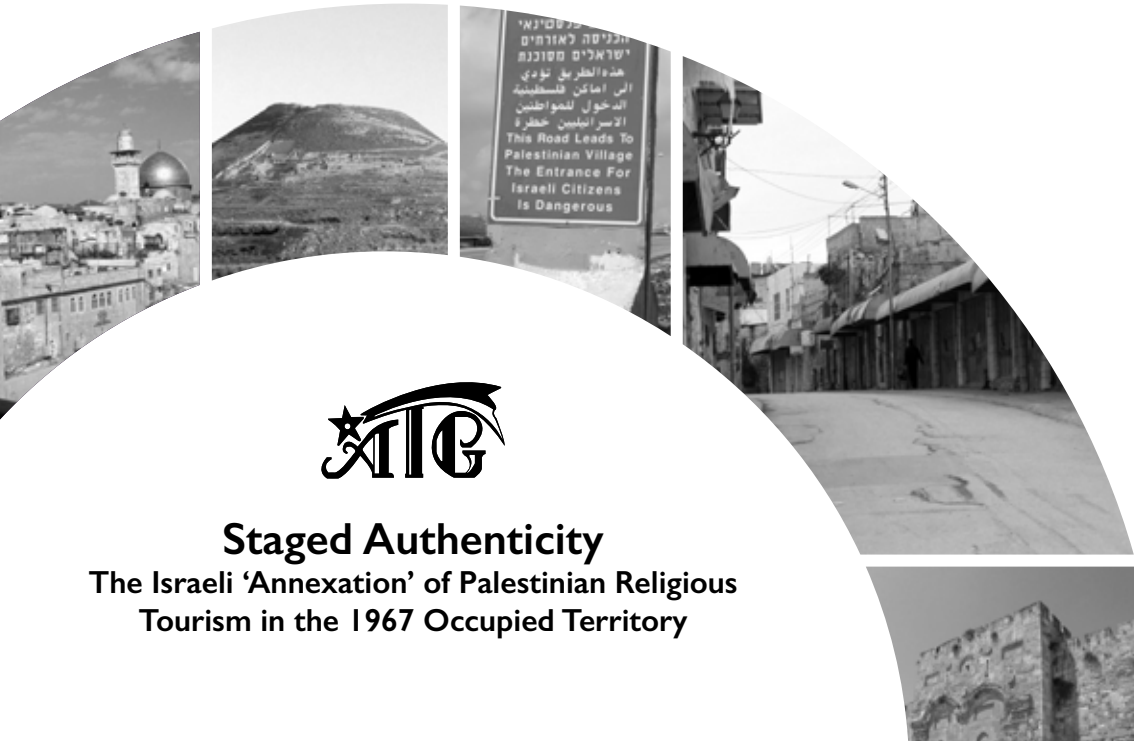


Alternative **Tourism** Journal



Staged Authenticity

**The Israeli 'Annexation' of Palestinian Religious
Tourism in the 1967 Occupied Territory**

Alternative Tourism Journal is an initiative of the Alternative Tourism Group-Study Center Palestine (ATG). It is a journal which offers an alternative narrative of the situation in Palestine and the way it impacts on tourism.

ATG is a Palestinian NGO specializing in tours and pilgrimages that include a critical examination of the history, culture, and politics of the Holy Land. ATG operates on the tenets of “justice tourism” and seeks empowerment of the local community through affirmation of Palestinian cultural identity, and protection of eco-rights. Above all, ATG seeks to promote justice in the Holy Land with tourism as one of its instruments.

Copyright© ATG-2016

Published in Palestine by the Alternative Tourism Group-Study Center (ATG)

Written and Researched by: Dr. Manar Makhoul

Design and Layout: Lisa Salsa Kassis

Printing: IDEAS - Bethlehem

Table of Contents

Preface	5
Introduction	7
Zionism and Tourism	9
Erasure	9
Appropriation	13
Pilgrimage and Religious Tourism in Palestine	18
Back Stage	23
Performance	34
Conclusion	39
Bibliography	40

Staged Authenticity

The Israeli 'Annexation' of Palestinian
Religious Tourism in the 1967 Occupied
Territory

Preface

In this study, ATG reinforces the views it has propagated in its previous journals. In the main, we make the claim that Israel's validation for promoting tourism under its current strategy is two-fold. The study is multi-faceted and, therefore, is intended to attract a variety of readers, researchers, and justice-oriented travelers whose primary reasons for being in the Holy Land is to explore the truth alongside seeing the sites.

For Israel, the occupation of Palestinian lands has helped to achieve dual agendas. On one hand, they took over land under the pretext of security for their own people. They claimed that peace could come only by security and that, in turn, meant appropriating more land and creating those lands as settlement areas for Jewish populations. But as the occupation continued, Israel also recognized political and fiscal advantage in appropriating tourism areas and 'products'. The researcher-writer of the booklet underlines the weight of tourism as a political instrument in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. He further underscores how Israel has maneuvered religious tourism because it generates high numbers of tourists. For the researcher, these tourists constitute a 'captive audience' whose political views and thinking can be shaped if the pilgrimage can be exploited to convey an Israeli narrative of the conflict; a narrative which paints the Palestinian as the root of the conflict and Israel as victim.

Historically, the claim of Israel to Palestinian sites has no foundations and, hence the title, "Staged Authenticity - The Israeli 'Annexation' of Palestinian Religious Tourism in the 1967 Occupied Territory". To cement its control over Palestinian sites and heritage, Israel has used questionable methods including minimizing access of Palestinian tour companies to religious tourism. Second, Israel invests profusely in promoting tourism in Israel as well as in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory. The researcher deals with the bureaucratic and statistical monitoring of Israeli authorities through which they fake truth and make the unreal claims about Israel's history.

Israel seeks, by all means, to erase the Palestinian identity and replace it by a super-imposed Israeli identity. Tourism and colonialism and nationalism are offshoots of tourism, according to the researcher. Many sites, including archaeological sites and national parks are spaces invaded by colonial practices and through which “versions of history and heritage are selected, institutionalized, displayed, and popularized”.

Through the machinations of the occupation, Israel controls the rights of Palestinians on the basis of the law of occupation. Israel has rebranded popular areas such as Jerusalem to authenticate, solidify, and strengthen the “Jewish identity” of the holy sites. This, as he suggests, shows how large numbers of pilgrims go to visit the sites of biblical significance. In that process, they neglect to understand the prevailing crises in the region. Some pilgrims even believe their visit is key to their spiritual future. Meanwhile, Israel invests millions of dollars into its tourism market in order to attract the maximum possible visitors; and rake in profits. Palestinian sites have been taken over and Israel has pumped huge investments. At the same time a cash-strapped Palestinian tourism industry has to reckon with the crumbs under the table.

Israel has made occupation a product that has perfected the Zionist enterprise, protected the Jewish tradition, and pilgrims leave feeling that the occupation is a normal and appropriate thing to do in order to preserve the Jewish character of the land.

The researcher argues with accompanying facts how the “blurring of the political reality is also manifested in the design of the ‘Holy Land maps’, which often lack cartographic accuracy”.

We endorse this study as one which will open eyes, reveal new insights, and prompt alternative thinking on the lines of justice.

Rami Kassis

Executive Director
Alternative Tourism Group

Introduciton

In June 2016, Israel's Culture Minister sent a "questionnaire to theaters and dance troupes to find out whether they are performing in Jewish settlements in the West Bank, a first step toward changing regulations that will allow [the ministry] to penalize cultural institutions that refuse to perform there".¹ This step was related to "new funding criteria instituted by Culture and Sports Minister Miri Regev in April 2016. Under these criteria, institutions that offer no performances in the settlements, the Negev or the Galilee will suffer a 33 percent cut in their government funding. Moreover, performances in the settlements will earn an institution a 10-percent bonus".² Branded as a form of encouraging cultural activities in the periphery, this policy intrinsically assumes a *de facto* equality between the Galilee, the Naqab [Negev], and the West Bank. In other words, although the West Bank lies under military occupation, culturally, as far as this policy is concerned, it is part of Israel.

This paper is about the duality of 'military' versus 'civic', 'political' versus 'cultural', or 'occupied' versus 'non-occupied' inherent within Israeli policies and practices toward the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory. Namely, the focus of this paper will be on the Israeli appropriation of religious tourism in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory. Our contention is that Israel implements a *de facto* annexation of the occupied Palestinian territory, thus implementing the Zionist colonial takeover of Mandatory Palestine. The rationale of this paper is derived from the understanding of the importance of tourism as a political instrument in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. This is particularly true regarding religious tourism for two main reasons. The first relates to the volume of religious tourists or pilgrims that visit Mandate Palestine annually, amounting to almost one in four of the total number of tourists. Secondly, religious tourists arrive in organized groups, thus becoming a 'captive audience'. Israel sees huge potential in

1 AP, "Israel Culture Minister Probes Troupes That Shun Settlements," News, The Big Story, (June 15, 2016), <http://goo.gl/XZWYVM>.

