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91

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SUBALTERN ARCHAEOLOGY — PART 2

INSTITUTE OF JERUSALEM STUDIES

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* (*JQ*) is the leading journal on the past, present, and future of Jerusalem. It documents the current status of the city and its predicaments. It is also dedicated to new and rigorous lines of inquiry by emerging scholars on Palestinian society and culture. Published since 1998 by the Institute for Palestine Studies through its affiliate, the Institute of Jerusalem Studies, the *Jerusalem Quarterly* is available online in its entirety at www.palestine-studies.org/en/journals/jq/about.

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Autumn 2022 — Issue 91

SUBALTERN ARCHAEOLOGY – PART 2

* Peer reviewed article.

Dig, Preserve, Imagine

This issue of the *Jerusalem Quarterly* is the second of two issues dedicated to how archaeology has affected Palestine. The special series editor, Salim Tamari, wrote in his introduction in the previous issue a comprehensive discussion about the main contributions to *JQ* 91 from Sarah Irving, Beatrice St. Laurent, Hamdan Taha, Jean-Michel de Tarragon, and Tamari himself. The upcoming conference "Reassessing the British Mandate in Palestine," organized by the Institute for Palestine Studies and taking place from 31 October–2 November, will feature two panels drawn from the work featured in these special *JQ* issues.

JQ takes a broad and interdisciplinary view of archaeology, one that encompasses the social and economic relationships of Palestinians to the remnants of the past on and under the ground, as well as the ways in which the analysis and presentation of archaeological material can highlight or exclude certain histories and emphasize or marginalize certain communities. This was as true in the Umayyad period (as St. Laurent proposes in her discussion of the repurposing of certain spolia in the Haram al-Sharif compound) as it was during the British Mandate (as Taha demonstrates in his piece on the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem). Yet, as Beverley Butler suggested in *JQ* 90, archaeological objects and collections are not static; their colonial and Orientalist origins need not hinder us from thinking about new, reparative possibilities.

A similar approach to photography can be found in the volume *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography,*

Modernity, and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948, edited by Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri and reviewed in this issue by Nayrouz Abu Hatoum. Despite photography's implication in Palestine's colonization, Abu Hatoum draws on the volume, as well as the work of Indigenous scholars beyond Palestine, to consider "the liberatory aspect of documenting, archiving, and worldmaking for Palestinians that could have been realized had history taken another turn." This is not just a matter of considering alternative pasts, but alternative futures.

Indeed, archaeology is not a neutral exercise in preserving the past, but involves judgments about what pasts are worthy of preservation, and whose present and future might suffer disruption or destruction as a consequence. Perhaps nowhere is this decision-making clearer at present than in Silwan, where the right-wing Jewish settler organization Elad, the City of David Foundation, has been authorized by the Israeli government to conduct excavations and stage a bibliocentric touristic experience. Mahmoud Hawari's essay in *JQ* 90 offers an in-depth look at Israeli activities in Silwan; in this issue, Joel Stokes considers Palestinian heritage praxis in Silwan an an effort to resist the erasure of Palestinians from a literature on heritage that, even if it is critical of Israeli archaeological practices in Silwan and elsewhere, tends to focus on state-led or institutional, rather than community-driven, heritage work.

One can locate an alternative form of heritage work in the Dakkak Award–winning essay "A New Horizon in an Old City: Amin Shunnar, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* Magazine, and the Intellectual History of 1960s Jerusalem" by Adey Almohsen in which he undertakes a different kind of excavation. Through a deep reading of the brief run of this small but influential magazine, Almohsen illuminates the cultural scene of Jerusalem under Jordanian rule – a period, or in archaeological terms a stratum, often overlooked – and the ways in which the Nakba of 1948 brought together authors and artists from various political trends to engage in production and criticism that forged a new kind of "Jerusalemite modernism." A bottom-up approach to Palestinian heritage is consistent, too, with the efforts of the Palestine Museum US, founded by Palestinian-American businessman Faisal Saleh in Woodbridge, Connecticut. The museum, which opened its doors in 2018, curated the exhibition "From Palestine with Art," an official collateral event at the fifty-ninth Venice Biennale, reviewed in this issue of *JQ* by Francesco Saverio Leopardi.

Whether in Silwan or in Venice, such activities seek to combat ongoing efforts to marginalize or erase Palestinian history, identity, and culture. Rasmieyh Abdelnabi's "Letter from Jerusalem" in this issue provides a window on how return is envisioned, experienced, and practiced by diaspora Palestinians. We can also see the struggle over history and identity being played out in the realm of education: In East Jerusalem, the Israeli Ministry of Education and the Jerusalem municipality are seeking to impose Israeli-approved textbooks and curricula on schools that have long been using textbooks produced by the Ministry of Education in the Palestinian Authority areas, and threatening to suspend the permanent licenses of schools that refuse to adopt the censored and reprinted versions of the same textbooks. Parents' associations and school administrations in East Jerusalem responded on 19 September

with a universally observed shutdown of schools in protest. In the Tel Aviv–Jaffa municipality, meanwhile, the Israeli Ministry of Education has banned the use of maps distributed to schools by the municipality that show the post-1948 armistice line (the "Green Line"). The struggle is also evident from Israel's crackdown on rights groups, including the August raids on seven NGOs – Addameer, Bisan, Defense for Children International–Palestine, al-Haq, the Union of Agricultural Work Committees, the Union of Palestinian Women's Communities, and the Union of Health Work Committees – the first six of which had been designated by Israeli authorities as "terrorist organizations" a year ago. It may be noted that nine European countries that support these organizations have denounced the Israeli measure. And we can see the struggle against erasure perhaps most fundamentally in this August's assault on Gaza, the latest in what seems now to be an annual escalation of Israeli violence on the besieged population there.

Once again, Palestinians are tasked with shifting the rubble, salvaging what they can, and repurposing it toward a vision of the future – a kind of collective work that ultimately cannot be divorced from the archaeological work of digging, preserving, and imagining addressed in these two issues of the *Jerusalem Quarterly*.

Submissions General Guidlines
The Jerusalem Quarterly (JQ)

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 are received throughout the year; specific deadlines for special thematic issues may also be announced.

JQ sends all manuscripts to designated readers for evaluation. <u>Authors may also specifically request that their article be peer-reviewed</u>. 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 the *JQ* team: jq@palestine-studies.org

General Guidelines

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

- **Length**: Articles for peer-reviewing should not exceed 8,000 words; essays should be between 3,500 and 5,000 words; "Letters from Jerusalem," reviews, and submissions for other sections should not exceed 3,000 words. All submissions should include an abstract of a maximum of 200 words; a list of up to 10 keywords; and a brief author's biography of a maximum of 25 words. NOTE: the above word-count limits exclude footnotes, endnotes, abstracts, keywords, and biographies.
- **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 names and words in Arabic, Hebrew, and Turkish 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 (open single quotation mark) and hamza (closed single quotation mark). No right-to-left letters are allowed, except for very limited instances of crucial need.
- **Citations** should be in the form of endnotes and written in full (CMOS), as in the original source, with transliteration as needed.

- **Book reviews**: A high-resolution photo of the book cover should be included, as well as a scan of the copyright page.
- **Visual material**: Any photos, charts, graphs, and other artwork should be of high resolution. For details, please see the section below.

Guidelines for Visual Material

The *Jerusalem Quarterly* encourages the inclusion of visual material, wherever possible, for articles, essays, and for other sections submitted for publication. Visual material can be photographs, scans, charts, diagrams, graphs, maps, artwork, and the like (hereafter called "figures"). When including any figures, please keep in mind the following guidelines:

- **Rights**: It is imperative that authors obtain appropriate rights to publish the figure(s). *JQ* is willing to assist in this in any way possible – for instance, by providing a letter from *JQ* supporting the application for rights, and providing more details about the journal – but it is the authors' responsibility to actually obtain the rights. An email giving *JQ* the rights to publish the figures suffices as proof of rights. Please let us know what copyright acknowledgment needs to accompany the figures.
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- **Captions**: Authors should provide full captions (including, when applicable: source, credits, dates, places, people, explanation of content, etc.).
- **Color figures**: Thus far, *JQ* has been more inclined to publish photos in black and white mainly because of the subject matter of the articles and essays, but for some time now we have been accepting both options. Since printing in full color is more costly, we sometimes opt to publish in black and white figures submitted in color. If this is not acceptable in the case of a specific figure, we kindly ask authors to notify us in writing.

The Kidnapping of 'Abdullah al-Masri

Archaeology, Labor, and Power at 'Atlit

Sarah Irving

Abstract

This article draws on the archives of the British Mandatory administration's Department of Antiquities to consider archaeology not as an increasing body of literature does, as a source of discursive power for the colonial regime, but instead as an employer of working-class Palestinians. Through a close study of the correspondence between the department and its antiquities guards, men employed to look after important sites, protect archaeological finds and government premises, and guide visitors, Irving examines the conditions of ordinary Palestinians employed by the department, highlighting the situation of 'Abdullah al-Masri, an antiquities guard at 'Atlit castle. The author examines the abuses of colonial power that occurred within this relationship, but also the ways in which Palestinian workers at times managed to manipulate their working environments, using a variety of narratives to subvert and push back against exploitative practices, and derive pride from their role in caring for their historical patrimony. As such, this study provides a rare glimpse into the details of working conditions for manual laborers in Mandate Palestine, and how these were affected by the wider political and social situation surrounding them.

Keywords

'Atlit; archaeology; labor; employment; Department of Antiquities; Mandate Palestine.

On 17 September 1938, 'Abdullah al-Masri, the resident guard at 'Atlit Castle, south of Haifa on the Mediterranean coast of Mandate Palestine, reported that two nights earlier he had been kidnapped from his bed by five armed men. According to his letter, written to the regional Inspector of Antiquities, Na'im Makhouly, they had woken him from his sleep and threatened to kill him if he did not hand over the gun allocated to him by his employers. They then accused him of being a spy for the government and claimed that the gun had been given to him "to kill the rebels when they came to me." The men tied al-Masri up, taking his gun, license, and ammunition supply of twenty-five shotgun cartridges, and kidnapped him. Twenty-four hours later, with the warning that he would be shot if they heard that he was spying for the government or "the Jews," he was returned, shaken but unharmed, to the village of Tantura.[1]

In recent years, the scholarship of Nadia Abu El Haj, Albert Glock, Amara Thornton and others has started to show the importance of archaeology to multiple aspects of our understanding of Mandate Palestine.[2] Abu El Haj and Glock have highlighted its ideological role in British and Zionist colonial endeavors, while Thornton and others have catalogued the institutions and structures that entwined archaeological research with imperial domination. My own work has also considered the role of Palestinian professional archaeologists in the Mandate antiquities authority.[3] These works deal mostly, however, with the institutional and the elite in Palestinian society and Mandate politics, something that can also be said of, for instance, D.M. Reid and Elliot Colla's works on Egyptian archaeology. In another way of viewing archaeological labor in colonial settings, Stephen Quirke has tracked the presence of Indigenous and local workers in the Egyptian excavations of W. Flinders Petrie, noting that Petrie's daybooks and diaries contain important information on who engaged in archaeological labor and the kinds of relationships they had with European bosses, visitors, and officials.[4] Allison Mickel's combination of archival work with ethnography among present-day excavations also yields valuable insights into the skills and knowledge accumulated by so-called unskilled workers in archaeology, and the ways in which they interact with and are viewed by the professionals employing them.[5]

In most cases, however, the nature of archaeological labor, with its short-term seasons and casual pay, makes it difficult to trace the long-term careers of subaltern workers in archaeology. One exception is Yusif Kana'an, who worked for the Palestine Exploration Fund for twenty-three years before World War I and part of whose life story I have traced elsewhere through the scattered references to him in the PEF archives.[6] The archives used for this article offer a similarly rare opportunity to follow a single individual over a comparatively *longue durée*. I perhaps step over a disciplinary line from the history of archaeology to a more general social history for an examination of the changing experiences of a so-called unskilled laborer in a colonial setting. The ways in which I interpret and understand the documents which tell a partial story of a decade of 'Abdullah al-Masri's life owe as much to broader considerations of mass labor under colonial rule as they do to works in the history of archaeology.[7]

This article therefore takes a different approach, emphasizing the role of

archaeology's embeddedness in the everyday life of Mandate Palestine – not its significance for Western and Israeli scholars living in Palestine or for the growing Palestinian middle classes, including those working at the higher levels of archaeological institutions – but for ordinary, working-class Palestinians. It has been recognized in the historical literature that, at levels below the educated, highly literate, culturally cosmopolitan staff of the Department of Antiquities, the Mandate government's archaeological wing employed hundreds of museum and site guards, manual laborers, delivery staff and other workers, usually unnamed and voiceless, and that the vast majority of these were Palestinian (usually referred to in the files as "Arab").[8] However, the archives of the Mandate Department of Antiquities, partially digitized by the Israel Antiquities Authority,[9] represent a valuable source for social historians as well as those researching the history of archaeology itself. Although fragmented and patchy, these documents include personnel files and other material from the day-to-day workings of the Department of Antiquities, and the letters in them – while mediated by translators and, in the case of letters from manual workers, probably also by paid letter writers – offer rare insights into working conditions for some ordinary Palestinians during the Mandate period.

Figure 1. "Northern views. Athlit [sic]. Rock-hewn moat," 1920–33; a Palestinian man (at left) in the ruins of the Crusader castle at Atlit. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019693539// (accessed 27 September 2022).

Using the employment files of some of those employees, often dismissed as "unskilled," I explore some of the ways in which ordinary Palestinians interacted with archaeology as a social institution and how this overlapped with daily concerns such as family and village life, and with the changing dynamics of daily life in Palestine during the Mandate and the Palestinian revolt of the late 1930s. 'Abdullah al-Masri's file presents a rare opportunity in this respect: he worked at 'Atlit for over a decade and its contents reveal details about the experience of Mandate employment for ordinary Palestinians, including questions of sick pay, annual leave, relations with management, and dismissal. Similar records for staff at other archaeological sites, including Sabastiya, Jerusalem, and Khirbat al-Mafjar (Hisham's Palace) in Jericho, broaden the picture.[10] Using colonial records to reconstruct such experiences has obvious drawbacks: the majority of the documents involved are written by colonial officials, mainly British although occasionally Palestinian. The working-class Palestinians who are the direct subject of this article were unlikely to be able to write; variations in the handwriting on letters from employees suggest that at least sometimes these were written by local scribes, friends, or colleagues. In other cases, the original letters have not been preserved, so that the employees' words are recorded only in the official translations made for their British managers. In the worst cases, we can only track events via internal notes and memoranda, which eliminate the voices of Palestinian workers completely. Nevertheless, at a temporal distance which makes oral history approaches impossible, and given the rarity of personal records from working-class Palestinians in this period, I argue that colonial records, read against the grain and supplemented and contextualized using a range of other information, still represent valuable sources from which to understand aspects of the lives of usually voiceless members of Mandate Palestinian society.[11]
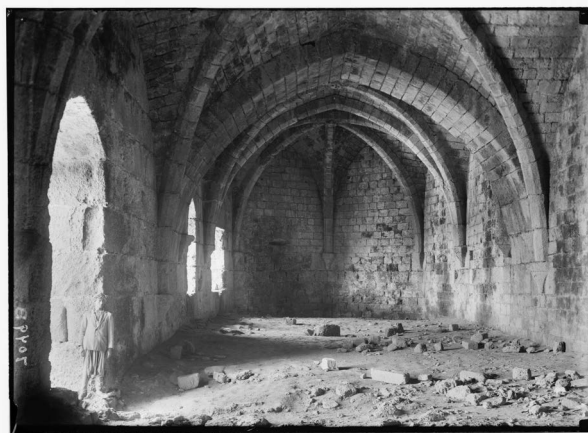
Figure 2. "Athlit. Various including excavations. Ruins fr[om] the beach. Buttress wall close to the sea," 1934–39; note the man in local dress standing in the doorway at left. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019696491/ (accessed 27 September 2022).

Guarding 'Atlit

'Abdullah al-Masri, born in 1900, probably in Tantura, was employed by the Department of Antiquities in December 1930 to work as a resident guard at the Crusader castle of 'Atlit.[12] The imposing ruins of this thirteenth-century fortress –

known in French as Chastel Pèlerin or Pilgrims Castle – are still prominent on the Mediterranean coast south of Haifa, and today are part of an Israeli military base. During the Mandate period, the Department of Antiquities' field archaeologist Cedric Norman Johns led excavations of the castle and its surroundings, including a Crusader cemetery, between 1930 and 1934, and authored a guide to the site; the publication became generally available only in 1997, the original print run having been destroyed during the British evacuation from Palestine in 1947–48.[13] Al-Masri was one of the laborers on these excavations, and later took on the job of site guard.

Figure 3. "Northern views. Athlit. Excavating the city wall," 1920–33; 'Abdullah al-Masri worked as a laborer on these or similar excavations. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019706148/ (accessed 27 September 2022).

'Abdullah al-Masri's job consisted of two main elements: being present on-site around the clock to ensure that the impressive ruins were not damaged and findings from excavations not stolen, and acting as a tour guide to visitors wanting basic information about the site. In terms of the former, al-Masri generally lived on-site, providing twenty-four-hour cover for the important archaeological site, warding off people who might want to take objects from the buildings or dig for finds to sell in Palestine's substantial illicit antiquities trade. The Department of Antiquities also owned a house on the 'Atlit site for the director to live in during excavations and for

storing valuable tools and finds during the low season, and al-Masri was also tasked with securing and maintaining this. Although his job title was guard, al-Masri also spent his days at 'Atlit repairing parts of the buildings, weeding and cutting the grass, and painting and whitewashing walls; he was also "an expert pot-mender," helping to reconstruct bowls and jars from the potsherds unearthed on the excavations, apparently as a voluntary extra.[14] Letters to and from other antiquities guards across Palestine suggest that many of these men applied for their jobs because they represented steady wages and the respectability of government employment; correspondence from Jericho suggests that for some it was seen as a route into the Mandate police force. Others, though, and 'Abdullah al-Masri seems to have been one of these, developed a genuine interest in the archaeology itself, developing skills and knowledge on the job, as we see in the case of his expertise in reconstructing ancient ceramics.

In terms of the latter part of this job – acting as some form of tour guide – the content of al-Masri's letters suggest that he had probably not acquired an in-depth knowledge of the archaeological background and history of 'Atlit, but he certainly possessed an outline understanding of the castle and, coming from a nearby village and as a former laborer on the excavations there, he presumably had local knowledge or stories and could describe the progress of and finds from earlier digs. It is not clear from the archive whether 'Abdullah al-Masri could write in Arabic or English and what languages he spoke, but the many interactions he describes over the ten-year period of the correspondence suggest that as well as his native Arabic he must have commanded some English and perhaps even a little Hebrew. The relative accessibility of 'Atlit, and its impressive appearance, made it a popular destination for British soldiers and other Mandate visitors, so Saturdays and Sundays could be busy for al-Masri, especially around public holidays; the visitors were not always interested in the archaeology so much as duck-shooting on the shore and marshes around the castle.

Although the correspondence between al-Masri and the department mainly concerns bureaucratic and everyday concerns, his letters do convey a sense of pride in his work of preserving and presenting the antiquities at 'Atlit – something found in the work of Yusif Kana'an and other indigenous archaeological workers without formal training.[15] As Ilana Feldman's interviews with former Mandate employees show, many clearly differentiated between their roles in government as service to their compatriots, and the government as an institution or its policies on Zionist immigration or Arab rights.[16] Al-Masri may not have been well-educated, but his voluntary acquisition and use of skills specific to an archaeological job, combined with the tone of his letters, challenge the assumption that an interest in history and archaeology are confined to the educated middle classes or foreign professionals, or that manual workers do not care about or take pride in their labor.

Despite the distortions, biases, and lacunae in the colonial archive, mentioned above, the length of 'Abdullah al-Masri's staff record with the department gives us the opportunity to witness the tensions and conflicts of the job and of a long-term manual worker's relationship with a government department. In the earlier years of his employment the documents are few, reflecting what seems to have been a reasonably

amicable working relationship. He was absent on paid sick leave for around a fortnight in 1932, having been admitted to the isolation ward of the Government Hospital in Haifa with "pyrexia" – a general term for a high fever or pneumonia, as a medical certificate from the Government Hospital states. The cause is not specified on any of the medical certificates entered in the file. He also took several days off as paid holiday after his hospital discharge, perhaps to recuperate. These were deducted from al-Masri's annual holiday entitlement, which in most years seems to have been seven days of personal leave plus a total of around two weeks of official holidays, made up of Islamic religious feasts and government administrative holidays. It seems also to have been normal for the family, including the growing number of children, to be allotted free rail passes by the Mandate administration in order to travel within Palestine. Until around 1938, 'Abdullah al-Masri usually combined all of his leave into a single bloc in the summer, something which was to become a source of tension in his relationship with the Department of Antiquities.

In most years, al-Masri requested an increase in his monthly pay of four Egyptian pounds due to the financial pressures of a growing family, and to account for the inflation that affected Mandate Palestine.[17] These requests were supported by Johns, the department's field archaeologist in charge of the 'Atlit excavations, who cited the help al-Masri provided him on the dig. In 1933, al-Masri's pay was increased to four Palestinian pounds and 250 mils per month, and in 1934 to five Palestinian pounds per month, but after this his requests were routinely turned down by the antiquities headquarters in Jerusalem. This was not a situation which 'Abdullah al-Masri passively accepted; in 1937 he wrote to the head of his department pointing out, "I have had no increments since 1934, and I wonder why I do not get yearly increment as is the Govt Regulation."[18] When his claim, based on an assertion of his honesty and long service and a list of the many tasks he routinely performed, was ignored, al-Masri turned to the Mandate administration's own rules to back up his demands. When this was unsuccessful, it seems that he may have taken matters into his own hands, as this is the point in his personnel file where complaints of his absence from the site at 'Atlit start to crop up on an increasingly regular basis.

By comparison, in 1933 the cook at the American Colony in Jerusalem was paid ten Palestinian pounds, the woman who did the laundry nine pounds 500 mils, and the nightwatchman – the job perhaps most comparable to al-Masri's – seven pounds per month.[19] Even allowing for the likely lower cost of living in a small village and the home-grown produce supplementing the family's diet, al-Masri's pay was far from generous. As with other working-class Arab staff of the British Mandate, the administration's wage policy depended on men such as al-Masri and his colleague 'Ata Milhim at Wadi al-Mughara feeding themselves and their families through subsistence farming.[20] The February 1935 resignation of Hamdan Hassan Farah, antiquities guard at Khirbat al-Mafjar (Hisham's Palace) in Jericho, because "I am too busy with my individual work," suggests that antiquities staff often needed multiple jobs in order to get by.[21] Indeed, according to the personnel files of various guards in Jericho, pay was often even lower than al-Masri's, at two and a half or three Palestinian pounds per

month, albeit with an additional cost-of-living allowance in some cases.

A further informative case is that of Moshe Ostrower, the guard at the antiquities museum in Acre ('Akka) between 1927 and 1930. He was also the gardener at the site and designed and maintained the formal grounds, apparently drawing on existing abilities which, after he left government employment, he used to establish and run a plant nursery for at least three decades.[22] His role was considered to be skilled, although it is not clear whether tasks such as landscape design and gardening were specified as part of the job or added when a skilled employee was engaged; al-Masri's role was deemed unskilled. Ostrower was initially paid eight Palestinian pounds per month, which was increased to ten – more than double al-Masri's salary, even before inflation is taken into account. Given the racialized ideas about Jews and Arabs embedded in British colonial thinking about Palestine, it seems probable that the initial difference in pay was at least partly based on this, as was common in many sectors at the time;[23] other factors may also have entered the equation, such as al-Masri's plot of agricultural land. The increase in Ostrower's pay, however, appears to have come about due to an appeal made by him to the high commissioner, over the heads of his managers at the Department of Antiquities, as shown by a letter from the acting director of the Department of Antiquities to the central government offices, which bases the new salary on that advised by the Department of Agriculture as correct for a "highly skilled gardener."[24]

Rising Tensions

In the late 1930s, however, with the social disruption of the Palestinian revolt, the rising Jewish population as refugees fled Hitler's Germany, and perhaps growing pressures on an income that was declining in real terms while he had to support a wife and a number of children, 'Abdullah al-Masri's relations with his employers started to decline. Certainly, the environment in which he worked must have become increasingly stressful. 'Atlit's location on the coastal plain south of Haifa saw major social and economic changes during the Mandate period. There had been a Zionist Organization experimental agriculture station at 'Atlit since 1910,[25] but after World War I the Palestine Jewish Colonization Association sponsored a colony which grew rapidly, soon overshadowing the existing Arab villages.[26] The surrounding marshes were drained and a large salt production company set up under concessions from the Mandate government, the terms of which were challenged in legal and community conflicts during the 1930s and 1940s despite administration claims that their lease of state land would protect the rights of existing residents.[27] These changes also led to a proletarianization of some villages and the migration of Palestinians from the rural interior in search of work at 'Atlit quarry, where the racialized perceptions of the day saw Palestinian workers allocated unskilled and heavy labor.[28] As a result of British concepts of Arabs and their society, Palestinians working for the quarries, operated by the Mandate government, were paid less than the administration's own stated minimum wage or living wage levels.[29] In the late 1930s, the British also established a

large prison camp near 'Atlit, initially holding Palestinian insurgents from the country-wide revolt (1936–39) and later incarcerating illegal Jewish immigrants. In later years the camp was used by the State of Israel to hold Palestinian and Lebanese prisoners.[30]

Given these rapid changes in the society, economy, population and environment of the coastal plain south of Haifa, particularly around 'Atlit with combined militarization and industrialization, it is not, perhaps, surprising to find that the area saw many incidents during the 1936–39 Palestinian revolt. These ranged from small-scale events such as the brief kidnapping of 'Abdullah al-Masri with which I began this article, to the massive raid which the uprising commander Yusuf Abu Durra launched against the British internment camp in July 1937, when two hundred Palestinian fighters attacked with the aim of releasing their fellow insurgents, and fought the guards and police for three hours.[31]

This, then, was the context in which 'Abdullah al-Masri's relations with his employers at the British Mandate Department of Antiquities went into decline. As noted above, by 1937 he was growing increasingly dissatisfied with his wages, something visible in the frustrated tone of letters to his employers. Then, in January 1938, al-Masri's daily routine at 'Atlit castle and archaeological excavation intersected with a murder case, when the lawyer for Mordechai Schwarcz came to the site as part of the investigation he was mounting for his client's defense. Schwarcz, a Czechoslovakia-born Jewish migrant to Palestine, had joined the Palestine Police Force and on the night of 1 September 1937, when he and a fellow officer, Mustafa Khoury, were sharing a tent in the high commissioner's summer encampment, Schwarcz shot the sleeping Khoury dead.[32] Schwarcz's lawyer had apparently heard that al-Masri had been burgled at the site the previous year and wanted him to testify at the trial, presumably to build a case that robbers were responsible for the murder. In such a politically charged environment, however, al-Masri wanted to avoid the public exposure of giving evidence. The conversation as al-Masri reports it sounds profoundly demeaning: the lawyer is quoted as telling him, "I shall ask your Director to permit you to attend the Court and to tell all what happened to you." But al-Masri sought to use the notion that he could not leave 'Atlit without his employer's permission to avoid appearing as a witness in court.[33] In February 1940, he used the same tactic, deploying a subaltern status in order to evade being caught up in the violence of the times, when one of his relatives, who had been involved in the armed revolt, surrendered himself to the superintendent of police in Haifa. The Haifa authorities tried to ensure that al-Masri's relation would not return to the insurgency by imposing a collective financial guarantee of the huge sum of two thousand Palestinian pounds onto the extended family, and al-Masri asked the Director of Antiquities, Robert Hamilton, to "send me a letter so that his relatives and the people could see that I am prohibited to guarantee."[34] In this instance, Hamilton refused, but in April 1938 he did respond rapidly to al-Masri's request for a letter to show to soldiers and police when they came to Tantura, certifying that he was a government employee and that his house was exempt from searches.

In 1938, however, the most intensive year of the Palestinian revolt, the situation around 'Atlit became less and less bearable for 'Abdullah al-Masri and his family. In July, he wrote to the Department of Antiquities asking to be transferred to Jerusalem, citing his health, but this could also be read as a desire to leave an insecure environment. The pass system, under which a Palestinian such as al-Masri was not permitted even to travel to Haifa to buy basic goods, appears in letters to his employers asking for a government ID card and permission to use the local trains. The request for a transfer was refused, but he did receive his identity card and travel pass.[35] On another occasion, an urgent request from 'Atlit – the contents of which are lost – could not be answered because the telegraph lines had been cut, and messages had to be sent via the prison camp telephones.

Antiquities under Fire

At the end of August 1938, al-Masri again wrote to Hamilton, asking that the guard from Wadi al-Mughara be allowed to come and stay at 'Atlit during the night, because he felt himself to be "in danger from the Jews and armed persons who might attack the place and destroy the equipment in my custody."[36] He placed a stress on the fact that there was no moveable department property at Wadi al-Mughara, so nothing to guard during the night. The request was sent to Na'im Makhouly, the regional antiquities inspector, who was on leave when Hamilton replied to al-Masri on 6 September. Despite the fact that guarding antiquities in Mandate Palestine was often a dangerous job, and it was not unusual for guards to run the risk of physical violence and even death, al-Masri's important request was stalled by Makhouly's holiday. Events overtook the proposed rearrangement of guarding duties: on 15 September, when al-Masri was staying with his family in Tantura, the house was invaded by apparent fighters in the Palestinian revolt who accused al-Masri of being a British agent and of being armed to kill them if they approached 'Atlit:

> Five armed men entered the house and said hand us the gun or you shall die. They told me that they know that I am a spy for the Government and that the gun was given to me to kill the rebels when they come to me. I told them that this was not true. They took the gun, the license and 25 bullets; then they tied me and took me with them. The second night they returned me to the village (Tantura) and swore to shoot me if they hear that I spy for the Government or the Jews. I reported the incident to the police at 'Atlit.[37]

The handwritten comments of the British officials at the head of the antiquities department on the typed translation of al-Masri's report are revealing. Hamilton's response, ignoring the fact that one of his employees had been robbed, kidnapped, and threatened with murder, was to note that he had been at Tantura, not at his post at 'Atlit, when the crime occurred. Cedric Johns, the field archaeologist with whom al-Masri had worked for many years at 'Atlit, was more sympathetic and probably better

informed about the conditions of life in al-Masri's village: he pointed out that al-Masri had not been paid his previous month's salary and was probably in Tantura to arrange to buy food on credit for his family.

The Department of Antiquities' official reaction focused almost entirely on its archaeological site and property. Hamilton instructed Na'im Makhouly to go to 'Atlit to "let me have a report on the facts and a statement of any damage that may have been done at our property."[38] He also told Makhouly to "tactfully" extract from al-Masri a sense of whether he thought he would be safe if he returned to his post at 'Atlit, and whether the guards at "Wadi Mugharah and Jebel Kafzeh" felt secure. Makhouly was to assess whether department property needed to be removed from 'Atlit, but was not to actively suggest the idea to al-Masri. The ensuing correspondence – with al-Masri insisting that he felt safe at 'Atlit, 'Ata Milhim from Wadi Mughara refusing to sleep there because it would leave his own young family alone at night, and the department mostly worried about how to transport its property to Jerusalem – highlights the casual attitude of Department of Antiquities officers towards their working-class staff. Makhouly reported that al-Masri was mainly concerned about the safety of department property and that he was keen to stay at 'Atlit, but it is no stretch of the imagination to think that – given the repeated denials of his requests for a pay rise or a transfer – that al-Masri feared that if 'Atlit no longer needed to be guarded, he would be out of a job and that his employers would not hurry to find him a new position.

As noted above, the physical danger to al-Masri and the threat to the historical remains at 'Atlit were not an isolated incident for the Department of Antiquities. In 1929, during the Buraq Uprising, the guard at the Crusader site in 'Akka, Moshe Ostrower, had missed work when he and his family were trapped in Haifa after the trains were halted due to riots in the town. A few months later, having been reported by Makhouly as absent from his post and as having allowed the gardens and equipment to deteriorate, he wrote to the Director of Antiquities stating that he had received a letter threatening himself and his family with death if he remained in 'Akka, and asking if he could move to Haifa and travel daily to work.[39] The local police denied that there was any danger and suggested that Ostrower was manufacturing an excuse to move to Haifa. The department refused, and after further disagreements over the safety of his position, and with the transfer of the museum premises to the police and prison officials, Ostrower was fired. Makhouly directly related Ostrower's dissatisfaction with his job to the political situation, remarking that he "has become, since the recent disturbances, absolutely negligent in his duties and careless of the government work put into his hands."[40] As in al-Masri's case, however, there was little sympathy shown by senior staff at the Department of Antiquities.

Another detail highlighted by the kidnap of 'Abdullah al-Masri described above is the theft of the department's gun and ammunition – ownership of which may have made him an especially tempting target for the rebels. The fact that al-Masri was allocated and accustomed to carry a firearm makes clear that the job of an antiquities guard was viewed as dangerous. At least one of the guards in Jericho – Mufleh Abdul Ghani at Khirbat al-Mafjar – was also granted a gun from government stocks

(confiscated from the Palestinian population) "as the place he guards is a lonely one and he is troubled by a hyena at nights."[41] According to the Antiquities Ordinance of 1935, even ordinary guards and attendants at the Palestine Archaeological Museum in Jerusalem had power of arrest over anyone suspected of trying to steal or damage objects on display, which could conceivably have involved violence from someone resisting arrest. Such examples make it clear that the lowest paid and least valued of the Department of Antiquities staff were expected to run considerable personal risk.

Colonial Attitudes

After the kidnapping incident, 'Abdullah al-Masri's working conditions at 'Atlit seem to have calmed down for a while, although in January 1939 he again asked for a transfer to Jerusalem. This time, however, he wrote directly to Johns, the field archaeologist, perhaps hoping that his former excavation boss at 'Atlit might make a direct request for him as an assistant in the capital and enable him to leave "a place which is like a prison."[42] While this plea was unsuccessful, awareness of his dissatisfaction must have become more widely known, as he was given permission to spend Thursday nights at home in Tantura, with 'Ata Milhim from Wadi al-Mughara guarding 'Atlit (despite the latter's reluctance because his own family would be left alone). Makhouly backed the idea, telling Hamilton that "[i]n my opinion the suggestion is reasonable given that the guard is unable to bring his family from Tantura where his children attend the school."[43] Milhim complained about the arrangement on Makhouly's next set of rounds to sites in the area, and al-Masri was instead told to find a trustworthy person from the village at 'Atlit and the department would pay him.

Unhappy at 'Atlit and with no pay rise for several years, 'Abdullah al-Masri's relationship with his employers declined further over the next year. In a stroke of bad luck for him, at the beginning of November 1939, he went home to Tantura between 3:00 and 4:00 PM on an evening when he did not have permission to be absent. Ramadan fell in October and November that year and al-Masri had apparently become accustomed to breaking his fast with his family and returning to 'Atlit early the next morning. But not long after he left, the high commissioner made a surprise visit to the castle and, finding no one looking after the Department of Antiquities house or present to guide them, his aide reported the fact to headquarters. This was a severe loss of face for the Department of Antiquities, especially given that the aide had somehow – presumably through poor translation from Arabic – got the impression that al-Masri had been absent for a fortnight. An acting director was heading the department at the time and, presumably concerned to perform well during his boss's absence, he overreacted. Makhouly's more accurate report of events smoothed things over, and al-Masri was docked one day's pay and ten days of the next year's holiday.

Although this brief clash was resolved, al-Masri was clearly unhappy at work and responded with what the anthropologist James C. Scott dubbed "weapons of the weak" – the everyday acts of non-compliance and disruption that often form a subtle kind of subaltern resistance.[44] While he had previously put up with the inefficient

and inconvenient system under which he and 'Ata Milhim were paid, now he started to make complaints. An apparent misunderstanding over leave allowances led to an exchange of letters which was ill-tempered on both sides. Then al-Masri's wife lost a baby – it is not clear whether this refers to a miscarriage or the death of a young infant – and he asked for, and was granted, extra leave to look after her. But his habit of combining all of his holidays into one long period came to the notice of the director, who questioned this. Explanations from Johns suggest that the practice had come about in the early years of al-Masri's employment, when the department's excavations at 'Atlit still took place every summer. For al-Masri to leave for several weeks while Johns was on-site to head the dig made sense, because no replacement needed to be hired, but after the excavations halted because of the 1936–39 revolt, the system no longer worked and a lack of institutional memory meant that Hamilton (as usual assuming the worst) thought that al-Masri was making unreasonable demands. Relations between 'Atlit and Jerusalem thus deteriorated further. The situation was exacerbated by a figure dubbed as "Najib Effendi," apparently an employee of the Department of Antiquities and responsible for writing the Arabic versions of letters sent by Hamilton. Al-Masri had complained about him as early as 1934, alleging that Najib wanted to edge him out of his job at 'Atlit so that it could be given to Najib's brother Mahfuz. Al-Masri had spent his first five or six years in the job in close and regular cooperation with the field archaeologist Cedric Johns, and the effect of linguistic and physical distance once excavations halted at 'Atlit was taking its toll on communications: "If Najib Effendi talks like that to me and I am unable [to speak that way] to him, to whom shall I report?" al-Masri begged of Johns in 1940.[45]

Al-Masri then came down with backache, preventing him from doing much of his job, particularly walking around the site, guiding visitors, and carrying out repairs. Between July and November 1940 a series of letters and medical certificates went back and forth between al-Masri, Makhouly and Hamilton. The latter was clearly skeptical, although Makhouly reported that the government doctor had found that the guard had a "serious case of trouble in his spinal column" and a later certificate mentions lumbago.[46] Al-Masri also asked if he might be permitted time off to go to al-Hamma, a village in the Yarmuk valley, destroyed between 1948 and 1950 but in the 1930s and 1940s popular with Palestinians, who went to the resort established by a Lebanese businessman, Sulayman Nasif, for the hot mineral springs and their healing properties.[47] Al-Hamma was on the railway connecting Haifa to the Hijaz line, so al-Masri also asked for railway passes to travel there when his requests were finally backed up by a medical certificate prescribing five days at the baths as treatment.

