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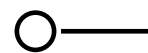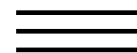
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P A R S E

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Intersections

Atlas al-'Aīn: The Performativity of "return" and Common Memory Production

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Abstract ×

Theorizing landscape as a site where Palestinian "return" is enacted and performed allows us to better understand the intersections of memory construction, "return" and spatial practices. The *atlas al-'aīn* is a collective, open-ended, and performative counter-archive of common memories. Ontologically and geographically the atlas revolves around the water springs of Al-Walaja and foregrounds the villagers' oral histories. This essay reflects on three assemblies from the *atlas*

al-'aīn in the light of their pedagogical, historical, material and theoretical implications. Grounded in the atlas, the essay puts forth "common memory" as a category that is inherently performative, shared and spatialized, mobilizing "to return" as a performative practice against the Nakba as an ongoing process of genocide and erasure.

This essay serves as a theoretical contextualisation of the *atlas al-'aīn* (atlas of the spring) project, a performative counter-archive of "histories from below". Spatially and ontologically the *atlas al-'aīn*, revolves around the natural water springs of al-Walaja, a village in Palestine subject to the continuing processes of erasure from the beginning of the Nakba onwards.[1] The *atlas* is an ongoing, open-ended, and common device and process: at times metonymic, and at times *forensic*,[2] it is a collection-in-progress of historic and legal documents, poetry, photography, texts and objects, sound recordings, drawings and conversational mappings that was collated into a *Performativatlas*[3] since the summer of 2018. Taking Palestinian artist Jumana Emil Abboud's artistic practice as precedent, the *atlas al-'aīn* is used as the basis for a series of events around which the Palestinian villagers of al-Walaja assembled, narrated and enacted common oral histories that weave around the common water springs of the village's landscape. Vis-à-vis the Nakba as not merely a historic event, but an ongoing process of Israeli settler-colonialism that results in Palestinian erasure and genocide, this essay conceptually engages "return" as an operative process of common memory production, and as the site of dialectical resistance, employing Nahla Abdo and Nur Mashala's work as a methodological and theoretical lens.[4] Shaira Vadasaria's work enables understandings of "return" that address questions of its imaginings, its representational and temporal life within and

outside the scope of legal redress.[5] Following this opening, and in lieu of lived landscape and environment as the nexus of Indigenous identity formation and memory construction,[6] this essay then argues for a conceptualisation of "return" as overflowing—including but not limited to—the bounds of legal redress, "geographical return" and "the Political" as such, and to *also* understand it as a performative practice extending into the realm of everyday life and spatial practices. Conceptualising return as a performative process does not propose substituting physical and legal instantiations of return, or any claims to redress, but instead illuminates the intricacy and complexity of return as spatially and temporally transgressing a 1948-present.

"Return is indivisible and cannot be partial… *when* we return, we return entirely or are, at least, free to choose."[7] A return-in-the-making, as an operative concept, neither substitutes return as an event nor negates the Rights of Return. On the contrary: conceptualising return as an (additionally) performative practice emphasises that, in order to return *somewhere*, mobilisation and performativity are required. To that extent, a performative return-in-the-making can be seen as precisely the act of making mobile *towards* a "complete and indivisible return"; the rights of Return and self-determination are asserted, and therefore are not a matter of discussion. To set the notion of a performativity of "(to) return" apart from "The Return" and "The Right of Return", this essay uses "return" as a verb, or, in some places, to highlight its place-based particularities—which differ from each individual social and geographic context, from one village to another, from village to camp, and so on—uses its plural form "returns". There is more than one word for "to return" in Arabic. *Al-Awda*[8] is used in the "Right of Return." *Rja'*[9] is used to denote "to return" in its everyday sense and in a less formal way, and without specifically pointing to "Right of Return." And although both words are mostly interchangeable in Ameeya Arabic, predominantly the latter (*rja'*) has been used in our conversations where we didn't specifically

reference the Right of Return.[10]

Following methodological and pedagogical reflections, the essay unfolds into two sections: first, the text assembles excerpts of the *atlas al-'aīn*, in both visual and transcribed form, stemming from the field work and performed assemblies that have taken place over the course of the (ongoing) project so far.[11] Then, in drawing on and working through the *atlas*, the text examines the intersections of landscape and memory, employing "Nakba as genocide" as an analytical lens to first deconstruct the hierarchical orderings of contested memory in relation to landscape, and then re-construct a performative and spatialised form of memory production specifically through the *atlas al-'aīn* as a common material and dialectical site.

Pedagogical and Methodological Reflections

The *atlas al-'aīn* project was first conceived as a radical pedagogical space during a summer school in Beit Sahour and al-Walaja in Palestine at the Al-Quds Bard College for Arts and Sciences. Pedagogically, the summer school drew inspiration from Augusto Boal's *Theatre of the Oppressed,* and particularly its emphasis on performativity and the role of the "Spect-Actor",[12] Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*,[13] Raja Shehadeh's positioning of landscape as a place to write *from*,[14] DAAR and Campus in Camps' "anti-pedagogies" that have proven to be of material and theoretical support,[15] and the embodied performative practice of Jumana Emil Abboud, which transects memory, landscape, and belonging.[16]

Following the conclusion of the summer school in 2018, a group of students, graduates and other participants continued the project and assembled the findings into the *Performativatlas* that continues to expand. The process of assembling the *atlas* also raised a number of questions: having encountered difficulties in

accessing state archives we asked: to what extent can we reclaim the archive as a site of anti-colonial knowledge production? Identifying only as secondary stakeholders of the project, we aimed to address questions of epistemic violence and decided, at the very beginning, to *not* ask participants questions pertaining to traumatic elements, but rather foreground narratives of cultivation and *commoning* as a basis for our conversations, and to *not* be the gatekeepers of the counter-archive, but, instead, to make the *atlas* an object that is truly held in common by the villagers and participants. Illuminating translational dynamics, we asked: in how far can the *atlas* translate across language, class and the insider/outsider binaries?

The *atlas*, as a translational space became not only a space to learn *about* the springs of al-Walaja and their histories, but rather inquire into larger dynamics of identity formation, our own positionality, and our collective agency within the context of a struggle for liberation, *through* the springs and their stories. The question about who we are became important: we understood that in contrast to the villagers of al-Walaja ("insiders"), we became "outsiders" to various degrees.[17]

At the core of the collective were eight participants: three of us Palestinian women and students from other villages and cities, one was a male refugee from Dheisheh, two were Palestinian-American women with "suspicious" accents, and I was a male/white/Western foreigner. Our (social) bodies, marked by race, class, gender and other cultural pointers, were inflicted with both (legitimate) suspicion by the villagers and the normative violence of the regimes of apartheid, colonialism and military occupation, to coercive degrees. As a male/white/Western practitioner, marked by foreignness, but also privilege, I found myself at both ends of the spectrum: being able to access the state/colonial archives and trespass restricted sites without serious risk. Local knowledge held by the village, however, was

less accessible to me. As a long-term visitor, who has been in and out of Palestine for ten years, and permanently based in the Bethlehem area for three years, I found myself somewhere in between "alienation, mediation and assimilation."[18] Another five women participants and four men participants from across a wide range of ages—some in their 20s, others in their 50s, and two elderly women—were from the village of al-Walaja and two from the al-Walaja neighbourhood in the Dheisheh refugee camp, and joined us for either a single, or sometimes repetitive and multiple gatherings.

