

## Peasant Narratives

### Memorial Book Sources for Jerusalem Village History

Rochelle Davis

How do we write about Palestinian village life in the first half of the 20th century? The absence of peasants and other non-elites from the social and cultural history of this period contrasts with the prominent role they play in contemporary scholarship regarding the political history of this period. In similar situations in other parts of the world, historians are left with only official records with which to reconstruct the past, resulting in serious gaps in understanding the perspectives and issues of importance to rural populations.<sup>1</sup> Fortunately, in the case of Palestine, the last 20 years have witnessed numerous compositions by Palestinians that offer us their unique lens on village life from this period. This essay focuses on village memorial books as sources for understanding Jerusalem village life prior to 1948.

## Memorial Books

Memorial books, as explained in Susan Slyomovics' extensive work on the subject, form a uniquely hybrid category of folklore and village history. They are composed by Armenians, Eastern European Jews, Palestinians, and Bosnians to recall and record their lost towns, villages, homes, and lands.<sup>2</sup> The 1980s and 1990s witnessed the widespread appearance of Palestinian village memorial books that focus on the Palestinian villages lost in the 1948 War. The term "memorial books" is not used anywhere in any of these books; they categorize themselves in a number of different ways - with subtitles such as "Our Palestine in the story of a village" and "a Jerusalem village in [our] memory" or as "one of the destroyed Palestinian villages".

These memorial books set out to create a historical record for the village through testimonies of its residents, their experiences of the 1948 War, and available documentary evidence. They focus on lineages, descriptions of the land of the village, and accounts of village economics, education, culture and traditions. Composed through a combination of collected oral testimony from former residents (as well as the recollections of the author if he or she is from the village) and written documentation such as land records, maps and photographs, these texts strive to present a picture of the village as it existed prior to 1948. Palestinian village memorial books have been written by individuals and by groups, as single volumes and as series, on one village or on groups of villages, by individuals about their own natal village (or the natal village of their parents), as well as by outside researchers who see village history as an important part of Palestinian national history.<sup>3</sup>

The geography of the Palestinian diaspora and the difficulty faced in travelling to the countries of the region limit these works to

accounts solicited from individuals living in the same country as the author/s (Israel/Palestine or Jordan).<sup>4</sup> Given the low rates of literacy among Palestinian villagers, Palestinian memorial books are almost entirely based on oral compilations.<sup>5</sup> In fact, villagers who have had little opportunity to write their own accounts or have their voices heard or their stories told are targeted as sources for these memorial books. Only a small number of the books, however, feature the interviews in colloquial Arabic (the Birzeit series, in particular); the majority of the accounts in other series are retold in modern standard Arabic. While the interviews were likely conducted in colloquial Arabic, particularly those with older people and women, the memorial book authors have chosen to rewrite the interview in standard form.

Palestinian memorial books can be categorized into three groups by author and the author's relationship to the village: the Birzeit series, *Destroyed Palestinian Villages*; books published by village societies; and individual publications.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest Palestinian memorial books are part of a project undertaken by the Birzeit Center for Research and Documentation of Palestinian Society (CRDPS) to document destroyed Palestinian villages. Under the leadership of Sharif Kana'anah, an accomplished folklorist, the Center envisioned the memorial books as a national project and chose six villages whose residents would be interviewed.<sup>7</sup> In the beginning, this group included Kana'anah and five other researchers, a typist, and a mapmaker, and they began work in 1985. The authors of these books, unlike most of the other memorial books, were not from the villages where they collected the oral histories.<sup>8</sup> The composition of these books is set within the national context of the Palestinian *Nakba* of 1948. "The series,

*The Destroyed Palestinian Villages*,” reads the explanatory text, “is a collection of ethnographic snapshots of the Palestinian villages as they were in the 1940s of this century before they were destroyed between 1948 and 1950.”<sup>9</sup>