Mixed in with the dates of the Muslim feast, of al-Masri's trip to al-Hamma, and of a call by the Mandate administration's Land Settlement officer specifying that the villagers of Tantura had to be on their land on a specific date, there seems at the end of 1940 and the first weeks of 1941 to have been several occasions on which Makhouly visited 'Atlit and did not find the guard there. Given existing tensions, this was bound to cause problems. Feelings ran even higher when al-Masri was docked two days' pay for one of his absences and 'Ata Milhim, who had been with him and

thus also away from his post, was not punished. In the ensuing correspondence, al-Masri never received a clear reason why he had been picked out for harsh measures, and he vehemently asserted his innocence, pointing out that both he and Milhim had thought that they were due to collect their wages in Haifa (a system they had already protested was troublesome) because they had confused the dates and lengths of the British administrative months. In defending himself, al-Masri had no qualms about telling the director of his department that his facts were "quite incorrect," but to no avail.[48] By this point Na'im Makhouly, the regional Inspector of Antiquities and al-Masri's first line of departmental contact, had decided that he had had enough of this employee. "In my opinion, unless some arrangement of the sort will be made, Abdallah who is head of a compound, a wife and several children, will continue to absent himself from his post," he wrote in a November 1940 letter to Hamilton, and the following month: "As a matter of fact I feel very sorry for the great change in the conduct of Abdallah so that he became nearly a man of no discipline."[49] Finally, in February 1941, Makhouly wrote again that, "Abdallah is a man of no principle and does not like to be governed by rules; instructions or orders from his chiefs are of no value to him. In a word I must say that I do not like Abdallah, owing to the trouble he is making to me, to work under me any more."[50]

Na'im Makhouly and the department were still showing some flexibility in January and February 1941, when they discussed hiring a man from 'Atlit to cover al-Masri's nights in Tantura. But any semblance of organization was breaking down. Annoyed with Makhouly, al-Masri was now trying to bypass the official hierarchy, writing directly to Johns and further irritating the director, Hamilton. He then tried to sort things out in person by visiting Makhouly's office in Nazareth, but the latter was not in town and the incident further added to al-Masri's tally of unapproved absences. On 14 March, Hamilton finally wrote al-Masri a few terse lines, giving him a month's notice to quit.

Situations Vacant

There was not, however, to be a clean break; in fact al-Masri continued to guard 'Atlit until well into the summer of 1941. On hearing that he was to be replaced, there were two distinct reactions from the residents of 'Atlit itself. First, they asserted the village's right to be involved in picking the new guard, since they did not want a stranger living among them; ideally, they believed, the new appointee should be from 'Atlit and that they had a moral right to this. This argument seems to have been a reaction to the news that a man whose name is given as Kamil Ahmad Zandik (al-Zandiq), was to be offered the job. Zandik, a resident of Tayba, near Tulkarm, was married to a woman from 'Atlit, which accounts for the fact that this news reached the village within days, possibly before Zandik had even been interviewed for the post by Makhouly. He had been enthusiastically recommended by the former governor of the prison at 'Akka, who had employed him as a gardener for some years. According to a letter signed by one Hassan Ahmad al-Awad and claiming to be from all residents of the village, "He

was imprisoned for 15 years and we do not trust him on our lives lest one day he might beat or kill one of the villagers, since his mean characters are used to such mischiefs.[51] We kindly beg you not to send him to our village as we all disagree to his appointment."[52] The mukhtar of 'Atlit reiterated this when Makhouly visited in mid-April. Another letter, from Muhammad Ahmed Awad of 'Atlit, objected to the appointment of "Abdul Karim al-Teebi of al-Taybeh village, Tul Karm," seemingly referring to the same man. It also claims that there would "be troubles and great corruption in the village if he comes because he will seize the opportunity through this job. All the inhabitants of the village object and oppose the acceptance of this person."[53] The authority of this second letter objecting to Zandik's appointment was undermined when a missive arrived in Jerusalem from Mordechai Surdin, director

Figure 4. "Northern views. Athlit. Salt works. The pier and pipes for pumping sea water," 1920–33. Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at loc.gov/pictures/collection/matpc/item/2019706149/ (accessed 27 September 2022).

of the Palestine Salt Company's operations at 'Atlit, recommending "Mr Mohamed Ahmed el Awad of 'Atlit – Islam Village [sic]" for the job.[54] That Awad's letter gave Surdin as an address for replies highlights the intertwining of this major Zionist enterprise in the daily life of the villagers.[55]

Hassan al-Awad's letter went on to say that the villagers believed "that we have the right in the case more than a stranger," but the Department of Antiquities did not agree. 'Ata Milhim, the guard from Wadi al-Mughara, was suggested as an acceptable compromise.[56] In the weeks that followed, recommendations also arrived for an 'Atlit man called Mahmud Yasin, who told Makhouly that he had worked for Johns and (incorrectly) claimed that the latter would give him a glowing reference. A Mahmud Muhammad al-Husayn, again from 'Atlit, also wrote to apply, although Johns noted that he had been employed several years earlier on the excavations and had been

dismissed from that role. Despite the comparatively poor pay, the competition for this role highlights the value attached to steady work for an official employer, both for the individual's job security and the village as a marker of its authority over the local area and relationship to the governing authorities.

Possibly as a result of the controversy over Zandik, some villagers backed al-Masri himself, perhaps because he was well-known to them and occasionally passed casual work to men from the village. This support came in an undated statement in the name of "the Arab inhabitants of 'Atlit," stating that al-Masri was always to be found at his post except for a brief period every five or six days when he went to Tantura to check on his family's food supplies, and that information to the contrary came from a "treacherous enemy." The document, ending with the assertion that al-Masri was "faithful, true and of good character," was signed by fifteen men, including the mukhtar, mainly using thumbprints. A short addendum reiterating that al-Masri was always to be found "at his place of business" was signed by "police No. 667, 'Atlit" on behalf of the constables at the 'Atlit police station.[57] The competition became yet more acrimonious when al-Masri wrote to Johns and Hamilton to say that he was willing to take a pay cut in order to keep his job, and that Muhammad al-Awad (also named Muhammad al-Jazury) had been sentenced four years previously for illegally digging antiquities at 'Atlit – which perhaps explains why al-Masri had enemies in the village.

At this point, having ruled out Zandik due to local opposition and Mahmud Yasin because of his bad reference from Johns,[58] the Department of Antiquities turned again to 'Ata Milhim, who at least had some support from the residents of 'Atlit and was a known quantity to Hamilton and Johns. Given his proximity, and the fact that he was accustomed to filling in at 'Atlit, it is not clear why it took some months for Milhim to be confirmed in the post, with al-Masri apparently remaining until July or August of 1941. The latter's certificate of service, signed by Hamilton, is dated 29 August and notes that he was "generally keen and active. Latterly became somewhat refractory when duty and private convenience conflicted."[59] In September, however, al-Masri made a somewhat pathetic journey to Jerusalem – something he could probably ill afford, under the circumstances – to beg Johns to intercede with Hamilton and ask for his reinstatement.[60] The bullish insistence on his innocence and martyred willingness to quit his job, abundant in previous letters, are gone. Instead he asks for forgiveness, saying that he will take his children out of the school at Tantura and move to 'Atlit, and is willing to work for less money. He also mentions making a similar trip to Nazareth to plead for Makhouly's support. Hamilton replied that Milhim had already taken up the position and that perhaps, if excavations recommenced at 'Atlit, al-Masri could find work then, a message which infuriated the recipient. His final communication pointed out that as a man in his forties with back trouble he was incapable of working as a laborer; he accused Milhim of being less competent than him and made oblique comments which Hamilton took to be a threat, while also demanding a "gratuity" or closing payment in recognition of his long service, "to which I am entitled."[61]

And here, 'Abdullah al-Masri disappears from the colonial record, or at least from

the personnel files of the British Mandate administration's Department of Antiquities. He may have gone on to find casual work, or he and his family may have had to rely on their small piece of land. In 1948, as has been well documented, his village of Tantura was the scene of a massacre by the Alexandroni Brigade of the Haganah. Among the eyewitness testimonies published by researchers who interviewed residents of Tantura are a number by people named Masri, including Mustafa al-Masri, Amina al-Masri (Umm Mustafa), 'Izz al-Din al-Masri, and Tamam al-Masri (Umm Sulayman). Several others of the name are mentioned as among the dead that day, including Mustafa's father and twelve other members of his family, and brothers Sulayman and Ahmad al-Masri.[62] Given a population of around 1,500 people at the time of the Nakba, it seems likely that some of these were part of 'Abdullah's extended family, if not more closely related to him. Was he killed in May 1948? Did he live out his days as a refugee in Yarmuk camp or in Damascus, like other Masris from Tantura? As mentioned at the start of this article, 'Abdullah al-Masri appears in the historical record only when his life intersects with the activities of the British Mandate authorities; otherwise he, like many ordinary Palestinians, could be found only in oral histories and family memories which are often now lost. But this account of the decade of his life spent working for the Department of Antiquities does permit a glimpse into how many working-class Palestinians existed day-to-day in this period.

Conclusion

This article, drawing intensively on the correspondence between Palestinian antiquities guards working for the British Mandate Department of Antiquities in Palestine and the men who employed them, highlights the charged social history of archaeology. The existing literature has focused on the narratives and images derived from archaeology and ancient history in Palestine and how these have perpetuated particular visions of the region's past. As such, it has tended to concentrate on the activities and discourses of the colonial occupiers of Palestine and how they used ideas of the past to claim land and legitimacy. This article, however, has sought to consider archaeology as a site of labor, and thus how it was experienced by the lowest-paid and least-valued of the Department of Antiquities staff, an overwhelming proportion of whom were Palestinian Arabs. As the personnel files of these men show, they did a hard job, sometimes dangerous and frightening, with long hours and little respect from their employers. Nevertheless, these archives also reveal glimpses of the varying reasons they might have had for wanting these positions, ranging from the comparative security and longevity of a government post to a genuine interest and pride in the role of caring for and helping to present and display their material heritage.

This approach also highlights the ways in which archaeology was not just a sphere of elite academic discourses *about* Palestine, happening at a distance from the place and people. It was also an everyday practice taking place *in* Palestine, involving ordinary workers and the communities in which they lived and who, while usually silenced by colonial archives and histories, can occasionally, briefly, be heard. Archaeology was

a provider of jobs, sometimes sought-after and valued not only by the individuals in them but also by the communities in which excavations and antiquities sites were located, and for reasons as much to do with control over community space and access to state resources as with basic issues of pay and employment. As we find in the documents presented here, antiquities guards were men with families, land, legal responsibilities, political views, and career paths before and after their jobs with the department. All of these things affected their encounters with archaeology and the scholars who saw themselves as in charge of it. Men like 'Abdullah al-Masri may have been exploited by the Mandate administration and their personal safety treated negligently, but they were also intermediaries or middlemen, viewed by the rebels of the 1930s as functionaries of the British administration and thus subjected to threats and kidnapping, at worst collaborating with and at best benefiting from the colonial regime. They were social actors in a changing setting of which colonial archaeologists were only a part, and their experiences offer valuable insights into the relationship between working-class Palestinians and the British occupiers of their land and history.

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Endnotes

1   Letter 'Abdullah al-Masri to Na'im Makhouly, 17 September 1938. All citations of original letters involving al-Masri and the Department of Antiquities were drawn from the online archive of the Israel Antiquities Authority, where documents present in the Palestine Archaeological Museum (now the Rockefeller Museum) fell into Israeli hands with the 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem. This online archive, which has huge potential for historians of both the archaeology of Mandate Palestine and social and labor issues in this period, is not easy to use: the documents have been scanned only as images, with no text recognition, and no consistent naming or file numbering system, and an erratic search facility. The documents referred to in this article can be found mainly in the folder "Atlit Castle: Guard 'Abdullah El Masri," online at (iaa-archives.org.il) bit.ly/3TvD1vN (accessed 18 September 2022), and other folders under the Site Headings, Athlit, online at (iaa-archives.org.il) bit.ly/3s8OWUW (accessed 18 September 2022), and Atlit, online at (iaa-archives.org.il) bit.ly/3eNXGfT (accessed 18 September 2022).

2   See Nadia Abu El Haj, "Producing (Arti) Facts: Archaeology and Power during the British Mandate of Palestine," *Israel Studies* 7, no. 2 (2002): 33–61; Amara Thornton, "Tents, Tours, and Treks: Archaeologists, Antiquities Services, and Tourism in Mandate Palestine and Transjordan," *Public Archaeology* 11, no. 4 (2013): 195–216; Amara Thornton, "Archaeologists-in-Training: Students of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem," *Journal of Open Archaeology Data* (2012), online at (openarchaeologydata.metajnl.com) bit.ly/3Ser3px (accessed 18 September 2022); Albert Glock, Lois Glock, and Nancy Lapp, "Archaeology," in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, ed. Philip Mattar (New York: Facts on File, 2005), 71–80; and Albert Glock, "Archaeology as Cultural Survival: The Future of the Palestinian Past," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23, no 3 (Spring 1994): 70–84.

3   See Sarah Irving, "Palestinian Christians in the Mandate Department of Antiquities: History and Archaeology in a Colonial Space," in *European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine, 1918–1948*, ed. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary

Zananiri (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 162–69; "'A Young Man of Promise': Finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (2018): 42–62; and "Archaeological Entanglements: Palestinian Refugee Archaeologists in Cyprus, Libya and Jordan," in *Empire and Excavation: Critical Perspectives on Archaeology in British-period Cyprus, 1878–1960*, ed. T. Kiely, A. Reeve and L. Crewe (Leiden: Sidestone Press, forthcoming 2023).

4   Stephen Quirke, *Hidden Hands: Egyptian Workforces in Petrie Excavation Archives, 1880–1924* (London: Bloomsbury, 2010).

5   Allison Mickel, *Why Those Who Shovel Are Silent: A History of Local Archaeological Knowledge and Labor* (Louisville: University Press of Colorado, 2021).

6   Sarah Irving, "A Tale of Two Yusifs: Recovering Arab Agency in Palestine Exploration Fund Excavations 1890–1924," *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 149, no. 3 (2017): 223–36.

7   Useful examples include the work of Arun Kumar on working classes in colonial India, see "Letters of the Labouring Poor: Letter Writing in Colonial India," *Past & Present* 246, no. 1 (2020): 149–190; "Skilling and Its Histories: Labour Market and the Making of Skilled Workers in Colonial India (1880–1910)," *Journal of South Asian Development* 13, no. 3 (2018): 1–23; and of Elizabeth Thompson on mass struggles over the dynamics of citizenship, gender, and class in Mandatory Syria and Lebanon, *Colonial Citizens: Republican Rights, Paternal Privilege, and Gender in French Syria and Lebanon* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).

8   Glock, Glock, and Lapp, "Archaeology"; Irving, "Palestinian Christians in the Mandate."

9   See endnote 1.

10 As mentioned in endnote 1, the majority of these files, including all personnel folders cited, are available online, although as image files and thus difficult to search on the website of the Israel Antiquities Authority (online at www.iaa-archives.org.il/). These were apparently left at the Palestine Archaeological Museum when Jordanian troops withdrew during the 1967 Israeli invasion of the West Bank. A small number of other Mandate documents cited were seemingly left in other administration premises occupied by Israeli forces in 1948 and are thus held by the National Library of Israel and digitized on its website, online at www.nli.org.il/en (accessed 18 September 2022).

11 For more complex and comprehensive discussions of the ethics and politics of this methodology, see Ricardo Roque and Kim Wagner, eds., *Engaging Colonial Knowledge: Reading European Archives in World History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012).

12 I could find nothing more on al-Masri's life story, whether before or after his employment by the Department of Antiquities. This gap highlights the extent to which many ordinary Palestinian lives are now invisible to historians except where they interact with the Mandate authorities.

13 Denys Pringle, "Introduction," in C. N. Johns, *Pilgrims' Castle ('Atlit), David's Tower (Jerusalem) and Qal'at ar-Rabad ('Ajlun): Three Middle Eastern Castles from the Time of the Crusades* (Farnham: Ashgate, 1997), xiii–xiv.

14 C. N. Johns to Director of the Department of Antiquities, 12 April 1933.

15 Irving, "Tale of Two Yusifs," 226, 230.

16 Ilana Feldman, *Governing Gaza: Bureaucracy, Authority, and the Work of Rule, 1917–1967* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 82–84.

17 Issa Khalaf, "The Effect of Socioeconomic Change on Arab Societal Collapse in Mandate Palestine," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 29, no. 1 (February 1997): 101. Egyptian pounds were the standard currency in Mandate Palestine until November 1927, when the Palestine Pound was issued, but some of Masri's file still uses Egyptian pounds as a denomination.

18 Al-Masri to Johns, 25 November 1937.

19 Sreemati Mitter, "A History of Money in Palestine: From the 1900s to the Present," (PhD diss., Harvard University, 2014), online at (nrs.harvard.edu) bit.ly/3SbmIn2 (accessed 18 September 2022).

20 Wadi al-Mughara, several kilometers from 'Atlit Castle, is a major site of evidence for early prehistoric humans in the Levant and was excavated under Dorothy Garrod's leadership, unusually employing and training a number of local women excavators, between 1929 and 1934.

21 Hamdan Hassan Farah to Inspector of Antiquities, 12 February 1935.

22 Moshe Ostrower's name suggests roots in Ostrow, present-day Poland, and that he was probably Ashkenazi Jewish, but when he or his forebears arrived in Palestine is unknown. After leaving the museum and gardens at 'Akka he seems to have established a plant nursery at Kiryat Bialik, a town to the north of Haifa founded by Zionist immigrants in 1934. A nursery owned by M. Ostrower existed there by 1938, according to a 1938 documentary on the " Development of Emek Zevulun" in Amy Kronish, Edith Falk, Paula Weiman-Kelman, *The Nathan Axelrod Collection: Moledet Productions, 1927–1934* (Vancouver: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), advertised its sale and delivery of seedlings in 1940 (*Palestine Post*, 7 January 1940, 5), and was still listed in an English-language Ministry of Posts telephone directory for Israel in 1965 (531).

23 See, for example, Jacob Norris, *Land of Progress: Palestine in the Age of Colonial Development, 1905–48* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 65–68, 74–91; James Renton, "The Age of Nationality and the Origins of the Zionist-Palestinian Conflict," *International History Review* 35, no. 3 (2013): 586; specifically on questions of pay differentials Arabs and Jews, see Zachary Lockman, *Comrades and Enemies: Arab and Jewish Workers in Palestine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 12, 52, 70, 86, 144, 101–2, 201–2, 214, 244, 247–48, 292.

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33 Al-Masri to Hamilton, 9 January 1938.

34 Al-Masri to Hamilton, 9 February 1940.

35 Probably the railways built for the salt works, which used mules between 1922 and 1936 and then mechanized its wagons. Paul Cotterell, "One Horse Power," *HaRakevet*, no. 32 (March 1996): 23.

36 Al-Masri to Hamilton, 31 August 1938.

37 Al-Masri to Makhouly, 17 September 1938.

38 Hamilton to Makhouly, 22 September 1938.

39 Ostrower to Director of Antiquities via Makhouly, 26 November 1929.

40 Makhouly to Director of Antiquities, 18 November 1929.

41 Hamilton to Inspector–General of Palestine Police Force, 7 September 1935; Acting I.G. of Police to Director of Antiquities, 17 September 1935.

42 Al-Masri to Johns, 20 January 1939.

43 Makhouly to Hamilton, 30 November 1939.

44 James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

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46 Makhouly to Hamilton, 30 October 1940; medical certificate signed Dr. H. Hindi, 6 December 1940.

47 Walid Khalidi, ed., *All That Remains: The Palestinian Villages Occupied and Depopulated by Israel in 1948* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 2006), 518–20; Muhammad 'Aql, "Project: The Baths

of al-Hamma in the British Mandate Era," PalestineRemembered.com, 2 February 2013, online at (palestineremembered.com) bit.ly/3gihV62 (accessed 18 September 2022).

48 Al-Masri to Hamilton, 11 November 1940.

49 Makhouly to Hamilton, 16 December 1940.

50 Makhouly to Hamilton, 22 February 1941.

51 While the nature of Zandik's crime is unknown, it appears to have been serious enough that the court records were ruled as exempt from routine destruction when Shukry Muhtadie, Registrar of the Haifa District Court, assessed them in 1939 (*Palestine Gazette*, 24 August 1939, 870).

52 Undated petition, signed Hassan Ahmad al-Awad.

53 Mohd.Ahmed Awad, 24 March 1941.

54 Surdin to Hamilton, 25 March 1941.

55 The salt concession at 'Atlit was initially granted to Surdin and his colleagues by the Mandate administration in 1922; Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015), 7. From then on, it played a significant role in economic lobbying by the Zionist movement, with tariffs introduced to protect its products from competition by cheaper, better-quality products from Egypt; Barbara Smith, *The Roots of Separatism in Palestine: British Economic Policy, 1920–1929* (Syracuse, NY:

Syracuse University Press, 1993), 169. The company's demands were also a factor in disputes over water supplies for the growing city of Haifa; David Schorr, "Water Law in British-Ruled Palestine," *Water History* 6 (2014): 257.

56 Undated petition, signed Hassan Ahmad al-Awad.

57 Undated petition.

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61 Al-Masri to Hamilton via Johns, undated, probably early October 1941.

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Spolia – A Conscious Display of History in Seventh-Century Jerusalem

Beatrice St. Laurent

Abstract

This article focuses on the use of *spolia* as historic objects on display in the seventh-century monuments of Bayt al-Maqdis or Jerusalem. This is not the incorporation of ruins in adaptive reuse such as columns built into walls. Rather, select historic objects figure prominently in the monumental construction of Muʿawiya I (638–80 CE), the first Umayyad Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Muʾminin)*, including in the Mosque of Muʿawiya (638–60), the Dome of the Rock (640–92), the Dome of the Chain, Double Gate, Golden Gate, and the eastern arcade or *mizan* leading to the Dome of the Rock. The *spolia* include Herodian stones, marble columns, carved wooden beams, and decorative stones from the Persian, Hellenistic, Hasmonian, and Roman periods and Christian churches. The patron, planners, and builders of the earliest Islamic monuments consciously incorporated *spolia* for prominent display as historic objects from earlier regional cultures and religions worthy of respect and preservation. This concept of displaying the ancient past has been linked with imperial power as early as the Greek *Mouseion*. Thus, the concept of a "Museum of Antiquities" was voiced by Muslim authority in mid-seventh century Jerusalem, invoking an egalitarian relationship with earlier Jewish and Christian monuments and proclaiming that message to a multicultural multireligious population.

Keywords

Spolia; Bayt al-Maqdis*;* Jerusalem; Dome of the Rock; Dome of the Chain; Mosque of Muʿawiya; Golden Gate; Double Gate; Museum of Antiquities.

The use of *spolia* (Latin, *spolium*, sing.; spoils) as historic objects on display in the seventh-century monuments of Bayt al-Maqdis (the Sacred or Holy House, a name for Jerusalem) during the governing period and reign of Muʿawiya I (638–80 CE) is significant for continuity with the past practice of other cultures present in the Eastern Mediterranean region. This is not simply the incorporation of ruins, sometimes helter-skelter, sometimes more purposefully utilized in reuse, such as a column built into a wall or a foundation as a supporting element, which certainly became a feature in the rebuilding of city walls in later periods.[1] The seventh-century early Umayyad period is a fertile domain for scholarly exploration of spolia utilization.

Significantly, select historical objects figure prominently in the construction of the new monuments of Muʿawiya, the first Umayyad Commander of the Faithful (*Amir al-Muʾminin*). The monuments of the early Umayyad era include the modified Golden Gate, the rebuilt Double Gate, the first mosque of Jerusalem – the Mosque of Muʿawiya (638–60), and the eastern and central western arcades or *mawazin* (pl., *mizan*, sing., scales or balances; architecturally, free-standing gates) leading up to the Dome of the Chain and the Dome of the Rock (640–91). The spolia include marble columns, some from churches, carved wooden beams, decorative stones from a church chancel screen, decorative stones from the Persian, Hellenic, Hasmonian, and Roman periods, large Herodian stones, and very practical reuse of stones found on-site or from nearby sites (figure 1).[2]

Figure 1. The Dome of the Rock southwestern facade, photo by Père Raphaël Savignac, 1907–9. Courtesy of École Biblique, no. 06838-657.

I propose here that the patron, planners, and builders of the earliest Islamic monumental architecture in Bayt al-Maqdis, later the Haram al-Sharif, consciously incorporated locally sourced historical *spolia* and intended them for prominent display

Spolia – A Conscious Display of History | Beatrice St. Laurent

in these new monuments as historical objects from earlier periods worthy of respect and preservation. In fact,

> in the oldest surviving Islamic monuments of Jerusalem from the seventh-century Umayyad Period, we find the earliest examples of the inclusion of physical documents of the past indicating that there was an awareness of the significance of history, its preservation and its obvious display in the early years of Islam.[3]

Also, there are clear intended messages in spolia usage on specific monuments. Thus begins the physical embodiment of the "open-air museum" for the preservation and display of historic artifacts, no doubt a continuation of past practice in the region.[4]

For the monuments of Mu'awiya, the message communicated was less of conquest and dominance but rather of a more egalitarian relationship with earlier Christian and Jewish monuments, and quite loudly proclaiming that message to the multicultural, multireligious population of the city. This message would change to new interpretations of dominance contextually with legal codification and superiority of Islam during the reign of the Marwanid Umayyad successors, beginning with 'Abd al-Malik (685–705) ruling from Damascus, along with the imposition of more restrictive access to the site for all except Muslims. The latter message was supported by the later writers of hadith and narrative histories of the Abbasid era in their eradication of the history and legacy of the Umayyads.[5]

History

This concept of displaying the ancient past has been linked with imperial power and conquest as early as the Greek *Mouseion*, which was a place, temple, or seat of the Muses in Alexandria *circa* third century BCE, presiding over the arts and sciences though not including works of art except for manuscripts as defined today. This was more of a space for contemplation of the sciences than a museum in the modern context. The other early comparative is the Greek *pinacotheca* (Latin from Greek, for picture gallery) forming the wing of the Propylaea on the Acropolis in Athens.[6] A notion of collections of works of art that can be applied here in the Muslim context is works considered as reverent, given as part of a *waqf* (charitable endowment) established during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, such as Qur'ans or objects for use in a mosque. They can be found now in museum collections such as the collections in the Islamic Museum in the southwest corner of today's Haram al-Sharif founded in 1922.[7]

The collection and use of spolia for the purposes of display of the historic past, I argue here, is comparable to the concept of a "museum of antiquities" displayed in the early Umayyad context and clearly and physically defined in the works of Mu'awiya in Jerusalem. Once established, the tradition of including spolia from the past continued in the monumental construction of imperial Islamic dynastic architecture on the site and elsewhere in the Islamic world, accompanied frequently in later periods by a new message being assigned to the same objects in reuse.[8]

Definition

The definition of spolia is repurposed building stone from the past incorporated in new construction, often taken from ruined monuments in nearby sites and incorporated in adaptive reuse in new construction in the Mediterranean region.[9] The reuse of period specific architectural features, be they sculptural or purely functional elements, have in the Islamic periods been attributed much more to utilitarian purposes rather than to a more purposeful intent. Additionally, up until now, there has been little discussion between scholars of the Classical and Byzantine periods with those scholars examining the Islamic context.[10]

With reference to the Early Islamic and Medieval periods in the Islamic world, where there has been the adaptive reuse of architectural components from earlier periods "the phenomenon has (with few exceptions) been ascribed either to utilitarian opportunism or to a triumphalist impulse posited (implicitly or explicitly) on the basis of an essentialized notion of Islam, and often colored by the assumption of a cultural predisposition towards iconoclasm." This ultimately results in ahistorical interpretations ignoring differing temporal and regional contexts.[11] The lack of research and publication in the Islamic realm has been changing recently with published research on the uses of spolia in Saljuk, Beylik, and Ottoman architecture. The uses explored are pragmatic, ideological, symbolic, and varying regionally and time wise; in the Anatolian Saljuk region, one scholar explores a talismanic association in the reuse of spolia as an indicator of power.[12]

There is a danger in later analyses of spolia of assigning an inappropriate message not tied to the original intended message at the time of its incorporation. This is a particularly significant observation for the period under consideration, since there are few surviving texts to provide evidence of the original message and when history has been intentionally eradicated or modified to suit new political dictates. Thus, it is important to "let the monument speak for itself, plainly and directly" in any attempts to interpret the visual language of individual monuments, in order to assure that the argument focuses on the message appropriate for the time.[13]

While there are some practical or pragmatic uses of older ruins as a "quarry" for new construction, other reasons for the use of spolia are obviously aesthetic and ideological and, I suggest, not solely with a message of conquest. All such practices are used in the seventh century (and later) monuments of Muslim rule in Jerusalem and specifically those monuments of the new Islamic sanctuary, al-Haram al-Sharif. The obvious message appears visually in both the architecture itself and in contemporary religious texts, notably the Qur'an and the traditional teachings of the *qussas*, popular preachers and early interpreters of the Qur'an prior to the revisionist texts of the later authors of hadith and histories.

Monumental Construction under Mu'awiya (638–680 CE)

Prior to discussing the use of spolia, a brief discussion is warranted on the monuments

previously attributed to the Marwanid Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik (685–705), which are now being backdated to the Sufyanid Umayyad Mu'awiya who was first governor in 638–60 and Amir al-Mu'minin or Commander of the Faithful (and not caliph) in 661–80. More recent scholarship proposed that the first mosque of Jerusalem said to have been destroyed survives today in the structure called the Marwani Musalla, traditionally called *al-masjid al-qadim* (the old mosque), and later erroneously referred to as Solomon's Stables. The survival of the mosque built of ruins on ruins establishes it as the oldest surviving Islamic monument in the city. At the same time, the city walls, Triple and Double gates were rebuilt, the Golden Gate added to and a new Single Gate built by Mu'awiya.[14]

A forthcoming book attributes to Mu'awiya the resanctification of the sacred precinct, establishing the footprint on the Herodian sanctuary by rebuilding the walls; renewing or establishing new entrances; and building the eastern, central western and south arcades or mawazin, the Dome of the Chain (640–60?), and the Dome of the Rock (640–91). The book also proposes that at the time of construction of these monuments there was no upper platform. Evidence is mostly in the monuments themselves, based on texts, and in expansion of the arguments of previous scholarship.[15]

Previously both S. D. Goitein and Oleg Grabar proposed both an earlier date and attributed at least the initiation of the Dome of the Rock's construction to Mu'awiya.[16] There are multiple reasons for Mu'awiya versus 'Abd al-Malik as the patron who built the Dome; many previously cited by Grabar in 1988 and mostly abandoned by him in later scholarship. The first reason is time to plan and build the monument. Most scholarship supports the construction of the building sometime between 685 and 691 with the building's completion date 691/692 supported by the Kufic inscription on the interior arcade of the structure. This is a very short period to complete such a large-scale project, particularly that it includes the exterior and interior mosaic decoration. After arriving in Damascus in 683 and becoming caliph in 685, 'Abd al-Malik would have had to build the Dome between 685 and 691 (six years), which would have been difficult, probably physically impossible, especially as he was primarily engaged in a long period of continuous military activity fraught with political challenges. There was simply not sufficient time to build a monument as decoratively complex as the Dome of the Rock.

A second reason is the fact that Mu'awiya's family had long tenure in the region with landholdings in Balqa', south of Amman, in Jordan prior to Islam and before he came in 634 to Bilad al-Sham with the army of conquest. Additionally, he had a long history as a builder of monuments in the Arabia of his origins prior to coming to Greater Syria.[17] 'Abd al-Malik on the other hand was a Medinan who arrived in Damascus in 683, two years prior to becoming caliph, spending no time in Jerusalem. Thus, prior to becoming caliph in 685, he had not spent time in, nor did he know the region.

A third reason for Mu'awiya versus 'Abd al-Malik is ideological disposition. Mu'awiya was not only long in the region but throughout his career prior to Jerusalem was a restorer of earlier monuments and the builder of new ones.[18] He also chose to

build his mosque in Jerusalem and not in Damascus where he was invested as Amir al-Mu'minin. It is also clear that 'Abd al-Malik followed Mu'awiya throughout his early career in either utilizing or embellishing sites already established by Mu'awiya,[19] and now including the Dome of the Rock, and establishing Jerusalem as one of the capitals of the early Umayyads. 'Abd al-Malik was a political strategist ruling from his capital of Damascus. His was the period of administrative reform and the molding of a specifically defined Islamic Umayyad state, adopting the title of caliph, and minimizing the role of the other *ahl al-kitab* (People of the Book) including Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrians, both in the state and on the site, and not much focused on monument building.[20]

A fourth reason for Mu'awiya versus 'Abd al-Malik is that the period of the former was a relatively peaceful period during the establishment of the Umayyad rule in Greater Syria allowing time to focus on monument building. In fact, the entire period from Mu'awiya's death in 680 through the reign of 'Abd al-Malik is "dominated by unceasing internecine strife between various factional groups" with peace finally restored in 692, at the end of 'Abd al-Malik reign.[21]

This article examines and analyzes the incorporation of spolia in multiple early Islamic seventh-century monuments within this revisionist framework of contemporary scholarship. Mu'awiya had a vision of Jerusalem as his new royal Umayyad capital that included historical consciousness and the value both of using the detritus of the relevant previous cultures of the People of the Book and of consciously displaying them in the open for all to witness.

Spolia in Early Islamic Jerusalem (638–80 CE)

While there are exceptions in the Medieval Islamic context,[22] the use of spolia in early seventh- century Islamic Jerusalem (Bayt al-Maqdis) has been attributed mainly to the convenience of material ruins from nearby sites or to historic triumphalism.[23] Offered here are some preliminary comments on the common usages of spolia for clear utilitarian purposes; this is followed by select situations of spolia usage beyond the utilitarian in seventh-century Umayyad monuments of Bayt al-Maqdis (known as al-Haram al-Sharif during and after the Mamluk period). Some reflect choices based on aesthetic value of the selected spolia, displaying a historic consciousness of their value specific to a particular culture or religion and their purposeful display, often reflecting cultural equivalency rather than the triumphalism of imperial conquest. The selection here of spolia usage is limited to those examples that can be reasonably attributed to the seventh century.

Utilitarian Usage

Indeed, there are many instances of specific utilitarian usage and the archaeological evidence for this requires examination. What the early Umayyad builders found when they arrived in the city in 636 CE was a site that had been attacked and previously utilized as a stone quarry for later monumental construction. This first occurred

after the Roman destruction of the Herodian temple. The city witnessed further destruction by the Persians in 614 CE but the degree of destruction has recently been archaeologically proven not as great as previously recorded in Christian texts. The city was reconquered for Byzantium in 630 CE, seven years prior to the Umayyad conquest.[24] In fact, evidence from a Roman period structure indicates that the building featured spolia from the Hasmonean period (140–37 BCE) – so a long-established practice in Jerusalem. That same archaeological evidence also points to how the seventh-century Umayyad builders utilized the materials from destroyed buildings of previous cultures.[25]

Up until recently there has been no evidence of methodological specificity employed by the early Umayyad builders of Jerusalem in their usage of spolia. The Givati Parking Lot excavation (in Silwan) provides abundant elucidating evidence of spolia and usage during the Byzantine–early-Islamic transition in one area of Jerusalem south of the Haram sanctuary near the "City of David" excavations. Notable are the remains of the paved Roman, later Byzantine, street – a main thoroughfare and pilgrimage route of the Byzantine city that led from the Byzantine church at the Pool of Siloam in the south, northward toward the major churches and Christian religious center of the city, and nearby the abandoned temple sanctuary and a Byzantine administrative structure to its east.[26]

The administrative building experienced two periods of destruction – one in 614 CE and one later above the street level in the second half of the seventh century. In this area, there were large amounts of fragments of marble (2,400 to be exact) and other materials but not larger intact pieces.[27] That area was converted into an industrial zone in the early Islamic period after 636 CE and abandoned by the Umayyads before the beginning of the Abbasid period in 750 CE. The larger more intact pieces of marble and decorative pieces that were already spolia in reuse from the second Byzantine period structure were no doubt employed in the monuments of the new Muslim sanctuary just to the north. There was a limestone kiln to produce lime for plaster and there were marble finds of small pieces of wall veneers and mainly pieces of *opus sectile* (small pieces of cut colored stone) flooring. The selective reuse of the small Byzantine marble fragments found in the Islamic layers was for the plaster needed in building the new Islamic monuments of the sanctuary and the "palace" complex south of the Haram.[28] Thus, the practice to reuse marble from older sites rather than the importation of new was a well-established practice both in the local region and the Mediterranean in general.[29]

The Muslim prohibition against public display of Christian crosses and other icons came only in the Abbasid period; in the Umayyad period there was no such dictate against Christian symbolism on monuments of the city. The archaeological evidence then points to "pragmatic recycling" with no ideological motivation. In fact, there was no definite break between the Byzantine to early Islamic period but rather a slow and gradual process of transition and a period characterized by great diversity.[30]

This area of the city south of the sanctuary went from being a principal street, pilgrimage, and public area of the city in the Byzantine period to an industrial area in

the early Islamic Umayyad period. Also, parts of the colonnaded city streets in the city were narrowed accommodating a new lifestyle characterized by increased industrial activity for the massive, monumental construction nearby and characteristic of the newly developing Islamic city.[31]

The Umayyad palace complex and administrative buildings south of the sanctuary initiated by Muʿawiya and continued but left unfinished by his Umayyad successors includes reused columns from earlier buildings to strengthen foundations.[32] Ben-Dov documented the use of columns as fortifying elements in his discovery of "no less than five different methods of construction" in the palace foundations.[33] This technique has more recently been found in the lower palace structure Building II, the southwestern part of the building complex south of the Haram.[34] Since the structures begun in the seventh century were left incomplete in the eighth century, there is no additional incorporation of spolia for display.[35]

Another exemplifying utilitarian usage of spolia exists whose original context is completely lost, and whose decorative motifs are not displayed. This is a flat piece of marble used as a step in the stairs leading down to the cave under the rock in the Dome of the Rock. This is a reused piece of marble of convenient size from the Byzantine period installed upside down, the decorative portion face-down and thus unseen.[36] This is a clear case of use of material as an available quarry source from a nearby site; there may be many more similarly used fragments not yet discovered, documented, and recorded.

Additionally, there are many decorative Byzantine and later marble fragments stored in the Islamic Museum courtyard and several additional fragments outside of al-Aqsa Library located in the unfinished Crusader structure between the mosque and the museum. Additionally, scattered throughout the platform are columns of indeterminate origin and period that today appear organized for display. There is no clear period of usage of these columns on the site, or perhaps they were never used in later construction and just stored for future consumption – a common practice at the site up to today.[37]

Spolia on Display in Bayt al-Maqdis (al-Haram al-Sharif)

Multiple secondary seventh-century monuments of Jerusalem's early Umayyad sanctuary display spolia with a specific message for public consumption. One is the renovated or rebuilt Byzantine Golden Gate (first built for Heraclius in 630 CE), in the eastern city wall, which was the main formal entrance to the city in the seventh century. It was also the ceremonial entrance to the courtyard of the seventh-century mosque of the city and was one of the ceremonial entrances to the Dome of the Rock. A second is the rebuilt southern sanctuary entrance or the Double Gate in the city wall that was one of three southern entrances to the sanctuary and the Dome of the Rock.[38] A third example are the eastern and central western triumphal mawazin or arcades leading up from the Triple Gate and Golden Gate, first to the Qubbat al-Silsila, then to the Dome of the Rock on the east and, from the western sanctuary entrances, to the Dome of the Rock.

