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Coffee, Gender, and Tobacco

Observations on the History of the Bedouin Tent

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Introduction

The black tents inhabited by pastoral nomads have been and continue to be a subject of interest to anthropologists and ethnoarchaeologists.[1] For anthropologists this shelter and the activities conducted inside of it provide insights into the social life of mobile pastoralists, such as the Bedouin (Lancaster 1997: 61):

> One of the most striking features of Bedu life is the division into public and private spheres, symbolized by the division of the tent into public and private spheres, symbolized by the division of the tent into the men's side, which is public, and the women's side, which is private.

The significance accorded to the Bedouin black tent (*beit sha'ar*) by some authors is demonstrated by the fact that the first chapter in a number of publications is devoted to a description of this shelter (for instance, Weir 1976: 1–6; Kay 1978: 11–32).

In contrast, ethnoarchaeologists have identified and documented the physical remains and artifacts found at abandoned Bedouin tent camps (Simms 1988; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1986, 1992). The purpose behind this ethnoarchaeological research is threefold: first, to demonstrate that the site structure of pastoral campsites differs from the habitation sites of hunter-gatherers (e.g., Simms 1988); second, to demonstrate that "pastoral camps" can be identified through archaeological fieldwork (Avni 1992: 242; Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1986; 1992: 182, 201); third, to determine "whether there is any basis to compare recent remains to those of ancient cultures found in the same area" (Avni 1992: 242). Absent in the research mentioned above, however, are detailed discussions on the history of the Bedouin tent and some of the customs carried out inside of this structure.

In this article I use various lines of evidence to propose two possible dates for the age of the Bedouin black tent. The first is based on the organization of space within this structure, the second is based on some of the material culture found inside it. By dating the material culture, we can also provide relative dates for some of the social customs carried out inside this tent. It is acknowledged that the consumption of coffee and tobacco occurred later in time than the separation of public from private space. This study does not investigate the origins of tensile architecture in the southern Levant or in the Old World. Rather, its purpose is to ascertain the age of a specific type of tent, namely the Bedouin Black tent,[2] and some of the activities carried inside it. The geographical focus of this study is primarily the southern Levant, northern Arabia, and the Sinai Peninsula, with data also drawn from other parts of the Near East. This research relates to Bedouin black tent dwellers who have been defined by others as Bedouin.[3]

It is acknowledged, however, that some Bedouin, such as the Jebaliya in southern Sinai, use tents that are not rectilinear in shape and that during the summer they do not use the *beit sha'ar* at all because it is too hot (Bar-Yosef 1984: 155; Goren-Inbar 1993: 418). Aside from tents, the Bedouin use a variety of other types of spaces for shelter, such as caves and rock shelters.[4]

The House of Hair

The Bedouin black tent, the *beit sha'ar* or "house of hair," is defined as a rectangular structure that varies in length and width (Table 1) (Weir 1976: 1). This type of shelter was found throughout the Levant, northern Arabia, and the Sinai as well as in other parts of the Near East and North Africa (e.g.,

1 E. g., Feilberg (1944), Musil (1928: 61–85), Simms (1988).

2 For example, Musil (1928: 61–76), Dickson (1951: 66–80), Simms (1988).

3 Burckhardt (1967: 3), Musil (1928: xiii, 44), Kirk (1941: 60, zone 2), el-Aref (1974), Simms (1988).

4 Bienkowski (1985), LaBianca (1990: 83, 87, 222, 232), Simms and Russell (1997).

Table 1: Selected Examples of the Size of Bedouin Tents.

