

An aerial photograph of a desert landscape, showing a winding road and a small building. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red filter. The title 'شجرة الأرض الغازية' is written in white Arabic script, and 'Gašeous Cedar Tree' is written in white English script below it.

شجرة الأرض الغازية Gašeous Cedar Tree

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Gaseous Cedar Tree

I come from a country where everyone comes from a village. I come from a village that's cradled by a mountain range, a mountain range so protective that clouds can't find their way out - not even to douse the desert. You'd think that water would be abundant - and surely it would be - but I'm afraid our greed has slowly depleted the aquifers - who would have thought that having two flanks would be a mountain's burden.

I come from the western flank of the mountain, from "The Cedars of Lebanon" - or "the Cedars of God" to prevent any confusion. The "Cedars" sits on the Casa [qaḍā'] of Becharreh, one of the 7 Casas of the North Governorate [Muḥāfazat Aš Šamāl], but it's also adjacent to the Baalbek-Hermel Governorate [Muḥāfazat Bā'labakk Al Hermel]. A somewhat privileged position¹ in the interlocking territorial delimitations, meticulously inscribed in religious, patriotic and mythical beliefs. From such strict and complex borderings, territorial aggressions and conflicts repeatedly arise, a repetition that carries intensive differences and that produces, in turn, said differences. For the purpose of this research, I intend to dwell on three conflictual episodes I found interest in, episodes indicative of a long exposure to the atmosphere, three weathering acts rooted in deep time but non-linear nonetheless:

The first recorded pillaging episode of the cedar tree forest 4700 years ago, the persecution of the Maronite monks in Wadi Qadisha by Mamluk sultans 755 years ago, and the ongoing conflicts around water ownership between villagers from Becharreh and Deniyeh.

In understanding the climate of the Cedars, it became evident that existing forms of territorial appropriation - namely traditional property beliefs or land divisions - were discordant with existing patterns of inhabiting and could eventually be challenged.

Land division seems incongruous to a land where intermittent streams surge on private properties, carrying sediments, rocks and microorganisms, only to disappear in the early summer days, where the guerilla planting of trees is the most effective reforestation tool; a land where goats and shepherds roam freely, razing our backyard bushes and fertilizing the soils along the way, such a land cannot be strictly bound. Ironically, even the very tools that draft the borders of properties struggle to represent the accuracy of the limits. Cadastral maps issued by the municipality² are the perfect representation of such a process, a transition from a land bounded by a tree and a stream, to a land drawn on

¹ as mentioned by Antoine Harb in *Lebanon – A Name through 4000 Years Entity and Identity*, the distinct geography of the country attracted minorities that were persecuted in neighboring countries - namely Druze, Shi'a Muslims, Orthodox Christians among others - lending them refuge between the mountain range and the sea, a nook that remains hard to storm, shielding Becharreh but exposing Deniyeh

² Refer to pp. 20 - 21



Fig.1: Overlay of Cadastral Maps of Becharreh, Hand Drawing Daung from 1964, CAD Drawing Dates from 2015

a modest piece of paper, and from that piece of paper to a computer-aided drawing of a polyline, moving the coordinates slightly along the process. This shift exemplifies the territorial aggressions³ aforementioned and the incongruent nature of the land division, a transition that both strengthens and is strengthened by an ideology centered on private property, a mode of desiring⁴ that takes precedence over community and solidarity. In Simondon's words, "[N]orms and values do not exist prior to the system of being in which they appear; they are becoming, instead of appearing in becoming without being part of becoming"⁵, these values and their becomings is where I would like to situate this exploration. In the production of the territory, borderings are weathered and borderings are weathering; could new borderings then provoke desiring otherwise?

³ The use of the word aggression is borrowed from Bogue's *Deleuze: On Music, Painting and the Arts* where he highlights the aggression/territory duality but contests whether aggression has primacy in the construction of a territory

⁴ My understanding of desire production aligns with Smith's reading of Deleuze: "Social production represents, at a molar level, what is produced, by desiring production, at a molecular level. As a result, desiring production comes to be crushed by the requirements of representation, and comes to desire its own repression." in *Essays on Deleuze*, p. 163

⁵ Simondon, *Individuation*, p. 377

Harvesting Nebular Intuition

The research I present is nonlinear, its outcome cannot be appreciated as a sensible thread that ties every argument to an enlightening conclusion, it is arguably closer to a thinking-with process, discordant at times, troubling at others, but metastable in its assembly. The research I conducted, in reading and in doing, materializes in a nebular structure that allows for sensible intuition, a fertile ground for informed and responsible decisions, a structure I found to be appropriate assuming the very nature of the site and the weathering it exists in.

In understanding the production of this specific territory, one must grow aware of the actors involved and their influence on each other's milieu formations; the weathering of which is indicative of a Territory and Ritornello continuum. Only by means of repetition and difference can a territory be produced¹, rhythmical difference would spur an occurrence into another milieu as it traverses an intensive threshold², in other words the difference becomes expressive. This becoming expressive is the transduction of flows and information to tangible characteristics, it is the operation that codes the flow and therefore renders it visible, a "locking in" of intensities afforded by a possibility space bound by a set of constraints³. In that sense, the realizability of a possibility is not strictly determined but biased⁴ by constraints that take conditions away from randomness⁵, in other words "constraints allow for a difference to repeat itself"⁶. The three weathering acts - the pillaging, the persecution, and the water dispute - are ritornellos in the molar fabrication of the "Cedars of Lebanon", but they are also territories in and of themselves, and the expressions of the repetitions will be crucial for my comprehension of the construction of the mountains. The numerous events superimposed on this remote land are interdependent as their respective flows of energy and matter are interwoven, but they don't fuse into a monolithic entity they come together in a "covarying pattern of coordination dynamic"⁷, a pattern that connects back to musical scores as the ritornello binds the composition without altering the complexity of the piece.

