



JERUSALEM QUARTERLY

82

Summer 2020



Palestine from Above

SURVEILLANCE, CARTOGRAPHY, CONTROL (Part 2)

“Along the Wings of a Tornado”: The Aerial Aesthetics of Frank Hurley in Palestine

Andrew Yip and Emma Crott

History Turns Space into Place: A French Voyage to the Dead Sea Basin in 1864

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The Tale of Two Villages: New Perspective on the Historic Palestinian Landscape

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Sarah El Bulbeisi

Late Ottoman Visions of Palestine: Railroads, Maps, and Aerial Photography

Zeynep Çelik and Zeinab Azarbadegan

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EDITORIAL

The Potter, the Poet, and Storytelling

Palestine from Above 2

Yazid Anani, Guest Editor

If God is the first potter, creating man out of mud, and if man's creation of idols has always been the greatest sin in monotheistic religions (by approximating the perfection of art created by the divine artist), then it is the artists who echoed the creative discourse – ranging from cave drawings, Babylonian temples, Egyptian reliefs, Byzantine iconography, and Italian renaissance paintings – and who imposed new images to existing meta-narratives.

And if God is the first poet, whose words are inscribed in the commandments of the sacred texts, then poetry is the ultimate sin, and poets are the impersonation of the divine power of scripture. That is why in Arabic the poet is known as *mash'ur* and *majdhub* – “smitten” and “deranged” by the divinity.

Nonetheless, heresy has surpassed the ability of man to perfect pottery and the language of poetry. Artists moved from the flight of words, to the physical attempts at elevating themselves and creating instruments of flying. Since the mid-nineteenth century airborne cameras via balloons, kites, dirigibles, airplanes, satellites, and drones have contributed largely in mapping terrains, surveilling human activities, and studying urban morphology as well as earth's ecology. Throughout the pre-modern ages, humanity gazed up towards the celestial in a desire to locate itself in the universe with cosmological yearnings to resolve humanity's existential questions: How was the world created? Where are we going, and where do we stand within the universal spatial temporal context?

In geometry, surveying, and structural mechanics, humans created terrestrial monuments that had cosmological

alignment and significance. These monuments were constructed to be seen by the deities of the skies. Neolithic stone circles, Mesopotamian ziggurats, Egyptian and Mayan pyramids and obelisks, the Nazca Lines, Hindu temples, Cretan nature sanctuaries, Mycenaean citadels, and others were all expressions of a terrestrial connection with the cosmos and a response to the gaze of celestial gods and goddesses who controlled earth. This gaze has been inverted with the emergence of aviation and aerial technology. It is not only the elevated skills of poetry and pottery that the human has acquired but also the skill of the celestial power of gazing on humanity itself from the sky.

The idea of the exhibition “Palestine From Above” came while Salim Tamari and I were investigating one of the aerial images of al-Bireh from the Bavarian State Archives. We were trying to demystify the location of the mysterious railway which was constructed at the end of WWI between Jerusalem and al-Balu’ area in al-Bireh. What struck me most was my inability to relate the aerial point of view to the familiar landscape of al-Balu’ where I lived for most of my childhood. Although, the landscape has been altered dramatically, I felt helpless by my incapacity to understand the landscape in that image through its topographic features. This drove the idea of an exhibition that could be a means of enabling us to understand how the Palestinian landscape has been first perceived, and then transformed, from the sky.

“Palestine from Above” juxtaposes layers of collected historic material with artworks, using a process of research conducted by the Qattan Foundation and its partners in 2019–20. The research explored



“Hercules,” in *Kitab suwar al-kawakib* [Book of the Constellations of the Fixed Stars], ‘Abd al-Rahman ibn ‘Umar al-Sufi (1009–10), Bodleian Library, Oxford, 80; available from wikimedia commons, online at bit.ly/2NetkC9 (accessed 15 June 2020).

how mapping and imaging technology has been historically used to depict the Palestinian landscape for surveillance purposes, art, documentation, planning, and other uses. Such data and material have enabled empires and armies to accumulate knowledge in the form of visual compendia that eventually supported the shaping of politics, culture, economy, and ideology. As a significant component of the exhibition and in partnership with the Institute for Palestinian Studies, issues 81 and 82 of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* have been dedicated to host a plethora of contributions on themes that emerged during the exhibition research process. The two volumes will later be merged together to comprise the exhibition catalogue together with a selection of textual and visual archival material and briefs on the artworks and artists.

A group of remarkable researchers and scholars sifted through stacks of documents in relevant libraries and archives including Istanbul University Nadir Eserler Kütüphanesi, Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi, Harbiye Askeri Müzesi, Atatürk Library, the Australian War Memorial, the National Library of Australia, the Hebrew University Libraries, Israel State Archives, the National Archives of the UK, the Bavarian State Archives, and the Library of Congress. Among the researchers who contributed their work were the main researchers: Zeynep Çelik, professor of architecture at the New Jersey Institute of Technology; Salim Tamari, Birzeit University professor of sociology (Emeritus); Andrew Yip, director of the Ultra High-Resolution Scanning Laboratory at the University of New South Wales, Sydney; Michael Talbot, senior lecturer in the history of the modern Middle East at the University of Greenwich; Zeinab Azarbadegan, PhD candidate in the Department of History, Colombia University; Chloe Emmot, PhD student at the University of Greenwich; Anne Caldwell, postgraduate researcher at University of Kent; Sarah El Bulbeisi, researcher at Orient-Institut Beirut; Robin Schmahl, Bavarian Archives research assistant; and Walid Habbas, research specialist in the Israeli archives.

Through displaying works by artists alongside historical archival material, the exhibition attempts to subvert the power of writing history and documenting society and landscape by the different regimes of power. Initial contributions of artwork include the following artists and groups: Amer Shomali, Andrew Yip, Rania Stephan, Studio CAMP, Rene Gabri and Ayreen Anastas, Jack Persekian, Sophie Ernest, Khaled Jarrar, Nahed Awad, Kamal Jaafari, DAAR, Gian Spina, the Eye Film Museum, Forensic Architecture, and Riwaq.

“To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric. And this corrodes even the knowledge of why it has become impossible to write poetry today.” So wrote Theodore Adorno in his *Cultural Criticism and Society* (1949). It seems that it is forbidden to utilize the divine language of art and poetry in perfecting the representation of cataclysmic trauma. This would have been considered as barbarism, in the sense of using the divine languages of art and poetry, not only in the creation of anti-monotheistic verses and idols, but in perfecting the transfiguration of the first divine work of pottery and poetry.

Wars as the most violent human experience have always been depicted by artists, through strokes, colors, textures, and patterns, and especially by those artists who

were recruited as soldiers in the battlefields: with their perennial encounters with the roar of artillery, the burst of shells, the stories of their fellow soldiers, death, tragedies, destruction, and triumphs. Their journeys and discoveries have been popular subjects in sketches and drawings in an attempt to portray the severity of war, its operations, emotions, values, and symbols. Their artworks probe not only how aesthetics respond to war, but the notion of violence itself. A big portion of Palestinian art has often been framed by what contemporary Western theory would consider as Propaganda Art, immersed with the motifs of trauma and victimhood. If Palestinians are living an ongoing colonial tragedy and trauma that persist outside the temporal demarcations of signposts as 1916, 1948, 1967, 1987, 1993, then storytelling through poetry and art is the only remaining tool for narrating the violent distortion and transfiguration of humanity as the antithesis to that imposed by the Western paradigm of *l'art pour l'art*.



This issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*, the second volume dedicated to Palestine from Above, covers new themes of landscape and aerial perspectives not addressed in *JQ* 81.

“Along the Wings of a Tornado: The Aerial Aesthetics of Frank Hurley in Palestine” by Andrew Yip and Emma Crott views the presence of the Australians in Palestine after the end of World War I through the eyes of Australian photographer Frank Hurley. Hurley’s aerial images played a role in blurring the line between reporting and artistic expression. His photographs were prominent in composition techniques that aestheticize and restage the experience of trench warfare. His tours in Palestine enhance our understanding of the role of war photography and artists in combat.

Isotta Poggi’s “History Turns Space into Place: A French Voyage to the Dead Sea Basin in 1864” examines how landscape perspectives are predominantly stipulated by human understanding of culture. De Luynes’ *Voyage* chronicles the journey illustrating a French cultural lens in Ottoman Palestine. Inspired by the Bible’s scriptures, De Luynes goal was to identify the locations of the biblical “cursed” cities following the scripture into the context of the geophysical environment of the Dead Sea basin in 1864.

Jeffrey Howry’s “The Tale of Two Villages – a New Perspective on the Historic Palestinian Landscape” examines the preliminary findings of historic sites and features from the Roman, Byzantine, and late Ottoman/Mandate eras of Tel Megiddo using a special type of remote sensing data (LiDAR). The importance of Tel Megiddo lies in its strategic location between the eastern Mediterranean coast and the Jezreel valley (Marj ibn ‘Amr). The article highlights the significantly different conditions in which LiDAR imagery can provide essential data on the context and structure of archaeological sites spanning millennia of occupation. At al-Lajjun it was possible to highlight field patterns, many of which were physically destroyed in recent decades. At Abu Shusha, the multi-terraced character of some of the highest terrain became evident.

Michael Talbot, Anne Caldwell, and Chloe Emmott's "Perceiving Palestine: British Visions of the Holy Land" analyzes how Palestine was perceived by superimposing biblical landmarks onto modern mapping surveys, supported by recent biblical scholarship, to play a role in re-imagining Palestine in British eyes. These aerial, high-elevation, and cartographic depictions of Palestine allow us to visualize the developing narratives of control. The privileging and foregrounding of an ancient, biblical landscape that all but erased the lived experience of contemporary Palestinians became familiar in today's topographical transformations.

Sarah El Bulbeisi's "Palestine in the Imagination of the Imperial German Self" sheds light on the power of the German imperial presence in Palestine. She reviews the visual and textual fragments left by the German Air Force from their surveillance missions in Palestine carried out during the end of World War I and the published photographs selected by Gustav Dalman in his classic compendium of German aerial photography in the 1917–18 period.

In "Late Ottoman Visions of Palestine," Zeynep Çelik and Zeinab Azarbadegan view how late Ottoman official politics displayed shifting attitudes towards Palestine. The Ottomans were aware of the "perceptive" power of aerial views and their ability to augment the authority, dominance, and control of those who could own and use the technology successfully. The efficiency and pace with which such new technologies were adopted, however, left new unequal relations between European powers who were able to consolidate their colonial interests and the Ottomans.

"Jerusalem Demography" by Rassem Khamaisi is a study in "demophobia" – the obsession with Arab fertility trends – and how it affects population planning in Israel. The essay identifies demographic conditions in Jerusalem and analyzes the city's national, ethnic, cultural, religious, and geopolitical attributes. The relationship between demographics, geography, and democracy, and how these considerations are employed in spatial planning and resource control, are also examined.

In an article published in June 1930, Muhammad Roshan Akhtar, the editor of the English edition of the Jaffa newspaper *Filastin*, called for the establishment of an Arab federation, considering Jews to be an integral part of a political community whose territory sprawled "from Basra to Jaffa." In "Beyond the Boundaries of 'The Land of the Deer' R. Binyamin between Jewish and Arab Geographies, and the Critique of the Zionist-Colonial Connection," Avi-ram Tzoreff examines the crystallization of Binyamin's spatial perception in the period of the British Mandate, and the importance he saw in identification with the anti-colonial struggle, and the affinities between this orientation and the attitudes held by Palestinian intellectuals and political activists during the 1930s.

"I Witness Silwan – Who Is Watching Whom?" is an act of visual decolonization in the neighborhood of Batan al-Hawa, in the Silwan neighborhood of Jerusalem. Monumental sets of eyes and goldfinches (*tayr hassun*) – the putative national bird of Palestine – are being installed in the hillside overlooking the Wadi Hilwa (Kidron Valley), facing West Jerusalem and the Old City. The eyes depicted belong to local heroes, international leaders, philosophers, activists, revolutionaries, writers, and artists,

and are visible from far away. Susan Greene in this “Letter from Jerusalem” examines the aim of Israel and its proxy “nonprofits” to solidify Jewish Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem by dispossessing Palestinians in the Old City basin, which includes the Old City’s Muslim Quarter and surrounding Palestinian neighborhoods such as Silwan and its vicinity.

Penny Johnson’s “Are You Coming With a Bulldozer to Silwan?” is a review of two Palestinian guides to Jerusalem and its environs, as well as sites in the West Bank, Gaza, and historic Palestine: *Wujood: The Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem* (2019) Grassroots Al-Quds, and *Pilgrimage, Sciences and Sufism: Islamic Art in the West Bank and Gaza* (2004), published by the Museum with No Frontiers and the Palestinian Authority. The review explores the fate of Palestinian guides to Jerusalem amid the well-financed marketing campaigns of both the Israeli government and right-wing settler organizations like the Ir David Foundation.

“The Alleys of Jerusalem Will Miss You” is a tribute to the late Albert Aghazarian by historian Nazmi Jubeh.

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, the leading novelist and poet from Bethlehem, was born one hundred years ago. His centennial was accompanied by a resurgence of interest in his literature, poetry, and his artistic creativity, in the Palestinian and Arab press. JQ will be addressing his patrimony in a forthcoming issue, which we hope will shed new light on his life, art, and literature.

Yazid Anani, the guest editor for JQ 81 and 82, is the Director of the Public Programme at the A.M. Qattan Foundation and former professor of architecture at Birzeit University.



The Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem

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

Essays submitted for consideration should be 4,000 to 5,000 words in length (including endnotes), should be based on original research, and must not have been previously published elsewhere. Preference will be given to young/junior/aspiring/emerging/early career researchers and students.

Please submit essays and a short bio (including current or previous affiliation with a recognized university, research institution, or non-governmental organization that conducts research) via email to jq@palestine-studies.org

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

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



“Along the Wings of a Tornado”

The Aerial Aesthetics of Frank Hurley in Palestine

Andrew Yip and Emma Crott

Abstract

In 1917 the Australian photographer Frank Hurley, renowned in Australia and Europe as an aesthete for his theatrical photographs of Antarctica, was commissioned as Australia’s official First World War photographer. His tour encompassed France, Belgium, and finally Palestine where he, more concerned with visual experimentation than historical documentary, experimented first with color and then aerial photography. Hurley occupied a contested role on the battlefield as an artist engaged in wartime. His blending of artistic techniques with military technologies during the Palestine campaign, at the dawn of aerial imaging, represented a significant moment in the history of photography, and lays bare many of the ethical complexities that concern contemporary aerial images that are synonymous with power and control.

Keywords

First World War; James Francis Frank Hurley; aerial photography; Palestine; conflict photography.

In 1917 the noted Australian Pictorialist photographer James Francis (Frank) Hurley (1885–1962) was appointed to the 1st Australian Imperial Force (AIF) as official war photographer. He was engaged primarily to record the Australian campaign on the Western Front, but was sent later to capture the war in Palestine. In this appointment he was initially recommended and supported by Australia’s official correspondent to the Great War (who later became Australia’s

official WWI historian), Charles Bean. Bean's journalism from the Ottoman and Western Fronts during the war, and his subsequent compilation of the *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18*,¹ helped to establish popular literary, historical, and pictorial maxims which persist today, in which Australia's war served as a bridge between the frontier society of Australia's Eurocolonial past and a newly-federated Australian polity, engaged for the first time in international geopolitical movements. This general characterization of Australia's experience in the First World War as a nation-building moment was not necessarily dependent on close engagement with the socio-cultural histories of the societies in which these conflicts took place. This is particularly true of Australia's campaign against the Ottoman Empire in the Dardanelles, Egypt, and Palestine, which in the latter twentieth century became increasingly identified in Australian histories with revisionist readings of the war as an invigoration of Turkish nationhood and ethnic determination, rather than the result of the movements of empire.

The persistence of this particular nationalist framework adds complexity to the usual concerns regarding authenticity, messaging, and purpose that condition our understanding of all conflict photographers. As an artist at war, Frank Hurley operated both within and without these boundaries. Commissioned under the Australian Official War Art Scheme, he was obliged to record the deeds of soldiers in the battles in which Australian forces took part.² These images certainly played a role in establishing historical narratives around the territories in which he was deployed. But Hurley was an aesthete, not a soldier, more concerned with conveying the theatrics and sensations of the battlefield than using the camera as a tool or political weapon. This is reflected in his images of French and Belgian battlefields, which are both famous and infamous for his technically innovative use of large format, composite techniques to aestheticize and restage the experience of trench warfare from multiple images.

Less well known are Hurley's experiments with aerial imaging during his tour of Palestine in 1917 and 1918, which represent a significant and problematic moment in the history of photography. These experiments were conditioned by the circumstances of Hurley's encounter with Palestine. He was not an ethnographer or anthropologist following a documentary tradition. Instead, he went there in support of combatants under military jurisdiction, and where the lives of Palestinians are captured in his photographs, the references are fleeting and reflect the unfamiliar eye of the outsider. Like another Australian Official War Artist assigned to Palestine – the painter George Lambert – Hurley approached and understood the Palestinian landscape aesthetically and compositionally, through its similarities to the landscapes of his youth. Hurley had little understanding of the political and ethnic complexities of the Middle East. Yet his photographs are not politically neutral. Commissioned as an honorary lieutenant in the Australian Imperial Force, his work, poetic though it was, imaged a moment in the history of his own nation through the lens of the occupation of another. For example, though he arrived after the fact, Hurley restaged and photographed a *tableau vivant* showing Australian troops occupying Jerusalem.

Hurley's aesthetic experiments with aerial photography in Palestine – a novel genre for artistic expression in 1917, made more so in the circumstances – represent

an important and complicated moment in the history of photographic aesthetics. In the hands of an artist like Hurley, this new pictorial space, representing as it did general advances in industrial technologies as well as a specific military control over the lands captured in his images, raised new and uncomfortable questions about the ethical boundaries of the artist at war and exposed the political networks that brought them to the battlefield. His aerial images thus deserve critical reflection a century after their production, at a time in which aerospatial imaging has evolved to become synonymous with the construction and control of territories and borders.

Hurley's images were produced at an inflection point for both the history of photographs and the status of the photographer. The emergence of portable imaging technologies, such as the Vest Pocket Kodak, allowed for the widescale capture of non-studio imagery while, simultaneously, aesthetic movements were laying the foundations for modernist pictorial experiments that allowed artists to interrogate the limits and philosophies of photographic imaging itself. The camera was being freed from its imperative to record in favor of the photographer's ability to interpret. As an artist and commercial practitioner, Hurley's approach to photography was heavily influenced by the Pictorialist movement that surfaced in the late nineteenth century, which sought to cement photography as an aesthetic form rather than simply a mirror of reality. These photographers emphasized the atmospheric qualities of the medium by manipulating tone and texture, sometimes scratching or painting directly onto the surface of negatives, drawing on classical principles of composition, staging scenes, and employing romantic or symbolic imagery.

This pictorial interest was one of two factors that framed his wartime work. The other was the dramatic persona he had created around himself that positioned him as something of a romantic protagonist. By the time of his commission as a war artist in 1917, Frank Hurley had already been mythologized in popular culture as a daring and heroic adventurer, made famous for his spectacular images of Antarctic exploration. His reputation as a young postcard photographer willing to take personal risks to obtain the ideal shot positioned him for his appointment as the official photographer and cinematographer for the Mawson (1911–13) and Shackleton (1914–16) Antarctic expeditions. His silent documentary film *Home of the Blizzard (Life in the Antarctic)* (1913) was celebrated for its portrayal of the treacherous conditions of polar exploration and the magnitude of the icy landscape.

In Hurley's most successful photographs, his aesthetic is conditional on two opposing experiments with scale and perception. On the one lies the subjectivity and agency of Hurley the explorer and, on the other, the sheer monumentality of the environments in which this exploration takes place. In his Antarctic series, he pursued this strategy in order to convey the task of exploration, the sublime conflict between humanity and the limits of the earth, and the perilous nature of this contest. When he arrived in France in 1917, Hurley approached the battlefield with a similar impetus. However, he was deeply frustrated by the technological inability of the cumbersome large-format cameras with which he worked to adequately capture the temporal complexity and geographic spread of action in modern warfare. "I have tried and

tried to include events on a single negative,” he wrote, “but the results were hopeless. Everything was on such a vast scale.”³ As a result Hurley took to producing composite images where multiple indicators of war, such as airplanes, bomb blasts, smoke, and soldiers, all appear in one frame to create a frenetic yet visually harmonious evocation of the event. The most iconic example is Hurley’s composite of four different negatives titled *Episode after Battle of Zonnebeke* (1918), which depicts Australian soldiers on the Western Front emerging from the trenches as they prepare to cross a no man’s land littered with explosions and the ever-present danger of aircraft overhead.

While Hurley’s role as an official photographer was ostensibly to document, he was convinced that the act of communication required his visual intervention. As cultural historian Bernd Hüppauf argues, Hurley’s exasperation with the restrictions of photography pointed to the gap between the experience of warfare and the limitations of the camera to adequately portray such an experience, despite the presumed mimetic capacity of photography. He argues this failure is indicative of a larger concept of modern reality as “disjointed, abstract, complex, and the product of technical, including photographic, constructions.”⁴ Charles Bean certainly failed to grasp the necessity of the photographer’s eye in conveying vision; he approached photographs solely as historical texts whose usefulness as sources of information were bound to their unadulterated materiality. As a result, Hurley’s subjectivity was met with derision by Bean, who was more concerned with factual and objective recording rather than the “publicity pictures and aesthetic results” that so excited Hurley.⁵ As his biographer David P. Millar notes, “Hurley loved the flourish. He was a communicator who wanted to make sure that the public would fully appreciate the mud, courage and stoical bravery of the boys at the front. If this meant that a picture should be cropped, or details burnt out, or negatives garnished with explosions, then so be it.”⁶

After an argument with Hurley over the use of composites, which he described as “fake,” Bean stubbornly insisted on the integrity of representation, writing in his diary, “I can see his point, he has been nearly killed a dozen times and has failed to get the pictures he wants – but we will not have it at any price.”⁷ Hurley threatened to resign but eventually a compromise was agreed to, allowing him to produce six composite images for exhibition. Yet Hurley’s composites were not mere flourishes. This was a task he approached soberly rather than jingoistically. On witnessing battle for the first time, he recorded in his diary that “[it is] the most awful and appalling sight I have ever seen. The exaggerated machinations of hell are here typified. Everywhere the ground is littered with bits of guns, bayonets, shells and men.”⁸

Hurley was not able to resolve his aesthetic problems under the eye of Bean in France and Belgium, and toward the end of 1917, he was deployed to Palestine to record the campaign of the Australian Light Horse against the Ottoman Empire. However, by the time he had transited through Cairo, Allied forces had already captured Beersheba, Jerusalem, and Gaza, where he arrived on 28 December. Though he saw action in February 1918 at the Battle of Nabi Musa and the subsequent capture of Jericho, and on another occasion narrowly escaped pursuit by an Ottoman patrol under heavy fire, Hurley’s Palestine campaign was a more subdued affair than his experiences in

France and Belgium. “Life is more Australian, open air and expansive,” he wrote of Palestine. “There is not the strain of war nor the eternal fear of death ... France is hell, Palestine more or less a holiday.”⁹ In Palestine he experienced relatively more freedom to produce images in the Pictorialist aesthetic, often capturing re-enacted “stunts” and staged scenes.¹⁰ To make these he was allowed the use of a group of Light Horse to photograph in Jerusalem, and he found the soldiers enthusiastic participants. This welcome latitude allowed Hurley to experiment; in Palestine he is believed to have produced the only extant color-plate photographs of the war, using the Paget plate technique developed in Britain shortly before the war in 1912 as a competitor to the first commercially available color photographic process, the autochrome, released by the Lumière brothers in 1907. Hurley was delighted by the results of the Paget process, which he used compositionally to great effect to explore the contrasting colors of the landscape.

These aesthetic experiments in Palestine led Hurley to aerial imaging. An initial flight with the No. 1 Squadron, Australian Flying Corps, based at Medjdel (Majdal) airfield, impressed upon him the aesthetic potential of this new vision. The scale and perspective were revelatory to him. After a flight on 16 February 1918, he recorded that looking down from the sky he was “intoxicated by the mighty works of nature ... from my seat, we are hurtling along on the wings of a tornado, poised over the deep blue waters of the mystic sea!”¹¹ His resultant body of photographs offer vertical and oblique perspectives markedly different from the spectacular imagery of his ground views from the Western Front, which were often shot at a low angle to give an authoritative and heroic status to the soldiers.

Just as the invention of the steam locomotive altered perceptions of the landscape through motion, so too did the airplane, though while the locomotive offered visual speed and distortion, the airplane offered distance, perspective, and relativity. Combined with photography, airplanes offered new forms of perceiving and experiencing the landscape. Primarily used for military reconnaissance, aerial photographs were not published in the press until the end of World War I due to their obvious application to military strategy. These photographs flattened the harsh terrain of the battlefield, reducing the intricate trench systems of WWI to geometric patterns, and allowing scenes of mass destruction to be read as “grandiose spectacles of places of pure horror,” divorced from the carnage of the trench.¹² The aerial perspective in Western artistic traditions, from landscape painting to cartography and mapmaking, has a long history of association with power and control. This is most obviously through religious connotations of the eye of God, but also manifests as a projection of nationalistic and imperial desires and the construction of territorial boundaries. With the technological advancement of aerial warfare in WWI for both reconnaissance and bombardment, the pilot assumed a new, god-like figure of domination.

On 25 February 1918, Hurley requested, and was accepted, to accompany planes from No. 1 Squadron on a bombing mission to attack Ottoman cavalry at al-Qutrani, east of the Dead Sea, where they were protecting a strategic point on the Hijaz

Railway. Hurley assumed the position of rear gunner, replacing the pintle-mounted machine gun with his own camera, in so doing putting himself in significant danger while also reducing the ability of the aircraft to be defended. Photographs of him in the cockpit before the mission show him as confident and sure-footed, clad in a leather flight jacket. They recall the image Hurley had constructed of himself as the heroic and intrepid Antarctic explorer, though here less an observer than a protagonist, a complicity evident in his recollection of the event:

The wonderful scenery of the range viewed from this elevation beggars description. The mountains appear to be great piles of limestone covered with stunted growth and around their bases the waddies, now dry, have cut deep channels... it lay below us like a great stagnant blue pool, rippleless and dead. From our height we could look from end to end of the abysmal basin.... Below us the fleet of bombing planes soared like great birds, making the desolation re-echo with the hum of power. Yet it all looked so peaceful that the mission of death and destruction on which we were bent, God Knows, was hellish enough: and it would be an unnatural being who could look down upon the majesty of nature below, smiling and peaceful and not feel regretful.... The machines circled like great vultures over the doomed Citadel, and I could distinctly see the large 100 lb bombs drop through the air. With a great detonation one fell directly in the courtyard. God knows what heinous damage it wrought....¹³

Hurley vacillates between the beauty and sensory aesthetics of the moment and the unknowable destruction he is engaged in. Even the bombers take on anthropomorphic forms. They soar like “great birds,” only to become “great vultures” when they drop their payloads. Hurley understands his complicity through his regret and yet, in spite of his vantage point and experience, refuses to imagine the damage done by his flight, again a problem of scale where human action and consequence are insufficiently resolved.

This is particularly evident when considering Hurley’s *A photograph taken from the air during the bombing of Jenin, showing a bomb dropping from a plane* (1918) (figure 1). Among the squiggly lines demarcating the topography of Jenin we see in the middle third of the image the ominous shadow of a bomb moments before it is detonated. In this, the lens of the camera morphs into a hybrid weapon, exposing the role of optical imaging in scoping, targeting, and measuring the delivery of ordnance. The photograph itself operates in a hybrid space and time. It is useless as reconnaissance for a mission underway and does not function as a measure of the mission – it cannot, until the bomb explodes and success or failure can be obtained. It records Hurley’s own interstitial position caught between being an observer and an actor.



Figure 1. *A photograph taken from the air during the bombing of Jenin, showing a bomb dropping from a plane (1918)*, Australian War Museum, online at www.awm.gov.au/collection/C972279 (accessed 15 June 2020).

Here aerial photography acts in a mode distinct from traditional war photographs recorded by bystanders to the event or its aftermath. It constitutes a crisis of representation, in which the visual scale of aerial imaging allows the context of the action to be understood holistically, but which also completely distances the viewer from consequence. The flattening of the landscape generated by the verticality of the aerial photograph engenders an aesthetic quality to the image founded on the ordering principles of geometry, as well as the emerging conceptual tenants of abstraction. As such, these early aerial photographs undermined the presumed realism of the camera. Hüppauf notes how the merging of new technologies of photography and aviation in war profoundly impacted on perceptions of landscape and space, transforming the profusion of worldly details into ordered and abstract patterns.¹⁴

For example, in *A photograph taken from the air showing a bomb bursting on a train at the railway station, centre left, at Jenin (1918)* (figure 2), physical distance is emphasized, but the viewer also remains emotionally distanced from the bombing event due to the difficulty of deciphering the image. In this inability to perceive, the viewer's reading shares something with Hurley's own diary accounts. Describing the view from his airplane, Hurley noted, "The earth assumed the appearance of patchwork."¹⁵ The problematic of these images lies in the potential for the aesthetic to overwhelm the devastating impact of war on real people and places. Interestingly, photographers such as Edward Steichen abandoned their commitment to the moody softness of Pictorialism after WWI, in favor of the hard-edge lines and abstraction of modernist aesthetics reflected in their experience from the sky.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Figure 2. *A photograph taken from the air showing a bomb bursting on a train at the railway station, centre left, at Jenin, (1918), Australian War Memorial, online at www.awm.gov.au/collection/C972278 (accessed 15 June 2020).*

Apart from his aerial images, other photographs taken during Hurley's time in the Middle East also employ an oblique, high angle to show the "exotic" features of the landscape in a manner that played on Hurley's unfamiliarity and fascination with the Middle East. He was not the only Australian artist to depict the Palestinian landscape during the First World War. The painter George Lambert, who would be Bean's particular choice to record the aftermath of the Gallipoli Campaign in 1919, was similarly attached to the Light Horse in Palestine and produced a series of majestic, high-keyed landscapes, often from elevated positions that evoked elements of the sublime in their scale and depth. Lambert, however, approached the Palestine landscape from the symbolic conceit of it as an extension of the Australian frontier tradition. To Lambert, the Light Horse soldiers in Palestine were evocations of the popular cultural hero of the nineteenth century, the Australian "bushman" (the stereotypical pioneer of European descent valorized in the foundation of colonial Australia). Lambert's painting *A Sergeant of the Light Horse in Palestine* (1920),¹⁶ which depicted fellow soldier-artist Thomas Henry Ivers who also drew and painted Palestine, was read at home as an exemplar of the character of Australian men and as a symbol of the arrival of the Australian national identity on the world stage. Indeed by 1918, as a particular consequence of the Gallipoli Campaign, the Middle Eastern theatre had acquired something of a mythological place in Australian narratives of the war – as an historical engagement between the recently federated nation with ancient and biblical cultures.¹⁷

During his First World War tour in Palestine, Hurley does not seem to have followed Lambert's particular line of national-mythologizing in his photographs. For example, unlike the lower angle employed in the Western Front to emphasize the individual heroism of the soldiers, images such as *A regiment of the Australian Light Horse on the march near either Bethlehem or Jerusalem [-] Leading the column is Brigadier General Charles Frederick Cox* (1918),¹⁸ taken from a higher vantage point, underscores the sheer vastness of the brigade. This and other images project the might of the Allied forces, but step away slightly from leveraging the historicity of Palestine as a motif. And yet clearly Palestine had a deep impact on Hurley throughout his life. When he returned in 1940 for his second tour as an Australian official World War II photographer (which also encompassed Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, and Syria), this time charged with creating overtly propagandistic images, he had clearly adopted a more symbolic reading of the journey as a Christian pilgrimage.¹⁹ Palestine's "very soil and ancient olive trees exhale the wondrous past and create an atmosphere that makes one ponder with some reverent awe," he wrote. "Here one sees inhabitants that seem to have existed from Bible days. They have not altered their customs nor methods ... they grow their olives, till the soil as they did thousands of years ago."²⁰

In Jerusalem, he produced a photographic book capturing the life and

architecture of the city, titled *The Holy City: A Camera Study of Jerusalem and its Borderlands*.²¹ Atypical of his oeuvre, this was a work concerned with a Christian ontology of Palestine. The images are highly aestheticized and make good use of elevated, aerial perspectives to imbue the architecture of the city with grandeur and scale, as well as stylized, volumetric lighting that evoked his composite images of World War I battlefields. They followed a narrative constructed through accompanying captions taken from biblical passages and included an image titled *The Light of the World*, a clear reference to William Holman Hunt's Pre-Raphaelite painting of 1851–56.²²

Hurley's Palestine photographs, some displayed as colored lantern slides, were exhibited to great acclaim as part of a group of 136 of his photographs at Grafton Galleries, London, in May 1918. Hurley's Palestine tours bracketed his career and were facilitated by two world wars. Yet Australia's problematic engagement with the Middle East through violent conflicts continued into the twenty-first century, through the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, both of which have seen the commissioning of numerous new official Australian war artists. As a consequence, the Australian Official War Art Scheme remains the longest continually operating art commissioning program in Australian history. It is thus necessary to interrogate one more relationship of complicity – that of the contemporary Australian body politic in imagining the Middle East, and to consider how the transmission and reception of Hurley's images has evolved over the century.

Our understanding of the photographic medium has evolved since Bean's insistence on material authenticity. As Jolly argues, "To the contemporaneous viewer Hurley's composite techniques were not illicit fakery, but licit special effects tacitly deployed to produce a legitimate scenario worthy of emotional and phenomenological investment."²³ This is true for twenty-first century audiences whose experience of photographic imagery is often heavily mediated, constructed, remixed, and shared. However, it is also true that we live in a contemporary moment where aerial images of war once again have caused a crisis of representation. There is a need to devise new modes of visual perception for interpreting the abstract shapes that signify roads, buildings, and the natural geographic landscape, let alone identifying any discernible human subjects in aerial imagery. Caroline Brothers suggests that the normalization of aerial photography's detached and impersonal perspective works to diminish the human impact of war.²⁴ This is made abundantly clear by the advent of the god-like cruise missile cameras of the first Gulf war, and the sight of young drone pilots remotely flying unmanned missions from sites deeply removed from physical danger. Yet in relation to the aerial photography of World War II, Cosgrove and Fox argue that due to the geographically dispersed theatre of war it was difficult for civilians to conceive its scope without the aid of aerial images.²⁵



Figure 3. *An aerial view of the Turkish defenses of Jerusalem taken from an aircraft of the Australian Flying Corps (1918)*, Australian War Memorial, online at www.awm.gov.au/collection/C969258 (accessed 15 June 2020).

The difficulty of reconciling these visions persists; photography theorist and critic Allan Sekula was particularly critical of the retrospective use of Steichen's aerial reconnaissance photographs from the war for aesthetic contemplation in galleries and museums, arguing these images once served an instrumental functional purpose and required specialist decoding and interpretation.²⁶ This is typical of a reading of the medium of photography that highlights the contextual significance of the image for its ideological understanding.

While it is indeed important to consider the context of Hurley's aerial images, which served functional, propaganda, and documentary purposes, context fails to account for the inherent indeterminant nature of photography as situated between contingency and artistic agency. As Jacques Rancière notes when discussing documentary photography, the image itself cannot reveal its status as either artistic expression or reportage.²⁷ It is perhaps this unknowing of whether the aesthetic framing of Hurley's aerial photography is intentional – such as the gradated tone and balanced symmetry of the road that cuts diagonally through the image titled *An aerial view of the Turkish*

defences of Jerusalem taken from an aircraft of the Australian Flying Corps (1918) (figure 3) – that makes them so compelling yet disturbing in the context of conflict. Of course, this contingency is shattered in his more famous composite images, which is possibly another reason why these unadulterated aerial images are something of an enigma in his oeuvre.

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Endnotes

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- 2 For the most comprehensive account of the Official War Art Scheme, see Margaret Hutchinson, *Painting War: A History of Australia's First World War Art Scheme* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).
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- 6 Millar, *From Snowdrift to Shellfire*, 50.
- 7 Bean, quoted in Martin Jolly, "Australian First-World-War Photography: Frank Hurley and Charles Bean," *History of Photography* 23, 2 (1999): 142.
- 8 "Frank Hurley Diary," 23 August 1917, Australian National Library, Canberra, MS 833.
- 9 "Frank Hurley Diary," 31 December 1917.
- 10 Jolly, "Australian First-World-War Photography," 142.
- 11 Quoted by Daniel O'Keefe, *Hurley at War: the Photography and Diaries of Frank Hurley in Two World Wars* (Broadway NSW: Fairfax Library, 1986), 104.
- 12 Hüppauf, "Experiences of Modern Warfare and the Crisis of Representation," 56.
- 13 Hurley, quoted by Daniel O'Keefe, *Hurley at War*, 88.
- 14 Bernd Hüppauf, "Modernism and the Photographic Representation of War and Destruction," in *Fields of Vision: Essays in Film Studies, Visual Anthropology, and Photography*, ed. Roger Hillman and Leslie Devereaux (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995), 106.
- 15 Hurley, quoted in Robert Dixon and Christopher Lee, eds., *The Diaries of Frank Hurley 1912–41* (New York: Anthem Press, 2011), 153.
- 16 See online at www.ngv.vic.gov.au/explore/collection/work/5822/ (accessed 7 June 2020).
- 17 Although not a sustained thread in Australian art history, representations of Palestine, the Maghreb, and the Ottoman Middle East bore some traces of a late and etiolated Orientalism informed by earlier European artist journeys. In 1909 the Australian post-impressionist painters Ethel Carrick and Emmanuel Philips Fox had reprised Delacroix's route through Algeria, engaging with the unfamiliar environments in aesthetic experiments. Australian Impressionist Charles Conder likewise found visual inspiration in Algeria. The landscape painter Arthur Streeton, also appointed an Australian Official War Artist, travelled extensively through Egypt on his way to London, keeping detailed sketchbooks.

- 18 See online at www.awm.gov.au/collection/B01619/ (accessed 7 June 2020).
- 19 When Hurley was seconded as the official photographer for WWII, he continued to draw on Pictorialist aesthetics, much to the dismay of his younger colleagues who considered this mode of imaging as outdated and unrepresentative of technology's increasing role in contemporary experience. Helen Ennis, *Man with a Camera: Frank Hurley Overseas* (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2002).
- 20 Hurley, quoted in O'Keefe, *Hurley at War*, 144.
- 21 Frank Hurley, *The Holy City: a Camera Study of the Holy City and its Borderlands* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1949).
- 22 When Hunt's *The Light of the World* toured Sydney in 1906 its exhibition at the then National Art Gallery of New South Wales was met with great critical acclaim and attended by two hundred thousand people. It is not known whether Hurley saw the painting in that context.
- 23 Jolly, "Australian First-World-War Photography," 147.
- 24 Caroline Brothers, *War and Photography: A Cultural History* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 103.
- 25 Denis Cosgrove and William L. Fox, "The Airman's Vision: World War II and After," in *Photography & Flight* (London: Reaktion Books, 2009), 57.
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History Turns Space into Place

A French Voyage to the Dead Sea Basin in 1864

Isotta Poggi

Abstract

In 1864, French humanist and collector Honoré d'Albert, duc de Luynes (1802–1867) spearheaded a scientific exploratory mission from Beirut, Lebanon, to Petra, Jordan, with the professional expertise of photographer Louis Vignes (1831–1896), geologist Louis Lartet (1840–1899), and naturalist Gustave Combe (1832–1905). The team surveyed the basin of the Dead Sea, researching historical sites associated with the biblical stories (including the ancient “cursed” cities) and the basin’s geological features. A year later, de Luynes financed the photographic campaign of Henri Sauvaire (1831–1896) to Hebron, West Bank, and the crusade castles of Karak and Shubak, Jordan. Accompanied by an archive of photographs, drawings, and maps, and recorded as a compilation of travelogues in *Voyage d’exploration à la mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain* (Paris, 1874), the mission documents a French approach to investigating the historical roots of Christianity in Palestine and encounters with the local inhabitants in the waning decades of the Ottoman Empire. Created shortly before the establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the photographs of living cities – Nablus, Jenin, and Hebron – and of natural landscapes by the Dead Sea, along with the geological maps and the travelers’ texts, may contribute unique historical sources in the context of Yazid Anani’s *Cities Exhibition* project.

Keywords

French mission to Palestine; Louis Lartet; Louis Vignes; Henri Sauvaire; Honoré d'Albert, duc de Luynes; Exploration of the Dead Sea; nineteenth century travel photography; Mar Saba Monastery; Nablus; Hebron.

Photo historian Liz Wells begins “Landscape: Time, Space, Place, Aesthetics” with the notion that landscapes are defined by the stories written about them: “History turns space into place.”¹ Wells identifies the symbiotic relationship between nature and culture as a fluid definitional process, in which “our perception of nature is filtered through cultural understandings [...], human action contours the landscape, and stories told give meaning to it.” It is with such layered cultural history that the landscape photographs of Palestine taken in 1864, in what is called today the West Bank, feature the topography and urban centers of a region continuously inhabited for millennia.

French humanist Honoré Théodoric Paul Joseph d’Albert (1802–1867), 8th Duc de Luynes, led a mission from Beirut to Petra over a period of five months (9 February to 23 June 1864). After devoting his life to studying and collecting Greco-Roman antiquities from Cyprus, Phoenicia, Palestine, and Italy, he conceived this mission to combine his interdisciplinary interests in biblical studies, antiquity, and archaeology with his scientific pursuits in photography, chemistry, and geology.² Inspired by the Bible’s scriptures and exegesis, de Luynes established an itinerary in Ottoman Palestine through the sites associated with Judeo-Christian tradition, including both living cities and ancient ruins. One of his goals was to identify the locations of the biblical “cursed” cities, following the scriptures, within the context of the geophysical environment of the Dead Sea basin.³

De Luynes’s team of experts, each with specific assigned tasks, included: naval lieutenant Louis Vignes (1831–1896), who had traveled extensively to the eastern Mediterranean and was trained in photography; geologist Louis Lartet (1840–1899); and naturalist Gustave Combe (1832–1905). The team navigated the length and breadth of the Dead Sea in a custom-built collapsible metal boat and collected water samples at different depths. After visiting Petra, de Luynes returned to France while other members of the expedition headed north to explore Palmyra and other sites. At de Luynes’s request, the following year French diplomat and photographer Henri Sauvaire (1831–1896) and architect Christophe Edouard Mauss (1829–1914) pursued a photographic campaign of the ruins of the crusaders’ castles at Shubak (Montréal) and Karak, in today’s Jordan.

Most significantly, de Luynes launched two photography competitions between 1856 and 1867 through the Société française de photographie. One award was for increased image quality and stability, to prevent image deterioration due to fading, a common problem with salted paper prints at the time. The second award went towards the development of a photomechanical process for the mass production of photographs intended for publication. Photo historian Sylvie Aubenas has chronicled the competition and its resulting rivalries during this early phase of the history of photography, in which Louis-Alphonse Poitevin (1819–1882) ultimately won a prize for his photolithographic process. De Luynes, however, preferred the photogravure developed by Charles Nègre due to its accurate rendition of details, broader range of tones, and image-enhancing qualities. He chose Nègre’s process for the production of the photogravures selected for the mission’s publication.⁴

The report of de Luynes' Dead Sea mission was published ten years later in *Voyage d'exploration à la mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain*, released in three volumes.⁵ *Voyage* (1874) includes a portfolio of 67 photogravures (after photographs mostly by Louis Vignes) and 18 lithographs (after photographs by Henri Sauvaire) featuring the landscapes functioning as documents of the rich multi-layered history, both cultural and geological, of the Dead Sea basin.

The journey was significant for pioneering the use of photography as a scientific recording tool. Some areas along the banks of the Jordan River and around the Dead Sea were photographed for the first time during this voyage. The images of Jerash, one of the cities of the Hellenistic Decapolis and later a key Roman junction along the caravan route leading to the Mediterranean, are among the first taken of this ancient city, and predate the excavation of the site in the early twentieth century. Other archaeological, biblical, and historically relevant sites photographed during the journey for the first time include: Nahr-al-Kalb, a strategic crossroads in Lebanon with inscriptions left by invading military forces from the Assyrians to Napoleon; the site believed to be Mount Nebo, from where Moses reputedly surveyed the promised land and later died, and the Nabatean-Arab capital Petra with its spectacular monuments carved into the living rock, respectively in north and south Jordan; the Hellenistic sanctuary at Banyas, in the Syrian Golan; and Palmyra, Syria.

During this mission, de Luynes negotiated two important antiquities for the Louvre Near East collection: the sarcophagus of King Eshmunazar (early fifth century BCE) from the necropolis of Sidon, Lebanon,⁶ and Shihan's Stele (commemorative slab), or Stele of the Warrior God (1200–800 BCE). The stele had been located by Félicien de Saulcy in 1851 on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea, at a site called Rujum al-'Abd, Jordan (near Mount Shihan).⁷ This last acquisition in particular drew much attention in Europe, raising the idea that more inscribed antiquities could be found in support of biblical archaeology.⁸

De Luynes' voyage documents a Eurocentric Christian (French Catholic) perspective and perception of Palestine at a time when this region was increasingly gaining international attention not only for its religious Judeo-Christian history (as the cradle of Christianity) but also for its geopolitical interests in the waning decades of the Ottoman Empire. A year after de Luynes' mission, the British crown approved the establishment of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF). This membership organization was founded in 1865 by clergymen, members of the military, archaeologists, and engineers. Its purpose was "the accurate and systematic investigation of the archaeology, topography, geology and physical geography, natural history, manners and customs of the holy land, for biblical illustration."⁹ The PEF founders sanctioned a scientific and methodologic approach to the survey and study of Palestine, and hence criticized the missions such as the one by de Luynes as "partial and isolated" attempts to study the region. In addition, de Luynes and others were deemed responsible for their "ill-advised liberality" in negotiating the acquisition of antiquities with local tribes, as it raised the local inhabitants' expectations.¹⁰

While the itinerary reflects the movement of the French travelers across multiple modern-day countries, from Lebanon (where they photographed the coastline of Tyre, the necropolis of Sidon, and ruins from the crusades) to Aqaba, Jordan, by the Red Sea, most of the images document the cities and sites closest to the Dead Sea, including in today's West Bank.

The present preliminary study focuses on the photographs of locations, towns, and panoramas specifically in this area, as a historical resource for Yazid Anani's *Cities Exhibition* project. A Palestinian scholar and architect, Anani has conceived *Cities Exhibition* as a series of curated cultural events addressing “decades of the Palestinian nation's fragmentation, its geography, and its cultural production... somehow a response to the post-Oslo spatial enclaves of the West Bank.”¹¹ While Anani's focus is to raise a cultural discourse and awareness between art practice and social change in cities and urban centers in today's West Bank, de Luynes' journey offers a mid-nineteenth-century portrait of the region: the French voyage produced photographic panoramas and maps which capture living cities (such as Nablus and Hebron), natural landscapes, and ancient ruins that were significant destinations for biblical archaeology or the geologic features of the Dead Sea basin.

The Itinerary

The main reference map of the mission illustrates the detailed itinerary beginning from the entry point from the north at Sebastiya, which the travelers visited on the way from Jenin to Nablus in early March (figure 1, Jenin is not shown on map).



Figure 1. “Cours inférieur du Jourdain de la mer morte, du wadi Arabah e du wady el Jeib,” 1864, Map of the lower Jordan River, the Dead Sea, Wadi ‘Araba, and Wadi al-Jib , in Honoré d’Albert, duc de Luynes (1802–1867) et al., *Voyage d’exploration à la mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain – Atlas* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, Éditeur, 1874), portfolio, 138, detailed view of map online at archive.org/details/gri_33125012263592 (accessed 7 June 2020).

