A SHAYKH'S PORTRAIT

IMAGES AND TRIBAL HISTORY AMONGST BEDOUIN IN THE NEGEV

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This paper explores the value of images for Bedouin historicity associated with genealogical and tribal history in Israel's Negev Desert. It is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted between 2011 and 2013 amongst several prominent lineages (*'a'ilat*), including the al-Huzayyil, exploring the nature of history-making in their society and the value of images as evidence for these endeavours. This paper describes one case study generated during this research; the social biography of an old photograph of Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil II originally presented in 'Arif al-'Arif's (1944) *Bedouin, Love, Law, and Legend* and currently circulating in the Negev amongst the al-Huzayyil lineage. By tracing the image's unique material and digital travels between websites, family albums and local archives, it details the ways in which this photographic image has shaped the al-Huzayyil's own tribal history and its dissemination amongst members and outsiders.[1]

The paper is split into four sections. It begins by describing the Bedouin population in the Negev and scholastic treatments of local memory in this society. This first section argues that studies examining Bedouin memory practices (see Abu Rabia 2008; Hall 2014; Yiftachel 2009) have yet to fully explore members' local historicity associated with genealogical and tribal lineage histories. Moreover, they solely focus on oral

practices and, consequently, overlook the value of evidentiary materials such as photographic images for these enterprises. The second section explores the unique nature of the Bedouin ancestral past in the Negev. It also describes the social biography approach used to detail the material and digital circulations of Shaykh Salman II's image in various social settings. The third section documents the image's varied photographic and digital appropriations for the creation of tribal history by al-Huzayyil members amidst Orientalist and national characterizations of Negev Bedouin society created over the last century. The fourth section concludes with an analysis of the image's poly-mediations (Madianou and Miller 2011) with oral and text-based enterprises and its local value as mediated evidence of tribal histories amongst Bedouin in southern Israel.

I Bedouin in the Negev and memory studies

With the phrase 'Bedouin in the Negev' I refer to Bedouin citizens living in southern Israel, frequently referred to as the 'Negev Bedouin' — a once pastoral nomadic people who currently live in the Negev Desert. Between the fourteenth and nineteenth centuries, this population travelled from Arabia to the Negev (Bailey 1985), where they conducted small migrations but also farmed land on the Beersheba Plain. During this period, the Ottoman Empire (1516–1922) governed the region but largely left the Bedouin population 'to their own devices' (Deringil 2003). In the mid-nineteenth century, Sultan Abdulmecid I created the *Tanzimat*,[2] which in part systemized government rule over Bedouin residing in the Empire's peripheral Negev district. In 1917, they

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1 Gideon Kressel (1996) argues that tribalism in the Negev connects people by a series of common ancestors. For him, tribalism 'denotes a strong in-group loyalty, sentimental attachment to one's own group and advocacy of the tribal way of life' (Kressel 1996:130). This paper argues that tribalism in the Negev is also characterized by relational affiliations whereby members strategically place themselves in relation to others by 'acting in the name of' tribal namesakes to which they are associated for social, political, and economic interests. Today, the prevalent tribalisms in the Negev focus on tribal confederations (*gaba'il*) and lineages (*'a'ilat*).

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2 The Tanzimat (Turkish —'reorganization') was a period of reformation (1839–76).

proceeded to formalize tribal boundaries in Negev and officially recognized several tribal confederations (*gabila*, pl. *gaba'il*) residing there (Abu Rabia 2001).[3]

After the First World War Bedouin in the Negev became subjects of the British Empire. Between 1922 and 1948, British officials created surveys distinguishing the demographic into narrower administrative units, also labelled 'tribes', for taxation and governance purposes (Marx 1967). These included customary sub-confederations (*saff*) and tribes (*'ashira*, pl. *'asha'ir*) (al-Arif 1934). Officials carried out a census that estimated that 65,000 Bedouin lived in Palestine between 1922 and 1931. They also produced detailed maps, such as the Palestinian Tent Survey (1946), indicating Bedouin residence in the Negev. In addition to these, 'Arif al-'Arif, Beersheba's district officer (1929–39), wrote extensively about Bedouin society, cumulating into a series of books. While noting tribal histories and namesakes, his writings reflected urban Palestinian and British sentiments at the time and presented the population as an exotic tribal people (Likhovski 2006).

After the Second World War the United Nations Resolution of 1947 marked the end of the Mandate, and Palestine was divided into two states, one for the Jewish and one for the Arabs. This declaration was rejected by both parties, and eventually led to the Israeli-Arab War in mid-May 1948 (also known in Arabic as the catastrophe or *Nakba*). According to Benny Morris (1987), an estimated 700,000 Palestinians were forcibly expelled or voluntarily fled to Jordan, Lebanon or Egypt. The majority of members from the Tiyaha did not leave the Negev region and now account for most of the Bedouin population there. From Emanuel Marx's (1967) research, the total number of Bedouin in southern Israel before the 1948 war was estimated at 60,000–90,000. After the war, only 11,000 stayed in the country to become Israeli citizens (Marx 1967).

Between 1949 and 1954 the Israeli state allowed Bedouin members to travel to Sinai and Jordan to reunite with their relatives (Marx 1967). Other extended families or lineages (*'a'ilat*) purposely stayed on their Negev properties in order to protect their land rights. Those remaining inside the 1949 Armistice boundaries were required to register or affiliate with one of the state-created tribal units (Hebrew – *shevet*, pl. *shevatim*) and relocate to a reservation (Arabic – *Siyag*) controlled by Israel's Military Administration (1949–66) (Marx 1967; Randolph 1963). In addition, the state assigned 'official' shaykhs to each *shevet* who served as the main administrative leaders through which the state governed the population. By the end of the 1960s, the state referred to Bedouin living in and around Beersheba as the 'Bedouin of the Negev'.

The government formalized the acquisition of Bedouin lands in the Negev with the 1950 Absentees' Property Law (Yiftachel 2003). In it, the state declared that the majority of the Bedouin population had voluntarily fled the Negev during the 1948 war and thus abandoned their customary land holdings in Israel. The state could also appropriate land from those that remained in the region but had not registered their property with the Ottomans or British authorities (Yiftachel 2003). Finally, according to the new law, the state could take possession of any land if officials considered it to be uncultivated (*mawat*) (Kram 2013). By 1967, Bedouin members

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3 Ottoman administrators identified eight main confederations with established territory in the district: Tarabin, Tiyaha, 'Azazmah, Ḥanajrah, Jubarat, Sa'idin, Aḥewat, and Jahalin (al-'Arif 1934). Of these confederations, the Tarabin and Tiyaha were the largest. Today, however, these tribal affiliations have long ceased to have any political autonomy in southern Israel (Parizot 2001).

lost approximately ninety-five per cent of their traditional land holdings to Israel (Maddrell 1990).