Together these formations construct a framework for territorial understanding beyond Euclidean systems of reference⁸, but rather as a metastable set of coordinates, a rhizomatic landscape that hosts but that cannot be formally appropriated. Guattari talks about ecosophy, a philosophy encompassing the social, mental and environmental ecologies, as

- 1 Kleinherenbrink, *Territory and Ritornello*, p.214 (from his reading of *A Thousand Plateaus*)
- 2 Kodalak, *Affective Aesthetics beneath Art and Architecture*. p.408
- 3 Juarrero, *Context Changes Everything*, p.70
- 4 Ibid, p.55
- 5 Ibid, p.56
- 6 Ibid, p.168
- 7 Ibid, p.57
- 8 Delanda, *Nonorganic Life*, p.129

both a unifying and a granular approach⁹. He reframes the aforementioned theories, on bordering, on intensive thinking, and on territorial production as follows: "While the logic of discursive sets endeavors to completely delimit its objects, the logic of intensities, or eco-logic, is concerned only with the movement and intensity of evolutive processes"¹⁰.

Guattari's logic of intensities can extend to a logic of constraints, as context-dependency "make[s] the probability of one event conditional upon another"¹¹. In the context of the Cedars of Becharreh, this approach cannot be dissociated from the weather. My use of the word is neither analogy, nor metaphor, weathering represents a specific approach to comprehending the interconnectedness of bodies, locations, and weather within our changing climate. It delineates the intricate relationships between socially, culturally, politically, and materially diverse bodies concerning the material essence of a place across extensive layers of historical, geological, and climatological timescales. In the conversation around constraints, context dependency means interdependency, on energy, on matter and on information, the flow of which constructs the weather. In Neimanis and Hamilton's words "to weather means to pay attention to how bodies and places respond to weather-worlds which they are also making"¹².

Fig. 2:



- 9 Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, p.42
- 10 Ibid, p.44
- 11 Juarrero, *Context Changes Everything*, p. 72
- 12 Neimanis and Hamilton, *Weathering*, p.81

**What affordances can be actualized
by conceptualizing territorial
production as acts of weathering?**

عَمَّا تَتَكُنْ الْهَنْدِيسَةَ بِفَهْمِهَا لِلتَّجْوِيتِ أَنْ
تَتَجَرَّ رَغْبَةً عَلَى الْإِسْتِخْدَامِ مِنْ مَخْتَلَفَةٍ

Can context-dependent constraints prompt a novel interpretation of appropriation through which architecture can operate? How can we foster practices of granularity, and in that situated knowledge, can architecture subvert ownership? When can we afford to make kin with the territory and its non-human actors?

Weathering Act I When Meat Refused to Burn

The map of the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate was drawn in an attempt to salvage the Ottoman empire from implosion. The “Tanzimat” or Reorganization, lasted for five decades, fifty years of contesting territorial boundaries and their respective sovereignty. Maintaining a stronghold on Mount Lebanon was more challenging than the Mamluk sultans estimated: geology clearly took a stance, and no conqueror could ever defeat geology. The wadi’s weathering provided shelter for persecuted Maronite monks, the crevices



Fig 3. Spatial and temporal constraint that enabled the emergence of the Kibbe Nayye

were thus inhabited but the milieu was not hospitable as energy sources were precarious, their wheat crops allowed for bulgur reserves, slowly depleting. Surrounded by goats endemic to the wadi, their only resort was to hunt and consume the flesh of the agile grazer, avoiding the lighting of a fire at all cost to stay out of sight. The bulgur thus aided the grinding of the meat to facilitate its consumption, making it softer both on the palate and on the guts, as the wheat absorbed most of the plasmatic fluid, reducing the risk of bacterial growth. The environment is subject to human intervention and its reappings dictate the weathering of the wadi, in its becoming-expressive, and that of the Maronite identity, inherent to a mental ecology, legitimized by the generational grudge of persecution.

The meat refused to burn, it decided to rot slowly instead. A curing method that safeguarded inhabitants of the valley, a method that took billions of years in the making. Mudstones were weathered into clayey sandstones, sandstones allowed the percolation of water, water carved the wadi, the wadi hosted the monks, the monks grew wheat, the wheat became bulgur, the bulgur absorbed plasmatic fluids from the meat, so the meat could rot slowly. The event of the controlled decay is conditional upon the event that precedes it, a network of temporal enabling constraints turning actors and entities interdependent¹.

But what if the raw meat underwent different sets of temporal constraints, a repetition in decay, meddling with possibility spaces to unfold a wider probability contour², five weatherings intended to stall the putrefaction.

The first iteration was constrained by tools, the mortar and pestle were meant to

¹ Juarrero, *Context Changes Everything*, p.73

² Ibid, p. 46

reconstruct the initial set up that grinded the meat. The stiffness of the sandstone allowed for the fine grinding of the meat and the bulgur, a lengthy operation that was labor intensive. The reliance on the tools called for intuition and flexibility, as the efficiency of the method relied on the bulgur’s shredding properties - I found myself tampering with the bulgur to meat ratio to facilitate the process.

