



## The Millenarist Settlement in Artas and its support network in Britain and North America, 1845-1878

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Artas village and the convent of Hortus conclusus, ca. 1940, *Watson collection, Library of Congress.*

The village of Artas, near Bethlehem, may be known for any one of three reasons: its location next to Solomon's Pools, as the object of Hilma Granqvist's ethnographic inquiry into Palestinian village life, or, more recently, as the site of the annual Lettuce Festival organized by the Artas Folkore Center since the mid-1990s. What is less known is that Artas also was the first Palestinian village to become the home of millenarist European and American settlers in the nineteenth century. Millenarism as the belief in the Second Coming of Christ and his thousand-year reign on earth is an ideology that has played an important role in shaping European and North American views of the Middle East. It continues to do so to this day, particularly in the United States, but also in some evangelical milieus in Europe.<sup>1</sup> In the nineteenth century, European and North American millenarists founded several settlements in Palestine that constitute an important element in the entangled history of the Middle East,



Solomon's Pools, second half of the 19th century, photographer unknown, *Library of Congress*.

Europe and North America. The settlement founded in the Artas valley is a particularly interesting example of millenarist ambitions and activities in nineteenth-century Palestine.

John Meshullam, a Jewish convert to Anglicanism from London, was the founder of the settlement in the Artas valley that became the first school for manual labor designed for the Jews of Palestine. In millenarist but also in early Zionist circles, this agricultural settlement quickly gained a reputation as a model establishment. Meshullam had no difficulty finding European and North American partners and supporters for his project, which makes this settlement a good example of the multinational alliances between millenarist Christians in Palestine and their extensive support networks in Europe and North America. This settlement also presents an interesting case of the kind of socio-political constellations settlers encountered in nineteenth-century Palestine: in Artas, they had to compete for access to land and water resources not only with local peasants, but also with the semi-nomadic Ta'amra tribe, who were a dominant force in the Bethlehem area at that time. Following a brief introduction to millenarist initiatives in Palestine and the socio-political conditions in which they evolved, this article will offer an overview of the settlement's development and its support network as well as some biographical details about its most important British and North American members.<sup>2</sup>

## Millenarist initiatives in nineteenth-century Palestine

The multi-national nature of millenarist settlements in Palestine was not an isolated phenomenon, but rather parallels the founding of the first Protestant Bishopric in Jerusalem in 1841, which was a joint initiative of Great Britain's Anglican Church and Prussia's Protestant Church. This British-Prussian initiative, based on religious as well as political motives, signaled to missionary organizations in Britain and in German-speaking countries that a new era had begun for their work in the Middle East. In the first half of the nineteenth century several millenarist missionary organizations arose in different parts of Europe. Their goal was to convert Jews to Christianity and to encourage their emigration to Palestine, both of which they saw as essential conditions for the Second Coming of Christ. In 1809 the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews (LJS)<sup>3</sup> was founded in Great Britain and in 1843 the Rhenish Westphalian Society for Israel (Rheinisch-Westphälischer Verein für Israel) saw the light in Cologne. Members of these two societies who immigrated to Palestine in the nineteenth century attended services in the only Protestant church in Jerusalem at that time, Christ Church, and were part of the small community of internationals in the holy city. Consular archives and travel accounts show that multi-national alliances were common in private as well as in commercial affairs. The contacts between settlers and missionaries from different parts of Europe and North America thus played an important role in the development of the various missionary and settlement initiatives.

## The socio-political framework

One of the most important elements of the socio-political framework within which the settlements of millenarist Christians evolved are the Ottoman reforms (*Tanzimat*) of the second half of the nineteenth century, since they gradually changed the status of religious minorities and non-Ottomans, as well as property and land use throughout the Empire. The *Tanzimat* were partly due to an Ottoman will to bring about the centralization and modernization of state power, but were also a result of the pressure exercised by the European great powers, which were eager to further their strategic, economic and religiously-motivated interests in the Middle East. The Ottoman reforms of property and land use profoundly changed the concept of landed property in Palestine, which had traditionally been based on collective and state-controlled forms. At the end of the *Tanzimat* period, the concept of landed property in Palestine was almost the equivalent of the European concept of private property.<sup>4</sup> This development facilitated land sales at a time when many Palestinian farmers were extremely poor due to high taxes while non-Ottomans had more and more legal possibilities to purchase land. Moreover, non-Ottomans enjoyed a privileged status, being protégés of their consulates, and were sometimes able to avoid Ottoman jurisdiction. The basis of the livelihood of Palestine's rural population thus changed significantly in

the nineteenth century, and these changes made it easier for Europeans and North Americans to settle down in the Holy Land.