Location or tribe	Tent dimensions (m) or size (m^2)	Reference
Petra, Jordan	15 × 4 m	Simms (1988: 202)
Petra, Jordan	51.5 m^2 (main tent)	Bienkowski and Chlebik (1991: 169, table 3)
Petra, Jordan	18.4 m^2 ("second tent")	Bienkowski and Chlebik (1991: 169, table 3)
Wadi Fatima, Saudi Arabia	10 × 4 m	Katakura (1977: 73)
Rwala tent, without main pole (*harbus*)	4–6 m × 2.5–3 m	Musil (1928: 72)
Rwala tent with one main pole (*katba*)	12 × 3.5 m	Musil (1928: 72)
Rwala tent for children or the "poorest inhabitants of the camp" (*tuzz*)	4 × 2 m	Musil (1928: 72)

Andrews 1990). The Bedouin black tent is primarily used during the winter months as it is water-repellant and, when it rains, the fabric expands making the tent waterproof.[5] During the summer months, those Bedouin who could afford to purchased a second tent made of lighter materials such as cotton, while "poverty" compelled others to continue to live in the black goat hair tent (Jabbur 1995: 249). The Bedouin had various means to acquire the panels of goat hair which were sown together to make a tent. Some Bedouin women wove their own tent panels, however, this was not possible for the mobile pastoralists who lived in deep deserts as goats could not survive in these arid conditions (Weir 1976: 46). Goat hair panels, or entire tents made of goat hair, were purchased by the Bedouin from towns or itinerant merchants.[6] Many towns in the Levant manufactured Bedouin tents. According to Weir (1976: 49), during the British Mandate in Palestine, tents were manufactured in the following towns: Safad, Majd al-Kurum, Samakh, Beisan, Anabta, Tulkarm, Nablus, and Hebron. Tents were also made in the village of Shhim in Lebanon (Weir 1976: 49; Jabbur 1995: 250). According to Jabbur (1995: 250), a major tent-producing center was located in the Syrian town of Yabrūd:

> In this small town there were about 2.000 people who earned their living making tents. There are about 300 looms there, and these supply the Bedouins of Syria and export to Jordan, Iraq, Najd, Kuwayt, and the oil companies.

Bedouin tents are often physically divided into two sections by using a curtain or rug, one for men, *al-shigg*, and one for women, *al-mahram*.[7] The men's *al-shigg* side of the tent is used primarily for entertaining guests and other tribesmen (Musil 1928: 64, 97). Items found in this area include a hearth, an assortment of rugs, cushions, and camel saddles for sitting and reclining. One of the more important activities carried out on this side of the tent is the preparation of coffee for consumption by guests and friends.[8] In general, the men's section of the black tent contains fewer material culture items than the women's side. Most household chores like cooking, however, are carried out in the women's *al-mahram* side of the structure, where domestic items and baggage are stored.[9] Lancaster (1997: 61) observes that the division of the Bedouin tent into two parts is a reflection of the duality of Bedouin society: the men's part of the tent is associated with the public aspects of society, while the women's side is restricted to "private" aspects of Bedouin life. The gendered division of space inside the Bedouin tent is attributed to Islamic beliefs and customs that determine how space is used and where activities are conducted (Insoll 1999: 62, 72, 90). Concerning this division of space within, Insoll (1999: 62) writes:

> The primary and over-riding concern is with privacy and the protection and seclusion of women (in certain cultural contexts referred to as *purdah*) and the sanctity of the family. Both wife and domestic space are to be protected, and domestic life is linked to ideas of purity.

In this context, there is a well-defined etiquette that describes how a stranger should approach

5 Burckhardt (1967: 37, 67), Musil (1928: 61), Dickson (1951: 66), Weir (1976: 1), Kay (1978: 11).

6 Musil (1928: 61), Dickson (1951: 73), Weir (1976: 49).

7 See, for example, Burckhardt (1967: 39 f.), Musil (1928: 64), Dickson (1951: 71–73), Cole (1975: 64 f.), Weir (1976: 17).

8 Musil (1928: 100–102), Dickson (1951: 195–201), Weir (1976: 7–10).

9 Doughty (1979: 267 f.), Musil (1928: 100), Weir (1976: 17).

a Bedouin tent, as recognized by Bedouin and Western travelers alike.[10] For example, el-Aref (1974: 136 f.)[11] describes how a guest should behave on entering a Bedouin tent:

> There are strict rules of social conduct to which the guest must conform if he would not be considered ill mannered and undeserving of kindness. Facing the entrance to a *Badawi* tent, the *hareem* is always on the right. On the left of the tent is the *Shigg* where the guest is entertained. It is very distasteful and offensive to a *Badawi* to have another man even pass closely to his harem, therefore it is incumbent on a visitor to approach the tent from the rear and to keep the tent on his left as he comes to the front. That is rule (1).
> Rule (2) is that he shall not take undue notice or peer at a woman moving about in the tent. He should appear to ignore their presence.

