



Revue Science and Video

des écritures multimedia en sciences humaines

ISSN 1775-4143

Citer ce document

Annelies Moors, « From Travelogue to Ethnography and Back Again? Hilma Granqvist's Writings and Photographs », *Revue Science and Video*, n° 3, 2011 [En ligne].

URL : <https://scienceandvideo.mmssh.fr/3-6/>

Creative Commons **CC-BY-4.0**

Annelies

Moors

Professeure au Département
de sociologie et
d'anthropologie à l'Université
d'Amsterdam.

From Travelogue to Ethnography and Back Again?

Hilma Granqvist's Writings and Photographs

Tracing the genealogies of ethnographic writing, one obvious category to look into is travelogues (Pratt 1992). In the nineteenth century such travelogues were not only produced by men who had travelled to far-away places, but women also took part in such endeavours and produced their own writings. In her third chapter, Inge Boer deals with travelogues of women travellers to the Orient as a particular form of ethnographic writing (Boer 2006: 102). For travel involves an “ethnographic impulse”. Both travellers and anthropologists, sharing an interest in the everyday lives of Europe’s others, produce knowledge by translating personal experiences into generalizations. In doing so they are faced with a similar problem, that is how to state the new and unknown in terms of the known in order to convey their experiences to the public “back home”. Writing about their experiences with unfamiliar practices, they need to employ certain techniques to make their work legible to their intended audiences.

Boer is particularly intrigued by the techniques nineteenth century women travellers used to convey their experiences and perceptions. It is her analysis of the travel writings of Jane Dieulafoy, who accompanied her archaeologist husband to Iraq and Persia in the 1880s, that I take as the point of departure in this paper. Dieulafoy did not only write about

the women she encountered, but also took photographs and had some of these images included in her publications. In analysing the text as well as the images, Boer draws on the work of Walter Benjamin to highlight that the photographs do not simply illustrate the text, but produce a narrative of their own:

If the text represents an explicit desire for what Dieulafoy sees as the necessary emancipation of Persian women, the photographs at first glance appear to do the same. But, at another level, the photos add and feed into the fantasy of unveiling Oriental women. In this respect, the photographs act doubly: while maintaining and reproducing cultural and sexual “otherness”, they simultaneously register the need for reform (Chapter Three).

In other words, while the written text points to women’s oppression under Islam and expresses the need to improve their conditions, the photographs partake in another style of Orientalism. In staging their unveiling – hence expressing and producing a narrative of seduction and a desire to dominate women – this pictorial style ties in with conventional visual representations of Oriental women. While at first sight these two discourses may seem different, they converge in the ways in which they leave “the body of Oriental women indelibly marked by their difference” (Chapter Three).

As implied in the above, Boer points to one particular technique employed by Dieulafoy, namely a focus on the physical features and dressing styles of women. Similar to many other travelogues written by women, little information is provided about the conversations they had with the women they encountered on their travels. Instead, the book abounds in descriptions of dress and appearance, of the body and the face. Visuality is the privileged sense and dressing styles are seen as a form of expression and communication. Such descriptions may be seen as another attempt to locate the unknown within the known.

In this contribution I will analyse another instance of ethnographic writing, namely the early publications of Finnish scholar Hilma Granqvist. As one of the first women anthropologists, Granqvist engaged in long-term fieldwork in the Palestinian village of Artas, near Bethlehem, in the late 1920s. In the course of her fieldwork she took over 1.000 photographs, only thirty of which were published during her

lifetime, all in her second book, *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village II* (1935). Only much later did she start to work on a publication of her photographs, but she passed away before she could finish this project. Nine years after Granqvist's death, Karen Seger succeeded in publishing many of the pictures in *Portrait of a Palestinian Village: The Photographs of Hilma Granqvist* (1981).

In what follows, I will discuss some of the tensions between the “ethnographic impulse” in more popular writings versus those of academic anthropology of a certain time and place, taking into account written accounts as well as visual imagery. I set out by framing Granqvist's early work through a comparison with contemporary popular imaginings of women in Palestine, while simultaneously locating her at a particular moment in the development of anthropology as an academic discipline¹. I then turn to Seger's publication and discuss how she translates Granqvist's work for a broader public at another historical moment, the 1980s. As it turns out, in spite of major differences, there are some interesting links between the techniques Seger employed in her “translation” of Granqvist's work and the ones Dieulafoy had employed a century earlier.

Out of History I: Palestine and Biblical Time

By far the most common topos in imaginings of Palestine in the earlier part of the twentieth century has been Palestine as the Holy Land.² Whereas such framing has a long history, nineteenth-century developments in scientific thinking brought about a novel style of representing Palestine as the Holy Land. Not only the geography of the land and its archaeological remains were seen as a direct link to Biblical times and as objective evidence of Biblical events, the inhabitants of Palestine were conceived of in a similar vein.

