

**Itineraries and Intelligibilities**

**A**t the end of an unpaved road in the Palestinian village of 'Arrabeh, Omar Hassan caters to Jewish Israeli tourists. The establishment he runs, part restaurant and part cultural curiosity, is difficult to find, as the access road lacks streetlights and proper signage. But determined visitors watch for the Hebrew placards directing them "To the Peace Tent" that Hassan has affixed to telephone poles. The tent was originally erected for a family party. But Hassan has refashioned it for commercial usage, lining the interior with carpets and adorning the entrance with Arab coffeepots and photographs of traditional Bedouin costumes. This décor is unremarkable. Hassan, himself a Palestinian citizen of Israel, has reiterated the terms of an Orientalist archive recognizable to his Jewish clients in order to secure profitability.<sup>1</sup>

It is the winter of 1996. The so-called Middle East Peace Process is underway, and Israeli itineraries are changing. Israeli diplomacy with neighboring Arab countries has altered the terms of Israeli tourism. Arab places within the borders of Israel, places feared and avoided by most Jewish Israelis in prior decades, are becoming tourist destinations. Hassan's tent is a coordinate within this emerging tourist landscape. It is a fragile landscape, haunted by histories of political enmity that threaten the market's

viability. To moderate these histories, Hassan has interspersed the Orientalist décor with the markers of Israeli nationalism. A photograph of the recently assassinated Israeli prime minister, seated next to the Israeli flag, is displayed in this spirit. The image is a familiar one among the customers Hassan serves, drawn from the prevailing memorial record, and it shares the wall with an Arabic coffeepot and a snapshot of Hassan standing with the Israeli minister of tourism. Such composite displays are crucial for most Jewish Israeli tourists, promising authentic Arab culture without political threat. Their patronage depends on this dual guarantee.

These visitors, most of European descent, have toured Arab places before. Many were avid travelers in the West Bank in the decades following Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories in 1967, enjoying the open markets of Jerusalem's Old City, restaurants in Bethlehem and Jericho, and souvenir shopping in Hebron. They traveled to Egypt and Jordan after the peace treaties with Israel in 1978 and 1994, respectively. Yet their visit to Hassan's tent is different. For many Jewish tourists, this is their first leisure visit to a Palestinian village inside Israel's borders. Peace, many say, is making it possible.

The popularity of the Peace Tent among Israeli Jews during the 1990s signaled an important shift in dominant Israeli imaginations. In the era of the Middle East Peace Process, also known as the Oslo process, Arab culture was being perceived and acknowledged differently by many Israeli Jews. In the process, the Israeli nation-state was being redefined, its landscapes redrawn, its histories reconsidered. The presence of Jewish Israeli tourists in the Palestinian Galilee marked the emergence of a new form of Israeliness, a new modality of national identity that would not have been possible before the political developments of this decade, before the diplomatic and economic agreements that the Oslo process spawned. The tourist market was not merely a byproduct of such shifts in national sensibilities, but was itself an important site of national reformation. In the 1990s, through the tools and spaces of tourism, Israel was being reimaged.

This is a book about the ways that Israeli tourist practices have participated in reformulating the Israeli nation-state amidst transnational political processes in the Middle East. My investigation of this reformulation focuses on what I will call *national intelligibility*—a concept that designates

that which is recognizable according to the dominant national script.<sup>2</sup> It identifies what we might call a national protocol of recognition, one that effectively regulates modes of perception, that which can be perceived, and how perceived things are to be understood or categorized within its terms. This discourse is also an engine of subject formation, one that sorts intelligible subjects from unintelligible ones within the broader field of the perceptible. At issue, then, is a complex interrelation of perception, recognition, and subjectivity, an interrelation that itself is subject to constant, if irregular, change. National intelligibility is a historically contingent discourse that can shift dramatically during periods of profound transition or upheaval within the nation-state, on its borders, and within adjacent territories. I contend that it is also a performative discourse that is sustained through iterative practices and can thus be contested and altered through such practices.<sup>3</sup> That is to say, its norms of recognition are never secure. The lexicon of intelligibility is always being produced and, as such, can be revised.

