Global moments are breakthrough events that change people’s lives and their futures. They are developments that typically call for significant adaptation leading to new forms of cooperation or conflict. Few places on earth can rival the Levant (Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria) when it comes to both incubating global moments and having to cope with their consequences.

What has made this region a virtual cauldron of global moments is its strategic location astride a vital intercontinental land bridge connecting the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. This location has made it a crossroads of cultures and civilizations, a corridor of communication and commerce, and a highway of military movement and intrigue since the dawn of settled life.

The Global Moments in the Levant research programme seeks to delineate what the salient theoretical and methodological implications are of the fundamental methodological assumption that the insights derived from historical and archaeological study of the past are relevant for understanding the present situation in the region and that, in turn, the findings of ethnographic studies carried out in the present have relevance not only for today, but also for understanding the past.

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GLOBAL MOMENTS
in the LEVANT

A Unifob Global Research Project

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Foreword

I am honoured to have been asked to write the foreword to this book, containing an overview of work that has been going on within the Global Moments in the Levant Programme. But since I have been directly involved in the programme as a leader, it is impossible for me to write a “standard” foreword, highlighting individual contributions, or evaluating how such individual contributions have been put together in “thematic clusters” furthering the understanding of particular issues in the region, or how the programme as such might offer conceptual answers to processes covered by our term “global moments”. This is so because the book itself is organised to answer precisely such questions. Not the final answers, though. Individuals keep developing arguments, and groups keep developing new project proposals advancing specific themes, and, perhaps most of all, on the side of meta-theorising, we have work to do. In a final essay, I try to discuss and suggest some of the meta-themes of the programme, but the discussion is suggestive and “in the making”. Although the programme is institutionally over, we need to further develop this part of the joint work. Hence, there is more to come.

But this is not what I want to do. Rather than cool detachment, I want to use this foreword to express a personal feeling. I would like to use it to express my thanks to everyone for the wonderful years of teamwork and positive relationships that the programme has represented. I would also like to express a hope that this experience will provide a basis for further collaborations among the researchers who have matured through the programme.

The background that has made a programme like the Global Moments in the Levant possible is a long one and has to do with activities in several research milieus. First, the well-established milieu at the University of Bergen, with its long-term focus on Middle Eastern and Islamic studies, initiated in the 1960s by academic giants like Fredrik Barth, and followed up by researchers such as Reidar Grønhaug and Gunnar Haaland in Anthropology, Sean O’Fahey in History and Randi Haaland in Archaeology, to mention names from the generation following Barth who took his early work in different directions. Later on, in the 1980s, and championed by the people already mentioned, these concerns were coordinated within the umbrella of a new Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies which, in collaboration
with relevant departments, sought to promote these kinds of studies within the wider university. Part of this history, also inspired by the Barthian legacy, was a basic interest in relating to research institutions and to colleagues in the South, both through personal networks and through more institutional links. One early example of this is UiBs links to the Sudan and the University of Khartoum, a linkage that has been existing from the 1960s to the present day. But other links came later, and of particular relevance for Global Moments is the collaborative research that developed in the 1990s with Bir Zeit University in Palestine. As I am myself very much a product of this tradition there is no hiding of the fact that the Global Moments Programme has been directly inspired by this history, and it has been a privilege to see how younger researchers have benefitted and grown, providing a basis for further continuations of this way of working.

But this is the world as seen from the University of Bergen. Links to American milieus were also of key importance. First, through Øystein LaBianca, at Andrews University in Michigan, we got in contact with the milieu relating to the Madaba Plains Project in Jordan which since 1968 has employed archaeology and related disciplines in several universities in the United States as a means to study long-term cultural historical changes in Central Jordan. Through his Norwegian ancestry and his ability to build networks, Øystein was already a partner both to Bergen and to other institutions in Norway. Second, through Bert de Vries, at Calvin College, also in Michigan, and a member of the US based archaeological research network in Jordan mentioned above and organised in Jordan around The American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR) in Amman, of which he was an earlier director, we got another link that has been of crucial importance in the institutional development of the programme. Even more so, as Bert was already a partner in his own collaborative work with Bir Zeit University, linking up to the same person who was directing the collaboration with Bergen, Kamal Abdelfattah, he is still a basic reference point in our mutual efforts to develop links with Bir Zeit. Things were really coming together, and on top of this we got in touch with Bethany Walker (at the time of Grand Valley State University, Michigan, and now at Missouri State) and Tom Levy at University of California, San Diego, who both provided academic inspiration, access to wider networks and expertise on historical periods of key importance to the programme.
To return to Bergen, links to other institutions there were also important. Key among these collaborating institutions was the Chr. Michelsen Institute in Bergen. They provided both participating researchers in the programme, and, through their on-going research collaboration with the Palestinian research organization, Muwatin, The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy, in Ramallah, provided a more sustained focus on contemporary political developments in the region.

The end result of these developments made it possible to put together a core team of people who had decades of research and publications on topics in the Levant region, and that could play a guiding role for younger members recruited into the programme to work on their Ph.D or Post. Doc. research. The production of academic theses certainly signifies an important part of the competence building process of the programme and represents an additional source of future publications of which we, at the time of writing, only see the beginning. I was also thrilled to see how all team members were willing to reach beyond the empirical foundation of their individual research and participate in the developing of a common set of conceptualizations of relevance to understanding the historical developments in the Levant. Through this, a combination of original research and explorations based on synthesized empirical knowledge and relevant theoretical works became the basis for our conceptual work. Workshops and conferences became arenas for wider discussions of ideas, and journals and edited books became major avenues for publication of articles.

Our workshops deserve special mentioning. They brought us together and allowed us to develop from a group of researchers to a research-group, a process that was greatly facilitated by the personal friendships among everyone involved. Once a year we gathered in a Bergen hotel, or some nice place outside of town, and focussed entirely on our project. In a relaxed atmosphere we could develop inter-disciplinary discussions that helped us cross disciplinary boundaries. We know that such boundary crossings can be risky, and at times have led to civil wars, but it serves as a credit to this group that the boundary crossing remained peaceful and mutually rewarding. But I don’t want to stop at this self-congratulatory point. The workshops would not have been what they were, nor would our visitors have felt at home as they did, had it not been for the administrative work carrying us forward. In the course of the programme’s history it started as a part of the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bergen, and was reorganised
into “Unifob Global”, a division within a larger “Unifob”-company. But organisational changes aside, the individuals involved at the administrative side remained the same. Ove Stoknes, Kristin Paulsen, Inger Thorsen, Jostein Nygaard and Tord K. Ro, all performed their various roles way beyond the call of duty. Whatever successes will come out of the programme, academic as well as social ones, the administrative backstopping carried out by these people will remain a key contributing factor.

As the Levant region also is a place of many conflicts of global importance, the programme also provided itself with a particular responsibility to feed research results back to the general public. Team members work on popularized presentations of the academic work to balance the simplistic views presented in the Western media about the situation in the region in general and in Palestine in particular. A driving force in such efforts has been to exploit the broad, cultural-historical scope of the programme to challenge distorted images of the region as one of perennial conflict, and to show that the region is composed of many religions and many ethnicities, and that relationships between people have been characterized as much by peaceful interaction as by conflictual relationships. I am particularly pleased that some of this work has been in the form of film-making, and that the programme has been able to support the realisation of three films, focussing on themes that demonstrate the diversity of regional developments, rather than just confirming current prejudices.

“I am growing long, and you must be growing bored”, as the saying goes. So let me stop here. With confessing to a great personal satisfaction, both to have been privileged to be part of this work and to see several cases of what is any teacher’s privilege – to see the talent of students grow and mature, providing a basis for their own futures as researchers in their own right. Hence, the personal reward of this work to myself is beyond doubt. But, the quality of work is not to depend on anybody’s idiosyncrasies. Rather, it has to grow as a result of the critical reading of many. And it is to such a critical readership that this book is offered. I am sure I speak on behalf of all of us, when I say that the programme participants are looking forward to such readings, and to continued debates about each of the issues raised.

Leif Manger
In this introduction we draw attention to previous research and collaborations on which GML was founded; offer a brief overview of its core theoretical constructs and describe how these have facilitated archaeologists studying tells, historians investigating texts, and social anthropologists and sociologists doing ethnography on global moments in the Levant.
A theme that has been central to the unfolding story of the Levant for our purposes here Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, the Palestinian Authority and Syria, is that of local-global interaction.

Since prehistoric times this region has been a contact zone, and hence a crossroads along which humans have migrated out of Africa to Asia and Europe and back; along which commerce and trade has moved north and south and east and west undeterred by oceans, deserts or mountains; and along which contesting imperial powers and local potentates, often aided by religious zeal and armies, have sought to impose varied and at times conflicting visions of social order and control.

A goal of the collaboration with which this book is concerned; namely, a project we call Global Moments in the Levant or GML—has been to focus attention on pivotal points in the history of Levant; times at which the daily lives and futures of its inhabitants have been significantly and even permanently altered. As we point out in our grant request, global moments are breakthrough events that change people’s lives and their futures. They are developments that typically call for significant adaptation, often leading to new forms of cooperation or conflict.

Examples include the Neolithic revolution that produced the first settled farmers, the Chalcolithic revolution that produced crafts specialization and long distance trade, the Early Bronze urban revolution that culminated in the rise of the first cities, the rise of monotheism during the Late Bronze and Iron Age, and the global moments that led to the rise of the Semitic, Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Modern Capitalist “Great Traditions.” Other examples are the various political developments in the Levant which have been of strategic importance to
a long succession of imperial superpowers, starting with ancient Egypt and ending with the United States.

In this introduction we draw attention to previous studies and collaborations on which GML was founded, offer a brief overview of its core theoretical constructs, and describe how these have aided archaeologists studying tells, historians investigating texts, and social anthropologists and sociologists doing ethnography on global moments in the Levant.

GML builds on several previous lines of research by senior members of our collaboration. To begin with we have the long-standing tradition of research on ethnic boundaries and conflicts initiated by Fredrik Barth, founder of the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen. As a more recent scholar in the department, Leif Manger, GML’s principal investigator, has raised the historical interconnectivities of ethnic diasporas with their homelands. Among the cases that Manger has studied are the Hadramies of Yemen and the Gulf States whose diasporas he has traced throughout the entire Indian Ocean, the Middle East, North Africa and beyond. Theirs is a history of timely exploitation of opportunities for commerce at the crossroads of civilizations, where they have capitalized on their global ethnic connections as the basis for entrepreneurship and trade.

Another antecedent line of research is the pioneering work of Randi Haaland and her students at the University of Bergen on the origins and spread of African and Middle Eastern foodways. Her research has combined investigations of prehistoric food-processing technology through the excavation of early Neolithic settlements in Sudan, studies of changes in manufacturing methods for stone tools and pottery, and ethnoarchaeological studies of contemporary African foodways. More recently, her students have undertaken similar lines of research in Neolithic/Chalcolithic Palestine.

About ten years ago Manger and Haaland teamed up with Kamal Abdelfattah of the Department of Geography at Birzeit University in Palestine to launch the Lower Jordan River Basin Programme. The
main objective of this NUFU-sponsored collaboration was capacity building, aimed at developing expertise among Palestinian and Norwegian students in the fields of archaeology, geography, social anthropology and cultural and environmental resources management. While this Bergen-Birzeit team concentrated its research and capacity building efforts on the West Bank of the Jordan, a partnership was entered into with an American archaeology team in Jordan headed by Øystein LaBianca, namely the Madaba Plains Project at Tall Hisban, to provide training opportunities for students and access to a rich source of comparative data and expertise dealing with the historical archaeology and environmental history of Central Jordan and the east bank of the Jordan River Basin.

Global Moments in the Levant is an outgrowth of these previous research projects and collaborations on many levels. To begin with, the core theoretical constructs on which the project is founded were initially formulated through these earlier research initiatives and collaborations. Second, several of the senior personnel and the institutions working together as part of GML had a history of working together, either as part of the Lower Jordan River Basin Project or the Madaba Plains Project at Tall Hisban. And third, the majority of the doctoral students and post-docs who were recruited to GML came prepared with valuable previous experience of working in Palestine or Jordan, thanks to these pre-existing collaborations.

Ultimately, however, it was the request for proposals issued by the Research Council of Norway (Norges Forskningsråd) under its basic research programme (STORFORSK) that inspired the intense spurt of brainstorming and writing that became the GML grant proposal. Drawing on theoretical constructs posited in several unpublished manuscripts by Manger, the first draft of the proposal was completed by LaBianca during two weeks of intense writing in May of 2004 at the University of Bergen’s Centre for Development Studies. The team of graduate students, post-docs and senior scholars that would be invited to participate was next identified by Manger, Haaland and LaBianca. Each of these proposed participants, in turn, was supplied with a copy of the draft proposal which included a suggestion as to how
they might contribute to the collaboration and an invitation to submit
a paragraph describing the research they would carry out as part of
GML. The final proposal draft, along with the budget, was polished and
completed by Manger with the invaluable assistance of Ove Stoknes,
the administrative director of the Centre for Development Studies.

The Research Council’s STORFORSK research programme, under
which this proposal was submitted, stipulated four key requirements
that had to be met by successful proposals. The first was that the
proposed research should advance theoretical understanding in a given
field of inquiry. The second was that the research be cross-disciplinary.
The third was that it must involve international collaboration and the

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disciplinary conversation and collaboration”

fourth was that it includes a public outreach component. We took all
four of these requirements very seriously and felt in the end that our
proposal measured up well. So, apparently also did the reviewers, who
gave the proposal the highest possible ratings. Even so, we were truly
surprised and honoured in January 2005 to learn that our proposal was
approved, especially given the worthy competition, which included
research teams from all fields of science, medicine, technology and
the humanities in Norway.

As the end-product of our GML collaboration was to advance our
theoretical understanding of the Levant as a culture area through
time, it has not been a priority to re-write the history of the region.
This task we happily leave to the well established communities of
period experts who have the requisite specialized training in ancient
languages, archaeology and epigraphy that such a task would demand.
What we have attempted to do, however, is what conventionally is
impossible and indeed is often looked on with suspicion within these
traditional communities of period experts, and that is to encourage the development of thinking tools for conceptualising long-term or deep-time culture historical processes and interactions in the Levant.

In the spirit of focusing attention on theory-building, our proposal isolated four over-arching theoretical constructs to help focus the investigations of our team of twenty researchers. Summed up in a sentence they are that the Levant is a contact zone in which shifting power constellations have generated global moments that in turn have led to new inter-civilizational encounters, as agents of invading civilizations come into contact with those that remained from previous encounters. The merit of these four themes is that they apply to all historical periods and eras, thus providing a common framework for research on the past as well as the present.

Furthermore, and central to this collaboration, these themes draw attention to the global-local interactions that have impacted the Levant since prehistoric times. This orientation is the basis for Randi Haaland’s research on the origins and spread of African and Near Eastern foodways; Nils Anfinset’s exploration of the rise of complex hierarchical societies; Tom Levy’s study of the impact of the development of metal production on culture change; Øystein LaBianca’s research on empires and great and little traditions; Bert de Vries investigation of the paradox of power in Classical and Late Antiquity; Bethany Walker’s tracking of the repercussions of cultural practices through time and space in the Muslim world; Leif Manger’s research on the role of diasporas throughout the Muslim world; Anders Bjørkelo and Kamal Abdelfattah’s research on local adaptation to Ottoman rule in Palestine; Inger Marie Okkenhaug’s exploration of the role of missionaries in Palestine and Nefissa Naguib’s examination of the politics of memory and the nostalgia for things among Armenian diasporas.

To these historical perspectives on global-local interactions, the rest of the team are adding insights from field research among contemporary residents of Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria. For example, in Palestine, Kjersti Berg draws attention to the role of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in shaping gender relations and the politics of aid
among Palestinian refugees. Janne Bøe examines the consequences of the Israeli occupation of Palestine for gender roles and the patriarchy. Lars Lundblad is investigating the mobilization of charity by various Islamic organizations under the occupation. Bård Kårtveit is following up on emigration dynamics and identity management among Christian Palestinians on the West Bank, while Frode Storaas’ project involves filming the everyday life of Palestinians living in Israel.

In Lebanon, Are Knudsen is following up on the global-local interaction theme by investigating contested social, political and religious dimensions of Lebanon’s enduring refugee problem and the impact of poverty, displacement and statelessness among camp-based Palestinians living in over-crowded refugee camps. On a somewhat different front, also in Lebanon, Anh Nga Longva examines the role of modern education introduced by the European Powers in keeping the religious communities apart, while in Syria and Lebanon Knut Vikør and Rania Maktabi are studying how Islamic law is being challenged and forced to adapt to Western-inspired concepts of the status and role of women.

A noteworthy and significant strength of this GML approach is its emphasis on sustained inter-disciplinary conversation and collaboration. Archaeologists team up with historians, political scientists, sociologists and social anthropologists in comparing disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches to dealing with, for example, food systems and foodways, gender roles, diasporas, imperial projects or welfare and relief. Indeed, as this volume shows, interdisciplinary working groups have been mobilized to tackle all of these themes. In this way the collaboration has expanded everyone’s arsenal of perspectives and approaches for thinking about various themes. The collaboration has thus not only encouraged thinking out of the box, but has also offered a venue for friendly peer support as new approaches have been incubated and laid open for constructive criticism and discussion.

An example of the sort of conversation that is possible under our GML collaboration is that between our archaeologists investigating the long succession of empires that have marched through the Levant and the local responses to these, our Ottoman historians, who are examining
Archaeologists team up with historians, political scientists, sociologists and social anthropologists in comparing disciplinary perspectives and methodological approaches to dealing with, for example, food systems and foodways, gender roles, diasporas, imperial projects or welfare and relief.

more narrowly the role of local elite families in their dealings with the Ottoman empire, and our sociologists and social anthropologists, who are documenting the experience of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation and in their diasporas. While on the surface these may appear to be very different lines of inquiry, making any sort of meaningful conversation seem like a long stretch, it has become apparent that it is as we attempt to learn from each other that we are gaining some of our most novel insights and understandings. What this conversation has brought into focus, for example, is the long history of what Bert de Vries has called the “paradox of power” that is the deep-time story of the Levant. His thesis is that the more forcefully occupying powers exert their control, the more tenaciously local residents resist.

The experience of the Jews under Roman control two millennia ago is a classic example from antiquity. As is being so masterfully documented by Kamal Abdelfattah and Anders Bjørkelo, this same paradox recurs during Ottoman times when the reach of the central imperial administration was hugely blunted by the power exerted by locally based strongmen and noble families, although in this case it may be as much due to Ottoman neglect as to Ottoman exertion of power. And the scenario is being repeated again today in the case of the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza and elsewhere, as is being documented by GML sociologists and social anthropologists.
Indeed, when the power constellations that have characterized the Levant are compared with those of neighbouring Egypt and Mesopotamia, it is clear that polycentricism or heterarchy has been the rule rather than the exception. That is to say, the region has been notably resistant to consolidation under a single powerful ruler. Consistent with this observation is the late appearance of the first state-level polities in the region, almost two millennia after the appearance of the first pristine states in Egypt and Mesopotamia. Furthermore, to the extent that state-level polities have arisen in the region, they have tended to be transient. The roots and salient features of this apparently endemic polycentricism in the Levant are among the topics being investigated by GML team members Nils Anfinset, Thomas Levy and Øystein LaBianca.

These are examples of some of the sort of cross-cutting concerns that are becoming core to our GML collaboration. They also hint at possible new frontiers of research as answers are sought as to how and why the Levant has been so resistant to centralized administration and foreign domination.

To what extent, for example, did the rise of monotheism and the prophetic movement among the ancient Hebrews contribute to a long-standing anti-monarchical sentiment among successive generations of local residents, thus constraining the scope of action and power of would-be kings (see for example 1 Samuel 8)?

Another question is whether, and to what extent, Jerusalem as a sacred city and pilgrimage destination for Jews, Christians and Moslems has contributed to a certain trophy status for the city and its sacred hinterlands which has made their conquest and control a matter of honour and legacy embellishment for far-off kings and emperors.

A third question has to do with the role of the worldwide diasporas of this region in drawing attention to, and generating financial support for, efforts to memorialize and maintain control over particular holy sites and territories in their homelands.
And a fourth question concerns the extent to which, in the course of the millennia, peaceful co-existence and cooperation have in fact trumped wars and walls as a basis for social order and security in the region. And to the extent that this is found to be the case, what lessons are there for the present that can inform present-day peace-making efforts in the region? These are the sort of big-picture questions that our GML approach is well poised to address as part of our quest for advancing not only theoretical understanding, but also a practical understanding of the Levant as home for people.

In this connection we should note that GML participants have been encouraged to form thematically organized working groups for the purpose of coordinating inter-disciplinary research on a particular topic. These groups, in turn, have taken the lead in organizing workshops and conferences involving colleagues from many other disciplines and countries who are open to the sort of diachronic comparison and inter-disciplinary perspectives that are at the core of GML conversations. So far, team members have organized conference and workshops at such disparate venues as the American Anthropological Association, American Schools of Oriental Research, Archaeological Institute of America, Nordic Middle East Studies Association.

A significant effort has also been made to deliver outcomes that benefit a wider public. The documentary produced by Nefissa Naguib and Inger Marie Okkenhaug on the historical and current relief efforts of Palestinian women in Jerusalem is a good example. This film will serve to inform students of Middle East studies and the general public on the challenges women face during war and how they respond to them. Another is the Digital Archaeological Atlas of the Holy Land which is being developed by Thomas Levy and Stephen Savage of Arizona State University, who are co-editors of this project. The DAAHL (http://gaialab.asu.edu/DAAHL/) is a web-based programme that will provide scholars, teachers, students, tourists and the general public with continually up-dated site plans, photos, drawings, 3-D virtual object animations, word text descriptions, virtual tours and voice-over narrations by excavators relating the latest fieldwork discoveries at major and medium-importance archaeological and
historical sites in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria (i.e. the Levant). The DAAHL is already facilitating scholarly collaboration on imperial projects in the Levant, and it promises to serve as a powerful visual aid to teaching and learning about the Ancient Near East and the Levant at all levels of education as well as for the general public.

In the end, however, the most durable outcome of this GML project will be the inter-disciplinary collaborations it has helped incubate—many of which will no doubt continue well beyond the termination of the Research Council’s funding for the project. These already are influencing scholarly conversations about tells, texts, and ethnography in the Levant in several professional circles in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, and will likely continue to do so for a long time as publications continue to be produced by original members of our team. We hope this volume will give an idea of what GML is about, including what we have already accomplished and what we hope to do as we wrap up our formal four years of collaboration in December 2008.
Leif Manger
BERGEN, NORWAY

Globalization as Long-term Historical Process

For some time Manger has been using anthropology and history to work towards an understanding of intercivilizational encounters. In the case of Global Moments in the Levant, rather than schematizing history with dichotomies such as modern vs. pre-modern, capitalist vs. non-capitalist, and reflexive vs. non-reflexive, Manger promotes a focus on shared human concerns in different historical periods.
My input into the GML research collaboration has been to provide a comprehensive comparative and historical framework for the project. This framework builds on previous research by others and myself on issues such as the interaction of anthropology and history, understanding large regions in time and space, and operationalizing studies of inter-civilizational encounters.

Further theorizing within such fields should be regarded in a “globalizational” perspective that sees the historical dimensions of the globalization processes. Such a perspective is crucial, I believe, as a means of avoiding arguments that privilege the West, privilege the meeting points between Western and non-Western peoples, and privilege modernity (see: www.globalmoments.uib.no/media/Manger1.pdf).

By historicizing globalization, I wish to challenge the claim that our contemporary globalized world is an entirely new historical construction - a radically different way of being human from earlier societies. Such a perspective is needed to help us discover and investigate earlier examples of communities and groups of people who were involved in some way in the “global” economies of their day. The aim is thus to show that many of the processes that take place today also occurred in the past, including documentation of earlier instances of flows.

“Studies such as these can help us focus on shared human concerns in different historical periods.”
of information that crossed oceans and continents, and the identification and study of earlier groups of peoples who saw themselves as bearers of a “global” perspective.

Research of this sort should enable us to discover technologies, places and peoples that facilitated the emergence of worldwide “spaces of flows” in the past. Such technologies might include, for instance, the emergence of new methods of navigation in the Indian Ocean, the change from sail to steam, or the change from land transport to aviation. Trade towns and “global cities” would also be important to investigate, as would be the groups of traders who operated in such spaces.

Just as global restructuring today has resulted in a wide range of reactions and has led in many instances to the restructuring of identities, so has it also in past epochs. However, such reactions and restructurings were not uniform. They were shaped by the various ways in which people were placed in broad processes, in support of the developments of the day, against them, or ignoring them. Then, as now, identities emerged in response to specific organizational histories in which particular individuals played central roles in formulating ideas and cultural memories by means of which people could relate to what was going on, thus mobilizing people in support of them.

In comparison with our contemporary world, these processes were limited in extent. Nevertheless, it is possible to argue that seen from the perspective of the participants of the day, what they were doing must have appeared as global because they believed they knew the world, and that the dynamism of their lives was different from the (primarily) peasant lives of the (traditional) populations with whom they interacted. Studies such as these can help us focus on shared human concerns in different historical periods, rather than schematizing history in dichotomies such as modern-premodern, capitalist-noncapitalist, reflexive-nonreflexive, and so on.
Leif Manger is professor in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen and Research Director of Unifob Global, a division dealing with development and global research of the Unifob Company. Manger was the head of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Bergen from 1999-2001. He also served as acting director of the Centre for Development Studies (CDS) from 1992-1993 and from 1994-1996. The CDS was replaced by Unifob Global in 2007.

Manger’s early research was related to the Sudan, and his research and publications include studies on household adaptations in oasis environments, mountain environments and savannah plains. He has also published studies, including edited books, on topics such as trade, communal labour and the socio-cultural processes of Arabisation and Islamisation. His latest monograph on Sudan is From the Mountains to the Plains: The Integration of the Lafofa Nuba in Sudanese Society. He has also edited books on issues such as Islam, entitled Muslim Diversity. Local Islam in Global Contexts, and on the issue of diasporas, Diasporas Within and Without Africa: Dynamism, Heterogeneity, Variation.

Manger is currently finishing a monograph based on his Indian Ocean research which deals with the migration history of people from Hadramaut in Yemen to areas around the Indian Ocean region (Hyderabad, Singapore, southern Ethiopia, Sudan). He is also working on a book on anthropology and longue durée research within the Indian Ocean Region. As leader of the project Global Moments in the Levant, Manger is involved in the overall organization and coordination of research within this project.

As a development consultant Manger has been involved in projects in the Sudan, Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania and Syria. In Sudan he was also a resource person for the Norwegian negotiation team on parts of their involvement in the peace negotiations during the civil war period. As part of this involvement in conflict and post-conflict activities in the Sudan Manger has co-edited, together with Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, a book on the conflict in Darfur, “Understanding the Conflict in the Sudan. Listening to Sudanese Voices”, and is currently, once again with Abdel Ghaffar M. Ahmed, working on a book that focuses on reconstruction and development in eastern Sudan.

Selected publications:


This project looks at two quite distinct foodways that emerged in Africa and the Near East during the Neolithic Period, i.e. about 10,000 years ago: the African food system based on porridge and the cooking pot, and the Near Eastern food system based on bread and the oven. It explores how these two different food systems have been maintained even into the present and how they have been dispersed over even wider regions such as the Indian subcontinent.
Archaeology possesses well-established techniques for recovering the material objects it studies, as well as time-tested procedures for the classification of material remains.

My input to the Global Moment Project compares the development of foodways in Africa and Middle East. Through focusing on this empirical theme, my goal is to develop new method and theory for advancing our understanding of the development of prehistoric food production processes in the Old World. To this end I have found Fredrik Barth’s work on human ecology, ethnic boundaries, transmission of tradition and comparative ethnography especially helpful (Barth 1994). I have also benefited considerably from the work of cognitive scientists such as Lakoff and Johnson 1980 and Johnson 1987. Ethnographic fieldwork in Africa and the Middle East has provided me with opportunities to observe the interplay of ecological, social and symbolic processes as they are played out in contemporary societies. It is the major source of the inspiration behind the conceptual framework I am employing in this study.

My empirical input to the GML research collaboration has focused on two contrasting foodways found in Africa and the Near East. Archaeological material indicates that these two different food systems go back 10 000 years. Furthermore, ethnographic studies and historical documents show a striking difference between Africa and the Near East with regard to symbolic elaborations of food-related items. This difference can be summed up as a contrast between a cooking-pot syndrome
in Africa and a baking-oven syndrome in the Near East. I argue that this contrast is related to differences in the emergence of interlinked elements of the Neolithic innovations in the two regions, namely cultivated cereals and the use of pottery. In the Near East the material shows that domesticated cereals appeared about 2000 years earlier than ceramics, while in Africa the evidence indicates that pottery appeared some 2000 years before cultivated cereals.

Porridge boiled in the pot was the staple food in Africa, while in the Near East bread was the social food, as exemplified in Biblical images such as Jesus breaking the bread to share it with his disciples. In the archaeological material the use of bread is seen in the existence of ovens (tannour) dating from 9000 years BP. It is suggested that beer was used during early exploitation of cereals, i.e., by 10,000 BP. Evidence for beer production in the Near East became more plentiful after the invention of pottery vessels. Detection of beer storage was made possible by the discovery that beer causes pitting in
the interior surface of clay vessels. There is good evidence for beer production in the early dynastic period of Sumer, and one artistic representation depicts beer being sucked through straws, similar to African cases.

“My research clearly draws attention to the importance of global flows of objects, ideas and people in shaping site inventory.”

The geographic connector for these African and Near Eastern foodways is Egypt. While beer was the staple drink throughout these regions, grain-based food saw a shift from sorghum porridge to wheat/barley bread in the pharaonic period. Another crossing point was the Horn of Africa. Interestingly, Ethiopia and Eritrea served for millennia as a crossroads for cultural contact and dispersal of crops between Africa and the Near East, with a difference in food technology and cuisine. The Horn was also a dispersal point for African food plants across the Indian Ocean to India about 4000 years ago. Today, on the Deccan plateau of India one can observe the African complex coexisting with the near eastern complex, as well as the south east Asian rice complex. Near Eastern food plants such as wheat and barley spread to India only a few hundred years after the initial domestication, 10 000 years ago.

Future studies will focus on comparisons of ethnographic case material from the Near East, Africa and India. Another point of focus will be the role of the Indian Ocean for several millennia in the exchange of ideas, cultural material and plants. This will provide a basis for the construction of testable hypotheses about how material manifestations of foodways are embedded in patterns of social organization and symbolic constructions, and thus may provide a sounder methodology for explorations

A small pot from the site of Aneibis, central Sudan, dated to the 8th millennium BP. This small pot was probably used for serving food and liquid, such as beer. Pottery in North Africa dates back as early as the 11-10 millennium BP. Photo: Anne-Marie Olsen
of the long-term socio-cultural processes that have shaped the evolution of different foodways. My work in the GLM is a further indication of the methodological weaknesses of the so-called Processual Archaeology approach, which tends to be highly biased towards seeking local site-specific causes (frequently called evolution) for changes in site inventory. My research clearly draws attention to the importance of global flows of objects, ideas and people in shaping site inventory. The methodological problems involved in sorting out the interplay of local innovation, diffusion of ideas, trade in objects and migration of people are far more complex than is often assumed.

References:


Randi Haaland is Professor of Middle Eastern and African Archaeology at the University of Bergen.

In 2000, while in Cambridge, UK, she was elected president of the Society of Africanist Archaeologists. She is currently on the Board of the Nubian Studies Association.

Since the 1970s she has been involved in fieldwork in Africa. From 1972-74 she was a lecturer designing courses in African Archaeology at the newly established Archaeology Department in the University of Khartoum, and for the next twenty years was involved in archaeological and ethnographic fieldwork in the Sudan, mainly along the rivers Nile and Atbara. She has done ethnographic fieldwork in Darfur among the Fur people, focusing on technological and social contexts of traditional food systems related to gender.

Haaland has directed projects in Tanzania, Mali, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Palestine and Nepal, but her longest commitment has been to Sudanese archaeology. Several of her projects have been financed by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and by the Research Council of Norway. Her research has also involved student training and competence building. Part of the competence building was teaching African students in Norway. In the mid-1990s she developed an M.Phil. degree in the University of Bergen in African Archaeology, since when 21 students from Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Sudan, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Palestine and Nepal have completed their Master’s degrees at the University of Bergen.

Haaland has also done extensive ethnographic work on the technological and symbolic aspects of iron working. This work has taken her to Sudan, Tanzania, Nepal and Ethiopia. The knowledge of traditional iron smelting is still maintained by a few elderly people who remember how this task was performed 50 years ago, before traditional iron smelting was replaced by the use of scrap iron. However, in 2000 she and her husband Gunnar Haaland did fieldwork in the remote area of Oska Denca in southwest Ethiopia, where they were able to work among iron smelters who still actively practice iron smelting. Because of the remoteness and inaccessibility of the area, as far as we know this is the only place in the world where people still smelt iron. In cooperation with her husband she has produced a video on this fieldwork: The Ethiopian Iron Smelter and his World. Haaland is also author of Socio-economic Differentiation in the Neolithic Sudan.

Selected publications:


FIELD:

This project uses ancient metallurgy to examine changing power constellations in the southern Levant in the course of the past 6,000 years. Research focuses on the Faynan copper ore resource zone, where evidence of ancient mining and metallurgy provides a rare ‘outdoor laboratory’ for examining the role of metal production in deep-time social change.
Human culture can best be conceptualized as a system made up of a constellation of different components including, ideology, economics, subsistence, and technology.

Each of these components represent a unique system which, to various degrees in time and space, directly influences social change. Under certain circumstances, control of these sub-systems can create ‘global moments’ of culture change. Anthropologist Leif Manger has defined global moments as breakthrough events that change people’s lives and their futures. The ‘Journey to the Copper Age’ project examines how technology, in particular the control of mining and metal production, has created some of these breakthrough events in the southern Levant from late prehistoric to early historic times. Specifically, the project looks at how technology influenced social change from autonomous village life during the Neolithic period (approx. 7500 – 4500 BCE) to the rise of the first historic state-level societies in the region during the Iron Age (ca. 1200 – 500 BCE).

Recognizing that time and space are the anthropological archaeologist’s most precious commodity, the methodology employed in the ‘Journey to the Copper Age’ focuses on the application of methods that help control time and the context (space) of material culture. By controlling both time and space, it is possible for researchers to measure rates of change and, in particular, to identify global moments of change. Archaeology is uniquely situated to study long-term or ‘deep-time’ social changes, because it is the only discipline that has the tools to...
examine data that pre-date historical records. For that matter, it is the primary discipline that has developed the tools needed to study the historical record where textual data are lacking. ‘Journey to the Copper Age’ uses the most advanced methods of radiocarbon dating to control for time and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to control for space, i.e., the precise location of material culture in relation to a host of cultural and environmental variables.

