



IMPERIAL PERCEPTIONS OF PALESTINE

BRITISH INFLUENCE AND POWER
IN LATE OTTOMAN TIMES

LORENZO KAMEL

I.B. TAURIS

Lorenzo Kamel is a research fellow at Bologna University and Postdoctoral Fellow at Harvard University's Center for Middle Eastern Studies.

‘A scholarly, original study that offers several new insights and a balanced criticism of British and Zionist perceptions of Palestinian history and society. For anyone with an interest in deconstructing the present of our region this book is a must.’

Moshe Ma'oz, Professor of Islamic and Middle East Studies,
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

‘Based on meticulous and extensive archival work, *Imperial Perceptions of Palestine* is a powerful and truly illuminating study of Palestine’s history under British influence that will challenge common conceptions and understandings of that period. Kamel shows how the dispossession to which Palestinians have long been subject extends to their history in what he terms “biblical orientalism”, denuding not only Palestinian claims but a lived history upon which those claims are based. Hence, the Palestinian struggle at present is not only about liberation but is also an attempt to “get back into history”, reclaiming a past in all its vibrancy, complexity and beauty.’

Sara Roy, Research Scholar at the Center for
Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University

‘This book offers important critical research about the roots of the conflict over Palestine. The author has made a thorough investigation based on a wide range of resources and documents, opening new avenues for re-reading a crucial period in the history of the Middle East.’

Nazmi Jubeh, Co-Director of Riwaq, Centre for Architectural
Conservation and Lecturer in the Department of History,
Birzeit University, Ramallah

‘This is a truly outstanding academic work. It fills a gap in the literature on modern Palestine and, more generally, on the construction of the modern Middle East. It is based on a wide range of primary sources in six languages. It offers a comprehensive outlook on a wide number of issues such as cultural, social and spatial boundaries, local identities, land tenure, institutions, toponymy and borders.’

Ilaria Porciani, Professor of Modern and Contemporary History,
Bologna University

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British Influence and Power in
Late Ottoman Times

LORENZO KAMEL

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LONDON · NEW YORK

Published in 2015 by
I.B.Tauris & Co. Ltd
London • New York
www.ibtauris.com

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References to websites were correct at the time of writing.

Library of Middle East History 61

ISBN: 978 1 78453 129 4
eISBN: 978 0 85772 919 4
ePDF: 978 0 85772 714 5

A full CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

A full CIP record is available from the Library of Congress

Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: available

Typeset in Garamond Three by OKS Prepress Services, Chennai, India
Printed and bound by CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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ABBREVIATIONS

AP	<i>Aberdeen Papers</i>
APES	American Palestine Exploration Society
ASDMAE	Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri, Rome
BAP	<i>Balfour Papers</i>
BLMC	British Library Manuscript Collection, London
BOA	Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul
BOL	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BP	<i>Benson Papers</i>
CAB	Cabinet Office
CHIR	Center for Heritage and Islamic Research, Abū Dīs
CP	<i>Cecil Papers</i>
CZA	Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem
DACH	Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage
DP	<i>Davidon Papers</i>
DVEP	Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas
EP	<i>Ellis Papers</i>
FO	Foreign Office
FP	<i>Fulham Papers</i>
GP	<i>Gladstone Papers</i>
HP	<i>Harley Papers</i>
ICJ	International Court of Justice
IDFA	Israel Defence Force Archive, Tel-Hashomer (Tel Aviv)
ISA	Israel State Archives, Jerusalem

ITAC	[Archives of the] Israeli Trust of the Anglican Church, Jerusalem
JIA	Jabotinsky Institute Archive, Tel Aviv
JEMF	Jerusalem and the East Mission Fund
JFC	Joint Foreign Committee of the Board of Deputies and the Anglo-Jewish Association
JHSP	John Hope Simpson Report
JNUL	Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem
KKL	Keren Kayemeth Leisrael
LJS	London Jews' Society
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library, London
MDC	Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv
MECA	Middle East Centre Archives, St Antony's College, Oxford
MP	<i>Mill Papers</i>
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration, Washington
PEF	Palestine Exploration Fund, London
PICA	Palestine Jewish Colonization Association
PLO	Palestine Liberation Organization
PMF	Palestine Model Farm
QSPEF	<i>Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration Fund</i>
RP	<i>Rose Papers</i>
SMC	Supreme Muslim Council
SP	<i>Stanmore Papers</i>
TCCDR	Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulation
TNA	The National Archives, London
TP	<i>Tait Papers</i>
TSP	<i>The Sledmere Papers</i>
UNA	United Nations Archives, New York
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCOP	United Nations Special Committee on Palestine
WP	<i>Wordsworth Papers</i>

NOTE ON TRANSLITERATIONS

In most cases Arabic terms have been transliterated following the system adopted by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*. Occasionally words have been transliterated using the forms found in British official documents. Family names have been transliterated according to the pronunciation usually adopted by the family clan themselves. Hebrew and Ottoman Turkish have generally been reproduced by following a simplified phonetic system as close as possible to modern Hebrew and Turkish.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Three figures in particular have been crucial for the writing of this book. Moshe Ma'oz was my academic point of reference during the years that I spent at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Afterwards he provided valuable criticism, ideas and insights to this work, primarily with respect to the simplification process related to the creation of religious titles and institutions in the phase following World War I. He inspired a substantial part of this research, also providing relevant academic contacts in different countries. Without his suggestions and his ability to stimulate my interest, this work would have had a very different structure.

Ilaria Porciani has been a constant source of insight and knowledge. She supported my work in many different ways and allowed me to see the various issues at stake from a different perspective. I count myself extremely fortunate to have had the chance to work with her. My gratitude towards her goes far beyond these few words.

Finally, I am indebted to Sara Roy, my inspired academic sponsor at Harvard University, where, thanks to a visiting fellowship (2013–14) and a postdoctoral fellowship (2014–15 and 2015–16) at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, I am having the privilege to work with a small group of formidable researchers.

I owe a debt of gratitude to the University of Bologna and the Hebrew University for several research grants; to Roger Owen, Efrat Ben-Ze'ev and Roberto Mazza for their comments on several chapters of this work; to Naẓmī Jūbeh, 'Adnān Musallam and Brian K. Barber for some critiques and suggestions used in the last four chapters of this

volume; to Sarī Nusseibeh, Zvi Elpeleg, Ruth Kark, Hillel Cohen, Muṣṭafā Barghūtī, Salīm Tamārī, George Ibrāhīm, Eitan Bronstein, Mūsa Srūr, Rāmī Ḥamdallāh, ‘Adlī Ya’īsh, Sam Bahūr and Roger Heacock for the interviews and the time that they granted to me; to Alberto De Bernardi, Maria Malatesta and Claudio Lo Jacono for their continuous support, Michele Bernardini for the contacts that he provided to me while in Istanbul, and Rabī’e Moḥammad Salāma for his invitation to spend a fruitful period as a Visiting Researcher at Cairo’s ‘Aīn Shams University.

Ruth Benny guided me in the research conducted at the Lambeth Palace Library in London, where I have also benefited from the experience of Joe Maldonado (British Library Manuscript Collection) and Mark Dunton (The National Archives).

Maḥmūd Ashqār, Director of the Center for Heritage and Islamic Research in Abū Dīs, gave me the possibility to access a wide range of unpublished documents. Helena Vilensky, of the Israel State Archives, has been an invaluable source of help for my research for the past ten years.

Maureen Grimshaw and David Pillegi assisted me in the weeks that I spent at the Archives of the Israeli Trust of the Anglican Church of Jerusalem. Gheith Hussein, librarian of the Kenyon Institute of Jerusalem, gave me some relevant insights about the Palestine Exploration Fund.

I am indebted to Irina Berdan (Jabotinsky Archive), Haim Gal (Moshe Dayan Center), Batia Leshem (Central Zionist Archive) and the staff of Oxford’s Bodleian Library, the Hebrew University’s Map Library, the Archivio Storico-Diplomatico del Ministero degli Affari Esteri of Rome, the National Archives and Records Administration in Washington and the United Nations Archives in New York. Matt Smith, of Harvard University’s Widener Library, and Elizabeth Flanagan, of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, who were, and continue to be, particularly patient and helpful.

The sources on which this book is based are mostly in English, Hebrew and Arabic. To a lesser extent I took advantage of documents translated from Ottoman Turkish, French and German. I want to thank the staff of the Osmanlı Başbakanlık Arşivi in Istanbul and, in particular Ayten Ordell, for their assistance in the translation of various documents from Ottoman Turkish, as well as ‘Ābid Nāṭūr and Māha ‘Izzat al-Khulī for a few translations from Arabic.

My heartfelt thanks goes to my editor at I.B.Tauris, Azmina Siddique, to my copy-editor, Elizabeth Stone, and above all to my family, without whom I would not have the necessary interior stability for facing the years that I spent away from home. The final thought is for Daniela, *l'amore della mia vita*, the most important and unexpected gift that I received from Jerusalem.

Facts are never the whole truth [...] beyond facts there is still something else to be seen.

Tiziano Terzani

INTRODUCTION

THE SIMPLIFICATION OF 'THE OTHERS'

Do the Palestinians, the Israelis, know how much they are extraneous to their current history, to their present? And do we know? Do they know the extent to which they are not victims one of the other, but that each is a victim of a history which is declared passed, but has remained suspended [...]?¹

Viviane Forrester

Despite being focused on a relatively distant past, *Imperial Perceptions of Palestine* is a book that speaks to and sheds light on the present. It is articulated in ten thematic chapters all connected to a central thread: the dynamics and the intrinsic consequences of the process of simplification of Palestine and its inhabitants under British influence. The process of simplification is about the tendency to define, indeed rationalize, the other in terms more suitable, comprehensible and useful to the self. It developed hand in hand with the increasing British penetration in the region and reached its apex in the five years immediately preceding the British mandate for Palestine.

The process of simplification has had in 'biblical orientalism' one of its most powerful manifestations. 'Biblical orientalism' – an under-researched variant of orientalism,² to which Edward Said (1935–2003) did not devote the attention one might have expected – can be defined as a phenomenon based on the combination of a selective use of religion and a simplifying way to approach its natural habitat: the 'Holy Land'.³

Between the 1830s and the beginning of the twentieth century this attitude triggered a flood of mainly British books, private diaries and maps. This enormous production, alongside a wide range of phenomena such as evangelical tourism, generated the idea of a meta-Palestine, an imaginary place devoid of any history except that of biblical magnificence. 'Biblical orientalism' was already present in the maps published in the first modern atlas by Dutch cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527–98). In the sixteenth century Ortelius instilled in black and white the concept of a Palestine devoid of history except that of biblical gloriousness. It is, however, only in the second half of the nineteenth century that this approach found its ideal ground and was converted into imperial politics relating to the area. It is then that both the 'shadowing' process with regard to the local populations, and the impression that the history of the major villages and cities of the region had its point zero in biblical times, gained their most influential formulations.⁴ The original nucleus of this book developed with the aim of deconstructing this perception by observing the process through which a local complex reality has been simplified and denied in its continuity.

The process of simplification has two dimensions: it is a mindset, as well as a policy. The book chapters are therefore linked to one another accordingly: the first dimension concentrates on how the perception of Palestine developed in Britain in the period under analysis (1850s–1923). The second focuses on the process by which the Palestinian context has been simplified through a reshaping of the institutional and normative frames of the local life world in relation to identities, land tenure, toponymy, religious titles, institutions, borders and other major aspects connected to the local reality. Both processes have been analysed through study of a large number of oral sources and documents from 17 archives scattered across Israel, the Palestinian territories, England, Turkey, Egypt, the USA and Italy.

The book is ideally divided into five parts, which follow a chronological as well as analytical order. The first part (Chapters 1–3) focuses on the development of basic British interests in, and biblical perceptions of, Palestine in the mid-nineteenth century, which set the ground for British policies of 'simplifying the other'. This took place through a process of denial and, more generally, through the rationalization of the local reality,⁵ as for instance in the land tenure issue ([Chapter 3](#)).



Figure I.1 J. MacGregor, *The Rob Roy on the Jordan* (London: Murray, 1904). The image represents an example of the effects that the inclination to standardize the complexity of the 'other' had within the Palestinian context. It is placed on the frontispiece of the book with the caption 'Captured on Jordan by the Arabs of Hooleh [Hula]'. John MacGregor (1815–92) visited Palestine in 1868–9. The 'naked and black' figures immortalized on the image are the Arabs who attacked his canoe in the Hula Valley. In describing them MacGregor noted that 'their heads were like cocoa-nuts, with only one hair-lock left at the top, for Mahomet to hold them by at last' (p. 4).

The second part of the volume (Chapters 4–6) brings in the Zionist movement in Palestine, often misrepresented, without which the process of simplifying the local reality cannot be fully understood. It starts with outlining the Zionist approach to the land, moves to the British–Zionist relationship, before examining its effects on the region.

Part 3 (Chapters 7–8) takes on board the creation of the mandates system, a meaningful turning point that, on the one hand, provided the legal international legitimization to the process of standardization examined in the previous chapters, and, on the other, enabled a 'cherry-picking process' – that is, the selection of a few 'natural representatives' from the local populations. Based on these developments, the fourth part (Chapter 9) analyses the construction of institutions, religious titles and leaders – Fayṣal (1885–1933) and Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī (1895–1974) first and foremost – by the British, which, in line with their interests, simplified local political structures and marginalized the Palestinian people and their expectations. Rather than denying agency to the local

population, the sources of the time show their efforts – often unsuccessful – to shape a different course.

While the first nine chapters largely focus on the top-down process by which present-day Israel/Palestine, and more generally the whole region, was essentialized between the second half of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the last chapter (part 5) goes beyond this and examines the growing bottom-up process through which the people are now trying to emancipate themselves from this process of simplification. This process gives a voice to the Palestinian people's attempt to write (or rewrite) history from below through museums, archives and cultural associations. In this last historical phase great swathes of Palestinian society have in fact demonstrated a willingness to correct the historical deficit triggered mainly by the colonial past. This may be understood as a growing internal need to bring Palestinians *back* into their history, or as an effort to emphasize a local reality that has grown for centuries in the name of a continuity and which has been too often overlooked or denied; or as an attempt to recover a local milieu and a way of life rooted in what in Western languages is only able to find expression in a complete way through the concept of *Heimat* – which in German does not refer to one's country or nation, two abstract ideas that are too far-reaching and distant, but rather to a place in which our most profound memories are rooted.

Finally, it is important to note that this volume is part of a much broader picture. It is to be hoped that it will facilitate a deeper understanding of the dynamics that the entire Eastern Mediterranean – an expression that in this volume is preferred to the more diffused Middle East, due to the colonial connotations of the latter – is currently experiencing. The process through which the history of the whole area has been simplified between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century has now reached its point of no return. In a effort to shed light on the present and the foreseeable future, a number of scholars are today resorting to the thesis of the 'end of the Sykes-Picot order'. If this claim has a meaning is mainly because the Sykes-Picot system postponed the rising of a new order shaped from within the region. Rather than linking what is happening in the Eastern Mediterranean to the end of the Sykes-Picot order it would be therefore more accurate to refer to the final point of an historical impasse that

lasted for almost one century. Each of the populations in the area are now expected to find their own peculiar way to get *back* into history, rediscovering the permeability and the specificities that for millennia characterized daily life in the region.

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CHAPTER 1

FROM PROPHECIES TO EMPIRE

There are my Lord two Parties to be noticed who will doubtless consider themselves entitled to some voice in the future disposition of affairs here [Palestine]. The one is the Jew – to whom God originally gave this land [...] and the other, the Protestant Christians, his legitimate offspring.¹

William T. Young, first British Vice-Consul in Jerusalem, to the British Foreign Minister Lord Palmerston (1784–1865)

“There is not to be found among them that great stimulus to national improvement, which exists more or less in every country in the world, – patriotism.”² When, in 1849, Colonel George Gawler (1795–1869) wrote these words to Lord Palmerston in reference to the Arabs of Palestine, the evangelical fervour that characterized the previous centuries and decades was already in decline. The fact that Gawler referred to the concept of patriotism, and that the same decade (1843) coincided with the first hoisting of a national flag in Jerusalem,³ represented two further confirmations of the new climate. The scriptures, however, maintained their guiding function: the Bible remained by far the most widely read book in England. Moreover, Protestant missionaries continued for a long time to distribute religious literature that in many cases, as the British consul in Damascus Richard Francis Burton (1821–90) attested, were ‘exactly in that style most offensive to Moslems’.⁴

Right beside, and often in place of, evangelical excesses, a more pragmatic approach was taking hold. This was embodied by figures such as the diplomat Charles Henry Churchill (1807–69), convinced that

British supremacy in the Orient could be obtained through its control of Syria and Egypt,⁵ and the physician Thomas Clarke, persuaded that Britain and the Jews were 'natural allies'. 'Syria would be safe', Clarke pointed out in *India and Palestine* (1861),

only in the hands of a brave, independent and spirited people, deeply imbued with the sentiment of nationality [...] Such people we have in the Jews [...] Restore them their nationality and their country once more, and there is no power on earth that could ever take it from them [...] In these speculations we have no respect to prophecy.⁶

In other words, the 1840s and early 1850s represented a sort of transitional phase in which the idea that settling the Jews in Palestine was strategically relevant for British interests began to gain a foothold. Edward L. Mitford, a colonial officer who in 1845 printed the *Appeal on Behalf of the Jewish Nation in Connection with British Policy in the Levant*, highlighted the positive implications that the support for the 're-establishment of the Jewish Nation in Palestine as a protected state under the guardianship of Great Britain' would have guaranteed: this action, he wrote, 'would place the management of our steam communications entirely in our hands'.⁷

In those same years, and in the phase to follow, dozens of other public figures proposed solutions that more or less explicitly identified Jews as a vanguard of British imperialism. In some cases – such as Samuel Alexander Bradshaw's *A Tract For the Times, being a Plea for the Jews* (1844), or the initiatives of Thomas Tuly Crybbace, who in 1844 established a society for the 'rebirth' of the 'Jewish Nation' in Palestine – the theme of the conversion of the Jews remained popular.⁸ The belief, instilled with Luther's Reformation, that the Second Advent of the Messiah depended on their conversion to Protestantism was thus still firm.⁹ Furthermore, Jews continued to be very often despised, including, and in some respects especially, by the missionaries active in Jerusalem.¹⁰ It became increasingly clear, however, that the issue of resettlement of Jews in Palestine was turning into 'a political desideratum for England, with her great interests in India'.¹¹

What, then, contributed to transforming Britain's attitude towards Palestine into a political desideratum? The answer is to a certain extent

connected to a generational change, in turn influenced by Charles Darwin's (1809–82) *The Origin of Species* (1859) and Thomas Huxley's (1825–95) *Man's Place in Nature* (1863). These kind of works, historian Franz Kobler (1882–1965) pointed out, 'dealt a more grievous blow to unquestioning acceptance of the Bible than eighteenth century rationalism [...]. Under the pressure of the idea of Evolution the structure on which the millennial hope was erected threatened to crumble.'¹²

But more important than the generational change were the historical contingencies to create the conditions for the superseding of strategic considerations over religious evaluations.¹³ Two events in particular were destined to play primary roles in the process that a few decades later (1923) led to the British mandate for Palestine. The Crimean War (1853–6) pushed Palestine into the world economy: it was the most significant military conflict involving Britain from the Napoleonic Wars to the outbreak of World War I. The Suez Canal question, on the other hand, represented the point of no return in the imperial path resulted in the British conquest of Palestine.

The Jewish client state

The Crimean War served as a watershed in the history of several Mediterranean countries. It can be associated with the first proto-democratic reforms to be introduced in some countries with Muslim majorities. In 1861 the *bey* of Tunis introduced for the first time in the Islamic world a written constitution; five years later the first elections were held in Egypt; in 1876 the first Ottoman constitution was enacted.

It was the first war in which Ottoman and European soldiers fought side by side against a common enemy; for the first time, in fact, a Protestant power (Britain) sided with a Muslim empire (Ottoman) in fighting a Christian empire (Russia). Furthermore, it represented the first major armed clash in which news from the fronts was communicated by telegraph and printed in newspapers almost in real time: a novelty that, thanks also to the photographs taken on the battlefields, gave an unprecedented echo to the victories of the Western powers against the despotic Russian Empire.¹⁴

In the more limited context of Palestine, the Crimean War constituted a no less relevant turning point. It was from this moment on

that the idea of a 'Jewish client state' in Palestine became increasingly established;¹⁵ a client state that was 'vital to British colonial interests, particularly to India'.¹⁶ It was then as well, more precisely in May 1854, that a special request was sent from the British Foreign Minister George Villiers (1800–70) to the Ottoman authorities to obtain the Sultan's permission to grant to the Jews the faculty to own land in 'Greater Syria'.

But which practical aspects pushed the idea that a Jewish client state in Palestine was the key route to India? Since the Reformation many Protestants considered Jews' conversion to Christianity and their physical restoration to the Holy Land as preliminary steps towards the Second Coming of the Messiah. These beliefs, mainly based on a literal interpretation of the Book of Daniel and other apocalyptic writings, were now increasingly obsolete. England, Gawler wrote in 1849, 'most urgently needs the shortest and safest lines of communications to the territories already possessed'.¹⁷ In the same article, Gawler argued that a foreign hostile power 'would soon endanger British trade',¹⁸ imploring for this London to put their trust in the 'real children of the soil, the sons of Israel'.¹⁹ Gawler – influenced by the thesis of John Thomas (1805–71),²⁰ his point of reference in America – was in this way echoing an increasingly popular viewpoint in London.

The possibility that Palestine might host 'the old tenant [the Jews] with a new landlord [Britain]' was supported by the conviction, shared also by Edward L. Mitford, that the 'resettlement' of the Jews would have put the control of British steam ship communication entirely in London's hands.²¹ Steam ships, which underwent significant development in the 1840s, were at that time fuelled by coal; the vessels needed a large number of ports to dock for refuelling. This soon brought the decision to put aside the routes circumnavigating Africa in favour of the Mediterranean–Red Sea route, through the Suez isthmus, where the trans-shipment system was adopted.

Several influential British figures were active in pushing Her Majesty's government to take possession of the corridors leading to India.²² England appeared to them as predestined to educate the populations in the East: 'The genius of England', argued Charles Henry Churchill in 1853, 'which seems so peculiarly fitted to lead and govern the populations of the East.'²³ In this respect Jews were considered as a particularly useful tool to enable London to exercise such a role. In Thomas Clarke's words:

If England, again, is [...] relying upon its commerce as the cornerstone of its greatness; if one of the nearest and best channels of that commerce is across the axis of the three great continents; and if the Jews are essentially a trading [...] people, what so natural as that they should be planted along that great highway of ancient traffic?²⁴

From being a useful tool to accomplish biblical prophecies, Jews became thus more and more potential means for guaranteeing British routes and strategies. This also included the possible support they would have been able to provide to Her Majesty's soldiers 'in the event of another aggressive movement of the Emperor of Russia'.²⁵

Practical considerations overlapped, therefore, to the failed attempts to evangelize the Jews. Such gradual change was not sufficient to completely erase the rooted convictions – some traceable back to anti-Semitism, others to humanitarian reasons, still others to religious consideration – that characterized the previous decades and centuries. Lord Shaftesbury (1801–85), the most eminent personality among those who in the previous historical phase worked to convert 'the ancient People of God', represented an emblematic proof of the new tendency. In the opinions he expressed in 1876 there is only a faint echo of the prophetic convictions that characterized his lifetime:

Is there no other destiny for Palestine but to remain desolate or to become the appendage of an ambitious foreign power? The country wants capital and population. The Jews can give it both. And has not England a special interest in promoting such a restoration? It would be a blow to England if either of her rivals should get hold of Syria. She must preserve Syria for herself. Does not policy then – if that were all – exhort England to foster the nationality of the Jews and aid them, as opportunity may offer, to return as a leaving power to their old country? England is the great trading and maritime power of the world. To England, then, naturally belongs the role of favouring the settlement of the Jews in Palestine.²⁶

Protestant evangelism had not vanished. It had changed skin, transforming itself into a more rational approach and converging into a phenomenon destined to mark the entire second half of the 1800s:

cultural imperialism. A central link in this process was represented by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), one of the most persuasive symbols of the attitude to simplifying the complexity of 'the other' that this book aims to examine.

An overwhelming part of the approaches and actions adopted in the decades in which the PEF flourished were the products of an attempt to (mis)appropriate the biblical past for political and imperial purposes. These efforts, largely successful, were carried out through the 'veni, vidi, vici' approach drawn up by Clifford Geertz (1926–2006),²⁷ which is the idea of dealing with the habits of local populations without passing first through the meaning system that the latter attributed to their social, cultural and religious life. The 'land of the Bible' provides a unique framework for a deeper understanding of this attitude. As Neil Asher Silberman argued, 'to possess the land of the Bible means to interpret its history. This aspect has remained constant. Only the interpreters have changed.'²⁸

Cultural imperialism: the influence of the Palestine Exploration Fund

The PEF represented one of the most successful research organizations created in nineteenth-century Europe. Established in London in 1865 following a visit to Palestine by the Prince of Wales,²⁹ and inspired by the British consul in Jerusalem James Finn (1806–72),³⁰ the PEF was initially financed by two major donations (Queen Victoria, patron of the fund, gave £150 and the University of Oxford £500) and by public subscriptions. Afterwards, starting in 1867, it became widely dependent on the War Office and the Royal Engineers.

Before focusing on this organization it is important to mention that just five years after the foundation of the PEF, the American Palestine Exploration Society (APES) was established in New York. Despite having being inspired by the work of the PEF,³¹ and rooted in the 'biblical tradition' initiated a few decades earlier by the American architect Edward Robinson (1797–1863),³² APES ceased to exist already in 1878. Of the same period was the German Society for the Exploration of Palestine (Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas, DVEP), the exploratory fund established in 1878 by the newly born German Empire. The rising political rivalry between the German and British empires was reflected in

the tensions between PEF and DVEP. A comparison with Germany's approach to the region can throw much light on just how unusual the modus operandi of the British establishment was. As far as the Germans were concerned, the Arabs, Jews, Turks, Afghans and Persians were simply means to the achievement of a powerful German hegemony. Berlin's foreign policy was marked by a genuine interest in preserving and strengthening an ideal – which subsequently proved fatal – known as *Deutschtum* or 'German-ness'. German policies in the region, contrary to the British ones, were not inspired by references to the Old Testament. Finally, as noted by 'Abdul-Laṭīf Ṭībāwī (1910–81), the work of the DVEP, as well as that of the French École Biblique of the Dominican Order in Jerusalem and other institutions of different national affiliation, belongs to a large extent 'to the twentieth, not the nineteenth century'.³³

Among its founders, the PEF counted prominent evangelists such as George Grove (1820–1900) and well-known imperialists like Walter Morrison (1836–1921).³⁴ It should not be surprising that both aspects were present in the words spoken by the Archbishop of York, William Thompson (1819–90), in the opening speech that hailed the creation of the PEF:

This country of Palestine belongs to *you* and to *me*. It is essentially ours. It was given to the Father of Israel in the words: 'Walk the land in the length of it and in the breadth of it, for I will give it unto thee.' *We* mean to walk through Palestine in the length and in the breadth of it because that land has been given unto us. [...] It is the land towards which we turn as the fountain of all our hopes; it is the land to which we may look with as true a patriotism as we do to this dear old England, which we love so much.³⁵

Despite these declarations, as well as the prayer officiated for the occasion by London's bishop, the scientific purposes of the PEF were promptly laid out in its statute: 'Our object', clarified Thompson reading PEF's founding prospectus, 'is strictly an inductive inquiry. We are not to be a religious society; we are not about to launch controversy; we are about to apply the rules of science.'³⁶ Thus, the evangelical extremism – connected to the prophecies, and detached, contrary to 'biblical orientalism', from imperial considerations – that characterized the previous centuries,

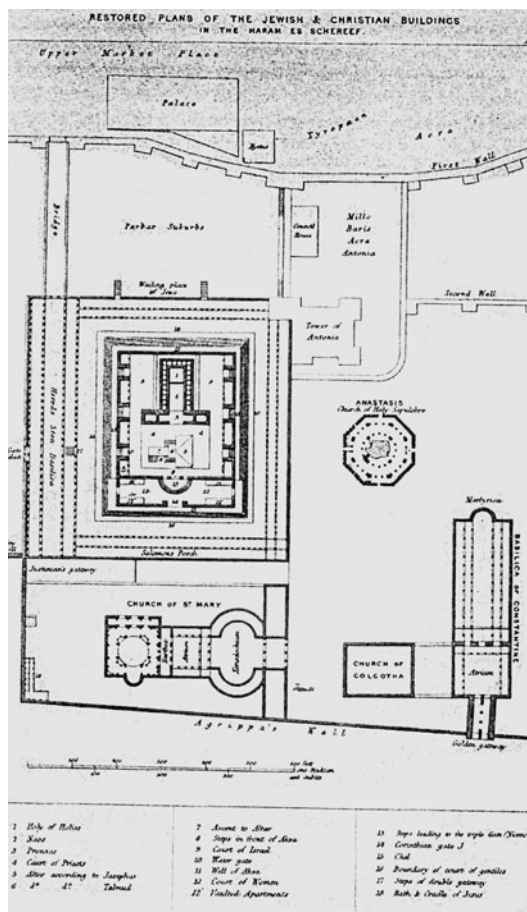


Figure 1.1 James Fergusson (1808–86) argued in his *Ancient Topography of Jerusalem* (1847) that the original site of the burial of Christ was not the Holy Sepulchre, but rather the place where the Dome of the Rock is located. This thesis followed those presented in previous decades by Edward Daniel Clarke (1769–1822) and Edward Robinson. Fergusson proposed the above map as a project guide to reinstate holy Jewish and Christian places over that which in the Islamic world is known as *al-haram al-Sharīf* (Noble Sanctuary). According to some reliable sources, Fergusson's theories 'are said to have been the origin of the establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund'. H. Chisholm (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), v. 10, n. 11, p. 273.

should have ultimately left room for the attempts to historicize scripture, in order to cast a 'newer and a truer light on the Bible'.³⁷

Nevertheless, the line between imperialism, religious fanaticism and the scientific method remained blurred. When, in the second half of the 1860s, Charles William Wilson (1836–1905) and other members of the PEF arrived in Palestine to conduct the first modern archaeological and topographical investigations,³⁸ their purpose was to provide 'the most definite and solid aid obtainable for the elucidation of the most prominent of the material features of the Bible'.³⁹ More specifically, they were not interested in the sites connected to the New Testament, but rather in those cited in the Old Testament. This choice was due to the fact that the places mentioned in the New Testament – more precisely the ones discovered until that time – were already under the direct control of the Orthodox Christians, as well as of the Catholics and other non-Protestant denominations. More importantly, this was traceable to the desire to connect Anglican Protestantism to the ancient Israelites and thus to the concept of 'chosen people'. As had already happened 13 centuries before with the Welsh cleric Gildas (c.500–70),⁴⁰ the purpose was clear: to create a parallel to show that the ancient 'chosen people', the Israelites, had been replaced by the new 'chosen people', the English.⁴¹

Besides these considerations, there was also a second side of the coin. Such operations reflected military strategies camouflaged by archaeological interests – many of PEF's members were connected to the British establishment and Queen Victoria became its patron – in order to obtain strategic information and progressively entrench the British presence in Palestine. PEF's maps, produced with an accuracy (scale 1:63 360) unknown before that time, were more useful than ever for Her Majesty's intelligence for the defence of the Suez Canal in case of new friction with Russia. 'The power that holds the "Promised Land"', a flier produced by the PEF in 1880 stated, 'holds the two routes from East to West'.⁴² Those same maps were also used later, in 1917–18, during the conquest of Palestine by General Allenby's troops.⁴³

Maps outlined prior to the nineteenth century were little more than notes based on suggestions passed down over the centuries. In the first half of the nineteenth century various Western cartographers visited the region to create rudimentary maps for military purposes. Though not complete, and containing macroscopic errors, these sketches served as

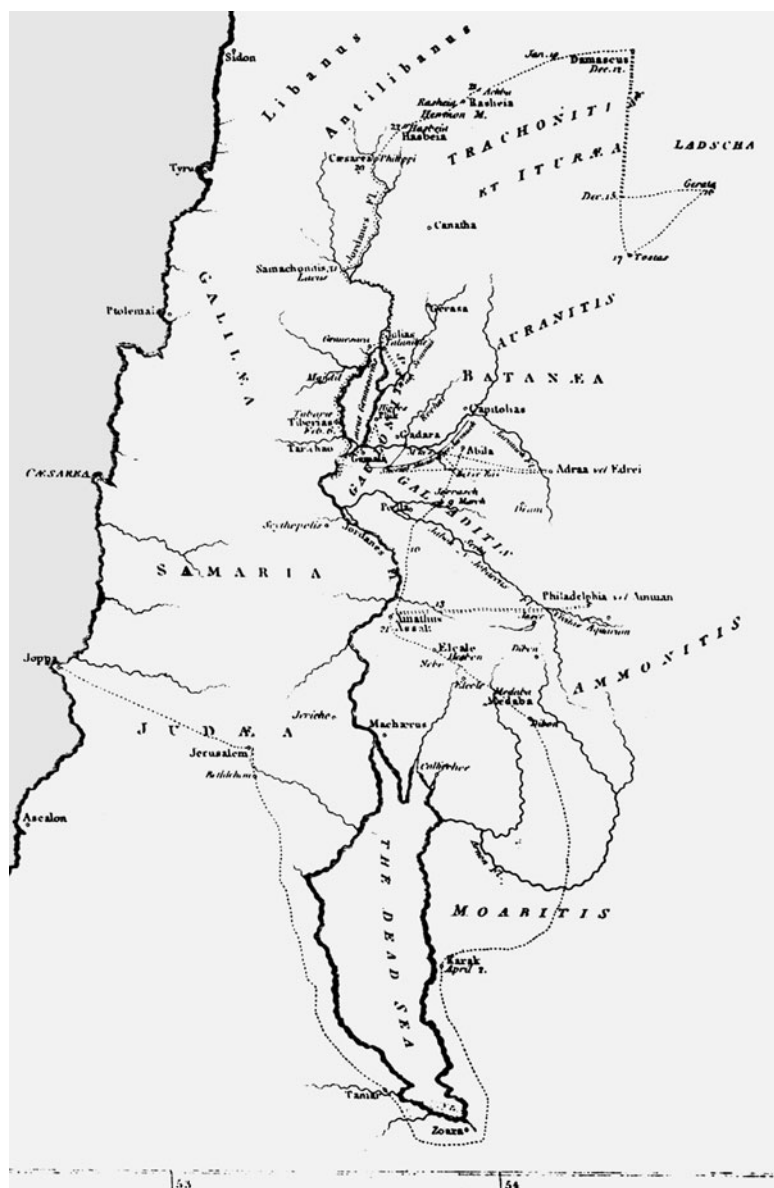


Figure 1.2 Map created by Seetzen in 1805–6. U. J. Seetzen, *A Brief Account of the Countries Adjoining the Lake of Tiberias, the Jordan, and the Dead Sea* (Bath: Palestine Association of London, 1810).

the basis for PEF's works. This is the case of the maps produced in 1810 by Seetzen and in 1815 by Pierre Jacotin, a geographer who had participated in Napoleon's Egyptian campaign, followed by those by Gauthier (1822), Assheton (1822), Berghaus (1835), Catherwood (1833), Scott (1844), van de Welde (1854–62) and others.⁴⁴

The interpretation of the meaning and the history of Palestine revealed by PEF's works, often imbued with a 'triumphant sense of European superiority',⁴⁵ was quickly transformed into a tool for the legitimization of British political claims on the region. The success of this was facilitated by the long-standing weakness and disorganization showed by the Porte; it is enough to mention that still at the outbreak of World War I the Ottoman authorities continued to assess the distances between various areas of Palestine in terms of hours of travel.⁴⁶ More importantly, this was facilitated by the certainty that the Islamic prevalence in Palestine was a 'temporary degeneration'; the true significance of the Holy Land, as clarified by two key figures of the PEF, Charles Warren (1840–1927),⁴⁷ and Claude R. Conder (1848–1910),⁴⁸ was to be found in its Christian and Jewish inhabitants.

Such predisposition was conveyed in various forms in numerous documents. In one of the volumes of *The Surveys of Western Palestine* there is a section entitled 'The peasantry of Western Palestine'. The words written by Charles F. Tyrwhitt-Drake (1846–74), who from 1869 until his death held prominent positions in the PEF,⁴⁹ show a predisposition towards the local population – specifically the *fellaḥīn* (farmers) – which went well beyond mere intolerance:

The physical and mental degradation of the women, who are mere animals, *proletaires*, beasts of burden, cannot but have a most injurious effect upon the children [...] the fellaheen are, all in all, the worst type of humanity that I have come across in the East [...] the fellah is totally destitute of all moral sense.⁵⁰

But it was perhaps Thomas Edward Lawrence ('Lawrence of Arabia', 1888–1935), a leading figure in the PEF as well as a protagonist of the Arab Revolt of 1916–18, who was the figure who most clearly expressed the prevalent opinion among the members of the organization in relation to the local Arab populations. Though belonging to the generation following that of Tyrwhitt-Drake and the PEF founders, Lawrence



Figure 1.4 Tyrwhitt-Drake lingered on the ‘mental degradation of the women, who are mere animals, proletaires, beasts of burden [...]’ The image portrays a woman of Nazareth at the end of the nineteenth century. Produced by Underwood & Underwood, London and New York, Special Collections, Central Library of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

captured in his *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* a feeling already widespread in the last quarter of the nineteenth century:

The Semites [Lawrence was referring to Arabic speakers] have no middle ground of seeing things [...] they don’t understand our metaphysical problems, our introspective questions. They only understand true and false, faith and no faith, without our hesitating result of subtle nuances [...] They were limited people [and] of limited vision, whose inert intellect remains arid in careless resignation. Their imaginations were vivid, but not creative. There was so little Arab art in Asia that one could almost say that there was no art whatsoever [...] They didn’t invent any philosophical system, no complex mythology.⁵¹



Figure 1.5 The first logo of the PEF; the image shows the methods used at that time to map: the theodolite and topographic triangulation. C. R. Conder, *Tent Work in Palestine* (London: Bentley, 1878), v. 1, frontispiece.

The approach towards the Islamic component in Palestine thus wavered between disinterest and disdain, with the result of raising hostility among the locals. Various influential PEF members, among them Conder and Lord Kitchener (1850–1916)⁵² – two old friends brought together by a strong religious devotion – were victims of ‘unjustified assaults’ by some local inhabitants to the yell ‘death to Christians’.⁵³ Though not justifiable, such bitterness was at least partially explicable given the hostility – in sporadic occasions aggravated by cases of physical abuses⁵⁴ – shown to them by various Western engineers, geographers, painters and Protestant missionaries.⁵⁵ The local population could hardly differentiate between the (albeit limited) scientific-religious activities of the PEF from those of the missionaries in

the whole region.⁵⁶ It is not surprising, then, that as witnessed in 1860 by Jerusalem's consul Finn, Arab farmers in Palestine were deemed to be 'unsettled in mind, being apprehensive of a general inundation of all sorts of European Christians, including Spanish, Sardinian, Prussians, and Greeks'.⁵⁷

But long before the implications connected to the contingencies of the moment, PEF's works are relevant in light of their long-term consequences. Their maps, supported in those years by the 'biblical orientalism' of George Adam Smith (1856–1942),⁵⁸ instilled what Meron Benvenisti defined as 'the imaginary perception of Palestine based on the Bible'.⁵⁹ The repercussions of this phenomenon were widely amplified by an initiative dating back to 1869, the year in which the PEF printed the first volume of the *Palestine Exploration Fund Quarterly Statement*, the publication responsible for divulging their findings. In those months – the same in which the Suez Canal was opened – the inventor of modern travel agencies Thomas Cook (1808–92) inaugurated 'evangelical tourism', leading the first touristic journey to Jerusalem.⁶⁰ Just 51 people participated in that tour, but in little more than three decades 12,000 British pilgrims, mainly belonging to the middle class, took part in the same journey. Through this undertaking, Cook, raised under a strict Baptist upbringing (he became a Baptist minister in 1828), contributed perhaps more than anyone else 'to facilitate and shape evangelical contact with the Holy Land'.⁶¹ Thanks to him, the considerations expressed by Archbishop Thompson in the inaugural meeting of the PEF ('This country of Palestine belongs to *you* and to *me*') were not conveyed through books and maps, but rather through the direct experience of British men and women.⁶² The following words were uttered in 1872 by Cook to describe the efforts made by his organization:

The educational and social results of these four years of Eastern travel have been most encouraging. A new incentive to scriptural investigation has been created and fostered; 'The Land and the Book' have been brought into familiar juxtaposition, and their analogies have been better comprehended; and under the general influence of sacred scenes and repeated sites of biblical events, inquiring and believing spirits have held sweet counsel with each other.⁶³

Cook's approach, like the maps produced by the PEF, had the effect of crystallizing the connections between biblical events and the physical characteristics of Palestine. Connections that in many cases – besides covering up the original non-biblical geography, and thus preventing or hindering the development of an alternative and inclusive local history – spread the idea that the names used by the local majority to refer to cities known for millennia as, just to name a few, 'Asqalana' ('Asqalān in Arabic, Ashqelon in Hebrew), 'Akka' ('Akkā in Arabic, 'Akko in Hebrew), Gaza (Ghazzah in Arabic, 'Azza in Hebrew), 'Ariḥa (Ariḥā in Arabic, Yeriḥo in Hebrew),⁶⁴ were nothing but awkward attempts to distort, by 'arabizing' and 'bastardizing' them, the names of ancient Israelite cities: a perception that, although often unfounded, has had repercussions visible up to the present day.

Such repercussions can be found in the impact of the neo-evangelical movements on the foreign policy of the leading power in the region (the USA), and can be detected in more subtle ways, as for instance in the path dependency of the maps that we use in reference to the area. Speaking about the Arabic names of the local cities, the geographer David Benvenisti (1897–1993) made a reference to the 'bastardizations of the authentic Hebrew ones, an aberration of sorts, which was rectified with their liberation'.⁶⁵ Several decades later, and three years before his first term as Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that when Robinson, Conder and other archaeologists 'first toured the land, they could identify the ancient Jewish sites with relative ease because the Arabs usually had not bothered to give them new Arabic names, leaving the original Hebrew names in place'.⁶⁶ These kinds of attempt to 'appropriate' thousands of years of local history in an exclusivist way have had a prominent role in igniting some of the many absolutist theories that are currently thriving in and outside Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Suez and Cyprus, setting the stage

The Indian revolts of 1857–8 symbolize the incident that more than any other pushed London to concentrate on the development of its own naval communications for India. The difficulty in getting reinforcements quickly – the South African route required months of navigation – forced Her Majesty's government to opt for the trans-shipment system in

Suez: an impractical method that required Istanbul's assistance. It was in this particular phase that the prospect 'of a Jewish colony [in Palestine] became even more compelling'.⁶⁷ Such a 'Jewish colony' was, in fact, as far as London was concerned, a possible way to reduce the risks of the Mediterranean–Red Sea route. It would have offered to the Royal Navy the possibility to dock in safe harbours, accelerating, if needed, the deployment of troops.

Though many had noted the potential benefits of the opening of a shortcut through the Red Sea,⁶⁸ this was in many respects a more feared than hoped for option for the British establishment.⁶⁹ Already in 1791 the House of Commons held a heated debate about the dubious convenience of creating a canal. In the subsequent decades the opposition to the project became even stronger. Not only was it seen as a symbol of French ambitions in the East, but it was also feared that in adopting such a scheme Egypt would have been completely detached from Turkey and could declare its independence at any time. In this manner, in the words of a Foreign Office report of 1869, 'French troops could easily be thrown into the Egyptian forts [...] Egypt might be considered a dependency of France.'⁷⁰

Despite British resistance, on 19 March 1866 the Sultan issued a *firman*. Thanks to this, Paris, through the person of French diplomat Ferdinand de Lesseps (1805–94), obtained the green light to complete the canal: a monumental work that cost the lives of around 125,000 Egyptian labourers (many of them affected by cholera) and twice the estimated economic resources. With a lavish ceremony, attended by the Empress of France, Eugénie (1826–1920), it was inaugurated on 17 November 1869.⁷¹

The opening of the Suez Canal significantly increased the international importance of the land bordering the naval corridor between India and Europe. Paris could boast at the time a momentary economic and strategic pre-eminence in Egypt.⁷² London – which had controlled the strategic city of Aden (Yemen) since 1838 – decided then to focus on Palestine on the other side of the canal.

Disraeli's legacy

Born to a family of Sephardic Jews of Italian–Spanish origin, Benjamin Disraeli (1804–81) was British prime minister in 1868 (February–December) and from 1874 to 1880. He converted to Anglicanism at

the age of 12, believing that 'Christianity is Judaism for the multitude, but it is still Judaism.'⁷³ His conversion was not sufficient to make him immune to receiving repeated anti-Semitic slurs. 'Yes, I am a Jew', he clarified in 1835 in Parliament in response to personal attacks, 'and when the ancestors of the Right Honourable Gentleman were brutal savages in an unknown island, mine were priests in the Temple of Solomon.'⁷⁴

Disraeli's contribution to the process that brought Palestine progressively to the centre of British strategy had nothing to do with biblical prophecy. His interests were strictly linked to Britain's imperial development. Nonetheless, the rebirth of Israel never ceased to be the focus of his writing.⁷⁵ In *Tancred; or, The New Crusade*, published in 1847, Disraeli made 'out of his aristocratic hero "Tancred" a sort of prototype of Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), who tries to realize the Messianic ideal of and in Palestine'.⁷⁶ Previously, in *Alroy*, a novella written in 1833, the theme of 'the restoration of the glory of Israel' was dealt with in the full awareness that:

Empires and dynasties flourish and pass away; the proud metropolis becomes a solitude, the conquering kingdom even a desert; but Israel still remains, still a descendant of the most ancient Kings breathed amid these royal ruins, and still the eternal sun could never rise without gilding the towers of living Jerusalem. A word, a deed, a single day, a single man, and we might be a nation.⁷⁷

In Daniel R. Schwarz's words, *Alroy* represents Disraeli's 'own dreams of personal heroism and political power in the alien British culture'.⁷⁸ This commingling of purposes, together with a political vision that Queen Victoria defined in the 1870s as 'very lofty',⁷⁹ was the basis for most of the decisions taken by Disraeli during his years at Downing Street. The decision for which he went down in history and that had a direct bearing on the Palestinian question was taken in just a few days at the end of 1875. When, through emissaries of the Rothschild and Oppenheim banks, the news reached London that Egypt's *khedive* Ismā'il Pasha (1830–95) was bankrupt and thus willing to cede his shares of the Suez Canal, Disraeli understood that this was a once in a lifetime opportunity: five-sevenths of Her Majesty's empire lay east of the Canal.⁸⁰

Baron Lionel de Rothschild (1808–79), Disraeli's best confidant, was the only option available to quickly obtain the £4 million requested by Ismā'īl Pasha.⁸¹ Rothschild – the first Jew to enter the House of Commons – agreed to the loan following a meeting that has gone down in history. 'When do you need the money?', Rothschild asked Montagu Corry (1838–1903), private secretary to Prime Minister Disraeli. 'Tomorrow,' Corry replied. 'What is your security?', asked Rothschild, to which Corry replied, 'The British Government.' 'You shall have it', Rothschild agreed.⁸²

The purchase of the majority of the shares of the Suez Canal Company, later approved with full votes by Her Majesty's Parliament, turned out to be an outstanding deal. In 1898 the same shares were worth £24 million on the market, six times their purchase value. Though a consistent portion of the shares were still with French investors, Paris was dealing with a progressive financial decline that worsened exponentially following the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1. More than once, in subsequent years, de Lesseps and other influential French figures proposed a compromise between London and Paris, including the idea to dig a second canal at Suez.⁸³ At that point, however, the imbalance between the two powers was too evident and the idea of creating an alternative corridor was considered to be detrimental to Britain's national interests.⁸⁴

Despite having the Suez Canal firmly in its hands, London had no interest, for the moment, in directly overtaking Egypt. The majority of British public opinion was sceptical about that option. This would also have represented an unnecessary humiliation for Paris. What instead remained vital was the safeguard of the Ottoman Empire. Disraeli, like Lord Palmerston before him and Winston Churchill (1874–1965) long after, considered in fact as a priority keeping the 'sick man of Europe' alive. To this purpose, he signed an historical agreement with Istanbul. In exchange for the control over Cyprus, located less than 200 km from the coast of Palestine, London pledged to guarantee protection to the 'territories in Asia of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan'.⁸⁵ The agreement, signed on 4 June 1878 and known as the Cyprus Convention, made the words spoken decades earlier by Disraeli's character Baziry, a Jerusalem Jew in his novella *Tancred*, come true. 'The English want Cyprus', Baziry said, 'and they will take it as compensation.'⁸⁶

The Cyprus Convention, followed five years later by London's occupation of Egypt and Sudan, the two areas that together with Palestine represented the strategic banks of the Suez Canal, marked the historic phase in which London realized that the region, including Palestine, was worth fighting an eventual war for.⁸⁷ More specifically – as the historian James Headlam-Morley (1863–1929) noted in 1929 and as was further elaborated a few years afterwards by the first British governor of Jerusalem, Ronald Storrs (1881–1955) – the entry of Cyprus into London's sphere of influence marked the moment at which Disraeli felt that sooner or later 'the step would bring Palestine and Syria within the orbit of British control'.⁸⁸ It was the last of Disraeli's predictions and this one also was destined to be fulfilled.

CHAPTER 2

THE STANDARD CONQUEST MYTH¹

The Egyptians are not a nation [...] they are a fortuitous agglomeration of a number of miscellaneous and hybrid elements.²

Lord Cromer, British consul in Egypt, 29 July 1912

[In Palestine] none are able to report the existence of anything like a homogeneous feeling of nationality among the people.³

John Dickson, British consul in Jerusalem, 23 November 1905

Palestine is not now an 'independent nation', nor is it yet on the way to become one.⁴

Arthur Balfour, 11 August 1919

One basic claim is that the Palestinians lacked positive values in their nationalism, their ideology being confined to a fundamental hatred of Zionism [...]. Other historians (Zionist and other) claim that [...] the people we today call 'Palestinians' saw themselves at the time as simply Arabs and nothing more specific [...]. I shall argue that not one of the historians who have dealt with these questions really got it right.⁵

Haim Gerber

Imperialism, anti-Semitism, humanitarian reasons, the persistent influence of the Holy Scriptures: each of these factors played a relevant

role in the early British penetration in Palestine. None of them, however, took into consideration the local Arab inhabitants, representing around 90 per cent of the total population in late Ottoman Palestine. The sources of the time may help to understand the reasons for this. The inhabitants of Palestine – defined by Gawler as ‘bodies of men’⁶ – had no interest in patriotism. Furthermore, they occupied the land ‘as foreigners, or as mere tenants-at-will, associating no ideas of honour to themselves from its glory, or scarcely of advantage from its improvement’.⁷

The lack of interest in any form of patriotism on the part of most of the local population was even more of a cause for concern considering that patriotism towards Palestine was stronger than ever in far off England:

This Holy Land, although no longer an object of bloody ambition, has lost none of the deep interest with which it once inspired the most vehement crusader. The first impressions of childhood are connected with that scenery; and infant lips in England’s prosperous homes pronounce with reverence the names of forlorn Jerusalem and Galilee. *We still experience a sort of patriotism for Palestine*, and feel that the scenes enacted here were performed for the whole family of Man. Narrow as are its boundaries, we have all a share in the possession: what a church is to a city, Palestine is to the world.⁸ (italics added)

The Archbishop of York himself had been clear during the inaugural meeting of the PEF (1865): Palestine, he claimed, ‘is the land to which we may look with as true a patriotism as we do to this dear old England’.⁹ Accordingly, the local inhabitants were often depicted by the British as foreigners in their own land.¹⁰

In many other contexts the ‘others’ – be they yellow, black or mulatto – occupied a marginal space in the writings produced by newcomers. Furthermore, many local populations residing in other regions were romanticized, or depicted as ‘impermeable to progress’. The symbolic value of the ‘land of the Bible’, however, bore unique religious implications. Only in the framework of this specific context is it possible, for instance, to understand the reason why the narrow presence of Arabs in Palestine – narrow only in comparison to European standards, not, as we shall see, to the ones registered in the region –

represented, in the eyes of several external observers, a further proof of a divine design. That is, a design that aimed at keeping the land ready for its 'lawful owners'.¹¹ 'The will of the Almighty', Lord Lindsay noted in 1838, 'is that the modern occupants should never be so numerous as to invalidate the prophecy that the land should enjoy her Sabbaths so long as the rightful heirs remain in the land of their enemies.'¹² At the core of this attitude was once again the idea that the land these people occupied was not to be considered as actually inhabited by legitimate residents. 'The land that you inhabit', the cartographer C. M. W. van de Welde (1818–98) wrote in 1854, referring to the Arabs of Palestine,

is not yours. Your fathers took possession of it as robbers and plunders [...] but the time will assuredly come that He [God] will visit you for the iniquities of your fathers, and will drive you out from before His face, in order that the land may be restored to them to whom He had given it.¹³

The 'low standard of morals among the Moslems',¹⁴ to use an expression of the Archbishop of Canterbury Archibald Tait, together with what James Parkes (1896–1981) defined 'the intolerance of Islam and the savagery of the local inhabitants',¹⁵ were the main aspects for the persistent laziness that Conder, one of the key figures of the PEF, indicated as the foundation of most problems in the region. 'The energy, industry, and tact, which are so remarkable in the Jewish character', Conder pointed out,

are qualities invaluable in a country whose inhabitants have sunk into fatalistic indolence; and Palestine is still so cheap a country, and requires so moderate a capital for investment, that it may well attract the attention of the middle class among its rightful owners.¹⁶

From these considerations it was assumed that the local majority, as clarified by Laurence Oliphant (1829–88), an MP as well as occasional collaborator of the PEF,¹⁷ were not entitled to empathy from the British. Oliphant proposed their segregation in specific 'reserves', a solution that had proved to be particularly effective with North American Indian tribes:

The Arabs have very little claim to our sympathy. They have laid waste this country, ruined its villages, and plundered its inhabitants, until it has been reduced to its present condition; and if they were driven back to the Arabian deserts from which they came, there is abundant pasture in its oases for their camels and goats [...] the same system might be pursued which we have adopted with success in Canada with our North American Indian tribes, who are confined to their 'reserves', and live peaceably upon them in the midst of the settled agricultural population.¹⁸

The hint to the 'Arabian deserts' as the place of origin of the Arabs of Palestine is particularly relevant. The attempt to delegitimize their presence followed in fact two distinct but connected paths. On the one hand, it was claimed that their origins were from regions external to what medieval Arab geographers called *jund Filastīn*.¹⁹ On the other, as in the case of Oliphant and other European and US thinkers, the idea was pushed that, besides 'a section of the urban and effendi [large landowners] classes', only the Bedouins, who were themselves perceived as being indolent and warlike, could be included under the denomination of 'Arabs'.²⁰ For the others, the *fellahīn* – 'the soul of the nation'²¹ – this definition was considered 'inappropriate'.²² 'To the West of the Jordan', William Ormsby-Gore (1885–1964) noted in August 1918, 'the people were not Arabs, but only Arabic-speaking'.²³ The reasons behind such distinct positions can be understood from a meaningful analysis written in 1905 by Ben Borochoy (1881–1917), one of Socialist Zionism's fathers:

The Fellahin in Eretz-Yisrael are the direct descendants of the remnants of the Jewish and Canaanite agricultural community, with a very slight admixture of Arab blood; for as is well known, the Arabs, proud conquerors, mixed very little with the mass of the people in the lands which they conquered [...] Thus the ethnic difference between the Jews of the Diaspora and the fellahin of Eretz-Yisrael is no greater than the difference between the Ashekenazi and the Sephardi Jews. The local people are neither Arabs or Turks.²⁴

Underlying Borochoy's thesis was the mistaken conviction that the ethnic affinity between local Jews and the local majority, together with the

apparent cultural backwardness of the latter, would have easily allowed their assimilation. The *fellahīn*, in this sense, represented a necessary bridge connecting the ancient and the new Jewish population of the Holy Land. Ya'acov Shavit clarified the issue in the following terms:

Romantic, utopian ideas that the Arabs of Palestine are the descendants of the ancient Jewish population which never went into exile but was forced to convert to Islam and that they had preserved archaic customs from the times of the First and Second Temples were significantly expanded upon in travelogues and serious research studies of the nineteenth century. This idea was accepted among Zionist intellectuals who were faced with the problem of creating a new immigrant society in a country with a native population.²⁵

Borochov's approach – problematic in as much as it posits that the region's history started with the ancient Israelites and that all earlier history had been 'absorbed' by them²⁶ – makes reference to forced mass conversions and is based on the idea that the 'Arab conquerors' of the seventh century were devoid of any affinity with the local population. These standpoints were shared by highly influential figures, including Yisrael Belkind (1861–1929), founder of the Bilu'im movement and, as such, a pioneer of the ha-Aliyah ha-Rishona (the First Aliyah).²⁷

More than Borochov and Belkind, it was David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973) and Yitzhak Ben-Zvi (1884–1963), respectively the future Israeli prime minister and second President of the State of Israel, who gave unprecedented importance to this suggestive idea conceived in Europe.²⁸ In their book of 1918, entitled *Eretz Yisrael ba-'avar u-ba-hove* (Palestine in the past and present), written in Hebrew and translated by the authors into Yiddish, they tried to demonstrate the Jewish origins of the *fellahīn*,²⁹ and to discredit the claim that the population present in the region in the previous 12 centuries had made any contribution to the development of the region.³⁰ They went so far as to undermine the theory of the mass expulsion of the Jewish people after the destruction of the Second Temple:

To claim that following the conquest of Jerusalem by Tito and the failure of the revolt of Bar Kokba the Jewish people ceased to work the soil of Palestine means to show one's complete ignorance of

Jewish history and literature of the time [...] Despite the oppression and suffering, the people of the country remained that which it always was.³¹

The dissonance between the above excerpt and the message contained in the Israeli Declaration of Independence, read by Ben-Gurion at the Tel Aviv Museum on 14 May 1948, is evident: 'After being forcibly exiled from their land', the declaration states, 'the people kept faith with it throughout their Dispersion.'

Two so drastically contrasting theses on a central theme such as the *galut* (diaspora) cannot but be traced back to the events registered in the three decades separating the publication of Ben-Gurion and Ben Zvi's book and the creation of the State of Israel. The progressive growth of Palestinian nationalism, the massacre of Hebron in 1929 and the Great Arab revolt of 1936 had proved once and for all the stiff opposition of the local majority to any assimilation process. Such an awareness would soon create the conditions for the affirmation of another influential claim, that of the *midbar shemama* (barren desert).³² The reference is to the efforts to promote the image of a barren Palestine, populated by a small recently immigrated Arab population.³³ This perception has had a significant impact on the subsequent development of the region:

From that moment on, [i.e. since the abandonment of the thesis of the Jewish origin of the *fellahîn*] the descendents of Jewish farmers were removed from Jewish national consciousness; the Palestinian *fellahîn* of the present day quickly became, in the eyes of the official memory agents, Arab immigrants who arrived en masse in the nineteenth century in an almost empty land and whose migration continued into the twentieth century, following the economic development of Zionist agriculture that, according to this myth, attracted thousands of non-Jewish laborers.³⁴

Who are the Palestinians?

Palestinian poet Maḥmūd Darwīsh (1941–2008) used seven words to indirectly clarify most of the 'misunderstandings' mentioned up to this point in this book. 'Who are they?', he asked in his 'Une rime pour les Mu'allaqāt' in regard to the local populations under Ottoman rule:

'That's someone else's problem.'³⁵ In many respects this was indeed a problem of 'others', of 'outsiders'. What made the difference for the 'insiders' was, besides religion, the provenance from a certain village (which often represented a sort of 'protonation in the protonation'), the belonging to a specific *ḥamūla* (family clan), the use of a particular dialect, a way of dressing, a product of the earth, a religious festival, a dance (*dabkeh*).³⁶ The Nabi Musa festival, at which thousands of people gathered every year, coming primarily from areas in present-day Israel and the Palestinian territories, was for instance the expression of a clear emerging 'proto-national cohesion'.³⁷

Before the imposition of the nationalist ideologies and the emergence of exclusivist approaches, it was these factors, not primarily political identity, that defined 'Palestinianness'.³⁸ These characteristics form the 'rudiments of a nation' in Anthony Smith's sense of the concept³⁹ – a set of identifiers so fundamental and so long-existing, so taken for granted, that virtually no one had any need to investigate. 'The whole game of identity definition', Meron Benvenisti noted, 'reflects the immigrant's lack of connection. Natives don't question their identity.'⁴⁰

In the context of this 'game of identity definition' it is relevant to mention that some scholars have suggested that the use of the term Palestine was not an exclusive prerogative of the Arabs and that therefore a more precise distinction should refer to two distinct realities: the Arab Palestinians (or Arabs of Palestine) and the Palestinian Jews. In this sense it was noted that from 1932 to 1950 the Jewish newspaper *Jerusalem Post* was called the *Palestine Post*. The clarification is relevant, and in fact the Jews that over the centuries remained in the region were often mentioned as 'Palestinian Jews'.⁴¹

The Charter of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) itself, a document certainly not very inclined to compromise, recognized that 'the Jews who had normally resided in Palestine until the beginning of the Zionist invasion are considered Palestinians' (Art. VI). This means that before the emergence of insular and exclusivistic approaches, such as the *avodah ivrit* (Hebrew labour; i.e. only 'Jewish hands' could work the 'Jewish land') logic, there was no urgency to define the different ethnicities in a clear-cut way.⁴² Moreover, such an aspect, even from an 'ethnocentric perspective', does not alter the terms of the question in a substantial way. Referring to an overwhelming 'Palestinian Arab majority', or to an overwhelming 'Palestinian majority', as opposed to a

possible 'Jewish-Palestinian minority' or 'Jewish minority', is little more than a semantic disquisition.

The reference to a 'Palestinian Arab majority' is relevant if framed in a nation state perspective. Peoples in the region started to feel the necessity to self-identify themselves as part of a majority or a minority mainly as a consequence of the rising of the nation states. Nonetheless, in hindsight, the reference to a majority, and thus to numbers, is relevant in as much as it directly tackles the common thesis according to which the local population was mainly composed by 'Arab immigrants' who 'came because of the Jews'. Answering the question of how many the Palestinians were also helps to explain who these people were.

The first official census carried out in Palestine was conducted by the British authorities in 1922. A total population of 757,182 individuals was found, of whom 590,390 were Muslims, 83,694 Jews and 73,024 Christians.⁴³ The census, like the one carried out in 1931, was unable to evaluate earlier unregistered immigratory and emigratory movements, both indeed quite limited up to then. British demographics were nonetheless by far the most reliable and detailed census ever produced on the region. The previous surveys presented in fact obvious limitations. The Ottoman authorities usually counted, for tax and military service purposes, almost exclusively adult males or heads of family. The various Christian denominations, like the Jewish *millet* and the consulates that were gradually created, kept their own records.

The most reliable estimates of previous centuries reveal that in 1800 the total population of Palestine numbered 250,000 individuals, reaching 500,000 in 1890.⁴⁴ McCarthy, author of one of the most authoritative studies on the issue, indicated the number of residents in Palestine in 1860 as 411,000, the overwhelming majority of whom (around 90 per cent) were Arabs.⁴⁵

From a Eurocentric perspective these numbers might seem negligible. When Paris reached 1 million inhabitants in 1846, Jerusalem and Haifa numbered little more than 18,000 and just less than 3,000 respectively. It would be wrong, however, to choose European countries instead of those in the Eastern Mediterranean area for a reliable comparison. It is more appropriate to compare Egypt at the start of the 1800s with the Palestine of the same period. At that time Egypt had a population of around 3 million: today it numbers about 85 million.⁴⁶ Palestine was inhabited at that time by 250,000–300,000 (therefore 225,000–

270,000 Arabs), and today registers little more than 6 million.⁴⁷ This data demonstrates substantial 'comparative convergence' between Palestine and the historically most important, as well as most populous, Arab country.

Though important 'minorities' were present in Palestine – in particular Christian (the most numerous minority), Shi'i and Druze – the 'majority' (85 per cent) of the 300,000 Arabs who lived in Palestine halfway through the nineteenth century were Sunnis. They used the Ottoman lira (before 1844 the common currency was the kuruj), spoke Arabic and lived in a hierarchical society. Over two-thirds of them were '*hypercivilisé*' farmers, to use a definition of Weulersse (1905–46),⁴⁸ engaged in the cultivation of



Figure 2.1 The olive harvest in the Nāblus area. C. E. Raven, *Palestine in Picture* (Cambridge: Heffer, 1929).

grains, fruit and vegetables, as well as the production of wool and cotton. A noteworthy class of professionals and intellectuals was also present, though the overwhelming majority of the population was composed of illiterate people.⁴⁹ The industrial sector was in its infancy phase, while the manufacturing compartment – connected overall to the olive harvest and relative production of oils and soaps – was an often exported resource. It is not an exaggeration to claim that olives were the ‘backbone’ of domestic economic and social life.⁵⁰

Significant power was concentrated in the hands of landowners, embodied by influential clans (*ḥamāyyil*, pl. of *ḥamūla*) such as the Ḥusaynī, the Khālīdī, the Nashāshībī, the Dajānī, the Nusseibeh, the Jārallāh, the Ṭūqān and the Nābulī.⁵¹ The Ottoman authorities, which in Palestine could count on an exceptionally scarce number of Ottoman officials, had to rely on the local *a’yān* (notables) to maintain relative control over the region. They played the role of ‘intermediaries’ between the central government and the local population.

In the second half of the 1800s, due to the pace of reforms and new public schools established by Istanbul, the power of rural *a’yān* was resized in favour of those based in the urban areas (primarily Jerusalem). Urban notables found in the Tanẓīmāt the ideal conditions to increase the concentration of land under their control.⁵² These families, beneficiaries of a prestige passed down over generations, were placed at the top of a pyramidal structure that had farmers (*fellaḥīn*) and Bedouins at its extreme opposite.

Despite their power, Palestinian notables represented a small percentage of the total population. Most of the local majority lived scattered among about 700 small villages, which up until the era of the second Tanẓīmāt were economically independent from the cities. These individuals, who, as noted by Elizabeth Finn, demonstrated their bond to their land ‘with the tenacity of aboriginal inhabitants’,⁵³ were dislocated mostly in the hilly and mountainous regions (*jebel*) that stretch from north to south between Galilee and al-Khalīl (Hebron). This was mainly due to reasons connected to safety and health: the flat regions like the coastal area (*sāḥel*) were in fact more exposed to the periodic raids of the Bedouins, as well as to the proliferation of illnesses such as malaria.

The rest of the population resided in cities of mixed population such as Jerusalem (al-Quds), Haifa, Tiberias (Ṭabariyya), Jaffa (Yāfa) and Ṣafad. Or in fully Arab cities such as Nazareth, Shafā ‘Amr, Nāblus (in



Figure 2.2 Nāblus in 1857, in F. Frith, *Egypt and Palestine Photographed and Described*, 2 vols (London: James S. Virtue, 1859).

the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this was the most prosperous city of the region), Baysān, Lydda (al-Lud), Ramla, Rāmallāh, Beersheba (Bi'r al-Sab'), Bayt Jālā, Jenīn, Khān Yūnis, Ghazzah, Bethlehem (Bayt Laḥm), St. John's Acre ('Akkā) and Ṭulkarem.⁵⁴ The Bedouins – characterized by a nomadic lifestyle that became increasingly rare after the 1800s⁵⁵ – were spread throughout that which since millennia was known as the Naqab Desert (Negev/al-Naqb) and represented less than one-twentieth of the total population.⁵⁶

Identities are based on social relations that change over time and according to different contexts.⁵⁷ Thus identities, like relationships, are not immutable: 'People produce and reproduce them rather than being born with them.'⁵⁸ The traditions and customs at the base of modern Arab-Palestinian identity – 'imagined' and 'constructed' as any other identity in history⁵⁹ – have their 'rudiments' in a remote past, far preceding 637. This date is often perceived as the historical moment of the Arabic invasion / occupation of Palestine, which starting from this period was populated by inhabitants extraneous to the area.⁶⁰ The reality is more complex. For instance, the idea that Iraqi people are somehow

related to the ancient Babylonians, or the Lebanese to the Phoenicians (the name by which the Greeks identified the Canaanites), is accepted in most cases without obstructionism, or at least discussed without acrimony. This is not the case when a similar approach is used in regard to the Arab-Palestinians.

The Arab-Palestinians are the final result of a combination of peoples with various ethnic origins, people influenced and shaken by the numerous populations that over the centuries have filled the role of conqueror. Tawfīq Kanʿān (1882–1964), prolific ethnographer and the first Arab pastor of Palestine's Lutheran Church, was the precursor and most influential scholar on the traditions and rites of the local majority. His broad scientific output, written largely in English and German, is still today an inexhaustible source of information. As a consequence of decades of village by village studies, in the 1920s Kanʿān documented the local folkloristic tradition, as well as proverbs, songs, social norms, superstitions and amulets linked to the Palestinian farmers. Such a large amount of data and materials supported the thesis that they represented the living legacy of the cultures present over the centuries in Palestine. 'These same Palestine *fellahin*', Kanʿān argued, 'are heirs and to some extents descendants of the heathen inhabitants of pre-biblical times, who built the first high places.'⁶¹ In other words, many popular traditions held by the Arabs of Palestine were nothing more than residual manifestations of daily life as described in biblical narrations.⁶²

Paraphrasing David Gilmour: 'Every invader until this century has, to some degree, left his mark upon the population [...]. The Canaanites and the Philistines of the tenth century BC were never deported. They remained in Palestine [...].'⁶³ When it comes to the Arab conquest of the seventh century we encounter what can be identified as the most pervasive – but also less 'forced' – of the mentioned invasions. Through it, Arabs introduced the language, religion⁶⁴ and type of government that most of the local population made its own. This does not mean that the conquest was greeted by the locals 'with open arms'⁶⁵ – and even less that the Palestinians of our day should be considered as the ancient Canaanites – but instead that the local population was Arabized in a natural way, in a process of continuity, thus maintaining what in modern times would have been called a cultural basis. This is so not only in consideration of the small number of new invaders, but also in virtue of the fact that the Arabic that was introduced did in fact

markedly preserve the sound of the ancient tongues spoken in the region.⁶⁶ Maxime Rodinson (1915–2004), for a long time committed to expose the simplistic approaches designed to deny or minimize any continuity in the history of the region, broached the subject with the following words:

A small contingent of Arabs from Arabia did indeed conquer the country in the seventh century [...] the Palestinian population soon became Arabized under Arab domination, just as earlier it had been Hebraicized, Aramaicized, to some degree even Hellenized. It became Arab in a way that it was never to become Latinized or Ottomanized. The invaded melted with the invaders. It is ridiculous to call the English of today invaders and occupiers, on the grounds that England was conquered from Celtic peoples by the Angles, Saxons and Jutes in the fifth and sixth centuries. The population was ‘Anglicized’ and nobody suggests that the peoples which have more or less preserved the Celtic tongues – the Irish, the Welsh or the Bretons – should be regarded as the true natives of Kent or Suffolk, with greater titles to these territories than the English who live in those counties.⁶⁷

Seen by the ‘others’ mentioned by Darwīsh, the fact that the local majority did not primarily define itself as Palestinian or Arab was associated to a lack of attachment to the land. Unlike medieval societies, characterized by a sum of particularisms, the era of the nation states tended towards the homogenization of diversities. What in modern Europe was often indicated as a ‘nation’ (from the latin *natus*, ‘to be born’) presupposed in fact a feeling of belonging to a defined community that differed, as a result of ‘mutual contact’ between distinct groups, at a linguistic, cultural and territorial level. It presumed, in other words, a cleavage between ‘us’ and ‘them’.⁶⁸

Such a ‘border’ was much more nuanced in Palestine. In many documents of the 1700s and 1800s it is possible to find a distinction between *ibn ‘Arab* (Arab son) and *ibn Turk* (Turkish son). This means that the local population considered the non-Arabic-speaking Turks as foreigners.⁶⁹ At the same time, as previously mentioned, the origin from a certain village, the *ḥamūla* of belonging and the local customs, were all factors that marked a certain distinction between the protonations present

in the region. As Jacob L. Burkhardt (1818–97) noted in 1822, ‘it would be an interesting subject for an artist to portray accurately the different character of features of the Syrian nations [...] a slight acquaintance with them enables one to determine the native district of a Syrian, with almost as much certainty as an Englishman may be distinguished at first sight from an Italian or an inhabitant of the South of France.’⁷⁰

And yet, until the last decades of the nineteenth century an external danger, which is almost always the basis of the need of a people to define itself in a clear-cut way, was missing. Even in the European context, notwithstanding the differences, it was for instance the anti-Napoleonic mass mobilization that contributed to transform Russia into a nation that was no longer simply identifiable with the tsar’s rule. In Germany, in the year of the French Siege of Mainz (1793) Goethe (1749–1832) turned to the German *Volk* and no longer to the Holy Roman Empire.⁷¹ The nation state of the modern era should thus be considered as a phenomenon that had its origin and destination mainly, although not only, in ‘the defence of the community from potential external aggression’.⁷²

Prior to Zionist immigration waves and, to a lesser extent, the British colonial influence and the modernist push of the Porte, the Arab-Palestinians – who at that time represented what Benedict Anderson would call an ‘imagined community’ *in fieri* – did not have to fear any danger in being part (as a province) of an Ottoman Empire that, at least until the second *Tanzīmāt* (1856), left them great freedom.⁷³ As the Swiss theologian Felix Bovet (1824–1903) noted in 1858:

It is true, the Turks are a power which reigns in Palestine, but there are others well alongside them. Every tribe conserves a type of independence, and takes care of its own affairs. There are entire villages that pay tax not to the Pasha, but to a Bedouin Emir, and there are provinces in Palestine where the Porte representative [of the Ottoman Empire] could not risk advancing without being stripped, as a new arrival.⁷⁴

Among the local majority different senses of identities (connected to religious, local, transnational and family allegiances) coexisted, without any contradiction between them.⁷⁵ They were identities as both distinguishable and overlapping. As Barnett and Telhami pointed out,

one of the ways in which the entire area differs from other regions 'is that the national identity has had a transnational character'.⁷⁶

It is in this 'regional' context that it is possible to understand the inconsistency of the thesis – regarding the 'foreign origins' of most of the Arab Palestinians – mentioned in the first paragraph of this chapter and made popular by Joan Peters's book *From Time Immemorial* (1984). Through an analysis of migratory processes registered throughout the course of the 1800s and in the period of the British mandate, Peters depicted local Arabs as 'foreigners' coming from 'outside areas'.⁷⁷ In line with what had been published a few years earlier by the journalist Arie L. Avneri,⁷⁸ Peters tried to demonstrate that Palestine was a semi-desert land and that the inhabitants the first Zionists encountered were nothing but 'travelers' attracted by the Jewish immigration.

