



JERUSALEM QUARTERLY

87

Autumn 2021



**The Language of Jewish Nationalism
Street Signs and Linguistic Landscape in the Old City of Jerusalem**
Amer Dahamshe and Yonatan Mendel

Christian Arab Pilgrimages to Palestine and Mount Sinai
Nabil Matar

**Rachel's Tomb
Narrative Counterspaces in a Military Geography of Oppression**
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**Jerusalem's Villages
Grey Development and Annexation Plans**
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**Jacob Israel de Haan
A Queer and Lapsed Zionist in Mandate Palestine**
Nathan Witt

**Tariq Bab al-Silsila
A Portrait of an Old City Suq**
Nazmi Jubeh

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For submissions to JQ, send email to:

jq@palestine-studies.org

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The Institute of Jerusalem Studies

P.O. Box 21649, Jerusalem 9121501

Tel: 972 2 298 9108, Fax: 972 2 295 0767

E-mail: sales-ijis@palestine-studies.org

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3501 M Street, N.W.

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EDITORIAL JQ 87

The Orient House and its Ordeals

On July 15 of this year the Israeli minister of security announced the closure of the Orient House for another six months, effecting an extension of the original closure, first made in August 2001 in the post-Oslo era. The Israeli orders of exactly twenty years ago included the shutting and sequestration of some forty-two Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem, and the dismissal of their staff in many cases. The objective was, and is, to curtail and control all Palestinian institutional presence in East Jerusalem. (This includes the closure of the Institute for Palestine Studies offices and the relocation of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* in 2001 from Shaykh Jarrah to the West Bank). This year the closure of the Orient House took place in the context of heightened clashes over al-Haram area, and particularly of settler activities in Shaykh Jarrah and Silwan.

But what is the significance of the Orient House, and why has it been targeted for the last twenty years by successive Israeli governments (Likud, Labor, and now the right-wing alliance Yemina)? Following the Madrid peace conference in 1991, Faisal Husseini, at the time head of the Jerusalem portfolio in the PLO, established his headquarters in the Husayni family's Shaykh Jarrah mansion, built by Isma'il Musa al-Husayni in 1897. Since 1983, it had also housed the Arab Studies Society, chaired by Faisal Husseini. It was this link that led the Israelis to first close the Orient House after the Algiers Declaration of Independence in 1988 when they considered the Orient House and the studies center as a front for PLO activities. Well before the Oslo Accords



The Orient House, 2021. Photo by Siba Khoury.

were signed, the Orient House hosted the Technical Committees whose purpose was to prepare the grounds for planning the prospective institutions of a future Palestinian state. They included many activists and professionals in the fields of planning, administration, cartography, hydrology, economics, demography, and systems analyses. The teams worked for months, more or less openly, in preparing different scenarios for the post-Madrid peace prospects. It can be said, without exaggeration, that the contingencies of Palestinian statehood were born in the Orient House.

Before that, the Orient House had had a rich history of association with the cause of Palestine and Jerusalem. It gained notoriety when in 1898 it hosted the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II and his wife Augusta Victoria. During the visit a tragedy occurred when the Husayni family was preparing for the Kaiser's arrival. "Ruwaida, daughter of the Ottoman Minister of Education in Jerusalem, had been chosen to present the queen with a gift. While she helped the servants light the rooftop lanterns, the child's gauzy white dress caught on fire and she burned to death," according to a contemporary narrative. "The official visit went on as planned, under the shadow of the horrific incident."¹

During 1936, Haile Selassie was its resident when he sought refuge from Italian occupation of Ethiopia before moving to Villa Leah. He spent his Jerusalem exile there and in a number of other places, including the King David Hotel. Immediately after the war it housed the newly established United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) during its first two years. After this, the Orient

House was turned into a hotel, and housed international NGOs, before becoming a hub for nationalist activities, beginning with the Arab Studies Society, and later, after the Madrid peace conference, with the Technical Committees. When the peace accord between the PLO and the Israeli government was signed, it was assumed, naively as we now know, that the objections against prospective Palestinian statehood had become part of the past.

A major concern among the Palestinians who signed the Oslo Accords was the future status of Jerusalem and the fate of Palestinian institutions that had evolved over the years under Israeli rule. A pledge was made by the Israeli government in October 1993, under pressure from the European governments who were keen for the success of the accords, to guarantee the right of Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem to function freely. In the famous statement signed by then foreign minister Shimon Peres, “All the Palestinian institutions of east Jerusalem, including the economic, social, educational, and cultural, and the holy Christian and Muslim places, are performing an essential task for the Palestinian population Needless to say, we will not hamper their activity; on the contrary, the fulfillment of this important mission is to be encouraged.” Despite those guarantees Israel began to harass and, sometimes expel, the staff of the bulk of Palestinian institutions, including trade unions, cultural foundations, theatre groups, and even musical and concert halls such as Yabous and Hakawati theatre. The Orient House, which by then had housed the Arab Studies Society, was on top of the list for closure since Israel saw it as a logistic base for the future planning of Palestinian statehood.

It is a sad indication that while earlier closure orders were met with serious opposition, local and international, including protests by the Quartet and a large number of diplomatic missions in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem, the current extension of the closure has been barely noticed. Almost nothing in the international and Arab press and media. Of the local press, only *al-Ayyam* published a short item on page 15 (*al-Ayyam*, 16 July 2021). The tribulations of the Orient House, and the fate of its confiscated archives dating back to the days of Faisal Hussein, has been subsumed by what seems more pressing issues of settlement encirclement, land confiscation, intrusions into al-Haram, and most recently the attacks on Silwan and Shaykh Jarrah. Nevertheless, we should not forget that the frozen status of the Orient House reflects the sum total of these issues of creeping annexation of Jerusalem. After all, the Orient House exists in the heart of Shaykh Jarrah. It is still continuously harassed by the visible presence of the border police, indicating that East Jerusalem is just as thoroughly occupied, if not more lethally, as Hebron and Nablus.

The current issue of *JQ* brings to you a new batch of articles, essays, and a larger selection than usual of reviews of books and exhibits.

“What’s in a name?” Shakespeare asks in *Romeo and Juliet*. In the Old City of Jerusalem, the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, names reveal Israeli mechanisms of national validation and erasure. As the sovereign power with the ability to assign names, Israel seeks to sever the link between freedom of worship – granted to Jews, and then to Muslims and Christians – with the freedom to see the city as a symbol

of national and political yearning. In “The Language of Jewish Nationalism: Street Signs and Linguistic Landscape in the Old City of Jerusalem,” Amer Dahamshe and Yonatan Mendel examine the power relations and politics of space in the Old City of Jerusalem through street signs, toponymy, and the linguistic landscape.

In “Christian Arab Pilgrimages to Palestine and Mount Sinai” Nabil Matar examines three nineteenth-century accounts written by Orthodox and Catholic pilgrims to St. Catherine’s monastery in Sinai and to Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine. His research shows the popularity of pilgrimages among Christian Arabs and their sense of place in the Ottoman world.

Toine van Teefelen’s “Rachel’s Tomb: Narrative Counterspaces in a Military Geography of Oppression” is a study in counter-narratives of oppression. He writes:

Rachel’s Tomb area and nearby checkpoint 300 in the north of Bethlehem have become an arena of cultural opposition to an Israeli geography of oppression that excludes, fragments, shrinks, and closes off Palestinian space. I will describe how a spatial-narrative politics – articulating counter-narratives through the strategic use of space – has helped to rewrite the Israeli military geography of power and control. Over the last fifteen years, both locals and foreigners in the area have inscribed narrative discourses of home, freedom, and welcoming into this geography in rhetorical contrast to the discourse of military power. I will illustrate oppositional politics by brief analyses of statements of daily life *sumud* or steadfastness; examples of Palestinian Christian religious practices; the Palestine marathon in Bethlehem; and the iconic graffiti of British artist Banksy.

Ahmad Heneiti, in “Jerusalem’s Villages: Grey Development and Annexation Plans,” examines the impact of Israeli planning schemes for greater Jerusalem as envisioned in the Greater Jerusalem 2020 plan, and how they will impact the incorporation of the Palestinian suburban locations such as Abu Dis, Sawahara, al-‘Ayzariya, Anata, and others. Heneiti’s main conclusion is that the Israeli plan will help push a substantial body of Palestinian residents into the suburban periphery of Jerusalem – a large part of them outside the boundaries of the Israeli municipal areas and into area C of the West Bank. This will accomplish two major objectives for Israeli strategy: a demographic one (fewer Arabs); and an urban-strategic one: integrating the outlying settlements such as Maale Adumim into the body of the municipality.

The life and times of the maverick Jacob de Haan is examined in this issue by Nathan Witt. De Haan, born in Amsterdam in 1880, was trained as a lawyer but became known as a poet, a journalist, and a writer of erotic queer fiction and poems during the 1920s in Palestine. De Haan is widely regarded as the “Dutch Oscar Wilde.” In 1924, he was shot and killed outside Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem. The assassination took place two weeks before he was scheduled to travel to London in an attempt to repeal the Balfour Declaration.

Nazmi Jubeh’s “Suq Tariq Bab al-Silsila” is the second essay in our series on

Jerusalem neighborhoods. The historic market adjoining al-Haram area had various functions during Mamluk and Ottoman eras and was transformed several times in the twentieth century, as handicrafts shops started to disappear gradually, to be replaced by produce and grocery shops, restaurants, and cafés. More transformations occurred after 1967, and the market became more open to tourism and visitors to al-Buraq Wall and al-Aqsa Mosque with souvenir shops. Tourism dominated the suq, but restaurants, cafés, groceries, and butcher shops did not disappear until the second intifada when more dramatic transformations occurred as the touristic activity was halted and most shops closed. Tariq Bab al-Silsila is targeted these days by settlers and constantly threatened with confiscation given its location on the northern boundaries of the extended Jewish Quarter next to Sahat al-Buraq. Still, the resistance of its determined residents and proprietors has formed an impenetrable wall that has prevented all attempts to take over this central area.

Laila Parson's essay-review "Island Exile: Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi in the Seychelles" examines al-Khalidi's diaries in exile – written in English – edited by his grandson Rafiq Husseini and published in 2020 titled *Exiled from Jerusalem*. This book complements al-Khalidi's three-volume Arabic memoirs *Mada 'ahd al-mujamalat* written in the years immediately following the Nakba, which constitute a comprehensive and compelling account of al-Khalidi's public life. The Arabic memoirs are certainly a key source for understanding the major events of the Mandate era and the Nakba itself. But the Seychelles diaries convey an intimacy not present in the Arabic memoirs. We learn about the rhythms of his relationships with his fellow prisoners, his longing for his wife and children, his reading habits, and his fears. The diaries also provide a glimpse down into the murky depths of his feelings about the British and about his colleagues in Palestinian politics, including figures such as Haj Amin al-Husayni and Ragheb Nashashibi.

In "Is the Palestine Virus Incurable?" Penny Johnson reviews *I Found Myself in Palestine: Stories of Love and Renewal from Around the Globe*, edited by Nora Lester Murad. In this collection, Johnson finds it "intriguing that the particular experiences of spouses, teachers, activists, etc. have a tendency to morph into an unquestioning general acceptance of categorization, both of others and the self, as *ajaneb* (foreigners), even for those who have lived in Palestine for decades and raised Palestinian children."

Sa'ed Atshan and Katharina Galor's "Jerusalem, Museums, and Discourses on Settler Colonialism" compares four Jerusalem-themed exhibits in different geographical and political contexts: the Tower of David Museum in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Jewish Museum Berlin. It examines the role of heritage narrative, focusing specifically on the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is either openly engaged or, alternatively, avoided. The writers specifically highlight the asymmetric power dynamics as a result of Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, and how this political reality is addressed or avoided in the respective exhibits. They also explore the agency of curators in shaping knowledge and perspective and study the role of the visitor community. The essay maintains that the differences in approaches to

exhibiting the city's cultural heritage reveal how museums are central sites for the politics of the human gaze, where significant decisions are made regarding inclusion and exclusion of conflict.

In reviewing the presentations at the first Palestine Writes Literature Festival, Amanda Batarseh suggests that Arabic literary heritage as a tradition is already underrepresented as a third world literature. "The broadening of the Palestinian canon to include non-Arabic writing by exilic authors" (often writing in English) and emerging popular genres ranging from speculative fiction to the graphic novel "resonates with the festival's articulation of Palestine in the language of transnational struggle." This inclusivity, however, also raises entrenched anxieties about the particularities of Arabic literary heritage. Most threateningly, Batarseh argues, is "the potential normalization and compression of Palestinian identity into a narrative of diasporic 'statelessness'" that such an overshadowing may reproduce.

Endnotes

- 1 Rachel Neiman, "7 Spooky Sites in Jerusalem," *Israe21c*, 30 October 2019, online at www.israel21c.org/7-spooky-sites-in-jerusalem/ (accessed 14 August 2021).

Corrigendum:

In *JQ* 86 (Summer 2021), on pages 60 and 61, the two authors' names of the captions for stereoscope 57 were mistakenly interchanged. The online version is now corrected.

Call for General Submissions to *Jerusalem Quarterly*

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* accepts author submissions of original contributions about Jerusalem, its social and political history, and its current realities. Occasionally personal memoirs or works of fiction are accepted. Submissions may be made throughout the year; specific deadlines for special thematic issues may also be announced.

JQ sends all manuscripts to designated readers for evaluation. Authors may also specifically request that their article be peer-reviewed. Authors should allow four to eight weeks from the date of submission for a final evaluation and publication decision.

Please direct submissions or queries to *JQ* team:
jq@palestine-studies.org

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Articles submitted to *JQ* for consideration should adhere to the following:

- Size: 3,500 to 12,000 words, and including an abstract (maximum 200 words), a list of keywords (maximum 10), and a brief author's biography (maximum 25 words).
- Spelling: American English according to Merriam-Webster.
- Text style: Refer to *Chicago Manual of Style* (CMOS) for all questions regarding punctuation, capitalization, and font style.
- 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.

Vicken Kalbian



1925–2021

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* mourns the dear friend and contributor Vicken Kalbian, veteran Jerusalem physician and local historian. In his last contribution to *JQ*, Vicken drew an affectionate portrait of the late Edward Blatchford, director of relief efforts for Armenian refugees during the Mandate period, based on the latter’s unpublished memoirs.¹ His assessment of Blatchford’s work applies to Kalbian himself.

I have tried to draw attention to a neglected but unique resident of Jerusalem during the Mandate days. He was the quintessential humanitarian. On his desk he kept a table piece made of Palestinian pottery inscribed with the Arabic phrase: “If my origin is of dust, then the whole world is my country and everyone in it is my kin.” His service – first to help the Armenian refugees, and later his devotion and staunch support to the Palestinian cause – gives proof that his motto was fulfilled.

In his “Reflections on Malaria in Palestine,”² a narrative about his father’s work with the Ottoman army in the south, he wrote:

Malaria shaped and influenced the history of Jerusalem and Palestine in the early twentieth century, in ordinary times, during World War I, and under British administration. The Ottomans only employed token efforts to control this widespread disease. The only serious attempts to control malaria in the region were in northern Palestine, where Jewish settlers initiated the elimination of mosquito breeding sites by simply draining the swamps in and around their settlements. For many Jerusalemites, my family included, malaria, aggravated by the arrival of Spanish flu in 1918 and 1919, continued to be an enemy to be battled well into the British Mandate period.

Vicken was born on 22 December 1925 in Jerusalem where he continued to live until he immigrated to the United States in 1968. He received his early education in Jerusalem at St. James Armenian School (Tarkmanchatz) and St. George’s

Anglican School (Mutran), and his university and medical degrees at the American University of Beirut. As a newly minted physician, he returned to a divided Jerusalem in 1950 to practice medicine alongside his father at the Augusta Victoria Hospital. The hospital had been established on the Mount of Olives to provide medical care for Palestinian refugees who had been forced out of their ancestral homes and villages in 1948.

After a year at the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine where he earned a diploma, Vicken returned to East Jerusalem and in 1954 married Ada Haddad. They enjoyed sixty-five years together until her death in 2019. Vicken's life in Jerusalem in the 1950s and 1960s was busy and fulfilling. He was a well-known figure in the Jerusalem Armenian community and a beloved doctor and confidante to Jerusalemites, and to many diplomats and foreign dignitaries. During this time his medical career flourished. He became Chief of Internal Medicine and Director of the Rheumatic Heart Disease Clinic at Augusta Victoria and was a consultant at several other hospitals in Jerusalem (St. Joseph's, St. John's Ophthalmic, and Spafford Memorial Children's) and in Nablus (St. Luke's). One of his most cherished memories of this period was the medical care he provided to an ailing Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. who was visiting Jerusalem in 1959.



Vicken Kalbian, top row second from left, in a group photo of Palestinian physicians in Jerusalem, 1945. Photo by Khalil Raad.



Vicken Kalbian with his father Vahan, standing on the balcony of their apartment in Shaykh Jarrah, c. 1965. Photo courtesy of Kalbian family.

Endnotes

- 1 Vicken Kalbian, "The Constant Consul of Jerusalem: Edward W. Blatchford," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 76 (Winter 2018), online at www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/233119 (accessed 11 October 2021).
- 2 Vicken Kalbian, "Reflections on Malaria in Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 67 (Autumn 2016) online at www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/208488 (accessed 7 October 2021).

The Language of Jewish Nationalism

Street Signs and Linguistic Landscape in the Old City of Jerusalem

Amer Dahamshe and Yonatan Mendel

Abstract

The Old City of Jerusalem is likely the most hotly contested geographical location in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The linguistic landscape in the Old City, including street names and signs, can shed light on power relations and political agendas within the conflict. This article examines the linguistic landscape of the Old City after the Israeli occupation of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) in 1967. It focuses on five different areas: four quarters (Jewish, Christian, Muslim, and Armenian) and al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount compound. Based on an examination of several hundred street signs, the authors' findings indicate a clear dominance of Hebrew in signage throughout the Old City, evident in different linguistic aspects. Two linguistic behaviors were also obvious: firstly, in the Jewish quarter, the linguistic landscape promotes an Israeli nationalistic discourse including physical erasure of the Arabic language and Palestinian existence; secondly, all other areas lack national Palestinian content and aspirations. This indicates the official Israeli view that there is an exclusive Jewish right to national identity while Palestinians must make do with religious identity only. Our analysis of signs in the Old City indicates two Israeli-oriented, complementary features: pro-active Jewish-Israeli nationalization, and an Orientalist, British-inspired, colonial and religious-centered attempt to de-politicize the East.

Keywords

Jerusalem; Old City of Jerusalem; linguistic landscape; naming; Jewish-Arab relations; Israeli-Arab conflict; language and conflict.

On Politics and Street Signs

The image a city exudes is shaped by a combination of physical objects and symbols that together serve as a medium for conveying the ideologies and visions of a society and its effects on the consciousness of the inhabitants of that urban space. The urban landscape, therefore, is a rich canvas that reveals dominant cultural values and power structures within that particular society.¹ The linguistic landscape is central to the urban space; it provides users of that space with practical information as well as serving a symbolic function. On the practical level, signage marks the boundaries of a particular lingual area. Symbolically, the linguistic landscape can enhance the self-esteem of speakers of the language that dominates the public space.² Therefore, the names of roads, intersections, and squares mark locations while also functioning as socio-political tools that inform the users' perception of that public space regarding the city. We argue that in situations of conflict or colonial conditions, the language of street signs and the meanings of the language used have a heightened importance as a means for advancing socio-political agendas. The sovereign power may use street names and signage in order to enhance its authority and control over the space while, simultaneously, exploiting, controlling and excluding others from that space. As such, as Young argues, any postcolonial analysis must deal with cultural, geographic, and linguistic changes made by occupying powers – an insight which serves as a main point of departure for this article.³

The act of naming sheds light on processes underlying establishment of new social or political realities. For example, the northern Italian region of Alto Adige was annexed by Italy after WWI. Once in Italian hands, it renamed 8,000 locations in Italian – replacing the previous German names. Today these new names are the center of a heated debate between German-speaking and Italian-speaking communities residing in the region.⁴ Anderson, similarly, has highlighted how mapping and naming helped colonial states to imagine themselves, create a geographical identity and also served as alleged sources of legitimation.⁵ While names can be seemingly functional, they also produce identities of place and create historical, social, and political connections – or disconnections – between the place and its inhabitants.

Through an examination of the linguistic landscape of the Old City of Jerusalem following Israel's occupation in 1967, this article will analyze ways in which Israel has influenced this important public space. We claim that Israel has used a strategy of changing or maintaining street names to justify political Zionist aims, on the one hand, and refute and de-politicize other aims, namely, Palestinian. Our research builds on the work of others such as Meron Benvenisti's analysis of maps demonstrating that, post-1948, Israel strove to achieve two political ends: to bolster the Zionist presence and to erase the Palestine one (past, present, political and more).⁶ Our study of street signs and our linguistic analysis of them focuses on why and where historical street names were kept or, alternatively, changed or discarded and the political meaning of those decisions.

Regarding the hidden messages underlying linguistic decisions, and in line with

the work of Yasir Suleiman,⁷ we contend that the lingual representation of street signs in the Old City of Jerusalem reveals deeper levels and dynamics underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed, focusing on the linguistic landscape of an area of such great importance can shed light on the political status of the Old City as being symbolic of Jerusalem, as well as, more broadly, the dynamics underlying the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Modern History of Jerusalem, al-Quds, and Yerushalayyim

Following from Lorenzo and others, we situate examination of the conflict in historical Palestine using insights and readings from colonial studies. For example, rather than being a conflict between two national movements, this lens views the conflict as being between a community comprised primarily of immigrants from Europe (West Jerusalem) and the indigenous Palestinian population (in East Jerusalem). This perspective views Jewish immigrants, and subsequently the Jewish state from its founding in 1948, as settlers rather than locals who are integrally connected to the place. As such, the Israeli regime reflects settler colonial societies which aspire to replace an indigenous population, and make settlers into locals.⁸ This perspective is essential to understanding the larger conflict and specifically the linguistic landscape in the Old City in general and particularly in the Jewish quarter.

The political situation in the Old City of Jerusalem post-1967 typifies settler colonial societies on the symbolic and physical levels. Firstly, this area was occupied militarily and then annexed unilaterally by Israel – an act that violates international law and stands in contradiction to the position of the international community. Secondly, due to the religious, national, and historic importance of the Old City, Israel has attempted to fully integrate this area into its national ethos. For example, official national and national-religious Israeli ceremonies and celebrations such as army swear-ins, Remembrance Day ceremonies, Dance of the Flags parade on “Jerusalem Day” and more are held there.⁹ Thirdly, the Israeli authorities assigned Israeli and Jewish names to public spaces and obliterated Arabic names.¹⁰ Indeed, three months following the Israeli occupation, the government officially changed the Arabic name of Jerusalem from al-Quds (القدس), a name which has been in continuous usage in Arabic since the seventh century, to Urshalim al-Quds (أورشليم القدس) or – preferably – Urshalim only (أورشليم).¹¹ Among other reasons, we believe that this change was made to make the Arabic name more similar to the Hebrew name (Yerushalayyim ירושלים). Thus, on the most basic level and at a very early stage, the Israeli regime decided to advance a Jewish-Israeli perspective through the use of language by engaging in both physical and symbolic acts.

The status of Jerusalem is central to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as the city encompasses religious, political, national, symbolic, historical, and mythical elements that are of central importance to both national communities.¹² Thus, analyzing the linguistic landscape of the Old City post-1967 facilitates insights into and lessons

about the ways in which Israel actively shapes political reality. We identify two linguistic-oriented processes that elucidate deeper political discourse and that, in a way, anticipated Israeli legislation such as the 2018 Nation-State Law: the first, the exclusive Jewish right to national self-determination, and the second, the de-politicization of Palestinian rights through an emphasis on religious and historical aspects.

Historical Background: Quarters, Street Names, and Lingual Regulation in the Old City

It is important to note that the rationale behind the separation of the Old City into different quarters is relevant for understanding street names. Lingual regulation of streets in the Old City of Jerusalem and its “official” partition into four quarters began during the British Mandate period (1920–48). While some divisions existed prior to this time, during the Ottoman Empire these divisions were mainly based on *harat* (neighborhoods).¹³ Tamari has shown that the subsequent division into four rigid quarters – that was pushed forward during the British Mandate – was not authentic nor consistent with local inhabitants’ perception of the space that had internal division to *mahallat* (places/areas/neighborhoods). According to Tamari:

There was no clear delineation between neighborhood and religion; we see a substantial intermixing of religious groups in each quarter. The boundaries of habitat, furthermore, were the *mahallat*, the neighborhood network of social demarcations within which a substantial amount of communal solidarity is exhibited. Such cohesiveness was clearly articulated in periodic visitations and sharing of ceremonials, including weddings and funerals, but also active participation in religious festivities. These solidarities undermined the fixity of the confessional system from a pre-modern (perhaps even primordial) network of affinities.¹⁴

The division into four quarters was invented by European travelers and explorers, army officers and architects who visited the city and created maps reflective of this idea toward the end of Ottoman Period.¹⁵ This trend accelerated during the British Mandate period by further establishing clear borders and boundaries between areas while simultaneously homogenizing the populations in them.¹⁶ Similarly, Wallach demonstrated that street naming was key to establishing the European four quarters as an established fact. According to Wallach, the British sought to protect what they considered to be the city’s sacred characteristics. As such:

The British administration also annulled the Ottoman plan for tramlines and electricity provision in Jerusalem. Like early European photography of Palestine, which rendered the country as a biblical theater set, Jerusalem had to abandon its hopes for tramways and electrification and make way for an Orientalist fantasy.¹⁷

This reflected a Western, Orientalist perception as it aspired to look at the East as a non-changing entity, one that is rooted in an ancient, religious, past.¹⁸ As Campos points out, in fact, the Old City was characterized by heterogeneous areas that featured significant mixing of religious groups and dynamics of migration, integration, and contact. Yet, this found no expression by either the colonialists or by the Israelis, as this post-1967 street name analysis will demonstrate.¹⁹

The British advanced this vision by undertaking practical activities and policies related to street naming. In 1922, the British governor of Jerusalem, Ronald Storrs, established a committee for street names; it operated under the auspices of the Pro-Jerusalem Society, which was founded following British conquest of the city. The committee – a part of the town planning commission, which in itself was a product of the Pro-Jerusalem Society²⁰ – was headed by Harry Charles Luke and included representatives of the three religions in Jerusalem: Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The committee named forty-six streets in the Old City that were then inscribed on ceramic tiles created by the Armenian ceramicist David Ohannessian.²¹ The British Pro-Jerusalem map relied on an earlier map, Wilson’s map of 1865, which also references forty-six street names in the Old City during the Ottoman period.²² However, while Wilson’s map from the Ottoman period included five names related to Christianity, two references to Judaism and Jews (Harat al-Yahud and Tariq al-Nabi Dawud), and thirty-nine referring to Arab orientations of al-Quds, Ayyubid history, and Ottoman history, the Pro-Jerusalem map included thirteen names referring to Christian figures or orders, seven to Jewish clans and biblical figures, and twenty-six to Islamic history.

The British logic of street naming in the Old City was highlighted by the Mandate governor of Jerusalem, Ronald Storrs. According to him: “It was forbidden to demolish, erect, alter or repair the structure of any building in or near Jerusalem without my permission in writing.”²³ Storrs advocated for naming streets in ways that related to Jerusalem’s ancient history and religious importance. This reflected a British-oriented colonial perception of the Middle East as being “frozen in time.” The policy of avoiding selecting names with modern or national characteristics stemmed from a desire to avoid controversy or at least from keeping the place “in the past.”²⁴ The guidelines outlined here reflect a Western-colonial approach expressing the belief that names should relate to historical periods and give expression to the special sacred character of the city.²⁵

The committee also created specific regulations regarding the visual aspects of the signs and their linguistic features. They decided that tile colors would be blue or green so that the color would stand out against the grey background of Jerusalem’s walls, indicating that the committee attached great importance to visual aspects.²⁶ They also made decisions about which languages would appear on the signs. In areas primarily occupied by a specific group, signs featured English (the language of the sovereign power) and the language of the local community (Arabic in Palestinian areas and Hebrew in Jewish areas). In what they defined as “public spaces” or where the area was populated by both populations, signs were written in English, Arabic, and Hebrew. Remnants of these trilingual tiles have English at the top, Arabic in the



Figure 1. Louis Vincent St. sign, erected by the British authorities during the Mandate period (1920–48). Photo by Mahmoud Muna.

middle and Hebrew at the bottom (figure 1).

The signage project during this period was not devoid of political context. The Zionists sought to forge a connection between language, street signs, and political ideologies. Wallach argues that even as early as the 1920s

... the Zionist desire to rewrite the landscape of Palestine relied crucially on Hebrew as a tool for appropriation and reinterpretation. Zionist leaders and activists lobbied hard, from the beginning of the Mandate, for Hebrew signs in train stations, government offices, and public services. Their efforts aimed not only to make Hebrew visible in public space *but also to claim that space*. In the 1920s and 1930s the streets of Jerusalem became saturated with Hebrew of new kinds: commercial signs for shops and advertisements, signs of Zionist institutions, political notices, and street names. *This new visibility challenged, and would later displace, Arabic.*²⁷

When the British Mandate ended in 1948, the Old City came under Jordanian control. During this period, no Jews resided in the Old City. Between 1948 and 1967, the Jordanians made very few changes to actual place names. Interestingly, the Jordanian map of the Old City included ninety street names, its vast majority being Arab, Muslim, and Christian names.²⁸ Jordanians did change the languages' appearance – by taking away the Hebrew and pushing forward a bilingual linguistic

landscape – Arabic followed by English. However, regarding the names of streets, their changes were minor, with the exception of two changes, the insertion of two new names: طريق المناضلين (Tariq al-Munadilin/Road of Fighters) commemorating Arab fighters who fought in the city during the 1948 war, and طريق الملك فيصل (Tariq al-Malik Faysal/King Faysal Road). In other words, the Jordanians did not create new Arab linguistic landscape (Jordanian or Palestinian) of a national or political nature.

A new linguistic era characterized by significant changes took place following the Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem and the Old City in 1967. To date, this subject has received limited scholarly attention, particularly in relation to the Old City. Suleiman's research demonstrated that the Israeli regime gave enhanced visibility and presence to Hebrew on street names in Israel in order to reflect its control over the space.²⁹ We aspire to comprehensively look at all street signs in the Old City in Jerusalem, and analyze the linguistic landscape that took shape during the post-1967 era in the Old City, with a few clarifications on methodology and structure.

Research Design and Methodology

This article, focusing on signs in the Old City, examines street and market signs, ascents, gates and squares. We analyze five areas in the Old City: the four quarters (the Jewish, Muslim, Christian and Armenian quarters) and al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount compound. In these areas, we seek to understand how Israel harnessed the linguistic landscape to gain control over space. As we will argue, at times this was done by perpetuating British colonial naming practices, and at other times by pushing forward a nationalistic approach to reconstruct space.

A total of some two hundred different signs were observed and documented. They were affixed during three main periods: the British Mandate period (1920–48), the Jordanian period (1948–67) and the Israeli period (1967 onwards). The article will not address the manner in which decisions were made about signage, or about symbols and colors, nor will it cover issues touching on the typeface used on the signs except in cases linked to the subject of the research. Rather, we examine the physical appearance of the signs, the representation or non-representation of languages as well as lingual hierarchy. We also incorporate general insights about language such as sign content, names, writing style, and the translation and/or transliteration of languages.

We aim to derive insights regarding political implications of the current linguistic landscape in the Old City. Israel has controlled this area for over five decades and throughout this period has made decisions about which signs to keep, replace, or create. As such, the linguistic landscape is indicative of power relations between the Israeli regime and Palestinian people. Consistent with Suleiman, our analysis seeks to elucidate Israeli political strategies, needs, perception, and desires and through this to uncover deeper layers of socio-political thought.³⁰ Thus, this article focuses on spatial-political meanings that underlie the linguistic landscape in the Old City of Jerusalem.

Preliminary Findings: Content of Street Signs in the Old City

Based on our examination of signage throughout the Old City, we will discuss the findings in the five areas under investigation. The sign names are categorized by topic area and are presented in accordance with the frequency in which they appear, highest frequency to lowest.³¹

The Muslim Quarter: 46 name tiles were documented in the Muslim quarter, divided into 10 categories:

- a. *Muslim History of Jerusalem* (19 names). Street names symbolize the social, religious, historical, and strategic achievements as well as physical development of Old Jerusalem under Muslim rule, covering the Ayyubid period (1187–1260), the Mamluk period (1260–1515), and the early Ottoman period twelfth to sixteenth century. Ayyubid heritage is commemorated in names that mention actions taken by Salah al-Din and his entourage (1138–1193). For example, طريق المعظمية, Tariq al-Mu‘azzamiyya is named for the nearby al-Mu‘azzamiyya school, built by ‘Isa al-Mu‘azzam (d. 1227), Salah al-Din’s nephew.³² ‘Aqabat al-Shaykh Lu’lu’, عقبة الشيخ لولو, is named after Shaykh Badr al-Din Lu’lu’, a commander of Salah al-Din’s army.³³ The Mamluk presence in Jerusalem is commemorated in names that preserve memories of sultans such as ‘Ala’ al-Din Street and mystics such as عقبة البسطامي (‘Aqabat al-Bastami) al-Bastami Ascent, named for Abu Yazid al-Bastami, a mystic Sufi holy man of Persian origin. Traces of the Ottoman sultans (1516–1917) are reflected in the names of institutions founded by Ottoman ruler. This includes عقبة السرايا, ‘Aqabat al-Saraya (Palace’s Ascent) and the Ottoman administration building, established by Hurrem Sultan, also known as Roxolana, wife of the first Ottoman sultan, Sulayman I.
- b. *Markets and Merchandise* (10 names). This refers to merchants, markets, and skilled workers who were active in the Old City. The names are mostly from the Crusader, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods. An example of this is سوق القطانين, Suq al-Qatanin (Cotton Merchants Market) built in the fourteenth century by the Mamluk governor of Jerusalem, Tankiz, and reflects the cotton goods sold there at the time. Another example is سوق اللحامين, Suq al-Lahamin (Butchers Market) whose establishment is attributed to the Crusaders; its name indicates a high concentration of abattoirs and meat shops on the street.
- c. *Local Families and Local Traditions* (5 names). These names highlight the biographies of Arab families in Jerusalem. For example, عقبة الخالدية, ‘Aqabat al-Khalidiyya (al-Khalidiyya Ascent) is called that because most of the houses were owned by al-Khalidi family, a veteran Muslim family in Jerusalem.
- d. *Nature and Trees* (3 names). An example of this is طريق الواد, Tariq al-Wad (Valley Road) given this name because its physical features follow the path of an ancient ravine.
- e. *Names Indicating Directions* (2 names). Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Gate Road), طريق باب السلسلة, was the road leading to the Chain Gate, one of the gates to al-Haram.

- f. *Local Holy Men* (2 names). These signs refer to Muslim religious leaders, such as عقبة الشيخ ریحان, Aqabat Shaykh Rihan (Shaykh Rihan Ascent). This street indicates that the mosque and holy grave of the Sufi Shaykh Rihan, dating from the sixteenth century, are located on the street.
- g. *Christian Traditions and Monasteries* (2 names). Examples from this category are the Via Dolorosa, طريق الألام, Tariq al-Alam (Street of Pain), where, according to Christian tradition, Jesus walked from the place where he was condemned to the place of his crucifixion. Another example is طريق الراهبات, Tariq al-Rahbat (Street of the Nuns) named for the Convent of the Sisters of Zion, located on that street.
- h. *Crusader Tradition* (1 name). For example: طريق برج اللقلق, Tariq Burj al-Laqlaq (Street of the Stork Tower).
- i. *Muslim Battle* (1 name). This sign القادسية, al-Qadisiyya, commemorates the battle in which the Muslims defeated the Persians in 636 CE.
- j. *Indian Tradition* (1 name). Tariq al-Zawiya al-Hindiyya (Road of the Indian Monastery), طريق الزاوية الهندية, refers to the Indian sufi mystics who established a monastic complex in the thirteenth century.

The main motifs of street names in the Muslim quarter relate to Christian religious history but primarily to Muslim religious and military history. Street names begin with traditions about Jesus and the Crusaders, and then cover Islamic military history during the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods, through the disintegration of Ottoman rule. Christianity and the Christians, as reflected by streets in the Muslim Quarter, are relatively limited in comparison with the abundant presence of Muslim history and Muslim rulers. Indeed, we learn about Muslim warriors through names given to monuments, holy men, religious structures, study halls, and public institutions founded by Muslim rulers.



Figure 2. Removal of the Arabic name طريق البراق (Tariq al-Buraq, al-Buraq Road) by the Israeli forces following the occupation of the Old City in 1967. Photo courtesy of Micha Bar-Am.

Al-Haram al-Sharif: 10 signs feature the names of the gates of al-Haram and 4 primary motifs (see figure 2). This short overview indicates that al-Haram gate names portray Jerusalem as a religious Muslim city with particular emphasis on the Mamluk and Ayyubid periods of Islamic history:

- a. *Muslim Religious Motifs* (4 names). Muslim religious rituals and concepts are inscribed in the identities of the gates. باب المطهرة, Bab al-Mathara (Ablution Gate) leading to the ablution area for prayers, and باب المجلس, Bab al-Majlis (Council Gate, also known as al-Nazir, Gate of the Superintendent of the Compound), encompass this principle.

- b. *Physical Development, Commercial Activity, and the Military Legacy of the Mamluks and the Ayyubids* (4 names). Bab al-Hadid, باب الحديد, (Iron Gate, also known as Arghun Gate) is named after Arghun al-Kamili, a fourteenth century Mamluk prince whose name in Turkish means iron.³⁴ باب المغاربة, Bab al-Maghariba (Mughrabi Gate) pays homage to Maghreb fighters who fought in Salah al-Din's army in the battle to liberate Jerusalem from the Crusaders. An example of a commercial name is باب القطنين, Bab al-Qatanin (Gate of the Cotton Merchants) which led to the Cotton Merchants' Market (figure 3).
- c. *Hashemite Dynasty* (1 name). A gate is named after King Faysal II (1935–1958) who gave a donation to al-Aqsa mosque during his visit to Jerusalem in 1943. This name plaque is relatively new and replaces the previous name of Bab al-Mu'azzam which referred to King 'Isa al-Mu'azzam, one of Salah al-Din's brothers.
- d. *Tribes Mentioned in the Quran* (1 name). Bab al-Asba (Gate of the Tribes), باب الأسباط, is a gate in the Old City walls that refers to the sons of Jacob mentioned in the Qur'an.

Christian Quarter: 15 street signs were documented in the Christian quarter, divided into 3 main categories.

- a. *Christian Saints* (6 names). Notable among the names in the Christian quarter are St. Helena Street, named after the mother of Emperor Constantine I, and St. Francis Street, named after the twelfth-century Italian Catholic monk, the founder of the Franciscan order.
- b. *Christian Branches and Institutions* (6 names). Examples are the Greek Catholic Patriarchate and the Street of the Copts. These street names highlight central branches of Christianity which are connected to Jerusalem in general and specifically to the Old City and the Christian holy sites located there.
- c. *Muslim Heritage* (2 names). Just as the Muslim quarter refers to Christianity, in the Christian quarter we find ميدان عمر بن الخطاب, Maydan 'Umar ibn al-



Figure 3. A welcome sign located at the Cotton Merchants' Gate showing the name in Arabic only (erected over the last decade by Palestinian Da'irat al-Awqaf/the Islamic religious endowments). Underneath is a tile bearing only Arabic and English (erected by Jordanian authorities in the 1948–1967 period). Photo by authors.

Khattab (‘Umar ibn al-Khattab Square) named after the Muslim military leader who conquered Jerusalem from the Byzantines in the year 638, and عقبة الخانقاه, ‘Aqabat al-Khanqah (al-Khanqah Ascent) which refers to the twelfth-century al-Khanqah al-Salahiyya mosque (مسجد الخانقاه الصلاحية), the Sufi institution from the period of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi.

- d. *Jewish and General Heritage*: (1 name). The street is called in Hebrew רהוב דוד, Rehov David (David Street) and in English: David Street, both refer to biblical King David. In Arabic the street is called سويفة علوان, Suwayqat ‘Alwan (‘Alwan products) referring to a market owned by the ‘Alwan family.

Street and location names in the Christian quarter reflect branches and communities from throughout the Christian world as well as others’ heritage – primarily Muslim. This religious-historical emphasis is evident by the prevalence of famous religious figures, for example, St. Helena and David. This naming system provides many different communities with recognition while also avoiding hierarchy or judgment.

Armenian Quarter: 8 signs were found in the Armenian quarter, divided into 3 categories:

- a. *Armenian Faith and Geography* (5 signs). An example is Ararat Street, referring to Mount Ararat, adjacent to Armenia, which is considered a central Armenian symbol. Another street, St. James, is the English version of the Christian saint Ya‘qub who was one of the twelve apostles of Jesus.
- b. *Names of Monasteries* (2 signs). One street is named after the Maronite monastery, referring to the Eastern Catholic Maronite community.
- c. *Mamluk Commander*: (1 sign). This street, حارة الشرف, Harat al-Sharaf (al-Sharaf Neighborhood) located in al-Sharaf area of the quarter, is named after Sharaf al-Din Musa Sulayman, a Mamluk commander who died in 1400 and was buried in the area. In Hebrew, the street is called ביקור חולים, Bikur Holim (Visiting the Sick).

The areas above reveal a number of similar themes. All have street names which focus on historical periods, as far as possible from modern reality. Many streets are named after religious figures and leaders related to the predominant religion in that area; however, there are some exceptions. With the exception of al-Haram al-Sharif, the three quarters reflect religious diversity in that they refer to more than one religious tradition while also seeking to avoid names that are overly particularistic. Furthermore, they refer to specific institutions, families, geographic characteristics, religious orders, types of businesses, graves, or other geographic markers on named streets, thus demonstrating congruence between the names and the specific locations. In general, the names in these quarters emphasize the range of religious history and traditions embodied by the Old City. This reflects a British settler-colonial understanding of the Old City, a perception that emphasizes the religious significance of the areas and de-emphasizes the national identity of the inhabitants or the politically-loaded significance of the place. Such a perception largely regards the Old City as “frozen in time,” and Orientalist, meaning lacking of modern national identities or understandings that go beyond the ancient religious orientation.

Jewish Quarter: We analyzed 36 signs in the Jewish quarter, divided them into 4 categories. The vast majority of the names were established following Israeli conquest in 1967:

a. *Names Connected to Temple Worship* (13 names). These names encompass religious and national principles associated with religious rites performed during the First and Second Temple periods. Jews believe these temples were situated where the Dome of the Rock and al-Aqsa mosque now stand. A street called רחוב משמרות הכהונה, Rehov Mishmerot ha-Kehunah (Street of the Priestly Guards) is named for groups of priests who, according to the Book of Chronicles, performed work in the Temple and the Tabernacle. Another street, רחוב החצוצרות, Rehov Ha-Hatsotsrot (Street of the Trumpets) refers to the trumpets used to accompany animal sacrifices held in the Temples (figure 4).



Figure 4. Ha-Hatsotsrot Street sign, erected by Israeli authorities (with the visible remains of a sticker that was intended to delete the Arabic). Photo by authors.

- b. *Religious Names* (13 signs). These names refer to Jewish law, Jewish practice, and sects of Judaism. For example, רחוב המקובלים, Rehov ha-Mekubalim (Street of the Kabbalists) refers to the Kabbalah movement, and רחוב חב"ד, Rehov Chabad (Chabad Street) is named after the Chabad movement.
- c. *Nationality and Religion* (9 names). These names combine military values and religion; they commemorate security, military events and history, and Israel's wars (mostly the war in 1967 and the war in 1948). For example, רחוב פלוגת הכותל, Rehov Plugat ha-Kotel (Street of the Western Wall Company) is named for the military company established in 1937 to protect the Jewish presence in the Jewish quarter. Another sign, מעלות הרב מאיר יהודה גץ, Ma'alot Rabbi Meir Yehuda Getz (Rabbi Meir Yehuda Getz Ascent) refers to a religious leader who was an officer with the Artillery Corps, and lost his son in the 1967 War during the fighting in Jerusalem.³⁵ This sign demonstrates the connection between religious life and the Jewish national cause and is reminiscent of ways in which French colonial rulers recognized military commanders in the French quarter of Fez in Morocco.³⁶
- d. *Byzantine Relics* (1 name). This refers to just one street – the Cardo – the Latin term for the main north-south street in a city.

Several insights can be derived from the four categories outlined here. Regarding the first category, temple rites, while these names refer to incidents that took place

in ancient history, many Jews hold a messianic outlook and advocate for revival of the rituals they believe took place in the temples. Similarly, many of the names refer to Israeli military campaigns and victories. This establishes asymmetrical national relations in Jerusalem and imbues them with a national-religious (and, as such, Zionist) spatial consciousness.³⁷ Furthermore, unlike in the other quarters, in the Jewish quarter, there are virtually no names that have non-Jewish connotations. This reinforces a perception of Jewish exclusivity and a significant nationalist and particularistic ethos.

We can see from this analysis that the Jewish quarter is different from the other areas of the Old City. Israel has, for the most part, maintained the British colonial and a-political understanding of the Old City in the other quarters. Yet, signs in the Jewish quarter reflect a national as well as settler-colonial ethos emphasizing historical continuity in the location, Israeli military conquest, religious-nationalistic themes, and religious tradition over time. It is the only quarter that reflects modern and nationalistic themes, and highlights Israeli myths such as defense and victimhood.³⁸

The emphasis on the old and the new is reminiscent of Walid Khalidi's conception of "reconquista."³⁹ Comparing Zionism to medieval Spain, he focuses on how groups "reclaim" or "recover" lost lands by emphasizing their glorious history and connection to the place. In his view, this is an "offensive action" by "people on the move, with its alchemy of religious and national motivation, its profound sense of prior ownership and entitlement, its insatiable land hunger, and its pitiless indifference to the fate of the inhabitants."⁴⁰ The conquerors view this mission as "an exclusive primordial, unchallengeable, indeed divine right."⁴¹

In historical Palestine, unlike in other settler-colonial contexts, Zionist settlers did not simply create new names, rather they sought to "recover" the "original" or "true" names, as well as practices, clothing, and other norms. They sought to demonstrate that there was a pre-Palestinian Jewish existence and Jewish rootedness in order to legitimate territorial claims.⁴² They did this, to a large extent, by referencing biblical names and concepts. Nadia Abulhadj⁴³ and Meron Benvenisti⁴⁴ refer to this in the context of place-names, while Yonatan Mendel writes about this in the context of "recovering" the forgotten roots of Arabic in the process of "reviving Hebrew."⁴⁵ Other writers, including Ricca and Nitzan-Shiftan referred as well to this notion of "reconstruction."⁴⁶ Nitzan-Shiftan, for example, writes that similar to other colonialists, the Israelis attempted to establish "nativeness." Her insights regarding architecture in the Old City are equally applicable to street signs: Israelis redefined the new surroundings as their own, according to an Orientalist vision. The "metaphorical return home" with the capture of the Old City was viewed as the embodiment of Jewish history and Jewish claims over the land, thus linking old and new.⁴⁷

Visual Appearance and Lingual Typeface

The signs examined in this research have been divided into two categories and analyzed as such. The first category relates to the sign's visual form; it examines

images on the signs, the types of signs, and the languages on the signs including the relative prominence of each language as reflected in linguistic hierarchy. The second category, the lingual category, examines the typeface, transliteration, and translation of language featured in the signs.