2 Yair Ashkenazi, "Israel Asks Culture Institutions to Declare If They Hold Performances in Settlements," News, Haaretz, (June 15, 2016), <http://goo.gl/9sAbqU>.

shaping the opinions of these hundreds of thousands of tourists, and shaping their perceptions of the political reality in Palestine. Tourism, indeed, has been a vital means to influence world public opinion since the early years of the Zionist movement.

In order to control religious tourism, Israel employs various policies on different levels. First, Israel utilizes its military rule apparatus to limit the access of Palestinian tour companies to religious tourism. Second, Israel invests profusely in promoting tourism in Israel as well as in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory. This paper will address the bureaucratic and statistical monitoring of Israeli authorities. These practices feed into designing and adapting the content presented to tourists. From those, this paper will focus on the education and training of tour guides, as well as the design of tourist maps as markers of political discourse. The Zionist political discourse is implicit in the maps, probably counter-intuitively, through the elimination of the political reality in Palestine.

This paper utilizes theoretical models from the field of tourism in order to analyze the Israeli policies and assess their implications. Specifically, we use the Dean MacCannell's model on Staged Authenticity, hence the title of the paper. Put succinctly, we analyze the Israeli touristic policies by employing an analogy of a theatre, and the differentiation between the 'on stage' performance, and the 'backstage' intentions, that are supposedly hidden from the audience.

Zionism and Tourism

Erasure

Tourism plays an important role in defining national identity. Benedict Anderson identified the museum, the map and the census as tools that define the imagined community of a nation, by marking the boundaries of belonging.³ Tourism, similarly, is not devoid of politics and ideology. On the contrary, as the Zionist ideology is “designed to promote political goals and/or cultural images, [it] pervades the country’s entire tourist infrastructure, including and above all its tourist-directed media: visual, oral and written”.⁴ This is especially true in a conflict, where tourism contributes to promoting certain world views over others.

Tourism in Israel is heavily linked with colonialism and nationalism. The Zionist movement, and later Israel, identified the importance of tourism in shaping a Jewish collective identity, and claiming ownership over Palestine. By 1925 the World Zionist Organization had already established the Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists, which was “financed and run jointly by the Zionist Executive, the Jewish National Fund [...] and the United Israel Appeal [...]”.⁵ The Bureau contributed significantly to the symbolic erasure of Palestine and Palestinians, and to promoting the Zionist narrative. This was achieved, in the words of Cohen-Hattab, through “a coordinated attack on the country’s oral, visual and written tourist media: guidebooks, tourist maps, advertisements, films and tour guides”.⁶ This coordinated attack has aimed to establish and substantiate a Zionist narrative. In order to achieve this, the Zionist movement also utilized archaeology. Today, “Israel emphasizes sites of ancient Jewish history, as well as those of recent Zionist history, where it invests in

3 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York: Verso, 1991), 184.

4 Kobi Cohen-Hattab, “Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine: Tourism as a Political-Propaganda Tool,” *Israel Studies* 9, no. 1 (2004): 63, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245744>.

5 *Ibid.*, 66–67.

6 *Ibid.*

archaeological digs, preservation, and development of tourist sites. Those sites, dispersed all over the country, attract Jewish visitors from Israel and abroad".⁷ Nevertheless, 'emphasizing Jewish history' in Palestine, entails the marginalization, erasure or appropriation of non-Jewish histories in it. First and foremost, the Zionist narrative inherently erases Palestinian history, belonging and ownership of Palestine. It is a "zero-sum game where only one of the two sides can be present. Dismissing the 'other' and emphasizing everything expressing 'Israeliness' are part of this".⁸ The sites that mark Zionist nationalism and belonging, such as national parks, nature reserves and recreation forests, are sites of destruction and eradication.⁹ The organizations responsible for creating and managing most of the nature, heritage and recreation sites in Israel are the Jewish National Fund (JNF) and the Nature and Parks Authority (NPA). These bodies are driven by the Zionist-Israeli ideology, and promote it to the visitors coming to the sites.¹⁰

The Jewish National Fund (JNF) was established in 1901 in order to purchase land in Palestine for the purpose of settling Jews. Today it is responsible for planting, forestation, settlement, agriculture, and tourism. The latter is now its main activity, with over 1000 recreation areas and parks in planted forests and open areas.¹¹

Similarly, Joel Bauman notes the ideological aspect of the Nature and Parks Authority (NPA), and describes it as an organization "charged with creating an imagined national identity through archaeological sites and national parks". He adds that Israeli national parks are "institutions where versions of history and heritage are selected, institutionalized, displayed,

7 Noga Kadman, "Roots Tourism—Whose Roots?: The Marginalization of Palestinian Heritage Sites in Official Israeli Tourism Sites," *Téoros: Revue de Recherche En Tourisme* 29, no. 1 (2010): 55, <http://goo.gl/0Qh4WM>.

8 Izhak Schnell and Ben-Israel Arnon, "Neo-Zionist Frontier Landscapes in the Occupied Territories," *Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis* 3, no. 2 (2011): 187, <http://goo.gl/A8uiYz>.

9 Kadman, "Roots Tourism—Whose Roots?," 55.

10 *Ibid.*, 57; See also Joanna C. Long, "Rooting Diaspora, Reviving Nation: Zionist Landscapes of Palestine-Israel," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34, no. 1 (2009): 61–77, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30136814>.no. 1 (2009)

11 Kadman, "Roots Tourism—Whose Roots?," 57.

and popularized".¹²

The erasure of Palestinian history is both physical and symbolic, "from expropriation of land to be used for parks, to symbolic conquest effected through walking hikes, to excavating under and around the Palestinians who remain and removing the layers of their history".¹³ Writing on contemporary Israeli tourist journalism, Haneen Naamneh, arrives to similar conclusions on the role of tourism and occupation. She sees that tourism sections in Israeli newspapers have an intrinsically nationalist role. Naamneh stipulates that tourism to displaced Palestinian villages aims to "normalize them as part of the past, and this is an integral part of the newspaper's contribution to the Israeli nation-building endeavor. It is possible to say that including destroyed Palestinian villages as part of a 'local' tour itinerary is a shameless insinuation attempting to define who the landlord is".¹⁴ For example, in 1959, the Association for the Improvement of the Landscape in the *governmental tourism authority* adopted a plan intended to beautify the road to Jerusalem. The plan entailed the demolition of the depopulated village of Qalunia and planting a forest on its lands.¹⁵ This serves two goals. The first is an example of how a site of displacement can become a site of national identity formation. Secondly, and more importantly, the decision to remove the remains of the Palestinian village to plant a forest was taken by an Israeli tourism authority. Qalunia, is surely not the only example, as 182 demolished Palestinian villages lie within the boundaries of 'tourism and recreation sites' in Israel.¹⁶

In addition to the erasure of Palestinian history, particularly that of displacement and ethnic cleansing, the Zionist movement appropriates

12 Quoted in *ibid*.

13 Joel Bauman, "Designer Heritage: Israeli National Parks and the Politics of Historical Representation," *Middle East Report*, no. 196 (1995): 21, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3013298>.

14 Haneen Naamneh, "Tourist Season 2013: Occupied Palestine, Visit and Celebrate It [Arabic]," *Al-Akhbar*, January 15, 2013, <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/175498>.

15 Italics added, Kadman, "Roots Tourism—Whose Roots?" 56.

16 *Ibid.*, 58.

to itself aspects of the history of Palestine. Analyzing tourist maps of Jaffa, Natasha Roth finds that:

The words 'Palestinian', 'Arab', and 'Muslim' do not appear in the map's key or descriptions once. The word 'oriental' does feature, however— as a category of restaurant, which fits neatly into the colonialist model of either erasing or subsuming the native culture and then passing off the safely fractured remnants as 'local color.'¹⁷

This analysis of a tourist map in 2016 reveals both erasure and appropriation. 'Palestinian', 'Arab', and 'Muslim' are erased from the narrative, while 'oriental food' is utilized to promote tourism. Similarly, as we will discuss below, the Zionist movement and Israel appropriate the religious history and sites in Palestine that promote their agenda. Like oriental food, religious sites are emptied of any contemporary political context.

