

PALESTINE, LAND OF OLIVES AND VINES

CULTURAL LANDSCAPE OF SOUTHERN JERUSALEM, BATTIR

WORLD HERITAGE SITE NOMINATION DOCUMENT

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ANTIQUITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

PALESTINE
2013



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State of Palestine – Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities,

Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage, 2013

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Presidential Letter

On behalf of the Palestinian people, I have the honour to present to the World Heritage Committee the nomination dossier of *The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir* as a pilot site of the serial nomination *Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines*.

This nomination dossier attests to the role that Palestine has played throughout History as a meeting place for civilisations and a cultural bridge between East and West and to its pivotal role in the evolution of humanity, as attested by evidences of the existence of successive cultures all over its land, from prehistory onwards. It also manifests, through its exceptional variety of cultural properties, archaeological sites and finds, distinctive collections and their associations that Palestine is a cradle of the three monotheistic religions.

The essence of *The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir* is that it represents a millenary culture and human interaction with the environment. It focuses on the Palestinian cultural landscape and the evolution and sustainability of about four-thousand-year agricultural system. The focus also spots the light on the human settling near sources of running water. In this case the water springs that dot the area are located in the south of the city of Jerusalem and its steep mountainous slopes are adapted for agricultural activities use.

The various and continuous human settlements that developed around the many water springs that dot the slopes of the mountains, since at least the bronze age, have contributed to the creation of this unique cultural landscape composed of terraces supported by dry-stone walls, agricultural watchtowers, olive oil presses, ancient irrigation pools to collect the water flowing from the springs, ancient irrigation canals and remains of human settlements.

This nomination dossier aims to protect the traditional practices that are still in use by the local community until this day and maintain the agricultural practices that lie at the basis of this living landscape, which embody one of the oldest farming methods known to humankind and constitute an important source of livelihood for the local communities.

Olive trees and vines are characteristic, and deeply symbolic features in the Palestinian landscape. They are highly representative of the identity and character of the landscape throughout history and the ways that people have worked the land. Furthermore, in the Bible, the teaching of Jesus and the Quran; the olive tree is a symbol of peace and would, therefore, be a particularly apposite tree.

It seems peculiarly appropriate to submit a nomination that recognises the tree of peace, in a time where we are looking forward for peace in our country. It is exculpatory that it is an emergency nomination since it aims to rescue this human-made landscape, which has become vulnerable under the impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations that may determine irreversible damage to its authenticity and integrity.

Mahmoud Abbas
President
State of Palestine



View of a watchtower near Al-makhrour



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



State Party

Palestine

State, Province or Region

Palestine, Bethlehem Governorate, Bethlehem Western Rural Areas

Name of the Property

Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines
Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir



Fig S.1 General view of the agricultural terraces near Battir Village.

Geographical Coordinates to the nearest second

The Nominated Area		The Buffer Zone	
C1	Latitude 31°44'2.369"N Longitude 35°8'2.897"E	B1	Latitude 31°44'2.79"N Longitude 35°8'0.495"E
C2	Latitude 31°43'50.094"N Longitude 35°8'35.287"E	B2	Latitude 31°43'42.443"N Longitude 35°8'15.407"E
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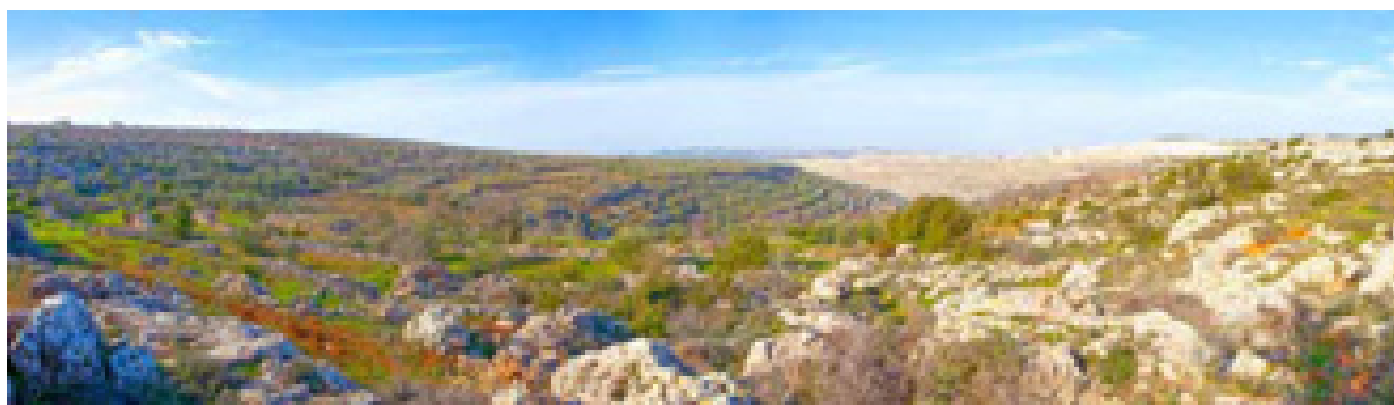


Fig S.2 Panoramic view of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir ñ Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines

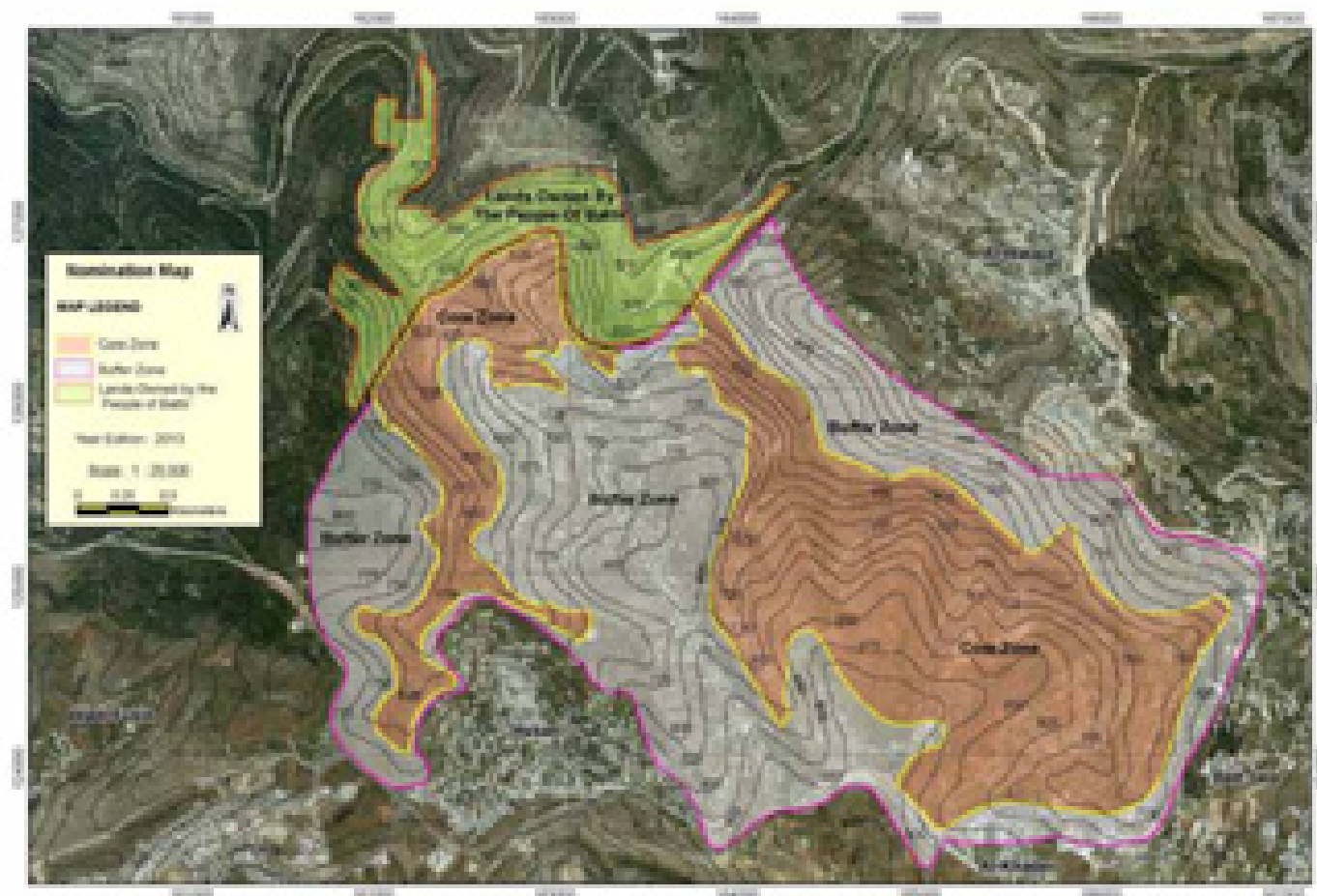


Fig S.3 Topographic map of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir showing the location of the coordinates that identify the area

Textual Description of the boundary (ies) of the nominated property

The proposed property is located in the central highlands of the cultural landscape of Palestine which starts from Nablus in the north and goes on to Hebron in the south. Cultural landscape of Southern Jerusalem Battir is located circa 7 kilometres southwest of Jerusalem, west of the top of the ridge of the mountain range that runs north to south along the Mediterranean coast. It stretches along the series of agricultural valleys “*widian*”; [sing. *wadi*] extending from Wadi Al-Makhrour to the west of Beit Jala towards the village of Husan, and encircling the village of Battir, which is an essential part of the buffer zone. This cultural landscape is characterised by extensive agricultural terraces, water springs, ancient irrigation systems, human-settlement remains, “*khirab*”, agricultural watch-towers “*manatir*; sing. *Mintar*” locally known as palaces “*qusoor*; sing. *Qasr*”, olive presses, and an historic core; a buffer zone surrounds the proposed property from its four sides.

The boundaries that define the buffer zone extend to the neighbouring villages of Al-Walaja to the northeast, the towns of Beit Jala and Al-Khader to the east and the village of Husan to the south. The lands that compose the buffer zone is either relict agricultural terraces that contain collapsed terraces and remains of agricultural watchtowers, or continuous landscape that lies within the inhabited areas. In some area, steep natural rock formations have prevented the adaptation of the landscape for agricultural purposed. These rocks, combined with the surrounding cultural terraces formulate a breathtaking landscape that reflects the efforts that were made to build the

terraces. The majority of the abundant terraces still have some olive trees that grow in between several wide plants that grow in the area.

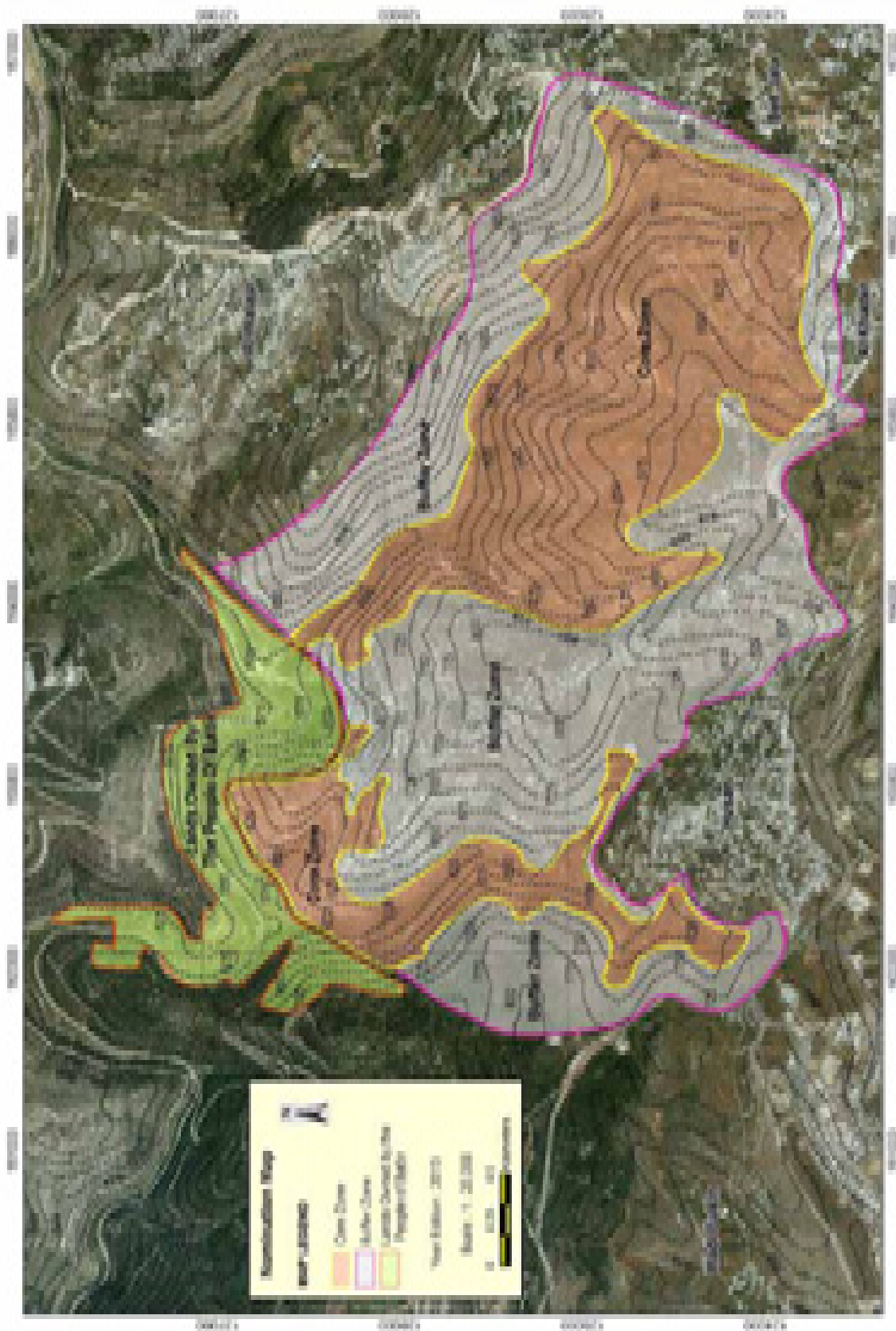
The buffer zone surrounds the property from its north, south and western sides, while a ten metres wide strip of separate the core zone form the Armistice Line¹. Lands owned by the inhabitants of Battir, and that still until this date owned and cultivated by them, and irrigated using the ancient irrigation pool and canals. These Lands lie beyond the Armistice Line in Israel, and formulate an essential extension of the agricultural terraces of the village. The village of Battir penetrates the core zone from its eastern side, and is also an essential part of the buffer zone.



Fig S.4 The canal that connects Ain Al-Balad with the ancient irrigation pool; the village of Battir is in the background.

¹ The Green Line: the name given to the 1949 Armistice lines that constituted the de facto borders of pre-1967 Israel 6 «Glossary: Israel», Library of Congress Country Studies

A4 (or “letter”) size map of the nominated property, showing boundary and buffer zone (if present)



Map of the Nominated Area and Buffer Zone

Criteria under which the property is nominated (itemize criteria)

(iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir encompasses various cultural heritage elements, which are built of stone available in the area, such as dry-stone walls, agricultural watchtowers, traditional footpaths, and olive oil presses. These represent an outstanding example of a landscape that illustrates the development of human settlements near water sources, here the springs that dot the mountainous area, and the adaptation of the land for agriculture.

The village of Battir, which developed on the outskirts of this cultural landscape, and was inhabited by farmers who worked and still work the land, attests to the sustainability of this system and to its continuation for the past 4,000 years. Battir has always been considered the vegetable garden of Jerusalem due to the abundance of springs in the area. This led to the development of a system of irrigation that permitted the development of agricultural terraces in a very steep mountainous landscape fed by a complex irrigation system that is managed by the eight main families inhabiting the village. It is simultaneously a simple and complex system, and is still in use today.

The traditional system of irrigated terraces within the nominated property is an outstanding example of technological expertise, which constitutes an integral part of the cultural landscape. The methods used to construct the terraces illustrate significant stages in human history, as the ancient system of canals, still in use today, dates back to ancient times.

(v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

The strategic location of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir and the availability of springs were two major factors that attracted people to settle in the area and adapt its steep landscape into arable land. Since the twelfth century, Battir has been one of the main producers of vegetable products for the central part of Palestine, and in particular the city of Jerusalem.

The property is an outstanding example of traditional land-use, which is representative of thousands of years of culture and human interaction with the environment. This human-made landscape has become vulnerable under the impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations that may cause irreversible damage. The agricultural practices that were used to create this living landscape embody one of the oldest farming methods known to humankind and are an important source of livelihood for local communities.

Draft Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

The village of Battir, to the south of Jerusalem, was historically considered to be the *jinan* of Jerusalem, that is the garden of Jerusalem. Battir lies almost at the centre of a system of very deep valleys that are very well supported by the yearlong availability of spring water that permits the cultivation of vegetables and fruit trees. In the areas along the slopes where water is not abundantly available, olives and vines were planted. The cultivation of these plants, on the very steep sloping sides of the valley, was only possible due to the creation of terraced fields with the use of dry-stone walls all along the valley. The terraces, together with a multitude of archaeological and architectural remains, testify to the presence of man in these green valleys that have been settled for at least 4,000 years.

The spring water is controlled by a unique system of distribution among the families of the village, using a very unique system of measurement to make sure that water benefits all the community. In areas of the valley that are far from the village, watchtowers or “palaces” were built for protection of the terraces. The olive trees, some of which are many hundreds of years old, are a testimony to the cultivation of olives in Palestine. Grapevines were also cultivated, though to a lesser quantity.

The continuous dependence of the inhabitants of the area on agriculture as a major source of income has indeed contributed to the sustainability of this significant and harmonious landscape, which is evidence of the adaptation of the steep mountains into arable land. Also, their commitment to and hard work in maintaining the hundreds of metres of dry-stone walls has preserved a landscape that is thousands of years old as a spectacular testimony to an ancient agricultural tradition. Farmers continue to tirelessly plant their land with seasonal vegetables and aromatic herbs, to take care of the vines and fruit trees and irrigate them using the Roman pools and irrigation channels, in addition to taking care of their olive trees, the symbols of peace.

The terraces are still in use today, despite the fact that the 1949 Armistice Line marking the boundary between Palestine and Israel cuts right through them, ignoring the natural contours of the valley. The emergency status of this nomination is linked to the fact that there is a plan in advanced stages to start the construction of the Israeli Wall, which would cut through this pristine valley landscape, marring this cultural landscape and cutting off farmers from fields they have cultivated for centuries. A railway link between Jerusalem and Jaffa, still in use today, winds its way along the lowest part of the valley. The people of Battir have always respected this link.

Battir is rightly considered to be the green heart of Palestine, even though its links with Jerusalem are not as strong as in the past. This dossier is the first of the serial nomination of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines, which will present the agricultural and cultural landscape of Palestine in all its variations of landscape.

Name and contact information of official local institution/agency

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Fax: + 972 (0)2 274 3753

E-mail: info@battirecomuseum.org

Web address: www.battirecomuseum.org

Facebook page: \Cultural-Landscape-of-Southern-Jerusalem-Battir

View of watchtowers along Wadi Al-makhrour



CHAPTER 1

IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY



1.a Country

Palestine

1.b State, Province or Region

Bethlehem Governorate, Bethlehem Western Rural Areas

1.c Name of Property

Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

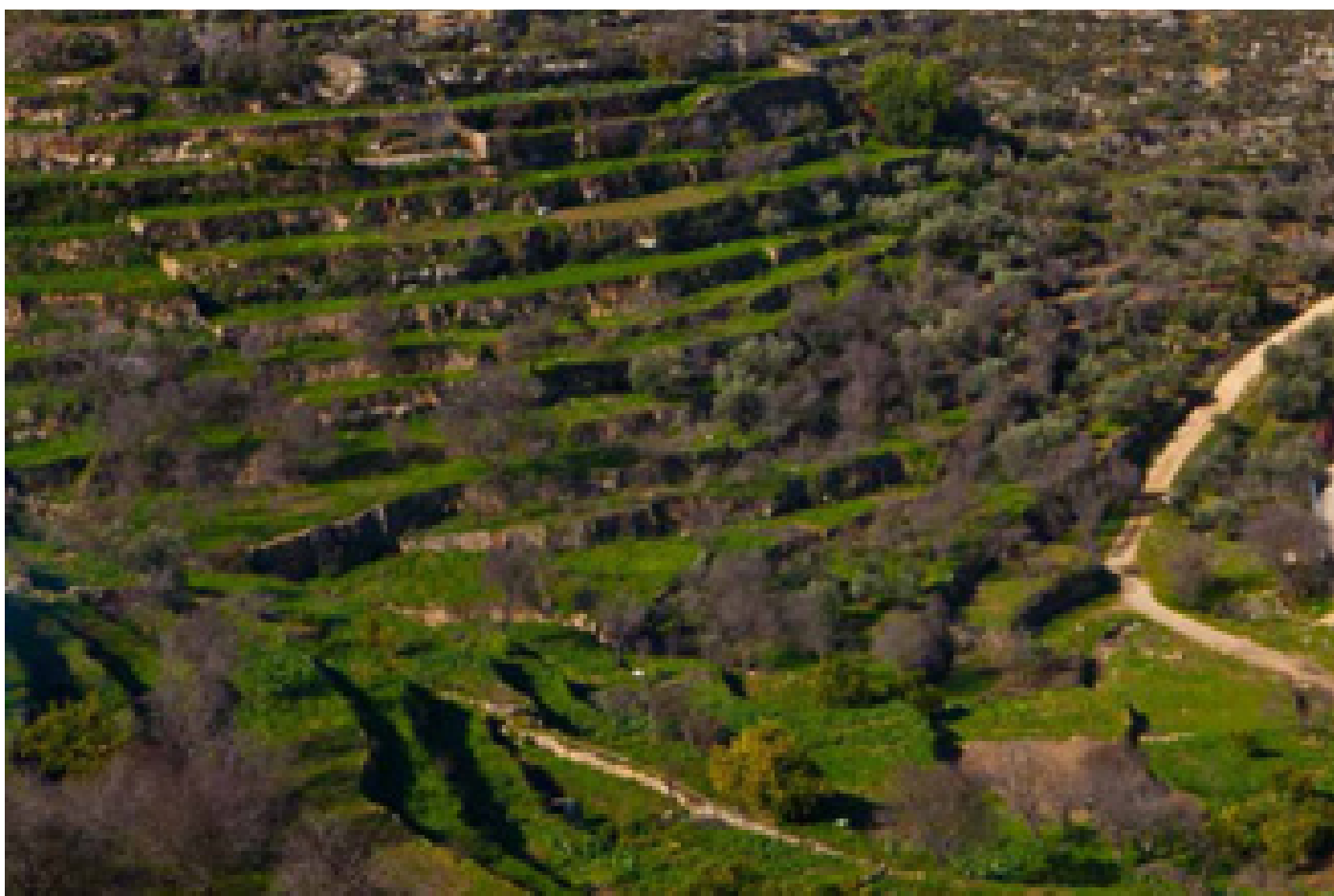


Fig. 1.1 Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

1.d Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

The Nominated Area		The Buffer Zone	
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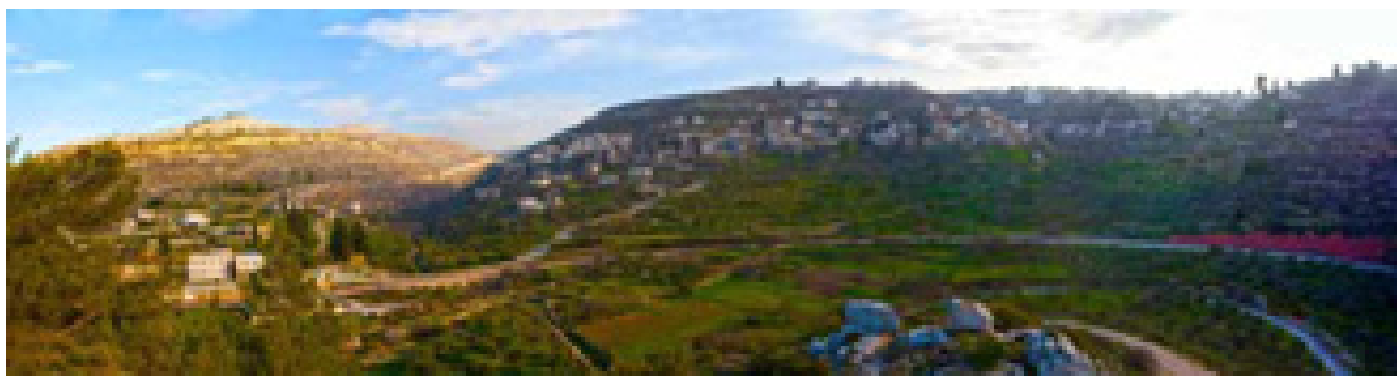


Fig. 1.2 A panoramic view of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir form the east toward the village of Battir

1.e Maps and Plans, showing the boundaries of the nominated property and buffer zone

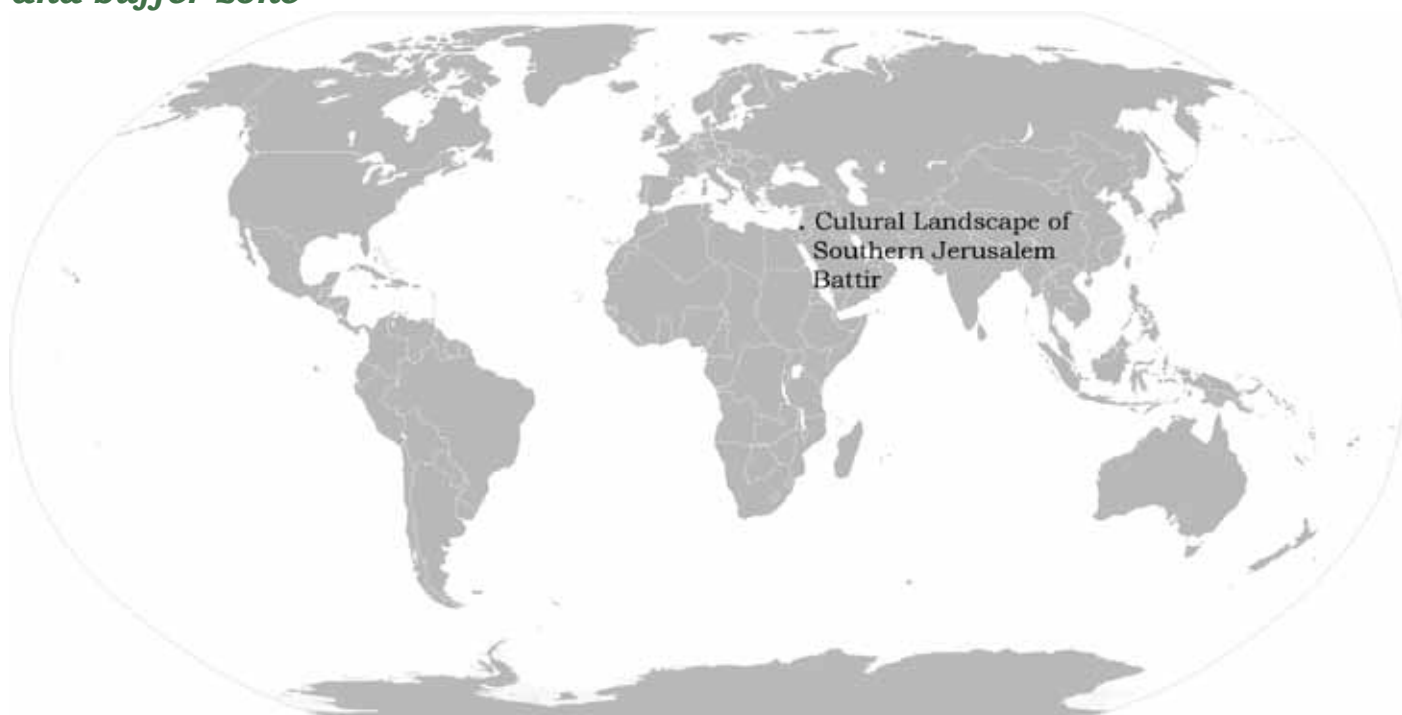


Fig. 1.4 World Map



Fig. 1.5 Map of the Region



Fig. 1.6 Map of Palestine

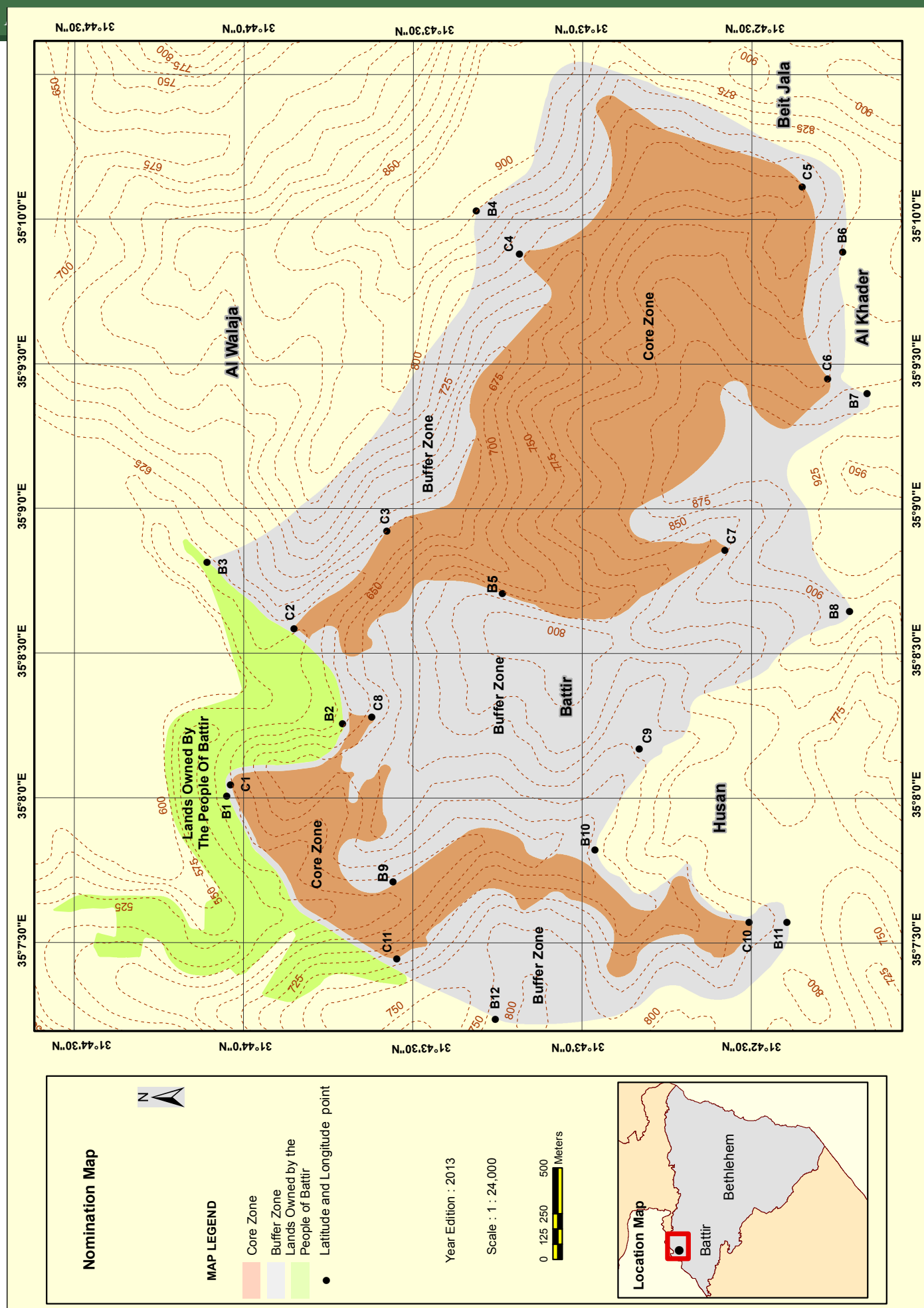


Fig. 1.7 Topographic map of the Nomination Area

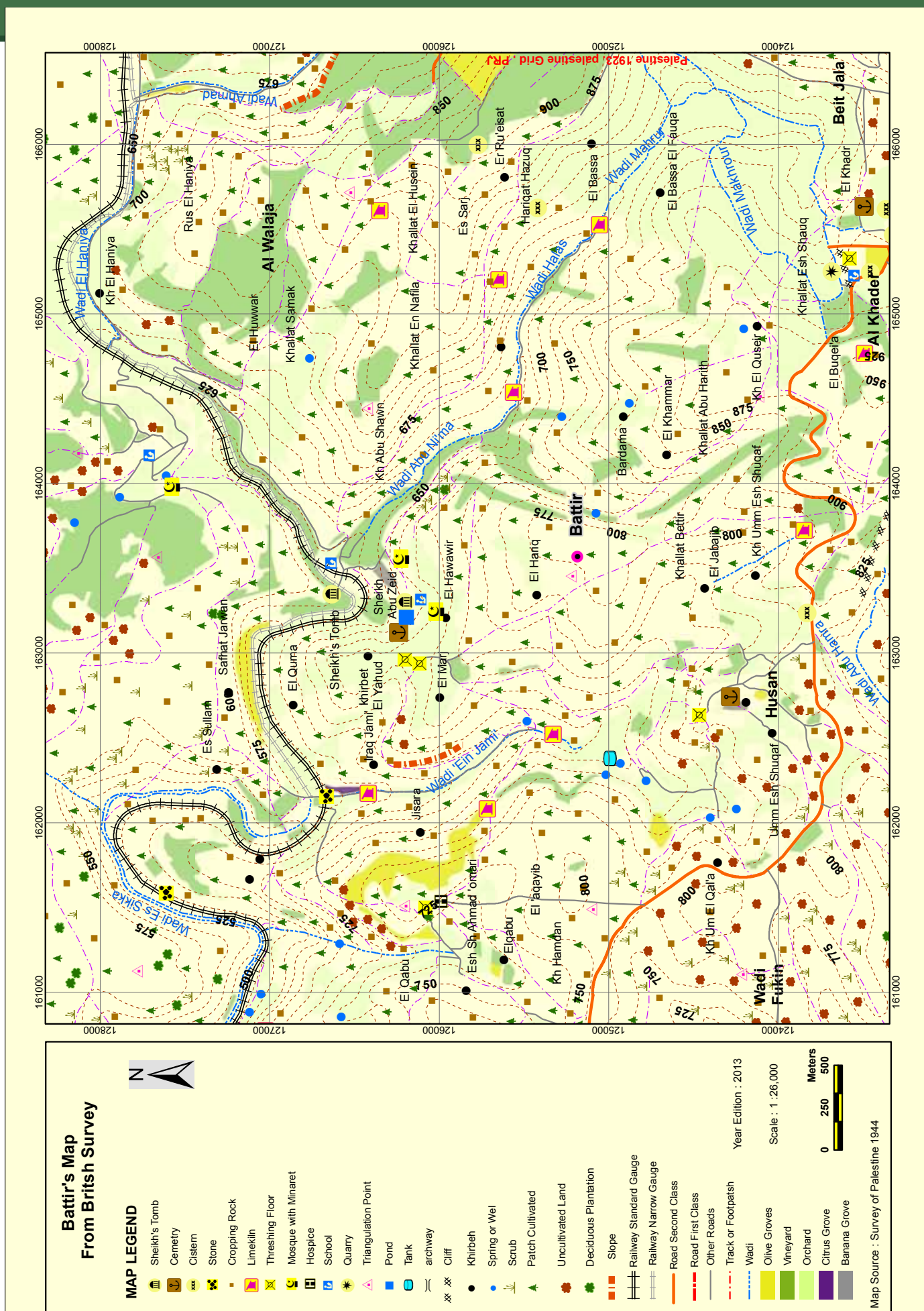


Fig. 1.8 Digitised map of the British Survey of Palestine (1944)