When *From Time Immemorial* was published in 1984 many historians and journalists noted that the data proposed by Peters would have changed the entire Arab–Jewish polemic over Palestine. Still today, despite the fact that, from an academic point of view, the book has been almost universally rejected,⁷⁹ it is nevertheless cited by dozens of scholars. 'The small and decreasing Arab-Muslim population of the area [Palestine]', Alan Dershowitz argued, 'was also a transient and migratory population, as contrasted with the more stable, if smaller, Jewish population.'⁸⁰

The 'foreigners' approach'

In 1857, following a trip in the region, Herman Melville (1819–91) noted that 'all who cultivate the soil in Palestine are Arabs'.⁸¹ The reference was to the same 'rural population' that Noel Temple Moore (1833–1903), the British consul in Jerusalem from 1863 to 1890, defined as 'the bone and sinew of the country'.⁸²

Despite these considerations and due to the nature of the available data, no definitive conclusions about the demographic composition of Palestine in Ottoman and British times can be drawn. It is largely accepted, however, that at least until the early 1920s the growth of the Arab population – not an isolated case in the region (in Iraq, for instance, the population increased between 1867 and 1905 from 1.25 million to 2.25 million)⁸³ – had little to do with external migratory waves. Referring to the century preceding World War I, Roberto Bachi (1909–95), founder of Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, noted that 'it

seems likely that the dominant determinant of this modest growth [among the Muslim population of Palestine] was the beginning of some natural increase'.⁸⁴ The increase in Palestine's Arab population was in large percentage due to a demographic growth: a phenomenon that started in the middle of the 1800s,⁸⁵ thus prior both to the first wave of Zionist immigration and the first construction company founded in the 1860s in Jerusalem by Yosef Rivlin (see [Chapter 4](#)).

Already in mandatory Palestine, the thesis that high Arab population growth came predominantly from hidden immigration rather than natural increase was considered problematic. The Anglo-American Survey of Palestine (1946) argued the following:

That each [temporary migration into Palestine] may lead to a residue of illegal permanent settlers is possible, but, if the residue were of significant size, it would be reflected in systematic disturbances of the rates of Arab vital occurrences. No such systematic disturbances are observed. It is sometimes alleged that the high rate of Arab natural increase is due to a large concealed immigration from the neighbouring countries. This is an erroneous inference. Researches reveal that the high rate of fertility of the Moslem Arab woman has remained unchanged for half a century. The low rate of Arab natural increase before 1914 was caused by:

(a) the removal in significant numbers of men in the early nubile years for military service in other parts of the Ottoman Empire, many of whom never returned and others of whom returned in the late years of life; and

(b) the lack of effective control of endemic and epidemic diseases that in those years led to high mortality rates.⁸⁶

Several cases of Arab migratory movements within Palestine – aiming in some cases at settling in areas with a Jewish majority⁸⁷ – were registered in the 1920s. These areas guaranteed more concrete development opportunities. As noted by the Peel Commission in 1937,

the Arab population shows significant growth starting from 1920, and it had a correlation with the increase of prosperity in Palestine [...]. In particular, the Arabs benefitted from the social services

which could not be provided in a broad sense without the income generated by the Jews.⁸⁸

Such demographic growth was accompanied by a reduction in average mortality – placed well below the 40 years in the first decade of the twentieth century – largely prompted by some innovations introduced by the Jewish component of the population.⁸⁹ Walter Clay Lowdermilk (1888–1974), an American soil expert that considered Palestinian Muslims as ‘primitive peoples’⁹⁰ and was involved ‘in lobbying and publicly supporting Zionism’,⁹¹ outlined the issue in the following terms:

An interesting sidelight on the beneficial effect of Jewish colonization on the Arab population is provided by the extraordinary rate of increase of the Arab community. From 1920 to 1940 the Arab population grew from 650,000 to about 1,050,000. Arab immigration accounts for only a very small part of this increase: most of it resulted directly from an astonishingly high birth-rate and a decrease in the death-rate.⁹²

On these same topics, and more specifically as a reply to Joan Peters’s claims, Yehoshua Porath pointed out that until the 1850s there was no ‘natural’ increase in numbers among Arabs, but that this changed when modern medical treatment was introduced and modern hospitals were established, both by the Ottoman authorities and by Christian missionaries: ‘The number of births’, Porath clarified,

remained steady but infant mortality decreased. This was the main reason for Arab population growth. [...] No one would doubt that some migrant workers came to Palestine from Syria and Trans-Jordan and remained there. But one has to add to this that there were migrations in the opposite direction as well.⁹³

Porath’s standpoint is accurate also in reference to later phases of the British mandate. In the second half of the 1930s, for instance, due to a state of public disorder, Palestine registered also a substantial outward movement of Palestinian Arabs. Not only to Syria and Lebanon, but also to Latin America (which has the largest Palestinian presence outside the Arab world).

In a recent paper released by the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, Reuven Aharoni and Gideon M. Kressel claimed that 'a significant portion of the Palestinian Arabs came from Egypt'⁹⁴ and that until the emergence of a Zionist-Jewish community Palestine 'had been a backwater of little importance to Arabs'.⁹⁵ The two authors asked: 'why was documentation or even mention of this migration process, which transformed so many Egyptians into Palestinians, so paltry in recent generations?'⁹⁶

Although no definitive data are available on this issue, some groups, as also Porath confirmed, did indeed immigrate before and during the British mandate from areas outside Palestine.⁹⁷ Among these was a group of Egyptians, who settled in Palestine when the region was under Muḥammad 'Alī's rule. Soon after, a limited number of Bosnian, Algerian and Circassian immigrants arrived; they settled primarily in Galilee (their presence today is seen in the villages of Rehaniya and Kfar Kama) and at the 'border' with Lebanon. In general, unlike those who arrived in later decades during the Second and Third Aliyot – these latter, through practices such as the above-mentioned 'Jewish Labour', opted largely for exclusion and therefore the non-integration with the local Arab population⁹⁸ – the aforementioned groups integrated, in some cases gradually, with the local majority. The exceptions to this general trend, registered for instance in the areas inhabited by the Bedouins in the Negev, were connected to social rather than nationalistic issues.

Most of the Arab Palestinians depicted as 'foreigners' or 'former invaders' by Gawler, van de Welde, Peters, Kressel, Aharoni and others were in large percentage people deeply rooted in what Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī (1585–1671), an influential Islamic lawyer from Ramla, defined in the seventeenth century '*Filasṭīn bilādunā*' ('Palestine our country');⁹⁹ the fact that it was not a separate political and administrative entity did not make al-Ramlī's '*Filasṭīn*' less real. As argued by CMS missionary C. T. Wilson in 1905, 'the Fellahin have a great love for their native place and think it is a real hardship to have to settle elsewhere'.¹⁰⁰ This contributes to explain why Palestinian surnames (Nābulṣī, Ramlī, Rāntissī and so on) often include their local village of origin.

As for the relevant majority of those whose origins were from other areas, they lived in the context of a borderless region. As confirmed by Kressel and Aharoni, in the southern coastal plain, in Wādī 'Arā, Palestinian families 'called Tantāwī (or Tāmtāwī) hailed from the area of

the city of Tantā in the Nile Delta'.¹⁰¹ Similar claims can be made also for other family names such as Maṣrī, Dumyātī, Sa'īdī and Jabālī. At the same time, in Damascus and in several other cities in the region, it is still today possible to encounter plenty of local families with names whose origins show clear links to areas in present-day Israel and the Palestinian territories. This further proves that considering the movements within the broader region as migratory processes among reciprocally 'foreign' populations is a simplistic way to define a reality that was anything but simple. The Palestinian context, in other words, was/is an integral part of the Arab world without, as a result, erasing its peculiarities. In Adel Manna's words:

A Palestinian who moved to south Lebanon or a Lebanese who moved to Palestine – or a Syrian or a Jordanian, for that matter – is surely not a foreigner because he is part of the culture of the society of Bilad-al-Sham, or Greater Syria, where there were no borders between countries. [...] It was common and natural for a Palestinian to go study in Al Azhar for instance, and remain there; or for a Hebronite merchant to go to Cairo and live there; or go to Damascus or other places, whether to study or to live [...] This was a natural phenomenon.¹⁰²

Manichean temptations have always been harbingers of misrepresentations, as well as of great suffering. The 'black or white' approach according to which Palestinians were/ are a fully defined nation, *or* were are nothing more than 'Arab immigrants' that 'came *because* of the Jews' – and so people who would be relatively easy to dislocate to any other region in the Arab world – has for long been an inaccuracy diffused in the literature on the issue – an inaccuracy that, on the one hand, contributes to further radicalize the present-day history of the region, and, on the other, continues to foster the long-established attempt of simplifying the local universe.

What is Palestine?

The origins of the name 'Palestine' are rooted in its cognate *pelishtim* (Philistines), a tribe numbered among the 'Sea Peoples' who, in the twelfth century BCE, settled in the southern coastal area of the region

(between modern-day Tel Aviv and Gaza). The Philistines, like the Sumerians in Mesopotamia (present-day southern Iraq), were a non-Semitic population. Starting from c.1150 BCE the word *Peleset* was mentioned in numerous Egyptian documents.¹⁰³ The Assyrian king Sargon II (c.763–705 BCE) called the same area *Palasbtu*. In the Greek culture of Herodotus' day (484–25 BCE) the term *Palaistinê* was used in reference to a broader area that included also the Judean mountains and the Jordan Rift Valley.¹⁰⁴ Already in pre-Roman times the toponym Palestine was thus utilized for indicating a wider area, inclusive of Judaea, Samaria and Gaza.

In modern times several travellers coming from Europe, Britain first and foremost, referred to Palestine as if it were a mere geographical expression: 'like Antarctica, the Amazons or Sahara'.¹⁰⁵ ('Geographischer Begriff', or 'geographical expression', was for that matter also the formula with which the Austrian Chancellor Metternich (1773–1859) apostrophized Italy in 1847).¹⁰⁶ Later on, this attitude was further strengthened through the influence of certain currents of Zionism. The latter, in fact, was far from being a monolith. Vladimir Jabotinsky, for instance, was aware of the problems posed by the concept of 'geographical expression'. As he wrote in 1923:

If it were possible (and I doubt this) to discuss Palestine with the Arabs of Baghdad and Mecca as if it were some kind of small, immaterial borderland, then Palestine would still remain for the Palestinians not a borderland, but their birthplace, the center and basis of their own national existence [...] because they are not a rabble but a nation.¹⁰⁷

In opposition to these views, other exponents and currents within Zionism juxtaposed the idea of Palestine to an abstract concept. The explanation for this was that Palestine never had frontiers, only administrative boundaries. This, however, was a predisposition – supported in the last few decades by several renowned scholars¹⁰⁸ – that in many respects did not find confirmation in the feelings of the local majority.

An editorial published in *Filastîn* on 2 and 15 February 1913 warned that 'the time of the Ottoman Empire is finished. It is our time [...] we shall organize a special army to protect Palestine.'¹⁰⁹ A special issue

published the following year by the same journal commented on the attempt by the Ottoman government to close down the journal:

Dear readers, according to the opinion of the central government it seems we have committed a serious error in alerting the *Palestinian nation* [*al-umma al-filistīniyya*] against the threat posed by the Zionist current [...] we are a nation that is under threat of extinction in the face of this Zionist current in this land of Palestine [*fī bathibi al-bilad al-filistīniyya*].¹¹⁰

Similar examples of such published material can be seen in abundance by the farmer masses and, even more so, among the urban elite.¹¹¹ In newspapers in Palestine between 1908 and 1914 – six years of relative freedom for the local press¹¹² – the reference to a peculiar ‘Palestinian *ummah*’ was widespread. This feeling grew fast, largely because of two factors: a tangible and growing external danger, and a relatively well developed self-identification. *Al-Karmil*, *al-Quds*, *Filastīn*, *al-Munādī* and *al-Dustūr*,¹¹³ to name the most important newspapers of the time, were in this respect like mirrors on which to cast love for one’s own land, as well as the fears that were appearing on the horizon. ‘The [Palestinian] land’, an editorial published in *Filastīn* on 6 April 1913 warned,

began to be subject to the attentions of Zionism and up to this moment in Palestine there are 100,000 Jews [...] how can we be sure that these 100,000 will not become 200,000 and that they will not reach a form of independent authority [...].¹¹⁴

However, it is not only the media of the time – which certainly further favoured the development of a ‘self-conscious [Palestinian] community’¹¹⁵ – that witnessed the self-perception that the local majority felt about their land in the early twentieth century, in the wake of the first effects of nationalism in the region. It is possible, in fact, to rely also on numerous documents, official letters and private diaries that made explicit reference to a land, Palestine, quite well defined. It is particularly meaningful, in this respect, to draw on the document of protest that the participants of the Jerusalem-based Arab Palestinian Congress sent to the Paris Peace Conference on 3 February 1919: ‘All

Muslim and Christian residents of Palestine, which is formed by the regions of Jerusalem, Nāblus and the Arab Saint John of Acre [...].¹¹⁶

For its large Muslim majority *Filasṭīn* had been an easily circumscribed land for centuries. This was due to its acknowledged uniqueness. Numerous classical Islamic sources identified it as *Al 'Arḍ al Muqaddasa* (the Holy Land).¹¹⁷ The awareness and perception that Palestine was a special area and therefore distinct from Syria and Lebanon is supposed to have always been present in the Arab conscience. 'The Holy Land [Al 'Arḍ al Muqaddasa]', Moroccan philosopher Abū Sālim al-'Ayyāshī (1628–79) noted in 1663, 'is the closest place to the Paradise on the heart.'¹¹⁸ For some, this uniqueness was so evident to the point that it could 'compete' with Mecca and Medina, the first two holy cities in Islam. 'The Qur'ān', Amir Ali (1937–2005), founder of the Institute of Islamic Information & Education, pointed out, 'calls only Palestine "holy" or muqaddasah. We have three "harams" but only one holy land. I have never found in the Qur'an or Hadith the word muqaddas being used for Makkah or Madina.'¹¹⁹

A further confirmation of this specificity, supported by more precise geographical references, can be found in a significant number of sources produced over a long period of time. An Islamic text from the eighth century, attributed to the medieval scholar Abū Khālid Thawr Ibn Yazīd al-Kalā'ī (764–854), a proud sustainer of the idea that women should have the right to serve as *imām* (spiritual guide), argued that 'the holiest place [*al-quds*] on Earth is Syria; the holiest place in Syria is Palestine; the holiest place in Palestine is Jerusalem [*Bayt al-maqdis*]'.¹²⁰ Detailed references to Palestine, not necessarily of a strictly religious nature, can be found in the *Kitāb al-Buldān* (*Book of Countries*) by the Shi'i historian al-Ya'qūbī (d. 897)¹²¹ and in *Kitāb al-masālik wa al-mamālik* (*The Book of the Routes and Realms*) by the Persian geographer al-Iṣṭakhrī (d. 957). 'Filasṭīn', al-Iṣṭakhrī wrote,

is the most fertile among the Syrian provinces [...]. In the province of Filasṭīn, despite its narrowness, there are around twenty Mosques [...]. At its maximum extension [Filasṭīn goes] from Raḥḥ [Rafah] to the edge of al-Lajjūn [Legio], a traveler would need two days to travel across its entire length; and [this is also] the time [necessary] to cross the province across its breadth from Yāfā [Jaffa] to Rīḥā [Jericho] [...].¹²²

Similar contents are also present in *Kitāb Sūrat al-'Arḍ* (*The Book of the Earth's Features*)¹²³ by the Baghdad merchant Ibn Ḥawqal (tenth century), in *Aḥsan at-Taqāsīm fī Ma'rifat al-Aqālīm* (*The Best Division for Understanding the Regions*) by the Jerusalem geographer al-Muqaddasī (946–1000),¹²⁴ and more in general in large part of the Arabic literature from the late Middle Ages. Particularly relevant is the literary genre of *Faḍā'il al-Quds* (*The Merits of Jerusalem*) composed halfway through the eleventh century and rich with material from the seventh and eighth centuries. In *Faḍā'il al-Quds* the beauty of Jerusalem and of the holiest places in the region were, once again, praised.¹²⁵

In virtue of these considerations, it is not surprising that also in later periods there was among its inhabitants a more or less defined perception of Palestine. A detailed analysis of the texts of the aforementioned Khayr al-Dīn al-Ramlī confirms, for example, that already in the seventeenth century the concept of *Filasṭīn* was more than an abstract idea.¹²⁶ Such was a common feeling expressed also in earlier works such as *al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Tārīkh al-Quds wa 'l-Khalīl* (*The Glorious Story of Jerusalem and Hebron*), which is considered one of the most popular classics in the history of medieval Jerusalem. In the pages of the manuscript, written around 1495, its author, the *qāḍī* of Jerusalem, Mujīr al-Dīn (1456–1522), made systematical use of the terms “*Arḍ Filasṭīn*” (‘Land of Palestine’).¹²⁷ The expression ‘Southern Syria’, on the other hand, was never mentioned.

Once again it should therefore not be surprising that *Arz-i Filasṭīn* (Land of Palestine), coinciding with the area to the west of the Jordan, was the name used in the nineteenth century in the official correspondence by Ottoman authorities when referring to Palestine. *Arz-i Filasṭīn* was not a politically independent area, even if it held, in popular as well in the official use, a non-secondary peculiar meaning. The ‘*Arz-i Filasṭīn ve Surīye*’ (Land of Palestine and Syria) formula was frequently utilized in the official Ottoman correspondence,¹²⁸ as well as in the maps printed in 1729 in Istanbul by Ibrahim Müteferrika (1674–1745).¹²⁹ It was thus not by chance that the central Ottoman government established an administrative entity ‘with borders practically identical to those of mandated Palestine on three brief occasions during the nineteenth century: 1830, 1840, and 1872’.¹³⁰ The latter, incidentally, was the year in which the consul Noel Temple Moore wrote

a dispatch commenting on the 'recent erection of Palestine into a separate Eyalet' (a decision that was greeted with jubilation by the local population), stressing the fact that 'many British travellers and explorers visit *the country east of the Jordan*' (italics added).¹³¹

Within this context it is possible to understand why Ottomans, Protestant missionaries, Arabs and early Zionists, though none of them having the same perception regarding the exact perimeter of Palestine, came to use the same toponym (Palestine). A meeting of the LJS, chaired by G. H. Rose and taking place in London on 4 May 1838, advocated, for instance, 'the diffusion of the Holy Scriptures and of the knowledge of the Gospel throughout the whole of Palestine and the adjacent countries'.¹³² The programme of the Zionist movement adopted in 1897 'spoke (in German) of a home "in Palestine" for the Jewish people'; moreover, 'the first Zionist institution created in the country was the "Anglo-Palestine Company"'.¹³³

Various documents exist that seem to disprove what has just been claimed. The London Convention of 1840, for instance, referred to the Acre area indicating it as 'the southern part of Syria'.¹³⁴ The *Encyclopedia Britannica*, published in 1911, clarified that Palestine 'may be said generally to denote the southern third of the province of Syria'.¹³⁵ Furthermore, also the 28 Palestinian delegates who from 27 January to 9 February 1919 participated in the first *Mu'tamar al-'Arabī al-Filastīnī* (Palestinian Arab Congress) in Jerusalem, issued a declaration defining Palestine as part of Syria. *Sūriyā al-Janūbiyya* (*Southern Syria*) was for that matter also the name of a newspaper published in Jerusalem starting in September 1919.

However, these and other similar examples do not contradict what has been argued thus far. The fact that the area under analysis was identified sometimes as Palestine and at other times as 'Southern Syria' by Europeans bears no particular value. It would have mattered had the local majority identified itself as from 'Southern Syria'. This, however, was not the case. Excluding some isolated cases that were driven by explicit political calculations,¹³⁶ no documents have been produced by the local majority, prior to 1918 or after 1920, which put aside Palestine and all it represented in favour of the concept of 'Southern Syria'. Also the episode of the Palestinian delegates in 1919 is understandable only in its specific historical context, which lasted for two years. The choice to 'shelve' Palestine was, then, nothing more than a tactical move taken

in order to get rid of the yoke of London and to oppose the growing Zionist ambitions. 'A united and independent Syria', Herbert Samuel (1870–1963) clarified in April 1920, 'is regarded as the only means of combating Zionism'.¹³⁷ It was therefore in every respect a tactical move dictated by that specific historical period:

During the war [World War I], Arab nationalists cooperated with Sharif Hussein and his sons in order to have an Arab kingdom. The Palestinians, who were part of this ideology, thought at that time, tactically, that it would be in their interest to be part of the Faisal kingdom in the Bilad al-Sham. That's why it is the only two years [1918–20] during which they speak about Palestine as Southern Syria or the kingdom of Faisal. After Faisal is kicked out of Damascus, the next conference doesn't speak about being part of Syria or the kingdom of Faisal. In the summer of 1920 the episode is finished.¹³⁸

Even in 1918–20 Palestine was therefore something more than an abstract concept.¹³⁹ Though devoid of any political connotation, it was clearly alive in the feelings of the general population.¹⁴⁰ One of the most interesting proofs of this can be found in *Jughrāfiyā Sūriyā wa Filastīn al-Tabī'a* (*The Natural Geography of Syria and Palestine*), a textbook used in the 1920s in several Palestinian schools. It was published in 1923 by Ṣabrī Sharīf 'Abd al-Hādī, a geographer and a teacher in Nāblus. Palestine was clearly distinguished from the rest of 'Greater Syria' through a description of its agricultural, demographic and administrative characteristics.¹⁴¹ A similar powerful testimony of this awareness was provided in the same months by Khalīl Sakānīnī. The Jerusalemite educator pointed out in the Egyptian newspaper *al-Siyāsa* (*Politics*) that Palestine was 'a nation which has been asleep for a long time', before being awakened 'by the First World War, battered by the Zionist movement and offended by illegal policy [of the British government]':¹⁴² a perception that has remained in the minds of a relevant percentage of Palestinians until our days.

CHAPTER 3

THE OWNERSHIP OF THE LAND

The 'traditional societies', have (in some cases emphatically) disappointed the simplistic and paternalistic expectation that they are bound to develop along lines which would ultimately lead them into that 'modern world' in which the intellectuals who analyse them, are already living.¹

Alexander Schölch (1943–86)

Few other issues are as enlightening as land tenure in enabling us to grasp the process of 'standardization of the other' that affected the region in the second half of the nineteenth century. In the Palestinian context property ownership is a particularly important issue. It was so in the initial phases of the mandate for Palestine, when it represented one of the first difficulties the government of London found itself dealing with,² as well as one of the most evident sources of frustration for the local majority.³ It was so in the year in which the United Nations (UN) decided to divide Palestine, when numerous Israeli institutions and sympathizers claimed that 'over 70 percent' of it did not 'legally' belong its local Arab population, but rather to the British mandate power, 'legitimate heir' of the former Ottoman properties.⁴ It is so today, as it is confirmed by the almost daily clashes that arise in the West Bank and in various neighbourhoods of east Jerusalem, Sheïkh Jarrāh first and foremost.

This chapter sheds light on the diverse ways in which land ownership was treated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Due to the entangled cultural contexts that encompassed Ottoman and Western

as well as local understandings of land ownership, multiple meanings were attributed to this phenomenon by different parties. The relatively slow infiltration of Western – or what we perceive as modern – concepts regarding land tenure had far-reaching implications until today. The weakest link on the ground, the *fellahīn*, had no influence on these decisions, since they had no voice representing their interests and were thus the easiest to blackmail and the most exposed to possible abuses.

In this chapter I will provide an introduction to land tenure classifications in late Ottoman Palestine. This is followed by a section on how a complex system such as the *mushā* has been misunderstood by the British authorities. In the next section, attention is turned to some of the most far-reaching (mis)representations connected to the land and its local majority. Based on this study it is argued that the still widespread claim according to which at the date of the partition of Palestine (1947) over 70 per cent of it did not legally belong to the local Arab population, but to the British mandatory power, is grounded on an approach that does not sufficiently take into account the rights, needs and traditions of the local population. Such interpretation was first proposed – for self-interests – by the British authorities,⁵ and then upheld by several organizations, including the Israel Academic Committee on the Middle East;⁶ today it is often used by the Israeli authorities in legal cases (mainly in West Bank and east Jerusalem) and is supported by renowned scholars.⁷

Before focusing on the central theme of this chapter it is appropriate, however, to first look at the reformist context of Palestine in the second half of the nineteenth century, a historic phase that registered a sort of revolution in the centuries-old relationship that linked the land to its local majority. This revolution had among its consequences the instillation of the idea – well rooted in Europe as well as the USA – that only the possession of private land, paraphrasing Merrimon Howard, a former American slave, would permit ‘the poor classes to enjoy the sweet boon of freedom’.⁸

The reformist context

When, in March 1876, Stephen Cave (1820–80) published his report on Egypt’s precarious state of wellbeing, the focus of the analysis was on a specific critical factor. ‘The vast expense’, he wrote, ‘caused by hasty and

inconsiderate endeavours to adopt the civilization of the West.⁹ Cave had been invited to Egypt three months earlier by Prime Minister Disraeli with the aim of investigating the precarious economic condition registered at the time in the region: a situation that was for that matter also clearly present in the rest of the Ottoman Empire, increasingly dependent on European powers.

Such dependence had in the Anglo-Turkish Trade Treaty of 1838 and the Crimean War of the early 1850s two particularly influential watersheds. The first outlined the fiscal context that dominated the Ottoman scene up to World War I; it also permitted British merchants to purchase goods at favourable tax rates in every corner of the Empire, putting Ottoman products at a disadvantage in relation to foreign competitors.¹⁰ The second had even more destabilizing repercussions. The costs of the Crimean War, in fact, forced the Porte to fall into debt with European powers, setting the stage for the financial collapse that pushed Istanbul to declare bankruptcy in October 1875. The first of these loans (2,514,913 Ottoman lire), signed in 1854 at an interest rate of 6 per cent, had been guaranteed by the British company Palmers-Goltschmid. The following year it was the turn of London's Rothschild, with a loan of 5,644,375 Ottoman lire.

The indebtedness was accompanied by the creation of the first banks, mostly under British control, placed in the main Ottoman port cities but often having their general headquarters in London and other European capitals. The Bank of Egypt was established in 1855, followed by the Imperial Ottoman Bank (1856), the Anglo-Egyptian Bank (1864) and the numerous branches of the main credit institutions in Europe: Barclays, Comptoir d'Escompte, Deutsche Bank, Banco di Roma and Crédit Lyonnais. This last one was, in 1892, the first modern bank to be founded in Palestine (in Jerusalem); it was followed ten years later by the Anglo-Palestine Company, owned by the Jewish Agency and headquartered in London.

The new credit institutions and the growing flow of European capital enabled the construction of railways – in 1856 a British company obtained permission for the creation of a railway line between Aydın and Smyrna – ports, and other services of public utility that contributed to push the Eastern Mediterranean region into the vortex of finance and international trade. This took place in spite of the efforts of the Porte, whose laws often remained unimplemented by the mere fact of not being

accepted by local European embassies. Writing about Istanbul's attempt to stop the operations of the Anglo-Palestine Company, the British consul in Jerusalem John Dickson (1847–1906) framed the political *Zeitgeist* of the time:

There is an Ottoman law dated 25 November 1887/7 December 1887 prohibiting foreign joint Stock Companies from establishing Agencies in Turkey without previously obtaining the permission of the Sublime Porte, but I understand that this law was not accepted by His Majesty's Embassy or the Representatives of other Foreign Powers.¹¹

Tanzīmāt's impact

The 'Tanzīmāt era' refers to a period of reorganization within the Ottoman Empire whose *incipit* was recorded following the Russo-Turkish War of 1768–74. It came about through a series of reforms implemented between 1839 and 1876, the year in which Abdul-Hamid II (1842–1918), Sultan from 1876 to 1909, blocked the reformist process taking advantage of the rivalry between the European powers and introducing authoritarian methods that delayed Turkey's development by several decades.

One of the most common difficulties among historians focused on the Tanzīmāt is that of establishing a shared definition regarding the nature of the changes triggered by the reforms. This debate is directly connected to the concepts of modernization and Westernization, often used as synonyms. There is today a certain agreement in holding that the modernizing component that sided the initial process of Westernization of the Ottoman Empire should not be detected in what the West exported to the other,¹² but rather in the internal transformations that the various components of the 'subaltern societies' implemented in order to adapt to the new framework.¹³

Ottoman strategists sought solutions for the growing internal conflicts and were at the same time concerned about the progressive penetration of the European powers: 'The European effect upon Jerusalem as a centre during the past year', as confirmed for instance by Finn in 1856, 'has been very great.'¹⁴ The first period of the Tanzīmāt, which opened with the *Hatt-ı Şerif* of Gülhane of 1839, was focused on security issues, on the tributary system, as well as on stopping the

growing processes of administrative peripheralization through a system of centralization and systematization of all bureaucratic and organizational aspects. Jerusalem, in particular, enjoyed in this phase a relative economic prosperity, accompanied by significant demographic growth.¹⁵ The process of transformation that took hold in those years was, in any case, weak and with a low, if not damaging, impact on the Muslim population. The reforms, in fact, affected the institutional structure and not the common people. This explains why they were temporary and doomed to disappear once Muḥammad 'Alī was forced to withdraw from Palestine (1840). A striking example of the failures recorded in this historical phase concerns the attempt to eliminate the *iltizām* – a tax-farm system by which the feudal lord collected the 'Uṣr (tenth), a tithe paid in kind, and certain other taxes – considered a plague of the Empire. Though the Porte had promised – in 1839 as well as in 1856 – its abolition, it continued to be practised, due to the absence of a specialized tributary system.

If the *Hatt-ı Şerif* of 1839 was partly related to Islamic tradition, and partly inspired by the European powers, the second reformist phase, inaugurated by the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* in 1856, was by many accounts an Anglo-French imposition – that is a policy prompted by the two powers that had fought alongside the Porte during the Crimean War. Notwithstanding its positive effects connected to the development of communications, the improvement of security and the attempt to extend social rights – the reforms aimed also at integrating non-Muslims and non-Turks into Ottoman society guaranteeing them civil liberties and equal rights¹⁶ – the historic phase started in 1856 modified and sometimes shattered several well-established equilibria. Though the Empire's initial regression can be traced back to previous times – a few historians have linked it to the abolition of the *Timar*¹⁷ – it is reasonable to claim that the new policies undermined a system without providing sustainable alternatives. As the Turkish economist Omer Clal Sarç wrote in regards to the industrial sector:

The Tanzimat had shaken our oil industry by changing some of the needs of the population and thus had been instrumental in its decline [...] The Tanzimat, although instrumental in the decline of old industry, could not create a modern industry to take its place.¹⁸

Also the second reformist period, as had already happened in previous decades and centuries,¹⁹ proved to be a failure. Besides registering meagre results, it created the conditions for the reinforcement of local powers and the break of the equilibria between the various religious denominations, to which the concept of Ottomanism, aimed at counterweighting the growing centrifugal forces within the Empire, tried (and ultimately failed) to provide an answer.²⁰ Furthermore, it coincided with a growing intrusion of European powers in Ottoman affairs.²¹ The failure to deliver these reforms and the related outcomes were in some respects connected to a generational issue. Only at the turn of the twentieth century, through the post-reformist generation formed in public schools created in the *Tanzīmāt* period – a generation that did not have any direct tie with the previous ruling class – was it possible to enter into a concrete reformist phase and to witness the rise of political movements such as the Young Turks.

The issue of the schools deserves a brief additional analysis. Until the middle of the 1800s, the urban elite received a traditional Muslim education. In 1869 the Porte launched a new mass education programme – based on the guidelines contained in a report drafted by the French government a few years earlier – which obliged all males in the Empire to undergo three years of study in Ottoman schools. This was intended to counterbalance the influence exercised by missionary schools – subject to more strict control starting from this phase – and to reinforce a feeling of loyalty to the Empire. Between 1876 and 1909 alone, the Porte established almost 10,000 schools and academies.

Despite its failures, the *Tanzīmāt* era sparked epochal changes destined to change the face of the Ottoman Empire. The preamble of 1856's *Hatt-ı Hümayun* introduced, for instance, the concept of patriotism or compatriotism, as a link between the subjects of the Empire: a decisive step towards the secular, Western, concept of nationality. It was precisely the failure of the reform process to exacerbate the sense of alienation of certain religious groups in the Empire that drove these people to put an increasingly strong emphasis on the different dialects spoken by the various communities.

The negative effects referred to above were over time increasingly evident even to European governments. 'During eighteen years of residence here, as Consul', commented the British consul of Aleppo in 1875, 'I do not hesitate to say that I have never seen the Turkish Rule fall so low as it is at the present.'²² In the Palestinian context – in this

respect not dissimilar to other areas of the Empire – the reforms reinforced local notables, accentuating the existing gap between the urban elite and the *fellahīn*. This triggered a growing concentration of land in the hands of urban families and thus a decrease in the influence of dignitaries and *ālim* (religious scholars) in the villages. The new equilibria created the conditions for a progressive dependence of the countryside on the cities and an internal fracture/ competition among urban and rural notables. Though the key socio-cultural characteristics of the local society remained for the most part intact, the unnatural injection of norms and traditions shaped the conditions for the subsequent weakening of Palestinian society. It was a far-reaching process that Divine described in the following terms:

In the last quarter of the [nineteenth] century, military, administrative, and fiscal reforms locked Palestinians Arabs into an imperial political system with stipulated cultural norms. [...] The first three decades of Ottoman reforms changed Palestine's imperial status and position and required major adjustments on the part of the population. [...] Social relations became less stable [...] Inequities in market relationships were more visible than ever before.²³

Land tenure classifications: focus on late Ottoman Palestine

Until 1858 there was no obligation in Palestine to register proprietary deeds of any land. Moreover, before 1867, the first year in which foreigners were permitted to purchase property in the Ottoman Empire (Ḥijāz excluded), the only system available to a foreigner intending to purchase property subject to the authority of Istanbul was attempted bribery and the use of fictitious intermediaries,²⁴ practices that remained widespread until the fall of the Porte. This means that in 1854 – the year in which Lord Ashley (1801–85) acted so that Her Majesty's ambassador in Istanbul, Stratford Canning (1786–1880) would persuade the Sultan to grant Jews the possibility to own land in 'Greater Syria' – the situation in the region was at best poorly defined. The ownership and/or use of a given piece of land was subject to several categories, which may be summarized as the seven described below.²⁵

Mülk

The owners of the *mülk* benefited both from the possession (*raqāba*) and the use (*tasarruf*) of the asset. Most of the property in various cities, for instance within the walls of Jerusalem, fell under this category; this perception was rooted in a remote past leading back to the Islamic conquest of the seventh century, when agricultural land was considered a spoil of war at the disposal of the Muslim community, while 'the properties built in the cities and towns were regarded as private goods [*biens privés*]'.²⁶ In the absence of heirs, the *mülk* became the property (*mīrī*) of the State. The property deeds were often registered by the Islamic religious courts.

According to Ruth Kark the *mülk* was 'to all effects private property, mainly located in cities and villages',²⁷ so of little relevance to the agricultural context. Other scholars, including Huri Islamoglu, contended that in the Ottoman context the category *mülk* 'did not so much refer to absolute ownership as to a certain kind of a claim over land revenues'.²⁸ Beyond the various interpretations, in the rural areas of the region, land falling under this category was very limited, to the point that the Hope-Simpson Report of 1930 defined it as 'negligible'.²⁹

Mīrī

Property of the State included all the land not defined as *mülk*, or rather around 90 per cent of the surface area of the Ottoman Empire. It was distributed by the Porte, without providing any *raqāba* (absolute ownership), in exchange for one-tenth of that which was produced and a tax. New buildings or plantations could be created only with explicit permission from the Ottoman authorities. When the land in question was left uncultivated for more than three years, or the person who managed its use died without any heir, the land became categorized as *mīrī maḥlūl* (vacant), or rather it was reconverted into property that was completely in the hands of the State. Doreen Warriner noted that, as far as use of the land was concerned, following the laws introduced in 1858, the *mīrī* and *mülk* categories were in reality the same thing.³⁰

Mushā

Lots of *mīrī* land was co-owned ('*sharikat mülk*', in Islamic law) by a certain number of 'family units' holding their share on a separate title. The oldest source describing this system – though without citing it

explicitly – was written by Swiss explorer Johann Ludwig Burckhardt (1784–1817),³¹ although its roots are uncertain.³² On the eve of World War I it is estimated that around 70 per cent of agricultural land in Palestine fell under this category.³³ It is important to note that this form of co-ownership became reified as *mushā* land in the terminology of the mandatory period: the term *mushā*, as noted by Martha Mundy, ‘occurs occasionally in the marginal notes of the *tapu* defters but it is not a legal classification of land under the 1858 Land Code’.³⁴

Though different types of *mushā* existed, some more egalitarian than others, it is possible to argue that it was a type of co-owned property – obtained in accordance with a series of parameters, including the number of males present in a given family (*dbukūr* system) or the number of plough animals on which each cultivator could count on (*feddāns*)³⁵ – through which farmers benefited from the use of the land in rotation. It occurred every one, two or five years and was designed so that local families could have the possibility to work the land that was considered to be most fertile. While collective holding was a common practice in medieval Europe and elsewhere,³⁶ the periodic redistribution of the land was a largely unknown feature in the Old Continent.

Waqf

Islamic law recognizes the power of a landowner to dedicate land or property and its income for a religious purpose. There were two types of *waqf* land: *waqf sahīh* (true *waqf*) and *waqf ghayr sahīh* (untrue *waqf*). The first referred to lands that were endowed on *mülk* land to a religious or charitable organization or to a particular family. The second was *mîrî* land transferred to the trust with the permission of the sultan or the government.³⁷ The *waqf* fell outside the Ottoman administration.

Mawāt

Land owned by the State (therefore *mîrî*) was often uncultivated and not reclaimed and because of this defined ‘dead’ (*mawāt*). The lack of surveys carried out in Palestine makes it difficult to quantify the percentage of land falling under this category. Going beyond exact numbers, it was in most cases located in areas not well suited for cultivation, at a distance of a few kilometres from a given village. Even without authorization from the authorities, more than a few villages used the ‘dead’ land mainly for grazing purposes, but also for cultivation, and in just as many cases it

was land, at least in an 'unofficial' capacity, at the disposal of those who benefited from it. Oren Yiftachel, a geographer of the Ben Gurion University, has warned the scientific community not to misinterpret the past, showing, for example, that the Bedouin of the Negev (often victims of atavistic clichés of the 'Bedouin predator')³⁸ were in reality owners of a large proportion of 'dead' land, on which they lived and from which they drew a large amount of their sustenance. In Yiftachel's words:

The Israeli interpretation to the Ottoman Law, [is] an interpretation formulated decades after the Ottoman Empire ceased to exist. This was not the interpretation of the Ottoman Government itself gave to its own laws [...] The Ottomans took care to purchase the land on which Be'er Sheva was established. When you buy land you thereby acknowledge the ownership rights of the seller from whom you bought it, and of the community to which the seller belongs [...] Abdul Hamid II respected the fact that the Bedouins were the owners and he had to pay them for it [...] Had he considered the land to be 'Dead', 'Mawat', under the law of 1858, that would have given him the right to take it without paying [...] Bedouin society had a very clear concept of land ownership, it was one of the most important things in their lives.³⁹

Matrūka

Land left by the state for public use and divided in two subcategories: land intended for the public in general (such as roads, irrigation, canals, forests), and land assigned for the sole use of the inhabitants of one or more specific villages (including woods and grazing lands).

Jiftlik

Mīrī land, mainly located in the Jordan Valley, which had been held in the name of the Ottoman sultan. The Ottoman authorities had the authority to reassign these lands to new applicants.

The *mushā* system and the dangers of a simplifying approach

Haim Gerber defined the *mushā* as 'a communal ownership of land',⁴⁰ while Ya'akov Firestone claimed that it was not a form of communal ownership (that is 'a legal entity owning the land'), but of co-ownership

(‘a relation among individual members’) among the farmers themselves.⁴¹ Other researchers, including Jacques Weulersse (1905–46), Gabriel Baer (1919–82) and, more recently, Ruth Kark, identified it as a collective form of use of a given piece of land.⁴² These opinions are still part of an ongoing debate.

Despite the different approaches, the legal principle underlying all *Mitr* properties, to which also village cultivable areas belonged, was based on the principle that the land was the property of the community of believers represented by their emir. Paraphrasing a pioneer study on the theme published in 1971 by John Ruedy:

Most rural land in the Ottoman Empire was not ‘owned’ in the Western sense of the term [...] the ultimate owner, as elsewhere in Islam, was deemed to be the *umma mubammadiyya*, as personified in this case by the sultan. [...] The individual’s rights were always expressed as a fraction of the whole.⁴³

The documentation at the Center for Heritage and Islamic Research of Abū Dīs – a centre almost completely ignored by researchers on the matter, even though it is to all effects and purposes the most important existing Palestinian archive – confirms that the land subject to the *mushā* was considered by the local population as a co-owned property at the disposal of family units entitled to share the land. The thesis that each co-owner held his shares on a separate title and that the share could be separately alienated and separately inherited is thus largely accurate. On a more general level, however, *mushā* land was often perceived also as an inalienable asset at the disposal of entire villages.⁴⁴ Firestone contended that ‘not all the families in the village were entitled to shares in the arable’.⁴⁵ It needs to be added, however, that according to the common understanding of the time ‘a stranger coming to the village to live cannot ordinarily enter into the land privileges [...] The old families of the villages, having had these land rights for years, hold them tenaciously’.⁴⁶ The village as a unit played a more important role in organizing the *mushā* than Firestone allows.⁴⁷

Though throughout the years of the British mandate the *mushā* system was routinely described by London experts as an obstacle to the improvement of conditions for the Palestinian *fellaḥīn*, and thus as something that, in the words of the Johnson-Crosbie Report (1930),

required a fast 'rationalization',⁴⁸ it is evident that these were partisan judgements. The efforts of the mandatory government and its on-site contacts were not aimed mainly at improving the agricultural system used by the local population, but rather at the confiscation of as much land as possible.⁴⁹ One of the reasons supporting this hypothesis is that the majority of the *fellahīn* were not interested in investing energies for the improvement of a land that soon would have been at the disposal of other farmers.⁵⁰ This assessment, besides not considering that in key areas (mechanized equipment, livestock, fruit trees) investment in the *mushā* was private,⁵¹ rested exclusively on considerations connected to agricultural production and the economy, neglecting the heart of the *mushā* system itself: *mushā*, Birgit Schaebler clarified,

is obviously not a function of economic progress, and its logic has to be sought in a realm other than economics. Land in *mushā* communities clearly is more than a means of production. It is rather the very expression of the community.⁵²

The attempt to over-stigmatize the *mushā* is also deficient from a 'psycho-social' point of view,⁵³ as well as from a purely economic perspective. Despite its limits, the system in fact allowed the more disadvantaged classes to count on 'a way of coping with poverty'.⁵⁴ This is a particularly relevant factor in a region largely dominated by mountainous and arid areas that, except through use of massive external capital on which the *fellahīn* could not count, were particularly difficult to cultivate.

The (mis)representation of the land and its local majority: dynamics of land alienation

Through the 'Law of Tapu [title deed]' of 1858 the Ottoman authorities categorized land according to usage and title, requiring its registration. Until then land registrations were voluntary. Up to that point tradition, consolidated over generations, had been sufficient to guarantee the claims of all (before the 1920s, when London introduced identity cards in Palestine, it was common to hear expressions such as '*Arđi hiya hawiyatī*', meaning 'My land is my identity').⁵⁵

More often than not, local peasants – sometimes completely unaware of the true meaning of concepts such as private property⁵⁶ – feared

'collateral effects' that would follow registration: taxes and conscription in the army. This mix of suspicion and hostility towards the newly introduced provisions was registered in some areas more than in others and was recorded in detail by Samuel Bergheim in an article that appeared in 1894 on the *Quarterly Statement of the Palestine Exploration* (QSPEF):⁵⁷

The Turkish laws which have been introduced within the last few years in Palestine with reference to land tenure, and which are being rigorously enforced, are changing all these ancient laws and customs, much against the will and wish of the people. The lands are divided by an Imperial Commissioner into various portions and given to individual villagers. They receive title-deeds for individual ownership, and each one is at liberty to sell his portion to whomever he pleases, either to a member of the village or to a stranger. The villager then sells his *Hak el Muzara'a* (right of cultivation) in the land; not as *mülk*, but as *ameeriyeh* (*miri*), and subject to taxes as such; the object of the government being to break down the old custom of *musba'a*.⁵⁸

The new regulations between 1858 and 1867 were an integral part of a broader process, which can be traced to the *Tanzīmāt* and to the related efforts to centralize and Westernize the ever more fragile Ottoman Empire.⁵⁹ Through these regulations Istanbul aimed to exploit the unused land and to exercise its direct control over the farmers,⁶⁰ in order to increase tax revenues, take control of as much 'state land' (*mīrī*) as possible, and pay off a part of the debts incurred with European powers.

The registration process was carried out in an approximate manner: no system of land mapping or measurement was foreseen, only descriptions connected to the boundaries of the parcels. The first on-site surveys were carried out by a commission sent by the Porte in 1870. The main attention was on agricultural land, which the commission members were meant to divide into categories. 'Abandoned' areas and areas of public use, such as forests and roads, were not registered.⁶¹

Throughout most of the Ottoman Empire – as for instance in the case of the provinces of present-day Iraq, as well as in a large percentage of the Palestinian region – the new regulations did not achieve the expected results.⁶² In particular, the *fellahīn*, fearing self-exposure, decided in a

relevant percentage of cases to register their land using the names of deceased relatives, or those of notables residing in major cities.⁶³

In the short term, the effects of these and other practices did not trigger relevant consequences: the farmers, in fact, continued to cultivate their own lands. Yet the long-term effects were meaningful.⁶⁴ Contrary to what is often claimed,⁶⁵ none of the articles of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858 aimed to end the *mushā* system and to contradict the principle of co-ownership in shares.⁶⁶ However, through a new conceptualization of the link between state, land and cultivator, the reforms of 1858 contributed in the long run to hinder the periodic redistribution of the land, weakening a basic feature of the *mushā* system itself. This aspect, as well as the registration process, had a certain impact also on the generations to come. As Kenneth Stein has pointed out:

Where owner-occupiers did not initially lose the right to use their land, they lost control over their land's future disposition. They became increasingly less independent and more the wards of notables [...] In particular, the inhabitants of the coastal plain, who were reckoned as the small proprietors of the country and who sometimes practiced the *musha* system, strenuously denied that they had any landed property whatever, simply to save the cost of title deeds. Others parted with their property for a nominal sum to landowners. In this way, many fellaheen lost legal control of their patrimony.⁶⁷

Expedients in line with that which is described above were not completely new to the history of the region. A similar process was registered already at the beginning of the 1700s, although in much lower percentages. Even then, due to high taxes and progressive indebtedness, some *fellaḥīn* turned to wealthy local notables, losing over time the ability to reclaim their lands. The extent of the phenomenon triggered by the 1858 Ottoman Land Code did not, however, have comparable historical precedence.⁶⁸ This was due to the system imposed by the Ottoman authorities and the related fears (taxes and conscription), but also to the new context that was emerging in Palestine, where an economy based on the exportation of products, starting from an 'increased grain export for Europe, especially for England', was progressively taking hold.⁶⁹ In the absence of any form

of tariff protection and credit facilities, the connection between market and agricultural system contributed to create ever more pronounced cleavages within local villages, favouring the weakening of the system at the base of the *mushā*.⁷⁰

It is within this framework that the choice made by several farmers to sell, at nominal prices, their rights to cultivate the land should be evaluated. Such decisions were often dictated by the impossibility to honour debts incurred due to the taxes that the *fellahīn*, in contrast to the Bedouins and merchants in the urban areas, could not avoid to pay.⁷¹ Those to benefit most from these acquisitions, beside some local notables, were large absentee land owners, namely family clans not residing in the region.⁷² The presence of these landholders (*effendi*), concentrated mainly in the fertile coastal area, facilitated the task of any potential buyer interested in purchasing large plots of land. This, in fact, allowed them to avoid contracting with single farmers, and the inevitable conflicts this would have entailed.

Although large 'absentee' land owners were less numerous in Palestine than elsewhere,⁷³ it was they, in the years to follow, who sold the relevant majority (between 80 and 90 per cent of the whole)⁷⁴ of the land purchased by the Zionist organizations as well as by groups linked to the various Christian denominations. The remaining percentage was sold mainly through the '*samāsira*', Arab personalities that worked for profit as intermediaries between sellers and buyers. Ṭībawī described the process in the following terms:

The peasants [...] were easily persuaded to sell their prescriptive rights to the land they cultivated for nominal prices, to the rich who grew richer in the process. It was members of this rich class of absentee landlords who made large profits by selling to the early Zionists extensive land acquired in this way or by other means.⁷⁵

Ṭībawī's account provides a perfect frame for a better understanding of an aspect often not properly considered. It is often taken for granted that the *fellahīn*, being mainly Muslims, were in some respects more protected than what today we would refer to as 'local minorities' (Jews, Christians, Protestants, including the Templers who reached Palestine in 1868, and others). It is this simplification that, in relation to the last decades of the nineteenth century, primary sources tend to reject.

The *fellaḥīn*, who sold a relevant percentage of the land acquired by the *effendi* ('absentees' and not) represented indeed the weakest sector of the local population, the easiest to blackmail and most exposed to possible abuse. This is particularly true regarding the 1870s and 1880s, when Palestine found itself dealing with a stagnation that could be felt in every sector of the local population. It was further aggravated by famine, poor harvests, an exponential rise in prices, as well as the mass conscription imposed on all available men in support of the wars being fought by the Porte (including the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–8).

The *fellaḥīn* were the only sector of the population to not have a great power backing them, a power to whom they could have turned on in case of necessity. Not only did the *fellaḥīn* not have any direct access to the halls of power in Istanbul, but, due to their peculiar fragility, they were also the first ones to suffer from the corruption and despotism of the Porte. One of the most accurate analyses on this matter was produced in 1879 by the British consul in Jerusalem Noel Temple Moore (1833–1903):

Wheat and grain are at double their normal prices [...] instead of combating these evils by remedial measures, the conduct of those in authority greatly aggravates them. The corruption and endless abuses in every branch of Turkish provincial administration are too well known [...] *the greatest sufferers thereby are incontestably the Mussulman rural population*, the bone and sinew of the country, and whose numbers, as compared with that of the non-Mussulman inhabitants is as four to one. *Whilst every other community can, and does, in case of need, appeal to the protection and sympathy of powerful advocates, the Mussulman has no one to look to.* The actual governor Arifi Pasha is [...] deficient in energy and initiative [...] In strong contrast with this inertia of the rulers of the country is the activity deployed by foreigners [...] the several German settlements are prospering, whilst the influx continue of foreign Jews, mostly Polish and German, who, availing themselves of the right now professed by foreigners of holding real estate in Turkey, are buying land and building houses in all directions.⁷⁶ (italics added)

In the decades to follow, and in particular after World War I, that very same types of purchases 'in all directions' to which Moore alluded to

were planned in a much more massive and accurate way. A large percentage of the 'Jewish lands' in Palestine, passed from 22,500 *dūnum* (c.1,000 m²) in 1882 to 1,734,000 in 1947,⁷⁷ were chosen in areas in which there was – in the words of Avraham Granott (1890–1962), director of the Keren Kayemeth le-Israel (National Jewish Foundation (KKL) from 1922 to 1945)⁷⁸ – the 'danger of a political change in favor of the Arabs'.⁷⁹ More specifically, the purchases were made 'precisely on distant frontiers to the east and the north',⁸⁰ with the clear aim of creating a *faits accomplis* in view of the creation of a Jewish 'national home'.⁸¹

Often, for completely different reasons, some of the main Christian organizations interested in purchasing land also concentrated on specific areas. One exemplary case was that of the Palestine Model Farm (PMF), active from 1857 – the year in which the Porte issued an official invitation to European citizens interested in settling in the less populated regions of the Empire – with the aim of providing work to the Jews converted by the Protestant missionaries. Though a portion of the plots purchased by the PMF were considered as being 'non-cultivable', many dispatches show the attention given by them to the lands profitably cultivated by Arabs, which, thanks also to the fragile conditions of the sellers, could be obtained under favourable conditions.⁸² In this regard, already in 1855, at the end of that which can be considered as the founding meeting of the PMF, the following 'declaration of intent' was issued:

It appears advisable to purchase private property as a basis of operations [. . .] The neighbourhood of Jaffa or Ramla seems to be most advisable for the commencement of a moderate settlement. Near Cesarea, and on the plain of Esdraelon, are extensive and fertile plans *very profitably cultivated by Arabs*, and also between Tiberias and Nazareth are very useful tracts which it is believed might be obtained on favourable terms.⁸³ (italics added)

The Jezreel Valley (plain of Esdraelon), one of the main rolling plains in the region,⁸⁴ for centuries known as the 'granary of Palestine', was indeed the area that registered a consistent percentage of the transactions performed by the 'absentee landowners'.⁸⁵ The same area catalysed the majority of the efforts undertaken by the Palestine Jewish Colonization

Association (PICA),⁸⁶ the KKL, and the Palestine Land Development Company (founded in 1908 by Arthur Ruppin under the World Zionist Organization).⁸⁷ Though dozens of witnesses described the Jezreel Valley throughout the 1800s as 'one of the richest districts in the world' (1854),⁸⁸ and 'a huge green lake of waving wheat' (1887),⁸⁹ the first British high commissioner for Palestine, Herbert Samuel (1870–1963), depicted it in 1925 as an unused desert; a desert that became a smiling countryside at the beginning of the 1920s, thanks to the efforts of its new inhabitants:

When I [Samuel] first saw it [Jezreel Valley] in 1920 it was a desolation [...]. The whole aspect of the valley has been changed. [...] what five years ago was little better than a wilderness is being transformed before our eyes into a smiling countryside.⁹⁰

Despite the efforts of the Zionist organizations and a certain number of individuals and private companies,⁹¹ as of December 1946, the year of the last official survey taken on the matter, the amount of 'redeemed' soil⁹² by the former and the latter was equal to around 6 per cent of the total land subject to the partition.⁹³

Deconstructing the land tenure issue

In light of the arguments just analysed, the claim that as of the date of the partition of Palestine (1947) 'over 70 per cent' of it did not 'legally' belong to the local Arab population, but to the British mandatory power, is problematic. This does not imply that all the land belonged to the local majority, but that such a perception is based on the transposition of practices and customs that had little to do with the local context. It is an approach that, in Roger Owen's words, tends to translate 'Arabic and Turkish terms uncritically into their supposed equivalents in a predominantly European legal vocabulary',⁹⁴ and subscribes the idea that traditions that were perceived as common in other parts of the world could be applicable, 'with some simplification',⁹⁵ in Palestine. On top of this, such an approach tends to endorse a solipsistic thesis, according to which a right to exploit a land without first dealing with its local majority existed. '[We request the] Sole right', a memorandum of the Universal Zionist Organization clarified in 1919, 'to minerals including

oil, valuable earth, mineral spring etc. belonging to the state and the right to exploit them as well the natural forces of the country.’⁹⁶ Finally, it does not properly consider the fact that in the entire Ottoman Empire, with the exception of Egypt and Lebanon,⁹⁷ there was a negligible amount (perhaps 5 per cent) of what we would perceive as ‘private property’ (*mülk*). This means that a similar argument, if held valid, should also be applied to the over 40 countries that today are part of what was once the Ottoman Empire, including some of those adjacent to the Holy Land. ‘With regard to land ownership’, Avraham Granott noted in 1936, ‘Palestine does not differ from its neighbor countries.’⁹⁸ Following the same line of reasoning, the local populations of these countries should not have been considered ‘legal owners’ of almost any of the lands on which they flourished. This implies, for instance, that the inhabitants of Iraq – where still in 1951 only 0.3 per cent of the registered land (50 per cent of the total land was registered) was private property – should also be identified as simple ‘tenants’ living on lands largely belonging to others. ‘The *mīrī* land’, clarified Moshe Ma’oz, ‘belonged to the people who lived on it. Supporting the contrary means to interpret the past using a selective and Western-centered approach.’⁹⁹

CHAPTER 4

ZIONISM: BEYOND THE EITHER/OR

Zionism saved our lives. I never forgot this when later I became a non-Zionist, perhaps an anti-Zionist.¹

Uri Avnery, essayist, former member of the Knesset

Today the Jews are a minority in Palestine. In twenty years' time they could easily be a vast majority. If we were the Arabs, we wouldn't accept it either.²

Vladimir Jabotinsky at a conference in Prague in July 1921

al Khawja: 'What would His Majesty say if I came to England and obtained the right to vote or to be elected to British parliament the very day of my arrival?'

Churchill: 'That could never happen. You would have to live in England for some years to obtain rights of this sort.'

al Khawja: 'So why do you behave with us in a way which is so different from the customs that you have in your own country? And why do you concede to the Jews in Palestine rights which you don't guarantee in your country?'

Churchill: 'What would you do with this people scattered all around the world? They need a country and the place which is connected in the most natural way with their history is Palestine.'³

'Every Zionist knows', Josiah C. Wedgwood (1872–1943), British MP for 35 years, pointed out on 20 April 1926, 'that the success of this Judeo-British venture depends upon the Jews getting land to use in Palestine.'⁴ That access to Palestine's land was a key factor for every 'gentile Zionist' was an established fact. In this sense Wedgwood, who met the future first President of the State of Israel, Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952),⁵ in December 1916 during a breakfast organized by the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George (1863–1945), was just echoing a long-standing opinion. What had changed by his day, however, was the attitude held on the issue by a relevant percentage, though still a minority, of Jews.

After having experienced for centuries a systematic exclusion from almost any access to land in Europe, a growing number of Jews were now ready to play an active role in implementing the 'return to Zion', a plan that throughout the nineteenth century had been advocated almost exclusively by 'gentile Zionists'.⁶ From Ashley's time to those of Arthur Balfour, the topic had been discussed in Britain as if it was a domestic issue. The reason for this was linked to strategic considerations, but also to that subtle underlying theme that, according to many, united the Jewish and English peoples. As Weizmann explained to the then US President, Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924), 'the English were, after the Jews, the most biblical nation in the world'.⁷ It was a combination of these factors that pushed Theodor Herzl to argue that from the moment he joined the Zionist movement his eyes 'were directed towards England'.⁸ And it is again to them that we must turn to find additional elements useful to understand the reasons why many of the major financial institutions linked to Zionism (Jewish National Fund, Jewish Colonial Trust, Anglo-Palestine Company) were registered as British companies.

'Leshana haba'ah biYerushalaim!'⁹

The bond between the Jews and Jerusalem is rooted in the millennia. The city's original name, 'Uru-Shalem' (the city 'founded by Shalem', a god venerated by the Canaanites), comes from the Canaanites, which founded Jerusalem around 2,000 years before King David's conquest (c.1000 BCE). In biblical usage Jerusalem – in which, according to various sources, by 1856 Jews 'greatly exceed the Moslems

in number'¹⁰ – is often mentioned as 'Zion', the high ground where the ancient Jebusites built their original fortress. *Šiyôn* is a term of Canaanite origin that can be translated as 'hill' or 'high ground'.

Well before the rise of modern Zionism – a term coined by Nathan Birnbaum (1864–1937) in 1890 – *Eretz Yisrael* had attracted for centuries a tiny but constant influx of Jews.¹¹ Those involved in this migration were often pushed by what Finn described as an 'irresistible desire to visit Palestine, there to live and die'.¹² A radical shift both in the nature and numbers took place in the 1880s. While some of the new arrivals continued to immigrate into Palestine to take part in the pious and devout *Yishuv* life, many others were young men motivated by nationalist and secular ideologies. They were determined to 'reconstruct their national heritage in Palestine'.¹³

The strategy pursued by the first Zionists, often perceived as a threat by the members of the *Yishuv bayashen* (the 'old *Yishuv*'), were to some extent influenced by the *Haskalah*, the Jewish enlightenment movement that had developed in Berlin at the end of the eighteenth century and that led to a renewed interest in the Hebrew language and a modernization of the economic life of the diaspora. But, yet more importantly, their aims were rooted in a firm belief: 'If they [Europeans] don't want us [Jews], we don't want them.'¹⁴ The return to Zion, invoked for centuries in daily prayers, including those recited around Jewish Easter (Pesach Seder), aimed thus to end the permanently oppressed minority status of the Jewish diaspora.

Initially, the attempts to escape from pogroms did not register the result hoped by most Zionists. Rather than a return to Zion, the great majority of Jews showed a preference to emigrate to America. The situation changed at the beginning of the 1930s: the *Yishuv* became then the main, if not the only, refuge for persecuted Jews.

According to Israeli sources, the ratio between Jews and Arabs (Muslims and Christians) in Palestine in 1800 was 1:40 (6,700 and 268,000), reaching 1:22 in 1880 (24,000 and 525,000), 1:6–7 in 1915 (85,000–90,000 and 590,000) and 1:5 in 1931 (174,000 and 837,000).¹⁵

Zionism misrepresented

An offshoot of European-style colonialism? Or a national resurgence movement in the tradition of the national unification struggles of

nineteenth-century Europe? Many if not most of the scholars interested in Zionism have developed their analyses following one of these two theses. The choice between the two has often been influenced by more or less overt political motivations: Manichean approaches have ultimately dominated the historiography on the issue.

Zionism shows indeed that national self-determination and colonial mindsets can, in particular contexts,¹⁶ coexist. Zionism was a movement underpinned by a national identity consciousness rooted in thousands of years of history, which had little in common with the colonial movements of its time (Palestine, unlike other colonial contexts, was not, at least formally, occupied by any foreign power). It was implemented, however, by means of methods that were typical of 'settler colonialism', including ways of dealing with the indigenous inhabitants, which were in some cases regarded as a capital to exploit and, in others, as an obstacle to be removed. It was, in other words, a project that had some colonial features – not by chance it aimed to satisfy the interests of the 'newcomers' rather than those of the 'locals'¹⁷ – but that was underpinned by 'national feelings'. As stressed by Gabriel Piterberg:

Zionism, its own historical peculiarities notwithstanding, was both a Central-Eastern European national movement and a movement of European settlers which sought to carve out for itself a national patrimony with a colony in the East. To say that it is either one or the other phenomenon is an impoverished restricted interpretation.¹⁸

Zionism and its key figures have long been stigmatized through a selective and distorted use of the available sources. A glaring case in point regards the 'spiritual father' of the State of Israel: Theodor Herzl. Both Benny Morris and Edward Said quoted numerous extracts from the diaries of the founder of political Zionism, aiming to prove his desire to expel the local Palestinian population. What follows is one of the most significant extracts cited by Morris (as well as by Said and dozens of other researchers). The sections that were omitted from the original are in italics:

[When we occupy the land, we shall bring immediate benefits to the state that receives us]. We must expropriate gently [the private property on

the estates assigned to us]. We shall try to spirit the penniless population across the border by procuring employment for it in the transit countries, while denying it any employment in our country. [*The property owners will come over to our side.*] Both the process of expropriation and the removal of the poor must be carried out discretely and circumspectly [...]. [*It goes without saying that we shall respectfully tolerate persons of other faiths and protect their property, their honor, and their freedom with the harshest means of coercion*].¹⁹

Herzl's original standpoint has been distorted. When Herzl wrote those words (12 June 1895), he could not have Palestine and its inhabitants in mind. The process of 'expropriation' to which he was referring had South America as its geographical frame. 'I am assuming', wrote Herzl in that same diary on 13 June 1895, 'that we shall go to Argentina.'²⁰ Whilst it is true that Herzl portrayed Zionism as an 'outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism',²¹ never once mentioning the word 'Arabs',²² it is only by forcing the issue that this can be seen as a 'prove' of his will to expel the local population.

The case of Herzl's diaries, certainly not an isolated one, shows the specious nature of some of the criticisms directed at Zionism. This erodes part of their legitimacy. The exasperated attempts to depict Zionism as a movement that aimed systematically to expel the Palestinian population have not, for instance, taken account of the fact that, in the debates that took place between the exponents of the various currents of Zionism, the issue was very rarely discussed.²³ Only from the 1930s onwards, as the clashes sharpened, did the issue begin to attract increasing attention. It was only then that attitudes emerged such as the ones expressed in 1940 by the director of the Department for Land in the Jewish National Fund, Yosef Weitz (1890–1972): 'There is no other way', Weitz contended, 'than to transfer the Arabs from here to neighbouring countries, to transfer all of them.'²⁴

The effects on the ground

Gad Gilbar noted that the bearers of the economic development registered in Palestine in the five decades preceding World War I were 'primarily local Arab-speaking Muslims and Christians'.²⁵ Yet, denying,

as often happens, the resources and the means provided by Zionist immigrations is an inappropriate way of analysing Palestine's modern history. Whilst Jewish immigrants showed a marked preference for the cities over the countryside (four-fifths of the Jewish population in Palestine was urban), the first pioneers (*chalutzim*) demonstrated since the beginning a strong commitment to work.²⁶ The introduction to the statute of the *Ha'aretz ve'ha'avoda* (the land and the work), drawn up in 1882 by Meir Dizengoff (1861–1936) and Lieb Gordon (1830–92), emphasized, for instance, that 'Jewish workers are to the Yishuv what blood is to a healthy body. It is they who give life and it is they who preserve it from decay and ruin.'²⁷

Sanitation was the area to which the new immigrants devoted most attention. This had the effect of setting a strong decline in infant mortality rates and an increase in average life expectancy, in both the Jewish and the Arab communities.²⁸ This is the main reason for the growth of the local Arab population, starting from the second decade of the twentieth century, an aspect that a few scholars believe had a relevant effect on the decline of the agricultural land available to the local majority.²⁹



Figure 4.1 David Ben-Gurion (bottom row, third from the left) with a group of young Zionists in 1923. Source: CZA.

Other important aspects, astounding given the resources of the time, were achieved in the area of marsh reclamation – preferred habitats for the carriers of malaria – as well as in the increase of industrial firms and production from agricultural land. This progress was confirmed also by the report drawn up by the Peel Commission in 1936. The latter emphasized that ‘endeavours to control the alienation of land by Arabs to Jews have not been successful’, but added also that ‘much of the land now carrying orange groves was sand dunes or swamp and uncultivated when it was purchased.’³⁰ This means that, whilst the same period saw unprecedented development in other Eastern Mediterranean regions too, the percentage of land bought up to then by Zionist organizations and individual Jews registered, thanks to their efforts, a growing prosperity.³¹

Despite what has been just argued, the effects that the various Zionist currents had on the local Arabs were more negative than positive, both in the short and the long-term. The critical factors can be summed up in two main aspects. The first relates to the system by which several Zionist organizations managed to indefinitely subtract the use of a part of the land, and the related natural resources, from the rest of the local population.³² The second, better known but not for this less pervasive, can be traced to the popularization of the image of Palestine as a desert waiting to be ‘redeemed’. ‘For centuries the Arabs’, explained Weizmann in a speech in Haifa in 1948, ‘have considered this land a desert without worrying about enhancing it.’³³ To this could be added a further, and frequently neglected, aspect. If it is in fact undeniable that the new techniques and new machinery had the effect of increasing agricultural productivity, it is equally true that such benefits were rarely shared with small local producers. Ilan Pappé has set out the argument, including in his analysis both Zionists and Templars (*Tempelgesellschaft*):

Some Palestinian notables in town and country succeeded in exploiting the new technology for their own benefit, as did the owners of the citrus groves who used the new developments for increasing their yield and their marketing capabilities, but they were the exception. Local industrialists did not benefit at all, and their way of life or production saw hardly any transformation at all. The rest of the population seemed to suffer from intrusion, even when the impressive improvements in health, sanitation and communication are taken into account. These processes were a

mixed blessing, helping to fight death and disease but bringing with them European control and exploitation.³⁴

The 'desert' without a people

Although the much-abused slogan 'a land without a people for a people without a land' was utilized almost exclusively by 'Christian Zionists' and not by the Zionist organizations established at the end of the nineteenth century,³⁵ the ideas promoted by the latter conveyed often the spirit of that very same slogan. That Palestine had a rooted local majority, a population that 'had been living in Palestine for several generations',³⁶ was known also to a relevant percentage of Zionists. However, the fact that that majority showed no 'homogeneous feeling of nationality' was considered sufficient reason to minimize its link with the land.³⁷

The support for the idea of a 'land without a people' went hand in hand with the attempt to spread the perception that the Arab majority was 'naturally lazy',³⁸ and that Palestine had been left in a state of disarray for centuries. 'Just look at that field!', exclaimed one of the characters of a novel published by Herzl in 1902, 'it was a swamp in my boyhood.'³⁹ An analysis of these specific aspects is outside the scope of this book: many essays have already demonstrated how inappropriate it was to refer to Palestine in these terms.⁴⁰ Here it will suffice to note that, well before the advent of the important innovations introduced by Templers and Zionists, Palestine had already registered what Alexander Schölch defined as a 'remarkable economic upswing'.⁴¹ In the historical period between 1856 and 1882 Palestine produced a considerable economic surplus that was exported – via the ports of Ḥaifā, Acre and Jaffa (Yāfa) – to Egypt and Lebanon, as well as to Europe. Already, then, wide areas such as the coastal plain to the north and south of Gaza (wheat),⁴² the Jaffa area (watermelons and, above all, citrus),⁴³ the Jabal Nāblus region (olives and cotton),⁴⁴ the Hebron region (grapes), as well as Galilee (tobacco and watermelons) and a number of others, were intensively cultivated – albeit not at full capacity and without the use of avant-garde techniques – 'by the inhabitants of villages lying in the adjacent hills'.⁴⁵ Even Consul Finn, who often showed a marked hostility towards the local majority, could not avoid noting the meticulous way in which great swathes of land on the coast and elsewhere were cultivated ('excellent agriculture').⁴⁶ This is what he wrote in 1848 about the lands

owned by the 'Abd al-Hādī family who, together with the *ḥamūla* of the Ṭūqān, controlled the Ṭulkarem-Nāblus-Jenīn triangle: 'The cotton plantations are beautifully clean and orderly and the fields from which grain crops had been reaped, are well defined and carefully cleaned'.⁴⁷

A further consideration should be added to these aspects. The travellers who are often mentioned to support the idea of a ruined and 'abandoned Palestine' – Henry Maundrell (1665–1701),⁴⁸ Adrian Reland (1676–1718),⁴⁹ Mark Twain (1835–1910), François-René de Chateaubriand (1768–1848), Alphonse de Lamartine (1790–1869), Felix Bovet⁵⁰ and others – evaluated Palestine through 'Western lens' influenced by the Biblical tales with which they had become familiar since their childhood. Their perceptions were rarely empathetic towards the 'others'. Mark Twain, despite being known for his cutting sarcasm, represented in this respect a case in point:

The Koran does not permit Mohammedans to drink. Their natural instincts do not permit them to be moral [...] I can not say any thing about the stone column that projects over Jehoshaphat from the Temple wall like a cannon, except that the Moslems believe Mahomet will sit astride of it when he comes to judge the world. It is a pity he could not judge it from some roost of his own in Mecca, without trespassing on *our* holy ground.⁵¹ (Twain's italics)

The process of 'extra-territorialization'

In an article published in 2014 in the *Journal of Israeli History* Johannes Becke argued that 'the Zionist movement neither exploited local labor nor intended to spread any *mission civilisatrice*'.⁵² This section aims to provide a more nuanced understanding of these claims, focusing on three major aspects: land, work and coexistence.

