

Introduction

Creating coherence and continuity: suggestions and illustrations of methods and themes

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Introduction

The Palestine History and Heritage (PaHH) project is an international and interdisciplinary project, which, through a revision of the traditional, biblically based, ethnocentric history of the region, supports a critical view of Palestine's history from the earliest human occupation to the present. Rooted in archaeological, ethnographic and anthropological research, our project intends to produce an evidence-based history in support of a culturally inclusive approach to the heritage of all who have lived in this region. This project views the distinct sub-regions of the land as an interrelated whole. Relationships, reflecting political, economic, linguistic, religious and intellectual life in the region, are understood as dynamic aspects of a shared heritage.

The project has the goal of registering and preserving knowledge of the region's geography, toponomy, history and culture. Such an effort is urgent as the changes that have taken place since the foundation of the State of Israel have rapidly displaced indigenous Palestinian heritage, rooted in ancient Near Eastern, Greco-Roman, Samaritan, Jewish, Christian, Islamic and secular traditions. An inclusive re-evaluation of the region's history and culture is needed to support its heritage. This discussion of principles supports coherence in our effort to resist further colonization of the cultural memory of Palestine that is rooted in exclusive and racist constructions.

Our historical narrative for Palestine's history is to be marked by sub-regional diversity and difference over millennia. Such diversity requires that we have a broader perspective than that which a national or ethnicity-defining narrative can support. Writing a meaningful and coherent account of Palestine's history and heritage also demands that we go beyond competitive origin stories, rooted in ancient and medieval theological traditions. We draw rather on those aspects, which both clarify and define structural continuities, cardinal themes and methods supporting coherence, and reflect fundamental economic and geopolitical change and development over millennia.

The PaHH project is as interdisciplinary as it is international, and we need, therefore, to take up the demanding task of respecting diversity, breadth and complexity. We must develop terminology, chronology and

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perspectives that are consistent and compatible. This must be carried out in each individual contribution and throughout the project as a whole. Cooperation, openness to change and revision and flexibility must be introduced while maintaining respect for the scholarly integrity of those who contribute to this history. This is a multi-vocal and inclusive history, and neither a utopian nor national history. It is a regionally oriented, landscape history. The working group for each volume is to be organized by its principal authors, and it is this group, together, who have the task of and responsibility for planning and producing that volume. They will be supported by an editorial board, which has the responsibility to secure the academic quality of the work.

In an effort to illustrate what I view as cardinal themes and methods, supporting an organizing coherence and continuity in the PaHH historical narrative, I offer the following chart as representative:

Ensuring coherence and continuity in methods and themes¹

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Projected Volumes</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Working as a group	(One to Two volumes for each period)	1 <i>Macro-history</i>
Creating a comprehensive glossary for personal and geographic names that is ideologically inclusive and coherent	<i>A History of Palestine 1: From the Earliest Beginnings to the Chalcolithic Period</i>	A history from without: normal history
Encouraging the use of personal and place names appropriate to their chronological context		a Where: geography and climate b When: time scale, periodization c What happened: sketching the overall political and cultural history of Palestine, the effects of Imperialism and influences from neighboring lands: warfare and battles, material life, religion and cult, language and literature
Using period-appropriate boundaries of Palestine and its regions	<i>A History of Palestine 2: Palestine from the Beginning of the Bronze Age to the Hellenistic Period</i>	d To whom did it happen? Demography and ethnicity Cycles of sedentarization and de-sedentarization Settlement patterns of regionally dominant patron towns, with client villages, hamlets and encampment
Discussing multi-cultural landscapes		The concept, origins and function of the city in Palestine Deportation/exile and resettlement/immigration and emigration
Writing evidence-based history		Colonies and colonization Changing ethnicities Languages and change of place and personal names
Defining Palestine as inclusive of the Transjordan, Gaza, the Jaulan and the Wadi 'Araba	<i>A History of Palestine 3: From the Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Roman Periods to the end of the Rashidun Caliphate: 198 BCE-661 AD</i>	
Orienting our historical narrative to an understanding of Palestine as an interrelated whole		

