



# Jerusalem Quarterly

**Summer 2021 — Issue 86**

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## Editorial

# Ramadan Wars: Jerusalem and Gaza

Jerusalem was at the heart of the Palestinian uprising in April/May and Israel's subsequent war on Gaza. At the start of those events was the resistance against two evictions: the first, of Palestinian youth from public space at Damascus Gate and the second, of Palestinian families from their homes in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Shaykh Jarrah. Together they represent only the latest in the long Palestinian struggle against Israeli efforts by the state and settlers to remove them from the city, and are of profound significance for the future of Jerusalem.

The events may have progressed unexpectedly rapidly, but they were not unpredictable. It began in the first nights of Ramadan in mid-April, when Israeli police suddenly blocked the entrances to the tiered steps leading down to Damascus Gate. The amphitheater-like area is the one public plaza in the Old City where youth can congregate, especially during festive evenings in Ramadan. This year it became the focus of Ramadan nightly clashes between Palestinian youth and Israeli police. The clashes reached their peak on 21 April when the Lehava ("flame") Jewish supremacist group marched into the Old City, with police permits, and later into Shaykh Jarrah chanting "Restore Jewish dignity" and "Death to the Arabs." At Zion Square in West Jerusalem, right-wing activists assaulted left-wing Jewish activists who were protesting against Lehava's racist messaging. The daily press reported hundreds of Jewish activists congregated around the Knesset calling for vengeance on the "Philistines."

[They] defiantly sang “Zakhreini Na,” which is associated with revenge and ends with the words of Samson in the Book of Judges: “O Lord God, remember me, I pray Thee, and strengthen me, I pray Thee, only this once, O God, that I may be this once avenged of the Philistines for my two eyes” – but they sang the lyrics substituting Palestinians for the Philistines.<sup>1</sup>

Simultaneously, provocations by Haredi and nationalist Jewish youth inside al-Haram al-Sharif compound were taking place. And in Shaykh Jarrah, the Palestinian neighborhood on Nablus Road, demonstrations every evening protesting new eviction orders against Palestinian families and settler take-overs of their homes, were met with extreme police violence injuring scores of protestors. It was then that Hamas began launching homemade rockets across the Gaza border in response to the aggressive actions in Jerusalem, and Israel unleashed its shock and awe barrage against Gaza, killing and injuring hundreds of civilian victims, until the Egyptian-brokered cease-fire stilled the bombing.

The uprising was a battle against ongoing Israeli processes of exclusion and discrimination against Palestinians in Jerusalem. But it also brought to the fore Palestinian claims for sovereignty over Arab Jerusalem, claims enlivened with force by the protestors – perhaps in opposition to the more tepid response of the official Palestinian leadership after President Abbas announced the postponement of Palestinian elections – scheduled for 22 May – because Israel had not acknowledged the rights of Jerusalem residents to vote. The slogan was “no elections without Jerusalem” but many observers saw the postponement as reflecting the ruling party’s fear of losing control over the Palestinian Authority, which had no response to proposals for logistical solutions for voting in areas of greater Jerusalem that are under the control of the PA, such as al-‘Ayzariya, and Kufr Aqab.

When the war on Gaza was raging the elections seemed to have been forgotten, or at least sidelined, but Jerusalem and Palestinian rights are once more at center stage. The war itself ended with an indeterminate truce and a massive destruction of Gaza infrastructure, as well as hundreds of civilian casualties. But it also generated enormous mobilization and global solidarity, triggered by the wide bombing of Gaza’s heavy residential areas. Youth rebellions (what else can we call them?) in Jaffa, Tiberius, Lydda, and ‘Akka and other urban “mixed cities” within Israel formed unparalleled scenes of solidarity with Gaza and Shaykh Jarrah. Those were followed by massive demonstrations throughout the West Bank and in the Arab world – in Yemen, Iraq, Jordan, Tunis, and Lebanon – and simultaneously in London, Rome, Paris, Madrid, Stockholm, and dozens of North American cities, of people galvanized in support of Palestinians. The unity produced by these street demonstrations recalled events during the First Intifada.

As we ponder our present, can we bring new critical eyes to the past? The focus of this issue of *JQ* is “Time Travelers in Palestine” based on a collection of stereoscopic images taken around the year 1900 that were curated in March 2017 by Issam Nassar and Ariella Azoulay at Brown University.



Invitation to the exhibition *Time Machine: Stereoscopic Views of Palestine, 1900*, Pembroke Hall, Brown University, March – May 2017 (design Erin Wells).

The images by various photographers take viewers on a journey through Palestine beginning with Jaffa, the traditional point of arrival in the country, followed by images of biblical sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Hebron, Nablus, the Jordan River, and other places including in modern day Lebanon and Syria. The original collection that was at the time available to pilgrims and collectors was technically of Palestine and its people, but much of it invoked biblical narratives of the country as it appeared at the time. Palestine and its people appear in the three-dimensional space of the stereoscopes only as re-enactors of the biblical story. The gap between the viewer – in the privacy of her living room in turn-of-the-twentieth-century United States or Europe – and the local population, as guardians of a cherished past, is further widened by captions such as: “The native mode of grinding coffee,” or “This market, with its throng of robed and turbaned business men (Arabs, Jews, and Turks), its meek donkeys and dignified camels, is just as Jeremiah and Isaiah and Amos used to know.” The images in the collection cannot be viewed today without feeling the imprint of the destructive colonial impulse that rendered nonexistent much of what we see in them, and erected on its modern ruins, the state of Israel.

In the 2017 exhibit at Brown, the curators invited spectators to become “time travelers”: to enter into a time machine of sorts for a journey into the beloved country of Palestine, the country of the many who lived there, of those who dreamt of going there, and of the pilgrims, immigrants, colonialists, missionaries, and tourists who did. The collection on display in the Brown exhibit raised a set of fascinating questions about photography – distance and proximity, public and private viewing, reproducibility, and the photographer/the photographed – as well as political questions about colonialism, conquest, migration, rule, ownership, memory, legacy, patrimony, and preservation. The curators, in collaboration with other contributors, addressed some of these questions in a second layer of texts added to the images on display. Through the juxtaposition of original and revised captions, spectators are invited to look at these images from a dual perspective: on the one hand, from the perspective of

what could be seen in them at a time when the destruction of Palestine was unthinkable and, on the other hand, from the perspective of what can be seen in them today, several decades after the catastrophe that imposed on this place the paradigm of colonial condition and national conflict as the sole lens for imagining a future.

The curators Issam Nassar and Ariella Aisha Azoulay, as guest editors of this issue, have chosen some forty images from the original exhibit, which appear here with their original captions and new captions provided by the contributors to the exhibition. In an introductory essay, the curators contextualize the juxtaposition of the original captions with the modern ones in which the issues of nativist ethnography, bibliofication, orientalism, and the commercialization of the photographic images are interpreted and deconstructed.

In addition to “Time Travelers,” this issue includes two articles on workers’ rights in settlements, and on sound as an historical element; an essay on the city’s early Evangelical visitors; and a new section on Jerusalem neighborhoods.

With the Oslo process fading and more than a decade of analysts arguing that the two-state solution is not viable, some have argued for a transition to a new strategy, shifting from a focus on state-building to one that demands rights. Ethan Morton-Jerome’s “The Struggle for Palestinian Workers’ Rights in Israeli Settlements: The Case of Maan and Zarfati Garage.” examines the work of Maan, a joint activist program taking an interventionist political stand – that is, to advocate for workers “regardless of nationality, religion, gender, or the color of their skin” – a radical position in the context of Palestine/Israel. Maan is also closely tied with Israeli socialist party Da’am, which seeks to “embrace solutions that connects the two nations and is based on democracy, human rights, pluralism, economic equality, and solidarity.”

Andrea Stanton’s “Situating Radio in the Soundscape of Mandate Jerusalem” sets radio broadcasting and listening within the broader “picture” of sound in 1930s–1940s Jerusalem. It examines several layers of the radio soundscape: the sounds of the broadcasting studio, the sounds and noise that radio listeners might have experienced from their set, and the sounds of radio broadcasting as mingled with other kinds of sound in Jerusalem’s public and private urban spaces. The article argues that contextualizing radio sounds and noise within the broader urban soundscape offers a better understanding of radio’s position within the social world of Mandate Jerusalem, and hence on its impact.

The winning essay of the Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem for the year 2021 is also featured in this issue. Gabriel Polley’s “Jerusalem through Evangelical Eyes: Nineteenth-Century Western Encounters with Palestinian Christianity.” In his essay, Polley explores Western attitudes to Christianity in Palestine as recorded in the accounts of nineteenth-century travelers, especially British Evangelicals of various denominations, to Jerusalem. In 1906, Charles W. Wilson described “the views of those earnest Christians of all denominations” – in reality, Evangelical Protestants – concerning the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, recognized by most Christians since the fourth century as marking the location of Christ’s crucifixion and tomb. Wilson, a key figure in the Palestine Exploration Fund in the late nineteenth

century, was well-placed to observe the attitudes of his own milieu of archaeologists, missionaries, and wealthy tourists who flocked to Palestine in the phenomena of the “Peaceful Crusade.”

In our new section titled “Jerusalem Neighborhoods,” *JQ* will be touring the city by neighborhoods, offering a fresh look onto the old vista. Saluting the *sumud* and bravery at Shaykh Jarrah, Nazmi Jubeh’s “Shaykh Jarrah: A Struggle for Survival” takes us to the front lines in the latest takeover confrontation in East Jerusalem.

As the world goes back to traveling once again, albeit differently from pre-COVID-19 times, we hope this special issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* will take you on a safe and enjoyable trip in time and sound.

### Endnotes

- 1 Nir Hasson, “For Jerusalem’s Muslims, an Israeli Humiliation on Ramadan,” Haaretz 21 April 2021, online at [www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.HIGHLIGHT-for-jerusalem-s-muslims-israel-s-ramadan-restrictions-were-a-bridge-too-far-1.9726088](http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium.HIGHLIGHT-for-jerusalem-s-muslims-israel-s-ramadan-restrictions-were-a-bridge-too-far-1.9726088) (accessed 22 June 2021).

### Corrigenda:

- The credit of Figure 4, on page 75 of the Spring 2021 Issue (JQ 85) was wrongly attributed to Micha Sender. The correct credit goes to Ayman Safi.
- On page 148 of the Spring 2021 Issue (JQ 85), the correct date is 27 July 2020, not 2021.
- On pages 40, 56, and 57 of the Autumn 2019 Issue (JQ 79), architectural critic Or Aleksandrowicz’s name was misspelled.

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* is pleased to announce the winner of the 2021

**Ibrahim Dakkak Award  
for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem**

**Gabriel Polley**  
**PhD graduate in Palestine Studies  
at the University of Exeter**

for his essay  
**Jerusalem Through Evangelical Eyes:  
Nineteenth-Century Western Encounters  
with Palestinian Christianity**

Published in this issue, *Jerusalem Quarterly* 86: 117.

**Jury:**

Michael Dumper: Member of the Advisory Board, the *Jerusalem Quarterly*

Hanan Toukan: Contributing Editor, the *Jerusalem Quarterly*

Lisa Taraki: Sociology Professor, Birzeit University

Vincent Lemire: Directeur, CRFJ Centre de Recherche Français à Jérusalem

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Essays that received honorable mention as outstanding contributions on Jerusalem  
will appear in future issues of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.



# Time Travelers in Palestine

## A Stereoscopic Journey

Issam Nassar and Ariella Aïsha  
Azoulay

Guest Editors

Palestine, a small country on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, was part of the Ottoman Empire until 1918. Like most other parts of the empire, it witnessed great transformations during the nineteenth century with major growth in its economy, population, and administration. Naturally, such changes had important implications on its society and the lived landscape. Various colonial powers of the time were interested in Palestine's strategic location between Asia and Africa, and its connection with the biblical narrative often served as a convenient pretext for different imperial ambitions. Several schemes to establish a foothold in the country and surrounding areas, and to colonize it, had been afloat by one or the other competing colonial powers since the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt. Photography, from its inception, had been seen as a technology that could facilitate the extraction and accumulation of visual wealth from non-European peoples. The arrival of photography in Palestine was shaped by such imperial and colonial desires and biblical and Oriental imaginations.

France, Britain, and Russia, in particular, were competing to establish a presence in Palestine. By the end of the nineteenth century, the newly established Zionist movement in Europe joined in with the efforts to colonize Palestine, where they wanted to establish a Jewish homeland. With more and more cameras in Palestine held by European photographers and entrepreneurs, images of Palestine, considered Holy Land for Christianity and Judaism, began to take on an important role for colonial powers. This is not to suggest that photography was limited to serving

colonial ambitions. Rather, by its construction of Palestine as a biblical heritage, photography served in the efforts to present the land not as a socially inhabited place, but rather as a dreamland awaiting to be “redeemed” and “restored.” In other words, photography participated in the visual colonization of Palestine by helping to construct it as the Bible land, rather than a country with people and society – a mission that prevailed through early Euro-American photography. This image, though predating the Zionist slogan of “a land without a people for a people without a land,” contributed to the efforts to physically colonize the country and create a system in which the immigrant Jews are the only legitimate people in Palestine.



V53603

#### A RELIEF MAP OF PALESTINE.

The map we see here was modeled from charts prepared by the Palestine Exploration Society. In order to render important places easily distinguishable, the vertical scale was made three and a half times as great as the horizontal scale. The numbered markers identify the following-named places:

- |                                       |                              |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Hebron.                            | 14. Carmel (Elisha's Altar). |
| 2. Bethlehem.                         | 17. Tiberias.                |
| 3. Jerusalem.                         | 18. Mt. Bethsaida.           |
| 4. Mirjath.                           | 19. Capernaum.               |
| 5. Bethel.                            | 20. Bethsaida Julias.        |
| 6. Jericho.                           | 21. Tyre.                    |
| 7. Iyyba.                             | 22. Selen.                   |
| 8. Ebal and Gerizim.                  | 23. Dan.                     |
| 9. Samaria.                           | 24. Caesarea Philippi.       |
| 10. Dothan.                           | 25. Mt. Hermon.              |
| 11. Esdrasim (Plain of).              | 26. Damascus.                |
| 12. Gilead, Mountains of (at Jeruel). | 27. Jerash.                  |
| 13. Bethshan.                         | 28. Jabbok.                  |
| 14. Mt. Tabor.                        | 29. Nebo (Mash Raza).        |
| 15. Nazareth.                         |                              |

The smooth plane we see at the northwest represents the Mediterranean Sea. Its Hebrew name was "The great western sea," or "the great Sea toward the going down of the sun." Parallel to the Mediterranean the land extends in five natural divisions: the coastal plain, the foothills, the mountain region, the Jordan valley and the eastern table-land.

South of Hebron (1) is another section of land, not parallel, like the others, but of different topography as you will note. This is the Negeb, called in the old version of the Bible, "The South Country."

By frequently referring to this relief map you will be able to gain a most comprehensive knowledge of the entire land.

Copyright by Keystone View Company.

With the invention and popularization of stereoscopic photography – where two images of the same subject were taken at the same time by a camera with two lenses – consumers in Europe and the United States could view faraway places using a special viewer that creates the illusion of a three-dimensional scene and become familiar with these places. Euro-American commercial companies were quick to send photographers to take photographs that they could commercialize and sell to different audiences. These collections of stereoscopic images were often organized thematically and, accompanied by captions and narratives, presented those different people to white Euro-American consumers.

The collections were promoted through an emphasis on places in “Bible Lands.” This is how the collection still features, for example, in the index of the University of Chicago Library, among other places. While in 1880 the brothers Underwood started with door-to-door sales of souvenir collections, they quickly became a big company that was selling “300,000 stereoscopes a year and producing more than 25,000 cards a day.” They took approximately 600 images in Palestine. Little is known about the circumstances under which they were taken and by whom. One thing is clear – what the Western and European viewers saw had little to do with the people from the world where these images were taken. The commercialized images carry only the brand of the company and no mention of the Palestinians who guided the photographers and assisted them in the pursuit of their photographic expeditions.

This issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* is based on the exhibition *Time Machine: Stereoscopic Views of Palestine, 1900* that we curated in 2017.<sup>1</sup> We invited around fifty scholars and artists to select stereoscopic cards from the one hundred images taken in Palestine around 1900, and to write new captions for them. These images were originally taken as part of a general imperial attitude toward another’s world: they were there to be taken (in photographs), to be made a source of profit, and an object of entertainment for the Euro-American public. The collection of these images raises a set of questions about photography – distance and proximity, resources and primitive accumulation, public and private viewing, regime of rights and care for the world, reproducibility and ownership, photographer/photographed-persons relations, and the like – as well as political questions about imperialism, colonization, conquest, destruction, migration, expulsion, memory, legacy, patrimony, and exploitation.. We invited the contributors to address some of these questions that are absent from the original captions. We also asked them to propose captions that interact on the one hand with the original captions of the stereoscopic cards and on the other with the current state of Palestine.

Our assumption was that these images, taken in 1900 cannot be viewed today without the imprint of the colonial project of destruction. After all, much of what is captured in the photographs no longer exists. We invited the contributors to dwell in this time-space created between 1900, the moment when the images were taken, and the moment of writing more than a century later, to reflect on what happened, what



*Time Machine: Stereoscopic Views of Palestine, 1900*, Pembroke Hall, Brown University, March – May 2017 (design Erin Wells, curators I.N. & A.A.A.).

should not have happened, and what may still happen. These images of Palestine, commercialized and widely disseminated at the dawn of the twentieth century, included images also from Syria and Lebanon as part of a single region. The Sykes-Picot agreement between imperial powers on how to divide between them other people's lands through a regime of mandates, and later, the imposition of partition and the state of Israel on the area, destroyed this geographical and cultural continuity of which Palestine was part. It turned the majority of Palestine's population into undesired "outsiders" in their homeland, and into refugees in camps that surround it in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

We were interested in how this three-dimensional space of stereoscopic images was used to convey visual information about Palestine. The set of these one hundred images was printed in a popular edition and sold with a stereoscopic viewer. The cards show Palestine landscapes and residents. However, with the help of the latest 3D-technology of its time, spectators were encouraged to conflate what they saw with biblical sights. We noticed this in the form of juxtaposition of daily situations in a market or a bazaar, in which people are seen busy in their occupations, with panoramic, often unpopulated landscapes, presented as biblical scenes in which the natives are captured embodying past figures. Often, the original captions depict the presence of indigenous people as impeding a more direct gaze into the “Holy Land” and its surroundings.

The companies responsible for the extraction of these images from Palestine are also responsible for the cultivation of different gaps between viewers who contemplate the images in the privacy of their living rooms in the turn-of-the-century United States or Europe – and the local population, often depicted as guardians of a cherished past, but who may not be trusted to be its best guardians. This is reflected in the tension between images and captions. The original captions often highlight explicitly the distance between the Western observer and the native population, its habits and customs, and its modes of eating, trading, living, etc. Such is the case with captions such as: “The native mode of grinding coffee” or “This market, with its throng of robed and turbaned business men (Arabs, Jews and Turks), its meek donkeys and dignified camels, is just as Jeremiah and Isaiah and Amos used to know.”

Those images, in which the beautiful and beloved country of Palestine is captured before its systematic colonial destruction, invite viewers to become “time travelers” in a time machine of sorts, to think what does it mean to look at these images not as hints of a pre-colonial time but rather as hints of the reversibility of the colonial projects, markers of repair?

With the original and revised captions, we invite the readers of this volume to look at these images from a dual perspective: on the one hand, what could be seen in them at the time when the destruction of Palestine and the creation of Israel in its place could not even be feared or imagined, and on the other hand, how they can contribute today to the struggle to decolonize Palestine.

*Issam Nassar is JQ’s consulting editor and professor of History at Illinois State University.*

*Ariella Aïsha Azoulay is professor of Modern Culture & Media and Comparative Literature, author of Potential History: Unlearning Imperialism (Verso, 2019).*



Jaffa, the Joppa of Bible times, Palestine.  
 Jaffa, le Joppé de l'époque de la Bible, Palestine.  
 Jaffa, das Joppa der biblischen Geschichte, Palästina.  
 Jaffa, la Joppa de los tiempos bíblicos, Palestina.  
 Jaffa, den bibliska tidens Joppa, Palestina.  
 Иѡѡѡ, Іоанна Библичѡскѡго вѡвѡекѡ, Пѡлѡстѡ-  
 вина.

It is not surprising that the very first image in this collection depicts the town of Jaffa as seen from the sea: this was normally the first close-up view of Palestine that the growing number of foreigners arriving by boat around 1900 would have seen, since Jaffa was then the country's most important port. Because it lacked a deep-water harbor, however, large ships anchored offshore, and passengers and goods were then transported to land on small boats, one of which is visible in the image. As the original caption suggests, Jaffa had been an important port since ancient times and is mentioned in the Bible and in early Christian writings. When this image was made it was a thriving urban center with some thirty thousand inhabitants (roughly 60 percent Muslim, 30 percent Christian and 10 percent Jewish). Its rapid population

growth in the later nineteenth century, and the establishment of new neighborhoods outside the “old city,” had been driven in large part by the dramatic expansion of citrus cultivation, particularly the famous “Jaffa orange” grown on the coastal plains surrounding the city and shipped to Europe and beyond through its port. Jaffa had its own municipal council since 1871 and was connected to Jerusalem by railroad in 1892; it had by then become the country’s de facto economic capital.

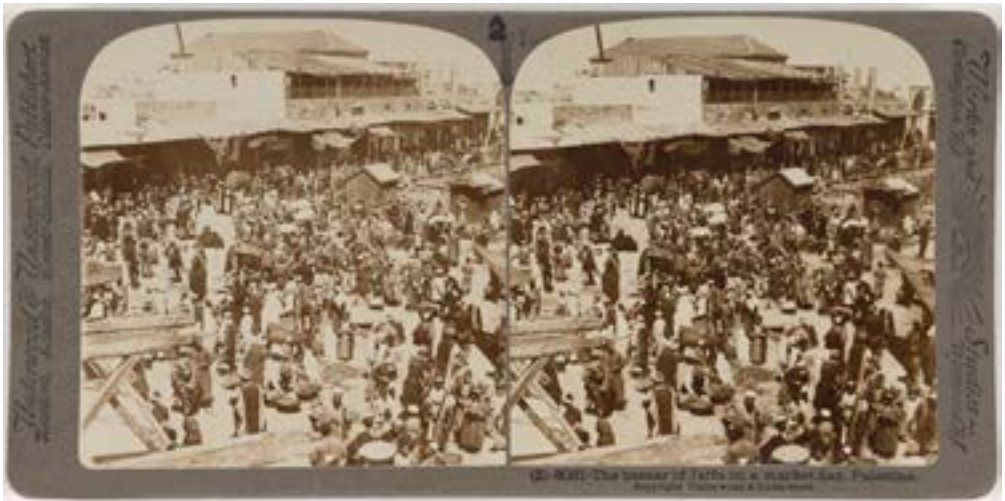
In 1909, inspired by Zionism’s program of transforming Palestine into a Jewish homeland, a group of Jews founded what they envisioned as a new, modern, and exclusively Jewish neighborhood to the north of Jaffa’s historic center; it came to be known as Tel Aviv (“Hill of Spring”) and quickly grew into Palestine’s largest Jewish urban center. By the late 1930s, owing to the large-scale Jewish immigration enabled by the British who ruled Palestine from 1918 to 1948, Tel Aviv was roughly twice as populous as Jaffa and encompassed one-third of the country’s Jewish population. In April–May 1948 Zionist military forces conquered Jaffa, 95 percent of whose Arab inhabitants became refugees, and the city was subsequently annexed to Tel Aviv. The eighteen thousand Palestinian citizens of Israel who live in Jaffa today (4 percent of the population of Tel Aviv) struggle with poverty, discrimination, and displacement through gentrification.

— *Zachary Lockman*

Jaffa is at the shore, on top of the hill, drawing the horizon line. She can now clearly see it. Maybe it was her first arrival into the city port and, full of excitement, she couldn’t wait. After the almost unbearable sea journey, she was about to land. She absorbed her surroundings with every breath of salty air, searching for the right angle. She held her camera between her hands, waiting. Finally, while boarding the small boat that will take her into the port, she found it. “Hold the boat,” she managed to shout and before taking a seat, she took a first shot of the city.

Jaffa, one of the oldest city ports in the world, thanks to its natural harbor, was always a place where people arrived: merchants, pilgrims, and immigrants. They arrived from Europe, the Far and Middle East, bringing spices and goods, prayers and hopes. The port, the gate entrance to the Holy Land, marked also the cosmopolitanism of the city in which, I imagine, a mixture of languages could be heard. This is the reason why Jaffa was not only known as ‘*Urus al-Bahr* (Bride of the Sea) but also as *Um al-Gharib* (Mother of the Stranger). Today, nobody arrives to Jaffa from the sea. A photograph taken now from one of the few fishing boats that still harbors in the port will show a line of fancy restaurants, boutiques, art galleries, and trendy cafes designed mainly for Jewish Israelis, as part of an effort to boost the “judaization” of Jaffa. As happened in similar Palestinian sites that were not destroyed by the Tel Aviv Municipality, the port has been “renovated” and turned into a touristic “attraction.” Thus, the government has erased the site’s history in favor of a high-cost entertainment complex that operates entirely in Hebrew and remains most of the time empty.

— *Norma Muslih*



The Bazaar at Jaffa, Palestine.  
 Le Bazar de Jaffa, Palestine.  
 Der Bazaar zu Jaffa, Palestina.  
 El Bazar en Jaffa, Palestina.  
 Bazaren vid Jaffa, Palestina.  
 Базаръ въ Яфѣ, Палестина.



Jaffa, 1 July 1905

I have your hat. I had hung it next to my other childhood collections, on the wall, on top of my desk, a French old-fashioned piece of furniture I inherited from my older sister. It's at the same height as the prophet Ibrahim; a stitched drawing of him, looking back to the sky, in one hand Ismael, and in the other a knife. The angel Gabriel is calling him with a sheep between his arms.

It is a beautiful desk. She had hidden her writings in its little drawers. There I found lost little comments about you. She liked to watch you observing us, curious about what things you thought were relevant, and about other daily encounters that had just passed by you without your attention.

She said that you tried to keep a scientific appearance, to look like somebody who knows how things work, and how they would work better. There were many of you at that time. She said she had noticed your fears, your distance from people and inward spaces.

Remember that day when the coffee boy bumped against you in the middle of the bazaar and spilled some coffee on you? It was not an accident. She paid him to do so. Then she asked me and the other boys dressed in our white jalabiyyas to surround you and to move in a circle. She asked us to sing you an Eid al-Adha song and to smile at you. She said that she wanted to blur your memories by flashing upon you some of ours. It was then when you lost your hat, escaping from us.

She saw you leaving on a ship to Egypt, people talked about something that was going to happen there. She wanted to ask you for a magazine that was being distributed in the region but she said she couldn't – you didn't know she existed.

— *Zahiye Kundos*



"Roses of Sharon," on the Plain of Sharon, Palestine (Cant. II: 1).  
 Les "Roses de Sharon" dans la Plaine de Sharon, Palestine (Cant. II: 1).  
 Die "Rosen von Sharon" auf der Ebene von Sharon, Palestina (Cant. II: 1).  
 "Rosas de Sharon" en las Llauras de Sharon, Palestina (Cant. II: 1).  
 "Saron's Roser," på Saronslätten, Palestina (Höga Visan 2: 1).  
 „Шарон-розы“ на равнине Шарона. Палестина (Псалм Шломе II: 1).

The Anemone coronaria commonly grows wild about Smyrna and in Asia Minor, spreading far And wide as the most beautiful of spring blossoms, growing on chalk soil along the edges of shrubbery. We cannot wonder that it was already in ancient times a favorite of the inhabitants and excited in poetic minds sensations such as can only be excited by surprising beauty. "I am the Rose of Sharon and the lily of the valleys," sings the first verse of the second charter of Solomon's Song, and there can be no doubt today what is here meant by the rose of Sharon. It was an American, Fiske P. Brewer, who decided this question, Narcissus tazetta, which likewise grows in Palestine, having previously been considered the biblical flower. This gentleman, according to the Edinburgh Review of 1886, while traveling in the year 1859 from Jaffa to Ramleh, came upon a place where a considerable expanse of ground was half covered with brilliant red flowers. At the sight of them some of his native companions immediately exclaimed "Roses of Sharon," and, when he inquired about the name, he was told that the anemone was there Universally so called.

In truth, it would not be easy otherwise to speak of a rose in Palestine, for native roses do not exist there – at least not where they would justify the association of the Plain of Sharon with their name. Wild roses are found in Palestine only on Lebanon, or where here and there R. centifolia is cultivated for the production of attar, as in the Wadi-el-Werd [sic] (Rose Valley), near Hebron. According to Ebers and Guthe in their "Palestine," the translations of the Bible often use the

word rose where there is no warrant for understanding by it a true rose. The roses of Persia and Media were not introduced into Palestine before the Grecian period.

— Yazid Anani

*Text selected from New York Times, 1 February 1891,  
originally published in Illustrirte Garten-Zeitung, Vienna.*

These stereoscopic images remind me of the double vision of a myopic man like myself! It is true that the photographs are crisp and clear, that they are generally taken from well-positioned angles, that the light is resplendent if a little garish and overexposed at times. But reading the captions, then looking at the images again, it became clear to me that the photographer “caught” his images but did not really *see* them. He has gone *looking for something other than what he has seen in front of him*. Instead of observing, therefore, as an artist should, he has created the crude fantasy of an ideologist, a biblical geography that is not there, a land empty of its people because they, with a few tolerated exceptions, might have been *in excess*, a disruptive element to an otherwise perfect construction.

Yet this particular image felt like a spurning to that project, a retort to the fantasist photographer. The flowers are vibrant, but dust is imminent. Nature asserting its withering truth over fantasy. In the meantime, the two trees and the distant village in the background evoke life persisting. Not a fantasy but *indigenous* life.

— Omar Al-Qattan

*Grown to provide  
And for no other task,  
That was the might,  
Of those roses*

*On a shared soil,  
They grew,  
Just, and no more than,  
To service life as roses*

*And when the spells changed,  
Their house,  
Forced by trade,  
It was made barren.*

*Barren of a vile craving,  
That sent you without regret,  
Making the land a castle,  
By giving harvest a name.*

*Of your tears and cries, barren,  
Of your pain,  
Barren, until your return...*

— Marcelo Svirsky



Lydda, the Old Testament "Lod," Palestine (1 Chron. vii: 12; Acts ix. 32).  
 Lydda, "Lod" de l'ancien Testament, Palestine (1 Chron. VII. 12; Les Actes IX. 32).  
 Lydda, „Lod“ des alten Testaments, Palästina (1 Chron. VII. 12; Apostelg. IX. 32).  
 Lydda, „Lod“ del antiguo Testamento, Palestina (1 Cronica VII. 12; Actos IX. 32).  
 Lydda, Gamla Testamentets Lod, Palestina (1 Krön. 7: 12; Apost. Ger. 9: 32).  
 Лядда, старая Ветхая Заветъ называемая „Лодъ“, Палестина (1 Црѣвннх; vii 12; Дѣянія  
 ix: 32).

In the town where I grew up, a church and a mosque share a wall. The minaret is towering high by the belfry. On the western part of the church, a mosque was constructed in the thirteenth century. Entering the mosque's square, one notices the remains of the Byzantine basilica, including hewn stones, granite and marble columns with capitals from the ruined church. Using the southern wall of the church, the mosque's northern façade overlooks the courtyard. On the eastern side of the prayer hall, a Byzantine apse has survived. Underneath the mosque, there are subterranean halls built by the Crusaders as water reservoirs for the church and the town dwellers.

The photograph in front of you shows a church and a mosque at the heart of a lively Palestinian town. In the foreground of the photograph, men, boys, and women are looking at the camera. One of the men is wearing a Turkish turban. Three children shade their eyes with their hands to better see the photographer. Two children have their backs turned to the camera, walking hand in hand alongside a woman shrouded in black and white. A man stands on the threshold of his shingled home looking at the photographer. The western flank of St. George's Church is seen against the horizon to the left. In the middle, between the holy edifices in the photograph's background and the people in its foreground, lie the buildings of the town of Lydda. Stone houses, palm trees, white domes, arches.

Similar to the complex relations between photograph as an object of documentation and one's personal experience, this photograph is also part of an illusory consciousness. From the town where I grew up, nothing has remained except for a church and a mosque sharing a common wall. On a hot summer day in the month of July 1948, the townspeople were ordered by the military to leave. A few hundred remained in the town, hidden in the church's cellars, among them my grandparents. This is a photograph that presents a place I've never been to, but which is nonetheless etched in my visual DNA.

— *Dor Guez*



Syrian Travelers, near Lydda, Palestine.  
 Voyageurs Syriens près de Lydda, Palestine.  
 قريظة سيريته قرب ليددا، فلسطين.  
 Viajeros sirianos, cerca de Lydda, Palestina.  
 Syriska resenärer, nära Lydda, Palestina.  
 Сирійскі Путем-чужаки біля Лідди, Палестина.

In 1859, the writer Oliver Wendell Holmes rhapsodized in the newly-founded *Atlantic Monthly* about the possibilities of the photograph, including stereographs. He especially liked the presence of detail that was incidental to the scene, the visual clue that French critic Roland Barthes would later call the *punctum*. While Barthes saw the punctum as a “wound,” creating an unexpected sensory association between a chance sight in the photograph and remembered experience, Holmes saw such moments as comic relief: “Stretching across the court-yards as you look into them from above the clay-plastered roofs of Damascus, wherever man lives with any of the decencies of civilization, you will find the clothes-line.” Photography, in other words, may have had pretensions to the grandeurs of biblical or historical painting but was inexorably mundane.

Half a century after his essay, this stereograph captured the quotidian experience of some Syrians traveling near what is now Lod. The accompanying text also highlighted an inconsequential detail: “The children with their slippared feet might easily be taken for American or English children.” The slippers – like Barthes’s fascination with strapped pumps in a James van der Zee photograph – cut across the local detail like the cacti, the palm trees, and the mosque to create a sense of identification. Looking at this little scene in 2015, I cannot help but see that Syrian child as well. Only now what is in my mind is the drowned body of Alan Kurdi and so many others whose names have not become known to us. Alan washed up on the Turkish coast. Palestinian children fleeing from their exile in Syria to a second exile that never took place were found drowned on the Libyan coast. Their photographs were censored by Facebook, the stereoscope of the present day, until an outcry had the media corporation change its mind. No Syrian or Palestinian child could happily ride down a street in Lod today, unless their vehicle had the necessary yellow license plates. For Palestinians must drive on different roads, using green license plates. Detail has become data. Wounds remain.

— *Nicholas Mirzoeff*



The Village of Amwas (Emmaus), Palestine (St. Luke xxiv: 13-31).  
 Le Village d'Amwas (Emmaus), Palestine (St. Luc XXIV. 13-31).  
 Das Dorf Emmaus (Emmaus), Palästina (St. Luk. XXIV. 13-31).  
 La Aldea de Amwas (Emmaus), Palestina (San Lucas XXIV. 13-31).  
 Byn Amwas (Emmaus), Palestina (Lukas 24: 13-31).  
 Бывшій Эммаусъ. Иерусалимъ (Св. Лука 24: 13-31).

The Latrun valley cuts across the Armistice Line of 1948. After the majority of the villages were ethnically cleansed in 1948 and half of the valley fell within the No Man's Land between Jordanian and Israeli held territory, three villages remained. They were Yalu, Bayt Nuba, and 'Imwas (Emmaus), the biblical town where Jesus dined with two disciples after he had risen. Although much of the population of the village of 'Imwas (Amwas in the Underwood and Underwood photograph) had fled in 1948, two thousand residents remained in the village until 1967, when in June, the remaining inhabitants of 'Imwas, Yalu, and Bayt Nuba were expelled in Operation Dani, and Yitzak Rabin, then commanding general of the Harel Brigade, ordered the villages to be demolished.<sup>2</sup>

In line with the standard process by which the land of expelled Palestinians was "legally" confiscated by the Israeli state (namely the Absentee Landlord Act, Land



Acquisition Law, the Abandoned Areas Ordinance, etc.), the Jewish National Fund acquired 'Imwas and its surroundings. With the financing of the Canadian branch of the Jewish National Fund, the "Canada Park" was established on the site of the destroyed villages, funded almost exclusively by donations from Canadian Jews.

This photograph is not of "time travel," but rather time compression. It layers the imprint of a turn-of-the-century village over biblical fantasy, overlapped by the presence of an absent Palestinian village on today's map. The stereoscopic image compresses the documentary evidence of a crime, stashed away under a verdant bed of a triumphalist rewriting of history and redrawing of geography, into the ghostly figures of women, who stand as a metonym for "the Village of Amwas."

