The Integration of Social Anthropology and Historical Geography in the Study of Rural Agricultural Estates in Northern Israel in the Late Ottoman and Mandate Periods: 1879-1948

Gerald Sack
School of Nursing and Behavioural Sciences Department, Safed Academic College, Safed.

ABSTRACT: *Anthropology and history employ two entirely different research methodologies: anthropological research is based on face-to-face interviews and direct observation, while historians eschew all forms of non-documented information, and generally assume that only the written word and maps are reliable. Exploiting the different relative advantages of these two disciplines, together with GIS (Geographic Information Systems), it was possible to locate and situate historical events from different periods in the physical landscape in which they took place. Such a "mixed methodological approach" yielded information that would otherwise not be found. This is illustrated in a study of the development of rural estates in the Galilee, consequent on the promulgation of the Ottoman Land Code in 1858.*

KEYWORDS: Mixed methodology; Oral History; Ottoman Land Code; rural estates; *effendis*; GIS; Jewish Land Purchases.

INTRODUCTION

Scientific research aims to elucidate cause-effect relationships between objects or processes. Archival documents, the comparison of maps from the Ottoman and Mandate periods, and the use of oral histories, enabled the location and reconstruction of local entrepreneurs' small estates in Northern Israel. Historical maps from 1799 (Jacotin's map), Mansell's map (1862), the PEF maps of Western Palestine (1880-1881), and Mandate maps (1932-1943), verified locations mentioned by informants as rural estates in the late Ottoman and Mandate periods. These locations were mapped using GIS cartographic and georeferencing tools, and existing relics searched for in the field; forgotten buildings and agricultural relics were located. The advantages of using a 'mixed methodology'[1] are illustrated with concrete examples.

---

[1] J. Mason, Six strategies for mixing methods and linking data in social science research, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, NCRM Working Paper Series, 4/06, Manchester University, (2006) 3; 5-12; E. Lieber and T.S. Weisner, 'Meeting the practical challenges of mixed methods research', in: A.M.

7

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

'Research' is an investigation that seeks to describe, understand and explain specific phenomena or processes.[2] The 'mixed methodology' research methodology used in this

Map 1: The Research Area:
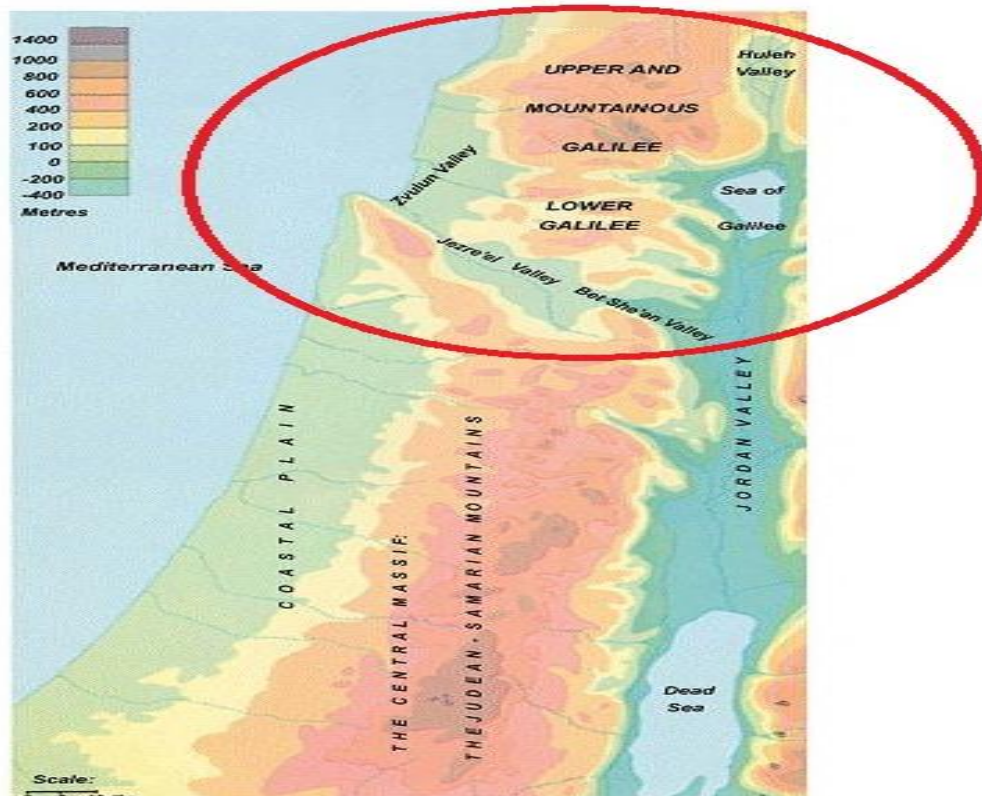
Based on Zev Vilnay, *The new Israel atlas: Bible to present day*, **Press, Jerusalem, (1968). p 31.**

Tashakkori and C.B. Teddlie (Eds.), *Mixed methods in social & behavioral research, 2nd Edition*, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2010 559-580; Jennifer C. Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, San Francisco, CA, 2007; J.M. Morse, and L. Niehaus, *Mixed methods design: Principles and procedures*, Walnut Creek, CA, 2009; C.B. Teddlie and A.M. Tashakkori, *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2009.
[2] D.B. Bromley, *The case-study method in psychology and related disciplines*, Chichester, 1986 302; A.G. Woodside, *Case study research: Theory, method, practice*, Bingley UK, 2010 1; G.O. Onatu, 'Building theory from case study research: The unanswered question in social sciences', 1st Global Virtual Conference Workshop, Section 6. Psychology, Sociology and Pedagogy, Social Science, 2013, 170; C. Hughes, 'Qualitative and quantitative approaches to social research', Department of Sociology, University of Warwick, At: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/academicstaff/hughes/researchprocess/quantitative_and_qualitative_approaches.docx Accessed 22/8/2015.

@ECRTD –UK: https://www.eajournals.org/

study was a combination of standard anthropological face-to-face interviewing, the conventional historian's use of archival material, the general historical-geographical analysis of historical events in their spatial context, and the use of GIS (geographical information systems) in order to situate the historical phenomena in their social, geographic, historical and cartographical contexts.[3] Such a broad approach was found necessary in order to understand and explain the complex social and historical processes that led to the establishment of small and large rural estates in the Huleh Valley and the Western and Upper Galilees from the early 19th Century on.

These small agricultural estates were previously ignored by historical researchers, as they were not documented. The location and interviewing of local informants revealed a previously unremarked rich mosaic of small agricultural estates and small-scale local agricultural entrepreneurship. Once these estates were located, conventional archival research provided additional information about them.

Sources

The standard anthropological techniques of in-depth face-to-face and group interviews were employed among a non-random sample of 65 Christian, Jewish and Moslem informants living in the Galilee between 1980-1986 and 2012-2016. The information gathered was cross-checked against archival material in the Israeli National Archives and the Central Zionist Archive (CZA), the Israel Mapping Centre's aerial photo and map archives, the History of the Haganah Archive in Tel-Aviv, a private archive (the Joseph Nachmani Personal Archive in the Beit Hashomer Archive and Museum at Kibbutz Kfar Giladi), and small local *kibbutz* and *moshava* archives in the Huleh Valley (Yesod Hama'ala, Kibbutz Ayelet Hashachar and Kibbutz Machanayim), and the Western Galilee (Kibbutz Ga'aton, Kibbutz Kabri, and Kibbutz Yechiam). The Tel-Hai Academic College map collection was a useful source for maps from the Mandate period (1921-1948) of the Huleh Valley and Upper Galilee.

Different historical maps were georeferenced with the Israeli Cassini Soldner projection (ICS) that was used from 1922 until 1994, or the new Israeli Transverse Mercator (TVM) projection in use since then, using ArcMap10. This enabled the location of traces of two of the estates.

The information about agricultural estates collected from both informants and archives enabled the identification of several rural estates now obliterated by the establishment of

---

[3] Ethnographers are beginning to use GIS systems (T.L. Whitehead, 'Basic classical ethnographic research methods', University of Maryland College Park Ethnographically Informed Community and Cultural Assessment Research Systems (EICCARS) Working Paper Series, (2005). At http://www.cusag.umd.edu/documents/workingpapers/classicalethnomethods.pdf Accessed 22/8/2015.

new agricultural settlements established in northern Israel from the 1920s onwards.[4] The original poorly documented small plots used by local agriculturalists and absentee landlords for at least six generations were leveled and consolidated in the period between 1926 and 1956, into the large fields characteristic of modern mechanized agriculture. The original agricultural enterprises could not have been located without the anthropological research, but once they had been identified, relics such as old tools, and irrigation furrows (which showed up as strata of differently coloured soil, for example), were located. So too were water pumps used for irrigating cash crops, particularly citrus, during the Mandate period. The diaries and documents of Joseph Nachmani, the most prominent Jewish land purchaser active in the Huleh Valley and Upper Galilee between 1918 and 1965, provided documentary support of informants' information. The mixed methodology, therefore, provided new social, historical and economic information that would not have been uncovered by conventional historical geographic research methods.

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Until now it has been argued that a mixed metholodogy has utility in uncovering previously unnoticed agricultural estates. There are, however, several problems with some of the research methodologies utilized, as well as advantages, that need to be addressed. They are dealt with below.

