77

JERUSALEM QUARTERLY

77

Spring 2019

Past Tense in the Present

Past Tense
Jack Persekian

**A Municipality Seeking Refuge:
Jerusalem Municipality in 1948**
Haneen Naamneh

**Self-Portrait of a Nation: The Arab Exhibition
in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34**
Nadi Abusaada

**Discovering Mandate Palestine through Disability:
the Life of Reja-e Busailah**
Book review by Sandy M. Sufian

INSTITUTE OF JERUSALEM STUDIES

Jerusalem Quarterly

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Past Tense

Cover photo: *New Gate*, by Jack Persekian, photo-overlay, 2017.
Back cover: Yazan Khalili, *Center of Life*, chalk on blackboard, 2018.

Past Tense in the Present

Every two years, those of us living in Palestine, or visiting the country at the right time, brace ourselves: another Qalandiya International biennale is about to propel us into a rush of exhibits, talks, and tours. Exhilarating and frustrating at the same time – no one can possibly attend or participate in the entire program – we come to the conclusion of its three weeks hoping to retain some of the insights and experiences.

Among them this past autumn was "Past Tense," a photographic exhibit by Jack Persekian, who also co-curated Qalandiya International's Jerusalem Show. Entering the dim hallway of the Goethe-Institut in Ramallah, lighted tables draw us to photos of contemporary Jerusalem. But then, we lift the glass panel and the past is illuminated, revealing a photo of the same place, or can we call it the same? Jerusalem's built environment, like that of so much of Palestine, has shifted in innumerable ways, some remembered and some forgotten. What has happened, Persekian asks, to the buildings at New Gate, Jaffa Gate or Damascus Gate? We experience some of these photos in a different way at the abandoned Lutheran School in Jerusalem's Old City, reopened for the biennale's Jerusalem Show. In a classroom, visitors sit at scarred student desks, leafing through photographs in a folder – the viewer also a curator trying to understand how the city has changed and what it means.

In the next classroom is another layering of time and place, this one of Jerusalem's garbage. Artist Benji Boyadgian, in his ongoing work *The Temporary Ruin, Chapter 2: The Cabinet of Curiosities*, culls oddities from the layers of garbage in the wadi below Jabal Abu Ghneim, now the site of the illegal Har Homa settlement.

These are carefully presented in a wooden cabinet, along with Boyadgian's own delicate sketches of his finds among the rubble. He writes: "For years I have gathered various curiosities from Wad al-Shami: trash from all periods. Taking a surface-archaeology approach, I create a collection of artifacts from the valley and preserve them from the dumps of oblivion, before the valley gets encroached upon by the urban sprawl."

In "Wandering Through the Flavours," Mirna Bamieh and Suzanne Matar of the Palestine Hosting Society add another dimension of excavation to this remarkable show, this one culinary. Bamieh and Matar led several tours of the Old City, exploring a cavern hosting one of the last remaining tahini mills, a venerable restaurant with a recently-excavated long staircase leading down to the tunnels below al-Aqsa, and shops where secrets of *za'tar* are passed along to sons only on the father's deathbed. Bamieh and Matar also highlight the disappearance of flavors from the Old City, citing the coming ban of any use of wood fires, so essential to the flavor of Armenian *lahmajun*. They remind us that smells and tastes are integral to Jerusalem's history.

At a slant to Jerusalem, historian Nazmi al-Jubeh, a longtime contributor to the *Jerusalem Quarterly*, led an archaeological tour of al-Jib, which was once, in the Bronze Age, a more splendid city than neighboring Jerusalem. Named by archeologists as the city "Where the Sun Stood Still" (in reference to the biblical campaigns of Joshua Ben Nun), for many in contemporary Palestine, al-Jib (like Qalandiya) has become synonymous with the Israeli checkpoint erected there. Such efforts resonate with the mission of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*, which for twenty years has sought to recapture both the contemporary realities of Palestine and its histories, however ephemeral or deeply buried, acknowledging the checkpoints while pushing beyond them toward deeper understandings of Jerusalem and, more broadly, Palestine.

"All the cameras have left for another war," writes Polish poet Wisława Szymborska. While this is certainly the case in much of the rapid-fire journalism around Palestine, we are grateful that it is not so for the artists and curators of Qalandiya International – and indeed for *JQ*. In this issue, we hope to share with readers some elements of the Qalandiya International experience that would otherwise vanish, like so much else of the city's past. We do so by presenting, as the issue's central feature, a selection of the photographs from "Past Tense," as well as Persekian's expanded essay on those images. For nearly three decades, Persekian has been a central figure in the Palestinian contemporary arts scene in East Jerusalem (and beyond), founding Anadiel Gallery in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1992 and establishing al-Ma'mal Foundation for Contemporary Art in Jerusalem in 1998.

This first issue of 2019 marks the beginning of *Jerusalem Quarterly*'s twenty-first year of publication. In its first two decades, *JQ* has established itself – in line with the revised mission statement that first appeared in *JQ* 75 – as the leading journal on the past, present, and future of Jerusalem, while pursuing new and rigorous lines of inquiry by emerging scholars on Palestinian society and culture. In recognition of both the foundational scholarship upon which *JQ* rests and the innovative work that heralds its future, we are pleased to publish the winners of the 2019 Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem: Haneen Naamneh's "A Municipality Seeking Refuge: The Jerusalem Municipality in 1948," and Nadi Abusaada's "Self-Portrait of a Nation:

The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34." Naamneh uses archival records and press accounts to explore the efforts of Jerusalem municipality employees to maintain the basic functions of the city between May and November 1948, highlighting the depth of the city's crisis, but also the resolve and resourcefulness of its inhabitants, during this crucial period. Abusaada, meanwhile, examines the organization and staging of the first Arab Exhibition in Jerusalem in 1933, which sought to put on display Arab industrial, artisanal, and artistic acumen, establish connections between different Arab countries, and counter the 1932 Zionist-organized Levant Fair. In its efforts to highlight local work and forge transnational links under colonial conditions, one could even draw parallels between the Arab Exhibition and Qaladiya International.

The celebration of two decades of publication also coincides with important changes in *JQ*'s organization and editorial. *JQ* welcomes Beshara Doumani, professor of history at Brown University, as its co-editor, joining Salim Tamari in that role. At Brown, Doumani has established the New Directions in Palestinian Studies (NDPS) research initiative, and we are excited for *JQ* to work in concert with NDPS – most notably by publishing scholarly papers presented at the annual NDPS workshop – to build an international community of scholars dedicated to decolonizing and globalizing Palestinian studies.

JQ also welcomes four new members of an expanded Editorial Committee: Nazmi al-Jubeh (professor of history and archaeology at Birzeit University), Roberto Mazza (lecturer of history at University of Limerick), Rema Hammami (professor of anthropology at Birzeit), and Rana Barakat (professor of history at Birzeit). All have enriched *JQ* with their contributions over the last decade, and we are now excited for them to help guide it into the future.

Another of the important changes taking place at *JQ* is the introduction of a more systematic double-blind peer review process. We will continue to publish reflections, memoirs, essays, and other non-refereed material – and hope to expand our film and book reviews, as well as the documentary back sections of the *Quarterly* – the distinction between refereed and non-refereed material will be clearly demarcated in order to enhance *JQ*'s scholarly status and help facilitate its service to the academic community. Finally, as you may have noticed if you are holding a physical copy of *JQ* in your hands, we have transitioned to a slightly smaller page size, thereby saving paper in an effort to be more ecologically and financially responsible.

Announcing the 2020 round

Ibrahim Dakkak Award
for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem

Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem will be awarded to an outstanding essay that addresses either contemporary or historical issues relating to Jerusalem. The winning submission will receive a prize of $1,000 and will be published in the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

Essays submitted for consideration should be 4,000–5,000 words long (including footnotes), should be based on original research, and must not have been previously published elsewhere. Submissions from junior and early career researchers and students will be given priority.

Please submit essays and a short bio (including current or previous affiliation with a university or research institution) via email to **jq@palestine-studies.org**

Any images must have copyright clearance from owners and should be submitted as separate files with resolution of 600 dpi if possible.

The deadline for submissions is **31 October 2019**. A committee selected by the *Jerusalem Quarterly* will determine the winning essay.

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* is pleased to announce the co-winners of the 2019

IBRAHIM DAKKAK AWARD
FOR OUTSTANDING ESSAY ON JERUSALEM

Haneen Naamneh

PhD Candidate in Sociology, London School of Economics

for her essay
"A Municipality Seeking Refuge: The Jerusalem Municipality in 1948"

&

Nadi Abusaada

PhD Candidate in Architecture, University of Cambridge

for his essay
"Self-Portrait of a Nation: The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34"

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The two essays appear in this issue, starting on page 110.

Jury: The Editorial Committee of *Jerusalem Quarterly*

A number of additional essays received honorable mention as outstanding contributions on Jerusalem and will appear in future issues of the
Jerusalem Quarterly

Past Tense

Jack Persekian

Those who knew
what was going on here
must make way for
those who know little.
And less than little.
And finally as little as nothing.

In the grass that has overgrown
causes and effects,
someone must be stretched out
blade of grass in his mouth
gazing at the clouds.

(from "The End and the Beginning"
by Wislawa Szymborska)[1]

Jerusalem's landscape, as we know it today, is merely a surface layer, a slice in a long tumultuous history that has witnessed a succession of takeovers by people and civilizations from the preceding ones. Over time, layers are obscured and sometimes obliterated to the point where only a few traces or ruins can be found. Since the turn of the nineteenth century and the invention of photography, our relationship to how we see, comprehend, and communicate our understanding of history and time has dramatically changed. Today, the act of photographing and sharing with others the present moment, the happening, the sheer unadulterated act, preoccupies much of the world. The ease with which one can take a photograph today is such that even a child may realize their first cognitive senses with a camera in hand.

A hundred years ago the story was different and taking a photograph entailed carrying around heavy expensive equipment and materials, not to mention the long arduous process of chemical preparation, development, and printing.[2] Starting from around 1898, the year that marked the grand visit of German Emperor Wilhelm II and his wife Augusta Victoria to Jerusalem, the American Colony Photography Department took it upon themselves to photo-document the city in detail from all four corners, as well as the daily life of its inhabitants and the major events that took place there. By the end of the 1940s, the American Colony photographers had documented the whole of Palestine, parts of Jordan and Egypt, and went on photographic expeditions to India and Iraq/Mesopotamia, photographing key events that took place in the region.

The American Colony photographic collection[3] is remarkable not only for the methodical and high quality photographic documentation, but for the resourcefulness of the chief photographer Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson and later the foresight of G. Eric Matson. Today, a large part of the collection is available online, in high definition and free of charge, through the Library of Congress.[4] These hundred-year-old photographs give us a very clear and detailed view of the city from several vantage points that can only be accessed by someone who knows the city well and has lived in it long enough to care to see its image preserved for posterity.

By superimposing an additional layer – a photograph taken today of the same location, shot from the same spot and angle – over that taken by a photographer some one hundred years ago, we are able to move between two distinct times. This allows us to study the changes that occurred, compare the different times, align the physical transformations with the events that took place in the city and around the region during the last century, and examine the changed landscape and forces at play that impacted the new environment.

I am compelled to confess that I was not able to align any of the photographs 100 percent with the old ones. This is due to several reasons: First, the cameras used some hundred years ago were very different from the one I am using today for this project. One feature of these old large-format cameras, which I do not have, is that the lens can be shifted up and down, left and right, and the angles of the photograph adjusted by moving the bellows that joins the lens to the camera body. With a digital camera this is only possible with a "shift lens," but that is for another project. Second, the lenses they used were designed and built differently from those I used and what is generally available for digital cameras today. Third, the ground elevations in many sites have dramatically changed, either raised or lowered, or simply that particular location where the former photograph was taken no longer exists today – a building has been erected or torn down in that location, trees are planted, or a tunnel dug for a new road.

After Matson, exhibition, photo by author, Albright Institute, Jerusalem, June 2017.

Several photographic pairs that I composed reveal the sprawl of urban development that has come to dominate the horizon and much of the landscape in the west of the city, while the lack of such development on the east side of the city is conspicuous. The absence of a jumbled stone-cladded, high-rise landscape may be a hidden blessing, but the sheer optical discrepancies between the eastern part of the city (sparse and underdeveloped) and the western part (overdeveloped and bloated) speak volumes about the policies and regulations imposed by the British Mandate government, and later the Israeli government, during the last century. We cannot know what the future holds for us and for the city; but, if things are left to the power now in control, it will surely embolden those disparities.

The structures on the eastern side of the city inhabited mainly by Palestinians seem somehow chaotic, confined, and impoverished compared to those on the western side. The epochs encompassed by the two layers (the East, pre-Israeli, and the West, post-Israeli) and their juxtaposition help us comprehend how sustained systems of control and discrimination manage to create two very distinct and contrasting realities side by side, or perhaps level upon level. We can also see how administrative politics control and impact demographic patterns and instrumentalize everything at its disposal to empower one side, and disadvantage and undermine the other.

It is not surprising that the American Colony photographers[5] (as well as local photographers such as Khalil Raad, Garabed Krikorian and others) carried on the Orientalist tradition of representing the local Arab inhabitants of the city, and Palestine in general, as poor and primitive.[6] I believe the photographers were primarily driven by the market for photography, particularly for photographic albums of the Holy Land, which were in high demand in the West during that period.[7] For the buyers, the photographs had to align with their imaginary biblical Holy Land – pastoral and undeveloped – and/or the photographs needed to corroborate the Zionist, and, for many, the Western conviction (current at the time), "that there were no Arab inhabitants; that the territory was empty; and that Zionist settlement was merely a restorative project."[8] The photographs had to negate the native population and portray enough vacant landscape for the return of the "chosen people" as imagined by Judaism and embraced by some Christians for "Jewish Restoration."[9] The resulting representation of an impoverished nomadic indigenous population sends the message that this sparse population can be easily discarded, removed, and replaced.[10]

Jerusalem is chock-full of contradictions and schizophrenic realities, which we embrace in this seemingly blessed, but so easily deadly, environment of persistent animosity and violence. Against these actualities we are always reminded of Jerusalem's centrality:

After Matson, exhibition, photo by author, Albright Institute, Jerusalem, June 2017.
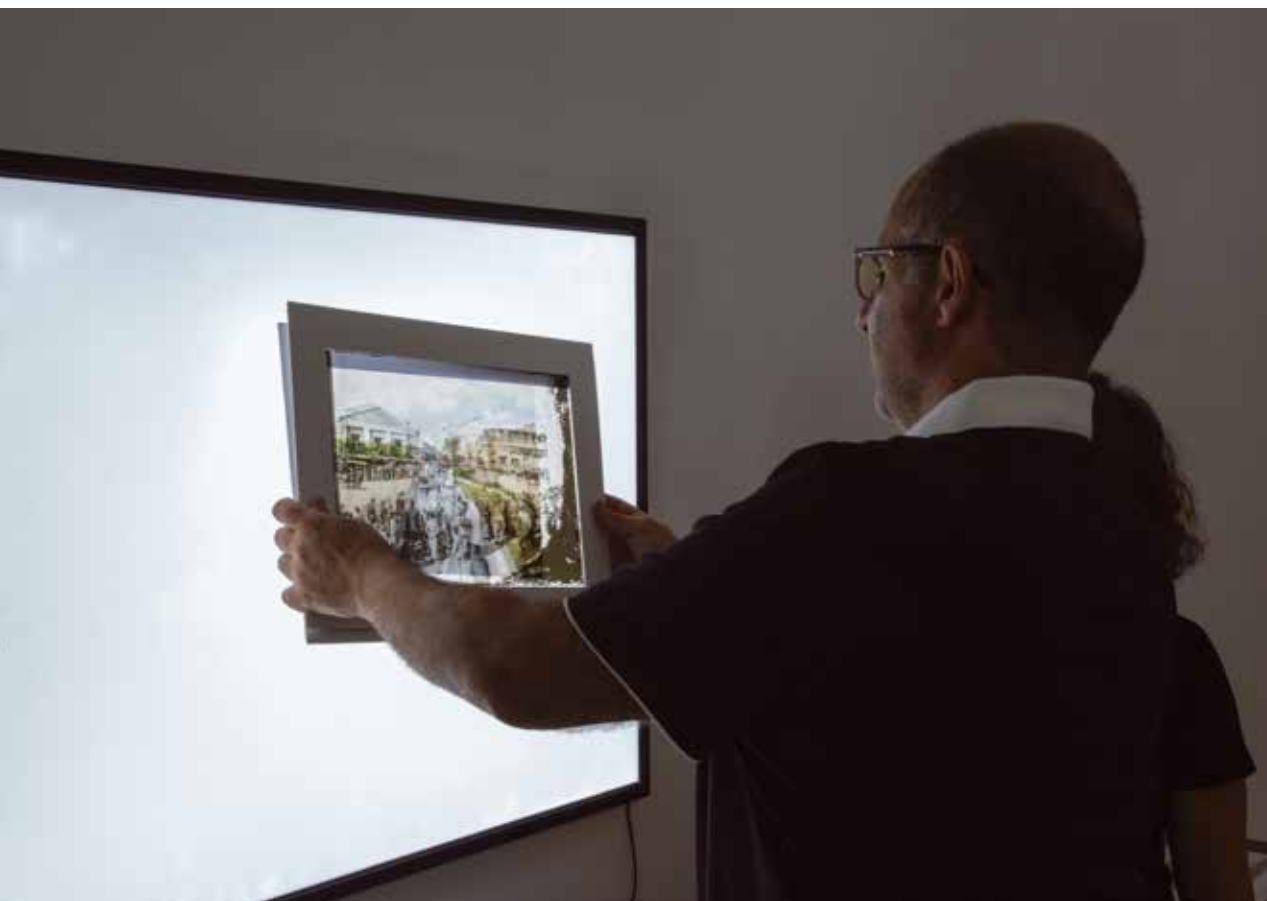
It is certainly not a coincidence that virtually all narratives about Palestine – religious and secular, Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, Palestinian, and Israeli – revolve around the city of Jerusalem, which has long been the geographical, spiritual, political, and administrative center of Palestine.[11]

Yet, no leader, political body or group of people, truly caring and genuinely concerned for the fate of the city, has so far been able to make a breakthrough on the political stalemate, or simply bring the various communities living here closer together. It is disheartening to see how in this protracted impasse and hopelessness, the people of the city have little concern for what is beyond their immediate circle of concerns and interests. If anything, this body of work is an attempt to encourage people, in general, and the people of Jerusalem, in particular, to reassess their relation to this city, reexamine it carefully, indulge in its details and love it – not for what it was and what it signifies, but for what it can be. If "God is in the details," as Mies van der Rohe is credited for stating so eloquently, then perhaps these photographs can allow us to see the sacred in the city once more.[12]

Past Tense, The Jerusalem Show IX, 2018, photo by Issa Freij. The Lutheran School, Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem in March 2017, I was invited by the W. F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research to present a project in their vast garden on Salah al-Din Street. On my mind at the time, and for more than a year, was the centennial of the Balfour Declaration,[13] which fell on 2 November 2017,[14] and the turbulent 100 years this declaration inflamed. The invitation from an archaeological research institute intrigued me and made me reconsider my approach towards the research and treatment of the old photographs of Jerusalem. Just as archaeologists approach the reading of history through layers of time, I too started studying these photographs as revealed layers of time, juxtaposing and comparing those captured moments with the present, in real time, and trying to understand the magnitude and impact of all that had occurred in between. I devised a technique that allowed me to move back and forth between the two layers of time, while anchoring this movement with fixed points of reference, such as the wall of the city, its main monuments, and the landscape. Consequently, I discovered that with this juxtapositioning one can identify the changes, the modifications, the alterations, and, in sum, the elements that disappeared and those that were substituted, similar to when puzzle pieces come together and the picture is finally revealed.

Three primary considerations guided my project and its development. First, I was very interested to present a work that was engaging, informative, and unpretentious, that an audience could handle and engage with, that would embrace the spectator with its 3-D effect, the way Sanduq al-'Ajab (the Wonder Box) had captivated audiences some 100 years ago. Second, I was also interested in showing the work in a public space – in the garden of the Albright Institute and not the vast rooms of the institute building, and later on in the year in the foyer of the Goethe Institut in Ramallah rather than their spacious underground gallery. Third, I was interested in presenting a work that was analogue – my measly vengeance on the digital world – now that I can begin to feel its pressure on my vanquished capabilities.

I started with *New Gate*, a well-known photograph from the American Colony collection. The New Gate has a special place in my heart, as it is the neighborhood where I was born and raised. The demonstration in October 1933 with the commotion, the body, and the strewn shoes draws one's attention immediately and focuses the reading of the photograph on that incident. Yet when compared with the new photograph I took, one notices that the buildings on the right and left of the old photograph have disappeared. Why did these buildings disappear when we can see that the building on the right, for example, was in relatively good condition back in October 1933?

18–19   *New Gate*, photo-overlay by author, 2017.

18   *Arab demonstrations on Oct. 13 and 27, 1933. In Jerusalem and Jaffa. Arab demonstration at the New Gate. Police cordon stopping the procession.* Jerusalem, 13 October 1933. American Colony Photographers, Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-15785]/

19   *Tram crossing, New Gate*, photo by author, 23 April 2017.

Immediately after assuming control over Jerusalem in 1918 as the military governor of the city, Sir Ronald Storrs together with the architect and designer Charles Robert Ashbee founded the Pro-Jerusalem Society for "the protection of and the addition to the amenities of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood."[15] Among these plans, a "greenbelt,"[16] a sort of garden encircling the Old City, was conceived where "no new buildings are to be permitted,"[17] according to General Storrs. This zone around the Old City walls was to be left "in its natural state,"[18] according to engineer William McLean who formulated the first British plan for Jerusalem in 1918 upon the request of General Allenby. It is quite interesting to consider Theodor Herzl's entry in his diary, where he imagines the "wide, green ring of hillside all around" as "the location of a glorious New Jerusalem,"[19] in relation to the British idea of a "greenbelt" or garden surrounding the city.

New Gate Reparatrice Sisters, photo-overlay by author, 2018. Old photo: *Reparatrise building [i.e., Convent of the Marie Reparatrise sisters] near Notre Dame, Jerus. [i.e., Jerusalem]*, Matson Photo Service, 1940–46. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-12449]. New photo: *Man with a hat crossing, New Gate*, photo by author, 2 June 2018.
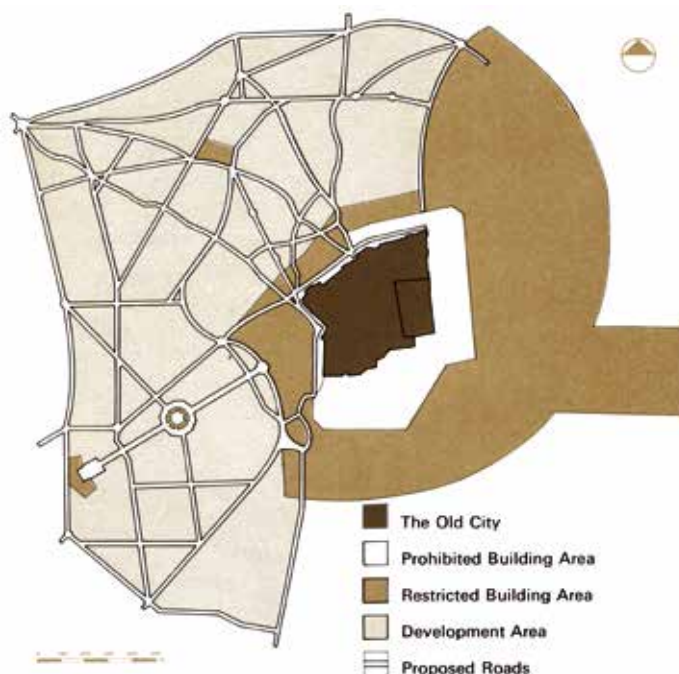
This plan was further developed, and in certain parts modified to align more sensibly with Jerusalem's specificity, by Patrick Geddes, the prominent Scottish sociologist and town planner, who wrote the first town planning report on Jerusalem, "Town Planning and City Improvements."[20] His ideas and intentions for the Holy City were made very clear in this report. He decried the new buildings outside the City Wall as "modern disfigurements" and as "mean modern buildings," while the Jaffa Gate area has "its ancient magnificence and modern squalor," and its improvement was to see "the gradual clearing of the Wall" by the skilled hands of Ashbee. His attitude toward the Ottoman clock tower in Jaffa Gate is arresting; he described it as "probably the most dreadful piece of architecture in existence."

The Old City
Prohibited Building Area
Restricted Building Area
Development Area
Proposed Roads

Above: *Jerusalem Town Planning Scheme No.1*, William H. McLean, 1918. Planning Jerusalem, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1973, p. 128.