The first large-scale purchases of Palestinian land by proto-Zionist investors took place against the backdrop of the pogroms in Russia in 1881:⁵³ 160 towns and villages saw anti-Semitic violence over the space of a few months. That year, the one that traditionally also marks the beginning of the First Aliyah,⁵⁴ French banker Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934) started to invest huge amounts of money in building *moshavot* (rural settlements) aimed at facilitating the settlement of the first groups of Jews⁵⁵ – including those involved in the Hovevei Zion (Lovers of Zion) movement – coming from the Russian Empire. The embryonic

phase of the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association (PICA) dates back to this historical phase, although the name itself was adopted only in 1924.

PICA's importance can be understood by recourse to mere statistics. Whilst there were many organizations involved in land acquisition in Palestine, at least until the beginning of the 1920s PICA was the largest organization involved in such activities. 'The P.I.C.A', as emphasized in the Hope-Simpson Report of 1930, 'now owns 454,840 metric dunams of land.'⁵⁶ A considerable part of this land had been bought in the last decades of the Ottoman Empire using subterfuges,⁵⁷ or by bribing local officials. As early as 1882 the Porte, fearing the emergence of a new problem regarding a minority, and particularly in the delicate context of the Holy Land, imposed strict, though ineffective, restrictions on land purchases and Jewish immigration into Palestine.⁵⁸ These limitations were dictated also by the fears provoked by the alarmist tones used by Ottoman officials in Palestine. What follows is an extract from a dispatch sent to Istanbul on 27 September 1892 by Jerusalem's Ottoman governor:⁵⁹

If we continue to allow this immigration influx from every part of the world towards the Palestinian land, the Jews will take control of it in less than thirty years' time. Land which was worth 10 Kuruş [currency in use in the Ottoman Empire] five or ten years ago can now be bought by the Jews at 200–300 times its value and sometimes at an even higher price.⁶⁰

With greater percentages than that registered in the USA with the Chinese Exclusion Act – the law that in 1882 banned, for economic and racial reasons, Chinese entry to the USA – the limitations imposed by Istanbul were thus frequently bypassed. 'Jewish settlers from Europe,' noted James H. Monahan in 1900, 'often arrive in Haifa where there seem to be exceptional facilities for admission by pecuniary arrangement with the local officials.'⁶¹

While some of the land acquired by PICA following 1882 was on flat land of undoubted strategic value and agricultural potential, much of it was composed of marshy or desert areas that could only be used after relevant capital investment and with cutting-edge materials. The colonies built on this land brought some tangible benefits to the local Arab population. The latter was stimulated by the new settlers and were employed in the cultivation of the fields and plantations developed by

PICA. When, at the end of a mission in Palestine in 1891, the British consul general in Beirut, Edward Henry Trotter, drew up a final balance sheet of his experiences, he promptly emphasized that the Jews living on the lands purchased by Rothschild 'seem to prefer employing native labour to working themselves'.⁶² For some, this approach was the result of a colonial mindset, aiming at employing a low-cost workforce with a great deal of experience. For others it was the consequence of an idealist spirit to foster integration. Whatever the reasons, the approach adopted in the early stages of Zionism also had positive effects on the relations between the two communities. Despite a few meaningful exceptions, such relations tended to be amicable.⁶³ 'Until ten years ago', clarified an editorial published in *Filastīn* on 29 April 1914, 'the Jews constituted a native fraternal Ottoman element. They lived and mixed freely in harmony with other elements and entered into working relationships, lived in the same neighbourhoods and sent their children to the same schools.'⁶⁴ These words, despite their apologetic tones, were not far from the truth. The attitudes shown by several religious groups in Palestine, and the pressure exerted by the Porte so that local Jews could become full Ottoman citizens,⁶⁵ give credit – at least as a general tendency – to such a consideration.

Already from the phases that immediately predated the Second Aliyah – which brought around 40,000 men and women of Russian origin into Palestine from 1904 to 1914⁶⁶ – such precarious balance began to break down. This triggered growing attritions that contributed significantly to the region's development in the years to come. With the Second Aliyah, whose protagonists could often count on economic capital,⁶⁷ the idea gained ground that the support of a great power was not enough: a 'Jewish state' could be created only through the efforts of a Jewish working class.⁶⁸ Influenced by revolutionary ideas that were already widespread in Russia in the early twentieth century, Arthur Ruppin (1876–1943), David Ben-Gurion (1886–1973), Berl Katznelson (1887–1944) and other future leaders arrived in Palestine in this historical phase, determined to turn rural settlements into Zionism's spearhead. They were moved by the conviction that the two pillars on which to base the purchase and development of land had to be collective ownership and work. Despite being legitimate in themselves, these two priorities concealed often an aggressive approach. As the then British consul in Jerusalem, Edward C. Blech (1861–1919), pointed out, 'these

Russian Jews are turbulent and aggressive, saturated with socialistic ideas, and by their demeanour and by their growing numbers are likely to arouse the resentment of the natives of this country, both Christian and Moslem'.⁶⁹

The imposition of the *kibbush ha'avoda* (conquest of work), directly related to the practice of *avodah ivrit* (Jewish work, or the idea that only Jewish workers must work Jewish lands), was certainly dictated by the need to offer greater job opportunities to the new immigrants.⁷⁰ The result of this, however, was the creation of a system of exclusion that blocked at its inception, and primarily on an ideological level, any potential integration with the local Arab population.⁷¹ Some researchers have emphasized that the Arab population likewise tended to avoid to provide occupation to the new settlers. This, however, takes no account for the fact that Arabs had only a marginal interest in employing a minority of new immigrants who had much more limited agricultural experience and did not speak the language used by the rest of the local inhabitants.

The 'system of exclusion' and the two parallel social and economic structures that it triggered – only partially eased in later years through corporations such as the Palestine Potash Syndicate⁷² – impacted on other crucial issues such as those of the land and its resources. In this sense, 1901 represented a watershed. In that year, the fifth Zionist congress founded in Basel the KKL (Jewish National Fund) with the task of buying land in Palestine, and banning the alienation of this newly acquired area to non-Jews. In the years to follow, the KKL succeeded in buying nine-tenths of the land bought in Palestine by Zionist buyers. In contrast to what happened to the lands owned by PICA, KKL's areas were managed in a discriminatory way in relation to the Arab population. This aspect was clearly set out in the third article of the KKL constitution drawn up in Zurich on 14 August 1929:

(d) Land is to be acquired as Jewish property and subject to the provisions of Article 10 of this Agreement, the title to the lands acquired is to be taken in the name of the Jewish National Fund, to the end that the same shall be held as the inalienable property of the Jewish people.

(e) The Agency shall promote agricultural colonisation based on Jewish labour, and in all works or undertakings carried out or

furthered by the Agency, it shall be deemed to be a matter of principle that Jewish labour shall be employed.⁷³

These provisions involved also fines or expulsions in the event that KKL farmers were found employing non-Jewish workers. This was a still more alarming aspect considering the ambitions that Weizmann – overtly favourable, like many other Zionist leaders, to more or less extreme forms of boycotting of the Arab workforce – expressed to his wife in Jaffa in 1907:

If our Jewish capitalists, say even only the Zionist capitalists, were to invest their capital in Palestine, if only in part, there is no doubt that the lifeline of Palestine – all the coastal strip – would be in Jewish hands within twenty-five years [...] The Arab retains his primitive attachment to the land, the soil-instinct is strong in him, and by being continuously employed on it there is a danger that he might feel himself indispensable to it, with a moral right to it.⁷⁴

More than anything else, however, it was the inalienability of the land that caused the most resentment in London: no other such cases existed in His Majesty's dominions. Not surprisingly, the issue of the 'extra-territorialisation of Palestine' was the one that struck the most for John Hope-Simpson when he undertook inspections in Palestine in 1929. The conclusions published in his report shed light on the marked differences between the policies implemented by the KKL and those carried out by PICA:

The result of the purchase of land in Palestine by the Jewish National Fund has been that that land has been extra-territorialised. It ceases to be land from which the Arab can gain any advantage either now or at any time in the future [...] The principle of the persistent and deliberate boycott of Arab labour in the Zionist colonies is not only contrary to the provisions of that article of the [British] Mandate, but it is in addition a constant and increasing source of danger to the country.⁷⁵

It would be simplistic to attribute to the 'isolationist process' alone the episodes of violence that in an increasingly systematic way marred the

relationship between Palestinians and Jews from the 1920s onwards. Even more so in consideration of the fact that some of them – including the clashes that occurred in Jaffa in March 1908,⁷⁶ in Zarnuqa in 1913 and in Tel Hai in March 1920 – predated this phase and were partially unconnected from such considerations.⁷⁷ It is, however, a fact, that that same approach, exacerbated in 1923 as a result of the controversial election of Menachem Ussishkin (1863–1941) as President of the KKL,⁷⁸ played a relevant role in convincing the Arab population that the promises and the conciliatory attitude shown by Weizmann and other Zionist leaders were nothing more than tactical manoeuvres. Furthermore, such strategy contributed to radicalizing the two main communities in Palestine:⁷⁹ in the space of only two decades the number of recorded instances of violence were much higher than the total amount recorded over the previous four centuries. The episodes of violence that had occurred between the mid-sixteenth and the end of the nineteenth centuries confirm once again the need for a self-determination to the Jews, but at the same time proves that the ‘isolationist process’ fed tensions to a huge extent. ‘During the thirty years we have been here’, wrote Moshe Smilansky (1874–1953) in 1913, a writer who emigrated to Palestine in 1891 from Kiev, ‘it is not they [the Arabs] who have remained alien to us but we to them.’⁸⁰ In this sense, an emblematic case was represented by Hebron, where Arabs and Jews – that in the diaries and autobiographies of Khalīl Sakānīnī and Waṣīf Jawharīyeh (1897–1972) were referred to as *abnā’ al-balad* (sons of the nation), or *Yabūd awlād ‘Arab* (Jews, sons of the Arabs)⁸¹ – had lived together for centuries without particular tensions,⁸² and often speaking the same language. When in 1925 the Slobodka yeshivah (religious school) was opened in Hebron, its large number of Ashkenazi students expressed the will to live in complete separation from the local Arab population as well as from the old *Yishuv*.⁸³ This situation was extremely different from the one in the ghettos scattered around Europe, in which millions of Jews had been progressively *obliged* to live in conditions that were often inhumane and subject to a series of special restrictions. In the first case, it was a choice, in the second, almost always an obligation.

In no way could this attitude justify the mass murder that occurred just four years later (1929) in Hebron, when 67 Jews, including many Slobodka students, were massacred (more than 450 Jewish lives were

saved when local Arab families gave them refuge). It throws light, however, on the reasons for which the local Arab population not infrequently viewed the newcomers with suspicion, sometimes with hatred, identifying them as 'Zionist immigrants' (or 'foreign Jews')⁸⁴ with no connection to the areas they settled in: 'Because the immigrants dumped upon the country from different parts of the world', complained the former mayor of Jerusalem, Mūsā Kāẓim al-Ḥusaynī (1850–1934) at the beginning of the mandate period, 'are ignorant of the language, customs and character of the Arabs and enter Palestine by the might of England against the will of the people.'⁸⁵

Three months after the Hebron massacre, celebrated historian Hans Kohn (1891–1971) – active in the Zionist movement from 1909 onwards – wrote the following letter:

Lately I have become increasingly aware that the official policy of the Zionist Organization and the opinion of the vast majority of Zionists are quite incompatible with my own convictions. I, therefore, feel that I can no longer remain a leading official within the Zionist Organization [...]. We pretend to be innocent victims. Of course the Arabs attacked us in August [1929]. Since they have no armies, they could not obey the rules of war. They perpetrated all the barbaric acts that are characteristic of a colonial revolt. But we are obliged to look into the deeper cause of this revolt. We have been in Palestine for twelve years [since the British mandate] without having even once made a serious attempt at seeking through negotiations the consent of the indigenous people. We have been relying exclusively upon Great Britain's military might. We have set ourselves goals which by their very nature had to lead to conflict with Arabs [...] for twelve years we pretended that the Arabs did not exist⁸⁶ and were glad when we were not reminded of their existence.⁸⁷

CHAPTER 5

ZION-LONDON: THE ARCHIMEDEAN POINT

Nor is there any indigenous civilization in Palestine that could take the place of the Turkish except that of the Jews.¹

The Times's correspondent Herbert Sidebotham (1872–1940) just before the adoption of the Balfour Declaration

It was also to be remembered that the persecutors had a case of their own. They were afraid of the Jews, who were an exceedingly clever people [...] wherever one went in Eastern Europe, one found that, by some way or other, the Jew got on, and when to this was added the fact that he belonged to a distinct race, and that he professed a religion which to the people about him was an object of inherited hatred, and that, moreover, he was [...] numbered in millions, one could perhaps understand the desire to keep him down [...] He [Balfour] did not say that this justified the persecution, but all these things had to be considered.²

Balfour refused to intercede with the Russian government to request the removal of the discrimination suffered by Jews. Lucien Wolf reported the contents of the conversation he had with Balfour on the subject on 31 January 1917

The rise of Berlin

Archaeologist and civil engineer of German and American origin, Gottlieb Schumacher (1857–1925) was responsible for the building of

many roads, houses and bridges in late nineteenth-century northern Palestine. His father, Jacob Schumacher, had been one of the key figures of Ḥaifā's Templers, the city where he settled in 1869. After studying in Germany, Gottlieb returned to Palestine in 1881 and, over the next few years, began to produce maps of the whole area between the Sea of Galilee, the Hula Valley and the area to the east of the Jordan River. In 1885 he moved to the south of the Yarmūk River and the following year published a map that became a landmark of sorts for specialists on the subject.

More than the maps in themselves, Schumacher's achievements are of particular interest in as much as they reflect a new balance of forces in late nineteenth-century Palestine. Schumacher succeeded in mapping an area in which PEF's members encountered significant problems. This was made possible mainly thanks to his German origins. In the 1880s Berlin succeeded, in fact, in equalling and then overtaking London as the power with the greatest influence on the Turkish Empire. This rise – that coincided with the same spasmodic interest for the Eastern Mediterranean area that had previously affected Russia, France and Britain – was also confirmed by the growing tensions that characterized relations between the PEF and the *Deutscher Verein zur Erforschung Palästinas* (DVEP), the exploratory fund created in 1878 by the newly born German Empire. Schumacher had collaborated both with the PEF and the DVEP from the start of his working life and both societies had published of work. In 1896 the new European balance of power obliged Schumacher to give up any collaboration with the British fund. The political rivalry between the two countries, as reflected in the tensions between the two societies, was now unavoidable.

If Berlin managed, in the Ottoman context, to replace St Petersburg as London's main rival, this was due to trade and means of communication as well as military considerations. At around 1850, half of world industrial production was in British hands; just 30 years later this went down to around 30 per cent and it fell further to 15 per cent by the first decade of the twentieth century. Germany succeeded in particular to come to prominence in the new industrial chemical sector and to create a railway network – the Anatolia and Baghdad railways represented in this respect the two major achievements – which permitted quicker troop and weaponry movements: British naval supremacy was no longer sufficient to guarantee London's predominance.

However, the new balance of power was more than anything else the result of the British strategies. With the Cyprus Convention of 1878 Disraeli succeeded in heading off the Russian threat and, at the same time, keeping alive 'the sick man of Europe'. His successor, Gladstone, committed himself to repeal the 1878 convention. He failed in this attempt but, moved by a genuine contempt for the Ottoman Empire, succeeded in weakening British contacts with Istanbul. It was a move that pushed the Porte into the arms of Kaiser Wilhelm II (1859–1941) and eroded British influence in Istanbul to the point of inducing the next prime minister, Lord Salisbury (1830–1903), to exclaim that the Gladstone government had 'just thrown it away into the sea, without getting anything whatever in exchange'.³

Despite hosting several Zionist leaders and sympathizers,⁴ Germany appeared to Abdul Hamid as a potentially less dangerous ally than Britain and the Jews.⁵ The fear of binding himself to a power (Great Britain) or a people (the Jews) with ambitions to settle permanently in Palestine alerted the Turkish authorities. London, in particular, and even more so after the Cyprus Convention and the occupation of Egypt, reinforced the Sultan's suspicions. Berlin, on the other hand, had no historical precedent in the region. The destructive potential of biological racism, deeply rooted in the pan-Germanic ideology and the German colonial policies (as the 1904's 'proto-genocide' perpetrated against the Herero in Namibia confirmed),⁶ was still far from showing its effects. Furthermore, the prestige of the Second Reich was clearly on the rise, as the Berlin Congress of 1878 confirmed. These and other factors led the Porte to choose what would later turn out to be the wrong horse:⁷ the Ottoman and German Empires collapsed one after the other against the backdrop of the disastrous effects of World War I.

For a long time the British authorities tried to avoid any possible territorial partition. They did not have any interest, in fact, in sharing frontiers with powers with large armies. London's approach aimed to create friendly buffer states by means of influence, exercised through trade treaties, loans, friendly advice. This started to change with Germany's increasing influence, as well as with the Franco–Russian alliance of 1894, and the British military deficiencies that showed during the Boer War. Since then, and more precisely starting with agreement that in 1904 gave to Paris a free hand in Morocco in exchange for a British free hand in Egypt, the phenomenon of partitions among

the great powers, almost always carried out without considering the wishes of the local populations, became increasingly common.⁸

London, despite all

In a dispatch sent from Jerusalem in August 1907 Consul Blech noted that the local population nurtured a 'strong desire for a European – preferably, according to certain of them, an English – occupation of Palestine'.⁹ Despite its excessive optimism, the message contained an element of truth. Hand in hand with the increasing British penetration in the region, many Arab-Palestinians and several Zionists began to fantasize about the potential positive impact of direct British rule on Palestine.¹⁰ 'I must confess', wrote Ma'az el-Khaldi, a former Palestinian student at Jerusalem's St George School (managed by the Anglican diocese), 'that at the news of the delivery of Jerusalem by the British troops, I was so glad that I could not help myself from shedding tears'.¹¹

The episodes that pushed HaHistadrut HaTsionit (The Zionist Organization) to concentrate its energies on Britain took place at the end of 1898. That year, in October, Herzl met Wilhelm II in Istanbul.¹² The following month the two convened in Jerusalem in what was to be Herzl's first and last journey to Palestine.¹³ The meeting was arranged by William Hechler, author of the treatise *The Restoration of the Jews to Palestine* (1882) and a preceptor of the German monarchy. Despite the celebratory tone used by the British newspapers of the time,¹⁴ the Emperor took a detached approach, expressing nothing more than benevolent interest in the region's agricultural improvements. He was not impressed even by the maps that Herzl showed him on the occasion. Herzl alluded to the idea of a possible German protectorate. Wilhelm II had no real intention of promoting Zionism. A few weeks earlier, during his talks with the Sultan, he declared that the Zionists 'are not dangerous to Turkey, but the Jews are everywhere a nuisance we should like to be rid of'.¹⁵ Definitive proof of the fact that Berlin was not the ideal ally came from the request of the kaiser that German and not Hebrew should be the language used in some of the Jewish educational institutions in Palestine. From then until World War I, no German government showed any sign of serious interest in the Zionist cause.

Many offices of the Zionist Organization, including its headquarters, were opened in the German capital over the next few years. Since then,

however, the conviction that Herzl had developed at the beginning of 1898 – the idea that London could represent ‘the Archimedean point’ to be used as a lever¹⁶ – became more and more concrete. In other words, the opinion that Britain was the only power that could guarantee the support and empathy required to achieve Zionist aims gained progressive ground; so also did the awareness of how important it was to exploit ‘the jealousy’ between the powers.¹⁷ Israel Sieff (1889–1972), a key player in the Anglo-Zionist vicissitudes of the first half of the twentieth century, recalled that Weizmann – who had met Herzl in 1898 and established his general headquarters in Manchester in 1904 – ‘believed that in England, as nowhere else, his Zionist dream would find sympathy and understanding among the people’.¹⁸

Far from being merely ‘passive’ players, as Mayir Vereté’s claims (1915–90) imply,¹⁹ Zionists sought since the beginning effective ways to influence Britain’s political scenario. On the occasion of the 1900 parliamentary elections, for instance, the English Zionist Federation sent a letter to all candidates asking for their overt support for the Zionist cause. The approximately 100 replies received showed marked support for Herzl’s projects.

In those same months, London hosted the fourth Zionist congress, which brought the issue to the centre of local media attention. ‘England the great,’ Herzl exclaimed for the occasion, ‘England the free, England with her eyes fixed on the seven seas, will understand us.’²⁰ On the sidelines of the congress, Francis Montefiore (1862–1935) introduced Foreign Secretary Lord Lansdowne (1845–1927) and Eric Barrington, Prime Minister Lord Salisbury’s secretary, to Herzl.

The first ‘official’ contact between the British establishment and Herzl, however, took place only in 1902. It was a highly significant event. The Zionist leader was invited to provide an opinion at the Royal Commission on Alien Immigration, set up by William Gordon Evans (1857–1913) and other British MPs in order to bring to an end the immigration of ‘foreign invaders’, who were for the most part Jews escaping pogroms in Russia. Most of the commission’s members believed that these new arrivals posed a threat to the wellbeing and stability of English families.²¹ Arthur Balfour, who openly shared the anti-Semitic opinions of Cosima Wagner (1837–1930),²² did not miss the opportunity to highlight ‘the undoubted evils which had fallen upon portions of the country from an alien immigration which was largely Jewish’.²³

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the very same Great Britain that had discussed and encouraged emigration to Palestine for decades was searching for the right tools to deny the same possibility to Jews looking for refuge in England. The interest prompted by the 'great-scheme of the late Dr. Herzl'²⁴ did not necessarily involve sympathy for the Jews and excluded any possible 'sacrifice' within Britain's national borders. On the other hand, Britain and the other European powers proved to be inflexible with the Ottoman authorities. The latter, in their opinion, had no right 'to place Jews, as such, under disabilities in respect of travelling and residing in the Ottoman Empire'.²⁵ A report drawn up by the Society for Relief of Persecuted Jews put the issue in the following terms:

The tragedy of the human shuttlecock tossed by the combined forces of persecution and adversity from a land of misery to a land of hope, and tossed back again by the powers that be [...] honest poor Jews, coming as third class or steerage passengers, are refused, and are driven forth. Whither can they go? Where find shelter?²⁶

Herzl was just one of 175 exponents invited by the 1902 commission on immigration. He was, however, the only one to put forward a practical solution to the Jewish 'immigration threat'. He argued that nothing would have resolved the problem 'except a diverting of the stream of migration'. The issue would have been resolved only 'if a home is found for them which will be legally recognized as Jewish'.²⁷

Herzl's words had a direct impact on Joseph Chamberlain (1836–1914), the influential Secretary of State for the Colonies who Winston Churchill later referred to as the man 'who made the weather'.²⁸ Although Chamberlain had grown up in a family of Unitarians saturated in Protestant beliefs, 'Our Joe' was not prompted by biblical motives or humanitarian ideals in relation to the Jews. If credence can be given to a 'dangerous anti-Semite' such as *The Times's* correspondent Henry Wickham Steed (1871–1956),²⁹ Chamberlain went as far as to claim that there was 'only one race that I despise – the Jews, sir. They are physical cowards'.³⁰ Indeed, Chamberlain's private diaries give no sign of prejudice towards Jews. It is clear, however, that his interest in the issue was primarily financial and strategic. Jews were seen as means by

which an internal problem could be solved, as well as a useful instrument to increase British influence in Palestine.³¹

A few months after appearing before the Commission for Alien Immigration, Herzl was received by Chamberlain and Lord Lansdowne (1845–1927), foreign secretary in the newly formed Balfour government. The meeting took place as a result of the efforts of one of Zionism's most famous propagandists in England, the journalist Leopold Jacob Greenberg (1861–1931). For the first time since the days of Oliver Cromwell (1599–1658) a representative of the British establishment and one of the Jews came face-to-face to discuss a political solution to the issue of the Jews' resettlement. In virtue of the solid influence exercised by Berlin on the Porte, Palestine could not yet be the subject of negotiations. On top of this, Chamberlain, after expressing his appreciation for Zionist plans, explained that he was not willing to discuss a possible Jewish settlement in Cyprus, where the rivalry between Greeks and Turks was already a source of tension, nor in any other area of the Empire 'inhabited by white settlers'.³²

Herzl moved his attention to the al-'Arīsh area, in the Sinai peninsula, in what he hoped would be the launching pad for a later settlement in Palestine. 'When we are under the Union Jack at El Arish', noted Herzl, 'then Palestine too will fall into "the British sphere of influence"'.³³ Officially an Ottoman province at the time, on a semi-official level an independent country with its own monarchy, Egypt was actually a pawn in the hands of the British government. This option, however, had a number of weak points. A party sent there discovered that Egypt lacked the necessary water resources. Added to this was the hostility expressed by the Egyptian and Ottoman authorities, with whom London had no interests to come into conflict. Lord Cromer (1841–1917), British consul general in Egypt, confirmed just how unlikely it was that Herzl's aspirations would ever win 'much favour in the eyes of the Sultan'.³⁴ It is certainly a fact, he added, 'that Paul Friedmann's venture [a converted Jew who had tried fruitlessly to found a Jewish colony in Sinai in 1891] caused considerable anxiety at Constantinople'.³⁵

The failure of the 'al-'Arīsh option' occurred against the backdrop of a new wave of pogroms. In Kishinev (modern-day Moldova) alone, dozens of Jews 'were slaughtered like sheep' on 6–7 April 1903, the year that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were published.³⁶ Chamberlain – perhaps prompted by humanitarian motives and certainly attracted by

the prospect of resolving the problem of Jewish immigration to Britain – put forward an official proposal to the Zionist elite for the colonization of an area of 13,000 km² in present-day Kenya.³⁷ It is a proposal that has gone down mistakenly in history under the name of the ‘Uganda Programme’. Herzl, whilst keeping Palestine as his main focus, welcomed the new offer. It was a possible temporary solution to the escalating Russian pogroms (*‘nachtsyl’*, ‘refuge for the night’) and, at the same time, a warning to the Sultan. ‘If you won’t give us Palestine,’ wrote Weizmann, interpreting Herzl’s thoughts, ‘we’ll drop you completely and go to British East Africa.’³⁸

The political advantage obtained by Herzl with the ‘Uganda Programme’ in the overt declaration by the British government of support for Jewish national aspirations and its recognition of the Zionist organization as a diplomatic body, moved the Zionist elite yet further from the Berlin–Istanbul sphere of influence and pushed Weizmann to move definitively to England with the declared intention of earning the support of the British establishment. In practical terms, however, the ‘Uganda Programme’ turned out to be only a fleeting success. The sixth Zionist congress, organized in Basel in 1903, rejected the proposal, confirming once and for all that Zionism without Zion had no *raison d’être*.³⁹

‘Made in England’ anti-Semitism: towards the Balfour Declaration

From a moral point of view, the ‘Uganda proposal’ was in many respects problematic. Not only was it put forward at an historical juncture in which London was looking for an anti-Jewish solution to its ‘alien immigration’ but it was also conceived out of the age-old practice of considering Jews, including those converted to Christianity, as ‘alien entities’.⁴⁰ Even where Jews were completely assimilated or employed in prestigious jobs, they were considered as mysterious figures to be avoided.⁴¹ When referring to Disraeli, Lord Salisbury, his direct superior in Parliament, branded him as an ‘unprincipled Jew who had no right to be in the House of Commons’.⁴² Lord Derby (1826–93), foreign secretary in the Disraeli government, underlined that the latter believed ‘thoroughly in prestige – as all foreigners do’.⁴³ Herbert Henry Asquith (1852–1928), prime minister from 1908 to 1916, was used to adopt

first names when addressing his colleagues; the exception was embodied by Edwin Montagu (1879–1924), the only Jewish member of the British Cabinet at the time of the Balfour Declaration, for whom he used epithets such as ‘the Assyrian’, ‘the Hebrew’ or ‘Mr. Wu’.⁴⁴ Herbert Samuel, another eminent Jew, was dismissed by Prime Minister Lloyd George, as ‘a greedy, ambitious and grasping Jew with all the worst characteristics of his race’.⁴⁵ Not surprisingly, Montagu, a fierce opponent of the Balfour Declaration, on 23 August 1917 published a memorandum entitled *The Anti-Semitism of the Present Government*.⁴⁶

These examples represent only the tip of an iceberg. At the very time that the British establishment was laying the foundations for a ‘Jewish national home’ in Palestine, some of the most common facets of anti-Semitism found one of their most solid bastions in Great Britain. ‘Anti-Semites’, predicted Herzl in 1895,⁴⁷ ‘will become our surest friends’.⁴⁸

When the Aliens Act was approved on 11 August 1905 Arthur Balfour was serving as prime minister. He had come to power three years earlier and emerged immediately as a front-rank figure in the parliamentary process aiming to curtail what a *Manchester Evening Chronicle* editorial referred to as the ‘dirty, destitute, diseased, verminous and criminal foreigner [mainly Jews]’⁴⁹ ‘who dumps himself on our soil’.⁵⁰ Just a month before the implementation of the law – approved with 211 votes for and 59 against – Balfour confirmed to the House of Commons the reasons for his distrust towards Jews. One of the aspects that worried him the most was their ‘damaging habit’ of intermarriage:

The right hon. Baronet [Charles Dilke] had condemned the anti-Semitic spirit which disgraced a great deal of modern politics in other countries of Europe, and declared that the Jews of this country were a valuable element in the community [...]. But he undoubtedly thought that a state of things could easily be imagined in which it would not be to the advantage of the civilisation of the country that there should be an immense body of persons who, however patriotic, able, and industrious, however much they threw themselves into the national life, still, by their own action, remained a people apart, and not merely held a religion differing from the vast majority of their fellow-countrymen, but only inter-married among themselves.⁵¹

A comparative study based on an analysis of the literary and journalistic writings of the day shows that the most common racial stereotypes in Central Europe had Jews as the main targets. In Britain, on the other hand, black people represented the most common victims. In Britain as well, however, anti-Semitism was a tolerated and in some cases an actively encouraged practice. A relevant percentage of nineteenth-century British literature favoured the popularization of the image of the Aryan as opposed to the Semite. Robert Knox (1791–1862), Francis Galton (1822–1911), Karl Pearson (1857–1936) and, *mutatis mutandis*, Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953) and Gilbert K. Chesterton (1874–1936)⁵² played in this respect a particularly prominent role.

Well before the alleged tendency for self-exclusion to which also Balfour referred to, the main issue that fed the anti-Semitic propaganda of the time was linked to the myth of an ‘international Jewish conspiracy’. It was popularized by two famous literary fakes – *Biarritz* (1868) and the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (1903) – and found ‘valuable’ support in Britain thanks to Arnold White’s (1848–1925) *The Modern Jew* (1899) and Joseph Bannister’s *England under the Jews* (1901).

At the end of World War I, ‘British anti-Semitism’ was channelled by focusing on the hypothetical ‘Jewish factor’ that was believed to have triggered the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. ‘We must not lose sight of the fact’, wrote H. Pearson in a dispatch on 2 January 1919, ‘that this movement is engineered and managed by astute Jews, many of the criminals, and nearly every commissary in Russia is a Jew.’⁵³ In the years preceding the revolution, a variant of this anti-Semitic attitude could be detected in what was described as ‘the international influence exercised by the Jewish race’.⁵⁴ The thesis of the ‘world domination by the Jews’ was not infrequently proposed, for political reasons, also by a certain number of Zionists. ‘Her Majesty’, argued Philipp de Newlinski (1841–99) in 1897 to the Ottoman authorities in an attempt to convince them to accept economic support – ‘could suddenly count on the biggest capitalists in the world as well as on the support of all the major newspapers of Europe, which are in Jewish hands [qui se trouvent entre les mains juives].’⁵⁵

Several studies about postcards in the Edwardian era (1901–10) have confirmed how popular anti-Semitism was in early twentieth-century England.⁵⁶ But it was between 1917 and 1920 that anti-Semitic theories received in Britain and elsewhere an ‘exceptionally receptive and

uncritical atmosphere'.⁵⁷ Lloyd George, prime minister in the year of the Balfour Declaration, was convinced that Jews would determine the outcome of World War I and that they were the hidden forces behind the Russian Revolution.⁵⁸

Lloyd George's opinions were also influenced by books, letters and reports produced by various members of his cabinet, or figures linked to it. In a clear allusion to Jews, John Buchan (1875–1940), director of information under his government, wrote that 'away behind all the governments and the armies there was a big subterranean movement going on, engineered by very dangerous people'.⁵⁹ In an introduction to Nahum Sokolow's (1859–1936) *History of Zionism*, Balfour claimed that Zionism represented 'a serious endeavour to mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilisation by the presence in its midst of a body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb'.⁶⁰ Robert Cecil (1864–1958), Balfour's nephew and undersecretary to the Foreign Office, clarified in March 1916 that he did not think it is easy 'to exaggerate the international power of the Jews'.⁶¹ Mark Sykes (1879–1919), the figure who perhaps more than any other shaped the British pro-Zionist approach in the years preceding the mandate for Palestine, declared that 'with "Great Jewry" against us' there would be no chance of winning the war. Zionism was, in his eyes, a powerful force hidden in the shadows, a phenomenon that he defined as 'atmospheric, international, cosmopolitan, subconscious and unwritten – nay often unspoken – it is not possible to work and think on ordinary lines'.⁶² Those same Jews who Sykes had usually depicted as fat men 'with big noses' just a few years earlier were now perceived in a different light.⁶³ 'Jews', explained Sykes in June 1918, 'could be found in the councils of every state, in every business, in every enterprise'.⁶⁴

The opinions expressed by Sykes and other leading figures are useful in order to throw light on some of the main motives that prompted the London establishment to express its support for a 'Jewish national home' in Palestine. This was mainly motivated by a desire to set in motion a global Zionist propaganda campaign that might attract the support of 'world Jewry' to the British war effort.⁶⁵

To such considerations is possible to add a further element that can be summarized in three words: the Old Testament. If, on the one hand, the

attitude of figures such as Balfour, Lloyd George and Churchill towards the Jews and Zionism was often based on more or less covert forms of anti-Semitism, on the other hand it was expressed in the form of a deep-rooted philo-Semitism of evangelical and puritan memory.⁶⁶ The very same that prompted Balfour to state that the Jews were 'the most gifted race that mankind has seen since the Greeks of the 5th century',⁶⁷ and Churchill to argue that they were 'beyond all question the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has ever appeared in the world'.⁶⁸ Hate and love, philo-Semitism and anti-Semitism were, yet again, two sides of the same coin.

CHAPTER 6

PALESTINE'S 'NON-JEWS'

I notice that the Arab population are spoken of, or included in, 'the non-Jewish communities', which sounds as if there were a few Arab villages in a country full of Jews.¹

John Tilley (1869–1952), commenting on a draft of the British mandate for Palestine, 19 March 1920

It is for the people to determine the destiny of the territory and not the territory the destiny of the people.²

Judge Hardy Cross Dillard (1902–82) in an advisory opinion (1975) regarding Western Sahara

The Balfour Declaration represented a key aspect in the 'shadowing process' mentioned in the introduction to this book. The choice to introduce a chapter on this historical document, starting from those to whom it was *not* addressed, may seem a hazardous one. However, such an approach can be justified by linking the thread of the issue to an aspect hinted at or mentioned in several parts of this volume. If, on the one hand, the idea of supporting the creation of a Jewish 'national home' in 'Erets-Yisra'el' was underpinned by an 'historical right', on the other it was undermined by several solipsistic prejudices.³ James Renton pointed out that the Balfour Declaration was the result of the misplaced decision of the British authorities to refer to 'ethnic groups in racial and nationalistic terms'.⁴ It might be added that the decision to ignore or underestimate the fears, ambitions and the very existence of a Palestinian Arab people – often loosely referred to as 'non-Jewish communities' in

the dispatches of the time⁵ – has been at the heart of some of the main problems that were registered in the region in the decades to follow. It contributed, moreover, to the emergence of conflicting perceptions regarding the nature and meaning of Arab opposition to Zionism.⁶ The choice to place the Palestinian Arabs at the ‘centre’ of the Balfour Declaration has the merit to solicit the reader to engage with one of the most debated documents of modern history starting from the subordinate perspective of the ‘excluded’.

Framing the Balfour Declaration

In February 1919 Balfour wrote to Lloyd George to underline the ‘weak point of our position’ in Palestine. He noted, ‘We deliberately and rightly decline to accept the principle of self-determination.’⁷ In his opinion, Arab Palestinians were to be considered a minority as compared to Jews. ‘In any Palestine Plebiscite’, Balfour argued, ‘the Jews of the world must be consulted.’⁸ This point of view was based on three assumptions: (1) that the majority of the Jews scattered around the world identified with Zionism; (2) that the Jews had been expelled by force from their ‘ancestral lands’; (3) that a Jew born in another part of the world could *ipso facto* claim equal or superior rights to Palestine as compared to a Palestinian Arab born and raised in the region.

In hindsight, the first of these assumptions might be regarded as possible. The second has been rejected by various authoritative historians and intellectuals, including the doyen of Israeli writers Abraham Yehoshua.⁹ Doubts have indirectly been thrown on the third point. Albert Hourani, emotionally committed to the Palestinian cause, explained them in the following terms:

The Palestinian question is not one of two factions placed on the same level, both on the lookout for something more than they deserve, unwilling to understand the other side’s point of view and incapable of opening up to dialogue without the attentive services of a third party. It is an issue between an indigenous population claiming the ordinary and inalienable democratic right to decide issues of general interest such as immigration for itself and, on the other hand, a minority of immigrants seeking to become a majority and to establish a state with the assistance of foreign

powers to restrain the indigenous inhabitants until such time as they will be in a position to put their aims into practice.¹⁰

Balfour, as Weizmann confirmed, had only marginal knowledge of the elements underlying the Zionist movement.¹¹ And this was even truer as far as the Palestinian situation and its local majority was concerned. The bulk of his assumptions on this issue were linked to Weizmann's influence. The future first President of the State of Israel worked hard to implement the legitimate aspirations of millions of Jews and to explain Zionism's efforts to create the conditions so that 'Jews and Arabs can live in mutual peace'.¹² At the same time, however, he was committed to a denigratory campaign against Palestinian Arabs. One of his main aims was to persuade the British establishment that the 'so-called Arab question in Palestine' was not regarded 'as a serious factor by all those who know the local situation fully'.¹³ A wealth of documents exist that confirm this attitude. What follows is a dispatch sent to Balfour by Weizmann on 4 May 1918:

The Arabs who are superficially clever and quick witted, worship one thing, and one thing only – power and success [...] The British Authorities [...] knowing as they do the treacherous nature of the Arab, they have to watch carefully and constantly that nothing should happen which might give the Arabs the slightest grievance or ground of complaint [...] The present state of affairs would necessarily tend towards the creation of an Arab Palestine, if there were an Arab people in Palestine. It will not in fact produce that result because the fellah is at least four centuries behind the times, and the effendi (who, by the way, is the real gainer from the present system) is dishonest, uneducated, greedy, and as unpatriotic as he is inefficient.¹⁴

Balfour was not indifferent to these words, all the more so because the then Foreign Secretary, like Shaftesbury more than half a century earlier, had never seen the lands he talked about nor met the people he referred to so frequently. He visited Palestine for the first time in 1925. On that occasion he presided over the opening of Jerusalem's Hebrew University accompanied by Vera (1881–1966) and Chaim Weizmann.¹⁵

Despite Balfour's very limited knowledge of the local reality, his actions were based on the rock-solid conviction that Zionist ambitions were, in his opinion, 'rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land'.¹⁶ He was fully aware that in Palestine 'we are dealing not with the wishes of an existing community but are consciously seeking to reconstitute a new community and definitely building for a numerical majority in the future'.¹⁷

That nearly nine-tenths of the people living in Palestine at the time of World War I – Gilbert Clayton (1875–1929) reported on 5 February 1918 that the population in Palestine was composed by 573,000 'non Jews' and 66,000 'Jews'¹⁸ – were not considered a priority by London was further confirmed in the weeks preceding the publication of the Balfour Declaration. In the three main meetings in which Lloyd George's War Cabinet discussed the decision, the possibility of an Arab opposition was 'not discussed or even mentioned'.¹⁹ The idea of consulting the exponents of the local majority was ignored. In the three meetings referred to, it was instead the anti-Zionist positions expressed by numerous Jews of the time that attracted the attention. There were essentially, from London's perspective, two opposing camps (Zionist versus anti-Zionist Jews), a mediator (Britain) and a considerable number of more or less passive spectators (Arab-Palestinians). The latter were officially informed of the Balfour Declaration on 1 May 1920, by General Louis Bols (1867–1930), almost three years after it was issued.

Also a relevant percentage of the most authoritative British political figures who were not part of the War Cabinet considered it best to look beyond the problems that might potentially emerge in the area. Balfour himself, convinced that the Arabs owed a debt of gratitude to Britain,²⁰ was convinced that 'the Arab problem could not be regarded as a serious hindrance in the way of the development of a Jewish national home in Dr Weizmann sense'.²¹ This was despite the fact that Nahum Sokolow²² – the figure in pre-World War I Britain who held the highest rank among Zionists – and, to an even greater extent Weizmann himself, had been very clear: their objective was to bring to Palestine 'about four to five million Jews within a generation and so make Palestine a Jewish country',²³ – that is, to make Palestine 'as Jewish as England is English'.²⁴

How such an ambitious plan could be implemented without encountering the opposition and fears of the local majority was an issue that the British establishment approached only in vague terms. It was in fact only with the White Paper of 1922 (see [Chapter 7](#)), a month before the approval of the mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations, that the British authorities took an official position on these issues.

Indeed, two first rank figures, George Curzon (1859–1925) and Montagu tried – motivated by their own personal interests and dislikes – to trigger the general attention on the expectations of the local majority. Curzon, the only member of the Lloyd George cabinet who made a visit to Palestine, pointed out that ‘Arabs are only allowed to look through the keyhole as a non-Jewish community.’²⁵ Furthermore, several British officials serving in Palestine²⁶ – in some cases motivated by age-old anti-Semitic feelings²⁷ – made clear that the situation on the ground was extremely different from that perceived in London. Despite these few cases, most of the concerns were considered in simplistic terms, or using an approach aiming to emphasize the ‘inferiority’ of the local majority.²⁸ ‘I cannot conceal from myself’, wrote Meinertzhagen to Curzon, ‘that Arab fears regarding Zionism are not groundless [...] only one motive prompts anti-Zionist feeling in Palestine. It is the general and very real fear of superior Jewish brains and money.’²⁹ Without fully assessing the consequences, in some specific but symbolic circumstances the British authorities went so far as to refer to Palestine in terms of a ‘Judae for the Jews’ and to mock the wishes of the Arab majority.³⁰ ‘If the Arabs’, Alfred Milner (1854–1925) clarified to Weizmann, ‘think that Palestine will become an Arab country, they are very much mistaken.’³¹ In certain private conversations they went even further, supporting the idea that Palestine should become a ‘Jewish homeland and not merely that there be a Jewish homeland in Palestine’.³²

Only in the years to follow, when these ideas had been subjected to the most varied interpretations and had created unreasonable expectations, did the British authorities feel the necessity to officially clarify their position and to slow down the immigratory waves that they themselves had contributed to triggering. Zionism, that until just a few years earlier had been the phenomenon on which London had based the bulk of its expectations in relation to Palestine, was now becoming an element to be managed with caution. ‘The pro-Zionists of

1917', in David Fromkin's words, 'turn into the anti-Zionists of 1921 and 1922.'³³

The tunnel's two sides

Commenting on the process that culminated in the Balfour Declaration, Nahum Sokolow wrote that it 'resembled the construction of a tunnel begun at two sides at once'.³⁴ The first side was composed by the Zionist exponents active in England, with Weizmann and Sokolow in the front ranks. The second one by the British authorities who were in favour of the Zionist ambitions.

While the beginning of what Isaiah Berlin (1909–97) referred to as a 'long and fascinated flirtation'³⁵ between Balfour and Weizmann goes back to 1905, it was only with the outbreak of World War I that the conditions for the construction of the 'tunnel' were created. In the decade before the outbreak of the 'Great War', contacts between the Zionist leadership and the British establishment declined drastically. This was not because of a reduced interest in Palestine. Quite the opposite, as the Aqaba incident of 1906 confirmed: Palestine was considered by the Foreign Office as an indispensable bastion in defence of Egypt. This 'cooling off' was rather a result of the departure from the political scene of the main exponents of the 'Uganda proposal' – Chamberlain resigned in September 1903, followed three months later by Prime Minister Balfour; Herzl died in July 1904 – and the subsequent advent of a new phase characterized by general apathy regarding Zionist aspirations. This was also the case for British Jews: among the around 300,000 Jews present in Britain in 1913 fewer than 10,000 considered themselves as Zionists.

Alongside this apathy, a certain measure of diffidence also developed. The fact that the Zionist establishment had chosen to build most of its offices in Berlin was interpreted in London, and in Paris too, as a dangerous sign of its intentions. At the same time the British government had nothing to gain from an open confrontation with the Ottoman authorities: the 'Young Turks' rise to power in Istanbul following the 1908 Revolution had shown as much intransigence as the sultan had in denying the Jews a 'national home' in Palestine.³⁶

The decision to approve the Balfour Declaration was taken by a small elite of men on the basis of a mixture of political, military and religious

factors. The latter, in particular, played a crucial role. Weizmann himself, however, aware of the importance of practical aspects, noted that Lloyd George, Balfour, Churchill and others were 'deeply religious [...] to them the return of the Jewish People to Palestine was a reality, so that we Zionists represented to them a great tradition for which they had enormous respect'.³⁷

The extent to which religious considerations affected the decisions taken at the time is still a matter of debate. What is certain is that the 'biblical predisposition' showed by the British policy makers of the time was anything but a secondary aspect. 'Biblical prophecy', as David Fromkin and others have observed, 'was the first and most enduring of the many motives that led Britons to want to restore the Jews to Zion.'³⁸

As many as seven of the ten figures who in different periods composed the War Cabinet responsible for the decision to issue the Balfour Declaration had grown up in nonconformist families and one was from a strongly evangelical family. The reference to the War Cabinet, sometimes confused with the Ministry of War, is noteworthy. The decision to establish in Palestine a 'national home' – a loosely defined expression, which in non-official circles, despite the contrary opinion expressed in several sources,³⁹ echoed the concept of 'Jewish state'⁴⁰ – was not taken or discussed in the House of Commons, or in the House of Lords. As occurred with other measures taken during World War I, such decision was adopted behind closed doors by a small War Cabinet created in the wake of the uncertainties of the period. In June 1917, six months after Lloyd George took up residence in Downing Street, he created in fact a small council with the purpose of concentrating power in a few hands in order to strengthen the war effort. It was a particularly radical decision, considering the traditional British system of parliamentary checks and balances. Liberalism, as highlighted by John Turner, was the first victim of the war.⁴¹

Between 1916 and 1922 Lloyd George was thus the key figure behind the British strategy in the Eastern Mediterranean area. His role was so relevant that more than one historian has wondered if the Balfour Declaration should not be renamed the 'Lloyd George Declaration'.⁴² His interest in Palestine was evident to the extent that he confided that it was 'the one really interesting part of the War'.⁴³ His connection with the Old Testament was endemic. In a declaration that has gone down in

history, he explained to have learnt the names of the mountains, rivers and valleys of the Holy Land before those of Wales (where he was born) and England.⁴⁴ This declaration was made during his first meeting with Weizmann, the same that in April 1919 defined the Balfour Declaration as 'our guide'⁴⁵ and that, 30 years later, recalled that the then British Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin (1881–1951)⁴⁶ had not succeeded in 'destroying what Balfour had created'.⁴⁷

Messianic times

One of the first to comprehend the possible consequences of World War I on Palestine was Herbert Samuel. In previous years, the 'first member of the Jewish community ever to sit in a British Cabinet',⁴⁸ as he called himself, had taken a benevolent approach to Zionist ideals. This, however, was not followed by any concrete step. He belonged to a family that was well-integrated into the British society of the day and many, including Weizmann, believed that he had no particular interest in the Zionist cause. Despite being fully integrated in the British society of the time, Samuel himself suffered repeated anti-Semitic attacks. In 1912, for instance, he was accused of insider trading in the context of the 'Marconi scandal': the mere fact to be Jewish, it seemed, was sufficient to implicate him in such a scandal.

Beyond the 'scars' left by anti-Semitism, it was Turkey's entrance into the war (October 1914) that pushed Samuel's latent proto-Zionism into a progressively more direct commitment.⁴⁹ On 9 November, only four days after Britain and France declared war on Turkey, Samuel met the then Foreign Secretary Edward Grey (1862–1933). In contrast to what had occurred in March of the previous year, when Sokolow had been received at the Foreign Office by second-rank figures, Zionist interests were now being promoted by one of the most influential members of the government. 'Perhaps', Samuel explained to Grey on that occasion, 'the opportunity might arise for the fulfillment of the ancient aspiration of the Jewish people and the restoration [in Palestine] of a Jewish state.'⁵⁰ The support for this plan would have attracted Jewish public opinion in favour of the Allied cause, facilitating at the same time British imperial ambitions. 'The geographical situation of Palestine', Samuel emphasized, 'and especially its proximity to Egypt would render its goodwill to England a matter of importance to the British Empire.'⁵¹

Istanbul was now perceived as an enemy that London no longer had the interest in protecting. Zionism, on the other hand, appeared to Grey as a tool to weaken Turkish influence in the Eastern Mediterranean. 'The [Zionist] idea', wrote Samuel reporting Grey's opinion, 'had always had a strong sentimental attraction for him.'⁵² Grey's cautious enthusiasm – in early 1916 he seriously considered the idea of drawing up a document in favour of the creation of an 'autonomous Jewish settlement' in Palestine⁵³ – induced Samuel to sound out the opinions of the then Chancellor of the Exchequer Lloyd George. Samuel knew that Lloyd George had already worked together with the Zionist movement in 1903. The law firm he led at the time had prepared the draft that should have made Chamberlain's 'Uganda proposal' concrete. Lloyd George, as the *Jewish Chronicle* wrote two years later, was already 'an ardent believer in the Zionist Movement.'⁵⁴

The reaction of the future prime minister to Samuel's words was thus largely foreseeable. Lloyd George expressed himself 'very keen to see a Jewish State established there [Palestine]' and asked Samuel to prepare a memorandum on the subject to be forwarded to the other cabinet members.⁵⁵ In one of those coincidences that rarely happens in history, in the same days in which Samuel was working on drawing up his memorandum, Charles Prestwich Scott (1846–1932), 'the soul of the Manchester Guardian', managed to put him in direct contact with Weizmann. In a meeting between the two on 10 December 1915, Samuel made a reference to the memorandum regarding the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine that he was preparing for Prime Minister Asquith. He went further, declaring to hope to 'rebuild the Temple [of Jerusalem], as a symbol of Jewish unity'.⁵⁶ A mixture of incredulity and emotion overwhelmed Weizmann. 'Messianic times', he wrote to his wife, 'have really come.'⁵⁷

These and other feedbacks convinced Weizmann that the situation was potentially an epoch-making one; a sensation that was heightened by his firm conviction that Palestine would soon pass under London's direct control.⁵⁸ After making contact with Samuel, as well as with Scott and various members of Rothschild's entourage, Weizmann decided to turn to Arthur Balfour, foreign secretary from December 1916, with whom he had talked about Zionism eight years earlier in Manchester, shortly before the 1905–6 general elections.

Balfour, like many influential people of his generation, believed that 'subaltern races' had existed from time immemorial and that it was reasonable to expect that 'different and unequal they are destined to remain'.⁵⁹ Furthermore, he was convinced that Jews had been an enduring source of misfortune for 'Western civilization' and that Zionism could become an 'instrument of Providence'.⁶⁰ The coexistence of these three factors – a subaltern 'race' (Arab-Palestinians), an 'instrument of Providence' (Zionism) and empathy with the history of 'God's ancient people' (the Jews) – made Balfour, from Weizmann's point of view, an ideal point of reference. This feeling was reinforced on 12 December 1914 when, two days after meeting Samuel, Weizmann crossed the threshold of Balfour's private residence for an hour and a half of discussions. 'Balfour', Weizmann wrote, 'remembered everything we discussed eight years ago.'⁶¹ When the Zionist leader complained about the slowdown that the war had apparently imposed on Zionist plans, the future Foreign Secretary confidently replied: 'You may get your things done much quicker after the war.'⁶²

While the outcome could not, in any sense, have been taken for granted, the process that only two years later would culminate in the Balfour Declaration had begun to take shape. On 15 January 1915, Weizmann met Lloyd George at Downing Street. 'When Dr Weizmann was talking of Palestine', Lloyd George confessed to Dorothy Rothschild, 'he kept bringing up place names which were more familiar to me than those of the Western Front.'⁶³ Less than two weeks later, Samuel was ready to present his first memorandum to the cabinet:

The course of events opens a prospect of change, at the end of the war, in the status of Palestine. Already there is a stirring among the twelve million Jews scattered throughout the countries of the world. A feeling is spreading with great rapidity that now, at last, some advance may be made, in some way, towards the fulfilment of the hope and desire, held with unshakable tenacity for eighteen hundred years, for the restoration of the Jews to the land to which they are attached by ties almost as ancient as history itself [...]. I am assured that the solution of the problem of Palestine which would be much the most welcome to the leaders and supporters of the Zionist movement throughout the world would be the annexation of the country to the British Empire [...]. It is hoped

that under British rule facilities would be given to Jewish organisations to purchase land, to found colonies, to establish educational and religious institutions, and to spend usefully the funds that would be freely contributed for promoting the economic development of the country.⁶⁴

Samuel's words provoked a mixed reaction, but the most influential response, that of Prime Minister Asquith, left no room for doubt: 'I am not attracted', he wrote to his confidant Venetia Stanley (1887–1948), 'by this proposed addition to our responsibilities.'⁶⁵ Asquith considered Samuel's pronouncements as a 'lyrical outburst' and Zionism as an unattainable fantasy;⁶⁶ he declared himself willing to consider a new memorandum on the subject on condition that it was less 'dithyrambic'⁶⁷ and more practicable.

On 13 March 1915, Asquith's cabinet gathered in order to discuss the future of Palestine from the perspective of the new memorandum drafted by Samuel. It was a highly symbolic meeting. In the new memorandum, which borrowed from the earlier one to a considerable extent, the author was careful to underline the need to guarantee the rights of the 'non-Jewish population'. He also erased the word 'annexation' and reiterated the need to create a British protectorate in Palestine. For greater clarity, right from his opening comments Samuel outlined five possible scenarios: the inclusion of Palestine in the French sphere of influence; the retention of Turkish power there; an internationalization of the region; its annexation to Egypt; and the creation of a British protectorate to safeguard the incorporation of the Jews. The latter alternative was, in Samuel's eyes, the only one worthy of consideration. 'The establishment of a great European Power so close to the Suez Canal', he wrote, 'would be a continual and a formidable menace to the essential lines of communication of the British Empire.'⁶⁸

Such a formula was adopted by Samuel after careful consultation with a number of prominent figures. Among them were the head rabbi of the English Sephardic community, Moses Gaster (1856–1939), Grey and Weizmann, who already and with good reason considered him as the backbone of Zionist ambitions.⁶⁹ 'You were good enough', wrote Weizmann to Samuel on 21 March 1915, 'to guide us up to now, and I am sure you will continue to help us. We look to you and to your historical rôle which you are playing and will play in the redemption of Israel.'⁷⁰

Samuel's second memorandum attracted the unconditional, and in many ways predictable, support of Lloyd George,⁷¹ to whom the *Zionist Review* assigned 'the foremost place inside the Cabinet among the architects of this great decision [the Balfour Declaration]'.⁷² Despite having such an authoritative supporter, the majority of Samuel's colleagues – with a few important exceptions embodied by Lord Haldane (1856–1928) and the Marquis of Crewe (1858–1945) – received Samuel's proposals with hostility. Edwin Montagu, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, in particular, accused him of having overemphasized the strategic importance of the region.⁷³ 'Palestine in itself', wrote Montagu to Asquith on 16 March 1915, 'offers little or no attraction to Great Britain from a strategical or material point of view.'⁷⁴ He also pointed out that there was no 'Jewish race now as a homogeneous whole'.⁷⁵ Like many other Jews, English or otherwise,⁷⁶ Montagu considered 'the Jews as a religious community and himself as a Jewish Englishman':⁷⁷ the rift between assimilationist Jews and Zionists had reached the point of no return.⁷⁸

In the weeks and months that followed the presentation of the new memorandum, Samuel, despite the paltry results, kept up his personal mission. Many years later, Edwin 'Nebi' Samuel (1898–1978) noted that his father understood the dynamics and complexity of the issue earlier, and more comprehensively, than anyone else, Weizmann included.⁷⁹ While he could not count on the support of authoritative figures such as Asquith, Montagu and Kitchener, Samuel managed nonetheless to place Zionism at the centre of Britain's political agenda.

Mark Sykes's 'door of hope'

'Door of hope' was Sokolow's way to refer to the door of Mark Sykes's office. Sokolow considered him as 'one of the most valiant champions of Zionism'.⁸⁰ Over the years, in fact, Sykes made himself into a vital *trait d'union* between the Zionist leaders and the Foreign Office. 'It was he', Weizmann wrote later about Sykes, 'who guided our work into more official channels'.⁸¹

There was nothing inevitable about the process that moved Sykes towards Zionism. His first writings confirm that he had a low opinion of Jews, comparable only to his feelings toward Armenians. 'Even Jews', noted Sykes at the turn of the century, 'have their good points, but

Armenians have none.⁸² According to Fromkin, from his earliest schooldays Sykes developed an 'almost excessive fear' of the Jews.⁸³ Particular targets of his disdain were 'assimilationist Jews'. He supplemented his dislike of Armenians and Jews with a powerful aversion to Arabs with whom he came into contact since childhood during the travels that he made in the region with his father, Tatton Sykes (1826–1913). In his writings, Arabs of cities such as Mosul, Hama, Homs and Damascus were described as 'insolent yet despicable' and 'one of the most deplorable pictures one can see in the East',⁸⁴ while the Bedouins – specifically the vast Shammar tribe – were considered on a par with 'animals', 'rapacious, greedy'.⁸⁵

The hostility Sykes reserved for Jews, Armenians and Arabs is worthy of particular note if only because, with the onset of World War I, the causes espoused by these peoples found in him a powerful champion. In taking on this new role Sykes – who maintained considerable prejudices regarding Arabs⁸⁶ – was not inspired by a 'Guevarian approach'. It was practical considerations that mattered to him. He aimed, in particular, to halt the German advance towards the East and to create a sort of Arab–Jewish–Armenian 'buffer zone' between the Turko-German front and that made up by Iran (Persia), Egypt and India.⁸⁷

The Zionist cause quickly became a priority towards which Sykes channelled most of his energies. It was Samuel's memorandum that instilled in him the idea that this movement could be a suitable tool to reinforce British ambitions in Palestine and elsewhere. 'I read the memorandum', clarified Sykes to Samuel shortly before departing for Russia, 'and have committed it to memory'.⁸⁸ These words were written in February 1916, when Sykes was fresh from the negotiations with George-Picot (1870–1951), from which the secret Sykes-Picot agreement to divide up the region into spheres of influence developed. The strategic and symbolic importance of Palestine made it an area of considerable significance for both powers. It was decided to place it under international supervision, although both London and Paris considered the decision a provisional measure. The ambiguous contents of the Husayn–McMahon correspondence and the equally evasive Balfour Declaration demonstrate, with the benefit of hindsight, that the decisions made at the time were not the upshot of clear strategies and, in quite a few cases, did not involve binding commitments. 'It is not unthinkable', commented the founder of the Hebrew University,

Judah Leon Magnes (1877–1948), a few years later, ‘that governments in war time should, unfortunately, make contradictory promises and declarations.’⁸⁹

Sykes was aware of the connection that bound many of the Zionist leaders to London. As pointed out by Clayton, the ‘Zionists who follow Dr Weizmann are strongly pro-British’.⁹⁰ It was only at the beginning of 1917 – when Sykes, through an Armenian anti-Semite by the name of James Aratoon Malcolm (1865–1952),⁹¹ met Weizmann and Sokolow for the first time and established daily contact with them – that he was able to ascertain the reliability of his contacts. It was then that Sykes realized the extent to which Zionist plans coincided with British strategies. On the one hand both Weizmann and Sokolow had declared themselves opposed to an Anglo-French ‘cohabitation’ in Palestine. On the other, they supported the implementation of a British trusteeship in the region. London could now demonstrate to France that it enjoyed the full support of one of the two main actors in the region. Zionism was thus becoming a formidable instrument in strengthening Britain’s position, freeing London from the provisions of the Sykes–Picot agreement. In Sykes’s own words:

if the French agree to recognize Jewish Nationalism and all that carries with it as a Palestine political factor, I think it will prove a step in the right direction, and will tend to pave the way to Great Britain being the appointed Patron of Palestine [...]⁹²

In the space of a few months – thanks also to the role played by James Aratoon Malcolm and Aaron Aaronsohn (1876–1919),⁹³ a Zionist spy in Britain’s service – Sykes transformed himself into an indefatigable champion of Zionism, going so far as to declare that Zionists embodied ‘now the key of the situation’,⁹⁴ and that those Jews who opposed the movement were nothing more than ill-concealed supporters of Turko-German ambitions.⁹⁵ Sokolow believed that Sykes was born ‘to work with us Hebrews for Zionism’.⁹⁶ Indeed, Sykes was, more than ever, committed to serve Britain’s imperialist interests. It was thanks to him that the creation of a ‘buffer Jewish State’ in Palestine as ‘strategically desirable for Great Britain’⁹⁷ became to be perceived as an increasingly established assumption. Years later, Leo Amery – a Zionist stalwart in

Lloyd George's new Cabinet Secretariat – described Sykes's role in the following terms:

Sykes soon persuaded me that from the purely British point of view a prosperous Jewish population in Palestine owing its inception and its opportunity of development to British policy, might be an invaluable asset as a defence of the Suez Canal against attack from the North and as a station on the future air-routes to the East.⁹⁸

Garden Suburb, the turning point

On the morning of 26 January 1917, Neil Primrose (1882–1917) – parliamentary secretary to the Treasury who died in action in Palestine 11 months later – participated in a work lunch together with Lloyd



Figure 6.1 Vera and Chaim Weizmann, Herbert Samuel, Lloyd George, Ethel and Philip Snowden. Source: CZA. The David B. Keidan Collection of Digital Images, 1930–9.

George. 'What about Palestine?', asked Primrose. 'Oh!' replied Lloyd George, 'We must grab that; we have made a beginning.'⁹⁹

Lloyd George had taken up service in Downing Street just 50 days earlier. Nonetheless, in comparison to the previous government, the changes that occurred were already huge. A powerful image to mark this transitional period was published by the weekly *Punch* magazine: Lloyd George was portrayed dressed as an orchestra conductor working on the 'Opening of the 1917 Overture'.¹⁰⁰

The 'orchestra' created by the new prime minister was soon embodied by a small War Cabinet. Its members met 200 times in the first 235 days of its existence alone. Since the first meetings they expressed the firm belief that the war could only be won if 'the willingness of the German government and people to continue the war had been extinguished'.¹⁰¹

The need to mark a turning point in the British strategies was dictated by the dispiriting results of the Allied effort in the first two years of the war. The Asquith government, in particular, had shown worrying weakness. This was even more evident considering Asquith's playing-for-time approach and the surfeit of members (as many as 22) making up his cabinet. In order to grasp the change of pace that occurred with Lloyd George's new cabinet, it is enough to point out that, just a few days after he took up his post, General Archibald Murray (1860–1945), head of the British Army in Egypt, was asked to supply his proposals in light of a possible intervention in Palestine.

The fall of Asquith's government on 5 December 1916 coincided with Herbert Samuel's resignation. This could have represented a major blow for Zionist ambitions. Very soon, however, the new government offered new opportunities for the relaunching of Zionist aims. Asquith never met Weizmann and was consistently cold to Zionist expectations. The new prime minister, Lloyd George, and his foreign minister, Balfour, showed on the contrary a long-standing interest in Zionist ambitions and had long been in contact with their leaders.

It was, however, the composition of the War Cabinet and the mechanisms at its disposal that contributed the most to revolutionize the British approach to Palestine. The cabinet was initially made up of the four ministers most directly involved in the war effort – Alfred Milner, George Curzon, Andrew Bonar Law (1858–1923) and Arthur Henderson (1863–1935). Five other influential figures were added

between 1917 and 1919, including Edward Carson (1854–1935), George Barnes (1859–1940) and Jan Christian Smuts (1870–1950).¹⁰²

Two further bodies were set up to support the War Cabinet. The Garden Suburb (its name taken from the name of the courtyard garden within the prime minister's residence in which the meetings took place) was a sort of prime ministerial think tank; and the Cabinet Secretariat, with Maurice Hankey at its head, which could count on the contributions of Sykes, Amery and Ormsby-Gore, the last two appointed on the initiative of Milner and destined to play a relevant role in support of Zionism. Philip Kerr (1882–1940), Lloyd George's private secretary, was also part of the group and shared the opinion that, in Weizmann's words, 'a reconstructed Palestine [or a Jewish Palestine] will become a very great asset to the British Empire'.¹⁰³

The first tangible consequence of the government change was the new role played by Sykes, whom Ormsby-Gore called 'the chief motive force in London behind the British Government's Near Eastern policy in the war'.¹⁰⁴ From this phase onwards, Sykes counted on greater room for manoeuvre and direct, ongoing access to the most influential ministers. A second, and in many ways even more momentous, turn of events took place with the rise of Alfred Milner who quickly established himself as the most influential member of Lloyd George's War Cabinet.

Milner, who at the beginning of the century had a relevant role in setting up the concentration camps in which no fewer than 26,000 Boer women and children and 14,000 black South Africans died, demonstrated since Herzl's times a genuine interest in the vicissitudes of the Jewish people.¹⁰⁵ Nonetheless, his conversion to the 'Zionist creed' took place only after reading Samuel's 'Memorandum on the future of Palestine'. 'It contains suggestions', wrote Milner to Samuel in January 1917, 'which are new to me.'¹⁰⁶ He added that, of the various alternatives proposed by Samuel, 'the one which you yourself favour certainly appears to me the most attractive'.¹⁰⁷ The memorandum advocated the idea of creating a British protectorate in Palestine and Milner was thus referring to this option. However, there was little room for idealistic gestures. 'Milner', clarified the British ambassador in Paris, Francis Bertie (1844–1919), 'is not a Zionist engagé; he only hopes that the adoption of Zionism will benefit us'.¹⁰⁸ In Milner's eyes, Zionism did not imply the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine but rather the creation there of a vaguely defined 'Jewish home', or an 'autonomous

Jewish community'.¹⁰⁹ Similarly vague concepts were later used in the Balfour Declaration – whose terminology was largely dictated by Milner himself – which in 1922 was interpreted in 52 different ways by the League of Nations.¹¹⁰

Once again, then, imperial interests and the requirements of war took precedence in dictating London's agenda. Washington's entrance into the war (2 April 1917) encouraged the British authorities to support a massive pro-Zionist propaganda campaign in the USA.¹¹¹ On top of this, the rise to power of the Bolsheviks in Russia – perceived by Berlin as a chance to get St Petersburg out of the war – urged the British government to consider Sykes's strategy with growing urgency. Zionism became thus a crucial factor to support the British war effort and a tool to keep Paris out of Palestine.

London's gradual movement from a favourable position to an increasingly official encouragement of Zionist strategies was supported, in this phase, also by the events unfolding in the region. The failures of the British Army during the First (26 March) and the Second (19 April) War of Gaza convinced London of the need to reformulate the Palestine campaign and make it more incisive. A growing risk existed of losing contact with the Palestinian front, particularly now that the Russian collapse would have allowed Constantinople to redeploy a considerable number of its troops. In April 1917, then, the War Cabinet took the decision to advocate the need to intensify its efforts to capture Jerusalem and expel the Turks from Palestine once and for all. 'We realised', recalled Lloyd George about a meeting that took place on 2 April 1917, 'the moral and political advantages to be expected from an advance on this front, and particularly from the occupation of Jerusalem.'¹¹² This aim required a more resolute leadership but also a clearer stance on the approach to be taken towards Zionism and its leaders.¹¹³

Both aspects were taken on by the War Cabinet in the months that followed. On 27 June, General Allenby was appointed to replace Murray as head of the British forces in Egypt. The new chief of staff quickly earned the respect of his soldiers by regularly visiting the troops at the front and moving his army headquarters from Cairo to the 'less reassuring' Rafah. At the same time, over the weeks to follow, the British authorities, after requesting Zionist leaders to publicly display their support for them, began to discuss the possibility of issuing an

official declaration supporting the creation of a Jewish 'national home' in Palestine.

Already on 13 June 1917, Ronald Graham (1870–1949), head of the Foreign Office's Middle-Eastern affairs section, intimated to Balfour the need to 'secure all the political advantage we can out of our connection with Zionism',¹¹⁴ adding that this would impact positively, above all, on Russia.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, Graham declared that the moment had come to satisfy the ambitions of the Zionists and that it was thus desirable to supply them with 'an assurance that His Majesty's Government are in general sympathy with their aspirations'.¹¹⁶ More than simply desirable, Graham's recommendation seemed in many ways a pressing necessity. As Zionist leaders made every effort to demonstrate, Berlin's authorities were committed 'to work upon the Zionists in Germany' in order to match the interests of the two parties. 'Further delay', clarified Cecil to Balfour, 'may [. . .] throw the Zionists into the arms of the Germans who would only be too ready to welcome this opportunity'.¹¹⁷

Balfour reacted to these solicitations by asking Rothschild and Weizmann to put forward a formula that the then Foreign Minister intended to present to the War Cabinet. Increasingly detailed proposals followed over the next few weeks. Rothschild, after a month of talks with Sokolow and Sykes, asked for an explicit declaration in which the British government had to officially declare to accept 'the principle that Palestine should be reconstituted as the National Home for the Jewish people'.¹¹⁸ This formula was positively received by Balfour, while Milner, opposing the use of the term 'reconstituted',¹¹⁹ supplied two alternative drafts. In the first one, submitted to the attention of the War Cabinet in August 1917, the expression 'Palestine as a National home' was substituted by the less binding and more realistic prospect of a 'home in Palestine'.¹²⁰ The second, presented two months later, referred to the setting up 'in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish Race'.¹²¹

The heated debates that followed – Lord Curzon asked how it was proposed to free Palestine 'of the existing majority of Mussulman inhabitants' and introduce 'the Jews in their place'¹²² – convinced the members of the War Cabinet to submit the second Milner proposal to the attention of President Wilson (who Balfour described as being 'extremely favourable to the [Zionist] Movement'¹²³) as well as to the leaders of the Zionist movement and to some anti-Zionist representatives of the British Jewish community. Ten personalities were

consulted, six of whom – Rothschild; Weizmann; H. Samuel; Sokolow; the chief rabbi of Great Britain, Joseph H. Herz (1872–1946); and the head of the Jewish Board of Deputies, Stuart Samuel (1856–1926) – were in favour of the declaration, while four others – C. G. Montefiore; Montagu; the head of the Jewish Board of Guardians, Leonard L. Cohen (1888–1973); and M. P. Philip Magnus (1842–1933) – were against it.

