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Tourism and representations: Of social change and power relations in Wadi Ramm, Southern Jordan

Géraldine Chatelard[1]

The area known as Wadi Ramm is a steppic and mountainous region located some 40 km to the northeast of the Jordanian Red-Sea port of Aqaba. It is populated by several Bedouin sub-tribes whose members started sedentarising at the end of the 1970's. In 2001, the settlement, or village of Ramm numbered roughly 1'200 inhabitants that mainly lived off tourism, while comparatively few families lived in tents and raised livestock. Following the fast pace of tourism development in Jordan, the number of foreign, mainly European visitors to Wadi Ramm rocketed from a few dozens a year at the beginning of the 1980's, to 70'000 in 1996[2]. Within this relatively short period of time corporate and government players in the local and international tourism industry have changed several times Wadi Ramm's marketing image. From a region where activities related to adventure tourism could be undertaken, Wadi Ramm was made into a heritage and folklore site, and finally declared a nature preserve under a World Bank assisted tourism development plan. This evolving commercial representation has nevertheless kept one constant component: Wadi Ramm has been advertised as "the Jordanian desert" inhabited by nomadic Bedouin. On this image, Ramm's inhabitants were never formally consulted. At the local level, touristic representations of the place and local culture have played an important yet understated role in the process of socio-economic change that has accompanied the development of tourism. In particular, they have become the symbolic objects of a significant contest over economic supremacy, territorial ownership and identity.

Since the ground-breaking work of J. Urry (1990) on the "tourist gaze", numerous anthropologists have dealt with issues of representations in tourism. In their overwhelming majority, they have been concerned with three main topics and/or with their interconnection. One is the construction of the touristic image of the place of destination. Another is the clash between tourists' representations and their actual experience. A third approach questions the process by which reality in the place of destination (as tourists expect to experience it) is modified to have it fit its touristic image. Meanwhile, there have been much less attempts at studying how individuals in a host population react to the globalised, stereotypical, touristic representations of the place they inhabit and of their culture as these representations bring about local social change[3]. Taking the approach of social and cultural anthropology, the aim of this paper is to look at how various representational systems and modes interact with each other when the logics of international and national tourism development come to meet the vernacular versions of place and identity. This process is studied by describing, analysing and criticising the power struggle between competing representations of place and local culture in Wadi Ramm, an area not as desert as Western visitors expect it to be, inhabited by a

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2 As a result of the 1994 peace treaty with Israel, 1996 was a peak year for tourism in Jordan. Even since that date, the number of foreign tourists to Jordan as well as to the region as a whole has kept decreasing following the resumption of instability in Israel/Palestine, the World Trade Center bombing and the subsequent crisis over Iraq. The economic situation of Wadi Ramm's inhabitants as described in this paper has changed markedly since the last episode of fieldwork undertaken to write it in October 2001. Tourism has almost come to a standstill and is no more the villagers' major source of revenues. As a result, several families that were settled have gone back to live in tents and have resumed livestock rearing.

3 For some attempts, see Evans-Pritchard 1989; King, Pizam and Milman 1993; Erb 2000; Joseph and Kavoori 2001; several essays in Picard and Wood 1997.

Bedouin community not as "traditional" as portrayed by the tourist media and whose inhabitants harbour their own ideas about place and group identity.

I. Tourism, Bedouin and ethnography: systems of representation and power relations

Representations and power in tourism

Tourism can be defined as a particular form of capitalist industry which does not only sell commodities but worlds of meaning and experience marketed by creating specific, idealised representations of the place of destination, and in particular of its cultural and natural features. The "gaze" is at the centre of the tourist's experience, as J. Urry (1990, 1995) convincingly argued, and tourist destinations are chosen to be gazed upon because there is an anticipation of intense pleasure, either on a different scale or involving different senses from those customarily encountered. R. E. Wood (1998) further points at tourism as oriented towards the experience of difference in a domesticated, packaged form, and primarily structured and evaluated by aesthetic criteria. As C. Ryan (2000) has shown in the Australian context, even ecotourism, which claims to enhance tourists' awareness of ecological issues, often constitutes more of a hedonist than cognitive experience, a fact I. Munt had already provocatively questioned in the title of his 1994 article: "Eco-tourism or ego-tourism?".

The tourist gaze, in its anticipation phase, is constructed, developed and sustained through a variety of non-tourist practices, in particular the consumption of such written or audio-visual media as films, newspapers, TV programmes, tour operator's brochures, web sites, magazines, records and videos (Urry 1990). Pictorial or written media all frame reality in one way or another, therefore simplifying and often stereotypifying it. Moreover, they create representations that do not always correspond to what tourists experience on the ground and want to take back home in the form of their own filmic or pictorial representations. Disappointed customers may then come home complaining about the gap between the product they have bought and the one they were sold. If widespread, dissatisfaction may have a negative impact on the tourism economy in the place of destination by preventing other visitors from coming as the reputation of a good or bad "holiday spot" is also largely created by word of mouth or, today, the Internet. The various agents in the tourism industry thus have a vested interest in making sure that the experience they sell corresponds to the tourists' expectations, that is to the mental representations those have of their destination before they take the trip. If this is not the case, an adjustment has to be made, either by re-framing the existing reality to present aspects that were previously excluded from the various media and to make them desirable, or by acting on aspects of reality in the place of destination so as to render them more congruent with their touristic representations. In the latter case, the tourist gaze assumes an obvious performative dimension, i.e. a capacity to translate phenomenological aspects into pragmatic and topographic realities.

While M. Mowforth and I. Munt argue that "tourism is a way of representing the world to ourselves and to others" (1998: 1) because it has become one of the main channels shaping Western world views, D. Harvey also suggests that the "eye is never neutral and many battles are fought over the 'proper' way to see" (1989: 1). In the activity of tourism, competing representations, and interpretations, of the visited place and population are at play not only between various actors within the First World but also with agents in the destination countries of the Third World. To quote M. Mowforth and I. Munt at length:

> "(...) tourists interpret and represent their experiences in ways that may be fundamentally opposed to the experience of those being visited; and these interpretations and representations will differ between different types of tourists. Even the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have a particular geographical imagination of the Third World. Their representation of tourism and

sustainability may also differ sharply from those of local communities in the countries where the policies of these supranational institutions are applied" (1998: 7).

Acknowledging the performative dimension of representations and the dynamic of competition between different representational systems leads to consider the power relations between the various actors involved in the tourism encounter. It can be argued that, in the context under study, power relations between some of these actors are fundamentally unequal because of the huge economic imbalance between, on the one hand, Western tourists and the local Bedouin, and, on the other hand, Jordanian public institutions and various transnational agencies such as large international tourist firms or the World Bank who finances tourism development in Ramm. This imbalance results in unilateral dependency of the Bedouin upon the rents extracted from the tourists, and of the Jordanian State upon resources generated by private and World Bank investments in the tourism sector. The Bedouin are particularly dependant, whose social fabric would otherwise be disrupted as they would have to migrate to town in search of hypothetical jobs at a time when roughly 25% of the Jordanian labour force is unemployed in the aftermath of the IMF-imposed Structural Adjustment Plan, and after the economy has had to absorb the man-power that came back from the Gulf following the 1991 war (Brand 1992). As for the Jordanian regime, that has made economic redistribution a condition of its survival, it has very few other alternatives than to rely on international donor and development agencies to promote economic growth in a country devoid of natural resources, under-industrialised and shaken by the sharp decline in remittances and aid since the late 1980's (Ibid.; Luciani 1990; Schlumberger 2002).

Despite this statement on the structural imbalance of power between the players involved in tourism in Wadi Ramm, I follow Bowman who warns that "By presenting the 'host' as a victim to whom the 'guest' does things, one perpetuates the modernist assumption that non-western peoples are objects upon which western projects are inscribed" (Bowman 1996: 83). To solve the apparent contradiction between these two interpretations of power and domination, De Boeck (1994) proposes that the key binary categories in post-colonial theorisation like hegemony and resistance, or the state versus the civil society, be complemented with aspects of localised strategies of adaptation, accommodation and collaboration as dynamic interaction acting both at the local and global levels. This approach seems particularly adapted to tourism as it is an activity substantially shaped by brokers or middlemen (Cohen 1985) who are located both in, and across, the First and Third Worlds. Their necessary mediation implies a rethinking of the relation between such binary categories as the tourists and the locals, donor agencies and recipient states, international investors and rentier economies.

As Bowman shows in detail in the case of tour guides in Israel/Palestine (1991), brokers come to play a major role in shaping touristic representations and perceptions of a place, mainly in constructing or sustaining the gaze and in making sure that tourists' experiences meet their expectations. These brokers are numerous and their mediation is more or less direct, i.e. more or less obvious for tourists. Those whose action is less directly visible are public sector agents such as planners, politicians, decision-makers in the government-operated tourism sector, private sector investors and large international firms, supranational agencies such as the World Tourism Organisation, the World Bank, the UNESCO, etc, but also the producers of touristic written and pictorial media. On the other hand, tourists in organised tours, who account for most of the visitors to Jordan, have a transactional relation with a tour operator at home, and sometimes have direct contact with employees in a travel agency. During their tour, they are accompanied by a tour leader, generally of their own nationality and in any case not a local of the country visited. For the tourists, the tour leader personifies the tour operator and provides group leadership, but the best part of his/her role is to deal with the local service providers during the tour and solve problems. Tour leaders are a first category of direct brokers mediating between tourists and the country they visit.

They themselves depend on other levels of mediation: in Jordan, most tour leaders speak English, not Arabic, and heavily depend on their local, Jordanian licensed guides to act as middlemen (there are very few women in the profession) in a series of circumstances where the vernacular language or cultural codes are needed. Most of the time, it is through that multi-level mediation that tourists enter in contact with other brokers such as bus drivers, hotel and restaurant staff, vendors in souvenir shops, etc.. Jordanian law requires that a licensed guide accompany any tour group above 9 people that makes use of commercial transport (coaches or mini-buses). The vast majority of tourists who visit Jordan therefore get their main verbal/enacted representation of the country they visit though licensed guides who produce a variously rich and coherent narrative of geography, history, culture, religion, society, economy and politics. This is if the guide speaks their language. Otherwise, the tour leader will have to mediate a more or less comprehensive translation in which s/he will have scope to interfere with the system of representation. As in European 19th Century literary accounts of travels to the Levant (Moussa 1995), multi-level mediated communication, and not direct involvement in social interaction with the local population, then becomes the main way in which tourists apprehend local reality and perceive it.

In Jordan, as I will try to make apparent later, a number of binary power relations between direct and less direct brokers, and between brokers and non-brokers (in particular between some Bedouin and some tourists, or Bedouin as a group and government institutions) are less unequal and less rigid than the ones described above. It is precisely because of this flexibility that negotiation is feasible and that local representations of place and identity can/could be mediated to global actors such as the international tourism media or the World Bank. Bedouin, I will argue, have some scope for contesting the external imposition of social and ecological changes derived from tourists' or World Bank's representations but only to a limited extent and not through direct confrontation.

Popular, national and ethnographic representations of the Bedouin

If the anthropology of tourism in the Arab Middle East is still in its early stages[4], ethnographies of Bedouin societies have a long tradition behind them. Ever since the days when Europeans started venturing inside the Levantine mainland and Arabia, the Bedouin have always been part of the picture (Pouillon 1996). Being recurrent characters in Orientalist writings, the Bedouin have been subject to scrutiny and documentation by Western travellers, scholars, and colonial officials with an ethnographic aim and, often, a political agenda: recording differences, categorising, and then controlling (Said 1979). In turn, these descriptions have fuelled Western popular representations of the Bedouin that have shifted from the cruel to the noble savage as entire areas were "pacified" by colonial rule (Brahimi 1982; Moussa 1994). Up to the 1950's, Bedouin and other nomads were described and studied by focusing on particular selections of cultural features, such as nomadism, land use, feud, kinship and leadership organisation maybe because these features are more easily written down, sketched or mapped, and certainly because they are all related to land and social control that the new States under colonial rule were attempting to exert in Bedouin-populated areas. More recent scholarly works on the Bedouin have been concerned with issues of change and modernisation brought about by the advent of the independent states that have tried to control nomadic people by forcing them to settle less through coercion and more through development projects[5]. But the scholarly accounts and analysis of the ecological and technological changes in the

[4] Apart from a rich literature on Israel (in particular Bauman 1995; Stein 1995), anthropological approaches to tourism in the Middle East are limited to Palestine (Bowman 1991; 1996) and Egypt (Mitchell 1995; Cole and Altorki 1998; Behbehanian 2000a and 2000b). More generally, the Middle East's limited part in the global economy of tourism (roughly 2% in 1997) is met by a comparable neglect in edited volumes or in specialised academic journals. Jordan has just started getting some attention, with studies that either explore the economic potentialities of tourism development (Barham 1998; Kelly 1998), or look at socio-economic or socio-political effects (Shoup 1995; Hazbun 1998, 2001a and 2001b; Brand 2000, 2001; Gray 2002).

[5] See Mundy and Musallam (2000) for an updated bibliography on social change among the Bedouin.

steppe, and of the socio-economic transformations affecting Bedouin communities, seem to have only little influence on the way non-specialists continue to view the Bedouin. Historically represented as "primitive" or "exotic", they continue to be read within this context when new modes of popular representation are employed, be they literary, filmic or pictorial. The Bedouin are therefore still largely viewed as nomadic and unaffected by social change or technological modernity, all the more because this primitiveness is now infused with positive qualities in the post-industrial First World. In coming to a Bedouin area, supposedly a desert, tourists hope to find a lost paradise unspoiled by Western industrial and technological civilisation.

Like Europeans or North Americans, most non-Bedouin Arabs also harbour a vision of the contemporary Bedouin as primitive. More often than not, this image is loaded with contempt, and Bedouin are thought to live in areas that look like hell, not paradise. In the Arab Middle East, still running after "progress" and "development", post-industrialised views are not a general sociological trend but eccentricities expressed only by a few, self-proclaimed "Westernised" members of the "urban elite". On the other hand, Bedouin are not exotic because there is not enough distance between them and non-Bedouin. Both groups are close neighbours in contiguous and interpenetrating geographical spaces, they have always been in social interactions, and there is social mobility between groups, though usually unidirectional when nomads settle, move to town and lose their Bedouin identity after two or three generations[6]. Most settled Arabs even say they have Bedouin ancestry, but ancestry is the keyword here. Actual Bedouin are considered somewhat of a socio-developmental anomaly. In the Middle East, since the most ancient times, central powers and settled urban populations have conceived of nomads as a threat to civilisation (Briant 1982). In that line, the 20th Century ruling elite and the urban middle-class easily appropriated the vision of British and French Mandate officials, adapting it to the nationalist credo, and "declared nomadic pastoralism a backward way of life antithetical to social and national development" (Mundy and Musallem 2000: 1). From the late period of Ottoman rule to modern independent Arab states, the aim of the central powers has been to control territory, settle the Bedouin and, at a later stage, modernise them though education and projects of economic development devised by international experts who shared the same vision (for the late Ottoman period see Rogan 1999; for modern Jordan see Bocco 1989, 2000; Bocco and Tell 1994). Now that at least three generations of Jordanians have been subjected to state-driven urbanisation and schooling, the vast majority of them can be considered as being from urban or other form of settled background. To most of these people, Bedouin who still live in the steppic areas, the *badia*, are not romanticised characters but an uneducated, backward social group to be modernised.