Right: *Allenby Parade*, photo-overlay and erasure by author, 2018. Old photo: *Allenby parade & inv. [i.e., investiture]*, American Colony Photographers, 11 December 1917, Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-08031]. New photo: *Jaffa Gate Tunnel*, photo by author, 9 April 2018.

The Jaffa Road as It Is. The Papers of Charles Robert Ashbee,
Kings College, Cambridge, CRA/21/4.11.
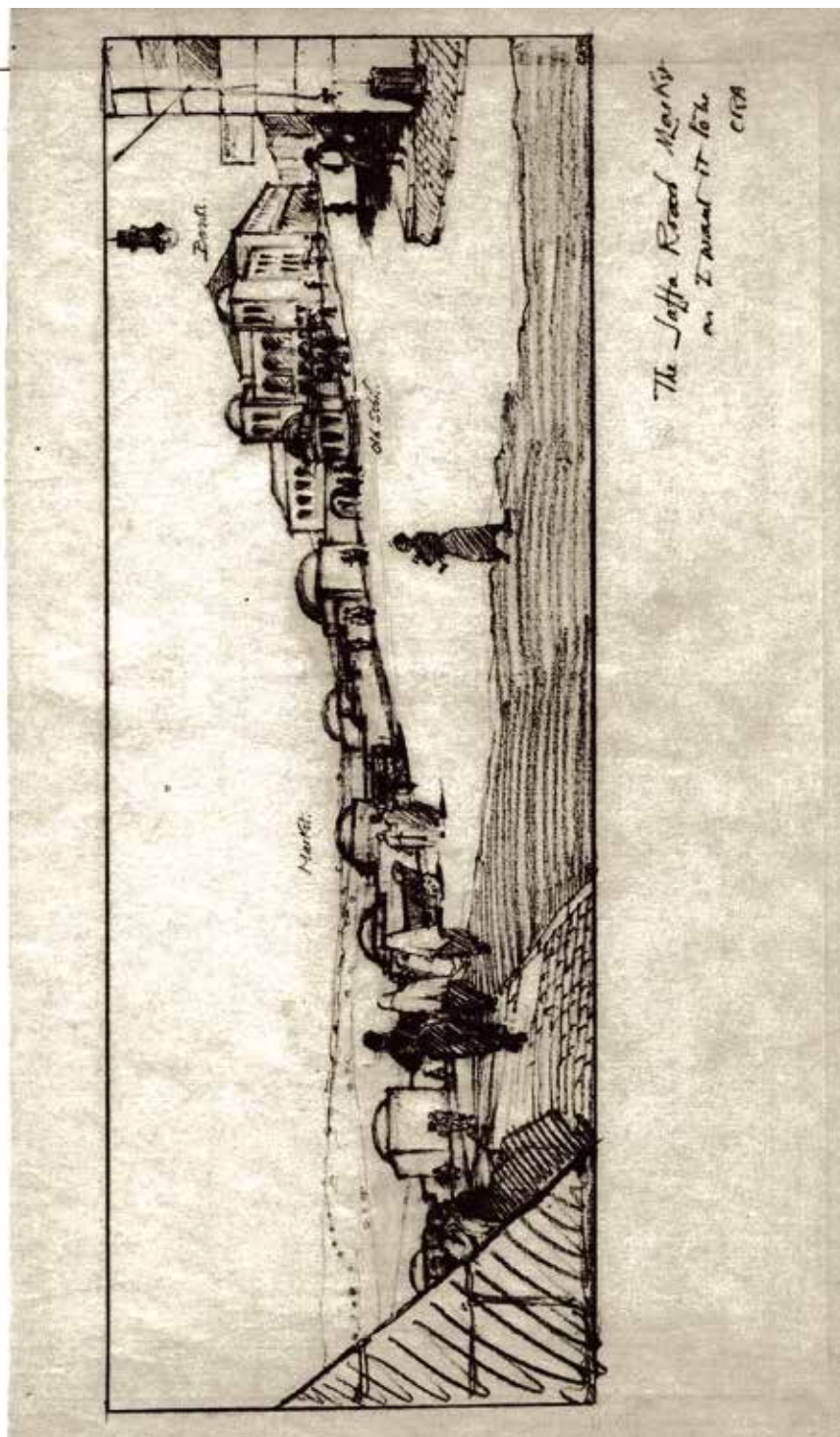
The Jaffa Road Market as I want it to be. The Papers of Charles
Robert Ashbee, Kings Collage, Cambridge, CRA/21/4.11.

For the silver jubilee of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II, marking the twenty-fifth anniversary of his accession to the seat of the sultan and khalifah, clock towers were erected in several major cities of the Ottoman Empire as symbols of modernity, efficiency, and respect of Time. In Jerusalem Jaffa Gate was chosen as the place to be adorned with this honor of keeping the time, knowing well that it was Damascus Gate that was considered to be the main gate of the city.[21] Designed and built by the city's chief architect Pascal (Effendi) Sarufim in 1907 (six years late) this clock tower (whether we like it or not) did not last long; it was dismantled by "the skilled hands of Ashbee" during the first years of the Mandate,[22] its mechanics reconstituted within a new structure outside the New Gate to conciliate some of the angry reactions to its destruction. The structure housing it near the New Gate was demolished in 1934 to make way for the new traffic arrangements in the area, and the mechanics shipped to the United Kingdom – whereabouts unknown.

Jaffa Gate Clock Tower, photo-overlay by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Jerusalem (El-Kouds). Jaffa Gate*. American Colony Photographers, 1912–17, Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06543].
New photo: *Jaffa Gate across bridge I*, photo by author, photograph 9 April 2018.

New Gate Clock Tower, photo-overlay by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Part I. 1934. Clock-tower removed from Jaffa Gate
to Allenby square being torn down. (Taken for Ashbee)*. John D.
Whiting, 1934. John D. Whiting Collection, Library of Congress,
Washington, DC [LC-DIG-ppmsca-17162].
New photo: *New Gate Square*, photo by author, 12 September 2018.

Patrick Geddes writes about a "complete park ring all around or through Jerusalem."[23] This idea of "clearing the Wall" from "modern disfigurement" was very important for all those who wanted to see the transfiguration of a phantasmic Holy City in the present, an attempt to bring that captured city as close as possible to the imaginary biblical Jerusalem. Geddes spelled it out in his report:

> In this way may be laid out and kept permanently open, the early biblical Jerusalem, of which the present old city is but a later development.

This approach gave me a lead to look further into the city's urban "development" in the photographs of the American Colony collection and others, to find the buildings and the pieces of the city's mosaic that had changed, transformed, or gone missing in order to make way for that "biblical Jerusalem" transcending the actual and making possible a different history and a new reality.

Snowballing, photo-overlay and erasure by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Snow scenes. Snowballing on Jaffa Road*. Matson Photo Service, January 1942. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-21151].
New photo: *Jaffa Gate Traffic*, photo by author, 12 September 2018.

In the photograph titled *Jerusalem from the South* (1898–1907), it is quite entertaining to see how the road aligns perfectly between the old and new photographs, allowing for a nice transition between the camels and mules of the past and today's cars that tread the same path. But when our eyes follow the contours of the city wall we are shocked to see and realize that the whole row of buildings on both sides of Jaffa Road as it heads north from Jaffa Gate along the city wall, and branching northwest out into Jaffa and Mamilla roads, were all cleared.

Jerusalem (El-Kouds). First view of Jerusalem from the south (detail). American Colony Photographers. 1898–1907. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06533].

34–35   *Jerusalem from the South*, photo-overlay (insert), by author, 2017.

34   *Jerusalem (El-Kouds). First view of Jerusalem from the south*. American Colony Photographers. 1898–1907. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06533].

35   *Sultan's Pool and Jaffa Gate from the bridge*, photo by author, 24 April 2017.
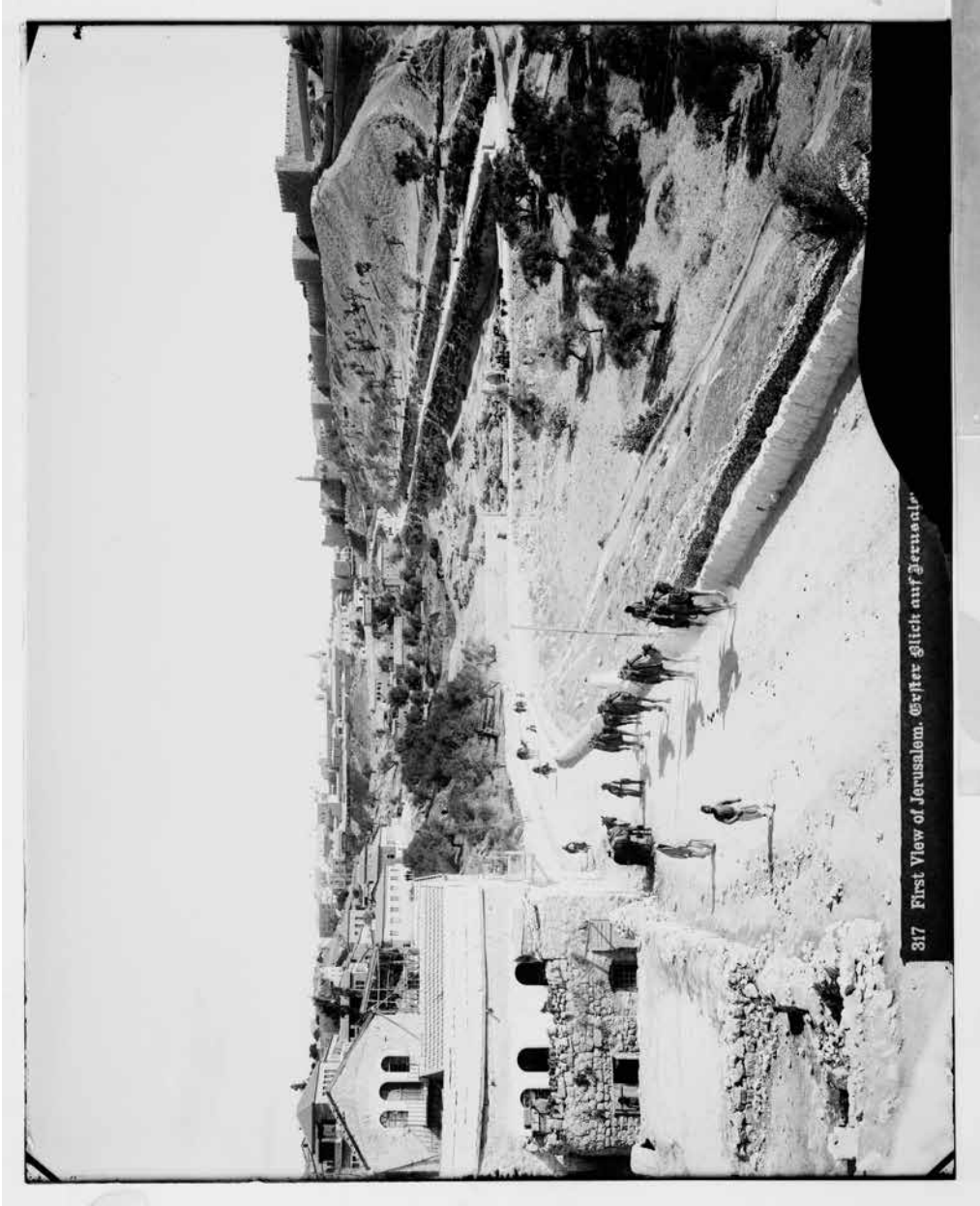
317 First View of Jerusalem. Erster Blick auf Jerusalem
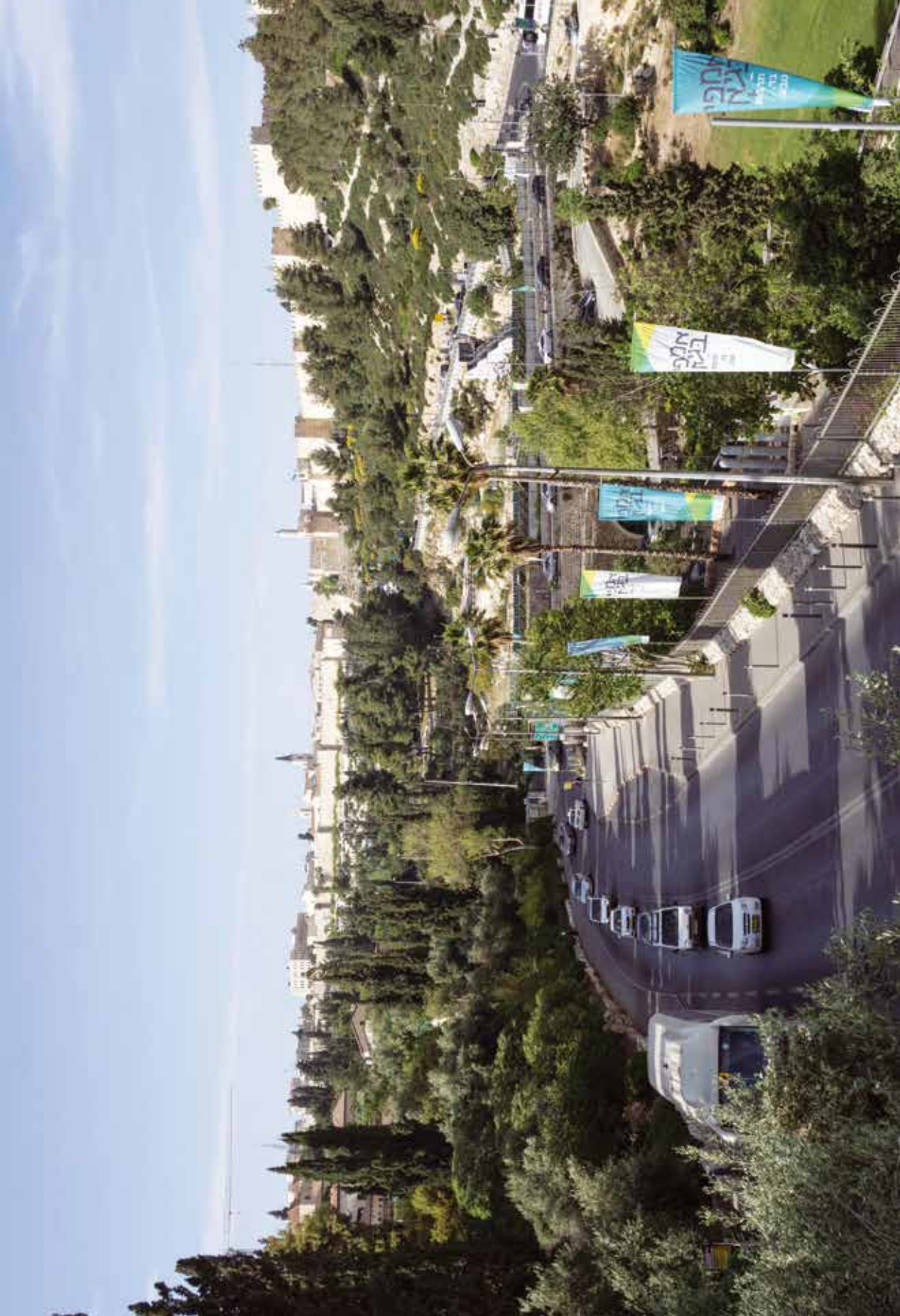
We know that they were heavily damaged during the 1948 war, and then designated as "no-man's land" until 1967. But soon after the 1967 war the whole area was raised to the ground by the Israeli army. With this clearing came the destruction of the bustling business and mercantile heart of pre-1948 Jerusalem, including a good chunk of the infrastructure supporting Palestinian photographic activity. Before 1948 one could name the studios of Krikorian, Raad, Savvides, Albina Brothers, Abdo, and Elia in that area outside Jaffa Gate. Was it sheer luck, part of a preconceived plan, or was it the consequence of "technical slips" in the agreement between Jordan and the State of Israel that "turned this area – the locus of the genesis of photographic activity in Palestine – into no man's land"?[24] David Kroyanker (the head of the town planning department at the Jerusalem Municipality in the 1970s mentions that "demolition crew members of the Israeli army blasted abandoned houses in the city before 1967, from Jaffa Gate to the Hotel Fast"[25] close to New Gate; the process was later completed in 1967 after the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem.[26]

Jerusalem (El-Kouds). The Jaffa Road, main thoroughfare of the new city. American Colony Photographers. 1908–14, (detail). Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06541].

38 top   *Palestine disturbances 1936. Scotch [Scots] troops at the forking of Jaffa Road & Mamillah Rd*. American Colony Photographers. 1936. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-18057].

38 bottom *The way between Jaffa Gate and New Gate in 1967*. Apo Documentaries, online at www.facebook.com/pg/apodocumentaries/photos/?ref=page_internal (accessed 18 January 2019).

39 top   *The wall that was separating Jerusalem [near the New Gate]. 1950s*. Apo Documentaries. online at www.facebook.com/pg/apodocumentaries/photos/?ref=page_internal (accessed 18 January 2019).

39 bottom *The ruins of Marie Reparatrice Convent outside the New Gate in 1967*. Apo Documentaries, online at www.facebook.com/pg/apodocumentaries/photos/?ref=page_internal (accessed 18 January 2019).

Jerusalem - The way between Jaffa Gate and New Gate in 1967

Jerusalem - The wall that was separating Jerusalem By "Tzahal Square" 1950's

Apo Documentaries ©

Jerusalem - The ruins of Marie Reparatrice Convent outside the New Gate in 1967

Apo Documentaries ®

Jaffa Gate was the first gate to be opened for longer hours into the night in the 1860s and eventually left open all night long during the 1870s,[27] to facilitate the arrival of pilgrims and visitors coming from Egypt and from the west through the port of Jaffa.[28] William H. Dixon, who helped found the Palestine Exploration Fund and for a period of time was its chairman, travelled to Palestine in 1867 and wrote the following:

> As the sun goes down over the Soba, four of the five gates now used by the people of Jerusalem are closed and barred. These are: the Damascus Gate on the north, St. Stephen's Gate, Dung Gate, Zion Gate, lying between the lepers' sheds and the tomb of David. But the Bethlehem (Jaffa Gate), the inlet of trade and travel from Egypt and from the sea, stands open for half an hour after gun-fire, a sentinel turns the key, and no man has the right to pass that portal until another morning shall have dawned.[29]

Cooks, photo-overlay by author, 2017.
Old photo: *The Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem, Holy Land. 1890–1900*. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC [LC-DIG-ppmsca-02688].
New photo: *Jaffa Gate across bridge II*, photo by author, 9 April 2018.

This access for visitors coming to the city (the majority pilgrims) justified the investment in businesses in and outside Jaffa Gate; and with time the whole area leading up to Jaffa Road and forking westward down towards Mamilla cemetery filled up with buildings and small shops, restaurants, offices, cafes, agencies, banks, hotels and the like. This development in Jaffa Gate and the thriving commercial activity overshadowed the Christian quarter street inside the Old City that had played that role before the city spread outside the city walls in the late nineteenth century. An important transportation development in 1891 helped boost business and commerce around the gate. The building of the railway station beyond Jaffa Gate on Hebron Road meant the establishment of serious logistical activities for people and merchandise, haulage in and out of the Old City, and accommodation facilities in the area and vicinity for all the additional traffic coming to the city on trains.

Top: *La Rue de Jaffa*. L. Fiorillo, 1880, online at commons. wikimedia.org/wiki/File:PikiWiki_Israel_49834_jaffa_road_1880.jpg (accessed 22 January 2019).

Bottom: *Jerusalem – Jaffa Gate*. Bain News Service, publisher. c. 1890s (before 1898) George Grantham Bain Collection. Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC [LC-DIG-ggbain-36566].

Jerusalem. La Rue de Jaffa 41. L. Fiorillo, Phot.

JERUSALEM - JAFFA GATE 6100 - 11

The first Cadillac dealership in the Middle East was opened on Mamilla Road, and the "first building to look like a hotel was the Howard Hotel put up by the Armenian Convent in 1898 on the lower Jaffa Road."[30] In 1907 Abraham Fast took over the hotel and renamed it Hotel Fast. We can clearly see the name, Elizabeth Arden, the major American cosmetics and fragrance company, above the entrance of the building to the right of the Hotel Fast, in the work titled: *Fast Hotel*. The building of the Hotel Fast was torn down by the Israeli army, as noted earlier, and in 1996 a new building for the Dan Pearl Hotel was erected with approximately the same dimensions and at the same height as its predecessor. The Dan Pearl Hotel did not have much luck either. It closed in 2003; and its building sustained serious structural damage when a tunnel was dug very close to its foundations in 2004, to connect Damascus Gate area with Jaffa Gate passing under the New Gate. Now it is boarded up, an empty shell waiting for its demise.[31]

Fast Hotel, photo-overlay and erasure by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Clearing around city wall. Digging sewage canals on Jaffa Road*. American Colony Photographers, 1936. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-16808].
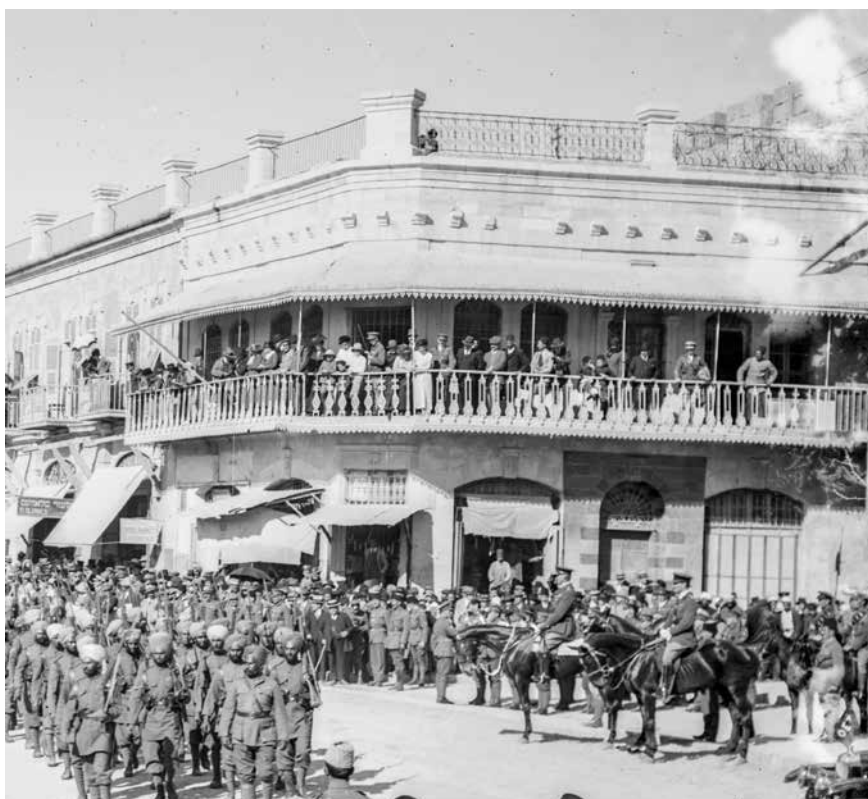New photo: *Jerusalem Pearl*, photo by author, 9 April 2018.

Coronation. King George VI. Decorations, day scenes (King David, Barclays, Julian Day, Fast Hotel). American Colony Photographers, 12 May 1937. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-16994].

Dan Pearl Hotel, photo by author, 26 November 2018.

