one goal in financing the act of destruction of the village and that is to prevent from passers-by on the Jerusalem road the pleasure of seeing the landscape of ruins, which raised various questions with tourists. Perhaps there are causes that make the destruction of the houses difficult (these are not a few ruins but many ruins). I ask you to understand that if we do not destroy all the said ruins we would not achieve our goal. We would be very thankful if you will give the order to destroy the ruins in the place . . . (Sources: first letter GL12-5451; other letter G13-5451).

To the best of my knowledge, the archaeologists were neither part of these discussions, nor informed about the operation. The village, like many abandoned Arab villages, was located in an area of antiquities (as even its name implies). Today one can still see in its remains the summer house of the then mufti of Jerusalem, Muhammad Amin al-Husayni.

However, in the 1960s, the archaeologists were asked to join the operation of destruction of dozens of abandoned Arab villages. They gave legal approval by separating 'modern' remains, which were not protected by the Antiquities Law and thus destined for destruction, from ancient remains

that would survive. The archaeologists surveyed the villages and usually also supervised their destruction.[5]

1964: Dances Abroad

On 1 June 1964, Avraham Biran wrote a letter to the IDAM workers. The letter bears the stationary 'The Statler Hilton. Dallas, Texas'. This was a top, luxury hotel—Biran appreciated the good life. The twenty-floor hotel was brand new (completed in 1956). Today it is considered an iconic building, the first modern American hotel. In more recent years it was called the Dallas Grand Hotel. It has been unoccupied since 2001, awaiting reconstruction:

> Hana and the Dear Colleagues,
>
> In the middle of the way to the Western Coast before the flight on the direction for home. Therefore, I have nothing left [to do], but be patient and we shall meet on Thursday 11th June at 4:30 afternoon (I go out in the El-Al flight on Wednesday evening from New York through Paris and Athens, but I do not intend to delay anywhere).
>
> Here there was the 'Ambassador Gala' (*neshef*), when the cute girls of sixteen are presented in front of the representative of the State of Israel and when your faithful slave leads the cotillion—it is a dance (and it's not Early Bronze!).
>
> I still have two or three days in San Francisco and Berkeley and then to New York and home.
>
> Farewell, yours, [Signed] Biran (Source: GL44888/6, handwritten; unpublished earlier).

In his years as director of IDAM Avraham Biran made quite a few tours abroad, usually for raising money (he was also a member of the Israel Museum establishment committee and later a management member and chairman of the Bronfman Museum Board). Especially in the 1960s, Biran stood in close contact with the IDAM secretary, Hana Katzenstein, and the two exchanged quite cordial letters. The names of the places must have seemed exotic to workers of the IDAM, who rarely traveled abroad in this period.[6]

5. Kletter 2006: 62-63. The 1960 legislation: Yiftachel and Kedar 2000; Barkat 2005. On Arab Qaluniya: Khalidi 1990: 309-10; http://www.zochrot.org. On the archaeology of the site: Greenhut and De Groot 2009. For the destruction of villages in the 1960s, Shai 2006. On the villages in general, Benvenisti 2000; Kadman 2008; Sulimany and Kletter (in press).

6. For Biran's obituary, Ilan 2009. On the Statler Dallas hotel, see http://www.preservationnation.org/travel-and-sites/sites/southwest-region/statler-hilton.html; Childers 2010: 8, 97-102.

1965: An Ancient Column from Caesarea

During the 1950s and 1960s, there existed a custom of presenting important state visitors, such as foreign prime ministers and presidents, with gifts of antiquities that the IDAM supplied. The finds were registered. In one case the U.S. foreign embassy asked to 'legalize' the holding of an ancient column from Caesarea:

> [Stationary:] U.S. Information Service.
> The Foreign Service of the United States of America
> American Embassy, Tel Aviv, Israel, July 7, 1965
>
> Dear Dr Biran,
>
> As requested by Miss Pnina Pommerantz of your department, I am writing to put on record, for your approval, the facts regarding a portion of a small sandstone column in my possession.
>
> The column is about one meter long and 10 inches in diameter, and has vertical fluting and a little other carved delineation, but all markings are weatherworn and indistinct. I understand it originated in Caesarea, and that it was given to my predecessor, who left it in the dooryard of the house in Savyon which he had leased and occupied, and which I took over from him on an extended lease when I arrived in Israel three years ago.
>
> Photographs showing the column are enclosed.
>
> I have had the column moved to the residence of Ambassador Walworth Balbour for safekeeping and would like to leave it there as a decoration which all visitors may see, if your permission to do so is forthcoming. I am providing a copy of this letter to the Ambassador, and (since I will have left the country) I would appreciate it if your response were addressed directly to the Ambassador, who would like to see the column remain at the Residence in Herzelia Pituach, but is anxious that it be with your approval.
>
> Thank you for your consideration, sincerely,
>
> [Signed] George A. Mann, Director USIS (Source: GL44864/9, unpublished earlier).

Walworth Balbour (1908–1982) was the U.S. ambassador in Israel in 1961–1973. After Biran approved the transfer of the column, the embassy asked (letter 13.9.1958, GL44864/9) to change the location, since the column could not 'be exhibited to its best advantage'. They asked if it could instead be 'placed on the property of the Deputy Chief of Mission at Rehov [=Street] X, Pinat [=Corner of] Rehov Y in Kfar Shmaryahu where we have ascertained that it can be most attractively shown'. Presumably it is still there, if it did not continue its travels along the various leasing of properties by U.S. employees at Herzelia Pituach or Kfar Shmaryahu.

As for the U.S. Information Service, mention must be made about their not very famous role in the establishment of the Israel Museum, Jerusalem. Credit for the making of the museum goes usually to Tedi Kollek (the execution) and to Mordechai Narkiss (1897–1957) of the Bezalel Art Museum

(the vision). Kollek was not the most objective source about the history of the Israel Museum, and very few people knew the real facts. Today we know that the vision of a complex of museums was created by the IDAM archaeologists and the Ministry of Education in the early 1950s. The establishment of the museum started after U.S. Intelligence Service money, frozen in Israel in 1948, was released by the Americans for cultural aims in Israel. The 'frozen' funds were used, among other things, to build the central building with the archaeological exhibition. Later, thanks to a generous donation, this building was named the Bronfman Museum. The 'frozen' funds were also used by the GTC for improvement of sites such as Megiddo, Avdat and Shivta. For that aim, and unknown to the IDAM, the Committee for the Improvement of the Landscape of the Land of the GTC (Yigael Yadin included) registered an association, with one aim being conducting archaeological excavations. At Avdat and Shivta, the GTC announced to the IDAM that it would do 'cleaning work'; in fact, it performed illegal excavations.[7]

1973: Plea of Workers from the States of the Sea

The following letter represents the new period after 1967. The cheap relief work of new immigrants of the 1950s–early 1960s is replaced by the cheap work of the conquered in the territories:

> To: Prime Minister Mrs. Golda Meir
> Through: His Honor the Prime Minister's Advisor for Arab Matters
> The Foreign Minister, Mr Aba Eban
> The Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr Yosef Burg
> The Minister of Law, Mr Shimeon Shapira
> The Minister of Defense, Mr Moshe Dayan
> The Minister of Health, Mr Victor Shem-Tov
>
> H[onorable] S[irs], Gentlemen!
>
> Subject: *Employment of IDAM workers at the Rockefeller Museum by Special Contract*
>
> The Letter of Mr Shimeon Nekhama—Chief Advisor for Workers' Matters (attached) [Nekhama's letter not found in this file—RK]
>
> We, signed below, workers of the Antiquities Department at 'Rockefeller' Museum in East Jerusalem, have the honor to notify you that we are employed by the Antiquities Department at 'Rockefeller' Museum permanently since the Mandatory period, including the period of Jordan in East Jerusalem. We have been lucky and have continued working here also after the Six Days War [in 1967]. The continuation of our work at this

7. For the history of the Israel Museum compare Tamir 1990 and Kletter 2006: 108-16.

Museum for over more than thirty years at least for each of us has given us expertise and meaning in our work; furthermore, we have dedicated ourselves completely to the work at 'Rockefeller' Museum, in such a way that we cannot make a living from any other work outside this Museum, whatever and wherever it may be. In addition, we are educating a new generation, which is supported by us and which needs a source of living (*parnasa*).

The activation of the naturalization rule (*khok ha-ezrakhut*) upon us means ours and our sons' and students' destruction and ruin (*harisah u-migur*). One should thank the wisdom of all those who contributed to the policy of open bridges. This policy was a sort of salvation (*ge'ulah*) to all the Arabs, whether they are in the State of Israel or in the "State beyond the Sea" [*be-medinat ha-yam*]. This policy was also a very strong proof of the democracy for which Israel is famous. It was also a major source for prosperity and economic joy for the Arab citizens in Israel and especially in the [Occupied] Territories, who managed, thanks to the policy of open bridges, to save their deposits and their property and shares in their State beyond *the sea*. Furthermore, we have not the sufficing words to express and describe the amount of satisfaction and prosperity which were the fruits of this policy, when we try to speak about the fact that tens of thousands of Arab youth had the benefit of continuing their studies and receiving jobs and work in their States Beyond the Sea [*be-medinot ha-yam*]; and they also made *aliyah* to the Land (*'alu artzah*) in the frame of families' reunion through the open bridges.

The activation of the naturalization law upon us as condition for the continuation of our work at 'Rockefeller' Museum wipes us off (*mekhaselet*) completely. [It] destroys our existence. [It] removes all our ties with the Arab world and affects badly the younger generations, for whom we live, in that it prevents them from continuing their studies and from receiving work abroad. This work of theirs is quite important: both out of the viewpoint of the economy in the Land, as well as for the huge view that takes care of establishing a dedicated, sincere generation, walking with pride (*bekomah zkufah*) in the state, a matter that we plan for our sons and daughters. We shall not forget [in] our days, and one should also praise, and one must remind you with utmost honor that the program of the Jordanian matriculation exams remained in operation also in municipal and State schools in East Jerusalem and the Territories. This proves to what extent Israel takes care of the fate of our sons and their future prosperity, by giving them all the opportunities to continue their high studies in their countries [lit., 'the state of the sea', *medinat hayam*], and at the same time walk proudly in the state as respectable, decent citizens.

Furthermore, many of us intend to make a pilgrim to Mecca this year. The rest plan to perform this duty next year, God permitting (*im yirtzeh Hashem*). We assume that your pure and clear (*zach ve-tahor*) conscience will not allow you, under any circumstances, to activate the law of naturalization upon us. Since indeed, this law prevents us from entering Mecca, something which our Moslem brothers in Israel suffer from, as you well know.

> Finally, we pray and hope that you will, with your great kindness, handle our case, merely from a humanitarian viewpoint; since your eyes look forward to our disciplines-sons (*baneynu ha-khanikhim*), who watch from far away the danger that lurks in the naturalization law, which the Chief Assistant for Workers' matters plans to activate upon us; and to the sword of lack of employment and dignity that is raised against us. All of us, in one tongue and unanimously call upon you: 'do not send' [this sword against us].
>
> Please come all together to our help, following the words of our fathers the Sages (*Tana'im*) in their vineyard at Yavneh, who stated: 'whosoever preserves a single soul [of Israel, Scripture ascribes to him] as if he had preserved a complete world' [*Sanhedrin,* 37a].
>
> Please accept kindly our best regards for the New Year; we all hope that the joy of the New Year will be unto us and thee as the rejoicing at Bet Ha-sho'ebah, about which was said: 'whoever has not witnessed the rejoicing at Bet Ha-sho'ebah has never seen a real festivity' (Mishna, *Sukkah* 5.1).
>
> Fare well, with much honor, best regards, and thanks in advance,
> [Names and signatures of six workers]
>
> Copies: [Names of five addressees, including the General Manager, Ministry of Education and Culture; the Civil Service Commissioner, Ministry of Finance; and A. Biran, Director of IDAM] (Source: GL44888/11; unpublished before).

The Open Bridges policy was decided by Moshe Dayan (1915–1981) after the 1967 war, enabling movement of mainly commodities from the West Bank to Jordan. The letter about the 'naturalization law' was sent to the workers on 31 July 1972 from Shimeon Nekhama. It specified that these workers were employed under a special contract, following section 14.234 of the *TAKSHIR* (the state's employment rules). According to these rules a government work contract could not be extended for more than six years, unless the employee acquired Israeli citizenship. Now the six years have almost passed (assuming the workers were continuously employed since 1967). Of course, it was quite difficult for workers from East Jerusalem to acquire Israeli citizenship. In theory, they could become citizens, and this possibility remains also today; in practice, very few (ca. 1 percent) took citizenship. The state did nothing to encourage it; taking it meant forfeiting Jordanian status and loosing access to Mecca. The inhabitants also saw this step as admitting Israel's authority to rule over them, an authority which they did not accept. Only the area was *de facto* annexed in 1967, not the population, who became permanent residents. No legislation was passed demanding from or promising the Arabs of East Jerusalem Israeli citizenship. The workers misinterpreted the regulations of work, as if denoting a plan of Israel to force them to take citizenship. There was no such plan.

Biran promised to help these workers, and at least one of them was still working in the Rockefeller for a further thirty years or so, until retiring

to pension. This proves that some 'arrangement' was found concerning the regulations of work, which enabled continuation of employment. This shows that Israel was quite willing to ensure a certain level of employment, even at a price of improvisations to rules. Israel never tried to use such rules as an incentive for the taking of Israeli citizenship.

Someone quite versed in Jewish culture 'helped' the workers to produce this letter, turning it into a farce that cites every possible cliché. The translator/editor was perhaps from East Jerusalem too, or an Israeli-Arab, since quite a few 'East Jerusalemites' needed services of Hebrew translation and representation before the new authorities. The translator/editor probably saw such flattery as the proper style for persuading Israeli authorities. The letter gives an idyllic vision of heaven on earth, a new united Zion, where the gentiles live peacefully, rejoice in the rejoicing of Beth Ha-Shoe'bah, and pray to the God of Israel. Fathers were present at the Yavneh Sanhedrin and the sons make *'Aliyah* through open bridges. In reality, non-citizens were working 'temporarily' for six years, and can at best pray for renewal of their temporary status. They are afraid of the fruit of nationalization, which the gods, however, have no intention of bestowing upon them.

It is sad evidence of the corruption of language. This tongue I call *lingua capitolina orientaliana* (*LCO*), the tongue of the United Lands of Jerusalem. We all speak it now, conquerors and conquered alike.[8]

In summary, the public, even students of archaeology, are used to descriptions of wonderful discoveries and sites, allegedly representing a 'pure' science of the past, detached from present politics. Awareness of and understanding of the contexts in which archaeology is created call for use of primary sources—*fossils directeurs*—just as we use archaeological finds for the study of distant periods. Without studying such documents, we shall never approach an understanding of 'how it really was'.

8. For the best description of the early years of Israeli rule in East Jerusalem see Benziman 1973; on a professional union of archaeologists in Israel during the 1980s, Kletter and Sulimany 2010.

Israel and Palestine: A Critique of How to Create and Anchor a Nation-State Archaeologically

Terje Oestigaard

Introduction

The world today as opposed to the past is organized in nation-states. A nation-state differs from a nation with regard to territory. The Palestinians are referred to as a nation without a state whereas the Israelis have a nation-state: Israel. The state has autonomous power through constitutional and statutory provisions which decide who shall be the nationals within the state's territory. The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that 'everyone has the right to nationality [and] no one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality'. The problem is, of course, when two nations claim rights to the same territory. 'Nationality is of cardinal importance to every person because it is mainly through nationality that the individual comes within the scope of international law and has access to the political and economic rights and privileges conferred by modern states on their nationals' (*The New Encyclopædia Britannica*, 15th edn). A nationality or a nation without a territory is consequently denied access to land and water, which is the basic core in the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Thus, in the process of creating a nation-state, archaeology is important because it defines territories where 'modern political rights have been substantiated in and expanded through material signs of historic presence' (Abu El-Haj 2001: 281). Archaeology is not about 'discovering the facts on the ground', but it is a practice of *intervening* in the world (2001: 11). Sir Mortimer Wheeler once said that Palestine is the country 'Where more sins have probably been committed in the name of archaeology than any commensurate portion of the earth's surface' (Laughlin 2000: 3). It is therefore of utmost importance to examine critically how archaeology is used to define and legitimize one nation's territorial claims at the expense of another nation's rights. Or one may ask as does Whitelam: 'What func-

tion does this particular representation of the past fulfil and what other possible representations of the past is it denying?' (Whitelam 1996: 23-24). Therefore, the aim of this essay is to analyse the role of archaeology in the Israel-Palestine conflict by (1) presenting the background of the use of archaeology in Israel, (2) discussing the relationship between nationalism, ethnicity and archaeology, (3) investigating theoretically if these interpretations are scientifically valid from an archaeological point of view, and (4) exploring why archaeology has the power to legitimate nation-states.

Biblical Archaeology, the Promised Land, Water and War

Biblical archaeology and Israeli nationalist archaeology are different branches of archaeology, but both provide Israel as a nation-state with a certain type of archaeological interpretation and explanation. A religious identity is often perceived to be even deeper and more resilient than a national identity:

> For most nations, exploring the past is a source of national pride and prestige, symbolizing the historical continuity of a country, or even its timelessness. . . . However, for the people of Israel, and for those for whom the Bible is meaningful, archaeology uncovers a special message (Meshorer 1995: 30).

Therefore, biblical archaeology has had another agenda than mainstream archaeology, and Albright defined it as anything that 'may be restricted to Palestine, or it may be extended to include everything that illustrates the Bible, however superficially. Accordingly, I shall use the term "biblical archaeology" here to refer to all biblical lands—from India to Spain, and from southern Russia to southern Arabia—and to the whole history of those lands from about 10,000 BCE, or even earlier, to the present time' (cited in Dever 1990: 14). Similarly, G.E. Wright defined a biblical archaeologist as one who:

> studies the discoveries of excavations in order to glean from them every fact that throws a direct, indirect, or even a diffused light upon the Bible. He must be intelligently concerned with stratigraphy and typology, upon which the methodology of modern archaeology rests. . . . Yet his chief concern is not with methods or pots or weapons in themselves alone. His central interest is the understanding and exposition of the scriptures (Wright 1962, 1971).

Or, in other words, biblical archaeology

> is a biblical discipline which exists for the benefit and interest of biblical studies. So long as people read the Bible and asks questions about history and culture of the ancient world which produced it, those questions have to

> be answered; and the sum of those answers will comprise biblical archaeology (Lance 1981: 95).

Just to illustrate the premise, in this region, following William Dever, the holy book is:

> not 'history', but 'His' story—the dramatic account of God's miraculous dealings with a particular people designated to become his chosen. The Bible is almost exclusively a sacred history, or 'salvation-history', written as it was . . . from a divine perspective, since its authors claim to be inspired by God. Thus the Bible is scarcely interested in humans, that is, historical explanations. It intends to tell us not so much how or when ancient Israel originated, but why (Dever 1997: 20).