To help measure rates of cultural change through time, I am working closely with Thomas Higham of the Oxford Radiocarbon Accelerator Unit (http://c14.arch.ox.ac.uk/embed.php?File=index.html) to measure organic remains found in University of California, San Diego, archaeological excavations in Jordan’s Faynan district for high-precision radiocarbon dating. In addition to using standard calibration of short-life radiocarbon samples, the radiocarbon results obtained from our Jordanian research is subjected to Bayesian analyses. The advantage of using the Bayesian approach, developed by Christopher Bronk Ramsey of the Oxford Laboratory (Bronk
Bayesian analyses also uses the full radiocarbon inventory available for each sequence of a site or region and makes explicit when any data selection assumptions are applied. This provides a more objective foundation for comparing regional radiocarbon chronologies. Where Levantine and historical archaeology are concerned, this enables researchers to attain sub-century dating accuracy which is crucial for identifying ‘global moments’ in the Levant.

To control for space or the context of ancient material culture – from small artifacts to archaeological sites, the Journey to the Copper Age project relies on GIS as the nexus for controlling spatial data. This is being done on two scales – the small on-site recording of archaeological materials using methods developed in the course of field work in Jordan by UCSD archaeologists (Levy and Smith 2007) and much larger-scale regional analyses of archaeological data through the Digital Archaeological Atlas of the Holy Land (DAAHL) project in collaboration with Stephen Savage through the California Institute of Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2) at UCSD.

Once time and space have been controlled through the application of high-precision radiocarbon dating and GIS studies,
the anthropology of craft specialization (Costin 2001, Levy et al. 2002) and behavior archaeology (Schiffer 1995) are used to parse out the behavioral sequences represented in the Faynan archaeological sites being studied. In order to help extract meaning from the patterns of archaeological data retrieved at the ancient metallurgical sites in Faynan, ethnoarchaeological models based on data collected in India (see: www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKKL4GMeJQM ) and other regions are being employed. This combination of methodologies is helping to identify socio-economic trends in the technological remains found in southern Jordan – part of the overarching goal of the Global Moments in the Levant project.
Thomas Levy is Professor of Anthropology at the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) where he holds the Norma Kershaw Endowed Chair in the Archeology of Ancient Israel and the Neighboring Lands. Tom is the Associate Director for Archeology of the Center for Interdisciplinary Science in Art, Architecture and Archeology at UCSD’s California Institute for Telecommunications and Information Technology (Calit2). Levy has had a distinguished career as a field archaeologist working in Israel and Jordan. Since joining the faculty at UCSD in 1992, he has served as the chair of the Department of Anthropology and director of the Judaic Studies Program. He is currently serving his second term as director of that program and is a research associate of the University of Bergen’s Global Moments in the Levant research initiative. In 2008, he was elected as a fellow to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Levy’s interests include anthropological archaeology, prehistoric, Biblical and Near Eastern archaeology, ethnoarchaeology in India and the application of digital methods in archaeology. He has served as the principal investigator of major excavation projects in Israel and Jordan, including Shiqmim, Gilat, and Nahal Tillah in Israel and the Jabal Hamrat Fidan and Edom Lowlands Regional Archaeology Projects in Jordan, which have been supported by grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Science Foundation, the National Geographic Society, private foundations and other institutions. In 2007 he was guest curator of the San Diego Museum of Man’s exhibition ‘Journey to the Copper Age’, in association with the National Geographic Society.

Levy’s research focuses primarily on the evolution of complex societies, especially chiefdoms, in the southern Levant, and deep-time studies of the role of technology in the evolution of societies from the Neolithic (ca. 7,500 BCE) to the Iron Age (ca. 1200 to 500 BCE). The popular book Journey to the Copper Age – Archaeology in the Holy Land presents an overview of the discovery of metallurgy. This subject is traced from the Neolithic to the Iron Age periods. In The Bible and Radiocarbon Dating – Archaeology, Text and Science, a strong case is made for the centrality of radiocarbon dating for historical archaeology in the Levant. To explore other global moments in the Levant and the impact of the rise of regional temple economies, Levy published Archaeology, Anthropology and Cult – The Sanctuary at Gilat, Israel. Crossing Jordan – North American Contributions to the Archaeology of Jordan highlights the contribution of North American researchers to the study of Jordan’s. For his role in spearheading the publication of this volume, Levy was awarded a publication prize by Her Majesty Princess Sumaya Bint al-Hassan of Jordan and Dr. Fawwaz al-Khraysheh on behalf of the Department of Antiquities of. In the course of the past year, Dr. Levy has also published a number of research articles.
Selected Publications:


Internet Resources:
UCSD, “Archeology in the Levant,” http://anthro.ucsd.edu/~tlevy

Journey to the Copper Age, “From Holy Land to Holy Land Excerpt,” www.youtube.com/watch?v=SKKL4GMeJQM
This project compares number of significant factors connected to the development of the first urban societies of the Levant and neighbouring regions. It explores in a comparative perspective the socio-economic and religious processes that eventually lead to what we may call complex and hierarchical societies.
One of the most fundamental questions in archaeology is the transition towards more complex societies which ended with the formation of the first urban states in the Near East.

This process has generally been seen as a straight evolutionary process, from fairly simple egalitarian societies in the Late Paleolithic to chiefdoms and city states. However, this simple line of development has recently been challenged by researchers (Yoffee 2005; Gamble 2007). This project follows along these lines by questioning both straight line evolution and the fact that not all regions in the Near East follow the same evolutionary path but had instead quite different social and developmental trajectories.

My contribution to the Global Moments in the Levant collaboration is therefore found on two levels. First is the specific context of the Levant and its role in the formation of the first complex urban societies towards the end of the 4th millennium BC. Second, and on a more general comparative level, I am researching why these processes take place in
Mesopotamia and Egypt, while the Levant they seem to have a very different trajectory. Contextually, the focus is on the 6th-4th millennia BC leading up to the first urban societies in the Near East. The study compares on a broad level the inter-linked social and economic developments that led to the rise of inequality, social power, and eventually, the various constellations of political landscapes that characterize the emerging urban centers. Here the particular focus is on the development of more comprehensive modes of exchange with a shift towards a political economy where the household loses much of its control of how the economic surplus is distributed.

In this sense, the Levant is a major global moment as it develops a number of social forms that are significant for the millennia to come.

One significant area of analysis is therefore the social organization of not only households and household production, but the shift towards more specialized tasks and activities which needs to be incorporated to the social structure. This includes analyzing and contextualizing the role of metal use in greater parts of the Levant and adjacent regions. Another area of analysis is the development of temples and sanctuaries within the Levant (Levy 2007), and the implication of this on a broader comparative level. This ends with a complex integration of religion within both the economy and the social structure that had not been known earlier, which were significant features in the establishment of the first complex societies.

In this sense, the Levant is a major global moment as it develops a number of social forms that are significant for the millennia to come. This means that a number of factors such
as equality vs. inequality, social structure, political economy, trade and transactions of commodities are analyzed in order to understand these developments. The attempt here is to work beyond the classical cases of state formation. In addition new empirical material will be incorporated; one is a survey in the desert regions north of Palmyra in Syria, and continued analysis of the archaeological material from the excavations at Tell el-Mafjar in Jericho. These two areas will represent both a settled society and the use of more marginal areas. The aim is in this way to look at alternative explanations of significant processes of the Levant, as well as broadening the horizon of understanding of a truly global moment in the Levant.
References:


(above) Small plot-agriculture basically for household production in NW Syria.

(left) Moving the flock. Sheep and goat is a significant part of the economic capital and resources in the more marginal areas.

Photos: Nils Anfinset
Nils Anfinset is a post-doctoral fellow in the Department of Archaeology, History, Culture and Religious Studies at the University of Bergen, but has also been affiliated with Unifob Global (formerly the Center for Development Studies) in a number of projects since the mid-1990s. He has also worked at the University of Oslo and Birzeit University. He has a diverse background, with fieldwork in Norway, Tanzania, Syria and Palestine, in addition to ethno-archaeological studies on mining, smelting and casting copper among different ethnic groups in Nepal. Most recently he has been researching early metal production and the consumption and circulation of goods in pre-state societies. Anfinset has also been a member of the joint Palestinian-Norwegian excavation at Tell el-Mafjar in Jericho. This has also led to consideration of ethical and political issues related to archaeological practice and the presentation of archaeological data.

Anfinset is currently in charge of the interdisciplinary BA programme in Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Bergen, and has links with field projects in both Syria and Palestine. He is the author of the forthcoming book Metal, Nomads and Culture Contact, in addition to a large number of articles on various topics in archaeology. He is co-editor of Combining the Past and the Present: Archaeological Perspectives on Society. He also served as executive member and treasurer of the World Archaeological Congress (2003-2006).

Selected publications:


Over the past four millennia Transjordan has seen successive waves of empires sweep through its desert highlands. To varying extents, each such intervention has constituted a global moment—a time of increased insecurity and stress as old ways are challenged and at times replaced by new ones. LaBianca’s research seeks to understand the meaning of each such global moment for the local population as well as for the invading population.
My input to the GML research collaboration has been to provide a deep-time perspective on power constellations and inter-civilizational encounters in the Southern Levantine contact zone.

To this end he has focused his investigations on the agency role of empires in imposing particular visions of social order on the Levantine population. A partial list of empires that have impacted the region over the past four millennia include Pre-dynastic Egyptian, Old Babylonian, Hittite, Egyptian, Sea People, Assyrian, Neo-Babylonian, Persian, Greek/Hellenistic, Roman, Byzantine, Sassanid, Umayyad, Abbasid, Tulinid, Fatimid, Seljuk, Crusader, Ayyubid, Mamluk, Ottoman and British.

LaBianca follows Hardt and Negri (2005) in defining “empire” as, simply, an “expanding world order.” He further posits that, in the case of most empires, the social order they seek to spread can be traced to their civilizational roots. A definition of “civilization” that is helpful in this regard is the following (posited by LaBianca under inspiration from Fernand Braudel and his...
GML experience): “a civilization is a luminous constellation of radiant attitudes, behaviors, beliefs, institutions, and works of art, artisanship and architecture that emanate from a particular epicenter such as Athens, Rome or Constantinople.” Thus, Alexander the Great and his successors were champions of Greek civilization—spreading their vision of the “polis” as the ideal social order for humans throughout the ancient world. The Roman emperor Justinian similarly championed Roman “law and order” as the ideal basis for world order, and Constantine the Great championed Romanized Christianity as the ideal template for world order.

Research on the agency role of empires in catalyzing global moments and shaping cultural changes has been facilitated by adoption of Robert Redfield’s “structure of tradition” methodology. This approach allows us to distinguish between, on the one hand, the elite-controlled, often codified, “great traditions” that emanate from the global and regional epicenters of empires and, on the other hand, the uncodified vernacular “little traditions” of the masses that live underneath the influence of one or more imperial world orders. A central objective of this approach is to discover the extent to which efforts by a particular imperial polity to “universalize” and impose a particular great tradition has succeeded, and, if so, to discover the extent to which this has involved “parochialization” or the selective incorporation of elements of a particular great tradition within a particular little tradition. To this end our research at Tall Hisban has endeavored to identify

(above) Local markets are a window on local consumption.

Photos: Dave Sherwin

(left) As water has become more scarce in villages and towns, people have turned to buying water delivered on trucks such as this one.
“signature artifacts” in the form of monumental buildings, ceramics, crafts and other material residues that can provide a clue to whether and to what extent a particular great tradition has been universalized and/or parochialized. The opposite sometimes also occurs—that is, elite culture at the epicenter is impacted by its engagements with local little traditions—and to the extent that it does, it highlights the interactive give-and-take nature of global-local interactions.

“A central objective of this approach is to discover the extent to which efforts by a particular imperial policy to “universalize” and impose a particular great tradition has succeeded.”

While the research at Tall Hisban is on the front line of research on imperial projects in the Southern Levant under this GML grant, efforts are underway to mobilize similar research at other archaeological sites throughout the region. To this end, LaBianca has succeed in organizing a series of “empire research roundtables” at the annual meetings of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) and the American Institute of Archaeology (AIA). The purpose of these roundtable sessions is to share the GML empire research agenda with scholars working in other parts of the Levant; to recruit and establish partnerships between these scholars and their colleagues studying imperial epicenters; and to facilitate on-going collaboration between epicenter experts and archaeologists, such as our team at Tall Hisban, working in far-flung regions of such imperial epicenters.

Finally, and essential to this line of research, is the goal of learning more about the long-term coping strategies of the
local residents of Tall Hisban and vicinity. What has been the “indigenous knowledge” on which they have relied for security and on which they have depended for survival despite the coming and going of empires? To this end seven “indigenous hardiness structures” or “little traditions” are being focused upon as part of this research endeavor. These include local level water management, mixed agro-pastoralism, fluid homeland territories, residential flexibility, hospitality, honor and shame, and tribalism. These little traditions appear to have persisted more or less unabated in the region of Tall Hisban since their likely origin in Neolithic times (perhaps even earlier) through to today. The great traditions of empires have been, by comparison, transient phenomena in the Levant, when compared with these little traditions.

References:


Øystein S. LaBianca is Professor of Anthropology and Associate Director of the Institute of Archaeology at Andrews University in Michigan. For the past ten years he has also been a visiting researcher at the Centre for Development Studies at the University of Bergen. Since his first fieldwork in Jordan at Tall Hisban in 1971, LaBianca’s career has been devoted to developing methods, procedures, and data sets for the study of long-term changes in the daily lives of the inhabitants of Tall Hisban and vicinity. His initial research, which focused on the animal bones unearthed by excavators at Tall Hisban, culminated during the late 1970s and 1980s with his formulation and application of the food systems concept, including the related notions of intensification and abatement and sedentarization and nomadization, as a means of making sense of documented long-term changes in the composition of these remains.

During the 1990s his research focused on identifying the social mechanisms, local adaptive strategies, which for centuries and millennia enabled local residents to shift back and forth between sedentary and nomadic lifestyles. More recently, and especially as part of his research with Global Moments in the Levant, he has become interested in how changes in Tall Hisban’s local food system have been influenced by global processes. To this end he has been exploring the utility of Robert Redfield’s notion of “great and little traditions” as a means to deepen understanding of the interaction of global processes with local adaptive strategies and as a means to account for how and why cultural particulars of each successive cycle of intensification and abatement differ from the last.

LaBianca is currently senior director of the Tall Hisban Excavations, co-director of the Madaba Plains Project and a member of the Board of Trustees of the American Schools of Oriental Research and the American Center for Oriental Research in Amman. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of the Middle East Section of the American Anthropological Association.

His research has been supported by grants from Andrews University, the American Schools of Oriental Research, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Geographic Society, the Research Council of Norway, and the Research Council of Norway.

Selected publications:


The Paradox of Power:
An Archaeology of Security in the First Millennium A.D.

The research focuses my archaeological projects, especially the Umm el-Jimal Project, through the wide-angle lens of the GML research process. This paradoxical interplay of specifics and generalities over the first millennium A.D. anticipates the theme of Paradox of Power. I plan four chapters developing the theme, paradoxes of power in the history of Levantine societies.
I studied Greater Syrian temples to highlight the diverse local cultural traditions and religious needs that prevail in societies under imperial forms of temple design and cultic practice.

“Religious architecture and security”

My concern is that the stereotype of religious uniformity superimposed through the process of Hellenization by colonists following Alexander has blinded us to the actual situation: the survival of local expressions through religious art.

By beginning locally, I began to see that even the more general and bureaucratically stringent Roman rule did not simply bring uniformity, but set in motion a complex process of culture change I call “amalgamation.”

Lucian’s De Dea Syria, gave me an excellent example. In describing the cult of the local goddess, he finds himself interpreting the native cult of his youth as an exotic curiosity to the imperial milieu to which he now belongs.

I see from this that Roman hegemony absorbed, but never dissolved the distinct pieces of Levantine religiosity into an imperial “solution.” When the liquid evaporated – in the disasters of the third century – those discrete fragments of Levantine religion remained, but in the form of an inert residue.

“Military architecture and security”

My work on military architecture – at Umm el-Jimal and el-
Lejjun – was done in the context of the traditional model in which Roman fortifications were seen as frontier security measures to protect sedentary local subjects against various perceived enemies, such as the Persians and raiding nomads. While I was drawn to the more post-colonial alternative, in which nomads and sedentists are both seen as subject to Roman power, this did not offer a better explanation of the rapid shift towards purpose-built massive fortifications in the third-fourth centuries.

For local subjects the experience of military/bureaucratic controls fits into the larger question of security, and mixes religious (and economic) issues with military/political ones. I can imagine that Roman power was made real by the sight of massive fortresses, but how do I imagine people felt – secure, blessed, enriched; or, conquered, oppressed, stifled?
My questions point to the paradoxes of power in ancient lives. Shifts in material culture make it more likely to me that the Roman occupation was oppressive, destructive, and spiritually depressing. Thus I see the Roman fortifications not simply as a security measure, but as a military response to the tenacity of local power, as seen in the surviving religiosity. This antithetical construct led to my thematic label, paradox of power.

“Interconnections between religious and military security”

I chose the interdisciplinary theme of security in order to overcome a tendency among scholars to treat religious and military phenomena as separate topics, like forts and temples. The following is an initial observation about the contiguity of religious and military architecture at Umm el-Jimal. From the sequence of construction and use we discovered that the end of local paganism and the beginning of Christianity are separated by a century of Roman military occupation. This means that the arrival of Christianity at Umm el-Jimal was not a deliberate conversion like that of the Franks. The coming of Christianity to Umm el-Jimal was rather more like its arrival in Central America. It came after a destruction of order and the creation of a new military order which brought an injection of new people, active and retired soldiers already Christian.

Many were also Arabs who mixed easily with local survivors. All local gods, such as Dushara ‘Arra and Holy Zeus Epekoos, were forgotten or had never been known.
Viewed in terms of political landscape, the transition from paganism to Christianity is not simply the replacement of temples with churches; it is rather a succession from temple to fortress, and then church. I find the location of one of the 15 churches at Umm el-Jimal inside the ruins of the Roman fortress a striking symbol of the completion of this cycle.

“My concern is that the stereotype of religious uniformity superimposed through the process of Hellenization by colonists following Alexander has blinded us to the actual situation.”

“Religious and military security in the early Islamic centuries”
Using the method set up above, modelling of the interconnection between military and religious factors in the archaeology of the early Islamic centuries is my assignment for the final year of the GML research process. I anticipate this central theme: the relationship between religio-political disorder and the construction of hill-top redoubts in the Levant.

Mosaic on the south façade of the courtyard of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, constructed under Caliph al-Walid, early 8th Cent. The fantastic scene of verdant shade over elaborately towering urban structures, completed by artists working in the Byzantine tradition, represents the rich promise of paradise for the righteous believer (Sura 13:35) – a symbol of both continuity with the past and of security combining caliphal authority with divine sanction for Levantine subjects now at the center of empire.

Photo: Bert de Vries
Bert de Vries is Professor of History and Archaeology at Calvin College and is an archaeological architect with field experience in the Levant. His major and current project is a study of Umm el-Jimal - a Roman to Early Islamic town in Jordan. Other recent architectural work on Roman fortifications in Jordan was published last year in S. Thomas Parker’s field report, The Roman Frontier in Central Jordan.

De Vries is curious about the ways in which popular fascination with Levantine antiquities shapes modern culture, particularly the impact of discoveries in ancient Egypt and the Levant on North America, and he uses this motif in his lectures and teaching. A forthcoming encyclopedia chapter on Archaeology and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict grew out of this interest in the role of the past in shaping the present.

Recent overseas teaching includes a joint Calvin College and Birzeit University course on the Environmental Geography of Palestine, with staff and students from both schools participating. The underlying motive is to understand historic relationships with the landscape as a foundation for achieving peace and reconciliation in the present. A similar course in Guatemala to teach and study links between the Maya archaeological past and the conflicted present has added comparative depth to these cross-cultural interests. A joint Calvin-Birzeit environmental study of a West Bank tributary of the Jordan River, The Wadi el Far’a Project, which is co-directed with Dr. Kamal Abdulfattah, was completed in January 2003 and published in 2006.

De Vries’ involvement in Global Moments in the Levant has grown out of the above interests. His contributions are on the modes of security – religious and military – buffering local societies during the succession of empires from the Roman to the Byzantine and Islamic eras, using his research at local sites, Umm el-Jimal and the Central Jordan fortifications, as points of intersection between local, Levantine and global foci of power.

On campus at Calvin College, de Vries teaches courses in Classical, Near East and World History and in Archaeology. He is a former director of the American Center of Oriental Research in Amman, Jordan, and is a co-organizer – with Bethany Walker and Øystein LaBianca - of the annual section of papers on the Material Culture of Ottoman Syro-Palestine at the annual meetings of the American Schools of Oriental Research.


**Internet resources:**
The Umm el-Jimal Project: www.openhandstudios.org/ummeljimal.htm; www.ummeljimal.org

The Wádi el Far’a Project: www.calvin.edu/~dvrb
This project focuses on the waning of the Middle Ages as a global moment in the Levant. I examine creative attempts at imperial revival in the fifteenth century from the perspective of the frontier of the last medieval Muslim empire, the Mamluk Sultanate. The repercussions of practices initiated in Jordan lasted long after the demise of this empire, echoing in a historical watershed of the Ottoman Levant; the Era of the Tanzimat Reforms.
My research within the Global Moments in the Levant collaboration has been concerned with the ways in which Muslim imperial states have exercised power over local communities and vice versa.

My approach is provincial in the sense that I start with the premise that local communities were not merely passive participants in the political events of the day, but active contributors to those events. To this end I have brought together a wide range of sources to illustrate and explain the give-and-take that has always been part of the imperial administration’s engagement with local communities in my study area, which is Central and Northern Jordan in particular, but also the Levant as a whole.

In my studies of the demographic decline of the late medieval Levant, I have considered the complex relations between the local and imperial and the ways their control over the land impacted settlement cycles. To this end I have adopted the methodologies of political ecology, in which historical geography, economics and environmental studies converge, and where the widest range of sources is used. The political ecological frame of reference allows for a coherent exploration of the ways in which states control local economies and resources, how decisions by the state and local societies impact one another and the physical environment, and how control over land becomes an important political objective for both players.
In terms of methodology, I am both a historian and an archaeologist in that I make use of both written sources and archaeological data, adopting the methods of both traditional archival history and anthropological inquiry. This hybrid approach, and the wide span of my chronological interests, has enabled me to be a part of three sub-themes of the Global Moments project: imperial projects; relief and welfare; and commercial elites, moral economies, and politics.

For the first theme, namely imperial projects in the Levant, I have focused on two transitional periods: that of the financial and political collapse of the Mamluk state in the late 15th century (which marks the end of the Middle Ages in the Levant and the beginning of the Ottoman, or Early Modern, era), as well as the 19th centuries, the era of the Ottoman reforms, or Tanzimat, which arguably laid the foundations of
the modern Arab states of the Levant. Comparing the height of the Mamluk era with the Ottoman Tanzimat - episodes of greater state engagement in the region, as well as periods of economic, political, and social experimentation – is one way to conceptualize the structure and application of imperial programs in a global, comparative perspective. For the purposes of the Global Moments project, I have abstracted from Jordanian data and compared it to similar processes in Palestine and southern Syria for these periods in an effort to better understand Late Islamic imperial systems in the larger Levant. My most recent research efforts in this regard have incorporated conceptual frameworks developed by political anthropologists and post-colonial theorists in delineating local-state relations and emphasizing the role of local society in transforming the state during periods of transition.

"The political ecological frame of reference allows for a coherent exploration of the ways in which states control local economies and resources."

In a spin-off project related to the autonomy of local communities in Jordan during times of imperial disengagement, I have focused on Islam in rural Jordanian society, from the

Photos: Bethany Walker
13th century until the early 20th, considering ways in which traditional practice and beliefs, and the structure of religious communities, can shed light on imperial projects and state-rural relationships. The engagement of “local Islam” (however one wants to define the phenomenon of Islamic practice and structures in village society) with larger religious networks has been the theme of much scholarship of the past ten years. In particular, I have focused on the issue of rural autonomy and the degree to which local communities in these periods acted independently of the state in organizing and funding their own religious networks and places of worship. I have been particularly interested in how local mosques and shrines were central to the identity and history of local villages. A convenient starting point for these reflections is to suggest, briefly, ways in which “the imperial” and “the local” engaged one another, as indicated by written sources of the Mamluk and Ottoman periods, and to posit modes of inquiry about the imperial from the perspective of local religious communities. The “mosques project” of the larger Northern Jordan Project (NJP), which I launched in 2003, is an archaeological investigation into “local Islam”. I am actively involved in community outreach and have engaged living villagers in exploring the history of their congregations and in helping to sponsor the restoration of their historical mosques and shrines.
Related to this effort is my contribution to the second GML theme, relief and welfare. My research on rural Sufism in northern Jordan, its relationships with larger networks that span the Levant and its important contribution to providing public education and health care at the end of the Ottoman period and beginning of the British Mandate, grew out of the NJP “mosques project”. My work in this regard draws on both archaeological and architectural remains, ethnography, and archival research related to public services and land registration. Here “charity” is envisioned as those public services that the state cannot, or is unwilling to, provide to rural communities. How the providers of such services, as community religious leaders, came to political, economic, and social prominence in the emerging state of modern Jordan is a key theme of this work.

In the final project sub-theme; commercial elites and moral economy, I have returned to the topic that is generating our current research in Mamluk studies: how economic reform on the imperial level is an expression of fluid power relationships between the state and local communities. The economic reforms of the late 14th/15th and 19th centuries were intended to reinforce failing states and regain control over agricultural resources in the Levant. Their unintended consequences; the creation of new economic elites and alternative expressions of the exercise of power, are transformative on both imperial and local levels.
Bethany J. Walker was Associate Professor of Middle East History at Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan throughout most of the project. She now serves as Associate Professor of History at Missouri State University. She was previously on the faculty at Oklahoma State University (from 1999 to 2004) and in 2003 was a Visiting Professor at the Arabic-language Islamic College of Prince of Songkla University in Pattani, Thailand, where she developed a graduate programme in Middle East Studies and taught a seminar on the Modern Middle East. Walker spent the fall of 2006 at the University of Bergen as a Visiting Researcher, co-sponsored by the Centres for Development Studies and Middle East Studies.

Walker’s research focuses on mediaeval Islam, and specifically the Mamluk Empire (1250-1517 C.E.), combining archaeological fieldwork with the archive-oriented methods of more traditional history. In the 1990s her work centered on the material correlates of imperial decline, and today she is interested in the ways in which the provinces of medieval Islamic states responded to the processes of economic and political transformations that ushered in the early modern period.

In terms of archaeological fieldwork, Walker directs the Northern Jordan Project, a historical-ecological study of medieval society; co-directs and acts as Chief Archaeologist for the Tall Hisban excavations of the Madaba Plains Project (under the senior direction of Øystein LaBianca); and has done ceramic consultation for archaeological projects in Cyprus. She is on the editorial boards of Mamluk Studies Review, Near Eastern Archaeology, and Bulletin d’Études Orientales, served on the Board of Trustees of the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), continues to serve on the Board of the Middle East Medievalists (of North America), and chairs the Consultation of the North American Dig Directors in Jordan (a sub-committee of ASOR). She has received grants from the National Endowment of the Humanities, the Fulbright Foundation, the Kress Foundation, the Oklahoma Humanities Council, Oklahoma State and Grand Valley State Universities, the University of Bergen and the Research Council of Norway, and was involved in a project for library support in Iraq (“al-Sharaka”) funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

Walker’s publications can be found in specialized journals on mediaeval Islamic history and archaeology, as well as more popular venues. She has recently edited a volume on the Mamluk provinces for Mamluk Studies Review (vol. 11.1, 2007) and a bilingual work entitled Exercising Power in the Age of the Sultanates: Bilad al-Sham and Iran, with J.-F. Salles, a supplement to Bulletin d’Études Orientales. Other works include Reflections of Empire: Archaeological and Ethnographic Perspectives on the Pottery of
the Ottoman Levant and Beyond, also under her editorship, published summer 2009 in the ASOR Annual Monograph Series, and her forthcoming monograph Jordan in the Late Middle Ages: Transformation of the Mamluk Frontier is to be submitted to the Chicago Studies on the Middle East monograph series of the Middle East Documentation Center, University of Chicago.

Selected publications:


During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, good economic conditions and a decentralized, independent administrative and tax collection system led to the rise of many local rulers and leading families in both Palestine and Jordan. These had sufficient powers and sufficiently large fortunes to build fortified strongholds or throne villages from which to rule their districts. The aim of my research is to document this story.
The weakening of the central Ottoman imperial administration caused by reverses in central Europe, beginning with the unsuccessful siege of Vienna in 1683 and the Treaties of Karlowitz (1699) and Kucuk Qaynarca (1774), resulted in an overall decentralization of the once very powerful central imperial administration in Istanbul.

This made room for the emergence of provincial and sub-provincial local powers throughout the Ottoman territories in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, where territorial sovereigns (al-wali) appointed sheikhs and chieftains as authorized representatives of political regimes.

As local sovereigns the sheikhs wielded strong political and economic power and social influence over their sheikhdoms, which they gained through their positions, relations within their clans (hamoulah), and regional alliances. In Syria and Palestine the majority of this local nobility was concentrated in mountainous areas where they acted almost independently, yet still in cooperation with the respective Ottoman bureaucrats to administer and collect taxes from their villages.

The more-than-forty “throne villages” (qura al karasi) of the central Palestinian highlands are a distinctive survival of the Ottoman hegemony over the Levant. These rural seats were
semi-urbanized residential and administrative compounds composed of imposing stone edifices that were visually impressive. At their centres were feudal mansions, some fortified and many still intact, which served as seats of local power, at the end of the seventeenth century. Today, they are abandoned and in need of preservation.

The architectural character of the throne villages received sufficient scholarly attention (see e.g., the work of Suad Amiry) to make the throne-village concept clear in its historical,
social, political and archaeological contexts. They reflect an administrative strategy that was especially appropriate for the rural highlands of Ottoman Palestine.

Throne villages were often divided into neighbourhoods, which housed the extended families of the ruling sheikhs with the most elaborate district, that of the rulers. Here was situated the family mansion or palace, which served both as administrative headquarters (saraya) and as living quarters for the sheikh’s families. The hybrid urban and peasant building design reflects both the local origin of the owners and their socio-political aspirations. A distinctive style of Palestinian rural architecture thus emerged to serve multiple functions and suit the new power of local sheikhs.

The power and influence of these rural chiefdoms had two significant bases. The first was the sheikh’s ability to mobilize the peasants in the event that war was anticipated. The second was their power to restrict or facilitate access to trade routes within their jurisdictions, which was essential for the important regional trade. Because of the widespread recognition of these two power bases and because of the complex and close-knit networks of patronage based upon a feudal obligation on the part of sheikhs to provide protection to peasants in exchange for their loyalty, force was rarely necessary. Well-developed social and familial connections, built up over centuries, enabled the kind of autonomy that Palestine enjoyed throughout Ottoman rule.

Peasant society was organized into hamoulahs, kin groups based upon patrilineal descent from a common ancestor. Connections between branches of the larger and more powerful clans in many villages were political, social and economic as well as familial. Avenging wrongs against clan members and defending them in times of trouble were the mainstays of hamoulah relationships. Elders directed members in interactions with
other clans and also settled internal disputes. Rather than written laws, the elders followed cultural traditions and customary practices in deciding legal issues on behalf of their clans.

Well-developed social and familial connections, built up over centuries, enabled the kind of autonomy that Palestine enjoyed throughout Ottoman rule.

Family names were a luxury reserved for the highest-ranking people of rural Palestine. Others were referred to by their given names with males designated mostly as “son of.” However merchants and artisans might have family names if they had achieved a measure of prosperity and social standing. The extended family lived in a household, dar, which refers simultaneously to the inhabitants and to their physical space. The extended family pooled its economic resources and nuclear families within it contributed to and partook of the communal resources, based upon their abilities and their needs.

As the power of these local chiefdoms collapsed, some of the ruling families left for the city, where they changed their social status to fit the fabric of urban life, but others have remained in their villages until today. After the throne village system was drastically weakened with Ibrahim Pasha’s invasion of Palestine (1831-1840) these mansions remain as a vital component of the Palestinian cultural heritage, testifying to a rich period, which would otherwise be a vacuum in the rural history of Palestine.

I am doing this research in cooperation with Anders Bjørkelo of the University of Bergen, utilizing archival documents, local histories collected by myself and others, interviews with descendants of leading families, and my own experience as a participant observer throughout my own life in Palestine.
Kamal Abdulfattah, Professor of Geography at Birzeit University in Palestine, received his BA at Damascus University in 1964 and, after teaching geography at high-school level in Palestine, earned his PhD at Friedrich-Alexander University in Erlangen, Germany in 1980. For his thesis, he studied the agricultural geography of the tropical southern Red Sea basin of Saudi Arabia and Yemen. He joined the first national Palestinian university, Birzeit, while it was still developing. He taught the geography of Palestine and the Middle East in the Middle East Studies Department of that university. He started the continuing tradition of extended field excursions all over Palestine to bring together the physical, cultural and historical features of the landscape for students and faculty. Through this distinctive approach to geography he prepared hundreds of graduates who now work in the Palestinian public and private sectors, dealing with physical planning, archaeology, geography and education.

His research interests are historical, settlement and cultural geography, water issues, cultural heritage and environmental questions. He has spent sabbaticals and leaves at European and American universities, most recently as a research fellow at the Princeton Institute of International Relations Studies and at the Trans-regional Institute for the Study of North Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia. He has also spent two years as a senior Fulbright scholar at Villanova University and one year each as visiting professor at the Universities of Erlangen, Bayreuth and Tubingen. His published books include Historical Geography of Palestine in the Late Sixteenth Century (co-authored), Mountain Farmer and Fellah in Asir, Southwest Arabia, and The Town of Jenin. He participated in the writing of many books, including: Palestinians over the Green Line, German Geographical Research in the Orient, The Palestinian Problem, All That Remains, Endangered Cultural Heritage Sites in the West Bank, and Architectural Treasures in Jerusalem.

He has participated in many group research ventures, including the Birzeit-Calvin Wadi el-Far’a Project (2000-2003), the Birzeit-Bergen Lower Jordan River Basin Project (1998-2008) and the Basic History of Palestine (2002-2007). As co-editor with Leif Manger he is responsible for the publication of the Lower Jordan River Basin Project monograph series, with 14 monographs published and 16 more projected by 2010.

Dr. Abdulfattah is a member of the Global Moments in the Levant research team based at the University of Bergen, Norway, 2005-2008, funded by the Norway Research Council. He and Professor Anders Bjørkelo share responsibility for studies of the Ottoman Empire period which lasted from 1516 to 1918.
Selected publications:


Bjørkelo’s project is a study of a particular global moment when the Ottomans introduced administrative and economic reforms that brought Transjordan under closer Ottoman control. At the same time they made the region more attractive to foreign merchants and capital much like the Ottoman Egyptian expansion into Africa. The second focus of the project will therefore be on the incorporation of the Sudan for comparative purposes.
My contribution to the GML project is a study of what can be called ‘changes in the socio-economic landscape’ of Ottoman Transjordan during the Tanzimat period, basically in the last half of the Nineteenth Century.

This research is carried out in cooperation with Professor Kamal Abdel-Fatah at Birzeit University, Palestine, who, with Hütteroth, has provided a basic study of the area in their Historical Geography of Palestine, Transjordan and Southern Syria in the Late 16th Century. (Erlangen 1977).