Iteration number 2 was constrained by exposure, blending together 200g of ground meat and 60g of bulgur letting it sit outside for some time, exposed to the dutch weather. Iteration number 3 was responding to resource related constraints as it was made with ground meat rather than goat, it also serves as the reference sample.

Iteration number 4 was kept in a dark environment, away from any lighting, a constraint that is not proven to have affected the Kibbe preparation per se, but that could have potential repercussions.

The last iteration was constrained by temperature, it was left outside at an approximate temperature of 2°C for the duration of the experiment. The sample was sealed to avoid exposure to a new set of constraints.

The operative model that sat to decompose on its own was an intuitive response to the schematic mapping of the different forms of time involved in the materialization of the Kibbe. An attempt at actualizing microcosms of potential weather-worlds and their interactions. Ruyer advocates for an understanding of the “universe as one fibrous structure”, where fibers are in constant motion, assembled through time as lines of individuation³. These fibers converge occasionally, and in that convergence they alter barriers of energy flow⁴, generating new sets of constraints⁵. The fibers represented intertwine, yet they stand for various time scales: geological formations rooted in deep time, mamluk occupations that unfolded in historical time, or a goat’s life cycle that’s rather developmental. Entities that were

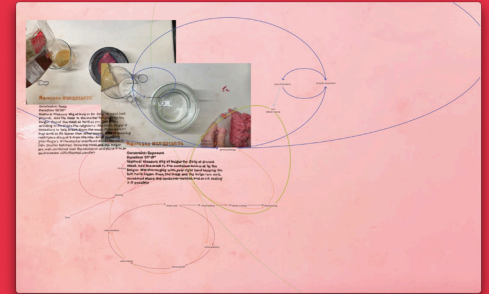


Fig 4. Five iterations of a Kibbe Nayye with five constraining regimes that respond to the context in which the recipe was developed

³ Kousoulas, *Ananke's Sway*, p.166

⁴ Juarrero, *Context Changes Everything*, p.40

⁵ Kousoulas, *Ananke's Sway*, p.167

previously separate are bound together “into complex diachronic interdependencies with emergent properties”⁶. Geology begets stones, stones serve as tools, tools reincarnate into mortars and mortars grind the flesh of goats.

Beyond the preparation of the meat samples, and their respective “resting” conditions, I relinquished control, letting the bacteria model the meats as they pleased. 24 hours into the process, the samples that sat in colder weathers, along with the hand ground meat kept their vibrant red color - the putrefaction was easier to notice on samples 2 and 3. With time another distinction surged, the preparation constrained by tools had a distinguishable texture, one that would arguably be most pleasant on the palate, aside from its stench of course. The bulgur and the meat formed a paste so smooth an untrained eye would find it difficult to differentiate the meat from the wheat, this synthesis into a unified whole was actualized by intensive effort.



Fig 5. Kibbe Nayye iterations ten days into the process

Ten days into the putrefaction, I draw the following conjectures on context dependency:
Weather specificity: The temperature of the samples determined its edibility, the type of meat used determined its chewiness. Had the climate changed, the probability contour would have differed.

Control: Whether it's in the intuitive preparation of the meat or the exposure to the elements, flexibility produces difference, enabling or disabling.

Intensity: Crossing an intensive threshold entails new information, a difference that ties

Weathering Act II Water Thicker than Blood

The methodology seemed adequate so a second iteration was in the works. A swift movement from temporal to spatio-temporal constraints, a possibility space determined by the three states of water to better conceptualize the transboundary water conflict.

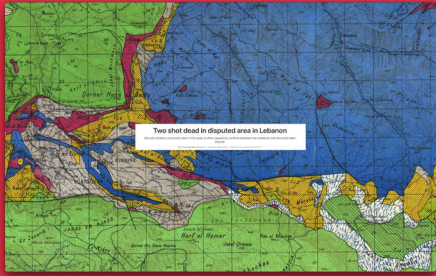


Fig 6. News paper headlines on July 3rd 2023

The dispute started with Haytham and Malek's death, or maybe that's where it ended. A day of mourning was proclaimed in Becharreh and countless news articles followed "Two shot dead in disputed area in Lebanon" some with suggestive undertones "Army Intervenes to Prevent 'Sectarian Strife' in Northern Lebanon Following Qornet Es Saouda Shooting". It wasn't the first time headlines emerge from this remote place, in November of last year, ahead of the skiing season, the chairlift cables were first sawed then shot, an undertaking targeting the economy of Becharreh, a vindictive gesture in the wake of severe droughts in Sir Ed Denniye. The reciprocal acts of aggression are rooted in rhythmic repetitions that could be plotted on Guattari's three ecologies "scheme". The aforementioned tensions, the tribe-like transgenerational vendettas, are inherent to the social ecology, beliefs pertaining to neighboring weather-worlds differ drastically, villagers on respective flanks of the mountain are represented by rivaling religious figures, opposing political leaders and diverging economic activities. A social climate that cannot be dissociated from mental and environmental ecologies, as their affects operate under the aegis of an ecosophy. Confused cartographies are indicative of the synergy between the three ecologies, they operate on a mental ecology as they weather the collective grudge, they strive to represent and annotate the abstraction of the land in its environmental complexity, namely its geological formations and its material flows, but its manufacturing cannot be dissociated from its holder, an author who is possibly a recipient of said generational grudge. Such mappings constitute the probative evidence for the case of the depleting aquifers, a map of the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate (مُتَصَرِّفِيَّة جَبَل لُبْنَان) dating from 1889, where the "Cedars of God" are illustrated but traces of Sir ed Denniye are nowhere to be found. But does the absence from the map necessarily mean the presence of a void? And where on the map is the underground bodies of the plateau¹ separating Sir ed Denniye from Becharreh?



