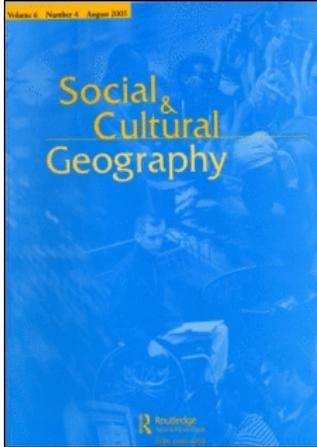


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## Tourism development and cultural conflict: the case of 'Nazareth 2000'

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*In areas that are characterized by political, national, cultural and religious conflicts, issues concerning conservation and development become particularly complex. One prominent example of this tension can be seen in events that have taken place over the last decade in the city of Nazareth, which hosts some of Christianity's holiest sites. Until the mid-twentieth century most of the city's residents were Christian. In the past several decades however, Muslims have come to form the majority of the population. Against this backdrop, Nazareth began to prepare for the millennium year, including the formulation of the 'Nazareth 2000' plan for tourism development in the city. Unfortunately, the city's numerous complexities rapidly surfaced, with one of the most prominent examples being the bitter struggle around the city's newly planned main square. This paper examines tourism development for the city in conditions of such cultural conflict.*

**Key words:** cultural conflict, tourism development, Nazareth.

### Introduction

One of the key issues in contemporary cultural geography is the relationship between conservation of the urban environment, and destruction of the old fabric, based on economic considerations. In recent years there has been an increased recognition of the need for this relationship to be balanced in order for cultural values to be preserved in the long term, on the one hand, while on the other hand, allowing for economic activity (such as tourism) to continue at those sites, based on appropriate development conditions. Another

key question is how to arrive at a consensual representation of the cultural landscape through conservation and development if the area is one riven by cultural conflict (Altinay and Bowen 2006; Bahaire and Elliott-White 1999; O'Neill and Fitz 1996).

The Holy Land is a unique case illustrating multiple conflicts. Over the generations, the three monotheistic religions have played a central role in giving the region its character, having turned it into a sacred area and focus of pilgrimage, thereby imbuing it with much diverse cultural and value-oriented significance. Some sites in the Holy Land are holy to more

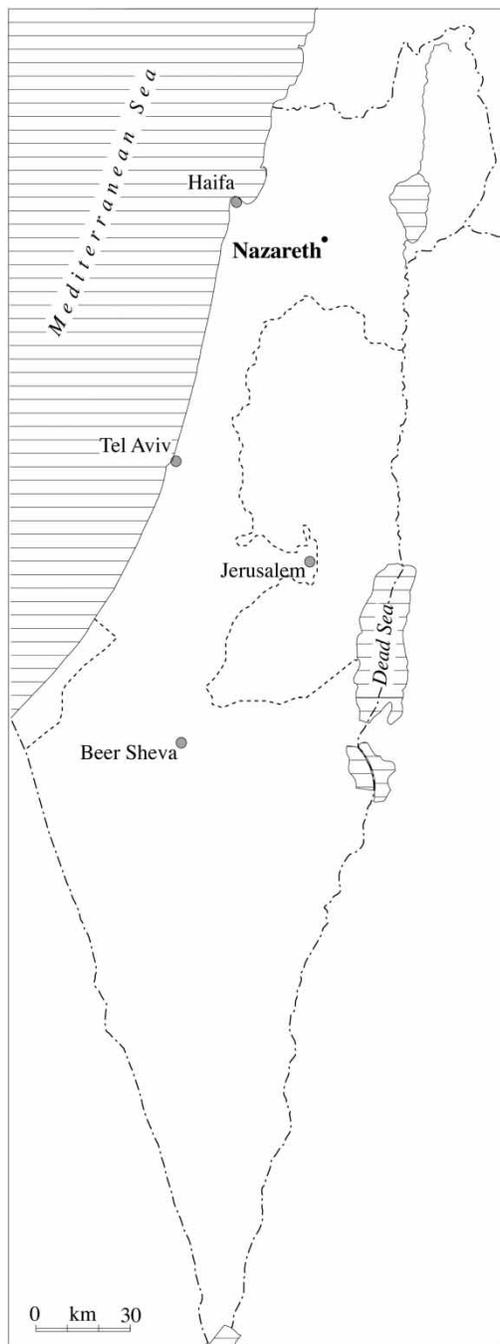


Figure 1 Location map of Nazareth within Israel.

than one religion, in some instances even to all three, a situation which, on more than one occasion, has created and continues to create tension between the different religions. In the modern era, as we become more preoccupied with the conservation and development of the Holy Land's landscapes for different purposes—including tourism—dilemmas and tensions have emerged, pertaining to the religious and nationalist significance of activity in this area.

One of the most outstanding examples of this tension in Israel's cultural landscape is the events that have unfolded over the last decade in Nazareth (Figure 1), the place where Joseph and Mary resided, according to Christian tradition. It is in Nazareth that Mary learned of her pregnancy—the Annunciation (Luke I), and it is the place where Jesus grew up and was educated. The town also served as the base for his activities in the Galilee.