atlas al-'aīn

The atlas al-'aīn is at once a material archive and a series of performative events. As a material object, it is an always unfinished archival box containing various things.[19] They include 3 historic correspondences, over 100 contemporary and over 30 historic photographs, 3 historic aerial images, countless maps, hand-drawn sketches, more than 20 interviews and conversations with 14 people from al-Walaja, 3 poems and 1 historic postcard, 3 ambient sound recordings, among other uncategorised things. The atlas al-'aīn is a place to gather things of the past for purposes of conservation and commemoration similar to memorial books. Susan Slyomovics's works highlight memorial books as both places of historic documentation and folkloric knowledge production.[20] In Palestine, those documents of memorialisation, as Rochelle Davis's research demonstrates, are important evidence. Understood as hybrid-form accumulations of folklore and village history, the memory books —also called "village histories"—serve as important lenses to understand peasant life in Palestinian villages before the Nakba in 1948 within a field that traditionally marginalises voices of non-elites from cultural history.[21] While memory books present themselves as static objects, the atlas al-'aīn, on the other hand, is an inherently performative archive: the documents it contains

are stored loosely, can be re-arranged, taken out, looked at, annotated and exhibited.

The *atlas al-'aīn* requires performative agency by its readers/writers, its spectators/"Spect-Actors". The *things* that it contains need to be assembled together as much as the bodies of those who participate need to assemble themselves around those *things* and *forensic* objects. Assemblies for the *atlas al-'aīn* took place in the olive groves, the springs, the gardens, the refugee camp, and, more often than anywhere else, in the living rooms of those villagers who participated in the *Performativatlas*. Sharing *shai* (tea), *qahwe* (coffee) and a meal opens up a space to also share common memories, poems, stories about the *things* in the middle. About *al-maḍafe*—the Arabic term that refers to a room dedicated to hospitality—Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal write: it "is the part of the private house that has the potential to… give different political and social meanings to the act of hospitality" and to turn "private spaces, such as the living room, into social and political arenas."[22] In al-Walaja, where "the public" is subject to military surveillance as much as in all of occupied Palestine, *al-maḍafe* becomes a category of space at the margins of the private and the commons. The houses, which have been re-built after the Nakba and of which many are now earmarked for demolition, [23] the gardens, the springs, and the olive groves serve catalytically as sites of memory production.

As a performed counter-archive, the *atlas al-'aīn* assembles itself around 'Ayn Haniya (the Spring of Haniya), one of the three remaining water springs located within the landscape of al-Walaja, which originally encompassed twenty-four springs on both sides of the present-day Green Line that was drawn through the Israeli act of state-formation in 1949, bisecting the village and its landscape across two territories. Tracing the history of the Nakba through al-Walaja's springs makes visible the temporalities of the Nakba as both a traumatic cæsura in 1948, and as an

ongoing process of erasure and continuing genocide.

The Arabic term عَيْن ('aīn) refers most commonly to "the eye" but also denotes a "spring" emerging from the ground. During a walk through the landscape of al-Walaja we were attempting to reconstruct the shared etymological origins of the word's multiple connotations. While we encountered various explanations, it was one image that stuck in our minds when we first heard it: عَيْن ('aīn) refers to the natural well that is used to draw water from the ground, and عَيْن ('aīn) also refers to the eye that sheds tears. A شُهُود عَيَان (shohūd 'aīān) is an eyewitness, and this specific signifier emphasises the validity of the claim "I saw it with my own eyes, it is true." It could perhaps be the flow of water, whether drawn from a spring for the purpose of working the land, or shed as tears from the eyes of those who are in sorrow amid a witnessed loss, that connects the eye and the spring. Whether etymologically sound or not, it was this explanation that moved us most. It is also to that extent that the narrative of عَيْن الحَنِيّة ('Aīn al-Hanīa) shares both aspects of the word's origin: the peasants' common labour on and living off the spring on the one hand, and a history of incomprehensible loss caused by the enclosure of the commons of the village and the peasants' violent displacement from their land before, and from 1948 onwards, on the other. In addition to "well", "spring" and "eye", the word عَيْن ('aīn) carries other connotations. It refers to "the guard", "the watchman", or "the spy", but of most interest in the context of this *atlas* is the word's reference to "origin", "essence", and "substance". The عَيْنُ البَلَدْ ('aīn al-balad) are the "original people of a village, or, the notables of the village". With a different pronunciation and the addition of different vowels, the word can also refer to the "due allocation of shares", عَيَّنَ ('aīana). It is in this light, too, that the *atlas al-'aīn*, does constitute a recording device as much as a communal means of truth narration with a principal focus on the ongoing practices of sharing and witnessing.[24]

Figure 1: The atlas al-'aīn workshop in al-Walaja, 2018

Figure 2: The atlas al-'aīn archival box, preparing for an exhibition in the al-Walaja neighbourhood in Dheisheh, 2019

When we started the *atlas al-'aīn* project in spring 2018, al-Walaja's most prominent remaining spring, 'Ain Haniya, had just been enclosed by the Municipality of Jerusalem. The spring and its landscape are located exactly on the 1949 Green Line itself, yet are just within the Jerusalem Municipality boundary line which has been redrawn in 1967, and was "officially" imprinted

through an act of annexation in 1980, and doesn't follow the 1949 Green Line but expands into Palestinian territory. Hand in hand with its enclosure, the spring and its landscape were fenced-in by the municipality under the impetus of modernising and improving it as part of the Israeli Refa'im Stream National Park scheme, which, in itself, forms part of a larger plan by the Israeli state to encircle West Jerusalem with green spaces, and to connect the Israeli-only settlements of Gilo, Har Gilo and others in the Gush Etzion block region to West Jerusalem. Through its construction, the green infrastructure project systematically erases the landscape of its Indigenous Palestinian histories: places change names, and ruins and remains are framed in line with Israeli ethno-nationalist state narratives produced by and situated in newspapers, state archives and governmental literature. The redeveloped spring now features handrails, bicycling paths, car parking, a refurbished water stream and a modernised "ancient" pool. Along with the construction of the various segregation walls and barriers, the redevelopment of the spring went hand in hand with the construction of a new checkpoint that, once completed, will cut off any remaining Palestinian access to the spring. Already, Palestinians are partially barred access to 'Ain Haniya by way of the segregation wall, which encircles the village and separates it from its landscape and springs. Farmers' access to the landscape of the now declared "national park" is intermittently disrupted and Palestinian access to the modernised spring—regardless of whether they hold access permits or not—is limited or entirely removed at times.[25]

Operating under the pretext of modernisation, natural conservation/restoration and development for the sake of "the public", the Jerusalem municipality and the state specifically exclude Indigenous claims to sovereignty over land by default. Petti and Hilal rightfully point out that the diversity of land categories, both legal and performed—determined through their corresponding diverse cultural and communal practices—existent

pre-1948 was flattened into the binary of privately owned land and "public space" through the emergence of the state. Under an ethno-nationalist and settler-colonial regime "the public" is, of course, necessarily exclusive[26] and "public space" rightfully perceived as "suspicious" by the Indigenous community.[27] Making the spring "public" then also means that its stories and oral histories become subjugated to hegemonic domination.