As a consequence, modern pictorial representations of the Bedouin in a country like Saudi Arabia, for instance, are rare and attempt to conceal overt signs of what are considered improper behaviours and values not in line with the state-promoted vision of Islamic orthodoxy and the accompanying version of soci-economic modernity (Pouillon et Mauger 1995). In Jordan, on the other hand, printed images of the contemporary Bedouin are frequent in a variety of contexts as this group of the population has come to embody part of the national character of the country (Layne 1994). But these images are stereotypical, emphasising only what are viewed as the positive values inherited from the nomadic Arabs: in particular, hospitality, generosity and honour, that is a social and ethical legacy any Jordanian citizen can claim for him/herself through imagined Bedouin ancestry, and not by actual belonging to what one would deem an "underdeveloped" group.

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 This is not to say that history and social change go in one direction, from nomadism to urbanisation. On the contrary, all studies of the *longue durée* in the Middle East, or other areas of the world where nomadism is a recurrent social form, point at long-term, alternate cycles of nomadism and sedentarisation. But this view is that of specialised scholars, and is not held by others either in the West or in Arab countries. The current cycle people experience/record/recall is a move towards ever more sedentarisation and urbanisation.

Part of the current paper is an attempt at producing an ethnography of a Bedouin community that does not represent Bedouin in a stereotypical way, neither romanticising them nor treating them as objects to be developed. If one is to look critically at the power-laden relations between, on the one hand, systematic, universalistic, rational, Western (or Western-inspired) knowledge and representation systems and, on the other hand, loosely codified, contextualised, non-rational forms of local knowledge and world visions (these being ideal types), then one should be careful not to compose an ethnography that objectifises the local agents and contributes to the "growth of [their] ignorance", as Hobart has warned in his anthropological critique of development (1993). In particular, ethnographies should be careful not to be other items of hegemonic knowledge such as the various World Bank sponsored reports or pieces of tourist literature. These represent Bedouin as ignorant and backward with a negative or positive interpretative contend, therefore making them appear as legitimate objects either of socio-economic engineering or of neo-orientalist, romanticised thoughts. Both are instances of domination which inscribe projects and desires upon Bedouin as an objectified social group. The Bedouin's own perception of the space their inhabit and of their collective identity, and how they represent the space they inhabit, their identity and their culture in the context of tourism, merit as much attention as the representation systems of economically more powerful strangers. This paper is an attempt to discuss critically how the relationships between various representation systems work in practice in Wadi Ramm, at least as this author understands them to.

As any ethnography is a way of "writing culture", in the words of J. Clifford and G. E. Marcus (1986), stylistic choices made to compose the written narrative are no less innocent than pictorial images. In these last years, anthropologists have become more and more aware that a diversity of representational modes and devices is needed in response to various critiques of conventional ethnographic representation. Bowman argues that social and cultural anthropologies which claim to examine other cultural systems from "within" and subsequently to translate those world views into terms which render indigenous interpretations comprehensible to the "outside" without effacing their alterity, should generate ethnographies of tourism which allow readers to "see" what tourism and its effects look like to the people who host and accommodate it (Bowman 1996). The ironic tone adopted at times in the following text is an attempt at rendering one of the ways in which the Bedouin in Wadi Ramm coexist with the expression of post-industrialised Western culture. As in other similar contexts (see below), and as far as it could be observed, humour and self-irony are permanent features of the rural Bedouin society in Jordan. Bedouin make wide use of these rhetorical devices when they feel that their honour (and therefore their social standing/status) is threatened by forces that are too powerful to resist directly. In Wadi Ramm, Bedouin use humour when touristic representations shake their own perception of social reality, a reaction which recalls that of the Native Americans described by D. Evans-Pritchard (1989) who analysed how members of that group expressed identity and alterity in front, or behind the back, of the Anglo-American tourists who visit their reservations. Another comparison can be drawn with the amused reaction of the Sinai Bedouin S. Lavie has confronted with their ethnographic representations as produced by Israeli scholars (The Hajj, Lavie and Rouse 1993).

II. Producers and consumers in the tourism industry: representations, expectations, experiences and readjustement.

The area of Wadi Ramm is a small part of the Hisma basin described by geography text books as a vast depression extending from the border with Saudi Arabia (and beyond) to the south of the Petra basin. It composes the northern part of the Hedjaz and the Arabian Peninsula and possesses very particular geological features that laymen can best understand, and already mentally construct as a romanticised landscape, by reading an American tour operator's brochure: there, "dramatic colorful

sandstone mesas rise to heights above stretches of golden or pink fine sand". 20th Century archaeological works, undertaken first by British Mandate scholars, have shown that since ancient times the area has been a major communication route linking the Levant and the Southern Mediterranean with the centre of the Arabian peninsula and Yemen. At some times, it was inhabited by nomads, at other times by a more settled population or a combination of the two. A few European travellers, Mandate officials and, more recently, anthropologists have written about the area as constituting part of the territory of the Howaytat tribe, one of the largest Bedouin groups in southern Jordan. History books mention that the tribal sections inhabiting the region of Wadi Ramm rallied behind Sharif Hussein of Mecca in the Arab revolt against Ottoman occupation during World War I. For the Western public, this episode is best remembered because of the part played by British Colonel T.E. Lawrence who gained his name Lawrence of Arabia, left a remarkable literary account of the revolt in his book *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*, and was the object of the famous 1962 film by David Lean of which many scenes were shot in Wadi Ramm.

Yet, First World tourists do not generally chose to come to Jordan with Wadi Ramm in mind. Rather, the famed rock-carved Nabatean city of Petra is the focus and highlight of their visit to the kingdom. As stated above, Wadi Ramm only started being systematically marketed and developed for tourism during the last decade. Beyond the circle of Western and Japanese tourists who have been to Jordan or are planning to, the area is almost unknown and mention of its name does not conjure up mental images, as is the case, for instance, with the Algerian Hoggar for the French public or the Arizona desert for the North Americans. As a survey this author conducted among European and North American tourists in Wadi Ramm shows[7], the overwhelming majority (94.2%) get an idea of Wadi Ramm either as they peer through tour operators' brochures in view of choosing a destination, or through travel literature once they have already decided on visiting Jordan. A minority has seen David Lean's movie Lawrence of Arabia (9%). Yet, before preparing or taking their trip, half of those are not aware of a connection between the film and the place, while the other half remembers (or rather was made to remember through TV documentaries or travel literature) that some episodes of the film took place in Wadi Ramm. A very small number (1,3%) have actually read T.E. Lawrence's book and may come to Wadi Ramm with specific images in mind other than the touristic ones. The various media used for promoting or marketing tourism therefore play an essential role in constructing the image of Wadi Ramm visitors have in mind when they come to the place.

Images of a silent and empty desert

In guidebooks, travel magazines, tour operators' brochures, leaflets from the MTA or JTB, their electronic versions on the web, TV documentaries, etc., Wadi Ramm is presented in stark contrast with busy modern Amman, the capital of Jordan, or with historically significant Petra. Wadi Ramm is "a timeless and empty place", a definition that befits Western fancies of the desert. Travel

[7] In November 2000, I conducted a random survey of 151 Western visitors in the village of Ramm. At the end of their tour of Wadi Ramm, visitors were handed a questionnaire either in English or French. The questionnaire included multiple choice close-ended questions on (1) the origin and (2) the age of the respondents, (3) their way of travelling (organised or individual), (4) the length of their stay in Wadi Ramm, (5) the type of activities they had undertaken there (site-seeing, camping, hiking, taking a Jeep, riding a horse or a camel, rock climbing), (6, 7, 8) their encounters with Bedouin (how they identified them as such and in what circumstances they met), (9) the sites they had seen in the desert, (10, 11) the places they had seen in the village, if any, (12, 13, 14) their previous knowledge of Wadi Ramm and when and how it was gained (before or after deciding to visit Jordan; through guidebooks, documentaries, travel magazines, the Internet, literary works, feature films, climbers, hikers or horse-riding clubs or magazines, etc.). Open-ended questions were also asked about (15) the idea respondents had of the place prior to their visit, (16) how they would describe the place after their visit, (17) whether they would recommend others to visit it and why. Besides statistical data collected from the survey, additional qualitative data had been gathered at different times over the previous 3 years through a number of informal interviews with tourists before, during or after their visit of Wadi Ramm.

literature and films give little written or oral description of the natural environment other than deeming it a "desert", briefly detailing the area's geological features and sometimes comparing it to the Sahara's Tassilis or to Monument Valley which posses similar sandstone formations. The various media generally leave it to images to speak for themselves.

In whichever media, print or film, the most frequent images of Wadi Ramm are those of the landscape. They generally are variations on the same theme and show wide, unspoiled stretches of pink or orange sand with dramatic looking mountain ridges in the background. One brochure from an American tour operator, which does not feature illustrations of Wadi Ramm, states that: "All around, there is emptiness and silence. In this immense space, man is dwarfed to insignificance". Defining and showing Wadi Ramm as a desert implies the absence of permanent human presence, an unspoiled nature, a mineral landscape and a silence propitious to spiritual elevation. In line with the booming trend of "adventure" tourism, it may also suggest wilderness and danger: "As in any desert, a British guidebook says, keep an eye out for scorpions and the occasional snake. (...) Do not challenge the desert alone, as getting lost there could become a dramatically serious matter".

In this desert landscape, close-up pictures indicating human presence are of three types. The first represents Bedouin men or boys in what is implicitly presented as their "traditional" costume, i.e. a white robe and a chequered red and white head-dress, most of the time preparing or serving coffee or playing music. The Bedouin black goat-hair tent is also frequently shown, sometimes with camels nearby. Another favourite is the Desert Police mounted on camels, wearing khaki robes and chequered head-dresses, and armed with daggers. All or some of these elements may appear in conjunction. Objects or artefacts of modern technology are systematically avoided. The second set represents Western rock climbers, hikers or campers. In this case, photos or films might include a Jeep, and modern camping or climbing equipment. Bedouin are rarely around, and if so only in the background. The last type signals ancient human occupation by showing images of rock engravings or archaeological ruins.

Through these various sets of images, the potential or actual visitor can easily distinguish several worlds, realities, and temporalities sharing the same desert space: that of an ancient people of primitive artists, builders and settlers, that of the "traditional" Bedouin, and that of the "modern" Western visitors. In all three cases, human occupation is presented as temporary: either bygone and part of history, or nomadic as with the indigenous people and the passing Western visitors. Geographical determinism is suggested: the climate shapes the land, which, in turn, dictates its rule over man's presence. "Desertness" thus becomes the primary feature of the place. Even for those tourists who have not been exposed to visual material, the written media, the Western tour leaders and the Jordanian licensed guides have prepared the way by repeatedly calling Wadi Ramm a desert.

Discarded images of change and human occupation

Even if pictures of tourist facilities such as the rest house and adjacent camp site are sometimes featured, the same media rarely describe and never show images of the village of Ramm itself, a recent Bedouin settlement set right in the middle of the valley (wadi) of Ramm. There, roughly 1000 locals live in unfinished grey concrete houses surrounded with electricity poles, scattered litter and occasional skeletons of disused cars. Almost every house has a satellite dish on the roof and a huge antenna rises above the village to allow for using mobile phones. Some Bedouin still keep a black goat-hair tent pitched in the backyard as is common is the settlement process of nomads, but the few camels tied up around houses were bought only recently to rent to tourists. Bedouin, for their part, prefer to drive Jeeps for their private use and, when they to go about the village, they may put on Western clothes just as much as they may wear the traditional robes depending on their mood, on the social circumstances or, more prosaically, on what is clean in their wardrobe.

Except in relation to the accommodation, transportation and leisure activities of the tourists, the travel media avoid showing signs of Western-style modernity and change either in the village or in the desert. Equally, they display no images of the numerous goats out of which Bedouin still make a good part of their living. In the valleys and the mountains, they are to be spotted potentially anywhere or detected by the dung and innumerable footprints they leave on the sand. In what is represented as an "empty and silent " desert numerous other signs of modern man's presence are to be found: occasional litter, recent rock graffiti, countless criss-crossing tracks of Jeeps, Bedouin passers-by who listen to Arabic music on their cars' radios or Jordanian tour guides who speak loudly on their cellular phones even quite far from the village. Not to mention other tourists hiking, climbing or on camel back and the distant fires of their campsites at night. On the other hand, for reasons that will be explained later, camps of nomadic Bedouin are becoming rare these days, even more so in the areas frequented by tourists.

The search for exotica, and in particular for experiencing the desert, is closely related to the processes that have produced Orientalism in writings and the visual arts (Said 1979). The operators in and around the tourism industry build upon existing stereotypical representations of the desert for marketing purposes and avoid mentions of change, modern technology and even of human presence, implicitly reducing the Bedouin to natural, unchanging elements in an "empty" environment. The few guidebooks that do mention the village lament its ugliness and advise avoidance.

The desert challenged

Yet, there is almost no way visitors can avoid being exposed to at least the brief sight of the village. Collective or individual tours to the desert generally start from the rest house located at the entrance of the village. Bedouin Jeep or camel drivers wait for clients next to the rest house and have to lead visitors alongside their settlement before "entering" the desert. Even if for no more than two minutes, this view is imposed once more on visitors as they come back to the rest house and the impression they get is rather unpleasant, as expressed in many answers to the survey.

This disagreeable feeling could probably be quickly overcome and forgotten if the tour to the desert was living up to tourists' expectations. But it is far from being always the case. For a variety of practical reasons, the main sites that have been identified by the MTA as of interest to tourists are located within a short distance from the village. As a consequence, the area frequented by tourists in the desert is not very wide (roughly 15 km x 20 km) and can become relatively crowded during the high Spring and Autumn seasons when up to 300 visitors go back and forth daily from one spot to the other by Jeeps, on camel-back or on foot, sometimes queuing up to see the most popular — i.e. recommended in every guidebook — rock inscriptions. Total quietness and emptiness are hard to find while one is never very far away from a human presence, at little risk of getting lost and frequently reminded that modern amenities are close at hand.