As part of the project’s intent to examine comprehensively and equally the destroyed villages throughout Palestine, each book follows the same format. The first chapter describes “the popular history of the village” [*al-tarikh al-sha’bi lil-qaryah*], including its location and that of bordering villages or towns. The remaining chapters fall under the subtitles “clans and families,” “the village in the 1940s,” and “politics, wars, and exile.” The interviewers who collected the information are completely absent from any part of the text, and their questions have been removed. Despite the books’ similarity in general layout, each varies significantly in the type of information and its manner of presentation. Photographs, documents, and other items of significance are appended at the end, and in some cases constitute a large portion of the total book. Under Kana’anah, at least thirteen books in the series were produced. Another seven appeared under the subsequent project director, political scientist Saleh ‘Abd al-Jawad.<sup>10</sup>

The national purview of the Birzeit series is complemented by a second group of memorial books written by authors who are originally from the village under discussion. Their books are published by village charitable societies in Jordan whose membership consists of refugees from that specific village in Palestine. The authors presumably had access to many former residents of the village, outside of their own relatives, through membership in the village society. The books in this group vary widely in their style of writing, sources, general layout and content, although all of them include information about the village and its

history before 1948 and also discuss details concerning the establishment and activities of the village society in the diaspora.<sup>11</sup>

The final group of memorial books also emerges from concerns over local identity within a national framework. Not affiliated with organized village societies, these books instead were produced either by a person from the village on their own initiative or by outside researchers. These books vary widely in form, content and presentation.

### Jerusalem’s Villages

The village memorial books for the Jerusalem district that I have collected cover six of the seven most populous villages, according to the Mandate population estimates for 1944.<sup>12</sup> These are: ‘Ayn Karim (3,180), Lifta (2,550), Beit Mahsir (2,400), Deir Aban (2,100), al-Walajah (1,650), and Qalunya (1,260). Al-Maliha (population 1,940) is the fifth largest village in the district and does not have a matching memorial book.<sup>13</sup> Similarly, the village memorial books also cover most of the villages with the largest Arab land ownership: ‘Ayn Karim (13,449 dunums), Beit Mahsir (15,428 dunums), Deir Aban (21,578 dunums) and al-Walajah (17,507 dunums). Some other villages that are not covered but have large land ownership are al-Burayj (population 720, land ownership 18,856 dunums), Deir Rafat (population 430, land ownership 12,966), and ‘Allar (population 440, land ownership 12,353). One village, Suba (population 620, land ownership 4,082), has had two books written about it, one by an author living in Jordan, and the other by a resident of the West Bank.

The books can also be mapped in terms of their geographical layout within the Jerusalem district. As evident in the Jerusalem district map for *All that Remains*, the villages with the closest proximity to the

city of Jerusalem all have memorial books written about them, with the exception of al-Maliha, al-Qastal and al-Jura. The other villages are located mid-way along the Jerusalem hills towards the cities of Lyd and Ramleh. All of these projects seek to present an overall picture of the village as well as a comprehensive treatment of the details of village life before 1948.

### **Al-Walaja to Qaluniya: Surveying the Texts**

‘Aziz Abu Khiyara, Salih Fannush, Mahmud Sulayman, and Musa ‘Ashur together composed *Al-Walajah: Hadarah wa tarikh* [*Al-Walajah: Culture and History*]. The authors provide chapters on the history and geography of the village, economic life, social life, the fighting in 1948 and martyrs, and the folklore of the village. This book also contains a map and photos of the village, poetry about the village by former residents, and a description and map of a new village established on the village lands that remained in Arab hands after 1948. Another chapter is devoted to the description of the al-Walajah Cooperative Society. The book appears to readers to be a jointly written text, and none of the authors takes individual credit for any part.<sup>14</sup>

‘Atiyeh ‘Atiyeh’s *‘Ayn Karim: Al-haqiqah wa al-hulm* [*‘Ayn Karim: The Reality and the Dream*] approaches the village memorial project in a more personal manner. After a lengthy introduction that describes his childhood memories of leaving ‘Ayn Karim in 1948, ‘Atiyeh begins a section he calls “illuminations” [*ida’at*] that establishes the framework for his understanding of Palestinian history: roots in the land, Arab lineages, allegiance/identity, exile and its effects, the Zionist ideology, and longing for the homeland. The remaining three-quarters of the book discusses the village of ‘Ayn Karim specifically as it existed before