Given the gendered division of space within the Bedouin tent, Musil (1928: 64) recorded an anecdote that demonstrates how the Rwala manipulated these rules to disarm their guests when they entered the men's section of the tent:

> The master of the tent and his guests remove their shoes or boots, which they place behind them against the dividing wall, while they hang their rifles on the main pole in the women's compartment.

Although the interpretation is speculative, this behavior appears to be one mechanism for defusing potential tensions between host and guests: while their shoes are kept in the men's section, their firearms are stored in the women's part of the tent, which is off-limits. If a violent disagreement arose between a host and his guests, their rifles would, at least theoretically, be inaccessible. I suggest that the Bedouin black tent, as we know it today, emerged some time after the mid-7th century C.E., that is to say, after the expansion of Islam into the southern Levant. This *terminus post quem* is based on the division of space and gender roles assigned to men and women in Islamic societies.

10 See, for example, Doughty (1979: 39 f.), el-Aref (1974: 108), Diqs (1969: 18).

11 Aref el-Aref was born in Jerusalem and educated in Istanbul. During the period of the British Mandate in Palestine, he held various administrative posts, including Governor of Beersheba (Abu-Rabi'a 2001: 86 f.). As a result, he became well acquainted with the Bedouin who lived in the Negev and wrote a number of books on this population (for instance [1944] 1974; see also Abu-Rabi'a 2001: 87).

The Bedouin Tent in an Archaeological Context

Currently, the best published example of a Bedouin tent and tent camp in an archaeological context is Ras Abaruk, site 5, in Qatar (Garlake 1978). This site contains the outlines of at least six tents. The pottery from surface collection and test excavation indicates that occupation at this settlement spanned the 17th–19th centuries C.E. (Garlake 1978: 166). Sherd scatters of coarse gray pottery identified as "Gaza Ware" have been found at many abandoned Bedouin tent camps in the Negev (Israel) and Sinai (Egypt) (e.g., Rosen 1981; 1994: 21*–22*; Eddy 1999: 135). Current studies indicate that the production of Gaza Ware may have begun as early as the second half of the 17th century C.E., or the beginning of the 18th century C.E., and that it continued to be manufactured until the end of the 20th century C.E.[12] The chronological span of this ware indicates that those abandoned Bedouin tent camps containing Gaza Ware should be dated between the 17th–20th centuries C.E.[13]

Archaeological and historical data from the northwestern Negev have been used to posit a Bedouin presence in this area during the Mamluk period (Schaefer 1989: 33, 54–56). The data are problematic, however, as many of the Mamluk campsites have evidence of multiple-period occupations (e.g., Gāzît 1996: 40 f., site 60). Also caution needs to be exercised in the identification of these sites as Bedouin camps, because the site formation processes may be misleading. Citing this problem in relation to Chalcolithic sites in the northwestern Negev, Gilead (1992: 31) writes:

> The dried mudbricks were made of local silt, identical to the natural soil. When they decay, it is sometimes impossible to separate them from the natural soil. This may give the wrong impression that such sites featured no architecture, and were, therefore, nomadic camps.

Therefore, the Bedouin presence posited by Schaefer (1989) needs to be investigated further in order to determine whether the sites are indeed the remains of tent camps or rather deflated farmsteads.

Stone outlines of ancient and modern rectilinear tents were documented at the sites of Har 'Oded and Nahal 'Oded, located to the south of the Ramon Crater (Rosen and Avni 1997: 22 f., figure

12 Rosen and Goodfriend (1993), Ziadeh (1995: 211, 220), Bulle et Marmiroli (2000: 93), Israel (2006: i–ix).

13 The author has concluded excavation of a historic Bedouin tent camp located at Beerotayim in the Negev desert, Israel. This site is tentatively dated to the late 19th–early 20th century and a preliminary report is in preparation.