Working from representation of these women, then, we see history synchronically, generations on generations of women who were the village itself. This is not to gaze upon them as a metaphor for loss, a time lost, a village lost, or a nation lost. Rather, their figures recall the social relations of 'Imwas; social relations between villagers and villages that form a social and historic chain that led to Jerusalem, Haifa, Jaffa, Nablus, and, perhaps, even Beirut and Damascus. Time is compressed because the representation of the women of 'Imwas invokes social relations that predate the imprint of this photograph and survive to this day.

— *Stephen Sheehi*

Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, who wrote the book of captions for these stereoscopic cards, describes this image as "Village of Amwas (Emmaus)." One could receive the impression that the name in the parentheses is incidental, aimed at helping the readers understand that the Arab village of Amwas ('Imwas in transliterated Arabic) is the same as a place called Emmaus. For those who are familiar with the New Testament, the story of Jesus' resurrection and his surprising visit to Emmaus creates a sense of familiarity with the photograph. But the full caption that accompanies the photograph shows us that the writer is completely aware of the gap between Amwas and Emmaus. Amwas is, in the nineteenth century, the contemporaneous village, while Emmaus is, according to tradition, the same place almost two thousand years earlier. The text vacillates between descriptions of the poverty of village life and a vivid description of the meeting between two local residents and Jesus, who appeared and then disappeared again. None of this is surprising since the writer, Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, is a biblical scholar.

This stereoscopic writing, which beautifully illustrates the stereoscopic photograph, disappeared from the explanatory signs that the Jewish National Fund set up here in the late twentieth century, when it established a park on the ruins of 'Imwas, destroyed by Israel in the 1967 war. Emmaus Nicopolis of the Roman Period appears repeatedly in the explanatory signs throughout the park, whereas life in the village of 'Imwas, as well as in the also destroyed neighboring villages of Yalu and Bayt Nuba, has completely disappeared from the narrative describing the place.

The struggle that I led, to return 'Imwas to the narrative that appears on the signs, reached a climax with the petition we filed to Israel's High Court of Justice. The court

ordered the JNF to add ‘Imwas to the area’s history. The posting of the new signs led an unidentified person to take them down, but the JNF was forced to re-post them. At the time of writing, the sign with both narratives still stands.

— *Eitan Bronstein*

*Translated from Hebrew by Tom Pessah*

On 17 March 1986, the residents of the Latrun area, including the villagers of ‘Imwas, addressed a letter to the Israeli authorities, in which they wrote: “Our houses were completely demolished and there is nothing left of our village. We were forced to leave our land and houses, and all was destroyed along with our furniture, our livestock and all our possessions, but we still hope to be able to return ....”<sup>3</sup> They never received a reply, and their right to return remains denied until this day. About ten thousand residents were forcefully expelled by the Israeli army from Latrun on 6 June 1967. Their houses, as then Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan recalled in his memoirs, were destroyed “not in battle, but as punishment . . . in order to chase away the inhabitants.”<sup>4</sup> Just a decade later the Jewish National Fund tried to cover up the war crime by establishing on the site of the villages a forest and recreation site, the “Canada Park.”

Today, the houses depicted in the image are rubble, their inhabitants “chased away,” and the landscape obliterated by a planted forest. The “elimination of the native,” as Patrick Wolfe<sup>5</sup> understood the settler-colonial project, attacks and erases all – the land, the people, the houses, the trees – that can question the settlers’ claim to ownership. Everything we see in the picture has been erased.

While the image indeed captures the moment before settler-colonial destruction in Palestine, it implies a similar claim to ownership and priority on the land. The three women remain unidentified, folklorized, silenced, and frozen in time as mere ethnographic objects in the biblical narrative of the Holy Land. It is a depiction of Palestine without its people.

The letter by the Latrun residents, however, is different. Here people are speaking about their relations and lived experiences on and with the land. Residents of Latrun continued to write letters to the Israeli authorities demanding their right to return, and they have also embarked on return visits to their land, called for their rights to bury family members in the village cemetery, and requested signs to be erected that acknowledge their villages of origin. Their return narratives and practices counter the colonizer’s material and epistemic project of elimination, and, instead, present an ongoing and living – not erased or silenced – voice of the people and their relations to the land.

— *Sophie Richter-Devroe*



We have taken our stand on the Casa Nuova or Latin Hospice, an old building in the heart of Jerusalem, and are looking out outward over the ancient Hill of Olivets and past the city wall. Bethlehem is six miles away at our right; Nazareth is between 60 and 70 miles distant at our left; 25 miles away behind us, beyond the mountains, is Jeppo, on the shore of the Mediterranean. Far off beyond that horizon lie the lands of the Wise Men of the East.

"Yorke" is the Mount of Olives, crowned by a modern Russian tower. How plain you can trace those three paths climbing the hill. By one of those, certainly—surely!—by all of them at different times—your Saviour and mine walked over the Mount of Olives to Bethany, which lies on the other side of the mountain. Now the hillside is bleak and bare, with comparatively few trees. Then it was a succession of terraces completely covered with vines and olives.

Now let us look at the city below us. To the left is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which millions of the Christian world believe—although scholars disagree about it—covers the site of the Cross and the Tomb of Jesus Christ. As we look across the city, we see a mass of small domes around a large domed building. That is the Dome of the Rock, which always emphatically calls strongly "The Mosque of Omar." It is the site of Solomon's Temple and covers the traditional rock where Abraham made ready his offering and David built his altar.

Farther to the right is a new, painted tower with scaffolding around it—that belongs to the Church of St. John, the headquarters of the Knights of St. John in the preceding ages. It now belongs to the Ottoman Government.

(From *Travels in the Holy Land* through the Stereograph, by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, D.D., with special "Lloyd" maps; published by Underwood & Underwood.)

Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives, East from the Latin Hospice.

Holy Land stereographs offered their audience a way of looking at a contemporary landscape so as to transpose a different time onto it. The text accompanying this view turns to the city skyline, inviting the viewer to travel to the time of biblical events that the buildings would have witnessed millennia ago. It also describes a history of attempts to recapture the land for Christendom. What might seem peculiar from our current perspective is how the caption cannot but help remark on the scaffolding around a Crusader era tower, which the reader is told was claimed by the German government, bringing the viewer back into the realm of secular political matters and current events. The inclusion of the tower helps the image on a technical level – to establish the three-dimensional effect. Yet it is also the inevitable fly-in-the-ointment of the dream of seeing the past directly, instead becoming part of the desire to see the past city through the present. Presumably, the traveler in the foreground would have also contended with this wrinkle while gazing at the city and landscape beyond.

— Hatim El-Hibri



Cattle Market Day, in the Lower Pool of Gihon, Valley of Hinnon, Jerusalem, Palestine (Slide XXXI). 9.

Le jour du Marché aux bestiaux, en bas Etang de Gihon, Vallée de Hinnon, Jerusalem, Palestine (Slide XXXI). 9.

Stiermarkt im tiefen Teiche von Gihon, Hinnon Thal, Jerusalem, Palästina (Slide XXXI). 9.

Día del Mercado de Ganado en el lago baja de Gihon, el Valle de Hinnon, Jerusalem, Palestina (Slide XXXI). 9.

Bestyrsmarknadsdag, vid den Ligre Gihon dammen, Hinnon dalen, Jerusalem, Palestina (Es. 22 : 9).

День съёмки ярмарки на пашенъ водопров. Гихонъ; Долина Гиннонъ, Иерусалимъ, Палестина (Слайд XXXI) : 9.

The men and livestock gathered here in “the Lower Pool of Gihon,” the spring-fed pools of Silwan, are evidence of the intimate relationship between Jerusalem and its rural hinterlands. On market days, the rural intruded upon the urban, and the sublime city reached out beyond its walls to draw sustenance from the human and animal labor of its surrounding villages. Today, Israel’s separation barrier – which snakes around Silwan – severs these networks, pulverizing the vital ecosystem that linked Jerusalem with its villages, the urban with the rural, the human with the animal. Moreover, for the past three decades in particular, Silwan has been the site of intensive Israeli settlement efforts. Jewish settlers (aided by Israeli police and the pro-settlement Ir David Foundation) have invaded Palestinian homes and evicted their inhabitants. The Israeli government, meanwhile, has refused to grant building permits to Palestinians living in Silwan and announced plans, a number of which it carried out, to demolish dozens of Palestinian homes. In the past decade, even as settlers have torched Palestinian olive groves in Wadi al-Rababa, the same “Valley of Hinnon” pictured here, Israeli authorities proposed plans to build a park, called the King’s Garden, by demolishing Palestinian homes in Silwan’s al-Bustan neighborhood – a perversion of the kind of organic relationship between urban Jerusalem and the natural environment pictured here. With such measures, the Valley of Hinnon, the analogue of hell better known in English as Gehenna or in the Qur’an as Jahannam, has increasingly become a literal hell on earth for its Palestinian residents.

— *Alex Winder*



The Pool of Siloam—outside of Jerusalem, Palestine (St. John ix: 1-7).  
 L'Étang de Siloam—en dehors de Jérusalem, Palestine (St. Jean IX. 1-7).  
 Der Teich von Siloam—außerhalb Jerusalems, Palästina (St. Johannes IX: 1-7).  
 El Estanque de Siloe—fuera de Jerusalem, Palestina (San Juan, IX. 1-7).  
 Siloam damması—utaarı für Jerusalem, Palästina (Joh. 9: 1-7).  
 Купель Силоамская, вне Иерусалима, Палестина (Св. Иоанн, ix: 1-7).

The pool in Silwan encapsulates the irrational and unique features of the conflict in Palestine. The pool is an archaeological dig which began in the nineteenth century by Christians who were eager to support the “return” of the Jews to Palestine (both for anti-Semitic and ecclesiastical reasons) and continued by Zionist archaeologists in order to sustain “scientifically” the bizarre claim of ownership of a land after two thousand years of “exile.” The pool in Silwan may or may not be from King David’s biblical times (quite a few archaeologists are not even confident of a David’s era); however, only a huge and complex project of fabrication and manipulation can turn such a pool into one of many “proofs” that justify the colonization of Palestine in modern times and the dispossession of its people.

The pool also represented the human tragedy of that colonization project that began in 1882. For hundreds of years, ‘Ayn Silwan provided water for a beautiful, picturesque village on the southern outskirts of Jerusalem. The village was fortunate not to be ethnically cleansed by the Zionist movement in 1948. It was in a way protected by the tacit agreement between Jordan and Israel who partitioned Jerusalem between them, leading to the villages west of Jerusalem being destroyed and those east of it saved. However, after 1967, the ongoing Nakba reached Silwan as well, as it did the West Bank as a whole. The village is now under the same danger of annihilation as were the pre-1948 villages. Its survival or destruction will indicate the fate of the country and its people as a whole.

— *Ilan Pappé*



16—3066—Tomb of the Prophets, in the King's Gate, Valley of Jehoshaphat, Jerusalem, Pal. (Copyright National Geographic Society)

You are up on Mt. Moriah, outside the wall at the southeast corner of the old city.

"How steep the side of Mount Moriah is at this point! It is almost a precipice down to the Kidron Valley whose bed is out of sight far below. The rocky hillside in front is the Mount of Olives. Those white stones in irregular rows are Jewish tombs. Jews will journey to Jerusalem from every land on earth and pay large sums for burial places in this valley, for they believe that the resurrection will begin here and that those who rise from their graves on these hillsides will have a sure passport to heaven. Then, too, they count the ground all the more sacred on account of the prophets, who are, as they believe, buried among their own graves.

"You see three tombs standing out prominently! Those are hewn out of the native rock just as it lies. That on the right, in a recess, is called the tomb of Zacharias and commemorates the prophet who was slain 'between the temple and the altar.' (Matt. xxiii:35.) The excavation with pillars at its door is the tomb of St. James, the Lord's brother (Galatians i:19), who was martyred in the precincts of the Temple about A. D. 68. That on the left is Absalom's Pillar."

You see there are a few olive trees here and there over the rocky slope. That marble building is a Russian Church. Either one of the two roads leading obliquely over the hill, this side of the church would take you to Bethany. The other road which you see farther to the north, at the other side of the church, goes to Jericho. In all probability that is the road whose familiar way Jesus called to his hearers' minds when he told them the story of the Good Samaritan. (See "Travelling in the Holy Land through the Stereoscope.")

From *Descriptive Bulletin No. 4*, copyrighted, by Underwood & Underwood.

Tombs of the Prophets, Jerusalem, Palestine.



Messianisms battle in this photo. For one, the caption depicts a latent promise, awaiting exploitation by the Zionist project: a promise of redemption that seeks to tie Messianic progress to the return of the Jewish people – who, at the time of this photo are not natives but “from every land of earth” – to Israel. And yet, there is a different Messianic redemption, one that seeks to renew a tradition that is described in the caption: pelting the tomb of Absalom with stones. Absalom, guilty of fratricide, is stoned on the basis of an ethical injunction: never to kill brothers and sisters.

We might read in this photo a bifurcated echo of Benjamin’s injunction: It *could have been* otherwise; it *can be* otherwise. In the years following this photo, when a claim was made upon the land, there were some who resisted – who refused to commit fratricide. And today, the same call echoes: one *must* seek out alternate forms of political life, recognize those alternative, transgressive forms that did exist, and halt the historical onslaught masquerading as progress. If not, the dead are doomed, unredeemed by a Messianic moment, and will have passed in vain.

— *Peter Makhlouf*



1908. We are in the western part of the old city, facing north. The Jaffa Gate and the Tower of David are only a few minutes walk from here—off at the west (left).

"Narrower, less" it, according to our notion of what a city street should be! But no wheeled vehicle ever enters the gates of Jerusalem. One often sees donkeys and oxen but never carriages in these streets. The pavement looks fairly even and decently clean; in these respects it is by far the best street in the city. Most of the alleys and lanes of Jerusalem are in a state of villainous filthiness. These walls on either side are plain and gloomy, and the windows on the upper stories are iron-barr'd. These upper stories are private houses. Everywhere in the city one finds arches like those spring across the streets; they are needed as props to the walls, for, underneath, the foundations often rest on the ruins of earlier buildings. On the ground floors little shops front upon the street and their awnings often stretch upon the roadway. That awning hung up in front, and the cloth beyond it, tell the passer what are for sale. You might suppose the shopkeepers would erect all the light possible in such shaded streets, but sunshine

is never welcome to Orientals, and they hang curtains and awnings overhead.

"Through a street not unlike this, Jesus was walking one day when He saw the blind man begging (John ix, 1-7). It was as such a street as this that the people laid their sick after the Day of Pentecost, that the shadow of Peter might fall on them (Acts v, 15)." (Extract from *The Holy Land through the Glimpses with special keyed maps, locating all the positions.*)

From *Notes of Travel, No. 20*, copyright, by Underwood & Underwood.

Christian Street, Jerusalem.

La Rue Chrétienn, Jérusalem.

Kristian Stræde, Jerusalem.

Кристианская улица, Иерусалим.

Kristlig gata, Jerusalem.

Христианская улица, Иерусалим.

We are on the main shopping drag in the Old City. The open-air Mamilla Shopping Mall is only a few minutes from here. Between the two, you can feast your eyes and wallets on kitchy souvenirs and diamonds, stop in at the Gap and international chains or peruse the antiquities robbed from the hills nearby (but worry not, they are stamped by the Israeli Antiquities Authority).

Walking through the alleyways or the multimillion-dollar pedestrian shopping area, you will be sure to enjoy the pause from the noise and pollution of cars. The Old City merchants' interactions with tourists from all over the world make this stretch one of the safest areas in the country to spot Palestinians and marvel at the merchants' ability to say a few words in an array of languages. Keep your eyes open for a rare encounter with a covered Palestinian Muslim woman. It is not recommended that you wander through the Muslim Quarter, where inhabitants are grumpier, and most of what they sell are cheap plastics made in China and some local foodstuffs – these are available, in any case, at “dollar stores” and at supermarkets across Israel, where you will find similar products more hygienically packaged for your bland taste and xenophobic well-being.

Unlike the welcomes you may get in Marrakesh – where Arabs still live in their traditional ways – the “hellos” you get here are uttered more from desperation than hospitality, which means that bartering will be favorable for you. Palestinian residents of Jerusalem will sell merchandise at indescribably despondent low prices, because apartheid policies enforced on them make for great shopping bargains!

It is hard to tell from the streets below, but Jewish-Israeli settlers have taken over some of these homes, making Palestinians even more desperate. When you look up along these streets and see barbed wire, it is usually because a settler and his family throw garbage – or worse – onto the Palestinians below, in the hope that these Arabs will voluntarily give up their homes and make the city Holy to Jews, and Jews only. You might assume that Palestinians would emigrate, leave their homeland, and move to a place where they are even less welcomed, but they like to make the most of their victimization.

Through a street not unlike this, before becoming prime minister of Israel, Ariel Sharon walked to the Temple Mount in 2000 and set off the Second Intifada (he first encountered Jerusalem as member of Haganah, 1947–48; died 2014). It was in a street as this that Palestinians picked up rocks and even their shoes, to throw at Sharon's bodyguards and hundreds of policemen accompanying him, hoping – foolishly – that a new Salah al-Din would come to “liberate” Jerusalem from the grips of Israeli occupation (first capture of Jerusalem, 1187; died 1193).

— *Helga Tawil-Souri*



Church of the Holy Sepulchre at ceremony of washing the saints' feet, Jerusalem.

L'Eglise du St. Sépulture à la Cérémonie du lavage des pieds des Saints, Jérusalem.

Kirche des heiligen Grabses während der Cérémonie der heiligen Fußwaschung, Jerusalem.

La iglesia del Santo Sepulcro, durante la ceremonia de lavar los pies de los Santos, Jerusalem.

Den heliga gråfvens kyrka, ceremonien för tvättandet af helgonens fötter, Jerusalem.

Обряд омовения ногъ святыхъ въ церкви Священной гробницы, Иерусалимъ.

*Where is Jesus buried?* For many centuries, most of Christendom has accepted the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as marking the site of both his crucifixion and burial. The first church on the site was built in 330 by Constantine I; by the time this picture was taken, it was a massive structure divided into six sections, each run by a different Christian Orthodox or Catholic denomination. The people who gather in front of the church are here for the Holy Thursday ritual of foot washing. This is likely the Greek Orthodox ceremony – other denominations commemorated Jesus’s washing of his disciples’ feet at the Last Supper, but their rituals were in other locations. Here, then, are Palestinian members of the Orthodox church, gathering, climbing, watching, worshipping.

Those who viewed these images in the United States or Europe likely had mixed feelings about such rituals. Clearly, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is a source of fascination and awe – it is beautiful and historic and peopled. The interior of the church is dark and rich with incense, its walls covered by images of Mary and Jesus. Many Protestants found this decorated and ritualized space to be foreign and excessive. One nineteenth-century visitor had dismissed the church as one of the “puerile inventions of monkly credulity.” By the late nineteenth century, Protestants had begun to claim their own alternative sites: Skull Hill and the Garden Tomb. These were quieter spaces, and the U.S. and European tourists who traveled to the Holy Land found them more congenial – a garden, a tomb, no churches or decoration. This choice suited the habits of nineteenth- and twentieth-century Protestant tourists, who based their religious reverence in an idealized landscape unencumbered by the modern inhabitants of Palestine. This image of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre represented a place that would have been both fascinating and vaguely repulsive to those who held the stereoscope. The ceremony and its people were a reminder that the land of the Bible was also a land of modern Christians, Muslims, and Jews, with their own claims to both the land and religious tradition.

— *Melani McAlister*



We are standing on the northern wall of the old city, looking off straight towards Bithpala and Gethse. Nazareth is between seventy and eighty miles away beyond that distant horizon. The Mount of Olives is three-quarters of a mile away over east of the city (right). The traditional Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the holy ground for which the Crucifixes were brought, is a little more than a quarter of a mile away behind us within the present limits of the city.

Look on that rugged, grassy knoll, with the few cypresses yearning under it. There are lanes which point to this place as the Hill of Calvary, far more strongly than to the traditional 'Holy Sepulchre'. We know that Jesus was crucified outside the city, and this has always been without the wall, while the other 'Calvary' may have been enclosed within it. The resemblance of that elevation with its two crosses to a hammer-head, with its two cross-arms, might have suggested the name of Golgotha, 'skull-like'. Moreover, we know the cross was planted in a public place, just in the city, and this is beside the Damascus road, one of the most frequented in all the land. True, from early Jewish writings, we learn that this Hill, north of the city, was given up to execution.

It is noted that in the old 'Latin' Calvary, then it is the centre of the Christian world. The same is true of these crosses, just as the hill is known in the center of the world of Jewish people and Jewish culture, even the 'New Calvary' is the same, the same, the same, the same.

At the entrance of the city, just at the corner of the wall, and beyond a cliff in the shadow. At the bottom of the cliff you see a small, dark spot. This is the entrance to a tomb, known by the name of Gethse. It is hollowed out of the rock, and has been named the 'Tomb of our Lord'.

From Jerusalem to the Holy Land through the wilderness, with special 'Ayod' maps, holding the chosen 'Ayod' maps, and showing all the 'Ayod' maps, published by Underwood & Underwood.

The "New Calvary" outside the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem.  
 Le "Nouveau Calvaire" au dehors de la porte de Damas, Jérusalem.  
 Das "Neue Golgotha" aus dem Damascus Thor in Jerusalem.  
 El "Nuevo Calvario" en las afueras de Damasco, Jerusalem.  
 Das "Neue Golgotha" outside Damascus port, Jerusalem.  
 „Новое Голгофа“ вне Дамасских ворот, Иерусалим.

We have before us the prospect of the road to Damascus. But look for a moment on that rounded grassy knoll, with two caverns yawning under it.

I never liked the song about the green hill. Why spoil the image of a nice green hill with an execution? British grammar school gothic pastoral.

Can you make yourself feel that it was all real? (No) And that it was for us He hung and suffered there? (No)

Try again.

We are standing on a beautiful balcony. Look, Tamim al-Barghouti says to me, look deeper, there is a massacre going over there. See the gathering on the horizon. The bodies, standing, sitting, in-between? The people you thought were going? They were en-route. They've just come back.

Can't you make yourself feel that it is all real?

They are looking east across a space. They have before them the prospect north of Jerusalem. They shut their eyes.

But if I keep my right eye open, I find that it's OK to move nearer to the wild gap; and that I don't need to fear the stones.

— *Lyndsey Stonebridge*

I look. I stare, trying to find the voice in the picture. I find colours; dilapidated, dual and never plural— with shades and slants that are neither black nor white completely. I return to the faces in the picture, to the man and woman sitting on the roof, to the young boy dangling his legs, to the (wo)man wrapped in white from head to toe. I look again and see almost static bodies leaning on the landscape. I look at the picture once more— while enlarging it, I distort the nuances of the face and the things placed — at once in order and in a hurry — here and there. The unclear in the picture becomes more unclear; perhaps the unclear and the disquieting of tomorrow. I try again to dwell on the intricate lines of the rug, the borders of things, the bodies — standing, sitting or in-between —, the faces, the heads — partly or completely covered — and the silhouettes of rocks and houses in the background. I spot beings of trace and traces of being scattered everywhere. As if everything were (and remains) en route. I spot the Palestine that was— a “was” whose tense has metamorphosed itself into a being with multiple tenses— tense tenses—wherein surviving pictures and murmurs will always (re)turn to the origins whenever the shutter drops...

— *Yousif M. Qasmiyeh*



Outside the Damascus Gate, Jerusalem.  
 Extérieur de la Porte de Damas, Jérusalem.  
 Außenhalb des Damascus-Thores, Jerusalem.  
 Fuera de la Puerta de Damas, Jerusalem.  
 Utanför Damascus porten, Jerusalem.  
 Иза Дамаскских ворот, Иерусалимъ.



Bab al-‘Amud is referred to by many Palestinians today as Bab al-Shuhada’ (to bear witness).

Just as the occupation varies from space to space in Palestine, so does apartheid, and this gate has its own mechanisms of settler colonialism that appear and disappear. The gate is the passageway to al-Aqsa, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Wailing Wall. It branches afterwards to reveal a bustling marketplace encompassing a variety of shops, from bakeries, and restaurants, to souvenirs shops, perfumeries and electronic stores. It is also the path taken home by many Palestinians who live in the Old City.

Among the daily bustle of life, the occupation is a constant via military presence, surveillance cameras, frequent searches, and execution of Palestinians. Here, on 19 February 2016, Israeli soldiers riddled Mohammed Abu Khalaf’s twenty-year-old body with fifty-plus bullets. Killing and maiming constitute the ultimate form of erasure after the erasure of history and language and culture. Just in the span of ten months, ten Palestinians were murdered here. This is part of collective punishment.

Bab al-‘Amud has witnessed endless Palestinian resistance against the occupation, which prompts a complete shutdown of the area followed by the threatening swarm of the Israeli army into the streets to terrorize Palestinians. Bedouin communities like those seen in the photo have been mostly eradicated from Palestine. Those that remain are repeatedly demolished by the occupation, and rebuilt in defiance by the Bedouins to be demolished again – some over one hundred times – Susiya, Jabal al-Baba, Um al-Hiran to name a few – are at the forefront of resisting settler colonialism.

I don’t walk, I fly, I become another,  
transfigured. No place and no time. So who am I?  
I am no I in ascension’s presence. But I  
think to myself: Alone, the prophet Muhammad  
spoke classical Arabic. “And then what?”  
Then what? A woman soldier shouted:  
Is that you again? Didn’t I kill you?  
I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die.

Mahmoud Darwish, “In Jerusalem,” in *The Butterfly’s Burden*.  
Copyright © 2008 by Mahmoud Darwish, trans. Fady Joudah,  
Copper Canyon Press. Reprinted by permission.

— *Amin Husain and Nitasha Dhillon*



The lower Road to Bethany, southeast from Jerusalem, Palestine.  
 La route d'en bas pour Bethany—au sud-est, de Jérusalem, Palestine.  
 Die untere Weg nach Betanien, südlich von Jerusalem, Palästina.  
 El camino abajo a Betania, al sudeste de Jerusalem, Palestina.  
 Den lägra vägen till Betania, sydöst om Jerusalem, Palestina.  
 Нижняя дорога къ Бетаніа, юго-востокъ отъ Иерусалима, Палестина.

This is a stereoscopic photograph about vantage points. One can photograph some of the other stereoscopes in the collection from this slope on the Mount of Olives in al-‘Ayzariya. Stereoscopy feels like theater in agony. It creates an impression of reality by misleading the mind into a third dimension when there was none to start with – simply by altering a millimeter in the same perspective. In many ways Yasser Arafat’s final independence project did precisely that. And the unfinished Palestinian Parliament, not far from where this stereoscope was shot, was in fact architecturally designed in this vein.<sup>6</sup> Jerusalem was to collapse into a two-dimensional space framed by the windows of the privileged few typing away a future Palestinian state.

Ironically the vantage point of the photographer looking onto the firmly standing “native” who is in turn looking outward, is in line with the gaze of the Jewish settler colony today: a towering top-down view cut by starkly decisive geometric lines in all their kinds. Here, they are roads protecting the monastery and its insertion of pine into the landscape. Though Underwood and Underwood’s colonial gaze seemingly adored sameness, class structures nevertheless unfold; the caravan versus the walker, the horse-rider versus the donkey-rider. The scene reminds me of the Lumiere brothers’ 1896 tracking shot of “Leaving Jerusalem by Railway,” where class structures unfold in zones of difference in dress codes across the platform.

But al-‘Ayzariya still walks. Every Friday at noon scores of youth walk to, into, over, and under the Wall in protest. And every Sunday at dawn a handful of its elderly try and jump over the Wall to open their vegetable shops on the other side of Jerusalem and save wrinkled fruit.

— *Oraib Toukan*



Unclean! Unclean! Wretched Lepers Outside of Jerusalem.  
 Le Infortunés Léproux, Faubourg de Jérusalem.  
 Reinlein! Reinlein! Unglückliche Aussätzige außerhalb Jerusalem's.  
 Immundo! Immundo! Leprosos desdichados fuera de Jerusalem.  
 Oren! Oren! Nagra stackara spotälska utanför Jerusalem.  
 Нечистый! Нечистый! несчастные прокаженные вне Иерусалима.

Fearing contagion, the governing of leprosy was fundamentally based on exclusion and segregation. Today in Jerusalem the “wretched lepers” stigma is extended to an entire “infected population” banned from Jerusalem and kept outside of its newly extended walls.

— *Alessandro Petti and Sandi Hilal*



Position 4—Uniform: S. S. Lessons—Jan. 25, 1914

Bethany, where Our Lord was Anointed by Mary (Matt. xxvi, 6-13).  
 Béthanie où Notre Seigneur fut oint par Marie (St. Mathieu xxvi, 6-13).  
 Bethan, Ort wo unser Herr Jesus Christus gesalbt wurde (Matt. xxvi, 6-13).  
 Bethania, donde nuestro Señor fue ungido por María (San Mateo xxvi, 6-13).  
 Betanias hvor Kristus smønstes af Maria (Matthæi xxvi, 6-13).  
 Бетания, где Исус Христос помазан Марией. [MATE. XXVI, 6-13].

A man and a woman pass in front of the camera, in movement through the hills above al-‘Ayzariya, a town just east of Jerusalem. In their original title for the photo, Underwood and Underwood tell us that this is “Bethany, where Our Lord was anointed by Mary,” sweeping away the town’s Arabic name (and its inhabitants) in favor of its biblical ones: Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Likewise, the clergyman Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, in the text from which Underwood and Underwood excerpted their description, all but commands the viewer to erase the photograph’s degraded, impoverished present in favor of its legendary biblical past. “What a squalid, miserable place it is!” he exclaims. “We must sweep away the present and build in our thought another Bethany on that hillside; for the Palestine of to-day is only the shadow and ruin of the Palestine two thousand years ago.”

Writing in 1913, Hurlbut had no idea just how completely the Palestine of this

image would be “swept away” in 1948, to clear space for other narratives, peoples, houses, and realities – how much the state of Israel would rely, like Hurlbut, on the glory of the biblical past and the detestable “squalor” of the Ottoman present to justify its establishment. Reading this original caption today, it is almost as if Hurlbut were presaging the Nakba, sanctioning the destruction it would ultimately enact (and indeed, continues to enact) on Palestinian lives and livelihoods. And yet contemporary viewers of this image may, despite their best efforts, find themselves doing precisely as Hurlbut commands: they too must “sweep away” their own, post-Nakba present – which is indeed a present of “ruins” – to imagine walking alongside this man and this woman, through a Palestinian past equally as distant to us now as the biblical one was to Hurlbut, Underwood, and Underwood.

Yet as Hurlbut is quick to remind us, as the site of Lazarus’ tomb (still a major Christian pilgrimage site), al-‘Ayzariya is steeped in legends of resurrection and rebirth. “There are other questions that haunt us concerning Lazarus after his return to life here,” Hurlbut writes. “What became of him? What kind of a man would he be who has come back from the other world?” The very questions that “haunt” Hurlbut’s knowledge of Lazarus’ tale also haunt contemporary Palestinians’ present, as generations dispersed in Jordanian, Lebanese, Syrian, and Iraqi camps, and in cities and towns around the world, try to imagine what it would mean to “return,” Lazarus-like, to a land and a time they have known only in memory, in imagination. Echoing Hurlbut’s references to literary invocations of Lazarus – including Tennyson’s queries in “In Memoriam” and Browning’s tale of a doctor examining the “madman” Lazarus thirty years after his resurrection – we might here, today, invoke the Lazarus-like speaker of Mahmoud Darwish’s “In Jerusalem:”

Then what? A woman soldier shouted:  
Is that you again? Didn’t I kill you?  
I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die.

So too the man and woman in this photograph, walking, forgetting (like Lazarus) to die, silently refuse to be swept away, and invite us to imagine other Palestinian Lazaruses, returning from other worlds.

— *Emily Drumsta*



We are looking east across a square which has been an open square longer than tradition can reach. How many times has grain been sold here, as we are now selling it now? Note the men and no better grade, the good measure is by piling the grain being pressed down and striking over. It is an ancient custom here in the East to give the men who have heavy loads to be made by on the ground. And if that is done with you good measure, ground down and shaken together and weighing each shall now give you just measure.

The building beyond is of great interest, for many believe and with some reason that it stands over the very place where on Divine Time the Holy Child was born. The church stands at the center, flanked by three porches, two of which we see in the left and the other on the right. It is an ancient building, the date of its construction is not known, but it is believed to be the work of the Emperor Justinian in the 6th century. The church is a very beautiful one, and the scene is a very interesting one. The scene is a very interesting one, and the scene is a very interesting one.

Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, Palestine

A distance in time separates us from this image, but the place it depicts is very familiar. Men trying to sell their harvest of wheat, or barley. It must have been in the early summer, when the harvest season is usually at its peak. The sellers' faces are darkened from the sun, and their attire attests to the distance in time. In this familiar, yet distant place, the two sellers in the foreground of the image gaze toward what became, a few decades later, the police station. During the Israeli army presence in the middle of Bethlehem, the station was also an interrogation center. Speaking Arabic and using Arabic pseudonyms, such as the infamous "Abu al-Nimr," Israeli security services interrogated many Palestinians in that station.

The Nativity Church in the background is also a familiar place. In 2002, it was the site of deadly events when Israeli tanks filled the square and besieged the church. They killed eight Palestinians and an Armenian priest. With the end of the siege, thirteen Palestinian fighters left the church and went into exile. The siege of the church took place in early summer of 2002, very likely around the same time of year when the image was taken, more than a century before. During the siege, no sellers were seen in the vicinity. Perhaps it was the result of the curfew imposed by the Israeli army, or maybe because in that year, no wheat harvest was reported in Bethlehem.

— *Issam Nassar*



We are looking in a westerly direction across the city from the roof of the Church of the Nativity and the flat stone paving we are going upon is where the entrance hall of this ancient church once stood. But first, if we will accept the authority of tradition which in this case is probably true—let us pause to realize that on this hallowed spot was the inn where our Saviour was born nearly two thousand years ago. How the thought, even as a bare possibility, thrills us with emotion and reverence! Note the characteristic life of the place, the cramped and crooked streets, the dull, ugly architecture of a Syrian town, where, as usual, the indolent East stops short at the independence in dwellings and accommodation. Yet Bethlehem is a substantial, respectable place compared with most oriental cities. This is due to the fact that the 8000 people are mostly Christians, always more progressive than the Arabs, and that the money left over by innumerable pilgrims and tourists contributes to its prosperity. The tall tower in front may have been the minaret of a mosque before the Moslems were driven out by their Christian neighbors in 1831. The distant spire and dome belong to a Greek church. In the Greek, Roman and Armenian sects are represented here as elsewhere in Palestine. The building with many arches, on the right, is a monastery. Three illustrious names stand out in the annals of Bethlehem: Ruth, her great-grandson David, and David's greater descendant, Jesus the Christ. Ruth is her widow's veil has walked these streets; David may have played with his young companions in this very square. Hither up from the city gate, came Joseph and his young bride along the street at the right, seeking a resting place only to find it in a stable, just under the roof where we are standing. Here in a manger Mary laid her first-born Son.

See: *Travelling in the Holy Land through the Stereoscope*, by Jesse Lyman Hurlbur, D.D. with its special "keyed" maps; published by Underwood & Underwood.

Bethlehem, Birthplace of Jesus Christ.

Two nuns with white umbrellas herd school-aged girls, heads bent down and some holding books, into a long queue making its way to the Church of Nativity. The photographer stands on the roof, his camera focused on the complex architecture of bodies in the expansive square below. Most are on the left side of the queue, packed close together in bunches that hug the receding curtain of shade, as the late morning sun gathers strength on a hot summer day. One can almost hear the din of numerous conversations echoing off the walls. It is harvest season, after all! A horse-pulled carriage is also heading towards the church. What is the occasion?

The rest of the square is sprinkled with men, women, and children going to and from with receding purpose, taking little interest in the goats, sheep, and three mounds of grain for sale. The early morning shopping rush has dissipated and the square is in a more contemplative



mood. Like the family and friends congregated on the bottom right of the queue, it is time to take stock and regroup before heading home for the main meal. What are they talking about? Further down on the right, a lone figure in a smart jacket with one hand bent into his pants' pocket, stands at the foot of a flight of stairs casting a gaze at the theater before him.