<i>Methods</i>	<i>Projected Volumes</i>	<i>Themes</i>
Interpretation of settlement patterns from their cultural, economic and political contexts	<i>A History of Palestine 4: The Omayyad and Abbasid Caliphates and the Mamluk Sultans: 661–1516 AD</i>	e What was the result? Politics, economy, subsistence and trade Political and economic continuities and dependencies Palestine's Mediterranean economy and the regional contexts of hunting, herding, horticulture and grain agriculture Patronage politics Changes in land use, water preservation, irrigation and soil; water resources: wells, terracing and drainage systems Region-wide continuities in language and economy, food and shelters Trade, trade routes and markets
Using post-colonial perspectives		
Defining religiously, linguistically and ethnically inclusive perspectives	<i>A History of Palestine 5: From the Ottoman Empire to the Arab Revolt</i>	
Relating settlement patterns to climate, topography, soils and water resources		
Interrelating small-regional landscapes		
Defining geographically determined continuities and separations	<i>A History of Palestine 6: From the Early 1900s Sinai and Palestine Campaign to the Present</i>	2 <i>Micro-history</i> A history from within: inter-regional histories Sub-regional continuity and change Lieux de memoire
Using multi-vocal perspectives		
Focusing on everyday life: gender determined roles, social and family structures		a Physical daily life: Geography and landscape, nature and civilization, architecture and settlement structures, occupations, food and clothing, water systems, equipment and goods, technological developments, economy, trade and markets
Giving voice to missing identities		b Social daily life: Family, gender and class structures, language, institutions, sickness and health, fortifications, war and peace, law and legal structures
Deconstructing concepts of ethnicity and nationalism in terms of inclusivity and multi-cultural values		c Mental daily life: Culture and education, intellectual history, literature and religion, secular and religious practice and cult, sports and entertainment, language, terminology and names The development and change in religious bodies and institutions; religious ideologies: critique, change and continuity
Defining the coherence and development of intellectual history		
Presenting the common ground, development and change in religious traditions and practices		
Tracing the developments and reiterated themes of religious texts, shrines and pilgrimages		
Including an awareness of cultural memory		

In an effort to clarify how these methods and themes support coherence and continuity in the *PaHH* historical narrative, throughout a projected six volumes, I offer six examples of how interrelated methods and themes might help hold our project together.

1 Settlement patterns and landscape

On the fringe of steppe and desert, with its center lying across the border of aridity, Palestine has a periodically vulnerable agriculture with radical shifts in climate, bringing famine, overgrazing and a recurrent development of malarial swamps. Its traditional Mediterranean economy created a deep dependency on local and international trade. However, the intrinsic instability of patron-client political structures has, over the centuries, fostered cycles of sedentarization and de-sedentarization across a much-diversified region.

Influenced by altitudes ranging from the Dead Sea's surface, ca. 429 m below sea level, to Mount Jarmaq's, 1,208 m above sea level, and a mean annual rainfall of ca. 50 mm in the southern Negev, compared to the Upper Galilee's ca. 800–1,000 mm, Palestine's climate ranges dramatically between Mediterranean, steppe and desert within very short distances. Such variations, given the considerable regional diversity of Palestine's topography, support the development of its Mediterranean economy toward small-region-oriented economies of herding in steppe and arid regions, horticulture on the slopes of the hill country and grain agriculture in the coastal plain and inland valleys. A consistent interpretation of the geographical context in the chronological narrative of our sub-regional histories would enhance both the coherence and the continuity of such sub-regional histories as they are related to a Mediterranean economy. We might relate settlement patterns, soil quality and availability of water resources in the different steppe and desert regions to animal domestication and trade routes. The settlement patterns in highland areas may be viewed in regard to terracing and the olive industry, while the pattern of settlement in the lowlands might be described in relation to grain agricultural, drainage and irrigation systems. We need to identify shifts in the border of aridity and the impact of drought on cultivated areas. As we will see, the development of market towns with their specialized crafts supported both local and interregional trade since at least the early Neolithic period, and such closely related polities of patronage have been characteristic of Palestine up to the present day. Archaeological excavations of these patron towns, together with a post-processual analysis of the associated region's settlement patterns, provide, for example, essential evidence for developing an understanding of the continuity and coherence of the Bronze and Iron Ages in Palestine.