4.2, 44, 54 f., figure 5.12, figure 5.13, 59, 70). At both of these sites pottery attributed to the 6th–8th centuries C.E. was found adjacent to the stone outlines of rectilinear tents. This is tantalizing evidence for the emergence of the Bedouin black tent.

Perhaps the earliest evidence for rectilinear tents in an archaeological context in the southern Levant is represented at the site of Giv'ot Reved in the Ramon Crater.[14] Rosen's research (1993: 448) at this site identified a series of rectangular tents, arranged in a row, dated to the 2nd and 3rd centuries C.E. While the stone foundations of these structures do provide evidence of the existence of rectilinear tents in pre-Islamic periods, their presence in these archaeological contexts does not constitute evidence for the Bedouin tent *per se* as it remains to be determined if the use of space inside both types of structures is similar or dissimilar to one another.[15] Alternatively, another question to address is whether the gendered division of space inside a rectilinear tent was a pre-Islamic custom that was integrated into Islam.

Although surveys in the Negev desert, Israel, have documented the presence of Bedouin tents in this region, no Bedouin tents dated from the 6th–18th centuries C.E. have as yet been excavated. At present, the results of archaeological investigations indicate a relatively shallow time-depth for the Bedouin tent.

Coffee and Tobacco

An alternative means to determine the age of the Bedouin tent is to provide relative dates for some of the social customs carried out inside this shelter. In the following section, I propose relative dates for the accouterments associated with coffee consumption and tobacco smoking among the Bedouin. Both activities are well attested in Western travelogues and in the ethnographic literature (such as Conder 1878/II: 282 and Musil 1928: 100–114, 127 f.). The presence of pottery known as Gaza Ware is another line of evidence that could be used to date Bedouin tents.

According to historic and ethnographic accounts, coffee is an important part of Bedouin society. Coffee is the only foodstuff prepared in the men's part of the Bedouin tent, and the equipment used to prepare it is usually stored there. The preparation of fresh coffee is a hallmark of hospitality among the Bedouin.[16] Both sexes in Bedouin society consume coffee.[17] The social value of coffee is illustrated by the accouterments used for coffee preparation and consumption (Musil 1928: 100), as well as the many poems extolling the virtues of this beverage (102–114). The grinding of coffee beans is also considered to be a form of art and personal expression (101):

> The noise made by the mortar and pestle, *ḥess al-mihbâš*, is heard everywhere in the vicinity, and the people give their opinion as to whether these sounds are regular and artistic or not. The pounding of coffee is an art, and musical ability is judged according to the way in which it is done.

Information contained in travelogues and ethnographies indicates that both Bedouin of humble means and tribal leaders spent considerable portions of their income on coffee consumption. One travel account from the early 19th century C.E. indicates that one Bedouin spent as much as 29% of his yearly income on "luxuries" such as coffee and tobacco.[18] The Rwala leader, An-Nûri eben Ša'lân, spent an appreciable portion of his income on the purchase of coffee and sugar (Table 2). Dickson

Table 2: Prices of Foodstuffs by "Load." Livestock Purchased for Human Consumption Is Included for Comparison, Foodstuffs for Animals Are Excluded (Data Drawn from Musil 1928: 59).

Foodstuff	Cost per "load" (in $)	Amount spent (in $)
Butter (no number of loads given)	247.50	247.00
Burṛul (husked wheat)	1.60	11.25
Camel (for consumption)	45.00	225.00
Coffee	60.00	90.00
Flour	36.00	1.440.00
Rice	6.00	18.00
Sugar	12.50	25.00
Sheep (for consumption)	2.70	270.00
Wheat	0.68	13.50

14 Archaeological research conducted in the Negev Highlands demonstrated that the majority of the tents from the Chalcolithic through the Early Arab periods were circular in shape (e.g., Haiman 1989; Rosen 1984: 119; 1994: 18*–20*).