Image, Languages, and Organization of the Languages

Following Israel's conquest of the eastern part of Jerusalem in 1967, Israel left existing signage in place and commissioned new signs. During the Jordanian period, many signs were produced by an Armenian ceramicist in the Karakashian workshop.⁴⁸ This tradition was continued by the Israeli authorities, thus preserving the aesthetic norm embodied by the Jordanian signs and representing continuity between the two periods. However, Israel also added metal blue-and-white signs (see figure 5), colors that are associated with the Israeli flag, as well as green and black signs for municipal signage outside the Old City. The consistency between outside and inside the Old City is significant: the Old City, in Israel's view, was now part of "unified Jerusalem."



Figure 5. Al-Sarayah Street (transliterated as "As Sarayeh St."), erected by the Israeli authorities as the official signs of the Jerusalem municipality. Photo by authors.

We observed two types of signs: altered signs (from 1967 to early 1990s, see figure 7), and new signs (post-1990s, see figure 6). The first type is identified by a new Hebrew name, added by Israel after it conquered the Old City, at the top and above the border of the original frame of the Arabic and English sign made by the Jordanians. The second type has no dividing line yet the languages are in the same order with Hebrew first – and with diacritical marks for the Hebrew. This type of sign was manufactured by Israel in a later stage – from the 1990s onward – to be, as we analyze it, a symbol of "united Jerusalem" (with no division between "East" and "West")

all under Israeli rule. In areas primarily identified as Palestinian (the Muslim, Christian, and Armenian quarters, and al-Haram al-Sharif precinct) both types of signs appear. However, in the Jewish quarter – to symbolize Israeli rule most clearly – none of the signs have this dividing line, testifying to the fact that all of the signs in the Jewish quarter are new. We argue that the dividing line is indicative of a distinction between the two time periods, while the absence of that line advances the notion of a single history and a unified political present: in other words, “unified Jerusalem” under Israeli rule.

This is consistent with previous periods. Prior to and following 1967, there has and continues to be a linguistic hierarchy reflecting the identity of the forces in power at any given time. During British rule, English came first with Arabic underneath. However, when the Jordanians ruled, the same languages were present yet this order was reversed.⁴⁹ Similarly, following 1967, Israel added Hebrew to the Arabic and English, placing Hebrew on top. Due to Israel’s lingual intervention, the majority of signs became trilingual. Furthermore, the order of the languages changed: Hebrew was placed above the Arabic, and English was at the bottom. In addition, Israeli-commissioned signs use a Hebrew typeface with diacritical marks (vocalization) that is resonant of Hebrew Holy Scriptures, yet does not adopt that same convention for Arabic names. Therefore, Hebrew maintains hegemony due to its positioning on signs as well as through use of diacritical marks and typeface.

Hebrew’s amplification and visibility is also reflected in directional signage that appears throughout the Old City. In most cases, the number of words in Hebrew is greater than the number of words in Arabic as exemplified in a sign which reads, “Northern Access to the Western Wall” (figure 8). In English there are nine lines, in Hebrew there are seven lines yet the Arabic contains a single line. The Arabic speaker is not made aware of the identity of the bodies acting in their living space – in this case an Israeli governmental company titled “The East Jerusalem Development Ltd.” Some of these organizations are dedicated to the Judaization of this space, as another example of colonial practices.



Figure 6. Tile of the Christian Quarter St. without a dividing line between the languages, erected by Israel in the post-1990s. Photo by authors.



Figure 7. Tile of the same street (with a slightly different name: Christian Quarter Rd.) showing the Hebrew wording placed above the original border of the Jordanian Arabic and English sign, erected by Israel in the post-1967 to early 1990s period. Photo by authors.

The norm of placing Hebrew on all signs does not apply to al-Haram al-Sharif precinct where signs are only in Arabic and English with Arabic on top. The absence of Hebrew in this area implies a corresponding lack of Israeli intervention in the linguistic landscape. Indeed, this area is under the jurisdiction of the Islamic Waqf and is managed by Jordanian representatives, as agreed by both countries in 1967. In our view, the lack of signage in Hebrew could relate to this political arrangement; however, perhaps local political-religious dimensions account for Hebrew's absence. Until now, at least officially, Israel has not been interested in intervening in the lingual identity of al-Haram area due to religious sensitivities and the volatile, fraught politics of this specific holy area. This evident lack of Israeli intervention seems to indicate that there is agreement regarding at least one issue: preservation of the lingual status quo at this site.

Lingual Presentation: Typeface, Transliteration, and Translation

Many have argued that translation and transliteration not only facilitates encounters between cultures, but can also be harnessed by majority and minority populations to advance ideological, social, and political agendas. This is the case particularly in situations characterized by colonialist relations between the dominant and the subaltern.⁵⁰ Throughout history, hegemonic social groups have exploited translation to understand other cultures and establish control over them. Yet, translation is also a tool that the subaltern group can use to protest against the ruling power.

We examined translation and transliteration and found a lack of symmetry between the way this was applied in relation to Hebrew and Arabic. Most Arabic words that lack particular significance have been translated into Hebrew and English. For example, طريق (tariq), سوق (share‘), حوش (suq), and in some cases, حوش (hawsh) were all translated into Hebrew using a single word רחוב (rehov) and into English using two words – street or road. Clearly some of these translations are not faithful to the original Arabic terms; rather they were unified or simplified. Simplification of complex



Figure 8. Directional sign to the northern access to the Western Wall in the Jewish quarter, erected in 1979 by a group of Israeli organizations. There are seven lines in Hebrew, nine lines in English, but one line in Arabic. Photo by authors.

terms occurs more frequently in Hebrew than in English. For example, the word حارة hara (neighborhood) was omitted from the name طريق حارة النصارى “Tariq Harat al-Nasara”; instead it was translated into Hebrew as Street of the Christians and into English as Christian Quarter Road. We believe that this linguistic change was made in

order to make it easier for Hebrew and English speakers to locate themselves through use of terms familiar to them based on their own cultural frames of reference.

In most cases, components of Arabic names appear in transliteration in English characters, while some have also been translated into English. In contrast, all identifying names in Arabic with lexical significance appear in Hebrew in translation and are not transliterated into Hebrew characters. For example, سوق العطارين Suq al-‘Atarin is translated into Hebrew as שוק הבשמים, Shuk ha-Besamim (Market of the Perfumes) even if an accurate translation would be the Market of the Plant Healers. On the symbolic level, even when the translation contains fragmentary linguistic traces of the Arabic source, inaccurate translation fractures the natural connection between Arabic, the geographical location, and the Palestinian subject. This shapes the hierarchies of the Old City: between a hegemonic Hebrew discourse for all, a national superiority of Jewish-Israelis, and axiomatic inferiority of the Palestinians.

Many words from the Jewish-Israeli lexical database have been added to Arabic street names. Therefore, certain streets have two names: a Jewish-Israeli name and an Arabic one. For example, ביקור חולים, Bikur Holim, is the Hebrew name for طريق حارة الشرف Tariq Harat al-Sharaf, known in Arabic as al-Sharaf neighborhood, where today, the Jewish quarter is located.⁵¹ Similarly, רחוב שער האריות, Rehov Sha‘ar ha-Arayot (Lions Gate Street) is referred to in Arabic as طريق المجاهدين, Tariq al-Mujahidin (Strugglers’ Road) in honor of fighters in the war for Jerusalem waged by Salah al-Din. In the Christian and Armenian quarters we found that the Hebrew text tends to be more consistent with the Arabic than in the Muslim quarter although, similarly, both the Hebrew typeface on signs and its vocalization echo Hebrew holy scriptures (figure 9). We believe that these inconsistencies in the Muslim quarter are because the Israeli regime seeks to strengthen Jewish heritage there. Accordingly, it views the Muslim quarter as being more important in terms of Jewish identity and presence.

Jewish identity and presence is, of course, most pronounced and dominant in the Jewish quarter. With the exception of Cardo Street, all names are Jewish and derived from the Hebrew lexical database. The overwhelming majority of signs in the Jewish quarter have been transliterated into Arabic and English characters. For example, רחוב אור החיים, Rehov Or ha-Hayim (the Light of Life Street) is transliterated into Arabic as طريق أور هحييم Tariq Or ha-Hayim and into English as Or ha-Hayim St. In some cases, but only in Hebrew, the sign actually contains an explanation of the name. For example, the sign on רחוב משה רוסנק, Rehov Moshe Rusnak (Moshe Rusnak Street) contains the explanation “Commander of the Jewish quarter in 1948 and Honoree of Jerusalem” 1923–2005. Only one street is translated into Arabic rather than transliterated: the Street of the Jews. The name حارة اليهود, Harat al-Yahud (Jewish Neighborhood) has been translated into Hebrew and English as Jewish Quarter Street. This preserves historical continuity and also ensures that the message is clear to speakers of Arabic regarding ownership over the area. Overall, this orthography demonstrates that the naming body sought to convey national and political messages in the Jewish quarter. For Jews, the message is clear: we are the owners. For others, particularly Palestinians, their foreignness is emphasized.

Israeli intervention in signage in the Old City is complex and intensive. It can be summarized as being based on Hebrew translation of Arabic terms, the addition of Jewish-Israeli names to Arabic names and the selection of an exclusive Hebrew typeface. These strategies represent an act of appropriation. They have been made with a Jewish-Israeli audience in mind and for its benefit while simultaneously alienating Palestinian spatial heritage. Overall, the Israeli authority refrained from changing street names in Palestinian spaces, but instead the emphasizing of Hebrew in these quarters and



Figure 9. Al-Wad Street, leading from Damascus Gate in the Muslim quarter to the Western Wall and al-Haram al-Sharif precinct; sign erected by Israeli authorities post-1967. Photo by authors.

lexical translation are made – at least for the Hebrew reader – in order to prove an ancient Jewish root. Following Gramsci, this could be considered as subversive and soft interference in Palestinian space.⁵² Similar to considerations made by the British Mandate’s Naming Committee, these decisions were made to advance Hebrew while avoiding direct confrontation with the Palestinian population.⁵³

Reactions from Below: Settlerism, Colonialism, and Names

In post-colonial literature, the subaltern resist those in authority through everyday practices such as how they use the space and their discourse about it.⁵⁴ This could also include destruction, such as the erasure of linguistic markers, use of graffiti, and other means. Such actions can be understood as a kind of discourse which demonstrates conflictual relations between political groups.⁵⁵

Signs in the areas studied reveal differential opposition to the official linguistic landscape, which also varies in intensity and form. Opposition in the Muslim Quarter is quite limited and takes three forms:

1. Alternative signs: This is a sign which bears a blessing in Arabic only سوق العطارين *يرحب بكم*. *Suq al-‘Attarin yurahibu bikum* (Suq al-‘Attarin welcomes you). Above the blessing is a verse from the Qur’an that proclaims the importance of al-Aqsa Mosque and in the background is a picture of the mosque (figure 10).
2. Spray-painted in Hebrew: We found two signs where words were spray-painted in

Hebrew. The name “Path of Hasidism” was spray-painted in yellow and the name for Bab al-Zahra, “Flower Gate” (שער הפרחים) was painted in green.

3. Stickers: We identified a sticker with religious-ideological content *دافعوا عن الأقصى* *Dafi‘u ‘an al-Aqsa* (Defend al-Aqsa) affixed to one of the plaques on Ha-Gai Street (חגי רחוב).

Monolingual writing in Arabic and religious-ideological content in spaces ostensibly controlled by the hegemonic power are examples of use of “symbolic capital” that has been converted into social capital. In this case, the lingual Palestinian presentation from below constitutes symbolic defiance of the establishment.⁵⁶ However, there was a paucity of such cases; in our view, this is either out of fear of opposing the Israeli naming authority or such attempts may have been quickly stymied by the Israeli authorities.



Figure 10. A sign in Arabic سوق العطارين next to a trilingual sign erected by Israel. Photo by authors.

There is evidence of intense resistance activity near the gates of al-Haram. There, we found many fabric signs on the gates which display the name of the gate in Arabic, a picture of the al-Aqsa Mosque, a picture of the Dome of the Rock shrine, and a blessing in Arabic. This form of resistance can be described as indirect or soft because this grassroots-initiated linguistic landscape accompanies official plaques, yet does not replace them. Indeed, in the area of al-Haram there are two linguistic

landscapes: the official one from the Jordanian period and a contemporary Palestinian one. The contemporary one challenges the presence of English while seeking to grant exclusivity to Arabic and link it to religious symbols associated with the Palestinian struggle against the Israelis. We did not observe any similar opposition in the Christian or Armenian quarters. We believe that Israeli political activity in these other areas is relatively limited and, furthermore, these areas do not contain sites claimed by Israeli religious actors.

The Jewish Quarter: A Zionist, Messianic, National-Religious Message

The Jewish quarter featured an entirely different pattern: obliteration of Arabic. Strikingly, the Arabic on virtually every sign in this quarter has been erased or defaced: many Arabic words on signs were removed or damaged either through use of graffiti or by covering Arabic text with stickers. This intense vandalization indicates that those engaging in such acts have a strong desire to make this area devoid of Arabic and Arabs. This contention is strengthened by the type of text evident in such vandalization attempts – primarily political messages which are tied to supporters of a version of Judaism which is largely messianic, settler, religious, and Zionist. For example, one sticker says: “And let them make me a sanctuary – we will go up to the Temple Mount according to the law” (figure 11). Clearly the individual who placed this sticker on the sign



Figure 11. Fighters of the Quarter 1948 St. sign, erected by Israeli authorities. Arabic is deleted. Photo by authors.

identifies with a group of rabbis who wish to break into al-Haram al-Sharif. Another sign features the logo of the Otzma Yehudit political movement – a group which supports transfer of Palestinians. On a sign for רחוב תפארת ירושלים, Rehov Tif'eret Yerushalayyim (Glory of Jerusalem Street), the extreme right-wing political message is even more explicit; it reads: “There is no co-existence. Transfer now” (figure 12).

We argue that these settler-oriented attempts to further Judaize and de-Arabize the already Judaized and de-Arabized linguistic landscape of the Jewish quarter tells a larger story of erasure that is consistent with contemporary Zionism in Israel. The Jewish quarter serves as a platform for extremist voices in Jewish-Israeli society,

voices which, over time, have become increasingly strident and dominant.⁵⁷ The Old City, as such, is emblematic of how Israel understands its geo-political location: it is a country that may be physically located in the Middle East, yet seeks to control and supervise the region's indigenous inhabitants and de-politicize and de-Palestinianize them. Our linguistic examination lends additional credence to the presence of a pivotal element of settler-colonialism that reflects the same narrow and rigid outlook and mindset as the colonialists who preceded the Zionist presence in the area.⁵⁸



Figure 12. Tif eret Yerushalayim Street sign, erected by Israeli authorities. Arabic is deleted. Photo by authors.

Conclusion: Zionism and De-Palestinianization – Comparing Lingual Representation

Over time, the linguistic approach to signage in the Old City has undergone a number of changes. The British naming authority emphasized a historical and mythological approach, which is consistent with Orientalist, Western views of the Middle East. The Jordanians made very few changes to names given by the British. However, the situation changed dramatically following Israel's occupation of the area in 1967, specifically in the Jewish quarter but also in the Old City as a whole. In the Jewish quarter, the Israeli authorities invested enormous efforts in renaming the streets such that they would engender a connection between the Jewish religious past and the Israeli Zionist present. This highlights a religious Zionist narrative and privileges military events connected to Jewish sovereignty. The degradation of Arabic on signage in this quarter represents a further entrenchment of the Jewish quarter as a Jewish only space. This sends a clear message of who is the sovereign power and has the right to establish ownership over holy sites – Jewish and Muslim alike – in Jerusalem. These politicizing efforts are also reflected in the absence of neutral, universal names in the Jewish quarter, in contrast with other quarters that do feature names from other religious traditions. Furthermore, in the other quarters, Hebrew has been given elevated status through translations which simplify and unify Arabic. Therefore, the Old City can be viewed as a binary space of ideological and theoretical clashes: on the one hand, it infuses Jewish identity and Israeli politics into the present in the Jewish quarter and makes this space welcoming to Jews only. The other quarters, however, are de-politicized and a-historical instead, emphasizing their religious nature. Thus, Jews are entitled to a national-religious presence – while religion serves as a justification to the national – while Muslims and Christians must make due with a religious presence only.

Consistent with this, street names in the Jewish quarter reflect nationalistic themes which are derived exclusively from the Hebrew lexical database. In the other quarters, names are derived from a multitude of other languages. For example, the Via Dolorosa, “Saint” as in Saint Helena, and Patriarchate as in the Armenian Patriarchate are not limited to Arabic – Palestinians’ mother tongue. This policy of monolingualism reflects Israel’s desire to preserve the purity of Hebrew in the Jewish quarter while also challenging the status of languages such as Arabic that were dominant prior to 1967. Therefore the types of words selected reflect national priorities and intentions.

Linguistic presentation in the Old City is closely tied to power relations between the conqueror and the conquered and these asymmetrical relations are sustained by use of language. The Palestinians, who are embroiled in a struggle for national liberation, are not able to control the linguistic landscape in their areas; therefore, this space does not reflect their linguistic identity. Instead, the linguistic landscape is determined by Israel; this gives visibility to Israeli-Jewish linguistic and toponymic heritage, while eroding and blurring Arabic’s visibility.

A comparison of the content of signs in the Muslim quarter with those in the Jewish quarter reveals two different understandings of time. The Muslim quarter seemingly reflects a timeless and ancient space, a relic of the Middle Ages and the Ottomans, that bypasses Palestinian eras and lacks Palestinian national identity. The Jewish quarter, on the other hand, emphasizes a centuries-long continuous attachment to the area stretching from biblical times to the contemporary era, as Braudel also pointed out.⁵⁹ This intergenerational continuum melds the past with the present. Biblically-inspired names feature mythical and ancient themes while military names emphasize the sacrifice entailed in liberating the mythical space and the return to Zion. These form a continuous circle of interaction between the past and present moving towards a biblically-inspired endpoint where Jerusalem will be eternally Jewish. Furthermore, chronologically, biblical terminology precedes Muslim symbols. As such, the Jewish quarter reflects both a Jewish mythical space and a contemporary Israeli space. This portrays Jewish and Israeli history as an ancient narrative with a beginning, middle, and end. Furthermore, when comparing the names of streets between the different quarters the political agenda gets clearer; street signs testify to the desire of the new sovereign – Israel – to maintain a British-oriented, de-politicized, and Orientalist approach in all quarters except in the Jewish quarter. Rather, the Jewish quarter promotes an exclusive Jewish national-religious identity with no space for other religions or cultures.

This is also true vis-à-vis anti-Arabic vandalization. The obliteration of Arabic, acts which are consistently disregarded by the enforcement authorities, is indicative of the racist nature of political winds blowing through Israel. Attempts to eliminate Arabic are viewed as a way to cement Jewish identity, hegemony, and rights at the expense of Arab rights. More directly, Israel seeks to erase Palestinian national and political existence. This message is found deep in the echelons of Jewish society as expressed in the recently passed Nation-State Law. This 2018 legislation, with constitutional status, removed Arabic’s status as an official language in Israel. We view this as paradigmatic of the status of Palestinian citizens of Israel as a status under

threat. The same law also proclaims that: “The exercise of the right to national self-determination in the State of Israel is unique to the Jewish People.” In our view, the linguistic landscape in the Jewish quarter, with its symbolic and telling value, and as compared to other quarters, demonstrates this principle in practice and foreshadows the passage of this law. Language, once again, serves as an indicator of deeper political processes underway in Israel-Palestine.

“What’s in a name?” Shakespeare asks in *Romeo and Juliet*. In the Old City of Jerusalem, the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, names reveal Israeli mechanisms of national validation and erasure. As the sovereign power with the ability to assign names, Israel seeks to sever the link between “freedom of worship” granted to Jews, Muslims, and Christians, with the freedom to see the city as a symbol of national and political yearning. An examination of street signs – their names, their use, and their appearance – reveals that Israel sees only itself as entitled to both. This tragic yet significant insight about the Old City can be a language-oriented contribution to studies and debates dedicated to the injustice that lies in the heart of Jerusalem and into the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Amer Dahamshe is a lecturer in the Hebrew department at the Arab Academic College in Haifa and a research fellow at the University of Haifa. His research focuses on the connection between place and identity in Palestinian and in Israeli place names, local legends, Hebrew literature, and in the presentation of languages in the linguistic landscape of roads in Israel. He thanks the Harry S. Truman Research Institute for the Advancement of Peace where he conducted research on Arabic and Hebrew road signs in Palestinian villages in Israel.

Yonatan Mendel is a senior lecturer in the Department of Middle East Studies at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev. His main research interests are the position, status, and teaching of Arabic in Israel; Jewish–Arab relations as reflected in language and culture; and the sociology, politics, and practice of translating from Arabic into Hebrew. He wishes to thank the Academy of the Arabic Language in Israel for supporting his research on the Arabic language and Jewish society in Israel.

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Christian Arab Pilgrimages to Palestine and Mount Sinai

Nabil Matar

Abstract

Pilgrimage studies to holy sites in early modern Palestine and Egypt have ignored Christian Arabic writings. This paper examines three accounts written by Orthodox and Catholic pilgrims to St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai and to Jerusalem and other parts of Palestine in the years 1637, 1753, and 1755. It shows the popularity of pilgrimages among Christian Arabs and the interactions they had with the various religious communities in the Ottoman world. The pilgrimage accounts show a thriving Christian Arab culture in the middle of a Muslim empire, and they present the views and experiences of pilgrims in their own words – challenging, on numerous occasions, the descriptions of Christian Arabs that appear in contemporaneous European sources.

Keywords

Christian Arabic writings; early modern pilgrimages; Islam; religious diversity; forms of piety.

The Christian Arabs constituted a sizeable minority in the Ottoman Empire in the early modern period (1517–1798). Unlike the imperialized peoples of the Americas in that same period, these “subjects of the sultan,” to use Suraiya Faroqi’s title, left a vast body of writings in their own language, Arabic, that reflected a vibrant religious culture. One expression of that culture was pilgrimage accounts to holy sites in Palestine and Egypt – a subject that has been ignored in pilgrimage studies in favor of European accounts. But large

numbers of Christians from Bilad al-Sham and Egypt annually travelled to Palestine and to St. Catherine's monastery in Mount Sinai.¹ Their writings recorded Christian voices, telling of experiences sometimes quite different from the European accounts.²

Daniel Goffman once noted that the minority communities in the Ottoman Empire "have been examined (and often continue to be examined) autonomously, with minimal regard to the Muslim state and society of which they were a part and which helped mold their unique characteristics."³ Given that the "geographical literature of the Christian Arabs consists, nearly completely, of descriptions of pilgrimage to the Holy Land/Palestine, and to Sinai,"⁴ the Arabic texts shed light on the pilgrimage tradition among them at the same time that their accounts illustrate their sense of place in the Ottoman dominions. Specifically, the texts show the exposure of Arab pilgrims to the religious diversity in the empire and the continuity of Christian piety under Islamic rule.



The first Christian Arabic pilgrimage account written after the Ottoman conquest of Bilad al-Sham and Egypt dates from 1635–36 and describes the journey to the Monastery of St. Catherine in Sinai.⁵ A certain monk, Afram, wrote to his addressee, a "lover of Christ," who had asked him to describe the site and the routes from "Egypt" (Cairo), Gaza, and al-Quds al-Sharif.⁶ Drawing on his own memories of visits, along with readings of *tawarikh* (books of history), and the Bible (including the Book of Judith), Afram started with practical advice about the food supplies the pilgrim should take, the water sources on the trek, and the camels that would be needed, "because the wilderness can only be traversed by camels." The route, he noted, was the same as the one used by the Egyptian Muslim *hajj*, which starts in Cairo, but while "most of the [Muslim] *hujjaj* pilgrims and merchants sail from this town [Suez] to the Hijaz," the Christians take a route that is biblical in its history. It recalls the pharaoh's pursuit of the Israelites and Moses' crossing of the sea of Qilzim (the Ottoman name for the Red Sea). Appealing to the allegorical interpretation of the exodus narrative, Afram asserted that Moses had drawn the sign of the cross after which the pharaoh and his army were drowned. Throughout the account, Afram combined biblical lore with current geographical information: Moses led the Israelites through the wilderness with its twelve water sources and seventy palm trees; and the port on the Red Sea received ships from India bringing spices, and from Sind, Aden, and Yemen.

On arrival at the monastery, Afram and the pilgrims were welcomed warmly. Half a century earlier, in 1598, a group of pilgrims that included the Franciscan friar Christopher Harant and his brother-in-law had been kept waiting until the evening: the monks inside the monastery feared attacks by Bedouin marauders.⁷ Records of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century contracts between the monks and the Bedouins show that there had been assaults on the monks but that Bedouin tribal leaders tried to curb such aberrations. They had set penalties on miscreants: a camel was to be given to Shaykh al-ʿArab (the leader) if any Bedouin assaulted a boy going or returning from the orchards with fruit; and a camel if a Bedouin stayed after the Friday prayer and

insulted the monks; and a camel if a Bedouin asked a monk to loan him money or demanded a gift or a mattress or a cover.⁸ By the 1630s and 1640s, the situation had changed: the monks had bought their safety by offering cloth, headgear, and silver to local Bedouin chieftains.⁹ Afram mentioned no danger as he described the entrance to the “holy monastery” through the *artax* (narthex), to the right of which was the brass serpent that Moses had wielded (Numbers 21:9). Inside the main church, he continued, there are twelve columns with images of martyred saints and their feast days. To the right of the altar is the body of the “saint, glorious among the martyrs, Katrina, whose holy body is inside a marble urn with three iron locks. Above it are three lamps that burn night and day.”¹⁰ Behind the altar to the east is the Church of the Burning Bush where God appeared to Moses, and to the south is the cave in which repose the bodies of “the fathers of Tur Sina Waraytu who had been killed by the *barbar*.”¹¹ Numerous chapels are dedicated to saints, and near one of the chapels in the northern part of the monastery is a water source, the “Gazelle Well,” and a pomegranate tree, planted at the time the monastery was built. “The tree reveals a great mystery: every year it bears as many pomegranates as there are monks in the monastery.”

Curiously, and while describing the chapels, Afram made no mention of the mosque that stood in the middle of the monastic complex. It had been built during the reign of the Fatimid caliph, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah (reg. 996–1021),¹² and as a 1518 contract between the monks and local Bedouins showed, the monks were responsible for maintaining the mosque and caring for its muezzin; they were also obligated to host Muslim travelers by offering them food and assistance.¹³ Although he made no reference to the mosque, Afram mentioned the gate in the northern wall from which the monks lowered for the ‘*Urban* (Bedouins) a *quffa* (basket) full of bread.¹⁴ He then told a story that the monks had privately relayed to him, quite different from what European pilgrims narrated. In the past, the “‘Arab” and the *barbar* so harassed the monks that the latter decided to abandon the monastery.¹⁵ In addition, the monastery had become infested with venomous snakes and scorpions, and so “the monks ascended the Mountain of God [Sinai], to receive [the saint’s] blessing after which they were to depart.” As they were descending, he continued, the Mother of God appeared to them, but they did not recognize her and took her for one of the “queens of the ‘Arab, her face shining like the sun.” She told them to return to the monastery, promising them supplies and support until the end of time. She also assured them that they would never encounter snakes or scorpions or any other harmful creatures. She then ascended into the sky and disappeared. At that point, the fathers realized that she was the Mother of God and so, they built a church for her on that spot. When they returned to the monastery, they found two hundred camels laden with grain, oil, and other foods that had been delivered, as the porters reported, by “a lightly bearded monk by the name of Moses who had gone into the monastery.” They searched for him but could not find him, but when they all entered the monastery, the “‘Arab” immediately identified him when they looked at the large mosaic in the Basilica of the Transfiguration, which included Moses, the standing figure to the left of Jesus. Thereafter, the monastery was cleansed of the snakes.¹⁶



Figure 1. Ceiling of the Basilica of the Transfiguration, Sinai, Egypt. © CCA (Centro di Conservazione Archeologica, Rome).

The monk’s description of the “Arab” shows that there was cooperation at the same time that there was tension:

The monks are in constant jihad with the ‘Urban . . . who come daily to the monastery and eat and ask for many things, other than bread. They always strike and insult the monks because in that wilderness there is no governor, judge, or ruler – only the ‘Arab, a barbarous people, evil, and murderous.¹⁷

Evidently, there were good and bad “Arabs” – those who plundered and those whose queen looked very much like the Virgin Mary. Afram continued with descriptions of the cells and the chapel of “St. Catherine’s of the Franks,” which had been built by “*ifranj* [Franks] visitors,” showing that the schism of 1054 had had no impact on European Catholic pilgrimage to this site.¹⁸ He mentioned the orchard where the Israelites carved the golden calf, which they had worshipped at Horeb, next to which was the *kamantir* (crematorium), where “the bodies of the monks miraculously exuded no foul smell.” At this point, Afram reminded his reader that no woman could enter the monastery, “even if she is a queen – nor female animals, nor an *amrad* prepubescent (beardless) boy, unless he is visiting.”¹⁹ There were also the chapels and cells on the mountain of St. Catherine, including the cave where John Climacus (579–649) stayed for forty years. While abbot of the monastery, he wrote

Sullam al-faḍa'il (The Ladder of Divine Ascent), a book that Afram and his addressee knew – and which was frequently copied by the monks, as the five Arabic copies in the library attest.²⁰

Afram ended his account by urging “my dear brother” to visit the monastery – all the way from Jerusalem via Hebron and then Gaza to Arish and finally to Holy Mount Sinai. All the toil of the journey would be worth it when the pilgrim arrived to receive the intercession of Moses the Prophet, Mary the Mother of God, blessed Saint Catherine, and all the saints. Travel was safe, the monks were welcoming to all, and the “Arab” were largely cooperative.

In writing the account, Afram shows that there was interest among Arab Christians of the Ottoman regions in the monastery about which they seemed to know little.²¹ But while they were curious about the monastery, the more accessible site for them was Jerusalem and Palestine about which pilgrimage records are numerous. In the middle of the sixteenth century, the poet ‘Isa al-Hazzar made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, possibly having started in *Bilad al-‘Ajam*, or Iran,²² and wrote a few lines of verse about it. At the end of that century, an anonymous monk wrote *Kitab tawarikh Bayt al-Maqdis wa ma bihi min ‘ja’ib* (The Book of the Histories and Wonders of Jerusalem).²³ It described Jerusalem to “you pious Christians, men and women, old and young.” The author monk was aware that his Orthodox Church had lost some of its holy sites to the Catholics, the Franks, and the Muslims, and one subtext to the glorification of Orthodoxy in this pilgrimage-cum-homily was the irritating intrusion by the non-Orthodox onto the holy sites. The author did not express alarm as he mentioned the intruders, but he clearly wanted to alert his congregation to the presence of rivals.

In 1668 the Iraqi Catholic priest, Ilyas al-Musalli, visited Jerusalem and wrote the following brief recollection:

[On the way from Baghdad to the “sepulcher of Christ”] We traveled a deserted road, and as we were halfway across, we were attacked by Bedouin robbers. We fought and drove them away. It was Easter Sunday. We were twelve people and they were a hundred, but because of our guns and the power of God we prevailed. From there we continued to Damascus, and from Damascus to Noble Jerusalem [al-Quds al-Sharif], where I was blessed by visiting the holy sites. A few days later, I returned to Damascus and then went to Aleppo.²⁴

All pilgrims faced dangers similar to Ilyas’s which is why Ottoman governors tried to protect the routes – especially for Muslim pilgrims since security to *Bayt Allah* in Mecca was one of their religious responsibilities.²⁵ The title of the sultan, after all, included *Khadim al-Haramayn*, Servant of the Two Holy Shrines. Like other pilgrims, Ilyas traveled in a group, apparently without a janissary escort, which is why they attracted the robbers.²⁶ The pilgrims fought back and succeeded because of their firearms – a rather curious image of monks wielding guns in the Ottoman dominions.²⁷

There were also the two pilgrimages to Jerusalem by Bulus, son of Makarius, the 141st Orthodox patriarch of Antioch:

In the seventh year of the patriarchate of my father, 7150 [1654 CE], he went to visit holy Jerusalem [*Urushalim*], accompanied by sixty Aleppans, among whom were priests and deacons. And what a visit it was! Unforgettable, to be recalled with joy in future times. We spent all our time in godly happiness and spiritual fulfillment. We prayed and chanted and celebrated. We held continuous prayers, accompanied by music and singing of hymns. We were joined by the Jerusalemites who followed us, walking when we walked, and halting when we halted. From Qara, we left them and went in the direction of Yabroud [Syria].²⁸

Bulus and his companions went on to visit Orthodox villages – including the Aramaic-speaking Ma‘loula where there was the monastery of Saint Takla, reputed pupil of St. Paul, where her remains were kept; above the village on the mountain was the Byzantine-old convent of Mar Sarkis. When the pilgrims returned to the “holy lands and other places” in April, they stayed for two days at the Monastery of Mar Saba near Bethlehem where they saw the nearly 14,000 monastic cells [sic] carved into rocks in the valley. After St. Thomas Sunday (celebrated by the Orthodox Church in mid-April), they left Jerusalem for Damascus. Throughout their pilgrimaging, they visited tombs of patriarchs and churches, publicly giving expression to their faith in hymns and chants, appearing less as pilgrims in an act of penance and more like Chaucerian pilgrims – but without women.²⁹ The stops that Bulus mentioned throughout his account confirm the numerous “small pockets” of Christians in Palestine, Lebanon, and Syria.³⁰

While it is nearly totally focused on Russia and the journey there, Bulus’s account furnishes a glimpse of the Christian Arab pilgrims’ sense of the Ottoman world. In Aleppo, Muslims, Christians and Jews, Bulus reported, went to the shrine of one Shaykh Abu Bakr to celebrate the arrival of special water brought from Persia to repel locusts. At the head of the procession were the Muslims who sang in Arabic, followed by the Christians who chanted in Greek, and together, they went around the wall of the city, in a most orderly fashion.³¹ Bulus came from a strong Arabic cultural background and found no difficulty in celebrating religious cooperation with Muslims. He recalled that when Sultan Murad IV passed through Aleppo on his way to the conquest of Baghdad in 1638, “All the Christian communities welcomed him with precious cloth which they spread on the sides of the road. . . It was a memorable day, recalled by all future generations. . . to see the *sultana al-ifranjiyya* [the French sultana], his wife preceding him by three days with a large number of carriages.”³² Evidently, there was excitement at the news of a French wife of the sultan, especially in a city with a French Catholic contingent of traders and missionaries. As the Christian community in the city celebrated Easter, the sultan joined them and so much enjoyed himself that “he gave 1000 piasters” to the congregation.

Later, and in writing about regions that were exclusively Muslim, Bulus still expressed a sense of belonging. In Konya, the burial site of the Sufi poet Jalal al-Din al-Rumi (1207–73), the travelers delighted in the *mahabba* (love) for “the *Nasara* and

the monks” that was expressed by the “dervishes.”³³ Throughout their travels, they felt no more danger as Christians than others who traveled and suffered from highway robbers, shortage of provisions, and rough weather.³⁴

A few years later, in 1393 AH as he wrote (1676 CE), monk Tawadrus stopped at the monastery of Saydnaya outside Damascus on his way “to Bayt al-Maqdis [Jerusalem] to pray in those noble places”; and in 1689, the Lebanese priest ‘Awn Farah wrote in his diary that he “visited Jerusalem” with a group of clerics and “two boys and others” where they stayed for six months.³⁵ A few years later, the Syriac Orthodox bishop Danha from Mardin in eastern Turkey went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem where he converted to Catholicism. So angry was his congregation of Jacobites that they poisoned him.³⁶ A treatise written by Makarius, Bulus’s father, and copied on 1 Shawwal 1103 (16 June 1692 CE), presents a history of Palestine and other regions of Orthodoxy based on the writings of the Greek Church Fathers (many of whom are mentioned by name), with a few asides:

We should visit the land where our Lord Christ was born, and which carries the marks of his feet. There he traveled widely and performed miracles and wonders [*ayat*]. That is why it has become glorified. There the apostles followed him. That land is called Palestine, as Damianos writes about it in his fourteenth chapter.

St. Irenaeus said about Jerusalem in his seventeenth letter that it is not provided with water from below, like Egypt, nor is its grass in need of water. Rather it awaits the seasonal rains from above because the land is full of stones . . . Palestine was given its name from *Philistim*, but they did not use the name accurately and thus called it *Filastin*.³⁷

The text continues about the early history of the land, with various references to bishops, bishoprics, and ecclesiastical changes. The Christian past is the only past that Makarius recognizes, but as he is describing Jerusalem, he adds:

This city of Jerusalem remained in the hands of the Christians after Christ’s ascension for 620 years. Then it was taken, in peace, by ‘Umar ibn al-Khattab. The Islam[ic people] kept it until the year 1099 after the birth of Christ. It was freed from their bondage by Godfrey the Frank. In the year 1087 after the incarnation of Christ it was returned, in peace, and by the consent of the Christians, to Salah al-Din. Then, after another period, it was returned, in peace, to the Franks who kept it for 42 years. Then the Moroccans [Fatimids] took and kept it, then the Circasians, and lastly, in the year 1517 after the incarnation of Christ, Sultan Selim conquered it and it has remained in their [Ottoman] hands until now.

But this is a mere digression, after which Makarius returns to the biblical history and specifically to the Orthodox ecclesiastical legacy.

Numerous episodic descriptions of Jerusalem and Palestine appear in Arabic Christian sources.³⁸ Many pilgrims visited the city with their families: the Maronite patriarch of Aleppo, Istfan al-Duwayhi, mentioned that in 1668, he went on pilgrimage with his mother and his brother; the latter subsequently gained the title of *haji*.³⁹ Other pilgrims so frequently described their experiences to their communities that the sites and the journey to Palestine became quite familiar among Christian Arabs – which might explain the absence of detailed written accounts. As Donald R. Howard noted in his study of pilgrimage in Europe, although there were nearly 200,000 pilgrims annually to Canterbury, “It must have been too familiar to deserve written accounts.”⁴⁰ And so, the next surviving pilgrimage account in Arabic is, again, about St. Catherine’s Monastery, in the year 1753. The Jerusalemite Khalil al-Sabbagh al-Shami (originally from Syria, but living in Jerusalem),⁴¹ started his journey from Cairo accompanied by the abbot of the monastery and fifty-six other Christians “from various countries and speaking various languages.” Sabbagh did not mention the nationalities or the languages of the pilgrims, but when they reached the stone of Moses on their final leg of the journey, all dismounted – the patriarch, the visitors, and the ‘Urban guides⁴² – to kiss the stone. Christians and Muslims, Arabs and *ifranj* shared in the veneration of the Moses landmark. When they arrived at the monastery, the monks came out to welcome the abbot with hymns and shooting in the air. The monastery and its surrounding were safe, and the ‘Urban joined in the celebrations of welcome; also, as Sabbagh noted later, the ‘Urban attended the evening liturgy on the feast of St. Catherine (25 November). Again, it is interesting that monks were armed and that bells were ringing loudly – at the edges of the Ottoman world – a noticeable change since the French pilgrim Morison wrote over half a century earlier.⁴³

The layout of the site had remained the same since Afram’s account, but now there were numerous additions inside the churches and the chapels. The monastery had received many gifts from pilgrims: the lanterns and icons along with the gold and silver ecclesiastical decorations show that the Muscovites, *al-Maskub*, along with other Europeans, had been regular visitors. One of the icons donated by the Russians was dated 1713; the lamps were made in Venice; the chandelier was made in Austria; and the “seven lanterns ... made of silver plated in gold, [were] made by the Muscovites.” The monastery was also a place of scholarship: 2,000 manuscripts in the “*Philiotikion*, which means the library,” including 400 manuscripts in Arabic.⁴⁴ Sabbagh was so drawn to the beauty of the monastery that he described it as equal to paradise: “Whoever enters it thinks himself in paradise.”⁴⁵ Sabbagh joined the monks in meals and liturgies, and described the celebrations, the chanting, the ringing of bells, the lighting of candles in front of the numerous icons, and the food they were offered: beans and dried fish and black olives. As it was the feast of St. Catherine, the guests were offered grapes and “good wine,” and later, five apples and five pomegranates, after which they drank a glass of arak.⁴⁶ There was also coffee – mentioned twice in the account – showing that the drink was available even in that remote part of Sinai.⁴⁷ Hospitality was vivacious: the monastery was prospering.

For Sabbagh, the highlight of the visit was the veneration of the relics of St.

Catherine: her left hand “to her wrist,” and her skull, “skinless.”⁴⁸ But, another relic was now available for veneration: the right hand of the fourth-century virgin saint, Marina of Antioch – showing the link between this Orthodox monastery and the other major Orthodox monastery and pilgrimage site in the Arab regions of the Ottoman world: Saydnaya, where St. Marina was venerated. There were two silver candelabra, “made by the *Maskub*” above the reliquary, and under the marble pedestal an Arabic inscription stated that Master Nasrallah al-Shaghuri had repaired the marble in the year 1715. This writing in Arabic reminded Sabbagh of the Arabic inscription on one of the iron gates of the monastery:

The monastery of Saint Catherine was built on the mountain of *munajat* [colloquy], by the poor to God and seeker of His mercy, the royal king, Rumi in denomination, Justinian, to commemorate him and his wife Theodora for all times – in the place where God blessed the land and everything thereon. And he is the best of those to inherit God’s blessing. It was finished thirty years into his reign in the year 6021 After Adam, 527 After Christ.⁴⁹

The inscription in Arabic was meant for Arab readers and visitors who were to remember with praise the Christian emperor and his wife; curiously, there was no mention of the Ottoman sultan. The fact that this inscription was in Arabic – there were many others in Greek – raises the question about the Arab monks in the monastery. How many of the monks were Arabs is difficult to gauge because there is no mention of names at all in the account (nor did Afram before him mention names of resident monks).⁵⁰ In the late tenth century, Solomon, Bishop of Mount Sinai, added notes in Arabic to copies of manuscripts, one of which he had brought from Damascus: as Mark N. Swanson observes, the books were “part of a library of Christian literature in Arabic that would readily be available to the monks in the monastery.”⁵¹

Other Arabic manuscripts in the library from that century to the fourteenth century attest to a thriving Arabic theological culture. In 1536, the preface to one manuscript included reference to its scribe, the Arab monk (*katibihi al-khuri al-‘Arabi*), and in 1574, another preface mentioned the translation of a book into the Arabic language.⁵² By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Arab presence was evident, as the surviving diaries, treatises, receipts, and records show (MSS Arab. 687, 688, 691, and the two Covenants of ‘Umar from 1561 and 1683 CE MSS Arab. 696 and 695 respectively).⁵³ One manuscript, which records encounters with the ‘Urban, was collected by the shaykh deacon Neophotius, “a dignitary of Damascus in Syria, who had been one of the leading monks in *Tur Sina* for about fifty years” (MS Arab. 690). The inscription on the front page explains that the collection and copying of the manuscript was taken over by deacon Afrosiyus al-Halabi (the Aleppan) in order to continue writing in Arabic (*bil-kitaba al-‘Arabiyya*).⁵⁴ There are other Arabic names in the manuscripts, and the numerous Arabic inscriptions around the monastic complex (which have yet to be studied fully) confirm active Arab presence.⁵⁵ On visiting the crematorium, he saw the garment of a *nasik* (ascetic) that had belonged to one “called *Shami*” (a Damascene).

Later, and accompanied by the other pilgrims, Sabbagh climbed the mountain where he visited a small chapel: above the entrance, there was a marble plate with an Arabic inscription recording the names of the late Mikha'il Şawaya, Jibra'il Mikanna, and Nasrallah al-Shaghuri, all from Damascus, dated 1515. North of the chapel, he added, was a Frankish *haykal* (temple), along with a mosque for the 'Urban.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, St. Catherine's Monastery was prospering and safe with active Christian Arab pilgrimages.⁵⁶ Unlike the situation in Jerusalem, there were no rival Christians laying claim to the holiness of the monastery. Pilgrims had been regularly visiting this Orthodox site, both from Arab and European regions, all contributing to the monastery's wealth and dazzle. The constant references by Sabbagh to the gold and silver, the jewels, and the crowns confirmed for him the holiness of the monastery, where Orthodox monasticism had first been consolidated. St. Catherine's was a wholly Orthodox site, a *waqf*, uncontested by other Christian denominations, and located in an Arabic-speaking region (unlike, for instance, Mount Athos). Thus, Sabbagh's last words in the margin to encourage future pilgrims: "All that we have described can be seen by the visitors who come. God be praised."⁵⁷

Two years later, on 13 April 1755, Ilyas Ghadban al-Halabi, a Greek Catholic dignitary, accompanied by two monks from the Lebanese monastery of Dhur al-Shwayr, left Aleppo on their way to the Holy Land.⁵⁸ Ghadban returned on 27 May and wrote an account about his pilgrimage (but mentioned nothing about his companions). The account was in two parts: the actual itinerary, written in the form of a log about the route and date of the journey across Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, the cities and villages on the road, the time spent in every place, where he and his companions slept, the churches they visited and in which sometimes they celebrated mass, and brief descriptions of non-religious sites – as for instance, the Baalbek Roman ruin, "a wonder of the world." The longer second part consisted of detailed descriptions of holy sites, furnishing exact measurements as well as historical, contemporary, and sometimes religiously spurious information about them. Ghadban was a man of some status (one of the *a'yan* of Aleppo) because he was able to gain access to abbots and to local dignitaries and to stay at the house of the English consuls in Acre (twice) and in Ladhikiyya.⁵⁹ What his relation to the English was is not revealed, but he was on such good terms that he took letters of introduction from the consuls, which helped him enter holy sites that were largely restricted to members of specific denominations.