In this book I am interested in a period of profound political transition when the terms of Israeli intelligibility were quite dramatically in flux. I focus on Israeli tourist culture during the era of the Oslo process, beginning in earnest with the Oslo Accords of 1993—an internationally recognized rapprochement between Israel and the Palestinians which set the terms for a negotiated settlement of the conflict—and concluding with the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000.<sup>4</sup> I argue that this regional political process had numerous effects on the ways that Israelis imagined their nation-state, altering normative Israeli practices of seeing and logics of recognition. Israeli diplomacy with neighboring Arab states, and the transnational process it spawned, coupled with concurrent changes in domestic policy, produced a substantive shift in the ways that national identity, space, and history could be conceived and represented. These shifts, I contend, were dramatically manifest within tourist culture. As a body of both spatial and representational practices, tourism provided a convenient toolbox with which to forge new notions of national identity befitting the altered regional landscape.

Consider, again, the Peace Tent. During the period of political flux that Oslo catalyzed, a Palestinian village once feared by Israeli Jews became newly visible as part of the Israeli landscape. This is not to suggest

a prior unintelligibility or invisibility that was somehow corrected. The village had always been perceptible to Israeli Jews, but primarily as a site of threat. What had changed was its symbolic charge, its significance in the prevailing Israeli imagination. I am thus speaking less about the Peace Tent than the fantasy it conjured, its changing figuration, its new status as a spatial coordinate of Israeli tourist desire. Yet the terms of this figuration were never under tourist control, not in any strict sense. That is, even the most reassuring itineraries, even those Arab places offering the conjoined décor of Orientalism and Israeli nationalism, could generate profoundly unsettling encounters between guests and hosts, bringing Jewish travelers into contact with a set of Palestinian histories that the state had long endeavored to suppress. In some cases, these encounters produced substantial cracks in normative Israeli logics. Some such encounters challenged the very legitimacy of the nation-state, revising its intelligibility in powerful ways.

Most of this inquiry focuses on the years when the Oslo process was at its height—namely, during the Labor administrations of Prime Ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres (1992–96).<sup>5</sup> The Accords, coupled with the subsequent end of the forty-year Arab boycott of Israeli goods and commercial partnerships, substantially altered Israel's relationship to the Arab Middle East.<sup>6</sup> In its wake, the Israeli state began to pursue new diplomatic and economic relations with neighboring Arab states following a template of peacemaking through economic liberalization, beginning with a peace accord with Jordan in 1994, which ended their official state of war. Without the Arab boycott as an obstacle, Israel also increased its trade with North African countries, particularly Morocco and Tunisia; opened trade offices in Qatar and Oman; escalated diplomatic negotiations with Syria; and pursued joint ventures with Jordan, Egypt, and the Palestinians in such matters as tourism, transportation, water, and the environment.<sup>7</sup> Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres spoke of the “New Middle East” that economic liberalization would deliver, including a regional common market with Tel Aviv at its center.<sup>8</sup> Israel's relationship to and within the Arab Middle East was being radically reconfigured.

Inside Israel's borders, political change was no less substantial. The national economy was liberalizing and expanding.<sup>9</sup> The ethnic makeup of the Israeli Parliament was changing.<sup>10</sup> Israeli demographics were shifting

due to massive immigration from Russia and a growing population of foreign laborers, and many minority populations were being acknowledged by the state in new ways, particularly during the Rabin-Peres administration.<sup>11</sup> The Oslo process also altered the ways that Israeli history could be told. In the Israeli academy, scholars were rethinking the foundational Zionist myths and accounts of state formation, and these new scholarly accounts began to circulate in the popular national media.<sup>12</sup> Whereas regional conflict had necessitated historical defenses of the nation-state, there was a sense that political reconciliation had enabled their critical reevaluation.