Oral Histories

A major problem with both written and oral sources is their implicit and explicit bias. Informants' bias in oral histories is not difficult to establish through careful questioning about specific historical events, and cross-checking the oral material against other sources, both oral and written.[5] Bias in written sources is more difficult to establish, although it is generally accepted by historical geographers, that historical documents generally reflect differential power relationships: the elite or politically powerful utilized their relative social, economic and political advantage to commission maps and document land transfers, for example, while the rural peasantry, who frequently were labour tenants on elite-owned land, seldom left any documentation. Hence they can only be discovered through oral histories.

Maps

It was initially assumed that historical material, such as land registration, land transfer documents and parcellation maps would be found in the files of the regional Israeli Lands Administration (MMI) offices in Nazareth, as this body took over the functions of the Mandate Land Registry Offices, which, in turn, had taken over the functions of the Ottoman Land Registry Offices in 1920. While information existed in the MMI offices,

---

[4] cf. W. P. N. Tyler, ' The Huleh Concession and Jewish Settlement of the Huleh Valley, 1934-48', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 30 (4), (1994) 853.

[5] Firo, 'How does oral history serve Palestinian history?' 1-4.

the files were not properly listed, catalogued or stored, and only limited verification of some current bloc and parcel numbers of *effendi*-owned land that dated from the Mandate period was obtained. Additionally access was limited by political *fiat*, because of the political sensitivity of what the original landowners saw as the appropriation of their lands.

Many Mandatory village cartographic and cadastral surveys begun are still incomplete. Historical sites, fields, buildings, irrigation channels and other signs of past agricultural and settlement activity were located, but not all could be mapped at the level of GPS exactness. Therefore, wherever possible, local informants who were historically connected with these sites were vital in their identification and more precise location.

As it was Ottoman practice to send copies of land registration documents to the district office in Sidon as well as the Central Registry in Istanbul,[6] it is probable that information unavailable locally may be found in one or both of these archives, but considerations of time and money, as well as the inability of Israeli citizens to enter Lebanon, prevented further research in these directions. Similarly, two local land agents interviewed in the early 1980s when a number of small Jewish settlements were established in remote parts of the Galilee, mentioned hearing that Land Registry files, especially from the Safed office, were transferred to Jordan at the end of the Mandate.

Ethnographic Sources or Oral Histories:

The Use of Ethnographic Material in Framing the Research Questions:
Face-to-face and group interviews were employed to elicit information about landholding practices during the Ottoman and Mandate periods. Information was collected about the local and absentee landowners who owned small to large landholdings around informants' villages. When an informant understood the difference between state-owned and privately-owned land, his knowledge about the Ottoman period was found to be more accurate, as these types of land were first defined by the Ottomans, and the original Ottoman names for the different types of land are still current in Galilean Arabic, although their precise meanings are not always known.[7]

---

[6] F. Ongley, *The Ottoman land code,* London, 1892 99-110.

[7] Three types of land, *miri* (state or public land), *mulk* (privately-owed land) and *wakf*, (land or the income from donated as a religious endowment), are still used occasionally in legal documents and land transfers in Israel.

Ethnographic material and the *Musha*' Landholding System in the Huleh Valley:
A persistent conceptual problem regarding the ownership of land or *usufruct* rights in land resulted from the lax Ottoman land regime: as long as taxes were remitted by their tax concessionaires, there was little Ottoman intervention in local landholding arrangements, especially those related to '*musha*'' or commonly-held land.[8] This was public land associated with a particular village; the land was held collectively but cultivated individually by family heads. The plots were re-allocated by annual lotteries. The idea behind this unusual system was to ensure that no single family would have an economic advantage over other villagers because of better-quality soil or more accessible plots. The egalitarian ethos led to the division of all blocs of *musha*' land into small plots, sometimes of less than 10 square metres in area,

The fragmentation arose from the Islamic laws of succession to property and property rights, which mandated the division of all of a man's property among his legal heirs. Consequently, over time, since ownership of *musha*' land was collective and not individual, the associated *usufruct* rights were calculated as shares in a specific bloc or blocs of land, and where there were a number of heirs, each received smaller fractions of the *musha*' land than their deceased father. Very simple examples are shown below in Figures 1, 2, 3 and Map 2. This translated into smaller and smaller plots for families to cultivate every generation.

Knowledge about how this system worked varied widely. Moreover, the extreme land shortage in most Arab villages in the Galilee in particular, undoubtedly led to modifications of informants' narratives about their landholdings, and the ownership of shares in *musha*' land metamorphosed into *de facto* ownership of plots of land in many cases. At the same time, there were villagers with land-ownership documents dating from both the Ottoman and Mandate periods, whose forebears had registered ownership rights in the respective land registries.

---

[8] A more comprehensive analysis of this system of landholding is in preparation.

Figure 1: Surveyor's Report on Yarda commissioned by Nachmani:

DIPL. ENG. **S. I. TÖRÖK**
LIC. SURVEYOR-LIC. L. VALUER
Palmersgate Keren Hayesod Bldg.
PHONE 3857.

מהנדס מדופלם **ש. י. טרק**
מודד. מוסמך, שמאי קרקעות · מוסמך
שער פלמר, בית קרן היסוד
טלפון 3857

HAIFA, 12th July, 1946. חיפה,

I hereby certify that the shares registered in the name of the Bishoof Abdallah Khuri and Salim and Mary Shdan Khuri the heirs of Shukrallah Khuri, in the land of the Village Kadita Safad Sub-District, as written in the attached list equal to 490.212 metric Dunams.

And whereas according to my valuation the value of a dunam in the above lands is LP.4.- and the value of said shares will be 490.212 x 4 Pounds will be 1960.848.

S. J. TÖRÖK
LIC. SURV. LIC. L. VALUER

13

Figure 2: Shukrallah's property divided into shares:

CASE No.:

IN THE DISTRICT COURT OF HAIFA.

BEFORE:- MR.REGISTRAR SHEHADEH

IN THE MATTER OF THE SUCCESSION OF
BISHOP SHUKRALLA KHOURY OF TYRE, DECEASED.

DECLARATION OF SUCCESSION

Upon reading the application of Abdalla Khoury and Mary Shadan Khoury filed in this court on 27.1.42;

And upon reading the affidavit sworn to by Shlomo Attiyeh;

And upon reading the other documents and publications filed herein;

And upon hearing Mr.Aron Lipshitz for and on behalf of the said applicant;

And upon being satisfied that Bishop Shukralla Khoury died intestate at Beirut (Lebanon) on the 11th February 1934 and that at the time of his death he was of Lebanese Nationality and a member the Maronite Religious Community;

And upon being satisfied that the said deceased left miri immovable property in Palestine;

And upon being satisfied that the said deceased left the under-mentioned heirs, now surviving, and no others;

And whereas this application for a declaration of succession is unopposed, although duly advertised in the Palestine Gazette and in the local press;

And by virtue of the powers vested in me by Section 11 of the Registrars Ordinance, No.62 of 1936;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the miri immovable property in Palestine of the said deceased be distributed amongst his undermentioned heirs, now surviving, each being entitled to the shares set out against his or her respective name, that is to say:

		OUT OF THREE SHARES
1. Abdalla Khoury, brother		1 one
2. Salim Shadan Khoury, brother		1 one
3. Mary Shadan Khoury, brother Sister		1 one
	total	3 three

GIVEN this 22nd day of December,1942.

(Sgd)
REGISTRAR

NOTE:-This order has not the effect of Grant of
Letters of Administration or Probate. It is
a Declaratory Order as to the heirs of the
deceased and their respective shares in the Estate.

(Sgd)
Fees:400 mils paid under receipt   (Seal)   REGISTRAR
No.133382 of 24.12.42.
(sgd)

Extract No.
I certify that the above is a true copy of the Declaration of Succession kept in file No.P.13/43 folio 16 and is given against payment of LP.   mils as per Receipt No.   of

DATE: REGISTRAR OF LANDS.

Figure 3: A page from Turok's survey:

