Fig. 1. Et-Taiyiba village in Ramallah, Palestine.

CONSERVATION POLICIES IN PALESTINE: A CRITICAL REVIEW

Mazen Iwais

Archaeologist of PICLS (Palestinian Institution for Cultural Landscape Studies), PALESTINE

mazen.almashhad@gmail.com

The attempt in this paper is to hold a critical review by conducting an excavation into two decades of conservation policies in Palestine that have been previously directed by NGOs with donors' financial aid.

1. INTRODUCTION

An accurate analysis over the subject of conservation and awareness of cultural-archaeological heritage requires going beyond the recurrent idea of the systematic external destruction and placing the discussion deeper into the Palestinian courtyard. Palestinians have more than 15 years of work in conservation - a good ground to conduct this discussion over and an inherent call to bear more responsibility in determining priorities and agendas in conservation.

The first part of the paper addresses the subject of traditional architecture, which has been considered under the discipline of the Ottoman archaeology. This particular field study was influenced by the Ethno-archaeological approach and Processualism throughout the 1980s (GLOCK, 1994; NEGEV, GIBSON, 2001: 51). Subsequently, a presentation of the NGOs' trends active in the field since 1994 to the present day (AMIRY and BsSHARA, 2007: 70-72).

The second part is a diagnosis of the objectives and historical circumstances which led to the transition between the two eras (Hanafi and Tabar 2004, 215). From the 1980s and 1990s up to the present time, a significant shift was noticed in how researchers approached the subject of traditional architecture. There are several articulations or landmarks of the shift, primarily the political shift "Palestinian Entity or PNA"

(KHAN, 2004: 8), which determined the transition of the subject from the academic environment to the NGOs environment.

The third part goes toward an assertive analysis, presenting thematic frames and examining the implementation of conservation policies with focus on the practice of these policies in the restoration and rehabilitation process of traditional architecture.

2. A DISCUSSION OVER THE TERMINOLOGY AND THE CHRONOLOGY OF 'RECENT PAST'

The discussion over the Recent past as a term and its chronology is still in maturation and debatable. The recent past based chronology in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean has been conceptualized or determined by historical archaeologists as the discipline of the Ottoman archaeology. According to Baram: "for the Middle East, the recent past is the epoch when the Ottoman Empire ruled over a region from the Black Sea to the Red Sea, from Mediterranean to the Tigris–Euphrates Rivers" (BARAM, 2009 647). The subject of traditional architecture grew, following the lead of post-medieval archaeology in Western Europe and Historical Archaeology in North America and coastal Africa, towards archaeology of the recent past of the Middle East. Those calls included improving the discipline of archaeology by testing notions in the material record of the recent past, finding the

commonalities in history for national groups that imagined their pasts as separate, and countering the impact of colonialism and imperialism in the region by exposing historical trajectories (BARAM, CARROLL, 2002).

While admitting the view of Baram and Caroll and other contributions in the subject of the recent past and the discipline of Historical archaeology, there is a need to expand the discussion over the term and its chronology onward the Ottoman period/ archaeology, for different objective reasons which can be summed in. Already we are closely approaching the completion of a century since the decline of the Ottoman Empire in 1917. In addition, there should be mention of the geopolitical changes that emerged in the Middle East since the demise of the Ottoman Empire, which have not been approached or practiced within the archaeological methods. For instance, in Palestine many studies have been published regarding the British mandate period 1917-1948, the main one belonging to Dove Gavish: A Survey of Palestine under the British Mandate 1920-1948. Other related studies introduced the historical geography of Palestine, the mapping system, surveys and cartography and other subjects such as demography, land use and proprieties between Palestinians and Jewish during the same period. Only few of the studies though represented the archaeological aspect.

The call for using archaeological perspectives as part of the recent past in the Middle East doesn't aim to more entanglement of the field in the current political issues. The implementation of this call is to enable an archaeological interrogation and examination of the recent layers, using material culture, artifacts, excavations, landscape surveys, modern unapplied technologies and multi-disciplinary approaches, where narratives and historical documents lack the full answer for the questions of the humanities in general. One example is the archaeological approach on the war of 1948, from which we have the remains of tens of Palestinian villages. Moreover, the post-1948 period, until the war of 1967, also submits to archaeological interpretation.