In this sense, Israel is not like any other country since it is the Promised Land given to the Chosen People by God. In the Hebrew Bible there are extensive passages describing the qualities and the environment of the Promised Land. God tells the Israelites that Israel is not like Egypt where the grain has to be irrigated (Châtel 2010: 274): 'The land you are about to cross into and possess, a land of hills and valleys, soaks up its water from the rains of heaven. It is a land which the Lord your God looks after, on which the Lord your God always keeps his eye, from year's beginning to year's end' (Deut. 11.10-13). Moreover, the importance of water in this arid environment is reflected in the many words the Hebrew language has for rain, while water and hope for fertility are also the subject of prayers during the festival of Passover. Indeed, in the Hebrew Scriptures rain is seen as more precious than the Torah and the creation itself, as shown by these rabbinic sayings (Châtel 2010: 275): 'The sending of rain is an event greater than the giving of the Torah. The Torah was a joy for Israel only, but rain gives joy to the whole world, including birds and animals'; and 'The day of rainfall is greater than resurrection; … than that whereon the Law was given to Israel … ; than when the heaven and the earth were made' (Isaacs 1998: 159).

Thus, from the very beginning, possession of land and water were two sides of the same coin. From the fall of the Ottoman Empire, European settlers driven by Zionist ideology made their desires to link water and borders explicit. The chairman of the World Zionist Organization wrote to the British prime minister, David Lloyd George, and asked for an expansion of the British Mandate for Palestine:

> The whole economic future of Palestine is dependent on its water supply for irrigation and electric power, and the water supply must be from the slopes of Mount Hermon [Jabil esh Sheikh], from the headwaters of the Jordan and the [Lebanese] Litani River. . . . [We] consider it essential that the northern frontier of Palestine should include the Litani, for a distance of about 25 miles above the bend, and the western and southern slopes of Mount Hermon (cited in Zeitoun 2010: 57).

The geopolitical map of water and land was one of the aspects the PLO contested in the 'Oslo II' agreement in 1995. The Palestinians have been prevented from using any water from the Jordan River and any diversions of Wadi Gaza upstream of Gaza since 1967. Today, as a consequence of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza strip, the distribution of the water resources is roughly 80/20 in favour of Israel (Zeitoun 2010: 57). Although not the only reason, access to water played an important role as a cause for the Six Day War in 1967 (Zeitoun 2010: 59). Access to water is central to the Israeli settlers; the settlements control the water resources and this ideology is dependent on archaeology.

Since the 1967 war extensive archaeological surveys have been conducted on the West Bank aimed to solve the longstanding debate about the character of the 'Israeli settlement'. 'That project of fact collection substantiated the West Bank as the biblical heartland, materializing its identity as Judea and Samaria in archaeological facts', which created a territorial conception, as Abu El-Haj argues, that 'is cardinal to settler claims that the region is rightfully an integral part, and in effect, the most fundamental part, of the Jewish state (Abu El-Haj 2001: 236-37). Thus, conquest and occupation based on archaeological 'facts' have been an intrinsic part of this ideology.

There is a close relationship between archaeology and war. The former general and minister of defence, Moshe Dayan, compared Israel's war of independence with Joshua's battles of Jericho and Ai. He was also an enthusiastic amateur archaeologist, who collected and bought archaeological objects wherever he could. His archaeological collection was the largest private collection held by an Israeli (Broshi 2001: 31). According to Dayan:

> The people of Israel were exiled from their land, but their land was never exiled from their hearts. In whatever country they dwelt throughout the nineteen Diaspora centuries, they yearned for their homeland (Dayan 1978: 6).
>
> The people closest to me were the founders of our nations, the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob . . . they carried a weighty burden—a new faith, a new nation and a new land. . . . Their main concern was not the present but the future, not themselves but the generations of their nation who would come after them (Dayan 1978: 13).

Thus, the nation was to come—uniting nationalism, archaeology and war. General Dayan says, 'To me, David Ben-Gurion was the Moses of our time, which witnesses the resurrection of the nation of Israel and its restoration to its land. Like Moses, Ben-Gurion set the people of Israel a dual objective: to return to their homeland; and to be a "moral nation". Like Moses, Ben-Gurion was a unique figure' (Dayan 1978: 77). Or in the words of Silberman (1997: 66-68):

> the territorial shape of the Holy Land (long left hazy and undefined, but which ultimately became the legal boundaries of the post–World War I Palestine Mandate) was determined not by census or political debate, but primarily by the work of archaeological surveyors of the British-sponsored Survey of Western Palestine . . . the most fundamental transformation in the social meaning of the ancient sites of the Holy Land came with the administration of the country by the British Mandatory authorities. . . The frequent mentions of disputes between the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim inhabitants of the country, on the one hand, and the arriving archaeological expeditions on the other, over property rights to ancient sites, underline the new relations of power . . . the ancient sites of Palestine now became a field of active historical reinterpretation, ideological identification, and political legitimization. Digging, like war, had become politics pursued by other means.

Political Archaeology, Nationalism and Ethnicity

Nationalism as an ideology constructs identities linking social organization and culture. 'Nationalism does indeed see itself as a universal, perennial and inherently—self-evidently—valid principle' (Gellner 1997: 7). The nationalist principle aims that the political unit or territory and the 'ethnic' identity are the same. Therefore, within a political unit everyone has to be of the same culture, and the function of culture is to 'reinforce, underwrite, and render visible and authoritative, the hierarchical status system of that social order' because that 'homogeneity of culture is the political bond, that mastery of a given high culture is the precondition of political, economic and social citizenship' (Gellner 1997: 20, 29). Thus, 'nationalism stresses solidarity between the poor and the rich, between the propertyless and the capitalists. According to nationalist ideology, the sole principle of political exclusion and inclusion follows the boundaries of the nation—that category of people defined as members of the same culture', Thomas Hylland Eriksen argues. 'Perhaps nationalist ideologies tend to be more concerned with clear-cut, unambiguous boundaries than other ethnic ideologies. An explanation for this could be that nations are territorial and political units with an inherent need to divide others into insiders and outsiders on the basis of citizenship' (Eriksen 1993: 102, 116).

It is natural that archaeology emphasizes identities. On the one hand, identity is a fundamental aspect of humans and being human, and 'identification can be defined minimally as the ways in which individuals and collectives are distinguished in their social relations with other individuals and collectives. Identity is a matter of knowing who's who (without which we can't know what's what)' (Jenkins 2004: 5). Since archaeology is about studying humans, identities will inevitable be an intrinsic part of the discipline.

However, the relation to nationalism is of another kind. By definition, if nations exist, they must have a past for their own good as well as for the individuals who belong to them (Díaz-Andreu 1996: 68). Marie Louise Stig Sørensen has addressed the relationship between archaeology and nationalism, and she argues that archaeology becomes institutionalized when it becomes politically powerful. At that time archaeology appears in the public sphere; it is seen as important in political decisions, and it becomes popular and gains new meanings (Sørensen 1996). The primary role of archaeology with regard to nationalism is to 'anchor' the nation by making it simultaneously timeless and very old, and therefore nationalism itself has its reasons and its roots in the past (Sørensen 1996: 28). Consequently, when a nation is 'anchored' in a given territory, within that limited geographical area there is no space for other nations to 'anchor'. The premise is: one nation, one area, one anchor.

Therefore, a question such as 'when did this state emerge?' in a multiethnic society is in reality 'did our state emerge before other groups came here, and if so, was the latter state-formation process dependent upon the former?' (Wailes and Zoll 1995: 23). As a consequence of this line of arguing, those who were at a certain territory first have the right to be there, and archaeology plays a fundamental role in this process. As I have suggested before,

> Political archaeology is the study of how archaeology is a part of political structures whereby archaeology as a discipline gives these constructions legitimacy, authority and scientific autonomy in contemporary societies. The study of the relation between archaeology and nationalism is crucial for two reasons: (1) The past is used to give nation-states territorial legitimacy in relation to other nation-states. Archaeology is a means for nation-states in territorial disputes, and the integration of archaeology and nationalism has consequences for the organization and the hierarchies in between nation-states. (2) Different ethnic groups within a given nation-state are ascribed various political rights and economical resources. The legitimacy for these internal hierarchies is often found in claims of exclusively inherited rights from the past. Political archaeology aims to illuminate the premises and the ideologies behind the contemporary political hierarchies when ethnic groups or nation-states aiming strategic advantages use archaeology as a means in their enterprises (Oestigaard 2007: 11).

With regard to Israel, the Zionist claim to Palestine rests on one or a combination of the following arguments: (1) divine right, (2) historical right, and (3) compelling need (Finkelstein 1995: 100). Two national concepts have dominated Jewish life from the very beginning of Israel's history: the concepts of the Chosen People and the Promised Land. Even though most Jews have lived in Palestine only during small time periods over the last three thousand years, and that a Jewish state or states have existed there only for

a few centuries, the Jews have felt tied to the Promised Land throughout the three thousand years by a close and unique link (Kohn 1971: 807). What is then the problem with 'anchoring' the Jewish identity to this land?

The answer lies theoretically in the very concepts of identity, culture and ethnicity. Following Jenkins, 'identity can *only* be understood as process, as 'being' or 'becoming'. One's identity—one's identities, indeed, for who we are is always singular *and* plural—is never a final or settled matter' (Jenkins 2004: 5); and 'Cultures are always in the process of changing and reconstructing themselves, sometimes in almost unrecognizable, qualitatively different ways. There is no culture that has existed "since time immemorial"' (Kohl and Tsetskhladze 1995: 151). A 'culture' is not a 'thing' that consists of certain clearly distinguishable characteristics and properties frozen in time and given once and for all. There are two main problems with the concept of culture: First, within almost every group there are enormous variations in the way of living and being; and second, it is almost impossible to distinguish or draw borderlines between cultures. Therefore, one way to distinguish cultures has been to use ethnicity (Eriksen 1999).

However, if the 'cultural content' is fluid, ethnicity is even more so because *ethnicity is situational and relational*. This means that ethnicity may occur in certain situations as a social categorization based on relational differences and not absolute inherited qualities from the past (Eriksen 1999). Ethnicity is used to separate *us and them*, but who one belongs to is context dependent (Eriksen 1993: 33); and as Fredrik Barth showed, a person may belong to one ethnic group in one setting and another group in another setting. Although ethnic categories may imply cultural differences, they are not the sum of 'objective' differences—only those the actors themselves regard as significant (Barth 1969: 14). One definition of ethnicity may thus be that ethnicity is 'an aspect of a person's self-conceptualization which results from identification with *one or more* broader groups in opposition to others on the basis of perceived cultural differentiation and/or common descent' (Díaz-Andreu 1998: 205).

Regarding the past and archaeology, it is of the utmost importance to stress that this identity is always in the making and changes, and then the question is: how does it relate to material culture?

Charlotta Hillerdal argues that 'In many cases, ethnicity is the wrong answer to the wrong question when it comes to archaeology' (Hillerdal 2009: 16) because it is important 'to understand ethnicity as a phenomenon *within* group identity, not as an *explanation* for group identity. . . . Ethnic identity is not at all a working concept for historical analysis, nor is it an objective, or non-prejudiced, group analysis' (2009: 12). It is basically because what culture and ethnicity are about that 'Tracing an ethnic group back in times is therefore not possible in the way ethnic and nationalistic

movements would like to be. There is no 'true' cultural essence preserved through generations' (2009: 28).

Hence, ethnicity is not identical to nationalism, although the majority of nationalistic ideas are ethnic in their character. Therefore, it is important to stress and emphasize that identity, ethnicity, nationalism and legitimacy to land are four very different concepts or ideologies that do not necessarily have anything to do with each other, although they are often combined and presented as inseparable. As a consequence, 'Nations exist . . . and the archaeologist's job . . . is to accept them as artefacts while constantly drawing attention to the process of fabrication' (Archerson 1996: viii) because 'ethnicity in theoretical terms and ethnicity in political practice and legislation disagree more often than not' (Hillerdal 2009: 36). Such constructions of the past can be rejected on scientific grounds and on ethical ones.

Following Philip L. Kohl,

> Ethical standards for accepting or rejecting nationalist uses of archaeology may vary in specific cases, but they should ideally satisfy the following three criteria: (a) the construction of one group's national past should not be made at [the] expense of others'; (b) all cultural traditions should be recognized as worthy of study and respect; and (c) the construction of a national past should not be made at the expense of abandoning the universal anthropological perspective of our common humanity and shared past and future, the positive lessons learnt from evolutionary and diffusionary prehistory (Kohl 1998: 243).

Biblical and Israeli Archaeologies

The main problem with any debate in this field is that biblical archaeologists and Israeli nationalist archaeologists share one fundamental premise: the authenticity of the Bible as a book describing real events and people. Hence, from the perspective of Israeli and Christian fundamentalists: 'The Old Testament story of Abraham, of the charge laid upon him by God, and of the binding promise ("Unto thy seed will I give this land") that accompanied it, is where, however incongruous it may seem, the annals of the modern State of Israel must begin' (Samuel 1989: 1). According to Thomas L. Thompson, on the other hand, 'Today we no longer have a history of Israel. Not only have Adam and Eve and the flood passed over to mythology, but we can no longer talk about the time of the patriarchs. There never was a "United Monarchy" in history and it is meaningless to speak of pre-exilic prophets and their writings. . . . Not only is the Bible's "Israel" a literary fiction, but the Bible begins as a tradition already established: a stream of stories, song and philosophical reflection: collected, discussed and debated. Our sources do not begin. They lie already *in media res*. We can say now with considerable confidence that the Bible is not a history of anyone's past.

The story of the chosen and rejected Israel that it presents is a philosophical metaphor of a mankind that has lost its way' (Thompson 1999: xv). The debate regarding what kind of book the Bible is and how the stories should be interpreted is not the topic here (but see, for instance, Lemche 1985; Thompson 1987; 1992; 1999; Pfoh 2009), but it is important to emphasize that the dogma of the Bible's historicity is shared by biblical and Israeli archaeologists alike. This has severe consequences for the archaeological interpretations.

It is impossible to trace ethnic groups in the past because of the theoretical implications it has that ethnicity is a changing social relation taking place in the interface with other groups and not a cultural core of static values, which is transferred from generation to generation in an unbroken pure and unsullied form. Thus, tracing ethnicity becomes even more problematic when this is done archaeologically, because if one believes that it is possible to document ethnic groups in the past, the underlying premise is that these identities have material correlates in the archaeological record. Ethnicity as an identity and social relation has thus to be represented in a one-to-one relation with a given material culture.

Since both biblical and Israeli archaeologies are relatively large fields of research, it is impossible to go into detail here with regard to how the past in constructed, but I will give some examples of the unchallenged premise and axiom that there has been a continuity of a 'cultural core' that can be traced for more than three thousand years (for a more in-depth study, see Oestigaard 2007, or a shorter version Oestigaard 2003). I will start with some biblical archaeological examples.

The existence of an ethnic Israelite group is not only a premise but also the most important research question to solve. William Dever has been a protagonist in biblical archaeology who advocates this explicitly.

> There was a 'people' somewhere in the land of Canaan called 'Israel' just before 1200 BCE. And they were already well known to Egyptian intelligence, and already well enough established to be considered a threat to security in Egypt's declining Asiatic empire. If these 'Israelites' were not our hill-country people, then who and where were Merneptah's 'Israelites'? And how can we account for our hill-country complex if it is not 'Israelite'? Simple logic suggests connecting the two sets of facts (and they are facts); and if so we have at hand the textually attested ethnic label that minimalists demand (Dever 1997: 43).

> But what do these people look like when they first emerge as a separate group; how can they be recognized archaeologically; and what can that tell us about their immediate background? At the very least, some sort of 'label' for this group is needed, if only for convenience; and any label necessarily implies something about origins. We can hardly dub them simply 'the X-people', or worse still, continue to speak impersonally of 'assemblages' or 'entities' (Dever 1997: 40).

How convenient is it just simply to label them 'Israelites' instead of, for instance, 'Palestinians' or the 'X-people'?

Even before the Israelites existed, they existed in the form of 'proto-Israelites'. Ethnicity is seen like a little seed which eventually blossoms after some centuries and then become the 'true' Israelite ethnicity living on for millennia. In the words of Dever again:

> The rationale, then, for employing the more tentative term 'proto-Israelite' for the pre-monarchical period is precisely that here we are on the horizon where the later biblical Israel is in the process of formation, still nascent. But even with this precaution, how do we know that the 'Israel' of the Iron I period really is the precursor of the full-fledged later Israel, that is, of the Iron II period, so that we are justified in using the term 'proto-Israel' as early as the thirteenth–twelfth century BCE? The argument is really a simple one, and it rests on the demonstrable continuity of material culture throughout the entire Iron I–II period. If the basic material culture that defines a people exhibits a tradition of continuous, non-broken development, then it is reasonable to argue that the core population remains the same (Dever 1997: 44).

In the article 'Social Structure in Palestine in the Iron II Period on the Eve of Destruction' Dever gives what might be called a theoretical approach to ethnicity:

> Ethnic consciousness, which is an essential concomitant of national identity and statehood, is often thought to be difficult or even impossible to trace in the archaeological material, but that is not necessarily the case. Artefacts may be considered properly the 'material correlates of behaviour', that is, they reflect patterns of both individual and social behaviour, as well as the thought and the intent that behaviour expresses. In that sense, archaeological remains are indeed an index not merely to material culture, but to culture, indeed to a particular culture. And when there emerge consistent, distinctive regional patterns, i.e. archaeological 'assemblages'—we can compare and contrast these with other such assemblages in order to isolate what may be called archaeological culture. . . . Finally, if we happen to possess literary texts that are sufficiently detailed and can be closely correlated with such an archaeological culture and its development over time, then we may be able legitimately to attach a specific ethnic label (Dever 1998: 420-21).

The rationale for assigning ethnic labels is what the totality of the 'archaeological assemblage' represents:

> There is no single feature that characterizes the Iron I highland villages now known from surface surveys, but rather a combination of features, one that is constant and unique. I believe that this distinctive combination constitutes what we call an 'archaeological assemblage', usually typical of a socio-economic, cultural, or ethnic group—in this case, one that I would not hesitate to label 'proto-Israelite' (Dever 1997: 30).

Apart from biblical archaeologists, Israeli nationalist archaeologists argue in the same way. General Moshe Dayan has been mentioned before, and a few quotes from another general, Professor Yigael Yadin, who excavated Masada from 1963 to 1965, may suffice. He was assisted by thousands of Israeli and foreign volunteers. Yadin's account of the Israeli volunteers is filled with descriptions of their enthusiasm: 'It was an unforgettable moment. Suddenly a bridge was thrown across two thousand years. . . . How great was their satisfaction, and ours, when they—the young generation of the independent State of Israel—uncovered with their own hands the remains of the defenders of Masada' (Elon 1971: 287). His often-quoted remark during a speech as part of a national-ritual army ceremony at Masada in the summer of 1963 is a classic: 'When Napoleon stood among his troops next to the pyramids of Egypt, he declared: "Four thousand years of history look down upon you". But what would he not have given to be able to say to his men: "Four thousand years of your own history look down upon you." . . . The echo of your oath this night will resound throughout the encampments of our foes! Its significance is not less powerful than all our armaments!' (Elon 1971: 288). Finally, Yadin had no small hope with regard to the role archaeology should play in Israel. The 'belief in history' would be a substitute for religious faith: 'Through archaeology they discover their "religious values". In archaeology they find their religion. They learn that their forefathers were in this country 3,000 years ago. This is a value. By this they fight and by this they live' (Elon 1971: 281).