In this context of profound transformation, Artas is an extremely interesting observatory. This village some three kilometers (nearly two miles) south of Bethlehem is located in a fertile valley benefitting from access to five sources of water and its proximity to the hydraulic infrastructure linking them to Jerusalem, namely Solomon's Pools and the Aqueduct. Two of Solomon's Pools were built during Herod's reign and the third during the Mamluk period in Palestine, but the name of the Pools shows the degree of association between the valley of Artas and King Solomon, who was said to have built his pleasure gardens named Etham there. This biblical association attracted European and American pilgrims, biblical researchers, archeologists and orientalists to the valley and also played a part in drawing millenarist settlers to the area in the nineteenth century.

### **Support for the Artas colony: millenarist expectations meet British interests**

The support network of the millenarist colony in the Artas valley was governed by strategic alliances and varying degrees of ideological convergence among protagonists who might not have entered into partnerships in other circumstances, since they differed significantly from one another in social, religious and political terms. The relationships between the various institutional and individual members of the colony's support network were – as network relationships generally are – multidimensional and multifunctional<sup>5</sup>. Some relationships were direct, others indirect. There were tensions between different members and some left, while others joined at different moments in the more than thirty-year history of the colony.

The settlement's support network was predominately British and North American, since Meshullam's project corresponded with millenarist expectations particularly widespread in Great Britain and North America, and also with a wave in British foreign policy that favored Jewish and Protestant presence in Palestine. British interests in Palestine were multiple and only began to be coordinated after the opening of the British Consulate in Jerusalem in 1838. According to A.L. Tibawi, the British Consulate and the Protestant Bishopric together became the pivots of British activities in Palestine.<sup>6</sup> The establishment of the British Consulate was at least partly due to the influence the Earl of Shaftesbury (1801-1885) had on the British Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston. A self-defined "Evangelical of the Evangelicals,"<sup>7</sup> Shaftesbury was a founding member of the London Jews Society and a firm opponent of the emancipation of British Jews since this would hinder their conversion to Christianity and their ingathering in the Holy Land.<sup>8</sup> As a founding member of the LJS and a close advisor to Lord Palmerston, Shaftesbury was doubly linked to the second British Consul in Jerusalem, James Finn, who became one of John Meshullam's most important allies. All three men were members of the LJS, which brought together

British finance, politics and religion<sup>9</sup> around the objective of assisting poor Jews and converting them to Christianity.

The North American side of the support network reflects the impact of the “Second Great Awakening,” a period of religious revival in American history. Clorinda Minor (1806–1855) was the wife of a rich merchant in Philadelphia and a follower of the Baptist preacher William Miller (1782-1849) who predicted the end of the world for 1843/1844. She was among the thousands of victims of the “Great Deception” resulting from the unfulfilled prophecy. Unlike most victims, she continued to adhere to his ideas, but became convinced that his error was not to have realized the important role of the Jews in Palestine in facilitating the Second Coming. In 1849 she visited Palestine and met John Meshullam at his Jerusalem hotel. She became an associate of his agricultural settlement in Artas, and after a two-month stay she sailed back to the US to raise funds and recruit volunteers for the colony, which she saw as a “bud of promise.”<sup>10</sup> Her partnership with John Meshullam lasted less than four years, after which she and her disciples joined a settlement founded by a group of Prussian millenarists near Jaffa, where she is buried.

Henry Wentworth Monk (1827-1896) was a Canadian self-declared prophet and the author of numerous pamphlets and articles on religious and political issues. Schooled in London, he developed a keen interest in religious questions and a deep admiration for thinkers such as Shaftesbury. In 1853 he worked his way to Palestine as a sailor and joined Meshullam’s colony in Artas for about two years. During his two-year stay he became a friend of the British painter William Holman Hunt, who painted his portrait. This oil painting depicts Monk with long hair and a long beard, holding the Bible in one hand and the *Times* in the other, in an illustration of Monk’s ideology which consistently linked current events to Biblical prophecies. Back in Canada in 1855, Monk finished his 200-page book *A Simple Interpretation of the Revelation* (1859)<sup>11</sup> in which he explains most of his ideas on the future of humankind and the place of the Holy Land. Later on in his life, he founded the Palestine Restoration Fund with the objective of raising enough money to buy Palestine from the Ottomans.<sup>12</sup>