Figure 3: A collective map serves as the index to the visual and textual entries, objects, sound recordings, and oral histories collected so-far in the atlas al-'aīn; blue arrows mark remaining springs; the pink line marks Jerusalem

Figure 4: Conversational mapping on an aerial
photograph of al-Walaja[28]

Assembly One: An Aerial Photograph, an Oral history of the Nakba, and "Incomplete Returns"[29]

The aerial photograph taken in 1931, unearthed during our archival work, and the first excerpt of the *atlas* to be discussed here, is the only photographic record that we found throughout the project that shows the village before its division and erasure in 1948, spanning across both sides of the present-day 1949 Green Line. Writing and drawing on it we re-appropriated the image in an attempt to visualise the repeated displacement through conversational mapping. A middle-aged man, an official of al-Walaja, told us about what happened in 1948:

> al-Walaja village was divided into two parts: the
> original part that is located in the 1948 land (in the
> Israeli territories), and the other part, which was

*controlled by the Jordanian government. (After 1948)
the people (of al-Walaja) could only reach this area
here (in "New al-Walaja").*[30]

An elderly woman and her daughter, whom we met multiple times
in their garden overlooking the valley of al-Walaja, added:

When the Nakba happened, al-yehūd *("the Jews")
came with soldiers and captured our village. Some of
us fought back, but in 1948, we had to leave the village
and go somewhere else. Some of us later tried to return
to their houses, but the soldiers planted bombs so that
when someone tried to come back to al-Walaja, the
explosion would kill them. It took eight years, from 1948
to 1956, until all houses in al-Walaja were gone. We all
left.*[31]

*My grandfather was killed in his house by one of these
bombs. He went back to see his house, but they
installed a bomb on the door… Israel decided to
destroy the houses so people would lose the hope and
the connection… to the village.*[32]

Al-wālje qdīman is the *al-Walaja of the Past*. Two thirds of the
village's land have been annexed by the Israeli state in 1948,
including the area where *al-wālje qdīman's* historic built-up core
was once located. That same area remains visible from *al-wālje
hālīan*, the *al-Walaja of the Present*, on the other side of the
border line. Where the ruins would be visible today, pine tree
forests, the settlements of Ora and Aminadav, the Biblical Zoo
and public parks have since materialised. Most of the more than
24 springs that would once form an intrinsic part of al-Walaja's
social and ecological fabric, are located in *'48*, the present-day
Israel on the other side of the Green Line. 'Ayn Haniya, 'Ayn

Jawaze and 'Ayn Hadafe are the three springs that are located in the *al-Walaja of the Present*. 'Ayn Jawaze remains accessible; 'Ayn Hadafe, also, is still in use, although being located on the projected path of the segregation wall, construction of which has advanced to only a few hundred meters from the spring; 'Ayn Haniya remains the conversationally most visible spring, despite its recent enclosure. Sharing *maqloube*, a traditional Palestinian dish, Umm Mohammad, the mother of a local poet, narrates:

> *I'm originally from Kherbet El Sheikh, but we left in 1948 once* al-yehūd *took over. We went to Wad Fouqin, then to Beit Sahour, and Beit Ta'mar for a few months, until we later tried to come back to al-Walaja. Once we got there, we found our homes demolished... Most families left to nearby (refugee) camps once they saw the conditions. Only about fifteen families stayed* here *(in* al-Walaja of the Present*), protecting their (remaining) land.*[33]

At the focal point of narrations about the springs of al-Walaja is, of course—and rightly so—the story of displacement; visible in its subtext though are also narrations of identity and land, commoning, "returns-in-the-making" and "existence as resistance". After the destruction of *al-wālje qdīman* in 1948, its residents fled to various places east and west of the Jordan river: some fled to nearby villages, gathering in fields and forests that would later turn into today's refugee camps. Other refugees settled within existing villages, and some remained in exile. After 1948, the land of 'Ain Haniya—dissected by the then newly drawn 1949 Green Line—was known as ḥrām (taboo, prohibited, or forbidden). Umm Mohammad remembers: "the Israelis killed a young man once, in the 1950s, when he went to get water from ('Ayn Haniya). As soon as he began walking away, they shot and killed him. His name was Mousa Said."[34] The springs were off-limits for everyday use. In 1967, with the beginning of the military

occupation of the West Bank, 'Ayn Haniya became accessible again and was used for cultivation and recreation. The change was temporary though, and only constituted a partial return to former practices: with the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 and 1995, a different set of spatial planning regimes emerged and the land of the springs was used to construct a road that would connect the settlement of Har Gilo to "Israel proper". With the construction of the settler road it was, once again, more difficult for the people of al-Walaja to reach their springs.

Yet, in spite of violent displacement, a marginal and "incomplete return" materialises, as Umm Mohammad continues with her memories and tells us how she and other families returned: not to the same land that they fled from in 1948, but to present *al-wālje hālīan,* which is on the West Bank side of the 1949 Gren line, yet well located within the landscape of the wider historic *al-wālje qdīman*:

> When we first returned (after 1956), we dug caves and lived in there for a while, until we slowly started to build houses from the mud of the land. We stayed in mud houses; still without basic necessities. We brought water from the springs. I was too young to remember much. When we wanted water, we went to 'Ayn Haniya.[35]

> (Those that) came back from the refugee camps—from Aida and Dheisheh, and Aqbat Jabr in Jericho, would settle here in this area. Some people say that from 1957 until 1960 they lived…. under trees (and plants that would naturally grow canopies.) [36]

Assembly Two: From the State/Colonial Archives

The same relational logic of exclusion and appropriation vis-à-vis

commoning and cultivation also became apparent throughout our archival research in two forms: through the stories within the historic correspondence themselves, as much as the process of us attempting to obtain those records in the first place.

Any correspondence between the British Mandate Department of Antiquities and the people of al-Walaja is housed in The Scientific Archive 1919–1948 at The Israel Antiquities Authority in Jerusalem. The physical archive, formerly known as The Department of Antiquities of the State of Israel, remains, to this date, inaccessible to most Palestinians. The archive's website only exists in English and Hebrew.[37] A list of countries—from which one country is to be selected when purchasing archival material for research use—does not contain "Palestine", "Occupied Palestinian Territories", or any other toponym for the West Bank or Gaza. We printed copies and filed them in the *atlas*, for the community of al-Walaja to assemble around.

Themes of regulation, expropriation and displacement become visible in and through the state/colonial archive. Bound in a red-covered binder titled *GOVERNMENT OF PALESTINE* we found written correspondence between the British Mandate Department of Antiquities, their local official subsidiaries and various actors in al-Walaja. The correspondence tells of three cases that occurred in close proximity to 'Ayn Haniya between 1930 and 1934. The first case, taking place between 1930 and 1933, documents an attempt by the British Mandate Government to expropriate a plot of land adjacent to the spring as it contained two "ancient columns" and a mosaic that was intended to be inspected and preserved. Believing that the land was not under *registered* ownership but "merely" in the possession of a local villager, the Department of Antiquities, in liaison with the Department of Lands, decided to expropriate the land. As soon as the British Mandate found out that the land was claimed by both the Patriarchate of Jerusalem and that of Alexandria, the

strategy changed and the government entered into negotiations with the Patriarchate of Jerusalem to not expropriate the land but survey its historic remains.

