

features. The lack of village records and the absence of material evidence (such as dated stone inscriptions) and the very restricted methods of dating available for me often caused blurring of the reconstructed picture. A related problem was the continuous overlap of reconstructed perspectives into later or earlier periods. I was able to confront this problem only by the most rigorous checking and double-checking of reconstructions of events, periods and memories of daily occurrences.

A different problem of oral history can be traced to distortions caused by interfactional rivalry between the Barghouthi clans and their opponents, the fallaheen. Since the high status of the former has been reduced today to that of equality with the fallaheen, there was a clear tendency to overemphasize their past glory in matters related to living conditions and behaviour, as well as debasing the conditions which prevailed in the peasant quarters. Understanding the difference in status and role between the Barghouthi and fallaheen women remained the most problematic task. In this context, I had to tread with the utmost caution.

Unfortunately, vernacular architecture in rural Palestine is a neglected area for research. The one exception is the valuable work of the folklorist Tawfiq Cana'an, "The Palestinian Arab House: Its Architecture and Folklore" (1932, 1933), which has an excellent detailed treatment of the technical and constructional aspects of the Palestinian house, discussing both building materials and the folkloric aspects of house construction. I have made extensive use of this work as well as Cana'an's other works on Palestinian folklore (Cana'an, 1927, 1928, 1934, 1935). Mention should be made also of the fragmented discussions on Palestinian peasant habitat which appear in the works of early ethnographers and Biblical scholars of the period. The most important among these are Dalman (1942), Wilson (1906), Bladensberger (1913) and Grant (1921). Most of these works were inspired by an attempt to trace Biblical parallels in the lives of contemporary Palestinian peasants. Perhaps with the exception of Dalman and the valuable works of Helma Granqvist on marriage conditions in the village of Artas (1931, 1935) all suffer from distortions caused by this prejudice.