2 Palestine's sub-regional histories

On Syria's southern fringe, Palestine is deeply divided from east to west by the Great Rift Valley, which separates the Cisjordan from the Transjordan.

This deep rift, stretching some 6,000 km from the Biqaa Valley in the north to Mozambique in the south, was created by the continental drift of Africa from Asia. This distinguishes Palestine through the complexity of its sub-regions. Among the most clearly defined are the coastal plain, itself split, north and south, by the Carmel range. The northern part forms a small coastal plain, beginning with the Haifa Bay area and its opening to the Jezreel Valley in the east, and the narrow coastal Plain of Acre, lying west of the Upper Galilee, forming a small but important strip of land, opening to the coastal towns of Lebanon and Syria. South of the Carmel, Palestine's broad central and southern coastal plains support the overland trade route to Gaza and beyond by linking the overland trade route from Lebanon, Syria and Mesopotamia to Arabia, Egypt and North Africa across the northern coast of Sinai (Thompson 1975: 9–13, 1982a).

Above and east of the Plain of Acre, the highlands of the Upper Galilee separate Palestine from the Lebanon range. Further to the east, within the Rift Valley, the Hula Basin lies open in the west to the Litani River and Lebanon's fertile Beqaa Valley, and, in the east, to the Anti-Lebanon of Syria. South of the Upper Galilee of the Cisjordan, the rolling hills of the Lower Galilee, with their rich vineyards and orchards, lie across the northern rim of the broad stretch of lowlands with the well-watered and rich soils of the valleys of Jezreel, Beth Shan, Northern Jordan and Wadi al-Fari'a. East of the Galilee and south of the Hula Basin, we find the fresh-waters of the low-lying Sea of Galilee. The development of irrigation and drainage, supporting Early Bronze agriculture in the malarial marshlands of the lower regions of the Jezreel and Beth Shan valleys, overcame serious barriers to agriculture, which came to support the most densely settled regions of the Bronze Age.

In the Transjordan, a broad highland plateau of fertile land rises toward the east and south above the Jordan rift. This plateau is sharply cut by a series of deep gorges, which drain the plateau into the Jordan. Here were formed the large but historically relatively isolated regions of Bashan, Gilead, Ammon, Moab, Edom and – further to the South – the vast peninsula of Arabia.

In the Cisjordan, south of the Jezreel, lie the central highlands of Palestine: an upland which stretches from Jenin and Nablus to Ramallah. Plateaus and inter-montane valleys, such as in the area surrounding ancient Shechem (Tell Balatah), with rich soils and abundant water, supported a rich and balanced agriculture since the mid-third millennium BCE, centered in grain and field crops. Orchards of olives and grapes on the terraces of the gentler slopes supported small highland towns and villages, while the more arid eastern slopes were given over to herding. Terracing and the development of slaked lime cisterns opened up new regions in the Iron II period, particularly along the western and southern slopes (Thompson 1992b: 221–239).

Further to the south lie the Jerusalem saddle and the southern highlands, which stretch to Hebron and the grasslands of the Northern Negev. Over

the centuries, this region supported a wide range of field agriculture and horticulture, including fruit, nut and olive trees and vineyards. Settlement in the region was sharply limited above the rich soils of the foothills and was subject to periodic famine. Grazing – especially of goats and sheep – formed a major portion of the economy. The arid and eastern slopes of the central and southern highlands lay within the rain-shadow, caused by the deep Rift Valley, creating the Judean desert, an arid strip of badlands stretching between the Wadi Fari'a, and the Araba, south of the Dead Sea. Within the Rift Valley, itself, the badlands are interrupted by the well-watered, rich and fertile oasis of Jericho, just north of the Dead Sea. South of the Dead Sea, the Araba with its immature soils separates the Judean desert and Negev from Arabia, stretching southward to Aqaba and the Red Sea.

Immediately south of the southern highlands lies the Northern Negev, with the rich grasslands of the Arad and Beersheba basins, supporting over millennia a dimorphic economy of grain agriculture and transhumance herding. Further to the south, the northwestern slopes of the central Negev highlands supported limited forms of transhumance agriculture and herding in EB IV/MB I, which was highly dependent on techniques of water storage and irrigation. In the Nabatean to the Byzantine periods, such technology enabled the development of very large towns and permanent settlement.