Fig 7. Map of the Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate from 1889



Fig 8. Three iterations of erosion with three constraining regimes that respond to the context in which the aquifers emerged

To better understand the incident that happened in Qornet Es Saouda, delving into the interactions between the fibers can be telling. One particularly dry winter provokes a sudden dip in precipitation patterns, a dip in precipitation patterns “takes the system to a threshold of instability”², said instability drives villagers from Sir Ed Denniye to land possession, land possession ignites generational grudge, generational grudge sows the seeds for sectarianism, sectarianism incites religious persecution, religious persecution triggers dogmatism, and dogmatism probably pulled that trigger on Haytham and Malek. These analogies are not drawn to justify the operations of each part as a means to reduce the complexity of the whole, in fact their sole purpose is to lay down the rhizomatic structure on the plane of imminence.

To put this hypothesis to the test, three models sat on the Cedars plateau, three stratifications of gypsum, clay, and sand embraced by the cirque of the mountain range. That same cirque was stamped onto the piles, a repetition that favors instability.

Temporality here is to be understood as a microevent, forgetting its origins and the path it traversed³, a microevent directed towards becoming-mud. The operative model confronts water to the constraint of density, which is inherently dependent on weather.

Water droplets fell onto the first mount, seeping into crevices and sculpting valleys, mirroring a process akin to Kwinter's epigenetic landscape. Chaotic particles of water coagulate with particles of dust, locking their forms as intensities are imprisoned. Three realms of strata operating around one model, the geological, the organic, and the techno-semiological. In “A thousand Plateaus” Deleuze and Guattari introduce strata as layers of organization that impose order and structure on a system. The liquid state's density prevails over that of dust, it takes precedence over its organization, yet not all dust particles are equal; clay, impervious, engages in negotiations with water.

The second mount was covered in denser water particles, solid lumps of ice infused with

² Juarrero, Context Changes Everything, p.69

³ Ibid, p.76

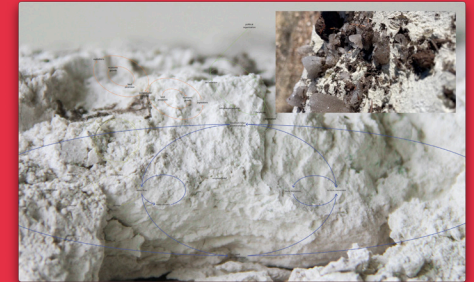


Fig 9a. Mount #1 captured liquid water as lumps that seeped through the crevices of the territory. Fig 9b. Mount #2 became a solid whole as ice melted slowly. Fig 9c. Mount #3 was divided in two parts: a solid surface and a sub-surface of clay still intact.

black ink and sediments. The water dripped slowly, eventually infiltrating every particle of the body of the earth. The sediments and the ink were found beneath the surface, permeating every granule, an arrangement that hardly followed any noticeable pattern, but was all encompassing nonetheless. The substrata thus altered the organization of the structure but remained unformed - with the exception of the rift between clay particles and dust particles.

The third mount was veiled in a mist of water vapor and ashes, a consistency hospitable to the surrounding atmosphere. The gaseous particles were drawn into the superficial layer of the mount creating a fine crust, a threshold reminiscent of the intensive exchange between dust particles and the wet atmosphere. A visible expression of transient organizations, a crust that hides underneath it a structure still auspicious to instability.