## **John Meshullam, founder of the settlement and center of the network**

John Meshullam was born in London in 1799 to a well-to-do Jewish family. After travelling widely and living in Italy and Tunisia, he converted to Christianity, and in 1840 was baptized in Malta, along with his Italian-born wife, by Samuel Gobat, the future Protestant bishop of Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> About one year later, the couple and their children moved to Jerusalem, where John Meshullam opened the first European-style hotel.<sup>14</sup> The British Consul’s wife Elizabeth Finn describes him as “a very small man of under five feet high, but of immense energy and brimful of information, gathered in all parts of the world.”<sup>15</sup>

In 1845 Meshullam obtained a lease for half of the valley of Artas by paying the blood price (*dīya*) which the villagers owed to another group<sup>16</sup>, presumably the Ta‘amra.<sup>17</sup>

As he [Meshullam] was riding one day in the vicinity of Bethlehem, near the Pools of Solomon, he discovered a rich valley, in an uncultivated state, with the different kinds of native fruit, the fig, pomegranate, and vine, growing untrained. It was also watered by a large and living fountain. On inquiry he ascertained that the owners, having murdered their neighbors some years before, and being unable to pay the price of blood, according to the Turkish law, had fled the country. M[eshullam] went to the Pasha, and paid the stipulated sum; *he sent for the banished to return*, and gave them half the soil, and entered into a continuous lease for the remainder, paying them a small sum yearly. This is the only way in which Europeans can legally obtain possession of the soil. He provided them with seed for their part, and employs them as laborers on his own, and *has thus become their benefactor*, and secured their confidence.<sup>18</sup>

John Meshullam arrived in Artas at a time of great vulnerability for the villagers (hereafter: Ratasna). An unpaid blood price and difficult relations with their neighbors were the last in a series of problems the villagers had suffered in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Having sided with the ousted Ottoman pacha Mahmud II in the early 1830s, the Ratasna had seen their houses destroyed by Ibrahim Pacha’s army in retaliation. The animosity which existed between them and the Ta‘amra seems to have discouraged them from rebuilding their houses thereafter, so they lived in neighboring villages and in the nearby Ottoman fortress named Qal‘at al-Birak for several years while continuing to cultivate their land in the valley.

John Meshullam could not have legally bought land in Palestine, since non-Ottomans did not have the right to do so until 1856.<sup>19</sup> Like other foreigners in *bilad al-Sham*, he was only able to obtain access to land by taking advantage of the villagers’ vulnerability in face of Bedouin raids or tax farmers. By paying the blood price, John Meshullam removed an important obstacle to the Ratasnas’ return to their village and thereby appeared as their benefactor. He still had to give a quarter of his annual harvest to the sheikh of Artas, in addition to the annual rent.<sup>20</sup> His lease was guaranteed by the British Consul, which reinforced Meshullam’s position among the local population, but also kept him dependent on the Consul.

Meshullam found very favorable conditions for agricultural exploitation in the valley of Artas:

He now raises *five* crops in a year ! of different kinds of European vegetables, most of which were unknown in Judea before. He raises two crops without irrigation, during the wet season, and three during the dry, through the plentiful supply of water from the fountain. His first crop he dedicated to

the Lord, and distributed it among the poor Jews, although he might have realized a large sum by its disposal in the city.<sup>21</sup>

The conditions in the Artas valley were in fact so favorable to extensive agricultural exploitation that Meshullam soon enlarged his project by renting an additional vineyard and several wheat fields near Solomon's Pools.<sup>22</sup> His objectives were lucrative and charitable at the same time: he gave part of his harvest to Jerusalem's poor Jews, but he sold most of his fruit and vegetables in a store in Jerusalem.<sup>23</sup>

Meshullam continued to live in Jerusalem with his family until 1850 when he obtained permission to build a house in Artas.<sup>24</sup> In a letter to a friend from the Millerite sect in the United States, he describes the reasons and the repercussions of his decision to move his family to Artas:

Beloved Christian Friend ..... After having spent the half of last winter under a tent, and finding it impracticable for me and the serviceable animals for my agriculture to go on in such a position, I proceeded to rear four rooms... at the lower end of the valley, economizing my labor by means of the adjoining rocks. Having taken such an important decision, I found it indispensably necessary to form habitations conducive to that health and comfort, of which, as Europeans, we felt in need, especially while removing my family to such a retired situation. .... Acceptable as this information may be to you, and those conjoined friends, who are desirous to *promote Zion's welfare*, it has not been received as such by sectarian opinions here, who when informed of my intentions of removing my family to Artos,<sup>25</sup> protested against the *precarious positions* to which I voluntarily exposed myself, as a responsible agent living in a solitary valley, *encircled by seven savage and barbarous tribes*. This is, indeed, the real fact; but GOD, the supporter, and help of his people, has mercifully condescended to employ my reason, in *leading these uncivilized people to view in me, and also to daily confess, a superior and benefactor*.<sup>26</sup>

In this letter, the indigenous population of the Artas region appears – as it often does in European writings of the nineteenth century – as uncivilized and backward. Meshullam, however, does not seem to feel threatened by the “natives,” in spite of the isolation in which he and his family would live in Artas. He believes that the “natives” have accepted him as a superior being and benefactor and therefore would not harm him. This condescending attitude towards the indigenous population reflects his confidence in his ability to manipulate the villagers. All of this, however, has to be seen in the context of this letter, which Meshullam addresses to a member of his new support network in the United States, in whose eyes he had every interest to appear a superior being in perfect control of his environment in order to be deemed worthy of support. In reality, the relationship between Meshullam, the villagers and the Ta'amra was however less hierarchical and more complex than this letter made them appear.

## Preparing the land for the return: millenarist beliefs in action

The objectives of the settlement founded by Meshullam can only be adequately explained in the context of his and his associates' religious beliefs. As a member of the LJS, Meshullam was motivated by his desire to contribute to the realization of the prophecies he believed in, namely the Second Coming of Christ after a period of preparation and purification. The following extract from a letter he wrote to his North American allies shows that he saw himself as an agent doing God's work:

If the Lord is indeed supporting my undertaking, in behalf of his *afflicted people*, He will I am sure, finish the work He has begun, and make me in future *the instrument of His purpose*, but if otherwise, I will simply commit to his *Providence*, the care of my personal concern in it. . . . Many are the evident, and increasing tokens, that the Lord's eyes are turned for good, on Jacob's heritage. Let but Islamism flee from our strong holds and the Lord's purpose find room, amid the broken fragments of this *desolate land*, and *the FIRST STEP of civilization*, and industrial labor, *in cultivation*, SPREAD among the vallies of Palestine, and find its way, effectually to Jewish quarters, then in the due and predicted time, the Lord will appear and openly exhibit the majestic band that is to *return to Zion*, and his hand shall dry up Israel's tears, when a remnant shall come out from the *furnace of long affliction*, as *pure* as the native gold of Armenia.<sup>27</sup>

One can contextualize Meshullam's beliefs by comparing them with the ideas of his most important North American ally, Clorinda Minor:

... the SON OF MAN SHALL COME, and a king shall reign in righteousness, "upon Mount Zion, and the Lord shall be the king over all the earth." Then shall come "the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of his glory," and bring the restitution of all things, which God has spoken... when the promise of Abraham shall be fulfilled, to all his natural and spiritual seed, and the curse of the land shall be removed, and it shall become "as the gardens of the Lord."<sup>28</sup>

For Clorinda Minor and her disciples, the promise of Abraham implied both the "natural" descendants of Abraham (the Jews) and the "spiritual" descendants of Abraham (all those Christians who believe in the Second Coming of Christ and consider the Jews as the "natural" brothers of Jesus).<sup>29</sup> The fulfilment of the promise of Abraham goes hand in hand with the removal of the "curse of the land" – the supposed desolation of Palestine which she describes as follows:

The most surprising fertility is struggling side by side with desert barrenness, and the choicest natural advantages of climate and situation, have hitherto been *paralyzed by an uncivilized despotism, and the ignorance and sloth of its occupants*. But in the last few years a surprising change is distinctly manifest, and “the land,” in harmony with the improving prospects of its scattered people, is showing *symptoms of returning to life*, in sure presage of its speedy and glorious redemption.<sup>30</sup>

It is important to explain some of the allusions in this passage. Clorinda Minor found the natural conditions of the country favorable, although it had been “paralyzed” by the mixture of the “uncivilized despotism” of the *Ottomans* and the “ignorance and sloth” of its *Arab* inhabitants. She believed she was witnessing an improvement in the general state of the country that paralleled the improved conditions of its real owners, in her eyes – the Jews. She therefore considered that the moment had come for Zion, or as she said, it was “the set time to favour Zion.”<sup>31</sup> This conviction implied an engagement of the “true Christians” on the sides of the Jews for the redemption of the Holy Land.