This book is particularly attentive to the changing status of Israel's Palestinian citizenry within this altered political landscape, a population that includes those communities that remained within Israel's borders after state formation in 1948.<sup>13</sup> In the 1990s, they composed nearly a quarter of the Israeli population. Collectively, they have been subject to decades of state repression, underdevelopment, and political disenfranchisement aimed at preventing any real or perceived threat to the Jewish state. Yet during the Labor administration, state policy toward the Arab minority was modified. After decades of sanctioned underdevelopment, government budgets for the so-called Arab sector grew considerably.<sup>14</sup> Official discourse was also changing, as the state encouraged Jewish Israelis to "coexist" with their Arab conationals. The rhetoric of coexistence (*dukiyum*) was first applied to Israel's new relationship with neighboring Arab states in the context of the Oslo process and only later, after it had gained a conceptual hold, was extended to include Israel's Arab population. Although this discursive shift had limited political effects, as subsequent chapters will suggest, it was nonetheless significant. Arab citizens of Israel, long perceived as Israel's enemy within, were being symbolically included in the nation's multicultural tableau.<sup>15</sup> Israel's Arab population, in other words, was becoming intelligible in new ways within dominant imaginations. It should be stressed that Israel's internal Arab population had always been perceptible to the Israeli state. Indeed, the state lauded its history of comprehension in this area. But these Arabs had been primarily comprehensible as political threats. Oslo helped to alter their perceived political valence.

How did tourism articulate with these political changes? This shift-

ing political landscape, the combination of changing regional diplomacy and domestic policy, catalyzed tourist appetites. More pointedly, I argue that among elite Jewish Israelis of European descent (Ashkenazi Jews), these political changes invigorated a desire for Arabness — that is, for Arab places, culinary traditions, cultural practices, and histories. These desires were by no means novel. In their broadest construal, they can be traced to the early decades of state building by Zionist settlers in Palestine, when the idealization of Arab culture was harnessed to the Jewish nation-making project.<sup>16</sup> In the decades after state formation in 1948, idealization would be replaced by a regulatory discourse about the Arab political threat, one manifest in the work of anthropologists, journalists, state officials, and intelligence officers alike.<sup>17</sup> In the 1990s, under pressure from the changing political landscape, the symbolic valence of Arabness shifted. Arab persons, cultures, and places were no longer perceived as threats in the dominant Israeli imagination — or, more precisely, not merely so. Their significance was being revised. Now they could also be desired, enjoyed, and consumed.

These new valences of Arab intelligibility were powerfully manifest within Israeli tourist cultures chiefly with the emergence of a new set of regional itineraries. Israeli diplomacy with neighboring Arab countries was making the region newly available as an object of Israeli tourist desire. Jordan was the first new regional destination of this era. In the immediate aftermath of its peace treaty with Israel in 1994, hundreds of thousands of Israelis traveled to Petra and Amman for a brief holiday. Israeli tourism to Morocco also increased during this period, following low-level diplomatic relations with Israel in the same year, as did Israeli leisure travel to Egypt and the Sinai Peninsula. Jewish Israeli tourist fantasies were also in flux. As Israel pursued diplomatic talks with Syria in the winter of 1995, articles in Israeli newspapers prepared readers for a visit to Damascus, while others lauded the pleasures of Beirut and Tunis, detailing their historic sites and culinary specialties. These itineraries were still impossibilities, as much of the Middle East and North Africa remained off-limits to Israeli passport holders. Nonetheless, these imaginary routes were important barometers of ideological change. Regional routes that had been officially unavailable to Israeli passport holders since 1948 were becoming thinkable in new ways thanks to shifts in the terms of regional diplomacy. While tour-

ism was a byproduct of such processes, it was also the theater in which Israelis actively negotiated these political changes. Tourist practices and discourses translated the vagaries of diplomatic processes and domestic policy into an everyday language of routes and consumer pleasures. The very intelligibility of the Arab Middle East was changing, and tourism was an important means of both enunciating and negotiating such changes.