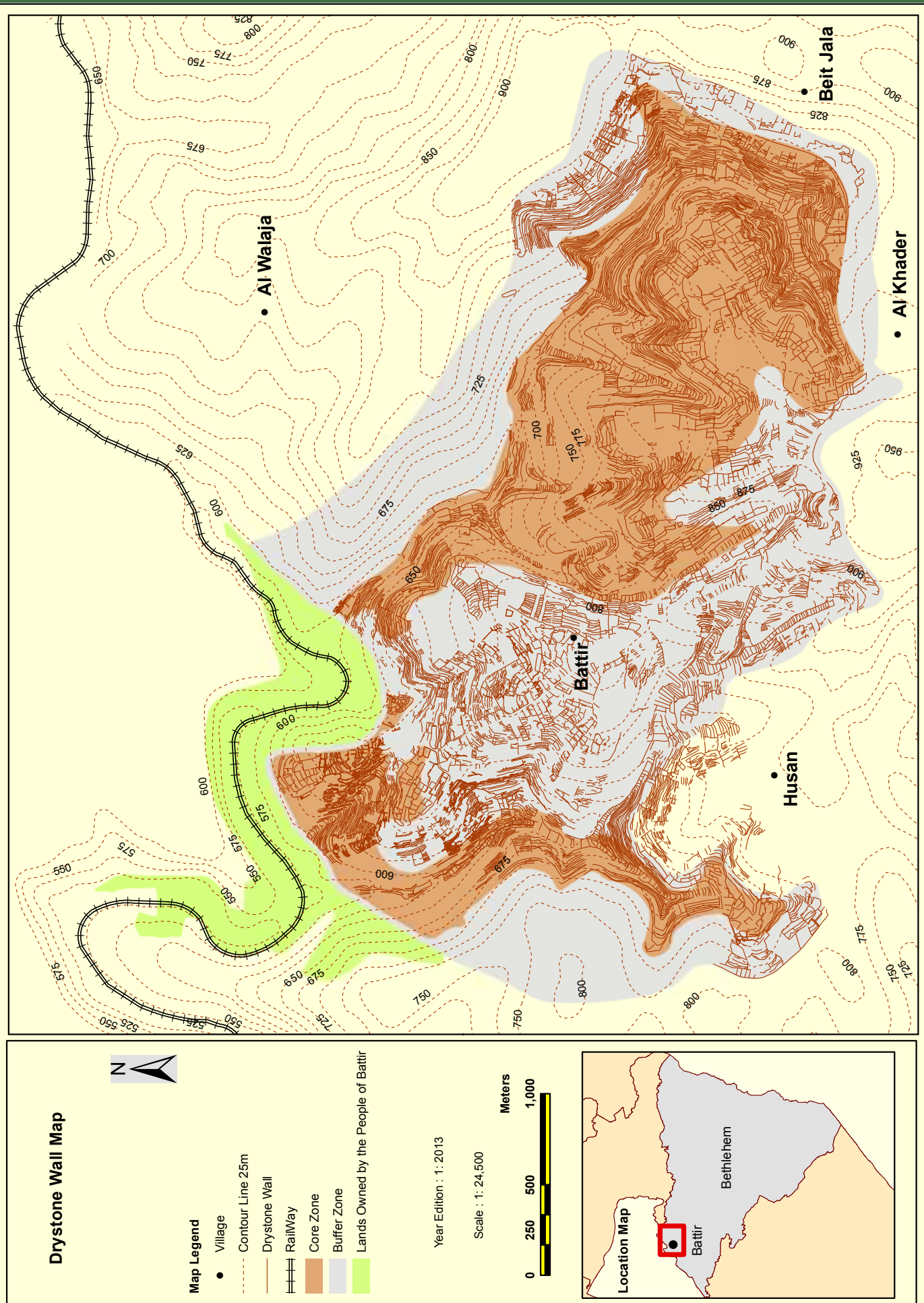


Fig. 1.10 Map showing the dry-stone walls and terraces within the property

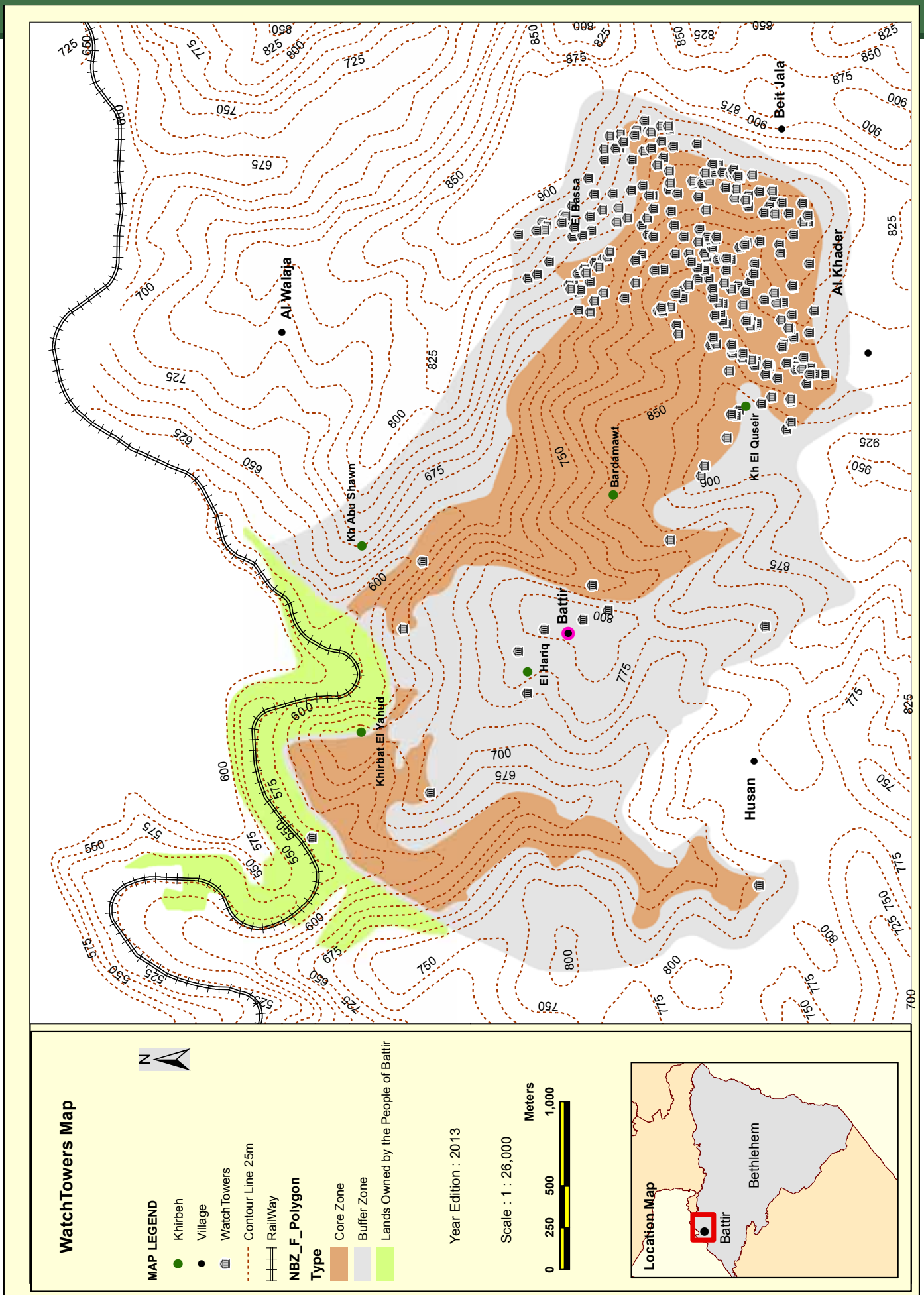


Fig. 1.11 Map showing the location of the watchtowers within the property

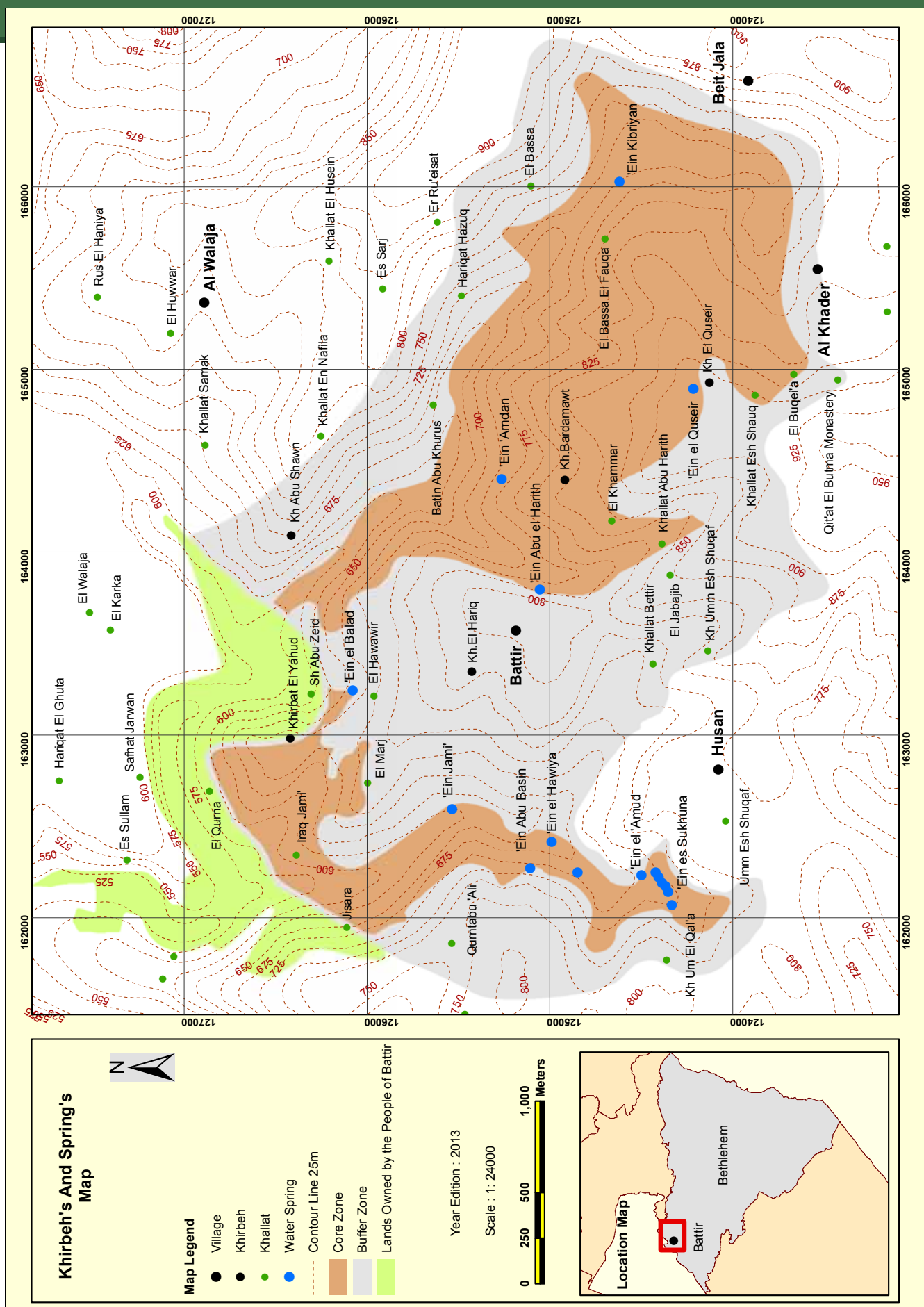


Fig. 1.12 Map showing the human settlement ruins (khirab) and water springs throughout the property and the surrounding areas; the relation between the two items reflects clearly that man settled near sources of water.

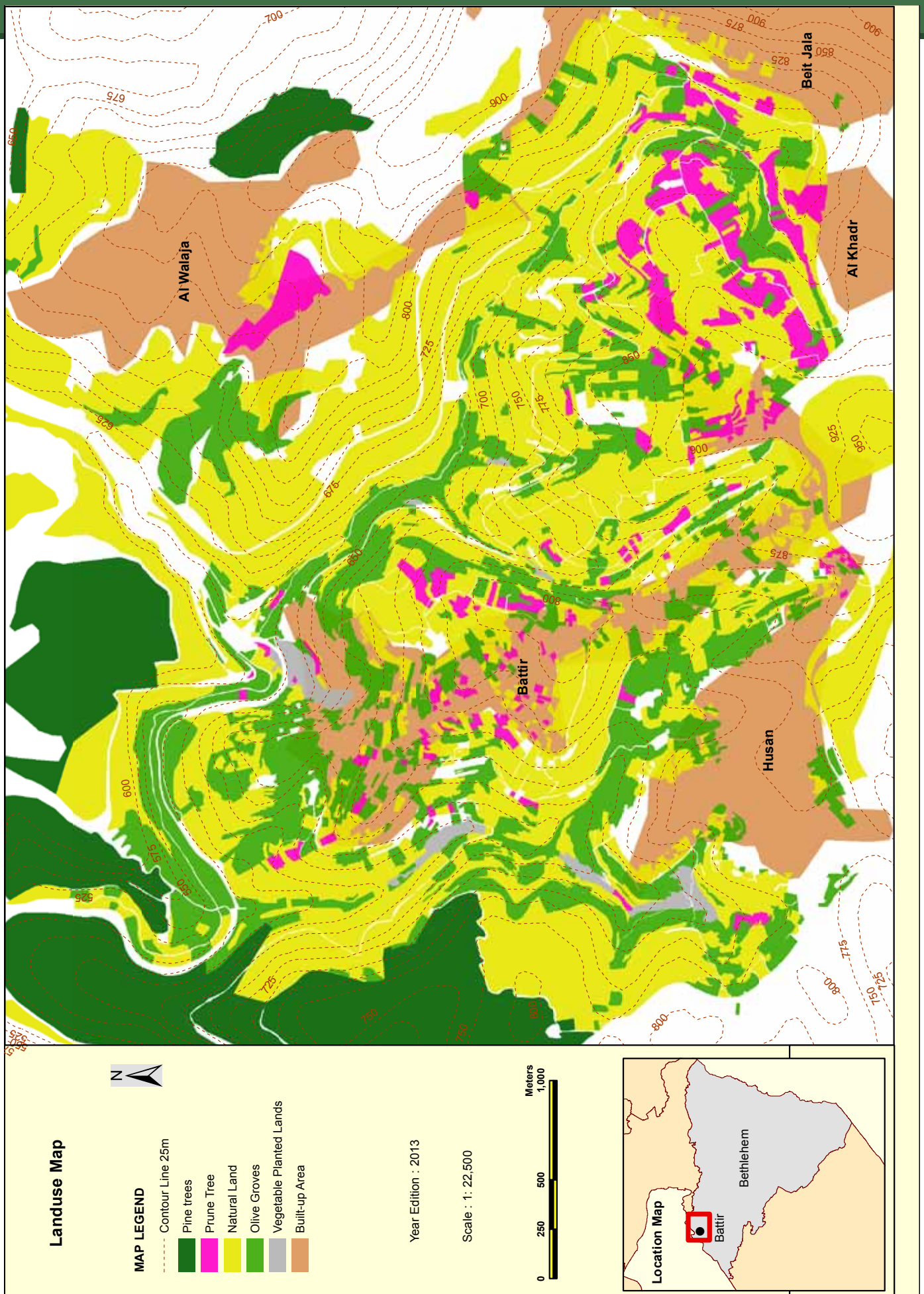


Fig. 1.13 Map showing the land use within the property and the surrounding areas

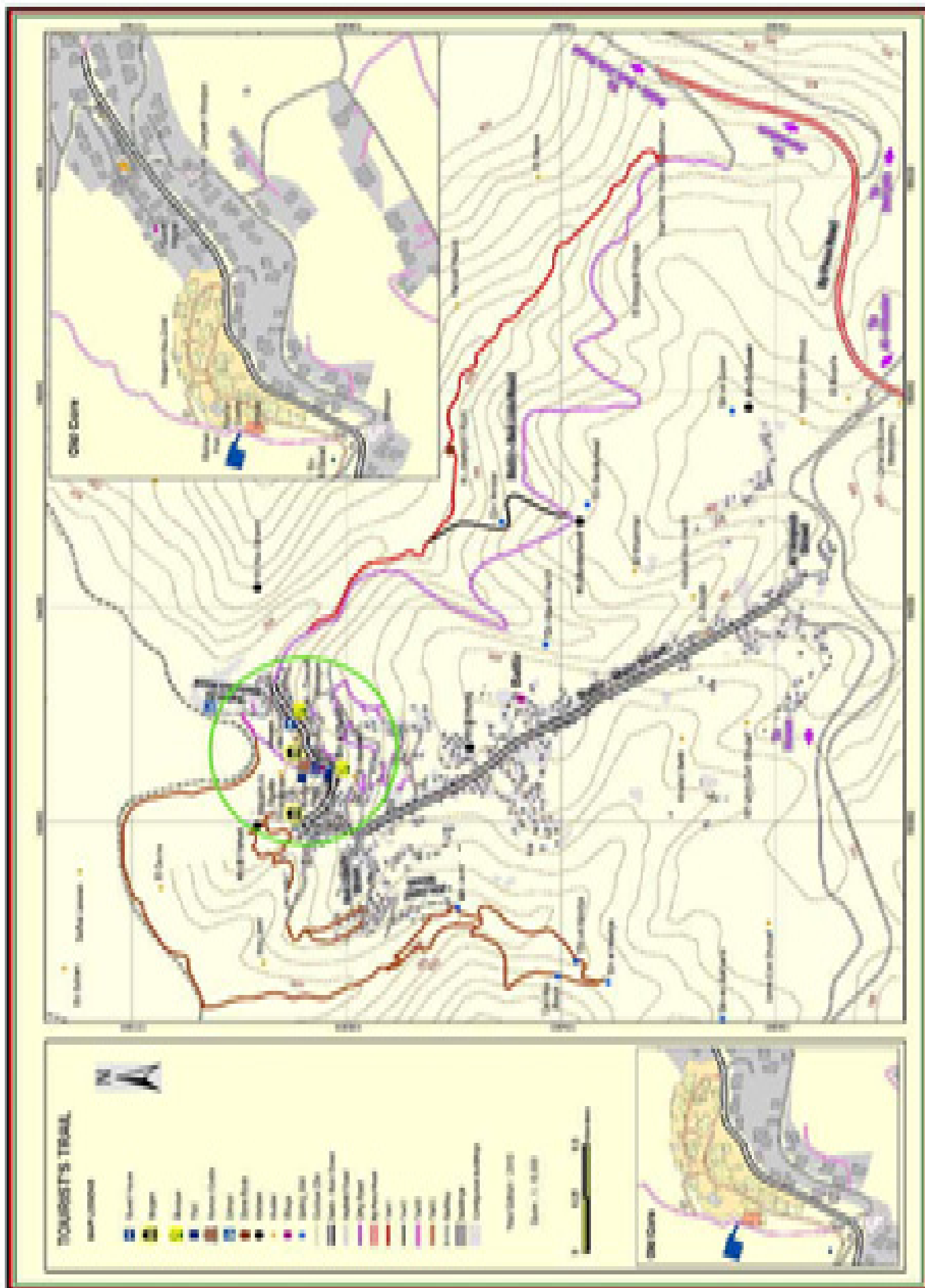


Fig. 1.14 Map of the Village of Battir

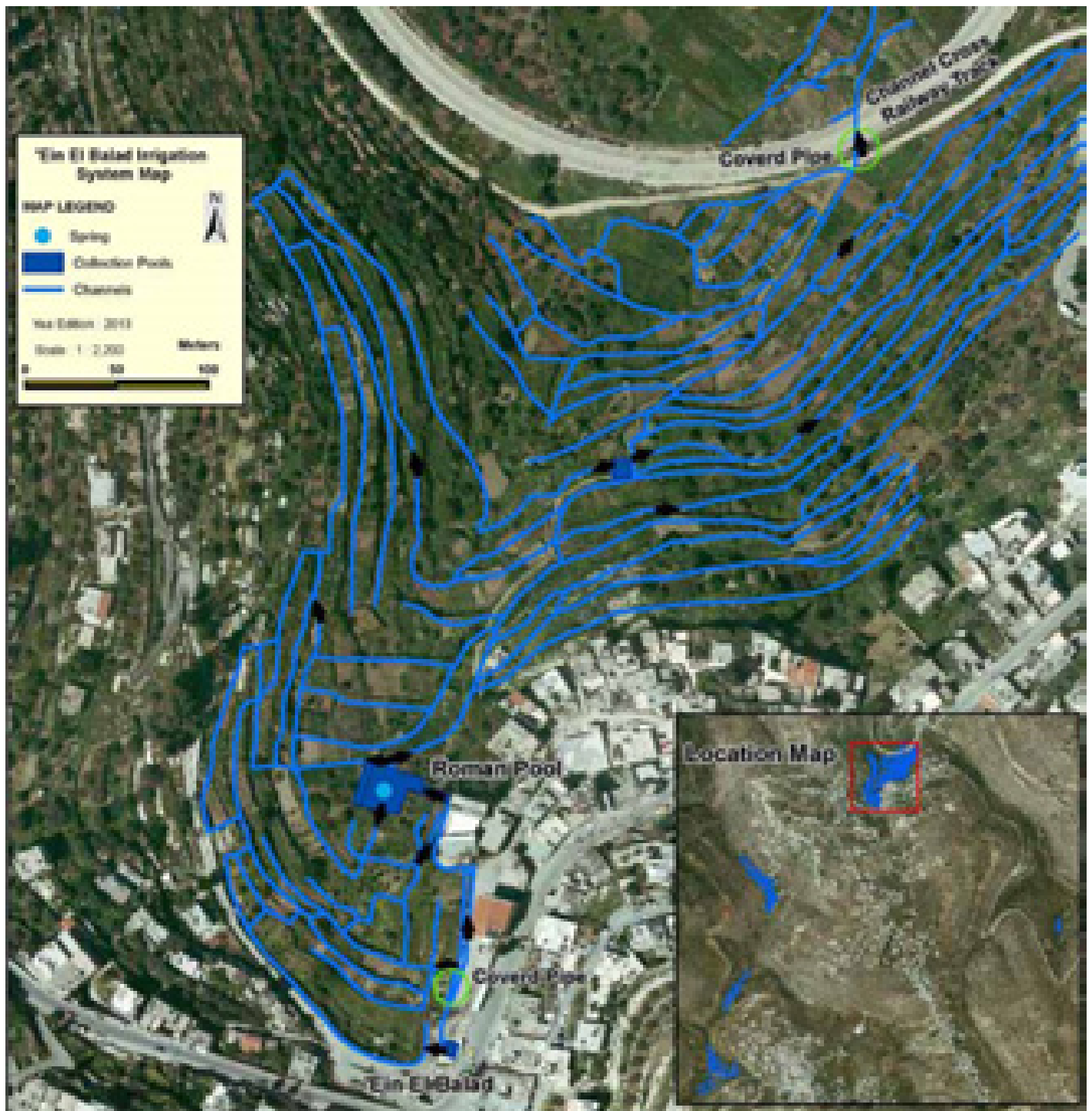


Fig. 1.16 Map of the irrigation pools and canals of Ain Al-Balad



Fig. 1.17 Map of the irrigation pools and canals of Ain Jama'

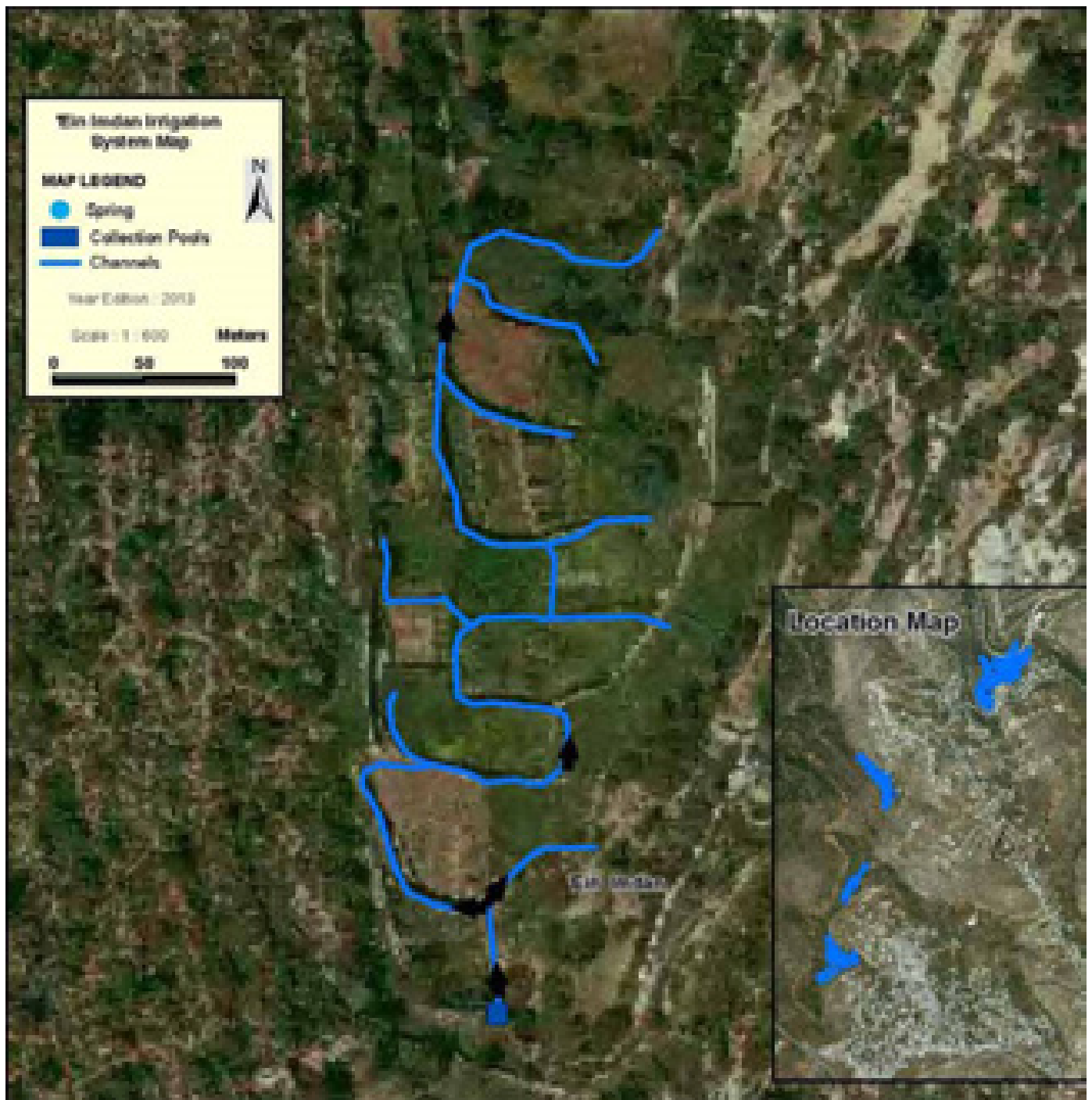


Fig. 1.18 Map of the irrigation canals from Ain Umdan

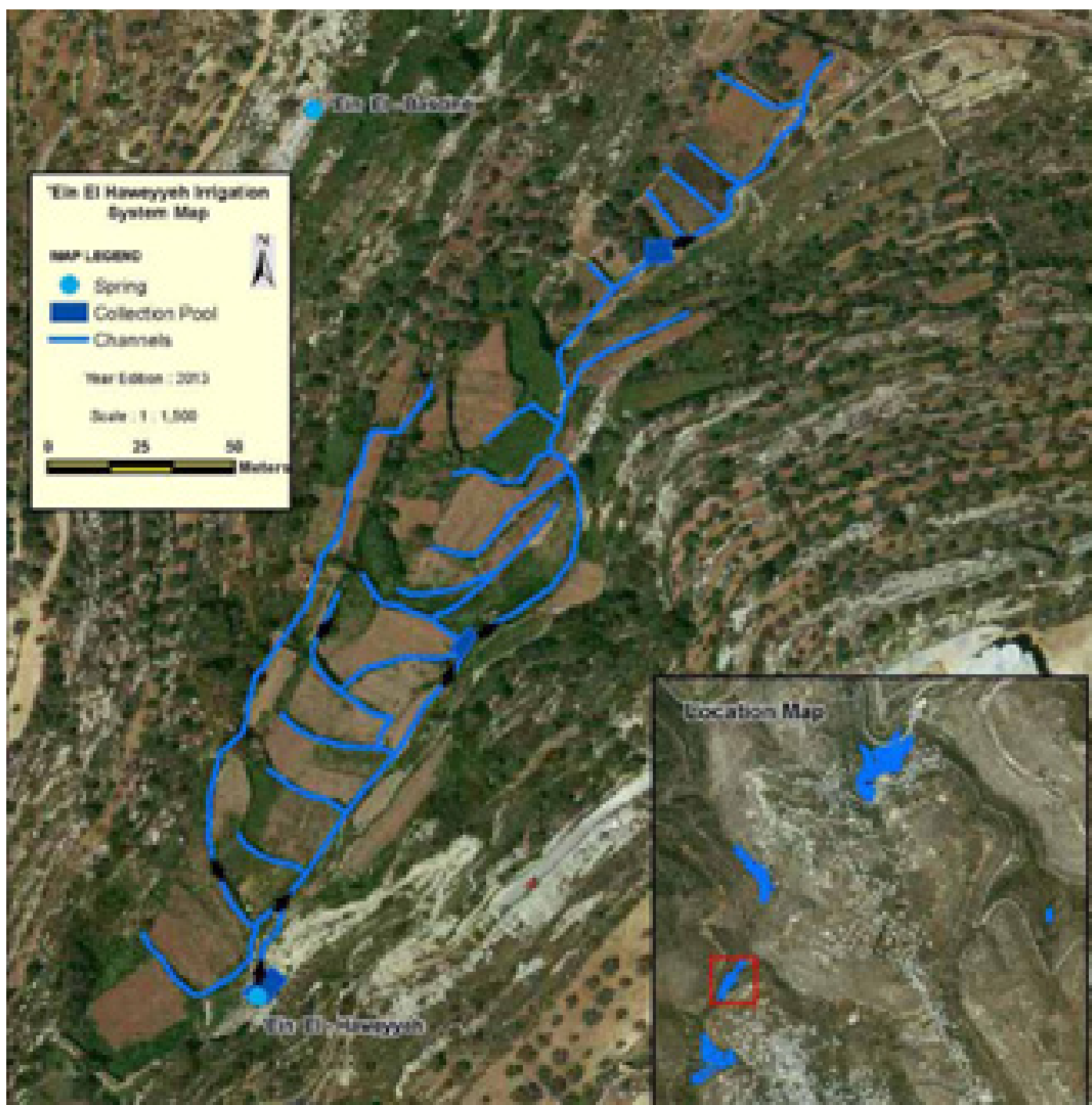


Fig. 1.19 Map of the irrigation canals from Ain Al-Hawweyeh



Fig. 1.20 Map of the irrigation canals from Ain Al-Sukhuna

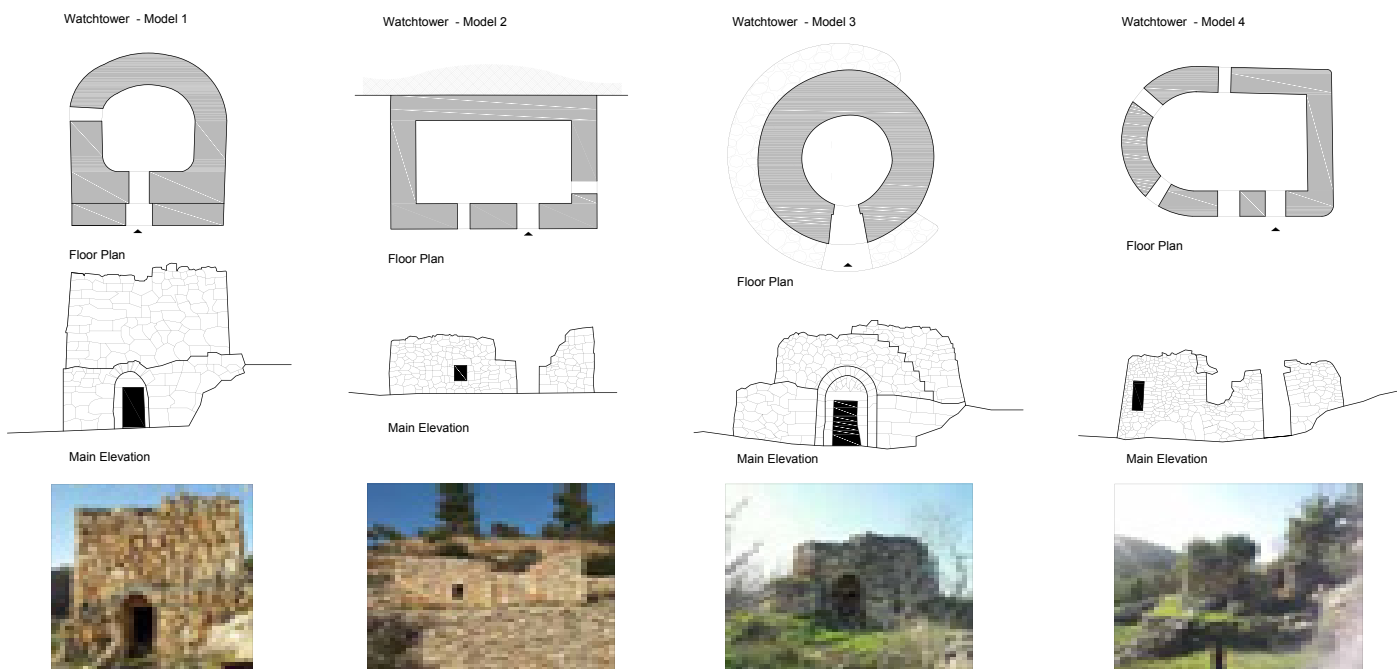


Fig. 1.21 Explanatory plans and elevations of the different type of watchtowers in the property

1.f Area of the nominated property (ha.) and proposed buffer zone

Area of nominated property:	348.83 hectare
Area of proposed buffer zone:	623.88 hectare
Area of owned by people of Battir ¹ :	133.23 hectare
Total area:	972.71 hectare
	area of nominated property and buffer zone

¹ This area is land, that is owned by the people of Battir, which they continue to cultivate and harvest, and that falls beyond the Armistice Line (1967 borders that separate Palestine from Israel)



Farmer picking up red chilli pepper in Battir



CHAPTER 2 DESCRIPTION



2.a Description of property

Prologue

Palestine has been a meeting place for civilisations and a cultural bridge between East and West for millennia. In addition, it has played a pivotal role in the evolution of history, evidenced by the existence of successive cultures in this area, from prehistory onwards. Despite its small size, Palestine has great variations in its topography, as well as ecological and climate diversity, all of which have contributed to the creation of a varied cultural landscape and high biodiversity. This is reflected in its four agro-ecological zones: the Central Highlands, the Semi-Coastal Zone, the

Eastern slopes, the Jordan Valley, and the Coastal Zone.

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is a key feature within the larger Palestinian Central Highlands landscape, which characterises central Palestine.