Three major monuments also incorporate substantial quantities of message-laden spolia. The first is the initial mosque of the city or the Mosque of Muʿawiya (638–60 CE) in the southeastern corner of the sanctuary.[39] The second is the Qubbat al-Silsila or the Dome of the Chain (seventh century). The third – the crowning glory of the sanctuary – is the Qubbat al-Sakhra or the Dome of the Rock (640–691/92 CE).[40]

Golden Gate

Golden Gate was the main ceremonial entrance to the city of Bayt al-Maqdis. The gate is a rebuilt Byzantine gate, built for Heraclius's triumphal reentry to Jerusalem with the relic of the Holy Cross in 630 CE, recaptured from the Sasanians at their capital of Ctesiphon, on the Tigris river.[41] In fact, Muʿawiya's father witnessed the cross's return by Heraclius while he was at his farm south of Amman prior to the conquest of 634.[42] There are also Christian biblical associations of Golden Gate with the temple and Mary's residence there.[43]

The gate is decorated with a gloss of Umayyad veneer on both the exterior eastern and western facades. The western exterior facade was capped by the veneer of Umayyad decor with a Byzantine column topped by a Corinthian capital in between the two arched openings. In other words, architecturally the Byzantine substructure was intended to be viewed as supporting the new Umayyad function of the gate. Additionally, the rebuilt interior flat domes or sail vaults from the Umayyad period (the latest rebuilding during the Ottoman period) of the Golden Gate are supported by Byzantine columns and the interior walls are decorated with pilasters capped by Corinthian capitals. The latter were possibly part of the original Byzantine construction but the columns with their varying capitals supporting the domes date from the period of rebuilding. The complete visual message was not to broadcast conquest but rather to suggest cultural equivalency and integration with Umayyad rule with clearly stated respect for the previous culture.

Thus, the purpose here is both aesthetic and ideological, combining the new Umayyad decorative veneer with the Byzantine royal structure, and is the quiet expression of new rule but also inclusion of and respect for the previous culture. The choice was made by the Umayyad builders to emphasize equally both the Byzantine Christian original construction and the new Umayyad decorative vocabulary of decor. Thus, there is a strong Christian association with this main entrance into the city as well as the new Umayyad sovereign message of welcome to important visitors to the city at the time. Though there are numerous ties of this eastern gate with the Jewish temple, they are not reflected clearly in what currently remains of the building but rather are embedded in Marian Christian associations.

The gate also was the royal ceremonial entrance to the courtyard of the seventh-century Umayyad mosque of Muʿawiya in the southeastern corner of the sanctuary – the first mosque in the city. An arcade or *riwaq* connects the southern entrance of the Golden Gate with the undecorated northern entrance of the mosque. This entrance to the mosque was probably reserved for ceremonial visits, notably first for the investiture of Muʿawiya as the first Amir al-Muʾminin in 661 CE.[44] The message

in this instance is the linkage of Byzantine rule to the new sovereign Umayyad rule under Islam.

The Double Gate

The Double Gate was originally a Herodian gate located in the south wall of the archaeological precinct of the temple and is a gate rebuilt in the Umayyad seventh century under Mu'awiya as an entrance from the southern Muslim, Christian, and Jewish residential districts leading to the central part of the sanctuary and the Dome of the Rock.[45] That it is an Umayyad rebuilding is made clear by the gloss of Umayyad decoration on the double arches of the exterior facade – the same decor that appears on both facades of the Golden Gate. A Roman inscription from the period of Antoninus Pius (when Jerusalem was Aelia Capitolina) is also included, placed upside down above the original Herodian lintel – left intact – of the entrance signifying a rejection or a negative response to the Roman destruction of the temple.[46] That the remains of the earlier Herodian gate are built into the new Umayyad gate communicates to Jewish visitors to the sanctuary a respect for Judaism and the temple previously on the site.

On the interior just as one enters the gate, Byzantine columns of undetermined origin and clearly in reuse support the newly rebuilt gate leading up to the archaeological precinct in the direction of the Dome of the Rock. While they serve a completely practical function of support, their meaning goes far beyond their function. Though often interpreted as historic triumphalism, the fact that they were inside the gate suggests not a message of conquest but rather of quiet welcome to all who entered, and to suggest cultural equivalency with Umayyad rule and respect for the previous government and culture.[47] Just beyond the columns are the series of pendentives, triangular corners supporting flat domes or sail vaults rebuilt using Herodian precedents.[48]

Mosque of Mu'awiya (al-Masjid al-Qadim – the Old Mosque)

As previously mentioned, the Golden Gate afforded ceremonial entrance to the multi-arched north entrance to the first mosque of the city, the Mosque of Mu'awiya (638–60 CE).[49] There is no use of spolia on the exterior north entrance of the mosque, only in the interior of the building. The use of monumental Herodian stones in a secondary context creates the pier support structure for the Mosque of Mu'awiya – later known erroneously in European/American scholarship as Solomon's Stables and used as a stable in the Crusader period. Additionally, the underground passageway originating in the sixth aisle of the mosque leading to the ruler's palace just outside the sanctuary walls is also of the same large Herodian stones in reuse. They are used to construct an overly large, monumental passageway for the ruler, clearly created with Herodian temple period stones, perhaps from the stoa previously on the site. That there is no decoration is dictated by governing principles dominant in the period of Muhammad, the early followers, and the period of the Rashidun caliphs.[50]

The only other use of spolia in the mosque is in the mihrab in the center of the qibla southern wall. The mihrab is formed by a large decorated spolium as the left formative

base of the rudimentary flat arch and with additional pieces of white marble. The decorated element is a remnant of the Herodian period decor of the nearby Triple Gate/Hulda Gate, which provided a south mosque entrance linking it with the Judaic ruling past.[51] The rest of the arch is composed of a series of white marble pieces clearly in reuse, salvaged from a destroyed local building to create the earliest surviving mihrab.[52]

The mihrab is said to have been invented by Mu'awiya to indicate the direction of Mecca and the usage here in Jerusalem is the first surviving example of such a marker. Flood defines the use of pieces of colored stone as commemorative markers of the places of prayer of the Prophet, pointing to that as the origin of the mihrab.[53] Thus, this early and perhaps first official mihrab turns to the time of the Prophet as a source. One can further suggest that the creation of the mihrab also draws on the pre-Islamic religious past based on the use of standing stones in an iconic context.[54] Thus, this use of spolia is purely in an Islamic context, its first usage with an entirely Islamic and new interpretation in Jerusalem.

The reuse of Herodian materials in the mosque and private royal passageway addresses the textual reference to the temple, and the Herodian enclosure as placed on the southeastern wall of the sanctuary can be yet another referent to the temple. It is notable that there are no uses of specifically recognizable Byzantine period spolia in the mosque building. Thus, usage can be viewed both as practical, serving a supporting construction function for the large space, and ideological in that the use of these materials in this particular space connects the physical early Islamic monument only to the Jewish temple. With no exterior reminders of earlier cultures on the northern formal entrance, the message was communicated internally to Muslim practitioners who frequented the mosque that the building was tied to the temple. Since Mu'awiya was installed as Commander of the Faithful in this mosque, one can postulate that the destroyed temple, which was in the southeastern wall of the sanctuary,[55] was integrated into the Umayyad royal context coming under the sovereignty of Islam and the Umayyads.

Triple Gate

Access to the mosque from the south was through the undecorated Triple Gate, a re-built Herodian gate placed in the south wall just west of, and attached to, the mosque; by turning right it led directly to the entrance to the mosque for Muslims. At the time, the "faithful" were the *ahl al-kitab* – Muslims, Jews, and Christians. The passageways of the Triple Gate additionally led straight to the north for Jews and Christians to access the sanctuary from their residential quarters south of the enclosure.[56]

Eastern and Central Western Mawazin or Scales (Two of the Current Eight Arcades)[57]

As indicated by the previous examples, the choice of spolia based on historic time period could also communicate a specific message by that usage. Another good example is the mizan or scale/balance on the eastern side of the upper platform. One can safely propose here that only the base piers supporting the upper present arcade date to the Early Umayyad seventh century during the reign of Mu'awiya. The upper

arches date from a much later period, the original construction of which is unknown and is not considered in this examination.[58]

The supporting piers are of very large Herodian stones in reuse and are crowned by a cornice. Since Herodian stones were used only in the early Umayyad period in the sanctuary, this confirms an early date for this mizan. Since the supporting Herodian stones are independent of the platform and begin at ground level not at upper platform level, the structure was probably originally free standing and later integrated into the platform. This indicates that the platform in that area dates from a later time and the mizan afforded access to the uneven, gradually sloping terrain defined by the original exposed topography. Additionally, there was no need for a staircase at the time of initial construction.[59] This also demonstrates that columns in reuse were added later after the platform was built.

The central western mizan leading directly from the western sanctuary entrances leads directly to the west entrance of the Dome of the Rock. The pier structure also is comprised of Herodian period stones in reuse. The north column of the central arcade contains a dated inscription documenting an Abbasid period restoration dated 950–52 CE by Ahmad ibn Abu Karasa, indicating that it existed in an earlier period in a different form.[60] It is also located at the top of the current stairs and was the limit of the upper platform in the Abbasid period.

The east and west central mawazin are often collectively discussed with the other six mawazin leading up to the platform, and in scholarship have been considered as constructed later. The southeastern mizan dated to the Fatimid period with a later Ayyubid restoration shares one similarity with the eastern one. The Fatimid period piers were also independent of the platform, which confirms a later date for this part of the platform to the Ayyubid period, with the addition of the arcade between the piers at that time.

Another issue requiring discussion is that if only the piers are part of the original construction of the eastern and west central mawazin, what was between the piers at the time of initial construction? This raises the issue of the use of the word mizan or collectively mawazin for the eight structures today located around the upper platform. The word means scale or balance and it is between the piers "because on the day of Judgment the scales for the weighing of character will be suspended here!"[61] The Qur'an is the initial source of this definition and two of relevance follow: "We shall set up the scales of justice for the Day of Judgment, so that not a soul will be dealt with unjustly" (Sura 21: *Anbiya'* – The Prophets) and "Then, he whose Balance (of good deeds) will be (found) heavy, will be in a life of good pleasure and satisfaction" (Sura 101: *al-Qari'a* – The Day of Noise and Clamor). From the above analysis, it is possible to posit that there may not have been anything at all between the piers, awaiting the scale to appear on the Day of Judgment. Short of any further definitive evidence, the most that we can say is that we have no idea what was originally between the piers, so the question remains open.[62]

The exclusive use of Herodian stones in the eastern and west central pier construction parallels their usage in the mosque piers, a message of respect and

inclusion of the Judaic past as part of the newly acquired sacred precinct. These piers were strategically located on the path directly from the east and west entrance to the sanctuary and directly on the path of one of the main approaches to the Dome of the Rock from the Triple Gate for those Christians and Jews residing south of the sanctuary. It thus could also represent Islamic sovereignty and reacquisition and resanctification of the site from the Romans and their destruction of the temple as well as the later Byzantine Empire.[63]

Dome of the Chain (Qubbat al-Silsila)

Proceeding directly west from the eastern mizan or piers, one encounters the Dome of the Chain also dated by most to the seventh century but by this author to the period of Mu'awiya rather than 'Abd al-Malik (figure 2).[64] The small domed building displays prominent usage of spolia dating from its period of construction and intended for viewing by visitors to the site.

The two rows of columns – eleven on the outside and six on the inside – and their capitals in reuse are spolia of multiple types of stone and marble and similarly lack clarity of their geographic origins from Byzantine to Coptic Christian. The columns are not the same thickness

Figure 2. Dome of the Chain (Qubbat al-Silsila), from the south, 1964. Courtesy of Awqaf Archives, al-Haram al-Sharif.

of marble, nor are the capitals of uniform style. The columns clearly serve a practical purpose in their reuse but also are on display for their beauty. One column, however, definitely came from a Christian structure as evidenced in the vertical remnants of a cross – the horizontal part of the cross has been removed, perhaps dating to the Abbasid period restorations at the site when all crosses were removed from Christian buildings in the city (figure 3).[65]

The early structure had no mihrab, at least not a niche defined as an indicator of the direction of prayer to Mecca, but probably had an arched niche or space implied by a structure having the unusual number of eleven sides. Also, an eleven-sided building prompts questions as to the role and original function of the structure; many have speculated in the past as to the function of the building placed in the exact middle of the sanctuary.[66] Given the building's prominent placement, it must have had a ritual function, possibly related to the Dome of the Rock just to the east.

It is possible that this space would have been used by the earliest Umayyad ruler

to dispense alms or funds – a function recorded in histories attributed to the later caliph Sulayman ibn 'Abd al-Malik. This would also explain the lack of need for a separate building serving as a treasury comparable to the one in the courtyard of the Great Mosque of Damascus. It is also proposed as the site where the oath to accession was taken by early Umayyad rulers.

This small eleven-sided building with no structural closing of the lower walls sits extremely and almost uncomfortably close to the eastern entrance of the Dome of the Rock. There exists some contemporary textual evidence that there were two other buildings on the site at the time of its creation and that they were located at the edge of the rock. This may also be an indicator that there was no upper platform at the time of the two earliest buildings

Figure 3. Dome of the Chain, southeastern column of the interior arcade. The vertical remnant of a cross is visible in the middle of the photograph, 2016. Photo by author.

and that all would have proceeded up over the unleveled natural topography of the site from the eastern mizan up to the Dome of the Chain. Also, it is clear that one should pass through the Dome of the Chain prior to entry to the Dome of the Rock from the east. Since all entrances from the east seem to have a formal ceremonial purpose, perhaps this structure was restricted for usage by the royal figure coming from either his palace or mosque located just to the southeast prior to entry into the Dome of the Rock.[67]

Since we are positing a new function for the Dome of the Chain, it is essential to present validation for our thesis. A plausible royal Umayyad function is proposed that includes its Muslim relationship to the dispensing of Davidian justice as the Mihrab Dawud of the Qur'an and as one of the *maharib* of Solomon and its ties to justice dispensation. A more eschatological theory related to the End of Days from its period of construction up through the Ottoman period is a well-developed thesis in past scholarship. Also proposed is its possible role later as the site for taking the oath of caliphal authority or *bay'a*, as a prayer space, and as a space for the dispensation of funds (treasury).[68] For the latter two proposed functions, there is not sufficient supporting evidence for any Umayyad ruler except possibly Sulayman, son of 'Abd
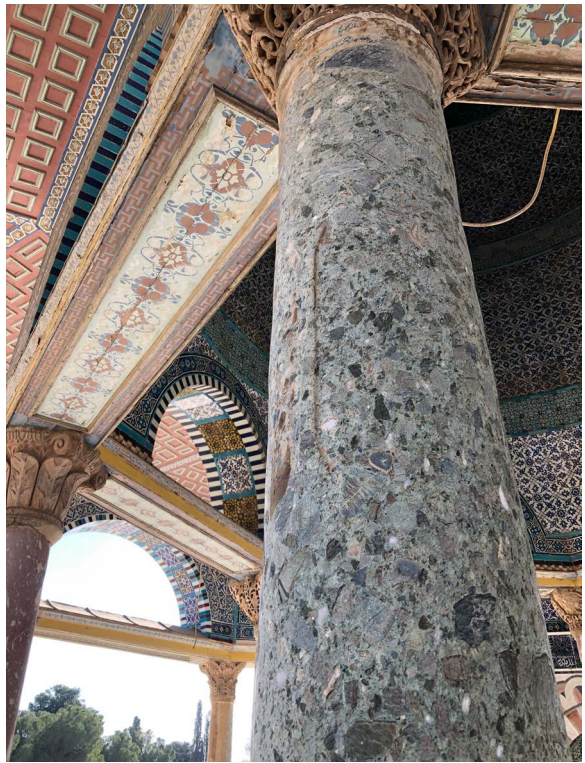
al-Malik. In fact there is evidence that 'Abd al-Malik took the oath in the Mosque of Mu'awiya.[69]

The thesis presented here is that Mu'awiya is responsible for the construction of the Dome of the Chain, probably under construction prior to his 660 CE investiture as Amir al-Mu'minin in the mosque in the southeastern corner. Not yet explored in previous scholarship is its possible connection to the then recently conquered Sasanians, beginning with the Rashidun caliphate's first battle of expansion into Sasanian territory at the 633 CE Battle of the Chains or *Salasil* in Kazima (Kuwait today).

By 637 CE, the Sasanian capital of Ctesiphon had fallen. From the roof or ceiling of the throne room or *iwan* of the Palace of Ctesiphon hung a royal chain holding the king's crown which was so heavy that it was suspended with a chain and hung over the head of the royal figure enthroned below. That kingship but not the king was divinely ordained is also relevant to this argument. That crown was captured in the sack of Ctesiphon and was sent to Jerusalem. According to one tradition, it hung in the Dome of the Rock during the reign of 'Abd al-Malik.[70] If it arrived in Jerusalem after the sack of Ctesiphon, where was it during the intervening years? And did this chain with the crown hang elsewhere prior to the period of 'Abd al-Malik?

There are documented stories told by the descendants of the Persians who came to Yemen c. 570 CE, possibly semi-legendary tales, that were of interest to Mu'awiya who consulted with the storytellers or relaters of traditions, *qussas.* Among them were tales concerned with the Throne of Solomon whose powers included harnessing the *jinn* (powerful spirits) to construct buildings. The throne was decorated with vegetation made of gold and was encrusted with rubies and emeralds. Mu'awiya's meetings with several of these relaters of tradition linked one of Solomon's attributes to the pursuit of justice. Solomon in Sura 34:12–13 is known to have had more than one mihrab in the temple in Jerusalem. A mihrab in this context is defined in early Islamic history as a sanctuary space for the ruler to pray and also defined as the palace Ghumdan in San'a' of the pre-Arabian kings of south Arabia (Yemen).[71] Solomon was also linked to the Persian king Jamshid who had a jewel-encrusted throne that was flown by jinn.[72]

Thus, Mu'awiya's construction in the area cleared by the jinn (mentioned by Christian sources in this time) of a small eleven-sided structure on the edge of the bedrock was a jewel- encrusted structure decorated with mosaics and embellished by the spolia of the past. It could be interpreted as a mihrab or sanctuary space reserved for the ruler. It would have included a throne in the niche of the south side of the Dome of the Chain reflecting Solomon's throne. A chain *silsila* would have been suspended over his head in a niche that represented both Davidian and Solomonic justice but also was tied to the divine kingship of the Sasanian kings and the Rashidun first conquest of the Sasanian Empire at the Battle of Salasil. Was the Sasanian crown attached to that chain and suspended above Mu'awiya's head as the unifier of the Byzantine and Sasanian empires under Umayyad sovereignty?[73]

Mu'awiya's role at the time would have been to serve as the Umayyad arbiter of justice in a place outside of his mosque, where people of all denominations – those "of

the Book and beyond" – would have met with him. Since this structure would have been built first or contemporaneously with the Dome of the Rock, he was also able to supervise and control the construction of the Dome of the Rock, which no doubt was left incomplete at his death in 680 CE.

Such a chain with a seemingly emblematic crown is found in the later 735–44 CE royal audience hall of Umayyad Khirbat al-Mafjar in Jericho: a stone chain with a pendant standing in for the crown hung in a centrally placed wall niche where the royal figure was said to have been "enthroned." This was a symbolic representation of the gold crown suspended from the roof of the Sasanian royal palace. The chain carved from a single stone today is in the Rockefeller Museum (Palestine Archaeological Museum) in Jerusalem. In fact, much of the royal imagery at the later Umayyad Palace in Jericho clearly reflects Sasanian royal dress and paraphernalia.[74] It is proposed here that the later representation in Jericho began with the earliest Umayyad ruler Mu'awiya in the rituals associated with the Dome of the Chain.

The Dome of the Rock (Qubbat al-Sakhra) and Its Precinct Entrance Gates

The Dome of the Rock appears just beside the Dome of the Chain (figure 2), so close as to inhibit entrance, confirming that the latter's placement was at the edge of the bedrock at a time when there was no upper platform.[75] Approaching from the east, from either the official and ceremonial Golden Gate or Triple Gate, and passing through the eastern mizan, all but necessitated passing through the Dome of the Chain, restricting access to enter the Dome of the Rock from the east. One could posit that during the early Umayyad period this entrance was reserved for the ruler.

Another entrance to the site from the south located west of the Triple Gate is the Double Gate, one of the main entrances aligning with the Dome of the Rock and was probably the formal entrance for the southern residential districts – Muslim, Christian, and Jewish – leading directly to the Dome. At the time, there was no al-Aqsa Mosque and probably only rough terrain of the exposed topography led up to the Dome. It is known that, at the time, there were at least two multi-arched entrances (parallel to the Triple Gate in the south) to the sanctuary from the north leading directly to the now platformed area north of the Dome.[76] The western multiple entrances, mostly rebuilt earlier ones, are the least emphasized entrances to the sanctuary for the primarily Christian population residing in the western area outside of the sanctuary. This plethora of entrances all leading to the Dome suggests that the Dome of the Rock was the primary focus of attention for visitors to the sanctuary in the seventh century and not the mosque located in the southeast corner.

The Building

As mentioned earlier, this article emphasizes subjects not explored before, or challenges previous scholarship, on the Dome of the Rock regarding this early Umayyad period begun well before 660 CE by Mu'awiya, as opposed to 'Abd al-Malik, and continuing up through his death in 680 CE (figure 1).[77] Focus will be specifically on areas of

the building that utilized spolia: the building's foundation, exterior and interior walls of the octagon, the interior columns, the drum of the dome and its wooden support structure – areas that are most assuredly dated to the initial construction of the building. Although it is apparent that there were probably no porches sheltering the four entrances, they will be briefly mentioned. The dome itself will not be considered as it was initially built by 'Abd al-Malik as per the 691 CE Kufic inscription and was replaced after a collapse in 1017 CE, also dated by inscription. Thus, discussion will be limited to the lower areas of the building up to the top of the dome drum.

The walls of the octagonal arcade sit on a combination of bedrock and large stones that can be considered spolia of found materials on the site (figure 4). These large stones are placed somewhat randomly to create the original foundational stabilization for the building, with filler material of smaller stones. In the 1960's renovation, these foundations were exposed in efforts to strengthen structural support with new and inappropriate materials. The interior structure of columns and piers sit on a similar base of smaller stones. In other words, there is no evidence of a systematic method of foundational construction but rather a random use of available materials. Similar construction methods exist in earlier buildings of Mu'awiya in Tiberias, in a mosque there and in his palace and mosque of Sinnabra, confirming an earlier attribution of the Dome of the Rock to Mu'awiya.[78]

Figure 4. Dome of the Rock; view of the trench dug along the northeast in 1961 showing large stones in reuse. Courtesy of Awqaf Archives no. 1869.

The lower walls of the octagon up to the windows are of large roughly hewn stones of varying sizes characteristic of the Umayyad seventh-century construction elsewhere on the site including in the rebuilt walls in the sanctuary (figure 5).[79] Much of this stone was no doubt readily available for reuse from the nearby area either directly within the sanctuary or just to

Figure 5. Dome of the Rock interior southwestern lower facade. Typical Umayyad period stone construction was revealed when marble was removed before being mortared again in place in 2007. Photo by author.

the south beyond the walls. There is no mortar between the stones suggesting that there was initially an intention to cover those walls with a revetment or facing. Exposure of part of the southwestern facade in an early twentieth century photograph revealed that the wall was clearly composed of stones in reuse (figure 6). Thus, some of the stones used in the lower wall construction should be considered as spolia in reuse, utilized for purely practical reasons and not meant for exposure. The main part of the building does use newly hewn stones easily identifiable as of typical Umayyad character.[80]

Figure 6. Dome of the Rock (detail of figure 1; photo by Père Raphaël Savignac, 1907–9. Courtesy of École Biblique, no. 06838-657). Note particularly the lower part of the easternmost panel of southwest facade (*at right*) where the marble revetment has been removed to reveal spolia in reuse. The two adjacent panels also contain spolia in reuse but lack visual clarity in the image.

Large marble panels, spolia from earlier buildings in the city, were used to cover the lower section of all exterior octagonal facades of the Dome of the Rock (figure 1).[81] The upper levels of the exterior at the window level of the octagon and on the drum were known to have been covered with mosaics requiring the use of smaller stones for wall construction but not necessarily identifiable as spolia (figure 7). One can speculate that the larger panels of marble discussed earlier from the site of the main Byzantine street and other ruins elsewhere from the Persian invasion of 614 CE

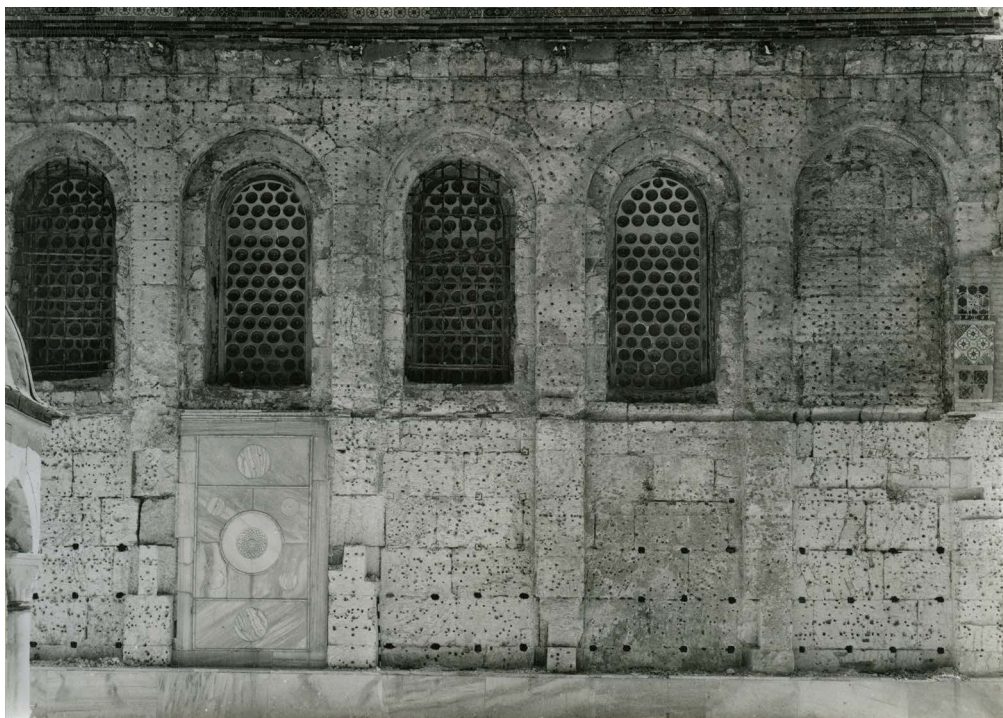were the bountiful source of the necessary marble panels for the building's exterior and interior revetment.

Figure 7. Exterior of the Dome of the Rock northwest facade, in A. H. S. Peter Megaw, *"Qubbat As Sakhra* (The Dome of the Rock),"* unpublished report, 1946, Plate IV.

The purpose of using marble is both practical, aesthetic, and ideological. The practical motivation would have been twofold: first, that mosaics would have been easily destroyed at that lower level and marble was more durable, and, second, that the marble was readily available. The use of marble can be ideologically related to connections of the Dome of the Rock to the exterior of the Jewish Temple which was said to have been bejeweled and covered with marble as well as referencing the Yemeni or south Arabian pre-Islamic palace of the Sabian kings said to be of multicolored marble with four entrances from the cardinal points.[82]

Additionally, an ideological rationale is proposed for a specific and important marble *spolium* incorporated in the northeast facade of the Dome of the Rock (figure 8). Prominently and centrally placed at the base of the marble revetment in the facade's central panel is a rather large remnant from a Byzantine church chancel screen. Earlier photographs indicate that it is the entire chancel screen, including its bottom-framing border, with later level/s of the platform encasing the panel. Prior interpretations implied that such usage was disrespectful to the previous culture. In fact, the *spolium* was selected based on aesthetic, religious and ideological considerations, showing

a respect for Byzantine Christian culture with further intentionality of purposeful display of an historic object in a new context. One can go even further in suggesting the inclusion of a Christian work was intended to clearly display to a visiting Christian public an implicit respect for and inclusion of Christianity in the function of the Dome of the Rock. Later ideological codification of Islamic law under 'Abd al-Malik would no doubt have dictated a very different interpretation of triumphalism with such a display.[83]

Figure 8. Dome of the Rock northeastern facade, 2016. Photo by author.

It is very questionable that the Dome's eastern and western porches existed in their current state. It has been suggested by many including Creswell, Grabar, and Rosen-Ayalon that all four entrances were contemporary to the period of construction, but there is sufficient evidence to question their existence in the seventh century. Photographs from the 1960s restoration of the Dome demonstrate that the porches were inserted in earlier construction. There will be brief commentary considering the porches after the removal of the late Ottoman additions. Each of the entrances include columns of a single style and may or may not be spolia in reuse from other buildings. They could be new columns that were crafted as part of a complete colonnade intended to connect all of the porches.[84] Until there is more conclusive archaeological evidence, the dating of the porches remains unresolved.

The Dome of the Rock also utilizes wooden beams, at least some of which are in reuse, that support the dome, though it is difficult to ascertain whether they are used in a purely utilitarian sense or if they were intended to be visible (figure 9). These beams are all decorated and probably at least some originally came from the ruins of local churches destroyed in the earlier seventh-century Persian invasion. Since there would have been continuity of crafts people in Jerusalem during this period, some may have been produced specifically for the Dome. They were exposed, photographed, and removed in the 1961 renovation of the Dome of the Rock under Egyptian technical supervision and do not survive.[85]

These beams were used as the main supports of the dome itself and sit with stones in between them on the circular stone drum. From the multitude of images that survive in the Awqaf Archives in Jerusalem, one can speculate that all beams had carved decoration and that the carved part was systematically facing downward. Not only that, but great care was also given to the inclusion of entire design units, not cutting them off in the middle or concealing them by embedding them in the stonework. From

this, one can propose that they were intended to be seen from below and were thus exposed to public view (figure 10), and that their function was possibly to be the integration of recognizable elements of Christian churches that would have been placed for optimum visibility to co-religionist visitors and worshippers at the site.[86]

The same purpose in spolia usage is reflected on the interior of the building (figure 11) as well as a revetment of marble at the lower level of the octagon. Since there have been many restorations throughout the history of the structure, it is difficult to tell if any of the original marble usage remains.[87] In addition to the interior wall revetment of marble, there are columns in reuse filling the interior space of the two ambulatories, the interior row surrounding the rock. The twenty-eight columns – sixteen in the outer and twelve in the inner arcades in the Dome of the Rock – all with Byzantine capitals, are not of uniform size in either width or height and so obviously are from different buildings, possibly Christian churches damaged or destroyed in the Persian invasion of Jerusalem.[88] These columns, supported on different-sized bases, surround the object of Muslim reverence at the site – the Rock – a position of greatest importance.

That the Rock has a specific relationship to Mount Moriah suggests an association with Judaism and the Temple. That columns from Christian monuments surround the

Figure 9. Dome of the Rock, showing supporting dome beams before removal and replacement in 1964. Courtesy of Awqaf Archives 1674, al-Haram al-Sharif.

Figure 10. Dome of the Rock in 1964. Supporting beam of the dome. Courtesy of Awqaf Archives 1687, al-Haram al-Sharif.

Rock incorporates a message of Christian inclusivity. If the beams are solely from Christian churches, then the message was also a message of inclusivity of Christianity in a new Muslim context. This also implies that the entire community of believers, the *ahl al-kitab* governed by the Amir al-Mu'minin, Mu'awiya, were intended to have visitation privileges to the Dome in this period. Thus, we see practical, aesthetic, and ideological usage of spolia to communicate this message to a Muslim, Jewish, and Christian public allowed access to the site in the seventh century.[89]

Figure 11. Dome of the Rock interior. Photo by Père Raphaël Savignac, 1905. Courtesy of École Biblique, no. 04715-1629.

A further issue in this discussion of the use of spolia is what dictated the choices of utilizing exterior decoration of the building to define the symbology of this new structure. First, why does this building not parallel the origins of its form and decoration as derived from the Byzantine church tradition and so defined in most previous scholarship. First, no Byzantine building of similar form had exterior decoration intentionally employed for visibility. Nor did the typical octagonal church have more than one entrance. Those issues were never addressed in previous scholarship. However, two other building types besides the Byzantine octagonal church have been proposed as inspirational and derivative for the Dome of the Rock. It is the choice of these influences that drives a new formal definition of the Dome of the Rock as a truly innovative monument.

Multiple symbolic reasons could have been the motivating factors for the use of exterior decoration on the Dome. This includes that the building's lower area was tied to the symbology of the Jewish Temple, whose exterior was said to be colorful and whose lower area was also said to be of marble. That decor included marble resembling waves at its lower level and the facade colorfully "bejeweled" at the upper level.[90] Another marble and colorfully decorated building type came with the Muslims from south Arabia. Living only in historical memory with its ruins attached to the Great Mosque of the city – supposedly by command of the Prophet – was the pre-Islamic Sabian (the kingdom of Saba') palace of the kings in San'a'– Ghumdan. Ghumdan had a multicolored stone or marble exterior with four entrances from the cardinal points. This palace type was called a mihrab or sanctuary space in Sabian, and significantly defines a space between the original stones of pre-Islamic worship on the interior of the Great Mosque as reserved for the ruler.[91]

Supporting this architectural past as the source for the Dome of the Rock is the fact that the Qur'an includes multiple references to mihrabs – those of David, of the multiple maharib of Solomon, and of Mary who lived in a mihrab in the temple for twelve years and was visited there by Zakariyya.[92] The parallels are clear. Thus, the building stands as the physical embodiment of a palatial mihrab or sanctuary displaying the inclusion of the three religions of the Book as well as linking pre-Islamic rule to the recent establishment of the sovereignty of Islam.[93]

It also is inclusive of another people, the Sabians, as the Qur'an states: "Those who believe (in the Qur'an), and those who follow the Jewish (Scriptures) and the Christians and the Sabians – any who believe in God and the Last Day, and do righteous deeds, shall have their reward and is surely secure with their Lord; on them shall be no fear, nor shall they grieve" (Sura 2: *al-Baqara*, 62). At the time, the People of the Book would also have included the monotheistic Persian Zoroastrians.

The Qur'an discusses the people of Saba' or Saba whose capital was at San'a' in the third century CE; the empire failed with the collapse of the major dam at Ma'rib in the sixth century. "There was, for Saba aforetime, a sign in their homeland – two gardens . . . a territory fair and happy . . . .. But they turned away, and we sent against them the flood from the dams" (Surah 34: *Saba* [Mecca], 15–16). Are these then the Sabians that moved to Greater Syria and converted to Christianity?[94] Is the subject to be explored that the Sabaeans and Sabians were originally the same people, but that their name was transformed in the early decades of the empire? The Himyarites succeeded the Sabians maintaining their capital in San'a'. The ties to Mu'awiya are in the mythologized mihrab palace of the Sabians' Ghumdan and is recorded in a seventh century book on the history of the pre-Islamic Arab kings. A book by 'Ubayd ibn Sharyah al-Jurhumi – a scholar and storyteller in Mu'awiya's court – on the history of the pre-Islamic Arab kings is presented as a dialogue between Mu'awiya and 'Ubayd.[95]

Thus, the Dome of the Rock can be seen as combining the religious maharib or sanctuaries of David, Solomon, and Mary with the royal mihrab palace of the Sabians enshrined in the Dome of the Rock.

Conclusion

The multipurpose uses of spolia in the seventh-century monuments of Bayt al-Maqdis (later al-Haram al-Sharif) created between 638 CE and 680 CE include: the first instance of pragmatic use of locally available stone from ruins; the aesthetic selection of spolia for beauty and meaning in previous cultures; the use of spolia for ideological purposes to convey a variety of coded messages; and, finally, chosen with the intent to be prominently displayed as the legacy of a previous culture or cultures. Examples selected for discussion in this article are only those that can be reasonably and securely dated to the period of initial construction at the site during the period of Mu'awiya.

Three of the major seventh-century monuments of the Bayt al-Maqdis sanctuary that clearly have exploited the use of ruins as a quarry are the Mosque of Mu'awiya, the Dome of the Chain, and the Dome of the Rock. Their inclusion of spolia is evident in both exterior and interior usage for both practical and symbolic purposes. The secondary monuments using spolia are the major entry gates into the city during this period, the Golden Gate and the Double Gate, remainders from both the Byzantine and Herodian periods and rebuilt to continue to reflect those earlier periods. In their use of spolia referencing the religions of Judaism and Christianity, as well as Islam, I argue that these highly important monuments of the seventh century as a unit reflect the intentional ideological inclusion of Jews, Christians, and Muslims – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and the Sabians/Saebeans – on this most holy site of Islam. The referential inclusion of Sasanian, Byzantine, and Sabian royal references links the site to the Umayyad sovereignty of the sanctuary.

The spolia that consciously reference specific prior cultures and religions contain messages addressed to those who continue to be part of those social groups and are allowed to frequent the site. Displayed in this manner, spolia intentionally reflect the political and religious views acceptable and included under Islam and the earliest period of Sufyanid Umayyad rule, prior to its more restrictive sociopolitical transformation under later Marwanid Umayyad, and notably Abbasid rule.

The patron, planners, and builders of the earliest Islamic monumental architecture of Bayt al-Maqdis consciously incorporated historic spolia intended for prominent display in these new monuments as recognizable historic objects from earlier regional cultures and religions worthy of respect, inclusion, and preservation. Thus, the concept of a "Museum of Antiquities" was clearly voiced by Umayyad authority established in mid-seventh century Jerusalem, invoking an egalitarian relationship with earlier Jewish and Christian, Byzantine, Sasanian and Sabian monuments and proclaiming that message to a multicultural multireligious population of the city. Thus, the early Umayyad sanctuary of Jerusalem was a venue for the display of objects from past cultures, which truly conforms to the definition of an open-air museum.

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Capitalizing Jerusalem: Mu'awiya's Urban Vision 638–680, co-authored with her colleague the late Isam Awwad, former chief architect and conservator of al-Haram al-Sharif, is forthcoming (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2023).

Endnotes

1   See: Eilat Mazar, *The Walls of the Temple Mount* (Jerusalem: Shoham Academic Research and Publication, 2011) and Michael Burgoyne, "The East Wall of the Ḥaram al-Sharīf: A Note on its Archaeological Potential," in *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City, 1517–1917*, ed. S. Auld and R. Hillenbrand (London: Festival of Islam Festival Trust, 2000), 415–24.

2   For an earlier brief discussion of this subject of *spolia* used in the first mosque of Jerusalem, see: Beatrice St. Laurent and Isam Awwad, "The Marwani Musalla in Jerusalem: New Findings," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54 (Fall 2013): 7–30; and Beatrice St. Laurent and Himmet Taşkömür, "The Imperial Museum of Antiquities in Jerusalem, 1890–1930: An Alternative Narrative," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 55 (Winter 2013): 6, 16, 18.

3   St. Laurent and Taşkömür, "Imperial Museum," 18.

4   St. Laurent and Taşkömür, "Imperial Museum," discuss the initial argument for the concept of open-air museum, 16.

5   St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham: Mu'awiya's Development of an Infrastructure and Monumental Architecture of Early Umayyad Statehood," *Journal of Islamic Archaeology* 6, no. 2 (2019): 153–86; for elaboration on this topic, see Beatrice St. Laurent and Isam Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem: Mu'awiya's Urban Vision (638–680)* (Sheffield, UK: Equinox Press, forthcoming, 2023).