שם החלקה	מס'	דונמים	תגבולות	החלק לי
המעין	52	43	צפון:מא מזי,דרום:עבד..ח מוסה, מזרח:אדמת חמזי בן עלי,מערב:כפר מירון	27/96
"	59	43	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף מזרח:בעל רכוס,ועלי זכור,מערב:בעל רכוס ומחמד חמזי	"
קומיה	25	15	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף ומזרח:בעל רכוס וחסן זכור,מערב:בעל רכוס וחמזי עלי	"
המעין	30	43	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף,מזרח:בעל רכוס וחמזי עלי,מערב:בעל רכוס וחסן זכור	27/48
קומיה	34	15	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:ואדי המעין זמזרח: בעל רכוס,ומחמד חמזי,מערב:בעל רכוס	"
זערורה	29	28	צפון:סיסבה,דרום:דרך ג״יס,מזרח:בעל רכוס אליאס בוזב וחמזי עלי,מערב:בעל רכוס וחסן זכור.	"
קוסיה	60	15	צפון:דרך ג״יס דרום:דרך צמצאף מזרח:בעל רכוס,ועלי זכור,מערב:בעל רכוס ומחמד חמזי וועד	27/96
המעין	12	43	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף,מזרח: בעלדרכוס וחסן ואחמד חליחל,מערב:בעל רכוס ועלי יוסף	27/48
קומיה	55	3	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף,מזרח: ביר סיך,מערב:בעל רכוס	27/96
זערורה	15	28	צפון: סיסבה,דרום:דרך ג״יס,מזרח: בעל רכוס וחסן זכור,מערב:בעל רכוס וחסן חמזי	27/48
"	17	28	צפון:סיסבה,דרום:דרך,מזרח:בעל רכוס, מערב:בעל רכוס וחסן זכור	45/160
ג׳דר חמרה 47 1200		אמות —	צפון:חמארה,דרום:חמארה מזרח:חמזי עלי מערב: גורן	27/96
קומיה	31	15	צפון: דרך הג״יס,דרום: ואדי המעין מזרח: בעל רכוס וחמזי עלי וועד,מערב:בעל רכוס וחסן זכור	27/48
זרורה	32	28	צפון:סיסבה,דרום:דרך ג״יס,מזרח:בעל רכוס ומחמד חמזי,מערב:בעל רכוס.	"
המעין	33	43	צפון: דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף,מזרח:בעל רכוס,ומחמד חמזי,מערב:בעל רכוס.	"
זערורה	35	56	צפון:סיסבה,דרום:דרך ג״יס,מזרח:בעל רכוס ועבדללה מפתה,מערב: כנ״ל	81/192
המעין	56	86	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:דרך צמצאף,וועד, מזרח:ואדי המעין,מערב:בעל רכוס	27/96
קומיה	14	15	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:ואדי המעין,מזרח: בעל רכוס וחסן זכור,מערב:בעל רכוס וחסן חמזי	27/48
"	43	15	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:ואדי המעין,מזרח: בעל רכוס ועבדללה מוסה,מערב:בית קברות והפירות	"
זערורה	41	28	צפון:סיסבה,דרום:דרך ג״יס,מזרח:בעל רכוס ועבדללה מוסה,מערב:ברכת מראח	"
מעין	42	43	צפון:דרך,דרום:דרך צמצאף,מזרח:בעל רכוס ועבדללה מוסה,מערב:צמצאף	"
קומיה	40	15	צפון:דרך ג״יס,דרום:כרסי הכפר,מזרח:בעל רכוס וחסן חמזי מערב׳בעל רכוס ומוסה עיסה	27/96

The Headings on the Top of the Document (from Right to Left) are as Follows:

The vernacular name of the bloc in which the plot was situated; the number of the bloc (probably on the surveyor's map); the size of the bloc in dunams; description of the boundaries of the bloc as described by locals (e.g. The first bloc bordered in the north on Muhammad Khamzi's bloc, in the south on Abdallah Musa's bloc, on the east on Khamzi ben Ali's bloc, and on the west on the boundary of the village of Meiroun. This was the traditional way of delineating plot boundaries) and finally the number of shares Shukrallah owned in the bloc.

15

Map 2: *Effendi* (notables) plots around the Yarda Khan:[9]

Note: Each different colour indicates a bloc owned by a different owner.

An added complication was the loss of land due to unpaid debts, usually taken from local or foreign petty notables (*effendis*), with the debtors' *musha'* shares being pledges as surety for the loans. The loans were usually taken out in order to pay Ottoman taxes. If the loans were not repaid the *effendi* could legally obtain possession of the debtor's *musha'* shares under both religious and Ottoman law. Over time, in many villages, *effendi* moneylenders, especially those from Southern Lebanon, accumulated substantial quantities of *musha'* shares in most to the villages in the Huleh Valley, Upper Galilee, and Lower Galilee. This process and *effendi* names was very easily discovered by questioning contemporary old Galilean villagers and cross-checking their answers with both archival documents and *Shai* Reports.[10]

Table 1: Plot Ownership at Yarda, c. 1940:[11]

Bloc	Parcel	Area of Parcel	JNF Land		Emil Hanna Elias Khattar - to be transferred		Nabiyah Lutuf Azar Habib - to be transferred	
			Parcels	Area	Parcels	Area	Parcels	Area

---

[9] KLM5\169. This is a JNF map that is based on Ayelet Hashachar, Survey of Palestine, 1941. The notations are Nachmani's.

[10] The initials of '*Sherutei Yediot*' in Hebrew, which means 'Information Services'. This was a division of the Hagannah later incorporated into the Israeli Defence Forces as the IDF Intelligence Corps in 1948.

[11] CZA, File KKL9\151, Documents 44; 61.

13828	3	95.711	All	95.711	-	-	-	-
13828	4	7.721	All	7.721	-	-	-	-
13828	5	60.860	All	60.860	-	-	-	-
13828	7	84.332	All	84.332	-	-	-	-
13828	8	10.306	All	10.306	-	-	-	-
13828	9	12.787	All	12.787	-	-	-	-
13828	6	112.800	9/20	50.760	8/20	45.120	3/20	
13828	14	34.781	9/20	15.652	8/20	13.912	3/20	
13830	1	451.993	9/20	203.397	8/20	180.797	3/20	
Totals:		871.291		541.526		239.829		89.936

Note: The fractions in the table are the proportions of the shares in *musha'* plots.

A simple example of the ownership of *musha'* shares is given in Table 4. 'Khan Yarda' was a Mameluke khan erected while repairs were made to another khan between Jubb trade route between Ottoman Palestine and Damascus.[12] 'Khan Yarda is incorrectly listed in several sources[13] as having been sold by 'Shukrallah' to Jewish purchasers; it was actually sold by his heirs to Nachmani.[14] I located his will in an archive; it bequeathed his property to his two brothers and a sister.[15] The brother lived in Egypt, and relinquished his share of the inheritance to his sister,[16] a widow who lived in Haifa, who sold the estate to Nachmani (See Figure 3 below).

Figure 4: Renunciation of inheritance in favour of siblings:

---

[12] E. Stern, *Khans, roads and caravanserais*, Jerusalem, 1997. (Hebrew).

[13] For example, Aida Essaid, *Zionism and Land Tenure in Mandate Palestine*, Routledge, 2014, p. 114.

[14] See Figure 1.

[15] See Figure 2.

[16] See Figure 3.

17

Problems with the person 'Khattar' listed in Table 1 led to a protracted legal battle between him and the JNF (represented by Nachmani). Khattar was an *effendi* from Safed, and based his claim on an undocumented verbal agreement with Shukrallah that dated from the 1920s. Ultimately the Land Court judge ruled that he would receive some compensation from the JNF, on condition that he relinquished all claims to *usufruct* rights on the plots he had cultivated.

Copious documentation regarding *musha*' plot fragmentation in the Huleh Valley exists in the reports of Joseph Nachmani, especially his notes on the availability and types of land whose owners were willing to him sell their land. Nachmani purchased nearly all of the land transferred from Arab to Jewish ownership in the Huleh Valley, most of the Upper Galilee and parts of the Lower and Western Galilee and the Beisan (Beit Shean) areas during and after the Mandate period. The fact that today he is remembered as an honest land broker in virtually every village in the above areas testifies to his commercial integrity; this was in marked contrast to the negative views of other Jewish land purchasers. Since much, if not most of the land he purchased was *musha*', his diaries, local surveys of village land ownership (always undertaken with village heads and influential local personages) give a vivid and detailed picture of the number of land shares he was negotiating for, which was not always understood by the management of the Jewish National Fund in Jerusalem, especially those wedded to European concepts of land ownership.

Nachmani's land purchases coincided with the mandatory authority's desire to improve the miserable economic situation of the Arab *fellaheen* (peasants) as enunciated in the 1922 White paper and substantial amount of Royal Commissions and Reports between 1922 and 1947. These regulated where and how 'Arab' land could be sold to Jews, and provided a degree of protection to the peasant sellers.

One unexpected by-product of the Mandatory's desire to improve the lots of the *fellaheen* was the aim of ensuring that they had economically-viable plots. This promoted the surveying of many previously unsurveyed Arab villages, and the meticulous recording of who occupied which plots, or in the case of *musha*' land, who held how many shares. These activities aided Nachmani who made his research available to the Land Registries in the areas where he operated (See Figure 1 below). It is quite clear from his diaries and voluminous correspondence with local land registries that his extensive knowledge of both Mandatory land law and village landholdings was of great use to local and regional officials, and that this eased the complex bureaucratic processes of land transfers. A central requirement for any purchase of *musha*' land was obtaining the villagers' written consent to a survey and reparcellation of any bloc of *musha*' land so as to ensure the establishment of plots sufficiently large to provide individual families with a livelihood.

To date information on the distribution and ownership of *musha*' shares in 17 villages (which do not exist today) has been collected, with the intention to ultimately consolidate and analyze all details available for all the villages in the Huleh Valley. Since our prime concern was to establish historical events and processes, wherever possible, informants' accounts about land tenure and landholding patterns were cross-checked with maps, written and other oral sources in order to establish their veracity.

Oral history must, of course, be used cautiously, as noted several decades ago in the classical anthropological work on oral history.[17] Okihiro, however, argued that historical documents are usually purposeful, that is, written from an ideological standpoint or with a specific aim. He suggested that internal textual criticism can reveal understand authors' biases, while external textual criticism, i.e., comparing several documents dealing with the same subject, should be used in order to determine the veracity of historical documents.[18] This methodology also seems appropriate for the analysis of oral historical information, since it is easier to establish informants' points of view than it is to establish the implicit points of view of the authors of historical documents including maps, because the researcher can elicit his informants' points of view by means of direct questioning.[19]

The Nature of Informants' Narratives:
Narratives collected in the field are more immediate and possibly more authentic than those of researchers who never venture outside libraries or archives.[20] At the same time, since individuals' narratives express specific points of view, the veracity or bias of all narratives must be checked. The nature of interviewer-subject interactions and the nature of the information collected, make historians avoid ethnographic research, especially the collection of oral histories. For historians, only written documents are valid sources of information.[21]

Portelli, however, contends that

'…written and oral sources are not mutually exclusive. They have common as well as autonomous characteristics, and specific functions … Therefore, they require different and specific interpretative instruments...',

---

[17] J. Vansina and H. M. Wright, *Oral tradition: A study in historical methodology,* Chicago, (1965) 1-45.