The western slopes of the Jerusalem saddle and the southern highlands are dominated by the rich, rolling foothills of the Shephelah, which has supported a wide range of agriculture and an intensive, trade-oriented olive oil industry, which in the Iron II period supported demographic expansion.

The multi-variant landscape, sketched earlier, is defined by some forty sub-regional profiles, each requiring its own history (Thompson 1979; Thompson, Goncalvez and Van Cangh 1988: 3). Each sub-region exhibits unique developments in economy, politics, language, religion and material culture which demand that we formulate a historical narrative and which adequately and appropriately sketch the multi-cultural nature of Palestine's indigenous societies. Rather than great cities, ancient Palestine developed market towns, often restricted in growth because of their relative isolation. Palestine's politics follow structures of patronage for a period of some 10,000 years, not the politics of a nation-based state, as Giorgio Buccelatti once argued (Buccelatti 1967, 2013; cf. Pfoh 2016a; Pfoh and Thompson ch. 11).

In its role as Asia's land-bridge to Africa, providing overland routes between Egypt and Syria and Mesopotamia on the one hand, and Arabia on the other hand, Palestine has never been without interest to its much more powerful neighbors, including Lebanon and Syria in the north; the Great Syrian Steppe and Arabia in the east and southeast; Sinai and Egypt in the south and southwest; and Cyprus, North Africa, the Aegean and Anatolia in the west by sea. This multifaceted context has created a structural dependence on its neighbors. Not only was Palestine dependent on partnerships with its

more powerful partners in sea trade from very early times, but major overland trade routes, passing through the land, were often directly controlled by greater powers. Such imperial interests often involved foreign military presence. The population, clients and patrons, was ever subject to the possibility of deportation, exile and resettlement; colonially motivated immigration; and emigration, all of which affected the political, demographic and ethnographic character of the population, demanding that the continuous transformation of the society needs to form a recurrent leitmotif throughout the narrative of our history. As a “history from within”, our project must deal with imperial presence, influenced by a competitively shifting center, revising and recreating the demographic and economic orientation of Palestine’s sub-regions.

3 Palestine’s multi-cultural history

Because of its sub-regions’ unique associations, Palestine’s regional landscapes offer a multitude of distinct economic, cultural and political contexts, definable by their openness and engagement with the greater cultures, related, for example, to the eastern Mediterranean, the Aegean, Cyprus, Phoenicia, Syria, Mesopotamia and Egyptian Delta as well as the large, sparsely populated, arid regions of the Syrian steppe, the Negev, Sinai and Arabia. Palestine’s associations with such cultures have defined its multi-cultural character. At its most dramatic, such involvement created recurrent events of deportation/exile and resettlement as well as various forms of colonial immigration and emigration. This seriously affected the political, demographic and ethnographic character of the population to such an extent that its transformations must form a leitmotif of our history.

In describing the variety of Palestine’s distinctive, small-regional landscapes – each reflected by its own distinctive culture and history – it is important that we support a multi-vocal perspective throughout our historical narrative. Rather than focusing on a political history dominated by elites and marking the decisive watersheds of a comprehensive past, affecting the whole of Palestine as it is reflected in retrospective literary and religious traditions, the central core of our history must be dedicated to the subaltern histories of daily life insofar as they are reflected in contemporary remains, giving voice to the sub-cultures hitherto largely silent (Thompson 2016; Dever 2017). We must write our history from many perspectives, with terminology, chronology and methodology that are coherent.