The first site they photographed in what is today's West Bank was Jenin, which they reached on 3 March (figure 2). The view is centered on the French travelers' tents mounted on the outskirts of Jenin, which is visible on the hill on the right. A small herd of horses used to transport the travelers, their luggage and equipment, is to the right of the tents. The mosque and minaret, centered in the background, are framed by the mountains on the horizon and a stand of palm trees to their right. After Jenin, the group visited several locations marked with peculiar (mis)spellings (of the nineteenth century), French and the contemporary Arabic romanized names interchanging the order: "Sebastieh (Samarie)," "Naplouse (Sichem)," "el Kods (Jérusalem)," "er Riha (Jericho)," and "el Khulil (Hebron)," among others.



Figure 2. "Djenin," Louis Vignes, *Vues de Phénicie, de Judée, des Pays de Moab et de Petra – Atlas*, plate 19, albumen print.

Vignes took two panoramic photographs of Nablus, which they reached on 5 March; he first photographed Mount Gerzim because of its religious significance, then the center of Nablus as seen from this mountain, followed by a panorama of the city tucked in the valley between Mount Ebal (Jabal Ibal) and Mount Gerzim (Jabal Jarzim) (figures 3–5).



Figure 3. “Naplouse, Mont Garizim,” Louis Vignes, *Vues de Phénicie, de Judée, des Pays de Moab et de Petra – Atlas*, plate 21, albumen print.



Figure 4. “Naplouse, Base du Mont Garizim,” Louis Vignes, *Vues de Phénicie, de Judée, des Pays de Moab et de Petra – Atlas*, plate 22, albumen print.



Figure 5. “Naplouse, Bases des monts Gazirim et Ebal,” Louis Vignes, *Vues de Phénicie, de Judée, des Pays de Moab et de Petra – Atlas*, plate 20, albumen print.

On 7 March, the group visited a site near Beitin (Baytin) which they speculated to be the ancient Bethel in central Palestine. Vignes took the panoramic view of a plateau covered with ancient rubble in the foreground, as de Luynes attempted to reconcile the stories in Genesis with the actual physical environment (figure 6). There he realized the challenges of understanding sacred topography due to the inconsistencies of the literary sources and what he considered to be “ambiguities” in local oral histories.¹² From this site they could see the profiles of the mountains on the eastern side of the Dead Sea. De Luynes noted that both the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea were visible from that altitude, and observed differing sea levels between the bodies of water. A sketch by Lartet shows the mountain chains on the other side of the salted lake (figure 7).



Figure 6. “Bethel,” Louis Vignes, *Vues de Phénicie, de Judée, des Pays de Moab et de Petra* – Atlas, plate 23, albumen print.

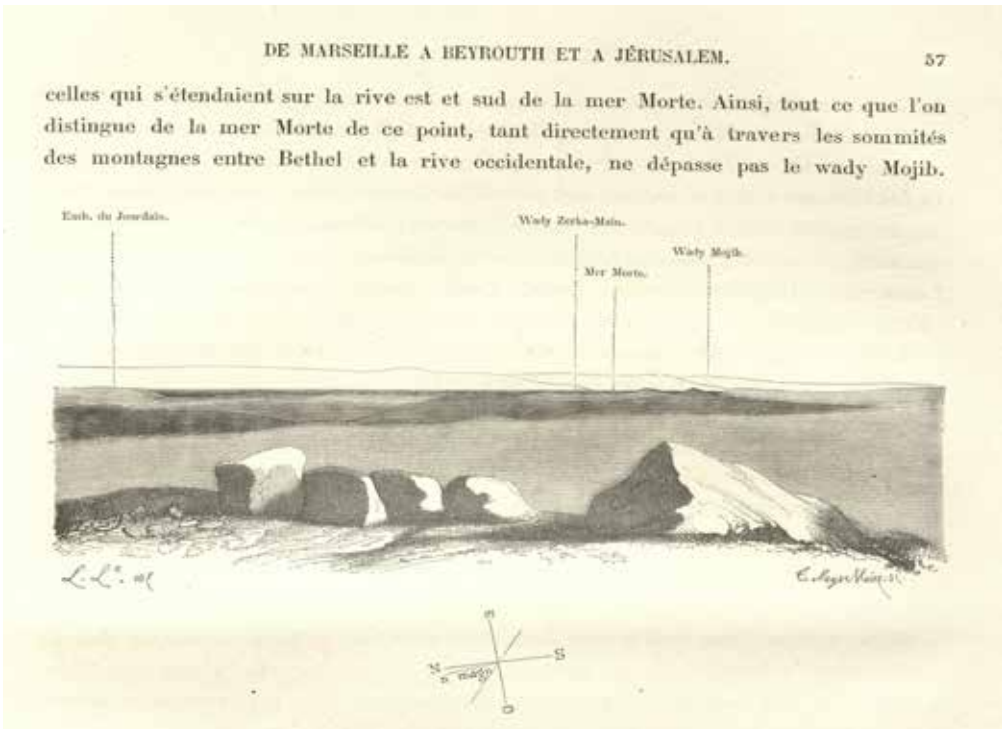


Figure 7. “View from Bethel of the eastern shore of the Dead Sea,” Louis Lartet, drawing, in Luynes, Honoré d’Albert, et al., *Voyage d’exploration à la Mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain* (Paris: Arthus Bertrand, Éditeur, 1874), vol. 1, 57.

After weeks surveying the mountain ranges both north and east of Jericho, on each bank of the Jordan River as it approaches the Dead Sea, the team headed south. In Jerusalem they photographed the Holy Sepulcher and Siloam outside the walls (Silwan). On 23 April, they reached the monastery of Mar Saba, which lies halfway between Jerusalem and the Dead Sea. For this site, the portfolio included a panorama showing the Kidron Valley (Wadi Qidrun) viewed from above the Greek monastery. However, the group of buildings is barely visible, with only the tops of two towers emerging from a hilltop in the center. Instead, the photograph clearly shows on the left the deep geological cut of the ravine of the Kidron Valley and its tributary to the Dead Sea. On the lower left corner, a small detail of a packing blanket reminds us of the presence of the observers, whose gaze points to the expansive altitudes ahead of them, reaching the mountain chains on the other side of the Dead Sea (figure 8).



Figure 8. “Vue Prise Audessus de Mar Saba,” Peter Bergheim (1844–1885), in Luynes, *Voyage d’exploration à la Mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain – Atlas*, portfolio, plate 25, photogravure.

De Luynes visited Hebron in both early and late May. At his request, photographs of Hebron were taken by Henri Sauvaire who planned a photo campaign in Jordan of the Karak and Shubak castles a year later. On 8 April 1865, Sauvaire and Mauss took eight photographs of Hebron’s urban center. The series begins with a panoramic “bird’s eye view” of the mosque and its ramparts; the tomb of the Patriarchs is placed at the center, and the city on the right (figure 9). In this city, Sauvaire focused his camera on urban architectural details, such as the minarets, one of its cupolas marking the presence of the caves, the entrance to the al-Khalil bazaar, and a fountain. He also photographed the narrow alleyways and gateways of the city, noting the historical layers of the city found where the ancient walls stand under the new ones.¹³



Figure 9. Henry Sauvaire (1831–1896), Panorama view of Hebron, albumen print, 1866, Archives, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles, California.

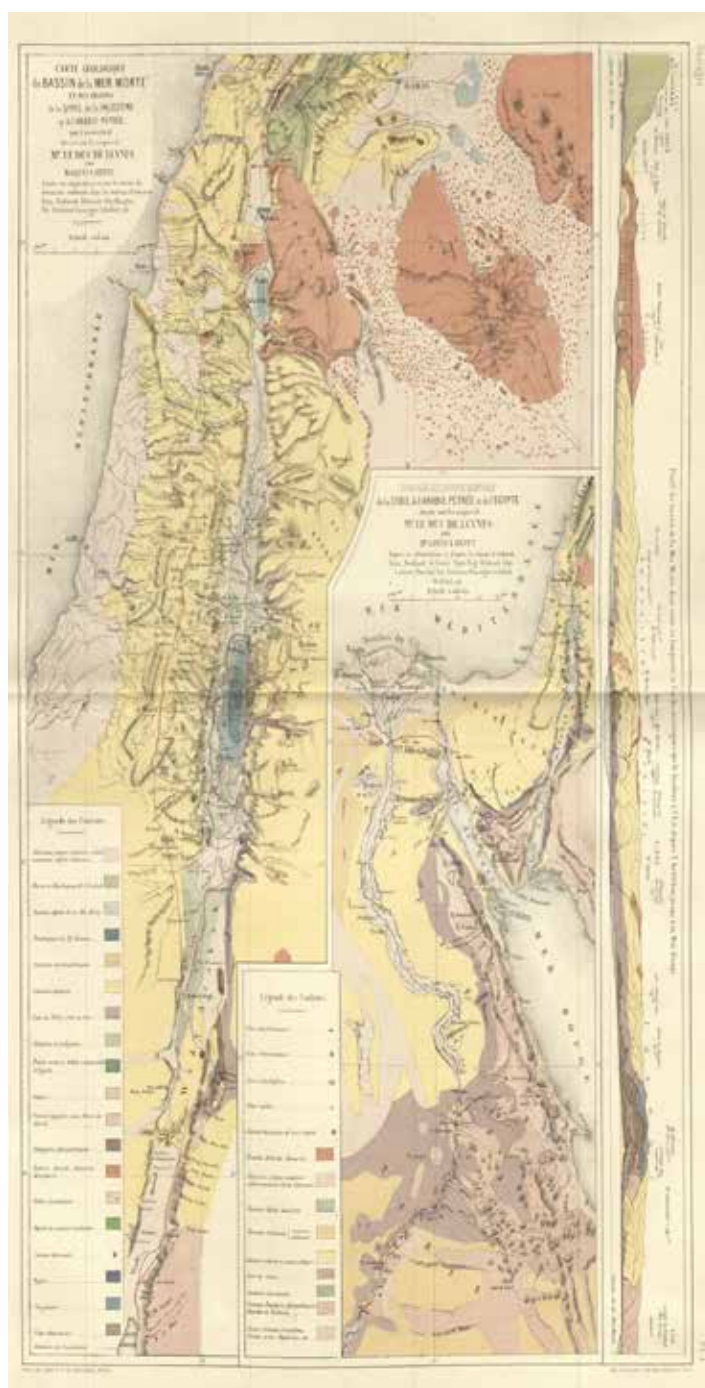


Figure 10. Lartet, Geologic map of the Dead Sea basin and the regions of Syria, Palestine, and Arabia Petraea, 1864, in Luynes, *Voyage d'exploration à la Mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain*, vol. 3, plate 1.

The third volume of *Voyage* includes two geological maps of the Dead Sea made by Lartet.¹⁴ One extends over the entire geological basin from Sidon in the north to the Red Sea, and the Sinai Peninsula in the south (figure 10); a second one provides a close-up look of the lake's contours, the surrounding mountains elevations, tributaries and shores from Nablus to the southern edge (figure 11).

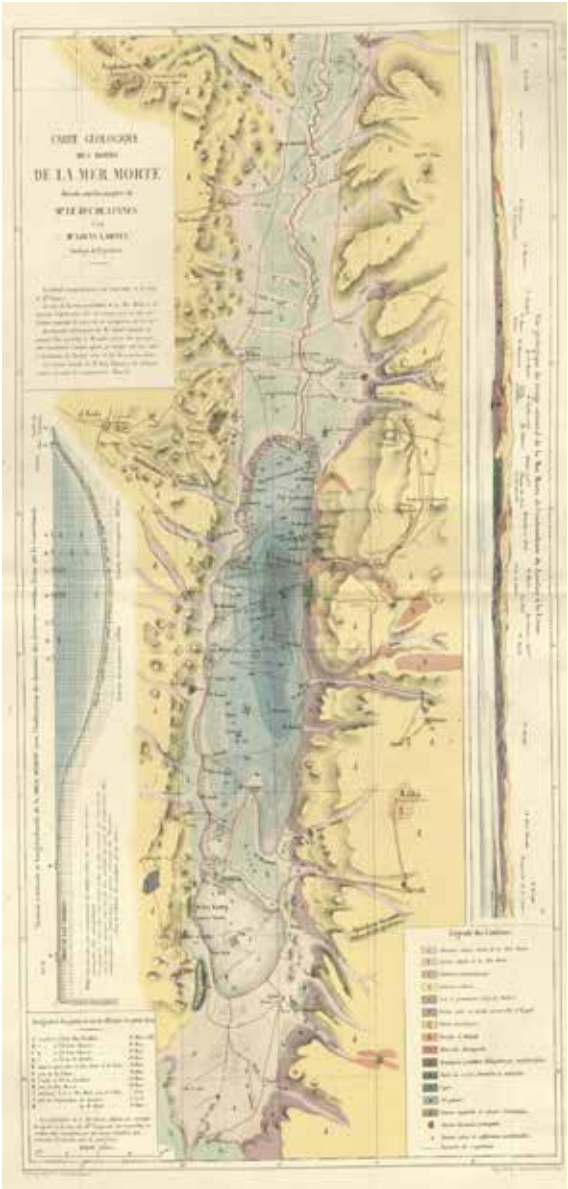


Figure 11. Lartet, Geologic map of the Dead Sea basin and the regions of Syria, Palestine, and Arabia Petraea, 1864, in Luynes, *Voyage d'exploration à la Mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain*, vol. 3, plate 2.

De Luynes's empirical research *in situ* on the region's ancient geography could not come to full fruition. He met his death on his sixty-fifth birthday before he could publish all of his conclusions. He was in Italy to support the cause of the Roman pope, whose temporal authority was being threatened by the Risorgimento troops of Giuseppe Garibaldi. The duc's perspective and his devotion to the Catholic faith transpired throughout his writings in *Voyage*, and into the circumstances of his death.

As the publication's editor, de Vogüé, stated in volume one of *Voyage*, this mission was significant for allowing de Luynes to hypothesize the location of Sodom, at the foothill of the mountains of the Ghor valley, although he could not site Gomorrah nor other cursed biblical cities.¹⁵ The editor acknowledged the difficulty of reconciling ancient geography with the exegesis of the scriptures and noted de Luynes' important contributions to the field.

Biblical exegesis apart, the images presented in *Voyage* show how the French travelers were deeply engaged with the complex relationship between ancient texts and the territory, and between culture and nature. Creating early panoramic photographs of land and cities in today's West Bank, this mission stands as a reminder and a resource for the study of the multi-layered history and identity of the region and the encounter of foreigners with local inhabitants.

Anani's *Cities Exhibition* project views "temporality as an important strategy for examining the city's ongoing transformations and scrutinizing the forces that reshape and reinvent Palestine and its political and social imaginary."¹⁶ As de Luynes' mission documented this territory's cultural fabric, focusing on the significance of the sites through an historical lens, it reminds us of the history of migrations and settlements through millennia and the most recent centuries into modernity. While the panorama above the monastery of Mar Saba evokes a static time, harking back even to the Byzantine Empire, de Luynes offers vibrant Ottoman-era views of Jenin, Nablus, and Hebron, which have been dramatically transformed since then.

The photographs by Vignes and Sauvaire, along with the maps by Lartet, provide a counterpoint to public art projects which Anani sees, critically, as a "constant collision and negotiation: "ours" and "theirs."¹⁷ The maps and cross-sectional details by Louis Lartet are a case in point. They reveal the free movement of the French group across the region. An east-west cross section presents the elevations of the mountain ranges from the Mediterranean Sea to Mount Shihan in Jordan, marking the highest peaks and the strategically placed urban centers developed along the way over thousands of years. The geologic formations of the Dead Sea basin beneath the cities visited in the voyage visually define the shared foundational ground not only for the French mission, but most importantly for this whole region, its landscape, its inhabitants, and its history (figure 12).

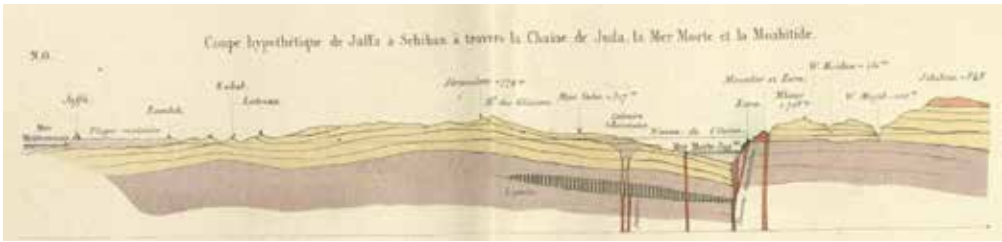


Figure 12. This cross-section drawing is captioned as the hypothetical explanation of the Dead Sea formation based on the depths that the author could explore and as material translation of the theory developed during the work. Lartet, Geologic map of the Dead Sea basin and the regions of Syria, Palestine, and Arabia Petraea, 1864, in Luynes, *Voyage d'exploration à la Mer Morte, à Petra, et sur la rive gauche du Jourdain*, vol. 3, plate 3 (detail).

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Endnotes

- 1 Liz Wells, *Land Matters: Landscape Photography, Culture and Identity* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2011), 19.
- 2 De Luynes was a member of the *Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres*, and served as deputy director of the Louvre from 1825 to 1828. He co-founded the Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica (now the German Archaeological Institute) in Rome in 1829 with Eduard Gerhard (1795–1867), and in 1835 sponsored the French section of the Institute. He authored more than twenty books on topics ranging from archeology to chemistry.
- 3 Editor Melchior de Vogüé summarized de Luynes' intentions in the publication: "L'intention du duc de Luynes était de résumer dans un travail d'ensemble toutes les observations topographiques, archéologiques et géologiques, recueillies pendant son exploration, et, à l'aide de cette étude, de discuter les textes réunis ci-dessus. Il aurait alors donné ses conclusions et développé le système qu'il avait adopté pour interpréter les traditions relatives aux villes maudites et fixer la géographie ancienne du bassin de la mer Morte." Honoré d'Albert Luynes, Christophe Mauss, Henri Sauvaire, Louis Lartet and Louis Vignes, *Voyage D'exploration À La Mer Morte, À Petra, Et Sur La Rive Gauche du Jourdain*, vol.1–3 and portfolio, ed. Melchior de Vogüé (Paris: Arthus Bertrand: 1874), vol. 1, 375.
- 4 See Frances Terpak and Peter Bonfitto "Transferring Antiquity to Ink: Ruins from the Americas to Asia Minor and the Development of Photolithography" in *Camera Ottomana*:

- Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840–1914*, ed. Zenap Çelik and Eldem Eldem, trans. Handel Eagle (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2015), 33.
- 5 All three volumes of *Voyage D’exploration À La Mer Morte, À Petra, Et Sur La Rive Gauche du Jourdain*, and the portfolio are available online courtesy of the Getty Research Institute at (archive.org) bit.ly/37wLW9u (accessed 15 May 2020).
 - 6 De Luynes, *Voyage*, vol. 1, 21–22. This necropolis had just been mapped by archaeologist and philosopher Joseph Ernest Renan, an archaeology delegate appointed by Napoleon III to build the antiquities collection for the French national museum.
 - 7 De Luynes, *Voyage*, vol. 1, 171.
 - 8 Hannes Olivier, “Nineteenth-century Travelogues and the Land of Moab,” in Moshe Sharon, ed., *The Holy Land in History and Thought* (Leiden: Brill, 1988), 83–84.
 - 9 “The Palestine Exploration Fund: Prospectus,” *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, vol. 1 (1869), online at biblicalstudies.org.uk/pdf/pefq/1869-71_001.pdf (accessed 15 May 2020).
 - 10 *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, vol. 1, 2: “It is sufficient to observe that their researches have been partial and isolated, and their results in too many cases discrepant with each other.”
 - 11 Yazid Anani, and Hanan Toukan, “On Delusion, Art, and Urban Desires in Palestine Today: an Interview with Yazid Anani,” *Arab Studies Journal* 22, 1 (Spring 2014): 211.
 - 12 De Luynes, *Voyage*, vol. 1, 351.
 - 13 While the Hebron series was not published in the *Voyage* portfolio, the original prints and negatives of this series are in the archives of the Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles.
 - 14 De Luynes, *Voyage*, vol. 3, plates 1–3.
 - 15 De Vogüé, *Voyage*, vol. 1, 375–76: “La grande lagune qui forme l’extrémité de la mer Morte, au sud de la Liean, occupe la place de la plaine de Siddim; les villes maudites étaient situées au pied des montagnes dans le Ghôr: Sodome près du Djebel -Esdoum, Ségor à l’embouchure du wady Es-Safieh ou à celle du wady Ed-Draâ. Il croyait, en outre, à l’existence d’une seconde ville du nom de Ségor ‘ou Tsoar au nord de la mer Morte, dans le Ghôr El-Belkaâ, près de l’embouchure du Jourdain et sur sa rive gauche. Il ne s’était pas encore prononcé quant à l’emplacement précis qu’il assignait à Gomorrhe, à Seboïm et à Adarna, mais il les cherchait aussi au sud du lac. . . . il est vivement à regretter que la science ait été privée des lumières que cet esprit éminent aurait jetées sur les difficiles questions de géographie et d’exégèse soulevées par les récits bibliques.”
 - 16 Anani, “On Delusion, Art, and Urban Desires,” 216.
 - 17 Anani, “On Delusion, Art, and Urban Desires,” 216.

The Tale of Two Villages

New Perspective on the Historic Palestinian Landscape

Jeffrey C. Howry

Abstract

A surface reconnaissance survey of several archaeological sites in greater Megiddo spanning the late Roman through Ottoman-Mandate periods was undertaken during June and July 2019 using LiDAR imagery with the intent of determining what features displayed by the LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) technology imagery could be verified on the ground. Specifically, the investigation sought to understand how LiDAR imagery could display sub-surface structures and certain surface features in two Palestinian villages previously identified in the vicinity of Tel Megiddo. The results of the field research of these case studies illustrate how the near-surface structures that once supported various buildings can be readily identified through the visualization that LiDAR provides.

Keywords

Ottoman Palestine; Mandate Palestine; historic landscapes; remote sensing; Palestine agriculture; historic demography; LiDAR imagery.

The dominant urban centers of the western Levant, the result of habitation for many millennia, often garner scholarly attention that overshadows the places and events of smaller sites within their immediate area of influence. Such is the case of Tel Megiddo, occupied from the Neolithic through Persian periods (6000 BCE – 400 BCE),¹ and

later sites in its immediate vicinity. The tel's strategic location along a major trade route between the eastern Mediterranean coast and Jezreel valley (Marj ibn 'Amr) is well documented through archaeological and historic documentary sources (figure 1). The importance of the location was notably recognized by the Romans in the early centuries of the current era during their occupation of "Syria Palaestina" from 105–337 CE.²

The individual case studies discussed in this article use a type of remote sensing technology known as LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging). While everyone has seen remote sensing data like satellite images available from Bing and Google, there are other types of images which can be created from wavelengths that are not visible to the human eye. Infrared images show heat patterns, while other imagery can reveal the amount of moisture on the landscape. LiDAR, a form of airborne laser scanning, uses a wavelength invisible to the human eye, but can penetrate vegetation to reveal surface features as if the ground was bare. In certain conditions, it is possible to see below the soil surface and view structures and features that only excavation would reveal. For this reason, LiDAR has revolutionized archaeological survey in many parts of the world. In Cambodia, for example, until recently most archaeologists believed the medieval area of Angkor Thom (which includes the Angkor Wat temple and surrounding monuments) occupied only 9 km². LiDAR has revealed a 35 km² area of the city and temple sites.³ In Central America, the lowland Maya region has been subject to archaeological survey for over 125 years. The focus for many decades was on the ceremonial centers, with survey of the areas surrounding the centers only undertaken in detail during the past fifty years. A recent study in the Guatemalan Maya Biosphere Reserve identified 61,480 structures within 2,144 km², suggesting that the Late Classic period (650 CE to 800 CE) in the central lowlands had a population of 7 million to 11 million inhabitants.⁴ In the dramatic case of the site of Caracol in Belize, LiDAR mapped 208 km² (80 square miles) defining the full extent of the site, whereas twenty-five years of research had only mapped 13 percent of the site.⁵

Field research in greater Megiddo during the summer of 2019 focused on investigating previously known historic sites from the Roman, Byzantine, and late Ottoman/Mandate eras with the use of LiDAR. Only a few of the sites located within the vicinity of Tel Megiddo have structures that are still evident on the surface. Since vegetation and soil can affect how LiDAR images present surface and subsurface features, the initial baseline fieldwork reported here sought to validate how observable terrain might be evident compared to subsurface features evident in the LiDAR imagery. This report summarizes some of the findings from this recent investigation.

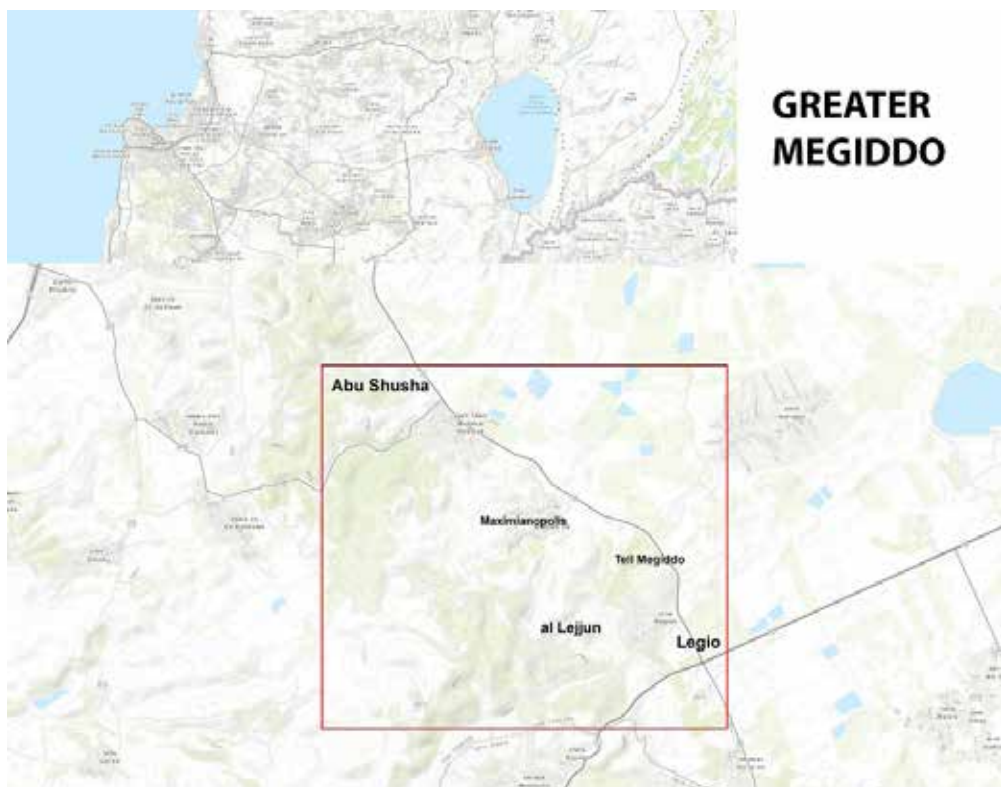


Figure 1. Sites of greater Megiddo. Source: J. Howry from Arcgis.com.

The Camp of the Sixth Roman Legion

The map of the area (figure 1) generally locates various archaeological sites which directly or indirectly were the result of Roman occupation and the nearby trade routes. Legio was the camp of the Roman Legio VI Ferrata (Sixth “Iron” Legion) which occupied the site from 192 CE to 316 CE.⁶ For the current study, this location serves as the anchor for the surrounding sites occupied in the early centuries of the first millennia of the current era. The rectangular shape of the traditional Roman camp is clearly evident from the LiDAR image (figure 2). Today’s sloping hillside masks the multiple buildings and streets which once defined this site of 5,000 legionnaires.

Excavations over several field seasons during the past decade have revealed the complex structure of the camp. Although many Roman camps followed a rectangular design with specific structures, Legio descends twenty-five meters down the hillside in a series of terraces crisscrossed with streets that separated the many buildings (officers’ quarters, barracks) of the camp.

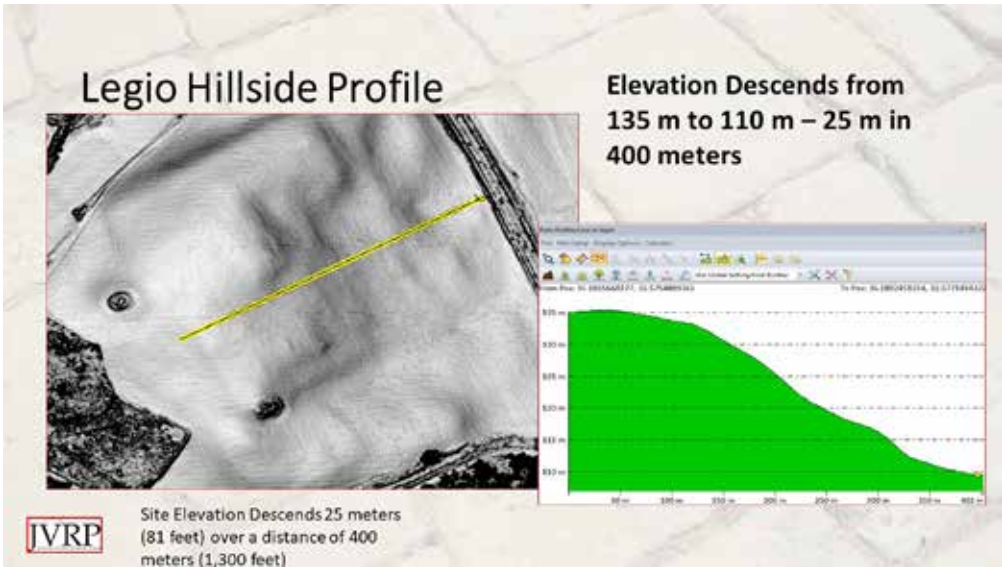


Figure 2. Legio's LiDAR Image and Terrain Profile, Jezreel Valley Regional Project. Source: J. Howry.

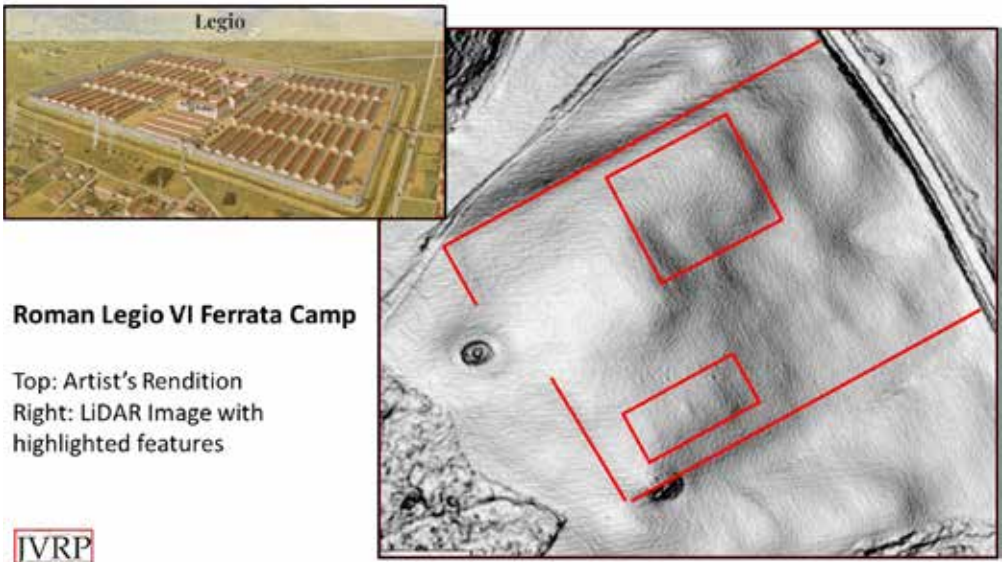


Figure 3. Roman Legio VI Camp and highlighted structures. Source: Jezreel Valley Regional Project and J. Howry.

An artist's early sketch of Legio (figure 3, left image) shows a typical rectilinear plan common to many Roman legion camps. However, the LiDAR image (figure 3, right image) presents a much more complex layout, with multiple levels separating sections of the camp. Some of the different sections located on separate levels are highlighted by red lines, as well as the perimeter ramparts which were constructed around the camp. Recent excavations have confirmed the presence of streets at multiple levels under which are sewage lines that served the buildings above. The traditional rectilinear plan of many Roman camps is clearly contrasted with the sloping camp of the Sixth Legion as exceptionally well delineated in the LiDAR imagery.

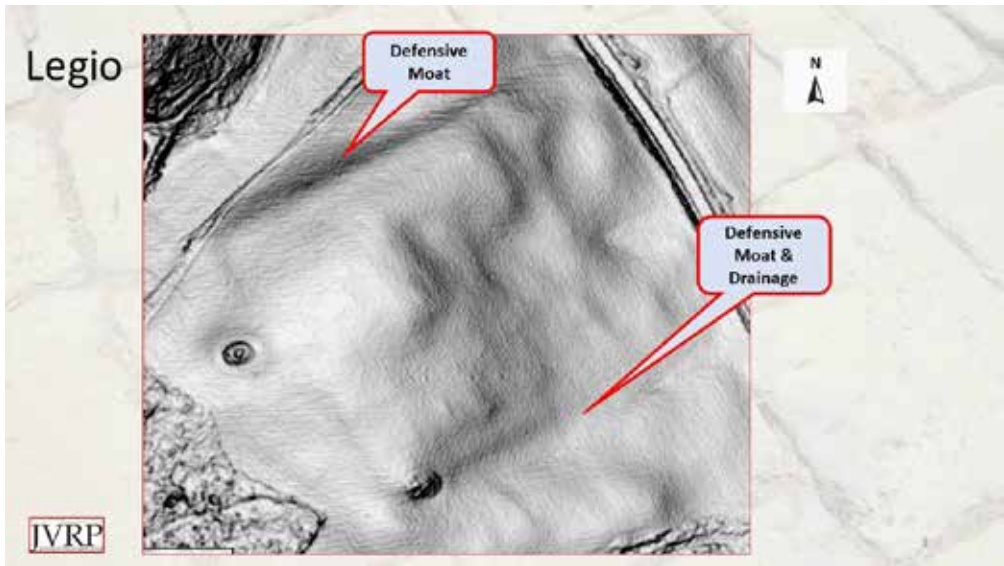


Figure 4. Legio's Defensive Moat and Drainage, Jezreel Valley Regional Project. Source: J. Howry.

A careful examination of the LiDAR image (figure 4) reveals the defensive moats that bordered the camp, but also the drainage ditch paralleling the southeast boundary of the camp. Excavations during the previous field seasons and in 2019 disclosed several drainage lines which flowed in a southeasterly direction, suggesting that at least some of the camp's sewage may have flowed through the defensive moat which paralleled the camp.

Overview of Two Villages and Their Roman Heritage

Roman legion camps (*castra*) required a substantial number of workers for logistical support and general labor. Some soldiers had families who lived outside of the camp. As a result, villages where workers and families lived became associated

with individual Roman camps. Al-Lajjun was an example of just such a village whose very name in Arabic comes from the Latin “legio” (legion).⁷ A Roman camp typically contained defined building types and architecture and therefore required specific construction materials and techniques. Several seasons of excavations at Legio during the past decade as part of the Jezreel Valley Regional Project (JVRP)⁸ have provided many examples of the types of materials used in the construction of the camp. Among those materials most evident are ceramic roof tiles of the buildings which are found throughout the camp. Production of these tiles required the construction and operation of a nearby manufacturing facility. This was just one of the building trades which took place in al-Lajjun, most likely along the year-round stream known as Nahal Qeni, which provided the water for the large-scale production of roof tiles.

The village of al-Lajjun was historically located in the Mandate era Jenin district (Ottoman era Sanjuk of Acre and Roman *Palestina Prima*) as was the nearby village of Abu Shusha. Both can be traced back to at least the late Roman era (second century CE), although Tel Shusha, located on the easternmost hill overlooking the Jezreel valley (Marj ibn ‘Amr), may date back to the Bronze age.⁹

To the west of Legio, the village of al-Lajjun became established with the arrival of the Sixth Legion about 192 CE. Historic sources indicate that there were three localities which comprised the village in recent centuries that corresponded to certain families or clans: al-Lajjun West (al-Lajjun al-Gharbiyya) located on a basalt mound flanked by fields to the east and south, a second south focus located along the Nahal Qeni, and a third area located north across the fields in elevated terrain which became the Roman city of Maximianopolis,¹⁰ today the area occupied by Kibbutz Megiddo.

Abu Shusha was a second village located less than six kilometers northwest of Legio on ridges overlooking the Jezreel valley (Marj ibn ‘Amr) to the east.¹¹ The length of occupancy of Tel Abu Shusha is not certain, as it is one of the few tels in the area which has never been excavated. Documentary sources indicate that it was occupied during the late Roman era when the Legio camp was operating. Recent research affirms that the village was known as Gaba Hippeon,¹² and possibly founded by retired members of Herod’s household cavalry.

These two villages were examined in terms of their LiDAR imagery to present different types of features, some of which are not visible by terrestrial survey. These case studies detail specific patterns of occupation while providing examples of how LiDAR can inform our understanding of the historic landscape. In this way, LiDAR can provide valuable insights that can guide more detailed terrestrial surveys with subsurface testing, as well as define major subsurface features not revealed without extensive soil removal through archaeological investigation.

Village of al-Lajjun

Early in the author’s research of imagery in the general vicinity of Legio, the Google Earth imagery, and particularly that from 2010, suggested there were extensive boundary walls constructed throughout a portion of the settlement and within the fields (see figure 5, left). This area became the focus of LiDAR analysis with the intent of determining whether these features could be observed on the ground.

A 1946 map of al-Ljjun prepared by the British Mandate administration clearly delineates a good number of structures on the mound. As the aerial photograph (1945) shows, most of the remaining portion of the mound is covered with thick vegetation making surface observation extremely limited. However, the regularity of the pattern seen in the LiDAR image supports the premise that the house sites that formerly occupied the mound were clearly bounded by low stone walls in a regular pattern. By contrast, on the more level fields where dark, rectilinear patterns appear in the LiDAR (2012), there were no walls to be observed at ground level! A second visit to the fields in the early morning, when the angle of sunlight was low, provided the first insight into what were previously walls. Instead of low walls, the dark rectilinear pattern results from the dense scattering of white limestone and basalt rock fragments that were previously field walls. Decades of cultivation using tractor drawn plows and disc equipment has created the scattering of the stone that was previously the various stone field walls. The dense pattern of fragmented stone could be confirmed using a high-resolution GPS instrument and matched with the dark rectilinear pattern in the LiDAR imagery (see figure 5, lower right).

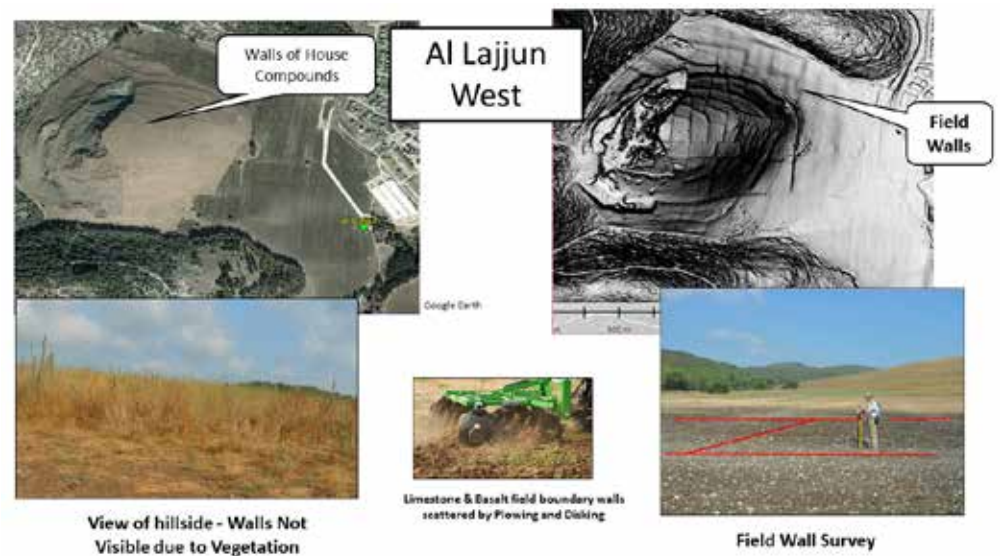


Figure 5. Al-Lajjun West (al-Lajjun al-Gharbiyya), household and field walls. Source: J. Howry.

The important insight provided by this portion of the survey is that although the physical evidence of the village's structures is very limited from terrestrial survey, the general pattern of the house sites as well as the pattern of cultivated fields is made evident from the LiDAR imagery when it is filtered for ground level features. If ground conditions were different and a higher resolution LiDAR were available, some of the more salient features of the village structures would be evident. In the next section, a second village site is examined where more distinctive residential features were evident and their specific attributes in similar LiDAR imagery were revealed.

Village of Abu Shusha

Approximately five kilometers north of Tel Megiddo is the much smaller Tel Abu Shusha, whose eastern slope faces the Jezreel valley (Marj ibn 'Amr). The historic village of Abu Shusha is principally located on the west side of the tel and extends southwest across the ridge and along a parallel ridge to the north. The village buildings and structures occupied the upper elevations of the two ridges that are separated by a stream (figure 6).

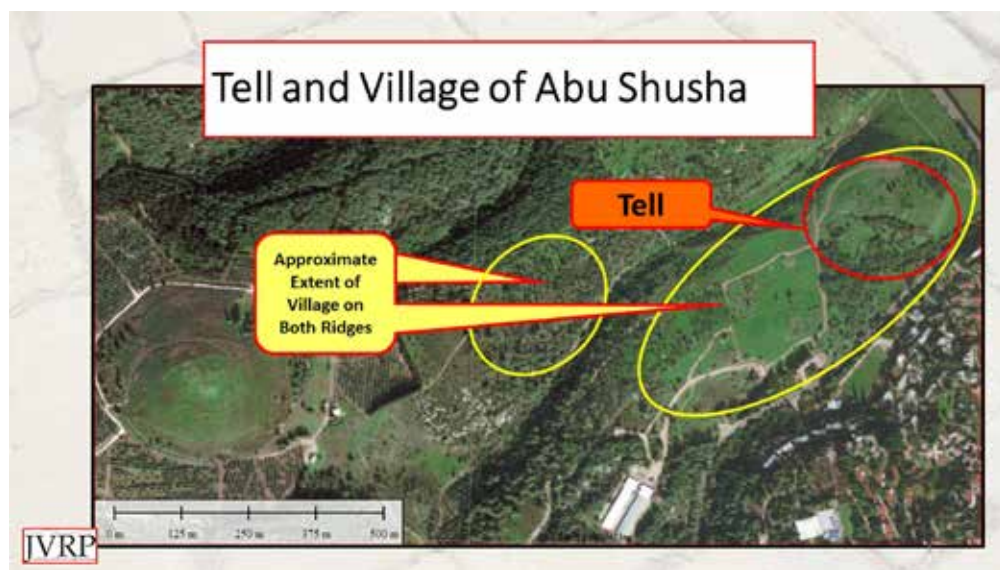


Figure 6. Satellite image displaying the topography of the tel and village of Abu Shusha. Source: Bing image with annotation by J. Howry.

The village was selected for study in part because some of the foundations of previous buildings and structures are still evident from terrestrial survey. In addition, the much earlier occupied area of the tel is primarily on the east facing slope, overlooking the Jezreel valley (Marj ibn ‘Amr). Together these landscapes provide a diversity of features which could be interpreted by the LiDAR.



Figure 7. Terraces of Abu Shusha. Source: J. Howry.

Terrace structures at Tel Abu Shusha, or possibly those of the later village, are clearly apparent on the northeasterly slopes in the LiDAR panel to the right. The terrestrial survey of existing conditions in 2019 confirmed these terraces, although dense vegetation precluded observing any ground features except at the highest points on the tel where ashlar blocks were observed, as well as a single Ottoman (or earlier) era semi-subterranean arched structure used for storage. Surface indications suggest that the platforms may have Ottoman and Mandate era use by the village, as well as by the much earlier occupants of the tel. The top-most platform is triangular, with successively lower platforms descending the eastern slope of the ridge. Some of these platform structures may be remnants of village construction that are evident in the aerial imagery from the UK Royal Air Force (RAF) from 1945.

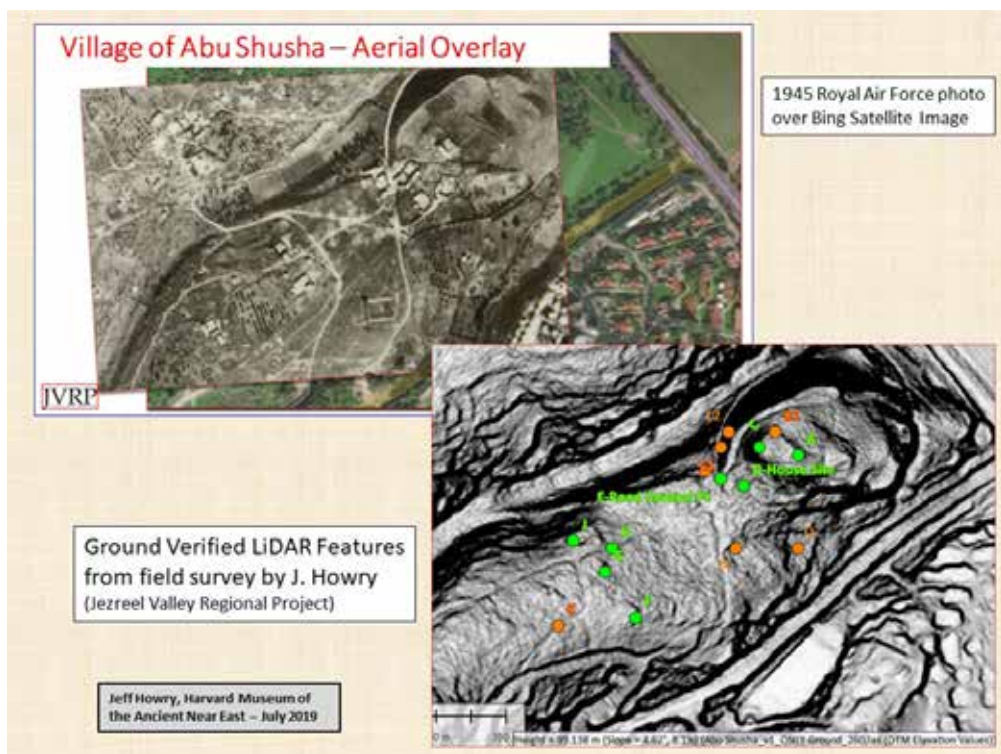


Figure 8. 1945 the UK Royal Air Force (RAF) aerial image overlay on satellite image and bare ground LiDAR image. Source: Aerial Photography Archive, Department of Geography, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Bing; and author.

A limited terrestrial survey confirmed that building foundations shown in the 1945 image were well represented in the LiDAR imagery. In addition to house sites, smaller residential features such as cisterns and household boundary walls evident in the aerial image could also be found through terrestrial survey using the LiDAR image as a guide.

Future Research Directions

The case studies in this article highlight the significantly different conditions in which LiDAR imagery can provide essential data on the context and structure of archaeological sites which span millennia of occupation. At al-Lajjun it was possible to highlight field patterns, many of which were physically destroyed in the past half century. At Abu Shusha, the multi-terraced character of some of the highest terrain became clear. Future analysis will include a detailed comparison of the LiDAR with the aerial imagery from 1945, and the surface artifacts found from Tel Abu Shusha during an intensive archaeological survey by the JVRP in 2017. It is expected that the

subsequent analysis of the results of the archaeological survey will evaluate how the surface collection combined with the LiDAR can enable interpretation of the near-surface features. It is hoped that this analysis will produce insights into the value that LiDAR provides for interpreting historic landscapes.

One further character of LiDAR is that it provides a very precise geospatial location of points that can be assigned to features identifiable in historic aerial imagery, such as road intersections and buildings. With the availability of 1945 aerial photographs, it is possible to place these images on top of the digital elevation model (DEM) created by the LiDAR to produce a 3D model of Abu Shusha and its structures as they existed at that time. Georeferencing the image in this way allows the user to reference the features that existed then and even today. An example of such an image is found below.