For John Meshullam and his associates, their agricultural labor in the valley of Artas thus had an extremely important spiritual dimension. They wanted to show that the land of Palestine had to be cultivated because it was the land in which the Second Coming of Christ would take place. The spiritual quest of these millenarist believers was thus translated into action on the ground, which was equally important in order to prepare the people, i.e. the Jews, for their supposed destiny. Reverend J.E. Hanauer, the son of an LJS missionary and friend of John Meshullam’s, describes the impact of the example of the Artas colony as follows:

The success of Meshullam in maintaining his family honestly by farming for several years ... led people to suppose that when the Jews should return in large numbers to the Holy Land, which return, it was believed, was imminent; they would have to take up agriculture as a means of subsistence. As it was realized that but few, if indeed any, of them would have any knowledge of farming, it was argued that it would be an important missionary venture to start a model farm or settlement, where Jewish converts could be trained for such work in order that when the great expected influx of their unbelieving brethren came, the latter might receive competent advice and assistance in their own peasant undertakings.<sup>32</sup>

As an element of the missionary landscape of Palestine, the Artas settlement corresponded to a new model of assistance promoted by many missionaries in Palestine in the nineteenth century: this new model sought to teach potential candidates for conversion important manual, agricultural and industrial skills. This training model was designed to replace the dominant charitable model, which these missionaries held responsible for the dependence on charity of potential converts. The School of Industry

founded by the first Protestant Bishop of Jerusalem, M.S. Alexander, in 1843 was the first project of this kind in Jerusalem,<sup>33</sup> while the Artas colony was the first project teaching agricultural skills in rural Palestine. For the advocates of the restoration of Israel, agricultural training projects for Jews signified the creation of the work force necessary for the realization of the Biblical prophecies at the heart of their ideology.

## Consul Finn's role in developing the settlement

British Consul James Finn (1806-1872), in office in Jerusalem between 1846 and 1863, was undoubtedly John Meshullam's most important ally, but also the main reason for some of his most serious difficulties in Artas. He was an active member of the LJS,<sup>34</sup> whose committee received the news of his appointment to Jerusalem with joy, hoping to see it "conduce to the honour of his Sovereign, the advancement of religion and civilisation in the East, and the welfare of the Jewish nation in Jerusalem and Palestine."<sup>35</sup>

James Finn received the order to promote the political and commercial interests of Britain in Palestine and to protect British subjects as well as Jews in Palestine,<sup>36</sup> a complementary order which had already been given to his predecessor,<sup>37</sup> but which Finn seems to have taken more to heart than him.<sup>38</sup> According to Mordechai Eliav,

His efforts to serve as benefactor to the Jewish community exceeded those of any other Consul in the nineteenth century. Though among the other Consuls there were some who tended to philosemitism and engaged in activities on behalf of the *Yishuv*, none exceeded his authority or went into debt to help the Jews.<sup>39</sup>

Aside from his consular activities, James Finn and his wife Elizabeth also pursued a number of charitable projects which aimed to improve the material situation of Jews in Jerusalem by giving them work and practical skills, but were also intended as an invitation to Christianity. For this purpose, the couple bought several plots of land first in Jerusalem (Al-Tālibiyya and Karm al-Khalīl/Kerem Avraham) and later on in Artas and Faghur, a small village south of Artas.<sup>40</sup> Kerem Avraham, which seems to have been inspired by the example of the Artas colony,<sup>41</sup> was the most renowned project of the Finns, which Grayevsky has described as follows:

... the house that was built on this property was the first to be constructed by Jews for Jews. Mrs. Finn presided over its construction and also provided for those numerous cisterns on the estate, hewn by Jews for Jews, to supply water to the returned exiles. Each cistern carried a special inscription, such as "Gather the people together, and I will give them water" or "The poor and the needy seek water and there is none, and their tongue faileth for thirst; I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them."<sup>42</sup>

Just as for John Meshullam and Clorinda Minor, the main objective for the Finns in Palestine was the preparation of the land and of the people (i.e. the Jews) for the events of the Second Coming. It was thus no wonder that Elizabeth Finn became an important partner in the Artas settlement in 1856 by buying a large plot of land in the valley.<sup>43</sup> This partnership, however, only became possible after Clorinda Minor and her disciples abandoned their plans in Artas, due mostly to serious conflicts with Consul Finn. As a fervent Anglican, he despised the Sabbath-observing Minor and accused her of using Meshullam's project for her own gain,<sup>44</sup> apparently in order to create a rift between her and Meshullam.