1948, the physical and political elements in the village, religion and the religious monuments, *waqf* properties, the fighting that occurred in the twentieth century, traditions and cultural elements of life in the village, important men, travellers and political opinions of ‘Ayn Karim, and the people of ‘Ayn Karim in exile.<sup>15</sup>

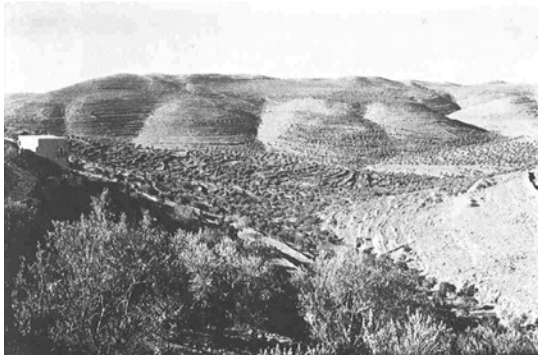
One book about the village of Suba was written by Ibrahim ‘Awadallah.<sup>16</sup> The opening chapter discusses the history of Palestine and the Jerusalem villages through 1948. The second chapter explains Arab lineages and how Palestinian tribes fit into this larger structure, along with a historical glimpse of the family structure of Suba village. The remaining chapters address the geography of the village, the events of the war of 1948, kinship in the village, social and economic life, and the archaeological remains from the Crusader period recently excavated from among the destroyed homes.

Another book about Suba, written by Muhammad Sa’id Muslih Rumman, appeared in 2000. Like the other books, it focuses on the geography of the village, land distribution, history of the village and its name, residents, leadership of the village, lineages of tribes and clans, inheritance records for some of the families, social and educational life, village economics, *waqf* establishments and religious buildings, Suba during the 1948 War, and archaeological discoveries.

‘Othman Salih’s *Beit Mahsir* focuses specifically on the village of the same name, its history, land divisions, lineages, social and economic life, agricultural practices, and the fighting in 1948.<sup>17</sup>

Ghalib Samarin wrote *Qaluniya: al-ard wa al-judhur* [*Qaluniya: Land and Roots*]. Like the other books, this text discusses geography, land ownership divisions, the historical origin of the villagers, the fighting





The hills of Qalunya, taken in the 1930s.  
Source: *Palestineremembered.com*.



An old black and white of the alleys of Deir Yassin, taken before 1948. Source: *Palestineremembered.com*.

in 1947-49, education, and folklore. The book also contains a number of unique chapters entitled, “marriage and love,” and “getting to know the village of Qaluniya,” a section that includes an elaborately detailed description of the architecture and use of the village house.<sup>18</sup>

The book on the village of Deir Aban written by ‘Abdelaziz Abu Hadba is one of the longest and most comprehensive of the memorial books at 450 pages. Abu Hadba is a folklorist by training, affiliated with the In’ash al-Usra Society in al-Bireh in the West Bank. He includes maps of many different features of the village and surrounding area and has chapters with detailed descriptions of all elements of village life. Like some of the other books, a section on “martyrs of the village” is included; Deir Aban lists 37

persons killed between 1916-1948.<sup>19</sup>

The Birzeit series on destroyed Palestinian villages provides books on the Jerusalem villages of Deir Yassin and Lifta. The Deir Yassin book from this series was the centre of some controversy in 1998 when the Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) published its “Deir Yassin: History of a Lie”. In that study, the authors investigate a large number of primary and secondary sources to “clarify what really happened in Deir Yassin on that fateful day”.<sup>20</sup> The ZOA authors cite the Birzeit University memorial book which presented the recollections of survivors of the those villagers killed by Jewish forces in Deir Yassin. In total, the survivors recalled the names of 107 killed (approximately 17 percent of the village) and 12 injured.<sup>21</sup> This number clashed, according to the ZOA narrative, with the number of 254 dead it found most commonly mentioned in 170 English language books and the number cited by Mordechai Ra’anan, the IZL (Irgun Zvai Leumi) fighters’ commander in Deir Yassin. More often than not, Palestinian sources that rely on oral testimony are ignored by Israeli or Zionist scholars on the grounds that memories do not make for accurate records of the past.<sup>22</sup> But in this case, the ZOA authors, trying to prove that a massacre did not happen, were inclined to put credence in this Palestinian source as “more accurate,” because of the lower number. The political motivation of the ZOA project overtakes the revisionist argument evidenced in its unconvincing conclusion that there was no massacre at Deir Yassin because of “the Israeli judicial ruling in 1952, an official recognition ... that the battle was, in fact, a legitimate military operation against enemy armed forces”.<sup>23</sup> By changing focus towards representations of the event (massacre vs. military operation) rather than the events themselves (the killing of men, women, and children), the ZOA