[18] G. Y. Okihiro, 'Oral history and the writing of ethnic history: A reconnaissance into method and theory', *Oral History Review* 9 (1981) 27-46.

[19] S. Caunce, *Oral history and the local historian*, Longman, London, (1994), p. 16; Firo 3-4.

[20] Firo 3-4; P. Thompson, *The voice of the past: Oral history*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1982 4; T. Lummis, *Listening to history: The authenticity of oral evidence*, New Jersey, 1987, 73.

[21] D. Henige, 'Oral, but oral what? The nomenclatures of orality and their implications', *Oral Tradition* 3 (1988) 232-233.

This does not give one source primacy over the other, however.[22] Historians' strictures seem over-cautious, since checking narratives almost invariably includes the use of the same archival materials that are central to historical and historical geographic research. Certainly in the areas under discussion in this paper, without the information collected anthropologically, little sense could be made of the information in the local and regional land registries. Similarly, archival evidence is an important tool for verifying informants' information and contentions.

The collection of oral histories from Arabic- and Hebrew-speaking residents of the research area enabled me to establish their different narratives of changes in landholding practices and settlement from the late Ottoman period onwards. By 2016, however, very few individuals remained who were alive during or shortly after the late Ottoman period, so first-hand narratives are increasingly rare.

Since all history is subjective history, historical events are seen from the personal viewpoint of the actors involved. Consequently, events since the establishment of the State of Israel, governmental land appropriations from Arab citizens who see themselves as the owners, have modified earlier narratives about land tenure and occupancy, because '…historical narratives are not neutral, but involve … choices with distinct ideological and even specifically political implications'.[23] Historical narratives 'endow… events, whether real or imaginary, with a significance that they do not possess as a mere sequence.'[24]

Another important justification for the use of oral history is that it provides '… a needed antidote to an overly elitist perspective in most historiography'.[25] That is, oral history provides a bottom-up view of past events that were usually only chronicled by elites, as the lower socio-economic strata were seldom literate. The bottom-up approach is particularly well-developed in historical studies of Ottoman Crete.[26]

Documenting the undocumented actors in the research area;
The lower socio-economic classes, usually uneducated and illiterate, generally go undetected in most conventional historical and historical geographic research, unlike the elites who often documented their actions. The study of these classes is termed the 'bottom-up' approach by the historians and geographers who use it in order to stress their interest in the non-elite components of the population. The bottom-up approach, central

---

[22] A. Portelli, *The death of Lugi Trastulli and other stories: Form and meaning in oral history*, New York, (1991), p. 46; Firo 3.

[23] H. White, *The content of the form: Narrative discourse and historical representation*, Baltimore, (1987) ix.

[24] White 5.

[25] Henige, 231.

[26] A. Anastasopoulos, *Political initiatives 'from the bottom up' in the Ottoman empire: Halcyon days in Crete VII*, Crete, (2012).

in studies of citizen-government relationships in many Ottoman provinces, is at the heart of the work of Cretan and Cypriot historians of the Ottoman period, and has also been utilized in historical studies of Ottoman Anatolia,[27] Beirut and Damascus,[28] Jerusalem, Lebanon, Nablus,[29] as well as in contemporary Palestinian research on Galilee villagers and their experiences.[30]

The results are important pictures of everyday life in these places. Oral histories, memoirs and personal diaries frequently reveal how economic or political decisions taken by the administrators and power holders impacted on the local level, especially in peripheral areas such as the Galilee. There is thus undoubtedly a place for ethnography in historical and historical-geographical research.

Anthropological Research in History and Historical Geography:
Anthropological techniques are rarely used in historical and historical-geographic research, since the emphasis in these disciplines is on written sources, including maps, all other types of data being deemed 'unreliable'. This, however, seems needlessly restrictive, especially when informants were alive during the period studied, or had heard about events directly from individuals who had observed or experienced them. Personal interviews, especially of individuals who were simple farmers, provide some insight into the daily life in late Ottoman Palestine, about which the little that is known. Written sources, on the other hand, relate predominantly to the educated elites, including European travelers, who recorded and even photographed important events and locations in their lives that may not necessarily have been regarded as important by anyone else.[31]

---

[27] Y. Terzibaşoğlu, 'Land disputes and ethno-politics: Northwestern Anatolia, 1877-1912', in: S. Engerman and J. Metzer, (eds.), *Ethno-nationality, property rights in land and territorial sovereignty in historical perspective*, London, 2004, 154-180, especially pp. 157-158; E. A. Aytekin, 'Historiography of land tenure and agriculture in the nineteenth century Ottoman empire', *Asian Research Trends - New Series*, (2009) 1-19; O. Gözel, *The Implementation of the Ottoman land code of 1858 in eastern Anatolia*, MA Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, (2007).

[28] L.T. Fawaz, 'The changing balance of forces between Beirut and Damascus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *Revue du mondes musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 55-56, (1990) 208-214; L.T. Fawaz, *Merchants and migrants in nineteenth-century Beirut*, Cambridge, Mass, (2000); M.J. Quilty, *Bridging the dichotomy: Socio-economic change and class consolidation in Ottoman Beirut and Damascus*, MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, (1992).

[29] B. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine: merchants and peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900*', Berkeley, (1995).

[30] For example, the *Mada al-Carmel* Institute in Haifa, specializes in the collection and publication in English and Arabic of local oral histories and the development of an indigenous critical Palestinian history, For example, A. Sabba-Khouri and N. Rouchana (eds.), *The Palestinians in Israel: Readings in history, politics and society*: *1 and 2*, Haifa, 2011.

[31] A good example of this is what appeared to be a high wall 300 metres long near a very large estate house built in the late Ottoman period in the Western Galilee by one of the Sursock family of Beirut, which was accepted as the wall of a reservoir for irrigating the estate owner's mulberry trees. Hydraulic engineers from the Mekorot Company, a state-owned concern that supplies Israel's citizens with domestic and agricultural water, told me in 1980, that it was a reservoir that supplied the surrounding area with water in Ottoman

21

This research strategy is thus similar to that used when historians study personal diaries, except that ethnographic information is verbal, not written. Diaries and oral histories contain individuals' narratives of events they lived through, while informants or diary-keepers embody the thinking of people of their time and place, how the informants related to daily events and critical incidents in the past, and how individuals related themselves to the aspirations of the groups of which they were members. Both diaries and oral histories, then, are individually-biased views of the events that occurred, but they can often be cross-checked against other written sources including maps, in order to obtain some idea of the nature and the extent of their bias.

Comparative historical research answers questions about how specific social institutions arose, or how new social arrangements developed – in our case, those related to the ownership and registration of land – especially where these events or arrangements were the result of multiple contributory causes. Thus ethnographic research provides what the informants saw as critical causal relationships, which were not always those identified as significant by academic researchers who do not employ this research technique.

In sum, ethnographic research can provide answers to questions about landholding patterns during the late Ottoman period. The oral material collected initiated and directed the research, while the other two methodologies, the historical-geographic study of written documents, and the GIS analysis of cartographic documents provided quantitative and documentary checks on the ethnographic material.

Historical Maps

Bias in Historical Maps:
The use of maps is a prerequisite in historical geographical research, in order to situate the historical events discussed in their spatial context. It should be remembered, however, that like diaries and oral histories, even 'scientific' sources like maps incorporate biases, depending on who commissioned them and for what purpose, what features of the landscape are incorporated, and how they are presented. For example, 'scrubland' may mean different things to different cartographers. In fact,

'Mapmaking is … an activity of supreme political significance - a means of providing a basis for the mapmaker's claims and for his social and symbolic values, while cloaking them in a guise of 'scientific objectivity.' Maps are generally judged in terms of their

times. Recently (March 2016) I spoke with the archivist of one of the kibbutzim that were established on the former *effendi* estate, and he told me that when he came to the kibbutz in 1953, the 'wall' still operated, but it was an aqueduct, that took water from a spring further up the valley to a flour mill (that appears on the Mandate maps as 'Sursock's mill'), and then returned it into the Ga'aton Stream. This information is not mentioned in any written source on the area. He said that the original founders of the kibbutz were Hungarian Holocaust survivors that deliberately avoided any physical or mental 'contact' (as he put it) with the past, and looked at the landscape only from the perspective that it was part of their day-to-day existence.

22

'accuracy,' that is, the degree to which they succeed in reflecting and depicting the morphological landscape and its 'man-made' covering. But maps portray a fictitious reality that differs from other sorts of printed matter only in form. Borders plotted on a map, the detailed presentation of certain features and the omission of others, the choice of agreed-upon icons (map symbols), the depiction of the relative size of places of habitation and especially the choosing of names for features of the landscape and for human settlements – these are in fact the vocabulary with which the 'literature' of maps … is written.'[32]

The implicit biases incorporated in historical maps can, however, be evaluated by comparing historical maps of the same area that were created at different times. The new field of critical cartography in geography contends that groups claiming the same territories use maps as '… juxtaposition[s] of different narratives, and [maps are consequently] … fluid and dynamic rather than fixed and static'.[33] The same map can have different meanings to different groups, which is called the 'palimpsest model'. This '…implies simultaneity of multilayered perspectives. Space-text is constantly …re-written by …'[34] the different groups who claim the same territory.