Upon dissolution of Israel's Military Administration in 1966, the government took up an urbanization strategy to encourage families to relocate to state-built townships from their villages (Hebrew – *pezurah*) in the *Siyag*. Israel's Housing Ministry built the first town, Tel as-Sab', in 1966 and Rahat in 1972. Over the last twenty years, the state has gone on to build several other towns.[4] According to the Negev Co-existence Forum (NCF) (2014), over half of the Bedouin population in the Negev (110,000) today live in these towns. The remaining members, approximately 100,000 people, live in what has been labelled the 'unrecognized villages' (NCF 2014). According to Israel's 1965 Planning and Construction Law, these villages are illegal because the state will not officially recognize Bedouin homesteads that existed before 1948 or were established by members during the Military Administration. Because of their illegality, the state distributes arbitrary eviction orders and, if not dismantled by residents, the state forcibly demolishes homesteads with bulldozers.

Throughout the twentieth century, anthropological and political studies have explored the changing nature of Bedouin tribes in the Negev (Marx 1967; Randolph 1963), the transformation of their economic practices (Abu Rabia 1999) and ethnic-minority politics and urbanization in Israel (Jakubowska 1985; Yiftachel 1999). Scholarship has critiqued apolitical approaches to Negev Bedouin historiography (Nasasra 2010), highlighted local agency and identity (Dinero 2004), countered state representations of members as passive

traditionalists (Hall 2014) and noted their differences and similarities with other Palestinian populations (Nasasra *et al.* 2015).[5] Most recently, studies have also examined memory practices in this society (see Abu Rabia 2008; Hall 2014; Nasasra *et al.* 2015; Yiftachel 2009).

According to this literature Bedouin members are 'cultivating their collective memories as a foundation of rebuilding their identity' (Yiftachel 2009:250) by preserving stories about the shaykh's rule, creating shared Islamic heritage and recording Palestinian remembrances of the *Nakba*. Of these, Yiftachel (2009:251) argued that articulations of the tribal past further 'split and weaken the Bedouin community, and enhances traditional, often chauvinist and reactionary elements....' of their society and support Orientalist claims that the population is nomadic and exotic. Because of these arguments, he and other scholars (see Hall 2014; Nasasra *et al.* 2015) frequently downgrade tribalism (*gabiliyya* and *'a'iliyya*) in members' representations of the past as they consider these reminiscences a hindrance to the Bedouin community's future in southern Israel (Le Febvre 2015).

In contrast, Safa Abu Rabia (2008:93–100) noted that not only are tribal relations central to members' local memories in the Negev but include bonding practices such as commemorative visitations, familial oral narratives and the preservation of old land titles and maps. While highlighting Bedouin remembrances of tribal events, figures and places through memory practices, she and others (Hall 2014; Yiftachel 2009) overlook how state-induced changes to Bedouin society since 1948 have coerced members to reconstruct local memories into official tribal histories in the Negev (Le Febvre 2015). While

4 Other towns include Shagib as-Salam in 1979 and Ksifa and 'Ar'arat an-Negev in 1982. The state formally recognised the villages of Lagiya in 1985, Hura in 1989, Bi'r Hadaj in 2004 and Tarabin al-Sane' in 2012.

5 See Le Febvre (2015) for a more detailed review of literature.

memories or 'living heritage' are inherently a part of Bedouin lives in the Negev, members are also strategically transforming their living memories into formal representations of the past (Nora 1989) in order to insert their perspectives into Israeli and Palestinian historiographies in the last decade.

In addition to approaching local historicity associated with genealogical and tribal histories as memory-making, most scholarship solely focuses on oral colloquies and written resources. By doing so, they overlook Bedouin members' use of diverse media such as photographic images to evidence and share local history projects in the Negev. These practices are indicative of the transformation of memory into history and the increased local value and presence of archival materials, libraries and collections, and online encyclopaedias in the society (Panitch 1996). As such, this paper aims to highlight the strategic roles of photographs and digital images for the transformation of local memories into parochial sources of history. It argues that these visual materials have come to evidence tribal history in the Negev, but do so in ways that contest or collaborate with popular Western, Israeli, Palestinian and local imaginings of their past and society.

II   Complicating tribal histories and the presence of images

Genealogical (*nasabi*) reckoning is one of the significant practices whereby Bedouin members conceptualize their past, 'roots' and internal status (*gima*) in the Negev (Le Febvre 2015). By establishing connections to bygone tribal confederations (*gaba'il*) and common apical ancestors, genealogies are a form of local history that communicates members' connections to past territories and events and people. Despite the originative nature of calling forth ancestry,

genealogies are not merely narratives of descent or corporate-ness – they are 'the logical and cultural ground for... [social] bonds to be formed, severed, or even recognised' (Dresch 1986:320). In the Negev, genealogies highlight pedigree, pastoral nomadic legacies, 'Bedouin authenticity' and 'inherited' higher status (Le Febvre 2015). Consequently genealogies also locally define who are 'true Bedouin' through members' associations with smaller tribal confederations (*gaba'il*) connected to the Bani Hilal namesake. In all, genealogies are representations of tribalism (*gabaliyya*), connecting people through their past confederations such as the Tiyaha.

Up until the early nineteenth century, oral references made to one's *gabila*, such as the Tiyaha or Tarabin, allowed members in the Negev to orient themselves with other Bedouin populations in the region (Parizot 2001). Today, however, when asked about the 'tribal history' of the Negev Bedouin, members continue to reference not only their *gabila* connections but also their customary lineages (*'a'ilat*) (Le Febvre 2015). This is because members conceive of their socio-political connections 'as branches from the same tree' and *gabila* namesakes provide 'shared' but fixed reference points for conceptualising the past amongst dozens contemporary lineages in the Negev (Le Febvre 2015). In all, local reconstructions of genealogies are the most ubiquitous form of historicity in the Middle East. Drawing on Andrew Shryock's (1997:314) notion of 'authenticating genealogy', this paper suggests common features of this practice amongst Bedouin in the Negev include: (1) legitimating contemporary status through local historical discourses; and (2) intensifying concern with proving descent and ancestry through archival documents.