The political processes of this period, and the newly modified intelligibility of Arabness, also produced new Israeli itineraries within the nation-state. Beginning in the mid-1990s, Palestinian villages in Israel's Galilee region were collaboratively refashioned as tourist sites by local Palestinian entrepreneurs and Israeli state officials, sites designed explicitly for Jewish Israeli visitors. The state discourse of coexistence played a crucial role in the market's emergence. At work was a phenomenon that we might call *consumer coexistence*. Following the state's injunction to coexist, many Jewish tourists engaged in an incitement to cultural difference: they invited Palestinian citizens of Israel to perform their ethnic identity in the tourist marketplace, to remake their cultural difference into a tourist commodity. Such demands, however implicit in form, represented a substantial shift in normative Israeli epistemologies. The state had long demanded spectacles of loyalty and performances of Israeli identity from the internal Arab population. While these demands did not dissipate in the 1990s, they were tempered by others. In the tourist arena, the same population was being asked by state officials and Jewish Israeli tourists alike to perform as Arabs—that is, to recover some of the ethnic markings that they had long been asked to disavow.

The ethnic tourist market that emerged took a relatively predictable form, reliant on a conventional set of cultural rituals and discourses.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, it is precisely the market's conventional form that interests me, as it signaled a radical shift in prevailing Israeli imaginations. Arab communities and places within Israel's borders were now becoming intelligible as banal objects of enjoyment. Arab villages, persons, and histories could now be slotted into a culturally interchangeable ethnic tourist economy, with relatively consistent taxonomies and measures of value. Yet, as I will suggest, these taxonomies generated highly localized effects. Through predictable tourist structures, new perceptions of the Palestinian minority were being forged.

While these tourist cultures were predicated on a revision in the terms of national intelligibility, they were also dynamic arenas of revision in their own right by which Israelis were actively negotiating and adjusting the contours of the dominant national optic. Space was an essential element in this process. Prior to the Oslo process, Israel's very proximity to its Arab neighbors had been largely obscured within prevailing political discourses, overwritten by the terms of political enmity, both real and imagined. The Oslo process changed this "imaginary geography," making these proximities thinkable in new ways.<sup>19</sup> But tourism made these geographies more thinkable still, making them perceptible in a way that the language of diplomacy could not. Israeli tourism to Jordan is a case in point. The voyage between Tel Aviv and Amman, now possible in just over an hour by car, changed the ways that regional geography could be described. The same could be said about Israeli tourist fantasies about Damascus, Beirut, and Tunis—fantasies anchored in a celebration of surprising nearness. Jewish Israeli tourism within the Palestinian Galilee had similar spatial effects. For many tourists, the proximity between Jewish and Palestinian places inside Israel had also been unthinkable, subsumed by the terms of inter-ethnic enmity. Jews who traveled to Palestinian villages effectively recast the terms of national geography by re-marking Arab spaces as proximate, as newly visible coordinates on a state-sanctioned cartography of Israeli leisure. During the Oslo period, geography could be enunciated in new ways, and tourism provided the tools.

Yet the tourist cultures that Oslo spawned were fragile forms. Consumer coexistence, like its analogue in the political arena, was predicated on a highly contingent form of political tolerance.<sup>20</sup> Most tourists sought Arab culture in denationalized form, stripped of explicit Palestinian histories. At the same time, most had little patience for the histories of discrimination and dispossession to which Palestinian citizens had been subject. The explicit presence of these histories or nationalist markers threatened market viability, discouraging tourists from returning. Nor were most Jewish Israeli tourists willing to use the term "Palestinian" to designate their Arab conationals, preferring the state-sponsored vocabulary organized through ethnoreligious categories. Within its terms, Christian and Muslim Arabs were marked as "Arab-Israelis" while Bedouin, Druze, and Circassian populations were categorized as Israel's "non-Jewish minori-



ties.” Of course, these categories were highly political: “Arab” signified an enemy population, while “non-Jewish minorities” were understood as Israel’s potential allies.<sup>21</sup> Some Palestinian hosts shaped their tourist offerings according to the political logics employed by tourists in an effort to maximize their profits. Others refused such logics, using tourism as a stage to enunciate the very histories that Jewish Israeli tourists refused. In such moments, the tourist market was transformed into an arena of active struggle over the material and symbolic conditions of Israeli belonging, highlighting the discrepant positions that Arab and Jewish citizens occupy within the Jewish state.<sup>22</sup>