Without going into more detail, there is sufficient evidence documenting that from the very beginning archaeology has had a crucial role in anchoring the ancient past with today's Israel in a one-to-one relation. The 'ethnic, cultural and religious core' of the Israelites has continued throughout history for three thousand years. One may argue that at the time Moshe Dayan and Yigael Yadin wrote and excavated most of the theoretical literature referred to above was not a part of the scientific discourse, which is true. However, the more disappointing it is to see that the same way of reasoning still exists in contemporary biblical archaeology, and indeed, in Israeli society.

And there is indeed a twist of irony in this. This paradigm which biblical archaeologists such as Dever are working within is called the cultural-historical approach. This approach gained support at the beginning of the twentieth century, and it laid the foundation for the nationalistic misuse of archaeology. In 1911, Gustav Kossinna defined and systematically applied the concept of an archaeological culture in conjunction with the 'direct ethno-historical' method in his book *Die Herkunft der Germanen* or '*The Origin of the Germans'*. The basic axiom was that in all periods, sharply defined archaeological *culture areas* were equally and clearly recognizable as peoples and tribes. Cultures were defined on material traits, associ-

ated with sites in a particular region and time, and cultural continuity was assumed to reflect ethnic continuity (Jones 1997: 16; see Trigger 1994).

This cultural-historical view also influenced European and British archaeology, and Gordon V. Childe, who is seen as one of the most prominent persons in the history of archaeology, worked along the same line of thought. In *The Danube in Prehistory* (1929), Childe defines culture in this way:

> We find certain types of remains—pots, implements, ornaments, burial rites, house forms—constantly recurring together. Such a complex of regularly associated traits we shall term a 'cultural group' or just a 'culture'. We assume that such a complex is the material expression of what would to-day be called a 'people' (as the adjective from 'people', corresponding to the German '*völkische*', we may use the term 'ethnic'). Only where the complex in question is regularly and exclusively associated with skeletal remains of a specifically physical type would we venture to replace 'people' by the term 'race' (Childe 1929: v-vi).

Only four years later, Childe became sceptical and rejected this view of culture and its connection to race (Childe 1933). Due to the political misuse of archaeology during the Second World War, this paradigm was abandoned in favour of functionalist approaches because of the consequences it could lead to and in fact did (see Oestigaard 2007).

Although this research tradition has long gone in the history of archaeological thought, the way Israel's history is constructed is not in accordance with contemporary theory, but based on the same premises with which the Germans developed their ideology before the Second World War. Be that as it may, Israel has achieved its goal. Once the past is conquered and colonized, regardless by which means—war, colonialism and German ideology—it is almost impossible to reverse and de-colonize it—the territory has become Israeli and not Palestinian.

Palestinian Archaeology as a National 'Anchor'

The consequences of this research tradition is that the Palestinians are 'a people without history, or are deprived of that history by the discourse of biblical studies; they become unimportant, irrelevant, and finally non-existent. It is an act of interpretation presented as objective scholarship, carrying the full weight of Western intellectual institutions, which is intricately bound to the dominant understanding of the present in which the modern state of Israel has made an 'empty' and 'barren' land blossom (Whitelam 1996: 46).

It has been argued that the reason why nationalist archaeology has played such a small role in Palestine is because they are Muslims, and consequently they will lose the 'we were here first' argument since Judaism is an older world religion. Nevertheless, it is intriguing to see what the Israeli reaction

is when such arguments are presented. It is worth quoting Magen Broshi at length, because he says:

> There is an archaeological-historical argument that looms very high in Arab ideology and is marshalled frequently in political polemics: the assertion that almost all the peoples of the ancient Near East were Arabs. So writes A. Hadidi, the director of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan: 'Jordan became thickly settled during the Iron Age (1150–550 B.C.). This is the age of native Arab Kingdoms of the Edomites, Moabites and Gileadites.' Because it is important to Arabs to prove their early origins here, it is often stated in modern Arab literature that the Hebrew tribes conquered the land from the Arabs who preceded them. Their claim is that Arab tribes have been settled here since prehistory. To buttress their assertion they identify almost all the ethnic groups who appear in the history of the land as Arab: Canaanites, Edomites, Arameans, Jebusites, Phoenicians, Hittites, Assyrians, and even the Hyksos and the Philistines. From such genealogies it would naturally follow that the Arabs were settled in the land much before the Jews, as well as after the Arab 'reconquest' in 636 CE. *Such arguments lack any scientific basis, and even in the political sphere hold no respectability* (Broshi 2001: 35, my emphasis).

I agree that such arguments lack any scientific basis and hold no respectability in the political sphere, but that will include the Israelis as well! The interesting thing here is therefore the Israeli reaction and way of reasoning. When Arabs use the same arguments and methods as Israelis, they are immediately shut out of the archaeological debate. They are denied the right to search for their 'roots' as a pure fabrication (Abu El-Haj 2001: 249). Whereas the same way of arguing is 'scientific' as long as it is Israeli history, and gains immense political respectability: in the Israeli discourse it is simply ridiculous nonsense if the Arabs use the same rhetoric. This is indeed an academic colonialization. Although this cultural-historical approach to the past is flawed from a contemporary, archaeological and theoretical perspective, what are scientific and political valid arguments among the Israelis are not being allowed for the Arabs. As Edward W. Said argues in *The Question of Palestine*, 'we must understand the struggle between Palestinians and Zionism as a struggle between a presence and an interpretation, the former constantly appearing to be overpowered and eradicated by the latter' (Said 1980: 8).

This is what political archaeology is about: revealing the structures by which archaeology is used as a political means to create hierarchies between groups whereby some are given basic rights and access to land and water (and other human rights and privileges) whereby others are not. The struggle for the past is a struggle for the present and the future, and without a past or with an inferior past, a group has lost its rights to a given territory. And when one group has started the 'we were here first' arguments, the premises for the debate have been given, and other groups have to follow these premises despite how flawed they are.

Creating a Palestinian history which covers all aspects of the region's history independent of the Hebrew Bible is an immense task for several reasons. On the one hand, a Palestinian history demands its own time and space, which it has been denied for more than a century by the discourse of biblical studies and later Israeli nationalist archaeology (Whitelam 1996: 69). On the other hand, when one nation has anchored their history within a certain geographical area, other histories are denied time, space, relevance and even existence. The effective use of bulldozers as part of Israeli excavations to erase any traces of non-Israeli or Jewish cultural heritage is one way of doing it (Abu El-Haj 2001). This is how nationalism and archaeology work together at their worst.

The Power of the Artefact

Archaeology thus has a special role in national myths as national symbols. Norway has Viking ships; Greece has the Acropolis; Egypt has the pyramids; and Zimbabwe as a country is named after an archaeological site: the Great Zimbabwe. Israel has, among others, Masada and the Wailing Wall. It is the authenticity of these and other sites, archaeological finds and cultural heritage that are actively used politically because they are ascribed with values representing contemporary societies which give legitimacy to nation-states to various degrees. It is therefore of interest to explore what gives the artefact this power.

Archaeological artefacts and sites are material, but intangible heritage, such as events and beliefs, enables people to experience and take part in a relationship with the past. The idea of 'authenticity' is a key word for museums because it designates that something is original and a unique work, apart from copies and replicas, giving the artefacts authority and credibility. However, the authenticity of objects is not always obvious and straightforward, and the authenticity of objects and cultural heritage is negotiated, constructed and context dependent. Moreover, authentic objects are believed and perceived to be 'real' and have an 'aura'. Age is one criterion that creates authenticity, but also the life-histories of objects and artefacts define what is real and what is not authentic, or just similar or a replica, which may nevertheless be seen as authentic (Holtorf and Schadla-Hall 1999). Authenticity can also be 'staged' where 'genuine fakes' or newly built constructions are made to evoke the same feelings for visitors as the originals, and heritage is thus a result of a process involving interpretation, manipulation and invention of the past for future purposes (Ching 2008). When the first session of the World Heritage Committee discussed the word 'authenticity' in 1977, they also discussed the concept of *progressive authenticity*, which would allow modification of contexts and landscapes (Rössler 2008).

The materiality of objects represents a reality that creates a unique experience and deepens the knowledge of historic processes and events. The materiality of objects and places brings closeness to history, people and their histories. Materiality brings intimacy to the past—it becomes more real, and therefore it can become an integral part of one's identity and indeed partly define it. It is precisely because of this that archaeology is an ideal tool for creating a nationalist past.

In this process not only archaeologists but also other social institutions and interests are involved. Archaeology is regulated by laws; not everything can be excavated and some make these decisions, finance the excavations and the publications, and establish and fund museums. In particular the last aspect is important since governments are interested in certain types of histories, and state-sponsored archaeological excavations, restorations and successive exhibitions can be seen as a form of a conservative educational programme (Anderson 1993: 181). This is evident in the process prior to the opening of the Israel Museum on 11 May 1965. In the Knesset on May 30th, 1960, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion delivered a speech as a part of a debate concerning the budget allocation for the National Museum of Israel:

> As it befits an ancient people, dedicated to the values of the spirit throughout its tortured history and now reviving its independence in its ancient land, Israel, in its twelfth year of statehood, is about to establish a National Museum. It will rise in Jerusalem, city of King David, amidst the timeless Judean hills. . . . Despite the daily preoccupations with defence and security, economic and social development, and housing the newcomers, it has been resolved to spend part of our resources, energy and talent in what is destined to become the most impressive cultural centre in the country (Weyl 1995: 8).

Thus, the aim was to make history timeless and forever Israeli. However, the material or the archaeological remains are not superior to their interpretations, because 'objects do not speak for themselves, and that we have to speak for them' (Haaland and Haaland 1995: 106). Or in the words of Ernest Gellner: 'Primitive man has lived twice: once in and for himself, and the second time for us, in our reconstructions' (Gellner 1988: 23). Therefore, it is the duty of archaeologists not to make the present identical with the past.

Although this is not difficult in theory from an academic point of view, the use of the past in society can be seen as part of the cultural grammar of nation building. All nation-states have three features that identify them: a national flag, a national folk costume and a national song. These codes are particular on display during sporting events such as the Olympics or the World Cup, but also during official meetings between heads of states (Löfgren 1993). The important point is that the materiality and the respective people of a country are combined—they are one and the same. In fact, it is the national symbols that shape the most important identity from the state's

perspective—the national one—and this logic is also transferred to archaeological objects, sites and historic events.

As an example of the difficulties that occur when ethnicity and nationality are connected to materiality, the Norwegian flag during Norway's national day 17 May is indeed an ethnic marker. However, even ethnic and national markers which have been created for this very purpose are dependent upon context. A Norwegian flag as a sticker on a German caravan indicates probably nothing more than that some tourists have had a vacation in Norway (Oestigaard 2007). With regard to the past, it is highly doubtful that any objects were ascribed a status similar to a national flag. Since ethnicity is a social relation, material items may have been used to signify this relation, but that will always be context dependent and in a process of change, which makes it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to trace ethnicity in the past.

Still, the authenticity of archaeological objects and sites are perceived as and constructed to possess the same properties as a flag, or in other words, identifying and legitimating a national or ethnic identity. This is after all the final outcome of nationalism's use of archaeology, and in particular when archaeological objects are included in official symbols. Amos Elon has pointed out this:

> It is intriguing in this context to observe the extraordinary appeal of archaeology as a popular pastime and science in Israel. The millennia-spanning mixture of ancient and modern history, coupled with notions of 'controversial' legitimacy, combine to produce this peculiar syndrome. Archaeological finds have inspired nearly all Israeli national symbols, from the State Seal, to emblems, coins, medals and postage stamps. For the disquieted Israeli, the moral comforts of archaeology are considerable. In the political culture of Israel, the symbolic role of archaeology is immediately evident. Israeli archaeologists, professional and amateurs, are not merely digging for knowledge and objects, but for the reassurance of roots, which they find in the ancient Israelite remains scattered throughout the country (Elon 1971: 280).

Finally, since Israel is not like other countries but the Promised Land for the Chosen People, the religious dimension strengthens this notion of a timeless and an unchanged core of Jewish identity and religion since religion is ultimately believed to be eternal and unchangeable. Thus, when religion and nationalism are combined in this way it becomes a holy nationalism (Oestigaard 2007).

Conclusion

Although the nationalist use of archaeology to 'anchor' the nation-state in the past is quite common among most nation-states, Israel is in many regards in a special position for several reasons: the religious concepts of

the Promised Land and the Chosen People, the diasporas through millennia, the Second World War and the declared independence in 1948 in a region populated by Palestinians. In Israel, archaeology has played a fundamental part in shaping both Israelis' identity and Israel's borders. Archaeology has been a means for political ends, and biblical and Israeli archaeologists have willingly supplied the nation with the knowledge the state needed. In fact, with General and Professor of Archaeology Yigael Yadin and General and Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan, the politics of war and archaeology went hand in hand and were the same. Indeed, in the Palestinian territories there has been an ideological battle of the past, which Israel won by systematically using all means. This way of using archaeology and the premise that the past is interpreted and based on it are not scientifically valid by any standards, but that has been inferior to the overall project: to anchor Israel as a nation-state in the past at the expense of the Palestinians. In this process, archaeological objects, sites and historic events have been ascribed identity and given national values as representing Israel in more or less the same way the national flag does. From an Israeli nationalist perspective one must admit that the project has been successful, but from an archaeological perspective it is a story of a scientific disaster. Still, it shows the power of the past and archaeology when it is mobilized on political grounds, which is also a warning with regard to Palestinian history. Within this paradigm where nation-states are anchored in an ancient past, the Israelis will always have an ideological and religious superiority, but as with the establishment of Israel as a state, it was the atrocities of the recent past and not claims to a mythological past that eventually gave rise to Israel as a state. Therefore, if the current situation is enough (which it is) to legitimate the presence of a Palestinian state, then it will also create space and time to write a Palestinian history based on sound archaeology without falling into the nationalist trap.

Biology as History

Nadia Abu El-Haj

Not long after the founding of the state of Israel, Israeli researchers began studying the state's Jewish population. They collected data on Jewish immigrants to Israel, along with some data on Arabs and Druze.[1] The oft-stated goal was to take this 'unique opportunity' to study the different Jewish 'communities' (*edot*) before their assimilation into Israeli society made such a scientific endeavour no longer possible. Alongside their Israeli colleagues, human geneticists from the United States and Europe argued that the recently founded Jewish state presented an opportunity that should not be missed. As asserted many times during a 1961 international conference in Jerusalem on 'The Genetics of Migrant and Isolate Populations', Israel was a 'perfect laboratory' for studies of human genetics: it was said that the state had good medical records on its population, despite the fact that the state was little more than a decade old. Israel's was a population whose history was, researchers argued, 'well known'. And it was a country of 'well-defined *populations of different origins*, some of which still exist as isolates' (Goldschmidt 1963: 8; emphasis added). Specifically, the study of Israel's Jewish population(s), researchers believed, would contribute to understanding the general processes involved in short-term human evolution (see Falk 1998; 2006b). In this work of human population genetics, the Jews of Israel were treated simultaneously as a single population with a shared (ancient) origin and as a collection of subpopulations that had migrated to Israel from various points of (more recent) origin.

In the aftermath of World War II, leaders of the Euro-American discipline of human population genetics, many scholars have argued, took up the mantle of studying the 'Family of Man' (Haraway 1989; Steichen 1955). In contrast to race science's focus on biological difference, as a long standard historical narrative told it, population geneticists asserted the biological

1. In Israel, the 'Druze' are classified as a separate population, distinct from 'Arabs'. I am using that designation here.

unity of the human species. That presumed unity formed the epistemological and political grounds for studying human evolution and the dynamics of biological diversity. From the perspective of the international field of population genetics, Israel's Jewish citizenry was regarded as an ideal population in its effort to find diversity within the unity of the human species. Believed to be a largely endogamous community and set of subcommunities, Israel's Jewish population was presumed to share a relatively recent historical origin. Now gathered in a single place, their unity *and* diversity (evidence of short-term human evolution) could be studied at one and the same time. As indicated by the fact that the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations funded much of the work by Israeli researchers in the 1950s and 1960s, interest in their work clearly traveled well beyond the boundaries of the newly founded state (see Kirsh 2003).

From the perspective of Israeli researchers, however, studying the genetics of Israel's ingathered Jewish population was also a project of state building. In a newly founded state that sought to 'ingather' the 'exiles' and merge them into a single polity, the project of population genetics was wedded to the urgency of the state's nationalist project. If generating statistical data about one's population has been a key bio-political strategy of the modern state (Foucault 2007; Hacking 1990), the state of Israel was no exception: knowing the genetics of Israeli Jews was part and parcel of epidemiological studies and medical management, most especially vis-à-vis the massive influx of Jewish immigrants arriving on Israel's shores, many of whom were widely viewed as a risk to the health and vitality of Israel's existing Jewish citizenry (Shvarts *et al*. 2005). More specific to my interest here, generating knowledge regarding the genetics of Israel's Jewish population was simultaneously a practice wedded to the work of *imagining* the nation: what evidence is there that the Jews are a nation with a shared origin in ancient Palestine? Faced with communities of immigrants who from the perspective of the state's Ashkenazi political and scientific elite seemed so radically different, that question took on urgency in the early state period. And for population geneticists who operated within an intellectual tradition within the Zionist movement that imagined peoplehood in terms of European racial and eugenic categories (see Hart 2000; Efron 1994; see also Abu El-Haj 2012), on the basis of what kinds of *biological* evidence could Jewish unity be rendered visible and true?

In reconsidering the histories of race science and population genetics, scholarly debates have focused on questions of biology: What was the status of racial thinking in the post–World War II biological sciences? On what evidentiary grounds were distinctions between human groups drawn? Did population genetics, beginning in the 1950s, unmake the biological assumptions of racial thought and its commitment to distinct natural *kinds*? What is often forgotten in these debates is that race science was never just a biolog-

ical science. Race science, as has been true of all of its scientific heirs, was also a historical science. Researchers working within particular subfields of the biological sciences have long desired to 'know' *history* even as they analysed biological data. They have built narratives about origins, descent, and relatedness on the basis of phenotypes and genotypes. In revisiting the work of Israeli researchers in population genetics in the 1950s and 1960s, it is important to keep that fact in mind: in studying the 'genetics' of Jewish populations, it was the history of the Jews that was, in large part, sought. Various 'physical characteristics' (blood group systems) and genetic mutations (disease-causing genes) were sought and used in order to substantiate the historical origins and unity of the Jewish people, and it was against the apparent contradictory evidence of phenotypic difference (in which the biological and the cultural often merged analytically one into the other; see Hirsch 2009) that researchers framed their work. In what follows, I provide an account of the work of Israeli population genetics in the early decades of Israeli statehood, exploring the relationships among origins, descent and peoplehood. More broadly, I provide a reading of the relationship between scientific practices and political imaginaries in constructing the boundaries of belonging to—or membership in—the Jewish state.