In strict climatic terms, Wadi Ramm is not a desert but an arid steppe (the *badia*, in Arabic) where annual rainfall, though scarce, allows for goat and camel husbandry, episodic dry farming is specific areas and permanent human occupation even if only on a nomadic basis (see Sanlaville 2000 for a climatic introduction to the Arabian steppe). Greenish bushes spot the sand floor and small trees grow near the mountain feet where rainwater streams down. Rainwater is also naturally collected by the sandstone rocks and wells up when reaching their granite base, thus forming a continuous line of springs with accompanying greenery along the slope of some mountains. These touches of vegetation, together with the herds and footprints of goats, are other reasons for surprise (if not disappointment) from the part of numerous visitors who expect a more strictly mineral landscape

with just a few camels here and there. They keep looking for unspoiled stretches of sand like those represented on the pictures they have seen. But photos always show the same couple of dunes taken from different angles since they are the only ones of the sort to be found in the area. Some elderly Bedouin remember that David Lean himself, when shooting scenes of his movie, had bushes uprooted to match his idea of a desert.

Tourists have paid for seeing a specific landscape and experiencing a particular atmosphere. Reality falls short of meeting their expectations and many of them feel deceived. They voice their disappointment locally to tour guides, to the tourist police or to the representative of the MTA and, back home, to the travel agencies where they have bought their trips. Some even write letters to travel magazines, others express their feelings on the Internet, on their homepages or in specialised travellers chat groups. This new media, where some also post their *own* pictures of the reality in Wadi Ramm, is becoming a major source of information for tourists of the younger generation. One such visitor, who kept an electronic diary of his trip to the Middle East in the Spring of 2000, denounced "the fallacies of the desert experience" in Wadi Ramm and put what he entitled two "alternative pictures" on his web site. One shows the same great landscape in the background but with a large litter bag torn open in the foreground. The caption identifies the litter as produced by tourists but disposed of by their Bedouin guide in the middle of the desert. The second picture shows large and deep tyre tracks on the sand, and the author comments that one should as well not dream of "going off the beaten tracks" when in Wadi Ramm.

Growing disappointment with the product sold as "the Jordanian desert" may translate practically by a drop in individual travellers visiting the area while touring Jordan or by Western travel agencies removing Wadi Ramm from their programme. Even before the peace treaty with Israel in 1994, the number of tourists visiting Jordan had regularly increased every year until the new outburst of violence in Israel/Palestine that started in Autumn 2000. Before that date, there was also a constant increase of foreign visitors in Wadi Ramm, as figures of the MTA show. Nevertheless, officials in the Ministry or in Wadi Ramm, Jordanian travel agents and the local Bedouin involved in tourism that were interviewed for this study in 1998-1999 were all aware that some Western tour operators had decided to shorten their tours of Jordan by removing the visit to the desert, a fact that could be checked by looking at their brochures. This move had measurable financial consequences for the various Jordanian travel agencies located in Amman or Aqaba, for the tour guides, for the hotels in Aqaba where most of the tourists in organised tours are accommodated after their one-day trip to Wadi Ramm, for the rest house in Wadi Ramm that is also a major local service provider and broker, and, of course, for the Bedouin working in tourism.

Organising the Bedouin experience

As stated before, parallel to images and experiences of the desert, the various operators in the tourism industry have used representations of the traditional Bedouin as another marketed item. Describing how touristic representations are translated into tourists' experiences of Bedouin culture in Wadi Ramm does not necessitate an introduction to the past or current Bedouin way of life. Rather, it is more useful to give some details of the various non-Bedouin brokers and middlemen that have designed the "Bedouin" product and organise the experience of visitors.

Large Jordanian travel agencies are located in Amman, or, to a much lesser extent, in Aqaba and Wadi Mousa, the town neigbouring the site of Petra. They are owned by urban Jordanian businessmen and staffed by no less urban employees, including tour guides. They either design their own tours to sell to Western corporate clients, or simply act as service providers for European, North American or Japanese tour operators. In both cases, they generally suggest, and organise if contracted, a stay in Wadi Ramm. There, they sub-contract the rest house, a government owned

structure privately managed by an urban businessman from Aqaba. He and his mostly Egyptian employees provide for a variety of services over which they have a quasi-absolute monopoly. This ranges from catering food, setting up campsites equipped with toilets in the desert, organising for large camel or Jeep trips, to hiring performers for an elaborate party under the stars.

In Jordan in general, where tourists view the local population as friendly and not as bothering as in neighbouring Egypt, and where tourist villages are not yet developed on a large scale, many foreigners consider their trips to be enhanced by some contact with "others". In Wadi Ramm in particular, they are anxious to meet the real Bedouin and to feel comforted in their belief that traditions are still alive. "The warm hospitality that characterises genuine Bedouin culture " is celebrated in each and every guidebook on Jordan. This image is reinforced by the fact that, ever since the time of the British Mandate, deeming Jordan the Land of the Bedouin has been the most common stereotype applied. The Jordanian souvenir market also participates in constructing so-called Bedouin culture by marketing as such all types of handicraft (Layne 1994). Bedouin culture is now commonly shown to tourists in Wadi Ramm but it is rarely Bedouin themselves who participate in this presentation. Rather, it is the rest house who seasons the visitors' stay with carefully selected tokens of traditional Bedouin culture: the ceremony of coffee — a well known sign of Bedouin hospitality —, a few items of handicraft, and some revels. Typically, for those tourists in large groups who spend from 2 hours to half a day in Wadi Ramm, the rest house sandwiches the desert experience between two slices of Bedouin culture. It may also help to swallow Ugly Village and its bad taste.

Buses and visitors' private cars cannot go beyond the village and into the desert on tracks. They have to park in a designated area next to the rest house. There, visitors or their licensed guides pay an entry ticket and move to the rest house. Visitors then wait for their guide to arrange for transportation and other services. Alternatively, if they travel on their own, this is the place to meet Bedouin camel or Jeep drivers with whom to negotiate a tour, or a local Bedouin hiking or climbing guide. While this takes place, visitors are made to sit in a Bedouin tent permanently pitched in the courtyard and furnished with cushions and rugs, and in which men dressed in Bedouin outfits serve them tea or coffee. Tour guides explain that these are Bedouin traditions of hospitality. They never spontaneously mention that the tent is not used by a Bedouin family, that the men who serve the drinks are all Egyptian migrant workers, and that tea and coffee are not for free but included in the price of the entry ticket.

At the end of their tour of the desert, tourists are brought back to the rest house and the time comes for buying souvenirs. Until recently, guides used to lead groups towards the open-air workshop of a weaver to buy what was advertised as Bedouin rugs. Foreigners were, and would remain, unaware that the man weaving was another Egyptian while, among Bedouin, this activity is reserved for women. They did not notice either that the loom used was a vertical village loom and not a horizontal Bedouin loom, or that the patterns of the rugs were typical of those designed for the tourism market in the Nile Valley. Those who bought one of the illustrated books on sale at the nearby souvenir shop were comforted in their idea of having brought back home a traditional Bedouin item: the book features two pictures of the same weaver presented as "a typical Bedouin craftsman".

Most of the groups or individual tourists then leave Wadi Ramm, generally to move on to Aqaba at about one hour drive. But some groups stay overnight. They can use one of the two camp sites equipped and managed by the rest house. Besides the small canvas tents each sheltering one or two tourists, a large black goat-hair Bedouin tent is pitched on one side of the camp. At night, the programme might include a "Bedouin evening". If this is the case, visitors are entertained by musicians presented as Bedouin but who mainly originate from Cairo or Alexandria and play

commercial Arabic tunes. Some small all-male groups have special requests in the form of "female Bedouin dancers". In this case, they ask directly at the rest house on the day of the visit. Egyptian, Iraqi or Gypsy women are hired in Aqaba to perform what in the West is called "belly dancing", often a code word for prostitution. Without the extra treat, the same dancers can also be asked to perform at pseudo-Bedouin weddings alongside the Egyptian employees of the rest house. All together and with tourists, they dance a typically urban Arab dance that no local Bedouin, and especially not women, would ever consent to perform.

It can be argued that the rationale behind this staging of mock Bedouin culture is not necessarily to deceive visitors. Rather, the purpose is to create the Oriental atmosphere tourists have been made to desire, have paid for, expect and enjoy. This can be achieved only by presenting elements of daily life that are sufficiently different from those of the tourists' society so as to create distance and otherness, the stuff exoticism is made of. Moreover, with few exceptions, Bedouin folk culture is not rich in visual and artistic expressions of the kind that can be easily turned into marketable items, and there is no Jordanian tradition of performing arts as in Cairo or Damascus, the centres of popular urban Arab culture. But also, many of the visitors display attitudes that place them in the "post-tourist" category defined by J. Urry (1995: 140). They know that they cannot buy authenticity, revel in the knowledge that a sort of theatre is played for them, and merely expect an unusual experience to talk about and show in pictures when going back home. But be they tourists of the modern or post-modern type, staged Bedouin authenticity reinforces their "latent" Orientalist stereotypes by blurring regional and social distinctions and unifying all people of "the Orient" under the assumption that they are not like those of "the West" (Said 1979: 2).

This is ever more the case as everything is done to have tourists coming in organised tours avoid contacts with the actual, current material culture of the local Bedouin, a mix of underdevelopment and high technology typical of many regions in Third World countries. The modern Bedouin way of life does not correspond to the image Westerners have of the people of the desert as nomadic, living in harmony with nature, and lacking modern artefacts. Containment is therefore organised to keep tourists moving from the rest house directly to the desert, from special tourist camp sites to sites deemed of interest and back to the rest house. Tourists who have attended what is presented to them as Bedouin performances praise Bedouin culture as lively and entertaining and hospitality as unequalled. Between the middle and the end of the 1990's, several Anglo-Saxon and North American tour operators had increased their requests for Bedouin parties and some, who used to stay only a half day in Wadi Ramm, had started remaining overnight.

In the footsteps of Lawrence

During the Arab revolt against the Ottomans (1916-1917), T.E. Lawrence was the British liaison officer with Emir Faysal. The latter was leading the military campaign under the more ideological guidance of his father, Sharif Hussein of Mecca. In 1923, Abdallah, the second son of Hussein, established the rule of the Hashemite dynasty over then Transjordan under British Mandate. Lawrence left a brilliant account of his role in the war in the form of a unique piece of literature *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. On a couple of occasions, he came to Wadi Ramm with the troops of the Emir. There, part of the large tribe of the Howaytat Bedouin, lead by shaykh Awdeh Abu Tayeh, rallied under the banner of the Arab revolt. Wadi Rum, as Lawrence called the place, greatly impressed and inspired him. His most famous description is now reprinted in almost every guidebook on Jordan: "Rum the magnificent.... vast, echoing and Godlike... a processional way greater than imagination... the crimson sunset burned on its stupendous cliffs and slanted ladders of hazy fire down its walled avenue...". Released in 1962, David Lean's movie about the life and deeds of "Lawrence of Arabia" was partly filmed in Wadi Ramm the previous year. The film greatly contributed in popularising the myth of a Western man who claimed to have given the Arabs victory

over the Turks and who was torn between his duty as an English officer and his love for the Arabs. In the film, images of the desert (never-ending, unbearably hot, dangerous but all the more fascinating) and of the Bedouin (tricky, fierce but noble at heart) all act as counterpoints to enhance the character of the British hero. The simple juxtaposition of his name with Arabia evokes a world of mystery and adventure.

For mainstream Jordanians, Lawrence of Arabia is at best unknown. At worst – and this is the contention of Jordanian historians –, he is a liar who tried to remove the Hashemites from the front-stage and assume the leading role. In any case, he is no mythical figure as among Westerners and his book, translated into Arabic, is hard to find in Jordan (Chatelard 2001; Bocco et Chatelard 2001). Nevertheless, when early official attempts at developing Wadi Ramm were made in the mid-1980's, the story of Lawrence, the popular movie, and their connections to Wadi Ramm were not lost on Ministry officials or on French and British consultants at a time when Jordan's tourism strategy was still primarily oriented towards marketing heritage sites. Then, the desert as a landscape and the Bedouin as secondary characters where conceived as the mere context within which to represent the story of Lawrence. In the last years of the 1980's, MTA officials selected from the multiple objects that could be picked out of the landscape a number which were not natural but cultural features (or could be easily endowed with cultural meaning) and that were distinctive enough to become icons for the story of Lawrence. Those were given names, and later made into visual representations in guidebooks, magazines and films that, together with tour guides, provide information about those objects, and place the objects and the information within an interpretative framework.

Photos of the historical Lawrence or of the movie character are reprinted in some of the locally produced books on sale at Wadi Ramm while foreign guidebooks frequently include a section on the hero. These last years, many Western TV crews have come to shoot scenes for documentaries on the life of Lawrence, and the American *National Geographic Magazine* devoted a lengthy article to his biography displaying numerous photos of Ramm. Journalists, photographers and filmmakers also contribute to the local economy. In the late 1990's, it was rare to see a month pass without at least one of them being around, escorted by officials or guides from the MTA, and paying for the services of the rest house or the local Bedouin who staged camel races or large-scale feasts. Dearly in need of landscape and local characters to represent the story of Lawrence, they would not be allowed to film in Saudi Arabia where a good part of his narrative took place. The northern Jordanian desert, on the other hand, is rather flat and not as picturesque as Wadi Ramm. The place has therefore become systematically associated with the British Colonel to the point of occulting other locations while, according to his own account, Lawrence only spent a few days in Ramm over a period of activity of two years with the Arab revolt.

Wadi Ramm has become a sort of Lawrencian theme park where sites were invented to serve as stations of a pilgrimage in his footsteps. Today, the railway north of Ramm, a section of the Hedjaz railway built by the Ottomans at the turn of the 20th Century to link Damascus to Medina, and which appears to some visitors rather misplaced in the surrounding landscape, is being photographed by others who are explained that Lawrence led expeditions to blow it up (the place mentioned in the book is much further to the south). The Bedouin well of Abu 'Eineh, used by David Lean in one of the scenes of his movie, has been renamed Lawrence's spring and is presented as the place where the British major would camp when in Ramm in total contradiction with the indications left in his book. An unimpressive piece of crumbled wall, thought by archaeologists to date back from Ottoman times and known to Bedouin as al-Qusayr (the little castle), is now called Lawrence's castle. Finally, the northern face of Jebel Umm 'Ashrin, bordering the valley of Ramm to the east, has been christened The Seven Pillars of Wisdom. Its shape does evoke pillars, but it is hard to count more than six. Jordanian tour guides explain that the seventh is like wisdom impossible to attain, and that this is the reason why Lawrence, in entitling his book, was inspired by this particular

mountain. The forewords in the book give a totally unconnected explanation for the title (as it refers to an archaeological site in Syria), but very few visitors are aware of it.

Representing episodes of Lawrence's adventures in Wadi Ramm allows for visitors to identify with the literary or movie hero by re-enacting episodes of his life, and for local tourism operators (travel agencies, rest house and Bedouin alike) to increase profits. Caravans of tourists on camel back, wearing beige outfits and the Bedouin head-dress, wander in the area from one Lawrencian site to another, a view reminiscent of some colonial scenes. Since officials of the MTA have strategically located the sites associated with the character at some distance from one another, a comprehensive pilgrimage induces the visitor to spend more time in Ramm and more money in transportation, accommodation and food.