Nazareth's complexity is considerable. The State of Israel, most of whose citizens are Jewish, includes an Arab minority accounting for some 20 per cent of the country's total population. Nazareth is the country's largest Arab city and is considered the capital of Israel's Arab population, with almost 64,000 residents (State of Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2005). Until the mid-twentieth century, most of its residents were Christian (Chad 1995). For the past several decades, however, it has had a Muslim majority, with the Christian population steadily declining (Figure 2). It is against this backdrop that the Nazareth Municipality began to prepare for the Millennium Year (2000). The change of government in Israel in 1992 and the election of Yitzhak Rabin served to transform this project, which had started as a modest initiative of the Nazareth Municipality, into a leading national project sponsored by the State of Israel. The complexity of the city soon surfaced, however. One of the most outstanding examples was the

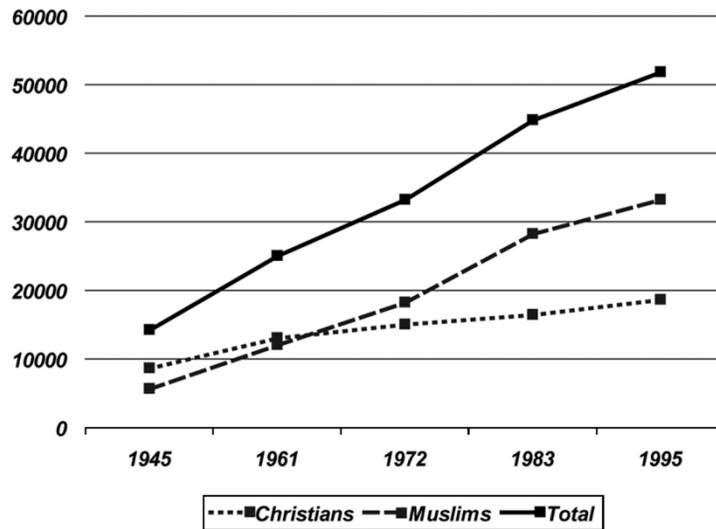


Figure 2 Population in Nazareth 1945–1995.

bitter dispute that erupted during this period over the character of the city's main square, which soon came to be referred to as the Shihab-a-Din compound by certain Muslim leaders.

In what follows, we will begin by discussing some of the theoretical ideas underpinning this study, share a brief synopsis of the methodology for the study, and introduce the background to tourism development in Nazareth in recent years. The dispute over the city square will then be discussed, followed by an assessment of the degree of success in the tourism project. We will then suggest how tourism development should be addressed in conditions of cultural conflict.

### Theoretical framework: conservation and development in areas of conflict

Over the last several decades, conservation has become part of a comprehensive socio-cultural approach that gives priority to environmental quality, quality of life, continuity and stability.

The concept of sustainable development has become prominent, emphasizing protection alongside a desire not to damage natural resources, and preserving them for future generations, even at the cost of not developing an area for tourist purposes (Coccosis and Nijkamp 1995; Eagles, McCool and Haynes 2002; Hall and Lew 1998). Nevertheless, the need to integrate and find the balance between conservation and sustainable development has been recognized (Ashworth and Larkham 1994; Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000). However, the new attitude of viewing areas and artifacts for conservation as economic assets serves to emphasize the need for economic strategies for development. Indeed, in regards to the new economical role that was given to conservation projects, there is now increased recognition of the need for a business approach in dealing with conservation and heritage (Aas, Ladkin and Fletcher 2005; Garrod and Fyall 2000).

In certain cases, however, the economic aspects are overshadowed by the question of what heritage precisely should be saved and

for whom it should be conserved (Ashworth 1997; Graham, Ashworth and Tunbridge 2000; Smith 2006; Timothy and Boyd 2003; Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996). The discussion of such issues has led to the recognition that there is room to examine the desires and preferences of the local population, to the extent of involving the public in the decision-making process (Linehan and Gross 1998; Vos and Meeke 1999). Later studies even call for the involvement of the population in the planning process itself and emphasize the success of tourism development, based on the extent of such involvement in the decision-making process (Amit-Cohen 2002; Hampton 2005; Reid, Heather and George 2004).

Public involvement in the process, starting with the planning, conservation and development stages, is obviously complicated in cases where the site in question is mired in some form of cultural conflict. Although certain studies have addressed this dilemma, they referred primarily to currently unsettled areas where activity had taken place in the past, such as the concentration camps in Europe (Ashworth 2003; Krakover 2005). By contrast, a relatively small number of studies have actually examined areas where cultural conflict is further complicated by the process of conservation and its negotiation with development projects. One example is a study that examined tourism development in Nazareth during the period between October and November 1999 from the perspective of the local population, and recommended that there should be greater involvement by the different elements of the population in the planning, conservation and development process (Uriely, Israeli and Reichal 2003).

This paper also addresses the place of the host population in the tourism industry, and particularly its response to tourism

development. Studies of this kind began with Doxey's famous model which indicates four stages in the development of the attitude of the local population to tourism development around it (Doxey 1975): the euphoria stage, when local residents display enthusiasm for tourism development and willingly accept the tourists; the apathy stage, when the local population has become accustomed to tourism development and the profits it generates, with enthusiasm declining as local residents view the tourists exclusively as a profit target; the annoyance stage, as tourism development peaks and any further development causes suffering and inconvenience for local residents; and finally, the antagonism stage, reflected in overt impatience by local residents who regard the tourists as responsible for interfering with their way of life. In recent years, a number of studies have shown that the relationship between tourism development and the response of the local population does not necessarily lead to such negative results but is dependent upon an entire range of variables and features: the nature of the tourists and the nature of their economic activity, the nature of the host community and the different groups it comprises, as well as the nature of the actual tourism site (Haralambopoulos and Pizam 1996; Jeong and Santos 2004; Schroder 1996).

This paper will discuss the issues of conservation, development and planning in 'Nazareth 2000' by focusing on the conflicts over the city square, as well as examine the attitude of tourists and local population towards these issues in 2000 and 2005. The following context must be borne in mind in our discussion: (1) the area is populated by the Muslim and Christian Arab minorities in Israel; (2) there is potential for conflict between these minorities and central government as a result of differences in cultural,

nationalist and religious background; (3) central government has an interest in tourism development of the area due to nationalist, political, economic and other reasons; (4) in view of all of the above, a decade after a major development plan for the town was initiated and five years after the Millennium Year, what can be learned about the state of tourism in Nazareth?