Rabbi Herz, in particular, expressed ‘the profoundest gratification’ with the intentions shown by the cabinet. Rothschild emphasized that the draft constituted ‘a slur on Zionism’ in that it posited a possible ‘danger to non-Zionists’.¹²⁴ Cohen objected that it implied ‘that the Jews are a nation, which I deny’.¹²⁵ Weizmann expressed his gratitude but asked for the term ‘establishment’ to be replaced with ‘re-establishment’.¹²⁶

After evaluating the different points of views, all of which expressed by pro- or anti-Zionist Jews, Balfour declared that there was no time to be lost. Despite the various stances, the opinion was now widespread that ‘from a purely diplomatic and political point of view’, it was desirable to move towards issuing a declaration ‘favourable to the aspirations of the Jewish nationalists’.¹²⁷ A formula was found, thanks in particular to the efforts of Amery and Milner, which appeared to take into account the various objections without ‘impairing the substance of the proposed declaration’.¹²⁸ On the morning of 31 October 1917 – the same day in which Allenby launched the military operation that, one week later and thanks also to the use of gas grenades, led to Gaza falling into British hands – Chaim Weizmann sat in the waiting room in front of the War Cabinet. A few hours later his companion in a thousand battles, Mark Sykes, came to the door. ‘Dr. Weizmann’, he exclaimed with no attempt to conceal his emotion, ‘it’s a boy!’:

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.¹²⁹

Weizmann expressed immediately his opposition to this formula. It referred to the creation of a ‘Jewish national home’ *in* Palestine. Thus,

if the 'national home' was to become a state at some point in the future, it would have to be 'either a binational state or a state in only a part of Palestine'.¹³⁰ Furthermore, the declaration recognized the civil and religious rights of the local 'non-Jewish communities'. This clarification, added to the draft on explicit request of Curzon and Montagu, together with an awareness that the declaration did not permit the Zionists to claim the whole Palestine, was commented on by Weizmann in the following terms:

A comparison of the two texts – the one approved by the Foreign Office and the Prime Minister, and the one adopted on 4 October, after Montagu's attack – shows a painful recession from what the Government itself was prepared to offer. The first declares that 'Palestine should be reconstituted as the national home of the Jewish people.' The second speaks of 'the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish race'. The first adds only that the 'Government will use its best endeavours to secure the achievement of this object and will discuss the necessary methods with the Zionist Organization'; the second introduced the subject of the 'civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities' in such a fashion as to impute possible oppressive intentions to the Jews, and can be interpreted to mean such limitations on our work as completely to cripple it.¹³¹

In the space of little more than a month, in order to bring to practical fruition and optimize the expectations contained in the Balfour Declaration, the Foreign Office set up a special section within the Department of Information with the task of producing and distributing Anglo-Zionist propaganda material. Albert Hyamson (1875–1954), a Zionist Jew who later, after serving in mandatory Palestine as head of the Immigration Department, became an anti-Zionist, was called in as head of the new section. Thanks to the untiring work of the new team led by Hyamson, thousands of booklets, films and books were circulated among the Jewish communities scattered around the world. Furthermore, countless pamphlets and leaflets were dropped into Austrian and German cities in order to attract the sympathies of Jewish soldiers fighting on the front line. 'Palestine', promised the leaflets, 'must be the

national home of the Jewish people once more [...] Remember! An Allied victory means the Jewish people's return to Zion.¹³²

At midday on 11 December 1917, six weeks after the publication of the Balfour Declaration, Allenby and his soldiers made their triumphal entry through Jerusalem's Jaffa gate. In order to respect the solemnity of the place and not inflame the resentment of the local people, they decided to get off their horses and continue on foot. They stopped a short distance before the historic Phasael Tower (renamed Tower of David, as a result of a misunderstanding, many centuries later) where Allenby read out a meaningful declaration:

The object of the war in the East on the part of Great Britain was the complete and final liberation *of all peoples* formerly oppressed by the Turks and the establishment of national governments and administrations in those countries deriving authority from the initiative and free will of the people themselves.¹³³ (italics added)

Despite the caution showed by Allenby, all those involved were aware that, for better or worse, nothing would ever be the same again.¹³⁴ In the press release that reached Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmed Nessimy Bey on 3 January 1918, it was noted that 'the entrance of the "infidels" in Jerusalem will weaken the prestige of the Turkish Caliph'.¹³⁵ The most direct consequences, however, were felt by the two main disputing parties. The 'fall' of Jerusalem was perceived by a relevant percentage of Zionist sympathizers as a 'glorious victory for the Jewish nation [...] We feel that our race is entering in a new era.'¹³⁶ It was a deeply felt optimism that over the decades to follow would be transformed for many into profound disillusionment.¹³⁷ Less profound (due to minor expectations), but in many ways more traumatic, was the frustration felt by the great majority of the Arabs living in Palestine. After a first phase in which London's assurances seemed to prevail, at least regarding the inviolability of the holy places,¹³⁸ the local majority became increasingly persuaded that the British establishment aimed 'to transform the Holy Land into an Anglo-Zionist colony, no more no less'.¹³⁹ It was a prospect that, according to the Bishop of Jerusalem, Rennie MacInnes (1870–1931), pushed many into fantasizing about the return of the Ottomans to power.¹⁴⁰

CHAPTER 7

MANDATE FOR PALESTINE: LEGITIMIZING THE SIMPLIFICATION PROCESS

I do not agree that the dog in a manger has the final right to the manger even though he may have lain there for a very long time. I do not admit that right. I do not admit for instance, that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America or the black people of Australia. I do not admit that a wrong has been done to these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher-grade race, a more worldly wise race to put it that way, has come in and taken their place.¹

Churchill to William Peel (1867–1937) answering in 1937 to a question about the Jewish people's right to Palestine

History teaches us that often symbols, rather than real events, remain carved in the memory of generations. Woodrow Wilson and the League of Nations constitute in this sense two of the most representative cases of the twentieth century. The American President went down in history for being a 'symbol of justice and peace'.² The League of Nations has remained in the collective imagination as a genuine attempt to create a new 'world order of justice and peace'.³ Both were very different from the image they left to posterity. Nonetheless, they played a vital role in determining the future of a large part of Africa and Asia, Palestine included – if not least because the Balfour Declaration, beyond its symbolic significance, did not in and of itself have any binding power.

In Alan Dowty's words, 'it was only a statement of British policy, but it became legally relevant when it was written into the British mandate for Palestine by the League of Nations.'⁴

The mandates system, and more specifically the assignment by the League of Nations of the mandate for Palestine to Britain, marked a meaningful turning point for the development of the region. It provided the legal international legitimization to the simplification process analysed in the previous chapters, and represented a further symbolic success in support of Zionist ambitions. 'Their [in reference to the clauses of the mandate] only serious defect', Jabotinsky commented, 'is the vague term "National Home".'⁵ These positive impressions were quickly corroborated by London's decision to nominate Ormsby-Gore – convinced that the inhabitants west of Jordan were not to be considered Arabs, 'but only Arabic-speaking'⁶ – as His Majesty's representative to the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League of Nations; and Herbert Samuel – the first member of the government to openly propose a Zionist solution to the Palestinian problem – as the first British High Commissioner for Palestine.

Despite these decisions, the British authorities acted almost immediately to regulate Jewish immigration to Palestine – Samuel, who became more and more critical of Zionism over time, played a significant role in that regard – and to limit the 'Jewish national home' to the area west of Jordan, namely the only one of the two banks of the river in which the Jewish communities present in the region were located. In addition to this, anti-Semitism continued to play a relevant role in the Anglo-American strategies applied to Palestine. Various figures instrumental to Zionist ambitions continued to show a problematic approach towards Jews. This is, for instance, the case of Edward M. House (1858–1938), President Wilson's main adviser, whose latent anti-Semitism has been highlighted by several scholars.⁷

Even some personalities apparently above suspicion such as Jan Christiaan Smuts – a leading figure in Lloyd George's War Cabinet, credited with authoring the international mandates system – became protagonists of episodes that would deserve greater attention. It is certainly true that on several occasions Smuts expressed his support for Zionist ambitions, making clear that 'that apparently deserted country [Palestine], so forbidding and grand, gave birth to the greatest religion on earth'.⁸ At the same time, however, Smuts was one of the more

prominent figures among those who supported the approval of the 1937 Aliens Act, a law intended to provide an answer to the growing anti-Semitic feelings expressed by a significant percentage of Afrikaners. This law limited the immigration of Jews fleeing from Nazi Germany (the Nuremberg Laws had been enacted in 1935).⁹ At the time of its approval, Smuts served as deputy prime minister in the South African government led by Barry Hertzog (1866–1942).

Colonialism's new faces

World War I claimed 9 million soldiers and around 7 million civilians. While President Wilson believed that the enormity of such a catastrophe required peace without annexations, Lloyd George was persuaded that a war of such magnitude demanded annexations and indemnities never seen before.

Many, while the war was still under way, began to wonder which new instruments could be created to prevent such disasters from happening again.¹⁰ In Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen points', drafted in collaboration with Edward M. House and presented to the US Senate on 8 January 1918, he expressed the intention to create an entity that would join various nations in order to provide reciprocal guarantees 'of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike' (point 14). The roots of the idea were not new in themselves. Already in the *Nouveau Cynée*, a pioneer work by the French monk Émeric Crucé (1590?–1648), the features were outlined for a 'Universal League of Nations' capable of refusing war as a means for resolving international disputes. However, Wilson's ideas were advanced at the end of an unprecedented war. What is more, they were underlied by the idea that 'all national aspirations shall be accorded the utmost satisfaction', as well as by the ambition to apply the 'Monroe Doctrine' ('America for Americans') globally.

In order to outline his programme, Wilson followed the advice of The Inquiry, a research group that he created in September 1917. It was chaired by House with Walter Lippman (1889–1974) serving as research director. Far more determinant, however, were the inputs of Jan Christiaan Smuts, author of the 1918 memorandum *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion*. Wilson himself confirmed to having rewritten the founding draft of the League of Nations 'in the light of a

paper by General Smuts, who seemed to have done some very clear thinking in regard to what was to be done to the pieces of the dismembered empires'.¹¹

Despite being awarded the Nobel peace prize in 1919 and having gone down in history as the President who best represented the (ambiguous) people's right to self-determination,¹² Wilson was a controversial figure. His administration reinstated the practice of racial segregation, abolished by Abraham Lincoln (1809–65) in 1863, within the federal government.¹³ It was under his two terms, moreover, that it became common practice to require photos for those looking for jobs, in order to determine their race. Wilson, in fact, was convinced that racial segregation was not humiliating and that it had been adopted to benefit blacks.¹⁴

This aspect is important in that it provides a point of connection between the American President and the figure who, as noted, inspired the founding draft of the League of Nations. For most of his political life Smuts was an open supporter of racial segregation. In 1929 he endorsed the idea of creating separate institutions for whites and blacks, a prelude to the subsequent proposal of the practice of apartheid. Like many other figures of his time, Smuts was convinced that 'these children of nature [Africans] have not the inner toughness and persistence of the European, not those social and moral incentives to progress which have built up European civilization in a comparatively short period'.¹⁵

In the country of John Locke (1632–1704) and John Stuart Mill (1806–73), the idea that freedom was a man's natural condition was quite widespread. It was held, however, that, as Mill had already clarified in *On Liberty* (1859), this criterion was to be applied selectively: only 'mature' human beings, in full possession of their faculties, could aspire to such status. The 'immatures' included not only children, but entire 'races' that were not completely civilized and thus lacked the necessary qualities of a democratic citizen. This was a widespread conviction also in America, where ex-slaves and their descendants were considered, in Wilson's words, 'excited by a freedom they did not understand',¹⁶ and thus not ready to participate in US public life. The League of Nations was born on the backdrop of an era in which the presumed innate quality of a given 'race' was invoked in order to explain the tenor of life of various groups of workers. Furthermore, the idea that immigration weakened the fibre of US society – allowing 'inferior races' to

outnumber the Anglo-Saxons, best fitted for national and worldwide hegemony – was widespread.¹⁷

Hand-picked leaders

While the founding Charter of the League of Nations was being discussed, the Japanese delegates fought for the inclusion of a clause validating the principle of ‘racial non-discrimination’, the same which, at the end of World War II, became one of the pillars of the United Nations. Such a clause was intended to secure equality of Japanese nationals and egalitarianism among members of the League of Nations. It was far from being considered by them as a universal principle. Nonetheless, it represented a meaningful step that the Japanese media of the time stressed on several occasions. In January 1919 the distinguished daily newspaper *Asahi* – followed by *Nichi Nichi*, *Osaka Mainichi* and other local media – pointed out that the authorities in Tokyo were unmovable regarding the need to officially guarantee the ‘equal international treatment of all races’ and that if President Wilson was not able to tear down ‘the wall of discrimination’, he would have spoken of ‘peace, justice and humanity in vain, demonstrating to be only a hypocrite’.¹⁸

Convinced, with good reason, that the US Senate would never have approved a treaty containing an article concerning racial equality,¹⁹ Wilson ordered the commission for the League of Nations to reject the proposal in that it had not been approved unanimously. Of the 17 delegates on the committee 11 were in favour of the insertion of the anti-discrimination clause. Furthermore, there was no law requiring unanimity. However, Wilson held it as essential given the delicacy of the subject.

The considerations shown up to this point help to understand why Washington, London and other European powers approached the ‘Middle East chessboard’ without considering the needs and wishes of the local populations, viewed as amorphous and incapable of taking decisions. The conference, which set forth the final affirmation of this kind of approach, began on 18 January 1919. The delegates of the five winning powers of the war – the USA,²⁰ Britain, France, Italy and Japan – and those of the defeated countries, met in the clock room of Paris’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs to convert the armistices of 1918 into peace agreements.

The decision to create the League of Nations and the approval of its Charter became official during these months of negotiations. They ended on 21 January 1920, when the General Assembly of the League of Nations was inaugurated. Japan and the USA – despite the role played by Wilson, Washington rejected the option to join the League of Nations – did not participate, adopting a more cautious, isolationist approach.

Article 22 of the Charter – which, inspired by Smuts's report,²¹ supported the introduction of the mandates system – was presented as a tool to realize 'the general interests of mankind'.²² For this purpose, three distinct categories of mandates were created (class A, B, C), depending on how much the population under examination was believed ready to 'stand on its own two feet', or, in the language of the time, 'able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world' (Art. 22).

If the principles contained in Article 22,²³ defined by Salvador de Madariaga (1886–1978) as the 'worst fig-leaf in the whole show',²⁴ could be applied to Palestine, and if the latter was indeed an 'A-class' mandate, are two long-debated issues.²⁵ Eli Hertz noted that 'the "Mandate for Palestine" never mentions Class "A" status at any time for Palestinian Arabs.'²⁶ John Quigley, on the other hand, pointed out that the separate identity of Palestine is reflected in particular in Article 17 of the mandate for Palestine, in which 'the "Administration of Palestine" was permitted to use military forces for purposes other than those specified only with the consent of Britain'.²⁷ Furthermore, according to Quigley, 'the Class A mandates were conceived as states, and Palestine especially so'.²⁸ H. Duncan Hall, finally, clarified that, 'Each of the "A" mandates was more or less *sui generis*, designed to fit the particular condition of a particular territory.'²⁹ The different explanation for these and many other points of view on these issues are in some respects connected to the vague wording used in the mandate text. Only several years later were some of its main moot points clarified. For instance, speaking in 1937 in front of the Permanent Mandates Commission, British Colonial Secretary William Ormsby-Gore explained that:

His Majesty's Government conceived it as of the essence of such a mandate as the Palestine mandate, an A mandate, and of Article 22 of the Covenant, that Palestine should be developed, not as a

British colony permanently under British rule, but as a self-governing state or states with the right of autonomous evolution.³⁰

Beyond the different interpretations, a common denominator can be detected at the core of each of the three mandate categories: the 'white man's burden' approach,³¹ that is the self-assigned task to 'civilize' the African, and a significant number of the Asian populations.

The official purpose of the mandate system was to prepare the various populations for self-determination and self-government. In practical terms, however, the victorious powers used it to legitimize their own 'rights of conquest' in order to divide the spoils of former empires, or of areas belonging to the defeated nations. This aim was pursued through a paternalistic approach that, on the one hand, supported the idea that there was a hierarchy among 'races'³² – Smuts defined the African population as 'barbarians'³³ – and, on the other, put an exaggerated emphasis on the need to establish well-defined borders based on ethnic principles. In other words, the mandate system represented, in Maḥmūd Cherif Bassiouni and Shlomo Ben-Ami's words, 'a new form of colonialism that had the appearance of international legitimacy'.³⁴

Such an appearance of legitimacy was perceived by many as precarious, not least for the fact that – in Paris as well as in subsequent conferences – the opinions of almost any representatives of the peoples subject to the mandates were not taken into consideration. A symbolic example is represented by Ho Chi Minh (1890–1969), at the time a young Vietnamese nationalist. Once he arrived in Paris in 1919 – for the occasion he had drafted eight programme points that, in line with the principle of self-determination promoted by Wilson, were aimed at freeing his country from French colonialism – the future Vietnamese President was pushed aside in a firm and hasty manner. Shortly after, Ho Chi Minh decided to turn his attention to Bolshevik Russia, starting a partnership that Washington paid for dearly in the decades to follow.

An historical figure who seems in part to contradict what has just been claimed is Fayṣal, the son of the self-proclaimed 'King of Ḥijāz' Ḥusayn (1854–1931), in representation of whom he participated as the head of the 'Arab delegation' at the Paris Conference. Already since the time of the Arab Revolt (1916–18) Fayṣal and his father Ḥusayn – who was born in Istanbul and was the last member of the Hashemite family to be named *Sharīf* of Mecca by an Ottoman sultan – established a solid

alliance with London. The strong ties between T. E. Lawrence, Gertrude Bell and Fayṣal – harshly condemned for this by Muḥammad Iqbal (1877–1938) and numerous other Arab intellectuals – bear further witness to this.³⁵ The British authorities had every interest in disregarding the warnings provided by their officials serving in the region,³⁶ and the suggestions made by several Palestinian delegations,³⁷ while having every interest in choosing Fayṣal as their interlocutor and in using him as a tool for promoting British interests in the region. More so, given the fact that those interests were shared by the Zionist leadership. The letter written by Weizmann to his wife on 17 July 1918, a few days after the private meeting that took place in ‘Aqaba between the Zionist leader and Fayṣal’, is worth attention:

I made the acquaintance of Fayṣal [...] He is not interested in Palestine, but on the other hand he wants Damascus and the whole of Northern Syria. He talked with great animosity against the French, who want to get their hands on Syria. He expects a great deal from collaboration with the Jews. *He is contemptuous of the Palestinian Arabs whom he doesn't even regard as Arabs.*³⁸ (italics added)

In the weeks prior to the Paris Conference, Fayṣal was ‘summoned’ to London for what was his first visit to the English capital. Fayṣal and his entourage – composed by convinced pan-Arabists – had no knowledge of English, and were fully dependent on T. E. Lawrence ‘for interpreting and advice’.³⁹ In London, Weizmann and Fayṣal perfected an agreement,⁴⁰ signed afterwards on 3 January 1919 in Paris, in which the two parties established that every effort was to be made to implement the Balfour Declaration (Art. 3) and that all ‘necessary measures shall be taken to encourage and stimulate immigration of Jews into Palestine on a large scale’ (Art. 4). Fayṣal added a handwritten footnote highlighting that ‘I shall not be then bound by a single word of the present Agreement’⁴¹ should the promises his family received from London during the war (correspondence Ḥusayn-McMahon) not be kept.⁴²

Some scholars have claimed that the Fayṣal–Weizmann agreement legally bound the entire ‘Arab national movement for which Fayṣal was the recognized spokesman at the Paris Peace conference’⁴³ to accept the idea of transforming Palestine into a ‘Jewish National Home’.

An alternative interpretation suggests that the way in which Fayṣal and his father Ḥusayn – both snubbed by the Arab-Palestinians during the ‘Great Revolt’ of 1916–18,⁴⁴ and both perceived in the region (and elsewhere) as mere instruments in London’s hands⁴⁵ – were handled, was further confirmation of the discriminatory approach of the Paris Conference.⁴⁶ The will to consider the *Sharīf* of Mecca and his sons as ‘natural leaders’ of the Arab-Palestinians was, not surprisingly, rooted in the idea that the local majority was composed by ‘false Arabs’. ‘The so-called Arabs of Palestine’, Clayton wrote to Bell in 1918, ‘are not to be compared with the real Arab of the Desert [...] He is purely local and takes little or no interest in matters outside his immediate surroundings.’⁴⁷ This perception, which in various forms was also projected on the Jews of Palestine,⁴⁸ was brought up again as a sort of mantra by dozens of British officials. A symbolic example, among many available, may be found in Roger Courtney, a member of the Palestine Police Force at the time. He clarified that ‘this particular kind of Arab-Palestinians’ was not in any way composed by ‘Arabs’, but rather by degenerate ‘Levantines’, thus individuals undeserving of being confused with ‘the real Arabs of the desert’.⁴⁹ In his eyes, as well as to those who believed that Fayṣal was the ‘legitimate spokesperson’ for Arab-Palestinians, they were nothing more than ‘a craven, cowardly lot’.⁵⁰ In claiming that the Fayṣal–Weizmann agreement has in some ways bound the entire ‘Arab national movement’ there is the risk of subscribing to the prejudices that transpire from such approaches.

San Remo Conference: whose land?

The San Remo Conference was called by the victorious powers in April 1920 with the purpose of putting the final word about the future of Syria, Palestine and Iraq. The meetings in Paris, in fact, ended without any official commitment being made regarding the former Ottoman territories,⁵¹ and without a peace agreement being signed with Turkey, while the summits in London had been useful to provide a provisional draft on the main issues.

The decisions pertaining the mandate for Palestine were officially confirmed by the Council of the League of Nations only on 24 July 1922. They became operative on 29 September of the following year, when Turkey renounced its rights and agreed to the terms imposed by the

Treaty of Lausanne. The latter did not come into force until 6 August 1924; that is the reason why several scholars indicate 1924 as the official starting point of the mandate for Palestine.

The main limits of the San Remo Conference were the same as those that had undermined the meetings in Paris and London, as well as the origin itself of the League of Nations: tens of millions of Arabs and hundreds of millions of Muslims did not have – at the moment in which the borders of their new countries were being arbitrarily drawn – any representative body that could give voice to their aspirations. The words written by Elizabeth Monroe (1905–86) on the decisions taken in San Remo hold in this sense significant symbolic value:

The decisions accorded neither with the wishes of the inhabitants nor with the unqualified end-of-war undertakings about freedom of choice. They were pieces of unabashed self-interest, suggesting to many onlookers that all talk of liberating small nations from oppression was so much cant.⁵²

Besides the British prime minister, Lloyd George, and his French counterpart Alexandre Millerand (1859–1943), the meetings in San Remo were also attended by the Italian prime minister, Francesco Nitti (1868–1953), and the Japanese ambassador Matsui Keishiro (1868–1946). Rome and Tokyo played purely representative roles. Italy was considered ‘of very little importance’,⁵³ and its leaders were viewed with disdain.⁵⁴ The historian Itagaki Yuzo described the subordinate role played by his country, highlighting that in order to protect ‘the interests and rights acquired in Asia and the South Pacific, Japan’s position at the San Remo conference was to leave the Middle East to Britain and France. She said in effect, please do whatever you like.’⁵⁵

In San Remo, thus, Paris and London – with Washington providing an ‘external support’ – divided up the Eastern Mediterranean area, without for the moment establishing the exact wording or the specific borders.⁵⁶ As far as Palestine was concerned, what Curzon defined ‘a verbatim repetition of Mr Balfour’s declaration of November 1917’ was included in the resolution that resulted from the meetings in San Remo.⁵⁷ It is common opinion that it was in fact this decision that transformed the Balfour Declaration into a binding act of international law.

The existence of a 'Jewish legitimacy' on the part of the Holy Land is rooted in an ancient history and is further supported by the concept of an 'endangered existence' referred to in different parts of this work. The decision to include the principles contained in the Balfour Declaration in the mandate for Palestine were thus supported by embraceable considerations. A growing number of scholars, however, go much further than this.⁵⁸ According to them, the results of the San Remo Conference and, more than this, the inclusion of the principles contained in the Balfour Declaration in the mandate for Palestine's text, assured to the Jewish people the exclusive right to create their 'national home' on 'the whole country of Palestine, not a mere part of it'.⁵⁹

The Levy Report – released on 9 July 2012 by a special committee appointed in late January 2012 by the Israeli prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, to investigate whether the Israeli presence in the West Bank is to be considered an occupation or not – pointed out, for example, that 'with the establishment of the United Nations in 1945, the principle of recognizing the validity of existing rights of states acquired under various mandates, including of course the rights of Jews to settle in the Land of Israel by virtue of the above documents, was determined in article 80 of its charter'.⁶⁰ According to the Levy Report, Article 80 of the UN Charter implicitly recognizes the mandate for Palestine. The late Eugene Rostow (1913–2002), former dean of Yale Law School, also known for being a key draftee of the UN Resolution 242, further clarified these aspects explaining that 'a trust' – as in Article 80 of the UN Charter – 'does not end because the trustee dies'.⁶¹ Backed by two International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinions in 1950,⁶² and 1971,⁶³ on the status of South-West Africa (Namibia), Rostow's argument, which is repeated in the Levy Report, is that although the League of Nations had ceased to exist, the commitments of the League of Nations remain binding.

These claims are marred by several inaccuracies, starting from the fact that the term 'national home' had no mutually agreed upon meaning or scope and that the British government was under no definite obligation, since the mandate made any Jewish immigration subject to 'suitable conditions' and contained safeguards for the rights and position of the non-Jewish communities. Furthermore, once the UN had been established, the mandate for Palestine – in which the word 'Arabs', representing almost 90 per cent of the total population, was

never mentioned, while the terms Jews and Zionists appeared 12 times in all – became a vestige of the past. As David Ben-Gurion clarified in July 1947:

The Mandate, in fact, does not exist because it was violated by the Mandatory. We are not in favour of renewing it [...] we say that the original intention and the need, and what in our conviction is just, should be decided upon by the United Nations [...] I said we do not ask for a Mandate any more, so it is not a question. The question does not arise on the Mandate.⁶⁴

Also the assertion that Article 80 of the UN Charter implicitly recognizes the mandate for Palestine is more complex than often claimed. One of the legal advisers to the Jewish Agency, Jacob Robinson (1889–1977), published a book in 1947 that presented an historical account of the Palestine question and the UN. Robinson explained that when the Jewish Agency learned that the Allied powers had discussed at the Yalta Conference (February 1945) a new system of international supervision to supersede the system of mandates, the agency decided to submit a formal request to the San Francisco Conference (April–June 1945) to obtain a safeguarding clause in the UN Charter. The proposed clause would have prevented a trusteeship agreement from altering the Jewish right to nationhood secured by the Balfour Declaration and the mandate for Palestine. The UN Conference ignored the Jewish Agency's request and stipulated in Article 80 of the Charter that the UN organization did have the necessary power to conclude trusteeship agreements that could alter existing rights held under a mandate.⁶⁵

Article 1 of General Assembly Resolution 24(I) reserved the right of the UN to decide not to assume any function or power of the League of Nations. On 19 March 1948, during the 271st meeting of the Security Council, US Ambassador Warren Austin (1877–1962) cited UN General Assembly (UNGA) Resolution 24(I) and pointed out:

The United Nations does not automatically fall heir to the responsibilities either of the League of Nations or of the Mandatory Power in respect of the Palestine Mandate. The record seems to us entirely clear that the United Nations did not take over the League of Nations Mandate system.⁶⁶

Finally, Resolution 9(I) of the UNGA reminded the members that the treaty obligations contained in chapter XI ('Declaration Regarding Non-Self-Governing Territories') of the UN Charter did not require the establishment of trusteeship agreements. In a resolution adopted on 9 February 1946, the General Assembly drew attention to the fact that the obligations accepted under chapter XI of the UN Charter by all members were 'already full force'.⁶⁷ The scope of Article 80 had been deliberately limited to chapter XII ('nothing in this Chapter shall be construed in or of itself to alter in any manner the rights whatsoever of any states or any peoples'), so that it would not interfere with those new treaty obligations in chapter XI.

On top of all these considerations, the above-mentioned thesis of 'exclusivity', besides being unjustified from an historical point of view – Palestine was not owned or inhabited by one single population in its entire history⁶⁸ – is incorrect also from the legal perspective imposed since the early stage by London. Hubert Young (1885–1950), an important figure of the Foreign Office, wrote in November 1920 that the commitment made by London 'in respect of Palestine is the Balfour Declaration constituting it a National Home for the Jewish People'. Curzon corrected him: 'No. "Establishing a National Home in Palestine for the Jewish people" – a very different proposition.'⁶⁹

The British White Paper of June 1922 – the first document that *officially* clarified the interpretation of the mandate's text – pointed out that the Balfour Declaration does 'not contemplate that Palestine as a whole should be converted into a Jewish National Home, but that such a Home should be founded "in Palestine"'.⁷⁰ Furthermore, it stressed that the 'Zionist congress' that took place in Carlsbad in September 1921 had officially accepted 'the determination of the Jewish people to live with the Arab people on terms of unity and mutual respect, and together with them to make the common home into a flourishing community, the upbuilding of which may assure to each of its peoples an undisturbed national development'.⁷¹ The 'common home' to which this passage was referring was the area in which Jews and Arab Palestinians were living, and not the land to the east of the Jordan, completely devoid of a Jewish presence and excluded, as also Chaim Weizmann confirmed,⁷² by the White Paper itself.⁷³

It is only in light of these clarifications that the preamble,⁷⁴ and Article 2,⁷⁵ of the mandate can and should be understood. It is

noteworthy that Zionist consent to such interpretation was requested and received *before* the mandate was confirmed in July 1922. In Weizmann's words:

It was made clear to us that confirmation of the Mandate would be conditional on our acceptance of the policy as interpreted in the White Paper [of 1922], and my colleagues and I therefore had to accept it, which we did, though not without some qualms.⁷⁶

Beyond the problematic aspects underlying the 'exclusivity thesis', it is perhaps the aura that, over the decades, surrounded the League of Nations that created some of the most rooted misunderstandings. Such organization – as well as the mandates with which it was entrusted in San Remo – was an instrument created by Western powers to carry out Western interests: referring to it as an *ex cathedra* source of legality means to apply a simplistic approach to an issue that is anything but simple.

The almost exclusive system at the disposal of a huge multitude of human beings to express their wishes and fears consisted in sending letters to the authorities who had taken it upon themselves to decide their fate. There were, however, some isolated exceptions to this. A Christian and Muslim Palestinian delegation was welcomed in London by His Majesty's authorities in August 1921; in the following months, the British Colonial Office engaged in consultations with Mūsā Kāẓim al-Ḥusaynī (1850–1934), President of the Palestine Arab Delegation.⁷⁷ These exceptions, however, were in fact illusory. Most of the decisions regarding their future had already been taken in the previous months and years. Furthermore, the petitions coming from the members of that delegation, which in broken English attempted in the subsequent months to influence the last lingering aspects,⁷⁸ were not in any way taken into consideration:⁷⁹

We strongly object to any further steps being taken with regard to the Mandate while we are still negotiating with the British government about the future of Palestine. We again wish to inform you that the Arab people of Palestine can never accept the Mandate in its present form.⁸⁰

There is today a general consensus that the punishments imposed on Germany at Versailles, the same that facilitated the end of the Weimar Republic and the rise of Adolf Hitler (1889–1945), were counter-productive, as well as dictated by interests that had much in common with the ‘survival of the fittest’ and little to do with the present-day understanding of customary or international law. The solipsistic and paternalistic approach imposed by the League of Nations on Palestine’s local majority – and by extension to millions of men and women in Asia and Africa – requires an evaluation that applies at the very least a similar approach.⁸¹ Even more so considering that the local majority had no responsibility for the outbreak of World War I. They were not, therefore, required to pay the price for its outcome, nor to strive for the establishment of defined borders that might satisfy the expectations of the European powers. Thinking the opposite – claiming for instance that the mere fact that they had been subjects to previous dominations might justify such impositions, or, that the then absence of a customary international law ‘beyond the realm of the actual international society which was creating Palestine at that very moment’⁸² is sufficient to legitimize *sine die* such an attitude – means endorsing, once more, the discriminatory approach of the time.

Churchill’s mark

While the borders and mandates were being discussed in San Remo, some no less important events were unfolding in Palestine. Since the British invasion at the end of 1917, the area had been governed by a military administration subject to General Allenby’s authority. In the spring of 1920 this was replaced by a civil administration under the authority of the first ‘High Commissioner for Palestine’. For the new post, made official on 1 July, the British government appointed Herbert Samuel.⁸³ Such a choice, considered ‘highly dangerous’ by Allenby⁸⁴ – even a Zionist sympathizer like Cecil defined it as not ‘very fortunate’⁸⁵ – was received with disbelief in Palestine by most Muslims and Christians alike. The latter were reassured by Samuel with the promise that his effort in favour of Zionist ambitions would go hand in hand ‘with a scrupulous respect for the rights of the present non-Jewish inhabitants’.⁸⁶ Aref al-Aref (1892–1973) – the well-known Jerusalemite historian who Likhovski went so far as to define as ‘a native

colonizer'⁸⁷ – summarized the feelings of the local majority in the following letter sent to London:

The nomination of Sir Herbert Samuel, one of the Zionist leaders, to High Commissioner of Palestine, is of great interest for the Arabic nation and has deep significance for all inhabitants of the region who since the beginning of occupation continue to declare that they refuse to deliver their affairs to the desires of foreigners. We consider this nomination the first step in achieving Zionist desires and in expediting the unjust decisions made in San Remo which the Arab people of Palestine and all those of Arab countries protested against. [...] please take note of our protest.⁸⁸

In the months that followed, a second decision was implemented, which brought about other important changes. The Palestinian administration was transferred from the responsibility of the Foreign Office to that of the Colonial Office. This meant, in the first place, the replacement of the influence exercised there by Foreign Minister Curzon – always critical with respect to Zionism and convinced it was necessary to allow 'Arabs to have a chance'⁸⁹ – with that of the colonial secretary Winston Churchill, known for his staunch support of Zionist ambitions (he often defined himself 'an old Zionist').⁹⁰

The new post and the attitude shown by Churchill in his way of dealing with Palestine immediately aroused the hostility of various British officials posted in the region: 'Mr Churchill's visit',⁹¹ commented Jaffa Captain Chisholm Dunbar Brunton (1887–?), 'put the final touch to the picture. He upheld the Zionist cause and treated the Arab demands like those of a negligible opposition to be put off by a few political phrases and treated like bad children.'⁹² Churchill, being aware that several other British officials harboured critical feelings towards Zionism, and perceiving with apprehension the impact it was having on the local context, sent out a memo on 11 August 1921 requesting 'the removal of all anti-Zionist civil officials, however highly placed.'⁹³

CHAPTER 8

DIVIDE AND RULE: THE CREATION OF THE TRANSJORDAN EMIRATE

To define, as to name, is to conquer.

*Arif Dirlik, Turkish American historian*¹

‘Israel opposes the establishment of an additional Palestinian state [additional to Jordan] in the Gaza district and in the area between Israel and Jordan.’² These words were included in the ‘peace initiative’ presented in May 1989 by Israel’s Labor–Likud ‘National Unity’ government. Twenty-five years later the ‘Jordan option’ is back, this time increasingly mentioned in Israeli and international media.³

Whenever there is a concrete effort to push forward the Israeli–Palestinian peace process, talk about ‘a substitute homeland’ for the Palestinians re-emerges. Most of those supporting this scheme claim that well before the partition suggested by the United Nations General Assembly (1947), the Zionist movement suffered a mutilation of territory following the unilateral British decision (1922) to separate Transjordan from the rest of the land subject to the mandate for Palestine. It is also argued that Palestinians already had/have a sovereign state – Jordan – and that for this reason it was Israel who in the subsequent decades accepted a territory that, even including today’s West Bank and the Gaza Strip, would represent only 22 per cent of the whole ‘historic Palestine’. In the words of the executive director of the non-profit American–Israeli Cooperative Enterprise, Mitchel Bard:

Historic Palestine included not only Israel and the West Bank, but also all of modern Jordan. It is *Israel*, including the disputed territories, that is only 22 percent of 'Palestine'. If Israel were to withdraw completely from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, it would possess only about 18 percent. And from Israel's perspective, it is the Zionists who have made the real sacrifice by giving up 82 percent of the Land of Israel. In fact, by accepting the UN's partition resolution, they were prepared to accept only about 12 percent of historic Israel before the Arab states attacked and tried to destroy the nascent state of Israel.⁴

In order to shed light on these and other related issues it is useful to outline a geo-historical and religious framework, starting with some often repeated questions. Is it possible to refer, without explicitly contextualizing it, to an 'historic Palestine' on both banks of the Jordan River? Is it true that 'about seventy-five percent of Palestine's "native soil", east of the Jordan River, called Jordan, is literally an independent Palestinian-Arab state located on the majority of the land of Palestine'?⁵ Is it correct to write that, with the creation of Transjordan, 'Great Britain robbed the Jewish people of three quarters of its country'?⁶

Jordan and/is Palestine?

The mandate for Palestine, in which were included the provisions contained in the Balfour Declaration, had the direct, complete and explicit jurisdiction over the area that in 1922 became the Emirate of Transjordan (Kingdom of Jordan from 1949) for eight months: from July 1920, when Fayṣal was thrown out of Damascus, to 12 March 1921, the day of the Cairo Conference that, in Churchill's words, sanctioned 'the policy to be adopted with regard to Trans Jordanian'.⁷

The mandate for Palestine was formally approved by the League of Nations on 24 July 1922, becoming operative on 6 August 1924, when the Treaty of Lausanne entered into force. A large part of the 'principles enunciated in the Mandate [for Palestine]', clarified in May 1922 by the then legal secretary of the British-run government of Palestine, Norman Bentwich, 'await the beginning of realization when the Council of the League of Nations shall at last have given its decision. And it is only when that step has been taken that the sovereign powers of the Mandatory can

become effective'.⁸ Transjordan was thus part of the mandate for Palestine, with the proviso that Britain might administer it separately and for a period that at best may be considered scarcely relevant. A scarce relevance that, together with some considerations developed in the following pages, put further in doubt the widespread allegation according to which Zionist ambitions were betrayed by London:

In accord with the Sykes–Picot agreement [...] the French government aspired to control Damascus and the interior, so it expelled Faysal from Damascus in July 1920. But the French did not claim the southern part of Faysal's territory, which now fell under British jurisdiction [...] *the British now for the first time called their whole territory in the Levant the 'Mandate for Palestine'. In other words, starting in July 1920, Jordan formed part of Palestine, as least as far as the British were concerned.*

But it did not remain so for long. In March 1921 Winston Churchill, the colonial secretary, found it 'necessary immediately to occupy militarily Trans-Jordania'. Rather than use British troops to do this, he decided to control it indirectly. Toward this end, Churchill divided the Palestine Mandate into two parts along the Jordan River, creating the Emirate of Transjordan on the east bank and excluding Jewish immigration there.⁹ Churchill offered this territory to Faysal's older brother, 'Abdallah [second son of Husayn], who after some hesitation accepted [...]. After March 1921, the east bank was no longer Palestine.¹⁰ (italics added)

Some interesting observations, which go in an opposite direction to what has just been analysed, were put forth by the Berlin jurist Paul S. Riebenfeld (1911–2001), Zionist delegate to the Palestine Mandate Commission of the League of Nations from 1937 to 1939. He wrote that

in vain will the diplomat or scholar look in the files of the League of Nations or any other archives for evidence that in the year 1922, or any other year before 1946 [when the League of Nations was dissolved], took place the "severance" or "separation" of Trans-Jordan from Palestine; the "Partition" of Palestine; the establishment of a "Mandate of Trans-Jordan"; or "Trans-Jordan Independence".¹¹

According to Riebenfeld, in fact, Transjordan was in no way legally separated from Palestine: 'There was no separate government [...] Trans-Jordan remained under the Palestine Mandate and was administered under the authority of the High Commissioner in Jerusalem.'¹² Yet the sources of the time suggest a more complex reality. Transjordan, unlike Palestine, was never occupied by British troops,¹³ and during the mandatory period, at the very least starting from 6 August 1924 (the date in which the Treaty of Lausanne entered into force), there was no 'overlapping', either at a legal or practical level, between the two areas; it is no coincidence that the inhabitants of Transjordan were excluded from the scope of Palestinian nationality by Article 21 of the 1925 Palestinian Citizenship Order:

For the purpose of this Order: (1) The expression 'Palestine' includes the territories to which the mandate for Palestine applies, except such parts of the territory comprised in Palestine to the East of the [River of] Jordan and the Dead Sea as were defined by Order of the High Commissioner dated 1 September 1922.¹⁴

Palestine and Transjordan were always included in the same report submitted annually to the League of Nations' Permanent Mandates Commission. The reason for this, however, can be understood only if considering what the report and the representatives of the Permanent Mandates Commission clarified on this specific aspect: 'In view of the fact that Transjordan was a mandated territory, and since it was not excepted from the provisions of Article 24 of the Mandate, would it not be possible for the mandatory Power to take the necessary steps in order that the Commission should receive regularly the laws and other regulations promulgated in Transjordan?'¹⁵

On 18 April 1925, the jurist Eugène Borel, appointed mediator for the League of Nations in order to clarify some aspects inherent to the Treaty of Lausanne, pointed out that 'Palestine and Transjordan have each a completely separate organization [organisation entièrement distincte]. We are therefore in the presence of three sufficiently separate states to be considered as distinct Parties.'¹⁶ The agreement signed by Britain and Transjordan three years later (20 February 1928) – when Emir Abdullah (1882–1951) obtained the powers of legislation and administration, while committing himself to follow British advice on

specific matters – was concluded in the form of an international treaty and referred to Transjordan and Palestine as ‘countries’.¹⁷ ‘Transjordan’, as noted by John Quigley, ‘was treated as a state’.¹⁸

It is in the framework just outlined that the following declaration, issued in December 1945 by the Supreme Court of Palestine (judge W. Clive Curry) in relation to a case brought by a Palestinian citizen, Jawdat Badawī Sha‘bān, can and should be evaluated:

Now, Trans-Jordan has a government entirely independent of Palestine – the laws of Palestine are not applicable in Trans-Jordan nor are their laws applicable here. Moreover, although the High Commissioner of Palestine is also High Commissioner for Trans-Jordan, Trans-Jordan has an entirely independent government under the rule of an Amir and apart from certain reserved matters the High Commissioner cannot interfere with the government of Trans-Jordan [...] Trans-Jordan comes within the meaning of the word ‘state’ as used in Article 15 [of the 1925 Palestinian Citizenship Order] [...] Trans-Jordan nationality is recognised [...] Palestinians and Trans-Jordanians are foreigners and therefore Trans-Jordan must be regarded as a foreign state in relation to Palestine.¹⁹

Several international law experts have rejected Riebenfeld’s thesis.²⁰ Assuming that his claims provide an accurate reconstruction and that the ‘Trans-Jordan province’ enjoyed fictitious autonomy,²¹ it is worth asking why he did not find it opportune to consider the role played by international consensus. Even supposing that the Emirate of Transjordan²² ‘remained a part of Palestine’²³ until 1946, when British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin granted it independence with an act of ‘doubtful legality’,²⁴ why should the resolution of the UN, that in 1947 suggested to leave out Transjordan from the partition, be considered less worthy than some dubious interpretations concerning a mandate issued by an international organization much less representative than the UN, and that did not include any representative of the populations subject to its decisions? The question is even more pertinent in light of the words written in 1918 by Arnold Toynbee (1889–1975), affiliated at the time with the Political Intelligence Department of the Foreign Office: ‘Jordan’, Toynbee observed, ‘forms a good natural frontier. Nor are there any Jewish agricultural colonies east of the river.’²⁵

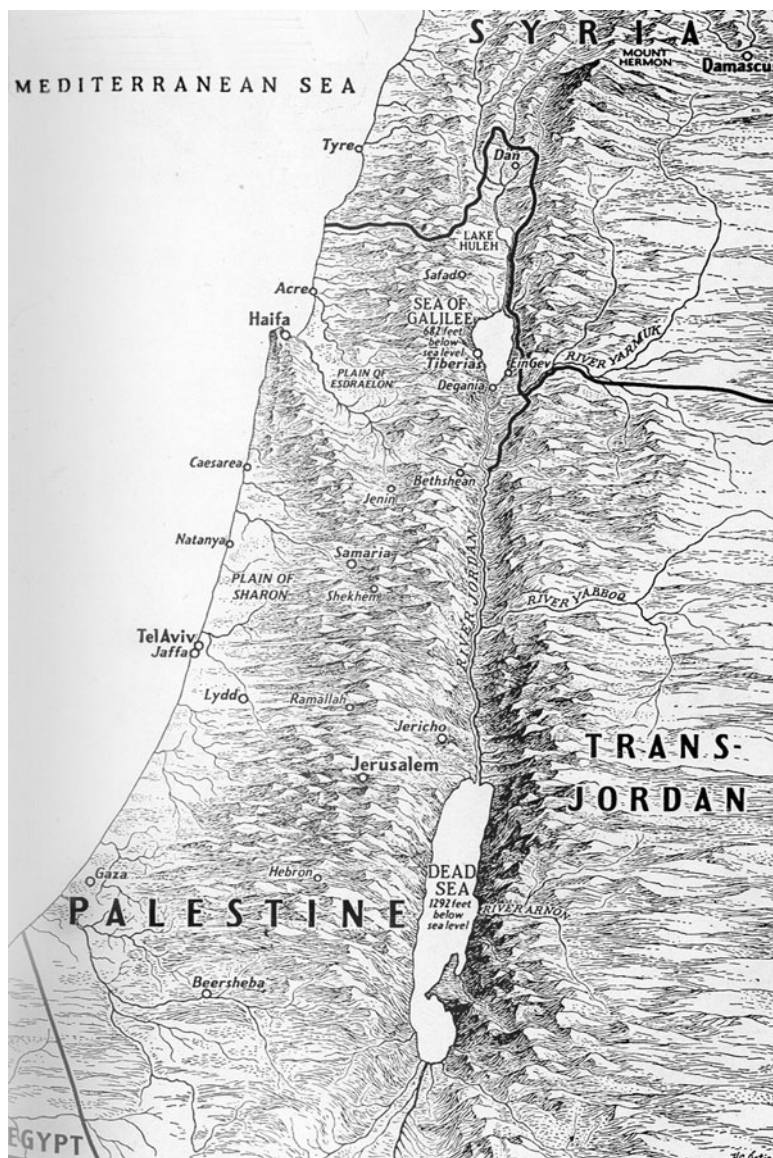


Figure 8.1 W. C. Lowdermilk, *Palestine Land of Promise* (London: The Camelot Press, 1944), p. 101.

In order to better answer the questions just addressed, it is important to stress that after the General Assembly of the UN suggested the partition of Palestine in 1947, and the State of Israel was unilaterally established, the Jewish people's rights under the mandate have been fulfilled and there no longer exists any unilateral right to settle in the former mandatory area except for the State of Israel. In the words of Marcelo Kohen, international law professor at the University of Geneva, 'once the [Jewish] National Home was established on part of Palestine, and more importantly, as a state, the immigration to other parts of Palestine was no longer justified under the Balfour Declaration or under the Mandate agreement'.²⁶

Some scholars have claimed, however, that the 1947 Partition Plan had 'no legal ramifications' and that its 'validity hinged on acceptance by both parties of the General Assembly's recommendation'.²⁷ Indeed, neither the Israeli establishment, nor the UN, nor the Arab states asked the Palestinians to reject or accept that resolution.²⁸ Moreover, to keep claiming that Resolution 181 is void,²⁹ and, more than this, that the UN had no authority to make it³⁰ – two aspects that, not surprisingly, had been suggested also by some Arab scholars³¹ – removes one of the main internationally recognized grounds for the recognition of the State of Israel. Finally, to minimize its legal value by resorting to a problematic interpretation related to Article 80 of the UN Charter can be counterproductive in as much as that same Charter is based on 'the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples' (Art. 1, sect. 2) and its Articles 80, 81 and 85 unequivocally accorded the necessary power on the General Assembly to finalize agreements on the emancipation or trusteeship of non-self-governing territories in collaboration with the states concerned, or on behalf of the organization itself.³²

This is a particularly compelling aspect when considering that Israel's admission to the United Nations (11 May 1949) was not unconditional but bound to its compliance with its explanations and assurances about the acceptance of the UN Charter and resolutions (Israel's original application for admission was, not by chance, rejected by the United Nations Security Council, UNSC). 'Negotiations', assured Abba Eban (1915–2002) in front of the UNGA on 5 May 1949, 'would not, however, affect the juridical status of Jerusalem [placed by the UN under a trusteeship], to be defined by international consent'.³³

The region's 'less colonial' border

This chapter began by mentioning the thesis according to which 'it is the Zionists who have made the real sacrifice by giving up 82 percent of the Land of Israel' and asking if it is correct to claim that with the creation of Transjordan 'Great Britain robbed the Jewish people of three quarters of its country.' No single answers can be provided to these provocative claims; different 'cultures' provided different responses depending on their specific interests and the historical period under consideration. In regards to the 'Jewish tradition', for instance, it would be necessary to indicate the period of reference. In other words, it would be important to assess if the 'promised borders' of the 'historical Jewish Palestine'³⁴ are those mentioned in the Book of Numbers (34. 11–12), where the eastern 'promised border' is the Jordan River: 'The boundary will go down from Shepham to Riblah on the east side of Ain and continue along the slopes east of the Sea of Kinnereth [Galilee]. Then the boundary will go down along the Jordan and end at the Salt [Dead] Sea. This will be your land, with its boundaries on every side.'³⁵ Or if the limits to be taken into consideration are those cited in subsequent books such as Deuteronomy (Deut. 1.6–8 and Deut. 11.24)³⁶ and Joshua (Josh. 1.4),³⁷ in which, on the contrary, the border extends beyond the Jordan River.

The issue is whether the 'promised border'³⁸ to be taken into consideration is the one defined in Ezekiel (Ezek. 47.15–20),³⁹ in which the Jordan River forms the eastern border, or if it is the case to consider a previous one that could, for instance, be traced to the time of David's kingdom, when a large section of present-day Jordan was likely included.⁴⁰ Also the description commonly used to indicate the biblical extension – 'All of Israel, from Dan to Beer-Sheba' of the 'Promised Land' (cited in 1 Samuel 3.20 and in several other biblical passages) – does not eliminate the doubt. The eastern border, once again, is not clear. 'From Dan to Beer-Sheba' is in fact equivalent to saying from the spring of the Jordan River to the hills *west* of the Dead Sea and to the south until the Negev.⁴¹

One possible answer to the doubts brought forth so far could be the following: it is methodologically incorrect to recall the Bible when discussing possible borders or ownerships. In the context of the Scriptures they had a more ideal than historical value. If we choose,

however, to maintain a forced bearing on what has been called 'Deuteronomistic historiography', another, more geopolitical than religious answer is the one that follows:

The singular importance that Jordan has in biblical history does not depend on its existence, as it was for the Nile in Egypt, as a dispenser of fertility or a means of communication, but rather on being the border line and a valid stronghold against nearby Eastern populations. These properties originate from the exceptional desolation and wildness of the region through which the river flows, from the lack of bridges or of easily accessible river crossings, from the periodic and unorganized overflows, from intricate shores of impenetrable marks, the shelter in other times of ferocious beasts.⁴²

Beyond the possible exegesis linked to the Scriptures and the 'several contradictions'⁴³ that may be found within them, the changeable 'borders' referred to maintained the same volatility, this time more historical than religious, under most of the ancient dominations. Archaeologists and scholars of other disciplines continue to debate the historical accuracy of borders during the kingdom of Israel under David and Solomon, the Persian period,⁴⁴ and many other historical phases. It is, however, ascertained that a relevant percentage of the land beyond the Jordan River was ruled by the Hasmonean dynasty (140 BCE–37 BCE). The kingdom of Herod the Great (73 BCE–4 BCE), an Idumaean (which means 'from the land of Edom') forcibly converted to Judaism, included a relevant percentage of present-day Jordan; upon Herod's death, the Romans divided the kingdom among three of his sons using the river as an administrative boundary between the three areas.⁴⁵ Conversely, Byzantine Palestine (390 CE–636 CE) encompassed a much wider area, although 'it never became one clearly defined entity, be it from the geographic and administrative, the ethnic or even the religious point of view'.⁴⁶ With the Mamluks (who were not Arabs but rather Turks), between 1250 and 1516, Jordan River served as an administrative boundary in the north, but not in the south. Under the Ottoman Empire (1517–1917), the function of the river as an administrative boundary became increasingly clear.

This brief account confirms that 'Historic Palestine', purposely renamed 'the land of many borders',⁴⁷ is in itself an indication that it cannot be circumscribed in a simple and univocal way.⁴⁸ It changes depending on the historical period under investigation and the type of reasoning with which one intends to proceed.⁴⁹

In a meeting on 10 September 1919, for instance, Prime Minister Lloyd George decided to resort to the Bible in order to resolve the uncertainties regarding the borders of Palestine. More precisely, he resorted to some of its most well-known interpretations. He asked for a copy of Adam Smith's *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and counted on the advice of a protestant missionary society (the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel).⁵⁰ Despite the firm desire to rely on the Scripture, the British colonial office continued in subsequent years to stress that – unlike the north, south and west boundaries – 'on the east, the boundary [of Palestine] is undefined'.⁵¹

More practical, however, was the approach adopted by some of the most important Zionist exponents. Some of them, including Sokolow, clarified that the eastern border of 'Erets-Yiśra'el' was represented by the Jordan River.⁵² Many others, however, showed themselves increasingly inflexible – in particular after the beginning of World War I – and reclaiming a much more vast area. Such requests were mainly justified through arguments linked to security (the 'ability to defend the borders'), as well as to ideological and economic aspects in relation to the exploitation of rivers, lands, ports and railway systems, which according to their intentions would have allowed for the sustainable development of the region.⁵³

In this study the perimeter used to outline Palestine redraws the rough delimitations commonly adopted by historians – that is, the same lines that the Ottoman government used its official correspondence in the nineteenth century to indicate Arz-i Filasṭīn (the land of Palestine), coinciding with the area to the west of the Jordan River. Arz-i Filasṭīn did not represent in any way an independent district or province, even if it kept, in the popular as well as in the official use, a specific meaning (see [Chapter 2](#)).

In the general context outlined up to this point it may be appropriate to add the marginal significance, from different points of view, of the area encompassed in the present-day Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, especially when compared with the land on the other side of the Jordan

River. The comparison is, at best, inaccurate. An interesting example – which also supports the thesis of a conscious symbolic distinction between the two banks of the Jordan – is related to the death of the prophet Moses. It occurred on Mount Nebo, present-day Jordan, and not surprisingly was understood as a punishment: ‘Then the Lord said to him, “This is the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob when I said, I will give it to your descendants. I have let you see it with your eyes, but you will not cross over into it”.’⁵⁴ The lack of religious value (no holy place of particular note)⁵⁵ is accompanied by a limited geographic and historic importance. The few places worth mentioning, including Petra or Jerash, are only spectacular ruins and tombs, with negligible symbolic value.

Some researchers have noted that in ancient times Transjordan, thanks to the work carried out between the fourth century BCE and the second century CE by the population of the Nabataeans, was one of the granaries of Rome, with a population of around 1 million inhabitants: ‘Three times its present [Lowdermilk was writing in the 1940s] primitive and backward population.’⁵⁶ Taking for granted these conjectures it is, however, worthwhile to keep in mind that 80 per cent of present-day Jordan is composed of desert and semi-arid areas.⁵⁷ Still in 1945 a memorandum drafted by the British colonial office described that area with the following words:

The possibility of [. . .] development in Transjordan is most limited; only the western fringe of the country is cultivable, the remainder of the state being desert, with a rainfall inadequate to support cultivation and with no other resources from which water could be obtained. The only part which is likely to prove susceptible of development is the comparatively narrow Jordan Valley.⁵⁸

Zionism, as well the role played by the British colonial power, certainly accelerated the general development of the region and the process of self-identification of the local majority, but never, in any historical period, did the land beyond the Jordan River have a religious, geographic, social or cultural value comparable to the land between the river and the Mediterranean Sea.

It is correct to claim that the boundaries of the states in the Eastern Mediterranean area are in the great majority of the cases ‘alien’ to the

history of the region, in that they are the result of strategies and commitments taken by European governments (first and foremost Britain). It is, moreover, appropriate to note that the river's course began to be exploited by local nationalists in the period following World War I. It is, however, misleading to equate the Jordan River to the artificial borders drawn up by European powers. The river represented an important factor for a general geographical 'distinction' – which does not mean a political border – between Palestine and Jordan (see [Chapter 2](#)).⁵⁹

Should it be necessary to indicate the 'less contrived', or 'less colonial' border, among the many present in the entire region, that of the Jordan River appears in many respects the most appropriate.⁶⁰ In Schölch's words:

Beneath the fluctuating surface of administrative boundaries, an image of the region's coherency was recognizable, at least after 1830. During the 1870s it took on contours that were clearer. To this extent, the Mandate zone of Palestine was no artificial, colonial creation.⁶¹

Though often ignored (as in the case of Rachel Havrelock's book),⁶² there are dozens of travellers' tales that over the centuries witnessed the division/ barrier that the vigorous flow of those waters – more consistent than today – determined. Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the perception of the river was clear. After a visit to the region, Henry van Dyke (1852–1933), professor at the University of Princeton, clarified that 'the Jordan is not a little river to be loved; it is a barrier to be passed over'.⁶³ The US explorers William Libbey (1855–1927) and Franklin Hoskins (1858–1920) went beyond, arguing that until bridges were built on the river the residents on both sides of it would remain 'strangers or enemies, to each other'.⁶⁴ Such considerations were in line with the impressions reported by the British consul in Jerusalem, John Dickson, in July 1892:

The 'Mutaseflick', a minor province, of Palestine, is bounded in the North by a line which runs from the river Awja (a little to the north of Jaffa) past the village of Sinjel (between Jerusalem and Nablus) and down to the fords of the Jordan, near Jericho,

and is separated from Eastern Syria by the river Jordan and the Dead Sea.⁶⁵

Beyond the River Jordan, which today has a range and a flow more contained than in past centuries, it has been the so-called Rift Valley that further demarcates the region in two parts. From Syria to Mozambique, the Rift Valley extends for around 5,000 km. In the northern part it is composed by the Jordan Valley, in the southern by the Arabah Valley. 'The Rift Valley', as noted in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, 'was throughout history one of the main factors for the division of the region into two parts, very infrequently – and then only partially – united into a single state.'⁶⁶

Though the area between the two shores of the River Jordan has always enjoyed a more or less clear demarcation,⁶⁷ the same may not be said for the perimeter between the southern extremity of the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. In fact, despite the presence of the Rift Valley, an important bulwark such as the one represented by the Jordan was missing. In the first decades of the twentieth century this aspect became increasingly relevant also for the British establishment. As the document cited below confirms, the detailed limitation of the southern borders represented a task that was anything but simple for British officials:

The Palestine–Sinai frontier is well marked by cairns both at the head of the NAQB AKABA and on the shore of the Gulf, about a kilometre from the Egyptian post of TABA.

The Palestine–Transjordan frontier is not marked and could not be identified. It was variously described as (a) 'through Peake Pasha's old house' [Frederick Peake, a British officer] i.e. about 1 kilometre from the Port of AKABA, or (b) 'along the Wadi Araba' i.e. one of at least 3 different water courses from 1 to 4 kilometres from AKABA, or (c) '3 kilometres from the Fort of AKABA', the authority for which is unknown.

In para 2 of my report (N. 33/702 of 8th April, 1929) on a reconnaissance to AKABA through the WADI ARABA I pointed out that

'The Boundary between Palestine and Transjordan is too vaguely defined. It might be advisable to consider the appointment of a boundary Commission to delimit the frontier

more clearly before any acute questions arise as to the legality of police or administrative action or as to the validity of rival concession claims.'

It is now important I consider that an accredited officer of each Government be appointed to determine the mutual frontier and to demarcate it on the ground by the erection of a few cairns.⁶⁸

The territory bestowed to Transjordan would have included a population of only 320,000 individuals. Many of them were Bedouins, and thus people who, according to Chisholm Dunbar Brunton, 'do not form a homogeneous political entity'.⁶⁹ Despite these aspects, to believe that a selective use of the Holy Scriptures could justify the creation of a 'national home' (also) in an area that did not contain any Jewish community would be problematic. Just as problematic is the thesis according to which the Palestinians should consider the area beyond the Jordan River as their 'natural home'.⁷⁰ Transjordan was certainly an artificial creation implemented by London mostly in order to compensate the Ḥusayn family and to strengthen its own imperial strategies. But its 'artificiality' cannot be used as an argument for imposing on the Palestinians an alternative land to that which for most of them was the only possible 'natural home':⁷¹ "Arḍ Filasṭīn" (see [Chapter 2](#)).⁷²

CHAPTER 9

HAJJ AMĪN AL-ḤUSAYNĪ AND THE SUPREME MUSLIM COUNCIL: THE *LONGA MANUS* OF LONDON

The crisis consists in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born; in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.¹

Antonio Gramsci (1891–1937)

There is an aspect in the historiographical debate on the almost three decades of the British mandate in Palestine that still exerts a special interest. It revolves around one of the most controversial figures in the recent history of the Eastern Mediterranean: the ‘Grand Muftī of Jerusalem’, otherwise known as the ‘Grand Muftī of Palestine’, or ‘Grand Muftī of Jerusalem and the region of Palestine’.

These functions are by now familiar to many, as is the name of the person who held this position between 1921 and 1948, Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī. He imposed himself as a champion of the Palestinian cause until the 1940s, although his efforts were ‘soiled’ by his collaborating and sympathizing with Adolf Hitler and Nazism.²

Arab nationalists express their utmost gratitude to Your Excellency [Adolf Hitler] for having brought up the issue of Palestine on many occasions. [...] I take this opportunity to

delegate my Private Secretary to the German Government in order that, in the name of the largest and strongest Arab organization and in my name, he can begin the negotiations required for sincere, loyal cooperation in all fields.³

Al-Ḥusaynī's negative influence is today acknowledged almost universally, in the West as well as in the Arab world.⁴ He is often called 'Hitler's Mufti',⁵ or 'Hitler's Jihadist Stepchild'.⁶ However, already since two decades, and peaking in the last one, a significant percentage of the studies produced on the subject has gradually moved beyond this view. One example among many is represented by *The Case for Israel*. Published in 2003 by Harvard jurist Alan Dershowitz, it is often cited in academic works and represents one of the major international bestsellers published in recent years on the contemporary history of the region. In one of its main passages, aimed to demonstrate the argument that between the 1920s and 1940s al-Ḥusaynī was an acknowledged representative of the Palestinian people, Dershowitz strengthened his point of view by proposing the following passage: 'Even Professor Edward Said believes that [quoting Said] "Ḥajj Amin al-Hussaini represented the Palestinian Arab national consensus, had the backing of the Palestinian political parties that functioned in Palestine, and was recognized in some form by Arab governments as the voice of the Palestinian people"'.⁷ Dershowitz expressed no doubts: Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī was 'the official leader of the Palestinians'.⁸

Dershowitz, although being well known in the academic world, is not an historian, and his writings are notoriously controversial as well as apologetic in regard to Israel. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to underestimate his thesis and confine them to a negligible circle of 'provocateurs'. The consultation of any search engine confirms that through the publication of articles, illustrations and books, a very large number of scholars – some well known, others less so – continue to convey similar messages: 'The leader of the Palestinian Arabs (who were on the side of the Nazis), Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, the Mufti of Jerusalem, spent the war in Berlin with his entourage where they broadcast Hitlerian propaganda to the entire Middle East.'⁹

The implications of such an analysis are obvious. As the 'official leader' of the Palestinian people, the latter automatically become, at least in principle, responsible for their own destiny. In other words, the

Palestinians would have a moral debt to be served.¹⁰ A moral debt before whom their historical claims should (or could) be read in a different light.

As will become clearer in the following pages, Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī was in many respects a product of British imperial policies and thus the interpretations just mentioned are highly questionable from an historical and political point of view. Furthermore, they generally fail to mention that in 1939 about 6,000 Arab Palestinians joined the Allies to fight Axis powers. Nevertheless, the rise to power of Ḥajj Amīn, and the means created and granted to him, remain needed tools for analysing the way in which the authorities in London related to the local realities post-World War I and in order to comprehend to what extent these practices have marked the subsequent development of Palestinian society.

Imperium in imperio

For the purposes of this study it is not necessary to linger on an evaluation of the strategies carried out by Ḥajj Amīn.¹¹ If only due to the fact that many historians have already scrutinized his actions: he is an historical figure who, although still relevant from an academic point of view, has been ‘condemned by history’, as happened to all the leaders who colluded with Nazism.¹²

Other matters are of interest in this context. The first revolves around the religious title of ‘Grand Muftī of Palestine’. This title was created ‘in the image and likeness’ of the future British mandatory power. The function of Muftī of Jerusalem was already known before the British government’s direct involvement in Palestine. However, it was clearly bound, geographically as well as in relation to its authority, to the city of Jerusalem,¹³ which had reverted to an independent *mutasarriflik* (district) in 1864 and was required to report directly to Istanbul.¹⁴ Such a role traditionally guaranteed prestige,¹⁵ due to Jerusalem’s symbolic value, but never power of one muftī over another.

Under the direct British influence, the title went from a local (Jerusalem) to a much wider sphere of influence (Palestine). What once was the Muftī of Jerusalem became, in the years following World War I, the ‘Grand Muftī of Palestine’, or ‘Grand Muftī of Jerusalem and the region of Palestine’. Such change had among its consequences that of

relegating all the other religious figures to marginal roles. 'The British military administration', Elie Kedourie (1926–1992) remarked,

must have found it inconvenient in many ways to deal with this, so to speak, acephalous society, and hit upon the idea of considering the mufti of Jerusalem as the head of the Muslim community in Palestine and of giving him the title of Grand Mufti.¹⁶

London's approach towards religious titles and leaders was often triggered by the idea that Islam was a sort of monolithic entity with a centralized and authoritarian structure. It is in this context that the decision to guarantee to the 'Grand Mufti' a much higher salary than that paid to his counterparts in the other cities of the region, as well as to the muftis of the Ottoman era, should be evaluated. According to the British authorities, 'the Mufti of Jerusalem is generally regarded as the Head of the Moslem Community in Palestine'.¹⁷ For such reason, as the Governor of Jerusalem Ronald Storrs (1881–1955) noted, given that the Bishop of London received more money than the Bishop of Chichester, it should have followed that the Mufti of Jerusalem could count on a higher salary than the muftis in other cities of the region. 'Seeing Palestine through a British prism', Efrat Ben-Ze'ev pointed out, 'may be termed anglicization'.¹⁸

The role conferred on the new office was therefore in many ways at odds with Islamic practices and principles. Even extending the analysis to include other titles, the contrast is evident. Islamic jurisprudence specifies, for instance, that *qāḍī* (judge) and mufti shall have complementary roles: the *qāḍī* judges, the mufti provides advice. However, it is common knowledge that the opinion of the latter is not binding on the former, just as it is ascertained that in the Ottoman Empire the *qāḍī* held a prominent position. In spite of this, the British authorities reorganized the entire system, triggering a mechanism that Rashīd Khālīdī explained as follows:

In the Ottoman and every other Islamic system, the post of *mufti* was always clearly subordinate in power and prestige to that of the *qadi* (or judge). The *qadi* was appointed by the Ottoman state from the ranks of the official Ottoman religious establishment, and almost never came from a local family. The *mufti*, as well as the *qadi*'s deputy, the *na'ib*, who was also chief secretary of the *shari'a* court, were by contrast always local

officials. This existing system was completely restructured by the British, who effectively placed the *mufti* above all other religious officials in Palestine.¹⁹

The position of Muftī of Palestine, conferred on Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī by means of a simple oral communication on 8 May 1921,²⁰ had an impact that was anything but marginal.²¹ Yet the reader will have noticed that at the beginning of this chapter reference was made to another ‘function’ usually associated with the name of Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, that is the one of ‘Grand Muftī’ (*al-muftī al-akbar*). This also – resulting from an atavistic desire to interpret the reality of the place with a mindset more familiar to the European context – was a creation introduced *ex novo* by London. Specifically, the addition of the suffix ‘Grand’ before the title of muftī, perhaps inspired by a precedent recorded in Egypt, was thought up by the British government to underline the same preponderance that, as we have seen, was in many ways contrary to Islamic tradition.

This additional new ‘title’ was coined as early as 1919, two years before Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī took office. By means of this addition the British government aimed to reward Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī (1867–1921), Ḥajj Amīn’s stepbrother and Muftī of Jerusalem from 1908 to 1921, for his conduct.²² It was in fact the entire Ḥusaynī clan, or at least a large part of it, to be invested with ‘a plethora of offices and titles without precedent in Palestinian history’.²³ More specifically, Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī had to be rewarded for having proved to be reliable. This is precisely why the Ottoman authorities fought hard (unsuccessfully) to have him removed from office during World War I. In the eyes of the Porte the accusation was one of the most incriminating: collusion with the British and the Zionists.²⁴

Although Kāmil therefore had the opportunity to enjoy a position that had no precedent in the history of the region, his prestige and coercive power over the local population were never in any way comparable with those of his successor. After the election of Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, which we will see was anything but standard, further tools of power were offered to him. The improvised leader used them to reward his supporters,²⁵ and for posing himself as the ‘defender’ of the holy Islamic sites.²⁶ And even more often, for repressing anyone who attempted to oppose his plans.

This applies, for instance, to the creation of the Supreme Muslim Council (al-Majlis al-Islāmī al-A'ālā; SMC), a body with no precedent in the history of the region nor, because of its numerous ramifications, in that of Islam. It was established, at the end of 12 months' 'incubation',²⁷ on 20 December 1921, and therefore, as in the case of Ḥajj Amīn's appointment, before the League of Nations actually granted the mandate for Palestine to London. The major personality behind this initiative was Herbert Samuel, the first British High Commissioner for Palestine, a figure perceived with suspicion by the Palestinian population due to his Zionist 'leanings' and Jewish origins.

The new body was to provide a degree of representational autonomy to the local Muslim majority,²⁸ so as to balance the institutions accorded by London to the Zionist counterpart, as well as to stop a growing discontent. 'We have no means', protested 'Abdallāh Sa'īd al-Danaf and 'Abdel Raḥmān el-Danaf in August 1921, 'to obtain our rights as long as the Justice of the British Government rules'.²⁹ In addition to this, the British authorities needed an 'imperium in imperio',³⁰ that is, a sort of 'government within the government' with which to interact. However, as was predictable in a context marked by power vacuums and the absence of any sort of legitimate representation, it soon acquired an all-encompassing role. The results of this did not take long to make themselves felt. 'The present administration of Palestine', lamented the representatives of the Palestine Arab Delegation in a letter to British public opinion in 1930, 'is appointed by His Majesty's Government and governs the country through an autocratic system in which the population has no say'.³¹

The SMC, legally bound to the mandatory power, allowed the person appointed by Samuel, Ḥajj Amīn himself, to preside over it,³² and to oversee for good the control of the enormous flows of funds from Islamic public donations (the public *awqāf*).³³ The latter, which were quantifiable when Ḥajj Amīn took office in £100,000 British sterling per year, had previously been supervised by Istanbul. As clarified in 1935 by the London scholar Beatrice Erskine (1860–1948), based in Ḥaifā during the years of the mandate, with the introduction of the new body those resources went completely out of control:

The head office of the *Wakf*, or Religious Bequests, was in Istanbul in Turkish times, and the great wealth attached to it was

administrated there under Government supervision. After the [First World] War the British Government handed over the funds to the Moslems free of all control, and instituted the Moslem Supreme Council [...] [It] manages eighteen religious courts, with a staff of two hundred and fifty assistants; superintends six *wakf* departments, in which five hundred and ninety-two men are employed; controls ten schools and a theological college, having a total of one thousand six hundred and fifty students.³⁴

Besides being able to dispose of enormous sums of money at his own discretion, the new office enabled al-Ḥusaynī to propose and elect judges, local muftīs and the administrators of the *waqf* (sing. of *awqāf*), and to lay off and hire functionaries in the Sharī'ah Court.³⁵ All these positions were distributed by the neo-*ra'īs al-'ulamā'* (head of Muslim scholars)³⁶ to people he deemed unconditionally loyal. According to an official protest sent from Hebron and signed by several local sheiks:

Many petitions and complaints were submitted by the inhabitants of Palestine to the [British] Secretariat against the President of the Supreme Muslim Council [Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī] and the improper manner in which he administers the Awqaf, Orphan funds and the Sharia Courts. [British] Government's reply to the majority of such petitions was that it cannot interfere with Waqf and Sharia affairs. Such policy cannot be concealed from ignorant people (Shepherds) as Government has actually interfered with the Supreme Moslem Council, by appointing the members of the Council. Such an attitude is, indeed, inconsistent with the terms of the Palestine Mandate and casts reflection on the administration of a civilized power, such as Great Britain.³⁷

The unprecedented Supreme Muslim Council – whose influence helped, between 1921 and 1929, to keep a period of relative calm in Palestine³⁸ – became a mere tool used to strengthen the status of the 'Grand Muftī'. To the religious power Ḥajj Amīn could in this way add an unchallenged political role within Palestinian society, preventing it from forming its own representational and inclusive institutions. Furthermore, the new council played a decisive role also in shaking the equilibria between Christian and Muslim Palestinians.

