
kalief had in 1009 de Heilig Grafkerk in Jeruzalem vernield. 'Al-Hakim, who was assassinated by orders of his own sister, was clearly as mad as a hatter.' De druzen golden als boerenvolk uit de heuvels, met een dubieus geloof. Het is niet ondenkbaar dat Grolle en Pilon in Tiberias iets meekregen van dit waardeoordeel. 'A fine-looking race of mountaineers', aldus Henry Vollam Morton (1892-1979), 'but it is scarcely surprising that their Christian neighbours have attributed to them dark and horrible practices.'⁸⁰

Zo heeft Pilon zich nooit uitgelaten over de sjeik, die hij eerder een soort boerenslimheid toeschreef. Khayr kreeg geen moment het gevoel dat Pilon en Blum hem beschouwden als hun gelijke – integendeel. De voorzichtige interventies van Rafiq Farah hadden deze indruk niet weg genomen. Khayr wilde het contact enkel voortzetten als uitwijkmogelijkheid in geval van een Israëliësche onteigening van zijn grond.

Farah vroeg aan Hans Bernath in Nazareth om als bemiddelaar op te treden. Anders dan Pilon en Blum sprak Bernath Arabisch en kende hij de sociale codes van de Arabieren. Farah's broer Shafiq beschrijft hoe Bernath sjeik Khayr overreedde om de onderhandelingen niet af te breken:

Reverend Rafiq Farah of Haifa put Hans [Bernath] in contact with a Group of Christians from Holland (...) who had the idea to buy land in the Galilee to establish a Christian settlement there. Their desire was to build a bridge between Jews and Christians. They had approached [Abdullah Khayr], but not knowing the particularities of local customs, they angered the sheikh who withdrew his offer. Rafiq was sure that Hans would be able to mend the relations. The sheikh had indeed been a patient at the Nazareth Hospital. His father [Salman], about eighty years old, had come to the hospital a year before with a broken forearm, the bone sticking out of the torn *abayeh* sleeve. The material of his garment was tightly stuck to the end of the bone – a rather frightening picture.

The astonishing recovery without infection impressed the whole clan. Hans attributed the complete recovery of the sheikh's father to the splendid condition of the patient rather than medical skill. The accident had opened the way for an excellent relationship with the family. Hans accepted Rev. Farah's suggestion, and the sheikh's invitation. After three or four visits, Hans attempted to come to the subject of the intended land sale. At first the sheikh expressed anger over the approach of the Dutch buyers, but finally he consented to see them again on the condition that doctor Bernath would be present as guarantor to an honest, non-aggressive deal.⁸¹

⁸⁰ H.V. Morton, *In the steps of the Master*, London 1934, 258-259.

⁸¹ Shafiq Farah, *What shall I do with my life*, North York (Ontario) 1995, 124.