¹⁷ Natasha Roth, "Wiping Palestinian History off the Map in Jaffa," News, +972 Magazine, (June 4, 2016), <http://972mag.com/wiping-palestinian-history-off-the-map-in-jaffa/119688/>.

Appropriation

The settlement enterprise does not just sit within the colonial project of land acquisition, but rather it emphasizes the importance of this project to ultimately integrate the 1948 and the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories under Zionist-Israeli rule. In this paper, we will show the *de facto* annexation of the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory. We begin by presenting how this has been performed in other, primarily legal, arenas. Later, we will focus on the appropriation and hijacking of Palestinian religious tourism, stemming from the same ideological roots. Thus, this is a double appropriation: the annexation of the 1967 occupied territory to Israel, and the hijacking of Palestinian Christian religious sites.

In 1983, the Ministry of Agriculture and the World Zionist Organization jointly prepared a master plan for the development of the settlements designed “to achieve the incorporation (of the West Bank) into the (Israeli) national system”.¹⁸ However, Article 43 of The Hague Convention stipulates that:

The authority of the legitimate power having in fact passed into the hands of the occupant, the latter shall take all the measures in his power to restore, and ensure, as far as possible, public order and safety, while respecting, unless absolutely prevented, the laws in force in the country.¹⁹

Article 43, in other words, prohibits an occupying power from creating laws in the occupied territory, “which are not absolutely necessary for the specific temporary context of occupation, such as for the maintenance of order, the safety of the occupier’s forces, and the realization of the legitimate purpose of the occupation. The enactment

¹⁸ Orna Ben-Naftali, Aeyal M. Gross, and Keren Michaeli, “Illegal Occupation: Framing the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 23, no. 3 (2005): 579, <http://googl/Qcflql>.

¹⁹ “Hague Convention (IV) on War on Land and Its Annexed Regulations, 1907,” October 18, 1907, <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/195>.

of laws and regulations that have no reasonable relation to the purposes of occupation are illegitimate”.²⁰ Nevertheless, in an article on the illegality of Israeli occupation, Ben-Naftali, Gross and Michaeli follow the evolution of the application of Israeli law in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory, showing how Israel abandons the notion of the occupation as a temporary situation and arrive at the conclusion that, “this dynamic is leading toward *de facto* annexation and the creation of a single legal system under Israeli control”.²¹ Similarly, Ben-Natan traces the gradual and conscious emulation of Israeli civilian criminal law in military courts.²² She concludes that the efforts to unify the two legal systems, in Israel and in the 1967 occupied territory, “aimed to remove the distinction between the occupying power and the occupied territory. This trend is one of the contradictions in the Israeli control apparatus in the West Bank: the temporary is in fact permanent, the unusual became the ordinary, the distinguished that is in fact inseparable from the regime in Israel”.²³ Thus, there is a duality and a contradiction in the Israeli practices in the occupied territory. This duality has been summarized thus by Ben-Naftali, Gross and Michaeli:

While Israel has consistently argued that the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are not occupied territories, the State’s attorneys have sought to justify Israel’s actions in the territories which restrict the rights of Palestinians on the basis of the law of occupation. [...] This occupation/non-occupation indeterminacy is complemented by its twin annexation/non-annexation indeterminacy: Israel acts in the territory as a sovereign insofar as it settles its citizens there and extends to them its laws on a personal and on a mixed personal/territorial basis, yet insofar as the territory has not been

20 Ben-Naftali, Gross, and Michaeli, “Illegal Occupation: Framing the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” 593.

21 Smadar Ben-Natan, “The Application of Israeli Law in Military Courts in the Occupied Territories [Hebrew],” *Theory and Criticism* 43, no. (Fall) (2014): 45–74, <http://goo.gl/KuTslB>.

22 Yaël Ronen, “Blind in Their Own Cause: The Military Courts in the West Bank,” *Cambridge Journal of International and Comparative Law* 2, no. 4 (2013): 755, <http://goo.gl/QLnuYH>.

23 Ben-Natan, “The Application of Israeli Law in Military Courts in the Occupied Territories [Hebrew],” 47.

formally annexed and insofar as this exercise of sovereignty falls short of giving the Palestinian residents citizenship rights, Israel is not acting as a sovereign. In this manner, Israel enjoys both the powers of an occupant and a sovereign in the OPT, while Palestinians enjoy neither the rights of an occupied people nor the rights of citizenship. *This indeterminacy allows Israel to avoid accountability in the international community for having illegally annexed the territories, while pursuing the policies of “greater Israel” in the West Bank without jeopardizing its Jewish majority.* It is, finally, the blurring of the boundaries between the temporary and the indefinite, and between the rule and the exception, which has donned a mantle of legitimacy on this occupation and has made possible the continuous interplay of occupation/non-occupation and annexation/non-annexation. This mantle, however, much like the Emperor’s New Clothes, should not obfuscate our vision of the naked illegality of this regime”.²⁴

This evolution of the *de facto* annexation of the West Bank had already been identified in 1988, by Israeli constitutional law scholar Amnon Rubinstein.²⁵ The blurring of the Green Line is also evident in the application of the Israeli Election Law, which allows Jewish-Israeli settlers in the occupied territory to take part in the Israeli general elections:

This provision is significant, especially considering Israel’s lack of absentee ballot voting. Its effect is to allow Israeli settlers in the [Occupied Palestinian Territory] to take part in choosing the government which rules these territories as an occupying power, whereas the Palestinian residents of the very same territories, who are also subject to the actions of this very same government, do not partake in choosing it.²⁶

24 Italics added; Ben-Naftali, Gross, and Michaeli, “Illegal Occupation: Framing the Occupied Palestinian Territory,” 610–12.

25 *Ibid.*, 586.

26 *Ibid.*, 584–85.

The same logic can be applied to tourism, and the Israeli *de facto* “annexation” thereof. One primary example is the rebranding of Jerusalem: “Visible since the mid-2000s, the rebranding of the area [of Mamillah] is implicated in attempts to erase traces of the [1967] border through upscale development that appeals to an international clientele”.²⁷ Moreover, a recent report on Israeli control over holy places concludes that, “the Israeli legislative and judiciary system is committed – wittingly or unwittingly – to validating the intensive political activities by successive Israeli governments geared towards solidifying and strengthening the Jewish identity of the holy sites”.²⁸

The same report shows that since there is no definition in the Israeli law to what constitutes a holy place, Israel’s practice is intentionally ambiguous and allows administrative flexibility at the sites. The flexibility “enables the Judaization and gradual state takeover of these sites”.²⁹ This has been the practice since the establishment of the state in 1948, and to an even greater degree, from 1967 onward.³⁰ For example,

The tombs of Samuel the Prophet and Rachel the Matriarch are located in the West Bank, in an area under military control, and therefore, it is unclear how they can be under the ‘jurisdiction’ of the National Center for the Development of Holy Places given that it lacks legal authority to operate outside of Israeli territory. (These tombs should be under the auspices of the Judea and Samaria Civil Administration.)³¹

27 Dana Herbergs, “The Davidization of Jerusalem: On the Politics of Symbols,” +972 Magazine, December 28, 2014, <http://goo.gl/RNZCYm>.

28 Eitay Mack, “Selectively Sacred: Holy Sites in Jerusalem and Its Environs” (Emek Shaveh, April 2016), 5, <http://goo.gl/LlhfwK>.

29 *Ibid.*, 27.

30 *Ibid.*, 13.

31 *Ibid.*, 16.

The report from Emek Shaveh corresponds to the above mentioned 'emphasizing of Jewish history' in Palestine. This is, however, not the focus of this paper. Relying on primary data from the Israeli Ministry of Tourism, as well as the Central Bureau of Statistics, we will present different sets of evidence that manifest the Israeli blurring of the Green Line and the appropriation of Palestinian religious tourism from different perspectives. This will be supplemented by theoretical tools and secondary sources. The different aspects that we will cover are training courses for tour guides in Israel, as well as the statistical monitoring of tourist flow in different locations, primarily Christian, and the Israeli authorities' legal definitions of what constitutes a holy site.

Pilgrimage and Religious Tourism in Palestine

In 2015, 2,787,297 tourists visited Israel. From the total number of tourists 53% were Christian, and 22% of the tourists arrived for religious purposes (pilgrimage).³² The Israeli Ministry of Tourism surveyed a sample of 15,369 Christian tourists: 36% said the purpose of their visit was pilgrimage.³³ Between 2013 and 2015, religious tourism accounted for 21%-22%.³⁴ This means that pilgrims constitute approximately 600,000 tourists annually.