The scope of political revision during this period should not be overstated. Neither the Oslo process nor the domestic policies of the Labor administration were universally embraced by Israelis. It follows that not all Israelis, particularly those on the political right, endorsed a shift in national ways of knowing. And the terms of Arab revaluation that Oslo spawned were highly delimited. Many Arab persons, things, and histories retained their perceived threat and, as such, could not be transformed into tourist commodities. Even as Palestinian villages in the Galilee were remade as tourist sites, Arab Jewish (e.g., Mizrahi) places within Israel’s borders did not acquire analogous tourist appeal.<sup>23</sup> The same could be said about the occupied Palestinian territories. Even as Jewish Israeli tourists were imagining their future routes to Damascus and Beirut, few returned to the West Bank as tourists or hikers during this period to revisit places they had enjoyed before the Palestinian uprising. In large measure, the contingent nature of Arab revaluation had its roots in the political terms of the Oslo process. Although the state promised free movement for all regional actors throughout a Middle East without borders, Oslo’s neoliberal economic order depended on concurrent restrictions on Palestinian movement, implemented through closures and curfews, militarized checkpoints, Israeli control of borders and ports, visa restrictions, and the eventual separation barrier.<sup>24</sup> While Israeli capital crossed Israel’s borders with increasing ease during this period, those borders were newly fortified to prevent the entry of unwanted Arabs into Israeli territory. And even as the Israeli media was reconsidering the proximity between Tel Aviv and Amman, the Israeli state was carefully regulating the distances and divides between Jewish Israeli cities and Palestinian ones in the Occupied Territo-

ries. The selective terms of Israeli tourism were a measure of this uneven political landscape.

#### Routes: Travel and Scholarship

The itineraries examined in this study are situated within a long history of tourism and travel through the Middle East. The tradition of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish pilgrimage to the Holy Land was already well established in the late 1880s, when the Zionist movement began to settle in Palestine.<sup>25</sup> While pilgrims and other travelers had traversed the region for centuries, most scholars trace the arrival of so-called tourists to the mid-nineteenth century, when the development of steam navigation, the growth of railway lines, and the construction of the Suez Canal (1869) made travel to and around the Middle East speedier and more affordable, thereby extending its pleasures to a broader class spectrum of consumers.<sup>26</sup> International tourist companies began operating in the region in the 1860s, offering excursions into the “enchanted Orient.”<sup>27</sup>

In some regards, the itineraries introduced in this book are anything but novel. Many of the routes enjoyed and imagined by Israelis during the Oslo period have their precedent in prestate history. In the first decades of the twentieth century, middle-class Jewish settlers in Palestine enjoyed a set of transregional itineraries. They took the daily shuttle service between Haifa and Beirut, the Hejaz railway from Haifa to Beirut, or passenger trucks from Tel Aviv to Damascus and Baghdad.<sup>28</sup> At the same time, these Jewish residents of Palestine were avidly touring the Land of Israel (*Eretz Yisrael*) in the context of a national pedagogical project committed to intimate knowledge of the ancient homeland. The hike (*ha-tiyul*) was a crucial element of this nationalist pedagogy, a practice imagined as a means of territorial conquest and of nationalizing the Jewish traveler through embodied experience of the land.<sup>29</sup> As Western tourism to Palestine increased, Zionist institutions began working with tourist agencies to introduce Western Jews to the burgeoning infrastructures of Zionist settlement, attracting them with specially designed guidebooks, posters, and promotional films (see figure 3).<sup>30</sup> Throughout the Mandate period, British authorities placed strict regulations on the movement of these visitors into Palestine to ensure that “no Jews would enter the country in the guise of tourists.”<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 1.** The pedagogical power of the hike [*ha-tiyul*]. Jewish travelers from Palestine with their guide, David Benvenisti, 1941. PHOTO: DAVID SERRY.