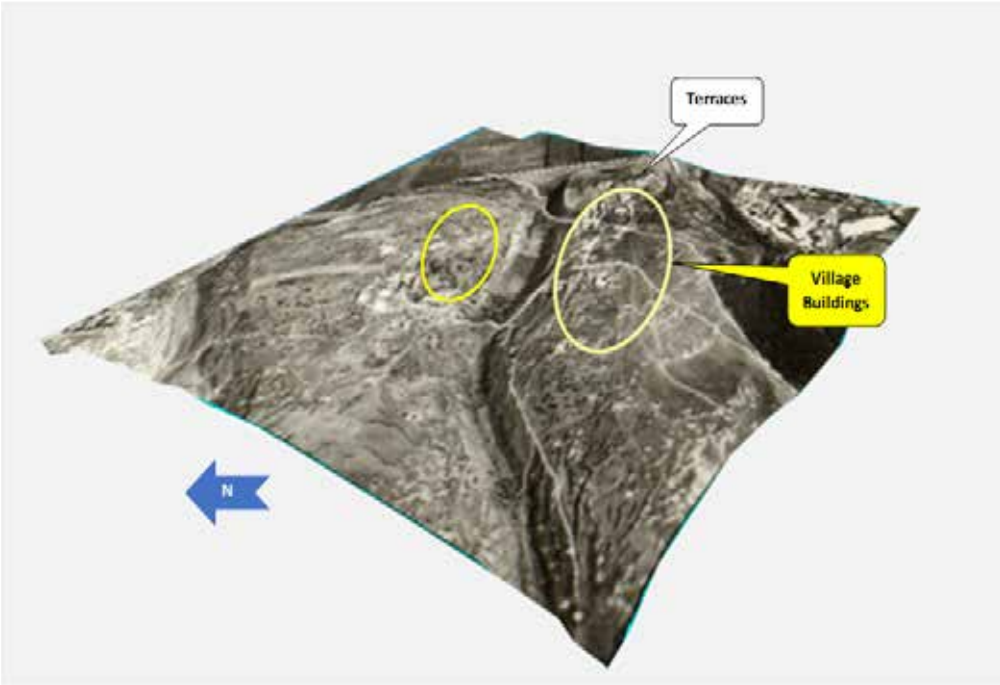


Figure 9. View of Abu Shusha (1945) from the East toward the Jezreel Valley. Source: J. Howry.

This type of image georeferencing and DEM modeling can be used to create virtual landscapes of many villages in historic landscapes where the terrain has not been substantially altered by development or agriculture.

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Endnotes

- 1 Jessie Pincus, Timothy S. DeSmet, Yotam Tepper, and Matthew Adams, "Ground-penetrating Radar and Electromagnetic Archaeogeophysical Investigations at the Roman Legionary Camp at Legio, Israel," *Archaeological Prospection* 20, no. 3 (July–September 2013): 175–88, online at onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/arp.1455 (accessed 16 May 2020).
- 2 Pincus, et al., "Ground-penetrating Radar."
- 3 "Uncovering Archaeological Landscapes at Angkor using LiDAR," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, 31 (30 July 2013): 12595–12600 (see n. 2), online at [doi:10.1073/pnas.1306539110](https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1306539110) (accessed 16 May 2020).
- 4 Marcello A. Canuto et al., "Ancient Lowland Maya Complexity as Revealed by Airborne Laserscanning of Northern Guatemala," *Science* 361, no. 6409 (28 September 2018), online at science.sciencemag.org/content/361/6409/eaau0137/tab-article-info (accessed 16 May 2020).
- 5 Arlen F. Chase, Diane Z. Chase, and John F. Weishampe, "Lasers in the Jungle," *Archaeology* 63, no. 4 (July/August 2010), online at archive.archaeology.org/1007/etc/caracol.html (accessed 17 May 2020).
- 6 Jesse Pincus, et al., "Ground-penetrating Radar."
- 7 Tepper, Yotam, "Lajjun—Legio in Israel: Results of a survey in and around the military camp area," *Proceedings of the 28th International Congress of Roman Frontier Studies, Amman, Jordan*, vol. 1 (September 2000), ed. Philip Freeman, Julian Bennett, Zbigniew T. Fiema and Birgitta Hoffmann, (Basingstoke, UK: Basingstoke Press, 2002), 234. The late Ottoman and Mandate era Palestinian village of al-Lajjun was depopulated and destroyed in the 1948 war, and its land confiscated. The main center of al Lejjun, formerly the Roman city of Maximianopolis, has become Kibbutz Megiddo whose members currently cultivate most portions of the village. See Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains* (Washington DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992), 334–37.
- 8 The JVRP (Jezreel Valley Regional Project) is an ongoing initiative of the Albright Institute for Archaeological Research, Jerusalem. Dr. Mathew Adams, Director of the AIAR, supervises the JVRP, which provided the logistical support for the field research as part of the Legio 2019 field season.
- 9 See "Tel Shusha" (Tal Abu Shusha) in Wikipedia, online at (wikipedia.org) bit.ly/2Y3YsKv (accessed 17 May 2020). Also see Ayala Sussmann, "Mishmar HaEmek—32," *Archaeological Survey of Israel* (2013), online at bit.ly/2UOJITI (accessed 17 May 2020).
- 10 "Legio/Caporcotani/Maximianopolis," *Pleiades*, online at pleiades.stoa.org/places/678266 (accessed 17 May 2020).
- 11 The Palestinian village of Abu Shusha was depopulated and destroyed in April 1948, along with several nearby villages, following military confrontation in the 1948 war due to their strategic location leading to the Jezreel Valley (Marj ibn 'Amr). See Khalidi, *All That Remains*, 142–43.
- 12 Azriel Siegelmann, "The Identification of Gaba Hippeon," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 116, no. 2 (July–December 1984): 89–93, online at (tandfonline.com) bit.ly/2N4Bkp3 (accessed 17 May 2020).

Perceiving Palestine

British Visions of the Holy Land

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Abstract

This article examines depictions of Palestine from above in the form of maps, high-elevation drawings and paintings, and aerial photography. Tracing the representations of Palestine from the mid-nineteenth century until the early twentieth, we explore how the imposition of a biblical landscape, supported by modern mapping surveys and the latest biblical scholarship, came to re-shape the Holy Land in the British imagination. Moreover, the imposition of an ancient past largely erased the modern landscape, forcing it to conform to set images of Palestine as it was and must be again. Looking at a variety of media allows us to see common images and tropes, with the landscape of aerial photography made to conform to a biblical vision that emerged from mapping surveys. A British biblical self-identification that often went hand-in-hand with settling Palestine with Jews, and increasing imperial interests and involvement in the region, created a form of imperial eschatology, fed and supported by these depictions of the Holy Land that blurred the lines between the past, present, and future.

Keywords

Britain; Biblical fantasy; Palestine Exploration Fund; archaeology; maps; paintings; aerial photography.

Introduction

In the summer of 1838, the British government appointed a vice-consul to reside in the city of Jerusalem for the first time.¹ Taking advantage of the new political order created in the region by the occupation

of Syria and Palestine by the Ottoman ruler of Egypt, Mehmed Ali Pasha, the British sought to expand their political and economic influence in the Levant.² The man appointed to the job was William Tanner Young, a protégé of the Earl of Shaftesbury and a fervent supporter of “British Restorationism,” that is, the idea that the second coming of Christ could be achieved through a “restoring” of the world’s Jews to the Holy Land, under British protection. Before departing for Palestine, Young wrote to the Foreign Secretary, Viscount Palmerston, proposing that he take a tour of his new jurisdiction, ostensibly with a view to report back to London on its trade potential and the nature of his duties.³ In his letter, he enclosed what he called “the latest map of that country.”⁴ The map in question (figure 1), published in January 1836 by the noted cartographer R.H. Laurie, includes Young’s hand-drawn route around the country, taking in the port of Jaffa, Jerusalem and its environs, and the northern centers of Tiberias and Safad. His focus was always on understanding the Jews of the land (despite the Palestinian population comprising over 95 percent) in order to offer them British protection for both commercial and eschatological reasons. Yet the map is not a map of Ottoman Palestine, but of an imagined biblical landscape. While geographically accurate, the provincial divisions were not of Ottoman administrative units (*vilayets*, *livas*, or *mutasarrifs*), but the supposed territories of the biblical Twelve Tribes of Israel. Its two inset maps showed the wanderings of the Israelites from Egypt to Canaan, and a “Plan of Jerusalem and its Environs,” depicting the city in the time of the Jewish temple, rather than the city as it stood in 1838.



Figure 1. Map of Palestine and the Holy Land (1836) with William Tanner Young’s tour route and annotations in grey (1838), The National Archives of the UK, FO78/340.

Young's map of Palestine provides an important entry point to understanding how the British envisioned Palestine from the sky in the century that would follow. A genuine political and commercial interest in the land of Palestine in its present situation consistently converged with a desire to recreate Palestine *as it was* in a distant but living scriptural and archaeological past. This paper will trace the British relationship to Palestine through how Palestine's landscape has been depicted and represented from above, primarily through maps, but also through high elevation and aerial artwork and photography. These two-dimensional images are more than simple illustrations, but served to shape and layer British understandings of Palestine as a space where ideas and ideals could transform realities. Studying maps and other images of Palestine from above help us to understand the relationship between reality and idealization in British depictions of Palestine. These tensions are evident if we apply the framework conceived in Henri Lefebvre's influential *The Production of Space*, a key text in the "spatial turn" in the historical discipline.⁵ He proposed a triad of spaces delineating space into: "spatial practice" in which daily practices and routines shaped a given space, "representations of space" where spaces are conceptualized and conceived in forms like maps and models, and "representational spaces" in which spaces are imagined and theorized.⁶ In the case of the British and Palestine, scriptural and historical understandings of the Holy Land (the representational space) shaped the ways in which Palestine was depicted (the representations of space), but these often had little in common with late Ottoman Palestine as a set of living and working urban and rural spaces (its spatial practice). The images the British produced and reproduced of Palestine in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries created a particular set of spaces that attempted to change and appropriate Palestine in Britain's own image, moving images, labels, and concepts from being ideas and representations on the pages of maps, to influencing the political and physical structures of Palestine itself.

Views from the Seas, the Mountains, and the Heavens

Young's arrival at his post in Jerusalem in late 1838 marked the start of a period of intense British activity in Palestine, with mapping a key part of understanding and shaping the region's geography.⁷ This was in part engendered by direct British military involvement in the region, with the Oriental Crisis of 1840 seeing naval actions against the forces of Mehmed Ali along the Palestinian and Syrian coasts. The mission of the Royal Navy in the Eastern Mediterranean was accompanied by cartographers, who attempted to accurately depict the Palestinian littoral and parts of the interior in a series of surveys sent to London in 1840 and 1841, building on earlier observations in the 1830s.⁸ Some of these maps were drawn to show the destruction of British bombardments to coastal fortifications like those in Acre, with two views provided, one a bird's-eye view from above, another a ship's-eye view of the landscape.⁹ Others aimed to provide practical military maps that gave detailed information on a variety of features, such as an 1841 depiction of Gaza that not only showed military encampments

but roads, religious buildings, wells, and orchards.¹⁰ The British military expedition to Palestine resulted in a wealth of cartographic productions that aimed to survey the region beyond purely military concerns, including relief maps by Frederick Holt Robe and triangulations by J.F.A. Symonds.¹¹ The new emphasis on precision would mix with existing biblical tropes to use modern maps to illustrate both the past and the potential future of the Holy Land.

Maps of Jerusalem, always an object of fascination for British cartographers, are a key example of how maps of Palestine were transformed by the new scientific surveys, with William Aldrich's map of the city sketched after the Egyptian-Ottoman Oriental Crisis showing the modern layout and road system but with scriptural labels.¹² Among the biblical sites, however, can be found the "Site of the Protestant Church New Building" opposite the Ottoman barracks and adjacent to the British consulate, a plot that was earmarked for a new Protestant place of worship in the Holy City. The addition of British features to the Jerusalem cityscape in particular demonstrated both the cultural and political aspirations of the United Kingdom in the Holy Land. In 1845, Consul Young sent another annotated map to London, this time his copy of the architect Frederick Catherwood's map of Jerusalem, one of the earliest survey maps of the city (figure 2).¹³ As well

as creating a detailed, accurate map of Jerusalem, Catherwood also created a high-elevation panorama from the vantage point of "Pilate's House, and now residence of Turkish [sic] Governor."¹⁴ Details of the contemporary city mixed with biblical sites, and on his copy Young enthusiastically noted the "real" place of the Pool of Sion, and added on the map in pencil the locations of the Greek, American, and British burial grounds to the list of significant Christian sites.



Figure 2. "Plan of Jerusalem by F. Catherwood" (1835) with William Tanner Young's annotations (1845), The National Archives of the UK, FO78/626.

The increased British political, military, and intellectual presence in Palestine from the 1830s onwards was driven in no small part by religious interests. The new expertise gained by the various military and naval surveys allowed for more detailed and convincing depictions of biblical sites and stories, and their modern state, for presentation to a domestic audience. Cartographers and artists provided new and comprehensive views of the Holy Land from a variety of vantage points which, when combined, allowed for the consolidation of particular images of Palestine. These views tend to fall into three categories: maps accompanied by relief drawings from ships; high-elevation illustrations, often accompanied by maps; and historical maps, sometimes with insets.

Given the maritime nature of many of the military mapping missions in the nineteenth century, nautical charts and off-shore panoramas were a common and effective way of visualizing Palestine both from above and in three dimensions. A fine example is a depiction of the Bay of Haifa drawn by Lieutenant F.G.D. Bedford of the Royal Navy in 1862, with detailed surveys of the liquid and terrestrial coasts, and plans of the cities of Haifa and Acre (figure 3).¹⁵ The map pays close attention to contemporary scenery, showing elevation, roads, orchards, and farms, as well as careful plans of the two towns and their ancient and modern monuments. This is accompanied on the page by two beautiful drawings of Haifa and Acre (‘Akka) – which, unusually, is called by its Arabic name – as viewed from the ship, with illustrations of the town and its surrounding countryside, allowing the observer to combine the two views to get a better understanding of the physicality of the land beyond the flatness of regular nautical maps. These military depictions began to produce a corpus of knowledge on Palestine that would provide a scientifically accurate template over which the ideas and fantasies of scripture, history, and archaeology could be overlaid.

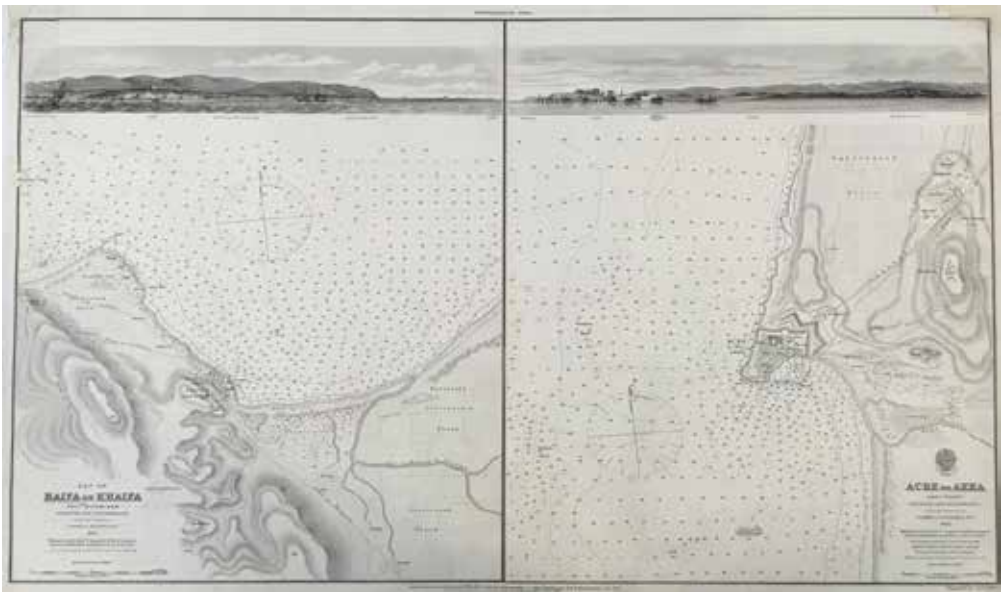


Figure 3. “Mediterranean – Syria: Bay of Haifa or Khaifa / Acre or Akka” (1863), British Library, Maps SEC.5 (1242).

Cartography in this form could only do so much for the imagination, and attempts to give flesh to the bones of maps of Palestine resulted in some rather stunning illustrated texts. One notable example is *Syria, the Holy Land & Asia Minor Illustrated*, three volumes of detailed descriptions by John Carne and 120 illustrations of the Ottoman Mediterranean, with a particular focus on Syria and Palestine.¹⁶ Volume 3 includes a map of the region covered, with Palestine depicted in a rather dated fashion with a jagged coastline – unlike the recent maritime surveys that tended to give the coast a smoother run. Here too the divisions of the Twelve Tribes of Israel are noted, together with an inset map of Jerusalem seemingly based on Catherwood.¹⁷ The book combines this cartographic reference with text and illustrations that aim to transport the reader to the area described. Several of these illustrations are high-elevation, with one of the most impressive being a view of the “Plain of the Jordan, Looking Towards the Dead Sea.”¹⁸ As this is a multimedia source, the map (figure 4), the illustration (figure 5), and the text (of which the following is an extract) need to be considered together:



Figure 4. Detail of map of Palestine in John Carne, *Syria, the Holy Land & Asia Minor Illustrated*, 3 vols. (London/Paris: Fisher, Son & Co., 1840).



Figure 5. Detail from “Plain of the Jordan, Looking Towards the Dead Sea” in Carne, *Syria, the Holy Land & Asia Minor Illustrated*, vol. 3, 77.

The surface of the plain, for many miles before you arrive at the Dead sea, is dry and withered, without a shrub, a flower, or even a blade of grass. Higher up, the verdure that fringes the river is delightful to the eye many a tree, many a wild flower, many a beautiful shrub is there; sweet is their shadow and perfume beside the everlasting stream. This view appears to be taken in the summer, when the Jordan is shrunk within its bed, and flows shallow and languidly. In winter, its waters are full and rapid, often on a level with their bank. The Bedouins come from the mountains to the pastures on its banks; their dark tents are pitched in a group, or scattered over the plain, whose solitude they people for a time: when their fire is kindled, they gather round it at their evening meal, and converse with wild gestures; then kneel down in the open air before the tent-door and invoke the Prophet, where the Israelite once poured out his sorrows before the Lord. The faint sound of their voices, heard amidst the stillness from afar, is hushed, and deep silence again falls on the plain. Each Arab is armed with a long spear and a matchlock gun, and it is not safe to travel through this plain without a guard; hardly a single traveller has traversed it from Jericho to the Sea of Galilee, though it would repay the trouble and the danger.¹⁹

The map, the high-elevation image, and the text invoke the senses, transforming the observer to a participant, transporting them to the Holy Land to experience its timeless landscape, biblical resonances, and contemporary wildernesses and dangers. Similar high-elevation views of Acre, Jaffa, Mount Carmel and the Bay of Haifa, the Wilderness of Ziph, the Sea of Galilee, and Jerusalem provided a common theme of showing Palestine as it was in the late 1830s, but highlighting the landscape's continuity with the biblical past.²⁰ Illustrated texts like Carne's would provide a model for later photographic and stereoscopic tours of the Holy Land in both their content and experiential tone. They allowed readers to view Palestine from different angles, embellishing cartographic depictions with high-elevation views. These images created new understandings of and engagements with historical biblical narratives, and also helped to shape and reify understandings of Palestine in terms of contemporary theology as a potentially rich, but frequently neglected, land awaiting the "right" inhabitants to bring its beauty back to life. The relationship between aerial and high elevation views of the Holy Land based on scripture, and British attempts to shape the flow of eschatological time, is particularly evident in such productions, allowing the viewer to fill the space with their own ideas and images.

The relationship of temporality to depictions of Palestine from above became increasingly linked to a desire to control that space through ever more accurate cartography. A number of cartographic sources in the British archives provide historical narratives, sometimes on multiple timelines, as a way of not simply representing Palestine from above, but using such representations to convey a religious and political narrative. Some are simple religious educational depictions of biblical geography, such as Frances Wood's map of Palestine with biblical cities and other landmarks, intended for use in Sunday schools, or a photolithographic plan showing the territories of the Twelve Tribes for use in schools.²¹

Many maps, however, combined biblical and contemporary narratives. Two of particular interest are from the British Library's collection. The first is a "relievo" map that is a three-dimensional relief or embossed map, published in 1845 and dedicated to Queen Victoria.²² It divides the Holy Land into biblical entities, such as Philistia and Judea while showing the modern road network, and includes a detailed list from the map of "towns and villages in the Holy Land which have been identified," giving their scriptural name and modern Arabic equivalent. The second map shows even more clearly how maps were used by the British to convey different layers of history, and in doing so provided an immediacy to biblical space and time. Entitled "A New Historical Map of Palestine" (figure 6), it was published in 1838 and drawn by R. Creighton, its subtitle indicating it was "intended to illustrate the geography of the Holy Scriptures."²³ On the sides of the map are four illustrations, of the Tower of Babel, Grand Cairo, Bethlehem, and Jerusalem "in its present state." Two inset maps are intended to contrast Jerusalem in its biblical glory and its contemporary distress. Palestine itself is colored and divided according to the boundaries of the Twelve Tribes, with place names given a combination of

biblical, classical, and modern Arabic names. The landscape is intersected by a number of lines that weave across time as well as space, notably with the near parallel routes of the journey of the Children of Israel in their wanderings towards Canaan, the journeys of recent European travelers, and the pilgrimage route of contemporary Muslims undertaking the hajj (figure 7). This blurring of temporal lines furthered the political and religious message that the British held the keys unlocking the biblical potential of Palestine. Maps were one part of a knowledge production that created an intertwined destiny of a Palestine awaiting divinely-guided liberation and a British Empire that, above all the world's powers, looked best placed to achieve it.

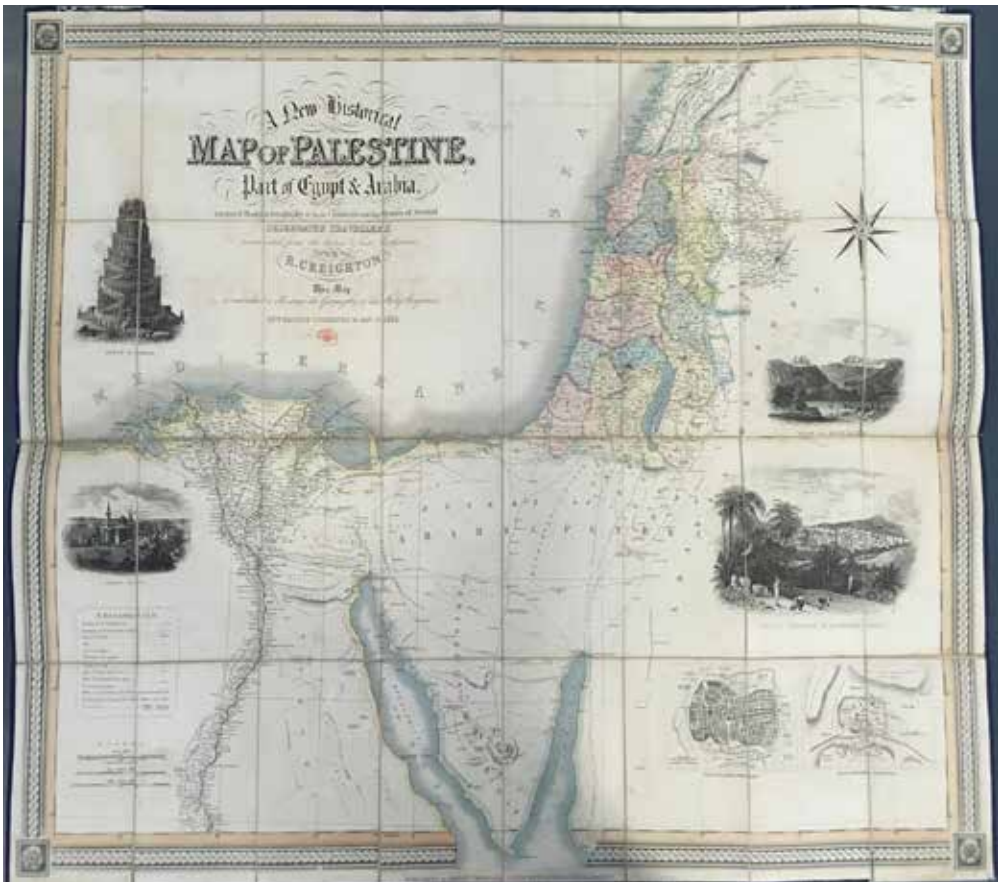


Figure 6. "A New Historical Map of Palestine" (1838), British Library, Maps 16.a.1.

As Debbie Lisle has argued, maps do not exist on their own in an intellectual or cultural vacuum, but rather "are always discursive; they make sense only to the extent that they are bolstered by already circulating myths, messages, and meanings about the

world.”²⁴ Mapping, she argues, is more than simply a linear journey towards Enlightenment values of accuracy, reason, and objectivity. Lisle ties her analysis with the approach of Derek Gregory, that while historians have often used maps (and indeed other visual sources) as mere illustration, their value as historical sources lies in understanding their relationship to what Gregory terms “systems of power knowledge.”²⁵ A crucial example of this is the Survey of Western Palestine, a monumental project to map the Holy Land, funded by the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) and



Figure 7. Detail from “A New Historical Map of Palestine” (1838) showing the travels of Johann Ludwig Burckhardt, the wanderings of the Israelites in the desert, and the route for Muslim pilgrims going on the hajj, British Library, Maps 16.a.1.

conducted with the expertise of the Royal Engineers from 1871 to 1877. The survey produced twenty-six map sheets published between 1881 and 1888, alongside six volumes of “memoirs” covering observations on the archaeology, flora and fauna, waterways, manners and customs, and place names.²⁶ Maps illustrating the Old and New Testaments were also published. The six memoirs, arranged via biblical geography into areas such as “Galilee” and “Samaria,” offer a deeper insight into the biblical preoccupations of the survey and illustrate how deeply embedded the ideal of biblical Palestine was within the survey. The introduction to the first volume informs the reader of “the necessity for a society entirely devoted to the work of collecting facts and information bearing on the Holy Land, its geography, ruins, people and customs,” alongside an illustration of a romanticized knight, an image that emphasizes the need for a crusade to recover Palestine once more.²⁷

The Survey of Western Palestine came at a time when travel accounts of Palestine

were immensely popular. Many of these works were in the genre of scriptural geographies, described by Edwin Aiken in his work of the same name as Christian accounts of the Holy Land, mapped and explained in relation to the Bible, in a tradition dating back to the Roman era.²⁸ A significant portion of the scholarly and popular works published on Palestine in the nineteenth century fell into this category, as indeed does William Tanner Young's map. Notable British works of this genre include: Edward Robinson's influential *Biblical Researches in Palestine, Mount Sinai and Arabia Petraea* (1841)²⁹; PEF collaborator John MacGregor's *The Rob Roy on the Jordan: Nile, Red Sea, & Gennesareth, Etc.: a Canoe Cruise in Palestine and Egypt and the Waters of Damascus* (1869)³⁰; politician and writer Laurence Oliphant's *The Land of Gilead: With Excursions in the Lebanon* (1881)³¹; and the Survey's own Charles Wilson's *Picturesque Palestine, Sinai and Egypt* in two volumes (1881 and 1883).³²

An increasing number of Britons made the journey to see the Holy Land for themselves, with Thomas Cook offering tours from the late 1860s and set routes in guidebooks and maps from the 1870s.³³ Beyond tourism and leisure, the mapping of Palestine formed part of an imperial project to "know" the world, to conquer it physically and intellectually, and to record it in Western forms of knowledge.³⁴ As Nadia Abu El-Haj argues, the aim was to "render a historic past materially visible on maps and on the contemporary landscape," something we have already seen from several of the depictions of Palestine from the sky.³⁵ This visibility of the historical past required a focus on the archaeological sites and ruins, which were meticulously surveyed and noted for future excavations. The unearthing of ancient sites was part of a physical resurrection of a biblical and ancient past that would sit alongside, and even supersede, the structures of modern Palestine. Conder outlines the methods used by the survey concerning "ruins":

The method is as follows. Every ruined or interesting site is visited and noted on the spot. Such as contain nothing of importance are not specially reported but merely included in alphabetical lists arranged for each sheet on that map. Any however where distinguishable relics are still to be found are at once reported and visited by myself. All buildings dating earlier than the time of Turkish occupation are planned with more or less detail according to their importance.³⁶

It is notable that "antiquities" were considered as earlier than the Ottoman presence in Palestine, something which reinforces the particular narrative and vision of the past that the British wanted to present. This was a past in which the West, and Britain in particular, was the true heir to the Holy Land. This British sense of ownership over Palestine was expressed at the very first meeting of the PEF by the archbishop of York, who stated that "this country of Palestine belongs to you and to me. It is essentially ours."³⁷

By omitting the Ottoman era from those "ruins" listed as sites of historical importance, this served to delegitimize and minimize the importance of the Ottoman presence in Palestine.³⁸ The Ottoman era was not deemed worthy of the same attention,

nor seen as part of the narrative of Palestine, in the same way that biblical, classical, and crusader archaeology were eras which emphasized what was important to the Western, Christian image of Palestine and one which minimized, if not erased, contemporary Ottoman and Islamic Palestine. Palestine was thus remade in a British image inspired by biblical scripture, as can be seen in depictions of the land through Old and New Testament framings in the Survey itself (figure 8). This fits into a wider pattern, identified by Zainab Bahrani, in which the narrative of Western civilization as being an inheritance from the ancient Middle East is constructed by denying the links between the ancient landscape and its modern inhabitants. Instead a narrative is created in which civilization passed westward, from Mesopotamia, to Egypt, and then to Greece, with modern Western Europe the pinnacle.³⁹ That many of the maps discussed here, such as Young's map (figure 1), and the "New Historical Map of Palestine" (figure 6) divide Palestine into the supposed territories of the Twelve Tribes of Israel, is an example of how the contemporary, especially Muslim, presence in Palestine was dismissed in favor of the Judeo-Christian and classical connections.



Figure 8. "Western Palestine Illustrating The Old Testament, The Apocrypha and Josephus" (1880), David Rumsey Historical Map Collection, 6930.037 (1880), online at www.davidrumsey.com/ (accessed 22 May 2020).

important study on *Mapping the Middle East*, British cartography in the Holy Land was as much a search for belonging as it was a military exercise motivated by geopolitical concerns.⁴³ Although this quest for “belonging” undoubtedly had political motivations centered on imperial interests in Egypt and beyond, by proving their connections to Palestine, by mapping Palestine in the way they saw it, the British were paving the way intellectually for the occupation of the Mandate. These connections were primarily religious, with Protestant organizations often acting as mediators between the Ottoman government and the British.⁴⁴ They were reinforced in Britain by what Eitan Bar-Yosef terms “vernacular biblical culture,” in which the Bible and the Holy Land were seen as a central part of British culture, and the British were seen as a chosen people. This narrative was used to justify the British Empire, and ultimately the British Mandate, by creating an Anglocentric historical narrative in which Britain (and often specifically England) became the true heir of civilization via the appropriation of the achievements of the ancient world.⁴⁵ As Nadia Abu El-Haj contends, “Cartography presented Palestine as a concrete, coherent, and visibly historic place, a sustained object of scientific inquiry, charted and recognizable on modern maps and increasingly explored through the ongoing excavation of ancient artefacts.”⁴⁶ Visions of Palestine from above in the nineteenth century clearly established the intellectual links between politics, cartography, and archaeology for the British. Military surveys provided the foundations for the overlaying of the landscape of the past on the topography of the present, which in turn would support imperial claims over the Holy Land.

Making Palestine British

The product of a system of mapping that privileged images of the past over the realities of the present meant that many images of Palestine from the sky neglected or ignored Ottoman authority in the region. Just as the early mapping projects of the 1830s and 1840s capitalized on Mehmed Ali’s occupation of Ottoman lands, those of the 1870s took advantage of the fact that the Sublime State was severely indebted to European creditors; they were also increasingly dependent on British and French political support in the international arena, highlighted by the serious Ottoman defeat to Russia in the war of 1877–78. In the British National Archives, in a folder of maps extracted from consular correspondence in the Ottoman realms that includes a plan to carve up the Balkans between British, Russian, French, and Italian zones in the aftermath of that conflict, there is a map showing another kind of proposed control. In 1876, an engineer named McBean published a book proposing a railway route to connect Britain with Palestine, Egypt, and India, arguing this would propose a pre-emptive answer to the Eastern Question – that is, what to do if the Ottoman Empire collapsed – and assert British interests over those of Russia, or indeed anyone else.⁴⁷ Sensing an opportunity to see his plan put into action following the Ottoman defeat, he sent a copy of his map to the authorities.⁴⁸ The thick red line of the proposed railway

route cuts across the Ottoman Empire and Iran, disregarding borders and established routes to create a new landscape centered on British interests, with Palestine a key link within a wider imperial landscape.

Maritime surveys of the region had tended to include the Palestinian coast as part of a wider region that centered on Egypt. In the 1850s and 1860s, stemming from the Suez Canal concession, British ships surveyed Palestine as part of a wider sphere of interest. The survey by A.L. Mansell in 1856 saw a number of maps drawn up that placed Palestine as part of an extended Egyptian coastline.⁴⁹ These maps were revisited, revised, and expanded throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with the British state archives holding a significant set of maps of the region by the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. For example, the 1862 survey of the harbor of Jaffa was updated in 1904, and Mansell's detailed map of Palestine and its coast from Ras al-Naqura to al-ʿArish received new additions to provide an up-to-date overview to aid the British advance into Ottoman Palestine in 1917.⁵⁰ Indeed, the wealth of military and cultural visions of Palestine from above would prove invaluable to the British from the outbreak of war between the United Kingdom and the Ottoman Empire in 1914. Palestine would quickly become a focus of British actions, not least because this was an opportunity to reshape the Holy Land in a British image.

The British military occupation of Egypt from 1882 – a campaign in which some of the surveyors of Western Palestine played a significant role – meant that the British began to make an active effort in shaping Palestine itself. During the nineteenth century, the border between Khedival Egypt (1805–79) and the Ottoman Empire proper went through the Sinai Peninsula, but a number of disputes between the British and the Ottomans, with a threat of force on the part of the United Kingdom, led to a new border delineated in 1906, broadly along the route of that between Egypt and Israel today.⁵¹ A fascinating set of maps planning the route of this new border in 1900 in The National Archives shows this new frontier, with a rather interesting use of the space of Palestine. One of these maps, with text in both English and Arabic, shows a key marker of the border between Egypt and Palestine through “Sketch of Two Pillars and Tree at Rafeh / Rasm al-ʿāmūdayn wa al-shajarah fī Rāfah [sic].”⁵² This echoes an image published in the *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* some years before (figure 10). The German engineer and archaeologist, Gottlieb Schumacher, conducted a number of archaeological surveys in Palestine in the 1880s, many of which were published in the quarterly, including his “Researches in Southern Palestine.”⁵³ Schumacher described the site of “Khurbet Refah” (that is, *khirbat*, the “ruins of Rafah”), comprising “two upright and one fallen granite column [...] placed 18 feet apart below a poor-looking sidri [cedar] tree” and marking the border between Syria and Egypt.⁵⁴ The significance of the inclusion of this image with ancient and biblical resonances on a map of the modern Egypt-Palestine border has a wider implication: the imposition of British authority upon the landscape of the Holy Land using images from scripture, history, and archaeology to assert new claims.



Figure 10. (Left) detail from the image “Khurbet Refah. Tell Refah in the Distance. The Boundary between Egypt and Syria” in Gottlieb Schumacher, “Researches in Southern Palestine,” *Palestine Exploration Fund* 18:183; (right) detail from The National Archives, Kew, MFQ 1/1000, Sketch Map of the Country round Turko-Egyptian Frontier (Enclosure in Lord Cromer’s No.37 of 22 February 1900).

The First World War saw the knowledge accumulated in previous decades annotated with new details, marking front lines, garrisons, and lines of marches. A series of maps held in the British archives, based on those first developed in the 1840s and 1860s, were marked in blue, red, and black pencil, with intelligence gathered from captured Ottoman maps, including similarly annotated plans of the front by the Ottoman commander Küçük Cemal Paşa, adding to this military knowledge.⁵⁵ The General Military Survey of Palestine from 1917–18 shows a different example of the ways in which the renaming of places and geographic features became a form of familiarity and ownership.⁵⁶ Instead of biblical “renaming,” these maps offer us insight into the humor, familiar locations, flora and fauna, and language of British soldiers during the Palestine Campaign. The maps for Yahia, Jerwal, and Bureir, include such renamed wadi as “Dundee Wadi,” “Thistle Wadi,” and “Grouse Wadi,” places, animals, and plants that would be more familiar on the British Isles than the semi-arid eastern coast of the Mediterranean. Although these names did not represent permanent changes, they are still an example of the ways in which Britain created an imagined landscape more familiar to itself than to the local population.⁵⁷

Sometimes these new names were added from the perspective of soldiers on the ground or surveying from high elevation positions.⁵⁸ But novel technologies provided new perspectives on Palestine, with aircraft providing a completely different, but also rather familiar view of Palestine from above. Often there were echoes of previous methods. Just as Lieutenant Bedford’s 1862 survey of the Bay of Haifa/Acre had a panorama from the ship’s perspective accompanying its detailed map, a 1916 survey of ‘Aqaba saw a series of photographs pasted together to provide a bird’s-eye-view map, above which was another set of photographs showing the panorama from

aboard HMS *Raven II*.⁵⁹ The mirrored aesthetic of the drawn 1862 naval survey and the photographed 1916 naval and aerial survey is indicative of a wider correlation between depictions of Palestine from above.

Certainly, some of these photographs, such as that of the town of Tulkarm or the result of a bombing on the train tracks at Qatrana (south of Amman), had a specific intended use.⁶⁰ Survey photography, however, allowed observers to piece together the landscape in a different way. What is striking with aerial photography of the landscape is its resonance with earlier mapping surveys and illustrations. An interesting feature of portrayals of Palestine in various media is a sense of emptiness, as in the aerial paintings of the British war artists Sydney and Richard Carline of the Palestinian landscape. They share common themes with the high-elevation illustrations in *Syria, the Holy Land & Asia Illustrated*; for example, Sidney's painting of the Sea of Galilee echoes the illustration from that 1840 book (figure 5) – both depicting the shores as devoid of signs of human habitation and civilization, despite having significant populations centers and agriculture.⁶¹ In many depictions of Palestine from above, the landscape is sparsely populated at best, desolate at worst.

Crucially, the landmarks that featured on photographic aerial surveys were taken directly from the earlier military and archaeological surveys. In late 1918, in the final stages of the war, a British aircraft took a series of photographs over the front lines between Nablus and Jericho (figure 11). The timeless, artistic quality to the aesthetic of these photographs mirror that of earlier paintings and drawings.⁶² Starting at the villages of Qaryut and Talfit, the plane moved southeast viewing Jalud, al-Mughayyir, Duma, and Majdal Bani Fadil, before ending the panorama at Fadayil. In addition to annotating the names of these villages and marking the Ottoman defensive lines, the intelligence officers also added names to geographic features like wadis and prominent hills. Sometimes they used the local Arabic name, sometimes a name invented by the British soldiers as noted earlier, so that we find Wadi Bab al-Kharjah alongside Cheshire Wadi, and Ras al-Tawil together with Boulder Boil, and one bilingual feature in Kurn Surtubeh (Qarn Sartaba) also known as “Milly's Tit.” Crucially, however, some of the key features were *khurabat* those such as Kh. Sarra, Kh. Abu Malul, and Kh. Jibeit (Jib'it). These were all – and their name in Arabic suggest – ruins. These ruins, as with others throughout Palestine, had been surveyed and described in the *Survey of Western Palestine* back in the 1870s (figure 12). Khirbat Abu Malul, described as “foundations, cisterns, tombs blocked up,” Khirbat Sarra, “foundations and cisterns,” and Khirbat Kulasun, “heaps of stones on a hilltop,” became key geographic markers for the British forces.⁶³ Given that some elements of the British establishment, including in the military, already viewed the campaign in Palestine in biblical terms, the prominence of ancient features on this battlefield is significant.⁶⁴ The archaeological and biblical survey formed the basis for mapping the British conquest of Palestine and, combined with the view from the air, recreated in photographic form the blurred timelines of earlier views of Palestine from above, with ancient heritage living alongside, and even superseding, the contemporary scenery.



Figure 11. Photograph of the landscape between Khirbat Abu Malul and Jalud, with annotations of local Arabic names and new English names, as well as the Ottoman defensive lines highlighted, The National Archives of the UK, WO 319/3 (1918).

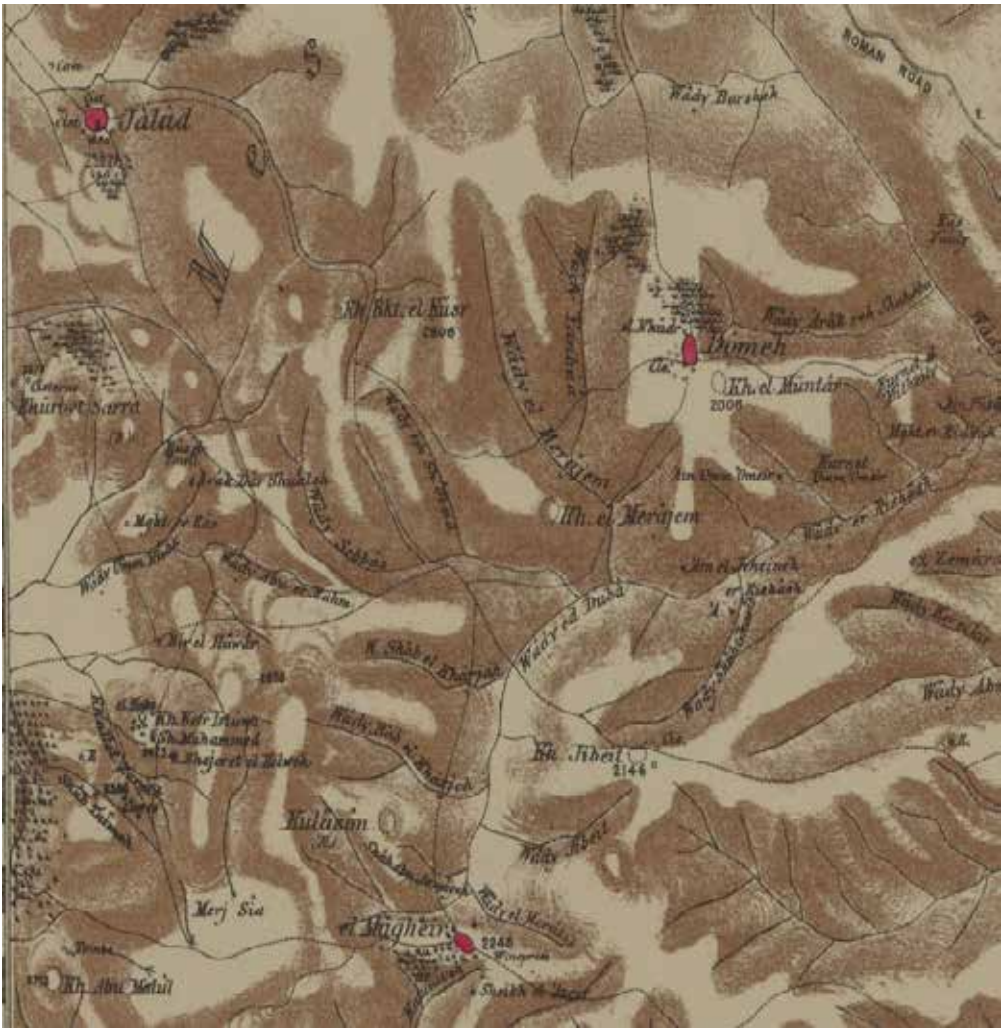


Figure 12. Detail from the *Survey of Western Palestine*, sheet XV, showing the same landscape as in Figure 9.

Views from the air, in photography and art, married with high elevation photography and art to develop the idea that the land was empty, but, harking back to its biblical fertility, ripe for development. The belief that the land was underutilized, transformed from its biblical glory, informed British policy in Palestine. “Scientific comprehension” evolved to focus on the way in which Palestine could be reclaimed from perceived Arab- and Ottoman-caused desertification.⁶⁵ While colonial restructuring of indigenous agriculture was not unique to Palestine, the biblical element influenced policy by offering a level of legitimacy to British control. Levin et al. write that maps “shaped

the ways in which the colonial state imagined its dominion, the nature of the people it ruled, the geography of its domain, and the legitimacy of its ancestry.”⁶⁶ In the case of Palestine, the biblical continued to inform the colonial. George Armstrong’s “Photo Relief Map of Palestine” of 1921 was reminiscent of previously mentioned biblical maps.⁶⁷ Thomas Cook continued to prove the power of biblical tourism to Palestine, producing guides, handbooks, and tours designed to offer a glimpse of this religiously oriented past. In “Cook’s Plan of Jerusalem,” featured in *A Guide to Jerusalem and Judea* (see figure 13), the focus is on the Old City and sites of worship, with peripheral mentions of Western colonization.⁶⁸

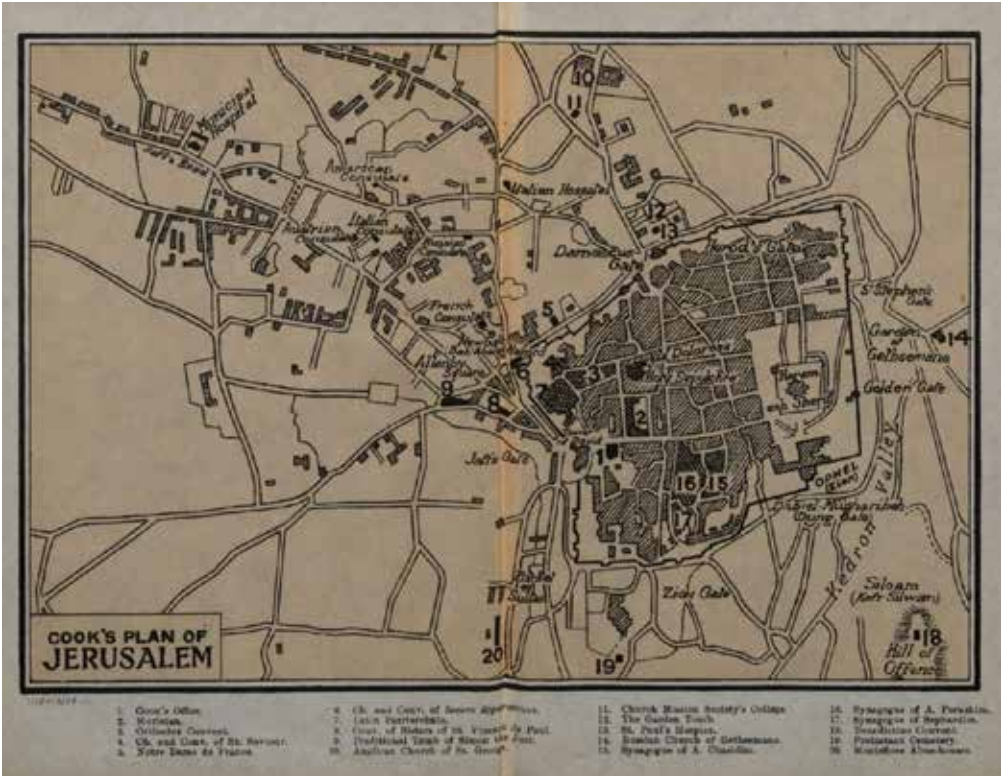


Figure 13. “Cook’s Plan of Jerusalem,” *A Guide to Jerusalem and Judea* (London: Thomas Cook, 1924).