The local Muslim majority paid a price for the decision to centralize all the Islamic institutions in the hands of one person; the Christian component of the population did as well. Although the latter had always been partially marginalized, it had gradually acquired a more central role in the last years of World War I. It was considered a 'natural bridge' to Europe in an era in which the Old Continent was the political centre for all decisions concerning Palestine. As evidence of the renewed focus on the Arab Christians and the will to concentrate the attention on a 'balance' between the two religions, the first of a long series of Muslim-Christian associations, al-Jam'īya al-Ahlīya (Local Association), was created in Jaffa. It was renamed al-Jam'īya al-Islāmīya al-Masīḥīya (Muslim-Christian Association) in June 1918, and adopted as its symbol a flag with the cross and the half-moon held by a woman wearing the traditional black veil (*ḥijāb*). The purpose was to underline that the Palestinian struggle in those years was not limited solely to the efforts of Muslims,³⁹ or men. The movement, deemed essential in order to oppose the 'Zionist threat' effectively, immediately became so popular that many organizations with the same name were formed in Nāblus and other cities. Most of the leaders of this movement, one of whom was the Greek Orthodox intellectual Khalīl Sakānīnī, were careful to avoid any explicit definition of Arab nationalism in Islamic terms. The SMC and the powers awarded to Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī were a deciding factor that relegated Christians once again to a marginalized position; it was no coincidence that from 1922 onwards local leaders appealed increasingly frequently to the religious feelings of ordinary people.

The 'Grand Muftī' of Great Britain?

On 9 May 1921, the day after the appointment of Ḥajj Amīn as 'Grand Muftī of Palestine', a crowd of *mukbtār* (village leaders) and notables from villages near Jerusalem brought the following considerations to the attention of the British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel:

Your Excellence is no doubt aware that every Moslem is individually interested in the Muftiship. That is why we see all Moslems turning their eyes towards this exalted position. The Muftiship is in great need of a man with proper legal qualifications, because the occupier

of this position will be the final authority to any good ideal, to learning and scholarship.

Your Excellency, this position is not hereditary but is conferred upon competent people and preference is given to him that is most learned. The Government is certainly anxious to give positions to people who are worthy of them. We therefore beg to request you to look into the matter and not to pay attention to whatever intrigues that are made by interested people who wished to subvert the legal elections held.⁴⁰

Although, as stressed by the mukhtars, the 'Muftīship' was not hereditary, immediately after the death (31 March 1921) of his stepbrother Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī, Ḥajj Amīn began growing his beard, wearing an '*amamah*' (turban) and behaving as if the position was already his. This attitude was mainly the result of what High Commissioner Herbert Samuel had implied to him from the beginning, namely that he would have been the next muftī.⁴¹ It was, however, also the consequence of a well-planned family strategy. In that phase the Ḥusaynī clan had in fact already dismissed the possibility of supporting two other legitimate candidates: that of Fakri al-Ḥusaynī, younger brother of Ḥajj Amīn, who was set aside because he was not considered an '*ālim*' (a scholar of religious matters); and that of Ṭāhir al-Ḥusaynī, the eldest of the four children of the 'Grand Muftī' Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī, who, although very determined to succeed his father, was impeded from doing so by his family, who perceived him as 'eccentric' and 'authoritarian'.⁴²

Independently of Ḥajj Amīn's attitude and the available options, in order to be appointed to the aforementioned office it was necessary to receive Samuel's approval. The latter arrived in Palestine on 1 July 1920, inheriting the authority of the *mutasarraf* (governor) of Jerusalem, who, according to Ottoman law, had the faculty to select the muftī from a list of three candidates chosen by a council consisting of '*ulamā*', *imām* and local notables. The election was in reality anything but regular; not only because it was clear from the beginning that the other candidates had superior experience and education than the then 26-year-old Ḥajj Amīn, but above all because he failed to obtain the necessary votes. He arrived last with nine votes, in a shortlist that, contrary to an established

tradition, consisted of four candidates. This means that he should have been automatically excluded from the competition.⁴³

Ḥusām al-Dīn Jārallāh (1884–1954), the candidate who had obtained the greatest number of votes (19) and enjoyed the support of the majority of the ‘*ulamā*’ of Jerusalem and the *Mu’aridun* (the opposition to the Ḥusaynī embodied by the Nashāshībī clan, who enjoyed wide consent ‘amongst Moslems of moderate political view’),⁴⁴ was ‘convinced’ by Samuel to withdraw: Jārallāh was later rewarded with prestigious appointments. The second most voted (17 votes), Khalīl al-Khālīdī (1863–1941), a man of acknowledged experience who immediately after the death of Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī had acted as muftī while the position was vacant, was one of the many who objected unsuccessfully to the British strategies. The forced withdrawal of Ḥusām al-Dīn Jārallāh, in fact, allowed Ḥajj Amīn to be included anew in the shortlist of the three expected candidates (third place had gone to Sheikh Mūsā al-Budairi, with 12 votes). Shortly afterwards Ḥajj Amīn was selected by the high commissioner to hold the coveted office.⁴⁵ The *repêchage* was, therefore, the result of planned, self-serving manipulation, surely facilitated by the predictable strategies contrived by the Ḥusaynī clan to boycott the result of the elections.

From an ‘external’ viewpoint, the decision to support Ḥajj Amīn could be regarded as highly problematic; if for no other reason than he had been sentenced *in absentia* to ten years in prison by a British military tribunal because of his active role in the bloody uprisings that broke out in Jerusalem in 1920, when five Jews were killed and many others wounded. It was only thanks to an amnesty that Samuel granted to him at the behest of Ronald Storrs, governor of Jerusalem, that Ḥajj Amīn was able to return to Palestine from the country where he had chosen to seek refuge (today’s Jordan). In this case as well, several Palestinians objected to the decision.

From an ‘internal’ perspective (such as that of the local population) the British insistence on proceeding with this appointment could appear even more questionable. It will suffice to mention that Ḥajj Amīn, despite having spent some time studying at Cairo’s Dār al-Da’wa wa al-Irshād (House of Prayers and Guidance) under Rashīd Ridā (1865–1935) and, before that, receiving a basic education at two schools in Jerusalem – *rushdiyya* (primary school) and *i’dādiyya* (secondary school) – never completed a programme of religious studies

at any institute.⁴⁶ ‘The President of the Supreme Moslem Council’, admonished one of the countless protests received over the years by the British, ‘does not possess the necessary religious qualifications which will qualify him to hold this office.’⁴⁷ The protests were in no way unfounded. Indeed, Ḥajj Amīn, who was often mentioned as ‘the defensor of the religion’ (*al-sayf al-dīn*),⁴⁸ never earned a diploma of any kind. ‘The only religious qualification that he achieved in his life’, as argued by the ambassador Zvi Elpeleg, author of the best-known biography of the Muftī, ‘was that of *Ḥajj* [pilgrim], which any Muslim who goes to the Mecca [where he went in 1913] is entitled to. The truth of the matter is that political considerations were given precedence over issues of a religious nature.’⁴⁹

From the beginning of his political career Ḥajj Amīn, who was therefore neither a sheikh (an accredited religious leader) nor an *‘alim* (a scholar of religious matters), was regarded with suspicion by a large segment of Palestinian society. This distrust was traceable early on within the clan of the Ḥusaynī themselves and their supporters (known as *Majlisiyyūn*), who feared the exuberance of the young Amīn’ and were



Figure 9.1 Al-Ḥusaynī visiting a village in Galilee on 23 April 1947.
Source: IDFA.

aware that even within their own family there were more suitable candidates (or less ill-suited) to hold the position of muftī. But the diffidence that the future 'Grand Muftī' soon aroused in ordinary people and in some of the local 'notables' was far more meaningful.⁵⁰ In this regard it is worth noting a dispatch sent on 13 May 1921 by Captain Chisholm Dunbar Brunton (1887–?) reporting to the 'General Staff Intelligence' stationed in Palestine:

In Jerusalem the chief topic of interest has been the election of the New Mufti [Ḥajj Amīn]; opinion has been divided as to who should succeed Kāmil Effendi al-Husaynī [...]. Learned opinion, represented by the Law Courts, has not favoured the popular candidate al Hajj Amīn al-Husaynī.⁵¹

Among the 'learned opinions' referred to by Brunton, that of the *qāḍī* of Jerusalem, Muḥammad Abū Su'ūd el 'Urī stood out especially. In December 1921 he protested vociferously to the British authorities. In his view Ḥusaynī 'was not worthy' of holding the offices assigned to him by the mandatory power. At most, suggested the *qāḍī*, it would have been better if London had managed Islamic affairs directly.⁵²

All of the above obviously does not mean that the British authorities didn't receive many petitions in favour of Ḥajj Amīn's candidacy. In fact, it is common knowledge that a minority considered him a sort of hero by virtue of the role he had played in the aforementioned protests in the 1920s, when he appeared to be the first leader up to challenging both the Jews and the British. It has been even ascertained that the Ḥusaynī clan launched a massive campaign to have *imāms*, *qāḍī-s*, *mukhtar-s* and Bedouin sheiks speak up in favour of electing the 'chosen one'. It was no coincidence that telegrams received by the British authorities in March and April 1921 in support of Ḥajj Amīn were in many cases signed by *ulāmās*, *imāms* and well-known notables who were often closely linked with the Ḥusaynī family.⁵³

To suppose that the British authorities distorted the outcome of the elections for fear of alienating part of the local populace would be problematic. It would be difficult to explain why they failed to show the same qualms when imposing other strategies – for example the Balfour Declaration, or immigration policies – which, unlike the legitimate appointment of Ḥusām al-Dīn Jārallāh, were objected to by

almost the entire Palestinian society. 'I was responsible', Herbert Samuel proudly announced in the House of Lords on 8 December 1938, 'for his [Ḥajj Amīn] appointment, and, looking back over the circumstances of the case, I have no doubt that the appointment was a right one.'⁵⁴

The reason for an appointment

There are many reasons why the British authorities took the decision of appointing Ḥajj Amīn. Two of them turned out to be decisive. The first was traceable to assessments expressed by High Commissioner Herbert Samuel and Governor of Jerusalem Ronald Storrs following several meetings – some of which were attended by two diehard Zionists such as Norman Bentwich (1883–1971) and Wyndham Deedes (1883–1956), Samuel's principal secretary – held with Ḥajj Amīn just before the 'elections'. During one of them, held on 9 April 1921, not only did Ḥajj Amīn impress them with his charisma, but also appeared to be reliable as to his promise to use his clan's prestige to further London's interests.⁵⁵ On 11 April 1921, Samuel summed up this crucial meeting with the following words:

I saw Haj Amin Hussein on Friday and discussed with him, at considerable length, the political situation and the question of his appointment to the office of Grand Mufti. Mr. Storrs was also present. In the course of conversation, he declared his earnest desire to co-operate with the Government, and his belief in the good intentions of the British Government towards the Arabs. He gave assurances that the influence of his family and himself would be devoted to maintaining tranquillity in Jerusalem.⁵⁶

Samuel, Storrs and the aforementioned Ernst Richmond (councillor for Arab affairs) were persuaded that they would be able to manage Ḥajj Amīn fairly easily. Besides being young and 'blackmailable',⁵⁷ he had little experience and preparation. At the same time, an agreement was reached that implicitly established that the Ḥusaynī clan would not impede the mandatory power's strategies, and would in return receive power and unprecedented status.

Besides these factors, the choice was motivated by political considerations. In Palestine the 'divide and conquer' strategy represented, as it did in a large portion of the British colonial empire, one of the cornerstones on which to base the mandatory government's hegemony. Great *ḥamāyyil* such as the Ḥusaynī, Nashāshībī, Khālīdī, Dajānī, Nusseībeh and the Jārallāh found themselves competing against each other for the favour of the British leaders.

The decision to rely upon Ḥajj Amīn was part of this approach. In particular, it was in the interests of the British authorities to maintain the equilibrium between the main Jerusalemite Palestinian families: Ḥusaynī and Nashāshībī. Mūsā Kāzim al-Ḥusaynī (1850–1934), the oldest member of the Ḥusaynī clan, had been removed from the office of mayor of Jerusalem by Storrs following the clashes that occurred in the city in 1920; this decision had weakened the Ḥusaynī-s considerably.⁵⁸ Rāghib al-Nashāshībī was installed in his place, to the great relief of the local Jewish community.⁵⁹ This appointment made it necessary to balance the power held by the various factions, so that the Palestinian community's sphere of action would be 'circumscribed by British interests and policies'.⁶⁰

In *The Iron Cage*, published in 2006, Rashīd Khālīdī went so far as to point out that Ḥajj Amīn's appointment was a strategy to undermine the legitimacy of Mūsā Kāzim and foment a lesser version of the divide-and-conquer strategy within his family. There is no doubt that Britain's ways of exercising power left everlasting scars over the Palestinian society. The British, explained Manuel Hassassian, 'exploited almost every aspect of the demographic and social cleavages existing in Palestine. They encouraged the establishment of "peasant" type of political parties hoping such political organizations would prevent the union of the rural and urban elites into what might become a viable and genuine national movement'.⁶¹

Towards a new Palestinian historiography

Ironically, the passage from which Alan Dershowitz extrapolated the sentences of Edward Said, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, comes from a book called *Blaming the Victims*. At this stage of the analysis it is appropriate to clarify that such a quote is the result of manipulation. Said's opinion has been distorted to support a theory that he would not

have agreed with. 'This committed [the Arab Higher Committee]', Said wrote,

chaired by Palestine's national leader, Hajj Amin al-Hussaini, represented the Palestinian Arab national consensus, had the backing of the Palestinian political parties that functioned in Palestine, and was recognized in some form by Arab governments as the voice of the Palestinian people.⁶²

The subject of the sentence, therefore, was the Arab Higher Committee, *not* Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī. The Arab Higher Committee, created in 1936 without an election and with 'shallow roots among the population',⁶³ represented 'the political voice of the Palestinian people' to a limited extent, in as much as it was composed of representatives from several local families (Ḥusaynī, Khālidi, Nashāshībī, Hādī, Ṣalāh and others). If Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī, who not coincidentally was the mind behind the initiative, was elected to lead this committee, it was only thanks to the aspects analysed in this chapter. At that point, no other leader would have had the strength and political weight required to oppose such a choice or aspire to that office.

Regardless of the 'error of form' in the quote from Alan Dershowitz, or perhaps precisely because of it, the citation is in any case important to the extent that it pinpoints a gap that, despite some attempts, has still to be filled. Today dozens of studies continue to put forward inconsistent historical claims in an attempt to portray Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī as a 'natural representative' of the Palestinian people. The most blatant aim to prove this claim by stressing the fact that in September 1948 he was appointed President of the new All Palestine Government. Any expert in the subject, however, can easily deconstruct the argument explaining that the All Palestine Government was nothing but an Egyptian initiative to frustrate the ambitions of King Abdullah of Transjordan. It was, in Moshe Ma'oz's words, 'a mere tool to justify Cairo's occupation of the Gaza Strip. Hajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and his clan were instrumental for the purpose.'⁶⁴

It was the British government that considered Hajj Amīn to be 'the official representative of the Palestinian population',⁶⁵ not the majority of the local population. If this historical figure managed over the years to acquire increasing power within Palestinian society by using power and

violence, it was due to growing political worries about the present and future of Palestine. Even more, it was due to many years of uninterrupted use of the functions and 'instruments' granted him, functions and tools that had little to do with the traditions and desires of a relevant percentage of the Palestinian people.⁶⁶ 'Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī was definitely a product of the West', explained Al-Quds University's President Sarī Nusseibeh,

but if we think about it all of us here in this land [Israel/ Palestine] are in some fashion a product of the West; that is, a product of how the West perceived us. What we need today is to see the birth of a 'new Palestinian historiography' that critically analyzes controversial figures such as Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī from a Palestinian point of view.⁶⁷

CHAPTER 10

BREAKING THE STANDARDIZATION PROCESS: GETTING *BACK* INTO HISTORY

One of the major dilemmas is the absence of public awareness of the importance of Palestinian archives. Many institutions have refused to cooperate and thus have hindered the process.

*Suzan Dāna, workshop at Bīr Zeyt University's Ibrabīm Abū Lughod
Institute of International Studies, 20 February 2013*

Getting out of the space which the centuries have built up over us is the most wonderful thing we can do.¹

Elémire Zolla

The colonialists usually say that it was they who brought us into history: today we show that this is not so. They made us leave history, our history, to follow them, right at the back, to follow the progress of their history.²

Amílcar Cabral, conference in Dār El-Salām, 1963

According to an old Spanish saying, when there is a flood the first thing that is lacking is drinkable water. This aspect also fits well with the theme analyzed in this book. The 'Holy Land' is certainly one of the areas of the world that has been written about the most. Despite this, the traditions, customs and expectations of the majority of the men and women who for centuries lived on it have been relegated to a

subsidiary role.³ 'Biblical orientalism', supported by a huge number of travel diaries, contributed in various forms to this, focusing on the links between biblical events and the physical characteristics of Palestine. The same applies for the subsequent influence exerted by Zionism,⁴ and London.⁵ However, the local majority, paradoxically, also played a certain role in this process. 'Until relatively recently', as noted by Maḥmūd Ashqār, director of the Center for Heritage and Islamic Research in Abū Dīs, 'the Palestinians paid limited attention to archives, libraries and, more generally, to everything that could bring the Palestinians back into history.'⁶ Ashqār's words are an indirect reference to what Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o termed 'colonial alienation', a phenomenon that in mandatory Palestine – and, reflecting this, in Palestine of the decades to follow – created the conditions for a twofold process already observed in other contexts: 'An active (or passive) distancing of oneself from the reality around; and active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one's environment.'⁷

Following a complex process, in these last few years large sectors of Palestinian society have demonstrated a willingness to correct this deficit and a readiness to concretize what Ignatieff would have defined as their 'desire to master time's losses'.⁸ The ongoing process that is leading to the creation of the first Palestinian archives and to developing techniques and methods for analysing oral history,⁹ can thus be seen as an attempt by the Palestinians themselves to break the vicious cycle triggered by the process of standardization analysed in this volume, bringing back their own experiences into a history written from 'below' by means of their voices and life experiences. As argued by Beshara Doumani – who initiated 'New Directions in Palestinian Studies', a series of annual symposia organized at Brown University starting from February 2014 – this process is far from being circumscribed to the Palestinian context:

Archive fever is spreading among Palestinians everywhere. Whether in Ramallah or London, Haifa or San Francisco, Beirut or Riyadh, someone or some group is busy interviewing old people and compiling genealogies, searching for photographs and letters, collecting textiles and folksongs, visiting and renovating graveyards, scanning and repairing manuscripts, and compiling information on old houses and destroyed villages, and this is but the tip of an iceberg whose full dimensions can hardly be imagined.¹⁰

The perception of the archives

The effort to get *back* into history represents in many respects the closure of a circle opened over one century ago: archives play a particularly meaningful, although not unique, role in this process. As the excerpts from the interviews below confirm, archives are increasingly regarded as something linked to the core of the Palestinian identity. This perception further validates the cogency of the analytical framework developed by Pierre Nora: 'We reinforce our identities by means of such bulwarks [archives, museums, cemeteries] but if what they defend was not threatened, there would be no reason to create them.'¹¹

It is precisely the growing perception of a threat hanging over their identities, coupled with an increasing will to 'regain possession' of their history, that lies at the heart of a series of archival or 'pseudo-archival' initiatives in some way linked to an 'obsession with archives'¹² and '*mal d'archive*'¹³ that have characterized Palestinian society over the last two decades.

Perhaps the most successful of these 'pseudo-archival' initiatives is *palestineremembered.com*, an online project, almost entirely in English,¹⁴ inspired by Walīd Khālīdī's *All that Remains* (1992), which was itself influenced by a cartographic project produced in 1983 by Bīr Zeyt University's geographer Kamāl 'Abd al-Fattāḥ.¹⁵ Set up in 1999, it brings together primary sources and images of pre-1948 Palestinian villages and shows what remains of them. All this is enriched by demographic data and by hundred of messages drawn up mainly by individuals identifying themselves as members of a highly heterogeneous diaspora (*al-Shatāt*). Initiatives such as *palestineremembered.com* – as well as the relatively new (January 2010) Center for Palestine Studies at New York's Columbia University – are evidence of an increasingly widely felt perception in Palestinian communities, in and beyond the Palestinian territories:¹⁶ creating and consolidating archives is considered 'a national priority'.¹⁷

An even deeper look into the Israeli–Palestinian context shows that such priority is, perhaps now more than ever, 'binational'. In realities characterized by deeply rooted conflicts, what Flora Kaplan wrote about museums – often being 'harbingers of change'¹⁸ – can in fact also be true for archives. These have the potential to breathe life into what Michal Zak and Rabah Halabi have termed 'a symmetrical dialogue in an

asymmetric reality'.¹⁹ Just how important is for the Israelis that also the Palestinians can develop their own *lieux de mémoire* – archives, in this case – is confirmed by Zochrot ('remembering' in Hebrew), an Israeli organization that many consider as a 'bridging message' between the two communities. Founded in 2002, Zochrot's ambitious objective is to bring the Israeli public opinion closer to the narrative and traumas of the Palestinian people. Zochrot organizes tours of ruined villages, publishes booklets, sets up exhibitions and catalogues of the accounts of witnesses. All this is directed exclusively at the Jewish majority of the country. 'Zochrot', as Eitan Bronstein emphasized, citing a Palestinian involved in its initiatives, 'is doing more for the Palestinians than they are doing for themselves.'²⁰

Whether Bronstein's words are a simple provocation or a reality less abstruse than what it seems, is an open question. What is incontrovertible, however, is the convergent effort that broad sections of Palestinian society are making so that it will not be only 'external archives' (British, Israeli, Turkish, Russian and American, as well as those of the UN),²¹ or the political agendas of Arab countries, to speak or act on their behalf. So that it will no longer be only museums such as the Palestine Archaeology Museum (today the Rockefeller Museum)²² – one of the main archaeological museums from colonial times – or archaeological excavations, that are almost always conducted by Western and/or Israeli researchers, to explain the history of their land.

In line with these considerations, Rāmī Ḥamdallāh, who at the time of the interview served as the rector of Nāblus's al-Najāḥ University, underlined that in certain contexts, Palestine included, education, archives, and libraries are 'the basis of everything. They are the instruments of survival.'²³ The director of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH)²⁴ of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), Ḥamdān Ṭāhā, who took part in several excavations in the Nāblus area, explained that archaeology gives Palestinians 'the opportunity to participate in writing or rewriting the history of Palestine from its primary sources'.²⁵ Naẓmī Jūbeh, director of the History and Archaeology Department (Dā'irat al-Tārikh wa'l-Athār) at Bīr Zeyt University, stated that 'the creation, maintenance and accessibility of archives are meaningful aspects in the struggle for self-determination'.²⁶ Muṣṭafā Barghūtī, leader of al-Mubādara (the Initiative Party), complained that many persons outside the Palestinian territories believe that his people are 'incapable of

taking their own past and future into their own hands, that is unable to establish state institutions, archives and research centres worthy of the name, or of appreciating full democracy.²⁷ ‘Adlī Ya’īsh, mayor of Nāblus since 2005, argued that ‘there will be no hypothetical reconciliation between us and the Israelis as long as it is exclusively the “others” who speak of our present and our past’.²⁸

Largely connected to these feelings and the ‘archival wave’ are also the numerous research centres, associations and cultural non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are currently flourishing in the region.²⁹ A partial list of these activities includes the Palestinian Heritage Center (Bethlehem, 1991), the Khalīl Sakānīnī Cultural Center (Rāmallāh, 1996), the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange (Rāmallāh, 1996), al-Quds University’s Centre for Jerusalem Studies (Jerusalem, 1998),³⁰ the Badīl Resource Center (Bethlehem, 1998) and the Cultural Heritage Resource Centre (Rāmallāh, 1998). Added to this, several exhibition centres and galleries have recently been opened with similar aims: a phenomenon mainly linked to the efforts of local NGOs and private groups.³¹ A few examples include al-Bad Museum (Bethlehem, 2001), Umm al-Faḥm Art Gallery (Umm al-Faḥm, 2008), al-Maḥḥaf (Gaza, 2008),³² the Palestinian Heritage Museum (Jenīn, 2011) and the Maḥmūd Darwīsh Museum (Rāmallāh, 2012). Despite their differences, each of these and other attempts – further prompted in the last few years by the admission (2011) of Palestine to the UN cultural agency (UNESCO) – mirrors what Ḥanān ‘Ashrāwī, the first woman to be elected to the Palestinian National Council, called ‘a defence mechanism reaction among the Palestinians who insist on preserving their identity at all costs’.³³

The archival deficit

‘Anything which approximates to an archive giving concrete substance to a history is seen as something to be destroyed.’³⁴ This is how Edward Said commented in February 2003 on the Israeli Army’s destruction of the Khalīl Sakānīnī Cultural Center in Rāmallāh, one of the very few historical documentation centres present at the time in the Palestinian territories. This operation – a reprisal sought by the then Israeli prime minister, Ariel Sharon, for the Netanya attack, which on 27 March 2002 killed 30 civilians – was not the first of its kind. Many similar cases had

already taken place over the decades, a case in point being Israel's invasion of Beirut in 1982, when the offices of the Palestine Research Council were destroyed by the Tzahal [the Israeli army] (most of the documents were transferred to Jerusalem).³⁵

The periodic destruction of Palestinian research centres, and/or the confiscation of a part of the material held in them,³⁶ has led some researchers and politicians, both Palestinian and otherwise, to detect what they assume to be a pre-planned Israeli policy aimed at blocking the development of those places of memory,³⁷ which Nora stigmatized as 'illusions of eternity'.³⁸ Moshe Ma'oz, who worked closely with Ben Gurion, Yitzhak Rabin (1922–95) and Shimon Peres, rejected the existence of a planned strategy to destroy the Palestinian documents, but without denying, however, that successive Israeli governments have shown a somewhat methodical approach aimed at taking possession of the greatest possible quantity of documents belonging to the Palestinians:

Palestinian archives have been destroyed by the Tzahal on many occasions but I wouldn't consider this to constitute a systematic plan to this effect.³⁹ At least not as far as the five-year-period following the 1948 war is concerned. During the 1967 War, I was personally responsible for the collection of documents held in Gaza and certainly no one ever asked me to destroy them. From the formation of Likud onwards [1973] things began to change and the right-wing governments that followed, including today's, the most chauvinist and nationalist of all, have increasingly tried to keep history, archaeology and everything relating to the roots of the issue under control.⁴⁰

The historical events of the last few decades can thus offer indispensable elements to understand the local archival deficit. There are, however, other no less significant factors to take into consideration. In this context it is sufficient to emphasize that, over the centuries in which Palestine was under Ottoman domination, the most important custodians of local 'archives' were the *ḥamāyyīl*. This is a tradition that in some cases has partially survived – see for instance al-Khālidiya, the library of the Khālidi family, which was opened to the public in 1900 in the Old City of Jerusalem, or Maktabat Faḥmī al-Anṣārī, close to Jerusalem's bus

station in Nāblus Road.⁴¹ In the Palestinian context this role was particularly important in consideration of the limited hold of the Porte and the absence of an institution such as the Church: the two key elements that for centuries performed the role of modern-day archives in Europe.

Such 'shortcomings', however, can still not fully explain why a Palestinian national archive or a specialized Palestinian studies university department have never existed in Palestine. Furthermore, they cannot throw light on the reasons why very few of the scholars who have written about Palestine are Palestinians. In order to understand these aspects it is necessary to consider other factors, starting from a very common feature of Palestinian society: that of considering documents as a sort of private property to be kept as far as possible within the narrow circle of one's community, or organization.⁴² Roger Heacock, based in the Palestinian territories since the 1980s, argued, for instance, that until the recent past most of the Palestinian NGOs tended to discourage any potential researcher from consulting the material they hold. 'The feeling that both I and my students have been given', emphasized Heacock, 'is of being treated like thieves who went to steal documents gathered at the cost of great effort and suffering.'⁴³

To this 'morbid' approach to documents, also influenced by the fact that not infrequently the documents have been used against Palestinians,⁴⁴ should be added the atavistic scarcity of historians and, more generally, of Palestinian academics, as well as the ongoing lack of funds available to them. These are issues that Philip Mattar, one of the most controversial living Palestinian historians, summed up in the following terms:

Israeli domination in the field of Palestinian studies is partly to be attributed to the fact that there are very few Palestinian scholars. While, since the Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the Jewish population has been able to benefit from access to the European education system which stimulated the study of its history and created the conditions for it to come to Palestine equipped with academic methodologies and study criteria, the Palestinians were an underdeveloped population from an educational point of view right up to the Mandate period (1922–48). Even towards the end of the Mandate there were

relatively few Palestinian graduates and professional scholars. The Palestinians lacked an academic tradition based on archival research and critical analysis, not to speak of a spirit of self-criticism.⁴⁵

The deficiencies detected by Mattar – exacerbated by a chronic ongoing disorganization and by the other factors referred to above – have created the conditions so that hundreds of thousands of documents were piled up for entire decades, sometimes even centuries, in entirely unsuited storage spaces. The documents crammed into the corridors of the al-Aqsā Mosque and in the rooms underneath the Dome of the Rock, as well as the ones present in Orient House – formerly the PLO headquarters in Jerusalem, which was closed by Israel on 10 August 2001, the day after an attack that killed 15 civilians – are cases in point. Orient House's documentation, inclusive of an Arab Studies Society's photographic collection, has been confiscated by the Israeli authorities.

The case of Abū Dīs

In the entranceway of the Center for Heritage and Islamic Research (CHIR) in Abū Dīs, a booklet is on display: '[Our archive] represents the true history of our nation and safeguards the identity and memory of our society. The documents and manuscripts kept here [...] are one of the pillars of this nation.'⁴⁶ That a place to which such great significance is attached is located in an extremely problematic context is yet further confirmation of the critical political situation that characterizes present-day Jerusalem.

The archive has no website nor road name or road number that can make it easy to find. In order to reach the place, it is necessary to take a bus (no. 36) from Jerusalem, getting off after around 45 minutes and the passage of a checkpoint, near the concrete wall that cuts Abū Dīs in two. The archive, in fact, is a dozen steps away from what is known in Israel as the 'separation barrier' and that the Palestinians perceive as the 'apartheid wall'.

The origins of the CHIR date to the early 1980s when hundred of thousands of documents piled up precariously in the corridors of the al-Aqsā Mosque and in the storage rooms of the Dome of the Rock attracted the attention of several members of the *waqf* (Islamic religious

endowment).⁴⁷ In 1982 a considerable portion of the *sijillāt* (Islamic court registers), *defterleri* (tax registers) and manuscripts considered to be of public interest were moved over a six-month period to their current location in Abū Dīs, in a *waqf*-owned building.⁴⁸ Despite a persistent scarcity of funds and qualified staff, over the years the archive has continued to catalogue, collect and restore a growing amount of documents from various institutions in Jerusalem – beginning with the historic Islamic court in Salāh al-Dīn street – and in the rest of the region. While various copies of this material are currently spread between the al-Najāh University of Nāblus, Ḥaifā University, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, ‘Ammān University and a few private collections, the vast majority is kept solely in the Abū Dīs archives. ‘The bulk of the material relating to Ottoman Palestine and the development of the Palestinian people at the CHIR’, explained the archive’s director Maḥmūd Ashqār, ‘is unequalled by any other archive or university in the Near East. We hold almost two million manuscripts and documents in our rooms the vast majority of which are original and have never been reproduced.’⁴⁹ In the last few years an increasing amount of funds have been allotted to projects for the digitization of these manuscripts and documents. Once completed, this process will further blur the boundaries between archives and libraries. For now, this outcome is far from being achieved.

In spite of its uniqueness and the richness of unpublished sources available, the CHIR is visited every week by only ‘five or six researchers’.⁵⁰ These are mainly Palestinians, but include a few Germans, French and English. In its almost 30 years of life CHIR has also received ‘one Italian scholar’.⁵¹ The logistical difficulties and the enduring conflictuality that has marked out the history of the region cannot fully explain the very limited attention given by historians to what is to all intents and purposes a ‘Palestinian national archive *in fieri*’. Mūsa Srūr, the Palestinian scholar who has spent the most time in the archive, emphasized that ‘any history which aims to set out the religious, cultural and social development of this region cannot but visit what is very probably its best documented source’.⁵²

The archives of the future

The Abū Dīs archive contains the bulk of the history of the Palestinian nation. However, as an institution mainly devoted to issues linked to

Islam, it does not have among its priorities the one of focusing on the 'Palestinian state' or, more precisely, on the difficult process involved in its making. Archives, in other words, play for the *waqf* mainly (although not only) a religious function in relation to 'Al 'Arḍ al Muqaddasa' (the 'Holy Land'); for the Palestinian authorities, on the other hand, they have a pivotal role in the problematic and for now unfinished process towards their national self-determination.

With this aim, and in order to fill that gap, the PNA is now close to opening two new archives that will provide historians with unexplored sources. The Palestinian authorities, however, seem increasingly committed to monopolizing the popular feelings that prompted the 'archival wave'. The First Intifada (1987) lost its impetus when the PLO succeeded in gaining control of the uprising, curbing local activism. The serious risk exists that something similar could also happen in relation to archives. A powerful example is represented by a little-known episode related to the Palestinian Digital Archive at Bīr Zeyt University. Opened in June 2011, it holds several thousand documents (including photos and videos), all digitalized and online at awraq.birzeit.edu. Soon after its inauguration, five representatives of the PNA went to Roger Heacock's office intimating him to block the project, which they saw as being in contradiction with the previously announced creation of a 'Palestinian national archive'.⁵³ This and other related issues were analysed in an unprecedented international conference held on 24–25 March 2014, at Bīr Zeyt University. During the meeting, entitled 'Globalizing Palestine: Bīr Zeyt University's Archive in an International Perspective – Towards a Chaotic Order', several presentations shed light on the trends that Palestinian society is currently experiencing, and a few focused on the dangers that the invasive approach shown by the Palestinian authorities could trigger.⁵⁴

Despite these problematic aspects, the archives on which the PNA is currently working deserve much attention. The PNA currently conserves thousands of documents about its recent history and that of the PLO in a building located in Beītūnīā, a Rāmallāh suburb. In accordance with a proposed law that has not yet been approved, the Palestinian authorities plan to transfer this documentation to a building that in their plans is to become the official 'Palestinian national archive'.⁵⁵ The site that has been chosen is along *Shāre'a* al-Quds (Jerusalem Road), one of the main roads in Rāmallāh. It is interesting to note that a few

kilometres from here – within the Bīr Zeyt University campus – also the ‘Palestinian Museum’ will be established,⁵⁶ an imposing building financed by Ta’āwun (‘Cooperazione’), a Palestinian NGO that laid down the foundation stone of this ambitious project in April 2013. ‘The Israelis have made strenuous efforts to memorialize their narrative’, pointed out former Palestinian negotiator Aḥmad Samīḥ Khālīdī, ‘the Palestinians are in the process of doing so by building a national heritage museum’.⁵⁷

A second archive is to be created at al-Muqāṭa’a, the former PNA headquarters now partially transformed into a mausoleum dedicated to Yāsser ‘Arafāt. Placed at the entrance of Rāmallāh, it will probably be called the ‘Arafāt Archive’ and will provide access to some of the diaries and documentation of the Palestinian leader and his entourage. This material is currently spread among three sites: Tunis (the city that acted as PLO’s headquarters for more than a decade), the offices of Rāmallāh’s ‘Arafāt Foundation, and ‘Arafāt’s ex-presidential office in Gaza. In the latter case, following Hamas’s rise to power, no one, apart from those directly involved, knows the fate of the material. According to Israeli sources cited by the daily newspaper *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, the documentary heritage left by ‘Arafāt in Tunis is a mine of information.⁵⁸ Palestinians have equally high expectations about it. ‘Whatever our opinion of the historical figure with which it is associated’, pointed out Naẓmī Jūbeh,

‘Arafāt’s archive will enable us to throw light on many as yet unresolved issues. The documents which researchers will gain access to include the majority of ‘Arafāt’s diaries. He wrote down everything and so we are talking about several hundreds of volumes. Considering the crucial role performed by the PLO in various international scenarios, the impact of this documentation will go far beyond the regional Palestinian context.⁵⁹

EPILOGUE

You should approach the other being aware that you are the other for the others.¹

Renata Pisu

The tendency to simplify the 'other' is a mental approach common to every attempt aimed to control, exploit or subjugate other human beings. Every colonizer has a marked inclination to redefine, indeed rationalize, the colonized. These simplifications, James Scott noted, 'did not successfully represent the actual activity of the society they depicted, nor were they intended to; they represented only that slice of it that interested the official observer'.²

Such processes of redefinition have often triggered a paradoxical mechanism. That which the colonized have sought to liberate, while struggling to assert their own identity against a colonial one, turns out to originate in the perception of the world imposed by the colonizer:

When a white man comes to the shores of Africa and calls the Africans black, he occupies language, for they are not black at all, it is he who is pale. The next step, after calling them black, is drawing a boundary and naming the place [...]. When the people who find themselves lumped together inside that magical circle recognized by the international community as a legitimate border try to struggle for their independence, they seldom realize that they are struggling for a name that is not theirs and trying to liberate an institution that was created to deprive them of liberty.³

As highlighted by post-colonial theorists Frantz Fanon (1925–61) and Amílcar Cabral (1924–73), every process of decolonization implies *in primis* the liberation on the part of the native from the image imposed on them from the outside and its replacement with another one rooted in the traditions and in the history of the place. In certain contexts, however, an unexpected tendency is witnessed. The colonized, in line with what has been mentioned above, is in fact driven to adopt the perception of reality put forth by the mind of the colonizer, accepting symbols and traditions created to better filter her/him. Thus, and paraphrasing Benita Parry, coercive power has often had a seductive turn.⁴

The Eastern Mediterranean area is one of the best examples of such a *forma mentis*. To further realize this, it suffices to turn attention to the paintings realized in Europe in the years following the Battle of Lepanto (1571), when the Muslim fleets of the Ottoman Empire faced the vessels of the Christian Holy League. Since most of the Christians considered the cross an evocative symbol of their religion, the crescent moon (as *mutatis mutandis*, the Star of David for the Jews) was automatically read by European artists in accordance with the same criteria. Hence the Christian fleets were depicted – as sumptuously shown in the frescoes within the Galleria Colonna in Rome – with crossed sails and the Turkish ones with the crescent moon. The latter symbol, however, did not hold such significance within the cultural universe that it was meant to represent. It was utilized exclusively for decorative purposes and not only in the *dār al-Islām*. Over the centuries, as has happened for many other issues, the dominant perception held on the two shores of the Atlantic led the majority of Muslims to accept and then to use a symbol attributed to them from outside.⁵ The attempts to interpret and simplify the ‘others’ are thus rooted in a far past.⁶

Local traditions, universal laws?

Jerusalem ‘has never been a capital for any Arab or Muslim entity’.⁷ ‘One should bear in mind that a Palestinian state has never existed.’⁸ Once again we are seeing an ‘invented Palestinian people’,⁹ ‘there was no national “Palestine” nor were there “Palestinians” who had a distinct identity or private ownership of “Palestinian” land’.¹⁰

Anyone with an interest in the Eastern Mediterranean area will often come across analyses of this kind. These are theses often proposed by

well-known figures within the international cultural and political landscape. Each of them, besides not bringing any real benefit to the interested parties, is vitiated by the transposition of values, uses and traditions that are as relevant in many European and American societies as they are negligible within the realities to which they refer. Each of them represents an updated variation of the same mindset that can be found in the iconography that made immortal the Battle of Lepanto.

Concepts such as state, capital, border, citizenship, private property, to name the most significant, held a secondary meaning in pre-mandatory Palestine and were all but irrelevant in the Palestine in which protestant missionaries – thanks also to the influence of the Syrian Protestant University of Beirut (founded by American missionaries in 1866; later known as the American University) – contributed to spreading most of such ideas in the region. The scarce adoption of them was confirmed by the absence of Arabic terms to express those same concepts.

To claim that Jerusalem has never been the capital (from the Latin *caput*, ‘head’) of any Arab or Islamic entity means, for instance, ignoring that the notion of *‘aṣīma* itself, which in modern Arabic indicates the capital of a state,¹¹ was unknown in classical Arabic, at least in its contemporary political–administrative meaning. This is even truer for citizenship, the concept that commonly indicates political belonging in the West and recalls the Greek *polites* (‘citizen’) and Latin *cives*. Until the recent past, Middle Eastern languages offered no term to indicate such concepts. If in modern Arabic, in order to make up for this lack, there has been adopted the word *jinsīya* (from the root *j-n-s*, which in classic Arabic indicated – depending on the case – gender, race and class), this may be traced to the necessity of introducing an idea functional for the interpretation of the locals by outsiders.

This does not mean that in the Eastern Mediterranean, or in the Maghreb, notions for expressing one’s own identity were absent, or that the particular importance of a certain city was not acknowledged (not only Baghdad or Damascus, but also Jerusalem, in the first period of Islam, played a role comparable with that of a ‘capital’).¹² Concepts such as *‘aṣabīya* (reciprocal solidarity),¹³ developed by Ibn Khaldūn (1332–1406) and based primarily on blood ties (the *ṣilat al-raḥīm*), *qawmīya*, which may be interpreted as loyalty to a community held together through cultural and linguistic bonds, and *watanīya*, to be intended as

loyalty to a community dislocated on a particular region, demonstrate a linguistic and cultural articulation that is worth noting. None of these, however, represented a priority in expressing one's being. None of them carried meanings comparable to those that, especially in Europe and the US, were relevant identity elements.¹⁴ In other words, as Henry H. Ayrout (1907–69) noted in regards to the Egyptian *fellahīn*, 'country, freedom, politics' were 'words and issues that he doesn't understand [*qu'il n'entend pas*]'.¹⁵ This does not mean that two contexts, also very different one from the other, are incommensurable, or that they cannot be subject to any kind of translation. But rather implies that, from different cultural premises, human beings draw very distant and subjective conclusions.¹⁶

Without necessarily making reference to somewhat abstract considerations, in order to stress once more the effects that the inclination to standardize the complexity of the 'other' historically had within the specific Palestinian context, it is sufficient to return again to the maps created by the British authorities in the decades preceding and following the beginning of the mandate. They were tools that in a first phase (1871–84), through the geo-theology of PEF fished in the mythical past of biblical Palestine to apply it to that present reality, and that subsequently, beginning with World War I and due to a selective choice of colours, dimensions and names, imposed a mental framework destined to shape the future of the region. In Efrat Ben-Ze'ev's words:

The maps also create a certain illusion regarding settlement sizes: in Arab villages, where houses were close to one another, the map identifies the single cluster of the built-on area (contrasting it with the surrounding area by way of colour). In contrast, the new pre-planned Zionist rural settlements had farms adjacent to the homes and thus, the area defined as 'built-on' in the map encompassed the farms and stretched on larger tracts. As an outcome, Jewish settlements seem larger on the map, although the number of their inhabitants was often lower than that of Arab villages. As [Mark] Monmonier (1991) points out, the larger the 'object' is on the map, the more prominence it gains in the eyes of the viewer.¹⁷

In this case as well, British obstinacy to identify symbols in addition to well-defined borders, using for this a plethora of terms on their maps (international boundary, village boundary, district boundary, subdistrict

boundary, fiscal block boundary, municipal boundary, triangulation point boundary, quarter boundary, qita' boundary), did not respond to any need of the local populations. The latter were mostly ignored, showing what Beshara Doumani defined as 'the amazing ability to discover the land without discovering the people'.¹⁸

What has been claimed throughout this book can be traced to an ancestral inclination very common among human beings: the assumption that local customs are equivalent to laws of nature. Indeed, the tendency to standardize the complexity of the other – not rarely induced by an intellectual arrogance unable to grasp realities that were anything but static¹⁹ – generated similar misunderstandings even within very different contexts. When, for example, the American anthropologist Harold Conklin began to analyse the way through which the Hanunóo of the Philippines classify colours, he was at first surprised at the apparent confusion and contradictions; however, this subsided as soon as the informant was asked to define oppositions within contrasting couples rather than separate samples. Even in such a framework there was, then, a coherent system, which however had no way of

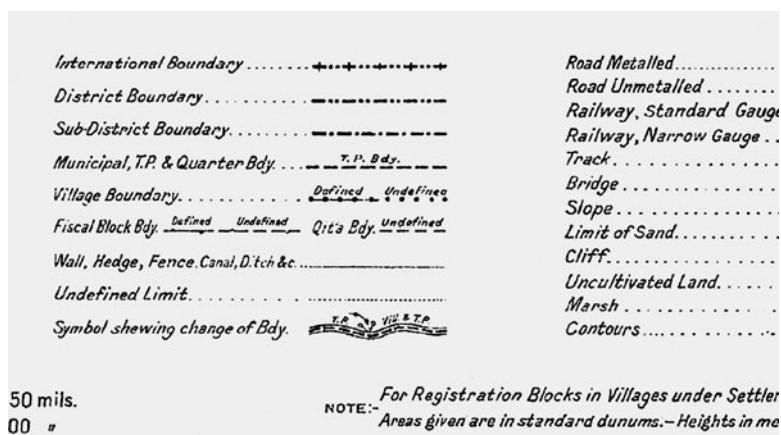


Figure E.1 Terminology adopted in a map of Palestine realized at the beginning of the British mandate. E. Ben-Ze'ev, 'Cartographic Imagination: British Mandate Construction of Palestine', in S. Tewari Jassal, E. Ben-Ari (eds), *The Partition Motif in Contemporary Conflicts* (New Delhi: Sage, 2007), p. 108.

standing out in terms of 'our system' and that would have remained unknown if Conklin had not been equipped with the tools necessary to interpret that particular reality;²⁰ or if, as often happened in many anthropological studies, the temptation to erase all that resisted the colonial map imposed by the 'authorized observer' would have had the upper hand.²¹

There is certainly no shortage of examples in which the absence of those tools have generated distortions destined to trigger epocal changes. In the America of the 'Indians', for instance, the 'white man' invented the 'redskins', attempted to assimilate the indigenous population to humans types more familiar to him, forged the myth of Pocahontas (c.1595–1617), and, more in general, projected his hopes and fears on the 'West';²² underestimating or ignoring the usual meaning of the local traditions, the British Empire established in India the Anglo-Muhammadan Law, a legal system, applied in the local courts, based on a selective and summary application of Islamic texts and practices;²³ in Afghanistan, the British authorities traced the 'Durand Line' in 1893, a border that has always been controversial and that still today explains the reason for which the Afghans call the western part of Pakistan 'Pashtunistan'; in Iraq the British authorities introduced in 1916 the Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulation (TCCDR), a system based on a legal separation of the urban and rural areas that enormously strengthened the role of local sheikhs and further affected the poor conditions of women.²⁴ These and several other examples are there to further confirm that the standardization and the oppression of 'the others' knows no latitudes or limits of time.²⁵

The same may be said for the seductive side of the coercive power referred to above. Bolivia represents an interesting example of this attitude. Like in other South American countries, Andean women consider it very fashionable to dress in the *pollera*, a skirt from the Spanish farming culture that was imposed on the local indigenous women by the Spanish colonial authorities. Over time the *pollera* became a sort of status symbol in the eyes of Bolivian Andeans. Along with the bowler hat imported from Britain, it is today the emblem of Andean native pride.

The approach of *histoire croisée* – which aims to uncover contacts, developments, and cultural and political convergences that unite disparate regions – can then be effective in shedding light on certain

dynamics that, though applied differently, had some more or less defined common denominators. In many respects the 'Holy Land' represents nonetheless a *unicum* that eludes combinations that are valid in other contexts. No other context exists where the histories of a land and of its peoples have been equally instrumentalized (William Blake (1757–1827), for instance, referred to Jerusalem as a 'lovely Emanation of Albion',²⁶ wondering if Britain was 'the primitive seat of the patriarchal religion').²⁷ Nowhere has the merging of religion, imperialism, colonialism and orientalism (or more precisely its most powerful variant, 'biblical orientalism') been more successful. It is hard, in conclusion, to determine an area of the world in which the rising of an alternative and inclusive local history has been more hindered.

'If I wish to profit by this tour', wrote Mark Twain during his travels in the region, 'and come to a correct understanding of the matters of interest connected to it, I must studiously and faithfully unlearn a great many things I have somehow absorbed concerning Palestine.'²⁸ *The Innocents Abroad*, the book in which he wrote these words, has been one of the most widely read travel diaries of all time. Twain's message, often misunderstood, is today more valid than ever: it is necessary to unlearn in order to relearn, to deconstruct in order to reconstruct. The road that leads to a broader comprehension of the current Israeli–Palestinian tragedy – and with it to a deeper empathy for all its victims – cannot avoid these considerations. Such awareness will help to create the conditions for a more respectful coexistence, a coexistence that will pay proper attention to the process through which the local universe has been simplified. It is necessary, perhaps now more than ever, to instil (or re-instil) the concept of continuity in reference to the history of the region. This is not a means of denying the claims of any of its peoples, but instead a path aiming to show why a land that did not belong to one single people in its entire history cannot but be shared.

NOTES

Introduction The Simplification of 'the Others'

1. V. Forrester, *Il Crimine dell'Occidente: Alle Radici Del Conflitto Arabo-Israeliano* [*The Crime of the West: At the Roots of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*] (Milan: Ponte alle Grazie, 2005), pp. 20–1.
2. Varisco noted that 'it is time that the issues raised in *Orientalism* move beyond a referendum on Edward Said'. D. M. Varisco, *Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2007), pp. xv–xvi. On the origins of orientalism see M. Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1988), pp. 40–4. On the peculiarities of German orientalism in comparison to its English and French variants see S. L. Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 28–38.
3. In Bar-Yosef's words, the 'Holy Land is rather marginalized in Orientalism [...] [Edward] Said very rarely stops to think about the distinct nature Western interests in the Holy Land, which might distinguish it from other Orientalist encounters'. E. Bar-Yosef, *The Holy Land in English Culture, 1799–1917* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 6.
4. The local inhabitants – Arab-Palestinian majority, Jewish minority and other sections of the population – were often portrayed as a simple appendix to the ancient biblical scenery. 'Every object', commented London painter William Henry Bartlett (1809–54) about the Jaffa area, 'is novel and Oriental in character, and independent of its picturesque beauty, is linked by a delicious association with our earliest dreams of Biblical scenery and incident.' W. H. Bartlett, *Walks about the City and Environs of Jerusalem* (London: Virtue, 1844), p. 9.
5. Some exceptions exist. Scottish diplomat David Urquhart (1805–77), for instance, published a few works in which he showed a profound identification with 'the Islamic world but also a rejection of imperial Britain'. G. Nash, *From Empire to Orient* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2005), pp. 43–73.

Chapter 1 From Prophecies to Empire

1. TNA FO 78/368. Young to Palmerston. Jaffa, 14 Mar. 1839.
2. TNA FO 881/1177. Gawler (former British governor of Southern Australia from 1838 to '41) to Lord Palmerston. London, 9 Nov. 1849.
3. British Vice-Consul Young commented Paris's decision to lift national flags 'on the French Agents' houses' pointing out that there were no precedents 'for hoisting a flag in Jerusalem, and there appears to be no local advantage to be gained [...]'. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Young to Hugh Rose (1801(85), British Consul-General for Syria and Lebanon, 24 July 1843.
4. TNA FO 195/965. Burton's Report. Damascus, 11 July 1870.
5. Churchill, British Consul in 'Ottoman Syria', outlined the first political plan for the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine. In *Mount Lebanon* he wrote that 'it must be clear to every English mind that if England's oriental supremacy is to be upheld, Syria and Egypt must be made to fall more or less under her sway of influence.' C. H. Churchill, *Mount Lebanon*, v. I (London: Saunders, 1853), p. vii. Churchill identified two conditions for the success of the plan: 1) Jews had to lead the project, 2) European powers had to back it. One passage of the letter written on 14 June 1841 by Churchill to Moses Montefiore (1784–1885): 'Were the resources which you all possess steadily directed towards the regeneration of Syria and Palestine, there cannot be a doubt but that, under the blessing of the Most High, those countries would amply repay the undertaking, and that you would end by obtaining the sovereignty of at least Palestine. Syria and Palestine, in a word, must be taken under European protection [...].' British Palestine Committee, *Palestine*, v. V (Garden City Press, 1919), p. 32.
6. *The Church of England Magazine*, v. 1 (London, 1861), p. 19.
7. Cited in British Foreign Office, *Mohammedanism: Turkey in Asia*, v. 1, n. 65–66 (London, 1920), p. 16. Mitford argued that a fully independent Jewish state in Palestine would have lifted the manufacturing depression in Glasgow, Manchester and Birmingham. See also W. Khālīdī, *Al-Qadīya al-Filasṭīniyyah* [*The Palestinian Question*], v. 1 (Cairo: Maktabat al-Waṭāniya, 1983), p. 177.
8. In 1861 theologian David Brown was still advocating the resettlement and the conversion of the Jews: 'As their [of the Jews] sins were the *cause*, and their dispersion the *effect*, so their conversion, removing the cause of their present dispersion, shall be accompanied by their return, under the Divine favour, to their father-land.' D. Brown, *The Restoration of the Jews* (Edinburgh: Strahan, 1861), p. 173.
9. Protestants and Catholics were moved by different approaches towards Jews. For centuries the Catholic Church stressed the impossibility of Israel's rebirth. God punished Jews, banning them from the Holy Land: there was no future for a Jewish nation. They could be saved individually, by converting to Christianity. Furthermore, for Catholics the prophecies concerning the resettlement of Jews had already been accomplished in the sixth century BCE,

when Cyrus of Persia (590–529 BCE) put an end to the Babylonian captivity allowing the return of the Jews. As confirmed by St Augustine's (354–430) *De Civitate Dei*, it was the 'new Israel', i.e. the Church, the recipient of the ancient biblical prophecies. Luther's Reform changed this approach. The idea of addressing Jews as a nation in its own as well as the Protestant support for their 'return to Palestine' was instilled then. See R. Sharif, *Non-Jewish Zionism* (London: Zed Press, 1983), p. 12.

10. 'Add to the common Oriental idea', pointed out from Jerusalem Miss C. Cooper (d.1859), a missionary affiliated to the London Jews' Society (LJS), 'that women are below education, the fetters of Talmudic superstition, and you will see how ignorant and degraded Jewish female are.' BOL – CMJ – D. 58, n. 1. Jerusalem, 1 Sep. 1850. According to John Nicolayson (1803–56), a missionary of the London Jews' Society that in 1833 succeeded in establishing the first permanent Protestant mission in Jerusalem, Jews were moved by 'personal prejudices against the truth'. ITAC – 1841–44, Letters, f. 4. Nicolayson to the LJS's secretary William Ayerst, 31 Mar. 1841. Nicolayson was also convinced that 'a wrong direction has been given to qualifications calculated to form an exalted character, and it is this that has rendered the Jews so depraved and despicable. [...] The circumstance of their being so degraded should not discourage, but increase our attempts for their conversion [...] The example of Christ should excite us to labour for the spiritual benefit of Israel.' In *The Jewish Expositor and friend of Israel*, v. IV (London, 1819), p. 187.
11. A. M. Hyamson, *British Projects for the Restoration of the Jews* (Leeds: Petty, 1917), p. 13.
12. F. Kobler, *The Vision was There* (London: Lincolns-Prager, 1956), p. 86.
13. 'Saints' days', exclaimed an English missionary in Palestine in 1887, 'are obsolete!' LPL – DP – v. 397 – f. 204.
14. Missionaries were particularly active during the conflict. Edmund Hornby (1825–96), British Supreme Court Judge of Istanbul from 1857, noted that during the Crimean War 'the British and Foreign Bible Societies and several missionary bodies were extremely active amongst the Turkish soldiers especially amongst the non-commissioned officers, in distributing copies of the New Testament, thus when the term of service of these soldiers expired, many Bibles found their way into Turkish families throughout the Country.' TNA FO 78/1851. Hornby to the Foreign Minister of the time, John Russell (1792–1878). Istanbul, 26 July 1864.
15. Clayton defined it as a 'key link (and a buffer against the French) in the Middle Eastern chain'. A. Clayton, *The British Empire as a Superpower, 1919–39* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), p. 138.
16. G. M. Levine, *The Merchant of Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p. 48.
17. In *The Scottish Christian Journal*, v. 1 (Edinburgh, 1853), p. 217.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid.

20. Thomas, founder of the Christadelphian movement and convinced millennialist, published *Elpis Israel* ('The Hope of Israel') in 1849: 'I know not whether the men, who at present contrive the foreign policy of Britain, entertain the idea of assuming the sovereignty of the Holy Land, and of promoting its colonization by the Jews; their present intentions, however, are of no importance one way or the other, because they will be compelled, by events soon to happen, to do what, under existing circumstances, heaven and earth combined could not move them to attempt. [...] The finger of God has indicated a course to be pursued by Britain which cannot be evaded.' J. Thomas, *The Coming Struggle among the Nations of the Earth* (Toronto: Maclear, 1853), p. 93.
21. B. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword* (New York: New York University Press, 1956), p. 137.
22. 'Any power', Austen Henry Layard (1817–94) warned in a speech to the House of Commons in 1853, 'holding those countries [Egypt and "Great Syria"] would command India'. The Parliamentary debates, v. 129 (London, 1853), p. 1775.
23. Churchill, *Mount Lebanon*, pp. v–vi.
24. N. Sokolow, *History of Zionism*, v. 1 (London: Longmans, 1919), p. 139.
25. BLMC – AP – v. CCXVIII – add. 43256. William Gosling to Aberdeen, 6 May 1854. Gosling was a prominent librarian from Kent; his opinion attests a common perception of the time: 'In an advertisement recently published by the "Palestine Land Company" which appeared in the Hebrew Observer it is stated that there are 100,000 Jews ready at a moment's notice to go back to their fatherland [...] as that country, especially Jaffa and its neighbourhood is exceeding fertile, and abounds in minerals they could well afford to support the whole of the British Army for the protection which they would afford them [...] A quiet and peaceable people, would be placed in their own land, and the army would be at hand in the event of another aggressive movement of the Emperor of Russia.' Ibid.
26. Cited in Friedman, *The Question of Palestine* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1992), pp. xxvi–xxvii.
27. C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 20.
28. N. A. Silberman, *Digging for God and Country* (New York: Knopf, 1982), p. 202.
29. With his visit to Palestine, the Prince of Wales, King Edward VII (1841–1910) from 1902, opened 'the whole of Syria to Christian research'. *QSPPEF*, v. 1 (London, 1866), p. 2. A. P. Stanley (1815–81), one of the founders of the PEF, was the Prince's guide.
30. A Palestine Society had already been founded in London at the beginning of the 1800s. It was in some respects the forerunner of the PEF. The Jerusalem Water Relief Fund (with Montefiore, Finn and Shaftesbury as members) and the Jerusalem Literary Society (founded in 1849 by Finn) provided additional impulses for the establishment of the PEF. On PEF's precursor societies see

- C. R. Conder, H. H. Kitchener, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, PEF, v. 1 (London, 1881), pp. 1–3.
31. APES's guidelines were taken from those of the PEF, with the exception of a significant additional sentence: 'Its supreme importance', Joseph P. Thompson, the society President, specified, 'is for the illustration and defense of the Bible'. *QSPEF*, n. 1, (1871), pp. 34–5.
 32. See E. Robinson, *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petrea* (Boston: Crocker, 1841).
 33. A. L. Tībāwī, *British Interests in Palestine, 1800–1901* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 205.
 34. Walter Morrison, pointed *The National Review* on the day of his death, 'believed intensely in the future of the British race and Empire'. In *The National Review*, v. LXXVIII (London, 1921), p. 857.
 35. PEF/MINS, 22 June 1865. Thompson was President of the PEF from 1865 to 1890.
 36. *Ibid.*
 37. C. R. Conder, *The Future of Palestine: A Lecture* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1892), p. 35.
 38. On 25 September 1865 the President of the PEF (E. Ebor) asked the Secretary of State for the War, Marquis of Ripon (1827–1909), the permission to give Wilson the task of investigating 'the Holy Land in a more accurate and systematic manner than has yet been done'. TNA OS [Ordinance survey] 1/17/1. The year before (1864) Wilson was in Jerusalem working on a project to improve the water system of the city. He took this opportunity to produce some remarkable maps. Regarding Muslims in Jerusalem, Wilson wrote that they 'belong for the most part to the same race as the peasantry of Palestine, representatives it may be, though with a large intermixture of foreign blood, of the Jebusite that dwelt in the land'. C. W. Wilson, *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai, and Egypt* (New York: Appleton, 1881), p. 118.
 39. *QSPEF* (London, 1875), p. 3.
 40. *De Excidio et Conquestu Britanniae* is the title of the most ancient surviving manuscript written by a British author about the story of Albion. It was written around 564 CE by the 44-year-old Welsh cleric Gildas. Although Britain did not host any Jewish communities at the time, it is referred to as 'the new Israel' and the battles of this 'holy nation' (*goy kadosh*: Exodus 19:6) against 'barbarian invaders' are compared to the battles of ancient Israel against Babylonians and Philistines. BLMC – HP – MS. 522, *Gildas' Chronicle* 1525, p. 76. Two centuries later, in 731, Venerable Bede (c.672–735) wrote the *Historia ecclesiastica gentis Anglorum*. Here some themes in Gildas's work were repeated, such as the perception of being 'God's chosen people' and 'the new Israel'. See Bede, *The Ecclesiastical History of the English Nation* (New York: Cosimo, 2007).
 41. See J. J. Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem: The Palestine Exploration Fund and British Interests in the Holy Land* (New York: Leicester University Press, 2000), p. 2.

42. PEF, Twelve reasons for subscribing, p. 4. Cited in Moscrop, *Measuring Jerusalem*, p. 219.
43. During his campaign, Allenby relied on several sources, including the intelligence provided by Nili, a Jewish spying organization which assisted London in Ottoman Palestine during World War I. See E. Livneh, *Nili: Toldoteha shel He'azab Medinit* [Nili: The History of a Political Daring] (Jerusalem: Shoken, 1961). PEF's maps, despite having being produced several years earlier, maintained nonetheless a meaningful and practical role in supporting British efforts.
44. About the contribution of these pioneers see C. Ritter, *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula* (New York: Haskell, 1865), v. 2, pp. 78–86.
45. B. Schaebler, "'Practicing Musha': common lands and the common good in southern Syria under the Ottomans and the French", in R. Owen (ed.), *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, 2000), p. 249.
46. BOA DH.ID. 59/72. 20 May 1914. The document, which included the distances in travel hours, was written at the conclusion of a tour made by the governor Ahmad Mecid in the Jerusalem area.
47. Warren openly proposed British colonization of Palestine: 'Let this be done', he wrote, 'with the avowed intention of gradually introducing the Jew, pure and simple, who is eventually to occupy and govern this country.' C. Warren, *The Land of Promise: or, Turkey's Guarantee* (London: Bell, 1875), pp. 14–20. The timeline proposed by Warren and Conder regarding the city of Jerusalem starts from 1044 BCE, the year in which the city, founded by the Canaanites around 2,000 years earlier was conquered by King David. C. Warren and C. R. Conder, *The Survey of Western Palestine* (London: PEF, 1884), p. 1.
48. 'The Moslem peasantry, whose fanaticism is slowly dying out, coming under such influences [of Jews and Christians] will gradually become more intelligent and more active, but will cease to be the masters of the country; and as European capital and European colonists increase in the country, it will come more and more into the circle of those states, which are growing up out of the body of the Turk.' C. R. Conder, *The Future of Palestine: A Lecture Delivered for the Palestine Exploration Fund* (London: PEF, 1892), p. 34.
49. In 1872 Tyrwhitt-Drake took over, for a short period, the direction of topographic measurements carried out by the PEF. From 1870, PEF's members were concentrated almost exclusively on mapping Palestine.
50. C. F. Tyrwhitt-Drake, 'The fellaheen', in The Committee of the PEF, *The Surveys of Western Palestine: Special Papers on Topography, Archaeology, Manners and Customs* (London, 1881), pp. 310–11. A few pages later, Elizabeth Finn, also active in the PEF, wrote that among local farmers 'to lie is considered a very great and useful accomplishment [...]'. What is more, she noted that 'one quarter of the town of Bethlehem [...] was known as a perfect nest of robbers'. Ivi, pp. 355–6.

51. T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), pp. 36–7.
52. Conder was more cautious when judging the local population, but he often contradicted himself: 'We cannot generalise about them, any more than we can generalise at home. The average standard is very low as regards morality, truth, and intellect.' C. R. Conder, *Palestine* (London: Philip, 1889), p. 232.
53. Dispatch sent on 14 July 1875 by Conder to the General British Consul in Beirut: 'I have to request your interference in an exceedingly serious case of murderous and unjustified assault on my party by the Moslem inhabitants of Safed [...] before I spoke a single word the Sheikh seized me violently by the throat. In defence I struck him in the face with my fist and knocked him down [...].' TNA FO 195/1067.
54. Regarding some labourers working in the ruins of Jerusalem, Warren wrote that he had hit them 'to make them work harder'. C. Warren, *Underground Jerusalem* (London: Bentley, 1876), p. 6.
55. The depiction of the Holy Land is mainly a phenomenon linked to the Western tradition: 'Muslim and Jews took little part in portraying the land [...]. Representations of the human figure, animals, places, and events ran counter to the religion and culture of Islam.' Y. Ben-Arieh, 'Biblical landscapes through Western eyes', in H. Brodsky (ed.), *Land and Community: Geography in Jewish Studies* (Bethesda, MD: University Press of Maryland, 1997), p. 9.
56. Giving voice to Ottoman dissatisfaction, British ambassador in Istanbul Henry Bulwer (1801–72) noted that 'the protestant Missionaries either themselves or through Mussulmans converts to Christianity gave lecture or lessons or preached sermons in Turkish [...] intended to show the unsound foundations of the mahometan religion and calculated and meant to bury it into discredit.' TNA FO 78/1851. Istanbul, 1 Aug. 1864.
57. TNA FO 226/147. Finn to Moore. Jerusalem, 14 Aug. 1860.
58. Smith, instructor of Exegesis of the Old Testament in Glasgow, visited Palestine four times, the first in 1880. As a consequence of this experience he wrote a book, reprinted in 26 editions, that was read by General Allenby (1861–1936) and his soldiers during the conquest of Palestine in 1917. The six maps in it, integrated in 1915 to form an atlas, were edited by the 'prince of cartography' John George Bartholomew (1860–1920). The latter, like Smith, approached the Palestinian reality using 'biblical lenses'. Smith, moreover, employed many parallelisms between England, Scotland and the biblical lands: 'Like England, Judaea, thought not impregnable, has all the advantages of insularity.' G. A. Smith, *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land* (London: Hodder, 1928), p. 297. Whitlam described Smith's book as a 'classic Orientalist expression of Europe's other'. K. W. Whitlam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 42. For a more general analysis see I. D. Campbell, 'In search of the physical: George Adam Smith's journeys to Palestine and their importance', in *History and Anthropology*, v. 13, n. 4, 2002, pp. 291–9.

59. Benvenisti in P. Sham, W. Salem and B. Pogrud, *Shared Histories* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2005), p. 85.
60. 'The birth of organised tourism is almost biblical in character, endowed with all the high moral tone of nineteenth-century evangelism.' K. K. Sharma, *Tourism and Culture* (New Delhi: Sarup, 2004), p. 54.
61. S. Sizer, *Christian Zionism: Road Map to Armageddon?* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 2004), p. 34.
62. In 1869 Archbishop William Thompson clarified that: 'We look on Jerusalem now – we English people – as a city that in some measure belongs to us. Do we not every year pour forth in thousands the documents that attests its history – do we not put forth in thousands and tens of thousands that sacred Book wherein is written its rise and its fortunes and its fall? May we not naturally say, when we are so largely occupied in spreading its history, that we have in some measure made it our own?' *QSPEF*, v. 1 (London, 1869), p. 91.
63. In *Cook's Excursionist*, 5 Aug. 1872, p. 2.
64. The cited cities, as well as Jerusalem – a name of Canaanite origins composed by the prefix 'Uru' ('founded by') and 'Shalem' (a Canaanite God) – Bethlehem – quoted in the Amarna Letters of the fifteenth century BCE as 'Bit-Lahmi' – and many others, can trace their origins and names to a past much more remote than biblical times; it is to this ancient past that the Arabs of Palestine have often turned to for the names of the cities they populate. This is confirmed by the fact that the Arabic names of the cities mentioned in this text, as well as of dozens of other symbolic places such as Majīddu (Megiddo) or the Naqab (Negev) Desert, are much more similar to the original names found in the 4,000-year-old Egyptian hieroglyphics, as well as in the Amarna Letters, than to the place names used in Western languages, or in Hebrew.
65. Cited in M. Benvenisti, *Son of the Cypresses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 31.
66. B. Netanyahu, *A Durable Peace: Israel and its Place Among the Nations* (New York: Warner Books Editions, 1993), p. 43.
67. G. M. Levine cited in L. A. Doyle, *Freedom's Empire* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), p. 341.
68. Arthur Anderson (1792–1868), co-founder of P&O Cruises, argued that 'Great Britain, from the vast extent of her commerce and political connexions with the East, would, undoubtedly, derive the greatest advantage from it [the Canal].' A. Anderson, *Observation on the practicability and utility of opening a communication between the Red Sea and the Mediterranean, by a ship canal, through the Isthmus of Suez* (London: J. Unwin, 1843), p. 20.
69. 'I must tell you frankly', Prime Minister Palmerston wrote in 1855 to de Lesseps, 'that what we are afraid of losing is our commercial and maritime preeminence, for this canal will put other nations on a equal footing with us.' Cited in M. D. C. Crawford, *The Conquest of Culture* (New York: Fairchild, 1948), p. 332. In 1854 Palmerston wrote to Canning that France, being 'so

- much nearer to the Canal would have much the start of us in sending ships and troops to the Indian seas.' TNA FO 78/1156.
70. TNA FO 78/2170. Edward Hertslet (1824–1902), Foreign Office's librarian from 1857 to 1896, 29 June 1869.
 71. 'There is a name which, without belittling anyone', Monsignor Bauer, confessor of the Empress, declared in occasion of the inauguration, 'may be likened to that of Christopher Columbus; that of Ferdinand de Lesseps.' BLMC – T21861.
 72. France experienced a period of decline in the years to follow: the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1 made evident its weakness in comparison to other European powers. This also affected power equilibria in Egypt.
 73. B. Disraeli, *Tancred* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2004), p. 367. Heidi Kaufman wrote that '*Tancred* not only co-opts Jewish Zionist discourse but manages to absorb Jewish people into a Western invasion of Palestine in the process.' H. Kaufman, *English Origins, Jewish Discourse, and the Nineteenth-Century British Novel* (University Park: Penn State Press, 2009), p. 84.
 74. Cited in *New Scientist*, v. 86, n. 1205, 12 June 1980, p. 252.
 75. According to Blake, 'Disraeli was fascinated by the thought of the return of the Jews to Palestine. If he took no steps to achieve it, this was mainly because there were none that he could take.' R. Blake, *Disraeli's Grand Tour* (London: Weidenfeld, 1982), p. 132.
 76. In *Mohammedanism: Turkey in Asia*, v. 10 (London: Great Britain Foreign Office, 1920), p. 12. See also TNA FO 373/7/36. Guide prepared in February 1919 under the direction of the 'Historical section of the Foreign Office'.
 77. B. Disraeli, *Alroy* (Leipzig: Tauchnitz, 1846), p. 45.
 78. D. R. Schwartz, *Disraeli's Fiction* (New York: Macmillan, 1979), p. 43.
 79. In 1875 Queen Victoria confided to the Scottish poet Theodore Martin (1816–1909) that Disraeli 'has very large ideas, and very lofty views of the position this country should hold'. E. F. Benson, *Queen Victoria* (London: Longmans, 1935), p. 274.
 80. Prior to 1914 traffic through the canal from India to Britain represented more than half the total. In 1928 the flow from India and Burma to London was 35.1 per cent of the total, and 33.1 per cent in 1937. TNA T206/21.
 81. Disraeli explained the episode as follows: 'They [Rothschilds] alone could have accomplished what we wanted and they had only four and twenty hours to make up their minds, whether they would or could incur an immediate liability of four million [pounds]. One of their difficulties was that they could not appeal to their strongest ally, their own family in Paris, for Alphonse is *si frangese* that he would have betrayed the whole scheme instantly.' R. W. Davis, *The English Rothschilds* (London: Collins, 1983), p. 154.
 82. H. R. Lottman, *Return of the Rothschilds* (London: I.B.Tauris, 1995), p. 76. The Rothschilds received, as commission for the loan, 2.5 per cent of the total investment.
 83. De Lesseps, 20 July 1883. BLMC – GP – v. 397 - ADD. 44482, f. 130.