This lively photograph of Bethlehem is accompanied by a long text, written in London or New York, that ignores the people in the square and dismisses the built environment surrounding it as typical of the “dull, ugly, architecture of ... the indolent East.” It privileges, instead, the distant spire of the Greek church and the monastery on the right of the square as platforms for the Christian redemption of Palestine. Much has been said about the scientific arrogance, religious bigotry, and imperial ambitions of biblical geography of the Holy Land, a genre to which this collection belongs. Most of its pictures are lifeless portraits of landscapes presumably touched by the feet of Jesus; ruthless staging of shepherds, tillers, wheat grinders, and lepers as icons of an unchanging world; and claustrophobic snapshots of crowds in tight spaces participating in exotic rituals. The discursive violence of erasure and racism of this genre primed Palestine for British rule and Zionist colonization with catastrophic consequences. But the people in the square have not gone away. This unique image tears through the ideological straightjacket of the writer and invites counter imaginations about the pasts and the futures of Palestine and the Palestinians.

— *Beshara Doumani*



44 (1895) Picturesque Palestine—the Wilderness of the Scapegoat, Judea, Palestine. American Photo-Engraving Co.

Picturesque Palestine, the Wilderness of the Scapegoat.  
 Le pittoresque Palestine, le désert du bouc émissaire.  
 Das pittoreske Palästina, die Wüste des Sündenbocks.  
 El pitoresco Palestina, el desierto del chivo puesto en libertad en la fiesta de expiación.  
 Det pittoreska Palestina, Syndabockens vilmarker.  
 Живописная Палестина, Иерусалимская Орисменна.

Despite the landscape bearing no immediately identifiable sign, it is not very difficult to locate the cameras' cone of vision in the contemporary landscape. The maps prepared by Underwood and Underwood mark the perspective of each stereoscopic pair on top of a relatively precise topographical rendering. Such marks anticipate the creation of "before and after" images. Simply locate your stereoscopic camera (or today a 3D scanner) at the edge of Mishor Adumim – an industrial zone east of one of the West Bank's largest settlements – and take an image looking east-southeast. The pairing of "before and after" photographs complete the task of stereoscopic pairing. While the latter's simultaneous but different perspectives springs out the third dimension, the former juxtaposition gives rise to the fourth. Before and after photographs tend to depict, celebrate, or scandalize, the passage of time as a story of radical change: development (here a city where there was none) or destruction (here a ruin where there once was a city) with the change in either direction being the result of violence to people and place. However, in the mountain of the scapegoat, your contemporary "after" images would show the very same barren mountains as in the 19xx "befores." Freezing out time takes its violent toll too: squeezed between a live-fire range and a nature reserve it is the site of the continuous eviction-return-and eviction of al-Jahalin – a Bedouin group that settled there after being expelled from the Naqab in 1948.

— *Eyal Weizman*



Position 26—Uniform S. S. League—July 12, 1914

Jordan and the "Promised Land" from the Cliffs of Moab, Palestine.  
 Le Jourdain et la "Terre Promise"—des falaises de Moab, Palestine.  
 Der Jordan und das gelobte Land von Moabs Klippen aus, Palästina.  
 El Jordán y la "tierra prometida," desde las Rocas de Moab, Palestina.  
 Jordan och "Det Eglöföde landet," från Moabs klippor, Palestina.  
 Лозанъ и "Обѣщанное Земле" изъ Моавскихъ Утесовъ, Палестина.

Once upon a time the River Jordan had plenty of water. It was enough to provide the farmers along its banks with all the water they needed. The river poured an ample amount into the Dead Sea, sustaining this unique body of water. It provided its visitors with space for sports and attractive picnic areas along its banks. But then its waters were diverted, its banks were closed to visitors by barbed wire, and the ground on either side was mined. From a river providing sustenance, connectivity, and pleasure, it was transformed into a noose that closed in those living on its western bank.

One day all this will change. The river will flow again in the vast open, liberated, and united Great Rift Valley that stretches from northern Syria through the Dead Sea to Lake Tiberius. The Dead Sea waters will rise again and the unique sea will be saved. No more sink holes will form along its shore. Sporting events will resume again. The mines will be cleared and parks will be built where bombs were once planted. And it will become possible again to picnic and enjoy what the river has to offer. Then more photos would be taken of happy people rowing down the beautiful River Jordan.

— Raja Shehadeh



The Fountain of Eliza—Miraculously Sweetened by the Peschet (a Kings II, 19-22).  
 La Fontaine du Prophete Elisee—adoucie par un miracle de prophete (a Roi II, 19-22).  
 Elisee's Quelle—beside ein Brunnen des Propheten, bewundert in ihr Wasser (a. König II, 19-22).  
 El Fuenta de Eliaz—miragrosamente hecha dulce por el profeta (a Los Reyes II, 19-22).  
 Eliaz' Brunne—ivary vatten af profeta i gjudes söt (a Konungaboken II, 19-22).  
 Источникъ Елизъ, чудеснымъ образомъ сладкимъ пророкомъ елисейемъ. (Царствъ II  
 19—22).

Workers from a nearby-gated housing community collecting water from a spring for the front lawns of five of its estate houses located near the US-EU funded Palestinian Academy for Security Studies.

— Hanan Toukan



Plain of the Jordan, southeast from the ruins of ancient Jericho, Palestine.  
 Plaine du Jourdain, au Sud-Est, des ruines de l'ancienne Jéricho, Palestine.  
 Ebene des Jordan; ܐܒܢܝܢܝܢ ܕܡܫܗܘܪܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ.  
 Llanuras del río Jordán, al sud-este de las ruinas del antiguo Jericó, Palestina.  
 Jordan slättan, sydöst om ruinerna af det gamla Jeriko, Palestina.  
 ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ ܕܗܝܘܠܐ.

The information could have merely clarified where this photograph was taken. However, the reference to “ancient Jericho” adds a biblical touch to the image and dictates the way we view the photograph. Traditional dress fulfills the text’s promise and adds a touch of sanctity, or at least some ceremonial atmosphere to the situation itself – a father and son, or perhaps grandfather and grandson sitting at a strategic spot, ignoring the landscape. The conversation seems more important.

Or maybe the landscape is so habitually obvious that there is no need to regard it? As far as I understand, the landscape in this region has never been obvious, and this adds weight to the substance of their conversation, or lesson, or promise of sorts.

The question arising from the photograph is why there? Why at this vantage point overlooking the landscape, why is this occasion taking place at a site of power and control? No doubt this is part of the text, that non-textual part, like a “presentation,” perhaps that which the text cannot explain. And perhaps their presence at the cliff symbolizes precisely the possible danger and loss hovering over any landscape by force of its demand for ownership or belonging.

However, a camera and a photographer are present. The event of photography empties the photograph of any speculation as to the event itself – it is a planned occasion and technically even demanding. This is no mere snapshot. Much time is needed to operate the heavy, clumsy camera that must have required glass plates.

Whose choice is it to show the child’s face, while the adult (perhaps his grandfather or father) is unidentifiable? Perhaps the site was chosen for its light, or the body posture it enabled? Does the photographer produce a kind of homage to the work of painter and master-etching artist Gustave Doré, whose works are identified with biblical imagery? In both cases this is a dialogue between an image and an object. Holding a Bible in one’s hand while viewing Gustave Doré’s illustrations changes one’s regard of the image. I presume a similar thing happens when one holds the platform on which the photograph is shown with the information in its caption – traces of time that change its patina or volume dictated by the technology.

And there still remain unanswered questions about the event itself.

— *Miki Kratsman*



A Street in Ramah, Palestine (I Samuel 1: 19-20).  
 Une rue de Ramah, Palestine (I Samuel I. 19-20).  
 Eine Straße in Ramah, Palästina (I Samuel I. 19-20).  
 Una Calle en Ramah, Palestina (I Samuel, I. 19-20).  
 En gata i Ramah, Palestina (I Sam. 1: 19-20).  
 Yanga vs Parki, Hasserana (I Canyon 1: 16-20).



Despite their confusion about the exact location of the biblical town of Ramah, upon reaching this street, the travelers confidently declared that they had arrived. For the purposes of their exploration of this “typical street in an Oriental city,” the actual name of the city was of little importance. The street’s narrowness and irregularity suggested to the travelers a primitive disorder that transcended city boundaries. An almost identically defined disorder was diagnosed by the travelers’ contemporaries from Mumbai to Cairo. Architecture itself became medicalized: colonial discourse turned the dirty, crowded streets into a source of plagues and chaotic street patterns into a symptom of the peoples’ lawlessness.

Orientalist travelers’ denigration of the built environment came into contradiction with their simultaneous admiration of the architecture’s simplicity and harmony with its landscape. As it turned out, though, a foolproof architectural analysis was not necessary to achieve the ultimate end of Orientalist discourse: the construction of a totalizing knowledge that asserted authority over the region and the people in it.

When these travelers arrived in Palestine, there were no plans to alter the cities and towns they visited. Yet the discursive need to bring order out of the chaos of the Oriental city was already taking on physical dimensions in cities like French Algiers and British Calcutta. As colonial aspirations shifted from knowing to dominating, Oriental architecture was no longer a mysterious relic but a military threat. Narrow streets were difficult for the army to penetrate; local public spaces were a locus of resistance. Across the colonial world, architects and planners considered themselves to be at war with the built environment. In Palestine, the travelers’ representation of the Oriental city reflected, predicted, and justified the physical destruction of the existing architecture and its replacement with the European-style public squares and modernist gridiron patterns essential to much of Israel’s architecture today.

— *Sophie Kasakove*



Gathering Yares from Wheat, in the stony Fields of Bethel, Palestine (looking south).  
 Enlèvement de l'étrale du Froment dans les Champs pierreux de Bethel, Palestine  
 (regardant au sud).  
 Wafajien d'el l'infants nom Wafajien in des feldmitten f'el'eren von Bethel, Palestina (südlich  
 blickend).  
 Recogiendo Ziraña de entre el trigo, en los campos pedregosos de Bethel, Palestina (mirando  
 al Sur).  
 Samlande agvarna från hvstet, på det Steniga Bethel fältet, Palestina (seende i söder).  
 Отдѣленіе колосковъ отъ сноповъ на каменистѣхъ поляхъ Ветлѣна. Палестина (сѣвъ  
 на-югъ).

The photographer reassures himself that from the spot where he is positioning himself to take the picture, no one will pay attention to the fact that the “Arab with a gun, on that heap of stones,” is only a young kid, probably the son of one of the women in the set. The author of the original caption would even call him “a guard watching for robbers.” The photographer could not anticipate that over a century later, the visual data he is capturing could be zoomed in so that the expression of the young guy will reveal the joy he felt when he was offered the role of a guard. The photographer seems confident in the legibility of the image he was staging, as well as in the role distribution among the protagonists: an overseer, women (“the weaker sex”) “scattered in the field” as “servants,” and a “householder” who can be distinguished by his “dress and dignity of carriage.”

Indeed, the author who viewed the stereoscopic cards sometime later, though he was possibly more attuned to the “Biblical scene” than the photographer, saw everything eye to eye with him. He even didn’t forget to reassure the viewers and readers, with whom he associates through the familiarity of a “we,” that “in our country we should devise some machine to screen them apart [the tares and the wheat], but here labor is cheap, not over six to ten per day, and everything is done by hand.” The gaze of both, however, was colonized by the opposition of backwardness with modernity as capturing the human condition. Therefore, they could not anticipate that those women in the field could be gleaners, collecting leftovers after the harvest, that surplus purposefully left by the field’s owner to the poor and the stranger. These women were protected by a local custom, whose abolishment is anticipated by the gaze of a modern imperial overseer. Against this gaze, we may even see these women as prophets of sorts. Working in the shadow of an invading colonial gaze they dimly envisage the threat to their very ability to use their own best seeds and collect them for the coming years.

— *Ariella Aisha Azoulay*



She stepped out of her village, ‘Askar. One day it would be a refuge. But not yet. Her feet met the cracked road in an awkward, familiar embrace. The sun was relentless and the air dry and hot. The mountains stood imposing. One promised blessings. The other threatened curses.

How much fruit would the fields yield? How much fruit would her body birth?

One mountain was the highest, the oldest, the most central, the most sacred, the site of annual pilgrimage. The other stored living remains: corals, skeletons, waste, and shells. The sediment of stories glittered in their beauty. Their ugliness screeched.

Descending the steps, the cool air of the well was always an awakening. The piercing touch of the silver on flesh was a reminder of the heat above. The summer had not reached the depths of the well. In her descent she revealed that here too, there were sediments of stories: of thirst, and salvation, of life and death.

She lived for the water. It was the deepest source of comfort and inspiration. It was grounded in this place and its layers but a refuge from it.

Between the past and the present, the claims and the promises, the blessings and the curses, she rested on the cool stone, full of longing for this place and the relentless desire to escape it.

— *Sherene Seikaly*

The gloomy light in the cave somehow mitigated the blistering sun outside. Esther stepped silently into the well, where she encounters a woman who strikes her as the young Rachel. The woman’s eyes were attracted to her reflection in the water, as if she hoped to grasp something of the hellish nightmare that haunted her last night.

Esther was unsettled by the icons posed on the cave’s walls. She sat nearby her, asking for her name and offering some dates and a lukewarm tea.

They tasted the dates and drank the tea.

Esther broke the silence and asked: “Are you here to contemplate?”

You have come down a flight of stone steps into the little Chapel that has been built about the old well, in the valley between Mt. Elai and Mt. Gerizim.

Here is a woman of Samaria, just drawing water! Indeed she is a real Samaritan woman from the very village of Isear (Sychar of the Bible) that the woman came from whom Christ met—the town where He was invited to stay and where he did stay two days (John IV, 49). You observe that she has brought her own rope, and her water-jar rests on the well-curb. I wonder whether the woman who came from Sychar to this well 1800 years ago was dressed in a striped gown and wore earrings and beads. The well has been cleaned out to a depth of seventy-five feet; the debris might be dug out fifty feet further to make it as it was in ancient days. Look at that stone curb, what seams and corrugations centuries of water-drawing have worn!

You see this is a Greek Chapel, from the lamps and pictures under the roof. That curious arrangement at the left is for the purpose of lowering down into the well a coil of lighted magnesium wire, enabling the visitor to see the walls of the well and its water far below. Every traveller now receives a cup of water, cool and refreshing, from the depths.

There are forty streams flowing down the sides of Gerizim and Elai, with more water close at hand than any other region in Palestine possesses. Why should anybody hew out a well through solid rock, 125 feet deep? Evidently there lived here a man who needed an abundant supply of water and who found the springs and streams already possessed by rivals. (Gen. XXXIII, 18-20.)

(See "Travelling in the Holy Land by the Stereoscope," with special, keyed maps, locating each standpoint taken and identifying the landmarks.)

From *Notes of Travel*, No. 7, copyright, 69  
*Underwood & Underwood*.

A Samaritan Woman at Jacob's Well; Palestine.

Her question awakened a ghost from the bottom of the well. Through his voice they knew that without knowing each other, they were hit by the same vision.

The voice wanes off, but the well remains seeped with horror. The women's bewilderment and shock were interrupted by the entrance of a tall European man with a camera on his back.

The young woman whispered to Esther: "I know this guy. I have guided him to this place, looking for the event of photography to take place."

"Shall we start?" the photographer asked sternly.

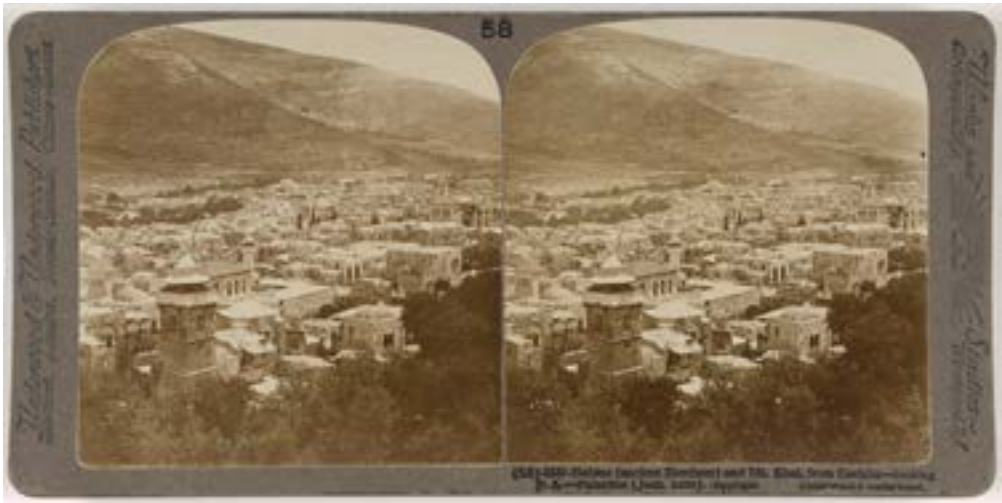
The young woman nodded in compliance.

Without saying a word, Esther held tightly the woman's hand, and walked out.

When the sound of the flash puffed, she was already on her way, on the back of a donkey praying that the flashing light will magically exorcise the horrific vision from the young women's eyes.

Years after Esther's death, and the death of her daughter Malka, her grandson, Joshua, my grandfather, sat on 16 November in his armchair not far away from the city of Yaffa and read in the newspaper, with some pride mixed with compassion, though not without repulsion, about a man with quite ordinary ideas, who entered Jacob's Well, and smashed with an axe the skull of a Hegumen. In the name of god.

— *Hagar Ophir*



Nablus (ancient Shechem) and Mt. Ebal, from Gerizim—looking northeast—Palestine (Josh. xxiv).

Nablus (ancienne Sichem) et le Mont Ebal, du Gerizim—en regardant au nord-est—Palestine (Joua XXIV).

Nablus (das alte Sichem) und Berg Ebal, von Gerizim—nordöstlich—Palästina (Josua XXIV.)

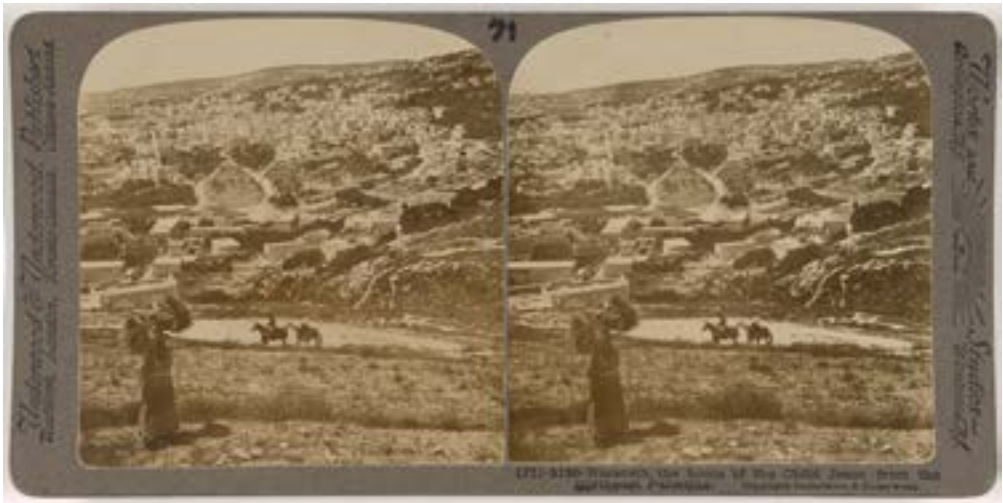
Nablus (el antiguo Sichem) y el Monte Ebal, desde Gerizim—mirando al noroeste—Palestina (Josua xxv).

Nablus (det gamla Sichem) och bergat Ebal, från Gerizim—seende nordost—Palestina (Jos. 24).

Наблус (древній Сичем) и гора Евал, охвъ от Геризима на сѣверо-востоку; Палестина (Josue XXIV).

This is my hometown.  
The birthplace of my ancestors  
Where my parents *lived, played, worked, worshipped,*  
*and died*  
Mother... passionate artist, radical activist  
Father... community leader, elected official  
I grew up in that big house with the large dome  
A courtyard covered by a jasmine tree and the sky This was my playground  
I made long jasmine garlands for Mommy  
Oh.... I can still smell the jasmine.  
*At home, Mom sang as Dad played the oud*  
My fondest memory is of walking back from the bakery with my oldest brother  
eating the fresh hot bread, skipping and singing. We would stop by my grandfathers'  
shop...  
He would give us some money, or *sukar faddi* (rock  
candy crystals) from the store.  
Everything around me was colorful and beautiful.  
Then, in June 1967, things took a different turn. "War is imminent" we were told...  
and we have  
to prepare.  
Mom, a very resilient and resolute woman, led  
the efforts.  
Next morning, backpack prepared with nametags  
and contact information for all of the children.  
The bags had some money, food, and water Mom placed some of her most valuable  
golden  
bracelets around mine and my sisters' upper arms and we were instructed to wear  
long-sleeved tops to hide the bracelets.  
*The oud became silent and Mom stopped singing.*  
Tears drop on Mom's cheek as she sews Palestinian flags and writes songs of  
resistance.  
My sisters and I carry the flags and chant Mom's songs in huge demonstrations  
*Nablus ya Jabal al-Nar; thawra ala al-isti'mar.*  
Each protest is followed by funerals. This became everyday life  
This is where I *lived, loved, and resisted.*  
Where I broke all the rules, and became defiant... Where I endured the pain of  
burying my best friend  
Lina and many other martyrs...  
The earth is still the same, olive oil and blood. This is my hometown  
This is Nablus.

— *Issmat Atteereh*



This very hollow among the hills our Lord must have looked upon many and many a time. "Perhaps in His day the town may have stood higher up on the side of yonder hill, but otherwise, at this distance, it may have appeared much as it appears to us now. As we are looking southwest, the distant mountain, dimly seen over the ridge at the left, must be part of the Carmel range. Do you see the road below on the left, which leads directly to the town? A short distance down that road, but hidden from our sight by buildings is the Fountain of the Virgin. That open field, oval in shape, containing a few olive trees, is the Mohammedan cemetery; on the right is another field of olives where tourists encamp. The group of buildings just in front of us, on the right of the road leading to the town, belongs to Russian Greeks; beyond the cemetery is the Moslem quarter; the Roman Catholics are on the hillside farther still.

"We cannot point to one spot more than another as His home, yet we know that he must have walked these streets and climbed these hills and viewed this valley." (Matt. II, 23; Luke I, 26-27; Luke II, 39-40.) In what kind of a house may we suppose that Joseph the carpenter and his wife lived with their Son? Perhaps it was not unlike the houses of the humbler (yet not the poorest) people as we see them now, one story high, made of rough stone plastered, with a door but not certainly a window; do you know that was the reason why the woman in the parable lighted her lamp when she would look for the lost piece of silver, as Jesus had seen his mother do. There was no window in her one-room house!"

(See "Travelling in the Holy Land by the Stereoscope," with special keyed maps, locating each standpoint taken and identifying the landmarks.)

From *Notes of Travel, No. 7*, copyright, 1899  
*Understood & Understood.*

Nazareth, the Home of the Child Jesus; Palestine.

Hurlbut invites us to look on Nazareth as "home of the child Jesus," using the sweeping landscapes and exteriors of the photograph to paradoxically reconstruct the interior of Jesus' home, based on evidence from the parables about him in the books of Matthew, Luke, and James. "There was a lamp on its stand; a measure, used also as a receptacle for food; a bed of a roll of matting," Hurlbut writes. "The only chimney may have been a hole in the roof." This list paints an intimate portrait of a humble, homey interior, yet the very intimacy of Hurlbut's tone contrasts with the composition of the photograph. In the foreground, a woman at work carrying hay pauses to look out over the city below. Her back is turned to the viewer and to the eye of the camera, and it is as though this turning has compelled the photographer to look up and



beyond her, to the city below and, further out, to the hills and sky in the distance.

Maybe she, like the viewer, is looking out over the city – or maybe she has paused to talk to the two men on horses down below, one of whom has his head turned toward her, and toward the viewer. Instead of recreating the interior of Jesus’ home, we might recreate the kind of social life that once took place between the residents of Nazareth, the kind of conversation these three might have been having in 1913. Or, building off Hurlbut’s assertion that “everybody naturally uses for illustrations the facts that he is most familiar with,” we might ask with what facts contemporary Nazarenes are most familiar, and what kinds of worlds and interiors they might imagine looking at this photograph. They might think of the city’s many poets, such as Taha Muhammad Ali and Tawfiq Zayyad, or the comfortable, familial interiors of Elia Suleiman’s films. They might remember one particularly famous poem by Zayyad, “On an Olive Tree in the Courtyard of My Home:”

Because I don’t weave wool  
Because every day I am subject to detention  
and my house is subject to the police  
who come to search and “sweep”  
Because I cannot buy paper to write on  
I will carve what I say  
I will carve my secrets  
on the olive tree  
in the courtyard of my house.

In this way we exchange one interior for another, one household for another. We might also simply “remain for some time on this hill,” as Hurlbut invites us to do in the first sentence of his description. But instead of “looking down upon the view that our Lord must have seen hundreds of times,” we might remain with the woman carrying hay and the men down below, recreating a social life – with its everyday encounters and pleasantries – that today is marked, like the tree in Zayyad’s poem, by narratives of detention, police searches, and checkpoints.

— *Emily Drumsta*



(72) 1200. Jordan "Fountain of the Virgin," where Mary drew the water. Palestine, Palestine. Underwood & Underwood.

You are looking nearly northeast across this square. Jerusalem is between seventy and eighty miles away at the south (behind you and at your right); Tiberias and the Galilee shores are only about fifteen miles away over beyond those hills that you see above the larger building. "Notice that recess arched over; that is the fountain from which the people of Nazareth have obtained water for centuries unknown. The source of the supply is a spring which bubbles up under the floor of a church at some distance up the hill. This arch may be modern, but the fountain is very ancient. It receives its name from the Mother of our Lord, who must have journeyed to this spring daily for water, just as you will still see women coming with water-jars poised on head or shoulder, morning and evening. See that young woman with her little boy -- I wonder whether the costumes of Mary and her Son looked like the dress of that pair? Perhaps they did, except for the fez cap, which is a modern fashion. How much do you suppose that jar of water will weigh? I once tried to lift a filled jar, as it stood on that corner of the wall nearest to us, and found it all that I cared to lift. A woman smiled at my awkwardness, picked up the jar with an easy swing, lifted it on her shoulder, and walked away with it in apparent ease. Daily, Mary and the Child Jesus must have walked hand-in-hand to this very spring, for it was then as now the universal custom for the women to carry the water to the home."

From *Travelling in the Holy Land through the Stereoscope*, by Jesse Lyman Hurlbut, D. D., with special "keyed" maps locating 100 interesting observation standpoints, and identifying all the local landmarks; published by Underwood & Underwood.

Ancient Fountain of the Virgin, Nazareth, Palestine.

Although not mentioned in the Gospels, the Fountain of the Virgin in Nazareth, known locally as St. Mary's Well, is where believers place Mary drawing water for her everyday needs accompanied by the child Jesus. Wells are public sociable spaces, watering spots where men and women mingle, animals and children meet, news is exchanged and rumors circulate. "How much do you suppose that jar of water will weigh?" the caption writer asks, foregrounding an enduring association between the Virgin Mary and water. Cults to imbibe her waters, famed for their healing properties to cure eye afflictions and female infertility, became the foundation of Marian pilgrimages throughout the Mediterranean. Affinities

between fecundity and water are represented by the female uterus imagined as a curvilinear earthenware jar or upside-down jug that mixes male and female elements. Thus, a circum-Mediterranean corporeal metaphor of oppositions germinating productively within the uterus (a human is created) continues its transposition emblematically upward outside the body to the woman's water jug (nourishing a household) and outward as ever-flowing well water (quenching a people).

The 1900 caption and image explicitly connect this sacred site and "the present life of this land directly with the events of nineteen hundred years ago." Once pure water streamed from the hills and mountains in the north, a source for the inhabitants' drinking water flowing downward to the Virgin's Fountain, a central Christian holy site located at the heart of the main square of Nazareth, a city that is Israel's largest Palestinian Arab urban center. Since the late 1990s, the well is dry. There is no water. Such states of enforced dryness are hallmarks of the post-1948 catastrophic realities that created two Nazareths, bifurcating place into a Jewish Israeli Upper Nazareth that rises above to encircle and hydrologically strangle the Palestinian Arab city below.

— *Susan Slyomovics*



A Christian Girl of Nazareth, Palestine.  
 Une jeune Chrétienne de Nazareth, Palestine.  
 Eix Çarıfien Mâsden yox Nazaret, Paleştina.  
 Uma Muchacina cristãna de Nazaret, Palestina.  
 En kristen flicka i Nazaret, Palestina.  
 Христианска дѣвоуца Назарета, Палестина.

The cover of Nitza Ben Ari's Hebrew book *Suppression of the Erotic in Modern Hebrew Literature* shows a framed photograph of two women in lesbian pornographic imagery. A red tape covers their breasts, their waists down are outside the frame of the picture. In the localization process of the book to the American market, not only was the language translated, but the book's cover was transformed as well. The English translation shows a painting with biblical resonances of a woman holding a clay jar on her shoulder. She is naked: the book's title hides her breasts. Through this act of image translation, the erotic charge and promise of the Woman-with-a-Clay-Jar image becomes manifest.

When I first saw this Woman-with-a-Clay-Jar image, I thought, "This woman is posing." I went back to look at the other photos, to search for other acts of posing. I imagined the interaction. "Stand like this," "stand like that," "no, there, in the light." There must have been a translator there, and a guide, a dragoman.

I too was once hired to be a dragoman. A European photographer came to photograph places with histories connecting them to the Nakba. He needed someone to show him around and talk to the people for him; I needed the money. The first place we went was Lydda. He had a very big, slow functioning camera. He had to put it on a tripod, and make long light and distance measures. Each photo took him about fifteen minutes to take. I had to stop people in the street and tell them this man wants to take a picture of you. The people were polite and said yes. Only after a minute or two they realized what they had gotten themselves into. With each, the photographer adjusted his gear and then for long moments told the person how to stand, adjusting their bodies to his visual need. I translated. The women, I thought, were much more trained in this art of bodily satisfying the masculine demand. In the car, I asked the photographer why he used such a slow camera and stopped people in the middle of their day for such a long time. He explained to me that that was exactly why he liked to work with that camera; it takes a long time and then he can get to meet the people whose portrait he takes.

— Tomer Gardi



Western end of the Plain of Esdraelon and Mt. Carmel, from Sheikh Barak, Palestine.

Extrême Occidentale de la Plaine de Esdraelon et le Mont Carmel, de Sheikh Barak, Palestine.

Der westliche Teil der Ebene von Esdraelon und der Carmel Berg, von Sheikh Barak aus, Palästina.

Extremidad occidental de la llanura de Esdraelon y el Monte Carmel, desde Sheikh Barak, Palestina.

Västra änden af Esdraelon slätten, och Karmel, från Sheikh Barak, Palestina.

Западный конец долины Исрафелитской и горы Кармел — вид с Шейха Барак, Палестина.

Stereographs produce the illusion of depth and solidity, the mysterious sense of being there. Left eye conspires with right to find in the convergence of lines, light, and shadow a third dimension. Rationalizing the small discrepancies, the mind burrows into shadow and glides over illuminated surfaces to form a single image. To look at this stereograph and read its caption – “Western end of the plain of Esdraelon and Mt. Carmel, from Sheikh Barak, Palestine” – is to experience another doubling of vision, where difference is not so easily reconciled. Who are the unnamed people? What is the woman looking at from the vantage of her roof? What is the man saying to the boy – perhaps his son? The receding biblical landscape seems to swallow them, leaving no trace.

We look at such scenes expecting them to reveal something, to make visible an underlying coherence that has been lost. Incidental details take hold in our imagination. The texture of the surfaces – jagged rock, hard hand-smoothed clay, and the dry rushes on the roof that crackle underfoot. These minor revelations delineate the modes and materials of construction. I hear the sound of work. A song, perhaps “Dal ‘Uwna,” is sung to encourage collective effort, the refrain mimicking the sound of stamping feet compacting clay and straw underfoot, or a scythe cutting grass. Its echoes are still heard in south Lebanon, where Sada Kayed, a refugee from Balad al-Shaykh – who might well be related to those pictured – sings a variation on it:

*The beloved has left without bidding us farewell.  
Oh birds, fly together,  
Let us exchange sad times for happy ones.  
I wish I were a garden planted with date palms,  
Let my parents not give me to anyone by you!  
... I have two kilos and a box of songs,  
Those that are on my lips are different from those in my heart.*

— Diana Allan



Haifa and the Bay of Akko, east from Mt. Carmel,  
 Palestine.  
 Haifa et la baie d'Akkon vues de l'est du Mont Car-  
 mel, Palestine.  
 Haifa und der Bucht von Akko, gesehen vom Berg  
 Carmel aus gesehen, Palästina.  
 Haifa y la bahía de Akko, vistas del Monte Carmel  
 hacia el este, Palestina.  
 Haifa von Akkon her, gesehen über den Berg  
 Carmel, Palästina.  
 Видъ Галифы и Аккерской бухты съ востока отъ  
 горы Кармелъ, Палестина.

We are taught that the stereoscopic image gave an added dimension to the flat, two-dimensional photograph. In the process, it forced the viewer to acknowledge the medium in the viewing experience. The stereo photograph presents the foreground as its focus, its subject, and its text. The background provides its depth, its receding points of view, its backdrop and its context. Despite its illusions of unity and depth, the stereoscopic image is bifurcated, cut in half, stacked, and layered within and upon itself. Without the prosthetic stereoscope to aid, the image is doubled; locked in a partnership of adjacency, it reveals the seams within its own composition and complicity in the act of viewing.

Haifa lays low, kissing the Mediterranean, disconnected from Mt. Carmel to the southeast. The image is almost abstract, line segments cutting from upper right to



bottom left corners by the diagonal of the mountain edge, the line of the trees, and the stark narrow band of the white wall. The diagonal that bisects the image is the bar of history, the bar of 1948. Haifa was a lost city before Operation Bi'ur Hametz or the "Passover Cleansing" by the Haganah's Carmeli Brigade. The United Nations assigned it to the Yishuv and its slow degeneration in Zionist control was an eventuality.

With this in mind, the biblical passage that accompanies the image (1 Kings xviii, 42–46) seems as prescient as it is ironic. The verse tells us that the prophet Elijah, on Mt. Carmel, commanded his servant to go up and look at the sea. Seven times, he does not see anything but then sees a small cloud rising like a hand over the water. It will turn into a storm to break a drought over Palestine. It will be a cleansing rain. Elijah sends the servant to tell the king to prepare for the storm.

The abstract photograph of Haifa – it is of Haifa, after all, and not of the foreground of Mt. Carmel – offers us a text like scripture. It is read like a prophecy of acts that have eventually transpired. The stereo image is folded upon itself, the back and foreground, 1900 and 1948. Two almost identical images locked in adjacency, both split by the diagonal that folds Haifa under Mt. Carmel. The Palestinian man and his horse look over the wall, over the diagonal lines. With him and at him, we look through the bar of history but, indeed, we can only now detect the storm coming after it has already passed.

— *Stephen Sheehi*

I really love this photographic view of a peaceful Haifa as seen from Mount Carmel, and of the coastal road between Haifa and 'Akka (now the Israeli city of Akko). The road was once one of the major commercial arteries of Ottoman Palestine, and the photograph evokes a time when the coastal cities of Haifa and 'Akka were major stops on Ottoman trading routes from the interior provinces of the empire to the sea. The accompanying text alludes to the modernity that had "arrived at Haifa" due to its location and its frequent trading visitors from Europe; it also alludes to the large group of German settlers who comprised the once-thriving German colony that settled in Haifa in the late nineteenth century. The photograph evokes a nostalgia in the viewer for a vibrant commercial and economic past that is now no more: though Haifa remains home to an energetic Palestinian population, it is no longer a vital stop on a Palestinian trade route; no Palestinian goods can enter or leave now through the port of Haifa; and there is now no real Palestinian economy to speak of.

— *Sreemati Mitter*



2160. We are facing northeast. Behind us, some ten miles is Cana. That deep gorge beyond the well-eroded hills is the "Valley of the Pigeons," from the thousands of pigeons that make their nests in its walls. Five miles beyond, and far below, we see the curving shores of the Sea of Galilee. That first place beside the sea is the Plain of Gennesaret. It is on the north-western shore, a little south of Capernaum. Every place on which our eyes now rest has its historical, sacred and Biblical. Here on this mountain, Jesus may have sat with his disciples and spoken to them that greatest of all sermons (Matt. VIII). It is possible that this is "the mountain in Galilee" where the risen Christ appeared to the great body of his followers (Matt. XXVIII:16; I Corinthians XV:6).

If we were wiser that wild sea we should find the walls looming a thousand feet high, honeycombed with caves. In the days of Herod the Great they were a resort of robbers, and so difficult of approach that Herod's warriors could reach them only by lowering from above great chests filled with soldiers. Here then the robbers slew each other, and the loss of the hand kept down the precipice rather than surrender. Here, too, was fought the last battle of the Crusaders in 1132, when the Christian knights of India passed away.