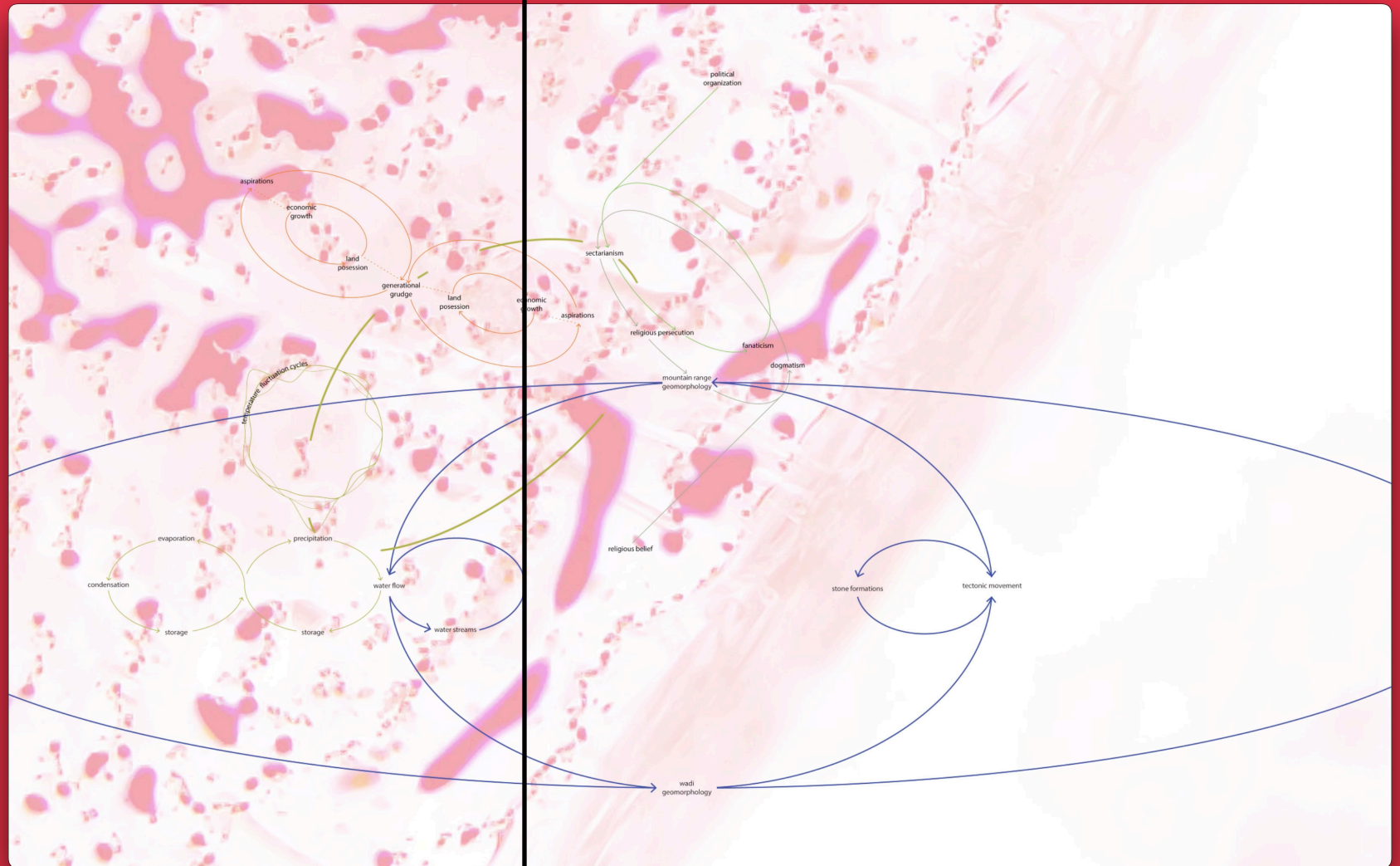


Fig 10. Spatial and temporal constraints that facilitated the murder of Haytham and Malek

After three attempts at stratification, I draw the following conjectures on spatio-temporality:

Density and consistency: Density could translate to granularity, the consistency of the synaptic gap between entities. This grain thus hints at appropriate planes of immanence. **Nomadism:** Sediments, akin to water particles, exhibit a nomadic nature. The exertion of entropy upon their movement would demand more energy than channeling and redirecting their inherent negentropy, restating the second conjecture of the first weathering. **Deleuze was not a geologist:** In the discourse around stratification, some distinctions need to be made between linguistics and geology. The hydrophobic properties of clay, for example, are inherent to geology and its impervious nature is key in the formation of the territory.

Weathering Act III

A Tree Growing Sideways

Much like the sediments and the water particles, I had to turn to nomadism to situate my agency, if any, on site. “Sit as little as possible”, Nietzsche advises, “do not believe any idea that was not born in the open air and of free movement – in which the muscles do not also revel. All prejudices emanate from the bowels. – Sitting still (I said it once already) – is the real sin against the Holy Ghost.” So I subjected myself to some tiresome constraints, delivering my body and its foot power to the uncertain weather, “a form of voluntary servitude”¹ within the vast realm of infinite freedom of choice.

I took it upon myself to get to know the place, to try to understand the production of the territory from its material expression, to defamiliarize myself from the context to

inquire into shrubs I took for granted, to build my own knowledge far from any objective, universal truth I was taught. The curriculum for Lebanese history wasn’t very extensive, in fact it has not been updated since the early 1970s, leaving much of recent history up for interpretation, but one thing the history books would never omit is Gilgamesh’s pillaging of the Cedar forest. Thousands of years ago, the mountains were shaded with cedar trees, an evergreen so fragrant and robust it quickly gained recognition, the trees bore witness to the epic battle between Gilgamesh and the mighty Humbaba, guardian of the forest. Our fallen hero was the last standing obstacle holding Gilgamesh’s troops back, their saws were unleashed and the tallest trees were floating down the Euphrates to build the gates of Nippur. This all too heroic tale painted the ideal backdrop for Maronite politicians from the casa of Becharreh to thrive, their sworn mission to reforest the mountains facilitated their rise in popularity in recent years, a mission that was set in motion many decades ago when one villager, Dr. Youssef Tawk took it upon himself to fight deforestation with guerilla gardening. Tawk crafted a weather-world where

junipers and cedars “miraculously” surfaced on the flanks of the mountains and on private property, strategically harnessing time as an ally as the trees’ lifetime will surpass his, leaving environmental ecology to its own devices. Tawk was also the first to introduce me to Humbaba, and the catalyst for the Qornet Es Saouda conflict as he destroyed the



Fig 11. The “Naval Expedition”, relating the pillaging of the Cedar trees, their journey along the Euphrates, and the construction of temples and gates with the wood. The low-relief is exhibited in the Louvres, human figure for scale.

pipes that drained the aquifers. Tawk lived most of his life in the village, he could never stand the city. He took me on a few walks in the summer around the trees he planted, I had to come back to see how his trees braced the cold.

Choosing the path for the day was not premeditated, nor was it arbitrary; instead, it stemmed from intuition. In Kousoulas’ words “From an infinity of directions, the first step—as the act of hiking-in-the-woods—becomes the norm itself: every step that follows it, builds on the relation of the step before it [...] Consequently, what becomes crucial is the act of the step itself: the moment where the cosmos is still undecided as to what it was and what it will be”².