Pilgrimage, or religious tourism,³⁵ is a form of political power. For centuries, Christian pilgrims visited Palestine “to impose their own conceptual grids on the territory”.³⁶ Seeing Christian tourism to Palestine, from this long historical perspective, one can appreciate the political importance of religious tourism as a platform to influence public opinion.³⁷ There are three main groups of Christian pilgrims to Palestine:³⁸

Evangelicals [and most Western Catholics and orthodox pilgrims] go essentially to visit the sites of biblical significance ... without addressing either the present Middle East conflict or necessarily engaging in theological praxis....

Fundamentalist pilgrims visit the Holy Land for similar reasons but with an added eschatological dimension, believing themselves to be witnessing

32 Israel Ministry of Tourism, “Inbound Tourism Survey Annual Report 2015” (Jerusalem: Israel Ministry of Tourism, June 2016), <https://goo.gl/mpkPr3>.

33 Ministry of Tourism, “Characteristics of Visit [Hebrew]” (Jerusalem: Ministry of Tourism, 2014), sec. 2.2.6, <https://goo.gl/zjLIUX>.

34 Israel Ministry of Tourism, “Inbound Tourism Survey Annual Report 2015,” 18.

35 We will not follow the distinction between “pilgrims” and “religious tourists”, seeing that “pilgrimage and tourism should be viewed not as exclusive phenomena but as ideal types on a continuum of travelers’ behavior and self-perception”; in Jackie Feldman, “Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims,” *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 2 (2007): 356, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4496811>.

36 Jackie Feldman, “Abraham the Settler; Jesus the Refugee: Contemporary Conflict and Christianity on the Road to Bethlehem,” *History and Memory* 23, no. 1 (2011): 66, <http://goo.gl/O722SB>.

37 Feldman, “Abraham the Settler; Jesus the Refugee”; Cohen-Hattab, “Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine.”

38 Quoted in Feldman, “Abraham the Settler; Jesus the Refugee,” 68.

and indeed participating in the purposes of God at work within Israel in these 'last days' [before the rapture and the Second Coming of Christ]. They believe they have a divine mandate to support the state of Israel....

'Living Stones' pilgrimages ... engage in acts of solidarity with the Palestinian church. These pilgrimages include opportunities to meet, worship with, listen to and learn from the spirituality and experience of the indigenous Christians.³⁹

According to Israeli data, between 2013 and 2015, Catholic tourists composed between 19% and 25% of all tourists; Orthodox between 12% and 14%; and Protestant-Evangelical between 8% and 10%. Statistics from previous years follow the same pattern.⁴⁰

From the start, the Zionist movement attributed great importance to religious tourism. Moreover, and in its search for legitimacy, tourism, from the standpoint of Zionism, was a means to influence public opinion, especially in the Christian world. "One of the biggest problems facing the Zionist Information Bureau [for Tourists] in its early years was how to net the organized Christian tours, which amounted to a substantial portion of tourism in Palestine".⁴¹ This line continued after 1948, and also after 1967:



Fig. 2. Certificates produced by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism for pilgrims crossing into Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. Reproduced by permission of Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

39 For more on this see: Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), "Listening to the Living Stones: Towards Theological Explorations of Kairos Pilgrimages for Justice" (Beit Sahour: Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), 2014), <https://goo.gl/Urd5WV>.

40 Israel Ministry of Tourism, "Inbound Tourism Survey Annual Report 2015," 18; For additional and older statistics, see the following link: <https://goo.gl/cF8TzM>.

41 Cohen-Hattab, "Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine," 73.

Since the rise of the right-wing Likud Party to power in 1977, various Israeli governments have targeted American Evangelical and fundamentalist groups as a prime audience for garnering political support. By sponsoring subsidized orientation tours, Israel has provided a source of additional income for pastors (who will then lead future groups) and created an emotionally convincing platform for their political agendas.⁴²

Nowadays, the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics explains that, "Israel's attractiveness to tourists can be attributed to the large number of religious, natural and cultural sites concentrated in a small area, as well as to its extensive touristic infrastructure and temperate climate".⁴³ Note that the quotation uses 'Israel' to refer to Mandatory Palestine, considering the fact that many Christian religious sites are located in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory.

Terminology and naming are important in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict.⁴⁴ It is a primary tool for claiming ownership and appropriation. The use of 'Israel' to represent Mandatory Palestine reflects Israeli intentions as well as practices, particularly in the tourist industry. The switch between 'Israel' and 'the Holy Land' is a terminological manifestation of the 'occupation/non-occupation indeterminacy' we presented above, allowing Israel to pursue its *de facto* annexation and appropriation of the entire space of Palestine, also symbolically. This can be seen in the following message provided by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism to tourists at the Bethlehem crossing.⁴⁵

The text in the greeting reads: "Dear Pilgrim: The State of Israel is glad that

42 Feldman, "Abraham the Settler; Jesus the Refugee," 69.

43 Tilda Hayat, Omri Romano, and Lena Ostrovsky, "Tourism and Hotel Services: 2000-2012," *Statisti-Lite* (Jerusalem: The Central Bureau of Statistics, November 2013), 2, <http://goo.gl/gXodqZ>.

44 Amjad Alqasis, "Decolonizing the Vocabulary of Palestinian Human Rights Work," NGO, The Nakba Files, (October 3, 2016), <http://nakbafiles.org/2016/10/03/decolonizing-the-vocabulary-of-palestinian-human-rights-work/>; Yasir Suleiman, *A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East*, Cambridge Middle East Studies 19 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Yasir Suleiman, *Arabic, Self and Identity: A Study in Conflict and Displacement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011).

45 Feldman, "Abraham the Settler; Jesus the Refugee," 77.

you have decided to celebrate the Christmas Season in the Holy Land''. The duality and equation between 'Israel' and the 'Holy Land' is evident, simply, in the fact that Israel welcomes tourists to the 'Holy land'. It is only through a sense of authority that somebody can appropriate the right to welcome a guest to a place that they do not own. In other words, this is an explicit sign of ownership and appropriation on the part of Israel. Moreover, the appeal in the greeting for the pilgrims "to pray for peace between all nations" portrays Israel to the tourists as a country that seeks peace, eliminating the fact that it is an occupying power in violation of international law.

In order to analyze the political, bureaucratic and symbolic tools employed by Israel, we will use the model presented by Dean MacCannell, who offers an ethnography of modernity. Using semiotic analysis, he shows how leisure reflects social structures, or more precisely social structural differentiation.⁴⁶ For him, modernism creates alienation that makes people look for authenticity. This search for an authentic experience is undertaken by tourism. However, MacCannell argues that this quest is doomed to failure because of commercialism, thus rendering the tourist experience as inauthentic, in what he calls staged authenticity. MacCannell adopts Erving Goffman's division of social establishment into what he calls 'front' and 'back' regions into his analysis and model. Goffman proposed the theater as an analogy to depict social behavior. For him social action is a play, therefore people change their social roles according to their position (front or back) on the stage. In the same way that people withhold certain aspects of their personality, keeping them 'backstage', the tourist is always confronted with a staged, inauthentic play.

⁴⁶ Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999).

MacCannell's model has been criticized by many.⁴⁷ For example, John Urry stipulates that it is not the search for authenticity that is at the basis of tourism, but the difference between the normal life of residence and work and the object of the tourist gaze.⁴⁸ In other words, it is the differentiation from the mundane and everyday life, through an experience of something that is out of the ordinary. A search for authenticity can be one dimension of this.

Nevertheless, for our analysis here, the 'staged' part of the analogy is of primary importance, before the 'authenticity'. Authenticity, does not strictly follow MacCannell's definition of the modern tourist's search for meaning. It means, rather, the battle for ownership over Palestine, and legitimacy. In other words, 'authenticity' for us lies in the side of the performer, rather than on the side of the receiver. We are interested in the mechanics, the backstage working of Israeli politics and ideology *vis-à-vis* the façade that tourist sees 'on stage'. We use this model to analyze different aspects of Israeli annexation of Palestinian tourism.

47 Chaim Noy, "The Politics of Authenticity in a National Heritage Site in Israel," *Qualitative Sociology Review* V, no. 1 (April 2009): 115.

48 John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze*, 2nd ed (London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2002), 12.