4 A Mediterranean economy and patronage

The PaHH project will view the land of Palestine as a coherent and inter-related region with historically shifting boundaries, structured within *la longue durée*. The PaHH project will facilitate a discourse of power and counter-power, especially as these reflect an understanding of Palestinian

identity, with its deep roots in the region's multi-cultural character. The development of the specialized crafts and market towns of a Mediterranean economy (Thompson 1999: 115–119), supporting a predominantly sedentary population with both local and interregional trade, dates at least from the time of the stable Neolithic towns of Jericho and Beidha (Thompson 1992b: 171–300; Pfoh 2016a, 2016b). As Emanuel Pfoh and I have argued (Pfoh and Thompson ch. 11), the longevity of the place names of stable major towns in Palestine, such as those mentioned in the Execration texts and Amarna letters, can be coordinated with the continuity of settlement remains on Palestine's tells. Contemporary texts, directly related to political and social structures in Bronze Age Palestine, can be brought together with contemporary economic archives, which have been excavated in Ugarit, Mari, Nuzi and Amarna, to illustrate the existence of patronage systems, controlling the economic and legal systems throughout greater Syria. Moreover, both settlement patterns and evidence for the coherence and continuity of cultural forms on excavated Late Bronze and early Iron Age sites show a good number of often continuously settled market towns, which controlled small sub-regions over centuries. Such stability is suggested for Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Ekron, Tantar, Jaffa, Acre, Hebron, Lachish, Jerusalem, Gezer, Shechem, Beth-Shan, Megiddo, Tell Keisan, Hirbet al Ureima,² Hazor, Dan and others. These sub-regional market towns provided the landscape for an indigenous pyramid of patronage over a *Hinterland* of subordinate towns, villages, hamlets and encampments within a sub-region of Palestine. This structure supported three dominant but regionally distinct forms of land use in Palestine's Mediterranean economy, centered in field crops and grain agriculture in the lowlands; horticulture in the hill country, especially olives, fruit trees and vineyards; and herding in the highlands and steppe (Thompson 1992b: 177–181; 1999: 115–129).

Intellectual and religious traditions also illustrate and reflect the existence of a coherent pattern of patronage between the king or patron and their patron deities, such as Hadad, Ba'al, Chemosh and Yahw. Ritual texts, correspondence and literature give unequivocal evidence for such patronage concepts influencing and supporting Palestinian politics. The Mesha stele speaks, for example, of the god, *Chemosh*, in the role of Moab's divine patron, who instructs his client-king Mesha by leading him into battle against *Bit Humri*. Very brief inscriptions from Kuntillat Ajrud and Khirbet al-Qom address the god, *Yahw*, as the patron of the towns of *Samaria* in the central highlands and of *Teman* on the southern steppe (Schmidt 2016).

5 Religion and intellectual history

In the PaHH history, biblical and quranic traditions are not to be understood within a perspective of eventual history but rather as central, integral aspects of intellectual history. With its secondary, small-regional, intellectual environment, derivative of and dependent on the great cultures of

the ancient Near Eastern and Mediterranean worlds, as is reflected in its architecture, literature, cult and art, Palestine's cultural and intellectual life – though markedly secondary in its development, when compared with the high cultures of its neighbors – has reflected recurrent cycles of interpretively innovative and critical originality as well as, at times, reactionary backlash. One of the most central problems in developing continuity and coherence in Palestine's historical narrative is dependent on how we deal with the mythic character of the origin stories, theology and critical thinking. Such developments have often affected the identities of Palestine's population in terms of adherence to religious communities and, not least, their response to critical developments in philosophy and rhetoric in the Greek and Roman worlds.

Biblical and quranic traditions are central contributions to Palestine's *intellectual* heritage. Our commitment to an inclusive and multi-cultural historical narrative raises the need to resist exclusive religious and cultural claims of supersession, which are endemic to their reception as foundation texts for sectarianism. Rather than viewing Palestine as a contentious landscape for conflicts between distinct and competing monotheisms, with a common antagonism to what is often condescendingly understood as ancient polytheistic "paganism" or modern secularism, our inclusive and multi-vocal history of Palestine will mark the common ground and functions of a continuously interrelated tradition in which even radical, critical understanding and revision can be interpreted as a reform of a contemporary religious and intellectual heritage.

One of the central problems in developing continuity and coherence in our historical narrative lies in questions of religious origins. As orientation and homeland for the Samaritan Pentateuch and Joshua; a comprehensive setting for Judaism's TaNaK, Septuaginta, Mishnah and Talmud, as well as for the Christian New Testament and earliest Bible; and, finally, as the focal center of the religious and intellectual world of Islamic revision in the Quran, Palestine is the ideological center of a closely interrelated heritage. Our project's commitment to an inclusive and multi-cultural historical narrative raises the need to resist competitive and exclusive tendencies toward sectarianism, common to universal and monotheistic traditions.