Travel guides, such as the Baedekers recommended the Bible as the best source of information for visitors to the Holy Land. Moreover, in journals such as the *National Geographic* pictures and descriptions of the contemporary customs of the population of Palestine were employed to provide a didactic lesson about Biblical ways of living and to correct Western common-sense notions about Bible times.

The notion that the living image of figures and incidents from the Bible were to be found in everyday sites was built upon the assumption that the life of the present-day inhabitants of Palestine and their customs had not changed. In fact, the very inclusion of people in publications was based on the assumption that their appearance and way of living represented Biblical times. This was further reinforced by the use of captions and accompanying texts which employed terms as “primitive”, “simple”, “unchanged” and so on. The effect of such verbal and visual discourse, displacing the customs of the contemporary inhabitants of Palestine to a past of two millennia ago, was not only to erase historical change, but also to deny coevalness between the viewer and those depicted through the spatialisation of time (Fabian 1983). In other words, the Palestinian Arab population of Palestine on these postcards was depicted as living in an earlier historical epoch, which the viewers had long left behind.

Representations of Palestine’s population were not only strongly influenced by the biblical discourse; other early nineteenth-century scientific discourses played their part as well. All of Palestine was to resemble the Holy Land, but some categories of the population were seen as more Biblical than others, with the practice of categorizing populations along lines of religion or habitat connected to evolutionist notions of hierarchical ranking, according to which different populations were regarded as relatively close or, inversely, at a remove from the pinnacle of civilization. Typologies based on such notions rapidly gained widespread currency amongst the public, and were to remain influential long after evolutionism had become discredited in academic circles. In travel books and guides, for instance, the division of Palestine’s inhabitants into different categories is a constant theme, placing them in an internal hierarchy with regard to their propensity for change. Oftentimes the lifestyle of the Muslim villagers is assumed to approximate the biblical past most closely, and it is their customs that are presented to instruct the public about life in biblical times.

Whereas Granqvist worked with such Muslim villagers, photographs that evoke biblical connections are absent in her published work. Rather, she develops a strong critique of “biblical” framing. In her introduction, Granqvist describes how she set out in 1925 to travel to Jerusalem to study “the women of the Old Testament”, convinced as she was that she would

benefit greatly from observing life in the Holy Land (Granqvist 1931: 1).³ Soon, however, realizing that archaeological courses and expeditions were insufficient to obtain new facts, she became involved in ethnographic fieldwork in the village of Artas.⁴ As she herself put it: “I needed to live among the people, hear them talk about themselves, make records while they spoke of their life, customs and ways of looking at things” (Granqvist 1931: 2). Her fieldwork experiences stimulated her to develop a critical stance towards, as she called it, “the biblical danger”. One of the central problems in the material about Palestine is, following Granqvist:

There has been the temptation to identify without criticism customs and habits and views of life of the present day with those of the Bible, especially of the Old Testament . . . No one can get away from the fact that much is in agreement – the land and nature determine that. But in any case one must remember the whole time that it is Muhammadam Arabs, not Jews, whose traditions are being studied, and that there is a period of 2000 years and more between them – a gap which cannot be explained away merely by citing “the immovable East” (Granqvist 1931: 9).

Still, in the following chapters of her books, Granqvist regularly returns to such “biblical connections”. The index of her two volumes on marriage conditions contains a long list of references to quotes from the Bible (Granqvist 1935: 340). In some cases these refer to a brief reference in a footnote, at other times biblical comparisons are included in the text itself. Granqvist’s struggle with “the biblical danger” poignantly shows up in statements such as: “However much I tried to be on my guard against the danger of drawing strained biblical parallels, I had to admit that this was a modern example of the Old Testament story” (1935: 221).

If present-day readers may be struck by the tensions between Granqvist’s critique of the “Biblical danger” and her own biblical comparisons and connections in her text, Granqvist herself saw her position as radically different from that of her predecessors and contemporaries. For that very reason she tries to preempt criticism of this particular aspect of her work:

If in my work there are fewer quotations from the Bible than in most others, it has been from a perhaps exaggerated fear of uncritically mixing

the old and the new. Just because there have been so many offences in this way it should be the object of a special inquiry to what extent the one or the other is connected with ancient times (Granqvist 1931: 10).