In the work titled *Jaffa Gate 1917*, a building dominates the view from Jaffa Gate as one exits the Old City. This building, as is the case with the rest of the built-up area outside Jaffa Gate, is no longer there. Through these buildings and activity outside the city walls one could sense continuity between the inside and outside. Now the Old City feels like a detached museum prop or relic from ancient times, distanced and safeguarded from modernity. It is not surprising to see that all renovation projects inside the Old City follow a retrospective logic down a desperate path attempting to restore the past in total disregard to today's particular usage and functional needs and requirements. The building right outside Jaffa Gate housed Abraham Fast's restaurant before he moved several hundred meters up the street to the Hotel Fast building. Built by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate on their massive property that stretched all the way up to the New Gate, it later housed the Hanging Cafe in reference to the hanging balcony extending out from the second floor. Yet the work titled *Jaffa Gate 1917* is not about the building and its history. It is an attempt to juxtapose the British soldiers standing at Jaffa Gate on 9 December 1917 with the Israeli soldier entering Jaffa Gate on 7 June 2017.
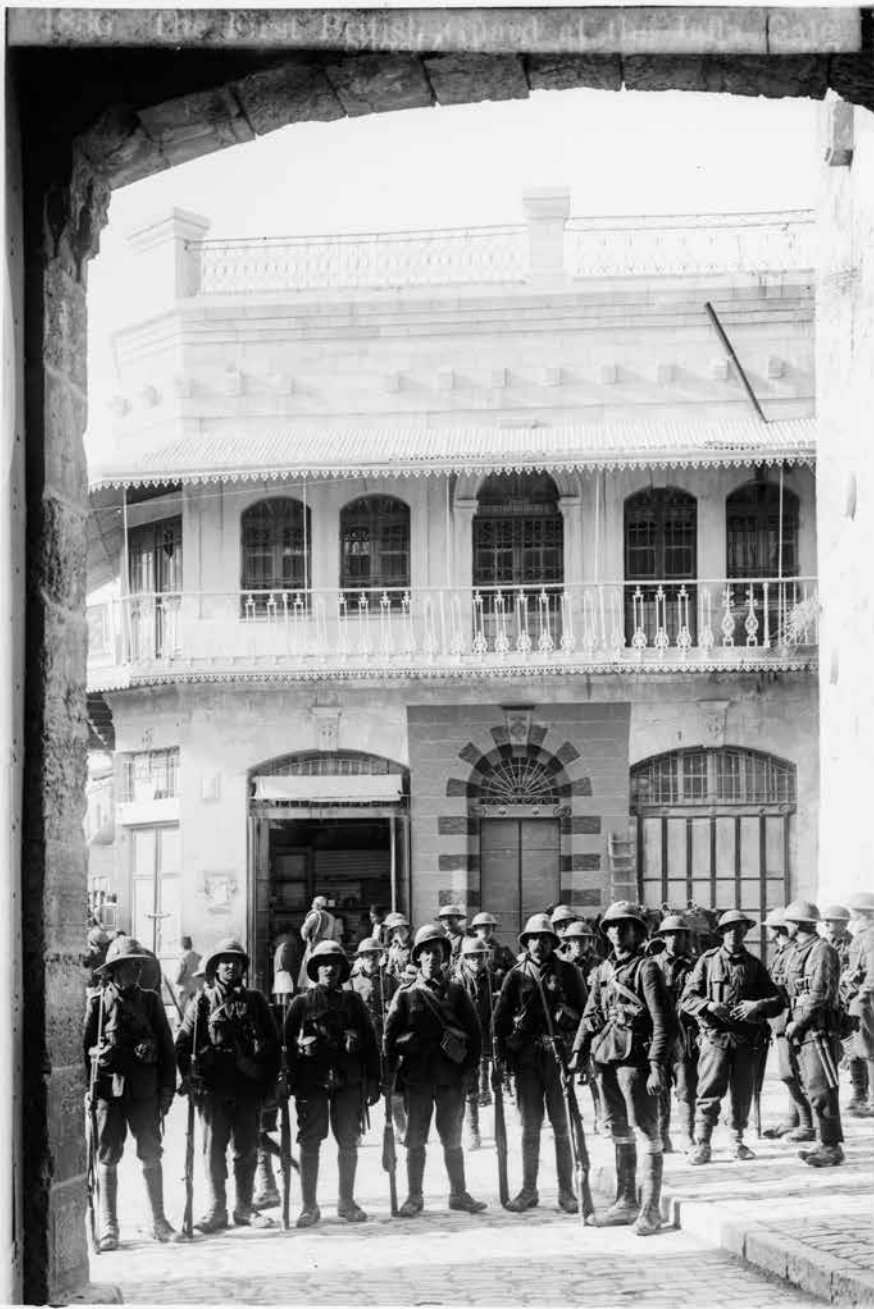
1886. The First British Guard at the Jaffa Gate.

In the last hundred years the city witnessed one occupation after another and has generally been guarded by a conspicuous military presence. Despite its assumed holiness, the city is mostly aggressive, intolerant, and prejudiced depending on who is in control. And I am not alone in this opinion. I was amused to read what architect David Kroyanker said in an interview in the *Jerusalem Post*:

> Jerusalem is a city that has no tolerance, especially in the western half of the city. It's a conflicted city, a city of people who reject each other.[32]

Zion Gate, photo-collage by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Jerusalem (El-Kouds). Zion Gate*, American Colony Photographers, 1898–1914. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06554].

These soldiers right outside Jaffa Gate in the old photograph served in the first units deployed to guard the city, its gates, and shrines right after the occupation of the city by the British. Military personnel from other allied forces were also deployed to protect the city and its monuments. In the work titled *Holy Sepulcher II*, we see Italian carabinieri taking turns from the British guarding the Holy Sepulcher. But against whom? The sign leaning against the wall next to them, which the British, of course, wrote, reads: "Out of Bounds." For whom? In his memoirs, Wasif Jawhariyyeh tells us that in the beginning of the British Mandate the Holy Sepulcher was out of bounds for non-Christians, as was the case for the Haram al-Sharif (the Holy Sanctuary) for non-Moslems[33] – a prohibition dating back to the Ottoman and earlier periods. It is not unheard of in Jerusalem that the authority sides with one religion, prohibiting followers of the other religions from having access to certain places and shrines, and sometimes the whole city. We know that during the Roman era Jews were eventually prohibited from entering the city after the destruction of the Temple by Titus. And we know that during the long Islamic reign other religions were more or less tolerated, but non-Moslems were not allowed to enter the Haram al-Sharif (the Holy Sanctuary) and other places. It is the Jews' turn now, and it is different from the time of David and Solomon. There are two other monotheistic religions the Jews need to deal with when it comes to the rightful ownership of god and his presence on earth.

British guard at the Holy Sepulcher, photo-collage by author, 2018. Old photo: *Various results of the war. British guard at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre*, American Colony Photographers, 1917–18, Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-02255].

OUT OF
BOUNDS

Carabinieri at the Holy Sepulcher, photo-collage by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Various results of the war. Italian guard at the Church
of the Holy Sepulchre*, American Colony Photographers, 1917–18.
Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC
[LC-DIG-matpc-02256].

Al Wad–Khan El Zeit junction, photo-collage by author, 2017.
Old photo (mistakenly reversed in original digital image): [Inside]
Damascus Gate, Jerusalem, American Colony Photographers
and Painters, 1900–1919, John D. Whiting Collection, Library of
Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-15056].
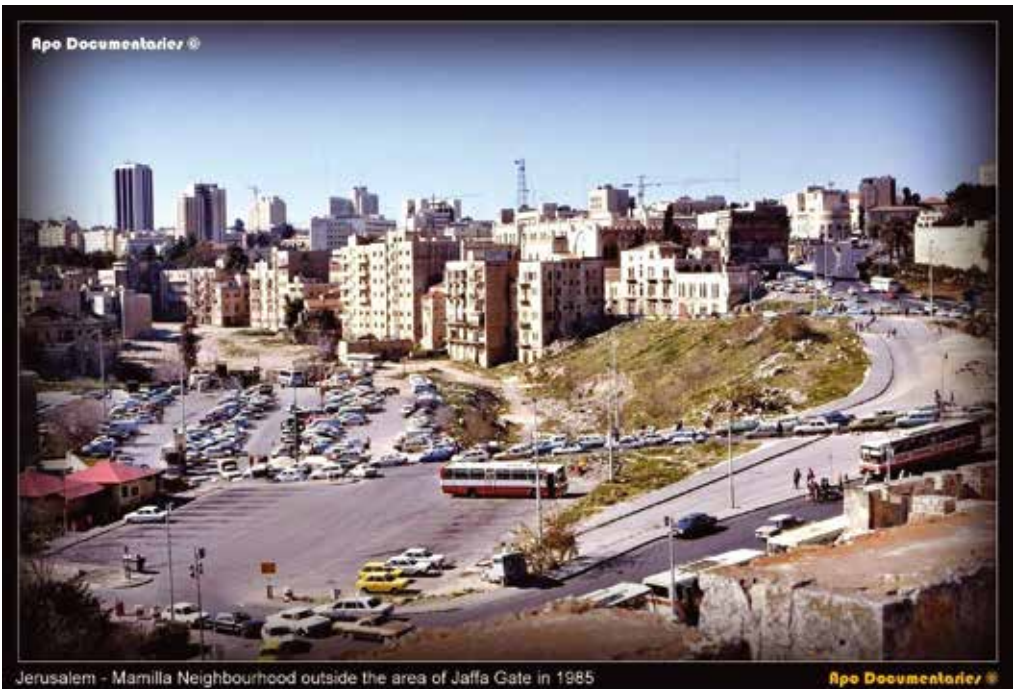
Jerusalem - Mamilla Neighbourhood outside the area of Jaffa Gate in 1985

Immediately after the 1967 war, and in no more than a week's time, the whole of the no man's land area from Jaffa Gate all the way to Damascus Gate was bulldozed, leaving no structure standing – thus clearing all of the area surrounding the city walls. Not much was done to that area outside Jaffa Gate after the 1967 war in terms of reconstruction or development until the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s. Yet already in 1969, the famous architect Moshe Safdie had a plan for the area at the behest of Mayor Teddy Kollek. Under the direction of deputy mayor Meron Benvenisti the municipality's town-planning team department headed by architect David Kroyanker drew "alternative plans" for the "preservation, renovation and new construction" of the area outside Jaffa Gate, published in 1977. I wonder whose idea and plan it was to transform the Jaffa Gate area into a "bridge between the Old City and the modern western part"[34]? It cannot be seen as a continuous extension of the Old City in any way. I see it more of a "safe and secure" passageway, a sort of skywalk between the "modern" western part and the Old City time capsule.
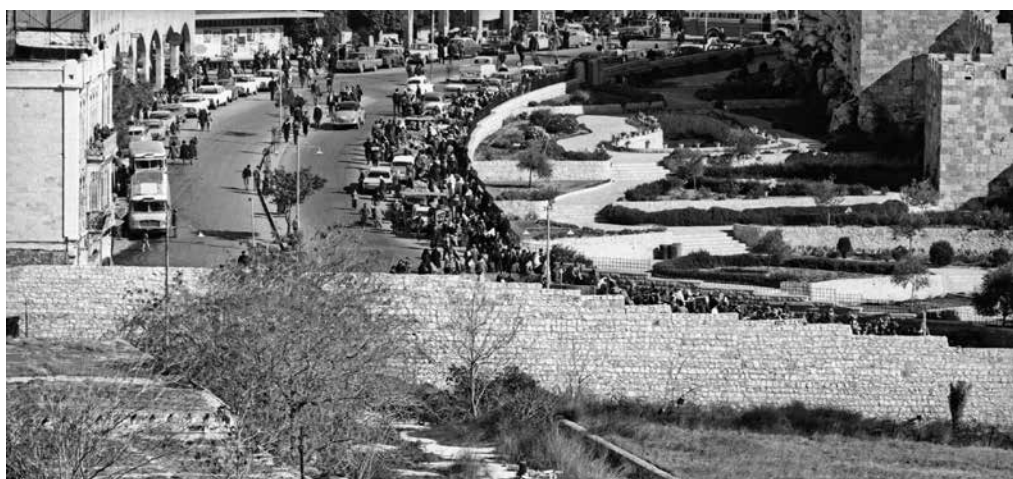
Left top: *Demolition at Jaffa Gate, 1967*, photo by Ronnie Firer, online at www.tod.org.il/jerusalem50/ (accessed 18 November 2018).

Left bottom: *Mamilla neighborhood outside the Jaffa Gate in 1985*. Apo Documentaries, online at www.facebook.com/pg/apodocumentaries/photos/?ref=page_internal (accessed 18 January 2019).

Above: *A wall dividing East and West Jerusalem, near the Damascus Gate, in 1967*. Micha Bar-Am/Magnum Photos.
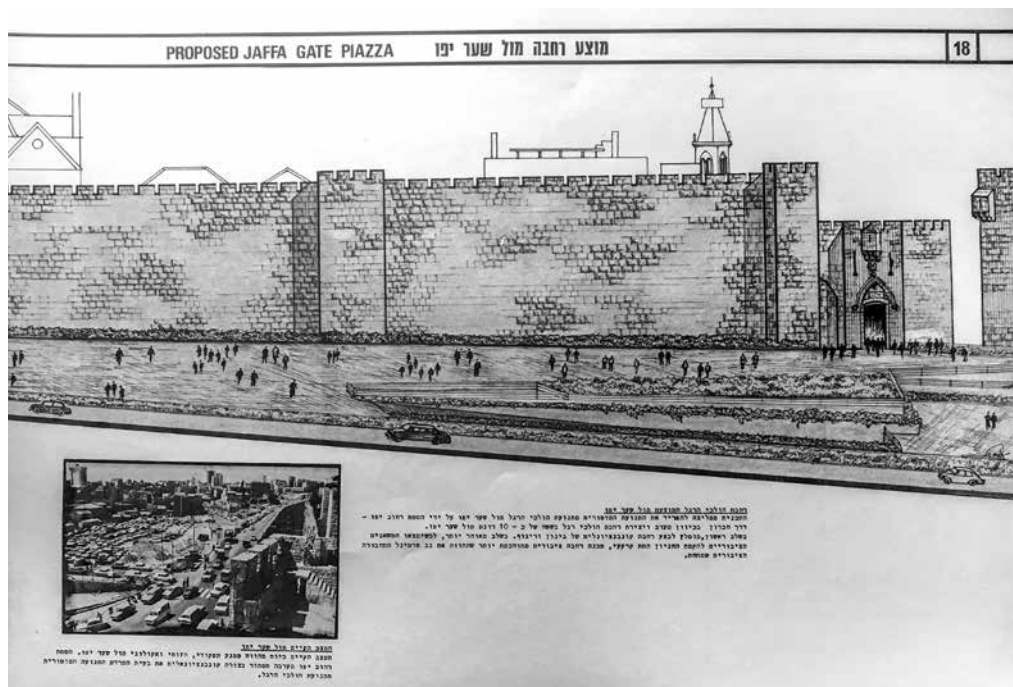
Above: *Proposed Jaffa Gate Piazza*. Mamilla: A conceptual revitalization plan, Preservation, Renovation & New Construction. The Jerusalem Municipality Town-planning Department, July 1977.

Right top: *Jaffa Gate Mamilla bridge*, photo by author, 26 November 2018.

Right bottom: *Jaffa Gate Mamilla bridge*, photo by author, 9 April 2018.

To return to identifying the buildings that were cleared outside the city walls, the work titled *Damascus Gate* clearly shows three buildings in the center and bottom right corner of the old photograph that no longer exist. The building on the far right corner was the Terra Sancta School where my father was a student in the late 1920s and early 1930s. On 19 October 1938, a woman stands on the roof of the school while one of the American Colony photographers stands on the roof of the Notre Dame building capturing the British military airplane and the British Forces at Damascus Gate trying to subdue the Arab Revolt. What is most interesting about this picture is what happened and did not happen on the slopes of the eastern hills in terms of planning and development.

Top: *Clearing around city wall. Bldgs [buildings] at Damascus Gate to be demolished*. American Colony Photographers, 1936. Matson Photograph.

Bottom: *Terra Sancta School, outside the city walls*, pre-1948. Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-16801].

Airplane over Damascus Gate, photo-overlay by author, 2017.
Old photo: *Airplane over Jerusalem & military force at Damascus Gate, seen from roof of Notre Dame building*. American Colony Photographers, 19 October 1938. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-00445]. New photo: *Looking East from the roof of Notre Dame*, photo by author, 24 April 2017.
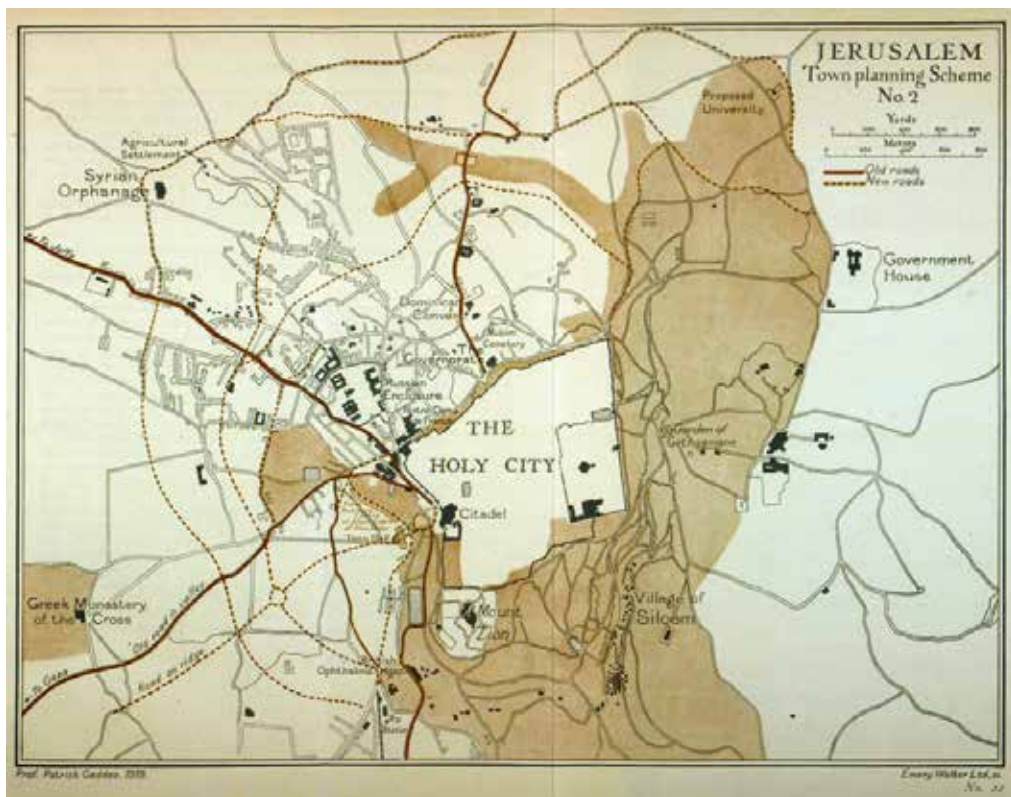
Jerusalem Town planning Scheme No. 2. Patrick Geddes. 1919. See online at fac.arch.hku.hk/asian-cities-research/overview-preserving-the-holy-city/ (accessed 22 January 2019).

In his report, Patrick Geddes insisted that first the Old City of Jerusalem needed to be considered before proceeding to the improvement and extension of the town, which depends upon it, while asserting that the "outlying area immediately east of it ... [is] by far the most important and most extensive Sacred Park in the World" and building on it needs to be "as little as possible."[35] And that is exactly what the overlay of the present picture over the old one shows us. In both photographs, the old and the new, clear slopes can be seen on both Mount Scopus and Mount of Olives, lush green vegetation (I took the photograph in the spring), dotted by a small number of scattered buildings (notably the Augusta Victoria compound in both the old and new photographs as well as the Mormon Brigham Young University in the new photo) – except, of course, for that extensive build-up on the top left of the new photograph, up on Mount Scopus. That expansive complex belongs to the Hebrew University, and its first building features prominently over the horizon on the left side of the old photograph. So why was that side of the "outlying area immediately to the east" of the Old City allowed to grow and expand and dominate one of the hills overlooking the Old City, while the rest of the eastern slopes were left undeveloped or underdeveloped with "as little as possible" building?

The answer might possibly be found in the introduction that Geddes wrote for his report. He tells us that he has "been also actively occupied with the prime object on [his] present visit, the planning of the future University."[36] So, was it part of the plan to curb any expansion or development on the east side of the Old City, which is predominantly occupied by Palestinians, while giving the Hebrew University (which Geddes had been busy designing) ample area to expand and develop, and to override all the restrictions and regulations that the British themselves imposed on the city landscape? Again, one may never know, but these connections between the architects and planners of the British Mandate and the grand projects of the Zionist Organisation underscores the various ways in which official British policies in Palestine made space, both figuratively and literally, for the rise of the Zionist state at the expense of a Palestinian one.

R. and Fr. Stegmiller, *Perspective map of Jerusalem* (Munich: Kosel & Pustet, 1928), (limited access) online at: forum.politz.com.br/index.php?threads/cartografia-os-mapas-antigos-mais-interessantes-e-curiosos.6046/

סביבות ירושלם

בנינים חדשים
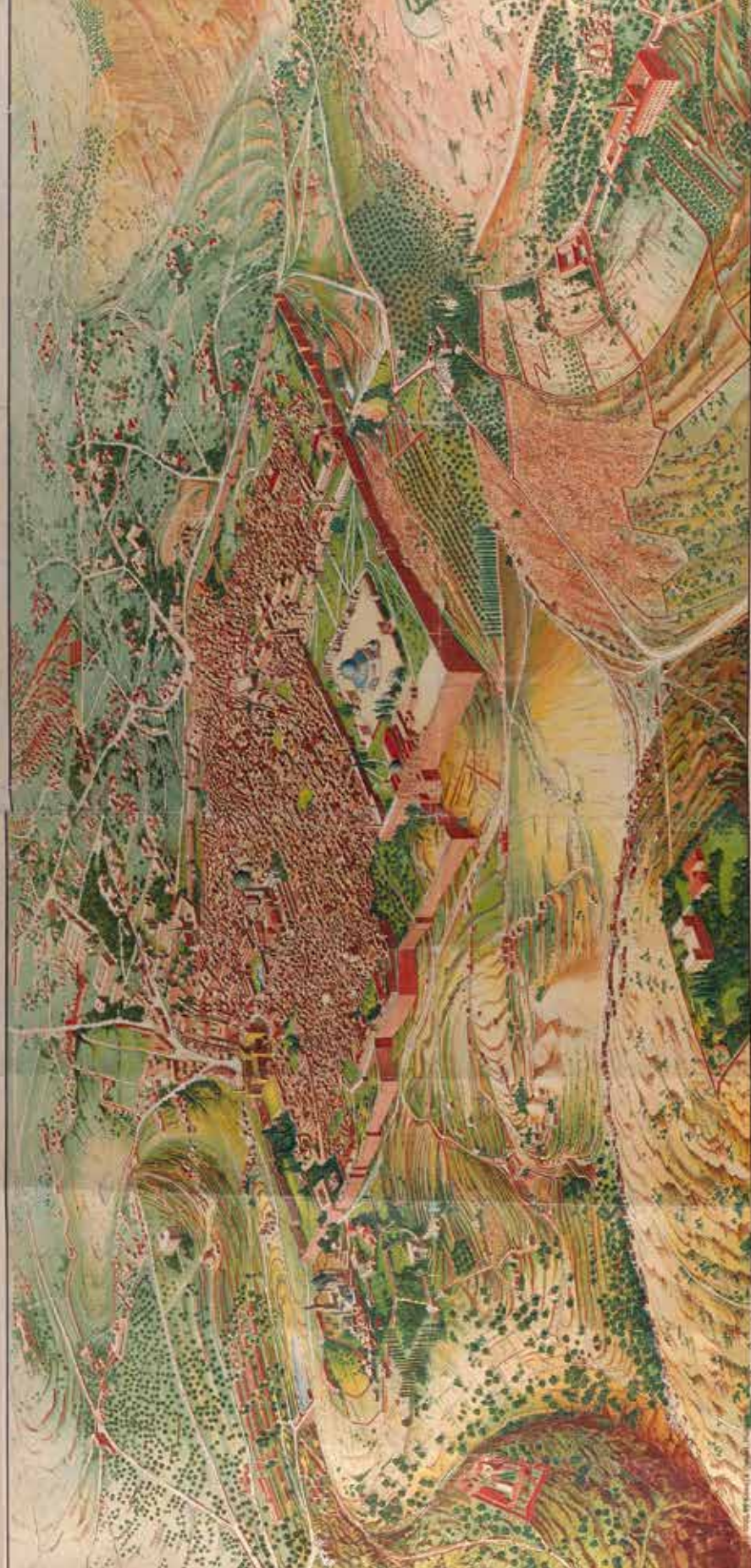
The photograph that shockingly unmasks the dishonorable collusion between the British Mandate government and the Zionist establishment[37] and which continued into the policies driving the events of 1967 is the one titled *Jerusalem from the Slopes of Scopus*. The old photograph from 1934–39 can be very well appreciated for its sentimental and nostalgic representation of the Old City. It is typically the type of photograph one would find in the market to take home and hang on a wall as a sort of memento from a bygone era, especially because it is in black and white. At first, there is hardly any discernable change between the old photograph and the new, apart from the excessive build-up over the horizon towards the west and southwest of the city. The main monuments in the city are exactly the same; the city wall, the cemetery in the foreground, the Dome of the Rock, the al-Aqsa Mosque, the Holy Sepulcher, the Hurva Synagogue (which was destroyed and rebuilt in the period bracketed by the two photographs), and the other monumental buildings in and around the Old City. Yet, after careful study and precise comparison between the two photographs, one is utterly bewildered by the dramatic change that took place in the Jewish quarter and what was previously known as the Mughrabi neighborhood. A good chunk of the Old City, no less than 10 percent (if not more) was completely razed to the ground after the 1967 war. All of the old historic buildings in that neighborhood that clearly and homogenously blended in with the rest of the architecture inside the Old City, as is clear in the old photograph, were destroyed, their memory erased, making it impossible for any of its previous inhabitants or their descendants to identify the location of their ancestral home or any trace of their childhood memories.