84. BLMC – GP – v. 397 – ADD. 44482, f. 157. The Newcastle Chamber of Commerce, in a meeting on 19 July 1883, chaired by Member of Parliament C. M. Palmer, passed a resolution that highlighted that the proposal to create a second canal is ‘damaging for national interests’.
85. House of Commons, *Accounts and Papers* (London, 1878), p. ii.
86. Disraeli, *Tancred*, p. 202.
87. Tuchman, *Bible and Sword*, p. 162.
88. R. Storrs, *Lawrence of Arabia: Zionism and Palestine* (New York: Penguin, 1943), p. 39.

Chapter 2 The Standard Conquest Myth

1. American historian Francis Jennings (1918–2000) coined the expression ‘standard conquest myth’: from the English in North America to the Dutch in South Africa, the land chosen for a conquest strategy, or for more or less declared ‘emancipatory plans’, has always been described by those coming from outside as a ‘deserted land’ inhabited by ‘savages’. ‘The basic conquest myth’, according to Jennings, ‘postulates that America was virgin land, or wilderness, inhabited by nonpeople called savages’. F. Jennings, *The Invasion of America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), p. 15.
2. Cited in R. Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century, 1815–1914* (London: Batsford, 1976), p. 256.
3. ISA RG 160/2881-P.
4. British Foreign Office, *Documents*, p. 345.
5. H. Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), p. 4.
6. TNA FO 881/1177. Gawler to Palmerston, 9 Nov. 1849.
7. Ibid.
8. E. Warburton, *The Crescent and the Cross*, p. i (New York: Wiley, 1845), p. 5. Warburton’s book was reprinted in 18 editions.
9. PEF/MINS, 22 June 1865.
10. Writing about Mark Twain and other Western writers Klazner noted that ‘it appears that travel writers were not expected to discover anything new, only to confirm what was already known.’ D. Klazner in Ben-Arieh and Davis (eds), p. 48.
11. Expression used by Elizabeth Finn (1825–1921), wife of the second British consul in Jerusalem, James Finn (1846–63). See E. Finn, *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn* (London: Marshall, 1929), p. 249.
12. Crawford, *Letters on Egypt*, p. 251.
13. C. W. M. van de Velde, *Narrative of a Journey through Syria and Palestina in 1851 and 1852*, v. 1 (London: Blackwood, 1854), p. 424.
14. LPL – BP – 174 – p.1 – ff. 215–216. Memorandum prepared by Tait on 14 January 1877, soon after his mission in Syria and Palestine: ‘Another

- difficulty perhaps even more difficult to cope with is the low standard of morals among the Moslems.’
15. J. Parkes, *A History of Palestine from 135 A.D. to Modern Times* (London: Gollancz, 1949), p. 294.
 16. *QSPEF* (London, 1879), p. 8.
 17. For early Zionists, Oliphant was a point of reference: ‘As for Oliphant, the Biluim (as well as many general Hovevei Zion adherents) were not only impressed with his book but they regarded him as a key intermediary in facilitating their migration to Palestine.’ L. Stein, *The Hope Fulfilled* (Westport: Greenwood, 2003), p. 16.
 18. L. Oliphant, *The Land of Gilead* (New York: Appleton, 1881), pp. 244–5.
 19. Literally the ‘military district of Palestine’; this expression was common in spoken Arabic between the mid-seventh and the mid-thirteenth century. See A. S. al-Khālidi, *Ahl al-‘Ilm wa l-Ḥukm fī Rīf Filasṭīn* [*Scholars and Governors in Rural Palestine*] (‘Ammān: Jamīyat Ummāl al-Maṭabī’ al-Ta’āwuniya, 1968), p. 9. As noted by Gil: ‘In the ninth century, jund Filasṭīn included the districts (*kuwar*, singular *kūra*) of Ramla, Jerusalem (Īliyā [Aelia]), Īmwās, Lod, Yavne, Jaffa, Caesarea, Nāblus (Shechem), Samaria (Sebastia), Bet Guvrin (Bayt Jibrīn; in the days of the Byzantines – Eleutheropolis), the Dead Sea (Baḥr Lūṭ), Ascalon and Gaza.’ M. Gil, *A History of Palestine 634–1099* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 111. According to Gerber, ‘we know for a fact that some form of Palestinian identity existed already in classical Islam, under the term Jund Filastin, or administrative district of Palestine.’ H. Gerber, *Remembering and Imagining Palestine* (New York: Palgrave, 2008), p. 6.
 20. According to Hillel Cohen, ‘during the national movement’s formative years, the Bedouin did not view themselves as an integral component of the emerging Palestinian identity. On the contrary, they saw the national movement as a threat, and some of them cooperated with the Zionists for this reason.’ H. Cohen, *Army of Shadows* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), p. 73. The Bedouins were almost always described in denigratory terms by British officials: ‘The Bedouins are not courageous [...] The Bedouins are fond of plundering [...] are indolent.’ Charles Wood (From 1 January to 28 October 1869 in the position of consul in Istanbul) to the British ambassador in Istanbul Henry Elliot (1817–1907). Damascus, 26 Oct. 1869. TNA FO 195/927.
 21. S. Tamārī, *Lepers, Lunatics and Saints*, in ‘Jerusalem quarterly file’, Inst. of Jerusalem Studies, 2003, p. 28.
 22. Parkes, *A History*, p. 244. According to Parkes the word Arab was ‘inappropriate as a description of the rural mass of the population, the *fellabeen*. The whole population spoke Arabic, usually corrupted by dialects bearing traces of words of other origin, but it was only the Bedouin who habitually thought of themselves as Arabs. Western travellers from the sixteenth century onwards make the same distinction, and the word “Arab” almost always refers to them exclusively.’ Ibid.

23. Cited in D. Warriner, *Palestine Papers, 1917–1922: Seeds of Conflict* (London: Eland, 2009), p. 33.
24. B. Borochov, *Li-sbe'elat zion ve-teritoria* [*On the Issues of Zionism and Territory*], in *Ketavim*, v. 1 (Tel-Aviv, 1955), p. 148. He also added, however, that the thesis of the dispersion of the Jews after the destruction of the Second Temple by Emperor Tito (39–81) was historically inaccurate and needed to be corrected.
25. J. Shavit, *The New Hebrew Nation* (London: Frank Cass, 1987), p. 123
26. In recent years various studies repeated similar theses to those of Borochov; see for instance A. Oppenheim, et al., 'High-resolution Y chromosome haplotypes of Israeli and Palestinian Arabs reveal geographic substructure and substantial overlap with haplotypes of Jews' in *Human Genetics*, 107/6, December 2000, pp. 630–41. The latter as well has various weak points. As noted by Judy Siegel, 'despite its merits, this study uses a small sample size [143 Israeli and Palestinian Moslem Arabs] and an improbable set of test subjects. It is puzzling that the Northern Welsh were tested, because it's obvious that they are farther away from European Jews than Arabs. Why were they tested instead of the Serbs, Romanians, Italians, or Austrians – groups which, unlike the Welsh, had significant contact with Jews over the centuries? The selection of groups influences the results of any genetics study.' J. Siegel, 'Experts find genetic Jewish–Arab link', in *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 Nov. 2001.
27. See Y. Belkind, *Ha-'araviyyim asher be-Eretz Yisrael* [*Arabs in the Land of Israel*] (Tel Aviv: Hameir, 1928), p. 19, and S. Laskov, *Ha-Bilu'im* [*The Bilu'im*] (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriya ha-Zionit, 1979).
28. Parkes explained that 'during the nineteenth century many European scholars visited the country for long periods [...] It was these scholars [...] who first made independent studies of the fellaheen, and gathered reliable information about their customs, religion and origin. Gradually it was realised that there remained a substantial stratum of the pre-Israelite peasantry.' Parkes, *A History*, p. 244.
29. D. Ben-Gurion and Y. Ben Zvi, *Eretz Yisrael ba-'avar u-ba-bove* [*Palestine in the Past and Present*] (Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Press, 1980), p. 196. The analysis is mainly based on a study of the names of Palestinian villages and on cultural and folkloristic aspects. In 1929 Ben Zvi expressed a slightly less drastic opinion: 'The vast majority of the *fellabin* cannot trace their origins to the Arab conquerors but to the Jewish *fellabin* who, before the conquest by Islam, formed the principle core of the inhabitants of the country.' Y. Ben Zvi, *Uklusianu ba-aretz* [*Our Population in the Country*] (Warsaw: KKL, 1929), p. 39.
30. Ben-Gurion and Ben-Zvi lingered for instance on describing the orchards, gardens and vineyards that surrounded Gaza. They clarified that 'the olives of Gaza were planted by Alexander the Great.' According to the two authors, 'the assumption is that since the Arab conquest not a single olive tree has been planted.' Ben-Gurion and Ben Zvi, *Eretz Yisrael*, pp. 151–5 and 210.

31. Ben-Gurion and Ben Zvi, *Eretz Yisrael*, p. 198. Cit. also in S. Sand, *The Invention of the Jewish People* (Milan: Rizzoli, 2010), p. 280.
32. On the use of the Jewish term *shemama* see Y. Bargal, *Dimuyei nof eretz-israel be-ta'amulat ha-keren ha-kayemet le-israel bi-tekuvat ha-yishuv* [Images of the landscape of the Land of Israel in the propaganda of the National Jewish Foundation during the period of Yishuv], in *Motav*, n.11, 2004, pp. 21–2.
33. According to Yael Zerubavel: 'The portrayal of the landscape as a "desolate desert" was clearly based on a selective view of the reality at the time. These descriptions focused on unproductive lands, barren areas, and the malaria-spreading marshlands while ignoring Arab villages and towns and other settlements built by European settlers, as well as the existence of cultivated fields, plantations, and orchards around various settlements. Other sources, however, indicate that the settlers clearly saw the inhabited and cultivated field parts of the land and developed relationships with members of other communities around whom they live. [...] The construction of the desert and the settlement oppositional symbolic landscapes were clearly influenced by predominantly European views of the Orient, which European Zionist immigrants brought with them to the Middle East.' Y. Zerubavel in J. Brauch, A. Lipphardt and A. Nocke (eds), *Jewish Topographies* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), pp. 207–8.
34. Sand, *Invention*, p. 283.
35. M. Darwish (transl. Elias Sanbar), *La terre nous est étroite et autres poèmes* [*The Earth is Close To Us and Other Poems*] (Paris: Gallimard, 2000).
36. In late Ottoman Palestine, *Dabkeh* and other characteristic dances were more than simple celebrations. They also represented a genuine expression of a 'collectivization of trauma.' N. Rowe, *Raising Dust: A Cultural History of Dance in Palestine* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2010), p. 53. George Ibrahīm, director of the Al-Kasaba theatre in Rāmallāh, believes that dancing and acting are also and above all useful tools to express the 'collective malaise of a nation'. George Ibrahīm, interview with the author, Rāmallāh, 13 Feb. 2010.
37. The Nabi Musa festival was designed to commemorate the traumatic events related to the Crusades. See K. al-Asali, *Mawṣim al-Nabī Mūsā fī Filasṭīn: Tārīkh al-Mawṣim wa 'l-Maqām* [*The Nabī Mūsā Festival in Palestine: the History of the Festival and of the Shrine*] ('Ammān: Dār al-Karmil, 1990); and U. S. Barghūṭī, *Al-Marāḥil* [*Turning Points*] (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabīya lil-Dirāsa wa 'l-Nashr, 2001), pp. 76–7. Just after World War I it became a political tool used by Arab leaders to test the degree of Arab resentment as a political manifestation. R. Mazza, *Jerusalem from the Ottomans to the British* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2009), pp. 165–78.
38. Some aspects connected to this have been analysed by Louis Fishman, Chris Gratien and Emrah Safa Gürkan in 'Palestinianism and Zionism during the late-Ottoman period', Ottoman History Podcast, n. 84, 16 Dec. 2012. Available online: <http://www.ottomanhistoricalpodcast.com/2012/12/palestine-zionism-settlement-nationalism.html>.

39. A. D. Smith, *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism* (London: Routledge 2009), pp. 25 and 72.
40. M. Benvenisti, *Son of the Cypresses* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), p. 233.
41. See for instance the diaries of Wasif Jawharieh (1897–1972), a composer from Jerusalem, in S. Tamārī and I. Nassār (eds), *Al-Quds al-'Uthmāniya fī 'l-Mudhakkirāt al-Jawbariyya* [*Ottoman Jerusalem in the Memoirs of al-Jawharieh*], v. 1 (Jerusalem: Inst. for Jerusalem Studies, 2003), p. 74.
42. Smith defines an ethnīe as 'a named and self-defined human community whose members possess a myth of common acenstry, shared memories, one or more elements of common culture, including a link with a territory, and a measure of solidarity, at least among the upper strata.' Smith, *Ethno-symbolism*, p. 27. Eriksen noted that 'for ethnicity to come about, the groups must [...] entertain ideas of each other as being culturally different from themselves. If these conditions are not fulfilled, there is no ethnicity, for ethnicity is essentially an aspect of a relationship, not a property of a group.' T. H. Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism* (Sterling: Pluto Press, 1993), p. 12. John Armstrong (1922–2010) noted that 'only extreme ways of life appear to lead to ethnic consciousness.' J. A. Armstrong, *Nations before Nationalism* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 14.
43. 10,000 Arabs residing in the Hula Valley and the foothills north of it were excluded from the census; this was carried out before the British–French agreement (1924) about the demarcation between Lebanon and Palestine. See S. Frantzman, 'The Arab settlement of late Ottoman and mandatory Palestine: New village formation and settlement fixation, 1871–1948', Ph.D. thesis, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, June 2010, p. 19.
44. S. Della Pergola, 2001. Demography in Israel/Palestine, IUSSP XXIV General Population Conference Paper. Available online: http://212.95.240.146/Brazil2001/s60/S64_02_dellapergola.pdf. Many Israeli sources indicate 'between a quarter and a half of a million' the total local population in 1880. D. Giladi and M. Naor, *Rothschild. 'Avi ha-Yishuv' ve-mifalo be-Eretz Israel* [*Rothschild. 'Father of the Yishuv' and his activities in the Land of Israel*] (Jerusalem: Keter, 1982), p. 18.
45. J. McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), p. 26. In a previous work McCarthy indicated a more limited number, around 369,000. A recent study by Grossman confirmed essentially the data, indicating in 400,000 people the total population (including Bedouins) in mid-nineteenth century Palestine. D. Grossman, *Rural Arab Demography and Early Jewish Settlement in Palestine* (New Brunswick: Transaction Pub., 2011), p. 89.
46. In the course of the centuries Egypt, like Palestine, witnessed a demographic decline. In Roman times it had around 8 million inhabitants, falling to 4 million in the fourteenth century and down to 3 million at the beginning of the nineteenth century. H. A. R. Gibb and H. Bowen, *Islamic Society and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 209.

47. The calculations take into account only those Palestinians present in Israel, in the Gaza strip and in the West Bank. A tally including also the diaspora would bring the total to about 11 million people. For the population of Egypt in the nineteenth century see J. McCarthy, 'Nineteenth-century Egyptian population', in *Middle Eastern Studies*, v. 12, n. 3, Oct. 1976, p. 1.
48. J. Weulersse, *Paysans de Syrie et du Proche-Orient* [*Farmers in Syria and the Middle East*] (Paris: Gallimard, 1946), p. 55. This is how Weulersse explained the evolution of the rural population in relation to the multiple civilizations passed through the centuries: 'Hittites, Arameans, Assyrians, Sea Peoples [. . .] didn't vanish, they changed their capitals, sometimes altered languages and customs, they hardly touched the rural population, already bound to the soil [*déjà lié au sol*].' Ivi, p. 56. Still in 1922, with the process of urbanization already under way, the first British census indicated that around 65 per cent (451,816 people) of local Arab Muslims resided in rural areas. Jews in rural areas numbered 15,172, while 'Christian and other' were 25,877. John Hope Simpson Report (hereafter JHSR), *Palestine: Report on immigration, land settlement and development*, v. 1, 1930, p. 24.
49. The 1931 census carried out by Major Eric Mills on behalf of the British government (the second and last to be conducted during the mandate) was the first to provide precise data on literacy. Among Muslims, only 25 per cent of males and 3 per cent of females were literate. Among Christians the percentage was about 72 per cent for males and 44 per cent for females. Among Jews the numbers stood at 93 per cent for males and 73 per cent for females. See Government of Palestine, *Census of Palestine 1931*, v. 2 (Jerusalem, 1932), p. 110.
50. Prior to the appearance of electricity, olives were also used as fuel to illuminate lanterns at night. It is estimated that in the 12 months of 1913 alone, around 130,000 kilos of olives were exported from the Nāblus area. J. S. Rajab, *Palestinian Costume* (London: Kegan, 1989), pp. 29–31. It is worth noting, also, that marriages and social celebrations were often organized in the harvest period.
51. See J. Hilal, *Takwīn al-nukhbā al-Filasṭīniyya* [*The Formation of the Palestinian Elite*] (Rāmallāh: Muwāṭin, 2002).
52. A. Hourani, 'Ottoman Reforms and the Politics of Notables', in Polk and Chambers (eds), *Beginnings*, p. 48. In the second half of the nineteenth century there was a progressive transformation of the urban elite: from notables and religious officials to landowners and public officials educated in the new Ottoman schools.
53. E. Finn, 'The fellaheen of Palestine', in The Committee of the PEF, *The Surveys*, p. 333. Finn highlighted the lack of 'national cohesion' among the *fellaḥīn*. However, he added that 'no clan has for a long time overpassed the boundaries of its own district, and they show no disposition to do so [. . .] Nothing but the strong arm of government can ever induce a Fellaḥ to quit his native village

- [...] They are influenced by no patriotism for Turkey. The very name is unknown to them.' Ibid.
54. In the last four, the component of the Jewish population was less than 1 per cent: Gaza (0.4 per cent), Bethlehem (0.1 per cent), Saint John of Acre (0.7 per cent), Tulkarem (0.14 per cent).
 55. Writing about the differences among the Bedouins, Constantin-François Volney (1757–1820) noted that those 'in the valley of Bekaa, in that of the Jordan, and in Palestine, approach nearer to the conditions of the peasants; but these [tribes] are despised by the others, who look upon them as bastard Arabs'. C. F. Volney, *Voyage en Égypte et en Syrie, pendant les années 1783, 1784 et 1785*, v. 1 (Paris: Bossanges Frères, 1822), p. 360.
 56. The Bedouins in Palestine were comparatively less than those present in Iraq, Syria and Jordan. Throughout the nineteenth century the Negev Bedouins passed from a phase of nomadism to a progressive semi-nomadism. As the studies of Oren Yiftachel confirm, Bedouins were much more attached to their land than previously believed. What is more, as demonstrated by Avinoam Meir, at the end of the eighteenth century, they were already employed in agricultural activities in the north of Negev. See A. Shemu'eli, *Hitnablut ba-Bevim shel Midbar Yehudah [The Settling of the Bedouins in the Desert of Judea]* (Tel Aviv: Gome, 1970), p. 50. According to a report by the US Department of Foreign Affairs dated 1 January 1949 the total population in the Negev was composed by about 60,000–70,000 people. NARA, RG 59, Palestine–Israel 1945–9, LM 163, Roll 18.
 57. Kimmerling argued that 'a collective identity is not necessarily a national identity; however, it is a necessary precondition for it.' B. Kimmerling, *Clash of Identities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 59. Anderson specified that it was the USA, rather than Europe, to have 'invented' nationalism.
 58. A. Klotz and C. Lynch, *Strategies for Research in Constructivist International Relations* (New York: Sharpe, 2007), p. 65.
 59. According to Uri Ram, 'the very concept of a primordial or perennial "Jewish nation" was constructed by modern Zionist historiography since the mid-nineteenth century.' U. Ram, *Israeli Nationalism* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 128.
 60. Aryeh L. Avneri noted that 'the Arab conquest brought new settlers, who imposed the religion of Islam and the Arab language on all the inhabitants.' A. L. Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession: Jewish Land-settlement and the Arabs, 1878–1948* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1984), p. 11.
 61. T. Canaan, 'Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine', in *The Journal of the Palestine Oriental Society*, v. 7, 1927, p. 47. One century before French archaeologist C. Clermont-Ganneau (1846–1923) noted that 'Mussulman Arabs, who founded their empire on the ruins of the Byzantine and Persian Kingdoms, intentionally left untouched the civilization which they found already installed and in use [...] the fellaheen of Palestine, taken as a whole,

- are the modern representatives of those old tribes which the Israelites found settled in the country, such as the Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites, Amorites, Philistines, Edomites, [...] C. Clermont-Ganneau, 'The Peasants', in The Committee of the PEF, *The Surveys*, pp. 319–324.
62. Ra'ad asked the following question: 'Is it not transparent that ancient peoples like the Canaanites/Phoenicians', Philistines, Babylonians, Egyptians, Moabites, and others remained on the land and could not have disappeared from existence? They changed identities, adopted different religious beliefs, and moved about, but for the most part they had no place else to go!' B. L. Ra'ad, *Hidden Histories* (London: Pluto, 2010), p. 218. Tamārī stressed that 'while Canaan's ethnography examined a living tradition, the more recent writings have created a "pickled" ethnography that aims at celebrating and glorifying a tradition that no longer exists – or exists only as part of a putative nationalist narrative [...]' S. Tamārī, *Mountain against the Sea: Essays on Palestinian Society and Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), pp. 98–111.
 63. D. Gilmour, *Dispossessed: the Ordeal of the Palestinians* (London: Sidgwick, 1980), p. 20.
 64. Until the beginning of the eleventh century the majority of the local population remained predominantly Christian; this confirms that, as a general tendency, Islam was not imposed on the local populations.
 65. M. Gil, *A History of Palestine, 634–1099*, v. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 20.
 66. 'The wedge script records an inventory of sounds that is closer to that found in Classical Arabic (ca. 28 sounds) than to that found in Biblical Hebrew (ca. 22 sounds).' See M. O'Connor, 'Epigraphic semitic scripts' in P. T. Daniels and W. Bright (eds), *The World's Writing System* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), p. 92. Arabic has the same 'sound system as Canaanite, reflected in the 28-sign alphabets of both. Ugaritic also has the same sounds, except that the 30-sign alphabet has three signs for the aleph: ā, ū, ē. As the only live language in the region for many centuries, Arabic can be said to be the storehouse containing the inventories of the earlier languages'. Ra'ad, *Hidden*, p. 187.
 67. M. Rodinson, *Israel and the Arabs* (London: Penguin, 1982), pp. 319–20.
 68. Edward Said explained that 'the development and conservation of every culture requires the existence of an *alter ego* different and in competition with it. The construction of identity [...] implies the construction of opposites and of "others", whose present is always subject to continuous interpretation and reinterpretation of that which differentiates them from us.' E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), pp. 331–2.
 69. There is evidence that until Istanbul fell to Mehmed II (1432–81) in 1453, there also 'existed a tradition of Turkism defending the merits of Turkish language and customs against Persian and Arabic influences.' See N. Canefe,

- 'Turkish Nationalism and Ethno-symbolic analysis: the rules of exceptions', in *Nations and Nationalism*, v. 8, n. 2, 2002, p. 141.
70. J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: John Murray, 1822), pp. 340–1.
 71. See C. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004).
 72. D. Archibugi and F. Voltaggio, *Filosofi per la pace [Philosophers for peace]* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1999), p. xvi.
 73. Although Ottoman rulers and European powers represented two 'others', they were in no way comparable to what was perceived as the 'Zionist threat'. Zionism, contrary to the other two, aimed at *permanently* introducing a population that was strongly motivated (also) due to its millenary ties with the Holy Land.
 74. F. Bovet, *Viaggio in Terra Santa [Journey in the Holy Land]* (Florence: Tip. Claudiana, 1867), p. 94.
 75. R. Khālidī, *Palestinian Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 19.
 76. S. Telhami and M. Barnett (eds), *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2002), p. 19. 'An identity is the understanding of oneself in relationship to others.' Ivi, p. 62.
 77. According to Peters, 'rather than a situation in which an active Arab population, present from "time immemorial", is forced from or exiled from its land, the picture is almost the exact opposite, [or rather that] of a population – the Jews – whose presence attracted Arab immigrants, and the Jewish land, assigned as their home, are usurped by the arrival of these Arab immigrants from external areas to the Jewish settlements.' J. Peters, *From Time Immemorial* (London: Joseph, 1985), p. 249.
 78. Avneri's book was published in Hebrew in 1980. It was translated to English in 1984: 'The few Arabs who lived in Palestine a hundred years ago when Jewish settlement began, were a tiny remnant of a volatile population, which had been in constant flux [...].' Avneri, *The Claim of Dispossession*, p. 11.
 79. Finkelstein wrote that Peter's book was 'the greatest fraud ever published regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict'. See N. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Verso, 1995), p. 22.
 80. A. Dershowitz, *The Case for Israel* (Hoboken: Wiley, 2003), p. 27.
 81. H. Melville, *Journals* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1989), p. 94.
 82. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Moore. Jerusalem, 30 July 1879.
 83. M. S. Hasan, 'Population Movements, 1867–1947', in C. Issawi (ed.), *The Economic History of the Middle East 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 160.
 84. R. Bachi, *The Population of Israel* (Jerusalem: Institute of Contemporary Jewry of The Hebrew University, 1974), p. 35.

85. For an analysis of the demographic growth (which involved around 120,000 persons) recorded in Palestine between the 1850s and the beginning of the 1880s, see A. Schölch, 'The emergence of modern Palestine (1856–1882)', in H. Nashabe (ed.), *Studia Palestina: Studies in Honor of Constantine K. Zuray* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1988).
86. Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry, *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December 1945 and January 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Jerusalem: Government Printer, 1946–7).
87. Justin McCarthy noted that 'the province that experienced the greatest Jewish population growth (about .035 annually), Jerusalem Sanjak, was the province with the lowest rate of growth of Muslim population (.009)'. See McCarthy, *The Population of Palestine*, pp. 16–17. While failing to provide counter-evidences, Fred M. Gottheil criticized McCarthy's assessments. See F. M. Gottheil, 'The smoking gun: Arab immigration into Palestine, 1922–1931', in *The Middle East Quarterly*, v. 10, n.1, 2003, pp. 53–64.
88. See [chapter 5](#) of the Peel Commission of 1937.
89. Hillel Yaffe (1864–1936), a Russian physician immigrated to Palestine in 1891, described the new cures used at the time. See A. Latour, *The Resurrection of Israel* (Cleveland: The World Pub. Company, 1968), p. 34.
90. W. L. Lowdermilk, 'The Arab problem in Palestine', in *The Menorah Journal*, v. 32, n. 1, 1944, p. 107.
91. R. Miller, *Divided Against Zion* (New York: Routledge, 2013), p. 37.
92. Lowdermilk, 'The Arab problem', p. 107.
93. Y. Porath, 'Mrs. Peters's Palestine', in *New York Review of Books*, 16 Jan. 1986.
94. G. M. Kressel and R. Aharoni, *Egyptian Émigrés in the Levant of the 19th and 20th Centuries* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, 2013), p. 3. Available online: <http://jcpa.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Egypt2.pdf>. The paper is largely based on Joan Peters's claims. On the problematic use of the Hope-Simpson Report – it clarified that in Palestine 'Egyptian labor is being employed in certain individual cases' – and the Anglo-American Survey see P. Blair, 'From time immemorial – evidence of unrecorded Arab immigration' (Part 5 of 6), in *Capitalism Magazine*, 20 Apr. 2002. Available online: <http://capitalismmagazine.com/2002/04/from-time-immemorial-evidence-of-unrecorded-arab-immigration-part-5-of-6/>.
95. Kressel and Aharoni, *Egyptian Émigrés*, p. 30.
96. Ivi, p. 6.
97. British mandate censuses failed to assess unregistered immigratory and emigratory movements, of both Jews and Arabs.
98. Also the Templers, arrived in 1868, tended to avoid any integration with the local population and to isolate themselves in their colonies. Their number in Palestine never exceeded a maximum of 2,200 persons. See A. Carmel, *Die Siedlungen der württembergischen Templer in Palästina, 1868–1918* [*The settlements of the Templers of Württemberg in Palestine, 1868–1918*] (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973).

99. Al-Ramlī, *Al-Fatāwā al-Khayrīya li-Naf' al-Barīya* [*Consolatory Legal Response in Favour of the Creation*] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'rifa, n.a.), v. 2, pp. 151–60.
100. C. T. Wilson, *Peasant Life in the Holy Land* (London: Murray, 1906), p. 85.
101. Kressel and Aharoni, *Egyptian Émigrés*, p. 25.
102. Manna, in Scham, Salem and Pogrund (eds), *Shared Histories*, p. 34.
103. In Semitic languages the word *Peleset* is often translated as 'migrant' or 'invader'. This aspect has been sometimes used in order to downplay the relevance of this term and the role of the Philistines. It is, however, a problematic argument that, if deemed correct, should be applied in other contexts as well. Wales, for example, means 'Alien'. No one, however, questions the fact that the Welsh are native of Wales.
104. Herodotus used the name *Palaistinê Syria* (Syria-Palestine) alluding to a broader area than that referred to in biblical Hebrew with the term *Plêshseth*. In *Polinnia* he wrote that 'this part of Syria, with the entire country, which extends to Egypt, is called Palestine [Palaistinê]'. Cited in G. Desiderj (ed.), *Erodoto Alicarnasseo*, v. 2 (Rome, 1789), p. 153. For a treatment of the reference made by Herodotus regarding the circumcised peoples of 'Palaistinê' (a diffused practice among the ancient Semitic populations; the most ancient proof of circumcision is traceable to ancient Egypt); see W. Beloe (ed.), *Herodotous*, v. 2 (London: Leigh, 1806), pp. 4–6; E. J. Brunshwig and G. E. R. Lloyd (eds), *Greek Thought* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p. 871. Also Aristotle (384–322 BCE) used (from second-hand informations the term Palestine, without indicating a specific area: 'Again if, as is fabled, there is a lake in Palestine, such that if you bind a man or beast and throw it in it floats and does not sink.' Aristotle, *Metereology* (Whitefish: Kessinger, 2004), p. 39.
105. Danny Ayalon, Israel's deputy foreign minister between 2009 and 2013, mentioned this aspect in a video posted in December 2013 on YouTube (title: 'The REAL Truth about Palestine').
106. Metternich, 2 Aug. 1847. A. Gercen, *Briefe aus Italien und Frankreich: (1848–1849)* [*Letters from Italy and France: (1848–1849)*] (Hamburg: Hoffmann, 1850), p. 56. According to Metternich 'the word "Italy" is just a geographic expression, a qualification concerning language that has not the political value that the efforts of revolutionary ideologists try to impress to it.'
107. First published in Russian, in *Rassvyet*, 4 Nov. 1923. Available in English at: <http://www.danielpipes.org/3510/the-iron-wall-we-and-the-arabs>.
108. According to Lewis: 'The word [Palestine] survived briefly in the early Arab Empire, and then disappeared.' B. Lewis, *From Babel to Dragomans* (London: Phoenix, 2005), p. 191. Assaf Likhovski noted that prior to 1917 Palestine 'was merely a geographical term'. A. Likhovski, *Law and Identity in Mandate Palestine* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), p. 10.
109. MDC – 'Filasṭīn', 2/15 Feb. 1913. Similar editorials were published in most of the newspapers of the time: 'How much longer will the vulture [the Zionist organizations] eat at the heart of our country? If we lose our country what are we living for?' MDC – 'al-Karmil', 27 Nov. 1912.

110. 'Filasṭīn', 7 Apr. 1330/May 1914. Cited in Khālīdī, *Palestinian*, pp. 154–6.
111. Even if most Palestinian newspapers were able to print only a few hundred copies each (*al-Quds* printed around 1,500 before 1914), most of them were available in public places and libraries; they were also often sent free of charge to the *mukhtār* (village chiefs) of various inhabited areas. See J. Yehoshua, *Tārīkh al-ṣaḥāfa al-'Arabīya fī Filasṭīn fī al-'Abd al-'Uthmānī, 1909–1918* [*The History of the Arabic Press in Palestine during the Ottoman Era*] (Jerusalem: Maʿbaʿat al-Maʿārif, 1974), pp. 17–18 and 44.
112. 1908 was the year of the new constitution (the second after the one of 1876) issued by Abdul Hamid II (1842–1918). The new climate led to the reduction of restrictions imposed by the Ottoman censure. This brief phase was interrupted by the outbreak of World War I, when the Porte gagged all press agencies. At the end of the war local newspapers began to reorganize; in 1919–20 a new phase began, that of the censorship imposed by London. Almost 20 years later (Feb. 1937) British authorities registered the presence of eight political dailies, four Arabic (*al-Liwāʾ*, *Filasṭīn*, *al-Difaʿa*, *al-Jāmiʿa al-Islāmiyya*) and four Jewish (*The Palestine Post*, *Haboker*, *Haʿaretz*, *Davar*). In six months, between 19 April and 12 October 1937, that is immediately following the years of the Great Arab Revolt of 1936–9, the 'Arab newspapers were suspended on thirty-four occasions and Hebrew papers on thirteen occasions'. TNA CO 733/346/10.
113. *Al-Karmil* was founded in 1908 in Haifa by Najīb Nassār. It was published until 1944; *al-Quds* was printed for the first time in Jerusalem in 1908, and was closed in 1917; *al-Munadi* was published in 1912 and remained active until 1914; *Filasṭīn* was founded by Yūsuf al-ʿIsā (1870–1948) and ʿIsā al-ʿIsā (1878–1950) – it was the longest lasting of the four newspapers, going to press from 1911 to 1948; *al-Dustūr* was printed by Khalīl Sakānīnī (1878–1939) between 1910 and 1913; it was then sold to Jamīl al-Khālīdī. See Y. Khūrī, *Al-ṣaḥāfa al-'Arabīya fī Filasṭīn* [*The Arabic Press in Palestine*] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1976).
114. MDC – 'Filasṭīn', 6 Apr. 1913.
115. A. Ayalon, *Reading Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2004), p. 64.
116. Cited in I. Nasser, 'Palestinian nationalism', in I. Pappe, J. Hilal (eds), *Across the Wall: Narratives of Israeli-Palestinian History* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 2010), p. 224.
117. See for instance the *tafsīr* (exegesis) of the Qur'an written by Ṭabarī (838–923). Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān 'an Taʾwīl al-Qurʾān* [*The Clear Collection Regarding the Interpretation of the Qur'an*], ed. Sīdqī Jamīl al-ʿAttār, 15 vols (Beirut, 2001). For a later source see Mujīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Tārīkh al-Quds wa 'l-Khalīl* [*The Glorious History of Jerusalem and Hebron*], v. 1 (Najaf: al-Ḥaydarīya, 1968), pp. 65, 66, 71, 94, 101.
118. A. S. Al-'Ayyāshī, *Al-Riḥla al-'Ayyāshīa* [*The Journey of al-'Ayyāshī*], v. 2 (Abū Zaby: Dār al-Suwāʿidī, 2006), p. 189.
119. The subject is dealt with in A. Fahīm Gabr, *Al-Ard al-Muqaddasa* [*The Holy Land*] (Nāblus: Al-Najāh University, 1983).

120. Cited in J. van Ess, 'Abd al-Malik and the Dome of the Rock: an analysis of some texts', in J. Raby and J. Johns (eds), *Bayt Al-Maqdis*, v. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp. 89–90.
121. See al-Ya'qūbī, *Kitāb al-Buldān* [*Book of Countries*], Bibliotheca Geographorum Arabicorum, M.J. de Goeje (eds), v. 8, (Brill: Leiden 1892), p. 330.
122. Cited and translated in G. LeStrange, *Palestine Under the Moslems: A Description of Syria and the Holy Land from A.D. 650 to 1500* (London: Watt, 1890), p. 28.
123. Ibn Ḥawqal, *Kitāb Sūrat al-'Arḍ* [*The Book of the Earth's Features*] (Leiden: n.a., 1967), translated in French in J. H. Kramers and G. Wiet (eds), *Configuration de la Terre* [*Configuration of the Earth*], v. 2 (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1964).
124. The following is one of the many passages written on Palestine by al-Muqaddasī (The Jerusalemite): 'Trade from Palestine includes olives, figs, raisins and the carob fruit, also mixed fabrics of cotton and silk.' Cited in LeStrange, *Palestine Under the Moslems*, p. 18.
125. O. Livne-Kafri (ed.), Ibn al-Muraja, *Faḍā'il Bayt al-Maqdis wa 'l-Khalīl wa Faḍā'il al-Shām* [*Merits of Jerusalem and Hebron and Merits of Syria*] (Shefa-'Amr: Aimaghreq, 1995). As suggested by the title of the work, it also included sections dedicated to Hebron and the Syrian region. The direct association between Hebron and Jerusalem is one of the characteristics of the text. For an analysis of *Faḍā'il al-Quds* in relation to the growing perception of Palestine as a more defined country, see A. Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856–1882* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992).
126. Haim Gerber clarified that 'little used sources from the 17th and 18th centuries indicate some remarkable traces of awareness of territorial consciousness that deserve closer scrutiny [...] While I am fully aware that some may claim that such territorial concepts may simply refer to one's native home, place of birth, a close reading of [Khayr al-Dīn] al-Ramli may suggest that there is something more to it, and that we are in fact looking at something that can only be called embryonic territorial awareness, though the reference is to social awareness rather than to a political one.' See. H. Gerber, "'Palestine" and other territorial concepts in the 17th century', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, v. 30, n. 4, Nov. 1998, p. 563.
127. Muḥīr al-Dīn, *Al-Uns al-Jalīl bi-Tārikh*, v. 2, pp. 66–73.
128. BOA I.HUS 140/43. 12 Feb. 1906.
129. For a reproduction of the map see N. Matar, *Turks, Moors, and Englishmen in the Age of Discovery* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), p. 134.
130. B. Doumani, 'Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: writing Palestinians into history', *Journal of Palestine studies*, v. 21, n. 2, 1992, pp. 9–10.
131. ISA RG 160/2881–P. Moore to Elliot. Jerusalem, 27 July 1872.
132. BOL – CMJ – C. 61. Rose, 4 May 1938.
133. N. J. Mandel, *The Arabs and Zionism before World War I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), p. xx.

134. L. Hertslet (ed.), *A Complete Collection of the Treaties and Conventions*, v. 5 (London: Butterworth, 1840), p. 548.
135. H. Chisholm (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, v. 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), p. 600.
136. In order to understand the reasons behind the statements made by the future founder of the PLO Aḥmād al-Shuqāṭī (1908–80) and other Arab leaders, often cited in order to negate the existence of a particular Palestinian identity, see D. Pipes, 'Is Jordan Palestine?', in *Commentary*, Oct. 1988. Available online: <http://www.danielpipes.org/298/is-jordan-palestine>.
137. TNA 371/5139. Samuel to Curzon, Jerusalem, 2 Apr. 1920.
138. Manna in Scham, Salem, Pogrund (eds), *Shared Histories*, p. 54.
139. That Palestine was a specific reality also in the eyes of supporters of Pan-Arabism is confirmed by an article published in January 1920, under the pseudonym 'Ibn al-Jazīra' ('Son of Arabia'), on *Surīya al-Janubīya*: 'Palestine, oh stage of the Prophets and source of great men; Palestine, oh sister of the gardens of paradise; Palestine, oh Ka'ba of hopes and source of fulfilment; Palestine, oh beloved of millions of people; Palestine, oh lord of lands and pride of worshippers; Palestine, oh source of happiness and spring of purity; Palestine, my country and the country of my forefathers and ancestors; Palestine only in you do I have pride Palestine, and only for you am I ashamed; Palestine, oh maiden of nations and desired of peoples; Palestine, my honour, my glory, my life and my pride.' Cited in R. Khālidī, *Palestinian Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 168.
140. U. S. Barghūṭī and K. Tutah, *Tārīkh Filasṭīn* [*A History of Palestine*] (Jerusalem: Bayt al-Maqdis, 1923), p. 13. The book was originally published in 1920. Umar Sālīh Barghūṭī (1894–1965), a staunch 'Ottomanist', was a refined intellectual educated according to the Alliance Israelite Universelle scholastic system. Khalīl Tutah (1886–1955) was an historian educated by CMS missionaries and at Columbia University, New York.
141. S. S. al-Hadī, *Jughbrāfiyyat Sūriyā wa Filasṭīn al-Tabī'iyya* [*The Natural Geography of Syria and Palestine*] (Cairo: al-Ahlīya, 1923). Cited in Khālidī, *Palestinian*, p. 174.
142. K. Sakānīnī, *Filasṭīn ba'd al-Ḥarb al-Kubrā* [*Palestine after the Great War*] (Jerusalem: Bayt al-Maqdis, 1925), p. 9. The works of Sakānīnī are available at the Hebrew University. The Khalīl Sakānīnī Cultural Center (Rāmallāh) was partially destroyed in 2002 during an invasion of the Israeli Army following a Palestinian terrorist attack in Netanya.

Chapter 3 The Ownership of the Land

1. A. Schölch (ed.), *Palestinians over the Green Line* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 10.
2. Norman Bentwich (1883–1971), legal secretary of the British-run Government of Palestine, noted that the Turks took the registers with them in the phases immediately following the fall of the Empire. He added that they

were rediscovered 'after the fall of Damascus, and have been brought back to the districts to which they belong.' *The British Year Book of International Law*, v. 1 (London, 1921), p. 146. Bentwich found clear irregularities in the way in which the land had been registered; transitions were suspended in the years 1918–20.

3. B. al-Hut (ed.), *Wathā'iq al-Ḥaraka al-Waṭanīya al-Filasṭīnīya, 1918–1939: Min awraq Akram Zu'aytir* [Documents of the National Palestinian Movement, 1918–1939: From the Papers of Akram Zu'aytir] (Beirut: Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīnīya, 1979), p. 72. The following is a protest advanced in 1925 by a group of Palestinian notables to colonial secretary Leo Amery: 'Laws as such in Palestine are not derived from the spirit and conditions of the country; they resemble a plant which cannot live. They do not remain in force for long and amendments are continually introduced [. . .] Our land is not so fertile in crops as the [British] Palestine government is fertile in giving us laws and legislation, which are considered as a burden by the inhabitants, who have not been used to them under the old regime.' Cited in M. Bunton, *Colonial Land Policies in Palestine 1917–1936* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 46.
4. 'In May 1948 [. . .] over 70% had been vested in the Mandatory Power and, accordingly, reverted to the State of Israel as its legal heir.' Israel Academic Committee on the Middle East. CZA KKL 5/50125.
5. Government of Palestine, *Survey of Palestine* (London: British Government Printer, 1946), p. 257.
6. Referring to a later phase, Benvenisti noted: 'Ironically, the legal framework used by Israel to claim West Bank and Gaza land as national patrimony is based on a medieval law of conquest [. . .] Conquerors in the Middle Ages regarded themselves as the owners of all lands that came under their control.' M. Benvenisti, *The West Bank Data Project* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute, 1984), p. 33.
7. Mitchell Bard is just one of the scholars who recently proposed that argument; 'more than 70 percent of the land – in what would become Israel was not owned by Arab farmers, it belonged to the mandatory government. Those lands reverted to Israeli control after the departure of the British.' M. Bard, *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Chevy Chase: AICE, 2006), p. 29.
8. M. Howard to A. Ames, 28 Nov. 1873. 'Documents: Colloquy with Colored Ministers', *Journal of Negro History*, Jan. 1931, v. 16, pp. 90–1.
9. House of Commons Papers, Report by Mr. Stephen Cave on the Financial Conditions of Egypt, v. LXXXIII, n. 7, 1876, p. 1. Cave's report, created with three other collaborators, also revealed endemic corruption of all Ottoman government apparatus.
10. *The British and Foreign Review*, v. 9, n. 17, 1839, p. 249.
11. ISA RG 160/2881–P. John Dickson. Jerusalem, 1 Sep. 1903.
12. A. Schölch (ed.), *Palestinians over the Green Line* (London: Ithaca Press, 1983), p. 10.

13. J. Berque in the introduction of Polk, Chambers (eds), *Beginnings*, p. 24.
14. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Finn, Jerusalem, 7 Jan. 1856. In the same dispatch, Finn noted that the 'old prejudices are abating and liberality of sentiment greatly increased in Jerusalem also, which has been ever since I know of, in advance of other places with respect to toleration of non-Moslem religions.'
15. Palestinian historian 'Āref al-'Āref (1891–1973) underlined that when the Ottoman authorities regained possession of Jerusalem in 1840, it counted around 22,000 inhabitants. Twenty-one years later, in 1861, the city was inhabited by around 68,000 persons. Ā. al-'Āref, *Tārīkh al-Quds* [*The History of Jerusalem*] (Cairo: Dār al- Ma'ārif, 1951), p. 118. Other cities in the region witnessed significant expansion. On 29 November 1851, the consul Finn noted for example that in the previous 12 months Jaffa 'is greatly enlarged, and some of the most expensive dwelling houses in all Palestine have been erected there by native merchants.' ISA RG 160/2881-P.
16. Hajjar pointed out that the *Hatt-ı Hümayun* and its international recognition 'are responsible for the regeneration of contemporary Eastern Christianity.' J. Hajjar, *Le Christianisme en Orient* [*Christianity in the East*] (Beirut: Librairie du Liban, 1971), p. 105.
17. The *Timar* system, almost abandoned in the seventeenth century and formally abolished in 1831, foresaw that the conquered territories be distributed among the participants of the military campaigns in the form of temporary rights over the land. See B. Lewis, 'Some reflections of the decline of the Ottoman Empire', *Studia Islamica*, n. 9, 1958, pp. 111–27.
18. Ö. C. Sarç, 'Tanẓīmāt ve Sanayimiz' ['The Tanẓīmāt and our industry'], *Tanẓīmāt*, v. 1, 1941 (Istanbul), pp. 423–40, reproduced also in C. Issawi (ed.), *The Economic History of the Middle East 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 58.
19. The Ottoman Empire registered other 'reformist eras' in previous historical periods (the body of the Janissaries, for instance, was introduced to meet certain specific needs encountered in the fourteenth century). Such reforms often failed due to the fact that the new governmental departments' military corps did not replace the pre-existing ones, but rather functioned alongside them, creating a partial stall in the form of internal conflict.
20. The concept of Ottomanism emerged with the Young Turks. It aimed at providing more political freedom and equality in exchange for loyalty to the Empire from all its citizens. Recent works that shed new light on these issues include M. U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011); A. Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem Between Ottoman and British Rule* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 2011); and J. Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).
21. Conder noted the following: 'In 1882 I saw only too plainly the change that had come over the land. The Palestine of the early years of the Survey [of the PEF] hardly now exists. The country is a Levantine land, where Western

- fabrics, Western ideas, and even Western languages, meet the traveler at every point.' Conder, *Palestine*, p. 21.
22. TNA FO 195/1067. James H. Skene (1812–86) to the British ambassador in Istanbul Henry Elliot, 9 Aug. 1875. The document is from Sultan Abdülaziz I's times. The latter tried to modernize the Ottoman Empire, but was evaluated in negative terms by London. 'His temper is violent', Edmund Hornby (1825–96) wrote in 1864 to the then Foreign Minister John Russell (1792–1878), 'and his prejudices are thoroughly Mahomedan.' TNA FO 78/1851. Hornby to Russel. Istanbul, 26 July 1864.
 23. D. R. Divine, *Politics and Society in Ottoman Palestine* (London: Rienner, 1994), p. 81.
 24. When, in 1850, the British consul in Jerusalem James Finn (1806–72) decided to purchase a home outside Jerusalem he turned 'to natives offering them to rent such a house if they would build it. But in every case their demands were too high for me to entertain them. I therefore set myself to purchase a small piece of land through my Dragoman, in order to build for myself, as several consuls and other Europeans have done in these countries'. Israel State Archive [hereafter ISA] RG 160/2881-P. Finn to Palmerston (1784–1865). Jerusalem, 10 July 1850.
 25. The information on the categories that follow is mainly taken from the files of the Israel State Archive (ISA – RG 22/7/3326), containing dispatches sent by various British employees involved in 'mapping' the use of land in Palestine during the first years of the mandate.
 26. Weulersse, *Paysans*, p. 92.
 27. Ruth Kark, interview with the author, The Hebrew University, 23 Nov. 2011.
 28. Islamoglu explained that the concept of *raqāba* 'did not represent a title of ownership in the modern sense but an ability on the part of the ruler, or the central government, to distribute rights to revenues from land and, in doing so, to negotiate with different groups or individuals the conditions of their allegiance [...] *mülk* did not signify private ownership. Instead *mülk* was a category of entitlement to tax revenues that the grantee held, as was the case with revenues grants, by a *berat* [certified by the seal of the sultan] or an official document of entitlement from the ruler'. H. Islamoglu, 'Property as a contested domain: a reevaluation of the Ottoman Land Code of 1858', in R. Owen (ed.), *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Middle Eastern Monographs, 2000), pp. 17–18 and 27.
 29. Hope-Simpson Report, Palestine: Report on Immigration, Land Settlement and Development, v. 1, 1930, p. 29.
 30. As noted by Warriner: 'The owner of the land on miri title, in theory a tenant of the state, is in much the same actual position as the owner on mulk tenure, since (except in Iraq) he pays no rent to the State and his title can be inherited by his legal heirs: he can also sell the land.' D. Warriner, *Land and Poverty in the Middle East* (London: Royal Inst. of Int. Affairs, 1948), p. 16.

31. J. L. Burckhardt, *Travels in Syria and the Holy Land* (London: Murray, 1822), pp. 291–309. In Iraq, a system of ‘shared harvest’ existed already during the first stage of Babylonian domination.
32. Some scholars argued that the *mushā* is rooted in an ancient tribal system; others linked it to tax liabilities. See Y. Firestone, ‘Land equalization and factor scarcities: holding size and the burden of impositions in imperial Central Russia and late Ottoman Levant’, *Journal of Economic History*, v. 41, 1981, pp. 813–33.
33. E. Sanbar, *Figures du Palestinien [Palestinian Figures]* (Paris: Gallimard, 2005), p. 45. By the end of the mandate in 1947, *mushā* land had been reduced to 25 per cent. R. El-Eini, *Mandated Landscape: British Imperial Rule in Palestine, 1929–1948* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 292.
34. M. Mundy, ‘Village authority and the legal order of property (the Southern Hawran, 1876–1922)’, in Owen (ed.), *New Perspectives*, p. 89.
35. Elihu Grant (1873–1942) argued that ‘the term feddān is used by the peasants to indicate the acknowledged right of a village farmer to own and work his plow and team and participate in the annual divisions of the arable land of the farming community. The feddān is the unit, but one feddān may be shared by several owners, each partner contributing his share to the outfit and being recorded as entitled to privileges in the feddān.’ E. Grant, *The People of Palestine* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1921), pp. 132–3.
36. Homans argued that ‘the resources of the village were divided into shares; one man might have more of these shares than another, but the shares themselves were equal.’ See G. C. Homans, *English Villagers on the Thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1942), p. 83.
37. K. Stein, *The Land Question in Palestine* (Chapel Hill: University of California Press, 1984), p. 12.
38. Büssow made reference to the cliché of the ‘Bedouin predator’, highlighting that after 1880 ‘the pastoral nomads of the Negev began shifting towards a more intensive engagement with farming.’ This was not a new process: ‘In the late eighteenth century the Bedouins of the northern Negev were already involved in agricultural activity.’ See J. Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 261. A paper published by the Israel News Agency in November 1948 clarified that, despite its modern backwardness, the ruins spread throughout the Negev proved the existence of a very developed ancient civilization. NARA, RG59, Palestine-Israel 1945–49, LM 163, Roll 23.
39. Deposition of O. Yiftachel, district court of Be’er Sheva, 6 Mar. 2010.
40. H. Gerber, *The Social Origins of the Modern Middle East* (Boulder, CO: Rienner, 1987), p. 147.
41. Y. Firestone, ‘The land-equalizing *mushā* village: a reassessment’, in G. G. Gilbar, *Ottoman Palestine 1800–1914* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), p. 101.
42. Weulersse, *Paysans*, pp. 99–108.
43. J. Ruedy, ‘Dynamics of land alienation’, *North Dartmouth: Information papers* (Association of Arab-American University graduates), n. 5, 1973, pp. 122–3.

44. When, for instance, 73 people from the village of Tīre (subdistrict of Ṭūlkarem) decided in 1929 to sell to the *waqf* a part of the *mushā* they had been cultivating, a sort of rebellion arose from the rest of the village. The 'sellers' were forced to give back the money collected; the agreement was nullified. Center for Heritage and Islamic Research [hereafter CHIR] 10/10.1/29/10.
45. Firestone, 'The land-equalizing', p. 92. Firestone provided also a distinction between 'open-ended' and 'quantified-share' *mushā* villages. In the former, title was reassigned at each redistribution among the family units qualified for it; in the latter, what was reassigned was only the land, and not the title. Ivi, pp. 93–4.
46. Grant, *The People of Palestine*, p. 132.
47. See M. R. Fischbach, *State, Society, and Land in Jordan* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), p. 39.
48. According to the Johnson-Crosbie Report, 'the foremost need of the [Arab] agricultural industry is "rationalisation"'. Government of Palestine, *Report of a Committee on the Economic Conditions of Agriculturalists in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Government Printing Press, 1930), p. 41. TNA CO 733/185.
49. Z. B. Ghandour, *A Discourse on Domination in Mandate Palestine: Imperialism, Property and Insurgency* (New York: Routledge, 2010), p. 53.
50. Ruth Kark, interview with the author, The Hebrew University, 23 Nov. 2011. *Fellahin* were often considered as morally reprehensible by British officials. Their 'insolence and temerity', in Consul Young's words, 'know no bounds.' ISA RG 160/2881-P. Young to Rose. Jerusalem, 7 May 1845.
51. Firestone, 'The land-equalizing', p. 121.
52. Schaebler in Owen (ed.), *New Perspectives*, p. 288.
53. As confirmed by Ruedy: 'From a social and psychological point of view [...] and as a reflection of the dependence of the individual upon the group for every security during a disorganized period of history, *masha'a* represents an appropriate adaptation.' Ruedy, *Dynamics*, p. 123.
54. S. Sayigh, *The Palestinians* (London: Zed Books, 2007), p. 30.
55. A. Essaid, *Zionism and Land Tenure in Mandate Palestine* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), p. 4.
56. The *fellahin* did not have any direct access to the 'rooms of power' in Istanbul. Moreover, paraphrasing Rosemary Sayigh, they 'did not grasp the meaning of the new laws, nor the concept "ownership", so foreign was it to their own concept of rights'. Sayigh, *The Palestinians*, p. 27.
57. Bergheim's opinion was confirmed also by Phillip J. Baldensperger (1871–1958), an anthropologist born in Jerusalem: 'The villagers of the plains of Sharon and Philistia are usually co-proprietors of all the lands, but when the new law to establish deeds was promulgated, the poorer denied owning any land in order to avoid paying the cost of the deed, and thus became deprived of their lands; in others they sold their rights for a trifle.' P. J. Baldensperger, *QSPEF*, v. 38, London, 1906, p. 192.
58. S. Bergheim, *QSPEF*, v. 26, London 1894, pp. 191–9.

59. According to Quataert, the new regulations were laid out in a European-style 'complex bundle of capitalist and pre-capitalist features'. See D. Quataert, 'Rural unrest in the Ottoman Empire, 1830–1914', in F. Kazemi and J. Waterbury (eds), *Peasants & Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami: Florida University Press, 1991), p. 39. On the same subject Edmund Burke III pointed out that 'private property on the European model was introduced and loosened the bonds between cultivator and land and between cultivator and village community'. Ivi, p. 29.
60. About the attempt, implicit in the reforms, to create a connection between the central government and the single Ottoman subjects see U. S. Barghūti and K. Tutah, *Tārīkh Filasṭīn [A History of Palestine]* (Jerusalem: Bayt al-Maqdis, 1923), pp. 235–6.
61. ISA – RG67/439. J. Serapion (secretary of M. Arutin, American consul in Jerusalem) to T. von Münchhausen (Prussian consul in Jerusalem), 12 June 1874.
62. Karpat clarified that the Code of 1858 began as a measure aimed at reaffirming 'the state's right to land through the establishment of a regime of state ownership and ended by enlarging the scope of private land ownership.' K. H. Karpat, 'Land regime, social structure, and modernization', in W. R. Polk and R. Chambers (eds), *Beginnings of Modernization in the Middle East* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 86.
63. A. Sa'id, *Al-Thawra al-Arabiya al-Kubra fi Filasṭīn, 1936–1939 [The Great Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–1939]* (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1989), pp. 134–5. This does not exclude the fact that there were cases in which the *fellāḥin* living in hill and mountain areas, i.e. the areas in which the majority of them were concentrated, had registered the land in their name. The exact extent of the phenomenon is impossible to estimate.
64. Polk on the impact of the regulations implemented in 1858: 'Long before the Balfour Declaration, which is often seen as the fount of all contention over Palestine, the inarticulate but ancient peasantry had slipped a rung on the ladder which was to lead them down into the refugee camps in 1948.' W. R. Polk, D. H. Stamler and E. Asfour (eds), *Backdrop to Tragedy: The Struggle for Palestine* (Boston: Beacon, 1957), p. 236.
65. According to Kark, the Ottoman land law (1858) 'aimed to end the common land system (*musba'a*)'. R. Kark, 'Consequences of the Ottoman Land Law: agrarian and privatization processes in Palestine, 1858–1918', in Raghubir Chand (ed.), *Marginalization, Globalization and Regional and Local Response* (New Delhi) (forthcoming).
66. Goadby and Doukhan clarified that 'the Land Code, Art. 8, expressly forbids Miri land of a village being held as a whole by the inhabitants of a village or by a few of them as representing the others. Each inhabitant must have a separate Tapu Grant.' See F. M. Goadby and M. J. Doukhan, *The Land Law of Palestine* (Tel Aviv: Shoshany's Printing, 1935), p. 206.
67. Stein, *The Land Question*, pp. 20–1.

68. According to Doumani, 'the emergence of a market in land and the rise of an urban-based large landowning class were rooted in long-term transformations that *preceded* the promulgation of the 1858 Land Code [...] the purchase and sale of nominally *miri*, or state land was taking place as early as the late 1830s.' B. Doumani, 'Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: writing Palestinians into history', in I. Pappé, *The Israel/Palestine Question* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 19.
69. ISA RG160/2881–P. Finn, 29 Nov. 1851.
70. G. Baer, *Population and Society in the Arab East* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 149.
71. The peasants were particularly exposed to the Ottoman system of taxation. Contrary to a relevant percentage of the Bedouins, the peasants were rooted in well-defined areas. Additionally, as opposed to the merchants in the cities, they did not have the means necessary to bribe the Ottoman officials. On taxation in the context of the reformative Ottoman Land Code see M. Kurd 'Alī, *Khiṭaṭ al-Shām [Design of Damascus]*, v. 4 (Damascus: Maktabat al-Nūrī, 1983), pp. 194–5.
72. Grossman argued that in considering the operations undertaken by the 'absentee owners' it is necessary to take into account the serious risks 'that occasionally left them bankrupt'. D. Grossman, *Rural Arab Demography and Early Jewish Settlement in Palestine* (Brunswick: Transaction Pub., 2011), p. 89.
73. Warriner, *Land and poverty*, p. 65.
74. This is 90 per cent according to the Shaw Report of 1930. The latter based its assessments on data provided by the KKL. In the following years the percentage fell to 80 per cent. See Polk, *Backdrop*, p. 236.
75. A. Ṭibāwī, *Modern History of Syria, Including Lebanon and Palestine* (New York: Macmillan, 1969), p. 176.
76. ISA RG 160/2881–P. N.T. Moore. Jerusalem, 30 July 1879.
77. A. Granott, *La Politique Agraire Mondiale et l'expérience d'Israël [World Agrarian Politics and the Israeli Case]* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1957), p. 18.
78. The KKL, an organization 'incorporated in England and registered as a foreign company and having a registered office in Palestine', was committed to the support of 'Jewish settlers in Palestine'. ISA RG 31/34/1–PNK. A. Granott, 1 Nov. 1934.
79. A. Granott, *Agrarian Reform and the Record of Israel* (London: Eyre, 1956), p. 37. Granott specified that 'the course of events subsequently completely justified these activities, which called for great exertion and accurate foresight [...] All those parts to which the Jewish settler had penetrated were included within the state, whereas those where they were not strong enough, or did not have time to plant stakes, remained for the most part outside.' Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.

82. Their interest, however, was not focused only on the land cultivated by Arabs. 'The work that could be most easily taken up', according to a report of the Free Church of Scotland in May 1895, 'and that would be most likely to pay, is the cultivation of land. The soil is rich in more than historic associations.' BOL – CMJ – 63/8.
83. BOL – CMJ – D62/15. The meeting took place in the house of the Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem Samuel Gobat (1799–1879). Besides Gobat, the decision was undersigned also by the Bishop in Sierra Leone, Rev. J. Bowen.
84. The other four are the coastal plain of Rafah and Mount Carmel (which includes the Plain of Sharon in the northern part), the Plain of Saint John of Acre (North of Haifa), the Valley of Hula (East of the Golan Heights) and the Valley of Jordan.
85. In 1887 Oliphant described the Valley of Jezreel as an area 'divided between two great proprietors, the Sultan [...] and the Sursouks [a family settled in Beirut; were among the more active speculators]'. L. Oliphant, *Haifa: or, Life in the Holy Land, 1882–1885* (New York: Harper, 1887), p. 74.
86. Though the *Jewish Colonization Association* (JCA), founded in 1891 by Maurice de Hirsh (1831–96) and renamed *Palestine Jewish Colonization Association* (PICA) in 1924, was not a purely Zionist organization, already at the end of the nineteenth century it began to support the Zionist movement. A. Granott, *Land Settlement in Palestine* (London: Gollancz, 1930), pp. 21–2.
87. Ruppin wrote that between 1910 and 1936, 225,000 *dūnum* of land were purchased in the area. B. J. Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine* (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1993), p. 98. See also A. Ruppin, *Ha-Sotziologia shel ha-Yehudim [The Sociology of the Jews]*, v. 2 (Tel Aviv: Shtibel Press, 1932), pp. 176–8.
88. B. Taylor, *Lands of the Saracen* (New York: Putnam, 1862), p. 99. Taylor (1825–78), an American poet, used the following words: 'Our road, next day, lay directly across the Plain of Esdraelon, one of the richest districts in the world. It is now a green sea, covered with fields of wheat and barley, or great grazing tracts, on which multitudes of sheep and goats are wandering. In some respects it reminded me of the Valley of San José, and if I were to liken Palestine to any other country I have seen, it would be California.' Ibid.
89. L. Oliphant, *Haifa, or Life in Modern Palestine* (London: Blackwood, 1887), p. 60.
90. H. Samuel in House of Commons, Parliamentary papers, v. 16 (London, 1930), p. 16. A memorandum written in 1919 by the *Zionistisches Zentralbureau* (Berlin) clarified that was 'desiderable to make purchases of land in the fertile valley of the Jezreel'. CZA Z3/7/16. Jaffa, 10 July 1919.
91. Between 1900 and 1914 private companies bought 27 per cent of the total land that was transferred from Arab to Jewish ownership. See Y. Katz, 'Private Zionist initiative and settlement', in R. Kark, *The Land that Became Israel* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1989), p. 277.

92. *Geulat Ha-Aretz* (the redemption of the land) was the expression commonly used by the KKL. The latter aimed 'to win a free soil for a free people'. In 1926 Granott, then director of the KKL, wrote that 'above all, the soil of Palestine awaits its redemption.' A. Granott, *Land Problems in Palestine* (London: Routledge, 1926), p. 90. For a Palestinian perspective on the methods used for buying lands see M. I. Darwazah, *al-Malak wa al-Simsār* [*The Angel and the Land Broker*] (Nāblus: n.a., 1934).
93. In 1936, with the intent to demonstrate that the purchase of land by Jews would not have caused damage to Palestinians, Granott clarified that 'since the total extent of Palestine is 26,319,000 dunams, the sum of the Jewish lands does not amount to more than 5% of the whole [...] only 917,495 dunams in Jewish possession are cultivable.' A. Granott, *The Land Issue in Palestine* (Jerusalem: Goldberg, 1936), p. 46.
94. Owen (ed.), *New Perspectives*, pp. ix–x.
95. London's strategies were often applied in the Palestinian context presupposing that the 'principles of the English Law [in respect to agricultural holdings], with some simplification, are applicable to Palestine'. ISA 22/3542. Report of the Committee to Advise on the Protection of Agricultural Tenants, 1927.
96. CZA A153/149/2. The memorandum, addressed to the Western powers, clarified that in order to make 'Palestine a Jewish land', the National Colonisation Association, a body which was to be created by the Universal Zionist Organization, should have counted on several guarantees, including 'the sole right to organise and control immigration into Palestine' and the possess 'of crown, government, waste and unowned lands'. Ibid.
97. In Egypt, mainly due to Muḥammad 'Alī's influence, who already in the second decade of the nineteenth century carried out a cadastral mapping of lands, it is estimated that the *mülk* land amounted in 1875 to over a quarter of the total. In Lebanon, characterized by a semi-autonomous status within the Ottoman context, around 65 per cent of the land was *mülk*. G. Baer, 'Land tenure in Egypt and the Fertile Crescent', in C. Issawi (ed.), *The Economic History of the Middle East 1800–1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), p. 87. Excluding Lebanon, it is estimated that in Greater Syria 'practically all agricultural lands' were *mīrī*. S. B. Himadeh, *Economic Organization of Syria* (Beirut: American Press, 1936), p. 53.
98. Granott, *The Land Issue in Palestine*, p. 68.
99. Moshe Ma'oz, interview with the author, Jerusalem, 14 Dec. 2011. Certainly 'Western-centered' it would also be to claim that the Palestinian people – and more generally the populations in the Eastern Mediterranean area – should not be equated with other nations within the Ottoman Empire on the grounds that they were subject to a *sui generis* Class A mandate. [Chapter 7](#) deals with these aspects. Here it is enough to mention that in the text of the mandate for Palestine the word Arabs, that is almost 90 per cent of the total population in the area, was never mentioned, while the terms Jews and Zionists appeared 12 times in all. In the official correspondences produced by the British

authorities while the terms of the mandate were under discussion, Palestinian Arabs were almost always called 'the rest of the native inhabitants'. TNA – FO 608/100. Forbes Adam to William Malkin, 29 Apr. 1919.

Chapter 4 Zionism: Beyond the Either/Or

1. U. Avnery, *Israel Without Zionism* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 5.
2. JIA – Diburim [speeches], v. 10, 1905–26. Jabotinsky, Prague, 6 July 1919, p. 198.
3. Dialogue between Shibli al Khawja and Churchill reported in Filasṭīn. MDC – 'Filasṭīn', 17 Mar. 1921.
4. Wedgwood in his preface to Granott, *Land Problems in Palestine*, p. ix.
5. Auspitz Labson, linked to Wedgwood by a long-term acquaintanceship, emphasized that 'Weizmann deeply impressed Wedgwood. He learned about Zionism from him and by 1917 was lecturing on the subject himself.' G. Auspitz Labson, *My Righteous Gentile* (Jersey City: Ktav, 2004), p. 18.
6. The British and the French branches of the Rothschild family, as well as Montefiore and the industrialist Edward Cazalet (1827–83), embodied a few influential but isolated exceptions. Cazalet, in particular, proposed a British protectorate on Syria: 'The Arabs who form two-thirds of the whole of the population of Syria, and are for most part lords of the soil, are with very few exceptions completely illiterate, regardless of truth, dishonest in their dealings, and immoral in their conduct.' E. Cazalet, *England's Policy in the East; Our Relations with Russia, and the Future of Syria* (London: Edward Stanford, 1879), p. 22.
7. TNA FO 608/98. The issues discussed in the meeting between Weizmann and Wilson were reported in a memorandum by Louis Mallet (1823–90), 14 Jan. 1919. Weizmann added that France had brought nothing to Palestine except 'monks and cocottes'. 'You are quite right,' replied Wilson, 'you are quite right.' Ibid.
8. Herzl, Vienna, 28 Feb. 1898. Letter addressed to the President of the Zionist conference held on 6 March 1898 in London. Cited in Sokolow, *History*, v. 1, p. 295. Three years earlier, in November 1895, Herzl made his first public appearance in front of a 'Jewish audience'.
9. 'Next year Jerusalem!' is the age-old invocation repeated at Jewish Easter (Pesach Seder).
10. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Finn, Jerusalem, 7 Jan. 1856. Other sources provide different data. During his stay in Jerusalem Rabbi Joseph Schwarz argued, for instance, that in the middle of the nineteenth century there were 7,500 Jews, 15,000 Muslims and 10,000 Christians. Schwarz, *Descriptive*, p. 273. It is well established that, around three or four decades later, Jews became an absolute majority as compared to Muslims and Christians (many of whom

- were Arabs) combined. Often the data regarding Jerusalem in the 1850s are taken from an article published by Karl Marx in 1854. Marx never visited Jerusalem and his considerations were taken from a work published the previous year by French diplomat César Famin. C. Famin, *L'Histoire de la rivalité et du protectorat des Églises chrétiennes en Orient* [*The History of the rivalry and the protectorate of the Christian Churches in the East*] (Paris: Frères, 1853), p. 49.
11. Misrad ha-khinuk veba-tarbut, *Ha-aliyot veba-Yishuv ba-Yebudi be-Eretz Yisrael* [*The Aliyot and the Jewish Yishuv in the Land of Israel*] (Jerusalem: Merkaz le-tokhniyot limudim, 1979), pp. 22–52.
 12. TNA FO 78/2068. Finn to Palmerston, 12 Mar. 1847.
 13. B. Dinur (ed.), *Sefer Toldot ha-Haganab* [*History of the Haganab*], v. 1, p. 2 (Tel Aviv: Ma'arachot, 1956), p. 957.
 14. A. Shapira, *Land and Power* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 5.
 15. A. L. Avneri, *Ha-bityashvut ba-Yebudit veTa'anat ha-Nishul* [*Jewish Settlement and the Expropriation Theory*] (Tel Aviv: HaKibbutz HaMeuchad, 1980).
 16. Zionism was not just a colonial movement. Funds coming from Europe were to remain *in loco*. There is no evidence that money ever went in the opposite direction, from Palestine to Europe. Ran Aaronsohn noted that before 1908, when political Zionism began to take root, Zionism was certainly a colonial movement but not of a colonial type. R. Aaronsohn, *Rothschild and Early Jewish Colonization in Palestine* (Lanham: Rowman, 2000).
 17. At the first Zionist congress in Basel (1897), only four out of 199 delegates were born in Palestine. Half a century later, Behor Shitreet (1895–1967) was the only one of the 37 signatories of the Israeli Declaration of Independence to be born in the region (in Tiberias).
 18. G. Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism* (London: Verso, 2008), p. xii. 'Here in England,' wrote Theodor Herzl, 'the idea of Zionism, which is a colonial idea, should be easily and quickly understood in its true and most modern form.' Cited in J. Fraenkel, *Theodor Herzl: A Biography* (London: Ararat, 1946), p. 126.
 19. T. Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, v. 1 (New York: Herzl Press, 1960), pp. 88–90. B. Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 40–1. E. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1992), p. 13.
 20. Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, p. 134.
 21. T. Herzl, *The Jewish State* (Minneapolis: Filiquarian, 2006), p. 28. Herzl pointed out that if 'I wish to substitute a new building for an old one, I must demolish before I construct.' Ivi, p. 16.
 22. In the years to follow the local majority continued to be ignored in the correspondence between Herzl and the Ottoman authorities. Herzl unsuccessfully made potential economic assistance conditional on two prerogatives: Ottoman recognition of Jews' right to settle in Palestine and the chance to buy unlimited quantities of land. BOA Y.PRK.TöF 6/72. Document produced by the Ottoman authorities at the beginning of the twentieth century.