6   P. M. Fraser, *Ptolemaic Alexandria*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 213–19; Mostafa al-Abbadi, *The Life and Fate of the Ancient Library of Alexandria* (Paris: UNESCO, 1990), 84–90; Roger Bagnall, "Alexandria: Library of Dreams," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 146, no. 4 (2002): 348–62; Michael Greenhalgh, *Marble Past, Monumental Present: Building with Antiquities in the Mediaeval Mediterranean* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2009).

7   Rudolph Peters, Doris Abouseif, et al., "Wakf," *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., vol. 11 (Leiden: Brill, 2000), 59–63; St. Laurent and Taşkömür, "Imperial Museum," 37.

8   Later examples from the Haram al-Sharif include the Crusader period *spolia* employed on the facade of the Nahawiyya, some of which was added in the late nineteenth-century Ottoman period; the same was included in the eastern miḥrab of al-Aqsa Mosque. More distantly and later, the entrance to fifteenth-century Ottoman Yeşil Cami in the capital in Bursa includes two Byzantine columns; St. Laurent, "Yeşil Külliye," unpublished paper, Harvard University, 1981.

9   Greenhalgh, *Marble Past*; Beat Brenk, "Spolia from Constantine to Charlemagne: Aesthetics versus Ideology," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 41 (1987): 103–9; Joseph Alchermes, "*Spolia* in Roman Cities of the Late Empire: Legislative Rationales and Architectural Reuse," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 48 (1984): 167–78; Helen Saradi, "The Use of Spolia in Byzantine Monuments: The Archaeological and Literary Evidence," *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 3 (1997): 395–423; Bryan Ward-Perkins, "Re-using the Architectural Legacy of the Past, entre idéologie et pragmatisme," in *The Idea and the Ideal of the Town between Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. G. P. Brogiolo and B. Ward-Perkins (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 225–44. There is also a long history of the incorporation of *spolia* in ancient Mesopotamian and Persian monuments. See Jennifer Finn, "Persian Collections: Centre and Periphery at Achaemenid Imperial Capital," *Studia Orientalia Electronica* 9, no. 2 (2021): 154–72. For discussion of this in the Medieval period, see also Finbarr Flood, "The Medieval Trophy as an Art Historical Trope: Coptic and Byzantine 'Altars' in Islamic Contexts," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 41–72.

10 Flood, "Medieval Trophy," 41.

11 Flood, "Medieval Trophy," 66 fn. 2.

12 Flood, "Medieval Trophy," discusses the absence and begins a redefinition. Among others recently publishing is Hilal Aktur,

"*Spolia* Use in Murad I Hüdavendigar Mosques in the Çanakkale Region," *Çanakkale Araştırmları Türk Yıllığı* 17, no. 27 (Fall 2019): 227–72. Aktur also summarizes the recent work of authors in the Saljuk, Beylik and Early Ottoman periods. For talismanic associations, see Richard McClary, "The Re-use of Byzantine Spolia in Rum Saljuk Architecture," *bfo–Journal* 1 (2015): 16–17, online at bauforschungonline.ch/bfo-journal-12015.html (accessed 29 September 2022).

13 Particularly relevant for the approach taken in this article, see Paolo Liverani, "Reading *Spolia* in Late Antiquity and Contemporary Perception," in *Reuse Value: 'Spolia' and Appropriation in Art and Architecture from Constantine to Sherry Levine*, ed. Richard Brilliant and Dale Kinney (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011), 33–51, quote at 35.

14 St. Laurent and Awwad, "Marwani Musalla."

15 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*.

16 S. D. Goitein, "Al-Kuds," in *The Encyclopaedia of Islam,* 2nd ed., vol. 5, 322–29; Oleg Grabar, "The Meaning of the Dome of the Rock," in *The Medieval Mediterranean: Cross-Cultural Contacts*, ed. M. J. Chiat and K. L. Ryerson, (St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 1988), 4.

17 St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham."

18 St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham."

19 St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham."

20 See St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem* for discussion of the expanded role played by Zoroastrianism in the founding monuments of the precinct.

21 Grabar, "Meaning of the Dome of the Rock," 5.

22 Flood, "Medieval Trophy," 66, fn. 2.

23 Flood, "Medieval Trophy," 41.

24 There is an active debate as to the extent of the destruction by the Persian incursion. Christian textual evidence of massive destruction is not supported by the archaeological record. See Yuri Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross: The Sasanian Conquest of Jerusalem in 614 and Byzantine Ideology of Anti-Persian Warfare* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2011); and Gideon Avni, *The Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Palestine: An Archaeological Approach* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

25 For detail see Avni, *The Byzantine-Islamic Transition*; Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies.*

See also articles by Yana Tchekhanovets, "Excavations on the Southwestern Margins of Giv'ati Parking Lot, Jerusalem: Markers of Byzantine-Early Islamic Transition," *'Atiqot* 106 (2022): 303–38; "Spoils and Spolia: Large Marble Assemblage from Givati Excavations," *Liber Annuus* 66 (2016): 269–300; "Recycling the Glory of Byzantium: New Archaeological Evidence of Byzantine-Islamic Transition in Jerusalem," *Studies in Late Antiquity* 2 (2018): 215–37.

26 Moran Hagbi and Joe Uziel have exposed another section of the street, which extended northward along the Western Wall. The church was destroyed in the Persian siege of the city in 614; Tchekanovets, "Recycling the Glory," 218 fn. 5, 221.

27 Tchekhanovets, "Spoils and Spolia." Earlier bibliography and views on the site are included in Tchekhanovets's articles and Stoyanov's more historical analysis of the Persian invasion and subsequent destruction. Tchekhanovets documents the reuse of Byzantine marble fragmentary larger panels in the later Byzantine administrative structure under discussion above street level.

28 Tchekanovets, "Recycling the Glory," 221–26.

29 Michael Greenhalgh, "Spolia: A Definition in Ruins," in *Reuse Value*, ed. Brilliant and Kinney (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2011).

30 Tchekhanovets, "Recycling the Glory," 235–36; Tchekhanovets, "Spoils and Spolia."

31 Tchekhanovets. "Recycling the Glory," 236; Meir Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple: The Discovery of Ancient Jerusalem*, trans. Ina Friedman (Jerusalem: Keter Publishing House, 1985); Donald Whitcomb, "Jerusalem and the Beginnings of the Early Islamic City," in *Unearthing Jerusalem: 150 Years of Archaeological Research in the Holy City*, ed. Katharina Galor and Gideon Avni (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 399–416; Alan Walmsley, "Regional Exchange and the Role of the Shop in Byzantine and Early Islamic Syria-Palestine: An Archaeological View," in *Trade and Markets In Byzantium,* ed. C. Morrisson (Washington: Dumbarton Oaks, 2012), 311–30; St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

32 The history of the "palace complex" is revisited in St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusaslem.* See also Tchekhanovets, "Recycling the Glory."

33 Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow of the Temple*; the illustration of this method can be seen in the

bottom left two sketches, 309. See also Ben-Dov, "Building Techniques in the Ommayad Palace near the Temple Mount, Jerusalem," *Eretz Israel* 11 (1973): 75–91 [in Hebrew].

34 This excavation of the IAA (Israel Antiquities Authority), directed by Joe Uziel and Moran Hagbi, is published in a paper in Hebrew; Helena Roth, Moran Hagbe and Joanna Regev, "Construction Techniques of the Monumental Buildings in the Davidson Center in Light of the Renewed Excavations in the Foundations of Building II," *City of David: Studies of Ancient Jerusalem* 12 (2017): 106–18. It discusses the dating of the foundations as Late Byzantine/Early Islamic with C14 dating of mortar and wood installations. The chapter on the "palaces" discusses the initiation of the palace district by Mu'awiya; St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

35 The use of columns to reinforce foundations or walls has been more frequently documented in Jerusalem during the later periods. See Mazar, *The Walls of the Temple Mount*; Burgoyne, "The East Wall."

36 Isam Awwad indicated that this was discovered during a restoration of the steps.

37 The column capitals of Byzantine Umayyad (Abbasid and Fatimid) period that were removed from al-Aqsa Mosque in the 1938–42 mosque "restoration" are displayed to the east and west outside of the mosque in what can be termed an open-air museum context. See John Wilkinson, *Column Capitals of the Haram al-Sharif (from 138 AD to 1118 AD)* (Jerusalem: Administration of Waqfs and Islamic Affairs, 1987); Robert W. Hamilton, *Structural History of the Aqsa Mosque: A Record of Archaeological Gleanings from the Repairs of 1938–1942* (Jerusalem: Oxford University Press for the Government of Palestine, 1949).

38 Though two additional entrances are built into the southern city wall atop the Herodian foundation, the Single Gate and the Triple Gate, neither display consciously placed *spolia* with an intended public message; St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

39 St. Laurent and Awwad, "Marwani Musalla" and *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

40 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

41 Dan Bahat, "The Golden Gate and the Date of the Madaba Map," in *The Madaba Map Centenary, 1897–1997: Travelling through the Byzantine Umayyad Period: Proceedings of the International Conference Held in Amman, 7–9 April 1997*, ed. M. Piccirillo and E. Alliata (Jerusalem: Studium Biblicum, 1999), 254–56; Stoyanov, *Defenders and Enemies.*

42 St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham."

43 These associations are discussed in St. Laurent and Awwad, "Marwani Musalla," and *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

44 St. Laurent and Awwad, "Marwani Musalla."

45 Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow*; Raya Shani and Doron Chen, "On the Umayyad Dating of the Double Gate in Jerusalem," *Muqarnas* 18 (2001): 1–40; this is discussed in detail in St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

46 See Michael Burgoyne, "The Gates of the Ḥaram al-Sharif," in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part I: 'Abd al-Malik's Jerusalem*, ed. J. Raby and J. Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 105–24.

47 This phenomenon continues to later dynastic periods in the Islamic world. The entrance to fifteenth century Yeşil Cami or the Green Mosque in Bursa also shares the inclusion with their placement in a somewhat sheltered location (Beatrice St. Laurent, "Yeşil Külliye," 9, unpublished paper, Harvard University, 1981), 9.

48 For a discussion of the derivative forms of these vaults, see Ignacio Arce, "Umayyad Arches, Vaults, and Domes: Merging and Re-creation. Contributions to Early Islamic Construction History," in *Technology in Transition A. D. 300–650: Late Antique Archaeology*, vol. 4, ed. Luke Lavan, Enrico Zanini, and Alexander Sarantis (Leiden: Brill, 2008), 491–537.

49 St. Laurent and Awwad, "Marwani Musalla" and *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

50 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*; Heba Mostafa, "The Early Mosque Revisited: Introduction of the *Minbar* and *Maqsura*," *Muqarnas* 33 (2016): 1–16.

51 Ben-Dov, *In the Shadow*, 137, 139.

52 This usage parallels the similar usage in the second Byzantine period administrative building in the Givati excavation; see Tchekhanovets, "Recycling the Glory," 221–26.

53 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*; Finbarr Flood, "Light in Stone. The Commemoration of the Prophet in Umayyad Architecture," in *Bayt al-Maqdis: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, vol. 2, ed. Jeremy Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 317, 353.

54 There is a detailed section in the mosque chapter of our forthcoming book documenting the history of the mihrab, St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

55 In "Marwani Musallah," and *Capitalizing Jerusalem*, St. Laurent and Awwad discuss more completely the belief that the Temple stood in the southeastern corner.

56 St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham," 153–86, discusses in greater detail the role of Mu'awiya as Amir al-Mu'minin and never referred to as caliph. The gate does not incorporate earlier spolia so it is not discussed further in this article.

57 The word mawazin is often translated as arcades but the word for arcade in a mosque is a *riwaq* and is continuous and covered, providing shelter. For a brief description of the arcades, see Myriam Rosen-Ayalon, *The Early Islamic Monuments of the Haram al-Sharif: An Iconographic Study* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1989), 30–32. See also St. Laurent and Awwad, "Marwani Musalla" for a discussion of the *riwaq.*

58 Other mawazin are safely dated later and built atop the platform. There were no other arcades on the south side at the time; there are two other Umayyad period arcades, the central western and southern ones. There is also evidence that there was perhaps no platform at that time in the southern area; St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

59 The entire eastern area of the platform is constructed over buildings of unknown date and function.

60 Michael Burgoyne, *Mamluk Jerusalem. An Architectural Study* (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1987), 46.

61 J. L. Hurlburt and C. F. Kent, *Palestine through the Atereoscope: A Tour* (London: Underwood and Underwood, 1914).

62 This subject is more completely explored in St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

63 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

64 Heba Mostafa, "From the Dome of the Chain to the Mihrab Da'ud: The Transformation of an Umayyad Commemorative site at the Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem," *Muqarnas* 34, no. 1 (2017): 1–22. This article provides a good summary of the history of the Dome of the Chain as well as the available scholarship on the subject. The exterior of the building was covered with external mosaics dating from the seventh century, so it was no doubt

built in this period. See also St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*, for a differing and expanded view of the original function and dating of this building.

65 Tchekhanovets, "Recycling the Glory," 236, also deals with the sources of marble found on sites in Jerusalem. She also indicates that Byzantine and Early Islamic usage was limited to already imported marble from previous periods.

66 For summary information, early bibliography, and speculative proposals as to the function of the Dome of the Chain, see Rosen-Ayalon, *Early Islamic Monuments*, 25–29.

67 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.* A text cited in *Capitalizing Jerusalem* indicates that the treasury sat at the edge of the bedrock suggesting that there was no platform at that time and that the rock was visible. The topography of the site illustrates that the rock was fairly level under the Dome of the Chain but drops off afterward toward the east.

68 Mostafa, "From the Dome of the Chain."

69 Andrew Marsham, *Rituals of Islamic Monarchy: Accession and Succession in the First Muslim Empire* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), 134 ff.

70 Parvaneh Pourshariate, *The Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2011), 193. See also Rachel Wood, "Empires of Faith: Interactions in Art and Religions of Late Antiquity across Eurasia" in *Empires of Faith in Late Antiquity: Histories of Art and Religion from India to Ireland*, ed. Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 223–59.

71 Estelle Whelan, "The Origins of the *Mihrab Mujawwaf:* A Reinterpretation," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18 (1986): 21–23; Nuha Khoury, "The Dome of the Rock, the Ka'ba, and Ghumdan: Arab Myths and Umayyad Monuments," *Muqarnas* 10 (1993): 57–65.

72 Priscilla Soucek, "Solomon's Throne/Solomon's Bath: Model or Metaphor?" *Ars Orientalis* 23 (1993): 109–13.

73 For the purposes of this article, the explication of the newly proposed function of the Dome of the Chain is extremely limited here. The entire analysis and explication is fully developed in St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

74 Bernard O'Kane, *The Civilization of the Islamic World* (New York: Rosen Publishing, 2013), 32. See also St. Laurent and Awwad,

Capitalizing Jerusalem, for a more expansive development of this idea. For Khirbat al-Mafjar, see Dimitri Baramki, *Arab Culture and Architecture of the Umayyad Period: A Comparative Study with Special Reference to the Results of the Excavations of Hisham's Palace* (London: University of London, 1953), and Robert Hamilton and Oleg Grabar *Khirbat al-Mafjar: An Arabian Mansion in the Jordan Valley* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1959).

75 The extensive list of publications on the Dome of the Rock will not be listed here but can be found in Gülrû Necipoğlu, "The Dome of the Rock Palimpsest: 'Abd al-Malik's Grand Narrative and Sultan Süleyman's Glosses," *Muqarnas* 19 (2008): 17–105.

76 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*; see also Burgoyne, "Gates of the Ḥaram al-Sharif," Part I, and "Some Further Observations on the Gates of the Haram," in *Bayt al-Maqdis, Part II: Jerusalem and Early Islam*, ed. J. Johns (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 215–22.

77 The discussion of Mu'awiya versus 'Abd al-Malik is pursued in detail in St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*. It is proposed that 'Abd al-Malik continued the project, building the dome and completing the mosaic decoration.

78 The renovations of the 1961–66 by the Egyptian team working for the Jordanian government revealed the bases of the support structure. The renovations are well documented in the four volumes and surviving photographs in the Awqaf Archives. All have been reinforced using concrete, not a desirable method of architectural restoration. For earlier buildings of Mu'awiya, see St. Laurent, "From Arabia to Bilad al-Sham."

79 For the sanctuary wall rebuilding from the Umayyad period, see Mazar, *Walls of the Temple Mount*, and St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

80 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*, discusses this issue more completely. The interior lower walls were exposed in 2007 and St. Laurent had the opportunity to photograph one area of the wall construction. Beatrice St. Laurent, "The Dome of the Rock: Restorations and Significance 1540–1918," in *Ottoman Jerusalem*, ed. Sylvia Auld and Robert Hillennrand (Edinburgh: Altajir World of Islam Festival Trust, 2000), 415–24; A. H. S. Peter Megaw, "*Qubbat As Sakra* (The Dome

of the Rock): An Account of the Building and Its Condition with Recommendations for Its Conservation, Submitted to the Supreme Moslem Council," unpublished report, 1946. St. Laurent will publish Megaw's complete report as a separate volume in the future. Since the stones are roughly hewn, the walls would have required a revetment. Megaw prepared the report for the British Mandate government and the Supreme Muslim Council, wherein he discusses the condition of the building at that time before the 1960s renovation and major transformation of the building.

81 Tchechanovets, "Spoils and Spolia," demonstrates that only marble spolia were available at the time with no new imports from abroad.

82 Steven Fine, "Babylonian Talmud, Sukkah 51b–Coloring the Temple: Polychromy and the Jerusalem Temple in Late Antiquity," in *Talmuda Da-Eretz Israel: Archaeology and the Rabbis in Late Antique Palestine*, ed. Steven Fine and Aaron Koller (Berlin/ Boston: De Gruyter, 2014), 191–204. Fine discusses the colorful exterior of the temple.

83 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*, fully explores this concept.

84 Megaw, "*Qubbat as Sakhra*," 59, no. 174. Megaw and others believe that the mosaics date from the time of construction. However, the mosaics of the arched porches might date from later than the initial construction period between 660 and 680 CE, possibly from the Mamluk period when there were documented major mosaic restorations, notable in the window areas of the Dome and the arch soffits of the Dome of the Chain.

85 In 2009, there was a collection of "trash" deposited by the Golden Gate, which included a number of rafters from the Dome removed in 1961. There were several large beams, which St. Laurent identified as removed from al-Aqsa Mosque during the 1938 restoration of that building. Some of the shorter ones with only one decorative panel could have come from the Dome. At the time of St. Laurent's last visit to Jerusalem in January of 2019, the beams remained outside to the left of the Golden Gate.

86 There existed six beams with Abbasid period inscriptions indicating that the beams were replaced or restored during that later period. One still exists in the Islamic Museum in the Haram.

87 St. Laurent, "Dome of the Rock,

Restorations"; Megaw, "Qubbat as Sakhra" discusses the multiple restoration periods of the marble.

88 The bases of the columns do not sit on solid foundational material but rather rest on a combination of small stones and dirt, rubble sitting directly on bedrock. Thus, there is no obvious use of spolia in this context.

89 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*.

90 Fine, "Babylonian Talmud"; Fabio Barry, "Walking on Water: Cosmic Floors in Antiquity and the Middle Ages," *Art Bulletin* 89, no. 4 (2007): 627–56; St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem.*

91 Robert B. Serjeant, "The Mosques of San'a' – The Yemeni Islamic Setting," in *San'a': An Arabian Islamic City*, ed. Robert B. Sergeant and Ronald Lewcock (London: World of Islam Festival Trust, 1983), 310–22.

92 Khoury, "Dome of the Rock."

93 St. Laurent and Awwad, *Capitalizing Jerusalem*, analyzes these sources in far greater detail.

94 There are questions about the references to the Sabians in the Qur'an as to whether they refer to a group of Christians living in Greater Syria or the Saebeans of south Arabia. These issues remain unresolved. It is also not clear what the specific references and word usage were at the time of the writing of the Qur'an.

95 A part of the book entitled *Akhbar 'Ubayd bin Shariya al-Jurhami fi akhbar al-Yaman wa ash'ariha wa ansabiha* [The account of 'Ubayd bin Shariya al-Jurhami of the events of Yemen and its poets and lineages] was published in Hyderabad, 10 and fn. 16, as noted by M. ul-Hasan in *Ibn al-Athir: An Arab Historian – A Critical Analysis of His 'Tarikh-al-kamil and Tarikh-al-atabeca'* (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2005), 10 and fn. 16.

Jerusalem's Palestine Archaeological Museum

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Abstract

The Palestine Archaeological Museum, renamed by occupation authorities as Rockefeller Archaeological Museum, is a spectacular iconic monument in Jerusalem. This museum tells two intertwined histories: the civilizational history of Palestine across millennia, and the 100-year political conflict that continues over the land of Palestine and its historical narrative. The history of the museum has been closely connected to Palestinian political history in the last century. The museum was initially established in the late Ottoman period and opened its doors in 1901. Following the British occupation of Palestine, the Mandate authorities transferred the museum collection in 1921 to the newly inaugurated Palestine Archaeological Museum. Work to construct new premises for the museum began after 1925, on purchased property known as Karm Shaykh al-Khalili, opposite the Old City, and was finally completed in 1938. It remained under British Mandate administration until the Nakba in 1948, after which it was managed by an international board until Jordan took steps to nationalize it in 1966. Shortly after, the museum was taken over by Israeli occupation troops in 1967 and has since remained under Israeli control, in violation of international and humanitarian laws. The complex consists of the museum buildings, library, and headquarters of the Palestinian (now Israeli) Department of Antiquities. The museum is considered a Palestinian cultural institution under occupation in Jerusalem until its future is decided in the final status negotiations.

Keywords

Archaeology; cultural heritage; Department of Antiquities; decolonization; Mandate period; museums; Nakba; occupation; Palestine studies; Rockefeller.

A twentieth-century Jerusalem architectural landmark, the Palestine Archaeological Museum (renamed Rockefeller Archaeological Museum after 1967) narrates two overlapping histories: the civilizational history of Palestine across millennia, and the 100-year political conflict that continues over the land of Palestine and its historical narrative. The museum's history has been deeply intertwined with the last century of Palestinian political history, going through several iterations since the initial idea of its establishment at the end of the Ottoman era. The Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hümayun in Turkish) of Jerusalem opened to the public in 1901 and remained in operation until the onset of World War I. The museum's collection of antiquities was later seized by officials of the British Mandate and relocated to the newly inaugurated Palestine Archaeological Museum, established in 1921 at the Palestine Department of Antiquities. In 1925, work began on new premises for the museum, which eventually opened to the public in 1938 and remained under British Mandatory administration until the 1948 Nakba. Following Israel's creation and the annexation of the West Bank by Jordan in the war's aftermath, the museum was administered by an international board. In 1966, the museum was nationalized by the Jordanian government, and remained under its administration for a brief eight months before being taken over by the Israeli military occupation authorities in the wake of the June 1967 war. The multi-building complex, which today accommodates the Israeli Department of Antiquities (as it had the Palestinian Department of Antiquities), has been used ever since to promote a Zionist historical narrative to serve Israel's occupation of Palestinian land.

For the Palestinians, the Palestine Archaeological Museum represents their national museum under occupation, according to both international law and the State of Palestine's Tangible Cultural Heritage Law (2018). The complexities of the museum's trajectory since its beginning merit the retelling of its history, and examining its status from the perspective of Palestinian and international law. In the following narrative, I will be reviewing some of the recent scholarly material on the antecedents and predecessors of this museum published in recent years. Most notably, the work of Beatrice St. Laurent and Himmet Taşkömür, among others, have added significant knowledge on the overlap between the early Ottoman roots of the antiquity collections and the current museum in Wadi al-Jawz. This article aims to trace the layered history of this museum and the struggle between two competing narratives, an indigenous Palestinian narrative, and a Zionist settler-colonial narrative.

Beginnings: The Imperial Museum (Müze-i Hümayun) of Jerusalem (1901–17)

Although Israeli historical studies and Israel's official narrative about Palestinian archaeology and museology during the twentieth century have consistently and deliberately obfuscated the museum's history, recent studies of the Imperial Museum of Jerusalem's establishment and development at the turn of the twentieth century have shed light on the early beginnings of the Palestinian museum and archaeological studies during the period.[1]

The late nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of archaeology as a new field of study as well as unprecedented interest in the archaeology of Palestine by Western researchers, archaeologists, and theologians. Exploratory studies by Ulrich Jasper Seetzen, Edward Robinson, Charles van der Velde, and others spurred scientific and religious interest in the history of the Holy Land. The most ambitious project of the period was the Survey of Western Palestine that was conducted from 1871–77 by a British team and produced detailed maps of Palestine; at the same time, archaeological excavations began at Tell el-Hesi, Tal al-Sultan, Jerusalem, Tell al-Jaziri (also known as Tal al-Jazar), Tell Ta'annek, and Sabastiya.

Palestine remained under Ottoman rule for four centuries until the collapse of the empire during World War I. The late Ottoman era had been marked by European colonial powers, particularly Britain and France, scrambling to acquire the already declining empire's territories and resources.[2] The first Ottoman law regulating the status of antiquities, passed in 1869 in the context of the Tanzimat reforms, sought to establish a legal framework for archaeological work. It urged local provincial authorities to collect archaeological materials by all means available, including purchase, and to dispatch them to the capital (Istanbul). To stem the rise in unregulated foreign excavation and the removal of large amounts of excavated material, the law was amended in 1874 to stipulate that all excavated material constituted State property.[3] The law was again amended, first in 1884 and then in 1907, in an effort to stanch the flow of antiquities out of the Ottoman territories at a time when rival European colonial powers were removing archaeological artifacts on the pretext of missionary work.
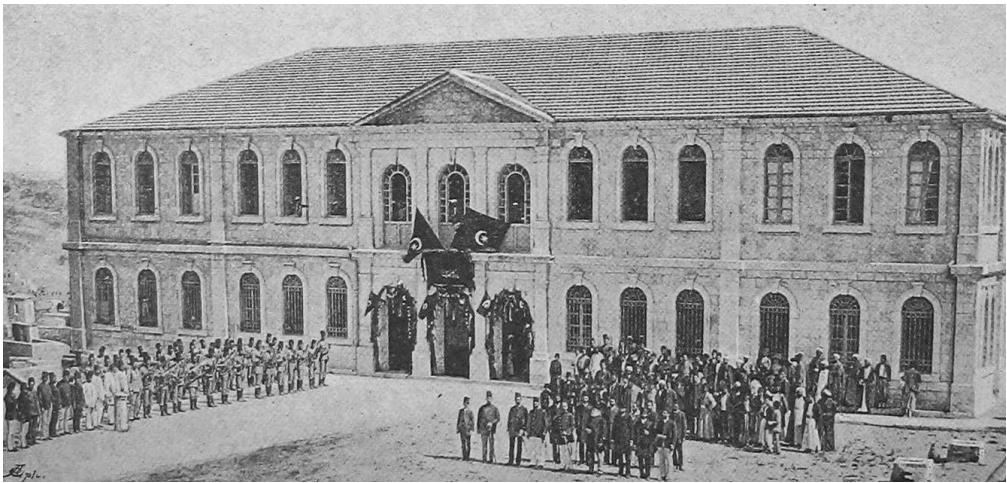

Figure 1. The Imperial Museum of Jerusalem was housed in al-Ma'muniyya School, shown here during the dedication ceremony, 1893. Source: www.tarihteninciler.com/osmanli-kudus-mekteb-i-idadisi.

During the same period, significant artifacts were assembled in Istanbul, including the Silwan Tunnel Inscription, an inscription of Umayyad caliph 'Abd al-Malik, and

the Greco-Roman statue of Zeus from Gaza. Jerusalem's significance as a sacred site profoundly influenced the formulation of Ottoman guidelines during this period.[4] The Imperial Museum of Jerusalem, the first of four proposed provincial museums in the Ottoman territories,[5] developed with joint collaboration between the Sublime Porte, local authorities, and archaeologists from Britain's Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF).[6] Discussions regarding the establishment of a museum in Jerusalem had begun as early as 1891: in addition to housing and preserving Palestinian archaeological artifacts, the aim of the Ottoman project was to counter the spread of the – by then – ubiquitous biblical archaeological narrative.

The museum, known locally as the Jerusalem Government Museum, was located on the premises of al-Ma'muniyya high school (figure 1). In 1899, some 465 items were deposited in the museum collection and in 1901 it opened to the public. Alongside a Palestinian team active in the preparatory phase of the work, PEF archaeologist Frederick Jones Bliss inventoried the items and designed the displays. According to Palestinian historian 'Adel Manna', the preparatory work was overseen by Isma'il al-Husayni (1886–1945), then the mufti of Jerusalem and director of education.[7] Bliss's imprint was evident in the use of biblical terms for referring to chronological eras as "pre-Israelite" or "Israelite" and to pottery as "Jewish," ethnological categories that were rejected by later archaeologists. Notwithstanding his use of such language, Bliss went head to head with the PEF whose ambition was to establish a museum of biblical history. The American archaeologist complained that foreigners want to work without any Ottoman government oversight and with little regard for the laws and customs of the inhabitants of the land they were excavating.[8]

The museum's collection grew rapidly and by 1910 included more than six thousand artifacts from a wide range of excavation sites. The year 1909 had marked an important step in the museum's institutionalization, with the establishment of a Museum Committee and the creation of a catalogue in response to concerns about mismanagement of the museum's holdings raised by R. A. S. Macalister, formerly an assistant to Bliss who had taken over as the PEF representative in Jerusalem. The committee was made up of local citizens, including Ibrahim Khalil, Mustafa Hulusi, 'Abdallah Rushdi, Musa al-Budayri, Muhammad Kamil, and Husayn 'Awni. During its early years, the museum counted Ibrahim Khalil, Mustafa Hulusi, and Hasan Muhsin among its directors.[9]

With the size of the collection outgrowing the limited space at al-Ma'muniyya school, the Ottoman authorities developed a plan to transfer the museum's holdings to Qal'at al-Quds (the Jerusalem Citadel), but they shelved the plan at the outbreak of World War I. They nevertheless protected the collection during the war by storing the artifacts dispersed in various safe locations in the Old City. After the war, the items were retrieved by the British and later formed the core of the collection at the Palestine Archaeological Museum established by the Mandate government in 1921, furthering the alliance of scientific interest in the archaeology of Palestine with British imperial ambitions.

Transition: From Imperial Museum to Palestine Archaeological Museum (1921–38)

World War I ended with the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire and the fall of Jerusalem to British imperial forces. Designated as the mandatory power in Palestine, Britain embarked on facilitating "the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" per the 1917 Balfour Declaration. Ronald Storrs, newly installed as the British military governor of Jerusalem, launched a renovation of the Citadel with a view to using it for safeguarding some 120 cases of antiquities captured from the former Imperial Museum collection.[10] The idea was revived of using the Citadel as the permanent site for the museum's holdings but it was opposed as inappropriate by John Garstang, head of the Mandate's new Department of Antiquities,[11] as well as the British School of Archaeology.[12]

In addition to the museum, the Department of Antiquities consisted of five divisions – inspection, documentation, library, restoration, and photography.[13] Storrs introduced an archaeological advisory board, which he chaired in person, to organize excavation

Figure 2. The internal courtyard of Way House, Jerusalem, where large artifacts of the Palestine Archaeological Museum were displayed, 1922. The building housed the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, along with the British School of Archaeology, and the American School of Archaeological Research.

missions throughout the country. The board included representatives of the British, French, American, and Italian archaeological schools, in addition to two Muslim and two Jewish notables from the city.

On 31 October 1921, the British authorities celebrated the move of the Department of Antiquities into a building called Way House, located off Nablus Road, near the Dominican École biblique et archéologique (figure 2). The building housed the department's headquarters, as well as the British School of Archaeology and the library of the American School of Archaeological Research library.[14] The Palestine Archaeological Museum was also initially housed in the British School of Archaeology, its artifacts displayed in a large hall of the school. The British move also served to lend an international colonial character to the museum endeavor, clearly messaging Palestinian heritage to be a universal rather than a national legacy. British archaeologist

Charles Phythian-Adams classified the holdings (being somehow unaware that an Ottoman catalogue already existed)[15] in 1924. In that same year, the British Mandate authorities levied a special tourism tax on Palestinians for the construction of new museum premises. Meanwhile, British Mandate authorities scouted for donations for their building project. This period also saw the launch of several private museums in Jerusalem, including the Islamic Museum established in the Haram al-Sharif in 1923 and the Franciscan Museum in 1920.

Palestine Archaeological Museum (1938–48)

Museum Establishment, 1921–1938

The Palestine Archaeological Museum commands a hill overlooking the Old City and the Mount of Olives at the end of Sultan Sulayman Street, next to al-Rashidiyya school and across from the northeastern corner of the Old City wall (Burj al-Luqluq). British town planner and sociologist Patrick Geddes, originally brought to Jerusalem in 1919 by the Zionist Organization to plan Hebrew University, went on to create the Mandate's master plan for Jerusalem, including his vision for a monumental archaeological museum on the plot known as Karm Shaykh al-Khalili, outside of Bab al-Zahra. The karm (orchard) surrounds the qasr, built by the renowned Islamic scholar and mufti Shaykh Muhammad al-Khalili in the early eighteenth century, and one of the first buildings to have been erected outside the city walls, on a spacious knoll of vineyards and olive groves.[16]

The site was apparently adopted by the Mandate government but major funds were needed for the construction, more than the government could provide. In 1925, American archaeologist and Orientalist James Henry Breasted[17] appealed to oil magnate and philanthropist John D. Rockefeller who agreed to finance the museum project for two million dollars. The agreement, signed in 1927, set out the financing conditions in a letter from Rockefeller to Lord Herbert Plumer, the newly appointed British High Commissioner to Palestine. Rockefeller's letter laid out several conditions, among them: the provision by the Government of Palestine of the Karm Shaykh al-Khalili plot, an area of twenty dunums outside the northeastern corner of the city walls; the removal of the current waste incineration site to another location; the integration of the area into the master plan for the city; the assurance that the museum would be dedicated to antiquities and not serve as a natural history museum; and, the Government of Palestine's establishment and management of the museum in consultation with an international advisory board of trustees.[18] Half of the grant was to be used to construct and equip the museum building and the other half for an endowment to cover the operating costs of the museum and of the Department of Antiquities. The grant was also conditioned on the preservation of the ancient pine tree that was built into the structure adjoining the two-story al-Khalili mansion. It was also agreed that the British Mandate government would appoint an advisory board to administer the museum.[19]

The Mandate authorities acquired the land from the Khalili family, and entrusted the design of the building to Austen St. Barbe Harrison, the Mandate government's chief architect and head of public works at the time. The original agreement stipulated that construction should be completed by 1931 but the project was delayed by political and logistical setbacks, including finding fifth-century Hellenic tombs at the site. The cornerstone was laid on 19 June 1930 in the presence of the British high commissioner, the director of the Department of Antiquities, and dignitaries of the local community. The work was tendered to a contractor from Alexandria, Egypt. On 20 May 1935, the Department of Antiquities moved into its new headquarters and work began on the museum exhibits and displays, a planning period which lasted nearly three years.

Floor Plan

The Palestine Archaeological Museum (Rockefeller Museum of Jerusalem) is a large architectural complex that houses the headquarters of the Department of Antiquities as well as the museum itself. The complex is made up of exhibition halls, administrative offices, store- rooms, a library, as well as a museum garden and parking lots.[20]

Figure 3. Museum (Rockefeller) in Jerusalem. Museum. Telephoto from Mount of Olives (between 1934 and 1939). Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

A mix of Mediterranean, local, and contemporary architectural styles, Harrison's design was inspired by the rich and diverse architecture of Palestine. While the structure is basically classical in form and mostly symmetrical, it is replete with local architectural elements, such as domes, vaults, galleries, arches, windows, and courtyard. Harrison completed the blueprints in 1929 and the project was carried out by a special unit of the Department of Public Works, using local labor and local materials such as limestone quarried from the surrounding hills. The doors were made of walnut imported from Turkey, the metal window frames along with locks and handles came from Britain, and the main door was decorated with copper plates in the Andalusian style of North Africa.[21]

The building design is largely symmetrical, with its central axis extending from the landmark 300-year-old pine tree behind the building (which died in 1998 although its stump remains), through a central courtyard, to the main entrance to the east (figure 3). The exhibition galleries surround the central courtyard on two sides and the main entry is flanked by two diagonal wings: one housing the library, and the other a small auditorium. Along the hallways spanning out from the center of the building are offices, some of which are used as study rooms or to store collections. The exhibition galleries also feature recesses for the display of larger objects.

The museum building is an architectural gem. Its central courtyard draws its inspiration from classical Umayyad architecture, especially the Andalusian al-Hamra (Alhambra) Palace, a recognized Islamic architectural masterpiece. A reflecting pool bisects the central courtyard; a small interior court at one end of the pool is covered in the traditional blue and white Armenian glazed tiles featuring geometric designs, created by the renowned ceramicist David Ohannessian. Originally, a fountain with a small octagonal basin graced the middle of the space, now replaced by a circular basin. The courtyard is surrounded on three sides by open galleries with vaulted ceilings divided by crossed arches where larger items from the museum's collection are displayed.[22]

The British sculptor Eric Gill engraved ten bas-reliefs on the galleries' internal walls (facing the courtyard) representing the major cultures that left their imprint on the land of Palestine, including Canaanite, Egyptian, Phoenician, Mesopotamian, Israelite, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Islamic, and Crusader cultures (omitting the prehistoric, Persian, and Ottoman eras).

On the cornice above the arched entrance of the building (today, either removed or not visible) was inscribed: "This museum was built with a donation from Mr. John Rockefeller to house the civilizational and cultural heritage of the people of this holy land."[23] The museum's name, Palestine Archaeological Museum, was engraved above the doorway, although no photographs of the museum show the details of the doorway from this period.

The change in name to Rockefeller Museum was introduced by the occupation authorities after 1967 as part of Israel's relentless quest to conceal Palestinian heritage and identity. No name appears on the museum itself today. According to a report written shortly after the 1967 war, the Rockefeller family had in fact stipulated that the museum "should not bear the Rockefeller name."[24]

Figures 4 and 5. The central courtyard, looking south toward the Old City, and north, respectively. Photo, October 2022.

Collection and Exhibition Halls

The Palestine Archaeological Museum houses items recovered from an extensive number of excavations conducted in Palestine from the early twentieth century until 1948.[25] The archaeological materials come from Jerusalem, Megiddo, 'Askalan, Tal al-Duwayr, Jericho, Sabastiya, Hisham's Palace (Khirbat al-Mafjar) (see figures 7–9), and Ein Gedi ('Ayn Jidi). The museum also holds a collection of scrolls that were uncovered by archaeological expeditions or purchased between 1947 and 1956. Large quantities of additional archaeological materials are also housed in the museum's storerooms.