Over the course of the mid-twentieth century, lineage (*'a'ilat*) histories also characterize a

'unique but competitive form of historicity in the Negev' (Le Febvre 2015:485). Unlike the homogenizing genealogies of confederations (*gabila*), these micro tribal histories distinguish group experiences during the 1948 war, military administration (1948–66) and urbanization (1967–96). Members perceive this post-1948 past in 'an entirely different manner: the past now meant the era before the establishment of the state for those who experienced it, as opposed to the […] new life of displacement from their land' (Abu Rabia 2008:101-103). In the wake of these particularisms, however, 'each tribe [not only] possesses its own history and truth' in the Negev (Abu Rabia 2008:101) but these histories are also indelibly caught up in accusations of lying (*kidhib*). This arises as members make historical claims pertaining to their tribal past (which may or may not be true) in order to rival other *'a'ilat* for status and resources that are validated by the fact that they have 'origins' (*'asil*) in the Negev (Le Febvre 2015).

Local historicity in the Negev today is significantly influenced by tribalism (*gabiliyya* and *'a'iliyya*) to communicate genealogical connections to past tribal confederations (*gaba'il*) and emphasize the historical particularisms of lineages (*'a'ilat*). Specifically, members' references of their tribal past highlight the influence of their agnates with state officials, chronicle the longevity of their group's socio-political power, prove their land ownership prior to the establishment of the Israeli state, and evidence their origins to the Negev from Arabia. Over the last decade, however, these expressions of 'historical capital' have become increasingly dependent on archival documentation in the form of media artefacts. Specifically, one's tribal past is no longer inherited in the Negev, an affirmation now must be supported by evidentiary materials contesting or collaborating local, Western, Israeli

and Palestinian imaginings of Bedouin history and society in southern Israel (Le Febvre 2015).

Up until the mid-twentieth century, Bedouin customarily relied on practices such as oral recitations to preserve their non-linear histories in the Negev, predominantly amongst themselves (Le Febvre 2015). In the wake of the population's improved literacy since the 1970s and access to the Internet in the 2000s, members have progressively developed inscription practices in order to interweave their distinct narratives into uniform chronologies typically presented to outsiders. Over the last twenty years in particular, members have utilized learned and web-based sources to call forth genealogies, validate lineage histories and counter accusations of lying, not only between themselves but also with the state. Today, these varied promulgations rely on diverse poly-mediations[6] (Madianou and Miller 2011) that increasingly include visual media in the form of photographic and digital images.

Cultural scholars and historians of the Middle East have noted the influence of photographic images amongst urbanites in cities such as Cairo (see Armbrust 2006; Gruder and Haugbølle 2013; Ryzova 2012). However, they have yet to account for these occurrences amongst populations residing the region's periphery. In the last twenty years, images have proliferated throughout the Middle East because of the mobile Internet, social media, and low-cost digital cameras. At the same time, websites such as Facebook are also facilitating the circulation and adaptation of images amongst people, irrespective of their locations and residences. While photographic images can still be found in their original physical

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6 It is argued that photographic images' ability to communicate messages are necessarily co-dependent on other modes of oral and textual communication or poly-media highlighting the connectivity of communication (Madianou and Miller 2011).

forms and sources, digital images are appearing and circulating on blogs, websites and Facebook (Gruder and Haugbølle 2013:xv).[7] Consequently, images are increasingly dislocated from their original material constraints and spatial contexts through photocopying and digitizing.

In order to account for these various productions and circulations in the Middle East, studies (see Gruder and Haugbølle 2013) emphasize images' polysemous natures as 'floating signs' and Orientalist iconography. Specifically, they highlight the fact that an image's meaning is continually (re)coded as it travels between tangible[8] and virtual spaces (Pinney 2003). In addition to these representational instrumentalities, this paper argues that images' *polyvalent* presence as commodities in different socio-political settings also determine their influence amongst peripheral peoples such as the Bedouin in the Negev (be them hung on walls, displayed on a smart phone, stored within an physical archive or saved in computer files).[9] In particular, the historical values of images in a society are not solely predicated on their capacity to articulate multifarious meanings, but are also based on their ability to maintain diverse 'presences' as material and digital evidence of the past. Together, it is their dual capacity to mediate meaning and maintain different presences that make images both unique communicators and also valued objects for the making of Bedouin history in southern Israel.

In order to explore these processes, this paper documents the social life of an image and how it, as both an object and code, is shaped by and shapes people's understanding of their past and society. In particular, it retraces the biography of an image that is widely circulated amongst Bedouin members in the Negev because of its value for tribal histories – the influential portrait of Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil al-Hukuk al-Tiyaha II (a famous local leader) as a young man produced at the turn of the nineteenth century. By researching the 'original' source of the photograph this case study establishes the image's socio-political biography. In particular, through archival and empirical research, I trace the image's presence from its initial display by members in the Negev to its replicated existences and (re)codings (by members and other stakeholders) in other physical and digital venues.[10] In doing so, my research was able to document the differentiated meanings attributed to the image by multiple people over the century and account for its value as evidence for local representations of the tribal past amongst Bedouin members in southern Israel.[11]

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7   Christine Gruder and Sune Haugbølle (2013), under the auspices of visual culture studies, describe increased access to technologies in the Middle East, the creation of images in the public sphere, Islamic and Orientalist iconographies, and the role of visualism for relational dynamics.

8   Alfred Gell (1998), Igor Koptyoff (1986), and Daniel Miller (1997) argue photographs are 'things' that are meaningful within societies because they have the capacity to mediate relationships in various spaces.

9   This research treated image-objects as 'commodities by *metamorphosis*, things intended for other uses that are placed into a commodity state' (Appadurai 1994: 84).

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10   The life of this image was meticulously investigated, nevertheless, its biography was inevitably incomplete. This reflects both piecemeal nature of object life stories and the non-linear and contested nature of historical and social knowledge in the Negev.

11   While beyond the scope of this paper, these social settings were treated as visual economies (Poole 1997), emphasizing that the meanings of images are never solidified but instead the relationships between signifier and signified are continually reworked as they travel between different contexts of viewing.

III   The shaykh of shaykhs

*The nobler the fact — and the more public
its expression — the more likely it is to merit
photographic attention.*

(Shryock 1997:296)

'This is Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil al-Hukuk al-Tiyaha.[12] He was the King of the Shaykhs in his time,' the shaykh's son[13] said while pointing to an old picture encased in a small, black, wooden frame hanging on the wall in front of us.[14] The image was a creased, black-and-white photocopy that had been framed and preserved behind glass. In it a man of middle age stood in front of a faded backdrop with his left hand resting on the back of a wooden chair. He was dressed in a customary stripped robe with dark suit jacket and a long cape draped from his shoulders. Around his chest and waist were bandoleers, on his head a kaffiyeh, and a cigarette burned in his left hand. Below the image, the caption read: 'SHAYKH SALMAN EL-HUZEIL OF THE TAYAHA TRIBE, MARRIED 26 WIVES' (original caps).