Not all travel agencies target nature lovers or tourists who want a flavour of adventure. According to figures from the MTA, the average tourist to Jordan is middle-aged, comes in a group of 25 participants and is interested in historical sites: not the ideal profile to convince Western tour operators to include "the desert of Jordan" in their programme. The character of Lawrence thus assumes another important function: he contributes to populating the area and giving it some historical depth. He shares this role with a small Nabatean site near the modern village and numerous rock inscriptions and drawings, some dating back to Prehistory, some left by the pre-Islamic and Islamic tribes living in or passing through the area. In fact, the whole Hisma basin is extremely rich in archaeological remains, only a few being shown to tourists. Wadi Ramm has become a "place of culture" which makes it a more acceptable stop for those tourists whose interest is exclusively in historical heritage. For those visitors, "timelessness and emptiness" need not be stressed and the desert experience is limited to a minimum with little risk of disappointment.

Jordanian tour guides too feel comforted by this attempt at historicising the area. With time, most of them have understood that Westerners have a fascination for the desert and some have even comprehended the cultural motives behind it. But they generally do not share it, a fact that makes it hard for them to fuel excitement among their groups. Tourists sometimes turn to Bedouin drivers, who are ever more numerous to speak enough English for explanations, and ask them about life in the desert. Jordanian tour guides who hold a national licence are never of Bedouin background and, when inside the desert in Wadi Ramm, local Bedouin drivers and guides deprive them of their important function as pathfinders. Cohen defined the pathfinder as "a geographical guide who leads the way through an environment in which his followers lack orientation or through a socially defined territory to which they have no access" (1985: 7). If not for the story of Lawrence, tour guides would also be stripped of the second part of their role, that of mentors who construct the meaning of what tourists look at, and make coherent sense of their various experiences (Ibid.: 9). Because being in Wadi Ramm deprives them of their main function of mediating between tourists and the human and historical reality in the place they visit, licensed guides have grasped the occasion offered by the MTA who has inscribed Wadi Ramm in various historical contexts and provides them with adequate training as far as ancient history is concerned. As for Lawrence's story and whereabouts in Wadi Ramm, it seems that this training is rather limited, and that guides actively contribute their own invented traditions. A line of continuous occupation is being drawn which extends from Prehistory to the British hero and the Arab revolt and makes modern Bedouin easy to include in the narrative while leaving them no time to speak for themselves.

Mapping Wadi Ramm's identity

Mapping Wadi Ramm further contributes intentionally to the processes of inclusion and historicisation. The MTA has designed tourist maps of the area to provide visitors with means of orientation. They also discourage them to go beyond certain geographical limits, at least on their

own. Maps are other ways of framing reality by carving separate territorial entities out of a spatial continuum and endowing each territory with a particular character. This is done, among other means, by drawing limits, selecting specific natural or human features to represent, and naming places (Anderson 1991). Looking at some of the maps of Wadi Ramm produced over the last few years is extremely revealing of the changing images Jordanian officials want to give of the place. The more recent ones, coming as part of brochures or leaflets with accompanying texts and pictures of the sort described above, cannot be interpreted in isolation but should be seen as yet another discursive element in a complex system of representation associating textual, schematic and pictorial components.

The Royal Geographic Society being under the supervision of the army, detailed survey maps are extremely difficult to obtain in Jordan and are not available to tourists. At the beginning of the 1990's, one could find a map called Ram (not *Wadi* Ram) in some bookshops in Aqaba, but it was almost impossible to find it in Amman. This simple fact was already a sign that, at the time, Ramm was first and foremost viewed in connection with its administrative centre and not as a destination to be accessed directly from the capital. The map, which has today disappeared from book shops, was in English and intended for tourists or foreign residents but it was not called a tourist map: major geographical features had local names and no site was singled out as of interest to foreign visitors. Rather than solely a map of the valley of Ramm, it was covering the whole area between the village of Ramm, Aqaba and the Saudi border 40 km to the south, therefore connecting Ramm to a wider region which is not only an administrative, and possibly military, district but also a social and economic entity for the local Bedouin. Like other such maps printed in the 1970's, it was designed after army maps drawn by British Mandate officials at a time when the emphasis was not on developing tourism but on controlling the territory and the nomads in border areas. It had no accompanying photos or commentaries and was therefore visually quite unattractive. But it performed its main task: allowing visitors — after officials or the military — to reach the fort of the Arab Legion established in Ramm in the 1930's and the government rest house erected at the occasion of the filming of David Lean's movie. Ever since that date, Ramm had started to become a secondary destination for local Western expatriates or for foreign tourists coming with Lawrence in mind. On the map, two routes were indicated to reach Ramm from Aqaba: the, then, recently asphalted road that branched from the main Amman-Aqaba road, and the ancient, more adventurous track across the desert. Mountains were represented with contour lines, a feature of little use to most foreign visitors but which gave an appearance of accuracy and reliability to the document and conveyed an illusion of man's control over natural features, a concern rather typical of the military.

In 1994, when the local representative of the MTA was asked to design the first tourist map of Wadi Ramm, he had to decide on framing the area he was to draw by giving it boundaries. Since the drafting of the previous map, things had changed a lot in Ramm as many nomads had settled and built houses next to the army fort. There was now a small village with shops, electricity, a large school, a mosque, and a refurbished rest house. The Ministry official himself had been posted there a few years before to introduce and supervise more changes in terms of tourism development. According to the new system already in force in 1994, visitors had to use the official entrance at the end of the asphalt road and pay an entry ticket. A tourism co-operative, set up independently by the local Bedouin, had established a rota among Jeep drivers and camel owners in an attempt at equally redistributing benefits and preventing tourists from wandering about the desert without paying for the services of the locals. Vehicles had to be hired next to the rest house.

Taking all these factors into account in his new map, the Ministry official represented only a section of the area shown on the previous 1970's document. He centred his on the *valley* of Ramm. Within a radius of 20 km, he included all the sites of interest to tourists he himself had played a major part in

identifying/inventing in the previous years. By doing so, he separated the Bedouin village of Ramm from its commercial and administrative centre in Aqaba and from a large part of its rangeland extending down to the Saudi border. On the other hand, other recent Bedouin settlements were included to the north. The whole area thus mapped, which covers about ten major *wadi*-s between mountain ridges, has been given the generic name Wadi Rum, the spelling adopted in most Jordanian publications in Latin script[8]. Other local geographical names do appear but the general impression remains of the whole area being called Wadi Ramm whereas, for the local Bedouin, the valley of Ramm is just one among a number of valleys in a wider territory that does not bear a fixed general name other than that of their own tribal section or of the administrative district it belongs to.

This document was intended to complement guidebooks, which, at the time, were not dwelling much on Wadi Ramm because the Jordanian Tourism board was just starting to market it systematically. Sites of interest were given a number and a symbol referring to a list and a key legend at the bottom of the map. The leaflet represents most sites with a colour picture and provides some historical details about the pre-Islamic tribes and the Nabateans who settled there two thousand years ago. Finally, a table gives distances from the village to the sites whereas, at the back of the map, a list of trips by Jeep, camel or horse is suggested. Since the track all the way down to Aqaba is not shown anymore, tourists who drive their own 4X4 vehicles and who do not want to risk getting lost are compelled to reach Ramm from the well indicated asphalt road and stop at the official entrance point where they pay fees. On the other hand, tracks leading to major touristic sites are clearly indicated.

In contrast to the previous map, Wadi Ramm appears as a region of its own separated from Aqaba and as a site of historical interest with numerous signs of ancient and modern human occupation. The neighbouring areas, out of the frame, seem to be of a different nature, totally desert and wild (that is with no historical remains, no current human occupation and hazardous). Independent visitors hesitate to venture there without a local guide while those in organised tours are made to believe that they have seen all sites of interest. The mapmaker, an architect by training, knew how to draw plans but had no previous experience with mapping a natural area. Typically, he entitled his map "Wadi Rum Tourist Plan" and gave it no relief other than the outer shapes of mountains. His map is merely indicative and obviously not meant for visitors to find direction on their own as the area looks flat and unreal and the map unreliable. The map was quickly made available for sale in major hotel bookshops in Amman, Aqaba and Wadi Mousa.

In 2000, the MTA designed yet another "Wadi Rum" leaflet, the latest one in circulation at the time of writing, though other projects are currently underway. New photos have been included showing more desert landscape than before and accompanied with a text stressing the need to protect the environment. In the same time, there are fewer details on history or practical information, in part because a lot of those provided by the previous leaflet have become redundant now that they have found their way into guidebooks in a section on "Wadi Rum" that expands with each updated edition. But the main reason for the change in focus from practicalities and heritage to environment is to be found elsewhere. The document is typical of the new vision development planners have for Wadi Ramm: they now want to promote ecotourism and have declared the area protected in 1998 (originally as a nature reserve), giving it new boundaries, slightly different from those of the tourist zone but still centred on the same valley. The new map therefore shows the protected area even if it

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8 This spelling was inspired by T.E. Lawrence's and was subsequently reused by British Mandate officials. Today, several non-native English speakers have started calling the place Wadi Roum, which has induced Jordanian tour guides who speak French, Italian or German to adopt the same pronunciation. On road signs and local maps in English, one can see Ramm spelled Ram, Rum, Rumm, Roum, and occasionally Rhum though rarely Ramm. This latter transcription is closer to the Arabic pronunciation. Ramm is an old north-Arabic term meaning "high" referring to the mountains. Archaeologists have identified the place as Iram, a city mentioned in the Quran.

is simply called "Wadi Rum". Designed after a satellite photo, it makes mountains and the sand floor look more real and the area wilder.

As will be explained below in some details, one of the aims of the project of protected area is to minimise permanent Bedouin presence in the area, a reason which might explain why many man-given geographical names have been omitted as if representing what Wadi Ramm ought to be once the project is fully implemented. Sites related to the Antiquity or to Lawrence are still indicated but it is doubtful that this signals more than the officials' willingness to maintain the historical or romantic character of the place to cater for all possible categories of tourists. Guidebooks and tour guides, just as they have found a way of including the contemporary Bedouin in a narrative that starts with Prehistory, will have the rhetorical means to remove modern occupation from the picture, if need be.

The Nature Reserve. Minimising human presence

That need may arise soon enough if the more extreme proposals put forth in the current ecotourism project for Wadi Ramm are implemented. In the tourism industry, ecotourism is a relatively new trend supported by a shift in the developmental credos of such supranational institutions as the World Bank. From the point of view of international planners and experts, ecotourism is defined as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of the local people" (Honey 1999: 6). Taking a look at some of the documents produced by the promoters of this new version of tourism in Wadi Ramm, and at some of the practical actions implemented, reveals much of the preconceived ideas foreign experts and Jordanian planners have of the Bedouin, of their relation to their environment, and of the future of tourism development in the area. While it is not my aim here to review at length the implications of ecotourism for the Bedouin society in Wadi Ramm[9], a few issues are worth discussing as they are closely linked to the question of the image and representation of the site as "wild" and "unspoiled" by man's presence that have been so problematic in the area since the advent of mass tourism.

Promoting Wadi Ramm as a destination for ecotourism, as is now being done, implies that an initial step had to be taken by declaring the area "protected". This was officially done over 540-square kilometres when, in 1998, the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature (RSCN) started implementing a component of the World Bank assisted Second Tourism Development Plan for Jordan, that linked nature conservation to the development of income generating projects for the Bedouin community. Many elements of the project and of its implementation reveal a dilemma which planners have found a disturbing way of solving. On the one hand, many activities the Bedouin carry out — such as hunting, animal husbandry, the use of Jeeps in the desert — are seen as threats to biodiversity and damages to the landscape and, therefore, as impeding the growth of ecotourism. On the other hand, these same Bedouin are the official targets of economic development who, in the long run, should financially and socially benefit from the new project. Therefore, various experts have come with recommendations that the Bedouin should become less present and less visible in the protected area and should conduct their activities linked to tourism behind the "ecological" screen provided by RSCN's management (GilmoreHankeyKirke 1996; Rowe, Ra'ei and Zalabia 1998; RSCN 1998).

This discourse always functions at two levels, echoing the dual nature of RSCN's mandate as both an independent conservation NGO and as a development agency working in close association with various Jordanian government institutions and under royal patronage (Brand 2001; Chatelard 2003). Measures recommended to limit Bedouin presence in the area are justified by a concern for the

[9] For critical accounts of the conflict between the local community and the agencies implementing the nature reserve project, see Brand 2001 and Chatelard 2002, 2003.

preservation or the ecosystem and, at another level, by the need to improve the aspect and image of the area to attract investors and tourists. RSCN's final report on tourism development and environmental conservation in Wadi Ramm, which presents the overall philosophy of the project and provides the major guide lines for its implementation, stresses the importance of creating "an overall environment" for the area to reach its "full market potential" (RSCN 1998). "Environment" here does not only refer to nature or social organisation, but also strongly to business and aesthetics.

Some points in the report have already started being implemented on the ground while others are still pending because of their extremely contentious nature. After setting boundaries for the protected area, hunting was forbidden in the entire area and even beyond. Eventually, Bedouin should be forbidden to graze their goats and camels in specific zones because of damages to the flora and to the wild character of the area. Wild animal species that have disappeared in the last decades because of hunting, such as the ibex, have started being reintroduced in view of restoring biodiversity but also to provide a sight of wildlife for tourists. To compensate for the loss in revenue ensuing from the limitations on animal husbandry, the administration of the protected area should hire some Bedouin rangers while some local women are already being employed in an RSCN-managed workshop that produces handicraft for tourists[10].

The initial project was going beyond limiting the access of the Bedouin to natural resources. Following the recommendations of a preliminary study prepared by a UK-based consultancy firm for the Jordanian MTA (GilmoreHankeyKirke 1996), it was proposed to incite the Bedouin to leave their current village, deemed too visible in the middle of the valley. Expressing negative aesthetic judgements about the actual settlement, experts stated that it has to be either removed or evacuated and turned into a tourist village. This was to be achieved by relocating most tourism activities around a new visitor centre - currently being built 6 km to the north, at the entrance of the valley. The move was expected to create a dynamic that would push Bedouin to spontaneously leave their old village for the new, more aesthetic, houses that would be built for them. In the meantime, the shabby aspect of the existing Bedouin settlement would be improved by burying electricity and telephone wires, fixing and cleaning the streets, and painting the houses reddish-pink to match the colour of the landscape. Once a sufficient number of Bedouin would had moved away, houses would then be turned into tourist accommodations, a local market or "suq" with handicraft shops and other tourist facilities. RSCN has to be credited for supporting the locals in opposing the relocation of their village, and this aspect of the project was frozen. The infrastructures in the existing village are currently being improved at the satisfaction of the inhabitants[11].