I saw snow at a distance and oriented my first walk towards the white peaks. I noticed my trajectory continuously shifting between different frames of reference, each shift unveiling new attractors and new possible trajectories. I heard water flowing at a distance and oriented my steps to attune to the intensifying sound, only to discover the source shrouded in goat droppings. I wondered if I would have stayed on Ulysses’ boat when the sirens sang. Pursuing the droppings, I realized the trail had brought me to the flank of the mountain basking in the longest sunlight exposure. I sat there to enjoy the last rays of sun, claiming a mere square meter of privacy in the outdoors, a bit of fabric that’s not only exposed to the weather but that also materializes its becoming.

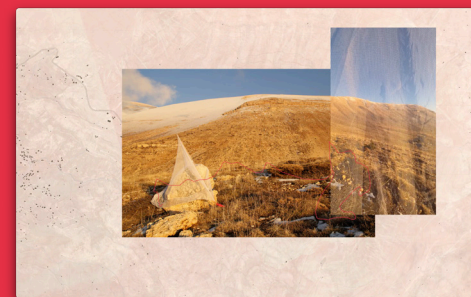


Fig 12. Walking the territory day 01

A storm followed, howling winds proclaimed it on frail twigs and into the valleys. The mountains shimmered since, a blinding light that lured me forward. I stepped into the budding cedar forest, leaving my traces on the pristine white coat. Snow was melting into water, turning into mud, a motion echoing the stratified mounts I initiated some days prior.

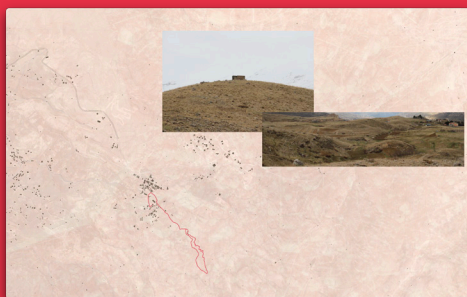


Fig 14. Walking the territory day 03

On the fourth day, I wanted to have a closer look at the growing cedar forest Dr. Tawk planted on the terraced walls the french agriculture commission built in the early 60s. The mud I traversed mirrored the undulating landform, a conglomerate of lumps of varying densities. I found a similar formational structure in some rocks, smaller parts aggregated into a whole, weathering in unison. I wonder if the same can be said of the local selection of wild bushes, a whole made of parts that share the same properties, a myriad of thorny shrubs, ready to deploy for self-preservation.

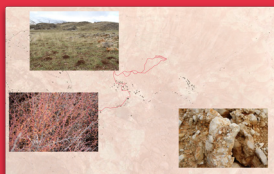


Fig 15. Walking the territory day 04



Fig 13. Walking the territory day 02

On the third day, a sudden attunement to the surrounding hills dawned upon me, a landform hidden in plain sight, excluded from cartographic representation as their elevation difference is rendered insignificant by the altitude of surrounding mountains. These hills make for the ideal milieu for farmers to settle momentarily, constructing their huts latched on boulders, sparing resources while evading municipality scrutiny. These landforms are optimal for agriculture, leveraging gravity for irrigation as water collects in summit-bound tanks. Numerous parcels of arable lands have been exploited for horticulture only to be abandoned with time. I laid my net on top of the hills, poking my hiking pole into a porous sandstone, a stone hospitable to encroachment.



Fig 16. Walking the territory day 05

On the fifth day, a thick fog accompanied me, making decisions on my behalf. My view was obstructed at times, yet so vivid at others. I could see the wind very clearly, but never the mountains in the background. I could also see a farmer's hut and how strategically sited it was, sitting on a green field encroaching onto a plateau. My tent also felt the fog's presence, it swayed and gained in weight, covered in droplets of water.

I recognized a green field from a distance, my now trained eye assumed a farmer claimed the spot. I wondered whether the farmer stumbled upon the well - which I later found in archival maps - or if the goats, in their innate instinct, guided the farmer to the water source, prompting settlement. On that green patch the farmer borrowed a well and a boulder, and on the boulder laid smaller stones to fence in the herd. I also learned that if you forget a jar of jam in the summer, you'll find it in the winter untouched; I learned that if you find yourself hiking hastily, you intuitively walk down intermittent streams, water navigates the land better than any hiker. After six painfully slow walks, I draw the following conjectures on situatedness:



Fig 17. Walking the territory day 06

Attractors: Patterns of chaotic attraction illustrate quite well the possibility space in which the walks were actualized. This model allowed for differences in repetition that built on my subjective knowledge.

Subjectivity: "I am arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives. I am arguing for the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body, versus the view from above, from nowhere, from simplicity" claims Donna Haraway a move beyond the falsehood of universal objectivity into situated subjectivity.