Out of History II: Between Evolutionism and a Synchronic Approach

In the popular imagery of publications such as the *National Geographic*, the centrality of the biblical discourse also meant that any traces of modernity were purposely left out (figure 14). For such photographs were of interest to a Western public, precisely because they provided an image of a different world, its inhabitants still living the life of Bible-times, or representing a romanticized Orientalist dream. Constructed as static, unchanging and traditional, they formed a vivid contrast with the increased popularity of the West as the agent select of change. After the British occupied Palestine in 1917, the British colonial administrators and their fellow Europeans were represented as a major force of change that was to positively affect Palestine and its inhabitants. With the growth of the Zionist movement, moreover, the new Jewish immigrants were presented as the epitome of modernity, embodied in the construct of the “pioneer”.⁵



Figure 14. W. Robert Moore (December 1938). *Water, Jars, Ancient Symbols Women's Toil*. In *National Geographic*, 718. Photo: W. Robert Moore/Nation: Geographic Image Collection.

The ways in which Granqvist dealt with change in her work are complex. Whereas commercial photographers often consciously left out all traces of modernity, Granqvist did not. If the former usually show women carrying water in earthen jars, Granqvist also took pictures of women carrying water in large tin canisters, which, as she stated, were ousting the beautiful, handmade water jars (figure 15; 1935: 22n; Seger 1981: 104). Other elements of change are visually present in her photographs as well, such as houses built from cinder blocks with corrugated iron roofing rather than the ancient stone-vaulted houses (Seger 1981: 106). In her writings she also mentions, for instance, men migrating to America, employment outside the village, and the introduction of cars. Still, it takes a close reading of her work to recognize such elements of change, for the impact of major political and economic changes is not seriously taken on. Also her large number of extensive footnotes, referring to an impressively wide array of sources in various languages, underline, perhaps unwittingly, the static nature of peasant life. For these footnotes are strongly comparative, employ a descriptive mode of writing without critical reflection, and produce an, at times overwhelming, feeling of decontextualization, with references to the ancient Hebrews or the ancient Arabs (“already amongst the ancient Arabs” [Granqvist 1935: 30]), the Semites (1935: 98), and such varied locales as Morocco (Fez 400 years earlier 1935: 130), nineteenth-century Mecca and Armenia (1935: 98).



Figure 15. Hilma Granqvist (1935). *Drawing Water*. Plate 104. By permission of the Palestine Exploration Fund, London.

These apparent inconsistencies in Granqvist's dealings with change may be better understood if her positioning vis-à-vis the academic world and, more specifically, major shifts in contemporary anthropology are taken into consideration. Before completing her thesis Granqvist had taken a course in anthropology with professor Edward Westermarck at the London School of Economics, where she also met Malinowski. Her shift to ethnographic fieldwork brought Granqvist, however, into serious problems at her own university. In 1931 she was denied permission to defend *Marriage Conditions I* as her thesis at Helsinki University. Philosophy Professor Gunnar Landtman judged the basis of her thesis (a single village) too narrow for genuine scholarly research. Westermarck then supported her and in January 1932 she was able to publicly defend her thesis at Åbo Akademi University, where he also held a professorship.⁶ Granqvist worked at a historical moment when anthropology was in transition from an older school – strongly influenced by evolutionist notions and employing a comparative method – to a more holistic, functionalist paradigm, arguing for the importance of long-term fieldwork in a particular locale (Stocking 1983). Convinced of the importance of in-depth research in a limited area, Granqvist stayed in the village of Artas for approximately twenty months. Besides pointing to the “biblical danger”, she was also critical about existing research on Palestine as easy generalizations were made on the basis of particular local customs, collected from here and there, without clear acknowledgments (Granqvist 1931: 10). Pointing to the deficiencies in the sources used by those practicing the comparative method and arguing for the need to supplement these by purely monographic studies, she stated:

But it is not surprising that they are deficient, seeing how casually they are often collected. To a great extent they are composed of opinions and statements of travellers and missionaries who have not had time or interest for an accurate study of the facts and have often confused their personal, sometimes extremely subjective, impressions and opinions or inserted them in place of the realities (Granqvist 1931: 5).

In her fieldwork, Granqvist was strongly influenced by the work of Rivers, in particular by the genealogical (or “concrete”) method he had developed. So, she constructed genealogical trees and compiled marriage lists, going back four to five generations, as long as the inhabitants of Artas could remember. The genealogical method was,

however, not simply a method to gather and organize kinship data, but functioned rather as a framework to connect various kinds of ethnographic information to individual persons, enabling the anthropologist to discover to what extent general rules were actually followed in practice. As Granqvist herself wrote:

No longer is one content with general statements only of what custom requires or such indefinite expressions as that “polygynous men are numerous” . . . one insists on having *concrete facts*, details and figures. One draws up statistical tables, and genealogies, and all this brings into the science of ethnology a precision and solidity (Granqvist 1931: 6).