Most striking about this pilgrimage account was the meticulousness with which Ghadban recorded the number of *sanawat ghufraan* (years of indulgence) he earned after visiting holy sites, ranging from three or four or seven years of indulgence to full indulgence. The exact value of the indulgences was determined by the patriarch in Aleppo,⁶⁰ and with an eye to informing future pilgrims, Ghadban itemized the spiritual value of each site, turning the pilgrimage into a journey of indulgence collecting: "Know that when you enter the tomb [in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre] you receive full indulgence. And if you enter numerous times in the same day, each entry earns you full indulgence" (30r).⁶¹ But this regimentation did not detract from his deep piety in which the sensory experience of Palestine turned the land into one big relic.

For him, there was holiness in the physical objects and sites, and indulgences could be earned just by touching, or even looking from afar on churches that had been turned into mosques and which pilgrims did not enter. After reaching Jerusalem, he spent four days *mahbus*, in isolated solitary meditation.

Ghadban described in detail the gold and silver he saw on altars, candelabras, reliquaries, and other ecclesiastical paraphernalia, along with the marble decorations, the frescos, and the luxurious cloth. “The iconostasis is old,” he wrote, “like ours in Aleppo, but this one is heavily plated in gold” (32r). Frequently, he mentioned the expensive (*mukallafat*) lanterns sent by foreign royalty, confirming thereby the universal recognition of Catholic holiness. Thus, inside the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, he saw “four famous lanterns of gold, the first from the sultan of France, the second from the sultan of Naples, the third from the sultan of Austria, and the fourth from the sultan of Portugal” (29r). The Catholic potentates of Europe validated the holiness of the site; even, from Istanbul, a door made of mother-of-pearl had been sent, costing 4,000 piasters (24v). Evidently, the local monks kept record of all the gifts and proudly told their guests about the donors.

Even though he was on a pilgrimage of penance, Ghadban took time to enjoy himself: sightseeing, collecting small pebbles from churches as souvenirs, and harvesting silkworms. But his main focus was on the Christianness of holiness: as he wandered around Palestine and southern Lebanon, he confirmed an image of the land as the land of Christ. Like Bulus before him, he traveled among the Christian communities: the many churches he visited and described show how much the region was thriving with Christian life, with new and restored monasteries, and with active clergy – whose names Ghadban often mentioned.⁶² But Ghadban also showed how much tradition and legend defined the geography of Palestine, and he praised the Franciscans who had “discovered” and preserved the holy sites – “otherwise, the sites would be unknown or destroyed.”⁶³ The Franciscans, whom he met in Nazareth, had identified numerous Old and New Testament sites, such as *Bayt Jahla* (Bayt Jala?) (11v) where Samson had killed 1,000 men with a jawbone, or the house of Dives in Jesus’s parable (Luke 16:19, 14v). The precise locations allowed Christian pilgrims like Ghadban and his companions to feel a sense of belonging in the Muslim sultan’s dominion. On her way back from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, for instance, Mary had sheltered under a batam tree as it rained and snowed – a tree that still stood and which Ghadban visited, thereby earning seven years of indulgence (13r).⁶⁴

Ghadban did not mention any interaction with Muslims – even though at the outset of the journey he stated that he and the pilgrims had slept twice in *takiyya* (hospices):⁶⁵ evidently, the Muslim overseers had welcomed the Christian pilgrims from Aleppo – just as Bulus had been welcomed in Konya and in the Aya Sophia Mosque. But while Bulus engaged with the Muslim communities, Ghadban did not even use the word “Muslim” or “Ottoman”: instead, he used the word *umam*, or gentiles – the Arabic biblical translation of “gentile.”⁶⁶ The house of Saint Veronica contained her body, “as it was said, but today the house is inhabited by the *umam*,” and so was the Upper Room in *Jabal Suhyun* (Mount Zion) which “used to be a great church

of extraordinary beauty, but now it is in the hands of the *umam* and no [Christian] believer can enter at the risk of losing his spiritual or physical life” (15v) – that is, conversion, or mortal punishment. However, and much as he ignored the *umam*, Ghadban appreciated how they shared in the veneration of “his” Christian sites. The house where Mary poured perfume on Jesus’s feet had been a church, but was now “in the possession of the *umam* who keep a lighted candle above the imprint of his [Jesus’s] foot” (17r-v); the tree under which Isaiah the Prophet sought shelter became a *musalla* (chapel), for the *umam* (22v); for a bribe, the *umam* allowed the Franciscans to celebrate mass inside a church-turned-mosque; and on the Feast of the Ascension, the monks assembled around the imprint of Jesus’s foot – which the *umam* protected (20r). The *umam* celebrated the Christians’ geography of piety, which is why, even as the sites had become Islamized, they still had the power of indulgences: for the three sites above, the pilgrim earned seven full years of indulgences for each.⁶⁷

While he did not mention Muslims directly, Ghadban was not reticent about non-Catholics. He referred to the Copts briefly, but when he reached a church near Lydda, which housed the relics of *al-shahid Jawirjius*, the martyr George, he did not visit it because it belonged to the *mushaqin* [sic] *Rum* (schismatics) (10r); later, he lamented the condition of the Church of St. Helena, because it was in Orthodox hands, and “not in the hands of its rightful owners” (28r). Earlier in the century, Uniates with Rome and Orthodox worshipped together, but after 1719, the former were prohibited from joining in Orthodox worship;⁶⁸ the two communities separated completely, not without acrimony in polemics, and even street fights.⁶⁹ When he was welcomed by the Armenian abbot, Ghadban admired “everything in him except his faith: May God guide him to the light of [Catholic] truth” (25v). Even when he could not but defer to the Orthodox in Jerusalem, because many of the holy sites were in their possession, *bi-yad al-Rum*, he could not refrain from snickering: “The *Rum* visitors squeeze between two columns [in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre]: the slim visitor goes through easily but the fat one with difficulty. Sometimes the latter gets stuck and people laugh and make jokes. May God have mercy” (30r-v).



The pilgrimage accounts show a thriving Christian Arab culture in the middle of a Muslim empire. Holy sites were both accessible and flourishing to pilgrims from Mosul to Shaghur to Jerusalem to Sinai, and the Palestine which Ghadban and other pilgrims visited was full of Christian-biblical history, miracles, and wonders. Even though some sites had been seized by Muslims, they still furnished indulgences: Muslim rule had not rendered the Christian imprint inefficacious. In addition, history had been preserved and could be reclaimed: When he wandered around Jerusalem, Ghadban “recalled” the “Christianity” of sites, even after a millennium of Arab-Islamic presence and over two centuries of Ottoman rule. After he visited the gates of Jerusalem, he wrote that there was “the Bayt Lahm Gate which the Islam call Bab al-Khalil, Bab al-‘Amud which the Islam call the Bab al-Sham, the Bab al-Mazabil which the Islam call Bab al-Maghariba Gate.” When Ghadban reached a well which

people called *Bir Ayub* (Well of Job), he promptly interjected how “the Christians [*Masihyyun*] knew that it was really the Well of Ezra the Priest” (22r). There were the “Christian” names and there were the “Muslim” names: by recalling the “Christian” names, Ghadban re-appropriated the sites to his own religious community. Even though Muslims were in possession of the places and their names, he as a Christian was in possession of their timeless nomenclature.

Generally, Christian Arab pilgrims encountered no linguistic differences since the Ottomans had not Turkified the region. They did not have to deal with political border crossings, nor did they have to change into different “local” clothes, as European pilgrims did. As subjects of the sultan, Christian Arabs paid less than others during their visits to holy sites,⁷⁰ and if they were attacked by marauders, as priest Ilyas reported, they had guns with which to fight back. Traveling from Aleppo or Damascus or Mosul to Palestine or to Mount Sinai, the pilgrims moved in an Ottoman world that was relatively undisruptive in its culture and peoples, currencies and foods. At the same time and speaking the same language of the peoples around them, they heard stories that European Christians never heard, slept inside Muslim spaces that Europeans never entered, and engaged with the Bedouins to such an extent that the latter celebrated with them upon arrival at St. Catherine’s monastery, and even entered with them into the church. Historicizing themselves in Arabic, and treating the sites as their *patria communis*, the pilgrims recalled Venice and Austria and Russia, at the same time that they kissed holy stones next to fellow travelers from among the ‘Urban.

And all in the dominions of *Khadim al-Haramayn* – Servant of the Two Holy Shrines.

Nabil Matar holds the Samuel Russell Chair in the Humanities at the University of Minnesota. His most recent book is The United States through Arab Eyes, 1876–1914 (Edinburgh: UP, 2019). His forthcoming books are Mediterranean Captivity through Arab Eyes, 1517–1798 (Leiden: Brill, 2020), and Luther and the Papacy through Arab Eyes, 1517–1798 (London: Palgrave, 2022).

Endnotes

1 For the importance of Jerusalem and Sinai in the early histories of Christian pilgrimage, see Andreas Kuelzer, “Byzantine and early post-Byzantine pilgrimage to the Holy Land and to Mount Sinai,” in *Travel in the Byzantine World*, ed. Ruth Macrides (Farnham, UK: Aldershot, 2002), 149–61; J. M. Fiey, “La pèlerinage des Nestoriens et Jacobites à Jérusalem,” *Cahiers de civilisation médiévale* 12 (1969): 113–26; Herman Teule, “The perception of the Jerusalem pilgrimage in Syriac monastic circles,” in *VI Symposium Syriacum*, 1992, University of Cambridge, ed., R. Lavenant (Rome: Orientalia Christiana Analecta 247, 1994), 311–21; the

account by Bar Hebraeus in Herman Teule, “Syrian Orthodox Attitudes to the Pilgrimage to Jerusalem,” *ECA* 2 (2005): 121–26, also discussed in Abdullif Wadi, “The Centrality of Jerusalem in the Arabic-Christian Literature,” in *Jerusalem House of Prayer for all Peoples in the Three Monotheistic Religions*, ed. Alviero Niccacci (Jerusalem: Franciscan Printing Press, 2001), 103–12; and Anton Pritula, “From Tigris to Jerusalem: Early Syriac Poetic Notes from the Ottoman Time,” *Hugoye: Journal of Syriac Studies* 22 (2019): 193–234. See also the fourteenth-century anonymous account in Gérard Troupeau, “Un ancien guide arabe des lieux

- saints,” *Parole de l’Orient* 21 (1996): 47–56; and Hilary Kilpatrick, “Between Ibn Baṭūṭa and al-Ṭaḥṭāwī: Arabic travel accounts of the early Ottoman period,” *Middle Eastern Literatures* 11 (2008): 233–48.
- 2 Of course, the largest number of pilgrimage accounts to Palestine was written by Muslim Arabs – to Jerusalem and Hebron, and Mecca and Medina. As Mahammed Hadj-Sadok observed, it was the Moroccans and the Andalusians who left behind the largest corpus of Muslim pilgrimage accounts: “Le genre ‘Rih’la,’” *Bulletin des études arabes* 40 (1948): 198. The study of pilgrim accounts by Muslim Arab writers is beyond the scope of this paper, but see some references in my “Arabic Travel Writing, to 1916,” in *The Routledge Companion to Travel Writing*, ed. Carl Thompson (London: Routledge, 2015), 139–51. For Ottoman records, see section 6 “Pilgrimage and the Lebanon” in Abdul-Rahim Abu-Husayn, *The View from Istanbul* (London: Taurus, 2004).
 - 3 Daniel Goffman, “Ottoman Millets in the Early Seventeenth Century,” *New Perspectives on Turkey* 11 (1994): 136.
 - 4 Ignati Iulianovich Krachkovski, *Isotria Arabskoi Geograficheskoi Literatury* (Moscow, 1957), trans. Salah al-Din Utham Hashim (Cairo: Lajnat al-ta’lif wa al-tarjama wa al-nashr, 1963), 700. Ora Limor repeated this view, “‘Holy Journey’: Pilgrimage and Christian Sacred Landscape,” in Ora Limor and Guy G. Stroumsa, eds., *Christians and Christianity in the Holy Land: From the Origins to the Latin Kingdom* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2006), 336.
 - 5 Louis Cheikho, “Waṣf Tur Sina wa abniyatihi,” *al-Machriq* 9 (1906): 736–43 and 794–99. Cheikho did not date the account, but the date is 1636, as cited in *al-Makhtutat al-‘Arabiyya fi al-adyira al-Orthodoksiyya al-Antakiyya fi Lubnan*, 127. See also Carsten-Michael Walbiner, “Ein christlich-arabischer Bericht über eine Pilgerfahrt von Damaskus zum Berge Sinai in den Jahren 1635/1636 (Hs. Balamand 181),” *Parole de l’Orient* 24 (1999): 319–37. I am grateful to my sister Inaam Matar for the translation.
 - 6 The reference to the Arabic name of Jerusalem varies from a transliteration of the Hebrew *Urushalim*, to a mangled alternative – *Urshlam* (as it appears in C. M. Walbiner and M. Nanobashvili, “Nicon’s Treatise on the Conversion of the Georgians,” *Le Muséon* 121 (2008), 456 in 437–61) to the Ottoman name, *al-Quds al-Sharif*, and the Arabic equivalent, *Bayt al-Maqdis*.
 - 7 Anne Wolff, “Two Pilgrims to Saint Catherine’s Monastery: Niccolò di Poggibonsi and Christopher Harant,” in *Desert Travellers: From Herodotus to T. E. Lawrence*, ed. Janet Starkey and Okasha El Daly (Durham: ASTENE, 2000), 47. See also Anne Wolff, “Pilgrims to the Monastery of St. Catherine,” in *How Many Miles to Babylon?* (Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2003), 195–232.
 - 8 D. S. Richards, “St Catherine’s Monastery and the Bedouin: Archival Documents of the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries,” 149–79 in *Le Sinai de la conquête arabe à nos jours*, ed. Jean-Michel Mouton (Cairo: Institut Français d’Archeologie orientale, 2001), *Cahiers des annals islamologiques* 21: 178.
 - 9 See the numerous references to gifts in MS Arab. 688 at the Library of the Monastery of St. Catherine, Mount Sinai. I am grateful to the assistant at the Library of Congress for sending me a digitized reproduction of the Arabic manuscript. For the contracts, see especially MS Arab. 687.
 - 10 Mentioned also by Niccolò di Poggibonsi in 1349, see Wolff, “Two Pilgrims to Saint Catherine’s Monastery,” 42.
 - 11 An attack on the monastery by “Saracens” occurred in the fourth century CE; see Philip Mayerson, “An Inscription in the Monastery of St. Catherine and the Martyr Tradition in Sinai,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 30 (1976): 375. The story of the martyrs is associated with St. Nilus (c. 400).
 - 12 In 1349, Niccolò mentioned the mosque, Wolff, “Two Pilgrims to Saint Catherine’s Monastery,” 43.
 - 13 For the texts of this and other contracts, see Richards, “St Catherine’s Monastery and the Bedouin,” 149–79.
 - 14 A year later, 1637, the Russian Vasily Yakovlev ‘Gagara’ wrote that the monks were forced to feed “500 ‘wild’ Arabs,” see Galina Yermolenko, “Life and Journey of Vasilii Gagara to Jerusalem and Egypt,” in *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500–1900*, ed. David Thomas (Brill online). The French Anthoine Morison also observed on how the monks gave bread to the “pauvres Arabes,” *Relation*, 106.
 - 15 Afram uses the terms “barbar” and “‘Arab” and “‘Urban” interchangeably.
 - 16 Differently, Harant mentioned that the monks had planned to leave, but then they stayed because they were asked to do so

- by the Bedouins; Wolff, “Two Pilgrims to Saint Catherine’s Monastery,” 51. See Kurt Weitzmann’s discussion of the Moses icons, “Thirteenth Century Crusader Icons on Mount Sinai,” *The Art Bulletin* 45 (1963): 179–203, especially the discussion of icon 18.
- 17 Bibliothèque nationale, Paris, MS Arabe 312, 31. This passage is omitted from the edition by Cheikho.
 - 18 In 1715, the priest Mikha’il ibn Bulus, a Maronite priest, went to St. Catherine’s so that he could report back to his monastery on “l’image de l’Eskim,” the garb of the monk, Paul Bacel, “La Congrégation des Basiliens Chouérite,” *Échos d’Orient* 6,40 (1903): 181.
 - 19 In one of the contracts between the monks and the Bedouins in 1599, there is mention of a penalty on any Bedouin who *ghabana amrad sabiyy*, mistreats a “beardless” boy. It was specifically noted that during Friday prayer when worshippers entered the monastery to pray in the mosque, the *amrad* should not enter: Richards, “St Catherine’s Monastery and the Bedouin,” 178. I am grateful to Professor Wadad Kadi for discussing this term with me.
 - 20 See the reference to Climacus in Morison in 1697: *Relation*, 105. In 1736, a monk copied an Arabic translation of the *Ladder* of Climacus, “You have reached the top of the holy ladder,” from Sinai MS Arab. 339 reproduced in Agnes Smith Lewis and Margaret Dunlop Gibson, *Forty-one Facsimiles of Dated Christian Arabic Manuscripts* (Cambridge: CUP, 1907), 77. Climacus was widely consulted by Maronite monks in Lebanon in the eighteenth century; see Joseph Torbay, “Un texte sur la prière de Abdallah Qaraali, 1672–1742: réformateur du monachisme maronite moderne,” *Parole de l’Orient* 1 (1970): 231–54.
 - 21 Among the Greek Orthodox communities, the monastery was famous, attracting numerous ascetics and monks from the sixth century on: Nicephorus the Hesychast, Gregory of Sinai, and Gregory of Palamas. John Meyendorff, *St. Gregory Palamas and Orthodox Spirituality*, trans. Adele Fiske (St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1974), 35. A Greek account about the monastery was written in 1659 by Nektarios, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who had been a monk in the monastery before he became patriarch in 1661; Shihadah Khury and Nicola Khury, *Khulasat tarikh kanisat Urshalim al-Orthodoxiyya* (Jerusalem, 1925), 154–56.
- See also Kostas Saris’s article on Nektarios’s *Epitomē tēs hierokosmikēs* (Venice, 1677), in *Christian-Muslim Relations 1500–1900*, ed. David Thomas.
- 22 Louis Cheikho, “Shu’ara’ al-Nasraniyya ba’ada al-Islam,” *al-Machriq* 16 (1913): 268.
 - 23 BnF MS Arabe 312. All references are to this copy. See the English translation by Mohammad Asfour in *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Holy Land, 1517–1713*, ed. Judy A Hayden and Nabil Matar (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 27–53.
 - 24 Translated in Nabil Matar, *In the Lands of Christians* (London: Routledge, 2003), 51.
 - 25 Suraiya Faroqhi, *Pilgrims and Sultans: The Hajj under the Ottomans* (London: I. B. Taurus, 1994), 8–9.
 - 26 For the life of Ilyas, see John-Paul A. Ghobrial, “The Secret Life of Elias of Babylon and the Uses of Microhistory,” *Past and Present* 222 (2014): 51–93.
 - 27 As Thomas Philipp noted, throughout the early modern period, “firearms were illegally imported from Europe to the Syrian coast,” “Bilad al-Sham in the Modern Period: Integration into the Ottoman Empire and New Relations with Europe,” *Arabica* 51 (2004): 415.
 - 28 BnF MS Arabe 6061, 7r – from the journey of Bulus that started in July 1652. This MS was copied in the early eighteenth century.
 - 29 European women were rarely encouraged to join pilgrimages to Palestine: Johan Huizinga, *The Autumn of the Middle Ages*, trans. Rodney J. Payton and Ulrich Mammitzch (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 185. An exception was the English Margery Kemp who left an account of her pilgrimage, *The Book of Margery Kemp*, trans. B. A. Windeatt (Penguin, 1985). Meanwhile, Muslim women, just like men, were expected to go on pilgrimage because it was a religious duty.
 - 30 *Syrian Christians in Muslim Society: An Interpretation* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1970), 10. Over a period of forty-five days, Bulus and his father visited numerous villages with Christian congregations in the Sidon bishopric in southern Lebanon. In the regions of Baqa’a, Iqlim al-Tuffah, and al-Shuf, they visited twenty-nine villages.
 - 31 Bulus, son of Macarius, *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d’Antioch*, trans. Basile Radu in *Theologia Orientalis* 22 (Paris, 1930): 50, 103.
 - 32 BnF MS Arabe 6061, 6v.
 - 33 BnF MS Arabe 6061, 13v. As Michel

- Balivet noted, from the fifteenth century on, Turkish dervishes affirmed their “croyance en l’identité profonde de l’islam et du christianisme,” “Chrétiens secrets et martyrs christiques en Islam turc: quelques cas à travers les texts (XIIIe – XVIIIe siècles),” *Islamochristiana* 16 (1990) 110 in 91–114. For Bulus’s description of mosques and Muslim sites, see Hasan Çolak, “Worlds Apart and Interwoven: Orthodox, Syrian and Ottoman Cultures in Paul of Aleppo’s Memoirs,” *Studies in Travel Writing* 16, 4 (2012): 375–85.
- 34 See also the warm welcome given to French priests by the “derviches d’Antioche,” in the late 1620s: Georges Goyau, “Une capital missionnaire du Levant: Alep, dans la première moitié du XVII siècle,” *Revue d’Histoire des Missions* 11 (1934): 169.
- 35 Antonious Shibly, “Nubdtha min tarikh Lubnan fi-l-qarn al-sabi‘ ‘ashar,” *al-Machriq*, 25 (1927): 813.
- 36 Ishaq Armaleh, “Fi al-batrakiyya al-Anṭakiyya,” *al-Machriq* 21 (1923): 661.
- 37 British Library OC ADD 9965, 142, 164.
- 38 See Joseph Nasrallah, “Historiens et chroniqueurs melchites du XVIIIe siècle,” *Bulletin d’Études Orientales* 13 (1949–51): 145–60.
- 39 *Tariikh al-Ta’ifa al-Maruniyya*, ed. Rashid al-Shartuni (Beirut, 1890), 240.
- 40 *Writers and Pilgrims: Medieval Pilgrimage Narratives and Their Posterity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 29.
- 41 BnF MS Arabe 313. See also Louis Cheikho’s edition, “Rihlat Khalil Şabbagh ila Ṭur Suna,” *al-Machriq* 7 (1904): 958–68, 1003–12. I shall use both texts. As Cheikho noted: “There is no travelogue in Arabic like Mikhail Sabbagh’s which includes the description of Tur Sinai and its surroundings,” 1012.
- 42 In 1697, Morison gave the number of Arabs in his pilgrimage caravan as two hundred, *Relation*, 198.
- 43 Morison wrote that bells were not used, but “longues barres d’acier,” *Relation*, 109.
- 44 Out of “about 4,000 mss,” according to *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Christian East*, ed. Edward G. Farrugia (Rome, 2015), 1309.
- 45 After all, the monks in the monastery followed the same rites as the Melkite Orthodox (and not the Alexandrian Coptic) patriarchate of Jerusalem – where the abbot-bishop of the monastery was always ordained.
- 46 Contrast the meager foods mentioned by Harar; Wolff, “Two Pilgrims to Saint Catherine’s Monastery,” 49.
- 47 As Svetiana Kirillina showed, coffee was frequently offered to pilgrims in monasteries: “The Magic of the Holy Land and Realities of the Ottoman Empire: Russian Pilgrims within the Borders of Islam and their Narratives from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries” in *Mélanges en l’Honneur du Prof. Dr. Suraiya Faruqi*, ed. Abdeljelil Temimi (Zaghouan: Fondation Temimi, 2009), 193.
- 48 In 1489, Francesco Suriano mentioned two hands “white as milk,” *Treatise on the Holy Land*, trans. T. Bellorini and E. Hoade (Jerusalem: Franciscan Press, 1983), 188.
- 49 The fresco of Justinian and his wife, Theodora, is at the entrance. See a reproduction in figure 19 in Weitzmann, “Thirteenth Century Crusader Icons.”
- 50 Morison mentioned that the “pere vicair” spoke at one time in Arabic, *Relation*, 112. The pere was Ioannikios I (John Lascaris) (1671–1702), whom the English Levant Company chaplain, Robert Huntington (1671–1680), met in Cairo in 1680: see the reference in Shereen Khairallah, “Arabic Studies in England in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries” (PhD diss., University of London, 1972), 106. Two years later, in 1699, Lascaris asked the French consul in Cairo to send him a portrait of King Louis XIV, E. Charles-Roux, *France et Chrétiens d’Orient* (Paris: Flammarion, 1939), 60–61.
- 51 Mark N. Swanson, “Solomon, Bishop of Mount Sinai (Late Tenth Century AD)” in *Studies in the Christian Arabic heritage in honour of Father Prof. Samir Khalil Samir*, ed. Rifaat Ebeid and Herman Tuele (Leuven, 2004), 106.
- 52 Sinai MS Arab. 121 and MS Arab. 264.
- 53 Interestingly, the latter manuscript included a Turkish translation of the Covenant.
- 54 Throughout the record, the scribes used the Hijri calendar, but in the preface, the Aleppan used the Adamic calendar, 7190. In 1774, a Damascene deacon, Akakius al-Dimashqī, translated into Arabic a Greek text about Mount Sinai. The text described the wondrous miracles that had occurred there, the various abbots who had been there, and their interactions with the “Arabs in those regions, living in the wilderness,” BL *Codices Arabici*, XXXIII.
- 55 In the study of the inscriptions in the monastery, Ilhor Shevchenko focused

- exclusively on the Greek inscriptions: “The Early Period of the Sinai Monastery in the Light of its Inscriptions,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 20 (1966): 255–64.
- 56 The view of Otto F.A Meinardus needs to be reevaluated, “From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, the Monastery of St. Catherine was repeatedly abandoned,” *Christians in Egypt: Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Communities Past and Present* (Oxford, 2006), 67.
- 57 BnF MS Arabe 313, 7. These words are not in Cheikho.
- 58 For a general history of Greek Catholics, see Robert M. Haddad, “Conversion of Eastern Orthodox Christians to the Unia in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” in *Conversion and Continuity: Indigenous Christian Communities in Islamic Lands Eighth to Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Michael Gervers and Ramzi Jibran Bikhazi (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1990), 44–59.
- 59 Very likely Thomas Phillips Vernon, see David Wilson, “List of British Consular Officials in the Ottoman Empire and its former territories, from the sixteenth century to about 1860,” July 2011, online at [www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/List_of_British_Consular_Officials_Turkey\(1581-1860\)-D_Wilson.pdf](http://www.levantineheritage.com/pdf/List_of_British_Consular_Officials_Turkey(1581-1860)-D_Wilson.pdf) (accessed 18 January 2021).
- 60 Over a decade after Ghadban’s visit, in 1773, the *Propaganda fide* tried to prohibit the patriarch from issuing such indulgences, arguing that he should have the permission of the pope in Rome first. Patriarch Yusuf Istʿfan and his congregation wrote against this prohibition: *Basa’ir al-zaman fi tarikh al-’allama al-batrirak Yusuf Istʿfan*, ed. Bulus Aboud Gostaoui [sic] (Beirut, 1911), 1: 94–106 for the year 1773.
- 61 University of St. Joseph, Beirut, Lebanon, MS 34. All page references are to the Arabic numerals at the bottom left side. I am grateful to Dr. David Calabro of the Hill Museum and Manuscript Library at St. John’s University, Minnesota, for his assistance.
- 62 See the 1761 survey of Christian parishes and numbers (of Catholics) in various cities of Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt, L.J. Rogier and Joseph Hajjar, *Siècle des lumières révolutions restaurations* (Paris: Seuil, 1905), 259–62.
- 63 Since their arrival in Palestine in the early fourteenth century (their Custody was established in 1342), and supported by Prince Fakhr al-Din II three centuries later, in the 1620s, the Franciscans excavated various sites in Palestine.
- 64 A century and a half earlier, the English traveler William Biddulph saw this “Terebinth or Turpentine tree,” *The Travels of Certain Englishmen* (London, 1609), 132.
- 65 In Damascus, there were the Sulaymaniyya *takiyya*, est. 1559, and the Murad Pasha *takiyya*, est. 1568; and in northeast Aleppo, the Shaykh Abu Bakr ibn Abu al-Wafa’ (d. 1583) *takiyya*, est. 1631. The *takiyya* housed the darwish/dervishes.
- 66 The term is used in the 1671 Arabic Bible published by the *Propaganda Fidei* in Rome.
- 67 There were numerous manifestations of such inter-religious activities, especially around saints, venerated by Muslims and Christians alike. See Bernard Heyberger, “Frontièrs confessionnelles et conversions chez les chrétiens orientaux (XVIIe- XVIIIe siècles),” in *Conversions islamiques: Identités religieuses en Islam méditerranéen*, ed. Mercedes García-Arenal (Paris, 2001), 248–49.
- 68 Qustantiin Basha, *Tarikh ta’ifat al-Rum al-Malikiyya wa al-Ruhbaniyya al-Mukhalisiyya* (Sidon, Lebanon: Maṭba‘at Dayr al-Mukhalliṣ, 1938), 1:25. See also L.J. Rogier and Hajjar, *Siècle des lumières*, 252.
- 69 Ferdinand Taoutel, *Watha’iq tarikhiiyya ‘an Halab* (Beirut: Catholic Press, 1940), 1: 53–57.
- 70 Under Sulayman the Magnificent (r. 1520–1566), Arab pilgrims paid less admission fees to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem than did Europeans. Ottoman overseers drew a distinction between foreigners, on the one hand, and Arabs and Copts, on the other. And so, the European paid, fourteen piasters; the Greek, seven piasters; the Armenian, five piasters; and the Arab and the Copt, three piasters; Muhammad Hashim Ghosheh, *al-Quds fi al-’ahd al-’Uthmani* (Amman: Dar al-thaqafa, 2009), 168–69.

Rachel's Tomb Narrative Counterspaces in a Military Geography of Oppression

Toine van Teeffelen

Abstract

The Rachel's Tomb area and nearby checkpoint 300 in the north of Bethlehem have become an arena of cultural opposition to an Israeli geography of oppression that excludes, fragments, shrinks, and closes off Palestinian space. The article describes how a spatial-narrative politics – articulating counter-narratives through the strategic use of space – has helped to rewrite the Israeli military geography of power and control. Over the last fifteen years both locals and foreigners in the area have inscribed narrative discourses of home, freedom, and welcoming into this geography in rhetorical contrast to the discourse of military power. While opposition to the Wall is important in all these practices, Van Teeffelen considers the Wall as part of a broader military geography rather than standing by itself. Oppositional politics is illustrated by analyses of statements of daily life *sumud* or steadfastness, examples of Palestinian Christian religious practices, the Palestine marathon in Bethlehem, and the iconic graffiti of British artist Banksy. The author reflects upon the potential of a spatial-narrative politics consisting of three stages: affirmation of rootedness, creative opposition, and border-crossing. The arts, religion, sports and political struggle, while fundamentally different human experiences, have in principle a potential to transcend borders toward a more hopeful horizon while connecting local and global narratives.

Keywords

Rachel's Tomb; Bethlehem; *sumud*; Israeli checkpoints; Israeli occupation; Palestinian Christianity; Palestine Marathon; Wall graffiti; narrative politics.

Over the years the Rachel's Tomb area and nearby checkpoint 300 in the north of Bethlehem have become an arena of cultural opposition to an Israeli geography of oppression which excludes, fragments, shrinks, and closes off Palestinian space. I will describe how a spatial-narrative politics – articulating counter-narratives through the strategic use of space – has helped to rewrite the Israeli military geography of power and control. Over the last fifteen years both locals and foreigners in the area have inscribed narrative discourses of home, freedom, and welcoming into this geography in rhetorical contrast to the discourse of military power. I will illustrate oppositional politics by brief analyses of statements of daily life *sumud* or steadfastness; examples of Palestinian Christian religious practices; the Palestine marathon in Bethlehem; and the iconic graffiti of British artist Banksy.¹

While opposition to the Wall is important in all these practices, the article will consider the Wall as part of a broader military geography rather than standing by itself either as a source of oppression or target of opposition. Nor will we exclusively pay attention to graffiti on the Wall as means of opposition² but rather also look for oppositional practices in the neighborhoods in the “shadow” of the Wall. The advantage of this more inclusive approach is that a broader understanding is reached of the many different forms of opposition to oppressive space,³ including their local-international interactivity. Finally, I will reflect upon the potential of a spatial-narrative politics consisting of three stages: affirmation of rootedness; creative opposition, and border-crossing.

Methodology

In preparing for this study I have collected information and insights through unstructured participatory observation – with the emphasis on participatory, as I have lived in the Rachel's Tomb area over twenty years in different roles: those of activist, project researcher, guide, student adviser, and cultural worker connected to the nearby Sumud Story House.⁴ Along with colleagues at the Arab Educational Institute, I was involved in the development of a “wall museum” consisting of hundreds of weather-resistant posters fixed to the Wall telling daily life stories of Palestinian women and youth.⁵

From the viewpoint of a spatial-narrative politics, I found especially my regular walks in this architecturally disfigured area useful – whether observing layers of graffiti that appeared on the Wall, for instance, or showing visitors wall-crossing perspectives from roofs in 'Ayda refugee camp to the west of the tomb. Walking in the area, visiting people's homes, passing the checkpoint with my Palestinian partner and children – all have been instrumental in learning how local Palestinians have been forced to adapt their daily life to an often impossible economic, social, and traffic situation.

Rachel's Tomb

It looks now a distant past that the Rachel's Tomb area⁶ was the welcoming gate

to Bethlehem. Since 1967, the area's central thoroughfare, the Hebron Road, was minutes away from Jerusalem by car. Located along this road, Rachel's Tomb was a humble structure not much visited by pilgrims from the three monotheistic religions before Gush Emunim marked it as an important Jewish pilgrimage site in the 1990s.⁷ Inside the city visitors encountered the well-known V crossing where the left road wound to the Church of Nativity and the straight road followed Road 60 to Hebron. Through the main Hebron Road, the Rachel's Tomb area took part in the identity of Bethlehem as a pilgrimage place with a symbolic message of peace.

In the decades after 1967 the area was not so much the zone of exclusion it would become but rather an area of connection notwithstanding the oppressive impact of occupation. The Hebron Road, with its stately houses, included a commercial area much visited by Israeli Jews and Palestinians alike given the short distance to Jerusalem and the relatively inexpensive shop and restaurant prices, along with a distinctly relaxed atmosphere. Refugee families from nearby 'Ayda camp remember how they visited the areas around Rachel's Tomb for picnic trips.

In the course of the Oslo years in the 1990s and during the second Intifada from 2000 onwards, two protective military walls – first a relatively small wall, then the present eight- to nine-meter high separation Wall – were built around the tomb, which had been de facto annexed to Israel in 2002 after an effective religious-Zionist settler lobby. The complex was linked by walls and roads to the main military checkpoint between Bethlehem and Jerusalem, itself relocated a few hundred meters to the south to become the physical border of urban Bethlehem. The checkpoint was changed into a large-scale terminal in 2006.⁸

With the Hebron Road fragmented and the checkpoint relocated to another much narrower entry road, the area around Rachel's Tomb lost its center. During the second intifada the majority of shops along the main road had to close down. Many locals kept avoiding the area in the years after the end of the second intifada in 2005–2006, more so because the Israeli army remained physically present (streets along the Wall and stretches of the Hebron Road are area C), and kept searching homes or taking youths for interrogation or into prison. The tourist buses left the area as quickly as the army at the checkpoint and the traffic situation allowed them, with tourists gazing from behind the bus windows at the high walls, not realizing about their impact upon local residents.

With the military fortress around Rachel's Tomb as the center of the Israeli army's military presence in Bethlehem, it was not a surprise that this became a magnet for demonstrations of public anger, especially when youths from the nearby refugee camps 'Azza and 'Ayda clashed with soldiers. During politically volatile times hundreds of youths of the camps spent months or years in military prison. The wide Hebron Road near the Jacir Palace (previously Intercontinental) Hotel was regularly a "street of discontent"⁹ and featured days of stone throwing and running street battles with Israeli soldiers, sometimes cloaked in civilian wear to catch demonstrators, as happened during protests against the Israeli bombardment of Gaza in 2014.

Dehumanization by Spatial Means

During the second intifada in the period 2000–2004, Rachel’s Tomb developed into the dystopian architectural structure it has since remained. It is characterized by an elaborate system of exclusion, control, and surveillance, through cameras, watchtowers, and walls connected to the nearby checkpoint. The holy place itself is accessible for Jewish and international pilgrims only, and completely inaccessible for local Christians or Muslims. A large walled-in parking lot for visiting buses and military vehicles splits the north Bethlehem neighborhoods from ‘Ayda refugee camp. Along with the Israeli Jerusalem settlements to the north of Bethlehem – Gilo and the newer Har Homa – checkpoint 300 separates Bethlehem from Arab East Jerusalem including Bayt Safafa. The military geography is a key element in the fragmentation of the West Bank as a whole into a northern and southern part along with the walled imprisonment of Bethlehem and the adjacent towns of Bayt Jala and Bayt Sahur.¹⁰

The oppressive geography around Rachel’s Tomb is also of major influence on the micro level, on the shrinking and closure of spaces within the northern urbanity of Bethlehem. Both overcrowdedness and desolate lifelessness are typical of the area. Some quarters have lost their basic urban functions, while as a result of the walling, certain quarters between ‘Ayda camp and Rachel’s Tomb have become dead – an example of the killing of social space, or spacio-cide.¹¹

The related concept of infrastructural violence¹² is applicable here too. There is a fundamental lack of traffic arrangements and services in the area, such as suitable parking lots and access to main roads. Various streets and neighborhoods are periodically overcrowded by traffic due to a series of disruptive factors: a dysfunctional network of narrow roads; cars and tourist buses queuing in front of the checkpoint; the use of even narrower bypass roads by traffic coming from both directions, and especially the use of streets as parking areas at busy times of the day or year such as during Ramadan (all familiar phenomena nearby large checkpoints in the West Bank). A recent demand by the Bethlehem mayor to the Israeli army to allow inhabitants to make use of alternative underused parking areas along the Wall has been refused, unsurprisingly.¹³

The status of several sections as ‘area C’ makes it practically impossible to start new projects and efficiently arrange services like solid waste collection. Moreover, during the year 2020, local rumors spread that the Wall route in the area would be changed to connect Rachel’s Tomb directly to Jerusalem, with concomitant changes in the status of families who would then live “inside” the Wall, that is, in Jerusalem. The overall uncertainty has obviously diminished individual and institutional willingness to undertake new initiatives for services or project development in the area.

Meanwhile, international visitors coming from the highways in Jerusalem can walk through the checkpoint and along bypass roads to watch the unlikely wall configurations and wall route arbitrarily determined by appeal decisions at the Israeli Supreme Court. Well-known and prototypical is the Anastas family house surrounded by the Wall on three sides and with several dimensions of oppressive space: surveillance (by cameras

and from nearby watchtowers); shrinking and closed off space (the home is just a few meters from the Wall); fragmentation (separation from neighborhoods to the west of Rachel's Tomb), and exclusion (from Rachel's Tomb and Jerusalem).

Emergence of Creative Protest

Though some areas of Rachel's Tomb have clearly become marginalized, and strings of shops and workplaces or small industries have been closed-off as a result of the wall-building, the Rachel's Tomb area as a whole is not dilapidated. There are still many (upper) middle class houses inhabited by families who collected some wealth due to work in the broader tourism sector. Actually some of the area's marginalization has been overcome by the recent arrival of new souvenir shops and restaurants opening up near the Wall.

Streets of creative protest have emerged. The spatial violence in the area attracted cultural opposition in the form of graffiti and popular arts. For many years local public opinion was by and large against the "beautification" of the Wall. In that early period after the wall-building, roughly 2004–2007, the making of wall graffiti was enough reason for the Israeli military to take especially – but not only – Palestinians for interrogation or to prison. Over time an increase in graffiti works created a *fait accompli* for both the Israeli army and local Palestinians who had held political reservations about wall art. The arrival of foreigners brought its own dynamic, especially after the establishment of the Walled-Off or Banksy Hotel in 2017. It attracted small restaurants and "Banksy" souvenir shops, before the corona epidemic in spring 2020 put a temporary stop to the incoming of visitors. While it would not be correct to speak of Rachel's Tomb as a homogeneous neighborhood, the clashes and the cultural opposition lent an unintended shared identity for the people and places in the area.

Although still a proportionally smaller number of tourists in Bethlehem¹⁴ visit the Rachel's Tomb area, it concerns a strategically interesting variety of groups from the viewpoint of cultural opposition. The cultural activists as well as their audience involve locals and internationals, religious and secular, well-to-do visitors and backpackers. They are attracted by the Walled-Off Hotel and surrounding initiatives in an otherwise dead area unexpectedly on the way of becoming a second visitor center of Bethlehem.

To a certain extent a visitor infrastructure has been developed with networks that lower the threshold for visitors to come, involving taxi drivers, guides, vendors, and shopkeepers. Local NGOs bring and organize groups and provide meeting places, while the Walled-Off Hotel and other businesses, souvenir shops, and guesthouses provide opportunities for hospitality, reflection, and storytelling.

Spatial Narrative Politics

In the following I will analyze some relevant practices usually not brought together for purposes of comparison but important from the viewpoint of cultural opposition

in relation to space: the Palestinian civilian presence beside the Wall as a cultural statement of *sumud*; symbolic religious activities applied to the Bethlehem context of imprisonment; the annual Palestine marathon in Bethlehem; and Banksy's graffiti projects.

The cultural oppositional practices include meetings and activities nearby the Wall, performances along the Wall and inscriptions on the Wall. Actors and motivations are involved with very divergent types of investments and orientations: the local commercial hospitality and souvenir industry; the local and international tourist trade and pilgrimage services which bring and guide visitors with different needs and interests, the local NGOs with a combination of social and political orientations, and creative, mostly international artists often working outside any structure.

The cultural practices themselves are typically situated in a dialectic between keeping roots in a shrinking and fragmented space, on the one hand, and the symbolic restoration of widening human space and possibility on the other.

The oppositional spaces refer to a spatial-narrative politics characterized by:

- a civilian “*sumud*” presence adapting to but showing unacceptance, and symbolically disrupting the military geography of oppression;
- the largely non-strategized re-use of space to make narrative counterclaims of autonomy, opposition, and wall-crossing, opening up symbolic alternatives of freedom vis- à-vis military power;
- using the proximity of the Wall to create rhetorical, often playful, contrasts between civilian life and zones of exclusion;
- as part of this rhetorical contrast against exclusion, making the oppositional spaces typically inclusive, inviting or welcoming as in a new home, developing sustainable new geographies of visitor solidarities; and
- in sustaining and developing such bonds, connecting local narratives to broader narratives of freedom and solidarity, reaching out to wider audiences.

The cases are oppositional practices that give a new narrative dynamic to an area which by itself has become to a great extent robbed of urban life and meaning.¹⁵ Interestingly, the various initiatives to some extent counter the impact of the Wall. Thus, the incoming flow of international visitors to some extent denies the military geography as a tool of incarceration; the hospitality industry shows that there are ways to challenge the economic impact of the Wall, while cultural workers show that the dead area in the shadow of the Wall does not necessarily need to be culturally lifeless.

Sumud as a Cultural Statement

Existence *is* resistance is a larger story recognizable all over the world. Everywhere people are forced to fight and survive the impact of political injustice, inequality, conflict, and war. *Sumud*¹⁶ is actually a spatial-narrative mode of affirming a civilian presence that cannot be easily removed, even by force. Examples of common, often heroic *sumud* are families and individuals going on with life on their ancestral land despite being affected by settlements, Wall, checkpoints, or bulldozers. Rooted in the

land and environment, they do not give up and are prepared to rebuild their houses after destruction. Doing so, they oppose the exclusion effects of the geography of oppression, and in the end reject the dehumanization intended as a result of being stripped of living space and dignity.

Classical sumud is perhaps the less obvious form of spatial cultural opposition. By continuing their daily life – a protest simply through a living presence – families which reside in the shadow of the Wall deliver a statement of sumud. This includes improvised checkpoint economies close to the Wall and checkpoints such as street vendors selling wares to people passing the checkpoint, and restaurants or businesses which already existed before the Wall was built and were not in a position to leave, so adapted themselves to the new environment. An example is Claire Anastas' shop that turned from selling home utensils and decorations to holy land souvenirs with a "Wall" element.

Sumud can involve a purposefully relaxed statement of homely civil life in contrast to the controlling, excluding, closing, shrinking, and distancing mechanisms of the military structures' projection of power. For instance, the welcoming statement at the NGO Wi'am's entrance invites passersby to share a coffee in the tradition of "make hummus not walls." Entering the courtyard of the NGO brings visitors to a play garden which articulates the art of friendly presence in contrast to the controlling military watchtower nearby. At the Sumud Story House visitors are invited to have a conversation about daily life near the Wall. The House includes a tent-like space for storytelling which epitomizes the old Arab tradition of integrating space, meeting, hospitality, and storytelling. Initially set up as a meeting place for women in the neighborhood who were immobilized and despondent due to the inhospitable environment created by Wall and checkpoint, it nowadays profiles itself as a women's and family place for healing, socializing, and development activities. It also creates oppositional counterspaces near the Wall through arts, including a women's choir performing near – and against – the Wall. Like in the case of restaurants opening up besides the Wall, hospitality – whether mainly aimed at profit-making or in the service of a broader range of social and political purposes – inevitably becomes a cultural statement in rhetorical contrast to a Wall representing extreme exclusion.

Statements of cultural identity and heritage are also made in 'Ayda camp, not just in contrast to the Wall but in general opposition to a closed up, ugly, and dehumanizing environment – an opposition called "beautiful resistance" by the NGO Rowwad.¹⁷ The people and NGOs in 'Ayda camp actually continue to make a larger human statement against the vanishing of the Palestinian refugees' history even though the camp dwellers live in a radically shrunken and incarcerated environment. Cultural resistance is present in the display of national symbols of identity (like the Palestinian flag, map, or image of al-Aqsa), struggle (names of prisoners and martyrs mentioned on walls and houses in the camp), and history (village names and symbols, including the symbol of the key metonymically standing for the former home). The Noor Women's Empowerment Group invites foreigners to share meals and help to prepare them so as to learn Palestinian cooking; the income is used to educate disabled children.

Complementary to these statements of a “living” sumud as rooted presence are the cultural statements that directly oppose the wall.¹⁸ The Wall around Rachel’s Tomb has been covered with graffiti over the years, some remained untouched, some buried under layers of paint. Cultural oppositional statements are usually displayed or performed on or near the Wall which can alternately be a stage, background to photos and films, a place for graffiti, or a film screen itself (when painted white).