Our inclusive and multi-vocal history of Palestine, seeking to be a voice promoting understanding and reconciliation, may well stand or fall on how we deal with Palestine's religious heritage. This issue has become even more sensitive within the growing influence of a politically divisive populism, which exploits fears of an inescapable "clash of civilizations" (Huntington 1997) and a threatening Armageddon-evoking doomsday (Sizer 2004; Hagee 2007), which, promoting a Zionist agenda as it does, also projects its ruin. We need to write a "history of responsibility" and describe with integrity the religious discourse of the ancient past, that we might give voice to an adequate understanding of the "contemporary theologies" implicit in these literary traditions (Gregersen 2008; Salama 2011).

6 *Deconstructing ethnicity*

The PaHH project intends to communicate the richness of Palestine's past, free from destructive and racist projections of ethnicity. Rooted in an understanding of Palestine's "indigenous" population over millennia, our aim is to describe an ancient heritage and identity of the many peoples who have lived in Palestine. The biblical origin story of the patriarch Jacob, in which Yahweh changed Jacob's name to Israel so that he might take up his role as eponymous ancestor of twelve tribes whom God had chosen to conquer Canaan had been thought, until the 1960s, to have been historically confirmed by archaeology's interpretation of the early Middle Bronze period (Thompson 1974). When Zionist and biblical scholars brought such an Israel out of Egypt at the end of the Late Bronze Period, the soon-to-be-former Canaanites of this land were transformed by the Bible's mythic allegory into a similar twelve-fold people of Canaan and his sons (Gen 10:15–20). Mythic story was transformed into historical event! Sixty years ago, this myth of origins was understood as an actual, historical, nomadic migration of *Amurru* ("Amorites") from Mesopotamia. Such biblical archaeology, however, misunderstood Mesopotamian inscriptions as referring to an actual people (Dever 1966; cf. Thompson 1974). "Amurru", in such inscriptions, rather, signifies "westerners": just anyone – shepherds or kings, farmers or nomads, from the west, that is, greater Syria. Rather than a history of the early Middle Bronze period, one had only the Bible's origin story.

There are two approaches to be followed in deconstructing essentialist claims of ethnic or national groups in our history. (1) Judaism is a religion, and Jewishness refers to one's adherence to that religion. It is neither an ethnicity nor a national designation. It is based on and defines a religious allegiance or conversion. (2) Those who once lived as part of the Iron Age II patronage kingdoms of Israel/Bit Humri, on the one hand, and Judea, on the other hand, can hardly be uncritically understood as the ancestors of much later Jews of Judaism. Historical Israel was never Jewish, though it may well be associated with Samaritanism. Yet Samaritanism, too, is first of all a reference to a religious affiliation and not an ethnicity (cf. Hjelm ch. 3). The population of the kingdom of Judea may well be referred to as Judeans or Judahites. However, this neither implies a common ethnicity nor identifies them as "Jews", that is, as members of a religious affiliation of any later period. There is no clear line of ethnic continuity (Thompson 1992b).

It is helpful in understanding how ancient Palestine developed distinctive peoples in successive periods, bearing identities, which survived over long and short durations, if we reconstruct the interrelationship of a given sub-region's landscape with the fluctuating stability and change in climate, economy, social structure, political form, language and religion, variously witnessed throughout Palestine's history. For example, attention to the

agricultural potential of regions in regard to a shifting border of aridity allows us to reflect on a considerable change in the population of sedentary settlements within a geographical spectrum distinguishing the desert from cultivated regions, marking periods of increased sedentarization, such as EB II, MB II and Iron II, against other periods of intense desedentarization, such as in EB IV/MB I and the Late Bronze/Iron I transition periods.

These “intermediate” periods reflect shifts in settlement patterns based in changes in inter-Palestinian strategies of survival. They illustrate historical continuity rather than simply patterns of displacement, invasion or population change.