### **Tourism development in Nazareth**

There are a number of sites in Israel that display a unique combination between cultural conflict, on the one hand—usually for religious and/or nationalist reasons—and a location that serves as an attraction for diverse interest groups, on the other hand. In the case of Nazareth, as early as in 1991, the municipality launched an initiative for the Millennium events—spearheaded by Mayor Tawfiq Zayyad—to turn Nazareth from a tourism site to a tourism city. This coincided with the desire of the Rabin government, which came to power in 1992, to demonstrate a change in its approach and its treatment of Israel's Arab population. Equally significant is the State's wish to strengthen Nazareth's Christian identity, in order to offset the burgeoning sense of Muslim identity among the country's Arabs. Either way, the 'Nazareth 2000' project converged with nationalistic and local political motives, with the city's heritage sites serving to promote power and interests, all through tourism conservation and development.

Nazareth is one of Christianity's holiest locations. The sites in the town symbolize emotionally charged events in the early history of Christianity. The Franciscan Church of the Annunciation, which is one of the most sacred sites in the Christian world, is a Catholic church built in accordance with a particular

Christian tradition, on the site of the house where Mary lived and where the angel Gabriel appeared and informed her that she would give birth to Jesus. The adjacent Church of St. Joseph marks the site of the carpenter Joseph's workshop. Mary's Well is where, according to other Christian traditions, the Annunciation took place, an event memorialized by the Greek Orthodox with the neighboring Church of St. Gabriel. The Synagogue Church, today a Greek Catholic church is, according to tradition, the site of the synagogue where Jesus prayed, and the Mount of the Precipice is, according to the New Testament, where residents of Nazareth attempted to throw Jesus into the abyss after the storm he raised in the synagogue (Colbi 1983).

Nazareth's centrality is reflected in the number of tourists who visited Nazareth in 2000 (prior to the outbreak of the Al Aqsa Intifada), which reached 850,000 out of the two and half million tourists who visited Israel that year (Israeli Ministry of Tourism 2001). Notwithstanding Nazareth's centrality in the Christian world and the fact that it is one of Israel's most important historical cities, most visitors tend to spend only a few hours in the town and do not sleep or eat in the town at all (Shoval 2000). Most visitors to Nazareth focus on just two or three sites, and their visit usually ends within a few short hours. Since the attractiveness of Nazareth as a pilgrimage site is obvious, the question that must be asked is why tourism in the town is not in a healthier state. It has been suggested that Israeli government policy has failed to adequately develop physical infrastructure—transportation facilities in particular—to and within the city, and that there has been no adequate development of the necessary tourism services. Government incentives in the area have been discriminatory, encouraging the development of tourism in Tiberias, a nearby town, to which

tour operators and travel agents direct the tourists, particularly with respect to accommodation and other tourism services. It can further be claimed that even in the Ottoman period, pilgrims and tourism never played a significant role in Nazareth's economy, largely due to the town's isolated geographic location and the absence of an adjacent large city with which economic and other reciprocal relations could be maintained, as in the case of Bethlehem and Jerusalem. All these hindered the significant development of tourism services in Nazareth (Cohen-Hattab 2000).

The Millennium Year therefore seemed to present a singular opportunity for Nazareth to recover from this difficult situation through planned investments and large numbers of Christian pilgrims who were expected to visit the Holy Land (Ben-Zaken 1997). During the 1990s, the authorities in Israel decided to take several steps to improve the town in preparation for the year 2000. In 1994 the government of Israel decided to grant Nazareth the status of 'Development Area A', which meant that the city would receive an extra injection of funds. In 1996, the government approved the 'Nazareth 2000' program as a national project, pursuant to which the government undertook to invest \$120 million in municipal infrastructures in preparation for the year 2000 (Shoval 2000). The preparation of a new urban plan for Nazareth began in 1997, under the direction of architect Arie Rahamimoff. The plan was completed at the end of 1998 and focused on tourism as a lever for the development of Nazareth. This approach was reflected in greater detail in the 'Nazareth 2000' plan (Rahamimoff 1999).

In practice, from the second half of the 1990s and thereafter, various activities were undertaken in Nazareth as part of the 'Nazareth 2000' project to physically rehabilitate the town. The project resulted in

considerable rehabilitation of the city's historic center, particularly the area of the old market and Paulus VI Street, the construction of three new hotels managed by international chains, the refurbishment of several existing hotels and improvements to the city's transport infrastructure, as well as the launching of several local economic initiatives (Figure 3). In preparation for the Millennium Year events, Nazareth received considerable local and international media coverage, and it seemed that there was now national and international awareness of the town as one of the most important tourism sites to be visited in Israel in the year 2000 (Shoval and Cohen-Hattab 2000).

### **Christians and Muslims in Nazareth—the City Square dispute**

In 1995, the 'Nazareth 2000' project planners envisaged a broad city square at the foot of the Church of the Annunciation. This square was to be sufficiently expansive so as to allow the thousands of pilgrims visiting the site to organize, rest, visit the restrooms and the like. The planners even called the proposed square 'the Piazza San Marco of Nazareth' (Rahamimoff 1999). To this end, the public elementary school that was previously located in the area was demolished in 1996. The creation of the City Square, however, served to upset the longstanding balance that had existed on the site, causing the emergence of a dispute between certain Islamic factions, various Christian entities, the Israeli government (representing the Jewish state) and the Nazareth Municipality which then, as now, was predominantly controlled by the Israeli Communist party.