In his 1917 paper, “Palestine: Its Resources and Suitability for Colonization,” E.W.G Masterman described the land as “unique in history and religious sentiment,” but depopulated, with “unredeemable deserts” that had potential to be “restored to their ancient fertility.”⁶⁹ The images that accompanied his paper at the Royal Geographic Society, and subsequent publication, show a desolate, deserted land. He concludes that it is “useless for any to settle in Palestine who are not prepared

to be themselves practical agriculturalists.”⁷⁰ Maps such as that compiled by the War Office in 1918, included a “Reference Section” featuring different forms of waterways and flora, including vineyards, orchards, gardens, woods, scrubs, palms, fir trees, and marshes all give their own symbols are marked clearly on the maps.⁷¹ Bartholomew’s *Quarter Inch Maps of Palestine*⁷² includes an inlay titled “Vegetation Maps of Modern Palestine” that features “Cultivable Lands” along the coast.⁷³ Agriculture was not the main interest of every colonial enterprise: Rhodesia, for example, was of more use for the extraction of raw materials, and the colonial government and its backers were far less interested in mapping the territory’s agricultural land. Interest in mapping and reshaping of agriculture, however, can be found in British projects like those of South Africa, Egypt, and India, two of which remained major agricultural exporters for the Empire through the Mandate era.⁷⁴

The role of Zionism, which had found formal British support during the First World War, was to play the middleman between biblical interpretation and colonial reimagining of the landscape, in the same way that Zionist Jewish settlers were seen as an “intermediary race between white Europeans and natives.”⁷⁵ While settlements such as Petah Tikva and the suburb of Tel Aviv may have appeared in pre-Mandate maps, they became more numerous, and in some cases more pronounced. Comparing the Railways Maps of Palestine and Transjordan from 1922 and 1929, both produced by the Survey of Egypt, the number of Zionist settlements included increases from five to eighteen. These settlements were clearly marked with a Star of David symbol, highlighting to the reader their perceived importance.⁷⁶ Thomas Cook began to include day trips to Zionist settlements, in tours given titles such as “How to see Modern Palestine,” where one could be taken around Zionist agricultural schools, a Zionist agricultural experimental station, and of course, several agricultural settlements.⁷⁷ Tel Aviv became not just a suburb or “Jewish settlement,” but was given city status with equal prominence to Jaffa in both tour descriptions and mapping. Note the appearance of Tel Aviv in Cook’s map for the 1929/30 Season (figure 14), after having not appeared at all in their 1927/28 catalogue. Kobi Cohen-Hattab has argued that this was in part due to the development of the Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists,⁷⁸ but it could easily be argued that the creation of that bureau was itself a reaction to a growing interest in Palestine where the biblical was now the modern.



Figure 14. (Left) Thomas Cook Season 1927–28; (right) Thomas Cook Season 1929–30. Map from *The Traveller's Handbook for Palestine and Syria* reprinted in Thomas Cook Archive, *A Guide to Jerusalem and Judea* (London: Thomas Cook, 1924).

Conclusions

The depictions of Palestine from above in various forms held in British archives and libraries show a number of themes emerging. The British blurred the boundaries of space and time in overlaying a biblical landscape over the modern outline. This outline became increasingly accurate and detailed as more and more British expeditions undertook to map and survey the Holy Land with ever more sophisticated methods. The focus, however, remained fixed on the past. The Survey of Western Palestine and its successors further shaped the British understanding of Palestine, populating the landscape with endless ruins and sites of biblical and classical interest that ensured past glories overshadowed contemporary geography. The effect of these maps, along with the illustrations that accompanied them, was to emphasize Palestine as a deserted, decayed land ripe for rejuvenation under the right stewardship. British imperial interests in the region, coupled with a sense of biblical self-identification and, to some extent, a sense of eschatology predicated on the return of the Jews to their scriptural home, fed into these mapping projects, but these depictions of Palestine

from above also provided the material that allowed such narratives to develop. The growing sense of British entitlement towards Palestine, evident in their redrawing and renaming of its borders and places, had a direct impact on a political culture that would see Palestine restored through conquest and control in 1917 and 1918. The attention given to Zionist settlements in the travel literature of the early twentieth century was a nod to British modernization of the Holy Land, an emphasis on the rebirth of a land perceived as having lost its ancient fertility. As such, the depictions of Palestine in the Cook maps of the 1920s share an intellectual and imperial vision with the map cherished by William Tanner Young in the 1830s.

Aerial, high-elevation, and cartographic depictions of Palestine from the British perspective in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries allow us to visualize developing narratives of control. The privileging and foregrounding of an ancient, biblical landscape that all but erased the lived experience of contemporary Palestinians is of course something that is all-too familiar in the context of today's Palestine. These maps, drawings, and photographs present Palestine as a canvas onto which could be imposed the religious and imperial fantasies and aspirations of the British. Palestine of the present became something to be improved, with William Tanner Young's vision of a land with a rich biblical past laying just underneath the surface waiting for the Jews, under British protection, to make it fruitful once more evolving over the century through expressions in cartography, art, and photography. As such, the space of Palestine as represented by the British became so well-known, so often reproduced, so discussed in the latest scholarship and technology, that these representations would come to shape Palestine as a lived space.

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Palestine in the Imagination of the Imperial German Self

Gustav Dalman and the Bavarian War Archive

Sarah El Bulbeisi

Abstract

This article explores the cultural imperialist identities that accompanied the semicolonial policy of the German Empire during World War I. It examines the imaginations that interwove representations of the German imperial self, apparent in visual and textual artefacts in the archival material of the German air force mission, as well as in the academic and institutional work of German Protestant theologian and Orientalist Gustav Dalman (1855–1941). The author shows how two aspects (the secular and the religious) of the German *mission civilisatrice*, the ideological backbone of its colonial ambitions, are reflected in the ways that the imagery of Palestine is created and connected within the struggle for power in the Near East. The author argues that the German secular mission went hand in hand with its aspirations to evangelize the Orient. The religious mission is evident in the aspirations of Dalman's social milieu by interpreting modernity against the background of biblical salvation history as the “end of times.” In this regard, Palestine was perceived as both: a place of salvation history as well as a power and cultural-political influence zone.

Keywords

German colonialism; biblical Orientalism; World War I; imperial narcissism; Gustav Dalman; Bavarian War Archive; Palestine; German air force brigades.

This article explores the cultural imperialist identities that accompanied the semicolonial policy of the German Empire during World War I. It examines the imaginations that interwove representations of the German imperial self as they become apparent in visual and textual artefacts in the archival material of the German air force mission as well as in the academic and institutional work of the renowned German philologist and Orientalist Gustav Dalman (1855–1941). I show how two aspects of the German *mission civilisatrice* (civilizing mission) – the secular and the religious, the ideological backbone of its colonial ambitions – are reflected in the ways that the imagery of Palestine is created and connected within the struggle for power in the Near East. These features are, namely: the striking neglect found in the textual and visual remnants left by the Bavarian air force, which carried out surveillance missions in Palestine during the end of World War I, and the outstanding enthusiasm visible in the academic work of German scholar Gustav Dalman in publishing a selection of their photographs in the aftermath of World War I.

The Military Representation or the Disappearance of Palestine in the Orient

In 1928, Gustav Dalman criticized the lack of visual data material displaying the “real” or “authentic” characteristics of Palestine and located its reasons in a one-sided focus on holy sites and historical places by professional photographers due to their economic dependence on touristic demands.¹ In his eyes, the German air force brigades were able to depict what these photographers missed. However, the brigades succeeded to give an encompassing visual impression of Palestine not because they were more talented or because they felt more committed to provide an accurate representation of the country. Rather, it was quite the contrary – because they were *not* interested in the visual depiction of the land. Their photographs were a side product of their military fact-finding missions that aimed at the reconnaissance of the enemy, its infrastructure, human and military resources, and strategic considerations, as the archival material shows. What peaked their interest was not the land *itself* – Palestine – but the presence of the (British) enemy *in* the land.² In the War Archive of the Bavarian State Archives we find evidence: a collection of handwritten commands to brigade officers and soldiers; information leaflets for the pilots with instructions on what to observe; forms with cryptic signs for communication with ground troops about enemy movements, forces, and intentions; and a war diary of Berthold, the lieutenant on duty, who carefully describes the daily tasks of his flight units and other matters. Above all hovers absolute concern and preoccupation with the British troops.

Even photographs of German traces in the country, such as colonies or institutions, seem to be arbitrary side effects similar to landscapes and rural as well as urban sceneries. Information about an “aerial-archaeological mission” of the German air force, as Nada Atrash puts it, is not found in the archival material.³ It looks as if no official order, as the word “mission” somehow implies, was given to the soldiers

in this regard. This does not mean that they had no such ambitions and aspirations. Schulz mentions in his article that Theodor Wiegand, director of the German-Turkish Archeological institute, asked the air force to make photographs of archeological sites, which resulted in the air force founding the aerial photograph archeology, as Gerd M. Schulz proudly announces.⁴ Due to this request, the photographs show historical traces from the biblical era, and the time of the crusades, the Ottoman occupation, and early Zionist colonization. The most famous ones are the photographs of the pyramids. Thus, we can speak of the informal task the soldiers indeed diligently fulfilled. In addition, the archival material reveals the humanistic education some of the officers must have enjoyed, an experience that gifted them with the appreciation of historical monuments. Thus, we can assume that some of the photographs were produced due to their own interest in historical monuments. This can be construed from a note in the archival material documenting their attempts to rent a ship from the maritime fleet to do some sightseeing.⁵

Nevertheless, drawing on the material in the Bavarian War Archive⁶ but also on other material, for example, a novel at the time, *Vortrupp Pascha*⁷ (Vanguard Pasha) by Richard Euringer, a member of the Bavarian air force mission, we saw no significant genuine interest or enthusiasm for biblical sites or stories reflected in the various documents of the period. Instead, the rare statements concerning non-military issues in the Bavarian archive material dismantle the general idea that Palestine was somehow dissolved into a far greater Arabia or Orient.

Heroic Guardians of the Orient

The soldier-pilots comprehended themselves to be “guardians” of this Orient. This heroic self-perception is omnipresent in Euringer’s novel and in chivalrous ideals of manhood, encapsulated in archival diplomas honoring certain officers by elevating them to the rank of knight.⁸ These ideal images of their subjectivities are inextricably linked to a certain imagination of the Orient cultivated by the soldiers. It is the legacy of the ancient Persians and Greeks (see Kyros in *Vortrupp Pascha*) they build upon for their images, desires, and ideals in the first place. To this ancient non-Christian heritage, they seem to connect their own militaristic chauvinism. This mythical manhood, on which the heroic self-perception of the German soldiers rests, sets itself apart from the ordinary of the Ottoman subject (be they Turkish or Arabic). The communication guidelines preserved in the Bavarian War Archive, instruct the soldiers how to treat and speak to Ottoman fellow soldiers and workers to increase their man power.⁹ In those guidelines, we find reflected the stereotypical deficits ascribed to the Oriental figure in general. The devaluation of the ordinary Ottoman or “Turkish” subject (as Ottomans were usually referred to by the Germans) remains juxtaposed against the idealization of the figure of the ancient hero who – since mythical – embodies the European and the Oriental at the same time, and in whose footsteps the German soldiers can therefore imagine themselves to follow. The continuity between the antiquity and

the contemporary appears to be established by the soldiers through the figure of the hero. As guardians of the Orient they were able to incorporate the Orient into Europe or rather they were able to see the Orient as partial extension of Europe, as a dark and mythical origin of the contemporary European hegemonies. Zantop describes the German strive for colonies as mirrored in the public consciousness by analyzing the colonial novel and speaks of an obsession with the colonies (*Kolonialbesessenheit*) of the society of the German Empire.¹⁰ This imagination was retrieved from the European Zeitgeist of the Belle époque, which cultivated Greek and Persian history and thought as predecessor of European culture.

Palestine – with its symbolical value for Christian identity and culture – plays a minor role in the imagination of this Orient. The archival material in Munich gives the impression that Palestine is primarily perceived as part of the Ottoman Empire or a fictitious Orient. The British archives most likely draw another picture, since Palestine played a crucial role in the divide and conquer strategy of their colonial policy, conceived already during the First World War (for example, the Balfour Declaration 1917). In comments about conversations with agents and captives (not conducted by the officers of the air force), *Arabia* – not Palestine – is clearly determined as the “object of desire” of the enemy and identified as “too much of importance for the British in political and financial regard as to be given up by them.”¹¹ *Arabia* – not *Palestine* – becomes an object of desire to the Germans due to its inimical value on the backdrop of the European trial of strength during the First World War. Palestine moved into the German spotlight only as the eastern frontier of military confrontations with the British shifted from Sinai to Palestine. Even though many representatives of the British political elites were ideologically dedicated Zionists and supported the nationalist goals of Zionist Jewish settlers for their own interests, the German emperor had always respected his close ally, the Ottoman sultan, too much to foster the already existing movement of German settlers into the Holy Land, dedicated to Christian Zionism.

Palestine as Embodiment of a Biblical Past

Nevertheless, there were German contemporaries of that time for whom Palestine had an intrinsic value, although this value was based on its embodiment of the biblical past. Gustav Dalman, a German Protestant theologian, was such a historical figure. Dalman was specialized in the Old Testament, that is, the Hebrew Bible, and was a scholar of Palestine studies. He led the German Evangelical Institute for Classical Studies of the Holy Country (*Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des heiligen Landes*), called Palestine Institute (*Palästina Institut*) in Jerusalem from 1902 to 1917. The Palestine Institute was only one of several German institutions for research on Palestine on Palestinian soil. It was established in 1903, after the foundation of the German Palestine Association in 1877, and formed its intellectual counterpart. The institute differed from the association by its explicit evangelic orientation – it

represented the German Evangelic Church in Palestine, whereas the association identified itself as interconfessional. The First World War prevented Dalman from returning to Palestine until its ending. During this time he accepted a professorship for Old Testament and Palestine Studies in Greifswald (Germany), where he established the Institute for Biblical Regional and Antiquity Studies (*biblische Landes- und Altertumskunde*), now known as the Gustav Dalman Institute.

In 1921, Dalman returned to Palestine and became the provost of the Church of the Redeemer in Jerusalem, and from 1905 to 1926 was the editor of the journal *Palästina-Jahrbuch* (Palestine Yearbook). During his time in Palestine, Dalman taught various lectures for young German theologians and explored, photographed, and documented the lives of Palestinian peasants and Bedouins. Dalman's work provides unique and unparalleled insights into the conditions of ordinary people's lives during the Ottoman era. In his second research field, Jewish studies, he published works on grammar and dictionaries of Aramaic dialects and post-biblical Hebrew language, which later became standard works in the field. The most astonishing characteristic of his scientific approach is the ideological framework he used for his research: he attempted to draw conclusions from his fieldwork about the history of Israel and the Orient in ancient times, which is why we find archeology and regional studies as so entangled in his work.

Being both a religious dignitary – or rather a representative of Protestant belief and thought – as well as a scholar interested in the topography, geography, and history of Palestine itself, Dalman blurred the commonly understood lines between the categories of (biblical) Orientalism and its metaphysical occupation of the country, disregarding the scholar's quest for accurate knowledge about the land itself. Biblical Orientalism¹² determined Palestine as *lieu de savoir* for biblical hermeneutics,¹³ that is, research about Palestine aimed not at the historical study of Palestine per se, but at biblical comprehension, putting scholarship into the service of religious and clerical interests. Studies on Palestine were thus conceived as Holy Land studies – often pursued by many interested, semi-scholarly actors such as theologians, doctors, teachers, and missionaries – and, as such, ought to be seen in the context of Christian-imperial scholarship. Dalman, on the other hand, was not only a theologian, but also a professional scientist. Even though he has to be considered representing Christian-imperial science (current 1871–1918), his critique that took aim at the romanticizing of Palestine counteracts biblical Orientalism. As we see in his introductory remarks, he regrets the lack of accuracy and will to display an authentic view of the Palestinian landscape due to a romanticized and idealized image of the country, which he even calls a sickness.¹⁴ As a consequence of this critique, his selection of one hundred photographs from *Bildsammlung Palästina* for the photobook *Hundert deutsche Fliegerbilder aus Palästina* (One Hundred German Aerial Photographs from Palestine) draws on the intention to provide different locations in Palestine.¹⁵ On the surface only, Dalman's scholarly habitus challenges predefined Orientalist notions. However, Dalman's thinking, like most others of his age, was permeated by a certain kind of Orientalism. Even though Edward Said did

not elaborate on the religious aspects of Orientalism, he clearly pointed out the close ties between Christianity and Orientalism and particularly Protestant missions and European colonial expansion by highlighting the latter's roots in Christian religious discourse.¹⁶

The Palestine Institute (German Evangelical Institute for Classical Studies of the Holy Country) was initiated by German Emperor Wilhelm II in 1898 and Dalman was its first director. The name of the institute already refers to its confessional identity and to other German archeological institutes of the German Foreign Office in Athens and Rome at the same time. This institution was established not only to represent the German Evangelic Church, but also the Evangelic position within the international research on Palestine.¹⁷ International studies on Palestine were a densely covered field, dominated by the *British Palestine Exploration Fund* that was prevailing in the production of knowledge about Palestine. The role of German research was mainly limited to the interpretation of data and knowledge produced by the *British Exploration Fund* or other field dominating actors.¹⁸ In the British context, "Palestine" referred to the country of the Old Testament. An accurate knowledge of the Holy Land, that is, the practices of secular science, should thus provide insights into the sacred text of the Bible. The interest in the Bible was not only religious. The British considered the Bible as a national epic, identified with the people of Israel. So we see Palestine regarded as an extension of England, as essential part of British identity.¹⁹ Whereas the British confined research about Palestine to illustrate the Bible, the German interconfessional approach (of the Palestine Association) pursued scientific approaches that were much more independent from the theological and ecclesial ambitions of the British. This manifested itself in focuses such as biblical research (*Bibelforschung*), that is, the method of so-called Higher Criticism (*historisch-kritische Methode*) of the Bible, as well as in the demand of a comprehensive knowledge fielded in ethnographic, demographic, and statistical explorations of contemporary Palestine.²⁰ Dalman, and the orientation of the Palestine Institute led by him, can be located somewhere in the middle between the secular tendencies of the German Palestine Association and the theological aspirations pursued by the British Exploration Fund, despite its secular identity. Dalman saw the function of the institute in the explanation of the Holy Land according to the standards of today's science (*"das heilige Land nach dem jetzigen Stande der ihm geltenden Wissenschaft zu erklären"*).²¹ The institute's field of research was dedicated to regional studies (*Landeskunde*); the aim was to explore the country, using the backdrop of its relevance as holy land. Dalman considered languages and customs, flora and fauna, geology and climatic conditions, antiquities, geographies, traffic routes, sanctuaries, residential buildings, cemeteries, and inscriptions as essential parts of regional studies. The goal of the research was to connect the historical past to the landscape (*"die aus der Geschichte bekannte Vergangenheit mit der Landschaft zu verbinden"*) and to discover the past in the present. The goal of the education was to give a colored background to the holy narratives (*"den heiligen Erzählungen einen farbigen Hintergrund geben"*).²²

Thus, the history, which was conceived of as underlying the country's past, was, of course, the biblical. Biblical history was to discover "the hidden truth" behind the mythical landscapes and even in the customs of its people. Everything from the stones to the monuments became in this view remnants of a holy past, reminiscent of a sacredness, lost in time. Based on these conceptions, one would assume Dalman to be a pale theoretician, but contrary to these expectations he was a whole-hearted ethnographer. Multi-day excursions formed an essential part of the curricula for the theologians and were given far more priority than lectures. Dalman saw the practice of autonomous study and observation as the key to a successful learning process. The four fixed topics he regularly taught in his lectures were: Jerusalem and its environment in topography and archeology, work and customs, and geography and regional study, as well as Palestine's relationships to the New Testament. In addition, he taught Arabic reading courses and lectured on language, on the historical geography of Palestine, the architectural history of Jerusalem, the regions of the tribes of Israel, modern Islam, the Greek Orthodox Church of Palestine and the Protestant Mission.²³ Dalman was able to capture all of his experiences, studies, and teachings of those years during which he presided over the Palestine Institute, into his tremendous seven-volume opus *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* (Work and Custom in Palestine), a late work, evolved in Greifswald.²⁴ With this fruitful product of his years in Palestine, he established German Palestine Studies as its own scientific discipline.

In *Work and Custom in Palestine*, Dalman starts with a detailed description of the different seasons and the daily routine, how one experiences the cold and the heat, and then proceeds to discuss: the ground conditions, agriculture, wheat harvest; the production of bread, oil and wine; useful plants and their utilization like spinning and weaving; and the farming and utilization of wool and different animal hair. He describes various categories of the Palestinian population, the Bedouin milieu with their life in the camps, livestock and milk products, hunting and fishing, sedentary farmers with their houses and their chicken farming, beekeeping, and pigeon breeding. Finally, he gives details about songs, music, and customs at times of birth, weddings, and death. A collector, with life and soul, in *Arbeit und Sitte in Palästina* he created an encyclopedic treasure of uncountable information on every shade of Palestinian life. The work can be read as a compendium of several handbooks on various topics – from cooking and baking to rituals, clima, and animals, as well as dictionaries for different Palestinian dialects on every possible aspect of public, private, and working life of the population, as well as of the soil, and rural and urban landscape back in time. Thus, it combines different scientific disciplines – ethnography, geography and philology among others – under the overall umbrella of the studies of Palestine and the Palestinians. The crucial idea through all of Dalman's work, and which he wants to convey, according to Julia Männchen, is the extent to which the land and its characteristics shaped its people and ingrained itself in the smallest details – from food and clothing to festivities – of their lives.²⁵

The German Mission *Civilisatrice*

I suggest to view Dalman as an anthropologist of ancient Palestine or rather an anthropologist of the sacred. His scientific approach was to reconstruct every aspect of (organic and inorganic) life from stones to humans in the biblical past – or more exactly during Jesus' lifetime – originating from the present. In this light, we have to see also his obsessive exploration of different Palestinian dialects. He carefully intertwined them into the descriptions of the various contexts of work and life of the population he observed. In addition to the Palestinian words, he invariably adds related Hebrew, Aramaic, and sometimes even Greek words. Thus, he saw the past of the land, chosen by God to be sacred, even mirrored in the language of the people, as he saw the people and its culture deeply rooted in a land with different sacred traditions that inherited each other's traditions throughout time. For him, past and present seem to be melting together before his eyes. He sees the divine traces of Jesus reverberated in the landscape and the people. The salvation history permeating and soaking the country's every inch knows no past nor present. Dalman must have seen his object of research through the prism of a consciousness of "cyclical time." As the backdrop to this, what appears to be strange on first sight becomes understandable: the study of the contemporary as a lens through which to study the past. In contrast to Israeli-European historiography much later in time, the population was not erased from time and space; rather it was regarded as an essential part of it, so essential that it served as a scientific source to research the biblical times.

But how does Dalman view the imagination shared by the air force officers who fantasied their being part of the Orient as its guardians and successors? It is a moral, or actually a mental, appropriation of the territory for their individual and collective salvation, whether in the form of conceptions of efficient militia in the footsteps of ancient, mythical Oriental kings and heroes for their identities and constructions of manhood, or in the form of the dream of the evangelization of the Holy Land. However, Palestine features as a mere part of the Orient as a whole in the former, while it played a crucial role in the latter. The differing significance of Palestine as an entity itself in the sources of the war archive, on one side, and in the sources of the photographs and writings of Dalman, on the other side, mirror the varying framework of the conditions of their creation. The missions of the Bavarian air force occurred in the context of the competing ambitions for hegemony over the Middle East among the European superpowers in the context of World War I, while Dalman's work in general, and his selection of Bavarian air force photographs in particular, should be seen against the backdrop of the colonial interests of the German Empire in the Near East. Even though the German Empire was first and foremost interested in political solidarity with the Ottoman Empire, it was eager to intensify its influence with regard to economic and military issues, not least because the German arms industry benefited. *Pénétration pacifique* is this mixture of policies between solidarity and maximization of interests.²⁶

Thus, the imperial self-perception connected a rootedness in Hellenistic ideals – embodied in the heroic military ideals of the members of the German air force – with the reconstruction of a biblical Palestine. Both imaginaries evolved within the *mission civilisatrice* in the context of the German colonial interests in the Orient. The identification with the Hellenist legacy was transmitted by the German higher education of the nineteenth century and formed therefore a vital part of the identity of modernity in the German context. All Germans with a higher educational degree had gone through the same scholarly curricula and thus had internalized a Hellenistic “substitutional identity,” which allowed an “imperial narcissism” to see Western Anatolia, Asia Minor, the Levant, and Mesopotamia as prolongation of the German hegemonic self.²⁷ The very same ideology sought to transform the world, society, and labor into a world of technical progress and increasing efficiency.

The German secular mission, which was to enforce the nineteenth century transnational European value system known as modernity, went hand in hand with its aspirations to evangelize the Orient, that is, the religious mission, seen in the aspirations of Dalman’s social milieu. Under the secular surface of Western modernism, major European powers interpreted modernity against the background of biblical salvation history as the “end of times” – that is, an epoch of global evangelization and/or national Jewish reconstruction as a prelude to the “kingdom of God on earth.” In this regard, Palestine was perceived as both: a place of salvation history as well as a power and cultural-political influence zone. This is why the ideal of progressiveness does not contradict with the longing for the biblical past. The stagnated Orientals were expected to open up to European superiority in this regard, as we saw above in the communication guidelines for German officers on how to speak to Orientals in order to increase their work power. The Islamic history of the region and its predominantly Muslim demography appeared to many of them as an obstacle to civilizational or salvation-related “progress.” By identifying the Aramaic civilization of Jesus and his family in the concurrent culture of the Palestinian population – and by drawing parallels between the contemporary Muslim and Christian indigenous population and their Aramaic-Hebrew predecessors in antiquity – Dalman certainly breaks with many of the premises underlying the ideology of the restoration of the Jews, which equated modern European Jewry with the ancient Hebrews in the Belle Epoque. Even so, by projecting the biblical past on them, he obliterates their human presence as well.

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Late Ottoman Visions of Palestine Railroads, Maps, and Aerial Photography

Zeynep Çelik and Zeinab
Azarbadegan

Abstract

This paper examines shifting attitudes in the late Ottoman official culture, with the argument that Palestine was claimed as an indispensable part of the imperial geography through modern technologies of photography, cartography, and warfare. The time period extends from the beginning of the construction of the Hijaz Railway in the 1880s to the British occupation of Jerusalem in 1917. The study is based on visual documents (photographs, maps, and postcards) drawn from the Ottoman archives, as well as from coverage in the Ottoman press of the time, most extensively from *Servet-i Fünun*. The discussion is organized around three key episodes. The first involves the construction of the Hijaz Railway, recorded by maps and a wealth of photographs. The photographs taken from heights, show endless landscapes crossed by rails, bridges, and tunnels – and crowded with Ottoman officers. The second explores how the Ottomans claimed Palestine through cartography. The topographic, ethnic, and touristic maps surveyed, organized, and conveyed a range of information on the district. The third focuses on the battles of the Gaza Front in 1917, tracing the advances and defeats of the Ottoman army as recorded by a series of maps accompanied by Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir's daily reports published in *Yıldırım* 1921. Significantly, World War I brought Palestine to the forefront of Ottoman military and political agendas, as conveyed through illustrated publications, most notably *Harb Mecmuası*, a periodical dedicated exclusively to the war.

Keywords

Photography; cartography; Late Ottoman Empire; modernity; Hijaz railway; tourism; World War One; Yıldırım (thunderbolt) army.

Photography, Railroad Construction, and a New Perception of Palestine

Photography and railway construction, two new technologies, made good companions during the second half of the nineteenth century. In Europe and America, photographs of infrastructure projects featured prominently in thematic albums. The innumerable photographs of infrastructure projects carried out in the Ottoman Empire fall into this universal genre. The extensive documentation of the Hijaz Railroad testifies to the privileged space that this project occupied (figure 1). With the goal of reaching Mecca and Medina, the railroad's main intention was to facilitate pilgrimage. In addition to the north-south line that directly served this purpose, links to the Mediterranean were built both to encourage agricultural development of the area and to facilitate another kind of religious tourism to Palestine, this time for Christians.¹



Figure 1. Map showing the railways and land roads in the Ottoman Empire (*Anadolu'da icrası muktezi olan yollarla inşaat-ı saireye dair haritadır*). Source: Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA) HRT_377.

Photographs celebrated not only the completed bridges, tunnels, and tracks, but also the construction processes themselves. They were collected in albums that focused on a particular region at a particular time, and sometimes appeared as individual prints in various publications. An elegantly bound album with Abdülhamid II's *tuğra* (sultan's signature) on the back cover, most likely produced in 1905 or 1906, was dedicated to two branches of the Hijaz Railroad: the 460-kilometer north-south stretch from Damascus to Ma'an, and the 161-kilometer segment from Dar'a (Müzeyrib) to coastal Haifa, both completed in 1905. It also commemorated the Jaffa-Jerusalem branch that was completed a few years later.² The album was organized into two sections, starting with the Ma'an line, moving southward, and then shifting to the Haifa line, moving westward, from inland to the Mediterranean. Through photographs, each section depicted the infrastructure under construction and completed, ending with the terminal point stations.

Of the forty photographs presented, nine depict the Damascus-Ma'an segment, while thirty-one are of the Haifa branch (Hayfa Şubesi). Differences in the geography of the two regions most likely drove the decision about how many images to include. The area to the south of Damascus, which was a relatively flat desert, contrasted sharply with the comparatively short distance between Dar'a and the Mediterranean Coast, which was defined by mountains, valleys, rivers, cascades, and rich vegetation. Palestine's complex landscape necessitated the construction of bold structures crossing dramatic natural settings; these structures and the landscape itself were also conducive to spectacular views that could be photographed from different angles. A view of the "stone sections" of the 110-meter long iron bridge at the 110th kilometer on the Haifa line and another bridge of the same length at the 94th kilometer (figure 2) emphasized the height of the piers, set smartly against the humble scale of human figures.



Figure 2. "The Haifa branch of the Exalted Line and construction of the stone column at the beginning of the three arched 110-meter-long railway bridge at the 94th kilometer of the Haifa branch" (*hat-ı ali Hayfa şubesinde ve Hayfa mebde itibarıyla doksan dördüncü kilometre dahilinde üç gözlü yüz on metre demir köprüünün bir kargir ayağının inşası*) shows workers on top of the temporary wooden bridge connecting the two main stone pillars of the bridge over the river in the Haifa branch of the Hijaz Railway. Source: Ömer M. Koç Collection.

While these photographs gave some idea of the surrounding landscape, others presented the projects in their broader contexts that often dwarfed the monumental interventions. As Hamburg, Heilburn, and Néagu argued in reference to Nadar’s photographs of Parisian air views, altitudes enhanced both “feelings of domination and power” and “gigantism and superhuman grandeur.”³ The effect is more pronounced when the observer is challenged to identify the projects in wide-angle views.

For example, one photographic caption refers to the 224-meter long “tunnel number 1” at kilometer 104 (figure 3), but the photograph shows the slope of a massive waterfall falling sheer to a river valley. The tunnel entrance is a barely noticeable black dot at the left; only a careful search reveals at far right the tiny arches of a bridge that is not even mentioned. Geography dominates.

At a time when the Ottomans were redefining their imperial domination in the Arab provinces, the camera’s ability to record large expanses of land served them well. The dissemination of photographs that captured landscapes from man-made and natural heights confirmed Ottoman possession of these territories. In albums collated according to different narratives (for example, to record a certain path, to provide information about the construction process, or to celebrate the sultan), photographs of the railway projects reinforced notions of imperial power. Regardless of whether such views were included in popular illustrated periodicals as single shots or as part of a series, or even if they circulated as single prints, the message was the same. From the empire’s center to its provinces to international viewers, these photographs made clear the territorial and political reach of the Ottoman Empire.



Figure 3. “The Haifa branch of the Exalted Line and the entrance on the Haifa side of the 227-meter-long tunnel number one at the 104th kilometer of the railway line” (*hat-ı ali Hayfa şubesinde ve yüz dördüncü kilometre dahilinde iki yüz yirmi yedi metrelik bir numarolu tünelin Hayfa cihetinden medhali*) shows the landscape and curve of a river on the Haifa line of Hijaz Railway with four arches of tunnels at the middle right-hand side of the photo. Source: Ömer M. Koç Collection.

Furthermore, imperial power was asserted by the depiction of people crowding the views that the cameras captured: these images conveyed valuable data about social hierarchies and the labor landscape. While the human scenes do not lend themselves to conclusive arguments and remain provocative, teasing the observer's interpretative tendencies, they are useful nevertheless for broadening our vision. Inevitably, the men made to pose for the camera (in some cases, simply to indicate scale) impose their long-lasting presence on the scene, triggering thoughts of social dynamics. They are clearly divided into two hierarchical groups: Ottoman officers identifiable by their European costumes, fezzes, and fancy boots stand alongside ordinary laborers. The latter occupy two categories: soldiers of the Ottoman army (*asker-i şahane*), who were salaried and whose military service was reduced by one year as compensation for this arduous work, and local laborers (*amele-i mükellife*).⁴ The Ottoman officers always appear in the forefront; because the same figures are recognizable in several photographs; they break through the generic category of administrators and overseers and acquire individual identities (figure 4). Adding to their prominent placement in the photographs, their erect postures exude self-confidence and control of the work being accomplished. In contrast to the relatively few official figures, the laborers in the background are numerous and are often featured in action, albeit choreographed for the shot: they carry stones on their backs, and axes in their hands. In another image they are shown completing the roof of the Ma'an station (figure 4). When they stand still, their locations say something about the difficulty of the work they do (figure 5). The message of imperial pride is conveyed clearly in one shot in which an officer points with his finger to the tracks over a bridge. Collectively, the photographs declare an imperial claim on Palestine, showing the control over the land and alluding to a social hierarchy.



Figure 4. "The general view of the Ma'an station and other structures on the Hamidian Hijaz route, glories of the imperial buildings and beneficences of charitable foundations of the Protector of the Caliphate." (*Celayil-i asar-ı Senniye ve ahasin-i mü'essesat-ı Hayriye-yi cenab-i hilafatpanahiden olan Hamidiye Hicaz demir-yolu Maan istasyonu ile sair-i mebanisi manzarayı umumiyesi*) shows Ma'an train station with seven men in fezes at the front wearing different colored uniforms. There are numerous other figures standing behind them around the station building and three figures on top of the roof finishing off the tiling. Source: Ömer M. Koç Collection.

Cartography and Empire Building

Documentation by cartography also served colonial and imperial ideologies well. Matthew Edney stated it blatantly regarding British control of India: “As geography and empire are intimately and thoroughly interwoven ... knowledge of the territory is determined by geographic representations and most especially by the map.” He concluded that, “imperialism and mapmaking intersect at the most basic level. Both are fundamentally concerned with territory and knowledge.”⁵ Furthermore, as Daniel Foliard argued, again in reference to British cartography, maps say a great deal about “imaginations and ideologies.” However, their meanings are associated more with those who demarcate them, and not necessarily about the lands depicted or, especially, the people who live there. Their “compilation, semiotics, publication, and reception” give clues about the “imaginations and ideologies” behind their production.⁶

Recent scholarship on cartography proposes to examine maps as “performances and processes,” that is, paying attention to their transformations as they are circulated, used, and interpreted. Unpacked by Karen Culcasi, this means, “situating and critiquing maps with the complex historical discourses from which they evolved, while looking for continuities and changes.” Among the examples Culcasi gives that relate to maps of the Ottoman Empire, the “Sykes-Picot” map of 1916 makes the clearest point. Superimposed on an older map created in 1910 by the Royal Geographic Society and titled “Maps of Eastern Turkey in Asia, Suria, and Western Persia,” the Sykes-Picot map transformed the earlier one to serve a new purpose by crudely dividing the Arab territories between the French and the British. The Sykes-Picot map served as the base for further negotiations, although many other maps followed proposing other territorial divisions.⁷

Late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Ottoman maps of the Middle East do not fall outside the general framework of this empire-cartography relationship. The construction of the Haifa section of the Hijaz Railway in 1905 provides a good platform on which to investigate a broader systematic attempt by the Ottomans to map the entirety of Palestine. The maps of the Hijaz Railway can be analyzed from three different perspectives. Firstly, the Hijaz Railway appears in imperial maps that show how the constructed and projected railways were meant to connect the entire expanse of the Ottoman Empire. Yuval Ben-Bassat and Yossi Ben-Artzi have identified five such map collections illustrating the empire’s veins, namely its roads and railways.⁸ The large production of railway maps demonstrates their importance to the empire’s centralization and its projection of power over provinces both near and far. While most of these maps were produced in Ottoman Turkish, some also include French toponyms, reflecting the influence of French cartographers in geographic and cartographic education in the Ottoman Empire.⁹

Secondly, the blueprint plans of railway construction include a detailed topographic survey of the region, noting the towns and cities through which the railway passed or was meant to pass.¹⁰ Although the blueprints were written and marked in French, Europeans may not necessarily have produced them since Ottoman surveyors and cartographers

were actively involved in the process of surveying the land.¹¹ For example, a map showing the projected railway line on a detailed topographic survey of the Imperial Hajj Route from Damascus to Mecca clearly demonstrates the instrumental role that the Ottoman surveyor, Hajji Mukhtar Bey, and cartographers, Captain of the Artillery ‘Umar Zaki and Lieutenant Hasan Mu‘ayyin, played in developing the construction plans. More importantly, the navy produced different versions of the map in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish, pointing to the multiple purposes and audiences targeted within and beyond the empire.¹²

The mass production of maps demonstrates the Ottoman state’s attempt to disseminate cartographic knowledge about the empire to the public. This speaks to the third and final aspect of analysis of the Hijaz Railway: its use as a tool of Ottoman

state propaganda during the Hamidian era. Before the Haifa branch of the Hijaz Railway was constructed in 1905, Ottoman lithographic maps of the Hijaz Railway were mass produced and sold for 100 para¹³ (figure 6). The map shows the main Hijaz Railway line fully constructed from Damascus to Mecca, although the railway between Medina and Mecca was never built. It also illustrates the District of Jerusalem in an enlarged insert of the Jerusalem-Jaffa line constructed in 1892. The latter map also includes a large text box in Ottoman Turkish, reading like a guidebook full of practical information for pilgrims making their way to Mecca. When considered next to the reproduction of photographs as postcards, this map was part of the larger attempt by the Hamidian state to mobilize and control visual knowledge production and dissemination about the Hijaz Railway. It was, in short, propaganda on a global scale.



Figure 5. “The bridge built under the waterfall at the Yarmuk creek near Zizun village at the 133th kilometer of the manufactured Haifa branch of the Exalted line” (*hat-ı alı Hayfa şubesi imalat-ı sanayisinden olup yüz otuz üçüncü kilometre dahilinde Zizun karyesi civarında Yarmuk deresine münhadir şelâle altında inşa olunan köprü*) shows the beginning of a railroad bridge with three figures, two in fezes and dark uniforms, with one of them pointing to the railroad. Source: Ömer M. Koç Collection

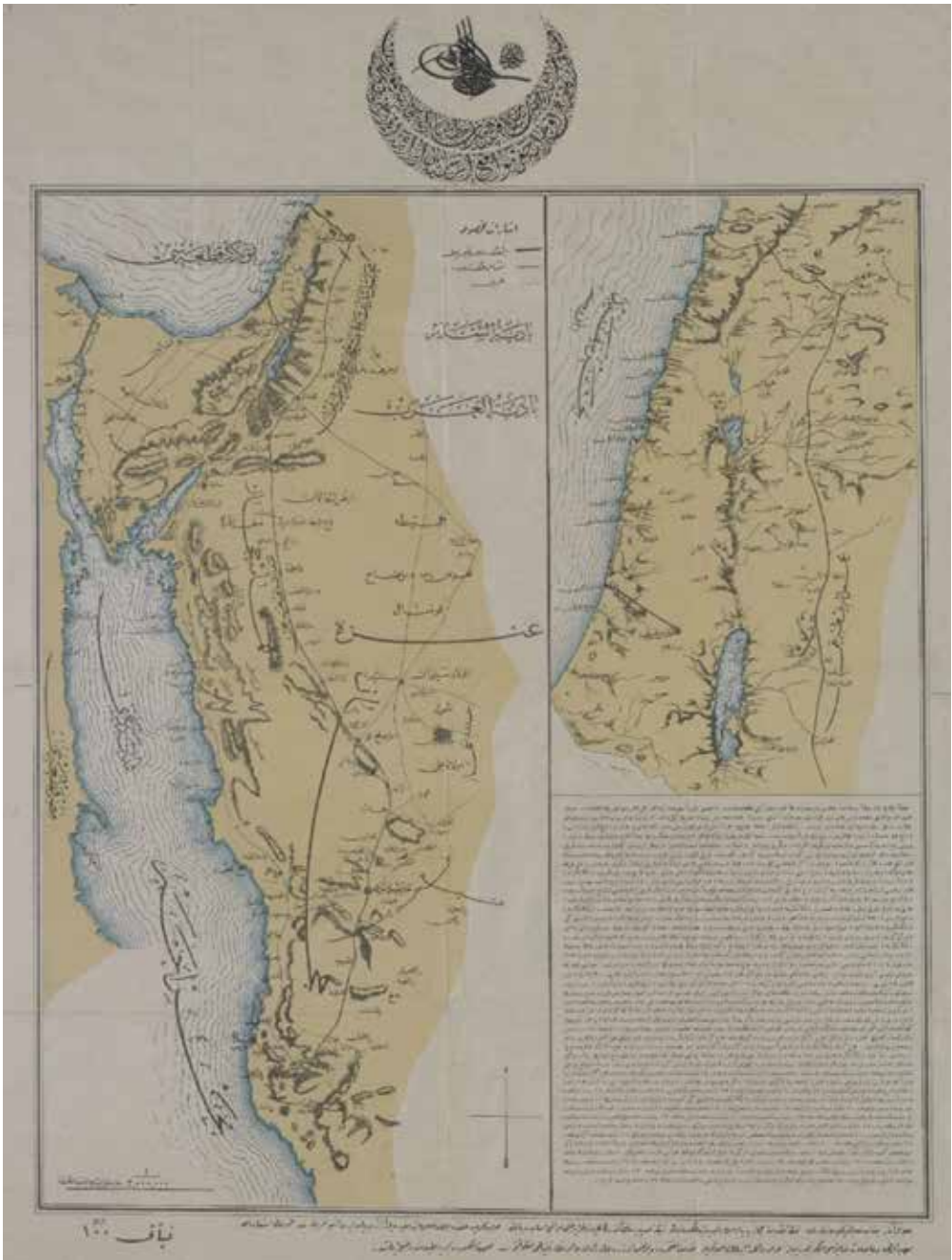


Figure 6. Lithograph printed map of the Hijaz Railway sold for 100 kuruş. The map has three sections. On the left, a map of the railroad and the roads leading from Damascus to Mecca is depicted illustrating the main cities and towns on the route. On the top right, a close-up of a section of the Beirut to Jerusalem route is depicted, with the railway between Jerusalem and Jaffa shown. On the bottom right, a detailed guide for pilgrims appears in Ottoman Turkish. Source: BOA, Hrt_1932.

The mass-produced map of the Hijaz Railway is connected to at least three earlier maps. It does not note the empire's administrative divisions, since it was published by the navy for "the benefit of the public" (*umumun istifadesi*) and intended to show a united empire. In contrast, an earlier map titled "The Land of Syria," published in Arabic in Beirut in 1889, clearly notes the administrative divisions through lines demarcating the borders and color-coding each province (figure 7).¹⁴ This map was filed in the archive with an earlier map entitled the "Province of Syria" published in Ottoman Turkish in 1880; the latter map shows Jerusalem as a subprovince of Syria, rather than as an independent district.¹⁵ There is a fourth map of the region from 1890, titled "Map of the Province of Beirut" and produced in both Ottoman Turkish and French by the engineer of the Beirut province (signed as "Bechara" on the map).¹⁶ It is similar to the previously mentioned maps, apart from two distinct features. First, it includes detailed topographic features, which might have been compiled by Bechara himself, his surveyors in the region, or even copied from circulating European maps or Hajji Mukhtar Bey's map of the projected Hijaz Railway. Second, it notes in detail the population of the province of Beirut in a table placed at the bottom right. The "Province of Syria" (1880) and the "Land of Syria" (1892) maps were mass-produced at the provincial level and found their way to the Yıldız Palace archive. The "Map of the Province of Beirut" (1890) was produced for state and administrative purposes and had limited circulation, and the later Hijaz Railway map (between 1902 and 1905) was published in Istanbul and circulated widely. These maps clearly indicate the compilation of cartographic knowledge in the Ottoman Empire: information from the earliest map on the Province of Syria was reused and updated in the later maps for different purposes.

The last map in the "Land of Syria" series includes a distinctive feature that reflects how the Ottoman state imagined Palestine, as well as the impact that the global circulation of ideas and cartographic knowledge had on Ottoman cartography (figure 7). In the left middle section of the map, we see a division of the coastal region stretching from Sayda to Gaza, together with the label "the Division of Twelve Tribes of Israel" (*aqsam asbat israil al-isna ashar*). This section of the map served to indicate where the Twelve Tribes would have lived on both sides of the River Jordan and beyond the contemporary Ottoman administrative divisions that separated Palestine into the Province of Beirut and the District of Jerusalem. One of these twelve divisions, in the area around the port city of Gaza, is labelled "al-Filistin," referring to the biblical Philistines. This detail supports Salim Tamari's argument that the delineation of Palestine in Ottoman cartographic culture corresponded, at certain levels, to European designations of the "Holy Land," as a clear awareness and utilization of biblical references and cartographic delineations in this map demonstrates.¹⁷ Apart from the wide circulation of cartographic knowledge and ideas, we can trace their impact on the implementation of administrative divisions. The Ottomans not only considered the District of Jerusalem as part of Palestine, but also intentionally divided Palestine into two separate administrative divisions, with the northern section included in the Province of Beirut. Palestine's division versus its unification into a single province was a key component of the debates that focused

on the goal of gaining full control over the province and resisting foreign intervention. These debates occurred at the central and provincial levels between 1872 and World War I – during which time the separate Province of Jerusalem was first created, then retracted, and finally replaced by the establishment of an independent District of Jerusalem in the same year under Midhat Pasha's premiership.¹⁸ The construction of the Haifa branch of the Hijaz Railway encouraged Christian pilgrimage to Palestine; however, the administrative division of the region was intended to assert higher levels of control from Istanbul over the District of Jerusalem while limiting European influence and intervention.