3. CONSERVATION POLICIES AND THE NGOS ERA FROM 1994 ONWARD

The major interpretation about traditional settlements from the Ottoman period in Palestine was made by Albert Glock and Ghada Ziadeh-Seely through the

excavation seasons between 1985 and 1987, and the ethnographical study of the Ottoman settlement in Ti'innik village in the West Bank. (Until the 1950's, people of Ti'innik and most of the Near East lived in clusters of single room houses built around an open courtyard which they called ahawâsh. Each cluster (singular is hawsh), which is both an architectural and residential unit, was occupied by members of an extended family. Close residence maintained the close ties of family members which are essential in societies that depended on collective labor in cultivating the land (ZIADEH-SEELY, 1995: 85).

The decline of the Palestinian archaeology program in Bir Zeit University after the murder of Albert Glock, led to a decline of the excavation projects in Tel T'innik and the ethno-graphical research project. However, part of the results of this project from the Ottoman site was published by Ghada Ziadeh-Seely, and the rest of the results are still stored in containers in the institute of Palestinian archaeology at Bir zeit University waiting for publication.

During the last two decades we have three key contributions illustrating the landscape of Palestine. First one is The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry (1999), edited by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod and others, with contribution from Edward Said regarding the memory and the space. The second one is the Conference of the Conservation and Management of Landscape in Conflict Zones, held in 2007 in Bir Zeit University. The third one is the WAC Inter-congress, held in Ramallah in 2009, under the term of Structural Violence.

Despite the several contributions related to the landscape of Palestine, the implementation of the protection and the preservation of cultural–archaeological heritage are still focused on single monuments, sites and features, or it is still limited around the restoration projects in selected sites or old towns. Currently efforts are being made by researchers in the fields of archaeology, geography and architecture to adopt the landscape approach toward an agenda for protection and preservation of cultural-archaeological landscape (BARGOUTH, NASER, 2007: 1-2).

Theoretically, the agenda is to re-conceptualize the conservation policies of traditional architecture in the context of the landscape; therefore, the current conservation policies that are dealing with traditional houses as one unit ignore the diversity, contextuality

Fig. 2. 'Abwein village. General view of the old town. Ramallah, Palestine.

and the variety in traditional houses and old towns. The practical side is to apply the documentation techniques before any rehabilitation or restoration process or decision, using unapplied technologies such as GIS, aerial photos, special analysis and remote sensing, etc. On the Palestinian scale, traditional architecture should be approached as representative for the rural communities in the landscape. Peasants acted as architects, contractors and planers at the same time therefore conservations policies must be re-conceptualized and adapted within this context, in order to dismantle the gap between indigenous people and conservators.

4. THE SELECTION AND DE-SELECTION IN RESTORATION AND REHABILITATION OF THE TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE

The restoration and rehabilitation process was primarily developed by a number of NGOs in 1991, focusing on

what was identified as *historical buildings*, without any scientific or professional criteria establishing what makes a building historical or non-historical. Perhaps the chronology of the historical building according to those NGOs is not clear either. It is mentioned in Riwaq Registry of the Historical Buildings that there are 50320 historic buildings in the West Bank, Gaza strip and Eastern Jerusalem (See Riwaq Website).

The observation in this part aims to expose, on one side, the bias selection criteria in conservation, through the restoration and rehabilitation projects that were conducted in many sites or in cores of the traditional centers in the West Bank. On the other side it intends to expose the neglecting of the other buildings because of alternative restoration agendas.

In order to polarized criteria in the restoration process of the traditional buildings, hereinafter the description of six sites, randomly selected in the West Bank, where a number of buildings were restored and rehabilitated.

Fig. 3. 'Abwein village. General view of the old town. Ramallah, Palestine.

Fig. 4. 'Abwein village. Dar Sehwil, Eastern restored external wall. Ramallah, Palestine.

The villages are **'Abwein, Bir zeit, Ras Karkar, Et-Taiyiba, Jifna** in Ramallah district and **Sebastiyeh** in Nabuls district.

The landscape of **'Abwein** village in Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate contains: 13 water springs, ancient roads system, lime-kilns and archaeological sites such as Kh. 'Ein Musharriqa. The occupation of the site dates back to the Iron Age 1-2, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine period. The remains of the archaeological sites are: ruins, structural remains, square towers, and remains of oil presses, burial caves, column drums and rock-cut tombs with decorated façades, land use and the traditional settlement. The traditional settlement of 'Abwein contains ahwash and single traditional houses. The traditional settlement was built in earlier periods: Iron Age 2, Byzantine, Crusader/Ayyubid, Mamluk, and early Ottoman (http://digitallibrary.usc.

edu). According to Riwaq's registry 'Abwein has 160 historical buildings, 136 of which are one-floor building and 13 two floor buildings. The structural conditions of 100 buildings are described by Riwaq as "good", 55 buildings are described as being bad structural conditions and 7 buildings are out of use (www.riwaq. org). A restoration was conducted for the Castle of dar Sihweil (chiefdom during the Ottoman period) by Riwaq, the rest of other traditional buildings, just a few yards from the castle, are under destruction threat.