seeks to feature the contradictions of largely secondary accounts and de-legitimise any but its own interpretation of the past.<sup>24</sup> The Birzeit book on Deir Yassin remains the most comprehensive compilation of later interviews with survivors.

### Women as Subjects and Sources

An examination of the memorial books in my collection reveals that for the most part women were not considered sources or subjects of history. Men describe the women's roles in the village. One author expresses that only those who lived in the village really know what women's lives were like:

*If historians praised women for some position or event that happened, their role was a natural one. The women of al-Walajeh enjoyed a quality [of life] that exceeded the description of historians. We feel that we must put in the readers' hands, both men and women, what we have heard from the women of the village and some of the roles that women took on in al-Walajeh and practiced over the generations in building, raising children, and making ends meet [kasb al-'ayesh].<sup>25</sup>*

He then proceeds to list and describe the different areas in which women played an important role: being lady of the house [*sayyida fi beitiha*], helping her husband in the fields and orchards, helping him sell the agricultural produce, knitting and embroidering household goods, encouraging her boys to go to school, teaching her girls household skills, and helping her husband to defend the land.<sup>26</sup> But even in the section of "women in the village," a section included in three of the memorial books, no women's

stories are told, nor are any women listed as sources for that particular section.

I was unable to find in the memorial books or oral history collections in Arabic any account by a village woman of life prior to 1948.<sup>27</sup> Whether women also do not view themselves as sources for information about the past is difficult to gauge, although the number of oral histories collected from Palestinian women on other subjects would suggest that they do see themselves as sources.<sup>28</sup> A further reason village women's lives may not be seen to merit a first-hand account is expressed in some of the village memorial books, which declare that "we find that the women worked with and shared with the men in their happy times, sad times, and daily work."<sup>29</sup> This view indicates that women's lives were fundamentally seen as equivalent in all matters, although the same author notes that "women did not get to rest like the men".<sup>30</sup>

Palestinian memorial books provide a particularly limited picture of women's involvement in the transfer of knowledge about the village, evidenced in the number of women listed as oral sources. In the introduction to each book in the Birzeit series, following a short history of the village, the authors name and thank the respective participants who provided information for the text. This number varies between five and 21 people per village. Those mentioned are overwhelmingly men. In five of the 11 books I have access to, no women are interviewed at all. When research was conducted by Lubna 'Abdelhadi (who authored three books and was the only woman author in the series) the number of women interviewed increased to six women and nine men in one book and two women and one woman respectively in the other two books.

The remaining memorial books in this study, seven in total, record almost no women as sources. Despite the fact that women live

longer than men, and thus seem more likely to be available to contribute to these books, their voices are almost completely absent.

That is not to say that women are entirely absent from memorial books. Traditionally, women's family, blood lines, and place of origin are not recorded in lineages preserved in textual forms and formal recitations, despite that nearly everybody knows the names of his or her mother and grandmother, their family names, and their places of origin. Information retained through personal connections is therefore lost in formalized accounts. When later generations lose the personal connection with that past, the information about female ancestry disappears with it. But in the memorial books, because of Palestinians' interest in recording a 'lost' past, I would argue that contemporary Palestinian ways of recording and writing history provides new ways for women to be included.