Top: *Temple area, Mosque of Omar* [i.e., Dome of the Rock] and Jerusalem. American Colony Photographers, c. 1910. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06075].

Bottom: *Demolition Mughrabi Quarter*, June 1967. Photo by David Rubinger. Courtesy of David Rubinger, *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

72–73   *Jerualem from the East*, photo-overlay (insert), by author, 2017.

72   *Temple area from slopes of Scopus*. American Colony Photographers, 1934–1939. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-03614].

73   *View from the East*, photo by author, 24 April 17.
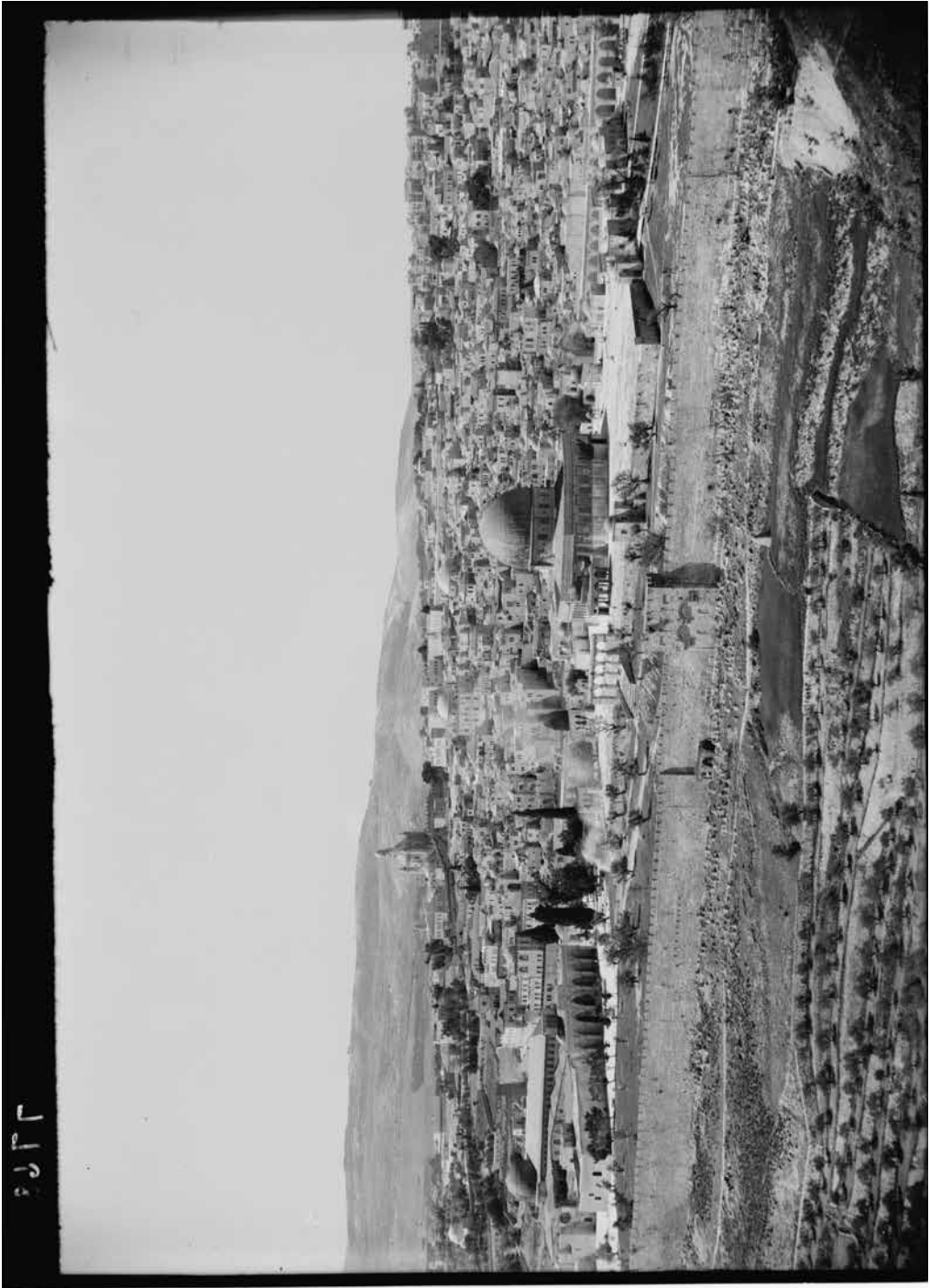
Teddy Kollek (mayor of Jerusalem at the time) explained in his memoirs that "the urgency of clearing the plaza" stemmed from the fact that the Shavuot holiday was in a few days after the six-day war, and tens of thousands of Israelis were expected to flock to the Wailing Wall. Leaving the old buildings standing could be "dangerous," Kollek justified. In his memoirs Kollek wrote a disconcerting description of what had happened during those critical days:

> On June 7, soon after our troops reached the Wall, people from throughout the city rushed there, and it was difficult for the soldiers to convince them to wait until a cease-fire went into effect. When we decided to allow the first pilgrimage in nineteen years on the following Wednesday, the holiday of Shavuot, we expected hundreds of thousands of people to take part. The pent-up feelings of a generation would express themselves in the chance to touch the stones of the Wall once more, to pray at this holiest of the Holy Places. But then how would these hundreds of thousands reach the Wall through the dangerous narrow alleyways? The only answer was to do away with the slum hovels of the Moghrabi Quarter. I received the go-ahead from Herzog, Narkiss, and Dayan and called a meeting of Ya'akov Yanai, Yigael Yadin, the architect Arieh Sharon, and several others. My overpowering feeling was: do it now; it may be impossible to do it later, and it must be done. To make the decision formal, I turned to my own Municipality group, and they approved the move as well. Then the archeologists and other experts went to the Wall and drew a map of exactly what should be torn down and what should not and we found *proper* [my emphasis] accommodations for the families that were living in those hovels. On the night of Saturday, June 10, the work of clearing the Moghrabi Quarter began. In two days it was done, finished, clean.[38]

Top: *After winning the Six-Day War and capturing the Old City of Jerusalem, Israelis bulldozed the Palestinian houses in front of the Western Wall*, photo by David Rubinger, Corbis via Getty, 1967, online at www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/reframing-the-1967-war (accessed 18 January 2019).

Bottom: *Moghrabi neighborhood demolition*, Marilyn Silverstone/ Magnum Photos, 1967.

Proper? In this swift and uncompromising operation that Kollek so proudly spearheaded, Arab residents of the Moroccan neighborhood were given only two hours' notice to vacate their homes in the evening of 10 June 1967, and those who refused were forcibly evicted. Thomas Abowd tells us that

> one woman from the quarter who did not hear the calls to vacate was buried alive beneath the rubble that evening. Her body was found the next morning under the ruins of her home… Roughly one-half of the neighborhood's residents at the time of its demolition traced a lineage back to the Maghrib. Many of these returned to Morocco via Amman with the assistance of King Hassan II after the destruction of the quarter. Other families from the neighborhood found refuge in the Shu'fat refugee camp and elsewhere in Jerusalem.[39]

Fearing an international protest against the demolition of the Mughrabi neighborhood, Kollek thought it was "necessary to use an unofficial civilian body to take on the job. The demolition work was given to the Jerusalem contractors and builders organization to distance any involvement of official bodies in the demolition as much as possible."[40] If this destruction, the transfer of the quarter's Arab inhabitants to outside the Old City, and their replacement with Jews, can be understood as driven by Zionist nationalist ideology that was made possible only after occupying the city in 1967, why does Patrick Geddes mention this particular area and the need to move out its inhabitants to make way for archaeological excavations back in 1919? I was shocked to read the following paragraph in the report of this prominent town planner:

> The village of the Moghrabi Arabs should also be attended to. Some of those who require to remain in the city may be rehoused along the vacant areas immediately west or south of their present homes; while it also need not be impossible by and by, when archaeological enquiries are fully satisfied, to house a small group of them outside the walls upon some portion of the southward slope.[41]

I do not know how to frame this: a man is invited and financed by the Zionist Organization to design the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, then is commissioned by the British Government to help plan Jerusalem. It is illustrative that Geddes' first introduction to the city was through Zionists and to think about how that early education/viewing of the city through a Zionist lens played into his vision for the city at large. He proposes to clear the Mughrabi neighborhood from its inhabitants and its buildings, and then his plan is implemented by Israel fifty years later. The question that begs to be asked, whose plan was it: Geddes, the British Government, the Zionist Organization, or Israel's army? This destruction or erasure was perpetrated to make room for some ugly bunker style buildings – clearly discernable in the new photograph I took – that have no connection or meaning for the city apart from the fact that these buildings and that particular neighborhood is now exclusively Jewish, and where no peaceful co-existence among peoples and religions is tolerated.
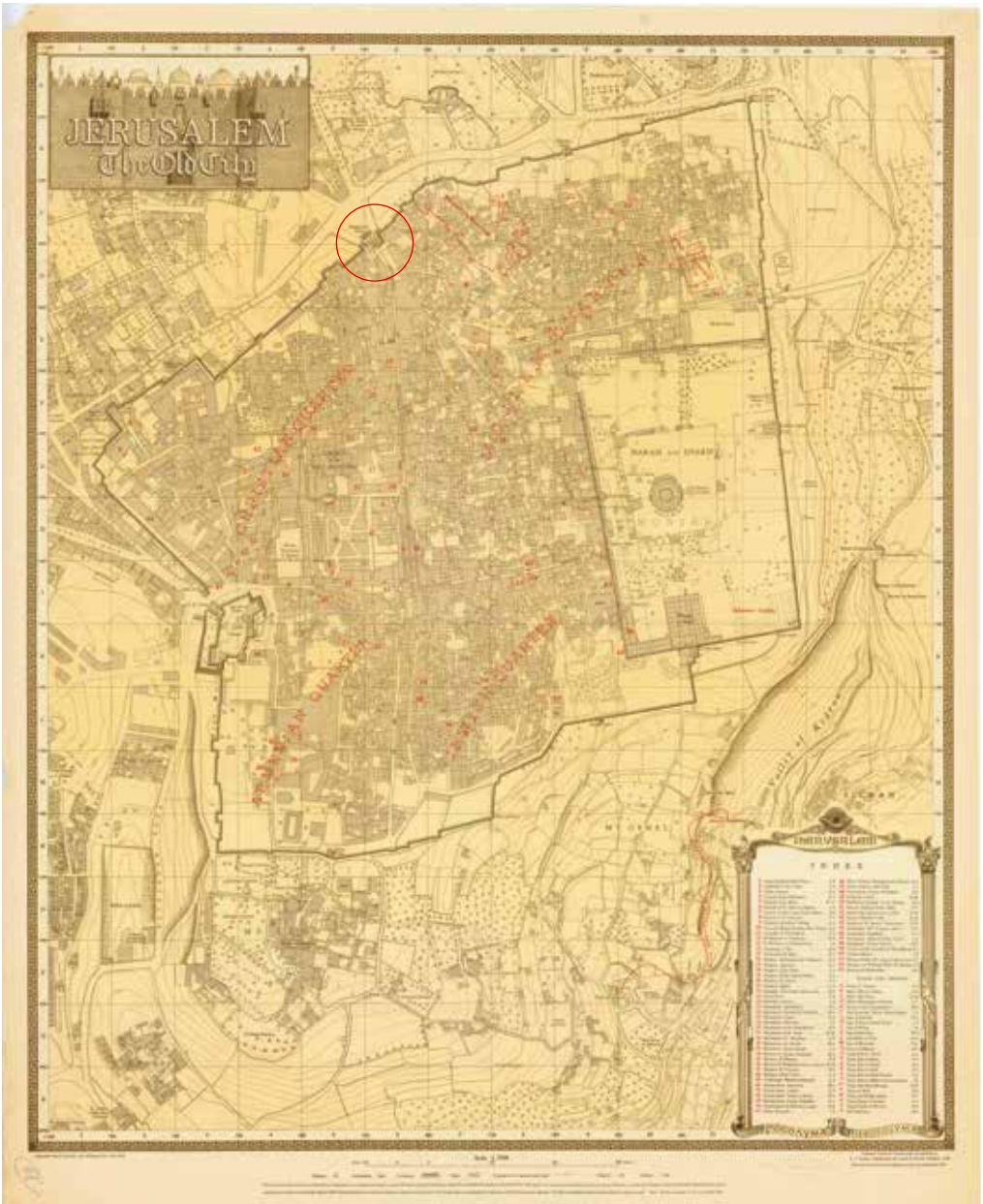
In the 1990s, the municipality reconfigured the whole area immediately outside Damascus Gate thereby creating a sort of amphitheater layout in three levels leading to this main gate of the city, as we can see in the work titled *Damascus Gate Fords*. This gate is still called the Column Gate [Bab al-'Amud] in Arabic, a reference to the row of columns that Hadrian erected in 135 AD crossing the city from north to south, as part of a wholly new rebuilt Jerusalem after its destruction, which he then named Aelia Capitolina. In trying to capture that precise angle of Damascus Gate and the wall, I had to eventually climb a ladder which I installed on the second level of that amphitheater bringing me to a point somewhere between the second and third level. This allowed me to align and shoot that photograph as faithfully as possible to the original one. The whole exercise of returning several times to that location to study and figure out the exact position also made me think about that amphitheater and its construction right outside the main gate of the city, which seemed to pose as nothing but the most topographically natural architectural intervention to be conceived there. One could easily see this proposed amphitheater in the map of the city from 1936, which was commissioned by F. J. Salmon, the then commissioner for Lands and Surveys in Palestine.

Jerusalem Old City map, compiled by F. J. Salmon, commissioner of Lands and Surveys, Palestine, in 1936 and revised by the British Mandate Department of Antiquities in 1945.

Damascus Gate Fords, photo-overlay by author, 2017.
Old photo: *Ford cars parked in Damascus Gate area*. American
Colony Photographers, 1934–1939. Matson Photograph Collection,
Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-04252].
New photo: *Damascus Gate*, photo by author, 14 June 2017.

THE DAMASCUS GATE—BAB EL AMUD (GATE OF THE COLUMN).
The northern entrance to Jerusalem.

Top: *Damascus Gate*. David Roberts, 14 April 1839. *From the Holy Land, Syria, Idumea*, Arabia, Egypt and Nubia (London: F.G. Moon, 1842–49), 1, l.2.

Bottom: Charles W. Wilson, *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt*, 1880.Reprinted by Ariel Publishing House, Jerusalem, under the title *Jerusalem - The Holy City*, p. 41.

That did not make sense to me, especially when we are dealing with an old city whose ancient walls needed to make military sense when they were finally rebuilt by Sultan Sulayman the Magnificent in 1541 after the city had been without walls for 300 years. It is highly unlikely that the walls were built on a sloping hill down towards the city on any side, especially towards its main gate. The city and all its defenses in that case would then be a very easy target for a simple catapult propped on top of that gradient, or a belfry, which can be rolled down that slope and easily smash the gate. This made me dig deeper into the history of that gate and the city's topography. I discovered that this gradient is actually man-made and that it is the accumulation of dirt, rubble, construction debris, and garbage from inside the city dumped outside over hundreds and hundreds of years. Those piles of dirt and debris piled up over the centuries to form what we see today as a sort of mound extending from the Damascus Gate all the way to the Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood. Actually, the city's garbage problem, its hygiene or lack of it, and ensuing diseases persisted for a very long period of time. William H. Dixon, continues his description of the city from his visit in 1867, writing:

> The streets of the Holy City should be trod by day, business of life suspends itself from sunset to sunrise. No gas, no oil, no torch, no wax lights up the streets of Jerusalem by night. The alleys of Jerusalem reek with decaying fruit, dead animals, and human filth, and in the midst of which fertilizing garbage innumerable armies of rats race and fight. Except in the souks, the streets are all unpaved, an open sewer runs down each lane . . . ."[42]

When Kaiser Wilhelm II intended to visit the city in 1898, he was interested to come in April to coincide with Easter celebrations. He communicated his desire to Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II, who sent a delegation to report on the situation in Jerusalem and its preparedness for this most important state visit – the second of a western head of state during the Ottoman reign. The report was damning. As a consequence, the visit was postponed to the end of October and the Sultan on his part fired the governor of Jerusalem and replaced him with a young officer from his own court to oversee the clean-up of the city, improve the water system, pave roads, and demolish and build whatever necessary for this momentous visit.

THE ANCIENT CITY OF JERUSALEM WITH SOLOMON'S TEMPLE
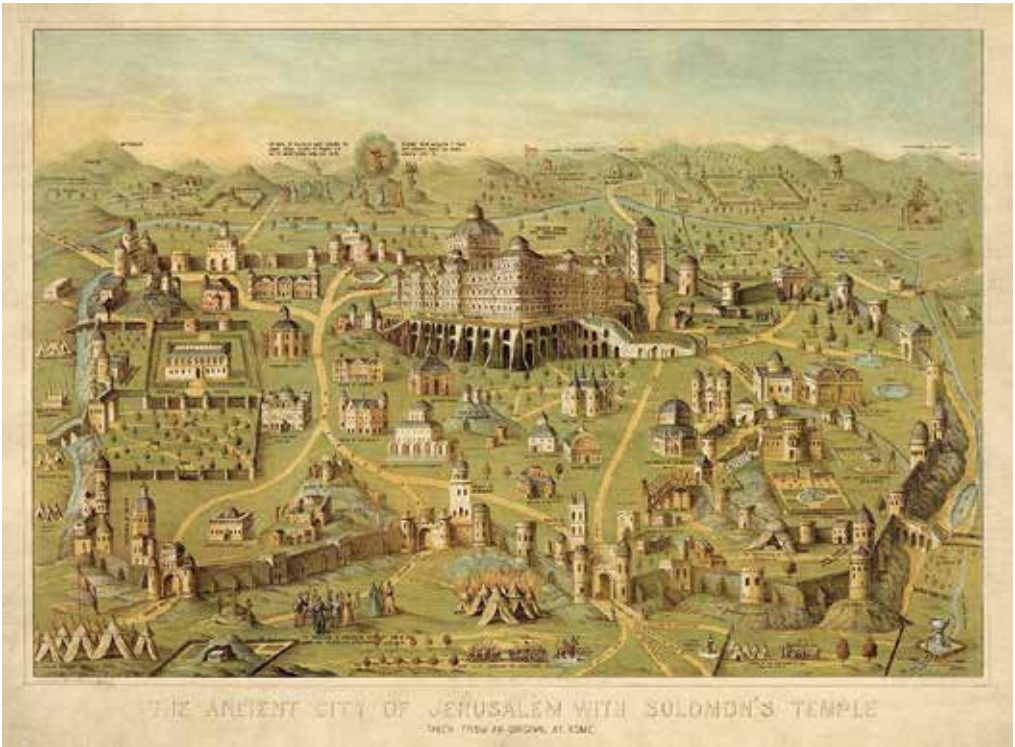
Top: *The Ancient City of Jerusalem with Solomon's Temple*. Popular Graphic Arts, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-pga-02305].

86–87   *Jerusalem from Mount Scopus*, photo-overlay (insert), by author, 2017.

86   *Jerusalem (El-Kouds). Jerusalem from Mt. Scopus*. American Colony Photographers, 1898–1914. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-06736].

87   *From north east*, photo by author, 22 April 2017.

The landscape of the city takes center stage in the photograph titled *Jerusalem from Mount Scopus*. The juxtaposition of the two photographs creates a sort of a picturesque hand-colored photograph with an illusion of a hologram,[43] reminiscent of the Sanduq al-'Ajab and its transposition of realities into wonderful imaginary worlds. This effect was a primary concern of mine when dealing with these photographs and the outcome of my interventions. In analogue mode, I wanted these visual stimuli to take control of the production, distancing the presentation, as far as possible, from the didactic formats of exhibitions which are usually stacked with infographics and grand conceptual gestures posing as artwork. The landscape is visibly arid in the old photograph (1898–1914) which tells of a city perched on the hills overlooking the desert. Logically, the hill in the foreground and those rolling down in the background towards the southeast are barren apart from the few olive groves embellishing the slopes of the Mount of Olives and the northeast corner outside the Old City. Yet, the recent photograph I took boasts of a lush green landscape with a whole assortment of trees, and of course the sprawling urban build-up.

What is quite striking here is the comparison between the types of trees in the two photographs. In the old, the trees are fruit bearing, whereas in the new photograph the trees are mostly non-fruit bearing and somehow decorative. While the Ottoman taxing system which levied onerous taxes on trees that people owned would explain why non-fruit bearing trees were not readily planted by the city's inhabitants (and elsewhere for that matter), we are still left to grapple with the concept of the "greenbelt" that Geddes, McLean, Ashbee, and Storrs proposed for the city. Was this their attempt to overlay the imaginary Jerusalem they had internalized from frescos and paintings which depict Jerusalem's landscape as if it were somewhere in Europe over the real Jerusalem – arid and dreary? Or, was it part of a concerted effort by all those who descended upon the city from as early as the first half of the nineteenth century to alter, transform, and break Jerusalem in order to appeal and eventually accommodate all the Westerners who came to settle the land? Or, more importantly, was it to embody the Zionist claim of having "made the desert bloom"?

German officers heading a line of 600 prisoners captured near Jericho, July 15, 1918 is an attractive title given to the old photograph by the American Colony studio showing British cavalry riding down Sultan Sulayman Street north of the Old City, guarding German prisoners of war as they are being led to the Austrian Hospice inside the Old City where they were held. It is obvious that the cavalry, at first inspection of their uniforms, particularly their hats, were one of the Australian Light Horse regiments. But what is particularly compelling in the composition of the two pictures layered one upon the other is the position of the bystanders in both the old and new photographs. They both seem to be somewhat indifferent and unmoved by the grand victory parade the British were throwing back in 1918. Some of them even seem to be looking ahead as if waiting for the next army to arrive. It is quite anecdotal how the people of the city saw armies descend on it over millennia, as they stood by and endured these hardhearted warriors as they passed through and eventually left.

Sultan Suleiman Street, photo-overlay by author, 2017.
Old photo: *German officers heading a line of 600 prisoners captured near Jericho, 15 July 1918*. American Colony Photographers. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-02265].
New photo: *Bus stop near Herod's Gate*, photo by author, 14 June 2017.

State visit to Jerusalem of Wilhelm II of Germany in 1898. General view of Jaffa Road, crowded with people and flags, during procession. American Colony Photographers, 29 October 1898. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-04611].

I wanted to include a photograph of Kaiser Wilhelm II and Empress Augusta Victoria's historic visit to Jerusalem, to keep reminding us that they were the reason for the destruction of that segment of the Old City wall next to Jaffa Gate. This breach in the city wall was to make way for the emperor on his white stallion and his imperial entourage in their carriages to ride victoriously into the Old City on 29 October 1898. It is the very segment that Geddes so yearned for its restoration, writing "the replacement of the City Wall across the present entrance roadway is no doubt desirable on historical and artistic grounds" – but immediately realized he needed "to leave an arch opening in the wall of width and height sufficient for carriages."[44] In contrast, several photographs of General Allenby's parade and investiture on 11 December 1917 show him dismounting from his horse outside Jaffa Gate, greeting his officers and then entering the city on foot. A noble and humble gesture. I wonder who he thought he was emulating, for none of the preceding western conquerors of the city entered it either kindly or humbly. History tells us that there were only a few who were able to achieve this magnanimity, and I am only able to name two: Omar Ibn al-Khattab and Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi. And even though the latter was the ruler who defeated the Crusaders and pushed them out of Jerusalem, he "was seen as being piously wise and indulgent to the Christian occupiers, which established his reputation within Western culture as a sage ruler."[45] Karen Armstrong elaborates further on his virtues:

> Christians in the West were uneasily aware that this Muslim ruler had behaved in a far more "Christian" manner than had their own Crusaders when they conquered Jerusalem. They evolved legends that made Saladin a sort of honorary Christian; some of these tales even asserted that the sultan had been secretly baptized.[46]

Intérieur de la porte de Jaffa à Jerusalem, 1867–1870, Albumen silver print. Félix Bonfils. The J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, online at www.getty.edu/art/collection/objects/56099/felix-bonfils-interieur-de-la-porte-de-jaffa-a-jerusalem-french-1867-1870/ (accessed 18 January 2019).