For this study I draw upon my previous research on the history of the Sudan under Ottoman-Egyptian rule, 1821-85—especially the imperialist expansion of the Ottoman frontier into Africa (up the Nile and along the Red Sea) and the efforts of the Ottoman Egyptians (known in the Sudan as Turks) to incorporate the new frontiers and make them effectively part of the Empire. This was achieved, much like in Jordan, through military expansion over several decades, through the establishment of garrisons and local administrations and through encouraging local elites to accept if not support the new political realities. Merchants, for instance, were not automatically against being “incorporated” in an empire that encouraged and secured trade over long distances and that wanted to mobilise the resources of the frontiers. On the contrary, in the Sudan European, Levantine, Egyptian, and Northern Sudanese merchants followed on the heels of the invading armies moving southwards. In Jordan, the merchants came mainly from Palestine and Syria.
As Eugene Rogan has argued, Nineteenth Century Transjordan can best be seen as an Ottoman periphery or frontier which was reintegrated into the Empire and subjected to Ottoman garrisons and direct control, (Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire, Cambridge 1999). These efforts were connected to the Tanzimat reforms which also aimed at linking the provinces closer to the centre and exploiting their resources more effectively, for instance in the fields of taxation, agricultural production, and commerce. These efforts, which of course required the curbing of the power of the Bedouins, set in motion a series of processes which attracted foreign merchants to the region, which opened for private ownership in land and the investment of commercial capital, and which connected the region more closely to the world capitalist market. Thus the merchants were instrumental in mobilizing the resources of the region and in its economic integration. The losers were, among others, small-scale farmers who mortgaged their land against loans and who for various reasons lost their land to their creditors.

The losers were, among others, small-scale farmers who mortgaged their land against loans and who for various reasons lost their land to their creditors.

(left) Al-Salt is built along a valley and on the hillsides surrounding it. The valley (wadi) leads down to the Jordan Valley and was in the past frequented by the caravans going between Nablus and Al-Salt mainly. Photo: Osman Sharkas

(right) Agricultural landscape north of Amman in the dry season. Notice the tree gardens dominated by olive trees. Further north into the district of Ajlun the landscape becomes more hilly and receives more rain, providing an excellent environment for olive, fruit and grain cultivation.
The three triggers for this expansion, which can be seen as products of Ottoman reform, are the presence of military garrisons, the registration and distribution of commonly held tribal and village land and the inflow of commercial capital from Palestine and Syria. This Ottoman-local dynamic not only produced commerce-based urban centers like al-Salt, but also reinvigorated the agricultural economies from Kerak to Irbid. Social beneficiaries of this invigoration were the previously nomadic tribal leaders of south central Transjordan, the agrarian village sheikhs of the ’Ajloun area, and the new merchant-landowners arriving from Palestinian centers like Nablus. The resulting socio-economic landscape formed the underpinnings for Jordan’s modern urban-agrarian texture.

Of these processes this research will single out the role of the immigrant merchants as agents of change and how the largely farming town of al-Salt was changed into a bustling export oriented market town towards the end of the 19th century. It has also been noted by Eugene Rogan, whose work on al-Salt and the Balqa is of fundamental importance for this research, that this process set in motion a more pronounced social stratification. We will follow up this by a studying the formation of a new elite and its impact in Transjordan. Here the connection between commerce, merchant capital and new forms of landownership is important.

A frontier or a periphery may look like a dead end when compared with the more vital and central parts of a state or...
an empire. However, we will argue that a frontier zone, as the cases of Jordan and the Sudan show, may be very attractive for commerce because its products are cheap and imports may get high prices, provided, and this must be underlined, that the frontier can offer a minimum of security for the merchants. In our case, the resources of the Transjordanian frontier could only be fully exploited under the protective shield of the Ottomans. In other words commercial capitalism was encouraged to expand into the frontier and act as another strong force of integration. It is too early to propose a definite conclusion, but it seems that Ottoman direct control benefited not only merchants and estate-owners, but also in the long run beduins, peasants, and the average town dwellers as they started to master the new rules of the game. Those who did not benefit were the increasing group of landless peasants.

The Transjordanian frontier can also be conceptualised as a contact zone between Ottomans and Arabs and between urban and rural cultures. In fact in spite of the long connections between Nablus and al-Salt, Nablus had a profound cultural impact on al-Salt when people from Nablus started to settle there in the last half of the 19th century. Here and in similar cases we may talk about small scale civilizational encounters that changed the socio-economic landscape of Transjordan forever.

The project will investigate the social, economic, and political effects of the immigration of Palestinians and the role of Ottoman reforms in this process. Particular focus will be on the migration of people from Jabal Nablus (merchants, artisans and peasants), and how their presence particularly in al-Salt led to profound changes in social stratification, economic production and land distribution. Elite formation will therefore require particular attention. The research is expected to put into clearer focus the rich history of the expansion of commercial and
agrarian society around the urban centers of al-Salt and ‘Ajloun, and to compare this development with similar processes in the Sudan.

The basic sources for this work include the sijil records of the shari’a courts of Palestine and Transjordan, hand-written daftars archived at the University of Jordan, but now increasingly available in digital-photograph form. Much valuable secondary material exists in the form of Master and Ph.D. theses already done on the sijils and the Ottoman land registers at the University of Jordan. These studies provide important data from al-Salt, Irbid, ‘Ajloun and other administrative centres. The written material will be supplemented by a few interviews. For the Sudan the sources are travel literature, official and private documentation and some interviews.
The discovery of private contracts from the 19th and early 20th centuries has enabled Bjørkelo to study and publish less visible aspects of trade and land tenure in the Nile Valley. Commercial documents – such as contracts, receipts, and letters - belonging to one long-distance trader have provided enough data to reconstruct his operations and career over several decades (work in progress).

Bjørkelo’s research has since moved in two distinct geographical directions, the Indian Ocean and the Levant, but with the same emphasis on the organization and financing of long-distance trade and agricultural systems, land tenure and peasant societies.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

Bjørkelo, Anders. “On the origin and structure of private legal documents in the Sudan and their value as historical sources.” In Understanding and History in Arts and Sciences. Acta Humaniora


I explore the role of missionaries as agents in the broader processes of modernization by studying global “welfare encounters” between Nordic female missionaries and peoples in the Ottoman Empire and later in Palestine and Syria. The aim is to look at the ways in which these encounters transformed the host societies, and to identify which aspects of the missionary discourse on gender and modernity resonates with the local population.
Recent research has led to a range of nuanced perspectives on the nature of Christian missionary activity in the Levant. Despite obvious ethnocentrism and racism, one has also to acknowledge the missionaries’ multiple roles as agents of change and modernization.

While spreading the Christian message was the main objective, welfare and social work soon became accepted missionary activities. In this light, the missionary can be seen as a forerunner of the present-day development/aid worker.

By studying “welfare encounters” between Nordic women missionaries and people in the Ottoman Empire and later in Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, I explore the role of missionaries as agents in the broader processes of modernization. In particular I look at the ways in which these encounters were junctures generating transformations, or global moments, in the host societies as well as which aspects of the missionary discourse on gender resonated with the local population. A related aim is to situate and explore the role of Nordic missionaries within the larger transnational process of mission and social change, with a focus on the special circumstances of the Nordic situation. How can the Nordic material be used to modify theories of colonialism and modernization within a Middle Eastern context?
The sources I use are primarily archival materials from Danish, Swedish and Norwegian female mission organisations such as the KMA (Kvinnelige misjonsarbeidere) and the Swedish Jerusalem Society (Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen). I have found biography to be especially useful as a methodological approach in this endeavour because it has proven to be an...
effective means to unify various sub-histories. I have also found biography to be a useful means of unifying the various disciplines that contribute evidence to this type of historical research, including mission history, colonial history, Middle Eastern history, church history, educational history and medical history. The history of Christian missions relies on all of these fields of study as sources of data and insights.

Mission schools in Greater Syria, including the Danish institution, were the educational base of many of the first generation of women writers and activists in the Ottoman Empire.

Beyond uniting various sub-disciplines, biography is important for yet another reason: it enables us to grasp the complexity of the colonial encounter. Nicholas Thomas has argued that: “Only localized theories and historically specific accounts can provide much insight into the varied articulations of colonizing and counter-colonial representations and practices… colonialism can only be traced through its plural and particularized expressions.”

Through a focus on complex and contradictory individual lives, the biographical method “humanises” history and contributes to our understanding of how individual lives intersect with the historical events around them.

One example is the life history of Johanne Svanenskjold (1879-1965) from Denmark, a missionary and teacher who was to spend 45 years in Lebanon and Syria. Svanenskjold, who started her career as teacher and headmistress at the Friend’s College in Brumana, Lebanon, later initiated and headed an educational project for girls in a rural area north of Damascus.

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1. Nicolas Thomas Colonialism’s culture 1994, p. IX, X.
from 1906 till 1946. Several generations of Muslim women attended the Danish schools, which became part of the Syrian state educational system in 1960. Mission schools in Greater Syria, including the Danish institution, were the educational base of many of the first generation of women writers and activists in the Ottoman Empire. The educative and social rise of women was one of the most contested and long-lasting impacts of Western mission in the Middle East. So far, however, it has been an understudied topic. My research will thus contribute to a new understanding of Protestant influence as a vital part of the history of women, modernity and social change in the Levant.

(above) The well-known artist and author of children's books, Elsa Beskow made the emblem for the Swedish School in Jerusalem. Beskow’s illustration was used in the work for financial support from the Swedish public.

(below) Children at the Swedish School in Jerusalem moving in to the new school building in 1928.

Photos courtesy of Svenska Jerusalemsföreningen (Swedish Jerusalem Society).
Okkenhaug is the editor of Gender, Race and Religion: Nordic Missions, 1860-1940 and she is also co-editor of several books, including: Interpreting Welfare and Relief in the Middle East and Gender, Religion and Change in the Middle East: Two Hundred Years of History.

Selected publications:


Okkenhaug, Inger Marie, ed., Gender, Race and...


**INTERNET RESOURCE:**

On Norwegian missionaries:
http://andre.aksis.uib.no/projects/106
http://bergenmuseum.uib.no/nettutstillinger/mission/index.htm
Politics of Memory and Nostalgia for Things:
Armenian Diasporas in the Middle East

During 20th century Ottoman Empire the status of Armenians shifted between a millet and a refugee or minority citizen. My research is an attempt to look more closely at the arrival of Armenians to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire and how nostalgia for things link diasporas to wider critical events of which Armenians are or were a part.
This study is concerned with migrants and nostalgia. It tells the story of Armenians who live and cross borders in the Middle East and elsewhere.

This is the story about departures, arrivals and emotional attachments. Several accounts are personal, while others include other Armenians. There are also stories shared with other minority and majority communities in the region.

Politics of Memory and Vibrant Trajectories is a work of both anthropology and history which attempts to rake newer approaches to migrants and the politics of memory, nostalgia for things and the connections which they allow people to make. Armenian diasporas in the Middle East are several hundred years old. While attention is frequently on the survivors of the 1915 genocide, older diaspora can be highly significant.

(below) Foodways. Meals are a link with the past, a celebration of roots, and a symbol of continuity. They offer daily confirmation of what migrants carry with them and keep returning to. Perhaps food is that part of an immigrant culture which survives that longest; kept up even when clothing, music and language have been abandoned.

Photos: Nefissa Naguib
(above) Palestinian Woman Embroidering. Once a traditional craft practiced by village women, Palestinian cross-stitch embroidery has become an important symbol of Palestinian resistance. The popularity of embroidery springs from both its beauty and its association with the Palestine of the past. The handicraft symbolizes attachment to land, much of which was lost after the 1948 creation of the state of Israel.

(left) Armenian Family Pictures. “You know photographs are good storytelling,” says Mrs. Victoria Hagopian who is the owner of these photos wrapped in anti-acid paper. Mrs. Hagopian is a retired librarian living in Cairo. Her family were deported and settled in Aleppo. After her parents early death she was sent to school in Cairo.
The study interprets biographies, family mobility and networks as they are evoked in peoples’ recollections and longings for meals, photographs and jewellery making. There is more. Nostalgias are sensitive and double-edged. Accounts of food are memories of hunger, missing pictures in an album are a trail of absences, and making jewellery is an adaptive skill for persecuted people.

This research is structured with the help of ‘the onion method’; every layer needs to be opened in order to grasp what lies beneath. Starting from the larger historical dispersion of Armenians, the study moves to the exodus from Turkey in 1915, mass arrivals of refugees in the Arab provinces of Ottoman Empire and the relief activities. New migrants settled down there, and I attempt to chart their homes and businesses in local neighbourhoods, family networks in distant places and relationships with the older established migrant societies in Arab cities. These local lives and distant networks open up yet another layer that enables us to listen to their stories of migration and attachments. We imagine not only the history of nostalgic things, but also their geography. Moving into the inner layers of ‘the onion’ and the core of the study, persons will tell us their stories of cuisine, photographs and jewellery making.
**Nefissa Naguib, PhD, is Senior Researcher at Unifob Global at the University of Bergen.** She is project manager for Muslim Devotional Practices, financed by the Norwegian Research Council, and NUFU coordinator for the project “Enabling Voices” in collaboration with Birzeit University. Naguib has been a visiting researcher at the American University in Cairo, the University of British Colombia in Vancouver and City University New York. Since her fieldwork during the early 1990s in the Palestinian West Bank and Jaffa in Israel she has done research on the interface between anthropology and history, with a special focus on the politics of memory.

During the 90s and early 2000 she worked and published mainly on social and cultural aspects of water and food, women and war, welfare and relief activities in the Middle East. Her GML input and publications focus on how migrants, especially Jews and Armenians, settled and participated in communities in the Middle East. Regionally, her focus is on the Middle East. Her other field of interest is the Northern Mediterranean. She has published a study on the “The Denomination of Origin” and has been revisiting Braudel's theories on the Mediterranean.

**Selected publications:**


**Film:**
Naguib, Nefissa. “*War, Women, Welfare in Jerusalem*” (co-produced with Inger Marie Okkenhaug), 2009.
Where the intercivilizational encounter between Islam and the West is felt most strongly by Muslim thinkers today is the issue of the role of women in society. By using ijtihad on Islamic texts, several attempts have been made by Muslim scholars to accommodate both “Islamic” and “modern” values into one system. My research examines the recent discourse on this topic among Muslim scholars in Syria.
The premise of my research under the Global Moments collaboration is that the issue of women, and in particular women’s rights in a legal context, is a central one to Islamic discussions throughout the Muslim world.*

It is so because it focuses the confrontation between diverse impulses that dominate the search for a modern Islamic identity in contemporary society. Basically, there are three major impulses that the intellectuals have to try to integrate into such an identity: The first is the “modern” or “western” impulse to change the traditional role of women. It is illustrated in the slogan of “freeing women”, taharrur al-mar’a. This is not necessarily a western idea, as it is internalized by many women as well as by men who resent being seen as agents for foreign values. However, this link to the “foreign” is precisely the main weapon that the opponents of these views can wield against the liberals, by presenting such views as non-authentic.

The second impulse, which is often opposite to the first, is received opinion about gender relations and the “natural” division of labour and the woman’s place in it, sometimes simply labelled “[traditional] culture”. It is not always vocalized,

* This contribution is to be seen in relation to Rania Maktabi’s on legal pluralism. While she looks at the role of family law in its practical application, my research complements hers by looking at the discourse on the topic of the role of women in society among Muslim scholars in Syria.
but is a basic constraint that sets limits on how any idea can be conceived and how far it can realistically go and still have a meaningful impact on society. Obviously, this impulse is also undergoing change, both through material forces (urbanization, new economic gender roles, new family structures from the establishment of nuclear families), and the force of ideology, individually and from generation to generation.

The third, then, is the Islamic literary tradition, which is the focus of this study. This tradition provides arguments in favour of both “liberalization” and “conservatism”, and thus both allows changes to take place in the name of “true Islam, freed from the shackles of backward tradition”, but also resistance to change, to be couched in the same terms, of “defending Islam from the atheist West”. However, any reference to the established literary tradition will also necessarily pose restraints on how far it is possible to argue for either view.

The situation in Syria is also particular, since it is a secular and authoritarian state which has kept a tight lid on any tendency to Islamist activism, especially since the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood there in 1982. This clearly places limits on how far the discussion can go, but also makes it all the more interesting to study how these limits may be tested by Muslim scholars.
The study will therefore of necessity be limited to scholars who in one way or another have “official approval”, but it will be of interest to see if these remain within a framework so narrow that we may talk of an “officially approved Islam” in Syria concerning this very controversial topic.

The method is thus a focus on discourse, by studying various works published by contemporary Syrian Muslim authors, compared to similar works by scholars outside Syria who do not operate under the same political constraints. The main focus will be, beyond the study of the positions themselves, on how the various authors frame their argumentation in relation to Muslim legal tradition. What room is there for *ijtihad* in their arguments, and what exactly do they practice in *ijtihad*? There is a large literature on this very crucial concept in Islamic legal development - and on Islamic reform in general - but it has traditionally been very vague on what the term means in practice, other than “[re-]interpretation” in general.

It is my hope that this study will allow us to develop more accurate methodological tools for defining what a scholar does when he does *ijtihad*, whether he eschews reference to the revealed text altogether in favour of common-sense interpretation, develops tools to extract an “intention” [*maqsad*] from the text that may be in contrast to what the text appears to say, or explicitly discusses and rejects - or reinterprets - majority as well as minority positions in the fourteen centuries.

“However, this link to the “foreign” is precisely the main weapon that the opponents of these views can wield against the liberals, by presenting such views as non-authentic.”
of legal discussion that he may draw from. Such a discussion will have an important impact on how we see the limits and possibilities of internal Islamic reform, legal or social, on the basis concepts such as *ijtihad*. This in turn will improve our ability to bring the third impulse of Islamic discourse on the role of women into line with the first. Seen, then, in conjunction with Maktabi’s related study on how the state deals with multiple religious communities in Syria, it may give us a better understanding of how this region stands in the constellation of inter-civilizational encounters and how social development and power relations affect the discourse of Islam.

Umayyad Mosque, Damascus. “Discussions of change of Islamic thought in Syria centre on the role of women in society. Here women taking a rest in Damascus’s Umayyad mosque”.

Photo: Mira Pavlakovic
In the course of the past ten years, his focus has shifted from Sufism towards Islamic law, where he studies similar approaches, in particular the development of “reform” in the period immediately prior to the European appearance in the Middle East. The approach is still a comparison between the various parts of the Muslim world, and in particular the peripheries of the Muslim world where such calls for *ijtihad*, new interpretations of the law, were stronger and more frequent than in the centre. Thus, this will once again be a case of internationalization in the Islamic world at large.

Vikør has published monographs on all these issues, as well as introductory works to Middle Eastern and Islamic history in Norwegian and English.

Selected publications:


My research under the Global Moments collaboration examines the impact of legal pluralism on the civil rights of women under family law in Syria and Lebanon. I approach the issue of legal pluralism in two ways: first by looking at the implementation of family law texts within the court system as dealt with by lawyers who raise cases in court in Syria and Lebanon; and, second, by examining social initiatives and counter-initiatives regarding changing or maintaining current family law in both of these states.
My research is a contemporary analysis of a widespread phenomenon in the Islamic Levant, namely legal pluralism. My focus is the debate regarding changing or maintaining gendered segments of current family law in Syria and Lebanon.

These states differ from other states in the predominantly Muslim Arab world in that the shari’a – Islamic laws and tenets – do not represent the main corpus of religious laws that exist as legitimate sources for legislation and promulgation of family law. In Syria there are eight different family laws, and in Lebanon there are thirteen such laws that form the structural basis of legal pluralism in the two polities. Plurality in family law results in segmented autonomy in the regulation of the personal affairs of citizens who are thereby seen as members of different religious groups. It has been argued that segmented autonomy in the sphere of family law induces distinct forms of relationships between majority and minority groups in the two multi-religious societies where we find dissimilar forms of political bargaining positions between rulers and ruled. (Maktabi 2007)

My research under the Global Moments collaboration focuses particularly on the impact of legal pluralism on the civil rights of women within family law in each state. Emphasis is put on social initiatives from civil society organizations, as well as from the authorities in the past decade, that aim to change or
maintain existing family laws.

Legal pluralism relates to the Global Moments in the Levant project and to the theme of empire, through an emphasis on the process of modern state-building in the Middle East which evolved following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. The establishment of the territorially-based state system in the Levant – itself an empirical project – is seen as an example of a ‘global moment’ in the region. In particular my research focuses on some of the contemporary outcomes of the state’s partial centralization of judicial authority which began

(left) Lawyer Daad Mousa deals with family law issues.

(right) Dr. Mohammad Habash, religious scholar and members of parliament. Elected in 2003 and re-elected in 2007. Leader of Islamic Studies Center (markaz ad-dirasat al-islamiyya). Habash is considered the most popular representative of moderate political Islam in Syria. He presents comments on the government’s reservations to the CEDAW convention in a study issued by The Islamic Studies Center (2005).

Photo: Bård Halvorsen
with the reformation of the Ottoman legal system in the 19th century and which can still be regarded as a continuing political process. I argue that the centralization and standardization of legislative and judicial power – central elements of state-building – have occurred only partially. While most legal and judicial fields were modernized in ways that incorporated Western legal standards (such as constitutional, commercial and criminal laws), the Ottoman Law of Family Rights of 1917 maintained the authoritative legitimacy of religious jurists and laws by perpetuating the autonomy of religious groups in defining rules of personal status (Sfeir 1998). With the establishment of independent states, family law was codified by a national-territorial legislature, and religious law was included as state law. Religious jurists and groups thereby retained partial autonomy in defining and promulgating family law.

In the contemporary states of the Levant, the state’s family law is therefore not secularized. Furthermore, family law perpetuates the existence of a plurality of legal norms and laws in society and bolsters the phenomenon of ‘legal pluralism’ which denotes the existence of a multiplicity of legal sources that prevail parallel with state laws (Dupret et al. 1999). The existence of a plurality in legal norms and rules has significant consequences for contemporary societies:

First, the plurality of legal sources deprives the state of its
monopolist position as a sovereign producer of authoritative legal rules, a process which is seen as crucial within classical studies of state-building and secularization in liberal democratic societies (Maktabi 2008, Rokkan 1987).

Second, the sphere of family law represents an arena of political mobilization, struggle – at times a battleground - between and among different religiously based and secularly oriented forces as to the definition of rights and duties of citizens in a polity. As such, the debates, social initiatives and political upheavals pertaining to family law in Syria and Lebanon are linked to the democratization process of modern states.

Third, the status and rights of women within family law constitute central points - many observers argue the focal points - of dissent in debates regarding the changing or maintaining of current family laws. Family laws regulate the private affairs of all citizens. However, these laws premise and affect women’s living conditions to a greater extent than men’s. Family laws are gendered in the sense that individuals are accorded different rights and obligations according to their sex, and because some law segments empower males legally and financially more than women in matters of inheritance, custody of children and (in the case of Islam) divorce. Debates on family law reflect therefore the differing positions of actors as regards maintaining or changing structural features of gender-based
roles and rights within society.

I approach the theoretical questions regarding legal pluralism in two ways: First, by looking at the implementation of family law texts within the court system as dealt with by lawyers who raise cases in court in Syria and Lebanon. The particularities of cross-religious marriages and divorces, as well as cases of custody and maintenance are particularly focused upon. Second, social initiatives and counter-initiatives regarding changing or maintaining current family legislation in both states are presented. Such initiatives include calls for abolishing gendered segments of family law, legal proposals for changing family legislation and political measures to remove the reservations set out by the governments regarding the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Cedaw). (Maktabi 2009).

References:


(top) Asma’ Kiftaro (in the middle), leader of muntada al-suriyyat al-islami bidimashq [The Association of Syrian Women in Damascus], with two students.

(left) Leader of the netportal Nisa’ Suriyya, Bassam AlKadi (left) with reporters in front of the banner marking the launching of the national campaign for the abolition of paragraph 548 in the Syrian criminal law which was initiated on October 25, 2005

Photo: Bård Halvorsen
Rania Maktabi is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Østfold University College in Norway. She has been teaching courses in international politics and comparative welfare politics since 2002. Maktabi’s research covers issues of citizenship, state-building and gender in the Middle East.

In her research, Maktabi has been particularly interested in structural features that characterize the formation of the citizenry and non-citizenry in Jordan, Kuwait and Lebanon where non-citizens make up a substantial segment of the population. Two main research questions have been: how do citizenship and immigration laws impinge on the formation of the citizenry, and how do membership policies relate to political participation in divided societies? Her focus has been on the role played by censuses in defining the citizen and non-citizen populations during the state-building process, and on the creation of statelessness as a phenomenon in the three states.

Maktabi was engaged as a project assistant in the Gulf Crisis project in the Department of Political Science (1991-1993). In her cand.polit. thesis *The Gulf Crisis & the Kuwaiti Regime-Legitimacy and Stability in a Rentier State*, she analysed how the Kuwaiti regime was reinstated following the Kuwait war (1990-1991) and how demographic measures were applied in order to redefine the Kuwaiti citizenry. Between 1993 and 1999 she was a researcher and a Ph.D. student at the FAFO Institute for Applied Social Science, where she worked living condition surveys in the Middle East and on a thesis on citizenship and membership in divided societies.

She has contributed to the Global Moments in the Levant research project through her involvement in the study of family law in Syria and Lebanon, where she examines the impact of legal pluralism on the civil rights of women under family law in Syria and Lebanon by applying two approaches. The first approach explores the implementation of family law texts within the court system as dealt with by lawyers who raise cases in court. The second approach examines social initiatives and counter-initiatives regarding changing or maintaining current family legislation in both states.

**Selected publications:**


Modern education was introduced in Lebanon as part of the European Powers’ strategy concerning the religious minorities of the Ottoman Empire. Against this background, present-day Lebanese education policy nurtures awareness of the sectarian Self and Other. I suggest that education plays a key role in keeping the religious communities separate – a paradox in this highly urban society seemingly open to social mobility.
The central concern of the GML programme can be summarised in the twin notions of “contact zones” and “global moments”.

One such moment, which has had enormous consequences for the later historical development of the Middle East in general and the Levant in particular, is the growing interference of the European Powers from the 17th century onwards in the internal affairs of the Ottoman Empire. This interference was among the causes that eventually led to the collapse of the Empire and the rise of the contemporary Arab nation-states. In tandem with economic, political and military strategies, the European Powers (especially the UK, France, and Russia) resorted to “human relations” as a means to gain a foothold in the heart of the Ottoman Empire through their contacts with the Christian minorities in the region.

By claiming the right to legislate on all matters related to the personal status of these communities and by supporting their cultural, especially educational, activities through the Churches, the European Powers achieved two goals: (1) they effectively undermined the internal sovereignty of the Ottoman State since the Christian Ottoman subjects were practically granted immunity from Ottoman legislation; and (2) they turned the Ottoman Christians into a population which, while subject to various discriminatory practices, was nevertheless culturally powerful. One might contend that by the end of World War I, the Ottoman Christians were in possession of a considerable cultural capital thanks to their European schooling. As the Levant and Iraq came under full European control after 1920, this cultural power was easily translated into political capital; this
My contribution to the GML programme is a study of the complex relationship between education and sectarianism in Lebanon. Various theories have been put forward to explain the persistent reproduction of sectarianism in Lebanese society - from political feudalism to socio-economic inequalities to regional conflicts. Meanwhile, little attention has been paid to education. Viewed universally as a positive resource, education is not easily associated with sectarianism. I do not wish to claim that such an association obtains as a matter of course, in Lebanon or anywhere else. What I do suggest is that the history of modern education in Lebanon and the way education is devised and carried out today nurture the awareness of the sectarian Self and Other; they thereby contribute to keeping the religious communities separate in spite of the development of a highly urban and in many ways, plural, society. The paradoxical coexistence of pluralism and communal insularity is ensured by various legal and political mechanisms; but it is also ensured by the Lebanese educational system.

“Sectarianism” or “confessionalism” characterizes societies in which rights and responsibilities are granted individual citizens insofar as they belong to one of the officially acknowledged confessions or religious communities, of which Lebanon has seventeen (three Muslim and 14 Christian). The relationship between citizen and State is mediated through the communities
which practically stand for the whole of Lebanese civil society. Membership in a religious community is, in other words, the sine qua non requirement for the exercise of Lebanese citizenship. The practice of defining the personal status law as part of religious legislation, and of placing it under the authority of the religious authorities rather than the State, is common throughout the Middle East. But whereas in most Arab societies Islam is clearly the dominant religion and the religious authorities and the

**Education in Lebanon is largely entrusted to the private sector.** Private schools are the norm, public schools are for those who have no other alternatives; they are fewer, more poorly equipped, and are staffed by less competent teachers than private schools.

State share the same faith, in Lebanon, Islam and Christianity live side by side and no single religious community can claim to be in an absolute majority. The State has no choice but to be religiously neutral, and show the same respect to all the “Churches”.

While the personal status law deals, strictly speaking, only with questions of family, marriage, divorce, inheritance education is, implicitly if not explicitly, another of its central concerns. Besides, the communities’ right to have their own educational establishments is explicitly acknowledged in the Lebanese Constitution. Education in Lebanon is largely entrusted to the private sector. Private schools are the norm, public schools are for those who have no other alternatives; they are fewer, more poorly equipped, and are staffed by less competent teachers than private schools. This is a pattern which dates back to the
late nineteenth and early twentieth century, when European education was introduced to Lebanon by Maronite priests and French/Italian missionaries. Run by devoted priests and nuns, the Catholic schools scored high, and won the admiration of the other communities. They have since then stood as the model for later schools.

From the very start, children of the Muslim upper-class attended the Christian schools and since independence in 1943, the entire Lebanese elite has been educated in Western, mostly Christian, schools. Since the end of the civil war (1975-1990) Christian education has become more accessible to ordinary Muslims as well. It should be pointed out, however, that the influx of Muslim students as a rule occurs only in schools that have been deserted by their Christian students.

This project addresses the following question: given that (1) most Lebanese agree on the scholarly value of Christian education, (2) many sons and daughters of the Muslim middleclass attend Christian schools, and (3) a degree of confessional mixing in classrooms has been taking place for over half a century, why has education not had the effect of integrating the communities? Lebanese education is commonly viewed as among the best in the Middle East, and it is modelled on the Western, especially French, system, drawing heavily on Western norms and values. It is seen in the region as “modern” and “advanced”. Yet the education imparted to Lebanese youths has not succeeded in reducing, let alone defeating, sectarianism. On the contrary, it seems that the benefits of education are defeated by the pervasive sectarian thinking.

This project aims to explore the social and ideological processes which contribute to the reproduction of such a paradoxical trait of Lebanese society.
Anh Nga Longva joined the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen in 1996 and is currently a professor there. Her areas of special interest are international migration, ethnic relations, identity processes, nationalism, and various aspects of the state problématique (e.g. the concept of sovereignty, the relationship between state and civil society, citizenship, multiculturalism). In the 1980s and 1990s her research centered on the Gulf, especially Kuwait and Bahrain. She has recently started a series of projects in Lebanon, a country she knew as a child in the early 1960s and which she rediscovered as a young adult in the late 1970s, during the Civil War.

One of these Lebanon projects, described below, is a part of the Global Moments in the Levant programme. Another, also funded by the Research Council of Norway, is “The State and the challenge of primordial loyalties”. The aim here is to critically assess theories of “weak states, strong societies”, using the empirical case of Lebanon. A third project focuses on the reproduction of sectarian identity among the Maronites of Beirut. The major analytical focus here is the comparative role of the kin group, the Church and the school in a Maronite community of the capital city.

Longva is a member of the Nordic Society of Middle Eastern Studies, the European Association for Middle Eastern Studies, the Middle East Studies Association of North America and the American Anthropological Association. She recently completed an international collaborative project on “The City and the Public Sphere in the Middle East” financed by the Ford Foundation through the Social Science Research Council (New York). She also works closely with colleagues from the Institut français du Proche Orient in Beirut and Chr. Michelsen Institute (CMI) in Bergen. Longva is co-organizer of the workshop “Power and Powerlessness: Religious Minorities in the Middle East” to be held in Bergen in spring 2008. The funding is provided by the University of Bergen and CMI.

Longva’s work on Lebanon has not yet been published, but the following is a list of some of her other publications:

Selected publications:


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From Refugees to Revolutionaries: 
Camp-Based Palestinians in Post-Civil War Lebanon

The more than 300,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the country’s poorest and most disenfranchised community. Traditionally, research on Palestinian refugees has been dominated by a focus on displacement, suffering and loss. In recent years, there has been tendency to focus on the more problematic side of refugee existence, including studies that see refugee camps as breeding grounds for Islamic “extremism”. This project critically re-examines the social, political and religious dimensions of Lebanon’s enduring refugee problem.
From the start, the Palestinian refugee community in Lebanon has been very open to all forms of research. This strategy has paid off in the sense that the refugee issue “will not go away” and is one reason why the refugee issue continues to command international attention.

My project is concerned with the period since the fifteen-year Civil War ended (1990) to the present, and focuses on the contested social, political and religious dimensions of Lebanon’s enduring refugee problem. It involves field-based research in the refugee communities of Lebanon, including interviews with representatives, officials, leaders and spokesmen for Palestinian political parties and factions (of which there are many), meetings with members of the NGO community and conversations with individual refugees. Importantly, this project also seeks to understand the views of the host society, hence it includes meetings and interviews with senior Lebanese politicians, scholars and bureaucrats.

The more than 300,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the country’s poorest and most disenfranchised community. In the country’s twelve refugee camps, poverty is the norm. Of all Arab countries hosting refugees, Lebanon has the highest number of individuals living in abject poverty. Lebanon also has the most politicized refugee community, with armed groups
and factions in frequent conflict. The bloody battle between the Lebanese Army and militants in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp in 2007, is an example of this volatile mixture. The battles not only highlighted years of systematic neglect from Lebanese authorities but also internationalized the refugee issue and placed the “refugee problem” on the global political agenda.

Civil War (1975-90) devastation still visible in the Shatila refugee camp, Beirut, the site of the Sabra and Shatila massacres in 1982.

Photo: Are Knudsen
The Palestinian refugees are subject to stringent policy measures designed to limit their social and political freedom and curtail their employment opportunities. In the post-civil war period (1990-present), the refugees’ situation has progressively worsened due to new laws and administrative decrees aimed at reducing their civil liberties and preventing them from permanent settlement in Lebanon. The question of naturalising refugees is (besides disarming them) one of the most contentious political issue in Lebanon today.

Despite enduring 60 years in exile, most refugees insist on their “right of return” to Palestine (Ar. haq al-‘awda, “right of return”) which has made it possible to maintain a distinct Palestinian identity. This, together with residence in refugee camps, has also prevented refugees from being assimilated into host populations (Bowker 2003). This has made camp-based refugees one of the most important sources of Palestinian nationalism. At the same time, political developments such as the Oslo Accords (1993) weakened the refugees’ rights and they have largely also been marginalised within the larger discussion of a future “two-state solution”.

Traditionally research on Palestinian refugees has been dominated by a focus on displacement, suffering and loss. Studies using oral history have been an important part of this research (Sayigh 1994). Much of the research on refugees is eclectic and dominated by studies that measure poverty and document its impact, but often leave difficult political
issues causing poverty either unexamined or understudied. In recent years, there has been a tendency to focus on the more problematic sides of refugee existence, including studies that see refugee camps as breeding grounds for Islamic “extremism” (Rougier 2007). Refugee poverty (“deprivation”), in this perspective, is seen as the driving force behind the shift towards militant Islamism. While such trends cannot and should not be ignored, these studies tend to leave the question of local support to such groups unanswered (Knudsen 2007). They also tend to neglect the vast number of refugees who, against heavy odds, struggle to make ends meet in squalid camps resembling urban slums.