A set of rules has been made for tourists to follow and are listed on a leaflet available at the shop RSCN has opened next to the existing rest house. These include not collecting rocks or picking up plants, and camping or climbing only in designated areas. RSCN's rangers, who were in limited numbers and busy chasing Bedouin hunters, loosely enforced the new regulations. In fact, several Jordanian travel agencies and foreign tour operators have expressed their concerns to the MTA and ASEZA about a planned limitation of the number of visitors and a restriction of their movements. Operators in the tourism industry are not ready to reduce their activities in Wadi Ramm as the demand for tourism is expected to resume its increase sooner or later. Considering that RSCN is not

10 It is revealing to note that the artefacts they make are described as "nature oriented" and do not have any connection to what Bedouin women consider their traditional craft.

11 The building of a new visitor centre away from the village without the consent of the Bedouin is still a major bone of contention. The RSCN was unable to effectively oppose the Aqaba Special Economic Zone Authority (ASEZA), the public, autonomous body under which Wadi Ramm's jurisdiction falls for matters of economic development. One wonders if planners at ASEZA do not still hope that operating most tourism activities from the new visitor centre, located close to the area originally identified to build a new village, will provide a soft push for the Bedouin to relocate there in the future.

wholly independent from state institutions, and that its mandate will come to an end soon, there is little prospect that rules for tourists will ever be taken by ASEZA as seriously as those aimed at the Bedouin. What is happening today in Wadi Ramm is in many ways comparable to the recent attempts by the Egyptian authorities at policing illicit activities in the tourism industry in Dahab. As L. Behbehanian has shown (Behbehanian 2000), this Red Sea resort in the Sinai has become associated with sex and drug tourism and a decay of moral value, therefore suffering from a negative image among multinational corporations who are reluctant to undertake major tourism investments there. In Wadi Ramm, the decay is presented as environmental, but in reality state authorities are trying to re-assess sovereignty over land use, while the argument of nature conservation becomes yet another way of "protecting the interests of powerful multinational sectors of the tourist industry" (Ibid.). The concept of sustainability, it seems, applies more to the financial interests of the international tourism industry and of urban Jordanian operators, who are all well connected with the political decision-makers in Amman.

Ideologies of development

It is undeniable that the natural environment has suffered in Wadi Ramm. As in other arid and semi-arid areas in the Middle East, the relationship of the Bedouin with the environment has been modified with the use of industrial materials, Jeeps, feed and water brought from outside. The logic of the market has induced the Bedouin to increase the size of their herds at the same time as pasture land was shrinking due to state-sponsored agricultural projects. This has lead to general overgrazing and a serious degradation of natural resources (Barham and Mensching 1988; Dutton et alii 1998; Rowe 1999). But tourists too have levied their tribute: tracks of Jeeps would not be so numerous if it were not for foreign visitors, firewood is becoming rare as tourist like to have large bonfires in their camps at night, modern graffiti can be attributed to foreigners as much as to Bedouin.

Attempting to change the image of the place to develop big business, international experts and state institutions all seem to forget that the current ecological situation and visual aspect of Wadi Ramm are the products of previous projects of socio-economic development that have been imposed on the Bedouin. In the past, concerns were more political and less economic, and the rhetoric was about security in the steppe and modernisation of the Bedouin and not about sustainability. From the 1950's to the 1970's, the modernisation approach posited that Bedouin had to become settled and to detralibalise through state-sponsored agricultural projects and education (Bocco 2000). In Wadi Ramm, the State provided the Bedouin with cheap cement and electricity to prompt them to set up a village at the end of the 1970's. More recently, governmental agencies brought in the telephone and running water. Other public institutions subsidised water and animal feeds for goat-breeders in the *badia* and the authorities never previously tried to limit the use of 4X4 vehicles (Rowe et alii 1998). In the 1980's, it is the State again that instigated tourism development in its current form. Then, Bedouin were asked to convert to the global economy of heritage and adventure tourism by pretending to be still "traditional", that is preserved from the very changes various national bodies, with the help of international development agencies, had previously managed to introduce. At the end of the 1990's, as in other areas of the Middle East that are the targets of nature conservation projects (Shatty 1998), Bedouin are considered a threat to the natural environment and have to be removed or at least contained.

As R. Bocco remarked in his analysis of previous development programmes in the Jordanian steppe (Bocco 2000), Wadi Ramm nature reserve project is the product of a system of representations embedded in an era and a context. Since the 1980's, ecotourism has found a public mainly among the First World middle-class responsive to the discourse of ecopolitics or socio-environmental movements (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 162). In their own rhetoric, experts and planners foster the development of ecotourism as a means to provide a response to both the environmental crisis and

to the debt problems of "developing" countries by linking nature protection to income generating for the local people, thereby being more "sustainable" in the long run than other economic activities that impact negatively on the environment (Honey 1999: 17). Today, experts do not emphasis man's control over nature any more, but pose that human actions corrupt nature. Yet, they do not challenge their persistent assumptions that man is divorced from nature, that First World conceptions of management are superior, and that, in the words of Hobart (1993), locals are ignorant. Therefore, they continue to launch projects of social and ecological engineering that demonstrate their absolute contempt for non-Western inspired world views. A logical outcome of this vision in Wadi Ramm, as in several other locations in the Third World, is that a project that purports to turn an area into a playground for ecotourists, while overtly advocating the economic development of the indigenous people, is likely to result in the displacement or lesser forms of exclusion of those very people from the areas deemed worthy of protection.

The complacence of the Jordanian decision-makers is no less questionable than foreign experts' vision of the human and ecological realities in a so-called "under-developed" area in a "developing" country. Yet, it can be argued that policy-makers in Amman are bound in many ways by the approach of development experts and agencies and merely demonstrate concern for their country's image in the international arena. Especially since the 1989 UN-convened Rio Summit on Environment and Development, major international donor agencies have made aid and other forms of material or financial subsidies increasingly dependent on a country's willingness to implement development projects that include an aspect about nature conservation and sustainability (Mowforth and Munt 1998: 23). The Jordanian power elite, like many others of its kind, is left with no choice but to adopt the language of donor agencies, an evidences of the growing hegemony exerted by international financial institutions on social and political processes in countries of the Third World. This also illustrates the performative character of representations: translated into the written and spoken language of development, they have the power to create self-realising social relations and dynamics.

The project of nature reserve clashes with the Bedouin's representations of the environment. These are, today, as much a product of their long-lasting use of space as pastoral nomads as a result of the new relationship they have developed with it through permanent settlement and involvement in the tourism industry, that is through other development projects that were imposed from outside but that they have managed to reinterpret locally, a process experts too often see as a failure or a perversion of their original plans. When tourism was at its peak, two third of Wadi Ramm's economy depended on tourism, according to Rowe et alii (1998). Provided that the new project is fully implemented, Bedouin drivers and guides will have to reorganise their current tourism management system, probably admit newcomers from neighbouring tribes into the existing rota system of cars, and those who have opened small restaurants and souvenir shops at the entrance of the village will be competing with facilities in the relatively remote visitors' center. Nobody believes that hiring rangers and putting women to work for tourists will compensate for the economic loss. Moreover, forbidding Bedouin to graze their goats in selected areas inside the protected area will deprive them of access to sections of their traditional tribal territory (*dira).* They will have to reduce the size of their herds or negotiate access to other, neighbouring tribes' *dira*-s[12]. As a whole, local resources will become scarcer than before, fuelling competition for access to employment and land within the local tribe in Wadi Ramm and with neighbouring tribes, possibly resulting in open conflict with the authorities and with neighbours.

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[12] Effectively limiting or banning grazing could have socioeconomic effects as devastating as reducing the income Bedouin derive from tourism activities. As Rowe and alii (1998) have documented, both activities are complementary in the economy of Bedouin households that fall back on herding when tourism is low. Since 2000 and the sharp decrease in the number of foreign visitors to Ramm, herding has resumed a predominant role in the local economy.

Even if it is a relatively new concept in their everyday vocabulary, Bedouin in Wadi Ramm have now their own definition of "nature" (*at-tabi'ah*), which they consider as part of their territory and as an economic and social resource, especially since they have managed tourism in the area for the last 15 years and have gained a valuable experience in desert guiding. This is why they believe that they should at least have a say and certainly a share in its use and in its transformation. Jordanian officials, especially in the Ministry of Tourism, have not turned a deaf ear to the complaints of Wadi Ramm's inhabitants who disapprove of many aspects of the project. As a result, the resettlement plan has been frozen, at least for now, various implementation phases have been postponed, and some recommendations have been rephrased in a more subtle way. But there are wide-ranging financial interests at stake. On the one hand, Jordan badly needs tourism to support its weak economy and is hostage to the demands of Western clients and investors for whom nature and wildlife are commercial items. On the other hand, Jordan has to polish its image of a country complying with international (Western) standards as regards environment hoping to be rewarded with the incumbent financial and political benefits, which have little if anything to do with protection of nature. Caught in between, the Bedouin might well have to pay the bill by being the alibi the Jordanian authorities can give when asked about the practical steps they take to foster nature conservation. Bedouin, who were once viewed as uncivilised, are now considered too civilised. Faced with such contradictory demands, it is doubtful that they want to conform to the "noble savage" stereotype again.

Part III Local visions and readjustments

The tourist gaze on Wadi Ramm is a composite construction where various elements of representation intermingle: the desert, the Bedouin, Lawrence of Arabia, the Orient and the Arabs in general, the Third World, unidirectional evolution, underdevelopment, poverty, ignorance and pollution, etc. Each visitor comes with a different configuration of these elements — and sometimes others, less collective — in mind. This gaze, tourists' reactions at the gaps between their expectations and local reality, and the demands made on the Bedouin to conform to certain images are all elements that have induced some of the Bedouin to start casting a new look at the place they live in and at their own culture and history. Interestingly enough, these new perceptions, and some accompanying behaviours, have not replaced other perceptions gained in other, previous or attendant, contexts than that of tourism interactions. Rather, they coexist as Bedouin have found ways of protecting their community from the pervasive presence of tourists and use humour as a means to constantly readjust to different value systems and world views. But humour does not prevent a struggle over representations from being waged now that some Bedouin show discontent with the way they are portrayed in the presentations the rest house, tour guides or tourists make of their culture. Also, some of them have managed to capture part of the market from the major operators in the tourism business, and have recently started producing their own touristic representations of Wadi Ramm and of Bedouin culture.

This last part briefly contrasts the era B.T. (before tourism) with the era A.T. (after tourism). It proposes to explore in more detail how tourist representations of the place and of Bedouin culture, that translate into pragmatic social realities, have affected and continue to affect the every day life of the Bedouin, how the latter make sense of these changes according to their own cultural categories, which versions of their culture they themselves try to convey to tourists, and the representational means they use in this process.

Economy and territory B.T.

The Zalabyeh who today inhabit Wadi Ramm are a fraction of the very large Aneyza tribe, whose members are to be found from Syria to the Arabian Peninsula. The fraction originally came from

further South to ask for the protection of another major tribe, the Howaytat, who occupy the South of Jordan. The Zalabyeh became their clients and were allocated the area of Ramm in the 1920's. From that time onwards, the valley of Ramm and the surrounding range lands and mountains have become parts of their *dira* or tribal territory with free access to natural spring water and pasture granted to neighbouring fractions of the Howeytat when need be (seasonally or in times of drought). Now that tourism is taking an ever larger part in the Zalabyeh's economy, pastoral nomadism is only a secondary source of income (Rowe et alii 1998). Classical studies of nomadic pastoralists have noted that herds are the most important mediating vector between nomads and their environment. In that system, management of the natural resources is collective and no individual can have exclusive ownership rights over land, water, fire wood, game, and so on except if he improves it by labour such as cultivation or the building of water collectors (Wilkinson 2000: 45). Use is always considered within the frameworks of exchange practices and shared access between individuals of the same tribal unit but also with neighbouring units. Such a system of reciprocity implies that the Bedouin's territorial organisation is flexible and that borders between *dira*-s are more mobile than fixed (Bocco 1987).

In Wadi Ramm, this fluidity is reflected in Bedouin toponymy. Mountains, valleys and other geographical features are given specific names which may endure for generations, especially when they are attached to significant landmarks and widely used by a variety of individuals belonging to different kinship groups. But names of less significant places often change within the lifetime of an individual, or just have different names that coexist. This does not trouble the Bedouin who are themselves great name givers and who feel all the more free to create new appellations as only very few are fixed in writing on available maps of which, in any case, Bedouin have no great use. The same applies to wider areas or regions in the steppe: names are not determinative but descriptive, that is contextual and relating to what happens (or happened) in a place at a particular time. Thus, Bedouin consider normal that a place may bear several names, a point important to bear in mind when looking at how they deal with the new tourist place names, as will be done later.

As other Bedouin of the Syrian steppe and the north of the Arabian Peninsula (Lancaster 1981; Lancaster and Lancaster 1999), the Zalabyeh have always resorted to a multi-resource economy: besides raising goats and sheep for local use and to sell, they had a few camels as beasts of burden, exploited wild resources — by collecting plants and hunting animals —, sowed small patches of lands with wheat or barley when rainfall permitted, and practised small-scale trade with the closest market towns of Maan, Tafileh , al-Karak and later Aqaba. Women played an important economic role as herders but also as weavers or dry-cheese makers, all products that could be sold or exchanged for other needed items available only from town. As in any other areas of the Middle East or North Africa (Nelson 1973; Khazanov 1984), Jordanian Bedouin were never socially isolated or economically self-sufficient and cannot be viewed as having ever been autonomous societies, except, at times, from a strictly political point of view[13].

Long before the introduction of tourism, a series of factors had modified the relationship of the Zalabyeh with the space they live in and appropriate as their territory. In 1927, the border between the newly created states of Jordan and Saudi Arabia was established and subsequently redrawn in 1965 (Bocco and Tell 1994). Even if it did not cut through the Zalabyeh's *dira*, the border limited their access to lands and social networks they were using to the south. Since the 1930's, numerous men in the fraction have entered the Arab Legion or the Desert Patrol and have lived in garrison towns with their families. Later, some have moved to Aqaba, Amman or Saudi Arabia to find paid jobs, generally as drivers or watchmen. A lot of them, even if still living in tents when coming back

[13] On the territory of contemporary Jordan, no central state power exerted its rule from the end of the 16th Century to the last decade of the 19th Century, even though the area was nominally part of the Ottoman empire (Rogan 1999).

to Ramm on visits or at retirement age, had experienced settled life and urban spatial organisation long before the first houses were built in what was to become the village of Ramm. They also had clear notions of private property especially since, during the British Mandate, Bedouin *dira*-s had become state-owned and individual Bedouin could gain private property rights over them through cultivation (Bocco 1989). In the restricted area of Wadi Ramm, the state intervened very little in the development of the *badia* and the Zalabyeh kept using their *dira* and managing access to natural resources and collective property as before. But since the 1970's, large-scale state-sponsored agricultural projects have been launched on the territory of neighbouring tribal sections, in particular in the area of Diseh at the northeast of Wadi Ramm.