Fig. 2.1 Terraced field along the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

The Central Highlands starts in Nablus in the north and goes to Hebron in the south. Battir¹ is 7 kilometres southwest of Jerusalem, west of the top of the ridge of the mountain range that runs north to south through Palestine along the Mediterranean coast. The property includes a series of agricultural valleys extending from Wadi Al-Makhrou (Al-Makhrou Valley) to the west of Beit Jala towards the village of Hussan, and encircling the village of Battir, which is an essential part of the property's buffer zone. This cultural landscape is characterised by extensive agricultural terraces, water springs, ancient irrigation systems, remains of human settlements (*khirab*), agricultural watchtowers (*manatir*) locally known as palaces (*qusoor*), and olive presses. A buffer zone surrounds the proposed property on all four sides.

¹ Battir was also known as Bittir during the Ottoman and British Mandate periods. The name Bether or Beth-ther appears on maps of Roman Palestine.



Fig. 2.2 Agricultural terraces near Battir

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is an organically evolved landscape, which initially resulted from social and economic activities, and also religious imperatives, according to the oral history of the local inhabitants. The property is mentioned in several travel books² that were written during the first half of the nineteenth century. The property belongs to the second category of cultural landscapes; notably the majority of the area falls within the continuous landscapes subcategory, while some parts fall within the relict landscape subcategory³.

The core zone

The property includes traditional footpaths, used by the farmers and inhabitants of Battir to connect them with their land, starting from Wadi Al-Makhroul and heading towards the village. It also includes the various human settlements that developed around the many springs that dot the slopes of the mountains, starting from at least the Bronze Age and continuing until today. These settlements have contributed to the creation of a unique cultural landscape composed of agricultural terraces that are supported by dry-stone walls, agricultural watchtowers (*manatir* or *qusoos*), olive oil presses, ancient irrigation pools to collect the water flowing from the springs, ancient irrigation canals, and the remains of human settlements (*khirab*).

Rural dry-stone vernacular architecture

Like the rest of the Mediterranean region, the landscape around Battir contains ample amounts of stone. Thus, traditional dry-stone architecture was extremely common, as gathering the stones

² Robinson, E.; Smith, E.; and others, *Latter Biblical Researches in Palestine and the Adjacent Regions: A Journal of Travels in the years 1838 & 1852*, Crocker and Brewster, Boston, 1856, pages 266-269.

³ Results based on a survey conducted during the work on the Battir Cultural Landscape Conservation and Management Plan, a project developed by the UNESCO Office in Ramallah in cooperation with the Battir Village Council.

had the added benefit of producing clean, tillable fields for agriculture. Due to the profusion of different varieties of stone, the local people used them for constructing their shelters, fences, and monuments, benefiting from each variety's particular aesthetic, physical, and geological characteristics. In addition, they used these stone to re-form the rocky mountainous landscape, and adapt it for their agricultural activities.

Being deeply rooted in traditional knowledge, dry-stone vernacular architecture represents the continuity and permanence of the culture and identity of many local rural landscapes. It is a testimony to ancestral human activity that progressively modelled what can be considered a specific type of landscape, the dry-stone landscape. This landscape is endowed with aesthetic, historic, symbolic, and ecological value, which goes far beyond its original practical function.

Visible signs of the dynamic relation between humans and the landscape are deeply integrated into this area, which is a living marker of the history and development of the traditional construction techniques used in the area. The dry-stone vernacular architecture represents one of the most evident elements of the process of adapting the landscape, embodying the materialisation of centuries of ability, knowledge, and modes of production. The construction and maintenance of dry-stone landscapes require a great amount of voluntary cooperative and collective work, called *al-'aona* in Palestine. This was an essential component of the local agrarian systems and landscapes and of the socio-cultural processes, and played a key role in the processes of socialisation and of transmission of knowledge and abilities.

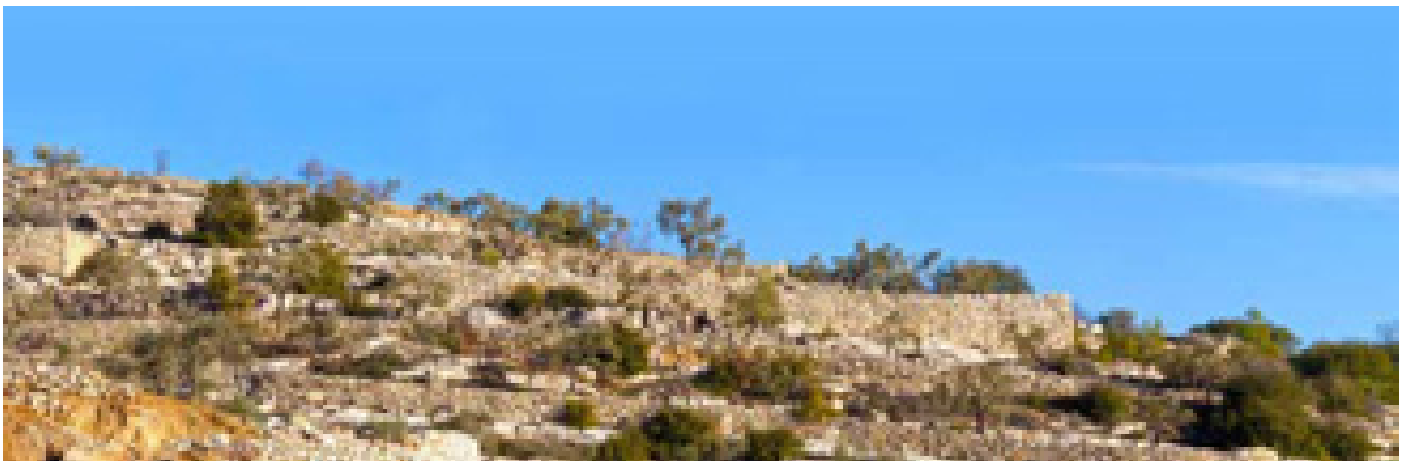


Fig. 2.3 General view of Wadi Al Makhroul

Agricultural terraces and olive tree cultivation

“The Olive Tree is a synonym for Palestine, and Palestine is a synonym for the Olive Tree. They exist together. They have formed a confluence for eternity, and they still maintain the passion between them. Never a morning or an evening passes, unless the Olive Tree, or “the Tree of Light” as it is called by the Palestinians, is a part of it in one way or another.”

Nasser Soumi; *Palestine and the Olive Tree*⁴

Extensive olive groves extend from Wadi Al-Makhroul north-west towards Wadi Es-Sikkeh. The man-made terraces that surround the valley are planted mainly with olive trees, some of which are ancient. This adaptation of the landscape has created a stunning landscape. Similar terraces have characterised all the central hills of Palestine from ancient times until the present. Research on the origins of terraced agricultural documents that this system dates back to the Chalcolithic

4 Soumi, Nasser, *L'Olivier & la Palestine: Une Passion Charnelle*, Sinbad: Foundateur Pierre Bernard, Actes Sud, France 2010, page 15.

5 Sayej, Ghattas I., “The Origin of Terraces in the Central Hills of Palestine: Theories and Explanations,” *The Landscape of Equivocal Palestine*, Soumi, Nasser, *L'Olivier & la Palestine: Une Passion Charnelle*, Sinbad: Foundateur Pierre Bernard, Actes Sud, France 2010, page 15.



Fig. 2.4 An olive grove near Khirbet Al-Yahoud

period (4500 to 3000 BC). This is when advanced farming villages emerged and an intensification of agriculture, evidenced by the cultivation of fruits such as olives and grapes, evolved. Archaeological excavations in both Palestine and Egypt indicate that wine and olive oil were among the most important goods imported from Palestine to Egypt⁵, and the trade of valuable Canaanite goods from relatively small Palestinian villages was registered in documents from the Early Dynastic Period of the Pharaohs around 3000 BC⁶.

The emergence of planned farming communities, including houses with courtyards, which appeared in central Palestine during the Chalcolithic period, marks the beginning of traditional village patterns, similar to those seen in Palestinian villages today. Moreover, the location of Battir along the route that connected central Palestine, namely Jerusalem, with the Mediterranean coast, and the availability of springs contributed to the development of such terraces.

Thousands of metres of dry-stone walls compose the terraces that extend along the valley of Wadi Al-Makhrour towards Battir. The dry-stone walls (*senasel*) create a flat earthen surface known as *habaleh*, and thus prevent soil erosion and preserve soil moisture. The traditional cultivation of olive trees is an essential component in the historical development of the cultural landscape systems in this area, and has multiple functions and meanings at the environmental, agricultural, socio-cultural, and symbolic levels.

5 Sayej, Ghattas I., "The Origin of Terraces in the Central Hills of Palestine: Theories and Explanations," The Landscape of Equivocal Palestine, Bir Zeit University Press, Palestine 1999, page 206.

6 Soumi, page 28.

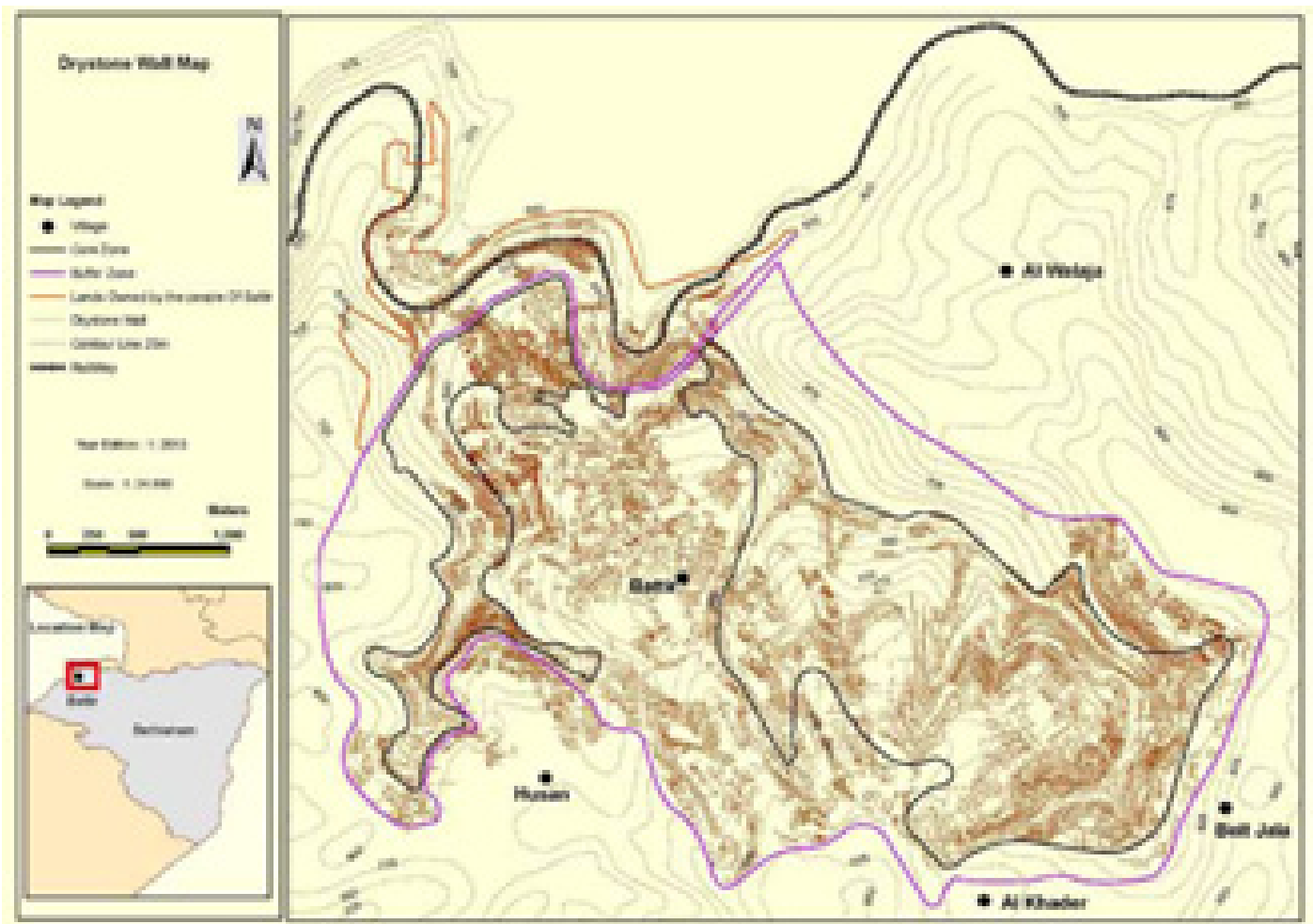


Fig. 2.5 Map of dry-stone walls throughout the property

Local cultures associate the practice of olive culture with their historical roots and Palestinian identity. The olive was domesticated during the Chalcolithic period, while the history of olive oil production can be tracked back more than 5,000 years. The significance of olive cultivation transcends its mere economic and agricultural value, attested to by the fact that many contemporary traditional olive farmers of the area are motivated by sentimental and cultural reasons. Their ability to take care of their olive groves is regarded as an important aspect of their quality of life, even when their income is secured through other activities.

The historical significance of this cultural landscape is integrated into the system of dry-stone terrace walls that characterise this rough landscape. The olive groves extend from the valley to the mountains. Thousands of stones were used in the construction of the dry-stone walls, which contain the soil and create many level areas on the hillside that are planted with olive trees. The stream flowing through the valley is bordered by similar stones to minimise soil erosion during the rainy season⁷. Just before Battir, a massive rock has been placed in the valley near the stream. The rock has a hole in one of its sides and appears to be a rock tomb or an old water cistern that has been turned 90 degrees due to natural forces.

Different types of dry-stone walls and terraces were identified in the Al-Makhroul area. They are associated with the adaptation, systemisation, and maintenance of the land for agriculture. The terraces include (1) very simple structures that require a minimum degree of modification of the land. They are identified locally as the stone piles called *rujum*, and are made from rocks and stones cleared from the land. (2) There are also dry-stone division walls (*senasel*) that are built in

7 Interview with Mr. Ghassam Olayan, a landowner in Battir.



Fig. 2.6 Terraces built with dry-stone walls along the property

flat areas and on smooth slopes to divide plots, mark land ownership, and prevent animals from entering plantations. (3) A third kind of structure is the pocket terrace (*midwath*), which is a short circular or semi-circular wall built around a single tree. They are often associated with olive tree cultivation. (4) Finally, there are the complex systems of dry and irrigated terraces and dry-stone retaining walls, called *habale*. These terraces are deeply integrated into the local geomorphology and contain essential primary and secondary functions, including the consolidation of slopes, prevention of soil erosion, optimisation of rain-water drainage, adaptation of slopes for agricultural uses, and reduction of rain-water runoff⁸.

Due to the rough, steep geomorphology prevailing in the territory, most of the agricultural land is densely terraced. The most pervasive type of dry-stone structure is therefore the contoured retaining terraces, often associated with olive tree cultivation, and the cross-channel terraces (*khalle*), which are built at the intersection of hill slopes and cultivated with different types of plantations, including irrigated terraces.

According to scholars, the amount of labour involved in the construction of dry-stone walls and agricultural terraces suggests that it would require extensive planning and organisation⁹. Even today, it takes extensive collective work by landowners to reconstruct and maintain these terraces after each rainy season. Spring is the time when the farmers gather to work on maintaining their terraces and ploughing the land. Olive picking season is usually during October and November of each year. During this time, all family members work together to pick the olives manually, and press them to produce olive oil. Finally, the olive trees are pruned after the picking season is over.

⁸ Based on the research conducted through the Battir Landscape Conservation and Management Plan project.
⁹ Ditto, page 202.



Fig 2.7 Visitors exploring the massive rock at the valley

The cultivation of the olive tree involves low-density plantations, sometimes planted in an irregular pattern, low labour and material inputs, and a manual harvest. Most of the olive tree plantations are rain-fed, along with other crops such as fruit trees and field crops, and occupy extensive hilly and mountainous areas that are susceptible to soil erosion due to water runoff. The Palestinian oak tree can be found amongst the olives in terraces that are away from the village, while vines and fruit trees, such as apricots, almonds, and plums are planted near the village. The agricultural activities related to olive cultivation are usually managed by individual families, and the olives and oil produced is used prevalently for self-consumption and for the local market.

The present extension of land cultivated with olive trees in the nominated area is 223 hectares, which represents 28 percent of the total territory and 54 percent of the cultivated land. Also in the area, the prevailing variety of olive tree planted for productive purposes is locally known as the nabali or baladi, meaning local.



Fig. 2.8 Olive groves near Battir Village.



Fig 2.9 Ancient Romani Olive tree near Khirbet Al-Yahoud

The majority of the olive trees in the area are very old, with many monumental multi-centenary olive groves in different parts of the territory, often in proximity of the historically built-up areas. The local community refers to the multi-centenary trees as Roman trees (*shajar romanī*), which attests to the deep roots of olive cultivation in the historical framework of the territory. In addition to Wadi Al-Makhrou, well-conserved multi-centenary olive groves are also situated on the hilltop and terraced land in the proximity of the remains of Khirbet Al-Yahoud (ruins of the Jews).

In the ancient world, the olive tree was a symbol of knowledge, wisdom, abundance, peace, health, power, and beauty. Olive oil was believed to bestow strength and youth, in addition to being used for medicinal purposes. Spiritually it symbolised consecration. In Judaism, it was the fuel used to light the holy oil lamp, and the first drop of a squeezed olive was consecrated and stored in special containers for use in the temple.

Orthodox and catholic churches use olive oil to bless and strengthen those preparing for baptism. Its uses also included conferring the sacrament of anointing the sick, as it was regarded to have natural healing properties. The olive tree, according to the Bible, is where Jesus prayed in the

Garden of Gethsemane after the last supper. It is mentioned in the twenty-third Psalm, “Thou anointeth my head with oil.”

In Islam, the olive tree and its oil are mentioned in the Holy Quran. “Allah is the light of the heavens and earth, His light is like a lantern inside which there is a torch contained in a glass jar, the jar is like a bright planet lit by a blessed olive tree, neither eastern or western, so bright it almost ignites, light upon light.” The Quran also starts verse 95:1 by swearing by the olive, “By the fig and the olive, and the Mount of Sinai.” Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) recommended the use of olive oil, “Consume olive oil and anoint it upon your bodies since it is of the blessed tree.” The prophet was reported to believe that olive oil cures some seventy diseases.



Fig 2.10 Olive picking season in Battir

The choice to plant olive trees away from the village, where there are more springs than in Wadi Al-Makhrour, is due to two major factors. The first is that olive trees do not require care year-round, and thus they do not require farmers to visit their fields to look after the trees frequently. The second is that the olive trees do not require irrigation, so planting them away from the springs spared the water for vegetables and fruit trees.

During the olive picking season, which lasts from October to November, the whole family would leave their houses in the village, and move to the agricultural watchtowers (*manatir*) in the hills. This would allow the farmers to watch over their lands. The watchtowers were another significant feature that characterised the slopes extending from Al-Makhrour towards the village of Battir.

Agricultural watchtowers

The route from Wadi Al-Makhrour towards Battir is dotted with agricultural watchtowers called *manatir*, which literally translates to the house of the guard (*natour*). They were also known locally

as palaces (*qusoor*), since they stand alone in the middle of the field overlooking the cultivated lands.¹⁰ About 230 watchtowers were registered along this route. The majority of the agricultural watchtowers were constructed at an intermediate level of the property, and are used by the farmers to watch over their fields during the harvest season. Accordingly, the agricultural watchtowers spread away from the village¹¹.



Fig 2.11 Agricultural watchtowers (manatir) in Wadi Al-Makhroul

The placement of these watchtowers was affected by considerations of the local terrain. They were usually placed on higher parts of the agricultural fields on the slope that faces the prevailing wind and sunlight to ensure ventilation, and to protect the family from various natural and man-made threats. Watchtowers were usually placed near a water source, either a spring or water cistern, and they were placed so as to be close to the neighbours, and thus provide social contact, while maintaining the privacy of the family.

The agricultural watchtowers in Palestine were connected with the origins of agriculture itself: the cultivation of grain and, somewhat later, the domestication of fruit trees. The role of the agricultural watchtowers was multifaceted: (1) to watch over the cultivated land and protect it from animals and thieves; (2) to provide a cool, shaded place for field workers and herdsman during hot summer days; (3) to protect people from wild animals and inclement weather; and (4) to afford their owners an alternate living space for staying temporarily at a distance from their homes. Watchtowers were also used as a permanent residence for farm labourers employed by wealthy landlords to survey, supervise, and cultivate their lands throughout the year. Just outside the building there was often a flat rock, called the *rukbah* or *derdas*, that was used for crushing small amounts of olives or other fruits.

¹⁰ Amiri, Suad, and Rahal, Firas, *Manatir, the Agricultural Watchtowers in Rural Palestine*, Centre for Architectural Conservation ñ RIWAQ, Palestine, 2003, page 16.

¹¹ Al-Houdalieh, Salah Hussein, and Ghdban, Shadi Sami, *Agricultural Watchtowers in Al-Tireh Quarter and Ain Qinia Village*, International Journal of Architectural Heritage, 7: 509-535, 2013.

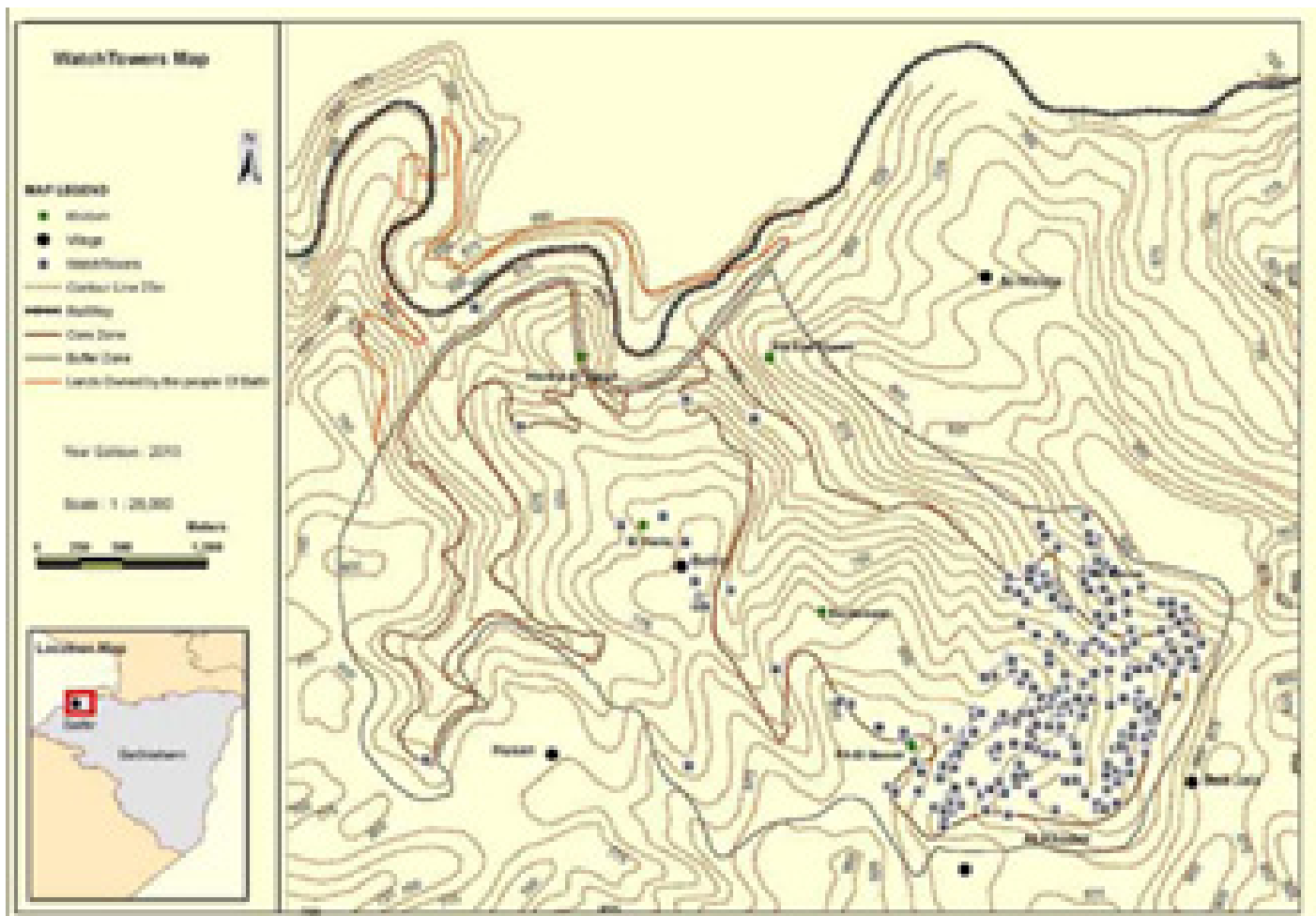


Fig. 2.12 Map showing the location of agricultural watchtowers in Al-Makhrou area

Although many agricultural watchtowers are presumed to have existed from late prehistory into the early historical periods (the ninth to the fourth millennia BC), modern archaeological and survey work throughout Palestine has documented very few of these. The absence of these hypothetical

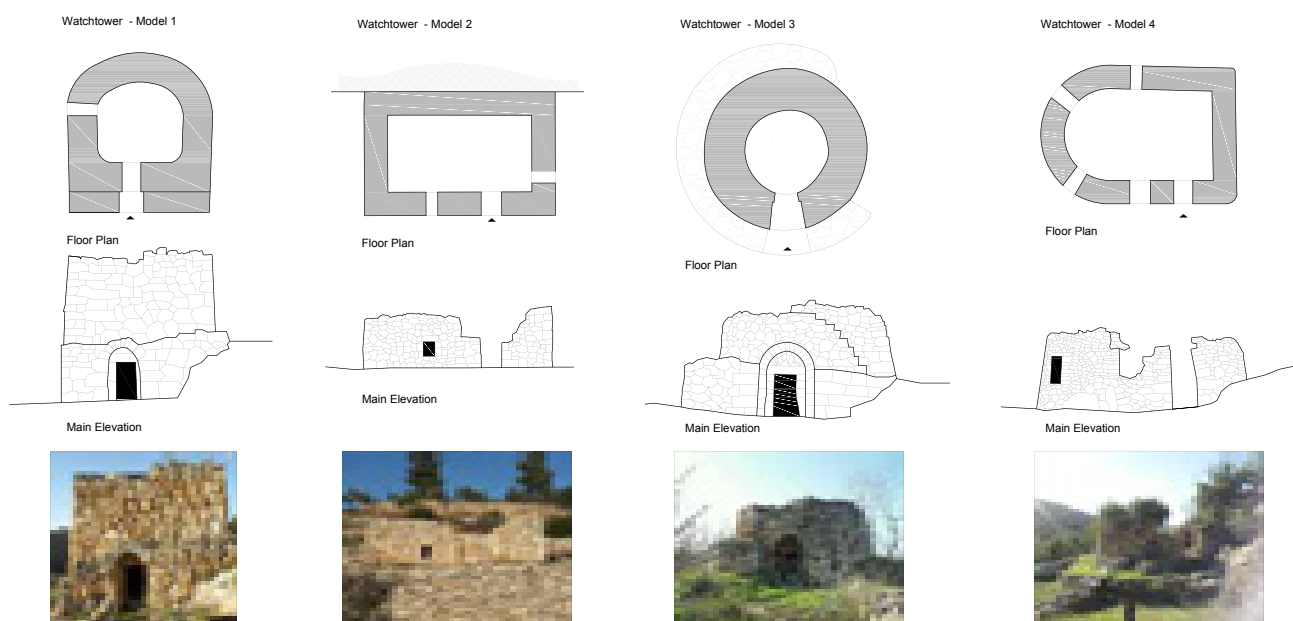


Fig 2.13 Sample plans of different watchtowers that spread in the area.

constructions, however, would be due to the repeated, heavy use of the land throughout antiquity, not to mention natural forces like earthquakes and the decay or weathering away of the organic building materials. Three different types of watchtowers are found in Wadi Al-Makhrou. These included the round-corbelled stone towers, the rectangular or squared quadrilateral watchtowers built of dressed ashler stone, and the solid stone heaps with oval or rounded shapes.

Solid stone heaps: The simplest techniques were used in the construction of the solid stone heaps. A single ring or rectangle of large stones was used to outline the outer boundary and then the entire internal area was filled solid with stones of various sizes; these were mostly gathered from the site in the course of preparing the land for cultivation. This technique was repeated until the required height was reached. The external profile of these structures featured a slight inward slant proceeding upward, to ensure the necessary stability of the heap. The roof of the stone heaps was made of a wood called *taqwis* taken from the cut branches of cypresses and local shrubs, called natish. The roof was temporary and was replaced and repaired with new branches seasonally, while the old branches were carried to the village and used as wood in the house during the winter.

Round watchtowers: To construct the round watchtowers, the farmers would clear and level the building spot. The circular layout of the construction was usually marked by forming two concentric rings of earth 1 to 1.5 metres apart, taking into account the placement and dimensions of the external entrance. Then, a bottom course of large stones was laid on top of each of the two earthen rings, thus outlining the inner and outer faces of the watchtower's foundation. In the next step, the space between the two rings of large stones was filled with medium and small-size stones mixed earth and other debris, all collected from the adjacent area. The two faces of this *rubble-core* wall (external and internal) were built of different sizes of un-worked fieldstone laid in an irregular pattern. Proceeding upward toward the ground-floor roof level, a slight inward slant was introduced to the outer face of the wall, in order to achieve greater stability and to minimise the weight borne by the foundation.

The internal faces of the same walls likewise incline gradually toward the centre. However, the incline began approximately 0.8 to 1.0 metre above floor level, ultimately forming a vaulted (or domed) ceiling. This ordinarily had the shape of a barrel-vault or cross-vault. Once the ground floor was complete and roofed, this procedure could continue upward in the same manner until reaching the desired number of floors and overall height.

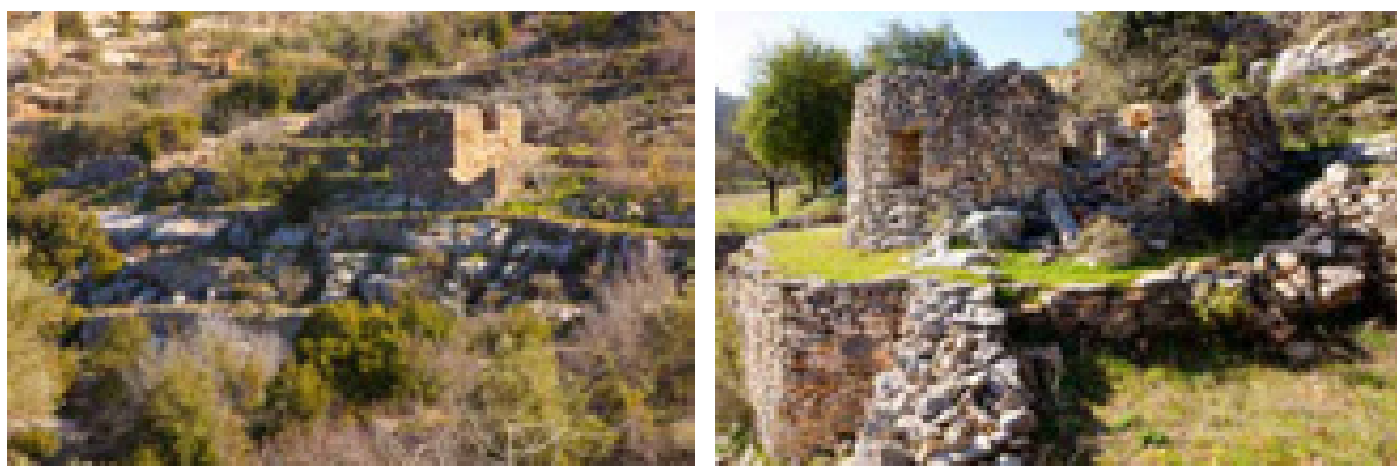


Fig 2.14 (left) Quadrilateral watchtowers, (right) Round watchtowers

Quadrilateral watchtowers: To build the quadrilateral watchtowers, the process started with levelling the building spot, i.e. cutting off the protrusions of the bedrock surface or filling the cavities with stones and mortar. Then the boundaries of the external and internal walls were marked off with two thick cords. The walls usually had a thickness of 0.80 to 1 metre. Quantities of water were then poured over the foundation areas in order to fully clean them of any accumulations of

dirt that might interrupt the seal between the bedrock and the mortared stone foundation. Next, a layer of mortar was laid down, and on top of it a layer of *ashlar* stones around the perimeter, which defined the inner and outer wall faces and the placement and size of the external entrance.

Once the lowest courses were laid, the space in between was filled with a combination of earth, lime, ash, and straw, and small to medium stones, all collected from the surrounding area. Proceeding upward, this method was repeated course by course until the ground floor roof. The exterior wall face was built with a relatively vertical profile, while, again, the internal wall inclined gradually inward beginning at a height of 0.8 to 1.0 metre above the ground. At the top, the inclined wall face formed a vaulted ceiling, which ordinarily had the shape of a barrel-vault or cross vault, or, in a few cases, a hemisphere or dome. To build subsequent storeys, the workers would follow the same steps, proceeding upward, until the building was completed. The masonry of these structures (in contrast to the round towers above) consists of large, well cut and sometimes nicely dressed *ashlar* stones, laid in regular, horizontal courses, but which sometimes varied in height from one course to the next, dictated mostly by the available stone material.

Limekilns

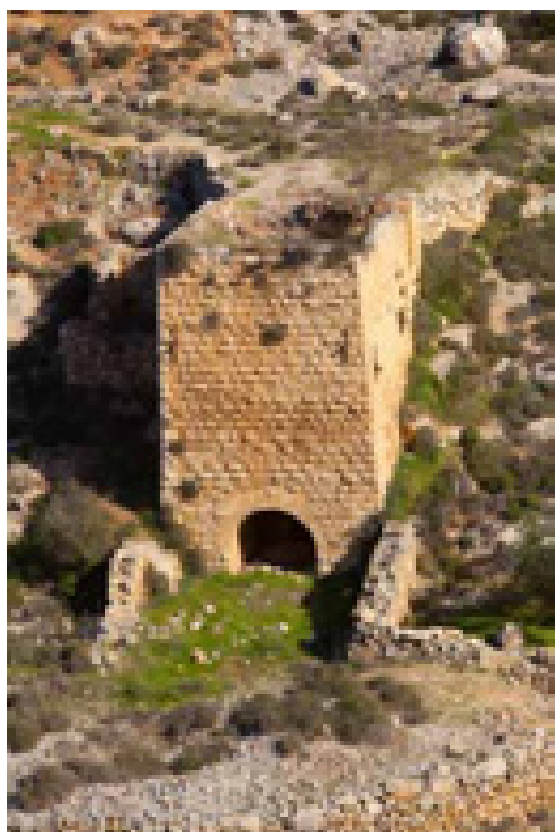


Fig 2.15 The limekiln near Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway, Battir

Limekilns were usually temporary structures that were developed by the Romans to burn limestone and produce lime for use as mortar. These structures were used for burning limestone, or calcium carbonate, which produces quicklime, calcium oxide. Mixed with water, the quicklime produces slaked lime, calcium hydroxide. Quicklime was used the production of mortar for building purposes, and sometimes, as during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for the production of lime for agricultural purposes. The common feature of early kilns was an egg-shaped burning chamber constructed using hard stone, with an air inlet at the base.

Limekilns exist throughout the property, and are called *qabbara* or *lattoun*. Until few decades ago, the limekilns remained in use by the local population to produce lime mortar, locally called *khallale*, from local lithic and soil materials. The traditional kilns were built near the site where the lime was acquired, and were either left to collapse after use or dismantled. The mortar was produced by lighting a big fire and keeping it at a high temperature for at least five or six days until the lime mortar was ready. The material produced was used locally by the villagers to build and maintain the houses of the village.