Two cartographic postcards of the region further illustrate the mass dissemination of maps showing the Ottoman Empire's administrative

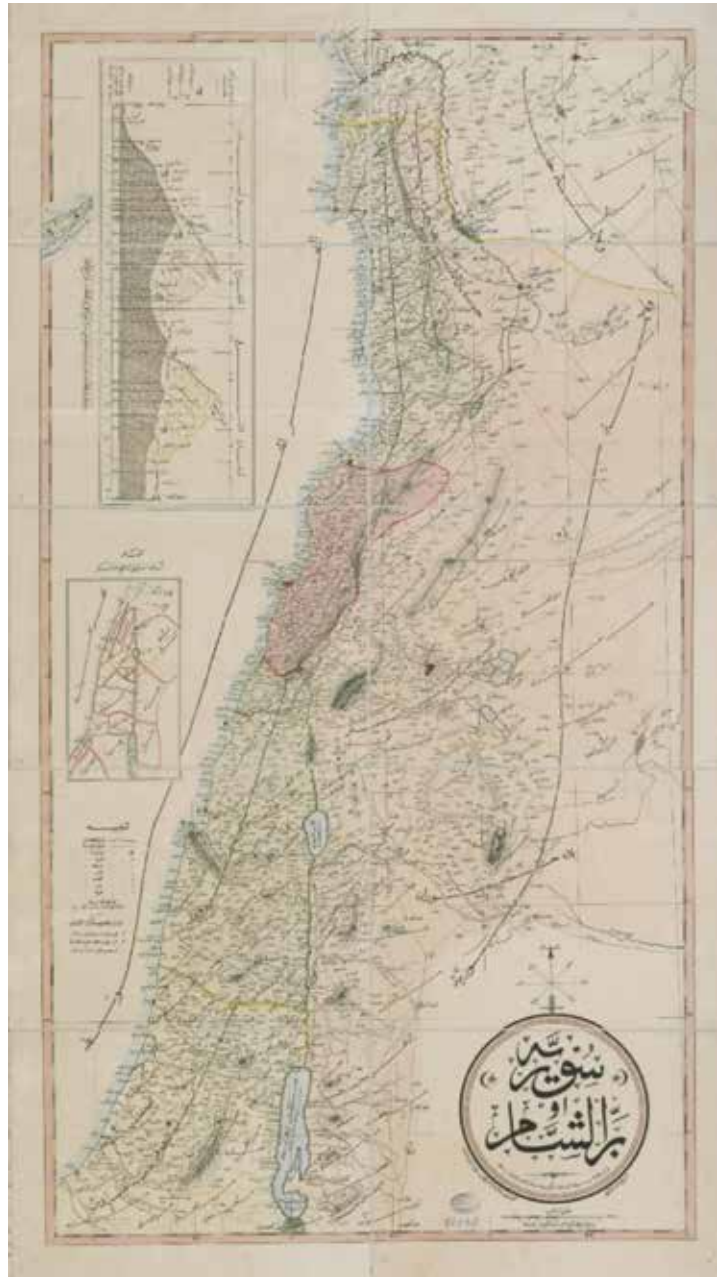


Figure 7. Map of the administrative divisions of the Province of Beirut at the coastline of the Mediterranean with the District of Jerusalem depicted at the southern section up to the end of the Dead Sea. At top left of the map is the elevation and distance of the main towns and cities in the Province of Beirut. At middle left, a division of the tribes of Israel is depicted around the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Source: *Suriye Berr al-Şam* [The Land of Syria] (Al-Amirakan Publication House, 1892), IUMK 92293_1.

divisions and the significance of the Hijaz Railway to the empire. While the first postcard depicting the Province of Beirut looks like a simplified version of the Land of Syria map (figure 7),¹⁹ the second, focusing on the District of Jerusalem (figure 8), mirrors the mass-produced map of the Hijaz Railway of the same region (figure 6).²⁰ The fact that the Hijaz Railway and its Haifa branch are marked clearly in red in both postcards demonstrates the significance that the railways had to the Ottoman state and its projection of power. The postcards are part of a larger collection published by the army's library (Kütüphane-i Askeri) and Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi, which includes every single province of the Ottoman Empire.²¹ While scholars have already established that the Ottomans used postcards to disseminate photos of the Hijaz Railway, the publication of this series of postcards illustrates how the Ottomans employed cartographic knowledge on a mass scale to project their sovereignty over the spaces they showcased pictorially, including Palestine.²²



Figure 8. “District of Jerusalem (Kudüs-ü şerif mutasarıflığı), the postcard shows the District of Jerusalem and its southern borders with the Sinai Dessert not clearly demarcated. The railway from Jerusalem to Jaffa is depicted with a red line. It was published by the Army’s Library (Kütüphane-i Askeri) and Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi. Source: Atatürk Library, AK Krt_028343.

Like other regions in the Arab provinces, Palestine's newly gained importance was reflected on the maps. Various state institutions mapped Palestine for different purposes: the navy produced maps of the port cities,²³ the state produced maps of the Hijaz Railway, and provincial governments and the Hamidian Privy Purse (Hazine-yi Hassa) produced maps for tax purposes.²⁴ Among them, the map of Sayda from 1848–49 (AH 1265) roughly identifies the stretch between Ramla and Jaffa as “Filistin ülkesi” (the land of Palestine), notably without any boundaries at all.²⁵ Another set of important maps underline the dispute regarding the Palestine-Egypt border, which was set in 1906 through negotiations between the Ottomans and the British.²⁶ A set of six maps point to the cartographic ambitions and utilization of maps by the Ottoman state. They predate 1872, as they represent Palestine as a subprovince of the Province of Syria. Information for the subprovince of Jerusalem was provided, demonstrating the significance the region had for the Ottoman state even before creation of the independent District of Jerusalem. The maps convey various types of information about the entire expanse of the Ottoman Empire, from demographics to crime rates and agricultural land use.²⁷ Noteworthy are the demographic maps, which distinguish the population distribution by age only, not according to religious affiliation.²⁸ While Ottoman surveys collected information about religious affiliation, its visual representation in maps only appeared in the Young Turk period (1908–18). The charter of the Council of Cartography (Harita Kurulu) within the Department of Cartography, established in 1909, listed as its main goal “to produce a map of the entire Ottoman lands”; one of its secondary goals called for “geographic research from the ethnographic perspective on Ottoman lands.”²⁹

Within this context of Ottoman cartography, *Filistin Risalesi* is a salient booklet that responded to the parameters set by the department, albeit with a significant delay. Reflecting the shift in Ottoman policies toward the Arab provinces and published in 1915 by the Eighth Army, under the tutelage of Mersinli Cemal Pasha, the Commander of the Eighth Army, and Ahmet Cemal Pasha, the governor of Syria and commander of the Fourth Army, it was intended for use by military forces.³⁰ The publication was packed with geographical, historical, ethnic, religious, and infrastructural information, for example, geographical specifications on water conditions and the range of agricultural production. The history section combined data on the important events of the past with random references to the Canaanite, Philistine, Hebrew, Babylonian, Arab, and Islamic conquests. Architectural monuments from the various eras and their current states were listed; in addition to major monuments (such as Dome of the Rock and the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem), the text also referred to less significant remains. Along the way, even vernacular culture was touched upon, such as a 33-meter deep well from the time of Jesus Christ, with waters that purportedly never dried up.³¹

The three maps (in color) at the end charted and summarized the data: the first, *irtifa haritası* (map of heights, accompanied with sectional drawings), showed topography; the second identified the zones where different ethnic groups lived (figure 9); and the third indicated the roads. In remarkable detail, the major human settlements featured in the textual discussions of geography and history and were marked on the geographic and infrastructural maps. The complexity of the empire's ethnic structure, which included

World War I intensified cartographic focus on the Middle East from all sides. Even before the war, the British had produced many maps that interlaced with their religious interests in the Holy Land; but they also demonstrated a growing eye for conquest. For example, the Palestine Exploration Fund made systematic surveys between 1872 and 1877 and, increasingly, the British War Office became involved in PEF's work.³³ In a parallel venture, during the war years, the Cartography Department of the Ottoman Army continued to do field work and produce maps of the empire. The activity was intense and continued through all of 1917, first starting with Rumeli and Anatolia, then moving to the Gaza war front in May and July. Again, with the support of Cemal Pasha, maps of Gaza, Jerusalem, Jaffa, Nablus, and Haifa in Palestine (in addition to other cities in the region) were printed at a scale of 1/200,000.³⁴

An interesting set of maps charted the daily operations of the "Yıldırım Ordusu" (Thunderbolt Army Group), the latter named after its abrupt attacks against the British forces and their "trench warfare" strategy. An integral part of the military aid provided to the Ottoman Empire, "Yıldırım" was headed by German General Erich von Falkenhayn. According to Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir, the deputy chief of staff of the Yıldırım Army Group, Yıldırım was organized pursuing German rules and with German officers in key positions. Its leadership was comprised of sixty-five German officers and nine Turkish officers, only one of whom was of a high rank. In his detailed account produced in the war's aftermath, Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir linked the loss of Palestine to this unbalanced command structure and to the fact that "the Thunderbolt came to Turkey as German and kept its German-ness to the end." The Turkish army, he said, increasingly distrusted Thunderbolt's German character.³⁵ Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir's book, *Yıldırım*, offers a detailed and valuable account of the Palestine Front. First published in 1921, it is a primary source for the Syria-Palestine Front and the Thunderbolt Army Group.³⁶

The Yıldırım collection of maps looks at Palestine from two scales, both providing war-related data alongside geographical features: large maps show the extent of the land while regional maps zoom into the details of military operations. In the first category is a general map of Palestine (Filistin Haritası), especially striking in its depiction of geographic elements. Details of the infrastructural network are conveyed in another map, titled "Filistin Yol Haritasi" (Palestine Road Map), now including the land roads in addition to the railways, along with named settlements, both large and small. In an interesting note, it also located "old ruins" (*eski harabeler*), in the southwestern part especially. A random glimpse at the more detailed maps reveals attacks, gains, and defeats, battle by battle. One map, for example, shows that on 26 March 1917 (26 Mart AH 1333) during the First Gaza Battle, the Ottoman troops (represented as circles) used a three-pointed offense that forced some British troops (represented as black arrows) to retreat (figure 10). On another, the success of the Second Gaza Battle on 11 April 1917 (11 Nisan AH 1333) was tied to the arrival of additional Ottoman troops from Jaffa (indicated in white arrows).³⁷ In a map showing the state of the Seventh and Eighth Armies on 8 October 1917 (8 Kanunsani AH 1333), the date of the pitched Beersheba-Gaza battle, the situation was quite different: here, the Eighth Army (marked in green arrows) registered a major retreat (figure 11). Several months later, on 7–9 December 1917 (7–9 Kanunievvel AH 1333), at the height of

the “Battle for Jerusalem,” the British were at the gates of Jerusalem and moving forward on all fronts.³⁸ This was the beginning of the end for the Ottoman presence in Palestine, as General Allenby made his ceremonial entry into Jerusalem on 11 December. The map summarizing the situation on 27 January 1918 (27 Kanunisani AH 1334) recorded the final defeat, with Jerusalem and Jaffa now sitting comfortably within the region controlled by the British forces. The Ottoman armies were moving away toward the north.³⁹

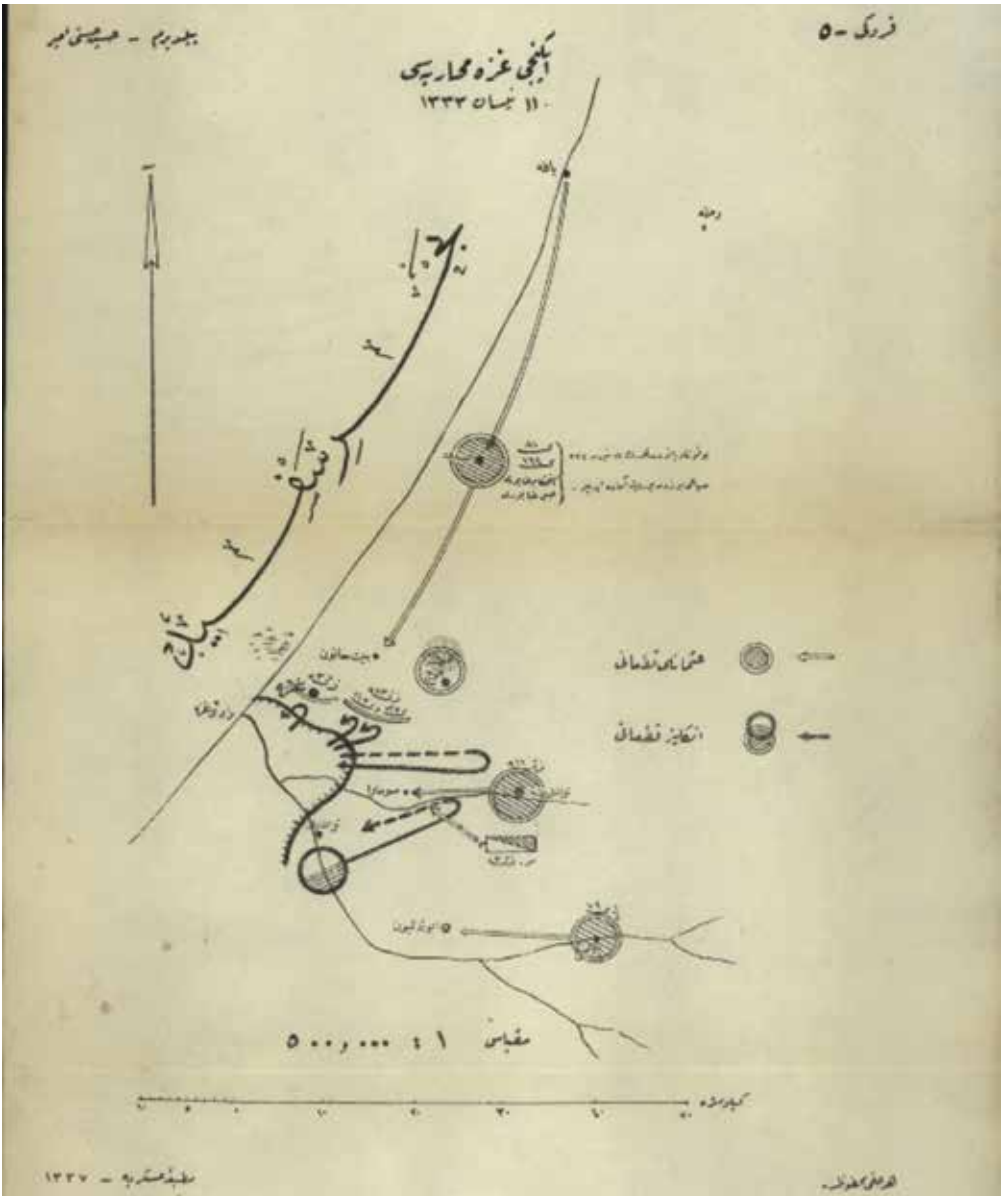


Figure 10. Yıldırım map, recording the action on 11 April 1917. Source: Atatürk Library, Hrt_011271.

Yıldırım maps survey the movements of the Seventh and Eighth Armies during 1917 in meticulous detail. Nevertheless, they also provide a comprehensive record of Palestine, from its geographical elements down to its smallest settlements, all accurately placed in broader contexts and in their immediate surroundings. It would be fair to argue that the Ottomans had not viewed Palestine with such intimacy before, but only did so now, just as it was slipping out of their grasp. Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir's book, *Yıldırım*, published in 1921 on the eve of the declaration of the Turkish Republic, sealed the end of an era.

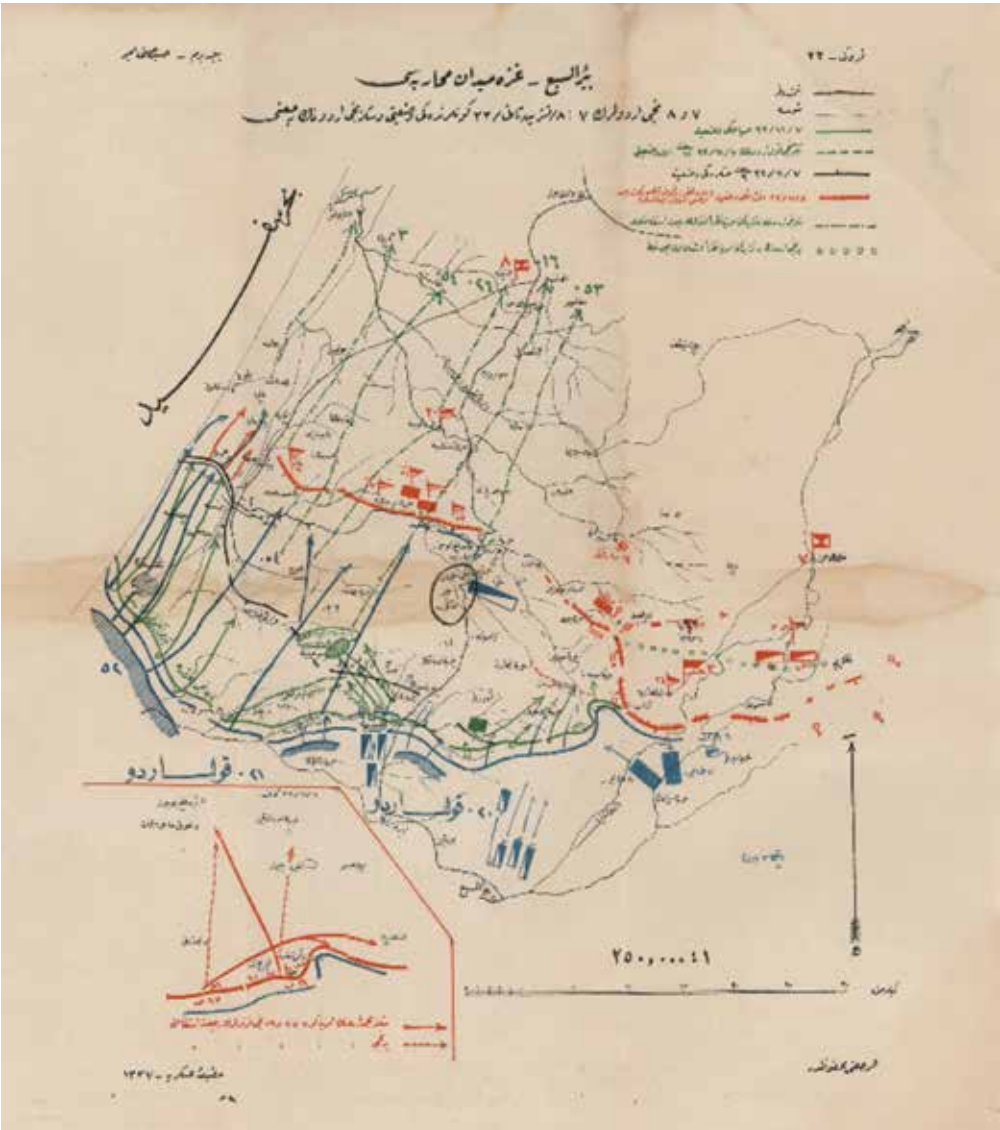


Figure 11. Yıldırım map, recording the action on 7–9 December 1917. Source: AK Hrt_011247.

Aerial Photographs and Cartography

Hüseyin Hüsnu Emir identified one map from the Yıldırım collection that was drawn with the help of photographs taken from German planes on 27 October 1917 (27 Teşrinievvel AH 1333).⁴⁰ In his words, Yıldırım armies desperately needed airplanes and the unfortunately poor state of Ottoman air technology had led to over-reliance on German forces: “All the planes on the Palestine Front” belonged to Germans.⁴¹ Nevertheless, the Ottoman military interest in airplanes goes back to a report from 20 December 1909, which stated that airplanes would be indispensable during pitched battles and that the army should acquire them urgently. The Ottoman initiative to train pilots started in 1911, when two young officers, lieutenant commander Mehmed Fesa and lieutenant Yusuf Kenan, were sent to France for flight training. An aviation school was founded in 1912 in Yeşilköy (figure 12) following their return to Istanbul.⁴² A year later, an article published in the popular illustrated journal *Şehbal* reported on the sight of a plane above Istanbul, flown by another pilot, Fethi Bey, and gave factual data about the experience. It stated, for example, that flying was similar to driving a car at 100 kilometers per hour and that until a plane reached a height of 800–900 meters, pilots could distinguish even people and animals on the ground. A photograph depicted Fethi Bey with a certain “Monsieur Kiray.”⁴³

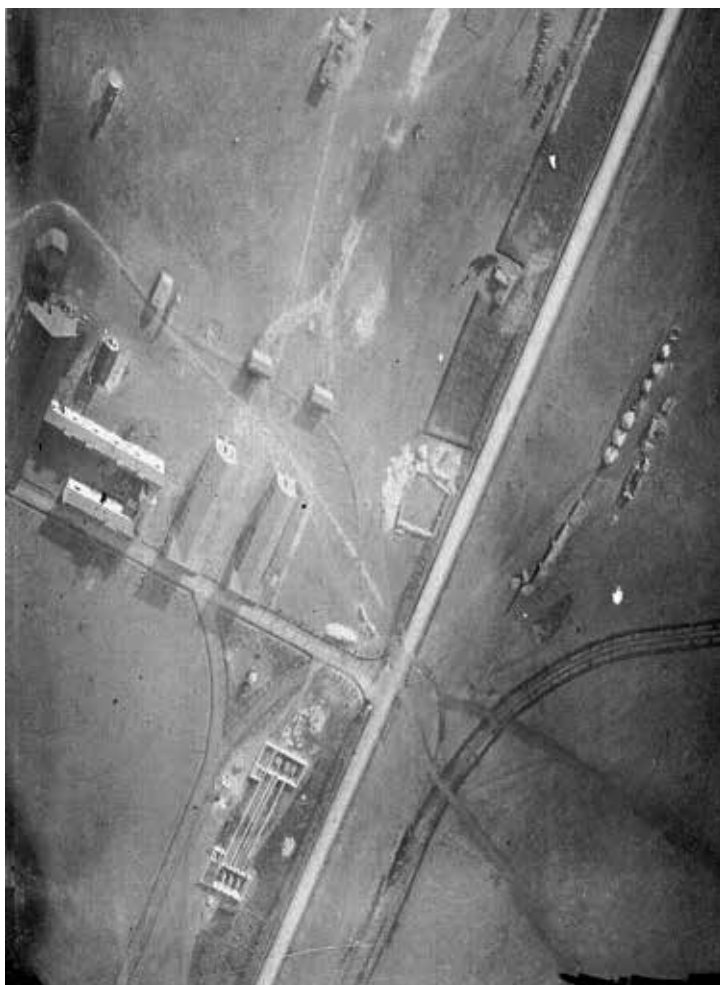


Figure 12. Aerial photo showing the aviation school at Yeşilköy. Source: Bahattin Öztuncay Collection.

Ottoman pilots took part in the Balkan Wars under limited conditions, with planes rented from Germany and France.⁴⁴ Flying was taken seriously and an ambitious journey was planned to link Istanbul to Aleppo via Anatolia and further south to Jerusalem and Port Said. Ultimately reaching Cairo, the flight was scheduled to take place between 8 February and 22 May 1914.⁴⁵ Stretching over a distance of 2,515 kilometers, the expedition would be broken with stops at major settlements; the longest distances to be covered were the 220-kilometer stretch between Istanbul and Eskisehir and the 300 kilometers from Homs to Beirut. The pilots in charge were lieutenant commanders Fethi Bey and İsmail Hakkı Bey and lieutenants Reşid Sadık and Nuri Bey. The flight turned out to be an arduous and deadly venture. Gusty winds on 27 February 1914 caused Fethi Bey and Sadık Bey's plane, *Muavenet-i Milliye*, to crash near Lake Tiberias on the Damascus-Tiberias stretch. Both men were killed. Another crash in Jaffa two weeks later, on 11 March, resulted in the death of Nuri Bey. All three pilots were buried in the graveyard cemetery of the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and a memorial was erected in Istanbul. The final stretch to Cairo was not realized due to weather conditions.⁴⁶

Harb Mecmuası (War Journal), a bi-weekly published by the Ministry of War (1915–18), proudly reported the activities of wartime Ottoman pilots. These activities included taking critical aerial photographs, including some of the Suez Canal that showed the train stations and various buildings constructed by the British, as well as ships belonging to the British navy. It was with the assistance of these photographs that the “brave” Ottoman pilots had bombed various sites, causing the death of British soldiers and destroying arms and equipment in the depots. As the planes were able to fly quite low, they could open fire on ground forces.⁴⁷ The photographs that accompanied the reporting showed air views of Port Said and an English plant destroyed by Ottoman air forces (figure 13). The British planes grounded by Ottoman



Figure 13. “Süvey ve Havalisinde Tayyarelerimiz Faaliyeti ve Tayyareden Alınan Fotoğraflar” [The Operations of Our Airplanes and Photographs Taken from Airplanes in and around Suez] *Harb Mecmuası* 1, no. 14 (Teşrinisani 1332 / Safer 1335 / November/December 1916), 220–21.

artillery featured in the pages of other issues of the journal, for example in May 1917 and in August 1917 (figure 14). The first image was paired on the same page with a memorable photograph of a destroyed British tank, qualified as “zırhlı otomobil” (armored automobile). The second showed the remains of two British planes, in addition to an image of the British lieutenant who was taken captive (figure 15).⁴⁸

Early Ottoman successes during the Gaza War, reported by *Harb Mecmuası*, corresponded with Hüseyin Hüsnü Emir’s accounts. However, the situation was soon reversed, and the British air force established its superiority. Casualties to Ottomans on the Palestine Front were considerable and air attacks resulted in the death of many soldiers, especially during the last stages of the war.⁴⁹



Figure 14. A British destroyed “armed automobile” and destroyed plane in *Harb Mecmuası* 2, no. 19 (Mays 1333 / Subat 1335 / May 1917), 291.

Aviation impacted more than just bombing during World War I. The airplane acted as an “eye in the sky” for “aerial reconnaissance information.” It was used to document the land, both serving map-making purposes and enabling the planning of further battles.⁵⁰ The Ottomans acknowledged the importance of such strategies and noted the need for advanced technologies, albeit belatedly. An article in 1927, for example, noted the new Turkish interest in cartography that had been developed with the help of aerial photographs; it explained that with the use of some “special equipment,” European topographers were able to utilize information from photographs to create maps.⁵¹



Figure 15. Remains of two British planes, and a captured British officer in *Harb Mecmuası* 2, no. 21 (Ağustos 1333 / Şevval 1335 / August 1917), 330.

Turks were thus aware of the “perceptive” power of aerial views and their ability to augment the authority, dominance, and control of those who could own and use the technology successfully. The efficiency and the pace in which such new technologies were adopted, however, had created unequal international relations, better serving colonial expansion than Ottoman imperialism. Of course, the story is much larger and much more complex, but if the British gained control over Palestine after the war, this had something to do with the multitudes of ways in which they had capitalized on aviation, as well as other technological advancements. In comparison, Ottoman claims to Palestine – whether military, technological, cartographic, or photographic – paled.

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Endnotes

- 1 There is extensive literature on the Hijaz Railroad. See, for example: Ufuk Gürsoy, *Hicaz Demiryolu* (Istanbul: Eren, 1994); Murat Özyüksel, *Hicaz Demiryolu* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 2000); Zeynep Çelik, *Empire, Architecture, and the City: French–Ottoman Encounters, 1830–1914*, (Seattle/London: University of Washington Press, 2008), chap. 1; and Vahdettin Engin, Ahmet Uçar, and Osman Doğan, eds., *Osmanlı’da Ulaşım* (Istanbul: Çamlıca, 2012), 237–86.
- 2 The album is housed in the Ömer Koç Collection. For completion dates of the two segments, see Engin et. al., *Osmanlı’da Ulaşım*, 269, 330. For an analysis of this album, on which this section is based, see Zeynep Çelik, “Photographing Mundane Modernity,” in *Camera Ottomana: Photography and Modernity in the Ottoman Empire, 1840–1914*, ed. Zeynep Çelik and Edhem Eldem (Istanbul: Koç University Press, 2015), 154–68.
- 3 Maria Morris Hamburg, Françoise Heilburn, and Philippe Néagu, *Nadar* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1995), 110.
- 4 İbrahim Üsul, ed., *Hicaz Demiryolu Fotograf Albümü* (Istanbul: Albaraka Yayınları, 1999), 14. It was also common to employ European experts.
- 5 Matthew Edney, *Mapping an Empire: The Geographical Construction of British India, 1765–1843* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 1.
- 6 Daniel Foliard, *Dislocating the Orient: British Maps and the Making of the Middle East, 1854–1921* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2017), 1, 3.
- 7 Karen Culcasi, “Disordered Ordering: Mapping the Divisions of the Ottoman Empire,” *Cartographica: International Journal for Geographic Information and Geovisualization*, 49, no. 1 (Spring 2014): 3, 6.
- 8 These are in Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivi (BOA): BOA Hrt 337, Hrt 374, Hrt 1489, Hrt 406, Hrt 2577. For more detailed discussion, see Ben-Bassat, Yuval, and Yossi Ben-Artzi, “Ottoman Maps of the Empire’s Arab Provinces, 1850s to the First World War,” *Imago Mundi* 70, no. 2 (2018): 199–211.
- 9 As will be discussed later, the Cartography Commission of 1890 was sent to France so that its members could master the latest cartographic methods.
- 10 BOA Hrt 1645. This blueprint includes 14 pages showing the whole of the projected Hijaz Railroad from Damascus to Mecca.
- 11 BOA Hrt 1645 was reproduced in Ottoman Turkish for the Yıldız Palace and Abdülhamid II. The reproduction does not include the topographic features and only shows the route and the stations on it in scale. See İstanbul Üniversitesi Merkez Kütüphanesi, Nadide Eserler İstanbul University Central Library, Rare Works (İÜMK) 92423.
- 12 The Arabic version is housed in the Royal

- Geographic Society (London). The Ottoman Turkish version is reproduced in James Nicolson's book on the Hijaz Railway. Nicolson does not cite from which archives the map comes. However, it is noted in the top right corner of the map that it is an "Enclosure in Sir N. O'Connor's no.252 pf 6404." Information has been translated into English with red ink next to the Ottoman Turkish. Nicholas O'Connor was the British Ambassador to the Sublime Porte from 1898 until his death in 1908. See Royal Geographical Society, Ms Asia Div.186; James Nicolson, *The Hejaz Railway* (London: Stacey International, 2007), 13.
- 13 BOA Hrt_806_2 and İÜMK 92293. 100 para is about U.S. \$ 0.25. Currency was converted using 110 as the exchange rate between kuruş and the British pound sterling (1841–1903) as stated in Şevket Pamuk, *Monetary History of the Ottoman Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Table 12.1, 191, online at www.measuringworth.com/ukcompare/ (accessed 25 May 2020).
 - 14 İÜMK 92293-1.
 - 15 The map shows the administrative divisions of Province of Syria at the coastline of the Mediterranean with the sub-province of Jerusalem in the bottom left. Titled "Map of the Province of Syria" (Suriye vilayeti haritası), drawn by assistant engineer of the province Yusuf Efendi and published as a lithograph by Mustafa Efendi, the head of the provincial lithographic publication house, 1880. İÜMK 92293_2.
 - 16 BOA Hrt_521. This map is discussed in Ben-Bassat and Ben-Artzi, "Ottoman Maps of the Empire's Arab Provinces," 213 (Plate 6).
 - 17 Salim Tamari, "Shifting Ottoman Conceptions of Palestine, Part 2: Ethnography and Cartography," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 48 (Winter 2011): 6.
 - 18 Johann Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem 1872–1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 9–11.
 - 19 Postcard showing the administrative divisions of the Province of Beirut with the District of Jerusalem appearing at the bottom left next to the legend. The Hijaz Railway and its Haifa and Beirut branches are illustrated with a red line. The map is titled "Province of Beirut (Beyrut vilayeti)," and published by the army's library (Kütüphane-i Askeri) and Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi, AK Krt_016834.
 - 20 AK Krt_028343.
 - 21 Tüccarzade İbrahim Hilmi was a prominent publisher in late Ottoman and early Republican eras
 - 22 In total, forty postcards have been identified from Atatürk Library as part of this collection of cartographic postcards. See: AK Krt_016835 (Egypt), Krt_016839 (Cyprus), Krt_028333 (Crete).
 - 23 İÜMK 93565: Muhiddin, Yüzbaşı "Sur portları: Akka ve Hayfa portları." This shows Haifa and Akka. This is part of a series of maps (93551–93566) of the Mediterranean, 93562 –Trablusşam, and 93564 – Beyrut ve Sida.
 - 24 For maps of the miri (state) lands, see (BOA) Hrt_1501 and Hrt_1568; for maps drawn for the Hamidian Privy Purse (Hazine-i Hassa), see (BOA) Hrt_528 and Hrt_529.
 - 25 BOA Hrt 520. This map is discussed in Ben-Bassat and Ben-Artzi, "Ottoman Maps of the Empire's Arab Provinces," 207.
 - 26 Ben-Bassat, Yuval, and Yossi Ben-Artzi, "The Collision of Empires as Seen from Istanbul: The Border of British-controlled Egypt and Ottoman Palestine as Reflected in Ottoman Maps," *Journal of Historical Geography* 50 (2015): 25–36. Büssow notes that as early as 1882, there were concerns in Istanbul regarding lack of accurate maps of southern deserts of Palestine after the British occupation of Egypt and unclear status of the border between the District of Jerusalem and Egypt. Büssow, *Hamidian Palestine*, 55.
 - 27 The maps in this collection, in order, are: (1) demographic map of the empire; (2) population distribution charts by age for every province; (3) empire-wide crime statistics maps; (4) public schools map of the empire; (5) land under agricultural use in 1313 (1895-96); (6) chart of imports to each province; (7) map of existing railways and roads of the empire; and (8) map of imperial administrative divisions, including some topographic information. See BOA Hrt_2577.
 - 28 BOA Hrt_2577_2.
 - 29 Abdurrahman Aygün, *Türk Haritacılık Tarihi*, Ankara: Harita Genel Müdürlüğü, ۳۰, ۱۹۸۰. It is in the aftermath of the Tanzimat, and associated with the reform agendas, that documenting the imperial lands through cartography emerged as a priority within the military structure. As Aygün reports, the efforts to institutionalize modern cartography

- go back to the late 1830s, when the idea for a Department of Cartography (Harita Dairesi) originated, even though the establishment of the Department only took place in 1909. Throughout the seven decades in between, during the reigns of Sultan Abdülmecid (1839–61) and Sultan Abdülhamid II, map making was introduced by courses on topography, geodesy, and astronomy into the curricula of higher-level military schools. A Cartography Commission was founded in 1887, and students were sent to France to be trained in mapmaking.
- 30 For an astute discussion of this context, see Salim Tamari, “Shifting Ottoman Conceptions of Palestine, Part 1: ‘Filistin Risalesi and the Two Jamals,’” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 47 (Fall 2011): 28–38.
 - 31 *Filistin Risalesi* (Jerusalem: Kolordu Matbaası [8th Army Publishing House], 1331 /1915), 1–13, 18.
 - 32 This point is made by Tamari in “Conceptions of Palestine, Part 2,” 10–11.
 - 33 Foliard, *Dislocating the Orient*, 9, 247.
 - 34 Aygün, *Türk Haritacılık Tarihi*, 94–95.
 - 35 Hüseyin Hüsni Emir (Erkilet), *Yıldırım*, (Ankara: Genelkurmay Basım Evi, 2002), 13–15. The maps in this edition are drawn over the original ones, which are held in the Atatürk Kitaplığı in Istanbul. Hüseyin Hüsni Emir is a controversial figure, remembered for his extreme nationalism and his admiration of Hitler.
 - 36 Hüseyin Hüsni Emir, *Yıldırım*, (Dersaadet: Matbaa-i Askeriye, AH 1337, 1921). This edition included the reproductions of the original maps.
 - 37 Yıldırım map, recording the action on 8 October 1917. AK Hrt_011270.
 - 38 Yıldırım map, recording the action on 27 January. AK Hrt_011253.
 - 39 Yıldırım map, showing a map drawn with the help of photographs taken by German pilots. AK Hrt_011254.
 - 40 AK Hrt_011260.
 - 41 Hüseyin Hüsni Emir (Erkilet), *Yıldırım*, 33.
 - 42 Stuart Kline, *Türk Havacılık Kronolojisi / A Chronicle of Turkish Aviation*, (Istanbul: Havaş, 2002), 55, 60.
 - 43 “Osmanlı Tayyareciliği Hakkında” [On Ottoman Aviation], *Şehbal*, year 5, v. 4, no. 75 (1 Mayıs 1329 / 14 May 1913), 15.
 - 44 Osman Yalçın, “Türk Hava Kuvvetleri Tarihinde Hava Okulu ve Harp Okuluna Geçiş Süreci” [Aviation School and the Transition to the Military School in the History of the Turkish Air Forces], *Akademik Bakış*, 9 no.17 (Winter 2015): 230–31, 235–36.
 - 45 *Crowd around Turkish military biplane*, Jerusalem, 1914 [1 May], American Colony, Photo Department, photographer, online at www.loc.gov/item/mpc2004003714/PP/ (accessed 25 May 2020).
 - 46 Osman Yalçın, *Türk Hava Gücü: Kuruluşu, İlk Seferleri ve Yükselişi* (Istanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2014), 55–72; Kline, *Türk Havacılık Kronolojisi*, 86, 88, 90.
 - 47 “Süvey ve Havalisinde Tayyarelerimizin Faaliyeti ve Tayyareden Alınan Fotoğraflar,” [The Operations of Our Airplanes and Photographs Taken from Airplanes in and around Suez] *Harb Mecmuası* 1, no. 14 (Teşrinisani 1332 / Safer 1335 / November/December 1916): 220–21.
 - 48 *Harb Mecmuası* 2, no. 19 (Mayıs 1333 / Şubat 1335 / May 1917): 291 and *Harb Mecmuası* 2, no. 21 (Ağustos 1333 / Şevval 1335 / August 1917): 330.
 - 49 Yalçın, *Türk Hava Gücü*, 276, 311.
 - 50 James Streckfuss, “Why the Air War Really Mattered: A Guide to Understanding the Significance of Aviation in World War I,” in *Images of Conflict: Military Aerial Photography and Archaeology*, ed. Birger Stichelbaut, Jean Bourgeois, Nicholas Saunders, and Piet Chielens (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009), 50–51.
 - 51 Mühendis Rahmi, “Tayyare ile Harita Almak Usulü Memleketimiz İçin Nafi Midir?” [Is the Method of Making Maps from Airplanes Useful for our Country?] *Şehir Emaneti Mecmuası* 3, no. 29 (Kanunisanı 1927): 265.

Jerusalem Demography History, Transitions, and Forecasts

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Abstract

The conflict over demography and geography is at the heart of the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. During the last century, there have been shifts in the status of Palestinian and Israeli demography, which have brought about geopolitical changes, and swings in power relations and in the distribution and control of resources. This study deals with the demographic projections for the city of Jerusalem, in order to examine the city's status within the Palestinian-Zionist conflict. The article identifies the demographic conditions in Jerusalem and analyzes the city's national, ethnic, cultural, religious, and geopolitical attributes. The relationship between demographics, geography, and democracy, and how these considerations are employed in spatial planning and resource control are also discussed. Forecasts for future demographic trends and their projected consequences are argued by monitoring and critically analyzing quantitative data collected from Palestinian and Israeli sources, as well as by reviewing the literature, plans, and programs shaping Jerusalem and its environs at present and for the foreseeable future.

Keywords

Demography; geodemographic; demophobia; Jerusalem; Israel; Palestine; population.

Introduction

No solution or geopolitical reconciliation is possible between Palestinians and Israelis without including demography as an essential element in conflict solution

proposals. From an Israeli standpoint, the main motive behind a two-state solution (Palestine and Israel) is to fulfill Israel's desire to preserve a Jewish Zionist majority. Israeli socio-political movements present a position that implies their willingness to relinquish some areas and lands, including in Jerusalem, in order to maintain a Jewish demographic majority in all of the areas that Israel seeks to control.

Palestinian demography represents a "demon," an eternal obsession that troubles the Zionist leadership.¹ In order to confront this demonic "problem," Israel, as a state and society, employs demographic and spatial policies that utilize its power and resources to implement ethnic/nationalist colonial policies to secure their demographic domination within that space; land policies, resource distribution, and spatial planning are calculated to achieve this dominance. We witness this demographic and geographic conflict clearly and frankly in the current social conditions of ethnically divided Jerusalem, where it represents an example of the geodemographic conflict at all levels – national, regional, municipal, and local.

This study aims to address the geodemographic conflict in the city of Jerusalem and its environs, including the urban Jerusalem environs² or metropolitan Jerusalem,³ as will be explained below. Despite the longevity of this conflict, the continuously increasing Palestinian demographic presence remains an influence in Jerusalem and its environs, representing an obsession for the Israeli authorities. The Arab demographic presence drives the Israeli authorities to employ demographic and colonial policies that they hope will alter the present demographic reality. This demographic conflict has woven mutual fear (majority-minority relations) within a state of asymmetry that is both imagined and real. I will refer to this phenomenon as "demographobia," which is the fear of demography, and in our context, the Jewish Israeli fear of Arab Palestinian population growth in Jerusalem and in the rest of the country.⁴

The central argument in this study is that Israel employs and weaves selective demographic policies and discourses. In some cases, it represents itself as a threatened minority, and in other cases, as a majority, depending on which geopolitical and administrative definitions enable it to marshal the desired mechanisms for extending its control over Jerusalem and its environs.⁵

After examining the concept of "demographobia" and theoretically framing it, we will discuss its components and projections using the case of Jerusalem. From this model, we will make several inferences about the Arab/Palestinian-Israeli Zionist conflict in Palestine. Following this theoretical introduction, the study will discuss the demographic conditions in Jerusalem according to national, ethnic, cultural, religious, and geopolitical affiliations. We will discuss the relationship between demographics, geography, and democracy, and how they are utilized in spatial planning and resource control. The study also seeks to forecast the future outlook and consequences by monitoring and critically analyzing quantitative data collected from Palestinian and Israeli sources, as well as reviewing the literature, plans, and programs shaping Jerusalem and its environs either at present or planned for the future.

Theoretical Framework

The natural human pursuit for settling conflicts pushes the demographic component to the forefront as a major factor in conflict resolution. What I refer to as Israeli demophobia, the fear of Arab population growth – that is, the population and its relative distribution and grouping based on affiliations and attributes – is a situation that affects resource distribution and the sharing and division of geographic democracy. This includes participation in decision-making, governance of institutions, and distribution of resources in a specific geopolitical space or entity.

The demographic discourse represents a central ground for creating an atmosphere and an obsession with demographic changes in a specific space. This discourse reflects the symbolic performative and functional resources for spatial planning and demographic policies and paves the way for its accomplishment.⁶ The discourse transformation is influenced by the goals of the demographic policies and power relations between the majority and minority of the population and the desired or threatening results to these relations.⁷ This fear of an increased number of Arab Palestinians elicits a demand for a continued increase in the number of Jews, especially in the increase of Orthodox Jews, or Haredim.⁸

The review of the demographic discourse shows that certain key terms have been used frequently since the first decade of establishing the state of Israel. Those terms include the discourse on “building a nation,” “Judaization and Zionism of the human and the place,” “Jewish population distribution,” “assimilation of Jewish immigrants,” and “the creation of a geodemographic balance.” Other terms include the formulation of the new Israeli; the fusing of the Jewish immigrants from the diaspora in the new state; and an ethno-national and spatial separation. The newly established Jewish state proceeded to concentrate and confine the remaining Palestinian Arabs who had become a defeated minority after the Nakba – by conducting an uricide of the Palestinian city, creating conditions of intimidation, and demanding the reduction of births, while not allowing the return of displaced Palestinian Arabs to their homeland. In addition, the Israeli state constructed a discourse referring to the Arab population as a backward and non-modern society. This discourse included an emphasis on the placement of women in education and the workplace, and efforts to accelerate their “modernization” as a tool to reduce Arab birth rates through “modernization.”⁹

There is a correlation between demophobia and drawing borders or reshaping them, especially in cases where transfer¹⁰ or “redemption” policies or forced displacement¹¹ are applied in a state of ethno-demographic conflict. The establishment of the modern nation-state was accompanied by the process of drawing its geopolitical borders, without preserving the ethno-demographic homogeneity within these borders.¹² As a result of the drawing of armistice borders, arbitrary boundaries were formed dividing population groups who belonged to homogeneous cultural groups. Thus, Palestinians were transformed from a demographic cultural majority in their space into minority groups dispersed among contending neighboring countries. Such is the case with Palestinians and other minorities in Arab countries,¹³ or in non-Arab countries that suffer from ethnic/national conflicts and live themselves in a state of demophobia. The new borders

resulted in shifts in the balance of population distribution according to ethnic, religious, national, and cultural affiliation within the country generally, or in other regions or cities, as in the case of the Balkans, Kurds, Lebanon, and Israel/Palestine.¹⁴

Israeli Demographic Policies

Despite the more than ten-fold increase in the Jewish population since the establishment of Israel, the obsession with demography remains a central component in its national policies. This discourse calls for Jewish immigration and supports population growth, not only for the Haredi Jews, but also for the Jewish middle classes. It also includes the growth of the Jewish population in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. As a result of these changes, the percentage of the Palestinian Arab population within the borders of colonized Palestine between the river and the sea was almost equal to the Jewish population in 2017; despite the efforts to increase the Jewish populations, the Palestinians increase faster. The number of Palestinians living in Palestinian areas is around 4,952,000 people,¹⁵ in addition to 1,421,000 Palestinian Arabs who became citizens of Israel – that is, approximately 6,373,000 Palestinian Arabs, compared to 6,959,000 Israeli Jews and others.¹⁶ This quantitative data disturbs decision makers in Israel, increasing their fear for the future of the country. These concerns are at the heart of Israeli politics on how to deal with the Arab Palestinian demographic increase and its spread within the space controlled by Israel.¹⁷ These demographic dilemmas are most prominent in Jerusalem today.

Jerusalem Demophobia

In 1948, Jerusalem faced partition and Palestinians were forcibly displaced from the occupied western areas. This led to a decrease in the Palestinian population in western Jerusalem, from 40 percent of the population in 1947 to less than 2.5 percent in the period from 1948 to 1967 (see figures 1 and 2).

According to UN Resolution 181, which specified that Palestine be divided into a Jewish state and an Arab state, Jerusalem was to be granted a distinctive status under international guardianship. Israel violated the international status of the city through its occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967 and its annexation of the western part within the borders formulated and approved unilaterally by the Israeli government and under its sovereignty. The Palestinian lands that were annexed to West Jerusalem were inhabited by urban and rural Palestinian residents, including al-Sawahira Bedouin Arabs. Demographically, these communities lived as traditional societies with high rates of natural population growth, which contributed to a significant increase in the number of Palestinians. Despite Israeli demographic policies that sought to prevent the return of refugees and displaced people to Jerusalem, and discouraged Palestinian immigration to it, a significant percentage of residents originally from Hebron inhabited Jerusalem and became part of the diversified Palestinian population.¹⁸

Israel initiated a number of demographic changes, principally through confiscating Palestinian land in the city for the construction of Israeli settlements, creating obstacles

to the possibility of a geopolitical settlement. These settlements represent a colonial demographic belt surrounding Palestinian neighborhoods and villages, and cutting the natural urban connection between them. These villages and neighborhoods continued to grow in population and expand spatially, despite Israeli restrictions on their growth.

In 2016, the number of Palestinian Jerusalemites reached around 332,000 people, 37.7 percent of the population in Jerusalem (see figure 1). In the period 1967–2016, the number of Palestinian Jerusalemites increased by 385 percent, while the Israeli population in Jerusalem increased by 178 percent.¹⁹ This percentage increase of Palestinian Jerusalemites – twice the increase of Israelis, both secular and Haredim – occurred despite Israeli restrictions on Palestinian immigration to Jerusalem, and Israeli encouragement of Jewish natural growth and migration to the city.