Backstage

To achieve the political goals of tourism in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory, "Israel follows a two-tiered strategy: firstly, to invest millions of dollars into its tourism market in order to attract the maximum number of visitors; and secondly, to cripple the Palestinian market as much as possible".⁴⁹ Israel directly invests in programs that target "politicians, community leaders and journalists",⁵⁰ who receive subsidized tours to Israel. Most recently, for example, the Israeli Ministry of Tourism launched the '2016 Decision Makers Hosting Project'. This regulation defines Decision Makers to be "tourism wholesalers, travel agents, religious leaders and all other decision makers who motivate tourism in Israel".⁵¹ The campaign aims to "immediately bring decision makers from abroad to visit touristic sites in Israel and get the impression that it is possible to renew marketing efforts leading to intensified traffic to the country".⁵² According to the campaign, which stretched from 1 January 2016 till 30 April 2016, the Ministry of Tourism would contribute to flight expenses. The Decision Makers Hosting Project has been promoted since 2014.⁵³

Moreover, Israeli tourism enterprises [are] offered long-term loans at concessionary interest rates, sometimes with part of the loan being converted into a grant. New Israeli tourism enterprises are eligible for tax reductions, and vigorous government support for Israeli enterprises active in Israel has proved to be a major impediment to full and equitable competition with Palestinian enterprises, which are totally deprived of such subsidies and assistance.⁵⁴

49 Amjad Alqasis and Dafer Kassis, "Status of Tourism in Palestine" (Bethlehem: Alternative Tourism Group, 2015), 17.

50 Ibid., 16.

51 Amir Halevi, "Regulation for Decision Makers Hosting Project 2016," Regulation, Director General Regulation (Jerusalem: Ministry of Tourism, January 4, 2016), <http://goo.gl/2f595d>.

52 Ibid.

53 Amir Halevi, "Director General Regulation number 09/2014 [Hebrew];" December 14, 2014, <http://goo.gl/XVb7yF>.

54 Alqasis and Kassis, "Status of Tourism in Palestine," 18.

To illustrate the first point quoted above, on investing in Israeli tourism, the following table shows the Israeli grants and investments in tourism in recent years in millions of US Dollars.

Year	Grants	Investments
2010	71.6	357.9
2011	56.4	270.3
2012	56.4	294.4
2013	53.0	204.5
2014	50.9	203.1

The Palestinian Authority can barely compete with the Israeli financial power. In comparison to the Israeli figures, “the Palestinian government pledged to invest US\$ 8.7 million in 2011, US\$ 17.6 million in 2012 and US\$ 22.9 million in 2013”.⁵⁵

Apart from the financial investment in tourism, the Israeli control over the tourist industry is evident in the geographical definitions. We mentioned the use of ‘Israel’ in official documents to refer to Mandatory Palestine. Moreover, in terms of control over tourism particularly, this appropriation has implications on the ground. The translation of this appropriation in practical terms, as we said above, is to promote Israeli tourism at the expense of Palestinian tourism. The geographical division between the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip has severe implications for Palestinian tourism, since Palestinian tour companies and guides cannot operate freely in the 1967 occupied territory.⁵⁶ In addition to denying access and limiting freedom of movement for Palestinian tour guides, crippling the Palestinian market, the geographic divisions help the Israeli Ministry of Tourism as well as the Central Bureau of Statistics monitor the flow of tourists to different areas.

55 Shir Hever and Connie Hackbarth, “Lost Revenue from Tourism to the Palestinian Economy” (Beit Sahour: Alternative Tourism Group, 2014), 7, <http://atg.ps/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/final.pdf>.

56 Alqasis and Kassis, “Status of Tourism in Palestine,” 13.

Statistical monitoring is vital to the Israeli tourist industry, allowing a comprehensive analysis of the demographics and preferences of tourists. This statistical analysis reveals the size and importance of the tourist potential that lies in the 1967 occupied territory. For example, a 2014 survey by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism addressed the habits of tourists in 41 locations in Mandatory Palestine. The results show that almost half of the tourist sites surveyed are located in the West Bank (the numbers in brackets denote to the ratio of religious tourists visiting each site in 2015)⁵⁷:

1. 53.6% (22 of the 41) are located in Israel: Tel-Aviv-Jaffa (52%), Haifa (31%), Netanya (8%), Herzliya (1%), Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee Area (87%), Nazareth (81%), Galilee Area (86%), Negev Area (7%), Eilat and the Red Sea (7%), Beth Shean (17%), Capernaum (80%), Old Jaffa (35%), Yad Vashem (34%), Masada (46%), Akko (Acre) (10%), Caesarea (48%), Yardenit baptism site (58%), Church of Annunciation (72%), Tel-Aviv Museum of Art (2%), Tel-Aviv port (6%), Israel Museum (31%), any other area in Israel (35%).
2. 39% (16 of the 41) are located within the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory: Jericho (58%), Bethlehem (79%), Qumran (43%), Qasr El-Yahud (9%), Tower of David (41%), Holy Sepulcher (89%), The Jewish Quarter (81%), The Western Wall (85%), Via Dolorosa (88%), Mount of Olives (87%), The Garden Tomb (52%), City of David (46%), Cave of the Patriarchs (7%), Al-Aqsa Mosque (12%), any other area in the Palestinian Authority (2%).
3. 4.9% (2 of 41) may include 1948 and 1967 areas: Jerusalem (98%), Dead Sea area (85%).
4. 2.4% (1 of 41) are located in the Golan Heights: 1967 occupied Syrian territory – that is not inside Israel (33%).

⁵⁷ Israeli Ministry of Tourism, "Raw Data Files of the Annual Incoming Tourism Survey [Hebrew]." Governmental, info.goisrael.com, (2015), <https://goo.gl/U4keji>.

Note for example that Christian sites are mentioned individually, while most locations in Israel are cities or even regions. Israel is not only interested that the tourist visited Jerusalem, for instance, but the survey wishes to know where in Jerusalem. This is especially true regarding sites that are of importance to religious tourism. This point is clarified when examining the ratio of religious tourist visits to each one of the sites Israel monitors. This is exemplified by the Garden Tomb, which matches the biggest city in Israel (Tel-Aviv) with 52% of visitors being designated religious tourists, exceeding Haifa, Netanya, and Herzliya put together. Clearly, the potential and the importance of religious sites for tourism in Palestine has been mentioned above, and Israel works actively to appropriate these sites to itself. This point has been made by former Palestinian Tourism Minister Kholoud Daibes: “We have more sites on our side, and Israel is using them to develop their own tourism, leaving us with a smaller piece of the pie. [...] They are promoting occupied territory as part of Israel”.⁵⁸ The minister indicated in the interview that this Israeli appropriation results in Israel collecting 90% of pilgrim-related revenue. Nevertheless, this appropriation has more than just a financial benefit for Israel. To make this point clearer we need to look at another aspect of the Israeli ‘backstage’ side of tourist policies. Namely, the education and training of tour guides in Israel.

Licensed Israeli tour guides are all graduates of the Israeli government tour-guide course. During the two-year course, “guides attend lectures on a variety of topics, with major emphases placed on biblical history and archaeology and Christianity. Although the course is not an indoctrination in Zionist ideology, the curriculum does reflect taken-for-granted hegemonic understandings of Israel’s history and place in the world”.⁵⁹ Effectively, in other words, “the tour guide becomes one the national movement’s primary spokespersons, used to promote its ideological goals”.⁶⁰ It is from this point of departure that Israel limits the

⁵⁸ Alqasis and Kassis, “Status of Tourism in Palestine,” 21.

⁵⁹ Feldman, “Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims,” 356.

⁶⁰ Cohen-Hattab, “Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine,” 71.

number of licenses for Palestinian tour guides. Whereas Israeli tour guides have freedom of movement and practice their profession in Palestine, “[...] very few Palestinian tour guides receive permission to lead tours in Israel. 42 permits were granted in 2005, the only time such permits were granted. Today [2015], only 25 of those 42 are still operational”.⁶¹ In 2014, there were 12,715 licensed Israeli tour guides.⁶²

Furthermore, the Israeli Ministry of tourism requires tour guides to participate in mandatory training courses annually in order to renew their licenses. Surveying the topics listed for the 2016 program reveals that almost one third of the courses are about, or take place in, the 1967 occupied territory, or relate to contemporary geopolitics.⁶³ In 2015, they constitute more than 43% of the offered courses (87 out of 200)⁶⁴. These numbers correlate with the above-mentioned ratio of sites located in the 1967 occupied territory. In other words, the courses offered in tour guide training programs reflect the statistical monitoring of touristic sites carried out by Israel and covering Mandatory Palestine. A closer look at the list of courses reveals certain trends that can be put in the following categories:

1. Appropriation of History and Religion

The first category corresponds to what has been said above on the biblical religious education of Israeli tour guides. We will address the performance aspect of guiding groups in the following section on the ‘front’ stage which covers what the tourist is presented with.