Put differently, the palimpsest model reveals how different generations altered the landscape within which they lived. The critical cartographical approach is a timely reminder of the fact that maps implicitly narrate groups' ideological and social attachment to a territory, and the cultural memory they developed to justify their bonds to the territory they see as theirs.

Only aerial photographs are unbiased, and even the carefully-surveyed maps of the PEF and the Mandate Survey of Palestine (which include information about the legal status of land in the late Ottoman period), and its successor, the Survey of Israel, are implicitly biased. For example, not all of the villages in the Galilee appear on all historical maps, and village names change over time. The historical maps of Palestine from the late 18th to the early 19th Century, mostly drawn by European cartographers, as well as several Ottoman maps of various parts of Palestine, differ from each other in some particulars. The names of places and boundaries between countries or provinces also changed over time, sometimes complicating identification.

'Ottoman Palestine' was not a recognized country or province, but was part of two adjacent Ottoman administrative districts, Damascus and Sidon. In the late 19th Century,

---

[32] M. Benvenisti, *Sacred landscape: The buried history of the Holy Land since 1948*, Berkeley, 2000, 13.

[33] Y. Wallach, 'Trapped in mirror-images: The Rhetoric of maps in Israel/Palestine', *Political Geography*, 30, (2011) 367; D. Massey, *For space*, London, (2008) 10-12.

[34] Wallach 366.

Jerusalem became an administrative entity ruled directly from Istanbul,[35] both because of the large number of European and American citizens who came to live there under the consular protection from their respective countries of origin and because of Istanbul's loss of most of its European provinces.[36] Jerusalem became a *mutasarriflik* (sub-province) that stretched as far south as Gaza, and included the coastal plain as far north as Haifa. These changes in the administrative identity of parts of the research area affected the historical processes associated with Zionist land purchases there, by modifying the degree and nature of Ottoman on-the-ground supervision of these areas.

Reconstructing Rural Agricultural Estates from Historical Maps from the Late Ottoman Period

Similarly, by utilizing the PEF and Mandatory fiscal maps of the Southern Huleh Valley, it was possible to reconstruct several *effendi* estates in the research area. In the case of one of these estates, a land purchaser for the JNF, Nachmani, made an exact list of the blocs and parcels owned by the *effendi* and his brother, which enabled the estate to be plotted accurately. The existence of two of these estates had been unknown until, while collecting an oral history from the daughter of one of the founders of Yesod Hama'ala (founded in 1882), I asked about the origin of its nickname ('Khouri's citrus orchard'),[37] 'which is today part of Yesod Hama'ala's orchards.

Like most of the village's residents, she had no idea of the origin of the name, until I asked whether it could have been the name of an *effendi*. She then remembered visiting him regularly on Saturdays with her father in the 1920s and 1930s, and that his name (Schadeh Khouri) was the same as that of the part of the *moshava*'s orchards, while two other residents thought that he had owned citrus orchards near the *moshava*. Another veteran resident whose grandfather had left Yesod Hama'ala after a bitter disagreement, at the turn of the 20th Century to found the Jewish village of Shoshanat Hayarden some 15 kilometres southeast of Yesod Hama'ala, suddenly remembered when I asked if he knew Schadeh Khouri, that he and his father used to stop at the *effendi's* house on their way on horseback to visit his grandfather.

---

[35] P. Sluglett, 'Municipalities in the late Ottoman Empire', in: P. Sluglett and S. Weber, (eds.), *Syria and Bilad Al-Sham under Ottoman rule: Essays in honour of Abdul Karim Rafeq*, Leiden, 2010, 534; A. Kirmizi, 'Taming the governors', p. 7; A. Heidborn, *Manuel de droit public et administratif de l'empire Ottoman, Volume I*, Vienna and Leipzig, 1908 7-8; Y. Ben-Arieh, 'The population of the large towns in Palestine during the first 80 years of the nineteenth century, according to western sources', in: M. Maoz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman period*, Jerusalem, 1975 9.

[36] M. Ma'oz 'Introduction' in: M. Maoz, (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman period*, xv-xvi.

[37] 'Khouri' is both a Christian Arabic surname and a Kurdish Jewish surname, which possibly added to the confusion.

Map 3: Schadeh and Tewfik Khouri's Northern Estate: Blocs where they Owned Plots:[38]
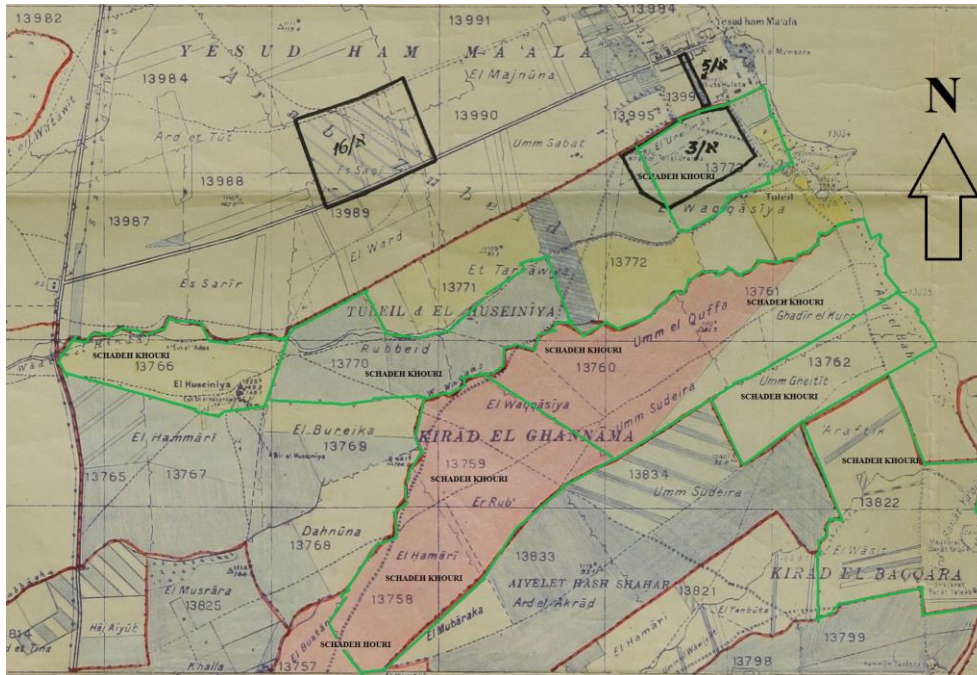
Note: The boundaries of the Khouri estate are marked in green.

Neither of the two local informants recalled his Khouri's first name, however, or knew if it was related to that part of the *moshava*'s orchards. A lengthy search in the CZA archive revealed the story of this estate, which its owner offered for sale to the JNF in 1950. The reason for his offer only became apparent later, when georeferencing showed that most of his fell into the Demilitarized Zone between Israel and Syria according to the 1949 cease-fire agreement between them. This was later verified by documents founf in Nachmani's personal Archive and the CZA archive.

When I returned with the name of the *effendi*, the historian not only remembered him, but also recalled that when he and his father would ride to visit his grandfather at Shoshanat Hayarden, several kilometers southeast of Yesod Hama'ala, they always stopped for coffee at his house on the way. He also recalled that the *effendi* had a naturally-heated *hammam* (bath) nearby, which I found after a lengthy search: it is the only natural hot pool in the area. Once located, it was found to be marked as 'the Daughters of Jacob's pool' on a Mandate map.

---

[38] Lake Huleh, 1:20,000 Series, Sheet 20-17, 21-17 Composite, Survey of Palestine, 1941, CZA, KLM\20-17.

From a *Shai Report* I learned that the *effendi* from Yesod Hama'ala came from Safed, and an account of Safed and its Jews' relationships with the local *effendis*, later obtained from an informant born in Safed in 1908, whose family lived next door to one of the local *effendis*, added to my knowledge of the dynamics of landholding and extensive farming in the Huleh Valley, which had never been mentioned previously, despite the fact that local *effendi*-owned land in the Huleh Valley totalled about 50,000 dunams. Three or four years later, the curator of the Kfar Giladi archive who had always asked to be updated on my research, came across a reference to the *effendi* in files relating to the Huleh Concession that she was cataloging, and was as excited as I was when I read it. It was a brief outline of his and his father's economic histories, which confirmed some details I had relegated to the status of 'unsupported hearsay.'[39]

Other archival information from 1940s about the Moslem clans that existed in Safed provided Safed *effendis*' landholdings in the Huleh Valley,[40] and their relationships with their tenant sharecroppers and agricultural workers.[41] Another *Shai Report* noted that Khouri owned a pump for irrigating his citrus groves near Yesod Ha'maála, which was listed in Nachmani's list of his property.[42] Other Safed *effendis* owned plots in the area of Jubb Yusuf and Yakuk (south of the Huleh Valley and southeast of Safed), and in the Huleh valley itself in the early 19th Century.[43]

Many Mandatory fiscal maps of villages in the Huleh Valley and the Western Galilee include information on when commonly-held village land (*musha'* or *ifraz*) was divided up by mutual consent into individually-owned plots (*mafruz*). Many of these individual plots were bought by *effendis* from Acre, Lebanon, Safed and Syria, or by local moneylenders between 1890 and 1920,[44] and consolidated into larger blocs of land, which were later sold to Zionist purchasers. There were also several estates owned by Christian clergy or churches, as well as a number of plots of land belonging to Moslem *wakfs* (religious endowments). Again, much of this information from the Mandate period which relates to events and documents relating to land ownership in the late Ottoman period and the 1858 Ottoman land Code, initially emerged from oral histories.

