

New Arab villages that appeared between 1871 and 1948: Population in 1945



Introduction

This study seeks to examine, in a systematic manner, the history, growth and settlement of new Arab villages that were established in Ottoman and British Mandatory Palestine (Israel, Judea, Samaria and Gaza) between 1871 and 1948. The dissertation will provide details on the numerous Arab villages that were founded throughout Palestine during this period and have hitherto been generally overlooked in research on the topic of settlement in Palestine in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Case Studies, mapping, historical aerial photos and archives as well as field work will be employed to examine the exact nature and extent of these villages, many of which ceased to exist due to the 1948 Israeli war of independence. The most important contribution of this work will be in establishing the exact population and geographic extent of these new villages through systematic work on each district and region of Mandatory Palestine.

It will answer three main questions.

- 1. How many new places of Arab inhabitation were established between 1871 and 1948?
- 2. What was the primary cause of settlement fixation for the new settlements?
- 3. What were the geographic and spatial characteristics of the new villages?

Some Conclusions:

As many as 196 new villages and hamlets appeared between 1871 and 1948.

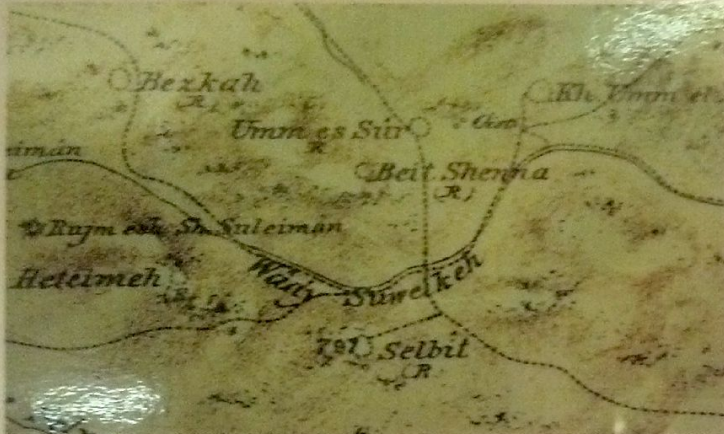
According to the 1945 British population estimate, often mistakenly called a census, a total of 64,974 people lived in these villages which together accounted for 749,847 dunams of land.

Major causes for the creation of these villages include increased security in the coastal plain and other valleys of Palestine, government intervention, the investment of wealthy landowners and Bedouin sedenterization.

Major factors in settlement fixation (i.e the reason villages appeared where they did) include the presence of existing ruins throughout the country, the presence of springs, khans and religious shrines (sheikhs' tombs).

Methodology

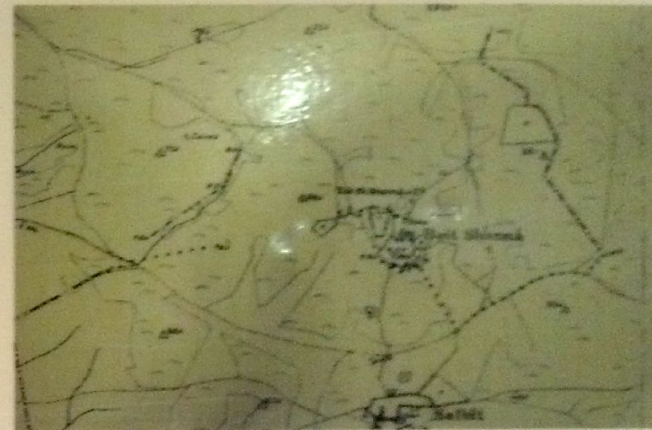
In order to locate villages that were not inhabited in the 19th century but became inhabited between 1871 and 1948 various travelers accounts from the 19th century are employed. The basis of the work involves the Palestine Exploration Fund's survey that took place between 1871 and 1877. This thorough and complete work produced a detailed 1:63,360 map and accompanying memoirs which provide a thorough and systematic view of the landscape at the time. Ottoman population registers provide some information on the last years of Ottoman rule. The British 1922 and 1931 censuses and 1938 and 1945 population estimates round out the data. Aerial photos, intelligence reports, newspaper accounts and archival material provide the rest.



The Palestine Exploration Fund found only ruins when it visited the site of two ruins known as Selbit Beit Shenna and located in what became the sub-district of Ramla. Palestine Exploration Fund, 1880 1:63,360, 1871-77 by Lieutenants Claude Conder and Horatio Kitchener *Map of Western Palestine in 26 sheets (Sheet XVII) from surveys conducted for the committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund*. London, 1883. Jewish and National University Library, Laor Map Collection.

Bayt Shanna: "traces of ruins and squared stones." -*The Survey of Western Palestine: Memoirs of the Topography, Orography, Hydrography and Archeology*. Judaea. London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1883. Republished Kedem, Jerusalem, 1970. Volumes 1-4, Judae, p. 86

Salbit: "foundations and caves. The ruins are extensive. A square building stands in the middle. There is a ruined reservoir lined with cement, the walls of rubble." -*Survey*; Judae, p. 157.



By 1929 two villages had been populated. The 1931 Census shows 406 residents and 71 houses. *Survey of Palestine*. 1:20,000 series, 1929, Mt. Scopus map library.



An aerial photo from 1948 shows the two villages. 1948, Israeli Shai intelligence aerial photos at Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, Jerusalem, Israel.

Field Work

Field work and a visit to one site of a ruin that became a