Granqvist’s limited acknowledgement of the importance of processes of political and economic change are related, on the one hand, to elements from the older evolutionist and comparative method, and on the other hand, to those of the new functionalist paradigm. Whereas the main text of the book is based on her in-depth fieldwork in the village of Artas, the very extensive footnotes – unusual in monographs – link her work to an older, comparative paradigm, with little attention paid to the specificities of time and place. In reaction to the older evolutionist strands of thought, functionalism propagated a holistic, synchronic mode of analysis that focuses on the coherence of coexisting social forms and institutions rather than on their history.

Granqvist’s lack of attention to economic and political change is perhaps further clarified by her focus on the single institution of marriage, rather than a holistic village study which, at least to some extent, would have brought in politics and economics.⁷ The ways in which she employs the genealogical method also flattens the history of Artas. It is true that, at times, Granqvist is very careful in mentioning exact dates, especially with events she herself witnessed. Yet, she also tends to employ the ethnographic present, suddenly covering a time span of four to five generations.

On Dressing Styles and Women’s Subordination

In the popular representation of women in Palestine two themes stand out. First, the overwhelming attention paid to styles of dress, but in a

rather different way than in the case of Dieulafoy in Boer's contribution. The central theme of "unveiling", common elsewhere in the Orient, is not prominently present in representations of women in Palestine. In the Holy Land the exotic is not sexualized, but rather turned into the picturesque; it is not the odalisque, but the madonna that is central to the visual imagery of Palestine. As elsewhere in the colonized world, the various categories of the population of Palestine were represented as "types". Such a style of representation constructs an individual (or a small group of people) as an (anonymous) exemplar of a specific category, as spelled out in the accompanying captions and texts. Presented as essentialized abstraction, all references to time, place and other forms of contextualization were ideally left out of the picture frame.

The ways in which such types were constructed differed according to time and place (Geary 1990; Edwards 1990). In Palestine they were firmly rooted in that strand of Orientalist discourse that produced highly romantic, mildly exotic and fabulous views, attractive to the public because of the particular combination of the familiar and the exotic. Particular forms of dress were employed as markers for particular types, be it "Bedouin types", "Mohammedan women", or "Bethlehem girls", while in pictures of landscapes and cityscapes beautifully dressed women were often employed to make the images more attractive and exotic. Similarly, work, such as carrying water jugs or produce on the head, was often described in terms of the picturesque, with the accompanying texts drawing attention to women's posture or to the beautiful clothing they wear. In this way, women were ornamentalized and their labour aestheticized.

The second theme is the trope of women's oppression, which was developed in a contrasting scheme to the gender equality that is a central element in constructing the modernity of Jewish immigrant women. Visually this was expressed through their dressing styles and the activities they engage in. Wearing shorts seems to be employed as a crucial metaphor for the modernity of the new Jewish immigrant women, who, as pioneers, build up the land together with their men. By contrast, photographs of Palestinian Arab women clad in long dresses, not only present them as picturesque, at times spectacular, and always mildly exotic, but were often accompanied by texts pointing to their gender

subordination. Visually, one of the most persistent symbols of women's subordination is the carrying of materials on their heads. While also employed as an aestheticizing element within a discourse of the picturesque, these materials are at the same time proof of a life of drudgery, a notion firmly rooted in the discourse on the subordination of Oriental women.

In many ways Granqvist's photographs are different. They often express some sort of familiarity and closeness, rather than a feeling of distance between the photographer and those depicted, or a sense of objectification. Her photographs are obviously those of an amateur – the technical quality often leaves much to be desired – taking snapshots of loved ones. Also, in contrast to images of types, Granqvist took great care to name the people depicted, if not in the caption itself, then in the accompanying text.

Granqvist also dealt in a very different way with women's appearance and dressing styles. Whereas commercial photographers usually produced images of women in their most colourful, attractive and exotic costumes (not troubled by mixing elements from different clothing styles), Granqvist's photographs generally are not about women's dress. When the text of her books refers to women's dress, this is always linked to central issues discussed in the books, such as, for instance, when she elaborates on the wedding clothing worn by the bride (1935: 46; 66-67; 81; 111) and wedding guests (1935: 71). In those passages, precise information is provided and the meaning of the various clothing gifts is discussed, such as the political importance of the colours used. In addition, changes in dressing styles are also taken up, such as women wearing black sateen rather than blue cotton, and the introduction of stockings and shoes (1935: 45; 53; 60; 71). Women's clothing is not used to aestheticize photographs of work either. When women are depicted as engaged in work, Granqvist seems to attempt to present a detailed and exact record of certain tasks, such as spinning, weaving and making clay utensils. The focus is on the tasks at hand rather than on appearance (Seeger 1981: 110-111; 124-125).