The Bias in Historical Maps of the Areas:
The inherent bias in maps is not always apparent, but where the same features appear in a number of different maps over a period of time, their historical validity is enhanced,

---

[39] This material was recently published: G.D. Sack, '‘Jewish’ and ‘non-Jewish’ fish in Lake Huleh in the 1930s and 1940s,' *Israel Affairs*, 28 (1), (2022) 60-74.
[40] Report by 'Amira' March 1941: Hagannah Archive, File 105-226, (Village Survey: 1/1/1940-31/12/1944); ISA/GP 127/G.366\11\2360\N.
[41] Hagannah Archive, File 105-226; Village Survey: 1/1/1940-31/12/1944.
[42] KKL9415-74/
[43] R. Kark, 'Agricultural land and plans for its cultivation by Jews during Montefiori's second visit to Eretz Israel, 1839', *Cathedra*, 33, (1984) 57-92 (Hebrew).
[44] A. Granott, *Land policy in Palestine*, London, 1952 38-45; 58-61; 65-70.

especially when they include significant man-made landmarks such as buildings. Thus, if buildings appear in the same location relative to other landmarks, on different maps drawn at different points in historical time, they may be said to have existed with a high degree of certainty, even though not all historical maps are complete.

For example, in the Western Galilee several buildings which were built on rural estates northeast of Acre during the 19th Century are marked on the PEF map shown below as Map 5, such as Khan Abdallah, el-Bahji, Kusr el-Hammar and Kusr Muhammed Bek. On Van de Velde's map only el-Bahji appears (as 'the Pasha's villa', which it was called by contemporary informants, referring to the fact that it was originally built by Suleiman Pasha, the Governor of Acre, 10-20 years after Napoleon's siege of the port). An earlier map drawn by Mansell, a ship's captain who visited the coast of Ottoman Palestine in 1862, provides greater detail of one of the locations, as shown below in Map 4, including a prominent feature not featured on other 19th Century maps, namely, the 'Tank'.

The 'Tank' is a large water reservoir that according to local informants, was built by Suleiman. Inexplicably, it is not marked on any maps except Mansell's and those drawn during the Mandate, even though it covered a large area, and still exists. Further south what Mansell called a 'large pillar' was in fact the siphon at the end of Suleiman's

Map 4: Bahji on Mansell's Map (1862):
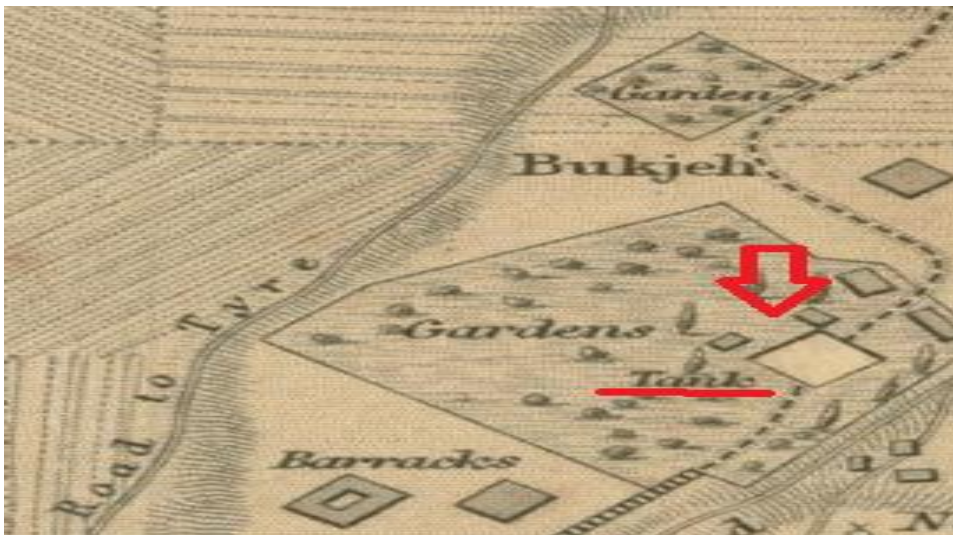
aqueduct between Kabri and Acre, which was built in 1816.[45] Suleiman's pool was surveyed several years ago, so it exists, as I verified myself, even though it does not

---

[45] D. Bersche, *The Ottoman water distribution system in Acre*, Acre, 2009; R. Frankel, 'The aqueducts in the Western Galilee', in: M. Yedia and E. Gil, (eds.), *The Galilee's Past*, The Sulam Tzur and Ga'aton

appear on most historical maps. The Bahji estate was offered for sale to the JNF in the 1930s by its owner, an *effendi* from Acre called Beyhoum. The offer states its extent and mentions Suleiman's Pool as well. This example shows how comparing several sources can provide an accurate historical and geographical picture of a specific location or landmark.

The information contained in historical maps is obviously influenced by the reasons they were drawn. Thus Jacotin's map reflects both Napoleon's interest in the Middle East during his campaign, and an attempt to document the topography for possible future incursions. Mieulat and Derien's map was related to French geopolitical ambitions in the Levant after they had adopted the Lebanese Christians in response to Druze attacks and killing of Christian communities between 1840 and 1860. The PEF maps reflect the Fund's interest in delineating sites of Biblical and Christian interest.

The Palestine Exploration Fund Maps and *Survey of Western Palestine*:
The PEF Maps and *Survey of Western Palestine* are valuable resources for the historian of the late Ottoman period in Palestine. Surveyed by engineers from the British Army, the PEF maps are a mosaic of 26 maps of most of Ottoman Palestine except for a small strip on the west bank of the Dan, Hatzbani and Jordan Rivers east of the Huleh Lake and swamps in the Upper Galilee. Associated with each map is a list of localities and features, such as wells and cisterns, antiquities, descriptions of the flora, fauna, geography and hydrography of the area, and brief reports on settlements. These are contained in the ten volumes of the '*Memoirs*'; finally; there is a separate list of all the place names and their map references. The PEF material can be cross-checked with Cuinet's account of the geography of the Holy Land that appeared 15 years later.[46]

The PEF material is meticulous and place locations are very accurately portrayed on the maps. This material provides a rich description of the landscape and its inhabitants in late Ottoman Palestine, and serves as the baseline for this study. An example of a PEF map is given in Map 5 below:

Regional Councils, 1961 85-86. [Hebrew]; R. Frankel, N. Getzov and D. Syon (Friedman), 'The aqueducts of Acre and the Western Galilee', in: D. Amit, Y. Hirschfeld, and J. Patrich (eds.), *The aqueducts of ancient Palestine*, Jerusalem, 1989 81–96 [Hebrew].

[46] V. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie:géographie administrative, statistique*, Paris, 1890.

@ECRTD –UK: https://www.eajournals.org/

Map 5: PEF Map of the Area North of Acre (1878-1881) Showing Buildings Still Standing Today:

Notes: 1. Existing places are underlined; existing buildings are marked with circles.
2. There were at least six small to medium-sized *effendi*-owned estates in this area in 1900.

Travellers' Accounts
There are scores of travellers' accounts of their visits to the Levant and Palestine, or the 'Holy Land', some dating from as early as the 9th Century. From the late 18th Century there was scarcely a year which did not see books published by European and American visitors to Syria, Lebanon and Egypt, including a European Jewish rabbi named Shwartz who visited Jewish settlements in Ottoman Palestine in 1840.[47] Where several accounts provide basically the same information, they were utilized to obtain a picture of what was taking place in the Galilee during the late Ottoman period.

Other Sources:
There are, quite literally, hundreds of scholarly books and articles on Ottoman Palestine, many of them dealing with the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 and its effects on land ownership in late 19th Century Palestine. A substantial part of this published research deals with Zionist land purchases in Palestine, mainly books and articles written after

---

[47] Other rabbis visited Palestine between the 15th and 17th Centuries (Z. Vilnay, *The new Israel atlas: Bible to present day*, Jerusalem, 1968 99.)

1960, when Israeli historical geographers, historians, and economists began to study Jewish land purchases in depth. This literature is discussed in the next chapter.

There are also a large number of diaries, memoirs, privately-published books in Hebrew, and centennial volumes produced by some of the veteran Zionist settlements. Some Ottoman documents relating to land purchases exist in at least the Nazareth office of the Land Management Authority (MMI), but have not been catalogued or properly stored, and access to them depends on which officials or clerks are physically present in the office at the time researchers visit it.

In many Galilean villages there are individuals, who possess Ottoman Land Registry documents in varying states of preservation, but these are often difficult to read and they are usually in Turkish written in Arabic script, and show the ravages of time and poor preservation. I saw several, but in only one instance was the owner of the document able to read and understand it. None of the owners of documents permitted them to be photostatted or photographed for translation, as there was a pervasive feeling in Arab villages in the Galilee, especially those that lost land to forced appropriations after 1948, that 'the Government' will use these documents in order to appropriate their remaining land.