Situated behind the school was a tomb which, according to Muslim tradition, was

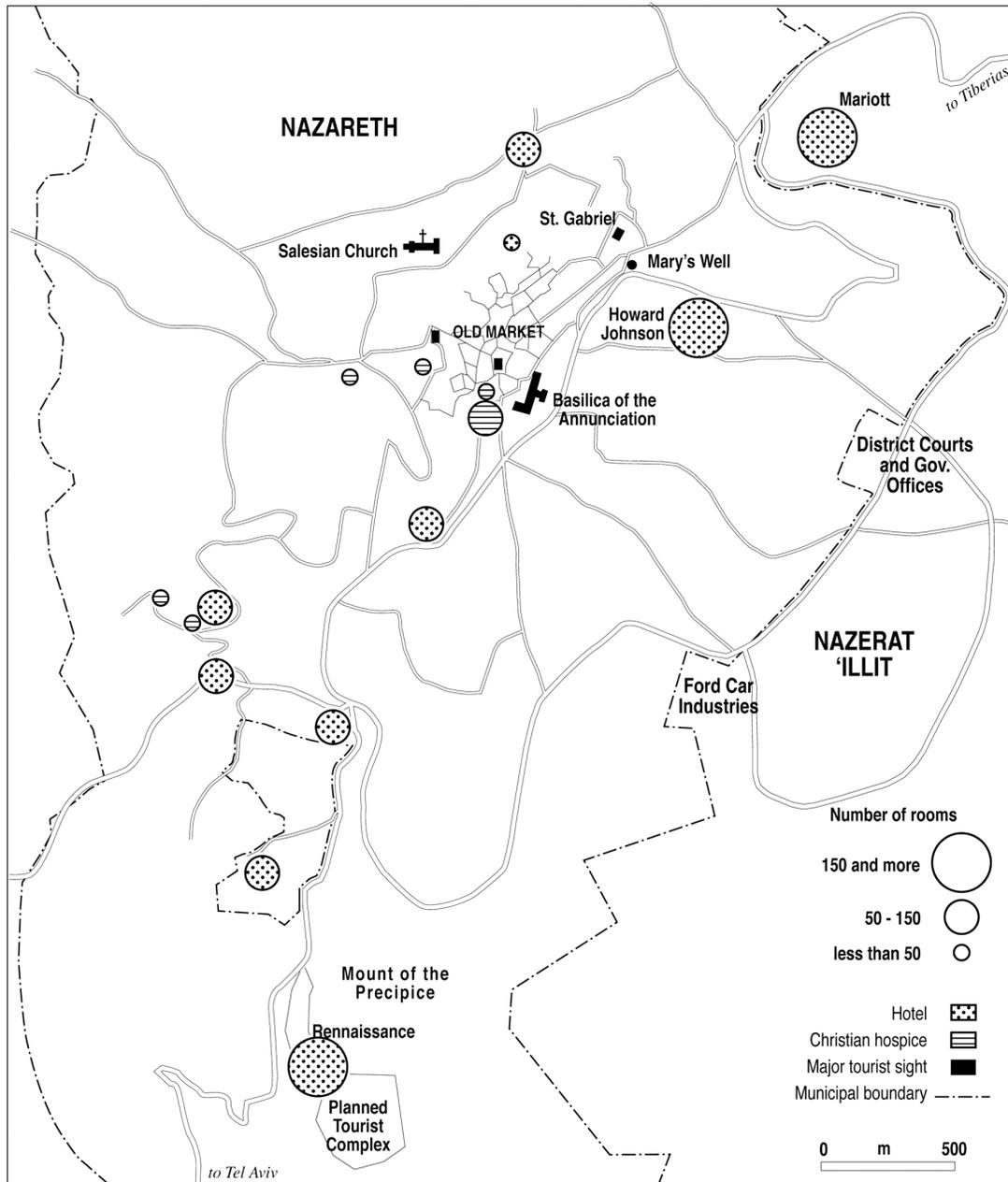


Figure 3 Major tourist sights and accommodation in Nazareth (2000).

that of Shihab a-Din, nephew of Salah a-Din Al Ayoubi, who freed Jerusalem from the Crusaders (Figure 4). The destruction of the school, and particularly the plans to

construct a plaza on the site, highlighted the position of this tomb, which until then had not generated any particular interest among the Muslim population. On 21 December 1997,

dozens of Muslims congregated in the area below the Basilica of the Annunciation and declared the area Muslim territory. They erected a huge black tent to be used as a temporary mosque until the construction of a mosque named for Shihab a-Din on the site. The cornerstone for the permanent mosque was laid in November 1999. From that date on, all activity undertaken during this period as part of the 'Nazareth 2000' project was accompanied by echoes of the dispute between Muslims and Christians in the city, in what became known as the 'mosque of dispute'.

The eruption surrounding the mosque, like the further developments that accompanied this interfaith conflict, attracted considerable attention and interest in Israel and worldwide and particularly damaged the positive image that those involved in the tourism development of the city attempted to market. The widespread perception among the Israeli and global public was that this was the renewed beginning of a dispute between two religions due to construction in a particular area, as part of a struggle over religious prestige. The media even reported that the minaret of the mosque to be built on the site in the future would tower over the church, thus creating an impression of Muslim dominance in the Nazarene skyline. It was alleged that the events reflected an ongoing political struggle between Christians and Muslims in the city, and that the dispute over the construction of the mosque at the foot of the city's most important church was the climax of the process of converting Nazareth from a Christian city into a Muslim city. This process, it was claimed, was dictated and designed by politicians from the Islamic movement seeking to maximize their chances of election to the city council (Gal 1998; Has 2003a).

The political and socio-religious divide in Nazareth was expressed more sharply in

municipal elections that were held in 1998, which as expected was accompanied by the eruption of religious tensions between Christians and Muslims. The background to this episode was the struggle between the municipality, representing tourism development in the city (despite the fact that the planning and construction work was directed by a central government company), and the Islamic movement over the erection of the mosque in the city center beside the tomb of Shihab a-Din (see details in Table 1). The municipality asked that the area be left as a large square around the Basilica of the Annunciation as part of the 'Nazareth 2000' project for developing the market and the historic core, while the Islamic movement fought to erect a mosque on the site. Despite the conflicts, the incumbent Mayor Ramez Jeraisi managed to secure re-election for another term, but the Islamic movement also managed to secure ten out of nineteen council seats. This made it impossible to form a coalition for two years, thereby effectively paralyzing the work of the municipality (Israeli 2002; Khamaisi 2003). The struggle between the parties for control of the municipality increased religious tension in the town and in Easter 1999 clashes between Christians and Muslims in the city took place. Evidence of that tension may be seen in Figure 5, showing a sarcophagus on which the words 'Nazareth 2000' appear.