The galleries surrounding the central courtyard feature high ceilings and large windows that provide plenty of natural light. Their ceilings are decorated with medallions, said to be inspired by the ceilings of public buildings in ancient Rome.[26] The displays were organized in chronological sequence by British archaeologist John H. Iliffe who was appointed in 1931 as the first Keeper of the new Palestine Archaeological Museum.[27]

The two main halls feature displays ranging from the beginning of the Stone Age to the Middle Ages. The southern gallery houses specific displays, such as the Bronze Age Egyptian statues from Bisan and inscriptions. The western gallery contains stucco reliefs from Jericho's Hisham Palace excavated by Dimitri Baramki and Robert Hamilton, as well as doors from al-Aqsa Mosque, a carved stone lintel from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and a room of collections of coins, ornaments, and jewelry, as well as larger architectural fragments and stone sarcophagi.

The museum displays undoubtedly reflect an Orientalist view of Palestinian history with their focus on ancient history and a chronology ending with the Crusader period; there are no artifacts from the Ottoman period or from the Palestinian people's heritage in recent centuries. Such deliberate oversights were ideologically driven, serving the

British Mandate's declared aim to establish a national homeland for the Jewish people in accordance with the Balfour Declaration and producing a historical narrative that served the Zionist colonial project in Palestine. This is evidenced in the controversy caused by Iliffe's proposal to add a Palestinian heritage collection to the museum that would round out the historical perspective. The Museum Committee rejected the inclusion of a collection that would reflect the culture and identity of contemporary Palestinians or of any other collection pertaining to human evolution in Palestine.[28]

Museum Guidebook

John H. Iliffe compiled the museum's original guidebook which appeared in 1937 under the title *A Short Guide to the Exhibition Illustrating the Stone and Bronze Ages in Palestine,* published by the Department of Antiquities, Government of Palestine.[29] In the foreword to the 1949 updated edition, Iliffe indicates that the guidebook "is merely a brief introduction to the history and civilization of each epoch, to help those who are not primarily archaeologists to follow the sequence of cultures intelligently."[30] In 1943, Palestinian Department of Antiquities' employees prepared gallery books with information on each historical period, dates, and the location of relevant artifacts in the museum by bay, display case, and individual number.

The Library

Facing east, the library has a "vaulted ceiling divided by crossed arches resting on three massive columns, an apse at one end, and small service rooms on two sides."[31] Its

Figures 6–8. Decorations from Hisham's Palace (Khirbat al-Mafjar), Jericho, built in the 740s CE as a winter residence for the first caliph of the Umayyad dynasty, Hisham bin ʿAbd al-Malik. The site was first excavated in 1935–48 by the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, directed by Dimitri Baramki.Top, Archives of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine; bottom photos, October 2022.

vast windows allow abundant indirect natural light, and it has a reading room. Adjacent to the library, and separated from it by a door, are the archives.

The museum houses one of the largest specialized libraries of archaeology, ancient history, and Semitic languages. By 1948, the library boasted more than seventeen thousand titles, including rare sixteenth- and seventeenth-century books and manuscripts, as well as the writings of nineteenth- and twentieth-century travelers and explorers, in addition to excavation reports and studies on archaeology and ancient languages.[32] According to a survey by Fawzi Ghandour

Figure 9. A monster peering over an acanthus leaf decorates a twelfth-century capital removed from the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth. Photo, October 2022.

who visited the museum library and met with Museum Director 'Arif al-'Arif in early 1967, pre-war, the library housed over thirty thousand titles.[33] A study by Hani Nour Addin in 1988 asserts that the library in fact contained more than sixty thousand volumes.[34]

Emek Shaveh, an Israeli non-governmental organization dedicated to defending cultural heritage rights and protecting antiquities "as public assets that belong to members of all communities" in the country has recently documented and challenged the Israeli authorities' removal of the contents of the library to a location in West Jerusalem.[35]

The International Board

In a proactive move as the end of the Mandate neared, the British authorities appointed a twelve-member international Board of Trustees to administer the museum. Iliffe, the museum's curator, had proposed that the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in charge of the preservation of the world's cultural heritage, should take over the museum's administration after the end of the fighting, but his proposal met with little response. The board members consisted of: two British individuals representing the high commissioner; one each from the British Academy and the British Museum; one each from the French National
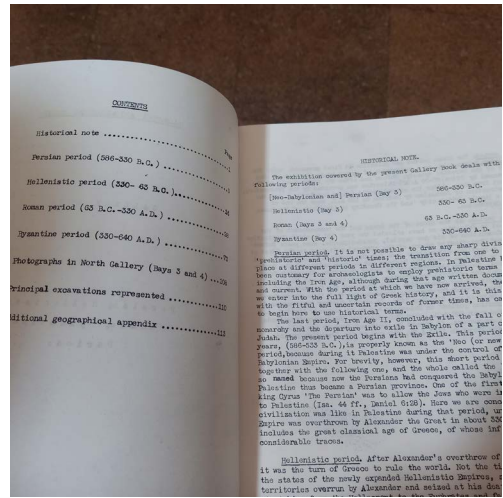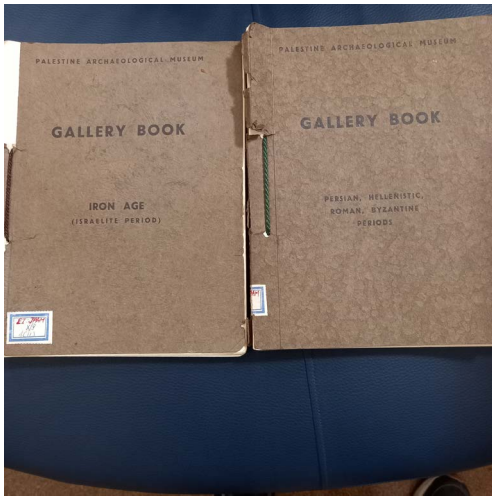
Figures 10 and 11. At left, the gallery books for the Iron Age (Israelite Period) (1200–600 BCE) and Persian, Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine Periods (586 BCE to 640 CE); at right, a sample page. Photo, October 2022.

Academy and foreign ministry; two from the antiquities departments of surrounding Arab countries (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, and Jordan) in alternation; and one each from Hebrew University, the Royal Swedish Academy, the American Archaeological Institute, and the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem.[36] As is evident from the list, the majority of the trustees were drawn from European and American institutions as well as Hebrew University, with not a single representative of the country's Palestinian inhabitants. Letters recently uncovered by Raz Kletter indicate that, in their communications with the international Board of Trustees, the Israeli authorities had opposed the appointment of Palestinian archaeologist and academic Dimitri Baramki as the museum's director following Iliffe.[37] Baramki was Senior Archaeological Officer at the Palestinian Department of Antiquities at the time of the Nakba and briefly led the museum for a short time thereafter.

The international Board of Trustees carried out its work without a Hebrew University representative until 1966 when the Jordanian government nationalized the museum and reconfigured the board under new regulations.

Jordanian and International Administration (1948–67)

In the aftermath of the armistice agreements that ended the 1948–49 war, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan annexed Palestinian land on the west side of the Jordan River while Egypt took over the Gaza Strip. Palestinian antiquities in what later became known as the West Bank were administrated by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities from its headquarters in Amman. Both the museum and the Palestinian Department of Antiquities became an extension of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, which was headed by British archaeologist Gerald Lankester Harding until 1956.
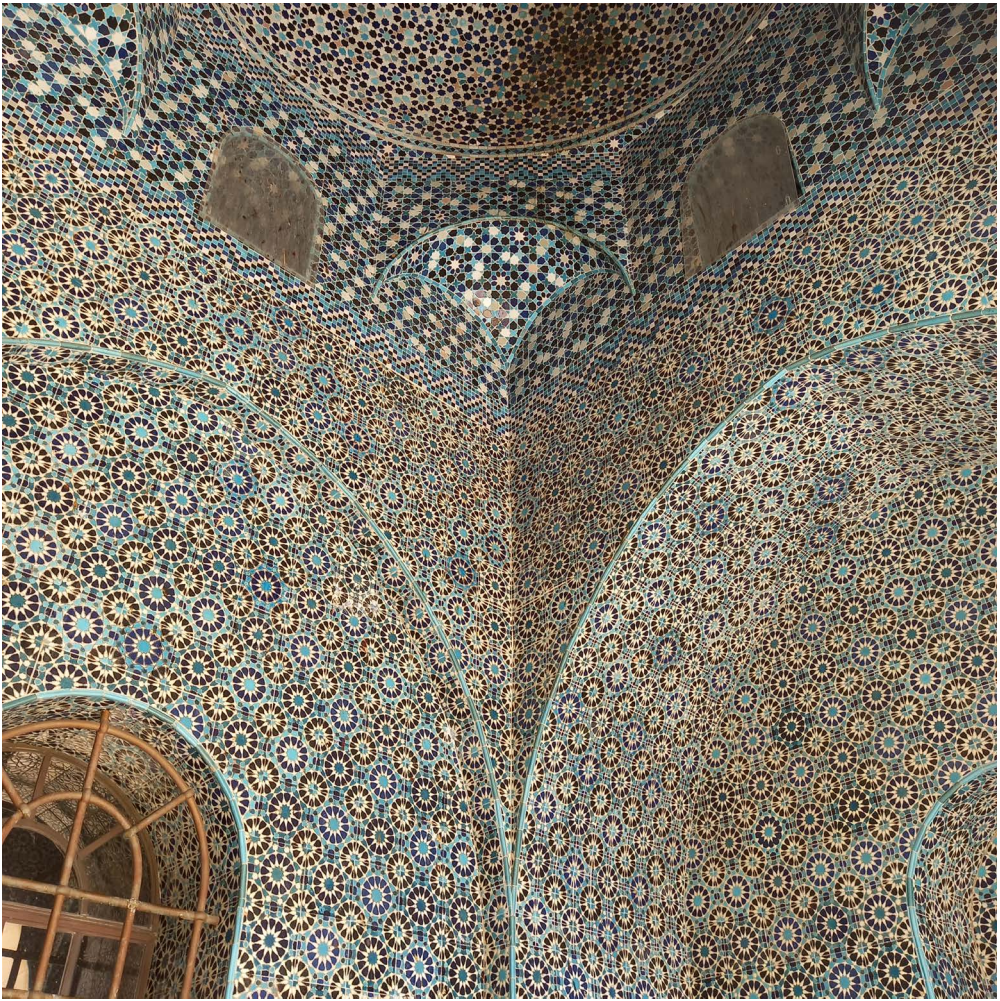
Figure 12. The vaulted alcove, paneled with hand-painted tiles by Jerusalem ceramicist David Ohannessian, at one end of the courtyard once housed the water source for the courtyard fountain.

The museum was administrated by the international Board of Trustees between 1948 and 1966, who oversaw the endowment (totaling 319,709 Palestine Pounds in April 1948[38]), confirming its international status. It is clear that the British were not unaware of the moves afoot, as revealed by a letter from Robert Hamilton, the British director of the Palestinian Department of Antiquities until 1948, to Gerald Lankester Harding, the director of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities who became the museum's director after the Nakba. In his letter, written in 1950, Hamilton expresses concern about the conduct of the museum's affairs, reminding Harding of the obligation of the museum administration to emphasize scientific knowledge and not political or national objectives in order to protect the institution from bias or politicization.[39]

Among the museum's most important holdings are the Dead Sea Scrolls. Some were discovered by individuals or obtained through purchase, others were found during the 1951–56 excavations of the Qumran caves undertaken by the Jordanian Department of Antiquities in cooperation with Father Roland de Vaux of the French École Biblique in Jerusalem, and the museum. In 1957, Yousef Sa'd, nominated "secretary" to the museum in 1948, became the museum's director and in that role issued a publication on the Dead Sea Scrolls, which was reprinted several times. Sa'd's name is associated with the scrolls that were purchased on the side of the Jordanian-French excavation in Qumran. In 1960, the scrolls were placed in the museum and declared a national heritage artifact by the Jordanian government. In 1967, Dr. Mahmoud al-'Abidi published his book, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, edited by Omar al-Ghul and republished by Yarmuk University.[40] The scrolls are divided into two collections: the first set, numbered I-XI, was discovered in eleven caves in the Qumran region and are considered complete, numbering 823 in total, including 11 leather capsules of manuscripts. The remaining 812 items are smaller artifacts of various sizes. Of these findings, the copper scrolls were subsequently moved to the Jordan Archaeological Museum.[41] The second collection of scrolls was discovered in the caves located to the north and the south of Qumran before the start of the June 1967 war, after which the Israeli military occupied the museum. They include the largest collections of Dead Sea Scrolls.

The Jordanian government's decision in 1966 to nationalize the museum and end its international status remains somewhat ambiguous since the nationalization enabled the Israeli occupation authorities to take over the museum in 1967 under the pretext that it was a government institution. According to 'Asim al- Barghouthi, it was 'Awni al-Dajani, who was appointed director-general of the Jordanian Department of Antiquities in 1960, who initiated the nationalization decision;[42] the measure was implemented under the auspices of the Jordanian minister of tourism and antiquities, Sa'id al-Dajani, in 1965 with the full approval of the museum's international board. For her part, Elena Corbett argues in her study that it was Anwar al-Khatib, the Palestinian governor of Jerusalem, who spearheaded the decision to nationalize the museum in 1966.[43] In any event, following correspondence with the international board, which approved the measure, and a green light given by the U.S government, a memorandum of understanding was signed on 26 November 1966, specifically stipulating that the scrolls were to be preserved at the museum. This is supported by discussions that took place in 1950 and by the archival records of the American School of Oriental Research, which reveal that it was the position of the principal of the American School, Mr. Henry Detweiler, in 1960. It is also supported by Beatrice St. Laurent's recent study[44].

The Jordanian government issued Temporary Law No. 72 of 1966, annulling the British ordinance of 1948 pertaining to the Palestine Archaeological Museum issued by the British high commissioner, previously amended by Jordan in 1955. According to the new regulations, the property of the Palestine Archaeological Museum and its assets reverted to the Jordanian government's possession, as did moneys deposited

inside and outside Palestine, provided that the funds were used for the museum's purposes. The law also provided for the formation of an advisory council and the issuance of museum regulations by Jordan's council of ministers. The following year, the Jordanian government issued Regulation No. 16 of 1967 pertaining to the Advisory Council of the Palestine Archaeological Museum, to be made up of fifteen members appointed by the Jordanian cabinet. The council would make recommendations on the museum's annual budget, carry out improvements to the museum, and also appoint its staff. Before the council could assume its duties, however, Jerusalem was occupied by the Israeli army on 6 June 1967. Palestinian historian 'Arif al-'Arif, who had been appointed director-general of the museum after its nationalization by Jordan, retained what became an honorary position following the occupation of West Bank, until his death in 1973.

Museum during Its 1967 Occupation

'Asim al-Barghouthi, as head of the museums section in the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and responsible for the exhibits, testified about the museum's final moments before the Israeli occupation,[45] testimony that was subsequently published in the proceedings of a seminar titled "Studies of the Dead Sea Scrolls." The seminar, held at the University of Jordan, was organized by Omar al-Ghul, professor of ancient Semitic languages at Yarmuk University's Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology. Al-Barghouthi indicated that he wrote his testimony in English in 1967 and that his attempts to have it published by the British press were unsuccessful, despite support from archaeologist Crystal Bennett, then director of the British School of Archaeology in Amman, who told him that all of the papers approached had expressed regret at not being able to publish his account of the museum's occupation.[46]

On the eve of the 1967 occupation, museum staff consisted of: 'Arif al-'Arif, director-general; 'Asim al- Barghouthi, head of the museums section; Ibrahim 'Assouli, exhibits officer; Najib Albina, the museum's head of photography; Sabri al-'Abbadi, a newly appointed employee; a renovations staff person; a night watchman; a member of the military police; and a receptionist.[47] In the library, Hamdi Nubani, the museum's secretary, and Husam Addin al-'Alami and Farah Salem worked as employees.[48]

After the occupation, the staff, like so many Palestinians at the time, scattered around the world. They included Najib Albina, who as the museum's master photographer between 1952 and 1967 had assembled over 1,750 photographic plates of the Qumran scrolls using large format film. These were the first and most comprehensive images of the scrolls of which only a few were intact, that made use of new infrared technology. In addition to taking five sets of these images at various points in the sorting, Albina carefully documented his technical process in a catalogue for the Department of Antiquities and the museum.[49]

During the June 1967 war, Albina was also witness to the fighting around the museum and helped protect its contents from being looted. He left Jerusalem after it was occupied and lived in the United States until his death in exile in 1983. When Israeli

forces were nearing Jerusalem, the museum staff tried to secure the scrolls. 'Asim al-Barghouthi recounts that the staff wanted to wrap up the delicate scrolls and dispatch them to Amman but were not able to obtain permission to do so from the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities. The minister instructed the museum staff to keep the scrolls in situ in a decision conveyed to them by the West Bank Antiquities Inspector, Khayr Yasin.[50] Al-Barghouthi goes on to recount the precautions and measures he took to put the invaluable artifacts including the Dead Sea Scrolls in fortified storage rooms following the ministry's refusal to have them moved to Amman.[51]

In his testimony, al- Barghouthi also documented their arrest by the Israeli forces that broke into the museum, and how they were taken to the roof of the building and used as human shields for several hours during the fighting. Al-Barghouthi testified what he witnessed: "Passing the main hall that was full of soldiers, I saw some of the display cases vandalized and emptied of their contents. Also, I saw antiquities, necklaces, bracelets, money, jewelry, and other objects in the hands of soldiers."[52] Subsequent reports confirmed that the forces that had broken into the museum were paratroopers.[53]

Under Israeli Occupation since 1967

The museum was put under the joint administration of the Israeli Department of Antiquities and the Israel Museum following the occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, in violation of international law. This was confirmed when the Israeli authorities annexed East Jerusalem despite it being considered occupied territory under international law.[54] The Israeli Department of Antiquities subsequently moved its own headquarters into the museum complex.[55]

The Palestinian employees were suspended, including 'Arif al-'Arif, and 'Asim Al-Barghouthi, as well as the rest of the staff. What had been the Palestinian Department of Antiquities was taken over and for a time the museum lost its civil status under occupation as it was turned into military barracks and surrounded by fences.[56] Today, although it is again operating, the Palestine Archaeological Museum represents Jerusalem's status as an occupied city. It does not attract city residents and offers no activities for Jerusalem's Palestinian population, such as open days or community outreach activities.

After occupying the city, the Israeli authorities transferred the Dead Sea Scrolls from the Palestine Archaeological Museum to the Israel Museum in West Jerusalem[57]; the Shrine of the Book, a wing of the Israel Museum, was specially constructed in 1965 as a repository for exhibition of the artifacts. In the decades of occupation since 1967, the Israeli authorities have illegally removed many of the artifacts from the Palestine Archaeological Museum for exhibition tours inside and outside the country, notably at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, Canada. Held between June 2009 and January 2010, the exhibition went ahead over formal objections lodged by the state of Palestine on the grounds that some of the exhibited materials were transferred from a Palestinian museum located in the Palestinian occupied territories, in violation

of both international and Canadian law. The empty display cases at the museum bear witness to the illegal transfer of the occupied museum's antiquities.

Israeli websites, including those of the Israeli Department of Antiquities, present a falsified account of the museum's history, omitting any mention of the 1967 occupation or that the museum stands in the occupied Palestinian territories. Among the most significant aspects of this mendacious erasure has been the change in the museum's official name from Palestine Archaeological Museum to Rockefeller Museum and its portrayal as an Israeli museum located in Israel, in violation of international law.[58]

Figure 13. The original bas-relief over the entrance was British sculptor Eric Gill's depiction of Palestine as the meeting between Africa and Asia. Israeli flags are the post-1967 addition to the entrance. Photo, October 2022.

In 2016, the Israeli occupation authorities in Jerusalem moved the museum library to the west side of the city, prompting Emek Shaveh to challenge the transfer measure at the Supreme Court.[59] The court responded by invoking precedent law in support of the transfer, arguing that the Israeli Department of Antiquities was responsible for the antiquities in the Palestine Archaeological Museum and that it had the right to transfer the library and the antiquities to West Jerusalem according to Israeli law. The Supreme Court ruled that international law was irrelevant in the case.[60] The absence of any official position from UNESCO (although it was a violation of its own convention) or from European governments, who always interfered in museum affairs under the Jordanian administration, was notable.

Future Prospects

The Palestinian official discourse considers the Palestine Archaeological Museum to be a museum that has been under Israeli occupation since 1967 and that is located in occupied territory, according to international law.[61] Most academic research supports the fact that the museum is the Palestinian national museum under occupation.[62] As reflected by the publications of the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the state of Palestine continually tracks Israeli violations at the museum. The Palestinian Tangible Cultural Heritage Law decree issued by President Mahmoud Abbas in 2018 defines the Palestine Archaeological Museum as a public national

museum.[63] Despite Israel's claims in the media and in tourism promotion that this is an Israeli museum in accordance with its illegal annexation of the city and the U.S. recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of the state of Israel, the future of both the museum and the headquarters of the Palestinian Department of Antiquities, along with all their contents and archives, are undoubtedly linked to the final status negotiations on Jerusalem. Until a peace agreement is reached between Palestine and Israel, the museum remains a Palestinian cultural institution under occupation according to international humanitarian law even while its future remains an issue of the final status negotiations on Jerusalem.

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Archaeology, Historical Memory, and Peasant Resistance

The Gezer Excavations at Abu Shusha

Salim Tamari

Abstract

The identification of Tal al-Jazar in Abu Shusha as the site of ancient Gezer by Clermont-Ganneau in 1874 was accompanied by one of the first colonial (in this case German) settlements in Palestine. With the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), Gezer became an important base for the use of biblical archaeology in interpreting the history of ancient Palestine. This interpretation circumvented the extensive Roman-Byzantine, early Islamic, and Crusader periods in the Ramla-Jaffa area. In this essay, Tamari discusses the subaltern element in Gezer's relationship to the village of Abu Shusha. The village was the source of hired labor for the successive archaeological excavations prior to 1948. For the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the local villagers of Abu Shusha became the source for the "scientific" reconstruction of the Palestinian peasant as residual biblical figures (Macalister). This disparity becomes obvious when the Gezer site is examined in terms of popular religious practices in Abu Shusha. An important ethnographic feature of this relationship between the village and its archaeology is the identification of its local holy figures (*awliya'*) as the living nodes of "scouting martyrs" (*tala'i' al-kashshafa*) who protected village lands from encroaching enemies. Since Tal al-Jazar was a major arena for Islamic-Crusader encounters in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, these subaltern features of popular religion have been preserved in the village collective memory.

Keywords

Gezer excavations; Tal al-Jazar; biblical archeology; Ottoman Land Law; peasant resistance; German settlers.

The discovery of the Gezer "boundary stone" by Charles Clermont-Ganneau in 1874, and the identification of the mound known as Tal al-Jazar by the villagers of Abu Shusha as the site of ancient Gezer, were turning points in the annals of biblical archaeology. Aided by nineteenth century cartography and historical geography, especially in the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), Gezer became an important locus for a selective interpretation of Palestine's history through the lens of the biblical text. Gezer, in this perspective, became primarily King Solomon's provincial capital – a dubious claim that excluded the rich and layered history of the place as a Canaanite, Philistine, Amorite, and Egyptian vassal garrison and trading center. Only the discovery of an elaborate water system and its tunnels, in successive excavations – most recently in 2015 – enhanced the earlier history of Gezer as a major Canaanite city. This bibliocentrism moreover ignored the site's subsequent history in the Byzantine, Crusader, and Ayyubid periods. In Clermont-Ganneau's and Macalister's excavations, the mound of Tal al-Jazar became associated with the ethnography of the village of Abu Shusha, in the Ramla district, where the mound was located.

In this essay, I will examine the impact that the excavations at Abu Shusha had on the lives of its villagers, and the history of Tal al-Jazar (Gezer) as an arena for biblical excavation, land appropriation, and colonial settlement. The essay will also focus on what has become known as the subaltern dimension in archaeological digs – namely the ethnography of the village whose fortunes were transformed by the excavations. In this assessment, I am utilizing the recently accessible records of Ottoman nizamiyya court records (1870–90s), and police investigation protocols of the "Bergheim Files (1885–90)," as well as oral narratives from the village of Abu Shusha.[1]

Figure 1. "Murder in Gezer: The Public Prosecutor Report on the Death of Peter Bergheim," signed by Salim al-Sa'id, Mutasarrif of Jaffa, 1886.

The area's commanding topographic position explains its military strategic significance throughout ancient and medieval history. The hill of Tal al-Jazar is located on a mound that overlooked the ancient roads of Palestine. Gezer/Abu Shusha thus commanded both the Via Maris (the coastal Palestinian route to Egypt) and the East-West Mediterranean route to the Syrian desert. According to Darrel Lance, the Gezer heights could control both of these routes: "A strong garrison stationed there would be able to intercept and turn back anyone deemed to be undesirable. And no invader
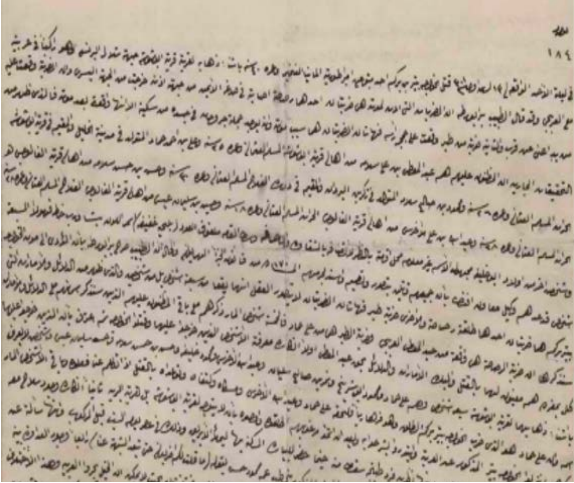
coming from south or north could afford to permit strong unfriendly forces control of this position: his supply lines and communications would be subject to constant harassment."[2]

Gezer/Tal al-Jazar was at various periods a Canaanite capital, a Philistine border town, an Egyptian vassal city-state, and an Israelite garrison city that reputedly belonged to King Solomon. The archaeological literature on the history of Gezer indicates that there was substantial resistance in Canaanite Gezer to Philistine intrusions in the Iron Age, as well as a prolonged conflict between the Israelite

Figure 2. Border conflicts between the Israelites and the Philistines. Shlomo Bunimovitz and Zvi Lederman, "Canaanite Resistance: The Philistines and Beth-Shemesh – A Case Study from Iron Age I," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 334 (2011): 38.

tribes and the Philistine "border" city.[3] In the Arab chronicles of the Crusades, Tal al-Jazar, as it is still known in the village of Abu Shusha, was the site of a major battle ("Montgisard" for the Crusaders) between the Ayyubid forces of Salah al-Din and the army of Baldwin IV, king of Jerusalem in 573 AH (1177 CE), in which the Islamic forces were soundly defeated ten years before Salah al-Din claimed his major victory in Hittin in 583 AH (1187 CE).[4] The defeat also became the source of debate over the role and status of Salah al-Din as a venerated figure in Islamic history. In the 1948 war, Tal al-Jazar was the site of a documented massacre undertaken by the Haganah against the villagers of Abu Shusha in the Ramla district.[5]

Gezer was also the site of the murder of Peter Bergheim, photographer, venture capitalist, and amateur archaeologist on the night of 12 October 1885.[6] The murder, which took place near Abu Shusha, highlighted the dynamic relationship between archaeology, early European agricultural settlement, and peasant dispossession of land.

Gezer has been one of the most investigated archaeological sites in Palestine. In addition to the earlier work of Clermont-Ganneau, and Bliss and Macalister, the site was excavated a second time by the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1934 (under Alan Rowe), then by Hebrew Union College and the Glueck School of Biblical Archaeology in 1964–74 (by E. Wright and Joe Seger), and a second phase by William Dever (1984–90). A third phase of excavations was launched by the Israel Antiquities Authorities (2005). The main systematic excavation of the site, however, was undertaken by the Palestine Exploration Fund under the direction of Daniel Bliss and Macalister in 1902.[7] They followed a preparatory survey by Clermont-Ganneau from the École Biblique in 1873, and by members of the Bergheim family, who had established a German settler
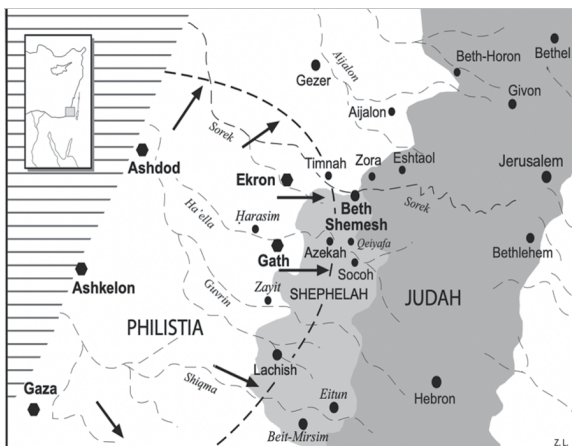
farm near the site, in the village of Abu Shusha, in the same period.[8] It was Clermont-Ganneau who identified the site of Abu Shusha as that of the Canaanite city of Gezer/Tal al-Jazar through a combination of field investigation in the central region of Ramla, and textual search for native place names used by local peasants. He made copious reference to the extensive Arab travel literature from the twelfth century onward, which clearly refers to the site and its historical connections.[9]

Figure 3. Gezer ("Tel Jezar") and "Abu Shusheh" on the early Palestine Exploration Fund maps in *Qaryat Abu Shusheh*, Birzeit University Monographs on Destroyed Villages, Documentation Center (Birzeit: Birzeit University, 1995).

The earlier excavations, led by Bliss and Macalister, were monitored by the Ottoman Department of Antiquities in Jerusalem under the supervision of Engineer Thurayya Effendi al-Khalidi. Khalidi was keenly interested in archaeological findings as a source for the history of the region. During his supervision of the work in Gezer, the cholera epidemic struck the village of Abu Shusha. At that time, Khalidi became involved in the setting up of quarantine procedures for major population centers in Hebron, Jaffa, Ramla, and Gaza.[10] Macalister's findings were published in three massive volumes, *The Excavation of Gezer* (1912).[11] Much has been written in criticism of Macalister's methods and findings by subsequent expeditions, including a recent volume, *Villain or Visionary? R. A. S. Macalister and the Archaeology of Palestine* on his lasting impact and major failings.[12] One feature of his work that concerns us relates to his systematic recording of the expedition on Tel Gezer's relationship to Abu Shusha and its living culture and history. Macalister's *Gezer* also contains numerous photographic records of the Abu Shusha workforce, providing an early record of the involvement of village labor on the site.

Virtually all of the major expeditions to excavate Gezer were framed and conceived in various degrees through the lens of biblical archaeology, which saw the biblical narrative as a main, but not, obviously, the only frame of reference in the dating and identification of archaeological artifacts. An early exception to this perspective was Clermont-Ganneau, who sought to examine how local peasants related their environment to their historical patrimony. R. A. Macalister, the Irish archaeologist working with the support of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and with the initial collaboration by Daniel Bliss, led an ambitious and massive excavation of the site from 1902 to 1912.

Three pitfalls of this approach concern us here: (1) The tendency among many biblical archaeologists for an *a priori* search for items in their excavations to claim and vindicate events and places in the Bible;[13] (2) ignoring or silencing material artifacts

Figure 4. Abu Shusha workers in Gezer, titled "Excavation Progress in Gezer" in R. A. Stewart Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer*, vol. 1 (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1912).

from "post-biblical periods," particularly Islamic and Ottoman periods;[14] and (3) the use of archaeological excavations as a source for asserting a Zionist nation-state identity.[15] A major challenge to the dominance of biblical archaeology has been the emergence of "biblical minimalism" in the 1990s, which challenged the historicity of the Bible (Thomas Thompson, Philip Davis, and Keith Whitlam, and the Copenhagen school) which had considerable impact on the interpretation of archaeological findings. A major figure in archaeology that has been identified with the minimalists is Israel Finkelstein, whose "Gezer Revisited and Revised" is a critical review of the main periodization and interpretation of the archaeological data in Gezer.[16] The terms of debate between the minimalists and the maximalists can be reviewed in an acrimonious encounter between Finkelstein and William Dever, who has been the leading figure of the Gezer excavations.[17] But even when the terms of reference was the Canaanite, Philistine, Egyptian, or Babylonian presence in the region, it was in relationship to the Israelites, or Hebraic tribes, that Gezer's centrality was defined. This is true of revisionist figures like Finkelstein, and others engaged in debunking biblical literalism in guiding archaeological surveys in the Holy Land.[18] Nor was there an interest among all the successive archaeologists in Gezer – Irish, American, British, French, and Israeli – in undertaking serious excavation of the Byzantine,

Crusader, Ayyubid, Mamluk, or Ottoman periods in Gezer.[19] Both Nadia Abu El-Haj and the late Albert Glock have made substantial critiques of these omissions in biblical archaeology but so far no one, including Arab and Palestinian archaeologists, has made an attempt to redress these gaps in the case of Gezer.[20]

Archaeological Taylorism?

In his archaeological digs, Macalister honed a system of labor rotation for the site based on hired workers from Abu Shusha and its area. He was keenly aware of the need to examine the living environment in the history of Gezer, in order to establish a comparative perspective, as well as for understanding the origins of peasant practices and architecture.[21] His study included a systematic recording of his interaction with village men and women chosen to undertake the heavy work of excavation; their habitat, culture and agricultural cropping cycle; and most importantly his ethnography of village holy figures (*awliya'; wali.* sing.), shrines, and healing practices that informed his interpretation of the archaeology of Gezer. His logs included a tabulation of wages for men, women, and children who were recruited for the mission and their wage rates in 1902:

> Men . . . . two beshliks (five piasters per day)
> Boys and women . . . . . one beshlik
> Water-carrier . . . . three beshliks (including hire of donkey)

Macalister was keen to devise a system of rewards to incentivize villagers to deliver and report objects they would find on the job. "The baksheesh is divided equally among the gang in whose pit the object is found, so that each member watches the others and prevents the pilfering of objects for private trading."[22] His main concern was to preserve the findings and control the amount of pilfering of archaeological sites. But Macalister also had a patronizing, often arrogant, attitude to the peasants of Abu Shusha, whom he saw mainly as a material base for a workforce for the diggings. This is what Dever noted about the archaeologist's view of the villagers:

> Toward his workmen from Abu Shusheh, Macalister showed the typical European condescension. He complains about their venality and laziness, about the filth of the village, and the like. During the cholera epidemic in 1902, he laments only that the village cemetery on the acropolises near the Muslim wêli was being enlarged at such a rate that it was encroaching on the areas allotted to him on his excavation permit! Despite these practical difficulties, not to mention his constant haggling with the Ottoman authorities about renewing his permit and dividing the "spoils of excavation," Macalister concluded, almost defiantly, "If nothing else has been gained by the work at Gezer, it may at least be claimed to have proved that work throughout the year is not impossible in Palestine."[23]

Figure 5. Thurayya Effendi al-Khalidi (standing on right) with his assistants at Gezer in 1902, in R. A. Stewart Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer*, vol. 2 (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1912).

The Macalister excavations also established a preliminary periodization of the various layers of conquests and regimes occupying the site. Those were later revised by subsequent digs in the 1930s, 1940s, 1960s, and 1990s. Here is a schematic periodization of the successive regimes (dynastic and imperial) that have been identified by various excavations of the site, with a certain degree of consensus among biblical and non-biblical archaeologists:

• Gezer was a fortified Canaanite city-state in the first half of the second millennium BCE.

• Gezer was a Philistine border post that was in constant skirmishes with the forces of King David. The Philistine city was destroyed by the Thutmoses III around 1468 BCE and became a vessel under Egyptian control.

• Gezer was an Israelite city ceded to King Solomon by the Egyptians, becoming a Levitical city.

• Gezer came under Ptolemaic control after 734 BCE.

• Gezer was a village in the province of Ramla under the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem in the twelfth century CE and the site of the battle of Tal al-Jazar in 1177 between King Baldwin and Sultan Salah al-Din that ended with the latter's defeat.[24]

Two archaeological discoveries made in the Ottoman period contributed to our current understanding of the historical site: The first was the "boundary stone" (or stones) discovered by Clermont-Ganneau in 1874. Altogether thirteen boundary stones have been discovered in Gezer since Clermont-Ganneau's discovery. The fact that they are engraved in Aramaic, Hebrew, and Greek letters attest that they were either markers between state domains, or – more likely – between clan and tribal borders.[25] Claremont-Ganneau's original view was that the Gezer stone marked the sabbatical boundary for ritual purposes, a view that has been challenged.[26]

Figure 6. The main Gezer boundary stone discovered by Clermont-Ganneau in 1874; online at bit. ly/3gd7IaN (accessed 28 August 2022).

The second finding, made by Macalister in 1908, was the Gezer calendar (now in the Istanbul Museum of Archaeology) that established the cycle of cultivation of local crops in the tenth century BCE period. The so-called calendar in Phoenician script is thought of as possibly a schoolbook exercise on the rotation of crops during the agricultural period. Macalister made a comparison between the agricultural cropping cycle in early twentieth-century Abu Shusha and the tablet outline.[27] All of those artifacts, the boundary stones, the Gezer calendar of crop rotation, as well as the later discovery in 2010–15 of water-tunnel networks attributed to the growth of the Canaanite city of Gezer, have been examined mainly in the context of biblical periodization (that is, the Israelite-Canaanite-Philistine periods) and rarely in relation to later Crusader and Islamic archaeology.[28]

The Battle of Tal al-Jazar: Muslim Defeat and Revisionist History

Figure 7. Entry for 573 AH in 'Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir and 'Abd Allah Qadi Abu al-Fida', *Al-Kamil fi al-tarikh* [The complete history] (Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-'Ilmiya, 2010).