The Iron I sedentarization of the central highlands, for example, reflects an economic transformation of the central hills, re-establishing the sedentary structures of a Mediterranean economy in this region (Thompson 1992a). Finkelstein’s analysis of the earliest Iron I settlements in the central highlands marks the differences of these settlements in terms of a chronological development from the early sedentarization of nomads east of the watershed to later developments as one moves westward. The differences in Iron I regions of settlement, rather, mark variants in climate in three very distinct agronomic regions. Herding dominated the arid zone of the highlands east of the watershed in both earlier and later periods. Grain and field agricultural, however, was dominant along the highland plateau and in inter-montane valleys, while the steep western slopes required terracing and developed horticulture all along the steep western slopes of the central highlands, which was dominated by a terraced-based horticulture (Thompson 1992b: 221–239, *contra* Zertal 1986 and Finkelstein 1988).

New, early Iron I, small-village agriculture, centered in field crops, olives and village-based herding, also existed in the Galilee. Palestine’s fertile central valleys, the Shephelah and the coastal plain are all largely linked to earlier Late Bronze settlement. These are regions which witnessed recovery of many market towns and had a pottery and material culture, reflecting considerable continuity with LB. A recovery of sedentarization of the southern highlands and of much of the Transjordan, however, did not begin until well into the tenth century. Jerusalem, for example, hosted a very limited population during LB and did not recover the size and importance of Middle Bronze settlement until Iron II, some three centuries later than the settlements in the central hills. That is, the recovery of agricultural settlement and the development of a patronage kingdom in the Judean highlands were comparable and perhaps related to the similar settlement and political organization of Edom in the Transjordan and not of much earlier Samaria. Indeed, the history of Jerusalem was different from that of Samaria. Like Bosra, Jerusalem’s resettlement was closely tied to Assyrian expansion into southern Palestine and Philistia in its effort to support Arab trade routes in Palestine in the eighth and early seventh century BCE. In regard to the development of potential ethnic constructs, Judea, with its patron deity,

Yahw, had common religious ties with both Samaria and Edomite Teman, and shared cultural and economic ties with the whole of southern Palestine, from Moab and Edom to Ashkelon and Gaza.

Northern coastal Palestine's economic, political and cultural life reflected Phoenicia's cultural ties with Philistia but was considerably distant from that of Israel's central hills. The regions of the eastern Galilee and the central valleys of Beisan, the northern Jordan and the Jezreel were culturally all more closely associated with Syria than with the central or southern highlands. Early inscriptions suggest Aramaic linguistic ties rather than a dialect of "Canaanite" (= Hebrew), as one finds in the northwest, central and southern regions of Palestine, such as Phoenician, Moabite, Ammonite, Edomite, Judahite and Israelite. We need to consider that Assyria's direct annexation of the entire coastal plain from Tyre to Gaza in 734 BCE was quickly followed by Tiglath Pileser III's destruction of Damascus in 732 BCE, which led to Assyrian control over Northern Palestine. This occupation was quickly stabilized by establishing provincial centers at Megiddo and Tantura, separating and isolating large regions of Northern Palestine from the central highlands and bringing the coastal region under the cultural hegemony of Phoenicia, while the northern valleys and lower Galilee fell under Syrian control.

The Transjordan regions of the Jaulan, Bit Ammani and Moab were similarly oriented to Syria rather than Bit Humri. Edom, in contrast, was linked to Judea and a chain of small patronage towns of the South, who were Assyrian clients, all closely tied to the Arabian trade network. The political influence of the patronage kingdom of Bit Humri/Israel – though it is known to have competed with both Moab and Damascus for political hegemony and may also have competed at times for influence in regions to the north of the central highlands, on both sides of the Jordan – was essentially a patronage polity of the central hills. Any greater boundaries, reflecting shifting politics of patronage and military alliances, were limited in both duration and influence. Assyria destroyed Samaria and took over the central highlands in 722/720 BCE. The vast majority of the population of the central highlands remained in the region under the Assyrian province of *Samerina*.