Top: *Interior view of Jaffa Gate*. The Papers of Charles Robert
Ashbee, Kings Collage, Cambridge, CRA/21/4.11
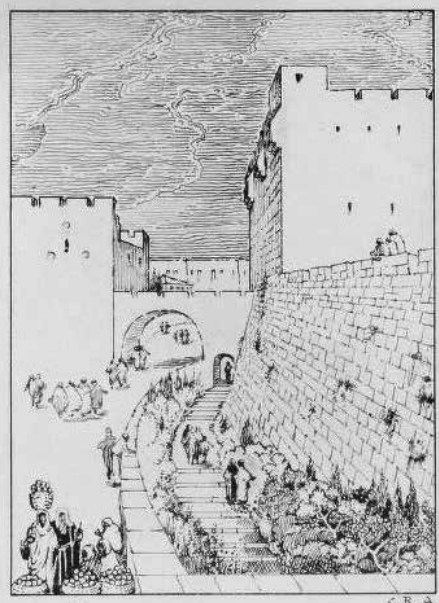
Bottom: *The Jaffa Gate as it was and suggested reconstruction*.
The Papers of Charles Robert Ashbee, Kings Collage, Cambridge,
CRA/21/4.11

Entry of Field Marshall Allenby, Jerusalem, December 11, 1917. Field Marshall Allenby at the Jaffa Gate. American Colony Photographers. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-00169].

Palestine – Jerusalem. General Allenby's entrance into Jerusalem, photo by Underwood and Underwood, 11 December 1917, Frank and Frances Carpenter Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-USZ62-93094].

I also wanted the American Colony to feature prominently in this body of work, hence this photograph is appropriately titled *The American Colony*. The visit of the Kaiser and this 1898 photograph of him was probably the precursor of what eventually became one of the largest photographic archives (more than 23,000 pictures) and a prosperous photographic studio and business for the American Colony for some fifty years. I would like to point out here that most of the photographs I used for this project come from this studio, yet the actual source where I obtained the photographs is the Library of Congress's website which carries the Matson and Whiting Collections, among many others. This, of course, has been and continues to be a thorny issue. Even though part of the photographic collection of the American Colony deposited at the Library of Congress is named after G. Eric (and Edith) Matson, it is actually the collective effort of the (at least) fifteen photographers who had worked at the American Colony Studio between 1898 and 1934, in addition to Matson's and his assistants' photographs until he left Jerusalem in 1947. It was Matson who donated his entire archive to the Library of Congress and rightly so it was named after him. But many people who are not familiar with its history would think that G. Eric Matson single-handedly created this entire photographic collection of the American Colony.

The American Colony, photo-overlay by author, 2017.
Old photo: *State visit to Jerusalem of Wilhelm II of Germany in 1898. Royal party entering Jerusalem from north, passing the American Colony building*. American Colony Photographers, between 29 October and 2 November 1898. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-04610].
New photo: *Sheikh Jarrah*, photo by author, 24 April 2017.

A diversion from the American Colony Photographs Collection, I requested from Salim Tamari access to Khalil Raad's photograph in Wasif Jawhariyyeh's collection, the one that depicts a *Hanging in Jaffa Gate*. The hanging took place on 3 October 1915 as is written on the board hanging around the neck of the "traitor" (according to its authors). It is quite amazing to see that all of the people gathered to witness the hanging took time to pause for Mr. Raad while he was framing and shooting that horrific scene. That was not his only photograph of a hanging. We know of a few more from Raad in Jawhariyyeh's collection from that terrible WWI period of poverty, hunger, and death. I also took my time waiting for the "right" moment to take my photograph from the exact same position and angle as Khalil Raad's. I waited for a contemporary representative of the power in control now, someone in uniform of course, and I also waited for the sun to cast its rays on the surveillance cameras in order for their shadows to figure in my photograph as silhouettes of an omnipresent system of monitoring and control – just like the system the Ottomans employed to monitor, capture, and put to death dissidents and deserters from an army and a war they had nothing to do with. The ka'q peddler emerges as a phantom figure in the juxtaposed image; cigarette in mouth adjusting the time on his wristwatch. He seems somehow indifferent to what is happening around him or what had happened in earlier times. Did he know that in the same spot where he is trying to make a living someone else on 3 October 1915 lost his? Is it possible that Alawi Bin Zidan was concerned and keen enough to try to do something about what was happening then, but sadly got caught and hanged? Or was he a poor helpless renegade from the Safarberlik (Ottoman conscription), of whom the government at the time wanted to make an example for any other would-be dissidents? Was Raad commissioned to print his photographs of hangings and disseminate them?

Left: *Hangings outside Jaffa Gate, Jerusalem: Arabs, Armenians, Bedouins, Jews*. Official Turkish photo circa 1917. File number FL1533796. State Library, New South Wales, Australia.

Right: *Hanging*, photo-overlay by author, 2018.
Old photo: *Hanging in Jaffa Gate*. Chalil Raad, 3 October 1915. Courtesy of the Library of the Institute for Palestine Studies.
New photo: *Surveillance cameras in Jaffa Gate* [shadows], photo by author, 11 January 2018.
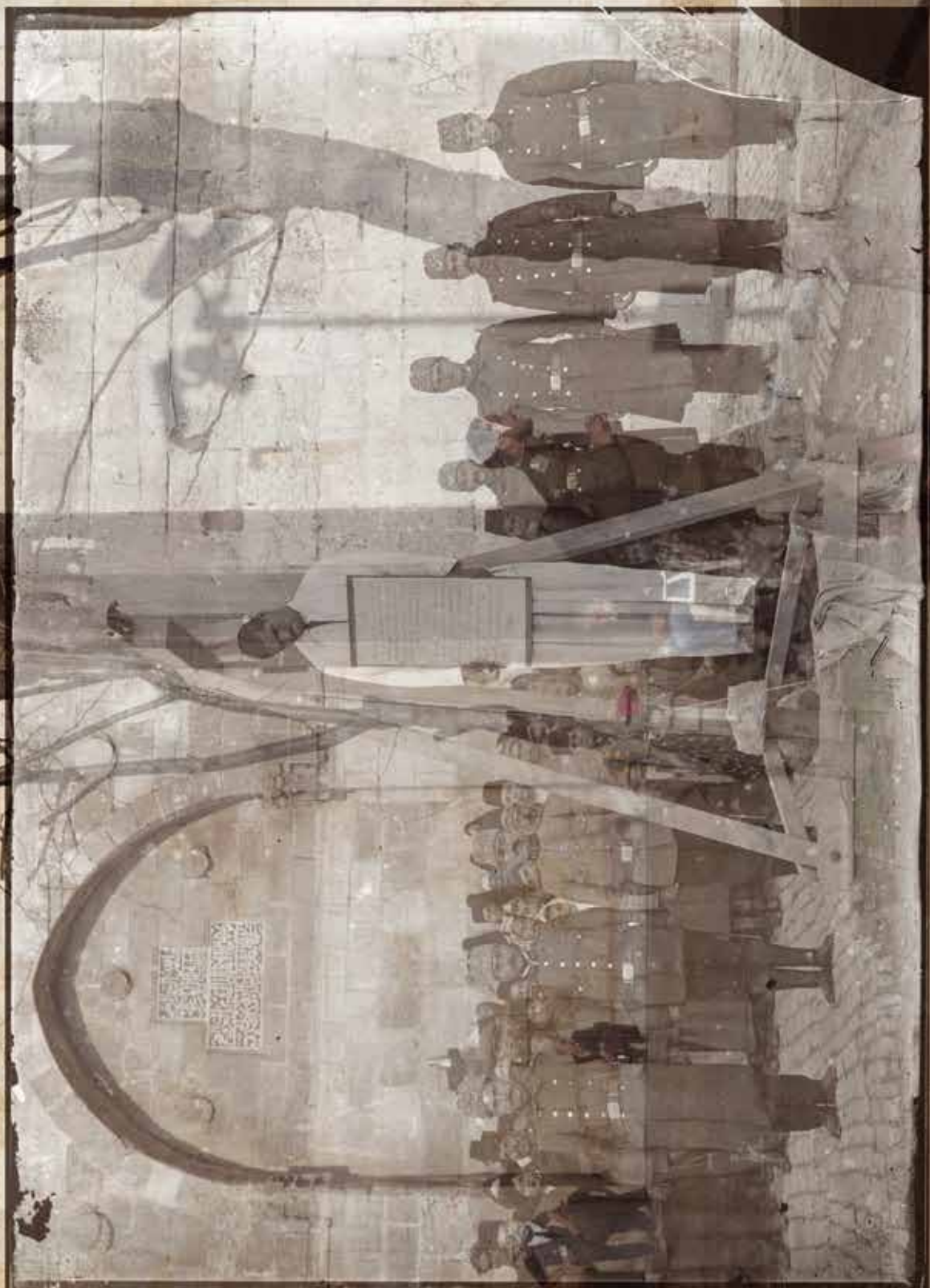
As mentioned earlier, several old photographs were not possible to reshoot and compose as overlays due to the changes and transformation in the topography of the city, the construction and demolition of numerous buildings in several areas, the digging of tunnels, paving of new roads, and planting of a good number of tall trees. Most of the photographs taken from rooftops in the area of Jaffa Gate were not possible to reproduce from today's perspective, since all the buildings outside the Gate have been removed – apart, of course, from the ones I managed to frame with the help of a ladder. The photograph of the entry of General Allenby through Jaffa Gate on 11 December 1917, which I so desperately wanted to rephotograph given its historic significance, was practically impossible since the second floor above the building inside Jaffa Gate from where the photograph was taken had also been removed. On the other hand, the city view as seen in the photographs taken by the American Colony photographers from the tower of the YMCA on Julian Street (later renamed King David Street) is today blocked by the additional two floors added to the King David Hotel, which consequently shifted the perspective angle, considerably turning all my attempts to reshoot some of the photographs taken from the hotel's rooftop in vain. I was surprised that the King David Hotel would give me access to their rooftop, given the aura of high security that envelops this hotel and its distinguished clientele. Yet I was denied access to several other rooftops and towers, especially those belonging to religious institutions, giving me all sorts of illogical and unconvincing reasons. I so envied the photographers of the American Colony and others at the time who seemed to have unrestricted access to almost anywhere in the city and elsewhere. In fact, the American Colony photographers were given special access by Jamal Pasha himself, who commissioned them to do wartime photography for the Fourth Army during the WWI. They also had a privileged relationship with the British Mandate government, which also gave them access to many places and events.

Top: *View from Y.M.C.A. tower. Panorama looking east*. American Colony Photographers. 1934–39. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-22297].

Bottom: *King David Hotel blocking view*, photo by author, 24 April 2017.

One of the interesting views to which I was gratefully given access was from the tower of St. George Cathedral on Nablus Road. In the old photograph one can observe: in the upper left, the Dominican Church and to the left of its tower, the Dome of the Rock; directly above it, the new British governor's house; and to the right almost above the church building, the Hurva Synagogue. The bell tower of the Redeemer Church is almost centered in the photograph and on its right is the Dome of the Holy Sepulcher and the minaret of the Mosque of Omar. On the far right horizon of the photograph, the Church of the Last Supper and the minaret of the Nabi Dawud Mosque are visible. What is striking about this photograph is the proximity of the beautiful olive grove adorning the foreground of the photograph to the Old City, undisturbed by the city's development for a long time up to then, knowing that this photograph was taken in the 1930s. Zooming in on the lower left corner of the photograph, it is crystal clear that the idea of installing a football field there came second to the integrity of the grove and the right of each and every tree to its ground. It is obvious that the players at the time were instructed to mind the tree, for it had been in that spot possibly before the game was even invented. Then comes capitalism, and money comes before anybody and everything – before time or maybe outside of Time. The need to generate income from every square inch of the city trumped all other considerations. Entrepreneurs jumped on that "undeveloped" field profitably located in the middle of the city putting forth numerable proposals that imagined office buildings, a mixed-use commercial residential complex, and a shopping mall with underground parking. Unfortunately for them, no investors could be found to dump their money in this troubled unrestful city. So no time was to be wasted, and it turns out a parking lot was the only affordable and money-making proposition they could come up with to replace the old football playground. What a pathetic ending to those timeless olive trees and to the land that nurtured them, the land that has been at the core of Palestinian identity and struggle.

St. George Playground, photo-overlay by author, 2017.
Old photo: *Jerusalem from North. American Colony Photographers. 1934–46*. Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC [LC-DIG-matpc-05867].
New photo: *S. George Parking Lot*, photo by author, 24 April 2017.

All I can think of now is Joni Mitchell's song "Big Yellow Taxi," given that the three monotheistic religions considered Jerusalem as being at the gates of heaven; and it goes like this:

> They paved paradise
> And put up a parking lot
> With a pink hotel, a boutique
> And a swinging hot spot
>
> They took all the trees
> Put 'em in a tree museum
> And they charged the people
> A dollar and a half just to see 'em
>
> Don't it always seem to go
> That you don't know what you've got
> Till it's gone
> They paved paradise
> And put up a parking lot

And while listening to Joni Mitchell, one might as well reread Wislawa Szymborska's poem, the last stanza in particular, and pause and rethink the causes and effects of the last hundred years. Rethink of the time that has passed and the grass that has overgrown the pains and suffering. Rethink of the new realities being created for dominion and for profit. Rethink of all those who are behind it and those who are benefitting from it all – stretched out blade of grass in mouth gazing at the clouds . . .

It is about time!

It is about time is the title of the text that James Scarborough wrote about this body of work,[47] and I believe it is the perfect conclusion for this project. It is about "time," the element of time and its passing in between layers of history which are arrested in photographs and ultimately left up to us to delve in between these layers to understand our past and how those forces at play maneuvered and prevailed. And it is about time that the story of Jerusalem is told in multiple narratives and from various perspectives, and where we embrace the plural identity of this city and plan ahead for hopefully a better future, unlike Geddes and Ashbee and many before and after them who planned to colonize and subjugate it and thus alter its image irrevocably. Finally, I do not need to overemphasize the fact that most of the old photographs I utilized in this project were shot by expatriates and foreigners, constantly reminding me of the missing link to the story of this place as it is told by local photographers whose work lay in boxes kept away from anybody's reach in secret Israeli underground facilities. Israel's army and its operatives looted photographic archives from local photographers' studios and homes "on a large scale in 1948, 1956, 1967, 1973, 1982, and on until the present."[48] It is about time we recovered all of the looted photographs, for there is no logical reason for keeping them under lock and key, apart from the obvious rationalization that these photographs contain information, facts, and history Israel does not want anyone to see.

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Endnotes

1 Wislawa Szymborska, "The End and the Beginning," in *Miracle Fair: Selected Poems of Wisława Szymborska*, tr. Joanna Trzeciak (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001); online at www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/52955/the-end-and-the-beginning (accessed 22 January 2019).

2 The work of the American Colony Photography Department, and the Matson Photo Service which followed, spanned a period of fifty years. In the first thirty-seven years, the department utilized the albumen silver print process. Invented in 1850, the albumen silver print was the most popular photographic printing process of the nineteenth century. To make albumen silver prints, a sheet of paper is coated with albumen (egg white) and salts, and then sensitized with a solution of silver nitrate. The paper is exposed in contact with a negative and printed out, which means that the image is created solely by the action of light on the sensitized paper without any chemical development. Because the paper is coated with albumen, the silver image is suspended on the surface of the paper rather than absorbed into the paper fibers. The result is a sharp image with fine detail on a smooth, glossy surface. In the latter thirteen years of their work the gelatin silver process was introduced. The paper or film used to make gelatin silver prints and negatives is coated with an emulsion that contains gelatin and silver salts. Gelatin silver prints and negatives are developed rather than printed out, which means that exposure to light registers a latent image that becomes visible only when developed in a chemical bath. The Colony photographers often used to hand-color the monochrome prints; a method that they excelled in. [Email from Rachel A. Lev, Curator, American Colony Archives Collections, to author on 5 May 2017. For a short history of photographic processes, see Gee Virdi, online at www.geevirdi.com/single-post/2013/05/01/This-is-the-title-of-your-first-blog-post (accessed 13 January 2019).]

3 Credits for the old photographs can roughly be divided into two periods: the work of the American Colony photographers (1896 to 1934) and the work of G. Eric Matson (1934 to 1947).

4 The history and digitalized Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection can be found online at www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?st=grid&co=matpc (accessed 12 January 2019). Lev, Archives Collection: "Collections at the Library of Congress are often named after the donor and not after the creators. The Matson collection is a good such example. It consists of two photographic archives: 1. The American Colony Photographers. 2. The Matson Photo-Service. Matson was a member of the American Colony collective and one of fifteen photographers. After the Photo-Department was dissolved in 1932, its negative archive moved into the hands of G. Eric Matson who continued to reprint their photographs. In 1940, he named his studio 'The Matson Photo Service.' As the Matson Photo-Service he conducted his own photographic projects. Between 1934 and 1947 he collaborated with John D. Whiting and two Palestinians, Hanna Safieh (1910–1979) and Joseph H. Giries. Brothers Jamil and Najib Albina continued to work with him after 1934 and eventually left the firm. Matson and his family left Jerusalem to the USA in 1947."

5 Lev, Archives Collections: "There were at least three Palestinian photographers out of fifteen known members of the [American Colony] collective, among them, Jamil and Najib Albina and Fareed Nassif."

6 Issam Nassar: 'The subjects of photographs [by European photographers] were often depicted not as particular individuals but as representatives of 'types' of people living in the Holy Land. The choice of pose, setting, object and subject was in the hands of the photographer. In contrast, in local photography, the object of the picture was his or her own subject: it was they

who decided to be photographed and chose the pose and image in which they would appear. Interestingly, however, they often imitated images they had seen in early European photography. For example, it was not uncommon for urban women to be photographed dressed as Bedouins or Bethlehemites. The studios of Krikorian and Raad, among others, had a number of costumes at the disposal of their customers who could choose to be photographed in the guise of other 'more exotic' locals. This habit might be explained by the fact that many of the customers of the early local studios were more likely to be from the wealthy urban segments of Palestinian society. It appears that the newly emerging class of urban aristocracy had fully adopted European attire and lifestyle and, along with it, the perception of peasants and Bedouins as exotic Orientals'; Issam Nassar, 'Familial Snapshots: Representing Palestine in the Work of the First Local Photographers,' *History & Memory* 18, no. 2 (2006): 139–155.

7   See Annabel Jane Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem – Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006).

8   "Zionism from the Standpoint of its Victims," Blogging the Middle East, online at meastpolitics.wordpress.com/2006/03/08/zionism-from-the-standpoint-of-its-victims. For Edward W. Said's article, see "Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims" *Social Text, no. 1 (Winter, 1979)*: 7–58, online at racismandnationalconsciousnessresources.files.wordpress.com/2008/11/edward-said-zionism-from-the-standpoint-of-its-victims.pdf (accessed 11 January 2019).

9   "The notion of the 'restoration' of the Jews to Palestine as a political project was first advanced by the Christians . . . Its development may be viewed as a drama in three acts, involving (1) the relation between Puritans and the 'Israelites' in the XVIIth century, (2) between the XIXth century Evangelicals and Jews, and (3) between American evangelicals and Israel in the XXth century." Jan Nederveen Pieterse, "The History of a Metaphor: Christian Zionism and the Politics of Apocalypse," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* (Jul/Sep 1991): 76.

10   Lev, Archives Collections: "I do see fundamental difference between the Zionists' image of the native Arab and that of the American Colony photographers. There is

a lot of compassion and admiration towards native inhabitants as representation of Biblical times. Representation of Palestinians in the American Colony photographic work stretch far beyond the orientalist architype [sic] of a ruler and subordinate both in the Biblical photography, photography of Bedouins and photography of their contemporary Palestinian friends and associates. Our albums are full with portraits of known and less known Arab friends and associates of the Colony. The Zionist [and Western travelers'] photography and often painting clearly discriminates between the 'New Jew' and the 'Native Arab.' I think the Colony photographers responded to the market demands but in general their point of view was far from the typical "empty land waiting to be conquered etc."

11   Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 13.

12   In a commentary in the *New York Times*, "On Language," William Safire, cites several possible origins for the dictum: "God is in the details," 30 July 1989, online at timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1989/07/30/949189.html?action=click&pageNumber=339 (accessed 11 January 2019).

13   On 2 November 1917, the "British Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour sends letter to Baron Lionel Walter de Rothschild pledging British support for the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine." On 9 December 1917, the "Ottoman forces surrender in Jerusalem to Allied forces under General Sir Edmund Allenby." Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of The Palestinians 1876-1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), 39.

14   I was born on 2 November 1962, and as far back as I can remember, we would have a day off from school as part of a general strike and shutdown in Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip in protest of the Balfour Declaration. On 2 November 1898 Theodor Herzl met with Kaiser Wilhelm II in Jerusalem to entreat his support for the Zionist settlement plan in Palestine.

15   Charles R. Ashbee, ed., *Jerusalem 1920–1922: Being the Records of the Pro-Jerusalem Council during the First Two Years of the Civil Administration* (London: John Murray, 1924), vii.

16 Inbal Ben-Asher Gitler, "Marrying Modern Progress with Treasured Antiquity: Jerusalem City Plans during the British Mandate, 1917–1948," TDSR, 15, no. 1 (2003): 39–58, online at iaste.berkeley.edu/pdfs/15.1d-Fall03gitler-sml.pdf (accessed 10 January 2019).

17 Ashbee, *Jerusalem 1920–1922*. The edict appears as item 2 on the legend of William McLean's "Jerusalem Town Planning Scheme No.1," 1918.

18 Ashbee, *Jerusalem 1920–1922*.

19 Theodor Herzl, *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl*, ed. R. Patai, 2 vols. (London and New York: Herzl Press), 1960, 793, quoted in Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths*, 444.

20 Patrick Geddes, "Jerusalem Actual and Possible," November 1919, 4–12. The author would like to note here that in the Central Zionist Archive, where a copy of this report is kept, copies of several letters issued by the British Colonization Department are found, all addressed to the various Zionist organizations and bureaus around the world (Paris, New York, Berlin, and London), mentioning that enclosed with the letter is a copy of the Geddes report that the recipient needs to "treat as confidential until you hear further from us."

21 Note the size, special decoration and ornamentation of the Damascus Gate in comparison to the other gates of the city. It was Sultan Sulayman's great court architect Sinan who personally designed Damascus Gate. Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2005), 324.

22 Wasif Jawhariyyeh in his memoirs approves of the demolition of the clock tower for the same reasons given by the Pro-Jerusalem Society, describing it as "a Mélange similar to the music of Abdel Wahab which they call Franco-Arab." *British Mandate Jerusalem in the Jawhariyyeh Memoirs* [second book], eds. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (Washington, DC: Institute of Palestine Studies, 2005), 333.

23 Geddes, "Jerusalem Actual and Possible," 19, 26.

24 Ariella Azoulay, "Photographic Conditions: Looting, Archives, and the Figure of the "Infiltrator," *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 61 (Winter 2015):13.

25 David Kroyanker, *Rehov Yafo* [Jaffa Road, Jerusalem: Biography of a Street, Story of a City] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005), 57.

26 Azoulay, "Photographic Conditions," 21, n.16.

27 Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *Jerusalem in the 19th Century, The Old City*, Yad Izhak Ben Zvi Institute, Jerusalem (New York: St. Maartin's Press, 1984), 23.

28 This explains why it was referred to in English as "Jaffa Gate," while in Arabic it is known as "Hebron Gate."

29 Hintlian, "The Commercial Life of Ottoman Jerusalem, Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City, 1517–1917," eds. Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000), 229-234.

30 Hintlian, "The Commercial Life of Ottoman Jerusalem."

31 The hotel is apparently to be rebuilt at the same height, with eight underground floors, online at /www.jewishpress.com/news/breaking-news/jerusalem-pearl-hotel-to-be-rebuilt/2018/08/05/ (accessed 12 January 2019).

32 Eetta Prince-Gibson interview with David Kroyanker, "Jaffa Road – It's a Long and Winding Road," *Jerusalem Post*, 27 July 2009, online at www.jpost.com/Israel-Guide/Jerusalem-Area-Tours/Jaffa-Road-Its-a-long-and-winding-road (accessed 11 January 2019).

33 *Jawhariyyeh Memoirs*, 286.

34 Peggy Cidor, "From Prosperity to Decay and Back Again," *Jerusalem Post*, 27 August 2009, online at www.jpost.com/Local-Israel/In-Jerusalem/From-prosperity-to-decay-and-back-again (accessed 11 January 2019).

35 Geddes, "Jerusalem Actual and Possible," 1, 2.

36 Geddes, "Jerusalem Actual and Possible," introduction. Geddes was the main doctrinal Zionist figure among the modern planners of Jerusalem, as Noah Rubin describes him: "Patrick Geddes worked in Jerusalem between 1919 and 1925. He was originally summoned to the city by the Zionists, in order to plan the Hebrew University of Jerusalem; eventually, he also submitted an overall plan for the city, presented to its British Governor." See Noah Hysler Rubin, "Geography, Colonialism and Town Planning: Patrick Geddes' Plan for Mandatory Jerusalem," *Cultural Geographies* 18, no.2 (2011): 231–248.

37 One could say that they were merely sticking to the terms of the Mandate, which states in article 2 that: "The Mandatory shall be responsible for placing the country under such political, administrative and economic

conditions as will secure the establishment of the Jewish national home . . . ." Yet after Britain voted for the United Nations partition scheme which called for two states, this changed. By then the Mandate was close to ending and the British ran away from Palestine and failed to implement the UN decision.