In September 2007, in an effort to examine the wider implications of the “refugee problem” in the Levant, CMI in collaboration with Muwatin organised a workshop entitled From Exodus to Exile: Palestinian Lives in the Levant, which attracted 20 researchers specialising in Palestinian refugees. An edited book from the workshop is currently under review for publication. In 2008, it will be 60 years since the refugees’ fateful exodus from Palestine (Ar. al-Nakba, “disaster”) and the birth of the refugee problem. This makes 2008 a Global Moment in the lives of Palestinian refugees and a painful reminder of the international community’s neglect of the refugee problem.
References:


Poster showing the late President Yassir Arafat (1929-2004), chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and leader of Fatah, the PLO’s largest faction.

Photo: Are Knudsen
Knudsen's research has been funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad) and the Research Council of Norway. He is the author of articles, book chapters and reports on Palestinian refugees and the Palestinian Hamas and is a frequent contributor to news media on refugee affairs. His PhD-dissertation *Violence and Belonging: Land, Love and Lethal Conflict in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan* is published by NIAS Press (2009).

Based on CMI’s long-term co-operation with the Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy (Muwatin), Knudsen began in 2003 to study Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and political Islam in Palestine. At present, Knudsen is involved in several studies of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, including the lack of civic rights, the role of Hizbollah (Party of God) as a steward of Palestinian affairs and a study of the political implications of the battle in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp (2007) that left more than 500 soldiers and militants dead. Funded by Global Moments in the Levant, Knudsen together with Palestinian collaborators has produced a documentary film on the impact of the Nahr el-Bared crisis on the 30,000 refugees displaced during the conflict.
**SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:**


**FILM:**
The war in 1948 was a global moment that engendered new political and social structures in the Southern Levant. This research documents two of these, namely how the services of the UNRWA gendered the Palestinian refugee population, and how UNRWA and institutional Islam responded to the religious needs expressed by Palestinian refugees in provisional, tented camps in the aftermath of the Palestine war in 1948.
After the war of 1948 Israel took control of most of the territory of the former Mandate of Palestine, an area much larger than the area stipulated for the Jewish state in the UN Partition Plan of 1947.

Some 750,000 Palestinians fled their homes these months, many ending up becoming dependant on international emergency relief in makeshift refugee camps in Gaza, West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria. The war in 1948 radically transformed the region. According to Rogan and Schlaim, this event was by far the most important, as it profoundly marked Arab politics; “the Arab-Israeli wars, the Cold War in the Middle East, the rise of Palestinian armed struggle and the politics of peace making in all of their complexity are a direct consequence of the Palestine war”.¹

The establishment and grounding in the region of UNRWA was intended as a means to ultimately eliminate the refugee problem, but instead the agency became institutionalized as a

permanent fixture in their host countries. Today, more than 4.4 million Palestinian refugees are registered with the agency, and about one third of these live in the fifty-nine recognised camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. UNRWA is a unique UN structure, and a UN elephant. Due to its extensive education, health, social services and relief programmes it has become one of the largest service providers in the region.

The war of 1948 was clearly a global moment in the Middle East. Refugee camps were set up, but over the years the map of the refugee camps changed. New camps were set up, some were closed down, and others grew into permanent camps.

The war of 1948 was clearly a global moment in the Middle East. Refugee camps were set up, but over the years the map of the refugee camps changed. New camps were set up, some were closed down, and others grew into permanent camps. As a part of various camp- and shelter projects, refugees were transferred from camps to suburbs, and from old camps to new camps, both voluntarily and by force. By way of archival studies and interviews, my Ph.D. dissertation investigates how and why this happened. The role of UNRWA, the host countries, and the Palestinian refugees in these processes will be analysed, and the politics of relief and humanitarianism, together with local, regional, and international politics, are highly relevant to this analysis.

My input in the Global Moments in the Levant research forms part in the research themes “Relief and Welfare” and “Migration,
Diaspora and Refugees”. On the one hand, in an article entitled “Gendering Refugees: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Politics of Relief” (in Naguib and Okkenhaug, eds. 2007) and in a paper with a similar title at the international workshop Welfare, Gender and Practice in the Middle East: 1800 - 2000. 200 years of Entrepreneurship (Paris 2005) I discuss how UNRWA’s refugee relief, its services and policies of education, health, relief and welfare may have gendered the refugee population. I also look at how this, in turn, is linked to complex notions of development, modernisation, and humanitarianism in a highly political fashion.

On the other hand, in my paper “‘Better the body starves than the soul:’ The Supreme Muslim Council, UNRWA, and refugee relief in the West Bank” presented at the international workshop From Exodus to Exile: Palestinian Lives in the Levant, Chr. Michelsen Institute and Muwatin, Bergen 7-9 September 2007, I examine the re-establishment of religious life after the shock of exile in 1948. The paper is based on Arabic sources from the

A UNRWA rations store-house in Jerusalem. Until 1982 registered refugees were entitled to basic rations, and rations has often been understood as a political right of the refugees. Today only 5.8 percent of the refugees, the special hardship cases, are entitled to rations.

Photo: Kjersti G. Berg
archive in Abu Dis, and presents new empirical documentation of UNRWA’s involvement in the religious sphere. The paper presents religious concerns as expressed in West Bank camps, and how institutional Islam and UNRWA replied to these requests. The responses to the humanitarian and religious needs of the Palestinian refugees are analyzed in a broader context, including how the specific ideological aspects of refugee relief illuminate understandings of the politics of aid.

(left) A woman in front of her shelter in Baqa’a camp in Jordan. Many of the shelters were built in the 1950s to replace temporary tents after the catastrophe of 1948. Other camps, like Baqa’a, were built in 1968 as a result of the Arab-Israeli war in 1967. This woman is one of the special hardship cases, who have no male head of family aged between 18 and 60 years within the same household, and she may therefore apply for shelter rehabilitation.

(right) Her new shelter is almost ready. In 2002 the special hardship families constituted 5.8 percent of the registered refugee population who are unable to meet basic needs for food, shelter and other essentials. Almost 47 percent of these are female headed households. Women at the lowest income levels bear a heavy burden in the camps.

Photos: Kjersti G. Berg

2. The Islamic Research and Heritage Revival Institution in Abu Dis/dawla
Kjersti Gravelseter Berg is a PhD candidate and research fellow in the Department of Archaeology, History, Cultural Studies and Religion, University of Bergen. Her PhD project is funded by the Research Council of Norway (FRIMUF 2004-present).

Berg’s main research interests include Palestinian refugees, humanitarian aid, civil society and charities. She is currently writing a dissertation on the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). The tentative title of her dissertation is *The Landscape of Refugee Camps: United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Sheltering of Palestine Refugees 1949–2007*. Through archival studies, field visits to UNRWA projects, and interviews with refugees, agency personnel and others, her project investigates UNRWA’s camp-and-shelter policies and practices.

Berg is affiliated with the following three research projects: *Global Moments in the Levant*, (University of Bergen), *The Missing Peace: Conflict Resolution and Peace-building in the Middle East* (Peace Research Institute, Oslo, PRIO 2004-2007) and the *Lower Jordan River Basin Studies Programme* (Birzeit University and University of Bergen, 2002-2006)

Since 2004, Berg has been a member of the Board of the Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies, and since 2003 she has been a member of the editorial board of *Babylon*, the Norwegian journal of Middle East and North Africa studies.

**Selected publications:**


Palestinian society is in a situation of economic crisis. Men have lost their jobs due to the second Intifadah and many women are now their families’ only breadwinners. Despite this, men are still seen as the families’ main providers and these working women are viewed as “helping their husbands out.” In my research I investigate how these gendered power constellations are negotiated in time and space.

When Providers Can’t Provide: Consequences of the Occupation of Palestine for Gender Roles and the Patriarchy
My input to the GML research collaboration is to look at the economic development and management at a micro level.

Previous studies of economic issues in the West Bank have often been at a macro level and have not addressed differences in women’s and men’s standards of living within the household, which I see as important. I am concerned with gender roles and regard them as being in constant alteration. In a global world, such reinventions are continuous processes that create regional and local variations in power constellations and boundaries.

For the West Bank, these concepts and thus people’s realities have been shaped by a long-lasting occupation and periods of severe unrest and economic stagnation.

One of the processes on which I focus is the changes in family patterns and responsibilities that have been a consequence of the decline in patriarchal power structures globally (Therborn 2004). Reduced patriarchal authority increases the ambiguity in the power relations between the sexes (Oppong 2004).

Earlier research has concluded that gendered economic power within the household can be determined and identified by women’s relative income compared to men and the way in which money is managed within the household (Pahl 1989, 1995) as well as by society’s dominant ideology concerning gender relationships (Vogler and Roman 1999). It is assumed
that if women make more money than their partners, they automatically gain influence over economic decisions in the household (Blood and Wolfe 1960, Oppong 1981, Stirrat 1989). Previous quantitative studies have shown that when resources are meagre women are often given responsibility for managing the household’s resources, while larger incomes are more often managed by men (see e.g. Pahl 1995). This distinction has proved to be important when it comes to gender equality and power within a relationship (Pahl 1989, 1995, Ahrne and Roman 1997, Vogler and Roman 1999, Nyman 2002).

(below) A woman has come to help prepare a wedding lunch in a Palestinian village in August 2007. She is preparing the soup that is put on top of the rice and under the meat of the traditional course called mansaf. For the 500 guests 280 kg of meat were prepared in the garage and served outside.

Photo: Janne Bjorheim Bøe
The above-mentioned ideas are empirically investigated in my work, and concepts such as patriarchy and gendered power are thoroughly discussed and will be part of an argument that cultural ideas of gender originate within the context of social as well as economic conditions (Moore 1988). I argue that the patriarchal discourse is also an essential part of the Palestinian women’s discourse and that this discourse is divided into one internal part, which is within the family, and one external, which concerns the Israeli occupation. What is so particular for the West Bank is that these concepts and thus people’s realities have been shaped by a long-lasting occupation and periods of severe unrest and economic stagnation. Among the occupied Palestinians, the women are positioned in a complex system caused by political and economic events. The objective is to bring the lives and histories of Muslim women into closer dialogue with the theoretical implements employed.

As a social anthropologist my main method of research is participant observation and long-term field research. This approach provides the GML with a view of the situation “on the ground” today and links up with the other participants’ ways of looking at the world, be it past or present, as peoples’ stories are extremely important for the project in general. I did field work for my dissertation during the spring semester and summer of 2007. My specific research questions were: What are women’s economic roles when a) men migrate to work, b) men become unemployed, imprisoned or killed, c) women have to work and earn their own money. Several questions also follow: What are the economic roles within Palestinian families? How have these roles changed in the course of the past decades? What are the local ideals on economic responsibilities, tasks and gender roles? Are there conflicts between their wishes/ideals and realities?
Janne Bjorheim Bøe is a Social Anthropology PhD student at the University of Bergen. Her first fieldwork in the Palestinian areas was for her master’s degree (hovedfag) in 1998. During that project she spent most of her time in a village near Ramallah – a village that she continues to study. The long-lasting contacts and friendships she made there have influenced her later research interests. For her master’s thesis Bøe focused mainly on the socioeconomic changes affecting farmer families in the West Bank that occurred due to the first intifada and the Israeli occupation. Her thesis has been published in the Lower Jordan Basin Programme Publications at Birzeit University and is entitled Farming will always Remain the Best Job. It was the First Love.

Bøe subsequently became involved in the debate over the use of the veil/hijab by Muslims in Europe and in 2004 she carried out new field studies on that topic financed by Nasjonalt program for utvikling, forskning og utdanning, (National Programme for Development, Research and Education, NUFU) project Basic History – Palestine. This resulted in several presentations and lectures and the article Hijab- mellom religion og politikk (Hijab – Between Religion and Politics) in Nytt Norsk Tidsskrift in 2005. Her main arguments were that there are several different ways of being a Muslim, that the stereotypes which the European media were presenting were too simple and that the meaning of the veil has changed during the past decades.

In the following years Bøe was involved in research on Norwegian household economy at the University of Bergen. This research was funded by Barne- og familiedepartementet (Norwegian Ministry of Children and Family Affairs). In 2006 she was also part of a research project at the Stein Rokkan Centre for Social Studies, and was Head of Office at the University’s Centre for Women’s and Gender Research. In her PhD study, Bøe focuses on Palestinian household economy in times of crisis. She looks at the specific roles played by women and men in the economic management of their households and extended families. Bøe is also a member of the editorial board for Babylon, the only Norwegian journal on the Middle East.

Selected publications:

Bøe, Janne Bjorheim Farming will Always Remain the Best Job. It was the First Love. Bergen: BRIC, 2004.

Bøe, Janne Bjorheim, and Benedicte Solheim. ”Er religiøs kunnskap en trussel mot det tradisjonelle patriarkatet?” (Is religious knowledge a threat to the traditional patriarchy?). In Babylon. Tidsskrift for Midtøsten og Nordafrika, 1 (2004): 74-85.


SUMMARY

The third pillar of Islam, zakat, (alms) constitutes a vital religious and socio-political ideal for many believers. My research is an attempt to understand how the Palestinian zakat committees operate on the local level and why they prefer to remain autonomous rather than join a national union. So far, my study of how the principle of zakat is materialized and institutionalized has taken me to the Palestinian territories, Syria, Jordan and Israel.
Because of their high professional standards and the central role they play in meeting people’s social need, zakat committees operating in Palestine and Israel appear to enjoy a high degree of legitimacy and local support. Significantly, however, they tend to operate in isolation rather than joining a national welfare union.

By means of interviews, conversations, observations, applications schemes, reports, pamphlets and similar publications (Lundblad, forthcoming 2008), my research within the Global Moments collaboration seeks answers to a range of empirical questions, including the following: What kind of services do the zakat committees on the West bank offer? Does the prioritizing of targeted needs and services have any link to Islamic tradition and the zakat discourse, or is it merely a response to the social conditions that have arisen under occupation? How do the committees organize, and how do they recruit people to lead them? How do they relate to national and international NGOs? Why do they cooperate so modestly with other charitable NGOs?

Trying to broaden the perspective on Palestinian Islamic welfare institutions, I am also seeking to incorporate data on the welfare work that has been and continuous to be developed
November 2006 I visited the zakat committee in Hebron. The visit and the interview could not be carried out as scheduled. Early in the morning I was told by my friend and door opener in Hebron, Abdelhalim (far left), that the committee had decided to postpone and reduce the visit in scale. The reason was that the Israeli army had killed 19 civilians in Beit Hanoun, Gaza, some of them as they were sleeping in their beds. This tragedy affected the contact with foreigners. However, after the interview the atmosphere was more relaxed and we could perform a small photo session outside the mosque.
Eid Al-Adha (Festival of Sacrifice) starts after the Hajj, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, with the ritual slaughtering of sheep, goats and cattle. The slaughtering commemorates Abraham’s willingness to obey God by sacrificing his son. In Jenin, the zakat committee organizes a large ritual in which volunteers take care of the slaughtering. Most of the animals are donated, but the zakat committee also buys cattle to increase the amount of meat which is given to poor families. This was an occasion where I could watch the halal way of slaughtering.

Photos: Lars Gunnar Lundblad
by the Islamic Movement in Israel. While the contextual background is very different; especially as Arab Israeli citizens are eligible to receive a number of universal social benefits from the state of Israel, discrimination appears nevertheless to be built into the rules (Natan 2006, Equality Monitor 2004).

Al Razi hospital in Jenin on the Northern West Bank. Established by the zakat committee in 1990. Eight departments with a total of 135 beds and out patient clinics. The minaret symbolizes the hospital’s religious anchorage.

Photo: Lars Gunnar Lundblad
LARS GUNNAR LUNDBLAD is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology, University of Bergen.

The working title of his project is The Islamic principle of Zakat, almsgiving - processes of institutionalization and politicization in Palestinian society. Before starting sociological research, Lundblad had a career in social work and teaching. He was licensed as a social worker in 1972 at Oslo University College and worked for 10 years in various branches of social assistance and administration. After completing a Bachelor of Science in Religion and Sociology in 1982 at the University of Bergen, he taught high school until 2005. In 2001, Lundblad earned his Master’s degree in Sociology at the University of Bergen on Islamic welfare in Palestine.

Lundblad’s background in teaching religion and social science combined with his professional background as social worker was a mediating path into the study of Islamic welfare structures in Palestine. From the empirical reality he met as master’s student in his first visit to Palestine in 1999, he turned to the philosophy of science, to form an epistemological foundation for his further work. Later, finding his empirical terrain so crammed with the social costs of the Palestinian disaster and the Islamic institutional answers to this, as well as Islamic welfare which in general is so thoroughly politicized, he felt his efforts to carry out decent social science research very challenged. However, with invaluable support from scholars at Birzeit University, he was able build up a small network that facilitated access to institutions and informants and contributed to his credibility as sociologist with serious interests in the interface between religion and welfare in the Palestinian context. With his background as social worker and administrator in the Norwegian welfare state context with its bureaucratized universal welfare system, the encounter with the corresponding fragmented picture in the West Bank required a reconsideration of concepts. While in the western welfare discourse, expansion of privately run welfare institutions is often an indication of the prevailing liberal ideology, in the Palestinian context, voluntary services in general seem to be the most sustainable and accountable ones. The notions of hybridizing processes and resistance seem in some ways better able to cover this area than typologies linked to the western welfare-state discourse.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:

Lundblad, Lars G., ”Hamas’ sosiale side” (Hamas’ social aspect), Bergens Tidende, July, 24, 2006, Arts section.

Christian Palestinians on the West Bank

Identity, Migration and Transnational Networks

Through 150 years of emigration, the Christian presence in Palestine has become dramatically diminished. Caught between different power constellations and faced with warfare, suppression and economic crisis, many Christian Palestinians turn to further emigration and the mobilization of diaspora family networks throughout Europe and the Americas. At the same time, they retain a resourceful presence within Palestinian society. My project focuses on emigration, homeland-diaspora-relations, adaptation to shifting political realities and issues of identity and belonging among Christian Palestinians on the West Bank.
Exploring the history and the contemporary situation among Christian Palestinians, my research examines the interplay between religious and national identity, and on how the position of local Christians within a Palestinian national community has been affected by their own history of large-scale emigration, as well as by international and internal political developments.

As part of the Global Moments collaboration, my project explores the connections between social processes and transformations in a local context, and political and economic processes at national and international levels. I also address questions of identity and of belonging in relation to emigration and ongoing interaction between home communities and migrant communities in the diaspora. The project has three main foci:

First; past and current dynamics of emigration among Christian Palestinians. This includes among other things, the change in patterns of emigration in response to shifting realities in Palestine, the social characteristics of those who leave, emigration routes and destinations, strategies employed to establish new bases in their host countries and the role of migrant family networks abroad.
Second; the role of emigration within local discourses on identity and belonging. How is Christian emigration seen within the framework of a Palestinian nationalist discourse, with reference to Christian–Muslim relations, and with reference to the future existence of a Christian community within the region?

Third; the impact of local, regional, and international institutions and structures of power on shaping the social and economic conditions under which West Bank Christians live. On local and regional levels, this includes the Israeli occupation and its effect on economic activity and mobility in the West Bank, the shortcomings of the Palestinian Authority in

My study is based on long-term fieldwork in the Bethlehem area, and the gathering of family histories and life stories through open-ended interviews, interviews with Church leaders, local political leaders and activists within Palestinian civil society.
providing public services and a rule of law, and the role of local churches as providers of social, health and educational services in the region. Internationally, this involves the role of Western governments and international institutions in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as well as the policies of Western immigration authorities in relation to Palestinian migrants.

My study is based on long-term fieldwork in the Bethlehem area, and the gathering of family histories and life stories through open-ended interviews, interviews with Church leaders, local political leaders and activists within Palestinian civil society. Personal interviews are complemented by secondary material based on previous studies from the area, local statistics on socio-economic condition in the region, media reports, pamphlets and journals from local and international sources.

(far left) Traditional wedding celebration in Beit Sahour. Bride wearing traditional Bethlehem costume at henna party prior to her wedding.

(centre) Traditional wedding celebration in Beit Sahour. Wedding celebrations among Christian Palestinians last for at least three days, culminating with a wedding party which may include 600 – 700 guests. A costly affair for the families involved.

(left) The bridegroom dancing at his wedding-party.

Photos: Bård Kartveit
Bård Kårtveit is a Ph.D Candidate in Social Anthropology at the University of Bergen, Norway. In 2000, Kårtveit performed his first long-term field studies in the occupied Palestinian territories. During the same period, he completed his master’s study on a particular phenomenon of migration which is described below.

In the late 1990s thousands of Palestinians living in the US moved back to settle in the West Bank. Most of these “returnees” were Muslim Palestinians who tried to resettle in their villages of origin on the Central West Bank, often bringing along children who had been born and raised in the USA. In this study Kårtveit focused on a few village communities near Ramallah, tracing the migration history of different families and its impact on their home communities, socially and economically. A key focus of this study was the efforts of migrants, as families and as individuals, to reconcile different identities, loyalties and cultural norms as migrants stretched between widely different societies. His master’s thesis, *In the US I’m an Arab Terrorist, Here I’m an American Punk!* was published as part of a publications series through the Lower Jordan River Basin Programme, in cooperation with the University of Bergen and Birzeit University.

While working on his master’s degree, Kårtveit developed an interest in another migration phenomenon; that of the Christian Palestinians of the West Bank. Since May 2006, he has been working on a PhD study focusing on this issue. Since the summer of 2006, he has done eight months of fieldwork in the Bethlehem region of the West Bank as part of his research on emigration, homeland-diaspora connections and identity management among Christian Palestinians of the West Bank. This PhD project is fully financed by the Research Council of Norway, as a part of Global Moments. Kårtveit is partly based at the Chr. Michelsen Institute, where he is involved with Politics of Faith, a research project that focuses on connections between religious and political authority, and the position of religious minorities in the Middle East. While working in the West Bank, Kårtveit has enjoyed valuable help and assistance from local researchers through the Lower Jordan River Basin Program at Birzeit University, and from researchers at Bethlehem University.

**Selected publications:**


The increasing importance of the Internet as an arena for publication has opened up a variety of ways of adding visual and audio presentations to written publications. My involvement with the Global Moments collaboration deals with encouraging and helping team members to obtain suitable visual and audio material for their presentations. To this end I contribute my own experience in ethnographic film making as an example.
Multimodal texts that combine written material with photos, sound and video are now common on the websites of newspapers and TV channels.

The Internet and TV will eventually meld and the web will gradually undermine the position of standard broadcast TV channels. This will open up a space for websites, such the one hosted by our Global Moments collaboration, to become arenas of information not only for their contributors, but also for the wider public.

Film as medium can be very powerful and emotional, and what is presented on the screen can move an audience. As ethnographic and anthropological films may reach a wider public than students of anthropology, it is crucial that they be designed not to shock, but to bridge cultural differences. An important consideration, therefore, is how audiences might interact with the films that we make; how they produce meanings and understanding in viewers. This is especially important in dealing with sensitive topics such as the everyday life of Palestinians under the occupation.

Gadamer (1975) talks about “fusion of horizons” and how knowledge is created through negotiations between the “horizons” of all the actors involved and that interpretation can only be understood in the context of cultural and historical mediation. The triangle of the main actors or the “sender”; the subject under study, the “translator”; the anthropologist/film-maker, and “the receiver”; the audience, all bring their pre-knowledge, their horizons, into a project. As MacDougall phrases it: “The underlying insight of the film-as-text is that the
film is a conceptual space within a triangle formed by the (film) subject, the film-maker, and the audience and represents an encounter of all three” (MacDougall 1978:422).

How we as film-makers imagine audiences, therefore, and how we, through visual representations, put people on display, implies great ethical challenges. This point is well illustrated by the following experience I had a few years back when I made a film on the Palestinians living in Israel. The project was based on the work of Moslih Kanaaneh who was then a PhD candidate in the department of Social Anthropology of the University of Bergen. I worked closely with Moslih on all stages of the film project. Palestinians were then as now well known from TV even though most of the reports are on the Palestinians of Gaza and the West Bank.

From Honolulu
Samiye listens to ‘takes’ shot earlier in the day of a heated debate with her brothers. “Would you marry a girl who had been with a man?” she had challenged her brothers. “If she was from Honolulu, yes. But not if she was from here. Never!” one of her brothers replied. A claim put forward in the film Al Karamah - Human Dignity is that sexual harassment is used as a political weapon against the Palestinian population in Israel. Political and cultural issues play significant roles in the everyday life of young Palestinians. The political awareness is very strong, the reflections and the discussions can be heated.

Photo: Frode Storaas
My idea was to make a film that looked behind the political slogans already well known from TV. I wanted the audience to meet a few Palestinian people, follow them in their daily activities as persons that the audience could recognize and respect. I imagined that in many Western minds, the Palestinians had the position of being the bad guys, so I wanted my audience to meet nice people. If the political statements were too much up front in the film, I was afraid that would just make the audience perceive the film as TVnews and not be open for the human side I wanted to show. I did not intend to hide the political situation the Palestinians in Israel are facing, but I thought I could put their political concerns and activities in the perspective of their daily life. This way I hoped their situation as a whole would be understood in a broader and human context. From the very beginning of the project I was influenced by my general ideas of the pre-knowledge, the horizons, of my putative audience.

The Palestinians who agreed to take part in the film, however, saw the camera as an opportunity to tell the world about the situation of the “left behind” Palestinians, those who did not flee when the state of Israel was established, a forgotten group of people as they see it. They wanted the political statements to be placed “up front”. We agreed that the people whom the film represented should have the last word on the final cut, and “Al Karamah – Human Dignity” ended, in a way, as a compromise.

“How we as film-makers imagine audiences, therefore, and how we, through visual representations, put people on display implies great ethical challenges.”
Cactus
The cactus has always been a symbol of resistance. It is a plant that survives hardship and maintains its weapons, the quills, always ready.
Frode Storaas is Associate Professor of Anthropology at Bergen University Museum. His research has focused on pastoralism and agro-pastoralism in Sudan, Kenya and Uganda and recently, in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. General anthropology, i.e. adaptation, economy, ethnicity and local politics, has been his main area of interest, along with development issues and politics. During his periods in Africa he has worked for organizations such as the Norwegian Agency for Development Coordination, Norwegian Church Aid and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Storaas has also been interested in topics related to Norway, especially the impact of a global economy on small local industrial communities. The book Ferrofolket ved fjorden – globale tema i lokal soge (The Ferro-people by the fiord – global themes in local saga) from 1999 (edited together with Erik Fossåskaret) and the film Frå solsida til skuggeland? Industristaden Ålvik i Hardanger (From the sunny side to the land of shadow? The industrial town of Aalvik in Hardanger) from 2006 (made together with Knut Terum) show how a once thriving community is dying as the hydropower generated and used in the town is now sold on the open market at a price that local industry will not pay.

Storaas spent a year as a visiting scholar at the Program for Visual Anthropology at the University of Southern California in Los Angeles and as an ethnographic filmmaker he has been involved in projects in Eastern and Southern Africa, the Middle East, Mexico, the USA, China and Norway. A common topic in a number of these projects has been magic: how cultural traditions and ideas, which in some contexts can be looked upon as magical beliefs, influence one’s everyday life. But most of all, Storaas’s aim as a filmmaker is to create “virtual meetings” between an audience and the people presented on the screen. He wants these meetings not only to communicate information, but also to move spectators emotionally, and communicate experiences that make a difference.

For some years now Storaas has been the general secretary of the Nordic Anthropological Film Association. On this website, several films from the Middle East as well as the rest of the world are presented. Storaas’ first major film project was among Palestinians in Israel. The film is called Al Karamah - Human Dignity, 42 min. and was made together with Moslih Kananneh.

Another major project related to the region with which Storaas has been involved is the permanent exhibit on Ancient Egypt called Eternal Life (opened 2001), which he curated at Bergen Museum.
SELECTED PUBLICATIONS:


INTERNET RESOURCE:

Nordic Anthropological Film Association: www.nafa.uib.no

FILMS:

Relief and Welfare

The collaboration focuses on welfare and relief activities in the Middle East during the last two centuries. Global Moment members, invited scholars and doctoral students explore both men’s and women’s welfare and relief involvements and activities since 1800, their daily welfare encounters and individual experiences and the results of these encounters.
Interpreting Relief and Welfare in the Middle East

Interpreting Relief and Welfare in the Middle East

The emerging theme “Interpreting relief and welfare activities in the Middle East” is the fruit of a November 2005 workshop organized by Inger Marie Okkenhaug and Nefissa Naguib in Paris, entitled “Welfare and practice in the Middle East: 1800 – 2000.” The workshop was organised in collaboration with the Centre de coopération franco-norvégienne en sciences sociales et humaines and Institut d’études de l’Islam et des Sociétés du Monde Musulman.

The interdisciplinary workshop focused on welfare and relief activities in the Middle East during the past two centuries. Global Moment members, invited scholars and doctoral students explored both men’s and women’s welfare and relief involvements and activities since 1800, their daily welfare encounters and individual experiences and the results of these encounters.

Synopsis

Based on various problematic and methodological perspectives and new sources, the contribution made by this book lies in the close study of welfare beyond religious divides, codifications and indoctrinations. The time span; from 1850 to the present day, represents moments of colonisations, occupations, wars and conflicts which resulted in unmet needs and decayed institutions. What are the stories behind health care, schools, orphanages and vocational schools, maternity homes and hostels? The collection of chapters examines different involvements in welfare activities, not only as contextualised in stable communities and nations, but also as they emerge in vulnerable states and disintegrating societies. Furthermore, this volume brings forth the historical and contemporary voices of those who provide relief and the beneficiaries of such efforts. At the core of this book are themes concerned with
Waqf, endowments, is one of the oldest legal traditions in Islam. For every conceivable enterprise of social benefit there is a waqf. Water in the hot dry Middle East is the most precious resource; making it easily available to the community was and still is one of the most charitable of acts. Aqueducts, cisterns and water fountains were built and endowed by Muslim families. Every village and city quarter has one, some large or small. Fountains, like this one photographed in Istanbul, illustrate the Islamic tradition of integrating and combining aesthetic beauty with practical usage.

Photo: Nefissa Naguib
As such, the presentations capture the social politics, ranging from politics dynamics and structures, to motivation and practice.

In the first chapter Beth Baron looks at the history of welfare and abandoned children and orphans in modern Egypt. Baron draws our attention to the children who have been on the margins of not only family and society, but also Middle Eastern history.

“This transnational activity created what has been termed one of the first international aid-operations in modern history.”

Scrutinising written sources and photographs Baron draws our attention to government policies, social activism and providers of welfare. Sponsors of orphanages included French Catholic nuns, Ottoman-Egyptian and British colonial officials and their wives, women missionaries; and Egyptian social reformers and later the Ministries of Religious Endowments and Social Affairs. Social welfare was not only an act of ‘saving’ children; it also involved the enhancement of sponsor’s legitimacy as guardians of the poor. Institutions, officials and individuals involved in these projects saw orphans as a blank slate, open to their proselytizing, modernizing, and nationalizing agendas.

While Baron’s main concern is with the sponsors of orphanages, Nefissa Naguib’s position is from the orphan’s emotive experiences and memories of enduring loss. Chapter Two associates itself with the post World War 1 exodus of Armenian refugees and their arrival to the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The essay traces relationships between relief efforts and memory. Naguib captures not only orphan survivors’ sites of memory and attachments but she also argues against the
general idea of Armenians as being simply a nation of victims. Although accounts from Jerusalem are about massacres, deportation and relief that at some level connect Armenians, nonetheless drawing on grounded ethnography Nefissa Naguib conveys how individual accounts show that recollections of relief are embedded in controversy and variations. She provides a close study of individual experiences which tell us more about impacts of relief on people’s lives and contribute to our understanding of people’s perceptions and memories of such efforts.

Relief work in Armenian history is also the theme in Chapter Three. Inger Marie Okkenhaug shows how Scandinavian female missionaries, together with secular organisations like the Red Cross and the Near East Relief, were crucial welfare agents in rebuilding and preserving what was left of Armenian society from the massacres in the 1890s until the interwar period. This transnational activity created what has been termed one of the first international aid-operation in modern history. Thus the missionary can be seen as a forerunner for the present-day development/aid worker. The central issue for those parts of Armenian society that had been affected by the massacres was the large number of orphans, and the large number of single women that had to support their families. These challenges had a decisive effect on the missions’ relief activities and aid-projects. Female missionaries would specialize in mother and child-related welfare and help- to self-help programs were created to give Armenian women a chance to self-support.

In Protestant mission ideology and rhetoric in general women were seen as the key to religious change and social improvement - two interlinked factors in the missionary project. This link between women, modernity and religious reformation is also a theme in Chapter Four, where Renate Lunde looks at Anglican mission’s maternity and infant welfare
work in Cairo from 1920-1950. Her empirical foundation is based upon sources of the daily encounters between female British missionaries/nurses and Egyptian mothers in infant welfare centres in the slum quarters of Cairo. These projects were influenced by contemporary international discourses on philanthropy, and are another example of mission being part of the transnational movement of the health, knowledge and modernisation. These Anglican women were not merely doing philanthropy, but aimed at more profound social change. They concentrated on preventive medicine through teaching young mothers childcare techniques and hygiene. Egyptian women also influenced the centres by demanding new services and an income-generating project. This venture still exists for the women in the “Social Centre” as it is called today.

Mission, welfare and gender is also a theme in Michael Marten’s essay on the Scottish mission girls’ school in Jaffa. While originally a Jewish mission institution, the school developed into an educational institution for Arab children in Palestine during the British Mandate period. This is yet another example of western welfare involvement that changed its practice because of local demands. Marten shows how the middle class orientation of the Scottish mission makes it part of larger picture where Western colonization was closely related to middle class aspirations. The female Scottish teachers were part of the dominant European narrative that defined itself in terms of “modernity and bourgeois identity”. Even so, in practice this institution offered local girls and women not only education, but also a practical training that would create female self-reliance. This income-generating project was empowering poorer women in the Jaffa region.

The modernisation-welfare-gender connections figure also prominently in Susanne Dahlgren’s article. In Chapter Six Dahlgren provides insight into contrasting ideas of what is
good for women, presented as welfare projects during a moment in the Aden’s history which includes periods from British colonialism to present-day Yemeni unification and ‘Islamic’ welfare activities. Tracing gender ideologies that have informed such welfare efforts, Dahlgren takes a Gramscian position on civil society and argues that the way the activist woman is articulated in these programmes notifies respective notions of modernity of each period. While the ‘advanced woman’ is presented as the outcome of these projects, by drawing on her material Dahlgren shows that the “advanced ideal woman” is not always the object of welfare but she is also the activist.

Also in chapter seven welfare efforts are explored through a gender perspective. Kjersti Berg discusses concepts, ideas and ideals that inform UNRWA’s gendered refugee projects. Berg explores how concepts like self-help; rehabilitation and self-reliance are at the core of UNRWA’s humanitarianism, development and modernisation project. Serving 4.2 million

“The role that transnational humanitarian networks might play in governing places with a weak or non-existing state is also important for today’s understanding of current global dynamics.”