Some graffiti involves a discourse different than that of oppression, steadfastness, struggle, and resilience; some is rather non-political and visually expresses human freedom and the need for connecting: the graffiti of symbolically crossing the Wall – or walking over, flying over, looking through the Wall. Besides such visual popular arts practices, it involves the aural “crossing” of walls as well, such as the interactive singing or music making across roofs.¹⁹ Cultural opposition thus takes shape in various combinations of genres: forging links between stories of Palestinian rootedness and imprisoned civilian life; protesting about the injustice of walls and checkpoints; and liberating visions of wall-crossing.²⁰

In the case of Rachel’s Tomb the tactics are certainly not consistently oppositional and actually quite divergent, ranging the whole gamut from physical clashes to commercial business. Many businesses would wish to keep a measure of ambivalence as to whether they are engaged in opposition at all; as they normally do not regard their business as part of a collective social movement.

If we look at a common denominator, the counterspaces in Bethlehem’s case are at present primarily intended to raise awareness among the many largely unaware visitors and pilgrims. The spaces informally teach visitors about the social and political situation. They involve meeting places like social centers, guest houses, or restaurants and local souvenir shops where visitors sometimes listen to the shopkeepers’ stories, join a locally-made meal, or engage in practicing alternative arts. We’ll go through some of these practices here and follow-up with the main spatial-narrative elements that come into play.

Religion, Liberation Theology, and Justice Pilgrimage

While the large majority of its urban conglomeration is inhabited by Muslims, Bethlehem is still considered a “Christian” city in the way it is promoted in the international tourist and pilgrimage industry. The established tourism and pilgrimage industry faces the challenge of how to meet and negotiate the expectation patterns of pilgrims in order to raise attention to the imprisoned reality on the ground, such as in the Rachel’s Tomb area. Cultural-religious initiatives in Bethlehem typically have to balance a range of orientations: the theological discussion of how to relate Jesus’ birth narrative to the present day situation; the interest to meditate and pray inherent to a pilgrimage; the local economic interests of hospitality and souvenir sales to visitors; and the call for a creative or artistic kind of protest or opposition that would fit traditional or alternative forms of pilgrimage.

On the level of applied theology, there is the challenge to integrate the present-day Palestinian situation of injustice into new understandings of biblical stories about the birth of Jesus. Old-new stories are created, disrupting the Christmas story as a cozy, non-political family affair. Examples of connecting theological and present-day stories of oppression include the annual theological conference at the Bethlehem Bible College titled “Christ at the Checkpoint,” combining the local and global narrative. Once, back in the second intifada in the beginning of the 2000s, Roman Catholic Patriarch Michel Sabbah made the call to transform checkpoints into prayer places. The blending of stories may challenge those involved to go for a deeper, justice-oriented interpretation of the Bible inspired by a Christian liberation theology that evokes utopian, liberating, and border-crossing vistas of a new Jerusalem or alternatively adopts the call of the warning prophecies in the Old Testament critically reflecting on situations of oppression.

A common humanity through border crossing is present in joint spiritual meetings set against the geography of oppression. In alternative justice programs for visitors, including pilgrims and local believers, the counterspaces near the Wall and checkpoint are sometimes used to evoke biblical passages for spiritual reflection and healing, along with expressions of solidarity with the *samadin*. Think about the intensity in holding prayers, silent circles, and rituals reflecting upon the wounded places impacted by the wall. On a visit to Bethlehem in 2014, Pope Francis broke protocol to step out of the popemobile, touch the Wall and pray on the spot in order to dramatically make a point about the inhumanity of the Wall. Liturgies near the Wall have been organized since a long time, sometimes in the context of the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel annually convened in September by the World Council of Churches, or as a statement of opposition during the building of the Wall, as in the years 2012–16 in the area near the monastery of Cremisan to the west of Bayt Jala. Visiting groups may join the weekly procession along the Bethlehem Wall organized by teams of Ecumenical Accompaniers, and watch a well-designed and -crafted icon of a tearful Mary on a wall section near the checkpoint, called “Our Lady Who Brings Down Walls.”

The improvised creation of spiritual counterspaces opens up possibilities for a symbolic restoration of human connection and possibility in opposition to the dehumanizing message of closed-up, shrunken, and fragmented space as a result of the Wall’s impact. On the practical level it allows for bonding across borders through hospitality and meetings between locals and visitors. The intensity of encounters such as at homes or NGOs along the Wall or in ‘Ayda refugee camp where inhumanity can be felt on a daily base, make meetings between locals and foreigners all the more meaningful. The theologian Mary Grey, who recently wrote a series of spiritual travel guides to the Holy Land and its peoples, speaks about “epiphanies of connectedness”²¹ possibly emerging during such encounters.

On the economic side, when Palestinian guides of visiting pilgrim groups pass the Rachel’s Tomb area to give visitors a taste of imprisoned life, there can be a remarkable mixture of commerce, creativity, and theology such as when visitors buy that well-known souvenir: an olive wooden nativity set with Wall and watchtower next to baby Jesus.

An applied liberation theology should inspire the formation of religiously inspired creative practices of counter-praying or designing counter-rituals. Calls for creative solidarity practices have been launched by religious working groups, and there have been here and there impulses in this direction. Near Rachel's Tomb visitors could once watch the public choreography of people walking in the shape of a "living star" beside and in opposition to the Wall; Palestinians showing visitors the holy family in a reconstructed nativity grotto in front of a military watchtower²²; or in situ performances by the aforementioned Bethlehem Sumud Choir for a CD called "the Birth of Jesus between the Walls."²³ Critical-playful cartoons and Christmas picture postcards show the Holy Family and the donkey interrogated and searched at the checkpoint.

Perhaps there is need for the development of an overall concept of counter-pilgrimage. Thus, Dutch theologian and sociologist Gied ten Berge pleads for the development of an annual inter-religious Rachel's Day on the "Bethlehem side" of the Wall at Rachel's Tomb, with pilgrims convening under the coverage of a tent.²⁴ Counterspaces for prayer would fit in; one local guest house opposite the Wall recently opened a room for inter-religious prayer. Importantly, an inter-religious quality to religious events near the Wall would make it possible to include local and international Muslim believers.²⁵ While learning about the pain, visitors may then also learn about Muslim-Christian living together within a diverse Palestinian historical identity, rather than hearing about stories of opposing "civilizations" often used in Israel to justify the Wall.

Marathon

A more secular form of "pilgrimage" is the annual Palestine Marathon in Bethlehem.²⁶ The space along the Wall is re-used to communicate new versions of the three oppositional cultural stories mentioned: the deliberate statement of sumud, the opposition to the Wall, and the crossing of walls symbolically reunifying Palestinians and peoples of the world. By simply participating in the marathon – participation is more important than the time clocked – many visitors express an embodied solidarity with local Palestinians who may cheer the participants if they do not themselves participate in the game. Sports too is a statement of homely civil life as reflected in the concept of sumud.

The opposition to the Wall is here present in the rhetorical contrast evoked by the mobility of people running or walking against the background of the immovable high wall and watchtowers at Rachel's Tomb – a suitable setting for photo and film, also for promotion purposes (for examples, see the website). Marathon-related pamphlets or stenciled graffiti on the Wall call for the right to movement in more than one sense. People's freedom symbolized by running stands in contrast to imprisonment by the Wall, as if the running aims at liberation from the clusters of the Wall and its fragmenting and shrinking impact (besides issuing a health warning). The opposition to the imposed geography of power and exclusion is also articulated in the annual

protest against the Israeli government's routine decision not to allow participation of athletes from Gaza.

The inclusive message of connectedness and peace across the nations fits the marathon as an Olympic sports game open to participants from all over the world (9,500 participants in the 2019 marathon). The colors of the Palestinian flag on the T-shirts and hats of scouts and others during the opening of the marathon suggest Palestine in the uncommon role of hosting other nations. Hospitality events before and after reinforce an atmosphere of peace and unity among participants. Where visitors stay at homes they have an opportunity to absorb the stories of household members.

In both the cases of liberation theology and the physically liberating marathon, Bethlehem as a symbolic capital of peace and hospitality is mobilized against the oppressive structures of fortified military borderscapes. This is achieved through the rhetorical force of spatial contrast and connecting between the homely local space and the transnational space of solidarity.

Banksy

Like the previous cases, Banksy's arts brand should be set in a broader ecology and not seen as standing by itself. It stands for a range of intersectional oppositional narratives: perhaps mostly the anti-militarist movement for Palestinian rights connected to anti-colonialism and anti-imperialism. The Walled-Off Hotel established by Banksy in 2017 next to the Wall (famously advertised as having the "worst view in the world") leads visitors into a British tea room environment with plenty of sculptures and images playfully subverting the legacy of British colonialism and imperialism, among other things symbolized by the sitting figure of former British foreign secretary Balfour, from the Balfour Declaration, positioned at the opening of an exhibit about Palestinian reality and history of occupation and colonization.

The hotel-café has become a convenient starting and end point for explorers of the area. Near it is a place to buy paint for those interested to make statements on the Wall in front. Not all of Banksy's visuals are painted on the separation/apartheid Wall itself, but their meaning is clearly related to the presence of the larger Wall and the military system supporting it. Several small shops nearby sell Banksy's graffiti on posters and other souvenirs, and others copying Banksy or, like the also anonymous "Cakes Stencils" artist, bring their own graffiti themes of children living and playing in an absurd and violent world.²⁷

Banksy's art narrates the longing for imagined spaces of vulnerable freedom out of imprisonment. The girl in front of the Wall hanging onto balloons is the most familiar one, along with the harnessed bullet-proof dove with the olive branch in the beak, and the child climbing an endlessly long ladder to reach the top of the Wall. Banksy's arts point to some key oppositional narrative strategies which also come back in the previously mentioned practices: playing with an oppressive reality, and generalizing or abstracting the homely and the everyday.

Playfulness

Banksy's children are not stereotypical in their victimhood. With all their innocence, the children and youths pictured are typically *pro-active* in their playfulness, starting a pillow fight, using balloons to fly away, climbing a ladder, checking a soldier, or, as in the famous graffiti of the intifada youth, throwing a bouquet of flowers instead of stones.

Much of the graffiti at Rachel's Tomb shows playing children who symbolize innocence in an oppressive environment. Playfulness can relate to the narrative content of playing children but also to narrative form, when images play with physical or spatial laws or with social and political mores, as when political control is undermined by the destabilizing, flattening, or reversing of hierarchies so typical for nonviolent resistance stories and tactics. Examples of the last category include a child checking a soldier (graffiti copied from Banksy is to be seen in 'Ayda camp), the pillow fight (criticized for its implied symmetry of soldiers and Palestinian civilians), and the soldier checking a donkey.

In religious symbolisms too we see a play with conventional expectations. The combination of a military watchtower next to baby Jesus may elicit a laugh due to the disruption of the Christmas logic, though it is more than balanced by the gravity of both the theological message and the oppressive reality. Similarly, Banksy attempted a nativity that was opened at the Walled Off Hotel at Christmas 2019: the light of the guiding star entered through a hole in a simulacrum of the separation Wall splintered by a bullet. The dimension of playfulness is also present in the marathon's game-like nature, which transpires both in the run and in the festive and relaxed atmosphere around the event.

Playfulness is a universal element of aesthetic resistance to hegemonic structures. Play and humor fit the temporality and ephemerality, or the non-institutionalized nature, of much of international graffiti arts. An expression of the homely, children's playfulness opposes power, discipline, and dehumanization. The genre represents a light antidote to the heavy technological functionality of control, fragmentation and exclusion.²⁸ Like carnival it attracts and brings people together, crossing social borders and humanizing the political, especially in view of the grotesque absurdity and oppressive nature of the Wall. In popular culture, humor and play open up utopian liberating possibilities while also calling for negotiation, ambiguity, and openness between interpretative options – a resistance against interpretative closure.

Geography of Home

The playfulness of Banksy and other graffiti artists is intertwined with the *homely*. Oppositional paintings on the Wall show both the oppression and the resilience of homely daily life such as when children are shown to play under absurd circumstances. The contrast between human civil life and the wall geography is thus rhetorically intensified. This playfulness typically makes use of the dialectic between the homely-

familiar and the defamiliarization effect that happens when the home turns out to be not homely at all.

Home as a concrete project can become a base of resistance when its existence is under threat, as in the dramatic examples of sumud when particular houses such as those near the Wall and settlements are defended against the bulldozers. The grassroots Palestinian story of sumud, as it comes forward in, for instance, ‘Ayda refugee camp, is largely home-centered. However, in the context of the oppositional and border-crossing cultures as we see it in the Rachel’s Tomb area, the presentation of home and the homely is not a concrete but an abstract statement based on a generalized image of home as the microgeography familiar to people all over the world. In the graffiti the homely stands for a holistic sense of belonging and rootedness, an abstract sense of home vis-à-vis exclusion and fragmentation. The graffiti makes typical use of general, non-cultural portrayals of playing children or homely scenes understandable to all.

Many of the narratives of cultural opposition in Palestine evoke the multiple meanings and metaphors of home as a geography of rootedness, intimacy, and living together – which can never be assumed to be natural. Think of the meanings evoked by Palestinian experiences of destruction and rebuilding of homes, searching for the lost home, articulating homelessness as an existential condition, and, when the former do not apply to the fortunate, “living” the normal home as an opportunity to meet visiting others. Celebrating the intimate and hospitable home and homely such as during the time of feasts and occasions is a statement that opposes imprisonment. Again the home here is not so much a concrete, specific home but part of the generalized home and homeland in the Palestinian national narrative or in the universal narrative of home.

The narratives and tropes of such a general home can involve a reinvention of the home as a platform of border-crossing solidarity, a hospitable open house, like the “Tent of Nations”²⁹ where the inhabitants and guests gather in caves or stay in tents due to the impossibility to build a house on one’s own land though registered since Ottoman times. Or the earth itself becomes a common home without borders.

The message of many NGOs and shops in present-day Bethlehem is home-based too as ‘home’ is inextricably linked to Bethlehem as the traditional birth place of Jesus. The home and homely can be used as a viewpoint for describing oppression out of a vision of liberation. After all, the image of homely life is a strong symbol of peace.

Yet the home always risks to become a frozen, cliché concept, part of a conventional nativist, romanticizing arts. This risk is less present when the symbol of homely hospitality is illustrated through a range of civil human actions – whether doing arts and sports, praying, laughing, learning, investigating, or exchanging food and stories. This makes the dimension of playfulness and aesthetics all the more relevant. To prevent a stagnating cultural stillness or repetition, cross-fertilizing platforms can help a dialogue of creative solidarity between foreigners and locals. An example of such dialogue happens when Banksy’s metaphors are deservedly scrutinized (such as the pillow-fight).³⁰

Meeting Place: Enabling Interaction for Locals and Foreigners

Both the generalized symbol of the home and the principle of making reality playful render the oppositional discourses humanizing, recognizable, and negotiable for a broader audience of visitors. The foreigners' presence is important for generating a range of values – economics, of course, in an area dependent on tourism but also the generative value of border-crossing dialogues and an assessment of creative oppositional tactics. It should not be forgotten that foreign visitors benefit from the proximity of Bethlehem to Jerusalem as a pilgrimage and tourism center; the contrast with Gaza, where foreigners are barely allowed to come, is great. Besides occasions such as religious feast days, the marathon is a moment for gathering during spring while festival-like activities, such as the one organized by the NGO Holy Land Trust in summer 2019 near the Walled-Off Hotel, further help to raise publicity to the area. The local NGOs and commercial initiatives in the Rachel's Tomb area invite and attract foreigners representing a mixture of different groups including clergy, devoted pilgrims, journalists, academics, international solidarity activists, and NGO professionals.

Importantly, their presence makes the threshold higher for the Israeli army to intervene.³¹ Given the familiarity of Bethlehem as a pilgrimage place, the wide range of visiting internationals, including many who Israel does not want to alienate, provides some protection to locals.³²

Joint initiatives involve Palestinians and internationals as co-creators, participants, and audiences. Hospitable meeting places can be spaces of emerging possibilities; the Rachel's Tomb area does not lack meeting places for developing a productive sense of joint cultural agency across borders. Different forms of foreigners' involvement are important for creating a productive cultural climate. Think of playful or spiritual co-creation in the fields of arts, pilgrimage, sports, informative or reflective meetings, and volunteering. These all engender a variety of cultural conversations, some focused, some fleeting but still leaving an impression.

Local-international exchanges and projects should prevent both a parachuting of culture or master stories from the outside and the local paralysis of copy-pasting within an isolated culture from the inside. Both prevent dynamic narrative power. In their positioning vis-à-vis geographies of oppression, exchange platforms or public spaces should provide a structure for interaction between local and broader narratives, opening up a resonating generative space which creates new dialogues and understandings and new metaphorical universes essential for artistic or cultural production. Narrative power is always dialogic and creative and brings different sources of value into interactivity.

Conclusion

The overwhelming power projected by military fortifications like the Wall and checkpoint at Rachel's Tomb carry the message that Palestinians should better lose their spirit and hope, and disconnect themselves from larger ideologies or narratives

which thematize struggle, sacrifice, freedom and solidarity. Nonetheless, such dehumanization never succeeds fully or even partially – residents and travelers alike tend to develop immunity and resilience and re-invent their own tactics of survival.

Narrativizing space is in itself a way of dealing with the frustrations of being closed up, and is a healing therapy by itself. However, this strategy is also relevant in a context of opposition because the geography of control and exclusion with its extreme measures provokes a deep sense of absurdity and inhumanity undercutting the assumptions of naturalness and inevitability. The more the military fortress and its operations dehumanize, the more they invite a cultural challenge through alternative stories of liberation.

The narratives of suffering-struggle-crossing boundaries resist the disciplining logic of the geography of oppression along with its logic of separation, imprisonment, and exclusion. Its rhetoric is both spatial and temporal: the roots of history deep in the earth, a challenging of the geography of oppression in the present, and the crossing of walls pointing toward an egalitarian and unbroken, healing future.

The home, a central starting point for a humanizing narrative identification, can represent those three stages, as it does in many Palestinian political narratives: the home as representing the affirmation, discovery or return to roots; the home as a base of opposition when defended; and the home representing a crossing of borders as in the case of an open hospitable house or tent.

The disciplining logic of the geography of oppression is effectively undercut by the humanizing effect of playfulness and humor which experiments with the laws of oppression by applying alternative physical or social “laws.” A playful vision of a different space-world beyond or without walls coalesces with a temporal vision of a liberated future. This is the journey from dystopia to utopia,³³ a new world overcoming the broken world and bringing people together. A quote of Arundhati Roy that was once on the Wall at Rachel’s Tomb evokes awareness of a utopian space-time coming near: “Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”

The combination of rootedness, opposition to obstacles and their crossing or overcoming are the ingredients of a familiar story grammar: actors in a rooted setting facing obstacles and conflict, fighting foes and finding friends, transcending obstacles and looking for a common horizon. But more importantly, the basic master story to which the narratives used in Rachel’s Tomb area together refer is one typical of indigenous peoples and their struggles of decolonization: standing fast in the home and protecting it while crossing borders in universalizing the struggle. A local narrative comes together with the larger human narrative of attempting to preserve a dignified human life on ancestral lands against oppressive forces that do not want them there.

The spatial-narrative politics thus connects local indigenous stories of oppression and protest to broader stories of liberation, equality, and freedom. These last stories challenge racism, discrimination, and apartheid as they appear in the form of exclusion, fragmentation, and shrinking space. A transcending narrative architecture comes to dynamically oppose a static physical architecture.

These potentials for a local-global dynamic, a story movement rather than a story articulation, can be socially grounded in the micro-interaction between locals and foreigners. There transcending vistas come up in the spirituality of religious encounters, the disruption brought about by playful or unsettling arts, and the joint joyful exercise of sports. Resonance and epiphany in human interaction can lead to a basic openness, a need to be affected and an answering to a human or religious call. When one experiences resonance and a sense of epiphany in interaction, the temporal and spatial horizon widens. There is a co-presence of the past and future and an opening up of the suffocating closed-up space into a space of possibility.

Arts, religion, sports and political struggle are fundamentally different human experiences and practices. However, all have in very different ways a tendency and potential of transcending borders toward a utopian, more hopeful horizon while connecting local and global narratives.

Toine van Teeffelen, who holds a PhD from the University of Amsterdam, is an anthropologist conducting studies in discourse analysis on Palestine-Israel. He also serves as an educational adviser at the Arab Educational Institute in Bethlehem.

Endnotes

- 1 Many thanks to Gied ten Berge, Riet Bons, Alexandra Rijke, Yara van Teeffelen, and an anonymous reviewer for helping to develop the argument or giving detailed comments on a draft.
- 2 For an analysis of graffiti on the Wall, see Ashley Toenjes, "This Wall Speaks: Graffiti and Transnational Networks in Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 61 (2015): 55.
- 3 In this article "space" and "place" will be used interchangeably though we are well aware of their different uses in much of the academic geography literature. See Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2004/2015).
- 4 I am thankful to the Wall Information Center at the Sumud Story House (part of the Arab Educational Institute) that allowed and encouraged the research of this article as part of the work. My association with one local NGO in the Rachel's Tomb area implies a greater familiarity with its activities rather than those of other organizations operative with whom I have been over the years in regular contact.
- 5 See Rania Murra and Toine Van Teeffelen, "The 'Wall Museum': Palestinian Stories on the Wall in Bethlehem," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 55 (2013): 93–96, and Thomas Suarez, *Writings on the Wall: Palestinian Oral Histories* (Northampton MA: Olive Branch Press, 2019).
- 6 I am aware that the descriptive "Rachel's Tomb area" is a problematic name, especially as residents do not even have access to the tomb. In the past the area had some kind of common identity due to the proximity of the central Hebron Road which connected the different residential quarters and refugee camp around, also through its street network. As the area has been dismembered through the Wall around the tomb, its present identity can be at most *negatively* defined by its very impossibility to function as a meaningful and cohesive neighborhood or community. Perhaps a "counter-name" would therefore be more suitable, as part of a counter-mapping project.
- 7 I will not go into the history of Rachel's Tomb here, the various claims relating to the Tomb, or its status as a pilgrimage site. For an overview and analysis of previous studies on Rachel's Tomb, see Glenn Bowman, "Sharing and Exclusion: The Case of Rachel's Tomb," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 58 (2014): 30. Gied ten Berge provides a recent overview account from a theological pilgrimage perspective: Gied ten Berge, *Pelgrimeren met een Missie: Het Palestijnse 'Kom en Zie' Initiatief in Cultuurwetenschappelijk en Historisch-theologisch Perspektief* [The Palestinian 'Come and See' Initiative in Cultural Studies

- and Historical-Theological Perspective] (Amsterdam: Irlis NSRL 23, 2020), soon available in an English edition.
- 8 For a comprehensive analysis of the “Rachel’s Tomb checkpoint” or “checkpoint 300” as a place of highly controlled osmosis, see Alexandra Rijke, *The Land of the Checkpoints: Study of the Daily Geographies of Checkpoints in the Occupied Palestinian Territories* (Wageningen: Wageningen University, 2019). Her dissertation has an extensive overview of recent academic literature on subjects related to geography and in/exclusion.
 - 9 See Ased Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Redwood CA: Stanford University Press, 2013).
 - 10 Just before the end of U.S. president Donald Trump’s term, the Jerusalem municipality sent out tenders for houses that will belong to a new settlement, Givat Hamatos, just north of Bethlehem along the Hebron Road, connecting the two other settlements Gilo and Har Homa and further isolating Bayt Safafa from Arab East Jerusalem.
 - 11 Sari Hanafi, “Explaining spacio-cide in the Palestinian territory: Colonization, separation, and state of exception,” *Current Sociology* 61 (2013): 190–205.
 - 12 See Dennis Rodgers and Bruce O’Neill, “Infrastructural Violence: Introduction to the Special Issue,” *Ethnography* 13: 4 (2012): 401–412.
 - 13 Information from a meeting with the mayor Anton Salman, October 2019, in the presence of a visitor group.
 - 14 During seasonal peak periods Bethlehem hosts some 5,000 visitors per day, as estimated by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism.
 - 15 We prefer not to speak of “resistance” since many actors in the area would agree on an expression such as “cultural opposition.” Meanwhile, the geography of resistance – see especially Steve Pile and Michael Keith, eds., *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge, 1997/2013) – covers now a broad field of literature, including studies of the defense of places against encroachment; the use of places for mobilizing and collecting opposition, as for instance at Tahrir Square in Cairo during the Arab Spring; the incubation of oppositional or resistance arts in marginalized urban spaces; and cultural opposition near and against borders, as in borderscape studies. As defined by Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory’s Edge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), the borderscape concept would be relevant to the geography of oppression and opposition at Rachel’s Tomb area. In their wording, borderscape is a space that is “represented, perceived and lived-in” as a “fluid field of a multitude of political negotiations, claims, and counterclaims”; “a zone of varied and differentiated encounters”; and “a way of thinking through, about, and of alternatives to dominant landscapes of power.” More general theories about the dynamics between spatial oppression and resistance that inspired this article include Henri Lefebvre, for instance, *The Production of Space* (Hoboken NJ: Wiley-Blackwell, 1992); David Harvey, especially *Social Justice and the City* (Athens: University of Georgia Press 1973); and Edward W. Soja, *Seeking Spatial Justice* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2010). As summarized by Fran Tonkiss, Lefebvre’s concern has been for “spatial projects produced through the political imagination and practice of social movements as an alternative to the spaces created by the dominant system” in Fran Tonkiss, *Space, the City and Social Theory: Social Relations and Urban Forms* (Cambridge, UK: Polity, 2005). A similar line is followed in Soja’s work about spatial justice.
 - 16 See Alexandra Rijke and Toine van Teeffelen, “To Exist Is To Resist: Sumud, Heroism and the Everyday,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 59 (2014): 86.
 - 17 For the concept of beautiful resistance, see the Rowwad website, online at www.alrowwad.org/en/?page_id=705 (accessed 14 January 2021).
 - 18 We do not label forms of cultural opposition against the Wall as examples of sumud so as not to stretch the concept too far.
 - 19 In 2007, Dutch composer Merlijn Twaalfhoven organized with locals a music performance at Rachel’s Tomb, “Carried by the Wind,” from rooftops and balconies. See online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_HBVA1qOBKc (accessed 14 January 2021). In subsequent years the Arab Educational Institute organized roof-to-roof music crossing the walls around Rachel’s Tomb.
 - 20 This three-part division reminds one of a similar distinction in Steve Pile and Michael Keith, eds., *Geographies of Resistance* (London: Routledge 1997/2013), though here the examples, mainly from studies of black and gay/queer movements and post-colonial

theory, are very different: resistance can be an act of transgression (crossing borders in the sense of crossing place-related conventional norms), opposition (such as constructing barricades), or everyday endurance (sit-ins). These are all forms of resistance in direct challenge to other humans including the police. In the Rachel's Tomb case, the opposition is typically symbolic and directed against an architecture of oppression (not taking into account individual challenges at the checkpoint crossing itself). It may be worthwhile to investigate whether the tripartite distinction has a larger validity and applicability.

- 21 See Mary Grey in her trilogy about seasonal peace pilgrimages to the Holy Land, especially Mary Grey, *The Resurrection of Peace* (London: SPCK, 2012). The recent sociological approach of Helmut Rosa might call such epiphanies strong examples of "resonance." See Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relationship to the World* (Hoboken NJ: Wiley, 2019).
- 22 Performed in the years 2008 and 2009 during the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel.
- 23 "The Birth of Jesus Jesus between the Walls," 2011, see online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ck1P84g5lA&t=18s (accessed 14 January 2021).
- 24 Personal communication.
- 25 It is quite common to watch Islamic individual and group prayers at checkpoint 300 (and other checkpoints). They can be often regarded as space claiming amidst a military architecture; a silent protest against the army's space claims which are characterized by oppression and violence. Though not an organized protest, such individual or group prayers involve a conscious choice by believers, and others would not think of participation (personal communication, Alexandra Rijke).
- 26 See online at www.palestinemarathon.org/ (accessed 14 January 2021).
- 27 See the interview with Cakes Stencils, online at inspiringcity.com/2019/03/22/an-interview-with-cakes-stencils-the-artist-creating-a-playground-on-the-west-bank-barrier/ (accessing 14 January 2021).
- 28 Light and humorous approaches in nonviolent methods of resistance can be easily detected in the well-known and still relevant list of Gene Sharp, *The Methods of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargent, 1973). See also Majken Jul Sorensen, "Humor as a Serious Strategy of Nonviolent Resistance to Oppression," *Peace and Change* 33, no. 2 (2008): 167–90.
- 29 See the website of Tent of Nations, online at www.tentofnations.org/about/about-us/ (accessed 14 January 2021). This project is a prototypical instance of staying sumud, opposing confiscation, and trespassing borders by inviting and hosting international groups, in line with the project's name.
- 30 Here is not the place to provide an extensive analysis of Banksy's work in Palestine, including criticisms and debates. More broadly, criticism has been informally expressed over the years about some graffiti art's tendency to become commercial, depoliticized, and "parachuted in." My overall take on this discussion, as will come out more clearly later in this article, is to plead for a dialogue between different stakeholders across the fields of commerce, art, and tourism, in order to take into account the different orientations and connect them with the need to incorporate a political advocacy or public struggle dimension – while staying aware that there will always be a basic tension between the different orientations.
- 31 With respect to the wall museum, I was informed that one night in 2016 the Israeli army checked the texts of some hundred wall posters. One soldier was reading the texts in English, another translated into Hebrew, and a third made a recording. The monotonous reading kept residents awake. Afterwards the army did not take measures against the posters. However, it happened that in two cases the mock street sign "Apartheid Rd," part of a countermapping initiative, was the target of soldiers who tried to remove the thin-metal street signs from the wall. A recent case (2018) of a more serious countermeasure was the expulsion of two Italian artists after finishing a huge wall portrait of Ahd Tamimi, the youngster who slapped an Israeli soldier in the village in Nabi Salih in the West Bank.
- 32 For instance, a representative of a guesthouse in area C told me informally that the presence of religious pilgrims tended to diminish the number of "visits" by the Israeli army.
- 33 For a utopia/dystopia analysis of Rachel's Tomb from the viewpoint of critical theory, see Rami Isaac and Vincent Platenkamp, "Concrete U(dys)topia in Bethlehem: A City of Two Tales," *Journal of Tourism and Cultural Change* 14, 2 (2016): 1–17.

Jerusalem's Villages Grey Development and Annexation Plans

Ahmad Heneiti

The future of Jerusalem villages seems inescapably clear if Israel decides to extend its sovereignty over additional areas of the West Bank and annex them to Jerusalem, “the capital of Israel,” according to the “The Deal of the Century,” and consistent with “Greater Jerusalem 2020” and “Jerusalem 5800,” Jerusalem’s plan for 2050.¹ Two main factors lead to this clarity: the lack of an imminent solution to the Palestinian issue, which allows Israel to prolong its policies and weaken the Palestinian Authority’s control over these areas, coupled with Israel’s concrete plans for the area, that is, to sustain the de facto situation while fostering a “grey” distorted reality in all social, economic, and planning dimensions, crucial to Israel’s plans for a metropolitan Jerusalem.

Most of Israel’s planned actions have already been completed, especially in north and northwest Jerusalem, while plans are still pending for the eastern part of the city. The Israeli vision for Jerusalem 2020–2050 represents an important entry point to understanding the transformations that await villages in the Jerusalem district, and the social impact this will engender, if the Israeli annexation plan is implemented.

The Israeli Vision for the City of Jerusalem

“Greater Jerusalem 2020” is one of the most comprehensive plans ever devised for the city of Jerusalem covering urban planning, tourism, economy, archeology, education, environment, transportation, culture, and art. This Israeli master

plan is considered a planning determinant for Jerusalem within a number of Zionist organizations, particularly for the Israeli municipality in Jerusalem. The central issue for this plan is to approach Jerusalem as the eternal capital of the Jewish people and an international Jewish city. This vision, of course, is highly linked to the city's demographics, and the Palestinian presence in it. Relevant literature suggests that the demographic balance Israel foresees for Jerusalem is 30 percent Palestinians and 70 percent Jews,² and is reflected in the many racist and exclusionary Israeli practices and measures that aim to reinforce this equation on the ground. These measures have already had a negative impact on Jerusalem's villages, as will be detailed later, by restricting Palestinian economic activity and the space available for them in the city, leading to residents' deteriorating economic situation in East Jerusalem. In 2017, unemployment among Jerusalem's Palestinians reached 25 percent, especially affecting new graduates and holders of higher academic degrees, and 75 percent of Palestinians in Jerusalem were categorized as poor.³

Israel limited the spatial development of Palestinian villages in Jerusalem, allocating only 14 percent of the land for building housing units for Palestinians, and less than 10 percent of the municipal budget for East Jerusalem's neighborhoods.⁴ Consequently, the real estate market (the cost of buying and renting houses) skyrocketed. Given the challenging economic situation, many Jerusalem residents could no longer afford to live in the city due to the high cost of housing, whether buying or renting, and the limited supply of housing units for Palestinians. Thus, the restricted economy and lack of space led many Jerusalemites to relocate outside the segregation wall to decrease their living expenses⁵ – to the villages of Jerusalem as viable destinations, in turn negatively affecting the infrastructure and spatial planning of these villages.

Spatial Planning for Jerusalem's Villages

The negative consequences of the Israeli vision of Greater Jerusalem 2020 has not been limited to within the current borders of the Jerusalem municipality, but has extended beyond it to affect all Palestinian villages and towns in the vicinity. Usually, cities expand toward the surrounding villages and towns, extending the urban environment as they overlap. So, too, Jerusalem's towns and villages, based on their distance from Jerusalem, became part of the municipality's plans, and were transformed from independent units to neighborhoods subject to central city planning. The expansion of Jerusalem's borders did not happen as a result of normal developmental planning, however, but due to racist planning based on exclusion and annexation. The continuous expansion of the borders of Jerusalem's municipality led to the annexation of large Israeli settlements and lands not populated by Palestinians, and the isolation of Palestinian villages and towns surrounding Jerusalem, thus marginalizing the centers of several Palestinian villages and reinforcing the desired demographic balance.

The Israeli spatial planning policy became “a tool to establish, institutionalize and normalize ethnic and colonial minorities' stereotypes, especially about elites,

settlers and growing groups on the one hand, and weak groups such as minorities and indigenous people on the other.”⁶ In addition to the planning authorities, military officers participate in the planning process; Yiftachel labeled this combination of forces as the “militarization of planning,”⁷ and called the Israeli expansion, which serves the strong dominating ethnic group, “creeping Apartheid.”⁸ Razi Nabulsi, on the other hand, calls it “functional Apartheid,”⁹ since it reflects a set of unlegislated and unpublished policies that are practiced on the ground.

The Israeli planning for Jerusalem is almost complete in the north and northwest parts of the city. West of Jerusalem, there are fourteen villages outside the Wall that are under the jurisdiction of the Jerusalem District, two other villages inside it (Bayt Iksa and Nabi Samwil), and some small neighborhoods such as Haret al-Khalayla and Haret Tal Adaseh. An envelope of Zionist settlements supported by the Wall has been established around Jerusalem. According to Ben Gurion, the first Israeli prime minister, “Settlements are determinants of the state’s security that are not any less important than establishing an army.”¹⁰

The establishment of settlements and roads that bypass Palestinian villages from all directions turned these villages into small, isolated cantons. For example, the villages of Bayt Iksa and Nabi Samwil were separated from the other villages by the segregation Wall and a military checkpoint at the entrance to Bayt Iksa, while access to Nabi Samwil is limited to only its residents – and requires tedious bureaucratic measures in order to pass through the military checkpoint next to al-Jib village. “Jib Biddu,” which consists of eight villages (Biddu, Bayt Surik, Qatanna, Bayt ‘Anan, Bayt Ijza, and Bayt Daqqu, al-Qubayba, Khirbet Um al-Lahm), was separated from other villages in the area and from the city of Ramallah; entry/exit to it has become possible only through a narrow 1,120 meter-long tunnel that lacks basic infrastructure, and that may collapse in winter when it floods and sometimes is impossible to drive through. The villages of al-Jib, Bir Nabala, al-Judayra, and Bayt Hanina form another pocket in the area. This pocket is connected with the governorate of Ramallah through a tunnel that passes under road 45. Consequently, these villages were turned into open isolated cantons visible to the Israeli occupation, which makes them easy to control. The same applies to the villages located in north Jerusalem such as al-Ram, Jaba‘ and Mikhmas; the first has been “stifled” by the segregation Wall, while the second and third have been surrounded with settlements and bypass roads, turning each village into a small canton.

The Israeli exclusionary planning policy was developed to ensure control over the largest possible area of Palestinian land without its residents. Hence, vast areas of these villages were annexed by the segregation Wall, while the permits policy controlled owners’ access to their lands inside the Wall in a manner that guarantees their confiscation in the future under the pretext of being “abandoned lands.”¹¹ This policy will limit the viable social, economic, and spatial areas available in these villages. The 133 kilometers of the Wall that surround the city of Jerusalem facilitate the confiscation of 15,974 dunums, equal to 43 percent of the area of the District of Jerusalem.¹²

The situation in northwest Jerusalem is very similar to that in the eastern villages of Jerusalem such as al-Sawahra, Abu Dis, al-‘Ayzariya, and al-Za‘ayim, except that the Israeli planning for these areas has not been completed yet. The planning process is being prolonged given the extreme international opposition to it. Nevertheless, the Israeli measures on the ground are ongoing. These villages have been surrounded by the segregation Wall from Jerusalem’s side, although there was urban overlap with the city before the construction of the Wall. From the east, the villages have been further blocked by settlements and advanced infrastructure, mainly bypass roads. The confiscation of vast areas of lands in these villages for settlement expansion limits future infrastructure development and horizontal urban expansion. It is expected that the isolation of the eastern villages of Jerusalem will be reinforced by the completion of the E1 settlement plan.

The settlement plan for East Jerusalem (E1)¹³ attempts to connect Ma’ale Adumim and adjoining facility installations with the urban environment of the city of Jerusalem. The plan extends over 12,000 dunums in addition to the original Ma’ale Adumim settlement located over 48,000 dunums. It includes 4,000 housing units in addition to ten hotels, a commercial area that extends over 1,354 dunums, and 180 dunums designated for a police station. The plan realizes part of Israel’s vision for Jerusalem 2020. Despite uprooting some Bedouin communities, confiscating several dunums, and building the police station, the plan is uncompleted in the wake of vicious international opposition, given the sensitivity of the area that links the south of the West Bank with its center and north.

The full implementation of this plan will require the confiscation of vast areas of land from Abu Dis, al-Sawahra al-Sharqiyya, al-‘Ayzariya, and ‘Anata, in addition to some plots from the villages located within the borders of Jerusalem’s municipality, such as al-‘Isawiyya and al-Sawahra al-Gharbiyya. In order to evacuate the intended area from its Palestinian residents, Israel started harassing the Bedouin communities living within the E1 plan area, dismantling their homes and economic establishments. In the late 1990s, some Bedouin communities were forced out of their homes to expand Ma’ale Adumim. A scheme was drawn to enlarge the “mountain plan” and force the Bedouin communities to resettle there after the completion of the E1 plan. This plan would only add to the social and economic hardship of Bedouin communities since it would strip them of their main economic resource: livestock.¹⁴

Social Reality in Jerusalem’s Villages

The demographic structure in Jerusalem’s villages differs according to the geographical location of each village. Some of these villages sustained the original family-based structure, while in others original families merged with immigrants and refugees. To elaborate, villages to the northwest of Jerusalem maintained to a great extent the original family structure, except for a temporary period in Bir Nabala. The geographical location of these villages made that possible, as they are relatively far from the main transportation network, and the segregation Wall later stifled these

villages and severed their historical relationship with the city of Jerusalem. Villages to the north of Jerusalem, on the other hand, are advantaged with their proximity to the main transportation network, which made them viable places for job seekers from various parts of the West Bank to seek employment in the main work hubs in Jerusalem and Ramallah. The same applies to villages east of Jerusalem given their central location near the road that links the north, center and south of the West Bank, especially after the Palestinians were banned from using the historical road that passes through the heart of Jerusalem, and after the segregation Wall was erected. Also, the Bedouin population became integrated into these villages, either by moving into them or as a result of horizontal expansion that ultimately came to include Bedouin communities in the outskirts. The positive immigration to these villages created a heterogeneous society.

Demographics played a role in the level of community harmony in the villages northwest of Jerusalem, as social disintegration was characteristic of diverse villages. At the same time, Israel planned the present and future of all villages in a manner that would keep them weak and disintegrated, especially that they are the first defense frontline to Jerusalem, and would create a weakened and fragile Jerusalemite Palestinian strip that would inevitably reflect on the Palestinian society in the heart of the Holy City.

Ambiguous Demographics

Population growth rates, as explained in the table below, were quite unexpected and suspicious. The table shows that population growth rates in villages immediately outside the Israeli municipal border from 1997 to 2007 were 18 percent, while they were only 7 percent from 2007 to 2017. Population growth rates in the West Bank, on the other hand were 28 percent and 22.6 percent during those periods, respectively,¹⁵ indicating a significant discrepancy in the rate of population increase between the villages of Jerusalem and the villages of the rest of the West Bank. The question is how to explain this difference?

There are general reasons for this that apply to all villages, and specific reasons for each stand-alone village. Many of the families that live in these villages hold Jerusalem IDs, whether they live legally within the municipality's borders, or illegally outside it. They are afraid they may lose their Jerusalem ID if they are counted as residents of other villages and, therefore, do not cooperate with the census.¹⁶ The villages of al-Ram and Dahiyat al-Barid are good examples: the population in al-Ram and Dahiyat al-Barid dropped between 1997–2007 by 3 percent, and the decrease accelerated to 33 percent in the next decade. Yet the actual situation in the village of al-Ram would indicate otherwise, where urban density and population movement clearly increased. According to estimates of the electricity and water meters and waste volume, the town's population totals 54,000 persons.¹⁷ The same also applies to Bir Nabala before the Wall was erected and the village became completely separated from Jerusalem.

Population in Jerusalem Governorate Outside Municipality Border by Locality and Sex, 2017

Locality	Total of Population			Population Increase %	
	2017	2007	1997	2017–2007	2007–1997
Jerusalem (J2)	133,877	124,635	105,857	7%	18%
Rafat	2,779	2,141	1,573	30%	36%
Mikhmas	1,288	1,305	1,391	-1%	-6%
Qalandiya Camp	7,876	7,962	6,712	-1%	19%
Qalandiya	540	1,063	855	-49%	24%
Bayt Duqqu	1,657	1,461	1,177	13%	24%
Jaba'	3,705	2,870	2,398	29%	20%
Al-Judayra	2,489	2,052	1,570	21%	31%
Al-Ram and Dahiyat al-Barid	12,264	18,356	18,899	-33%	-3%
Bayt A'n'an	3,978	3,589	3,154	11%	14%
Al-Jib	3,903	3,805	3,436	3%	11%
Bir Nabala	4,647	4,343	4,499	7%	-3%
Bayt Ijza	807	629	497	28%	27%
Al-Qubayba	3,662	2,860	1,516	28%	89%
Kharayib Umm al-Lahim	379	328	276	16%	19%
Biddu	7,777	6,129	4,704	27%	30%
Nabi Samwil	221	233	161	-5%	45%
Hizma	6,726	5,654	4,517	19%	25%
Bayt Hanina al-Balad	1,046	966	1,025	8%	-6%
Qatanna	6,596	5,823	5,555	13%	5%
Bayt Surik	3,803	3,505	2,827	9%	24%
Bayt Ikxa	1,675	1,708	1,162	-2%	47%
'Anata	13,109	10,864	7,112	21%	53%
Al-Ka'abina (Tajammu' Badawi)	811	626	713	30%	-12%
Al-Za'ayyem	5,924	3,068	1,801	93%	70%
Al-'Ayzariya	16,425	15,874	12,807	3%	24%
Abu Dis	9,551	9,721	8,937	-2%	9%
A'rab al-Jahalin (Salamat)	1,754	650	893	170%	-27%
Al-Sawahira al-Sharqiyya	5,862	5,229	3,861	12%	35%
Al-Shaykh Sa'd	2,623	1,757	1,783	49%	-1%

Source: PCBS.

Bayt Iksha is a special case: the village population increased by 47 percent between 1997 and 2007 and dropped by 2 percent during the next twenty years. This is attributed to the Wall being built in 2002 besieging the city, and the military checkpoint stationed at the entrance to the village preventing non-residents from going into the village unless they underwent complicated measures. The checkpoint even hampers the movement of residents themselves and forced many to relocate.¹⁸ Perhaps the location of al-Za‘ayim near the military checkpoint that connects the settlements of Ma‘ale Adumim, Kedar, and several others along the eastern side of the West Bank and North Palestine to Jerusalem encouraged people to move to the town, especially after the building of the Wall. The population growth rates between 1997–2007 and 2007–2017 were 70 percent and 93 percent respectively. According to an employee in al-Za‘ayim municipality, 95 percent of the residents hold Jerusalem IDs. During the census, the census employees were accompanied by municipality employees to add credibility and encourage cooperation with the census. Seventy percent of the population cooperated with the census, leading employees to estimate the population at 10,000 people, that is, an increase of 226 percent, which means that the actual number of residents in most of the villages in the District of Jerusalem is uncertain.

Grey Area

Sound urban and spatial planning is usually based on population growth predictions. Planning is connected to infrastructure and services, and the lack of accurate demographic data negatively impacts the planning process and creates discrepancies between the municipality’s resources and expenditures. Demographics are related to the volume of available services, which in turn are usually determined by the municipality’s revenue and governmental allocations. Otherwise, the municipality’s deficit would increase and it would become incapable of delivering the expected level of services, which would lead to the spread of “social diseases,” such as crime, drugs, public property vandalism, consumption of public space, etc. The visual landscape of the urban space in most of Jerusalem’s villages reflects the chaos of life and neglect of public spaces.

Field observation shows that villages of the north and east of Jerusalem are witnessing vertical urban expansion. The nature of construction there (crowdedness and lack of services) shows that most are built illegally and often without permits. Streets are narrow, making it sometimes difficult for two small cars to pass in opposite directions, drug trafficking and abuse thrive,¹⁹ the use of illegal “discarded” cars,²⁰ and litter inside villages, in valleys, and in open spaces proliferates. This is generated by what Yiftachel calls a “grey area” – located between the whiteness of secure/consensual legitimacy and the blackness of destruction and death. Grey spaces are spaces that have neither been integrated nor eliminated; they represent semi-permanent margins of the present urban areas.²¹

More than two thirds of the area of Jerusalem’s villages is categorized as area “C.”

In some villages, 96 percent of the area is categorized as area “C,” such as ‘Anata, while the remaining area is area “B.”²² There are also areas that are under the Israeli municipality’s jurisdiction, but located outside the segregation Wall, and have become adjacent to these villages, such as ‘Anata, al-Ram, al-Za‘ayim, and several others. Hence, Israel has considerable control over life, planning, and security affairs in these villages and is more capable of intervening. This limits the ability of the Palestinian Authority to exercise its sovereignty and authority over the people and makes Israeli approval conditional to its involvement. These areas are also highly neglected in the Palestinian Authority's budget, as most of the budget is allocated to areas of Jerusalem located inside the Wall.