As previously mentioned, in commercial photographs of women the line between the discourse of the picturesque and that of Oriental women's subordination is a thin one. A poignant example is women carrying heavy goods on their heads. Granqvist's photographs do not invite such a focus

on women's subordination. Whereas she does include pictures of women carrying food or firewood on their heads, she is careful to provide a text that foregrounds the women's point of view:

The women are proud of being able to carry heavy burdens. They train themselves to be strong and competent. It makes them respected personally. They are conscious that everyone is watching them and expressing their opinions (Granqvist 1947: 158 quoted by Seger 1981: 106).

Granqvist is well aware of preconceived western notions of male dominance and women's subordination in the East. Intrigued by women's own views on polygyny, she argues that she will refrain from making statements about the women being happy or not, and takes issue with the ease with which judgments are made about "the position of Oriental women" (Granqvist 1931: 22).

In order to present a more nuanced view, she employs two lines of argumentation. On the one hand, she works at getting a view from within, making sure not simply to observe customs or ceremonies, but also to investigate local explanations, views and motives (1931: 19). In doing so, she explicitly acknowledges the advantage of having women as informants, as this gives her the opportunity to elaborate on women's strategies that have often gone unnoticed (1931: 22). When addressing "women's value", for instance, she points out that there are many strong women, and that their value depends a lot upon their personality (Granqvist 1935: 169). She writes extensively about women's important role in arranging marriages and the kind of strategies they follow, such as women preferring a bride from their own families (Granqvist 1931: 86). Further delving into marriage arrangements, she argues that not only women, but men are dependent as well upon their families to arrange a marriage (1931: 53; 57; 59). She mentions a host of particular cases in which women make their opinion heard, and points to cases of women owning land (1931: 28; 1935: 305) and other forms of property (1931: 45). Furthermore, Granqvist pays ample attention to the specific position of widows, underlining that a widow is economically much better off, more independent and has more freedom to act if she does not remarry (1935: 312). As she points out, after her husband's death a woman can have power, authority and freedom by remaining a widow (1935: 319).

On the other hand Granqvist critically investigates established Western notions – both popular and scientific – about women’s subordination. This leads her to elaborate extensively on such vexed issues as marriage payments, polygyny and divorce. In an elaborate discussion Granqvist points out that the bride price cannot be considered as “the purchase of women” (1931: 132; 134; 143). Pointing out that polygyny in the case of barrenness of the first wife has only been seen from the male point of view, she points out that the wife may have her own reasons to encourage her husband to take another wife, such as securing her inheritance rights (1935: 211-12). She makes clear that what is known about divorce forms a highly incomplete picture, as in the West usually men’s formal rights and women’s complete lack thereof are the only aspects considered. Underlining that her work is “based directly upon cases taken from real life” (1935: 257), Granqvist argues that it is of the greatest importance to collect comparative material on the numbers of divorces, its causes and effects, as this may result in important corrections of “our ideas of the powerful husband in the East” (1935: 284). For there are vast differences between the theoretical facility of divorce for a husband and the serious consequences he will face in practice (1935: 285). At the same time, under certain circumstances, women are actually very able to get a divorce, which also “disturbs belief in the husband’s power in the Orient” (1935: 286).

Karen Seger: Popularizing Granqvist and Palestinian Rural Culture

Karen Seger’s *Portrait of a Palestinian Village: The Photographs of Hilma Granqvist* (1981) is both an intervention in debates on Palestine in the 1980s and an ode to Granqvist’s work. Whereas Seger refrains from taking an explicit political stance, by expressing the hope that the book will “stir interest in the rich and fascinating culture of the Palestinians” (1981: 15), she does introduce Granqvist’s work as a counterimage to stereotypical images of Palestinians in Euro-American and Israeli discourse. The Seger volume is also a tribute to Hilma Granqvist and her work. In this large-size publication, Seger reproduced 226 of Granqvist’s photographs, framing them by providing introductions and accompanying texts based on both Granqvist’s published work and her unpublished notes. *Portrait of a Palestinian Village* presents a vivid visual

image of rural Palestine in the early twentieth century, and has been instrumental in drawing attention to Hilma Granqvist's work amongst anthropologists.