61 Alqasis and Kassis, “Status of Tourism in Palestine,” 19.

62 Sultan and Ergas, “Tourism 2014,” 196.

63 Ministry of Tourism, “In-service training course booklet: January-June 2016 [Hebrew]” (Ministry of Tourism, 2016), <http://goo.gl/p6k8Iz>; Ministry of Tourism, “In-service training course booklet: July-December 2016 [Hebrew]” (Ministry of Tourism, 2016), <http://goo.gl/EfjB2>.

64 Ministry of Tourism, “In-service training course booklet: January-June 2015 [Hebrew]” (Ministry of Tourism, 2015), <https://goo.gl/ejYmOy>; Ministry of Tourism, “In-service training course booklet: July-December 2015 [Hebrew]” (Ministry of Tourism, 2015), <https://goo.gl/k0WGcD>.

1. The Philistines and Judea between the Aramaic occupation and the Assyrian occupation
2. Nuns and the monasteries in the Judean desert from an archeological-historical perspective
3. Nuns and the monasteries in the Judean desert, past and present
4. Bringing archaeology to life in Qumran and Masada – Guiding Methodology [in English]
5. Scrolls, secrets and treasures in the Qumran Caves
6. From Qumran to [Ein Feshkha]
7. Sebastia, the Caesarea of Samaria
8. Israel Museum for the Christian tourist
9. Old and new at Herodium
10. Herodium
11. Herod the Great

2. Jerusalem: History and Archaeology

Jerusalem is given a relatively strong focus, with more than 30 courses. This is not a surprising finding, especially when we see that 98% of religious tourists visited Jerusalem as a whole, not to mention the sites surveyed individually in the city. Here Jerusalem combines two trends, manifested in the two lists below: (1) digging in the past and appropriating the historical and archaeological narrative of the city; and (2) attempts to normalize and neutralize the occupation of the city.

The following is a list of courses that focus on the archaeology and history of Jerusalem, where Jerusalem refers to both East and West Jerusalem. We do not distinguish between the two sides of the city for two reasons. The first is that the vast majority of the courses refer to the eastern part of the city that was occupied in 1967. The second reason is that some of the courses, especially in the following category, blend the space of the city. Jerusalem was annexed by Israel in 1981 (without receiving international recognition), and the Israeli policies in the city aim to 'unite'

it. These efforts mirror the efforts to 'unify' the two parts of Palestine: the one that was occupied in 1948, receiving international recognition, and the other, occupied in the 1967 without international recognition.

1. Via Dolorosa (English)
2. Archeological innovations at the Western Wall and its vicinity
3. Jerusalem between new and old
4. 'Under Jerusalem' – innovations at the City of David
5. The City of David: past and present (English)
6. Underground Jerusalem – The Biblical City of David
7. Archaeological innovations at the Tower of David
8. Developments at the Tower of David
9. From New Gate to Dung Gate
10. The Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem
11. The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in Jerusalem
12. Mount Zion – evolution of traditions and contemporary issues
13. From the Church of the Holy Sepulcher to Mount Zion
14. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher
15. In search of Justinian the Great in Jerusalem
16. Along the road to Jerusalem in the Crusade period
17. Ramat Rachel and its vicinity in light of the archaeological findings

The following abstract of one of the tours in Jerusalem demonstrates the 'emphasis on Jewish history' through archaeological digging, while erasing any mention of contemporary political context (at least as appears to be the case from the abstract):

Underground Jerusalem - The Biblical City of David: An exciting underground world is being revealed in the new excavations at the City of David and its surroundings. We will tour the Gihon Spring (Canaanite) newly excavated fortress and the Pool of Siloam, where Herodian Street from the

Second Temple period was unearthed. We will then go up the Tyropoeon valley in the drainage channel all the way up to the Davidson Archeological Park, where we'll come out under Robinson's arch.⁶⁵

3. Jerusalem: Normalizing Occupation

The third category includes courses that are not explicitly political, historical or religious. They offer 'light' and culturally enriching content. This, however, seeks to normalize the *status quo* through erasing the political context. See for instance, the following description of Jerusalem's 'Cultural Mile':

During the 19 years in which the city was divided, most of this area, which stretches from Jaffa Gate through the Ben-Hinnom Valley to the Khan Theater in the south, was completely abandoned and neglected, strewn with destroyed and crumbling buildings. In the 1970s, there were plans to build a multiple-lane road and several residential towers in the area, but public opposition led to their cancellation. Meanwhile, the city purchased part of the area from the Greek Orthodox Church and the Jerusalem Foundation built the Bloomfield Garden there. Today, 'the Cultural Mile' consists of a series of parks containing 15 historic buildings that have been preserved and renovated for cultural and other public uses.⁶⁶

This is reminiscent of the depiction of Jaffa we mentioned earlier. Note the orientalist binary depiction of the transformation of the area that constitutes the 'Cultural Mile': before the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, the area had been "neglected", "destroyed" and was "crumbling". It is only after the Israeli occupation of the city that this area was transformed, preserved and renovated.

⁶⁵ Ministry of Tourism, "In-service training course booklet: January-June 2016 [Hebrew]:" 46.

⁶⁶ David Kroyanker, "Heart and Soul of Jerusalem," News, Haaretz, (January 4, 2007), <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/heart-and-soul-of-jerusalem-1.209190>.

1. Spring and flowering in the Jerusalem mountains
2. The urban and the natural in Jerusalem – the touristic combination between them
3. Jerusalem's mosaics – small stories along the way
4. A hidden pearl in Jerusalem – the southern part of Hebron Road [Jerusalem]
5. The evolution of a house and a region – Stern House and Mamilla area
6. Serge House – the Russians in Eretz Yisrael and Jerusalem from a Russian perspective
7. Copts and Syrians in the Old City of Jerusalem (English)
8. The Armenian and Ethiopian communities in Jerusalem
9. Sheikh Badr and Romema
10. Talbiya neighborhood with a feminine emphasis
11. Ein Karem – a different view
12. Baka [Jerusalem] (English)
13. A tour to the Arab Qatamon of the Mandate period
14. The Greek Colony and Qatamon
15. Jerusalem's 'Cultural Mile'
16. Talpiot neighborhood in Jerusalem
17. Sites north of Jerusalem

4. Normalizing the Occupation

This is similar to the third category. Here the normalization of the occupation of the West Bank is performed through eliminating the political context of occupation and colonization. On the normalizing function that tourism plays in the Israeli military occupation, Stein analyzes the media representation of the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (and the 1982 Israeli invasion to Lebanon). She concludes that,

Through stories about tourism as they circulated in the Israeli popular

media, the occupation was figured as an exercise in mass sightseeing. The violence that the occupation entailed and the political interests that it served were virtually invisible. [...] Stories about tourism both legitimized and naturalized the work of the Israeli army by refiguring military occupation as a field of pleasure, leisure, and consumption rather than one of violence, repression, and political interests. These narratives endeavored to stabilize and banalize the military processes they described by anchoring them in accounts of quotidian leisure practices.⁶⁷

1. Flowering in the land of the Philistines
2. Flora in the Judean desert
3. 'Straight to the point' – touristic pearls in the south of the Judean desert and next to the Dead Sea
4. Tourism and agriculture in the Jordan Valley
5. Travel in the Jordan Valley tracing landscapes and songs
6. Sites and landscape in the Jordan Valley
7. North of the Golan Heights and Mount Hermon
8. Plants and vegetation in Eretz Yisrael

5. Geopolitics and Current Affairs

The fifth category, however, is explicitly political and contemporary – focusing on geopolitics in Israel and in the neighboring Arab countries.

1. Themes from the Islamic world – a different perspective relating to tourism in Israel
2. Islam: History, art and current affairs
3. Gaza envelope – a geopolitical tour
4. Geopolitics in our region - key themes
5. The Seam Zone between Kufr Qasem and Tul Karem
6. Basic themes in the geopolitics of the Gaza Strip
7. Sites along Road No. 1 from an Islamic perspective
8. The legal status of Jerusalem and the status quo

67 Rebecca L. Stein, "Souvenirs of Conquest: Israeli Occupations as Tourist Events," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008): 648, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40206012>.