Regional routes were closed to Israeli tourists after the establishment of the state in 1948. But their itineraries would shift considerably following Israel's occupation of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula in 1967 as sites in these territories became newly available as Jewish Israeli destinations. Jews flocked to East Jerusalem's Old City for its culinary offerings, to the Sinai coast for natural beauty and Bedouin culture, and to the markets and restaurants of Bethlehem and Ramallah for inexpensive shopping on Friday afternoons. Palestinian residents of the newly occupied territories also crossed into Israel in large numbers after the cessation of the 1967 War, returning to homes, landscapes, and families from which they had been separated in 1948. Jewish Israeli travel through the Palestinian territories would continue in varying degrees until the outbreak of the first Palestinian uprising (1987–93), when most of these itineraries came to a decisive end. Jewish settlers and territorial nationalists were an exception in this regard, continuing their travel in the Occupied Territories as a means of advancing the Zionist project. By the end of the 1990s, small numbers of Israeli Jews returned to the West Bank as consumers and sightseers, their routes made possible by the sense of security that Oslo had delivered. Most such travel would cease with the outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000.



**Figure 2.** Regional routes before nation-states. Jewish travelers from Palestine camping in Aqaba (Jordan), 1929. PHOTO: AVRAHAM SOSKIN.

As a study of the interplay between travel and power, my investigation is by no means novel. Rather, it draws on a body of scholarship inaugurated by Edward Said's *Orientalism*, with its consideration of how travel practices have participated in Western imperialist projects. Scholars working in *Orientalism*'s wake have argued that we understand travel narratives as instruments of colonial conquest, discursive tools intimately related to the more violent projects of resource extraction, settlement, and colonial governance.<sup>32</sup> Postcolonial critics also have insisted on the ambivalent nature of such narratives, arguing that their ruptures can signal both the blind spots and the fragilities of colonial dominance.<sup>33</sup> They contend that reading such narratives against the grain with an eye to such ambivalences participates in a kind of decolonizing work, work this book will try to advance. In drawing on postcolonial criticism, I am advancing a historical argument about the colonial nature of the Israeli nation-building project. I am contending, as many other scholars have, that Zionism borrowed heavily from contemporaneous colonial movements by sharing settlement tactics, forms of land acquisition, economic structures, and cultural ideologies and that many of these colonial institutions persist in the Israeli present, although in altered forms.<sup>34</sup>

As should be clear, I employ the rubric *tourism* a bit unconventionally



**Figure 3.** Courting Western Jews. Poster produced by the Society for the Promotion of Travel in the Holyland, 1929. ARTIST: ZE'EV RABAN.

in this study to designate a wide array of Israeli traveling practices, leisure cultures, consumptive desires, and market discourses of the Oslo period. Together, I argue, they form a distinct cultural field. A comprehensive study of Israeli tourism of this decade is, however, well beyond the scope of this inquiry. Numerous itineraries and traveling practices have been excluded, many of which have been intimately involved in the production of national intelligibility. These include postarmy travel to third world countries by which tourism functions as catharsis for the military project; the annual visits by Jewish high school students to Holocaust memorial sites which suture Holocaust memory to Jewish Israeli identity; political journeys of both Jews and Palestinians with Israeli citizenship to former Palestinian villages destroyed during the course of the 1948–49 War, journeys that commemorate the dispossession; and Mizrahi pilgrimage and homecoming travel to Morocco, routes that frustrate state interdictions on Mizrahi memory.<sup>35</sup> I leave these Israeli itineraries to other studies.

Yet I include other itineraries in their stead, ones infrequently grouped under the rubric of tourism. At the heart of this inquiry is an investment in what I'll call *discrepant mobility*—a term that refers to the broader regimes and histories of mobility and immobility in Israel, Palestine, and the Arab Middle East in which, I argue, Israeli tourism is situated. These histories include the Zionist migration to Palestine beginning in the late nineteenth century and the forms of Palestinian dispossession that it generated; the flight and expulsion of some seven hundred thousand Palestinians in the course of the 1948–49 War; the Military Administration to which Palestinian residents of Israel were subjected in the early decades of state formation (1948–66), with its violent restrictions on Palestinian movement; the 1950s mass emigration to Israel of Mizrahi Jews from the Middle East, North Africa, and the Levant and the state-sponsored discrimination that followed; the numerous journeys of the Israeli army to Arab places in times of espionage, incursion, occupation, and war; and the strictures on movement to which Palestinians in the Occupied Territories have been increasingly subject since the onset of the Oslo process.<sup>36</sup> I am interested in the ways that Israeli tourist cultures have historically intersected with these routes, with these histories of both movement and spatial incarceration. In other words, I contend that Israeli tourist and leisure practices have been historically enabled by the journeys of soldiers, immigrants, and refugees.<sup>37</sup> Such convergences among seemingly dissimilar itineraries are at this project's core.

