

Abstract
1949: The (Palestinian) Exodus from Iraq al-Manshiyyah

This thesis is consisted of two parts: the first, narrates the Palestinian exodus from Iraq al-Manshiyyah in 1949, one year after the Palestinian Nakba of 1948; whereas the second presents a thorough reading in the official Palestinian documents (with an emphasis on the PLO Palestinian National Council Resolutions) regarding the plight of the Palestinian refugees. While the first part presents a critical analysis of the Zionist, Palestinian, and Arab accounts regarding the fall of Iraq al-Manshiyyah; the second employs a diverse number of personal accounts from the Palestinian refugees who survived the Zionist ethnic cleansing of the village. The two parts aspire not only to construct a Palestinian narrative of the fall of Iraq al-Manshiyyah, but also to map-out a social history of the village before, during, and after the exodus of 1949. The main argument of the thesis is that the oral history as constructed from the stories of Iraq al-Manishiyyah refugees, albeit always fragmented and often neglected, provides a subversive history of the rise and the fall of Palestinian village within the wider picture of the Palestinian Nakba of 1948, that is more valid than any other “official” narrative, be it Zionist or Arab. There are two major conclusions that could be drawn from this thesis. At the methodological level, one should assert that in spite of the good work done on the Palestinian oral history, that is gaining much currency in the last three decades, it still falls short of constructing a full-fledged national narrative of the ethnic cleaning of Palestine around 1948. This might be attributed to the relatively nascent attempts to establish a Palestinian national archive, and the rather peculiar agendas of the research centers and NGOs that work in the field of oral history. At the historical level, though, the personal accounts of the Iraq al-Manshiyyah refugees collected and included in this thesis strongly challenge the official Zionist narrative of what happened in the village one year of the national catastrophe of 1948. The Palestinian exodus of Iraq al-Manshiyyah did not by any measure occur as a mere result of the ‘acts of war,’ but rather as a result of a coherent plan of ethnic cleansing of the village at the hands of the Zionist movement. While praising some works done in a good faith at the hands of the so-called-‘Israeli New Historians,’ this thesis calls upon a national attempt to consolidate an official Palestinian national narrative that is capable of transforming the hidden history of Palestine from ‘orality to literacy.’