As a result of the clashes, the late chairman of the Palestinian Authority, Yasser Arafat, was approached by some of the local city leaders to help solve the dispute. The Israeli government did not like the idea of active involvement by an external power in what was considered an Israeli internal affair. As a result, each of the three governments in power in the years 1999–2001 appointed a different governmental commission to decide on the fate of the now famous square in Nazareth.

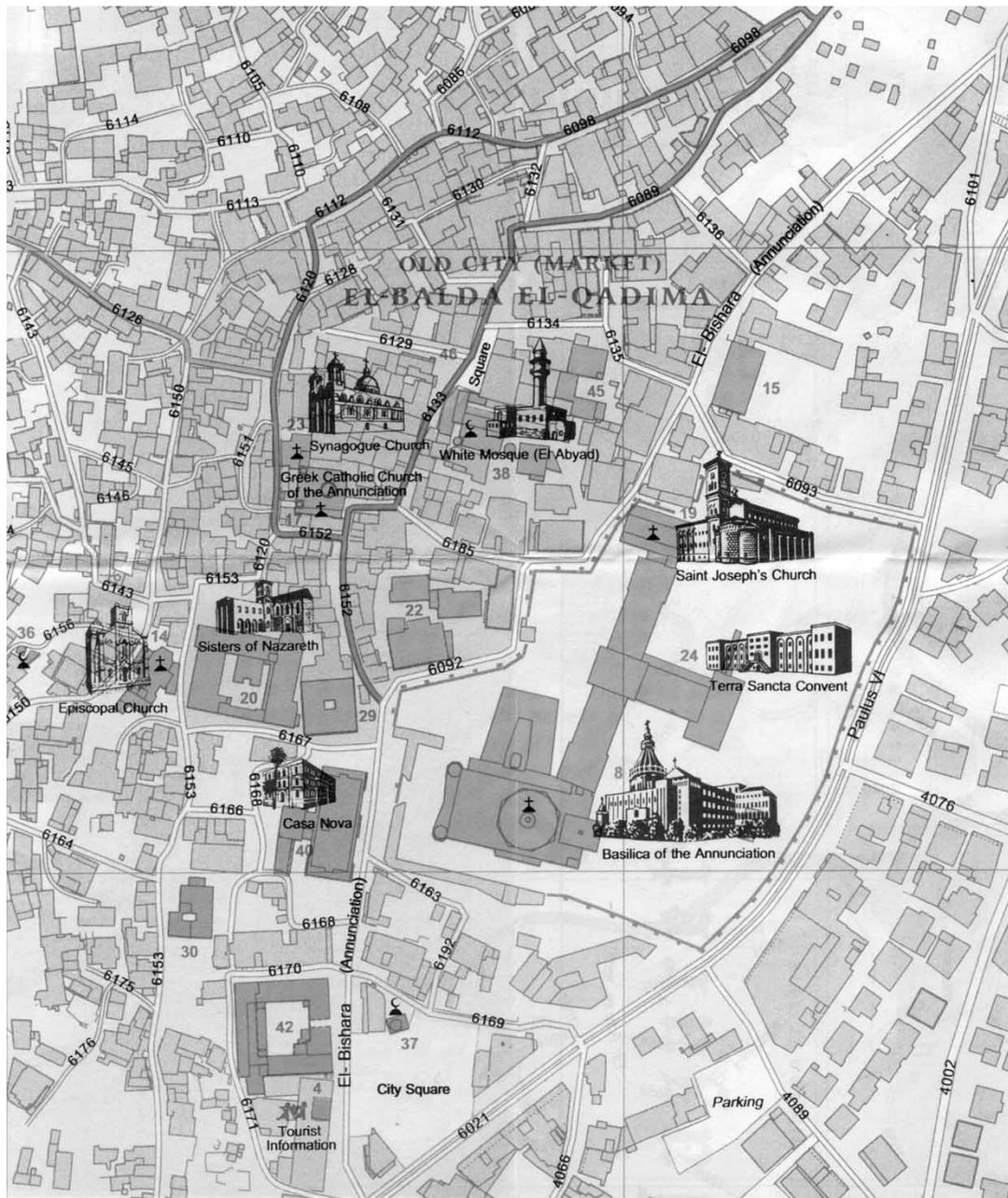


Figure 4 The location of the planned city square.

**Table 1** Development of the dispute over the City Square

Until 1995	An elementary school on the premises
1995	Plan presented for the creation of the 'City Square'
1996	The school is demolished
21 December 1997	Islamic movement erects a tent-mosque on the site
1998	Local elections create political deadlock
Easter 1999	Clashes between Christians and Muslims. Yasser Arafat is asked to help resolve the dispute
Summer 1999	First governmental commission (Katsav)
November 1999	Cornerstone laid for the mosque
2000	Second governmental commission (Ben-Ami)
2001–2002	Third governmental commission (Scharansky)
July 2003	Destruction of the foundations and the removal of the tent-mosque
November 2003	Mayor Jeraisi wins the local elections and manages to form a coalition
2004	Construction of the City Square begins after eight years

The first two governmental commissions recommended constructing a small mosque at the edge of the square. However, the third commission decided that a mosque should not be built. This decision cleared the way for the government to appeal to the courts in order to receive an approval to demolish the tent-mosque and the foundations of the permanent mosque. The main claim was that the building activity was done without any permit on a tract of land that was allocated for another use and owned by the central government and not the Islamic movement.