In the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, a permanent limekiln structure is located a short distance from the village of Battir on the western slope of Wadi *Ni'meh*. The structure is rectangular, almost 8 metres high, and made of bricks, stones, and mortar. The limekiln has a lower furnace and a higher room surmounted by a vault roof with a central hole.

The location of the limekiln near the Jaffa-Battir railroad, and the relatively small size of the village of Battir indicate that this particular limekiln was constructed for mass production, most probably for the nearby city of Jerusalem, and perhaps for other major cities located along the route of the railway. It remained in use and productive until the end of the 1940s, when it was abandoned as a consequence of the Israeli-Arab war and the introduction of concrete for construction.

Ancient olive presses

The cultivation of olives for the production of olive oil required techniques to produce the oil. Methods to extract olive oil before mechanically operated machines included three techniques.

The first method was known as *al-baddudiyeh*, which was usually used by farmers to meet their needs for olive oil, in case they ran out of their stored oil before the olive picking season. *Al-baddudiyeh* is done by placing the olives on dry thorns available from the fields in a pit made of rocks. The olives were crushed in the hole using a stone. The produced paste was placed on a straw plate and covered with another; this was repeated in many layers that were pressed by a heavy stone¹². The oil would drip into another pit that was also made of stone. An olive press of this type was found during excavations conducted in 2007 at the bottom of the village of Battir¹³.

The second method was known as *zeit tfah* (overflowing oil), and it was a way of producing oil manually with one's bare hands without using any tools. Oil prepared in this method was devoted to lighting lamps in shrines and holy places and for lighting oil lamps during religious festivals.

The third method was implemented using the traditional olive press (*al-bedd*). This is the press that was used before the introduction of the mechanical press. It was usually made of two stones. The first was shaped like a huge dish, and was laid on the ground, and the other had a cylindrical shape with a square opening at its centre and was placed vertically inside the first stone. A wooden



Fig 2.16 Remains of an ancient oil press near Battir Village.

staff was placed at the opening and was rotated around the circumference of the first stone either

¹² Soumi, Nasser, *L'Olivier & la Palestine: Une Passion Charnelle*, Sinbad: Fondateur Pierre Bernard, Actes Sud, France 2010, page 92.

¹³ http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=1625&mag_id=117

by a mule or wheel. The crushed olives, which became a paste, were placed in hay baskets and squeezed to extract the oil.

Not surprisingly, in a cultural landscape that depended on the cultivation of olives for the production of olive oil, many traditional olive presses of the third type were found among the fields and near the watchtowers, since it was easier for the farmers to press the olives in the fields than move them to other location. In addition, the remains of two olive presses were found in Khirbet Bardama and Khirbet Al-Qasr.

Agricultural fields surrounding the village: The people of Battir and their paradise

In his description of the train route heading to Jerusalem from Jaffa, Fredrick Jones Bliss wrote *“but at last the train enters Wayd Es-Surar (the Valley of Sorek) and, following its many windings, slowly mounts to the station of Bittir¹⁴ set in a garden of brilliant green and surrounded by terraced slopes rich with vines...”*¹⁵

The village of Battir has long been known as the vegetable basket of Jerusalem. The vegetables of Battir have always been well appreciated in the nearby towns and villages. The eggplants of Battir (*beitinjan batttiri*) are considered to be the best and the most famous in the area. The closeness of the terraces to the village, and the availability of water within the boundaries of the village, have both enabled Battir to develop an agricultural system for growing vegetables that is totally

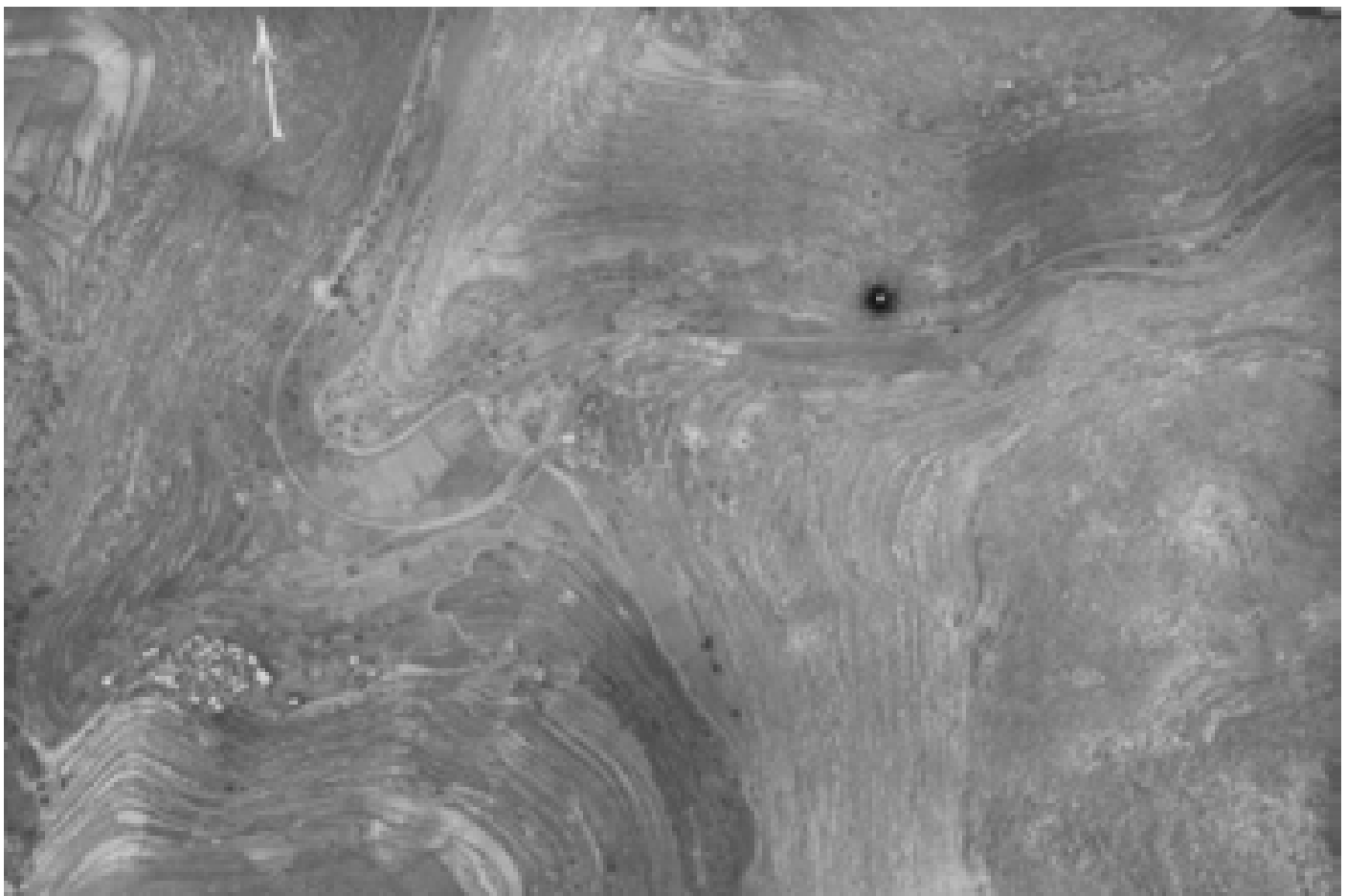


Fig. 2.17 Aerial photograph of Battir Village and the surrounding areas, 8 April 1918, Bayerisheshaptstadt Archive, Bildsammlung Pästina (www.gda.bayern.de)

14 Another spelling of Battir that was common during the British Mandate.

15 Bliss, Fredrick Jones, Summer in Palestine and Syria, the Biblical World, vol. 20, no. 2, Aug. 1902, pages 90-91.

dependent on irrigation. Vegetables are grown in the terraces all year around, and were once mainly sold in Jerusalem, although this situation changed after Battir was completely cut off from Jerusalem after the 1967 war. Still, even today, Battir is considered one of the major sources for vegetables for Bethlehem.

Although the terraces near the village have a few scattered olive trees, they are mainly associated with other crops, including grapevines, fruit trees¹⁶, seasonal vegetables, and herbs^{17,17}. Some citrus trees, mainly lemon trees, are also found in these fields, but they are planted for domestic use only. The majority of the cultivation near the terraces depends on irrigation. The ancient pools and the water canals are used during the dry season to irrigate the terraces, and the distribution of the water among the farmers follows a traditional system known as shares (*al-ma'dud*).

Many of the dry-stone agricultural terraces are planted with a historical collection of crops that include olive trees, vineyards, and fruit trees. The dry field agricultural terraces, which are planted with these trees, are called *karm*¹⁸. Each *karm* is divided into three different parts that is each reserved for a different plant. The front section, *el-rahma*, is planted with vines; the middle section, *rasel mahna*, is planted with fig trees; and the third section, which is adjacent to the upper dry stone retaining wall (*al-zarb*) is planted with olive trees. Enclosed walls, vineyards, and fruit orchards serve also as windbreaks to protect the vegetables. Pocket terraces around single trees and stone piles are also encountered in the agricultural lands, and can be mainly found around the terraces.



Fig 2.18 Agricultural terraces near Battir Village

16 Such as apricot, almonds, and figs

17 Such as cauliflower, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumber, mint, and parsley.

18 Karm is literally translated as vineyard, which indicates that many grapevines existed in the area.

The agricultural terraces in Battir, which depend totally on agriculture, are called the paradises (*al-jinan*). Everyone in Battir is fond of his/her “jinar,” especially the irrigated terraces. They are committed to look after their lands and keep their shares active, even if they don’t use them very frequently. This can be attributed to their feeling that their lands and the fountain were very important to their ancestors. This moral commitment has, in turn, given rise to their contribution to renovate and maintain the pools, canals, and fountains.

The irrigation system

The traditional irrigation system continues to be used by the inhabitants of Battir, and still meets the needs of the farmers, even though it is an ancient system. According to the farmers themselves, the system satisfies their needs and it continues to be implemented without any modifications. It is simple and easy¹⁹; and it has been passed down from father to son from generation to generation.

The traditional irrigation system, which continues to be used today, has been used by the peoples of Battir for centuries, presumably all the way back to Roman times. The ancient rock-hewn canals are still in use and stand out in the distinctively built terraces. This water distribution system that has been used for millennia depends on dividing the water that is collected in a retaining pool during the night in equal portions among the local families and their individual members. Battir has eight families that benefit from the system, and each family has the right to use the water for one full day on an eight-day rotation.



Fig 2.19 View of the irrigated terraces in 1892

19 Although distributing the water can be implemented by anybody, young or old, man or woman, the presence of a wise adult man is necessary to monitor the equality in the measurements and distribution.

This unique water system is the result of an ancient democratic distribution system that delivers water to the terraced agricultural land based on a simple mathematical calculation and a clear time-managed rotation scheme. The system is described by the farmers as just and fair, and satisfies the needs of the landowners. These two facts have contributed to its sustainability throughout the years.

Battir has more than ten water springs²⁰. The most important springs are Ain Al-Balad and Ain Jama'. The water from these springs is collected in two pools and used to irrigate the surrounding man-made dry-stone terraces. The water from these two fountains and the irrigation system, including the canals and pools, are public property, and are managed by Battir's eight main families²¹.



Fig 2.20 Water pouring in the ancient pool in Battir Village

Water distribution among the farmers

Distributing water to the land below the pools, or the lower water (al-mayyah al-tahta)

Irrigation of the terraces located below the level of the collecting pools depends on measuring the height of the water, and is called a share (*al-ma'dud*). It is used in both the pools that collect the water of Ain Jama' and Ain Al-Balad. A measuring stick (*al-'adad*) is taken from a bush, locally called *al-sakron*, that grows around the pool. The measuring stick is divided into equal divisions using lycium thorns, according to the number of shares of the family. The share depends on the amount of water that runs from the pool through the without a time limit. The available amount is gauged by the stick and is then divided between the family members²².

²⁰ Tmeizeh, A., p. 107.

²¹ Olayan, and Tmeizeh, pp. 107-109.

²² The division is based on the amount of the land that a person has, accordingly one person in the family may receive one share while the other receives three shares.

At about 6 o'clock each morning, an old farmer from Battir village goes down into the ancient pool to measure the height of the water gathered during the night using *al-ma'dud*. He holds the *ma'doud* vertically in his hand so that its bottom end touches the highest corner of an old flat square tile fixed in the middle of the pool and he puts two thistles on the stick exactly to the point marking the surface of water. Then he leaves the pool and starts to divide the height of water by the number of his family's shares. The distribution of the shares among the family members also rotates in order to avoid differences in the volume created by the irregular shape of the walls of the pools and the time of the day the farmer receives his share(s).

As soon as the old man finishes the preparation of *al-ma'doud*, he keeps it in a safe place known to other farmers and out of reach of children. He goes off to his land to handle other field activities until his turn is due. The farmers in Battir can easily read *al-ma'doud* even if they did not do the

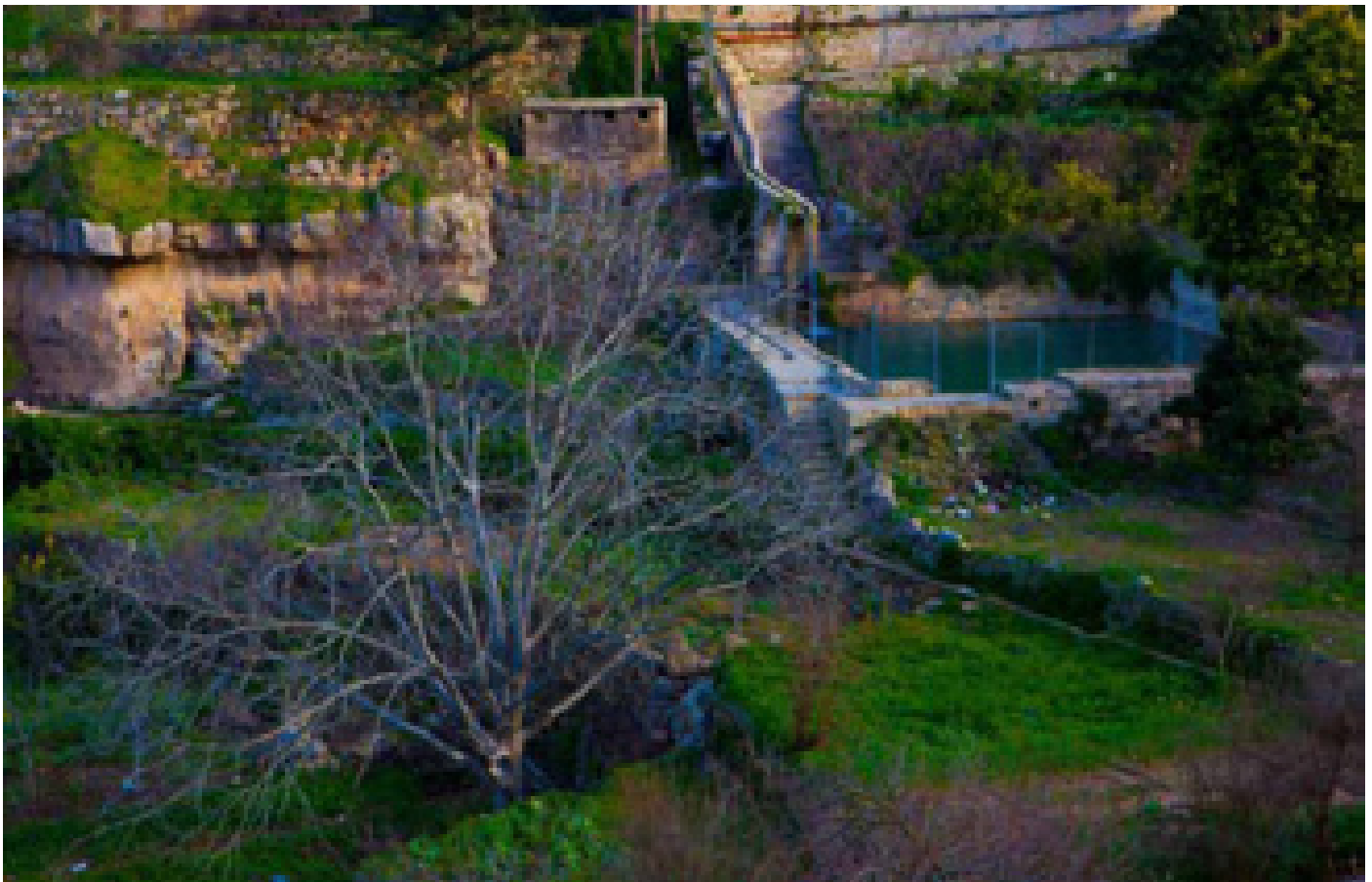


Fig 2.21 The ancient (Roman) pool that collects the water of Ain Al-Balad near Battir Village

division. A share usually takes 30 to 50 minutes depending on the number of shares per day and the time of sunset, at which the pool is closed again to collect water for the next day.

The farmer who has the first turn starts to irrigate his land with his share of the water in the pool, in addition to the water flowing to the pool from the spring at Ain-Jama', since the flowing water of Ain Al-Balad is used for irrigating the lands that are located between the spring and the pool. The farmer has to manage the time and the water in the pool, and use it as efficiently as possible before his time finishes. However, farmers can usually control the flow of water, time their periods, and control the irrigation of their land. As a matter of fact, if the water flow is stronger than necessary, it will harm the soil as well as the newly sown seeds. Further management of the water might include dividing the water into more than one sub-canal. Family members cooperate in irrigating their lands.



Fig 2.22 Al-ma'doud, a stick used to determine the level of water in the pool before distributing it on the farmers

The second farmer will be waiting for his turn and control the water flow to determine when the first farmer's share will end by measuring the water level in the pool with al-ma'dud, and will notify him more than once with a loud voice so that the first farmer can finish irrigating his or her plants. Sometimes, farmers face a shortage of water supply, especially in summer. If this happens, the first farmer may ask the second one to allow him some three to five extra minutes so he can water some withering plants just to keep them alive. If, for any reason, a farmer is absent, another farmer will replace him. Farmers normally support each other, especially if they are relatives, but even if they are not. The people in Battir are accustomed to helping one another (*ouneh*).

The farmer who receives the last portion (*e'kab el-birkeh*, *e'kab el-nhar*, or *taali el-har*) is given the extra amount of water (*nafal*) to compensate him for the difference caused by the irregular shape of the pool. Hence, the farmer makes up for this loss with the *nafal* and an extra portion of time. Farmers prefer the last time slot since it allows them to irrigate their fields comfortably. Exactly at sunset, one person from the family whose turn is on the following day will be there waiting to close the pool when the sun sets at the Maghreb prayer time, so the pool can start collecting water for the next day.

Distributing the water to the lands located above the pool, the higher water (al-mayyah al-foukah)

Since *Ain Al-Balad* is located on a higher spot than the other pool, the irrigation of the terraces in between the spring and the pool depends on a timing system that, until the 1950s, was measured by observing a sun clock that was located near the spring. Today, it is measured by an electric clock.

To guarantee a fair distribution among the families, the lower and upper water of *Ain Al-Balad* is allocated on the same day, and the water of *Ain Jama'* is on the day that follows. According to this



Fig. 2.23 Farmers working their land

system, the water is divided among all the village families, and each has one day. Thus it is said that a week lasts eight days, not seven, in Battir's traditional irrigation system. Within the same family, the water is distributed according to the share system. Between sixteen and twenty-two shares are divided every day, and between 144 and 146 shares are distributed between the village families every eight days. For example, the Al-Botmah family's share is one complete day from Ain al-Balad. On that day, the water is divided into eighteen shares²³.

Canals, *al-masakib*, and the four seasons

Canals are made from the soil and the water runs through them to irrigate small garden beds (*mashakib*). Each one is about 1.5 metres by 2 metres. All the beds are linked together by a canal in between them, and separated from each other by borders made of soil. Every season, Al *Mashakib* have to be renewed and reshaped and should be maintained every now and then during the same season.

The irrigation system makes it possible for farmers to use their land in three seasons: summer, winter, and spring. In each season they usually grow different vegetables like the Battiri Eggplant, named after the village. This well-known type of eggplant is considered a summer crop, whereas green beans are a winter crop, etc.

Human settlement remains (*al-khirab*)

The availability of springs around the mountains, and the location of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir along the ancient road that connected Jerusalem with the southern part

23 Tmeizeh, A., 2004, p. 108.



Fig. 2.24 The ancient pool and al-mashakib, the small gardens.

of Palestine encouraged several civilisations to settle in the area. Archaeological remains²⁴; locally known as *khirab*, from different periods (Canaanite, Roman, Byzantine, Mamluk, and Ottoman) attest to the presence of different layers of civilisations and of different phases of domestication of the local landscape. Seven *khirab* have been found within the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, the majority of which are located near the modern village.

Khirbet Al-Yahoud is located on top of the hill to the south of Battir village, and is considered the most important *khirbeh* in the property. It is known to the local inhabitants as *Al-Khirbeh*. *Khirbet Al-Yahoud*, which translates to the Ruins of the Jews, has been associated by some scholars to Betar, the site where the Romans suppressed Simon Bar Kokhba in 135 AD. Excavations have

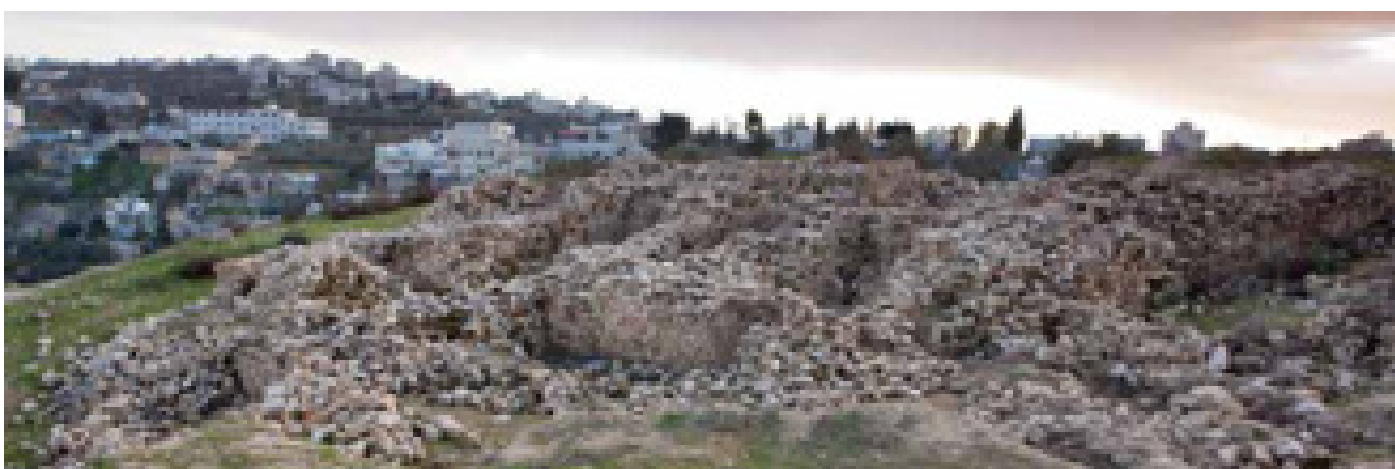


Fig. 2.25 A view of Khirbet Al-Yahoud overlooking Battir Village

²⁴ The description of the human settlements in Battir is based on the Magazine of Battir, edited by Gassan Olayan, first edition, 1998.

been carried out intensively at the site since the beginning of the twentieth century, and the site was highlighted by many scholars²⁵. Recent excavations at *Khirbet Al-Yahoud* revealed remains that date back to the Middle Bronze Age (Canaanite period).

There are no visible ruins on the hill that is mostly planted with olives and other summer trees. Remains of a Roman Citadel/Castle that served as a garrison for the village, and a horse stable that is known as *Al-Boubarieh*²⁶ are located behind it. Ancient tombs located to the east of the *khirbeh* are located in the side of the mountain that overlooks the village of Battir.

The location of *Khirbet Al-Youhud* along the ancient Roman road that connected the city of Jerusalem with Gaza and Caesarea, the availability of springs, and the location of the fortress on the mountaintop were three determining factors in the formation of the settlement. The defensive structure proposes that the settlement was built along the route to provide protection for the route.

Khirbet Al-Rukba is a Roman station along the ancient route. Remains of an olive press can be found on the site. *Khirbet Al-Rukba* is evidence of the importance of the site as a main station along the Roman road, and to the extensive cultivation of olives in the area.

Khirbet Bardama (Bardamout) is located in the northeast of the village, overlooking Wadi Al-Makhrou, near a water spring that bears the same name. The *khirbeh* is surrounded by olive groves, and is believed to date to the Roman period. Some archaeological remains still exist at the site.

Khirbet Al-Harith (Al-Hariq) is located to the southwest of Khibbet Bardama; the site contains Roman, Islamic, and Mamluk remains.

Other *khirab* are located on the periphery of Battir and around it, including *Khirbet A-Qasr*, *Khirbet Um Al-Shukaif*, and *Khirbet Karzaleh*.

Excavations were only conducted in *Khirbet Al-Yahoud*, and mainly aimed to connect the site with biblical Betar. The remaining sites were identified by the British Survey of Western Palestine and documented and described in the texts of various travellers and pilgrims who visited the area. The location of the *khirab* in the areas identified as Area C by the Israelis is the main obstacle in conducting excavations and surveys.

The buffer zone

The buffer zone surrounds the property on its northern, southern, and western sides, while a 10-metre-wide strip of land separates the core zone from the Armistice Line²⁷. Lands owned by the inhabitants of Battir, that are still cultivated and irrigated using the ancient irrigation pool and canals today, lie beyond the Armistice Line, and form an essential extension of the agricultural terraces of the village. The village of Battir lies along the eastern side of the core zone, and is also a part of the buffer zone.

The lands that compose the buffer zone extend to the neighbouring villages: the village of Al-Walaja to the northeast, the towns of Beit Jala and Al-Khader to the east, and the village of Husan to the south. The land that composes the buffer zone either contains collapsed terraces and remains of agricultural watchtowers, or is continuous landscape that lies within the inhabited areas. In

25 Scholars include V. Guerin, C. Clermont-Ganneau, J. Germer-Durand, E. Zickermann, W.D. Carroll, A. Alt, A. Schulten, A. Reifenberg, S. Yeivin, and others.

26 Building used to house the horses and carriages of travellers, as well as providing them with a place to rest.

27 The Green Line is the name given to the 1949 Armistice lines that constituted the de facto borders of pre-1967 Israel ("Glossary: Israel", Library of Congress Country Studies).

some areas, steep natural rock formations have prevented the adaptation of the landscape for agricultural purposes. These rocks, combined with the surrounding cultural terraces form a breath-taking landscape that reveals the effort that was made to build the terraces. The majority of the abandoned terraces still have some olive trees that grow in between the wild plants that grow in the area.

The village of Battir

The village of Battir shifted to its current location probably during the Mamluk period. The inhabitants restored houses, stables, and storerooms from the Roman period. During that time, the village was categorised as a *vaqif* for the benefit of Al-Athemieh School in Jerusalem. The majority of the traditional buildings in Battir date back to the late Ottoman period. These buildings

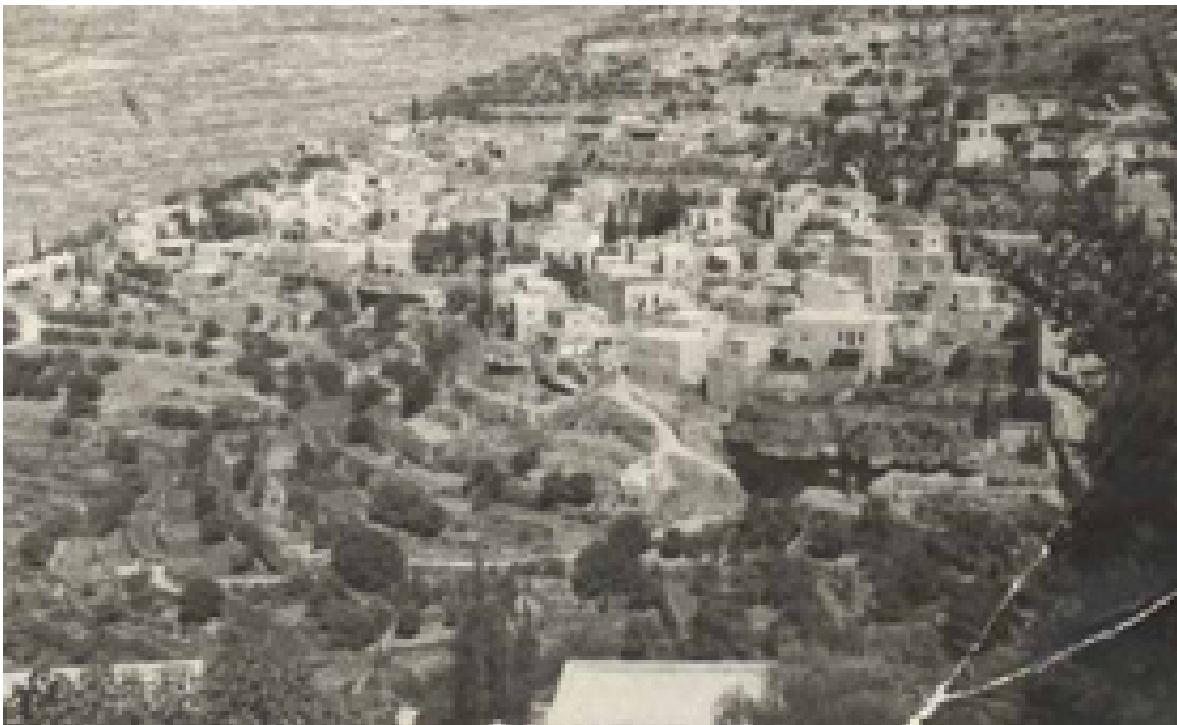


Fig. 2.26 Battir Village during 1960s.

incorporate the development of Roman-Byzantine techniques and reflect different phases in the village's history

The cross-arched room structure, a Roman-Byzantine technique introduced in Palestine in the first century BC, continued to be developed and was used until the beginning of the twentieth century. Other Roman-Byzantine techniques used over a similar time-span and visible in the village, include the arch, the vault, and the use of limestone (*cociopesto*) concrete, mortar, and plaster. A wide range of shapes and details are apparent on numerous buildings, which are unique personal creations of the owner and were made according to the capabilities of the builder.

Roman building techniques continued to be used until the arrival of the steam railway and the introduction of the steel beam and Portland cement. The opening of the Jaffa-Jerusalem line meant that, by 1910, the new I-Beam and Portland cement techniques had largely replaced all lime-based plaster, mortar, and Roman concrete construction²⁸.

Various traditional buildings have been adapted by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem in cooperation with the village council of Battir for the use of local community

²⁸ Shaffer, Y., "Changes in the Building Technologies in Israel from Ancient Times Until the 20th Century and Their Influence on Everyday Life," from the UNESCO report, *More than Two Thousand Years in the History of Architecture, Safeguarding the Structure of Our Architectural Heritage, Proceedings of the International Congress, in partnership with the Bethlehem 2000 Project (Maison De LiUNESCO, Paris), 2001.*

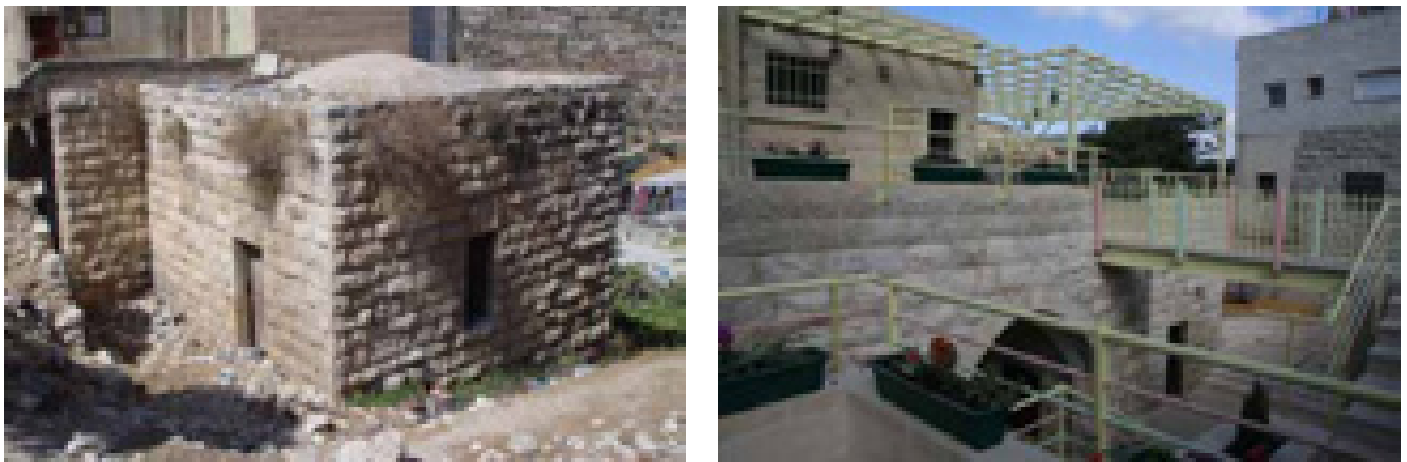


Fig. 2.27 Dar Al-Bader before and after renovation

organisations. These buildings include Dar Samara, the surrounding neighbourhood of the Seven Widows Quarter, Dar Al Bader, and Dar Abu Hassan. These three buildings have been adapted to serve as a guesthouse (Dar Abu Hassan), a visitors' information centre (Dar Al-Bader), and an office for the municipality (Dar Samara).

In addition, several architectural features can be found in the village of Battir, and are strongly related to the narrative history of the village. Maqam Abu Zeid is a shrine located to the north of the ancient pool of Ain Al-Balad and is dedicated to Abu Zeid's wife, Rabiea Al-Adawieh. In the local narrative, it is believed that the shrine belongs to the mystic Abu Zeid Al-Bustami and that

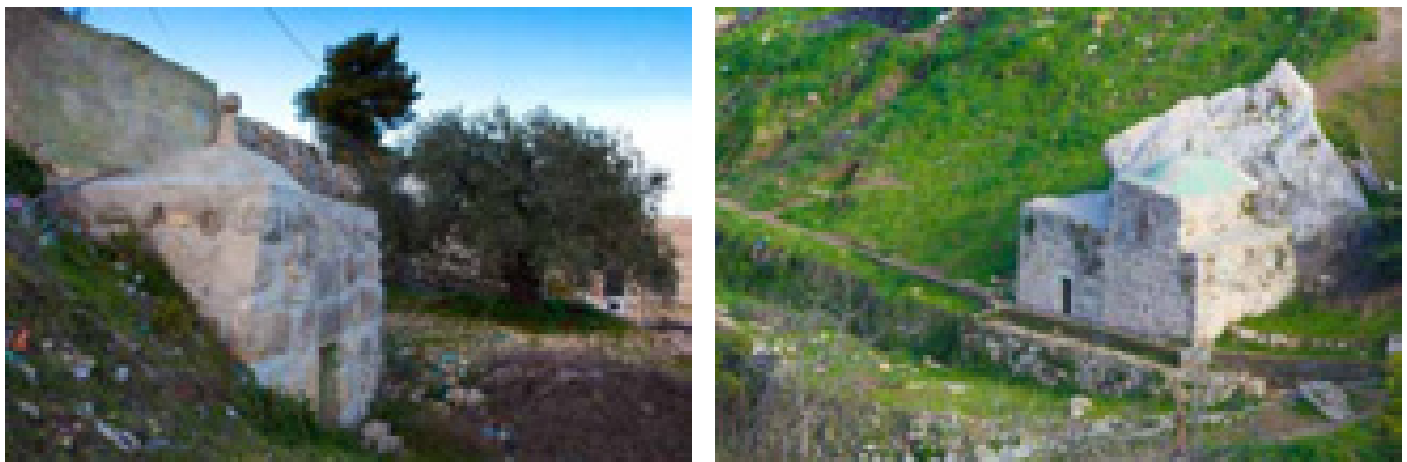


Fig. 2.28 Maqam Al-Sheikh Khattab (left) and Maqam Abu Zaid (right).