Around 1948

In the years straddling 1948 and 1951, Israel's Jewish population doubled. And more than mere numbers were at stake: there was a dramatic change in the regions from which Jewish immigrants came; and thus, from the perspective of Israel's political and cultural elite, there was a dramatic shift in the character of the state's Jewish citizenry. Of the 101,819 Jewish immigrants to Israel in 1948, 75.5 percent came from Europe and the United States. By 1954, that was true of only 14 percent. The majority had immigrated from either Asia or North Africa (Shvarts *et al*. 2005: 11). The 'absorption of immigrants', as it was called, took on urgency in these early years, and that sense of urgency was driven most centrally by an anxiety about the 'quality' of Israel's new Jews (culturally and biologically). Most of that anxiety was directed toward the state's non-European immigrants, although it is worth recalling that David Ben Gurion once referred to Holocaust survivors as having been 'reduced to . . . "human dust"' (Shvarts *et al*. 2005: 17).The fear of biological unfitness was a prominent issue in public policy and political debate.

The question of biological fitness was not new to Jewish nationalist politics in the early years of statehood. Borne of the entanglement of racial thought with Jewish nationalist politics beginning at the turn of the twentieth century (see Hart 2000; Efron 1994; see also Abu El-Haj 2012), the medical selection of immigrants had been one venue for managing the biology

of the *yishuv*. By the early 1920s, potential Jewish immigrants to Palestine were routinely subjected to medical examinations at their points of departure and, when that failed, in Palestine (Bloom 2007; 2008; Falk 2006a; 2006b; Shvarts *et al*. 2005). And the discourse of health and hygiene—for example, on the part of Jewish nurses in Palestine who tried to inculcate hygienic habits primarily among Jews of the 'Old Yishuv' (both Eastern Jewish communities and Ashkenazi Orthodox Jews long resident in Palestine)—was central to visions of how best to build a new, and a modern, Hebrew polity (Hirsch 2008).

Immediately after the Second World War, Zionist agencies relinquished their criteria for medical selection of immigrants in order to allow European-Jewish refugees to immigrate to Palestine (Shvarts *et al*. 2005). But following Israel's establishment and the massive immigration of the 1950s, a strident debate ensued over whether or not to enforce medical criteria, selecting which Jews could make '*aliyah*' (Shvarts *et al*. 2005: 10). Israel's political leadership by and large opted for 'quantity' over 'quality'. But neither medical inspections and interventions nor eugenic anxieties simply disappeared. The health system was key to the project of immigrant 'absorption'. Hygiene education and vaccination campaigns were launched. And control over children's health was a primary concern: state officials removed children from their Eastern immigrant parents in order to provide what they considered proper medical treatment (Shvarts *et al*. 2005: 161-62) and sometimes, a presumably better life in the homes of Ashkenazi parents in an adoption scheme in which children who were not orphaned were handed over to members of the state political and cultural elite (Shenhav 2006; Weiss 2001).

Medical management and eugenic anxieties were but one axis of the interest in the biology of Israel's Jewish citizenry, however. So too was an intense investment in and anxiety about Jewish peoplehood. For a state founded upon the 'ingathering' of communities who shared little in the way of culture, language and even religious practices, the work of building *the nation* and not just the state loomed large. In that context, a whole other style of reasoning (Hacking 2002) vis-à-vis the question of Jewish biology emerged: one that was interested precisely in the question of 'shared history'—that is, a shared *origin*—as a matter of central concern. Blood group and, to a lesser extent, epidemiological-genetic data were used in order to reconstruct Jewish history, and to 'establish links with the more "esoteric" communities' (Falk 2006b: 157).[2]

2. Given the fact that medicine and public health were key components of managing immigrant 'absorption' the reach of medical institutions and personnel extended deep into the initial 'reception' camps in which immigrants were put and into the *maabarot* or transit camps intended to provide temporary housing to the state's new (eastern) Jewish

Biology and the Nation

By the 1950s, blood groups were the mainstay of the international field of population genetics.[3] Blood groups were understood to be 'physical characteristics' that 'are stable throughout life and appear to have little if any effect on survival' (Mourant 1954: xx). As explained by Arthur Mourant, a leader in the mid-twentieth-century field of population genetics, particular blood groups had certain 'advantages' for anthropological studies:

> [Blood groups] are fixed for life, at the moment of conception, by the genetical constitution of the individual. Also, unlike such features as the size of various parts of the body, they are unaffected by the subsequent history of the individual. . . . Moreover, while visible characteristics of the body, and especially the colour of the skin, have become associated in some quarters with racial prejudice, and allegations of inferiority and superiority, the blood groups have hitherto gathered no such unscientific accretions (1961: 155).

In the aftermath of the Nazi genocide, population geneticists were concerned with the spectre of race that cast a shadow over their work. But rather than abandoning the concept of racial difference, they were drawn to forms of evidence that seemed less 'vulnerable' to politics. They sought to carve out a potentially safe or 'ethical' space (see Abu El-Haj 2012). For many, blood groups were the perfect working objects: scientifically robust (fixed for life and thus signs of genealogical descent rather than environmental pressures, or 'selection') and ethically safe. As Mourant points out, blood group differences were not visible on the body, they had no civilizational or cognitive consequences and they were not associated with any of the kinds of claims that racial thought had put forth vis-à-vis different human groups.

In the late 1950s, a team of Israeli researchers led by Yosef Gurevitch of the Hebrew University–Hadassah Medical School conducted a series of studies on the blood groups of Israeli populations.[4] Gurevitch's team col-

arrivals but which became longstanding places of residence. Blood was being collected for a variety of medical reasons. And it was apparently made available for population genetic research.

3. Blood group systems identify specific antigens, substances that cause reactions when exposed to different antigens. They are important for establishing compatibility between donors and recipients of blood transfusions, and therefore their discovery was key for enabling organ transplants. The first blood antigens to be discovered were 'A' and 'B', although the subsequent discovery of 'O' completed the initial ABO system. Other substances were subsequently discovered: M, N, and then P, which came to be known as the MN system; and then the Rhesus blood groups system (Rh, which can be either positive or negative) (see Mourant 1961).

4. Gurevitch was a medical doctor who immigrated to Palestine in 1921, joined the staff of the Rothschild Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem in 1930 (as a bacteriologist),

lected blood group data from '3,500 individuals from ten communities', as it was reported following his death. And those ten communities were not of the same scale: whereas the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim were single categories, the remainder of the Jews—oriental Jews who were understood, at least formally, to belong to the 'third' large division of Judaism (Margolis, Gurevitch and Hermoni 1960a: 201)—were studied as a collection of distinct and disparate populations: as Jews from Yemen, Cochin, Baghdad, Kurdistan, Persia, Morocco, Tunisia and Tripolitania (in Libya), a collection of categories that moved from city to country to regions without any consideration of the different classificatory regimes that were in play. Moreover, 'the Jews'—a category that presumably incorporated all of these groups and which, by definition, was the population being examined—rarely operated *in practice:* who was compared to whom or what quandaries or problems were being explored is far more complex than the a priori goal of studying 'Jewish communities' would suggest.

Increasingly over the past several decades, critics have drawn attention to the history of Ashkenazi dominance in the Israeli state. Mizrahi Jews were marginalized by the Ashkenazi establishment and subjected to a civilizing mission designed to assimilate 'oriental Jews' to 'the Israeli'—that is, the Ashkenazi Jewish—social and cultural norm (Swirski 1989; Shohat 1989; 1988; Shenhav 2006; Eyal 2006; Chetrit 2010). The view of Mizrahi Jews as marginal to the Jewish state and to the Jewish 'mainstream' is evident in this work of Israeli population genetics: oriental Jewish communities were explored as Jewish communities less known, their histories less clear, their relations one to the other and to the Jewish 'mainstream' a primary object of scientific inquiry and *doubt*. As an illustration, I give a reading of just one of Gurevitch's publications: 'Blood Groups in Jews of Iraq'. I focus on the question of what 'the population' being studied *is* or *is made to be* by virtue of the comparisons drawn and the silence evident in the paper.

As with all of the blood group studies published by Gurevitch and his team, the paper on 'Blood Groups in Jews of Iraq' begins with a lesson in history. 'Iraqi Jews have been considered to be the descendants of the Jews deported from Palestine to ancient Babylonia after the destruction of the first Temple' (Gurevitch and Margolis 1955: 257). Various regimes ruled over the area and various populations came and went:

> So many destructions, displacements, persecutions and massacres took place, that it is difficult to assume that the Jews remained there so isolated as to be considered an anthropologically pure community. Nevertheless, Iraqi Jews themselves have insisted on their being a non-assimilated

and in 1949 became a lecturer in the medical school. He subsequently directed the Department of Microbiology at Hadassah Hospital, and perhaps most important for our purposes, was also in charge of the blood bank (Kirsh 2007: 182).

> Jewry, devoted to Jewish religion and tradition. Intermarriages have not been reported (1955: 257).

The history of 'Iraqi Jews' is somewhat ambiguous, according to this account. There is the claim that Iraqi Jews are not 'pure' Jews, and yet that account sits side-by-side with a cultural narrative that the communities have not assimilated and have sustained endogamous marriage practices. As presented in the paper's opening paragraph, both of these sorts of claims— those based upon the history of Iraqi Jews written in encyclopedias of Judaism and those (presumably) based upon the self-understandings and narratives of Iraqi Jews—were granted equal evidentiary standing. But the reader soon learns that 'the Jews of Iraq' are not a single population. There is not one Jewish community but two. 'The Jews of Iraq' refers to first 'Iraqi Jews', who are 'more accurately' named 'Jews of Baghdad', and, second, to Jews of Kurdistan or 'Kurdistani Jews'. According to Gurevitch and his team, Kurdistani Jews are the 'pure' ones. It is they who more plausibly descend from ancient Israelites with little admixture. Once again combining information from Jewish encyclopedias with the immigrants' self-representations, we learn that the Jews of Kurdistan, by and large, have been saved from persecution and massacres and from cultural influences. They have 'to a great extent preserved the language, customs and religion of their ancestors' (Gurevitch and Margolis 1955: 257). They consider themselves to have lived in Kurdistan from ancient times, being descendants of the ten lost Jewish tribes. Kurdish Jews 'might be considered as a pure stock' (Gurevitch and Margolis 1955: 257; see also Gurevitch, Hermoni, and Margolis 1953).

In the context of these apparent historical facts, the paper offers two sets of comparisons of the blood group data: first, the paper presents a comparison between Kurdish Jews and Europeans. It is worth emphasizing here that this is a comparison between Kurdish Jews and 'Europeans', not European Jews. For example, with reference to the frequencies of ABO, MN and Rh frequencies among Kurdish Jews, 'a very low O percentage and relatively high AB and B percentages were noted, as compared with results found in Europeans' (Gurevitch and Margolis 1955: 257).With regard to the MN groups, 'the percentages were similar to those found in Europeans' (Gurevitch and Margolis 1955: 258).

Second, the paper presents a comparison of the data on the Jews of Baghdad with the data on Kurdish Jews. In this comparison, there is no mention of Europeans or, for that matter, of any population residing outside of Iraq. Some figures are similar between Kurdish and Baghdad Jews, ABO frequencies, for example. Others exhibit 'more of a difference' (MN system distributions). It appears as if the results from studies of Baghdad Jews are being evaluated against the pure(r) stock, the Kurdistani Jews. This paper

presents *two Jewish populations—one* that has a potential relationship to Europeans worth exploring, the other worth evaluating solely in terms of its sameness with or difference from the other *local* Jewish population. Strikingly missing is any reference to any Jewish community outside the Iraqi fold, let alone to a category of 'the Jews' writ large.

Each paper on the blood group of one or another oriental Jewish community is structured in a similar way. Each opens with a history of the community. Some histories were more fully known (Moroccan and Tunisian Jews, Tripolitanian Jews [Margolis *et al.* 1957; Gurevitch, Hasson *et al*. 1955b]) than others (Cochin, Yemenite, Persian [see Gurevitch, Hasson *et al*. 1955a; Gurevitch *et al*. 1956]). Each paper presents comparisons with other populations. And in most cases those comparisons are limited to other oriental Jewish communities. Occasionally there are comparisons with either European populations or Sephardic Jewish populations.

What then might these blood group studies reveal about practical understandings of the Jewish world among Israel's scientific elite at this moment in time? Moreover, what might these papers reveal about the central questions and problems regarding Jewish origins that required resolution or proof? As a population category, oriental Jews posed the biggest problem for Gurevitch and his team: What *is* their history? Is there any evidence of unity among members of this seemingly disparate and widely scattered group? As the scientific publications point out, oriental Jews do not share culture, language, or distinct religious rites. In practice, the 'oriental' is but a residual category. The data on 'oriental Jews' is never presented as a single sample. Each community has a history of its own, however poorly known. What makes these communities 'oriental' for scientific researchers—as was true for the Israeli state, its demographic imagination, and its treatment of these new immigrant communities—is quite simply that they are not in or of the West.

There are several noteworthy differences between the structure of the papers on oriental Jewish communities and those on Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews (Margolis *et al*. 1957; 1960a; 1960b). I focus on one of them here: In contrast to the analysis of blood group data of Sephardim and Ashkenazim, it is almost entirely among themselves that the different Jewish communities of the orient are compared. I want to offer several possible and partial explanations for this distinction in scientific practice.

First, the general lack of broader comparisons between oriental Jewish communities and other Jewish groups seems a logical consequence of the fact that the category is a residual one: How can one compare 'oriental Jews' with Sephardim or Ashkenazim or for that matter with Europeans when the category does not actually exist in any substantive or practical sense? And no evidence of the biological-historical robustness of the category—'oriental Jews'—emerges from the data either. By way of contrast,

one could assume that the blood group data on Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews *confirmed* their existence as biologically recognizable and distinct populations. No such confirmation could be derived from the data, however. Gurevitch and his team treated each group as *a population* from the outset*:* The data on blood group frequencies among the Ashkenazim, as was true of the blood group data on the Sephardim, were collected and reported precisely as that—*as Ashkenazi blood group data.* In turn, the work of collecting and analysing the data on each 'group' reiterated the biological truth that the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim are identifiable populations on biological-historical and not just cultural or religious grounds.

Second, the fact that oriental Jews are compared, by and large, only among themselves can be seen to be a consequence of a persistent racial logic that structured science and politics alike in the mid-twentieth century, and more specifically among European Jews in the Israeli state: In practice it was hard to imagine that *these* Jews—oriental Jews—were actually the biological kin of their European counterparts. They 'looked' different, after all. They were primitive. And the more 'far flung' each community got the less likely any connection to European Jews, Sephardic or Ashkenazi, became (see for example, Gurevitch, Hasson *et al*. 1955a; 1955b).

These papers on blood groups need to be read as part of a project to produce a *content*—in this instance, a *biological-qua-historical content*—for a Jewish peoplehood presumed a priori to exist. And what is evident in the work of human genetics, as was evident in many other policies and practices for integrating oriental Jews into the Ashkenazi state (see Swirski 1989; Shenhav 2006; Eyal 2006) is a practical ambivalence and an uncertainty about the very presumption of Jewish peoplehood upon which Zionism was built. Are all Jews *really* kin? Was it possible *in practice* to imagine and to sustain such an expansive understanding of Jewish kinship and of the Jewish world?

But I also want to propose a second, more counter-intuitive reading that lends insight into a different problem also faced by the newly established Jewish state given its belief in and commitment to a national ideology of 'return'. A major problem for Israeli human geneticists in the 1950s and 1960s was the historical origins of European—and, more specifically, Ashkenazi—Jews. Let me turn very briefly to the paper 'Blood Groups in Ashkenazi Jews' (Margolis, Gurevitch, and Hermoni 1960a), the only paper in which the results from *all* the various Jewish communities are mentioned and compared with the blood group frequencies of the Ashkenazim.

As is true of all of Gurevitch's publications, the paper on the Ashkenazim begins with a historical account of who they are. In this paper, however, the authors present comparisons with the other Jewish groups up front. 'The term Ashkenazim is used to denote one of the great divisions of Jewry in contradistinction to the Sephardim (Spanish Jews) and the Oriental Jews,

from whom they differ in many respects' (1960a: 201). (This is the one context in which I have found the term oriental Jews capitalized.) The authors then give an account of Ashkenazi history—persecution in France and Germany beginning with the Crusades, and flight toward northern and eastern Europe. I want to highlight what comes next: 'Anthropologically the Ashkenazim differ from the Sephardim and their oriental brethren: they have a larger proportion of blonds, have rounded faces and heads and are shorter especially in comparison with the Sephardim' (1960a: 201). Leaving the question of shortness aside (I have no idea what to make of it), what we are being told is that *phenotypically* these are (central and eastern) Europeans. But what does the blood group evidence say?

Numerous comparisons are offered in the paper. Many of the blood group frequencies (of the O, of the cDE chromosome of the Rh system, the M and N) are similar to those of Europeans. In addition, Ashkenazi blood group data are compared with all of the available data on other Jewish communities, both individual oriental communities and the Sephardim. In most instances, the authors note divergences, especially with reference to oriental Jewish communities. Occasionally they note similarities, mostly with the Sephardim. In one instance they note a similarity with Moroccan and Tunisian Jews, and with respect to one 'unexpected' result, they also note that a similarly high frequency of a 'North European' chromosome (of the RH system) is also found 'in some oriental Jewish communities'. 'The question was then raised as to the origin of this chromosome in these [oriental] communities' (1960a: 202).

The picture that develops is rather inchoate: for the most part, differences were marked, especially with oriental communities. Some similarities were found between the Ashkenazim and one or more Jewish communities. But what interests me is the *difference in analytic practice.* Why, in contrast to every other paper, does each of the other Jewish communities appear here? One could propose that the 'Other' Jews are being evaluated against an Ashkenazi (genetic) norm. But I think the significance of the comparisons moves in the opposite direction. There is a 'problem' regarding the origins of the Ashkenazim, which needs resolution: Ashkenazi Jews, *who seem European—phenotypically,* that is—are the normative centre of world Jewry. No less, they are the political and cultural elite of the newly founded Jewish state. Given their central symbolic and political capital in the Jewish state and given simultaneously the scientific and social persistence of racial logics as ways of categorizing and understanding human groups, it was essential to find other evidence that Israel's European Jews were not in truth Europeans. The normative Jew had to have his/her origins in ancient Palestine or else the fundamental tenet of Zionism, the entire edifice of Jewish history and nationalist ideology, would come tumbling down. In short, the Ashkenazi Jew is *the* Jew—the Jew in relation to whose values and

cultural practices the oriental Jew in Israel must assimilate. Simultaneously, however, the Ashkenazi Jew is the most dubious Jew, the Jew whose historical and genealogical roots in ancient Palestine are most difficult *to see* and perhaps thus to believe—*in practice,* although clearly not by definition.