A second case arose in 1930 when Muhammad Saleh Abu Aun was "digging his plot of ground at al-Walaja" and unearthed a cave next to the spring. Muhammad Saleh Abu Aun and his two friends tried to open the cave and subsequently reported the finding to the Department of Antiquities in Jerusalem. The government decided to seal the cave and entered into a dialogue with other government offices about inspecting and potentially expropriating the land as it could contain antiquities and architectural remains of a site of historic or religious importance. Similarly, in 1934, a local *fallaheen* (peasant) from al-Walaja was cultivating his plot of land and collected a number of large stones that were lying around his field. The Department of Antiquities, having found out about the incident, debated whether the local farmer should be persecuted for potentially destroying architectural remains. In the end, he was allowed to continue cultivating his land and was granted permission to dig up to 50 cm deep into his soil to cultivate the land with vegetables.

The two cases above detail the continuity of colonial rule in Palestine, and also the different degrees of coercive violence between the British Mandate and the settler-colonial regime of Israel. While at the base of both expropriations of 'Ayn Haniya— first, in the 1930s under British Mandate rule, and then again since 1948 under the Israeli settler-colonial regime—lies a shift in land use or a regulation thereof, and the formation of a collective (state) memory, the amplitude and scale of both were enforced with significant difference. During the British Mandate there appears to have been room for negotiation and scope for flexibility with regards to cultivation practices; without being "apologetic" for British colonialism, the subsequent shift evidences a particular form of violence specific to the settler-

colonial state from 1948 onwards. Common to accounts from before and after 1948 are also the use of religious narratives in an attempt to represent the landscape of Palestine as a "sacred" and "holy" space, elevating "preservation" and the importance of religious rituals above agricultural activities. The importance of mystic elements is mostly accounted for in non-Indigenous representations of the landscape (as we will see again below) and, as one participant from al-Walaja witnessed, is persistent until today: "every Saturday we don't like to go to the spring because Israeli settlers come and practise their religious rituals. And so we try to avoid them and avoid any problems with them." [38]

The earliest written records of al-Walaja we were able to find were in a book by Edward Robinson and Eli Smith, two "Biblical Researchers" who came for a "research adventure in indigenous land", to borrow Linda Tuhiwai Smith's phrasing.[39] The two adventurers describe their departure from Jerusalem amid an outbreak of the plague and express their fear of being contained in the city once a quarantine would be enforced. Their travel itinerary included servants and a Christian guide from Beit Jala that they "could trust". Altogether, the party was ten men strong and they considered themselves "secure against all ordinary thieves or plunderers."[40]

Although we can extrapolate some information from their adventurous tales that is of relevance to our project, Robinson and Smith's text reveals more about the Western construction of the Other than the vernacular landscape itself. Standing on a "sightly spot", the two adventurers had "a commanding view of the country before (them)" and took note of the village. Characterised by a writing mechanic that resembles military precision, the text discusses the "biblical dimensions" of the landscape that lies before them, issues of taxation and land use in "the St. Philip's of the Latins (al-Walaja)."

We set off again from Beit Jâla, at 10 1/4 o'clock, winding around the hill above the village towards the N.W. among vineyards and gardens of olive and fig trees. The hill is everywhere terraced and cultivated, as in ancient times; indicating more industry and thrift than is usual in the villages.[41]

Similarly, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, published in 1883 by the British-led Palestine Exploration Fund, serves as a medium of imperial reconnaissance, emptying the land of its inhabitants in its descriptions and paving the way for conquest.

11. El Welejeh (L u).—A good-sized village on the slope of the hill, in a sort of recess formed by a steep ravine running down immediately north of the houses. There are vegetable-gardens in this ravine below the village, and vineyards… the neighborhood, which has a good water-supply, five groups of springs occurring round the village…. 'Ain Hanniyeh is the foundation where St. Philip baptized the Eunuch (see Bethzur, Sheet XXI.), a tradition apparently not older than the fourteenth century.[42]

Assembly Three: Towards a Performative Archive

While the aerial and ground photographs taken by the American Colony Photography Department in 1931, as well the other "objective"/objectifying and/or exoticising documents, both the British Mandate correspondence and the "biblical survey" accounts, written by Western (male) "researchers", point to some important truths—the significance of al-Walaja for the agricultural market, the importance of the springs and their cultural connotations—they do not much more than repeat what Palestinians already know and share. These written records do not deserve to be elevated above oral histories, nor are they

required as a means of validation. On the contrary, the written imperial archive omits the presence of Palestinians as subjects of agency and is very limited in its understanding of the vernacular meaning of landscape for Palestinian identity.

The oral histories that were performed and collected during the *atlas al-'aīn,* are representations of a landscape that includes "many springs, each one belonging to one family, not just in the village itself, but also in the surrounding landscape... reaching down the *wadī* (valley) towards Al-Khalil (Hebron)", one elderly woman, who witnessed the Nakba as a child, recounts of pre-1948 times. A second generation refugee from al-Walaja, who lives in the Deheishe refugee camp, explains the discrepancies between current representations of al-Walaja in maps and photographs, and between its former extent:

> al-Walaja really is larger than maps can show; it
> reaches from present-day al-Walaja near Jerusalem all
> the way down to Al-Khalil; .... even before the Nakba,
> people from al-Walaja would have to leave the village
> due to inner-political quarrels; they left al-Walaja and
> they would settle nearby or in neighbouring villages.
> But, if asked "where are you from?", they will still say "I
> am from al-Walaja" to this present day.[43]

The span of the landscape of al-Walaja, as much as the extent of the springs, remains un-representable in cartographic terms, and invisible on the aerial photograph taken by the American Colony Photography Department. The map, authored in 1917 by the Palestine Exploration Fund, represents al-Walaja as a relatively small red-coloured shape, visualising the village's built-up area, but not that of the wider al-Walaja landscape and its springs as socio-spatial complex places. Their visibility remains below the threshold of Western epistemology and cartography. While the

cartographic locations of the springs remain blurred, their importance for the social, economic and ecological fabric of al-Walaja begins to emerge with clarity through common memories:

> *Each family possessed a spring and used its water to cultivate the lands. Its grain, vegetables and fruit trees, and to provide water to the sheep and goats... The springs were also the places where families would meet and eat together.*[44]

> *I remember building a flotilla once. We would take drums, sticks and rope and let it swim in 'Ayn Haniya.*[45]

> *When I was younger, I would often come to 'Ayn Haniya to swim and have a picnic there with my family.*[46]

Figure 5: atlas al-'aīn assembly in the poet's house in al-Walaja (2018), with local poetry read out aloud in al-Walaja

As we sit in the living room of a family, the son of Umm Mohammad, a local poet, performs a poem about the landscape of al-Walaja. His way of relating to the springs, the fields, the hills and the valleys as meaningful communal places, is characterised

by a vernacular entanglement with the places of the village. Another poem, cited in Ahmad Sa'di and Lila Abu-Lughod's *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory,* likewise, demonstrates how specific places in al-Walaja have been given particular names, underscoring the communal importance of these everyday commons and how they attain a particular symbolic role:

Trip in the ruins of al-Walaja (rihla fi atlal al-Walaja)
by Mustafa Khalil al-Sayfi

...