As we stood in a breezy, metal building, which now serves as the al-Huzayyil lineage's *shigg* (men's meeting place), I looked at the enclosed image and recalled what the shaykh's son had previously told me in his living room about his father:

Anonymized Son: The first shaykh of the shaykhs in the history of the Bedouin was Shaykh Salman I and then Shaykh Salman II [1882–1982], who

was the shaykh for sixty years.[15] They called him the King of the Bedouin ... Shaykh Salman II who married thirty-nine women. Because, you know, he was the King of the Tiyaha and most of the other shaykhs wanted to have a political relationship with him so they gave to him a daughter to marry... There is a story about this in our family. Oh, have you heard the story?

One day Shaykh Salman II was riding his horse when he came across a well. And there he saw a little girl there. I think today that he felt that this little girl was of his blood. Something from inside told him this because she was really a very strong little girl. When he saw the girl he said to her, 'Give my horse water, please.' She said to him, 'No! Who are you that I should give you water. I am the daughter of an important shaykh.' Shaykh Salman II looked at her and recognized her as his own blood, and he said, 'I am your father.' And then he decided to take her back with him. However, the story people tell in the Negev is different from this one. But, what I tell you now is the truth! This is how it actually happened. People say that the shaykh didn't know that she was his daughter and he wanted to marry her but this is not true!

Amir:[16] She said that if you knew who my father was you would never talk to me.

Son: Yes! Yes! He said that!

Amir: You know maybe I should tell my students here in the Negev this version of the story. You know they talk about it in the classrooms.

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12   The Arabic transcriptions in this work loosely follow the practices set out by the *International Journal of Middle East Studies*.

13   For the remainder of this paper, interviewees will be anonymized. Rather than giving them pseudonyms, they are referred to by their relationship to Shaykh Salman II.

14   Interviews with the shaykh's son were conducted at his home in Khirbet az-Zibale on 20 December 2012.

15   The line of succession of the al-Huzayyil shaykhs is as follows: Salman 'Ali 'Azzam al-Huzayyil to Fihayd al-Huzayyil to Salman 'Ali Salman al-Huzayyil to Jaddua' Salman 'Ali Salman al-Huzayyil to Salman al-Huzayyil (Abu Rabi'a 2001; Bailey 1991 [2002]).

16   Amir is a Bedouin man from northern Israel who served as my chaperone and oft times my translator of Bedouin dialectic throughout my fieldwork in the Negev.
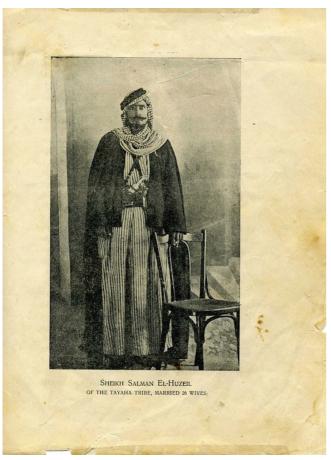
Figure 1 Photocopy of page in 'Arif al-'Arif's (1944:73) book. Content: Portrait of a young Salman al-Huzayyil II. Photograph located in anonymized al-Huzayyil member's photographic album. Photographed by Emilie Le Febvre, 20 December 2012. Original photographer of portrait of a young Salman al-Huzayyil II unknown, and photo taken at unknown date (1900s from the age of the shaykhs).

Son: But now you both know the truth! … OK, so now back to the pictures. As I said, Shaykh Salman II was very important man and his first picture was taken a long time ago. It can be found in an English book 'Arif al-'Arif wrote about him. He was very, very young in the picture, maybe thirty-five or forty, and he had already married twenty-six wives. It is written there. Already, at that time, when his picture was taken.

Emilie: Do you own this book and the picture?

Son: I will show you pictures and the book later. But it is important to know that Shaykh Salman II was a very young shaykh then. All of the northern Negev was under his control because it was his family's ancestors' land. There is a history about him. These are things that are written and said. The most important thing for you to know is that if he did not rule here, there would be no Bedouin here in Israel. You must know what is true!

After completing his story, the shaykh's son got up and disappeared into the next room. He returned with a photo album fashioned out of a blue folder filled with plastic sleeves. In each were black-and-white photocopies, newspaper clippings, small snapshot photographs on paper, and pages with images torn out of books (I later realized that these images were his 'originals' of the copies hanging in the *shigg*). He placed the album next to me on the sofa and told me I should look through it. Sitting on the other side of me, he explained the events, people, and places depicted in the images but paused when we came across a yellowed page that he had carefully removed from another, older book and inserted into its own plastic sleeve in the album (see Figure 1).

I asked him if this picture was the same image he spoke of earlier in our conversation? Pointing again to the album, he explained:

Yes, this is it. I took it from 'Arif al-'Arif's English book. I own his books. I have read these books! I have one book from him that was translated into Hebrew some six years ago. I have read this. But he writes many things that are not true about the al-Huzayyil, though every family knows of these books. See this, this picture here. [He points to the picture in Figure 1.] It is the earliest photograph I have of my father. However, don't believe what you read about the al-Huzayyil in 'Arif al-'Arif's books. 'Arif wrote about this and that. He wrote that Shaykh Salman I was very hard on the people. That he would take unwilling girls from the people. He wrote this but the story is not true. No! He was a very strong shaykh and his people knew him and loved him and I want to tell you something very, very, very important. The Bedouin that have roots here in the Negev. If they are famous and they have big families, they would never make the mistake of giving their family a bad name or reputation. It would never happen! 'Arif al-'Arif was disliked here and that is the reason he started these rumours about the shaykhs of the al-Huzayyil. But his writings are lies because those stories would have never happened because a shaykh would not bring a bad reputation upon his people.

After the shaykh's son finished describing the pictures in the album, he directed us to his personal library. It was a small room located down the hallway with walls lined with books and a large computer desk with a PC positioned on top of it. Rather than reaching for al-'Arif's books to show us the images in the printed volumes, however, the shaykh's son went to his desk and turned on the computer. 'I want to show the Facebook page I recently made recording the history of my father.' Amir and I sat down next to him as he began navigating the Internet in search

of the Facebook profile.[17] 'On this Facebook page I've upload most of the images and documents that I have collected.' Clicking on the homepage, he signed into a special Facebook account dedicated entirely to the life and visual history of his father.

Anonymized Son: To get to this Facebook page, you must read it in Hebrew not in Arabic. See here. [Pointing to the screen.] It reads Shaykh al-Huzayyil in Hebrew. If you go there you will see all of his pictures. Now I go inside. [Clicking the mouse.] You see. These are all of the pictures and writings that I have of him, here on Facebook.

Emilie: When did you create the Facebook page?

Son: Maybe around a half a year or so ago.

Emilie: Do many people ask to 'friend' the page?