It is impossible to derive any single history of 'the Jews' on the basis of the blood group data that Gurevitch and his team collected in Israel's early decades. But the project itself was never abandoned. In 1964, Helmut Muhsam, a demographer by training, published a paper designed to answer once and for all the question of whether or not the Jews 'are indeed a race'. His goal was to devise a method rigorous enough to identify a distinct Jewish population descendant from an original Jewish race on the basis of blood group and other forms of biological data. In other words, the inability to resolve the question of Jewish origins once and for all was a problem of method that he set out to fix. 'The Genetic Origin of the Jews' (Muhsam 1964) marks a significant departure from Gurevitch's earlier studies in one significant way: 'the Jews' as a single category operates as *the* object of analysis. There is no resolution to the question of 'whether the Jews should, or could, be considered as one single race' (1964: 36), Muhsam writes, because while a 'wide variety of morphological characteristics' have been studied, there has been no systematic approach to the data. But for all the methodological rigor that Muhsam proposed, his project was but a reiteration of work carried out by those who came before him: how to identify a *single* Jewish population or race *in the face of evidence of biological diversity*? That was—and remains—a scientific project not easily resolved on the grounds of biological data alone. And, as such, when Muhsam's data does not sustain his premise that the Jews *are indeed* a race, he does not abandon his original hypothesis. Instead, he writes, 'It is hoped that the analysis of additional traits, taking full advantage of the possibility to extend our model into a multi-dimensional attribute space will throw further light on the problem' (1964: 53-54). And he turns to other sources of historical evidence in order to ensure the biological data is properly 'read' (see also Sheba 1971).

For researchers in Israeli population genetics, the fact of Jewish genetic diversity confronted them again and again. But evidence of diversity was never enough to undermine the original hypothesis that there is an original Jewish race or population from which current Jewish communities descend. In practice, researchers relied on other lines of evidence and other methodological commitments to compensate for the inability of the biological data to produce an acceptable result—from the perspective of the biblical stories and the history of Jewish origins, homeland, and exile taken for granted in modern Jewish nationalism, to produce an answer regarding their questions about Jewish origins that 'made sense'.

In effect, the truth of Jewish origins lies elsewhere. It resides in long-standing traditions, in biblical texts, in existing 'historical' sources, and it

resides in contemporary forms and institutions of politics (not the least of which, by the mid-twentieth century was the Jewish state). As such this search for the biological evidence of Jewish unity—of a sustained Jewish Difference—is an experiment that could (and can) never end (Galison 1987). And yet the experiment was (and is) ongoing, whether by Jewish scholars who sought to specify the racial character of the Jews in Europe and the United States at the turn of the twentieth century (see especially Hart 2000) or by Israeli scientists who sought to specify the genetic distinctiveness of Israel's Jewish citizenry in the early decades of statehood (and by genetic historians today [see Abu El-Haj 2012]), even as those iterations occurred within partially distinct scientific epistemologies and in important ways radically distinct social, institutional, and political contexts.

The effect of that constant reiteration, and in particular its effect within the context of the Israeli state, was complex. Yes, the work of Israeli population genetics articulated the anxiety that *edot ha-mizrach* could not really be Jewish kin. And it did so in a context in which medical management together with other forms of social and political intervention and control produced and reinforced not just the difference, but quite crucially the inferiority of these non-European (and mostly Arab) Jewish communities. At the same time, however, the work of population genetics produced oriental Jews *as fellow Jews:* every time researchers studied the biology of 'the Jews' or of 'Jewish communities' they performed the fact of Jewish national unity—understood in the long shadow of racial thought and Zionism, as these were articulated in the early twentieth century—despite the fact that no biological evidence of that unity ever materialized through their work.

By the late 1970s, Israel's 'oriental Jewish communities' had become the Mizrahim, and for the most part their kinship with Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jewry had emerged as an unquestioned biological and historical fact—again, whether or not the biological evidence to 'prove it once and for all' ever emerged (see Bonné-Tamir 1980). The state of Israel had expanded the known Jewish world even if, within the grammar of biological sciences designed to track origins and descent, Mizrahi Jews will never be a category as visible—as 'authentic'—as is the category of the Ashkenazi Jew (see Abu El-Haj 2012).

Ever since the mid-twentieth century, the field of human population genetics has been bifurcated into two distinct (if often overlapping) kinds of projects, those that seek to understand the 'Family of Man' and those that seek to demarcate particular populations. Historical scholarship on the shift from race science to population genetics has long privileged the universalizing side of this work. The violence committed in the name of race made the *scientific* study of race no longer legitimate following World War II, scholars such as Michael Banton, Nancy Stepan and Donna Haraway have argued, which is not to say that 'race' ceased to exist in the social

domain (Banton 1978, Stepan 1982, Haraway 1989). As this work in Israeli population genetics demonstrates, however, studying biological distinction remained pervasive following World War II, and it remained pervasive even in the Jewish state. But it did so in partially different terms: Researchers in Israeli population genetics (as was true of population genetics elsewhere) were not speculating about the 'biological unity' of the Jews in the terms that Jewish race scientists had done in the early twentieth century. The concept of biological unity was no longer tethered to the notion of health and vitality, biological fitness or degeneration. In short, the question of Jewish origins was no longer entangled with the 'Jewish Problem' and all the eugenic implications that term carried in its train. There was a problem of medical management from the perspective of the newly established state. But what the medical problems were—specific disease incidences, bad hygiene, ignorance—refracted differently through different communities of Jews; they were not signs of *Jewish racial degeneration*. They were signs of the presumably primitive conditions in which some Jewish 'communities' (*edot)* had lived.

Where Jewish biological unity was sought and presumed was in the work in Israeli population genetics. But blood group data was used in order to 'see' what were understood to be historical connections—or signs. In so doing, 'the Jewish population' rather than 'the Jewish race' became the (more common) idiom of this biological science as much as the language of the Jewish people became that of the state. But that does not mean that this work in population genetics cordoned nationalist thinking off from the legacy of race.

Israeli population genetics was a bio-political project of relevance to, although not seamlessly directed by, the interests of the newly founded Jewish state and the struggle of its various elites (political, military, scientific) to produce a Jewish nation that it presumed already to exist. The data generated by the work of Israeli researchers proved as important to the international field of human population genetics as to its Israeli equivalent, but the investments of each of those scientific communities in the data were not precisely the same. Even as data on the biology of Israel's Jewish communities was understood to be crucial to the medical management of the state's Jewish citizenry, for Israeli researchers so too was knowing the genetics of 'the Jews' a practice of nationhood. And insofar as this research was driven by the political unconscious (Jameson 1981) of the Zionist state, there were virtually no population genetic studies of about 12 percent of Israel's population: those Palestinians who remained (see Kirsh 2003: 645). Moreover, the most obvious of comparisons could never be made: if this was a project to demonstrate Jewish origins in ancient Palestine, why not compare the data on Jewish populations with data on Palestine's remaining indigenous residents, its so-called Israeli-Arab citizens? For Jewish nation-

alists in the Israeli state in these early decades, the possibility of that kinship was unimaginable. It was completely out of bounds—in matters of science and not just of state. For Israel's Arab citizens then, in contrast to its 'oriental Jewish communities', the effect of the research on the biology of 'the Jews' was to produce nothing but their absolute and enduring Otherness. The parameters of membership—if not citizenship—were clearly drawn.

Shaping the History of Palestine: Nationalism and Exclusivity

Keith W. Whitelam

The Loss of Palestine's Past

The history of Palestine has suffered from the double bind of imperial and colonial control. The construction of national histories from the nineteenth century onward and particularly after World War II has been understood by all modern nations as an expression of national consciousness and sovereignty. But what is peculiar here, and possibly unique, is that with the retreat of the European powers, and Britain in particular, the post-colonial history that was written was not undertaken by the indigenous population but by a new colonial power. It was a reflection and reinforcement of what had gone before. It was a colonial Zionist narrative, which as a European enterprise in its origins, simply reiterated and reinforced the notion of external conquest and the bringing of culture and civilization to the region. Palestine lost its history first to the European imperial powers and then to a Zionist construction of the past that rapidly became its national narrative. The history of Palestine became embedded under two layers of imperial and colonial history; layers which are so thick that are almost impenetrable.

Palestine became detached from much of its history, as though it only came into being with the British Mandate (1920–48), as though the growth of towns, the shift in villages, or the population movements of three millennia before had nothing to do with this 'modern' Palestine. It was as if many earlier periods, including the Iron Age, had been cut adrift from the history of Palestine. This view of Palestine's truncated history was brought to a head by the social and political upheavals that followed the Zionist immigrations into Palestine from the nineteenth century onward and was secured with the establishment of the modern state of Israel in 1948.

It is the fate of the Iron Age—primarily the object of interest of biblical scholars and archaeologists from the nineteenth century onward as the period in which many of the central events of the Bible were set—that helps to illustrate how Palestine became divorced from its ancient past. It

is the construction of history by European and American scholars that has shaped and subsumed the history of the region as a whole. In effect, the history of ancient Palestine became subsumed by the history of ancient Israel. Because of this peculiar and concentrated interest in the emergence and development of ancient Israel by Western scholars, the Iron Age was effectively cut adrift from the history of Palestine and the many currents that tie it to its wider world.

The Zionist movement drew on this academic narrative in order to show that they were returning to and reclaiming their 'historical' homeland. In Zionist narratives, the Iron Age—unlike many later periods—is seen as being crucial for the present since it is claimed that it was the time when King David established Jerusalem as the capital of the kingdom of Israel. The words of the Proclamation of Independence of the state of Israel issued on 14 May 1948 declaring a return to 'the land of their fathers' and 'the re-establishment of the Jewish State' show how this period became part of the foundation narrative of the modern state of Israel. The carefully selected guests who attended the 'Jerusalem 3000' celebrations on 4 September 1995 were informed that

> No other people designated Jerusalem as its capital in such an absolute and binding manner—Jerusalem is the concrete historical expression of the Jewish religion and its heritage on the one hand and of the independence and sovereignty of the Jewish people on the other. Jerusalem's identity as a spiritual and national symbol at one and the same time has forged the unique and eternal bond between this city and the Jewish people, a bond that has no parallel in the annals of nations. Israel's rule over the united city has allowed her to bloom and prosper, and despite the problems between the communities within her, she has not enjoyed such centrality and importance since her days as the capital of the Kingdom of Israel (Benvenisti 1996: 1-2).

Thus, through the exclusivist lens of nationalist historiography, Iron Age Palestine was claimed for the modern state of Israel as part of its founding narrative. It is a claim and a view of history that can be heard constantly in the utterances of official Israeli government spokespersons or found on countless official and unofficial sites on the Internet. It was reiterated by President George Bush in his address to the Knesset on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the state of Israel:

> What followed was more than the establishment of a new country. It was the redemption of an ancient promise given to Abraham and Moses and David—a homeland for the chosen people of Eretz Yisrael.[1]

1. The speech was delivered on 15 May 2006 and can be found at http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2008/05/print/20080515-1.html.

It is a view of the past that, despite its claim of a very strong continuity between past and present in terms of modern Israel, severs the Iron Age from its overall context. The Iron Age becomes a special period that is seen as representing a radical break with the past.[2] It is thereby cut adrift from the periods that surround it and effectively removed from Palestine's history. Consequently, the pursuit of Palestine's Iron Age is not just a matter of academic interest but has become an integral part of political debates and rhetoric—'the fulcrum of political discourse', to borrow Geary's phrase—surrounding the contemporary Palestinian–Israeli conflict.[3]

Palestinian nationalist narratives, by contrast, tend to ignore this period of the region's history precisely because it is seen as providing the central legitimizing thread to Zionist claims for the sovereignty of the modern state of Israel. Such Palestinian nationalist narratives, if they appeal to the past at all beyond the Arab period of the seventh century CE, invoke the preceding period of the Late Bronze Age that is generally associated with Canaanite culture in order to provide a counter-claim to the land. Here again, a direct continuum is drawn between past and present. Seemingly, the threads that tie the past to the present by-pass the Iron Age, or perhaps we might say unravel, only to be woven again within 'modern' Palestine.

The problematic status of the Iron Age and the way in which Palestine became detached from much of its past can be illustrated by a brief look at modern accounts of Palestine's history. An initial search of the library catalogues of major British universities (COPAC) for books on 'the history of Palestine' revealed 1,023 entries, suggesting that the interested reader can easily discover Palestine's past.[4] On closer inspection, it will be found that many of these are multiple entries or updated editions of earlier volumes. It is noticeable that the vast majority of works that deal with Palestine's ancient past were written in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many by

2. Zerubavel (2003: 82-100) discusses the importance of historical discontinuity—the construction of discrete historical periods separated by sharp breaks or 'watersheds'—within collective memory. The establishment of such a 'new beginning' often involves destroying every possible link with what had gone before. Jones (2003: xiii), for instance, argues that the construction of the official version of English history from the time of Thomas Cromwell when the Reformation was seen as a break with the past was an attempt 'to fabricate an erroneous collective memory for the English people'.

3. The phrase is taken from Geary (2002: 7), who makes the point that Europe's past has become critical in the development of contemporary notions of identity and nationality. He says that 'suddenly, the history of Europe over a millennium ago is anything but academic: The interpretation of the period of the dissolution of the Roman Empire and the barbarian migration has become the fulcrum of political discourse across much of Europe.' The same is true of this period in Palestine's history.

4. The initial search was conducted on 26 March 2004. Interestingly, a similar search on 8 August 2008 revealed only 889 titles, a reduction of 134 titles.

Western scholars concerned with Palestine because of their primary interest in the Bible. Most recent works on Palestinian history deal with the modern period and the Palestinian struggle for a homeland, stretching from the nineteenth century to the present or often from only 1948 onward. Palestine is represented as a modern entity, the product of a relatively recent struggle for national identity and self-determination that only emerges onto the international stage in the last century. The unwitting reader emerges from these volumes with the strong impression that Palestine does not have a continuous history, running from the ancient past to the present.[5]

Sami Hadawi's *Bitter Harvest: A Modern History of Palestine* (1991), for instance, opens with a few pages that question the Zionist claim to Palestine by 'historic right' as derived from the biblical traditions.[6] In order to undermine this claim, which he sees as being based on 'occupation through invasion', he maintains that modern Palestinians are descendants of the Philistines and Canaanites. Their claim to the land comes from '*birth and long and continued possession*' (Hadawi 1991: 30, his emphasis). In effect, the period associated with Israel in the biblical traditions, the Iron Age to the Roman period, is effectively divorced from Palestinian history. Hadawi's narrative then concentrates on the modern period as he explores the history of Palestine. Palestine is left with only a truncated history; only particular periods are of consequence for understanding modern Palestine, while the Iron Age is cut adrift from this history as though it is somehow illegitimate. By contrast, Kayyali's *The Modern History of Palestine* (1978) begins its narrative in 1882, with Palestine as part of the Ottoman Empire, and concludes with the Palestinian Revolt of 1936–39. The ancient past plays no role in this conception of Palestinian history.

Islamic histories of the region tend to focus either on the arrival of Napoleon, the intervention of Muhammad Ali or the first wave of European Jewish settlers at the end of the nineteenth century as the starting point for the modern history of Palestine.[7] Doumani (1999: 12) makes the point

5. Pappe (2004: 12) views the past as a coercive tool that is often employed by nationalists to manipulate people. It is important, therefore, to challenge such an abuse of the past for political gain.

6. The work was originally published in 1967.

7. He notes that a graph of nineteenth-century books on Palestine according to the periods they cover would show that the two most conspicuous spikes are for the biblical and Crusader periods, because of their importance for European history (Doumani 1999: 14). '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.' Doumani (1999: 23) illustrates that Arab and Palestinian historiography, like much Western and Zionist historiography, 'draw a clear and inviolable line' between past and present and gloss over historical continuities. He also notes that many Jewish

that, 'it comes as no surprise, therefore, that there is not a single English-language monograph on seventeenth-century Palestine, and only two on the eighteenth century'. He remarks that the focus is upon political events, personalities and administrative structures: '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' (Doumani 1999: 13). Doumani's *Rediscovering Palestine: Merchants and Peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900* (1995) provides insights into Ottoman Palestine and attempts to rewrite the 'silent majority' back into history but is restricted to the modern period, as its subtitle suggests. It is important to connect this history of the silent majority with the ancient past in order to understand how the past flows into the present

Ilan Pappe's *A Modern History of Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples* (2004) is an important contribution to our understanding of Palestine's history since it attempts to tell the story of the people and the land not just from the common perspective of modern politics and and nationalism. Despite his desire to ignore the ancient past, his study offers an important and distinctive perspective on the modern period that is sympathetic to understanding the rhythms of Palestine's history as a whole and contributes to the writing of an integrated history of Palestine. He sets out to challenge the nationalist paradigm of history based on modernization, 'which produces a story with a clear beginning, a distinct present and a reasonably predictable future' (Pappe 2004: 2). Like Doumani, he attempts to write the history of those who were absent or totally marginalized in standard accounts. Although he concentrates on the modern period, his approach provides the basis of developing an integrated history of Palestine that includes its ancient past:

> ... I wish to reintroduce the past, and show that it was and still is a vital factor in the lives of the people of Israel and Palestine. The past is not always regressive, as the present is not always progressive. In Palestine, as elsewhere in the Middle East, the past contained egalitarian patterns of behaviour that were lost in the present. (Pappe 2004: 9)

It is, therefore, important to try to understand how the present has been shaped by the rhythms of time.

nationalist historians produced historical works that tried to prove a continuous and unbroken Jewish presence in the ancient land of Israel from biblical times to the present (Doumani 1999: 34 n.14; see also Myers 1988: 167-93). Works such as Rashid Khalidi's *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (1997) and Baruch Kimmerling and Joel Migdal's *Palestinians: The Making of a People* (1994) inevitably focus on the development of a modern Palestinian consciousness, arguing that this was already emerging before the Zionist immigration.

> In national historiographies, the past is generally romanticized. The past that nationalism tries to bring into the story is a distant and magnificent past, reinvented by national movements as the cradle or dawn of their existence to claim a hold over the present. I have tried to dissociate myself from that kind of historical reconstruction, first by giving the area a bi-national name. and second by not referring to an obscure, splendid past. The 'ancient' past, so important for national movements, seems to me irrelevant to most of the people. I would rather begin with the more recent, relevant, 'ordinary' human past, not the version favoured by either Palestinian or Israeli histories. Nor is the nation described here as it would be in a nationalist chronicle, as something eternal. It is a human invention, which appeared relatively recently to serve particular purposes and benefited some but destroyed others. Above all, it never was the essence of life that it pretended, and still pretends, to be. Life is determined by physical factors, such as climate, the locust, economics and tradition, no less than by nationalism. (Pappe 2004: 10)

However, in seeking to challenge the exclusivity of nationalist narratives, by concentrating on the more recent and relevant 'ordinary human past', he effectively abandons the ancient past to the exclusive claims of nationalists.