Saladin, the Ayyubid leader, gave orders to build this shrine, in addition to many others, after Palestine's liberation from the crusaders, in order to give the country an Islamic appearance.

Other sites include Maqam Al-Sheikh Khattab, a shrine constructed for Al-Sheikh Khattab who is thought to be one of those who first settled in the village, and Al-Zawyeh Mosque, an Islamic endowment that dates back to the Ottoman period and served as a place of worship for some Islamic mystics. Part of the mosque can still be found in the Girls' School near the ancient pool Ein Al-Balad.

The plaza (*Al-Saha*) is an important feature in the urban composition of the village, and is considered a gathering space for the men of the village. Several sahat are located throughout the village, each within the quarter of the family that uses it. *Al-Sahat* serve as gathering places for men, where they would spend the evenings, solve disputes, and discuss various matters, and are also collective



Fig. 2.29 Villagers celebrating a social occasion in al-saha, 1952

spaces for celebrating various occasions.

2.b History and development

In order to match the goals required for the Statement of Outstanding Value, the historical description of the property should include the continuous use of the land for agriculture, and its sustainability as a system throughout the history, starting at least from the Roman period when the water cistern was constructed.

Introduction

Being situated in the centre of the Palestinian Central Highlands, the property has benefitted from its strategic geographical location throughout the centuries. Palestine continues to be an

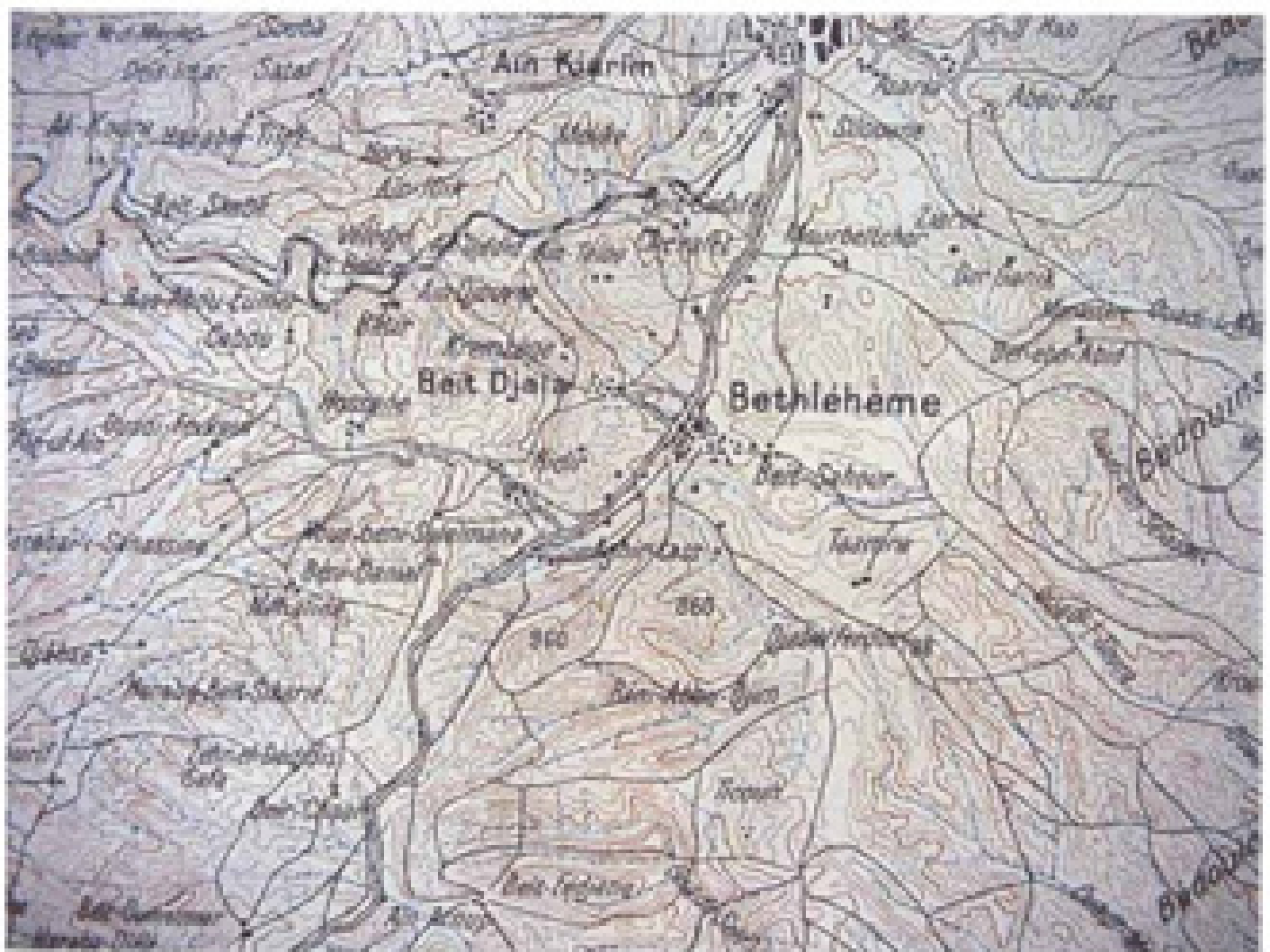


Fig. 2.30 *Carte de la Palestina, detailed, Par Victor Guérin*
Scale 1:250'000

Paris 1881, *Ecole Biblique Cartographic Archive*

important route of migration and encounter between diverse cultures and civilisations, functioning as a bridge between eastern and western societies.

The various periods and their associated ruins in the nomination area

Early Bronze Age	3200 BC to 2000 BC	Archaeological excavations and surveys have revealed remains that belong to the Bronze Age, namely to the Middle Bronze Age. During a site visit of the team working on the nomination, remains of pottery that dates Bronze Age were found at Khirbet Al-Yahoud. ²⁹
Middle Bronze Age	2000 BC to 1550 BC	
Late Bronze Age	1550 BC to 1200 BC	
Iron Age I	1200 BC to 1000 BC	Pottery remains that date to the Iron Age I and II, the Persian Period and the Hellenistic Period were found in soundings conducted by Z. Yeivin.
Iron Age II	1000 BC to 535 BC	
Persian Period ³⁰	535 BC to 332 BC	
Hellenistic Period	332 BC to 63 BC	
Roman Period	63 BC to 324 AD	The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir was located along the main road connecting the port city of Gaza with Jerusalem; Battir (known as Bethther during that period) was on the top of the hill to the east of the road. Remains of a fortification wall in Khirbet Al-Yahoud have been found, the construction and shape of which date back to the Roman Period. Remains also indicate that the site was inhabited during the first and second centuries AD.
Byzantine Period	324 AD to 636 AD	Remains of a human settlement, including some tools that were used for agriculture, were found during a 2007 excavation. ***
Caliphate Period	636 AD to 661 AD	Based on the findings of 2007 excavations, which concluded that the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir has been used continuously as agricultural lands, these lands were used for agriculture during these periods.
Umayyad Period	661 AD to 750 AD	
Abbasid Period*	750 AD to 1099 AD	
Crusades Period	1099 AD to 1187 AD	
Ayyubid Period	1187 AD to 1250 AD	Remains of a human settlement, including some tools that were used for agriculture, were found during a 2007 excavation. ***
Mamluk Period	1250 AD to 1516 AD	Remains of a human settlement, including some tools that were used for agriculture, were found during 2007 excavation. ***
Ottoman Period	1516 AD to 1917 AD	In 1556, Battir was mentioned in the registrar (sijil) because of a dispute over revenues between the inhabitants and the Ottomans. It also mentions that Battir was like Abu Dis and Ain Karem, and that the farmers were harvesting barley and wheat ³¹ . The construction of a train station in the valley along Jerusalem-Jaffa railway started in 1892.

British Mandate	1917 AD to 1948 AD	During the British Mandate period, Battir was the last stop before Jerusalem along the Jaffa-Jerusalem railway, and was tied to Jerusalem economically.
Jordanian Jurisdiction	1948 AD to 1967 AD	Battir was cut off from Jerusalem by the Green Line in 1949 ³² , and was annexed to Bethlehem. The villagers used an old narrow dirt road to travel to Bethlehem.
Israeli Occupation	1967 AD until today	Battir remains a village in the Bethlehem governorate and its inhabitants continue to sell the products of their land in Bethlehem as well as Jerusalem.
Palestinian Authority (Autonomy)	1995 until today	Battir remains an agricultural village, and thus maintains a tradition that has survived and proved its sustainability for the past 4,000 years.

* The Fatimids, whose rule lasted between 909 and 1171, also ruled in Palestine during the Abbasid period.

** The chronology of archaeological sequence presented in the table above is based on the soundings in Battir made by Z. Yeivin during 1970s, and by the trial excavation conducted by professor David Ussishkin on behalf of the Archaeological Staff Office of Judea and Samaria and the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University.

*** Prior to the construction of the Wall, a salvage excavation was conducted by Yehuda Dagan at the foot of Battir village in May and June 2007 on behalf of the Israeli Antiquities Authority, which was underwritten by the Ministry of Defence.³³

The report concluded that the excavation exposed part of the agricultural complex on the edge of the ancient settlement and demonstrated that the farming terraces are the product of many generations of hard work that has continued until the present. The documented burial caves were dated to the periods that are represented on the tell and it seems that they are part of a large cemetery, which continues on top of the slope.

29 The site visit took place on Sunday, 23 December 2012. The identification of the pottery was conducted by Dr. Ahmed Rjoob and Mr. Mohamed Ghayada from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities.

30 Also known as Iron Age III.

31 Singer, Amy, *iPalestinian Peasants and Ottoman Officials: Rural Administration of Sixteenth Century Jerusalem*, i Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilization, Cambridge University Press, 1994, page 75.

32 The Green Line is the name given to the 1949 Armistice line that constitutes the de facto borders of pre-1967 Israel («Glossary: Israel», Library of Congress Country Studies)

33 The case of constructing the Separation Wall in the agricultural lands of Battir was brought to the High Court of Justice, and the decision was delayed until the middle of February 2013. http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=1625&mag_id=117

Prologue

Palestine, is the Holy Land, the land of many narratives, contrasts, layers, and textures. It has always been the object of rivalry: Canaanite, Assyrian, Egyptian, Phoenician, Greek, Roman, Byzantines, Islamic, the Crusades, Mamluk, Ottoman, British, and eventually Israeli colonisation have left evidence of their presence across the area.

Because of the availability of springs in the valleys of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, in addition to its strategic location, the area was adapted by its inhabitants to become one of the important terraced landscapes that provided surrounding communities, namely Jerusalem and, at a later stage, Bethlehem Governorate, with fruits, vegetables, and herbs, and most importantly, olives and olive oil.

Although not much was documented about the history of the area in specific during past historical periods, excavations and surveys in Khirbel Al-Yahoud and its environs revealed pottery that dates back to Bronze age, Iron Age, Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman periods ³⁴.

The Bronze Age, Iron Age, Persian Period and Hellenistic Periods

The location of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir and the availability of water have been two major factors that contributed to the creation of human settlements in the area. Archaeological remains found in the area, whether at the excavations at *Khirbel Al-Yahoud* or along the valley, have revealed that these settlements belonged to different civilisations. Yet, it is difficult to determine the exact location where these settlements were located for two reasons: the first being that the remains that were found are relatively small and could have drifted from their original location carried by the rain or streams, and the second is that the fact that the area is composed of manmade terraces, and during the construction of the terraces the remains might have been moved from their original locations.

Excavations in Khirbet Al- revealed findings that date back to the Canaanite period. Excavations also revealed that the site is actually an ancient Canaanite site of high significance, and is one of the largest excavated Middle Bronze Age sites in the region ³⁵. The site is associated by many scholars with biblical Bether, the last stronghold of Bar Kokhba in his revolt against the Romans in 135 BC. Excavations conducted in the valley have revealed remains that date back to the Bronze Age, Iron Age, Persian, and Hellenistic Periods ³⁶.

Roman Period

During the Roman period, the agricultural area of the village was known as the *ville* or *farm*. The population of the *ville* or *farm* varied between 100 and 1,000 inhabitants, and its area extended between 10 and 100 Dunums ³⁷. During the Roman period, Battir was known as Beth-ther. Some researchers wrote that it meant the “impregnable fortress,” while others wrote that it meant the “corral” or the “fold of sheep.”

During the Roman period, the fields were divided into three sections. One was planted with grains

³⁴ Ussiskin, David, Soundings in Betar, Bar-Kochbais Last Surrounding.

³⁵ Rapoport, Meron, “Buried treasures that’s kept in the dark: An “Archaeological Heart of darkness” is how Dr. Rafi Greenberg has described Israel’s behavior in the territories since 1967,” Haaretz, 17 December 2006. Available at <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/buried-treasure-that-s-kept-in-the-dark-1.207435> (Accessed 12 January 2013).

³⁶ Dagan, Yehuda, iNahal Rephaim, Final report, i Journal 122, December 2010, Hadashot Archeologiyot: Excavations and Surveys in Israel. Available at http://www.hadashot-esi.org.il/report_detail_eng.asp?id=1625&mag_id=117 (accessed 9 January 2013).

³⁷ One dunum = 1,000 square metres.

like corn, wheat or barley, another was planted with vegetables, and the third was left for grazing. The majority of the *villes* or *farms* had water canals to facilitate the irrigation of the crops, and most probably Battir was one of those villages. The different sections were planted or left for grazing on a rotating basis ³⁸. Perhaps one of the most interesting finds in Battir is the Warren Cup, a silver cup found at the beginning of the twentieth century that dates back to between 5 and 15 BC. The cup reflects the customs and attitudes of this historical context, and provides us with an important insight into the culture that made and used it ³⁹.

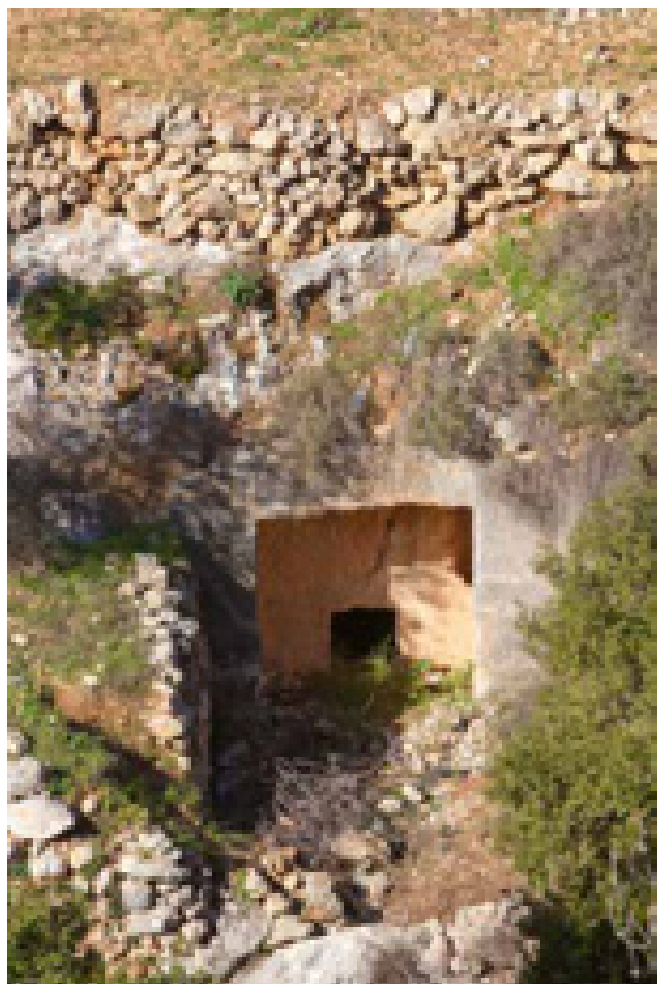


Fig. 2.31 A Roman tomb along the way between Wadi Al-Makhrour and Battir.

Byzantine Period

According to Herschtfeld ⁴⁰, the most significant feature of the Byzantine period in this area was the extreme variation of the village in terms of size, kind, and composition. Villages were separate entities, and the farmers lived in an independent society. Accordingly, archaeological excavations that were conducted within the property, during which some tools that were used for agriculture were found, indicate the continuation of agricultural activities in the area. Agriculture flourished in the villages that surrounded Jerusalem, and the crops cultivated included grains, parsley, and olives.

The Islamic Period (Caliphate, Umayyad, and Abbasid Periods)

Agriculture was identified as the major activity throughout the Levant. Agricultural villages were located throughout Palestine, and the majority of resources indicate the original inhabitants did not leave, and were joined by Arab tribes.

Agriculture flourished around Jerusalem and Hebron, and the majority of the lands were planted with olives and figs. The farmers divided the land into two plots. One was cultivated and the other was kept uncultivated and was left for grazing. References mention that four villages to the south of Jerusalem, Battir, in addition to Artas, Al-Kahder, and Al-Walajeh, depended on springs for irrigating the fields, the majority of which were planted with olives ⁴¹.

The Crusades Period

Few documents have been found on the local population, villages, or the rule in Palestine, as it

³⁸ Shokeh, Khalil, *The History of Battir*, unpublished research, 2012.

³⁹ British Museum Collection, highlights.
http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/gr/t/the_warren_cup.aspx (revised on 12 January 2013).

⁴⁰ Herschtfeld, Y., *Farms, and Villages in Byzantine Palestine*, Oak papers, no. 51, 1997.

⁴¹ Shokeh, Khalil, *The History of Battir*, unpublished research, 2012.

was based on a feudal system. The few archaeological remains that were found in the excavation of 2007, and the fact that Jerusalem was a major centre during that period, indicate strongly that the property might have been inhabited during the Crusades period.

Mamluk Period

The Mamluk rule has been identified as a military feudal system. During that period, a reconstruction process of the villages, which were located around Jerusalem and contained water resources, took place.

During that period, Battir became a *vaqif*⁴² for Al-A'thamieh School in Jerusalem. The village continued to pay for this school until the Ottoman period⁴³. The Sharia Court Registrar also recorded that farmers were treated as workers in their land by the religious and civil government.

Two earthquakes struck Palestine in the years 1458 and 1497, after which the inhabitants suffered from drought. Also they suffered from compulsory military recruitment. According to historians, this period was one of the worst that passed over Palestine⁴⁴.

Ottoman Period

During the Ottoman period, Battir was one of the nine villages of Beni Hassan, which were located to the southwest of Jerusalem, and one of 174 villages that were annexed to the Jerusalem Central Governorate (*Nahiyat Al-Quds*). Battir was reported to be an agricultural village from the early Ottoman period onward. The villagers paid one-third of their revenues, as did those of Abu-Dis and Ain-Karem⁴⁵, to a *vaqif*. Its revenues belonged to *timar* then to *ze'amet*, and the village yielded a moderate quantity of products. However, according to the Ottoman Registrar (*sijill*), the estimated revenues doubled between the surveys of 960 *hijri* and 970 *hijri*⁴⁶.

In August 1556, the village leaders were involved in a serious dispute over the revenues of Battir and payments due from them. The progress and resolution of this case demonstrates how the villagers could and did safeguard their interests with the help of the judge (*kadi*). Although this case was initiated by a complaint from the guardian (*nazir*) of the *vaqif*, the final decision favoured the villagers.⁴⁷

In his description of the area in 1839, during his trip that lasted for almost two hours, Robinson wrote: *"In front of the village "Battir" the whole Wadi turns short to the right, and then sweeps around again to the left in almost a semicircle, enclosing a large and high Tell, which is connected by a lower narrow ridge with the table land on the south. At the village which thus stands in an angle, is a large fountain, larger than the ones we have already seen in "Al-Walajeh village", and with water enough to turn a mill. Below the fountain are extensive gardens on terraces. There are marks upon the steep rocks near by, as if a channel had been once carried upon them; perhaps for a mill."*⁴⁸

42 A *vaqif* or *waqf* is typically a building or plot of land or even cash used for Muslim religious or charitable purposes under the context of an inalienable religious endowment *isadaqa*.

43 Sharia Court Registrar, Jerusalem. No. 61, page 366, 660/1261.

44 Kark, R. and Oren-Nordheim, M., *Jerusalem and its Environs: Quarters, Neighbourhoods and Villages 1800-1948*, The Magnes Press, Hebrew University, Jerusalem, 2001, pages 287 and 233/table 13.

45 Two agricultural villages also annexed to Jerusalem.

46 1553 CE and 1563 CE.

47 Singer, Amy, *"Palestinian Peasants and Ottoman officials: Rural Administration Sixteenth Century Jerusalem"* Cambridge Studies in Islamic Civilisation, Cambridge University Press, 1994, page 75.

48 Robinson, E., and Smith, E., *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai, Arabia and Petra, a Journal of Travels in the Year 1839*, vol. II, John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1841, page 325.

The Railway

During the middle of the nineteenth century, Dr. Conrad Schick, Sir Moses Montefiore, and other British notables initiated the idea of building a railway that linked the Mediterranean Coast with Jerusalem. But it was not until 1888 that the idea started to take shape. The franchise for laying the railway was obtained from the Ottoman government by Joseph Navon, but due financial difficulties, he had to sell the franchise to a French company which was set up to build the line, *Société du Chemin de Fer Ottoman de Jaffa Jérusalem et Prolongements*. The land that the stations were built on was purchased at a very high price by the railway company. The stations were equipped with a telegraph and water cisterns.

The Jaffa-Jerusalem railway had five stations between the two cities, including Al-Lydd, Al-Ramlla, Sajd ⁴⁹, Deir Aban, and finally, Battir. The three important stations along the route were Al-Lydd and Al-Ramla, because they were large cities, and Battir (Bittir). Battir was the most flourishing village in the southern part of Jerusalem, and it was known for its springs and vegetables.



Fig. 2.32 Rail Ticket, in French and Arabic, recto and verso. It is a pasteboard card measuring 1 3/16 by 2 1/8 inches (roughly sextodecimo), for the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railroad, 2nd Class, Palestine, no date. Punched and cancelled.

The opening of the French-built Jaffa-Jerusalem Railroad in 1892 meant that it was now much easier for pilgrims to come to, and oranges to leave from, Palestine. Tourists, especially from Europe, used the line to visit the Holy Land and travel to Jerusalem. It first ran only once a day in each direction, although additional trips were added for Easter. It wasn't long though until the line was so popular that, by 1900, passenger traffic warranted two trains in each direction.

The construction of the railway station in the village of Battir reflects the importance of the village. Villagers used the train to transport their goods from the village of Battir to Jerusalem, which was the most important market. The villagers continued using the train until the 1948 war.

British Mandate Period

During the British Mandate period, Battir was the vegetable basket of Jerusalem. The train station played an essential role in strengthening the relationship between the village and the city of Jerusalem. Inhabitants confirm that during the 1936 revolution, people came to the village by the train to shop for their needs. The system of irrigated terraces played an important role, not only in the economic life of the area, but also in determining the mobility of its inhabitants, who travelled daily to the markets in the District of Jerusalem.

49 Sajd Station was closed in 1915.



Fig. 2.33 A rare travel poster for the French railway, depicting the road leading to the Jerusalem gate, a figure walking, and a figure on a donkey. An inset, “Bethleem” features a view of the main gate, a man leading camel, and a man on a donkey leading second donkey.

Colour Lithograph of a travel poster for Chemins de fer de Paris Lyon et la Méditerranée, PLM Railways titled “Palestine”, 25.5 by 36 inches, 1898. Lower left, “Ateliers F. Hugo D’Alesi 5, place Pigalle, Paris” and lower right, “Louis Gyerry Annecy 1898.”

Jordanian Jurisdiction

After 1948 and the “temporary ejection” of its inhabitants, Battir village in the southern Jerusalem landscape found itself on the Green Line. Its inhabitants made a complete return to the village thanks to the strategic political initiative of their local chief (mukhtar), Hassan Mustapha. Hassan Mustapha dedicated his efforts to guaranteeing the right of the inhabitants of Battir to their land, and he was indeed able to obtain a permission that gave them the right to use lands they owned despite their location behind the Armistice Line.

After the Jordanian-Israeli Armistice Agreement (1949), a progressive separation of the village from Jerusalem began with the closure of the Battir Railway Station. Since the 1950s, the village started to turn into an increasingly “Bethlehem-oriented” village, with the construction of its main road, a pathway historically not used, leading to Bethlehem.

Israeli Occupation Period

Battir was totally annexed to Bethlehem, and its inhabitants continued to depend on agriculture as a major source of income despite all difficulties. They remained committed to living in peace and dedicated their time and effort to taking care of their lands. However their market shifted totally to Bethlehem, where the villagers still sell their products today ⁵⁰.

State of Palestine

In 2005, the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, was designated by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in Palestine as a site that bears outstanding universal value in the tentative list that was prepared. The property was considered one of the sites that represent

⁵⁰ Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, *Inventory of Cultural and Natural Resources of Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine*, first edition, 2009, Palestine, pages 28 and 29

Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines.

Since then, efforts have been made by various stakeholders, in cooperation with the UNESCO Office in Ramallah to preserve the property. The Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Battir Village Council, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem have all put enormous effort into preserving and promoting the site, raising awareness among the local community, and building the capacity of a local team that can contribute towards the preservation, promotion, and management of the property.

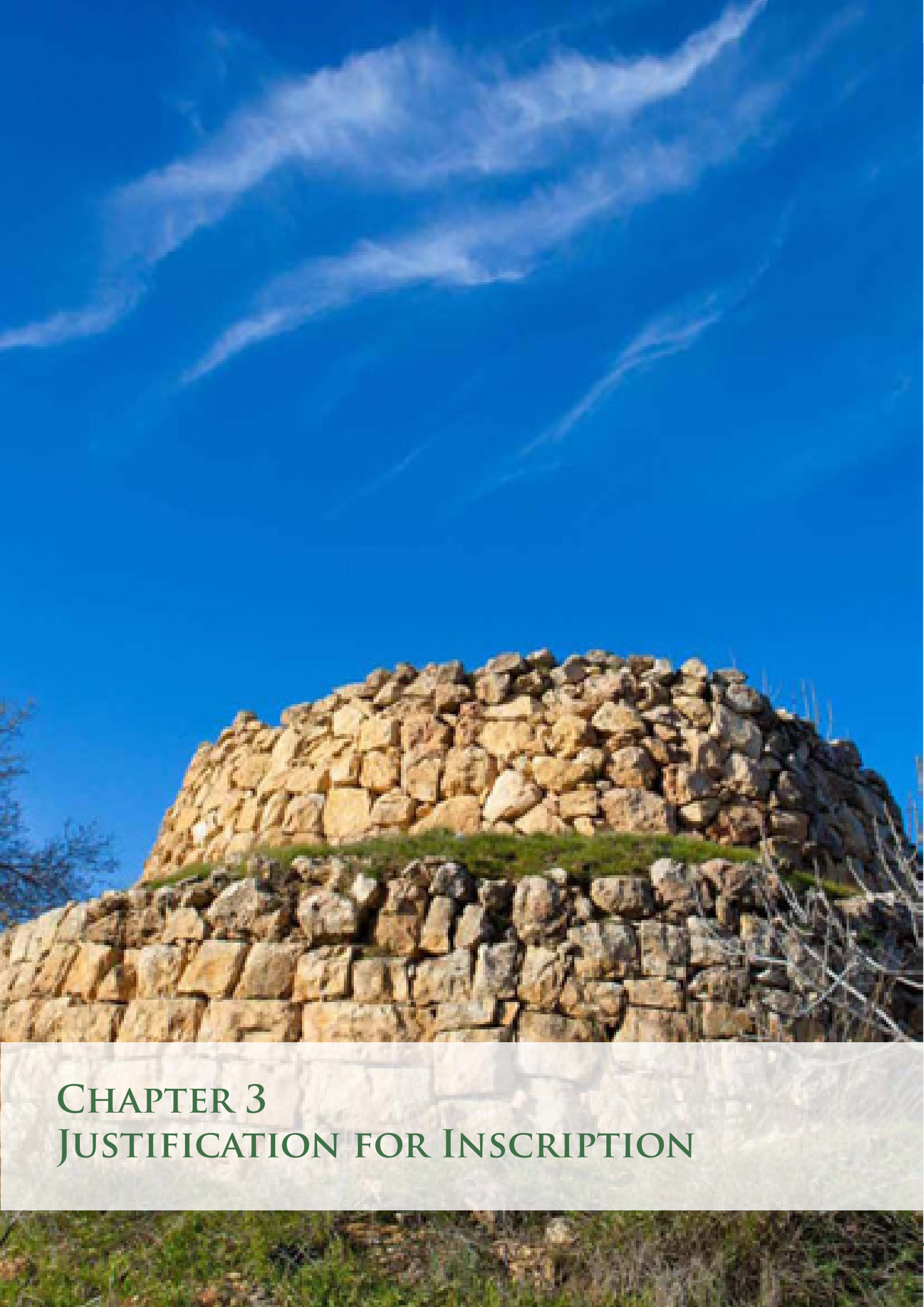
In 2010, an international jury granted the Battir Cultural Landscape File, submitted by the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, the Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes. The prize was given to the Battir Village Council for the remarkable efforts that were made in order to safeguard an outstanding landscape that continues to be threatened by different factors that include the Wall, the settlements, water loss and contamination, and the inability to maintain the agricultural terraces due to the geo political situation.



Fig. 3.32 Villagers selling their products to train passengers during the British Mandate Period.



A stone heap “agricultural watchtower near Wadi Al-Makhrour



CHAPTER 3

JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION



Introduction

Prologue

For millennia, Palestine has been a meeting place for civilisations, and a cultural bridge between East and West. It has played an important role in the evolution of human history, evidenced by the existence of successive cultures throughout its land. Palestine is also the cradle of the three monotheistic religions and is home to the remains of a unique time in history.

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, is the first site being presented as part of a serial nomination that aims to inscribe, in addition to the proposed site, other cultural landscapes that stretch from the plains of Jenin in the north of Palestine to the Hebron Hills in the south. Together, these sites make up **Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines**, a group of fascinating cultural landscapes that distinguish Palestine. Olive trees and vineyards are characteristic, and deeply symbolic, features in the Palestinian landscape. They are highly representative of the identity and character of the landscape throughout history and the ways that people have worked the land, highlighting the attachment of these people to their land.

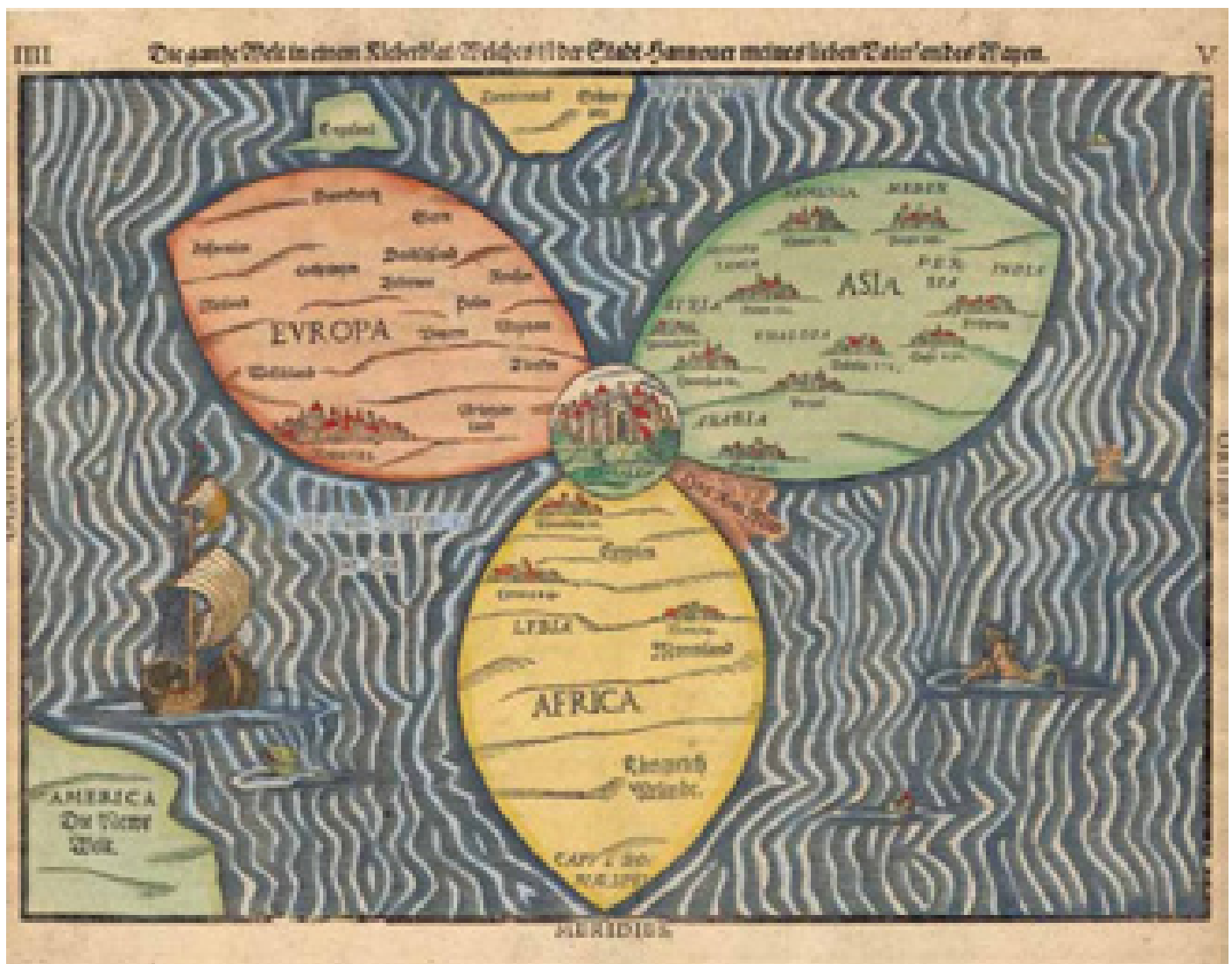


Fig 3.1 Map of the World by Heinrich Bünting (1545-1606) as published in *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae* Description Donat, 1581. The map places Jerusalem/Palestine at the heart of the world, Yasir Barakat Collection

Justification

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, is a nomination of 971.72 hectares that focuses on the Palestinian cultural landscape and the evolution and sustainability of a 4,000-year-old agricultural system. The nomination also spotlights the development of human settlements near sources of running water, in this case the water springs that dot the mountainous area located to the south of the city of Jerusalem. These communities also adapted the steep mountainous area for agricultural activities through the construction of dry-stone walls in order to form agricultural terraces.

For at least 4,000 years, this area has witnessed the evolution of an agricultural system that has been identified and confirmed through archaeological¹ excavations, and the development and adaptation of the landscape for the cultivation of various crops. The terraces represent good examples of adapting to nature and making steep and uneven terrain agriculturally productive. Olives and vines are characteristic of the Palestinian landscape. Furthermore, they both feature strongly, in narrative and metaphor, in the Quran, the Bible, and in the teachings of Jesus. The olive is, of course, a symbol of peace and would, therefore, be a particularly apposite tree to include in a nomination from Palestine.



Fig. 3.2 Khirbet Al-Yahud, remains of a human settlement located to west of Battir Village.

The development and the continuation of this landscape is attested to by the dry-stone architecture constructed from available stone, which takes the form of agricultural terraces that are supported by dry-stone walls, agricultural watchtowers (*manatir*), olive oil presses, ancient irrigation pools to collect the water flowing from the springs, ancient irrigation canals, and remains of human settlements (*khirab*).