Son: Yes, but I don't take everybody. Facebook is good but I don't know … maybe putting them here was a mistake. I don't want everyone to see. I don't know. A lot of people go inside to look at these pictures. Lots of people! From everywhere! I have people from Russia, Ukraine, Demark and Sweden. They come to visit here to see the pictures. Oh, here we are! [Scrolling down through the page.] Here is a copy of pictures from a book that was written in English and in Arabic, but it is really best if you see the original books, not like here, on the computer.

The entire homepage was composed of archival photographs, films and pages from various Western, Israeli and Palestinian documents. Clicking on the page's album

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17   Anonymized al-Huzayyil member's Facebook page dedicated to Salman al-Huzayyil II. *Facebook*. https://www.facebook.com/ינשה-לייזוהלא-ןאמלס-חייש 213126295449369/?fref=ts. (accessed 17 August 2013).

Figure 2   Screenshot of anonymized al-Huzayyil member's Facebook page dedicated to Salman al-Huzayyil II taken by Emilie Le Febvre, 17 August 2013.

Figure 3   Screenshot of anonymized al-Huzayyil member's Facebook page dedicated to Salman al-Huzayyil II taken by Emilie Le Febvre, 17 August 2013.

collection, he showed us the digitized collection of each photograph that he had previously showed me in family albums. The shaykh's son contextualized each image with Hebrew, Arabic and German captions. In addition to these, followers of the page also inserted comments about the images (see Figure 2 and 3).

Once again, the shaykh's son went through each image and explained who was in the image, the event in which it was taken, and the importance of his father's legacy in the Negev. Towards the end of the online collection, we came to a digitized copy of the earliest photograph taken of the shaykh, the image taken from al-ʿArif 's book.

Anonymized Son: OK, so now we come to ʿArif al-ʿArif. This photograph was taken from ʿArif al-ʿArif and here [pointing to the screen] see it says again, 'Shaykh of all the Tiyaha'. At that time, he was the shaykh of all the Tiyaha. See it says here in the photograph. [Scrolling down the homepage.] That is him with ʿArif al-ʿArif and with his sword. Here, see this photograph. It says, 'The Shaykhs of Beersheba'. In 1920, the British took the shaykhs,

those who really had power in the Negev, and put them together in a shaykh's court. See it says, 'Shaykh al-Huzayyil of the Tiyaha was a member of the Tribal Court.' There were eight shaykhs there.[18]

Emilie: Do you know the names of the other shaykhs?

Son: No, they are written in the Arabic books. Their names stay there but not in the English and Hebrew books, only in the Arabic books. English and Hebrew books do not recognize everyone or give us their names. You know I want this book in Arabic. I only have the Hebrew one. They say these books are in Ben Gurion Library. The originals of the books are there at the University.

Emilie: Where did you get these pictures? The images you put here on Facebook and the albums? Are they from your father's personal collection?

18   At the beginning of twentieth century Beersheba, there were courts presided over by shaykhs or elders of the tribe (al-ʿArif 1944).

Son: They were around. Most of the pictures were collected by my mother and I. Some were given to us. There might be more out there but I don't know. I have what I have … that is all. But, you see, there are lots of pictures here and good ones too. The originals are in the albums not like you see like here on the computer, but they also now hang in our meeting place [shigg].

Back in the newly constructed *shigg*, I studied the same image of his father, which was a photocopy of the image in the album (see Figure 4).

Around it hung twenty-five other pictures of the shaykh in frames of various sizes. The quality of the images ranged from glossy colour photographs to dull photocopies taken from newspapers and books. Their content included stoic portraits, posed group pictures and spontaneous snapshots taken during group events or meetings from the 1930s until the shaykh's death. In most, Shaykh Salman II is photographed with well-known figures such as Israel's former Prime Minister Simon Peres (1977), the state's former Minister of Defence Moshe Dayan (1967–74), and other shaykhs of the Negev. Arranged alongside the photographs were framed documents such as newspaper articles and personal correspondences in Hebrew, Arabic and English script. In addition to documentary materials, the room contained other items such as a large Oriental rug, coffee urns and commemorative plates.

After we finished looking at the decorated wall in the *shigg*, the shaykh's son guided Amir and I back through his private garden to say our goodbyes. As we walked through the gated entrance, I looked over the parking area to the northern Negev landscape where the shaykh's house (now his son's) overlooked the town of

Figure 4 Framed photocopy, by anonymized al-Huzayyil member, of young Salman al-Huzayyil II from 'Arif al-'Arif'w book (1944:73) in al-Huzayyil's shigg. Photographed by Emilie Le Febvre, 20 December 2012. Original photographer of portrait of a young Salman al-Huzayyil II unknown, and photo taken at unknown date (1900s from the age of the shaykhs).

Rahat and the Shari'a Valley.[19] I thanked him for his time and for showing me his extensive archive. 'Oh, by the way Emilie, here is my card. You should also look on the Internet. There is more information about my father there. Many, many websites, because as I told he was a very important man for our people.' I thanked him once again and we said goodbye.

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19 According to members, Shaykh Salman II was instrumental in the establishment of the Israeli government town of Rahat in 1972. The shaykh supposedly donated the land to build the city, but he chose to live outside of the town along with family, on their own territory. As of 2013, there were approximately 50,000 residents living in Rahat.

A couple of weeks after my discussion in Rahat, I travelled to Ben Gurion University (BGU) in Beersheba to find the books containing the images displayed on the *shigg* wall and the shaykh's son's Facebook page. I was looking for the 'Arif al-'Arif's English volume, *Bedouin, Love, Law, and Legend* (1944), and the Hebrew and Arabic versions of *Ta'rikh Bi'r al-Sab' wa-Qaba'iliha* (1934). I found a variety of al-'Arif's books in BGU's Middle Eastern Collection and skimmed them for the images, in particular the portrait of the young Shaykh Salman II. The smallest books were Hebrew translations of al-'Arif's work, which the Joe Alon Museum of Bedouin Culture and BGU translated in 2006. In each book, however, someone had torn out the pages containing larger portraits of Bedouin shaykhs. In addition to ripping out the pages, a person had also gone through all of the Hebrew copies and translated each of the smaller images' captions from Hebrew into Arabic in pencil.

Flipping through the pages of al-'Arif's English (1944) volume, I came across the Shaykh Salman II's early portrait. It was located on page 73 in his chapter entitled 'Divorce and Polygamy'. In the paragraph next to the image, he wrote:

If you were to ask a Badawi what is the most important material factor in his life, his answer probably would be land. If you asked him what is the second in importance, he would answer Woman. In his relationship with woman, divorce and polygamy are freely practiced. The prophet has said that divorce is tolerated but hated by God... It is said in the Koran — 'You may marry, twice, thrice, four times, but if you fear you will not do justice you should marry only one.' Shaykh Salman Huzeil [al-Huzayyil] married twenty-six, and one of his ancestors married 28 women. The Huzeil tribe are known to indulge living in polygamy.