23. The very few figures linked to Zionism who were overtly in favour of expelling the local majority before the 1930s included Israel Zangwill (1864–1926). In 1905 Zangwill declared that ‘we must be prepared either to drive out by the sword the [Arab] tribes in possession as our forefathers did, or to grapple with the problem of a large alien population, mostly Mohammedan and accustomed for centuries to despise us.’ I. Zangwill, *The Voice of Jerusalem* (New York: Macmillan, 1921), p. 92. In 1905 Zangwill abandoned the Zionist movement to establish the Jewish Territorial Organization.
24. See L. Kamel, *Israele-Palestina: Due Storie, una Speranza* [*Israel-Palestine: Two Histories, One Hope*] (Rome: Editori Riuniti University Press, 2008), p. 289.
25. G. Gilbar, ‘The growing economic involvement of Palestine with the West, 1865–1914’, in D. Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi, 1986), p. 188.
26. Many years later, in response to a question as to why he had become a Zionist, Weizmann explained that it was common belief that Jews ‘always come in on the second floor’ or rather that they ‘come into buildings after the foundations have been erected.’ Palestine, he noted, ‘is the one place where Jews can be pioneers’ and thus show that they are not ‘parasites’. UNA S-0611–0001–23. Weizmann, 23 June 1947.
27. CZA A370/575–13. On 16 November 1948, Adel Arslan (1887–1954) wrote that ‘if the Jews, who have never lived a rural life, turned to agriculture in Palestine, it was to boycott Arab products and oblige young Israelites to remain in the country without any other means of subsistence, and certainly not for humanitarian reasons.’ ASDMAE, AP 1946–1950, Palestine, b. 9.
28. According to John Falanga, British vice-consul in Jaffa, the high rates of infant mortality amongst the Arabs was due to the ‘neglect and carelessness of the parents in bringing up their children’. ISA RG 160/2881–P. Falanga to Blech. Jaffa, 9 Mar. 1910. More than 30 years later US senator Owen Brewster (1888–1961) emphasized that ‘Arab immigration has never been limited and the Arabs in Palestine have one of the highest birth rates perhaps of any other people in the world – thanks to the improved economic and health conditions introduced by the Jews.’ ASDMAE, a. p. 1946–1950, Palestine, b. 1. Interview broadcast on the radio by the National Broadcasting Company of Washington, 11 May 1946.
29. Grossman pointed out that ‘between 1870 and 1945 the decline in the rural Arab per capita farmland was mainly due to the population growth. The impact of Jewish land purchases was much lower.’ Grossman, *Rural Arab*, p. xv.
30. Palestine Royal Commission, 1937, p. 364.
31. Edward Atiyah (1903–64), secretary of the Arab League’s London office, argued that between 1920 and 1945 a considerable growth occurred in the whole Arab world: ‘Egyptians, Syrians, Lebanese and Iraqis have all, beginning with their liberation from Turkey and their achievement of self government, attained a level of social and economic progress which is even higher than that

- of the Palestinian Arabs and this without the help of Jewish immigration.’ NARA, RG59, Palestine–Israel 1945–9, LM 163, Roll 4.
32. According to Gerber, ‘Zionism was interested in nation-building rather than in exploitation per se. It also lacked a *metropole* to return to. But it cannot be denied that what it lacked in colonial exploitation it had in colonial dispossession.’ H. Gerber, ‘Foreign occupiers and step children’, in E. Podeh and A. Kaufman (eds), *Arab-Jewish Relations* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2005), p. 23.
 33. ASDMAE – AP 1948–1950, Israel, b. 1. Weizmann, Haifa, 10 Nov. 1948.
 34. I. Pappe, *A History of Modern Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 41.
 35. According to Muir: ‘It is not evident that this was ever the slogan of any Zionist organization or that it was employed by any of the movement’s leading figures.’ D. Muir, ‘A land without a people for a people without a land’, *Middle Eastern Quarterly*, v. 15, n. 2, spring 2008. Dowty noted that the meaning of the phrase ‘was that Palestine was a land not identified with a specific nation (as was indeed true at the time), not that it was uninhabited’. A. Dowty, *The Jewish State, A Century Later* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 267. Garfinkle clarified that many ‘believed that the land was desolate because there was not in Palestine “a people” in the then current European sense’. A. M. Garfinkle, ‘On the origin, meaning, use, and abuse of a phrase’, *Middle Eastern Studies*, n. 27, Oct. 1991, p. 539.
 36. Ahad Ha’am (1856–1927) published an essay in 1891 called ‘The Truth from Palestine’: ‘We are accustomed abroad to believing that Palestine is currently virtually deserted [...] in actual fact it isn’t [...] The Arabs, particularly those from the cities, see and understand our activities [...] the day on which our people makes sufficient progress as to oblige people to move from the country [...] they will certainly not abandon their positions easily.’ A. Ha’am, *Kol Kitvei Abad Ha’am* [*The collected writings of Abad Ha’am*] (Tel Aviv: Dvir, 1947), p. 23. In 1905 Yitzhak Epstein (1862–1943) emphasized that ‘in our beloved land lives a whole people which has lived there for many centuries and has never considered the idea of leaving it.’ Y. Epstein, ‘A hidden question’, *Ha-Shilo’ab*, n. 17, July–Dec. 1907, pp. 193–206.
 37. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Dickson to Nicholas O’Conor (1843–1903), 23 Nov. 1905.
 38. CHIR 13/323/1–61/44. Falanga. Jaffa, 16 Nov. 1905. Weizmann declared that ‘the Arab has learned how to farm, produce and market from the Jews’. UNA S-0611–0001–23. Weizmann, 23 June 1947.
 39. T. Herzl, *Altneuland* (Princeton: Wiener, 2007), p. 124.
 40. See Kamel, *Israele-Palestina*, pp. 29–40.
 41. A. Schölch, ‘The Economic Development of Palestine, 1856–1882’, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, v. 10, n. 3, 1981, p. 58.
 42. In 1859 W. M. Thomson (1806–94) wrote that ‘the first time I came into this region I was agreeably surprised to find it not flat, barren country [...] one

- must go much farther south to encounter anything resembling that [...] The country is equally lovely and no less fertile than the very best of the Mississippi Valley.' W. M. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*, v. 2 (New York: Harper, 1859), p. 347. Thirty years later Dickson turned his attention to the Gaza area, which was 'under cultivation, crops of wheat and barley being raised by the Arabs.' ISA RG 160/2881-P. Dickson to O'Connor, Jerusalem, 30 Nov. 1899.
43. In the 1870s there were around 468 hectares of irrigated citrus groves in the Gaza area. See N. Badran, *Al-Rīf al-Filasṭīnī qabla al-Ḥarb al-ʿĀlamiyyat al-Ulā* [*Palestinian Rural Landscape before World War I*], in *Shuʿūn Filasṭīniya*, n. 7 (Mar. 1972), p. 126.
 44. Nāblus had its 'golden age' in the nineteenth century. See I. Al-Nimr, *Tārīkh Jabal Nāblus wa 'l-Balqā'* [*History of Nāblus and al-Balqā'*], v. 1 (Nāblus: al-Taʾawuniya, 1975), p. 139.
 45. ISA RG 160/2881–P. Beirut, 19 Aug. 1891. E. H. Trotter about the area between Haifa and Nazareth.
 46. 'I do not know', wrote James Finn, 'where in all the Holy Land I have seen such excellent agriculture of grain, olive-trees, and orchards of fruits, as here at Ashdod. The fields would do credit to English farming.' J. Finn, *Byeways in Palestine* (London: Nisbet, 1868), p. 162.
 47. BLMC – RP – v. 26 – add. 42797 – Finn to Palmerston, 22 Nov. 1848. Despite having written several similar descriptions, on 14 August 1850, Finn pointed out to Canning that there were 'millions of acres of fine land lying waste' in Palestine. ISA RG 160/2881-P.
 48. Maundrell aimed to establish a contact with the Protestant roots of the Holy Land. When his diary was published in Oxford in 1703, it was clear that his ambitions had been frustrated. Local Arab and Turkish inhabitants were referred to as insolent, savage and avaricious. In the introduction of Maundrell's book, David Howell wrote: 'What surprises the reader of Maundrell is his evident ignorance of Palestine itself and the areas around it.' H. Maundrell, *A Journey From Aleppo to Jerusalem in 1697* (Beirut: Khayats, 1963), p. xxviii.
 49. Contrary to what it is often claimed, Reland, a Dutch Orientalist, never visited Palestine. Most of his work about the 'Holy Land' was compilatory and influenced by conservative Calvinist ideology. See A. Reland, *Palaestina ex Monumentis Veteribus Illustrata* [*Palestine Shown through its Ancient Ruins*], 2 vols (Utrecht: Guilielmi Broedelet, 1714). Reland 'maintained that it was necessary to study Islam in order to defeat it [...] despite his attempt to "understand" Islam, Reland was entirely dedicated to its destruction'. See M. Woodward, *Java, Indonesia and Islam* (Heidelberg: Springer, 2010), p. 50.
 50. Bovet, a Swiss Protestant theologian, reached Palestine in 1858: 'At each step, travelling through the Holy Land, reminiscences are to be had which stop one from going further. A journey through these places is a continual Scripture commentary.' Bovet, *Viaggio*, p. 171.
 51. M. Twain, *The Innocents Abroad* (New York: Penguin, 2002), pp. 269 and 443.

52. J. Becke, 'Towards a de-Occidental perspective on Israel: the case of the occupation', *Journal of Israeli History: Politics, Society, Culture*, v. 33, n. 1, 2014, p. 5.
53. Already in April 1840 Moses Montefiore suggested to Palmerston the possibility of promoting agricultural development in Palestine under his aegis. In this case, it was a question of direct investments mainly to Jews already living in Palestine. The first Jerusalemite building society was set up by seven private individuals; among them Yosef Rivlin (born in Jerusalem in 1837), who founded the Nahalat Shiv'a neighbourhood.
54. The First Aliyah, preceded by other minor migratory influxes, lasted from 1881 to 1903 and involved around 35,000 Jews coming mainly from Russia, but also a minority of Yemenites.
55. In contrast to the collectivist framework of the *moshavim* and *kibbutzim*, the *moshavot* were based on private ownership of land and private initiative. As an undated KKL document noted, 'the traditional European village form [moshavot], exclusively based on private initiative, was the only one existent before 1900, and remained the dominant one until the end of World War I. Since the 1930s, hardly any new such villages were added'. CZA KKL5/50125.
56. JHSR, p. 39.
57. To bypass a ban on registering property with company names, these were bought collectively and registered in the name of a range of representatives, each having a different nationality.
58. The first influx in 1882 did not pass unnoticed in Beirut. Already in 1891, a number of eminent Palestinian Jerusalemites had sent a telegram to Istanbul asking to bring an end to Jewish immigration.
59. According to the American consul in Jerusalem, Selah Merrill (1837–1909), in 1892 there were 42,000–43,000 Jews in Palestine. BOA HR.SYS 62/8. Merrill's dispatches show many of the anti-Semitic prejudices displayed by the Protestant missionaries active at the time in Palestine. See R. Kark, *American Consuls in the Holy Land, 1832–1914* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1994), pp. 296–7.
60. BOA Y.PRK.UM 23/66. The first part of the document emphasizes the vulnerable situation of the Russian Jews and the reasons behind their growing immigration into Palestine. Similar documents, increasingly focusing on fears around the Porte's weakened position in relation to foreign powers, were produced in copious quantities over the years to come as well. See BOA, DH.I.D 34/18.
61. ISA RG 160/2881-P. James H. Monahan (British consular agent) to the consul-general of Beirut. Haifa, 5 Feb. 1900. When attempts at bribery had been unsuccessful, Jews were often returned to their ships: 'Nine British Jews were prevented by the Police Authorities from entering the Country, and that they were subsequently subject to ill-treatment when made to reembark on the steamer from which they had landed.' ISA RG 160/2881-P. J. Dickson to M. de Bunsen. Jerusalem, 20 Sep. 1898.

62. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Edward H. Trotter, Beirut, 19 Aug. 1891.
63. Ha'am testified in 1891 – the year in which the *Vezir-i Azam* (Gran Vizier) of Istanbul received one of the first formal protests against Jewish immigration into Palestine by a group of eminent Jerusalemites – that the '*olim* (immigrants) showed 'a tendency to despotism as tends to occur every time that servant becomes master'. He added that they 'relate to the Arab [labourers] in a hostile and cruel way [...] beating them in a shameful way without sufficient reason and boasting of their actions'. Ha'am in *Kol Kitvei* cit. p. 25. Already in the 1880s a few cases of isolated attacks on Jewish settlements had occurred. They were mainly linked to the fact that, unacquainted with ancestral local traditions, the new settlers forbade peasantry to pasture on their newly acquired land.
64. MDC – 'Filasṭīn', 29 Apr. 1914. A relevant percentage of the various religious groups in Palestine were in favour of developing a 'shared homeland' in the Ottoman context. 'Yehudim heyu Otomanim!' ['Jews, you are Ottomans!'] was also the refrain of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda (1858–1922). See Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, p. 229. Mainly for reasons of political expediency, Ben-Gurion himself often used expressions such as: 'Our Turkish brethren and fellow citizens.' CZA Z3/22/4. Ben-Gurion to Djemal Pasha (1872–1922), 5 Mar. 1915.
65. The Ottoman authorities stressed on a number of occasions that Jews in Palestine had to 'become Ottoman citizens. Those who refuse to become Ottoman citizens must sell their land and go back where they came from'. BOA YEE 136/63. The document cites the directives that came out of a meeting organized by a series of Ottoman ministers at Yıldız Palace in Istanbul on 22 May 1898.
66. Before the Second Aliyah, with a very few isolated exceptions, there is no trace 'of female pioneer immigrants motivated by definite social goals [...] the longing for a national center of a productive life gave the young men and women of the Second Aliyah the strength to leave their homes, break their family ties'. A. Maimon, *Women Build a Land* (New York: Herzl Press, 1962), p. 19.
67. ISA RG 160/2881–P. Falanga to Blech. Jaffa, 9 Mar. 1910: 'Most of these immigrants arrive with sufficient pecuniary means to establish themselves as shop keepers or cultivators.' Ibid.
68. A. Bein, *Toldot ha-bityasbuvut ha-tzionit mi-tkufat Herzl ve-ad yameinu* [A History of Zionist Colonization from the Herzl era to our own Times] (Ramat Gan: Masada, 1954), p. 31.
69. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Blech to O'Connor. Jerusalem, 19 Mar. 1918.
70. The perspective that 'Hebrew workers' would not find jobs due to the employment of 'Gentile workers' was perceived as evil. See the letter of a Zionist private company to Ruppin. CZA L18/257, 21 Nov. 1912.
71. Palestinians were excluded for the most part from the *kibbutzim* and *moshavim*, continuing to some extent to be used as a labour force in the towns and in colonies that were privately owned.

72. Palestine Potash Syndacate, organized as a British corporation in 1929, had exclusive rights to extract the minerals from the Dead Sea. It was organized and managed by Jews, and used to employ Arabs. Although in a more limited scale, a few other corporations, including the Palestine Electric Corporation, adopted a similar approach.
73. In *Industrial and labour information*, v. 31, International Labour Office, 1929, p. 367.
74. C. Weizmann [B. Litvinoff (ed.)], *The Essential Chaim Weizmann* (London: Weidenfeld, 1982), p. 11 and 208. Weizmann held that the fears of the *fellahin* were the result of misinformation: 'The poor ignorant fellah does not worry about politics, but when he is told repeatedly by people in whom he has confidence that his livelihood is in danger of being taken away from him by us, he becomes our mortal enemy.' Weizmann to the London offices of the Zionist Organization. Cairo, 7 Nov. 1919. CZA Z3/526.
75. JHSR, p. 54. According to Ruedy 'the withdrawal of 180,000 hectares from the native rural economy at a time when all resources were needed to meet a crisis of gigantic proportions compounded the suffering needlessly'. Ruedy, *Dynamics*, p. 131.
76. On the 1908 clashes and the impact of Zionist immigration on the agricultural lands around Jaffa see M. LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv and Struggle for Palestine* (Berkeley: University Of California Press, 2005), p. 45. According to LeVine, 'For Tel Aviv's founders, the attempt to separate physically as well as ideologically and epistemologically their new neighborhood from Jaffa and its existing Arab and Jewish quarters was a primary concern.' Ivi, p. 156. On the desire of the Zionist pioneers to mark out a distinction also between the old Jewish neighbourhoods of Jaffa and embryonic Tel Aviv see T. Meroz, *Tel Aviv-Yafo: Sipur Ha'Ir [Tel Aviv-Jaffa: History of a City]* (Tel Aviv: Ben-Zion, 1978), p. 35.
77. In 1907 – a few months before the Jaffa clashes – the Eighth Zionist Congress created a 'Palestine Office' ('Agricultural Colonisation Department') in Jaffa, under the direction of Arthur Ruppin, author in 1926 of a book entitled *The Agricultural Colonisation of the Zionist Organisation in Palestine*. Ruppin clarified that his objective was 'the creation of a Jewish milieu and of a closed Jewish economy, in which producers, consumers and middlemen shall all be Jewish'. A. Ruppin, *Three Decades of Palestine* (Westport: Greenwood, 1936), p. 62.
78. Richard Meinertzhagen (1878–1967) was only one of the key figures of the day to point out Ussishkin's 'overbearing intolerance' and his 'contempt for compromise'. Meinertzhagen, 10 Nov. 1919. TNA FO 371/4185. In a conversation in October 1919 between Ussishkin and the then mayor of Jerusalem, the former arrived in Palestine that same year and emphasized that 'no amount of argument will persuade us to compromise on our principal demands.' CZA A226/30/2.
79. Nationalist leader Rafik Bey Hakim explained in the newspaper *Cheriot el-Moquattam* the process by which Arab public opinion moved from viewing

- Jewish immigration as a possible resource to it being a cause of apprehension. In his opinion, it was primarily the result of the fact that the Zionists 'cut themselves off completely' from the rest of the local population. MDC – 'El-Moqattam', 14 Apr. 1914.
80. Cited in P. R. Mendes-Flohr (ed.), *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 5.
 81. Cited in Tamārī and Nassār (eds), *Al-Quds al-'Uthmānīya*, p. 20.
 82. A case of 'blood libel' occurred, for example, in Hebron in 1775. The Jewish population was unjustly accused of having killed the son of a local sheikh and obliged to pay a heavy fine.
 83. In the mid-nineteenth century the Jewish population of Hebron was composed of 60 Sephardic families and 50 recently arrived Ashkenazi families. In 1850 there were around 5,000 Ashkenazis in Palestine and these became a majority over Sephardic Jews in 1870. As already mentioned, the growth of Zionist immigration did not only create tensions between the new settlers and the local majority but also between the new arrivals and the pre-existing Jewish community. These tensions were mainly connected to education and religious issues.
 84. The *qaimaqam* (sub-governor) of Jaffa to the *mutasarrif* (governor) of Jerusalem, 9 July 1907. See D. Kushner (ed.), *Mosbel bayiti be-Yerushalayim: ha'ir veba-mahoz be-'enav shel 'Ali Ekrem Bey: 1906–1908 [I was the Governor of Jerusalem: the City and the Province From the Eyes of Ali Ekrem Bey, 1906–1908]* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi, 1995), pp. 62–8.
 85. ISA Palestine Gov. Pub., 4381/M – 01/3/95. Mūsā Kāzim al-Ḥusaynī, 17 June 1922. Ya'acov Yehoshua (d.1983), A. B. Yehoshua's father analysed Palestinian printed papers in the 15 years following the foundation of Tel Aviv (1909). He noted that the Palestinian Arabs of Jaffa often considered the pre-existing Jewish community as 'sons of this place' who had themselves repudiated 'the new Jews'. Y. Yehoshua, 'Tel Aviv be-raii ha-itonot ha-Aravit behamesh ha-shanim ha-rishonot lehivasdah, 1909–1914' ['Tel Aviv as seen by Arab newspapers in the first five years of its existence 1909–1914'], *Hamizrach Hachadash*, v. 19, n. 3, 1969, p. 218.
 86. Writing about Jacob Israël de Haan (1881–1924), the first political murder in the Jewish community in Palestine (he was killed in Jerusalem by members of Haganah), Hekma, Oosterhuis and Steakley pointed out that 'De Haan moved to Palestine at the end of World War I but, angered by the unwillingness of the Zionists to cooperate with the Arabs, joined the anti-Zionist movement of orthodox Jews who had coexisted with the Arabs in Palestine for centuries.' G. Hekma, H. Oosterhuis and J. Steakley, 'Leftist sexual politics and homosexuality: a historical overview', in G. Hekma, H. Oosterhuis and J. Steakley (eds), *Gay Men and the Sexual History of the Political Left* (Binghamton: The Haworth Press, 1995), p. 106.
 87. JNUL 376/224. Kohn to Berthold Feiwel (1875–1937). Jerusalem, 21 Nov. 1929. In the same historical phase, Ruppin expressed similar views. See

A. Ruppin, *Pirquei bayai, be-binyan ha'aretz ve-ha'am 1920–1942* [*Chapters of My Life Building Land and People, 1920–1942*] (Tel Aviv: Am Oved, 1968), p. 33 and Mendes-Flohr, *A Land*, pp. 98–9.

Chapter 5 Zion–London: the Archimedean point

1. H. Sidebotham, *England and Palestine: Essays Towards the Restoration of the Jewish State* (London: Constable, 1918), p. 174.
2. TNA FO 800/210. Conversation between Wolf and Balfour, 21 Jan. 1917.
3. Cited in A. L. Kennedy, *Old Diplomacy and New, 1876–1922* (London: Murray, 1922), p. 55.
4. See K. Polkehn, 'Zionism and Kaiser William', in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, v. 4, n. 2, 1975, pp. 76–90.
5. Prussian General Von Moltke (1800–91) had already underlined the strategic importance of Palestine in the 1840s. Over the next few decades such considerations remained unheeded and Bismarck went so far as to argue that Palestine was not worth 'the bones of a single Pomeranian grenadier'. It was only when Wilhelm II came to the throne in 1888 that Von Moltke's projects became highly relevant once more. See. F. Herre, *Moltke: der mann und sein jahrhundert* [Moltke: the land and his century] (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1984).
6. The Namibian genocide can be considered the first genocide of the twentieth century. Eugen Fischer (1874–1967) carried out the first eugenics experiments on Herero women and children.
7. On the infamous German 'hyperaggressive expansionism' as compared to the winning strategy of 'selective appeasement' adopted by London see J. Snyder, *Myths of Empire* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 153.
8. See E. Monroe, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East: 1914–1956* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), pp. 15 and 19.
9. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Blech to O'Connor. Jerusalem, 10 Aug. 1907.
10. 'You cannot imagine', wrote Shibli al Khawja to Churchill, 'how happy our people were when your army entered Palestine. This euphoria was changed into sadness after the Balfour Declaration because His Majesty knows how dangerous Zionism is for the Arabs.' MDC – 'Filaṣṭīn', 17 Mar. 1921.
11. LPL – DP – 400 – f. 56. El-Khaldi to Miss Blyth (daughter of the former Anglican bishop of Jerusalem), 23 Dec. 1917. According to el-Khaldi, 'most of the educated Arabs consider the British and the French Nations their best friends.' Ibid.
12. Herzl met the Sultan five times in Istanbul between 1896 and 1902. He fruitlessly proposed to the Ottoman authorities to supply capital to save the Empire from the interference of European powers: 'We wish', wrote Herzl to Izzedin Pasha in 1899, 'to bind our futures to your future.' BOA Y.HRK. HR 27/30.

13. A few months later the mayor of Jerusalem, Yūsuf Ḍiyā' Bāshā al-Khālīdī (1842–1906), wrote to Herzl via the chief rabbi of France, Zadok Kahn (1839–1905), asking: 'In the name of God let Palestine be left in peace.' Herzl answered him on 19 March 1899, assuring him that, in the event that Ottoman agreement should not be forthcoming, 'we will search and, believe me, we will find elsewhere what we need.' T. Herzl, *Igrot Herzl [Herzl's letters]*, v. 3 (Jerusalem: Ha-Sifriya ha-Zionit, 1957), pp. 309–10.
14. Various commentators of the day wrote that the Kaiser's trip to Palestine and the historic meeting with Herzl that took place there gave an 'immense impetus' to Zionism. In *Daily Mail*, 18 Nov. 1898.
15. T. Herzl, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (New York: Grosset, 1962), p. 299.
16. Sokolow, *History*, v. 1, p. 295.
17. Herzl, *The Diaries*, p. 384.
18. I. Sieff in the preface to J. Kimche, *The Unromantics, The Great Powers and the Balfour Declaration* (Liverpool: Tinling, 1968), p. ix. Sieff described the 'long evening with timeless discussions, our frequent journeys mainly at night, travelling from Manchester to London to meet Balfour or Lloyd George and the long list of men whom Weizmann worked to influence', Ivi, p. viii. Weizmann's pro-British attitude and that of his followers grew over the years. Gilbert Clayton noted that Weizmann's followers 'are strongly pro-British as it is to Great Britain alone that they look for the fulfilment of their program'. TNA FO 371/3385. Clayton, 18 Nov. 1918.
19. M. Vereté, 'The Balfour Declaration and its makers', in N. Rose, *From Palmerston to Balfour: Collected Essays of Mayir Vereté* (London: Frank Cass, 1992), p. 23.
20. A. Bein, *Theodore Herzl: A Biography* (Philadelphia: The Jewish Pub. Society of America, 1941), p. 346.
21. In January 1902, Evans-Gordon declared to the House of Commons that 'not a day passes but English families are ruthlessly turned out to make room for foreign invaders.' The Parliamentary debates, London 1902, p. dcccii.
22. Weizmann to Ahad Ha'am, 14 Dec. 1914. 'He [Balfour] told me how he had once had a long talk with Cosima Wagner at Bayreuth and that he shared many of her anti-semitic postulates.' Cited in L. Stein, *The Balfour Declaration* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1961), p. 154.
23. The Parliamentary Debates (London, 1905), p. ccvi.
24. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Dickson to O'Connor. 23 Nov. 1905.
25. TNA FO 78/5479. O'Connor to Lord Salisbury. 13 Oct. 1898.
26. LPL – DP – 1908 – 145 – J.2 – L.7 – ff. 104–105. The Society for Relief of Persecuted Jews, later renamed the Society for Relief of Distressed Jews, in order to avoid disagreements with the Ottoman authorities, was founded by James and Elizabeth Finn in 1882. Its headquarters were on Victoria Street, London.
27. House of Commons Papers, v. 9 (London, 1903), p. 213.
28. W. Churchill, *Great Contemporaries* (London: Collins, 1959), p. 63.

29. JFC – C11/3/4. Lucien Wolf to Cyrus Adler, 15 July 1920. According to Wolf, Wickham Steed was a 'dangeous anti-Semite – absolutely monomaniacal'.
30. H. Wickham Steed, *Through Thirty Years, 1892–1922* (New York: Doubleday, 1925), p. 163.
31. Amery (1919–96), Chamberlain's biographer wrote that the motives of the then Secretary of State for the Colonies were initially humanitarian. Later he realized that 'a Jewish colony in Syria might prove a useful instrument for extending British influence in Palestine'. J. Amery, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain*, v. 4 (London: Macmillan, 1951), p. 260.
32. Herzl's Diary, 23 Oct. 1902. 'He [Chamberlain] liked the Zionist idea. If I could show him a spot among the British possessions which was not yet inhabited by white settlers, then we could talk.' T. Herzl, *The Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (London: Gollancz, 1958), p. 375.
33. Ivi, p. 348.
34. ISA RG 160/2881-P. Cromer to Lansdowne, 21 Nov. 1902.
35. Ibid.
36. In *New York Times*, 28 Apr. 1903. In 1921 Lucien Wolf demonstrated on *The Times* that the Protocols were a fake, fabricated by the Tsar's secret service.
37. Herzl himself was convinced that the great interest showed by Chamberlain in the Jews was motivated by a desire 'to turn the scattered peoples of the world into his agents'. Amery, *The Life*, p. 270.
38. C. Weizmann, *Trial and Error: The Autobiography of Chaim Weizmann* (Westport: Greenwood, 1972), p. 85.
39. Officially, the proposal was only rejected during the seventh Zionist congress of 1905. However, the reactions recorded two years earlier had already made the outcome very clear.
40. Kimche underlined that neither the Germans nor the French or the Americans 'could conceive of conceding a Jewish nationality to the Jews of their countries. Only the British could do it because of the deeply-rooted English (rather than British) attitude that Jews [...] always remained Jews, some kind of foreigner.' Kimche, *The Unromantics*, p. 70.
41. Henry Mayhew (1812–87) recorded that, in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Jews of London were seen as 'an entire people of misers, usurers, extortioners, receivers of stolen goods [...]'. H. Mayhew, *London Labour and the London Poor*, v. 2 (London: Griffin, 1864), p. 129. A guide drawn up in February 1919 by the President of the council of Deputies of British Jews, David L. Alexander, and the then President of the Anglo-Jewish Association, Claude G. Montefiore, highlighted that, for reasons that were certainly not entirely religious, 'the British public was intensely sympathetic to the idea of Palestine for the Jews' in the first half of the nineteenth century. TNA FO 373/7/36.
42. A. L. Kennedy, *Salisbury, 1830–1903: Portrait of a Statesman* (New York: Kraus, 1971), p. 51.

43. Ivi, p. 109.
44. M. and E. Broch (eds), *H.H. Asquith, Letters to Venetia Stanley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 99.
45. Cited in J. M. McEwen (ed.), *The Riddell Diaries, 1908–1923* (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 82. Lloyd George's phrase dates to April 1914.
46. Montagu clarified the following: 'As the one Jewish Minister in the Government I may be allowed by my colleagues an opportunity of expressing views which may be peculiar to myself [...] When the Jews are told that Palestine is their national home, every country will immediately desire to get rid of its Jewish citizens, and you will find a population in Palestine driving out its present inhabitants, taking all the best in the country [...].' TNA CAB 24/24. Montagu's memorandum submitted to the British cabinet on 23 Aug. 1917.
47. Herzl himself was motivated by a certain distrust of the Jews until a few years earlier. Schorske noted: 'Another tie linking Herzl to his enemies, even though he drew different conclusions from it, was his distaste for the Jews.' C. E. Schorske, *Fin-de-Siècle Vienna* (New York: Vintage Books, 1981), p. 160.
48. Herzl, *The Complete Diaries*, p. 84.
49. Brustein clarified that 'though the Aliens Act did not mention Jews outright, it was clear to most observers that the purpose of the act was to halt the flow of Eastern European Jews into Great Britain'. W. Brustein, *Roots of Hate* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 149.
50. In *Manchester Evening Chronicle*, 12 May 1905. Similar practices and feelings had been recorded in the last two decades of the nineteenth century in relation to Polish workers in Germany and the Chinese in the United States. In Britain the 1905 measures were made even harsher in 1914 and 1919.
51. The Parliamentary debates, v. 149 (London, 1905), p. ccvi.
52. Belloc and Chesterton, anything but marginal figures in early twentieth-century England, worked for the implementation of harsh civil limitations on British Jews and favoured their mass emigration to Palestine. See H. Belloc, *The Jews* (London: Constable, 1922) and G. K. Chesterton, *The New Jerusalem* (London: Hodder, 1920).
53. TNA CAB 24/73. Pearson's letter to the head of a textile business active in Russia was circulated by the Secretary of State for War Alfred Milner to his cabinet colleagues in a memorandum dated 8 January 1919. Both the Foreign Office and the press of the day focused with a certain constancy on a supposed 'Jewish factor'. 'Whoever is in power in Downing Street', wrote Leopold Maxse (1864–1932), director of the *National Review* and brother of Violet Milner (1872–1958) Alfred Milner's future wife, 'whether Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals, Coalitionists, or pseudo-Bolsheviks – the International Jew rules the roost'. *National Review*, v. 73, 1919, p. 819.
54. Already on 19 May 1910 British ambassador in Istanbul Gerald Lowther (1858–1916) wrote that the Young Turks revolution of 1908 was the outcome

- of an international conspiracy orchestrated by 'Jews, Freemasons and Zionists'. It is believed that the source used by Lowther was Gerald Fitzmaurice (1865–1939), Istanbul embassy's dragoman from 1907 to 1914. See M. Kemal Oke, 'Jews and the question of Zionism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908–1913', *Studies in Zionism*, v. 7, n. 2, Autumn 1986, pp. 199–208.
55. BOA Y.PRK.TKM 38/51. Newlinski (who was working at the time in Istanbul as Herzl's diplomatic agent) to the Porte. Vienna, 23 Mar. 1897.
 56. E. Pearlman, 'The representation of Jews on Edwardian postcards', in B. Cheyette and N. Valman (eds), *The Image of the Jew in European Liberal Culture, 1789–1914* (London: Vallentine Mitchell, 2004), pp. 217–42.
 57. B. Wasserstein, 'British Officials and the Arab-Jewish Conflict in Palestine, 1917–1929' (Oxford: Ph.D. thesis, 1974), p. 16.
 58. D. Lloyd George, *Memoirs of the Peace Conference*, v. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1939), p. 721. Even Churchill, in a speech in Sunderland on 2 January 1920, described Bolshevism as a 'Jewish movement'. Many sources report that Balfour mentioned to Felix Frankfurter (1882–1965) and Louis Brandeis (1856–1941) that he knew that Lenin's (1870–1924) mother was Jewish. CZA Z4/16009. 24 June 1918. See also Z. Szajkowski, *Jews, Wars, and Communism*, v. 2 (New York: Ktav, 1972), p. 174.
 59. J. Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* (New York: Doran, 1915), p. 6.
 60. N. Sokolow, *History of Zionism*, v. 1 (London: Longmans, Green, 1919), p. xxxiv.
 61. Cited in K. Robbins, *Sir Edward Grey* (London: Cassell, 1971), p. 332.
 62. Sykes, 18 Mar. 1916. Cited in R. Adelson, *Mark Sykes: Portrait of an Amateur* (London: Cape, 1975), p. 207.
 63. Schneer noted that Sykes 'was an anti-Semite – during his travels he sketched grotesque cartoons of fat Jews with big noses'. J. Schneer, *The Balfour Declaration* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010), p. 44. According to Schneer, 'Sykes's exposure to Zionism at a crucial moment in the war led him to adapt, but hardly to relinquish, his prewar prejudices and stereotypical thinking about Jews. He continued to believe in their enormous if subterranean power.' Ivi, p. 168.
 64. Cited in M. J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917–1948* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 10.
 65. Eric Hobsbawm argued that 'the British government, anxious for international Jewish support during the war, had incautiously and ambiguously promised to establish "a national home" for the Jews. This was to be another problematic and unforgotten relic of the First World War.' E. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Extremes* (New York: Vintage, 1996), p. 32.
 66. Projected to our days, it can be noted, as Uri Avnery wrote in a newsletter dated 12 April 2012, that 'this extreme kind of pro-Semitism is just disguised anti-Semitism. Both have a basic belief in common: that Jews – and therefore Israel – are something apart, not to be measured by the standards applied to everybody else.' A. Avnery, 'Günter the Terrible', in *Uri Avnery's Column*,

14 Apr. 2012. Available online: <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avner/1334242715>.

67. R. F. Mackay, *Balfour, Intellectual Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 317. Balfour made this declaration in 1917 to Harold Nicolson (1886–1968).
68. In *Illustrated Sunday Herald*, 8 Feb. 1920.

Chapter 6 Palestine's 'Non-Jews'

1. Cited in A. L. Tībawī, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine, 1914–1921* (London: Luzac, 1977), p. 427.
2. Cited in International Court of Justice (ICJ), *Reports of Judgments, Advisory Opinions, and Orders* (Leiden: A. W. Sijthoff, 1975), p. 122.
3. Balfour to Curzon, 11 Aug. 1919. 'If Zionism is to influence the Jewish problem throughout the world Palestine must be made available for the largest possible number of Jewish immigrants. It is therefore eminently desirable that it should obtain the command of the water-power which naturally belongs to it [...] For the same reason Palestine should extend into the lands lying east of the Jordan.' TNA FO 371/4185.
4. J. Renton, *The Zionist Masquerade: The Birth of the Anglo-Zionist Alliance 1914–1918* (New York: Palgrave, 2007), p. 149.
5. TNA CAB 23/4. Alfred Milner's Memorandum, 6 Oct. 1917.
6. 'Arab hostility towards Zionism [...] is borne of ignorance and perversity.' From a memorandum by John Shuckburgh (1877–1953), member of the Middle-East Department of the Foreign Office. CZA Z4/42436.
7. TNA FO 371/4179. Balfour to Lloyd George, 19 Feb. 1919. Balfour justified his position by arguing 'that we regard Palestine as being absolutely exceptional' in that he regarded 'the question of the Jews outside Palestine as one of world importance.' Ibid.
8. R. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary, 1917–1956* (London: Cresset, 1959), p. 25.
9. A. B. Yehoshua has written that 'history teaches us a cruel thing in the relationship of the Jewish people with the land of Israel. The Jewish population was not expelled by force from its home country but rather expelled itself (and continues to ignore this). In the Second Temple period, half of the Jewish people lived outside the borders of Eretz Israel by its own choice! The Roman exile, and there is much historical evidence on this, was not a mass movement but concerned only small numbers of people. The land of Israel lost its Jewish inhabitants because these did not retain their ties with it and preferred to move to lands both near and far.' A. B. Yehoshua, *Bizkbut ha-normaliut [In defence of Normality]* (Tel Aviv: Schocken, 1980). The passage has been translated from the

- Italian edition. A. B. Yehoshua, *Elogio della normalità* (Florence: Giuntina, 1991), pp. 89–90.
10. NARA, RG59, Palestine-Israel 1945–9, LM 163, Roll 7. Hourani, 31 May 1946.
 11. Forty years after the event Weizmann confirmed that Balfour 'had only the most naive and rudimentary notion of the [Zionist] movement'. He did not even know Theodor Herzl's real name, calling him, in his closest approximation, 'Dr. Herz'. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 111.
 12. BOA HR.SYS 2334/40. Report drawn up by the Turkish authorities about a speech given by Weizmann at an official dinner on 2 April 1918, at Jerusalem's 'Government House'. Weizmann expressed the wish that Palestine would remain 'undivided and have only one fair and responsible government'.
 13. CZA Z4/16055. Weizmann to Balfour, 17 July 1918.
 14. TNA FO 371/3395. Weizmann to Balfour, 30 May 1918.
 15. 'Lord Balfour', noted Humphrey Bowman (1879–1965), 'was here [in Palestine] for 10 days and was surrounded by Jews the whole time, so that he never had a chance of hearing the Arab point of view. Indeed, he did not seem to wish to do so.' From Bowman's diaries, 13 Apr. 1925. Cited in S. S. Boyle, *Betrayal of Palestine* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2001), p. 129.
 16. TNA FO 371/4185. Balfour to Curzon, 11 Aug. 1919. Balfour added: 'In Palestine we do not propose even to go through the form of consulting the wishes of the present inhabitants of the country.' Ibid.
 17. Balfour to Curzon, 20 Jan. 1919. British Foreign Office, *Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919–1939* (London, 1952), p. 1277. George Kidston, Foreign Office official, warned that Balfour's strategy did not respect the wishes of the large majority of the local population. In Kidston's opinion, the idea that such a strategy 'will entail bloodshed and military repression never seems to have occurred to him [Balfour]'. TNA FO 371/4183. Kidston, 22 Sep. 1919. Cit. also in Ṭībāwī, *A Modern*, p. 300.
 18. TNA FO 608/98. According to Howard M. Sachar, there were more than 17,000 Jews in Palestine in 1856. Sixty-two years later, at the end of World War I, there were 55,000 as against 560,000 Arabs (the war years saw a rise in the number of Jews as a result of the conflict). H. M. Sachar, *A History of Israel: From the Rise of Zionism to our Time* (New York: Knopf, 2006), p. 118.
 19. Stein, *The Balfour*, p. 550.
 20. 'I hope', wrote Balfour in July 1920, 'the Arabs will remember that Great Britain has freed them from the tyranny of their brutal conqueror.' NARA, RG 59, Palestine-Israel 1945–49, LM 163, Roll 8. Ormsby-Gore also noted: 'We are getting reports that the Arabs in territory occupied by us are beginning to forget what they suffered under the Turks [...] Gratitude in the East is largely limited by what you get out of people in hard cash!' TNA CAB 21/58. Ormsby-Gore to Maurice Hankey (1877–1963), 19 Apr. 1918.
 21. Cited in C. Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, v. 1 (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1983), p. 216.

22. Sokolow underlined that the day that London took control of Palestine, 'she would clearly and obviously take such necessary steps as to secure that the Jews should be the predominant people in Palestine [and] that it should be *their* country'. Cited in Schneer, *The Balfour*, p. 149.
23. TNA FO 371/3385. Weizmann to Balfour, 4 Dec. 1918.
24. Weizmann to the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Palestine Royal Commission, London 1937, p. 301. A telegram sent a few months earlier (27 Oct. 1918) by Zionist leader Victor Jacobson (1869–1935) to Zionist headquarters around the world highlighted the need that the peace negotiations support the establishment of Palestine 'as a national homeland for the Jewish people'. BOA HR.SYS 2334/43.
25. TNA FO 371/5199. Curzon, 20 Mar. 1920. Curzon argued that the vague promises made to the Zionists could generate false expectations. 'Their [Zionists's] program is expanding from day to day. They now talk about a Jewish State. The Arab portion of the population is well-nigh forgotten and is to be ignored. They not only claim the boundaries of the old Palestine, but they claim to spread across the Jordan [...].' TNA CAB 27/24. Curzon to the Eastern Committee, 5 Dec. 1918.
26. For Major-General H. Watson, the opposition to Zionism 'of the majority of the population is deep rooted – it is fast leading to hatred of the British – and will result, if the Zionist programme is forced upon them, in an outbreak of a very serious character'. TNA FO 371/1051. Watson to Allenby, 16 Aug. 1919.
27. Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880–1940), leader of the revisionist Zionist right-wing, stressed that 'Palestine has become the theatre of an undisguised anti-semitic policy. [...] high officials, guilty of acts which any Court would qualify as instigation to anti-Jewish pogroms, not only go unpunished, but retain their official positions.' JIA – Mictavim [letters], n. 3, 1919–21. Jabotinsky, Lydda, 6 July 1919.
28. According to Sykes, 'Arabs could be managed, particularly if they receive Jewish support in other matters.' Cited in M. Gilbert, *Exile and Return* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1978), p. 93.
29. TNA FO 371/5034. Meinertzhagen to Curzon, 31 Mar. 1920. Meinertzhagen, Allenby's political adviser, was described by Weizmann as 'an ardent Zionist'. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 181. However, he himself admitted that he was 'imbued with anti-semitic feelings'. R. Meinertzhagen, *Middle East Diary, 1917–1956* (London: Cresset, 1959), p. 67.
30. 'The Arabian lands for the Arabs', exclaimed, among many others, Robert Cecil at the London Opera House on the occasion of the publication of the Balfour Declaration, 'Armenia for the Armenians, and Judaea for the Jews.' Cited in P. Goodman (ed.), *The Jewish National Home* (London: Dent, 1943), p. 28.
31. Cited in Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 179. The future of Palestine, pointed out Alfred Milner (1854–1925) in a House of Lords debate in 1923, 'cannot possibly be left to be determined by the temporary impressions and feelings of the Arab

- majority of the present day'. Cited in Palestine Royal Commission (London, 1937), p. 30.
32. TNA FO 800/217. Brandeis to Balfour, 24 June 1919. Balfour expressed his 'entire agreement' with this position. Ibid.
 33. D. Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace* (New York: Holt, 1989), p. 19.
 34. Sokolow, *History*, v. 2, p. xxvi.
 35. I. Berlin, *Personal Impressions* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), p. 53.
 36. Immediately after their rise to power, the Young Turks abolished the limits on Jewish immigration to Palestine, creating considerable expectations in Zionist ranks. In August 1909 the previous limits were reimposed. BOA YEE 136/63.
 37. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 157.
 38. J. Kimche, *The Second Arab Awakening* (London: Thames, 1970), p. 37.
 39. Fromkin, *A Peace*, p. 298.
 40. S. H. H. Nadvi, *Filasṭīn Aur Bain Al-Aqwaīmīr Siyāṣīyaāt* [*Palestine and International Politics*] (Karachi: Academia, 1976), p. 439 (in Urdu). Speaking to UNSCOP's (United Nations Special Committee on Palestine) members, David Ben-Gurion noted on 7 July 1947 that thanks to the direct intervention of the United Nations 'there will be a clear-cut, unequivocal decision that Palestine is becoming a Jewish State. The fact – and this has been admitted by many – the fact that this was not quite clear in the Mandate has led to contradictions.' Available online: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/06728C052629426085256E8B007092DF>.
 41. The expression 'national home', a concept that had been absent in international law, was used for the first time in Basel in 1897 in order to avoid disagreements with the Ottoman authorities. 'I did my best', Zionist leader Max Nordau (1849–1923) clarified, 'to persuade the claimants of the Jewish State in Palestine that we might find a circumlocution that would express all we meant'. Cited in C. Sykes, *Crossroads to Israel* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p. 10.
 42. J. Turner, *Britain and the First World War* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1988), p. 117.
 43. H. Purcell, *Lloyd George* (London: Haus, 2006), p. 69.
 44. C. P. Scott, *The Political Diaries of C. P. Scott, 1911–1928* (London: Collins, 1970), p. 274.
 45. The fact that Lloyd George was born in a small country that had always striven to protect its identity seems to have influenced his approach to Zionism. Josif Trumpeldor (1880–1920), icon of Socialist Zionism, proposed him to create a Jewish regiment emphasizing that 'we ask for the Jew the privilege the Welshman and Scotsman enjoy – to fight for their country; to fight like the Welsh and Scotch do – in regiments of their own, not scattered and nameless'. JIA – Mictavim [letters], n. 2, 1914–1919. Trumpeldor, 24 Jan. 1917. Lloyd George himself elaborated in 1925 on the role of Jewish history in the Welsh education of the time: 'On five days a week in the day school, and on Sunday in our Sunday schools, we were thoroughly versed in the history of the Hebrews.'

- Cited in G. Davies (ed.), *The Chosen People: Wales & the Jews* (Bridgen: Seren, 2002), p. 92.
46. TNA FO 800/216. Weizmann to Balfour, 9 Apr. 1919.
 47. According to Bevin, the Balfour Declaration possessed 'the congenital ill of being unilateral. Neither its British authors nor its British and American supporters have taken account of the Arabs. Such a unilateral policy should be abandoned in order to avoid asking the Arabs to bear the weight of the Jewish problem alone.' ASDMAE – AP 1946–1950, Palestine, b. 1.
 48. ASDMAE – AP 1948–1950, Israele, b. 1. 'Consolato Generale d'Italia' ('Ufficio di Caifa') to the ministry for Foreign Affairs in Rome, 10 Nov. 1948. The document, signed by the consul, contains excerpts of a speech given by Weizmann during his first official visit to Haifa.
 49. Samuel, *Memoirs*, p. 139.
 50. Samuel wrote that 'the moment Turkey entered the war' his position 'was entirely changed'. Ibid.
 51. Ivi, p. 140.
 52. H. Samuel, *Great Britain and Palestine* (London: The Jewish Historical Society of England, 1935), p. 13.
 53. Ivi, p. 13. Samuel reported that Grey had expressed himself 'quite favourable to the proposal' and that he would have been 'prepared to work for it if the opportunity arose'. Ibid.
 54. In March 1916 Lucien Wolf proposed to the Foreign Office to issue a declaration in order to clarify that the Allied powers would have taken into account 'the historic interest that country [Palestine] possesses for the Jewish community'. TNA FO 371/2817. Wolf to Lancelot Oliphant (1881–1965), 3 Mar. 1916.
 55. *The Jewish Chronicle*, 15 Oct. 1905.
 56. Samuel, *Memoirs*, p. 142.
 57. C. Weizmann, *The Letters and Papers of Chaim Weizmann*, v. 6 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 112. Samuel did not clarify whether the Temple would be built on the Dome of the Rock or elsewhere.
 58. Ivi, p. 77.
 59. In a conversation with Zangwill on 19 October 1914, Weizmann confirmed that he had no doubt 'that Palestine will fall within the sphere of England. Palestine is a natural continuation of Egypt and the barrier separating the Suez Canal from Constantinople, the Black Sea and any hostility which may come from this side'.
 60. A. Balfour, *Henry Sidgwick Memorial Lecture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1908), p. 47. 'Parliamentary institutions,' clarified Balfour, 'have rarely been a great success, except amongst the English-speaking peoples.' Cited in D. Judd, *Balfour and the British Empire* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 261.
 61. Balfour wrote that if Zionism 'succeeds, it will do a great spiritual and material work for the Jews, but not for them alone. [...] it is [...] a serious

endeavour to mitigate the age-long miseries created for Western civilization by the presence in its midst of a Body which it too long regarded as alien and even hostile, but which it was equally unable to expel or to absorb'. Balfour in the preface to Sokolow, *History*, v. 1, p. xxxiv.

62. Weizmann, *The Letters*, p. 81.
63. Ibid. According to Weizmann, Balfour 'listened for a long time and was very moved – I assure you to *tears* – and he took me by the hand and said I had illuminated for him the road followed by a great suffering nation'. Ivi, p. 82.
64. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 152.
65. TNA CAB 37/123. Samuel, memorandum entitled 'The Future of Palestine', Jan. 1915.
66. H. H. Asquith, *Memories and Reflections, 1852–1927*, v. 2 (Boston: Little, 1928), p. 71.
67. Ibid.
68. Ivi, p. 78.
69. J. Bowle, *Viscount Samuel, A Biography* (London: Gollancz, 1957), p. 172.
70. Already in Nov. 1915 Samuel had emphasized to Grey 'the danger of any other Power than England possessing Palestine'. Grey, according to Samuel, 'agreed that that was so'. Samuel, *Memoirs*, p. 154.
71. Weizmann, *The Letters*, p. 181.
72. Despite their shared views, Lloyd George's opinion of Samuel was never positive. 'During the War,' Lloyd George recalled in his memoirs, 'he [Samuel] had done nothing in particular, but he had done it very well'. D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George* (Boston: Little, 1937), p. 32.
73. *Zionist Review*, Dec. 1917, p. 214.
74. See Khālidī, *al-Qaḍīya al-Filasṭīniyya*, p. 367.
75. Cited in Friedman, *The Question*, p. 22.
76. Cited in T. M. Endelman, *The Jews of Britain, 1656 to 2000* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), p. 192.
77. Zionism was viewed by many Jews, and primarily by rabbis, as an anti-Jewish rebellion comparable to Luther's challenge to the Church of Rome. Luigi Luzzatti (1841–1927), Italy's second Jewish prime minister, declared, for instance, that Jews 'must acquire everywhere full religious liberty as existing in the United States and in Italy. In Palestine, delivered from Turks, Jews will live, not as sovereigns but as free citizens, to fertilise their fathers's land. Judaism is not a nationality, but a Religion.' TNA CAB 21/58. Luzzatti, 18 May 1917.
78. TNA CAB 23/4. Balfour on Montagu, 2 Oct. 1917.
79. Many anti-Zionist Jews were not against the creation of a Jewish state *tout court*. Lucien Wolf, for example, explained to Balfour (30 Dec. 1917) that he was not opposed to the idea of creating 'a local Jewish nation and a Jewish State' in Palestine. Wolf, however, like Montefiore and others, was alarmed by the prospect that the Zionists might put the status of Jews in the rest of the world at risk.

80. 'Nebi' (prophet), Edwin Samuel's nickname, was given to him as a result of the battle he fought in November 1917 with the Jewish Legion around the village of Nabi Samwil/Nebi Samuel.
81. Sokolow, *History*, v. 2, p. xvii. Sokolow wrote that 'sometimes I had to go there [Sykes's office] three times a day and to remain there till late at night.' Ivi, p. xxxii.
82. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 182.
83. M. Sykes, *Through Five Turkish Provinces* (London: Bickers, 1900), p. 80.
84. Fromkin, *A Peace*, p. 181.
85. M. Sykes, J. H. Smith and E. G. Brown, *Dar-ul-Islam* (London: Bickers, 1904), p. 178.
86. M. Sykes, *The Caliphs' Last Heritage* (London: Macmillan, 1915), p. 441.
87. According to Sykes, 'from top to bottom, where Syrian Arabs are left to themselves, graft and rascality and ambitious designs are the only things one is able to see.' TNA FO 608/105. Sykes in a memorandum entitled 'Appreciations of the Situation in Syria, Palestine, and Lesser Armenia', 22 Jan. 1919.
88. MECA – The Sledmere Papers. Sykes, 19 July 1917. On 11 February 1918, Shmuel Tolkowsky (1886–1965) Weizmann's secretary, wrote in his diary that the alliance between Armenians, Arabs and Jews 'is an artificial issue created by the Foreign Office which wants to use us as an instrument to achieve goals which are incomprehensible to me'. Cited in Y. Auran, *The Banality of Indifference* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2009), p. 258.
89. Cited in Schneer, *The Balfour*, p. 155.
90. ISA RG72 695/4-P. J. L. Magnes, 12 Nov. 1929.
91. TNA FO 371/3385. Clayton, 18 Nov. 1918.
92. Malcolm, who worked during and after the war to represent Armenian interests in Europe, attempted to convince Sykes that the only way to attract the sympathy 'of certain politically-minded Jews everywhere' was to speak up to guarantee 'Palestine for them'. J. A. Malcolm, *Origins of the Balfour Declaration: Dr. Weizmann's Contribution* (London: British Museum, 1944), pp. 2–3. Sokolow noted that Malcolm 'has great sympathy for Zionism (not for the Jews in general) [. . .] It is possible that he [. . .] believes that the Jewish *haute finance* will help the Armenians.' Cited in R. Sanders, *The High Walls of Jerusalem* (New York: Holt, 1984), p. 507.
93. TNA FO 800/210. Sykes to Balfour, 8 Apr. 1917.
94. Aaronsohn, renowned botanist and founder of Nili, a Jewish espionage organization that worked in Palestine during World War I to supply information to London, enjoyed Sykes's full trust. 'If Rabbi Gaster', wrote Sykes's biographer a few months before, 'had provided Sykes with the grace note of Zionism in Europe, here was Aaronsohn who had actually played the trumpet in Palestine.' Adelson, *Mark Sykes*, p. 279.
95. TNA FO 800/381. Sykes to diplomat Arthur Nicolson (1849–1928), 18 Mar. 1916.

96. MECA – TSP. Sykes, 29 July 1917.
97. Sokolow, *History*, v. 2, p. xxii.
98. TNA 371/4178. Memorandum entitled 'The Strategic Importance of Syria to the British Empire', drawn up by the War Cabinet on 9 Dec. 1918.
99. L. Amery in the introduction to P. Goodman (ed.), *Chaim Weizmann: A Tribute on his Seventieth Birthday* (London: Gollancz, 1945), p. 11. In October 1918 Amery declared himself convinced that 'the Jewish settlement of Palestine is not likely in the long run to be confined to Palestine in the narrower sense. It is sure to spread not only into the trans-Jordan country, but to Egypt, Mesopotamia and the Near East generally.' TNA FO 371/3384.
100. The episode was reported by C. P. Scott who took part at the meeting. Scott, *The Political Diaries*, p. 255.
101. In *Punch*, 20 Dec. 1916, p. 423.
102. TNA CAB 37/161/14. War Cabinet, 22 Dec. 1916.
103. 'Smuts, Barnes [...] and Lord Milner', wrote Weizmann to Judge Louis Brandeis in October 1917, 'have advocated our cause very strongly.' Cited in Weizmann, *The Letters*, p. 525.
104. Weizmann to Kerr, 7 Oct. 1917. Stein, *The Balfour*, p. 519.
105. S. Leslie, *Mark Sykes: His Life and Letters* (New York: Cassell, 1923), p. 288.
106. In 1902 Milner wrote to the President of the South African Zionist Federation, Samuel Goldreich, that 'some of the best people I have ever known are Jews, some of the closest personal friends are Jews, and Jews intensely devoted to their race and religion'. A. Milner, *The Milner Papers*, v. 2 (London: Cassell, 1931), p. 379.
107. Samuel, *Memoirs*, p. 145.
108. Ibid.
109. F. Bertie, *The Diary of Lord Bertie of Thame, 1914–1918*, v. 2 (New York: Hodder, 1924), p. 168.
110. CZA AK 46/1. Claude Montefiore Papers, Montefiore's Milner interview, 16 May 1917.
111. Any intention of creating a Jewish state in Palestine continued to be denied on all sides. 'There is no idea whatever on the part of the British administration', declared Bentwich in August 1921, 'of creating a Jewish State. What they hope to do is to create a condition in which Jew and Arab in more or less equal numbers shall live and govern side by side.' LPL – DP – 400 – f. 206.
112. A memorandum drawn up in January 1923 by Ormsby-Gore pointed out that six years earlier the Foreign Office held that Washington could be 'favourably influenced if His Majesty's Government gave an assurance that the return of the Jews to Palestine had become a purpose of British policy'. TNA CAB 24/158. C. P. Scott also noted that, in order to promote British control in Palestine, it was 'very important to obtain American Jews' support. It would be unanimous if they could be assured that in the event of a British occupation of Palestine the Zionist scheme would be considered favourably'. Scott, *The Political Diaries*, p. 258.

113. D. Lloyd George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George* (Boston: Little, 1934), p. 89.
114. On 8 April 1917 Weizmann clarified that ‘since the invasion of Palestine by the British army our problem has become much more tangible and “*actuel*”. Everybody here realises the importance of the Palestinian campaign, and the press on the whole is extremely favourable to a Jewish Palestine under a British Protectorate.’ Weizmann, *The Letters*, pp. 357–8.
115. TNA FO 371/3058. Graham to the permanent undersecretary at the Foreign Office, Charles Hardinge (1858–1944), 13 June 1917.
116. *Ibid.*
117. TNA FO 371/3058. Graham to Hardinge, 13 June 1917.
118. *Ibid.* 371/3054. Cecil to Balfour, 24 Oct. 1917.
119. *Ibid.* 371/3058. Rothschild to Balfour, 18 July 1917.
120. Milner ‘thinks the word “reconstituted” is much too strong, and also the word “secure”’. TNA CAB 21/58. Ormsby-Gore to Hankey, 23 Aug. 1917.
121. TNA CAB 21/58. Milner to the War Cabinet, 5 Aug. 1917.
122. *Ibid.* 23/4. Milner to the War Cabinet, 4 Oct. 1917.
123. *Ibid.* 24/4. Curzon to the War Cabinet, 4 Oct. 1917.
124. *Ibid.* 23/4. Balfour to the War Cabinet, 4 Oct. 1917. A year earlier, during a meeting with New York rabbi Stephen Samuel Wise (1874–1949), Wilson, a Presbyterian, declared: ‘To think, that I, the son of the manse, should be able to help restore the Holy Land to its people.’ Cited in P. Grose, *Israel in the Mind of America* (New York: Knopf, 1983), p. 67.
125. These responses are set out in a document signed by Hankey. TNA CAB 24/4. 17 Oct. 1917.
126. *Ibid.*
127. *Ibid.*
128. TNA CAB 23/4. Balfour to the War Cabinet. 31 Oct. 1917.
129. L. Amery, *My Political Life*, v. 2 (London: Hutchinson, 1953), p. 116.
130. The declaration, whose final form included a few small amendments, was privately sent by Graham to Weizmann on 1 November 1917. The next day, Balfour forwarded it to Rothschild officially.
131. V. Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest* (New York: Pluto Press, 2009), pp. 60–1.
132. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 207.
133. A. Cohen, *Israel and the Arab World* (New York: Funk, 1970), p. 124.
134. In *Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire*, v. 3, Empire Parliamentary Association (London, 1922), p. 486.
135. Cecil noted that the entry into Jerusalem sanctioned ‘the final termination of the infidel possession of the Holy City’. Cecil, 26 Nov. 1917. LPL – DP – 400 – f. 206. 27–30.
136. BOA HR.SYS 2446/9.
137. *Ibid.*
138. In a memorandum entitled ‘The Palestine Problem and Proposals for a Solution’ drawn up in August 1947 by the Irgun group for the attention of

- UNSCOP it was emphasized that 'the history of the mandate as such can be described as a trick perpetrated by Great Britain at the expense of the Jewish people.' ASDMAE – AP 1946–1950, Palestine, b. 2.
139. BOA HR.SYS 2456/9.
 140. BOA HR.SYS 2334/45. Text drawn up by a Palestinian delegation made up of Muslims and Christians. It was sent to the second general assembly of the League of Nations and printed in *La Tribune d'Orient* on 20 May 1922.
 141. LPL – DP – 400 – f. 187. MacInnes to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 28 Feb. 1920. 'British prestige, which was so high after the liberation of Jerusalem, has suffered grievously [...] [the people] would far prefer to have the Turks back again.' Ibid.

Chapter 7 Mandate for Palestine: Legitimizing the Simplification Process

1. Cited in M. Gilbert, *Churchill and the Jews* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2007), p. 120.
2. R. Green, *Woodrow Wilson* (Minneapolis: Compass, 2003), p. 44.
3. K. Blei, *Freedom of Religion and Belief: Europe's Story* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 2002), p. 128.
4. A. Dowty, *Israel/Palestine* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2008), p. 71.
5. JIA – Mictavim [letters], n. 3, 1919–21. Jabotinsky, 6 Feb. 1921.
6. TNA FO 406/40. Ormsby-Gore, London, 16 Aug. 1918.
7. Stein, *The Balfour*, p. 509.
8. Smuts was aware that 'a large Arab population is still living in Palestine'; however, he considered this a secondary aspect. 'You have', Smuts noted, 'a minority of Jews there, and the policy that will have to be promoted and fostered in future will be the introduction of larger and ever larger numbers of Jews into Palestine.' Smuts, Johannesburg, 3 Nov. 1919. Cit. J. Van Der Poel (ed.), *Selections from the Smuts Papers*, v. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 20 and 22.
9. The disinterest shown by Smuts towards the Jews as victims of Nazism did not imply an empathy towards Palestinians. On 22 July 1943, Smuts wrote to Anthony Eden (1897–1977) that 'Arabs have done very little for allied cause in this war while profiting immensely from our effort in the last war [...] I think it would be fatal for us to leave Jewish claims at the mercy of their undeserving opponents at end of this war.' TNA FO 371/35036.
10. During World War I several proposals were advanced in the USA, as well as in South Africa and England. In the latter, in December 1916, Robert Cecil – 'a sound friend of Zionism and an idealist to the end' (N. Rose, *Chaim Weizmann: A Biography* (New York: Penguin, 1989, p. 162) – suggested to create a special committee with the task of drafting a charter for an international league. The proposal was set aside a year later, primarily due to the scepticism shown by Wilson.
11. J. C. Smuts, *Jan Christian Smuts: A Biography* (New York: Morrow, 1952), p. 201.

12. In the words of the US Secretary of State Robert Lansing (1864–1928): ‘When the President [Wilson] talks of “self-determination” what unit has he in mind? Does he mean a race, a territorial area, or a community? Without a definite unit which is practical, application of this principle is dangerous to peace and stability.’ R. Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative* (New York: Houghton, 1921), p. 97.
13. Writing about the American Civil War, Wilson argued that ‘the white men of the South were aroused by the mere instinct of self-preservation to rid themselves [...] of the intolerable burden of governments sustained by the votes of ignorant negroes.’ W. Wilson, *A History of the American People*, v. 5 (New York: Cosimo, 2008), p. 58.
14. Wilson to William M. Trotter (1872–1934). White House, 12 Nov. 1914: ‘Segregation is not humiliating but a benefit, and ought to be so regarded by you [colored] gentleman.’ In *The Crisis*, Jan. 1915. Wilson, according to Melvin Steinfield, ‘furnishes one more example of a President who has developed a reputation as a spokesman for freedom, yet who, in actual fact, was an overt racist’. M. Steinfield, *Our Racist Presidents* (San Ramon: Consensus, 1972), p. 215.
15. J. C. Smuts, *Africa and Some World Problems: Including the Rhodes Memorial Lectures Delivered in Michaelmas Term* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1930), p. 76.
16. Wilson in *Atlantic Monthly*, v. 87, Jan. 1901, p. 6. According to Wilson ‘an extraordinary and very perilous state of affairs had been created in the South by the sudden and absolute emancipation of the negroes.’ In his opinion, such people represented ‘a danger to themselves as well as to those whom they had once served’. Ibid.
17. E. Foner, *The Story of American Freedom* (New York: Norton, 1999), p. 129.
18. In *Japan Times*, an article entitled ‘Racial discrimination to end’, 31 Jan. 1919.
19. On 14 March 1919, Japanese ambassador Ishii Kikujirō (1866–1945) attended a dinner at the Japan Society of New York. He lingered on Japan’s humiliation connected to racial discrimination. His claims were received with hostility by various American senators. According to Burkman, Wilson’s attitude ‘cooled after they encountered such sentiment’. T. W. Burkman, *Japan and the League of Nations* (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2008), p. 84.
20. The British Embassy in Paris noted that ‘at the conference American Jewry will doubtless have a very big say in the settlement especially as President Wilson is sympathetic to Zionist aims and Jews have so much influence in the politics of the USA.’ TNA FO 608/98. 16 Jan. 1919.
21. The ‘Smuts Resolution’, drafted by Smuts while serving as British representative at the Paris Conference, was adopted by the ten delegates of the five victorious powers on 30 January 1919. Article 22 of the League of Nations’s Charter is written using most of the terms adopted by Smuts. The ‘Smuts Resolution’ mentioned the names of six areas – including Palestine – that were to be governed according to Article 22. In the latter, on the contrary, it was held opportune to omit them.

22. TNA FO 371/7776. Balfour, 18th session of the Council of the League of Nations, 17 May 1922.
23. Article 22: “To those colonies and territories which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of the States which formerly governed them and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant.’
24. S. de Madariaga, H. N. Brailsford, *Can the League Cope with Imperialism?* (New York: The Foreign Policy Association, 1928), p. 12.
25. Victor Kattan clarified that Article 22 ‘provided for the “well-being and development” of the peoples concerned which formed “a sacred trust of civilization”. Moreover, certain “communities”, i.e. peoples, formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire, had “reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized”. Evidently, this terminology only applied to the Arabs of Palestine and not to the Zionists who at that time were primarily Jews of European origins.’ V. Kattan, *From Coexistence to Conquest* (New York: Pluto Press, 2009), pp. 138–9.
26. E. E. Hertz, *Reply* (New York: Myths and Facts, 2005), p. 29.
27. J. Quigley, *The Statehood of Palestine* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 39.
28. Ivi, p. 76.
29. H. Duncan Hall, *Mandates, Dependencies and Trusteeship* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1948), p. 149.
30. League of Nations. Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the Thirty-Second (Extraordinary) Session devoted to Palestine, held at Geneva from 30 July to 18 August 1937, including the Report of the Commission to the Council, Official N. C.330.M.222 1937, v. 6, p. 85.
31. ‘The White Man’s Burden’ was the title of a poem composed by Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) in 1899. Over time it became a sort of manifesto for colonialism in virtue of the attention it gave to the need to civilize countries outside the European tradition.
32. Matthews noted that ‘the concept of the mandates preserved the notions of racial hierarchy that typified the belief and practice of the era of High Imperialism’. W. C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation* (London: I.B.Tauris, 2006), p. 20.
33. Smuts clarified that the former German colonies in Africa ‘are inhabited by barbarians, who not only cannot possibly govern themselves, but to whom it would be impracticable to apply any idea of political self-determination in the European sense’. J. C. Smuts, *The League of Nations: A Practical Suggestion* (London: Hodder, 1918), p. 15.
34. M. Cherif Bassiouni and S. Ben-Ami, *A Guide to Documents on the Arab-Palestinian/Israeli Conflict: 1897–2008* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), p. 16.

35. In a letter written to his father on 8 July 1921 Bell complained that ‘making kings’ was more difficult than he could have imagined. However, seven months earlier, on 10 January 1921, Bell pointed out that ‘we keep two Divisions there [in Palestine] in order to carry out our iniquitous policy of making it a home for the Jews. If they withdrew the two Divisions from Palestine we could keep them here [Iraq] for a couple of years where they’re so urgently needed. But no; there’s the Jewish interest to reckon with.’ Bell’s letters are available online: <http://www.gerty.ncl.ac.uk/>.
36. Clayton to the Foreign Office, 2 March 1919: ‘It will take years of wise and impartial government to allay the fears which have been aroused and to prove to the non-Jewish population that the Zionists are not pursuing a policy entirely opposed to the principles so frequently enunciated by the Allied leaders.’ ISA 2/155/15A.
37. In July 1922 an Arab delegation from Palestine published in London a declaration addressing ‘the British nation’. It argued that ‘the tendency of the current [British] administration in Palestine is to “zionise” the contry’. BOA HR.IM 60/47.
38. Cited in Weizmann [Litvinoff (ed.)], *The Essential Chaim Weizmann*, p. 209. Clayton, the British official who arranged the meeting between Fayṣal and Weizmann, noted that ‘Fayṣal sees in Zionism a force which, if enlisted on his side, may furnish him with the necessary economic support [...] As regards political support, he recognizes in Zionism an “international” influence which permeates every country from which the future Syrian State may have anything to hope or fear. Finally, behind Zionism and working through it, he reckons on the British Empire on which in the last resort he places his trust.’ Cited in M. Sicker, *Reshaping Palestine: From Muḥammad ‘Alī to the British Mandate, 1831–1922* (Westport: Praeger, 1999), p. 140.
39. According to Palestinian sources, T.E. Lawrence played a crucial role ‘in deceiving Faysal into signing’ the Fayṣal–Weizman agreement. See K. Qāsimīyah (ed.), Awnī Abd al-Hadī: Awrāq Khāssa [Awnī Abd al-Hadī: Private Papers] (Beirut: PLO Research Center, 1974), p. 23.
40. A. L. Tībāwī, *Anglo-Arab Relations and the Question of Palestine, 1914–1921* (London: Luzac, 1978), p. 339.
41. G. Antonius, *The Arab Awakening* (London: Hamilton, 1938), p. 439. George Antonious (1891–1942), a staunch supporter of pan-Arabism, was born into an Orthodox Christian family in today’s Lebanon.
42. C. L. Wilson pointed out that Ḥusayn ‘has been allowed to remain under the impression that certain of his interpretations are correct and the serious misunderstanding which has all along existed appears likely to reach a crisis shortly’. Wilson A. Milne Cheetham (1869–1938). TNA FO 608/97. 21 Jan. 1919.
43. H. Grief, *The Legal Foundation and Broders of Israel under International Law* (Jerusalem: Mazo, 2008), p. 221.
44. The lack of interest shown by the Arab-Palestinians for the ‘Great Revolt’ of 1916 is one of the reasons why Lawrence did not view them favourably. This

hostility makes it possible to understand why Lawrence found it acceptable that ‘Weizmann hopes for a completely Jewish Palestine in fifty years, and a Jewish Palestine, under a British façade, for the moment.’ G. S. Symes, *Tour of Duty* (London: Collins, 1946), pp. 321–2. This sentence was dictated by Lawrence to Stewart Symes (1882–1962) in the middle of June 1918.

