

official oppressors in their original territories. Many of these migrations were just local movements, but several came from distant places including Europe and other overseas countries. The dominant local wave (i.e., within Palestine) was from Hebron to northern Samaria and its adjacent areas. This movement consisted mostly of people whose lifestyle was semi-nomadic, because the climate of their home region, which was surrounded by dry-lands, was notoriously unstable. It was subject to long periods of drought, and, occasionally, even to catastrophic events that forced its inhabitants to seek new permanent homes.

Other causes for the local moves included the search for refuges from blood revenge; inter- and intra- *hamula* (extended family) strife; regional faction wars (known as *Qais-Yaman*); escape from Bedouin raids or various other communal or individual causes; and, not the least, insufficient means of subsistence. There were also many short-distance and seasonal moves for cultivation of relatively remote or inaccessible plots. But, as noted above, the most conspicuous, mostly long distance moves, were those generated by repeated droughts or other forms of food insecurity in their original homes. This type of push-generated mobility was characteristic of the *fallaheen* (peasants) who wandered to northern Samaria and to its adjacent areas from the periphery of the Hebron Sub-District.

Migrations from areas that are now termed “foreign countries” often had similar causes. Some of them had, in fact, family- or clan-based ties and retained close links with each other. This was especially the case with the east-west move across the Jordan River. In fact, both banks of the Jordan belonged, for much of the nineteenth century, to Balqaa District. Some of the mobility was the result of purely economic reasons. There were also migrants who originated in more remote areas.

The most outstanding cases were from farther areas. They came from Circassia and Chechnya, and were refugees from territories annexed by Russia in 1864, and the Bosnian Muslims, whose province was lost to Serbia in 1878. Belonging to this category were the Algerians (*Mughrabis*), who arrived in Syria and Palestine in several waves after 1850 in the wake of France’s conquest of their country and the waves of Egyptian migration to Palestine and Syria during the rule of Muhammad Ali and his son, Ibrahim Pasha. The causes of each of these migrations were unique, but they had in common a strong push factor associated with inter-ethnic or international conflicts. The following section discusses the Egyptian migration and its demographic impacts. The other migratory groups and their impacts are treated later in this chapter.

The Egyptian Migration: Background and Significance

Unlike various groups of Muslim refugees that arrived in Palestine from territories lost by the Ottomans in the Balkans or in the Caucasus Regions, the Egyptian settlers did not receive any direct government aid. However, the authorities refrained from demanding any payment for the land that the migrants managed to occupy.² From a demographic point of view, the Egyptian “migrants” (most of them not strictly migrants, as will be shown below) were much more numerous than any of the others that preceded the Jewish migratory waves (that are called *aliyot*, pl. of *aliyah* = ascent).

The Egyptians left their impression on the map of population distribution unevenly. Because of their extreme poverty, the relative ease with which they were absorbed into the local population and the fact that the government provided no territory for their settlement, they did not leave their mark on any specific geographical zone. Their distribution reveals, nevertheless, a clear spatial pattern whose general shape closely resembles that of the later (post-1882) Jewish one. Like the Jewish migrants, the Egyptians came in a series of waves, but unlike them, they often settled in already established villages, though in some cases, as around Jaffa, they built new ones.

The Egyptians were not newcomers to Palestine. There is evidence of their arrival at the end of the late eighteenth century as a result of a severe famine in Egypt, but several waves came even earlier. The migration was bi-directional, since many Palestinians moved to Egypt for a variety of reasons, but the following discussion focuses solely on the more dominant, one-way stream, from Egypt to Palestine.³ The push factors were numerous: natural disasters such as droughts and plagues, oppression by government officials, tax policies and the military draft. Much has already been written about these subjects, and I have delved into these questions in prior research works, but some of these migrations have never been documented at all or only partially so.⁴ I believe, therefore, that the Egyptian contribution to the demography of Palestine deserves to be thoroughly studied.

The major series of Egyptian migration waves are associated with the time of Muhammad Ali’s Syrian campaign. The original wave took place in 1829, about two years before the invasions, and ended in early 1841, with the forced retreat of the Egyptian army.⁵ The historical circumstances that brought about the Egyptian migrations are presented briefly below. The migrations had profound demographic and socio-economic impacts. They contributed to a population increase that more

than counterbalanced the loss of life caused by the harsh rule of the Egyptians.

The Egyptian invasion was caused, at least partly, when the ruler of Syria and Palestine refused to obey Muhammad Ali's demand to repatriate the Egyptians who had escaped from the forced labor projects in the Nile Delta. But, ironically, the regime's later Syrian-Palestinian development projects were accompanied by the import of Egyptian forced labor into the conquered land. The termination of Muhammad Ali's Syrian administration resulted in another wave of Egyptian migrants. The demographic impacts of Egyptian rule in Palestine occurred thus during the period that preceded it (1829), during the period of its administrative control (1832-1839), and during its termination phase (1840-41).

The motivation for these migration waves was, thus, complex. There was a strong push factor, such as escaping from forced labor, or deserting the military forces, and on the other hand—a somewhat weaker pull factor, such as personal desires for improving economic prospects. It is possible that the military desertions that accompanied the forced retreat of the army in 1840-41 were partly motivated by the desire to take advantage of the greater productive potential of Palestine, where the pressure on the land was lower. At any rate, the Egyptian population that remained in Palestine after the retreat of the army made up the largest migration that the country had known during the nineteenth century. One of the contributions of this wave was the emergence of Jaffa and its rural hinterland, although the new neighborhoods that they established were mostly slums, built of adobe bricks and other unsorted, locally available materials.⁶

But the real demographic influence of the Egyptian settlers was in less visible areas, that is, in the rural periphery. These places included the areas from which the Bedouins had been removed as a result of Ibrahim Pasha's harsh policy against the nomads in the aftermath of the 1834 uprising (see below), but the repopulation was also felt in many existing settlements. When the first wave of Jewish migrants arrived at the end of the nineteenth century, they found a land more populated than it had been during the first half of the century. What they noticed, however, was that the population of their neighboring Arab villages was increasing. This was, in fact, partly the result of a renewed migration wave from Egypt, which was generated by the increasing employment opportunities in the new Jewish colonies.⁷

As hinted above, it is ironic that Muhammad Ali's desire to stem Egyptian migration into Palestine in 1829, which some scholars believe was one of the causes for his invasion of Syria and Palestine in 1831,