It is crucial to challenge the representation of the past in such nationalist narratives since they have such profound consequences for ordinary people in their everyday lives. Just as Pappe notes that modern history is determined by physical factors—the rhythms of time—so it is important to understand how the ancient past beat to these same rhythms. Otherwise, the roots of modern Palestine are set in shallow soil and disconnected from the depths of the past. It results in a fragmented narrative with significant parts of the ancient past, particularly the Iron Age, missing from Palestine's history. The Iron Age—as well as some other earlier periods—needs to be reclaimed and integrated into the history of Palestine. Pappe challenges modern histories of Israel and Palestine —histories of conflict—by writing the history of one land, two peoples.

If we are to integrate the ancient past into this narrative, it is essential to write the history of one land, Palestine, that has been inhabited by many different peoples and groups over the centuries. It is important to recognize that the history of ancient Israel, just as of the modern state of Israel, is one part of the wider history of Palestine. There are not two separate histories: the history of Palestine and the history of Israel. Rather, we need to understand how ancient Israel fits into and contributes to the history of Palestine. Unfortunately, all too often, our histories of ancient Israel are presented as though they are histories of Palestine: the history of ancient Israel subsumes the history of the region as a whole. Thus the Iron Age becomes the exclusive property of the history of Israel and thereby detached from Palestinian history.

A search for books on 'the history of Israel' on COPAC helps to illustrate this problem and also reveals an interesting asymmetry in the investment of scholarly resources in pursuit of the history of Israel compared with the history of Palestine. The search produces 2099 entries, more than twice as many as for the history of Palestine, although again many of these are multiple copies or later editions of the same volume.[8] Even though many of these deal with the modern period leading up to 1948 and after, there is often an appeal to the ancient past in order to establish a Jewish presence in the land. This suggests a timeless attachment to the land with strong roots running deep into the past. Indeed, a very significant number of volumes, written by biblical specialists and archaeologists, deal specifically with the history of ancient Israel. These range from the uncritical retelling of the biblical traditions as history to detailed, critical studies which reconstruct the history of ancient Israel using the Bible in a more selective manner, along with a variety of inscriptions and other sources from the region, and the results of modern archaeology. Although many of the recent works on the history and archaeology of the region cover a vast expanse of time—from the Chalcolithic (4500-3300 BCE) or at least the Early Bronze Age (3150-2000 BCE) to the end of the Iron Age (1200-586/7 BCE) or even later—it is the search for ancient Israel, particularly during the Iron Age, which dominates the discussion. This relatively short period of time, roughly six centuries, is disproportionately served because of its interest to biblical studies and to western culture.

A consequence of the fact that the Iron Age has become the domain of biblical specialists and archaeologists is that it has seldom attracted the attention of professional historians.[9] While it is possible to go into any

8. The original search for "history of Israel" was conducted on 26 March 2004. A later search on 8 August 2008 produced 2,020 titles, a decrease of 79 titles.

9. It is a history that has been theologically motivated and informed and which has been estranged from mainstream historical studies as constituted in Departments of History in Western universities. This has been brought out most strikingly in the recent revival of the 'biblical history' movement that explicitly claims that the Bible provides a source for a divinely guided history. Millard claims, for instance, that, 'But for anyone holding the Bible to be divinely inspired, its record of past events will be true, if correctly interpreted, taking account of the authors' standpoints' (2004: 160). Provan, Long and Longman (2003: 102-103) provide the most explicit statement of the assumptions that underpin such an approach to the past:

> Our position, however, is that of the metaphysical and methodological theist: one who believes that there is a God, a 'sacral being endowed with the authority and power of the Lord', whose story history is and through whose metanarrative human beings can come to understand themselves in relation to the world. Such a person cannot be content with the a- or antitheological approaches to history that have evolved since the Enlight-

reasonably sized bookshop and discover in their History sections numerous volumes covering the events of the twentieth century, particularly the period leading up to the creation of the modern state of Israel in 1948, the Palestinian Nakbah, and subsequent events, the reader will search in vain for similar volumes by professional historians on the Iron Age in Palestine. Such a situation has been encouraged and reinforced by the long-held belief that this period represents the 'biblical period' par excellence and should, therefore, be confined to the history of ancient Israel. Just how strong a hold this assumption has on the conception of the past is demonstrated in a survey of archaeological evidence, where Bloch-Smith and Nakhai can say that 'the story of the Iron I is, in part, the biblical story of the transition from the city-states of Canaan to the United Monarchy of Israel' (Bloch-Smith and Nakhai 1999: 62). Thus, ironically, such specialist attention has contributed to the fragmentation of Palestinian history by removing the Iron Age from that narrative as though it is part of a separate history, the history of Israel. It needs to be reintegrated into the history of the one land, Palestine.

The assymetry of interest in this period can be illustrated from the multi-authored volume *The Oxford History of the Biblical World* (Coogan 1998), which ranges from the Neolithic to the Roman period and beyond, roughly eight millennia. The focus of the volume is on the search for ancient Israel in the Iron Age with some 242 pages of a total of 596 pages devoted to the topic. This represents roughly 40 per cent of the volume, while the Iron Age covers less than one per cent of the period from the Neolithic to the Roman and Byzantine periods. This is a history dominated by the absence or presence of Israel as signaled in the title of the second chapter, 'Before Israel: Syria and Palestine in the Bronze Age'. The shape of this history follows a traditional pattern of 'biblical histories' produced over a century or more.[10] Similarly, many histories of ancient Israel often focus on the period

> enment, because he will tend to share the biblical prophets' view of history as God's conversation with his people. Indeed, he will believe that God is central to history, and that it is impossible rightly to understand the *meaning* of history if God is marginalized or denied.
>
> 'Biblical history' is essentially a theological enterprise in which the historian is subject to the dictates of religious dogma. The truth claim which underpins this notion of 'biblical history' does not allow for contingency, for the possibility that the past may be open-ended or even meaningless, or that it is the historian, through the choice of evidence, narrative structures, emplotment, and rhetoric, who imposes meaning on the traces of the past and that all interpretations of the past are open to revision and debate.

10. See Whitelam (2002a) for a study of the shape of histories of Israel from some of the classic works of the twentieth century to the present. Despite the fact that recent debates have raised serious questions about the relationship of many biblical traditions to history and the fact that Coogan and other contributors to the volume acknowledge

of the Iron Age, the period from the twelfth-sixth centuries BCE (1200-586 BCE), while preceding or later periods are treated as adjuncts to what is perceived to be 'the biblical period'. It becomes a special vantage point from which to view the history of the region: earlier periods are seen as leading towards the emergence of Israel and the development of a state under David, while later periods are a consequence of these events in the Iron Age.[11]

Both nationalist narratives appeal to what Geary (2002: 12) has termed 'the moment of primary acquisition' in order to justify their contemporary claim to the land. The continuities with subsequent periods of history, the migrations of populations, and the many cultural shifts that have inevitably taken place since are ignored or represented as though they were illegitimate. In both cases, the Iron Age becomes the fulcrum of interpretation. For the Zionist narrative, it is the moment of primary acquisition which provides a sharp break with and surpasses what had gone before, mainly Canaanite culture of the Late Bronze Age. While for the Palestinian nationalist narrative, it is a period whose significance for the history of the region is to be denied or ignored. Both forms of exclusivist reading of the past isolate the Iron Age as though it is somehow discrete and separate from the history of Palestine before and immediately after.[12] In effect, for the competing historiographies of Zionist and Palestinian nationalists, these few centuries have been treated as though they are a special case and have thereby become detached from the history of Palestine.

that 'it is impossible to correlate with any certainty the events described in the first books of the Bible with known historical realities' (Coogan 1998: ix), vast periods of time and vast geographical areas are claimed for Israel before its appearance on the scene. Revealingly, although the chapter by Stager deals extensively with Philistine settlement and material culture as well as his understanding of the emergence of Israel in Palestine, it is entitled 'Forging an Identity: The Emergence of Ancient Israel'.

11. The renewed interest in the so-called Second Temple period as the locus for the development of the biblical traditions and monotheism fails to deal with the problem of terminology and the conceptualization of the past. Yet again, the term used to designate the period ('the Second Temple') shows how it has been subsumed into Israelite history and so dominates the history of the region.

12. Hallo (1992: 1-6) claims that the opening of the Iron Age represents a 'watershed' in human history comparable to the agricultural and urban revolutions. Such an assessment reinforces the perception that this is a discrete, even unique, period of human history. Drews (1993: 3) is illustrative of this approach in his categorization of the end of the Bronze Age in the eastern Mediterranean as 'one of history's most frightful turning points', which he terms 'the Catastrophe', a beginning rather than an end, yet signaling a radical break with what had gone before. The classic statement of Israelite history as 'the pinnacle of biological evolution' can be found in Albright's *From Stone Age to Christianity: Monotheism and the Historical Process* (1957: 121-22). The idea that the Iron Age is somehow special or separate from the periods that precede or follow has very important implications for how the history of Palestine is conceived and represented.

This is not to suggest that the concentrated attention and dedication of biblical specialists and archaeologists have not thrown significant light on the many separate pieces of the rich mosaic of which Palestine in the Iron Age is composed. However, the inevitable consequence of such specialisation—vital as it is to scholarship—is the intimation that the Iron Age represents a discrete entity, both geographically and chronologically, which can be understood apart from the many currents that tie it to its wider world.[13] It has drawn attention away from the whole span of history and the ways in which the Iron Age is inevitably connected to the periods that precede and follow it. Biblical scholars long thought that many of the biblical traditions were crystallized and committed to writing during this period, particularly within the Davidic court, and that many of the historical traditions, especially the books of Samuel and Kings, provide a sound basis for a historical description of the period. Thus, scholarly investment over a century or more has been dominated by attempts to correlate archaeological discoveries with the events and personalities of the biblical traditions. The Israelite monarchy, the political high point of most standard accounts, determines the shape and understanding of the region's history. It is as if history is seen as working itself out to an inevitable conclusion, the founding of an Israelite monarchy by David and Solomon, which is then lost for centuries before being 'reborn' in 1948. It also implies a progressivist notion of history; the idea of the linear progression of society over time which is teleological. It is a narrative of inexorable progress pointing towards an inevitable future.

It is in this way that the results of serious scholarship come to inform the rhetoric of politicians, as seen in the claims of the 'Jerusalem 3000' celebrations: the period of David and Solomon is appealed to in order to legitimize Israeli government attempts to claim sovereignty over Jerusalem and the land. This standard representation of the history of ancient Israel has been used to underpin Israel's appeal to 'historic right' to possess Palestine—what has become a reality in political terms.[14] The Knesset decreed on 15 March, 1972 that 'the historic right of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is beyond challenge.' This rested upon a belief in a special relationship between Israel

13. See Whitelam (1996: 37-70) for an introduction to some of the problems of defining chronological and geographical boundaries in Palestinian history.

14. See Norman Finkelstein (1995: 101) for a rejection of the claim of 'historical right' to the land:

> In any event, Zionism's 'historical right' to Palestine was neither historical nor a right. It was not historical inasmuch as it voided the two millennia of Jewish settlement outside it. It was not a right, except in the Romantic 'mysticism' of 'blood and soil' and the Romantic 'cult' of 'death, heroes, and graves'. . . .

The quotations are taken from Shapira (1992).

and 'the Land of Israel' which has become institutionalized in the West and in the modern state of Israel (Said 1994: 81). It is a view of history which has become so ingrained in the popular and, significantly, in the political imaginations that it has been almost immune to challenge.

If an integrated history of Palestine is to be written, it is vital that the Iron Age should be reclaimed from the exclusivist nationalist historiographies that emphasize difference and separation. The major historiographical task is to see how the Iron Age forms part of an integrated history of Palestine from its ancient past to the present. The many threads that tie together the distant past and the recent present need to be reconnected in order to allow us to appreciate the rich tapestry of Palestine's history. If we are to challenge the standard histories of differentiation—so dangerous in our modern world where the focus is on a supposed clash of civilizations rather than the values that unite us in our humanity—then it is important to try to write an integrated history of Palestine.

Palestine in the Iron Age forms part of a rich and intricate historical tapestry whose threads, set deep in the past, continue into the present. It has been said that 'for in the long and dazzling past of the Mediterranean, history may not repeat itself, but it is all part of a single fabric'(Braudel 2002: 8). We might say of Palestine's history that it is linked, if not by a single thread, by threads that recur, reappear and continue through into the present. Palestine's well-known geographical and climatic diversity has produced a mosaic of landscapes that have an important bearing upon its history. Yet equally, it forms part of an ancient world from which it cannot easily be separated as though it were a self-contained, autonomous domain. Its geographical boundaries are fluid, particularly the southern, arid zones, where settlement is not only at the mercy of variable rainfall but is intricately linked to the political situation throughout the region as a whole. Contrary to the way that it has often been viewed in the popular, political or academic spheres, the Iron Age forms an intimate part of the rhythms of Palestine's history binding past with present.

The Problem of Naming

If the Iron Age is to be integrated into the connected narrative of Palestine's history, it cannot remain the sole domain of biblical studies, 'biblical archaeology', or theology. Nor can it remain the preserve of exclusivist nationalist narratives that project it as a period of special significance from which other periods in the history of the region must be viewed.[15] The basic

15. Since the more recently acknowledged problems with 'biblical archaeology', it has become common to appeal to the 'new biblical archaeology' as though this somehow overcomes the methodological problems of using the Bible to determine the results of

challenge to historiography is how to view this period as an integral part of the accumulated deposits—the bones in tombs at such places as Afula, Dothan and Silwan—on which the present has been built. If we are to write an integrated or a connected narrative of Palestine's history from the past to the present then no period can be cut adrift as though it has nothing to contribute to this rich story. Nor can any one period, or aspect of that period, be elevated as though it surpasses all other aspects of the region's history or represents a moment of primary acquisition.

Yet it is all too obvious that the term 'Palestine' to describe this region, and so its history, is not a neutral term. It has been a contested term from at least the Ottoman period and for most of the twentieth century.[16] That contest has become ever sharper during the period from the British government's publication of the Balfour Declaration in 1917 to the contemporary negotiations of the so-called peace process between the Israeli government and the Palestinian National Authority. The names 'Israel' and 'Land of Israel' (*Eretz-Israel*) have competed with 'Palestine' as exclusive designations for the area since the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and especially since Israel's military occupation of the West Bank in 1967.

The right to name the land, and thereby to control it politically, is the product of the nationalist struggles that emerged in nineteenth-century Europe and that have been exported to the rest of the world, particularly this region, with such tragic consequences. The 'nationalization of the landscape', which was first begun by the Negev Names Committee set up by David Ben-Gurion to 'assign Hebrew names to all the places—mountains, valleys, springs, roads and so on—in the Negev region', was crucial in the Zionist transformation of Palestine into their lost 'homeland' (Benvenisti 2000: 12):

> The physical space and the dimension of time—the soil and the affinity for it —were made the property of the Jewish nation, and this collectivity cast its identity over the landscape and transformed it into a 'Jewish landscape'—Jewish rocks, Jewish wadis, Jewish wildfowl—not to mention the trees they planted and the houses they built (Benvenisti 2000: 249).[17]

archaeology. See Dever (1993), Levy and Higham (2005) and Faust (2006: 4, 8, 231-32) for the claim that they are now undertaking 'new biblical archaeology'. The essential difference, however, in the two approaches is that assumptions drawn from the biblical text are implicit and remain hidden in the 'new biblical archaeology', while in the older 'biblical archaeology' these assumptions were quite explicit and therefore easier to identify and critique.

16. See, for instance, Pappe (2004: 8) and Obenzinger (1999: xiii).

17. The remit for the Committee for the Designation of Place-Names in the Negev Region is taken from the Central Zionist Archive A 402/151 (cited in Benvenisti 2000: 12). Benvenisti (2000) provides a detailed study, using official government minutes and

The claim to sovereignty is invariably derived from an exclusivist reading of some period of the past as a moment of primary acquisition and attached to a particular ethnic group and its 'historic' territory. The designation of the Iron Age as 'the Israelite period', as it became known in Israeli archaeology, which follows (and by implication replaces) 'the Canaanite period' (the Bronze Age) is the temporal corollary of this nationalization of the landscape.[18] Such claims, as Geary (2002: 11-12) points out in European history, inevitably (usually deliberately) ignore centuries of lived history as well as the rights of those living there now.[19]

Many biblical historians and archaeologists have become increasingly uneasy as their period of expertise has become the centre of a political maelstrom in a contest for the present and the past claiming that they are only interested in scientific or objective reconstructions of the past and that their work stands outside of politics.[20] To adapt Geary's observation on the

papers from the Zionist Archive, of the way in which a 'Jewish map' was produced, particularly using biblical place names and proper names to replace Arabic place names.

18. It is interesting to note that the archaeological periods in Palestine after the Iron Age are named after the imperial powers that conquered the region: Babylonian, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Arab, Crusader, Mamluk, Ottoman and British. This was adopted in the British Mandate period and reflects the attempt to fit history into the colonial context. As Benvenisti (2000: 299) notes, 'these designations conceptualize the history of the country as that of its conquerors'.

19. He goes on to add:

> ethnic claims demand the political autonomy of all persons belonging to a particular ethnic group and at the same time the right of that people to govern its historical territory, usually defined in terms of medieval settlements or kingdoms, regardless of who may now live in it (Geary 2002: 11).

He then points out:

> After these moments of primary acquisition, according to this circular reasoning, similar subsequent migrations, invasions, or political absorptions have all been illegitimate. In many cases this has meant that fifteen hundred years of history is to be obliterated (Geary 2002: 12).

20. Geary (2002: 9), in noting the use of medieval European history by nationalists, remarks:

> Probably no other period of history is as obscure and obscured by nationalist and chauvinist scholarship. This very obscurity makes it prey for ethnic nationalist propaganda: Claims can be based on the appropriation of the migration period with impunity, since few people know any better. Once the premises projected onto this period have been accepted, political leaders can draw out policy implications to suit their political agenda.

This is particularly true of the way in which the Davidic monarchy is used in contemporary political claims by successive Israeli governments.

same predicament for historians of early medieval Europe, 'their rhetoric [is] being used to lay claims to the present and the future' (Geary 2002: 8). The naming of the region, and thereby the claiming of its past, is central to contemporary competing nationalist narratives.