Palestinian refugees, out of which one third live in sixty-one camps in Gaza, the West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria, UNRWA has had particular concern for the empowerment of women through sustainable educational programmes and vocational training. Berg’s essay is an addition to the ongoing discourse on women’s impoverishment within the context of relief in vulnerable nation states.
In Chapter Eight Ilana Feldman analyses the relations between humanitarism and government with the case of Gaza in the aftermath of the war in 1948 as an example. The role that transnational humanitarian networks might play in governing places with a weak or non-existing state is also important for today’s understanding of current global dynamics. In the case of Gaza, as shown by Feldman, humanitarianism and government were to a large degree mutually dependent. UNRWA has since it was established in 1950, been responsible for aiding displaced Palestinians. What is unique about the Palestinian refugee situation is that it is a seemingly permanent, humanitarian condition, punctuated by moments of crisis. Humanitarism has become the normal order of things. During such a long time span, the humanitarian organisations cannot avoid to take on some of the functions of a state. From 1948 till 1967 Gaza was an area that was “shared” by government (the Egyptian administration until 1967) and humanitarian organizations.

In Chapter Nine, Lars Gunnar Lundblad also addresses humanitarism within weak public structures related to the Palestinian areas, but from another perspective and location. Drawing on his material from the West Bank, Lundblad examines zakat, alms, multifaceted complexities, practices and significance. Taking the politicization of Islamic welfare further Lundblad’s contribution is not only an argument about how voluntary zakat committees unite religion and the people’s world, but it is also an analysis of how Islamic welfare providing a presence of traditions and unity. Strongly represented and locally committed, zakat systems form significant pockets of fundamental relief that assist people in their survival. Hence providing confirmation of the effectiveness and value of ‘social Islam’ in countries without adequate state welfare provision.

Islam, welfare and an insufficient state in this area, is also
the topic of Chapter Ten. However, Bethany Walker has a historical view when she looks at Sufi sheiks’ contribution to public service in nineteenth century Jordan. She argues that rural Sufism played an important role as channels of charity and public service in the late Ottoman Jordan. As a result of the Ottoman state’s slow response to the educational needs in rural Jordan, local sheikhs attached to Sufi brotherhoods created kuttabs - elementary schools for boys. In the absence of state-run schools and hospitals, traditional kuttabs and home-based clinics provided the only literacy and basic health-care for most villages before 1920. Walker concludes that while the Sufi dervishes did not transform social structures, they did provide essential public services in the absence of a centralized state.

Collectively the chapters in “Interpreting Welfare and Relief in the Middle East” show that welfare is profound and integral to human society. Of course, ongoing wars, conflicts and not least regular media reporting exposing the general public to the casualties of conflicts, if nothing else, turn this book into a text that engages with ongoing life destructions and needs in the Middle East.
The aim of this research group is to develop a fuller picture of the ways global factors have shaped the long-term history food and foodways. Historical and contemporary issues involving food’s political significance are analyzed as are such related issues as economic development, community alliances, household relationships and identity construction.
Food is the foundation of every civilization, involving political strategies, economic development, community alliances, household relationships and identity construction.

In the Levant, changes that led to new food-producing economies some 10,000 years ago involved not only new ways of exploiting and controlling food resources but also had far-reaching socio-cultural and ecological consequences, generating trajectories which soon developed into the domestication of certain animals, the expansion of trade routes and elaborate marketplaces. These were followed by encounters leading to more sophisticated food systems and cuisine. Food crosses several conceptual boundaries; as such it must be interpreted interdisciplinary. An emerging research theme for Randi Haaland, Nils Anfinset and Nefissa Naguib is the development of the trajectories of food systems in the Levant.

“Foodways and Food systems” addresses historical and contemporary issues involving the political significance of food, economic developments, community alliances, household relationships and identity construction in the Middle East. Themes such as the development of food systems, trade, global food markets, consequences of food epidemics, poverty and hunger and food in rituals and religious practices will be explored. The ultimate aim of the research group is to develop a fuller picture of the ways in which food features in the archaeologies, histories and cultures of the Levant. Participants
engage with the development of food systems and foodways as chapters in Middle Eastern studies and as part of the archaeology, history and ethnography of food in the region.

Abstracts of papers presented at the first workshop of this group follow. The title of the workshop was “Foodways and Food systems: The cultural elaborations, production and sociability of food in the Middle East”. The workshop took place on Sunday 21 – Monday 22 October 2007 at Retno Hotel in Ramallah, Palestinian Authority.

Randi Haaland, University of Bergen

African and Near Eastern foodways in India. The circulation of crops along the Indian Ocean.

The focus is on two contrasting foodways found in Africa and the Near East. Archaeological material indicates that these two different food systems go back 10,000 years. Ethnographic studies and historical documents also show a striking difference between Africa and the Near East with regard to symbolic elaborations of food-related items. This difference can be summed up as a contrast between a cooking-pot syndrome in Africa and a baking-oven syndrome in the Near East.

In Africa porridge boiled in the pot was the staple food while in the Near East bread was the social food, as exemplified in Biblical images like Jesus breaking bread to share with his disciples. In the archaeological material the use of bread is seen in the presence of ovens (tannour) from 9000 years BP. It is suggested that beer was used during early exploitation of cereals, i.e., by 10,000 BP. Interestingly Ethiopia and Eritrea served for millennia as a crossroads for cultural contact and

Food has a significant role in the study of Global Moments in the Levant. Since ancient times long distance trade included staple foods and luxury products such as wine, rice, spices, dates and nuts. Securing greater access to food was a force behind the rise and power of empires. Food markets quickly became globally integrated, linking distant areas and cultures of the world to the Levant. These exchanges and encounters inspired more sophisticated food systems and cuisine in the region.

Photos: Nefissa Naguib
dispersal of crops between Africa and the Near East, with a difference in food technology and cuisine. The Horn served also as a dispersal point for African food plants across the Indian Ocean to India about 4000 years ago, probably based on small coasting vessels. Near Eastern food plants spread very early to India, and we find wheat/barley only a few hundred years after the initial domestication 10,000 ago, and it appears to be part of the bread-eating complex with no remains of pottery but of ovens. Possehl sees this as part of a region that can be called the Middle Asian interaction sphere manifested in shared artifacts, including objects of exchange and trade. These contrasting foodways can be observed on the Deccan plateau today, where they also adopted the rice complex, a different cuisine but still part of the cooking pot syndrome.

Since very ancient times long-distance trade has involved staple foods and luxury products such as dried fruits and nuts. Every major Middle East town has its spice street. And every country has a favourite combination of spices and herbs.

Photo: Nefissa Naguib
**Nils Anfinset**, University of Bergen

"To eat or not to eat: pigs of the Jordan Valley in the 5th and 4th millennia BC"

This paper starts by briefly discussing some of the results of the excavation at Tell el-Mafjar in Jericho, with particular focus on the role of pigs. The striking fact that pig bone comprises a large percentage of the animal bones at the site also raises a number of questions. Here the focus will be on pigs in a comparative perspective, as there are also some other sites that have a majority of pig bones, though there seem to be some geographical restrictions. Of significance here is the role of pigs in the wider but also contemporary setting of the 5th and 4th millennia. This enables us to explore the economic role of pigs, as well as pigs in community alliances, household relationships and identity construction in the Middle East. This is done by also drawing on ethnographic studies in order to understand the wider role of pigs. In other words, the project concerns not only nutritional aspects, but also the social and cultural significance of pigs in a specific setting of formative village societies in the southern Levant.

**Anders Bjørkelo**, University of Bergen

*Food habits on the Blue Nile around the middle of the twentieth century. Reflections on a report on diet in the Gazira irrigated area, by G. M. Culwick.*

Gezira (al-Jazira) is the name of the peninsula between the White and Blue Nile in the Sudan. It has also lent its name to the Gezira Scheme, which turned a large part of the area into the largest plantation in the world from 1925 onwards. With irrigation water from the Blue Nile the scheme was launched primarily as a cotton producer, but sugar and food crops were also cultivated for export and for local consumption. The labour...
force consisted of tenants settled in villages on the scheme, composed of original inhabitants, sedentarised nomads and immigrants mainly from the northern and western Sudan and of foreigners from as far away as Nigeria, the latter known as the Fellata. Thus a heterogeneous population was formed who exhibited different cultures, customs and food habits.

In 1949-50, G.M. Culwick, hired by the British authorities in the Sudan, carried out a qualitative and quantitative investigation of the food habits and diet of the inhabitants of the scheme. His study focuses on the village of Rimeitab, populated mainly by Kawahlia peasants and herders, but was also concerned with food habits and diet in and off the scheme in general for comparative purposes.

This paper will analyse the main findings of the report with regard to food habits and standard of living and try to detect patterns of emulation and change in food preferences in a multi-ethnic environment.

**Inger Marie Okkenhaug**, University of Bergen

*“Setting the table at the Swedish school in Jerusalem.”*

Many of the Arab girls who attended the Swedish school in Jerusalem during the Mandate period were undernourished. They were given a meal at the school, a service that was extended to also include their mothers and younger siblings. In 1938 this practice resulted in the establishment of a soup kitchen called the “Green Hall”. In times of political and social crisis, for example during the Arab revolt from 1936-39, around one hundred children from other schools and their mothers and smaller sisters and brothers also received food at the Swedish school. At another time of crisis, during the war of 1947-48, teachers and pupils organised soup kitchens for the poor in the
old city.

This food distribution made a difference to the daily lives of people in Jerusalem. However, food also played a significant role in the festive life of the Swedish school. Christian and Muslim pupils and parents were served food at Christmas time, and the Arab cook had to prepare a Scandinavian meal for Christmas Eve including rice pudding hiding an almond. Food was thus a means of creating a sense of community across the cultural and religious divides, as well as creating a Scandinavian identity in the Holy Land.

This paper will focus on the ways in which food features in the political and social life of the Swedish school in the context of Mandatory Palestine.

Bert de Vries, Calvin College

The devolution of one of Palestine’s indigenous food production system: a photographic documentation of the processes of the erosion and destruction the West Bank’s three thousand-year-old terraced farm system.

Palestine’s agricultural terraces represent a fundamental
The breaking of bread is central to Christians in the region and ‘daily bread’ is a euphemism for food (and also for wealth). The custom of signing loaves with a cross before baking, or making the sign of the cross before cutting bread, continues in several parts of the region. In the Muslim tradition bread is a direct gift from God. A hungry person will kiss a piece of bread given to him or her as alms. An invocation to God is murmured before kneading the dough, another before placing it in the oven.

Photos: Nefissa Naguib

engineering feat of transforming the natural landscape, achieved and maintained over three millennia – a feat on the scale of pre-Columbian American projects like the terrace systems of the South American Andes and the buffalo-management system of the North American prairies. Today these terraces face ruin from their prolonged neglect under occupation and their rapid destruction by bulldozer for non-agricultural settlement-colony construction and urban development.

My April 2007 field study involved walking surveys of the encroachment of modern development on the traditional orchard and produce agriculture of Palestine. I covered the outskirts of Ramallah in the direction of Birzeit and did a tour of the lands of Silwad village (between Bir Zeit and Taybeh, northeast of Ramallah) with Professors Kamal Abdulfattah and Hamed Salem and a geographer resident of Silwad. The universality of the phenomenon is confirmed in a later tour by car from Ramallah across the West Bank past Nablus and ending at Qalqiliya, and by earlier visits to other areas of the highlands, especially Jenin and Battir.

This terrace dilapidation is obvious and familiar to anyone travelling about the West Bank, but largely unknown to foreigners who follow events from afar. The point of this presentation is that under the surface of emergencies triggered by political and population crises, a more fundamental transformation is taking place: the permanent erasure of the historic human-engineered Palestinian food-production landscape that has been maintained through a continuous process of communal cooperation for millennia. Although a few hopeful counter-examples, small terrace restoration projects, prevent this story from becoming totally pessimistic, this erasure will transform the millennia-old “foodways” of rural Palestinian highland communities.
Øystein S. LaBianca, Andrews University & University of Bergen

*Food system research as a window on great and little traditions of Transjordan*

The paper will discuss how archaeological food systems research at Tall Hisban and vicinity has helped illuminate long-term patterns of indigenous survival and coping (little traditions) and successive imperial interventions (great traditions) in Transjordan. To this end it will examine the related concepts of food system intensification and abatement, sedentarisation and nomadisation, universalisation and parochialisation of great and little traditions. The promises and limitations of this approach will also be critically assessed.

Janne B. Bøe, University of Bergen

*Household economy and gender in a Palestinian village*

Although a growing number of Palestinian women are contributing to their household economy and doing the purchases in the market, the daily preparation of food for the family and serving meals to guests remains their domain. For women from poor families, growing their own vegetables, fruits and preserving food to feed their family and kin is essential knowledge. They also judge each other’s quantity, preservation techniques and skill in preparing, cooking and serving meals. Based on empirical material from the West Bank my paper will illustrate how economic restrictions since the second Intifadah and the recent hold on government employees salaries have produced a set of “newly poor” with less money to spend on food, and how these critical realities impact on Palestinian women’s food management.
Leif O. Manger, University of Bergen

*Beer, identity and civil war among the Nuba of the Sudan*

My concern in this paper is with various socio-cultural changes among the Lafofa Nuba in the very south of the Nuba Mountains of central Sudan in the wake of their increasing contact with wider Sudanese society. As with most other Nuba groups, the contact is through the general commercialization of their economy, with cash crop cultivation, local wage work and labour migration. But also in the political and administrative field the affairs of the Nuba Mountains are becoming ever more affected by an expanding central government. Through participation in such activities the Lafofa are becoming involved in social processes of nationwide scale. Similarly, they are more exposed to influences from their Arab and Muslim neighbours, both through daily interaction as well as through a history of missionary activities.

The resulting changes can be seen on different levels of Lafofa socio-cultural and socio-economic life. I have dealt with various aspects of economic change in earlier papers (see Manger 1987a, b, 1988); here I shall focus particularly on changes which relate to Lafofa foodways and try to show how such foodways are tied to culture and social organization, particularly to processes of modernization, Arabisation and Islamisation (for the Nuba Mountains see e.g. Nadel 1947, Stevenson 1966, Baumann 1987). Such changes relate to how the Nuba in general, here the Lafofa, have moved from being a pagan population native to the Kordofanian plains, to adopting many Arabic customs as well as Islam as a religion. Through this process important aspects of Lafofa social organization have changed, as have basic notions they hold about the world and their place in it. The very content of “being Lafofa” has thus changed and people today think and behave in significantly different ways from what they did only a generation ago. It
is the direction of this change as it relates to the use of food which is the theme of the paper

Nefissa Naguib, University of Bergen

Foodways: analytical possibilities in anthropology

“What is for some people a radical event may appear to others as a date for lunch” (Marshall Sahlins 1985:154) is a statement about how episodes do not exist outside cultural classifications that provide them with interpretability. In this presentation I take this statement to offer an outline of how in recent years food has emerged as an explicit discipline in anthropology, yet remains rather disconnected from broader research concerns. I will briefly sketch how in ongoing ‘anthropology and food’ studies we have established demarcations which neglect food’s intricacies and entanglements. This is an attempt to present a few analytical possibilities of food which go beyond ethnographical divisional zones. The paper suggests taking a broader anthropological approach to foodways in the Middle East, which would take into account the associations that food enables people to make.

Of all the markets in the Middle East, food markets were the first to become connected and integrated to distant areas and cultures. Cooking in the Middle East is deeply reflected in the unwavering attachment to the dishes of the past. And a look into the past of the region shows it continuously beset by endless currents and cross-currents, great and small wars and all-embracing empires with factional and dynastic rivalries. It is forever experiencing shifting allegiances, cultures and peoples moving to and from the region. All this and the regions malleability and capacity to absorb new cultures has affected the kitchen and cooking - very much to its advantage.

Photos: Nefissa Naguib
The aim of this collaboration is to identify and compare the various ordering templates that have accompanied different imperial projects in the Levant and, at the same time, to investigate the coping strategies of subject populations in responding to these, whether by means of passive resistance, tensioanal balance or open rebellion or through peaceful coexistence, accommodation and acculturation.
An emerging research theme for LaBianca, de Vries and Walker is the historical anthropology of imperial projects in the Levant.

Imperialism is about power, control and order — about one society ordering another, whether culturally, politically, economically, religiously, or a mixture of these four. In the Levant, imperial expansion began already in the third millennium B.C. with the Akkadians and Neo-Sumerians, who were followed by the pharaohs of Egypt’s Middle Kingdom during the second millennium B.C. Theirs was followed by those of the Hittites, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks and Romans; which in turn were followed by the late antiquity and medieval imperial undertakings of the Byzantines, Sassanids, Umayyads, Abbasids, Tulinids, Fatimids, Seljuqs, Crusaders, Ayyubids, and Mamluks; and, in modern history, those of the Ottomans, British and French. The distinctive nature of the “ordering templates” of each of these imperial projects, as manifested, for example, in their respective bureaucratic apparatuses and infrastructure projects, their commonalities and differences, and the coping strategies of the various subject populations (whether by means of passive resistance, tensional balance or open rebellion or through peaceful coexistence, accommodation and acculturation) are sub-themes in this line of research.

LaBianca, de Vries and Walker each have their own archaeological research projects in Jordan on which they will be drawing for primary data in connection with this research.
Øystein LaBianca’s contribution to Imperial Projects in the Levant

LaBianca will draw upon his research in central Jordan at Tall Hesban and that of his Madaba Plains Project colleagues at Tall Umayri and Tall Jalul. A key objective of his research is to examine the link between Hesban’s well-documented cycles of food system intensification and abatement and imperial interventions in the region. To learn more about the nature of the “ordering templates” of the various imperial powers that have impacted Hesban and the rest of the Levant, LaBianca, together with Sy Gitin of the Albright Institute in Jerusalem, has spearheaded an initiative among colleagues in the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR) that will make possible collaborative research on specific empires and imperial projects that will involve senior scholars, post-doctoral scholars and doctoral students affiliated with ASOR. LaBianca has also involved a number of his undergraduate students in probing for links between imperial “ordering templates” and the archaeological record of Tall Hesban.

An important question that LaBianca’s research hopes to illuminate is the extent to which the southern Levant has been an enabling agent of empires. First, due to its strategic location, since the second millennium B.C. the region has been a trophy target of nascent empires on the march to global influence and power. Second, thanks in large degree to its being a contact zone of civilizations, during the first millennium B.C. (the so-called Axial Age) its local inhabitants, especially the Jews, helped give birth to monotheism as expressed in the three Abrahamic faiths — Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Third, during the first millennium A.D. Christianity and Islam each produced its own succession of civilizational offspring, each with their respective imperial agents such as Byzantium and the Holy Roman Empire, in the case of Christianity, and the
A related question has to do with the impact on the Levantine peoples of their homeland for millennia being at the epicentre of competitions between empires — each with its own reasons for wanting to control and shape the destiny of the region and its inhabitants. Thus the Levant has for millennia served as a frontier or intersection of competing empires, including the following:

- New Kingdom Egypt - Hittites – Mitanni - Kassite
  Babylon - Mycenae
- Persia (Achaemenid) – Classical/Hellenistic Greek
- Ptolemaic Egypt - Seleucid Syria - (Parthia - Macedonia - Roman Rep.)
- Roman Empire - Persia (Parthian and Sassanid)
- Byzantium – Sassanid Persia
- Umayyad – Abbasid
- Fatimid – Crusader – Zengid – Seljuk
- Ayyubid/Mamluk
- Ottoman Turkey - Safavid Iran
- European Mandates.

These are all documented historically, but the material evidence from archaeological excavations and surveys in the Madaba...
Plains region and elsewhere should enable us to map (via GIS) the ebb and flow of these competing influences on local communities, and thus correct and refine the propagandistic bombast of imperial written sources.

**Bert de Vries’ contribution to Imperial Projects in the Levant**

De Vries will draw on findings from his excavations and surveys at Umm el-Jimal in northern Jordan and his work as architect on Roman fortifications in central Jordan (Limes Arabicus Project). A key objective of his research is to develop the theme of local security in the waxing and waning of imperial powers. Security will be examined not only on the local level, but also from a broader, more encompassing perspective involving military, economic and religious institutions. From the point of view of individuals the interplay between local and imperial is often a situation of “tensional balance” which, as the classical Greeks saw it, is more often a trigger of tragic suffering than a guarantee of peaceful coexistence.

This is easy to catch in literature, but in archaeology the layers of destruction are devoid of tears and smiles. Of course, in those situations in which there are gross imbalances, especially of power, the sacking of cities, mass deportations, enslavements and wholesale massacres ensue. Here the archaeological record could be especially helpful, because the historical record is usually white-washed by the victorious destroyers, who survive to tell their glorious lies with impunity. Unfortunately, archaeologists are often tempted to interpret their results in conformity with these imperially propagandized versions, which have been locked into the canon of the “western tradition.” Thus, to get at security at the local level, it may be necessary to peel away the version of security presented by imperial apologists (the sort satirized by Constantine Cavafy and in J. M.
Coetzee’s Waiting for the Barbarians).

A related theme which is of particular importance to understanding the history of security in the southern Levant is that of how local players have been sacrificed to more global power politics because the region lies in the vice-like grip of competing empires. An example is the imperial wars between Ramses II and Muwatalli (Hittite) in the thirteenth century B. C., each with their local “coalitions of the willing” which resulted in waves of local turmoil and destruction at the end of the Bronze Age. Other examples include the Roman/Byzantine-Persian conflicts from the second to the seventh centuries A.D. (Heraclius vs. Chosroes) and the Fatimid expansion into the Levant and Arabia in the tenth century A.D.

In older historiography these vice-grip moments were seen as the incubators of cultural progress, whereas in more recent, post-colonial history writing, those caught in this situation would be more readily described as exploited and victimized. Sabatino Masceti’s The Face of the Ancient Orient is a classic of the first attitude. His work stands with Albright’s From Stone Age to Christianity as a great classic of culture-evolution synthesis in the mid-twentieth century. A more recent critical reaction to this “spoils to the victor” view of cultural imperialism has been spearheaded by Edward Said. See especially his Culture and Imperialism, which provides a model based on western literature in the context of the European and American empires of the 19th and 20th centuries. A. D. Warwick Ball applies such thinking specifically to the ancient Levant in Rome in the East, a thorough analysis of the role of Roman imperial culture in the Levant. His refreshing conclusion is that the major impact of Roman imperialism is not Romanization of the Levant of Syria (which was real enough), but the ‘Syrianization’ of Rome.
For his publications feeding the Imperial-Projects research see de Vries in the Participants list section, and for the direction this is taking see the summaries of his contributions to the Workshops, both on the GML Website.

**Bethany Walker’s contribution to Imperial Projects in the Levant**

Bethany Walker’s research on imperial-peasant and imperial-tribal relationships draws on both current archaeological fieldwork at the Northern Jordan Project and Tall Hisban and archival research in Cairo and Amman.

The broader objective of this work is to document the complexities of these relations in the middle Islamic (namely Mamluk) and late Islamic (Ottoman) periods through economic history and patterns of land use, using the methods and models of political ecology, and to evaluate their role in the political, economic and demographic decline of southern Bilad al-Sham in the transitional fifteenth century A.D. The last two years this work has generated several smaller projects, each of which involves international collaboration and all of which are still under way.

The first is a project on “Exercising Power in the Age of Sultanates,” a research effort jointly sponsored by the French (l’Institut Français d’Archéologie Oriental) and American (American Research Center in Egypt) institutes in Cairo that began in 2004. Scholars from the French and American institutes in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Yemen, Turkey, and Tunisia have been working on topics related to expressions of power relations among civilians, their elites, and political bodies in these regions from the thirteenth through early nineteenth centuries. The result has been a series of bilingual regional
conferences and publications articulating these themes. Walker organized the Jordanian conference in Amman in May 2005 (link) and has presented different phases of her research on the agricultural factor in imperial-peasant relationships in Mamluk Jordan at both the Amman and Cairo conferences.

The second project is an international field cooperation involving Grand Valley State University, Yarmouk University, Brandenburg University of Technology in Cottbus, Germany, and the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. The purpose of the Northern Jordan Project is to assess the relationships among settlement, climate, and land use changes in the thirteenth to early twentieth centuries as a way of understanding periods of political and economic transitions in the middle and late Islamic periods. The project is a multi-disciplinary study that employs archaeological, archival, sedimentological, palaeofaunal, and palaeobotanical methods in a political ecological framework to identify the long-term environmental and social impacts of traditional and imperial land use. Fieldwork has consisted of a preliminary season at Malka in 2003 and a brief soil collection season in 2005, and a full survey and excavation in Sahm and Hubras in 2006.

**Recent web publications by Walker:**
- Abstract: Transformations in the agricultural economy of late Mamluk Jordan (2006)

**Conferences organized and delivered by the Imperial Projects in the Levant team**

2004 American Schools of Oriental Research: Material Culture in Ottoman Syro-Palestine: The role of local notables
and throne villages in the decentralized socio-political conditions in southwest Bilad es-Sham during the 18th-19th centuries. Participants: Bert de Vries (Calvin College); Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University); Kamal Abdulfattah (Birzeit University); Hamed Salem (Birzeit University); Eveline van der Steen (Albright Institute of Archaeological Research); Lynda Carroll (Binghamton University); Adam Fenner (Andrews University). San Antonio, Texas. November 17-19.

2005 IFPO-ACOR Symposium: Exercising Power in the Age of the Sultanates: Bilad al-Sham. Bethany J. Walker (Grand Valley State University) and Jean-François Salles IFPO Amman, Jordan), organizers. Participants: Denise Aigle - EPHE (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris); Andrew Peterson (University of Wales); Benjamin Michaudel (IFPO-Damascus); Cédric Devais (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, la Zone Afrique du Nord Proche-Orient; Adel Manna (Vanleer Institute, Jerusalem). Hosted at American Center for Oriental Research, Amman, Jordan May 13-14, 2005

2005 American Schools of Oriental Research: Material Culture in Ottoman Syro-Palestine: Ottoman Period Ceramics. Participants: Bert de Vries (Calvin College); Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews), and Bethany J. Walker (Grand Valley State University); Miriam Avissar (Israel Antiquities Authority); Marwan Abu Khalaf (Al-Quds University); Ruth Smadar Gabrieli (University of Sydney); and Hamed Salem (Birzeit University). Philadelphia, PA November 16-19, 2005

2006 American Schools of Oriental Research: Material Culture in Ottoman Syro-Palestine: Textiles and Embroidery in the Ottoman Empire. Participants: Bert de Vries (Calvin College); Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews), and Bethany J. Walker (Grand Valley State University); Widad Kawar (Amman, Jordan); Sally de Vries (Grand Rapids, Michigan); Sumru Belger
Krody (Textile Musuem, Washington); Vera Tamari (Birzeit University) Hamed Salem, (Birzeit University). Washington DC Nov 15-18, 2006

2007a Central States Anthropological Society: Three Thousand Years of Imperial Projects in the Levant: Student Research on the History and Archaeology of Great and Little Traditions at Tell Hesban in Central Jordan. Participants: Øystein S. LaBianca (chair); Elizabeth Brown; Ehren Lichtenwalter; Darrell Rohl; Joshua Smith; Kathleen Schwarz; Andrew Gerard; Jennifer Castillo. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 13-14, 2007.


2007c 7th Nordic Conference on Middle East Studies: Visualizing Global Moments in the Levant. Participants: Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University) and Nefissa Naguib (University of Bergen), Organizers; Anders Bjørkelo (University of Bergen); Bård Kårtveit (University of Bergen) Frode Storaas (University of Bergen). Helsinki, Finland, September 21, 2007.

2007d American Schools of Oriental Research: Order and Conflict: Roundtables on the Agency Role of Empires in the Levant. Participants: Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University), Yuval Gadot (Hebrew Union College); Thomas Levy (UCSD); Nils Anfinset (University of Bergen); Bert deVries (Calvin College); Bethany Walker (Grand Valley State University); Anders Bjørkelo (University of Bergen). San Diego, CA November 14-17, 2007

2007e American Schools of Oriental Research: The Madaba Plains Project After 40 Years Parts I and II. Participants:
Lawrence T. Geraty (La Sierra University); Larry G. Herr (Canadian University College); Douglas R.I Clark (La Sierra University); Randall W. Younker (Andrews University); Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University); William G. Dever (University of Arizona); P.M. Michele Daviau (Wilfrid Laurier University); Timothy P. Harrison (University of Toronto); Bethany J. Walker (Grand Valley State University). San Diego, CA November 14-17 2007

2007f American Schools of Oriental Research: Material Culture in Ottoman Syro-Palestine: The Ottoman Empire as a Shaper of Society and Culture in the Levant. Bert de Vries (Calvin College); (Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University); Kamal Abdulfattah (Birzeit University); Douglas Howard (Calvin College); Anders Bjørkelo (University of Bergen); Bethany Walker (Grand Valley State University). San Diego, CA November 14-17 2007.

Book Project. The papers presented at this last conference will form the core of a planned book, entitled The Ottoman Empire as a shaper of society and culture in the Levant. The goal of the book is elucidation of the role of the Ottoman Empire as “empire” in the shaping of material culture in the Levant. The strategy is to have authors develop theses which will enhance our understanding of the core characteristics of imperial structure and behavior based on current historiography and the impacts that these had on the political geography and cultural institutions and practices of the indigenous societies in the outlying vilayets of the Levant.

2008a Archaeological Institute of America: Order and Conflict: The Agency Role of Empires in the Levant and Mediterranean. Participants: Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University) and Gloria London (AIA Seattle), Organizers; Randall Younker (Andrews University); Derek Counts (University of Wisconsin);
Andrew Smith (Dowling College); Denise Demetriou (Michigan State University); Andrew Goldman (Gonzaga University; Bert de Vries (Calvin College); Sarah Lepinski (Bryn Mawr College). Chicago, Illinois January 3-6, 2008

2005 IFPO-ACOR Symposium: Exercising Power in the Age of the Sultanates: Bilad al-Sham. Bethany J. Walker (Grand Valley State University) and Jean-François Salles IFPO Amman, Jordan, organizers. Participants: Denise Aigle - EPHE (École Pratique des Hautes Études, Paris); Andrew Peterson (University of Wales); Benjamin Michaudel (IFPO-Damascus); Cédric Devais (Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication, la Zone Afrique du Nord Proche-Orient; Adel Manna (Vanleer Institute, Jerusalem). Hosted at American Center for Oriental Research, Amman, Jordan May 13-14, 2005

**Future Conferences**

2008a Over the next several years we plan to continue these various workshops and conferences as a means of expanding opportunities for participation by scholars with shared interests and also in order to establish on-going collaborations on each of the nearly two dozen empires that appear to have had a hand in shaping the social order of the Levant. Central to this collaboration will be the Digital Archaeological Atlas of the Holy Land (see separate chapter in this volume), which will provide a powerful tool for facilitating collaboration between these various scholars.

Thanks to a separate venture grant from the Research Council of Norway, a workshop is being planned for May 2008 which will focus specifically on the development of the DAAHL. The workshop is being co-sponsored by Unifob Global and the Intermedia Group of the University of Bergen, and the preliminary description of the conference reads as follows: The purpose of the workshop is to examine opportunities for
expanding access to the Digital Archaeological Atlas of the Holy Land (DAAHL) through wireless connectivity involving smart-
phones and related handheld technologies. A spin-off of the
Research Council of Norway (RCN)-funded Global Moments in the Levant Project (http://globalmoments.uib.no/), the
DAAHL (http://gaialab.asu.edu/DAAHL) will provide scholars,
teachers, students, tourists and the general public with
continually up-dated site plans, photos, drawings, 3-D virtual
object animations, word text descriptions, virtual tours and
voice-over narrations by excavators relating the latest fieldwork
discoveries at major and medium-importance archaeological
and historical sites located in Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine
and Syria (i.e. the Southern Levant).

The reason for wishing to expand access to the DAAHL
through the use of smart-phones and related handheld
technologies is to make available to individuals planning
to visit these sites, to real-time visitors, to local residents
and archaeologists instant information about the latest
discoveries made at these sites. The workshop will provide a
venue for exchanges of ideas about the technical challenges
presented by this new technology; assessment of its
strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats once it is fully operational; and possibilities for future collaboration.
Current funding for the workshop will allow for approximately
twenty individuals to participate, including the developers
of the DAAHL and selected representatives from the smart-
phone manufacturers and researcher community; several 3-D
animation experts, and a representative each from Google
Earth, the Worldwide University Networks, the UN World
Heritage Fund and the ENAME Center for Public Archaeology
and Heritage Reservation. While most of the workshop will be
closed to the public; a public event is planned for one evening
during which highlights of the DAAHL and related technologies
will be showcased. Bergen Heritage Media Conference May
2008b American Schools of Oriental Research, Material Culture in Ottoman Syro-Palestine: Cities as links between the Ottoman imperial centre and the Syro-Palestinian countryside. We propose to examine a third component of the link between centre and periphery; the regional city. Were regional cities like Nablus and es-Salt merely ‘natural’ district market and manufacturing centers, or, like their Roman counterparts, were they key elements in the Ottoman imperial strategy, ‘cultivated’ to assert bureaucratic control over and economic exploitation of the Syro-Palestinian countryside? Participants: Bert de Vries (Calvin College); Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University), and Bethany J. Walker (Grand Valley State University) and others. Boston, Massachusetts, November 19-22, 2008.

2008c American Schools of Oriental Research: Order and Conflict Roundtable II: Analyzing Imperial Ordering Templates. Øystein S. LaBianca (Andrews University) organizer. The session will be a continuation of last year’s inaugural Order and Conflict workshop, which was organized in order to facilitate inter-disciplinary and cross-border research by ASOR members and their invitees on the agency role of empires in the Levant. The general aims of the roundtables are 1) to facilitate networking of junior and senior scholars working in different regions of the Ancient Near East on topics related to the agency role of particular empires in the Levant; 2) to encourage the formation of problem-oriented collaborative research teams around the topic of empires in the Levant; 3) to identify potential sources of funding for research on empires; and 4) to incubate proposals for thematically organized conferences and publication initiatives on the topic of empires in the Levant. Highlighted as part of the introduction to this 2008 workshop will be 1) the Digital Archaeological Atlas of the Holy Land (http://gaialab.asu.edu/DAAHL) as a tool for
collaborative research on empires; 2) strategies for uncovering imperial ordering templates that focus on textual, architectural and related infrastructural traces of imperial bureaucracy, infrastructure and administration and 3) methodological issues involved in analysing and describing the salient features of imperial ordering templates. Persons interested in making a 10-minute presentation that clearly addresses methodological issues in analysing imperial ordering templates should send before April 1 an abstract of approximately 100 words to labianca@andrews.edu. A maximum of four short presentations are all that can be fitted into the programme.
The aim of this collaboration is to document and analyze the extent to which the Levant’s marginality socially and geographically during Mamluk, Ottoman and Safavid times led to experimentation with various traditional structures of power and influence, thus creating significant opportunities for freedom of action politically and economically among local elite families.
Situated on the geographical, political, and, in many ways, economic frontier of the Mamluk, Ottoman, and Safavid Empires, the Levant was historically an imperial hinterland for much of the Islamic world. Marginality nonetheless gave it a unique opportunity for experimentation with traditional structures, as physical and social distance from urban centres allowed for some degree of freedom to interpret, co-opt, and adapt systems locally. During times of imperial reform, the societies of the Levant transformed themselves by simultaneously embracing the spirit of reform while retaining elements of traditional structures, creating new social, economic, and political power structures at home in the process.