The Palestinian increase led the Israeli authority to utilize a demographic, spatial, and planning matrix to preserve the Jewish majority in Jerusalem, by defining exclusive ethno-national administrative and geopolitical areas. Demographic conflicts in Jerusalem have reflected the Palestinian-Israeli demographic conflict at its base, but also involve the conflict between Orthodox Jews, Haredim, and other Jewish groups that affects the character of the city and the population’s social attributes. Today, Israeli residents of Jerusalem are divided into three groups: secular, representing 33 percent; other religious groups also representing 33 percent, and the remaining Haredim living in their own neighborhoods, representing about 34 percent of the Israeli Jewish population in Jerusalem. Jerusalem currently experiences negative immigration, especially from the secular Israeli middle class, weakening the economic situation in the city and contributing to the deterioration of non-religious life in Jerusalem.²⁰

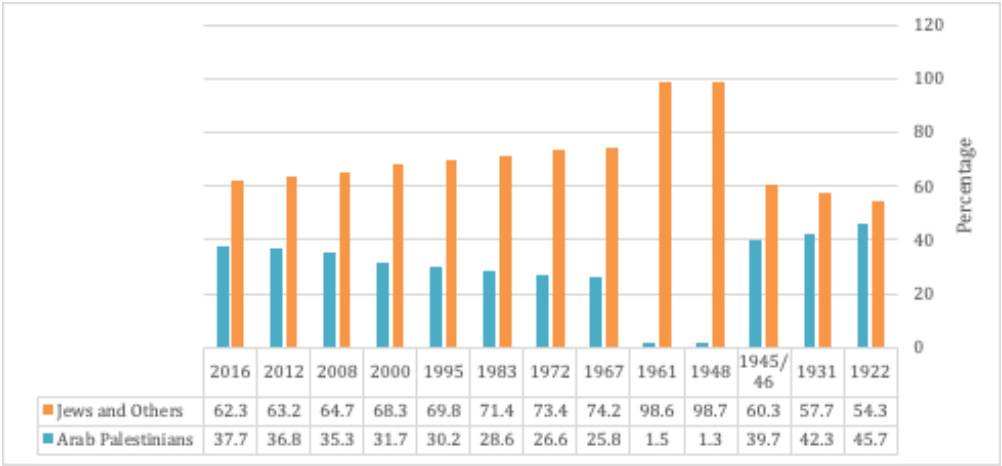


Figure 1. Transitions in the Palestinian population compared to the Israeli population in Jerusalem, according to changing definitions between 1922 and 2016, compiled from Table (G/1), the *Jerusalem Statistical Yearbook* (in Hebrew), online at (jerusalem.institute.org.il) bit.ly/37CAOIf, Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (2019), (accessed 29 May 2020); in English, online at (jerusalem.institute.org.il) bit.ly/3fpOadJ (accessed 4 June 2020).

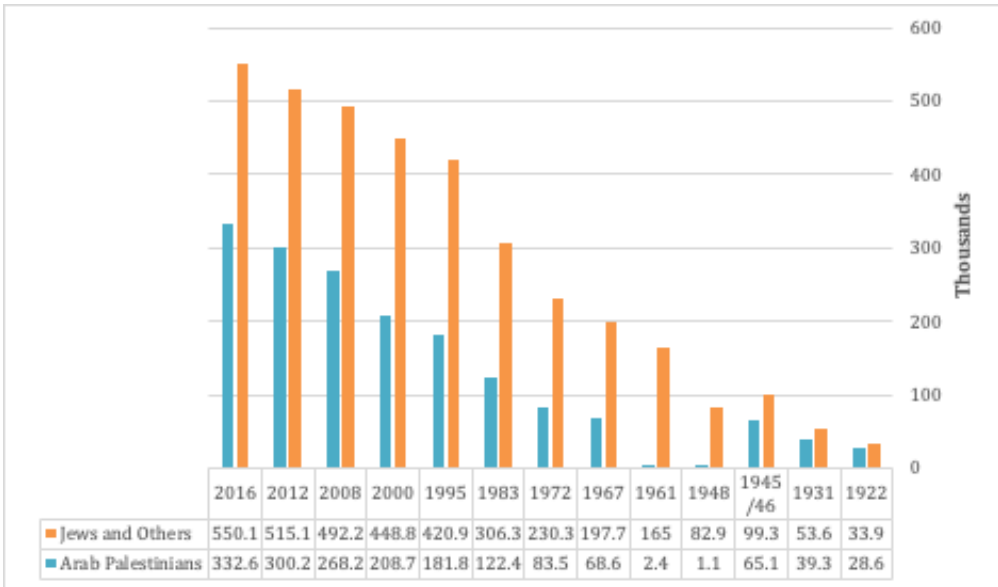


Figure 2. Transitions in Palestinian population percentages in Jerusalem between 1922 and 2016, according to the change in administrative and geopolitical borders, compiled from Table (G/1), the *Statistics Yearbook of Jerusalem*, Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research, Jerusalem (2019) (in Hebrew), online at (jerusalemstitute.org.il) bit.ly/2N3CnFO (restrictions on access).

The geopolitical location of Jerusalem ,in addition to the changes that occurred in the formation of the administrative borders ,has contributed to the creation of a demographic prevalence map .This map is based on calculations that are being applied by Israel in order to preserve the demographic majority .This demographic need stands in the way of any future geopolitical resolution with Palestinians that includes Jerusalem .It also secures Israel’s geodemographic control of the space without paying the price for Palestinian political participation .Instead ,this goal is attained by producing the space or by dividing the power ,the resources ,and the political institutions ,according to ethno-national affiliation .This is why Israel has adopted a unique and distinct approach towards the demographic conditions in Jerusalem .We summarize part of this approach in the following points:

1. **“Status” as an indicator of demophobia:** Palestinian Jerusalemites were granted the status of “Permanent Residents” as a new definition of the status of native people. This status was granted to Jerusalemites who had been subjected to Israeli occupation under the “Entry into Israel Law of 1952,” and given to others who enter Israel for the purpose of work, without a claim as native people. Jerusalemites were also granted an Israeli identity card but were not granted citizenship, although

citizenship could be applied for according to the Israeli Citizenship law of 1950. Most Palestinians refused to apply for Israeli citizenship and, in any event, Israel generally rejects citizenship requests submitted by Palestinian Jerusalemites. Since 2003, around 15,000 Palestinians out of around 330,000 living in Jerusalem applied for an Israeli citizenship, of which Israel approved less than 6,000 applications. This unique status is a result of the state of conditional temporality in which the Palestinian Jerusalemites live; it even created a culture of temporality that expects status and conditions to change.

When Israel annexed East Jerusalem and extended its sovereignty over it, it also applied all Israeli laws on the land and the people except the law of citizenship. Yet the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics ignores the unique status of Palestinians in Jerusalem, and includes them with their calculations of the number of Arabs in Israel, which increased the percentage of Arab Palestinians in Israel from 18 percent to 21 percent.

According to their new “Permanent Resident” status, Palestinian Jerusalemites were granted the right to participate in municipal elections, but were not granted the right of citizenship according to the law, which would have enabled them to elect representatives to parliament and obtain an Israeli passport. As such, they remain under the threat of residency withdrawal, expulsion, and other problems when traveling outside the country. The separation wall built by Israel after 2002 is the best exemplification of this threat, cutting off Palestinian neighborhoods outside the wall where more than about 55,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites holding an Israeli ID reside.²¹ This threat from the status increased after Israel approved the “Center of Life” policy for Palestinian Jerusalemites in 1995. The policy states that every Jerusalemite who does not prove that the center of their life is Jerusalem – meaning that they have resided and worked in Jerusalem for the past seven years – is subject to losing their permanent residency and their identity card will be retracted. They must also declare their assets as absentee property, whereby their land and assets become subject to confiscation and are transferred to the control of the state administration. Indeed, 14,595 Palestinian Jerusalemite identity cards were confiscated between 1976 and 2016 based on this policy.²²

Part of the demographic policy was concerned with registering the population in the population registrar and uniting Palestinian families. This is applied in Jerusalem and in the rest of the West Bank as a way to reduce the Palestinian presence, since Israel still controls the Palestinian population registry even in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is true that the Palestinian National Authority issues Palestinian identity

cards in the occupied land except East Jerusalem, but this occurs in coordination with Israel, which can reject or cancel requests for identity cards or registration in the population registry, as it has done since 1967. Israel rejected and cancelled 230,000 identity card requests under the pretext of residing outside the occupied land for a long period of time.²³

2. **Border Delineation:** The United Nations drafted the partition plan of Palestine based on geodemographic considerations, to ensure that the Jewish state includes the Jewish majority in Palestine at that time.²⁴ In the aftermath of the war, the cease-fire/armistice borders were created, which became known as the “green line.” Currently these borders represent the basis for a potential agreement on a two-state solution, Palestine and Israel.²⁵ These borders were created on the basis of demographic distribution and the relationship between the Jewish majority that arose after the Nakba through immigration, and the Palestinian transition to a minority status after displacement and ethnic cleansing, not exceeding 18 percent of the population of Israel including West Jerusalem. After the 1967 war and the occupation of Palestinian territories by Israel, there was little spatial urban and rural displacement, unlike the case in the areas that Israel built on after the 1948 war.²⁶

The state of Israel annexed lands from the West Bank after the 1967 war. This included the municipal borders of Arab Jerusalem and local villages, borders that Israel abolished and then annexed the land to the expanded Israeli Jerusalem municipality, increasing its area to reach seventy-one thousand dunums. In doing so, Israel drew its borders based on geopolitical and demographic considerations: they encircled an expanded Jerusalem municipality, including twenty-eight Palestinian villages such as Sur Bahir, al-Isawiyya, and Shu‘fat, in addition to Arab Jerusalem, with a population of not more than sixty-eight thousand Palestinians at that time, representing about 26 percent of the population of Jerusalem after the Israeli annexation.

Our review of the drawing of the Israeli Jerusalem municipal borders shows the adoption of annexing the largest area of the land that serves the Israeli goals and narratives, with the lowest number of Palestinian population. Accordingly, Israel controlled Qalandiya airport, north of Jerusalem, and the Old City, in addition to the eastern hills of al-Masharif hills (Mount Scopus area), providing land to construct Israeli settlements to increase the number of Jews, to accommodate Jewish immigration, and to pull Jerusalem out of the “siege” status according to the Israeli narrative.²⁷ The Palestinian demographic component and its distribution represented the basis for border drawing, to ensure that the percentage of Palestinians remained less than 30 percent of the total

population within the municipal borders of Jerusalem after annexation.

As a result of this policy, Qalandiya refugee camp and adjacent towns such as Qalandiya, al-Ram, Bir Nabala, Bayt Hanina, Anata, Hizma, and Abu Dis, among others, were excluded from the Jerusalem municipal council area. The reason for their exclusion was to keep the basis for the ratio of a 30/70 Palestinian/Israeli presence in the city, the bedrock of their demographic planning policy. The Jerusalem municipality and the Israeli regional and country planning committees did not endorse any building plans that would allow the number of Palestinians in Jerusalem to exceed 30 percent. This led Palestinians to build randomly without structured construction planning or licensing to meet their basic needs, to keep up with their housing needs. Hence, Israel effectively applied the 30/70 Palestinian/Israeli equation as an optimal demographic balance for the city's population to maintain Israel's continued control over the city²⁸ and proceeded towards building the separation wall.

3. **The separation wall as a product of demophobia:** A demographic policy has been applied to keep Palestinian Jerusalemites a minority, not to exceed 30 percent within the borders of the city of Jerusalem. Despite enormous efforts to increase the Israeli population in the city through immigration, natural Jewish growth, and settlements, and to limit population growth among Palestinians, the Palestinian population increased from 68,000 in 1967 to around 330,000 in 2016 within the municipal borders of Jerusalem.

This increase emanates partly from Palestinian urban and rural expansion in urban Jerusalem and the Jerusalem metropolitan area, which extends from Birzeit in the north to Bayt Sahur in the south, passing through Ramallah, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and its surroundings (see figure 2). In order to cut off the Palestinian population connections and extension, Israel began to establish settlements in two concentric rings. The inner ring included the establishment of eleven settlements ("neighborhoods," according to the Israeli definition) in East Jerusalem, inhabited by around 209,000 settlers in 2016, surrounding the Old City and its basin. As for the outer ring, it included the construction of twenty-eight settlements in the Jerusalem Metropolis, with around 178,000 settlers in 2016. These settlements aim to control and Judaize the space, and to cut off and penetrate Palestinian geographical connection and thus prevent the creation of a Palestinian demographic majority in the space. In addition to these settlements, Israel has built a separation wall to ensure that Palestinians enter Jerusalem only through Israel's controlled and closely monitored gates and barriers. This wall

was not built around settlements, or on the municipal borders, according to the Israeli definition. Rather, it cuts off Palestinian neighborhoods and prevents their continued physical and natural connection.²⁹ This wall was built on the pretext of security motives, but it is likely that demographic considerations were also involved.

As mentioned, the wall has kept 55,000 Jerusalemite Palestinians from the rest of Jerusalem, according to the Israeli definition, even though they hold an Israeli identity card. This includes Kufr 'Aqab, Dahiyat al-Barid, Shu'fat refugee camp, al-Sawahira, and al-Walaja. In the gerrymandering, the wall included two very large settlements outside the municipal borders of Jerusalem: Ma'ale Adumim and Givat Ze'ev. Demographic considerations then represented the guide for determining the location of the wall, in order to reduce the percentage of Palestinian Jerusalemites within the borders drawn by the Israelis – to formulate a discourse and awareness that Israelis are a majority in this area.

Producing Demographic Spaces

For a deeper understanding of the demographic discourse and demographic policies, these policies must be linked to the specified space and to the population density and percentages of distribution according to national affiliation. Hence, we examined population distribution according to Israeli definitions within the administrative, functional, and geopolitical division of the space, rather than Palestinian definitions. The division of the population distribution in the space is based on national, ethnic, and cultural affiliations, as in the case of Jerusalem and its urban surroundings, which Israel calls the Jerusalem metropolitan area.³⁰ What confirms this regional control is Israel's focus on the municipal borders of Jerusalem, considering it the heart of the metropolitan area and its functional inner ring, in addition to presenting the Israeli settlements, including those established in the West Bank, as part of the outer ring of the so-called metropolitan. This effectively ignores and denies the urban and rural Palestinian presence that constitutes an organic part of the urban fabric of the area surrounding Jerusalem and replaces it functionally and urbanly.³¹ This denial and the Israeli selective display of data, maps, and planning of Palestinian existence reveals the Israeli presence as an achievement for the Zionist project and the state of Israel in Jerusalem and its environs. Hence, any display of the Palestinian presence and population increase is a threat to Israelis.

I have summarized some of the results in the manipulation of spatial blocs (in table 1 and figure 1), with the aim of displaying the numbers and percentages in the space and inferring from the results the demographic situation that exists between Palestinians and Israelis with particular reference to the area of Jerusalem.

Administrative/ Functional Areas	Population No.	Palestinians (%)	Israelis (%)
Old City	34,960	91.40	8.60
East Jerusalem	542,400	60.42	39.58
Jerusalem municipal borders, according to Israel (considered the core of the metropolitan according to the Israeli definition).	882,700	37.70	62.30
Jerusalem metropolitan borders, according to Israel (the core and the outer ring), dismissing the Palestinian existence in the outer ring of the metropolitan.	1,357,696	31.30	67.70
Outer ring of the metropolitan, including Jerusalem governorate according to the Israeli definition, dismissing the Palestinian existence in it.	474,996	23.11	66.89
Outer ring of the metropolitan in Jerusalem (does not include the metropolitan core), according to the Palestinian definition.	281,896	36.82	63.18
Outer ring of the metropolitan including Palestinians in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah, based on the Palestinian definition.	823,418	78.37	21.63
Core and outer ring of Jerusalem metropolitan, including Israelis and Palestinians in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah governorates.	1,899,218	51.2	48.80
Palestinian population of metropolitan Jerusalem from the total Palestinian population in the West Bank.	2,803,411	34.71	---
Israeli settlers in metropolitan Jerusalem of the total number of settlers in the West Bank.	622,67032	---	62.21

Table 1. Distribution of Palestinian and Israeli Population in the Jerusalem Environs in 2016 according to geopolitical, administrative and functional divisions. Data calculated from data of the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, Jerusalem Institute for Policy Research (formerly the Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies), and B'Tselem.

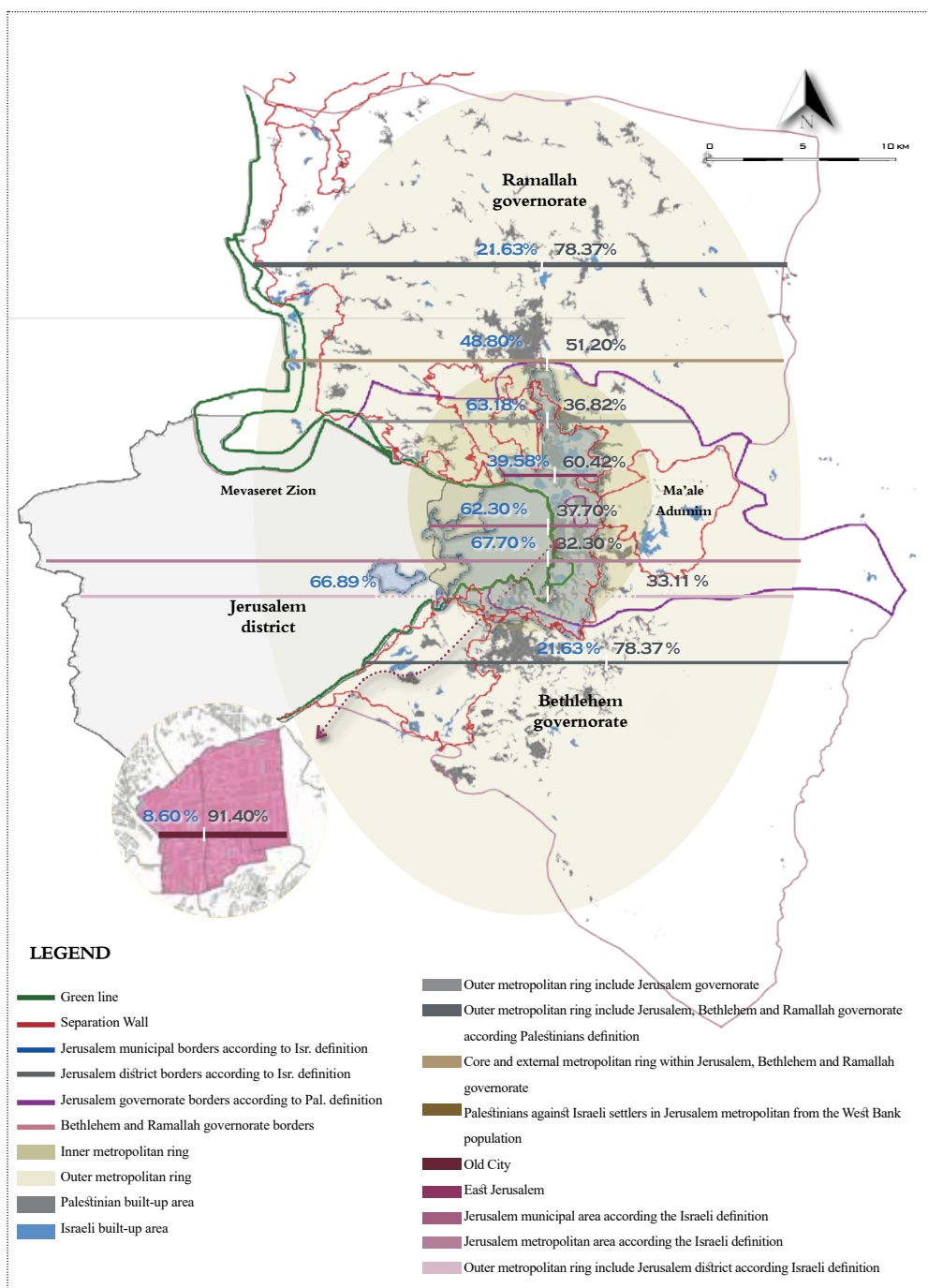
A closer review of the data presented, according to national affiliation (Palestinian or Israeli) and according to the specified administrative, functional, and urban spaces, shows a deviation in the demographic balance between Palestinians and Israelis. The data indicates that Palestinians in the Old City of Jerusalem represent the

overwhelming majority (91.4 percent Palestinian compared to 8.6 percent Israeli). Despite the consistent policies to Judaize the Old City and push Jews to live in it, the percentage of Arab Palestinians in the Old City basin, or the “Holy Basin,” according to Israel, also represents the overwhelming majority, exceeding 95 percent. In addition, the percentage of Palestinians in East Jerusalem exceeds 60.42 percent, compared to 39.58 percent of Israeli settlers.

However, if we take into account the total population in the city of Jerusalem, according to the borders set by Israel, we will find a demographic balance in favor of Israelis, who represent 62.3 percent of the city in 2016, compared to Palestinians representing 37.7 percent. In comparison to the Old City and its environs, the percentage of Palestinians in the rest of the Jerusalem metropolitan (the inner ring, metropolitan core) decreases to 31.30 percent of the total population, declining to 23.11 percent of the metropolitan population of the outer ring. This ring includes the district (governorate) of Jerusalem according to the Israeli definition, dismissing the Palestinian existence in it, while describing it as part of the metropolitan area and population.

But if we take into consideration the population of Palestinians living in the outer ring of the metropolitan, which includes the Palestinian governorates of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah, the percentage of Palestinians rises to 78.37 percent, falling to around 51.2 percent in the metropolitan core. Also, if we calculate the population living within the metropolitan core and the outer ring in the governorate of Jerusalem, including Palestinians and Israelis in the governorates of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Ramallah in 2016, we find that the majority of the population is Palestinian. In addition, if we calculate the percentage of Palestinian population in Jerusalem metropolitan area in 2016, we will find that 34.71 percent of the population of the West Bank lives within the Jerusalem metropolitan area, compared to 62.21 percent of Israeli settlers who settle in the West Bank and live in the Jerusalem metropolitan area.

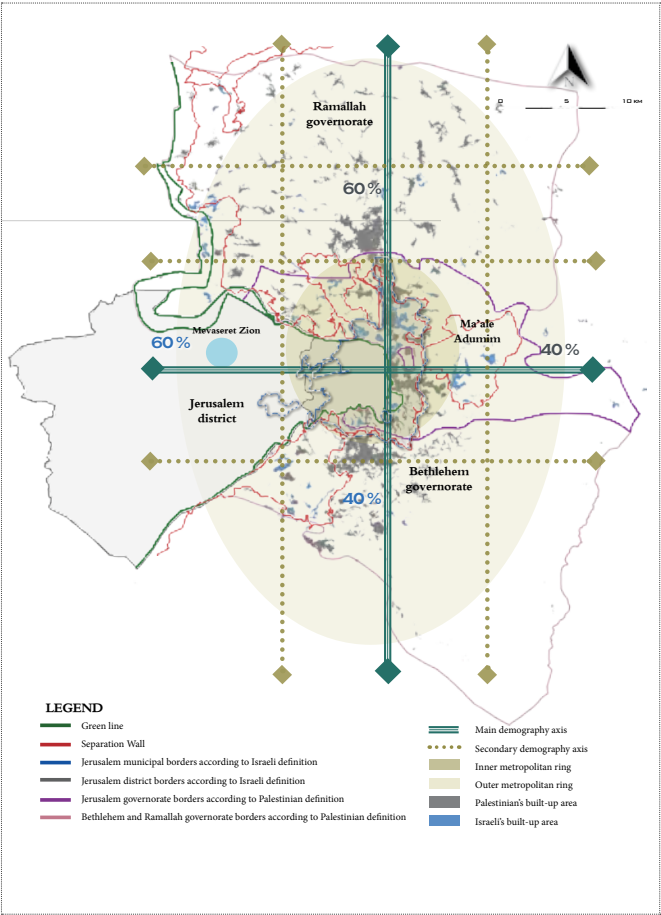
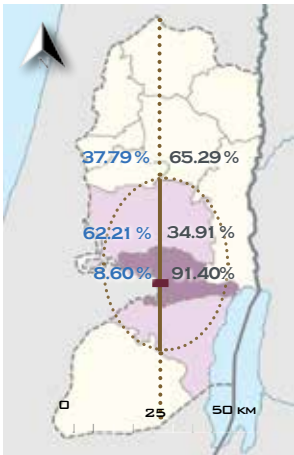
We conclude from the data presented (table 1 and map 1) that the percentages of the population will change depending on the area specified. Israel seeks to focus on Israeli settlements in East Jerusalem and its surroundings, now totaling thirty-nine settlements with around 388,000 settlers living there. While the Palestinians (living in core and outer ring of Jerusalem metropolitan, include part of Bethlehem and Ramallah governorates) reached around 973,000 individuals living in 161 villages and cities.³³ However, when Israel and its state and municipal institutions present their data and maps,³⁴ they ignore the Palestinian existence and their urban and regional connection and communication to Jerusalem, rendering them invisible, despite their presence in the amputated and dislocated metropolitan area of Jerusalem. This amputation and urban and functional dislocation aim to bring Palestinian alienation from Jerusalem by neglecting their existence in it, while at the same time, directing and bringing settlers closer to Jerusalem and fostering their affiliation to it. We see how selective demographic data and borderlines serve the Israeli demographic discourse and their colonial and population policies in Jerusalem and its environs.



Map 1. The percentage of Palestinian distribution compared to Israeli distribution, according to the administrative and functional areas and units in the divided Jerusalem metropolitan area. Map prepared by the author.

Map 2. Population distribution for Israeli settlers and for Palestinians within Jerusalem metropolitan area, comparing respective populations in inner and outer metropolitan rings; and Old city

Jerusalem metropolitan	Israelis	Palestinians
Inner core	37.79	65.29
(of which: Old City)	8.60	91.40
Outer core	62.21	34.71
	100.00	100.00



Map 2. The formation of Palestinian and Israeli demographic distribution networks in Jerusalem and its bi-sectional environs, prepared by Rassem Khamaisi.

Forecasting Perspective

The Zionist project was culminated by the establishment of a Jewish nation state in Palestine and the absorption of Zionist Jews, by virtue of using ethnic affiliation, described as “reuniting the Jewish diaspora.” This state transcribed its narrative into the Nation-State law of 2018,³⁵ which adopted components of the 1948 “Israeli Declaration of Independence” that was drafted into the Basic Law of Israel. The law states that the right of self-determination in Palestine – “The land of Israel” – is restricted to Jews and that Jewish immigration, leading to direct citizenship, is possible only for Jews, with united Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. The law did not refer to equality for Arab Palestinian citizens, and of course, ignored the native Arab Palestinian presence, which currently represents around half of the country’s population, and did not refer to their right of self-determination in their country.

The continued adoption of current demophobic policies by Israel aims at maintaining Palestinians as a minority and ensuring their population does not exceed 30 percent of the total population in Jerusalem.

At the country specific level, there is almost equality between the number of Palestinians and Israelis. At the regional level, however, Israelis represent a minority in an “island” surrounded by an Arab majority and this relationship will not likely change. This increases the Israeli obsession with demography, pushing them to continue applying and emphasizing demographic policies. These policies are consistently attracting Jewish immigration, encouraging Jewish population growth and internal Zionist migration to settlements in East Jerusalem and its environs. These policies, in fact, are applied to pull Jerusalem, according to the Israeli definition, out of its so-called demographic island and, in addition, to strengthen the ring of outer settlements surrounding the city of Jerusalem, especially from the east (Ma‘ale Adumim area), and to cut the geodemographic connection of Palestinians along the north/south sphere, where Palestinians represent the majority in East Jerusalem and its environs (see figure 6).

Perhaps there is an Israeli far-sightedness that increasing the siege on Palestinians, especially on the younger generation, will push them towards emigrating outside of the Jerusalem area and perhaps outside of the country. This negative and forced migration, desired by Israel, is supposed to reduce the percentage of Palestinians in the long run. According to our examination, this prediction is elusive despite Israel’s practice of increasing pressure and strangling Jerusalemites. Thus, the population growth of Palestinians and Israelis will continue in the Jerusalem region, ensuring a relative distribution within the metropolitan rings, despite the increase in population for Palestinians and Israelis.

The location of Jerusalem and its environs within the heart of the West Bank will increase the concentration of Palestinians in its urban and rural environs, despite Israel’s continued demographic policies and expansion of colonial settlements in its surrounding. The rate of increase in the Palestinian population in the areas surrounding Jerusalem, and within the outer ring of the Jerusalem metropolitan area, will depend

on natural growth, positive migration from the outskirts of the West Bank, and the return of Palestinians to their homeland. At the same time, the Israeli population will increase within the inner ring of the metropolis. This includes the borders of the city of Jerusalem according to the Israeli definition, in addition to the settlements nearest to the city. The increase will support achieving Israel's geodemographic policy in removing Jerusalem from a condition of an island within the Jerusalem metropolitan area, a condition that is strengthened by the axis of the mountains northward toward Ramallah governorate and southward toward Bethlehem governorate passing through the center of Jerusalem governorate. As for the geodemographic axis that Israel seeks to reinforce, it is concentrated in the east-west axis, which means expanding the cluster of settlements of Ma'ale Adumim and its surrounding in the east to reach Mevaseret Zion in the west, joining the settlements that were constructed within the municipal borders of Jerusalem, especially in East Jerusalem.

In order to accommodate this increase, Israeli colonialist policies will reinforce the religious nationalist and the Haredim communities; these communities inhabit an Israeli colonial network within the rural and urban Palestinian settlement network in the city of Jerusalem, with its shattered, scattered, twofold metropolitan, divided by administrative borders and the separation wall. This prevents freedom of movement between the two residential networks existing in the environs of the Jerusalem metropolitan; the urban and rural settling of Palestinians that has developed organically, as opposed to the Israeli government-established colonial settlement network.

The overlap of the formation of the rural, urban, and community Palestinian settlement network and its interconnectedness, and the Israeli colonial settlement network, leads toward a creeping apartheid system that is already formed and is becoming even more developed and reinforced. The Palestinian settlement network originated and developed organically, cumulatively, and some randomly, as opposed to the Israeli colonial settlement network constructed and planned to achieve the goals of controlling the space by increasing the number of settlers. The intersection and the lack of spatial and functional integration between the Palestinian habitation network and the Israeli colonization, and their relation to the city of Jerusalem, in addition to the continuous race to increase population and settlement around Jerusalem, will stoke further clashes and confrontations between Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem and its urban surrounding. The percentage of the Palestinian population compared to that of the Israeli population will likely be 40/60 percent in the inner ring of Jerusalem, within the municipal borders of Jerusalem and on the east-west axis; conversely, the percentage in the outer ring of the metropolitan and on the north-south axis will approximate 60-40 percent, in favor of the Palestinians (see map 2).

None of the following – not the endorsement of the Israeli Nation-State law in 2018, the continuing unequal power relations between Palestinians and Israelis, the political and behavioral discourse of Israel, the inability of the international community to apply international and UN resolutions, or even the establishment of a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital – will bring a significant change to the geopolitical reality. This means Israel's demographic control over Jerusalem and

its environs and its administration will continue, without changing the status of the population by transforming them from the occupied into citizens who have the right to vote and politically participate.

Palestinian conditional political participation outside of Jerusalem is more concentrated in Palestinian municipalities and village councils at the local level. On a country specific level, they participate in the Palestinian National Authority institutions. However, Israeli settlers living in the occupied Palestinian land since 1967 hold Israeli citizenship, despite living in the occupied land in violation of international law, and they actively participate in the Israeli political system.

It is expected that the administrative, selective and spatially constructed apartheid regime in Jerusalem and its metropolitan area, will remain and become more complicated with the increased population in Jerusalem and its environs. This will be especially true if Israel officially includes in it Palestinian lands designated Area C by the interim agreements between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization.

Summary and Conclusions

The geodemographic conflict in Jerusalem and its environs clearly represents the demographic conflict present in all of Palestine, taking into account the prominence of Jerusalem and its distinctive status in terms of its multiplicities of its national and religious narratives. Despite the diversity of the population growth sources, migration and natural growth, Palestinians and Israelis residing in Jerusalem and its environs are in a state of “population explosion,” according to demographic transformation theory.

Reading the distant and recent past shows that the possibility of demographic domination of one side over another, meaning an absolute Palestinian or Israeli domination, is impossible in the foreseeable future, except in the case of a war in which spatial or ethnic cleansing is employed. The occurrence of this demographic cleansing is evitable in the current and foreseeable Palestinian, Israeli, and global reality.

The basis of proposals of a geopolitical settlement for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is a two-state solution, and the development of the principle that neither party will be able to demographically dominate over the other. The continued control of one side over the other, and deprivation of the other side of its geopolitical rights, will necessarily lead to the emergence of an apartheid regime in urban areas and in the country as a whole.

Studies show that the relations of the majority that is controlled by a dominant controlling plurality will be shaken and will lead to clashes if the defeated and oppressed minority reaches or exceeds 30 percent within a specified area. This minority will demand equal and fair participation of rights in resources and in political decision making. Currently, the number of Palestinian Jerusalemites has exceeded this percentage within the city, especially in East Jerusalem, and are demanding their rights to participate in the country and the city in a similar and equal manner. This

predicts the transformation of the city and the country from a state of occupation, control, and ethnic discrimination to a shared country and city that has diversity where equality of citizenship is presumed – what is known as a one-state solution. This possibility is completely rejected by Israelis at the national and urban levels for reasons related to demography, resource sharing, and, as well, the Israeli political narrative. The settlement of the demographic and human rights conflict in Jerusalem based on justice principles, fairness, and the provision of a decent life is not expected in the near future, hence exacerbating the conflict.

Since the beginning of the Zionist project in Palestine and the push of Jewish immigration to Palestine, especially the immigration of religious Jews to the city of Jerusalem, the number of Jews and non-Arab Palestinians increased from 33,900 in 1922 to around 100,000 in 1946 in the city, a percentage increase from 54.3 percent to 60.3 percent of the city's population (see figures 1 and 2). The continued focus on linking the population based on ethnic and religious affiliation to administrative decisions has created a Zionist and Israeli demographic discourse and behavior that relies on achieving a demographic balance in favor of the Jewish population. By dividing the space into units, they display themselves as the majority that deserves rights within the urban, regional, and country space, which historically led to the partition plan of Palestine and the formulation of resolutions on the basis of having a Jewish majority. This logic continues to prevail and is practiced in Jerusalem and its environs.

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Beyond the Boundaries of “The Land of the Deer”

R. Binyamin between Jewish and Arab Geographies, and the Critique of the Zionist- Colonial Connection

Avi-ram Tzoreff

Abstract

In an article published in June 1930, Muhammad Roshan Akhtar, the editor of the English edition of the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin*, called for the establishment of an Arab federation, considering Jews to be an integral part of a political community whose territory sprawled “from Basra to Jaffa.” Akhtar’s article met with an enthusiastic response from Jewish author and essayist Yehoshua Radler-Feldman (also known as R. Binyamin). RB considered the large space between Basra and Jaffa – intended to serve as the basis for the anti-colonial unification of the Arab lands – as a basis for a different thinking about Jewish existence in Palestine particularly and in the Middle East generally. He foresaw an existence of Jewish masses dispersed throughout the whole region, where the old Middle Eastern Jewish communities would play an important role. This article focuses on the crystallization of RB’s spatial perception in the period of the British Mandate, the importance he saw in the identification with the anti-colonial struggle, and the affinities between this orientation and the attitudes held by Palestinians intellectuals and political activists. It also examines the theological perception of Eretz Yisrael and the “lands that are adjacent to it” that lay at the foundations of the spatial logic RB developed.

Keywords

Binationalism; anti-colonialism; Istiqlal; Palestinian Press; Zionism; Brit-Shalom; the Syrian Revolt; Orientalism; Political Theology; British Colonialism.

In July 1925, an essay published in *Haaretz* newspaper criticized members of the Yishuv¹ for permitting *avoda zara*, a term for idolatry, but here meaning literally “foreign labor,” as long as it did not compete directly with Hebrew labor.² The use of the term in its literal sense reflected a broader secularization and nationalization of traditional Jewish terms and practices within Zionist discourse. The religious prohibition of idolatry was reconstructed as a foundational national term for the development of an ethnically distinct Hebrew economy that rejected any form of Arab labor. This reflected the construction of the national economy as a sanctified space, where “foreign” (that is, non-Jewish) engagement – understood in a nationalized and secularized manner – was prohibited. The writer of the essay, who rejected the distinctly national economic logic, pointed to this political-theology by using the pseudonym *Min* (heretic, in Hebrew).

“Min” was Yehoshua Radler-Feldman, an observant Jew, author, and essayist also known as Reb Binyomin (1880–1957, hereinafter RB). RB was born in Zborow in Habsburg Galicia in 1880. He left Galicia in 1900 and moved to Berlin, where he studied at the Agricultural University of Berlin (Königlichen Landwirtschaftlichen Hochschule zu Berlin). In 1906, he moved to London and migrated to Palestine the next year. Growing up in the multinational Habsburg Empire, where national identifications coincided with local and imperial loyalties, RB seems to have gravitated toward understandings of local civic partnership as a basis for identification in Ottoman Palestine during this period. These notions emphasized Ottoman citizenship, alongside other local and collective attachments, as a shared point of identification for Ottoman Muslims, Christians, and Jews. This was especially useful for those Ottoman Palestinian Jews, both Ashkenazi and Sephardi, who self-identified as “children of the land” (*bnei Haaretz* or *abna’ al-balad*).³ This conception of belonging was consistent with a spatial imagination distinct from the separatist model promoted by the Zionist leadership.

The Zionist Yishuv in Ottoman Palestine sought to create for itself – especially after the foundation of the Palestine Office in 1908 – a distinct Jewish space. Settler-colonial spatial and economic policies, widely known as the “Conquest of Land” and “Conquest of Labor,” worked to create a distinct and “pure” sphere within Palestine that could then distinguish itself culturally and linguistically from its Arab and indigenous Jewish surroundings.⁴ Despite serving as an official in the Palestine Office, RB was a fierce critic of these policies. Hegemonic Zionist settler-colonial efforts attempted to implant a largely European Jewish community and establish it as “indigenous,” primarily through land purchase and expulsion of Arab peasants, construction of a segregated economy, and defense of the “purity” of the Hebrew language. However, RB set forth a different notion of Jewish belonging in Palestine: his conception rested upon a vision of restoring connections with relatives, and thus emphasized Jewish–Arab cultural and Jewish–Muslim religious affinities. He thus criticized the hegemonic Zionist negation of both the local Palestinian and Jewish exilic (non-sovereign, traditional, and religious) existence.⁵

World War I, the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, and the establishment of the British Mandate created new conditions for the Zionist Yishuv. While the mandate

supported the Zionist movement and allowed the foundation of separate Jewish national institutions in Palestine, it negated any possibility of creating local political institutions manifesting Palestinian political and national aspirations. Accordingly, the British Mandate government promoted colonial policies that increasingly subordinated Palestinian Arabs to Zionist-Jewish settlers.⁶ The British commitment to the Balfour Declaration, which supported establishing a “national home” for the Jews in Palestine, meant denying the national aspirations of Palestinian Arabs. The Zionist movement’s status shifted from that of a separatist group seeking accommodation with the Ottoman state and holding somewhat ambiguous ties to various European colonial powers, to an ally of the colonial regime in direct control of Palestine.

After the Great War, and inspired by Rabindranath Tagore’s and Mohandes Kremchand Gandhi’s anti-colonial writings, RB criticized Zionist cooperation with colonial regimes and its strive for sovereignty. In his July 1925 essay in *Haaretz*, RB called upon “those whose spirit is as our spirit” in what became the first proclamation of the binational movement of Brit-Shalom – to join the new group. RB cited Hugo Bergmann – one of his future companions in Brit-Shalom – who criticized Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann’s supplication to David Lloyd-George, asking the British statesman to help establish Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine. One month earlier, in June 1925, Bergmann had described Weizmann’s invitation in *Davar* newspaper:

This is evidence that Weizmann, from his perch in London, is unable to fathom that which is coming into being in the East Speak today with Palestinian Arabs and hear the pride in which they speak of ‘Abd al-Karim and his campaign against France, and comprehend the hope they invest in the National Movement in India, on the leadership of the Ali brothers and of Gandhi. The Land of Israel is becoming an integral part of the entire East through the shared hopes and the aspirations of all Arabs.⁷

To both RB and Bergmann, Zionism’s reliance on European imperialism testified to a fundamental error in Zionism’s relations with the Arabs in their entirety, a misunderstanding of the historical implications of the political tremors crisscrossing the Middle East and Asia, and a failure to recognize the potency of the anti-imperialist struggle’s call to arms. The anti-colonial struggle’s political diagnoses and remedies, Bergmann pointed out, precluded the notion that Palestine was a unique and ultimately separate arena. In participating in the global uprising against the West, it would become “part of the East.”

The decision to position Bergmann’s words so prominently in the public call to join what would become Brit-Shalom testifies to the importance RB ascribed to the imagination of an alternative geography in which anti-colonial struggle formed a common basis for viable cooperation between Jews and Arabs in Palestine. To close the essay in *Haaretz*, he wrote: “The great East is awakening, opening its eyes and looking to us, too . . . opinion leaders are about to make their determinations about us.

They have but one question: Are you with us or against us?"⁸ This was the moment, he claimed, when Zionism's loyalty to the region where it wished to strike root would be decided.

RB's and Bergmann's insistence on widening the spatial scope, their shared perception of Palestine as a part of a larger Arab geographical entirety, and their demand that the Zionist movement identify with regional anti-colonial struggles, reveals the role of anti-imperialism in crystallizing Brit-Shalom's criticism of the hegemony of contemporary Zionist leadership. Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has showed the centrality of anti-colonial attitudes and the demand to stand "on the right side of the barricades" in Gershom Scholem's treatises on binationalism, identifying an "indefatigable excoriation of the values of colonialism . . . which had enabled the removal of the Jews from Europe."⁹ Zohar Maor similarly points out anti-colonial criticism in the writings of Hans Kohn, Hugo Bergmann, and Gershom Scholem and the ways it served as an infrastructure for their critiques of the secular European model of the nation state.¹⁰ Repudiating any reliance on imperial power was, to them, a critical precursor for creating an alternative political model for Palestine's Jews. This non-imperialist model would also reject contemporary premises of the nation-state and its modalities of power and formulate a different, transnational political construct that, in the case of Jews in Palestine, for instance, could be pan-Asian, as Hans Kohn suggested. Many of these articulations, however, maintained a clear distinction between a romanitization of the supposed wealth of Far East cultures and philosophies and an unstudied contempt for Arabs and Islam.¹¹

Revisiting the writings of RB and rereading the critiques of Brit-Shalom from such a perspective may help trace a missing link between the nation-state and pan-Asian frameworks: the spatial imagination of Arab unity. These writings must be understood against the broader contemporary political context of the Arab anti-colonial struggles and the Arab campaign to reunite the space dismembered by colonial mapmakers. An attempt to reread the movement's history from RB's perspective sheds light on the differences between his own attitude and that of other members of the movement, revealing important aspects of the activities of Brit-Shalom – and other binational movements that were founded afterward, such as Kedma-Mizraha, the League for Jewish-Arab Rapprochement, and Ihud – that have been generally overlooked. These aspects, namely, the emphasis of the spatial Arab unity and the critique of Zionist-colonial cooperation, challenge the existing frameworks of analysis regarding their role in the political and intellectual history of Israel/Palestine.

Jewish-Arab partnership, an affinity for Palestine's indigenous Jewish communities, and a "maximalist" view of Jewish migration from Europe to the Arab lands were the bedrock of RB's call for Zionism to imagine Jewish integration into a larger Muslim – rather than merely "Asian" – spatial framework, and to find common cause with Arabs who opposed the dissection of the Arab lands by colonial boundaries after World War I. Already in his early writings, RB recognized the religious and cultural affinities between Judaism and Islam as a central argument for, and resource in, forging Jewish-Arab partnership.¹² He also shared a spatial imagination with Palestine's indigenous

Jews who rejected hegemonic Zionist separatism. (As Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor claim, some Middle Eastern Jews maintained this critical approach to the policies of the Zionist leadership during the mandate period as well.¹³ Others, however, as will be discussed below, adopted the Zionist spatial approach.) RB also had a “maximalist” vision of Zionism, which regarded Palestine as too limited a space to accommodate all European Jews who were persecuted in their homelands, and therefore, there was need for the Arab lands in their entirety to serve as a migration destination for these Jews.

Writing as early as 1923, a mere five years after the British occupation ended centuries of Ottoman rule, RB diagnosed that the most acute challenge facing the Zionist movement “concern[ed] the East. That is to say: not withdrawing into the boundaries of the Land of the Deer [*Eretz Hatzvi*].”¹⁴ RB’s criticism of a narrow spatial frame of reference, his conceptualization of a united Muslim-Arab realm, and his call for Zionism to realign itself with anti-colonial struggles requires a synthesis with contemporary Palestinian writing and an analysis of how a future Palestine/Eretz Israel was imagined in such a post-imperial framework. Such a recontextualization illuminates RB’s turn toward breaching the conceptual and spatial boundaries imposed by European colonialism and replacing them with alternative regional frameworks that conceptualize Arab-Islamic space as a single continuum, in which myriad local demands for liberation co-reside.

Zionism as a Watchword for English Rule

Two weeks after his July 1925 *Haaretz* op-ed mentioned above, RB published another short article in the Zionist daily *Hed Lita* based in Kaunas, Lithuania.¹⁵ In this article, RB claimed that the Treaty of Versailles, espousing the “right of self-determination,” had indeed extended political rights to many European peoples, but had withheld them, through the mandate system, from the peoples of the East. The newly established League of Nations thus interpolated the peoples of the East as “second-grade peoples, in need of the Western peoples’ guardianship.” RB also claimed that one could not avoid the feeling that “there is here something of the Christian relation to Islam” in these outcomes. This understanding of global postwar politics led the peoples of the East to an understanding that “the whole West looks upon the East as an object for exploitation” and that “the role of the East in the near future is to liberate itself from the West’s burden.” That is why, according to RB, “the resistance of the East turns [its sights] first and foremost toward England,” an empire standing “at the head of the mandatory system.”¹⁶

In this regard, RB claimed, his position reflected contemporary attitudes in the Arab lands, “the whole of this region that is unified in its Arab tongue,” which “is being thought and felt as one piece. Cultural uniformity unifies all these tribes. They all share the aspiration for liberation and resistance to the West. Especially to the English.” RB understood Arab and Muslim resentment of Zionism against this

backdrop. Arab and Muslim political leaders opposed Zionism not based on “a hidden hatred for the Jews,” which “did not strike deep roots [in the East] . . . as it had in the West,” but due to the fact that “Zionism emerged as a watchword for English rule – specifically at the moment when anger against the English is growing.”¹⁷

The essential trouble of the Zionist movement was, according to RB, its reliance on British colonial power. This reliance led to the identification of Zionism as Britain’s long arm, thereby anathema to anti-colonial liberation. Foreign colonial powers dissected the region and ruled its fragments, and cultivated the Zionist movement as an accomplice, lending it power to pursue its own purposes, which in turn made Zionism an object of resentment. RB emphasized time and again that Zionist integration demanded an identification with liberation movements:

The East faces the people of Israel with the question: Are you one of us or of our enemies? In other words: the Jew who goes to the land of Israel must determine his relationships and his place . . . whether he belongs either to the West or to the East. By choosing the former, of course, he becomes entwined with fate of the West, and he must forfeit the chance to enjoy a desirable relationship with the East.¹⁸

Zionism, RB claimed, could not afford to continue its indecisiveness: it must throw its lot with one of the two warring sides, aligning itself either with the peoples of the East struggling for liberation or with their colonial oppressors. The Zionist movement’s attempt to sit on the fence, simultaneously presenting itself as a movement of Jewish restoration in the East, while continuing to cling to the hem of the West’s robes, must make way for a clear decision.