The author of the book on the village of Qaluniya utilizes this personal knowledge of family in writing his memorial book. In a section entitled "Our roots: The residents of our village, from ancient times until the diaspora of 1948," he describes the different tribes and clans [*hama'il wa 'asha'ir*] in the village. He follows this standard and formal description of family origins with a 53-page section on the residents of the village for the 150-year period prior to 1948. One small extract reads:

*Families [fasa'il] dar al-Salamah:*

*Salamah Sha'ban Salamah, married to Siriyah 'Atiyah (who is the mother of Hussein Salamah Sha'ban Salamah), in exchange for his sister Fatima Sha'ban who married from the 'Attiya's of the Makhlu'f hamula.*

*Hussein Salamah Sha'ban Salamah. He married three wives:*

- *'Othmanah Othman Samur "Imm Salamah"*
- *Subhah Muhammad 'Abedrabbo from the village of al-Ram "Imm Muhammad"*
- *'Izziya Muhammad 'Ali Salamah "Imm Ahmed". This was her second marriage after her first husband, Hamdan Barakat died in the Ottoman army.*

*Salamah Hussein Salamah Sha'ban Salamah was married to Fatimah Muhammad 'Ali Salamah Sha'ban Salamah 'Askar "Imm Sha'ban".*

*Muhammad Hussein Salamah Sha'ban Salamah married two wives: the first was Ni'mah al-'Abed 'Othman Salah from Makhlu'f [family] "Imm Hussein" and after her death, the second was 'Azizah Muhammad 'Atwah from Makhlu'f [family] "Imm Khalil".<sup>31</sup>*

The information recorded in this memorial book is exceptional for a number of reasons. This work gives us information not recorded in formal, orally recited genealogies, written family trees, or historical documents. Instead, the Qaluniya register gives us personal family knowledge, the type of information (such as mothers' and sisters' names) that might not have been recorded at the time. The list also provides, when noted, interesting information on how many men married more than one wife, either simultaneously or after the death of the wife, as well as how many women remarried. The author gives information about the family or clan the bride is from, or whether she is from another village entirely. Such documentation provides a rare opportunity to see, over a number of generations, women's presence in family histories, the relationships among villages (and among which neighbouring villages) indicated by marriages, and

possibilities for understanding the social history of the village, numbers of multiple marriages, deaths, and marriages within or outside of the family, tribe, and clan.

From the above selection alone, which only covers three generations (it continues on for three more generations) we find a variety of information that is often asserted to be either 'characteristic' or 'unusual' of Arab societies and village relations - rarely, however, do we have actual data for village populations with which to work. In the six generations of the Salamah Sha'ban Salamah family, the author lists 19 marriages. Of those, there is one case of 'exchange' wedding (presumably to lower the dowry costs), where a groom from one family takes a bride from another family, and in exchange a sister from the groom's family becomes a bride for someone in the other family. We find seven wives who come from other villages entirely, five wives are cousins from the same family, three wives come from other families within the same *hamula*, and three wives are from other *hama'il* (although within the same '*ashira*').<sup>32</sup> The author provides us with the possibilities of understanding the social relations of the time in this village through these unorthodox marriage statistics, the nature of marriages, and women's origin and family. While he never specifies directly the sources of this list of Qaluniya families, I assume it is entirely reconstructed from his and others' memories and perhaps family records. The importance of this material is its inclusion of what is specific familial knowledge (women's names and family and village origins) that often are maintained for only a few generations within the family and which is rarely, if ever, included in larger, collective Palestinian written and oral genealogical histories. In this village memorial book, specialized family knowledge known only to a small group of people is recorded in a larger collective history of the village and thereby takes its place in collective Palestinian understandings

of the past. There is not only one set of information to be related, nor is there only one way of telling it.

### A Word of Caution

This review of these village memorial books is primarily intended to outline the rich material available for understanding village life prior to 1948. Another useful aspect of the books for researchers are the sections on the 1948 War, the villagers' resistance and fighting, and the effects of the war on the population. The books thus build on the oral history work done by Nafez Nazzal in his *Palestinian Exodus from the Galilee* in tracing this fateful period in history from the point of view of Palestinian villagers.