Bethany Walker’s study is concerned with such patterns of “elite formation” during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. It examines the changing ways in which local societies made use of, and reinterpreted, traditional Islamic institutions and indigenous socio-economic structures to create new elites. It examines, specifically, the development of popular religion (specifically Sufism), Islamic endowments (awqaf), and land tenure and management (through new modes of taxation, registration, marketing and cropping) as mechanisms of social transformation.

This is a comparative study of the “high” Mamluk period, during the transition from Bahri to Burji rule, and that of the Tanzimat of the late Ottoman era in the Levant, with special attention to the Transjordan. Each of these periods represents a “global moment”, as it was experienced locally, and one necessitating intense economic and political reforms: the fourteenth-century recovery from the Black Death, in the first case, and the nineteenth-century trends in economic globalization and imperialism, in the latter. Contemporary written sources and archaeological data suggest ways in
which imperial reforms of the period created unique economic and political opportunities locally and in which local actors adopted those reforms to their advantage, restructuring their own societies in the process. The project considers the full impact of such practices as the purchase and endowment of state lands for charitable purposes, the growing role of Sufi institutions in providing public services, the registration of communally held land in the names of individuals, and changes in traditional cropping on the emergence of new landed elites and political leaders in the fifteenth and twentieth centuries.

The study by Kamal Abdelfattah and Anders Bjørkelo also deals with the Ottoman period, and focuses on production systems, commercial networks and local and regional trade within an Ottoman administrative setting, coupled with a study of merchant families, notables and elite formation.

From an economic point of view, the Levant was dominated by peasant agriculture and in some areas also by pastoralism, i.e. by subsistence production with a part of the produce going as taxes to the political authorities or as tribute to local Bedouin groups, another part being sold in the local market or to merchants and a third part remaining in the household as raw material for family consumption and production. Land was generally controlled by the Ottoman authorities, by village communities and Bedouin groups, by local notables, and gradually also by merchants who traded in agricultural produce (grain, olives, fruits and vegetables and so forth).

The nineteenth century in particular, following the Tanzimat reforms, saw the rise of merchant families who were able to convert part of their capital into land and into production for the market, both locally and internationally. They made up an elite that was different from the traditional notables and the Ottoman elite. Such local merchant families became part of
the middle and upper classes and gained also political power through their participation in the Advisory Councils established by the Ottomans.

A study of regional and long-distance trade with the Levant as the central area or as the bridge between the continents is also expected to reveal some of the vital structures and mechanisms that underlay the concept of “contact zone”. International trade routes and commercial networks bound the Levant economically and culturally to the East and West, to the North and the South. This can be shown empirically by the presence of foreign commodities, caravans and merchants arriving in the Levant and the presence of Levantine commodities and merchants in far-distant regions.

The prosperity of the primary producers (peasants and Bedouin), the crafts and small industries and the movement of commodities, caravans and merchants doubtless depended on a stable and predictable administration; in the case of this sub-project it depended on the economic policies of the Ottoman rulers. This requires an examination of the effects of the Ottoman land ownership regime, Ottoman taxation and various forms of impositions on the peasantry and on Ottoman regulation of crafts, guilds and commercial activities in general.

Within this broader context a small study is planned by Leif Manger on how such historical developments have affected Syrian Bedouin living in the steppe and desert interior (badiyah). Regional variation will require specific cases studies, but the general pattern is one of variation between periods in which these areas were scattered with villages of cultivators, and other periods in which the nomads controlled the areas. In general, such fluctuations were tied to developments in the general security situation in the various areas, to the settlement policies of various regimes as well as their general commercial
policies. The policy choices made by the regimes were very closely related to wider commercial interests, such as export and inter-regional trade in which the elite families acted as important agents. The nomadic response has been a varied one, from settlement back to nomadism and towards settlement again. But within such general patterns internal variations can be expected to appear, based on different strategies when it comes to the involvement of the nomads in society in general.
Recent studies reveal that factors like class, time and place can produce diverse courses of actions for Muslim women. This research is an effort to examine such diverse courses of action among women belonging to various minority communities living in the region, especially Christians, Jews and Armenians.
The aim of this research group is the gendering of Global Moments and to interrogate the entanglements between gender, civil society, state and processes of nation building.

Inger Marie Okkenhaug deals with interactions between people with different ethnic and religious backgrounds within a colonial context from a gender perspective. The intersection of race and religion in the colonial encounter has been called a fatal combination that prevented meaningful interaction between the two groups of women, especially when considerations of social class intervened as well. Inspired by Kumari Jayawardena and others who study female missionaries’ motivations, Inger Marie Okkenhaug wishes to challenge this assumption. By focusing on individual actors, both missionaries and recipients and their motivations and agencies, her research asks if religion was one of the few forces that brought at least some women across a racial divide.

A basis for analysis here is women’s own engagement and activities. By examining specific areas of women missionaries’ experiences in detail, the processes whereby women were able to contest and subvert seemingly powerful gender constructions will be illuminated. A main area of focus will be the possibilities for female agency and the complex construction of femininities, within broader narratives of historical explanation. A central concept of mission rhetoric was that of improving the deplorable situation of women in heathen, oriental patriarchies. Thus, several historians have argued that missionary women defined
themselves in relation to non-Christian women, whom they considered subordinate and dependent. However, even if Scandinavian women missionaries found a role for themselves in the public space, they lived within a patriarchal society.

The nucleus of Lutheran evangelicalism was the ideology of separate spheres, which was reinforced by the doctrine of women’s submission to men. Okkenhaug argues that some Christian women were able to recognize the similarities in the two patriarchal societies. Individual women made use of the strategies that they knew from Scandinavian countries to improve the situation of Arab women. Within a Middle Eastern context, this process included a challenge to both local and colonial patriarchal structures.

In the debates now under way on the connections between history of events, women’s history and gender studies it is clear that engagements with women’s history are progressing beyond the limits of particular historical narratives. We have what Joan W. Scott refers to as ‘movement’, which suggest something of the dynamic quality involved in cross-national and cross-disciplinary exchanges by historians of women (2001:43). Scott ties the ‘story of the history of women’ to the multifaceted nature of politics. Elizabeth Thompson builds further on this connection and introduces women’s performances in history to the broad conceptualizations of civic order (1999).

Nefissa Naguib’s research contributes to such studies, demonstrating the participation, coping and experiences of ordinary people in the history of events. Drawing on material from Palestine and Egypt she frames her reflections on gender in Middle Eastern anthropological studies and the need to explicitly engage with women’s lives ‘as lived’ and ‘dealt with’ under constant, hazardous conditions. These never-ending
situations, which UNICEF refers to as ‘the silent emergencies’, are conditions involving continual human suffering, such as the spread of epidemics, maternal deaths, lack of housing, lack of proper nourishment, lack of clean drinking water and sanitation, and lack of shelter. Naguib argues for a stronger awareness of the implications of violent critical moments on women’s lives. These events bring into being new modes of action, which in turn change the categories within which women operate. Violent events then, bring about material and social change which affects women’s practices, religiosity and position in society.

Nefissa Naguib takes this approach further in her more recent research on the Palestinian activist Hind Husseini who established a school and orphanage in 1948 as a consequence of the 1948 Arab/Israeli war. This is an attempt to explore how individual women’s lives can serve as an allegory for broader issues concerning gender, conflicts and welfare in Middle Eastern society.

The documentary “War, Women, Welfare in Jerusalem,” produced by Nefissa Naguib and Inger Marie Okkenhaug, and in collaboration with Sahera Dirbas, is about Palestinian women who step in to fill the gaps, when states/governments are not fulfilling their functions as providers of adequate welfare.
Tracing women’s welfare activities in Jerusalem from 1948 via 1968 until the present day, this is an attempt to get at case studies of women who built orphanages, established schools, clinics and provided vocations for Arab women and children in Jerusalem during traumatic events.

Janne Bøe’s PhD topic: “Household economy and patriarchy in the southern Levant in a moment of economic crisis”, will draw on her previous study “Farming will always remain the best job: It was the first love”, which was a comparative study in Social Anthropology of irrigation societies on the West Bank. In her current research Bøe will further explore local coping strategies within Palestinian households. She attempts to assess women’s economic roles within the family by addressing the current economic reality of the Palestinian society at a stage of economic stagnation which results in household crises. Her study will examine what the local ideals of economic responsibilities, tasks and gender roles are, as well as how the circumstances of economic embargoes impinge on the daily lives of Palestinian women living in the areas surrounding the West Bank city of Ramallah today.
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SUMMARY

The Mediterranean Archaeology Network or MedArchNet will make archaeological data from the Mediterranean lands accessible via the internet to various communities, including school teachers, tourists and travel agents, university students and professors, researchers, and public policy makers. Through tapping in to the fast-growing field of ‘portal science’ MedArchNet will serve researchers and explorers as a platform for international collaboration, while also allowing the general public to share in the excitement of archaeology and discovery (http://medarchnet.calit2.net).

**MedArchNet: Towards**

*Cyberinfrastructure for World Cultural Heritage - Developing a Portal for Cultural Heritage Information Management, Research, and Education*
The Mediterranean Archaeology Network or MedArchNet is one of the first attempts to create ‘Portal Science’ for archaeologists and the interested public. Consequently, a major goal of MedArchNet is to make archaeological data from the Mediterranean lands accessible to various communities, including school teachers, tourists and travel agents, university students and professors, researchers, and public policy makers. MedArchNet taps into the fast-growing field of ‘portal science’ and will serve researchers and explorers as a platform for international collaboration, while also allowing the general public to share in the excitement of archaeology and discovery. Various portals will be used by these communities. Archaeological data will be accessed and displayed over the Internet through existing tools such as Google Maps/Google Earth and emerging visualization technologies such as Calit2’s HIPerSpace large-format display systems suitable for museum and other public display environments. A key component in this regard is user access to the data using smartphones. Interested individuals could download content about particular cultural heritage sites in MedArchNet on their cell phone in preparation for visiting a site, or while actually there. To date, our most advanced atlas node is DAAHL - the Digital Archaeology Atlas of the Holy Land.

Our vision for MedArchNet (Mediterranean Archaeology Network) is to develop an international network of archaeological sites, from remote prehistory to the early 20th century that provides a model for world cultural heritage research, management, and presentation. Indeed, MedArchNet is a virtual organization (VO), which will be built initially in small, incremental steps by incorporating a few thematic nodes and requesting VO members to make modest contributions of data. The initial thematic nodes include the Digital Archaeological Atlas of the Holy Land (DAAHL) portal and an Aegean Portal, which will be initially funded by a seed grant from the Institute
for Aegean Prehistory (INSTAP), using the Google Maps/Earth API mapping platforms for information presentation.

The cyberinfrastructure for the MedArchNet VO will support sharing of information and data and provide a collaboration space for researchers, students and the public. Additionally, the CI will support field activities, including untethered operation. Currently, there is no portal science based cyberinfrastructure for archaeology. We propose to establish one with an existing community of some 70 current international archaeology projects in the Eastern Mediterranean that will significantly change the way researchers examine data, monitor archaeological sites and present educational material to the public. This project has already been endorsed by the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR), the umbrella organization for North American archaeologists working in the eastern Mediterranean and Middle East with projects from Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, the Palestinian Territories and over 11 European Union country projects have committed to providing data to MedArchNet.
Development of the CI will leverage significant investments by NSF and other agencies in shared cyberinfrastructure. We plan to take full advantage of the work done in projects like CAMERA, BIRN, and TEAM funded by the Moore Foundation, CARTA funded by the Mathers Foundation, and GEON, funded by NSF.

MedArchNet will have a significant research and education impact by providing easy online access to archaeological data and information. We will deploy the MedArchNet hub and a virtual catalog, which will provide access to information contributed by each member of the MedArchNet VO. Via the hub, users will be able to navigate back to the original member sites and databases to access the full information and related data from the respective site. Each participating member of the VO will receive full recognition and credit for their contribution. Individual portals will be developed initially for ASOR, INSTAP, and other partnering groups. The network of linked portals will support collaborations among users and provide a platform for initiating and sustaining discussions related to cross-site thematic areas of study. MedArchNet CI activities include:

- Deployment of the MedArchNet hub: access to a virtual catalog, collaboration tools, and collaboration areas. Authenticated and authorized access to services based on the type of user, e.g. catalog contributors, network members, researchers, educators, and public at large.
- Development of thematic portals, e.g. the DAAHL and Aegean portals, in focused areas.
- Facilitation of Network/VO activity: support for users interested in registering information to the virtual catalog and utilizing the collaboration spaces.
- Development of field CI: support for data provenance and metadata tracking from the very beginning, starting with the primary data collected in the field.
On the world scene, archaeology produces the major new sources of cultural heritage data and material remains that require innovative methods for study, interpretation and public presentation. To take advantage of the growing body of such data, the proposed MedArchNet cyberinfrastructure will provide a workable model for researchers from a wide range of fields dealing with cultural heritage to collaborate, discover and monitor resources. In an era of rapidly expanding population and urban development, a system like MedArchNet can provide mechanisms to monitor archaeological site conditions over time and lessen the impact on cultural heritage resources by careful planning and significantly enhance site preservation and development potential in the Mediterranean basin. Furthermore, by uniting archaeological site metadata from many disparate datasets and organizations, the MedArchNet CI will dramatically improve the ability of researchers to ask large-scale, cross-border questions of the archaeological data, providing fresh new insights into one of the most culturally meaningful regions on Earth.

References

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As the principal investigator for this programme, I have focused attention in particular on trying to delineate what the salient theoretical and methodological implications are of the fundamental methodological assumption of our GML programme: namely that the insights derived from historical and archaeological study of the past in the Levant are relevant for understanding the present situation in the region and that, in turn, the findings of ethnographic studies carried out in the present have relevance not only for today, but also for understanding the past. Offered here is a brief overview of some of the issues that have come to the fore as I have wrestled with this and related questions in my own mind and with my GML colleagues.
1. Global Moments are breakthrough events that change people’s lives and their futures

To repeat our general starting point, global moments are breakthrough events that change people’s lives and their futures. They are developments that typically call for significant adaptation leading to new forms of cooperation or conflict. Few places on earth can rival the Levant (Palestine, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria) when it comes to both incubating global moments and having to cope with their consequences. On a general level examples include the Neolithic revolution that produced the first settled farmers; the Chalcolithic revolution that produced crafts specialization and long distance trade; the Early Bronze urban revolution that culminated with the rise of the first cities; the rise of monotheism during the Late Bronze and Iron Age; and the global moments that led to the rise of the Semitic, Greco-Roman, Byzantine, Islamic and Modern Capitalist “great traditions.” Other examples are the various political developments in the Levant which have been of strategic importance to a long succession of superpowers, starting with ancient Egypt and ending with the United States. What has made this region a virtual cauldron of global moments is its strategic location astride a vital intercontinental land bridge connecting the continents of Africa, Asia, and Europe. This location has made it a crossroads of cultures and civilizations, a corridor of communication and commerce, and a highway of military movement and intrigue since the dawn of settled life.

2. We are not re-writing the history of the Levant

Taken together the topics mentioned above might indicate that our aim is a total re-writing of the history of the Levant region. This is not the case. Rather, through our different cases the aim is precisely to capture the way these global events can be said to change the future of people. Hence, the term “global moments” must be taken as a metaphoric, and
not as an analytical term. Our intention is to use such global moments as starting points for a *comparative endeavour* through which specific events and processes that emerge out of such moments can be studied, as they evolve in different places within the region and through different historical periods. The comparative effort is organized around certain key themes that all participants engaged with in their specific studies. On a general level the themes relate first to the effect of various global moments on the *basic adaptational structures* in the region. They are cultivation, pastoralism, and various urban based occupations such as trade and other market based activities. These early developments provided a base for the emergence of cities and state formations in which alliances between rulers in their palaces, traders in their markets and priests in their temples, made up an early basis for political power in the region. Through our studies we can follow such developments all the way to the modern situation with increasing urbanization, settlement and employment opportunities outside the primary sector. Such a comparison can form a basis for theorizing around the different ways economic adaptations have interacted with other fields of society and how such interactions have affected the viability of the various production systems in the region and also how individual people have been affected by such changes.

A second general theme is to look at the region as an *intercivilisational encounter*. The global moments mentioned above
also involved inter-cultural and/or inter-civilisational encounters in which people met and interacted. We have asked what were their consequences for people’s identities? Did they result in clashes that culminated in one or more groups being marginalized? Did it lead to emigration to other areas for some people—to the creation of diaspora groups in other lands? Or did it lead to increased “hybridity” and “syncretism” of traditions and practices as formerly separated peoples became enmeshed and intertwined? Such questions have been central in several of our empirical studies, as they also lead us into theorizing about identities in contexts of social complexities and state formations. And thirdly, we have studied the consequences of such encounters for the power constellations that structured access to resources and opportunities among affected populations. What were the consequences of such enmeshments for the power constellations that structured access to resources and opportunity among affected populations? Did new power structures emerge? Did a new class of elites enter centre stage? And what was the source of social power of such elites—control of ideology, economics, armies and/or politics? Here we enter the general debates of the emergence of states and of empires, the social, cultural and economic context for these developments as well as the relationships between rulers and the ruled, the power holders and local communities.

3. Understanding Global Moments as “events”

Rather than re-writing a region’s total history, our aim has been to engage in a collective effort to understand the nature of events. Rather than begin with a definition of global moments to which everyone should adhere, we are exploring what the concept might mean in the particular cases we have studied. Hence, in specific historical periods things seem to get organised in specific ways, but then ruptures appear, in which certain elements get condensed and lead to new constellations.
These ruptures are not free-floating possibilities but rather potentialities, forcing themselves into the plane of real historical events. This represents a combination of path dependence, in which what can happen depends on earlier occurrences and a non-linear history in which that path dependence is not to be understood as a chain of necessary causalities. In social science parlance this represents an understanding both of continuities and changes, of processes of structuration and institutionalisation and events of change.

The merging of all this can be expressed by the notion of “becoming”. What we are looking at is not a pre-established, reified reality, but rather a fluid set of possibilities in which certain realities emerge. The basic question then is how human beings can be constituted in a given world, and yet transcend that state and create new patterns of systematisation. The issue is how the underdetermined becomes determined, how a “tendency” becomes “historical time”. Our studies show that the answer is not that such processes emerge as an effect of some abstract force, belonging in a transcendental heaven, but rather as intrinsic features to on-going historical processes. But those historical processes may not only be “local”, in the sense that they are present within the localities of the event itself. Rather, they may be “global”, in the sense that they represent dynamics that have to do with far away places. The question then is how to include such far away processes in our analysis. Here the order of things becomes important. It

Photos: Bert de Vries
is basic to our perspective of “becoming” that communities, identities, values and so on, are not to be seen as reified, pre-existing elements, linked together through processes of contact. Rather, these units themselves are produced as outcomes of flows, such as migrations, imperial expansions, long-distance trade, spread of biological species as well as religious and cultural ideas. Not in one homogeneous process but in different sorts of waves, energised by human agency, influenced by political, economic, technological and cultural influences.

Hence, what we are looking at are not fixed entities, linked by flows. Rather, the flows are prior, and the entities are produced and constituted through the flows. This is the meaning when we say “becoming” – our objects of study are in the making. If this is the starting point, we should not read every case study that has been presented in this book as a part in a cumulative history-writing, each adding to the other. Rather, each case study is an experiment in which empirical material is worked and re-worked from different angles. But basic to all is the “event”.

4. Short-term occurrences vs. long-term historical processes

All events, not only the most dramatic ones, contain elements of “what happened?”. They require interpretation, but it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when whatever happened actually took place. What is the extent of the event? Is it the actual happenings at a certain time, or is it the building up towards it, or its repercussions? The events move in two directions at the same time, inwards, towards the actual happening, and outwards, towards before (what has happened) and after (what is going to happen). It is in this sense that events are “signs” and can be dealt with on a micro level, a macro level, long durée and so on. Hence, to the researcher, a dramatic, short term event indicating change is not in principle different
from more long term historical processes of change, such as the Neolithic revolution, or colonialism. In both cases it is a challenge to explain and fix in time “what actually happened” (wie es eigentlisch gewesen”). When water at some times boils and becomes damp, and at other times freezes and becomes ice, we can relate it to temperature. But in our cases, it is not easy to isolate the factors driving the change. Sometimes a dramatic event might explain things, but at other times it is as if nothing has happened, and yet, a new world can open up. Given such a dynamic it is clear that history and event themselves are inseparable from those singular points.

«It is the type of event chosen and constructed for investigation and not some underlying property of historical reality that determines the level of concreteness appropriate to any given historical or sociological explanation. Events are defined not by any measure of detail, specificity or concreteness within the chronology of happenings but by their significance as markers of transition. As something to be explained the challenge of an event is not a matter of grasping its concreteness but of apprehending, at an appropriate level of concreteness, the transition it signifies». (Abrahams, P. 1982:195, Historical Sociology. Ithaca: Cornell UP).

5. Historicising globalisation

If understanding “events” has been a major challenge in the programme, the same can be said about the concept of “globalisation”. The process of globalization is generally taken to mean the rapidly developing networks of interconnections and interdependences that characterize modern social life. These interconnections come in different modalities, such as more frequent contacts between individuals and groups, the increases in flows of goods, people, information, etc., across borders, and the more concrete travel technologies and the Internet. Words such as «interconnections», «networks»,
«flows», «time-space compressions» and “complex connectivity” are typical, the implication being that as the radical change in time taken to cover distances, both physically and representationally, is reduced, new situations arise in which social relationships get stretched across distance. Hence, although «locality» still exists, a number of things that are happening in faraway places will affect us, and people are increasingly becoming aware that it is happening. Thus the world appears to us in new ways. The field of globalization studies relates to recent theorizing in contemporary social science on issues of globalism, traditions, nationalism and religious resurgence. But it is somewhat ironic that in spite of all the criticism of Western social science conceptualization, social scientists seem constantly to return to a series of dichotomisations of the world, into modernity and pre-modernity, modernity and post-modernity, the local and the global, not to mention that the outcome of such meeting-points must be either cultural homogenization or a totally random post-modern flow of patterns. To our mind, and here we draw on our studies, the debate over whether globalization leads to cultural homogeneity or heterogeneity is false. There is no inbuilt drive towards either pole, but rather regional and local variation and possibilities. Although localities are brought together by technology, locality is also reinvented all the time. We should be looking at the differentiated positioning of actors rather than at symmetrical identities. We should not look for null points, but start with existing political confrontations, and seek temporality within this context of political confrontations.
In short, our general theorizing should be complemented by comparative case studies in which we can observe how people actually struggle with identity and the production of locality. Rather than arguing about what is the right interpretation of globalization, let us take the phenomenon covered by the term and extend it as far as we can, in order to cover the historical realities that lie behind it. This is what this programme is about.

Our claim in the above paragraph has been that by historicizing our perspective we can see that claims that our contemporary, globalized world is a new historical construction, radically different from earlier societies, should be modified. Certainly there are new trends. Certainly things are more “global”. But even today the process is not total. There are still differences in the distribution of these global forces, and also in the extent to which different groups of people participate in a globalised world. Using the same type of logic, it could be said that also in earlier periods there were sectors of communities and certain groups of people who were more involved in the global connections of the day. A focus on those sectors shows that also in earlier epochs there were flows of information that crossed oceans and continents and we can see that groups of people who presented themselves as bearers of a “global” perspective would have revealed many of the same processes as those of today; not empirically, of course, but as basic social processes. We see a “space of flows” emerging that is defined by a certain technology (for instance the technology of travel), certain places (the trade towns, which represented the “global cities” of the day) and certain people (such as groups of traders) that operate such spaces. We also see that in earlier epochs of global restructuring there were reactions, and there was a restructuring of identities. But reactions were not uniform. They were shaped by the various ways in which people located themselves in the broad processes, in support of the developments of the time, against them, or ignoring
them. We also see that identities emerge as a result of specific organizational histories, through which particular individuals played central roles in formulating ideas about what was going on, and mobilizing people in support of such ideas. Today, of course, we can say that these processes were limited, and that it is only today that the system is truly global. But we want to argue that seen from the perspective of the participants of the day, what they were doing must have appeared to be global, and that they believed they knew the world, and that the dynamism of their lives were different from the (primarily) peasant lives of the (traditional) populations with whom they interacted.

In this we argue against the notions that pre-modern and modern societies represent different types of communities, the difference between them being the difference in the handling of basic ontological categories. We argue that such a strong conclusion seems to lead us back to something we wanted to avoid - simplistic dichotomization between non-modern and modern. Based on an essentialist notion of how society really is. Why not settle for something less totalizing and try to understand a particular type of social formation, as defined by its institutions, forms of cultural imagination (distinct forms of rationality, cosmology, values and beliefs, conceptualizations of time and space etc), in a definite historical period? Not in the overall period of Modernity, but at specific moments of time. People themselves draw boundaries all the time, and that is a process that can be studied. Thus we argue that the encounters of interaction enable people to perceive their own particularistic cultures in new ways that provide new frames of meaning that affect the construction of the self. Such rationalizing processes are not continuous and unidirectional, rather, they are polycentric and contingent on many different processes. They are concerned with difference, but not necessarily a difference constituted by a Huntingtonean “clash of civilization”, but might also be characterised by permeable “symbolic frontiers”. 

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Actually, the focus on identities, on purity and impurity and on race might show dramatic differences within different historical contexts. The clash-of-civilisation- situation shows an emphasis on the exclusivity of boundaries, cementing theories of kinship rooted in fixed local groups with clear-cut characteristics and with a “pure” past. As a result, hybrid groups might be regarded as impure and inauthentic, in need of education and reform. Religious, ethnic and cultural “minorities” emerge on the scene, with a heightened awareness of themselves and their position in the larger scheme of things, thus providing a basis for a new type of identity politics from which various “clashes of civilizations” emerged. The second situation indicates the existence of a particular moral-practical milieu of intercultural networks of exchange and association that enabled both dialogue and cultural borrowings that punctuated the symbolic frontiers of civilizations.

6. The role of power

A key historical factor that has affected the way such encounters have evolved is the emergence of states and empires. The political frameworks laid down by power holders have always affected what power constellations will be significant. Studying “power” and “states in the making” become important for a programme such as this one. It leads us into the issue of legitimacy. In order to develop contributions on this we needed to generalize the basic problems of such states. Our starting point should be that every state formation is grounded in its historically determined cultural and social conditions. Only by identifying and investigating how specific states deal with the major challenges to their existence, and by proceeding to systematic comparisons can we hope to advance our understanding of the current challenges to the state in a truly global perspective. Many non-Western states cannot be reduced to Western notions of what a state is supposed to be and how it is expected to operate. Such “Western” notions
of what a state is clearly builds on Weber’s understanding of the state as being based on bureaucratic and institutional organizations of power, and that, by virtue of its monopolization of violence in territories it defines, the state mediates and regulates the terms of social and public order. It is questionable whether such an ideal type state ever was found, but in any case, we now have to move beyond this Weberian ideal type and recognize the fact that the state itself is embedded in a matrix of cultural and social relations that help shape a particular form of state organization. The state is not a clear-cut concept, but rather one that is filled with ambiguity and is constantly being “re-invented”, even though the international discourse continues to operate with the concept of “the state”. We should also confront the problem in the current literature on the future of the nation-state and the revived focus on “empires”. While some commentators argue that in the current phase of globalization the nation state as such, a power assemblage is no longer the dominant form, and that we are heading towards larger regional models, or even in the direction of new empires. Our starting point is that all these options are possible, but the way in which they will develop is by no means given. Although the concept of globalization and trans-nationalism seems to downplay the role of states and state power, it can be argued that the state continues to be a critical context for many processes that characterize the contemporary world. For instance, we cannot understand trans-nationalism as merely another word for “freedom of movement”. Both host states and states of origin place demands and restrictions on the migrant, but they may also offer migrants new opportunities. Diasporas may become influential political forces, promoting a particular state’s domestic and international interests. Conversely, states and their representatives also draw on their expatriate communities and the economic resources, political leverage in host countries, and professional skills that these may represent. Hence, we need not assume that there is any
contradiction between promoting a globalized economy and maintaining the international system of nation states.

7. Methodologies

In such an endeavour the word “history” becomes important, not only as a discipline but as epistemology. By putting our own contemporary world in a comparative perspective of earlier global formations we can see not only how our world came into being, but also alternative possibilities for human developments. Such a “historicizing of cultures” may be an alternative to contemporary reified forms of “culturalisms” and may guide our critical thinking of basic contemporary issues like ethnic and religious differences, questions of identities, patterns of exploitation and oppression and issues of violence and peace.

To do so, we need to place ourselves within relevant literature. We are clearly inspired by the writings of Fernand Braudel, whose historical analyses revolved around three «units of time»: the structure or long term, dominated by the geographical milieu (climate, biology and demography); the conjuncture or medium term in which social life appeared, and thirdly, the fleeting event, indicating the concerns of the individual. Even though Braudel later modified his perspectives, it remains that for him, society is a collection of parts assembled into an interrelated system, i.e. societies are sub-systems of wider systems. It is held together by the nature of the prevailing type of world economy, described in terms of three dimensions: «horizontally» in which the world system has a geographical centre, a «vertical» dimension in which activities exist at different levels of material civilization, market relationships and ownership, etc, and a «chronological» dimension with identifiable periods, long cycles. But we have also said that the use of history, of different historical periods or different epochs, should not only lead to a history of systemic
forces but also to a history of people living their lives. In this we are inspired by a history, for instance represented by Roger Chartier, that acknowledges that structures of the social world, as well as intellectual and psychological categories, are all produced historically, and that history is also about the processes by which meaning is constructed. Rather than look for causality then, we should be more interested in seeing the various ways in which historical processes provide material for various interpretations among people and lead to discussions of change. This requires a broad exploration, not only of ideas, but of the historical context within which such ideas are produced, reproduced and changed. Marshall Sahlins, for instance, claims that we can capture an entire indigenous order through an understanding of a cultural structure. He sees cultures coming together in ritual systems and in cosmological orders that are reproduced, elaborated and changed by people as they actively engage historical realities. But Sahlins’ culturalist analysis has also been criticized. One line of criticism is its lack of attention to historically situated actors. Robert Keesing and Fredrik Barth, for instance, argue that cultures are webs of mystification as well as signification and that we need to ask who creates and who defines cultural meanings, and to what ends; a reminder that requires us to specify what analytical space should be given to individual acts in our analyses. Others, such as Eric Wolf, point to the need for an explicit perspective on power relations. He has warned against the supposition that discourse is only a matter of literary form and genre. Discourse has its reasons and its consequences, argues Wolf.

We find all three theoretical positions of value to our analyses, and we regard it as important that none of the perspectives mentioned see culture as a series of clear-cut continuums with clear-cut boundaries, but rather as a phenomenon that is in constant flux. Even so, the flux is not total. It is patterned through social practice, through meaning-bearing vehicles and
categorical schemes. This implies that the flux originates not so much in our cultural ideas as in our specific experiences. We need to show that there is some reality to cultural patterns, without assuming that everyone will embrace the cultural in the same way, nor that everyone reads symbols the same way. Hence, within each individual study focus is on systemic forces as well as the role of people as active agents, whose actions shape those forces. We aim to show that in a world of overlapping social networks, with crosscutting boundaries and flows of meaning, people’s experiences in different periods are also touched by “global” social processes, but at the same time people’s interpretation of such processes vary widely and produce a variety of localized adaptations and responses. What needs to be done, then, is to see evolving societies in terms of their material conditions, technological and economic organization and class structures, but also as made up of populations unified by religion, myth, symbols and language. These sets of symbols made possible meaningful communication, not only within a society but also between societies. What we are after, then, are perspectives that allow for an understanding of the material condition of existence and inter-subjective meanings.

8. An interdisciplinary experiment

The types of analyses dealt with in this programme obviously need to be implemented through a variety of research strategies, methodologies, and data sources, and most of all, through our formulation of particular comparative research questions of the type indicated above. The broad comparative scheme of our programme, of human adaptations in the Levant in time and space, produces two results - it helps us isolate classifications and schemes that operate within our cases, and it shows us the temporary change of the same classifications and schemes. But the search for underlying dynamics also
requires us to engage in theoretical explanations of a different order from what is involved in the comparison itself. In addition to comparison we must address the “hows” and “whys”, i.e. processes and mechanisms behind the phenomena we look at. The inter-disciplinary work therefore presents us with several challenges.

One important step in our cross-disciplinary effort has been to understand the ways the different disciplines produce their arguments and generalizations based on different types of evidence, from the objects of archaeological excavations, to the source material of the historians and the ethnographic fieldwork of the anthropologists. The complexity of past and present society in the Levant can be approached through a number of methodological strategies. Archaeological mounds or “tells” in the Levant is one example. Typically they are made up of layers that contain cultural remains that span centuries and millennia. Within each layer one will likely find architectural remains, pottery, stone tools, trade goods, or animal remains attesting both inside and outside strands of influences, some going back only a few decades or centuries, others going back multiple millennia. Historians work on “texts” that provide insights into selected strands and their trajectories, including how cultural categories linked to the material artefacts were constructed.
and transformed at various points in time. For the studies of contemporary society, a basic point of entry that is not available in studies of the past, is ethnographic fieldwork. As the “tells” may be seen as the special domain of the archaeologists and “texts” that of the historians, “fieldwork” may be seen as the domain of the anthropologists, and in an interdisciplinary effort such as this, detailed contemporary case studies might bring an understanding of human adaptations that can be made use of by the disciplines dealing with earlier periods.

From such an increased awareness of the basic methodologies of the disciplines involved, we have sought systematically to build on insights from all of them to build up descriptions of key dynamics within our periods. It is such descriptions that form the basis of our comparisons, not the various types of “facts” that we uncover. Hence, the building of descriptions that allow for real comparisons across time and space make up a key challenge, not only on the empirical level but also on a theoretical one. We need to include various forms of meta-discussions relating to our key issue of understanding large scale regional dynamics as they evolve through historical periods. We need to visit theories that deal with large scale systems, such as world systems theory, various forms of civilization studies in which complex societies are analyzed, as well as the contemporary debates on the process of globalization. “Systems oriented” approaches must be balanced by more “people oriented” ones, in which we can discuss the role of culture, the role of historical agency and the role of social practice within the dynamics of larger systems. Our discussions in our annual meetings have focussed on structure-agency debates, on how to conceptualize time, historical processes and forms of historicity, on how to understand general cultural and civilisational dynamics including the understanding of meaning systems such as religions, and on the understanding of various types of power and legitimacy,
be they in the political field and of relevance to state formation
and political culture, or in the social field, of relevance to
systems of social inequality based on gender, ethnicity or class.
Through such discussions the programme participants have
realised that, by the above way of thinking, methodology is no
longer a set of neutral techniques, but is the interrelationship
between substantive problems, sources of evidence, and larger
assumptions about society and history. We need what Laura
Nader calls “a composite approach”, and to bring reflexivity and
criticisms into the building of our arguments. In this process
we have concentrated as much on the generation of exciting
hypotheses and questions as we have on the formally correct
testing procedures. We have moved between the general and
the particularistic in order to arrive at an understanding of how
phenomena relate in systems of interrelationships rather than
insist on preconceived notions about where to find systems
dynamics. In short, a major lesson of the programme is that at
times we might have to trade narrow analytical elegance for a
broad empirical realism. But we have also learnt that this is not
the end of theorizing, but the beginning of it!