At the beginning of the 1970's, the families that had remained in, or returned to, the region of Ramm benefited from government subsidies to build concrete houses around the army fort occupied by a small garrison of the Desert Patrol. The Zalabyeh, and a couple of small families that had joined them over time as protected guests, were following a soft push by the State to settle more permanently. Schooling and house building were not declared compulsory or imposed by force: rather, they were presented as a privilege the Jordanian King was granting his dear Bedouin subjects on the road to modernisation. Even before dwelling in houses, the fraction had considered the place where the village now lies as an important landmark. Geographically, it is not situated at the centre of their *dira*, but the Zalabyeh and other neighbouring fractions would come there to collect water at the perennial al-Shallaleh spring, the largest in the area. As a gathering point, it was also a place to socialise or to make collective decisions, even though these activities could take place somewhere else too. In the 1980's, land in the village was registered under private ownership and the authorities further developed the settlement. It became the focal point of the local economic, political and social life while the *badia* retained marginal importance as it was used only by pastors either still living in tents or having settled in the village. Today, the constraints that used to send nomadic Bedouin on the move have been alleviated: they have built reservoirs and bring water by tanks and animal feeds by Jeeps from the village. The few households that still live in tents, usually the elderly, do not move as often or as far as before and have reduced the size of their herds.

To sum up the new relation to space that has derived from political, economic and technological changes during the 20th Century, one could say that the State is now the owner of the Zalabyeh's tribal territory and decides on it development. This territory is not granted any form of official legal recognition but is encapsulated into the region of Aqaba, a wider administrative and territorial unit. Nevertheless, the State de facto recognises the existence of the Zalabyeh's *dira* by allowing them to use the territory according to their own system of access rights over pastures, natural water springs and reservoirs and some new resources such as tourism. This territory has gained a permanent centre (the village) and a periphery (the range lands and the mountains), and every Bedouin has had access to some form of private property. The same basically holds true for other neighbouring tribes.

It may appear artificial to determine an era *before* and *after* tourism in Ramm, as tourists have been coming ever since the time of the British Mandate and even before if one puts 19th Century European travellers in the same category. Yet, there was a turning point with the filming of David Lean's movie in 1962 that opened up the way for future touristic representations of Wadi Ramm. Before the end of the 1970's, foreign visitors would find the locals living in a manner closer to what they expected of Bedouin and the area much more desert than today. Organised tours had not yet included Wadi Ramm in their programmes, there was no asphalt road or built village, and only the Fort of the Arab Legion and a small rest house stood at the end of the track, at times surrounded with back Bedouin tents. Those taking the trip had little chance of being disappointed: few Bedouin could speak English but most were happy to host visitors in their tents sometimes for weeks or months in row, as they still remember today. At the time, these visitors were called foreigners

(*adjnabi*/pl. *adjâneb*). Today, any foreigner in Ramm is called a tourist (*sâyeh*/ pl. *suwwah*) even by children in the streets, and local people, when speaking of the period before the 1980's, talk of the time "before the tourists came" (*gabl ma aju s-suwwah*) as they talk of the time before they built a house in the village (*gabl ma 'amarna dâr bil-garyeh*).

The change in vocabulary from "foreigners" to "tourists", and the breaking of time into "before" and "after", indicate that the shift did not occur when foreign visitors started interacting with Bedouin in Wadi Ramm, but when tourism started having a systematic character, became a driving force in the local economy, and impacted on social realities by being the main vector of change. One illustration of this shift is that an important economic difference between the Zalabyeh and their neighbours was created only after mass tourism was introduced in the 1980's. Before that date, the Zawaydeh fraction (also from the Anayza), living in the nearby village of Diseh, was economically more well off because it had benefited from earlier types of state-sponsored development projects while the Zalabyeh had not.

Superimposed representations of space and the environment

Zalabyeh men first got involved in the activity of tourism as Jeep drivers either contracted directly by individual tourists, or hired with some profit margin by the rest house. Many sold part of their goats or sheep to buy more Jeeps, or reverted to purchasing camels that had been traded for cars in the previous decades. Later on, some opened small shops and restaurants in the village. A few were able to by-pass the rest house and offer direct services to hikers or climbers travelling alone or in small groups. They involved members of their families to accommodate them in Bedouin tents in the *badia*. Nowadays, almost all male residents of Wadi Ramm between 15 and 45 years of age work with tourists at least part of their time, even if extended family households often have other sources of income, derived mainly from animal husbandry or the army. As tourism was gaining economic importance, tourists became a new vector mediating between the Bedouin and the surrounding space, and it is not rare to hear Bedouin drivers and guides equating their jobs with tourists with that of herders. Many aspects of these two activities can be fruitfully compared to understand how Bedouin have recycled their know how as herders into guiding skills. One big difference between goats and tourists, though, is that the latter, unlike the former, come with representations that they communicate to Bedouin, and that they have complex and changing demands. As a Bedouin said "Goats don't complain, tourists do". Moreover, other agents stand between the Bedouin and the tourists that interpret or direct the demands of the latter. One by-product of this double mediation has been the creation of a new relation between Bedouin and the place. This relation can best be read in place-naming, in the introduction of a new vocabulary to designate the ecological environment or milieu, and in a concern for the landscape some individuals had developed even before RSCN's involvement.

It is hard to tell if the current touristic place names that appear on maps and guidebooks in English were first invented by Arabic speakers such as MTA officials or the local Bedouin, or if those just repeated names given by early foreign visitors. The only sure thing is that these names were generally unheard of before tourists started coming in larger numbers, a fact corroborated by the Bedouin, by other informants who knew Wadi Ramm before the 1970's, and by ancient written documents or maps. Touristic place names in English all have their Arabic translations that are in common use by MTA officials, rest house employees, Jordanian travel agents and tour guides, and, of course, Wadi Ramm's Bedouin who speak about taking groups to *bîr lôrans* or *gasr lôrans* (Lawrence's well or castle), and give appointments to tour guides near *al-`umûd as-sâba'* (The Seven Pillars) or under *al-burj as-sghayyer* (the small rock bridge). But when referring to the same places between themselves in a context unrelated to tourism, Bedouin use non-touristic names. By a slip of the tongue, one may utter the touristic name in the wrong context. It can pass unnoticed unless the conversation refers to

a time B.T., in which case the speaker will be corrected and reminded that such a name is irrelevant, — anachronistic, so to say.

Zalabyeh women, for their part, do not guide tourists and are not in contact with other Jordanian agents in the business. They may just receive foreigners as guests brought in by male relatives but even then interaction is limited due to language differences and/or to local concepts of women's shame. Thanks to schooling, a handful of young women in the village now read English, but even those have no motive for peering at maps or guidebooks in that language. Consequently, even though most Bedouin females are aware of the new touristic place names heard from male relatives, they cannot relate them to any personal or collective experience and do not use them even when discussing between themselves their husbands' whereabouts with tourists. In Wadi Ramm, representation of space as it is manifested though place names has both a generational and gendered dimension, reflecting that different groups in the community have various levels of contacts with tourists and therefore view and appropriate space in a different manner.

The same holds true for concepts relating to the wider milieu. *As-sahra*, which means the desert in Arabic, is not synonymous with *al-bâdia*, the arid or semi-arid steppe. But the former has been sold to tourists. Bedouin, eager to speak the same language as the intermediaries in the tourism industry and in no position to impose their vision of reality, now — at least verbally — take tourists "to the desert" (*fis-sahra*). Yet, for Bedouin, as-s*ahra* is not the general environment in which they live when in their encampments or in the village. Even the term *al-bâdia* is not of very common use among the Bedouin. It pertains more to the vocabulary of the development planners of the 1950's or 1960's. Bedouin do not express opposition between the place of dwelling and the outside by saying that one "goes out into *al-bâdia*", but by opposing the encampment or the village to *al-barr*, meaning the place where there is no domestic unit or *beit*. This is another relative/descriptive concept. As easily as he jumps from one category of place name to another according to the context of interaction, a Bedouin may tell his wife that he has taken a group for "a tour of the desert" (*rihleh fis-sahra*) and continue the conversation about his relatives who are "encamped in the 'undomesticated'" (*elle saknîn fil-barr*).

Surely, when speaking with tourists in English, the same man will praise "the beauty of the sunset in the desert", a phrase he will not have to adapt when talking to his peers as Bedouin rarely pause to marvel at the twilight. Despite what looks to tourists as Wadi Ramm's extraordinary character, Bedouin find *al-barr* no subject of wonder and no place for adventure, even though they express some nostalgia about "dwelling in the tent". For the Bedouin, *al-barr* is neither empty nor timeless: it is peopled with other Bedouin in their encampments or who have left recent or more ancient traces; it evokes pasture lands and paths, seasonal migration routes, wells and springs, hunting spots in the mountains, animals and plants that each have their specific use, name and habitat; when they think of it, Bedouin remember secret passages where children use to play hide-and-seek, old places of encampment where neighbours had a lovely daughter, and many other features with a cultural or social significance. Individuals can name canyons, valleys, sand dunes, or cracks in the mountains within the territory of their fraction, and with even more accuracy next to the seasonal encampments of their own families. Many stories can be told about particular places and people, and many events recalled that make of *al-barr* a social environment and endow it with historical depth.

It can be argued that those Bedouin who have grown up in a built settlement and do not have regular social activities in *al-barr* are now separated from it and that their familiarity with that milieu is disappearing. But *al-barr* still lives in the collective representations that one generation of nomads has passed to the next (partially) settled generation. In the imaginary of the settled Bedouin, *al-barr* is linked to a certain idealised style of life one used to lead there — simple, honest and communal. In Wadi Ramm, most of the young adults feel nostalgic about life in the tent, in large part because they

believe that village life and the new economic competition are detrimental to harmonious social and family relations and to personal autonomy. When they want a break from village life (including everything related to tourists), Bedouin families pack a Jeep and head off to spend a night or two at relatives' who still live in a tent or, simply, spend the evening around an open air fire in a place where they have memories. By doing so on a regular basis, especially off tourism season when men have more spare time, young adults perpetuate the Bedouin's special relationship with *al-barr* and pass it on to their children, otherwise raised in the village. Just like the tourists romanticise the desert, settled Bedouin too idealise *al-barr* but not because of an inherent beauty or purity in the landscape, or because they want to be closer to nature or to God. Bedouin like *al-barr* for its social meaning not for its aesthetics, simply because they do not view it as something external to them or unusual, as an object of desire. Foreign visitors come to Wadi Ramm from all over the world and marvel at the arid landscape of the desert where astounding shades of red dominate. Those who have the opportunity to visit a Bedouin family at home can have no other reaction but to mock a sight they call "kitsch" because they cannot make any other sense of it: posters hang on the walls, even in some tents pitched in the desert, showing pictures of Swiss chalets in a landscape of forest and rivers.

With tourism, the landscape and the view (both translated by the same Arabic word *al-manẓar*, "the place being viewed") have assumed a financial value by becoming marketable items: visitors pay to be taken to the "sun set place", to camp where they can admire sunrise, and to be guided on top of rocks or mountains where they can take panoramic pictures. The value of the landscape increases with its cleanliness, i.e. with the absence of visible pollution or traces of "technologised" human occupation. In order to sell their landscape, Bedouin have to repeat the discourse on its beauty and uniqueness. Demonstrating the qualities of good salesmen, a few young men are now sincerely convinced that no such "desert" as Wadi Ramm is anywhere to be found. Bedouin have also heard disappointed tourists complaining about the garbage left around encampments, graffiti on the rocks and other damages to the environment. They have realised that they get less money from visitors if they take them to spend the night in a place they find dirty or where the view is spoiled by too many Jeep tracks. Logically, they have become aware that if they want tourists to keep coming and pay good money, they should provide them with a view where man's presence is as little visible as can be.

Well before RSCN's involvement, protection of the environment had become an issue in Ramm, albeit under a different vocable. Already by the mid-1990's, there was a recurrent debate going on between those who supported "improving the view" and those who did not see why they should change their habit of throwing Coca Cola cans over the window of their Jeeps. The first ones who had started to care about the view were a small group of young men who had managed to individually set up regular business as guides or service providers with some European tour operators specialising in hiking or climbing tours for small parties. By-passing the rest house or the rota system introduced by the Bedouin tourism co-operative, members of that group were getting an income slightly above that of the Bedouin drivers who waited for their turn at the entrance of the village and employing several members of their community or outsiders as drivers, cooks, etc.. Tourists they were working with usually came without a licensed Jordanian guide, a fact that allowed the young Bedouin service providers un-mediated interactions and exchange of views with the tourists and/or their tour leaders, at least in English, a language they picked up quickly. Following the rest house, these same young men were the first ones in the village to buy fax and answering machines, and had direct access to managers in the headquarters of the tour operators they worked with in European cities. Another important point is that some members of this emerging socio-economic group had been to Europe. At the end of the 1980's, four of them had been selected by a British professional mountain climber upon the request of the Jordanian MTA and sent to the UK for training. In later years, the same ones or others that were quick to understand the economic

opportunities offered by "adventure" tourism, went to European capitals as guests of tour operators to discuss business. Either because they had travelled to Europe or because they were keeping a high level of direct business or friendly contacts with Westerners in Wadi Ramm, this group of young informal entrepreneurs were subjected more than others to the discourse on protection of the environment and became convinced of its relevance. They were the promoters of a new set of environmental practices in Wadi Ramm: they started not disposing of litter in the desert, telling tourists not to uproot plants, and passing this attitude to others around them especially those they employed as drivers, cooks, or guides or to their own children and spouses. It is to conform to the tourists' expectations and to their desire to be represented on pictures in what they imagine as a desert environment that Bedouin have developed a new interest in the "beautification" of the view. Those who have fuelled this dynamic are those who can take business initiatives and do not depend exclusively from middlemen, who derive a good income from tourism according to local standards, who can still relate to the steppe as a milieu producing economic resources (as one once of them put it schematically and jokingly: "*Al-barr* used to feed the goats who fed the Bedouin, *as-sahra* now pleases the tourists who feed the Bedouin"), and who feel that their knowledge of the milieu and professional know-how as service providers is valued by clients and contractors.

RSCN's ecotourism project was designed with other types of representations in mind, giving priority to wildlife (conceived of as natural and essential) and not to the landscape (conceived of as cultural and superficial). Therefore, the new attitude described above is totally ignored by international experts, although it can be passed on to other members of the community by a process of diffusion typical of the dynamic of endogenous social change. It will most probably come to a standstill if Bedouin feel they have no say in the future of the area and less share in its use.