What, then, do we mean when we talk of 'Palestine's history', 'Palestine in the Iron Age', or, most contentiously of all, 'Palestinian history'?[21] It does not signify the attempt to replace one form of exclusivist nationalist narrative by another. The history of ancient Israel, where we have evidence for it, and the events of 1948 and after with the creation of the state of Israel, are part of the history of Palestine as a whole. They do not subsume nor surpass that history; they do not provide a moment of primary acquisition, nor can they be ignored or written out of that history.[22] The use of the terms 'Palestine's history' or 'Palestinian history' signals an attempt to write a regional history acknowledging the accumulated deposits over time.

Yet one of the most often heard objections to the idea of 'Palestinian history', as a regional history of Palestine over time, is the claim that such terminology is inappropriate or anachronistic. It is frequently, but erroneously, claimed that the term 'Palestine' only became current for the region during the British Mandate after 1918. Therefore, to use it to refer to an integrated history of the region from the ancient past to the present is inappropriate.[23] But as Pappe (2004: 11) notes,

21. For instance, Fenton and Oded (2003: 85) complain about the systematic and deliberate use of the 'anachronistic designations' (for the Late Bronze Age and Iron Age I–II) 'Palestine' and 'Palestinians' when there is good epigraphic evidence from these periods for such terms as 'Canaan', 'Canaanite', '(proto-) Israelite people(s)', 'Israel' and 'Judah'. Their complaint, which echoes many others, is that the term 'Palestine' as a toponym for the area covered by Canaan, Israel, Judah, Ammon, Moab and Edom is first attested in Herodotus. However, they do then say that it is 'legitimate and technically convenient' as long as it is not used to support revisionist historical work or used with a modern reference. It should be noted that an integrated history of Palestine is a regional history that includes (but does not replace) these other designations. The term 'proto-Israelite' is not attested epigraphically, and its use embodies assumptions about ethnic identity and the teleology of history that are inappropriate.

22. As Geary (2002: 13) notes of European history,

> Europe's peoples have always been far more fluid, complex, and dynamic than the imaginings of modern nationalists. Names of peoples may seem familiar after a thousand years, but the social, cultural and political realities covered by these names were radically different from what they are today.

23. This is part of the exclusivist claim that Palestine's history only begins in the modern period. Doumani (1999: 16) notes that an administrative district 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 part of Greater Syria. Although nationalist ideology, 'which views the world through the prism

> What the land was called did not play an important role in the lives of those who lived there. It was only with the arrival of Zionism and European colonialism on the one hand, and the emergence of Palestinian nationalism on the other, that the name assumed importance and meaning. Instead of merely describing an area, the name came to represent a claim over it. And so, from the end of the nineteenth century, different groups of people at different historical junctures, when they had the will and the power to do so, named the land in a forceful act aimed at creating a new reality. Such is the power of nationalism.

An integrated history of Palestine is a regional history, the history of an area, that challenges the exclusive claims of nationalist historiography.[24]

What are we to make of the fact that throughout its history this region has had a variety of competing names? Or that there is considerable uncertainty as to the territorial extent designated by these names? Egyptian scribes often referred to the area as *Retenu* or *Kinahhi* ('Canaan'). Thus Pharaoh Thut-mose I, according to his scribe at the beginning of the fifteenth century BCE, 'undertook an expedition to Retenu in order to take vengeance throughout foreign lands', while Merneptah I claimed in the thirteenth century BCE that 'Canaan is plundered'. The name Palestine, however, has also been used widely since ancient times through to the present. The Assyrian ruler Adad-Nirari III at the beginning of the eighth century BCE, in celebration of his military superiority, mentions on a broken inscription found at Calah how he 'subdued from the banks of the Euphrates, the land of the Hatti, the land of Amurru in its entirety, the land of Tyre, the land of Sidon, the land of Israel (*Humri*), the land of Edom, the land of Philistia (*Pa-la-as-tu*), as far as the great sea in the west'. The precise area covered by the terms Pal-

of the territorial state', was more developed in Europe, the formation of 'Palestine' in the consciousness of the native population was not an automatic response to foreign encroachment and rule, or the uncritical absorption of European definitions of Palestine along biblical lines. It had local and regional roots. He notes that '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' (Doumani 1999: 17). He concludes:

> 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 (Doumani 1999: 17).

24. Similarly, Pappe (2004: 11) attempts to challenge the nationalist grip on historiography by 'bi-nationalizing' or 'de-nationalizing' his modern history of Palestine as that of 'One Land, Two Peoples'.

estine, Judah, or Israel in such inscriptions is unclear. The Greek historian Herodotus, writing two centuries later in his *Histories*, understood Palestine to be part of Syria, stretching from Lebanon to Egypt: 'and from Phoenicia the branch I am speaking of runs along the Mediterranean coast through Palestine-Syria to Egypt, where it ends' (4.39). He also refers to 'the Syrians of Palestine' (2.104; 7.89). Ibn Battutah, who set out from Morocco on a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1325 CE, casually remarks that he stayed one night in Cairo before setting out for Syria (Mackintosh-Smith 2002a: 25). Like other Muslim writers, he considered his visit to Jerusalem to be a visit to Syria.

Palestine, as a general designation for the area, is widely attested. It was the name for the region used by the Romans and was commonly used by Arab historiographers and other writers. Gerber (1998) provides evidence from seventeenth- and eighteenth-century documents of 'traces of awareness of territorial consciousness' and, what he terms, an 'embryonic territorial awareness'. In particular, the two-volume fatwah of the Palestinian scholar Mufti Khayr al-Din al-Ramli (1585–1670) shows that the term 'Palestine' (*Filastin*) was widely used despite the fact that the area under the Mamluk and Ottomans was divided into districts (Gaza, Jerusalem, Nablus, Lajjun, and Safed) under the province of Damascus.[25] It has a long history of usage as a common designation for the region well before its official adoption by the British during the Mandate period.

From the beginnings of map making, 'Palestine' has been common currency among cartographers. The series of magnificent maps in Kenneth Nebenzahl's *Maps of the Bible Lands* further contradict the claim that the term 'Palestine' disappeared with the Romans until it was revived by the British in the early twentieth century.[26] In the medieval period, the dominant map of the Carolingian Rennaisance by Beatus, produced in 776 CE, gave Judea as the provincial name with Palestine designating the southern coastal plain.[27] However, in the Latin notes accompanying Tilleman Stella's map depicting the exodus from Egypt in 1559, 'Palestine' has been extended to

25. Gerber (1998; see also Gerber 2004) documents similar usages in the fatwas of later scholars, the travel book of a Turkish traveller, and a seventeenth-century treatise on the virtues of Syria, Palestine and the Holy Land.

26. The information in this paragraph is taken from Nebenzahl's (1986) excellent work.

27. The same usage can be found in Abraham Ortelius's map of the wanderings of Abraham which was included in the fourth edition of his *Theatrum orbis terrarum* published in 1590. It became part of the supplement of historical maps, the *Parergon*. The map of Abraham's wanderings uses the 'land of Canaan' (*Terra Chanaan*) to designate the whole area, with 'Palestina' confined to the southern littoral. The same area is designated 'Palestiim Niovi' on Christian von Adrichom's map of the Holy Land from 1590. See Nebenzahl (1986: 92-97) for the maps and more detailed information.

designate the region rather than just the southern coast. A similar usage can be found in the notes attached to Peter Laicksteen's and Christian Sgrooten's map of the Holy Land from 1570. Abraham Ortelius included 'Palestinae sive Totus Terrae' in his ground-breaking atlas *Theatrum orbis terrarum,* which was published in Antwerp in 1570. The use of the name to cover the region can be traced throughout the seventeenth century on the influential maps of Natale Bonifacio (1590), Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1629), Jan Jansson (1631), Philippe Briet (1641), Nicholas Visscher the Elder (1659) and Alexis Hubert Jaillot (1692).

The Roman designation did not disappear for nearly seven hundred years after the Arab conquest only to reappear in the nineteenth century.[28] Blaeu's map appeared in Protestant Bible's in the seventeenth century; Briet's map was later used in Nicholas Sanson's *Atlas* from 1650 onward and became the standard French map, while Nicholas Visscher the Elder's 'Terra sancta' became the predominant Dutch map for over a century. The inclusion of these maps in Bibles and atlases meant that 'Palestine' as a geographical designation had wide currency throughout Europe. The use of 'Palestine' as a regional designation can be traced throughout the eighteenth century from Nicholas de Fer's innovative comparative map of 'Terre sainte ancienne & terre sainte moderne' published in 1701 to the first modern survey conducted by Pierre Jacotin in 1799 after the Napoleonic invasion. It is also a term that has deep roots in the academic study of the region ranging from Thomas Fuller's classic study *Pisgah-sight of Palestine*, published in 1650, to the classic works of Edward Robinson and George Adam Smith on historical geography.[29] Even within modern histories of ancient Israel, it is the dominant term used to describe the area. It has become accepted academic parlance, being used extensively by historians, biblical specialists and archaeologists for a century or more.

It has been suggested that the term 'Canaan', which as we have seen is used in antiquity and modern scholarship, 'is empty of any false modern connotation, and can be used freely and neutrally of the area so often labelled 'Palestine' by various interested parties' (Kitchen 1998: 118-19).[30] Yet this ignores the pejorative sense that the term developed in associa-

28. *Contra* Dothan 1985: 137.

29. Edward Robinson and Eli Smith (1841). The founding of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the subsequent Survey of Western Palestine by Conder and Kitchener which began in 1871 and was completed in 1877, and the founding of the German Palestine Society (Deutscher Palästina Verein) show how deeply embedded the term was.

30. However, see Lemche (1991) for a discussion of the problems involved in the use of the terms 'Canaan' and 'Canaanites' in various sources, including the Bible, and by biblical scholars.

tion with the justification for slavery, for instance, and more particularly in nineteenth- and twentieth-century biblical studies. The term has often been used as a symbol for and a justification for slavery, following the biblical statement that 'Cursed be Canaan! The lowest of slaves will he be to his brothers' (Gen. 9.25). Later, 'Canaan' became part of an elaborate evolutionary scheme within nineteenth- and twentieth-century European biblical scholarship: 'Canaan' is succeeded by 'Israel' just as 'Canaanite' society and religion, not infrequently referred to as 'an extraordinary debasing form of paganism' (Bright 1960: 108)[31], is replaced by 'Israelite' superior religion and political organization.[32] The European imperial powers justified their conquest of Palestine in similar evolutionary terms. It is this idea, retrojected back into the past, that produced the artificial break between histories of modern Palestine and the ancient past. It is a conception of history that dominates the numerous volumes on the history of Palestine found in the search on COPAC and that underpins nationalist, exclusivist readings of the past. In effect, it is denied that Palestine has a past. To suggest that the term Canaan should be used for periods prior to the Iron Age, in order to

31. He adds that 'it was the sort of religion with which Israel, however much she might borrow the culture of Canaan, could never with good conscience make peace'. This remark comes after he describes the religion as consisting of 'numerous debasing practices, including sacred prostitution, homosexuality, and various orgiastic rites . . .' (Bright 1960: 109).

32. See Whitelam 1996. Macalister (1912: 40-41), at the turn of the last century, could scarcely believe that the Canaanites were capable of constructing something as complex as the tunnel which supplied water to the site at Gezer: 'it must considerably increase our respect for the Canaanite civilization to contemplate it'. He then adds that 'thus, the Canaanite population here executed a work which would no longer be possible to their degenerate descendants. These found the work of clearing out the mere loose stones and earth with which the tunnel had become filled a sufficient tax on their strength.' This is a very common representation of the Canaanite period in earlier works. It has continued its influence on more recent scholarship in terms of political evolution. Bright, for example, describes Canaan as 'a patchwork of petty city states' incapable of creating unity (1955: 21). This is representative of an important thread in Western scholarship that viewed Canaanite civilization as debased. Thus Macalister remarked that 'the Semitic natives, Amorite, Hebrew, or Arab, never invented anything: they assimilated all the elements of their civilization from without' (1912: 31). All advances in civilization, according to Macalister, are the result of external influence of the great empires including, what he terms, 'the extraordinary attempt to graft Western European feudalism on the country, which we call the Crusades'. He adds that 'after the fall of the Latin kingdom the culture of the country collapses into an almost recordless semi-barbarism, till new ideas, new machinery, and, above all, new colonists from Europe have within the last century quickened it to life once more' (1912: 32).

avoid the use of the term Palestine, is another way of separating Palestine's ancient past from its present and of denying an integrated narrative.[33]

Similarly, to talk of Palestine's history as only a modern phenomenon is to curtail chronology artificially, as if the present is not the result of deep-flowing currents from the past. It is this idea that has led to the situation where the past, particularly the Iron Age, seems to be divided from the present and so seemingly does not belong to Palestinian history.[34] It is a curtailing of history that is all too often carried out in the service of modern nationalism; a history that emphasizes that which is different or separate. Yet are we to restrict the history of Britain or France to the modern period when they took on the garments of modern nationalism in the form of the nation-state? Are not the landscape and agricultural patterns of Britain or France the result of long-term patterns of land use that stretch back centuries before?[35] Do these not form, as Braudel (1989: 20) put it, 'a living feature of the present-day world'? When we look today at the struggle for the realization of modern-day Palestinian self-determination focused on control of the central highlands (the West Bank) and the southern coastal strip (Gaza Strip) are we not seeing the repetition of a recurrent pattern in the region's history, already set in the Bronze and Iron Ages, of a struggle between the highlands, lowlands, and steppes on which the history of the

33. The problem with such a view is that the region's history becomes atomized; we might have a history of Canaan, a history of the kingdoms of Israel or Judah, a history of the Philistines, Phoenicians, Persian Yehud and so on. Rarely, however, are the interconnections and threads of these histories considered. This has long been the case in Western scholarship. Kitto (1869), although written from an uncritical biblical perspective, is one of the few histories to cover the history of Palestine. It is subtitled *From the Patriarchal Age to the Present Time*. Paton tells 'the story of the West Semitic peoples from . . . the earliest times down to the establishment of the Persian empire' (1902: x). By contrast de Haas in his *History of Palestine: The Last Two Thousand Years* (1934) avoids what he calls 'the remoter pre-biblical and biblical periods' (1934: vii) and begins his account with the Roman period to the beginning of the Mandate period. Interestingly, Castle's *Syrian Pageant: The History of Syria and Palestine 1000 B.C. to A.D. 1945* (1948) omits earlier history and begins with the monarchy of David and Solomon. By contrast, Anati concludes his *Palestine before the Hebrews* (1963) with the Canaanite period. Thus we can see that the various volumes rarely offer an integrated history of Palestine. Invariably, these volumes are dominated by a biblical perspective, and the beginning of the Iron Age is seen as a critical break in the history of the region.

34. It is an idea reinforced by the concentration on modern Palestinian history, particularly by Palestinian scholars (e.g., Walid Khalidi 1984; 1991; Abu Lughod 1987; Rashid Khalidi 1997; and Doumani 1995).

35. See, for example, Williamson (2003) for a description of the ways in which the English landscape has been shaped by developments in the medieval period. The collection of essays in Christie (2004) examines the transformation of the European landscape from classical to medieval times.

region has been built? At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Palestine looks little different to many other times in its turbulent history.[36] It is a pattern of history, founded on its geographical diversity, in which the differences and the interconnections between these regions have been arranged and rearranged over many centuries. It is part of the rhythms of history that stretch back over centuries and millennia.

In light of objections to the idea of a 'history of Palestine' or 'Palestinian history' on the grounds that the terms are anachronistic when applied to earlier periods, we might compare attempts to write a continuous history of India in the post-colonial period. The term 'India' to describe the area now covered by the modern state of India is not found within the vast Sanskrit, Buddhist or Jain literature (Keay 2000: 56). Keay (2000: 57) points out that the first occurrence of the word occurs in an inscription (ca. 518 BCE) found at Persepolis in Iran, the capital of the Persian or Achaemenid Empire of Darius I, which lists 'Hi(n)du' as one of the imperial possessions. The term, as originally used, referred to a relatively small area in the vicinity of the Indus river. Similarly, Herodotus also seems to have assumed that it covered a limited area.[37] The irony of this is that the area referred to in these early texts 'was largely outside the republic of India but largely within Pakistan' (Keay 2000: 57). However, no one suggests that we cannot write a continuous history of India from its ancient past to the present or that we cannot refer to 'Indian history'. No one questions the appropriateness of the phrases 'history of India' or 'Indian history'.[38]

The idea of a history of Palestine, a narrative that integrates the ancient past with the present, has as great a claim to legitimacy as that of a history of India.[39] The study of the Iron Age in ancient Palestine is simply one

36. As in the past, the investment of an imperial power—whether it be Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Rome, Byzantium, Turkey, Britain or now the United States—in pursuit of its own strategic interests has often been a determining factor in the affairs of the region. In each of these periods, however, it is important to investigate and understand how the indigenous population responded to such imperial presence. It also important to recognize that imperial powers have come and gone while the inhabitants of Palestine have lived their lives to the rhythms of time.

37. See Keay 2000: 59. Thapar (2000: 77) notes that inscriptions of the Achaemenid empire refer to the frontier region of the Indus or Sindhu as Hi(n)dush. It appears in later Arabic texts where it refers to the inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent, the land across the Sindhu or Indus river. Al-Hind was therefore a geographical identity, and the Hindus were all the inhabitants of the land rather than primarily a religious group.

38. It is possible to read many volumes on this subject, including John Keay's *India: A History* (2000).

39. It has a greater claim to legitimacy than the history of the Balkans. As Mazower (2001: 1) pointed out at the outset of his recent study of Balkans history, 'At the end of the twentieth century, people spoke as if the Balkans had existed for ever. Two hundred

phase in the rich history of the region. In the same way that a continuous history of India has been constructed in the post-colonial period, it is important to write an integrated history of Palestine that takes into account its ancient past. But in order to do this, we have to beware of reading the modern nation-state and its ethnic identities back into the past and of trying to replace one form of exclusivist history with another.

The History of Palestine: A Regional Perspective

Attempts to understand the history of ancient Palestine as part of an integrated narrative that continues into the present have been hindered by the way in which the history of ancient Israel has come to dominate and subsume the past. Viewed from a regional perspective, the history of ancient Israel—and of the modern state for that matter—is one thread in the fabric of Palestinian history.[40] This problematic relationship finds an interesting parallel in the debate that has taken place within British history over the role of English history.[41] Kearney, following the seminal work of Pocock, is particularly concerned to escape 'the straitjacket of exclusively national categories', particularly the dominance of English history, when studying the various major cultures of the British Isles from the Roman period onward. He adopts what he terms a 'Britannic' approach: 'To concentrate on a single 'national' history, which is based upon the political arrangements of the present, is to run the risk of being imprisoned within a cage of partial assumptions, which lead to the perpetuation of ethnocentric myths and ideologies' (Kearney 1989: 1). Similarly, to allow the political arrangements of the present—the dominance of the modern state of Israel—to be read back into and dominate the past perpetuates the ethnocentric writing of history.[42]

years earlier, they had not yet come into being.' Yet as he notes, 'a new geographical concept rooted itself in everyday parlance' as a result of military and political changes. 'Palestine' as a geographical term has a much longer history than that of the Balkans. In noting that in 1912 one Bulgarian expert had complained about the region being referred to as the 'Balkan' peninsula, Mazower (2001: 3) remarks that 'the tide was against such pedantry'.