But look beyond this valley with its grim associations to that calm plain of Gennesaret. Do you remember that on the morning after the night when Jesus walked on the water, he landed on that place (Matt. XIV 34)? The news of the great miracle's coming went throughout the region; and its people brought to him their sick to be restored by his touch.

(Taken from *Herod's Testament to the Holy Land*, published by *Geographical & Historical*.)

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N. E. from Mt. of Beatitudes to Sea of Galilee, Pal.  
 Du Meer des Betsaidaen im N. E. von la Mer de Galilee, Pal.  
 Vom Berg der Seligkeiten nordoestlich auf den See von Galilee gesehen, Pal.  
 Mirando al N. E. desde el monte de las Bienaventuranzas hacia el mar de Galilea.  
 Durdal it urvokur: 1132 byskaldgletinnu bergi mill Gallaasapen, Pal.  
 G. E. von der Berg der Seligkeiten ge Dardafinnu seen, Betsaidaen.

In Doris Lessing's short story, "The Old Chief Mshlanga," the protagonist is a young white girl on a settler farm in southern Africa. Walking through the veld she "could not see a msasa tree, or the thorn, for what they were" because her "books held tales of alien fairies, her rivers ran slow and peaceful, and she knew the shape of the leaves of an ash or an oak..." Standing on an ancient jutting rock, her eyes were "sightless for anything but a pale willowed river, a pale gleaming castle."<sup>7</sup>

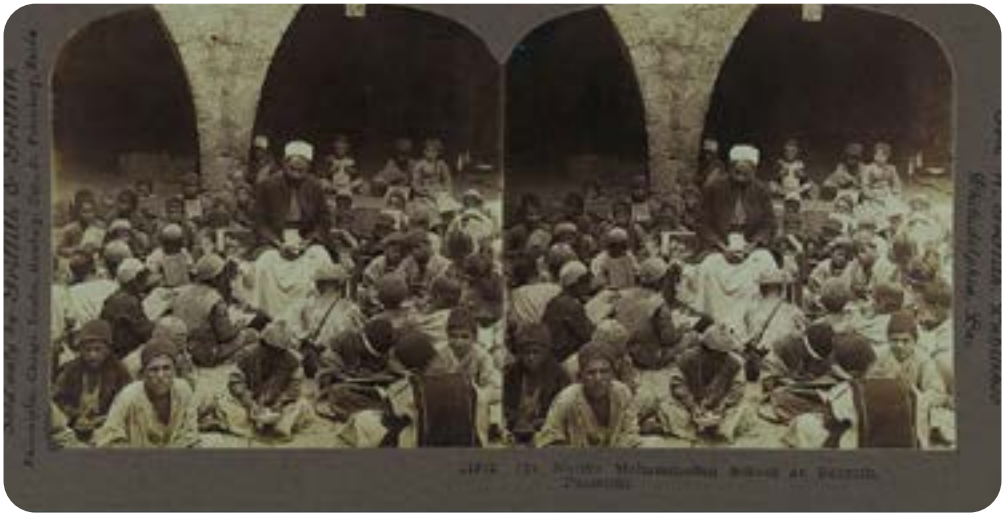
Like this girl, the traveler in the Holy Land who describes the view from the "Mount of Beatitudes" (where Jesus may have given his famous sermon, writes Hurlbut, though most Christians today agree that it was elsewhere) sees in the distance the Sea of Galilee and beyond that the Plain of Gennesaret where the people brought their sick to Jesus to be restored. He sees the looming gap of the "Valley of the Pigeons" as that place where robbers hid from Herod's warriors and then slew each other. Here too, the last battle of the Crusades. "Every place on which our eyes now rest has its memories, sacred and historical."

Yet the frame is filled with the unmistakable regular lines of field boundaries across a wide stretch of intensely cultivated land. Who was plowing and planting this land? Our traveler does not see them.

What do these tilled fields tell us about the land of Palestine just before European Zionist settlers would begin to arrive, armed with arguments about redeeming the undeveloped land of Palestine? Was their labor needed to make productive these fields of the fertile plains of Hittin, long cultivated with cereals, summer crops, and even cotton by Palestinian Arabs?

These fields attracted the Jewish National Fund that purchased a small number of dunums in 1904, just a few years after our American Christian pilgrim stood here. Now the plain lies thick with the sprawling buildings and dense trees of an Israeli Jewish settlement called Arbel. Founded by demobilized soldiers in 1949, it erased from view and existence after the Nakba, the Palestinian village of Hittin. Who farms the fertile plain now?

— *Lila Abu-Lughod and Omar Imseeh Tesdell*



What is she doing there? Native Mohammedan school in Bireh, 1905 (George Griffith, Publisher). This image of the local *kuttab* (primary school) in al-Bireh was taken by an unidentified photographer in 1905. It is similar in size and format to another *kuttab* image taken in 1903 by Carlton Graves. The *kuttab* were local village primary schools aimed at teaching children reading, writing, grammar, and arithmetic.

The *kuttab* were immortalized by Taha Hussein in his autobiographical *al-Ayyam*. His portrayal of the *kuttab* was as a system of mindless rote learning, with the teacher portrayed either as an idiot or blind, or both. Since Hussein was himself blind, his reference to *the blind teaching the blind* was both affectionate and sardonic.

But the *kuttabs* were the core instrument of establishing literacy for the rural population, where – for the most part – government or missionary schools were either non-existent, or not accessible. It prepared those students who were deemed able to continue their studies at the *nizamiyya i'dadi* (intermediate) or *rushdi* (secondary) schools.

Village *kuttab* schools were located in the village *madafeh* (guesthouse), or in the vicinity of the local *masjid*. In the city, the *kuttab* were attached to the mosques or the *zawiya*. This photograph was taken in al-Bireh on the eve of the establishment of the Quaker mission for boys (The Friends School) in al-Bireh, and was probably intended by the photographer to contrast the primitiveness of native schooling with modern education provided by the mission schools. *Kuttabs* were normally segregated and girls were taught separately in their own *kuttab*, often by the same *shaykh*, or Qur'anic reader. In many villages, however, there were not enough girls to necessitate having a separate *kuttab* and the girls in this case would join the boys' circle. In the case of the al-Bireh stereoscopic image above, we find a lone girl in the upper right corner (of the photo) holding her notebook and listening intently to the *shaykh*. In contrast to her male companions, she is relaxed, sitting straight, head uncovered, and striking a defiant pose.

— *Salim Tamari*

## Endnotes

- 1 Exhibition, March 2017 at Brown University, Center for Middle East Studies, see online at [watson.brown.edu/cmest/events/2017/exhibition-time-machine-stereoscopic-views-palestine-1900](http://watson.brown.edu/cmest/events/2017/exhibition-time-machine-stereoscopic-views-palestine-1900) (accessed 22 June 2021).
- 2 Freda Gutman, "Imwas 1967, 1978, and 1988 Canada Park: Two Family Albums," in *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 13, no. 1 (2005): 49–54.
- 3 See the letter reprinted in John Reynolds, *Where the Villages Stood: Israel's Continuing Violations of International Law in Occupied Latroun, 1967–2007* (Ramallah: al-Haq, 2007), 88.
- 4 Quoted in Rich Wiles, *Behind the Wall: Life, Love, and Struggle in Palestine* (Washington: Potomac Books, 2010), 21.
- 5 Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event* (London: Cassell, 1999).
- 6 Both al-‘Ayzariya and Abu Dis are neighborhoods in Jerusalem but have been chopped off from Jerusalem by the erection of Israel's Separation Barrier.
- 7 Doris Lessing, *African Stories* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965), 47–58.

# The Struggle for Palestinian Workers' Rights in Israeli Settlements: The Case of Maan v. Zarfati Garage

Ethan Morton-Jerome

## Abstract

This article focuses on the story of the Israeli union, Maan Workers Association, and Hatem Abu Ziadeh, a Palestinian man who works at Zarfati Garage in the settlement of Mishor Adumim. Maan assisted Abu Ziadeh in his desire to unionize the Palestinian workers in the garage and to demand their labor rights according to Israeli labor laws. The article follows the multiyear court case as the Zarfati Garage tried to break the union and fire Abu Ziadeh. After three and half years, the two sides signed a contractual agreement bringing an end to the labor dispute. In the context of Israel as an ethnocratic state, whereby there is an appearance of democracy, Palestinians are systematically discriminated against while the state privileges Israeli Jewish citizens. Maan's efforts are unique – a union that does not discriminate by religion, race, or nationality, but demands labor rights and equality for all exploited workers. The complexities of this account go beyond questions of law, labor rights, and court proceedings to larger issues concerning the future of a Palestinian state and what laws will govern people between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan River.

## Key words

Settlements; labor; union; Maan; one-state; annexation; labor law; labor courts; ethnocracy.

It was hot on the morning of 22 July 2014, in front of the Zarfati Garage located in Mishor Adumim, one of the largest settlement industrial zones in the West Bank. Assaf Adiv, the head of the Israeli union, Maan Workers Association, gave an inspired and emotional speech to the Palestinian workers of the garage.<sup>1</sup> Yearlong labor negotiations between Maan, who was representing the Palestinian workers, and the garage had stopped, and now the garage was in the process of firing the leader of the workers' committee, Hatem Abu Ziadeh. During the thirty-minute work break, the workers listened intently as Adiv discussed the many positive changes since June 2013, when Maan began representing the workers in negotiations with the owners of the garage. Adiv described how the workers had begun to receive more benefits, in accordance with Israeli labor laws. But during the previous month negotiations had stalled over the issue of compensation for past failures to give workers the benefits and pay required by law and over the garage's refusal to pay more than the minimum wage or to increase workers' pay based on experience and expertise. Now, with the garage trying to fire Abu Ziadeh, workers feared that the earlier gains could be lost, and those who had joined the union feared continued harassment. With Maan as their representative, the workers were in a much stronger position to stand up to the garage owners' intimidation, coercion, and exploitation. Adiv asked whether they wanted to stand together in solidarity with Abu Ziadeh and go on strike, providing details of what would be necessary to carry out such an action. All of them raised their hands in a moment of workers' solidarity.<sup>2</sup>

The decision by Palestinian workers at the Zarfati Garage, alongside the Israeli union Maan, to come together and strike in support of their coworker who was about to be fired came not only in the immediate context of tense and contentious labor negotiations with their employer. It also came within the complex and challenging environment produced by over half a century of Israeli military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip which has deliberately and systematically destroyed any semblance of an independent Palestinian economy. In the



Figure 1. The workers of Zarfati Garage vote to go on strike, 22 July 2014. Photo by Ethan Morton-Jerome.

1980s, Yusif Sayigh described the economic situation for Palestinians as deliberate “pauperization” and “dependency-cum-dispossession.”<sup>3</sup> Sara Roy has written of Israel’s policy of de-development in the Palestinian territories, a dual process of



dispossession of land, water, and ability to create an independent economy and of externalization, that is, a dependency of Palestinian labor on the Israeli labor market in order to survive under the conditions of a military occupation.<sup>4</sup> Israel had created a system whereby, as Leila Farsakh writes, “Palestinian migrant workers in Israel were the main anchor of Palestinian economic growth, a growth that relied principally on access to Israel.”<sup>5</sup> The Oslo agreements, notably the Paris Protocol, did not fundamentally change the structural relationship between the Israeli and Palestinian economies. Israel retained full control over imports, exports, and decisions on how many – and which – Palestinians could be employed in the Israeli labor market.<sup>6</sup> With the collapse of the Oslo peace process and the outbreak of the Second Intifada, Farsakh describes Israeli actions toward the Palestinian economy as a shift “from domination to destruction.”<sup>7</sup>

To survive the military occupation’s deliberate destruction of the Palestinian local economy, Palestinians became dependent on employment within the Israeli economy. Palestinians from the occupied Palestinian territories began working in the Israeli economy soon after the 1967 war ended. Allowing Palestinians into the Israeli labor market was and remains an important strategy of the Israeli military to control and pacify the population.<sup>8</sup> With the creation and expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Palestinians were hired for construction and eventually in the service industry, agriculture, and in settlement industrial zones. There have been long periods in which consistent numbers of Palestinians were employed in the Israeli economy and also periods of major fluctuation, yet the overall policies and the structure built to control the flow of Palestinian labor have remained largely the same.<sup>9</sup> Fundamentally, Palestinian labor provides a cheap, compliant, and superexploited workforce for a growing capitalist economy that needs a “reserve army” of unemployed and underemployed workers.<sup>10</sup>

Superexploitation refers to the structural mechanisms that force compliance and submission of the worker both inside and outside of the workplace. Outside the workplace, these practices include a permit regime, checkpoints, home invasions, and arrest, and discrimination against non-citizens living under Israeli military rule. The approximately thirty thousand Palestinians employed on settlements thus experience superexploitation at the hands of settler employers and the everyday violence of military occupation.<sup>11</sup> The difficulty of work and life for these workers is further exacerbated by the reality that the Palestinian community views their work with skepticism and as bordering on treasonous. Work on settlements also contravenes Palestinian Authority (PA) law; no one has yet been arrested for working on the settlements, but they cannot seek assistance in any manner from the PA or any Palestinian labor union.<sup>12</sup>

In an economic environment where Israel welcomes and implements a race to the bottom, capitalist exploitation and denial of workers’ basic rights are standard. The ability of Palestinians from the West Bank to unionize and demand their labor rights is limited because they reside in areas under military occupation and work in places where they are not citizens. The most powerful Israeli union, the Histadrut, has never allowed Palestinians from the occupied territories to become members. Palestinian

unions are unable to advocate and organize in the Israeli economy, and there is also significant opposition to assisting Palestinians who work in the settlements.

What follows is an account of the case of Hatem Abu Ziadeh and his coworkers at the Zarfati Garage, who became the first Palestinians working on an Israeli settlement to unionize.<sup>13</sup> It also illuminates the difficulties that these workers, alongside Maan, had to navigate when demanding labor rights on a West Bank settlement. Their story must be understood in light of a political structure of discrimination and inequality under which Palestinians under Israeli rule, whether citizens or non-citizens, must live. This has been evident from the establishment of the state of Israel and was reaffirmed in law with passage of the “Nation-State Law” in the summer of 2018.<sup>14</sup> Israel’s ethnocratic political structure allows non-citizen Palestinians to take their case to Israeli courts, to demand equality in the workplace, and to ask for representation by an Israeli union.<sup>15</sup> Yet, it clearly discriminates against them in all sectors, including employment, policing, law, and the courts. Even as Palestinians can take advantage of particular aspects of a democratic system, Israel’s settler-colonial regime is focused on expanding into, controlling, and dominating the West Bank. In light of the structural discrimination against Palestinians, Maan represents itself as a union that does not discriminate by religion, race, or nationality, but demands labor rights and equality for all exploited workers. This particular case focuses on Abu Ziadeh and his coworkers employed on a settlement, Maan as labor union, and the Israeli judicial and disciplinary apparatus of Israeli settler employers, police and military, courts, and judges. As will become evident, the complexities go beyond questions of law, labor rights, and court proceedings to larger issues of structural inequalities of an ethnocratic state, Israeli’s military strategies to pacify the occupied Palestinian population, and the incremental Israeli settler colonial dispossession. These issues bring forth fundamental questions about the future of Palestine, with a deepening crisis with the Palestinian Authority and their inability to protect Palestinians, provide adequate employment, and negotiate a two-state solution, while Israeli right-wing politics become more popular, with growing calls for annexation. Maan provides an alternative voice, based on working class mobilization against capitalist exploitation and a political framework of equal rights for all people between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan River.

## **Labor Law in the Settlements**

Fundamental to Maan, Abu Ziadeh, and his coworkers’ demands were equality and fair treatment alongside their Israeli coworkers. Since the occupation of the West Bank in 1967, two different sets of laws applied to Palestinian and Israeli workers on the settlements. Palestinians were, supposedly, subject to Jordanian labor law from 1965 and Israeli military orders.<sup>16</sup> Military orders also govern Israeli workers in settlements, as does legislation that applies on a personal basis to Israeli residents of the settlements, and collectively bargained agreements that govern labor relations

for Israeli employees on both sides of the Green Line.<sup>17</sup> Although Israeli civil law is not applied beyond the 1967 borders unless stipulated by military orders, Israeli employers and employees in the settlements act on the mutual understanding that Israeli civil law applies to them.<sup>18</sup>

In October 2007, the Israeli High Court of Justice (HCJ) ruled that Palestinians who work in Israeli settlements are entitled to the same rights as their Israeli coworkers. The HCJ used the principle of equality in the workplace to justify the change in labor laws that were used by the Israeli employers. Until that time the courts had generally followed official Israeli government policy with regard to labor laws, which was to keep in place the local laws that existed prior to the occupation — in the case of the West Bank, Jordanian law. The 2007 HCJ ruling came on a lawsuit brought by Palestinian workers, assisted by the Israeli NGO Worker’s Hotline (Kav LaOved), against the Givat Zeev settlement municipality in 1995. After twelve years, it proceeded from the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court to the National Labor Court (NLC), and finally to the HCJ.<sup>19</sup>

In December 1997, the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court ruled that Israeli labor law should apply to Palestinian employees in the settlements. The settlement municipality appealed the decision, with four Israeli settler companies joining the appeal to the NLC.<sup>20</sup> The Israeli attorney general also submitted a brief advocating for continuation of the government policy that Israeli civil law does not apply in the settlements. The attorney general argued that the most important factors in determining which law should apply were the location of employment and the residency of the employees; in this case, both were the West Bank and, therefore, Jordanian law and Israeli military orders should apply.<sup>21</sup> Alternatively, the attorney general suggested that the court could determine “choice of law” by considering “points of contact,” including the national identities of the employer and employee, the work calendar and religious or national holidays observed, the currency used for paying salaries, whether Israeli tax payments were deducted from the worker’s salary, and the use of Arabic or Hebrew in the workplace.<sup>22</sup> The 2003 NLC ruling vacated the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court’s ruling and, rather than underscore uniformity of law in the workplace, concurred with the attorney general that the most important factors were the location of the worksite and the residency of the workers. The NLC did add that, in some cases, it was possible that “certain Israeli law provisions could be applied if public policy considerations deem such application necessary.”<sup>23</sup> The NLC ruling meant that all of the cases that were part of the lawsuit needed to return to the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court and that each judge should rule according to the specifics of the case, keeping in mind “public policy considerations.”<sup>24</sup>

Worker’s Hotline appealed the NLC’s decision to the HCJ rather than return to the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court. In contrast to the NLC, and in keeping with the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court decision, the HCJ used the principle of equality in the workplace to justify the application of Israeli law. The HCJ attempted to clarify its 2007 ruling by noting that a key provision in Israeli law is that terms of employment cannot be discriminatory and, therefore, different terms of employment

are prohibited.<sup>25</sup> What the HCJ did was, in fact, unprecedented, applying “Israeli labor law to the territory of settlements,” something that neither the Israeli military nor the Knesset had ever done.<sup>26</sup> By bringing Palestinians who work in the settlements under Israeli labor law, the HCJ, following in the decades long “creeping annexation,” erased the legal distinction between Israel and the territories occupied in 1967 and produced a single, undifferentiated jurisdiction.<sup>27</sup>

In terms of labor rights for Palestinians employed in the settlements, though, the HCJ ruling was considered a significant victory. However for court rulings to have a real impact there must be enforcement, and numerous reports by local and international NGOs and the Israeli government comptroller office clearly document systematic lack of enforcement and blatant exploitation of Palestinian employees.<sup>28</sup> Settler employers know that neither Israeli government officials nor the military will intervene on behalf of Palestinian workers and so they treat their employees as they choose.

## **Zarfati Garage Workers Organize**

It was in this new legal situation that Hatem Abu Ziadeh decided to look for assistance for himself and his fellow workers at the Zarfati Garage. The garage is one of over three hundred businesses located in Mishor Adumim industrial zone, which together employ several thousand Palestinians.<sup>29</sup> In spring 2013, Abu Ziadeh contacted several lawyers to see if anything could be done to help the Palestinian workers employed at the garage. Although the 2007 HCJ ruling stated that Palestinian workers employed on the settlements fall under Israeli labor law, Zarfati Garage was refusing its Palestinian workers from the West Bank the legal minimum salary and benefits. The treatment of these workers stood in sharp contrast to other garage workers with Jerusalem IDs or Israeli citizenship, who received full labor rights and benefits. Abu Ziadeh contacted Maan and, after initial conversations with Assaf Adiv, many workers met and decided to join the union so that it would represent them in negotiations with the garage.<sup>30</sup>

Maan is exceptional in that it is willing to accept Palestinian workers employed in settlements if they ask to join.<sup>31</sup> In contrast to the largest Israeli and Palestinian unions, Histadrut and the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), both of which hold nationalist perspectives, Maan takes a different position:

It is the obligation of trade unions and civil society organizations in Israel to take a principled stand against the violation of the rights of Palestinian workers . . . ignoring these workers is a betrayal of the principle of solidarity, based on the oath to protect every worker regardless of religion, nationality, citizenship, gender, color, or political affiliation.<sup>32</sup>

Established in the late 1990s, Maan has organized Jewish workers in Israel, assisted Palestinian workers in East Jerusalem, and, with the Zarfati Garage case, Palestinians in the settlements.<sup>33</sup>

On 25 June 2013, Maan sent a letter to the garage management officially

declaring that thirty-nine workers had joined the union and that it would represent them in collective bargaining.<sup>34</sup> The garage management initially rejected the letter and ignored Maan's demands. In July, Maan demanded that management begin negotiations, otherwise the workers would begin a strike.<sup>35</sup> With pressure mounting, the garage management responded to Maan two days before the strike was set to begin and agreed to start negotiations.<sup>36</sup> The garage's owners and union representatives met seven times during the following eleven months, and the workers began to receive the benefits stipulated by Israeli law, such as minimum wage, insurance, vacation pay, pension, and compensation for transportation to and from work. Although Maan demanded merely that the workers receive the labor rights due them according to Israeli law, negotiations were difficult. One year after the workers had unionized, two main issues remained unresolved. First, there were the past debts – that is, all the years that the workers were not paid the minimum wage in addition to the other benefits provided for by Israeli law. Second, the garage was only paying the minimum wage; Maan argued that workers should receive increased salaries according to experience, seniority, and expertise. Negotiations stalled, and it was unclear what would happen next.

On 21 July 2014, the management sent a letter to Abu Ziadeh. They informed him of a meeting to take place two days later, at which, ostensibly because reorganization at the garage meant that his work would no longer be needed, he would be fired. The letter was not sent to Abu Ziadeh's union representative at Maan, as required by law, and Abu Ziadeh quickly contacted Adiv for advice. Maan argued that the garage management was unfairly targeting Abu Ziadeh because of his leadership position as head of the workers' committee and demanded that the company retract its letter. The following day, the garage again requested that Abu Ziadeh attend a meeting with the garage owners on 23 July. In response to what Maan perceived as a clear threat that Abu Ziadeh would be fired, Adiv met with workers on 22 July during their morning break, as detailed above. It was obvious to the workers that if Abu Ziadeh, who had worked at the garage for seventeen years, could be fired, then all of them were vulnerable; thus, the workers unanimously agreed to strike. The garage management, caught off guard, demanded that the workers return to their stations at 11:30 am, when their break ended, and called the police.

When the police arrived, they demanded that the workers either return to work or leave the premises on the basis of a military order for the West Bank stating that no more than ten people can gather together for political purposes without a permit.<sup>37</sup> Most of the workers left for home, and nine stayed back to man a picket line outside the garage. The following day, nine workers and a Maan employee, Yoav Tamir, returned to protest outside of the garage. Members of the Manufacturers Committee for Mishor Adumim arrived, carrying Israeli flags, and verbally threatened the workers and Tamir. Tamir called the police. When they arrived, instead of protecting the workers, they arrested Tamir for inciting the workers. He was taken to the police station and was only released after signing a statement promising not to enter Mishor Adumim

for two weeks.<sup>38</sup> The same thing happened the next day; this time, it was Adiv who was detained for incitement of the workers. When Adiv demanded evidence of the illegality of his actions and that he be afforded his legal rights, the police released him. Maan petitioned the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court for a hearing, arguing that the garage was trying to fire Abu Ziadeh to break the union and stop negotiations.

## **The Securitization of Labor**

The workers' strike took place at a time of broader conflict. Growing tensions and violence since May 2014 eventually led to a war against the Gaza Strip in July.<sup>39</sup> While the Israeli military were focused on the Gaza Strip and the West Bank did not see the bombing and full-scale assault that occurred in Gaza, tensions were extremely high in the West Bank, accompanied by a major increase in Israeli military presence there that impacted the environment at settlement workplaces. As a licensed garage for the Israel Defense Forces, Zarfati's largest customer is the Israeli military. Given the increase in military activity, the garage was particularly busy during the summer of 2014. The co-owner and day manager, Morris Tzarfati, a high-ranking reservist in the military, was called up for service during that time. The garage was under pressure with the increased workload, and its owners were especially upset that workers would threaten a strike in the middle of Israel's war on Gaza. Throughout the labor dispute, the garage management argued that it was the victim of an illegal action by the union that, by going on strike, was taking advantage of the war in Gaza and the increased tensions in an attempt to harm the garage.

Maan filed a complaint against Zarfati Garage with the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court, and as the case headed to the labor court, the other workers returned to their jobs on 27 July. At the hearing, the garage owners brought a major accusation against Abu Ziadeh that surprised both him and Maan. The garage owners accused Abu Ziadeh of sabotaging a military vehicle on 10 July, and argued that Abu Ziadeh had participated in political protests and was a security threat.<sup>40</sup> These would have been major accusations under any circumstances, but because they were brought during a period of intensified conflict, the court took the allegations particularly seriously. Yet when the judge asked whether the garage owners had reported the sabotage incident to the police, it indicated that it had not done so. The garage owners also admitted that Abu Ziadeh had continued to work at the garage until 22 July, when the strike had started. The judge demanded evidence of the sabotage and a police complaint within twenty-four hours. The next day, 28 July, the garage submitted the complaint to the police. Of course, the delay in reporting the alleged incident raised serious questions regarding the legitimacy of the complaint against Abu Ziadeh. Why had the garage allowed Abu Ziadeh to continue working for more than two weeks after the supposed incident of sabotage? Why had the garage not mentioned the incident in the letter sent to Abu Ziadeh on 21 July? Why had the garage not gone to the police with a complaint until after the judge demanded some form of proof?

In response to the 28 July police complaint, Abu Ziadeh was summoned to the Mishor Adumim police station for questioning. The police took away his work permit, without which he could no longer enter Mishor Adumim. A hearing for the accusations of sabotage of a military vehicle was scheduled for nine months later, in April 2015. Abu Ziadeh was released from the police station only after posting bail of one thousand shekels. Although the garage could provide no physical evidence that Abu Ziadeh had sabotaged the vehicle, the accusation alone was enough for his permit to be revoked.<sup>41</sup> It was unclear who had ordered that the permit be revoked – the garage owners or the police – and so Maan filed a petition with the HCJ to rectify the situation. More than three months later, on 30 November, the attorney general acknowledged that it was not clear why the permit had been revoked and ruled that it should be returned. In December 2014, the Israeli police determined that there was no evidence that Abu Ziadeh had sabotaged a military vehicle, and closed the case against him.<sup>42</sup>

On 7 December 2014, Abu Ziadeh's case was heard in the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court.<sup>43</sup> The judge appointed to Abu Ziadeh's case, Sarah Breuner Israzda, was relatively new to the labor court, and her inexperience was evident during the hearing. The lawyer for the garage owners dominated the four-hour proceedings as the judge sat passively. The lawyer used his imposing physical presence, along with his loud, dramatic voice, to try to intimidate Abu Ziadeh, Adiv, and Maan's lawyer, attorney Aya Bartenstein. His facial expressions, body language, and tone when addressing the judge, Bartenstein, and the witnesses were variously racist, misogynist, and dismissive. Afterward, I learned from several others in attendance that the lawyer's performance was completely normal for such cases. The consensus was that the lawyer's arrogant attitude and behaviors were a typical part of the settler persona (he was representing a settlement business) and that it was rare for anyone to openly question such posturing.

The garage's owners clearly sought to intimidate and discredit Abu Ziadeh and Adiv. Most importantly, the lawyer for the garage owners argued that the letter to Abu Ziadeh on 21 July concerned the garage's reorganization and, therefore, Abu Ziadeh's firing was not connected to his leadership position with the Maan workers' committee. The garage's lawyer argued that, from its perspective, Maan started an illegal strike in the middle of a war to take advantage of the vulnerability of the garage because the military was its largest client. Furthermore, the garage had been inundated by emails from international unions and activists, which they believed was unjustified harassment.<sup>44</sup> They also argued that, within the Mishor Adumim industrial zone, they had some of the best relations with Palestinians and were an example of coexistence.

The garage owners also brought new evidence in the form of two letters from an Israeli Defense Force officer that stated that the military did not want Abu Ziadeh to work in the garage because of security concerns.<sup>45</sup> The letters were used to bolster the owners' argument that Abu Ziadeh was a security threat and a dangerous activist who could not be allowed back in the garage. As evidence of the danger Abu Ziadeh presented to the garage, they provided a picture of him wearing a kufiya at a demonstration in Tel Aviv. The garage owners used the picture to suggest that Abu

Ziadeh was a political activist and a threat to Israel, interpreting the kufiya as an accessory worn by terrorists. The lawyer for Zarfati also argued that Maan was a discriminatory organization because it only worked for Palestinians. He maintained that Maan was a political organization, not a legitimate union, and that it tried to cause conflict in the settlements, attempting to take advantage of Palestinian workers to serve its own nefarious goals. The garage owners did not recognize Maan as the legal representative of the workers and therefore claimed that they did not need to negotiate with the union. Management would talk directly with the workers and did not need Maan's interference.

The accusation that the union was discriminatory was easily refuted since Maan represents both Israeli Jews and Palestinians in Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank who work on settlements. Adiv and Bartenstein reminded the judge that, on 30 November, the attorney general had recognized that "Hatem Abu Ziadeh will be permitted to enter the Mishor Adumim Industrial Area for employment at the Zarfati Garage," and that "the temporary restraining order keeping him from entering the areas of Israeli settlement in Judea and Samaria has been rescinded."<sup>46</sup> They also clarified that the picture of Abu Ziadeh wearing a kufiya was posted on the Maan website, and that Abu Ziadeh had received a permit to join other workers on a May Day march, the event at which the photo was taken. Bartenstein concluded by affirming that the union was indeed the legal representative of the workers.

The judge's decision, issued two weeks later, was critical of Maan and Abu Ziadeh. The judge argued that Abu Ziadeh should have attended the meeting that the garage requested in the 21 July letter. She blamed Maan for telling Abu Ziadeh not to attend the meeting and for starting a strike without attending the meeting. Second, she agreed with the garage that the potential firing was not connected with Abu Ziadeh's leadership position in the union. She further blamed Maan for causing a crisis during the war and stated her belief that the union was using Abu Ziadeh for their own purposes. Although the case concerning the accusation of sabotage had been closed, she said of Abu Ziadeh, "His testimony was unreliable in our eyes."<sup>47</sup> Critical to the future of the case and most important for the future work of Maan in the settlements, the judge did confirm that Maan was the legal representative for the workers who had signed up to join the union. This position allowed Maan to continue to represent the workers in negotiations – stalled since June 2014. Finally, the judge wrote that, because Abu Ziadeh did not attend the meeting with the garage management on 23 July 2014, he had not, from a legal perspective, been fired. The courtroom was not, she wrote, the proper place to adjudicate this dispute and, before any other negotiations could occur, the two sides needed to hold that meeting.

Soon after Judge Israzda's decision, Maan submitted an appeal, to take the case to the National Labor Court. The garage management and Abu Ziadeh, along with the lawyers for each side, finally met on 26 January 2015, and completed Abu Ziadeh's firing. Now that Abu Ziadeh was officially fired, Maan filed another petition in the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court to protest what the union believed was Abu Ziadeh's illegal firing.



## New Venue, New Judge

The judge for the new suit, Eyal Avrahami, was completely different from Judge Israzda, both in terms of familiarity with workers' issues and in courtroom presence. When Abu Ziadeh's case began, he was the vice president of the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court, and in December 2015, he became its president. The judge clearly managed the atmosphere and direction of courtroom proceedings, and the lawyer for the garage behaved in a completely different manner, eschewing the outbursts and drama that he displayed in the December 7 hearing. It was clear that Avrahami's goal from the beginning was for the two parties to come to a negotiated settlement. He was also clear about the law and, in the first hearing, told the lawyers for both sides that he believed strongly in the right of workers to unionize.<sup>48</sup> Within the first five minutes of each of three successive court hearings over which the new judge presided, he asked either the lawyers or Adiv and the owner of the garage to meet privately in his office. The hope was that through discussions with the judge, in his office and without court record, the two sides would be able to come to an agreement. The union's lawyers did not budge, however, asserting that Abu Ziadeh should return to work, while the garage held that "no force on earth" could make them accept Abu Ziadeh back.<sup>49</sup>

After the first hearing with Judge Avrahami, there was a high level of excitement among Abu Ziadeh's supporters. They believed that the facts were on their side and that, as long as the judge remained unintimidated by the garage's owners and lawyer, recognized the lack of evidence regarding accusations that Abu Ziadeh was a security threat, and was not swayed by the garage's connection to the Israeli military, then justice would prevail and Abu Ziadeh would eventually return to work at the garage. From Maan's perspective, the garage was not telling the truth and was using tactics of intimidation to force Abu Ziadeh out of work and delegitimize the union. But despite the enthusiasm about the new judge and certainty about the strength of Abu Ziadeh's case, the outcome was never clear. Until the very end, the garage owners held firm to their position that Abu Ziadeh could not return to the garage.

The NLC delivered its decision on the appeal on 21 April 2015. In a powerful rebuke, the NLC ruled that Judge Israzda's decision was to be vacated. With the exception of her ruling that Maan was the legal representative of the workers, the NLC found her decision to be no longer applicable. The labor dispute, including Abu Ziadeh's firing, was to continue in Judge Avrahami's court.<sup>50</sup> It was a major victory for Maan and Abu Ziadeh.

During the last hearing before Judge Avrahami would write his decision, held on 12 May 2015, both sides gave testimony as lawyers questioned several witnesses. The garage owners did not waver from their previous strategies, even though their main arguments had been disproven or discredited. The judge was supposed to rule on the labor dispute within three months of the 12 May hearing, but nothing came during the summer. In the fall, violence in the West Bank and in Israel increased, sparking fears of a third intifada. As the parties awaited the ruling, it was natural to wonder if and how current events would affect the judge. With almost daily headlines of

uncoordinated attacks by Palestinians, would the judge demand that the garage allow Abu Ziadeh to return to work? The prevalence of security concerns in Israeli society cannot be overstated, regardless of the context.<sup>51</sup> Would a judge rule against a settler business in favor of a Palestinian worker if the former claimed that the latter was a security threat?

After nine months, Judge Avrahami gave his ruling on 17 February 2016. It was a complete repudiation of the garage. Avrahami wrote of the accusations against Abu Ziadeh, “justifications changed several times, and there was no legitimacy to them. This opens up questions as to the real reasons for the basis of calling for a hearing and the basis for the termination.”<sup>52</sup> Most importantly, the judge wrote, “Because of the determination to harm him in his work in the union, *he must return* to his initial role [in the garage]. This demand is in light of the importance of the right to organize for all of workers and the need to protect workers.”<sup>53</sup>

The garage owners appealed the decision, thereby preventing Abu Ziadeh from going back to work. On 5 April 2016, the NLC in Jerusalem held an appeal hearing. Again, the garage would not budge; Abu Ziadeh was not going to return to work. When the hearing ended, I overheard the lawyer for the garage comment to a journalist, “We will go bankrupt before we allow Abu Ziadeh to return.” Having already received all of the evidence and court protocol, the hearing before the panel of three judges did not take long. Again, as we left the courthouse, both the outcome of the appeal and when it would come were uncertain. Thus, I was completely surprised to receive a phone call that same evening. The NLC had made an immediate decision that Judge Avrahami’s ruling stood and that there was no reason for them to change any part of his decision. Once again, the court repudiated the garage owners for their actions against Abu Ziadeh and the union and criticized their shoddy arguments.

On 18 April 2016, the parties returned to the Jerusalem Regional Labor Court to finalize the case. Morris Tzarfati and his lawyer behaved completely differently. They politely said hello to Abu Ziadeh and shook his hand; it was as if the nearly two years of accusations that Abu Ziadeh was a security threat had never happened. It was agreed that Abu Ziadeh would return to work on 12 May and negotiations with Maan would begin again on 17 May. After nearly a year of negotiations, Maan and Zarfati Garage signed a comprehensive labor agreement on 14 February 2017.<sup>54</sup> The Palestinian workers received back pay and annual wage increases, and the agreement created mechanisms for settling future disputes between the ownership and the workers. It was a major victory for Maan, Abu Ziadeh, and the Palestinian workers at the garage.