Looming over the archaeological excavations in Tal al-Jazar are the twelfth-century encounters between the Crusader kingdoms and the Ayyubid armies of Salah al-Din. With the exception of Clermont-Ganneau, these encounters were either ignored or passed over by the successive archaeological expeditions. They were certainly not the focus of any of the major American, British, German, and Israeli excavations at the site. In Arab historical writings, Tal al-Jazar was often cited as the strategic arena for the struggle over control of the maritime routes, and indeed for the control of Jund Filastin in its entirety. Reference to this site can be found in *al-Fath al-Qussi* by 'Imad al-Din,[29] as well as in Yaqut's *Mu'jam al-buldan.*[30] Mujir al-Din's famous work on the history of Hebron and Jerusalem (*al-Uns al-Jalil*) identified Tal al-Jazar as "a garrison city (*husn*) of Palestine, in the vicinity of Ramla." In Arab geographic lexicons, as well as in local histories, Tal al-Jazar is often referred to as a thriving village during the Fatimid and Ayyubid periods.[31]

Tal al-Jazar is also the site of one of the most famous battles during the Crusades, known among the Europeans as the battle of Montgisard, and in Arabic as the battle of Tal al-Jazar. It took place on 25 November 1177, when Salah al-Din was approaching Jerusalem, still under the rule of King Baldwin IV, with superior numbers. Baldwin was countering the Muslim armies from Gaza and Asqalan with the Knights of the Templers. Baldwin, in alliance with the king of Karak, Raynald of Châtillon (known in Arabic as *Arnat Shatiyun*), made a surprise attack against the Ayyubid army and defeated them

decisively in Tal al-Jazar, described as a location "in the vicinity of Ramla."[32] The Ayyubid army was dispersed and the sultan lost all of his personal guards. As a result, Salah al-DinDin withdrew to Egypt to save the remnants of his army. The main source for the battle of Tal al-Jazar is Ibn al-Athir in *al-Kamil fi al-tarikh*, who claims that Salah al-Din had to learn major lessons from the defeat of Tal al-Jazar before regrouping again and concluding his key victory at Hittin ten years later.[33]

Popular religious practices in Abu Shusha and the surrounding villagers provide us with significant indicators of how historical memory of resistance against the Crusades was kept alive in Abu Shusha holy figures' shrines (*maqamat al-awliya'*) well into the middle of the twentieth century – that is, until those shrines were wiped out in 1948–49. However, in the domain of biblical archaeology, Islamic periods in Tal al-Jazar are relegated to a footnote of twentieth-century excavations. Both Macalister and Claremont-Ganneau are interested in those religious practices in Abu Shusha village, but only as an ethnographic detail surrounding the archaeological site, and possibly – in Macalister – as residual Semitic practices. In the oral history of Abu Shusha, three main *awliya'* (holy figures) are commemorated in important *maqamat* (shrines) and seven other minor shaykhs.[34] Maqam al-Shaykh Abu Shusha is the main shrine, followed by Shaykh al-Jazari, seven hundred meters away, Maqam Shaykh Darwish, venerated by women, and Maqam Shaykh al-Tali'a, who was a fighter and martyr of the Islamic wars against the Crusaders.[35] Claremont-Ganneau interviewed the fellahin of Abu Shusha during the years 1873–74 and added significant insight into the relationship between local shrines and the residual memory of the Battle of Tal al-Jazar (Montgisard). Three of these shrines were located in strategic lookouts in the Ramla hills and were named after scouts (*tala'i'; sing, tali'a*) of Salah al-Din's armies, army guides that were sent ahead of the fighters to scout and assess the forces of the enemy. Thus, we have the maqams of Shaykh Musa Tali'a, Shaykh Ja'bas Tali'a, and Shaykh Jazari Tali'a (that is, al-Jazari) established to commemorate the death of those martyr-scouts.[36]

The Abu Shusha historians refer only to Shaykh Ja'bas and Shaykh Musa as *mujahidin* in the Islamic armies of Salah al-Din.[37] The latter is referred to as "a scout (*tali'a*) of the Islamic army, sent ahead of the fighters by two or three kilometers to investigate enemy territory. He was martyred and the [villagers] built this maqam in his memory, in recognition of his bravery."[38] During his 1873 visit to the village Claremont-Ganneau narrates how Abu Shusha locals refer to Shaykh al-Jazari and his shrine as a martyr "a *shehid* [shahid] of the faith of the times of the kuffar . . . we know that signifies that the saint has been the faithful preserver of the name of the ancient city [of Gezer]."[39] Thus the *maqamat* of Abu Shusha seem to commemorate and preserve the strategic scouting nodes (points) of the battles against the crusading armies, through their topographic naming and in the names of sainted shaykhs who were remembered as scouts (*tala'i'*).The destruction of the buildings and shrines of Abu Shusha since 1948 has obliterated these networks of observation, but the recent development of remote sensing technology known as LiDAR (light detection and ranging) allowed for the uncovering of subterranean structures in the area and

establishing the relationship between Tal al-Jazar and the village area. It also revealed the strategic nature of these nodes for observation as seen in the two archaeological sites of Tal al-Jazar and Megiddo.[40]

Tal al-Jazar also became source of revisionist debates about the historical Salah al-Din and his status as the liberator of the Holy Land. Yusuf Zaydan, the Egyptian historian, triggered this controversy with his reassessment of Salah al-Din's anti-Fatimid and anti-Shi'a practices during his reign. His wartime record of liberating the Holy Land was clouded, according to the historian, by poor strategizing and nepotism. This is attested by his major defeat in the battle of Tal al-Jazar (Montgisard) as described by Ibn al-Athir and Ibn Shaddad:

> Reference here is to the decisive defeat suffered by Salah al-Din at the hands of the Crusaders in Tal al-Jazar near Ramla (573AH) [1177 CE], before his victory over them in 583 AH [1187 CE] in Hittin ten years later. Then his defeat again at Arsuf in 587 AH [1191 CE] four years after Hittin. Why do we hide from the public that Salah al-Din's wars with the Crusaders ended at the battle of Arsuf with his defeat and the dispersal of his army, and his subsequent total surrender of coastal Palestine after the Truce of Ramla. Why do we not tell the truth, which is that the battle of Hittin ended with a victory for Salah al-Din because he poisoned the wells, and that it followed a defeat in which the vast majority of Muslim soldiers were eliminated.[41]

According to several Islamic sources (for example, Ibn al-Athir), in the battle of Tal al-Jazar, Salah al-Din blindly underestimated his enemy and fell victim to a practice of allowing his soldiers to seek rewards by pillaging the outlaying margins of his enemy. But the use of historical precedents in Zaydan's revisionism is meant at establishing parallels between the military behavior of Salah al-Din and Gamal Abdel Nasser in the 1967 war, and possibly about his current successors. It was also meant at undermining the rise of anti-Shi'a ideological tendencies within the nationalist Arab press in later periods.

Gezer Excavations and Abu Shusha Peasants

The village of Abu Shusha in the district of Ramla and its people played a pivotal role in the archaeological excavations of Gezer. Abu Shusha was the setting for providing the work force for the first surveys and excavations (Claremont-Ganneau, Bergheim, Bliss, and Macalister) as well as the setting for comparing the reconstructed life of ancient Gezer and the contemporary habitat of the Abu Shusha fellahin. In contrast to the work of these European excavators, we have the reconstructed narratives of the Abu Shusha natives preserved in an extensive compendium of oral histories from the destroyed Palestinian village, in *Qaryat Abu Shusha*, which will be discussed below.[42] Macalister acknowledged the significance of the Bergheims in setting up the archaeological project at Gezer. In particular, he referred to the work of Arab

foreman, and local Palestinian administrators, such as that of Murad Sarofim from Jaffa, for the success of the project.[43]

The struggle over the use of land between the villagers of Abu Shusha and the Bergheim banking family, who established one of the earliest modern agricultural ventures, engulfed the PEF excavation and its successors with controversy and strife. We can glean the nature of the dispute from a testimony made by Samuel Bergheim, the son of the banker Melville Bergheim and brother of the slain Peter Bergheim, at a meeting on "archaic land tenure in Palestine" held in the Victoria

Figure 8, Nasr Ya'qub, Fahum al-Shalabi, Walid Mustafa, and Salih 'Abd al-Jawad, *Abu Shusha and Tel al-Jazar – Qaryat Abu Shusha,* (Birzeit: Birzeit University, 1995).

Institute in London.[44] It was commonly assumed by archaeologists and biblical scholars of the period that the Bergheim family "owned" the Tel Gezer site as well as the village itself. Neil James introduces Abu Shusha as "Bergheim's village."[45] In 1904, Roger Moore of the American School of Research refers to "one visit to Gezer [where] we were hospitably entertained by Mr. Murad, the administrator of the Bergheim estate at Abu Shusheh."[46] Even as late as 1985 in an essay about biblical archaeologist and PEF activist Elizabeth Finn, Gillian Webster refers to Peter Bergheim as the entrepreneur "whose family owned Abu Shusheh where Tel Gezer is situated."[47]

When Claremont-Ganneau arrived to Abu Shusha in the early 1870s looking for biblical spolia, the Bergheims were already settled in Tel Gezer and were describing the site as their domain. Claremont-Ganneau referred to the Bergheims, without a hint of irony, as "the new lords of Gezer."[48] Melville's son Samuel introduced himself in archaeological circles as a "native of Palestine . . . having extensive property there."[49] In lecture circuits he tried to establish himself as a "native expert" on local land laws, explaining that the Ottoman authorities have been struggling to establish modern property laws in rural areas where the communal (*musha'*) system prevails.[50] "In such villages older laws and customs have been kept up; in fact, many of the words used by the inhabitants are different to those used in the ordinary language." Then Bergheim adds prophetically:

> with the apportioning of land, the land near the towns is not *mushaa'* [sic]; each piece of land is freehold. It was made so by a law brought in by the Turks, who have often tried to enforce this law in the whole country, and thus to do away with those rights of cultivation, *mushaa'*, but have failed to do so.

Bergheim alerted his European audiences about the nature of the conflict between "modern" forms of land ownerships, and "native peasant understanding" of possession:

> When my brother and I bought the lands of a village some years since from its inhabitants, the Turkish authorities recognized us as the freeholders, and gave us title deeds, in accordance with a law on freehold passed by the late Sultan about twenty years ago. *Not so, however,* [for] *the inhabitants of the village, for when we came to portion out the land in plots for cultivation, the villagers protested and refused to accept the new arrangement. They would only have the land in mushaa'*, as explained in the paper just read. These laws, or customs, of cultivating the land still exist, and the people refuse to change them.[51]

European (as well as American) archaeological excavations in Palestine were thoroughly imbued with colonial and biblical agendas from their earliest manifestations in the nineteenth century. As Sarah Irving has noted, "The relationship between archaeology and Palestinian society was both negative and positive, a source of work but also one of the ways in which the British administration would impose increasing control and surveillance of the Arab population, displacing people and locking them out of their own heritage in a process which has continued to the present day."[52] By "positive," the writer seems to be referring to the employment opportunities generated by the digs for the local population.

A significant feature of the PEF expedition at Gezer, and the earlier survey organized by the École Biblique elsewhere, was also the extensive photographic records of village topography and the participation of village men, women, and children in the archaeological digs. Bliss was one of the few early archaeologists who wrote ethnographic details about women involved in archaeological digs.[53] Sarah Irving provides unique and exceptional biographical details of two women workers, "Heuda" (Huwayda? Huda?) and "Fatimy" (Fatima?), derived from Bliss's field notes on Tal al-Hasi in the 1890s.

> At no point can Heuda speak for herself. We can reconstruct only this one small part of her life, and that from the writings of a white, upper-class male, who writes about her appearance in terms typical of a masculine, orientalist gaze, and although at times seeing her as a worker in her own right, describes her mostly in terms of her gender and marital status. But we also need to look at the circumstances in which we first encounter these Heuda and Fatimy – not as wives or fiancées, but as labourers, and ones who have actively come seeking cash work when the opportunity arises.[54]

Macalister himself took hundreds of images to document the physical attributes, dress codes, and work organization of the village "gangs," as they were called. Here we have a rare series of images, taken not as a biblical tableau, which was common in nineteenth-century portraits of the natives, but of upstaged images of working women

in the field and at the work site. French ethnographer Serge Nègre has examined the École Biblique's nineteenth-century collections of the "unknown soldiers of Palestinian archaeology" referring to the local workforce at archaeological digs. He reviewed more than a hundred archaeological sites where

> photographers came equipped with their darkroom and documented the progress on the site. They also recorded images of long files of workmen, and women, carrying the rubbish on their heads that had been excavated from the bottom of the site, by their companions . . . Although many remain anonymous, others are known to us thanks to the numerous notebooks of construction sites where the officials noted their names, the date of their hiring, the number of hours paid and most often their fingerprints by way of signature.[55]

In Macalister's own images of the Abu Shusha fellahin, those he employed in the Gezer digs, he was preoccupied with establishing a typology of native peasants as residual prototypes of biblical toilers, as can be seen from this "parade" of Abu Shusha workers.[56] He was keen to establish the relationship between the physiognomy of skeletons that he found in Gezer graves that he attributed to Philistine inhabitants, and the modern peasants of Abu Shusha:

> The race to which these bones belonged must have so closely resembled the modern fellahin, that a few words of description of the external characters of these may suitably be appended. The average male stature is 5' 6" to 5' 7", though a few exceed 6': the female stature ranges from 4' 11" to 5' 6". The heads of the men are almost all dolicho-ellipsoid, with rounded foreheads, moderately prominent at the frontal eminences but bulging medially. The brows are fairly heavy, often rising at the lateral end, and scarcely ever synophryous. The noses are for the greater part prominent and fairly straight, with large cartilages and alae, but with narrow nostrils. [57]

Macalister's racialized description of these peasant profiles cited here evokes nineteenth-century pseudo-scientific use of photographic physiognomy as a guide to native origins in anthropological research.[58]

The subaltern presence in Palestinian archaeology included not only the peasant laborers recruited from the village, but also a constellation of workers that included foremen, guards, cooks, and dragomen-interpreters. They also included a number of native mediators and overseers who were crucial to the organization of the excavation sites. Sarah Irving has written about the agency of those Palestinian "overseers," as well as manual laborers involved in the early excavations of the Palestine Exploration Fund. She notes that "from its inception until around 1891," the Fund was primarily "a base for survey of the Holy Land [for and by the British military . . . and] a beacon of British imperial presence." Local workers were small in number, frequently professional dragomans and interpreters, providing logistical and

linguistic help for the often highly-trained military cartographers conducting surveys and mapping. From the 1890s, however, the PEF shifted from being "a surveying organization to an archaeological one."[59]

In the case of Gezer those native "overseers" included Thurayya al-Khalidi, Ottoman inspector of antiquities, who among other tasks was to monitor and prevent the smuggling of artifacts; also Murad Sarofim (Serapion), the manager of the Bergheim estate, who is continuously referred to by a number of visiting archaeologists as an expeditor for the labor supply for the digs. Sarofim later became the court receiver of the estate after it was dissolved. Many of these overseers were draftsmen who helped in the reading and deciphering of Arabic carvings on sites. Among the most famous of those was Nu'man Qasatli, who worked as a draftsman and surveyor with the PEF (1874–77), and left a well-known posthumously published manuscript, *al-*

Figure 9. Macalister's peasant typologies at Abu Shusha. R. A. Stewart Macalister, *The Excavation of Gezer*, vol. 1.

Rawda al-Nu'maniyya (1900) on archaeological sites in Hebron, Ramla, and the Jerusalem area.[60] It should be clear from the history of the Gezer site that native Arabic-speaking archaeological workers, like Qasatli and Sarofim, were more than local "fixers." In Irving's words, they were "cultural mediators between their own society and Western visitors [and] not simply passive conduits for information or (as sometimes demonized in travel accounts) scoundrels out to cheat travelers."[61] They interpreted local culture to Western archaeologists, as well as mediating the administrative needs of archaeologists. In some cases, they became complicit in the biblical-Orientalist enterprise, but in other cases, such as Qasatli, they became pioneer interpreters of the archaeological scene to the Arab reader. Qasatli's *Rawda*, in fact, might be the first Arabic book on local archaeology published in the region.

Dar al-Khawaja: Gezer Excavations as Seen by the People of Abu Shusha

The construction of Dar al-Khawaja (house of the foreigner) in the 1870s, as the Bergheim estate in Gezer came to be known, was vividly recollected by Abu Shusha elders as the beginning of the catastrophic events that led to the alienation of their lands at the hands of the German settlers.[62] Melville Bergheim and his sons began

constructing their mansion in what became the site of the Gezer archaeological digs immediately after they succeeded in acquiring 153 property deeds in lieu of back taxes owed by the villages to the state.[63] The mansion became the administration of their modern farming estate, as well as a field for a private archaeological excavation by Peter Bergheim at the Gezer site.[64] Local chronicler Yusuf Hamawi describes Dar al-Khawaja as an elaborate two-story building that included "farm machineries, and rooms for workers and ploughmen, a cow and camel shed. It contained water wells, and granaries for wheat and barley, as well as animal feed containers."[65]

The villagers were divided from the beginning over the construction of the family farm. Those who supported the construction were cognizant of Bergheim's support in covering their taxes, and for providing work for the villagers. Others however objected to the ominous Bergheim mansion being built on choice land overlooking the village. As soon as the construction work commenced in the elevated area of Tal al-Jazar, protests in the village were led by Hasan Ya'qub, a destitute farmer who originally came from the village of Iraq al-Manshiyya. According to the received oral tradition, he addressed Bergheim in threatening terms: "Strange. . . you come to our town and chose an area of more than two dunums in the best location to build your house. This is not your father's property (*il balad mish balad abuk*)."[66] The protest halted the construction for a few days, but the Bergheims prevailed, producing legal documents showing the transfer of the property to their possession.[67]
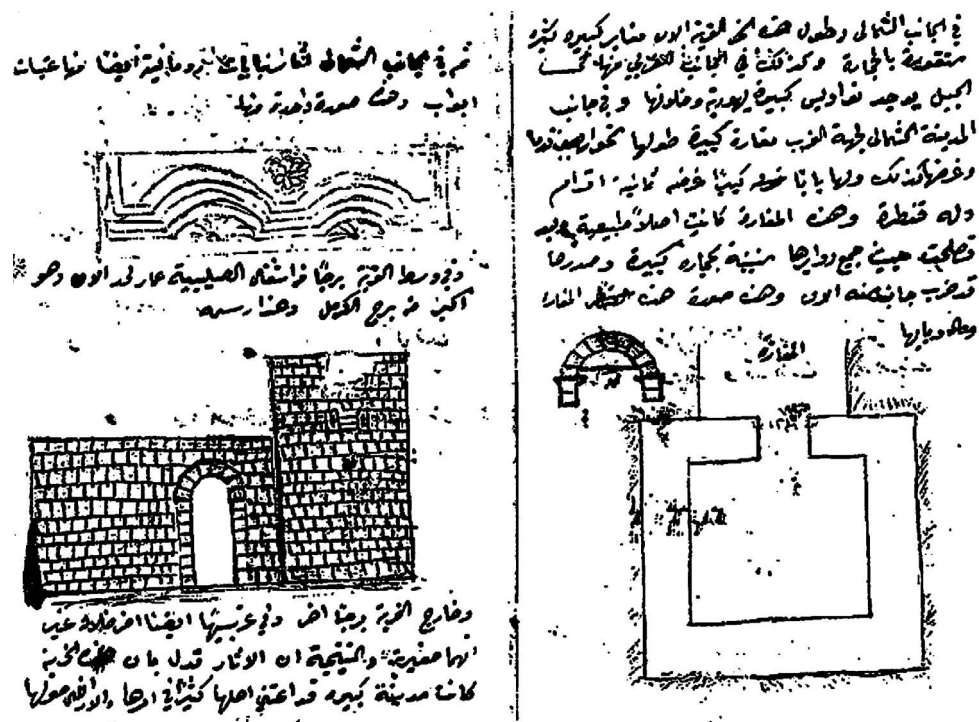

Figure 10. Nu'man Qasatli's manuscript, *al-Rawda al-Nu'maniyya*, 1900.

Financed by the Jerusalem-based Melville Bergheim banking company, the estate was run according to modern European capitalist farming methods. Alexander Schölch and Ruth Kark both discuss the Bergheim Abu Shusha venture as early examples of nineteenth-century non-Jewish colonial settlements.[68] Schölch examines it as a case of land usurpation following Ottoman 1858 land reforms, while Kark presents it as a case of nineteenth-century entrepreneurial modernity. Based on German consular reports, Schölch reports that Melville Bergheim acquired some five thousand acres in 1872, some accounting for "the back taxes of about 400 residents of Abu Shusheh, namely 46,000

Figure 11. "Dar al-Khawaja – the Bergheim Estate and Mansion," in Ruth Kark and T. Shiloni's, "The Resettlement of Gezer," in *Essays on the History, Archaeology, and Lore of the Holy Land*, ed. Ely Schiller (Jerusalem: Ariel, 1984), 331–42 [in Hebrew].

piasters."[69] Fifty-one peasants from Abu Shusha were involved in transferring 153 ownership titles to Bergheim's banking company. The fellahin of Abu Shusha, according to Schölch, "remained as tenants on the land and insisted on cultivating it as previously by the musha' system" – that is, they refused to divide it as parcels which would have given recognition to the new ownership regime.[70] Bergheim in his turn directly cultivated his part of the land using modern technical methods. Unlike other landholding subjects, such as the Sursuqs and the Tayyans (from Lebanon), the Bergheims were not Ottoman subjects, and according to Schölch, "They had to constantly defend their new possession against the local [Jaffa and Jerusalem] upper class and against the village fellahin."[71] By all accounts, the Bergheims had taken over a very substantial part of the village lands, and turned a considerable number of the Abu Shusha villagers into workmen for the Gezer estate. The farm prospered and turned out a substantial profit. By 1882, a report on the assets of the estate listed a farm of 25,000 dunums containing "25 buildings and cowsheds, 100 bulls, camels and mules, 24 donkeys, 40 horses, 20 sheep, 2 threshing machines, 2 harvest machines, 2 ploughs, and 7 springs of water."[72]
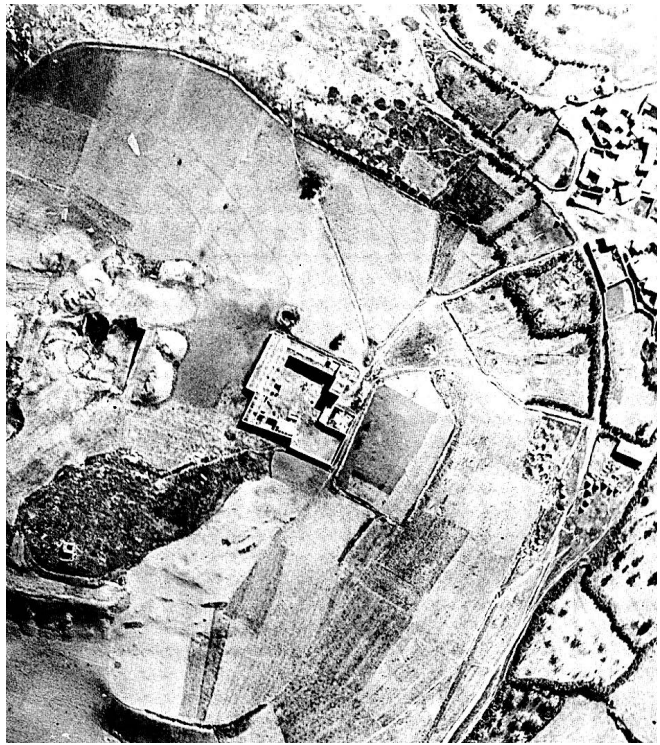
Ard al-Faragh: The Dissolution of Communal Land and Peasant Incitement

The conflict over the land, including the ownership of the area of Tal al-Jazar, is rooted in the transfer of the village's communal (*musha'*) cultivable land from the villagers to the Bergheim family as payment for the latter's covering the villagers' tax liability to the Ottoman state. This transfer was only possible as a result of the application of the new (1858) land code that allowed for the liquidation and commodification of communal village land into private property and its registration under the name of the (new) owners into the Land Registry (*tapu*). The coercive nature of this land transfer can be gleaned from a public interrogation record of the village mukhtars by the Jaffa public prosecutor when agitation against the transfer took the form of the spoilage of the harvested crops by villagers from Abu Shusha. The district police were already charging the villagers with incitement (*tahyij)* against their landlords.

Figure 12. Abu Shusha workers at Gezer site with Bergheim mansion on the horizon. "Allan Rowe's excavations at Gezer, 5 October 1934." Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, online at www.loc.gov/pictures/resource/matpc.22231/ (accessed 22 August 2022).

> **Prosecutor:** To the Mukhtars and village elders of Abu Shusha – It is understood from documents produced by Melville Bergheim and his sons Sam[uel] and Peter that the farmers of your village has dispensed their rights in your cultivable land with exception of vineyards, hawakir (garden

plants), and houses. Is this true and was this transfer (*faragh*) taking place with their consent, and for what reasons?

Village Mukhtar and Elders: Yes, the transfer (*faragh*) did take place with our consent, with the exception of land for Ahmad bin Hussein Raddad. This transfer applies to cultivable land only and it took place with our consent. A consent which we had to give because we became unable to fulfill our obligations [to the state], and we were reduced to a state of extreme poverty after the accumulation of debts to the treasury . . .

Prosecutor: What was the amount of badal that was owed by you?

Answer: *Faragh* amounted to 46,000 girsh we owed to the state. [The Bergheim family] committed themselves to pay this amount to the treasury.

Prosecutor: Can you name those families that signed to this transfer and the amount of shares that each farmer transferred?

Answer: Our village land is made up of 29 shares distributed into three land blocks that are drawn into the village survey land. Each person's tax dues are registered under his name in the survey logs. Below are the names of these villagers [followed by the individual names]

Statement given on 15 Aylul 1289 [1872][73]

Abu Shusha's peasants represent one of the earliest (if not *the* earliest) cases of peasant resistance against privatization of communal land following the Ottoman land code of 1858. In 1872, the Appeals Court of Jerusalem (following the Jaffa police intervention) recorded a case of "incitement" (*tahyyij*) in which village farmers Hasan Salam al-Alam and Ibrahim Hasan mobilized their fellow villages against harvesting the wheat crops resulting in damages to the crop claimed by the Bergheims to value the amount of thirty to thirty-five thousand girsh. An assessment by the Jaffa claims court (*Majlis Da'awa Yafa*) dated 25 Rajab 1290 (1872) found that the amount of damage was assessed to be no more than ten thousand girsh, and should be paid by the villagers to their landlords.

This episode of crop destruction was followed by a number of appeals to the authorities for recompense. Those included a petition presented to the governor of Jerusalem on 2 Rajab 1291 (1873) requesting an imperial intervention of their behalf against the exactions of their landlords:

We the weak and oppressed subjects of the Sultan, the villagers of Abu Shusha, beseech your excellency to intervene on our behalf to lift the injustices imposed on us by Khawaja Bergheim, who has taken to cursing our religion, rebuking us, and beating us – claiming that the land we have cultivated from ancient times belongs to him. And that he had bought it from our Sultan Abdul Aziz, may God grant him victory. If an

imperial order has indeed been made to grant our land to Bergheim, then we will vacate our lands after we [are granted] alternative plots and land in compensation. [In the meantime] We beseech you to rescind the order made by the [Jaffa] Police Department [*dabitiyya*] who ordered us to grant Khawaja Bergheim one-fifth of our produce value in addition to the payment of the *miri* tithe. Yesterday the local gendarme [*khayyal*] forced us to give to the aforementioned [Bergheim] a fifth of our produce. We beseech your Excellency in the name of justice to lift this imposition on us, which will lead to our obliteration [*kharab*]. Have mercy on us for we have families and children to feed. We ask for an investigation into this matter. Each shepherd is accountable to his flock, and decision belongs to those who are empowered.

Mutasarifiyyat al-Quds, Rajab 2, 1291 (1873)[74]

The gist of those appeals, written in Turkish and Arabic, was a request to the Jerusalem governor to rescind the official takeover of their land, and their compulsion to pay a fifth of their produce to their new landlords, in addition to the payment of the *miri* tithe to the state. In response, the court examined the documents of transfer in the title deeds of Abu Shusha and supported the claims of the bankers to the effect that the necessary documents were produced proving the transfer of the village cultivable plots (*thubut faragh al-aradi*) to the Bergheim family, turning the villagers from communal owners of the land into sharecropping peasants who lease the land in return of a crop share.[75] The episodes of destruction of crops were repeated periodically by Abu Shusha farmers in successive years. In most cases, the court compelled villagers to pay compensation, although in each case the amount requested by the Bergheim family was reassessed by an independent assessor.[76] Local Ottoman governors, however, sometimes intervened on behalf of the villagers. There is some evidence from the period after Peter Bergheim's murder that Ottoman support was vacillating. According to one historian, "the Governor of Jaffa declared at one point that the land should be given to the inhabitants of the village, the Shaykhs of Abu Shusha, and not to Mr. Bergheim."[77]

Ruth Kark, the Israeli geographic historian, published one of the most detailed accounts of the Gezer Bergheim saga. A discrepancy occurs in her assessment of the Abu Shusha case in three separate articles published in Hebrew and English. "A European-Owned Farm in Palestine" is a historical study of how the Bergheim's Gezer estate was an example of early capitalist entrepreneurship in agriculture. In the extended Hebrew version of Kark's essay, Gezer was discussed as a cornerstone in the early Zionist colonization in the Jaffa-Ramla region. Gezer here is a family hacienda, but also an early case of (non-Jewish) European settlement. The murder of Peter Bergheim was significantly reported by the British press "as a matter of revenge. It has been some time now since Mr. Bergheim purchased the farm of Abu Shusha, having dispossessed the villagers of their land."[78] Despite the farm's profitability, the murder of Bergheim led to a series of events that ended with the bankruptcy of the banking

family and the offering of the estate for sale. Serapion Murad (sometimes referred to as Murad Sarofim) of Jaffa, the farm manager, was later appointed by the Jaffa court as official receiver.[79] The Abu Shusha land went through a series of sales to a number of Zionist organizations including the Maccabean Land Company and Rothchild's Jewish Colonization Association, ending with the establishment in 1945

Figure 13. Dar al-Khawaja again: (*at left*) the Bergheim House as it appeared in a Zionist Settlement Brochure of the Maccabean Land Company (1910); and (*at right*) in H. Darrell Lance, "Gezer in the Land and History," *Biblical Archaeologist* 30, no. 2 (May 1967): 33–47.

of Kibbutz Gezer.[80] During the War of 1948, the kibbutz was the site of a major battle between Palestinian forces, the Arab Legion, and Jewish forces on 10 June 1948, ending with a defeat for the Zionists, and the killing of thirty-eight Haganah combatants and militiamen from Gezer.[81]
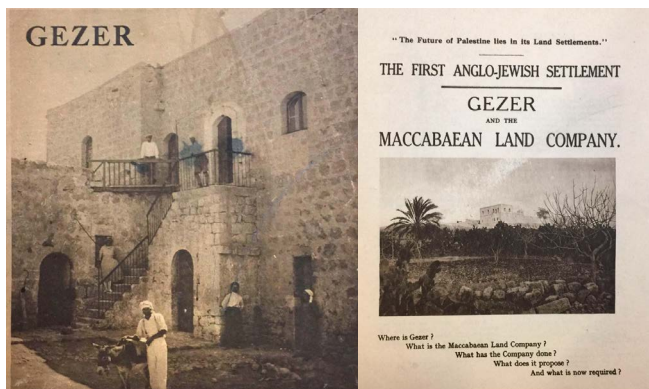
Conclusion: The Scouting Nodes of Shaykh Musa al-Tali'a

The identification of Tal al-Jazar in Abu Shusha as the site of ancient Gezer by Clermont-Ganneau in 1874 was accompanied by one of the first colonial (in this case German) settlements in Palestine. With the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund (PEF), Gezer became an important base for the use of biblical archaeology in interpreting the history of ancient Palestine. This interpretation circumvented the extensive Roman-Byzantine, early Islamic, and Crusader periods in the Ramla-Jaffa area. One recurrent feature that is common to many of these historical "layers" is that Gezer was a garrison city and a frontier border post, a feature that is related to the strategic location of the site on Palestine's central coast, and on the Jaffa–Jerusalem Road. The emergence of the Copenhagen school of biblical minimalism also contributed to challenge the dominance of literal biblical association between archaeological sites like Gezer, Megiddo, and Gibeon (Jaba') and the history of these sites.

In this essay, I discussed the subaltern element in Gezer's relationship to the village of Abu Shusha. The village was the source of hired labor for the successive archaeological excavations prior to 1948 (Bliss, Macalister, and Rowe). The villagers were also the subject of one the earliest applications of archaeological Taylorism in the organization of labor in archaeological digs in Palestine. For the work of the Palestine Exploration Fund, the local villagers of Abu Shusha became the source for the "scientific" reconstruction of the Palestinian peasant as residual biblical figures

(Macalister). The dominance of biblical archaeology as the marker of archaeological digs in Gezer (and many other sites in Palestine) meant that the later periods of Roman, Byzantine, and Islamic-Crusader encounters fell outside the domain of these excavations. This archaeological amnesia has been true even for critical archaeologists, such as Finkelstein and Silberman, who remained bogged down in battling their biblical opponents on their own terms.

This disparity becomes obvious when we examine the Gezer site in terms of popular religious practices in Abu Shusha. An important ethnographic feature of this relationship between the village and its archaeology is the identification of its local holy figures (*awliya'*) as the living nodes of "scouting martyrs" (*tala'i' al-kashafa*) who protected village lands from encroaching enemies. Since Tal al-Jazar was a major arena for Islamic-Crusader encounters in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, these subaltern features of popular religion have been preserved in the village collective memory. They were manifested in the continued use of local names such as Tal al-Jazar, Shaykh al-Jazari, and Musa al-Tali'a, attesting to the power (and limitations) of historical memory.

Gezer was also the site of one of the earliest encounters between settler colonialism (the Bergheim estate) and peasant resistance to the imposition of the land privatization code of 1858, in which the communal (*musha'*) system was undermined. The murder of Peter Bergheim, banker, settler, and amateur archaeologist, by Abu Shusha peasants highlighted one of the earliest conflicts over village lands involving European settlers in Palestine. Significantly, it took place several decades before skirmishes with Zionist settlers. The use of recently released Ottoman police records, and of nizamiyya court cases, throws an important light on the nature of those conflicts. The concept of *ard al-faragh* (referring to "transferrable land," lit. "vacated land") in Ottoman land law was the major bone of contention between the German landlords and the Abu Shusha farmers. *Al-faragh* is a land sale transaction that refers to the transfer of usufruct land rights in *miri* land.[82] It was a key concept of "void" in the Tanzimat (reorganization) land law that established the mechanism for the transfer of communal land into private property. In this case, it allowed the Bergheims to claim major tracts of village plots against the payment of accumulated tithe taxes due to the state. The Bergheims were keenly aware of the meaning of these juridical battles. Samuel Bergheim in his address to European archaeologists in the 1880s spoke of the Ottoman authorities as having been "struggling to establish modern property laws in rural areas where the communal (*mushaa*) system prevails." He referred to the musha' as "an archaic system" that needs to be dispensed with.

Gezer becomes an arena for colonial conquest and Palestinian defeat. Although Abu Shusha farmers were vanquished in Ottoman and Mandate law courts, their resistance to the impositions of tax-farming (as well as the assassination of their landlord) contributed to a compromise deal with the German caretaker of the Abu Shusha land, and later with Jewish purchasers of the Bergheim estate, that allowed them to retain a part of their possessions, even though they became sharecroppers on their own land. An Israeli study of the land schemes in the area pointedly referred to

the Zionist takeover of the Bergheim estate as "the new *Resettlement* of Gezer" (*hidush ha-yishuv*).[83] The assumption of this narrative is that kibbutz Gezer, established in the vicinity of Abu Shusha in 1945, on land acquired from the Bergheim estate, and later on land appropriated after the war from Qubab village,[84] constitutes a second return of the Zionist settlement in the post-war era, and possibly a Jewish "redemption" of an Israelite biblical past.[85] This ideological utilization of archaeological history is substantially muted in Kark's English version of the same essay, which is focused on entrepreneurship and modernization theory. Thus, the notion of *faragh* (vacated land) used originally in Ottoman courts to indicate the transfer of ownership from the villagers to the new German landlords, has come full circle the second time around, to indicate the transfer of village land vacated through war and conquest, to the kibbutz settlement of Gezer.[86]

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"Silence," Heritage, and Sumud in Silwan, East Jerusalem

Joel Stokes

Abstract

Research interest in Jerusalem's archaeological-touristic landscape and its close relationship with Israeli state-sponsored settler colonialism has increased greatly over the past two decades. At the center of Jerusalem's contested landscape is the Palestinian village of Silwan and the "City of David" in East Jerusalem. Much of the scholarship concerning these sites has used the language of heritage and memory in a manner that has inadvertently highlighted the narrative practices of Jewish-Israeli settlers at the "City of David." The author argues that the result is a top-down framing of the sites whereby Palestinian Silwan, at least in the academy, is now associated primarily with Israeli archaeological activity. Based on four months of ethnographic fieldwork in East Jerusalem during the summer of 2022, Stokes explores the nature of silencing, heritage, and *sumud* in Silwan and the social, political, and ethical complexities involved in reporting on it. The author suggests that recent developments in Palestinian heritage praxis hold the key for appropriately projecting and legitimizing Palestinian resistance in Silwan to an international academic and political audience.

Keywords

Heritage; archaeology; conflict, Palestine; Israel, City of David; East Jerusalem; Silwan.

Research interest in Jerusalem's archaeological-touristic landscape and its close relationship with Israeli

state-sponsored settler colonialism has increased greatly over the past two decades.[1] Mobilizing "the language of heritage" to govern states and communities is therefore a well-established and recognized paradigm, particularly when that heritage is archaeological. At the center of Jerusalem's contested landscape is the Palestinian village of Silwan and the "City of David" in East Jerusalem.[2] These sites in particular have been the focus of recent scholarship that, in the majority, is critical of Israeli attempts to erase Palestinian history and populations from the landscape.[3]

This literature employs a variety of conceptual frameworks to understand and expose the structures that underlie settler-colonial expansion of the "City of David" into Silwan. In some cases, this scholarship utilizes the language of heritage and memory conflict, albeit through predominantly traditional (that is "tangible") understandings of what heritage is.[4] The result is a top-down framing of the sites, a consequence of which is that Palestinian Silwan, at least in the academy, is now associated primarily with Israeli archaeological activity. Indeed, despite widespread sympathy with the Palestinian community of Silwan in the literature, a comprehensive review leaves the reader with relatively limited knowledge about the village, its cultural heritage, or its Palestinian inhabitants. Also lacking is an awareness of the methods of Palestinian resistance against settler colonialism in Silwan beyond legal challenges in Israeli courts. Palestinian voices are therefore marginalized within an academic discourse that foregrounds a settler-colonial narrative, even if through a critical lens. This is often due either to an overemphasis on settler activities or, as has been frequently reported, a failure to appreciate the systems of silencing that Palestinians are subjected to.