### Borders and Crossings

As a study of Israeli political culture, this book has numerous scholarly precedents. I draw heavily on the tradition of new Israeli historiography and sociology that has emerged over the course of the past few decades, with its commitment to rethinking foundational Israeli myths about national history, demography, geography, and state formation.<sup>38</sup> In turn, my attention to Israel's Palestinian population is made possible by decades of anticolonial scholarship on Palestinian history and society—a scholarship that has boldly refused the dominant account of Palestinian absence from both land and modernity alike.<sup>39</sup> Although this anti-colonial literature has made my study possible, its goals are different from my own. While it has endeavored to restore Palestinians to the histories from which they

have been so systemically foreclosed, my project, by contrast, concerns the mechanisms of their foreclosure in the dominant Israeli context. It follows that while Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are at this study's core, I am principally interested in their discursive function within prevailing Jewish Israeli imaginaries, their status as tourist commodities and objects of desire. My attention to Jewish Israeli tourist cultures is delimited by a related logic. I focus on elite tourists of European descent (Ashkenazim), the population most prominently involved in Arab commodification, and the population that has dominated Israeli political and social life since the early years of Zionist settlement in Palestine.<sup>40</sup> In these ways, this study seeks to advance a very different kind of progressive research agenda, arguing that serious attention be paid both to the terms of Israeli dominance and to the everyday Israeli cultural machinery of Palestinian dispossession.

This book is also proposing a relational approach to the study of Israeli cultural politics. As others have argued, scholarship about both Israeli and Palestinian society has traditionally been hampered by a national logic, a logic manifest in disinterest in “mutually formative interactions” between Jews and Palestinian Arabs, interactions that span borders, checkpoints, and national ideologies.<sup>41</sup> Traditionally, both Middle East studies and Israel studies have been party to this disinterest. Scholars working within the former rubric have, for their part, largely avoided sustained engagement with Israel, save its legacy as a Western colonial outpost. Avoidance was thought to perform radical critique, effectively removing the Jewish state from the region. Scholars working within the Israel studies paradigm have, in turn, focused principally on Jewish Israeli culture and society within the national borders, therein neglecting Israel's relationship to its regional context. In these ways, both traditions reproduced the fiction of Israeli spatial and cultural insularity within the Middle East, frustrating efforts to consider mutual formation across national borders and ideologies. A relational approach, by contrast, conceives of Israel differently, placing questions of cultural interdependence at the scholarly core.<sup>42</sup> I attempt to work in this relational mode. Indeed, I suggest that Israel's relation to the Arab Middle East structures the terms of national intelligibility itself.

Chapter 1 analyzes the regional routes enjoyed by Israeli travelers of

the Oslo period through a reading of the mainstream Israeli print media. I focus on two distinct itineraries: Israelis traveling into the Arab Middle East and regional Arabs voyaging into the Jewish state. The figure of the tourist was a locus of both possibility and anxiety during this era. Jewish Israeli routes through the Middle East illustrated the promise of this peace process, even as incoming Arabs in tourist guise, often figured as threatening subjects, suggested its dystopic possibilities. Through attention to the colonial archive on which these narratives drew, this chapter considers how stories about tourists enunciated normative Israeli anxieties about the status of the Jewish state in the New Middle East that Oslo was poised to deliver.

The next chapters study the growth of an ethnic tourism market within Palestinian villages of the Israeli Galilee during this period. Chapter 2 considers how these tourist spaces, producing unusual forms of intimate contact between Palestinian and Jewish citizens of Israel, could generate contest over the terms of national intelligibility. In an effort to secure market viability, most Palestinian entrepreneurs fashioned their tourist offerings according to state-sponsored protocols, protocols that sought to regulate the kinds of histories and politics that such offerings contained. Yet these protocols were plastic forms, providing Palestinian hosts with the tools to narrate the Israeli nation-state in ways that challenged the very foundations of national intelligibility. This chapter is also an investigation of normative Israeli notions of cultural value and how such notions were being reworked amid the political changes of the period.