15 Doughty (1979: 267 f.), Musil (1928: 64–68, 97, 100), Insoll (1999: 62, 72, 90).

16 Doughty (1979: 289 f.), Musil (1928: 469), Dickson (1951: 195), Weir (1976: 10).

17 Musil (1928: 100), el-Aref (1974: 36), Dickson (1951: 76 f., 84, 198 f.).

18 Burckhardt (1967: 70). Other luxuries purchased included a "dried apricot jelly" and "a sweet jelly made of grapes" and six lambs (Burckhardt 1967: 70).

(1951: 78) notes that the Bedouin in Kuwait hide their coffee with other valuables:

> Treasures such as money, coffee beans, cardamum, sugar, salt, silks and special holiday attire are kept by the housewife locked up in a small tin or wooden box. The key of this she always keeps on her person, and tied to a portion of her head veil or *milfa*.

The introduction of coffee to the Middle East provides a relative date for the introduction of this beverage to Bedouin society. The use of coffee as a beverage did not become widespread in the Ottoman Empire until the 17th century C.E. (van Arendonk 1998: 450 f.; Baram 1996: 120; 1999: 140). According to Baram (1999: 142), by 1610 C.E., coffee and coffee houses were present throughout the Ottoman Empire. Being a stimulant, there were times during the 17th century C.E. when coffee consumption was banned on religious grounds.[19] Archaeologists have interpreted the finds of small porcelain coffee cups at archaeological sites in the southern Levant as evidence of the import and consumption of coffee in this region.[20] Therefore, the dating of the objects necessary to prepare coffee, and its social role within recent and historic Bedouin society, cannot be earlier than the 17th century C.E. This only applies to the use of coffee, however, and does not mean that other (hot or cold) beverages were not offered as expressions of hospitality.

Tobacco, another stimulant used by both men and women in Bedouin society, was exported from the New World, also during the 17th century C.E. (von Gernet 1995: 79; Baram 2000: 149). The adoption and use of tobacco among the Bedouin is well documented for the 19th to the early 20th centuries C.E.[21] Bedouin acquired tobacco from various sources, by means of purchasing it in markets, in towns, or from itinerant tobacconists, casual exchange and personal cultivation (Doughty 1979: 355, 487, 525; el-Aref 1974: 36). Like coffee, the Rwala also had poems about tobacco (Musil 1928: 128–131).

Clay smoking pipes appear in the Near East in the 17th century C.E., with the adoption of tobacco smoking (e.g., Simpson 1990; Matney 1997: 74). In the Ottoman period, the Bedouin acquired clay tobacco pipes both through purchase and by making their own from local stone. According to information contained in travel accounts and provided by pipe collectors, the Bedouin in northern Arabia and Sinai crafted their own pipes (Doughty 1979: 288; Baram 1996: 192 f., fig. 9). Tobacco pipes, dating from the 17th to the early 20th centuries C.E., have been found at presumed Bedouin encampments in the Sinai peninsula, Egypt, and in the Negev Highlands, Israel.[22] Given the origin of tobacco, and the archaeological evidence of tobacco smoking, the Bedouin could not have adopted it prior to the 17th century C.E.[23]

Discussion

The origin of "Bedouin" society is frequently linked to the advent of camel domestication (e.g., Barfield 1993: 60 f.):

> We often casually assume that the modern camel-raising Bedouin nomad must be representative of a very ancient way of life that extends well back into the mists of prehistory. Surprisingly, this is not the case, because camels themselves were not domesticated until well after urban life and literate civilizations had first emerged in Egypt, Sumeria, and Central Asia.

Expanding upon Barfield's point, I would argue that the "Bedouin" society known to us from historic and ethnographic accounts is in part attributed to the emergence of Islam.[24] In particular, I propose that the division of space within the Bedouin black tent should be attributed to gender relations in Islam, suggesting that the use of space inside this shelter most likely developed sometime after the 7th century C.E. Furthermore, I propose that the activities associated with expressions of

19 Van Arendonk (1998: 451), Baram (1999: 141), Insoll (1999: 106).

20 For example, Edelstein and Avissar (1997: 133), Baram (2000: 147, 154), Boas (2000: 553 f.), Ward (2000: 189 f.), Kletter (2004: 198–200).