Landing Gently

تسجب

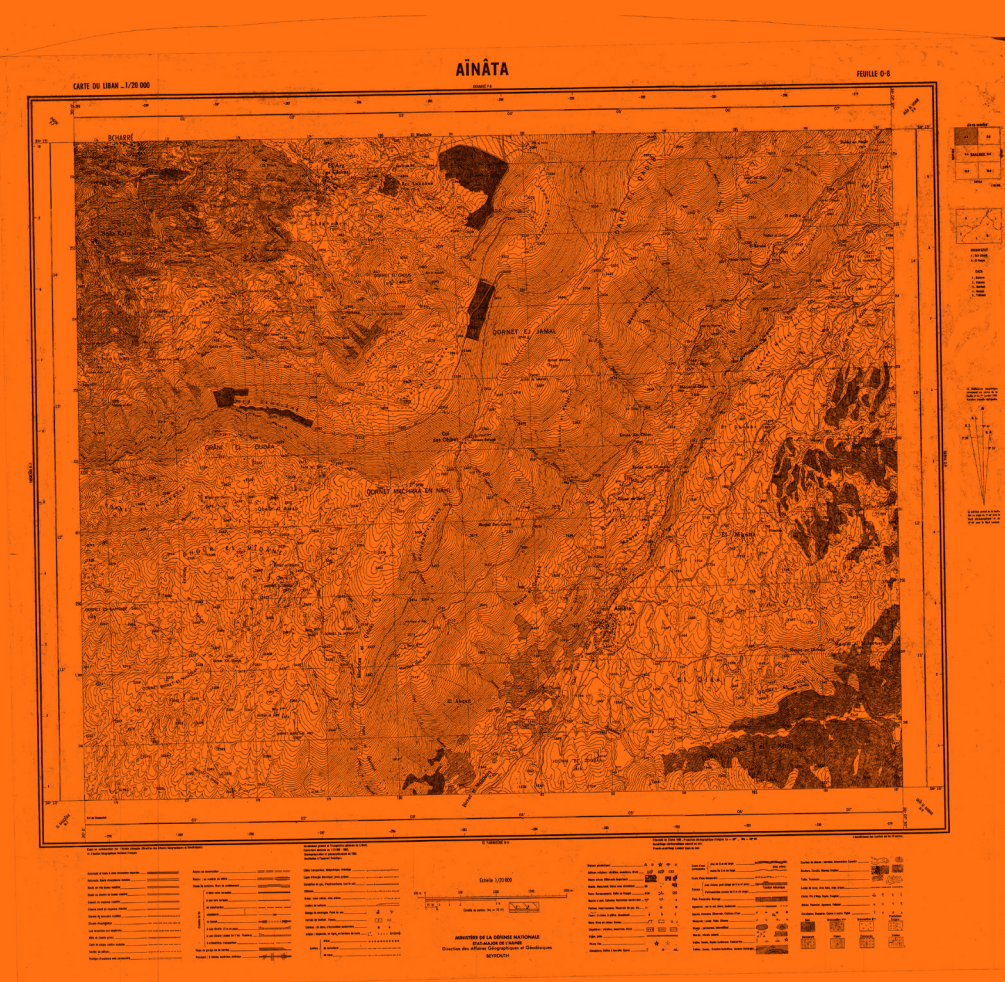
Conceptualizing a desiring ownership otherwise cannot happen outside of subjective knowledge systems, a mode of desiring that reconsiders objective universals in favor of metastable weather-worlds¹. This hinging from ownership to knowledge was not intentional, it surged then swelled as I repeatedly meddled with constraints. Following the goats' droppings until I found a water source laying beneath me was staggering as the ownership/knowledge interrelation materialized: the goat understands the flow of water better than the farmers, who then entrust the goat with their siting. The territorial actors in their corporeality are subject to "a dynamic web of potentialities and intensities in constant move and transformation"² and their becoming is afforded by the weathering they partake in, and the manifestations of that weathering transduced into knowledge. As bodies weather, flows are coded into becoming-expressive. This expression materializes the interconnectedness of a place in its historical, geological, and climatological timescales, across its materially, socially, culturally and politically diverse bodies; becoming-expressive paves the way for becoming-other, attuning to bodies and places and their response to the weather-worlds they are mediating. In prototyping the Cedars as meat, as dust, or as walks, the knowledges I gathered I transduced to information, as operations through which the territory is produced and differentiated. The norms and values I documented would therefore deterritorialize to allow for the emergence of new forms and structures, where organization and relation persist, mediated in the metastable equilibrium that is the weather.

I am aware of the risk I might be running, naively romanticizing the modes of existence of the farmer, or appropriating their situated knowledges in an extractive manner, but my interest lies in the information system rather than the knowledge itself, the pedagogy rather than the lesson.

1 The shift beyond objectivity is borrowed from Haraway "We unmasked the doctrines of objectivity because they threatened our budding sense of collective historical subjectivity and agency and our "embodied" accounts of the truth" from *Situated Knowledges*, p. 578

2 Braidotti, *Nomadic subjects: Embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, p. 307

Fig. 18: Transparent film map of the sire that belonged to my grandfather, norms and values perpetuated



Acquiring an Archive



image0445.jpg

Document:

Satellite Images 569-570 Dating from 1956

Procurement:

Army imagery, property of the Department of Geographic Matters, can only be acquired by submitting proof of land ownership within the confines of the image, the processing of the request took three weeks.



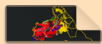
MAPS 61-90.pdf

Document:

Cadastral Map of the Casa of Becharreh Dating from 1964

Procurement:

These maps were kindly shared by the previous secretary of the mayor of Becharreh, Mr. A. K. has collaborated with my father on infrastructural works in the Casa of Becharreh.



Finalised
Cadastral.dwg

Document:

Cadastral Cad Drawing of the Casa of Becharreh Dating from 2015

Procurement:

These maps were kindly shared by the previous secretary of the mayor of Becharreh, Mr. A. K. has collaborated with my father on infrastructural works in the Casa of Becharreh.



Expedition Navale
Lamassu.jpeg

Document:

Low Relief Orthostate Depicting a Naval Expedition Dating from -720

Procurement:

The orthostate is part of the Louvres's permanent collection, in room 229 of the Department of Oriental Antiquities. Although the low relief was found in former Mesopotamia, I will need to pay sixteen euros to see it.