A comparison of Granqvist's text, including her use of photographs in *Marriage Conditions II* (1935), and the ways in which Seger presents Granqvist's photographs, suggests some interesting contrasts. There is, of course, the obvious difference that Granqvist's two earliest volumes are about marriage conditions in Artas, while the Seger volume is about Granqvist and her photographs of a Palestinian village. It is no surprise then that the Seger volume includes a number of photographs of Granqvist herself, something Granqvist in her own book avoided. Granqvist's 1935 volume states on the title page "with 30 pictures by the author". These pictures are small black and white images, grouped two, or sometimes three on a page, with the three pictures at the beginning of the book clearly setting the stage. The first shot is of "The House in Artas where the Author lived", the second has as caption "Sitt Louisa [Miss Baldensperger], 'Alya and Hamdiye", while the third reads "The East of the Village with the Gardens". Hence, whereas in the first volume Granqvist pointed to the importance of fieldwork in her introductory chapter on methodology, in the 1935 volume she establishes her presence as fieldworker by presenting pictures of her house (indicating that she lived in the village), her main contact and informants (Sitt Louisa), and of the two village women who were her main informants ('Alya and Hamdiya). The photograph of the Eastern part of the village completes the set of house, people and landscape, providing an overview of a major part of the village. The remaining twenty-seven photographs of marriage processions generally have very brief and general captions, but are referred to extensively in the text.

Let me also point out some less obvious differences. Seger leaves out some people's names and dates Granqvist had painstakingly provided. As a result, the presentation of the wedding ceremonies in Seger, for instance, gives the impression that this is one and the same wedding, while it is clear from Granqvist's book – providing the names and often also the dates – that these photographs were taken on three different occasions. Granqvist's work and its representation in the Seger volume is also divergent with respect to biblical time, dress and appearance, and women's subordination. While there are fewer references to biblical time in the Seger volume, some of the pictures, such as those of shepherds with lambs, can easily be linked to this theme. The fact that Granqvist

had taken such photographs, but chose not to take them up in her publication, may be seen as an indication of her attempts to avoid the “biblical danger”.

There is also a somewhat stronger focus on women’s dressing styles in the Seger volume, not so much through the style of photography but rather in the information she provides in the texts accompanying the photographs. The main difference between Granqvist’s work and the Seger volume is the less nuanced way in which Seger deals with “women’s position”. Seger foregrounds women’s subordination through a variety of techniques. Some of the elements of women’s strength Granqvist had mentioned cannot be found in the Seger volume. In the process of selecting a bride, for instance, no reference is made to the influence of female kin, a point underlined by Granqvist (1981: 75), while the potentially powerful position of widows is not mentioned at all (1981: 79). Also, Seger makes several general statements

– such as stating that women are associated with the home and children and men with farming, politics, religion and the outside world – a mode of reasoning Granqvist had consciously avoided (1981: 102).

While these differences are to some extent one of historical moment, the different positions Granqvist and Seger take up, especially with respect to genre, intended audiences, and claims to authority, are more important.⁸ Granqvist wrote her books while attempting to establish academic authority and credibility as an anthropologist, that is, as an anthropologist at a particular juncture in anthropological thought. As mentioned above, in the quotation about the deficiencies in the comparative method, Granqvist strongly underlined the differences between her own work and that of missionaries and travellers. The ways in which she dealt with photographs in her 1935 publication also needs to be seen within such a context. Up until 1910/20 photography had been part and parcel of a collective endeavour to collect anthropological material, to be used for comparative studies. This changed when the ideal method of anthropology became long-term research by an individual fieldworker in one particular place, often with a theoretical focus on social organization (Edwards 1992: 4; Poignant 1992: 64-65). Rather than collecting photographs for the sake of comparison, the inclusion of photographs in an ethnography started to function as an indication of presence of the anthropologist, without the need to depict

that very anthropologist himself/herself (Pinney 1992: 78). The focus on social organization also discouraged the use of photography, as “social organization” is much harder to visualize than, for instance, material culture or ceremonies. Finally, the small number of photographs included may well have been the result of attempts to establish ethnographies as a genre different from travel books (Poignant 1992: 64). By contrast, Seger wrote a book that aimed at a larger, non-academic public. It was part of a trend in publications about Palestine and its history, a trend that did not pay exclusive attention to formal politics, but also to Palestinian culture and everyday life. This attempt at popularizing ethnographic writing required an attractive publication, as exemplified by the large number of photographs and relatively simple accompanying texts. Seger had to diverge from Granqvist’s work, as one of the latter’s aims had been to establish academic authority, and in order to do so, to distance herself from more popular genres.

Hilma Granqvist’s photographs and texts are quite different from those produced by more popular, commercial publishers. Even though for presentday readers biblical references stand out, compared to her contemporaries such references are not only small in number, but also framed by a critique of “the biblical danger”. Women’s dress styles are only considered where this is functional in light of the issues under investigation and her presentation of women’s position is nuanced. Privileging the aural over the visual, Granqvist focuses on conversations and takes up the position of a listener, rather than a spectator. Weary of unwarranted generalizations, she deliberately produces an open text that allows for alternative interpretations:

it appeared to me only right to present my material in the form in which I received it, so that in every case it would be known upon what I founded my conclusions. It is possible that others would read into it something different, and it must be valuable for those who have no opportunity of living among these people to see and form judgments on what the fellahin relate and how they relate . . . My material is thus a direct translation of the literal reports given by the women (Granqvist 1931: 21).