## Conclusion

The Israeli High Court decision in 2007 brought a major shift in law and legal rights for Palestinian workers in the settlements. By applying Israeli labor law beyond where Israeli civil law is currently enforced and into the settlements, the HCJ made a decision that the Israeli Knesset had resisted since 1967. The HCJ ruling provided

the basis for the first judge in Abu Ziadeh's case to rule that Maan was the legal labor representative for the Palestinian workers, as well as for Judge Avrahami to ensure that Abu Ziadeh be returned to work and that a formal labor contract be signed between the garage owners and Maan. The Jerusalem Regional Labor Court and the National Labor Court based their judgments on the 2007 HCJ decision and Israeli civil labor laws; for Palestinians employed in the settlements, the effect was as if they were working inside Israel, even though they physically were working in occupied territory.

The HCJ's decision is a violation of the international law governing the treatment of occupied territories by an occupying power and further erodes any distinction between the settlements and "Israel proper." The ruling follows a historic pattern of settler colonialism in the West Bank, and serves the Israeli political planners' strategy to surround Jerusalem with settlements.<sup>55</sup> The expropriation of the land in 1974 eventually led to what is the largest settlement industrial zone, Mishor Adumim, and more than thirty-eight thousand Israeli residents now live in the adjacent settlement of Ma'ale Adumim.<sup>56</sup> The settlements were created through violent dispossession of the land, but the Israeli HCJ provided a veneer of legal legitimacy of the settlements through the argument of equal treatment of Palestinian workers.<sup>57</sup> The HCJ ruling in 2007 and the subsequent unionization efforts are further steps in a process whereby violence and dispossession, followed by liberalism's ideal of equality, further a creeping annexation of the West Bank.

With the Oslo process fading and more than a decade of analysts arguing that the two-state solution is not viable, some have argued for a transition to a new strategy, shifting from a focus on state-building to one that demands rights.<sup>58</sup> Undoubtedly, Maan's political stand – that is, to advocate for workers "regardless of nationality, religion, gender, or the color of their skin" – is radical in the context of Palestine/Israel.<sup>59</sup> Maan is also closely tied with Israeli socialist party Da'am, which seeks to "embrace solutions that connects the two nations and is based on democracy, human rights, pluralism, economic equality, and solidarity."<sup>60</sup>

A strategy for demanding labor rights in the settlements must also contend with the fact that Palestinian employment on the settlements has always been a contentious issue within the Palestinian community. In 2010, PA president Mahmud 'Abbas signed a law making any economic relationship with the settlements, including employment, illegal.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, the boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement (BDS) calls for a complete boycott of the settlements.<sup>62</sup> Maan has not shied away from the complexities and controversies that come with unionizing Palestinian workers in the settlements. In defending the work of Maan in the settlements, Assaf Adiv writes:

The more such worker organizations expose the exploitation of Palestinians in Israeli businesses, the more they expose the character of the occupation. Thus they show the Israeli public the significance and implications of the occupation, raising awareness about these workers as they struggle for their basic rights.<sup>63</sup>

The question remains whether exposing exploitation through the labor courts and unionizing the workers are worth the long-term price for Palestinians who live under a regime that treats Jews and Palestinians unequally. Israel's economic structure has, since 1967, systematically pauperized, de-developed, and destroyed any independent Palestinian economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, forcing Palestinians there to work in the Israeli economy in order to survive.

Fundamental to an ethnocratic state is an appearance of democracy, even while the foundation of the state privileges one ethnic group within all arenas, including the economy, law, culture, and politics.<sup>64</sup> Palestinians who have citizenship in Israel are treated as second-class citizens. The Nation-State Law in 2018 made de jure what had been de facto, that is, the supremacy of Jewish citizens in Israel.<sup>65</sup> Still, as the account of the Zarfati Garage illustrates, the HCJ ruling of 2007 does represent a fundamental shift in labor law in the settlements for Palestinians. Palestinian workers and Maan were able to use this ruling, which held that employees in the same workplace must be treated equally and, therefore, subject to Israeli law, to demand their labor rights. Judge Avrahami, along with the National Labor Court, ruled in favor of Maan and Abu Ziadeh, demanding that he return to work and confirming that Maan was the legal representative for the workers.

The success of the unionization efforts was extremely difficult for the union; it needed to raise funds through an international campaign in order to pay lawyers, and Abu Ziadeh had to wait during the two years to return to work.<sup>66</sup> Though Abu Ziadeh won his case and Maan can now represent Palestinian workers, has anything changed structurally between the Israeli government and Palestinians under the Israeli regime? Sfarid wrote in 2005, "Palestinian limited success perfects the occupation and makes it sustainable; moreover, by lodging petitions to the Israeli court, human rights lawyers act as PRs of occupation: they promote the notion that Palestinian residents have a resort to justice."<sup>67</sup> Despite questioning the long-term impact of advocating for Palestinians in Israeli courts, Sfarid continues his work; likewise, Maan will continue to fight for the labor rights of Palestinian workers in the settlements, East Jerusalem, and Israel. As Adiv wrote in 2019:

Our starting assumption is that these workers are entitled to labor rights and human rights, whatever may be the status of the political conflict or the future of the Occupied Territories. We are engaged in this effort under almost impossible conditions as part of our commitment to a democratic agenda of equal rights for all and to the struggle to end the Occupation and apartheid system built in the West Bank.<sup>68</sup>

In 2019 and 2020, Maan expanded its work and now represents Palestinian workers in another company in the Mishor Adumim Industrial Zone in the West Bank and in the Atarot Industrial Zone in East Jerusalem.<sup>69</sup>

With the failure of the Oslo process, the end of any possibility for a two-state solution, demands for annexation by the Israeli right, and growing interest in a one-state solution, Maan offers a clear example of a rights-based approach demanding

equality for all workers between the Mediterranean Sea and Jordan River. It is only part of what is necessary: citizenship based on equal rights for all citizens and which does not discriminate by religion, ethnicity, and race. In the long-term, the question remains whether Israelis and Palestinians see the efforts of Maan as a viable starting point of action for working class people in both communities in the universal struggle for equality, human rights, and economic justice.

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### Endnotes

- 1 In October 2020, Workers Advice Center (WAC)–Maan changed its name to Maan Workers Association and is now “one of four general workers associations in Israel.” See: “MAAN–Workers Association – The New Name of the Union Reflects a New Stage in Its Development,” 26 November 2020, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=2492](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=2492) (accessed 28 December 2020).
- 2 I observed this gathering in front of the Zarfati Garage and the beginning of the workers’ strike as part of my fieldwork from February 2013 – May 2016.
- 3 Yusif Sayigh, “The Palestinian Economy under Occupation: Dependency and Pauperization,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 15, no. 4 (Winter 1986): 46–67.
- 4 Sara Roy, “The Gaza Strip: A Case of Economic De-Development,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, no. 1 (Autumn 1987): 56–88; Sara Roy, “De-Development Revisited: Palestinian Economy and Society since Oslo,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 28, no. 3 (Spring 1999): 64–82.
- 5 Leila Farsakh, *Palestinian Labor Migration to Israel: Labor, Land, and Occupation* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2005), 388.
- 6 Sara Roy argues that the peace process actually made the economic situation worse with the increasing use of closures by the Israeli military and the ongoing fragmentation of the Palestinian economy, in particular the separation between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sara Roy, “De-Development Revisited,”: 64-82. Farsakh focuses on the colonial nature of the occupation and how it continued through the Oslo peace process. Leila Farsakh, “The Political Economy of Israeli Occupation: What Is Colonial about It?” *MIT Electronic Journal of Middle East Studies* 8 (Spring 2008): 41–58.
- 7 Leila Farsakh, “From Domination to Destruction: The Palestinian Economy under the Israeli Occupation,” in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, ed. Adi Ophir, Michal Givoni, and Sari Hanafi (New York: Zone Books, 2009), 379–402.
- 8 Shlomo Gazit, *The Carrot and the Stick: Israel’s Policy in Judaea and Samaria, 1967–68* (Virginia: BookCrafters, 1995).
- 9 Farsakh, *Palestinian Labor Migration*.
- 10 Emmanuel Farjoun, “Palestinian Workers in Israel: A Reserve Army of Labor,” *Khamsin 7* (1980): 107–43; Joost Hiltermann, “Worker’s Rights during the Uprising,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no. 1 (Autumn 1989): 83–91.
- 11 The figures for Palestinians employed on the settlements are only estimates. The Israeli military, which issues work permits, does provide exact numbers, but there are thousands more who work without permits. Workers in the agricultural and construction sectors experience seasonal and contractual fluctuations.
- 12 Law no. 4 (2010), article 4. The Palestinian Legislature had not met since 2007, so the law was signed through presidential decree on 26 April 2010. Palestinian unions cannot assist workers who are employed in the settlements because they fall under full Israeli military jurisdiction.
- 13 Maan had tried to unionize Palestinian workers in the four settlement companies but were unsuccessful in finalizing an agreement to represent the workers with the companies where they were employed. Assaf Adiv, *WAC-MAAN – A Decade of Organizing Palestinian Workers in the West Bank Settlements* (Tel

Aviv: WAC-MAAN, June 2019): 31.

- 14 On the Nation-State Law, see Adalah, “Israel’s Jewish Nation-State Law,” 20 December 2020, online at [adalah.org/en/content/view/9569](http://adalah.org/en/content/view/9569) (accessed 27 December 2020). Adalah has also compiled the most comprehensive list of Israel’s discriminatory laws. See Adalah, “The Discriminatory Laws Database,” 25 September 2017, online at [www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7771](http://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7771) (accessed 29 December 2020). For an account of Israel’s early decades, see Shira Robinson, *Citizen Strangers: Palestinians and the Birth of Israel’s Liberal Settler State* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).
- 15 Oren Yiftachel argues that Israel is an ethnocratic state, whereby there are democratic features but, fundamentally, Israel exercises “a non-democratic rule for and by a dominant ethnic group.” Yiftachel’s analysis of Israel as an ethnocratic regime illustrates the fundamental hierarchy in Israeli society that benefits Jewish citizens and discriminates against Palestinians. Oren Yiftachel, “Democracy or Ethnocracy? Territory and Settler Politics in Israel/Palestine,” *Middle East Report* 207 (Summer 1998): 11.
- 16 In 1976, Israel began to use military orders to amend Jordanian labor law. In 1982, order no. 967, Employment of Workers in Certain Locations (Judea and Samaria), stipulated that Israeli minimum wage law was to be applied inside the settlements. Military order no. 967 has been amended periodically by other military orders as the minimum wage in Israel has increased. In 2007, the geographic area in which Israeli employers were required to pay the Israeli minimum wage was expanded beyond specific settlement borders to include all of Area C.
- 17 Amir Paz-Fuchs and Yaël Ronen, “Occupational Hazards: Labor Law in the Occupied Territories,” *Berkeley Journal of International Law* 30 (2012): 599. These regulations were created in 1981 with Military order no. 892, the Order on Administration of Municipal Councils. Most important is the fact that Annex 6 within the order makes clear that “the Code applies Israeli legislation (listed in the annexes) only in the settlements and only with respect to Israeli residents of the settlements.” Since Palestinians cannot be residents of the settlements, they are excluded. Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Occupational Hazards,” 601.
- 18 As Paz-Fuchs and Ronen observe, “The settlements and their adjacent industrial areas are socially and politically perceived by many Israelis as incorporated within Israel.” Amir Paz-Fuchs and Yael Ronen, “Integrated or Segregated? Israeli-Palestinian Employment Relations in the Settlements,” in *Normalizing Occupation: The Politics of Everyday Life in the West Bank*, ed. Marco Allegra, Ariel Handel, and Erez Maggor (Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 2017), 173.
- 19 For further details on this case, see: Tobias Kelly, *Law, Violence, and Sovereignty among West Bank Palestinians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Occupational Hazards”; and Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Integrated or Segregated?” The National Labor Court acts as the court of appeals for the Regional Labor Court. A National Labor Court decision can be appealed to the High Court of Justice.
- 20 The Zarfati Garage along with three other employers that had received similar rulings joined the appeal. Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Occupational Hazards,” 588.
- 21 Kelly, *Law, Violence, and Sovereignty*, 74–77.
- 22 Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Occupational Hazards,” 591.
- 23 Michael Karayanni, “Choice of Law under Occupation: How Israeli Law came to Serve Palestinian Plaintiffs,” *Journal of Private International Law* 5 no.1 (2009): 38.
- 24 Karayanni, “Choice of Law,” 38.
- 25 Kav LaOved (Worker’s Hotline) v. National Labor Court, HCJ 5666/03, decided 10 October 2007. Translation online at [versa.cardozo.yu.edu/opinions/kav-laoved-v-national-labour-court](http://versa.cardozo.yu.edu/opinions/kav-laoved-v-national-labour-court) (accessed 29 December 2020).
- 26 Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Occupational Hazards,” 622.
- 27 Michael Hudson, “The Scars of Occupation: An Eye-Witness Report,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 9, no. 2 (1980): 32–49. Paz-Fuchs and Ronen, “Integrated or Segregated?”
- 28 Examples include Bill Van Esveld, Ripe for Abuse: Palestinian Child Labor in Israeli Agricultural Settlements in the West Bank (Human Rights Watch, 13 April 2015); Noga Kadman, *Employment of Palestinians in Israel and the Settlements: Restrictive Policies and Abuse of Rights* (Kav LaOved, 2012); State Comptroller, Israeli Government, “State Comptroller Report Chapter Seven: Industrial Zones in Judea and Samaria and the Rural Sector,” trans. by Connie Hackbarth, 2012;

- Selwa Alenat, *Palestinian Workers in Israeli West Bank Settlements (Kav LaOved, 2009)*; Marco Rettig, *Palestinian Workers under Israeli Economic Oppression: The Case of Settlement Workers* (LAW – Palestinian Society for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment, 2000); Yehezkel Lein, *Builders of Zion*, (B’Tselem, 1999).
- 29 Ma’ale Adumim Economic Development Company website, online at [www.parkedom.co.il/](http://www.parkedom.co.il/) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 30 Adiv, *WAC-MAAN – A Decade of Organizing*, 40–41.
  - 31 Maan does not actively recruit Palestinian workers on the settlements. They do organize and assist workers when Palestinians approach them and ask for assistance.
  - 32 Adiv, *WAC-MAAN – A Decade of Organizing*, 51.
  - 33 See Maan’s website for additional information on various projects and work they have undertaken, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?page\\_id=8](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?page_id=8) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 34 WAC-MAAN, “Achievement for Palestinian Workers – Zarfati Garage Agrees to Start Negotiations with WAC MAAN – Planned Strike Canceled,” 1 August 2013, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=712](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=712) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 35 According to Israeli labor laws, a union must give fifteen days’ notice to the company before beginning a strike.
  - 36 WAC-MAAN, “Achievement for Palestinian Workers.”
  - 37 Military order no. 101 says that ten or more people cannot assemble for political purposes. Assaf Adiv reminded the police that this was not a political gathering but had to do with a labor dispute and, therefore, the order was not relevant. The police still demanded that the workers leave or return to work.
  - 38 WAC-MAAN, “Police of WB Settlement Maaleh Adumim Detain Director of WAC-Maan Labor Organization, Assaf Adiv,” 24 July 2014, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1044](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1044) (accessed 29 December 2020). Author interview with Assaf Adiv, 30 July 2014; author interview with Yoav Tamir, 10 February 2015.
  - 39 Two significant incidents were seen as igniting the violence during this period. First, on 12 June, three Israeli teenagers were kidnapped in the West Bank and killed. Israel sent thousands of soldiers to search for the teenagers, invading several Palestinian cities and putting up roadblocks especially in and around Hebron. Second, on 2 July, Palestinian teenager Muhammad Abu Khdeir was kidnapped by Israeli Jews and burned to death in East Jerusalem.
  - 40 For further details and analysis, see Niv Hachlili, “How to Stop Palestinians Unionizing: Security, Security, Security,” *+972 blog*, 28 January 2015, online at [972mag.com/how-to-stop-palestinians-unionizing-security-security-security/101949/](http://972mag.com/how-to-stop-palestinians-unionizing-security-security-security/101949/) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 41 Berda describes the bureaucratic system of the permit regime and how easy it is to have one’s permit revoked and complicated to have it reinstated. Yael Berda, *Living Emergency: Israel’s Permit Regime* (Stanford Press, 2017).
  - 42 Author interview with Assaf Adiv and Yoav Tamir, 7 December 2014.
  - 43 Sarah Breuner Isazda, *Jerusalem Regional Labor Court Protocol 48364-07-14*, 7 December 2014.
  - 44 In September, Maan began an international campaign asking unions to send emails to the garage and to the Ministry of Labor in support of Abu Ziadeh and Maan and in opposition to the garage’s actions. According to Maan, seven thousand emails were sent during the following months. WAC-MAAN, “Zarfati Workers Stand Firm, Morale Boosted by 7,000 Emails from Unionists across the Globe,” 5 August 2014, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1079](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1079) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 45 It was later clarified that the letters were written in response to a report submitted by the garage and, therefore, were not valid. The police had dropped the vehicle sabotage case, and the attorney general said that Abu Ziadeh should receive his permit back.
  - 46 WAC-MAAN, “A Big Gain for Palestinian Workers Organizing in the Settlements,” 2 December 2014, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1181](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1181) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 47 Israzda, *JRLC Protocol 48364-07-14*, 8.
  - 48 I discussed the proceedings with Maan’s lawyers, Moran Svorai and Amir Basha, after the hearing had ended.
  - 49 Assaf Adiv and Maan’s lawyers for the case reported this quote to me from the negotiations that took place with the garage owners and the judge.
  - 50 Assif Adiv, “Israel’s National Labor Court: WAC-Maan Is the Representative Workers’ Union at Zarfati Garage in West Bank,” 21 April 2015, online at [eng.wac-maan.org](http://eng.wac-maan.org).

- il/?p=1284 (accessed 29 December 2020).
- 51 David Kretzmer, *The Occupation of Justice: The Supreme Court of Israel and the Occupied Territories* (New York: SUNY Press, 2002). Kretzmer discusses the challenges faced by the Israeli HCJ, particularly when issues of security are central to court cases. See also Lisa Hajjar, *Courting Conflict: The Israeli Military Court System in the West Bank and Gaza* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).
  - 52 Eyal Avrahami, *Jerusalem Regional Labor Court Protocol 42848-02-15*, 17 February 2016, 6.
  - 53 Avrahami, *JRLC Protocol 42848-02-15*, 8 (emphasis added).
  - 54 WAC-MAAN, “WAC-Maan Signs a Groundbreaking Collective Agreement for Palestinians at Mishor Adumim’s Zarfati Garage,” 19 February 2017, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1822](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1822) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 55 When Ma’ale Adumim was inaugurated in 1979, an Israeli official commented, “We are putting the settlements all around Jerusalem so there will never be any question of whether it is part of Israel.” Edward Cody, “Israeli Settlements: A Link to Jerusalem,” *Washington Post*, 14 August 1979. Weizman writes on the planning and construction of Ma’ale Adumim under the direction of Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon and architect Thomas Leitersdorf. Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel’s Architecture of Occupation* (United Kingdom, Verso, 2012).
  - 56 By 2017, Maale Adumim’s population was 37,817, according to Btselem, online at [www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics](http://www.btselem.org/settlements/statistics) (accessed 30 May 2021).
  - 57 Hundreds of Jahalin Bedouins were expelled and, “a substantial portion of the village lands of Abu Dis, al-‘Eizariyah, at-Tur, ‘Anata, and ‘Issawiya are included within the jurisdiction area of Ma’ale Adumim.” See Nir Shalev, *The Hidden Agenda: The Establishment and Expansion Plans of Ma’ale Adummim and their Human Rights Ramifications* (Bimkom and B’tselem, December 2009), 49.
  - 58 Tareq Baconi, “Israel’s Annexation Plan, a New Era in Palestinian Resistance,” *New York Review of Books*, 2 July 2020; George Bisharat, “Maximizing Rights: The One State Solution to the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” *Global Jurist* 8, no. 2 (2008); Seth Anziska and Tareq Baconi, *The Consequences of Conflict Management in Israel/Palestine* (Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre, January 2016).
  - 59 WAC-MAAN, “About,” online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?page\\_id=8](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?page_id=8) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 60 “About Da’am,” online at [en.daam.org.il/?page\\_id=25](http://en.daam.org.il/?page_id=25) (accessed 29 December 2020). Da’am is a small political party and has never reached the necessary threshold to send a representative to the Knesset in any of the elections since its founding in 1995.
  - 61 Since the decree, no Palestinian who works in the settlements has been charged with breaking the law.
  - 62 The BDS campaign calls for withdrawing support from Israel and applying pressure to it through full boycott, divestment, and sanctions of Israeli institutions, representatives, and companies, including those based in settlements.
  - 63 WAC-MAAN, “Factory Owners at West Bank Settlement Mishor Adumim Threaten Violence against Striking Palestinian Workers, Police Arrest WAC-MAAN Coordinator,” 23 July 2014, online at [eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1039](http://eng.wac-maan.org.il/?p=1039) (accessed 29 December 2020).
  - 64 Oren Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2006).
  - 65 See: Adalah, “Discriminatory Laws Database”; and Adalah, “Israel’s Jewish Nation-State Law.”
  - 66 When Hatem was not allowed to return to his employment with Zarfati, he worked as a taxi driver in the Ramallah area.
  - 67 Michael Sfar, “The Human Rights Lawyer’s Existential Dilemma,” *Israel Law Review* 38, no. 3 (2005): 168.
  - 68 Adiv, *WAC-MAAN – A Decade of Organizing*, 3.
  - 69 Maan provides updates of its efforts on its website ([www.wac-maan.org.il/](http://www.wac-maan.org.il/)) and its Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/WacMaan/](http://www.facebook.com/WacMaan/)).



# Situating Radio in the Soundscape of Mandate Palestine

Andrea Stanton

## Abstract

This article situates radio within the broader soundscape and social world of 1930s–1940s Mandate Jerusalem. It examines several layers of the radio soundscape: the sounds of the broadcasting studio, the sounds and noise that radio listeners might have experienced from their set, and the sounds of radio broadcasting as mingled with other kinds of sound in Jerusalem’s public and private urban spaces. Contextualizing radio sounds within the broader urban soundscape improves our understanding of radio’s position within the social world of Mandate Jerusalem, and of the broader interrelations between sounds and the lived experiences of Mandate Jerusalemites. Jerusalem provides a worthwhile case study because of its historic religious importance, its increased political importance as capital of the Mandate administration, and because the Palestine Broadcasting Service, the state radio service, was headquartered there. Laying out the contours of this broader soundscape also helps move us closer toward a “sounded history” of this period – one in which scholars integrate sounds of various kinds into their analyses, as integral parts of Jerusalemites’ lived experiences. Understanding the richness of this aural landscape, which included communications technologies like the telegraph and telephone, and transportation technologies like buses and trains, helps bring to life the broader societal and political context of the Mandate’s major events and developments.

## Keywords

Mandate Jerusalem; soundscape; radio; music; cinema; religion; telephone; language; technology.

In a 1935 letter to the editor of the pro-Zionist, English-language *Palestine Post*, an irate resident of Jerusalem complained of the city's assault on his ears:

In a most commendable manner the police have lessened street noises by forbidding the unnecessary use of automobile horns. But this does not help the people who live on or near Jaffa Road where the radios and gramophone shops are responsible for a noise which is ten times worse than automobiles. I refer to the loud speakers.

If I am not mistaken, the merchants in the Suq were forbidden some years ago to play gramophones in the street. Is not this terrific noise, which reminds one of Red Indians, much worse? This is especially true in the New Russian Building where two adjacent shops play different tunes at the same time. Passersby believe themselves to be suddenly removed to a lunatic asylum where the patients are performing in an orchestra.

In most of the civilized states of Europe the use of loud-speakers in the street or near open windows is forbidden. Why not forbid it in this country too? Residents and tourists who are looking for peace in this city, called the Holy City, would be extremely grateful.<sup>1</sup>

For this unhappy letter writer, a holy city was a quiet city. He disliked car horns. He disliked radio and gramophone shops because they advertised their goods by playing them, with loudspeakers to attract customers. He liked the policing of car horns. The quiet he so desired was associated with “civilized states” of Europe; by contrast, noise called forth the writer's racialized assumptions about Native Americans and ableist statements about people with mental illness. However, with his complaint, he also entered into the historical record a complex and multi-layered description of the soundscape of Jerusalem in 1935, or at least of parts of it.

This article draws on such period sources, including the Arabic-language press, but also memoirs and photographs, to situate radio within the broader soundscape – and social world – of later Mandate Jerusalem. Historians like Ziad Fahmy and Carole Woodall have worked to reinsert sound into our understandings of the past, both in terms of discerning what life sounded like in past contexts, and in terms of accounting empirically and analytically for those sounds in historical scholarship.<sup>2</sup> Radio forms a particularly useful lens through which to consider the broader soundscape, because it engages with so many varied aural elements: public versus private sounds; the amplification (or suppression) of political, commercial, and religious sounds; the interplay between naturally produced sounds and those powered by electricity or batteries; and, as the letter above makes clear, debates over agreeable versus disagreeable sounds.

Radio came to Mandate Jerusalem in the late 1920s and early 1930s, inserting itself into a rich world of musical, educational, and religious sounds – among others. However, it is important to recall – especially from the perspective of the saturated media world of the twenty-first century – that it did so only at specific times. No

broadcast media form operated without interruption in its early years, and radio was no exception: radio stations broadcasting during the interwar period were on air for a limited number of hours per day. Take, for example, the early January 1940 (see table 1) broadcasting schedule for the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) – the only station broadcasting in Palestine until September 1941, when the British intelligence-operated, Arab nationalist station Sharq al-Adna/Near East Arab Broadcasting Station began broadcasting from Jaffa. By this point in time, the station operated two daily broadcasts: a short one-hour news-focused broadcast in the afternoon, and a longer, four-and-a-half-hour broadcast in the evening. In total, the PBS operated roughly five to six hours per day. Most of its on-air time was devoted to musical entertainment, punctuated by news broadcasts, weather announcements, and scripted lectures.<sup>3</sup>

<b>Afternoon Program</b>	1:30 pm	Time signal, then Hebrew music
	1:40 pm	First news announcement in Hebrew
	1:45 pm	Time signal
	1:50 pm	Program of what the Arab listeners want – recordings
	2:00 pm	Time signal then first news announcement in Arabic
	2:10 pm	Program of what the English listeners want – recordings
	2:20 pm	First news announcement in English
	2:30 pm	Time signal and shut down
<b>Evening Program</b>		
<i>Hebrew Program</i>	5:30 pm	
<i>Arabic Program</i>	6:15 pm	Talk to farmers – “the home garden” [ <i>hadiqa al-manzil</i> ]
	6:35 pm	Musical program – Tayseer Faydallah Jaber and the Arabic broadcasting band [ <i>firqa</i> ]
	7:00 pm	Solo performance on <i>bazaq</i> – Muhammad ‘Abd al-Karim
	7:15 pm	Musical performance – Muhammad Ghazi and the Arabic broadcasting band
	7:30 pm	Weather, then second news announcement in Arabic
<i>Hebrew Program</i>	8:00 pm	
<i>English Program</i>	9:30 pm	Weather, then second news announcement in English
	9:50 pm	Talk on foreign affairs
	10:00 pm	Shut down

Table 1. PBS broadcasting schedule, as published in *Filastin*, 2 January 1940.<sup>4</sup>

While the station expanded its services from the 1930s until the Mandate ended in 1948, there was nothing unusual about such short broadcasting sessions. The BBC’s

Arabic Service and the Egyptian State Broadcasting Station in Cairo, for example, were on air for similar durations each day. If period observers noted the common presence of radio sets in coffee shops in the 1930s and 1940s, for example, it is likely that they were only tuned to Arabic-language stations for specific minutes and hours each day. (It was also likely that many were battery-operated. Radio set advertisements in period newspapers and Mandate government archives suggest that battery- and electricity-operated sets were both common, although battery-operated sets were more common in rural areas.)<sup>5</sup> Making sense of radio sounds in Mandate Jerusalem, as in the rest of the interwar Middle East, thus requires reinserting them within the broader aural context of specific times and places. This article offers a descriptive portrait of the sounds of Jerusalem in the 1930s and 1940s, asking how radio broadcasts might have fit within this broader context. It examines a sampling of written and visual materials for evidence of sound: newspapers and memoirs that describe urban or rural, usual or unexpected sounds, and photographs that depict objects that produced sounds, from horses' hooves to gramophones.

Memoirs and other autobiographical texts have played a crucial role in writing the social history of Mandate Palestine, at times offering rare insight into the sensory experiences of the past.<sup>6</sup> Photographs offer a complementary perspective on the aural landscape of Mandate Palestine, often enriching the written record or providing a sense of the impact of sounds that may be difficult to convey in text. As Issam Nassar has demonstrated, local photography in Jerusalem dates back to the 1860s, and by the Mandate period it was well developed.<sup>7</sup> Collectively, these photographs, along with personal histories and community memory, offer a rich trove of visual material for historical research, as the Facebook community page British Mandate Jerusalemites Photo Library, with over nineteen thousand followers as of March 2021, suggests.<sup>8</sup> Among the largest (and most accessible) collections of photographs from Mandate-era Jerusalem is the G. Eric and Edith Matson Collection, drawn from the archives of the American Colony Photography Department, a for-profit enterprise associated with the American Colony that includes some twenty-two thousand photographic negatives and transparencies taken in Palestine between 1898 and 1946.<sup>9</sup> Despite its name, many of the photographers and members of the colony – including the photographer Eric Matson – were Swedish, although local photographers, including Hanna Safieh, also worked for or with them.<sup>10</sup> Matson and his American wife emigrated from Palestine to the United States in 1946, and in the 1960s gave their collection of photographs, negatives, and albums to the United States' Library of Congress. Although the collection, like others produced during the Mandate period, was not created to highlight the aural qualities of life in Jerusalem during the Mandate, its contents help evoke key characteristics of the city's soundscape.

Contextualizing radio sounds – entertainment programs, news broadcasts, broadcasting languages – within the broader urban soundscape improves our understanding of radio's position within the social world of Mandate Jerusalem, and of the broader interrelations between sounds and the lived experiences of Mandate Jerusalemites. Jerusalem provides a worthwhile case study because of its historic

religious importance, its increased political importance as capital of the Mandate administration, and because the Palestine Broadcasting Service, the state radio service, was headquartered there. Laying out the contours of this broader soundscape also helps move us closer toward a “sounded history” of this period – one in which scholars integrate sounds of various kinds into their analyses, as integral parts of Jerusalemites’ lived experiences.<sup>11</sup>

The radio soundscape of later Mandate Jerusalem had multiple layers, in terms of the different stations, broadcasts, sounds, and static available on air at different times and in different years, and in terms of its interaction with the other kinds of sounds circulating through the city. This article takes a case study approach, highlighting some of the various sound issues associated with radio broadcasting in Mandate Jerusalem. It focuses on the British Mandate’s national state-run radio station, the Palestine Broadcasting Service, which broadcast from Jerusalem (with the main transmitter in Ramallah) from 1936 to 1948. However, it recognizes that many radio stations reached Jerusalem – from within the region and from Europe – and that many people listened to multiple stations, making the radio soundscape itself more multilayered. Further, people listened to radio for different reasons: news, entertainment, education, religion, and business. As the only broadcast medium of the interwar period, radio commanded significant attention from listeners.

But radio did not exist in a vacuum. Understanding the richness of this aural landscape helps bring to life the broader societal and political context of the Mandate’s major events and developments. In particular, this article will look at the way radio, along with other communications technology like the telegraph and the telephone, impacted the relationship of Jerusalemites to space and distance, exposing them to communications and broadcasts from well beyond the Mandate boundaries, and allowing instantaneous communication over vast expanses; the way radio interacted with the cinema, the gramophone, and live musical performances to shape a world of arts and leisure; and how radio fit into a shifting soundscape of the everyday, with its porous boundaries between private and public, and rural and urban. It begins by discussing the soundscapes of religious and national identity, focusing on the belief that radio was an important venue for promoting proper language, and that proper language was particularly important for inculcating a proper national self-identification among Palestine’s population.

## **Religious and National Identity**

### *Religious Sounds and Public Activism*

Although the Jerusalemite who complained about noise pollution to the *Palestine Post* imagined a “Holy City” as a quiet one, this seems to ignore the great number of sounds produced by religious institutions in and around the city. All houses of worship had regular services, involving various sounds, and all had holidays – festive and somber. Church bells and calls to prayer might have been the most regular sounds that emanated from religious buildings, although the sounds that neighbors and passersby

would hear depended on the day of the week and the neighborhood.

Like other city buildings, Jerusalem's churches and synagogues were connected to the electrical grid in the early 1930s, with mosques reportedly electrifying more slowly.<sup>12</sup> Electrification in this moment might primarily have involved lighting. Although some houses of worship might have had microphones and speakers, it was not yet typical for most (see figure 1). The sounds of group prayer and scriptural recitation might also have been audible, whether coming from courtyard of a mosque, emanating from a house on a Friday evening, or wafting through the open windows of any house of worship, since few had air conditioning. While not always amplified by microphones and speakers, religious sounds, whether daily, weekly, or annual holiday sounds, would have been a regular part of Jerusalem's aural landscape – modulated by the religious affiliations of each neighborhood.

During the later Mandate period, the population of Jerusalem hovered around 60 percent Jewish, around 20 percent Muslim, and around 20 percent Christian.<sup>13</sup> Starting in the late 1800s, communities had begun expanding into new neighborhoods, built outside the Old City's walls – but the growing European influence in the late Ottoman Empire resulted in a proliferation of churches, convents, Christian schools, and other religiously-affiliated buildings and enterprises.<sup>14</sup> The Old City's division into ethnic and religious “quarters” was echoed in the population distributions of the newer neighborhoods. As a 1948 urban planning text noted: “In the new town the Jews are grouped principally to the west, the Christians to the south-west and the [Muslims] to the north and east.”<sup>15</sup> The sounds of religious life – in ancient houses of worship and newly-constructed ones – generally reflected these geographic divisions, with some overlap. They also transcended geographic location by appearing on the radio, with religious broadcasts from al-Aqsa Mosque, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and other significant houses of worship on Jewish, Christian, and Muslim holy days.<sup>16</sup>



Figure 1. “Calling to prayer from Saladin’s Tower, [Jerusalem].” Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019709885/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019709885/) (accessed 29 May 2021).



Figure 2. “Jewish protest demonstrations against Palestine White Paper, 18 May 1939. Crowd leaving [Yeshurun] Synagogue [Jerusalem].” Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019709116/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019709116/) (accessed 29 May 2021).

However, a photograph of protesters against the 1939 White Paper at the Bauhaus-style Yeshurun Synagogue, built in 1936 across from the Jewish Agency building (see figure 2), in the lead-up to a Zionist-led Jewish general strike is a reminder that the sounds emerging from and leading to houses of worship were not only religious. Such protests and demonstrations – sometimes linked to funerals and festivals – demonstrate the intersectional connections between religious identity and political aspirations for many in Mandate Palestine. The link between communal identity and political struggle, so significant in this period, is particularly evident in the question of language and its uses over the airwaves and beyond.

### *Linguistic Communities*

The Palestine Broadcasting Service broadcast from the outset in Arabic, Hebrew, and English. While the news broadcasts were the same duration for each language, the Arabic service consistently enjoyed more airtime – roughly 60 percent of the weekly broadcasting hours. This decision reflected the larger Arabic-speaking population in Mandate Palestine, as well as the British administration’s concern to attract Arabic-speaking listeners, in Palestine and around the region. They seemed to doubt that listening to the PBS would make Arabic-speakers pro-British, but believed that at least it would keep them from listening to Radio Bari, the Italian Arabic-language station, which broadcast anti-colonial and anti-British rhetoric.

Meanwhile, the local press tracked and reported the number of radio licenses registered annually in Arabic, English, or Hebrew as proxies for the numbers of Arab, British, and Jewish listeners respectively.<sup>17</sup> By the end of 1936, the station's first year of operations, for example, two-thirds of the new licenses were issued in Hebrew. Less than 10 percent were issued in Arabic.<sup>18</sup> The issue increasingly raised hackles as the decade continued. In June 1939, the Vaad Leumi petitioned the Mandate government to make the proportion of broadcast time in each language reflect the licensed listening audience. "The Jewish share in the general programs was in inverse ratio to the number of wireless licenses," it argued. "While Jewish listeners constitute at least 80 per cent of the licensed public, the Vaad Leumi states, the Jewish share in the broadcast programs was no more than 30 per cent, and even the larger part of that time was given over to general musical programs jointly shared with the English Hour."<sup>19</sup> World War II seems to have redirected public attention away from the issue of language equity – the station's administration was militarized and broadcasting controls were tightened. Still, an aural perspective offers a reminder that for listeners in Palestine, tuning into the local radio station meant encountering languages that might affirm or challenge one's linguistic and national identity.