21 Doughty (1979: 355 f.), Musil (1928: 127), el-Aref (1974: 36).

22 Beit-Arieh (2003: 304, site 1051, fig. 2), Cytryn-Silverman (1996: 147–149), Saidel (2008).

23 There is no clear-cut point in time at which tobacco pipe smoking was abandoned in favor of cigarettes and cigars. Cigarette smoking in the southern Levant seems to have begun sometime during the third quarter of the 19th century (e.g., Jaussen 1908: 289; Merrill 1881: 498; Simpson 2000: 171, endnote 7). According to some accounts, the Bedouin rejected this kind of nicotine delivery system due to the taste of the tobacco (e.g., Hull 1886: 135). During the 1930s, Bedouin in the Negev purchased factory-made cigarettes because of legislation banning the cultivation of tobacco (e.g., el-Aref [1944] 1974: 168). Their adoption of cigarette smoking is also attributed to their proximity to British military bases. In British Mandate Palestine, clay tobacco pipes remained in use throughout the 1940s (e.g., Safieh 1999: 92, right photo, 93).

24 E. g., Ibn Khaldûn (1981), Burckhardt (1967), Musil (1928).

Bedouin hospitality and recreation, such as coffee and tobacco consumption, are a result of the "global movement of commodities" following the 15th century C.E. (e.g., Baram 1999, 2000). Thus the use and integration of these products and their associated paraphernalia can not be dated before the 17th to the 18th centuries C.E.

The relatively recent dates proposed for the origins of Bedouin tent and some of the activities conducted inside it have implications for ethnoarchaeological and archaeological research on the Bedouin. In particular, there is a wealth of ethnohistoric and ethnographic literature that can be combined with ethnoarchaeological data to study the archaeological remains of subrecent and historic Bedouin populations. These data can be combined to generate archaeologically testable hypothesis concerning the lifeways of historic Bedouin.

A common observation on the Bedouin made by 19th–20th-century C.E. travelers and some archaeologists was that, except for their use of coffee, tobacco, and firearms, the Bedouin were essentially living fossils (for example, Conder 1878/II: 282; Glueck 1970: 11). Ironically, Bedouin tent and the manner in which it is used is directly impacted by gender relations and social distances predicated on Islamic sensitivities. Taken as a whole the Bedouin black tent and some of the activities conducted inside of it, are broadly dated between the 7th to the 15th centuries C.E.

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The Individual and Social Self

An American and African Illustration of Differences

John Hamer

The purpose of the article is to seek to understand the difference between and emphasis on individualism or social belonging and some of its consequences in America, as compared with an African community where the focus is on identity with social attachment. My hypothesis is that there is a broad difference in how an African from birth is oriented in terms of security toward the community, though not completely at the expense of the self. By contrast, the American is directed toward self-realization, with the community as a means rather than a base for a shared sense of security.

This approach suggests very different orientations toward the community and the nation state that may explain the failure of the latter in Africa (Hamer 2007; Comaroff and Comaroff 2004). If the African associates authority and security with the community of birth, his/her social connectedness will be directed differently than that of the American who sees social interaction at any group level as an opportunity for self-attainment, rather than a greater degree of security. For the latter the nation state becomes a kind of referee to see that the individual shows a modicum of social responsibility.

To explain this difference I propose two hypotheses. One is that societies stressing self-realization in child rearing processes are likely to require hierarchical social control because of the difficulty of gaining compromise and consensus at the community level. A second is that societies stressing normative conformity in childhood are likely to experience less difficulty in obtaining compromise and consensus and have less need for hierarchical social control. Therefore, the American sociocultural system should conform to the first hypothesis while African peoples fit more appropriately into the second. I use the Sidāmo people of the Horn of northeastern Africa to represent the latter.

The American Self

Historically there has developed an exaggerated stereotype of the individualistic American as being