The geopolitical reality of these villages generated a distorted form of urbanization,²³ as the planning process was assigned to local authorities, where every municipality or village council plans for itself regardless of the neighboring villages. Many of the villages were not able to implement their plans due to lack of sufficient funds or lack of cooperation from residents and their refusal to abide by the laws. This led to the disintegration and fragmentation of development in the area and limited efficiency and functionality caused by the lack of integrated plans. This is exactly what the Ministry of Local Governance is encouraging by adopting individual spatial plans for each village, and the manner in which it monitors implementation and fund allocation, while spatial strategic plans remain plans on paper that are never implemented.

Spatial Planning that Destroys the Future of Jerusalem

An additional cause for alarm is the focus on village planning apart from its connection to Jerusalem, the capital of Palestinians. Ignoring this aspect in the spatial planning for these villages will be a distortion in the future vision for Jerusalem. About this, Nazmi Jubeh, history professor at Birzeit University, says:

Work cannot continue in areas under the jurisdiction of the PA, and/or de facto treated as such, without a structural plan that guarantees a metropolitan future for Jerusalem. This is needed to guarantee natural growth and development in the geographical space. Al-‘Ayzariya, Abu Dis, Ram, Bir Nabala, Kufr ‘Aqab, ‘Anata, and Hizma cannot be left at the mercy of the village councils and municipalities, as they have already turned into what resembles slums, lacking the requirements for growth and development. Hence, [rather than] losing day-by-day, the valuable factors that Palestine will need in the future . . . planning should be approached through an integrated project with a vision and philosophy to establish the future capital of the Palestinian State. Adopting the above-mentioned planning standards in these areas, and perhaps also Bayt Lahm and Ramallah, will not only guarantee the future of the capital, but also improve performance within this challenging area.²⁴

The challenges that face spatial and urban planning in Jerusalem are significant. The Israeli occupation's grip over the city, and surrounding villages as well as the empty areas between them, in addition to the fragmentation of these areas by settlements and bypass roads, weakened the ability of the Palestinian institutions to implement many structural area plans that had been developed on paper, like the plan for northwest Jerusalem. By distorting local development in this area, Israel aims to prevent the creation of a stretch of connected Palestinian communities, which means that these areas will remain weak and marginalized, and will continue to lack the minimum level of strength, which will in turn reflect on the center of Jerusalem. According to Khamaysi:

Urban studies indicate that there is a direct controversial relationship between the economic status of the metropolitan urban center, the periphery, and parts of it. The stronger the economy of the periphery, the stronger the economy of the metropolitan center would become. This relationship, however, is deformed in Jerusalem as the periphery is weak and so is the center. It is true that some individuals and locations are thriving economically, but this only confirms that Jerusalem's economy is weak, making it incapable of participating in the international economy and delayed developmentally.²⁵

Therefore, these areas are considered "grey" areas according to Yiftachel. Grey areas are usually "areas where development works and residents are torn between legal and security aspects, and between complete annexation on one side and expulsion, destruction and death on the other."²⁶

The obvious developmental deformation of Jerusalem adds to the negative stereotypical image about life there. Random construction is usually undertaken without permits for two reasons: Building is located on the outskirts of villages, and while usually easy to plan for, construction in area "C" requires permits from the Israeli occupation authorities, which are usually rejected. Also construction depends on family initiative, without involvement of institutions or organizations, according to available plots of land, resulting in a chaotic character to the urban landscape in these villages. Given the limited number of open private areas and the rising cost of land,²⁷ residents cope by trespassing on areas allocated for local public development. Random construction also negatively affects village infrastructure such as roads, sanitation, and the like, and will be an increasing problem in the next few years.

Villages of Jerusalem and the Annexation Plan

The cornerstone of the "Peace for Prosperity Plan," announced by the Trump administration as the "Deal of the Century," is consistent with the Israeli vision of Jerusalem. The plan states:

Jerusalem will remain the sovereign capital of the State of Israel, and it

should remain an undivided city. The sovereign capital of the State of Palestine should be in the section of East Jerusalem located in all areas east and north of the existing security barrier, including Kufr ‘Aqab, the eastern part of Shu‘fat and Abu Dis, and could be named al-Quds or another name as determined by the State of Palestine.²⁸

The plan adds that Palestinians living in the capital of Israel and areas beyond the 1949 armistice line will have three options:²⁹

1. Become citizens of the State of Israel
2. Become citizens of the State of Palestine
3. Retain their status as permanent residents in Israel

The so-called Prosperity Plan is based on two principles, to reinforce the Israeli vision for Jerusalem – expressed by insistence on the Jewishness of Jerusalem as a unified indivisible capital of the Jewish people, and to foster de facto policies, expressed over and over again, especially that “throughout decades several suggestions and ideas were proposed, but elements of these plans were unimplementable given the facts on the ground in Jerusalem and in the greater Middle East.”³⁰ These two principles explain the fate of the Jerusalemite Palestinians.

Israeli statistics in 2018 indicated that Jerusalem had the highest population density compared to other cities in Israel. The population of Jerusalem totals 919,400; 569,900 Jews and 349,500 Palestinian. 61 percent of the city’s population live in the eastern part of the city; 39 percent of them are Jewish and 61 percent are Palestinian; while Jews make 99 percent of the population in West Jerusalem.³¹ These numbers show that the desired demographic equation in Jerusalem according to the Israeli vision has not yet been achieved, as Palestinians make up 38 percent of the city’s population. This drives Israel to seek to limit the number of Palestinians living in “Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.” Complicated bureaucratic measures block the option of becoming a “citizen of the State of Israel,” and jeopardize the option of “retaining their status as permanent residents of the State of Israel,” since a significant percentage of them cannot find affordable housing in Jerusalem as a result of Israeli economic policies and the deterioration of the economic situation. Consequently, Kufr ‘Aqab and other areas that are considered inside the borders of Jerusalem’s municipality but outside the Wall are destined to become Palestinian areas. The final maps have not been finalized, nor at the very least have they been announced so far, which creates ambiguity regarding the fate of some areas. This is manifested in the non-demarcation of the borders of “Jerusalem, the capital of Israel,” and in the interim map that shows that villages of West Jerusalem will be within the borders of the Israeli capital, which is contradictory to the plan’s vision. Therefore, the plan will reinforce the production of Palestinian cantons within the borders of “Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.” The implementation of the plan would lead to:

1. Implementation of the E1 plan, reinforcing the transformation of some Palestinian villages east of Jerusalem (‘Anata, Hizma, and al-Za‘ayim) to cantons and secluded areas, while others (al-‘Ayzariya, Abu Dis, Sawahra and Shaykh Sa‘ad) will be

allowed to expand to the south, so they will become connected with the villages north of Bethlehem, although within very narrow areas, and will be besieged from the west and east.

2. Reinforcement of the situation of the villages northwest of Jerusalem as it has been previously diagnosed.
3. Uprooting of several Bedouin communities currently living within what will be considered “Jerusalem, the capital of Israel.” The population of these communities add up to 3000 people.
4. Building more tunnels and bridges to connect the residents of these villages and towns with the “State of Palestine,” and between the north and south.

Conclusion

The colonial Israeli conflict manifests itself openly in Jerusalem. Prospective studies on Jerusalem indicate that both Palestinians and Israelis will continue to immigrate to Jerusalem, given its functional and affective importance,³² in addition to the natural population growth, as the average age in 2018 among Jews is 25.2 years, and 21.6 among Palestinians.³³ The Israeli exclusionary policy will drive Palestinians to the rural periphery, that is, areas outside the borders of “Jerusalem, the capital of Israel”. These inputs will result in the continuation of deformed urbanization in the villages located outside the borders of the Israeli municipality. This deformed urbanization is an objective of the Zionist plans for Jerusalem that aim to weaken the Arab heart of the city by weakening the periphery. The exacerbation of the current reality will reinforce the “grey areas” and will allow the rise of crime, lawlessness, and drug abuse, making these areas a living example of negative citizenship.

This paper does not address the potential stripping of the legal status of Kufur ‘Aqab, Dahiyat al-Barid, and other Palestinian communities located under the jurisdiction of the Israeli municipality, and changing the status of its people to non-residents of Jerusalem as one of the results of annexation, if implemented by Israel. If this does occur, it will create significant social chaos, since more than 100,000 residents who hold Jerusalem IDs are unable to move within the segregation Wall because the areas allocated to the Palestinians there cannot accommodate reversed immigration nor can Palestinians afford the high living costs. This will generate yet another crisis for Palestinians living in Jerusalem.

Ahmad Heneiti is a researcher focusing on al-Aghwar, Bedouins, and marginalized sectors.

Endnotes

- 1 For the Jerusalem 2020 and the Jerusalem 2050 plans, see Nur Arafeh, with comments from Maha Saman and Raja Khalidi, "Roundtable: Israel's Colonialist Projection and Future Plans in Occupied East Jerusalem," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 68 (Winter 2016): 76–89, online at www.palestine-studies.org/en/node/211012 (accessed 1 June 2021). See also Haleema Abu Haniya, "al-Mukhattat al-Isra'ili li barjazet al-quds fi dou' "khuttet al-quds 5500": Ru'yet al-Quds 2010–2050" [The Israeli plan to gentrify Jerusalem in light of the Jerusalem 5500 Plan: Vision of Jerusalem 2010–2050] *Istishraf* (April 2019).
- 2 Some literature mentioned 28 percent Palestinians and 72 percent Jews. See, for example, Sari Maqdisi, "Mashru' 'unsuri: i'adit takwin mujtama' al-Quds" [Racist project: restructuring the society of Jerusalem] in *al-Dawla al-wahidah lissira' al-'arabi al-isra'ili: baladun wahidun li kaffet muwatini* [The One State Solution for Arab-Israeli Conflict: One Country for all Citizens], ed. Hani Fares (Beirut: Markaz Disrasat al-Wihdah al-'Arabiyya, 2012), 79.
- 3 "Iqtis'ad al-Quds tahta ban'adiq al-ihtilal" [The Economy of Jerusalem under the Rifles of the Occupation] *al-Jazeera*, 9 December 2017, online at cutt.us/QorBc (accessed 18 September 2021).
- 4 Arafeh, "Roundtable: Israel's Colonialist Projection," 182.
- 5 Abu Haniya, "al-Mukhattat."
- 6 Oren Yiftaha'el, "al-Ithnograatiyya siyasat al-'ard wal hawiyya fi Isra'il/Filastin [Ethnocracy: Land and Identity Politics in Israel/Palestine (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2021)], trans. Sulafa Hijjawi (Ramallah: Madar, 2012), 525.
- 7 Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy*, 269.
- 8 Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy*, 274.
- 9 Razi Nabulsi, *Zionism and Settlement: Strategies to Control Land and Produce Ghettos* (al-Bireh: Palestinian Center for Policies and Strategic Studies Research – Masarat, 2017).
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- 11 Residents said that the civil administration issues permits to older residents and denies them to younger ones under security pretexts. The civil administration often delays the issuance of permits, which affects agricultural workers dependent on seasonal work. (Team research conducted by the Institute of Community and Public Health in Birzeit University in 2019 about Biddu's pocket.)
- 12 Nazmi Jubeh, *al-Iskan fi al-Quds: bayna mitraqat al-istitan wa al-imkanat al-mutaha* [Housing in Jerusalem: Between the Hammer of Settlement and Available Capacities], (Ramallah: Institute of Public Policies, 2009), 29.
- 13 For more about E1 Plan, see "The E1 Plan and Its Implications for Human Rights in the West Bank," December 2012, online at www.btselem.org/settlements/20121202_e1_human_rights_ramifications (accessed 1 June 2021).
- 14 For more on this topic see Ahmad Heneiti, *al-Tajammu'at al-Badawiyya fi wasat al-diffah al-gharbiyyah ka haala diraassiyaa* [Bedouin communities in the middle of the West Bank as a case study], (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2018).
- 15 Population and percentages are taken from the Palestinian census for the years: 1997, 2007, and 2017.
- 16 For more on this see Ashraf Bader, "al-Ti'dad al-sukkani fi al-Quds biwasfihi adaat lissaytara wa al-tashthiyya al-isti'mariyya" [Census in Jerusalem as a Tool for Control and Colonial Fragmentation], *Istishraf* (February 2019).
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- 21 Yiftachel, *Ethnocracy*, 293.
- 22 See ARIJ, "Dalil al-Tajammu'at al-Filastiniyya" [Directory of Palestinian Communities], online at vprofile.arij.org.

- org/jerusalem/ar/vdata.php (accessed 18 September 2021).
- 23 See Rasem Khamayseh, “I‘adet tashkil al-muhit al-maqdisi, qalb al-dawla al-Filastiniyya” [Restructuring Jerusalem’s Periphery, the Heart of the Palestinian State] *Hawliyat al-Quds* 16 (Fall/Winter 2013), in Arabic, online at www.palestine-studies.org/ar/node/144746 (accessed 1 June 2021)
- 24 Jubeh, “Housing in Jerusalem,” 10.
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- 27 UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, *East Jerusalem: Key Humanitarian Concerns*, 77.
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- 32 Rasem Khamayseh, “al-Dimographia fi al-Quds: al-waaqe’ wa al-tahawullat wa al-istishraf” [Demography in Jerusalem: Reality, Transformations and Prospects] *Siyasat Arabiyya* (July 2019): 24.
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Jacob Israel de Haan

A Queer and Lapsed Zionist in Mandate Palestine

Nathan Witt

Editor's Note

A notable contribution to the Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem, in the 2021 Round.

The year sneaks in in God's capital city
Near the Western Wall
Tonight, what is it that I long for?
The sanctity of Israel, or an Arab male prostitute?

— "Doubt," in Jacob Israel de Haan, *Kwatrijnen* (Quatrains) (1924)

Abstract

This essay focuses on a large group of preeminent dissenting intellectual and Orthodox Jewish voices from the start of the twentieth century who were critical of the suitability of Israel as a site of return and who stood in solidarity with Palestinians. It focuses on the victim of Israel's first political assassination, Jacob Israel de Haan, and raises the then permissible notions of sexuality in Palestine. Since the de Haan's death in 1924, his journalistic writings, essays, and poems, written over a five-year period in Mandate Palestine, have yet to be published in English or Arabic. The author examines the trajectory of de Haan's rescinding Zionist attitude as something increasingly common upon arrival in Palestine. De Haan's work as a litigator uniquely placed him to affect and destabilize the colonial infrastructure in formative Israel, which ultimately led to his murder.

Keywords

Mandate Palestine; anti-Zionism; queer studies; Balfour Declaration; political assassination; Orientalism; King Husayn bin Ali; Muhammad Asad; psychoanalysis; Sigmund Freud.

In *Freud and the Non-European*, Edward Said wrote of the importance of reading history proleptically; of reading characters whom we might consider controversial or offensive but to pay greater attention to how much they were bound by, or were part of, their cultural moment.¹ In this essay I want to reflect upon a queer, lapsed Zionist Dutch lawyer – Jacob Israel de Haan – a character who appeared perpetually at odds with his cultural moment. He was shot three times in the chest outside of Shaare Zedek Hospital in western Jerusalem, on 30 June 1924, by fellow Jews, one of whom was an off-duty policeman who owed the lawyer money, and who were given orders, according to the killer, from Ben Zvi who would later become Israel’s second president.²

De Haan was, in part, a Jewish nationalist but with a particularly contrarian and deeply nuanced relationship with his fellow Jews and Palestinians. He was a lover of young Arab men and became a legal defender of Arab nationalist interests, yet harbored many negative views of Arabs that dissipated the longer he stayed in Jerusalem. In a decolonial context, the Dutch lawyer and writer is as much a complex, peculiar, and problematic figure now as he appeared to be in 1920’s Jerusalem. His relationship with the British Mandate was one of curiosity, eventually culminating with de Haan being a Palestine correspondent for the British and Dutch press before his sudden killing. In a queer context, de Haan is a cult figure, yet largely unknown outside of Israel and Holland. Today, one can go on a queer literary tour of Jerusalem³ and on 20 June each year pashkevilim or broadsides are fly-posted around Jerusalem’s Jewish Orthodox neighborhoods to commemorate his death. His letters and archive can be found at the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana at the University of Amsterdam (hereafter, Ros. de Haan #). His Palestine writings, journal, reports, and poems include: *Jerusalem* (1921) and *Palestine* (1925, published posthumously), *Quatrains* (1924) – a series of erotic poems – and his vast feuilletons in the newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad*. The *Handelsblad* text consists of some four hundred entries, written from 1919 to his death in 1924.⁴

The targeted killing of de Haan was carried out not just for a single specific act but for a culmination of many activities – from his legal prowess and his political writings to an international audience, to his meetings with local Arab delegates, particularly King Husayn bin Ali al-Hashimi and his son Abdullah, the Emir of Transjordan, who were particularly fond of de Haan. It was also as a result of his plans to travel to London insisting on using only a Palestine passport, which did not exist at the time, and to be accompanied by other members of the Agudat Yisrael to attempt to repeal the Balfour Declaration. De Haan’s death came two weeks before the trip, and directly after de Haan attended King Husayn’s inauguration where he declared himself caliph at his son Abdullah’s winter camp at al-Shunah. His death was shortly after described by the German writer Arnold Zweig as “Israel’s first political murder.”⁵

Delusion and Disillusion

De Haan’s arrival to Jerusalem on a rainy day, 5 April 1918, was by his account an ignoble affair, with him complaining about the weather, the lack of a welcome party,

and attempts by his baggage handler to extort him.⁶ He had left his wife Johanna and Holland behind, partially in disgrace due to a homoerotic text called *Pipelines* that led to his expulsion teaching children in Holland, and had travelled to Palestine via Cairo, Rome, Paris, and London.⁷ His application to the Zionist Foundation was not met with enthusiasm and with de Haan being neither young nor athletic, it took some convincing by Israel Zangwill for Chaim Weizman to admit de Haan's usefulness to their plans.⁸ After being in Jerusalem for two years, his membership became more strained which is revealed in his entry "The City in Uprising," dated 8 April 1920,⁹ when de Haan witnessed first-hand the Nabi Musa riots. This moment seemed to crystallize just how politically naive he was when he first arrived, both in regards to Zionism and the British Mandate, and the local Orthodox and Arab sentiments against both.

A month earlier, in March 1920, de Haan was elected to the seventy-member City Council for the Ashkenazi Community, the religious haredim community's governing body, with the expectation that he would lead the prosecution against the Zionist Organisation. Paradoxically, a few months later, after the riots de Haan comically defended, while on a stretcher, the right-wing militant Ze'ev Jabotinsky, alongside five members of the Haganah, would later arrange his assassination.¹⁰ In 1921 he underwent his Baal Teshuva, converted fully to Orthodox Jewry, and became a litigator and a representative of the haredim Agudat Yisrael.

De Haan's development of anti-Zionist views, in both the press and in his classes, brought frequent complaints, which first began in 1922 from his students' parents, his fellow professors, and the students themselves attending his classes on Ottoman Penal Law at the Government Law School, later to become Hebrew University.¹¹ Ironically, this was a class which he set up with the help of Jabotinsky, under the watchful eye of the Mandate attorney general Norman Bentwich and his secretary Frederic Goadby. De Haan's tenure at the school was intermittent, fractious, and from a series on regular exchanges with the Legal Secretary's Office, there appeared to be a series of quite exhaustive misunderstandings (mainly by de Haan) – and numerous attempts by the office to instruct him to desist from political activity.¹² He often failed to turn up for his own classes, which were only half full – and he was told he would not be paid. However, as he was being paid a salary for writing in two newspapers and also taking on legal cases and meeting and interviewing local people, as well as his romantic dalliances, it seemed that he was not that concerned about money. In one case, attempting to overturn an imposed tax on flatbread, he collected some 1,600 local signatures around Jerusalem. The case was initially rejected with de Haan paying the £100 legal costs out of his own pocket. He retried the case and was successful the second time around.¹³ His tenacity and skill as a lawyer were much admired, which was particularly noted by Horace Samuel in his 1930 book *Unholy Memories of the Holy Land*. Samuel (not related to the Mandate high commissioner Herbert Samuel) was a judge in Palestine from 1918–28 and relates with some amusement of the "one-man wrecking ball" de Haan, sometimes deliberately taking on cases of some "wretched debtor of the Zionist Executive, basing himself on the quite formidable



Figure 1. “Dr. de Haan Shot Dead in a Courtyard,” *Daily Express* (London), 2 July 1924, Daily Express Archive.

legal point that the Zionist Commission, not being a juridical entity, was not entitled to sue.”¹⁴ Surely, this was a sore and humiliating point. De Haan was first discharged from teaching in March 1922, then re-appointed in 1923 on an experimental basis with the agreement that he would stop writing for the press, which again proved to be a failure and he was again dismissed, this time permanently but on good terms with Bentwich and Goadby.¹⁵ Bentwich condemned de Haan’s assassination, saying: “One cannot speak sufficiently ill of de Haan”¹⁶ to warrant such an action.

Conscientious Objectors

De Haan’s death preceded a growing, vociferous Jewish elite in the early twentieth century that consisted of, to name a few, high-profile figures like Freud, Einstein, David Grossman, Arnold Zweig, and Hannah Arendt, who, like de Haan, focused on questioning the rule of law as applied to the state.¹⁷ Like the Mizrahi Orthodox community, of which de Haan was a member (before moving to represent Agudat Yisrael), all these figures questioned the suitability of the site of the new Israel as a deeply problematic return,¹⁸ a view that is expressed in the pashkevilim commemorating de Haan with one line, “To be brothers in misfortune alongside the Arab people,” being particularly prominent.¹⁹ In her book *The Last Resistance*, Jaqueline Rose examines

how these well-known Jewish literary figures sit contrapuntally – or in the words of Said, *proleptically* – to the development of Israel, from both a psychoanalytical and a modernist literary perspective. Rose’s book examines the various personal crises – spiritual, existential, moral, ethical, political, religious, religion-as-a-political-pretext-for-colonial-expansion – that they and many others were challenging and foreseeing.²⁰

Many were already living in exile from antisemitism and pogroms in Russia, Poland, and later Nazi Europe. Arnold Zweig’s *The Case of Sergeant Grischa* (1927) was a critique about bureaucracy and antisemitism within the German army in the First World War, in which he served. The subjects of nationalist conditions of religious exile, the moral and ethical conditions that surround it (that is, the asymmetry with the subsequent Palestinian exile from 1948), and the burden of the land, provided a significant amount of political disagreement, who in 1932 Freud refers to disparagingly as “baseless fanatics” with “misdirected piety” worshipping “a piece of a Herodian wall”:

But, on the other hand, I do not think that Palestine could ever become a Jewish state, nor that the Christian and Islamic worlds would ever be prepared to have their holy places under Jewish care. It would have seemed more sensible to me to establish a Jewish homeland on a less historically burdened land. But I know that such a rational viewpoint would never have gained the enthusiasm of the masses and the financial support of the wealthy. I concede with sorrow that the baseless fanaticism of our people is in part to be blamed for the awakening of Arab distrust. I can raise no sympathy at all for the misdirected piety, which transforms a piece of a Herodian wall into a national relic, thereby offending the feelings of the natives. Now judge for yourself whether I, with such a critical point of view, am the right person to come forward as the solace of a people deluded by unjustified hope.²¹

The notion of mythistory is something that colonially has long manifest itself in various forms of historical cultural bias, reappropriation, and misrepresentation, insofar as to say that mythistory/cultural bias/myopia is the beating heart of colonial vernacular

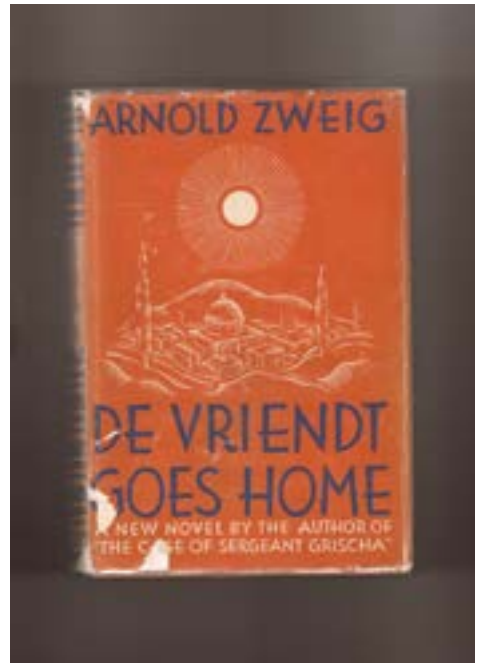


Figure 2. Dust jacket of Arnold Zweig’s *De Vriendt Goes Home* (New York: Viking Press, 1933).

and nationalism.²² De Haan’s myopia is loud and clear in his diaries, which his news editors had to temper by reminding him they were seeking “news, not views.”²³ Again, in the context of the colonizer and occupier, nationalist [myopic] mythistory is something that is diametrically opposed to the constant Palestinian struggle to reclaim memory, and is an active tool for suppressing it. Jacqueline Rose, in the essay “David Grossman’s Dilemma,” describes Grossman’s book *Someone to Run With* (2000) as confronting Israel’s “historical burden” and the writer’s overwhelming feelings of guilt and the subsequent desire to strip the land of its many “meanings” with the ignominious dates of 1897, [1918], 1929, 1936, 1948, 1967, 1987 reading like a nightmarish roll call.²⁴ The



Figure 3. “Jacob Israel de Haan Certificate of Provisional Citizenship, 1922,” issued by Mandate authorities, online at commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jacob_Israel_De_Haan_prov_citizenship_fr.jpg (accessed 11 October 2021).

following song sarcastically mocks the violence of Herzl’s “plan,” saying how well it is going and illustrates both anti-national sentiment and unwillingness to participate:

A Star of David broke into two,
 Herzl’s opinions died with the man.
 Rotten in the grave, with spikes of Sabra fruit
 But everything goes according to plan.

Like a man to hold a gun in my hand,
 Blow off heads, like a man,
 Like a man, march to my death, all alone,
 And everything goes according to plan

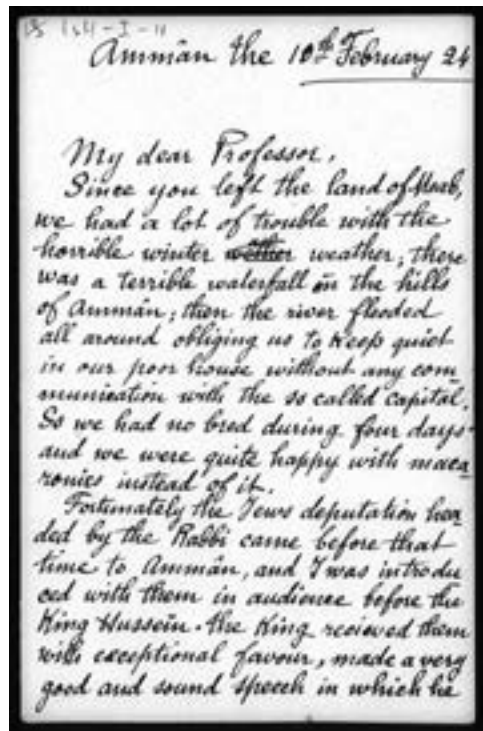
And then all of a sudden, from all corners of the yard,
 even the dance floor, rose the roar: “*Fuck the plan.*”²⁵

De Haan’s assassination, his cynicism, and anarchic nature, echo in the song and the members’ unwillingness to participate in “the plan.” These dissenting voices

directly challenge the exceptional morality of the Zionist return narrative. Similarly, in the “Disillusion of War,” Rose asserts that Freud places the killing of [rebellious against] the father squarely in the middle of the religious collective. She argues that Freud’s boldest move is to place at the heart of the group what it would most like to dispose of,²⁶ which in this case means the killing of de Haan, from the perspective of the Zionists. One final Freudian motif that Rose presents for us is regarding the religious collective and how, on many levels and not just subconsciously, its members can become implicated as a “partner in crime and guilty by association,” reminding us that: “We are all killers, or capable of being so.”²⁷

A year before de Haan’s shooting, the Swiss psychoanalyst, Dorian Feigenbaum (1887–1937) tried to introduce the study of psychoanalysis at what was termed the only psychiatric hospital in Palestine.²⁸ Feigenbaum was also psychiatric consultant to the Mandate administration and in April 1923 delivered a lecture titled “The Mind in Health and Illness,” divided into three parts: “The Unconscious,” “Dreams,” and “The Modern Theory of the Neuroses.” Echoing the unrest similar to that experienced at de Haan’s lectures, the second two parts of Feigenbaum’s talk were not made due to a hostile reaction to the talk “The Unconscious,” and the hospital forbade the talks to continue. A year later at the Hadassah Nursing School in Jerusalem, run by the Mandate, Feigenbaum presented another series of lectures which were better received: “Experimental Psychology and Freud’s Depth Psychology,” “The Unconscious,” and “Hypnosis, Sleep, and Dreams,” leading to an additional lecture on “Childhood Masturbation.” Soon after, however, he was dismissed, and in an article for the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* he complained, anonymously, that the outlook in Palestine was not hopeful and that psychoanalysis in Jerusalem had become too fashionable among the young but was not fully understood. He then left Jerusalem for America, leaving his precocious nephew Leopold behind.²⁹

Leopold Weiss had converted to Islam, assuming the name Muhammad Asad, and had recently arrived in Jerusalem from Vienna. He was one of those impressionable young migrants that his uncle disapproved of, and who was, by his own admission: “drunk on psychoanalysis.”³⁰ He also hated his ardent Zionist father, Aryeh Leopold Feigenbaum who was director of ophthalmology at the Rothschild Hospital in Jerusalem. In the summer of 1923 and later in 1924, he accompanied de Haan on a



said in substance, that he had not any feeling of contempt against the Jews and the Zionists also because they are Jews, but he can by any means accept and acknowledge the pretention of the Zionists to the political supremacy and domination in Palestine over a great majority of the population. He said also - pointing out to their illegal process - that they would be welcome, if they got in by the door and not from the window or falling in from the ceiling, if they do not try to realize by an illegal way their dream of founding up a Zionist government against the Arab. They will be received everywhere with open heart (and so saying he opened his *Nikkah*) even we shall give them land for nothing, we shall be very pleased for their service in any Department of the administration etc. Then after referring to the unpolitical statements having course amongst the population or some Zionist papers against the Jews, he added: I present you this (the decoration!) in order to dissipate the misrepresented feelings of the Arabs towards the Jews. That was all right! When the Rabbi and his people left his Majesty, he followed them to the door, and afterwards asked me for you saying: Where is the other gentleman your friend? I replied, that you left Amman for Jerusalem being exceedingly thankful to His Majesty. He told me to tell you that whenever you like you may come to see him. That is very noble too.

Now I am sure they will go to the (Jann) for three or four days, but the day is not yet determined owing to the bad weather. I will not follow him, because of my wife, there is no much room for both of us in *Shawee* but if you insist in coming there once

number of visits to Jordan to meet King Husayn and Abdullah, both of whom had a growing admiration for de Haan and sympathy to the cause of the Agudat. In Asad's book *The Road to Makkah* he describes the car journey, recalling what apparently were newly revised concerns by de Haan that went against his initial decision to migrate:

Two thousand years of exile and unhappiness have taught them [the Zionists] nothing. Instead of making an attempt to understand the innermost causes of our unhappiness they now try to circumvent it, as it were, by building a "national home" on foundations provided by Western power politics: and in the process of building a national home, they are committing the crime of depriving another people of its home.³¹

more again to see the King with *de* Wollach, you must let me know by answering to my telegram in one word. I will cable you the day, saying for instance Wednesday; you can answer me by saying simply (yes) or (no). If you wish another day, you can say the name of that day, but you must not postpone your visit very long because, they will stay only few days there, then I shall try to come for returning to Amman the same day at the evening.

I received the newspapers and thank you very much for that.

Give our best wishes and thanks for *de* Wollach and all the friends there.

My wife presents you her compliments. How are the bad children?

Truly yours
Riza Tawfik

Figure 4. Letter to de Haan from Riza Tawfik, Amman, 10 February 1924. Copyright Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, University of Amsterdam.

Unlike with de Haan's gradual transition, or complete turnaround, this view was something Asad thought long about before he left for Jerusalem, echoing the Freudian sentiment on the psychological and cultural burden associated with overloading meaning onto the land, specifically when "the malady must be sought in the foundation of Zionist thinking itself. It is a sick idea to think that the only solution to the bitter fate of the Jewish people and its longings is the homeland."³² De Haan, Freud, Asad, and Zweig all refer to a more psychological, spiritual, religious, moral, and ethical complaint that paradoxically is situated both inside and outside of the colonial association.

From 1923 de Haan and Asad met regularly with an exiled former Turkish minister, poet, and philosopher Riza Tawfik in Jordan. Tawfik acted as a delegate for Sharif Husayn and was also the chief advisor of the emir, Abdullah; he was a former university professor, later to become minister of education for the Turkish cabinet and was involved in the Young Turkish Revolution. He was exiled from Turkey in 1922. A brief account of the Shunah and Amman trip is mentioned in Asad's *The Road to Makkah*. A beautifully written letter can be found in the Rosenthaliana archive detailing how much Tawfik and the king and Abdullah were looking forward to de Haan's next visit. This was written a month after de Haan attended the king's inauguration. Tawfik talks fondly of a harsh winter in Amman and floods that kept him and his family locked in their homes for four days without bread. But there was the more pressing issue of increased Jewish migration, with Tawfik stating that the king did not have a problem with Jewish people coming to Palestine as long as they "get in by the door and not from the window, or falling from the ceiling." He goes on to discuss the legality of some of the Zionist's "pretensions," British dissatisfaction with them, Arab responses towards the Jewish boycott of Arab labor, and the king's desire via the Anglo-Hijaz treaty to find an amenable way to rescind the Balfour Declaration and install an emir in Palestine – and to do this in a way that would not upset the Zionists. At the end of his letter Tawfik cryptically inquires of de Haan: "How are the bad children?"³³

The scenes in which the letter is set can be found in three of de Haan's later feuilletons.³⁴ He details some interesting facts regarding the numbers of Jews leaving Palestine in disillusionment, stating that at the start of the Balfour Declaration the Zionists expected half a million Jews in a few years but that, according to de Haan, about thirty thousand entered Palestine and almost half as many left: "The number of immigrants is now no more than five hundred monthly. Figures for the exodus are not officially provided. But I happen to know from [one] month that nearly seven hundred left the country."³⁵ De Haan was reporting these meetings in the press and was in some sense abusing his position as a journalist, being forced to print retractions for making false statements from Husayn towards the Zionists. The Zionists also had begun to set up a fund for a legal committee to counter de Haan through Frederick Kisch of the Zionist Executive in 1923, and started to defame de Haan via discussing his sexual proclivities. These were the last days of de Haan and also Husayn's complex reign and his own subsequent short exile to follow.

“How innocent is the 25th when one is not assassinated on the 24th.”

Nine years after de Haan's killing, the German writer Arnold Zweig, while exiled from Germany, and like many fleeing from the newly elected Nationalist Socialist Workers/ Nazi Party, moved to Mount Carmel in Haifa and worked on an account of de Haan's murder. In a series of correspondence between the two writers, Zweig additionally echoes the existential crises when he stated to Freud that he wished that his *aliyah* would be to return to a reunified post-Nazi Germany and *not* to Eretz Israel.³⁶ In Haifa, Zweig was deeply miserable and like de Haan, he soon abandoned his early Zionist beliefs, which is set out in a letter to Freud, dated 1 September 1935:

Meanwhile I have been going through various crises. Firstly, I have established quite calmly that I do not belong here. After twenty years of Zionism this is naturally hard to believe. It is not that I personally am disappointed, for we are really doing quite well here. But all our reasons for coming here were mistaken.³⁷

Zweig's depression and his researching of de Haan "to tread the path of disillusionment yet further, as far as necessary, or possible – further than was good for me"³⁸ was no doubt compounded, as it was for many of his exiled, newly arrived German compatriots (figures such as Walter Benjamin and Max Brod). It also followed the trauma of the World War I and witnessing first-hand the dangers of extreme Nationalist Socialism in Germany. Zweig's struggle to speak Arabic, Hebrew, or English made writing and life in general very difficult and, due to the account of de Haan's assassination being published in those three languages, Zweig admitted that he had made a huge error in believing that, for seven years, de Haan was murdered by Arabs:

The figure of this Orthodox Jew who "reviled God in Jerusalem" in clandestine poems and who had a love affair with [an] Arab boy[s] – this important and complex character gripped my imagination while the blood was still not dry in the whole affair. It compelled me.³⁹

De Haan first became aware of an attempt on his life in 1923 and, in a letter to Colonel Frederick Kisch, who held a particular dislike of the Dutch author, de Haan wrote: "I got a letter (in a government envelope) telling me that I shall be killed if I do not leave Palestine before the 24th. I know that the question whether it is advisable or not to kill me is seriously discussed in the circles which you have the honor to represent."⁴⁰

Later, in May 1923, de Haan received another letter, which read: "I hereby inform you that unless you leave our country by the 24th of this month, you will be shot like a rabid dog."⁴¹ The letter was signed "The Black Hand." It is difficult to know the meaning of the date "the 24th." De Haan filed a complaint with the police, but

he greeted the death threat nonchalantly, and apparently whenever he made an appointment he would often smile and add: “That is, if I’m not murdered beforehand.” De Haan wrote in his journal on 25 May, the day after the death threat had expired, surely relieved: “How innocent is the 25th when one is not assassinated on the 24th.”⁴²

Another provocation from de Haan came when he headed off a Zionist greeting party for the English press baron Lord Northcliffe, who was arriving in Jerusalem by train from Egypt in 1924. De Haan bought a ticket to Egypt so that he could board the same train back to Jerusalem that Northcliffe would be arriving on – in order to befriend Northcliffe and warn him about the Zionist Committee and their intentions. As the train pulled into Jerusalem, with both the Zionist Committee and the British delegation staging a ceremonial welcome for Northcliffe, they found Northcliffe getting off the train smiling and laughing with de Haan who had talked to him for the entire journey, warning him of the Zionists and British plans. It is difficult not to admire de Haan’s sheer tenacity and will. He was killed later that year; according to a friend, H.A. Goodman who recalled the murder:

When news of the murder reached Rabbi Sonnenfeld, he tore his clothes in mourning. De Haan’s funeral on the Mount of Olives was a demonstration of the entire religious population against this strange murder, for this was the first time in our generation that Jew stretched out his hands against Jew. Rabbi Sonnenfeld and many other Rabbis and communal leaders came to grant him the final honour, all of them outraged by the murder. During the seven days of mourning, representatives of the Arab Executive and the Muslim-Christian Association paid visits of condolence to Rabbi Sonnenfeld.⁴³

De Haan became the main political liaison between the Agudat and the Arab opposition to the Zionists and a crucial partner. In the years leading to his death, de Haan, along with his rabbi, Chaim Sonnenfeld, was increasingly meeting more Arab committees in Palestine and Amman, from the head of the Muslim Christian Association to various mayors, and was on good terms with the grand mufti, Kamil Effendi al-Husayni. De Haan would return back to his house early in the evening before setting off in the night with Adil Effendi to meet various Palestinian nationalist parties, some whom had long been at odds with the Turks. Invariably they would get a train to Lydda (or Ludd or Lot as de Haan always referred) and set off on horseback underneath the moon and the stars, with the writer commenting on the beauty of the painted stones guiding their way. Among the eulogies of de Haan’s death was a tribute from the mufti’s brother, Musa Kazim al-Husayni, the mayor of Jerusalem.

His assassins and their employers were not unobvious about their motives for carrying out the killing. In November 1970 – and rebroadcast on 21 November 1971 – de Haan’s assassin Avraham Tehomi went on Israeli national TV and radio to proudly declare the righteousness of taking de Haan’s life and putting aside any doubt about this being anything but an act sponsored by a nascent state. Journalists interviewed Yehuda Slutski, editor of *Kitsur Toldoth ha-Haganah*, and police officer David Tidhar. Tehomi

proudly confessed in the interview for Israeli TV that Yosef Hecht, commander of the Haganah, had received instructions to eliminate the “traitor, Jakob de Haan, Dutch poet, novelist, diplomat, former Zionist, and spokesman for Agudat Israel against the creation of a Jewish State,” and had relayed the orders to Zechariah Urieli, Haganah commander of Jerusalem. Tehomi admitted that he had carried out the order, openly stating: “I have done what the Haganah decided had to be done. And nothing was done without the order of Yitzhak Ben-Zvi. I have no regrets because he [de Haan] wanted to destroy our whole idea of Zionism.” Tehomi went on: “This was not Hecht’s decision alone. Someone very important in the country was involved in this . . . this was a very high-level decision (I hope this does not appear in the broadcast. . .) He received permission . . . the time has still not come to reveal the truth.”⁴⁴



Figure 5. Letter to de Haan from Chaim Weizmann regarding application to join Zionist Organization, 31 December 1918. Copyright Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, University of Amsterdam.

Police officer David Tidhar stated: “I regret I was not chosen to liquidate him, my job was to protect those who did . . . I moved into the area and waited for the shots . . . Naturally I appeared on the scene immediately. Since I knew in which direction the gunman had to escape. . . .”⁴⁵ Ironically Tidhar went on to have a career as a celebrated crime writer and rather incredibly had owed de Haan money for subsidizing Tidhar’s first novel. They fell out over the debt and, not long before the shooting, de Haan asked Tidhar to repay him, demanding that he bring his IOU note to settle the debt.

What seems missing from the archives – and from many of his many detractors – is any outright condemnation of de Haan’s sexual activities, which, in contrast to his wild and eccentric behavior, appeared more discreet than people give him credit for. The criticism was greater coming from his European counterparts, most notably and

understandably, de Haan's wife, Johanna. Secondly, much of the criticism toward de Haan's sexuality and any perceived sexual activities was mainly directed as responses to his literary works. Zweig, in a 1932 letter to Freud, for example, refers to having a "special distaste" to the queer elements of his research on de Haan. As part of Zweig's ongoing self-analysis, he talks of his reluctance of removing his own repressed sexuality. De Haan spoke of it awakening his own hidden desires: of self-identifying as being, and empathizing with, both a young [Arab] boy and an impious-Orthodox lover, referring to the Freudian notion of the taboo:

You see I am answering your letter, but first I want to spin my thread yet further. The homosexual component in this book, which I am dictating with special distaste and with specially great concentration, challenged me right away to self-analysis. I was both, the Arab (semitic) boy and the impious-Orthodox lover and writer [de Haan]. I am afraid that the removal of these repressions is the main cause of my depression.⁴⁶

Essentialism

The practices surrounding homosexuality in early twentieth century Palestine were not unlike the newly arriving European and Zionist concepts of nationality, which is to say they were distinctly European and foreign concepts. Notions of comparing East (*turka*) to West (*franja*), deemed essentialist, were phenomena, argued as being constitutive of the political, economic, and military battles that were occurring at the time.⁴⁷ Joseph Massad and Khaled el-Rouayheb, who discuss sexual attitudes in nineteenth-and-early-twentieth-century Palestine and the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia (MENA SA) region, write that the term homosexuality, or queer became (interpreted as being) universalized in late nineteenth century Germany.⁴⁸ They write that sexual practices were perceived to be part of a person not having a particular or fixed sexual identity *per se*, or that such an identity differed from any other aspect of one's personality. Furthermore, this identity represented to Europeans more fluid notions of gender during adolescence, much of which seems to revolve around what is regarded as legally permissible and what is gazed upon as an ideal notion of beauty. This legal permissibility was linked to the age of maturity from boy to man (fifteen lunar years.) and where Islamic law protects the boy. Islamic and Sufi practices of beardless boy-gazing (*amrad*) were often used to inspire notions of beauty in literature and art and, like all of the orthodox Abrahamic faiths, also extreme attitudes towards idolatry and images of the human form. Yet, along with pretty young male servants in Paradise, the *ghulam* (boy) was, and still is, considered *haram* or taboo.

Some notions have often been either overlooked or overamplified by the West, according to Massad, in an environment that was predominantly liberal and where, crucially, class played a decisive role, such as in having access to possibly more obscure types of literature. This canon, he argues, is analogous to an Orientalist type of archaeology, which has apparently played a deciding factor in how the admiring gaze

is to be interpreted. This canon consists of an archive of mediaeval love poems, and medical treatises on treating – and legal treatises on punishing – same sex desires and practices.⁴⁹ Rouayheb also points to poetry books having separate sections for love poems addressed to males (by males) and to females (by females).⁵⁰ Such texts range from *al-Qanun fi al-tibb* (Canon Medicinae) by the Islamic intellectual Ibn Sina (980–1037), and *Risala fi al-Ubna* (Message to his son) by the Persian physician, al-Razi (925), to Syria’s Ibn Tamiyya’s (1263–1329) treatise against *Nazar ilya al-marda’* (The contemplation of the beardless), *Risala fi fihrist kutub...* al-Razi (the section “I’lajat al-Ubna”

(The Treatment for Ubna) by al-Biruni (973–1050), and *Bustan al-atibba’ wa rawdat al-alibba* (Garden of the Physicians and Meadow of the Intelligent) by Ibn al-Matran (1191) of Damascus. Also worth noting is a work by al-Saffarini (d.1744), a Hanbali scholar from Nablus, *Qar’ al-Siyat fi Qam’ Ahl al-Liwat*,⁵¹ an invective against predominantly Turkish “sodomites” in Nablus.

Among this Orientalist archaeology there is a culturally entrenched vernacular (or possibly, a derogatory glossary), with various specific terms used to denote who is active, (*Luti*, From the people of Lot) and who is passive, (*ma’bun*) and also the interchangeability of a person from one to another (*bidal/mubadala*), or the gender ambiguity, or effeminacy of a young male (*mukhannath* or *rijal mu’annathin*). *Liwat* and *ubna* were terms used to describe homosexuality as a whole, and much like many other places it has been used to describe queer behaviors and practices as an illness – a negative attitude that still prevails. Al-Razi referred to *ubna* as a “hidden illness” (*Al-da’ al-khafi*).⁵² *Liwat*, however, is used more in a negative context to describe a crime that has been committed, specifically, extra-marital intercourse and is subject to Islamic laws of *zina*, which has caused much discussion as to what is legally permissible. Without trying to essentialize de Haan’s lovers, his *Quatrains* reflect the Arabic poetic tradition reflecting upon the *amrad* and also the Sufi practice of *sama’* (Turkish: *suma*) of boy gazing.

Oh, the night will also be empty for him and hot,
 Who rides beside me, Adil, a naughty boy?
 Will it live full of pleasure and pain are cruel,
 One torture waking and sleeping?

— “Adil Effendi”



Figure 6. British representative John Philby’s invitation to de Haan to meet King Husayn in Amman, 21 January 1924. Copyright Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana, University of Amsterdam.