Here, I reflect on four months of ethnographic fieldwork in East Jerusalem during the summer of 2022. I explore the nature of silencing, heritage, and *sumud* in Silwan and the social, political, and ethical complexities involved in reporting on it. In doing so, I have tried to be conscious of the fact that in discussing instances of Palestinian silence, one must recognize that silence can also act as political agency and is not, therefore, involuntary.[5] In sum, I suggest that recent developments in Palestinian heritage praxis hold the key for appropriately projecting and legitimizing Palestinian resistance in Silwan before an international academic and political audience.[6]

Silwan and the "City of David"

Silwan is a Palestinian village, now neighborhood of Jerusalem, located immediately south of Jerusalem's Old City. The settlement has ancient precedence due to its proximity to one of Jerusalem's few natural springs, given mention in the Bible.[7] It has been a center of Palestinian life for many centuries. The village also holds special historical significance for visitors from Arab regions as it was traditionally "the last resting spot for travelers approaching Jerusalem from the south."[8] Today, Silwan is home to an estimated fifty thousand Palestinians, over half of whom are under the age of eighteen. Although it is within the boundaries of Jerusalem as delineated by Israel's formal annexation in 1980, Palestinian Silwan is severely neglected by the municipality.[9] Rubbish collection is sporadic, meaning waste spills out onto most

streets. Building permits are granted extremely rarely, forcing growing Palestinian families to build upward and illegally in an *ad hoc* fashion.[10] Unemployment hovers around 40 percent, exacerbating discontent and civil unrest, and general infrastructure for daily life (schools, roads, cultural centers) is largely dependent on Palestinian and external funding sources, which at present are few.[11] Among older Israelis, Silwan is perhaps still regarded as a source of resistance activity, a reputation first earned thirty years ago during the first intifada, 1987–93.[12]

The "City of David" is an active archaeological excavation and tourist visitor center located in the Wadi Hilwa neighborhood of Silwan. The site is run by the Ir David (City of David) Foundation, or Elad (a Hebrew acronym for City of David). Elad is a right-wing Jewish settler organization with an agenda to replace both the historical signature and contemporary Palestinian presence in Silwan with an exclusive Jewish-Israeli ethnohistory and reality on the ground. Elad seeks to strip away Palestinian legitimacy through the "performative power of tourism,"[13] and is involved in "shady dealings" in Silwan, such as the forced evictions of Palestinians from their homes.[14] Elad's first settlement in Silwan came in the late 1980s and by 2010, some two thousand Jewish settlers had moved into the neighborhood, often displacing Palestinians in the process.[15] The current number of settlers in Silwan is disputed; Palestinian residents suggest the number is now closer to four or five thousand.

The land of the archaeological tourist site is managed by the Israel Nature and Parks Authority (INPA) and is leased to Elad "without tender."[16] In this capacity, Elad has underwritten excavations at the site since 1994. This is the latest chapter in the area's long archaeological history. Western excavations in Silwan date back over one hundred and fifty years (overseen predominantly by the Palestine Exploration Fund and subsequently by Israeli authorities). Despite Israeli archaeological excavations and population transfer in the occupied Palestinian territories (including East Jerusalem) being illegal under international law, Elad's "salvage" excavations continue at breakneck speed.[17] Their narration of the site's history provides tourists with a one-dimensional bibliocentric history of Jerusalem, which all but eliminates Palestinian and Muslim history.[18] Despite the half million or so tourists that visit the "City of David" complex every year, many of them Israeli religious Jews and military groups, Israeli Jews' awareness of other histories at the "City of David" is extremely limited.[19] Both Elad and non-Elad guides at the site can regularly be heard discussing only the relevant biblical periods as well as the "City of David's" sole importance to the Jewish people – indicating an ignorance of, or an unwillingness to, introduce to the tourist gaze the more than two millennia of civilizations in Jerusalem, including its deep connections with Christian and Islamic history.[20]

Silencing in Silwan: Fieldwork Experiences

Despite Israel's "comprehensive legislation to protect the right to privacy," sophisticated Israeli state and private (state-backed) surveillance in Silwan is extensive.[21] This undoubtedly has an impact on when and where Palestinians feel they can speak

openly. By monitoring Palestinian movement to and from residential properties, for example, state authorities and settler organizations use opportune moments to enforce Israel's much-discussed 1950 Absentee Property Law. In June, a prominent Israeli archaeologist and left-wing activist in Silwan told me his Palestinian colleagues had first shared concerns about the extent of surveillance in Silwan following the second intifada in the mid-2000s. Since then, the technology has been enhanced dramatically. According to a recent report published by the non-profit organization 7amleh, "some of these cameras look directly into private homes . . . some interviewees researchers spoke with believe the cameras can identify them automatically."[22] The impact of such intense surveillance in Silwan for Palestinian-researcher relationships resembles Foucault's metaphorization of Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, whereby individuals self-regulate due to the perception of Orwellian state monitoring.[23] Indeed, self-silencing is a well-recognized facet of oppressive political environments.[24]

The distinction between voluntary and enforced silence is blurry. This is especially the case when, from an outside perspective, Palestinian silence is often interpreted as political "anti-normalization."[25] What is certain, however, is that Elad and the Israeli state's politicization of the Palestinian presence in Silwan creates an environment whereby Palestinian heritage, meaning here anything that ties Palestinians to the land, is also taboo. The gatekeepers of information about Palestinian heritage in Silwan are understandably tight-lipped, as information can be used against these communities.

Israeli surveillance likewise affects Palestinian community organizing. Several Palestinians from Silwan informed me that community meetings, which take place in temporary tent structures (of which there are normally six across Silwan), are routinely disrupted by Israeli police.[26] In some instances, the police dismantle or completely destroy the tents. On one of my first fieldwork trips to Silwan with a local friend and tour guide from the al-Bustan neighborhood, we passed the remains of a recently destroyed tent (see figure 1). The ability of Israeli police to shut down community events on a moment's notice is testament to the extent of the surveillance of Palestinians in Silwan.

Bearing in mind the extent of surveillance in Silwan, it is easy to understand how field research may be interpreted by residents as suspicious and unnatural. This can be especially true of ethnography, whereby the researcher will "appear," spend a period of "hanging around," and then at some point "disappear."[27] Some Palestinians understandably perceive such behavior as overlapping with that of Elad, settlers, and even Israeli intelligence agents. Young children in the streets of Batn al-Hawa (a neighborhood in Silwan) would ask me: *Inta mustawtin? Inta yahudi?* ("Are you a settler? Are you a Jew?"). The perception of researchers as settlers, even if only at a glance and even if only in this case through the eyes of children younger than thirteen, indicates an inquisitiveness that doubles, I think, as a defense mechanism. In a city defined along ethnic and religious lines, categorizations based on a mix of religious/ethnic identity and political activity are telling, important even, yet they also indicate a mistrust that runs deep in Palestinian neighborhoods facing constant threats of evictions and settler violence.[28]

Figure 1. Open space in Silwan where a community tent once stood, 8 July 2022. Photo by author.

Thus, when contacting individuals in Silwan, I quickly discovered the delicacy with which introductions must be made. An example of this came during a trip with a fellow researcher to a well-established shop in Wadi Hilwa. Upon entering the shop, I greeted the shopkeeper. The researcher I was with entered the shop after me and before introducing himself, asked in English, "How long has this shop been here?" The shopkeeper immediately became defensive and replied: "What type of question is that? Why are you asking me this question? You don't ask these kinds of questions straight away when you enter my shop."

The shopkeeper then explained to us that Elad employees and Palestinian real-estate middlemen have tried on numerous occasions to either buy his shop or uncover information that could be used to exploit legal loopholes to take the property forcibly. To the shopkeeper, my fellow researcher's question raised suspicions that he was yet another representative trying the same thing. After my colleague apologized (multiple times), the conversation was amicable; however, it was clear that the shopkeeper was still somewhat on edge. As the conversation drew to a natural conclusion, I asked whether he would be interested in having a further conversation about my research topic. The answer was categorical: "I don't talk to anyone, and I don't say anything . . . I don't want to get in trouble . . . You can't speak to anyone or say anything in this country." I told him he

would be completely anonymous, but this was not enough to allay his concerns: "I don't want trouble, I just want my life, my shop and to be left in peace."

The shopkeeper's auto-silencing indicates the difficulty of outsiders to engage in community organizing and day-to-day relationship building in Silwan. This is exacerbated by settler groups using Palestinian real-estate middlemen, meaning that even local Palestinians who speak Arabic without an accent can be cause for suspicion. The shopkeeper's position as an elderly resident of Silwan, and therefore someone with lived experiences of a Palestinian presence in the village pre-1967, positions him as a key gatekeeper of a Palestinian heritage narrative in the village. His cautiousness in discussing such topics with outsiders emphasizes the silent efficacies of Israeli state and settler surveillance.

I witnessed similar self-silencing on the several occasions I visited the Wadi Hilwa Information Centre (WHIC), situated in the same neighborhood. The WHIC was "established in 2009 and . . . aims at revealing the facts and history of the village of Silwan."[29] By name and mission, then, the WHIC should be able to provide those interested with information about Palestinian life and history in Silwan as well as ongoing Israeli human rights violations. The founder and director of the WHIC, Jawad Siyam, has first-hand experience of Elad, having been embroiled in court cases with them for almost twenty years. Siyam is perhaps the most well-known Palestinian spokesperson in Silwan and anyone asking about information on Silwan will most likely be directed by locals to the WHIC offices on Wadi Hilwa Street, fifty meters or so from the entrance to the "City of David" complex.

Despite the relative renown of the WHIC, the front entrance is often locked. Only those familiar with the area would know there is a second entrance through an adjacent alleyway. I visited the center on approximately ten occasions. On all but one, the offices were either closed or empty. On my most recent visit, however, I met a young Palestinian woman sitting at a desk in the first office. She asked me if I needed any help. I explained why I was there and that I had been in contact with Jawad Siyam. The woman led me into a second office. A man in his thirties sat behind the desk, a nearly finished cigarette between his fingers. I repeated my introduction and asked about the WHIC's work. The man became visibly uncomfortable in his chair and suggested that I come back next week when Jawad would be there.

Realizing that to continue the conversation would make matters worse, I thanked them for their time and left. Upon exiting the building, the peculiarity of the situation struck me. Here was an information center dedicated to challenging Elad and the Israeli authorities through the power of information sharing and dissemination. And yet a form of auto-silencing prevailed. Refusal or reluctance to talk to strangers is a symptom of the state and settler control over Palestinian spaces in Silwan.[30]

Heritage is at the heart of community, and vice versa.[31] Settler groups and the Israeli state are winning the battles in court, but that is but one small part of the story. Without forums to gather and engage in community issues, the development of a Palestinian heritage narrative in Silwan becomes even more difficult. In such circumstances, alternative forms of heritage expression and legitimization have emerged.

Heritage as Noise and *Sumud* in Silwan

Despite instances of self- and enforced silencing in Silwan, Palestinian resistance through heritage practice is thriving. There are several active community centers in the village, which serve the different needs of residents. These community centers run a range of initiatives that straddle themes of Palestinian heritage as *sumud* (a Palestinian cultural philosophy often translated as "steadfastness").

The Wadi Hilwa Information Center

Despite my own and other researcher's experiences of "silence" at the WHIC, it is important to consider the role of the center (and others like it in Silwan, such as the Madaa Silwan Creative Center, discussed below) in terms of local organization and local government (again, in lieu of effective relationships with the Jerusalem municipality). In her 2019 book, Chiara De Cesari explores the role of NGOs in Palestinian society and demonstrates that, without effective governmental leadership, Palestinian NGOs "collapse the divide between mobilizing heritage to defend vulnerable communities and resist the encroachment of the (Israeli) state . . . using heritage to develop institutions and help build the (Palestinian) state."[32]

The WHIC, although not strictly a heritage NGO, speaks the language of one. Take, for example, this excerpt from their website:

> Despite the oppressive measures, the social, cultural, and economical injustices . . . the international *silence* . . . we, the residents of Wadi Hilwa in Silwan, have decided . . . to be effective in communicating the correct information that concerns us. We, the residents of Wadi Hilwa, *did not delegate anyone to convey the information on our behalf* and we do not allow any person to obscure our deep-rooted identity which lies in the houses, stones, trees, gardens, springs, and sky of our village.[33]

Within this paragraph lies the crux of experiences that cross paths in Silwan. The WHIC expressly states its role as a representative for the people of Wadi Hilwa. In other words, it communicates a Palestinian story with a Palestinian voice. Having control over the image of Wadi Hilwa and Silwan (which includes selective silence with outsiders) is but one means of protecting and developing Palestinian cultural memory and heritage in Silwan. Additionally, the center's website, Silwanic.net, is regularly updated with news of court appeals, house demolitions, arrests of community members (most notably boys under eighteen), and Israeli killings of Palestinians in East Jerusalem, and thus acts as a source of news that is communicated and archived through a local Palestinian perspective, albeit in English. The use of English and Arabic on the website does, however, indicate the WHIC's desire to reach a wider, international audience.

Madaa Silwan, Art Forces, and "I Witness Silwan"

The Madaa Silwan Creative Center is a community hub responsible for many of the heritage initiatives in Silwan. In addition to creating secure spaces for children's

programs and summer camps, the center also works specifically to empower Jerusalemite women in "all aspects of public and private life based on gender equality and women's human rights."[34] Perhaps their most elaborate project, however, comes in the form of a collaboration with the WHIC and the San Francisco-based activist group Art Forces. Since 2015, the project "I Witness Silwan" (www.iwitnesssilwan. org) has used "community public art . . . to inspire critical thinking and action."[35] "I Witness Silwan" transformed blank walls in Silwan into large murals that are visible from the "City of David" and the Old City walls – several hundred meters away.

The murals are varied but follow several general themes. First, and most famously, are the numerous sets of eyes (see figure 2) that lend their name to the project.[36] The eyes depict well-known icons of political resistance and civil rights struggles such as George Floyd and Che Guevara, as well as activists who became victims of Israeli military violence such as Rachel Corrie.[37] Some of the eyes are those of local elders in Silwan, names that will be recognized by many, if not most, of the Palestinians in the village.

Figure 2. The eyes of Rachel Corrie, 8 July 2022. Photo by author.

The eyes, which often border upon abstraction to those unfamiliar with the people to whom they belong, send a loud message to settlers: There are witnesses to the violence. Because of limitations on verbal and physical resistance against Israel's occupation, art has become a powerful tool for Palestinian political expression. De

Cesari stresses the difference between Palestinian practices of heritage and that of the Israeli state (and in this case Elad): "Rather than being preserved in a glass case, this past is creatively put to use for social and economic development. It is a site of cultural production in the present."[38] The emphasis on heritage as a tool for survival, and nothing less, cannot be stressed enough in the case of Silwan. Court proceedings may occasionally go in Palestinians' favor, preventing (temporarily) a forced eviction here and there, but that is preventative, rather than productive, heritage action. The "I Witness" project places Palestinians in Silwan back on the front foot.

There is a broader message, too. In adorning the walls of Silwan with internationally recognized figures of resistance and solidarity, residents draw deliberate parallels between the Palestinian struggle and other civil rights movements worldwide. Perhaps the most notable is that of Black Lives Matter, a connection that brings together Palestinian and Black American experiences of police brutality and civil discrimination in Israel and the United States respectively. Art elsewhere in the occupied territories repeats this symbolism (see figure 3) and recognition of a shared plight is reciprocated by the BLM movement.[39]

Figure 3. Artwork depicting an Israeli soldier wearing the infamous Ku Klux Klan hood adorns the separation barrier next to Checkpoint 300 in Bethlehem, 22 August 2022. Photo by author.

Elsewhere in Silwan, motifs of the Palestinian sunbird and national flower (a red poppy) can be seen pasted across many of the residents' houses. This is about as explicit as the Palestinian nationalistic iconography gets, as Art Forces and "I Witness Silwan" work hard to ensure the safety and prosperity of both the property owners and the project itself. Several members of the project told me that paintings of Palestinian flags, as well as the word "Palestine," have in the past been removed or painted over by settlers and the Jerusalem municipality. Excluding this, the artwork is generally left untouched by settlers, security guards, and the Jerusalem municipality.

The easiest explanation might be that the removal of the Palestinian artwork from

Silwan would require the unnecessary use of public funds. A deeper consideration of "why" might suggest that for Israel to remove Palestinian artwork plays into Palestinian hands. It demonstrates that artwork is effective in solidifying Palestinian presence and ownership through community expressions of *sumud*. That the majority of the artwork will not be removed gives Palestinians of Silwan something that Israeli authorities cannot take away, at least not without ceding ground in an ongoing legitimacy war.[40]

During my fieldwork, I met several individuals involved in "I Witness Silwan," including the head of the project who was visiting for the first time since the pandemic. I was also fortunate to be in Jerusalem at a time when the project was particularly active. I therefore witnessed the spread of artwork across the neighborhoods of Silwan from one day to the next as well as how the active *doing* of these murals provided young members of the community with a creative outlet during the summer months.[41] Children and other community members would regularly join the Art Forces team for several days at a time, making the murals their own, and using the activity as an opportunity to explore Palestinian identity in the village. The power of art to capture the imagination of both Palestinians in Silwan and outside onlookers is potent. It is a means of resistance that can simultaneously provoke discourse, disseminate political messages, distill identity, and beautify a critically underfunded area of Jerusalem.

The Edward Said Library

Although the first public library in Silwan, "Silwan Reads," was opened in 2009, access to educational materials in Silwan remained limited until very recently.[42] Due to the work of the Madaa Center, a new branch named the Edward Said Library was opened in March 2020 in the Wadi Hilwa neighborhood, and now boasts a collection of over four thousand books. While predominantly acting as a critical educational resource for Silwan's younger residents, the library is also a rare quiet space for children to gather and partake in social activities. Such activities enable individual and community dialogue with Palestinian heritage, as I saw on a visit following an arts and crafts session (figures 4–6).

On one of my visits to the library, I met Maryam, who volunteers as library events coordinator and runs the library's social media pages. She told me that one of the most important events made possible by the library is a weekly discussion for teenagers and young adults. Each week, the group decides on a topic of discussion and then meets in the library space. The week I met Maryam, the discussion topic was: *What are the psychological effects of occupation?* The painted faces of Palestinian cultural icons that adorn the walls of the library (see figure 7) – courtesy of Art Forces and "I Witness Silwan," – make it easy to see how the space could be a powerful place for imagining and building a better future.

Figure 4. A Palestinian flag and map of Palestine are sketched into clay, Edward Said Library, 12 August 2022. Photo by author.

Figure 5. Handala, a character created by Palestinian cartoonist Naji al-'Ali, depicted in clay by a child, Edward Said Library, 12 August 2022. Photo by author.

Figure 6. Kids will be kids. A snowman and a dinosaur (Isanosaurus?) suggest a place where imaginations can run wild, 12 August 2022. Photo by author.

Figure 7. One wall of well-known Palestinian and Arab cultural figures at the Edward Said Library, 12 August 2022. Photo by author.

According to the stories of the people I met there, the library is a sanctuary for Palestinians of Silwan, especially in the context of oppressive surveillance. This is a place where residents of Silwan can be themselves and openly express pride in their Palestinian heritage. One day at the Edward Said Library, a young woman I had just met spontaneously sang a traditional Palestinian folk song for a friend and me, and then recited for us from memory a poem by the Palestinian poet Tamim Barghouti. This is a place for people to be themselves, even in the presence of a visitor.

Heritage and Resistance through Social Media

Increasingly during my fieldwork, it became obvious how prevalent social media had become in the political struggle in Silwan. During my meeting with a board representative from al-Bustan Association, the man got out his phone to show me an Instagram page, #SaveSilwan, that he created in 2021 and still runs today. #SaveSilwan posts news and informational pieces about Silwan, its history, and ongoing political struggles against Elad and other settler groups in the village. He works with a friend to ensure that each post has both Arabic and an English translation. The result is that the page has over 173,000 followers, many of them from Europe.[43] Such a large following

provides al-Bustan Association with a powerful tool for influencing international public consciousness. Indeed, #SaveSilwan is perhaps the only Palestinian platform operating in Silwan that comes close to matching the outreach of Elad at the "City of David." While footfall in Silwan cannot compete with the alleged half million visitors to the "City of David" each year, Elad's combined following across YouTube (62,000), Instagram (26,900), and TikTok (421) social media is only half the number of those viewing #SaveSilwan.[44] On a smaller but no less significant scale, there are individuals active within Art Forces and "I Witness Silwan" with personal Instagram followings close to ten thousand. The individual who runs the Edward Said Library Instagram page has an approximate following of 3,500. These are substantial numbers and provide an insight into both the reach of Palestinian activism in Silwan and the appetite for a Palestinian narrative in the international community.

There are also challenges to consider here, the most significant being how to navigate exposure, for both good and bad. Naturally, Palestinians in Silwan are projecting their stories out into the world and as discussed earlier, building ideological bridges between other groups who continue to suffer from oppression. However, in a context where a painting or waving of the Palestinian flag can result in one's arrest, the act of monitoring the actions of the Israeli occupation as well as promoting ideas of Palestinian nationalism through very public platforms undoubtedly exposes those responsible in Silwan to considerable personal risk.[45] 7amleh's 2021 report claims that "scores of Palestinian Jerusalemites, particularly those active on social media platforms, have been detained on incitement charges in recent months . . . [due to] expansive incitement laws to intimidate many Palestinian users into silence."[46]

Conclusion

Silwan is entering a critical time in terms of its Palestinian heritage and identity. Settlers continue to evict Palestinians from their homes, slowly working to increase the ratio of Israeli Jews to Palestinians living in East Jerusalem. Concurrently, expressions of Palestinian heritage are thriving despite pressures from the Israeli state and settler-colonialism. I have tried to highlight Palestinian *sumud* in Silwan through a heritage framework to stress the importance of cultural heritage practices to the wider Palestinian struggle. Already, projects such as "I Witness Silwan" resemble the form of a living and evolving archive or museum. Achieving some measure of international recognition or protection for Silwan would create significant difficulties for further Israeli Jewish settlement plans in Silwan. For now, heritage innovation continues to prevail under the most difficult of circumstances.

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Endnotes

1 See: Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University Chicago Press, 2001); Maja Gori, "The Stones of Contention: The Role of Archaeological Heritage in Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Archaeologies* 9, no.1 (2013): 213–29; Raphael Greenberg and Adi Keinan, "Israeli Archaeological Activity in the West Bank 1967–2007: A Sourcebook," Emek Shaveh, online at emekshaveh.org/en/israeli-archaeological-activity-in-the-west-bank-1967-2007/ (accessed 22 October 2022). Raz Kletter, *Just Past? The Making of Israeli Archaeology* (London: Routledge, 2006); Gideon Sulimani and Raz Kletter, "Bone Considerations: Archaeology, Heritage, and Ethics at Mamilla, Jerusalem," *International Journal of Cultural Property* 24, no. 3 (October 2017): 321–50.

2 Labels are important in Israel-Palestinian contexts. I use quotation marks for the "City of David" throughout this piece to symbolize both the contested nomenclature and disputed archaeological interpretations at the site.

3 See: Michael Feige, "'Where It All Began': Archaeology, Nationalism, and Fundamentalism in Silwan," in *Toward an Anthropology of Nation Building and Unbuilding in Israel*, ed. Fran Markowitz, Stephen Sharot and Moshe Shokeid (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2015), 243–58; Katharina Galor, "The City of David / Silwan," in *Finding Jerusalem: Archaeology between Science and Ideology*, ed. Katharina Galor (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 119–31; Raphael Greenberg, "Pompeo in Silwan: Judeo-Christian Nationalism, Kitsch, and Empire in Ancient Jerusalem," *Forum Kritische Archäologie* 10 (2021): 55–66; David Landy, "The Place of Palestinians in Tourist and Zionist Discourses in the 'City of David', occupied East Jerusalem," *Critical Discourse Studies* 14, no. 3 (2017): 309–23. There are, of course, those who interpret events on the ground differently; see Shaul Bartal, "Fabricating Palestinian History: The Battle over Silwan," *Middle East Quarterly* 19, no. 2 (2012): 31–41.

4 See Beverley Butler, "The Efficacies of Heritage: Syndromes, Magics, and Possessional Acts," *Public Archaeology* 15, no. 2–3 (December 2017): 113–35; Beverley Butler, "Keys of the Past: Keys to the Future

– A Critical Analysis of the Construction of the Palestinian National Museum Policy as an Alternative Deconstruction of Routinised International Heritage Discourse," *Present Pasts* 2, no.1 (2010): 113–25.

5 Christina A. Sue, "Hegemony and Silence," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 44 no.1 (2015): 113–40.

6 For the safety and security of all participants and non-participants, names have been changed throughout this report.

7 Ronny Reich, "The Date of the Gihon Spring Tower in Jerusalem," *Journal of the Institute of Archaeology of Tel Aviv University* 45, no. 1 (2018): 114–19.

8 Ahdaf Soueif, "The Dig Dividing Jerusalem," *Guardian*, 26 May 2010.

9 United Nations, Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, *The Status of Jerusalem*, 1997, 3, online at (un.org) bit.ly/3VyE3Jz (accessed 21 September 2022); Nisreen Alyan, Ronit Sela, and Michal Pomerantz, "Policies of Neglect in East Jerusalem," (May 2012), online at (law.acri.org.il) bit.ly/3Db6mGN (accessed 21 September 2022); Aviv Tatarsky and Oshrat Maimon, "Fifty Years of Neglect: East Jerusalem Education Report," Ir Amim, (September 2017), online at www.ir-amim.org.il/en/node/2874 (accessed 21 September 2022).

10 Palestinians rarely receive permits from Israel to build in East Jerusalem, forcing them to build houses that are deemed illegal under Israeli law.

11 Hanna Baumann and Manal Massalha, "Your Daily Reality is Rubbish," *Urban Studies* 59, no. 3 (2022): 548–71; "Silwan & Ath Thuri Town Profile," Applied Research Institute – Jerusalem, 2012.

12 This perception of Silwan was exemplified to me in August 2022 at a dinner in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. After the meal, a religious Jewish man from Abu Tur – a mixed Israeli-Palestinian neighborhood in south Jerusalem that borders Silwan, also called al-Thuri – asked me without irony if my work in Silwan involved interviews with Hamas or Islamic Jihad. Neither group is known to operate in Silwan.

13 Chaim Noy, "Narratives and Counter-Narratives: Contesting a Tourist Site in Jerusalem," in *Narratives of Travel and Tourism*, ed. Jacqueline Tivers and Tijana

Rakić (Burlington: Ashgate, 2012), 135–50.

14 Meron Rapoport, Ehud Tagari, Orly Noy, and Yudith Oppenheimer, "Shady Dealings in Silwan," Ir Amim, 2009, online at www.ir-amim.org.il/sites/default/files/Silwanreporteng.pdf (accessed 21 September 2022).

15 Nisreen Alyan, Mahmoud Qarae'en, Keren Tzafrir, Miri Gross, and Tali Nir, *Unsafe Space: The Israeli Authorities' Failure to Protect Human Rights amid Settlements in East Jerusalem*, (2010): 4; B'Tselem, *Eyes Wide Open*, 2020, online at (btselem.org) bit.ly/3EWpMjN (accessed 21 September 2022); Aviv Tatarsky, Eyal Raz and Oshrat Maimon, "Broken Trust: State Involvement in Private Settlement in Batan Al-Hawa, Silwan," Ir Amim, (May 2016).

16 Rapoport, Tagari, Noy, and Oppenheimer, "Shady Dealings in Silwan," 2009, 12.

17 Elad and the Israel Antiquities Authority claim the excavations are "salvage" excavations, which exempt them from this law. However, it is well-documented that Israel liberally uses the term "salvage" excavations in order to further scientific research and ultimately, Jewish settlement in the occupied Palestinian territories. See "'Salvage Excavations' in the West Bank for Settlers Only: An Analysis of the Scope and Objectives of Archaeological Excavations in Area C of the West Bank 2007–2014" Emek Shaveh (August 2017). See also Greenberg and Keinan, "Israeli Archaeological Activity," and Ahmed A. Rjoob, "The Impact of Israeli Occupation on the Conservation of Cultural Heritage Sites in the Occupied Palestinian Territories: The Case of "Salvage Excavations," *Conservation and Management of Archaeological Sites* 11 no. 3–4 (2009): 214–35.

18 Raphael Greenberg, "A Privatized Heritage: How the Israel Antiquities Authority Relinquished Jerusalem's Past," Emek Shaveh report (November 2014).

19 C. Noy, "Narratives and Counter-Narratives."

20 John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze 3.0* (London: Sage Publishing, 2011). In their book, Urry and Larsen argued that the tourists' understanding and experience of tourist spaces are shaped, sometimes inaccurately and for political purposes, by the tourist industry.

21 Sophia Goodfriend, Bashar Bakri, and Rawan Sheikh Ahmad, "The Expansion of Digital Surveillance in Jerusalem and Impact on Palestinians Rights," 7amleh – The Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media, 2021, 3. See also the video by Hagit Ofran, Israeli Peace Now, of Elad filming in Silwan, June 2010, online at (youtube.com) bit.ly/3yS3yM6 (accessed 21 September 2022).

22 Goodfriend, Bakri, and Sheikh Ahmad, "Expansion of Digital Surveillance in Jerusalem," 7.

23 Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (London: Penguin Books, 1975).

24 Hastings Donnan and Kirk Simpson, "Silence and Violence among Northern Ireland Border Protestants," *Ethnos* 72, no.1 (2007): 5–28; Richard Falk, *Palestine's Horizon: Toward a Just Peace* (London: Pluto Press, 2017).

25 "In the Palestinian context, "normalization' (*tatbi'* in Arabic) has been defined as 'the process of building open and reciprocal relations with Israel in all fields, including the political economic, social, cultural, educational, legal, and security fields'." Walid Salem, "The Anti-Normalization Discourse in the Context of Israeli-Palestinian Peace-Building," *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 12, no.1 (2005). Not all Palestinians have the same stance toward normalization.

26 The tents provide open shaded spaces – rare in Silwan, and are also used for children's activities, such as drama workshops and summer camps.

27 David Waddington, *"Participant Observation" in Essential Guide to Qualitative Methods in Organizational Research*, ed. Catherine Cassell and Gillian Symon (London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2004), 154–64.

28 This is evidenced in JustVision's 2012 film *My Neighbourhood* about Shaykh Jarrah. During the film Rifqa al-Kurd, the elderly Palestinian grandmother of the film's young protagonist, Muhammad (now an internationally revered activist and poet), expresses uncertainty about the alliance of Israeli Jews standing alongside Palestinians in their protests against the Israeli state and settlers: "If you want to hear the truth, I don't really trust them [Israeli Jews against settlers]. You're telling me that they will leave their people, their religion, and join us? It's not logical." JustVision, *My Neighborhood*, online at justvision.org/myneighbourhood/watch (10 October 2022).

29 See website, Silwanic.net (accessed 21

September 2022).

30 As I was first drafting this section, breaking news came that Israeli troops had raided and shut down seven Palestinian NGOs in the Palestinian city of Ramallah. Israel's Defense Ministry designated six of the targeted NGOs as "terror organizations." Oren Ziv, "Israel Storms Palestinian NGO Offices after Months-long Failure to Discredit Them," +972 Magazine, 18 August 2022, online at (972mag.com) bit.ly/3zeRCV1 (accessed 10 October 2022). At least one of these NGOs, the Union of Palestinian Women Committees (UPWC) has done considerable documentation and activist work in Silwan and has supported the community in their fight against house demolition orders; online at upwc.org.ps (accessed 21 September 2022).

31 Robert Johnston and Kimberley Marwood, "Action Heritage: Research, Communities, Social Justice," *International Journal of Heritage Studie*s 23, no. 9 (2017): 816–31; Ann E. Killebrew, Dana DePietro, Reema Pangarkar, Shelley-Anne Peleg, Sandra Scham, and Evan Taylor, "Archaeology, Shared Heritage, and Community at Akko, Israel," *Journal of Eastern Mediterranean Archaeology and Heritage Studies* 5, no. 3–4 (October 2017): 365–92.

32 Chiara De Cesari, "Heritage between Resistance and Government in Palestine," *Internatonal Journal of Middle East Studies* 49, no. 4 (2017): 747–52; Chiara De Cesari, "Creative Heritage: Palestinian Heritage NGOs and Defiant Arts of Government," *American Anthropologist* 112, no. 4 (2010): 625–37.

33 My emphasis. See Silwanic.net, 2022, (accessed 21 September 2022).

34 See www.madaasilwan.org (accessed 21 September 2022).

35 Susan Greene, "I Witness Silwan: Who is Watching Whom?" *Jerusalem Quarterly* 82 (Summer 2020): 154–67.

36 Some of the murals can be seen, with descriptions, online at www.iwitnesssilwan. org (accessed 21 September 2022).

37 Rachel Corrie was an American activist and member of the pro-Palestinian group International Solidarity Movement. In 2003, aged twenty-three, she was crushed by an Israeli armored bulldozer while trying to prevent the demolition of Palestinian houses in Rafah, Gaza. She later died of her injuries in hospital. See Rachel Corrie, *Let Me Stand Alone: The Journals of Rachel Cor*rie (New York: W. W. Norton, 2008).

38 De Cesari, "Heritage between Resistance and Government," 747.

39 Erum Salam, "Black Lives Matter Protesters Make Palestinian Struggle Their Own," *Guardian*, 16 June 2021.

40 Falk, *Palestine's Horizon*.

41 Butler, "Efficacies of Heritage," 113–35.

42 "Edward Said Library," Madaa Silwan Creative Center website, online at www. madaasilwan.org/en/1/8 (accessed 21 September 2022). The limited impact of Silwan Reads was such that Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian wrote in a 2011 paper that "in Silwan . . . there is no library," in "E-resistance among Palestinian Women: Coping in Conflict-ridden Areas," *Social Service Review* 85, no. 2 (2011): 179–204.

43 Instagram allows business account holders to view the geographic demographics of a follower base.

44 Soueif, "The Dig Dividing Jerusalem"; C. Noy, "Narratives and Counter-Narratives"; Landy, "The Place of Palestinians." Their figures for visitors to the "City of David" include Israeli schoolchildren and soldiers. Since Noy and Soueif, visitor numbers at the "City of David" have likely fluctuated between tens and hundreds of thousands, particularly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Figures for social media are accurate as of 14 September 2022.

45 Raja Abdulrahim, "Palestinian Flags Aren't Illegal in Israel. They Still Get Torn Down," *New York Times*, 30 July 2022, online at (nytimes.com) nyti.ms/3VCjPyi (accessed 21 September 2022).

46 Goodfriend, Bakri, and Sheikh Ahmad, "Expansion of Digital Surveillance in Jerusalem," 5–9.

The Five Transformations of Dung Gate – Bab al-Maghariba in Jerusalem

Jean-Michel de Tarragon

Abstract

Bab al-Maghariba or Dung Gate is one of the least photographed gates of the Old City of Jerusalem. Also known as Mughrabi Gate – and not to be confused with its namesake, one of the internal gates allowing entrance into al-Aqsa Mosque from inside the Old City walls – the history of this southern gate can be examined from the few old photographs and maps that are available. The gate's changing appearance is partly documented, partly deciphered in this photo essay by Jean-Michel de Tarragon, photo archivist for École Biblique.

Keywords

Dung Gate; Mughrabi Gate; photographs; architecture; towers; Old City of Jerusalem.

Sorting through photographs of the Mughrabi Gate (Dung Gate), I quickly realized that its appearance has changed a great deal over the years, and at an accelerated rate from 1940 to 1967. Of all the gates in Jerusalem, it is also the one that has been most often redesigned.

If we compare it to other gates of Jerusalem, since the Ottoman period Bab al-'Amud (Damascus Gate) has not been reshaped, nor has Bab al-Sahyun (David's or Zion Gate). Bab al-Zahra (Herod's Gate) and Bab al-Asbat (Lions' Gate or St. Stephen's Gate) were altered by piercing and dismantling the outer walls to leave a straight path instead of the narrow L-shaped entrance on the side of the gatehouse and its meandering passages.[1] The piercing of Herod's Gate remains mysterious as we have not found the date of the alteration and, above all,

have no photograph showing the gate without the break. Even the oldest photos already show the straight line inside the door. Perhaps because the gate is not very photogenic, old documentation is rare. Even the reason for the piercing is not obvious, since horse-drawn carriages were not intended to pass through here, given the network of narrow alleys behind the gate. Ancient travelers texts also indicate that Herod's Gate may have been condemned at one time, and left unused.[2] In the British Mandate period, it underwent major remodeling inside its gatehouse above the entrance.

New Gate has been barely modified since its relatively recent creation in 1898, with the exception of its barbed wire closure by the British during two periods: during the Arab revolt of 1936–39, and during the war of 1948. On the other hand, Jaffa Gate has undergone a well-known remodeling: the piercing of the curtain wall between it and the Citadel, in 1898. It was not, as is too often said, to allow Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany to pass through, whose horse could easily negotiate the inner baffle of the old Ottoman gate, but to allow passage of the empress's carriage and those of the ladies of the court – and of guests not on horseback.

Mughrabi Gate (Bab al-Maghariba)

Although Mughrabi Gate is not an important door, it is nevertheless well attested. We can recall that it has several names, and that an ambiguity has long persisted because an element of the Haram al-Sharif bears the same name: the entrance to the mosques by the ramp above the Wailing Wall (Buraq's Wall) on ancient maps is also called Bab al-Maghariba (and also Bab al-Nabi or Bab al-Buraq), for example, on our map of 1912 from Père H. Vincent (figure 1) and earlier in the map of 1888 (figure 2).[3]

Our goal not being the study of toponymy, but of photographs, we recall in passing that in the late Middle Ages, Bab al-Maghariba may have been called Sterquiline Gate, in echo of the Latin *stercus* (manure), and thus Dung Gate. It was also called Tanners' Gate, or Gate of the Africans, according to travelers' accounts. This last name brings us closer to Maghariba, a reference to the Muslim pilgrims from al-Maghrib who, over the centuries, settled nearby, in the neighborhood that was consequently called the Harat al-Maghariba (Mughrabi quarter). It may also have been called Bab Silwan, according to some pilgrims. Specialists in pilgrims' accounts, mostly in Arabic, will be able to enrich this investigation.

The oldest photograph showing the gate from a distance is from Salzmann, in 1854 (figure 3), on which we have inscribed (in a black oval) the tower of the gate, which protrudes slightly. A photo by James McDonald in 1864–65 also shows the gate.[4]

The gatehouse first had, on the inner side of the city, a guard tower, establishing the baffle route. The Mughrabi Gate, however, has not attracted much attention from researchers and historians, except for the reflections of the archaeologist Meir Ben-Dov.[5] Ben-Dov conducted surveys along the southern wall from 1975 to 1977, published in 1994. However, he did not carry out any actual excavations at the gate – this would have been difficult, as it was in heavy use daily. He made a detailed visual examination of the monument as it is today, and is the only one to have proposed a detailed reconstruction

of the phases of the gate.[6] Ben-Dov rightly proposes what no one else had noted, a small Ottoman tower *inside* the rampart, protecting the gatehouse with a baffle (figure 4). The chunking of this tower is visible in all the photographs showing the inner face of the gate. This is the case of the known photographs of the American Colony photographers,[7] or with this unpublished 1930 photo, from our collection (figure 5), from 1930, showing the entire height of the wall on its inner face, with the multiple tiers that Ben-Dov is the first to explain by his logical hypothesis of an inner tower, which we adopt.

At an unknown period, which Ben-Dov assumes to be the eighteenth century, the Ottomans added the outer tower, the only one that has survived to our generations, and which appears on old maps and photographs. The inner tower, no longer needed, would have been dismantled before the period of the PEF (Palestine Exploration Fund), whose work is among the first who could have attested to its survival – or the mission of L.F. de Saulcy, whose 1863 map testifies to the disappearance of the inner tower.[8] Similarly, a map of 1886 confirms that the inner tower had disappeared. No old photograph attests to this inner tower. Its dismantling must have occurred early, before the invention of photography. Thus, it does not appear on Bonfils' photo number 298, whose angle of view could have shown it.