At no one time does the number of wives exceed four as laid down in the Koran.

(al-'Arif 1944:72, orig. ital.)

Unfortunately, however, al-'Arif provided no provenance for the portrait, while the remaining photographic reprints in the book were all carefully referenced and attributed to The Matson Photo Service and Mr John D. Whiting. Leaving me to wonder whether he forgot to cite it? Did he own the image or take it himself?

After perusing al-'Arif's Arabic works, it became apparent that most of the images in his books were produced by photographers from the American Colony of Jerusalem.[20] In addition, each translation contained most of the same photographic images. Moreover, as the shaykh's son asserted, the Arabic version was the only volume that listed and identified the shaykhs by name. In fact, it listed the names of each shaykh posed in the group photographs and described each pre-1948 tribal lineage in the Negev. Upon careful examination, it also became clear that al-'Arif or his publisher had identified each shaykh from the group photographs, cropped their image, and re-printed their smaller portrait in the relevant chapters describing their tribes. Additional images of Shaykh Salman II showed him sitting with other Tiyaha leaders participating in tribal courts established during the British Mandate. One of these was the picture that the shaykh's son had copied and posted on his Facebook page. The portrait of younger

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20   The American Colony's Department of Photography was established in October 1898. In 1903 Ferdinand Vester and John Whiting purchased a store in Jerusalem, a time when the photography department gained notoriety. Many of their photographs sold at the store and later reprinted in various publications. Whiting, Hol Lars Larsson, and Eric G. Matson became the most well known of the colony's photographers.

Shaykh Salman II in the English (1944) book was not, however, amongst the images in the Arabic (1933) or Hebrew (2001) versions.

Confronted with a dead end regarding the biography of Shaykh Salman II's early portrait, I met with a local Bedouin professor from BGU in an attempt to get more information about the 'Arif al-'Arif's books and the photographic collections in them.[21] The professor explained that there are three translations of al-'Arif's writing in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. The Israeli translators, E. Navi and M. Keflavik,[22] present the Hebrew version as a direct translation of the Arabic *Ta'rikh*, however, the professor informed me that they significantly altered some the information from al-'Arif's the original Arabic text. For example, they added and removed several images presented in the original Arabic version. Moreover, he explained that the English edition only focuses on cultural aspects of the Negev Bedouin society, and does not go into detail about tribal histories in the same ways as the Hebrew and Arabic versions.

Unfortunately, the professor had no additional information about the history of the photographic images other than that they originated from the American colony, which had originally produced them. 'You know, most people believe that the photographs were taken by al-'Arif himself since most find them in his books. These books are the only means for people to access these important images but as you have read, al-'Arif clearly states that the images were taken by the American Colony.' He went on to explain that these photographs are the earliest surviving images of the Negev

Bedouin and that they are highly valued by members. I asked him why so many of the pages containing the shaykhs' portraits were removed from the Hebrew books. He stated, 'Students take them, especially pictures of shaykhs from their own tribes. In fact, these are probably the only photographs of their ancestors. Once taken, students make copies to frame and hang on the walls of their houses and *shiggs*, and you can even find them on the Internet now-a-days.'

After our conversation, I conducted a more thorough Internet search for pictures of the shaykh. In addition to the shaykh's son's Facebook page, I found the portrait on a Hebrew version of Wikipedia created by lineage (*'a'ilat*) members, 'Ali al-Huzayyil. The webpage was entitled *Salman al-Huzel* and recounts several stories popularly relayed in the Negev about the shaykh, such as the desert-well story involving his daughter that I mentioned earlier.[23] The online version of the story is recounted by another shaykh who supposedly accompanied Shaykh Salman II on the day in question. Today, this account, not the shaykh's son's version, is the more popular version of the 'well story'.

Those days we went hunting and went riding horses. One day we passed one of the wells in the Negev. Around the well were women drawing water for their flocks. We stopped to water the horses. Shaykh [Salman] found a beautiful young girl amongst the women and as usual began to charm her for himself. He turned to her and asked, 'What tribe you are from? What your father's name?' and she replied, 'Al-Huzayyil tribe and my father is Shaykh Salman.' He then asked her who is your mother? She answers and tells her mother

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21   Interview with local Bedouin professor was conducted at a café in Ben Gurion University of the Negev on 14 January 2013.

22   Forenames of the translators are not indicated in Hebrew version.

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23   Al-Huzayyil, 'A. Salman al-Huzayyil. *Wikipedia*. URL: http://he.wikipedia.org/wiki/סלמאו_לא_הזויל (accessed 17 January 2013).

was deported to her parents[24] when she was a baby and now she lives with an aunt. She went on to say, 'I have not seen my father for my entire life and I do not know him at all.' The shaykh said, surprised and disappointed, 'I am that Shaykh and you are my daughter.'

(al-Huzayyil 2001)

In addition to this story, the website contained a digital image of the young shaykh on the left-hand margin of the page — it was a copy of the portrait taken directly from al-'Arif's English edition. The caption reads 'Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil in his youth'. Once again, however, there is no provenance for the image (see Figure 5).

During my research, I tracked down one of 'Arif al-'Arif's relatives in Ramallah to see if they could provide additional information about the origin of the photographs in al-'Arif's books. After several weeks of telephone calls, I discovered that al-'Arif's daughter (anonymized) still lives in Ramallah and works as the president of a local Palestinian NGO. After calling, she agreed to meet and tell me more about her father's writings and his time in the Negev.[25] Upon our meeting, she explained that she arrived in the Negev when she was two-years old with her father, al-'Arif, when they would pay visits to various Bedouin families in the area. 'We used to have a house there and would visit people in Bi'r al-Sab' [Beersheba], even after the occupation.' I asked her if she had any photographs of her father with the community, and she went on to say:

פה אל
אבני גזית
גב, וכן

יקים

נל
וקירבה.
ז באזור.
ו, הנשיא,
יל היה
לפניו
זרות

נצמו, שני
וגילו מעל

השייח' סלמאן אל הוזייל בצעירותו

Figure 5 Screenshot of Al-Huzayyil Wikipedia page dedicated to Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil, II entitled 'Salman al-Huzel' in Hebrew, taken by Emilie Le Febvre, 17 January 2013.

Yes, we have a lot of photographs from our time in Bi'r al-Sab' in our family collection but you have come at a very bad time. I am too busy now to show you these and will be leaving for Canada for two and half months. I will give you a copy of his book but I have to make copies of the images and that will take too much time.