Where is "al-Dhuhur" of almond buds
And the "Hadayif" surrounded by wildflowers
Where are the fields and birds of "al-Khalayil"
And "Wadi Ahmad", the grounds of the partridges
Where is "al-Hina" and its flowing water
Its shade sheltering resting travellers
Where are the guests who suddenly appear
And in the "Quffeh" the coals are lit (to cook for them)

...

On the "Jurun" were playgrounds
On the "Habayil" was a house
Is there still enough in the coffeepots
For people to stay up late and drink? [47]

The second historic photo, also part of the American Colony Photography Department collection, shows a scenographic view of the landscape visible from *bab al-khalīl* (Hebron Gate), now labelled "Jaffa Gate" on contemporary Anglophone maps (as if its gaze had changed direction). The view across the plains of the

Ref'aim valley follows the trade road that would historically lead to al-Khalil (Hebron) via Bethlehem and Beit Jala and the rail road that would pass through al-Walaja and Battir. "Al-Quds (Jerusalem)", as an elderly *atlas* participant begins to explain, "was a market hub for the fruit and vegetables grown in al-Walaja".[48] A collection of historic photos depicts women carrying baskets of fruits on their heads as they are on their way to the markets in the city of Jerusalem.[49] Other photos show peasants loading the Jaffa-Jerusalem train line with their produce, at a time the train, which no longer stops in al-Walaja or Battir. was still accessible to the village. al-Walaja, its springs and landscapes, colloquially, would be called "The Fruit Basket of Al-Quds", pointing to its importance as one of the region's most fertile and arable landscapes. The fruit trees were the pride of al-Walaja: "We grew almonds, figs and oranges… For the foreigners and *al-yehūd* that came to the springs, the land was only there to make religious rituals."[50]

Figure 6: Jerusalem (El-Kouds), approach to the city, plain of Rephaim from the Jaffa Gate[51]

The shift in land use reveals the entanglements of the socio-

spatial transformation of al-Walaja's landscape and, in parallel, the transformation of the local economy. Whereas before 1948, the village was predominantly self-sufficient and characterised by its agricultural activity, in 2009 only a fifth of the volume of economic activity remained in the agricultural sector and almost half of the total economic activity generated by the people of al-Walaja had been absorbed and extracted by the Israeli labour market.[52] Neoliberalism, as the current modus operandi of the settler-colonial state, commodifies land and land relations, creating a new set of dependencies and identity-markers.

> *(Half of present-day al-Walaja) is actually within the Jerusalem municipality boundary… Israel offered us blue ID cards (which would entitle us to work and go to Jerusalem), but we rejected. Israel is trying to offer us something, that they can then* take away again *if we protest or demonstrate or resist against the occupation. That is why we refused. So that they cannot pressure us into giving up resistance.*[53]

Today, approximately three quarters of the land of al-Walaja remains arable, and half the land agriculturally cultivated. A vast majority of it is planted with olive trees, fruit trees and nut trees; a lesser amount of land is cultivated with vegetables and field crops; some pastoral activities remain present.[54] Over the past years, forms of social and economic reproduction on and through landscape have not only re-emerged but also new models of communal landscape use have developed: community garden projects have emerged across al-Walaja, of which some are grassroots movements and others have been conceived by NGOs and foreign donors.[55]
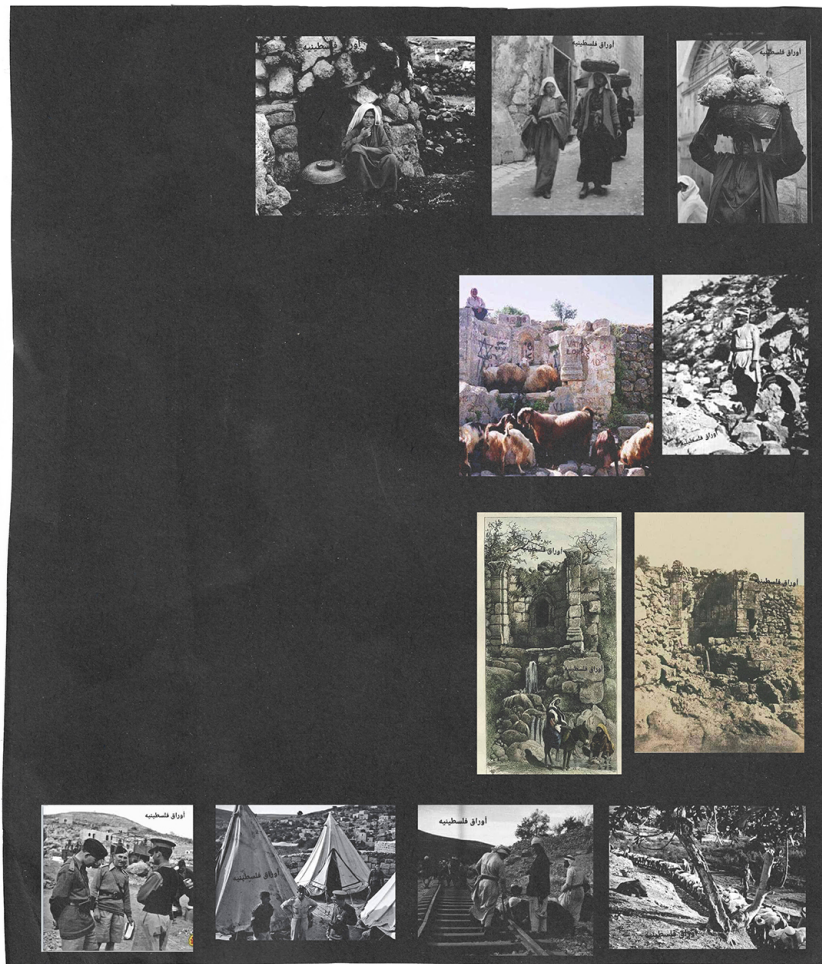
Figure 7: Scan of album page of atlas al-'aīn (2019) with thumbnail photographs sourced from local historian from al-Walaja (A. Al-Atrash): first row shows photos of what are assumed to be women from al-Walaja with produce; second row, photo on the left shows historic photo of 'Ayn Al-Haniyeh with Palestinian shepherd and pastoral activities; third row shows historic illustrations and one historic photo of 'Ayn Haniyeh; last row, two photos on the right show activities related to the construction of the railway

The oral histories and common memories that assemble around the *atlas* unearth the continuity of cultivation as onus and centrality of everyday life in al-Walaja. Despite a shifting relation to land in the looming post-Nakba transformation of the local economy in the second half of the twentieth century, from an

agrarian to a capitalist mode of production, cultivation and horticulture remain practised in the households of the village for those still having access to arable land, and prevalent in the conversations and memories of those displaced from their fertile lands. The histories that weave around these objects and memories attest to "paradisal" pasts and colonial-capitalist presents. Yet, the conversations navigate the terrain of romanticisation and nostalgic "pre-colonial" pasts on the one hand, and an overdetermined all-consuming portrayal of a 1948-present as the "end of times"—an representation of suffering and total erasure that international media and activists have long exhausted—on the other.

The memories assembled and performed cross through enclosure, violence and suffering. In their choreographic totality though, these memories stand contrary to predominant narratives of victimhood: the oral histories emerging from the memory-landscape in front of us develop the Nakba as a complex and multi-layered process—as a violent regime, but also as the beginning of returns, and as a present of resistant ongoingness.