Coupled with the question of which language to use for broadcasting was the question of the role of broadcasting in conveying proper or correct language. Eight months before the PBS opened, a *Palestine Post* editorial suggested that its broadcasts would improve Hebrew-language speech in Mandate Palestine. The editors wrote:

Enormous improvement in the diction and syntax employed in speaking our official languages might well follow from model lessons on the air. English as it is spoken and written today endangers the very understanding of the tongue; the varieties of Hebrew pronunciation and the many new words being coined . . . call for some competent instruction, while even Arabic, more rooted here than the other languages, is yet spoken in so many dialects and so many varying degrees of literacy, that practice in its literary expression will be very useful.<sup>20</sup>

Although modern Hebrew was already well developed by the 1930s and 1940s, the PBS's last director, Edwin Samuel, described the station as playing an important role in supporting correct use of the language. In 1947, he stated on air that "the PBS now is one of the most potent factors in determining the way in which Hebrew should be written and pronounced. The PBS is rightly considered by many Jewish listeners to be an authoritative body as far as the Hebrew language is concerned."<sup>21</sup> He explained that the PBS maintained rigorous language standards, with Hebrew-language advisors and courses for announcers. However, he noted, even the most distinguished guest speakers often failed to use proper Hebrew. "Some of them have learnt Hebrew late in life and speak it painfully with a foreign accent. This jars on the ears of many of our Jewish listeners, especially the younger generation for whom Hebrew is the mother tongue." Samuel concluded by promising that the station would "refuse to let such people broadcast in the future," even if they had previously served as on-air speakers.



Radio broadcasting also offered opportunities to promote the Arabic language and to debate the level of language broadcasters should use on air for news broadcasts, talks, and entertainment programs. ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid, the controller of the Arabic section in the early 1940s, noted in his memoirs how proud he was when regional listeners praised the quality of the Arabic being broadcast. He proudly contrasted the quality of the Arabic spoken on the PBS with that of other Arabic stations, praising the work of Khalil Baydas, the intellectual and nationalist, who reviewed scripts for grammatical errors and monitored the on-air broadcasts.<sup>22</sup> So broadcasting in Mandate Palestine became a pedagogical and thus national linguistic act, as did listening. This careful attention to language helped connect the soundscape of radio to the broader political, societal, and cultural contexts in Palestine.

The multiple languages in which the Palestine Broadcasting Service broadcast could be found echoes the many languages spoken in Jerusalem. Jacob Nammar described his parents – his Arab Palestinian father and Armenian mother – as speaking multiple languages to one another, their children, and others in the community.<sup>23</sup> Hala Sakakini recounted her experiences growing up in a family that regularly spoke Arabic at home and English and German at school or work.<sup>24</sup> Liora Halperin describes the array of language practices – and debates over language choices – in which members of the Zionist immigrant community engaged. Hebrew was considered critical to nation building, but community members’ mother tongues were the language of the home.<sup>25</sup> Although many Jerusalemites spoke more than one language, British Mandate educational and other policies treated Palestinian residents as members of two proto-national communities who should be educated and sign government documents in Arabic, English, or Hebrew – thus eliding Armenian-, German-, Greek-, and Russian-speaking communities, among others.<sup>26</sup> As a state-run station, the PBS reinforced this trifurcation of language, contributing Mandate government notions of national and language identities to the radio soundscape.

## **Changing Space and Distance**

At the same time that it sought to reinforce a notion of two proto-national communities in Palestine, radio also brought listeners in Palestine into contact with numerous other nations. Radio listeners in Jerusalem may have only been able to tune into local stations at specific times and for limited durations, but they were able to receive additional radio stations with various degrees of clarity from elsewhere in the region, Europe, and even the United States. It would have been possible, then, to tune into some station’s broadcast at most hours of the day. The program guides published in various local newspapers and reproduced in government documents suggest the variety of stations available to listeners in Palestine (see table 2). It is likely that additional French stations like Radio PTT, regional stations broadcasting in multiple languages like Beirut’s Radio Orient, and even North American stations broadcasting in English, could be heard depending on the time of day and atmospheric conditions. Even if incomplete, this list offers a sense of the rich aural array of broadcast sounds available

in Jerusalem by the late 1930s. Listeners could tune into many stations if they were willing to adjust their schedules and tuners. Meanwhile, those wishing to listen to a specific station might have to deal with overlapping frequencies and broadcasting interference – issues that might not have deterred someone from listening to a news broadcast, but might have led them to tune into a different station for recorded music or other entertainment.

Stations with Arabic programming	Stations with no Arabic programming
BBC Arabic Service	BBC Empire
Palestine Broadcasting Service	Radio Bordeaux
Radio Baghdad	Radio Brno
Radio Bari	Radio Bucharest
Radio Cairo	Radio Kosce
	Radio Lubljana
	Radio Lugano
	Radio Lyon
	Radio Montpellier
	Radio Prague
	Radio Sofia
	Radio Strasbourg
	Radio Tour Eiffel
	Radio Warsaw

Table 2. Stations available to listeners in Palestine in June 1938, compiled by author.

Like radio, the telephone brought the promise of a changed relationship between proximity and sound: connecting people in one place with those in another, simultaneously, for conversation or broadcasting/listening. For Jerusalemites, the city soundscape might expand and contract depending on whether they were listening to sounds produced in Jerusalem or by people, musical instruments, or records coming through a radio broadcast or telephone line. The British Mandate government had worked to establish telegraph and telephone networks starting in the early 1920s, developing a technological and administrative infrastructure for Mandate Palestine (see figure 3).<sup>27</sup> The rise of radio broadcasting and listening seems to have gone hand in hand with the rise of the telephone, although the number of active radio sets in Palestine was more than twice the number of telephones by 1938.<sup>28</sup> Jerusalem’s telephone operations shifted from a manual to an automatic exchange in June 1938, meaning that telephone users used dial telephone sets to route their calls, rather than speaking to a human operator. This upgrade was considered necessary to support the growing number of telephone subscribers – residential, commercial, and governmental – while also minimizing misunderstandings between callers and operators, due to the

wide variety of languages spoken in Jerusalem.<sup>29</sup> While relatively few Jerusalemites would have used telephones on a regular basis, the sound of a telephone's ring – technically, the sound of a ringing electromechanical gong – would have been familiar as one of the “modern” sounds being produced and heard in Jerusalem.

## Music, Cinema, and Leisure

While the aural landscape of later Mandate broadcasting was broad and rich, the spoken sounds of some stations may have been unintelligible to many listeners. As noted above, many of the accessible stations did not broadcast in Arabic, Hebrew, or English. Whether that kept people from tuning in to stations broadcasting in French, German, Polish, or other languages is unclear: although governments

tended to believe that news broadcasts were the most important aspect of radio broadcasting, live and recorded music also drove listener interest. Jerusalem listeners may have tuned into stations to hear music rather than spoken broadcasts.

Music and poetry dominate the pages of memoirs written by Mandate-era Jerusalemites. Wasif Jawhariyyeh – himself a musician – described musicians moving between Jerusalem and other cities around the region for professional opportunities, a practice that continued from Ottoman times. They performed at religious celebrations, such as weddings, as well as religious and other festivals. Less formally, young men might play instruments or sing together during evening gatherings – or someone might play an instrument in a family setting.<sup>30</sup> Reja-e Busailah, who was blind, also mentioned a neighbor who played the oud regularly, although not professionally, and recalled asking him to play Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s “The Train.”<sup>31</sup> Jawhariyyeh also describes his childhood activity of paying a local man who owned a large gramophone to play one of his many Arab world disc recordings, praising it as an invention that enabled people to hear music from elsewhere in the world, to access music, and to learn how to appreciate what he considered good quality music. Nimrod Ben Zeev’s



Figure 3. “Repairing telephone lines on Jaffa Road, 31 October 1938.” Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/mpc2010004369/PP/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/mpc2010004369/PP/) (accessed 29 May 2021).

research on rural building materials industry workers and their practice of singing about the rigors of their work suggests that workers in urban areas might also have turned to song as a means of passing time in aesthetically and emotionally meaningful ways.<sup>32</sup> These accounts suggest both the prominence of music in daily life, and also the ways in which mechanically-played, recorded music was integrated into existing practices of musicmaking and family or community sociality.<sup>33</sup>

Music was also important for cafés and restaurants applying to the Mandate government for a license that allowed them to add a surcharge to drinks and snacks purchased when music “other than by records was provided.”<sup>34</sup> As Maayan Hillel has argued for Haifa, cafés and similar spaces “were a major venue for the emergence of new recreation patterns in Palestinian society” during the Mandate period, thanks to their combination of food, drink, and entertainment that ranged from radio broadcasts to live performers by regional musicians or dancers.<sup>35</sup> Cafés that provided radio broadcasts offered customers without access to a radio at home the opportunity to listen to entertainment as well as news broadcasts – as well as the pleasure of enjoying a live music broadcast or discussing the latest news development with other café patrons. In this way, radio contributed to a new form of café sociality (or business sociality, for stores and factories that had radio sets).



Figure 4. “Debut of the P.B.S. Choral Society, concert broadcast from Y.M.C.A. auditorium on 22 November 1938.” Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019713305/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019713305/) (accessed 29 May 2021).

Memoirs and some photographs attest to the synergistic relationship between the Jerusalem radio station and other musical events, including those focused on European classical music. The Matson collection includes a photograph of the Palestine Broadcasting Service's Choral Society, which gave a live performance at the then new YMCA in 1938 that was also broadcast on air (see figure 4). Robert Lachmann's 1936–37 "Oriental Music" broadcasts included a mixture of live studio performances and his lectures that he hoped would form a complement to European classical music studies.<sup>36</sup> Jawhariyyeh, Busailah, and Sakakini all mentioned the music played on the Palestine Broadcasting Service, describing it as having an important, if contested, role in supporting and strengthening Palestinian identity.<sup>37</sup> They praised the Arabic section broadcasters and controllers, while criticizing the British Mandate government and the station's upper administration.



Figure 5. [Princess Mary Street with Rex Cinema in background, West Jerusalem], [between 1940 and 1946]. Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019704314/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019704314/) (accessed 29 May 2021) NB: title created by LOC staff.

Numerous Jerusalemites mentioned the cinema as a critical part of their visual and aural entertainment. The Rex Cinema on Princess Mary Street featured in several Jerusalem memoirs, including those of Wasif Jawhariyyeh and Jacob Nammar – who loved the English-language films about Tarzan and Zorro, despite what he described as the “poor sound quality.”<sup>38</sup> Film ads from local cinemas appeared regularly in Mandate Palestine newspapers, and the Palestine Broadcasting Station (and others) broadcast recorded and live versions of the films’ songs. For example, advertisements for the 1935 Egyptian film *Dumu‘ al-Hubb* (Love’s Tears), a romantic drama that featured Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahab and Nagat ‘Ali, appeared regularly in the Jaffa-based newspaper *Filastin* in January, February, and March 1936. At the end of March, when the Palestine Broadcasting Service launched, Nagat ‘Ali performed live as part

of the opening ceremonies, singing a song from the film.<sup>39</sup> The PBS and other stations also played recordings of famous film songs. For example, it devoted thirty minutes of a 135-minute evening broadcast in April 1939 to recordings of ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s film songs.<sup>40</sup> Cinema, radio, and the gramophone appear as interconnected media forms, reinforcing the self-consciously modern aspects of Jerusalem’s soundscape with their twentieth-century technology, while weaving in the evolving musical forms and romantic narratives of period Egyptian cinema.

## Radio and the Everyday

### *Public and Private Conversations*

In addition to the sounds emanating from buildings where people gathered in worship or for entertainment, sounds traveled from one house or apartment to another. Reja-e Busailah described his family’s experience living in Lydda, where the houses were built wall-to-wall, with adjacent courtyards. “We heard each other distinctly. Mother and our neighbor, Imm Ali Shammout, would sometimes talk to one another over the wall separating our courtyard from theirs. I liked that.”<sup>41</sup> His description echoes Fahmy’s characterization of the aural connections within and between urban residential buildings in early- and mid-twentieth-century Egypt: “Most walls could hardly stop wanted or unwanted sound from traveling.” Further, “windows, balconies, and doors enhanced this sonic penetration and served as sensory portals connecting residents with their neighbors and their neighborhood.”<sup>42</sup> As Fahmy notes, residents did not necessarily consider this aural permeability negatively, since “connecting with your neighbors and interacting with street hawkers was not only convenient but the expected norm.” The construction of separated houses in the newer neighborhoods beyond the Old City gave some additional space between residents in those neighborhoods. Salwa Sa‘id, who delivered a series of talks on the PBS in 1941 titled “The New Arab House,” contrasted her ideal modern house with multifamily buildings, framing it as both an issue of extended family interference and of noise. In large, multifamily buildings, “We whisper when we speak, we are quiet when we cough and when the children play, so that we do not disturb our neighbors, as they do us most of the time.”<sup>43</sup> However, Sa‘id’s perspective reflected a particular socioeconomic class position. Living in connected houses or on one floor of a multifamily building was still common, and – as Brownson notes, “people likely knew most others in the urban neighborhoods of Mandate Palestine,” making it possible for neighbors to connect the sights and sounds produced in homes and yards with particular individuals and families.<sup>44</sup> In other words, the aural landscape of Jerusalem included the sounds of neighbors’ voices, indoors and out, mingling with the sounds of musical instruments, radios, or gramophones.

### *Trains, Buses, and Cars*

Radio, telephone, and gramophone sounds reflected technological advances, but so did other kinds of sounds. A photo of a row of Ford motor cars parked outside the

Damascus Gate, taken between 1934 and 1939, suggests the modern transportation sounds – along with those of the Jaffa–Jerusalem railway, inaugurated in 1892 – that helped comprise the Mandate Jerusalem soundscape (see figures 6 and 7). Reja-e Busailah described listening to the sounds of cars and trucks while waiting to cross Jerusalem’s streets, listening for the rumble of the train that his family took between Ramla and Jerusalem.<sup>45</sup> These vehicles shaped the soundscapes of people inside as well as outside them. Hala Sakakini took two city buses each day to and from school, part of the Jerusalem bus system which had begun expanding in the 1920s.<sup>46</sup> She described the social interactions she saw and heard: passengers would greet the driver and other passengers when boarding, “and the greeting was promptly returned by all.”<sup>47</sup> Neighbors and friends would try to pay for one another, slowing the paying process with “noisy but friendly” arguments. Passengers would converse – often starting as a conversation between two people who knew one another, but then others “seated in front of them or behind them or across the gangway” would join the conversation.



Figure 6. “Ford cars parked in Damascus Gate area” [between 1934 and 1939]. Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019694557/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019694557/) (accessed 29 May 2021).

These social encounters and exchanges continued practices carried over from face-to-face encounters on neighborhood streets and in local shops – but city buses and other official and unofficial forms of public transportation shifted the geographies of these encounters. They may also have introduced new forms of socioeconomic stratification,

along with the sounds of horns, brakes, and engines. An elite few owned or could hire cars, while others could afford to take the bus or an informal taxi – regularly or on occasion – and some could only afford to walk. Whether welcome or unwelcome, Jerusalemites did not “tune in” to these sounds in the same way that they might consciously choose to listen to a radio program or a gramophone record. But transportation vehicles added to the aural picture of movement and modern living, both in the sounds they produced and in the various kinds of social interactions in which Jerusalemites using each form of transportation could participate.



### *Rural–Urban Interface*

Finally, it may be helpful to remember that in many cities in the interwar period, including Jerusalem, urban and rural were permeable categories. A sheep market outside Herod’s Gate (figure 8) offers a reminder that although many photos of Jerusalem are animal free, animal sounds were a likely part of at least some of the Jerusalem aural landscape. Jacob Nammar, for example, described his childhood home in lower Baq‘a as being next to a small forest, Horsh al-Nammara, where he would play with friends and take their dog for a walk.<sup>48</sup> Reja-e Busailah similarly mentioned playing outdoors with family and friends, in semi-rural parts of their neighborhood. He also described the sounds of the horse- or mule-drawn vegetable cart, with its “four metal wheels” and of the coach that transported people between Ramla and Lydda: “The horses were well shod and I liked the sound of their clomp, clomp, clomp as they ran. The sound was rich [and] sumptuous.”<sup>49</sup> These accounts suggest the ways in which “rural” and “urban” were interconnecting categories for many people living in Jerusalem, and that the sounds associated with rural life were also sounds associated with life there.

Figure 7. “Jaffa to Jerusalem. Train at Battir. Pulling up the steep grade” [between 1920 and 1933]. Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/matpc.15152/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/matpc.15152/) (accessed 29 May 2021).





Figure 8. “Sheep market outside Herod’s Gate” [between 1898 and 1946]. Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019698690/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019698690/) (accessed 29 May 2021).

## **Conclusion: Sound and Noise in the Written Archives**

Working on the aural aspects of bygone eras offers a challenging but valuable historical challenge. Looking across multiple forms of historical documents and objects – written, visual, oral, material – helps create a richer and more complex understanding of the past, in terms of how ordinary people experienced daily life. In this case, using written documents and photographs together offers a way to think through the intersections of sound and social contexts in Mandate Jerusalem. These intersections in turn point to the relationships between sound and lived experience, whether in the areas of culture, politics, religion, work, or other areas, providing a richer understanding of Jerusalemites’ multilayered, aural lived experiences. These relationships then help provide a better appreciation of radio’s location within the world of Mandate Jerusalem – a useful case study both as a large city in Palestine’s interior and as its religious and political heart. While radio introduced new sounds, it

was not the only source of new sounds; rather, radio sounds amplified, competed with, and complemented the sounds of gramophones and telephones, the Jaffa–Jerusalem train, and ‘Abd al-Wahhab’s film songs. Nor did radio and other new sounds replace the older sounds of neighborly conversation, animals, or the call to prayer. This combination of new sounds and old sounds helped establish a distinct soundscape during the Mandate era. Considering history in terms of soundscapes, in Mandate Palestine and elsewhere, offers alternative ways to imagine (or, perhaps, listen to) changing attitudes to politics, leisure, and the everyday and new configurations of space, distance, and linguistic and religious community.

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### Endnotes

- 1 *Palestine Post*, 3 February 1935, 4.
- 2 See, for example: Ziad Fahmy, “Historicizing Sound and Noise in the Middle East,” *History Compass* 11, no. 4 (2013): 305–15; Andrea Stanton and Carole Woodall, “Bringing Sound into Middle East Studies” (roundtable), *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 48, no. 1 (2016): 113–14.
- 3 For a general overview on the Palestine Broadcasting Service, see Andrea Stanton, *This Is Jerusalem Calling: State Radio in Mandate Palestine* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013).
- 4 “Wireless Radio Jerusalem Station” [daily broadcasting schedule], *Filastin*, 2 January 1940, 3.
- 5 Stanton, *This Is Jerusalem Calling*, chapters 2 and 3.
- 6 See, for example, Issam Nassar and Salim Tamari, eds., *Dirasat fi al-tarikh al-ijtima’i li-bilad al-sham: qira’at fi al-siyar wa-l-siyar al-dhatiyya* [Studies in the Social History of Bilad al-Sham: Readings in Biography and Autobiography] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2007). On the sensory experience of a particular Palestinian memoir, see Sandy M. Sufian, “Discovering Mandate Palestine through Disability: The Life of Reja-e Busailah,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77 (Spring 2019): 136–41.
- 7 See Issam Nassar, “Early Local Photography in Jerusalem: From the Imaginary to the Social Landscape,” *History of Photography* 27, no. 4 (2003): 320–32. There were many photographers active in Palestine during the Mandate period, including Khalil Ra’d, Ibrahim and Khalil Rassas, Hanna Safieh, Militad Savvides, and ‘Ali Za’rur, as well as numerous Jewish and Zionist photographers. Some, like Safieh and Ra’d, focused more on landscapes, rural scenes, and ethnographic or folk subjects – sometimes later criticized as Orientalized – and others, like Za’rur, specialized in photojournalism. As Rona Sela had documented, several – including Za’rur and the Rassas family – had their collections lost or confiscated after the creation of the state of Israel. See: Rona Sela, “Imprisoned Photographs: The Looted Archive of Photo Rissas (Rassas),” *Intermedialités* 32 (Fall 2018), online at [www.erudit.org/en/journals/im/2018-n32-im04484/1058469ar/abstract/](http://www.erudit.org/en/journals/im/2018-n32-im04484/1058469ar/abstract/); and Rona Sela, “Ali Za’rur: Early Palestinian Photojournalism, the Archive of Occupation, and the Return of Palestinian Material to Their Owners,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (2018): 48–56. Other collections are now primarily available in books, such as: Raffi Safieh, *A Man and His Camera: Hanna Safieh: Photographs of Palestine, 1927–1967* (Jerusalem, 1999); and Rona Sela, *Khalil Ra’d: tazlomim, 1891–1948* [Khalil Ra’d: photographs, 1891–1948] (Ramat-Hasharon: Raphaeli, 2010).
- 8 See British Mandate Jerusalem Photo Library, online at [www.facebook.com/BMJerusalemPhotoLib](http://www.facebook.com/BMJerusalemPhotoLib) (accessed 29 May 2021).

- 9 This article uses photographs from the Matson collection to illustrate particular aspects of sound in Jerusalem during the Mandate, due to their open-source availability, and with no intent to marginalize the Palestinian or other photographers working in Mandate Jerusalem. The collection is available online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/colony.html](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/colony.html) (accessed 29 May 2021).
- 10 On the American Colony Photography Department, see Barbara Blair, “The American Colony Photography Department: Western Consumption and ‘Insider’ Commercial Photography,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 44 (Winter 2010): 28–38; and Nada Awad, “Waiting for the Second Coming: The New Photographic Collection of the American Colony Archives,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 61 (Winter 2015): 101–12.
- 11 For a discussion of how music can be incorporated analytically into sounded history, rather than used solely to illustrate a mood or a moment, see Marc A. Hertzman, “Toward and Against a Sounded History,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 96, no. 2 (2016): 249–58.
- 12 See Fredrik Meiton, *Electrical Palestine: Capital and Technology from Empire to Nation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2019), 191. See also Ronen Shamir, *Current Flow: The Electrification of Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2013). Meiton argues that Jerusalem electrified at a slower pace than other cities.
- 13 Ruth Kark and Michal Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs: Quarters, Neighborhoods, Villages, 1800–1948* (Detroit and Jerusalem: Wayne State University Press and Hebrew University Magnes Press, 2001), 147.
- 14 Kark and Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs*, 377–78.
- 15 See Henry Kendall, *Jerusalem: The City Plan: Preservation and Development during the British Mandate 1918-1948* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1948), 34.
- 16 See, for example, Rioli and Castagnetti’s account of the Franciscan *schola cantorum*, whose liturgical singing was broadcast by the Palestine Broadcasting Service and the BBC: Maria Chiara Rioli and Riccardo Castagnetti, “Sound Power: Musical Diplomacy within the Franciscan Custody in Mandate Jerusalem,” in *European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Karene Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri (Springer, 2021), 79–104.
- 17 The Palestine Broadcasting Station followed the British BBC model in requiring that radio set owners pay an annual license fee, which went to support the station. Unlike the BBC, the PBS’s budget came primarily from government funds and not license fees, but they did contribute to the station’s operating revenues.
- 18 “Nearly 19,000 Radio Licenses, Remarkable Increase since April Last,” *Palestine Post*, 9 December 1936, 5.
- 19 “Jews Would Control Their Section of Palestine Broadcast Service,” *Palestine Post*, 9 June 1939, 1.
- 20 “Jerusalem Calling,” unsigned editorial, *Palestine Post*, 8 July 1935, 4.
- 21 *Between Ourselves* script, 15 August 1947, 3–4 (Edwin Samuel author and broadcaster) (RG14 1879 1).
- 22 See ‘Ajaj Nuwayhid, *Sittun ‘amm ma’a al-qafila al-‘Arabīyya* [Sixty years with the Arab caravan], prepared by Bayan Nuwayhid al-Hut (Beirut: Dar al-Istiqlal, 1993), 258–61; and Elias Sahhab, “This is Radio Jerusalem... 1936,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 20 (2004): 52.
- 23 See Jacob Nammar, *Born in Jerusalem, Born Palestinian: A Memoir* (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2012).
- 24 See Hala Sakakini, *Jerusalem and I: A Personal Record* (Amman: Economic Press Company, 1990).
- 25 See Liora Halperin, *Babel in Zion: Jews, Nationalism, and Language Diversity in Palestine, 1920–1948* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2015).
- 26 See, for example, Suzanne Schneider, “Monolingualism and Education in Mandate Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 51 (2013): 68–74.
- 27 See Kark and Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs*.
- 28 For telephone statistics, see *Statistical Handbook of Middle Eastern Countries* (Jerusalem, 1945), 18 (listed under “telephone instruments”). For 1937 and 1938 radio license statistics, see *Report by His Majesty’s Government in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Council of the League of Nations on the Administration of Palestine and Trans-Jordan for the Year 1938* (London: His Majesty’s Stationery Office, 1939), 276. Despite radio’s far greater popularity, there seems to have been

- some use of a “wired” radio transmission, a system of transmitting radio signals by wires or cables (including electric and telephone wires) rather than by radiating radio waves.
- 29 See “New Era in Telephone History: Jerusalem’s Automatic Exchange,” *Palestine Post*, 17 June 1938, 4.
  - 30 See Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1900–1948*, ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nasser, trans. Nada Elzeer, (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2014).
  - 31 See Reja-e Busailah, *In the Land of My Birth: A Palestinian Boyhood* (Washington: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2017), location 434; Jawhariyyeh, *Storyteller of Jerusalem*, 189–90.
  - 32 See Nimrod Ben Zeev, “The Sound of Danger: Voice, Noise, and Risk in Building Material Production in Early Twentieth-Century Palestine,” *International Journal for History, Culture, and Modernity* 7 (2019): 492–503.
  - 33 Jawhariyyeh, Sakakini, and others also described poetry and other literary recitation playing important roles in their lives, both in formal school contexts and in informal, family contexts.
  - 34 The Israel State Archives includes numerous licensing records for cafés in towns around Mandate Palestine. See, for example, the 1947 file about the license for the Vienna Café in Jerusalem, ISA – Mandatory Organizations – Mandate Commerce – 000a143.
  - 35 See Maayan Hillel, “Constructing Modern Identity: New Patterns of Leisure and Recreation in Mandatory Palestine,” *Contemporary Levant* 4, no. 1 (2019): 75–90.
  - 36 See, for example: Ruth F. Davis, “Ethnomusicology and Political Ideology in Mandatory Palestine: Robert Lachmann’s ‘Oriental Music’ Projects,” *Music and Politics* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2010).
  - 37 Busailah, *In the Land of My Birth*; and Sakakini, *Jerusalem and I*.
  - 38 See Jawhariyyeh, *Storyteller of Jerusalem*; and Nammar, *Born in Jerusalem*. The Matson collection includes photographs of the cornerstone laying in 1935 and a street scene between 1940 and 1946. For the latter, see [Princess Mary Street with Rex Cinema in background, West Jerusalem], online at [www.loc.gov/resource/matpc.12908/](http://www.loc.gov/resource/matpc.12908/) (accessed 29 May 2021). NB: title created by LOC staff.
  - 39 For the film ads, see, for example, *Filastin*, 26 February 1936, 3. For the newspaper’s praise of Nagat ‘Ali’s performance and the radio station’s launch ceremony, see “The Broadcasting Station is Behind the People,” *Filastin*, 1 April 1936, 5.
  - 40 See “Palestine Station Schedule,” *Filastin*, 22 April 1939, 6.
  - 41 See Busailah, *In the Land of My Birth*, location 2040.
  - 42 See Ziad Fahmy, *Street Sounds: Listening to Everyday Life in Modern Egypt* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2020), 49–51.
  - 43 Quoted in Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 63. For more on Salwa Sa’id’s broadcasts, see Stanton, 140–47.
  - 44 See Elizabeth Brownson, *Palestinian Women and Muslim Family Law in the Mandate Period* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2019), 90.
  - 45 See Busailah, *In the Land of My Birth*.
  - 46 Kark and Oren-Nordheim, *Jerusalem and Its Environs*, 141.
  - 47 See Sakakini, *Jerusalem and I*, 103–4.
  - 48 Nammar, *Born in Jerusalem*, 25.
  - 49 See Busailah, *In the Land of My Birth*, location 2432.

# Jerusalem through Evangelical Eyes: Nineteenth-Century Western Encounters with Palestinian Christianity

Gabriel Polley

## Abstract

This essay explores Western attitudes to Christianity in Palestine as recorded in the accounts of nineteenth-century travelers, especially British Evangelical Protestants, to Jerusalem. Nineteenth-century Evangelicals shared a hostility towards non-Protestant Christian denominations, an unwavering belief in the Bible as a historically infallible document, and an attitude towards Palestine and the Jewish people that led them towards what is now recognized as Christian Zionism. In Jerusalem, the essay argues, travelers came face-to-face with a “Christian Orient” which lay far beyond their previous conceptions of Christianity. This was exemplified by travelers’ attitude to the event that is held most sacred by Palestinian Christians: the Easter ceremony in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Evangelicals attended the Easter service not as worshippers, but detached observers. Denying completely the sacred importance of the ceremony, they viewed it as a tradition setting the Christians of the Orient apart from themselves, as shown through analysis of their reports of the event. Ultimately, the essay contends, Western travelers’ repeated ideological attacks on the practice of Christianity in Jerusalem served to delegitimize the Palestinian Christian community in Western eyes, informing the outlook of British Mandate officials and the Christian Zionist Evangelicals of today.

## Keywords

British travelers; Christianity; Christian Zionism; Church of the Holy Sepulchre; Evangelical Protestantism; nineteenth century; Orientalism; Orthodox Christianity; Palestinian Christians; Protestantism.

This essay explores Western attitudes to Christianity in Palestine as recorded in the accounts of nineteenth-century travelers, especially British Evangelicals of various denominations, to Jerusalem. In 1906, Charles W. Wilson described “the views of those earnest Christians of all denominations” – in reality, Evangelical Protestants – concerning the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, recognized by most Christians since the fourth century as marking the location of Christ’s crucifixion and tomb. Wilson, a key figure in the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF) in the late nineteenth century, was well-placed to observe the attitudes of his own milieu of archaeologists, missionaries, and wealthy tourists who flocked to Palestine in the phenomena of the “Peaceful Crusade.”<sup>1</sup> He noted that, “Educated pilgrims to the Holy City are often sorely perplexed when they visit the ‘holy places’ for the first time. They know that Christ suffered without the gate. They find Golgotha within the walls of a small Oriental city and in close proximity to its thronged bazârs.”<sup>2</sup> Wilson’s observation touched one of Western travelers’ core obsessions: the controversy over the Church of the Holy Sepulchre’s site based on arguments concerning the locations of Jerusalem’s ancient walls outside of which, according to the Bible’s wording, the crucifixion occurred, and their search for the “true” site. This led in the 1890s to the purchase by a group of British Protestants of the site of the Garden Tomb, outside the Old City of Jerusalem’s walls in post-1948 East Jerusalem.

This story has been told in academic research before.<sup>3</sup> Yet here we note Wilson’s articulation of this process as driven not by biblical description or archaeological evidence, but rather Westerners’ inability to reconcile the aesthetics of their faith with the existing Jerusalem. Wilson candidly described Western visitors’ first impressions of Christianity’s most sacred site as “hasty and unfavourable,” leading them to “seek some spot which appeals more directly to the eye and to their preconceived ideas of the character and appearance of Golgotha.”<sup>4</sup> From stained glass and Sunday schools, travelers had a mental image of the crucifixion site as, in the words of a popular English hymn, “a green hill far away.”<sup>5</sup> Finding the church well within late Ottoman Jerusalem, travelers were further disconcerted by “thronged bazârs” evidencing an indigenous society contradicting the idea of Palestine as a blank canvas awaiting the prophesied Jewish Restoration.<sup>6</sup>

This complex of attitudes, critically deconstructed throughout this essay, survives in the outlook of tens of thousands of Evangelical tourist-pilgrims, particularly from North America, who arrive in Palestine/Israel each year. Viewing the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as “distasteful, unaesthetic, and sometimes ‘idolatrous,’” they are fed a politicized Christian Zionist narrative by Israeli tour guides, resulting in their view of Palestine’s indigenous Christians, in the words of the veteran Palestinian activist Jean Zaru, as “not among the chosen,” but “rather, one of the cursed.”<sup>7</sup> In examining these beliefs’ emergence, this essay first engages with Edward Said’s articulation of Orientalism, before turning to Jerusalem, and representations of the Easter ceremony at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

## “The Central Point and Nucleus of All Biblical Geography”

It is an important part of Said’s thesis in his seminal *Orientalism* that Western discourse on “the Orient” has been largely determined by attitudes toward, specifically, Islam. In “the Near Orient,” Said wrote, “[...] Islam was supposed to define cultural and racial characteristics.”<sup>8</sup> Said explored this theme further in his *Covering Islam*, writing that the discourse of “Islam versus the West [...] is the ground base for a staggeringly fertile set of variations,” with their origins in “what was called ‘the Oriental Renaissance,’ a period in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when French and British scholars discovered ‘the East’ anew.” This “discovery” did not, of course, imply acceptance: Said noted that “Islam has never been welcome in Europe.”<sup>9</sup> Said’s conceptualization of Orientalism is, essentially, the encounter between an Islamic East and secular West. Yet while it would be churlish to deny the overlap between Orientalism and Islamophobia, Said’s formula is somewhat simplified, problematizing an understanding of Orientalist views towards Palestine, what Lorenzo Kamel identifies as “Biblical Orientalism,” shaped as much by encounters with non-Western Christianity as with Islam.<sup>10</sup>

In his critique of Said, Eitan Bar-Yosef argues that “throughout the nineteenth century, English stakes in the Holy Land were shaped by traditions and articulated in ways which cannot be accommodated by Said’s model of Orientalism.” Bar-Yosef identifies this lacuna as arising from Said’s evaluation of “Orientalism as a secular, de-Christianized phenomenon.”<sup>11</sup> While the secular Enlightenment formed the background to modern Orientalism’s emergence, European travelers consistently related to Palestine as the Christian Holy Land.<sup>12</sup> While they were confronted with the region’s government by the Islamic entity of the Ottoman Empire, its inhabitation by an overwhelmingly Muslim population, and Islam’s visible presence almost everywhere from the village shrine to the Dome of the Rock – “one is never out of sight of Mohammedan religion for an hour of travel,” one British traveler complained – they continued to conceptualize it as a Judeo-Christian sacred space, temporarily occupied by Islam.<sup>13</sup> Jás Elsner and Joan-Pau Rubiés note of the earliest European travel narrative of Palestine, that of the Bordeaux Pilgrim produced in 333 AD, that Palestine was “only meaningful in relation to scripture, and its landmarks acquire their significance by being interpreted in the light of the Biblical text which is the pilgrim’s principal resource”; this sentiment is almost as applicable to Western textual discourse of a millennia-and-a-half later.<sup>14</sup>

This paper largely concentrates on the attitudes of nineteenth-century British Evangelicals, mainly members of the Anglican Church, but also some Nonconformists. They shared a hostility toward non-Protestant Christian denominations, an unwavering belief in the Bible as a historically infallible document, and an attitude towards Palestine and the Jewish people that led them towards what is now recognized as Christian Zionism. It was undoubtedly in Britain, after the Protestant Reformation, that these ideas first emerged.<sup>15</sup> The doctrines spread to North America where they were adopted in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by many Evangelical sects

essentially unchanged, notwithstanding the unique resonances of American settler identities with Palestine's biblical history.<sup>16</sup> For example, the *doyen* of biblical archaeologists, Edward Robinson, while an American, could trace both his genetic and his theological lineage back to western England, from which his Puritan ancestors had emigrated in the seventeenth century.<sup>17</sup>

In the nineteenth century, interest in Palestine soared, especially in Protestant Britain, as a result of the Evangelical Revival with its literalist reading of the Bible and belief in the Restoration, the gathering of the world's Jews in Palestine.<sup>18</sup> Western travelers viewed Palestine "through the eyes of the Bible," in the words of the prominent Anglican churchman and Palestine Exploration Fund co-founder Arthur Penrhyn Stanley.<sup>19</sup> In response to scientific advances which challenged literalist interpretation of scripture, Evangelicals adopted semi- (or pseudo-) scientific methods to establish the Bible's veracity, cross-referencing the sacred text against the Palestinian landscape.<sup>20</sup> This frequently put Evangelicals at odds with existing Christianity in Palestine, its traditions dating from the Byzantine era, indigenized by the native Palestinian Christian population. These erroneous and embarrassing traditions, Evangelicals considered, needed to be eliminated if the battle against atheism in the West was to be won. The most notable example of this process was the search for an alternative site for Christ's tomb.