Appendix 01



Denniyeh
Evidence

Document:

Probative Evidence for the Becharreh/Denniyeh Trial

Procurement:

The complete folder was kindly shared by the previous secretary of the mayor of Becharreh, Mr. A. K. The documents were available on-line in July but there's no longer traces of them on national media websites.

Document:

Maps from 2015 with the Demarcations from Various Sources



Procurement:

Army maps, property of the Department of Geographic Matters, can only be acquired by submitting proof of citizenship, the request was submitted four months ago and it's still being processed, a small area is visible here as it was shared in the evidence folder.

خرائط الجيش عليها
حدود الجيبان-6.p

Document:

Eyewitness Testimonies from the "Elders" in Becharreh

Procurement:

These testimonies were gathered in 1999 as previous conflictual episodes surged, the "elders" claim to have come to an agreement with dwellers from the neighboring village.



افادات الكاتب
العدل.pdf

Document:

Map of Mount Lebanon Mutasarrifate Dating from 1889

Procurement:

I first saw this map when I visited the Department of Geographic Matters, my contact in the army told me he could share the scans of the maps with me as long as they don't get published, so I'm hoping this research doesn't get too interesting.



Map of
Moutssarifiah.jpg

Conversation Piece

The following are fragments of conversations I had in the past months, some accidental some provoked. I carried these conversations with me as the research unfolded, and I think including them is worthwhile.

Conversation Piece 01: Obama

Former archeologist, currently employed as a property caretaker (or concierge), nicknamed Obama as he loosely looks like US ex-president.

(While I try to take pictures of my models)

Obama (originally Salah): What are you doing again with this sand?

Me: I'm trying to see how the different states of water would act with the soil, I'm trying to produce my own knowledge rather than take biology and geology for granted. I was watching this video of a person forecasting snow as they saw a few trees moving with strong winds, I would love to have these powers so I guess that's how I'm going about it.

Obama: Grow up, these youtubers would do anything these days and you'd believe them.

Me: I know this is not a good example to explain the knowledges I'm interested in, but it was just a way to illustrate some types of reading the signs of the earth. You know what I mean?

Obama: Actually, there was an elder in my home village in Syria, near Palmyra, who would advise people on the ideal location to dig a well. He never went to school, he didn't know how to read or write, but when he decided on a location I kid you not water would flow without ever stopping. Once he even unearthed the ruins of a roman well, it was buried under layers of rubble and he thought it would be a good place to dig!

Me: What? That's insane! See that's exactly my point, it's wild to me that the roman well and the elders' are superimposed, it makes perfect sense! But how? How did this man know?

Obama: I don't know, I'm telling you he couldn't even write his own name.

Appendix 02

Conversation Piece 02: Johnny

Johnny is trained as an architect but never practiced. Like most villagers, he keeps a keen eye on the real estate land market.

(As we're stuck in Beirut's endless traffic)

Johnny: So can you explain again what project you're doing? What are you building?

Me: I'm really not sure what I'll build, I'm trying to figure it out as the research moves forward.

Johnny: And the research is about sustainable construction in the mountains right? Remind me again what it was about.

Me: I'm trying to understand our relationship to the territory and its resources, I call it "weathering", I know it's silly but I don't want it to be called "sustainability" I think it puts it in a category I'm not sure it belongs in. With "weathering" I look into how we affect a place and how it affects us, but it can also extend to things that are not necessarily climate-related. So for example the way land changes after a road is built or how as Lebanese we still speak French, you know that type of process of exposure to the atmosphere.

Johnny: I see, so for example the fact that after generations of farmers lands get inherited by dozens of descendents and it needs to be divided into smaller parts? Would that be "weathering"?

Me: Exactly! So what I was hoping to achieve is to turn these fallow lands into agriculture, to weather them gently and to take ownership of the lands and of the process of renaturation.

Johnny: Oh so it's not an architecture project, it's a project that's very speculative.

Me: No why? Don't you think you'd rather receive a basket of vegetables every now and then for a land you own 1% of and don't know how to deal with?

Johnny: Sure, but you know you'll get in trouble for that.

Me: We always talk about this, no? The troubled and uncomfortable phase before a transition happens, don't cringe please but I think this might be one of these transitions.

Conversation Piece

Conversation Piece 03: Rafic

Rafic migrates from the mountains to the plains seasonally, in the summer he looks over my grandparent's lands in the summer.

(As I relentlessly try to get words out of his mouth)

Me: Hi Rafic! How are you feeling today? I'm sorry I don't mean to bother but can I ask you some questions about farming?

Rafic: *Nods*

Me: I'll be really quick! I'm working on this project for university and I wanted to ask you about agricultural cycles. Is there a specific logic to the yearly planting? I notice that the field changes every year, what guides this change?

Rafic: First hummus, then we remove it. Then vegetables, then wheat, then rest. In turn.

Me: Do you know why? This sounds super interesting!

Rafic: Experience, experience.

Me: Tell me more about your experiences with the soil, we need to learn from you it's a shame that we don't know much about agriculture practices.

Rafic: Here they plant potatoes, cauliflower, tomatoes, cabbage, corn, things that can resist the cold, the cold. That's it.

Me: Nice! Does that mean that you need to plant potatoes, for example every year or do you plant it once and it lasts longer?

Rafic: Once every other year.

Me: Is it the same for all the other fields or is it just potatoes?

Rafic: All.

Me: And how do you irrigate?

Rafic: Carve lines.

Appendix 03



Fig 19. Harvesting cabbage with Rafic as he kindly shares the knowledge he gathered caring for the land

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