Landscape, Memory and Genocide

The 1948 Nakba is an ongoing process of Israeli settler-colonial erasure by way of genocide, exile, and expulsion, that remains constitutive to contemporary Palestinian Identity.[56] Throughout the assemblies above, "1948" emerges as a marker, a cæsura, against which the history of Palestine is framed, narrated and analysed. Scholarly texts, and popular culture likewise, lever 1948 as a point of reference and speak of "pre-'48" or "post-Nakba" times: "What's the soul of the 47?… Back to the peasants to the falaheen born" sings shamstep band 47SOUL.[57] Against 1948 as a singular past event, in their edited volume *An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba* (2018), Nahla Abdo and Nur Masalha argue for

an understanding of the Nakba as a persistent and ongoing process interrelated with the complex processes of identity-formation and shared memory-construction. As the accounts above evidence, the Nakba as an ongoing process is on the one hand the continuous active genocide of the Palestinians, spanning the temporalities of the settler-colonial state, but also, on the other hand inaugurative to contemporary Palestinian identity-formation, memory-construction and ongoing performativities of return.[58]

The year "1948" is not merely a temporal split, but emerges also as a spatial toponym, pointing to the lands lost to the Israeli settler-colonial state, declared in 1948. The 1948 lands—or simply *'48*, as they are colloquially called in short by Palestinians—comprise the territory recognised as the state of Israel, falling within the 1949 Armistice "green" line. This territory stretches from the city of Al-Quds in the east, to the orange groves and beaches of Jaffa in the west, from Accra in the north to the plains of the Naqab in the south; *'48* demarcates the locus of Palestinian desire, longing, narration and return.

Theorising "Nakba as genocide" and as essentially spatialised, is in so far important as it inflicts landscape with a primary role in the processes of erasure.[59] Genocide, as first defined by Raphael Lemkin (1945) and later in the *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide* (1948) is a project of erasure of a national, ethnical, racial or religious group by way of toponymicide, cultural genocide, memoricide, and politicide.[60]

The demographic group most immediately affected by the genocide in Palestine were the *fallaheen* (peasants). Peasant-Indigenous life is spatially, economically, materially, socially, and epistemologically interpreted and produced through landscape as its fabric.[61] Throughout the ongoing Nakba, landscape—as

constitutive to the Palestinian peasant-Indigenous condition—has been violently transformed: most apparently through Israeli acts of war, land grabs, the denial of commemoration and memorisation through the enclosure of lands and the erasure of ruin, and theft of Palestine's cultural landscape, which includes the changing of place names, the re-drawing (and erasure) *of* and *through* maps, cultural appropriation, and so on.[62] Landscape, then, becomes not only *part of* genocide, but also emerges as one of the primary sites *within* and *through* which genocide is conducted. Specifically, the "slow" and continuing violence of the Nakba as an ongoing process gains visibility through this form of theorisation. The modern state, by way of engineering a territorialised landscape, does conceive itself specifically through a hierarchisation of forms of life/land relations. "The category of the 'black body' can come into being only when the body is perceived as being out of place, either from its natural environment or its national boundaries."[63] The Nakba as genocide, following the pre-text of Radhika Mohanram on the "black body", conceives racialised Palestinian bodies as external to precisely the modern landscape it was able to construct through "the other" in the first place. The implication for the Palestinian body is, that it is forcibly and violently put "out of place", specifically within the very landscape that is central to the reproduction of an Indigenous-Palestinian "*fallaheen* identity".

At a translational level, the use of the word "genocide" has had its critics among our participants, pointing towards discrepancies between the various (geographic and social) positionalities of Palestinians and (also foreign) researchers:

> When we discussed the word "genocide" with other refugees in Deheisheh we found that we didn't like the term—we found it offensive and problematic. The Arabic word for "genocide" is ābādeh djmā'īeh *and it*

means something like "collective annihilation", or "total uprooting". It is something very final and irreversible. Something that is done and cannot be undone. With us that is not the case: We are still here, resisting, and we form an active part of the struggle. We are not done. Maybe naming the Nakba as genocide is a class or positionality thing?[64]

Landscape is the socio-spatial construct through which the interrelations of land, identity and memory are negotiated and reproduced; for imperialism, landscape as sensor and means of memory-formation, is the locus of "desire for conquest and domination".[65] Through the mobilisation of the environment—the forests planted on top of the villages destroyed during the Nakba, the walls and fences erected around the springs to turn the commons into "public space", the settler streets dividing villages from each other, the museums, checkpoints, zoos and shopping malls—the landscape is transformed in an attempt to re-write the collective memories that are fundamental to the identity of the nation-state.[66] "Lived landscape", though, is more than "there is to the eye"; it is not merely a seismographic sensor to cultural inscriptions. Landscape as a lived practice is a thicket of social, "ecological", and performative interactions and interrelations, imbued with agency and potentiality. Drawing on Ed Wall and Tim Waterman's display of landscape's agency, landscape becomes tangible "as a complex of powerful social, spatial and ecological relations".[67] Close to Henri Lefebvre's *lived space*, lived landscape becomes a constant re-negotiation, its open-endedness paving the way to a conceptualisation of "return" as a performative practice of common memories.[68] While the commoning of memories is different from other "practices of return"—think of the Great March to Return in Khan Younis and Gaza, for example—it can, however, be conceived as a return-in-the-making, a form of return that forms part of a complex process of liberation.

Abdo and Masalha's work is of methodological importance to the *atlas*; it situates and anchors the discursive shift of "oral histories" in the context of the Nakba, continuing, and, more importantly, theorising the epistemic transformation brought underway through Rosemary Sayigh's distillate of oral histories in *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries*.[69] Abdo and Masalha de-stabilise the modern positivist dialectic of history as "knowledge about the past" and memory as "knowledge from the past", and move oral histories—as the project of "understanding and archiving the particular 'memories' and concrete human experiences"—"central to narrating and historicizing".[70] As a situated framework of anti-colonial feminist analysis, "shared memory" becomes the vector through which the colonial archive is tormented, and male/elitist history-construction challenged. Unsettling the binary of individual and collective memory, Abdo and Masalha present a "pluralistic approach to memories", one through which "it should be possible to distinguish between top-down elite 'collective memory' and people's 'shared memories'".[71] Edward Said, in W.J.T. Mitchell's collection of essays on *Landscape and Power*, summarises the role of collective memory for modern nation-state formation: "collective memory is not an inert and passive thing, but a field of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning."[72] The construction—or, sometimes, intervention, invention or mythical narration—of a collective memory, specifically through landscape as its medium, is put at the base of modern state-building and ethno-nationalist identity-formation. Shared memories and oral histories "from below", on the other hand, "are central to historical writing, shared values and the construction of (group) multi-layered, multi-cultural identity".[73] Shared memories as a practice of truth narration allows for a deconstruction of hegemonic discourses.