Other characteristics of the memorial books will encourage scholars to be selective in their use. Some scholars may find the long sections of genealogies tedious. Other researchers, and I would count myself one of these, will find frustrating the lack of documentation of statistics, claims and assertions alongside the generalizing tone of some of the authors. In some cases, the generalities with which the author explains a situation - say, education in the village - make the material almost useless to a researcher:

*Al-Walajeh, like the neighboring villages, had the kuttab system at the end of the Ottoman period and the beginning of the British Mandate. The students studied the Islamic religion, the Qur'an, the Arabic language, and arithmetic. The student stayed in the kuttab until he had finished reading the Qur'an.*

*A celebration would be held for this occasion and the sheikh and students*



*of the kuttab would go to the house of the student who had completed the reading to have lunch. Students who finished a part of the Qur'an would also distribute sweets to their fellow students. This situation lasted until 1938. The boys of al-Walajeh would study in the home of the teacher for a minimal fee.<sup>33</sup>*

Such general accounts of village life seem to tie back to a generic village past and provide few details that tie the information to a particular village or that would be useful to a scholar of this period or subject (although undoubtedly valuable and interesting to someone from the village).

Researchers who are only interested in pre-1948 village life will, in some cases, need to sift through prefaces, introductions and conclusions bearing witness to Palestinian rights to the land and the burning nostalgia for the idyllic peasant past. For example, one village memorial book starts out:

*My village Qaluniya is part of the divine creation on this earth, inviting the mind and attracting the soul to contemplate its natural beauty. It is surrounded by green earth, and full of fruit, and made pleasant by a refreshing climate and moderate weather most months of the year. It is watered by springs of fresh, pure water [salsabil 'a spring in paradise'], whose vigour and purity clarify the mind, heart, and soul. Its mountains are covered with the trees of blessing, figs and olives.<sup>34</sup> The figs are loved by people and birds, and they have a distinctive taste that has not changed since their appearance. The olives are the loftiest mark of God in beauty, decorating the mountain faces.<sup>35</sup>*

While it is easy for us to attribute these feelings to a nostalgic longing for the long absent past and the lost land, thereby dismissing the idealized picture of life during those times, it is important also to consider the context of this recollection. For many refugees, life in their villages, no matter how difficult, was far superior to the life they had to lead in the camps after 1948. One man comments, "By God, even when we were beggars when we were in Palestine, our lives were better than they are now."<sup>36</sup> Thus these books are often written from oral testimonies taken from men and women who lived agrarian lifestyles and were suddenly made landless - their past was indeed preferable. In the refugee camps, villagers found their farming skills worthless, and they were forced to live with people they didn't know in crowded, unsanitary camps and depend on others, in particular the United Nations, for their day-to-day survival.<sup>37</sup>

This material, however, will be of interest to scholars of contemporary Palestinian society and politics: the fact that the memorial books were written recently - some 40 to 50 years following the 1948 War but prior to any political settlement - help us understand how individual and collective memories are utilized to compose an image of the past in the present. The texts, comprised of both historical material and personal memories, serve to validate what had existed and to give testimony to a 'Palestine' once registered as a tangible entity on maps.

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#### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Palestinian history has benefited from a number of works that focus on rural populations. The early

ethnographic accounts of Hilma Granqvist and Tawfik Canaan describe village life and practices in the early 20th century. Beshara Doumani's work on 19th century Jabal Nablus constitutes an important contribution to the rural-urban relations in the 18th and 19th centuries (*Rediscovering Palestine*. (Berkeley: UC Press, 1995). Salim Tamari's work on villagers covers both halves of the twentieth century: "The City and its Rural Hinterland" in *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab Neighbourhoods and Their Fate in the War*. Ed. Salim Tamari. 1st ed. (Jerusalem: IJS and Badil, 1999) and "From the Fruits of Their Labour: the Persistence of Sharetenancy in the Palestinian Agrarian Economy." *The Rural Middle East: Peasant Lives and Modes of Production*. Eds. Kathy Glavanis and Pandeli Glavanis. (London: Birzeit University and Zed Books Ltd, 1990). Ted Swendenburg's *Memories of Revolt*, focuses on Palestinian rural resistance fighters and their memories of the 1936-39 revolt (Minneapolis: UMinnesota Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Susan Slyomovics, "The Memory of Place: Rebuilding the Pre-1948 Palestinian Village." *Diaspora* 3.2 (1994) and *The Object of Memory: Arab and Jew Narrate the Palestinian Village*. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1998), xiii-xiv and 1-7. For an extensive introduction to and excerpts from memorial books by the Jewish communities in Poland, see Kugelmass and Boyarin, *From a Ruined Garden* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998).