After some deliberations in the Israeli courts, the mosque was ultimately demolished on 1 July 2003. The actual demolition passed fairly quietly and with no incident (Has 2003b), and the incumbent Mayor Jeraisi even managed to win the local elections in 2003. However, the collateral damage from the episode was considerable. The long struggle, which included much negotiation and numerous arguments between the city's Muslims and Christians, drew in the Israeli judicial authorities and even caused Israel embarrassment when it elicited sharp criticism from the Vatican, numerous European states and the USA for failing to protect the interests of the Christian world in the Holy Land. These

all became an open wound accompanying Nazareth in the years preceding the Millennium events, and the Pope's visit to the Holy Land in honor of the Festival of the Annunciation in Nazareth (March 2000). For years later, Nazareth's image as a town sacred to the Christian world was also damaged. Instead of the town becoming a pearl of the Millennium Year events, tourists refrained from visiting Nazareth, which was seen as the site of bitter conflict between Christians and Muslims, thus contributing considerably to the lack of success of the city's tourism project (Kliot and Collins-Kreiner 2003).

### Assessment of the 'Nazareth 2000' project

Over the last five years two field studies were conducted in Nazareth: the first study during the last few weeks of 2000, to assess the state of tourism in Nazareth's historic core (Shoval and Cohen-Hattab 2000), and the second study in the summer of 2005 as a follow-up to the first. The key question of the second study was whether over a five-year perspective there was any evidence of change in tourism patterns in Nazareth (Cohen-Hattab 2005). The two studies adopted questionnaires and

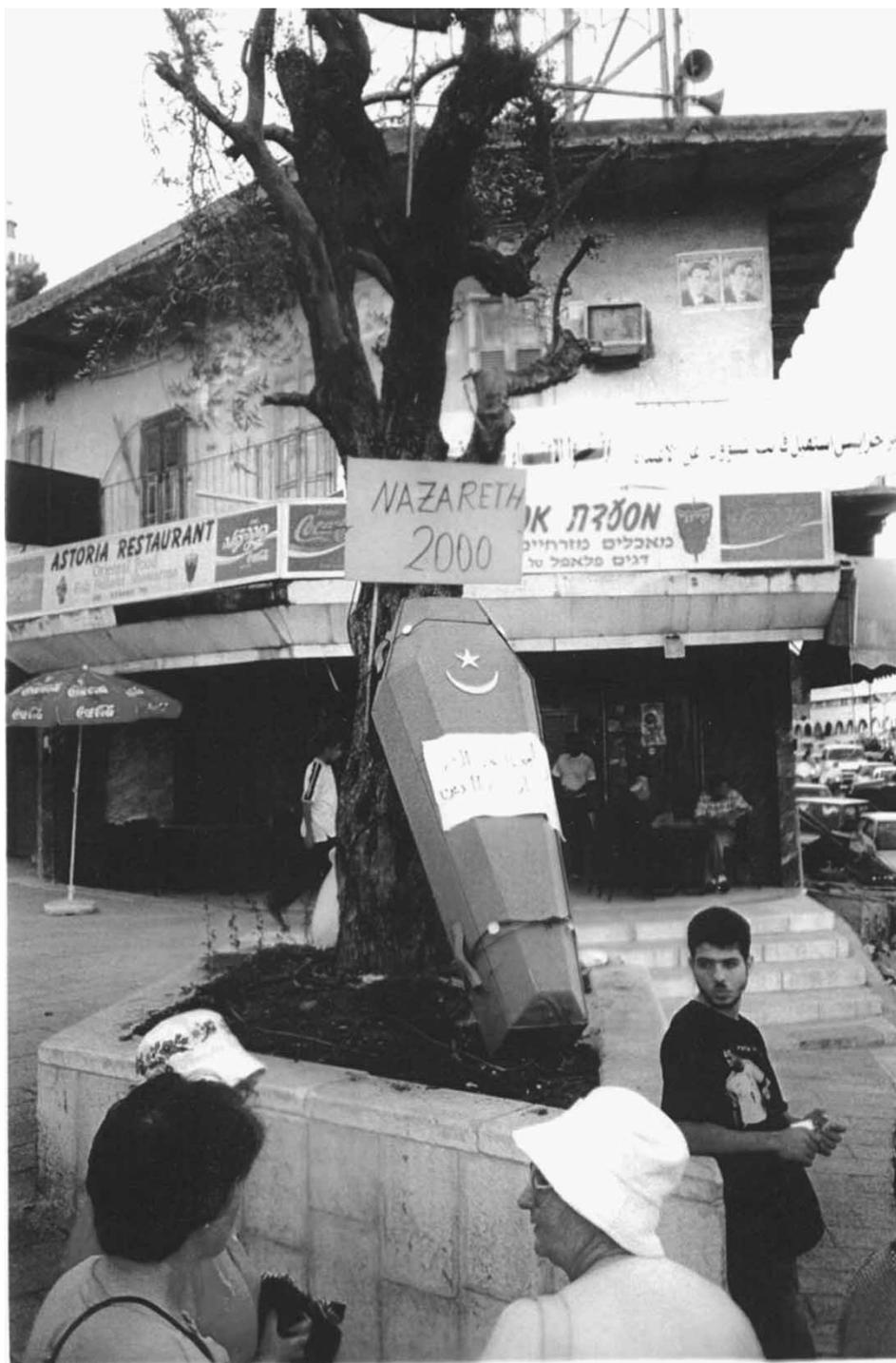


Figure 5 A sarcophagus with the words 'Nazareth 2000' in the site of the planned city square.

in-depth interviews among the various parties involved in tourism activity in the town, particularly the tourists (individuals as well as organized groups), local residents, local merchants, travel agents and agencies.

The 2000 study has been reported elsewhere in detail (Shoval and Cohen-Hattab 2000), and so we shall summarize the results here. In essence, it highlighted the fact that efforts undertaken to improve Nazareth's status and turn it into one of Israel's major attractions in preparation for that year were only partially successful.