Even before his wife officially entered into a business partnership with Meshullam, Consul Finn was very closely involved with the settlement in the Artas valley. His involvement was partly justified by Meshullam's status as a British subject under the protection of the British consulate, but it went beyond official consular business. Aside from guaranteeing Meshullam's lease, Finn was also instrumental in negotiating the terms of Meshullam's access to water resources with the villagers and the neighboring Ta'amra.<sup>45</sup> He accompanied Meshullam to the Governor's office in Jerusalem when Meshullam wanted to intercede on behalf of the villagers in tax matters.<sup>46</sup> In many ways he took Meshullam under his wing and facilitated most if not all of his administrative dealings with the representatives of the Ottoman state. As an active member of the LJS he also sent converted Jews or potential candidates for conversion to Meshullam for employment on the settlement.<sup>47</sup>

Over the years, Finn's involvement in the affairs of the settlement became increasingly heavy-handed and overbearing. After his wife became a major partner of Meshullam's in Artas, the relationship between the two men gradually became more difficult. In 1862, John Meshullam and Elizabeth Finn officially went to consular court after months of disputes about their accounts and debts. Consul Finn's decision in favor of his wife led to the auctioning off of John Meshullam's property, which Elizabeth Finn then bought.

Another reason for the conflict between James Finn and John Meshullam lies in the recruitment of John Meshullam's son Peter as Finn's first unofficial, later official, chancellor.<sup>48</sup> John Meshullam did not approve of Peter's aggressive behavior towards local peasants and blamed Finn for encouraging such behavior in his son.<sup>49</sup> When Peter was found dead in the countryside near Artas in March 1863, James Finn suspected the Ta'amra, but John Meshullam blamed Consul Finn. In a letter to James Finn's successor, Noël Temple Moore, John Meshullam described the impact of his son's behavior:

Meanwhile my deceased son Peter began to behave rudely and lawlessly towards my Arab neighbours which threatened to bring upon me their resentment, destroy all feelings of friendship which had existed between me and them, endanger his own life and imperil my residence among them. – I made repeated representations of the danger to the Consul, but found that instead of aiding me to reclaim my son within the province of reason, the

Consul made him his Chancellor and took him under his especial protection, which encouraged him in his lawless and disorderly career and subsequently entered into partnership with him, in certain lands of which the inhabitants of a village about an hour distance from Urtas<sup>50</sup> have been most unjustly deprived of by the Consul and my son. A scene of conflict and disturbance ensued, my complaints to the Consul remained unanswered; the natives persecuted by my son crowded my residence, some presenting a threatening attitude, other demanding justice and bitterly complaining of the various losses and damages entailed upon them and of the indifference of the local Government towards them.<sup>51</sup>

While the case of Peter Meshullam's tragic death was never entirely elucidated, the case of John Meshullam vs. Elizabeth Finn was finally taken up by the Judge of the British Consular High Court in Istanbul who reversed James Finn's decision and restored all of John Meshullam's property in the summer of 1863.<sup>52</sup> John Meshullam returned to Artas and appears to have lived there until his death in 1878. James Finn had to leave Palestine in May 1863 after having been accused of insubordination by his superiors in London.<sup>53</sup> The grievances and complaints against him, coming from the rabbis of Jewish communities, and also from John Meshullam, had become too numerous to be ignored. This disgraceful end notwithstanding, Elizabeth Finn was assured by the interest shown her by Zionist leaders of the historical importance of the projects she had been involved in during her husband's service in Palestine. In her autobiography dictated in 1913, she concludes:

Thus it came to pass that while we were able to demonstrate that Jews would work and that Palestine was indeed worth cultivating, the Jewish leaders of Europe, being informed of what we were doing, took the matter up. They sent to Palestine to make enquiries and one of their principal agents came to me for statistics and information. They possessed the necessary capital and have gradually built up the great Jewish colonies where now several thousands are settled and employed ... That this work will progress and that the Holy Land will again be peopled by its lawful owners, the Hebrew nation, and will again "blossom as the rose," when Israel fulfils the Divine conditions, we fully believe and expect.<sup>54</sup>