The unique water distribution system used by the eight major families of Battir is a testament to an ancient democratic distribution system that delivers water to the terraced agricultural land based on a simple mathematical calculation and a clear time-managed rotation scheme. The system is described by the farmers as just and fair, and satisfies the needs of the landowners. These two facts have contributed to its sustainability over hundreds of years.

¹ Excavations show that the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir contains remains that date to the Middle Bronze Age (Canaanite period) onwards. These excavations were conducted by the British Mandate government and the Israeli authorities.

3.1.a Brief Synthesis

Along the valleys connecting Beit Jala and Hussan with Battir, located to the south of Jerusalem, are ancient agricultural terraces, of which the majority are still in use until today. These terraces bear witness to thousands of years of human activity centred in the area near the springs that dot these slopes. A wealth of cultural heritage remains can be found in Battir, around the springs, and along the ancient roads winding through the valley.

The various and continuous human settlements that developed around the springs, from at least the Bronze Age until today, have contributed to the creation of a unique agricultural landscape composed of terraces that are supported by dry-stone walls, agricultural watch towers, olive oil presses, ancient irrigation pools to collect the water flowing from the springs, the ancient irrigation canals, and the remains of human settlements.

The integration of these various elements, which are essentially made of stones from area, has contributed to the creation of a breathtaking landscape scattered with olive trees. This landscape continues to provide a major source of income for the inhabitants of the area, who contribute to its maintenance and protection as a part of their care of their lands.

This human-made cultural landscape, which is composed of thousands of pieces of irregular stone, is a testimony to the adaptation of the hilly mountains of Palestine into arable land. Supported by archaeological excavations, the area has been inhabited continuously at least since the Bronze Age.

The construction and continuous use of the ancient irrigation system, especially the pools², or water reservoirs, at the outskirts of the village of Battir demonstrate an important milestone in the development of agriculture in the area, in addition to the dependence of the local community on agriculture. In fact, the continuous use of the pools and the water canals from ancient times until today is evidence of the continuous use of land since Roman times.

The unique local water distribution system used by the eight main families of Battir is a testament to an ancient democratic distribution system that delivers water to the terraced agricultural land based on a simple mathematical calculation and a clear time-managed rotation scheme. Farmers continue to tirelessly plant their land with seasonal vegetables and aromatic herbs, to take care of the vines and fruit trees, and to irrigate their land using the Roman pools and irrigation channels, in addition to taking care of their olive trees, the symbols of peace.

The location of the village of Battir along the Roman route that connected the city of Gaza with Jerusalem, contributed to strengthening the relation between the village of Battir and the city of Jerusalem. Battir's strong connections to the city of Jerusalem were highlighted during the Ottoman period by the construction of a train station in the valley as a part of the Jaffa-Jerusalem Railway in the late nineteenth century.

Olive trees are characteristic, and deeply symbolic, features in the Palestinian cultural landscape. While they, of course, grow elsewhere, they are highly representative of the identity and character of the Palestinian landscape throughout history and of the ways that people have worked the land. They are good examples of adapting to nature and making productive use of steep and uneven terrain. They are very clear evidence of the continuous human settlement in the region for thousands of years. Furthermore, they feature strongly, in narrative and metaphor, in the Quran, in the Bible, and in the teachings of Jesus in particular. The olive is a symbol of peace and is, therefore, a particularly apposite tree. Ancient olive trees along Wadi Al-Makhrour and in Battir, and the olive presses there, also reflect the long history of this holy tree in the area.

² The ancient pools are known in the narrative tradition as the Roman pools, dating them back to Roman times.

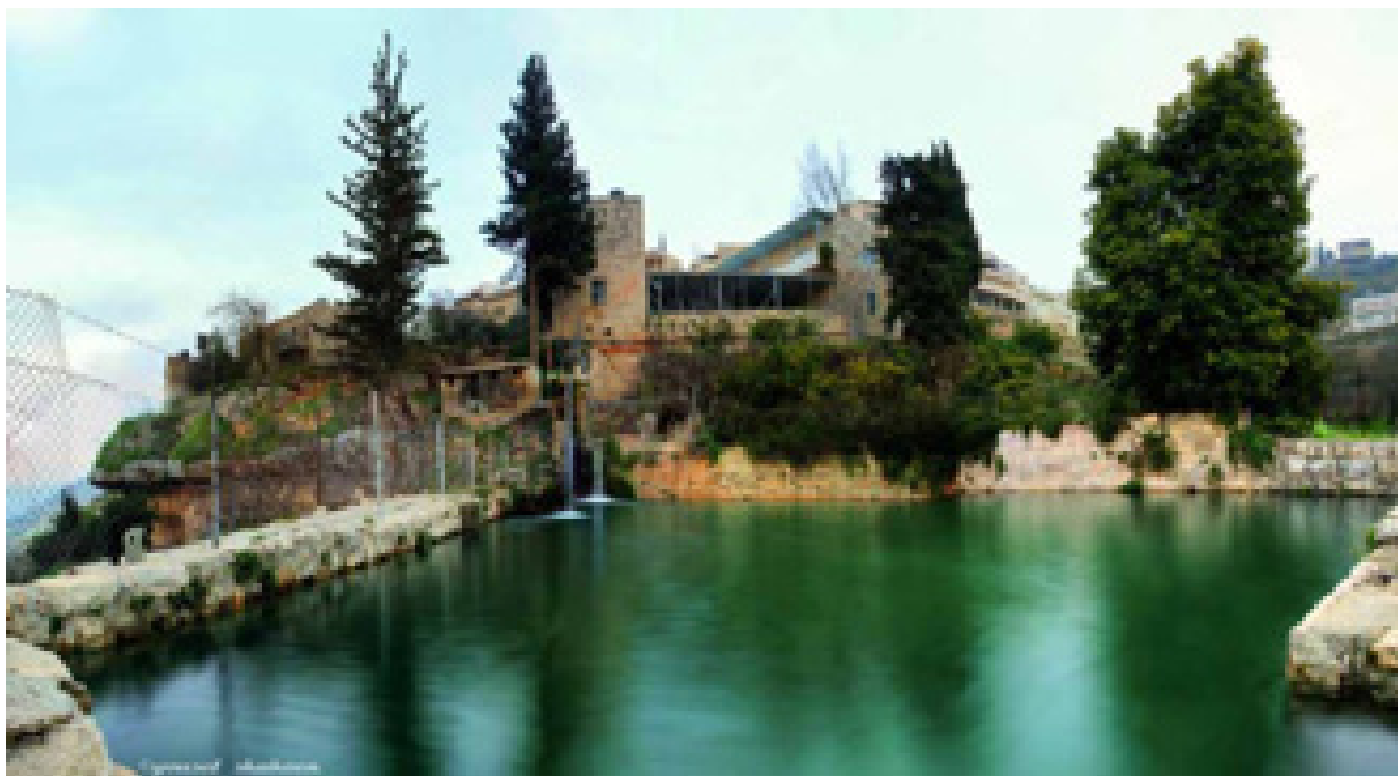


Fig 3.3 The ancient irrigation pool that feeds the terraces near Battir Village.

A buffer zone surrounds the property on its northern, southern, and western sides, while a ten-metre-wide strip of land separates the core zone from the Armistice Line³. Lands owned by the inhabitants of Battir, that are still cultivated and irrigated using the ancient irrigation system, lie beyond the Armistice Line and form an essential extension of the agricultural terraces of the village. The village of Battir lies on the eastern side of the core zone and is also an essential part of the buffer zone.

3.1.b Criteria under which inscription is proposed (and justification for inscription under these criteria)

(iv) be an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates (a) significant stage(s) in human history

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir encompasses various cultural heritage elements, which are built of stone available in the area, such as dry-stone walls, agricultural watchtowers, traditional footpaths, and olive oil presses. These represent an outstanding example of a landscape that illustrates the development of human settlements near water sources, here the springs that dot the mountainous area, and the adaptation of the land for agriculture.

The village of Battir, which developed on the outskirts of this cultural landscape, and was inhabited by farmers who worked and still work the land, attests to the sustainability of this system and to its continuation for the past 4,000 years. Battir has always been considered the vegetable garden of Jerusalem due to the abundance of springs in the area. This led to the development of a system of irrigation that permitted the development of agricultural terraces in a very steep mountainous landscape fed by a complex irrigation system that is managed by the eight main families inhabiting the village. It is simultaneously a simple and complex system, and is still in use today.

³ Also called the Green Line, the name given to the 1949 Armistice Line that constituted the de facto borders of pre-1967 Israel. («Glossary: Israel,» *Library of Congress Country Studies*.)

The traditional system of irrigated terraces within the nominated property is an outstanding example of technological expertise, which constitutes an integral part of the cultural landscape. The methods used to construct the terraces illustrate significant stages in human history, as the ancient system of canals, still in use today, dates back to ancient times.

(v) be an outstanding example of a traditional human settlement, land-use, or sea-use which is representative of a culture (or cultures), or human interaction with the environment especially when it has become vulnerable under the impact of irreversible change

The strategic location of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir and the availability of springs were two major factors that attracted people to settle in the area and adapt its steep landscape into arable land. Since the twelfth century, Battir has been one of the main producers of vegetable products for the central part of Palestine, and in particular the city of Jerusalem.

The property is an outstanding example of traditional land-use, which is representative of thousands of years of culture and human interaction with the environment. This human-made landscape has become vulnerable under the impact of socio-cultural and geo-political transformations that may cause irreversible damage. The agricultural practices that were used to create this living landscape embody one of the oldest farming methods known to humankind and are an important source of livelihood for local communities.

3.1.c Statement of integrity

The unique setting of dry-stone terraces and all of the other various vernacular architecture elements, the olive trees, vines and orchards and the ancient pools and irrigation canals, attest to the effectiveness of a 4,000-year-old agricultural system that is still in use until today. Local farmers still use the same traditional agricultural practices and irrigation methods, creating a picturesque scene that still retains its integrity to a considerable extent.

The commitment of the local community towards the site and their dependence on it as major source of income, supported by the fact that the olive tree is a holy tree in Palestinian culture and traditions, are considered major factors in the protection and management of this unique landscape.

The property suffers from various threats, which have contributed to the decision to submit this nomination dossier as an emergency nomination. These factors include the construction of the illegal Israeli Wall and the settlements, which will negatively affect the integrity of this picturesque landscape. There are also geo-political factors that prevent the implementation of plans that would contribute to preserving the property, such as a sewage network and treatment plant, and a water network that would prevent the loss and contamination of the spring water. In addition, these geo-political factors prevent farmers from maintaining parts of their agricultural lands and watchtowers. These factors threaten, both directly and indirectly, the sustainability and integrity of this cultural landscape.

Tourism is foreseen as a factor that shall contribute to the sustainability of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and enhance the economic situation of the local community. However, in order to protect the property from future development that may result from tourism, the Battir Village Council has worked to establish a visitors' information centre and to refurbish a traditional building to be used as a guesthouse. Also, being located close to the city of Bethlehem, which has around 5,000 hotel beds, development pressures are seen as minor issues.



Fig 3.4 View of the Battir Village and the surrounding agricultural terraces

3.1.d Statement of authenticity (for nominations under criteria (i) to (vi))

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir has witnessed 4,000 years of history and has born witness to the adaptation of the hilly mountains of Palestine as arable land, and the development of human settlements near sources of water. The property is a unique cultural landscape that is composed of terraces that are supported by dry-stone walls, agricultural watch towers, olive oil presses, ancient irrigation pools to collect the water flowing from the springs, ancient irrigation canals, and the remains of human settlements.

The continuous use of the irrigation system, which is based on collecting the water of the springs in the pools and distributing it through irrigation canals to the fields near the village is another important component of this landscape that continues to be in use to this day. The distribution of the water between the eight families of Battir demonstrates the sustainability of the system, and its ability to fulfil the needs of the farmers who continue to use it.

The property, which is located 7 kilometres to the south of Jerusalem, continues to be a major source of livelihood for the people of Battir, who carry on cultivating and maintaining it using traditional methods and techniques, which have retained their authenticity to a considerable extent. The commitment of the farmers has contributed and continues to contribute to the sustainability of this cultural landscape. In addition, olive trees and vines are represented, in narrative and metaphor, in the Quran, in the Bible, and in the teachings of Jesus. The olive is a symbol of peace and is, therefore, a particularly apposite tree. Ancient olive trees along Wadi Al-Makhrour and Battir, and the olive presses there, also reflect the continuous growing of this holy tree in the area.

3.1.e Protection and management requirements

The location of the proposed property is in Area C according to the interim agreement which divided the West Bank into three major areas A, B, and C. The fact that the State of Palestine has no control over these lands has contributed to the absence of a comprehensive management plan for the property⁴. However, the management of the property is guided by the Palestinian laws, the codes of ethics of governmental and non-governmental organisations regarding the preservation of cultural heritage property in Palestine as expressed in the Palestine Charter, and the commitment of the local community towards the protection of the site.

Various laws applied by the State of Palestine throughout Palestine act as managing tools for several components of the property. These laws include: (1) the Law of Antiquities no. 51/1966, which guides the management of archaeological sites and the ruins of human settlements; (2) the Law of the Environment no. 51/1999, which guides the protection of the agricultural lands; (3) the Law of Tourism no. 79.1966 which guides the management and development of cultural heritage property; and (4) the Building and Planning Law no. 79/1966 which also contributes to the protection of archaeological finds and requires the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities to prepare a proper conservation and management plan for these finds.

The Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter) reflects the commitment of the various governmental and non-governmental organisations to the protection of cultural property in Palestine and their recognition of its value as a tool for development.



Fig. 3.5 View of the irrigated terraces to the west of the Battir Village.

⁴ Refer to chapter seven on the emergency factors affecting the property.

The most important part of the management of the property, which is privately owned by the inhabitants of Battir, is the commitment of these inhabitants to cultivating and maintaining their lands using traditional methods and techniques, and the fact that the property, which comprises an essential part of the livelihood of the inhabitants, remains in use. In this regard, the owners and users of the property have come up with a declaration stating their commitment to cooperating with the authorities and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in the preservation and protection of the site. Most importantly, the inhabitants stated their willingness to continue using traditional techniques to irrigate their lands. This declaration was signed by representatives of the local community of Battir on 14 January 2013.

3.2 Comparative analysis

Four different cases that have major similarities with the property are presented in the comparative analysis including the Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana in Spain, the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the *Subak* System as a Manifestation of the *Tri Hita Karana* Philosophy in Indonesia, the Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras in the Philippines, and the Cultural Sites of Al Ain (Hafit, Hili, Bidaa Bint Saud and Oases Areas) in the UAE.

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is considered unique in three major aspects: first, that the landscape depends on cultivating a variety of crops within its man-made dry-stone terraces; second, is the distinctive architecture of the dry-stone agricultural watchtowers, built for protection of the terraces; and third, is the uniqueness and survival of the tradition of using a democratic irrigation method.

Spain-Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana

Criteria (ii)(iv)(v)

The Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana located on a sheer-sided mountain range parallel to the north-western coast of the island of Mallorca. Millennia of agriculture in an environment with scarce resources has transformed the terrain and displays an articulated network of devices for the management of water revolving around farming units of feudal origins. The landscape is marked by agricultural terraces and inter-connected water works - including water mills - as well as dry stone constructions and farms.

Both this landscape and the landscape in Battir reflect human interactions with nature and the adaptation of steep mountains for agricultural purposes near sources of water. The continuous use of land in both properties has contributed to the creation of a unique landscape that is composed of dry-stone wall terraces.

In both sites, an irrigation system based on collecting water from available resources, and storing it or distributing it to the agricultural fields, is considered an important component of the landscape. The water is distributed in articulated underground network in the Cultural Landscape of the Serra de Tramuntana, while in the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, the distribution of the water is done through a network of surface canals that distribute the water using gravity.

Indonesia-Cultural Landscape of Bali Province: the *Subak* System as a Manifestation of the *Tri Hita Karana* Philosophy

Criteria (ii)(iii)(v)(vi)

The cultural landscape of Bali consists of five rice terraces and their water temples that cover 19,500 ha. The temples are the focus of a cooperative water management system of canals and weirs, known as *subak*, that dates back to the 9th century. Included in the landscape is the 18th-century Royal Water Temple of Pura Taman Ayun, the largest and most impressive architectural

edifice of its type on the island. The *subak* reflects the philosophical concept of *Tri Hita Karana*, which brings together the realms of the spirit, the human world and nature. This philosophy was born of the cultural exchange between Bali and India over the past 2,000 years and has shaped the landscape of Bali. The *subak* system of democratic and egalitarian farming practices has enabled the Balinese to become the most prolific rice growers in the archipelago despite the challenge of supporting a dense population.

Both this site and the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir demonstrate the adaptation of steep mountains for agricultural purposes through the construction of terraces, and cooperative water management systems that have survived for centuries. Both systems include democratic water management and distribution among the farmers.

There are some differences between these sites though. The Cultural Landscape of Bali Province is related to religious traditions, while this is not the case for the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir. Also rice is the only crop that is cultivated in the Cultural Landscape of Bali Province, while in the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, various crops, namely olive trees, vines, fruit trees, vegetables, and aromatic herbs, are cultivated throughout the property.

Philippines-Rice Terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras

Criteria (iii)(iv)(v)

For 2,000 years, the high rice fields of the Ifugao have followed the contours of the mountains. The fruit of knowledge handed down from one generation to the next, and the expression of sacred traditions and a delicate social balance, they have helped to create a landscape of great beauty that expresses the harmony between humankind and the environment.

Both this site and the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem reflect human interaction with natural steep slopes and their adaptation for agricultural through the construction of terraces, and the employment of natural water resources for irrigation. Community cooperation is employed in both sites for the maintenance of the terraces and harvesting of the crops, which are a major source of income for the people.

Rice is the only crop that is cultivated in the rice terraces of the Philippine Cordilleras, while in the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, various crops; namely olive trees, vines, fruit trees, vegetables, and aromatic herbs are cultivated through the property.

UAE: Cultural Sites of Al Ain (Hafit, Hili, Bidaa Bint Saud and Oases Areas)

Criteria (iii)(iv)(v)

The Cultural Sites of Al Ain (Hafit, Hili, Bidaa Bint Saud and Oases Areas) constitute a serial property that testifies to sedentary human occupation of a desert region since the Neolithic period with vestiges of many prehistoric cultures. Remarkable vestiges in the property include circular stone tombs (ca 2500 B.C.), wells and a wide range of adobe constructions: residential buildings, towers, palaces and administrative buildings. Hili moreover features one of the oldest examples of the sophisticated aflaj irrigation system which dates back to the Iron Age. The property provides important testimony to the transition of cultures in the region from hunting and gathering to sedentarisation.

Both this site and the site near Battir have an irrigation system that employed the available water resources in arid lands to create an agricultural system that depended on distributing water through irrigation canals. These canals are underground in the Cultural Sites of Al Ain, while they are on the surface in the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir.

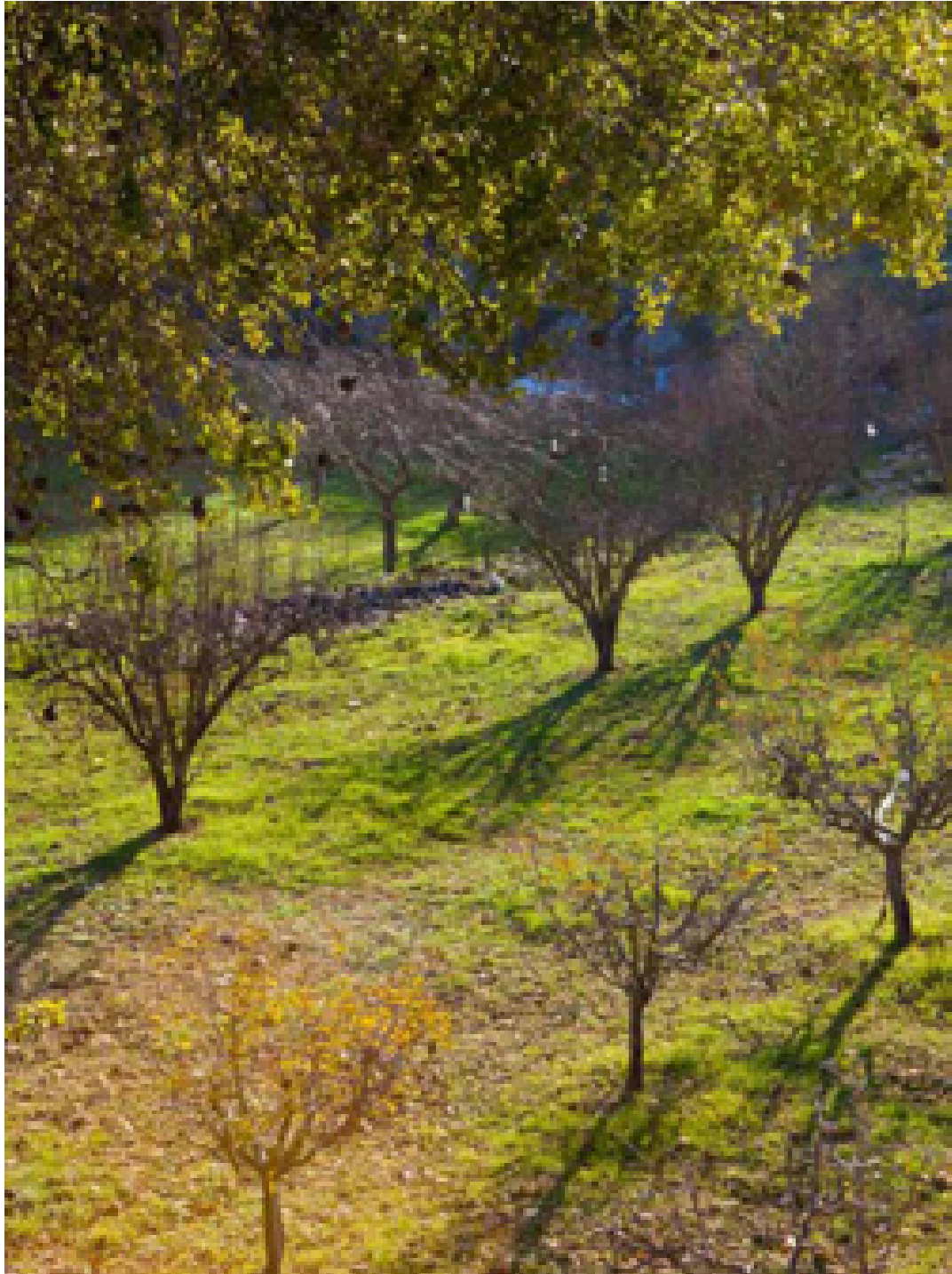


Fig. 3.6 Agricultural fields planted with fruit trees

An important similarity between both sites is the continuous use of the land through different historical periods. Another similarity in both sites is apparent in the various cultural components of the property, including the watchtowers, ruins of human settlements, and ancient tombs. These components are an integral part of both landscapes, and they contribute to the authenticity and integrity of the sites.

The major difference between the two sites is directly connected to the topography of both areas. The cultural sites of Al Ain are located on a flat area while the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is based on the adaptation of steep mountains for agriculture use through the construction of dry-stone terraces.

3.3 Proposed statement of outstanding universal value

The village of Battir, to the south of Jerusalem, was historically considered to be the *jinan* of Jerusalem, that is the garden of Jerusalem. Battir lies almost at the centre of a system of very deep valleys that are very well supported by the yearlong availability of spring water that permits the cultivation of vegetables and fruit trees. In the areas along the slopes where water is not abundantly available, olives and vines were planted. The cultivation of these plants, on the very steep sloping sides of the valley, was only possible due to the creation of terraced fields with the use of dry-stone walls all along the valley. The terraces, together with a multitude of archaeological and architectural remains, testify to the presence of man in these green valleys that have been settled for at least 4,000 years.

The spring water is controlled by a unique system of distribution among the families of the village, using a very unique system of measurement to make sure that water benefits all the community. In areas of the valley that are far from the village, watchtowers or “palaces” were built for protection of the terraces. The olive trees, some of which are many hundreds of years old, are a testimony to the cultivation of olives in Palestine. Grapevines were also cultivated, though to a lesser quantity.

The continuous dependence of the inhabitants of the area on agriculture as a major source of income has indeed contributed to the sustainability of this significant and harmonious landscape, which is evidence of the adaptation of the steep mountains into arable land. Also, their commitment to and hard work in maintaining the hundreds of metres of dry-stone walls has preserved a landscape that is thousands of years old as a spectacular testimony to an ancient agricultural tradition. Farmers continue to tirelessly plant their land with seasonal vegetables and aromatic herbs, to take care of the vines and fruit trees and irrigate them using the Roman pools and irrigation channels, in addition to taking care of their olive trees, the symbols of peace.

The terraces are still in use today, despite the fact that the so-called 1949 Armistice Line marking the boundary between Palestine and Israel cuts right through them, ignoring the natural contours of the valley. The emergency status of this nomination is linked to the fact that there is a plan in advanced stages to start the construction of the Israeli Wall, which would cut through this pristine valley landscape, marring this cultural landscape and cutting off farmers from fields they have cultivated for centuries. A railway link between Jerusalem and Jaffa, still in use today, winds its way along the lowest part of the valley. The people of Battir have always respected this link. There is therefore no need for the Wall to be constructed here.

Battir is rightly considered to be the green heart of Palestine, even though its links with Jerusalem are not as strong as in the past. This dossier is the first of the serial nomination of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines, which will present the agricultural and cultural landscape of Palestine in all its variations of landscape.

The Limekiln near Jerusalem-Jaffa railway



CHAPTER 4 STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY



4.a Present state of conservation

The village of Battir has been, and continues to be, the vegetable basket of the surrounding town and villages, including Jerusalem and Bethlehem. Agriculture is considered the main source of income for its inhabitants who cultivate and maintain their lands using traditional techniques, including the maintenance of the terraces and construction of dry-stone walls.

In the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, the crops grown on the terraces provide the main livelihood for the inhabitants of Battir. Thus, the Battir Village Council, in partnership with local community organisations and the inhabitants of the village, has been working tirelessly to preserve the terraces for over five years. These efforts started with projects conducted in partnership with the UNESCO Office in Ramallah and the government of Norway as part of the Battir Cultural Landscape Conservation and Management Plan Project. The project won The Melina Mercouri International Prize for the protection and management of a cultural landscape.

This work has continued through the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum Project¹, which is being implemented by the Battir Village Council in partnership with the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem (CCHP). Through the project, the municipal council was able to reclaim a solid waste dumpsite close to the terraced landscapes, rehabilitate the agricultural terraces, and rehabilitate traditional routes that connect the agricultural terraces with the village of Battir. Wadi Al-Makhrour (Makhrour Valley) to the south of Beit-Jala is now connected by a road and footpaths to Wadi Battir (Battir Valley).

Many of the traditional buildings within the historic centre of Battir have been rehabilitated and made sustainable by CCHP, which was working through the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum project and other projects funded by the Swedish government through Sida². Some of the rehabilitations include the rehabilitation of the houses and streets in the Seven Widows Quarter and Dar Samara (Samara House). Dar Samara was used by UNESCO as an office in Battir, and is currently used by the village council³. After the rehabilitation of Dar Al-Bader (Al-Bader House), it is now being used by the Battir Village Council as an office for the team working on the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum Project, and shall be used in the future as a visitor's information centre⁴. CCHP is currently rehabilitating Dar Abu Hassan (Abu Hassan House) to be used as a guesthouse, which will be managed by the village council⁵.

The Battir Landscape Eco-Museum's work is on-going. Upcoming projects include the conservation of agricultural lands and traditional routes, including marking the routes and installing signs to guide visitors to places of interest in the village and surrounding valleys. In addition, the CCHP in Bethlehem shall provide funds to rehabilitate other buildings and adapt them to support sustainable tourism in the village, according to the needs recognised by the various stakeholders⁶.

1 The Battir Landscape Eco-Museum is a project funded by the Palestinian Municipalities Support Programme through the Italian Cooperation Office in Jerusalem. It was co-funded by six institutions belonging to different Italian Local Authorities, Lecce Province, Publiambiente, Empoli Council, Ipres, Felcos Umbria, Arpa Umbria, and Federparchi.

2 Sida stands for the Swedish International Cooperation Development Agency.

3 This project was funded by the Swedish Government through Sida and was implemented in 2008. More information can be found in the report from the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, *Cultural Heritage, A Tool for Development: Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, A Key Player*, CCHP, Bethlehem, Palestine 2011, pages 65-69 and page 109.

4 This project was funded by the Swedish Government through Sida and implemented in 2006. Ditto, page 113.

5 Project implemented by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem through the funds allocated for the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum Project.

6 The selection of buildings for rehabilitation by CCHP is conducted in a participatory manner in which various stakeholders and community representatives choose the buildings and decide on their future use, so as to serve the needs of the community. Ditto, pages 45-47.



Fig. 4.1 Dar Al-Bader in Battir, a traditional building that was rehabilitated by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation of Bethlehem. The building is used by the village council as a locale for the Battir Landscape Eco-museum Office; visitors' information centre.

The majority of the inhabitants of Battir depend on agriculture either as a secondary or primary source of income, and 10 percent of Battir's inhabitants depend on agriculture as their sole source of income⁷. This has contributed to the sustainability of the agricultural terraces, and to the continuous use of the arable land in the area. The local residents have preserved and continue to preserve the hundreds of metres of dry-stone walls throughout the area.

4.b Factors affecting the property

Various factors that affect the property were revealed in the studies conducted through the Battir Landscape Conservation and Management Plan project and the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum Project, in addition to the factors listed in the Battir Village Profile prepared by the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem.

(i) Development pressures (e.g. encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining) The building of the Wall by the Israeli government

The most importunate issue that faces the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is the proposed construction of the Wall within the area. Although the exact location of the Wall has not been decided yet, its construction would destroy the physical and visual integrity of the site and negatively affect the area, causing irreversible damage to a cultural landscape that has been sustained for at least 4,000 years.

⁷ Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem, Battir Village Profile, 2010, page 9.



Fig 4.2 A view from the property to the north towards the Israeli settlement of Har Gilo and a segment of the Wall. The settlement and the wall create a negative visual effect on the integrity of the property.

The Wall would prevent the inhabitants of Battir from reaching their lands, and thus taking care of their crops and maintaining the terraces. It would also cause direct irreversible damage to the irrigation system and the agricultural terraces, and divide a cultural landscape that has witnessed the development of agricultural communities in Palestine.

The Battir Village Council has brought the case to the Israeli Supreme court, which has delayed the issuance of its decision until the middle of February 2013. (Refer to Chapter Six for more information about this case.)

Loss of water through the water supply network

The existing water network, which supplies the village of Battir with water for domestic use was installed during 1970s. About 30 percent of the water that is supplied to the village is being lost through leaks in the network. The inhabitants are using the water from the springs for household use. This water is usually allocated for agriculture, and the loss of this water is contributing to the deterioration of the fields.

Projects to renew the existing water network and to construct two water tanks to collect rainwater for domestic use are seen as urgent by the local village council, which is working to find the necessary funds for these projects.

The replacement of the water supply network is one of the future projects proposed by the Battir Village Council and the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WSSA) in Bethlehem. The village council has not been able to obtain a permit to construct a water reservoir from the Israeli government.



Fig 4.3 A watchtower with a collapsed roof near Wadi Al-Makhrou

The deterioration of the watchtowers

Since the watchtowers are located in what the Israelis refer to as Area C,⁸ farmers cannot obtain permits from the Israeli authorities to rehabilitate these towers. Since 1995, only minor maintenance work has been allowed. Farmers are only permitted to work on an existing structure as is, and are forbidden from replacing collapsed roofs.

Some of the watchtowers, which are in good condition, continue to be used by their owners during the cultivation season as a refuge from the heat, but the majority are collapsing and interventions are not allowed. The Israeli authorities demolished two watchtowers that are located in Wadi Al-Makhrou because their owners rehabilitated them.

(ii) Environmental pressures (e.g., pollution, climate change, desertification) The lack of a sewage network and the infiltration of sewage into water springs

Battir lacks a public sewage network; most of the population use cesspits as a means for wastewater disposal. Based on the results of a community survey carried out by the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics in 2007, the infiltration of grey water from the cesspits is threatening the purity of the ground water and the springs.

The Battir Village Council, in cooperation with the Joint Service Council of Bethlehem West Rural Area and the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority (WSSA) in Bethlehem, is working on a plan

⁸ Interventions are prohibited in Area C unless a permit is obtained from the Israeli authorities, which is almost impossible to get. Area C was defined according to the Oslo Accords of 1995 as an areas with full Israeli civil and security control, except over Palestinian civilians. At the time, the area included 72 percent of the West Bank (first phase, 1995). In 2011, 61 percent of the area of the West Bank was considered Area C, including all Israeli settlements (cities, towns, and villages), land surrounding the settlements, most roadways that connect the settlements (and which Israelis are now restricted to), as well as strategic areas described as “security zones.”

to connect the village with a sewage network that disposes the wastewater in a treatment plant, which will process the water for agricultural purposes. However, neither funds nor the approval for the construction of the network has been secured for this project. The project also requires Israeli approval, which is difficult to obtain.

In case the approval of this project remains pending, the village council shall propose a plan to work on replacing the cesspits with holding tanks, in order to minimise the effect of waste water on the agricultural terraces.

The dumpsites

The Battir Village Council has realised how much damage is caused by dumping garbage near the agricultural terraces, and has issued a decision to stop these acts immediately and imposed penalties on people who do not obey. Since then, the disposal of any waste is managed by the Battir Village Council and the Joint Service Council of the Western Area of Bethlehem. The settlements have also been prevented by the Israeli court from dumping their waste near Battir.

The Battir Landscape Eco-Museum Project is working to reclaim the dumpsites near the agricultural terraces, and these areas are currently recovering. However, the remains of two other dumpsites still exist near the eastern part of the village, and although these sites are within the buffer zone and do not fall close to the agricultural terraces, the village council is planning to work on reclaiming them as part of its five-year plan⁹.

(iii) Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)

Although there is no current plan for natural disasters and risk preparedness, the fact that the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir has been continuously cultivated and maintained is a strong evidence that local farmers are ready and willing to maintain and protect their land under any circumstances. The inhabitants of Battir, as reflected in the annex, are committed to the maintenance and preservation of their fields, and to providing any labour required for their protection.

The inhabitants still follow, and are committed to following, the traditional techniques to maintain and preserve the terraces, the water canal, and the ancient pools. In addition, the conservation works that were implemented through the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum project also respected and followed traditional techniques.

The Battir Village Council, local community organisations, and local inhabitants are committed to maintaining the traditional footpaths as they are, without any alternations or plans to turn them to agricultural roads, in order to avoid harming the landscape or causing any damage to its integrity or authenticity.

(iv) Responsible visitation at World Heritage Sites

As a result of the nomination of Palestine: Land of Olives and Vines¹⁰ as one of the twenty sites of potential outstanding universal value in Palestine¹¹, various efforts were made to safeguard the Jerusalem Southern Terraced Landscape as evidence of a sustainable system of adapting the steep mountains of Palestine as arable land for planting olive trees.

⁹ This was decided during a meeting with Mr. Akram Bader, the head of the Battir Village Council on Tuesday, 18 December 2012

¹⁰ The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, is a pilot site for the serial nomination Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines.

¹¹ For more information, see the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities' *Inventory of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine*, October 2009, second edition, pages 28-29.