<sup>3</sup> This article is based on my dissertation: Rochelle Davis, *The Attar of History: Palestinian Narratives of Life before 1948* (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 2002).

<sup>4</sup> None of the authors cross borders to collect information from refugees living in other places, although numerous works are compiled from the accounts of refugees living in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. I include Israel and the West Bank and Gaza as one geographical entity because of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and therefore of the relative ease of travel between them (prior to 1991) and the post-1967 connections among the Palestinian communities across the borders.

<sup>5</sup> This is in contrast to the Eastern European Jewish memorial books, which were solicited and collected in written form; see Kugelmass and Boyarin, 1998.

<sup>6</sup> All of the village memorial books in this study were published either in Jordan or Palestine.

<sup>7</sup> The villages are from the provinces [*liwa*] of Haifa (the village of 'Ayn Hod), Jaffa (Salameh village), Ramleh ('Anaba village), Jerusalem (Deir Yassin village), Hebron (al-Duwaymeh village), and Gaza (Majdal 'Asqalan town).

<sup>8</sup> Some of the researchers may have been from the descendants of these villages, but there are no indications in the text that they were. Some of their father's names point to other places of origin. In addition, some authors worked on more than one village book.

<sup>9</sup> Kana'aneh and al-Madani *Majdal 'Asqalan* (Birzeit: Birzeit, 1987), cover page.

<sup>10</sup> The villages represented, according to their geographical distribution, are Kufr Bir'im (Safad District), 'Ayn Hod and Tirat Haifa (Haifa District), Lubya (Tiberius District), Zir'in (Jenin District), Kufr Saba, Miska, and Qaqun (Tulkarm District), Dayr Yasin and Lifta (Jerusalem District), Salameh and Abu Kishk (Jaffa District), 'Anaba and Abu Shusha (al-Ramlah District), Beit Jibrin (Hebron District), and al-Faluja, al-Kaufakha, and Majdal 'Asqalan (Gaza District). With the exception of the villages of the northern Galilee whose inhabitants ended up in Lebanon and Syria (and therefore were not available to the Birzeit researchers), the chosen villages represent most of the areas of Palestine that became Israel in 1948. These works do not cover, however, the large number of Bedouin communities that were displaced by the creation of Israel, in particular from al-Naqab (the Negev) area and who ended up either displaced within Israel or in Jordan.

<sup>11</sup> All of the books in this group were from village societies founded in Jordan.

<sup>12</sup> The 1944 land and population statistics are taken from *All that Remains*, ed. Walid Khalidi (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992). A few of the Jerusalem villages also had Jewish populations, the largest of which was in Qaluniya (350 Jews and 910 Arabs), and these Jewish populations owned land (in Qaluniya Jewish land was 1,084 dunums, Arab land was 3,594 dunums).

<sup>13</sup> At least not to my knowledge.

<sup>14</sup> Abu Khiyara et al. *Al-Walajah Hadara Wa Tarikh [Al-Walajah: Culture and History]*. (Amman, Jordan: al-Walajah Cooperative Society, 1993), 208 pages.

<sup>15</sup> 'Atiyya, 'Atiya 'Abdallah. *'Ayn Karim: Al-Haqiqah Wa-Al-Hulm ['Ayn Karim: The Reality and the Dream]*. (Amman: 1991), 280 pages.

<sup>16</sup> 'Awadallah, Ibrahim Nafi'. *Suba: Ihda Qura Filastin Al-Mudammara 'Am 1948 Fi Mintaqat Al-Quds [Suba: One Village of Palestine Destroyed in 1948 in the Jerusalem Area]*. (Amman: Jamai'yat suba al-ta'awuniya, 1996), 291 pages.