History, identity and hospitality as issues of prestige and power

When asked about their memories of Lawrence, the elders among the Zalabyeh took a half-secretive, half-amused tone. Their fathers may well have known him, they said, but memories were not passed on from one generation to the other. They themselves had never heard his name "before the foreigners came to make the film in the 1960's". They were hired to play extras, but they were not very interested in "what's his name?" (Peter O'Toole) who was playing Lawrence. Approaching then young King Hussein, who came during the filming, is recalled as a much more significant experience. On the other hand, they were interested in the actors playing Emir Faysal and the Shaykh of their tribe, Awdeh Abu Tayeh. Those, their fathers knew and fought on their sides. "Lawrence, it is well known, was a liar", they say. And in fact, nobody in Ramm would ever boast of having an ancestor who knew the British Colonel, except when talking to tourists or journalists who "always ask the same questions, so we give them the answers they want". This is what Bedouin call a "white lie" (*kedhb abyad*), which, like in English, is supposed not to be detrimental to the person lied to. Bedouin create fictive links with the hero so as not to confess the breach in the transmission of memories that would testify to the historically secondary nature of the character, demystify him, and displease the visitors. This last concern is not so much borne out of a particular regard for the tourist as a guest. More prosaically, it is a way of avoiding the hassle of dealing with tourists' disappointment. Some Bedouin go as far as inventing episodes of their grand-father's life with Lawrence while they take journalists or tourists to photograph a section of the railway the two characters of the story supposedly blew up together. This little game can be financially rewarding, but it does not enhance the local reputation of Lawrence, a sort of puppet one can manipulate as one pleases. Indeed, not someone worthy of becoming a local hero, "and why should he? Nobody we know has ever met him, really".

When Bedouin are alone together, they sometimes laugh about the credulity of foreign visitors. They also make fun of each other's pretences, especially the younger ones who can embark on real

contests to decide on who made up the biggest story or got the best money out of one. But make believing about Lawrence is irrelevant in the competition for historical prestige between individuals and kinship groups, which serves to assess symbolic status among Bedouin and in a large number of social and political processes in the Jordanian society at large. What counts then is the proximity of one's ancestors with the *real* leaders of the Arab Revolt, those whose descendants have some power in today's Jordan, either as leaders of influential social groups or, better, as rulers of the kingdom (Layne 1994; Schryock 1997; Chatelard 1999).

Eager to divert the economic benefits of tourism in their direction, Bedouin have quickly understood the use they could make of easily marketable cultural markers. Dynamic young men in Ramm have opened Bedouin restaurants, Bedouin supermarkets and Bedouin souvenir-shops. Some keep a Bedouin tent in the desert just for tourists, furnished with the usual Bedouin rugs and cushions, where they serve Bedouin coffee or tea (sometimes presented laughingly as Bedouin whiskey). Touristic Bedouinity has become thick and pervasive to the point of literally ethnicising the Bedouin, following a process similar to the Southeastern Asian cases of "touristic ethnicity" studied by Wood (1998). Foreign visitors frequently ask if Bedouin are Arab and Moslem, and if their language is Arabic. Since one can undoubtedly answer yes to all three questions, what differentiates a Bedouin from another Arab has to be made clear for tourists. Selected external tokens of Bedouin identity are there to make differences obvious and delineate a group that can be easily identified.

But whether one considers the decoration of the tents pitched to host tourists or the objects sold as handicraft, it is obvious that those at the hands of the Bedouin are closely similar to those presented by the rest house. This is due to the fact that the manager of the rest house conforms to the Orientalist vision Westerners have of the Bedouin and, in turn, that the Bedouin take their inspiration from the services provided by the rest house because it appears to be successful if judging by the fact that it makes good money. Consequently, the touristic image Bedouin give of their own culture and identity does not differ markedly from the one presented by Egyptians or urban Jordanians and is definitely in line with what tourists expect before coming. The same goes for the musical evenings Bedouin organise for visitors. The type of music they play is a mix of Bedouin folk songs, commercial Saudi or Gulf (*khalîdji*) pieces and Egyptian or Lebanese standards. Instruments they use are not typically Bedouin. In fact, what is presented here *is* everyday Bedouin musical culture. Instruments coming from the city such as the *'ûd* (lute) are today preferred to the old Bedouin *rabbâba* (one string guitar) good only for old men, and what Bedouin listen to on their radios are mainly commercial songs from Saudi Arabia. Once again, the way in which they entertain visitors is not very different from the style of the all-Egyptian pseudo-Bedouin musical band that works for the rest house. (This said with all due consideration for these migrant workers whose livelihoods and uneasy position as Arab strangers/foreign labourers in Wadi Ramm deserve careful attention too.)

A very important cultural marker that allows tourists to identify Bedouin is the dress. For the Bedouin, as elsewhere, the costume has a symbolic meaning and is connected to issues of collective identity, group prestige, respect and honour. The way in which it is being adapted to fit the tourism interaction tells a lot about where the tourists stand in the local system of social ranking, but also reveals the tensions at work between the rest house and the Bedouin. While most Bedouin men over 30-35 years old tend to wear robes at all times when in Wadi Ramm, many of the younger ones casually wear Jeans, T-shirts and jackets except when they take part in a formal social event either involving only Bedouin or where Bedouin and non-Bedouin Arabs interact. Then, they systematically put on their robes and head-dresses as a sign of group belonging which also strongly indicates a difference of honour/status between Bedouin and non-Bedouin. Some of these young men also consciously wear Bedouin robes when they go to work with tourists. Here too, it is a sign

of group belonging, but unconnected to issues of honour and status, and displayed only to please the tourists and, for the more cynical ones, to yield better profits. In any case, it is optional as one can still drive tourists around wearing jeans. Among the entrepreneur group mentioned earlier, some employ Arabs of other origins that have come to Ramm following the growth of the village. Unlike what happens at the rest house, those Arab strangers do not dress as Bedouin when they take part in the musical evenings Bedouin organise for "their" groups of tourists. In front of tourists, a Bedouin can chose not to wear the traditional costume, but an Arab stranger should not wear it and pass for a Bedouin, that is pose as an equal when Bedouin consider him inferior. This is why Bedouin do not appreciate seeing the Egyptian employees of the rest house disguised as a Bedouin band. If a tourist dresses up as a Bedouin, "*Ma'lech*", it does not really matter because he is not pretending to pass for an authentic Bedouin. The tourist can be left to wear the Bedouin head-dress as this act does not threaten social hierarchy and order. On the contrary, it can even be an occasion for laughter as Bedouin humour too is becoming post-modern.

What is at stake, behind the staging Bedouin perform of their own culture for the purpose of tourism, are issues of identity and power invisible for tourists. Most probably, tourists cannot tell the difference between what the rest house presents as Bedouin culture and what Bedouin show to the tourists. Bedouin even say they know that what makes the *real* Bedouin is not his costume nor his folklore. The point lies elsewhere, in the feeling they have of controlling what is shown of their culture. For them, this is a matter of pride and self-respect, just as not involving "their women" in the tourism encounter and not bringing false Bedouin women from outside to please the tourists. All Zalabyeh men asked about the role of the rest house on the organisation of tourism expressed resentment at its quasi monopoly, even when they acknowledged the fact that they had a lot to learn. Generally, men also disapprove of the way rest house employees stage their culture, especially in the case of so-called Bedouin parties. Today, a very revealing process is underway whereby those Bedouin who have gained recognition as the most successful in the tourism business confront the manager of the rest house to have him stop "giving a wrong image" (*sûra ghalta*) of Bedouin culture. How this was allowed to happen, in a relationship that is strongly unequal, is also a matter of perceptions and representations.

On the one hand, urban Arabs look down on the material aspects of traditional Bedouin life seen as primitive. Bedouin, for their part, have enough self-esteem to consider that their "traditions and customs" (*'adâd u taqalîd*) are a part of their history and identity they should not be ashamed of. But they would not normally chose to underline practical aspects of traditional daily life to assert the value of Bedouin identity in front of urban Arabs. Rather, they would stress such qualities as honour or generosity. On the other hand, both Bedouin and urban Arabs aspire to material and technological modernity seen as an attribute of the West (things are different when one comes to social or moral values). Now, Western tourists, who possess technological modernity at home, show appreciation for and give an economic value to these aspects of traditional Bedouin life urban Arabs despise (such as nomadic life in the desert, hand-made artifacts, etc.). The tourist gaze on the Bedouin allows the latter to confront the Arab city-dwellers involved in tourism with more self-confidence when it comes to representing Bedouin culture. A couple of years ago, the President of the Wadi Ramm tourism co-operative successfully approached the manager of the rest house to have him stop selling Egyptian rugs in guise of Bedouin handicraft. Up to now, though, the President has failed to convince the manager that he'd better organise parties more decent than the current ones where loud music, belly dancers and alcoholic drinks are provided. The manager of the rest house has travelled to the West and has been to night-clubs there. He thinks that this is the way most Westerners like to enjoy themselves and that he just needs to provide a little exotic touch. But, to please the President of the co-operative, whom he needs badly to provide services to tourists, he is ready to stop advertising these parties as Bedouin and just call them Arabic or Oriental. He is even ready to have the Egyptian performers exchange Damascene-style outfits for the Bedouin ones. One

possible reading is that elements of Bedouin material culture are becoming disentangled from the all-encompassing, unifying Orientalist canvas. But looking at the intentions that fuelled this change shows that, by having Arab migrant workers remove their Bedouin dress, the President of the co-operative is just putting them back into their place: at the bottom of the social ladder. Whatever the interpretation, the mere fact that a Bedouin individual, mandated by other members of the community, is in a position of making demands on the rest house — and not the other way round, which has systematically been the case before — indicates that the tourists' vision can become an effective tool in the competition between local actors in the tourism industry. It testifies to the fact that representations can contribute to modifying power relations, albeit not, in this case, to the extend of inverting them.

When it is not confiscated and staged by the rest house, the Bedouin themselves extend their famous hospitality to tourists. If they show interest, individuals or small groups are likely to be invited into an inhabited Bedouin tent or even into a house in the village. There they can just have some tea, share a meal with their hosts or stay overnight. Hospitality is never a gratuitous act but is part of a wide-ranging system of reciprocity, mutual aid and competition for individual or collective prestige. Tourists, who normally cannot partake in this system, are nonetheless eager to experience hospitality and ready to pay for it. Bedouin, for their part, like to reset the touristic intercourse in a context familiar to them, that of the relation between a host and his guests. By doing so, Bedouin feel that they control the relationship and acquire a dominant position. They also adapt the tourists' visit to have it meet the standards of a proper host/guest exchange: as hosts, they offer hospitality not so much in their own name or in that of their tribe (as they would do in most inter-Arab contexts), but in the name of all Bedouin; as guests, tourists are welcome — though rarely directly asked — to give some money in exchange. It is as if, as G. Albergoni (1990: 200) has noted, Bedouin could not reduce exchanges to economic transactions but should always accompany them with a social etiquette in which rituals of hospitality play a great role. Just as barter exchange continues to be expressed in the vocabulary of presents exchange, service to tourists is disguised as hospitality. This is why Bedouin prefer to receive tourists accompanied with a guide/mediator. This *dalîl* can be another Bedouin, another Arab, or even a foreigner who knows the local practices and the "étiquette of bargaining", and whose role is similar to that of the *dellâl* in the Arab market place F. Khuri has analysed (1968). By refraining from entering into direct commercial relations with tourists, some Bedouin think they are preserving their superior social ranking because middlemen are considered individuals of a lower category who can talk about money. This attitude is changing among the younger ones who do not hesitate to discuss prices with independent travellers. The new generation now masters both the vocabulary and rituals of Arab bargaining and the commercial logic of the tourism exchange.

Bedouin do not feel they are selling hospitality. They contrast their way of hosting tourists with the way the rest house deals with them. They refuse to be at the disposal of tourists, as are waiters or tour guides whom they consider to be servants or employees who take orders from a boss. Even those who have small shops or restaurants do not work there, they hire Egyptian, Sudanese or Iraqi immigrants or non-Bedouin Jordanians. According to the "tribal ethos", not all types of occupations are deemed suitable for Bedouin, especially if they imply servility or dependence (Albergoni 1990: 212). Bedouin like to think that all they provide to tourists (a Jeep, a camel, a cup of tea, a meal, accommodation or entertainment) is given on an exchange basis because they *willingly* want it to be so, not because they need it or are ordered it. In their view, hospitality is a generic label covering all the range of services they offer. It conceals the commercial and neo-colonial aspects of the tourism encounter where power lies in the hands of tourists. But as long as Bedouin do not feel they are dominated, they retain their pride and honour.

Of boundaries, old and new, and of struggles over them

Like the various experts or the anthropologists, Bedouin have their own ideas about the effects of tourism on their society. They generally say they appreciate economic benefits and improvements in their everyday life made possible because of a higher purchasing power. Most are curious to learn more about how tourists live at home and enjoy exchanging views and ideas. Some elements of Western culture may appeal to them. Others may not considered in line with their own value system, which they qualify as Arab and/or Islamic when asked to do so. This is why a majority of Bedouin do not object to a certain containment of tourists as it is practised with large organised groups at the initiative of urban Arab or Western tour-operators. In this way, only a limited number of escorted tourists enter what Bedouin want to keep as a separate sphere to prevent the vulnerable members of the community from being exposed to unsuitable Western values.

In the village and in the desert, specialised zones have appeared intended for the purpose of tourism. Within a radius of 10 km around the village, in the area where most touristic sites are concentrated and where campsites have been set up for foreign visitors, pastoral nomads in the era B. T. used to pitch their tents in larger numbers than in regions farther away from the al-Shallaleh spring. Nowadays, tent dwellers try to find places where they will not be bothered by tourists peering through their tents and taking photos or by the loudspeakers installed for parties at night. In practice, the area shown as desert on the tourist map has come to be used by tourists more than by pastoral nomads. In the village itself, Bedouin restaurants and shops for tourists have all been located on the edge of the housing zone, right across the street from the rest house and from the parking lot where Bedouin Jeeps and camels wait for their turn. Even more than in the desert, this concentration of activities has created a specialised area. The practice of a *cordon sanitaire* around tourist activities is frequent in a number of developing countries. It is usually interpreted as a way for development planners and the tourism industry to protect tourists from bothersome locals, and to prevent the underdeveloped reality of the natives from interfering with staged authenticity (MacCannell 1973; Opperman 1993; Mitchel 1995; Slyomovics 1995). In other words, it makes exoticism possible by a process of segregation.

In Wadi Ramm, young and middle-aged Bedouin males move in and out of the touristic "bubble" rather freely and do not complain about a segregation which little affects them. On the contrary, most of those interrogated on the subject said they would not mind if the separation between touristic zones and Bedouin dwellings was stricter. They said they did not like to see unaccompanied tourists wandering about the village or around the tents and taking pictures of women that might appear in books or magazines (this concern relates to the same conception of shame and honour as those of the Egyptian Bedouin L. Abu-Lughod analysed in her 1986 monography). What is lawful (*hallal*) and unlawful (*haram*) between Bedouin is not what is lawful and unlawful between Bedouin and tourists. The same applies for another set of antagonist values with less religious connotation and more references to customary, patriarchal ethics: what preserves or increases honour (*sharaf* for men/*'ird* for women), or what brings shame (*'eyb*). Playing music while tourists are drinking beer and wine is certainly not very moral. Neither is close contact (very intimate in some occasions) with Western women. Some types of commercial deals tour operators have with Bedouin would not be accepted as ethical within the Bedouin community either. Bedouin differentiate very clearly between two spheres: that of the values in the context of tourism, and that of the values at home. Keeping specialised zones is a way of materialising the boundaries between these two value systems in the local geography. Specialised zones need specialised Bedouin personnel and only those received among the initiates can cross the line. Bedouin women and the elderly, on the other hand, take no part in the interaction with tourists while youngsters have to be considered mature enough to assess what is good with tourists but bad at home.