9. The Russians in Jerusalem until today
10. Seam [Zone] tour geopolitics (English)
11. The Golan Heights geopolitics (English)
12. Geopolitics (English)

See for example the following abstracts from the 2016 training booklet:

- “Gaza envelope – a geopolitical tour: during the day we will visit lookout points and settlements along the border with the Gaza Strip. We will outline the security, political and civic issues of the Gaza envelope”.⁶⁸
- “Geopolitics in the Galilee Panhandle: Between the water sources of the Dan and the Ayun rivers we can present all the geopolitical challenges of Israel’s northern front: security (Syria, Hizballah, UNIFIL); ethnicities (Alawites, Shiites, Maronite, Druze); water and borders. We will visit familiar sites (Metulah and Misgav Am) and less known sites that give unique views on the geopolitics of the North.”⁶⁹

There is no available data on the attendance levels in these courses and how many tour guides participate in each course. Nor do we know much about the content that is given in them. We, then, can only speculate on who takes which courses, and whether there are specialized tour guides in a certain area – geopolitics, for example. However, this survey of the courses is important to learn about trends in Israeli tourism. Moreover, these courses shed light on the geographical focus of Israeli tourism, presenting another dimension that explains the Israeli crippling of Palestinian tourism.

68 Ministry of Tourism, “In-service training course booklet: January-June 2016 [Hebrew],” 23.

69 Ministry of Tourism, “In-service training course booklet: July-December 2016 [Hebrew],” 24.

Performance

This backstage bureaucratic funding, monitoring, education and training serves to solidify Israel's control over the 1967 occupied territory in general, and religious tourism in it in particular. However, the Israeli political narrative that is disseminated to tourists is "created through the omission of crucial information and by ensuring that no contact between visitors and local Palestinian communities takes place".⁷⁰ The map and the tour guide are the performers (or 'markers' according to MacCannell's model) at the front, on the stage. In this section, we will analyze the narrative that they depict.

The map is one of the most useful tools that a tourist uses to orientate in a new place. However, maps are subjective texts, they reflect the orientations of those who prepare them.⁷¹ This is true on the national level as well, where the map helps the formation of 'imagined communities'.⁷² In a piece of research on the manifestation of religious dimensions in more than 100 maps of Palestine, issued in the period of 1978-2001, Collins-Kreiner concluded that the use of 'the Holy Land' actually serves a Zionist orientation that aims to blur the political context in Palestine.⁷³ 'The Holy Land' in tourist maps in Israel is presented as a single unit that includes Mandate Palestine, Lebanon and Syria. Moreover:⁷⁴

'The Holy Land' is presented without borders, while the roads and the railways stretch across the borders as if [they are] never crossed. Current political borders are not presented, nor are names of neighboring countries. There is full 'continuity' in the cartographic and secular aspects like the settlements across the Israeli borders.⁷⁵

70 Alqasis and Kassis, "Status of Tourism in Palestine," 17.

71 Noga Collins-Kreiner, "Religious Mapping of the Holy Land (1978-2001) [Hebrew]," *Horizons in Geography*, no. 64/65 (2005): 352, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23716055>.

72 *Ibid.*

73 Collins-Kreiner, "Religious Mapping of the Holy Land."

74 *Ibid.*, 356.

75 *Ibid.*, 359.

The reasons for this, Collins-Kreiner assumes, are based in the wish to portray 'the Holy Land' in its 'divine holiness'. One can argue that these maps are designed to suit a certain group of tourists, the pilgrims. However, seeing the Israeli 'backstage' ideology, politics and practices one can no longer see these maps as naïve or driven by pure touristic needs. Moreover, although Collins-Kreiner explores three methods in which maps "blurred the political reality"⁷⁶ she does not critically investigate the transition between 'Israel' and 'the Holy Land' as titles of maps. Nevertheless, such use of 'the Holy Land', erasing all political context from the map, thus from the map users, serves Israeli interests both economically and politically. Economically speaking, removing the political context allows Israeli tour companies to exploit touristic sites that lie in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory, some of which are key religious and pilgrim destinations. From a political point of view, the use of the seemingly neutral term 'Holy Land' in maps seen by hundreds of thousands of tourists every year is a very powerful tool for de-politicizing them when they are here, and when they return to their countries. They are given a false sense that the political conflict is low-key. We saw this in the Christmas greeting distributed by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism discussed above.

The blurring of the political reality is also manifested in the design of the 'Holy Land maps', which often lack cartographic accuracy. Spaces, distances and borders are compromised for the benefit of the religious atmosphere that the maps aim to convey. However, this also contributes to blurring the understanding of the political reality in Palestine. We can call this use of maps, what Bar-Gal terms 'hidden propaganda'.⁷⁷ The Israeli tourist map, thus, is inauthentic. This is another marker in the tourist experience with the tour guide.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 356.

⁷⁷ Yoram Bar-Gal, "Ideological Propaganda in Maps and Geographical Education," in *Innovation in Geographical Education*, ed. J. van der Sche and H. Trimp (Hague: Netherlands Geographical studies, IGU, Commission on Geographical Education, 1996), 67–79, <http://goo.gl/OYWvvp>.

Similar to the depoliticized touristic map, Jewish-Israeli tour guides have the ability to “mold space according to his or her own spoken narrative, which depends in part on the isolation of the stage from sources of possible contestation”.⁷⁸ As we said earlier, the use of MacCannell’s model here aims to analyze the issue of authenticity and the authentication process from the performer’s point of view. In this regard, we need to remember that authenticity and authentication are closely related to authority: “[t]he more fundamental question to ask here is not if an object or site is authentic, but rather who has the authority to authenticate, which is a matter of power; or, to put it another way, who has the right to tell the story of the site”.⁷⁹ This, too, is reflected in the Christmas greeting we mentioned earlier:

Moreover, researchers of tourism in Palestine, documented “the influence of Zionist orientations on certain Christian pilgrimages, through guiding performances and government regulations”.⁸⁰ By making use of the religious setting of the tour, Israeli tour guides infuse their presentations with an implicit political agenda. Ultimately, the Zionist project aims to take over Palestine, and tourism is a political tool that aims to erase the Palestinians. Thus, Jewish-Israeli tour guides “trace paths that make Protestant and Zionist claims to territory and significant history natural, blurring their differences while rendering Arabs-Palestinians-Muslims invisible, irrelevant, or an opposing force”.⁸¹ The dominance, or monopoly, of Israel over religious tourism allows tour guides to avoid any contact with the Palestinian daily, political reality.⁸² In a reflective article on being a Jewish-Israeli tour guide with Christian pilgrims, Jakie Feldman presents ethnographic examples of guiding narratives where he demonstrates:

[...] how the narratives draw on historically embedded,

78 Feldman, “Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims,” 355.

79 Quoted in Noy, “The Politics of Authenticity in a National Heritage Site in Israel,” 126.

80 Feldman, “Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims,” 354.

81 Ibid., 367.

82 For the purpose of this paper, we will focus on examples from itineraries that were presented to Christian pilgrims by Jewish-Israeli tour guides.

shared Protestant-Zionist social memory practices, and [he illustrates] how those practices enable Jewish Israeli guides and Protestant pilgrims to constitute each other, strengthen commonality, and sacralize the landscape. [He also illustrates] how the isolating environmental bubble of the guided tour encourages both guides and pilgrims to affirm faith and suspend skepticism.⁸³

Israeli tourism tolerates Palestinian existence in the background only in order to strengthen the 'authentic', that is meant to be Zionist-Israeli. The authenticity that the Palestinians represent at the Israeli tourist attraction is hijacked to be 'Israeli' or 'Jewish', while they are portrayed to be the ultimate outsider, in an act of differentiation.

Moreover, Israeli military considerations or militaristic 'staged authenticity' are what MacCannell calls truth markers: "Truth markers function to cement the bond of tourist and attraction by elevating the information possessed by the tourist to privileged status".⁸⁴ In practice, Israeli tour guides,

[...] explaining the separation fence will point to the half-destroyed houses which served Palestinian snipers during the second Intifada and explain how the wall protects the residents of Gilo from terrorism. Thus, tourism practice reinforces the state and municipal laws annexing Gilo to Jerusalem and naturalizes the area as just another Jerusalem neighborhood, while the Palestinians are marked as the snipers 'there' across the river bed.⁸⁵

83 Feldman, "Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims," 353.

84 MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*, 137–38.

85 Feldman, "Abraham the Settler, Jesus the Refugee," 85–86.

In sum, touristic maps and tour guides play an important role in the Israeli dual practice of front/back. This is evident in the appropriation of what is 'Jewish-Israeli' and what is 'universal heritage' – from Christian Palestinian religious sites – trying to represent it in a neutral light. This helps portray 'neutral' historiography, thus solidifying the imagined/invented Zionist narrative, therefore "Israel becomes not a site of political contestation but the eternal Land of the Bible".⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Feldman, "Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims," 368.

Conclusion

Tourism, politics and ideology are inseparable in the Zionist-Palestinian conflict. Tourism and politics play complementary roles. Israel's touristic 'narrative' is a good source to understand the Israeli discourse and policies towards the 1967 occupied territory. This is so precisely because it is counterintuitive. The Zionist narrative erases Palestinian history, while appropriates Palestinian Christian sites for its political purposes.