References:


A core activity of the Global Moment in the Levant collaboration is the annual week-long workshop during which team members meet and update each other on progress on their research projects and exchange ideas about future directions and possibilities for collaboration. Summaries of the presentations made by each team member at these workshops are included in the following chapter.
Leif Manger introduced the “Frameworks” of the Global Moment collective research vision (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

Three broad parameters for considering major developments in the Levant from the Palaeolithic until the present which might be considered are:

1. Adaptations: the emergence of micro-ecologies, economies and social structures, abstractly termed “meaning-bearing vehicles.”

2. Inter-civilizational encounters: the Levant is between continents, a crossing point. These crossing processes include trade and political relations. Themes coming out of this coalesce under the general term “connectivities.”

3. Power Contexts: The dynamic locales of power relations can be seen as social, political or gender. Landscapes of power involve the built environment such as temples; significant information on religious structures would include their degree of embeddedness, whether their design serves local, regional or imperial religio-political purposes.

Randi Haaland, “Food Systems in the Neolithic” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

My research has concentrated on Africa and thus begins
with African food systems. The African record of agricultural production predates the Middle Eastern by a significant amount. For example, pottery for food storage in Mali dates from 13,000 B.C.

Thus a comparison with the Near East – a “cosmology of food” - begins with this African base: In Africa the staple agricultural products – ranging from Mali to Sudan – are sorghum and millets, which are used both for solid food such as porridge and for beer. That consumption is an essential feature of human relationships is demonstrated by the sipping of beer through straws from a communal pot, pictured in ancient art (a recent find in Meroé, Sudan) and surviving until the recent past. Porridge is the distinctive African staple grain-based food.

In the Near East stock agricultural products were barley and wheat, which were used to produce bread and beer. This geographic sphere includes Egypt, which experienced a switch form porridge to bread. Evidence for early bread production includes grinders, hearths (bread baked in ashes, not oven-made). Evidence for beer exists as early as the Natufian culture. In art from Sumer dated to 4500 B.C. there is a depiction of communal beer sipping. For Global Moments this comparison will be pursued via further studies of early near-Eastern foods; for example, why porridge was not known there, though the two regions have beer in common.

_Randi Haaland, “Food systems, food symbolism and sociability” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)_

As I described at the previous workshop, African and Middle East food systems have a different base, sorghum for the first and bread for the second. A connecting link, however, is beer, which is basic both to diet and to sociability. In fact, viewed in
terms of sociability, beer in Africa and bread in the Near East serve parallel roles.

In Africa beer was the social drink, sucking beer a communal activity. From one eighth to a third of grain produced (sorghum and millets) was used to produce beer. In the Near East, bread was the social food, as exemplified in Biblical images like Jesus breaking the bread for sharing with His disciples. Yeast, used in bread, is a symbol for social transformation. “Bread” in some languages, Turkish for example, is synonymous with “food”.

It is suggested that beer was already used during early exploitation of cereals, i.e. by 10,000 BP. Evidence for beer production in the Near East became more plentiful after the invention of pottery vessels. The detection of beer storage was enabled by the discovery that beer causes pitting in the interior surface of clay vessels. There is good evidence for beer production in the early dynastic period of Sumer, and one artistic representation depicts the sucking of beer through straws, parallel to the African practice.

The geographic connector for these African and Near Eastern food-ways is Egypt. While beer was the staple drink throughout the region, grain-based food saw a shift from sorghum porridge to wheat/barley bread in the pharaonic period. These patterns, set in the Neolithic cultural revolution have survived over several millennia and therefore constitute a global “moment” of longue durée.


Last year’s presentation dealt with the comparative origins of
staple foods in Africa and the Near East. In Africa the invention of pottery vessels 10,000 years ago was associated with the development of grain porridge. In the Near East the central role of bread and the presence of baking ovens accompanies the absence of pottery this early, because vessels were not important for bread. In the Sudan, the sorghum-porridge culture appears to have been fully domesticated by 2000 B. C. It appears earlier in Yemen and Oman, and then also appears in India.

This paper reports on my recent trip to India to research the domestication and dispersal of sorghum to India 4000 years ago. Including sorghum, three basic foodstuffs moved to India, particularly to the Deccan Plateau. The environmental conditions can be described as “savannah,” like those in Africa. A basic requirement of the geographic spread of a food source is that a plant must be taken from its natural habitat into a new environment with comparable growth conditions. This environmental compatibility made it possible for sorghum culture to transfer from the Horn of Africa to the Deccan of India. Parallel movements to India include bread from the Near East and rice from East Asia.

One puzzle in the transfer of the African food-way is that not a single African archaeological object connected with sorghum has been found in India.

The process of the spread of sorghum from Africa must have been along the coasts by water, following the trade routes along the southern coast of Arabia, the Persian Gulf and coasts of the Indian Ocean, rather than over land or across open water. On the Deccan Plateau itself native millets dated to 5000 B.P has been excavated. African food-crops appeared in 4000 B.P. While these African foods came from the west, the Near Eastern foods came from the north, likely via Harappan
settled in the Indus Valley. Future research will include tracing later connections for food movement to India. For example, the Roman Periplus is a major literary source for the movement of goods from the Mediterranean to India and back around 100 A.D. Another intriguing question is the reverse flow of foods, such as the spread of bananas from Asia to Africa around 2500 B.P.

Nils Anfinset, “Cultivation and pastoralism in the 5th and 4th Millennia B.C.” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

My interest is in the roles of pastoralism and cultivation in the 5th-4th millennia, up to the emergence of complex societies in the late 4th millennium. This inquiry is influenced by the work on arid-region pastoralism by Andrew Shryock, inspired by the World Systems approach – though that does not apply directly – and seeks to lay out the broad trends over the longue durée.

The specific evidence for this comes from the excavations at Tell el-Mafjar, which dates to the Neolithic-Chalcolithic, not to the Chalcolithic-Bronze Age as was first thought. The list of artifacts includes scrapers, mortars and pestles, tokens and animal figurines. Spindle whorls indicate wool spinning and early domestication of sheep. Cereals include wheat and barley, legumes lentils and peas; bones indicate the presence of cattle. One question is whether the site reflects “specialized” pastoralism.

Nils Anfinset, “Societies without a state: Pastoral nomads and villagers in the Levant” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

While the paper in the previous workshop dealt specifically with late Neolithic cultures at sites being excavated, like Jericho, this
paper deals more generally with the phenomenon of “societies without a state:” economic relations between pastoral nomads and villagers in the fifth and fourth millennia BC. Understanding the economy of this period represents a key “global moment,” the transition from the earlier Neolithic to the later urban cultures.

A discussion of the domestication of sheep and goats derives from the work of Tom Levy and Steve Rosen in the Negev — where Rosen posits domestication as early as 6000 BC, Gary Rollefson and Leslie Quintero in the Jordanian uplands, William and Felicity Lancaster in the eastern harra and Don Henry in the southern hisma of Jordan.

Village sites like Shiqmim and Ghassul (that is, complex chiefdoms) should provide the evidence for the sort of pastoralism practiced – meat production or milk? – with the evidence from Ghassul pointing to milk production in the context of agriculture. Evidence for the manufacture, use and trading of metal objects between villages and pastoral nomads comes from an interesting case in the central Negev, where Steve Rosen’s “Camel” site served as the center for a nomadic exchange system.

How complex were these stateless societies? Parallels may be provided from the study of North American subsistence economies where there was a high interest in metal implements and where surplus production points to their use for political rewards. Such rewards may provide a measure of the operation of mechanisms of inequality as well as equality.

This emergence of low-level social differences is “the first brick in the wall of urban societies.” Thus the further study of specialized pastoralism and refined understanding of economic relationships between village and tent-camp will help elucidate
this global moment, the laying of the groundwork for the emergence of urban societies and polities in the Levant.


Last year’s paper focused on economic relations between pastoral nomads and villagers in the late 5th and 4th Millennium BC as a component of the growth of complex societies. A political economy is characterized by the growth of bureaucracy, the development of a state society with organized production and participation in a “world system” economy. Production within the household (cf. Marshall Sahlins), played a central role in the development of more complex economies. Household manufacture also included the practice of a “gift economy” for the movement of goods from the household to the larger society. The lead-up for these transitions was the emergence of agricultural economies in the 5th and 4th Millennia B.C. Tom Levy documented the climax of this process in his work at Shiqmim in the Beersheba area of the Negev at the point of transition.

Some of the material characteristics for this emergent political economy include:

- The shift from communal to individual burials in the Chalcolithic period.
- The appearance of spindle whorls for wool production.
- The prevalence of tokens used in the transfer of bulk commodities in the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic.
- Emergence of the manufacture of copper starting 4000 BC. Note that though this came relatively late, it was still located in households rather than community
structure, i.e. in the area of gift-giving rather than mass production.

- Shifting settlement pattern with spread into more marginal areas.

This suggest evidence of a more communal socio-political structure with the presence of egalitarian chiefdoms not unlike those of the Ubaid-period villages of northern Mesopotamia.

Øystein LaBianca, “My journey to Global Moments” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

My journey began with study of food systems at Hesban, from which the deep-time pattern appeared in the shape of the dynamic interplay between sedentarization and nomadization. This interplay sees the functioning of societies at local levels, at which the cultural pattern may be described in terms of seven aspects:

1. Local water harvesting
2. Mixed agro-pastoralism
3. Residential flexibility
4. Fluid homeland territories (no private ownership, no fixed borders)
5. Hospitality
6. Honour and shame (as social-control mechanisms)
7. Kin-based social networks (tribalism)

This list of seven aspects represents the “little” side of Robert Redfield’s distinction between Great Traditions and Little Traditions in his analysis of the cultural components of a civilization. While the little traditions enable people to cope and survive, the great traditions are the luminescent achievements in architecture, art etc., enabled by the resources of great
In the Levant this civilizational pattern is cross-fertilized by “connectivities”; the fact that the area is a land-bridge, a meeting point of centres of civilization such as Iran, Egypt and Greece. The aptness of considering “Global Moments” is pointed up by the current re-examination of the concept of “axial age,” in which the Levant is the connector in the first Millennium B.C. global transformation of intellectual and religious perspectives. Especially helpful in this revival of Karl Jaspers’ paradigm is Johann Ainason and S. N. Eisenstadt: *Axial Civilizations and Worlds History*.

Øystein LaBianca, “Tribes, tribal kingdoms, empires and civilizations in the Levant: A deep-time perspective on power constellations, inter-civilizational encounters, global moments and the quest for social order in the contact zone” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

Consideration of the Levant in “deep time” is enhanced by studying the prominent role played by the succession of numerous empires and the sort of order they established among the Levantine peoples. For an understanding of the ways in which such empires served the local social order from a peace perspective, a helpful book is Vilho Harte’s *Ideas of Social Order in the Ancient World* (1998). For a peaceful life, according to Harte, the goals of a social order are three: 1) that life be secure (security), 2) that promises be kept (truth), and 3) that basic sustenance be available (property). Such a social order may be seen as the product of social power, provided in successive historical periods by strong men, tribal kings, states and empires.

In deep time, the Levant has been controlled or influenced
by some thirty empires, beginning with the Akkadian and Egyptian and ending with the Ottoman and European powers. All of these have in their own way been agents of civilization, by exporting their distinctive civilizational constructs by means of the application of imperial power, from exterior epicentres into the traditional local cultural settings of the Levant. This succession of political empires provides the historical framework for sorting out the interplay between “great traditions” and “little traditions” set out in my previous paper presented at the 2005 Global Moments Workshop.

An example of such an inter-civilizational encounter on a major scale is the Hellenistic empire established by Alexander’s conquests. His post-conquest “mission”, applied with the ardent missionary zeal of the European Christian missionaries that we are also studying, was the establishment of Greek-cultured urban centres throughout the Near East. The Hellenization of the Levant thus represents a major global moment in its history. Not all power constellations affecting this interplay of great and little traditions in the Levantine contact zone are easy to categorize as “empire.” The Nabataeans, for example, while commercially powerful and culturally very influential, fit somewhere in the middle of the dynamic interplay between the “great” and the “little.”

A well worked-out chronological list of the successive empires, with brief characterizations describing their cultural and political impacts on the Levant, may be accessed at www.israelipalestinianprocon.org/history.html (The list focuses on Israel-Palestine rather than the entire Levant, and puts rather tiny non-imperial polities into its linear time-line succession at some points. For example, at one point it lists only the Hasmonaeans, but ignores the contemporary Ptolemaic, Seleucid and Nabataean states, among others).
The challenge of the Global Moments enterprise is to penetrate below the caricatures provided by such a list of empires to achieve an understanding of the dynamic that drives all the inter-civilizational encounters of the deep past and to clarify how that dynamic continues to shape such encounters and the resulting social order in the Levant of today.

Øystein LaBianca, “Local-Level Power: The Role of Little Traditions in Responding to Imperial Predations in Jordan” (3rd Workshop, March 26-27, 2007)

The perspective of this paper comes from within the Madaba Plains project, especially the archaeology at Tell Hesban as a “Window on Empires”. The larger project is the study of the role of empires in research with publications appearing in BASOR and ADAJ, and promotion of the study in a network of academic organizations.

The research question is: How did local households in the Levant respond to three millennia of imperial (predatory) controls? The methodology has adopted a “systems” approach (like “Food Systems”), the determination of an oscillating pattern of intensification and abatement, associated with sedentarization and nomadization. The larger framework involves the placement of local social orders in the global context of civilizations (with their “luminous constellations” of traits discussed in last year’s paper). The juxtaposition of culture influences from epicentres with those rooted locally has been dubbed “Great Traditions – Little Traditions,” a rubric coined by Robert Redfield.

While Great Traditions, often enforced imperially and sometimes with predatory intent, tend to overwhelm, local cultures survive these powerful forces through the deep-rooted
Little Traditions. Surviving traces for places like Hisban are detectable through excavation, ethno-archaeology and text traditions. Here is my list of seven clusters of Little Traditions:

1. Local-level water management (subsistence self-sufficiency)
2. Mixed agro-pastoralism (combining field systems and transhumance pasture rights)
3. Residential flexibility (fluctuation between tents, houses and caves)
4. Fluid homeland territories (no fixed borders)
5. Hospitality (including gift-giving-based networks of exchange)
6. Honour and shame (locally based social control)
7. Tribalism (kin-based community solidarity)

In conclusion, an example for (7) is the Biblical story in I Samuel 9:1-19, in which the prophet responds to popular pressure for monarchy with an eloquent critique of central kingship from the local tribal point of view. The story of security in the Levant is as much – if not more – about reliance on local polities as about reliance on state/imperial ones.

Bert de Vries, “Rural Prosperity and Security from the era of the Roman to the Early Islamic empires: The case of Umm el-Jimal, 1st – 9th c. A. D.” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

The interplay between the central controlling empires and the local subject communities is a recurring motif of Levantine history from the early Bronze Age to the present. Usually this is seen and evaluated from the centers of power, with the ‘empire’ as provider of security and innovator of culture. Local people tend to be seen as passively shaped recipients.
When studied from the local point of view, it is not at all clear that communities are most secure when imperial controls are the strongest or that imperial culture innovations are any more than external symbols of power. It is a thesis of this study that the inverse can be true. A further thesis is that a civilization like the Roman is a product of the dynamic meeting of a complex set of influences radiating the center to the periphery and coursing from the periphery to the center.

This paper introduces the specific case of Umm el-Jimal a rural site in northern Jordan which originated in the era of Nabataean-Roman accommodation in the first century and survived the succession of Roman, Byzantine and Islamic imperial controls until abandonment in the ninth century. Analysis of data from decades of archaeological field work will be used to develop a specific case for the above theoretical perspective.

**Bert de Vries, “Religion and society in the Roman Levant”**

(2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006) *Relations between local and imperial motifs in temple design*

The title of this presentation addresses the specifics of the research; visual analysis of temple design for understanding the cross-currents of influences between local and imperial influences on temple architecture, architectural decoration and sculpture forms of statuary. Thus, the study represents another use of visual data, photographic and graphic renderings of these material remains. The disciplinary focus here is art historical rather than journalistic, as it was in the missionary photos. The study is the joint work of the presenter and student Elizabeth Osinga.

Seen more abstractly, as a study of the role of empire from
the local point of view, the thematic title is “Paradoxes of Power.” The point here is that what one sees in the remains of temples is an outcome of the dynamic relationship between the relatively more powerful imperial centre and less powerful local subject. Another version of that dynamic was introduced at last year’s workshop with the study of the evolution/ transformation of military fortifications from the Roman to the Islamic imperial occupations of the Levant.

Nabataean temple design was chosen for study because the history of the relationship between the Nabataean kingdom and the Roman Empire entails a relatively long period of independence (up to AD 106), a period during which Nabataean forms were nevertheless strongly influenced by Hellenistic and Roman styles. It is therefore possible to compare the nature of voluntary borrowing during the era of independence to the more proscribed borrowing during Rome’s occupation of the region, now known as the province of Arabia.

While the temples appeared Roman in their exterior façades, their actual plans represent a variety of forms. None were laid out according to the Vitruvian guidelines for a rectangular peripteral temple. Architectural decorations began as Graeco-Roman in appearance, but were rapidly adapted to local taste. Statuary ranged from the classical forms of faces and bodies of the classical world to the indigenous stylized god-blocks (baetyl), and later included the adaptation of Syrian sculpture styles.

In the current phase of this study regional relationships are being considered, with Oisinga treating Egypt and Nabataea, and de Vries Syria and Nabataea. Analysis of this data leads to a complex set of imperial-local relationships as an expanded depiction of the “paradoxes of power”.

1. Is imperial influence “benevolent”?  
   * Issues of military force and security – B. Isaac, The Limits of Empire; J.M. Coetzee (Constantine Cavafy), Waiting for the Barbarians  
   * Is the culture of the epicentre accepted without resistance?  
   * What is the propaganda factor in the view from the epicentre?  

2. What is the nature of acculturation in the power dynamic?  
   * Does the adoption of Roman appearance also mean the acceptance of Roman substance (e.g., religiosity)?  
   * Is the emulation of Roman style sincere or sycophantic?  
   * Is it a striving of the less powerful to close the distance between them and the more powerful? (Geert Hofstede)  
   * Is the assertion of local culture a demonstration of independence, a form of revolt?  
   * The relationship between culture and empire is dynamic and multi-directional.  
   * Rapid but superficial flow from the centre to the local periphery  
   * Reassertion of local culture; retention of diversity  
   * Flow from the periphery to the centre? (Horace’s Graecia Capta)  
   * Continued assertion of regional influences (Syria, Egypt, Arabia, Persia)  

The paper given in 2005 was entitled “Umm el-Jimal: Variations on the themes of Security and Prosperity in the Levant – ‘A Global Moment’ 1st-11th centuries. A.D.” and in 2006 “Nabatean Temples form Independence to Roman Rule.” These are variations on the theme of local security in the face of imperial domination, the motif of my GML research. An emergent in this study is “Empires: Paradoxes of Power.”

The paradox in this paper is the inverse relationship between the nature of imperial military control and the degree of local cultural autonomy. The cultural side of such a paradox was famously expressed for Rome’s prior conquest of Greece in the poet Horace’s Graecia capta: “Greece, taken captive, captured her savage conqueror and brought the arts to rustic Latium.” Warwick Ball’s thesis in Rome in the East: the Transformation of an Empire extends this maxim to Levantine culture: “In the West, the Romans were the civilizers; in the East, it was the Romans who were on the receiving end of civilization” (2000, p. 449).

This paper discusses the military side of the paradox. It is occasioned by the publication of S. Thomas Parker, The Roman Frontier in Central Jordan: Final Report on the Limes Arabicus Project, 1980-1989, 2 vols. (Dumbarton Oaks, 2006). The author was project architect and has contributed drawings and chapters, including, “The Fortifications of el-Lejjun” (with Victoria Godwin and Andrea Lain, Ch. 6, pp. 187-212).

Rome established imperial control over the Mediterranean with a combination of aggressive military force applied by its legions and diplomatic consensus acquired from local elites. Military policing of conquered populations was secondary to rule by consensus, but insurgencies were cruelly suppressed with desperate emergency campaigns. In the East, where Rome inherited the existing socio-political structure of Greek
rule over local populations, consensus included empowerment of Greek-speaking urban elites and Hellenized local rulers. The vast majority of local non-elites, urban proletariat, rural peasants and steppe nomads were incidental to the raison-d’être of the empire and remained excluded from this rule by Roman governor – local elite coalition. (I was reminded of this Roman structure with the inception of the American occupation of Iraq in mid-2003, when Paul Bremer arrived to establish the American occupation via local (expatriate) elites like Chalabi and Alawi.)

The Roman military strategy for occupation of the Levant was developed as circumstances of this provincial rule required, and evolved through three phases:

1. First Century BC to Third Century AD
In this first phase Rome relied on a combination of the existing armies of the Hellenistic rulers who became Rome’s puppets and its own mobile legions, which it imported from the West. Reliance on the local armies gradually diminished as Rome turned puppet states (like Nabataea) into provinces (Arabia). While some areas appeared to be stable, the weakness of the strategy (described above) led to dangerous rebellions (Jewish insurgency and Palmyrene rebellion) which Rome was barely able to suppress. The combination of policy and unrest resulted in the severe immiseration and dislocation of large segments of local tribal and sendentized communities of the Levant.

2. Third to early Fifth Centuries AD
After ending the Palmyrene rebellion, the Roman emperors resumed its occupation with a new strategy: the construction of massive permanent stone fortifications - legionary camps, smaller castellae and watchtowers – which are still visible on the Levantine landscape and now much studied. Some, like Parker, see these forts arrayed as a defensive “zone” along
the desert frontier to protect local subjects from raids/invasions by nomads/Persians. Others, like Benjamin Isaac, have downplayed the nomad threat and stressed policing for keeping order among subjects within the frontiers. Still others, like Warwick Ball, see the forts as bases both for the essentially foreign occupation and as staging sites for the undying imperial passion for invasion and conquest of Persia. Though in function they were mere military camps for foreign troops, as looming structures in stone the forts were imprints of Rome’s distant power on the local landscape: An architecture of intimidation through “symbolic violence” (from Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*; for parallel discussion of militaristic symbolism in art, see Nasser Rabbat, “The Militarization of Taste” in *Muslim Military Architecture in Greater Syria*). Leif Manger has suggested treating this relationship between form and power in the framework of *The Political Landscape*, Adam Smith’s analysis of the role of archaeology in linking political power and material evidence in the landscape.

3. The Fifth to early Seventh Centuries AD.
In the context of other major transformations (mass conversion to Christianity, for example) fortresses on the frontier were gradually abandoned, some already by AD 400, but in other cases not until demobilization in the mid-sixth century. While the Byzantine army and some fortifications remained closer to the coast, the transitional region on the desert side were managed by more mobile federated Arab allies, in succession the Tanukhid, Salikhid and Ghassanid phylarchies (e.g. the works of Irfan Shahîd).

Some former forts (Umm el-Jimal, Qastron Mefaa) became civilian settlements, part of a densely populated rural landscape, a “countryside of villages” (Fergus Millar), which gives evidence of an era of peace which the previous monopoly of the elites was broken and prosperity extended to a more
autonomous local society including the previously excluded rural farmers and nomadic herders. To achieve this, the Ghassanid Arab phylarchy played a prominent role in bridging the divide between village farmer and nomad “Saracen,” a divide previously so vital to Rome’s imagined threats to power.

Thus the sixth-century Levant appears to have enjoyed a “A Century of Peace” from which all levels of society benefited at the very time that the Roman (now Byzantine) controls shifted from a foreign military occupation for the benefit of empire to the provision of local security for the benefit of the subjects. Inherent in this is the paradox of power: local security was the best when central military power was at its weakest.


The 15th-century transformation in the Mamluk administration of the Jordan region will be considered as a Global Moment; i.e. a major transitional event or crisis that affected the Levant in the middle of the “Age of the Sultans,” the 12th – 19th centuries. The decline of the Mamluk state is a major focus of attention in both American and French centres of Middle Eastern Studies. My own work focuses on political ecology, the impacts on local people and their agricultural resources in face of the manipulation of power by government and non-government organizations.

This work comprises the study of Mamluk archives in Cairo, particularly the examination of waqfiyyāt, the on-going excavation of Mamluk Hesban, and archaeological research at Malka-Hubras in North Jordan. This last will include environmental assessment of the worsening agricultural conditions, including soil analysis and climate study, and the
excavation of a Mamluk mosque.

Bethany Walker, “Imperial-rural relations evaluated through land-use: Late medieval and Ottoman Jordan” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

This is a study in imperial-rural relations in the late Mamluk – Ottoman transition of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Its specific focus is on the political ecology of Jordan under the Cairo-centred policies of Sultans Barqūq and Farāj. Their economic policies have to be seen against a backdrop of natural disasters – plague and drought – and manmade disasters such as civil war and the Timurid invasion of Syria. The project combines text data derived from Mamluk archives in Cairo with archaeological and landscape data collected through fieldwork in Jordan (Hesban and Malka Projects).

Research on economic documents, especially waqfiyyāt, uncovered the following practices and circumstances: 1. Mamluk investments in southern Syria; 2. Waqf endowments – rural and religious; 3. Fifteenth century withdrawal of services coincidental with prolonged drought; and 4. In the course of this crisis a) Jordan resorted to traditional land-owning practices, and b) Waqf estates survived as the tax base.

Official land surveys reveal that some land was parcelled out according to the iqṭa’ system to create feudal estates, with local populations attached to the land for three years. This reduced local land ownership in favour of large estates, e.g. sugar plantations, with negative impacts on the local economy and the environment. During the reign of Barquq, endowed Jordanian villages were exploited for waqf income, which was used to pay for Egyptian madrasas. Ironically, this increased centralized control created a buffer against economic collapse.
threatened by the combination of drought and plague.

In response to the catastrophic combination of oppression, war and drought, the rural peasantry became more politicized in the following ways: 1. Circulation of legal petitions for redress which mostly backfired; 2. revolts by villagers; in spite of some successes most suffered brutal suppression; and 3. abandonment, a form of resistance for those legally attached to the land.

It is interesting to note that on comparing the effects of the Black Death on England and Egypt, in England the population decrease opened up opportunities for surviving peasants who had independent access to land; whereas, in Egypt that did not happen because in the iqta’ system peasants were attached to land being exploited by absentee landlords.

Bethany Walker, “Reflections on Rural Islam and Engagement with the State” (3rd Workshop, March 26-27 2007)

This paper deals with the ways in which communities of Mamluk and Ottoman Jordan could arrange their local religious life in the context of external imperial administration. Specifically this means the engagement of local Islam in the creation and use of its own mosques and shrines, which as structures, can be examined archaeologically.

The research breaks down into three broad questions:

1. On a general level, how do imperial actions influence local institutions and practices? A significant geo-political factor is the selection of specific sites serving as centres for administrative districts. In food economy the variable is the degree of local
autonomy in planting, basically outside plantations, where the cash export crops were indigo, wheat and sugar. Financially, the *iqṭāʿ* tax system deeply influenced the financial aspect of land ownership and transformed the conditions of land tenure. Commerce depended on the access to and demand from international markets (via Egypt and Palestine). Intellectual and social networks were largely controlled by the *ʿulema*, in the Mamluk era connected to Syria, and in the Ottoman era to Palestine.

2. Similarly, what is the potential of local communities for transformation of the empire from within? Significant variables for answering this are:

   a. The degree of flexibility of institutions and administrative structures;
   b. The presence of a malleable and constantly evolving political culture;
   c. The levels of local political autonomy

3. How can local religious communities, then, define “the imperial”? Three aspects of this are:

   a. The level of local control over administration and finance. In the Mamluk period religious institutions relied on significant local funding, while in the Ottoman period there was greater local autonomy. Government patronage of local political leaders is a factor.

   b. Local shaping of religious culture was driven by specific sacred sites, pilgrim destinations, and the creation of access through construction of a road network.

   c. Local criticism of the state. Religious leaders were a major channel for venting criticism, and local Jordanian
communities were full of criticism of the Ottoman state.

The archaeological side of this inquiry involves work at three north Jordanian villages and their landscapes: Hubras, Sahm and Malka. Local excavation and landscape survey are combined with the study of written sources (waqf records, inscriptions and coins in the Mamluk; tax records, travellers” accounts, and correspondence in the Ottoman era); ethnography and analysis of standing architecture. The remainder of this paper is a summary of the 2006 field season.

1. Hubras is a well-documented mediaeval village, in which a mediaeval mosque (possibly Umayyad, used for at least eight centuries until 1931) is located within a Mandate-commissioned mosque (founded in 1931; used until 1970). Excavations began in 2006.

2. Sahm, near the Syrian border, appears in Tanzimat records of the 19th Century, and has a mosque closed by Awqaf for repair, reopened through intense community pressure in 1984, but now closed. The complex includes a kuttab, residence of the imam.

3. Malka, 8 km east of Um Qeis, occurs in a waqf document of 1393 C.E. belonging to the Sultan. It was involved in the olive industry and the location of a shrine founded by Iraqi Sufi Sheik Omar (Rumi) of the Qadariyya Order.

General conclusions: The Mamluk and Ottoman Levant provides a distinctive locus for identifying the characteristics of imperial frontiers, for determining how an empire can be transformed from the periphery and for measuring the room left for local autonomy within the strictures of central administration. In comparing the relationship of imperial to local, the Mamluks ruled local people more responsibly than the Ottomans.

The general research framework of my specialization is the Sudan under Ottoman-Egyptian rule from 1820-1885, and secondly on the activities of the Ottoman Central Treasury (Beit el-Māl) of the Sudan. Current research deals with long-distance trade involving peasant communities along the Nile across the Indian Ocean and the Sahara Desert. Specific research questions include:

1. How villages are affected by long-distance trade patterns.
2. How agencies structure partnerships over thousands of miles.
3. How the Levant acts as a bridge for trade across Palestine Syria with Bostra and Aleppo.

Specific application of this to Global Moments will focus on this question: what specific impacts did the Ottoman Empire have on shaping trade routes, e. g. between Cairo and Damascus, or between Bostra and the Persian Gulf. To isolate the role of ‘empire’ as a variable, the Ottoman situation can be compared to its Ayyubid and Mamluk predecessors, or with the Nabataean, Byzantine and Fatimid empires in the more distant past.

Kamal Abdulfattah and Anders Bjørkelo “Urban-rural relations in Palestine with particular reference to the central mountain areas in the 18th and 19th centuries” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

This paper examines the economic role of market towns both with regard to the hinterland and with regard to regional and
long-distance trade. The productive capacity of Palestinian villages and town industries is outlined. It argues for more studies of merchant networks and the dynamics of merchant families as points of entry into regional interconnections. Finally, it also looks at the economic and political consequences of global moments such as the Napoleonic and Egyptian invasions. Important themes like the rise of a merchant class and elite formation in the context of Ottoman reforms are only alluded to here, but will get more attention as the project develops.

*Kamal Abdulfattah, “Ottoman Fiscal and Administrative Organization in the Levant” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)*

In framing, research on Ottoman fiscal and administrative organization in the Levant, the following research parameters are pertinent:

1. There is a strong background from administrative records in the Byzantine, Seljuk and Mamluk activities in the Levant.
2. Local archival sources include waqfiyyāt, records in monastic cloisters and trade capitulations – Genoese, French, etc.
3. The records and oral histories of prominent local families – merchant elites – everywhere in the Levant.
4. Closely related to (3) are the seats of local power (like the qur’a karāshi – ‘throne villages’ of Palestine), records and archaeological remains.
5. A huge amount of European literature.

The data could be coordinated on a GIS map of the region.

Ottoman Imperial reforms of the mid-nineteenth century produced significant socio-economic consequences in the peripheral provinces. This paper presents the joint research done by Anders and Kamal on the effects of those reforms in Transjordan.

The basic sources for this work include the sijil records of the shari’a courts of Palestine and Transjordan, hand-written daftars archived at the University of Jordan, but now increasingly available in digital-photograph form. Much valuable secondary material exists in the form of Ph.D. theses already done on the sijils at the University of Jordan.

The research is expected to put into clearer focus the rich history of the expansion of commercial and agrarian society around the urban centres of Es-Salt and ‘Ajloun. The three triggers for this expansion, which can be seen as products of Ottoman reform are: (1) the presence of military garrisons; (2) the registration and distribution of commonly held tribal and village land (musha’); (3) the inflow of commercial capital from Palestine and Syria.

This Ottoman-local dynamic not only produced commerce-based urban centres like Es-Salt, but also reinvigorated the agricultural economies from Kerak to Irbid. Social beneficiaries of this invigoration were the previously nomadic tribal leaders of south central Transjordan, the agrarian village sheikhs of the ‘Ajloun area, and the new merchant-landowners arriving from Palestinian centres like Nablus. The resulting socio-economic landscape formed the underpinnings for Jordan’s modern urban-agrarian texture.
Knut Vikør, “Ottoman legal developments” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

Research will focus on Ottoman legal development in the context of modernization in the Levant – Syria and Palestine. The direction taken by the legal structuring of societies depends on the playing out of tension between three conceptions of what is right: (1) Shari’a (Koran-based law), (2) Qanun (Ottoman ‘civil’ law) and (3) general social norms (e.g. patriarchal authority). One longstanding issue is the role of *ijtihad* in adapting traditional law to current circumstances. Such issues are being debated in Syria. The Palestinian Authority plans to write its own law to escape from under the accumulated baggage of Ottoman, British, Jordanian and Israeli legislation. Issues in developing modern law range from traditional issues such as honour killings to cutting-edge modern ones like genetic manipulation.


We (Rania) did three weeks of research in Syria and a ten-day period of research in Lebanon *in order* to establish a library of written sources, and we (Knut) bought books on women and law in local book stores. Our presentation consists of preliminary thoughts based on these experiences. Rania reported:

Why study family law? The answer is, in order to identify the formal mechanisms governing gender in patriarchal relationships. In Islamic societies of the Middle East there is a distinction between law in the private sphere and law in the public sphere. Family law fits into the first of these and
is perceived to lie at the heart of the Shari’a. Recent study on family law in Western research circles (academia as well as activist groups and networks) has been gendered through specific focus on the role and legal position of women. There are numerous expressions of law in society and, because the state is not sovereign in forming and applying family law, the variety of activities regarding the legal interpretation of texts in a more liberal or conservative direction is a hallmark of internal reform movements in Syria and Lebanon.

A significant factor for research in this field is that legal texts *per se* do not reflect social situations in real life, and more research is needed on the different ways in which family law based on texts from the Shari’a and different church laws are presented and implemented as ‘state law’ in multi-religious societies.

A summary of actual research that compares different religious groups in Syria and Lebanon follows:

1. We examined some of the socio-religious categories in both states: In Lebanon the Shi’a community was particularly in focus. In Syria, family law as applied by the Greek Catholics (Melchites), the Druze and the Greek Orthodox communities were compared to the laws that regulate the majority Sunni community. Syria has common laws for its citizens except for special regulations regarding marriage and divorce for the Druze, Christian and Jewish communities. Lebanon has separate family laws for each of the 18 officially recognized religious communities.

2. In Syria, legal books on the subject tend to be very old; it is not uncommon for books published in 1962 to be used in the University curriculum. However, books that reflect contemporary debates regarding the legal and social position of women within Shari’a are numerous and flourishing. In Lebanon, there is a marked updated production of legal books
on family law as well as books on case law, i.e. the application of family law in the form of court appeals and decisions.