By creating a space for tourists within their own geographical and ethical world, Bedouin develop strategies to adapt to change. They want to draw the best financial and social benefit out of tourism while preserving their value system. Similar attempts have been recorded in other Third World host communities (Picard and Wood 1997; Erb 2000; Joseph and Kavoori 2001). To what extent they succeed needs to be explored more thoroughly. The simple fact that there is a flow of persons, money, information, know how, etc. that circulates from one ethical and spatial sphere to the other jeopardises Bedouin's endeavours to keep them tightly separated. Nevertheless, when going back home to their families after a day's work with tourists, Bedouin males do have to readjust to a different reality. To smooth the process of re-adaptation, they may meet for a chat on the 4X4 parking lot, or visit each other at home. If adult Bedouin women or old people are nor around, all opportunities are good to seize to mock tourists' behaviour or credulity, to use self-irony, to laugh at oneself staging touristic Bedouinity or acting as a tourist. In a way similar to Native Americans who use parody to put Anglo-American tourists "into their place" (Evans-Pritchard 1989), Wadi Ramm's Bedouin use humour to adjust to different value systems. By staging it, humour allows for distancing oneself from the commercial world of tourism where the main value is money, and for regaining one's place in the tribal world of the Bedouin where honour and pride are said to matter more than wealth.

Tourism has not created new social boundaries between groups in the Bedouin community. Rather, it has reshaped or reinforced existing ones between such groups as adult women and men, male children and young adults (*ash-shabâb*), the elderly (*al-kbâr*) and the younger adults. It has also changed the power balance between these groups. In the era B.T., women used to take an active part in the household economy, together with young children and the elderly who could perform a variety of tasks linked to animal husbandry or the making of products to be sold. With the growing importance of tourism in the local economy, and with the process of sedentarisation, pastoralism is loosing its importance as an economic activity. For those nuclear families who live in the village, young adult males are now the main (if not exclusive) breadwinners and, because they are the only ones to move from the touristic sphere to the non-touristic one, they have acquired a knowledge no other group shares with them. This knowledge differential results in a power differential. Most young village women have been deprived of their role in the domestic economy and now constitute a category seen by men as ignorant (*djahilîn*) of what goes on outside the house. Men are not keen to remedy women's ignorance or eager to let their spouses earn some income (for example, by working in the workshop set up by RSCN or by weaving rugs to sell to tourists). They prefer to maintain the power and knowledge gap and use it as a tool of domination in their marital relations. Yet, the younger ones talk of a day when they will send their daughters to university, and will be proud of them. With very few exceptions, those who do have daughters old enough to complete secondary education think more about marrying them before they graduate from high school. For their part, the elderly are duly respected, but consulted only when it comes to taking decisions that have to do with tribal law or other domains that Bedouin see as traditional (pertaining to *'adâd u-taqalîd*). To a certain extend, even if pastoralism still plays an economic role in which members of the older generation living in tents or in the village are involved, the younger ones in the village now see this activity as traditional.

Most relations with state institutions have also stopped being mediated by the old men that used to be considered *shuyûkh* (leaders). But if young adult males have taken most instances of collective decision away from the elders, they have not been able to agree on leadership among themselves. This is in part due to the fact that the various public or semi-public agencies that are involved with Wadi Ramm's Bedouin in matters of local development have not always selected the same local partners and interlocutors. This is also a feature of the current process of social adjustment the Zalabyeh are undergoing. While they know what are the bases of traditional leadership and agree on it, they are searching for the basis of a new type of leadership adapted to the changing social

conditions. In the meantime, various visions will keep struggling and various individuals trying to seize the opportunity to be recognised as leaders by state and other public institutions. But leadership should emerge from consensus within the community, otherwise it is not a leadership Bedouin will follow. At the moment, a very deep factionalism is impeding the emergence of a non-contested leadership among the Zalabyeh and weakening their position in front of institutional agencies that have a freer hand to carry out their projects with minimum Bedouin consultation and consent.

Even if, today, most of the land belongs to the Jordanian state, even if the MTA was the main actor in promoting Wadi Ramm, and even if ASEZA is now increasingly controlling the use of the land, the members of the Zalabyeh fraction still consider that all visitors (Jordanians and tourists alike) come to *their* village, receive *their* hospitality, admire *their* landscape and visit sites on *their* land. All that is shown on tourist maps, guidebooks, in documentaries, and other media, all that is described as a tourist zone or protected area in development projects is a representation of *their* territory. *Dira*-s are not shown on maps, be they meant for tourists or for the local people; they even have no official existence in the modern land law of Jordan. Still, in the mind of the Bedouin, they sometimes assume more importance than the territories mapped on official documents. The Zalabyeh have mentally integrated the various representations of their territory created by the State. Even if the border is not always materialised, they know they are forbidden to cross into Saudi Arabia as they wish. They also know where their village — defined as such on the land registers — starts and ends and the limits of the various individual plots. They know when they enter the protected area and are not supposed to hunt anymore. Unlike most government officials or rangers, they also know when an unwelcome member of the neighbouring tribe crosses over the boundaries of their *dira*.

In the area of Wadi Ramm, tourism has become an important element used in the competition for economic and political leadership among Bedouin of the same fraction but also between neighbouring fractions. Locally, the Zalabyeh have benefited from tourism development much more than any of their neighbours and are now more well off and better connected in Amman than their direct competitors, the Zawaydeh, settled in the village of Diseh, 15 km to the east of Ramm. In the era B.T it was quite the other way round as Diseh was a larger, more ancient settlement which had benefited from state-sponsored agricultural projects at a time when visions of development were different from the current ones. The Zawaydeh are now trying to redirect part of the flow of visitors towards their village: they have set up their own tourism co-operative and offer Jeep and camel tours at a cheaper price, thus attracting more and more tour operators (Brand 2001: 580). A privately owned rest house was built recently and more investments are planned. The problem is that tourists want to see what is pictured in their guidebooks or what is presented on their maps as sites of interest. If they want customers, Zawaydeh drivers have to comply with tourists' requests at their own risk. Entering the area described, photographed and mapped as "Wadi Rum" also means entering the Zalabyeh's *dira*.

Now that competition in the framework of tourism takes place between two neighbouring fractions, tribal visions of the territory reassume primary importance and tribesmen resort to customary law (and to old men) to solve conflicts ensuing from encroachments. If tribal boundaries are just as flexible as before when Bedouin look for pasture or water, these same boundaries are becoming very fixed with tourism mainly because the Zawaydeh cannot reciprocate the use they make of the Zalabyeh's territory. Eventually, this problem might be solved as the MTA has started identifying sites of interest to tourists around Diseh. Tour operators, guidebooks, maps, TV documentaries, etc. now have to construct a marketable representation of Diseh and make it as desirable a place as Wadi Ramm.

Epilogue. Smoke screens, computer screens and unanswered questions.

In the end of October 2001, while I was visiting Wadi Ramm, two local events were getting national coverage and being reported in *The Jordan Times*, the national English-language daily. In Ramm, these events were not both getting equal attention from the part of the villagers. I was also trying to follow up on them, which led me to ponder about screens as either media that give representations tangibility and reality, or as veils that cover and conceal the real nature and effects of representations.

For the third time in a row, Wadi Ramm was chosen as a venue for the Desert Cup, an international endurance competition organised by a French private firm specialising in the "creation of events". This time, 229 participants from twenty countries were running over 168 km to reach Petra from Ramm. For the rest house, it was rushing time too. Meals had to be served and accommodation provided to the roughly one hundred members of the organising team and support staff who had arrived a couple of days before to explore the terrain and mark out the route for the runners. The local and international press was there, accompanied by an assembly of officials gathered under five large Bedouin tents that had been pitched for the occasion in the vicinity of Lawrence's spring. Nobody could have missed the arrival of the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities who, at the time, was also wearing the hat of Information, and who had reached Ramm by helicopter. His "vehicle" kept flying above the area and making a lot of noise.

In those days, many of the Zalabyeh males, who were idle for a second season in a row because of the sharp decline in tourists coming to Jordan, were trying to keep themselves busy with social visits or by spending some time at relatives' encamped in *al-barr*. Unlike the rest house, they were taking no part whatsoever in the servicing of the Desert Cup. Neither were they fascinated by the race of which they had seen previous versions, but they were enviously looking at the powerful brand-new 4X4 that were patrolling the desert from one control station to the other. It has to be said that, apart from tourists and female conquests, cars are young and middle-aged Bedouin men's favourite subject of conversation. I suppose cars have replaced flocks in discussions just as they have taken goats and camels' place as the most important marker of social standing. That day, notwithstanding their considerable interest for the American and Japanese monsters roaming around, the friends I was sitting with in a tent had a good reasons to be shocked: "Thinking, one said, that last time the people of the village organised a camel race, the manager of the protected area (*mahmiyeh*, or reserve) came to complain that we were ruining nature (*nekhreb at-tabî'a)* because we were following the race by car! ".

The Jordan Times, reporting on the Desert Cup, wrote that, before the race, two representatives of ASEZA had briefed the press on new projects to preserve the environment, and attract more investors and tourists. The official in charge of investment and development was reported as saying : "We are hoping to a achieve the concept of Destination Aqaba which includes the Golden Triangle of Wadi Rum, Petra and Aqaba". His colleague in charge of environment declared: "We are trying to create harmony between tourism and environment. Besides promoting diving, snorkelling and mountain climbing, we intend to create a marine park in Aqaba and a desert park in Wadi Rum".

Needless to say, ASEZA and not RSCN had granted permission for the race to take place, another sign of the incoherent decision making process over the Ramm region. But it was rather clear that all the rhetoric about sustainability and conservation was in fact a smoke screen, and that the Jordanian authorities had no serious concern for biodiversity. What they cared for was economic diversification, and opening up their national space to international investors. ASEZA was eager to take over responsibility for tourism development in Ramm to foster big business. I wondered why the World Bank had bothered to conceive such an elaborate discourse on development of the local community and on nature conservation in Ramm? Who was this discourse addressed to? For whom

was the representation intended? Who was threatening the promoters of global capitalism to the point that they needed such a heavy smoke screen to hide their intentions behind?[14]

The day following the Desert Cup, unaware of the scope of the planned projects for Wadi Ramm, more idle young men were gathering around a building in the centre of the village. Taking the opportunity of the ministerial visit, the management of the protected area was opening Wadi Ramm's first information technology (IT) centre "designed to spread public awareness on environmental issues like nature conservation and protection of wildlife in the area", according to the story that appeared in *The Jordan Times* (11.07.01). The General Director of RSCN declared to the journalist that interviewed him: "We want to incorporate environmental education into the schooling of children in Wadi Rum and other villages, like the Disi village, through the Internet". Why not, I thought, also have these children's grandparents come to school to talk about the use of wild plants in Bedouin medicine, to teach students how to recognise animals' tracks or to respect the old customary regulations on hunting[15]? These are entire portions of collective knowledge that are being lost whereas they are directly connected to the local environment. Why not also involve those community members who have already (even if partly) internalised the Western discourse on conservation? Is it that I have a romantic view of environmental education, or is it that the development discourse is incoherent too when talking of community participation?

The newspaper also reported that the five computers with Internet access at the IT centre could be used freely by the inhabitants of the village. But anybody who thinks that RCSN is leading the way in opening up the doors of electronic communication to the Bedouin (as was implicit in the newspaper story) is misled. Several teenagers in the village are already quite versed in the use of Internet and other electronic devices such as mobile telephones. They also know that Internet can become a powerful business tool to market the services of their community directly. At the time the IT centre opened, at least three Bedouin households in the village were already equipped with computers and Internet access. More young men were taking, or had taken, some training in Aqaba or taught themselves surfing the web in an Internet café. Some had learnt with tourists. Many of them had e-mail addresses and were keeping up a regular electronic correspondence with Dutch or German girlfriends they had met in Wadi Ramm. Two of the young men I know had satisfied their sense of curiosity by typing "Wadi Rum" and were amazed at what the search engine had retrieved in cyberspace. One of them had entered into a heated discussion — "In bad English", he told me, "but I don't care"— with the tourist I mentioned above as having posted alternative pictures of Wadi Ramm. My young friend was arguing that tourists too throw litter around and that Bedouin have the same right as anybody else to have cars. "We are in the 21st Century, even in Wadi Ramm", he wrote.

The first computer owners in Wadi Ramm are again the same members of the entrepreneur group who, some time ago, were concerned about "cleaning up the view". But Internet users are more numerous than those and, thanks to RSCN and to Jordan Telecom who has offered the computers, there will be more young people to come who will have things to say about the way Wadi Ramm and their community are portrayed in the tourist media and who will have the means to answer back to disillusioned visitors. Computer owners even have plans to create web sites to advertise their services directly to potential clients overseas. Some knowledgeable tourists have offered their technical advice. Considering the very rapid pace of technological change in Wadi Ramm, sites can be expected to be operational in the coming months. Via the electronic media, Bedouin are now

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14 Such questions and other related ones are addressed in Chatelard 2003.

15 In previous years, as RSCN was establishing another nature reserve on the central plateau of Jordan now marketed to eco-tourists as Dana Nature Reserve, animal biologists and botanists came from Europe and North America to conduct research on Dana's area ecosystem. These studies, of which RSCN holds copies, were not used to enhance the public image of local people's knowledge, for example on botany and traditional medicine.

offered a chance to transmit their own representations of Wadi Ramm and of their culture on computer screens. It remains to be seen if these images turn out to be similar to the ones already presented by the various tourist media controlled by Western agents or Arab urbanites. Most probably, for obvious economic reasons, Bedouin will have to keep submitting to the dominant Orientalist representations of themselves and of the desert to the point of reproducing them. But they will feel they have some degree of control, and they might even have more than a feeling if they discover that Internet is not just a business tool but can be turned into a global networking engine.

Touristic representations of the place and people visited cannot be considered plainly as commodified or commercial representations with an interpretative or symbolic content. They are also powerful propellers of social and ecological change, and essential elements in the process of local identity formation, of making of place, of perpetual re-invention of culture. In this respect, this paper comes close to the conclusions of several studies on the effect of tourism on host societies in the Asia Pacific (Volkman 1990; Picard and Wood 1997; Erb 2000), that all point to culture as an unboundable, continuous and innovative creation at one and the same time, therefore dismissing such antagonist notions as authentic v. inauthentic cultural practices, or tradition v. modernity (Smith 1982). But stating this falls short of acknowledging that representations are also primary factors in the contest over power, recognition and survival in a world where the logic of economic globalisation of the ultra-liberal type can only be fought with the tools it has helped create.

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