



Dust jacket from the 1880 *Map of Western Palestine* by Conder and Kitchener

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**James Morris**

## Time & Remains of Palestine

Photographs and text by James Morris  
 Introduction by Raja Shehadeh  
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### Reflections on a landscape of conflict

With a curiosity for history and topography James Morris began photographing the remains in Israel of the former British Mandate of »Palestine« promised as a homeland to such different peoples. His work evolved as an enquiry into a particular trajectory of Palestinian history, witnessed within the landscape. Part 1 probes the concept of »Nakba« (catastrophe) through exploring the now historic Palestinian presence in much of Israel, documenting the remains of some of the 400 or so villages depopulated then razed as a consequence of the 1948 war. Places that, now renamed and reinterpreted, remain pertinent in the consciousness of their diaspora. Accompanying each image is a detailed caption that records something of the history and occupation of that place.

Part 2 considers the contemporary landscape of a would be »Palestine« recording the fabric of conflict in the labyrinthine West Bank and witnessing parallel worlds of parted peoples, each with a narrative in variance to the other.

In contemplating the enduring notion of »Palestine«, the book seeks not just to chronicle history and landscape but also to comprehend, in part, that which evolved and reverberates still.

From the introduction by Raja Shehadeh:

*James Morris' superb collection of photographs includes a striking image of the destroyed village of Simsim, a piece of empty land with the eeriness and mystery of a Scottish Moor. The uneven ground undulates as if pregnant with remnants of a life buried underneath. [...] Here the destruction was total. It is left for the imagination of the viewer to work out what was there on this quiet but sad piece of charged territory.*

*The village of Simsim was named after its main agricultural produce, sesame. Without visible indicators of its history we have to trust Morris's text to tell us. He writes that in 1945 the village had a population of 1360, and that it was destroyed by the Jewish forces on 13 May 1948, two days before the Israeli state was declared. It was then that time began for Israeli Jews in a state of their own. For us Palestinian refugees, time was suspended. What remains of Simsim is this empty strip of ground and the memories of those who lived there that they passed on to their descendants who still commemorate Nakba Day. Not all of Morris's pictures are as quiet and subdued. Some cry out; others are informed by the imprint of time.*

*[...] Without people acknowledging – truly seeing – the Nakba there can be no peace in this region.*

**James Morris** (b. 1963) is a British photographer of landscape and the built environment. His work documents the impact of man's presence in the landscape and the layers of history evident there; exploring storylines of place and people, past and present. In 2003 he published *Butabu*, a record of the threatened and vulnerable landscape of West African vernacular architecture. Some years after returning to live in the country of his birth he published *A Landscape of Wales* (2010) which has been described as both a love letter and deeply melancholic. His works have been exhibited internationally and have received awards from the Design and Art Directors Guild, the Graham Foundation for Fine Arts, the European Union and the Arts Council of Wales. They are held in numerous collections including the Victoria and Albert Museum, The British Council; The Museum of African Art NY; Princeton University and the Aga Khan Foundation.

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## Press images

Please find complete captions in the book, see page reference



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2. al-Ghabisiyya, district of Acre (page 14)  
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3. Jaba' district of Haifa (page 32)  
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