Zionism in Light of Arab Anticolonial Resistance: Correspondence with Bulus Shehadeh

RB’s vision of the commitment to worldwide anticolonial struggles as a basis for a Jewish-Arab cooperation in Palestine can be found in a series of public exchanges with Bulus Shehadeh (1882–1943), the editor of the Palestinian newspaper *Mir’at al-Sharq*, in November 1925.¹⁹ RB was intimately familiar with the Arabic-language Palestinian press, having in the final years of Ottoman rule presided over the Palestine Office press bureau’s Arabic press department, founded in 1910. The defined role of the department was to follow discussion of the Yishuv in the Palestinian press and, in various instances, to engage in these discussions in favor of Zionist colonization.²⁰ For RB, the department offered him his first chance to become aware of the political and cultural orientations that were crystallizing among Palestinians.²¹ In his critical writings on Zionist settler-colonial policies, he often included translations from the Palestinian press, including critiques of Ottoman government officials who were blamed for abandoning the local Palestinian peasants, while Zionist institutions

purchased lands and expelled the local inhabitants. By serving as an “echo” of the Arabic press, RB sought to open what he regarded as the closed ears of the Zionist Yishuv to Palestinian perceptions of Zionism.²²

Since their establishment after the renewal of the Ottoman constitution in 1908 – and especially from the end of 1910 and the beginning of 1911 – Palestinian periodicals played an important role in leading Palestinian opposition to Zionist colonization.²³ Newspapers such as Najib Nassar’s *al-Karmil* reported daily on Zionist land purchases and the expulsions of the peasants and warned of the dangers posed by the Zionist policy of the conquest of land. The newspaper *Filastin* – founded by the cousins ‘Isa al-‘Isa and Yusuf al-‘Isa in 1911 – took a more ambivalent approach toward Zionist colonization in the first year of its publication, entertaining its potential benefits as a force for “modernization” in rural areas and giving space to Zionist authors to respond to critical analyses of Zionist colonization. However, *Filastin*, too, became more critical of Zionist threats to the political and economic future of Palestinian Arabs and, especially after a deadly clash in 1913 between Jewish colonists in Rehovot and the neighboring village of Zarnuqa, eventually became a main outlet for Palestinian opposition to Zionist colonization.²⁴

During World War I, Ottoman authorities shut down Palestinian periodicals, but by the 1920s the press had recuperated from its wartime paralysis, and emerged as the main textual site of Palestinian political expression. During this period, Bulus Shehadeh’s *Mir’at al-Sharq* played an important role. *Mir’at al-Sharq* launched in September 1919, and served as a chief organ of the political faction associated with the Nashashibi family, also known as the opposition (*al-mu‘arida*) to the Husaynis and the Supreme Muslim Council, which enjoyed colonial patronage. Although the newspaper generally adopted a reconciliatory position with British colonial authorities, it was also “often critical of British policies” and, alongside other Palestinian periodicals took an oppositional line concerning the issue of Zionism.²⁵ While opposition to Zionism in the late Ottoman period focused mainly on land purchases and the expulsion of *fellahin*, the emergence of the British Mandate led to Zionism becoming identified with colonial power. The Balfour Declaration in particular became a symbol of the connection between Zionism and the colonial powers.²⁶

In 1925, the Great Syrian Revolt emerged as a symbol of organized Arab anti-colonial resistance, shared in by rural peasants, urban tradesmen, and army officers, and breaching the borders imposed by colonial policies of “divide and rule.”²⁷ The Syrian demand for liberation from the French colonial burden, and its aspiration to reassert the independence of the entire Bilad al-Sham region (divided into French and British mandate territories) as a singular geopolitical and socioeconomic whole, occupied a major place in the Palestinian Arab press. *Mir’at al-Sharq* covered the revolt on a weekly basis and, as Foster claimed – “took every opportunity to praise the Syrian rebels.”²⁸

In a November 1925 open letter titled “To the Hebrew Press,” Shehadeh decried Hebrew-language Palestinian newspapers’ depictions of the popular uprisings in Jabal al-Druze and Damascus against the French colonial regime, and the revolt led by ‘Abd

al-Karim al-Khattabi against the French and the Spanish in the Rif region of Morocco. While Zionist public figures often spoke of their own aspiration to achieve a reciprocal understanding between Jews and Arabs, emphasizing the Semitic connection shared by the two groups, Shehadeh explained that they undercut that very possibility by siding with the Arabs' oppressors against legitimate aspirations for liberation:

We saw you in the Rif war, when you stood alongside France and Spain . . . and you have forgotten what the latter have done to you . . . and you did not show any empathy for the Rifians. We saw you during the Druze revolt when you stood beside France and showed no sympathy for the Druze and the Syrians in their struggle, forgetting that the Druze and the Syrians are Semites like you. You forgot the neighborly relations you are bound to, you forgot that your existence is one of a small island in the middle of a vast Arab ocean. You forgot that you are not connected in any matter to France, either nationally, linguistically or religiously: you forgot that by doing so [aligning yourself with France] you undercut the claims you make over and over again.²⁹

Shehadeh's critique of the pro-colonial attitude of the Hebrew press constructed its coverage in terms of forgetting – forgetting the relations between the European regimes and the Jews throughout history, forgetting the historic identification of Jews with oppressed peoples, and denying the way in which Zionism introduced itself to the Arabs. The attitude of the Hebrew press toward these struggles reflected, according to Shehadeh, Zionism's attempt to erase Jewish history, which should place Jews firmly on the side of the Arabs rebelling against their Western colonial overlords.

Shehadeh's figurative articulation of the Zionist Yishuv as "a small island in the middle of a vast Arab ocean" evoked a spatial imagination that refused to reconcile itself to emerging colonial geography. The activities of Zionist Jews in Mandatory Palestine should be assessed not only according to this limited geographical unit, Shehadeh claimed, but according to how they regarded liberation movements erupting throughout the "vast Arab ocean." In allying itself with the French and the Spanish, Zionists betrayed their desires to recreate the Yishuv as a distinctively European space by construing an opposition between themselves and their Middle Eastern geographical, cultural, and political surroundings.

The following issue of *Mir'at al-Sharq* published excerpts of a rebuttal from RB, who argued that Shehadeh relied on the editorials of two newspapers – *Do'ar Hayom* and *Palestine Weekly* – that were indeed hostile to the anti-colonial uprisings and were known to stand alongside the colonial powers. *Do'ar Hayom*'s reports on the Syrian revolt revealed a deep anxiety about the possibility of the uprisings spreading to Mandate Palestine – a territory that, according to the paper, had "just now achieved some peace and serenity" thanks to British rule. The newspaper pinned its hopes on "the French authorities and their power to quell the revolt before it would expand and spill over across the border."³⁰ However, RB claimed, a large majority of Jews

objected to these opinions and even sought to censor them.

RB raised *Haaretz* and *Davar* as counterexamples of a different attitude, more sympathetic to the struggles and more representative of actual public opinion among Palestine's Jews.³¹ *Haaretz* and *Davar* relied on the Arab press for their reportage, and acknowledged the great destruction and the numerous casualties caused by French aerial attacks on Damascus in October, even ascribing the revolt to "the bitter experience the Druze had . . . under the despotic rule of Carbillet, the [French-appointed] governor of the mountain."³² The Arabic press thereafter distinguished the "pro-French coverage" of *Do'ar Hayom* and the more reserved line taken by *Haaretz*, hailing the latter as a newspaper with the basic decency to report the "evident truth."³³ RB's implication that the majority of the Jewish Yishuv were empathetic to the Druze cause was exaggerated, however. Except for its publication of essays by Hugo Bergmann and RB himself, it is impossible to argue that *Haaretz* effectively sympathized with the revolt and its professed objectives.

Shehadeh, for his part, sought to expose RB's claims as wishful thinking. He characterized RB as "one of the orthodox Jews . . . whose aspirations are totally different from those of the Zionists."³⁴ By cementing the schematic distinction between Zionists and Orthodox Jews, and ascribing RB's views to his belonging to the latter group, Shehadeh communicated to his readers the limited context in which they should take RB's words. Shehadeh also claimed that, throughout their history, Jews never aspired to be politically independent, but rather sought religious autonomy and economic independence within political entities ruled by non-Jews. This was precisely how Zionist Jews in Palestine differed from their counterparts: theirs was a political program for "Jewish sovereignty [*mamlaka*]," a goal that would be attained only when they achieved total domination over a region. In Palestine, therefore, Zionists will settle for nothing less than a political reality in which Arabs lack meaningful political power. That was why, Shehadeh argued, Zionists "will be happy with any tragedy [*nakba*] or trouble" that would befall the Arabs, and also explained their support for the colonial powers – who had promised foundation of a Jewish state.³⁵

Shehadeh's distinction between Zionists and Orthodox Jewry, which lay in the former's goal of total sovereignty manifested in a Jewish state, is reminiscent of, but not equivalent to, European distinction between religion and nation. As opposed to the European depiction of Judaism as a religion and thus as apolitical by nature, Shehadeh's distinction between Orthodox Jews and Zionists focused on the different political frameworks within which they sought collective autonomy – either within a larger political framework or in the form of a separate sovereign Jewish state, relying on the colonial powers. Shehadeh thus saw RB's politics as so far beyond the pale of Zionism that he understood him as "Orthodox." The readiness to identify with the Syrian rebels could never be characterized as "Zionist" since, in Shehadeh's reading, at its core Zionism's fate was bound up with imperialism and the movement was therefore anxious about any scenario that included foreign powers' departure from the region. As far as Shehadeh was concerned, RB was an observant Jew who never shared Zionist political aspirations for sovereignty, and was therefore able to sympathize

with, perhaps even share, the Eastern understanding of the rebels' objectives in the Rif and in Syria and empathize with them.

The subsequent issue of *Mir'at al-Sharq* included another letter from RB in which he rejected Shehadeh's notion that Zionists and Orthodox Jews were in binary opposition in their attitudes toward Arabs. RB again mentioned *Haaretz* and *Davar*, and again emphasized that those were Zionist newspapers and that "unexpectedly, they regard the Arabs in general and the question of the Rifian and the Druze with respect and sympathy."³⁶ He concluded:

The true Zionist loves his own people, and also respects and cherishes the other peoples, especially ones struggling for their liberation. The true Zionist knows that the happiness of the world depends on the liberty of all peoples and their independent development.³⁷

RB thus sought to reclaim the term "Zionism" from the pro-imperialist politics with which it had come to be associated. According to RB, patriotic sentiment did not come at the expense of solidarity with other national struggles. On the contrary: the "true Zionist" identified "especially" with colonized peoples fighting for their liberation. This understanding of "true Zionism" as an identification with the Arab anticolonial struggle was manifested in RB's activities as a member of Brit-Shalom.

Brit-Shalom, British-Zionist Cooperation, and the "Great Arab Nation"

RB served as Brit-Shalom's secretary and a co-editor, together with Hans Kohn and Hugo Bergmann, of its principal organ, *She'ifotenu*. In a 1928 article in *She'ifotenu*, RB argued against Zionist policies designed to achieve a Jewish majority in Palestine, which he saw as a crudely concealed aspiration to dominate the Palestinian Arabs, confined to minoritarian status within a Jewish-majority polity, and thus a catalyst for war and struggle.³⁸ A Jewish majority, RB went on, was the wrong political objective because it negated any cooperative approach and construed the two groups as having opposed and mutually exclusive interests. The shift toward ensuring a Jewish majority in Mandate Palestine, he claimed, went against Zionism's original political agenda of seeking "a radical solution to the Jewish question" through "the removal of millions – during one generation's time." The new political context required a recalculation of the price that Zionists should pay to "solve the Jewish question":

The first question: to whom? An answer (and I speak only on my own behalf): to the great Arab nation. A second question: What is the essence of the price? My answer: A real outstretched hand, forging a brotherhood, not of declarative poetics but in actual reality, a recognition of the Semitic brotherhood as a great factor, forming a public [*minyán*],

creating a great and joint political construct, a building whose roof will shelter two large peoples and resolve the question of the Jews under its roof, under which neither of the two peoples will ask who is in the front and who has the “majority” . . . It is here that Herzl’s vision will be resurrected in a different hue.³⁹

RB’s vision of national space was not limited to the boundaries of “the land of the deer,” but was home to the “great Arab nation” as a whole. RB departed from the limiting boundaries of the post-war political arrangements that allocated Palestine as the territory to serve as a Jewish homeland, and instead envisaged the grand space posited by the advocates of Arab unity as an alternative geography.⁴⁰ Those who would seriously contemplate the radical solution of removing millions of Jews from Europe should not sentence them to be concentrated in a territory limited by the mandate system, but should instead allow them to be dispersed throughout the lands of the “great Arab nation.” RB saw Semitic brotherhood as a main catalyst in this political framework, abrogating the aspiration for Jewish sovereignty based on national majority, which he understood to be the root cause of never-ending strife. Thus RB wished to adopt Herzl’s initiative to solve the “Jewish question,” while transforming the political framework that would be the vehicle for its realization – not “a portion of a rampart of Europe against Asia” as Herzl envisaged, but integration into a non-European political framework.⁴¹

RB therefore considered British rule a foreign imposition on the region, which could not serve as an arbitrator between Jews and Arabs, as Weizmann had requested of Lloyd George. On the contrary: RB’s attitude toward colonial authorities was rooted in his view of Jews and Arabs as natural partners in the struggle against the British Empire. From this perspective, RB points out both Jews’ and Arabs’ need for British “help and support,” while emphasizing the imperative to struggle jointly against its “mistakes, defects and damages.” This approach parted from dominant Zionist attitudes toward the British as the power that had not only the might but also the right to shape the future of Palestine, and thereby manage relations between Zionists and Palestine’s Arabs.

RB understood Zionists’ affinity for Britain to be based in temporal political calculations rather than long-term vision or principle. Later in the 1928 *She’ifotenu* article, RB sharply rebuked Avraham Elmaleh, a prominent Sephardi Jew who during the Ottoman period had been one of the most vociferous critics of European Zionism and its neglect of the question of Jewish-Arab relations – but whose views in the late 1920s reflected the same axioms of hegemonic Zionist policies RB so adamantly criticized.⁴² Elmaleh’s change of heart signaled an alarming shift on the part of Middle Eastern Jews (and not only European Jews) toward the Arabs following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire and a decade of British occupation of Palestine. Elmaleh articulated a spatial perception diametrically opposite to that of RB, one in which the Yishuv prospered “within our own little corner, with no connection with any other neighboring states,” based on the view that Jewish and Arab national aspirations

were irreconcilable and mutually exclusive: “Anything that the Arabs consider good for themselves, is an elixir of death to us.”⁴³

It is clear, RB charged, that although Elmaleh did not explicitly so state, his shift in attitudes toward the Arabs derived from the change of government in Palestine.⁴⁴ His former promotion of mutual understanding between Jews and Arabs was not due to political principle and persuasion, but to the cold calculations of political expediency.⁴⁵ The relative weakness of the Jews and the accumulating power of the Arabs during the late Ottoman period had meant that maintaining cordial relations was a Zionist priority. The shift in political circumstances now meant that the efforts to cultivate good relations became unnecessary, having never stemmed, for Elmaleh, from a belief that both peoples were partners in a joint political framework, but rather that they were adversaries in competition. To RB, Elmaleh’s transformation illustrated the important meaning that the change of government carried. The preoccupation of the Zionist movement with the political covenant of the region’s new imperial powers, and the British colonial government in Palestine in particular, came at the expense of integration with, and cultivating ties among, the one and only stable factor in the region – the Arabs. In RB’s eyes, the Arabs must be made allies of Jews if there was to be any hope for realizing Zionism’s goals.

Pinning hopes on government support rather than integration with local Arabs, RB claimed, was not, however, entirely new for the Zionist leadership in Palestine. It was a pattern also throughout the Ottoman period. As an example, RB recalled an assembly of Jewish and Arab politicians scheduled to take place in Brummana, Lebanon, in 1914. This meeting, organized by the Zionist official Hayyim Margaliot-Kalvarisky, had been scheduled as a follow-up to another meeting that had taken place in Damascus, at the home of Muhammad Kurd ‘Ali. The Brummana assembly, however, was cancelled after the Jews who were invited to take part in it claimed, “There is no need for assemblies with the Arabs, since the government is on our side.” Nasif al-Khalidi’s alleged response to this cancellation seemed to encapsulate what RB saw as the moral of the story: “Be careful, Zionist gentlemen, governments come and go, but peoples remain.”⁴⁶

The divergence between the hegemonic Zionist approach to privileging the relationship with state power over that with the Arab masses and the views espoused by RB and, more generally, by Brit-Shalom became particularly acute in the wake of the violent confrontations of August 1929 – “year zero” of the Arab-Israeli conflict, in Hillel Cohen’s coinage.⁴⁷ Brit-Shalom criticized the Zionist appeals to power and national honor that preceded and followed the events, seeing them as evidence of the Yishuv’s ongoing disregard for Arabs and collaboration with the British. The hegemonic Zionist narrative emphasized the need for “national discipline,” while the members of Brit-Shalom saw the violent outburst as cause for a reassessment of Zionist policies and cooperation with colonial authorities.⁴⁸ The Zionist leadership viewed these attitudes as betrayal, and censored them. According to Berl Katznelson, a Zionist leader and editor of *Davar*, the Yishuv was “struggling for its life,” and in such a state of emergency could not permit publication of such critique.⁴⁹

RB edited the issue of *She'ifotenu* published, following the censorship imposed by “national discipline,” eight months after the events of 1929. In his editorial, RB criticized the Zionist understanding of the events as an inevitable confrontation led by the Arabs:

There were times that they [the Arabs] reached out for peace and their hand was waving in the air. . . . Weizmann . . . who does not find his hands and legs regarding the Arab question . . . says that he won't negotiate with the Arabs unless they recognize our rights and stop the violence. . . . This is the situation, actually, when they are calm . . . we ignore them, look upon them, and swell as turkeys, and when they are awakened by natural, elementary feelings, we do the same thing again. This is not the way.⁵⁰

While the Zionist leadership understood the event as an outburst that should, through alliance with colonial power, be controlled and restrained, RB understood it as an issue requiring reflection. The political Zionist approach that preceded the events served as a basis for the Zionist denial of the Arabs and their national aspiration, and to this “swelling” of national pride, which saw the turn toward Arabs as a manifestation of exilic Judaism. The violent moment should have served, RB claimed, as evidence that this Zionist approach was in need of revision.

“From Basra to Jaffa”

The demand to stand against the British colonial regime and to break beyond the boundaries it set should be examined in relation to similar approaches that emerged during these years within the Palestinian national movement itself. The British administration used methods of ruling and supervision based on a “reliance on indigenous elites, and sometimes other social strata, to participate in structures of indirect rule.”⁵¹ In Mandate Palestine, this pattern appeared in the repackaging of the former institution of the Mufti of Jerusalem as the “Grand Mufti of Palestine,” and in appointing Hajj Amin al-Husayni to this newly powerful post. At the same time, the British refused to recognize the Arab Executive of the Palestine Arab Congress, a popularly established political body that demanded national rights for the Arab majority in Palestine, an agenda that challenged the ultimate authority of the British.⁵² By the early 1930s, the failure of either approach to yield results for Palestinian Arabs led to the emergence of political forces that did not stake their power on British recognition, but rather on an emerging educated and professional class, youth movements, and other bases of support within Palestinian society. The Istiqlal (Independence) party, established in 1932 and whose main seat of power was in Nablus (rather than Jerusalem, whose elite families dominated both the officially recognized leadership associated with the Supreme Muslim Council and its opposition,

al-mu'arida), was among the most evident manifestations of this trend, articulating a clear anticolonial platform.

The Istiqlal party's agenda of non-cooperation with the British authorities differed from that of RB and other members of Brit-Shalom. While the former were part of the majority group in the country whose national demands British authorities unequivocally and uniformly rejected, the latter were part of a national movement reliant, to a large extent, on the goodwill and cooperation of the colonial overlords. However, several points of overlap can be discerned between the two parties. Such a comparative synthesis could help achieve a better understanding of what standing against the British rule meant to different actors and how their respective positionalities affected their articulations of a non-colonial spatial imagination.

Weldon Matthews claims that Palestinian public figures associated with the Istiqlal party concentrated primarily on the issue of resisting cooperation between the Palestinian leadership and British rule. They considered the anti-imperial resistance led in India by the Indian Congress Party headed by Gandhi and in Egypt by the Wafd Party under the leadership of Sa'd Zaghlul to be powerful models of effective and popular struggle against British colonialism. The officially recognized Palestinian leadership, however, had proved unable to lead an oppositional, anti-cooperative movement à la Gandhi.⁵³ The Istiqlalists also rejected the geographically limited Palestinian framework championed by the official leadership, viewing acquiescence to a colonially-ordained brand of a local nationalism to be unacceptable cooperation with the British regime.⁵⁴

Hamdi al-Husayni, a scion of one of the most influential families in Gaza, was one of the major figures in the Istiqlal. As editor of *Sawt al-Haq* newspaper, Husayni publicly promoted the agenda of noncooperation. He was also a member of the Berlin-based League to Combat Imperialism, which supported various anticolonial liberation movements throughout the world. In 1929, Husayni was nominated to the position of the league's secretary for all the Arab lands.⁵⁵ In July 1929, a congress of the league was held in Frankfurt, where a resolution was adopted that, according to Moshe Belinson's description in *Davar*, called Zionism "a dangerous manifestation," one in league with "British imperialism against the Arab people, since the idea of a national home for the Jews is nothing but a pretext to bring the European worker to Palestine in order to create a workers' aristocracy against the exploited Arab worker."⁵⁶ Belinson's report described the congress as subordinate to the Soviet Union's political ambitions in the region, and described the league delegates' statements on the mandate system as "exaggerations."

Following the reports in *Davar*, the league's secretariat for the Arab lands, headed by Husayni, sent RB a manifesto in Hebrew. The manifesto attempted to clarify that the attitude of the league was "far removed from any religious or national chauvinism," and that its resolution derived from its unwavering commitment to ensure that the "elementary right" of self-determination be extended to "the populations of Palestine or Transjordan," a right unjustly denied by the British.⁵⁷ The league's objective was the "creation of an independent covenant of Arab Republics, which includes all of the

countries whose majorities are part of the Arab people . . . [and] the cancellation of all the mandates and guardianship of the imperialist kingdoms of these countries.” With regard to the Zionist movement, the manifesto read:

The reason for the struggle of the League and its Arab and Jewish members against Zionism is the fact that Zionism is an instrument for the cancellation of the just aspirations of the Arab masses for independence – as “the Balfour Declaration” is what the British Mandate relies on, it stands in contradiction to the realization of the right of “self-determination” by the land’s populations. The reason is also that Zionism does indeed enrich a small part of the natives of the land – the big landlords . . . [and] is diminishing and demolishing the place of the majority of the Arab natives of the land. . . . [T]he loathing and national hatred brought to the country by designating an already settled country by one people to the “national home” of another, without the permission of the country’s residents by foreign force, is disturbing the peace of the land and the stability of its development. Therefore, the League sees the struggle against Zionism as a struggle against imperialism, and recognizes the possibility of a covenant of all the Jewish and Arab masses, to which it aspires with all its might, rooted in this joint struggle. However, the League opposes the notion that the cancellation of “the Balfour Declaration” is possible while the Mandatory system and British imperialism remain installed in power. “Palestine to the Palestinians!” “The Arab countries – to the Arabs” are its slogans.⁵⁸

According to this manifesto, Zionism was little more than a clever instrument used by the callous British to drive a wedge between the Jewish and Arab national aspirations and thus ferment confrontation between them – in the hopes this would enable them to prolong, perhaps indefinitely, their ostensibly temporary mandate in Palestine. The struggle against Zionism was, therefore, a struggle against the “divide and rule” cynicism of the colonial regime. The manifesto, published after the violent confrontations of August 1929, also decried Husayni’s arrest after he “turned unequivocally and bravely against this incitement, and declared the need to mobilize to the struggle to the full independence of the land.”⁵⁹ Husayni saw the erupting confrontations between Jews and Arabs as a departure from the central objectives of the struggle, which was the eviction of the British colonial regime from Palestine.

The league’s choice to send RB the manifesto implies that he was considered a potential partner in resisting Zionist cooperation with the British Mandate and, more broadly, in the anti-colonial struggle. This expectation, however, suffered a setback in light of his correspondence, published in *Davar*. RB chose not to focus on the claims that Zionism was a colonial instrument nor on its call for the cancellation of the mandate system and the foundation of a general Arab covenant, but rather on the slogan that signed the end of the letter – “Palestine for the Palestinians.” This is

illustrative of the boundaries of RB's attitude, which fell short of a clear identification with the Palestinians in their struggle against the British. RB claimed that despite his basic approval of the slogan, he wished to challenge the understanding of the word "Palestinian" as one that is used only in relation to the Arabs that lived within the boundaries of Palestine, and called for it to be broadened to include Jews who did not reside in Palestine at the time:

The meaning of the slogan "Palestine for the Palestinians" could be understood in a broad, comprehensive, and detailed sense (and this understanding indeed faces us with hard questions that bother me and I am trying to find just solutions to them). But it might also be narrowly understood, like it is understood by the muftists [followers of Hajj Amin al-Husayni], who consider only the passport . . . the one who negates my right (and that of other Jews like myself) to a homeland in this Palestine, which to me is the Land of Israel, [and in doing so] are plotting to make us miserable, robbing us of a central term of our lives.⁶⁰

The manifesto had distinguished between Zionist aspirations and those of the natives of the land; it also presented a call for "a covenant of all the Jewish and Arab masses" in the struggle against imperialism. Considering this context, RB's choice to emphasize the Jews as an integral part of those who identify themselves as "Palestinians" is not so clear. It seems, however, that RB – who held a notion of Herzlian Zionism that saw its prime objective as promoting the migration of the Jewish masses eastward – wanted to emphasize the fact that these Jews as well, though only potentially "Palestinian," have a stake in the identity in question. RB focused on the question of what he saw as the Jews' "right to a homeland," and therefore on the question of the legitimacy of the continued migration of Jews to Palestine. He presented this question as one upon which his affiliation to the league hinged. He also admitted, parenthetically, to the "hard questions" that arise due to the broadly inclusive conceptualization he suggested to the term "Palestinian," and the need to solve them. This admission can be seen as acknowledging the claims raised in the manifesto – claims that RB himself asserted elsewhere more than once. He still insisted, however, that denial of "Palestinianness" to Jews was a death sentence to those millions of Jews rejected and expelled by Europe.

RB's contestation of the term "Palestinian" and his call that it be transformed to include Jews as well – whether or not these Jews would have understood themselves as such – also suggested a different possible identity to his readers. The definition of Jews as "Palestinians" equally challenged the pillars on which the Zionist Yishuv construed itself as a distinct national unit. RB was not alone among Zionists in seeking to adopt a Palestinianness that included Jews within it as a potential identity. Itamar Ben-Avi, a son of first Aliyah immigrants, saw it as a basis for a joint Jewish-Arab political framework, as opposed to the Zionist aspiration for "Jewish sovereignty," which he imagined, in contrast to RB, within the colonial boundaries of Palestine

– “this new state created by Balfour’s brilliance.”⁶¹ Efraim Hayyim Ben-Nahum, a companion of RB in Brit-Shalom and religious Zonist circles who was born in Kirkuk, Iraq, also used it as an alternative locus of national identification.⁶² Though differing in their political scopes, these various adoptions of “Palestinianness” as marking a local identification for Jews each challenged the hegemonic Zionist discourse.

Of course, initiatives to build a broad alliance between Jews and Arabs did not only exist on the fringes of Zionist thought. In an article published on June 1930, Muhammad Roshan Akhtar, a Muslim Indian and the editor of the English edition of the Palestinian newspaper *Filastin*, called for an establishment of an Arab federation, claiming Jews were an integral part of a political community spanning “from Basra to Jaffa.”⁶³ Akhtar rejected notions that the two peoples had conflicting interests and that the British regime could behave as an arbitrator. Akhtar, who, like RB, viewed Jews and Arabs as partners claimed that such a federation would also serve as a destination for Europe’s Jews, where they would be recognized as equal citizens. This article ended with the urgent words, “we are waiting for an answer.” RB responded enthusiastically, having “dedicated ten years of his literary activities for the promotion of this idea,” and considered Akhtar’s essay greatly important, anticipating that it would influence those “who are able to transcend the present moment and think of the past and the future.”⁶⁴

Several months later, Brit-Shalom invited Akhtar to speak to its members. Akhtar prefaced his talk by stating that he could not speak on behalf of the Arabs, nor even as a representative of *Filastin* – a newspaper that he insisted was a trusted representative of the Palestinian Arabs – but would instead speak as a Muslim Indian who “loves . . . the Arabs as any other of the Muslims of India.”⁶⁵ Akhtar described the arrival of the Jews in Palestine as embodying not “the spirit of the person who wanders and returns to his homeland,” but “the conquerer who has come to his conquered land.” He also discussed the Zionist movement’s limitation within the boundaries of Mandate Palestine as self-defeating, if its goal was first and foremost to rescue European Jews from persecutions and anti-Semitism:

Palestine in itself does not give you the area necessary to rescue [so many millions] from persecutions. Even the most exaggerated estimations will not reach the numbers you want. . . . Even had the Arabs not been here at all, you could not have settled here all the people who sought to escape from there. It is necessary, then, to find something larger than Palestine, that can support all these people you want to rescue from persecutions. . . . Therefore, you, Zionists, or let’s say the Jews of Palestine, made a fundamental mistake when you accepted upon yourselves the character of the Westerners, to live in the East.⁶⁶

Fulfillment of the Zionist program to rescue Jews necessitated a broader geographical region, one “larger than Palestine,” meaning that the Zionist spatial horizon must be extended eastward. This understanding required, according to Akhtar,

that the Zionist movement abandon the goal of founding an exclusively Jewish space within the area of biblical “Judea” – and its tragic enthrallment with European culture and power – and turn toward a different spatial unit, from the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean, or “from Jaffa to Basra.” Akhtar juxtaposed the integration of the Jews into an Arab federation with the tendency of Western-sponsored political exclusivity and ascendancy encapsulated by the Balfour Declaration. The latter could only result in the creation of a segregated and isolated Jewish political entity in the limited space of Mandate Palestine, and therefore engender prolonged violent confrontations between Jews and Arabs.

Akhtar’s idea of Arab federation coincided with RB’s Herzlian Zionist model with regard to the necessity of forging a Jewish-Arab political partnership. In Brit-Shalom’s organ *She’ifotenu*, RB wrote of the “internal logic” of his and Akhtar’s vision. Akhtar’s talk, RB claimed, made it possible to demonstrate how the Zionist model derived from Herzl’s perception – and not that of Ahad Ha’am, who proposed creating a limited Jewish “spiritual center,” rather than a comprehensive political solution of the “Jewish question” – was indeed the one which presented a radical demand for making a political covenant between Jews and Arabs and for Zionist cooperation with the peoples of the East in their struggles. RB wrote:

The ones who think that only through the conception of Ahad Ha’am one can reach a theory of Brit-Shalom are mistaken. To the contrary. There is a place for the litigant to claim that, as a matter of fact, it might be possible that for a “spiritual center,” a mutual understanding with the East and the Arabs is not so necessary . . . but this is not the situation with a maximalist, Herzlian Zionism, interested in the migration of mass amounts . . . this is compelled to take into consideration specifically Arabia and the East . . .⁶⁷

While the minimalist Zionist approach, seeking to create a spiritual center within Mandate Palestine, would lead the movement toward segregation and isolation, the maximalist approach, by dint of the inability to resettle massive numbers of European Jews within these territorial limits, could not ignore the place to which it wishes to bring these Jews. RB, then, presented the fulfillment of the Herzlian Zionist vision not as the foundation of a distinct political entity where Jews will enjoy the privileges of a national majority, but rather as the identification of the large, heterogenous space where Zionist aspirations to rescue persecuted Jews could be fulfilled.

The editorial of the next issue of *She’ifotenu* discussed the Arab struggle against colonial powers and the position of the Zionist movement, which “in the war between the awakening Eastern world and Europe relies . . . on Europe.” The editorial proposed a “new orientation . . . of Zionist ideology”:

The objective is . . . the creation of a strong Jewish center in Palestine and the turning of the Jewish migration to the Near East, to the Arab lands,

and that the prerequisite for achieving this goal is the agreement of the Arab people. The achievement of this agreement, a new charter, a new “Balfour Declaration” from the Arab people by its leaders – will be the political goal of renewed Zionism.⁶⁸

This new declaration was supposed to be given by the Arabs in whose lands the Jews were to be absorbed – therefore, a totally different kind of declaration. If the original Balfour declaration was issued by an epitome of British colonial power, Lord Balfour, the proposed declaration would express the goodwill and the extended hand of thousands of Arabs.

In a following article, RB compared America and the East as migration destinations, and again criticized hegemonic Zionism’s scorn for viewing the space from Basra to Jaffa as a destination for migrating Jews. “Do we acknowledge the limited and narrow boundaries of the country [Palestine]?” he contended.⁶⁹ RB argued that the traditional Jewish spatial imagination, like the Arab spatial imagination, rejected the dissected geography imposed by colonial powers after World War I. Responding to claims that the East did not support the Zionist movement, RB turned the argument back on itself, ascribing this lack of support to Zionist policies: “The East is against you? As long as you rely on its enemies, its oppressors, the West, of course, it is.”⁷⁰ By relying on British authorities’ bayonets, Zionism blindly closed the gate on the possibility of fulfilling its own goals. “The required spaces are there, and there is an anchor for rescue,” RB proposed, but the Zionist movement shortsightedly preferred partnership with British colonial authorities over standing alongside the Arabs, a fateful choice that precluded Jewish emigration to the Arab countries.⁷¹

Epilogue: R. Binyamin and Adjacent Lands

RB’s views, shared by some other members of Brit-Shalom, identified ways in which Zionist goals could be integrated with Arab anti-colonial demands. Alongside the call to identify with this struggle, RB saw facilitating mass Jewish immigration to Palestine, and to the Arab lands in general, a central part of “ambitious” Zionism. His open letter to Hamdi al-Husayni also demonstrates the obstacles that he set for himself, placing perhaps unnecessary hurdles in the way of achieving the partnership he wished to promote. RB left Brit-Shalom at the end of 1931, seemingly in response to emerging orientations within Brit-Shalom that RB saw as limiting the radical Zionist demand for mass Jewish migration eastward. After he left Brit-Shalom, RB depicted himself as one who stood “alone inside Brit-Shalom as he was outside it.”⁷² RB’s “maximalist” approach – maximalist in both the scope of his spatial imagination and his advocacy for mass emigration – did not convince most of his companions in Brit-Shalom, especially students of Ahad Ha’am. They were oriented toward a different model of Jewish-Arab covenant, one based on the perception of the Zionist movement as a cultural-spiritual movement rather than one seeking to intervene in global demographics and politics.⁷³

RB rooted his rejection of the colonial geographies and his acceptance of expansive Arab spatial notions on theological grounds, according to which the Jewish existence in the lands adjacent to the Land of Israel is preferable to Jewish existence in Europe due to its proximity to the promised land, and thus should not be considered as an exilic existence. Jewish existence in the land, he claimed, was not dependent on their political status or the political framework to which they happened to belong. It was, rather, a “natural-religious-mystic-spiritual issue”: any Jew must “feel himself connected to the land with chains, connected in any thread of his life, in a way that his departure from the land will be considered as a departure from his life-home.”⁷⁴ This was a perception of Jewish existence in the Land of Israel as an existential demand that does not depend on shifting political sands, but is manifested in the Jewish orientation toward the land as the center, and seeing adjacent lands as manifestations of the same orientation and thus as a broader possibility of a Jewish existence in Palestine/Eretz Israel:

The pedigree of the adjacent lands is firstly in that they are “adjacent,” that they are . . . “connected to the land as to a national geographic center.” In that they enable the daily spiritual interaction with the internal life of the people of Israel in the Land of Israel. You can read the country’s newspaper on the same day or on the day after. You can visit the land in every pilgrimage festival [*regel*] . . . He who can settle in the land must settle in the land, he who cannot but can settle in one of the adjacent lands must prefer the adjacent lands over distant lands . . . the real meaning of a disrespectful and scornful relation to the adjacent lands is a relation of scattering, while a positive approach toward these lands can serve as a basis of centralization, a relation of aspiration from the distance of exile to the center.⁷⁵

While making this theological claim in favor of the adjacent lands, RB again evoked Akhtar’s phrase – “from Basra to Jaffa.” Doing so reminds us that RB connected his understanding of the theological concept of Eretz Israel to various Arab and Islamic spatial imaginations, and to Palestine’s place within them. His critique of Zionist concentration within Palestine as an attempt to create a distinctive, separate, sovereign, and pure national political entity went together with his concept of maximalist Zionism and his call for identification with the anti-colonial Arab struggle. The latter was connected to the acceptance of the Arab demand to reunify the space dissected by the colonial boundaries, which was also manifested in RB’s theological understanding of Eretz Israel as a center, and his positive regard of Jewish existence in the adjacent lands. The hegemonic Zionist spatial imagination, however, was already concentrated in a different understanding of the place, its Western-oriented gaze served as the basis for a colonized and secularized notion of Eretz Israel, inseparable from the mandate’s spatial imagination.

RB maintained this critical approach toward hegemonic Zionism following the

Palestinian Nakba and the foundation of the state of Israel in 1948. He created the journal *Ner* (candle, in Hebrew) as a stage for demanding the return of the Palestinian refugees. RB depicted his vision of the Palestinian refugees' return as the "great messianic idea," contrasted with the false messianic notion of national independence.⁷⁶ He saw the secularization of the messianic idea – manifested in the creation of the Jewish nation-state, ethnically homogenous and spatially, culturally, and linguistically distinct from the whole region of the Middle East – simply as idolatry. He saw the desacralization of the idea of the secular nation-state as a necessary shift toward a different possibility of an alternative collective Jewish existence in Palestine that would promote the return of the refugees. The desacralization of secular nationalism was, ultimately, for RB, for "Min," the heretic, the basis for the possibility of binationalism.

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Endnotes

- 1 The term used in Zionist writing to describe the Jewish community residing in Palestine before 1948.
- 2 Min, "Kol Mehatzetzim", *Haaretz*, 9 July 1925, 2.
- 3 See Michelle U. Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims, Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011); Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011), 31–40, 53–60; Menachem Klein, *Lives in Common: Arabs and Jews in Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Hebron* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); and Hillel Cohen, "The Life and Death of the Arab-Jew: Eretz Israel–Palestine and Beyond," in *Homelands in Exile: Otherness and Belonging in the Jewish Diaspora*, ed. Ofer Shiff (Beersheba: Ben-Gurion Research Institute, 2015), 171–200.
- 4 See Yfaat Weiss, "Central European Ethnonationalism and Zionist Binationalism," *Jewish Social Studies* 11, no. 1 (2004): 105–111; Derek J. Penslar, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine, 1870–1918* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1991), 80–102; Etan Bloom, "Arthur Ruppin and the Production of Modern Hebrew Culture" (PhD diss., Tel Aviv University, 2008), 1–26; and Gershon Shafir, "The Meeting of Eastern Europe and Yemen: 'Idealistic Workers' and 'Natural Workers' in Early Zionist Settlement in Palestine," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 13, no. 2 (1990): 172–197.
- 5 Avi-ram Tzoreff, "'An Imagined Desert That Is Indeed the Core of the Yishuv': R. Binyamin and the Emergence of Zionist Settler-Colonial Policies (1908–14)," Simon Dubnow Institut Jahrbuch (forthcoming).
- 6 Rashid Khalidi claimed that the Palestinians were situated during the mandate period within a constitutional "iron cage" that prevented them from any of the characteristics of a political status, while at the same time ensuring that status for Jews or, more accurately, for the Zionist movement. Rashid Khalidi, *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2007).
- 7 H.B., "Darkey Shalom," *Davar*, 23 June 1925, 2.
- 8 Min, "Kol Mehatzetzim", *Haaretz*, 9 July 1925, 2.
- 9 See Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, "Ben brit shalom u-beit ha-mikdash: ha-dialektika shel ge'ula u-meshihyut be-ikvot Gershom Scholem" [Between Brit-Shalom and the Temple: The Dialectics of Redemption and Messianism

- following Gershom Scholem], *Te'oria U-bikoret* 20 (2002): 105–7; and Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exile and Binationalism: From Gershom Scholem and Hannah Arendt to Edward Said and Mahmoud Darwish* (Berlin: EUME, 2012), 88–109.
- 10 Zohar Maor, “Ben anti-colonialism ve-post-colonialism: bikoret ha-le’umiyut vehahilun bebrit shalom” [Between Anti-colonialism and Post-colonialism: The Critique of Nationalism and Secularism of Brit-Shalom], *Te'oria U-bikoret* 30 (2007): 13–38.
 - 11 Maor, “Between Anti-colonialism,” 30 n27.
 - 12 Hanan Harif has underscored the role of pan-Semitism in the writings of RB, and discussed the importance other contemporary “pan-” movements had in its formulation. See Hanan Harif, *Anashim ahim anahnu: ha-pniya mizraha bahagut hatziyonit* [For We Be Brethren: The Turn to the East in Zionist Thought] (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar Center, 2019), 95–210.
 - 13 Abigail Jacobson and Moshe Naor, *Oriental Neighbors: Middle Eastern Jews and Arabs in Mandatory Palestine* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2016), 16–120.
 - 14 R. Binyamin. “Mizrah U-ma’arav” [East and West] *Ha-ikuf* 21 (1923): 443.
 - 15 R. Binyamin, “Arav: Michtav me-eret Yisrael” [Arabia: A Letter from Eretz-Yisrael], *Hed Lita* 37, no. 12 (20 July 1925): 2–3. In this article, RB recounted a number of conversations he had with Professor Josef Horovitz (1874–1931). Horovitz was a renowned Orientalist who, alongside holding a chair in the University of Frankfurt, also taught at the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College in Aligarh, India, between 1905 and 1917. RB’s meetings with him took place during Horovitz’s stay in Palestine for the purpose of the foundation of the Hebrew University, where he was later nominated to head the Institute for Oriental Studies. RB later described these conversations as one of the crucial moments to the foundation of Brit-Shalom. See R.B., “Mize u-mize: al tasbich ehad” [From This and From That: On One Complexity], *Bamishor* 136, 13 (November 1942): 3. On Josef Horovitz and the connections between the years he spent in Aligarh and his attitude toward the question of Jewish-Arab relations in Palestine, see Ruchama Johnston-Bloom, “‘Dieses Wirklich Westostlichen Mannes’: The German-Jewish Orientalist Josef Horovitz in Germany, India, and Palestine,” in *The Muslim Reception of European Orientalism: Reversing the Gaze*, ed. Susannah Heschel and Umar Ryad (New York: Routledge, 2019), 168–83.
 - 16 Binyamin, “Arav.”
 - 17 Binyamin, “Arav.”
 - 18 Binyamin, “Arav.”
 - 19 On Shehadeh, see Michael R. Fischbach, “Shehadeh (Family)” in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, ed. Philip Mattar (New York: Facts on File, Inc., 2005), 444. On *Mir’at al-Sharq*, see Zachary J. Foster, “Arabness, Turkey, and the Palestinian National Imagination in the Eyes of *Mir’at al-Sharq* (1919–26),” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 42 (2010): 61–79.
 - 20 Ya’akov Ro’i, “Nisyonotehem shel hamosadot hatziyoni’im le-hashpia al ha-itonut ha-aravit be-eret Yisrael bashanim 1908–1914” [Zionist Endeavours to Influence the Arab Press in Palestine, 1908–1914], *Zion* 32, no. 3–4 (1967): 213–25.
 - 21 R. Binyamin, “Be-ritmat h-ahava” [With a Harness of Love] *Ner* 4, no. 12 (1953): 7.
 - 22 R. Binyamin, “Bereshit” [Genesis] in *Benta’im: kovetz safruti* [Meanwhile: A Literary Collection], ed. R. Binyamin (Jaffa, 1912), 100–1.
 - 23 Ami Ayalon, *The Press in the Arab Middle East* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 50–72; Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 119–22; Emanuel Beska, “Responses of Prominent Arabs towards Zionist Aspirations and Colonization Prior to 1908,” *Asian and African Studies* 16 (2007): 22–44; Emanuel Beška, “Political Opposition to Zionism in Palestine and Greater Syria: 1910–1911 as a Turning Point,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59 (2014): 54–67.
 - 24 Emanuel Beška, “*Filastin’s* Changing Attitude toward Zionism before World War I,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 72 (2017): 86–101; Samuel Dolbee and Shay Hazkani, “Unlikely Identities: Abu Ibrahim and the Politics of Possibility in Late Ottoman Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 63–64 (2015): 24–39.
 - 25 Foster, “Arabness,” 63–64.
 - 26 As Eli Osheroff argues, Palestinian resistance to Zionism in this period was characterized by a new understanding of Jewish nationalism as an imperial tool. Eli Osheroff, “Balfour pinat Ahad Ha’am: Tziyounut, le’umiyut ve-imperialism ba-mahshava hafalestinait

- ha-mukdemet” [On the Corner of Balfour and Ahad Ha’am: Zionism, Nationality and Imperialism in Early Palestinian Thought] *Te’oria u-bikoret* 49 (2017): 211–12.
- 27 Michael Provence, *The Great Syrian Revolt and the Rise of Arab Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005), 1–26.
 - 28 Philip S. Khoury, “Divided Loyalties? Syria and the Question of Palestine, 1919–39,” *Middle Eastern Studies* 21, no. 3 (1985): 326; Foster, “Arabness,” 68–72.
 - 29 “Ila al-suhuf al-ibraniyya” [To the Hebrew Press], *Mir’at al-Sharq*, 18 November 1925, 1.
 - 30 Avi-amar, “Mered ha-druzim,” [The Druze Revolt], *Do’ar Hayom*, 14 August 1925, 1.
 - 31 “Al-‘Arab wa-l-yahud: jawab ‘ala kuttav” [Arabs and Jews: A Response to Authors], *Mir’at al-Sharq*, 25 November 1925, 2.
 - 32 “Ba-itonut ha-aravit” [In the Arab Press], *Davar*, 2 August 1925, 2; “Ha-tzarfatim yatzu mi-damesek” [The French Left Damascus] *Davar*, 21 October 1925, 1.
 - 33 “Ba-itonut ha-aravit: *al-Jazirah al Do’ar Hayom ve-al Haaretz*,” [In the Arab Press: *al-Jazirah on Do’ar Hayom and on Haaretz*] *Haaretz*, 26 July 1925, 1.
 - 34 “Al-‘Arab wa-l-yahud.”
 - 35 “Al-‘Arab wa-l-yahud.”
 - 36 Rabi Binyamin, “al-‘Arab wa-l-yahud aydan: jawab ‘ala jawab” [Arabs and Jews Also: Response to a Response], *Mir’at al-Sharq*, 28 November 1925, 3.
 - 37 Rabi Binyamin, “al-‘Arab wa-l-yahud aydan.”
 - 38 R.B., “Misaviv la-nekuda (sirtutim)” [Around the Dot (drafts)] *She’ifotenu*, 1 February 1928, 22.
 - 39 R.B., “Misaviv la-nekuda,” 24.
 - 40 Moshe Behar pointed to the problems that are found in historiographic writing of Jewish-Arab relations that is based on the acceptance of the “mandated imagination” that created mandated Palestine and its colonial boundaries as an axiom of the discussion. The limitation of the spatial and historic discussions prevents, Behar claims, the possibilities to identify the processes in which the Zionist movement and later also the national Arab movements imposed the crystallization of a discourse that was based on the principle of partition, as was clearly manifested in the decision of the Peel committee. Moshe Behar, “One-State, Two-States, Bi-National State: Mandated Imaginations in a Regional Void,” *Middle East Studies Online Journal* 5, no. 2 (2011): 97–136.
 - 41 Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State*, trans. Sylvie D’avigdor (New York: Dover Publications, 1989), 13.
 - 42 R.B., “Misaviv la-nekuda,” 24–26.
 - 43 Avraham Elmaleh, “Be-sodam al tavo nafshenu (al ha-bhirot la-mo’atza ha-mahokeket)” [Let not Our Souls be Included in Their Council (On the Elections to the Legislative Council)], *Do’ar Hayom*, 17 July 1928, 1. On Elmaleh and the Magen, see: Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, 106–7; and Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 163–65.
 - 44 Elmaleh wrote, for instance, that “thank god, we are not living under the mouth of Musa Kazim . . . because they are not the rulers of the country and not its higher authority . . . the years in which one could talk in the tone of a commanding ruler had passed, and, it is our pleasure, won’t return.” Avraham Elmaleh, “Parashat ha-yom: al siha ahat,” [The Matter of the Day: On One Conversation], *Do’ar Hayom*, 1 August 1928, 1.
 - 45 This can be seen in the emphasis by Hevrat Magen, an organization that Elmaleh helped found in 1913, on managing the “threat” posed to Zionism, and Jews in Palestine more generally, by the Palestinian press. Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, 106; Campos, *Ottoman Brothers*, 164. On different aspects of Elmaleh’s political activity during the mandate period, see Jacobson and Naor, *Oriental Neighbors*, 36–38.
 - 46 R.B., “Misaviv la-nekuda,” 28–29. Khalidi is cited in Moshe Madzini, *Eser shanim shel mediniyut eretz-yisraelit* [Ten Years of Eretz-Yisraeli Policy], (Tel Aviv: Haaretz, 1928), 80.
 - 47 Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict: 1929* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2015); Shalom Ratzabi, *Between Judaism and Zionism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925–1933* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), 137–154; Adi Gordon, “En zo ki im ahava nichzevet: prishat Hans Kohn me-hatnu’a hatziyonit” [This is Not But an Unrequited Love: Hans Kohn’s Seclusion from the Zionist Movement] in *Brith-Shalom and Bi-national Zionism: The “Arab Question” as a Jewish Question*, ed. Adi Gordon (Jerusalem: Karmel, 2008), 71–74.
 - 48 Nitzan Lebovic, “Filosofyat hazman shel hugo Bergman: ben geula le-brit shalom” [The Time Philosophy of Hugo Bergman; Between Redemption and Brit Shalom] in *Brith-Shalom and Bi-national Zionism*, ed. Gordon, 149–167.