The document that was translated defined the plot owned by the informant's grandfather in very general terms, such as 'bounded on the south by the sheik's olives' or 'The plot reaches …. [undecipherable] in the east'. Visits to the plots did not always make their identification possible, because of both subsequent sub-divisions because of Islamic inheritance rules, as well as substantial intra-village land purchases since the late 1950s,[48] which altered plot boundaries. A thorough transformation of many villages' fields was carried out after they were bought for the establishment of Jewish settlements using modern farming technologies. Therefore, such 'vernacular' documents were of limited assistance to the research, apart from indicating who had owned some land in the village in the late 19th Century, and its approximate location and size.

Finally, there is a large (and rapidly increasing) number of Palestinian narratives of dispossession, personal memoirs of the period just prior to and after the 1948 Israeli war of Independence, when tracts of Arab-occupied land were confiscated by the Israeli government. This body of information includes writers resident in Israel, in the Palestinian Authority, and overseas. This research is primarily concerned with delegitimizing the Israeli 'occupation' of former 'Arab-owned land'. That is, the research

---

[48] cf. A. Saba-Khouri, 'The [internally-] displaced Palestinians in Israel', in: Arij Sabba-Khouri and Nadim Rouchana (eds.), *The Palestinians in Israel: Readings in history, politics and society:2*, Haifa, 2011 28-29; Issa (Mahmoud Issa," Lubya: Palestinian Village in Galilee - An Unforgetable Symphony," At https://studylib.net/doc/6970948/they-sold-the-land-through-a-man-named-nachmani.-once-a-s... Accessed 17/4/2018, pp. 79-92.

is carried out within a specific socio-political agenda, which makes careful reading necessary.[49] Unfortunately relatively little of this research has been published in English.

GIS (Geographical Information Systems) in Historical Research:
The use of documents and maps as sources of historical data is central to historical geographic methodology. This research methodology is systematic and provides an objective way of analyzing different written sources about the same events. The use of GIS to superimpose and link different historical maps onto one of the standard cartographic projections of Palestine enabled them to be compared on the level of individual cartographic co-ordinates, once they were all related to the same standard cartographical projection of Palestine, either the Israeli Cassini Soldner projection (ICS) that was used from 1922 until 1994, or the new Israeli Transverse Mercator projection (ITM) in use since then.

The linking of maps from different historical periods is done by 'anchoring' specific geographical features, such as the junctions of major roads, field boundaries, specific unchanging geographic features like cliffs, gorges, or mountain peaks, as well as man-made features, such as the graves of sheiks or buildings that appear on more than one map in more or less the same location. When these relatively unchanging features are linked together on all the maps to the same standard cartographical projection, point-by point or feature by feature comparisons are possible. This process is called the 'geo-referencing' of maps, which involves 'Aligning geographic data to a known coordinate system so it can be viewed, queried, and analyzed with other geographic data. Geo-referencing may involve shifting, rotating, scaling, skewing, and in some cases … orthorectifying the data'.[50]

The anchoring process is complex especially where one of the maps being anchored has a specific feature or features inaccurately located, which will skew the map beyond acceptable limits when it is anchored. Most commercial and Open Source software has complex algorithms to calculate the 'best-fit' solutions mathematically, so the degree of error or inconsistency in the comparisons between different maps can be reduced, as was shown in the case of Van de Velde's 1858 and 1866 maps which were known to have displaced certain locations by a substantial factor or 'Mean Position Error'.[51] An associated problem is that some parts of historical maps were more accurately surveyed and drawn than other parts, which complicates the choice of anchoring points. Ultimately, the points on the projection that skew those on the historical map the least are

---

[49] M. Reinkowski, 'Late Ottoman rule over Palestine: Its evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli histories, 1970-90', *Middle Eastern Studies* 35 (1999) 66-97; I. Pappé, The vicissitudes of the 1948 historiography of Israel, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39 (2009) 6-23.

[50] http://support.esri.com/en/knowledgebase/GISDictionary/term/georeferencing Accessed: 1/1/2016. This is a database for one of the most highly-developed GIS programmes available, ArcMap 10.

[51] S. Perthus and J. Faehndrch, 'Visualizing the map-making process: Studying 19th century Holy Land cartography with MapAnalyst', *e-Perimetron* 8, (2013) 65-67; 70.

those usually chosen, which may in turn introduce a degree of bias in the interests of convenience.

Comparison of maps of the same area that were drawn at different times provides an indication of changes in land tenure, agricultural activity, and the erection or destruction of buildings. Such events can sometimes be confirmed by oral histories and Ottoman historical documents, such as sales contracts or land registration changes. Thus the three research strategies discussed here complement each other, as well as providing checks of the reliability of the data derived from the other methods. Taken together, these methodologies situate both individuals and historical processes in a specific cartographical and historical landscape, which the individuals interviewed described and often analyzed.

Summary:
The use of 'mixed methodologies' has both benefits and shortcomings. Where qualitative data are collected sequentially, that is either before or after the quantitative data, the qualitative data may explain the quantitative data, or unexpected quantitative results. As such, qualitative data are a useful adjunct to purely quantitative methods. Thus the interviews both focused interest on and threw light on the GIS results, as well as the conclusions of earlier researchers obtained from the previously published research.

The reconstruction of past events related to landholdings requires a multi-disciplinary approach, as no single research methodology can provide all the answers to research questions. The research questions themselves embody a complex historical reality, in this case, the processes of land ownership accumulation and privatization in the northern part of late Ottoman Palestine consequent on the enactment of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858.[52] The methods adopted in this research were those of anthropological fieldwork, historical and historical geographic archival research and cartographic analysis, and those of GIS, in order to enable the comparison of different historical maps of the research area. The melding of these methodologies provides material with a high degree of historic, legal and geographic veracity and reliability.

---

[52] R. Kark, 'Changing patterns of land ownership in nineteenth-century Palestine,' *Journal of Historical Geography* 10 (1984) 357-384; R. Kark, 'Land acquisition and new agricultural settlement in Palestine during the Tyomkin period, 1890-1892', *Zionism* 9, (1984) 179-193, (Hebrew); R. Kark, 'Land ownership and spatial change in nineteenth century Palestine: An overview', in: M. Rosciezewsky (ed.), Transition from spontaneous to regulated spatial organization, Warsaw, (1984) 183-196; R. Kark, R. Aaronsohn and Z. Shillony, *Land ownership and settlement in Palestine 1800-1948*, Jerusalem (1984); M. Ewing, 'Land acquisition in Palestine in the late Ottoman period', Seminar Paper, New York University, n.d. 2-4. At: *http://www.historian-nyu.com/michael-ewing---land-acquisition-in-palestine-in-the-late-ottoman-period.html* Accessed: 08/1/2015.

@ECRTD –UK: https://www.eajournals.org/

The use of oral histories and ethnographic research methods, while adding an important dimension to the conventional historical and historical-geographic methodologies, may introduce biased information, especially when informants have undisclosed personal agendas that may influence not only what information they reveal, but how they present it. At the same time, most individuals who were interviewed made efforts to minimize their individual biases, for example, by verifying or comparing their 'facts' and memories with other local historians, frequently from different villages.

The acuity of the experienced interviewer can also indicate when information seems to have been distorted or manipulated. Overall, I was impressed by all my informants' distinctions between what they knew or had experienced, and hearsay information. Consequently the degree of conscious and unconscious bias in oral histories does not necessarily to reduce their value appreciably, and it has even been argued that oral histories are more reliable than written sources, especially where the latter derive from '… hegemonic institutions, such as state archives and academic libraries',[53] since apart from correspondence, much archival material is *post facto* transcripts, discussions, or interpretations of events, and not the events themselves.[54]

The material gathered by means of this mixed methodology uncovered a number of previously unrecorded small- to medium-sized *effendi*-owned rural estates in the Western and Upper Galilee and the Huleh Valley, as well as information about the *effendi* owners, the crops grown, and the use of local peasants as labourers (*harrat'in*)[55] or sharecroppers (*qatruz*)[56] Much of the information about the estates derived initially, from oral histories, that, to varying degrees of completeness, were confirmed by written data (maps, purchase contracts and other documents), as well as physical inspections of the landscape. Georeferencing historical maps enabled buildings and, in some cases, growing agricultural relicts to be located, for example in the form of a number citrus trees of types assumed to be extinct that were located on a Bahai estate in the western Galilee. Generally only very fragmentary remnants of old irrigation systems were located, however, as these had been systematically razed as part of the soil preparation for modern industrially- grown crops.

In such a situation, the use of oral history is essential in building up a comprehensive and coherent picture of an extinct agrarian regime and agricultural system, peopled by simple farmers on the one hand, and agricultural and property entrepreneurs, many from neighbouring countries, on the other.

---

[53] Firo 3-4.
[54] Firo 3-4.
[55] '*Harra't*' is Arabic for 'a ploughman'.
[56] '*Qatruz'* is Arabic for a landless peasant who had no ploughing animals (http://www.ap-agenda.org/nasser/nasser3.htm Accessed 14/3/2011).

BIBLIOGRAPHY:
ARCHIVES:

Beit Hashomer Museum and Archive, Kibbutz Kfar Giladi.
Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.
History of the Hagannah Archive, Tel-Aviv.
Kibbutz Kabri Archive.
Map Centre of Israel, Tel-Aviv.