In particular, while the project was underway, the economic activity in the market came to a virtual standstill, which paradoxically resulted in an accelerated decline of economic activity, particularly in the historic center. Moreover, it transpired that the actual project failed to change tourism patterns in Nazareth from both spatial and economic perspectives: tourist groups continued to visit the same two or three sites, scarcely looking at the old city and the market. Thus there was no change in the short stay of pilgrims in the city and, as in the past, their visit made almost no contribution to the city's economic activity. In other words, the pattern of activity by visitors to the city remained unchanged following the 'Nazareth 2000' project, and thus the city's facelift changed almost no aspects of economic and tourism activity (Shoval and Cohen-Hattab 2000).

The case of tourism development in Nazareth confirmed that physical development alone is inadequate in complex internal and external political conditions. In such instances cultural, social, political and other elements must also be taken into account in order to improve the chances of success. Development activity in Nazareth on the part of the Israeli development authorities was carried out principally for the benefit of Christian pilgrims expected to visit

the city in preparation for the Millennium Year. By contrast, almost no practical or declarative action was taken with the intention of involving the city's Muslim elements in the various plans. Thus for example, a local non-Christian project such as the municipal museum was not promoted. Nevertheless, the problems encountered in the 'Nazareth 2000' project were also connected to the failure of several national tourism efforts by the State of Israel prior to the year 2000, in particular the failure to complete transport infrastructures (such as the expansion of Ben Gurion Airport) and other service infrastructures that in any event, in retrospect, failed to create the necessary conditions for the arrival and stay of large numbers of tourists in Israel (Kliot and Collins-Kreiner 2003).

Insufficient attention in the 'Nazareth 2000' project was paid to the involvement of several important entities—such as the local population—in planning and implementation. Thus, the feeling was created that the project was designed to give precedence to visiting tourists over local residents, most of whom do not earn their livelihood from tourism. One example of this was the plan to turn Pope Paul VI Street, the town's main artery, into a one-way street for non-tourist traffic, while allowing the tourist buses to use this artery in both directions. This measure would have given priority in transportation to the tourists visiting the city at the expense of the local population. Consequently, and particularly since the initial stages of the project severely disrupted the daily routine of local residents and business owners, large sectors of the population were alienated and the project failed to gain the political support of local residents (Shoval 2000).

In 2005, a further study was conducted, the purpose of which was to evaluate the state of tourism in Nazareth using several follow-up surveys to those conducted at the end of

2000. The first survey that was undertaken among business owners in the town's historic core (the market) and along Nazareth's main street (Paulus VI Street) re-examined the state of commerce and involved a random sample of 80 businesses, twice as many as in 2000.

The picture that emerges of tourism-related commerce in Nazareth five years subsequent to the completion of the Nazareth 2000 project closely resembles the findings obtained in 2000. Six per cent of the stores specifically targeted tourists, usually engaged in the jewelry and souvenir business (in 2000 7 per cent of the stores were targeted at tourists). Tourists did not enter most of the stores and only 2.5 per cent of the stores were visited by more than 10 tourists a day. Almost 80 per cent of the stores were in no way connected with travel agencies or tour organizers and just 9 per cent of the storekeepers consider their present and future economic success to be dependent upon income from tourism. This picture underscores the lack of progress with respect to tourism-driven development, expressing in fact a stagnation of the market center relative to tourism activity in this area.

The second follow-up survey conducted in 2005 examined the consumer behavior of visitors to Nazareth's market ( $N = 63$ ) and it consisted of a variety of participants:<sup>1</sup> fourteen were Israeli tourists (22 per cent), twenty-two were tourists from Europe (35 per cent), twelve were tourists from Latin America (19 per cent), two were from North America (3 per cent), and thirteen were tourists from Asia (21 per cent). Twenty-two visitors (35 per cent) defined the main purpose of their visit as a tour of the market, seventeen (27 per cent) defined the main purpose of their visit as touring the White Mosque or the Synagogue Church, twenty-two visitors (35 per cent) defined the main purpose of their visit to the market as a transition point between different sites, and only two visitors

(3 per cent) stated that the main purpose of their visit to the market was for shopping. The figures therefore point to extremely weak demand by tourists for goods in the Nazareth market, to the extent that the market does not in fact constitute a shopping destination for tourists. Despite the physical rehabilitation of the market, there has been no dramatic change in the ability to attract tourists as compared to the period prior to the Nazareth 2000 project or during the five-year period since its conclusion (Cohen-Hattab 2005).

At this point it is worth noting that the Al Aqsa Intifada broke out toward the end of the year 2000. From that date onward the number of incoming tourists to Israel fell dramatically. This decline continued until 2002, when 860,000 foreign tourists visited Israel, as compared with 2.7 million in 2000. During the ensuing two years, tourism began to recover with the number of tourists almost doubling, so that in 2003 1.5 million incoming tourists were recorded and in 2005 this trend intensified with 2 million tourists visiting Israel (State of Israel Central Bureau of Statistics 2005). The 2005 study showed that despite the positive national trend, tourism patterns in Nazareth did not change and remained as they had been prior to the 'Nazareth 2000' project in the year 2000. It follows that the unstable security situation in Israel should not be considered a significant indicator in discussing tourism development in Nazareth.

### **Tourism development in conditions of cultural conflict**

The events surrounding Nazareth 2000 may be summarized as follows:

- Stage 1: a location in which there is political, religious and nationalist tensions

is found to be suitable for tourism development.

- Stage 2: central government, identified with a particular political and nationalist trend, decides on the direction of the development, resulting in dissatisfaction on the part of the local population, which is not involved in the decision-making process.
- Stage 3: the lack of involvement and temporary damage to the economy due to the development activity results in local antagonism from the outset.
- Stage 4: when the physical development is completed, the location's previous problems with respect to tourism development remain and no real change has been achieved.