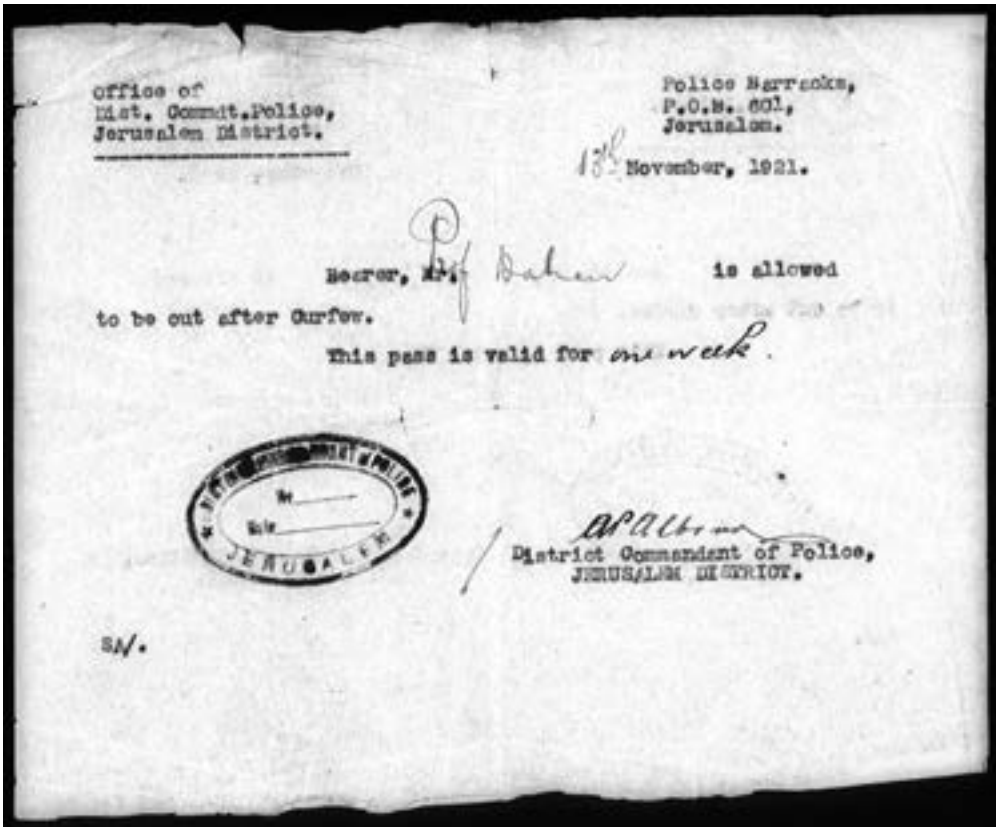


Figure 7. Police permit to walk around after curfew, 13 November 1921. Copyright Bibliotheca Rosenthalana, University of Amsterdam.

Adil E. A. (1900–1963) was de Haan’s closest friend in Jerusalem, lover, tour guide, student, teacher, and also landlord, with de Haan renting Adil’s brother’s summerhouse in the Old City from his uncle Ibrahim. Ibrahim worked as a high-ranking police officer in Jerusalem.⁵³ Effendi, or “naughty Adil” as de Haan often referred to him, was twenty years younger than de Haan. He taught the lawyer Arabic and how to ride,⁵⁴ and often accompanied him on trips through the countryside and on many walks at night, of which de Haan wrote more tenderly in his *Quatrains* than in the diaristic feuilletons. De Haan often referred to Adil as just his “friend,” but he was clearly more than that, not just as partner and lover, but someone very special and dear: de Haan saying: “I know all his secrets.” The two were like a couple of naughty boys and partners in crime, with de Haan ironically being the quite useful lawyer, able to bail out Adil or their friends, and Adil, often the light-fingered kleptomaniac, who “has no intentions of paying for that lawfully,”⁵⁵ which seemed to amuse de Haan.

In the amrad, the objects of both chaste and sexual amorous male attention were often prepubescent and adolescent boys. These boys, defined as smooth-skinned or

downy-cheeked, ranged in age from their early teens (sometimes even younger) to as old as twenty. The *amrad*, also referred to as *ghulam* and *hadath*, is common in the Arabic literature of the Ottoman period. As El-Rouahyeb comments: “Much if not most of the extant love poetry of the period is pederastic in tone, portraying an adult male poet’s passionate love for a teenage boy.”⁵⁶ One explanation for this widespread phenomenon is that children inhabited a “gender limbo” of sorts until they reached full physical development. For boys, that milestone was marked and frequently publicly celebrated by the appearance of the beard, typically at around fifteen. Islamic law decreed that age, in the absence of clear physical signs of maturity or of the youth’s own declaration of physical maturity.

De Haan had previously worked with children for many years and was happiest in the boys orphanage; he wrote a children’s page for a Dutch newspaper *Het Volk* from which, after publishing *Pipelines*, he was sacked and put on a register forbidding him to teach children; he also taught at the Evaline de Rothschild girls school in Rehavia. There is a definite desire not to misrepresent de Haan regarding children of which he clearly was eternally affectionate, kind, and generous towards, but some of the quatrains found in the DBNL have a slightly odious, predatory air about them, particularly while often referring to notions of innocence. When de Haan laments about the boys he went to school with, he talks as if they were missed opportunities, and in the poems he applies the same wistful sentiments to the young boys while he was watching them, unbeknown, while they tended to their flocks:

They know nothing, my Arab boys,
Of all that my panting heart alarmed.
They die blessed, as they were created,
In licentiousness and lust heart.

— “Young Shepherds”

In 1923, the Mandate distributed what was surely interpreted as a bizarre sex questionnaire that was part of a general survey into the sexual attitudes and practices of Palestinians.⁵⁷ The questionnaire itself was identical to a previous survey earlier conducted by the British in India in the nineteenth century and had the word “India” crossed out on the cover and replaced it with the word “Palestine.” The six reports focused on the districts of Jerusalem, Nablus, Ramallah, Acre, Jaffa, and Safad, and were written by six local officers who were either Palestinian Muslim or Christian Orthodox. They looked at a wide range of sexual practices in Palestine, ranging from polygamy, lesbianism (“sophism”), homosexuality (“sodomy”), pederasty, bestiality, incest, and even necrophilia to which, according to the questionnaire at least, no one had, thankfully, ever heard of the practice.⁵⁸ The focus on polygamy in the questionnaire might understandably allude to a concern regarding population density and influx due to increased Jewish migration to Palestine, but this point does not seem to be made. What is clear is that arriving Europeans increased the contrasting notions of puritanism and Orientalism. One night on a drive through Qatamon with Adil, de

Haan asks quite innocently – and without any irony – if he is indeed such a person, after being called a “strange Orientalist” at a dinner party in Jerusalem. This coming from a fellow Dutchman, working for the East India Company.⁵⁹

One of the local citing officer’s reports that the “practice” of lesbianism as “sophism” was something imported from Damascus and Cairo, and suggested that Nablus was Palestine’s most liberal city, possibly as a result of its ties with Damascus. In Nablus, referring to one historic example, a text by Muhammad al-Saffarini (d.1744), a Hanbali scholar from Nablus, the practice of gazing upon beardless boys or clean shaven, predominantly Turkish, men had been for some time a part of everyday life in Nablus. Al-Saffarini composed an invective against what he called the “sodomites of his time” who, he bemoaned, were increasingly present in his homeland. They were often recognizable by certain distinctive physical attributes, such as “clean-shaven faces and long moustaches, and by specific habits, like frequent congregation in cafes.” Al-Saffarini was unequivocal about this: the sodomites were “a plague that had to be suppressed.”⁶⁰ Despite the offence of the statement, it is worth remembering that this type of negative view also existed as a defence among scholars who had experienced much criticism for their boy gazing. Similar psychological denials and cultural attitudes still exist today.

De Haan’s sexual activity was well-known to the Zionist Organization and to the British, but it did not add to existing problems they had with him about his political activities because he was an exceptional lawyer. In one year he wrote fifty-five legal papers. However, attacks on his sexuality became a last resort that the Zionists, particularly Kisch, decided to use against de Haan after the meetings with Husayn and Abdullah. The Orthodox Jews, local Palestinian communities, and the Jordanians embraced de Haan when he was shunned by both the Zionist and the British administrations. They paid little attention to his sexual proclivities and, to the end, he was fiercely loyal to his rabbi, Chaim Sonnenfeld. Ending with one affectionate quatrain and in a typically mischievous fashion, de Haan speculates whether his rabbi has ever entertained homoerotic thoughts – and if he ever gave in to them. The poet addresses his death and contentedly wanders off in the night with his beloved Adil:

He was a lad. Did he ever succumb?
He became a man. Did he always resist?
Soon I will wander again with Adil through the country
Of light and shadow in the full moon.

— “Rabbi Chaim Sonnenfeld”

De Haan’s short time in Jerusalem can be looked at in many ways: he was a religious zealot, a political activist, an Orientalist, or even as a mischievous sex tourist of sorts. De Haan’s kind and lasting words “Such a boundless desire for friendship,” taken from his poem *To a Young Fisherman*, can be found today inscribed in the pink triangle homo-monument in Westermarkt, Amsterdam, situated directly underneath the house of Anne Frank.

Nathan Witt, British artist, has been working in Palestine since 2012, with Art School Palestine, Decolonizing Architecture in Bayt Sahur, and Campus in Camps in Dahaysha refugee camp. He has a forthcoming residency with the Birzeit University Museum, and Konrad Adenauer Foundation and MMAG Foundation in Amman. He is also current Guest Artist at CERN in Geneva.

Endnotes

- 1 Edward Said, *Freud and the non-European* (New York, NY: Verso Books, 2014).
- 2 According to the history of the Haganah (*Toledoth ha-Haganah*, vol. 11 Part 1 (1964), 251–53), the order allegedly came from Joseph Hecht, then the coordinator of the organization, who instructed Zachariah Urieli, the Jerusalem commander, to have de Haan killed by the smallest possible group. Zionist newspapers named the assassins as Abraham Krichevski (Giora) and Abraham Silberg (Tahomi); the former is said to have died in Tel Aviv in 1942, the latter to have immigrated to California. Zionist papers have identified Isaac Ben-Zvi, his wife, Rahel Yanait, Moses Eisenstadt, and Aviezer Yellin as prominent in the Haganah's Jerusalem branch at the time. Hecht was later dismissed from his command by the Zionist leadership as the result of an investigation into the Haganah's failure to give prior warning of the 1929 riots.
- 3 Nir Hasson, "Forget Paris, This Is 'Gay Jerusalem'," *Haaretz*, 11 February 2011.
- 4 All can be found at De Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren in The Hague, online at www.dbnl.org/ (accessed 7 October 2021).
- 5 Ernest Freud, *The Letters of Sigmund Freud and Arnold Zweig* (Hogarth Press, 1970), 42. For an account of the precedent of the Jewish political assassination that cites de Haan as one of the three major examples of political assassination in Israel see Nachman Ben-Yehuda: *Political Assassinations by Jews: A Rhetorical Device for Justice* (State University of New York Press, 1992).
- 6 Jacob Israel de Haan, *Feuilletons from the Algemeen Handelsblad*, #21. DBNL, The Hague.
- 7 Clinton Eliot, *Hidden: The Intimate Lives of Gay Men Past and Present* (Bloomington, IN: Authorhouse, 2014), 88.
- 8 Item from the Bibliotheca Rosenthalana archive. Number *Ros. de Haan*, 9 (1918, letter and envelope from Weizman).
- 9 Jacob Israel de Haan, *Feuilletons from the Algemeen Handelsblad*, #140. DBNL, The Hague.
- 10 Ludy Giebels, "Jacob Israel de Haan in Mandate Palestine: Was the Victim of the First Zionist Political Assassination a 'Jewish Lawrence of Arabia'?" *Jewish Historical Studies* 46 (2014): 110.
- 11 Items from the Bibliotheca Rosenthalana archive. Comprising a series of seven letters/telegraphs. A full account of these complaints and correspondences can be found in item *Ros. de Haan*, 4.
- 12 Bibliotheca Rosenthalana, *Ros. de Haan*, 4.
- 13 Moses Blau, *Amuda di-Nehora* (Jerusalem, 1932), 75–79.
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JERUSALEM
NEIGHBORHOODS

Tariq Bab al-Silsila
A Portrait of an Old
City Suq

Nazmi Jubeh

Abstract

Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Street) is a major historical commercial and residential street in the old walled city of Jerusalem. The road displays an architectural museum, exhibiting tens of historical buildings with strikingly beautiful facades. Most of the existing buildings date to the Mamluk period (1260–1516), and some to the Crusader period (1099–1189). Besides being an exhibition of historical buildings, the road also bears testimony to the cultural life of Jerusalem over more than seven centuries. The mixture of commerce, industry, pilgrimage, charitable foundations, and education can be seen in its zenith in Tariq Bab al-Silsila, which today is also a suq that since 1967 resists for its survival.

Keywords

Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Street); Old City of Jerusalem; Mamluks; architecture; suq; commerce.

The current plan of Jerusalem's Old City was laid out by the Roman emperor Hadrian (117–138 CE), who reestablished the city of Jerusalem, known then as Aelia Capitolina, in 135. The city originally consisted of a colonnade street (Cardo Maximus) that began at today's Damascus Gate and crossed it in a north–south axis. It is uncertain where the colonnade street ended in the south, but it certainly went beyond al-Bashura market (al-Qasaba/city center) and was extended later during the reign of the Byzantine

emperor Justinian I (565–527) in the mid-sixth century after he constructed the Nea Maria Church near Mount Zion’s Gate (Bab al-Nabi Dawud). The second Hadrian street also began south of Damascus Gate and continued along the Trypoeon ravine (Tariq al-Wad) exiting the Old City at Dung Gate (Bab al-Maghariba). It is unknown whether or not Hadrian also built the east-west road (Cardo Decumanus) that crossed the main colonnade street, but it is certain that such a road existed in Byzantine Jerusalem, beginning at Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil) and extending east towards al-Aqsa Mosque. The north-south axis intersected with the east-west axis south of the Triple Market (Suq al-‘Atarin (Spice Market), Suq al-Lahhamin (Butchers Market), and Suq al-Khawajat (Merchants Market). These features can be identified on the mid-sixth-century Madaba map mosaic. The street has



Figure 1. Bab al-Silsila road, 1920—1933, Library of Congress, online at www.loc.gov/pictures/search/?q=Old%20City%2C%20Jerusalem (accessed 19 October 2021).

remained as it was, except for an elevation of a few meters from the city’s level in the Roman-Byzantine-Early-Islamic periods, clearly seen in excavated parts of the city, such as in the southern part known as the Cardo. The city’s layout has not changed since the Byzantine period except for some size reduction in the south.

Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Chain Street) starts in the east, immediately after the point where al-Bazaar, Butchers Market and Bashura Market meet and slopes to the east. Suq Bab-al Silsila (Chain Gate Market) is a long market that ends at al-Aqsa Mosque’s gate, lending its name to the market. Nowadays, the suq is around 308 meters long and has 110 shops, although few in the eastern part. It is abound with public Mamluk buildings, especially mausoleums and schools, with the most important landmark located in the western part, Khan al-Sultan, considered one of Jerusalem’s largest and most beautiful khans or travelers’ inns.

As we will discuss later, Suq Bab al-Silsila had various functions during the Mamluk and Ottoman periods. In the twentieth century, it went through several transformations: as handicrafts shops began to disappear, they were replaced by grocery shops, restaurants, and cafés. Changes continued after 1967 when the suq became more open to tourism and visitors to al-Buraq Wall (Wailing Wall) and al-Aqsa



Figure 2. Six vaulted sections of today's suq alternate with open sections.

Mosque, and encouraging souvenir shops to appear. Tourism soon dominated the suq, but restaurants, cafés, groceries and butcher shops did not disappear entirely until the intifada (1987–1991) when touristic activity stopped and most shops closed. Importantly, the way to al-Buraq Wall was diverted and access became possible only through the Armenian Quarter and Dung Gate, and no longer through Tariq Bab al-Silsila.

At the beginning of the 1990s, the suq was revived and souvenir shops, restaurants, and a few spice shops took the place of the former butcher shops and cafés. Over the past two decades, since the eruption of al-Aqsa Intifada (second intifada) in 2000, Suq Bab al-Silsila has suffered the closure of most of its shops – with the COVID-19 pandemic only worsening the situation.

Suq Bab al-Silsila descends gradually from west to east through flat terraced steps that facilitates movement of pedestrian traffic and allows for shops on both sides. The suq is connected to the surrounding residential neighborhoods at several points: from the southern side, the Jewish Quarter, al-Sharaf Quarter, and the Moroccan Quarter; and from the northern side, 'Aqabat al-Khalidi, Tariq al-Qirami and Tariq al-Wad. Along the suq, several entrances to main residential complexes (hawsh) can be identified, which indicates the functions of the market changed throughout its various periods. In Tariq Bab al-Silsila there is a mixture of commercial and industrial buildings, including khans, residential buildings, mausoleums and schools (madradas). Although not much is known about its role before the Crusader period, it is one of the more diverse old streets representing the composition of the old town from that period to today. It has not been possible to inspect all buildings on both sides of the road, but below we will try to present those that are most significant.

The exact date of construction of the suq's shops is difficult to determine, but their current state is consistent with the Crusader-Mamluk period,¹ which suggests that it dates at least from the Mamluk period. There is much architectural evidence indicating the existence of small markets and shops from the Crusader period, but they are not connected with each other. While the suq may pre-date the Crusader period,²

the Mamluk style is dominant in the many facades. Most of the *qanatir* (vaulted-ceiling passages) date from the Mamluk period, while the height of the identified Mamluk buildings are consistent with the current suq levels. The sizes of stores vary: some have large halls, which is unusual, indicating that many changes have occurred over the different periods, especially during the Islamic periods.

Tariq Bab al-Silsila is one the most famous in the Old City for its abundance of wooden and stone mashrabiyyas (projected latticed windows). Mashrabiyyas were common in the period when houses were built atop the shops overlooking the suq, enabling onlookers to see the street without being noticed by passersby.

Suq Bab al-Silsila boasts four separate roofed sections of barrel vaulting (*qanatir*) of various lengths, interrupted by short open areas – making it the most covered suq in the Old City. The first third of the suq from the west, about one hundred meters, is covered with a barrel vault (*qantara*) with openings for light and ventilation. From there one can access Khan al-Sultan. The next fifty meters of the suq is unroofed, followed by a small section covered with a barrel vault and topped with a high multi-story building overlooking both east and west sides of the suq. After another uncovered fifty meters, the suq is again covered with another barrel vault with light and ventilation openings. It is uncovered for another stretch before it is covered again with the Tashtamuriyya school's vaulted ceiling for about seventy meters, the top of which is used for building. The market is roofless in the area around al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, the Khalidi Library and Sabil al-Khalidi, and then is covered again for eighty meters until Sabil Bab al-Silsila and al-Tankiziyya School. From there it leads to a wide open square that facilitates movement to al-Aqsa Mosque, followed by the vaulted entrance hall to Bab al-Sakina and Bab al-Silsila.

The market was famous for selling foodstuffs until the end of the twentieth century, when it began to accommodate to the growing tourism activity by changing their merchandise to attract tourists. The northern part of the market once had two working sesame presses that produced sesame oil and sesame paste (tahini) and were housed in two of the biggest commercial buildings in the Old City. Abu Kamil al-Salihi's sesame press is still operating, preserving the traditional hand press methods. Sa'ad al-Salihi's press was closed in the 1970s with the press still intact; a small area was turned into a souvenir shop. The suq also had several coffee shops: Rishiq, Kurdiyya, al-Dirr, and al-Khalis.

Two types of residential buildings are found along the suq, with the exception of the western third. The first type directly overlooks the suq, while the second is concealed behind serpentine paths that lead to huge residential complexes, especially in the northern part, forming *ahwash* (s. *hawsh*, residential complex). The most famous of these are Hawsh Ghayth and Hawsh Narsat (referring to nurses). Both were probably khans or soap factories in the past that changed over time to become residential complexes. Residential buildings increase in the last third of the suq closer to al-Haram, where there are almost no shops. Most probably these buildings were public buildings in the past, then turned into private property, and with time lost the features of public buildings.

A number of roads connect directly to Bab al-Silsila. On the south side (and then onward to the west and east) there is the street known as Daraj al-Tabuna (Daraj al-Harafish) that leads to al-Sharaf neighborhood and the Jewish quarter. To the east of the Jewish quarter there is a huge hall, known as al-Amana Bakery (previously Sunuqrut Bakery),³ which may have been originally a khan or soap factory. It is difficult to determine the date of construction, but possibly it dates to the fifteenth century Mamluk period. On the opposite side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila is a large store of two intersecting halls, which could have been used for industrial purposes or even a khan.⁴

At al-Sharaf neighborhood intersection, located in the first (eastern) third of the suq, there is a huge hall that is now a restaurant (Rishiq restaurant), that was a famous coffee shop in the past. While the size of the hall suggests that it was used for industrial purposes or a khan, no evidence remains to prove that other than the basic foundations that are still intact. Most probably this hall also dates to the Mamluk period. On the opposite side of the road, another huge Mamluk hall is also used as a restaurant (Burbara restaurant).⁵ It is possible that this hall was part of al-Fahm Khan that is mentioned in early Mamluk and Ottoman sources.

The last intersection, located opposite to al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, leads to ‘Aqabat Abu Madyan al-Ghawth that used to lead to the Moroccan Quarter before its destruction in 1967, and now leads to Sahat al-Buraq (the Buraq plaza of the Western Wall). Al-Khalidi Library is located east of ‘Aqabat Abu Madyan, while the Mamluk-era Zawiyat Abu Madyan al-Ghawth is on the south side.

North of Bab al-Silsila are two intersections; the first (from west to east) leads to ‘Aqbat al-Hakkari and al-Qirami neighborhood that were famous in the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods for being inhabited by Hakkaris⁶ (Kurds) who built al-Badriyya School and Maqam al-Qirami. On the corner of the intersection is a large Mamluk period building used now as public bathrooms after it was divided into several small cells. To the east is a big store (Karama Store) that seems to have been used for commercial purposes and goes back to the Mamluk period.

The second intersection in the east part of the road, leads to Daraj al-Wad (stairway) near Sabil al-Khalidi. This stairway links the bridge that holds up the eastern part of Tariq Bab al-Silsila with Tariq al-Wad which is twelve meters below the bridge.

The eastern part of the suq (the last 120 meters) is built over a bridge that goes back to the ‘Umayyad period, as suggested by its current condition. Additional structures and supporting foundations were added to the bridge during the Fatimid period. However, many of the bridge’s stones suggest that it was originally built in the Roman period. The bridge links between al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, al-Khalidi Library, and Bab al-Silsila leading directly to al-Aqsa Mosque. The bridge spans Wadi al-Tawahin (Trypoeon ravine), also known as Tariq al-Wad. It is impressively sturdy, still existing fourteen centuries after its construction and supporting several multi-leveled residential and public structures with large and heavy facades.

Michael Burgoyne’s *Mamluk Jerusalem*⁷ identifies four Crusader markets in Suq

Bab al-Silsila; some are covered market halls and the rest are rows of shops. The first market consists of a large hall (stable) that was annexed to Khan al-Sultan later on, and is located to the left (west) of the Khan, right before the entrance. The second market is the vaulted entrance to the Khan that leads to an open courtyard with two rows of shops. The third market is located west of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum; it is a large hall – its area is not exactly known – but the visible part corroborates the enormous size of the market. The fourth market is located south of the Khalidi Library (Baraka Khan mausoleum). Burgoyne’s assertion was based on the existence of Crusader-style architectural elements and texts from the same period.⁸

Tariq Bab al-Silsila is well documented, given its central location and the numerous public buildings found along the street. Many books describe Jerusalem during the Crusader period, but the most important is by the famous late-Mamluk Jerusalem chronicler, Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali, who mentions:

The David Axis, peace be upon him, which is the greatest road (*al-shari‘ al-‘adhim*), starts at al-Aqsa Mosque’s gate, known as Bab al-Silsila and continues until Bab al-Mihrab, which is the gate known as Bab al-Khalil [Jaffa Gate].⁹ The road is divided into several parts: the first part extends from the Mosque’s gate to Dar al-Qur‘an al-Salamiyya¹⁰ known as Suq al-Sagha [Goldsmith’s Market]; the second part extends from Bab al-Salamiyya to Bab Harat al-Sharaf,¹¹ and it is known as Suq al-Qashash [Straw Workers Market]; the third part extends from the gate of Bab Harat al-Sharaf to Khan al-Fahm¹² and is known as Suq al-Mubaydat [Copper Bleachers Market];¹³ the fourth part extends from Bab al-Khan to Qantar al-Jubayli to Daraj al-Harafish,¹⁴ and is known as Suq al-Tabbakhin [Cooks’ Market]; the fifth part extends from Daraj al-Harafish to the Jewish Quarter’s gate,¹⁵ and is known as the Caravan. It was a great Khan, part of al-Aqsa Mosque endowments, that was rented for 400 dinars per year [in the fifteenth century according to Mujir al-Din], and various merchandise used to be sold in it. The sixth part of the street extends from the Jewish Quarter’s gate to Khan al-Suf [wool],¹⁶ and it is also known as Suq al-Harir [Silk Suq]. The final part extends from Khan al-Suf to the city’s gate that was known as ‘Arsat al-Ghilal [Crops Market].¹⁷

It is important to note here that the southern part of Tariq Bab al-Silsila was confiscated in 1969 and annexed to what has become known as the extended Jewish Quarter, but the annexation decision was not enforced and most of Tariq Bab al-Silsila is still in the hands of its Palestinian owners, except for three shops that were confiscated. One is opposite to Khan al-Sultan, the other is located in the middle of the suq facing the upper Salihi press and the third is facing the lower Salihi press. Kurdiyya coffee shop, at the beginning of ‘Aqbat Abu Madyan” which leads to the Moroccan Quarter (Sahat al-Buraq), was also confiscated. Shlomo Goren, head of the Israeli military rabbinate in 1967, confiscated the building located east of the

Khalidi Library and turned it into his headquarters. He built an additional level over the eastern wing of the library for use as the Talmud Torah School. If it was not for al-Khalidi family's diligent efforts to defend their library, it would have also been confiscated,¹⁸ just as al-Tankaziyya school was in 1969. Tariq Bab al-Silsila is targeted by settlers and constantly threatened with confiscation given its location on the northern boundaries of the extended Jewish Quarter next to Sahat al-Buraq, but the resistance of its residents and proprietors formed an impenetrable wall that has prevented attempts to take over this central area.

Several Jerusalemite families lived on Tariq Bab al-Silsila in the past and still own real estate there, in addition to the properties of the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf. They include the Qutayna, 'Asali, Hadiyah, Imam, and Khalidi families who owned the most of the estates in this area, especially in the eastern third of it. Most of the family estates in this area are inherited family endowments (*waqf thurri*). Images of Tariq Bab al-Silsila from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries abound with beautiful mashrabiyyas decorating the facades of upper floors, some of which can still be seen in the vicinity al-Tashmuriyya school and opposite to al-Khalidi Library.

Despite numerous studies done on some of its buildings, Tariq Bab al-Silsila still entails a challenge to researchers, as it hides within its folds much historical, archeological, and architectural information requiring further exploration and documentation from the Crusader and Mamluk periods, in addition to remains Roman and Umayyad eras. Below we will explore the most important historical buildings that can be studied along Tariq Bab al-Silsila from west to east.

Khan al-Sultan

Khan al-Sultan, known also as Khan al-Wakala, is located in the heart of the city's commercial center near the intersection of two axes on the western side of Suq Bab al-Silsila. Although it is believed that the current khan (or at least the part near the entrance) used to be a vaulted market hall dating to the Crusader period,¹⁹ Khan al-Sultan was built in 1386–87 CE at the time of Mamluk sultan al-Dhahir Barquq, during the rule of Amir Baydamur, governor of Bilad al-Sham kingdoms, the Mamluk ruler of Syria, by Asbugha b. Balat, superintendent of the two holy mosques in Jerusalem and Hebron, as cited in the inscription on the western side of al-Khan's entrance.²⁰

The khan was built to be a commercial market, incorporating parts of the Crusader market, as well as hospice, and destination for trade caravans, and endowed to the al-Aqsa Mosque. Apparently the khan was not specifically named after the "sultan" who founded it, although this cannot be ruled out, but was a center to collect taxes (*rasm al-qabban*) on merchandise entering Jerusalem for later sale in the markets. Mujir al-Din at the end of the fifteenth century wrote the following about the khan: "It is a great khan that was endowed to al-Aqsa Mosque. It was rented out for 400 dinars per year, and a variety of merchandise was sold in it."²¹

To avoid interrupting the continuity of the suq, a *zuqaq* (vaulted passageway) was built to join the khan with Tariq Bab al-Silsila through a long corridor that ends with

the khan's huge gate and then continues to form a suq hall with five stores on the right and four on the left forming a vaulted market that precedes the two-story market hall. At the center of the western side (between the four stores on the left) there is a modest gate that leads to a large rectangular hall of about 100 square meters.²² Most probably this hall was used as a stable for animals; it was still used for that purpose until five decades ago, and now it is used as public bathrooms. These structures date back to the Crusader period.

Behind the gallery at the upper floor of the entrance hall is a series of small chambers – six on the left and six on the right – that were used to accommodate lodgers, in addition to al-Suwayqa hall that has a barrel vault built from a series of pointed arches. This beautiful hallway, which has undergone renovation, has maintained its original elements. It allowed for commercial use of its ground floor and use of the upper floor for accommodation. At the end of the hallway there is a large open courtyard in the center of the building at the end of the vaulted market. The yard is rectangular with uneven dimensions, 14 meters wide and 28 meters long, and is surrounded by spacious halls and chambers on the ground floor. Apparently during the Ottoman period (1763 CE), a *sabil* (drinking water fountain) was built in the square's northern wall where there is a deep water well, but the sabil was removed some time later (date unknown) and all that is left is an inscription that refers to the construction date.²³

In the southern western and the southern eastern corners, two stone staircases lead to the upper floor; other staircases are in the western facade of the courtyard. In the upper floor there is a long series of chambers of various sizes and shapes, some of which appear to have been residential apartments. Most probably, during the Ottoman period the northern western hall in the upper floor was converted into a praying hall without any major changes except for the addition of a prayer niche (*mihrab*).

Many changes have been made in most of the building, especially in the courtyard and surrounding rooms in the ground and upper floors. Minimal changes have been made in the corridor market where corbels hold ornamented cornices underneath the corridor of the upper floor. The ornamentation is similar in style to that found in Crusader architecture in Palestine, confirming the date of construction of this part of the building complex. As for other changes, they are mainly additional cement structures that deformed parts of the building, especially in the courtyard and the large halls surrounding it. Parts of the upper floor have also been deformed by the different users of these spaces.²⁴

Information in the records of the shari'a court in Jerusalem indicate that the khan was no longer used for the function it was built for originally during the Mamluk period; it was turned instead into a market for various merchandise, and later into a vegetable market that became known as Dar al- Khudar (house of vegetables). Nevertheless it continued to serve one of the purposes it was built for during the Mamluk period: weighing wheat and other types of grain to collect taxes.

In the nineteenth century the building gradually turned into a center for handicrafts and industrial workshops, with its spaces divided to serve these purposes, negatively affecting the khan's integrity of internal and external appearance. In very recent years

most of the structure was used as housing for the poor as a solution for the growing housing shortage in Jerusalem. The khan has become overcrowded with tenants with families occupying one room or more, and living conditions in the khan are substandard.

The Islamic Waqf Department in Jerusalem partially renovated the khan in the 1990s, mainly renovating and protecting the entrance and entrance hall (the vaulted market at the beginning of the khan). The courtyard was tiled and some of the chambers were renovated, all of the facades were grouted, and roofs and vaults were renovated and insulated. The Welfare Association (Ta'awun) conducted another partial renovation of some rooms to improve living conditions. However, the conditions that surround the building – the political and legal situation in the occupied city – leading to most of it turned into residential apartments, prevent the implementation of a complete project that would guarantee the preservation of the historical integrity of the building and the protection of its aesthetic value.²⁵

Tashtamuriyya School

Al-Tashtamuriyya school, built in 1382 CE by the Mamluk amir Sayf al-Din Tashtamur al-'Ala'i,²⁶ is located south of Tariq Bab al-Silsila on the eastern end of Tariq Harat al-Sharaf and west of Tariq Abu Madyan. The building has a beautiful Mamluk northern facade with Mamluk ornamental elements including different colored stone courses, curved stone stalactite work, symmetrical facade, beautiful stone porch, large windows, and a small water fountain. On the western side of the ground floor, the hall that overlooks Tariq Bab al-Silsila has the Amir Tashtamur mausoleum, covered with a beautiful two-story high dome that houses a mihrab. From inside, the building has four vaulted iwans with a large vaulted hall in the middle. The building was built on three levels, with a mezzanine and an upper floor, and includes a large



Figure 3. The Mamluk ornamented facade of the Tashtamuriyya School.

number of rooms of different sizes that were used as classrooms (especially on the ground floor) and for the accommodation of teachers and students.

The ground floor is currently used as the headquarters for the Islamic Higher Committee, while the rest of the building is a residence for the Imam family, who became in charge of the building (the reason that the building has also been known as Dar al-Imam).²⁷

The Crusaders' Meat Market (Abu Khadija Restaurant and Coffee Shop)

This market is mentioned in Crusader sources²⁸ but without details. Burgoyne and others inspected part of it while studying al-Kilaniyya mausoleum located to the east of the market.²⁹ The market is to the north of Tariq Bab al-Silsila opposite al-Tashtamuriyya school. The building consists of a huge rectangular hall of over 500 square meters, recently renovated, with a hall below of almost the same size. It was used as a grocery for a while and then turned into a restaurant and coffee shop on the upper floor. The ground floor has not been used for a while, although it has been protected and renovated. The foundations of both halls are in excellent condition, but have been divided into several parts; one was annexed to al-Kilaniyya mausoleum and others to adjacent shops, while the main space between the shops was unused. The owner has been gradually emptying the rubble from inside since 2015. In 2017 a large part was renovated for commercial utilization. Excavations at the site revealed another floor below the current one built in the same way. The dimensions of the newly discovered hall have not been identified yet, but it is clear that it goes back to the same historical period as the upper floor. The author has examined it several times during the renovation process.

Al-Kilaniyya Mausoleum

Al-Kilaniyya mausoleum is located opposite 'Aqbat Abu Madyan, on the northern side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila. The mausoleum was built a couple of years after 1352 CE, the date that the estate was endowed by its owner. We know very little about the owner, Jamal al-Din Bahlavani al-Kilani /al-Jilani,³⁰ or when he was reputedly buried there, Al-Kilaniyya mausoleum is one of the few Mamluk buildings that do not have any inscriptions or documents with information about the establishment of the structure.³¹

The use of the building as a school is not certain, although the name "al-Kilaniyya school" was mentioned in the records of al-Shari'a Court in Jerusalem during the Ottoman period between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries,³² but "al-Kilaniyya mausoleum" is more precise and corresponds to the text of the endowment.³³

One of the building's facades can be seen from the road, while the others are hidden by the surrounding buildings. It is actually difficult to identify the extent of

the building because it connects with adjacent buildings, and has been always divided throughout various periods into small units. The symmetrical facade is decorated with curved stone stalactite work, large windows, and high domes. Al-Kilaniyya mausoleum³⁴ consists of two burying chambers that overlook Tariq Bab al-Silsila, separated by a high-walled entrance decorated with three levels of stone stalactites and an open courtyard with two large iwans on the east and west, in addition to several rooms on the ground and upper floors. The main facade is symmetrical and topped with three beautiful stone domes. The burying chambers are square-shaped, and the original ceilings of both rooms are more than eleven meters high, but the rooms were made later into two floors for residential purposes. The first addition (the lower one) was likely completed during the Ottoman period, but the second upper addition was apparently made in the middle of the twentieth century using cement. The visitor can imagine the grandeur of the original burial chambers which extended from the floor to the dome, which was visible from the inside where its windows lit the chambers.

The building was renovated in the mid-1980s by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf and the Islamic Antiquities Department, but its use for residential purposes again damaged the building. It was renovated again in 2013 by Ta'awon.

This building is an example of the complex relationship between preserving cultural heritage on one hand and using historical buildings for residential purposes, especially in cases like Jerusalem's Old City where housing is a major socio-political challenge. Al-Kilaniyya building, similar to many other historical buildings in the city, has undergone numerous changes, including supplementary structures added to it suitable for housing. The current circumstances in Jerusalem make it difficult to reasonably preserve the architectural integrity of the building. It is possible, however, to preserve at least the historical components, especially since it stands witness to a historical period in which Jerusalem had an abundance of architectural gems. Preservation of the building requires frequent renovation, especially because of its intensive use as a residential space requiring several additional structures and adaptations. In fact, preserving the historical appearance for the hundreds of historical buildings in old Jerusalem has become a continuous challenge.

Taziyya School (Madrasa)

East of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, opposite al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyy, is Taziyya school on the northern side of Bab al-Silsila. The school was established by the Mamluk amir Sayf al-Din Taz in 1361 CE, and there is a cartouche on the facade that has his emblem in the shape of a cupbearer. This amir was highly important among the Mamluks as a one of the six amirs who were members of the Supreme Council of the Mamluk state. He died in Damascus and was buried in the school named after him, in some documents the building bears the name Taz mausoleum. Taz endowed al-Minya village, located on the northwest corner of Lake Tiberias, with a shop, bakery and mill to finance this school.

The Taziyya school's beautiful facade features Mamluk ornamental and

architectural art. The school is L-shaped, probably determined by the layout of the buildings surrounding al-Kilaniyya mausoleum. The school consists of three rooms: a main entrance, and a staircase leading to two rooms on the upper floor. The passage on the ground floor leads to two vaulted halls; the western one extends to reach the north side of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum, while the other hall extends west to the street. The upper part of the school was destroyed.

Al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya (Turbat al-Amir Baraka Khan)

Al-Maktaba al-Khalidiyya (Khalidi Library) is located on the eastern side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila, the eastern corner of ‘Aqabat Abu Madyan, facing al-Kilaniyya mausoleum and Taziyya School. In fact, until the beginning of the twentieth century this building was known as Turbat al-Amir Baraka Khan, for the commander of the Khawarizm forces, that had been called upon by Najm al-Din Ayyub to reclaim Jerusalem from the Crusaders in 1244.



Figure 4. The Khalidi Library (Turbat al-Amir Baraka Khan)

This amir was killed in Homs in 1264, his body is believed to have been taken to Jerusalem and buried in this location. Although there is a tombstone with his name and date of death on it in the building’s courtyard, his burial here remains unconfirmed. As suggested by the tombstones, his sons Badr al-Din Muhammad (1279) and Husam al-Din Kara Bey (1263) were also buried in the same location.³⁵ The building, constructed between 1264 and 1279, has a beautiful Mamluk facade that leads to the open courtyard where the graves are located, and then to a large hall with a mihrab on the right and a smaller one on the left. In the front end of the turba there is a small sabil.³⁶ It seems that the remaining parts of the complex were removed or annexed to adjacent buildings, to the extent that it has become difficult today to imagine the original shape of the building. If the documentation is correct, this building is the second oldest Mamluk building that still existing in the Old City of Jerusalem, predated only by the northern portico of al-Aqsa Mosque (built in 1213) and completed in 1432.

Little is known about the history of the building’s usage, but the complex, part of the Khalidi family endowment in the Old City, was turned into a library in 1900 to house a large part of the family’s book collection. The library is the largest family library in Jerusalem and consists of more than twelve hundred manuscripts (more

than two thousand titles), some which are rare or more than a thousand years old and cover many disciplines, especially Islamic sciences, and a collection of 5,500 books printed mainly in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.³⁷ The library has an annex, fifty meters away to the east. The annex consists of three floors and is also from the Mamluk period. It houses printed volumes, and al-Khalidi family documents and papers, in addition to a lecture hall and Ottoman-era accommodation facilities for researchers.³⁸

Dar al-Qur'an al-Salamiyya

Dar al-Qur'an al-Salamiyya is located on the south side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila, opposite of al-Turba al-Jalaqiyya. Dar al-Hadith used to be in front of it, a few buildings east of the Khalidi Library. It was established by Siraj al-Din 'Umar al-Salami in 1360. The building consists today of one hall, but it is possible that once other spaces existed that may have been annexed to adjacent buildings, especially on the southern side. It is, therefore, difficult to imagine what the building originally looked like. It seems that this Qur'anic school was still active in the eighteenth century, but it was not used afterwards. It is part of the Khalidi family endowments. There is a late Ottoman grave in the hall known as "Musa's grave," on the belief that Musa al-Khalidi is buried there, but this has not been confirmed.³⁹

Jalaqiyya School

Al-Jalaqiyya is located south of Taziyya school and on the edge of the stairway descending from Tariq Bab al-Silsila to Tariq al-Wad. It is also known as Turbat Baybars al-Jaliq (Baybars al-Jaliq mausoleum). According to the inscription on the facade, the school was built in 1307.⁴⁰ The building has a beautiful Mamluk facade with a large window overlooking Tariq Bab al-Silsila and a vaulted burial hall in which the grave of Amir Baybars al-Jaliq al-Salihi is located, in addition to a small grave where a child might have been buried. This room is decorated on the inside with beautiful stalactite work. There is an antechamber behind it to which a number of rooms on two levels were added later.⁴¹

Dar al-Hadith

It is not easy to identify the location of this building that used to be adjacent to al-Jalaqiyya from the west. Available information indicates that the school was there, and that it taught al-Hadith al-Sharif. Mujir al-Din al-Hanbali mentions it and so does 'Arif al-'Arif.⁴² It was mentioned as "Dar al-Hadith al-Hakkariya" established in 1267 by Sharaf al-Din 'Isa al-Hakkari.⁴³ The architectural remains of the building may have been conjoined with the building west of al-Jalaqiyya, and the building is part of the Khalidi family endowment.

Sabil al-Khalidi

Sabil al-Khalidi is located at the intersection between Tariq Bab al-Silsila and Daraj al-‘Ayn, the stairway that descends to Tariq al-Wad. Sabil al-Khalidi was built in 1713,⁴⁴ and is comparable to others built by Sultan Sulayman al-Qanuni (the Magnificent), although there is an obvious difference in grandeur. It is a simple wall fountain located in a recess similar to the recess of Sulaymani sabils, crowned by a pointed arch framed with zigzagged white and red stones. Behind the main southern facade is a square-shaped chamber with a door on the west side. It has two big windows overlooking the sabil’s facade. The windows are very similar to that of Sabil al-Shurbaji at Damascus Gate. Most probably Sabil al-Khalidi was connected to the ‘Arrub-Bethlehem-Jerusalem aqueduct. There are some modest ornamental murals on different parts of the wall. It seems the water trough was lost as a result of changes in the level of Tariq Bab al-Silsila.⁴⁵



Figure 5. Characteristic Mamluk ablaq stone treatment for a building.

Turbat Turkan Khatun

Located on the north side of Tariq Bab al-Silsila and west of al-Sa‘adiyya school, Turbat Turkan Khatun consists of a burial chamber with a high dome and an antechamber behind. This small mausoleum is distinguished by its small symmetrical facade artistically ornamented with inscriptions and intricate arabesque decoration. The mausoleum was built in 1352 and is the burial place of Lady Turkan Khatun, daughter of Tuqtay al-Saljuqi al-Uzbaki⁴⁶ according to the inscription on the facade.⁴⁷

Turbat al-Sa‘adiyya

The Turbat al-Sa‘adiyya is located on the northwest corner of Bab al-Silsila courtyard behind Sabil Bab al-Silsila. It was built in 1311 by Amir Mas‘ud B. Sunqur al-Jashinkir.⁴⁸ It has a burial chamber separated by a corridor from a large hall on the opposite side. The building is distinguished by a beautiful Mamluk-style ornamented facade which has a large door and a double window that opens to the road. The

building has two floors⁴⁹ and it is currently part of the Khalidi family endowment, currently used as a private residence.

Tankiziyya School

Al-Tankiziyya School was founded by Tankiz al-Nasiri, governor of Bilad al-Sham (Great Syria) and one of the most important Mamluk amirs who generously invested in Jerusalem and the renovation of the two mosques, decorated them with marble and gold and added structures such as Bab al-Silsila's minaret, Bab al-Qatanin and other architectural structures. Suq al-Qatanin, the adjacent khan, two public baths, and the beautiful Bab al-Qatanin, one of al-Aqsa Mosque's gates, are standing proof of his interest in Jerusalem.

Al-Tankiziyya school is located on the south side of Bab al-Silsila just before entering al-Aqsa Mosque. It shares the western wall with al-Aqsa and the school's roof overlooks the mosque. The school is located behind the mosque's western portico; part of its upper floor was built over the portico itself, marking the beginning of the main axis, Tariq Bab al-Silsila. The huge building represents the influence of its owner, and his immense wealth, yet it respects the aesthetic aspects of al-Aqsa Mosque. The building nowadays overlooks al-Buraq Wall after Israeli occupation forces destroyed the buildings adjacent to it in 1967.

Tankiz established this school and endowed it⁵⁰ in 1328–29, according to the inscription written in al-Naskhi script on the facade.⁵¹ Tankiz built the building as multipurpose: as a school, Sufi center, orphanage, and school for hadith. It became one of the most important educational establishments in the city, and played an active role until the fifteenth century. It hosted many of Jerusalem's esteemed visitors including sultans, princes, and scholars. Later it was turned into a courthouse (*mahkama*) because of its central location and size.⁵² It regained its educational role again a century later, and then became Jerusalem's Shari'a Court⁵³ in the seventeenth century. It is still known as "al-Mahkama" today. It continued to serve this function throughout



Figure 6. The monumental Mamluk Tankiziyya School was taken over as headquarters for Israeli border guards at the entrance to al-Haram.

the British Mandate, and then Hajj Amin al-Husayni converted it into his place of residence and office when he became the head of the Supreme Muslim Council. After 1948 it was turned into a school for teaching Islamic jurisprudence until 1969 when it was confiscated by the Israeli occupation forces and turned into a boarder police station, which it remains as of this writing. The Jerusalem Islamic Waqf Council, the legal owner of the building, is not even allowed to enter to check on it.⁵⁴

A visitor standing in the small square in front of Bab al-Silsila (al-Aqsa Mosque Gate), surrounded by Mamluk and Ottoman buildings, is at the culmination point of the long series of Mamluk buildings located in Tariq Bab al-Silsila to the west, considered to be the longest Mamluk street.