38 From David Reeb's painting, *Clean* (1999), online at www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/reeb-clean-t07654 (accessed 10 January 2019).

39 Thomas Abowd, "The Moroccan Quarter: A History of the Present," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 7, 2000, online at www.palestine-studies.org/jq/fulltext/78159 (accessed 10 January 2019).

40 Uzi Benziman, "The Real Reason Israel Annexed East Jerusalem," *Haaretz*, 25 May 2017, online at www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.MAGAZINE-the-real-reason-israel-annexed-east-jerusalem-1.5476317 (accessed 11 January 2019).

41 Geddes, "Jerusalem Actual and Possible," 8.

42 Hintlian, "Commercial Life," 231.

43 This hologram effect is achieved when the two juxtaposed photographs do not completely collapse one over the other, but a small gap or space is kept in between the two layers of images.

44 Geddes, "Jerusalem Actual and Possible,"12.

45 Jewish Museum Berlin's *Welcome to Jerusalem*, eds. Margret Kampmeyer and Cilly Kugepmann, (Cologne: Wienand Verlag, 2017), 43, online at www.jmberlin.de/en/catalog-welcome-to-jerusalem (accessed 10 January 2019).

46 Karen Armstrong, *Jerusalem: One City, Three Faiths* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1996), 294.

47 James Scarborough, "It's about Time: Jack Persekian and Jerusalem's Eternal Present," online at perhapsperhapsperhaps.typepad.com/what_the_butler_saw/2018/03/its-about-time-jack-persekian-and-jerusalems-eternal-present-by-james-scarborough.html (accessed 11 January 2019).

48 Azoulay, "Photographic Conditions," 17.

A Municipality Seeking Refuge:
Jerusalem Municipality in 1948

Haneen Naamneh

Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem is an annual award launched in 2017 to commemorate the memory and work of Ibrahim Dakkak (1929– 2016), former chairman of the Advisory Board.

The municipality did not fare any better than the rest of Jerusalem's residents. After the departure of the British forces before noon on 14 May, we were surprised by the attack of the Jewish forces. We left the municipal offices and the bullets all over the city and entered the walls [of the city]. We found on the morning of 15 May that while being inside the walls, the enemy had surrounded us, and bombs were falling everywhere.[1]

On 26 December 1950 *al-Difaʻ* newspaper published extracts of a "Detailed report of Jerusalem Municipality's work after the termination of the mandate," which was authored by Anton Safieh, a senior employee of Jerusalem Municipality during the British and the Jordanian rule. *Al-Difaʻ* added the sub-headings: "Facts and figures demonstrate the difficulties it [the municipality] encountered and the valuable tasks it undertook"; "The difficult period that followed the departure of the Mandate government"; "The remnants of the municipality and its finances"; "Gradual restitution of life to normal."

Between mid-May and late November 1948 a municipal council composed of senior Palestinian administrative employees led by Safieh undertook the municipal tasks in Jerusalem after the city's administrative center fell under the control of the Zionist forces. This municipal council functioned until 22 November 1948 when the military commander, Abdallah al-Tal, appointed the first official municipal council under Jordan in Jerusalem.[2]

The historical account introduced in this paper sheds light on some of the

municipal challenges that Jerusalem encountered between May and November 1948, based on historical press and archival research in the Arab Municipality files, which are located at the Israeli Jerusalem Municipality Archive. Despite the loss of the Jerusalem Municipality town hall in 1948, which had devastating effects on the city's essential services, some municipality employees attempted to revive the municipal work. However, neither the town hall's loss nor the history of its labor have been included in the narratives about Jerusalem in 1948.

This paper approaches the municipality as a refugee-institution and traces its loss as part of the narratives on displacement and survival in 1948. Approaching the municipality as a refugee transcends conventional analysis of the mere material loss and captures its political, social, and quotidian meanings. Furthermore, it creates a communal and local context for interpreting the municipality's loss and revival and allows us to better understand post-1948 Jerusalem.

The Rise of an Arab Municipality

The Jerusalem Municipality was an essential institution that gradually gained status in local and national politics after its establishment in 1863[3] under Ottoman rule. It became a heated site for contentious politics during the Mandate period, reflecting "in miniature the paramount problem of the whole country."[4] Against the backdrop of rapidly increasing Jewish immigration, a crisis related to the right of mayoralty arose in Jerusalem in August 1944. Following the death of the mayor Mustafa al-Khalidi, the Mandate government appointed the Jewish deputy Daniel Auster as acting mayor. The Palestinian members of the municipal council, as well as the political leadership across Palestine, protested the appointment since they perceived it to be a violation of the precedent established under the Ottomans, which preserved the position of Jerusalem's mayor for a Muslim resident.[5]

The Mandate government had been pressured by the Jewish municipal council's members to overturn the Muslim mayor precedent. Therefore, the Mandate government attempted to negotiate the terms of mayoralty through a system of triple rotation between Christian, Muslim and Jewish residents, but eventually both parties rejected these suggestions. Starting in March 1945, the Palestinian members refrained from attending the municipal meetings. As a result, they were disqualified in July 1945 as council members, thus creating a lack of quorum that prevented the Jewish members from having legal assembly of the council[6]. Consequently, the government dismissed the council and appointed a Municipal Corporation Commission composed of five British government officials, and appointed chief justice William Fitzgerald to inquire into the local administration in Jerusalem and to make recommendations.[7]

In late March 1948 Richard Massie Graves, the chairman of the Municipal Commission, addressed the Jerusalem district commissioner suggesting that "the present commission might be dissolved and the High Commissioner to be asked to appoint two emergency committees from the Arab and Jewish Communities, with himself [Graves],

the chairman as a neutral coordinator." However, this suggestion "broke down" as the Palestinian leadership rejected it.[8]

Earlier that month on 6 March 1948 Graves addressed Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi, an ex-mayor of Jerusalem who was then the Secretary General of the Arab Higher Executive, pleading with him to encourage the Palestinian residents to pay their dues to the municipality given its degraded financial situation. In his letter, Graves also invited the Arab Higher Executives to create an *Arab* committee to deal with municipal affairs:

> I do not for a moment anticipate cooperation between the communities [Arab and Jewish]. What I propose as far as the Arab population of Jerusalem is concerned is that a small Committee should be formed under the auspice of the Arab Higher Executive to take some part in the responsibility for municipal affairs. I realise that such a committee would not wish to become coopted members of the Commission [Municipality Corporation Commission], (which, of course, is likely to disintegrate within a few weeks as most of the members are Government officers), and suggest that they should act as my advisers on all important matters connected with the Arab areas and Arab personnel.[9]

The following day al-Khalidi on behalf of the Arab Higher Executive rejected the proposal as the Arabs refuse "to participate or cooperate with an appointed municipal commission installed in the municipality against the will and the wishes of the Arab tax-payers in Jerusalem."[10] This position emphasized the intensity of the 1944 mayoralty crisis for the Palestinians in Jerusalem, and the symbolic value of the municipality in the national discourse over self-determination and political representation. In the last meeting of the Commission on 6 April 1948 before it was dissolved, Graves reported on the breakdown of his attempts given the Palestinians' rejection, and the commission "felt that nothing further could be done in regard to this matter until a decision had been announced by Government."[11]

However, an *ad hoc* municipal division had already been underway since December 1947 as Graves reported that there was an "absenteeism problem" among the Jewish staff, and that

> . . . the Jewish community are obviously doing everything in their power to force us [the government] to open a branch office in the Jewish part of the town. This would be most inconvenient, and would be interpreted by the Arabs as the first step towards "partition" in the city. I shall certainly resist this pressure, unless it is demonstrated beyond a doubt that attendance of the Jews at the present office is definitely dangerous.[12]

On 29 December an attack targeted the Jewish staff while they were passing through Jaffa Road to reach the town hall, located at the old post-office building opposite to Barclays bank.[13] As a result, the Commission decided to establish a Jewish branch of

the municipality in a building located in Mahneh Yihuda.[14] For the next few months, "the Arab employees, abandoned by their colleagues, anticipate[d] being blown up by the Jews".[15]

The municipal order and workforce were severely affected by the security situation even before the termination of the Mandate in mid-May. By the beginning of April, at least three municipal employees were killed in violent events while on duty, and the Commission allocated fifty Palestinian pounds as compensation for their dependents.[16] On the administrative level, some Palestinian employees had to take over the tasks of their Jewish colleagues. For instance, Salah al-Din Jarallah, who was an assistant to the head of clerks in the municipality, stated that he had to cover the position of the Jewish head of clerks, Ibrahim Franko.[17]

Starting mid-April 1948 the Commission's members and all other British municipal employees began to leave Palestine. The municipal affairs of the Palestinians and the Jewish community had to be transferred to the auspices of their leadership. In light of the High Arab Executive's rejection to cooperate with the Commission, the deputy of the Commission J. A. Hilton appointed Anton Safieh to lead the Arab municipal affairs until a new municipal order arose. Similarly, Hilton asked Daniel Auster to lead the Jewish municipal affairs.[18]

The Municipality as a Refugee-Institution

Upon the occupation of the western neighborhoods of Jerusalem in May 1948, the city lost essential institutions, including "the post office and telephone exchange, all hospitals, the bus terminal, sanitation equipment, and the wholesale vegetable market,"[19] as the administrative center was concentrated in these neighborhoods. The institutional crisis in Jerusalem was aggravated by thousands of refugees who sought shelter in the city during the months of massacres and displacement in Jerusalem and the surrounding villages.[20] Most prominent was the loss of the municipality town hall and resources, including money, records, and vehicles. As was articulated in the report in *al-Difaʿ*, the fate of the municipality was not any better than others who lost their homes. Below we consider the consequences of the municipality's losses and analyses the attempts to revive the city's essential services.

On 13 May 1948, J. A. Hilton, the deputy of the Commission attended the town hall for the last time. The following day, Palestinian employees, including Safieh and Jarallah, encountered difficulties in reaching the town hall given the heavy fighting in the area[21] and they would never be able to resume their work in that building. Despite the great loss Safieh formed with other employees a temporary municipal council [hereafter: the municipal council].[22] The council included Saba Saʿid as the municipality's advocate, Yusif Budiri as the head of the engineering department, Mufid Nashashibi as the head of the health department, Jamil Ahmad Nasir as the head of the water department, Mahmoud al-Shuʿaybi as the head of the inspection department, Mohammad Totah as the head of the finance department, and Salah al-Din Jarallah as the head of clerks.[23]

These municipality employees worked to respond to urgent challenges, such as preventing epidemics and ensuring public order, while their work took place under conditions of continuous fighting rendering the future ambiguous and uncertain.[24] The municipal council described the situation as a "crisis" and announced that "the country is in a state of chaos" and that it was not possible to "influence anyone or to achieve justice for anyone."[25] The municipal council was unsure how to approach the situation from an administrative point of view and considered the situation to be "a change of the administration in Palestine."[26]

Throughout the first weeks following the loss of the town hall, the municipal council had to operate from different locations. Safieh described in an internal report in 1958 how "we [the employees] sought *refuge* inside the walls together with the residents who remained' and then "we took *refuge* in two rooms of The Islamic Orphans House" [emphasis added].[27] Jarallah's testimony further explains the journey as he detailed the several buildings in which the municipality sought refuge "first in al-Frier school for four or five days and then in The Islamic Orphans House for a month or two, from there we moved to Murkus estate, known as the Citadel Hotel and we stayed there for about a month."[28] Safieh reported that the Municipality moved to the Citadel Hotel when the first Truce was announced, and before it ended they moved to the building of the Greek hospital.[29]

The displacement of the municipality and its workforce generated a shared fate between the institution and the public given the desperate need for essential services. Similar to the public who sought to survive the crisis by turning to the city's material and social infrastructure – even if it was largely in ruins – the Municipality sought the assistance of other local institutions that survived the war to establish temporary sites of authority.

Moreover, the municipality shared with other refugees not only the loss of homes and buildings but also of deeds and documents. In mid-May 1948, some employees managed to save maps, documents including property tax registrations, vehicles, and fuel just before the fall of the town hall.[30] Yet, they were not able to get hold of one particular check which was the most crucial for the functioning of the municipality. Upon the termination of the Mandate about sixty thousand Palestinian pounds remained as a surplus fund in the Jerusalem Municipality's Barclays bank account. The Mandate government decided to divide the amount between the anticipated Palestinian and Jewish municipal councils in Jerusalem. Accordingly, two checks were issued[31] and handed to Safieh and Auster in their capacity as the leaders of post-Mandate municipal councils. Safieh signed the check and kept it as was normal procedure in the metal safe of the municipality. On 30 June 1948 Safieh crossed under the auspices of the Truce Commission to examine the town hall hoping to retrieve the check,[32] but the safe could not be found and the traces of the check were lost. Safieh believed that the Israelis took over the safe when they occupied the town hall, which included in addition to the check, "about 100 pounds and a number of promissory notes from tenants of municipality property."[33]

In June 1948 Safieh contacted the British Colonial Office and the Department of Clearance of the British government in Cyprus, seeking their assistance to retain the

check and release the money. In August 1948 he met with United Nations mediator in Palestine Count Folk Bernadotte[34] – just before Bernadotte was assassinated by *Lehi,* the Zionist militia. Bernadotte expressed his sympathy with Safieh but explained that his role was limited to political affairs.[35] In the same month Safieh travelled to Cyprus to meet with Barclays bank officials, but he fell ill while he was there and was unable to resume his role as the head of the municipal council until December 1948.[36]

During these months of hunting for the lost check, the municipal council sought to overcome its empty treasury – it had only 15 pounds in August 1948![37]– through other channels, including collecting taxes from monasteries and pleading with the Jordanian central government for financial support. However, as time passed the council became hopeless, realizing they were unlikely to obtain immediate support from the government despite the "misery and destitution"[38] that prevailed. Therefore, the check represented a deed for a future, without which neither the municipality nor the city could revive. This sentiment was repeatedly expressed during municipality meetings, referring to the check as the only thing that could save the municipality from its severe financial crisis.

For the next six years Palestinian, Jordanian, and British officials would attempt to obtain the check and release the money from Barclays bank. The Israel Exchange Controller declared that it "would not in any case release the funds in question" to the Arab Municipality. In 1949, following instructions from the Israeli government, Barclays bank released the money to the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem.[39] In 1952 the Arab Municipality sued Barclays bank in the Jerusalem Magistrate Court (in Arab Jerusalem), won the case in 1954 and finally received its share of the Mandate Municipality treasury, a total of 27,500 Palestinian pounds.[40]

Unemployed Municipality

One of the direct consequences of the municipality's financial crisis was its inability to pay the salaries of its workforce. Municipality workers did not consider that their employment was officially terminated after the termination of the Mandate. Consequently, many of them continued to attend the municipality's provisional seats in order to prove their availability for employment even when no work or money was available, since they worried that nonattendance would lead to their dismissal.[41]

In August 1948, only 130 to 150 Palestinian technical and administrative municipal employees – of the total number of 300 to 350 – were active.[42] After two months of working without being paid, some employees protested and performed disorderly acts [s*haghab*]. Therefore the municipal council met with their representative and pointed out that the employees who were paid until the end of May 1948[43] were asked to refrain from coming to work, as the municipality had no money to pay them. It further clarified to them that given the "change of administration" in Palestine, salaries would not be paid until the new government had determined a salary scale and secured the necessary financial resources.[44]

Following the employees' threats of a strike, the council met in mid-August 1948 with the employees' representative and explained the hardship of the municipality and the challenges of health hazards that city was facing.[45] Although the employees initially expressed their understanding and agreed to cooperate with the municipality and to receive only a partial payment, they announced a strike on 20 August which they suspended on 25 August when they learned about Safieh's travel arrangements to Cyprus to release the money from Barclays bank. Upon his return without success to obtain the money, the desperate employees resumed their threats to strike.[46]

During this period the municipal council members played the role of mediator between the central government and the employees. The council members demonstrated an understanding attitude towards the employees, that could be explained as derived from a sense of bureaucratic solidarity and communal responsibility towards the destroyed city. Amidst the workforce crisis, Safieh met with the Administrative Committee of the Transjordan government who "paid no attention at all to the problem of the municipality and was not even willing to discuss it." Nevertheless, Safieh insisted to speak in front of the Administrative Committee and described the situation of the municipality while emphasizing the strike of the employees.[47]

The zenith of the workforce crisis was when the Jerusalem military commander's only solution to offer to the municipality was to dismiss most of the employees. Safieh who represented the municipal council in the talks with the military commander refused such a solution, and so did the council members once he reported back to them on 21 August 1948. The following day the council met after the military commander had met Safieh again and ordered him to dismiss employees and prepare a brief budget proposal accordingly.

At that note, the council members agreed that any decision to dismiss employees depended on the "acceptance of the employees who are the operating hand of the municipality and if they refuse then there is no need to prepare neither a brief nor a detailed budget." The employees' representative was called at once and was briefed on the crisis, which the council members described as a quandary [*wurṭa*], yet "the public good which demands that we sacrifice everything, is on the top of all."[48]

The representative went back immediately to consult with the employees, who agreed to conditional dismissal of some of their number until the situation changed, so long as: their late salaries for June, July and August would be paid, that they would not be considered permanently dismissed, and their accumulated rights would be guaranteed. Accordingly, the municipal council prepared a brief budget to hand to the military commander.[49] The negotiations over this issue did not stop there and after two months of correspondence with the central government, it was agreed in October 1948 to grant the municipality a loan of five thousand pounds to secure some basic salaries.[50]

The workforce crisis only emphasized to what extent the check was essential for the municipality during that crucial phase. Above all, its loss limited the municipality's capacity to provide services and to develop the ruined city, but it also affected its political authority and status and made it fully dependent on the "new administration," which

was not yet aware of or attentive to its needs and priorities. Despite this, the municipal council, which was equipped with local knowledge and bureaucratic experience, alternated between material and legal continuities and interruptions to negotiate its terms through the crisis.

Law, Order and the "Public Good"

Alongside its attempts to retain administrative order, the municipality was also busy leading the city throughout these chaotic months as it became crowded with deprived refugees, in addition to a large impoverished population of native residents following the war. In late May and early June 1948, the municipality was preoccupied with issues of public health and hygiene to prevent spread of diseases and epidemics.

Among its first tasks was the preparation of some workers' groups to spread DDT all over the city after a few cases of typhoid were diagnosed in refugee houses, while other groups were prepared for the clearance of water wells by spreading lime in the city's alleys.[51] Other health hazards were caused by the loss of crucial infrastructure and public spaces, like the loss of the slaughterhouse in Shu'fat after it became a dangerous area, forcing butchers to slaughter their cattle in their shops inside the Old City. Consequently, the municipal council established an alternative slaughterhouse in Wadi al-Joz, and by 16 June 1948 at least eight butchers were fined for failing to use the new slaughterhouse.[52]

Improvised usage of the city's public spaces were common during that period, as we can learn from Safieh's call to his "fellow citizens" on 9 June 1948,[53] in which he pleaded with the general public as well as particular sectors to keep the city clean and in order. In an earlier call that was broadcast on *al-Rawda* radio, he addressed street vegetable vendors to resume selling their goods in the bazaar market that the municipality opened on 7 June 1948.[54]

Disorder seemed to be common not only in public spaces among merchants and manual workers, but also among individuals in private places:

> As for the residents, I hope you keep your houses clean and do not throw garbage in the streets, but rather put it in tightly-closed containers until it is gathered by the municipality workers and do not drop dirty water in the streets so that you prevent flies from spreading in front of your houses bringing with them different kinds of fatal bacteria. As for urination in the streets, it has very bad effects on all of us and therefore I ask you to avoid doing it and each one of you should help the municipality workers to do their job appropriately.[55]

Lack of law enforcement and communal compliance with urban regulations constituted a challenge for the municipality, but to what extent did it have any executive force to implement the law? In its meeting on 2 July 1948, the council concluded that it

would plead with the military commander to formally recognize it as a national charity institution "in order to continue to meet its obligations and apply Municipality Ordinance and by-laws in Jerusalem."[56]

Beyond the importance of the rule of law, the municipality was also seeking to collect some revenue through taxes and municipal licenses to overcome its financial crisis. As early as 13 June 1948, the municipality turned to merchants, manual workers and handicraft workshops' owners and ordered them to renew their expired licenses immediately, and to start paying their taxes accordingly, stating that its employees had started collecting taxes and lack of cooperation would be followed by legal steps.[57]

On 31 July 1948 the municipal council dedicated a meeting to discuss the question of urban licensing procedures. The meeting was attended by the municipal council members, the head of inspectors and representatives of the health division and the police. Safieh retrieved the Mandate municipality's procedures for issuing licenses and collecting taxes, and the attendees assessed the situation on the ground concerning law enforcement.[58]

New bars and cafes, including mixed (male and female) cafes, opened during the few months after the war; the police representative indicated that some of these became targets for thieves. It was therefore decided to refrain from issuing licenses to new bars or cafes, especially those located outside the walls, without referring to the police first. New shops like handicrafts and manual workshops also worked without licenses during this period. But given the public's degraded economic situation, Safieh suggested that no strict policy would be enforced in issuing licenses to these workshops, as long as health rules were followed. Yet the council and the police decided to cooperate to ensure that unlicensed workshops would be fined and closed.[59] The municipality also decided not to intervene in the work of the female farmers [*fallahat*], as long as they were away from main streets. Interestingly, these *fallahat* were distinguished from vendors (mainly male), as the municipality decided to hold a separate meeting to discuss their situation in detail.[60]

To what extent did vendors, merchants, butchers, *fallahat*, and cafe and bar owners comply with municipal regulation of health, safety, licensing, and tax payment? The dearth of sources available make it difficult to understand, especially since the local press was temporarily suspended[61] during these months. Municipal disorder was not unusual to the municipality due to different political and administrative circumstances under the Mandate.[62] Yet given the drastic changes in the city's life after mid-May 1948, citizens' cooperation with the local municipal council becomes a crucial entry point to learn about the city's local political and social dynamics.

Retrieving Jerusalem in 1948

Throughout the six months following the destruction of Jerusalem in May 1948, residents, refugees, administrators, butchers, cafe owners, municipal employees, vendors, and others had to find their way despite the ruins, trauma, and uncertain future. To retrieve the various ways in which this locality, including individuals, economic sectors, and institutions responded to the crisis – with order and disorder, improvisation and

regulation, and continuities and interruptions – it is necessary to reinsert it within the multiple narratives of Palestinian life after al-Nakba. Beyond the historical value of narration, retrieving Jerusalem as a locality in crisis, framing the municipal institution as a refugee, and describing the urban crises in detail, this account has embarked on the uneasy task of constructing a sociological and political context for the city that emerged between 1948 and 1967.

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Endnotes

1   *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

2   Abdallah al-Tal, *Karithat Filistin* [*The Catastrophe of Palestine]* (Cairo: n.p., 1959), 367.

3   'Arif al-'Arif, *Al-Mufassal fi-Tarikh al-Quds* [A *History of Jerusalem: Detailed Account of the Holy City*] *(*Jerusalem: al-Andalus Library, 1999), 478. Vincent Lemier argues that the "first documentary clues' indicated that the municipality was established in 1866-67." See *Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the Age of Possibilities,* trans. Catherine Tihanyi and Lys Ann Weiss (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2017), 105.

4   *Report of the Palestine Royal Commission* [Peel Commission] (Cmd. 5479. London: HMSO, 1937), 354.

5   *A Survey of Palestine*, Volume II, 933–938; Israel State Archive, P/15/201: Anton and Hanna Atallah – Meeting report of the Arab Municipal Council's members, 28 September 1944.

6   *A Survey of Palestine*, Volume II, 935–937.

7   Statement by Jerusalem District Commissioner to Jerusalem Municipal Councillors, 11 July 1945, in *Local Government in Palestine, Memorandum Submitted to the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine on behalf of the Vaad Leumi General Council of the Jewish Community of Palestine* (Jerusalem: Haoman Press, 1947), 28–29. *A Survey of Palestine*, Volume II, 937 stated that six British officials were appointed. See also *Report by William Fitzgerald on the local administration of Jerusalem* (*Palestine Gazette*, no. 1541, 1946).

8   Israel State Archive: Microfilm of Jerusalem municipal council protocols (1940–48), 6 April 1948, and Graves Richard Massie *Experiment in Anarchy* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1949), 170.

9   Israel State Archive, P/61/990: Evading paying municipal dues.

10 Israel State Archive, P/61/990: Evading paying municipal dues. Graves expected this rejection as he stated in his memoir: "the Jews will probably be prepared to co-operate, but I fear that the Arabs may think that co-operating with me and the Commission is equivalent to co-operating with the Jews." See Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, 154.

11 Israel State Archive: Microfilm of Jerusalem municipal council protocols (1940–48), 6 April 1948.

12 Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, 106.

13 Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, 115–116.