While the popular media employed imagery to attract the attention of a wider public, Granqvist took her photographs primarily a means of documentation for research purposes (as in series of pictures about how

to make clay utensils), upon request of people she worked with, and as mementos of friends and acquaintances. The pictures she included in her early work are hence limited, with the selection clearly made within the boundaries set by anthropology as an academic discipline. Her motivation for taking pictures was in fact not publication, and it is exactly because she is not a highly skilled photographer that the imagery, through the indexical qualities of photography, presents us with interesting information. But it is only with the publication of the Seger book that her private pictures became public knowledge.

While Granqvist's produced a narrative that can be read as a strong critique of contemporary representations of women in Palestine (even if written for a limited academic audience), the Seger volume intended to use Granqvist's photographs to present an alternative view of the lives of Palestinian women in the rural areas some fifty years earlier, drawing attention to the "culture and history" of a people whose very existence had been denied.⁹ Tensions and convergences between the texts and the photographs – as Boer discussed for Jane Dieulafoy's travelogue – are also present in the work of Granqvist and Seger. In an attempt to reach a broader public, Seger seems to move into the direction of some of the techniques Dieulafoy employed. While Seger's aim is to present Granqvist's photographs to a wider audience, her accompanying texts – in its greater emphasis on women's dress styles and their subordination – provide a particular framing that diverges to some extent from Granqvist's work. In other words, her attempts to connect with a more popular audience seem to have led to a perhaps inevitable flattening of Granqvist's more open and multifaceted work. Simultaneously, some of Granqvist's photographs in the Seger volume present elements of change and modernity that Granqvist mentions in her own work, in passing as it were, but does not really take on, because her work remains caught between a holistic, synchronic approach (in the main body of the text) and the older comparative/evolutionary perspective (in the footnotes). While in some cases she must have deliberately included traces of modernity such as metal containers, cinder blocks and corrugated iron roofs, the indexicality of the photographic, indiscriminately including everything in front of the lens, would also have made it difficult to avoid this. These photographs were, however, only published in the Seger volume, not in her own books.

Granqvist herself wrote her early books to position herself as a respectable academic, her intended audience consisting of her fellow-academics. Next to presenting an alternative view of Palestinian history, the Seger volume was also produced to draw attention to Hilma Granqvist's work as one of the earliest women anthropologists. It is ironic that in a sense Seger may have done her work too well. In his authoritative introduction to the anthropology of the Middle East, Dale Eickelman (1998) mentions both the work of Edward Westermarck and that of Hilma Granqvist, yet in a different way. Whereas both authors are referred to in the section on "further reading" at the end of the chapter on personal and family relationships, only Westermarck makes it into the chapter on "intellectual predecessors". More interesting, whereas Westermarck's work on marriage ceremonies in Morocco is mentioned with its exact reference provided as an example of older accounts of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century marriage practices in the Middle East, Granqvist's work only becomes visible through a reference to the Seger volume.¹⁰ Directing present-day anthropologists to Seger's "translation" of Granqvist's work stands in a tense relation with Granqvist's attempts to position herself as a professional anthropologist.