Bir zeit town in Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate, the landscape of this village contains: water springs, ancient roads system, lime-kilns, archaeological sites, land use and the traditional settlement. The traditional settlement of Birzeit contains ahwash and single traditional houses. The traditional settlement was built on earlier periods Iron Age 2/Persian, Hellenistic,

Site	Periods	Description
Birzeit (old town)	Iron Age 2/Persian, Hellenistic, Roman/Byzantine and Mamluk	Traditional houses, terraces; threshing floors; mosaic pavement.
Kh. Rujm er-Rujman	Iron Age 1?, Iron Age2, Byzantine, Crusader/Ayyubid and Mamluk	Lime kiln; circular structure; watchtower; agricultural terraces; walls.
Kh. Deir el-'Uqban	Byzantine and early Ottoman.	Ruin; structural remains; aqueduct; 2 wine-presses; rock cuttings; columns and column bases; probably a monastery.
Kh. er-Ras	Early Bronze 2-3, Middle Bronze, Iron Age2, Persian, Hellenistic, and Byzantine	Fort 38x59 m; building stones reused in terraces; threshing floors.
Without Name	Middle Bronze and Iron Age 1	A wall; traces of construction; fences; terraces; pottery.
Without Name	Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine	Several threshing floors surrounded by stone fences; building remains.

Table 1. Cultural-Archaeological Landscape of Birzeit

Site	Periods	Description
Ras Karkar (old town)	Hellenistic, Mamluk and Early Ottoman	Traditional houses
Jebel el-Kurne	Hellenistic	Single building
Kh. 'Ein Aiyub	Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine/ Umayyad and Early Ottoman	Dismantled ruin; reused building stones in terraces; threshing floors.
Kh. en-Nabi 'Annir	Iron Age 1-2, Persian, Roman, Byzantine/Umayyad and Early Ottoman	Large ruin; well-built terraces with reused building stones; winepress; oil presses; burial caves; Sheikh's tomb; building; two pillars.

Table 2. Cultural-Archaeological Landscape of Ras Karkar

Roman/Byzantine, Mamluk, early and late Ottoman (http://digitallibrary.usc.edu). According to Riwaq's registry of the historical buildings, Bir zeit (the old town) has 174 buildings, 46% described by Riwaq in good structural conditions and occupied, 20% are in bad structural conditions and unoccupied, 35% are two-floor houses and 60% are one-floor houses (www.riwaq.org). Khirbet Bir zeit is regarded as one of main archaeological sites in the West Bank due to the excavations seasons that were conducted at the site; the results of the excavations were published in the Journal of Palestinian Archaeology, Vol. 1 and 2, (2000). The restoration project for the old town of Bir zeit, was undertaken by Riwaq.

Ras Karkar village in Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate, is also known as Ras Ibn Samhan (Chiefdom during the Ottoman period). As for the previous examples, the landscape of this village contains: springs, ancient roads system, lime-kilns, archaeological sites, land use and the traditional settlement (http://digitallibrary.usc.edu). According to Riwaq's registry of the historical buildings, there are 27 buildings, 19 are one-floor buildings, 8 are two-floor buildings, 15 buildings are considered in good structural conditions, 11 buildings are considered in medium conditions and one is in bad condition (www.riwaq.org). A restoration project was conducted by Riwaq for Dar Samhan Castle (the Chiefdom during the Ottoman period). The castle is

Fig. 6. Et-Taiyiba village. External wall of the crusader castle. Ramallah, Palestine.

Site	Periods	Description
Et-Taiyiba (old town)	Iron Age 1-2, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Crusader/Ayyubid and Early Ottoman	Traditional houses, remains of church; Cru castle; mosaics, one of them inscribed; Byz and Cru basilica.
el-Khadr	Hellenistic, Byzantine, and Crusader/Ayyubid	Church
Kh. Dar Haiyeh	Roman and Byzantine	remains of buildings; oil press parts; many cisterns
Kh. ed-Dis	Iron Age 2, Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, Ayyubid and Mamluk	Structures; plastered caves; plastered cisterns; field watchtowers
Without Name	Byzantine	Single building, with two rooms and courtyard
Without Name		Rock-cut dwelling cave; non-diagnostic pottery

Table 3. Cultural-Archaeological Landscape of Et-Taiyiba

surrounded by the other traditional houses (ahwash) under threat of destruction and in bad condition.