ORAL HISTORIES

Mazal Dorfesman (neé Antebi)**.**
Jalal Hatami**.**
Arieh Lubowski.
Hussein Mubaraki.
Muhammad Mubarake.
Michal Ramot.
Gideon Sigali.
Salach Yassin.
Bat-El Zamiri.

REFERENCES:

A. Anastasopoulos, *Political initiatives 'from the bottom up' in the Ottoman empire: Halcyon days in Crete VII*, Crete, (2012).
E. A. Aytekin, 'Historiography of land tenure and agriculture in the nineteenth century Ottoman empire', *Asian Research Trends - New Series*, (2009) 1-19.
Y. Ben-Arieh, 'The population of the large towns in Palestine during the first 80 years of the nineteenth century, according to western sources', in M. Maoz (ed.), *Studies on Palestine During the Ottoman Period*, Jerusalem, (1975) 49-69.
M. Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The buried history of the Holy Land since 1948*, Berkeley, (2000).
D. Bersche, *The Ottoman water distribution system in Acre*, Acre, (2009).
D.B.l Bromley, *The case-Study method in psychology and related disciplines*, Chichester, (1986).
S. Caunce, *Oral history and the local historian*, London, (1994).
V. Cuinet, *La Turquie d'Asie; géographie administrative, statistique*, Paris, (1890).
B. Doumani, *Rediscovering Palestine merchants and peasants in Jabal Nablus, 1700-1900*', Berkeley, (1995).
Aida Essaid, *Zionism and Land Tenure in Mandate Palestine*, Routledge, 2014.

M. Ewing, 'Land acquisition in Palestine in the late Ottoman period', Seminar Paper, New York University, n.d., pp. 2-4. At: http://www.historian-nyu.com/michael-ewing---land-acquisition-in-palestine-in-the-late-ottoman-period.html Accessed: 08/1/2015.

L. Tarazi Fawaz, 'The changing balance of forces between Beirut and Damascus in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries', *Revue du mondes musulman et de la Méditerranée*, 55-56, (1990) 208-214.

L. Tarazi Fawaz, *Merchants and migrants in nineteenth-century Beirut*, Cambridge, Mass, (2000).

K. M. Firo, 'How does oral history serve Palestinian history'? *Jadal, (*2014).

R. Frankel, 'The aqueducts in the western Galilee', in: M. Yedia and E. Gil, (eds.), *The Galilee's past*, The Sulam Tzur and Ga'aton Regional Councils, (1961) 85-86. [Hebrew]

R. Frankel, N. Getzov and Dany Syon (Friedman), 'The aqueducts of Acre and the western Galilee', in: D. Amit, Y. Hirschfeld, and J. Patrich (eds.), *The aqueducts of ancient Palestine*, Jerusalem, (1989) 81–96 [Hebrew].

O. Gözel, *The implementation of the Ottoman land code of 1858 in Eastern Anatolia*, MA Thesis, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, (2007).

A. Granott, *Land policy in Palestine*, Eyre and Spottiswoode, (1952).

J.C. Greene, *Mixed methods in social inquiry*, San Francisco, CA, (2007).

A. Heidborn, *Manuel de droit public et administratif de l'empire Ottoman, Volume I*, Vienna and Leipzig, (1908).

D.Henige, 'Oral, but oral what? The nomenclatures of orality and their implications', *Oral Tradition*, 3, (1988) 232-233.

http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/al-Nahr/Picture22995.html. Accessed 01/02/2011.

https://bahai.bwc.org/pilgrimage/Intro/visit_9.asp. Accessed 23/4/2015.

https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=740404592673754&id=304965289551022. Accessed 23/4/2015.

R. Kark, 'Agricultural land and plans for its cultivation by Jews during Montefiori's second visit to Eretz Israel, 1839', *Cathedra*, 33, (1984) 57-92 (Hebrew).

R. Kark, 'Changing patterns of land ownership in nineteenth-century Palestine,' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 10, (1984) 357-384.

R. Kark, 'Land acquisition and new agricultural settlement in Palestine during the Tyomkin period, 1890-1892', *Zionism*, 9, (1984) 179-193 (Hebrew).

R. Kark, 'Land ownership and spatial change in nineteenth century Palestine: An overview', in: M. Roscizewsky (ed.), *Transition from spontaneous to regulated spatial organization*', Warsaw, (1984) 183-196.

R. Kark, Ran Aaronsohn and Zvi Shillony, *Land ownership and settlement in Palestine 1800-1948*, Jerusalem, (1984).

A. Kirmizi, 'Taming the governors: The swinging pendulum of power over the Ottoman provinces in the nineteenth century', *The International Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, 6, (2013) 4-23.

E. Lieber and T.S. Weisner, 'Meeting the practical challenges of mixed methods research', In A.M. Tashakkori and C.B. Teddlie (Eds.), *Mixed methods in social and behavioral research 2nd Edition*, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2010 559-580.

T. Lummis, *Listening to history: The authenticity of oral evidence*, New Jersey, (1987).

M. Maoz, (ed.), *Studies on Palestine during the Ottoman period*, Jerusalem, (1975).

J. Mason, Six strategies for mixing methods and linking data in social science Research, ESRC National Centre for Research Methods, NCRM Working Paper Series, 4/06, School of Social Sciences, Manchester University, (2006).

D. Massey, *For Space*, London, (2008).

J.M. Morse, and L. Niehaus, *Mixed methods design: Principles and procedures*, Walnut Creek, CA, (2009).

G.Y. Okihiro, 'Oral history and the writing of ethnic history: A reconnaissance into method and theory', *Oral History Review*, 9, (1981) 27-46.

G.O. Onatu, 'Building theory from case study research: The unanswered question in social sciences', 1st Global Virtual Conference Workshop, Section 6. Psychology, Sociology and Pedagogy, Social Science, (2013), p. 170; Christina Hughes, 'Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Social Research', Department of Sociology, University of Warwick,   At: http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/sociology/staff/academicstaff/hughes/researchproces s/quantitative_and_qualitative_approaches.docx Accessed 22/8/2015.

F. Ongley, *The Ottoman land code,* London, (1892), pp. 99-110.

I. Pappé, The vicissitudes of the 1948 historiography of Israel, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 39, (2009) 6-23.

S. Perthus and J. Faehndrch, 'Visualizing the map-making process: Studying 19th century Holy Land cartography with MapAnalyst', *e-Perimetron*, 8, No 2, (2013) 60-84.

A. Portelli, *The death of Lugi Trastulli and other stories: Form and meaning in oral history*, New York, (1991).

M.J. Quilty, *Bridging the dichotomy: Socio-economic change and class consolidation in Ottoman Beirut and Damascus*, MA Thesis, Simon Fraser University, (1992).

M. Reinkowski, 'Late Ottoman rule over Palestine: Its evaluation in Arab, Turkish and Israeli histories, 1970-90', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 35 (1999) 66-97.

A. Sabba-Khouri and N. Rouchana (eds.), *The Palestinians in Israel: Readings in history, politics and society-1*, Haifa, (2011).

A. Saba-Khouri, 'The [internally-] displaced Palestinians in Israel', in: A. Sabba-Khouri and N. Rouchana (eds.), *The Palestinians in Israel: Readings in history, politics and society-2*, Haifa, (2011) 26-46.

G. D. Sack, ''Jewish' and 'Non-Jewish' fish in Lake Huleh in the 1930s and 1940s,' *Israel Affairs*, 28 (1), (2022) 60-74.

P. Sluglett, 'Municipalities in the late Ottoman empire', in: P. Sluglett and S. Weber, (eds.), *Syria and Bilad Al-Sham under Ottoman rule: Essays in honour of Abdul Karim Rafeq*, Leiden, 2010, 529-542.

E. Stern, *Khans, roads and caravanserais*, Jerusalem, 1997. (Hebrew).

C.B. Teddlie and A.M. Tashakkori, *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences*, Thousand Oaks, CA, (2009).

Y. Terzibaşoğlu, 'Land disputes and ethno-politics: Northwestern Anatolia, 1877-1912', in: S. Engerman and J. Metzer, (eds.), *Ethno-nationality, property rights in land and territorial sovereignty in historical perspective*, London, 2004 154-180.

Paul Thompson, *The voice of the past: Oral history,* Oxford, (1982).

J. Vansina and H. M. Wright, *Oral tradition: A study in historical methodology*, Chicago, (1965).

W. P. N. Tyler, ' The Huleh Concession and Jewish Settlement of the Huleh Valley, 1934-48', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 30 (4), (1994) 826-859.

Z. Vilnay, *The new Israel atlas: Bible to present day*, Jerusalem, (1968).

Y. Wallach, 'Trapped in mirror-images: The rhetoric of maps in Israel/Palestine', *Political Geography*, 30, (2011) 358-369.

H. White, *The content of the form: Narrative discourse and historical representation*, Baltimore, (1987)

T. L. Whitehead, 'Basic classical ethnographic research methods', University of Maryland College Park Ethnographically Informed Community and Cultural Assessment Research Systems (EICCARS) Working Paper Series, (2005), p. 2). At http://www.cusag.umd.edu/documents/workingpapers/classicalethnomethods.pdf Accessed 22/8/2015.

A.G. Woodside, *Case study research: Theory, method, practice*, Bingley UK, (2010).