Al-Tankiziyya building, made up of three floors visible from the north facade, is considered a special architectural landmark in the Old City and a classic example of Mamluk architecture. The plan of al-Tankiziyya school is an example of the cross plan of a central hall with four iwans. The square hall in the middle has an octagon stone water fountain in the center that is linked to al-Qanat al-Sabil that brings water from al-‘Arrub through al-Maraji’ (Sulayman) pools south of Bethlehem. The central hall’s ceiling is vaulted with a folded arch and there is an octagon-shaped oculus with dimensions similar to those of the water fountain beneath it.

In the south wall of the southern iwan, which is the largest, the school’s mihrab stands, which is considered to be very special. The walls of the mihrab are clad with Anatolian marble slabs. The dome of the mihrab is decorated with mosaics of intricate flora motives, made with workmanship that is as meticulous as the mosaic of Qubbat al-Sakhra. Mother-of-pearl is used extensively over a gilded background with inscriptions.⁵⁵

There are nine spaces of different sizes and shapes on the ground floor. The small mezzanine has four relatively small chambers, while the Sufi corner is located in the spacious upper floor.⁵⁶ The upper floor can be divided into two wings: the first (eastern) wing is located over the mosque’s western portico and has a spacious hall (sama’khana) used for prayer and study seminars, with an impressive ornamented facade that, the upper part at least, can be seen from the courtyard of al-Aqsa Mosque. It stands out as the highlight of the building. The second wing is located above the mezzanine in the western part of the building and has relatively small, irregular chambers.

Al-Tankiziyya school played an important role in the city’s cultural, social, and political history, and formed an important part of Jerusalemites’ collective memory. In addition to being used as a courthouse for a long period, all citizens have a special connection to it. It played a large role in active academic development.⁵⁷ It was turned into a headquarters for the Supreme Islamic Council during the time of the British Mandate. When it was confiscated by the Israeli occupation in 1969, it had major repercussions for native Jerusalemites, since numerous worshippers pass by it daily in order to enter al-Aqsa Mosque through Bab al-Silsila, and see the sign over the gate with the emblem of the state of Israel and its police forces standing by it.

Sabil Bab al-Silsila

Sabil Bab al-Silsila is located in the open square between al-Aqsa Mosque and Bab al-Silsila. Sulayman the Magnificent built this wall fountain in 1537 and connected it to the water of al-Sabil aqueduct. Sabil Bab al-Silsila is in the same style as the five other water fountains built by Sultan Sulayman with minor differences. Sabil Bab al-Silsila takes the shape of a gate-facade framed with a pointed chevron arch. The sabil is recessed inside the wall embedding the water trough. In the center of the sabil's facade is a large protruding inscription (1.72 x 0.70 meters).⁵⁸ The very large size of the inscription⁵⁹ compared to the facade might be intentional to display the power and strength of the sultan.



Figure 7. The sixteenth-century Sabil Bab al-Silsila, built by Sultan Sulayman. Found stone was often repurposed by builders over the centuries. The water trough of the fountain, thought to be a sacarfagus dating from the Herodian period, was apparently added in recent centuries.

Ribat al-Nisa'i (The Women's Hospice)

The Women's Hospice was built by Tankiz al-Nasiri across the street from Tankiziyya school in 1330 to accommodate poor, single women in the city. The building has a modest appearance and structure and is squeezed between two buildings in the northwest corner of the square right before Bab al-Silsila. The building is marked by its high gate, although its location suggests that it was meant to avoid attention. The hospice has several levels and a number of rooms that accommodated the women,⁶⁰ it is used now as residential apartments.

Bab al-Silsila

Bab al-Silsila is one of the most important accesses to al-Aqsa mosque. It is a huge double gate called Bab al-Silsila and Bab al-Sakina. The gate consists of two passageways with two large decorated shallow stone domes. The gate in its current state goes back to the Ayyubid period; it was built with Crusader construction material – marble columns and capitals – of which the gate's building has a significant number. Apparently the gate was exceptionally impressive during the Fatimid period when it was beautifully described by the Persian traveller Nasir-i Khusro in 1047. The extent



Figure 8. Details from Sabil Bab al-Silsila.



Figure 9. Detail from the Sabil's water trough.

of Crusader intervention in the gate is unclear, but it seems that it was rebuilt during the Ayyubid period in 1198.

The Two Sesame Presses

The two sesame presses in Tariq Bab al-Silsila are still intact but, unfortunately, we have no historical information about them. Inspection of their architecture suggests that they date to the Mamluk period. It is not possible to determine whether they were originally built as sesame presses or as khans since there is much information about the existence of a number of khans along Tariq Bab al-Silsila, as mentioned by Mujir al-Din. What is certain is that they had been functioning as presses since the Ottoman period. The first is located in the west of Tariq Bab al-Silsila (Sa'ad al-Salihi Press), and the second in the east (Abu Kamil al-Salihi Press). The former stopped working in the 1980s and a part was turned into a souvenir shop, while the Abu Kamil Press is still working and demonstrating traditional production methods.

Other Buildings Worthy of Further Inspection

There is a number of important historical buildings in Tariq Bab al-Silsila still awaiting scientific inspection and research. These buildings are very interesting and represent the industrial and commercial sectors in Tariq Bab-Silsila especially during the Mamluk and early Ottoman periods. Of these buildings, we mention here: al-Kharbutli Butcher Shop facing Daraj al-Tabuna/ Daraj al-Harafish (a souvenir shop), al-Amana Bakery/Sunukrut (taken by Israeli settlers), Bab al-Silsila's public bathrooms, Rishq cafe (now a restaurant) located left of Harat al-Sharaf's Gate, and Burbara Restaurant facing Harat al-Sharaf's Gate.

Finally, this review of part of the Old City demonstrates the great challenges that face studying the cultural, economic, and social histories of the old town. Tariq Bab al-Silsila has more than twenty historical buildings worth further study and documentation using archival and architectural material from Ottoman documents. Such studies can open up the door to a wealth of knowledge about Jerusalem, and we hope that this article would encourage just that.

Nazmi Jubeh is associate professor in the Department of History and Archaeology, Birzeit University.

Endnotes

- 1 It also corresponds to the Crusader (*franji*) construction level if we take into consideration that part of Khan al-Sultan was built during that period. But the suq level may date to the Umayyad period, especially since the current bridge that is located at the bottom of the eastern suq starts at the Khalidi Library and ends at the mosque's gate (Bab al-Silsila) dates to the Umayyad–Fatimid period. This means that if there was a change in the level, it took place before Islam and not after.
- 2 This can be seen in Abu Khadija's shop north of Tashtamuriyya school and west of al-Kilaniyya mausoleum.
- 3 The building had been abandoned since the late 1980s, except for part that was turned into a house and later was overtaken by settlers.
- 4 It was previously Kharbutli Butchery, and today is a souvenir shop. The architectural style of the building suggests that it dates to the Mamluk period, but it warrants further investigation.
- 5 Although these two halls have not yet been architecturally surveyed, they are thought to date to the Mamluk period.
- 6 Hakkaris, Kurdish Turks from the Turkish-Iraqi border, actively participated in the army of Salah al-Din.
- 7 Michael Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem: An Architectural Study* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1987).
- 8 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 327, 336, 479–80; Adrian Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades: Society, Landscape and Art in the Holy City under Frankish Rule* (London: Routledge, 2001), 145. Although Burgoyne's assessments are valid based on the knowledge available at the time, they should not be taken for granted. More research is necessary since differentiating between the Crusader and Ayyubid styles can be difficult. The possibility that the suq was built in the Mamluk period should not be completely ruled out. Unfortunately, available Arabic texts from the Ayyubid period do not offer an adequately detailed description of the city that would help us understand urban transformations.
- 9 The "Great Axis" or "David Axis" is the west-east axis that starts at Jaffa Gate and ends at al-Aqsa Mosque's Gate, known as Bab al-Silsila.
- 10 This was east of Khalidi Library. Hence, the goldsmith's market was relatively small, beginning at Bab al-Silsila and ending just before Khalidi Library. There were only a few shops since public buildings and houses take up most of the market.
- 11 The gate still exists and is located to the west of Tashtamuriyya school. It used to lead to al-Sharaf neighborhood but in 1969 it was appropriated by the Israeli occupation authorities and annexed to the Jewish quarter.
- 12 Based on available sources it is not possible to determine where the khan, which is known to have existed during the Mamluk period, was exactly located. The khan, an al-Aqsa Mosque waqf, consisted of two levels and an open courtyard. According to Mujir al-Din's description, the khan may have been located where the public bathrooms are today, and a shop to the west and a house behind it to the north, since it is a central location.
- 13 *Mubaydun* (copper bleachers) treated the oxidization of copper pots by removing the oxidized copper and applying a layer of molten tin to the pot. Pots and cookware were usually bleached once a year, a process that was common in Jerusalem until the 1970s. The last bleacher (*mubayyid*) worked in Khan al-Sultan two decades ago.
- 14 Al-Harafish stairway, which still exists today and known as al-Tabuna, is located south of Tariq Bab al-Silsila and east of Khan al-Sultan.

- 15 It still has this name, but it is actually the beginning of Suq Bab al-Silsila from the west.
- 16 This might refer to al-Qasaba, known today as Suq al-Bashura.
- 17 ‘Arsat al-Ghilal consists today of al-Bazaar and Suwayqat ‘Allun, officially called Dawud (David) Street, which is outside of our discussion here of Tariq Bab al Silisla, although it is considered as one suq by Mujir al-Din. See Mujir al-Din al-Hanabli, *al-Uns al-Jalil fi Tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*, vol. 2, ed. Mahmud al-Ka‘abina (Hebron: Dandis Library, 2009), 106–107.
- 18 Further information can be found in Walid Khalidi’s prologue for Nazmi Jubeh’s *Catalogue of Manuscripts in Al-Khalidiyya Library* (London: Al Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 2006), 25–27.
- 19 Michael Burgoyne mentions that this hallway is what is left of the Crusader market. See Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 479. If this is true, then this is all of the Crusader market and not part of it. See Boas, *Jerusalem in the Time of the Crusades*, 14.
- 20 For more details on the inscription see Max van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus inscriptionum arabicarum*, Part 2, Syrie du Sud T.1 Jérusalem (Ville) (Caire: Impr. de l’Institut français d’archéologie, 1923), no. 91, 299–303.
- 21 Mujir al-Din, *al-Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 2, 106.
- 22 It is evident that what is currently left of the hall is part of a much larger one. It also seems obvious that parts were later annexed to adjacent buildings on the western side, in Suq al-Khawajat or shops south of it that are part of Suq al-Bashura. However we should be cautious about this, since it is necessary to draw a complete plan of the area to understand the various relationships of the numerous important buildings in it that have not yet been sufficiently studied.
- 23 The Israeli Antiquities Authority conducted archeological excavations in the hall in 2018 and uncovered remains that dated to the Abbasid period. Among the most important findings there were the remains of a large building dating to the Fatimid period. The building’s function was not identified, but most probably it was a public building. There is a possibility that the Mamluk khan was built on the remains of the Fatimid building, and likewise the Crusader market, which is believed to have been built on the remains of the Fatimid khan. These possibilities cannot be confirmed, however, because the excavations were conducted only on the northeast side of the ground floor. For more information on the excavation and findings see David Yeger, “Jerusalem, the Old City (Khan al-Sultan),” *Hadashot Arkheolgiyot* 130 (2018), online at www.hadashot-esi.org.il/Report_Detail_Eng.aspx?id=25380 (accessed 23 September 2021).
- 24 On the architectural description and analysis and the khan’s plan see Kamil al-‘Asali, *Min Atharuna fi Bayt al-Maqdis* [From our antiquities in Bayt al-Maqdis] (Amman: Jordan University, 1982), 44–60 and Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 479–84.
- 25 Al-Khan remains an important project for the future that could be transformed into a center for traditional handicrafts, a museum, or a cultural center. The building could be turned into one of Jerusalem’s architectural gems, given a change in circumstances to implement these ideas.
- 26 He was the *dawadar*, the first secretary of Sultan al-Ashraf Sha‘ban, a job similar in function to that of a viceroy.
- 27 For more on Tashtamuriyya architecture, see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 460–75; van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 89. For more on the school in the academic life in Jerusalem, see ‘Abd al-Jalil ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris fi Bayt al-Maqdis fi al-‘Asrayn al-Ayyubi wa al-Mamluki* vol. 2 (Amman: Al-Aqsa Library, 1981), 93–94; ‘Arif al-‘Arif, *Al-mufasssal bi tarikh al-Quds* (Jerusalem: al-Andalus Library, 1999), p. 251.
- 28 Anonymous, *The City of Jerusalem*, trans. C. R. Conder (London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1896), 12.
- 29 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 327, 399.
- 30 Mujir al-Din, *al-Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 2, 95, Kamil al-‘Assali, *Ajdaduna fi thara Bayt al-Maqdis* (Amman: al-Bayt Foundation, 1981), 63, ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris*, vol. 2, 74; al-‘Arif, *Al-Mufasssal*, 511; Yusuf Natsheh, *Al-Turbah al-Kilaniyya* (Jerusalem: Islamic Endowment Department, 1979).
- 31 A stone tile with fragments of writing was found in the eastern burial chamber. Most probably it was a tombstone, but the writing was illegible due to fire that destroyed the chamber in 1938. There is no other documentation of the inscription.
- 32 ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris*, vol. 2, 74.
- 33 Salim al-Swarieh, *al-Hayya al-ijtima’iyya fi al-Quds 1750–1800* (Amman: Dar ‘Alam al-Thaqafa, 2009), 215–16.
- 34 For more on al-Kilaniyya mausoleum see

- Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 325–36; Archibald Walls, “The Mausoleum of the Amir Kilani-Jerusalem,” *Levant* 7 (1975): 39–76.
- 35 For more on the tombstones, see van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 59, 60, 61, 186–92.
- 36 For details on the building, see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 109–16.
- 37 For details on the library’s manuscripts see Jubeh, *Catalogue of Manuscripts*.
- 38 See Khalidi Library website, online at khalidilibrary.org/en (accessed 22 September 2021).
- 39 For details on the building’s architectural analysis, see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 380–83; for details on the history of the building’s endowment see Kamil al-‘Asali “*Ma’ahid al-‘ilm fi bayt al-maqdis*” (Amman: Jam’iyyat al-Matabi’ al-‘Arabiyya): 134; on the school’s scholars and its role see ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris*, vol. 2, 180–83.
- 40 Van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 72, 223–24.
- 41 For more details on al-Jalaqiyya, see Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 184–91.
- 42 Mujir al-Din, *al-Uns al-Jalil*, vol. 2, 94.
- 43 ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris*, vol. 2, 187–90.
- 44 Muhammad Ghosheh mentions al-Sabil al-Khalidi was built on the model of a previous one established by Prince Tankiz al-Nasiri in 773 H/1371 CE, see online www.akhbarelbalad.net/ar/1/10/2760/ (accessed 23 September 2021). However, this is definitely incorrect as Tankiz al-Nasiri died in 741 H (some sources say 744 H), that is, three decades before its construction.
- 45 Yusuf Natsheh, “Catalogue of Buildings,” in *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City: 1517-1917*, part II, ed. Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000) vol. II, 963–65.
- 46 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 321–24; Al-‘Asali, *Ajdaduna fi thara bayt al-maqdis* (Amman: al-Albayt Foundation, 1981), 56–59.
- 47 Van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 84, 272–76.
- 48 Al-‘Asali, *Ajdaduna*, 54–56.
- 49 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 195–200.
- 50 For more on the endowments of al-Tankiziyya School see: Al-‘Asali, *Ma’ahid*, op. cit., 68, and record no. 92, 426–30 in the Shari‘a Court records which were published by Kamil al-‘Asali in *Watha’iq Maqdisiyya tarikhiyya*” (Amman: ‘Abd al-Hamid Shuman Foundation, 1983), vol. 1, 105–124; Nazmi Jubeh, “Duwr al-wathaiyiq al-waqfiyya fi astijla’ al-tarkiba al-hadariya wa al-ma’ariyya li madina al-Quds: al-madrasa tankiziyya” [The role of endowment documents in clarifying the urban and architectural structure of Jerusalem: al-Tankiziyya school as a case study] in *Al-Waqf al-Islami fi al-Quds* [The Islamic Waqf in Jerusalem], ed. ‘Isam al-‘Asa (Jerusalem – Supreme Islamic Commission, 2018): 392–430.
- 51 Van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 80, 252–56. For more on the educational role of the school and people who taught and lived in it, see ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris*, 2/31 ff.
- 52 It was used as headquarters for judges, rulers, personalities and public administrators during the rule of Sultan Qaitbay. This was confirmed by the Swiss Dominican traveler Felix Fabri (1441–1502 CE) who visited Palestine between 1480–1483 CE; Felix Fabri, *The Wanderings of Brother Felix Fabri*, trans. Aubrey Stewart (London: London Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1893), vol. II, 125.
- 53 Although this has been mentioned in several sources, the records of the shari‘a court continue to refer to it as a school in the eighteenth century. The records mention the appointment of numerous shaykhs, readers, teachers, endowment caretakers, and treasurers. This may be because part of the building continued to be used as a school. For more on the school in the Ottoman period, see al-Swarieh, *al-Hayya al-ijtima’iyya*, 201–209.
- 54 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 223.
- 55 According to the inscription the Tankiz meant this building to be a mosque for the public.
- 56 See Ibn Fadlallah al-‘Umari, *Masalik al-Absar fi Mamalik al-Amsar*, ed. ‘Abdallah b. Yahya al-Surayhi (Abu Dhabi: The Cultural Foundation, 2003), vol. 1, 214.
- 57 For more on the academic role of al-Tankiziyya school see ‘Abd al-Mahdi, *Al-Madaris*, vol. 2, 31–43; ‘Asali, *Ma’ahid*, 70; al-‘Arif, *al-Mufassal*, 244–45.
- 58 Van Berchem, *Matériaux pour un corpus*, no. 112, 415.
- 59 Almost all of the drinking water fountains built by Sultan Sulayman have the same inscription, with minor differences. All were built in 943 H. (1536–37 CE).
- 60 Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem*, 240–43.

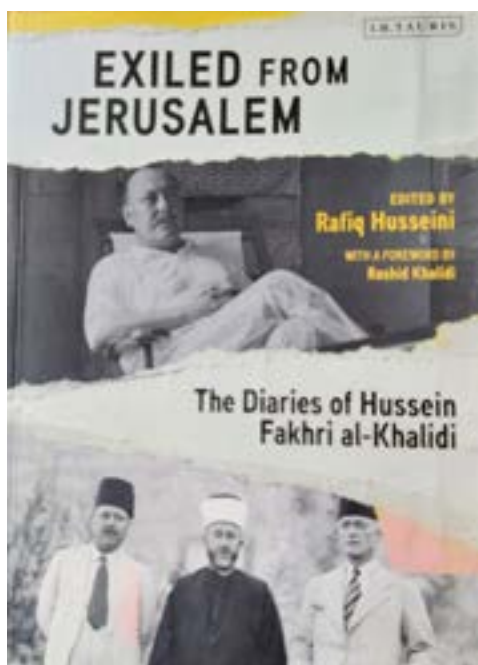
BOOK REVIEWS

Island Exile

Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi in the Seychelles

Rafiq Hussein, ed., *Exiled from Jerusalem: The Diaries of Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi*. With introduction by Rashid Khalidi. 376 pages. London: I.B. Tauris, 2020. £81.00 hardcover. £26.09 paper.

Review by Laila Parsons



Abstract

Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi was a Palestinian doctor and a leading figure in Palestinian politics during the British Mandate period. He served as mayor of Jerusalem from 1934–37, helped to found the Reform Party, and represented that party in the Arab Higher Committee. In 1937, the British government exiled him to the Seychelles for his political activities, and eventually released him in spring 1939. While in exile, al-Khalidi wrote a daily diary in English. Edited by Rafiq Hussein, and including an introduction by Rashid Khalidi, the diary has now been published for the first time. What follows is a review-essay on this important new historical source.

Keywords

Colonialism; Palestine; exile; Arab Higher Committee; Palestinian Revolt; Palestinian leadership; British Mandate of Palestine.

On 30 September 1937, Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi had an especially long day at work. As mayor of Jerusalem, he prepared the agenda for an important meeting of the municipal council and then chaired the meeting from the late afternoon into the night. When he finally reached home at eleven in the evening, he stayed up chatting with his wife Wahideh before finally going to bed at midnight. Early the next morning, his ten-year-old daughter Leila crept into her parents' room to say that a British police officer was knocking at the door. Flanked by two constables, the officer

told al-Khalidi that he was under arrest. Al-Khalidi was given fifteen minutes to pack his bag and say goodbye to his wife and children. From his home, he was taken to the port of Haifa. There he was placed on board the battleship *HMS Sussex*, which would take him on the first stage of the long journey to exile and imprisonment in the Seychelle Islands, 1,500 kilometers off the East African coast, far away in the Indian Ocean (9–12).

Al-Khalidi's arrest and deportation were part of a sweep of arrests carried out by the Palestine Government after Palestinian rebels assassinated Lewis Andrews, the British District Commissioner of the Galilee, on 26 September 1937. In the wake of the assassination, the government detained over 100 people in the Nazareth area, and British troops marched into the city to impose a curfew. These government actions marked a new escalation of harsh British counter-insurgency measures against Palestinians. Rural communities bore the brunt of these measures. Over the following months, the government rounded up thousands of ordinary Palestinians, destroyed hundreds of houses, and executed a number of rebels. The government also targeted the Palestinian leadership. They declared the Arab Higher Committee, of which al-Khalidi was a member, an illegal organization. Fu'ad Saba, Ahmad Hilmi, and Ya'qub al-Ghusayn, were all arrested on the same day as al-Khalidi and joined him on *HMS Sussex*. (The government added the banker Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim to this small group bound for the Seychelles, even though he was not a member of the AHC). Haj Amin al-Husayni, the leader of the Arab Higher Committee, had already taken refuge in al-Haram al-Sharif and later managed to evade British guards and escape to Lebanon. Jamal al-Husayni, who was close to Haj Amin and represented the Palestine Arab Party in the Arab Higher Committee, also evaded arrest and fled to Beirut. Awni 'Abd al-Hadi and Izzat Darwaza were out of the country and remained in exile. Ragheb Nashashibi, head of the National Defence Party and an opponent of Haj Amin, had resigned as a member of the Arab Higher Committee just a few weeks before, and was not arrested.¹

Not as well-known as the infamous Andaman Islands, in the Bay of Bengal, where Indian nationalists were exiled and imprisoned following the 1857 Rebellion, the Seychelles served as the island prison for leading nationalist figures from the Arab Middle East. In the 1920s, the British government exiled members of the Egyptian Wafd Party there, including Sa'ad Zaghlul and Mustafa Nahas Pasha. Yemeni leaders also spent years of exile in the Seychelles in the 1920s and 1930s. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi's diary, written while he was there, is the first detailed account we have by an exiled prisoner in those islands. It is also the first account of the particular experiences of the five Palestinian exiles in the Seychelles from 1937–1939. Their deportation is mentioned in passing in histories of Palestinian nationalism, but the full story of this episode has never been told.²

Edited by Rafiq Husseini, the diaries are supplemented by copious footnotes that provide details about the people, places, and events that al-Khalidi mentions in his daily jottings. There are also two useful historical introductions, one by the editor, the other by Rashid Khalidi. The Seychelles diaries, which were written in English,

differ from Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi's Arabic memoirs, which were published in 2014. Written in the years immediately following the Nakba, the Arabic memoirs are a comprehensive and compelling account of al-Khalidi's public life. As such, the Arabic memoirs are certainly a key source for understanding the major events of the Mandate era and the Nakba itself. But the English Seychelles diaries convey an intimacy that is not present in the Arabic memoirs. We learn about the rhythms of his relationships with his fellow prisoners, his longing for his wife and children, his reading habits, and his fears. The diaries also provide a vivid sense of the depth of his anger towards the British, and the complexity of his feelings toward fellow Palestinian leaders, including key figures such as Haj Amin al-Husayni and Ragheb Nashashibi. Al-Khalidi's choice to write the Seychelles diaries in English rather than in Arabic is not difficult to understand. He had been educated in English at St George's School in Jerusalem, and later at the Syrian Protestant College (today's American University of Beirut). He had written another diary and some other short pieces previously in English. In addition, his captors were, of course, all English-speaking, and he was closely monitored by British officials on the island. Writing the diaries in English rather than Arabic would have drawn less scrutiny from the authorities. Finally, he had always been committed to persuading an English-speaking audience of the justice of the Palestinian cause. He may well have thought that his diaries might one day be published, and that an English account of the mayor of Jerusalem's banishment would be especially compelling.³

The historiography on Palestinian elites of the 1920s and 1930s is surprisingly limited. During the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, political historians often viewed Palestinian political life of the Mandate period through the prism of "factionalism," reducing a highly complex story to what was presented as clannish competition between prominent families, such as the Husaynis and Nashashibis. Historians have recently turned away from the political history of elite leaders in the Mandate and instead produced scholarship on other aspects of this important period. These include works on the more radical *Istiqlal* party, on rural rebel leaders, and on economic or cultural life. With the notable exception of Bayan al-Hout's 1981 Arabic magnum opus, *Al-Qiyadat wa al-mu'assasat al-siyasiyya fi Filastin, 1917–1948*, we do not possess a detailed political history of the Palestinian leadership that shows a minute understanding of their worldview, and that includes an account of the subtle fluctuations and tensions that informed their day-to-day decision-making as they struggled to push back against the British occupation and Zionist settlement. Al-Khalidi's diaries thus provide us with an opportunity to gain a deeper insight into this important generation, and to understand these men on their own terms.⁴

The five Palestinian exiles arrived in the Seychelles on 11 October 1937. The government confined them in two small bungalows on Mahé, the largest island of the archipelago. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi shared a bungalow with Fu'ad Saba and Ya'qub al-Ghusayn. Ahmad Hilmi and Rashid al-Haj Ibrahim stayed in a separate bungalow, just a few yards away. The living quarters were comfortable but not luxurious. A photograph taken shortly after they arrived shows al-Khalidi reading in a spare and simply furnished bedroom (figure 1). The five Palestinians could also walk

around in the small bungalow gardens and could visit one another, but they were not permitted to visit anyone else on the island, nor to receive visitors, except of course for the British officials overseeing their imprisonment.

In spite of these restrictions, the conditions of the five men cannot be compared to those endured by Palestinian prisoners back home in Palestine. The years 1937 and 1938 saw British round-ups of thousands of Palestinians who were incarcerated in prisons in 'Akka and Jerusalem, and in detention camps in Atlit and Latrun. al-Khalidi was aware of the relative privilege of their life in Mahé. He had served as a doctor in the Ottoman trenches during the British advance through Palestine during World War I, so he knew what genuine physical hardship looked, felt, and smelled like. But the loneliness and desolation caused by the distance from home suffused his days. He worried about his family so far away, about events in Palestine, and about what the future held for the five exiles, who had never been told how long their exile would last.⁵



Figure 1. Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi reading in his bedroom in the Seychelles. Rafiq Hussein (the editor of the diaries) kindly shared the photo upon request.

Al-Khalidi desperately missed his wife Wahideh and his four children. He waited impatiently for their letters, which often took weeks to arrive, and were censored buffoonishly by British officials. On one occasion, he received a telegram from home saying that his daughter Leila would be singing for him on the radio as part of the Palestine Broadcasting Station's weekly show, *Children's Arabic Corner*. He struggled

and failed to tune the bungalow's radio to the right frequency so that he could catch a sound of Leila's voice. On other occasions, he expressed his dislike of the food on the island and his longing for the tastes of home. This longing was sometimes satisfied by jars of *tahini* and *labnah* that Fu'ad Saba's wife sent to the Seychelles' prisoners. Al-Khalidi struggled with desolate thoughts that the five men had been forgotten by their colleagues back home. The exiles received only a few telegrams of concern, and they searched the radio frequencies for accounts of their arrest and for news of what had happened to other members of the Arab Higher Committee. Radio Bari, the Italian Arabic Service, broadcast on the easiest radio frequency for them to tune in to. The five men caught snippets of information from Radio Bari, while they laughed at its cartoonish propaganda efforts to win the Arabs over to Fascism. The hot humid weather on the island, and the boredom and exasperation that arose from spending day in and day out with his fellow exiles, grated on al-Khalidi's nerves. As their stay lengthened, he spent more time alone in his bedroom reading books that he was permitted to borrow from the local library. He read voraciously, particularly the works of American authors such as Pearl Buck, Eugene O'Neil, and Margaret Mitchell.⁶

Al-Khalidi often wrote in his diary about his feelings towards Haj Amin al-Husayni, leader of the Arab Higher Committee. He was furious when Haj Amin issued declarations on behalf of the Arab Higher Committee without ever mentioning the four members of the committee – al-Khalidi, Saba, Hilmi, and al-Ghusayn – stuck in exile in the Seychelles. When Haj Amin made a public statement in November 1938, after the Woodhead Commission deemed the partitioning of Palestine to be unfeasible, al-Khalidi was appalled by the grandiosity and detachment of Haj Amin's statement, writing that it was as if:

he was victorious and dictating terms to a defeated enemy – when instead Palestine is being overrun and screwed by dozens of British battalions arresting, hanging, routing and demolishing houses and the country is simply going to the dogs. I told my friends that the Mufti has no right to go and publish a statement on behalf of the AHC [276].

It is nevertheless clear from al-Khalidi's diary entries that in spite of his reservations about some of Haj Amin's decisions, he saw the two of them engaged in, and deeply committed to, a shared political struggle. When the four AHC members were finally allowed to leave the Seychelles in early 1939, they travelled straight to Haj Amin's new base in the Lebanese village of Zouk. There, the Arab Higher Committee reconvened to discuss strategy for the upcoming Saint James Conference. And when al-Khalidi argued with his fellow exiles on Mahé about Haj Amin's decisions, these arguments took the form of debates about tactics. They did not come close to disloyalty or to a fundamental mistrust.⁷

Al-Khalidi's attitude towards Ragheb Nashashibi was another matter entirely. The British did not arrest Nashashibi when they rounded up those Arab Higher Committee members who remained in Palestine in late September and early October 1937. For al-Khalidi, this was a clear sign of Nashashibi's closeness to the government. Al-

Khalidi exploded in fury at radio reports that Nashashibi had made public statements representing himself as the leader of the Palestinians. As the revolt intensified towards the end of November 1937, al-Khalidi heard on the radio that Nashashibi had issued a *bayan* in the Egyptian press repeating Palestinian demands for independent government. That night he wrote wryly that: “Nashashibi is trotting the stage all alone and wants to prove at least outwardly that he is a patriot. If this is the case, why don’t they get him to the Seychelles?” (78). During his exile, al-Khalidi also read H.J. Simson’s 1937 book, *British Rule and Rebellion*. Simson served as a British army officer and the book detailed the British military’s campaign against the Palestinian rebels. Al-Khalidi was shocked to find in it so much information about the Arab Higher Committee and the role of Haj Amin in directing the revolt. He was convinced that Simson’s source was none other than Nashashibi, who, according to al-Khalidi, met often with British staff officers in the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. The Nashashibi family has long been cast in the historiography as pro-British. What al-Khalidi’s diaries indicate is that Palestinian leaders such as himself, whom later historians cast as being softly supportive of the British, clearly saw themselves standing on the other side of a wide gulf from the Nashashibis.⁸

Hussein Fakhri al-Khalidi’s daily jottings reveal his hostility towards the British system. But there was something deeper than hostility on display when he mused about British power. He understood the intricate mechanics of how the British actually ruled, particularly the way that British procedures and bureaucracy acted to cloak the raw violence of British guns. He was proud of the bravery shown by the armed rebels in Palestine, but he saw that they could never overpower the British army, however courageously they fought. At the same time, he was entirely convinced of the futility of Palestinian efforts to confront British rule through diplomatic means. Drawing on the writings of the American writer Pearl Buck, who had described diplomatic protests without gunfire as nothing more than “eyewash,” al-Khalidi wrote:

The Arabs have been protesting for twenty years. Nay we have submitted two or three memos and three or four telegrams of protests to the Palestine [Government] since we came to Seychelles. Did we have any reply? No – why? Because the authorities concerned know that we can’t back our protests with gunfire; and that’s the end of it. I can imagine our memos and telegraphs tucked away in neat files at the Secretariat at Govt. Offices with a “P.A.” on them and a date followed by some initial of a junior Assistant Secretary.⁹

As a colonized Palestinian, al-Khalidi was aware of the magnitude of the power stacked against him as well as the hollowness of British notions of “fair play” and the rule of law. Even so, he pushed relentlessly against the British system. He sent repeated enquiries to the Secretary of State for the Colonies concerning the law under which the five Palestinians were deported. He also hired a lawyer on Mahé to challenge the restrictions that the five men were placed under. He knew that acts such as these were almost certainly futile, but he persevered nonetheless, writing in his diary, “If it has,

or has no, effect, or if he replies or not, is not so important. My intention is to put things like these on record and in writing” (220). He adopted the same attitude with regard to his medical treatment on the island. Among the few visitors allowed by the government was the local British doctor, Dr. Lanier. Al-Khalidi, himself a physician trained in Paris and Istanbul, grew to despise the amateurish ministrations of this local doctor, as their exile on Mahé lengthened and al-Khalidi’s health deteriorated. He refused to be placated by Lanier, who consistently downplayed al-Khalidi’s symptoms. For al-Khalidi, Lanier’s refusal to take al-Khalidi’s health concerns seriously mirrored the British refusal to recognize Palestinian political rights. After one particularly humiliating session with Lanier, when al-Khalidi was again treated like a child rather than as a fellow physician, he wrote in his diary, “Have we got to give sworn evidence [to Lanier] before we can be believed?” (222).

Of course, Khalidi, in fact, had given formal evidence to a panel of British officials. Just a few months earlier, in January 1937, when he was still in Palestine and still mayor of Jerusalem, he had served as a member of the Palestinian delegation that gave public testimony to the Peel Commission. In his Arabic memoirs, he discusses that testimony in great detail, analyzing the tactical mistakes made by the Palestinian delegation, and identifying exactly how the commission could never have been a place of genuine political possibility for the Palestinians. In the Seychelles diaries, where Khalidi appears as an ailing patient whose symptoms were dismissed by a British “expert,” we see how he suffered the same testimonial injustice that he suffered at the hands of the British commissioners during the Peel Commission hearings.¹⁰

Al-Khalidi used his declining health to push for the British authorities to allow him to return home. He understood that medical issues were a way for him to pressure the government to grant a concession, because any action the government took could be cast as humanitarian rather than political. Genuinely fearing that he had throat cancer, but also using that fear as a strategy, he went on hunger strike with the intention of forcing the government to send a medical expert from off-island to examine him. Eventually, the British authorities relented, sending a specialist from Zanzibar to conduct a proper medical examination. The specialist did not find any cancer but al-Khalidi’s strategy worked nevertheless: a few weeks later, the five deportees received the news that they would be released. They were offered the chance to return to Palestine as long as they did not engage in politics. Al-Khalidi refused to accept this condition, opting instead to go to Beirut, where he could be as close to Palestine as possible, and where his wife and children would be able to join him. He continued to serve as a member of the Arab Higher Committee, and he attended the Saint James Conference in London in the spring of 1939.¹¹

Readers looking for insider information concerning political events in Palestine between October 1937 and the spring of 1939 will not find them in al-Khalidi’s Seychelles diaries. He was himself an outsider during this period, struggling constantly to obtain news about what was happening back home. The last few pages of the diaries do cover his time at the Saint James Conference, but these pages are somewhat disappointing, dealing briefly with where he had lunch and the few tourist sites that

he visited in Britain and France. His Arabic memoirs are a much richer source for his role in Palestinian political life during the Mandate in general, and for his view of the decision-making process within the Arab Higher Committee in particular. But it is only the Seychelles diaries that provide a deep account of his inner emotional life. Far from home, confined to his bungalow and its garden, he poured his heart out to his diary every night. His immediate feelings determined what he wrote about. His fluctuating attitudes towards his fellow detainees, his health, the weather, rebel campaigns back home in Palestine, the Italian invasion of Abyssinia, his children's successes in school – all of these are jumbled together. But every entry vibrates with rage at the colonial power that had occupied his country and banished him from it. This fury sometimes consumed him. One hot moonlit night, before going to sleep, he wrote:

I am not going to write anymore tonight, it being a full moon. The more you look and gaze and stare into the face of a full moon, the madder you become; and this lonely sojourn on this island is about driving me mad. I am craving for my wife and my dear four children. I had a last look at the moon; and look at him! He is smiling, the beggar, and showing his tongue: 'Who are you to oppose Great Britain! We have armies – warships – aeroplanes – poison gas etc. etc. And you [are] only a handful of Arabs' [77].

Laila Parsons is professor of modern Middle East history at McGill University, Montreal. She is the author of The Druze between Palestine and Israel, 1947–1949 (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan, 2000), and of numerous articles on the 1948 war, the interwar period, and the place of narrative and biography in Middle East historiography. Her most recent book The Commander: Fawzi al-Qawuqji and the Fight for Arab Independence, 1914–1948 (New York: Farrar Straus and Giroux, 2016) received the 2017 Palestine Book Award and the Society for Military History's 2017 Distinguished Book Award.

Endnotes

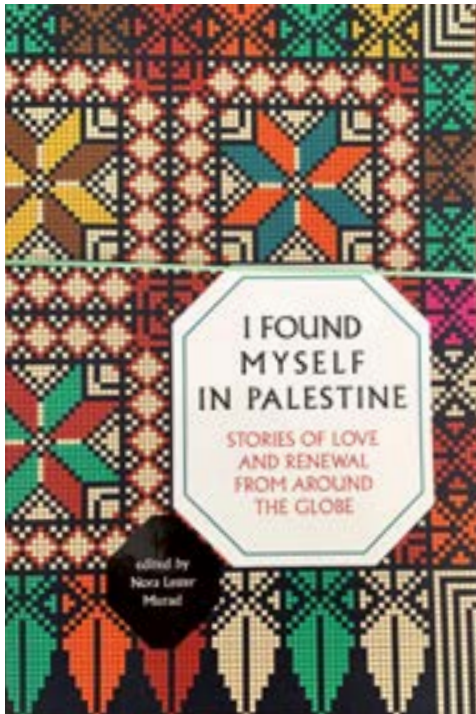
- 1 For the assassination of Lewis Andrews, see Matthew Hughes, *Britain's Pacification of Palestine: The British Army, the Colonial State and the Arab Revolt, 1936–1939* (Cambridge University Press, 2019), 102. For an account of Jamal al-Husayni's escape from British arrest, see Serene Husseini Shahid, *Jerusalem Memories* (Beirut: Noufal, 2000), 111–22.
- 2 For details of the Egyptian deportees, see Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 262. For more on the Andaman Islands, see Satadru Sen, *Disciplining Punishment: Colonialism and Convict Society in the Andaman Islands* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- 3 *Wa-mada 'ahd al-mujamalat: Mudhakkirat Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi* (Amman: Dar al-Shorouq, 2014). For al-Khalidi's choice to write in English, my thanks to Rafiq Husseini and Rashid Khalidi for a helpful email discussion on this issue.
- 4 For examples of older books in English that employ factionalism as a frame, Yehoshua Porath, *The Palestinian Arab National Movement: From Riots to Rebellion* (London: Frank Cass, 1977); and Issa Khalaf, *Politics*

- in Palestine: Arab Factionalism and Social Disintegration, 1939–1938* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991). For examples of more recent scholarship, Weldon C. Matthews, *Confronting an Empire, Constructing a Nation: Arab Nationalists and Popular Politics in Mandate Palestine* (London: I.B. Taurus, 2006); Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2016). Rashid Khalidi's *Iron Cage* is a history of the Palestinian search for a state over the long arc of the twentieth century. It shows the challenges that Palestinian leaders faced during the Mandate, but it is not a detailed political history of that leadership: *The Iron Cage: The Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2006), 31–139.
- 5 For al-Khalidi's appraisal of their conditions on Mahé and his time in the trenches at Gaza, see Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 104.
 - 6 For missing his family and letters from home, see Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 34, 210; for feeling forgotten by colleagues, see 71; for trying to listen to Leila's voice on the radio, see 111; for his love of American authors, see 110–11; and for the taste of labnah sent from Palestine, see 240.
 - 7 For the visit to Haj Amin's headquarters at Zouk, see Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 302; for arguments with his fellow exiles about Haj Amin, see 46–47. Rashid Khalidi also discusses al-Khalidi's attitude towards Haj Amin in his introduction, x–xi.
 - 8 For his account of reading Simson's book, see Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 147. The diaries of Khalil Totah, the well-known Palestinian educator and headmaster of the Quaker Friends School in Ramallah, contain a similar account of Fakhri Nashashibi (Ragheb's nephew): Thomas Ricks, ed., *Turbulent Times in Palestine: The Diaries of Khalil Totah 1886–1955* (Jerusalem and Ramallah, Institute for Palestine Studies, 2009), 244. It is well documented that the Nashashibi family were behind the pro-British Palestinian "Peace Bands" established in the final months of the revolt to help the British army crush the rebels: Matthew Hughes, "Palestinian Collaboration with the British: The Peace Bands and the Arab Revolt in Palestine, 1936–39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51/2 (2015): 291–315.
 - 9 Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 103. Rashid Khalidi also discusses his attitude towards the British in his introduction, xi–xii.
 - 10 *Wa mada 'ahd al-mujamalat*, 230–41.
 - 11 For his departure from the Seychelles and the entries on the Saint James Conference, see Husseini, *Exiled from Jerusalem*, 284–325.

Is the Palestine Virus Incurable?

I Found Myself in Palestine: Stories of Love and Renewal from Around the Globe, edited by Nora Lester Murad. 174 pages. Olive Branch Press, 2020. \$20 paperback.

Review by Penny Johnson



Abstract

The review explores the reflections of twenty-two “foreigners” who have visited or lived in Palestine previously or who live there currently. These personal narratives highlight how the various writers’ experiences of Palestine have shaped their life trajectories, affiliations, family life, and political commitments. Penny Johnson questions notions of generic “foreigners” as tending to create generic “Palestinians,” but also highlights how the enduring experience of Palestinian life can travel with those who leave as well as those who stay.

Keywords

Palestine; foreigners; affiliation; Galilee; global community; Nazareth; Ramallah; human rights.

In this collection edited by writer and social justice activist Nora Lester Murad, twenty-two “foreigners” who have visited or lived in Palestine previously or who live there currently reflect on their experiences and how Palestine has shaped their life trajectories. With origins from Chile, Bolivia, Holland, Greece, Germany, South Africa, the United Kingdom, Japan, Sudan, and the United States, the writers both find Palestine and also discover themselves in brief contributions that are often engaging, sometimes amusing, and rarely heavy-handed.

This is a book of personal narratives, but it is intriguing that the particular experiences of spouses, teachers,

activists, and travelers have a tendency to morph into an unquestioning general acceptance of categorization, both by others and self, as “*ajaneb*” (foreigners), even for those who have lived in Palestine for decades and raised Palestinian children. This may come partly from an admirable desire not to speak for Palestinians – or to deploy privilege – but strikes me as worthy of further reflection. Generic “foreigners” tend to produce, in seeming opposition, generic “Palestinians,” losing the richness (and contradictions) of actual family, social, and political life that these slender narratives contain. I was most engaged with the narratives when the writers follow Theodore Adorno’s call (albeit without his weighty conceptual machinery) for “lingering with the particular.”¹

Another less surprising conformity is the long-term and universal commitment by the writers to work for justice for “Palestine” and the Palestinian people, both from those who stay and those who leave. A question arises that is only partly ironic: Is the “Palestine virus” incurable? Do people ever recover from Palestine? Cody O’Rourke, a former hard-living construction worker from Michigan, arrived in Palestine after having overcome alcoholism. Searching for meaning in his life, he had taken the recommendation of a mentor to join the Christian Peacemakers Team in Hebron. He is shaken by what he sees and on the airplane back home he, “without thinking,” asked the flight attendant to round up a few beers. He stayed “more or less drunk” for the next six months “trying to sort out what the hell I had experienced” (102). Fortunately, he sobered up and his mentor recommended that he use his skills to return to Palestine and rebuild demolished houses. With quite a few life bumps, he married and had a child. He now lives with his son in Bayt Jala. His entry is called “Trying to be a Good Dad in a Complicated Neighborhood.”

If Cody’s story grabbed the attention of readers of this review, others in the volume will as well. Saul Jihad Takahashi, who comes to Palestine as deputy head of the UN High Commission for Human Rights in Occupied Palestine (whew!), leaves with a yearning that brings him to embrace Islam as “a framework of belief that fits perfectly with my work as a human rights lawyer” (54). Hence his new name, Jihad. Or Arabic-speaking Zeena Salman, originally from Sudan and a pediatric cancer specialist, who admits, “I did not know that I was an *ajnabiya*. It never occurred to me” (43). Her repeated encounters with Palestinians who question (or outright deny) her Arab identity because she is black, including a storekeeper who insists she must be from India, bemuse her. Or there is Donn Hutchison, who raised his two children in Ramallah after his wife Sina died of cancer. When his daughter in the United States called him to announce she was engaged to an American, he answered “but he’s a *foreigner*.” She gently reminded him, “Baba, habibi, you are an *ajnabi*” (90).

There are the requisite number of spouses, both men and women, settling into large Palestinian families and grappling with family dynamics. Some of the observations may be trite, but all ring true to particular experiences. Samira Safadi, born in East Berlin, offers a series of acerbic dialogues of her experiences coming to Jerusalem to marry Mahmoud and to become part of his large family. As her wedding approaches, she tells her future husband, “I thought we agreed to invite only around seventy

people.” He notes that “actually” there may be around two hundred and anyway he has printed seven hundred invitation cards (78).

For Samira, Jerusalem itself is represented only through her sour encounters with the Ministry of Interior and a more amusing exchange in the Islamic court. The city itself has no presence. And indeed, there is a striking absence of place – of Palestine in its natural rural and urban environments – in many of the narratives. Aside from scattered mentions of olive trees (and of the sea for Galilee residents), Palestine itself is rather ghostly, although Palestinians as families, colleagues, and friends are vividly present.

And not everyone has had the opportunity to experience either people or place at great length. There is Nadia Hasan, born and raised in Chile, for whom the number of her deportations and bannings from Palestine by the Israeli authorities is dizzying. It is also a reminder that there is another definition of “foreigner,” one many are all too familiar with, including faculty at Birzeit University, Palestinian and non-Palestinian, who do not have residency. That definition, employed by the Israeli state and its Israeli Civil Administration and Ministry of Interior arms, stands counter to the Palestinian use of *ajaneb*, which is often teasing and affectionate, sometimes just plain puzzled, but never punitive.