40. Coote and Whitelam (1987) pointed out some time ago that ancient Israelite history needed to be viewed as a subset of Palestinian history.

41. John Pocock (1982), in a powerful essay entitled 'The Limits and Divisions of British History: In Search of an Unknown Subject', attempted to define a field of study that might properly be called 'British history'. He emphasized the political aspects of 'British Isles' history, ranging widely in time and space. Pocock's proposals and the debate it sparked are pertinent to the discussion of 'Palestinian history'.

42. The development of a regional history does not remove the problem of teleological approaches, of course. As Clark (1997: 801) notes concerning the develop-

The reading back of modern national boundaries into the past profoundly affects our understanding of Palestine's history. The problem of trying to impose rigid definitions along national lines and the imposition of rigid geographical boundaries that define the territory of the nation state are illustrated graphically in the shifting borders between England and Wales and England and Scotland. Kearney notes that the current border between England and Wales assumes that Herefordshire and Shropshire are part of 'England' and their inhabitants 'English' with all the appropriate 'mental furniture' to go with that term. But these border counties, as with Scotland, have been the scene of a complex intermingling between 'Welsh' and 'English' cultures over a long period of time. At one time (the now Scottish) Lothians were within England, at another time (Celtic) Cumbria was within the kingdom of Strathclyde, but is now part of England. He also notes that the modern distinction between Ulster and south-west Scotland did not exist in the later Middle Ages when they were unified by a seaborne post-Viking society. Such borders were porous, ill-defined and always liable to relocation or violation. He concludes that 'to make sense of so much variation over time requires a "Britannic" framework', what he terms the 'Britannic melting pot' of a complex of interacting cultures (Kearney 1989: 3). The concept of 'nation' stresses the differences between a particular society and its neighbours.[43] Kearney's Britannic approach emphasizes how much different cultures have in common in contrast to nationalist readings of the past that stress the differences between particular groups—the 'nation'—and its neighbours. Or as Rees Davies (1988: 23) put it, a Brittanic approach helps in 'breaking down the barriers between England, Ireland, Scotland

ment of a Brittanic approach, 'the alternative to the old teleology of the nation state thus became a new teleology of European integration'.

43. Geary (2002: 15) makes the following crucial point:

> Modern history was born in the nineteenth century and developed as an instrument of European nationalism. As a tool of nationalist ideology, the history of Europe's nations was a great success, but it has turned our understanding of the past into a toxic waste dump, filled with the poison of ethnic nationalism, and the poison has seeped deep into popular consciousness. Clearing up this waste is the most daunting challenge facing historians today.

Kearney (1989: 6) claims that 'it is time for historians at large to follow their example and to break way (*sic*) from the concept of 'nation' which they inherited from nineteenth-century historiography, and which is too rigid to use when dealing with the complexities of the post-Roman centuries'. Again, the way in which the nation-state has been projected back upon the Iron Age has had profound implications for the representation and understanding of Palestine's past.

and Wales' and presents an 'opportunity to enrich our understanding by considering the connection, comparison and contrasts between them'.

British history, which for so long has been dominated by English history—in the same way that the history of ancient and modern Israel has dominated and subsumed the history of Palestine—is now exploring the multiple identities of Welsh, Scottish and Irish history that have contributed to the making of modern Britain. There may have been many population and cultural changes over many centuries, making it impossible to draw a direct continuum between population groups in the past and the present, but the modern population of Britain is still heir to that rich historical heritage.[44] In the same way, the indigenous population of Palestine is heir to its rich past and forms part of its continuing narrative. It is part of an integrated history that runs from the ancient past, including the Iron Age, to the present. Its history has been built on the bones of the dead, such as those in the tombs of Afula, Dothan and Silwan. When we speak of Palestine and Palestinian history we are speaking of a history that is the result of multiple layers built up patiently throughout its long past. This is not a process that has been interrupted and stopped at some particular point in the past, such as the Iron Age, or that only began in the modern era. It is a complex and dynamic process that stretches from antiquity and continues into the indefinite future.[45] It is a challenge to theologically motivated, teleological histories showing instead how the past is open ended, contingent, and moves to the rhythms of time. It is the pursuit of a 'secular human history', to use Said's phrase (1993: 72).

Just as English history has come to dominate and be seen to be coterminous with British history, so Israelite history has been represented in biblical studies as the dominant factor in the history of Palestine in the Iron Age. In order to overcome this problem, just as Kearney adopts a 'Brittanic

44. Pappe's (2004: 11) important modern history of Palestine is an attempt to tell the story of 'one land which became Israel and Palestine' and 'to examine the implications for the people of this land with two names'. As important as this is, viewed in the long term, ancient Israelite history and the history of the modern state of Israel are component parts of a wider, integrated history of Palestine. They have to be seen a parts of a much wider and much longer regional history rather than as the essence of that history.

45. It is a point that Braudel (1989: 23) made in his history of France:

> What then, do we mean by the identity of France—if not a kind of superlative, if not a central problematic, if not the shaping of France by its own hand, if not the living result of what the interminable past has patiently deposited, layer by layer, just as the imperceptible sedimentation of the seabed in the end created the firm foundations of the earth's crust? It is in sum, an amalgam, a thing of additions and mixtures. It is a process, a self-inflicted conflict, destined to go on indefinitely. If it were to stop, everything would fall apart.

approach' so it is important to conceive of the history of ancient Palestine as a broader regional history of Palestine in which numerous cultures, many whose own self-understanding and self-designations we do not know, interacted over centuries. Such a history thereby becomes a regional history of Palestine and all its peoples. Thus it is appropriate to refer to 'Palestinian history' as the history of the region and its peoples. Self-perceptions and notions of identity in the past are an open question, and we should beware of imposing modern ethnic identities on the past. Similarly, the nationalist and ethnocentric constructions of Palestine's past, as expressed in histories of ancient Israel, must change as it is seen to be a part of a wider regional history that is not constructed on nationalistic grounds or panders to the exclusivity of nationalism. We have to look for multiple or layered identities that are not necessarily equivalent to modern national identities and reconceive of the ancient past of Palestine without these nationalist frameworks. In this way, we can begin to write an integrated narrative of the region from its ancient past to the present as it responds to the rhythms of time.[46]

We do not possess such a history, as a number of commentators acknowledge.[47] What stands in its place are the massed ranks of standard works on the history of ancient Israel, which, as many have pointed out, are in effect little more than commentaries on the biblical texts. More recently we find archaeology-based accounts that tend to concentrate on the interpretation of strata, the attribution of architectural features to particular strata, the problems of ceramic chronology, and so forth. The repetition and reiteration of specialist archaeological reports do not produce a history of the region any more than the paraphrasing of the biblical texts. Invariably, such studies are integrated with biblical information in order to shed light on the search for ancient Israel and its self-definition. Although such archaeologically based accounts are essential to the reshaping of Palestinian history, they are

46. Much of the newer archaeological work, while vital to a regional history of Palestine, still derives its models and language of representation from biblical studies and 'biblical' history. It is true, as Levine and Malamat (1996: 287) contend, that many scholars have studied and brought to light important material on the Philistines, Moabites, Edomites, Ammonites and Phoenicians. However, they fail to recognize the ways in which the discourse of biblical studies shapes this material and determines its use. The primary motivation was the background light that this material could throw on our understanding of the Bible and ancient Israel. Notice, for instance, that Levine and Malamat say that 'modern scholarship recognizes the great debt that biblical Israel owes to these civilizations': in effect the material sheds light on biblical Israel and its background. These studies are fundamental to the development of a regional history of Palestine but need to be freed from the conceptual lock of the discourse of biblical studies that has shaped the way in which the history of the region has been presented.

47. Liverani's (2005) latest attempt is still a history of Israel rather than a history of Palestine in the broadest terms.

not histories of the region as such and remain the domain of professional archaeologists. This situation is not dissimilar to Michelet's complaint about France in 1869: 'I perceived France. She had her annals, but no history.'[48]

Similarly, archaeological reports might tell us of the multiple stone-lined silos at Izbet Sartah at the end of the eleventh century BCE or the hundreds of olive presses at Tel Miqne in the seventh century BCE. Yet they tell us little about the people at Izbet Sartah, Tel Masos or numerous other sites throughout Palestine who harvested the grain, stored it in the silos, and turned it into bread for their children or about those who cultivated and crushed the olives at Tel Miqne. Archaeologists might record the size of silos, their relationship within strata or their decrease in number in later strata, but if we simply transfer these issues from archaeological reports to our history books, we forget the very people who built and maintained the silos. As Pesez remarked, 'By dint of studying the price of grain, we sometimes forgot those who ate it.'[49]

How were they part of the history of Palestine? What roles did the great mass of humanity who have been ignored by our traditional histories—as part of what E.P. Thompson (1980: 12) termed, 'the enormous condescension of posterity'—play in the tides of history? What were their fears, hopes, aspirations? Where are they in our histories of the period? It may not be possible to answer the questions with any specificity—indeed, it is not—but they are important and should not be swept aside as they are in our standard presentations. We are peering back into the past, relying on a few lingering traces, incomplete information and hypotheses. Yet in just the same way that we have become more sensitized to the literary sensibilities of our texts, so we need to be more sensitized to the sheer humanity of our subject when we study the world from which these texts arose. E.P. Thompson, in his classic *The Making of the English Working Class*, provides an eloquent expression of this concern:

> I am seeking to rescue the poor stockinger, the luddite cropper, the 'obsolete' hand-loom weaver, the 'utopian' artisan, and even the deluded followers of Joanna Southcott, from the enormous condescension of posterity. Their crafts and traditions may have been dying. Their hostility to the new industrialisation may have been backward-looking. Their communitarian ideals may have been fantasies. Their insurrectionary conspiracies may have been foolhardy. But they lived through these times of acute social disturbance, and we did not (Thompson 1980: 12).

This is not a residual history, what is left over when event-based history is exhausted. It is the very basis on which events ride, which cannot happen without this history and which are explicable only in terms of this history.

48. Cited in Dosse 1994: 70.
49. Pesez 1978: 130; cited in Dosse 1994: 145.

The thickness and focus of the narrative may vary, but it is not a sequence of well-known heroes and villains. Of course, Thompson was able to work with textual sources that helped him to explore this concern. The emphasis on *la longue durée*, on the permanent structures of history, is often dismissed as lacking humanity when in fact Febvre's central tenet was that man was the object of history; and so it is with the history of Palestine, if we substitute humanity for his gendered term.[50]

The silos at Izbet Sartah and their charred grain remind us that the history of ancient Palestine is a history of real people, struggling against the forces of impermeability. It is not simply a history of the characters preserved in our literary sources: of David, Solomon, and whether or not they existed or how big their domain of influence might have been. Such a history is ignorant of the rhythms of the history of Palestine on which it is carried. A regional history offers a strikingly different perspective on the parameters of history: one which is concerned with 'hearth and home' rather than the 'sceptre and sword' of our biblical narratives.[51] As Michael Lynch (1992:

50. Marino (2004) provides an excellent recent assessment of the reception of Braudel's work. For a detailed critical assessment of Braudel's influence on Mediterranean studies with bibliograpy, see Horden and Purcell (2000: 541-4). Dosse (1994), Burke (1991), Iggers (1984) and Hexter (1972), among many others, provide earlier critical assessments of the work of Braudel and the Annales school. Said (2002: 417) points out that *The Identity of France* arises out of the crisis evoked by the decline of French identity caused by the influx of foreigners into France in the late twentieth century.

Braudel's conception of history, particularly his notion of *la longue durée*, has had some influence in biblical studies and archaeology (see Coote and Whitelam 1987; Whitelam 1996; Levy and Holl 1995; LaBianca and Scham 2006, among others). Barstad (2007: 29), while acknowledging the importance of Braudel's work in general, cautions against its use for the history of ancient Israel. His description of Braudel as 'the anti-event-oriented and anti-narrative analytical scientist' is particularly puzzling given the artful narrative and eloquence of Braudel's many writings and his claim that events that formed the focal point of many traditional accounts had to be understood in the context of the underlying features of historical experience.

51. The phrases are taken from Samuel (1989: xlvii):

> This new version of the national past is not only more democratic than earlier ones but also more feminine and domestic. It privileges the private over the public sphere and sees people as consumers rather than—or as well as—producers. Hearth and home rather than the sceptre and the sword become the symbols of national existence, samplers and patchwork quilts the signifiers of tradition. In the hands of the historical demographers, the grand permanencies of national life are no longer those of altar and throne, nor, as in the 'Whig' interpretation of history, constitutional government, but rather those of the nuclear family, as representative a feature of sixteenth-century Ealing, it seems as of any London suburb to-day.

xvi) notes, in his *Scotland. A New History*, 'The continuities of history—which usually include the experience of ordinary people—can now be better set against the process of change, which, for some, is what history is all about.'

Studies by a variety of archaeologists have helped to illustrate the rhythms and patterns of the region's history, the differing responses of its fragmented landscape and its inhabitants to the deep-seated movements of history. The differentiation of the Iron Age from the preceding Late Bronze Age and later Persian period is to a large extent an artificial watershed that results from the pursuit of the singular event, the great men of history and the 'natural instinct to periodise and pigeon-hole'.[52] While biblically based constructions focus upon the glare of political events, particularly in and around Jerusalem, the work of archaeologists, particularly many younger Israeli archaeologists and a growing number of Palestinian archaeologists, has begun to reveal something of the silent world that guides the history of the region. Despite the perspective of our texts, history is carried silently on the backs of the peasants. Within these rhythms, history is never completely static despite the massive inertia of the ancient past: 'It has gentle slopes along which the whole mechanism slides', as Braudel (1974: xi) suggested. A history of Palestine in the Iron Age, or any other, is required to provide a greater understanding of the complex responses of the inhabitants of Palestine to the economic and political realities of their ancient world.[53] The transformation and reinvigoration of Palestine throughout the Iron Age bear witness to the ebb and flow of the tides of history to which this region has always been sensitive given its strategic location in the geo-political scheme of things. It is a picture that is significantly different from the priorities that govern the way in which the biblical writers, and modern 'biblical historians' who rely almost exclusively on these accounts, present this world.

We might compare some current responses to the idea of an integrated history of Palestine with efforts to create an African history nearly half a

52. The sentence is adapted from Lynch (1992: x), as well as the direct quotation.

53. Similarly, Pappe (2004: 8-9) describes the subjects of his history in the following terms:

> They are not one mass of people. They are grouped together according to choice in small social units, usually households. But, with time, they prefer to define themselves via ethnicity, gender, occupation, class or culture. They change at will, but at times are forced to, not always to their advantage. Their world is a mix of material necessity and spiritual solace. Many of them are connected to the land where they live or chose to settle on. They cling to the land or to their property not from a national imperative to protect the mother/fatherland, the entity, but for much more mundane and at the same time humane reasons.

century ago. Prins (1991: 114) points out that since the beginning of academic history, following the model of von Ranke, Africa has been seen as the ahistoric continent par excellence. Such views have a long history ranging from Hegel's view in 1831 that 'it is no historical part of the world' to Hugh Trevor Roper's well-known dismissal of African history as being little more than 'the unrewarding gyrations of barbarous tribes in picturesque but irrelevant quarters of the globe' (Roper 1965: 9). It has been claimed that the settlement of the hill country in Palestine in the Early Iron Age is of 'special interest' only if the inhabitants were Israelite: 'if the people were not Israelites, they have as much interest to us as Early Bronze Age IV people. That does not mean that we are uninterested, but it does mean considerably less interest than if they were Israelites' (Shanks 1991: 66). Why is there a hierarchy of interest here? Why are they not of equal interest as part of the kaleidoscopic history of Palestine? Is their humanity any less if they are not Israelites?

The unknown poet of Ugarit, on the north Syrian coast, expresses love for the family in a blessing of future generations with the tender words, 'the little one your lips will kiss'. Is this not similarly a sentiment common to all the inhabitants of Palestine, whatever their own self-definition or label by which they identify themselves? Whoever the inhabitants of these sites might have been, are they not part of the layers, just like the bones of Afula, Dothan and Silwan, on which the present has been built? Ronald Segal (1975: 10), in his foreword to Oliver and Fage's *A Short History of Africa,* recognized that 'much of Africa's past has now been excavated from ignorance and error. Yet the study of African history has hardly begun. Those who have undertaken it are the explorers of an unknown human heritage. Their discoveries are of much more than African moment. They must enrich man everywhere.'[54] The many studies in recent years by bib-

54. Segal (1975: 9-10) also points out that because of European domination and conception of history, Africa had remained a dark continent:

> The changes in political power have corrected the vision of a European-centred world. And research itself has excavated civilizations that had been beyond Europe's reach and so beyond her recognition. Africa has had its own rich sweep of events, outside those which European conquest and settlement have recorded. The era of European dominance is short even within the thin margin of human history. Long before, in the evolution of man himself, Africa had helped shape history. And while the centres of European culture flourished, decayed, and sprouted in their turn, empires in Africa rose, ruled, resisted, and succumbed. Scholars studied and disputed in Timbuctu as in Paris, and what the Italians accomplished with pigment, the artists of Benin achieved with bronze. The cultures were different, but only on the horizontal. The vertical, the separation into superior and inferior, was a product of conquest.

lical specialists, archaeologists and historians of Philistines, Ammonites, Edomites, Moabites, Israelites, Judaeans or Phoenicians are fundamental for our understanding and appreciation of the ancient past. They contribute to but, alone, do not constitute an integrated history of Palestine for the Iron Age. The history of Palestine is a history of all its peoples— not a hierarchy—that enriches all of humanity. An integrated history of Palestine is a celebration of humanity, not a tract for exclusivity.[55]

Wesseling (1991) comments that the situation has changed spectacularly with the development of African history as one of the most vivid, dynamic and innovative fields of history since the emergence of new social and economic history in the 1920s and 1930s.

55. Gould, in talking of a trip to Africa as a trustee of the Rockefeller foundation to visit social, medical, and agricultural projects, says:

> In the most memorable event of this trip, we spent an entire morning talking with the women farmers of a small Malawian village. This ample time gave us leisure to explore in depth, and to listen and observe with great care. My mind wandered over many subjects, but I kept returning to a single theme. I could not imagine a greater difference between earthly communities—a senior American Ivy League professor, and an illiterate Malawian farmer, twenty-five years old, with five children (the oldest already eleven), and an annual family income of about eighty dollars. Yet her laughter, her facial expressions, her gestures, her hopes, her fears, her dreams, her passions, are no different from mine. One can understand the argument for human unity in a purely intellectual and scientific sense, but until this knowledge can be fleshed out with visceral experience, one cannot truly know in deeper sense of compassion (Gould 1999: 212).

Similarly an integrated history of Palestine is one that celebrates the achievements of all its peoples and draws on a deeper sense of compassion.

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