14 Municipal employee Salah al-Din Jarallah stated, however, that one of the Jewish staff

refrained from attending the town hall starting March 1948. See Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/7: The Municipality case against Barclays bank.

15 Graves, *Experiment in Anarchy*, 124.

16 Israel State Archive: Jerusalem municipal council protocols, 6 April 1948.

17 Jarallah gave a detailed description of the events in his testimony on 11 January 1954 in the legal case 262/52 Jerusalem Municipality vs. Barclays Bank in Jerusalem Magistrate Court, Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/7.

18 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

19 Abdallah Schleifer, *The Fall of Jerusalem* (Nottingham: The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation, 1972), 43.

20 Schleifer, *The Fall of Jerusalem*; Salim Tamari, "The City and its Rural Hinterland," in *Jerusalem 1948 – The Arab neighbourhoods and their fate in the war*, ed. Salim Tamari (US: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1999), 77–80.

21 Jarallah testimony, JMA 965/7 and *Al-Difa'*.

22 The Jordanian military commander Ahmad Hilmi Pasha approved Safieh's appointment as a head of the Arab municipal council. JMA 965/8: The Municipality's negotiation to release its money from Barclays bank.

23 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

24 Krystal Nathan, "The Fall of the New City," in *Jerusalem 1948: The Arab neighbourhoods and their fate in the war*, ed. Salim Tamari (US: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1999), 84-141; Report of the UN Truce Commission in Jerusalem (16 August 1948), online at uniteapps.un.org/dpa/dpr/unispal.nsf/eed216 406b50bf6485256ce10072f637/33b977861 eec51f985256a5c0051bf6f?OpenDocument (accessed 3 November 2018).

25 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 16 August 1948.

26 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, meeting on 5 July 1948.

27 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 944/24: Speeches, lectures and talks.

28 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/7.

29 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

30 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950. Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 944/24.

31 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/8: The municipality's negotiation to release

its money from Barclays bank; British National Archives, FO 371/82216: Jerusalem Municipality Funds. Code EE file 1152 and *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

32 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/8.

33 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950. Other accounts suggest that the safe was destroyed and buried under rubble when the town hall was partially damaged, see Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/8.

34 Bernadotte was the United Nations mediator in Palestine, appointed in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 186 of 14 May 1948.

35 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 11 August 1948.

36 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/8 and *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950. It is beyond the scope of this article to detail the unending efforts of Safieh and other Palestinian and Jordanian officials to release the money.

37 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 12 August 1948.

38 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 12 August 1948.

39 British National Archives, FO 371/82216.

40 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 965/7.

41 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 5 July 1948.

42 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 22 August 1948.

43 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 5 July 1948. Before the termination of the Mandate, the government paid a group of workers advanced salaries until May 1948 and another group until June 1948 – JMA 936/8, municipal meeting on 7 August 1956.

44 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 5 July 1948.

45 JMA 936/1, municipal meeting on 12 August 1948.

46 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

47 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 21 August 1948.

48 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 22 August 1948.

49 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 22 August 1948.

50 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

51 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950.

52 *Al-Difa'*, 26 December 1950. Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 945/8: Jerusalem Municipality, general directions to the city's residents.

53 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 945/8.

54 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 945/8.

55 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 945/8.

56 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 2 July 1948.

57 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 945/8.

58 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 31 July 1948.

59 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 31 July 1948

60 Jerusalem Municipality Archive, 936/1, municipal meeting on 31 July 1948.

61 Schleifer, *The Fall of Jerusalem*, 43. *Filistin*, 4 February 1949.

62 Israel State Archive, P/61/990.

Self-Portrait of a Nation

The Arab Exhibition in Mandate Jerusalem, 1931–34

Nadi Abusaada

Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem is an annual award launched in 2017 to commemorate the memory and work of Ibrahim Dakkak (1929– 2016), former chairman of the Advisory Board.

On 1 July 1933, a large crowd gathered outside the impressive arched entrance of the Palace Hotel building in Jerusalem. The crowd had arrived from various parts of Palestine and the Arab world with the purpose of attending the inauguration of the First Arab Exhibition in Palestine. The exhibition showcased the agricultural and industrial advancements taking place in the Arab world and displayed products manufactured across the region. It was the first of two Arab exhibitions organized in Mandate Jerusalem; the second opened its doors the following April (figure 1).

The two Jerusalem exhibitions were held during a critical political period, as several Arab countries were at the height of their struggle against British and French colonial rule. In Palestine the timing was all the more acute. Executed between the two major Palestinian revolts of 1929 and 1936, the exhibitions were held at a time of direct and violent Arab confrontation with the Zionists and the British, but also at a formative moment when Palestinians were articulating their national identity and making real attempts to establish national institutions.[1]

The two Jerusalem exhibitions were events of profound importance for both Palestine and the Arab region. As this article will show, the exhibitions were intended to demonstrate that Arab countries were witnessing remarkable innovations in the industrial and agricultural sectors despite, and not because of, European colonization. Additionally, the pan-Arab nature of the exhibitions facilitated an exceptional opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and expertise among the Arab countries in the face of their geopolitical division following the Great War.

Figure 1. Inauguration of the Second Arab Exhibition in Jerusalem, 1934. Source: Sa'id Husayni Collection, the Palestinian Museum.

Despite their importance, the Jerusalem exhibitions remain absent from the historical literature on the 1930s in Palestine and the Arab world. This is not surprising, given the fragmented nature of the historical materials on Arab society in the Mandate period more generally and the two exhibitions in particular. Hence, this paper is based on a disjointed collection of textual and visual remains, including personal memoirs, Arabic newspaper archives, two exhibition handbooks, and photographs, with the aim of piecing them together to reconstruct a coherent history of the Arab exhibitions in Jerusalem.

Focusing on the First Arab Exhibition of 1933, this paper traces: first, the original conception of the idea of an Arab exhibition and the historical and political context in which it emerged; second, the progression of the exhibition to its planning phase and the obstacles its organizers faced; and third, the process of constructing an image of the Arab exhibition as a project of national significance through discursive and visual representations, and the implications of this image. Crucially, while acknowledging the primacy of the colonial context in which the two exhibitions were envisioned, planned and realized, this essay grants special attention to the inner dynamics of Palestinian and Arab society and their influence on these processes.

Conceiving the Exhibition

By the 1930s, multinational industrial and agricultural exhibitions were not a new phenomenon globally, regionally, or even for Palestine. The story of multinational industrial and agricultural exhibitions of this kind originates in nineteenth century

Europe, parallel to the transformations of the economic and political world order that accompanied competitive industrialization and the rise of modern nation states. The Great Exhibition of 1851 in London, often labeled as the "first world's fair," took these exhibitions to a new level and claimed to represent the works of industry of all nations.[2] Such exhibitions served, in the words of Eric Hobsbawm, as "giant rituals of self-congratulation" and as platforms for competing European nations to display their industrial superiority and wealth acquired through colonial possessions.[3]

The colonies were not absent from the universal and multinational exhibitions held in European capitals. The exhibitions often included a "colonies section" where pavilions were built to represent the different colonies and their cultures. "The placement of pavilions," as Zeynep Çelik has shown, "revealed the world order as mapped by Western powers."[4] Inside, the colonies and their cultures were represented as inferior and abstracted through neat and consumable objects that fitted this idea. The piecemeal representation of the colonies at these exhibitions played an important role in disseminating the political agendas of British and French "mission civilisatrice" to a European public.

As with the other colonies, Palestine received its share of representation in universal and colonial exhibitions in the Mandate period. Palestine pavilions were constructed in several exhibitions in the 1920s and 1930s, including the 1924 British Empire Exhibition, the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition, and the 1939 New York World's Fair. In these exhibitions, representations of Palestine were particularly distinct from those of the other colonies. This was, in part, due to the religious symbolism associated with Palestine as the biblical Holy Land.[5] However, it was mainly because these pavilions did not serve British interests alone but were usually based on a British-Zionist partnership.

Juxtaposing the biblical historicity of the Holy Land (and its native population) along with, and against, the modern agricultural and industrial "progress" of the Zionist movement became a standard representation of Palestine in the universal exhibitions of the 1920s and 1930s.[6] Both Palestine pavilions at the 1924 British Empire Exhibition and the 1931 Paris Colonial Exposition reflected this contrast. The two pavilions, whose exteriors were similarly designed in Arab-style domed structures with arched windows and entrances, were intended to represent "characteristic" native Arab buildings.[7] Meanwhile, their interiors included objects that highlighted modern Jewish developments in Palestine including photographs of Jewish colonies and factories and architectural models of the Rockefeller Museum and the Rutenberg power stations.[8]

The idea for the establishment of an Arab exhibition in Palestine was not disconnected from the legacy of universal and colonial exhibitions. In 1931, 'Issa al-'Issa, a leading Palestinian journalist and co-founder of *Filastin* daily newspaper, visited the Paris Colonial Exposition. Inspired by the exhibition's grandiose and the breadth of the showcased objects, "it was there," al-'Issa records in his memoirs, "that [he] began to articulate the idea of holding an Arab exhibition in Palestine."[9]

Upon his return from Paris, in October 1931, al-'Issa mentioned his idea of holding an exhibition of Arab products in an article in *Filastin* for the first time.[10] But it was after al-'Issa was invited to attend the 1932 Iraqi Agricultural and Industrial Exhibition
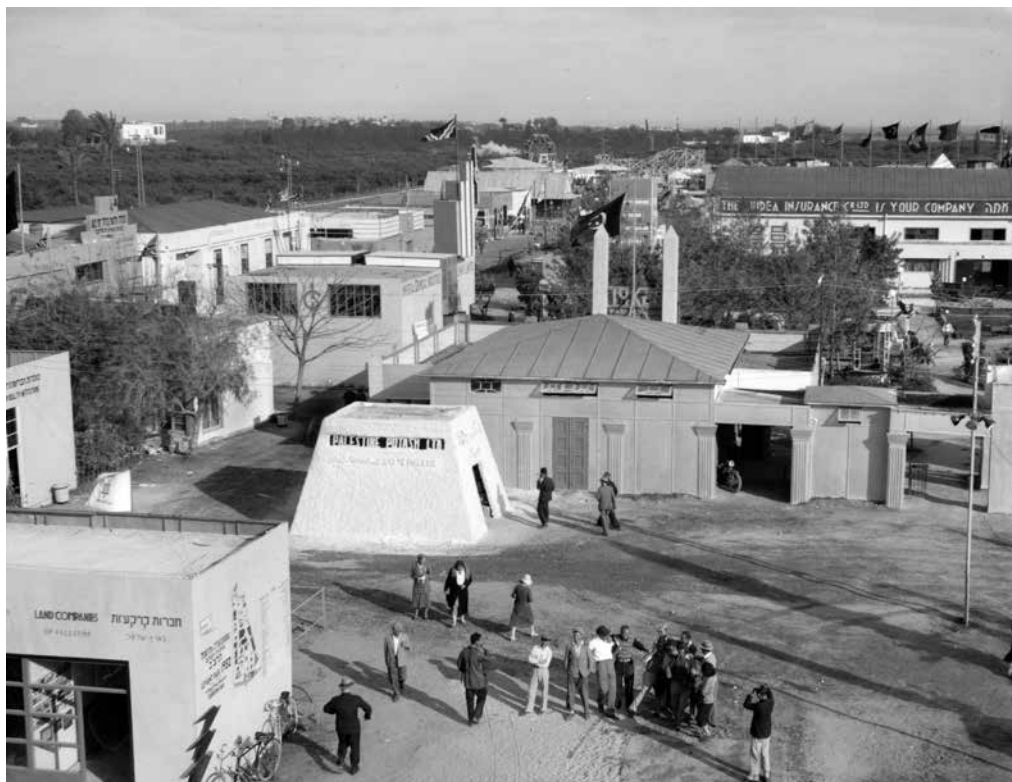
Figure 2. "The Levant Fair in Tel Aviv, 1932," G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/matpc.15189 (accessed 13 May 2019).

in Baghdad that he began pushing for his idea more systematically. In Baghdad, al-ʿIssa managed to meet with King Faysal I and members of the Baghdad Chamber of Commerce with whom he shared his idea for an Arab exhibition in Palestine.[11] The meeting left al-ʿIssa more optimistic regarding the exhibition project and it did not take him long to begin advocating for his idea in Palestinian circles.

The Paris and Baghdad exhibitions may have inspired al-Issa in his original idea of the Arab Exhibition, but equally important to him was the political atmosphere of Palestine during the 1930s. A few kilometres away from al-ʿIssa's residence in Jaffa, in Tel Aviv, the Zionists were in the process of organizing the 1932 Levant Fair (figure 2). This was not the first agro-industrial exhibition to be held by the Zionists in their newly-built city. It was preceded by a series of exhibitions and fairs in 1925, 1926, and 1929. However, the 1932 exhibition was arguably the most ambitious and regionally-oriented, as its name "The Levant Fair" explicitly indicates.[12]

By the time plans for the Levant Fair were announced, Arab-Zionist antagonism in Palestine had escalated to a new level. This antagonism, which had originated with the beginning of Zionist colonial settlement in Palestine in the late nineteenth century, had been exacerbated in the British endorsement of the "establishment of a Jewish national

home" in its Mandate for Palestine. In the 1920s, clashes between Arabs, Zionists, and the British in major Palestinian cities became commonplace, and by 1929 these tensions crystallized into the nation-wide Buraq revolt.

While Palestine remained a unified geopolitical territory for the entirety of the Mandate period, in social and economic terms it was slowly turning into two separate entities: Arab and Jewish. These two entities were not equal. British policies disadvantaged the Arab population in both economic and political terms, and allowed Zionists to establish what was practically a 'state within a state' with their own military organization, and political, social, and financial institutions independent from the British administration and the country's Arab majority.[13] Naturally, these discrepancies led to major antagonism between the Arab and Jewish populations in Palestine.

Throughout the 1920s, calls for boycott became an effective strategy for the different Zionist parties and for the Arab Executive Committee (AEC), the supreme executive body for Arabs in Mandate Palestine. With the events of 1929, whatever was left of Arab-Jewish intercommunal trade in Palestine had gradually faded. Thus, in 1932, when al-Issa began advocating for the Arab exhibition in *Filastin*, he expectedly framed his exhibition in contrast with the Levant Fair in Tel Aviv and in line with the AEC's calls for boycotting Jewish products and supporting national industry.[14]

But while al-Issa and those who echoed his idea presented the Arab exhibition as an adversary to the Levant Fair, this was hardly the only or main reason why they thought the exhibition was necessary. Equally significant, they considered the exhibition as a platform to develop the regional connection between Arab nations that had disintegrated in the Great War. "An undertaking of this kind," an article in *Filastin* postulated, "would encourage national production and establish a strong economic bond between Arab nations."[15] The establishment of an "economic bond" was intended to offer a new way of upkeeping inter-Arab relations. "One exhibition," the article added, "is capable of achieving over a few days what politics have failed to deliver over years."[16]

Within weeks of publishing these initial articles, al-'Issa's idea of establishing an Arab exhibition in Palestine became more widespread. Other Arabic-newspapers in Palestine and the Arab world echoed their support for an Arab exhibition. An adamant supporter from the outset was the Jerusalem-issued *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* newspaper, closely affiliated with the Supreme Muslim Council (SMC) led by Hajj Amin Husayni.[17] Within only a few months, the conversations regarding the Arab exhibition began to shift from the realm of ideas into organized action.

Planning the Exhibition

With all the enthusiasm that the idea for an Arab exhibition in Palestine had generated, al-Issa realized that an organizing committee had to be formed while the momentum for its support was still high. A temporary organizing committee for the Arab exhibition led by al-Issa was formed in May 1932. In its first two meetings, the committee came up with the initial, but primary, decisions regarding the exhibition's planning process.

These decisions reflected much of the vision for the Arab exhibition and clarified the questions regarding its structure, financing, location, and timeline to the public. On 27 May 1932, a list of these initial decisions was published in *Filastin*:

> First; the exhibition is held by a shareholding corporation officially registered with the government; second, this corporation's initial capital is 5,000 pounds divided into 5,000 shares; third, the exhibition is held in Jaffa; fourth, the exhibition is held on 1 May; fifth, those who contribute with 50 shares are considered founding members; finally, the dividends are distributed as follows: 50% to shareholders and 50% equally distributed between the Arab Executive Committee, the Arab National Fund, sport groups, scout groups, and the Youth Congress Executive Committee.[18]

This organizational structure for the Arab exhibition, emanating from these decisions, was not coincidental. It was one made possible, if not necessary, by transformations in the Palestinian political and economic landscape in the late 1920s and early 1930s. As recent works have shown, this period was marked by the rise of new modes of "mass politics" that challenged the monopolization of elite politicians and the politic of notables.[19] Nonetheless, as Sherene Seikaly asserts, this should not lead to the assumption that elites themselves were unchanging.[20] Instead, Seikaly explains through her study of *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya* (the Arab Economic Journal), in the mid-1930s, a new class of commercial and manufacturing elites who began to envision nation-building in distinct terms than those of the landowning notables, that is, through the lenses of capitalist progress and development.[21]

The corporate terms in which the Arab exhibition was formulated in the early 1930s, shows this process in its initial articulations before *al-Iqtisadiyyat* (1935–37) was published. The exhibition was to be registered as a private shareholding limited company and its shares were to be collected from private money. Nonetheless, the organizers also understood that balancing the exhibition's public and private components was necessary given the project's national outlook. Splitting the dividends equally between private shareholders and incumbent national committees and organizations can be read as an explicit strive for this balance.

On 14 June, the Arab exhibition was officially registered as a private corporation, and 2000 of its shares were already bought.[22] As the original committee was no longer sufficient to lead it, a temporary Board of Directors of eight individuals had to be elected by the founding members. The eight successful candidates were 'Issa al-'Issa, Hamdi Nabulsi, Ahmad Hilmi Pasha, Shukri al-Taji, Hasan Arafeh, 'Aziz Miqati, Hajj Taher Qarman and Admon Rock. This temporary Board of Directors was set to serve the company until all the shares were sold and a permanent Board was elected. In their first meeting, the Board appointed Hilmi Pasha as its president, Nabulsi as its vice president, al-'Issa as managing director, and Arafeh as treasurer.

It is significant that these were the men to lead the Arab Exhibition Company. These men belonged, for the most part, not to the traditional urban notable elite but to the new

Palestinian class of corporate elites. In the late 1920s and 1930s, these individuals were among the main drivers of the process of change in Arab economic thinking in Palestine. The Arab exhibition was not external to or merely driven by this process. It was one of the main initial platforms in which these new figures began to advocate for their vision of the nation. Hilmi Pasha, the elected president of the Arab Exhibition Company, was arguably the country's leading figure in this domain. At the time of his election, he served as the general manager of the Arab Bank. Founded by 'Abd al-Hamid Shuman in 1930, the Arab Bank was the first private sector financial institution in Palestine and the Arab world. As its general manager, Hilmi Pasha ensured the Arab Bank's support for the exhibition in financial terms, purchasing 100 shares, but also in providing the technical knowledge and expertise for the registration and financial operation of the Arab Exhibition Company.

After the Arab Exhibition Company was officially registered, the board realized that they had little time left to plan their project. In early 1933, the permanent board appointed Nabih al-'Azmah, a prominent Syrian nationalist and member of the Syrian nationalist party *Hizb al-Istiqlal al-'Arabi*, as the exhibition's director. At the time of his appointment, al-'Azmah had already been in Palestine for a few years, which he spent working with the short-lived World Islamic Congress organized by the Supreme Muslim Council, before helping establish the first political party in Palestine, the Arab nationalist *Hizb al-Istiqlal*, which challenged the traditional political elite and the SMC.[23]

Al-'Azmah was close to Hilmi Pasha, and it was the latter who facilitated the issuance of his permit to remain in the country in 1931.[24] Hilmi Pasha and the board saw al-'Azmah as the perfect man for leading the Arab exhibition, given his long engagement with political organizing and his wide connections across the region. But the task ahead was difficult even for someone like al-'Azmah. By the time al-'Azmah was appointed, only three months were left for executing the exhibition, and the organizers were facing a series of interrelated logistical, political, and financial challenges.

Among the main conflictual issues in planning the exhibition was deciding upon its location and venue. Since the outset, al-'Issa and the temporary committee envisioned that the exhibition would take place in Jaffa, in proximity to the site of the Levant Fair.[25] They even had a specific site in mind, al-Bassa, a vacant large property situated between the orchards outside the Old City. In July, Arab engineers were hired to prepare plans for the site, and a committee of representatives was selected to negotiate with the municipality, the Town Planning Commission, and the government to approve the plans.[26] The government rejected the plans, which would have involved municipal financial support to the exhibition.[27] Later, the organizers decided to relocate the exhibition to Jerusalem, and they chose the Palace Hotel, built by the SMC a few years earlier, as its most fitting venue.

The somewhat abrupt decision to relocate the exhibition to Jerusalem and to the Palace Hotel in particular did not pass without controversy. Some, especially the Jerusalem-based newspaper *Mir'at al-Sharq* which had been advocating to host the exhibition in Jerusalem for months, celebrated the decision.[28] Meanwhile, the Jaffa-based newspaper *al-Sirat* lamented the decision and insisted that neither the city nor the

venue were appropriate: "Jerusalem," an article in *al-Sirat* maintained, "suffers from a water shortage and is distant from industrial and commercial activity."[29] "The Palace Hotel, "it added, "was unfit for the exhibition [. . .] which demands a spacious open-air site where buildings and shops can be constructed."[30] But while *al-Sirat*'s critique was framed in logistical terms, it is not unlikely that it also stemmed from its political stance which opposed the SMC, and, therefore, saw in hosting the exhibition at the SMC's headquarters a form of political legitimation for the SMC.

The other main constraint that the exhibition faced was a financial one. With the government's rejection of allocating any public or municipal funds to the project, which it justified by the fact that the exhibition excluded Palestine's Jewish population, the organizers had to rely heavily on private shareholders. The organizers struggled to collect sufficient funds. In an interview with *Filastin*, al-'Azmah explained that "some did not support the project falsely thinking that it was a commercial or private enterprise."[31] Meanwhile, many of the shareholders ended up not paying their dues.[32] By the end of the sale period, 3,771 shares were subscribed but only 1,994 pounds were received – posing a serious hurdle for organizing the exhibition.[33]

Representing the Exhibition

Despite the financial deficit and the challenges that the organizers were facing, they realized that the stakes of executing the exhibition with a minimal budget were less drastic than in not executing it at all. These stakes were not based on a fear of consequential financial losses alone. They derived, for the most part, from what the Arab exhibition stood for in both material and symbolic terms. "Let the Palestinians remember," a *Filastin* article lamented as shareholders were not paying their dues, "that the idea of the exhibition has become strongly connected to maintaining their national dignity."[34]

Parallel to the exhibition's planning and execution, the organizers were equally involved in framing the exhibition to the general public. Local and regional newspapers played an instrumental role in this process. In Palestine, besides reporting on the decisions in board meetings, several articles were published especially in *Filastin* but also in *al-'Arab, al-Carmel, Mir'at al-Sharq, al-Sirat*, and *al-Jami'a al-'Arabiyya* newspapers that endorsed the Arab exhibition as a precursor to the larger projects of Arab *wihda* (unity), *istiqlal* (independence), and *nahda iqtisadiya* (economic renaissance).

The concepts of *wihda, istiqlal*, and *nahda* were not unfamiliar in Palestinian national discourse by the time they were utilized to advocate for the Arab exhibition. But in the 1930s, they had begun to ascribe new political meanings and associations: *wihda* became strongly associated with Arab nationalist ideology of King Faysal I and his government; *istiqlal* became a reference to the newly-established Istiqlal Party which adopted an Arab nationalist sentiment and considered Palestine part of Greater Syria; and finally, *nahda iqtisadiya* signified the new interpretation of the cultural project of the Nahda in economic, and even capitalist, terms.[35]

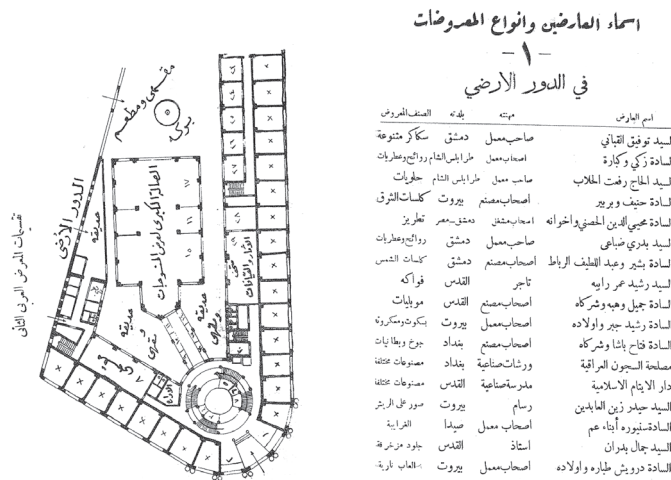The capitalization on these terms as they were acquiring these new meanings did

Figure 3. Two pages from the guidebook for the ~~First~~ Second Arab Exhibition showing an architectural plan and a list of participating companies. Source: Arab Exhibition Company, ~~1933~~. 1934.

not mean that the entity of the Arab Exhibition was explicitly associated with these three groups. Nonetheless, the presence of direct links between the organizers and these affiliations attest to the existence of a relationship between the two: al-'Issa was a supporter of King Faysal I, al-'Azmah helped establish the Istiqlal Party, and Hilmi Pasha was one of the main businessmen who aspired for an economic *nahda* in Palestine.