The *atlas* embraces "shared memory" as the site where anti-

hegemonic counter-narratives are produced, but, beyond that—in spatialising the affairs of memory production—proposes a shift from "shared" to "common" memories as a third category. The (spatial) commons are material (and immaterial) assemblages of cultural, spatial, environmental and knowledge resources while simultaneously inaugurating radical forms of horizontal self-governance; social systems and an organisational mode of struggle against the enclosure of the "places for the many".[74] The commons are neither "public" (state property) nor private. Differentiating "public" from "common", Hilal and Petti, in turn, problematise the common in the context of Palestinian histories of land use. *Al-mshā'*, a category of communal land that emerged during Ottoman Palestine, is common in nature and exists for as long as its farmers continue cultivating it together. De-linking land use from legal ownership, the "possession" of *al-mshā'* is established through the act of commoning itself—its reproduction depends on ongoing performativity.

Construing oral histories and memory-narration as a *common* process, then, means, first, to spatialise memory-construction, anchoring it in specific places and locales, making them truly *radical*—rooted in place; second, to de-centre the role of the expert, the archive, the institution, the scholar, the activist, the state, etc., by way of governing the memory commons along notions of horizontality and communality; and third, to emphasise memory as an ongoing performative (spatial) practice. Like *al-mshā'*, the memory commons—of the *atlas* and elsewhere—need to be performed in order to constitute themselves. The dynamism of performing memories as a practice of embodiment contrasts with notions of "conservation", or the (colonial/state) archive as extractive means of documentation or a "setting in aspic" and exoticisation of empirical experiences. Dis-closed (governed)[75]—but not enclosed (by means of government)—the memory commons become spaces of multiplicity[76] that can mobilise "diversity" against the hegemony of the settler state and

its homogenising imperative of violent erasure and normalisation.

Historically, the *atlas* serves as a recording device that demonstrates the (ongoing) deep entanglements of Palestinians with their lands and the importance of lived landscape to identity formation on the one hand, and the continuity of the Nakba as an ongoing processes of erasure on the other. First, through oral history accounts and the radical reinterpretation of the colonial/state archive, the continuity of the Nakba as genocide, enacted through landscape, has become visible. Second, and precisely because the Nakba is an ongoing process, return has (also) emerged as a performative practice that is in the making.

Methodologically, the *atlas*, as a performative archive, has opened up a space for common memory production that is rooted in the lived landscape of the village and its springs. Specifically in contrast to the colonial/state archive and its "objective"/objectifying discourse, the *atlas al-'aīn*—though assembling around the very same *things*—becomes a performed *counter*-archive that allows for a radical reinterpretation of truth narrations and a material return of knowledge, and knowledge production, into the ownership of the people of al-Walaja.

Footnotes

1   "'Nakba' (Arabic for "disaster" or "catastrophe") refers to the deliberate and systematic mass expulsion of Palestinians by Zionist forces, which resulted in the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, as well as the destruction and confiscation of their property during the period leading to and following the creation of the state of Israel (1947–1949)." Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA). *Dictionary of Palestinian Political Terms*. Third updated

and revised edition. Jerusalem. 2019. ↑

2   Forensic (from *forum*): pertaining to the public, following Weizman, Eyal. *Forensic architecture: violence at the threshold of detectability*. Brooklyn, NY: Zone Books. 2017; on Forensic Architecture (Project), see Franke, Anselm, Weizman, Eyal and Haus der Kulturen der Welt (Eds.). *Forensis: The Architecture of Public Truth*. Berlin: Sternberg Press. 2014. ↑

3   Taking German art historian and cultural theorist Aby Warburg's *Bilderatlas* (image atlas) "Mnemosyne" as a precedent, I here refer to our *atlas* as a *Performativatlas* (performative atlas). ↑

4   Abdo, Nahla and Masalha, Nur (Eds.). *An OralHhistory of the Palestinian Nakba*. London: Zed Books. 2018. See also, among many others, Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native". *Journal of Genocide Research*. Vol. 8. No. 4. 2006. pp. 387–409. DOI: 10.1080/14623520601056240. ↑

5   This essay draws, in its approach and in its methodological considerations, specifically on Shaira Vadasaria's work. See Vadasaria, Shaira. *Temporalities of 'Return': Race, Representation and Decolonial Imaginings of Palestinian Refugee Life*. Toronto: York University. 2018. ↑

6   Shourideh Molavi's work on Gaza and Palestine has become an important framing to understand the contested nature of landscape and the mobilisation of environment in processes of identity formation and memory construction, but also erasure and bordering under the paradigm of settler-colonialism and military occupation. See Molavi, Shourideh C. *Herbicidal Warfare in Gaza*. London: Forensic Architecture. 2019. Available at https://forensic-architecture.org/investigation/herbicidal-warfare-in-gaza (accessed 2020_04-14). ↑

7   Transcribed conversation with Omar H., a graduate student and translator from Dheisheh, 2019. ↑

8   Arabic: العودة, from عاد. ↑

9   Arabic: رجع. ↑

10   Based on conversations with Omar H., 2019–2020. ↑

11   Some interviews have been recorded, transcribed and

Some interviews have been recorded, transcribed and translated. Where recording was too intrusive, either because it would have disturbed the performative aspects of the events, or where there are safety concerns, the accounts are derived from notes. ↑

12   Boal, Augusto. *Theatre of the Oppressed. Get Political.* New edition. London: Pluto Press. 2008. ↑

13   Freire, Paulo. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Thirtieth anniversary edition. New York, NY: Continuum. 2000. ↑

14   Shehadeh, Raja. *Palestinian walks: notes on a vanishing landscape*. London: Profile Books. 2008. ↑

15   DAAR let us use their studio space in Beit Sahour, which we used intermittently and always when a desk was needed and the landscape of al-Walaja itself not our primary place of work. See Petti, Alessandro and Hilal, Sandi. *Permanent Temporariness*. Stockholm: Art and Theory Publishing. 2018; DAAR. "Campus in Camps". (n.d.). Available at http://www.campusincamps.ps (accessed 2020-04-21) ↑

16   Throughout her work, Palestinian artist Jumana Emil Abboud, who was raised in Canada and later returned to Palestine, explores the intersections of landscape, belonging and memory. By excavating narratives and folkloric tales emanating from springs and water streams that are now rendered inaccessible (buried by settlements and enclosed by confiscation), Jumana Emil Abboud explores in how far a "restoration of those folk tales could entail a return of or on land, as each drags the other along." See Abboud, Jumana Emil and Khaldi,

Lara. *In Aching Agony and Longing I wait for You by the Spring of Thieves*. London: Black Dog Press. 2018. ↑

17   Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Second edition. London: Zed Books. 2012. ↑

18   Formative, here, to a situated approach and the question of positionality has been Gary English's work. See his conference paper, English, Gary M. "Theatre in Palestine: Alienation, Mediation and Assimilation in Cross Cultural Research and Practice". Abu Dis. 2017. ↑

19   The *thing,* following Bruno Latour (2005) is here more than the material "thing". It is the issue at hand, the

than the material "thing". It is the issue at hand, the "topic", and also designates the assembly itself. See Latour, Bruno "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public". Latour Bruno & Weibel Peter (Eds.). *Making Things Public—Atmospheres of Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press. 2005. ↑

20   Slyomovics, Susan. "The Memory of Place: Rebuilding the Pre-1948 Palestinian Village". *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*. Vol. 3. No. 2. 1994. pp. 157–168. DOI:10.1353/dsp.1994.0019. ↑

21   Davis, Rochelle. "Peasant Narratives: Memorial Book Sources for Jerusalem Village History". *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 20. 2004. pp. 62–72. ↑