Elizabeth Finn's reasoning is representative of the gradual reduction of millenarist ideology (with its strong emphasis on the conversion of Jews as a prerequisite for the Second Coming) to restorationism, the conviction that the Bible mandates a final restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel. As Alexander Schölch has pointed out, "Once stripped of its chiliastic wrappings, the doctrine of the inalienable right of the Jews to Palestine, their repatriation, and the role that Britain thereby acquired, became a commonplace in the English literature on Palestine."<sup>55</sup> A commonplace so widespread that we can find a restorationist amalgam in Handbook No. 164 on

Zionism, written under the direction of the historical section of the British Foreign Office in 1919:

Though it is less than twenty-five years since Theodor Herzl in his *Jewish State* suggested Zionism as a solution to the Jewish question, it is also the oldest nationalist movement in history. The earliest books of the Bible make Palestine the rallying-point of Israel and the Nations. Moses, Isaiah, Malachi, all preached the love of the Holy Land. The Zionism of the Bible is far anterior to the exile of Israel – even the first exile. It dates back to the prehistoric days of Israel in Egypt; and Moses was the first Zionist.<sup>56</sup>

Millenarism and restorationism were important elements in the history of the European and North American presence in the valley of Artas, and particularly strong motivations for the settlement's supporters in Britain and North America. John Meshullam, James Finn, Clorinda Minor and Henry Wentworth Monk saw the past and the present of Palestine through a Biblical looking-glass that made Artas appear like the Gardens of Solomon and the ideal starting point to prepare for the Second Coming. This biblical past and providential future thus made the settlement founded by a converted Jew appear like a "sign of the times," a portent of the end of the world.

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#### Endnotes

- 1 Millenarism often goes hand-in-hand with Restorationism, the conviction that the Bible mandates a final restoration of the Jews to the land of Israel. While Millenarism and Zionism thus share the goal of restoring the Jews to the land of Israel, the ultimate objective is obviously not the same: political Zionism aims to create a nation-state for the Jews in Palestine while Millenarism sees the ingathering of the Jews in Palestine, along with their conversion to Christianity, as a necessary step for the final redemption of Christendom.
- 2 The settlement was also linked to individuals and organizations in German-speaking regions of Europe, but their role is beyond the scope of this article.
- 3 For the history of the LJS, see Yaron Perry, *British Mission to the Jews in Nineteenth-Century Palestine* (London: Frank Cass, 2003).
- 4 For a more detailed and nuanced description of land use and property in Ottoman Palestine, see Roger Owen, ed., *New Perspectives on Property and Land in the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000).
- 5 Cilja Harders, "Dimensionen des Netzwerkansatzes: Einführende theoretische Überlegungen," in R. Loimeier, ed., *Die islamische Welt als Netzwerk, Möglichkeiten und Grenzen des Netzwerkansatzes im islamischen Kontext* (Würzburg: Ergon, 2000), 25.
- 6 A.L. Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine, 1800-1901: A Study of Religious and Educational Enterprise* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961), 1-2.
- 7 Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*, 34.
- 8 Eugen Weber, *Apocalypses et Millénarismes* (Paris: Fayard, 1999), 157.
- 9 Weber, *Apocalypses et Millénarismes*, 156-157.
- 10 A.L. Wood, *Meshullam! Or Tidings from Jerusalem, From the Journal of a Believer Recently Returned from the Holy Land*, 2nd edition, (Philadelphia: privately published, 1851), 62-63.
- 11 Internet: Russell, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Online, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=40429>, accessed March 2007.