The bulk of the entries are from generations older than Nadia’s. Marty Rosenbluth, who was a human and labor rights worker in Palestine from 1985 to 1993 (with stops at Amnesty International and law school), is presently an immigration lawyer at the “worst immigration court in the country” in the deprived town of Lumpkin, Georgia (no, I did not make up the name!). He writes that he would not have been able to handle it without the experiences of his years in Palestine where he “developed a high tolerance for frustration.” My personal memory of Marty from his years in Ramallah: in the late 1980s, Marty was detained by the Israeli army and became yet another resident of the dank cells in the Ramallah police station (thankfully briefly). When I called the U.S. Consulate, the voice over the phone said, as if by rote, “I am sorry, we can do nothing.”

Palestine in Lumpkin, this image lingered with me. Indeed, the Palestine “virus” may well be a vaccine enabling those like Marty to work against the odds: the approval rate for asylum seekers at the Lumpkin court was only 5 percent when Marty arrived. Perhaps Palestine can contribute this vaccine to a world governed increasingly by uncertainty and insecurity.

Penny Johnson is a member of JQ’s Editorial Committee. Her book, Companions in Conflict: Animals in Occupied Palestine was published in 2019.

Endnotes

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EXHIBITION REVIEW

Jerusalem, Museums, and Discourses on Settler Colonialism

Review by Sa'ed Atshan and
Katharina Galor

Abstract

This article compares four museum exhibits of Jerusalem from different geographical and political contexts: the Tower of David Museum in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Jewish Museum Berlin. It examines the role of heritage narrative, focusing specifically on the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and how it is either openly engaged or, alternatively, avoided. The authors employ an analytical framework of settler colonialism and specifically highlight the asymmetric power dynamics resulting from Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, and how this political reality is addressed or ignored in the respective exhibits. The article also explores the agency of curators in shaping knowledge and perspective, and examines the role of the visitors community. The authors argue that the differences in approaches to exhibiting the city's cultural heritage reveal how museums are central sites for the politics of the human gaze, where significant decisions are made regarding inclusion and exclusion of conflict.

Keywords

Settler colonialism; Tower of David Museum; The Palestinian Museum; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Jewish Museum Berlin; Jerusalem; heritage narratives; visitor communities; curatorial practices.

Introduction

Jerusalem's cultural heritage, not unlike that of other settler colonial cities, cannot be exhibited in an "impartial" manner.¹ Jerusalem's cultural and artistic legacies are intimately tied to the city's geopolitical realities. Both the material and human landscapes are inherent to the structural asymmetries, an imbalance that transpires in all curatorial efforts to showcase the city. In this article, we document museum exhibits that center around Jerusalem, and explore them through the lens of current settler colonial discourses.²

In her 2015 article, "On Assumptive Solidarities in Comparative Settler Colonialisms," feminist studies scholar Dana Olwan provides a nuanced approach to placing Palestine/Israel within an analysis of settler colonial states. She writes, "Although a settler-colonial framework helps us recognize similarities and mutualities in struggles, it also runs the risk of disappearing the particularities and specificities of settler colonial states and the regimes of violence they enact on Indigenous peoples."³ At the same time, Olwan affirms the work of other Palestine scholars who bring "Israel into comparison with cases such as South Africa, Rhodesia and French-Algeria, and earlier settler colonial formations such as the United States, Canada or Australia, rather than the contemporary European democracies to which Israel seeks comparison."⁴

In his book *Heritage, Culture, and Politics in the Postcolony*, cultural studies scholar Daniel Herwitz explores heritage formation in South Africa, recognizing the relationship between colonialism, apartheid, and how South Africans mark their past in museums and other cultural spheres. Herwitz also delineates the parallels and critical differences between the contexts in South Africa and Israel/Palestine, arguing that in Israel as a settler state, heritage is shaped by an unbalanced relationship with the indigenous Palestinian population.⁵

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod also explores the complexities of discourses on settler colonialism with reference to Palestine/Israel. In her 2020 article, "Imagining Palestine's Alter-Natives: Settler Colonialism and Museum Politics," Abu-Lughod traces the rise of settler colonialism as a salient analytic for Palestine.⁶ She explicates both the potential limitations and strengths of adopting this framework of settler colonialism, particularly in a comparative lens to other contexts. Abu-Lughod considers the role of museums in either representing native cultures as static, or appropriating their cultures, or commemorating past and present harm against indigenous communities, or in empowering these populations and their political imaginaries. She demonstrates how the Palestinian Museum in the West Bank is an example of museum politics in service of what she terms "Alter-Natives," or a conceptualization of possible future political sovereignty for Palestinians and other native peoples. We draw upon Abu-Lughod's theorization of the relationship between museums and settler colonial discourses to reexamine our own ethnographic research in four different museums, looking specifically at their exhibitions on Jerusalem. It is in consideration of these debates that we highlight how two of the curatorial approaches can be understood as being in service of a settler colonial imagination,

while the other two actively challenge Israel's settler colonial project in Palestine.

Our research reveals how the Tower of David Museum in East Jerusalem tells the city's history in a manner that reinforces Israeli state-driven narratives about the Jewish heritage of the city, marginalizing the Christian and Muslim histories, while eclipsing Palestinian national identity altogether. The erasure of Palestinians in this exhibit is an extension of Israeli erasure of native Palestinians. Jerusalem as portrayed in *Tahya Al Quds (Jerusalem Lives)* at the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, on the other hand, features the city as militarily occupied by Israel. This reflects Jerusalem as the central stage of Israel's settler-colonial oppression of the Palestinian population. Jewish connections to the city are acknowledged merely as linked to the Israeli state's appropriation of the history and cultural heritage in service of the eviction of Palestinians from the city. *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York proceeds as if there were no settler colonialism in the United States or Palestine/Israel. Drawing upon reified historical relics from the distant past that represent an aestheticized projection of Jerusalem and a fantasy of pluralism in the city, the discomfort of bearing witness to colonization is beyond the realm of possibility for their visitors. Finally, *Welcome to Jerusalem*, the exhibition at the Jewish Museum Berlin, highlights the city's complex human, cultural, and religious past and present, using stimulating visual and artifactual displays and projections while also incorporating the conflict into the portrayal of the city. In this way, the Jewish Museum Berlin's truth-telling actively undermines Israeli settler-colonial narratives surrounding Jerusalem.

Tower of David Museum

Jerusalem's history museum asserts to present the city's multicultural past. Yet, in reality, it highlights its Jewish and Israeli heritages.⁷ Established by an Israeli nonprofit organization in 1989, it operates in concert with municipal and governmental agencies.⁸ Its official mission is to educate the public on the historical heritage of the city, by means of illustrative methods in lieu of original artifacts. Situated near Jaffa Gate, just inside the Old City, it proclaims Israel's ownership narrative of a "united" city, trying to counter its status of occupied territory according to international law.

The museum positions itself as a site that excludes Palestinians and their history. Located in an ancient citadel, it aspires to showcase Jerusalem's legacy in chronological order.⁹ Designed around a courtyard that incorporates archaeological remains (figure



Figure 1. Tower of David Museum organized around central courtyard featuring archaeological remains. Photo Katharina Galor.

1), the main displays in the surrounding exhibit halls feature replicas, models, reconstructions, dioramas, holograms, photographs, drawings, audio and video recordings, and, since October 2017, a hi-tech innovation lab using augmented and virtual reality technologies.¹⁰

The building dates from the Crusader period, with modifications and additions from the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods.¹¹ The lack of adequate labels, however, dismisses the structure's Christian and Islamic legacies.¹² Examples are the Crusader column capitals at the museum entrance (figure 2), several Ayyubid and Mamluk inscriptions, and the Ottoman period *mihrab* and *minbar* (figure 3), incorporated in the single exhibit hall that summarizes the city's Islamic and Crusader periods.¹³ The building, however, merely functions as an anonymous decorative frame, directing the visitor's gaze primarily towards the carefully curated narrative orchestrated in the exhibit halls.

While the historical sequence does incorporate all main periods, events representing Jerusalem's Jewish and Israeli religious and national perspectives are clearly singled out and stressed. For instance, the final exhibit space until recently centered around Israel's capture of East Jerusalem in 1967, and the Israeli national holiday called "Jerusalem Day," which celebrates the city's "reunification" of East and West. The Palestinian and largely international perspective, which identifies this moment in the city's history as the beginning of Israel's occupation, is not included.¹⁴ The contested nature of the political reality and the mostly critical



Figure 2. Crusader column capitals without labels at the museum entrance. Photo Katharina Galor.



Figure 3. Ottoman period minbar without identifying label. Photo Katharina Galor.

voices against the biased display no doubt led to the overhaul of this room, which now ends the historical survey with a narrative of the British Mandate period. Other recent transformations include a so-called digital innovation lab and the integrated space of “Herod’s Palace and the Kishle,” highlighting the First and Second Temple periods.¹⁵ No doubt, the narrative caters to the museum’s public of mostly Israeli and American Jews, as well as Evangelical Christians, and largely excludes Palestinians.¹⁶ Just as the Israeli settler-colonial project seeks to systematically erase Palestinians, so does the historical narrative displayed in the Tower of David Museum.

The Palestinian Museum

The foundational principle of this newly built museum is to display the Palestinian heritage as a national endeavor. Located in the West Bank, at only 25 km distance from Jerusalem but separated by the wall and checkpoints controlled by the Israeli military, the museum opened its doors to the public in August of 2016. Taawon (Welfare Association), a non-profit foundation devoted to humanitarian and development projects for Palestinians, established the museum. Initially, it was intended primarily to memorialize the Nakba. The project, however, quickly expanded its mission to document Palestinian history more broadly, and to engage with its society, art, and culture from the early nineteenth century onward.¹⁷



Figure 4. Vera Tamari’s plexiglas, iron, and wire screen sculpture “Home” in the Palestinian Museum garden terrace, as part of the *Jerusalem Lives* exhibit. Photo Katharina Galor.

Jerusalem Lives (Tahya Al Quds), planned as the museum’s inaugural exhibition between August 2017 and January 2018, fulfilled all of these principles.¹⁸ At the center of the temporary show was Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem and the suppression of its Palestinian population, presenting this political act as a “failed project of globalization,” economically, politically, ideologically, and culturally. Israel’s investment in trying to project the image of Jerusalem as a cosmopolitan and multicultural city, with a religiously and ethnically diverse population, was exposed as deceitful. A range of artistic media, including scale models, original artifacts, maps, posters, and videos, some of them interactive, were displayed on walls zigzagging through the building. Contemporary artworks and sound installations by Palestinian, Arab, and international artists, both within the building as well as in the terraced gardens, engaged the main narrative. Exemplary projects of the outdoor spaces included Vera Tamari’s sculpture “Home” (figure 4), consisting of a caged stairwell evocative of the former Palestinian houses in Jerusalem’s Old City, fenced in since 1967 for “security reasons;” Khalil Rabah’s “48%, 67%,” (figure 5), part of the artist’s larger project called *Palestine after*

Palestine New Sites for the Museum Department (2017) about the distressing events of ethnic cleansing; and Nina Sinnokrot’s “KA (Oslo)”, a 2 JCB 3CX 1993-model backhoe arm (figure 6), embodying the physical destruction of Palestinian homes and villages by Israel. Despite media attention, and the presence of a distinguished group of visitors on the inauguration of the exhibit, the total number of visitors was regrettably low, in part given the museum’s remote location and difficult access, but mostly a result of the dispersed population since Israel’s occupation. Partaking in cultural events, after all, is a privilege that most Palestinians cannot enjoy under the current situation.¹⁹

The task of asserting a Palestinian cultural legacy is closely linked to the political struggle of resistance. As a result, Jerusalem’s Jewish heritage was not integrated into the display of *Jerusalem Lives*. And while the struggle unites, various factors contributed to the curatorial challenge of featuring a single heritage narrative. Other than the geographic fragmentation among the Diaspora, Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, Palestinians differ by religion between Islam and Christianity, not to mention secular and Islamist streams – all societal disparities that shape the various heritage perceptions. The settler colonial discourse is here engaged from the perspective of the colonized, a concept that frames the narrative and contextualizes the artifacts.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

On 26 September 2016, the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened a three-month long exhibit *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven*, allegedly doing justice to the city’s Jewish, Christian, and Muslim legacies without ideological bias. The lavish display of artifacts included more than two hundred works of art from around the world.²⁰ Curators aimed to project a narrative of harmonious religious and ethnic



Figure 5. Khalil Rabah’s “48%” steel sculpture in the Palestinian Museum garden terrace, as part of the *Jerusalem Lives* exhibit. Photo Katharina Galor.



Figure 6. Nina Sinnokrot’s backhoe arm installed on the museum terrace, with the arms raised up to the skies in a gesture that recalls despair and prayer. Photo Sa’ed Athsan.

co-existence, focusing on the city’s flourishing commercial activity, cultural richness and symbiosis.²¹ The actual conditions of Jerusalem’s sociohistorical context, including hostility and tension, or hardship and disease, were elided by featuring an almost endless display of the most exquisite and eye-catching objects, reminiscent of Jerusalem or at least of an imaginary ideal. Artefacts encompassed architectural details, glass, metal, and ceramic vessels and objects, jewelry, textiles, manuscripts, and maps. Among those, less than a handful were actually from Jerusalem, an embarrassing shortcoming masked by the projection of Jerusalem photographs onto the walls of the gallery spaces, and by the presentation of videos featuring interviews with Jerusalem residents and historians (figure 6). Artefacts included a fourteenth-century Mamluk mosque lamp of Sultan Barquq from Syria; the twelfth-century “Chasse of Ambazac” made of gilded copper, champlevé enamel, rock crystal, semiprecious stones, faience, and glass from Limoges, France (figure 7); a fourteenth-century illustrated Passover Haggadah manuscript page from Catalonia with the words: “next year in Jerusalem, amen;”



Figure 7. Entrance Hall of *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, featuring photographs of Jerusalem to make up for the lack of artefacts with a Jerusalem provenance. From the museum website. www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/jerusalem/exhibition-galleries.



Figure 8. Twelfth century “Chasse of Ambazac” from Limoges in France. Photo Allison Meier, online at hyperallergic.com/349211/metropolitan-museum-of-art-jerusalem/.

and several intricately sculpted twelfth-century limestone capitals from the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth (figure 8), an artistic tradition that differs greatly from the Jerusalem workshops, one of numerous curatorial deficiencies.²² Curators used the recognition of Jerusalem along with an idealized perception of the intertwined Jewish, Christian, and Muslim legacies as a way to market a concept that would appeal to the anticipated visitor community. It appears that both critics and most of the roughly two hundred thousand visitors were charmed by the dazzling array of prized artifacts, obfuscating the lack of historical depth and accuracy.²³ Jerusalem’s complicated histories of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim cultures, rife with wars and conflict, not to mention contested Israeli and Palestinian heritage narratives, were largely whitewashed. Settler colonial dynamics, tension, and asymmetric power dynamics, both past and present, were thus effaced entirely.

Jewish Museum Berlin

Welcome to Jerusalem, a temporary exhibit on display at the Jewish Museum Berlin between 11 December 2017 and 30 April 2019 featured two thousand years of history, structured thematically and presenting all three monotheistic heritage narratives (figure 8).²⁴ Displaying both authentic artifacts and replicas, including maps, models, and media installations, this show explored historical and religious perspectives, highlighting people's daily lives while engaging political repercussions of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The JMB's central mission has been "to study and present Jewish life in Berlin and Germany and to create a



meeting place for the wider community."²⁵ More so than any European and even any other German city, Berlin assumes responsibility for the atrocities committed during World War II and engages with the past and ongoing consequences – a process known as mastering the past or *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.²⁶ In German public discourse this responsibility extends to a commitment to the safety of Israel, and hence the judgment of all forms of Israel criticism as anti-Semitic. The non-exclusive focus on Jerusalem's Jewish heritage perspective in the Berlin museum thus resulted in criticism of the *Welcome to Jerusalem* exhibit, despite the effort toward a historically balanced and accurate display.²⁷ Thematically the galleries engaged traditional themes including shifting borders, pilgrimage, sacred sites, monuments, and artifacts. It did, however, also investigate contentious debates around Zionist principles, religious fundamentalism, nationalist tendencies, and Israel's occupation, incorporating diverse political outlooks. Among these were the consideration of "Religious Perspectives on Jerusalem" engaging various controversial acts of spiritual advocacy, including an anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox group participating in Palestinian solidarity protests; adherents of the Temple Mount Movement and their efforts to breed a red cow for sacrificial rituals; and finally Miri Regev, Israeli Minister of Culture and Sports in an evening dress decorated with a picture of the Dome of the Rock alongside images from social media platforms parodying the dress (figure 9). Another critical engagement with Jerusalem's turbulent history was the Film-Rotunda referred to as "Conflict" featuring a 20-minute video survey juxtaposing historical footage from multiple archives (figure 10).

In contrast to the three other Jerusalem shows examined here, the JMB exhibit did not elide the contentious nature of the city's religious, historical, and cultural legacy.²⁸

Despite historical accuracy, the show was accused of being “non-Jewish,” “Israeli critical,” and “pro-Palestinian.”²⁹ Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu requested that Germany’s chancellor Angela Merkel retract all state funding in support of the Jewish Museum, as the curation diverted from Germany’s usual Zionist narrative tendencies.³⁰ A diverse visitor community of Germans and international tourists came to see the exhibit, both a sophisticated and well-informed public as well as visitors without prior knowledge.³¹ The exhibit mirrored Berlin’s general drive to be pioneering, inclusive, honest, and critical. Despite public reproaches from Netanyahu, Jeremy Issacharoff, Israel’s ambassador to Germany, and Josef Schuster, director of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, *Welcome to Jerusalem* drew significant crowds of visitors who were eager to explore the city’s multidimensional sociopolitical and religious-historical legacies. The complexity of the settler-colonial context was not ignored while doing justice to the city’s rich and intertwined Jewish, Christian, and Muslim heritage. The Jewish Museum Berlin’s exhibit therefore undermined Israeli settler colonial narratives on Jerusalem.



Figure 10. Multi-media display of the three monotheistic heritage narratives on display at the Jewish Museum Berlin’s temporary exhibit *Welcome to Jerusalem*. Photo Thijs Wolzak.



Figure 11. Miri Regev wearing an evening dress featuring the image of the Dome of the Rock, adherents of the Temple Mount Movement and their efforts to breed a red cow for sacrificial rituals, and anti-Zionist Ultra-Orthodox group participating in Palestinian solidarity protests (from left to right). Photo Thijs Wolzak.

Conclusion

Representations of Jerusalem have different meanings and implications for those who are colonized, those who perpetrate colonization, and finally for those who are external to the conflict but take an active part in the discourse surrounding it. The four Jerusalem exhibits that we have analyzed reveal different curatorial choices that are shaped by this settler colonial context, and they intentionally or unintentionally take positions on the city’s contested heritage.

The religious and historical legacy of Jerusalem has played a key role in the ongoing



Figure 12. The Film-Rotunda named “Conflict” showing a video survey with historical footage from multiple archives. Photo Thijs Wolzak.

geopolitical conflict among Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, and regardless of the mission of the exhibit or museum, the display – in dialogue with the visitor communities – takes an active role in fostering a particular narrative perspective and positioning. The different themes and narratives chosen, however, often reflect and inflect the identity politics of the targeted visitor communities, rather than serving as an educational mission and platform that stands for itself.³² The visitor’s knowledge and understanding of the conflict remains a product of engagement and dialogue, in which museum and visitors take part together in a form of silent political activism under the guise of cultural engagement.³³

The Tower of David Museum, in highlighting Jerusalem’s history through the lens of the Israeli settler colonial state objectives, while erasing the Palestinian presence and narrative perspectives, reinforces the existing confrontational national divides over Jerusalem. *Jerusalem Lives* at the Palestinian Museum engages the conflict by focusing on Palestinian narratives and by excluding Jewish narratives that resonate with the Israeli state. Suffering from a relative lack of visitors, the conditions of viewing at the Palestinian Museum are shaped by Israeli state subjugation of ideas, bodies, and movement across lines of difference, mirroring the reality of Jerusalem

for its Palestinian residents. *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art models how curating conflict can also result in the elision of settler colonialism, responding to desires of sponsors, visitors, and others who prefer a sanitized aesthetic, displaying artefacts and images from a reified past, and the illusionary gaze onto an imagined pluralistic rather than conflict-ridden Jerusalem. *Welcome to Jerusalem* at the Jewish Museum Berlin instead curates in a manner that engages the conflict, caring for the past and present of Jerusalem in a way that has come to define so much of the German state and society's sensitive and nuanced recognition of its own history and responsibility. In their unapologetic refusal to cease bearing witness to Israeli or Palestinian cultural heritage, despite formidable external pressure to do so, we witnessed firsthand how the curatorial team has modeled collaborative curation. The high numbers of visitors to their Jerusalem exhibit demonstrates the strong desire among the larger public to face the realities of colonization, rather than to avert their eyes.

Museum curation in this and other contexts where there is an asymmetrical distribution of power must acknowledge disparities in access to resources and mobility as a result of settler colonialism. Just as Jerusalem cannot be evaluated apolitically, these exhibitions cannot be evacuated of the role of power in their own construction and curation. The four hundred thousand yearly visitors to the Tower of David Museum, for example, are largely Israelis and tourists whom Israel welcomes while it polices the presence of tourists in the West Bank. The visitors to *Jerusalem Lives* of the Palestinian Museum are already circumscribed by whom the Israeli state invites to or keeps away from Jerusalem. Many of the West Bank Palestinians who attended the exhibit could not visit the city of Jerusalem itself. Additionally, the town of Birzeit has often been under siege by Israel, which makes it a very different space from the state-sanctioned Tower of David Museum, which enjoys Israeli governmental support. In conceptualizing curatorial practices through ethnography, anthropologists are attuned to the heterogeneous nature of curation and the power that underlies how particular narratives are privileged over others. This knowledge is critical to scholarship that connects museum studies with settler colonial studies.

Sa'ed Atshan is associate professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Swarthmore College. He is an anthropologist who specializes in Palestinian society and politics.

Katharina Galor is the Hirschfeld Senior Lecturer in Judaic Studies at Brown University. She specializes in the visual and material culture of Israel/Palestine.

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 - 22 On the singularity of Crusader architectural details in Jerusalem, see Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem. From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 207–8; Bianca Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century: A Geographical, and Historical, or an Art Historical Notion?* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1994), 164–68.
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 - 24 The exhibit was planned to bridge the period from preparation until installation of the new permanent exhibition in the museum.
 - 25 For the mission statement, see online at www.jmberlin.de/en/about-the-organisation (accessed 21 May 2021).
 - 26 On Vergangenheitsbewältigung in post-war Germany, see, Gary S. Schaal and Andreas Wöll, eds., *Vergangenheitsbewältigung: Modelle der politischen und sozialen Integration in der bundesdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte* (Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997). On the commemoration of the holocaust in Europe, see Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013). On holocaust memorials in Berlin and Paris, see Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany Since 1989* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005); and Sa’ed Atshan and Katharina Galor, *The Moral Triangle: Germans, Israelis, Palestinians* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 88.
 - 27 This lack of focus on the Jewish heritage has been criticized in the press as radically anti-Israel. See Eldad Beck, “No Friend of Israel,” *Israel Hayom*, 27 December 2017. The German media was largely positive and used the opportunity to incorporate Trump’s recent recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital into the narrative. See, for instance, Christiane Habermalz, “Ausstellung ‘Welcome to Jerusalem’: Aufruhr im Vorhof zum Himmel,” *Deutschlandfunk Kultur – Fazit*, 9 December 2017; Udo Bdelt, “Ausstellung des Jüdischen Museums Berlin:

- Warum Jerusalem so eine umkämpfte Stadt ist,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 11 December 2017; and Maria Wölfle, “Jerusalem-Ausstellung in Berlin. Wem gehört die Stadt?” *Spiegel*, 11 December 2017.
- 28 Mariana Salgado presented a paper on “Openness, Inclusion and Participation in Museums” at a conference in 2009 which summarizes and analysis the history of inclusion and participation as an approach to new curatorial initiatives. Online at www.researchgate.net/publication/233782466_Openness_Inclusion_and_Participation_in_Museums.
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- 32 Laurajane Smith has made a similar argument in the context of identity politics and nationalizing narratives in American and Australian museums. She argues that museums may be more usefully understood as arenas of justification rather than resources of public education. See Laurajane Smith, “‘We are ... we are everything’: The Politics of Recognition and Misrecognition at Immigration Museums,” *Museum & Society* 15, 1 (2017): 69.
- 33 On the construct of identity as a key to understanding the museum visitors experience, see John H. Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016). On the museological engagements with conflict, see Charlotte P. Lee, “Reconsidering Conflict in Exhibition Development Teams,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 22, 2 (2007): 183–99; and Erica Lehrer, Cynthia Milton, and Monica Eileen Patterson, *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

FESTIVAL REVIEW

Freedom to Imagine Reflections on the First Palestine Writes Literature Festival

Review by Amanda Batarseh

Abstract

Originally scheduled for March 2020, the first Palestine Writes Literature Festival was held virtually in December 2020. The festival brought together authors, artists, activists, scholars, and publishers, offering a dynamic environment for attendees to reimagine the space and time of Palestine, foregrounding Palestinian presence in the past, present, and future. The festival's aim "to imagine a world we want" asserts the centrality of Palestinian political futurity – the liberation of Palestinian imagination from the confines of settler colonial space-time that presents itself as natural, neutral, and permanent. Drawing participants from across multiple regions, languages, and artistic genres, the festival disrupted the ostensible boundaries and binaries of Palestinian writing (inside/outside; Arabic/non-Arabic; literary/non-literary, etc.). The broadening of the Palestinian canon to include non-Arabic writing by exilic authors, however, also provokes the demand to protect against the potential compression of Palestinian identity into a narrative of diasporic "statelessness." In this review, Amanda Batarseh interrogates what it means for Palestine Writes to imagine Palestinian futurity when those voices doing the imagining are dispersed and subject to varying degrees of censure and threat.

Keywords

Festival; literature; futurity; space; time; imagination; temporality; virtual.

In *Al-adab al-'aja'ibi wa al-'alam al-gara'ibi*, Kamal Abu-Deeb describes the tradition of fantasy in Arabic literature as the “unbound imagination” – a space of “creative imagination in absolute freedom.”¹ Abu-Deeb’s assessment surpasses fantasy’s conventional association with a whimsical indifference for the presumed laws governing reality.



The landing page of the Festival's virtual venue (palestinewrites.vfairs.com/).

Unbound imagination, he contends, “shapes the world as it wishes, subservient only to its own desires and observing only those laws and limits from which it wishes to pull. It is a wild, free and irreverent imagination.”² While attending the first Palestine Writes Literature Festival held in December 2020, I was reminded of the unbound imagination. Co-organizer and author Susan Abulhawa stated in her opening remarks, the festival imagines “a world we want – a world that does not know racial theory, Ayn Rand, Zionism, or a white Jesus.” Abulhawa foregrounds the revolutionary significance of “creative imagination in absolute freedom” as fundamental to combating the interdependent structures of white supremacy, neoliberal capitalism, and settler colonialism.

Originally scheduled for March 2020 in New York City, the first Palestine Writes Festival was postponed during the first round of COVID-19 closures and convened in December as a virtual event. The five-day festival brought together authors, artists, activists, scholars, publishers, and booksellers, offering a dynamic space for the formal and informal exchange of ideas. Panel sessions were accompanied by lively chats on the virtual platform, allowing participants to engage both panelists and each other simultaneously. Sessions on solidarity work and Palestinian literary innovation were accompanied by story times for children, musical performances, film, and workshops on cooking and *tatriz*. The festival’s multi-dimensionality aspired both to a tradition of Palestinian resistance that celebrates life and to reflections on the collectivity of Palestinian national imagination. A liberatory imagination crystallized in the festival’s virtual, borderless world.

The transition of Palestine Writes to a virtual platform facilitated the tripling of the festival’s registrants to roughly three thousand across seventy-five countries. On the festival’s welcome page, attendees hovered outside the event’s convention center, a generically futuristic building buffering the Jerusalem skyline. In the virtual environment, and through Zoom-facilitated³ panels (recordings of which are still available online⁴), attendees were welcomed to reimagine Palestinian space and time. “We have returned to Jerusalem in this virtual space,” Abulhawa stated, “because the justice we want, and need, must start with our abilities to imagine it as individuals

and as collectives.” In a thoughtful inversion of Edward Said’s “imaginative geography” – a degenerative tool of settler colonialism that first imagines the land absent of its indigenous population and then violently enforces that “absence” – the festival’s imaginative geography was instead regenerative, premised upon Palestinian “presence” in the past, present and future.⁵

As an alternate although artificial landscape, the festival’s virtual homeland was the only place where an otherwise ordinary activity – a cultural festival – could be made available to all interested Palestinian participants on relatively equal terms. This kind of absurdity has never been lost on Palestinians. In 1974, Emile Habibi contemplated spatial alterity in Saeed’s desperate pursuit of alien deliverance, reflecting, “The moon is closer to us now than are the fig trees of our departed village.”⁶ The festival’s virtual environment (imagining future return to the “departed village”) temporarily offered Palestinian attendees respite from the settler state’s restrictions upon their movement through space and time. Participants were invited to envision a future Palestine – a time and place from which Palestinians have been systematically and violently excluded.

On a purely practical level, the festival disrupted typical constraints on Palestinian movement by facilitating virtual transport across time-zones and borders. Some panels succeeded in temporarily disrupting the normative space-time of interdependent settler colonial/white-supremacist/capitalist/heteropatriarchal regimes of power. The keynote panel, “Culture, Solidarity and Internationalism,”⁷ opened with a letter from Khalida Jarrar read by daughters Yafa and Suha. A political prisoner in the Israeli Damon prison near Haifa, Jarrar’s letter bypasses the state’s militarized enclosures. Her participation in the festival virtually razes the prison walls, exposing imprisonment – the criminalization and incarceration of unwanted demographics – as a critical site of Palestinian national imagination and liberation. Even while the prison is intended to isolate and dissocialize inmates, Jarrar explains in her letter how Palestinian detainees maintain connections with each other and Palestinian society through structured learning environments, reading and writing practices, and clandestine communication within and beyond the prison walls. Both the content and physical realization of Jarrar’s letter – produced within and yet transcending the prison walls – are manifestations of prison writing’s liberational ethic. Reflecting upon the importance of reading, writing, and creativity, Jarrar expresses the capacity of the liberatory imagination to expose the fissures and frailty of carceral coloniality and to fuel resistance movements.

Jarrar’s letter was followed by a panel discussion between Angela Davis, Hanan Ashrawi, and Richard Falk, moderated by Susan Abulhawa and Bill Mullen, which placed transnational struggles in conversation. Elaborating on the centrality of prison resistance as a linchpin to transnational liberation struggles, Angela Davis noted how *Enemy of the Sun* by Palestinian poet Samih al-Qasim (1939–2014) – the first collection of Palestinian resistance literature circulated in the United States – was released by a small Black publishing house. Al-Qasim’s poem “Enemy of the Sun,” which lent its name to the anthology, was originally found in the prison cell of Black revolutionary-scholar George Jackson in 1971 (and thought originally to be penned by him) following Jackson’s assassination by prison guards. This concordance, suggested

Davis, captures the interconnections and “intimacies of our struggles.”

Another panel which placed transnational struggles in conversation – unknitting normative space and time – was “The Parallel Lives of Ghassan Kanafani and James Baldwin.”⁸ Panelists Huzama Habayeb, Rami Abu Shehab, Robin D. G. Kelley and Bill Mullen, moderated by Maha Nassar, examined the resonant lives and works of Kanafani and Baldwin whose distinct and yet parallel exiles in 1948 profoundly shaped their revolutionary politics. Kelley, in his discussion of Kanafani’s *‘A’id ila Hayfa* (Return to Haifa), located in its provocations – that “man is a cause” and “what is a homeland?” – the radical politics of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine that, while national in aim, were also profoundly embedded in transnational revolutionary movements. Kelley noted the “critical moment in the early period of the late 1960s and early 1970s when Black/Palestinian solidarity was an expression of global revolutionary insurgency.” Citing Barbara Harlow’s *After Lives*, Kelley proposed the necessity of looking back at revolutionaries like Kanafani and Baldwin to disclose how they looked ahead.

As these panels suggest, confronting the imposition of settler space and time on Palestinian reality is a key site in the resistance struggle. Kanafani addressed the importance of this confrontation in *Al-adab al-filastini al-muqawim taht al-ihlil 1948–1968* (Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine) as a tension between Palestinian retrospective and prospective vision – between looking backward and forward. As part of this discussion, Kanafani articulates a distinction between the Palestinian literature of resistance (produced in “*al-ard al-muhtalla*,” the territory of historic Palestine) and the literature of exile (produced in “*al-manfa*”) expressing a temporal divide between a literature that looks to the future and another that looks to the past. He develops this distinction in his political writings, such as “*Al-muqawama hiya al-asl*” (The Resistance is the Origin), where he warns that “the relationship uniting Palestinians has become one of exile and displacement rather than revolution.”⁹ For Kanafani, because the land is what centers Palestinian cultural, historical, individual, and communal (including national) formations, a (future) return to it and not (past) exile from it must be central to its liberation movement. As the character, Said, proclaims to his wife, Safiyya, in *‘A’id ila Hayfa*: “We were wrong when we thought the homeland was only the past . . . Homeland . . . is the future.”¹⁰

The festival’s stated aim “to imagine a world we want” asserts the centrality, then, of Palestinian political futurity – the liberation of Palestinian imagination from the confines of settler colonial space-time which presents itself as natural, neutral, and permanent. The festival’s catalogue brings together authors, artists and scholars across multiple regions, languages, and artistic genres, disrupting the ostensible boundaries and binaries of Palestinian writing (inside/outside; Arabic/non-Arab; literary/non-literary, etc.). Through simultaneous translation into Arabic and English, from literary icons like Ibrahim Nasrallah and Mahmoud Shukair to young up-and-coming authors, from the novel to emerging genres, the festival’s plurality aspires to approximate a liberated Palestinian imaginative geography. The broadening of the Palestinian canon to include non-Arabic writing by exilic authors, for instance, resonates with the

festival's articulation of Palestine in the language of transnational struggle. A tension emerges, however, between the extended geography of Palestinian authorship and the demand to protect against potential normalization and compression of Palestinian identity into a narrative of diasporic "statelessness."

The question of who writes Palestinian literature, and for whom, is complicated by the range of intersecting geo-political and geo-historical categories under which Palestinians are subsumed. These include, but are not limited to: '48 refugee; '67 refugee; second-class citizen of the occupied '48 territory; under occupation in the West Bank, Gaza, or East Jerusalem; exile in an Arab or non-Arab majority country; first-, second-, or third-generation exile, etc. All these identities are bound to the space of Palestine and yet segregated from one another by distinct parameters on space and time. Asking "who writes and consumes Palestinian literature?" is, then, not an uncomplicated question, particularly for a population whose connection to their homeland is systematically undermined by dominant Zionist discourse and political practice. Collectively, contemporary Palestinian writing can encompass the multidimensionality of Palestinian identity. However, the dynamism promised by geographic and generational diversity is also always accompanied by its violent source – the inherited trauma of settler colonial dispossession and erasure. How Palestinians negotiate the space and time of internal and external exile remains central to their national constitution and the very challenges of imagining that nationhood. A summation of the festival's mission "to imagine a world we want," then, also provokes that question raised by Kanafani: who is the "we" doing the imagining? Even while we assert the legitimacy of collective Palestinian nationhood in the face of forced dispersal, we are compelled to address not only the diversity of Palestinian positionalities in the world, but also the disparity of their access to cultural capital resulting from this diversity. In other words, as a result of these persistent categories (inside/outside, Arabic/English, literary/non-literary, etc.), whose voices are we being permitted to hear narrate or imagine Palestine?

These fissures manifest in the level of representation afforded anglophone western-situated artists and scholars at the festival. Of course, in its planning phase, the festival was conceived pre-COVID-19 as an in-person event. Facilitating the presence of attendees in historic Palestine and the Arab world – especially for those whose access to mobility and international transit is precarious – can constitute a real barrier to participation. It is also the case, however, that with its transition to a virtual platform, the festival consciously inhabited a space of alterity bypassing traditional barriers to global Palestinian participation. Moreover, facilitating virtual participation of Palestinian panelists at in-person events now constitutes a manageable challenge. Even taking into account that the event was intended to be held in the United States, its name – Palestine Writes – brings homeland and Palestinian collectivity to the fore, ostensibly de-centering its location in the U.S. Just as Kanafani's concern for Palestinian literature produced in historic Palestine was not a critique of exilic literature, this is not an indictment of Palestinian anglophone art or its inclusion within an increasingly diverse canon of Palestinian writing and cultural production. Expanding the Palestinian

canon to reflect the diversity of its creators is fundamental to contesting the settler colonial state's intentional fragmentation of Palestinian identity – that is, the erasure of Palestine and Palestinians from space and time in large part through expulsion and physical dispersal. This concern for overrepresentation of exilic Palestinian identity – particularly of those in the United States – however, does become an invitation to further develop the festival's proposal to imagine a future Palestine and to engage the discomfort and uncertainty that this conversation requires. What does it mean to imagine a multivocal Palestine when those voices doing the imagining are dispersed, subject to varying degrees of censure, and when their access to audience (not to mention their very existence) is under constant threat? What will Palestine Writes look like next year when the barriers to in-person international gatherings have been lifted for those of us in the United States, but persist for those in historic Palestine and beyond? Increased engagement with Palestinian writers, artists, scholars, and cultural critics producing in Arabic in historic Palestine presents future opportunities to explore the vast network of Palestinian authorship and how it connects (and re-connects) *al-sha'b al-Filastini* (the Palestinian people) to *al-ard* (the [home]land).

The “SciFi Palestine”¹¹ panel – addressing the topic of Palestinian imagination and futurity – offered a unique site for meditation on these very questions. This panel brought together Ibtisam Azem, author of the novel *Sifr al-Ikhtifa'* (Al-Kamel Verlag, 2014; *The Book of Disappearance*, translated into English by Sinan Antoon in 2019) with two contributing authors from the short story collection *Palestine +100; Stories from a Century after the Nakba* (Comma Press 2019), Saleem Haddad and Rawan Yaghi, moderated by Ebony Coletu. *Sifr al-Ikhtifa'* is set in Jaffa, the region from which Azem – currently residing in New York – originates. The short stories in *Palestine +100* range from explicitly Palestinian locations to the construction of unnamed worlds, while the collection's authors are globally dispersed. Haddad was born in Lebanon with Palestinian ancestry through his grandmother, and currently lives in Portugal. Yaghi was born and raised in Gaza and recently moved to the United States. Both Haddad and Yaghi composed their short stories – “Song of the Birds” and “Commonplace,” respectively – in English for *Palestine +100*, which contains a mixture of works both translated into and written in English.¹²

We might consider imaginative geography relative to the author's perception and construction of genre against a western model of “science fiction.” None of the authors seem particularly comfortable with the identification of their work as “Sci-Fi.” As Haddad notes, he was never drawn to the mainstream genre, so plainly rooted in the “violent colonial ideologies” of discovery and conquest.¹³ Haddad's comment resonates with a hesitancy expressed by Azem, noting that her novel was only categorized as science fiction upon its translation into English, ostensibly for positioning on the anglophone market. Yaghi asserts that her short story was a creative meditation on the traumatic realities of Gazan life, rather than modeling a prototypical sci-fi narrative. What is the imaginative geography and future being asserted by Palestinian authors of contemporary speculative fiction and how is this space pushing up against the tired – and yet remarkably persistent – practice of measuring global

south literatures by Western models of cultural production? Rather than asking if Palestinian compositions of imagined futures fit the demands of science fiction, it seems more appropriate to (finally) ask if this Western genre of science fiction fits the demands of Palestinian imagination. This panel de-centers the Western genre of science fiction – and their works’ readability or digestibility relative to that framing – and re-centers Palestinian writing as its own kind of methodology.

Similar tensions emerged in other panels, such as the “Graphic Novel Workshop”¹⁴ where exceptional artists, Mohammad Sabaaneh, Marguerite Dabaie, and Iasmin Omar Ata discussed their recent works. While Dabaie’s *The Hookah Girl and Other Stories* and Ata’s *Mis(h)adra* fit comfortably within the parameters of the graphic novel, Sabaaneh’s artwork is explicitly rooted in the popular Palestinian artform of political cartoons à la Naji al-Ali. The framing of this panel, then, missed an opportunity to allow its participants to consider, not how their works conformed to the parameters of the graphic novel, but rather how the variants of the graphic genres in which they work are shaped by the particular spaces they inhabit as Palestinians. Sabaaneh, who was born in Kuwait and is from Qabatya, lives in Palestine and has been imprisoned repeatedly by Israel for his work, while Dabaie and Omar live and work in the United States where they confront political and social repression of a different (although not unrelated) kind. The urge to categorize the genres of contemporary Palestinian literature into digestible units for literary consumption incites familiar anxieties – of who gets to decide the parameters of inclusion? Although the call by the festival to upend the borders confining Palestinian freedom (from those of movement to those of creation) are certainly genuine, such instances illustrate the challenges ahead in detangling ourselves from the regulatory systems of which we are all subject – that is, the distance between the desire for and realization of “imagination in absolute freedom.”

Given the hesitancy raised by Azem, Haddad, and Yaghi regarding the categorization of their works as science fiction – a genre that freely exploits, as Anishinaabe First Nations scholar, Grace Dillon writes, the “theme of conquest, otherwise known as ‘discovery’” – they were compelled to consider if and how to re-imagine this literary space as one of resistance and liberation.¹⁵ This is perhaps the most difficult question to grapple with for Palestinians imagining futurity. Must Palestinian futurity be utopian in order to be liberational? If so, that would seem to severely limit the contributions of these three authors and also much of Palestinian writing. Narrative content may inspire hope; however, processes, projects, and modes of being can also inspire hope. We can, for instance, locate hope in futurity as a decolonial tool – in its assertion of the right to imagine, the right to agency over one’s space and time. As Basma Ghalayini, editor of *Palestine +100* stated recently, what she found most hopeful about the collection, even given the prevalence of dystopian landscapes “was that the writers actually wrote these stories and ventured out of their comfort zones to display the Palestinian cause in that specific context.”¹⁶ Ghalayini’s focus on the authors, rather than the written product in isolation, illustrates the space-time of Palestinian futurity, positioning itself always external to the text and within the world it aspires to inhabit. In this sense, futurity is a conduit for the “creative

imagination in absolute freedom,” and generative space for Palestinians to confront the challenges of imagining a Palestinian future, unrestricted by the imprisonment of a lost past. The homeland is, after all, the future.

Amanda Batarseh is an assistant professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature at the University of California, San Diego. Her recent work focuses on the analysis of place-centered narration in Palestinian contemporary literature across a variety of genres and forms from speculative fiction and the historical novel to the graphic novel and cookbook.

Endnotes

- 1 “Al-khayal al-mubdi‘ al-mubtakir alathi yajub al-wujud bi-ihzas mutlaq bil-huriyat al-mutlaqa,” Kamal Abu-Deeb, “Al-adab al-‘aja’ibi wa al-‘alam al-ghara’ibi” in *The Imagination Unbound: Al-Adab al-‘Aja’ibi and the Literature of the Fantastic* (London: Saqi, 2007), 4.
- 2 “Ya‘jan al-‘alam kama yasha’, wa yasugh ma yasha’ ghayr khadi’ ila li-shahawatihi wa li-mutatallabatihi al-khasa wa li-ma yakhtar huwa an yarsumahu min qawanin wa hudud. Innahu al-khayal jamihan, taliqan, muntqa,” Abu-Deeb, *The Imagination Unbound*.
- 3 The festival’s organizers addressed the censorship by Zoom of an October 2020 event hosted by San Francisco State University of Leila Khaled (and the cancellations of subsequent events that had been planned to address the private company’s ability to censor public speech as a gross infringement of academic freedom), in opening remarks citing the continued practice of Palestinian censorship and their regrettable inability to switch from the Zoom platform at such a late date.
- 4 Palestine Writes Literature Festival, August 2020, online at www.facebook.com/PalestineWrites/videos (accessed 25 2021).
- 5 Edward Said, “Invention, Memory, and Place,” *Critical Inquiry* 26, no. 2 (2000): 181.
- 6 “*wa al-qamar asbaha aqrab ‘alayna min tinatina al-qamra’ fi qaryatina al-thakla,*” Emile Habibi, *Al-waqa’i’ al-ghariba li ikhtifa’ sa’id abi al-nahs al-mutasha’il* (Dar al-Shuruq lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzi’, 2012), 11; Emile Habibi, *The Secret Life of Saeed, the Pessoptimist*, trans. Salma Khadra Jayyusi and Trevor Le Gassick (Northampton: Interlink Books, 2003), 4.
- 7 “Culture, Solidarity and Internationalism,” Palestine Writes Literature Festival, December 2020, online at fb.watch/7vN9Zd1uNJ/ (accessed 25 August 2021).
- 8 “The Parallel Lives of Ghassan Kanafani and James Baldwin,” Palestine Writes Literature Festival, December 2020, online at fb.watch/7vNfWbsjcW/ (accessed 25 August 2021).
- 9 Ghassan Kanafani, *Al-dirasat al-siyasiyya al-mujallad al-khamis* [Political Studies, vol.5] (Cyprus: Dar Manshurat al-Rimal, 2015), 483.
- 10 “*akhta’ana hina ‘i’tabarna anna al-watan huwa al-madi faqat ... fa al-watan ... huwa al-mustaqbal,*” Ghassan Kanafani, *‘A’id ila Hayfa* [Return to Haifa] (Cyprus: Dar Manshurat al-Rimal, 2013), 77.
- 11 “SciFi Palestine,” Palestine Writes Literature Festival, December 2020, online at fb.watch/7vNmER-d8e/ (accessed 25 August 2021).
- 12 This is an assumption made on my part, since only some of the stories in the collection indicate a translator. I have assumed those that were not written originally in English, or were translated into English, by the author.
- 13 “Radical Imagining: Afro, Indigenous & Palestinian Futurisms,” DC Palestinian Film and Art Festival, October 2020, online at www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpaCogzt9YA (accessed 16 August 2021).
- 14 “Graphic Novel Workshop,” Palestine Writes Literature Festival, December 2020, online at fb.watch/7vNssUDfq0/ (accessed 25 August 2021).
- 15 Grace L. Dillon, *Walking the Clouds: An Anthology of Indigenous Science Fiction* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2012), 5.
- 16 “Radical Imagining: Afro, Indigenous & Palestinian Futurisms.”

Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem

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*.

Essays submitted for consideration should be based on original research and must not have been previously published elsewhere. They should be 4,000 to 5,000 words in length (including endnotes), preceded by an abstract of no more than 200 words, and up-to 10 keywords.

If the submitted article is in Arabic, the abstract and keywords should be in English.

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

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

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Email: jq@palestine-studies.org
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