She told me to come back to retrieve a copy of *Ta'rikh* later in the autumn after she returned from Canada. Approximately three months later I drove back to Ramallah and the NGO to retrieve a copy of the original version held in the family's private library. Unfortunately, yet again, the elusive portrait of the young Shaykh Salman II was not there.

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24   Shaykh Salman II most likely married and divorced and the girl's mother and sent the daughter to live with her maternal relatives.

25   Interview with 'Arif al-'Arif's daughter was conducted at her office in al-Bireh on 26 June 2012.

Figure 6   'Aref el-Aref and Bedouin Shaykhs', Eric Matson, c.1920 to 1933. Matson collection: LC-DIG-matpc-03791 (digital file from original photo), Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division.

Tracking down my final lead, I went in search of more information about Eric Matson, a photographer from the American Colony. In the hopes of locating the source of the shaykh's portrait, I paid a visit to the Library of Congress in the United States, which holds the Matson Collection. This archive constitutes the oldest and most extensive photographic record of the Negev Bedouin at the beginning of the twentieth century. It includes approximately 22,000 glass and film photographic negatives and transparencies, and over 1,000 photographic prints, including stereographic images and eleven albums, most of

which are in the process of being digitized. The photographic images document a range of events including Sir Samuel Herbert's arrival to the Negev, shots taken during customary wedding day feasts, and depictions of the Negev Bedouin's way of life during the British Mandate. Included in the black-and-white portfolio are stoic portraits of leading Bedouin notables commissioned by 'Arif al-'Arif. In most, leading men are posed in front of Beersheba's buildings with their swords, guns and formal clothing. As seen in Figure 6, the group photographs usually included shaykhs and al-'Arif sitting or standing amongst them.

As the shaykh's son noted in our conversation, none of the men in the group photographs, other than al-'Arif, are identified in the English or Hebrew versions of his work. Instead, the photographs' captions simply read 'Aref el Aref and Bedouin Sheikhs'. After reviewing the entire collection, I was not able to locate the original copy of the young Shaykh Salman's portrait in its holdings. Thus, the reconstruction of this particular image's biography came to a dead end, lost in the hinterland of missing provenances and private family libraries. Despite its forgotten origin, however, the portrait of the shaykh continues to amass its own story as an instrument of evidence for the al-Huzayyil members, a source of genealogical pride today that supports popular historical narratives such as the one authored by 'Ali al-Huzayyil (2001) and published on the lineage's (*'a'ilat*) Hebrew Wikipedia[26] page below:

> *It is known throughout the region that Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil was a legend in his lifetime. He has an exceptional status not only among the tribes Tiyaha, but also across the Negev, Sinai, and Jordan... Shaykh possessed great leadership, wisdom, courage, generosity and ability to negotiate with any government. He was a striking appearance: tall, noble-looking, fair skin and blue eyes... He also served as a judge in court Bedouin Beersheba.*

Today, most contemporary Bedouin in the Negev regard Shaykh Salman II, from within and outside of the al-Huzayyil lineage, as a charismatic figure in their collective historical narrative. Depictions of his exploits and life have become fixtures in their folktales, oral

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26   Al-Huzayyil, 'A. Salman al-Huzayyil. *Wikipedia.* URL: he.wikipedia.org/wiki/סלמאן_לא_זוהיי (accessed 17 January 2013).

remembrances and writings about the past. His portrait has increasingly become a part of their visual historical landscape.

IV   Analysis of photographic presence and circulating legacies

Historical photographs such as Shaykh Salman II's portrait were originally contextualized as Orientalist imaginings of the 'holy land' and Bedouin 'natives' by their original producers, predominantly early Western and non-Bedouin Israeli and Palestinian photographers and authors. Thus, the graphic contents of these old images often say more about the interests, perceptions and culture of the outsiders than the Bedouin peoples depicted in them (Jacobson 2007). While historical photographs were produced for Orientalist enterprises, the meanings of these images have the capacity to change – to acquire new presence and values outside of the 'initial contexts' in which they were created and embedded. Thus, historical images of Negev Bedouin are not merely dictated by the social contracts characterizing their creation, instead they accumulate other biographies during their lifespans. As images increasingly travel between alternative and varied contexts, people, who were once merely photographed participants, are taking opportunities to appropriate them for their own history projects. Overall, historical images are being increasingly removed from their original contexts of Orientalism, colonialism and nationalism in the Middle East by peripheral people, who re-contextualize them within their own networks, according to their own perceptions of the world and for their own histories.

To explore these practices, this paper addresses the capacity of Shaykh Salman II's image to be re-coded by Bedouin, who today 'speak for themselves' in the same media that historically 'othered' them (Marcus 1997). It has

traced the incomplete and fractured biography of the shaykh's portrait, pursuing an 'original' production context. By this approach, the case study was able to note the image's changing material and digital presence(s) and differentiated values as a family heirloom contained within a photographic album; an artefact of tribal reputation hung on the *shigg*'s wall; a printed illustration of Bedouin otherness in al-'Arif's (1944) book; and as a digital image of Negev Bedouin history on the web.

As this case study illustrated, there are divergent accounts about where old images come from and how they come to be in the Negev. Until the late 1990s, the only access members had to archival images were generally from books found in regional libraries such as that of the BGU or from photographs given to members by outsiders. Today, original images are still typically unavailable to local collectors, as archival photographs, along with other historically significant documents, are held in outside institutions such as Israeli state archives. Thus, in most instances, original production information of archival images is unknown to Bedouin members. For example, apart from the professor, when asked about the historical photographs in 'Arif al-'Arif's books, most people admit that they assumed he had taken the images, as they had retrieved them from his volumes.

Over the last ten years, however, the Internet has substantially expanded members' ability to research photographic databases and source more documentary information about their lineages (*'a'ilat*), specifically materials produced by outsiders. In particular, search engines have augmented members' access to digital replications of old photographs, which they have then copied and shared. Again, however, local collectors do not seem overly concerned about the original photograph's producers or the

quality of the images found online. Most digital reproductions such as the shaykh's portrait on the al-Huzayyil Wikipedia page are simply taken from their original production contexts through copy-and-paste applications into new formats, without citation of the source.

For members whose ancestors can be visually identified, orally confirmed and textually labelled, historical images authenticate the 'most noble and public' of their shaykhs in antiquity (Shryock 1997:296). Origins (*'asil*) to the Negev are indicated by the simple 'fact' that photographic images of their ancestors exist. They were pictured and therefore visually memorialized. The ability to name and visually identify an ancestral shaykh is essential for tribal lineages (*'a'ilat*) such as al-Huzayyil in order to maintain their socio-political reputations and status in the Negev. It allows them to profess and 'prove' the longevity of their genealogical connections, especially amongst those who have the ability to recognize photographed individuals with any degree of certainty. Moreover, members also consider visual depictions of their shared ancestors as presentations of their lineage's public face, which is indelibly connected to their collective reputation. The existence of the shaykh's portrait allows members to present the 'truth' of their lineage's (*'a'ilat*) endurance and ongoing presence in the Negev, and thus legitimate their historical influence and create reputations in the region.