In short, our case study presents the response of the local population to tourism development by top-down government initiatives, without adequate involvement of the residents or their representatives. The conditions of political tension and conflict were almost totally ignored.

In conditions of religious, political, and socio-economic diversity and conflict, tourism development needs to be fully cognizant of the tensions, and to factor them into any development and promotion plans. This will help resolve even a small proportion of the conflicts arising from the different backgrounds and orientations of the various interest groups. Thus, in Nazareth, the more effective strategy would be to recognize the differences between the social and religious groups, and establish common ground between them to ensure that development in the Nazareth area is properly managed. Further, under conditions of cultural conflict, particular importance must be attached to encouraging and providing incentives for local development by local grassroots initiatives. The increasing number of local initiatives

constitutes one of the most important keys to successful development, since such initiatives increase the involvement of the local population, while helping to develop the local economy, all based on interests shared by the local population and the development entities.

In fact, in recent years, several new local initiatives have been observed in the old city, which were not established as part of the 'Nazareth 2000' project, but which have very good potential. These include the establishment of a hostel in the 150-year-old home of a wealthy family, a classy restaurant in a similar house, a theater from a nearby town which also began to operate from an old house, a cultural center, as well as the discovery and display of an ancient public bath house in a souvenir shop as a private initiative by the store owner. Other possibilities exist. For example, one of the most unique but underdeveloped possibilities for Nazareth could be the integration of tourist routes that include visits to the numerous decorative ceilings that adorn a great many mansions that are spread all over the historic town. The majority of these ceilings are located in private homes in all parts of the town. Getting local residents involved in preserving and developing these ceilings for visitors could provide an excellent example of the way to involve the local population in one particular aspect of tourism development, with considerable growth potential. This is not without problems though, since growing numbers of visits by tourists to private homes in a relatively small historic city could turn quickly into a major problem of privacy for the local population, especially for residents that are not involved in the tourism business and will probably not benefit at all from this activity.

Israel's case is unique in the role played by the three religions in shaping the landscape and the consequent need to take into

consideration the balance of power between the religions over time. A discussion of Israel's cultural landscape must pay particular attention to Israel's Arab sector as a unique environment, against the backdrop of the Zionist discourse in Israeli culture. Tourism development and conservation, and their consequent reshaping of the cultural landscape, must serve as bridges between groups with deep religious disputes.

Offering incentives for local involvement in shaping the local cultural landscape, particularly in areas of distinct conflict, is one of the keys to relieving even part of the tension. The case of Nazareth therefore illustrates that in areas that are characterized by different types of conflict, questions concerning conservation and development and the part played by the population in all these are value-oriented questions of the first order that relate to the location's cultural geography. In the relationship between the State of Israel and its Arab population, the issue of tourism development and the shaping of the cultural landscape in this context can serve as a compass through which one of the most important bridges between the State and its Arab population can be laid.

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### Note

- 1 The survey took place on five different days in during March to May 2005. Two of the sample days took place on weekends in order to make it more representative,

since Israeli visitors are more abundant on weekends while the international visitors do not have any specific pattern in relation to the day of the week. In each of the days a random sample of visitors to the market that had a different appearance than the local population were approached as they left the premises of the market. The relatively low number of respondents on each day reflects the low interest of tourists to Nazareth to visit sites other than the Basilica of the Annunciation. The survey has an over-representation of tourists from Asia and an under-representation of North American visitors, however, in terms of religious affiliations the survey represents the main trends for incoming tourists to Israel.

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### Abstract translations

*Le développement du tourisme et le conflit culturel: le cas de «Nazareth 2000»*

Les questions liées à la conservation et au développement sont d'une grande complexité dans les régions marquées par des conflits d'ordre politique, national, culturel ou religieux. L'un des exemples les plus frappants de cette tension est visible dans les événements qui se sont succédés au cours des dix dernières années à Nazareth, ville abritant les plus grands lieux sacrés de la chrétienté. La plupart des résidents de la ville étaient jusqu'au milieu du vingtième siècle de confession chrétienne. Toutefois, dans les dernières décennies, la majorité de la population est composé de Musulmans. C'est dans ce contexte que Nazareth préparait les célébrations marquant l'arrivée du nouveau millénaire, dont l'élaboration de son plan de développement touristique «Nazareth 2000». Les nombreuses complexités qui caractérisent la ville sont malheureusement apparues, parmi les plus frappantes est le

cas de l'aménagement de la place centrale qui a suscité un âpre conflit. Cet article étudie le développement du tourisme par une ville en prise avec un conflit culture

**Mots-clefs:** conflit culturel, développement du tourisme, Nazareth.

*Desarrollo turístico y conflicto cultural: el caso de 'Nazaret 2000'*

En zonas caracterizadas por sus conflictos políticos, nacionales, culturales y religiosos, cuestiones de conservación y desarrollo quedan muy compejas. Un ejemplo de esta tensión es evidente en los acontecimientos que han tenido lugar durante la última decada en la ciudad de Nazaret, lugar de algunos de los sitios más sagrados del cristianismo. Hasta mediados del siglo veinte, la mayor parte de los habitantes de la ciudad eran cristianos. Sin embargo, durante las últimas décadas, los musulmanes han llegado a constituir la mayoría de la población. Contra este escenario, la ciudad de Nazaret empezó a prepararse para el año milenario, planes que incluyeron la formulación del plan 'Nazaret 2000' para el desarrollo turístico de la ciudad. Desafortunadamente, las muchas complejidades de la ciudad surgieron rápidamente, uno de los más importantes ejemplos siendo la lucha sobre la nueva plaza mayor planeada para la ciudad. Este papel examina el desarrollo de turismo para la ciudad dentro de estas condiciones de conflicto cultural.

**Palabras claves:** conflicto cultural, desarrollo turístico, Nazaret.