

It is tempting to attribute the mutilation of a number of village names in the 1871 provincial *salname* – Bani N ‘aja for Bani N ‘aim, Bani Najjār for Bayt Fajjār, Lūna for Idhna/Idna, or al-Saqr for Suflā, to name a few of the inconsistencies apparent in Table 2.1 – to the scribe having lost his glasses or the ink on the document he copied from having been smeared as it was carried through the rain (And, who knows?). However, Ottoman scribes are known for their copying skills, so these musings are likely unlikely. Certainly more relevant is the fact that scribes copied from document to document, therefore this nomenclature had a tendency to persist. For example, in the early twentieth century one sees throughout the correspondence from Istanbul to Jerusalem about the Yatta village - Ẓullam bedouin land conflict then ongoing in the Hebron district, that the village of Yaṭṭa is consistently rendered as it is in the *salname* above, as Baṭṭa. However, in locally authored documents of the same period, its name was consistently spelled phonetically correct, either **بطا** or **بطة**.<sup>153</sup> Although examination of Hebron court registers of this period show that the way to spell names of people and places were not yet standardized, the various spellings one observes of a given name in local records tend to yield the same pronunciation.

This nomenclature can also be extended backwards in time. As an example, we can consider the village of Idhna. Its proper name is Idhna, but until today, while Idhna is the

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<sup>153</sup> This war is the subject of an article I am now preparing for submission for publication. For the non-reader of Arabic: the distinction between the B (*bā*) and the Y (*ya*) within a word in Arabic (and Ottoman Turkish) is slight, made by placing either one or two dots under the line of the word. A number of the mistakes seen above are of this nature, confusion between two letters that can be difficult to distinguish from one another in handwritten documents.