The site was adapted to make it eligible for World Heritage status without affecting its integrity and authenticity through the establishment of the Eco-Museum Project. This was one of the recommendations made by the Battir Landscape Conservation and Management Plan project. Another recommendation was to establish an office to manage visitation to the site, and to renovate

some of the traditional buildings located in the village of Battir, part of the buffer zone of the site, to accommodate those visiting the property. All of these projects are intended to prevent any damage to the village from tourism.

The traditional footpaths that connect the agricultural fields with the village of Battir through Wadi Al-Makhroun and Wadi Battir were rehabilitated to enable visitors to explore without causing any damage to the fields. Route marks for visitors were added along the route, and the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum staff, which is managed by the Battir Village Council, also prepared an explanatory visitors' map. In addition, tour guides were trained to work through the eco-museum office to accompany visiting groups¹².



Fig 4.4 An educational trip organised by the Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project in Cooperation with the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem for the Faculty of Tourism of University of Bethlehem, 28 April 2012.

Future Tourism

The majority of tourism in the Bethlehem governorate is identified as Christian pilgrimage (about 92 percent). Bethlehem receives only 8,000 local tourists, compared to 52,000 in Nablus and 38,000 in both Jenin and Tulkarem¹³. According to the Master Plan for the Development of Tourism in Bethlehem Governorate, reviving and re-integrating walking tours is a priority because it will enhance the economy in the governorate.

¹² Detailed information about the routes can be found in *Walking Palestine: 25 Journeys into the West Bank* by Stefan Szepesi, Interlink Publishing, 2012, pages 241-255.

¹³ For more information, see the *Master Plan for the Development of Tourism in Bethlehem Governorate*, prepared by alternative Business Solutions (ABS) for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Tourism Development Plan working Group in 2010.

Recognising the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir as a World Heritage Site would contribute to attracting visitors to the area, an important factor for improving the economic situation of the inhabitants of Battir, and contribute to the sustainable development of the area.



Currently there is no concern over visitors causing environmental damage to the area. Only a small number of tourists come to Palestine for cultural tourism, and the fact that sites are not easily accessible will continue to restrict the number of the visitors to the area. In addition, visitors can use the existing footpaths to learn about the traditional agricultural and irrigation system and explore the historic village centre and the other components of the area without causing any damages to the landscape.

Upon the completion of the Battir Landscape Eco-Museum, signage will be installed along the property to guide visitors. In addition, a visitors' information centre shall also provide assistance and guided tours for the visitors to the area. Also, a workshop for tour guides working in the Bethlehem Governorate shall be organised in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities in order to build capacity for cultural tourism in general, and increase the number of people qualified to lead tours in the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir in particular.

Fig 4.5 Students of the Faculty of Tourism in University of Bethlehem listening to a tour guide from Battir, 28 April 2012.

(v) Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone

No inhabitants live within the nominated area, since it's composed of open space. But, as of 2010, 5'303¹⁴ lived in Battir Village, the inhabited part of the buffer zone.

¹⁴ The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2007.

¹⁵ The number of inhabitants decreased dramatically because they were forced to join the Turkish Army in WWI.

The table below shows the number of inhabitants in Battir Village in the different periods.

Year	Number of Inhabitants
1597	137
1871	478
1896	750
1914	500 ¹⁵
1922	542
1931	758
1938	871
1945	1'050
1961	1'321
1967	1'710
1997	3'045
2007	3'967
2010	5'303



General view of the property



CHAPTER 5

PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY



5.a Ownership

The ownership of different parts of the property is divided as follows:

The core zone is all private property. Part of the buffer zone is also private property, except for public buildings, which are owned by the community, and religious buildings, which are owned by the religious institutions.

The largest part of the nominated area is made up of agricultural terraces, which are used for the cultivation of crops, olive trees, vines, and fruit trees. All the terraces are owned by the inhabitants of the village of Battir and the town of Beit Jala. The majority are owned by the inhabitants of Battir, while the rest are owned by the inhabitants of Beit Jala. The terraces are considered agricultural lands by the owners, i.e. families, who are committed to cultivating them. For ten percent of the owners, agriculture is their only source of income, and for the rest, it is their main source of income.

The traditional footpaths along the agricultural terraces are also privately owned by those who own the adjacent fields. Still, by common norms, these paths are shared by the villagers and farmers who want to move from one place to the other or reach their lands. There are no restrictions on the use of these pathways.

The mosques and shrines are Islamic endowments (*vaqif*)¹, and are managed by a charitable trust (*Al-Awqaf*).

The main routes and roads are public property, and are managed by the Battir Village Council. It is the duty of the village council to conduct any works related to the maintenance and construction of the roads network. There are no plans for new roads in the nominated area.

The pools, springs, and canals that distribute the water along the terraces are public property and are managed by the representatives (elderly) of the eight families residing in Battir. During the dry season, the water from the ancient pool is given to a family once every eight days in a rotating order (thus it is said that the week extends for eight days in Battir).

A member of the family that is granted the water on a particular day distributes the amount of water in the pool among the rest of his family members by dividing the water in the pool into portions depending on the water height and not the volume. In order to guarantee fairness in the distribution, the family members also rotate the order in which they receive their water.

The archaeological sites are privately owned lands that are managed and supervised by the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities under the Law of Antiquities number 51 (1966). According to the law, intervention is prohibited in archaeological sites until an excavation is conducted and a proper management plan for the site is prepared and adopted. However, because of the location of these archaeological sites in Area C, the Israeli authorities prohibit interventions².

5.b Protective designation

The protective designations shall highlight the tools used by the various stakeholders to ensure the management and conservation of the property.

¹ All religious endowments are managed by a charitable trust.

² See chapter seven on emergency factors affecting the property.



Fig. 5.1 General view of the agricultural terraces and the buffer zone near Wadi Al-Makhroun

The Law of Antiquities no. 51 (1966)³

The Law of Antiquities number 51 (1966)⁴ is the law in effect for preserving antiquities and archaeological sites in Palestine. According to this law, any property that was constructed before 1700 AD and human and animal remnants predating 600 AD are directly protected, and any property or site that was constructed after that period and declared by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as an archaeological property or site is also protected. Interventions in any protected site are forbidden until an excavation is conducted and a proper conservation and management plan is prepared and approved (articles two and three).

According to this law, all archaeological sites and remains of human settlements, in addition to ancient pools and irrigation canals, are protected by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Still, because the majority of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is located in what is defined by the Israelis as Area C, works are prohibited in these sites by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, which has delayed any excavations in the area.

³ A new law for antiquities and cultural heritage has been drafted in cooperation with the Institute of Law at Bir Zeit University in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and other governmental and non-governmental organisations, including the Centre for Architectural Preservation (RIWAQ), the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, and the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalisation Programme (part of the Welfare Association).

The new law addresses property of cultural value, including cultural landscapes, and is expected to be ratified in 2013. Once ratified, the new law shall provide comprehensive protection for all cultural heritage property in Palestine, including the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir.

⁴ The Jordanian Law of Antiquities was re-activated by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1994, until the finalisation of a Palestinian law is completed. A draft of a law that aims to preserve cultural heritage was prepared, and is currently being revised.

The Law of Environment no. 7 (1999)

The Law of Environment number 7 (1999) declares that it is forbidden to sweep arable lands or move their soil to use it for purposes other than agriculture⁵ (article 18). Chapter five in the law aims at preserving natural, archaeological, and historic lands, and stresses that any act that shall cause damage to natural preservations; public, archaeological, or historical sites; or harm in any way their visual aesthetics is forbidden (article 44).

The Law of Environment indicates the penalties for any acts that may harm the integrity or authenticity of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and it is a strong tool used by the authorities to preserve the terraces within the core zone, as well as the buffer zone.

The Law of Tourism no. 45 (1965)

The Law of Tourism number 45 (1965) calls for the protection, preservation and development of cultural heritage sites in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities as part of the tourism authority. It also requires the director of the Department of Antiquities to be a member of the council of tourism (articles four and five).

Building and Planning Law no. 79/1966

Building and Planning Law number 79 (1966) states that the Department of Antiquities should investigate any building site before construction and during the excavation of the foundation, and is allowed to stop the construction in case any archaeological remains or caves are revealed. The construction is postponed until an excavation is conducted and a proper conservation and management plan is prepared and approved.

This law shall protect the sites in the buffer zone, namely the village of Battir, that are not yet revealed, and thus contribute to a stronger protection of these sites (article nineteen).

Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter)

The Palestine Charter⁶ reflects the commitment of the various stakeholders to conserving cultural heritage in Palestine, since it is a shared national responsibility that should be managed in a rational manner with the aim of benefitting the community and valued as an element of social and economic development.

The charter reflects the commitment of all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, the Battir Village Council, and community organisations and inhabitants to preserve the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, since they recognise and realise its value for both the local community and all of humanity.

Declaration Regarding the Safeguarding of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

The Declaration⁷ was drafted by the Battir Village Council and representatives of the eight families in Battir upon the decision to inscribe their property, the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir. The declaration states their willingness and commitment to preserving their

5 It is common practice to move the soil from one piece of land to another to enhance the fertility of the second piece of land. This is especially common in the northern plains of Palestine.

6 The Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter) was prepared through a participatory process (2012), and was adopted by the various stakeholders (See the annex). Cultural heritage is defined in the charter to include the urban fabric and archaeological properties, monuments, and cultural and natural landscapes, along with their intangible dimensions.

7 Please see the annex.

cultural landscape and maintaining its sustainability.

The declaration reflects the commitment of the owners to cooperate with the authorities and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation to preserve and protect the site, and, most importantly, it reflects their willingness to continue reviving the traditional techniques used to irrigate their lands.

5.c Means of implementing protective measures

The Palestinian laws in force

The Law of Antiquities no.51 (1966)

The Law of Antiquities is implemented by the Antiquities Office in Bethlehem, which is the representative office of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and supported by the Police of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage. It is a strong legal tool that is managed by the local authority.

The Law of Environment no.7 (1999)

The Law of Environment is implemented by the Office of Environment in Bethlehem, which is the representative office of the Ministry of Environment and supported by the Palestinian police. It is a strong legal tool that is managed by the local authority.

The Law of Tourism no. 45 (1965)

The Law of Antiquities is implemented by the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and supported by the Police of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage. It is a strong legal tool that is managed by the local authority.

Building and Planning Law no. 79/1966

The Building and Planning Law is implemented by the village council and the Planning Department of the Bethlehem Governorate, which is working under the Ministry of Local Government. The law is supported by the Palestinian Police and is considered a legal tool.

Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter)

The Palestine Charter reflects the interest and commitment of the different stakeholders to preserving the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir. It is not a binding law, but it still reflects the willingness of the various parties to protect the landscape⁸.

Declaration Regarding the Safeguarding of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

The declaration reflects the commitment of the local community of Battir to continue practising traditional techniques, including agricultural methods, cultivation, irrigation, and management of water resources and maintenance of dry-stone walls, as well as constructing new terraces.

These traditional techniques have been and continue to be supervised by the elders of the village, and are practiced by all the village residents.

⁸ The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities drafted the Palestine Charter, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem was among the partners that participated in drafting and adopting the charter.

The traditional practices of the owners of the property

The traditional agricultural practices of the local community have played a major role in the sustainability of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and are also seen by the local community to be a strong tool for preserving their landscape. Also these practices are seen as an important tool for the development of the landscape as a tool for economic revitalisation.

5.d Existing plans related to the municipality and region in which the proposed property is located (e.g., regional or local plans, conservation plans, or tourism development plans)

The Master Plan of the Village of Battir

The master plan for the village of Battir was prepared by the Ministry of Local Government for the benefit of the Battir Village Council, and aims to regulate the building licences within the village according to Building and Planning Law no. 79 (1966). It is limited to the lands of Battir that fall in Area B, as defined by the Israeli authorities.

The Master Plan for Developing Tourism in Bethlehem

The master plan⁹ supports the development of cultural, ecological, and alternative tourism as important components that contribute to enhancing the experience of the visitors coming to Bethlehem, and aims to promote the rich diversity of religious, cultural, historical, and natural resources in the governorate. It also points out that export products should revolve around promoting cultural and historical sites.

The actions proposed in the master plan include building on cultural heritage assets to promote Palestine as a destination, and to protect, preserve, and celebrate the key assets of tourism, including natural and built heritage and cultural treasures. Action 5.2.2 directly addresses developing and packaging new products targeting niche markets, including cultural, historical, natural, and alternative tours and experiences.

5.e Property management plan or other management system

Although there is no comprehensive management plan that targets the property as a whole, the different parts of the property are managed by the various stakeholders at different levels. Various governmental actors, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Environment, the Bethlehem Governorate, and the Battir Village Council participate in the management of the property, alongside the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, local community organisations, and the landowners and inhabitants.



Fig. 5.2 Meeting of the working group on the nomination dossier to inscribe the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir on the World Heritage List with representatives of the Local Community of Battir.

9

The Master Plan for Developing Tourism in Bethlehem came as a result of various meetings, workshops, and discussions held among stakeholders working in the field of tourism and cultural heritage, and was prepared by Alternative Business Solutions for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Tourism Development Master Plan Working Group. It was officially launched on 5 March 2011. (See annex.)

The fact that the majority of the cultural landscape is located in Area C, while the remaining part of the village is in Area B, makes it a difficult task to prepare a management plan.

The management procedures, as explained in 5.b and 5.c, are duly explained in the management outline in the nomination document annex¹⁰.

5.f Sources and levels of finance

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the village council of Battir, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem are working together tirelessly to secure the resources necessary to sustain and preserve the site. In addition, the inhabitants continue to maintain and preserve their lands, using their own resources and manpower.

The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:

In phase two of the Sustainable Tourism Project, funds have been allocated for developing and promoting sustainable tourism initiatives in five Palestinian governorates: Jericho, Nablus, Tulkarem, Hebron, and Bethlehem.

Also, as part of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem project, Battir is one of the major sites that shall be targeted by the ministry in 2013. Funds shall be allocated to provide promotional materials and for the preparation of a plan for the management of tourism at the site.

The Battir Village Council and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem (CCHP):

Throughout the Battir Landscape Eco-museum project¹¹, the Battir Village Council and CCHP have received funds to develop the cultural routes within the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and to promote the sites and initial SMEs through the village council and the local community to ensure the sustainability of the site. The remaining funds shall be allocated to the following activities:

- Preparing promotional materials including brochures, leaflets, and a book about the property;
- Installing signs and marking the routes that go through the property; and
- Maintaining another traditional route that goes to Ein Umdan.

Battir Village Council:

Taxes collected by Battir Village Council are used for providing services for the village of Battir, which composes an essential part of the buffer zone.

The Joint Service Council of Bethlehem Western Areas:

Funds have been allocated for the establishment of two water reservoirs and the renovation of the water network. However these two projects have been halted and now depend on the approval of

¹⁰ See the annex for more information.

¹¹ 75 percent of the total amount for the project (480,000 Euros) was spent on training staff to maintain the traditional routes, the rehabilitation and adaptation of Dar Abu Hassan as a guesthouse run by the village council, the establishment of the visitors' information centre, and the creation of a cultural unit within the village council.

The Battir Landscape Eco-museum is funded by the Palestinian Municipalities Support Programme through the Italian Cooperation Office in Jerusalem, and co-funded by six institutions belonging to different Italian Local Authorities, which are Lecce Province, Publiambiente, Empoli Council, Ipres, Felcos Umbria, Arpa Umbria, and Federparchi.



Fig. 5.3 Farmer picking up red chilli pepper from his field in Battir Village

the Israeli authorities because the property is located in Area C¹².

A study is being prepared for the construction of a sewage network and a treatment plant that would serve the village of Battir, and the neighbouring villages of Husan and Nahalin. The implementation of the project also depends on the approval of the Israeli Authorities.

The local landowners (farmers):

The majority of the land within the property is privately owned by the inhabitants of Battir, who depend on cultivation as a major source of income. The maintenance of the dry-stone walls, the agricultural lands, and the ancient pools, springs, and irrigation canals is conducted by the inhabitants and is a continuous process that falls within their activities as farmers. This practice is the main factor in ensuring the sustainability of the property.

¹² For further details refer to chapter seven on emergency factors affecting the property.

5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage

The Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage is the state actor that is responsible for the conservation and management of archaeological sites, antiquities, and cultural property in Palestine. Its team is well trained and has excellent expertise in the following fields:

- Assessment of sites, documentation, and drafting policies;
- Conducting excavations and surveys; and
- Preparing conservation and management plans for archaeological sites.

The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem

The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem (CCHP) is a semi-governmental organisation that was established in 2001. Its mission is to preserve tangible and intangible cultural heritage resources in the Bethlehem governorate. CCHP works under the umbrella of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The team at CCHP is trained in the following fields:

- Conserving traditional buildings and neighbourhoods;
- Preserving the urban fabric through rehabilitation projects and the preparation of conservation and management plans¹³;
- Raising awareness among local community members about cultural heritage and its role as a tool for development; and
- Conducting research and studies in the field of cultural heritage.

It is worth mentioning that CCHP and the Battir Village Council signed a memorandum of understanding in 2010 that names CCHP as a responsible partner in all interventions in the cultural heritage property in the village.

The Village Council of Battir

The village council of Battir is the local authority responsible for the property that is located within the borders of the village. Through the Conservation and Management Plan for the Cultural Landscape of Battir and the Battir Landscape Eco-museum, the village council of Battir was able to build the capacity of a team that works with the village council and that is able to:

- Manage tourist activities within the property;
- Contribute to raising the awareness among the local community;
- Communicate with different stakeholders on the local and national levels to ensure proper management of the property;
- Supervise the property and recommend where intervention is required; and

¹³ CCHP, in partnership with the Beit Sahour Municipality, won the Arab Towns Award in 2010 for best practices in conserving architectural heritage for the project "Revitalisation for the Historic Town of Beit Sahour."



Fig. 5.4 Meeting of stakeholders at Battir Village Council

- Control the tourism at the site.

In addition, the village council has the staff and capacity for:

- Maintaining the cleanliness of the public spaces in the village in cooperation with the Joint Service Council for Bethlehem Western Areas;
- Maintaining the water network in cooperation with the Bethlehem Water and Sewage Authority;
- Distributing electricity and maintaining the network in cooperation with the Jerusalem Electricity Company; and
- Following up with and approving building licenses and construction activities within Battir's boundaries, in addition to coordinating with the local authorities in any planning of regulations that lie within its borders.

5.h Visitor facilities and infrastructure

Tourism that targets Palestine in general and the Bethlehem governorate in particular falls under the category of religious tourism. However, the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is foreseen as a potential site for enhancing tourism in the governorate.

Visitors' facilities and infrastructure in Battir include:

- A visitors' information centre that was developed through the Battir Landscape Eco-museum project, and that works under the supervision of the Battir Village Council. The centre has the infrastructure to:
- Receive tourists and provide them with printed material;
- Provide guided tours along the traditional routes that were rehabilitated throughout the project;

- Organise trips with other institutions and agencies such as the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, the Alternative Tourism Group (ATG), the Palestine Wildlife Society, the Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association, and the Network for Experimental Tourism Organisation.
- Arrange meals for groups in cooperation with women's associations in Battir. This initiative is considered to be a tool that shall enhance the village community.

A guesthouse has been created in a traditional building rehabilitated by CCHP for the purpose.



Fig. 5.5 Student of tourism from Bethlehem University in a lecture at Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project Office “visitors’ information centre”.

The guesthouse has seven double bedrooms.

In addition, the towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour have the infrastructure and the capacity to receive tourists, including providing hotel rooms, restaurants, transportation, and tourist information centres, in addition to trained tour guides who can accompany the tourists throughout their trip.

Through the Battir Landscape Eco-museum, several capacity-building workshops were held for licensed tour guides working in the Bethlehem governorate to train them to conduct tours in the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir.

5.i Policies and programmes related to the presentation and promotion of the property

The Master Plan for Developing Tourism in Bethlehem

Through the Master plan for Developing Tourism in Bethlehem Governorate, the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities shall work with the various stakeholders, namely CCHP, the Palestine Wildlife Society, the Alternative Tourism Group, the Palestinian Tour Guides Association, the Department of Tourism and Hotel Management at Bethlehem University, and the Battir Village Council to prepare promotional materials and organise tours to the property.

Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project

Upon the completion of the project, which is expected in May 2012, a full set of promotional materials, including a brochure, a booklet, and a book about the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir shall be available at the visitor's information centre.

Staff shall be trained and working in the visitors' information centre to manage and assist the visitors to the property.

5.j Staffing levels and expertise (professional, technical, maintenance)

Professional Staff

Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH) of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:

- Management of archaeological sites and cultural heritage property including, documentation, assessment, conservation, and management;
- Management of the property; and
- Planning and management of the site.

Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:

- Coordination with the various sectors working in tourism, including the Arab Hotel Association, Holy Land Incoming Tour Operators Association, Palestinian Society for Tour and Travel Agencies and the Network Of Experimental Palestinian Tourism Organisation; and
- Promoting the site at the national and international levels.

Interventions from the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage are limited due to the geopolitical situation. Refer to chapter seven on emergency factors affecting the property.

Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem (CCHP):

- Conservation of traditional buildings, including assessing, designing, tendering, and supervising the implementation of the works;
- Rehabilitation of historical quarters, including assessing, designing, tendering, and supervising the implementation of the works;
- Conducting community awareness campaigns to involve the local community in the maintenance of the site, in order to ensure its sustainability upon the completion of the work; and
- Preparation of conservation and management plans for historical urban centres.

CCHP is currently the technical partner and consultant for the Battir Village Council on the Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project and shall be assisting the village council with any future projects within its field of expertise.

Technical Staff

Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH) of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:

- Initiation of archaeological excavations and surveys, including surveys, documentation, and conservation of the various historical components of the site.

Prequalified contractors with expertise in conservation techniques, such as CCHP:

- Conservation of traditional buildings and rehabilitation of historical quarters according to the designs and specifications prepared by the CCHP.

Maintenance staff

Local community organisations and the inhabitants of Battir:

The local community organisations and the inhabitants of Battir are considered the most important partners in the maintenance of the site, since they are the owners of the agricultural lands, which are considered an important source of income for them. They contribute to the following:

Cultivating and harvesting the land, and taking care of the various crops;

Maintaining and preserving the water springs, irrigation pools, and canals;

Maintaining the dry-stone walls that support the agricultural terraces, and

Maintaining the historical centre.

Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage (DACH) of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities:

- Maintenance and monitoring of archaeological sites and cultural heritage property.

Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem (CCHP):

Maintenance of restored buildings and historical centres.





CHAPTER 6

DOCUMENTATION



6.a Photographs and audiovisual image inventory and authorization form

Id No	Format (Slide/ Print/ Video)	Caption	Date of Photo (mo/yr)	Photographer/ Director of the Video	Copyright owner (if different from photographer/ director of video)	Contact details of copyright owner (Name, address, tel/ fax, and email)	Non exclusive cession of rights
Cover Page	Print	General view of Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	MoTA/CCHP	CCHP: P.O. Box 2000 Bethlehem Tel: + 972 2 276 6244 Fax: + 972 2 276 6241 Email: info@cchp.ps MoTA: P.O. Box 534 Bethlehem Tel: +972 2 274 1581/2/3 Fax: + 972 2 274 3753 Email: info@mota.gov	Yes
Summary Cover Page	Print	A door of an agricultural watchtower	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. S.1	Print	General view of the agricultural terraces near Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. S.2	Print	Panoramic view of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir – Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	MoTA/CCHP		Yes
Fig. S.4	Print	The canal that connects Ain Al-Balad with the ancient irrigation pool; the village of Battir is in the background	February 2011	Allesio Romenzi	CCHP		Yes

Chapter 1 Cover Page	Print	View of the watchtowers along Wadi Al-Makhrour	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	MoTA/CCHP		Yes
Fig. 1.1	Print	Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Chapter 2 Cover Page	Print	Farmer picking up red chilli pepper in Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Fig. 2.1	Print	Terraced fields along the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Fig. 2.2	Print	Agricultural Terraces near Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Fig. 2.3	Print	General view of Wadi Al-Makhrour	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Fig. 2.4	Print	An Olive grove near Khirbet Al-Yahoud	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Fig. 2.6	Print	Terraces built with dry-stones along the property	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes
Fig. 2.7	Print	Visitors exploring the massive rock at the valley	April 2012	CCHP		CCHP: P.O. Box 2000 Bethlehem Tel: + 972 2 276 6244 Fax: + 972 2 276 6241 Email: info@cchp.ps	Yes
Fig. 2.8	Print	Olive groves near Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MoTA		Yes

Fig. 2.9	Print	Ancient Roman olive tree near Khirbet Al-Yahoud	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.10	Print	Olive picking season in Battir	October 2012	Joint Advocacy Initiative, the East Jerusalem of YMCA	Notes from Ramallah, Blog 9		No
Fig. 2.11	Print	Agricultural watchtowers (Manatir) along Wadi Al-Makhrour	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.14 Left	Print	Quadrilateral watchtower	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.14 Right	Print	Round watchtower	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.15	Print	The limekiln near Jerusalem-Jaffa railway, Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.16	Print	Remains of an ancient oil press near Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.18	Print	Agricultural terraces near Battir village	February 2011	Allesio Romenzi	CCHP		Yes
Fig. 2.19	Print	View of the Agricultural terraces in 1892	1892	Unknown photographer		Battir Village Council Tele-fax: + 972 2 277 9531	Yes
Fig. 2.20	Print	Water pouring in the ancient pool in Battir Village	February 2011	Allesio Romenzi	CCHP		Yes
Fig. 2.21	Print	The ancient (Roman) pool that collects the water in Ain Al-Balad near Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes

Fig. 2.22	Print	Al-ma'doud, a stick used to determine the level of water in the pool before distributing it on the farmers	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.23	Print	Farmers working their land	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.24	Print	The ancient pool and al-mashakib (the small gardens during 1940s	1940s	Unknown photographer		Battir Village Council Tele-fax: + 972 2 277 9531	Yes
Fig. 2.25	Print	A view of Khirbet Al-Yahoud overlooking Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.26	Print	Battir Village during 1960s	1960s	Unknown photographer		Battir Village Council Tele-fax: + 972 2 277 9531	Yes
Fig. 2.28 Left	Print	Maqam Al-Sheik Khattab	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.28 Right	Print	Maqam Abu Zeid	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.29	Print	Villagers celebrating a social occasion in Al-Saha, 1952	1952	Unknown photographer		Battir Village Council Tele-fax: + 972 2 277 9531	Yes
Fig. 2.31	Print	A Roman tomb along the way between Wadi Al-Makhrour and Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 2.32	Print	Villagers selling their products to train passengers during the British mandate period	1917-1948	Unknown photographer		Battir Village Council Tele-fax: + 972 2 277 9531	Yes

Fig. 2.32	Print	Rail ticket, in French and Arabic, recto and verso. It is a pasteboard card measuring 1 3/16" by 2" (roughly sextodecimo) for the Jaffa Jerusalem Railroad, 2nd Class, Palestine, no date. Punched and cancelled.	Late nineteenth - early twentieth century		Shappel Manuscript Foundation www.shappel.org		No
Chapter 3 Cover Page	Print	A stone heap "agricultural watchtower" near Wadi Al-Makhrour	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 3.1	Print	Fig 3.1 Map of the World by Heinrich Bünting (1545-1606) as published in Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae Description Donat, 1581. The map palces Jerusalem/ Palestine at the heart of the world, Yasir Barakat Collection.	1851	Heinrich Bünting	CCHP		Yes

Fig. 3.2	Print	Khirbet Al-Yahoud, remains of a human settlement located to the west of Battir Village.	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 3.3	Print	The ancient irrigation pool that feeds the terraces near Battir Village	March 2012	Yousef Shaheen	Battir Village Council	Battir Village Council Tele-fax: + 972 2 277 9531	Yes
Fig. 3.4	Print	View of Battir Village and the surrounding agricultural terraces	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 3.5	Print	View of the irrigated terraces to the west of Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 3.6	Print	Ancient olive tree near the site	December 2012	CCHP			Yes
Fig. 3.7	Print	Agricultural Fields planted with fruit trees	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Chapter 4 Cover Page	Print	The limekiln near Jerusalem-Jaffa railway	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes

Fig. 4.1	Print	Dar Al-Bader in Battir; a traditional building that was rehabilitated by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem. The building is currently used by the village council as a locale for the battir Landscape Eco-museum Office "visitors information centre".	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 4.2	Print	A view from the property to the north towards the Israeli settlement of Har Gilo and a segment of the Wall. The settlement and the Wall create a negative visual effect on the integrity of the property.	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 4.3	Print	A watchtower with a collapsed roof near Wadi Al-Makhrour.	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes

Fig. 4.4	Print	An educational trip organised by the Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project in cooperation with the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem for the Faculty of Tourism of Bethlehem University	April 2012	CCHP			Yes
Fig. 4.5	Print	Students of the Faculty of Tourism of Bethlehem University listening to a tour guide from Battir.	April 2012	CCHP			Yes
Chapter 5 Cover Page	Print	An agricultural watchtower in Wadi Al-Makhrou	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 5.1	Print	General view of the agricultural terraces and the buffer zone near Wadi Al-Makhrou	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes

Fig. 5.2	Print	Meeting of the working group on the nomination dossier to inscribe the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir on the World Heritage List with representatives of the local community of Battir.	December 2012	Battir Village Council			Yes
Fig 5.3	Print	Farmer picking up red chilli pepper from his field in Battir Village.	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 5.4	Print	Meeting of stakeholders at Battir Village council	January 2013	Battir Village Council			Yes
Fig. 5.5	Print	Student of tourism from Bethlehem university in a lecture at Battir landscape Eco-museum Project Office "visitors' information centre".					
Chapter 6 Cover Page	Print	An ancient olive tree near Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes

Chapter 7 Cover Page	Print	Ein Al-Balad in Battir Village	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 7.1	Print	Panoramic view of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 7.3	Print	General view of Battir Village and the surrounding mountains	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Fig. 7.4	Print	Unattended agricultural lands near Wadi Al-Makhrour	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Chapter 8 Cover Page	Print	Agricultural terraces near Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes
Chapter 9 Cover Page	Print	Agricultural terraces near Battir	January 2013	Rami R. Rishmawi	CCHP/MOTA		Yes

6.b Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans relevant to the property

A. Protective designation

The protective designations shall highlight the tools used by the various stakeholders to ensure the management and conservation of the property.

Palestinian laws

The Law of Antiquities no. 51 (1966)¹

The Law of Antiquities number 51 (1966)² is the law in effect for preserving antiquities and archaeological sites in Palestine. According to this law, any property that was constructed before 1700 AD and human and animal remnants predating 600 AD are directly protected, and any property or site that was constructed after that period and declared by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities as an archaeological property or site is also protected. Interventions in any protected site are forbidden until an excavation is conducted and a proper conservation and management plan is prepared and approved (articles two and three).

According to this law, all archaeological sites and remains of human settlements, in addition to ancient pools and irrigation canals, are protected by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. Still, because the majority of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is located in what is defined by the Israelis as Area C, works are prohibited in these sites by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, which has delayed any excavations in the area.

The Law of Environment no. 7 (1999)

The Law of Environment number 7 (1999) declares that it is forbidden to sweep arable lands or move their soil to use it for purposes other than agriculture³ (article 18). Chapter five in the law aims at preserving natural, archaeological, and historic lands, and stresses that any act that shall cause damage to natural preservations; public, archaeological, or historical sites; or harm in any way their visual aesthetics is forbidden (article 44).

The Law of Environment indicates the penalties for any acts that may harm the integrity or authenticity of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and it is a strong tool used by the authorities to preserve the terraces within the core zone, as well as the buffer zone.

The Law of Tourism no. 45 (1965)

The Law of Tourism number 45 (1965) calls for the protection, preservation and development of cultural heritage sites in cooperation with the Department of Antiquities as part of the tourism authority. It also requires the director of the Department of Antiquities to be a member of the

¹ A new law for antiquities and cultural heritage has been drafted in cooperation with the Institute of Law at Bir Zeit University in cooperation with the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and other governmental and non-governmental organisations, including the Centre for Architectural Preservation (RIWAQ), the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, and the Old City of Jerusalem Revitalisation Programme (part of the Welfare Association).

The new law addresses property of cultural value, including cultural landscapes, and is expected to be ratified in 2013. Once ratified, the new law shall provide comprehensive protection for all cultural heritage property in Palestine, including the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir.

² The Jordanian Law of Antiquities was re-activated by the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1994, until the finalisation of a Palestinian law is completed. A draft of a law that aims to preserve cultural heritage was prepared, and is currently being revised.

³ It is common practice to move the soil from one piece of land to another to enhance the fertility of the second piece of land. This is especially common in the northern plains of Palestine.

council of tourism (articles four and five).

Building and Planning Law no. 79/1966

Building and Planning Law number 79 (1966) states that the Department of Antiquities should investigate any building site before construction and during the excavation of the foundation, and is allowed to stop the construction in case any archaeological remains or caves are revealed. The construction is postponed until an excavation is conducted and a proper conservation and management plan is prepared and approved.

This law shall protect the sites in the buffer zone, namely the village of Battir, that are not yet revealed, and thus contribute to a stronger protection of these sites (article nineteen).

Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter)

The Palestine Charter⁴ reflects the commitment of the various stakeholders to conserving cultural heritage in Palestine, since it is a shared national responsibility that should be managed in a rational manner with the aim of benefitting the community and valued as an element of social and economic development.

The charter reflects the commitment of all stakeholders, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, the Battir Village Council, and community organisations and inhabitants to preserve the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, since they recognise and realise its value for both the local community and all of humanity.

Declaration Regarding the Safeguarding of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

The Declaration⁵ was drafted by the Battir Village Council and representatives of the eight families in Battir upon the decision to inscribe their property, the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir. The declaration states their willingness and commitment to preserving their cultural landscape and maintaining its sustainability.

The declaration reflects the commitment of the owners to cooperate with the authorities and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation to preserve and protect the site, and, most importantly, it reflects their willingness to continue reviving the traditional techniques used to irrigate their lands.

B. Means of implementing protective measures

The Palestinian laws in force

The Law of Antiquities no.51 (1966)

The Law of Antiquities is implemented by the Antiquities Office in Bethlehem, which is the representative office of the Department of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and supported by the Police of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage. It is a strong legal tool that is managed by the local authority.

⁴ The Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter) was prepared through a participatory process (2012), and was adopted by the various stakeholders (See the annex). Cultural heritage is defined in the charter to include the urban fabric and archaeological properties, monuments, and cultural and natural landscapes, along with their intangible dimensions.

⁵ Please see the annex.

The Law of Environment no. 7 (1999)

The Law of Environment is implemented by the Office of Environment in Bethlehem, which is the representative office of the Ministry of Environment and supported by the Palestinian police. It is a strong legal tool that is managed by the local authority.

The Law of Tourism no. 45 (1965)

The Law of Antiquities is implemented by the Department of Tourism of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and supported by the Police of Antiquities and Cultural Heritage. It is a strong legal tool that is managed by the local authority.

Building and Planning Law no. 79/1966

The Building and Planning Law is implemented by the village council and the Planning Department of the Bethlehem Governorate, which is working under the Ministry of Local Government. The law is supported by the Palestinian Police and is considered a legal tool.

Charter on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage in Palestine (The Palestine Charter)

The Palestine Charter reflects the interest and commitment of the different stakeholders to preserving the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir. It is not a binding law, but it still reflects the willingness of the various parties to protect the landscape⁶.

Declaration Regarding the Safeguarding of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

The declaration reflects the commitment of the local community of Battir to continue practising traditional techniques, including agricultural methods, cultivation, irrigation, and management of water resources and maintenance of dry-stone walls, as well as constructing new terraces.

These traditional techniques have been and continue to be supervised by the elders of the village, and are practiced by all the village residents.