In terms of ethnicity, one might define the central highlands as a relatively coherent region. However, the large town of Gezer in the northern Shephelah and the regional importance of Gezer as a patron town in LB and possibly also MB hardly support any coherent ethnicity which linked the identity of the northern Shephelah with Gezer's patronage, either to the population of the central coastal plain or to Bit Humri (Finkelstein 1990; Pfoh and Thompson, in this volume).

In regard to ethnic identification of the Galilee during LB and the Iron Age, it is clear that the material culture of the Lower Galilee is closer to that of the Jezreel than to that of the central highlands. Upper Western Galilee is more closely linked to the Lebanon, especially the Biqu' Valley, than to

the Palestinian regions further south. The coastal strip from Tell Keisan to Acre, however, is, culturally and economically, tied to Tyre and Sidon, rather than to the patronage kingdom of Israel in the central hills or even to Bit Humri's successor in Samerina (2016; Hjelm and Thompson 2002).

When we consider ethnicity in the southern hills, we should note that Sennacherib's support of his client in Ekron against Judea's king Hezekiah led to his attack on the towns and villages of Judea in 701 BCE. A massive destruction was created throughout Judea, including the Shephelah's dominant town of Lachish, the former LB competitor to Jerusalem. As a result of Sennacherib's attack, most of Jerusalem's *Hinterland* was lost. The patronage of its villages and towns was given to the kings of Ashdod, Ekron and Gaza. The deportation of the population of Lachish and the villages in the highlands, the southern Shephelah and the northern Negev transformed the region.

Recovery, including the rebuilding of Lachish and many of the older towns of Judea, around the mid- seventh century, opened the population of the southern hills to a broad integration with the people living in the southern coastal plain of Philistia, the northern Negev and especially the patronage kingdom of Edom. It was this recovery – closely linked as it was to the infiltration and sedentarization of the peoples of the northern Negev and Edom – which found a corresponding expansion in the growth of Jerusalem's population onto the western hill of the city in the mid-seventh century BCE.

In the early sixth century, the southern highlands were attacked once again when Jerusalem and the whole of Judea were conquered by Nebuchadnezzar. After Jerusalem and Judea's destruction, the populations of both Edom, which had functioned as a faithful client of Nebuchadnezzar, and the southern steppe migrated gradually into southern Cisjordan. A cultural continuum developed in the South, embracing regions on both sides of the Jordan. The coherence of this development intensified after the capital of Bosra was destroyed by Nabonidus, and a common culture was eventually created across the entire breadth of southern Palestine from the Transjordan to the southern Mediterranean coast (Thompson 1992a, 2013a, 2013b). This broad, symbiotic region, bringing villagers and herders under a single patronage polity, integrated a considerable diverse population of sedentary and non-sedentary peoples. They first found a center in Hebron and later – with greater coherence – in Lachish, which became the prosperous center of first the Persian and, later, the Hellenistic province of Idumea. This radically changed the character of the region, uniting a people who had once formed several distinct polities in the Iron Age.

Jerusalem, however, and the province of Yehud hardly recovered from the Babylonian destruction. Throughout the Persian period, Jerusalem was an impoverished, depopulated religious center. Neither its population nor its political or economic influence in the southern highlands and the Shephelah was recovered until Jerusalem was finally rebuilt by Antiochus III.

In the periods following the destruction of Jerusalem and the massive Assyrian and Babylonian deportations of 701 and 597–582, the eventual consolidation of Lachish at the center of the province of Idumea makes it extremely difficult to speak of the existence of a *Jewish* ethnicity, which somehow brought an ethnic continuity and identity to the population of southern Palestine. The cultural polity of ancient Judea had longed ceased to exist, and Jews were not its only heirs. Judaism's rise to religious hegemony has its substantial, historical point of departure in an armed, religiously motivated Maccabean rebellion in Jerusalem, which eventually led to military conquests over Idumea, Samaria and the Galilee, and part of Transjordan. Through the Maccabean rulers' subordination of and, at times, forced allegiance and conversion to Judaism and its temple, religion created an exclusive transformation of Palestine's multi-ethnic population.

Notes

- 1 I am indebted to Sharif Kanaanah and Ingrid Hjelm for their suggestions and corrections to this chart.
- 2 The ancient names of the towns on the sites of Tell Keisan and Hirbet al 'Ureima are unidentified.

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