Et-Taiyiba village is located in Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate. The landscape contains: springs, ancient roads system, lime-kilns, archaeological sites, land use and the traditional settlement (http://digitallibrary.usc.edu). According to Riwaq;s registry of the historical buildings there are 188 buildings, 137 are one floor buildings, 46 are two-floors buildings and one is three-floors building; 115 buildings were described as in good structural conditions, 37 are in medium structural conditions, 21 are in bad structural conditions and 15 were unable to be used (www.riwaq.org). The restoration project was conducted for the old town by Riwaq.

Fig. 7. Et-Taiyiba village. General view of the restored houses. Ramallah, Palestine.

Fig. 8. Sebastiyeh village. Dar el Kaid and the old town. Nablus Governorate, Palestine.

Fig. 9. Sebastiyeh village. The Crusader church. Nablus Governorate, Palestine.

Jifna village is located in Ramallah and al-Bireh Governorate. The village contains: springs, ancient roads system, lime-kilns, archaeological sites, land use and the traditional settlement (http://digitallibrary. usc.edu). According to Riwaq's registry of historical buildings Jifna has 122 buildings, 74 are one-floor building, 29 buildings are two-floors and one building has three-floors only; 109 buildings are described as in good structural conditions, 2 buildings are in medium conditions, 3 buildings are in bad conditions and 1 building is not able to be used (www.riwaq.org). Rhe restoration project was conducted for the crusader fort in the old town.

Sebastiyeh village is located in Nablus Governorate, with water springs, ancient roads system, lime-kilns, archaeological sites, land use and the traditional settlement (http://digitallibrary.usc.edu). However, Sebastiyeh is considered as an archaeological park in Palestine. According to Riwaq's registry of the historical buildings there are 183 buildings, 118

buildings are one-floor, 63 buildings are two-floors, and 133 buildings are still in use and 44 buildings abandoned; the structural conditions for 114 buildings were described as good, 17 are in medium structural conditions, 45 are in bad structural conditions and five are not able to be used (www.riwaq.org). Riwaq restored El-Kaid castle (chiefdom during the Ottoman period), and the rest of other traditional houses under vanishing and destruction process.

5. CONCLUSION

The past is a problematic subject in the conflict regions generally, and so are its mechanisms of reconstructing the discourses and the interpretations. For young archaeologists practicing archaeology in one of the contested regions, it is essential to keep in consideration two main aspects. The first one concerns the ethical frame in the field as regards the matter of selection in conservation and awareness of

Site	Periods	Description
Jifna (old town)	Hellenistic, Roman, Crusade, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Early Ottoman	Two Byz churches; fortress, prob. Cru; structural remains; rock-cut burial caves; cisterns; sarcophagi, one decorated; capitals.
El-Muneitrah	Middle Bronze, Iron Age 1-2, Hellenistic and Byzantine	Large heap of stones; terraces
Without Name	Middle Bronze, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine	Heaps of stones; pottery; threshing floors
Without Name	Middle Bronze, Hellenistic, Roman and Byzantine	Heaps of stones; walls
Without Name	Byzantine	Square structure

Table 4. Cultural-Archaeological Landscape of Jifna

Fig. 10. Sebastiyeh village. The Crusader church and the mosque. Nablus Governorate, Palestine.

Site	Periods	Description
Sebastiyeh (old town)	Roman, Byzantine, Umayyad, Abbasid, Crusade, Ayyubid, Mamluk and Ottoman	Traditional houses, Cru church, cisterns; rock cuttings
Sebastiyeh	Early Bronze 1, Iron Age 2, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman 1-2, Byzantine, Mamluk and Ottoman	Tell
Sebastiyeh	Early Bronze 1, Iron Age 2, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman 1-2, Byzantine, Mamluk and Ottoman	Tell; Byz churches; Herodian colonnade; hippodrome; IA casemate fortress with a palace and reservoir structure; IA burial cave; Hel fortifications; Rom city wall; western gate; temples; forum; basilica;
Kh. el-'Aqil	Mamluk	Terraces; structural remains; dressed building stones
Kh. Manahas	Byzantine, Umayyad and Abbasid	Small ruin: walls; building stones incorporated in terraces
Kh. el-Babariyye	Iron Age 1-2, Persian, Hellenistic, Roman 1-2 and Byzantine	Large ruin; burial cave
Kh. el-Lawz	Byzantine	Small ruin; building foundations and building stones in secondary use; cisterns; burial caves.
Without Name	Roman	cistern; walls; caves; two ritual baths

Table 5. Cultural-Archaeological Landscape of Sebastiyeh

cultural heritage. The second one is about redefining priorities, which, in the fieldwork, should be directed following the agendas of the conservators parallel with the agendas of the local communities and their needs.

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