- 49 Cohen, *Year Zero*; Ratzabi, *Between Judaism and Zionism*, 137–154; Gordon, “En zo ki im ahava nichzevet,” 71–74.
- 50 R.B., “Mi-megilat shigayon (sirtutim be-shuley ha-kovetz)” [From the Whim’s Scroll (Drafts in the Margins of the Collection)], *She’ifotenu*, 1 April 1930, 41–44.
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LETTER FROM JERUSALEM

I Witness Silwan

Who is Watching Whom?

Susan Greene

Abstract

“I Witness Silwan” is an art installation in the Silwan neighborhood of Israeli-occupied East Jerusalem. The installation features large images of eyes—belonging to philosophers, activists, and artists—that dare to look back at the occupying forces and bear witness to the colonial violence that is wielded against the Palestinian people. “I Witness Silwan” looks the ‘colonial gaze’ in the eye, asking: Who has the power to look and why? Whose sight counts? Concurrently the process of creating the imagery involves a looking and witnessing of the colonial occupation in East Jerusalem. The images are created and installed by an international collective of artists and activists working with the local population, and will soon be supplemented with oral histories accessible both on-site and remotely. In this way, “I Witness Silwan” generates a global gaze within the region, making visible what was invisible and enabling and empowering others to bear witness, in solidarity with the Palestinian people, to colonial violence and dispossession. The article describes the art installation and the social, political, and economic context around it as well as its collaborative and creative process. It includes testaments to the social and political impact of the installation written by community leaders and project participants.

Keywords

Silwan; East Jerusalem; colonial gaze; surveillance; occupied Palestine, Israeli settlements; murals; Madaa Creative Center; Art Forces; art activism, international solidarity.

- The staring eyes say to people we see them and they should see us too . . . we want to say that we are here, we love our land and our home.

Jawad Siyam, director of Madaa Creative Center, Silwan

- To exercise sovereignty is to exercise control over mortality and to define life as the deployment and manifestation of power . . . to kill or to allow to live constitutes the limits of sovereignty, its fundamental attributes.

Achille Mbembé¹

“I Witness Silwan – Who Is Watching Whom?” is an act of visual decolonization in the neighborhood of Batan al-Hawa, Silwan, East Jerusalem. Monumental sets of eyes and goldfinches (*tayr hassun*) are being installed in the hillside overlooking Wadi Hilwa (Kidron Valley), facing West Jerusalem and the Old City. The eyes depicted belong to local heroes, international leaders, philosophers, activists, revolutionaries, writers, and artists, and are visible from miles away.



Figure 1. Batan al-Hawa, Silwan, East Jerusalem (2019). Photo by Kobi Wolf.

Israel and its proxy “nonprofits” aim to solidify Jewish Israeli sovereignty in East Jerusalem by dispossessing Palestinians in the Old City basin, which includes the Old City’s Muslim Quarter and surrounding Palestinian neighborhoods such as

Silwan. Within Silwan, in Batan al-Hawa, more than eighty-four Palestinian families (approximately seven hundred people) are fighting eviction orders by the settler organization Ateret Cohanim. To date fourteen families have been forcibly evicted, their confiscated properties turned over to Jewish settlers. Recently, three more families lost their eviction cases and have been ordered to leave Batan al-Hawa by August 2020.

Israeli courts of law, including the Supreme Court, support this organized state violence and dispossession of Palestinians. The courts' decisions hinge on disregard for crucial facts, duplicitous arguments, and flawed reasoning. The fields of archeology and history, the Bible and tourism industry are harnessed to justify and enact these policies.

The increased presence of IDF soldiers, border police, and armed guards in Batan al-Hawa – who always accompany the settlers – has led to higher levels of violence against Palestinians, including young children and elders. As the level of settler presence rises in Batan al-Hawa, the security apparatus increasingly affects Palestinians, even if they are not facing eviction directly. The Israeli state has placed all Palestinians under extensive systems of surveillance, a “colonial gaze” that renders the population hyper-visible as objects but invisible as subjects. Zuhayr Rajabi, a community leader, and director of Madaa Cultural Center in Batan al-Hawa explains:

If you take a look, you can see all of the cameras that are installed [by Israeli state]. These cameras intervene in the privacy of Palestinians here. The cameras are again and again intervening in the privacy and in every single detail of the people's lives here – which leads to further pressure on the people – a pressure that is already immense because of the guards and the settlers.

“I Witness Silwan” looks the “colonial gaze” in the eye, asking: Who has the power to look and why? Whose sight counts?

Zuhayr Rajabi was born and raised in Batan al-Hawa. He began surveilling his neighborhood in 2004 after his brother was shot and injured by Israeli police. His father died shortly thereafter when Israeli military forces fired tear gas into their home. After his father's death, Rajabi attempted to sue the police. The court said he did not have a case as there was no evidence. This is what led Rajabi to install a series of cameras to document assaults by the sovereign state against the Palestinian population in Batan al-Hawa.

Rajabi currently has ten cameras, although in the past he has had up to sixteen. Over time the occupation confiscated or damaged some of Rajabi's equipment, sometimes after complaints from settlers. The documentation of increasing Israeli police, army, and settler brutality has indeed helped to win some measure of justice and has raised awareness globally.

The existence and placement of the “colonial gaze” – surveillance cameras – in Silwan suggests that Israel has documentation of the same incidents of violence that Rajabi's cameras are filming. The two realities – that of the sovereign occupier and that of the occupied – are layered one atop the other in the same location, as settlers and Palestinians live next door to each other, sometimes in the same building. The meaning and value of the images depends on who is doing the looking, on whose

camera is capturing the images. In other words, the occupation cameras are an extension of the sovereign eye, therefore the data collected does not see the occupied. With their cameras, Zuhayr Rajabi and the Palestinians of Silwan counter the claim that what is visible is only the domain of the sovereign state.

When Zuhayr Rajabi installed cameras he claimed a right he does not have in the “state of exception,” that is, Occupied Palestine – he claimed the right to look. Jacques Derrida’s phrase, *droit de regards*, can be translated as meaning either “the right to look” or “the law of the gaze.” How an event unfolds and is seen depends precisely on the politics of visual rights. The “other” is a reflection of “the look” that emerges out of what Derrida calls “the infinite asymmetry of the relation to the other, that is to say, the place for justice.”²

I Witness Silwan, Phase 1

- The idea of de-colonization as an intervention in the field of vision is not only about physical occupation. How do you own something through vision? How do you participate in the landscape through vision?

Eyal Weizman, Decolonizing
Architecture Art Residency, Bayt Sahur

The images in “I Witness Silwan” are either painted directly on the wall or glued in the form of large-scale vinyl stickers printed from digital files of photographs or paintings. To date ten sets of eyes and scores of Palestinian “national birds” ranging up to four meters tall have been installed. Several of the murals are not visible from outside the neighborhood at all. Other murals are visible from both inside and outside the neighborhood and some of the murals are only visible from a vantage point across Wadi Hilwa. “I Witness Silwan” aims in part to bring a global witnessing gaze to Silwan by including artist participation from around the world. (The images below include the names of a number of participating artists and portraits.) A media program is in development for linking oral histories to the images via AR (augmented reality) technologies, accessible on site and remotely.



Figure 2. View of Batan al-Hawa across Wadi Hilwa (Kidron Valley), facing west. Photo by Kobi Wolf.

In the second phase, 1,242 square meters of eyes and finches are planned for across the hillside. Included will be portraits of Edward Said – Palestinian intellectual and critic; Milad Ayyash – a 15-year-old resident of East Jerusalem killed by settler guards; Rene Yañez – Bay Area, California, curator and supporter of Palestinian artists and themes; Razzan al-Najjar – medic murdered in Gaza; Naji al-Ali – beloved Palestinian cartoonist and creator of Handala; Red Fawn – native American incarcerated in the United States, to name a few.

“I Witness Silwan” grows out of a decade-long relationship between the Madaa Creative Center in Silwan and the U.S.-based group, Art Forces. They have been painting community murals together since 2015, although their first joint project occurred in 2011.

The Madaa Creative Center, founded by Jawad Siyam and Silwan residents, has five locations throughout Silwan. The center works to resist dispossession through activities and resources that include dance, music, poetry, hip-hop, libraries, language classes, martial arts, and mural painting (www.madaasilwan.org).

Art Forces, founded in 2001, uses community public art and technology, to inspire critical thinking and action. The projects make visible histories and relationships that have been obliterated and forgotten, making connections to national and global issues of social justice, borders, precarity, migrations, and decolonization (www.artforces.org).

Statements from Project Participants



Figure 3. “Eyes of Nihad Siyam,” Silwan resident, acrylic on concrete. Muralists: Susan Greene and Fred Alvarado. Photo by Kobi Wolf.



Figure 4. (Right) “Eyes of Palestinian community member,” acrylic on concrete. Muralists: Susan Greene, Laura Rosner, and Batan al-Hawan youth. (Left) “Eyes of Bai Bibiyaon Bigkay, Lumad leader, Talaingod Woman Chieftain (Philippines),” an organizer who leads her tribe in defense of ancestral lands, vinyl print image of Bai Bibiyaon by Cece Carpio (Philippines and USA). Photo by Kobi Wolf.

Zuhayr A-Rajabi, community leader and director of Madaa Center in Batan al-Hawa:

“I Witness Silwan” has been going for nearly a year now. First of all, it gave us a lot of energy, and secondly, it gave the neighborhood in Batan al-Hawa in Silwan more beauty. Most importantly, it talks about the people’s suffering in Batan al-Hawa, about the current situation that we are going through, expressed in the form of paintings. The project talks about what the look in our eyes says and what is inside of us. Not only was Silwan impacted by this project, but also all of the visitors who come to Silwan to witness and try to understand the situation here. These paintings leave a big mark on them, a strong vision that will stay in the minds of everyone, old and young, and that is very important for us.

I think this project will make people understand more of what is happening – whether people come to Silwan and see everything up close or see everything from a distance. Hopefully, the project will lead to more people coming to visit and meet the people of Silwan. Before COVID-19 many people were coming to Batan al-Hawa to see the murals and hear about our situation. We want everyone to know that we are people who love life and want to live in peace – we want to live a flourishing life in our homes and neighborhood – and that our only wish is not to be deported from our homes.



Figure 5. “National Bird of Palestine,” designed by Susan Greene, mixed media. Image of sitting finch by Eric Norberg (USA). Photo by Kobi Wolf.

Susan Greene, director, Art Forces:

I have had the honor of working in Silwan, East Jerusalem for the past few years. In the fall of 2019, work began on “I Witness Silwan” in the neighborhood of Batan al-Hawa in Silwan. At the end of October, as I was working two stories above the ground on the finch mural, a tour led by the right-wing settler group, Ateret Cohanim, started gathering below. This settler organization is responsible, with full support of the Israeli government, for dispossessing Palestinians and moving Jewish settlers into the stolen property. I began filming the tour as they milled around the tour guide. Soon some of the participants noticed and began filming me. The tour started and the guide explained that the three-meter (9 foot) high birds that I was painting are “one of the symbols of Palestinian liberation, of freedom.” He says the birds are very beautiful and adds: “I’d say it’s beautiful in the way that Hitler’s paintings are beautiful. The painting is very aesthetic but we know what it really means.” The sixty tourists nodded solemnly and continued on down the street to have tea in a building that was confiscated from a Palestinian family and turned into a synagogue. In their wake, eight heavily armed Israeli border patrol took their places facing Palestinians who were socializing outside their homes, and waited to accompany the tour out of Batan al-Hawa.



Figure 6. “Eyes of Alex Nieto,” a Salvadoran-born American citizen killed in San Francisco, California, 2014,” vinyl print. Image by Josue Rojas (USA). Photo by Kobi Wolf. “Nieto died because a series of white men saw him as a menacing intruder in the place he had spent his whole life,” Rebecca Solnit, “Death by Gentrification: The Killing that Shamed San Francisco,” 21 March 2016, online at (theguardian.com) bit.ly/30PDLUv (accessed 8 June 2020).

Mohammad Salaymeh, project translator:

Living in Jerusalem as a Palestinian has always had its fair amount of frustration, confusion and feelings of alienation. I always have the feeling of things being built and made while people like me are excluded. Living in a well-to-do family, the few privileges that I had protected me from some forms of the occupation but not all of it.

Occupation and settlements never made sense, there is no logic behind them, no clear reason, nothing more than greed for land, mixed with racism and disregard for Palestinians. And confronting these things was always hard and more than a bit dangerous.

What is happening in Silwan is another example of the tragic fate of the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem, erased, demonized and considered the lesser identity of Jerusalem’s many identities. As a young man trying to decide what will he do with his life, taking part in something that stands up to these forces of injustice in a creative and beautiful, meaningful way has given me an opportunity to see my existence in this city flourish.



Figure 7. “Eyes of Hamad Moussa,” farmer from West Bank, Palestine. Image by Palestinian American artist John Halaka from series “Faces from Erased Places,” vinyl print. Photo by Kobi Wolf.

Silwan community member:

I would like to talk about the paintings that are being painted in Silwan. I think they talk and express something that is inside of us. The painting is about our suffering and adds to the beauty of Silwan.

Jadala Rajabi, Community Organizer, co-director of Madaa Center, Batan al-Hawa:

As for the murals project ... I think it has added a lot to Silwan, and also added a lot to the children – they are living through all of this frustration and suffering because of the settlers presence. The project has changed their lives and changed their way of thinking in this neighborhood. It has given them a new level of awareness. It has changed many things – the murals catch the eye of any visitor that comes or passes by. Susan and her helper have done a lot to this neighborhood and everyone is thankful to her – she also has given the hardships that the Palestinians of Silwan experience a new form of expression. It was a transformation in the neighborhood, and I hope we will continue this work and change the neighborhood even more for the better in the future.



Figure 8. “Eyes of John Berger,” art critic, painter and writer,” vinyl print. Photo by Kobi Wolf. Berger’s writing has shaped how many individuals see, analyze, and try to remake their world. Berger wrote frequently about Palestine in his late work.



Figure 9. “Eyes of Che,” Ernesto Guevara de la Serna, who played a major role in 1959 Cuban revolution, land reform and literacy, vinyl print. Photo by Kobi Wolf.



Figure 10. “Eyes of Rachel Corrie,” a student from Olympia, Washington, killed in 2003 by Israeli forces in Gaza as she peacefully protested the demolition of Palestinian homes, vinyl print by Denny Sternstein. Photo by Kobi Wolf.



Figure 12. “Dove and Olive Tree,” acrylic on concrete. Muralists: Laura Rosner, Jadala Rajabi, and Batan al-Hawa youth. Photo by Laura Rosner.

Laura Rosner (U.S.), Art Forces Team:

Working in Silwan for over half a year at this point, I've been filled with renewed hope that art has the capacity to facilitate change on a grassroots level.

I remember when I was asked to begin a mural across the street from the Batan al-Hawa mosque – a place where people come to gather throughout the day, to sit in prayer, to sit with God – seeing faith central to the life of the neighborhood. Collaborating, as for all of the paintings we create in Silwan, Jadallah and I manifested the idea of an olive tree with arms extended in prayer on either side of the wise, gnarled tree – a symbol of this land. Flying above the tree are doves – beautiful winged creatures flying for freedom, for peace. Together we painted this scene, later with the help of the older neighborhood girls, who grinned at the opportunity to contribute to the transformation of the streets of Silwan.

A few weeks later, after the mural across from the mosque was completed, I understood its importance on a deeper level. One morning after arriving in Batan al-Hawa, Jadallah and Zuhayr called me to their rooftop. They greeted me with the hospitality I'm consistently humbled by and motioned to the bird coops, where beautiful "hamam" of all colors emerged from the shadows. Jadallah had raised all of them, taking great care to ensure they would be healthy and sustained. The sun shined brightly above us and Zuhayr slowly placed a white dove into the hands of little Jude, his son. I was immediately overcome with gratitude to share this moment with the Rajabi family. That so much "*amal*" – hope – is nurtured on that rooftop felt emblematic for how much our world needs it, especially somewhere as politically charged as Jerusalem – a complicated but beautiful city.

Statements from children of Batan al-Hawa:

- Peace be upon you. We think that the murals made Silwan really, really beautiful.
- The murals are beautiful and we love them.
- They gave us a lot more space to have fun. Silwan is a beautiful place and is more beautiful with the drawings – Silwan is beautiful and will not be shaken by anything!
- The murals show that Silwan is a beautiful place full of creativity.
- Silwan has been creative and made itself more beautiful.



Figure 13. Youth painting stairwell leading to Madaa Creative Center.



Figure 14. “Eyes of Sigmund Freud,” Austrian Jewish founder of psychoanalysis, vinyl print. Photo by Kobi Wolf. Freud’s last work *Moses and Monotheism* (1939) grapples with origins of Jewish identity in part by claiming Moses was Egyptian. Edward Said, in his last work *Freud and the Non-European* (London: Verso, 2003), elaborates a vision of identity that is never whole or fixed but necessarily contains foreign elements at its core. Said finds that, “The complex layers of the past...have been eliminated by Israel.”

Zuhayr Rajabi:

When I take a look at the internationals who come here and paint paintings like these – like the birds for our children – I tell myself these are people who understand and feel our suffering and sympathize with our situation. And because of that I wish that this project will keep happening – because it makes this place more bearable and helps life to keep going and be full of happiness for our children.



Susan Greene is an artist, clinical psychologist, and founding director of Art Forces, based in California, U.S. The “I Witness Silwan” project is partially funded by generous contributions from the Sam Mazza Foundation, Left Tilt Foundation, the Middle East Children’s Alliance, and A. Greenberg Foundation.

Endnotes

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BOOK REVIEW

Are You Coming with a Bulldozer to Silwan?

Palestinian Guides to Jerusalem and Its Environs

Review by Penny Johnson

Wujood: The Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem. 433 pp. Grassroots Al-Quds, 2019. \$40.00 paper. Digital version available, see online <http://www.grassrootsalquds.net/campaigns-projects/wujood-grassroots-guide-jerusalem-0>

Pilgrimage, Sciences and Sufism: Islamic Art in the West Bank and Gaza. 253 pp. Museum with No Frontiers and the Palestinian Authority, 2004. \$24.90 paper; \$8.72 Kindle.

Abstract

A review of two Palestinian guides to Jerusalem and its environs, as well as sites in the West Bank, Gaza and historic Palestine: *Wujood: The Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem* (2019) and *Pilgrimage, Sciences and Sufism: Islamic Art in the West Bank and Gaza* (2004). The review explores the fate of Palestinian guides to Jerusalem amid the well-financed marketing campaigns of both the Israeli government and right-wing settler organizations like the Ir David Foundation.

Keywords

Jerusalem; tourism; travel guides; Silwan; Ir David Foundation; Mount of Olives; Islamic art; pilgrimage.

“What should we see?” a diminutive American woman with a very pregnant daughter asked me as I waited at the Amsterdam airport for an Easy Jet flight to Tel Aviv.

“Are you on a pilgrimage?” I asked, catching her Texas drawl and equating, perhaps stereotypically, that distinctive accent with Southern Baptist piety.

“Oh, yes,” she replied happily, as other members of her family group trailed into the boarding area and her husband began handing out sandwiches from the airport’s McDonald’s.

“Oh, I love bacon,” the mother exclaimed, looking at me. I appreciated her capacity to find happiness even in the crowded boarding area but refrained from mentioning the difficulties of bacon location in the Holy Land. Instead I enquired: “Do you already have a program

in Jerusalem?” I was fairly certain that I was not the right person to provide an itinerary to this particular ensemble.

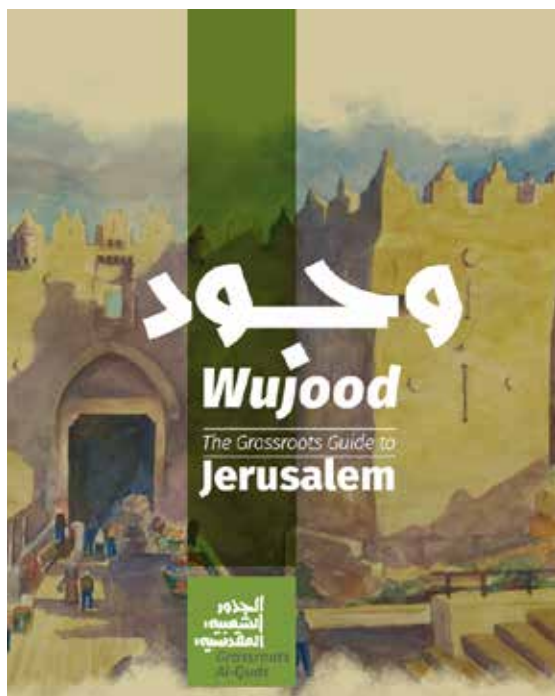
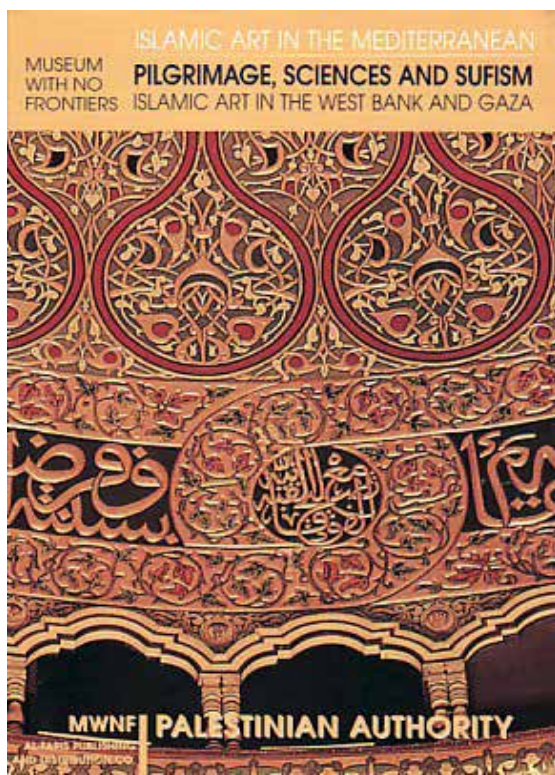
“Oh yes, we are going to the City of David. And then....” She hesitated groping for a name.

“The Holy Sepulcher,” I suggested.

“Ah, perhaps yes, that church.” The daughter began to ask me what she could bring back for her husband and the mother wanted additional shopping tips. I feebly noted that they will find many shops in the Old City with interesting gifts. Both gave me a kindly look but then turned away from the world’s most boring trip advisor.

Afterwards, I was puzzled. It seemed strange that the first stop of a devoted Christian group was the City of David, a massive project by the Ir David Foundation, known as Elad (acronym for El Ir David, “to the City of David”) the zealot settler organization that has taken over Palestinian property in several areas of Jerusalem, including in the village of Silwan, the location of the ever-growing City of David national park.

Recently a friend in Delhi had asked me to advise a colleague during her first trip to Jerusalem. But she also already had a program – and her first stop was also a tour of the City of David and the tunnels, a tour that lasted so long that she had to text me that we could no longer get together. Why, I wondered, was the City of David such a magnet?



I turned to Tripadvisor and asked for top sites in Jerusalem. The City of David and the Tunnel tours both were rewarded with certificates of excellence and a panoply of tours with Israeli guides was advertised. They were not the only choices, of course, and Tripadvisor recommendations shift with the clicks, but nonetheless it was telling. (And indeed since I clicked on the City of David tours, I cannot get rid of annoying advertisements popping up whenever I open any internet site).

Not as telling, however, as the self-advertisements of the Ir David Foundation for its eponymous City of David tours. Significantly, for my bewildered group of American pilgrims, Ir David embarked at least a decade ago on a massive marketing campaign that saw visitors to its site rising from 25,000 in 2001 to almost half a million (450,000) in 2011. And more recently, in February of 2019, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations Danny Danon managed to cajole forty of his United Nations colleagues to the site "in defiance of UNESCO," as Ir David crowed on its website.

Thus, when I picked up *Wujood: A Grassroots Guide to Jerusalem*, I breathed a sigh of relief. I turned immediately to its section on Silwan where the authors address the City of David and cogently explain:

In addition to seizing Palestinian property, the Elad foundation administers the "national park" known as the "City of David." This is the name the occupation has bestowed upon a natural and archaeological area in Silwan covering 24 dunums and extending from Al Dhuhur (Ophel) ridge south of the Old City's walls to the Silwan Spring and its Red Pool. This area contains a plethora of archaeological and historical finds discovered thanks to the excavations that have been taking place in Silwan since the mid-19th century. The "national park" is officially registered under the administration of the Israel Nature and Parks Authority and the Jerusalem occupation municipality. Elad, however has been granted an exclusive permit to manage and control it since 1997. This de facto administration of the park by Elad has made the distinction between the settler group and the "City of David" virtually impossible.

While Elad's activities are mainly in the Wadi Hilwa in north Silwan, a companion extremist settler group, Ateret Cohanim, is deeply involved in the takeover of Palestinian property in the Batan al-Hawa neighborhood, and *Wujood* (existence, in Arabic) provides a detailed and illuminating example. The authors also add that Silwan's main spring, once the source of Jerusalem's fresh water, is now dry, as is the 'Ayn al-Lawza spring. The gardens of Silwan, irrigated by these springs in the past, were so famous for abundant crops of parsley, mint, and, especially, chard that a mocking popular proverb in Jerusalem was, "Are you coming to sell chard in Silwan?" I wondered what the proverb of today might be. Given the demolition of Palestinian houses and property in that beleaguered community, one might propose: "Are you coming with a bulldozer to Silwan?"

Wujood's analysis of Silwan is obviously to the point. While *Wujood* addresses the Old City in some detail, it is the extensive sections on forty Palestinian neighborhoods, towns, and villages near Jerusalem – from Kufr 'Aqab and Jaba' in the north, to

Sur Bahir and al-Walaja in the south, that are the strongest part of the book for this reader. However, I doubted my American pilgrims – or indeed the better-informed visitor from Delhi – would be clutching a copy of *Wujood*. Described as a “political guidebook,” at 433 pages it is anything but a handy pocket guide. Indeed, the first 140 pages, in addition to helpful information on getting around the country (including a list of all Palestinian bus routes) and traversing the Israeli airport, contain a series of impressive briefings on key political issues in Jerusalem: planning, legal issues, education, Jerusalem after the wall, and more. This is a hefty dose of political analysis before an interested visitor finally is guided to the sites of the city. It is thus helpful that the guide is available in clickable sections (plus interactive maps) on Grassroots Jerusalem’s website (online at www.grassrootsalquds.net/).

As I read on, I began to ponder the fate of Palestinian guides to Jerusalem and the challenges of well-financed Israeli (and indeed settler) campaigns to capture the tourist market and dominate the story (or stories) of Jerusalem. I remembered another Palestinian guide to Jerusalem and other sites in Palestine, the 2004 publication *Pilgrimage, Sciences and Sufism: Islamic Art in the West Bank and Gaza* (henceforth *Pilgrimage*). This attractive volume brought together an impressive group of Palestinian scholars – Yusuf Natsheh, Nazmi Jubeh, Mahmoud Hawari, Marwan Abu Khalaf, Naseer Arafat, and Mu‘en Sadeq – offering itineraries to the Haram al-Sharif, Sufi institutions in Jerusalem, and the pilgrimage road between Jerusalem and Hebron, among others. Natsheh, for example, takes us on a tour of the Old City’s madrassas (beautifully photographed by Issa Freij), and also offers a description of the waqf system and the daily life of a student at a madrasa. And notably, Sadeq provided an itinerary of “Gaza, the Gate to Africa,” a stark reminder that this guide was written when Gaza was not in perpetual lockdown.

Pilgrimage was a project of the Museum with No Frontiers and the Palestinian Authority and carries the stamp of a number of post-Oslo projects that featured both international cooperation (and funding) and a hopeful outlook on a future Palestine. Perhaps some of the differences in the two guides were not only those of the more scholarly framework of *Pilgrimage* versus the more activist framework of *Wujood*, but also reflected the times in which they were written. Writing an honest tourist guide to today’s Jerusalem is indeed complicated and *Wujood* has high marks for honesty. The dilemma, of course, is how to engage visitors. On the website, *Wujood* opens with a cheerful, American-accented voice who enquires “Visiting Jerusalem?” “Looking for a Palestinian experience?” and goes on to promise the “most inspiring journey of your life,” as well as specific promises of delicious food and good and generous people. There is also the attractive claim that, “The fragmented nature of the city today is reunited in this book.” *Wujood* does try to project a multidimensional vision of the city but this vision is largely located in the past. Thus, the authors write: “The various places of worship that bespeckle the Old City are evidence of the fluidity and diversity that once characterized it. The proof? In the ‘Muslim Quarter’ there are 11 churches, and in the ‘Christian Quarter’ there are six mosques.”

The dilemma of honesty versus attraction is present in the descriptions of Palestinian neighborhoods and villages. Take, for example, the section on al-‘Ayzariya (Bethany), one of Jerusalem’s larger towns and a site that is, as *Wujood* notes, “the fourth most sacred site for Christians, following Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Nazareth.” (In the

biblical account, Bethany is where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead). *Wujood* describes the Tomb of Lazarus – even offering a warning about its slippery steps – as well as the Eastern Orthodox celebration of Lazarus Saturday, the day before Palm Sunday. Intertwined with this information are the many problems facing the town, part of which is classified Area B and part Area C (where Israel has complete control). Then there are the checkpoints and the Wall. It is a window into Palestine today, but the question of course is who will look and who will be engaged enough to visit the town.

The itineraries in *Pilgrimage* are perhaps more tempting for some visitors. Describing the ancient pilgrimage road between Jerusalem and Hebron, for example, al-Jubeh invites the visitor: “On our way from Jerusalem to Hebron we will visit some of the sites that played a vital role in shaping the Islamic history of Palestine. The visitor will also enjoy the natural and magnificent landscape, including the terraces that protected the soil from erosion and the watchtowers scattered along the road.”

Pilgrimage and *Wujood* can complement each other. For example, both volumes offer the reader advice on visiting the Mount of Olives. *Wujood* simply describes the Chapel of the Ascension (where Jesus was said to rise to heaven), while *Pilgrimage* adds the history of this site as a church in the Byzantine period, restored by the Crusaders, and then converted into the mosque that bears the name Mosque of Qubbat al-Su‘ud, and indeed is still an Islamic waqf. *Wujood* in turn widens our understanding by describing the village of al-Tur and its problems, including the two settler outposts on the Mount of Olives. (And both volumes prompted me to visit the site!)

Wujood, like any guide, has its weaknesses. In the “Around Palestine” section, the authors offer brief descriptions of cities – from Acre and Haifa to Jericho – that sometimes seem hastily assembled. While the guide to the Old City of Jerusalem is attentive to religious sites, it is disconcerting for a guide to Bethlehem not to mention the Church of the Nativity. This being said, I appreciated the information on Dahaysha and ‘Ayda refugee camps and their community institutions. The erratic use of quotation marks around Israel or Israeli might also deter some readers. And this reader would appreciate an acknowledgement of all of the writers and contributors to this quite unique initiative.

As far as I can ascertain, *Pilgrimage* is out of print, although a Kindle edition is advertised on Amazon. Even Jerusalem’s most active Palestinian bookseller – Mahmoud Muna – has only a vague memory of it, telling me, “Perhaps I have a copy of it around somewhere.” (We also recalled another good guide that is not available in Jerusalem and should be, George Azar and Mariam Shaheen’s *Palestine: A Guide*, published by Interlink in 2007 and still available from Interlink’s website). I would very much recommend a reprint of *Pilgrimage*, with or without an update – we need more Palestinian guides to Jerusalem and our other habitats, not less.

And here is another service of both *Wujood* and *Pilgrimage*, not only for the novice tourist or even for the immense challenge of countering the Israeli narrative on Jerusalem, but for us, the inhabitants of fragmented Palestine. We are also deterred by checkpoint fatigue from taking a stroll down the Mount of Olives to the Old City or checking out a half-remembered site. Our political losses become personal losses as we inhabit a shrinking Palestine and consider a visit to a Jerusalem neighborhood or

even a walk in the Old City as just too much trouble – or indeed impossible without a permit. Looking at the carefully compiled lists of community organizations for each locale in *Wujood*, I also confronted my own ignorance.

Grassroots Jerusalem then also addresses us, not only in *Wujood* but also in its many projects in the city. Partnering with Youth for Jerusalem and ArtlabGrassroots, the Old City Tales project trained nineteen young girls in story-telling (and improving their English language skills) and photography to explore their city (and offers to take tourists on the route of the tales). One girl's narrative, "Still Living," might speak to all of us:

Though I've always considered myself part of Jerusalem, I knew almost nothing about my city. My journey began by asking myself what's the real story of Jerusalem. I became a tourist in my own home. I began exploring and asking people about their stories, the stories they heard when they were young, and the stories they want to pass on to the next generation. It was hard to get people to tell their real stories. Perhaps they were afraid or they'd gone through such hard experiences that they didn't want others to see their wounds. To get the stories I wanted I had to visit different people from different communities and ethnicities, and most of all I had to dig deep. The journey was difficult but I enjoyed every bit of it because I found things that I never imagined were there. I heard stories that left me breathless. Stories of sorrow and despair. Stories I'd otherwise have to hear from the news or read about in books. I had never realized the source was next to me.

Penny Johnson is a member of the Editorial Committee of the Jerusalem Quarterly. Her most recent book is Companions in Conflict: Animals in Occupied Palestine (Melville House Books, New York, 2019).

OBITUARY

In Memory of Albert Aghazarian

The Alleys of Jerusalem Will Miss You

Nazmi Jubeh

Translated from Arabic by
Samira Jabaly

Abstract

On 30 January 2020, Jerusalem lost one of its beloved sons. Albert Aghazarian was a historian, a public relations expert, and a man among the people. He played a major role in representing Birzeit University – in Palestine and abroad – for over four decades, and was also a much respected source of information on Palestine and Jerusalem. Jerusalem, its history, diversity, and people, was his obsession. I was privileged to be one of his many friends who shared some of his life experience.

Keywords

Albert Aghazarian; Jerusalem; the Old City; Jerusalem; Armenian; Birzeit University; public relations.

I was a third-year student when Albert Aghazarian arrived at Birzeit University in the late 1970s, a tall, solid young man, with a trimmed beard and a pipe jutting from his mouth, beaming with life and energy. Although I was not required to take any of his classes in the Middle Eastern Studies department, I attended several that he taught on the History of Modern and Contemporary Arab Thought to learn the ideas of this new lecturer. I found him to have a brilliant mind and a passion for the seventies revolutionary spirit, challenging dominant and traditional concepts. Most interesting for me was his eloquent Arabic. Being from the Old City of Jerusalem, I was accustomed to hearing Armenians speak a version of Arabic that was not governed by the rules of



Albert Aghazarian and Nazmi Jubeh, Salzburg – Austria. Photo by Salim Tamari.

standard Arabic or dialects. Surprisingly, I found this Armenian Jerusalemite was speaking fluent intellectual Arabic.

Little by little, as our relationship grew, we soon discovered that we had much in common. At that time I was a student and political activist, while he had recently been appointed Director of Public Relations at Birzeit University. I began to spend considerable time in his office on the university campus, and learned a great deal from Albert. Albert was tailor-made for public relations; he did not just fit right into it, but he expanded it beyond its limitations. His mastery of several Eastern and Western languages at a native speaker's level, coupled with his bold and charismatic personality, turned him gradually into not just a PR person, but an indispensable source for international journalists seeking to understand the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian position. In fact, his relationships frequently grew into intimate and personal friendships, for Albert did not separate between his public and private life. After an interview with one journalist or another, he would frequently invite them to his home in the southern part of the Christian Quarter, and later in the Armenian Quarter, where Madeleine (Umm Arsine) would have prepared lunch or dinner, a task she did not cease to do until Albert's final days. Albert believed that for his PR job there was no separation between Birzeit, the Palestinian cause, Jerusalem, and his private life; he was convinced that he should utilize whatever means he possessed

to nurture influential relationships with the outside world, an effort that had been overlooked by many national institutions. Albert's name appeared as a source of information on the Middle East in general, and especially on Jerusalem, in hundreds of books and articles in various languages. In many cases the author would include their personal impressions and description of Albert, his wide knowledge, and his vibrant personality.

Albert found in Birzeit University the ideal representation of the Palestinian cause. At the time when the PLO was in exile, Albert believed that the university played a central role, side by side with other national institutions, in expressing the suffering of the Palestinian people and their aspirations. He saw in the university a leader of the struggle and an educated image of the Palestinian people. Albert, along with the university's administration, lecturers, and student movement, undoubtedly contributed to reinforcing the university's status and international presence, but he was notably effective for bringing together all of these different components for the common cause. The most admirable trait about Albert was not just his liberal vision, but his reverence for the idea of diversity. I do not recall that he excluded anybody in the university based on their position or background; to the contrary he was unusually and remarkably tolerant. He had excellent social relationships, even with the most religiously or socially conservative persons in the university. His office soon turned into a PR training workshop, and he managed to recruit many students to work with him; many went on to become prominent journalists, authors, and writers, especially during the First Intifada. Albert was determined to train even more students in the PR field, along with teaching dozens of specialized courses all over the country.

A recurring image from the seventies and eighties was his fearlessness when confronting the occupation's soldiers, who often attempted to barge into the old campus. Albert would go out threatening: "If you do not back off now, I will not be able to control the students, and you know Birzeit students." I heard him speak often, in the same tone, to the military governor by phone, as if he had an invincible army behind him. He never crossed a military checkpoint without protesting and speaking out. He often followed this by writing a press release and circulating it to the international and Arab press, and the various solidarity committees around the world.

At that time, the Israeli occupation had isolated the occupied territories from the outside world, and communication means were limited to phone calls, post, and later fax – all less than adequate and under the control of the occupation. Albert overcame this obstacle by skillfully supporting the establishment of committees for friendship and solidarity with Birzeit University. I cannot recall the names of all the committees he cofounded and worked with, but I witnessed first-hand how he interacted with them in Switzerland, France, Belgium, and the UK. I accompanied him on a visit to Switzerland and another to the UK, where he gave lectures and seminars on the Palestinian cause and Birzeit University. These committees organized press conferences and lobbied with their governments to pressure the Israeli occupation to re-open Birzeit University after each closure. They also collected books and raised funds to aid the university. I accompanied Albert on one of his trips with Sanabel

(the University's performing arts group), on a trip to the UK in 1982, where we toured England, Scotland, and Ireland and visited seventeen British universities. We gave lectures on Palestine and Birzeit, while Sanabel made several performances. During this trip I saw first-hand the extensive network of relationships that Albert weaved. I relived the experience again in Switzerland and France. I also had the honor of accompanying Albert on some of his tours to Sweden, Austria, Denmark, and the Netherlands, where he informed his audiences exactly what was happening in Palestine. This is what I personally witnessed, but it was only a part of his extensive work and relationships in Europe and the United States.

As for Albert and Jerusalem's Old City, it is such a multifaceted love story that if I were to tell all of its details I would never finish. Nothing preoccupied him as much as Jerusalem. Just as I search in its stones for its history and archaeology, Albert was in love with its people and its social history of the nineteenth and twentieth century. He was fascinated – almost to the point of obsession – with the city's ability to embrace contradictions, and to sit singularly on the “throne” of social and religious diversity. He considered Jerusalem to be a unique place, since no other city in the world included such a multitude of religious communities that managed, in one way or another, to coexist. I think he saw in old Jerusalem, prior to the Israeli occupation, a kind of utopia, and that is how he portrayed it. He genuinely believed in it; it was not simply good public relations. He used the principle of diversity to counter Israelization attempts over the city, to expand the circle of solidarity with Jerusalem.

Albert liked to relate the story of nineteenth century Jerusalem in various flavors, each time in a different tone. Sometimes it would be the history through the consulates, or through the patriarchs of the different churches, or through the Hebronites, or the city's prominent figures and their mistresses, its cafes and bars, or through the missionaries – and sometimes through the Armenians. It was always the same city but cloaked in different Albertian robes. Every time he told the Jerusalem's story, he would relate it as passionately as he did the first time, never tiring or becoming bored with the repetition. If he chanced upon new information, often generously provided by his lifelong friend, George (Gevork) Hintelian, a local historian, it would quickly become incorporated into his story.

Old Jerusalem was not only the physical place where Albert was born, grew up, and was buried. Jerusalem for Albert was the community, and not the city's intellectuals and scholars, but the people of the city: the shopkeepers, peddlers, and street vendors from all sects and colors. I had always marveled while walking with him in the streets of the Old City that he knew all of these people; he would drink coffee with one merchant, plays chess or checkers with another, plays cards in the evenings with his friends at his favorite coffee shop in Jaffa Gate, and later smoke narghile in one of the alleys of the Aftimos market. He would inquire about a merchant's son studying in France, or a daughter who recently married. In fact, he did not know the people as much as he knew their stories and concerns. He walked in the city's markets as if searching out their stories, and they enjoyed sharing their stories with him. They called him “Ustaz (Professor) Albert,” not because he was a teacher, but because for them

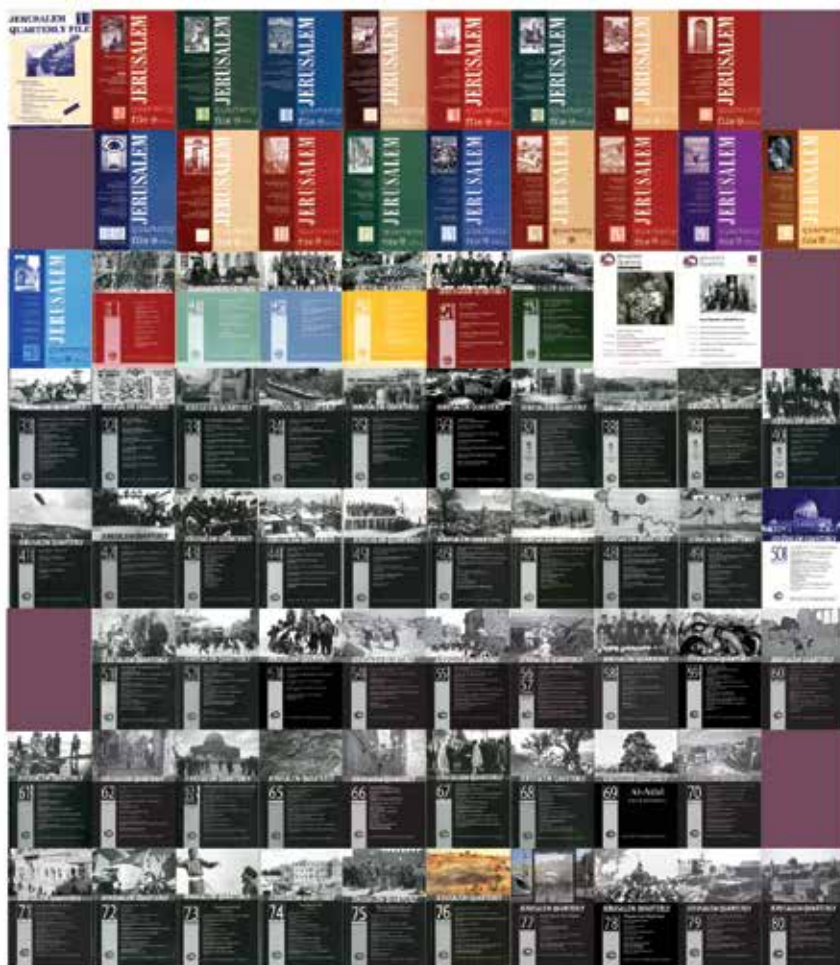
he was respected as more than a scholar – he was a homeboy, a local of the Christian Quarter who had happened to obtain a higher education and become a lecturer, but he was still one of them. He never left, and gave them all he could. Albert liked to take visiting “prominent figures” such as ministers, foreign secretaries, parliamentarians, and international journalists to these old markets to hear the stories of the common people. It was as if he wanted to impress on them that Jerusalem is not only a holy city, or sacred places, or an international address, but it is home to its people, who protect its uniqueness and safeguard the walls that were meant to safeguard them.

It is impossible to write about Albert without acknowledging his heroic wife, Umm Arsine. The truth is that Albert’s ability to give his time to public work in its various forms would not have been possible without his wife’s great support. For although Albert knew all the shopkeepers in the Old City, and despite their friendship – which I, the son of one of those shopkeepers, very much envied – he never shopped there. I don’t think he even knew how to shop. For a long time, even after he married, his mother, the famous seamstress at the eastern end of al-Zahra street, made his clothes, while Umm Arsine dependably bought and managed the house supplies. Moreover, she never complained about the numerous visitors he brought home with him, always assuming that she would have made more than enough food to share with unexpected visitors. And since Albert was always travelling, sometimes for long periods, Umm Arsine also took on the role of both mother and father to their three children.

I will never forget a sentence Albert often repeated: “A boat where God does not reside will sink, and the best thing about God is forgiveness.” I will miss Albert, I will miss seeing Jerusalem through his eyes, as will his family and his colleagues and his many friends, some whom I know and many whom I don’t, as well as a long line of students who owe him much.

Nazmi Jubeh is an associate professor of history at Birzeit University, specialized in Jerusalem history, archaeology, and architecture.

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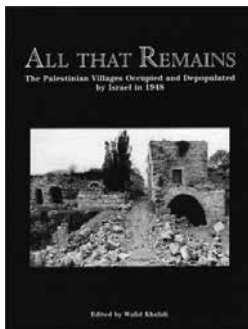
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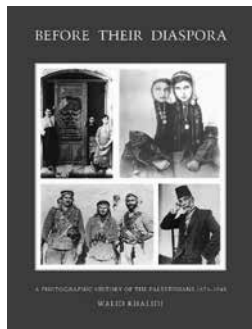
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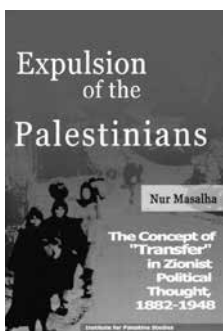
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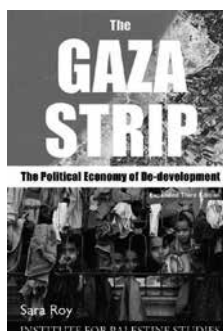
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Palestine Airways Baggage Tag, c. 1937, designed By Oskar Lachs Aviation

Palestine Airways was a private airline company launched in 1934 from Haifa, with financial and technical assistance from the British Imperial Airways. In 1937 it was taken over by the British Government and operated direct flights from Lydda Airport to Beirut three times a week. In 1940 the airline was taken over by the Royal Air Force and became part of the British war effort in the Middle East.

Cover photo: "Looking down from the Mount of Olives, cameraman Frank Hurley and writer Maslyn Williams gaze out across the Valley of Jehoshaphat onto Jerusalem," 1940. Hurley collection of family, industrial, pastoral and scenic images, 1910–50, National Library of Australia.

Back cover: "A Holy City" [Madina Maqddasa], Amjad Ghannam, mixed media on canvas, 110 X 110 cm, 2018.