There was both change and continuity between earlier European pilgrimage to Palestine and later Evangelical travel. Protestant visitors looked down on their Catholic predecessors from medieval Europe, and their Christian non-Protestant contemporaries, who had journeyed to the Holy Land over centuries for spiritual salvation. Robinson scoffed at the non-Protestant "pilgrimage to Jerusalem," which "instead of being resorted to merely as a means of elevating and purifying the religious feelings, and quickening the flame of devotion, should come to be regarded as having in itself a sanctifying and saving power."<sup>21</sup> Yet for Evangelicals, Jerusalem remained the center of the universe, as it had been the center of the medieval *mappa mundi*. Robinson stated that only from Palestine "has gone forth, to other nations and to modern times, all the true knowledge which exists of God, of his Revelation, of a Future State, and of Man's Redemption through Jesus Christ"; Palestine, compared to which "the splendor and learning and fame of Egypt, Greece, and Rome fade away," is "the central point and nucleus of all Biblical Geography." The area of "Biblical Geography," regions included within the Bible narrative or Christianity's early spread, was largely coterminous with the western Asian Islamic Orient:<sup>22</sup> these included Lebanon "in great part comprised within the original boundaries of the twelve tribes [of Israel]," Sinai "the scene of the wanderings of Israel, as they came up out of Egypt to take possession of the Promised Land," and "outlying regions" from "Northern Syria" to "the rugged country of Armenia," to "the vast plains of Mesopotamia," to Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Turkey, and stretching into Europe through Greece. While in many of these areas Christians formed a small minority, these lands were nevertheless conceived as Christian in essence.

Travelers came face-to-face in this "Christian Orient" with an array of denominations



lying outside the Protestant-Catholic binary defining Europeans' conception of Christianity's history. Like the West's encounter with the Islamic Orient, meeting the Christian Orient also produced strongly negative reactions. Evangelicals struggled to identify the "so-called Christians" of the East, as Scottish missionary John Wilson scathingly wrote, with doctrines and traditions at obvious variance with Anglo-Saxon Protestantism, as coreligionists at all.<sup>23</sup> Nowhere could the Christian Orient be encountered with such force as in Jerusalem, identified by Britain's mid-nineteenth century consul in Jerusalem James Finn, a key figure in Evangelical Christian Zionist efforts, as "the grand central point to which all of the branches of those Eastern and Western churches gravitate."<sup>24</sup>

## **"What We Least Valued": Evangelicals in Jerusalem**

"People often say they are disappointed in Jerusalem [...] they are disappointed, not because Jerusalem is what it is, as because it does not correspond with what they had trained themselves to expect." These words of Charles Biggs, Anglican chaplain in Jerusalem in 1892, accurately encapsulated many Western visitors' reactions. Biggs continued, "They have come to the Holy Land for the sake of the Bible story, and take no account of the subsequent changes, the wars, and sieges, and burnings, and re-buildings."<sup>25</sup> Protestant travelers came to Jerusalem hoping to walk in Christ's footsteps. What they found, however, was a Jerusalem visibly dominated by Islam, with a crowded Jewish quarter far from the romantic impressions of the ancient Israelites, and Christian holy sites monopolized by Orthodox, Catholic, and other non-Protestant denominations. Travelers retreated into what Scottish clergyman Norman Macleod called "a Jerusalem of their own – full of the beautiful, the sacred, the holy, and the good."<sup>26</sup> As Issam Nassar notes, this "historical imagination paves the way toward actual colonization"; from nineteenth-century travelers, to the Zionist movement, to contemporary Christian Zionist tourists, there has been a consistent wish to possess Jerusalem and reshape the city according to colonial and/or religious desire.<sup>27</sup>

Travelers were instinctively hostile to manifestations of Christianity in Jerusalem, even though members of the community often showed travelers around the city as dragomans (from the Arabic *turjaman*, translator) guides. There was a fundamental mismatch between what local Christian dragomans thought visitors should see, and what Protestant travelers wanted to see. John Wilson complained that "our Christian guides cared most for what we least valued, the monkish traditions, which our own reading had previously almost uniformly taught us to discard."<sup>28</sup> Travelers' distaste for sites such as the Via Dolorosa, venerated by non-Protestant pilgrims and Palestinian Christians, led the influential Christian Zionist Laurence Oliphant to dismiss Jerusalem as containing "more sacred shams and impostures than any other city in the world."<sup>29</sup> Encountering Christians worshipping at these locations prompted travelers to express their disdain for and disclaim any suggestion of kinship with non-Western Christians. The novelist Anthony Trollope described in high Orientalist fashion worshippers at

the Tomb of the Virgin Mary just outside the Old City:

It must be remembered that Eastern worshippers are not like the churchgoers of London, or even of Rome or Cologne. They are wild men of various nations and races – Maronites from Lebanon, Roumelians [i.e. Balkan], Candiotas [Cretan], Copts from Upper Egypt, Russians from the Crimea, Armenians and Abyssinians. They savour strongly of Oriental life and of Oriental dirt. [...] They are silent mostly, looking out of their eyes ferociously, as though murder were in their thoughts, and rapine.<sup>30</sup>

These encounters within Jerusalem turned travelers' attentions to rural locations where Westerners could more clearly picture the Bible narrative. "The [Church] of the Holy Sepulchre [...] may be closed against us," wrote Stanley, "but we have still the Mount of Olives and the Sea of Galilee; the sky, the flowers, the trees, the fields, which suggested the Parables; the holy hills, which cannot be removed, but stand fast forever."<sup>31</sup>

Travelers also viewed the villages of the Palestinian *fellahin* as a more "authentic" throwback to biblical days than the established Christian sites, confusing local guides. The parson-naturalist Henry Baker Tristram recorded his Orthodox Christian dragoman's reaction at the village of Baytin, north of Jerusalem: "No holy places here, and no pilgrims ever visit them. I have been dragoman to scores of Russians and Frenchmen, but it is only you English who come here. Perhaps you only care for places where there are no saints, as you do not adore them?" According to Tristram, although he tried to explain the village's importance as somewhere Christians could "feel our nearness to a watchful Providence," his dragoman remained uncomprehending as "there were no saints of the calendar here, and beyond them his veneration could not stretch."<sup>32</sup> In broadening their gaze to encompass the countryside and Palestinian villages, travelers cast a colonial eye over the land, imagined as possessing only a sparse and undeveloped population.

Reversing the Orientalism-as-Islamophobia thesis, travelers sometimes contrasted Islam positively to Palestinian Christianity. Tristram juxtaposed the "childish and ridiculous ceremonies" of "the lowest and most corrupt form of Christianity," to Islam "simple and noble in idea and in form."<sup>33</sup> This extended to travelers' attitudes towards Islam's most prominent symbol in Jerusalem, the Haram al-Sharif compound, which Protestants appreciated for its uncluttered spaciousness in which to reflect upon the Bible. "Would that the Holy Sepulchre and other holy sites had been preserved with the same good taste," lamented Isabel Burton, wife of the infamous Orientalist and British Consul in Damascus Richard Burton.<sup>34</sup>

The remainder of this essay returns to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which received the lion's share of Western criticism. The novelist William Makepeace Thackeray's description of the Church's interior is exemplary:

blaring candles, reeking incense, savage pictures of Scripture story, or portraits of kings who have been benefactors to the various chapels; a

din and clatter of strange people – these weeping, bowing, kissing – those utterly indifferent; and the priests clad in outlandish robes [...] the English stranger looks on the scene, for the first time, with a feeling of scorn, bewilderment, and shame at that grovelling credulity, those strange rites and ceremonies, that almost confessed imposture.

Ultimately, Thackeray claimed, “The Church of the Holy Sepulchre, for some time, seems to an Englishman the least sacred spot about Jerusalem.”<sup>35</sup> Faced with the Church’s rich interior adornments which offended Evangelical sensibilities, travelers developed mental fantasies of sweeping the building away. “If this once irregular hillock were indeed Golgotha,” remarked Elizabeth Rundle Charles, a popular writer on Christian topics, “[...] then what a desecration this building is! What one would give to be able to sweep away this heavy roof, and this wretched gold, and these marbles, and look up from this very spot to the sky.”<sup>36</sup>

With these emotive reactions, it is unsurprising that Protestant travelers enthusiastically bought arguments over what Charles Wilson admitted was the “difficult and obscure question” of the “true” sites of Christ’s crucifixion and sepulchre, from the reasoned “Biblical researches” of Robinson to the bizarre theories of the doomed imperial hero Charles George Gordon.<sup>37</sup> Burton made a rare defense of the sepulchre site, sardonically noting “how strange that all Christendom should have been mistaken for 1841 years, and that a handful should arise of late years to show us how wrong we have been.”<sup>38</sup> As a Catholic, however, her voice lay outside the Evangelical mainstream consensus.

Familiar tropes that persist today in Evangelical attitudes and Israeli tour guide discourse, portraying the church as a locus of Oriental chaos rather than spirituality reserved for Protestantism alone, had their origins in high Orientalist discourse. One was the supposedly violent antipathies between different denominations that shared the church, today frequently exploited by Western and Israeli news agencies to cast Christianity’s practice in Palestine in a belittling light.<sup>39</sup> Ada Goodrich Freer, a spiritualist fraud who lived in Jerusalem for several years in the early twentieth century, wrote a sensationalist account of a confrontation (which she did not personally witness) between Orthodox and Franciscan monks outside the church in November 1901. In an “indescribable scene of carnage and bloodshed,” Orthodox monks, supported by Palestinian Christian women, attacked the Franciscans with “clubs [...] daggers, knives, and hatchets,” and were about to set the wounded alight with “burning rags, soaked in petroleum” when Ottoman troops intervened.<sup>40</sup> Freer, or her informants, overstated the scale of this fracas: British newspapers recorded only four to five injured monks.<sup>41</sup> Yet amplifying such incidents allowed travelers to present Palestinian Christianity as part and parcel with a barbarous Orient. This was exemplified by travelers’ attitude to the event that is held most sacred by Palestinian Christians: the Easter ceremony in Jerusalem.

## “The Disgrace of Eastern Christianity”: Witnessing the Holy Fire

Easter witnessed pilgrims from around the Christian Orient congregate in Jerusalem. While Western visitors frequently arrived in the city at the same time, they attended the Easter service on Holy Saturday not as fellow worshippers, but detached observers watching from the church’s upper galleries. Denying completely the sacred importance of the ceremony, they viewed it as one more tradition that set the Christians of the Orient apart from themselves. As Biggs aptly summarized, “Protestant travellers, who would never dream of denying themselves a single half-meal even on Good Friday,” voyeuristically attended to watch a “crowd of enthusiastic pilgrims, who have taken nothing but vegetables for six weeks [that is, fasted for Lent], welcome the symbol of their Savior’s Resurrection,” and subsequently “report to their friends at home on the extravagance they mistake for irreverence.”<sup>42</sup> The most well-known depiction was the Pre-Raphaelite artist William Holman Hunt’s 1899 painting *The Miracle of the Sacred Fire in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre* (figure 1), based on sketches made during Easter 1892; typically, Hunt wrote of “the ignorance of the barbaric pilgrims” who formed his subject.<sup>43</sup>

Robinson’s own attack on the location on the church, on the surface drawn from reasoned topographical arguments, partly resulted from his feelings of repulsion towards the Easter service which he witnessed in 1838; as Robinson’s admirer, American biblical archaeologist Frederick Jones Bliss, admitted, Robinson’s reactions were those of “the Puritan, not the scholar.”<sup>44</sup> Represented as total hubris, Easter at the Church stood through synecdoche for the entire Orient. One traveler described the Easter worship as a “continuation of shameless madness and rioting,” while Finn wrote that “the orgies celebrated on the occasion by the pilgrims, may be paralleled in ancient heathendom.”<sup>45</sup> Claude Reignier Conder, another PEF figure associated with the quest for an alternative crucifixion site, described “the Greek [Orthodox] Christians, mostly Syrians by birth” as becoming “worked up into a state of hysterical frenzy which would not allow them to be quiet for a moment.” He claimed that “delicate women and old men fought like furies; long black turbans flew off and uncoiled like snakes on the ground, and what became of the babies I do not know.”<sup>46</sup> Travelers were more likely to feel kinship with the Muslim Ottoman soldiers on the scene, whom Oliphant imagined felt “contempt and disgust which one felt compelled to share” at the “degrading rites and superstitions.”<sup>47</sup> Unsurprisingly, some Protestant travelers spurned the Easter service altogether. Visiting Palestine in 1847, the social commentator Harriet Martineau chose to sit watching “Olivet [the Mount of Olives] and the rising moon” rather than “witness mummeries done in the name of Christianity, compared with which the lowest Fetishism on the banks of an African river would have been inoffensive.” She nevertheless quoted a traveling companion who did attend the worship and likened it to “a holiday in hell.”<sup>48</sup>

Most offensive to Protestants was the claimed miracle of the Holy Fire, by which a flame emerged from the Edicule marking Christ’s tomb. Westerners theorized how

the “miracle” of the flame’s appearance, which Charles Wilson identified as “the disgrace of Eastern Christianity,” might be affected by a disingenuous priesthood only concerned with lining its pockets with pilgrims’ donations.<sup>49</sup> The most dramatic of all descriptions were of the Holy Fire in 1834. According to one Westerner who witnessed the events, English aristocrat Robert Curzon who traversed the Eastern Mediterranean acquiring ancient Christian manuscripts, disaster resulted from the church’s overcrowding.<sup>50</sup> The drama was heightened by the presence of Ibrahim Pasha, governor of Greater Syria during the Egyptian occupation of 1831 to 1840, then engaged in repressing a widespread Palestinian uprising (though this went unmentioned by Curzon). According to Curzon’s bloodcurdling account, once the Holy Fire was distributed with – in Orientalists’ eyes – the customary lack of dignity, smoke from the pilgrims’ candles “obscured everything in the place.” Overpowered by “heat and bad air,” “three unhappy wretches [...] fell from the upper range of galleries, and were dashed to pieces on the heads of the people below,” while “one poor Armenian lady, seventeen years of age, died where she sat, of heat, thirst, and fatigue.” This led to panic. Curzon luridly described his escape over “a great heap of bodies,” and accused Ibrahim’s guards of killing “numbers of fainting wretches” as they cleared the governor’s path, leaving “the walls [...] spattered with blood and brains of men who had been felled, like oxen, with the butt-ends of the soldiers’ muskets.” To Ibrahim’s credit, however, Curzon attributed him with organizing the survivors’ evacuation from the church; three hundred people, according to Curzon, however, were not so lucky, and were crushed to death.

Predictably, Westerners used these events in diatribes against the Holy Fire ceremony. Curzon, who unsuccessfully lobbied Ibrahim Pasha for an exposure of “the blasphemous impositions of the Greek and Armenian patriarchs” in perpetuating “so barefaced a trick [...] in these enlightened times,” utilized his chilling narrative to form a parable of Jerusalem’s fall from its supposedly ancient glory after Christ’s crucifixion. “Since the awful crime which was committed there,” he wrote, “the Lord has poured out the vials of his wrath upon the once chosen city; dire and fearful have been the calamities which have befallen her in terrible succession for eighteen hundred years.” The Easter 1834 events became apocryphal, contributing towards a discourse around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre as a site of violence and death. Gordon described the church simply as “the slaughter-house,” while Conder castigated it as a “grim and wicked old building.”<sup>51</sup>

The story of the Easter 1834 disaster continues to be cited by commentators exclusively using Curzon’s and other Western accounts.<sup>52</sup> Reliance on these sources masks the fact that the eyewitnesses may have exaggerated events in line with their antipathies towards non-Western Christianity. Casting some uncertainty over the event, British newspapers reported that anywhere from “several persons” to “nearly 400” lost their lives; without cross-referencing with non-Western sources, the accuracy of these claims cannot be known.<sup>53</sup> Further research on the incident is necessary, though journalists and popular historians will likely continue uncritically recycling European accounts.

## Epilogue

Western travelers' repeated ideological attacks on the practice of Christianity in Jerusalem served to delegitimize the Palestinian Christian community in many Western Evangelicals' eyes. This is especially notable in a pamphlet entitled *The Land of Promise* by Charles Warren, a PEF colleague of Wilson's. Warren's text, four decades before the Balfour Declaration, envisaged a British occupation of Palestine "with the avowed intention of gradually introducing the Jew, pure and simple, who is eventually to occupy and govern this country." Warren anticipated that "the Moslems generally will not be difficult to keep in order"; however, he continued that "with the native Christians I see some difficulty [...] They are at present a difficult people." With thinly veiled euphemisms for militarized colonial control, Warren concluded that "keeping the native Christians within due bounds" and "very tightly in hand" would be necessary for a European occupier.<sup>54</sup>

This attitude toward Palestinian Christians was consistent with the Protestant encounter with Christianity in Jerusalem. Discursively "othering" Christians beyond Europe, Westerners denied any commonality between themselves and those who shared their faith, but whose religious practice differed from the strictures of Evangelical Protestantism. With Christians relegated to an Orient considered altogether subservient to the West, and the goal of the traditional pilgrimage replaced with the colonial desire to reshape Jerusalem and see the Jewish Restoration achieved, Christians could be construed as a nuisance and threat. These attitudes have informed the outlook of the Christian Zionist Evangelicals of today as much as of British colonial officials of the Mandate era, who attempted to sideline the Christian community, which produced leading intellectual figures of the Palestinian national movement.<sup>55</sup> The Orientalist discourse of the nineteenth century continues to cast a malign shadow over indigenous Christian practice in the land and city of Christianity's birth.

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JERUSALEM  
NEIGHBORHOODS

## Shaykh Jarrah

### A Struggle for Survival

Nazmi Jubeh

#### **Abstract**

Tens of Palestinian refugee families face eviction from their homes in Jerusalem's Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood after the claim that the land on which their house was built in 1956 belonged to Jewish owners prior to 1948. Israeli law allows Jews to reclaim their properties within the 1967 occupied territories, but denies Palestinians the same right, despite the fact that, according to Israeli law, both Palestinians and Israelis in Jerusalem live under Israeli jurisdiction. By clearly exposing Israel's apartheid policies, the struggle waged by this small Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood of twenty-eight houses could begin a new era in the Jerusalem front line of the Palestinian-Israel conflict.

#### **Keywords**

Shaykh Jarrah; Jewish settlements in East Jerusalem; Shimon HaTzadik; Holy Basin; displacement of Palestinians; Mufti of Jerusalem.

The threatened evictions in Shaykh Jarrah are part of a larger plan to transform the main area of conflict, Jerusalem and its vicinity, into a Jewish Israeli city. The Israeli projects in the area known as the "Holy Basin" – encompassing the Old City and the surrounding area, including the holy sites and Jerusalem's historical landscape – aim to change the demographic reality and urban landscape in Jerusalem in favor of the occupation and its religious and "nationalistic" symbols. The Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood cannot be separated from what is happening in al-

Aqsa Mosque, as was evident in the spring 2021 al-Aqsa uprising, since that holy site is the central part of this plan.

In order to understand the Holy Basin's importance and the ferociousness of the attack on it, it is enough to say that after fifty-four years of occupation of east Jerusalem, 90 percent of the population in the Old City and the "Holy Basin" is still Palestinian, despite the numerous mechanisms Israel has employed to change its composition in favor of the colonialist project.

It is also important to acknowledge the distress that has beset the Arab world after years of civil and intraregional wars. Recent years witnessed some Arab states rushing to legitimize occupation (normalization) under various pretexts, while the Palestinian Authority has failed to set the direction or devise a political platform that responds to the developments of the past two decades and the emergence of new tools for resistance.

## **Shaykh Jarrah in History**

The Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood, whose boundaries are only vaguely drawn, is located two kilometers north of the Old City's Bab al-'Amud (Damascus Gate) – a stone's throw. The southern part of the neighborhood was probably within the boundaries of ancient Jerusalem in the early Roman era (first century BCE). Several churches and convents were built in the neighborhood during the Byzantine era, in addition to two rock-hewn pools used to preserve rainwater that date to the Roman-Byzantine era. The neighborhood also has several historical cemeteries from various eras, with Qubur al-Salatin (Tombs of Kings), the most renowned among them.

The neighborhood is geographically important since it is the link connecting the Old City – through two central streets, Salah al-Din and Nablus roads – with the northern neighborhoods of Jerusalem (Shu'fat and Bayt Hanina), and leading to Ramallah and the north of the West Bank. The neighborhood itself houses a considerable number of national and international institutions that many Palestinians, not only in Jerusalem but in all of Palestine, depend on.

During the Ayyubid era, a Sufi center was built over the gravesite of Husam al-Din al-Jarrahi, Salah al-Din's personal physician and one of his emirs. Jerusalem historian Mujir al-Din, writing at the end of the fifteenth century, refers to al-Zawiya al-Jarrahiyya:

Al-Zawiya is located at the northern edge of Jerusalem. It has a waqf and specific administrative functions. It is attributed to its endower, Emir Husam al-Din bin Sharaf al-Din 'Isa al-Jarrahi, one of King Salah al-Din Yusuf bin Ayyub's men, who passed away in Safar in 598 h. (1201 CE) and was buried there, may his soul rest in peace. Opposite of the Qibla direction, gravesites of several mujahidin, known as al-Jarrahi's men, can be found, but only God knows the truth.<sup>1</sup>

Al-Jarrahi's gravesite, which can still be seen, is considered a holy place (*maqam*) very similar to other Islamic shrines in Palestine.<sup>2</sup> This *zawiya* apparently played a role in the Sufi movement and was supported by an endowment; its last trustees were from al-Disi family in Jerusalem, whose descendants today still dwell in and around the *zawiya*.

ʿArif al-ʿArif refers to this *zawiya* as al-Madrasa al-Jarrahiyya, and mentions that it had specific administrative functions. Al-Jarrahi became prominent in the local popular heritage, with some references to him as “al-Nabi Jarrah” (Prophet Jarrah).<sup>3</sup> In 1886, a mosque with a minaret was built at the end of the *zawiya* to serve the growing population in the neighborhood. The mosque, known as Shaykh Jarrah Mosque, remains in use today.

It is not known when exactly the name “Shaykh Jarrah” began to be used, but the fact that al-Zawiya al-Jarrahiyya existed since the beginning of the thirteenth century suggests that the name is quite ancient. The name “Shaykh Jarrah” consistently appears in texts and maps, and in local Jerusalem records from the nineteenth century as the location of the few buildings that stand outside the gates of the city before modern residential neighborhoods emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century.

During the Ottoman era, the area continued to be used for agriculture and summer resorts for Jerusalem's notables.

Many of the vineyards (*al-krum*; s. *karm*) there were named according to their owners, and are still used today; Karm Abu al-Khayr, Karm al-Nazir, Karm al-Mufti, Karm al-Jaʿuni, and the like. It was common for the city's notables to spend the summers and some weekends with their families in these vineyards, seeking some privacy, sun, and fresh air, which they missed in the overcrowded Old City.<sup>4</sup>

Shaykh Jarrah's gardens and orchards were planted with grape vines, and olive and fig trees, and some plots had mills and grape presses. A few of the simple dwellings were turned into small fortified castles (*al-qilaʿ*; s. *qalʿa*), especially in the seventeenth century, such as Qalʿat al-ʿAmawi, whose remains were still visible up to 1948.



Figure 1. “Turkish soldiers marching past Am. [i.e., American] Colony on Nablus Road [Jerusalem]; [Another view of Turkish soldiers on Nablus Road],” Matson Photo Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019697793/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/item/2019697793/) (access 15 June 2021). The Ottoman army is passing between the Shaykh Jarrah mosque and Qasr al-Amawi and other houses on its way to Suez 1914.

Al-‘Amawi was located directly southwest of al-Zawiya al-Jarrahiyya. The castle consisted of two floors built of chiseled stones, with a grain mill and a water well, and was surrounded with olive orchards and vineyards.<sup>5</sup>

Eventually, it became a trend among Jerusalem’s aristocracy to build summer houses (*qusr*; s. *qasr*) amid the vineyards, even more widespread by the nineteenth century. Maps from the mid-nineteenth century show Qasr al-Mufti, which appears to have existed before 1840. Although the building was modest,<sup>6</sup> it was one of the earliest orchards and “palaces” built in the nineteenth century. Shaykh Tahir Afandi bin Mustafa al-Husayni (d. 1865),<sup>7</sup> who was the Hanafi mufti in Jerusalem and father of Hajj Amin al-Husayni, built a luxurious *qasr* to the north of his previous home around 1890. Sources refer to other *qasr* in Shaykh Jarrah built in the nineteenth century such as Qasr al-Qutub and Qasr al-Shihabi. Although we have little information about them, this shows how common this practice was.<sup>8</sup> After the Husayni family built their *qasr*, the families of al-Nashashibi, Hindiyya, Jarrallah, al-‘Arif, al-Khatib, Ghosheh, Murad, Dajani, Sharaf, Nusayba, and other wealthy families followed suit.<sup>9</sup>

Although numerous Jerusalemite families built extravagant houses in Shaykh Jarrah, the Husayni family remained dominant in the southern part, where most of the buildings still stand, giving this important part of Shaykh Jarrah the name: al-Husayniyya. It is difficult to track the exact date when the family purchased the land, but it could be assumed that they began purchasing land there in the middle of the sixteenth century, when the family’s influence began to increase and they acquired more property in other cities and villages.<sup>10</sup>



Figure 2. “Sheikh Jarrah after Operation Yevusi,” April 1948, Harel Brigade, Palmach Archive, online at [ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81:Sheikh\\_Jarrah.jpg](https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/%D9%85%D9%84%D9%81:Sheikh_Jarrah.jpg) (accessed 14 June 2021)



Figure 3. “Shaykh Jarrah, 1948,” Harel Brigade, Palmach Archive, online at [es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Sheikh\\_Jarrah\\_1948.jpg](https://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Archivo:Sheikh_Jarrah_1948.jpg) (accessed 14 June 2021).

Modernity began to appear among the Husaynis in mid-nineteenth century in the form of modern houses built in Shaykh Jarrah. In addition to vineyards, Rabah Afandi al-Husayni (d. 1886)<sup>11</sup> built the first modern villa south of Zawiyat al-Shaykh Jarrah in the 1860s. He expanded the villa in 1876,<sup>12</sup> and later several other family members built houses in the same “al-Husayniyya” area. One of the most famous houses is a large villa built by Isma‘il Haqqi Musa al-Husayni in 1897, which has stood witness to important political events, including the reception of German Kaiser Wilhelm II during his visit to Jerusalem in 1898. After 1948, Isma‘il Haqqi’s villa was turned into the New Orient House hotel.<sup>13</sup> In the 1980s, the same building became the headquarters of the late Faisal al-Husayni’s Arab Studies Society, and the unofficial headquarters of the PLO. In 1990, it became the official diplomatic headquarters of the PLO, known simply as “Orient House.”<sup>14</sup>

Another famous house in Shaykh Jarrah – and one of the largest and most beautiful – is Dar Is‘af al-Nashashibi, on a northern rise of the neighborhood. It consists of three floors in addition to a garden and several other amenities. The house’s facade is decorated with Jerusalem ceramic (Kashani) tiles. The house was designed by the famous Jerusalemite architect, Spiro Khouri, for Is‘af Othman al-Nashashibi<sup>15</sup> and built in 1922. Later, the house became an important cultural salon, a trend among Jerusalem’s notables in the late Ottoman era and one that persisted during the British Mandate, when Is‘af al-Nashashibi became famous for hosting Palestinian and Arab literary intellectuals.<sup>16</sup> Following al-Nakba,<sup>17</sup> the house was utilized by a number of

foreign and local entities: the embassy of Saudi Arabia, and later the Saudi Consulate; the French Consulate; and headquarters for the German Archeology School in 1964 until 1982 (when it moved to the Mount of Olives). Most recently, it was turned over to Dar al-Tifl al-‘Arabi (Hind al-Husayni), to be used as a Center for Islamic and Heritage Studies, housing an important collection of books and manuscripts under the direction of author and historian, the late Ishaq Musa al-Husayni. The building is now called Dar Is‘af al-Nashashibi for Culture, Arts, and Literature, where numerous cultural and artistic activities take place, and its rich library is maintained.<sup>18</sup>

In all cases, every house in Shaykh Jarrah has a history worthy of a stand-alone article.<sup>19</sup> The history of the neighborhood is an integral part of the collective history of the Palestinian people. It played an important role in political and cultural life and witnessed the major changes that Jerusalem has undergone since the mid-nineteenth century. The neighborhood was home also to a number of Palestine’s prominent figures, in addition to the Husaynis: George Antonius,<sup>20</sup> Raghīb al-Nashashibi,<sup>21</sup> and Is‘af al-Nashashibi<sup>22</sup> lived there. The Ottoman census for 1905 mentions 167 households in Shaykh Jarrah, and this number increased even more during the British Mandate, as indicated by the number of qusur in the neighborhood, making it one of the most affluent areas in Jerusalem in the first half of the twentieth century.

## **International and National Organizations in Shaykh Jarrah**

After al-Nakba, Shaykh Jarrah attracted more buildings and organizations, especially public buildings that moved to Shaykh Jarrah after the fall of the western part of the city into the hands of the Israeli occupation. Today the neighborhood houses the Swedish, Turkish, Belgian, Spanish, Italian,<sup>23</sup> British, and French consulates.<sup>24</sup> (Until 1967, Shaykh Jarrah also housed the Iraqi, Lebanese, Saudi, Egyptian, and Syrian consulates.) International and national organizations also prefer the location, such as: the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA),<sup>25</sup> the World Health Organization, the EU Representative Offices, YWCA, International Committee of the Red Cross, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung,<sup>26</sup> Friedrich Naumann Stiftung,<sup>27</sup> Belgian Development Agency, and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA).

The neighborhood has several schools, including Khalil al-Sakakini,<sup>28</sup> ‘Abdullah Bin al-Husayn,<sup>29</sup> and al-Fatah al-Laji’a; two hospitals: St. John’s Eye Hospital<sup>30</sup> and St. Joseph’s Hospital;<sup>31</sup> and the British School of Archaeology (Kenyon Institute). There are also three Arab hotels: the Ambassador Hotel,<sup>32</sup> Mount Scopus Hotel,<sup>33</sup> and the American Colony Hotel. The Palestinian National Theatre (al-Hakawati) in the former al-Nuzha cinema is also located in the southern part of Shaykh Jarrah. In addition to many Palestinian families, the neighborhood is the residence for a number of consuls and state representatives to the Palestinian Authority,<sup>34</sup> and employees of international organizations in Jerusalem and Ramallah.

Being a hub for international, national, and service organizations makes Shaykh

Jarrah one of the most sensitive and important areas in the city, one on which many Palestinians inside and outside Jerusalem depend for services and employment. Hence, targeting the neighborhood is an attack on Palestinian vital infrastructure and Palestinian symbols in Jerusalem.



Figure 4. “Air views of Palestine. Jerusalem from the air. Newer Jerusalem. The American Colony. In Sheikh Jerrah Quarter,” 1931. American Colony (Jerusalem) Photo Department, Matson Collection, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/mpc2010007762/PP](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/mpc2010007762/PP) (accessed 14 June 2021).

## **Early Settlement Activity in Shaykh Jarrah Post-1967**

Early Israeli settlement began in various forms in Shaykh Jarrah immediately after the occupation of the city in 1967. At the time, the Jordanian government had just finished constructing a new governmental hospital near St. John’s Eye Hospital, with the intention of moving the (Austrian) Hospice there from the Old City. Although the construction was completed in 1967, the internal finishing had not yet begun when the building was appropriated by the Israeli forces claiming it as a “governmental building.”<sup>35</sup> The building was made the headquarters for Israeli Police, and several Israeli additions were built on the north, east, and west sides over the following decades. Currently, more construction is underway to turn the entire area into a hub of Israeli governmental buildings in Shaykh Jarrah.

About three hundred meters southwest, another large complex was built as the

regional headquarters for the Israeli Border Police, thus turning a main part of Shaykh Jarrah into a center for Israeli internal security forces – altering the cultural and historical character of the residential neighborhood. In addition, the Israelis took control of the western strip of Shaykh Jarrah, located in the buffer zone known as No Man’s Land that had marked the separation of the two parts of the city between 1948 and 1967. In part of that strip, two huge Israeli hotel blocks were built west of the American Colony Hotel, in addition to a building for the Histadrut (General Organization of Workers of Israel), part of which was later turned into a clinic. The broad Road No. 1 was constructed adjacent, on No Man’s Land, to conceal the 1948 armistice (“green”) line and lay claim to the “unification” of the city’s two parts.



Figure 5. Mufti of Jerusalem Hajj Amin al-Husayni’s original palace (bottom right) and the new palace, later converted under Jordan into the Shepherd Hotel (center), 1933, American Colony Photo Department, Library of Congress, online at [www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019704480/](http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019704480/) (accessed 10 June 2021).

After 1967, the Israeli authorities confiscated Qasr al-Mufti, which included the nearby Shepherd Hotel built during the Jordanian period, claiming it as absentee property, despite the fact that several inheritors of the mufti were still living in Jerusalem. In 1985, the American Jewish billionaire Irving Moskowitz bought the hotel, palace, and the surrounding area to build a Jewish settlement.<sup>36</sup> Moskowitz planned to tear down the one-hundred-year-old palace of Hajj Amin al-Husayni, with its Palestinian national history and all that Hajj Amin had stood for, and build in its place 122 settlement residential units.<sup>37</sup> In 2010, and after receiving many objections, the Israeli Planning and Building Committee agreed to build only twenty-eight units, and later increased that number to fifty-six units.<sup>38</sup> The historical palace itself was not torn down; instead it was converted into a synagogue, but all other structures built before and after it were destroyed.

The settlement is part of the northern strip that marks the borders of the “Holy Basin” – on the west is the hospital-now-governmental complex and to the north, the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital – and succeeds in disrupting the continuity of the Palestinian neighborhoods in the area. It is useful to regard these disparate settlement components as a single unit, rather than scattered points.