Several observers have identified Israeli 'occupation/non-occupation indeterminacy' in various spheres including the application of Israeli criminal and election laws, the policies of defining 'holy places', and in tourism in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory in general, and in Jerusalem in particular. This duality is analogous to the 'Staged Authenticity' analysis we presented in this paper, focusing on the combination of guiding performances and touristic maps *vis-à-vis* government regulations and policies.

Nevertheless, our brief discussion on the function of tour guides and maps in shaping the perception of religious tourists in Palestine highlights the need for further research on them, as well as other markers of tourism in Palestine. Guide books, brochures and touristic websites are prime examples of this. Moreover, there is a need for a deep analysis of Israeli touristic policies and practices.

Bibliography

- Alqasis, Amjad. "Decolonizing the Vocabulary of Palestinian Human Rights Work." NGO. The Nakba Files, October 3, 2016. <http://nakbafiles.org/2016/10/03/decolonizing-the-vocabulary-of-palestinian-human-rights-work/>.
- Alqasis, Amjad, and Dafer Kassis. "Status of Tourism in Palestine." Bethlehem: Alternative Tourism Group, 2015.
- Alternative Tourism Group (ATG). "Listening to the Living Stones: Towards Theological Explorations of Kairos Pilgrimages for Justice." Beit Sahour: Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), 2014. <https://goo.gl/Urd5WJ>.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London; New York: Verso, 1991.
- AP. "Israel Culture Minister Probes Troupes That Shun Settlements." News. The Big Story, June 15, 2016. <http://goo.gl/XZWYVM>.
- Ashkenazi, Yair. "Israel Asks Culture Institutions to Declare If They Hold Performances in Settlements." News. Haaretz, June 15, 2016. <http://goo.gl/9sAbqU>.
- Bar-Gal, Yoram. "Ideological Propaganda in Maps and Geographical Education." In *Innovation in Geographical Education*, edited by J. van der Sche and H. Trimp, 67–79. Hague: Netherlands Geographical studies, IGU, Commission on Geographical Education, 1996. <http://goo.gl/OYWvpb>.

- Bauman, Joel. "Designer Heritage: Israeli National Parks and the Politics of Historical Representation." *Middle East Report*, no. 196 (1995): 20–23. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3013298>.
- Ben-Naftali, Orna, Aeyal M. Gross, and Keren Michaeli. "Illegal Occupation: Framing the Occupied Palestinian Territory." *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 23, no. 3 (2005): 551–614. <http://goo.gl/Qcflql>.
- Ben-Natan, Smadar. "The Application of Israeli Law in Military Courts in the Occupied Territories [Hebrew]." *Theory and Criticism* 43, no. (Fall) (2014): 45–74. <http://goo.gl/KuTslB>.
- Cohen-Hattab, Kobi. "Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine: Tourism as a Political-Propaganda Tool." *Israel Studies* 9, no. 1 (2004): 61–85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30245744>.
- Collins-Kreiner, Noga. "Religious Mapping of the Holy Land (1978-2001) [Hebrew]." *Horizons in Geography*, no. 64/65 (2005): 351–68. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23716055>.
- Feldman, Jackie. "Abraham the Settler, Jesus the Refugee: Contemporary Conflict and Christianity on the Road to Bethlehem." *History and Memory* 23, no. 1 (2011): 62–95. <http://goo.gl/O722SB>.
- "Constructing a Shared Bible Land: Jewish Israeli Guiding Performances for Protestant Pilgrims." *American Ethnologist* 34, no. 2 (2007): 351–74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4496811>.
- "Hague Convention (IV) on War on Land and Its Annexed Regulations, 1907," October 18, 1907. <https://ihl-databases.icrc.org/ihl/INTRO/195>.
- Halevi, Amir. "Director General Regulation number 09/2014 [Hebrew]," December 14, 2014. <http://goo.gl/XVb7yF>.

- "Regulation for Decision Makers Hosting Project 2016." Regulation. Director General Regulation. Jerusalem: Ministry of Tourism, January 4, 2016. <http://goo.gl/2fS95d>.
- Hayat, Tilda, Omri Romano, and Lena Ostrovsky. "Tourism and Hotel Services: 2000-2012." Statisti-Lite. Jerusalem: The Central Bureau of Statistics, November 2013. <http://goo.gl/gXodqZ>.
- Hercbergs, Dana. "The Davidization of Jerusalem: On the Politics of Symbols." +972 Magazine, December 28, 2014. <http://goo.gl/RNZCYm>.
- Hever, Shir, and Connie Hackbarth. "Lost Revenue from Tourism to the Palestinian Economy." Beit Sahour: Alternative Tourism Group, 2014. <http://atg.ps/en/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/final.pdf>.
- Israel Ministry of Tourism. "Inbound Tourism Survey Annual Report 2015." Jerusalem: Israel Ministry of Tourism, June 2016. <https://goo.gl/mpkPr3>.
- Israeli Ministry of Tourism. "Raw Data Files of the Annual Incoming Tourism Survey [Hebrew]." Governmental. info.goisrael.com, 2015. <https://goo.gl/U4keji>.
- Kadman, Noga. "Roots Tourism—Whose Roots?: The Marginalization of Palestinian Heritage Sites in Official Israeli Tourism Sites." *Téoros: Revue de Recherche En Tourisme* 29, no. 1 (2010): 55–66. <http://goo.gl/0Qh4WM>.
- Kroyanker, David. "Heart and Soul of Jerusalem." *News. Haaretz*, January 4, 2007. <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/heart-and-soul-of-jerusalem-1.209190>.

- Long, Joanna C. "Rooting Diaspora, Reviving Nation: Zionist Landscapes of Palestine-Israel." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 34, no. 1 (2009): 61–77. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30136814>.
- MacCannell, Dean. *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1999.
- Mack, Eitay. "Selectively Sacred: Holy Sites in Jerusalem and Its Environs." *Emek Shaveh*, April 2016. <http://goo.gl/LHfwK>.
- Ministry of Tourism. "Characteristics of Visit [Hebrew]." Jerusalem: Ministry of Tourism, 2014. <https://goo.gl/zjLIUX>.
- "In-service training course booklet: January-June 2015 [Hebrew]." Ministry of Tourism, 2015. <https://goo.gl/ejYmOy>.
- "In-service training course booklet: January-June 2016 [Hebrew]." Ministry of Tourism, 2016. <http://goo.gl/p6k8lz>.
- "In-service training course booklet: July-December 2015 [Hebrew]." Ministry of Tourism, 2015. <https://goo.gl/k0WGcD>.
- "In-service training course booklet: July-December 2016 [Hebrew]." Ministry of Tourism, 2016. <http://goo.gl/EfjbB2>.
- Naamneh, Haneen. "Tourist Season 2013: Occupied Palestine, Visit and Celebrate It [Arabic]." *Al-Akhbar*, January 15, 2013. <http://www.al-akhbar.com/node/175498>.
- Natasha Roth. "Wiping Palestinian History off the Map in Jaffa." *News. +972 Magazine*, June 4, 2016. <http://972mag.com/>

wiping-palestinian-history-off-the-map-in-jaffa/119688/.

Noy, Chaim. "The Politics of Authenticity in a National Heritage Site in Israel." *Qualitative Sociology Review* 5, no. 1 (April 2009): 112–29.

Ronen, Yaël. "Blind in Their Own Cause: The Military Courts in the West Bank." *Cambridge Journal of International and Comparative Law* 2, no. 4 (2013): 738–62. <http://goo.gl/QLnuYH>.

Schnell, Izhak, and Ben-Israel Arnon. "Neo-Zionist Frontier Landscapes in the Occupied Territories." *Journal of Urban and Regional Analysis* 3, no. 2 (2011): 175–194. <http://goo.gl/A8uiYz>.

Stein, Rebecca L. "Souvenirs of Conquest: Israeli Occupations as Tourist Events." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 40, no. 4 (2008): 647–69. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40206012>.

Suleiman, Yasir. *A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East*. Cambridge Middle East Studies 19. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Arabic, Self and Identity: A Study in Conflict and Displacement. New York: Oxford University Press, 2011.

Sultan, Esther, and Yaron Ergas. "Tourism 2014." Jerusalem: Central Bureau of Statistics, January 2016. http://www.cbs.gov.il/publications/16/1625_tayarut_2014/pdf/e_print.pdf.

Urry, John. *The Tourist Gaze*. 2nd ed. London; Thousand Oaks, Calif: Sage Publications, 2002.