Today, Bedouin members strive to control the consumption or meaning of images by tactfully presenting them in public venues connected to the lineage, and by moving them between various material and digital displays. Similar to Shryock's (1997:296) description of Balga, 'Buying the pictures and hanging them on the walls of one's own home turned out to be the most decisive means by which a person could gain control over what was considered, by everyone involved, a
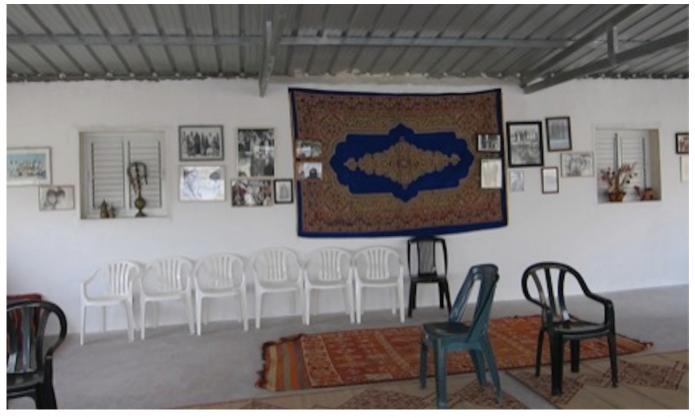
Figure 7   Picture wall displaying Shaykh Salman al-Huzayyil II images and documents in al-Huzayyil shigg. Photographed by Emilie Le Febvre, 20 December 2012.

kind of documentary evidence.' Similarly, in order to promote his legacy, the shaykh's son strategically presented copies of his father's young portrait in various spaces, one of which included the picture wall in the al-Huzayyil's *shigg* (see Figure 7).

There, the shaykh's son fashioned a gallery presenting old images and other items associated with Bedouin material culture. He created and presented their genealogical past through physical references, which recast objects such as photographs along with coffee urns, water pipes, rugs and textiles into historical artefacts that possess the power to symbolize his father's legacy in the Negev, and thus preserve the history of their lineage. In so doing, al-Huzayyil members such as the shaykh's son rely on both the physical

and simulated ambiguities offered by images, as well as their poly-mediations (continually reworked) with material artefacts, books, oral stories and websites (Madianou and Miller 2011). As part of these exercises, lineage members re-contextualize images by disregarding or actively countering information that does not bolster their group's contemporary reputations.

In the Negev, historical images are a critical form of documentary evidence that can be isolated from unflattering oral and textual narratives simply by cutting away captions and repositioning them in new contexts. In doing so, members can reconstruct their own historical truths. For example, al-'Arif presented the younger Shaykh Salman II's portrait in the

English edition (1944) to illustrate the uniqueness of Bedouin culture in the Negev. The insertion of the young Salman's portrait in the text does not convey specific information about the al-Huzayyil tribe, but, rather, the image portrays a man who 'indulges' in polygamous marriages. Contemporary al-Huzayyil, in attempting to dislodge the photographic portrait from this unfavourable textual account, have physically and digitally removed the image from its original found context, and subsequently disconnected it from al-'Arif's writings.[27]

Rather than merely physically possessing these reconfigured images, members actively advertise and circulate them as evidence of their particular versions of genealogical and tribal histories. They are doing so through a range of new platforms as they become available in the Negev: creating web pages, producing YouTube videos, organizing photographic essays on Flickr and sharing images via Bluetooth, for example. Through these digitally based mediums members set out to rectify mistruths or 'set the record straight'. In addition to these historical corrections, they are also expanding the consumption of alternative histories, along with the visual evidence supporting them, to broader Arabic, Hebrew and English reading audiences. Through the saturation of various media sources, they aim to solidify their versions of the re-constructed past and the legacy of the al-Huzayyil.

Old images contribute to the reputations and status of the Negev tribal lineages (*'a'ilat*). They are not, however, limitless or plastic resources. Re-contextualization efforts must relate to pre-existing forms of historical knowledge (which both locals and outsiders have produced), such

as associated oral genealogies and books like al-Arif's. Moreover, their recoding labours are limited by members' differential access to image-based technologies and materials such as frames, cameras, computers and printers. Bedouin in the Negev have regular access to these items because of Israel's relatively strong economy, and most own mobile phones that have a camera and allow access to the Internet. Additionally, the local consumption or interpretation of particular historical images by lineage members must also contend with broader visual iconography associated with Orientalist stereotypes or nationalized versions of Negev Bedouin history.

Nonetheless, the increased presence and circulation of historical images in southern Israel over the last decade has changed the art of representing the past amongst the Bedouin in the Negev. Photographic images are involved in the purposeful fashioning and re-fashioning of tribal legacies, practices that are not only strategic but also revisionary. Whether boasting the legacy of one's family or countering the reputations of others, they influence Bedouin's expressions of tribal history. Members perceive the owning and publicly displaying historical images as equivalent to possessing 'knowledge' that may be manipulated in order to constitute and protect the reputation of their lineages (*'a'ilat*) – through increasingly visible means. Making claims in the public domain is not simply about promoting one's ancestry, however, but also about negotiating other types of historical knowledge and other media through which it is shared. To do so, members strive to control the circulation, presence(s), and relative consumption of images as evidentiary media within and between various social settings.

In conclusion, by tracing Shaykh Salman II's early portrait's material and digital presence in

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27 Polygamy is a highly contentious issue amongst contemporary Negev Bedouin but is still common throughout the Negev.

different settings, this case study has described how it has influenced al-Huzayyil members' representations of their past amidst Western, Israeli and Palestinian imaginings of their history and society. The study argued that most Bedouin in the Negev (regardless of age, status, or residence) value images' ability to realistically capture historical events, connect people to the past and ground the population in Negev landscapes. It demonstrated that a photographic image is typically treated as a document providing historical 'truths' and thus awarded value similar to that of other significant material cultural objects in this society. At the same time, however, members, such as the al-Huzayyil, typically 'play' with an image's meaning to reconstruct alternative historical narratives in the pursuit of resources and reputations. In all, Bedouin in the Negev utilize images' ability to be presented in various forms, with a range of other media, in multiple places and amongst diverse types of people. Because of these qualities, this study of a historical image was able to explore the persuasion-politics characterizing historicity in this Bedouin society, including those relating to the tribal past.

Acknowledgements

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