3. There are civil societies that handle issues related to family law in Syria and we met six such networks. Examples of such groups are:
   a. The Association of Social Initiative has a strategy of reform from below and it conducted a survey in March – September 2006, with a distribution of 8000 questionnaires regarding different aspects of family law.

   b. The Observatory of Syrian Women (www.nesasy.com) is an Internet-based portal that focuses on different gender-related issues, including family law.

   c. The Syrian Women General Union has a strategy of reform from above. A socialist party affiliate, the group’s principle for reform is that laws should reflect what is actually happening in society. Its current work includes draft laws regarding:

      1. a state-monitored maintenance fund for divorced mothers
      2. changes in rules that may enable divorced mothers to remain in their marital house after divorce
      3. creation of family courts which specialize in rulings regarding family law.

4. Further research will continue to focus on seeing the social reality rather than the formal family laws. In this respect we focus on observing how legal texts are implemented in court. As a start, Rania focused on the Shi’a community in Lebanon and attended court trials at the Ja’fari High Court in Beirut for one week in April 2007.

The use of film as visual medium can be used to present research effectively to broad audiences beyond the academic context of fellow scholars, for example to students in courses or to the general public. This should be regarded as part of the general goal of the presentation of the results of the Global Moments research. How can this be done?

1. Contextualize the visualization with the textual scholarly results.
2. Use documentary techniques for filming (and/or still photography) in the course of field work.
3. Prepare script or structure with audience, e.g. the classroom, in mind.


Research on Swedish women working as missionaries in the Middle East is an example of the ‘civilizational encounters’ aspect of the Global Moments Project. The case of Swedish Missionary women sent to Palestine plays up the problem of proselytizing to Muslims. The prospect of negative consequences caused the women to switch from a mission focus to non-mission social work, concentrating specifically on education with the founding of the Swedish School in Jerusalem.

The general issue of this research involves the question of the power of these missionary women to make their own decisions in the context of their own missionary organizations,
the Ottoman government and the European colonial authorities. Thus the discourse context brings together these three subjects; “missions, gender and colonialism.”

**Inger Marie Okkenhaug, “Photography as a source of history of cultural encounters, global moments, more specific mission practice and representation in the Levant” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)**

As introduced at the previous Global Moments workshop, this presentation is part of a larger investigation of the role of Scandinavian missionary women in the Middle East. Several of these women worked in Armenia before and during World War I for the German mission organization “Deutscher Hülfsbund.” However, prospects for actual conversions in response to the gospel message were difficult. A ministry of mercy through relief work thus became as important as religious conversion. The result was a successfully operated orphanage and the extension of aid to refugees as they were forced to flee in the face of Turkish pressures during and after World War I.

In the course of the archival investigations a large photo album full of pictures taken by one of the women, Bodil Biørn, was discovered. Consideration of methodology and reaching conclusions from the study of photographs is the goal of this presentation.

It is clear that the use of the camera was deliberate and purposeful. An immediate purpose of taking pictures was for visual documentation to be presented at missionary meetings and rallies back in Scandinavia. However, as the tragedy of events around World War I unfolded, the role of photography appears to shift towards providing a witness to the tragedy of dislocation and the suffering of deprivation as Armenian
refugees were dislocated and moved to Aleppo and beyond in the Levant.

The pictures in the album can be organized into the following topics:


2. The position of women: In the written sources published by the Scandinavian missionaries, the Armenians are largely presented as living in a state of spiritual decay. The Muslim influence has led to heathendom among the Armenians, and the Armenian women’s position is as low as the Turkish. However, the photos show strong women, personalities. However, political developments within the Ottoman Empire, and the central power’s persecutions of minorities, led to poverty and ruined the traditional structure of the family. Men were murdered; women became heads of households. We can see these social conditions reflected in mission photos.

3. Because of social emergencies, mission photography became a crucial factor in mobilizing a long-lasting international aid operation. The Armenian massacres in the 1890s and the genocide during World War I have been termed the first and probably one of the largest international, humanitarian grassroots movements in modern history. These photos then became documentation of emergencies and catastrophes as the genocide developed, including dramatic pictures of women dressed in rags, portraits of suffering presenting a dramatic contrast to the dress-up poses in category 1.

4. Ethnographic documentation: pictures of farmers, houses,
implements and costumes.

5. Documentation of the disappearances: The significance of this missionary photography was altered when the genocide of 1915 obliterated most of Armenian life in the Ottoman Empire. Thus Bodil Bjørn’s photos (and photos taken by other missionaries) obtain new importance as documentation of a society that no longer existed.

The use of visual documentation, in this case photographs, as data for understanding events in the Levant opens up a distinctive methodological avenue in the Global Moments project, as the photographer and her subjects are linked through the camera lens; the missionary culture of Scandinavia and the Armenian culture of the Caucasus/Levant are bridged by the photos; and the scholar sees into the mind of her subject, the missionary, through viewing her photographs.

Inger Marie Okkenhaug, “Narratives of Missions: History, Biography and Global Moments in the Middle East”
(3rd Workshop, March 26-27, 2007)

The specific subject of this project is the role of female missionaries from the Nordic countries, and the plan is to produce a collective biography of three to five women. This paper will present aspects of the methodology and research goals, as follows:

1. Biography offers an understanding of the interplay between structure and agent and sheds light on the historical precondition of the missionary venture. Besides the aspect of uniting various sub-disciplines, this enables us to grasp the complexity of the colonial encounter of which mission history is a part. There is a tendency in the existing literature
to see woman missionaries as either heroines or “maternal imperialists”. The biographical method enables us to probe beyond both the heroic myths and the “colonizer” image. It can “humanize” history through a focus on complex and contradictory individual lives.

2. Forerunners of this project include PhD theses that targeted the biographies of missionaries in the field of mission history. The current project seeks a broader historical framework in which biography is a stepping stone to seeing the role of missions in colonial, gender, church and medical history.

3. Key issues in the writing of biography to produce history include:
   a. Concern with the subjectivity of recording personal stories.
   b. The role of the “narratively constituted nature” of biography in the production of analytical history.
   c. Life coherence can be approached in terms of narrative and also in terms of a thematically oriented structure. The choice of strategy depends on empirical findings rather than on a priori commitments.

4. The available sources include:
   a. Letters, both formal and private.
   b. Photographs; e.g. those taken at the Swedish School in Jerusalem by American Colony photographers.

5. Themes of the research include:
   a. The lives of the missionaries as “spinsters.” Female missionaries were single because they could only work in the mission field as long as they remained unmarried. The biographical question this raises is whether women were attracted in order to escape a miserable spinster life back
home. Or is this a misreading of the religious calling?
b. Colonialism and missions (including welfare agencies).
The question is how these Scandinavian agencies
functioned within the welfare administrations of the
Ottoman and British imperial structures.

Conclusion: The general outcome expected is that this study
will shed new light on the “cultural encounters” aspect of the
Global Moments research.

Nefissa Naguib, “Effects of emergencies on the life women
who are without men” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

The specifics of the lives of women who coped with the
emergency of the Armenian tragedy in the early 20th century
are being considered in the light of The Turbulent Sea, a book
reconsidering Brodell’s longue durée theory. The point being
demonstrated is that events, even catastrophic ones, do not
modify culture, which survives the emergencies of the moment.
The project examines the lives of specific Armenian women
on their flight from Armenia as they arrive at three specific
points, Aleppo, Beirut and Jerusalem. In Aleppo the locale is a
neighbourhood, the Armenian quarter, in Beirut it is a refugee
station, The Bird’s Nest, and in Jerusalem a soup kitchen
providing emergency food relief.

Complementing the experiences of the Armenian refugees
women are the multi-ethnic/religious groups of women
engaged in emergency assistance: Jewish, Muslim and
Christian women.

For the Global Moments project, this study is a reconsideration
of women’s colonial encounters and fits into the general
methodological framework of women’s history and gender
Foodways play a significant role in the Armenian retention of identity in their Diaspora, a way comparable to those of the Jewish Egyptian and the Palestinian diasporas. While family customs, electronic communication and socio-religious life in the patriarchate all serve to preserve community identity, foodways represent a particularly strong cultural element for defining group solidarity and distinctiveness. In fact, this is specific enough to see in the ongoing differences between the “native” Armenians of Jerusalem — with a presence going back as far as the Crusades, and the more recent refugees of the 20th century called zowār or “visitors.”

The central, symbolic and actual relationship of food to memory was made clear to Scandinavian readers and more recently for Western audiences in the popular book/film “Babette’s Feast”. For Armenian zowār, such a symbol of the memory of home is the poem “The Walnut Tree”, which emulates the sense of rootedness in the land of Armenia and celebrates the popularity of nuts in Armenian recipes.

The distinctiveness of the Armenian diet is represented by manti, Armenian “ravioli.” Recipes for such foods are kept as part of the family tradition, and form the literary basis for the passing on of the distinctive food preparation skills over the generations. These inherited foodways may thus be seen a distinct “cultural site” in which zow’r families preserve their sense of “wholeness” as Armenians, and in which the communal preparation and sharing of traditional dishes signifies a “returning to the whole.”

Ironically, because recipes such as manti have their Turkish and Arab versions, their remembrance also celebrates cultural solidarity within the larger cultural spheres of the Levant/Near East. These foodways thus provide an understanding of the survival of a group’s solidarity – in this case the Armenian zow’r – and of inter-group relationships over the century of violent socio-political upheavals triggered by the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire.

Nefissa Naguib, “Armenian Photo Albums in the Diaspora”  
(3rd Workshop, March 26-27, 2007)

Roland Barthes, in his later views on photography, observed that photos are a “certificate of presence.” Photos of the Armenian experiences at the time of the massacres and Diaspora of the World War I era function as such “certificates.” The photos show that there are “Armenians” in the plural. There were already “native” Armenians who spread before 1915; there were the refugees from the massacres who scattered in Turkey, the Levant and the Americas, and there were those who stayed. This paper concerns personal responses to enduring loss: the role of photo albums in capturing the remembrance of the dead. As a European scholar doing this analysis, we are well advised to follow the advice of Jack Goody in The Theft of History, that is, not to allow one’s own biases to dominate the interpretation of these photos without due attention to their own cultural setting. Nevertheless here is a set of impressions from the albums, as seen in the company of their owner, interviewee Victoria.

Although Victoria’s family albums are materially ‘things’; they must also be regarded as providers of her recollections, expressing stories that she wants to tell. For those of us concerned with life stories, family photos and records serve
both as goads to recollection and as aids to their certification. ‘Seeing’ other pasts somehow obviates our need for complete recollections from our interviewees. But, our sense of other peoples’ pasts involves more than this. Sometimes photos portray only frozen, static moments cut off from their lived experiences. At other times, these albums are verification of bereavements. They enable the perpetuation of mourning. I have seen Victoria’s collection of pictures many times; every time I visit she brings out her albums and says “let’s lament together.” This sharing of lamentation included a series of posed photographs of her young parents, who died when Victoria and her sisters were young.

The albums also include a collection of news clippings and photos about the Armenian orphanages in Egypt, both in Cairo and Alexandria, which her husband Krikor collected for the family album. These included a caption with a side story, a surprising punctum (Roland Barthes term for a photo’s accidental point of interest; cf. his Camera Lucida).

In conclusion, the study of these photographs as evidence of catastrophe needs to be framed in the works of those who have thought about the nature of photography, about photography to record violence and death and about the violence itself. Roland Barthes has said that photography records what we cannot record existentially. When engaging with a photograph one can never deny that what it shows was there (1981:75). Sontag, in Regarding the Pain of Others (2003), advises us not to use the depictions of suffering and dying (e.g. as produced by war correspondents) for our own voyeuristic purposes, but to approach them with empathic acknowledgement of the real pain the subjects were enduring at the time they were “regarded” by the camera. Simone Weil, in L’Iliade ou la poème de la force, also warns us that depictions of violence – such as by Homer – are not to be used for
celebration, but for objection and with lament for those who are violated. Still, within such strictures, we accept the photographs as evidence of the massacres and the consequent history of lamentations of the survivors.

Anh Nga Longva, “Cultural reproduction and the education system in Lebanon” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

The general aspect of this study, preliminary to assessing the place of education, is the search for an understanding of the decentralized character of the Lebanese state, especially the deliberate lack of any state obligation to provide basic cultural and educational services for its citizens. This intentional irresponsibility of the state of Lebanon comes into sharp focus when it is compared with Kuwait. There the case is the direct opposite. In Kuwait the state functions as the central welfare agent for its citizens. This strong view of state responsibility has had the effect of weakening competing clan and tribal roles. In contrast, Lebanon, since before the inception of the National Pact’s confessional structure, has placed the obligation for citizens’ welfare on its diverse and numerous religious communities. This confessional diversity was intensified as various confessional groups looked outside Lebanon, especially to the European powers, for support and protection, rather than within the country to build co-dependent state-centred mechanisms for coexistence. Unfortunately, the turmoil of civil war and the recent Hariri crisis have done little to advance the notion that the state rather than the confessional group has to become the central agent for the provision of national services like education.

The second part of the study, then, deals directly with the problem that education in Lebanon has, historically been the domain of the private, confessional community, so that a unified
public educational system has failed to overtake the private schools either in reputation or in quality.

Incipient modern education in the nineteenth century took place in the context of the capitulations and the accompanying Christian missions, which used the opening of schools to “save” the already existing Christian communities. Thus, local Christians achieved privileged positions in both commerce and education. Sunni schools followed later in the century, and Shi’ite schools not until 1910, but these schools never caught up, and public schools have stayed even farther behind on both the secondary and higher levels. To this day, private Christian schools and universities, e. g., AUB and St Joseph, remain the establishments of primary choice in the country.

The divisiveness of the educational “system” pervades the history of Lebanon and has provided fuel for the recurring fires of civil war. Thus, one could see the stubborn insistence on sectarian education as a form of symbolic violence, a refusal to pay sufficient allegiance to a central state to enable stable and peaceful coexistence. The inability to get approval for uniform textbooks represents a refusal to subscribe to a uniform history.

While many countries may be criticized for too much nationalism, the paradox of Lebanon is too little nationalism, an unwillingness of the confessional groups to relinquish their power to the central state. At the heart of that paradox is the unwillingness to allow space for a strong, nationally uniform educational system.

In the aftermath of the war waged by Israel against Lebanon in summer 2006, the weakness of Lebanese state sovereignty has been once again starkly exposed. The phrase “a-state-within-the-State” used by the media to describe the Hizbollah during the month long war throws into relief the extent to which this country’s sovereignty is limited: externally, Lebanon’s territorial integrity has been subject to repeated violations by its neighbors; internally, the authority of the Lebanese State over its population through the organization and regulation of basic social services such as health and education has always suffered from the competition of the powerful religious communities. The sectarianism which notoriously characterizes Lebanon’s political life is also a key feature of its social life.

While the origin of sectarianism in Lebanon can be said to derive from the Ottoman millet system and was strengthened by tensions arising from the modernization of the economy in Mount Lebanon in the 19th century (Makdisi 2000), I argue in this paper that it was the French Mandate which institutionalized sectarianism in its present-day form. Admittedly distinctive features such as the legal and social autonomy of the communities are undoubtedly the legacy of Ottoman structures. However, in Lebanon, this Ottoman legacy has a French twist: Islam is no longer the dominant religion and it no longer provides the social context within which all the other religions have to be organized; in fact there is no longer any one dominant religion, they are all equal. One of the official aims of the French mandate over Syria was indeed to protect the religious rights of the local (non-Muslim) minorities. Through this system, which is purported to ensure an equitable amount of power to all the communities, France proudly claimed to have made Lebanon a modern democracy. However this is not the kind of individual democracy based on the principle of one-man-one-vote. Rather it is a community
democracy, where the status of individuals is acknowledged only insofar as he/she is member in one of the 17 officially recognized communities. In this democratic system, the only interests that are genuinely taken into account and protected are those of the communities, not those of the citizens. It is a curious paradox that this form of communalism exclusively based on religious identities, although originally associated with the Ottoman millet system but abolished by the Porte through the Tanzimat reforms, was resurrected and institutionalized in Lebanon by France, a country which prides itself on its uncompromising secularism.

Today sectarianism has become so enmeshed in the Lebanese social fabric that there seems to be no viable alternative to it. Most Lebanese have a deeply ambivalent attitude to sectarianism: they clearly identify it as the most severe cause of many bloody conflicts over the years, yet they are deeply skeptical to measures to deconstruct sectarian divisions in the society. It is the conviction of many Lebanese that “to dismantle sectarianism is to dismantle Lebanon”. This view is, not surprisingly, strongly supported by all the religious leaders. With their schools, hospitals, and other welfare institutions, the religious communities command the allegiance of the population; they are the real political actors, and due to their moral legitimacy, are powerful competitors of the Lebanese State. While it is correct to describe the Hezbollah as a state-within-the-State, it is not alone: each and everyone religious community in Lebanon is a state within the State, and as such they are collectively a permanent challenge to its internal sovereignty.

UNRWA was authorized by UN Resolution 302; more than a half million students are served by its schools, several million by its clinics, and those with formal refugee status (card-carrying) receive food subsidies. Previous research on the agency’s history is by Benjamin Schiff, who covered the period up to 1980.

The specific nature of UNRWA’s assistance and its very character as an agency can be set out in the following four concepts:

1. Its emergency responses to crises – first what Israel destroyed, but then also what the PLO destroyed.

2. Its activities as a development agency, that is, the extending of an ongoing set of services in education and health care. The critique here is that these services are static; that is, they go on forever, unlike dynamic development targets’ realization of client self-sufficiency and donor phase-out. Responses to this critique include Sara Rooy’s concept of “redevelopment,” and Robert Bowker’s argument that the role of UNRWA is regarded as a symbol for Palestinian rights.

3. Its role as a welfare system providing social services. This is donor-driven (with the USA the largest contributor). There is a history of constant financial hardship, especially as aid began to flow directly to the PNA.

4. Its role as a quasi-state in the region, though it portrays itself as non-political. Cf. the overlapping/competing role of Hamas as a dispenser of social services in Gaza.

Global Moments general questions to be derived from the study include: How have groups of people been helped or sustained in moments of crisis? Is UNRWA a distinctly
Levantine organization, or generically international?


A background study of the literature indicates that local Islamic community organizations are very active in public welfare to bring relief to society under the emergency of occupation through the principles and practice of zakat, the Islamic religious institution of social welfare.

In the political sense these welfare procedures are independent of the formal workings of the Palestinian National Authority. Functioning on the local level, zakat organizations work with a low bureaucratic profile, and connect directly with the financial resources of Islamic organizations abroad for efficient, overhead-free distribution of funds at the point of need. The research builds on presuppositions currently being discussed in the theoretical literature that humans are creative and responsible in stress conditions (Sewell) and have a long history of imaginative cultural creativity (current re-discussion of axial age phenomena). Fieldwork will be interview-based, with the main target a zakat committee in Jenin and a control study of similar committees beyond the West Bank (one in Nazareth – or Umm el-Fahm – and one in Aleppo).

Lars Gunnar Lundblad, “Theoretical and ethical challenges in the study of Islamic welfare structures in the occupied Palestinian Territories” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

This PhD project continues the study of zakat, the local and national structure of Islamic welfare projects. Specific fieldwork is being done in Jenin, with a control study in Aleppo, Syria.
While the paper in the first Global Moments workshop dealt with the substance of the zakat programs themselves, this one deals with the apprehensions and difficulties triggered by having a foreign observer attempt to penetrate the inner workings of a traditional religious society for the purpose of deriving data to be used in creating scientifically respectable interpretations from which objectively weighed conclusions can be drawn.

One reservation comes from working in a very emotionally charged environment. For example, to sit for interviews under wall posters commemorating the targeted assassinations of Yassin and Rantisi, and to be aware of the tensions raised by the new political role of Hamas, not only against Israel, but also other Palestinian factions, makes it difficult to maintain a stance of neutrality without oneself being drawn into the conflict.

This particular dilemma is representative of the whole Eurocentric/Orientalist perspective of doing research in which the subject of study is objectified as the “other,” the subject of scrutiny by the all-knowing scholar from the outside — something Edward Said called the “power of knowledge.”

On top of this is the limitation of doing interview research in which the interviewees are chosen by those in local authority rather than randomly selected. Moreover, the limitation of language adds the further subjective factor of being “at the mercy” of interpreters, who may interject their own agendas in their translation of questions and answers.

These concerns needed airing after one set of study visits to Aleppo and Jenin, where fieldwork will continue during another planned visit. They are indicative of the fact that the Global Moments Project has to be as much a study of
methodologies of research as it is the deriving of results and reaching of conclusions based on that research.

**Lars Gunnar Lundblad, “The development of the local and national structure of Islamic welfare projects in the West Bank and Israel: A discussion of comparative principles in the light of empirical evidence.”** (3rd Workshop, March 26-27, 2007)

The next step, after visits to Jenin and Umm el-Fahm, is field research in southern Israel, hosted by Sheikh Abdullah Nimr Darwish in the Negev. Unlike the previous fieldwork, this next phase will have to be framed much more in terms of the welfare situation of the State of Israel.

The visit to Umm el-Fahm in northern Israel was much like that to a West Bank town and did not require much change in approach. The new field of inquiry will be much more influenced by the Israeli context. A dynamic analysis of the welfare systems for Israeli Arab Muslims will require accounting for a double set of intersections of the welfare channels for Muslims in Israel and Muslims in the West Bank/Gaza. First, the Israeli government has responsibilities for the welfare of both those Muslims under occupation and those Muslims who are citizens, but it executes these responsibilities in different ways. Secondly, the two communities; Muslims under occupation and Muslims in Israel, are strongly linked by a sense of Islamic solidarity that affects the private administration of welfare through zakat.

These intersections became actual in the aftermath of the June War of 1967. Because the occupation of the territories allowed greater contact between the two Islamic communities the Arab
Muslims in Israel received greater access to Islamic institution-building taking place in the West Bank and Gaza. For example, the Israeli Government supported the development of an Islamic Studies Centre in Hebron to create leadership. (Now, however, that this centre has become very radical.)

The distinctiveness of the situation in Israel is framed as follows. Israeli scholars criticize the authorities for the pronounced lack of support of religion-based self-generated welfare (zakat/waqf) among the Muslim Arab sector of its citizenry. This poor support is in part structural. On the West Bank, Islam is the official religion of the coming state so that the zakat process is regarded as an essential component of public welfare. In Israel the three sets of civil society legislation – non-profit association law, corporate law and trust law – are secular and religion is not formally constitutional. This negative situation is further complicated by the fact that while the state is formally secular/democratic it is also formally Jewish.

In this situation the application of Islamic welfare varies informally from place to place, from institutional direction regarding giving to individual decisions to pay the zakat. One positive case of joint Israeli government and private zakat funding is the wonderful new high school constructed in Umm el-Fahm for teaching 500 elite students. The Israeli state has contributed 65% of funding and the local community is raising the other 35%. During a tour of the destroyed villages there was a chance to interview the secretary of the Zakat Board. He reports that there are fifty zakat committees in Israel, whose role is to function as a “safety net” by supplementing the Israeli public welfare system. The collection of zakat is relatively well organized, even door-to-door in some areas. In conclusion, a significant welfare supplement, the traditional
support from American Muslims, has been put in jeopardy by the arrest and prosecution of Islamic fundraisers, e.g. the case in Texas, under the provisions of the anti-terrorism policies of the U. S. Homeland Security.

Bård Kårtveit, “Palestinian Christians remaining in the Occupied Territories” (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

This project is my PhD research, and is based on my M.A. study of patterns of migration among Christian Palestinians. Currently there are about 500,000 Palestinian Christians in the world, of whom about 150,000 live in Israel, and 50,000 in the West Bank. This inquiry fits into the larger field of politics of identity. The question is how do Christian Palestinians position themselves in the contexts of Muslim Palestinians and the occupying and neighbouring Israelis? A significant factor in determining the answers to that question is the socio-economic impact of the transnational networks that link these Palestinians with their expatriate fellows elsewhere, especially in the United States. The study’s situational approach will involve the following circumstantial factors:

1. The unwarranted myth of the persecution of Christian Palestinians by their Muslim Palestinian neighbours.
2. Tensions between Christian laity’s loyalty to the Palestinian cause and Orthodox clergy’s tendency to cooperate with the Israeli authorities.
3. Inter-sectarian relations among Christians, including the dilemma of traditional tensions and the practical need for inter-sectarian cooperation (e.g. through ecumenical liberation theology as adopted by Sabeel).
4. Realities of emigration, immigration and trans-nationalism among Palestinian Christians.
Field-work will comprise interviews in villages which are already familiar from research done there for my M.A. thesis: Taibeh, Ram’n and ‘Aboud.

**Bård Kårtveit,** “‘Modernity,’ ‘Globalization’ and the problem of individual agency: An assessment of Ulrich Beck’s call for a cosmopolitan outlook, and his concept of a second modernity in relation to migration” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

This presentation is a report on the preliminary work in preparation for a Ph.D. proposal to continue the research on the migration of Palestinian Christians begun for my M.A. thesis. The first step has been an examination of Ulrich Beck’s theory of cosmopolitanism for its applicability to the migration of Palestinians fleeing the conditions of occupation in modern Palestine.

Beck takes the declining capacity of the nation-state as evidence of the arrival of a new cosmopolitan global outlook in place of the modern nationalist outlook. He calls this a “second age of modernity”, in which human processes and power relations will transcend national boundaries. International human rights will become the norm for judging behaviour, and individuals will become internationalists who move about in the “global shopping mall” to satisfy their needs, unbound by national constraints.

Early migration studies were based on the model of sender and receiving societies in the context of “methodological nationalism”, a context in which the newly arrived immigrant became a dependent of the receiving nation and had to be trained as its citizen. More recent migration studies stress transnationalism, i.e. the phenomenon of the global citizen, a
truly internationally adjusted person who can belong anywhere. Beck’s model does not fit the Palestinians very well. Even the most privileged few among them do not move freely, but remain well connected to the “nation.” Economically successful Palestinians may operate businesses across national borders, but they will tend to do so from a residential base in Palestine. Many of them, however, would appear to fit the earlier immigrant model – those who move from sending to receiving societies.

It thus becomes clear that Beck has generalized his theory of transnational migration on the basis of observing a few elite. When seen in total, modern migration theories can be slotted into three broad categories, Beck’s among them:

1. Hyper-globalism – Beck’s theory of denizens of a borderless world
2. Sceptics who see such theories of globalization as a myth
3. Transformationalists who take the middle ground by maintaining a distinction between globalization and internationalization.

Palestinian migration, of course, is deprivation created by the Israeli occupation, and thus an act not very distinct from the flight of a refugee. Unfortunately, many cross-border migrations today are made by those deprived of the power to live freely in their own nation, rather than by those empowered by a new cosmopolitanism to live freely anywhere on the globe. [One may wonder whether the same tension (forced versus voluntary) is not age-old in the Levant – two examples of the pattern might be the Roman Levant and the Levant of the Mandate era.]
The framework of the GML research has three foci of interest: (1) Israeli and Palestinian state structures, (2) the role of immigration into Palestine from the (American) Diaspora and (3) the discourse between international and local elements of Palestinian identity. This paper deals with international discourses on religious and cultural differences, and their influence on inter-sectarian relations and local realities in the West Bank.

In *The Clash of Civilizations*, Samuel Huntington posits future conflicts arising from irreconcilable cultural differences between eight groups (civilizations) defined by culture, all of which he sees as juxtapositions of the “West” and the others. One of these in particular, the Islamic civilization, is seen to be a major opponent of the West. As is well known, this thesis has been much criticized in academic circles and attacked especially in the scholarly milieu of Middle East Studies. Nevertheless this line of thinking has affected public discourse influencing political positions taken in the various conflicts of the Middle East. This popular-political use of the concept had made “clash” a self-fulfilling prophecy in international relations, and it has also influenced discourses on Palestinian identity at a local level.

While in reality Christian-Muslim unity has been an aspect of Palestinian identity formation, the Huntington civilization paradigm has imposed an impression of greater separation. After more than a hundred years of steady emigration, Christians make up only 1.3 per cent of the Palestinian population, or 42,000 persons divided among several denominations. Though they wish also to be recognized within
the larger Christian world, they define themselves as committed Palestinian nationals and show a great deal of solidarity with their Muslim compatriots. For example, they criticized the Danish Muhammad cartoons last year and widely condemned the international boycott of the Hamas-led government. Against this fundamental unity there are some potential “seeds of division” – which tend to be taken as evidence of Christian-Muslim division when viewed in the Huntington construct. These “seeds” are:

1. Christians emigrate at a much higher rate than Muslims, and this emigration has tripled since 2000. This can be explained with reference to the socio-economic and educational differences between Christian and Muslim Palestinians. However, Christian emigration is often interpreted as a sign of Muslim persecution against Christian Palestinians – in spite of evidence to the contrary – in an interpretation that fits neatly into a Huntingtonian model of Civilization differences.

2. These rumours of persecution have been reinforced by the practices of Western governments of granting Palestinian Christians refugee status on the grounds of religious persecution. Such practices have been found in European countries as well as in the USA, creating a damning representation of Palestinian Muslims.

3. Influenced by external forces, local tensions between Bethlehem families and internal migrants from other regions of the West Bank are increasingly read into a “Civilization discourse”, as examples of conflicts between Christians and Muslims, rather that between locals and outsiders, formerly the most usual understanding. A number of local organizations try to combat tendencies of sectarian essentialism among their own, and use public advocacy to fight the myth of Christian-Muslim hostility, to present local Christian responses to Christian Zionism and to promote Bethlehem and Palestine as tourist destination.
Fortunately, there is some reinforcement from international efforts to expose the “Huntington Trap”; for example, Richard Bulliet’s *The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilization*, written explicitly to counter the clash myth.

**Janne Bøe, “Household economy and patriarchy in the southern Levant in a moment of economic crisis” (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)**

This presentation is an introduction to my Ph.D. proposal for research to be conducted under the Global Moments grant. The project is an inquiry into the relationship between household economy and patriarchy in a Palestinian village in crisis conditions. The focus will be on the shifting role of women in the gender equation in times of stress.

Causes of stress fit under the general rubric of the Israeli occupation, but specific phenomena vary from men being away at work, either daily or for prolonged periods, men being absent without producing income, killed or imprisoned, or men being home but unemployed. In all these cases women may need to work and may be or may not be employed.

In many of these situations of stress the woman’s economic activities – employment and household management – will be crucial for the material wellbeing of the family household. Her ability to act as a decision-maker and breadwinner will depend on her status in relation to the male adults in the household in which gender relations are defined by traditional patriarchy. The study will therefore address this question: How does traditional patriarchy affect women’s ability to act in circumstances of traditional patriarchy in times of stress on the economy of the household?
Fieldwork will involve conducting interviews in the Palestinian village of Dura, where the principal investigator previously collected interview-based data on the subject of the changing practices of covering (hijab) among the young women of the village. Interviews will be conducted through the services of the same interpreters, village women with whom a relationship of trust and understanding has already been developed. While it is true that these interpreters may sometimes disagree in principle with the answers given, previous experience has indicated that they will represent the interviewees’ answers fairly.

Are Knudsen, Islamism in the diaspora: Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (1st Workshop, May 23-25, 2005)

The more than 300,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are the country’s poorest and least enfranchised community. Traditionally, research on Palestinian refugees has been dominated by a focus on displacement, suffering and loss. In recent years, there has been tendency to focus on the more problematic and sides of refugee existence, including studies that sees refugee camps as breeding grounds for Islamic “extremism”. This project examines the contested social, political and religious dimensions of Lebanon’s enduring refugee problem.

Recent years have witnessed growing academic interest in Islamism in the Middle East, not least in Palestinian Islamism championed by groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad, which are waging a bloody war of attrition against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. There has been less concern with Islamism among the Palestinian refugees dispersed in Middle Eastern countries such as Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. The article outlines the sources of Islamism (“political
Islam”) among Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The rise of Islamism is a complex mix of contingent factors that is fuelled by social and political deprivation and shaped by divergent views on Palestinian nationalism (secular vs. Islamist), the Islamist revival in Lebanon and “strategic localisation” that turns refugee camps into battlefields between Palestinian factions. The Islamist groups cater for narrowly defined segments of the refugee population and have been unable to attract wider support. Instead, they cater for minor, camp-based constituencies which compete with secular groups for internal control of the camps and, by implication, of the Palestinian nationalist cause itself.

Are Knudsen, Islamic clientelism: Hizbollah’s patronage of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (2nd Workshop, May 2-5, 2006)

This paper analyses Hizbollah’s (Party of God) patronage of camp-based Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In post-war Lebanon (1990-2005), the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees have worsened and they now constitute a disenfranchised and marginalised minority. During the same period, Hizbollah has emerged as a major political party and vocal supporter of the Palestinian’s quest for civic rights as well as major foe of Israel. Deprived of civic and political rights (including the right to vote), this project seeks to understand the nature of the Hizbollah’s patronage of a minority group unable to offer them electoral support. A major research question is therefore what characterises the transactional relationship between Hizbollah and the refugees and, more concretely, what kind of tribute do the Palestinian refugees (and their political representatives) offer in return for Hizbollah’s material and political support? This paper complements ongoing research projects on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon funded
by the Research Council of Norway: the multi-disciplinary research project “Global Moments in the Levant” (2005–08) and the interdisciplinary project “The Poor and the Judiciary” (2005–07). Taken together these projects aim to increase our knowledge of the plight of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon and to explain Hizbollah’s political agenda vis-à-vis the refugees, a topic neither widely studied nor understood.

Are Knudsen, The land, the loss and the lives of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (3rd Workshop, March 26-27, 2007)

Lebanon has been a reluctant host to Palestinian refugees since 1948. A mainstay of Lebanese policies vis-à-vis the Palestinian refugees have been to prevent their permanent integration and settlement in the country. The question of naturalising refugees is one of the most contentious political issues in Lebanon today. Palestinian refugees tend to live in conflict-ridden environments, often at the margins of the host society. This first of all applies to the camp-based refugees, who languish in dilapidated and overcrowded camps. Unable to return to Palestine and marginalised by the host society, they are caught in a legal limbo. In order to understand the legal plurality that governs their refugee status, it is necessary to examine their rights as refugees in international law, regionally as hosted by Arab League states and nationally as residents of Lebanon. The rights regime is complex and contributes to a critical “protection gap” for the refugees. In particular, there is a need to explore the “politics of citizenship” in post-war Lebanon that has widened the protection gap and institutionalised legal discrimination of refugees. This paper argues that legal discrimination of Palestinian refugees was politicised amidst growing fears of permanent settlement in the country and institutionalised through the executive’s patronage of the legislature and the judiciary.
The following is a comprehensive bibliography of the scholarly activities of Global Moments in the Levant team members. To date, these include books, articles, forthcoming books and forthcoming articles, scholarly conferences or workshops organized, and presentations of papers at scholarly conferences.
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Knudsen, Are, and Basem Ezbiidi. “The rise of


Longva, Anh Nga. “Neither Autocracy nor Democracy but Ethnocracy: Citizens, Expatriates


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LaBianca, Øystein S. Three Thousand Years of Imperial Projects in the Levant: Student Research
De Vries, Bert, Øystein S. LaBianca and Bethany Walker. *Material Culture in Ottoman Syria-Palestine: The Ottoman Empire as a Shaper of Society and Culture in the Levant*. San Diego, CA, USA, November 14-17, 2007.

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FILMS