22   Petti, Alessandro and Hilal, Sandi. "Madafeh/Hospitality". In *Permanent Temporariness*. Stockholm: Art and Theory Publishing. 2018. ↑

23   Following the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (Oslo II), the territory of the West Bank was divided into a number of Zones (A, B, C, H1, H2). Zone C demarcates the area of the West Bank where Israel has full security and civil sovereignty, including issues pertaining to planning and zoning. al-Walaja's land falls almost entirely (97%) under area C and in the absence of development zoning, and the virtual impossibility to obtain building permits most newly erected structures in Area C are deemed illegal and are issued demolition permits. See Ben-Naftali, Orna, Sfard, Michael and Viterbo, Hedi. *The ABC of the OPT: A Legal Lexicon of the Israeli Control over the Occupied Palestinian Territory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2018; Cohen-Lifshitz, Alon, Shalev, Nir, Mardi, Diana. *The Prohibited Zone: Israeli Planning Policy in the Palestinian Villages in Area C*. Bimkom. 2008. ↑

24   Based on conversations in the wider group of participants; translations and detailed notes provided by Omar H., 2019–2020. ↑

25   Hasson, Nir. "Jerusalem Reopens Natural Spring, but Not to Palestinians". *Haaretz*. 15 October 2019. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/misc/article-print-page/.premium-jerusalem-opens-natural-spring-to-visitors-unless-they-re-palestinian-1.7991344 (accessed

visitors-unless-they're-palestinian-1.7991344 (accessed 2020-04-21). ↑

26   Petti, Alessandro, Hilal, Sandi and Weizman, Eyal. *Architecture after Revolution*. Berlin: Sternberg Press. 2013. ↑

27   Petti, Alessandro and Hilal, Sandi. "A Common Space in Fawaar Refugee Camp". In *Beyond the Public: collected writings 2012–2014*. London: Theatrum Mundi. 2014. ↑

28   American Colony Photography Department, "Air views of Palestine. Various points of interest around Jerusalem. Wady Ismail. The R.R. valley approaching Jerusalem from the S.W." G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. Call number: LC-M34- 4372 [P&P]. (1900-1920). ↑

29   The term "incomplete returning" was first coined by Raghda Joulani, a graduate from Al-Quds Bard College. In her analysis of Mahmoud Darwish and Mourid Barghouti's literature, she explored what it meant for the authors, as well as for herself, to return to Palestine after a term of absence. Joulani, Raghda. *The negative psychological impacts of displacement on Palestinians through Mahmoud Darwish and Mourid Barghouti work*. Al-Quds Bard College for Arts and Sciences. 2019. ↑

30   Transcribed interview, a middle-aged Palestinian man, and village official, al-Walaja 2018. ↑

31   Transcribed interview, an elderly mother and her daughter (in her twenties), ʿAyn Jawaze, 2018. ↑

32   Transcribed interview, a middle-aged Palestinian man,

and village official, al-Walaja 2018. ↑

33   Transcript of conversation with Mother of Mohammad, or *Umm* Mohammad, an elderly woman, al-Walaja, 2018. ↑

34   *Ibid*. ↑

35   Transcript of conversation with Mother of Mohammad, or *Umm* Mohammad, an elderly woman, ʿAyn Haniyeh 2018. ↑

36   Transcribed interview, a middle-aged village official, al-Walaja 2018. ↑

37   The Israel Antiquities Authority. "The scientific Archive 1919-1948". N.d. Available at http://www.iaa-

1919–1948". N.d. Available at http://www.iaa-archives.org.il (accessed 2019-11-15). ↑

38   Transcript of conversation with a young Palestinian woman in her twenties, from al-Walaja, early 2018, and before the spring closed almost entirely to Palestinians. ↑

39   Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. "Research Adventures on Indigenous Lands". In *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Second edition. pp. 81–97. London: Zed Books. 2012. ↑

40   Robinson, Edward and Smith, Eli. "From Jerusalem to Gaza". *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea: A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838*, Vol. II, 1841. p. 322. Halle: Waisenhausbuchhandlung. ↑

41   *Ibid.* ↑

42   Condor, Claude Reignier. *The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs of the Topography, Orography, Hydrography, and Archaeology*. Vol. III. Sheets XVIL-XXXVL. 1881. p. 22. London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund. ↑

43   Notes from interview with a Palestinian man, refugee from al-Walaja, middle-aged, conversation took place in al-Walaja "neighbourhood" in Deheisheh, 2019. ↑

44   Transcribed interview, young woman, 'Ayn Jawaze, 2018. ↑

45   Transcribed interview, a middle-aged village official, al-Walaja 2018. ↑

46   Transcribed interview, young Palestinian woman, al-Walaja, 2018. ↑

47   "Trip in the ruins of al -walaja (rihla fi atlal al -walaja)" by Mustafa Khalil al-Sayfi in Sa'di and Abu-Lughod, *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the claims of memory*. ↑

48   Transcribed interview, elderly Palestinian woman, 'Ayn Jawaze, 2018. ↑

49   The collection was shared with us by a local historian, Adel A., from al-Walaja, 2018-2019. ↑

50   Transcribed interview, elderly Palestinian woman, 'Ayn Jawaze, 2018. ↑

51   G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. Call number: LC–M32– 50–[2] [P&P]. (1900–1920). ↑

52   ARIJ. Al Walaja Village Profile. Jerusalem: The Applied Research Institute (ARIJ). 2010. ↑

53   Transcribed interview, elderly Palestinian woman, 'Ayn Jawaze, 2018. ↑

54   *Ibid*. ↑

55   See Ziviler Friedensdienst. "Palästinensische Gebiete: Gärten gegen Grenzen" (Palestinian Territories: Gardens against Borders). 28 June 2018. Available at https://www.ziviler-friedensdienst.org/de/aktuelles/palastinensische-gebiete-garten-gegen-grenzen (accessed 2019-10-15). ↑

56   Abdo and Masalha, *An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba*.; Weizman, Eyal and Sheikh, Fazal. *The Conflict Shoreline: Colonization as Climate Change in the Negev Desert*., 1. Göttingen: Steidl. 2015; Pappé, Ilan. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld. 2006; Masalha, Nur. *Palestine Nakba: Decolonizing History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*. London: Zed Books. 2012. ↑

57   47SOUL, Dankwa, N., Cedargen Productions, & Alturki, F. *Intro to Shamstep*. 2015. ↑

58   Abdo and Masalha, *An oral history of the Palestinian Nakba*. ↑

59   Abdo, Nahla. "Feminism, indigenousness and settler colonialism: oral history, memory and the Nakba". In *An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba*. ↑

60   Cooper, John. *Raphael Lemkin and the Struggle for the Genocide Convention*. Basingstoke and New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan. 2008. ↑

61   I am aware of the problems associated with tendencies that "biologise" or naturalise relations to land. Radhika Mohamram's *Black Body: Women, Colonialism, and Space* (1999) provides a helpful overview of the debate. Landscape, here, though, is conceived as a form of land-relation pre-dating the modern nation-state and puts centre stage the importance of land for the *fallaheen* (peasants), not merely as an indigenous group, but as a specific lifestyle. ↑

but as a specific lifestyle. ↑

62   For the erasure of place names, memory and space in
      Palestine and ruins in Palestine see Masalha, Nahla.
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