Bibliographie

- Boer, Inge, 2006, 'Uncertain territories: Travel as exchange', in Mieke Bal, Bregje van Eekelen and Patricia Spyer, eds., *Uncertain Territories. Boundaries in Cultural Analysis*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi. p. 71-106.
- Edwards, Elizabeth, 1990, 'Photographic 'Types': The Pursuit of Method', *Visual Anthropology* 3, 2-3: 235-259.
- Edwards, Elizabeth, 1992, *Anthropology and photography 1860-1920*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Eickelman, Dale, 1998, *The Middle East. An anthropological approach*. Englewood Cliffs (N.J.): Prentice Hall.
- Fabian, Johannes, 1983, *Time and the other. How anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Geary, Christraud, 1990, 'Impressions of the African Past: Interpreting Ethnographic Photographs from Cameroon', *Visual Anthropology* 3, 2-3: 289-315.
- Granqvist, Hilma, 1931. *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village I*. Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung.
- Granqvist, Hilma, 1935. *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village II*. Helsingfors: Akademische Buchhandlung.
- Khalidi, Walid, 1984, *Before their diaspora. A photographic history of the Palestinians 1876-1948*. Washington D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies.
- Moors, Annelies, 1996, 'On appearance and disappearance. Representing women in Palestine under the British Mandate' *Thamyris* 3, 2: 279-310.
- Moors, Annelies, 2001, 'Presenting Palestine's Population: Premonitions of the Nakba', *MIT-E7MES electronic journal* 1, 1: 14-26.
- Pinney, Christopher, 1990, 'Classification and Fantasy in the Photographic Construction of Caste and Tribe', *Visual Anthropology* 3, 2-3: 259-289.
- Pinney, C., 1992, 'The Parallel histories of anthropology and photography', in E. Edwards, (ed.), *Anthropology and photography 1860-1920*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. Pp. 74-97.
- Poignant, Roslyn, 1992, 'Surveying the Field of View: The Making of the RAI Photographic Collection', in Edwards, E., *Anthropology and photography 1860-1920*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press. Pp. 42-74.
- Pratt, Mary Louise, 1992, *Imperial Eyes. Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London: Routledge.
- Stocking, George, 1983, 'The Ethographer's Magic: Fieldwork in British Anthropology from Tylor to Malinowsky', in George Stocking, *Observers Observed. Essays on Ethnographic Fieldwork*. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, p.70-121.
- Suolinna, Kirsti, 2000, 'Hilma Granqvist: A Scholar of the Westermarck School in Decline', *Acta Sociologica* 43, 4: 317-23.
- Warner, M., 1984, 'The question of faith: Orientalism, Christianity and Islam', in M. Stevens, ed., *The Orientalists: Delacroix to Matisse*. London: Royal Academia of Arts.
- Weir, Shelagh, 1975, 'Hilma Granqvist and Her Contribution to Palestine Studies', *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies* 2, 1: 6-13.

Widén, Solveig, 1998, Alma Söderhjelm and Hilma Granqvist, *Gender and History* 10, 1:
133-142.

Notes

1. Granqvist's early work refers to *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village I*, published in 1931, and *Marriage Conditions in a Palestinian Village II*, published in 1935.
2. For this framing I have made use of two archives of visual representation that enjoyed mass circulation at the time: picture postcards and the pictures and articles published in the *National Geographic Magazine* (for an analysis of these popular representations sees Moors 1996). During the first decennia of the last century picture postcards, produced by commercial photographers for the tourist market, had become a highly popular means of disseminating visual images of Palestine, both in the European and American markets, and, with the development of international tourism, in Palestine itself. During roughly the same period, the *National Geographic Magazine*, based in Washington D.C., had become a major medium of visually representing the colonized world to a Western public. It was not only one of the first monthlies to make extensive use of photographs, but the ways in which it employed photographs greatly helped to establish it as both a popular and a scientific publication (see Lutz and Collins 1993).
3. Granqvist (1891-1972) graduated at the faculty of arts at Helsinki University in 1921 in the subjects of pedagogy, history and philosophy. She then went on to write her doctoral thesis for Gunnar Landtman, professor of philosophy at the same university on the topic of "The Women of the Old Testament". After attending courses in Old Testament Studies at Berlin University, she left for Jerusalem in 1925 to take a course in Palestinian archaeology.
4. One reason why she had chosen the village of Artas was that Louisa Baldensperger was willing to introduce and house her. Louisa Baldensperger was the daughter of an Alsatien missionary, whose father had settled in the village in the 1850s. She herself had been living there for over 30 years.
5. This did not preclude links with biblical times, but the activities of the new Jewish immigrants were not seen as simply reflecting events of the biblical past, but as consciously and actively creating these as part of a new culture. For an analysis of shifting representations of Palestinian women in the course of British mandatory rule over Palestine, see Moors (1996).
6. Amongst anthropologists her thesis was well received (see for instance the review of her work by Evans-Pritchard in *Man* 1937; Weir 1975). Still, she was never able to get a university position, and was also passed over for other positions, most likely because of gender considerations (Widén 1998).
7. In some ways her work was similar to that of Finnish anthropologist Edward Westermarck (1862-1939) who also did long term and in-depth fieldwork in Morocco and wrote monographs on particular aspects of rural Morocco. Theoretically, however, he remained close to the comparative method.
8. One problem is that it is hard to say to what extent Granqvist's unpublished notes have given direction to the Seger volume. According to Shelagh Weir, one of the major criteria for Granqvist's specific use of photographs was their photographic quality. Granqvist was a rather inexperienced amateur photographer, and a considerable number of photographs were simply not suitable for publication (1975).

9. Seger can also be read as a critique of authoritative Palestinian visual histories, a point made by Khalidi (1984), see Moors (2001).
10. “Photographs of marriage practices in a small village near Bethlehem taken by the Finnish ethnographer Hilma Granqvist and a summary of her ethnographic work related to marriage appear in Karen Seger, ed., *Portrait of a Palestinian Village: The Photographs of Hilma Granqvist* (1981)” (Eickelman 1998: 172).