<sup>17</sup> Salih, 'Othman Mahmud. *Beit Mahsir [Beit Mahsir]*. (Amman: 1988), 140 pages. This book is hand-

written in calligraphy.

<sup>18</sup> Samarin, Ghalib Muhammad. *Qariyati Qaluniya: Al-Ard Wa-Al-Judhur (Filastinuna Bi Qisat Qarya) [My Village Qaluniya: Land and Roots (Our Palestine in the Story of a Village)]*. (Amman: 1993), 339 pages. The name could be Samarin or Samarayn, as it is not voweled in the original. I will use the first throughout the text.

<sup>19</sup> Abu Hadba, *Qaryat Deir Aban* (al-Bireh: In'ash al-Ustra, 1990). Of the martyrs, two were killed in 1916, one in 1929, two in 1936, and the remaining 32 in 1948, among whom were five women (413-414).

<sup>20</sup> Zionist Organization of America. *Deir Yassin: History of a Lie*. 1998. Web Page. URL: <http://www.zoa.org/pubs/deiryassin.html>. 22 July 2002, Introduction.

<sup>21</sup> ZOA, ("Arab researchers' surprising discovery" section), The total population of Deir Yassin in 1944 was recorded to be 610 people, and thus the killing of 107 persons from the village represents around 17 percent of the population.

<sup>22</sup> Benny Morris, whose seminal work *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem* rewrote thinking about 1948 for many, did not use oral sources in his research. He believes that "While contemporary documents may misinform, distort, omit or lie, they do so, in my experience, far more rarely than interviewees recalling highly controversial events some 40 years ago. [...] I have found interviews of use in obtaining "colour" and a picture of the prevailing conditions. Only very, very rarely have I relied on oral history to establish facts." (Morris (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1989, p. 2.) See also the controversy surrounding the thesis work of Katz, a student at the University of Haifa. Pappe, Ilan. "The Tantura Case in Israel: The Katz Research and Trial." (*Journal of Palestine Studies* XXX.119, 2001).

<sup>23</sup> ZOA, Conclusion.

<sup>24</sup> Hogan and McGowan offer a cogent critique of the ZOA report; see Introduction, <http://www.deiryassin.org/op00005.html>

<sup>25</sup> Abu Khiyara et al. 1993, 99.

<sup>26</sup> Abu Khiyara et al. 1993, 99-100.

<sup>27</sup> Undoubtedly some exist, but there were none in the books that I am using for this study. On the other hand, there are many accounts by women of what happened in 1948 (Diab and Fahum's *Hikayat Qarya* (Beirut: al-Mu'asisa al-'arabiya lil-dirasat wa al-nashr, 1990), for example), and a number of accounts of village women's lives in English. See Gorkin and Othman, *Three Mothers, Three Daughters* (Berkeley: University

of California, 1996), Najjar and Warncock's *Portraits of Palestinian Women* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992).

<sup>28</sup> See, for example, *Palestinian Women: Identity and Experience*, edited by Ebba Augustin (NY: Zed, 1993); *Portraits of Palestinian Women* by Orayb Aref Najjar and Kitty Warnock (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah, 1992); *Palestinian Women of Gaza and the West Bank* edited by Suha Sabbagh (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998); and Gorkin and Othman, 1996.

<sup>29</sup> 'Awadallah 1996, 199.

<sup>30</sup> 'Awadallah 1996, 199.

<sup>31</sup> Samarin 1993, 93-95.

<sup>32</sup> One wife was listed by her name and she didn't seem to fit into any of the families or *hama'il* listed.

<sup>33</sup> Abu Khiyara 1993, p. 69.

<sup>34</sup> Fig and olive trees are mentioned in the Qur'an as the trees of blessings [*al-ashjar al-mubarakah*].

<sup>35</sup> Samarin 1993, 13.

<sup>36</sup> Abu Ahmed ('Issa Ahmed Musa Suleiman) in Kana'anah and al-Madani, *al-Faluja* (Birzeit: Birzeit 1987), 42.

<sup>37</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, *Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries* (London: Zed Press, 1979).