45. A. Ismāʿīl, I. Khūrī, *Al-Siyāsa al-Duwalīya fī al-Sharq al-ʿArabī min Sanat 1789 ilā Sanat 1958* [*The International Politics in the Arab Orient from the Year 1789 to 1958*], v. 2 (Beirut: Dār al-Nashr lil-Siyāsa wa ʿl-Taʾrīkh, 1964), p. 28. The fact that a minority of Palestinians might recognize Fayṣal as their possible representative is due to pure political opportunism (see also Tamārī, *Years*, p. 66). The same opportunism that in February 1919 pushed the 28 Palestinian delegates of the first ‘Arab-Palestinian Congress’ to define Palestine as an appendix of Syria (see [Chapter 2](#)). In March 1920, Samuel himself wrote to Curzon: ‘I can see no sufficient reasons for recognizing Feisal King of Palestine. I doubt whether he or his supporters expect it.’ TNA FO 371/5034.
46. Fayṣal was afterwards (August 1921) crowned king of Iraq. It was a sort of ‘compensation’ bestowed on him by the British authorities. He had never set foot in Mesopotamia before that moment; he spoke a different dialect than the local Arabs; he was Sunni, while the local majority was Shiʿite.
47. Cited in J. Kimche, *There Could Have Been Peace* (New York: Dial Press, 1973), p. 55. Clayton was serving at that time under Allenby as first ‘political officer’.
48. According to Clayton ‘the Jerusalem Jew of today is certainly not an attractive personality.’ By contrast, Clayton awaited the arrival of Weizmann’s delegation with trepidation, in that it would put the Arabs in ‘contact with the really good class Jews’. TNA FO 371/3398. Clayton, 27 Feb. 1918.
49. R. Courtney, *Palestine Policeman* (London: Jenkins, 1939), p. 41. Courtney reserved similar insults also for the Jews present in the region.
50. Ibid.
51. It was widely held, however, that Britain would have gained the mandate for Palestine, and France that of Syria (including Lebanon). Hankey to Balfour, 12 Aug. 1918: ‘If these regions are not to be under the control of the Turk, under whose control are they to be? [...] there is only one possible answer [...] they will come under British control.’ BLMC – CP – add. 51071.
52. Monroe, *Britain’s Moment*, p. 66. Toynbee argued that Palestinian and Syrian Arabs were completely against ‘the proposal for the imposition on them of “mandates”’. A. J. Toynbee, *Acquaintances* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 211.
53. Italy, in Sykes’s words, ‘seems to me of very little importance. A couple of Italian officers employed in some unimportant district or on some function or other will not make any appreciable difference’. Sykes, Paris, 25 Dec. 1917. LPL – DP – 400 – ff. 73–76.
54. ‘I cannot remember’, Balfour clarified, ‘meeting any single Italian during these last years [...] who seemed to me the least bit of good. [Sidney] Sonnino was

- perhaps the best, no doubt because he was largely Jewish.’ BLMC – CP – add. 51071.
55. Itagazi Yuko, cited in J. Morikawa, *Japan and Africa* (London: Hurst, 1997), pp. 46–7.
 56. The provisions contained in the mandate for Palestine had first been drafted as a result of the joint efforts of the Zionist Organization and the Foreign Office: ‘There was no participation or consultation with any Arab body or representatives, whether in Palestine or elsewhere.’ Grief, *The Legal*, p. 118. Curzon noted that ‘it is quite clear that this mandate has been drawn up by someone reeling under the fumes of Zionism. If we were all to submit to that intoxication, this draft is all right.’ TNA FO 371/5199. Curzon, 20 Mar. 1920.
 57. TNA FO 371/5035. Curzon, 26 Apr. 1920. According to Max Nordau, the meaning that London would have attributed to the Balfour Declaration and the San Remo Conference would have been fully dependent on the ‘ability of the Jews to become a strong and absolutely reliable factor in world politics’. CZA A119/68/7.
 58. C. D. Wallace, *Foundations of the International Legal Rights of the Jewish People and the State of Israel and the Implications for the Proposed New Palestinian State* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 2012), p. 25. Grief, *The Legal Foundation*, p. 118. Hertz, *Reply*, H. Fogelman, *Christianity Uncovered* (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2012), p. 442.
 59. Grief, *The Legal*, p. 106; Wallace, *Foundations*, p. 25; Fogelman, *Christianity Uncovered*, p. 442.
 60. See the English translation of the legal arguments in the Levy Report, available online: <http://elderofziyon.blogspot.cz/2012/07/english-translation-of-legal-arguments.html>.
 61. See E. V. Rostow, ‘The Future of Palestine’, in ‘McNair Papers’, n. 24, Institute for National Strategies Studies, Nov. 1993, p. 10. Available online: <http://www.dtic.mil/dtic/tr/fulltext/u2/a276639.pdf>.
 62. ICJ, Advisory Opinion on the International Status of South West Africa, 11 July 1950. Available online: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?&case=10>.
 63. ICJ, Summary of the Advisory Opinion on the Legal Consequences for States of the Continued Presence of South Africa in Namibia (South West Africa) notwithstanding Security Council Resolution 276 (1970), 21 June 1971. Available online: <http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/index.php?&case=53>. See p. 79: ‘When the League of Nations was dissolved, the *raison d’être* and original object of these obligations remained. Since their fulfillment did not depend on the existence of the League, they could not be brought to an end merely because the supervisory organ had ceased to exist. [...] The International Court of Justice has consistently recognized that the Mandate survived the demise of the League [of Nations].’
 64. Excerpt of a declaration made by Ben-Gurion on 7 July 1947 in front of UNSCOP’s members. Available online: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/06728C052629426085256E8B007092DF>.

65. J. Robinson, *Palestine and the United Nations: Prelude to a Solution* (Westport: Greenwood, 1971), pp. 2–3.
66. Cited in H. Kelsen, *The Law of the United Nations* (Clark: The Lawbook Exchange, 2000), p. 597.
67. J. A. C. Gutteridge, *The United Nations in a Changing World* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969), p. 53.
68. We know from the Bible that also in Joshua's era several ethnic groups coexisted, often melding together: 'The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites and the Jebusites; and they took their daughters to be their wives, and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods' (Judges 3.5–6).
69. TNA FO 371/5124. Curzon, 29 Nov. 1920.
70. House of Commons Papers, HMSO, v. 28 (London, 1922), p. 18.
71. Cited in A. M. Hyamson, *Palestine Under the Mandate, 1920–1948* (London: Methuen, 1950), p. 200.
72. Weizmann pointed out that the White Paper of 1922 'limited the Balfour Declaration to Palestine west of the Jordan'. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 290.
73. In the White Paper, the British government pointed out that in the secret negotiations that took place during World War I 'the whole of Palestine west of the Jordan' was excluded by any guarantee related to the possible establishment of an Arab 'independent national government'. In the same passage, however, it was clarified the following: 'Nevertheless, it is the intention of His Majesty's government to foster the establishment of a full measure of self government in Palestine. But they are of the opinion that, in the special circumstances of that country, this should be accomplished by gradual stages and not suddenly.' That the British authorities were referring to the land to the west of the Jordan was confirmed by what was mentioned soon after: 'The Secretary of State would point out that already the present administration has transferred to a Supreme Council elected by the Moslem community of Palestine the entire control of Moslem Religious endowments (Waqfs), and of the Moslem religious Courts.' The Supreme Council did not include any representative of the land to the east of the Jordan. It consisted of five members, a president and four members, two of whom representing the district of Jerusalem and the remaining two representing the districts of Nāblus and Akka.
74. In favour of the 'establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people'.
75. Article 2 asked the Mandatory to create the political, administrative and economic conditions fit for the establishment of the 'Jewish national home' in the country.
76. Weizmann, *Trial*, p. 208.
77. Available online: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/48A7E5584EE1403485256CD8006C3FBE>.
78. In regards to the Arab-Palestinian delegation, John Shuckburgh noted that 'hardly any of them understand English'. TNA CO 733/15. Shuckburgh to

- James Masterton-Smith (1878–1938), 7 Nov. 1921. In the same weeks Shuckburgh noted with surprise that ‘whatever agreement we reach in London with the Moslem Christian Delegation it will not be ratified by the people of Palestine unless it suits them to do so. [...] in perpetually asking the Zionists to go slow we are killing the ‘Zionist idea’’. CZA Z4/42436.
79. The Palestinian delegation was able, following what Christopher Sykes (1907–86) defined ‘a long siege’, to obtain an audience with Balfour: it was the first and only meeting they had with him. This is more surprising when one thinks that the Zionist Organization had had continuous contact with Balfour for years and enjoyed ‘direct access to high political personages outside the Colonial Office’. TNA CO 733/15. Shuckburgh to Masterton-Smith, 7 Nov. 1921.
 80. TNA FO 371/7776. Mūsā Kāẓim al-Ḥusaynī to Lloyd George. London, 13 May 1922.
 81. Humphrey Bowman, head of the department of education in mandatory Palestine, explained that the dangers ‘of going too far in the matter of educational devolution can hardly be exaggerated. [...] In Europe the virtues of honesty, of truth, of straight and honourable dealing, of clean living, are taught in the home as well as at school. In Palestine, as in most Oriental countries, the inculcation of such virtues is left by the parent for the most part to the teacher [...] We shall be false to our trust if we allow ourselves to be persuaded by specious arguments to hand over the power of appointment and dismissal of the teaching staff – a power of paramount importance – to local bodies’. ISA RG 2/135. Memorandum signed by Bowman, 4 May 1925.
 82. Strawson, *Partitioning*, p. 53.
 83. Samuel predicted that once the mandate had been published ‘protests may be expected from the anti-Zionist groups. But I am sure that the subsequent effect will be very salutary.’ ISA 649/7P. Samuel to Curzon, 2 July 1920.
 84. TNA FO 371/5263. Louis Bols (1867–1930), head of Allenby’s staff, to the War Office, 18 June 1920.
 85. BLMC – CP – add. 51095. Cecil to Alan Saunders (1886–1964), 24 May 1922: ‘I should have selected almost anyone sooner than a Jew, but I believe he [Samuel] has personally done well.’
 86. PRO CAB 24/107. Samuel, 13 June 1920. The announcement was published the same day in some of the most important international newspapers, including the *New York Times*.
 87. Likhovskii, *Law*, p. 204. Al-Aref later became an official on the payroll of London. He wrote a book on ‘beduin law’ undermined by various constraints. Likhovskii’s definition does not appear appropriate, in any case. Ghandour noted that it is ‘an overstatement, seeing as it strips the meaning of colonialism of its crucial military, political and financial impetus’. Z. B. Ghandour, in *The Modern Law Review*, v. 70, n. 2, 2007, p. 348.
 88. ISA RG2 1/7. Al-‘Āref, 25 June 1920. The author signed as the secretary general of the Arab Palestinian Society, an organization established in Damascus in 1919. ‘Āref explained that it was only during his studies in Istanbul, in the

- years preceding World War I, that he began to 'hear talk for the first time of concepts such as Arabs, Arabism, nationalism and country'. Cited in Y. 'Awdat, *Min A'lām al-fīkr wa 'l-Adab fī Filasṭīn* [Palestinian Writers and Intellectuals] ('Ammān: Wakalat al-Tawzi' al-Urdunnīya, 1987), p. 405. On the inefficiency of Palestinian protests/requests see also 'A Brief Statement of the Demands of the Arab People of Palestine (Moslem and Christian) Submitted to the Honorable Mr. Winston Churchill by the Arab Palestine Delegation in London', Aug. 1921. TNA CO 733/14.
89. TNA FO 371/5199. Curzon, 20 May 1920.
 90. R. Churchill and M. Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, v. 3 (Boston: Mifflin, 1988), p. 663.
 91. Churchill's visit took place in March 1921, a year after the San Remo Conference. Churchill guaranteed the Muslims and Christians he met that Zionism would have been 'good for the Jews and good for the British Empire. But we also think it will be good for the Arabs who dwell in Palestine'. Cited in A. Klieman, *Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), p. 270.
 92. TNA CO 733/13. Brunton, Jaffa, 13 May 1921.
 93. Cited in R. Churchill and M. Gilbert, *Winston S. Churchill*, v. 4 (London: Heinemann, 1966), p. 624.

Chapter 8 Divide and Rule: the Creation of the Transjordan Emirate

1. A. Dirlik, What is in a Rim?: Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea (Lanham: Rowman, 1998), p. 5.
2. Israel's Peace Initiative, 14 May 1989. Available online: http://www.knesset.gov.il/process/docs/achdut_eng.htm.
3. See, for example, Daniel Friedman's 'Jordan option must be reconsidered', in *The Jerusalem Post*, 9 Jan. 2014, and Geoffrey Aronson's 'The return of the Jordan option for Palestine', in *Al-Monitor*, 8 May 2013.
4. M. Bard, *Myths and Facts: A Guide to the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (AICE: Chavey Chase, 2006), p. 249.
5. Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, p. 240. According to Peters, various Arab leaders claimed that 'Palestine and Trans-Jordan' were a single entity. Pipes and Garfinkle clarified that 'this interpretation distorts the real character of these remarks, which are not disinterested analyses [...] they assert rights to expand and rule other regions; the PLO hopes to stake out a claim to territory it does not control; Amman seeks to protect territories it either controls or hopes one day to control again.' Pipes and Garfinkle, 'Is Jordan Palestine?', in *Commentary*, Oct. 1988, pp. 35–42.
6. ASDMAE – AP 1946–1950, Palestine, b. 2. Excerpt from a memorandum drafted by Irgun, Aug. 1947. It was brought to the attention of the members of UNSCOP.

7. TNA CAB 24/122. The official report of the conference clarified the strategic reasons for which Churchill justified the creation of this new border. Without the military occupation of Trans-Jordan it would have been 'impossible to secure a settled government there or to stop anti-French action initiated in the British zone'. Ibid.
8. N. Bentwich, *Mandated Territories: Palestine and Mesopotamia (Iraq)*, in *The British Year Book of International Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), p. 53.
9. For the first six months, from 1 April 1921, 'Abd Allāh of Trans-Jordan received a personal monthly subsidy by Churchill. In this phase 'neither the issue of governance nor that of sovereignty was raised'. TNA FO 371/6343. Churchill to Samuel, 2 Apr. 1921.
10. Pipes and Garfinkle, 'Is Jordan Palestine?', pp. 35–42.
11. P. S. Riebenfeld, 'Palestine in Middle East', in R. Israeli (ed.), *Dangers of a Palestinian State* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2002), p. 78.
12. Riebenfeld, 'Palestine', p. 79.
13. The Arab Legion was established in Transjordan in 1923. It was financed by Britain and composed mainly by Arabs under the command of British officers. Transjordan was the only political entity in the region, among the ones within London's sphere of influence, not directly garrisoned by British troops.
14. Government of Palestine, *Proclamations, Regulations, Rules, Orders, and Notices* (Jerusalem, 1927), p. 83.
15. League of Nations Permanent Mandates Commission, Minutes of the Fifteenth Session, Seventh Meeting, 11 Nov. 1927. Available online: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E211072996E780B9052565F000651656>.
16. E. Borel, *Répartition des annuités de la dette publique ottomane (Article 47 du Traité du Lausanne)* [*Distribution of Annuities of the Ottoman Public Debt (Article 47 of the Treaty of Lausanne)*] (Geneva: Kundig, 1925), p. 107. Yithak Gil-Har argued that Britain had always treated Transjordan 'as a political entity completely separate from Palestine. Its inclusion within the framework of the Palestine Mandate was an outcome of the political events following the fall of Faisal's government in July 1920. The Palestine-Trans-Jordan boundary served as a political barrier separating two states. Therefore, the postulation by some writers that the boundary was merely administrative in its character, delineating two territories subjected to the one British rule within the British Empire has no foundation in reality.' Y. Gil-Har, 'Boundaries delimitation: Palestine and Trans-Jordan', in *Middle Eastern Studies*, v. 36, n. 1 (Jan. 2000), p. 72.
17. M. Abu Nowar, *The History of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, v. 1 (Oxford: Ithaca, 1989), p. 285.
18. Quigley, *The Statehood*, p. 48.
19. Cited in H. Lauterpacht (ed.), *International Law Reports*, v. 12 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 15–16.
20. M. G. Kohen, 'La longue marche vers la reconnaissance territoriale de l'autre', in W. Ossipow (ed.), *Israël et l'Autre* (Geneva: Labor et Fides, 2005), p. 17.

21. Several documents produced in the 1920s by the British authorities explicitly referred to the fact that 'His Britannic Majesty is prepared to recognize the existence of an independent Government in Trans-Jordan under the rule of His Highness the Amir of Trans-Jordan [...]'. ISA, Palestine Government Pub., 4375/M. Jerusalem, 20 Feb. 1928.
22. The naming of Transjordan as an emirate was initially unofficial. U. Dann, *Studies in the History of Transjordan 1920–1949: The Making of a State* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1984), p. 3.
23. Riebenfeld, 'Palestine in Middle East Peace', in Israeli (ed.), *Dangers of a Palestinian State*, p. 79.
24. Ivi, p. 82.
25. TNA FO 371/3398. Toynbee, 2 Dec. 1918.
26. Kohen, 'La longue marche', p. 25.
27. Hertz, *Reply*, p. 55.
28. As clarified by Uri Avnery, 'no one asked the Arab Palestinians whether to accept or reject anything. If they had been asked, they would probably have rejected partition, since – in their view – it gave a large part of their historical homeland to foreigners.' U. Avnery, 'Sacred Mantras', in *Uri Avnery's Column*, 24 June 2011. Available online: <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1308952216>.
29. Hertz, *Reply*, p. 56.
30. Grief, *The Legal*, p. 256.
31. Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Status of General Assembly Resolution 181 (II) of 29 November 1947, 30 Mar. 1999. Available online: <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFA-Archive/1999/Pages/The%20Status%20of%20General%20Assembly%20Resolution%20181%20-II-.aspx>.
32. See the British memorandum on the 'Legal Meaning of the Termination of the Mandate', 27 Feb. 1948. Available online: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/B8A884629259C43885256A570067C00E>.
33. Abba Eban speaking in front of the UNGA, 5 May 1949. Available online: <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/1DB943E43C280A26052565FA004D8174>.
34. H. M. House, *What Really Happened at Paris: The Story of the Peace Conference, 1918–1919* (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1921), p. 467.
35. Cited in R. D. Cole (ed.), *Numbers*, v. 3b (Nashville: B&H Pub., 2000), p. 534.
36. 'Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. No one will be able to stand against you. The Lord your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.' Cited in J. Ridderbos (ed.), *Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1984), p. 148.
37. 'Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the great river, the Euphrates – all the Hittite country – to the Mediterranean Sea in the west.' C. J. Goslinga (ed.), *Joshua, Judges, Ruth* (Grand Rapids: Regency, 1986), p. 36.

38. Guillaume argued that it is 'generally supposed that these promises were made to the Jews and to the Jews alone. But that is not what the Bible says. The words "to thy seed" inevitably include Arabs, both Muslims and Christians, who claim descent from Abraham through his son Ishmael [...]. It cannot be argued that the words of Genesis 21.10–12 necessarily cancel the promise made to Abraham's seed as a whole.' A. Guillaume, *Zionists and the Bible* (New York: Palestine Arab Refugee Office, 1956), p. 1.
39. 'On the east side, the boundary shall run from Hazar-enon between Hauran and Damascus, along the Jordan between Gilead and the land of Israel; to the eastern sea [??the Dead Sea] and as far as Tamar. This shall be the east side.' Cited in P. C. Craigie (ed.), *Ezekiel* (Edinburgh: The Saint Andrew Press, 1983), p. 313.
40. Pipes and Garfinkle provided the following response: 'Whatever the situation on the ground, Jewish tradition clearly distinguished between areas of historical Jewish habitation and the land of the Covenant as defined in the Bible. Only the latter, more circumscribed, area is "the land of milk and honey", the subject of God's promise to Israel.' Pipes and Garfinkle, 'Is Jordan Palestine?'
41. W. Keller, *La Bibbia aveva ragione [The Bible was Right]* (Milan: Garzanti, 1979), p. 66.
42. *Enciclopedia Italiana Treccani*, v. 17 (Rome, 1951), p. 170.
43. In 1850 Rabbi Joseph Schwarz pointed out that 'it is difficult to determine, with any degree of accuracy, the former limits of Palestine, especially as there are apparently several contradictions in this respect in the holy Scriptures'. Schwarz, *Descriptive*, p. 17.
44. Marchadour and Neuhaus noted that 'although there are periods when the historical land of Israel is described as extending beyond the Jordan River (in the period of king David for example) the historical territory of the Land is often extremely limited as is the case in the Persian period, when the small province of Judah included only a small part of the region around Jerusalem'. A. Marchadour and D. Neuhaus, *The Land, the Bible, and History* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2007), p. 60.
45. According to Pipes and Garfinkle, in Roman times 'the Jordan River initially formed a boundary; after 66 CE it did not. Conversely, the first Jewish revolt extended beyond the Jordan, the second ended at the river.' Pipes and Garfinkle, 'Is Jordan Palestine?'
46. G. Stroumsa, 'Religious contacts in Byzantine Palestine', *Numen*, n. 36, f. 6, 1989, pp. 16–42.
47. G. Biger, *Erets rabat gvnlot [The Country of Many Borders]* (Sde Boker: ha-Merkaz le-moreshet Ben-Gurion, 2001).
48. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1911) defined Palestine in vague terms: 'We may describe Palestine as the strip of land extending along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea from the mouth of the Litany or Kasimiya River (33° 20' N.) southward to the mouth of the Wadi Ghuzza; the latter joins the sea in 31° 28' N., a short distance south of Gaza, and runs thence in a south-easterly direction so as to include on its northern side the site of Beersheba. Eastward there is no

such definite border. The River Jordan, it is true, marks a line of delimitation between Western and Eastern Palestine; but it is practically impossible to say where the latter ends and the Arabian desert begins.' H. Chisholm (ed.), *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, v. 20 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910–11), p. 601.

49. According to Ormsby-Gore 'the historic Palestine from Dan to Bersheba comprises Galilee, Samaria and Judaea, and consists of strip of land lying between the Mediterrean and the Jordan river [...] The Zionists have aspired to include part of Trans-Jordania, the ancient land of Reuben, Gilead, and Menasseh in the new Palestine, but this claim will undoubtedly be disputed by the Arabs, and by the local population. Either the Jordan river or a line drawn a few (not exceeding 10) miles east of the main stream of the Jordan should form the eastern boundary.' TNA FO 608/98 Memorandum by Ormsby-Gore, 24 Jan. 1919.
50. TNA CAB 21/153. The person in charge of finding a copy of Smith's book was Maurice Hankey. Besides the latter and the prime minister, Bonar Law and Allenby were also present at the meeting.
51. Great Britain. Colonial Office, *The Colonial Office List*, v. 60 (London: Harrison, 1921), p. 451.
52. N. Sokolow, *Erets Chemda* [*The Coveted Land*] (Warsaw: Naldaman, 1885), pp. 6 and 12.
53. Between 1917 and 1919 various Zionist members proposed extended borders, including areas such as al-'Arish, Tiro, 'Aqaba, the river Litani, Mount Hermon, the hills of the Golan, as well as the entire area between the Jordan and the city of Bosra. In a book published by Ben-Gurion and Ben Zvi in 1918, the vertical extension of 'Erets-Yiṣra'el' was from the ancient Phoenician city of Tiro and al-'Arīsh. See Ben-Gurion and Ben Zvi, *Eretz Yisrael* cit.
- Shmuel Tolkowsky, Weizmann's secretary, played an influential role in relation to the eastern border: '[From] Bosra (32°30' N)', noted Tolkowsky, 'the frontier would go southward, parallel with the railway [Hegiaz railway] and at a distance of ten to twenty miles to the east of it.' S. Tolkowsky, 'A note on the boundaries of Palestine', in H. Sacher (ed.), *Zionism and the Jewish Future* (London: Murray, 1917), p. 212. According to Tolkowsky, 'Aqaba was 'absolutely useless for anybody else, whereas for Palestine it is a vital necessity'. Ibid. As far as the southern border is concerned, an important memo written by Aaronsohn for the Zionist delegation clarified the need to include the territory between Qatia (east of al-'Arish) and 'Aqaba, in order to guarantee vital access to the Red Sea. CZA Z/4/16024. Memorandum from Aaronsohn, Jan. 1919.
54. Deut. 34.4. Cited in D. Buckwalter, *Topical Analysis of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1991), p. 740.
55. Uriel Heyd (1913–68) focused on Ottoman documents about sixteenth-century Palestine. He concluded that the 'veneration of innumerable holy places in Palestine had become a widespread fashion among the Muslims of the seventeenth century'. This represented an additional distinctive element for

- Palestine and its inhabitants. U. Heyd, *Ottoman Documents on Palestine, 1552–1615* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), p. 151.
56. W. C. Lowdermilk, *Palestine Land of Promise* (London: The Camelot Press, 1944), p. 143.
 57. A document from the US State Department dated 17 March 1949 documented, with several details that only 5 per cent of Transjordan was arable: 'There is a veritable lack of arable land in Trans-Jordan.' NARA, RG59, Palestine-Israel 1945–49, 501.Ma, Box 2220.
 58. TNA FO 371/45379. Memorandum of the British Colonial Office, 7 Sep. 1945.
 59. Jobling focused the attention on the crystallization, resulting from contradictions in the Holy Scriptures, 'of Transjordan as *ambiguous land*. It belongs, at some level, to Israel; yet there is the suspicion of another level at which it belongs rather to someone else [Moab and Ammon], so that Israel's occupation of it is not Yahweh's intention.' D. Jobling, *The Sense of Biblical Narrative*, v. 2 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1987), pp. 116–17.
 60. According to Rogan, 'the modern state was introduced in Transjordan by the Ottomans in the nineteenth century, not the British or Hashemites after the First World War [...] it was a state which was marked by strong continuities from its recent Ottoman past.' E. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850–1921* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 1 and 241.
 61. Schölch, *Palestine*, p. 16.
 62. Rachel Havrelock suggested to consider the border represented by the Jordan as a fictitious interpretation, a 'national mythology'. Taking inspiration from ancient melody, she entitled a chapter of her book 'My home is over Jordan' and proposed to put aside the Jordan River border, without explaining how to deal with the national identities present on both sides of it. R. Havrelock, *River Jordan: The Mythology of a Dividing Line* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), p. 218. Havrelock did not take into account the possibility that Jordan's Palestinian refugees may opt to move to today's State of Israel. Furthermore, her arguments seem to support the thesis according to which Palestinians could be easily relocated in other areas (referring to the case of the foundation of Rāmallāh – which occurred at the hands of a family originally from today's Jordan – and to the fact that 'many villages' were 'founded this way', the book implies the idea that Palestinians in many cases have their origins in other regions).
 63. H. van Dyke, *Out-Of-Doors in the Holy Land* (New York: Scribner, 1908), p. 132. On the following page van Dyke defined Jordan an 'everlasting symbol of division, of separation'. Ivi, p. 133. This is what happened to Felice Bovet during his pilgrimage in 1858: 'I wanted to swim across the river [Jordan] to gather *laumea palms*. But the current was so strong that it quickly carried me away. I fought with all my strength, until, finally too tired to go on, I began to call for help.' F. Bovet, *Viaggio in Terra Santa [A Voyage to the Holy Land]* (Florence: Tipografia Claudiana, 1867), p. 175.

64. W. Libbey and F. E. Hoskins, *The Jordan Valley and Petra*, v. 1 (New York: Putnam, 1905), p. 89.
65. ISA RG 160/2881–P. Dickson to the Marquis of Salisbury. 19 July, 1892.
66. Excerpt from the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Cited in Pipes and Garfinkle, 'Is Jordan Palestine?'
67. 'The eastern frontier of Palestine, from the summit of Djebel esh Sheikh (Mt. Hermon) to the southern end of the Dead Sea, will not be affected by the fate of Syria [...]' TNA FO 608/98. War Office. Geographical Section, 9 Apr. 1919.
68. ISA RG (not registered) 546-M. Extract of a letter (n. 33/702) signed by an unidentified 'District Commissioner', 13 Mar. 1931.
69. Brunton, cited in Fromkin, *A Peace*, p. 443.
70. Former Israeli prime minister, Menachem Begin (1913–92) to Zbigniew Brzezinski: 'There's no such thing as a Palestinian. These are all Arabs. And their natural home is across the Jordan.' Cited in Z. Brzezinski and B. Scowcroft, *America and the World* (New York: Basic Books, 2008), p. 96.
71. Peters argued that the 'native land' of Arab Palestine and Jewish Palestine both reached independence within two years of each other: Transjordan in 1946 and Israel in 1948. Peters, *From Time Immemorial*, p. 240.
72. Even before the War of 1967, when the West Bank was in Jordanian hands, a relevant percentage of the local Palestinian population, including many Fatah members, opposed that occupation to the point that King Hussein (1935–99) felt obliged to impose martial law.

Chapter 9 Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī and the Supreme Muslim Council: the *Longa Manus* of London

1. A. Gramsci, *Passato e presente [Past and Present]* (Turin: Einaudi, 1974), p. 38.
2. The connivance of Ḥajj Amīn with Nazism should be read in an anti-Zionist perspective, infused with anti-Semitic prejudices (he did not hesitate to cite on several occasions *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*) and anti-British stands. His intransigence towards Jews had deep roots. According to various sources, Ḥajj Amīn did not recognize to Jews the right to pray at the 'Wailing Wall', but only to visit it. See 'A. Kayyali, *Watha'iq al-Muqawama al-Filasṭīniya al-Arabīya [Documents on the Arab-Palestinian Resistance]* (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirāsāt al-Filasṭīniya, 1968), pp. 119–26. Haim Gerber pointed out that in numerous documents written by Zionist leaders it was expressed the will to demolish the buildings on the 'Temple Mount' to make space for a new Jewish Temple: 'It is in this light', Gerber clarified, 'that we may understand Amin Husayni's objection to any compromise with the Zionists over the Buraq/Wall'. Gerber, *Remembering*, p. 178. On this aspect see TNA CO 733/175/2. Dispatch from Isaiah Braude and Solomon Horowitz, representatives of the Zionist Executive, to the British authorities in Palestine, 19 Aug. 1929.
3. Al-Ḥusaynī to Hitler, 20 Jan. 1941. The following year the Muftī congratulated the 'Führer' for his victories in North Africa, speaking on behalf

- of the entire Arab world: 'Das arabische Volk wird daher an Ihrer Seite gegen den gemeinsamen Feind bis [zum] endgültigen Sieg weiterkämpfen [The Arab people will continue to fight by his side against the common enemy until the final victory].' CZA L35/59–4. Berlin, 4 July 1942. The position of Amīn al-Ḥusaynī is particularly problematic considering that he wrote in his private diary the intentions outlined by Hitler during a meeting that they held on 21 November 1941: 'The objectives of my fight', Hitler explained, 'are clear. Primarily, I am fighting the Jews without respite [...] I am resolved to find a solution for the Jewish problem, progressing step by step without cessation.' JMA – Box 7005 – Mishpacha Ḥusaynī ('Ḥusaynī Family').
4. A. 'Abd al-Ghānī, *Almāniyā al-Nāziyya wa Filasṭīn, 1933–1945* [*Nazi Germany and Palestine, 1933–1945*] (Beirut: Inst. for Palestine Studies, 1995), pp. 326–34. Some isolated cases that go in the opposite direction to what was just claimed can be found in A. Jaddū 'Ubaydī, *Ṣafaḥāt min bayāt al-Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī* [*Pages from the life of Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī*] (al-Zarqā': Maktabat al-Manār, 1985), pp. 134–5, and H. A. Jarrar, *Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī* ('Ammān: Dār al-Diyā', 1987), pp. 218–36.
 5. D. G. Dalin and J. F. Rothman, *Icon of Evil: Hitler's Mufti and the Rise of Radical Islam* (New York: Random House, 2008).
 6. D. Patterson, *A Genealogy of Evil* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 108. According to Patterson, 'the Palestinians were pleased to be deemed honorary Nazis after their leader, Haj Amin al-Husseini, paid homage to Hitler.' D. Patterson, 'Toward a post-Holocaust Jewish understanding of the Jewish State', in L. Grob and J. K. Roth (eds), *Anguished Hope* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub., 2008), p. 123.
 7. Dershowitz, *The Case*, p. 56. David Meir-Levi went even further: 'Edward Said praised al-Husseini, former partner with the Nazis in their crimes against humanity, as "the voice of the Palestinian people".' D. Meir-Levi, *History Upside Down* (New York: Encounter, 2007), p. 12.
 8. According to Dershowitz: 'The Palestinian leadership with the acquiescence of most of the Palestinian Arabs actively supported and assisted the Holocaust and Nazi Germany and bears considerable moral, political, and even legal culpability for the murder of many Jews.' Dershowitz, *The Case*, p. 54.
 9. M. Seltman, *What's Left? What's Right?* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance Pub., 2010), p. 148. On al-Ḥusaynī as the 'leader' of the 'Palestinian Arabs, then known as "southern Syrians"' see also B. Rubin and W. G. Schwanitz, *Nazis, Islamists, and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 63–4; and S. Sharan and D. Bukay, *Crossovers* (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2010), p. 37.
 10. K. M. Mallmann and M. Cüppers, *Nazi Palestine* (New York: Enigma Books, 2010), pp. 14 and 43. Writing about the volume of Rubin and Schwanitz, Petra Marquardt-Bigman pointed out that if the Palestinians 'were finally willing to confront their own historical connections to the Nazi era' much more could be 'achieved for the prospects of genuine reconciliation and peace'.

- P. Marquardt-Bigman, 'The Palestinians and the Holocaust', in *The Jerusalem Post*, 27 Apr. 2014.
11. Edgal Ansel Mowrer (1892–1977) wrote that in truth Ḥajj Amīn 'is no Husseini. An undistinguished ancestor called el-Aswad ("the Black" – from the Yemenite origin of the family), living in the village of Deir Sudan in Palestine, married a Husseini woman. Against all Moslem custom, the el-Aswads first added the genteel "Husseini" to their name and then gradually dropped the "el-Aswad" that betrayed their menial origin.' CZA L35/59–5.
 12. Al-Ḥusaynī was responsible for the creation of the *Handschar*, a Nazi division funded in collaboration with Heinrich Himmler (1900–45) on 10 February 1943. It was composed of Bosnian and Serbian Muslims, with the addition of a minority (2,800) of Catholic Croats. The following is an excerpt from a speech given by al-Ḥusaynī to the division on 25 January 1944: 'Many common interests exist between the Islamic world and Greater Germany, and these make cooperation a matter of course.' CZA – L35/59–2.
 13. As noted by Mattar, 'the mufti of Jerusalem remained subordinated to Shaykh al-Islam in Istanbul, and restricted in jurisdiction to Jerusalem until the British occupation of Palestine in 1917–18.' P. Mattar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 22.
 14. Many Ottoman dispatches indicate 1872 as the year in which Jerusalem was actually subject to a 'müstakil idaresi' ('self-government'). BOA A.MKT. MHM 443/82 1289.L.14 (15 Dec. 1872).
 15. From time to time the title was listed under the name of *Muftī al-Diyār al-Qudsīya* ('Mufti of the Holy Land'), confirming its recognized importance. However, in these isolated cases as well, it did not imply an overwhelming role in relation to other religious figures active in the region.
 16. E. Kedourie, *The Chatham House Version and other Middle-Eastern Studies* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 1984), p. 58.
 17. ISA – RG2 10/12-M. E. T. Richmond (1874–1955). Jerusalem, 20 Oct. 1921.
 18. E. Ben-Ze'ev, *Remembering Palestine in 1948* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 30.
 19. R. Khālidi, 'The Palestinians and 1948: The Underlying Causes of Failure', in E. L. Rogan and A. Shlaim (eds), *The War for Palestine: Rewriting the History of 1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 22.
 20. Y. Arnon-Ohanna, *Herev mi-Bayit: ha-Ma'avak ha-Pnimi ba-tnu'a ba-le'umit ba-falastinit, 1929–39* [*The Internal Struggle within the Palestinian National Movement, 1929–39*] (Tel Aviv: Yariv-Hadar, 1981), pp. 38–40; E. Elath, *Ḥajj Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḥusaynī: Mufti Yerushalayim Lesbe'avar* [*Ḥajj Muḥammad Amīn al-Ḥusaynī: Former Mufti of Jerusalem*] (Tel Aviv: n.a., 1968), pp. 26–35.
 21. An editorial published the same month and headed 'About the speech of Herbert Samuel' complained that 'we are really not sure' about the actions and the words of the High Commissioner, concluding that 'we are starting to feel

- deeply paranoid in our heart'. MDC – 'Filasṭīn', 29 May 1921. It is interesting to note that such feelings were in strong contrast with the sensations expressed in that same historical phase by Samuel himself: 'The state of Palestine continues quite tranquil', Samuel wrote on 12 September 1920, 'and there is a marked tendency towards better feeling among the various sections of the people.' ISA – 649/7-P.
22. M. Khadduri, *'Arab Mu'āsirūn [Contemporary Arabs]* (Beirut: al-Dār-Muttaḥida li-l-Nashr, 1973), p. 137.
 23. Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, p. 69.
 24. An important meeting between Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī and the future first President of the State of Israel, Chaim Weizmann (1874–1952), which for the occasion clarified that his objective was not 'to found something that looks like a Jewish state or a Jewish government at the end of the [First World] War', took place on 22 April 1918. The same year Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī participated in the ceremony to lay the first stone of the Hebrew University, where 'over 10,000 persons, including local inhabitants' participated. CHIR 13/22/6,2/40.
 25. One of the many documents that over the years denounced this conduct was signed by Muḥammad Khulūṣī, President of the Moslem Youth Association of Gaza. In a letter mailed on 9 February 1933 to the British High Commissioner, he complained that the SMC 'is still influenced in its activities by partisan inclinations. It has recently appointed an inefficient and unqualified person, who was known for his misconduct during the seven years he was headmaster of a national school as Mamour of Awqaf.' ISA 293/3-M.
 26. See E. Freas, 'Hajj Amin al-Husayni and the Haram al-Sharif: a pan-Islamic or Palestinian nationalist cause?', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, v. 39, n. 1, pp. 19–51.
 27. On 9 November 1920 a meeting was organized at the British headquarter in Jerusalem to discuss the matter. Kāmil al-Ḥusaynī and seven other Muslim representatives were invited to participate. Samuel, Storrs and six other British officials were also present. Yet again, the British authorities decided who the eight representatives would be. But Samuel had no doubts, 'That the members of the Conference fully represented Moslem opinion is unquestionable.' ISA – 649/7 – P. Samuel to Curzon (1859–1925), 14 Nov. 1920.
 28. According to Ghandour, 'the Mandatory authorities chose to deal with the Palestinian Arabs not as Arabs but as Muslims [...] the "Muslims" did not so much want a Supreme Muslim Council as much as they wanted a representative government'. Ghandour, *A Discourse*, p. 131.
 29. CHIR – 13/21/6,1/40. Abdallah Sa'id El-Danaf and Abdel Rahman Rashid El-Danaf ('servants of the Holy Rock' of Jerusalem) a Wyndham Deedes. Jerusalem, 10 Aug. 1921.
 30. An expression used by the Peel Commission in 1937 to refer to the Jewish Agency and the SMC.

31. ISA – RG65 1054/1-P. Protest signed by the Palestine Arab Delegation, 19 May 1930.
32. The term ‘appointment’ should be preferred to ‘election’, although Ḥajj Amīn never missed an opportunity to remind that ‘the President [he himself] was elected by Muslim representatives and was not appointed’ (ISA 195/18M. 26 May 1936). Ḥajj Amīn was appointed on 9 January 1922 – following the wishes of Herbert Samuel – by 56 former grand electors of the last Ottoman parliament. It is noteworthy that, as early as 24 August 1921, when those same 56 local notables were invited by Samuel to discuss the issue at Government House, ‘Ḥajj Amīn was named as their leader’. T. Jabārah, *Palestinian Leader, Ḥajj Amin al-Husayni, Mufti of Jerusalem* (Princeton: Kingston Press, 1985), p. 47. This confirms that, as Uri Kupferschmidt remarked, ‘Ḥajj Amīn al-Husaynī’s election as *Ra’īs al-‘Ulamā* was a foregone conclusion since he already held the position of *al-Muḥtār al-Akbar*.’ U. Kupferschmidt, *The Supreme Muslim Council* (Leiden: Brill, 1987), p. 20.
33. From the dispatches of British functionaries it appears that they believed it possible, if not probable, that Ḥajj Amīn would be chosen for President of the SMC. ISA – RGW 10/12-M.
34. S. Erskine, *Palestine of the Arabs* (London: Harrap, 1935), p. 160.
35. The attempt to deprive Ḥajj Amīn of the control of the Shari’a Court became the main focus of the efforts of the Nashāshībī clan over time. TNA CO 733/222/7. A.G. Wauchope to P. Culiffe-Lister, 30 Jan. 1932.
36. This was an additional title ‘granted’ to Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī. Although it is true that starting from the seventeenth century various ‘*ulamā*’ were called – due to their acknowledged authority – ‘*ra’īs al-‘ulamā*’, it is also true that such a ‘title’ never obtained any official recognition. See M. al-Muḥibbī, *Khulāṣat al-Aṭḥār fī A’yān al-Qarn al-hādī ‘Ashar* [*Compendium of the Notables of the Eleventh Century*], v. 4 (Cairo: al-Maṭba’a al-Wahbīya, 1867), pp. 43–4.
37. ISA – 293/3-M. Hebron, 5 Feb. 1934. The dispatch, sent to the then High Commissioner Wauchope was signed by Tawfiq Tahbub, Haj Muhammad Badr and others. Two years earlier, 17 local notables wrote to the British authorities denouncing that Ḥajj Amīn ‘had appointed 25 persons, all members of his family, at different posts, thus putting at their disposal the revenues of the Moslem Wakfs as well as our own ones which they conjointly spent for their personal upkeep’. ISA – 293/3-M. Jerusalem, 11 Aug. 1932.
38. I. Pappé, *The Rise and Fall of a Palestinian Dynasty: The Husaynis, 1700–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011), p. 222.
39. See A. Mukhlīs, *Al-Muslimūn wa al-Naṣāra* [*Muslims and Christians*] (Ḥaifā: n.a., 1929). On the general atmosphere of that specific period see R. Mazza, ‘Transforming the Holy City’, in U. Freitag, N. Fuccaro, N. Lafi and C. Ghrawi (eds), *Urban Violence in the Middle East* (New York: Berghahn, 2014), pp. 214–29.
40. ISA – RG2 10/12-M. The letter was signed among others by Samara Abu Kias and Mohamed Sa’id Mohamed.

41. 'When I was mourning over my brother Kamil', Ḥajj Amīn reminisced subsequently, 'Sir Samuel visited us [...] and I asked him whom do you prefer, a candid adversary [i.e. he himself] or a renegade friend [the legitimate winner Jārallāh]? He answered "a candid adversary" and on the basis of that came my appointment as the Mufti of Jerusalem.' Cited in Y. Taggar, *The Mufti of Jerusalem and Palestine, Arab Politics: 1930–37* (New York: Garland, 1936), p. 23.
42. Jabārah, *Palestinian Leader*, p. 41.
43. The supporters of the Ḥusaynī clan started a tough campaign to oppose to the election result: 'A meeting was held last night at the house of Jamil Bey al Husseini and was attended by a large number of Ulama and notables. The election of Grand Mufti [the reference is to the legitimate winner Jārallāh] was contested on the ground that all Moslems had not cast their votes. It was decided to organise a deputation of townspeople and villagers, representing all classes of the Moslem Population to call on the High Commissioner and protest against the election.' ISA – RG2 10/12-M. Unsigned document produced by the British authorities on 15 April 1921.
44. TNA CO 733/222/7. Wauchope to Culiffe-Lister, 30 Jan. 1932.
45. From the dispatches of British functionaries it appears that they believed it possible, if not probable, that Ḥajj Amīn would be chosen for President of the Supreme Muslim Council. See the dispatches dated October 1921 in the ISA file – RGW 10/12-M.
46. According to sources in the CZA, Ḥajj Amīn studied in Cairo for 'only one year'. CZA – S25/10499. During this time he attended some courses at al-Azhar University. On the education of Ḥajj Amīn, defined by Shaqrā as 'a nation in a man' ('umma fī rajul', p. 5), see I. A. Shaqrā, *Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī: mundbu Wilādatibi ḥattā Thawrat 1936* [*Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī: from his Birth to the Revolution of 1936*] (Latakia: Dār al-Manāra lil-Dirāsāt wa 'l-Tarjama wa 'l-Nashr, 1998).
47. ISA – 293/3-M. The letter, signed by a series of local notables, does not bear a date; however, from the content it appears that it refers to the early 1930s. It continues with these words: 'Even at the previous elections he [Ḥajj Amīn] failed to obtain the necessary votes and was appointed as a head of this Moslem institution without any lawful justification although Moslem religion does not allow of the appointment of such person as a spiritual head.'
48. Shaqrā, *Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī: mundbu Wilādatibi*, p. 5.
49. Zvi Elpeleg, interview with the author, Tel Aviv, 16 May 2010. Elpeleg, former ambassador in Turkey (from 1995 to 1997), referred several times to the concept of an 'Arab mentality': 'If you are familiar with the concept of *taqīya*, the ambassador explained, 'you know what the Arab mentality is like. They are in the habit of concealing their real opinions. Usually the concept of *taqīya* is applicable when a grave and imminent risk to someone's personal safety and faith exists. To avoid an obvious danger, caused by their religious beliefs, they are ready to dissimulate all their opinions. They bow their heads

- until the “tide has changed”. Then they take action and reveal their real intentions.’ Ibid.
50. Among the population’s protests that were sent to the British authorities over the years denouncing Ḥajj Amīn’s conduct, some bore thousands of signatures. The weekly paper al-Karmil, for example, published a protest signed by 1,500 people. MDC – ‘al-Karmil’, 5 Sep. 1925.
 51. TNA CO 33/13. Brunton, 13 May 1921.
 52. See Cohen, *Army of Shadows*, p. 51.
 53. The following is just one of many examples: ‘We Moslems of Jerusalem [...], it is argued in a letter sent among others by Abdul Rahman El Alami, ‘have elected Ḥajj Amīn al-Ḥusaynī [...] as Muftī of Jerusalem, as he is a descendant of a well known family and enjoys a very good reputation.’ ISA RG2 10/12-M. Besides Abdul Rahman El Alami, who belonged to a family related to the Ḥusaynī by the marriage of Nimati El Alami (sister of Musa El Alami; 1897–1984) and Jamal al-Ḥusaynī (1893–1982), the document, dated 21 March 1921, was signed by ‘150 others’.
 54. House of Lords official report, The Parliamentary Debates, v. 111, London 1939, p. 426. The quotation seems to exclude the theory, expressed by Zuhayr Mardini, according to which Samuel considered Ḥajj Amīn as too young for the office of ‘Grand Muftī’. Z. Mardini, *Alf Yawm ma’a al-Ḥajj Amīn [One Thousand Days with Ḥajj Amīn]* (Beirut: al-‘Irfān, 1980), p. 44.
 55. Just 15 years later, Ḥajj Amīn was commonly perceived by the British authorities as a ‘deep-seated enemy of Great Britain’. CZA – L35/50–1. William Ormsby-Gore (1885–1964). House of Lords, 8 Dec. 1938. According to Nevo, until August 1940, when Ḥajj Amīn ‘finally opted for a pro-German orientation’, several British officials were still convinced that they could have exploited his influence to promote British interests. J. Nevo, ‘Al-Ḥajj Amin and the British in World War II’, in *Middle Eastern Studies*, v. 20, n. 1, 1984, p. 9.
 56. ISA – RG100 649/8-P.
 57. According to Jabārah, ‘Samuel was presumably convinced that a man who had a bad record due to the 1920 demonstrations would remain on good terms with the British officials.’ Jabārah, *Palestinian*, p. 44.
 58. Although the Ḥusaynī clan continued to be very influential, it was weakened after Mūsā Kāẓim’s removal. Other members of the family lost important positions during the same phase. One of them was Ḥajj Amīn’s uncle, Sa’īd al-Ḥusaynī, who had to resign from the office of Minister of Foreign Affairs, which he obtained for a short while under King Fayṣal.
 59. Already in 1918 Vladimir Jabotinskij (1880–1940) wrote to Weizmann that ‘this Mayor [Mūsā Kāẓim] proved to be not a neutral but a militant. Just try to imagine what would have happened if a Jewish Mayor, mutatis mutandis, appointed by the British to keep peace and represent all races, had acted in an analogous way against Moslems.’ JIA – Mictavim [letters], n. 2, 1914–19. Jabotinskij to Weizmann, 12 Nov. 1918.

60. B. Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (New York: I.B.Tauris, 1999), p. 25. According to Milton-Edwards: 'Britain's paternalistic control over the appointment process could be used either to appoint or replace candidates of their choosing. Palestinian control was in this way circumscribed by British interests and policies.' Ibid.
61. Hassassian in Scham, Salem and Pogrud (eds), *Shared Histories*, p. 25.
62. E. Said and C. Hitchens (eds), *Blaming the Victims* (New York: Verso, 1988), p. 248.
63. U. Avnery, 'Sacred Mantras', in *Uri Avnery's Column*, 24 June 2011. Available online: <http://zope.gush-shalom.org/home/en/channels/avnery/1308952216>.
64. Moshe Ma'oz, interview with the author. Jerusalem, Truman Institute, 7 June 2010.
65. Y. Porath, *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918–1929*, v. 1 (London: Frank Cass, 1974), p. 202.
66. For some people, as Sheikh Fā'iḳ al-Anṣārī, Ḥajj Amīn was '[our] sole leader'. ISA 295/27-M, 20 May 1939.
67. Sarī Nusseibeh, interview with the author, Jerusalem, al-Quds University, 5 June 2010.

Chapter 10 Breaking the Standardization Process: Getting *Back* into History

1. E. Zolla, *Uscite dal mondo* [*Out of this World*] (Milan: Adelphi, 1992), p. 15. According to North, 'history matters. It matters not just because we can learn from the past, but because the present and the future are connected to the past [...]. Today's and tomorrow's choices are shaped by the past.' D. C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. vii.
2. A. Cabral and R. Handyside (eds), *Revolution in Guinea* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1969), p. 78.
3. Issām Nassār argued that 'in the absence of a state with a national archive, museum, or library, the closest thing we have today is the Institute of Palestine Studies, which has a large library and archive in Beirut. The fact remains, however, that the core of the archival material available to historians of this area is not Palestinian nor is it fully devoted to the lives of the Palestinians.' I. Nassār, 'Photography as source material for Jerusalem's social history', in C. Mansūr and L. Fawāz (eds), *Transformed Landscapes* (Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press, 2009), p. 140.
4. Benita Parry pointed out that 'the Zionist version, despite its idealism, was from the outset tainted by constructing the Palestinian people as dispersed communities without a culture or history, who had drifted from elsewhere into the Holy Land [...]. With this, the Palestinians were written out of a scenario subsequently enacted by the state of Israel.' B. Parry, *Postcolonial Studies* (London: Routledge, 2004), pp. 180–1.

5. If, on the one hand, the influence exercised by London contributed to defining the social, cultural and political framework of the Palestinian (proto)nation in greater detail, on the other, it created the conditions for a progressive 'silencing' of local history and traditions.
6. Maḥmūd Ashqār, interview with the author, Center for Heritage and Islamic Research, Abū Dīs, 19 Dec. 2011. See also A. M. Abū Ghazāleh, *Arab Cultural Nationalism in Palestine, 1919–1948* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1973), p. 97.
7. N. W. Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2011), p. 28.
8. M. Ignatieff, *The Russian Album* (New York: Picador, 2001), p. 5.
9. According to Sherna Gluck, when publishing online oral testimonials, an oral historian becomes an 'unwitting archivist'. Sherna Gluck, excerpt from a presentation entitled 'Reflections on the Promises and Perils of Online Archiving', delivered at Bīr Zeyt University, 25 Mar. 2014. Palestinian oral histories are relative latecomers to this tradition. Beginning in the late 1990s, Nāblus's Al-Najāḥ University played a pivotal role in collecting oral testimonials. Its academic programme on these issues is available online: <http://www.najah.edu/apsim>.
10. B. Doumani, 'Archiving Palestine and the Palestinians: the patrimony of Ihsan Nimr', *Jerusalem Quarterly*, n. 36, 2009, p. 3. On Palestinian archives see also the works of Vincent Lemire, including V. Lemire, *Jérusalem 1900: La Ville Sainte à l'Âge des Possibles* [*Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the Age of Possibilities*] (Paris: Armand Colin, 2013).
11. P. Nora, 'Between memory and history: Les Lieux de Mémoire', *Representations*, n. 26, 1989, p. 12.
12. Ivi, p. 23.
13. According to Derrida, 'the *trouble de l'archive* stems from a *mal d'archive*. We are *en mal d'archive*: in need of archives.' J. Derrida, *Mal d'archive: Une impression freudienne* [*Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*] (Paris: Galilée, 1995), pp. 7 and 142. Derrida emphasized that it is not infrequent for the archive to 'produce an event'. Archives are often bound to political power and take on themselves the right to decide what can be acceptably forgotten. Particularly in areas subject to various forms of oppression, a sort of right to 'mal d'archive' exists. This implies that also the 'weaker' must have the chance to create her/ his narrative, incurring in the risk of 'producing', in a selective way, events connected to his/ her history. The alternative is that such an option would be left only to the 'stronger'.
14. The fact that, whilst the majority of the portal's visitors and creators are native Arab speakers, English has been chosen as its internal communication language is probably related to a desire to offer an alternative historiographical interpretation to Western guest-readers.
15. In the following years the anthropologist Sharīf Kanā'nah and the historian ṣāliḥ Abd al-Jawād published many works aiming at fixing in the collective memory the profound changes that have occurred in Palestine in 1948. Israel,

- according to Kanā'nah, 'has made the eradication of Palestinian identity its major goal, cultural struggle has become the Palestinians' first priority.' S. Kanā'nah, *Struggling for Survival: Essays in Palestinian Folklore and Folklife* (Al-Bireh: Society of Ina'ash El-Usra, 2005), p. 113.
16. Sam Bahūr, creator of the first ICT-specific consulting firm in the Palestinian territories (1997), clarified that 'thanks largely to internet and to an almost physical necessity to regain possession of our past, a "fragmented body", the Palestinian nation, has begun to reunite'. Sam Bahūr, interview with the author, al-Manāra, Rāmallāh, 12 Oct. 2011. On the role of the Palestinian diaspora on the web see A. Ben-David, 'The Palestinian Diaspora on The Web: Between De-Territorialization and Re-Territorialization', in 'e-Diasporas Atlas', Apr. 2012. Available online: <http://www.e-diasporas.fr/working-papers/Ben-David-Palestinians-EN.pdf>.
 17. Roger Heacock, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 12 Jan. 2012. Heacock argued that 'it is impossible to build a State without documents which speak of the history which shaped it. Before you have a State you must have an archive. That said, I'm aware that, already in our times, we are perhaps facing a post-national era.' Ibid.
 18. F. Kaplan, 'Exhibitions as communicative media', in E. Hooper-Greenhill (ed.), *Museum, Media, Message* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 42.
 19. M. Zak and R. Halabi, 'Cofacilitation: a symmetrical dialogue in an asymmetrical reality', in R. Halabi (ed.), *Israeli and Palestinian Identities in Dialogue* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2004), p. 141.
 20. Eitan Bronstein, interview with the author, Tel Aviv, 11 Mar. 2010. Bronstein claimed that it is 'only by getting closer to the suffering of the other side that real reconciliation between peoples is possible. It is not a coincidence that all the peace processes of the last few decades have failed. They were little more than "empty boxes". No peace is sustainable without true, prior reconciliation.' Cited in L. Kamel, *L'Alternativa* [*The Alternative*] (Rome: Editori Riuniti University Press, 2011), p. 39.
 21. The United Nations Archives (UNA) in New York and the UNRWA offices in Amman, Gaza and Jerusalem are principally repositories of documents, videos and photos about post-1948 and post-1967 Palestinian refugees. An additional part of the documents focuses on the administrative and legal aspects of the UN programmes, as well as on children's conditions after 1948. According to a UN report of 19 August 1948, based on data supplied by Andrew W. Cordier (executive assistant to the UN Secretary), 300,000–400,000 children became refugees that year. UNA S-0158–0005–05.
 22. The *Palestine Archaeological Museum* was opened in 1938 as a result of the efforts of J. H. Breasted (1865–1935), the support of J. D. Rockefeller (1874–1960) and the encouragement of the then British High Commissioner in Palestine Lord Plumer (1857–1932). As the documentation in the museum reports, it was set up 'to host the Department of Antiquities, a vast archaeological library and the archives'.

23. Rāmī Hamdallāh, interview with the author, al-Najāh University, Nāblus, 19 May 2010.
24. DACH, funded mainly by European donors, was established in 2002 following the merging of two departments set up in 1994 by the PNA as part of the Oslo process; according to Ṭāhā, 'it is considered an official comeback to history after several attempts of historical banishment'. H. Ṭāhā, 'Managing cultural heritage in Palestine', in *UNDP Focus*, v. 1, 2004, p. 31.
25. In *Associated Press*, 22 July 2011.
26. Naẓmī Jūbeh, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 12 Jan. 2012.
27. Muṣṭafā Barghūtī, interview with the author, Palestinian Medical Relief Society, Rāmallāh, 24 Nov. 2009.
28. 'Adlī Ya'īsh, interview with the author, the mayor's office, Nāblus, 20 May 2010.
29. The Rozana Association, just one of many possible examples, was established in 2007 as a rural development initiative by a group of 'Birzeities'. It is behind many cultural initiatives such as the Maftoul Festival, the Bīr Zeyt Heritage Week and the tiny People's Museum, opened in October 2009 in Bīr Zeyt.
30. Since 2007 the Al-Quds University hosts at its Abū Dīs campus The Abu-Jihad Center for the Prisoner Movement. It is a museum that, according to its website, 'aims to highlight the role of the Prisoner Movement in Palestinian life'. See Y. Mendel and A. R. Steinberg, 'The museological side of the conflict: Israeli exhibition of terror and the Palestinian Museum of Prisoners', in *Museum and Society*, v. 9, n. 3, 2011, pp. 190–213.
31. For an Israeli perspective focused also on the Palestinian initiatives in the West Bank see N. Perry and R. Kark, *Muzeonim Etnografim beIsrael [Ethnographic Museums in Israel]* (Jerusalem: Ariel, 2014).
32. Al-Maḥḥaf (The Museum) was opened by Jawdat Khoudary. According to him, 'the idea is to show our deep roots from many cultures in Gaza [...] Israel has legitimacy from its history. We do, too.' In *New York Times*, 25 July 2008. Palestinian amateur archaeologist Walīd al-'Aqqād established a similar project on the ground floor of his home in Khān Yūnis. On these issues see M. Haldimann (ed.), *Gaza: à la croisée des civilisations [Gaza: at the crossroads of civilizations]* (Geneva: Edité par Chaman Edition, 2007).
33. A. 'Ashrāwī, 'The contemporary Palestinian poetry of occupation', in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, v. 8 n. 3, 1978, p. 82.
34. Cited in D. Barsamian, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward W. Said* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 160. A few years earlier Said underlined 'just how seriously Israel takes not just the emergence of a national movement but also [the emergence] of a national history'. E. Said, *The Politics of Dispossession* (New York: Vintage, 1995), p. 71.
35. Naẓmī Jūbeh claimed that the bulk of the original documentation that was in Beirut got lost in Libya: 'After copying the confiscated documentation, Israel gave it back to the PLO. This took place in the context of an exchange of

- prisoners which occurred in the mid-1980s. However, it was a delicate moment for the PLO which was not ready to receive it appropriately and it was thus decided to take it to Libya under the protection of PLO fighters who were there at the time. The latter had no idea of its importance and did not know what to do with it. It is still not known today if this material was completely destroyed or whether even a tiny fraction of it survived.' Naẓmī Jūbeh, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 12 Jan. 2012.
36. In 2012 a film was released entitled *The Great Book Robbery*, written and produced by Benny Brunner on the subject of the approximately 70,000 books stolen during 1948. Part of this documentation is now available at the National Library of Israel where it is itemized as 'abandoned property'.
 37. On 14 April 2002, the PNA's Minister of Culture Y.A. Rabbo commented on the outcome of the Israeli invasion highlighting 'the systematic attack on the official documentation, the archives [...] It is clear that the Israeli government intends to make of us a society without history or memory' (letter from Rabbo to the PNA's consular representatives around the world). Benvenisti has also taken a clear line on the issue. 'From 1948 onwards all attempts made by the Palestinians to create archives have been nullified and confiscated systematically by the Israeli government.' Benvenisti in Scham, Salem and Pogrund (eds), *Shared Histories*, p. 23.
 38. Nora, *Between Memory and History*, p. 14.
 39. Roger Owen claimed that 'the Haganah had a special unity active in 1947/8/9 stealing the libraries of Palestinian notables'. Roger Owen, interview with the author, CMES, Harvard University, Cambridge (MA), 21 May 2013.
 40. Moshe Ma'oz, interview with the author, the Truman Institute, Jerusalem, 15 Dec. 2011.
 41. Al-Khālidiya can currently be consulted on appointment. The bulk of the documents (mainly manuscripts, that are more than 1,200) have been digitalized and are accessible online at khalidilibrary.org. Maktabat Fahmi al-Ansāri is open every day, excluding Friday, from 8am to 3pm. It contains books (about 30,000), documents, newspapers and magazines. No website available.
 42. According to Maḥmūd Yazbak, 'what papers and memories may have been held in private family possession seem almost all to have been dispersed in 1948'. M. Yazbak, *Haifa in the Late Ottoman Period, 1864–1914* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), p. xi.
 43. Roger Heacock, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 12 Jan. 2012. Heacock added that one of the very few Palestinian NGOs that was not reluctant to let him consult its documents was Al-Haq (founded in 1979 and based in Rāmallāh).
 44. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, email to the author, 29 June 2013. 'Documents, and especially land deeds, are not only important politically but also to one's sense of pride. They have gained an aura. Why share them?'

45. P. Mattar, *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians* (New York: Facts of File, 2005), pp. xiv–xix.
46. Booklet of the Center for Heritage and Islamic Research, Jan. 2008, p. v.
47. In accordance with the Sharī'a the lands and property managed by the *waqf* are at the service of the *ummah*.
48. A part of the documentation, which is difficult to quantify, is still at the al-Aqsā Mosque.
49. Maḥmūd Ashqār, interview with the author, Center for Heritage and Islamic Research, Abū Dīs, 19 Dec. 2011.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Mūsa Srūr, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 6 Oct. 2011.
53. Roger Heacock, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 12 Jan. 2012.
54. Including 'Oral History and the Absence of State' (by Rosemary Sayigh), 'The Outcome of Palestinian Oral History Projects' (by Lourdes Habash and Raed Bader) and 'Archiving Palestine: The Conceptual Power of Dissensus' (by Ann Laura Stoler).
55. It has been estimated that the documents crammed into the Beītūnīa building amount to around 30,000 items. The PNA intends to add other sources to these, including part of the documentation currently held in the various Palestinian diplomatic buildings scattered around the world.
56. There are other museums located in some of the main Palestinian cities. In Gaza, in particular, there are two museums devoted to the region's ancient history. Al-Mathaf is the main of the two. Despite these initiatives, the new 'Palestinian Museum', directed by Jack Persekian, will be by far the largest (8,000 m²) and the most important of its type. It is expected to open in Spring 2015 and will be focused on the history of the last 200 years (available online at: <http://thepalestinianmuseum.org/>). Until a few years ago these initiatives would have been considered unexpected. In 2004 Ben-Ze'ev argued that 'under the current political conditions, Palestinian museums, as site to exhibit national objects, are almost non-existent. Possibly, in light of this absence, almost every Palestinian home and business becomes a mini-museum, displaying on the wall artifacts from the pre-1948 past, such as old keys, land deeds and fraying photographs.' E. Ben-Ze'ev, 'The politics of taste and smell', in M. E. Lien and B. Nerlich (eds), *The Politics of Food* (Oxford: Berg, 2004), p. 150.
57. Ahmad Samih Khālīdī, in *OpenDemocracy*, 29 May 2013.
58. Ibid., in *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 2 Mar. 2010.
59. Naẓmī Jūbeh, interview with the author, Bīr Zeyt University, Rāmallāh, 12 Jan. 2012.

Epilogue

1. Renata Pisu, telephone interview with the author, 21 Feb. 2013.
2. J. C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), p. 7.
3. Al-Barghūṭī, *The Umma*, p. 78.
4. B. Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries* (London: Penguin Press, 1972).
5. On how Europe was perceived by Arabs see N. F. Hermes, *The {European} Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2012) and R. L. Euben, *Journeys to the Other Shore* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006).
6. Emile Bustani (1907–63) noted that ‘even Arabs in the early years of their history, were among the most ardent imperialists that the world has encountered’. E. Bustani, *Doubts and Dynamite* (London: Allan Wingate, 1958), p. 28. It is noteworthy that a seachange regarding what we refer to as ‘imperialism’ took place in the second half of the nineteenth century. See E. Kedourie, *Nationalism in Asia and Africa* (London: Weidenfeld, 1971), p. 3. On the perception of Europe in medieval Arabic literature see N. F. Hermes, *The {European} Other in Medieval Arabic Literature and Culture* (New York: Palgrave, 2012).
7. E. Olmert, ‘The crisis in morality and international policy; how Israel may be the solution’, in D. Radyshevsky (ed.), *The Jerusalem Alternative* (Green Forest: Balfour, 2005), p. 100. Olmert, prime minister of Israel from 2006 to 2009, completed the sentence clarifying that Jerusalem ‘will never be any part of a capital or any Muslim entity’. A few years afterwards, he softened his position by offering some neighbourhoods in East Jerusalem as a possible Palestinian capital.
8. A. Diskin, ‘Waking up from the Oslo dream’, in R. Israeli (ed.), *Dangers of a Palestinian State* (Jerusalem: Gefen, 2002), p. 22. Diskin is a political scientist at the Hebrew University.
9. Newt Gingrich, candidate for the Republican nomination in the American presidential elections in 2012, in an interview with ‘The Jewish Channel’, 9 Dec. 2011.
10. R. Price, *Fast Facts on the Middle East Conflict* (Eugene: Harvest, 2003), p. 23. Price is an archaeologist and a theologian, teaching at Liberty University of Lynchburg, Virginia.
11. *Al-‘āṣima* (singular form of *al-‘āwāṣim*, ‘defences’, ‘fortifications’), literally ‘the protector’, indicated originally the line between southern Turkey, Iraq and northern Syria, which divided the Byzantine Empire from the caliphates.
12. Cfr. K. ‘Athāmina, ‘Le premier siècle de l’Islam: Jérusalem, capitale de la Palestine’ [‘The first century of Islam: Jerusalem, capital of Palestine’], in F. Mardam-Bey and E. Sanbar (eds), *Jérusalem: le sacré et le politique* [*Jerusalem: The Holy and the Political*] (Arles: Sindbad, 2002), pp. 115–48.
13. The concept of *‘aṣabīya* was introduced by Ibn Khaldūn in the *Muqaddima*. It may be linked to what Said Nursī (1878–1960) defined as ‘positive nationalism’, a predisposition that ‘arises from an inner need of social life and

- is the cause of mutual assistance and solidarity; it ensures a beneficial strength'. S. Nursî, *Letters, 1928–1932* (Istanbul: Süzler Neşriyat, 2001), p. 381. 'Aşabîya is not, then, a concept comparable to nationalism. Baron De Slane (1801–78) translated it as '*esprit de corps*', while Hellmut Ritter (1892–1971) interpreted it with a more convincing 'solidarity feeling'.
14. This is thanks also to the role played by figures such as Rousseau (1712–78) and Walter Scott (1771–1832), and even more to the influence of Puritan movements in England and, later on, the romantic German culture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.
 15. H. H. Ayrout, *Moeurs et Coutumes des Fellahs* [*Manners and Customs of the Fellahin*] (Paris: Payot, 1938), p. 128.
 16. U. Fabietti, *L'identità etnica* [*The Ethnic Identity*] (Rome: Carocci, 2002), p. 37. For an alternative perspective, see V. Chibber, *Postcolonial Theory and the Specter of Capital* (New York: Verso, 2013). Chibber accused 'subalterns' of orientalism.
 17. Ben-Ze'ev, *Remembering Palestine*, p. 34. Scott emphasized that the maps 'are designed to summarize precisely those aspects of a complex world that are of immediate interest to the map-maker and to ignore the rest'. Scott, *Seeing*, p. 87.
 18. B. Doumani, 'Rediscovering Ottoman Palestine: writing Palestinians into history', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, v. 21, n. 2, 1992, p. 8.
 19. Elémire Zolla (1926–2002) argued that 'in many traditions it is customary to expose supreme archetypes in a domestic, childish way. Thus the European did not understand the depth of the fables retold among the tribes of Africa and America [...]. It is a marvelous trick because it is the greatest obstacle to real understanding [...]. The proud shall never bow to studying with love a modest reality, nor shall it ever be able to suspect that it might be discussed, like the miserly dress of the caliph Hārūn ar-Rashīd in the *Thousand and one nights*.' Zolla, *Uscite dal mondo*, p. 433.
 20. C. Lévi-Strauss, *Le pensée sauvage* [*The Savage Mind*] (Paris: Plon, 1969), p. 75.
 21. Anthropology, in Hamid Dabashi's words, 'was as instrumental in the European colonial conquest of multiple worlds as the soldier who carried the gun. The anthropologist's pen was, and remains, mightier than the colonial officer's sword.' H. Dabashi, *The Arab Spring* (New York: Zed Books, 2012), p. 52.
 22. See L. Fiedler, *The Return of the Vanishing American* (New York: Stein, 1968), p. 78.
 23. In Parry's words: 'From the pedestral of a predominantly Protestant middle-class ethic [...] the British looked down on the codes and habits of Indians as aberrations from a human norm which they defined in terms of their own standards.' B. Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries* (London: Penguin Press, 1972), p. 3.
 24. On the historical condition of Iraqi women see N. al-Dulaimi, *Al-Mar'a al-'Irāqīya* [*Iraqi Woman*] (Baghdad: al-Rābiṭa, 1950), pp. 8–11. On the practical effects of the TCCDR see N. Efrati, 'Gender, tribe and the British construction

- of Iraq, 1914–1932', in Z. Levey and E. Podeh (eds), *Britain and the Middle East* (Brighton: Sussex University Press, 2008), pp. 152–3.
25. In this respect, Kenya – where, still in 1952, young people who were surprised speaking the local language (gĩkũyũ) outside the colonial schools were subject to corporal punishment (Thiong'o, *Decolonising*, p. 11) – and Kurdistan – where up until little more than two decades ago the Turkish authorities prohibited the use of the Kurdish language and attempted to replace the names of Kurdish towns with Turkish names – represent, *mutatis mutandis*, two further meaningful cases.
 26. W. Blake, *Jerusalem: The Emanation of Giant Albion* (London: William Blake, 1804), p. 146.
 27. Ivi, p. 171.
 28. Twain, *The Innocents Abroad*, p. 363. According to Tom Quirk, author of an introduction to Twain's book: 'The Twain of *The Innocents Abroad* is an iconoclast without a creed, smashing in gesture and comment all manner of idols, but his cantankerousness and scepticism are temporary. He seems to be able to renew innocent expectation after every disillusionment.' Twain, *The Innocents*, p. xxxviii. See H. Obenzinger, *American Palestine: Melville, Twain, and the Holy Land Mania* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), p. xi.

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BOA – Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Istanbul.
BOL – Bodleian Library, Oxford.
CHIR – Center for Heritage and Islamic Research, Abū Dīs.
CZA – Central Zionist Archive, Jerusalem.
IDFA – Israel Defence Force Archive, Tel-Hashomer (Tel Aviv).
ISA – Israel State Archives, Jerusalem.
ITAC – {Archives of the} Israeli Trust of the Anglican Church, Jerusalem.
JIA – Jabotinsky Institute Archives, Tel Aviv.
JMA – Jerusalem Municipal Archive, Jerusalem.
JNUL – Jewish National and University Library, Jerusalem.
LPL – Lambeth Palace Library, London.
MDC – Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv.
MECA – Middle East Centre Archives, St Antony's College, Oxford.
NARA – National Archives and Records Administration, Washington.
TNA – The National Archives, London.
UNA – United Nations Archives, New York.

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