- 12 Internet: Russell, *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Online, <http://www.biographi.ca/EN/ShowBio.asp?BioId=40429>, accessed March 2007.
- 13 Yehoshua Ben Arie, *Jerusalem in the 19th century: Emergence of the New City* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, 1986), 66.
- 14 Wood, *Meshullam*, 104.
- 15 Elizabeth A. Finn, *Reminiscences of Mrs. Finn, Member of the Royal Asiatic Society* (London: Marshall, Morgan and Scott, 1929), 91.
- 16 Wood, *Meshullam*, 102.
- 17 Several sources mention animosity between the Artas villagers and the Ta'amra during the first half of the nineteenth century. Hilma Granqvist (1931) seems to attribute it to their respective allegiance to the Qais and Yaman factions, and Philip Baldensperger (1913) mentions the Ta'amra razzias on Artas. A.L. Tibawi (1961) writes that shortly after his arrival in Palestine, Meshullam paid a sum of money to the Ta'amra who were living in the Artas valley in the early 1840s. The Ta'amra in turn left a part of the valley for him to use. Local historian Musa Sanad, the founder of the Artas Folklore Center, writes in his unpublished history of the village that the presence of the European settlers contributed to decreased hostility between the villagers of Artas and the Ta'amra.
- 18 Wood, *Meshullam*, 102. Author's italics.
- 19 The *Hatti Humayun* of 1856 gave foreigners the right to buy land, but this reform was not really applied in Palestine until 1867.
- 20 Mordechai Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land, 1838-1914* (Jerusalem: Yad Izhak Ben Zvi, 1997), 160. In 1852, Biblical researcher Edward Robinson estimated that Meshullam cultivated between 15 and 20 acres in the valley of Artas (Ruth Kark, "Land Purchase and Mapping in a mid-Nineteenth-Century Palestinian Village" *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* (July – Dec. 1997): 159).
- 21 Wood, *Meshullam*, 102-103. Author's italics.
- 22 Wood, *Meshullam*, 1851, 103.
- 23 Mary E. Rogers, *La Vie Domestique en Palestine* (Paris: Agence de la Société des Ecoles du Dimanche, 1865), 74.
- 24 Wood, *Meshullam*, 1851, 103.
- 25 This spelling is used to designate Artas in the book published by Wood. Other European or American sources render the village's name as "Urtas" or "Ourtass".
- 26 Wood, *Meshullam*, 119. Author's italics.
- 27 Wood, *Meshullam*, 130. Author's italics.
- 28 Wood, *Meshullam*, vi-vii. Author's capitals.
- 29 Wood, *Meshullam*, iv.
- 30 Wood, *Meshullam*, 89. Author's italics.
- 31 Wood, *Meshullam*, viii.
- 32 J.E. Hanauer, *Notes on Attempts to make Hebrew-Christians and Jews Agricultural Colonists*, (unpublished manuscript or private publication, found among the Hilma Granqvist papers at the Palestine Exploration Fund in London), 7-8.
- 33 Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*, 75.
- 34 Sybil Jack, "Imperial Pawns: The Role of the British Consul," in *Imperialisms: Explorations in European Expansion and Empire*, ed. Deryck M. Schreuder, (Sydney: History Dept., University of Sydney, 1991), 44.
- 35 Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*, 123.
- 36 Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*, 122.
- 37 Tibawi, *British Interests in Palestine*, 33.
- 38 For instance, Finn extended British consular protection to many Russian and Austrian Jews in the second half of the 1840s (Arnold Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem, 1849-1858: The Consular Diary of James and Elizabeth Ann Finn* (London: Associated University Presses, 1980), 39.
- 39 Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 76.
- 40 The Finns' land acquisitions were a source of controversy and strained their relationship with Ottoman officials and local notables. When James Finn wanted to buy the land in al-Tālibiyya, the Jerusalem notables threatened to boycott, and even arrest, anyone who would sell land to Finn (Ilan Pappé, "The Rise and Fall of the Husaynis, 1840-1922, Part I," *Jerusalem Quarterly File*, (Issue 10, 2009): 9.
- 41 Hanauer, *Notes*, 6-7.
- 42 Ben Arie, *Jerusalem in the 19th century*, 63-64.
- 43 Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 75.
- 44 Arnold Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem, 1849-1858: The Consular Diary of James and Elizabeth Ann Finn* (London: Associated University Presses, 1980), 117.
- 45 Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem*, 130-132.
- 46 Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem*, 102-103.
- 47 Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem*, 116.
- 48 Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem*, 277. His nomination became official in November 1860, but Peter Meshullam had begun to work for Finn in 1857.
- 49 Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 215-216.
- 50 The village of Faghur. Peter Meshullam was the Finns' partner in their project there.
- 51 Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 215-216.
- 52 Eliav, *Britain and the Holy Land*, 223, 218.
- 53 Blumberg, *A View from Jerusalem*, 313.
- 54 Finn, *Reminiscences*, 249.
- 55 Alexander Schölch, *Palestine in Transformation, 1856-1882: Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development* (Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1993), 65.
- 56 Jane Priestland, ed., *Records of Jerusalem, 1917-1971* ([Great Britain], Archive Editions, 2002), 371.