Southeast of Qasr al-Mufti, part of a twenty-five-dunum plot of land (Karm al-Mufti, attributed to mufti Tahir al-Husayni)<sup>39</sup> was used to build al-Madrasa al-Ma'muniyya, a municipal girls' school, which was never opened. Instead, after the building was completed, it was turned into offices for the Israeli Ministry of Interior, apparently to prevent students from gathering in a sensitive location near several Israeli security organizations. Had the school been opened, it would have become a headache for settlements planned in the same area. The Jerusalem municipality confiscated the rest of the land to prevent the erection of any Palestinian structures on it, calling it "absentee property." Recently, the municipality decided to turn it into a park, set to be completed by 2023, that will effectively be a barrier between the settlement and Wadi al-Jawz neighborhood to the east.<sup>40</sup>

## Shimon HaTzadik Settlement

In Jewish heritage, Shimon HaTzadik (Simon the Just) was a prominent rabbi who lived in Jerusalem during the Greek era. Jewish tradition says that he welcomed Alexander the Great in 332 BCE, when he conquered Jerusalem, although historical sources do not mention that Alexander the Great ever arrived in Jerusalem when he conquered Palestine, nor do they mention that this meeting took place in any other part of Palestine. According to these sources, Alexander the Great marched through Palestine towards Egypt, and a small Greek military force occupied Jerusalem. In all cases, Shimon HaTzadik is mentioned in the Talmud, including the Mishnah.<sup>41</sup>

In the Middle Ages, a cave in Shaykh Jarrah was claimed to be the gravesite of Shimon HaTzadik, although the tomb in the cave has a wall inscription indicating the grave is of a Roman matron named Julia Sabina. Clermont-Ganneau (1871) refers to it as "the so-called Simon the Just" (Shimon HaTzadik), and concludes that the gravesite actually dates to centuries after the life of Shimon HaTzadik, the closest date being the second century CE and not before. He concludes that any association between the grave and Shimon HaTzadik is nothing but a myth.<sup>42</sup>

Wasif Jawhariya mentions in his memoirs written at the end of the Ottoman era:

The Jewish Picnic (*shathat al-Yahud*): there are two caves in Shaykh Jarrah in Jerusalem next to Waqf Abu Jibna. The Jews believe that the gravesite of Shimon HaTzadik is in one of these caves, and they visited them twice a year, I believe, spending the whole day under the olive trees. Most of them were Eastern Jews who observe Eastern traditions, especially in Arab countries. Visitors enjoyed the performances of string musicians such as Haim, the oud and violin player, Zaki, the Aleppine tambourine player who had a loud melodious voice and sang mainly Andalusian Mushahat and some other melodies. The Arabs of Jerusalem, both Christians and Muslims, used to join the Jews in what was known as the Jewish picnic. The mountain at the time of the Jewish picnic was full of people from different backgrounds and peddlers of all sorts. My

siblings and I made sure to never miss that event.<sup>43</sup>

Jawhariyya speaks about visiting the gravesite twice a year, similar to the practice of visiting maqams in Palestine in certain seasons. He does not mention the existence of a Jewish settlement in the area, but it is clear that the custom of visiting this gravesite was well-known and involved certain rituals, such as popular celebrations that attracted people from various communities and faiths.<sup>44</sup>

Wilson quotes from Ferdinand Ewald a description of the location saying that it is carved from rock, specifically in the Shimon HaTzadik burial spot, and that there is a water well nearby. Conservative practicing Jews visited the location on the first Friday of every lunar month, especially thirty-three days after Pesach. They celebrated with their children by shaving their heads for the first time. He provides a detailed description of the cave.<sup>45</sup>

In conclusion, it has never been proven that the cave in Shaykh Jarrah can be linked in any way to Shimon HaTzadik; rather, the evidence – the inscription for a Roman woman – dates to the second century CE and not earlier. The Jewish tradition began in the twelfth century based on an assumption, and the site turned into a *mazar* (shrine) at the end of the Mamluk era. In the Ottoman era, and particularly in the nineteenth century, it became a well-known tradition with specific rituals including lighting candles, playing music, and dancing similar to Islamic seasonal festivals al-Nabi Musa (between Jerusalem and Jericho), and al-Nabi Rubin (Jaffa) or the Christian festival of Mar Jiryis al-Khadr (al-Lyd). The area, including the cave, was owned by Arabs and probably visitors paid fees to the owners, who had a key to the cave and hence received fees for this service.<sup>46</sup>

## **Nineteenth-Century Jewish Settlement in Shaykh Jarrah**

The settlement project in Shaykh Jarrah began when the chairmen of the Sephardi and Ashkenazi councils in Jerusalem formed a coalition in 1876 to buy/rent Shimon HaTzadik cave and the cave next to it known as the Minor Sanhedrin,<sup>47</sup> and the surrounding Karm al-Ja'uni (around 17.5 dunums). They secured a long lease contract (*hikr*) for sixteen thousand francs. The contract was registered in the Ottoman records under the name of Rabbi Avraham Ashkenazi on behalf of the Sephardi community and Meir Auerbach on behalf of the Ashkenazi community.<sup>48</sup> The cornerstone of Shimon HaTzadik was laid in 1890 in the Sephardi part. German architect Conrad Schick may have been involved in dividing the land plots and drawing the settlement's plan east of Nablus Road. The settlement was meant to house poor Jews, hence the dwellings were small, crowded, functional, and plain. In 1916 there were around forty-five settlers in this settlement living in thirteen dwellings. As for the part allotted to Ashkenazi Jews, it was never built and remained empty. This land plot in particular is the one where a housing project (of twenty-eight houses) was built in 1956, as we will explain later.

In 1891, the establishment of another settlement commenced less than two hundred

meters away from Shimon HaTzadik settlement, west of Nablus Road, called Nahalat Shimon, known among locals as “Kubaniyat Umm Harun.”<sup>49</sup> The land was rented (or less likely bought) by a Jewish settlement investment agency that divided the land into plots and distributed them to Jewish families, mostly settlers from Yemen, Aleppo, and Georgia, who built very modest homes. The residents in the settlement numbered 259 people in 1916. The condition of the buildings and the dire poverty there turned the settlement into ruins and, less than two decades after the cornerstone was laid, it became mostly uninhabitable.<sup>50</sup>

The number of Jewish settlers in the settlements varied, decreasing due to poor living conditions as well as due to the repercussions of al-Buraq uprising in 1929 and the Great Arab Revolt in 1936–39. The settlement was evacuated after al-Nakba when the Haganah and the British police moved whoever was left there to the western part of the city where they settled in Palestinian homes whose owners had been forcefully removed.

## **Attempts to Control Karm al-Ja‘uni Post-1967: “al-Nuqta Cave”**

The first attempt to control Karm al-Ja‘uni was in 1999, when Magharat al-Nuqta<sup>51</sup> (Cave of the Point) (19 meters long, 20 meters, and 3.5 meters high) was found near Shimon HaTzadik. Zionist organizations claimed it as Ramban Cave,<sup>52</sup> where Ramban prayed in the thirteenth century CE. This was accompanied by an attempt to put their hands on land located next to Shimon HaTzadik that belonged to Abu Jibna family from Jerusalem (Abu Jibna family waqf). Jewish religious groups flocked to the location to perform religious rituals. These groups appealed to Israeli authorities and courts to declare the cave a holy Jewish location. Abu Jibna family installed a fence around the land to protect its property.

In 2000, the Israeli Minister for Religious Affairs announced that the cave is a Jewish religious site and subject to the Protection of Holy Sites Law of 1967. The Abu Jibna family filed a lawsuit in the Israeli High Court of Justice, protesting against the decision to transform its private property into a holy place, and depriving it of its right to use and benefit from the land. This particular piece of land is considered one of the most expensive properties in Jerusalem because of its location in Shaykh Jarrah and on the main road that connects Jerusalem to Ramallah, only two kilometers from the northern gate of the Old City (Damascus Gate). The land is also suitable for commercial purposes, including building a hotel. After an eight-year-long bitter and expensive battle in the Israeli courts, the Abu Jibna family managed in 2008 with the help of the Islamic Waqf Department to win back its right to the land,<sup>53</sup> and prevent settlers from going into the cave that was private property.<sup>54</sup> The court was not convinced that the location was holy, whereas the Palestinian ownership of the cave was clear and duly documented, obliging the court to accept the challenge by the Abu Jibna family and the Islamic Waqf Department.

## Shaykh Jarrah Housing Project: Displacement and Displacement Again

The Jordanian Ministry of Building and Construction signed an agreement with UNRWA to build twenty-eight residential units for Palestinian refugees (from west Jerusalem, Jaffa, and Haifa) in Karm al-Ja'uni, south of Shimon HaTzadik on a piece of land that Jordan placed under the administration of the Custodian of Enemy Property (Custodian of Absentees Property). According to the agreement the Jordanian government would provide the land needed for construction while UNRWA would fund the construction work. The ministry signed contracts with twenty-eight Palestinian families to build houses for them on that land without waiving their rights of return and compensation and without giving up their legal status as refugees. In return they only had to waive the "ration card" provided by UNRWA. A memorandum of understanding was also signed between the Jordanian ministry and UNRWA on one side, and the beneficiaries on the other in July 1956. According to this understanding thirteen buildings, comprising two apartments on a single floor, were constructed, and two other buildings with one apartment each. The apartments were very small, about sixty square meters, with two rooms separated by a corridor, a kitchen and a bathroom. Each building was constructed on a plot of around 350 square meters. The initial (preliminary) contract's term was for three years and three months that expired on 30 September 1959, and provided that each apartment holder would pay a nominal annual rent of one Jordanian dinar to the Jordanian Ministry of Economy and Development until the title deeds were issued in the names of these families for thirty years, renewable for thirty-three more years. Accordingly, the families moved into the newly-built apartments, settled there, and started a new life.<sup>55</sup>

The eastern part of the city fell into the grip of occupation in 1967, and the Israeli forces seized the Jordanian records of the Custodian of Enemy Property and handed them over to the general Custodian of Absentee Property in the Israeli Ministry of Justice, which was handling Jewish property in the West Bank and Jerusalem prior to 1948.

Israel first attempted to put its hand on the neighborhood in 1972, after the Sephardi Council in Jerusalem and the General Synagogue Commission in Israel succeeded in registering the land (17.5 dunums) in the Israeli Land Department (Title Deeds), and without issuing an official statement or notifying the residents. Interestingly, the registration was done without approving a master plan for the location, which indicates that there was collusion from the Israeli Land Department. Ten years after this registration, in 1982,<sup>56</sup> the first lawsuit was filed by the entity that "claims ownership of the land" against twenty-three families living in the neighborhood, demanding that they evacuate their homes since they are built on Jewish land registered officially in the Israeli Land Department.

Shaykh Jarrah's families hired the Israeli lawyer Yitzhak Tosia-Cohen to represent them. This lawyer signed a settlement in 1989, without consulting the residents. The

agreement recognizes the settlement agency's ownership of the land, and considers the residents as tenants protected from eviction in return for a regular agreed-upon rent. The Israeli court approved this "settlement" but the residents rejected it, considered it to be collusion between the lawyer and settlement agencies, and announced that they did not recognize Jewish ownership of the land in the first place. Their argument was that their homes were built in accordance with the decision by Jordan, which had jurisdiction over the land at the time, and accordingly they would not pay rent to the settlers.

In 1993, after they had severed their relationship with Cohen, the families hired Palestinian lawyer Husni Abu Husayn to represent them. In 1994, Sulayman Darwish Hijazi filed a lawsuit to prove his ownership of the land on which the neighborhood is built. He provided the Tabu deeds (Ottoman *tapu*, title deed for permanent lease) and official Ottoman documents that proved his ancestors' ownership of the land, which had been sold in 1939 to Palestinian Hanna Bandak. Bandak registered this land and recorded it in the Jordanian Survey and Land Registry in 1959 with the official deeds and documents. Consequently, the three judges in the central court ruled that Hijazi cannot be answered until the court reaches a final decision about the ownership of the land. This was stated in the rejection of the proceedings filed by the Sephardi Council in Jerusalem and the Israeli General Synagogue Commission at the Central Court demanding a decision about the ownership of the land.

There are many details pertaining to the long, difficult, and costly path that the neighborhood's families and supporters have taken in their attempts to prove their entitlement to the estate. Dozens of sessions were held in several courts on all judicial levels. But at the end, the Israeli High Court rejected Hijazi's request to prove the ownership of the land, and the first Palestinian family (the family of Fawziya al-Kurd – Umm Kamil) was evicted from their home on 4 August 2009. The Hannun and Ghawi families were also forcefully evicted by the police from their homes and settlement agencies took them over<sup>57</sup> and occupied them.<sup>58</sup> These families were evicted because allegedly they did not pay rent to the settlement agencies, although they, like others living in the neighborhood, did not recognize the ownership of settlement agencies to the land, and considered themselves to be the legal owners of the real estate.

Thus, the removal process began with the support of Israeli courts and under the protection of Israeli police, and the families were removed from their homes by force, after almost seven decades of living in their homes – a period of at least two generations.

## **Is It a Legal Dispute That Requires a Legal Solution?**

Despite the fierce legal battle that the residents of the neighborhood have waged in Israeli courts, the dispute is not a legal one. It is a purely political dispute that falls within the lines of apartheid and ethnic cleansing. The contract signed with the Jews in the nineteenth century might have been a long-term lease (*hikr*), perhaps up to ninety-

nine years, and in all likelihood it was.<sup>59</sup> From a legal perspective, this is a thorny issue for legal experts who disagree about the interpretation of such contracts. Some experts say that the contract expires according to the stated term, especially since it has a defined annual rent, while others say that it is basically a regular purchase contract written in the form of a long-term lease to go around the law that prevented the sale of charitable or family endowment land, or perhaps to avoid the laws at the time that prevented selling real estate to non-Ottomans.

It could also be argued that Jordan, which had jurisdiction over east Jerusalem in the 1950s, and, with the support of an international organization (UNRWA), took measures within the law, and so retained the right of disposition of the real estate – similar to the way Israel disposed of Palestinian real estate in the occupied land in 1948 (although no comparison is intended here). If, for the purpose of argument, the land was actually owned by Jews in 1948, what does that mean?

Regardless of the different contract interpretations, the main point for discussion and defense is that the Shaykh Jarrah families are refugees who had been forcibly removed from their homes in 1948. Many had been removed from west Jerusalem and some from Jaffa and Haifa, and were now being removed for the second time. What kind of law (in this case the same law that belongs to the same state) prevents them from even demanding their property located a few kilometers away from Shaykh Jarrah in the western part of the city, while allowing at the same time the settlement agencies to claim back Jewish property in the eastern part of the city. A state without discriminatory laws applies the same laws to all citizens living under the same jurisdiction. Shaykh Jarrah residents would not mind in principle handing over their homes to whoever proves to be the owner, if they can in return reclaim their property that is within the 1948 occupied territories (in Israel) using the same logic.

The dispute is not legal, because Israeli law was legislated in a way that serves colonial settlement and denies Palestinians their right to return to their property.<sup>60</sup> These laws have been reinforced since the Nakba and supported with further measures and regulations that prevent even Palestinians living in Israel from claiming the property that was appropriated or destroyed, although they are Israeli citizens according to Israeli law. For example, some Palestinians were displaced from Saffuriyya, six kilometers from Nazareth, and they have never been able to reclaim their property, and still live as refugees in Nazareth.<sup>61</sup> This same situation applies to almost half of the Palestinians living in Israel. The people of Kafr Bir'im in upper Galilee are another example. They managed to win a verdict from the Israeli courts acknowledging their right to return to their village. However, seven decades after their displacement they still have not been able to return.

Throughout the last ten years, several local and international solidarity movements organized to stand with the residents of Shaykh Jarrah for what is right. A progressive, diligent, and influential Jewish Israeli group participated in these movements; they have demonstrated every week throughout the past decade in Shaykh Jarrah in solidarity with the residents and kept the issue alive in the local and international

conscience. These demonstrations shone a light on the injustice suffered by Shaykh Jarrah residents, and their determination not to be expelled again, as they were in 1948, and demonstrate their unprecedented persistence. This accompanied the struggle in Israeli courts. Jordan has been entangled in the dispute since residents acquired their housing rights based on the agreement with the Jordanian government in 1956. Turkey has also been involved in it because of references to the Ottoman archives. The neighborhood's location in the midst of a number of diplomatic and international organizations has raised the voice of the residents onto various levels, especially given the injustice of evictions and the just nature of their cause.

What is unusual about the movement in Shaykh Jarrah is that it has not been linked directly to al-Aqsa Mosque, as almost all previous battles have in one way or another referred to the occupation's attempts to control al-Aqsa or parts of it. Shaykh Jarrah's battle may be the first large-scale public battle in the last two decades that has a civic background rather than a religious one. This brings to mind the battles led by Faisal al-Husseini, such as Jabal Abu Ghnaim, that despite their importance did not attract such massive attention, and often had participation limited to social and political elites. Shaykh Jarrah's battle, however, with the massive interest in it, resembles to a great extent the battles over al-Aqsa mosque. So will this battle be a new beginning in Jerusalem? The logical answer is yes, especially that the Palestinian young people of Jerusalem and Israel no longer fear the occupation forces or its tools of oppression. Followers, watching media footage and social media posts, realize that a new era has begun and it is difficult to predict what will happen next.

Social media has played an important role in facilitating immediate communication among the young people, a role that the occupation has been unable to control. The images are no longer held hostage in a military sergeant's drawer. The events of 26 Ramadan became an important lesson. The Israeli police prevented dozens of busloads of Palestinians from Israel who were coming to spend Laylat al-Qadr in al-Aqsa Mosque from reaching the city; they were stopped about twenty kilometers west of Jerusalem. In only a few minutes hundreds of cars arrived from east Jerusalem to pick up the people waiting on the Jaffa-Jerusalem highway. They actually blocked the highway, which is the central axis linking Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, in both directions. They finally forced the Israeli police to open the road and dropped off thousands of worshippers at al-Aqsa mosque. Jerusalem welcomed its guests and Ramadan banquets were seen in all parts of the city.

The Shaykh Jarrah families have endured five decades of Israeli oppression, persecution, lack of social stability, and psychological pressure. Their plight has been unbearable. Their five decades of suffering have also been five decades of steadfastness, struggle, and persistence to survive, building, for example, additional structures to house the new families of their offspring, multiplying the number of families living in the neighborhood. The latest Shaykh Jarrah battle is a new beginning, the beginning of a new era with new tools to end the occupation, a new era that has been proven possible by the latest events.

## Shaykh Jarrah Battle: Commencement of a Bigger Battle

The Shaykh Jarrah Battle brought attention back to Nakba-related issues, particularly the right of return and reinstatement of private and endowed property in the 1948 occupied territories. If Israel is determined to reclaim Jewish property in the eastern part of the city – which number very few in Shaykh Jarrah (Karm al-Ja‘uni and Kubanniyyat Umm Harun), Silwan (Batn al-Hawa and Wadi Hilwa), Ras al-‘Amud, and a small part in the Jewish Quarter in the Old City – vast areas in west Jerusalem are in fact Palestinian property.<sup>62</sup>

Palestinians should prepare for proceedings concerning the Palestinian properties in the western part of the city and throw all cards on the table. This should include filing lawsuits in Israeli courts, raising attentiveness about this issue, and looking into the possibility of filing lawsuits against Israel or individuals in courts outside Palestine. Along with Jerusalemites, Palestinians in the rest of the occupied territories can accomplish that on an even larger scale. The Israelis opened that door – that we know! But it is necessary to look at these attempts not only from the legal perspective, but also from a perspective of resistance and to embarrass Israeli institutions on all levels. These efforts may not lead to the reinstatement of Palestinian property, but they will clearly expose the escalating apartheid system in Israel.

Shaykh Jarrah succeeded in raising questions about the legitimacy of the State of Israel. This is an achievement that should not be ignored or surrendered. It has also drawn attention to the settlements in Jerusalem and has encouraged discussion about them. It has shown that Jerusalem is an occupied land according to international law, and that the transfer of occupied property, regardless in which form, contradicts international law.

Israel proved in Shaykh Jarrah that Jerusalem is not unified, and that it implements two different legal systems – one designed for Jews and their interests, and the other designed to control and uproot Palestinians. Shaykh Jarrah is a clear example that the “unified Jerusalem and the Capital of Israel” is but an empty slogan. Jerusalem is not only divided in services and social, economic, and cultural structures, but also in its legal and justice system.

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## Endnotes

- 1 Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, *al-Uns al-Jalil bi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil* [The glorious history of Jerusalem and Hebron], ed. Mahmud al-Ka'abineh (Hebron: Dandis Library, 2009), vol. 2, 100–101.
- 2 There is an inscription in Naskh script on the tombstone on al-Zawiya wall: "In the name of God most mighty, most merciful: 'Everyone on it will perish ... Only our Lord himself full of majesty and honor will remain forever.' This is the gravesite of Emir Husam al-Din/ al-Husayn bin 'Isa al-Jarrah, may God bless his soul and the souls of those who speak well of him/ He died in Safar in 598" (The mistakes in the inscriptions have not been corrected). See Kamil al-'Asali, *Ajdaduna fi thara al-Quds* [Our ancestors in the ground of Jerusalem] (Amman: Al-Bayt Organization, 1981), 104–6.
- 3 Arif al-Arif, *al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh al-Quds*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. [The detailed history of Jerusalem], (al-Quds: al-Andalus Library, 1999), 239.
- 4 Al-Baq'a witnessed the same phenomenon during the Ottoman era. A southwest neighborhood of new Jerusalem, Baq'a was occupied and its citizens uprooted in 1948.
- 5 Qasr al-'Amawi's ownership was eventually transferred to al-Nusayba family.
- 6 The mufti's original villa was used for many years by the Arab Graduates Club as a venue for organized cultural activities. It is now part of the Ambassador Hotel's estate.
- 7 For more on Tahir Afandi al-Husayni, see 'Adel Manna', *A'lam Filistin fi Awakhir al-'ahd al-'Uthmani 1800–1918* [The Notables of Palestine at the End of the Ottoman Era 1800–1918] (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1995), 111–12.
- 8 For more on this see Ruth Kark and Shimon Landman, "The Establishment of Muslim Neighbourhoods in Jerusalem, Outside the Old City, During the Late Ottoman Period," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 112 (1980): 113–35.
- 9 Y. Ben Arie, *A City in the Reflection of an Era: Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century* (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, 1977), 476–77 [Hebrew]; Kark and Landman, "Establishment of Muslim Neighbourhoods," 191–92; Salim Tamari, *Jerusalem 1948* (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies and Badil, Resource Center, 1999), 55.
- 10 For more on the role of the notables' representative and al-Husayni family in Jerusalem, see 'Adel Manna', *History of Palestine at the End of the Ottoman Era 1700–1918*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2003), 26–41. For more information on the most important members of the family see, 41–46, 109–10, 120.
- 11 Manna', *History of Palestine*, 123. This may not be the precise date. I believe that the house was built in 1865, and it was expanded in 1876. See, for example, David Kroyanker, *Jerusalem Architecture: Arab Construction Outside the Old City Walls* (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing, 1991), 177–82.
- 12 This villa and its amenities became the American Colony Hotel. It was bought by an American-Swedish religious group in 1895, along with the southern palace of Salim bin Husayn al-Husayni, which they turned into their headquarters and included workshops, farms, photography studio, and guest room. It was turned later into a hotel that is still considered one of the most luxurious in Jerusalem.
- 13 Serene Hussein Shahid, *Jerusalem Memories* (Beirut: Naufal Group, 2007), 209–10.
- 14 Immediately east of this building is Sa'id al-Husayni's palace. For an architectural description of the palace, see Diala Khasawneh, *Memories Engraved in Stone: Palestinian Urban Mansions* (Ramallah: Riwaq Center for Architectural Conservation and Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2001), 97–103. For more on al-Husayniyya in Shaykh Jarrah, see Mahdi Sabbagh, "The Husayni Neighborhood in Jerusalem: Space of Self-Invention," *Jerusalem Quarterly Journal* 72 (Winter 2017): 102–14. It is important also to pay special attention to the buildings of Dar al-Tifl al-'Arabi, originally established as an orphanage by Hind al-Husayni during the Nakba in 1948, and which belonged to al-Husayni family.
- 15 'Uthman al-Nashashibi was a well-known intellectual and a member of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies. He had good relations with the intellectuals of the Arab world and other parts of the world and had a cultural salon. Is'af inherited his father's relationships and followed in his footsteps, becoming a well-known name in his time.
- 16 Including Ma'ruf al-Rusafi from Iraq and Ahmad Shawqi, Ahmad Hasan al-Zayyat, 'Abd al-Wahhab 'Azzam from Egypt and others. In his memoir, the Jerusalemite

- musician, Wasif Jawhariyya, says that he used to spend the evenings in Qasr al-Nashashibi with a group of intellectuals and notables from Jerusalem and elsewhere. He mentioned that Nashashibi introduced him to the Egyptian musician, Muhammad ‘Abd al-Wahhab, and that he met him there several times.
- 17 Is‘af al-Nashashibi died in Cairo in 1948.
  - 18 The library included donated collections from, for example, Ishaq Musa al-Husayni, ‘Arif al-‘Arif, Nasir al-Din al-Nashashibi, Fawzi Yusuf (owner of al-Andalus Library), Farid Musa Kazim al-Husayni, Zaynab Jawwad al-Husayni, Ahmad Sa‘d al-Din al-‘Alami and others. Newer books were later added to the library. For more on the history of Is‘af al-Nashashibi and the center’s activities, see online at [www.dta-isaaf.org/ar/1/2](http://www.dta-isaaf.org/ar/1/2) (accessed 11 June 2021).
  - 19 For more details on the lands, endowments and vineyards in Shaykh Jarrah, see Muhammad Hashim Ghosheh, *al-Quds al-Islamiyah* [Islamic Jerusalem] (Amman: Arab Thought Forum, 2009).
  - 20 George Antonius was an intellectual, engineer, diplomat, and historian. Antonius was born in Dayr al-Qamar in Lebanon in 1892. He graduated from Cambridge and worked as an engineer in the Alexandria municipality. He then immigrated to Palestine where he first worked in the Department of Education, and then as secretary for the British Mandate’s government. Soon after, however, he resigned and joined the nationalist forces to defend Palestine, and wrote his famous book *Yaqthatu al-‘Arab* (*The Arab Awakening*). He died in Jerusalem in 1942, and was buried in the Orthodox cemetery on Jabal Siyun; his grave is inscribed: “Beware and wake up, Arabs.”
  - 21 Raghīb al-Nashashibi (1880–1951), a Jerusalemite politician, was a representative of the Ottoman parliament, and the mayor of Jerusalem following the removal of Musa Kazim al-Husayni in 1920. He later held several official positions in the Jordanian government.
  - 22 Muhammad Is‘af al-Nashashibi (1885–1984) was an intellectual, Arabic linguist, and author of numerous books and articles.
  - 23 A building housed the Italian Agency for Cooperation after the consulate in al-Baq‘a in West Jerusalem began operations.
  - 24 A building housed the French cultural attaché to the French Consulate, after the old consulate near the King David Hotel in West Jerusalem resumed its operations.
  - 25 United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).
  - 26 Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, an organization associated with the Social Democratic Party, Germany.
  - 27 Friedrich Naumann Stiftung, an organization associated with the Free Democratic Party, Germany.
  - 28 Khalil al-Sakakini is the new name for al-Qadisiyya school in the Old City. The original building dates to the late nineteenth century and has a beautiful view of the Old City.
  - 29 The Jordanian government built it in the 1960s on endowed lands. It had several football fields, including the largest football field in Jerusalem (‘Abdullah bin al-Husayn football field). It continued to be a secondary school for boys until the Israeli Ministry of Education turned it into a girls’ school to keep the male students away from Shaykh Jarrah in preparation for the settlement expansion. The football field was closed and most of it was appropriated to expand the roads surrounding the school; a small part was left as a playing field.
  - 30 The Eye Hospital was established in the Old City of Jerusalem in 1882. The current building in Shaykh Jarrah was built in 1960 on a piece of land donated by the Nashashibi family. The hospital has branches in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. St. John Charity is a British missionary charity.
  - 31 The hospital was established in 1948 by the Sisters of St. Joseph.
  - 32 The hotel was established in 1955 where Rashid al-Nashashibi’s palace was located.
  - 33 After its closure during the second intifada, the hotel was turned into a modern office building.
  - 34 Foreign representative offices at the PA are located in Ramallah, but most of the foreign staff members live in Jerusalem, especially in Shaykh Jarrah, Shu‘fat, and Bayt Hanina, located on the main road connecting Jerusalem to Ramallah.
  - 35 Israel considered itself to be the “legal and natural owner” for all Jordanian governmental and municipal property such as offices, hospitals, schools, empty lands, and public investments. Accordingly, it seized an important part of real estate in the eastern part of Jerusalem. When these are not enough to

- facilitate their plans to control the city, “the public interest law” does the rest. The Israeli government also employs several other methods discussed later in this article.
- 36 The billionaire Moskowitz (1928–2016) specifically supported Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem and the creation of a Jewish majority in it. He contributed considerable funding to settlement agencies such as ‘Ateret Cohanim and El’ad in addition to front companies in Panama and elsewhere that worked to buy Palestinian property in Jerusalem.
- 37 The Husayni family fought a legal battle to prevent the demolition of the palace and reclaim their property. The Israeli courts kept the historical house but approved the demolition of the additional structures. See al-Jazeera’s report on the demolition and the family’s protest, online at (al-Jazeera) bit.ly/3hyvyMD (accessed 11 June 2021)
- 38 The approval was announced on 23 March 2007, a few hours before the summit between Prime Minister Netanyahu and President Obama took place in the White House. The approval came in response to the American demands to suspend the project in Jerusalem. See Massimo Calabresi, “Shepherd’s Hotel Demolished; U.S. Peace Efforts in the Debris,” *Time*, 10 January 2011, online at [swampland.time.com/2011/01/10/shepherds-hotel-demolished/](http://swampland.time.com/2011/01/10/shepherds-hotel-demolished/) (accessed 11 June 2021).
- 39 Manna’, *History of Palestine*, 111–12.
- 40 A huge project is being planned for Wadi al-Jawz, but the exact boundaries of the plan remain unclear. The project means the demolition of around two hundred Palestinian commercial and industrial establishments. The announced goal is to “develop” the area of Wadi al-Jawz, but we know that this actually means settlement. The municipality of Jerusalem approved the plans in 2020 and sent eviction notices to affected residents and shop owners. This means that a new battle will start very soon in Wadi al-Jawz, which is at the doorstep to the Old City compared to Shaykh Jarrah. See Jamil al-Salhut, “*Bidun Mu’akhatha: Tahwid Wadi al-Jawz in Jerusalem*” [Shamelessly Judaizing Wadi al-Jawz] online at [www.palestine-studies.org/ar/node/1650868](http://www.palestine-studies.org/ar/node/1650868) (accessed 11 June 2021),
- 41 About Shimon HaTzadik in Jewish tradition and the references about it, see Yitzhak Reiter and Lior Lehrs, *The Sheikh Jarrah Affair: The Strategic Implications of Jewish Settlement in an Arab Neighborhood in East Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: The Jerusalem Institute for Israel Studies, 2010), 15–16.
- 42 Charles Clermont-Ganneau, *Archaeological Researches in Palestine during the Years 1873–1874*, vol. 1 (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1899), 267–70.
- 43 Wasif Jawhariyya, *al-Quds al-Uthmaniyya fi muthakirat al-Jawhariyya* [Ottoman Jerusalem in Jawhariyya’s memoirs] ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (al-Quds: Institution for Jerusalem Studies, 2003), 74.
- 44 On the general mood at the end of the Ottoman era in Palestine in general and Jerusalem in particular, see Salim Tamari, “‘Ishaq al-Shami and the Predicament of the Arab Jew in Palestine,” *Jerusalem Quarterly File* 21 (2004): 10–26.
- 45 John Wilson, *The Lands of the Bible Visited and Described*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: William Whyte, 1847), 492.
- 46 Reiter and Lehrs, *The Shaykh Jarrah Affair*, 17.
- 47 Sanhedrin is a Jewish Consultative Council.
- 48 I was not able to see this document, so I cannot verify its authenticity. It is impossible to ignore it, however, since the settlement was built as a result of it. What needs to be verified is whether the contract was a purchase contract or a long-lease (*hikr*) contract.
- 49 This settlement is not discussed in detail here, although it is located in the same area and faces the same fate. It may be addressed in a separate article in the near future.
- 50 Reiter and Lehrs, *The Shaykh Jarrah Affair*, 18–19. The authors obtained the information from Hebrew sources and documents of the Zionist movement. Unfortunately, there are no Arabic sources and thus we cannot compare the information. The registration deed was not found in the Ottoman archives, and the Shaykh Jarrah lawyers’ efforts to locate it were unsuccessful.
- 51 Most likely the cave had been a quarry, judging from its inside walls.
- 52 The location of Ramban’s gravesite is not known, although it has been mentioned variously that it is in Silwan, Hebron, and ‘Akka. If the grave location has not been identified, how could it be known that he prayed in the cave? This shows how even tenuous myth is used to facilitate settlement. Moshe bin Nahman (1194–1270) (alias Ramban) was a famous Sephardi clergyman, physician, and philosopher from Catalonia

- (Spain) who still has followers today. He immigrated to Jerusalem and started the Jewish community in Jerusalem during the Ayyubid era.
- 53 See the court decision, “Court: Ramban’s Cave Belongs to the Muslim Waqf,” *Yeshiva World*, 21 December 2008, online at [www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/israel-news/27465/court-ramban-cave-belongs-to-the-muslim-waqf.html](http://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/israel-news/27465/court-ramban-cave-belongs-to-the-muslim-waqf.html) (accessed 14 June 2021).
- 54 Michael Wygoda, “The Three Kinds of Holy Places in Jewish Law: The Case of Nachmanides’ Cave in Jerusalem as a Third Kind,” in *Holy Places in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Confrontation and Co-existence*, ed. Marshall J. Breger, Yitzhak Reiter, and Leonard Hammer (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 93–104.
- 55 The families say that there was an understanding with Jordan that the Tabu deeds would be registered in the name of the residents. However, the long and complicated procedures were not yet completed in June 1967, leaving the process suspended.
- 56 Before this date, there were several hearings in various courts that in general rejected the claims of the settlement agencies, but they continued to file lawsuits. Some of the court decisions confirmed that the Jordanian procedures were sound and they acknowledged that they were legal since Jordan had jurisdiction.
- 57 The Israeli journalist Nadaf Shargai said that the Sephardi Council in Jerusalem and the Synagogue Commission in Israel sold the property to Homot Shalem, a settlement agency that aims to Judaize Shaykh Jarrah, for USD 3 million. See Nadaf Shargai, “Plan to uproot the Arab residents from Shimon HaTzadik’s Neighborhood,” *Haaretz*, 12 October 2001.
- 58 For more on the legal measures and court hearings, see “Nakba and a Second Forced Displacement of the Families of Shaykh Jarrah: ‘The Israeli Occupation Police Evacuate My Family Hannun and al-Ghawi from Their Homes,’” POICA, *Eye on Palestine*, 14 August 2009, online at (POICA) [bit.ly/3eaRSjT](https://bit.ly/3eaRSjT) (accessed 11 June 2021). For a legal summary of the issue, see “Fact Sheet Regarding the Case of Sheikh Jarrah – The Occupied Jerusalem (Field Facts & Legal Findings),” online at [law4palestine.org/fact-sheet-regarding-the-case-of-sheikh-jarrah-the-occupied-jerusalem-field-facts-legal-conclusions/](http://law4palestine.org/fact-sheet-regarding-the-case-of-sheikh-jarrah-the-occupied-jerusalem-field-facts-legal-conclusions/) (accessed 15 June 2021).
- 59 “The Ottoman records do not include any documents that explain the format of the contract, nor are there records of this piece of land in the Tabu. It is difficult to know for certain whether the contract was a genuine purchase contract or a long-lease contract (*hikr*). It is also unclear if the land was private property or a family waqf,” phone interview with Khalil al-Tafakji, land documentation expert in Jerusalem, 23 May 2021.
- 60 Israeli law sometimes allows compensation for private property at its November 1947 price, but it does not allow owners to reclaim their property. Palestinians rarely accept compensation, since they are demanding the right to return to their property.
- 61 They were not granted the status of Palestinian “refugees,” and therefore were not eligible for UNRWA benefits.
- 62 ‘Adnan ‘Abdul Razzaq, who documents Palestinian property in West Jerusalem reports that 33 percent of the area there is Palestinian property (his documentation lists 4,503 Palestinian properties), 30 percent Jewish property, and 15 percent Christian organization properties, while the rest of the area comprises public buildings, roads, parks, and railways. See ‘Adnan ‘Abdul Razzaq, *Architectural Property in Occupied West Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Arab Studies Society, 2021), 85. His book is an important source for information about Palestinian real estate and raises these issues for international and local awareness.

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## Call for Contributions

### Special Issue on

# ARCHEOLOGY IN JERUSALEM

A special issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*  
on Archeology will appear in 2022.

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* invites contributions from scholars in the field of archeology. Submissions of articles, essays, or research notes related to archeology and archeological excavations in Palestine should be scholarly written, non-specialized, previously unpublished, and accessible to the general reader. Essays on the history and ethnography of archeological excavations in Jerusalem are especially welcomed. The optimal size is between 4,000 and 5,000 words, excluding endnotes, images and maps.

Please send draft proposals to the Managing Editor at  
[jq@palestine-studies.org](mailto:jq@palestine-studies.org)

Proposed abstract by 1 August 2021.

Proposed draft by 1 September 2021.

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# Call for Contributions

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### UNFULFILLED SCHEMES: Jerusalem's Past Futures

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**Guest Editor:** Falestin Naili

Jerusalem's status quo and the blocking of its future by the structural violence of the present occupation is not novel. This special issue of *JQ* proposes a reassessment of the city's urban past, one that is attentive to the schemes and ideas that were under discussion or in preparation during the late Ottoman, Mandate, and Jordanian periods, such as plans for a tramway line and public gardens. This issue seeks to focus on the possible futures that Jerusalem did not experience and on the plans that were interrupted as the city changed hands. Rather than yielding to facts on the ground, this issue is an invitation to explore the ideas for a Jerusalem that did not materialize.

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Please send draft proposals to the Managing Editor:  
[jq@palestine-studies.org](mailto:jq@palestine-studies.org)

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Proposed abstract by 30 August 2021.

Proposed draft by 30 September 2021.

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- Transliteration of Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish names and words should follow the style recommended by the *International Journal for Middle East Studies*, but modified for Arabic transliteration, by omitting all diacritical marks except for the 'ayn and hamza.
- Citations should be in the form of endnotes and written in full (CMOS) as in the original source, with transliteration if needed.
- Any photos (minimum 600 dpi), charts, graphs, and other artwork should be camera-ready format. The author should provide captions and credits, and indicate the preferred placement in the manuscript. The author is responsible for securing permission to reproduce copyrighted materials.

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

It is awarded to an outstanding submission that addresses either contemporary or historical issues relating to Jerusalem. A committee selected by the *Jerusalem Quarterly* determines the winning essay. The author will be awarded a prize of U.S. \$1,000 and the essay will be published in the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

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