Chapter 3 turns to the politics and production of space. I argue that the Oslo process can usefully be understood as a rescaling project which enabled Israel's insertion into both regional and global marketplaces in some relatively unprecedented ways. Rescaling was a cause of both celebration and concern for the Israeli state. Even as it welcomed multinational capital investment, the state feared that a newly transnational Middle East would weaken the Israeli nation-state and bring its internal Arab population into threatening contact with neighboring states. This chapter posits the ethnic tourism market as a symptomatic instance of these anxieties. Through a study of the everyday practices of state planners and architects, I consider the ways that the Israeli state labored to remake Palestinian space for Jewish Israeli tourism in the midst of rescaling processes. I ar-



gue that the state responded to these processes with a fantasy of bounded Arab space, producing blueprints for tourist development that effectively fortified the scale of the village as a spatial container. This study of spatial production and everyday statecraft is thus an attempt to consider the link between regional and intranational processes during the Oslo era.

Chapter 4 moves to a very different political terrain. Here I consider forms of Jewish Israeli culinary tourism in the Palestinian village of Abu Ghosh, a village known for its history of collaboration with the Israeli state and Zionist institutions. While much ethnic tourism in the Palestinian Galilee occasioned a contestation of national intelligibility, Abu Ghosh entrepreneurs in the restaurant sector struggled to fortify its terms and therein secure recognition by the state and dominant Israeli society. This study of restaurant culture provides an occasion to reconsider the “romance of resistance” that frequently attends scholarship on Palestinian political culture, pointing to some of the histories, subjects, and structures of feeling that this approach has obscured.<sup>43</sup>

Although politically transformative, the Oslo process was relatively short-lived, declared a dead letter in 2000 following the diplomatic failures at Camp David. The outbreak of the second Palestinian uprising in 2000 precipitated a dramatic political realignment in Jewish Israeli society: a popular shift to the political right that provided the government with political authority to suppress the uprising at virtually any cost. Chapter 5 concludes with a reading of Oslo’s demise through the lens of Jewish Israeli leisure practices. Returning to the dominant Israeli print media, I study political events in Israel during the spring of 2002, when Palestinian suicide bombings terrorized Jewish Israeli cities and the Israeli military administration launched a massive incursion into the West Bank. I am interested in how narratives of Jewish Israeli leisure under attack were used to represent this political crisis.

The *itinerary* to which my title refers has multiple resonances. In part, it gestures to the theoretical literatures on which this study draws, the ways that tropes of mobility have been deployed in poststructural theory to figure the transitory route of the signifier, its “detours” and “wanderings,” and the potentially disruptive effects of these routes.<sup>44</sup> Michel de Certeau, for example, takes the “itinerary” of the urban pedestrian to elaborate the logic of performativity. De Certeau’s “walker in the city” is a subject

who makes the city through perambulation, giving meaning to the urban landscape in the act of traversing space. These traveling practices are polyvalent in their effects, both securing and reconfiguring the spaces made available by urban planners. “Pedestrian enunciation,” as de Certeau coins this spatial practice, simultaneously “affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects, etc. the trajectories it ‘speaks.’”<sup>45</sup> Posited as the counterpart of the map, with its panoptic vision, the itinerary designates a critical analytics rooted in contingent knowledges and polyvalent readings.

The tourist forms discussed in this volume are itinerant in similar ways. They are “many sided, resilient, cunning and stubborn,” in de Certeau’s words, generating contradictory trajectories.<sup>46</sup> At moments, they affirm national norms and logics of intelligibility. At other moments, they enunciate national space, identity, and culture differently, calling these logics into question. Nation-states are also itinerant—they are performative forms, constantly being reproduced, adjusted, and refashioned within the everyday practices of national communities and institutions. Tourism, I contend, plays a critical role in this performative process. To read Israel as itinerant is to consider the transgressive potential of its perambulating norms and intelligibilities. To read Israel as itinerant is to imagine its alternative futures.