Newspapers were arguably the most effective platforms where these ideas about the Arab exhibition and its relevance were disseminated, but they were not the only ones. A few days before the launch of the first Arab Exhibition, the organizers issued a guidebook titled *dalil al-ma'rad al-'Arabi*.[36] The guidebook included: first, a general introduction; second, a section on the history what was termed, intriguingly, *jazirat al-'Arab* ("Arabian Peninsula"), including brief histories of Palestine, East Jordan, Lebanon, Inner Syria, Iraq, Najd, Hijaz, Yemen, and Egypt); third, a general directory for the Arab exhibition (including participation fees, responsibilities of the participants, water and electricity, entry fees, prizes and certificates, the sale of products, general notes, and contacts); fourth, a list of participants and architectural plans for the two floors (figure 3); and fifth, a section for private advertisements.[37]

While the first two sections reiterated the narratives of unity, independence, and economic renaissance, the third section reveals the more subterranean forms of politics in the planning and execution of the Arab exhibition:

> The entry fee for the first two days is 50 mil, during the week it is 30 mil, and on Fridays and Sundays is 40 mil [. . .] It is possible to purchase a monthly ticket for 250 mil […] Students with letters from their schools and Arab scouts pay half the price [. . .] Wednesdays of the first and third week are dedicated to women.[38]

These guidelines show that whereas the organizers were open to the attendance of different age groups, classes, and women in the exhibition, their inclusion was carefully engineered.

In fact, encouraging the attendance of women in the Arab exhibition had already been addressed months before in *Filastin* before the exhibition's inauguration.[39] Remarkably, however, women's participation in the exhibition was not limited to attendance. It was in the First Arab Exhibition that Zulfa al-Sa'di, at the time a young Palestinian female artist and student of the Jerusalemite artist Nicola Saig, exhibited a range of her works: "oil paintings of landscapes, still life compositions, and portraits of Arab heroes as well as contemporary cultural and political figures – the latter, such as King Faysal I of Iraq."[40] The significance of al-Sa'di's contribution to the Arab Exhibition lies not only in her inclusion as a woman, but also in the high level of aesthetic awareness that her contribution displayed. In his encyclopedic study of Palestinian art from the mid-nineteenth century until the early 2000s, Kamal Boullata refers to al-Sa'di's exhibit at the

Figure 4. "The view of the Awqaf Hotel, the building where the exhibition is taking place, built according to the glamorous Arab style. It is four stories high and cost no less than ninety thousand Palestinian Pounds and used to be leased for eight thousand pounds annually." Source: *al-'Arab*, 15 July 1933, 22.
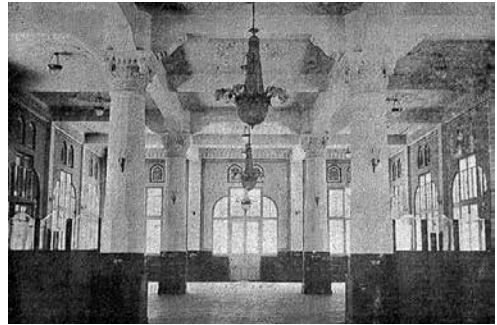
Figure 5. "View of the large lobby on the ground floor before the exhibition occupied the space." Source: *al-'Arab*, 15 July 1933, 22.

Arab Exhibition as the "first ever solo exhibition by a Palestinian painter [and] the first to gain public endorsement for an art form that, until then, had been tolerated, but not deemed worthy to represent national culture."[41]

The organizers, too, exhibited a sophisticated level of aesthetic awareness in representing their exhibition. The Palace Hotel, where the exhibition was held, was frequently described as an "Arab Style' building. Ironically, the building had been designed by two Turkish architects, Ahmet Kemaleddin and his student and colleague Mehmed Nihad, whose architectural style belonged to what became known as the "Turkish neo-classicism" of the early Turkish republican era.[42] Further, as the exhibition was taking place, several articles appeared in *Filastin* and *al-'Arab* which included photographs of the venue's exterior and interior, accompanied by textual descriptions of the quality of its spaces (see figures 4 and 5). When the second Exhibition was held in April 1934, similar photographs appeared for both the first and second exhibitions, but also illustrations of the golden and silver medals, certificates of participation,

Figures 6-7: ". . . two enlarged drawings of the golden and silver medals prepared by the exhibition's administration to gift to the winning exhibitors. The one on the right contains a picture of the Dome of the Rock in the Haram el-Sherif above which *The Second Arab Exhibition, Jerusalem 1353* is written in delicate Arabic Kufic script. The one on the left contained a picture of the Arabian peninsula to its furthest borders and Egypt. Lines with wonderful symbolism radiate from Jerusalem to the largest capitals and Arab cities. . ." Source: *al-'Arab*, 14 April 1934, 9.

and a postcard for the second exhibition (see figures 6–8). The textual descriptions supplemented the visual materials presented in the two exhibitions' guidebooks and in recent newspapers, and together, along with the articles previously published, these helped the solidify the regional and national outlook of the Arab Exhibition.

Afterlives

Soon after the First Arab Exhibition closed its doors to visitors, the idea for hosting a Second Exhibition was underway. The organizers liquidated the First Arab Exhibition Company and registered a new company for the Second Arab Exhibition. The Second Exhibition was inaugurated in April 1934 with higher financial burdens and labor than the First Exhibition.[43] Following the Second Exhibition, the organizers were beginning to think of holding a Third Exhibition in al-Bassa in Jaffa, as had originally been planned for the First Exhibition, but financial hurdles stepped in the way of this plan.[44]

When the organizers were about to liquidate the Second Arab Exhibition Company, the prominent Iraqi businessman Norui Fattah Pasha sent a letter to al-'Azmah advising him not to proceed with the liquidation, for the possibility that the Iraqi government would purchase the company and plan the next exhibit in Baghdad.[45] In 1935, the hopes of maintaining the Second Arab Exhibition Company as a permanent company faded when the Iraqi government backtracked on its intentions.[46] Significantly, the decision to liquidate the Second Arab Exhibition Company appeared in none other but the newly-established economic journal *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya*.[47]

In a sense, the Arab exhibitions were a prelude to *al-Iqtisadiyyat al-'Arabiyya*. They set the stage for an understanding of the nation and nationalism primarily through economic frameworks and corporate approaches. Hilmi Pasha, the president of the Arab Exhibition corporations, appeared several times in the journal and was heroically depicted as the "true intellectual" and "the man of the nation."[48] The map on the journal's cover even echoed the maps of the commercial and industrial networks in the Arab region as they were depicted on the postcards and medals of the Arab exhibitions.

This episode in the history of Palestine and the Arab world opens a series of questions to historians regarding our assumptions about the relationship of the history of capital, economic development, and modernization in the modern Arab world. Tracing the origins, conception, and representation of the first Arab exhibitions provides a preliminary sketch of the nature of and thinking behind these process, and opens the door for further interrogations regarding this process in which ideas, capital, and people moved across the colonial boundaries of the Arab world in the interwar period.

Figure 8. "The third picture is an enlarged drawing of the postage stamps that the exhibition's administration used for letters. The symbol in it is visible, and he is an Arab with a sure stand, breaking his chains, and raising his hand carrying a ball with the word *Jerusalem* written at its center, and from it the light shines to the rest of the Arab World." Source: *al-'Arab*, 14 April 1934, 9.

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15 "Al-ma'rad al-Falastini al-'Arabi," *Filastin*, 25 May 1932.

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38 Arab Exhibition Company, *Dalil al-maʿrad al-ʿArabi al-awwal.*

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Discovering Mandate Palestine through Disability: the Life of Reja-e Busailah

Reja-e Busailah. *In the Land of My Birth: A Palestinian Boyhood*. Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2017. Xx+371pp. $24.95 (paper), ISBN 978-0-88728-000-9.

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Reja-e Busailah's memoir, *In the Land of my Birth: a Palestinian Boyhood*, is a significant contribution to disability history and to the history of Palestine. It is the only book to my knowledge that simultaneously details the dynamics of both daily life in colonial Palestine (1920–48) and of youth with disabilities. Indeed, the memoir is a sensory invitation into the life of a Palestinian boy and his schooling during the Mandate period of Palestine, and it tracks an extraordinary boyhood amidst dramatic social, demographic, and political changes taking place in Palestine.

What is most relevant to a disability analysis of the book is that Busailah's exploration of social, educational, and political life in Palestine between 1929 and 1948 is told from the perspective of a boy who is blind. Now almost ninety, the author writes an impeccably documented story (his memory is exceptional) of his education, his love of poetry, his understanding of demographic and political transformations in Palestine, and, ultimately, of his forced exile from his beloved country. The book is organized around the schools that Busailah attended, thus foregrounding education as the key to his growth. This is an unsurprising structure for a boy who eventually became an English professor and who clearly savors intellectual pursuits.

What struck me most about this book is how Busailah relishes the quotidian. His description of the sounds, smells, and tactile sensations of his surroundings and of daily life in Palestine powerfully reorients readers in the act of reading, especially those readers who are used to predominantly visual representation in a written narrative. In essence, the book challenges these normative modes of description and offers a world of discovery,

of vivid aural and tactile imagery, and of cadence and rhythm, as well as monumental national and personal loss.

My colleague Lila Abu-Lughod has recently written a compelling review of this book, focusing on its treatment of the British colonial and Zionist betrayal of Palestine and of the Palestinian people.[1] This review will focus instead on aspects of the memoir that speak to the richness of disability experience in Palestine. I concentrate on three themes that capture Busailah's contemplation of what it means to be blind in 1930s–40s Palestine: the intersection of disability and family relationships, the building of disability community and identity, and the sobering encounters with disability prejudice and discrimination.

Busailah introduces his family by delineating the individual sounds his family members make and how those sounds helped him differentiate between them: "When she walks, my mother's footsteps are many and fast and loud. When my father walks, his footsteps are not as many. They are slower and not as noisy . . . when father pees in the chamber pot, it makes a sound very different from the sound mother makes . . . the voice of my mother and the voice of my father and the sound of the clock ticking – they make it easier for me to find my direction and my way . . . when there is no voice or ticking, I do not walk straight" (5–7). These introductions confirm disability as relational – evidenced here through sound.[2] These sensory identifications gave Reja-e a sense of space and place; they helped him navigate his world.

Busailah's status in his family is a question with which the boy struggled. He sought approval from his parents, particularly his father, and worried that he was unable to fulfill parental expectations due to his disability. He consistently wondered how to please his father, but also resented that his father forced him to learn to recite the Qur'an when he was young: "What is the connection between blindness and memorizing the Qur'an?" he asked (58). Little did he understand that his father's actions were based on fear and worry; he believed that reciting the Qur'an might be the only paying job Reja-e would eventually get.

Such anxieties about limited opportunities for education and employment continued to shape some of the tense dynamics between Reja-e and his father. Yet, as a teacher himself, Reja-e's father made sure to educate his son. He encouraged the boy's penchant for reading literature and poetry, read a variety of stories and poetry to him. Later in Reja-e's youth, his father often asked him to share his increasingly sophisticated under-standing of literary texts. This parental commitment to education was not commonly shared by other parents of blind or disabled children during the time. Busailah's father believed, however, that Palestinian society during the 1930s was beginning to recognize the necessity of secular education for both the sighted and the blind, even though the British government did not require school attendance for Arab children during the Mandate period. These beginnings set the backdrop for Busailah's journey.

Reja-e describes his treatment by other family members. Some felt a mixture of sadness and love for him while others felt pity. As a mischievous and astute boy, however, he used those feelings to his advantage: "I didn't like the sadness, but I liked the love. I suspected that my blindness had something to do with their special attitude, but I was too practical not to exploit the opportunity. Blind. Fine! But then why not capitalize on it?" (30). By overturning the typical patronizing power dynamics between people

with and without disabilities, Reja-e turned being an object of pity into a source of empowerment and advantage.

Despite these moments of defiance throughout the book, Reja-e struggled with the impact his blindness had on his family, and especially on his parents, attesting again to the relational quality of disability. He writes that he lost his eyesight before he reached his first birthday. Through his telling, readers gain knowledge about the (often common) coexistence of biomedical and folk medicine in this colonial context. Indeed, his parents had different interpretations of his impairment's etiology. While his father cited the biomedical diagnosis of opthalmia (conjunctivitis and other eye diseases were quite common in Mandate Palestine), his mother attributed it to the evil eye of a woman she had briefly encountered. Reja-e's grandmother "scolded my mother for not snatching something from her: 'a trace – a piece of cloth, a lock of hair, even a single hair – anything belonging to her in order to burn it and so cancel out the jinx'" (94). But the belief in folk medicine did not stop Busailah's parents from seeking allopathic medical care. They took him to a hospital (most likely St. John's Eye Hospital in Jerusalem) and then, despite Arab–Jewish tensions, to Dr. Abraham Ticho, a well known and established Jewish ophthalmologist in Jerusalem who received both Arab and Jewish patients at his clinic on Jaffa Road. But this was to no avail. Despite his stellar reputation, Ticho could not recover Reja-e's eyesight.

Friends and family responded in dramatically different ways to his permanent visual impairment. A Muslim, his mother prayed at al-Aqsa and Ibrahimi mosques as well as the Holy Sepulchre, while a friend even suggested that his parents commit infanticide by smothering Reja-e with a pillow. His father protested vehemently and vetoed that suggestion. But Reja-e describes how, because of his vision loss, his very early marital engagement (at infancy) to his cousin was broken: "All was lost with the loss of my eyes" (95). This excerpt about the origin, treatment, and family responses to Reja's blindness reveals the complexity of navigating family life and disability in Mandate Palestine.

Disability is not only portrayed as deeply relational in this memoir, but Busailah also demonstrates that disability is a distinct, phenomenological experience that challenges normative modes of understanding the world. He asks, for instance, "But what is shadow if you can't hear it, smell it, or touch it?" (7). Similarly, what is a color? These ruminations make clear that our concepts are intimately related to our senses and are not uniformly understood. Indeed, disability resists that universalizing project and instead savors difference, both in meaning-making and experience.

Busailah found the disability community and constructed a sense of disability identity through his schooling. Busailah's first school was the Islamic Industrial House for Orphans (Dar al-'Aytam al-Islami) in Jerusalem where, in common practice during this time, all types of dependent children lived and learned. Essentially, it was a sheltered workshop where blind residents made brushes, chairs, and brooms, and sighted children did carpentry and other vocational activities. On his first day, Reja-e took delight in realizing that all the boys making brooms were blind: "So many blind boys together, talking and working happily!" (62). This was his first encounter with a group of boys like him and he immediately felt an affinity toward them.

Busailah's identification with others who were blind deepened when he transferred to the 'Alaiyyah School (School for the Blind) in Hebron at age nine. It was at 'Alaiyyah that Busailah began to find his voice and his passion. It was here where he found the disability community. He did so with the help of his friends and instructors and with the dedication of the school's principal (who was blind). In particular, the principal served as a role model for Reja-e, embodying determination and devotion and the opposite of the negative messaging he had previously learned about being blind: "He was different than all the blind men and children I had known. He radiated energy and hope. He was feisty" (112). He taught the students that people with disabilities should not be pitied, that they have valuable things to contribute to society.

Reja-e's teachers at 'Alaiyyah quickly identified his academic proclivities, and learning Braille opened a whole new world to him. Busailah became exposed to a trove of fiction and poetry, history and philosophy. He began to write poetry and plant the seed for his future professorial career.

Reja-e was clearly highly intelligent and his academic talents set him apart from other boys in the 'Alaiyyah School, but also among his high school peers, both blind and non-blind. It was when he studied in Ramleh at a mainstream high school, and then al-'Amiriyyah high school in Jaffa, that Busailah was the happiest in his life. As he retells it, he reentered the sighted world. He realized he amounted to more than his blindness. He became "so much more myself, so much less of what they thought I was. I was so much more of those with eyes than of those with no eyes" (213). He acknowledged disability oppression and posited a structural corrective to the segregated status of the blind in Palestine: "The blind would have a better chance to advance, I thought, if they were integrated within normal society instead of cut off from it" (213). To be sure, this idea was a radical proposition for early 1940s Palestine.

Although his return to the sighted world in Ramleh expanded his range of experiences, his integration also forced him to realize limitations that he had to face, like a slower reading pace (using his hands) than his fellow students, limited access to Braille books, and the need to depend upon others to read printed books to him. Despite these disadvantages, his teachers supported him and Busailah excelled, surging to the top of his class in several subjects. At al-'Amiriyyah, he befriended very accomplished scholars-in-the-making and developed a more nuanced understanding of politics. He found non-disabled allies who expanded his intellectual and political horizons and shaped his commitment to academic pursuits and his plans to attend university. These plans, he hoped, would also offset any societal hesitations about his marital eligibility: "Would not my education offset my blindness?" (268). Such moments and feelings of vulnerability about his disability are artfully narrated throughout the memoir.

These feelings are based on raw experiences. Although Reja-e's childhood was mostly joyful, he did encounter bullying and other children's trickery because of his blindness. This treatment is grounded in the disability tropes of inability, dependence, and inferiority. One such encounter, for instance, involved a child stating that Reja-e's blindness meant that he didn't have eyes and could not walk on his own. A young Reja-e recalls: "My hand touched my eyes. My eyes were there, both of them. My companions took off. I was shocked, but I knew the road very well… I got home; therefore, I had

eyes. I was not really blind. I was proud of myself, but I was confused and sad that my companions would leave me like that" (9–10). In another instance of bullying, Reja-e remembers older boys making fun of blind children at his first school in Jerusalem. In their tormenting, the boys merged terrifying world events, the impending threat of Zionist colonization in Palestine, and deep prejudice against disabled people: "'Come Wednesday next, all the blind shall be slaughtered. The blind are no better than the Jews whom Hitler will slaughter.' That terrified me and made me cry" (40). Busailah and the older boys were certainly unaware of the T4 campaign and the fate of disabled people during the Third Reich; in their effective and chilling taunt, the boys drew from the immediate politics of Mandate Palestine, where Jews were seen as imperiling the Palestinian homeland, and where the mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husayni, sided with Hitler because of that threat and against British colonialism.

Reja-e also openly, and often painfully, acknowledges how relatives, teachers, and friends invoked the typical religious trope of blindness as a curse, as the source of compensatory, blessed traits, or of blind people as bestowed with either wisdom or self-pity. In his youth, Reja-e internalized these stereotypes, felt awkward, guilty, and ashamed, yet also struggled to find meaning in his own boyhood. For example, as a young boy, during one Ramadan, he even asked Allah to "give me my eyes back," only to realize that there was no hope of cure and that his impairment was permanent (39). But with that recognition came an identity shift; Reja-e grasped that he must harness his ingenuity to create his own path as a person with a disability. As he aged, his educational experiences, the disability community he found there, and his continual emotional development, as portrayed in this memoir, allowed him to carve out that unique life trajectory.

Busailah's masterful narration of his boyhood is a must-read for scholars interested in the history of Palestine, the history of childhood and youth, and disability in global contexts. As a memoir, it is a singular representation of a blind person's experiences in mandate Palestine, but it meticulously and thoughtfully captures those experiences in ways that suggest Busailah's boyhood probably resonates with some others. Indeed, the memoir shows that there are shared disability experiences in Palestine that are fundamentally grounded, like elsewhere, in prejudice and segregation, but also determination and empowerment.

The reader unfamiliar with the history of Palestine will not only learn about the experiences of a boy with blindness navigating his way through his youth and his innocence, but also about the "unique olfactory chorus" of the Old City (41), Ramleh or Jaffa, of olive trees and oranges, as well as the overall texture of Palestinian life and loss during the Mandate period. It is truly an historical account that seamlessly captures how disability shapes, and is shaped, by Busailah's strong relationship to the land.

Perhaps most powerfully, every historian will read a detailed account about Palestinian nationalism and, at the end of the book, will absorb the human tragedy that resulted from the horrific events of the 1948 war (al-Nakba, "catastrophe" in Arabic). Busailah's writing is a textured telling of war, death, and its aftermath, masterfully captured through sound and touch. His description of the loss of his hometown, Ramleh, the residents' exodus, and his miraculous survival is one of the most extensive personal, and haunting, testaments I ever recall reading.

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Endnotes

1 Lila Abu- Lughod, "Moods of Betrayal in the Story of Palestine," *Public Books*, July 18, 2018.

2 See Alison Kafer, *Feminist, Queer*, *Crip* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013).

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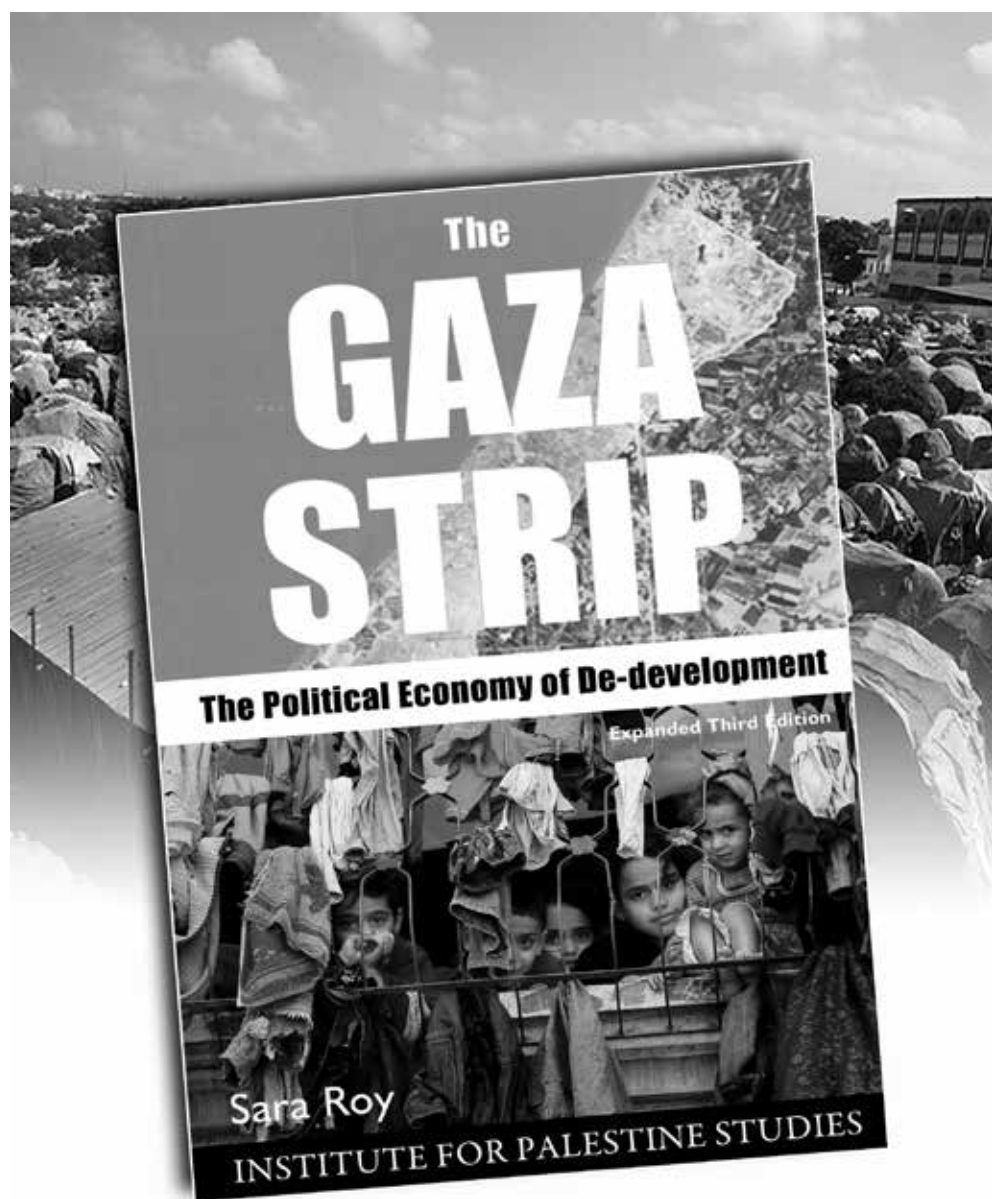
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