The traditional practices of the owners of the property

The traditional agricultural practices of the local community have played a major role in the sustainability of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, and are also seen by the local community to be a strong tool for preserving their landscape. Also these practices are seen as an important tool for the development of the landscape as a tool for economic revitalisation.

5.d Existing plans related to the municipality and region in which the proposed property is located (e.g., regional or local plans, conservation plans, or tourism development plans)

The Master Plan of the Village of Battir

The master plan for the village of Battir was prepared by the Ministry of Local Government for the benefit of the Battir Village Council, and aims to regulate the building licences within the village according to Building and Planning Law no. 79 (1966). It is limited to the lands of Battir that fall in Area B, as defined by the Israeli authorities.

⁶ The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities drafted the Palestine Charter, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem was among the partners that participated in drafting and adopting the charter.

The Master Plan for Developing Tourism in Bethlehem

The master plan⁷ supports the development of cultural, ecological, and alternative tourism as important components that contribute to enhancing the experience of the visitors coming to Bethlehem, and aims to promote the rich diversity of religious, cultural, historical, and natural resources in the governorate. It also points out that export products should revolve around promoting cultural and historical sites.

The actions proposed in the master plan include building on cultural heritage assets to promote Palestine as a destination, and to protect, preserve, and celebrate the key assets of tourism, including natural and built heritage and cultural treasures. Action 5.2.2 directly addresses developing and packaging new products targeting niche markets, including cultural, historical, natural, and alternative tours and experiences.

C. Property management plan or other management system

Although there is no comprehensive management plan that targets the property as a whole, the different parts of the property are managed by the various stakeholders at different levels. Various governmental actors, including the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Environment, the Bethlehem Governorate, and the Battir Village Council participate in the management of the property, alongside the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem, local community organisations, and the landowners and inhabitants.

The fact that the majority of the cultural landscape is located in Area C, while the remaining part of the village is in Area B, makes it a difficult task to prepare a management plan.

The management procedures, as explained in 5.b and 5.c, are duly explained in the management outline in the nomination document annex⁸.

6.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property

Maps prepared for the Nomination Document to Inscribe Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

Digital Maps (CAD and GIS), December 2012

Photographic documentation of the property

Digital images, December 2012

Route maps prepared during Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project

Digital Maps (CAD), April 2012

Tender documents including drawings for the adaptive re-use of Dar Abu Hassan as a guesthouse

Digital and hard copy (CAD, MS Word), April 2012

Surveys conducted during the Battir Landscape Conservation and Management Plan

⁷ The Master Plan for Developing Tourism in Bethlehem came as a result of various meetings, workshops, and discussions held among stakeholders working in the field of tourism and cultural heritage, and was prepared by Alternative Business Solutions for the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and the Tourism Development Master Plan Working Group. It was officially launched on 5 March 2011. (See annex.)

⁸ See the annex for more information.

Digital surveys (CAD and GIS), April 2010

Tender documents including drawings for the adaptive re-use of Dar Samara and the Seven Widows Quarter as an office for Battir Village Council; the building shall be used as a locale for the cultural heritage unit of Battir Village Council upon the completion of Battir Landscape Eco-museum Office.

Digital and hard copy (CAD, MS Word), April, 2008

Tender documents including drawings for the adaptive re-use of Dar Al-Bader as a locale for the team working on Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project; the building shall be used as visitors' information centre upon the completion of the project.

Digital and hard copy (CAD, MS Word), December 2006

6.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held

Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

P.O. Box 534
Bethlehem, Palestine
Tel: + 972 (0)2 274 1581/2/3
Fax: + 972 (0)2 274 3753
Email: info@mota.gov
www.mota.gov

Battir Village Council

Battir Village
Bethlehem governorate, Palestine
Tel: + 972 (0)2 277 9531
Fax: + 972 (0)2 277 9531

Battir Landscape Eco-museum Project Office

Battir Village, via Battir Village Council
Bethlehem governorate, Palestine
Tel: + 972 (0)2 276 3509
Fax: + 972 (0)2 276 3509

Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Bethlehem

P.O. Box 2000
Dar Mansour, Star Street
Bethlehem, Palestine
Tel: + 972 (0) 276 6244
Fax: + 972 (0) 276 6241
E-mail: info@cchp.ps
www.cchp.ps

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CHAPTER 7

EMERGENCY FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY



Prologue

The Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is being presented as an emergency nomination because it aims to rescue a unique landscape that has been cultivated by man for 4,000 years from irreversible damage. The village of Battir is home to an ancient system of agricultural terraces that have been used to adapt its hilly landscape for the cultivation of olive trees, vines, and other crops. This landscape and the communities living on it face socio-cultural and geopolitical threats. In addition, this emergency nomination also aims to protect and maintain the agricultural practices that were used to create this landscape. These living traditions include some of the oldest farming methods known to humankind, which are an important source of income for local communities.

The threats to the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir are the direct and indirect effects of the illegal construction of settlements on surrounding hills, the proposed illegal construction of the Wall¹, and the Israeli state's refusal to allow the farmers to maintain their land and buildings. The landscape has also been harmed by actions resulting from The Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which divided the West Bank into three major "Areas" – A, B, and C. One of the core principles of the Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza (1993) was that its implementation would be temporary. The fact that this interim agreement is still being imposed negatively impacts almost every plan or project in Areas B and C, which comprise 82.3 percent of Palestinian land.

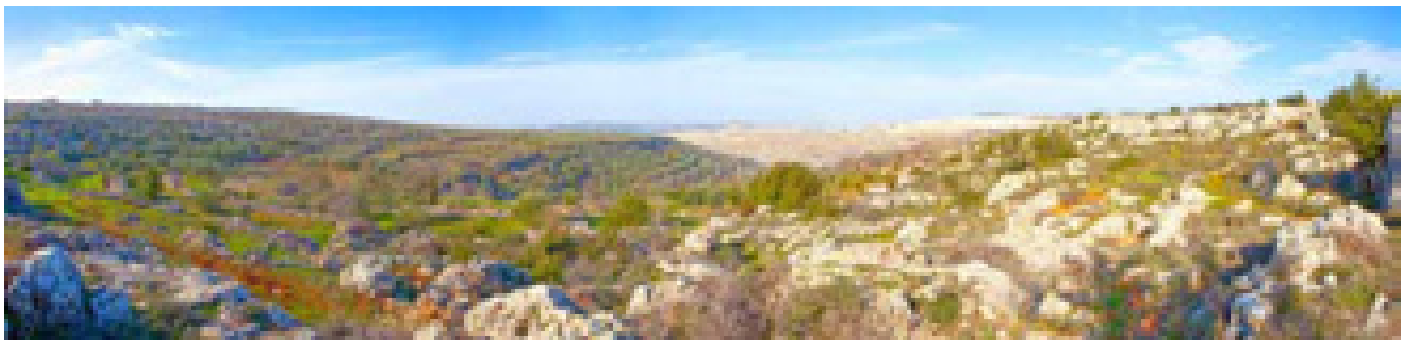


Fig. 7.1 Panoramic view of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir

The division of the Palestinian territory into Areas A, B, and C, which the Palestinians had no control over but have had to accept de facto has had tremendous negative effects on the visual integrity of the landscape and the conservation of culture and traditions. The proposed area of land discussed in this proposal is located in Areas B and C. It is worth noting that that Areas A, B, and C are defined as the following:

- Area A - The vast majority of the Palestinian population lives in Area A, where the State of Palestine is responsible for internal security and has broad civil powers. Consisting of approximately 17.7 percent of the West Bank, Area A is divided into separate, non-contiguous areas. Israeli checkpoints surround each of these areas.
- Area B - The majority of the remainder of the Palestinian population lives in Area B. The State of Palestine has civil control in this area, but overall security control rests with Israel. Area B consists of 21.3 percent of the West Bank.

¹ The steps that have led to the construction of the Wall and the court case that the village of Battir has initiated against the Wall are described in an Annex. Understanding the history of the proposed construction of the Wall near Battir is important in order to understand the severe threat the Wall presents to the area.

- Area C - The majority of the West Bank, 61 percent, is Area C, where Israel has full security and civil responsibility. Area C is the only contiguous area in the occupied West Bank; it surrounds and divides Areas A and B.

Beginning in 1967, Israel colonised the oPt by systematically transferring parts of its civilian population into the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in violation of international law. Today, more than 525,000 Israeli settlers, including over 200,000 in occupied East Jerusalem, live in settlements established on land illegally seized from Palestinians in the oPt. These settlements range in size from nascent settlements or “outposts,” consisting of a few trailers, to entire towns of several thousand people.

The aim of Israel’s settlement enterprise has been to artificially alter the status of the oPt, both physically and demographically, so as to prevent it from being returned to Palestinians. Israeli settlements serve to illegally confiscate Palestinian land and natural resources while caging the Palestinian population in unsustainable, ever-shrinking enclaves, and severing East Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. By limiting the territorial contiguity and economic viability of the oPt, Israeli settlements pose the single greatest threat to the establishment of an independent, viable Palestinian state, and hence, to a just and lasting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

In Battir, the 1949 Armistice Line between Israel and the West Bank² divides the ancient agricultural terraces built along the slope of the valley from their one source of water, which is located in the centre of the village. The de facto division line between the two states has always been the railway track. The villagers of Battir have always respected this division, and no incident against the Jerusalem Jaffa Railway Line has ever been recorded. Battir farmers can, in the present circumstances, still farm their land beyond the railway line. The construction of a division wall or fence next to the railway line will mean that the Battir farmers, who are the guardians of this cultural landscape, will not be able to maintain their land.

Furthermore a wall or fence would create severe visual interruption of the landscape, ruining what is now a picturesque view. The building of a wall or fence will also mean the disruption of the natural areas of the valley and the landscape around it, as hills will be flattened to create access roads to the area. Furthermore it is expected that a wall or fence will also include high watchtowers and closed-circuit television controls, which will create more eyesores in the valley.

In the summer of 2002, Israel began constructing a wall in the oPt. Though Israel has claimed that the Wall is for security purposes, it forms an integral component of Israel’s settlement infrastructure. The Wall snakes through the West Bank encompassing major Israeli settlement blocs on the “Israeli” side of the Wall and securing large portions of West Bank territory for the settlements’ future expansion. In so doing, the Wall separates Palestinians from their lands, their sources of livelihood, and from social services. If completed as planned, the Wall, combined with settlement-controlled areas east of the Wall and in the Jordan Valley, would leave Palestinians with only 54 percent of the West Bank.

In its advisory opinion of 9 July 2004, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) held that the Wall, along with Israeli settlements, violate international law. It called upon Israel to halt their construction, dismantle the portions already built, and provide reparations to Palestinians for damages it has caused.

7.a The Israeli Settlements and the Wall

Since 2005, the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, which is in the Bethlehem governorate, has been the target of increased land confiscation by the Israeli military in order to

² 1967 Borders refer to the borders of West Bank and Gaza Strip including East Jerusalem from the 22% of historic Palestine, and that are accepted by the international community as the borders between the State of Palestine and Israel.

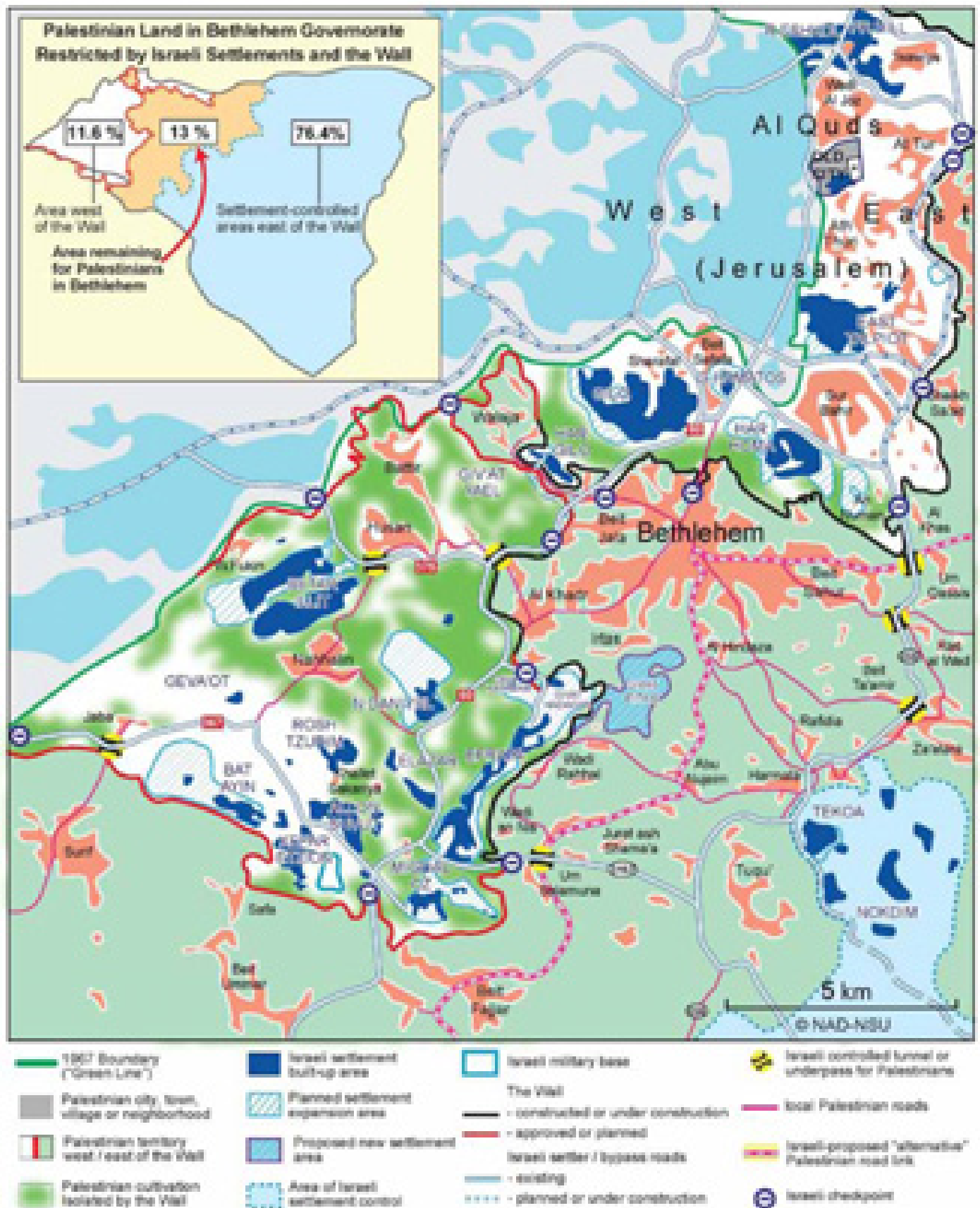


Fig. 7.2 Map of the Israeli Settlements and the Wall surrounding Bethlehem, from the Negotiation Affairs Department, 2012.

implement a systematic policy of segregating and colonising Palestinian communities, effectively pre-empting the possibility of the two-state solution.

Contrary to Israeli claims that the Wall's route is close to the 1967 pre-occupation border (and thus causes less harm to Palestinian communities), 80 percent of the route is on Palestinian territory, a de facto annexation of 12 percent of the West Bank, including valuable agricultural and water resources that are currently used to sustain Palestinian communities.

In the western rural villages of the Bethlehem governorate³, the Israeli army has issued military orders confiscating over 4,000 dunums (1,000 acres) of land in order to construct the Wall. The impact of the Wall and Israel's colonies in the Bethlehem area will cause great harm to the Palestinian cultural landscape and to its development. The Wall will encircle and isolate Bethlehem's villages west of the wall, exposing them to future confiscation for settlement expansion. These villages shall lose 73.7 percent or 64.7 km² of their total village lands. The Etzion settlement bloc, with a total land area of 70.8 km², will devastate the western villages of Bethlehem.

In the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, the Wall will extend for several kilometres and consist of a double-layered fence 40 to 100 metres wide comprised of barbed wire, trenches, military roads, and footprint detection tracks, topped with an electric fence equipped with security cameras⁴. In the event that the Wall is constructed throughout the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir, it is expected to have the following irreversible impacts⁵:

1. The loss of highly valuable agricultural lands, uprooting of plants, and significant damage to the agro-biodiversity on some of the most fertile land in the West Bank.
2. Significant damage to the biodiversity of the area. The free movement of wildlife between the different ecosystems will be restricted by the Wall, and the natural habitat of the native life will be fragmented and damaged.
3. Significant negative impact on the socio-economic status of local communities as result of land confiscation, land annexation, the uprooting of trees and the loss of income from the confiscated or damaged land. More than 90 percent of the inhabitants of Battir depend on agriculture as an essential source of income, and 10 percent of the inhabitants depend solely on agriculture for their livelihood.
4. Significant damage to the integrity and authenticity of the landscape and its exceptional universal value, as well as damage to the visual continuity of the area.
5. The Wall will cut off the watercourse and the natural water drainage system in the area. By dividing the landscape in two, the Wall will prevent the natural flow of rainwater along the terraces and the mountain slopes to the crops and other plant life below.
6. The construction of the Wall will spread a large amount of dust. After the wall is complete,

3 In addition to the village of Battir, the rural villages west of Bethlehem include Al-Wlajeh, Husan, Battir, Wadi Fukin, Al-Jaba, Nahhalin, and al-Khader and the neighbouring town of Beit Jala, whose lands extend to Wadi Al-Makhroun

4 In areas that have a sizeable population and/or are in close proximity to the armistice line, as in the case of the Palestinian cities of Qalqiliya and Battir, the Segregation Wall consists of 6- to 8-metre-high concrete with cylindrical military watchtowers every 200 metres. Realising the negative impact that a concrete wall of this size would have on the landscape, landowners in Battir brought a case to Israeli Higher Court to defend their land and prevent the construction of the Wall. The citizens were supported by various Israeli environmental organisations that share the same perspective. Confirming the outstanding universal value of the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, the court decided on 12 December 2012, to grant the Israeli Defence Forces a period of three months to re-evaluate the location of the wall, and replace it with a high electric metal fence.

5 Points one through five are taken from the report on the Environments Impacts Assessment of the Wall Plan on Battir Village from the Applied Research Institute - Jerusalem (ARIJ) and the Natural Resources Sector, which is part of the Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority. The report is a product of the Monitoring of Israeli Settlements Project, which is supported by the European Union (EU) and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

the use of unpaved military roads in order to monitor movement in the area will continue to contribute to polluting the atmosphere.

Undoubtedly, the construction of the Wall, regardless of the material used in construction or its location, shall have irreversible negative impacts on this magnificent landscape. It shall play a major role in eradicating a cultural landscape that has survived for at least 4,000 years. Sealing the fate of this area, the proposed settlements and their buffer zone surrounding Battir will have a similar affect on the landscape. The combined presence of the Wall and the settlements is expected to:

1. Obstruct current and future prospects for socio-economic viability for local communities even more severely than in other settlement blocs. The land threatened in this area is being used intensely for cash crop cultivation, in particular olives, grapes, and plums, which are a vital part of the Jerusalem and Bethlehem markets. This area also has high development potential, with large water reserves and a fertile and picturesque landscape well suited for tourism.
2. Separate the property from East Jerusalem, severing the historical connection between the two sites, which existed until 1967.
3. Prevent at least 5,000 villagers from accessing their agricultural lands and cultivating them, which in turn shall affect the socio-economic situation of farmers who depend mainly on agriculture to make a living.
4. Expose the land cultivated by the villagers in the environs of the illegal settlements to regular attacks from Israeli settlers. Sewage is often dumped from these settlements onto Palestinian agricultural lands, contaminating crops and trees cultivated in the area. The settlement of Betar Ilit, for example, regularly discharges waste water onto agricultural lands belonging to the village of Wadi Fukin. Accordingly, the construction of the proposed settlements near Battir shall expose it to similar threats.
5. The settlements, being built on the high ground of the valley opposite Battir, already dominate part of the landscape. These settlements will be further enlarged according to published plans, disrupting the visual integrity of the valley. In addition, the buffer zone created around the settlements will prevent farmers from taking care of their land, which, in turn, will contribute to landscape deterioration.
6. Additionally, the Wall, whether made of concrete or a fence, shall prevent the farmers of Battir, who are the guardians of this cultural landscape, from taking care of their land, and thus further contribute to the deterioration of the land.

7.b Water Losses and Contamination

The Middle East is one of the world's most water-stressed regions. It is therefore essential that water be shared equitably by everyone in the region. Since its 1967 occupation of the oPt, Israel has almost completely controlled Palestinian water resources and deprived Palestinians of access to a sufficient share of water, in violation of international law. Instead, Israel has used the water for its illegal settlements and its civilian population, forcing Palestinian communities to purchase water, at high cost, from Israeli companies.

Israel allocates approximately 89 percent of available water resources to itself, leaving the Palestinian population less than 11 percent⁶. This comes despite the fact that the great majority of the areas where the various aquifer basins are fed, or "recharged," lie within Palestine. If water

⁶ At present, the overall available water in Israel and the oPt combined is between 2,200 and 2,800 million cubic metres per year (MCC/year) on a regular basis, and varies each year according to rainfall and other factors.

resources were divided into equal per capita shares, Palestinians would receive approximately 33 percent. As a result, each Palestinian living in the oPt receives an average of less than 70 litres of water per capita per day for all uses. This is less than half the 150 litres per day recommended by the World Health



Fig. 7.3 General view of Battir Village and the surrounding mountains.

Organisation as the minimum per capita water availability.

Since 1967, Israel has assumed near complete control over all Palestinian water resources, thus depriving Palestinians of their right to control or have access to their own natural resources. Discriminatory measures toward water distribution adopted by the Israeli authorities include:

- Restricting drilling of new Palestinian water wells;
- Restricting pumping or deepening of existing wells;
- Restricting access to areas with fresh water springs;
- Limiting Palestinians' ability to utilise surface water; and
- Limiting Palestinians' ability to develop water and sewage infrastructure.

At the same time, however, wells for Israeli settlements, which are often located over areas with the richest water resources, have been approved and are generally drilled deep into the aquifer. Due to their high pumping rates, these wells often pull water from the shallower Palestinian wells adjacent to them. The consequence of these actions has been to force Palestinian communities to purchase water, at high cost, from Israeli companies.

During the period in which Israel was solely responsible for water-related issues in the oPt, it failed to invest adequately in water infrastructure that would serve Palestinian communities. Since the signing of the interim agreement, Israel has used its veto power, provided by the agreement, to prevent Palestinians from undertaking projects designed to develop groundwater resources in the West Bank⁷.

In addition to utilising a disproportionate amount of water, Israeli settlements have caused significant environmental damage. Settlers discharge domestic, agricultural, and industrial waste into nearby valleys without treatment. Industrial pollution, such as aluminium and plastics, has been transferred into the West Bank, especially in the past twenty years after environmental controls in Israel tightened.

The village of Battir is connected to a water network, which supplies water for domestic use, but the village is not connected to a sewage network, forcing the community to rely on cesspits. Solid waste is managed by the village council; a truck collects the waste from Battir as well as the neighbouring villages of Husan, Wadi Fukin, and Nahhalin.

In addition, Battir villagers rely on springs to irrigate their crops. Seven water springs that flow continuously year-round provide water for irrigation, as well as drinking water for domestic animals and wildlife during the dry months (April to October). These springs are Ein⁸ Al-Balad, Ein Jama', Ein Abu Yaseen, Ein Al-Fouar, Ein Amdan, Ein Al-Leghsar, and Ein Bardamot. The water from Ein Al-Balad and Ein Jama' is collected during the dry season in two ancient reservoirs, and flows through an ancient man-made stone canal to irrigate crops. This is a traditional irrigation method that continues to be used by local inhabitants.

As a result of the various issues related to the investment of water resources, the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir is facing both direct and indirect threats to its water springs. These issues are summarised below:

1. The water network that supplies water for domestic use was installed in the 1970s, and is relatively old; water leakage throughout the network means the amount of water provided is not sufficient to meet the inhabitants' needs. The Battir Village Council's request to construct two water cisterns to collect water from the springs during the winter period for domestic use was refused.
2. The Battir Village Council has been prevented from constructing a sewage network, and the local community's dependence on cesspits is contaminating the water from the springs that are located close to the village. This contamination is preventing the local community from using the spring water for domestic use, and is affecting the agricultural lands that depend on the water for agriculture.
3. The construction of the nearby settlements is expected to be followed by the construction of water cisterns, which will drain the groundwater, causing the springs to dry up.

This water loss and contamination is another major threat to the Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir and another reason why this is an emergency case. The water shortages are causing major damage that will slowly but surely affect the area's authenticity and integrity in the long run.

⁷ The interim agreement provides for the establishment of a "Joint Water Committee" (JWC) that would be composed of an equal number of representatives from all stakeholder groups and would deal with all water and sewage related issues in the West Bank. All decisions taken by the JWC are to be reached by consensus if they concern an issue in Area A or B. If related to Area C (around 60 percent of the West Bank), the decision has to be approved by the Israeli Civil Administration. (Palestinian-Israeli Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1995), Appendix I, Annex III, Article 40.)

⁸ Ein is the Arabic word for water spring.

7.c Maintenance of Agricultural Lands

As mentioned above, in the 1995 Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) agreed to the temporary division of the West Bank (excluding East Jerusalem) into three areas: A, B, and C. In Area C, Israel retained full control over security, planning, and zoning, as well as other aspects related to “territory.” This division was intended to last until a final status agreement was reached within five years.

With the breakdown in negotiations in 2000, approximately 36 percent of the West Bank had been categorised as Areas A and B, with an additional 3 percent of land, designated as a nature reserve that was to be transferred to the State of Palestine under the Wye River Memorandum. This left the majority of the West Bank as Area C.

There has been no official change to this division since 2000. Of particular importance is that responsibility for planning and zoning in Area C, which was to be transferred to the State of Palestine by the end of 1998, has remained with Israel.

Because the division of the West Bank into Areas A, B, and C does not correspond to the built-up areas of Palestinian communities, the exact population of Area C is unknown, but it is estimated that around 150,000 Palestinians live there. However, this number does not reflect the total number of Palestinians affected by Israel’s policies in Area C. Also affected are those Palestinians who own land in Area C, but reside elsewhere, as well as those living in areas adjacent to Area C, particularly Area B communities that are completely surrounded by Area C, many of which report difficulties similar to those facing Area C communities.

Moreover, Area C is home to the most significant land reserves available for Palestinian development, as well as the bulk of Palestinian agricultural and grazing land. It is also the only contiguous territory in the West Bank. Therefore, any large-scale infrastructure projects (roads, water, electricity networks, etc.) also involve work in Area C. As a result, the entire West Bank population is affected by what happens in Area C.

The majority of the land of the Southern Landscape of Jerusalem, Battir is situated in Area C, while the village of Battir is mainly located in area B. Restrictions on planning and development efforts and the absence of concrete policy changes in Area C have negatively affected this area. Specific obstacles include the following:

- The stone walls that support the terraces around Battir require yearly maintenance after the winter. The restrictions on land in Area C prevent the maintenance of the terraces throughout the area, especially those that are located near the Israeli settlements or are in areas where future settlements are proposed.
- It is difficult to conserve the agricultural watchtowers in the area, since conservation works are prohibited in Area C. In fact, two farmers tried to conserve their watchtowers in the Al-Makhrour area by replacing the collapsing roofs, but the Israelis demolished these watch towers.
- It is impossible to develop new terraces and expand the agricultural plots.
- Finally, it is difficult to access water from the nearby springs to use for agriculture, and to conserve the existing water reservoirs in the area. Additionally, the deterioration of the watchtowers and the water wells have prevented the farmers from using them during the summer.

Summary

The emergency inscription of Palestine, Land of Olives and Vines: Cultural Landscape of Southern Jerusalem, Battir aims to protect a cultural landscape that undoubtedly has outstanding universal value. This is a landscape that has witnessed the development and continuity of agriculture in steep, hilly areas.

Despite the willingness and commitment on the part of the local community to sustain and protect the area that comprises an essential part of their livelihood, they face threats to the landscape from the Wall and settlements. In addition, they are powerless to control water shortages and contamination, and unable to maintain their agricultural land. These threats must be addressed urgently in order to ensure the comprehensive protection of the property.

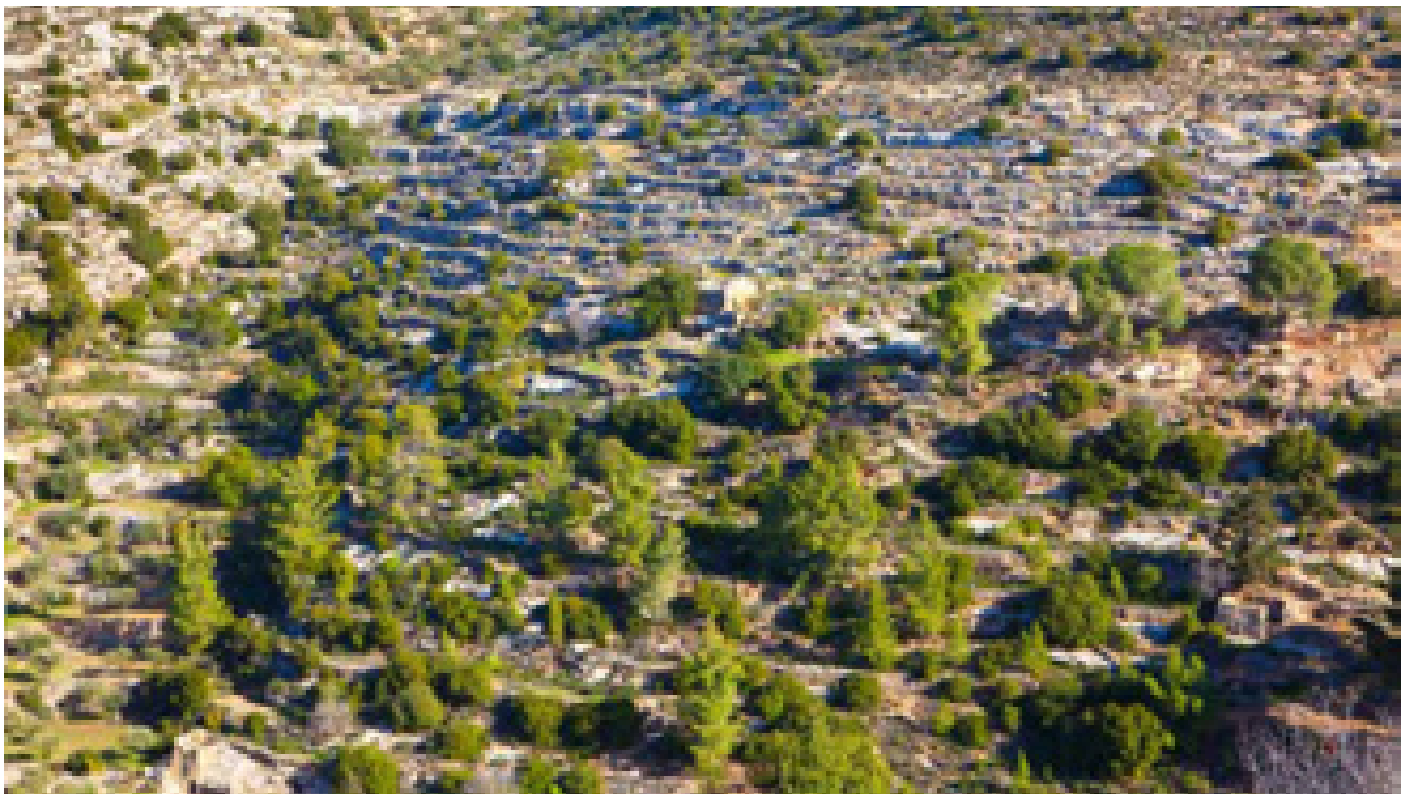
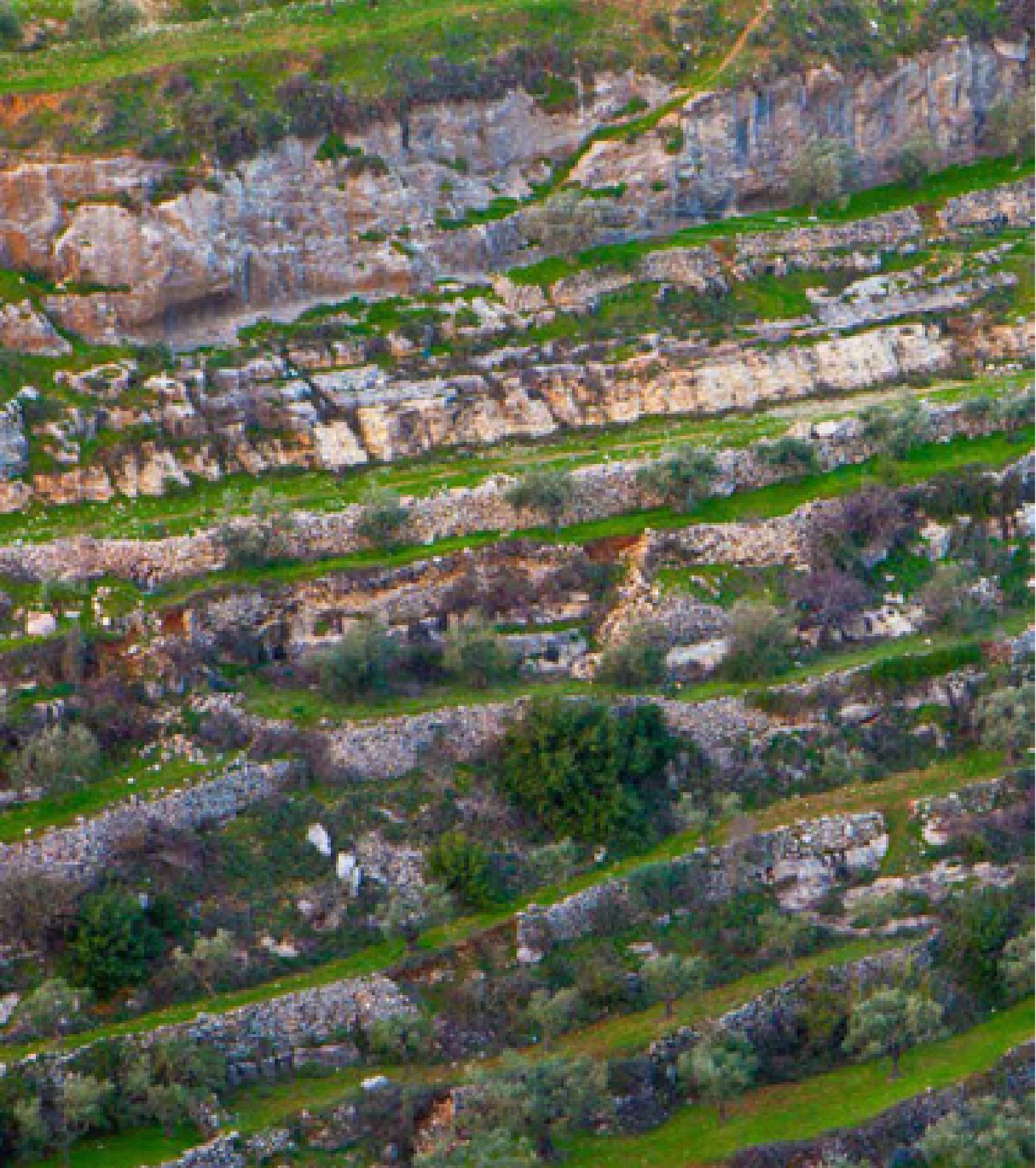


Fig. 7.4 Unattended agricultural lands near Wadi Al-Makhroun



CHAPTER 8

CONTACT INFORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES



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CHAPTER 9 SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY



WORLD HERITAGE SITE NOMINATION DOCUMENT

SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY

Rula Ma'aya
Minister of Tourism and Antiquities
State of Palestine