Dismantling of the Outer Tower

The third transformation of the Mughrabi Gate is the dismantling of the outer tower, in order to make a straight passage. Here, Meir Ben-Dov's work is at fault for an oversight that we cannot explain: he writes: "A basic change in the Ottoman Dung Gate was made in the *early* days [our italics] of the British Mandate, probably in the late 1920s, when most of its construction was removed leaving only an opening in the city wall."[9] This dating is inaccurate. A 1936 map published by the Zionists in 1947 shows the tower still there.[10] More importantly, many photographs show the tower after the 1920s – including the one taken from the Zeppelin in 1931.

Apparently, the outer tower was dismantled at the very end of the British period. In 1948, it no longer exists. Three photographs taken from the same angle, figures 6, 7, and 8, can be put in dialogue: the first, oldest of the three, by Khalil Raʻd, shows the Tiferet synagogue and the Mughrabi Gate tower; the second, by the Jesuit Institute, displays the same image, but closer to 1948, as we see from the outskirts of the gate; the third, by the Jesuit Institute also, shows the gate without the tower, but with the dome of the Tiferet synagogue still standing (this dome will be dynamited in May 1948).

Two photographs by Khalil Raʻd (figures 9 and 10) are remarkable documents of this outer tower. The first photo shows a strange peculiarity: the tower is detached from the wall. A large slit in the top shows that the tower is not connected at all, evidence that it was added afterwards. It is therefore understandable that its dismantling did not leave any traces of damage on the wall.

The result was, after 1948 and until 1967, the situation that one of our color slides from 1958 illustrates: the Jewish quarter of the Old City in a state of disrepair and the Mughrabi Gate without a tower (figure 11).

Enlargement of the Mughrabi Gate in Two Stages

Once the outer tower was dismantled at the end of the British period, the straight pedestrian passageway shows, on the outer face, a beautiful carving, illustrated here in a picture by the Jesuit Fathers of Jerusalem (figure 12). One can note the wooden door for closure (the right-hand leaf is clearly visible). This carved decoration is from the original, present before the seventeenth century if we follow Ben-Dov's hypothesis: it would be the external facade of the door at the time of the first tower, the one inside the ramparts. When the Ottomans added a second tower, on the outside, they left this decoration in place, which then survived inside the zigzag passage, in the semi-darkness, fortunately sheltered from the sun and rain. The dismantling of the tower by the British suddenly brings this solid lintel, surmounted by a low-profile arch, decorated with the carved Star of David motif, back into the light. Above, classic elements of Mamluk decoration: a beautiful pointed gadroon arch and, above it, a floral-themed macaroon, or button.

The enlarged opening has distorted this postern by opening it to cars and trucks. The photos show that it was done in two stages: first by the Jordanians, in 1953, then by the Israelis, in 1985. A slide from 1964 (figure 13) shows the 1953 Jordanian concrete lintel that widens the gate; the same device is maintained by the Israelis at the beginning of their occupation of the Old City after the June 1967 war, as shown in figure 14: note, on the left, an Israeli soldier sitting in front of the wooden gatehouse. The Jordanian device persists, for a short time, until the further widening that can be seen today in the many photographs visible on the internet, with an aesthetically improved lintel modified by two lateral curves; the ground had to be lowered slightly to allow the passage of oversized vehicles.

Using the scarce documentation, we are able to suggest an architectural evolution of the Mughrabi Gate, which in our view has witnessed more transformations than did any of the other city gates. The city maintained, through its gates, a global architectural heritage, going back several centuries to the early Ottoman period and earlier. Not many historical cities, in our twenty-first century, can pretend to this achievement. We also note that the many wars the city was subjected to did not significantly alter the appearance of those gates.

The peculiarity in the several transformations of this modest structure can be explained by its location: it is the only southeast gate, with its sensitive surroundings, the village of Silwan and the Kidron valley, and its well-known water resources. The city's needs were conflicting: the need to protect against enemies was accommodated by the Ottomans with the addition of a second, outer tower. On the other hand, the need to facilitate the circulation of people and commodities towards the south of Jerusalem led to the dismantling of the towers, stage by stage. We acknowledge that we have not found any written records to substantiate this perspective. This article is in large part a reconstruction of possible trajectories, using maps and mostly old photographs.

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Figure 1. Excerpt from a map of Jerusalem, drawn by Father Louis-Hugues Vincent of École Biblique, 1912. The location of the two "Mughrabi gates," the one to the Haram al-Sharif platform and the one in the southern city wall, are circled. Courtesy of École Biblique library.
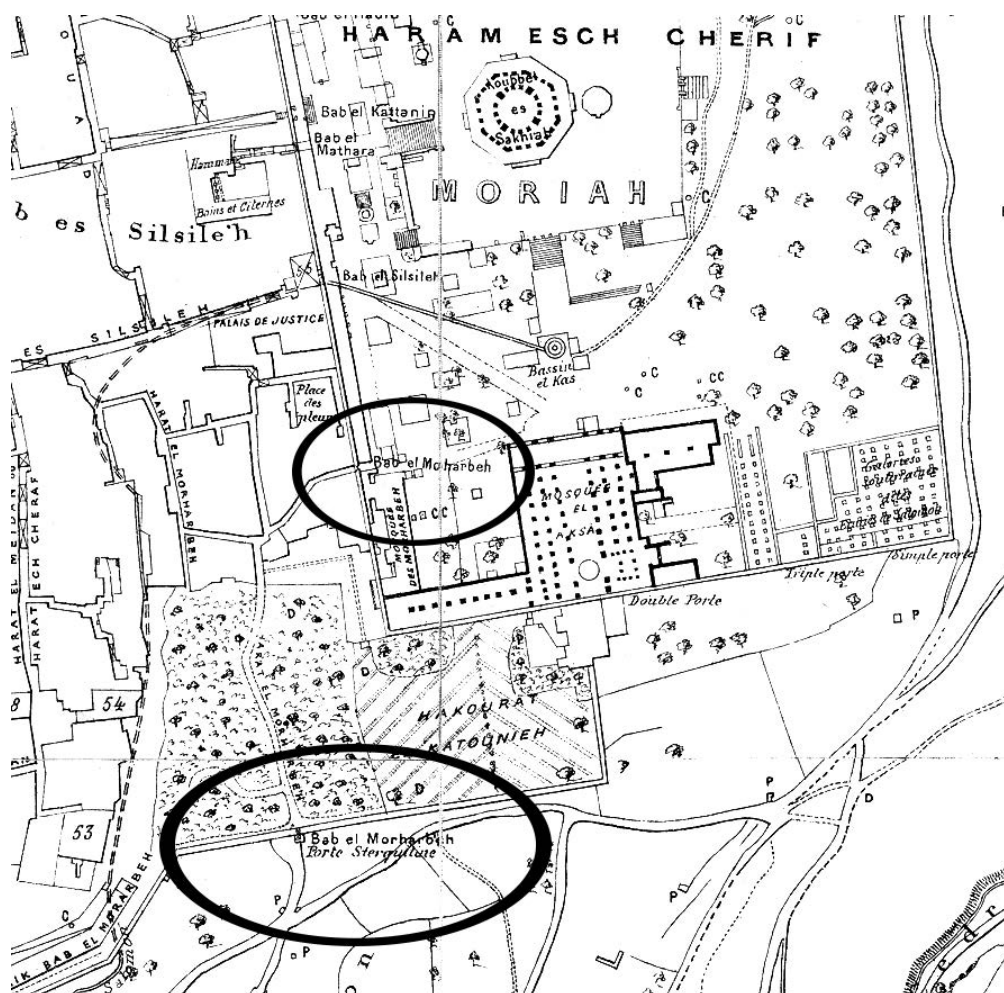
Figure 2. Excerpt from a map of Jerusalem, drawn by a French priest in 1888, l'abbé Henri Nicole. Courtesy of Ecole Biblique library.
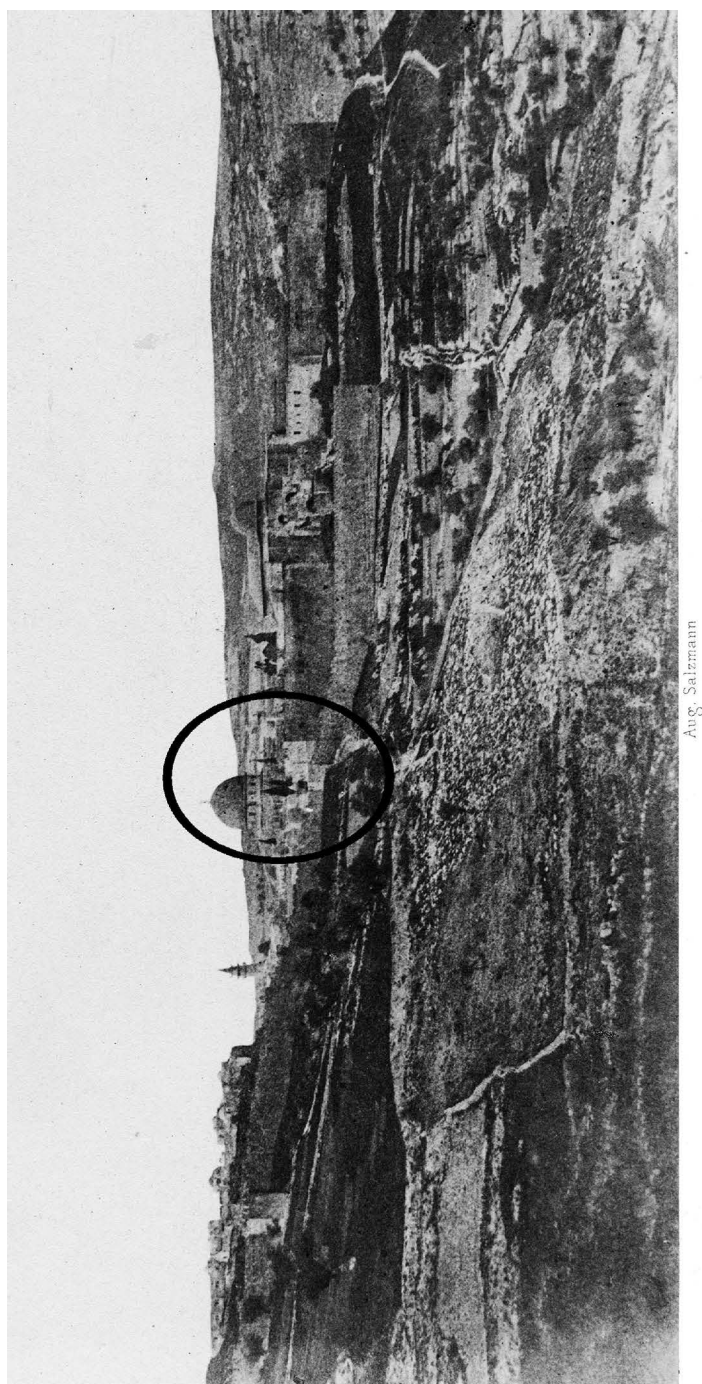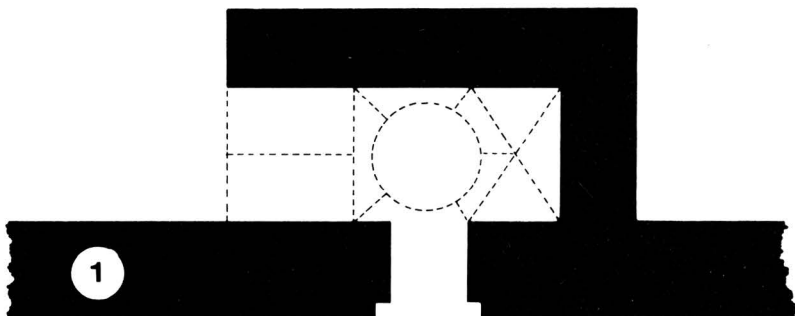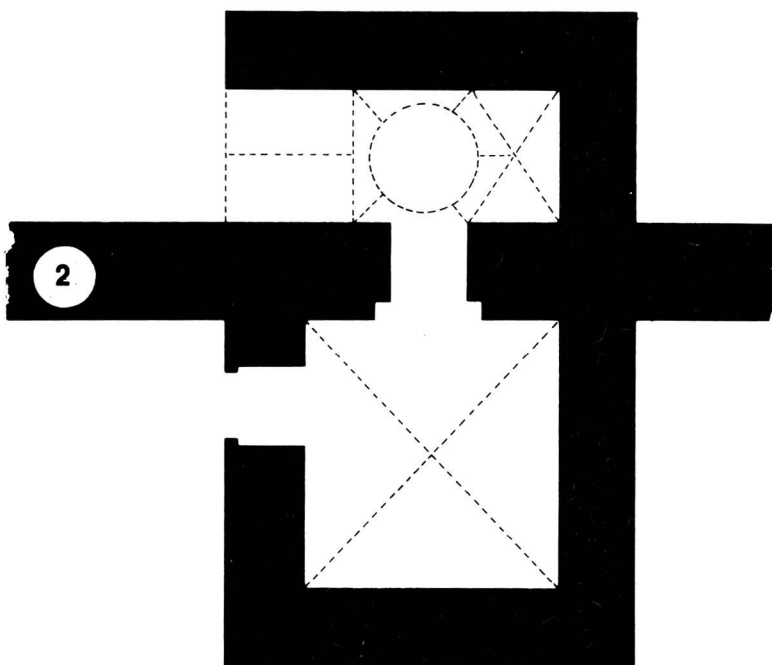
Figure 3. One of the oldest photos of the southeast city wall, by August Salzmann, 1854, and the only old one showing Mughrabi Gate. From the photo book of Salzmann, courtesy of the École Biblique, scan no. 15746.

Dung Gate: plan of the original stage with the gatehouse
built inside the city wall

Dung Gate: plan of the second stage, after the additional
gatehouse was built outside the city wall to strengthen
the defenses

Figure 4. Archaeological sketch of two phases of the Mughrabi Gate through the ages, as interpreted by Meir Ben-Dov in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Hillel Geva (Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 317–20.
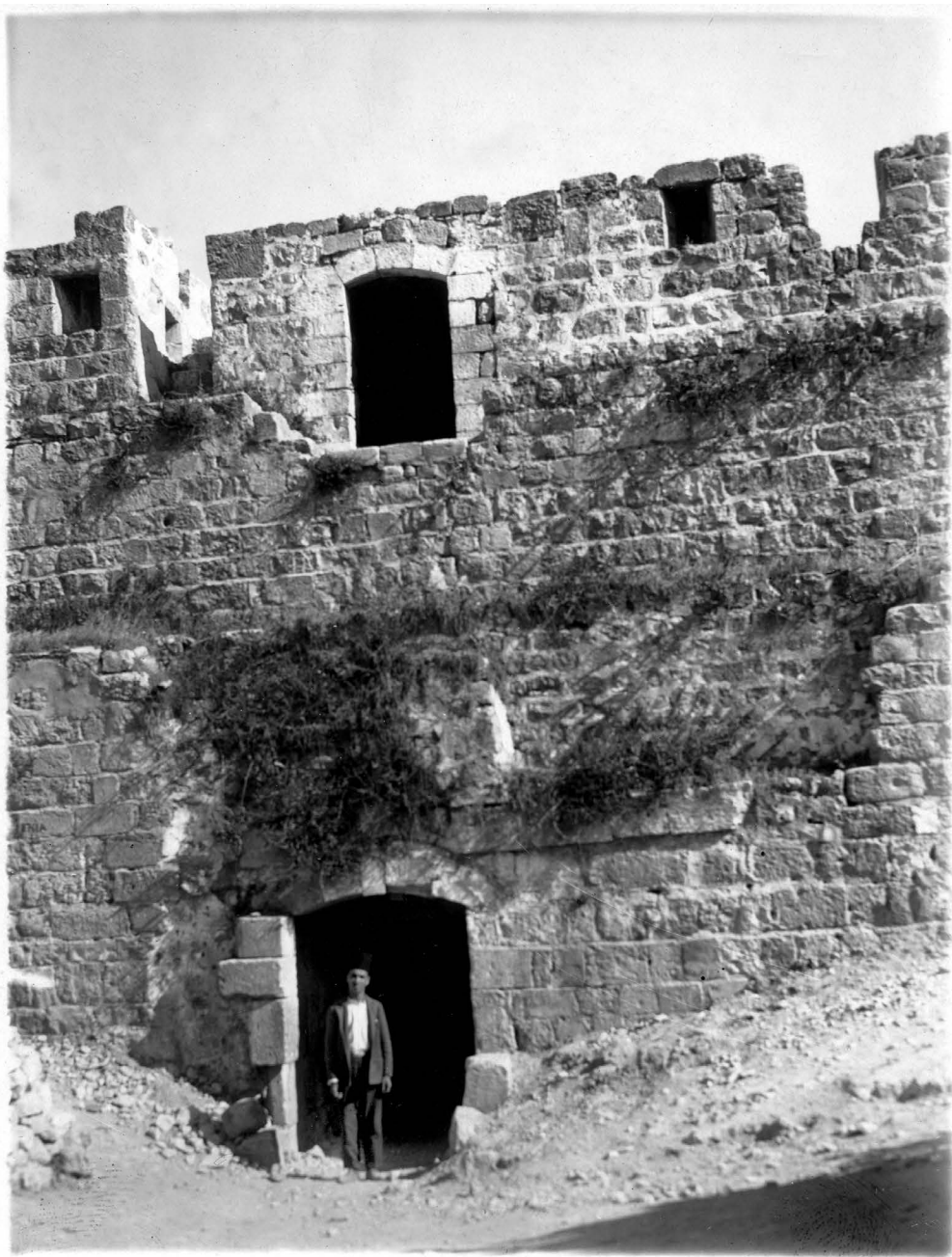
Figure 5. Inner face of Mughrabi Gate, photographed by Fr. Ferrero in 1930. Fr. Ferrero was a Spanish Dominican friar, studied at École from 1929 to 1931. He donated his entire collection of photographs pertaining to the Holy Land to the École Biblique. Courtesy of École Biblique, scan no. 10794.
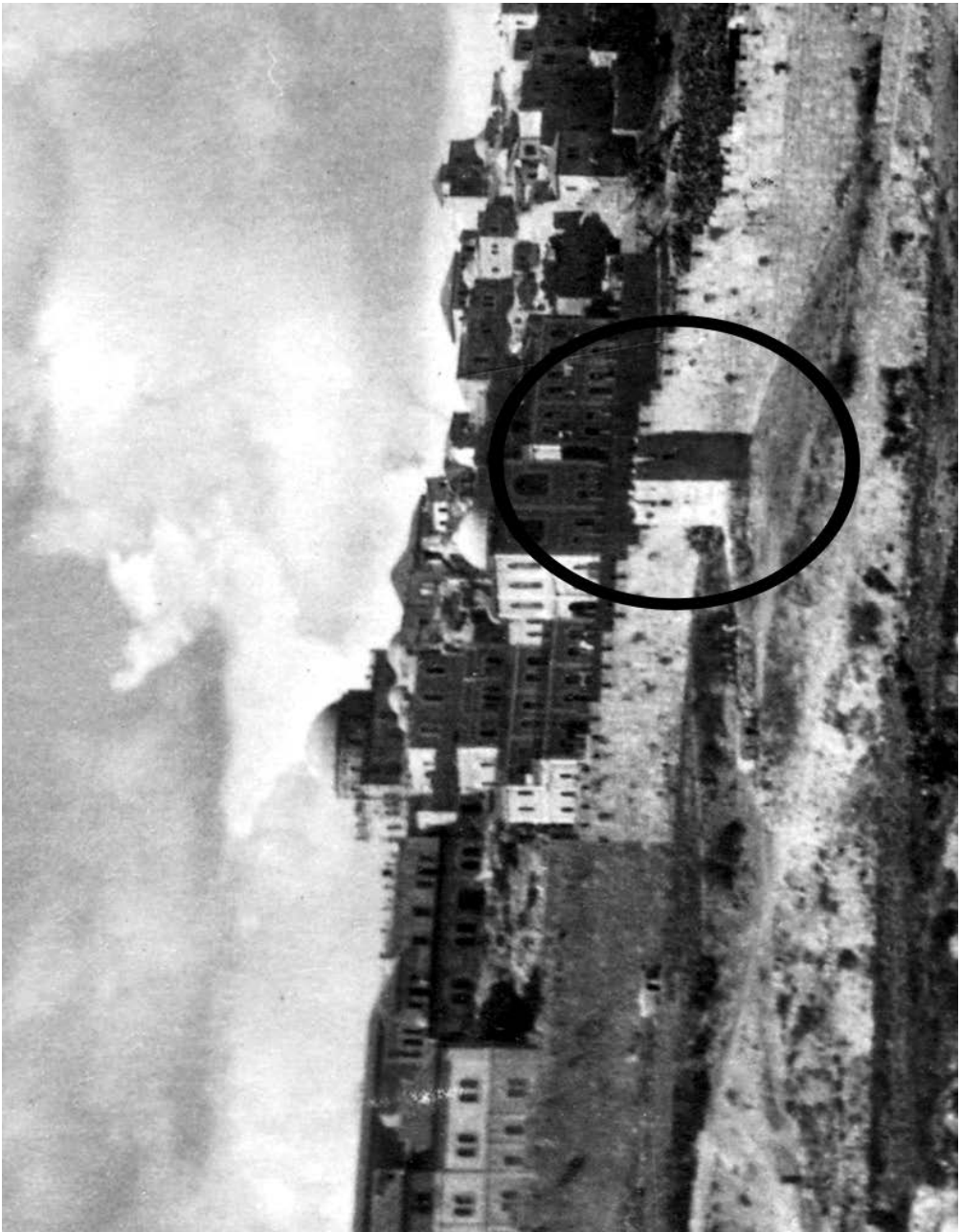
Figure 6. Mughrabi Gate and tower from a distance, seen from above Silwan village, from east to west. Excerpt of a photograph by Khalil Ra'd, no date, probably early British Mandate period, from a small print in a studio photo album, lent to École Biblique in 2015 by a private collector (two albums, now destroyed in an accidental home fire). Courtesy of École Biblique, scan no. 24004.
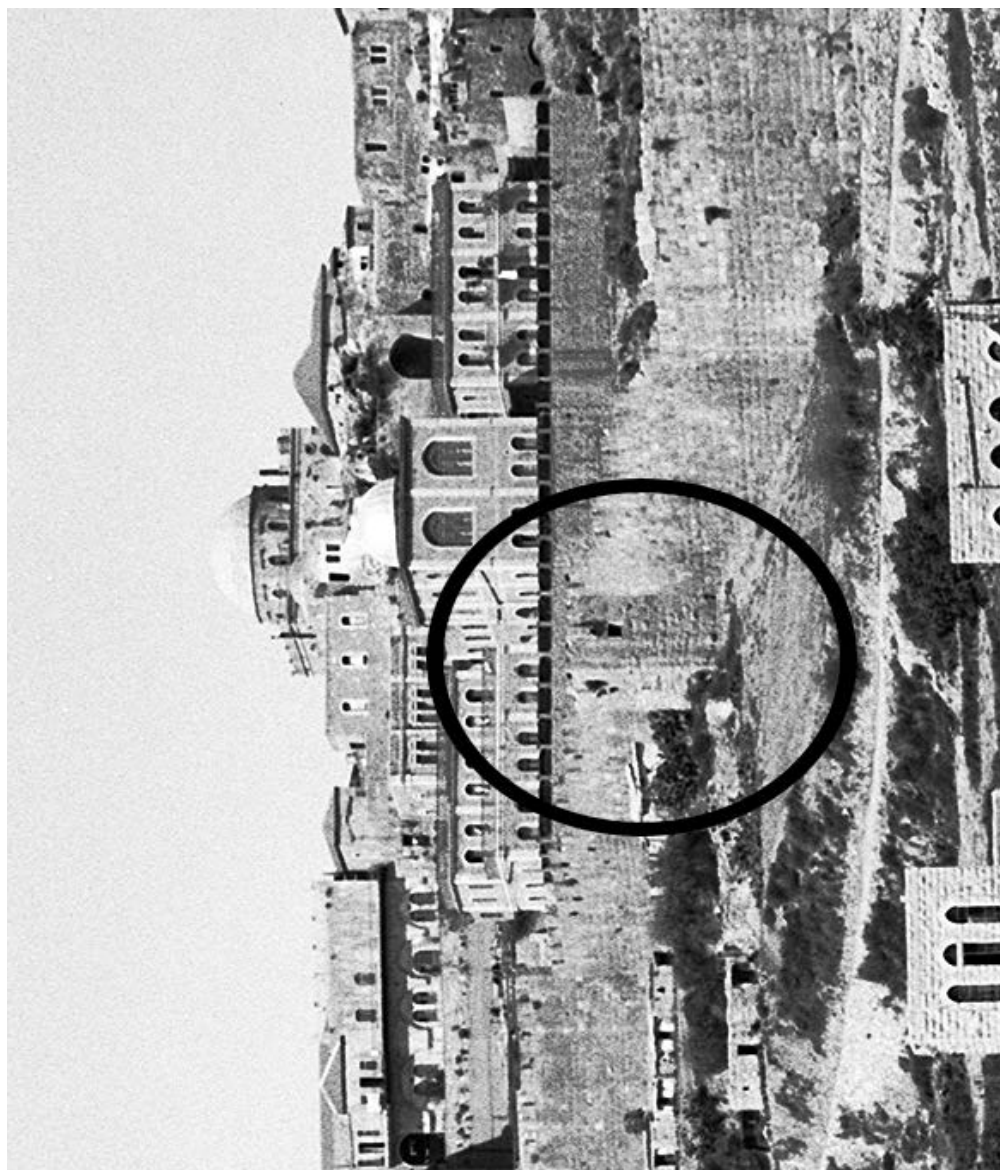
Figure 7. Mughrabi Gate with its tower, seen from afar, east to west, the Jewish Quarter in the background. Excerpt of a photo from the Jesuit Fathers of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (PBI) in Jerusalem, no date. The circle shows the tower of Mughrabi Gate, the Jewish Quarter as before 1948 and a few buildings along the path to Mughrabi Gate, which were not existing in the photo of Ra'd (figure 6). We can estimate the date as the last years of the British Mandate period. Courtesy of the PBI, Jerusalem, paper-print from an album, scan no. 16691.

Figure 8. Mughrabi Gate seen from afar, the Jewish Quarter in the background, east to west. Excerpt of a photo from the Jesuit Fathers of the Pontifical Biblical Institute (PBI) in Jerusalem, no date. The crop shows Mughrabi Gate *without* the tower – and the Jewish Quarter as before the war of 1948. The date should be the very last years of the British Mandate period. Courtesy of the PBI, Jerusalem, paper-print from an album, scan no. 16801.

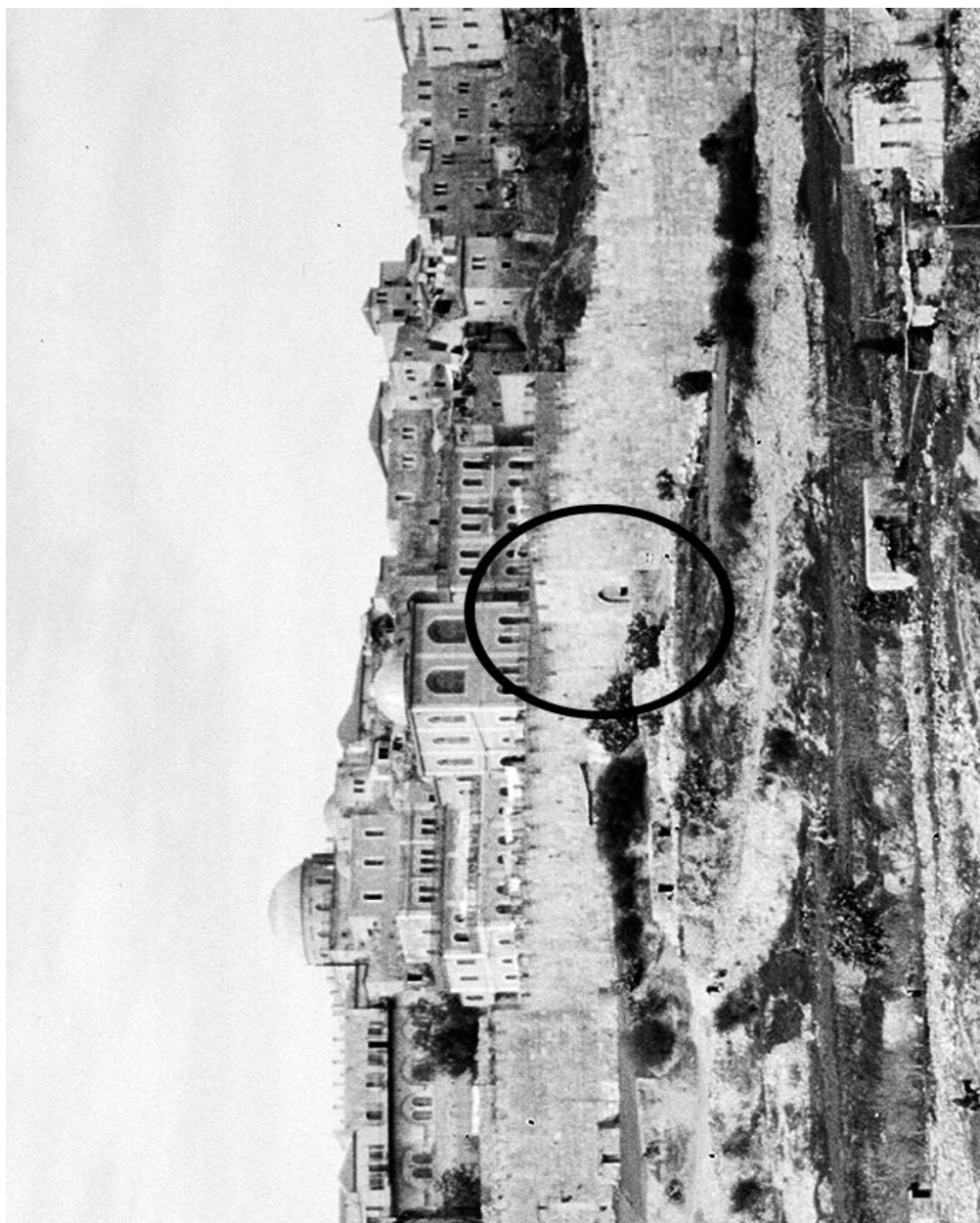Figure 9. Tower of Mughrabi Gate, close up from west to east, alongside the city wall. The black oval on the photo points out the strange slit separating the tower from the wall, no date. Perhaps at the beginning of the dismantling process, a professional architectural photo to document the tower. Original negative probably at the Rockefeller Museum. Courtesy of École Biblique from a print in a private collection lent for scanning, scan no. Ely 10.

Figure 10. Tower of Mughrabi Gate, close up from south to north, no date. Courtesy of École Biblique, from a paper print, issued by the Studio of Khalil Raʻd, scan no. 24494.

Figure 11. Mughrabi Gate in 1958, from the east. Excerpt from a color slide, scanned in black and white. The black circle shows the place of Mughrabi Gate, seen from east to west, Jordanian period, 1958. Collection of Fr. Giraud-Mounier, courtesy of École Biblique photo archive, scan no. 023.
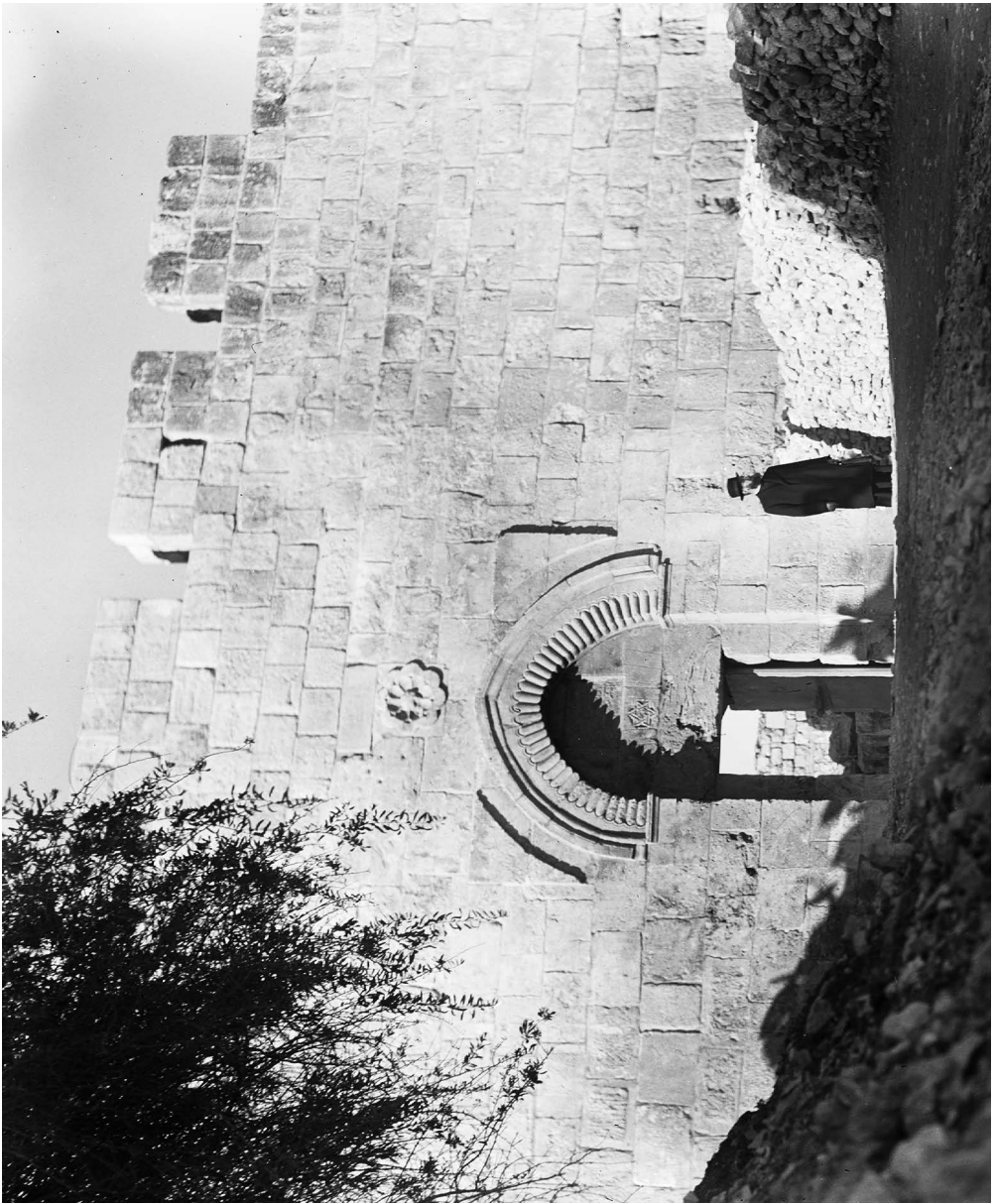
Figure 12. Close up of Mughrabi Gate from outside the city wall, south to north. No date, but between 1948 and 1964 (see figure 13). The gate is not yet enlarged by the Jordanian Municipality. A Jesuit priest gives a human scale to it. Courtesy of Pontifical Biblical Institute, Jerusalem, paper print scan no. 16804.
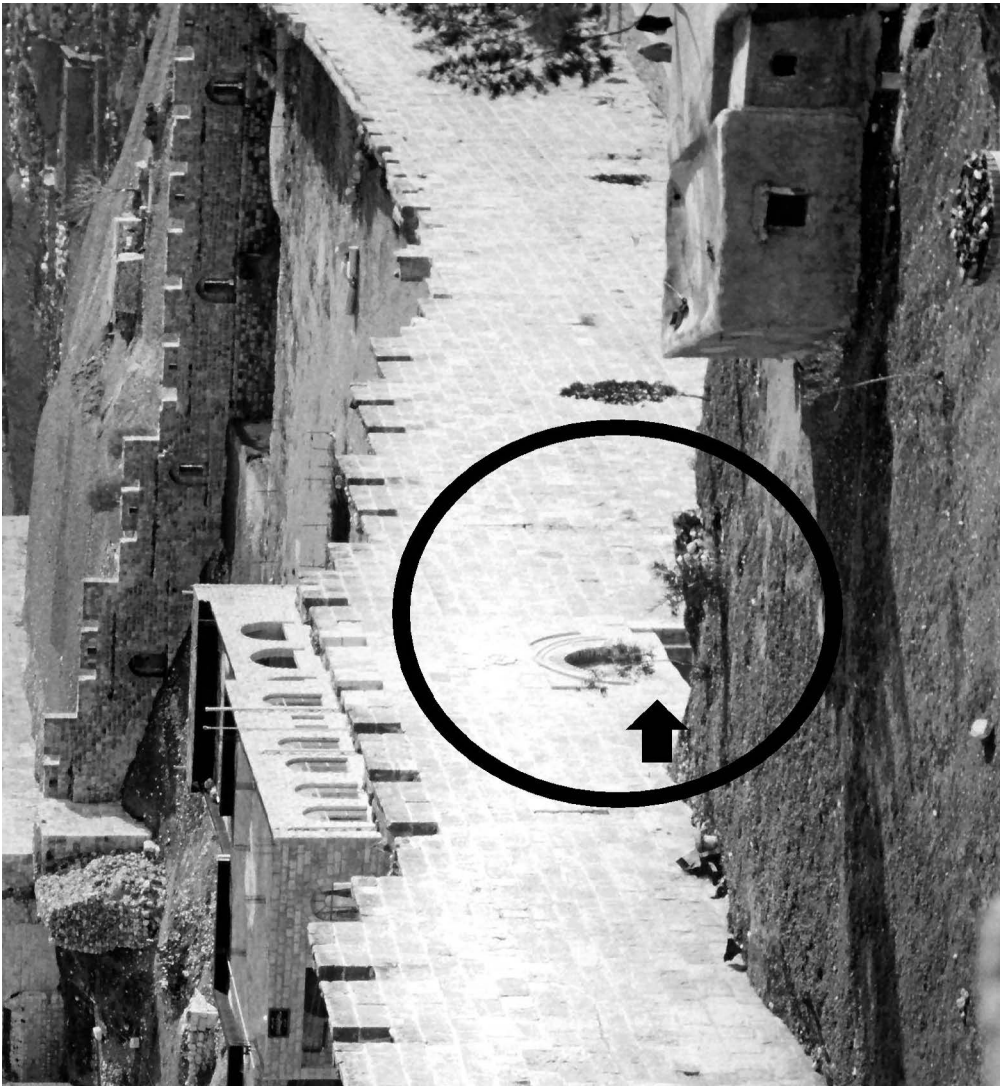
Figure 13. The southern city wall of Jerusalem, viewed west to east, with a glimpse of the Mughrabi Gate (black circle and black arrow), showing the widening of the gate by the Jordanian administration, done in 1953. In order to leave way for motor cars, a concrete lintel has been inserted in the city wall, as shown in figure 14. Crop of a color slide from 1964, scanned in black and white, gift to École Biblique from the family of a French pilgrim to the Holy Land.
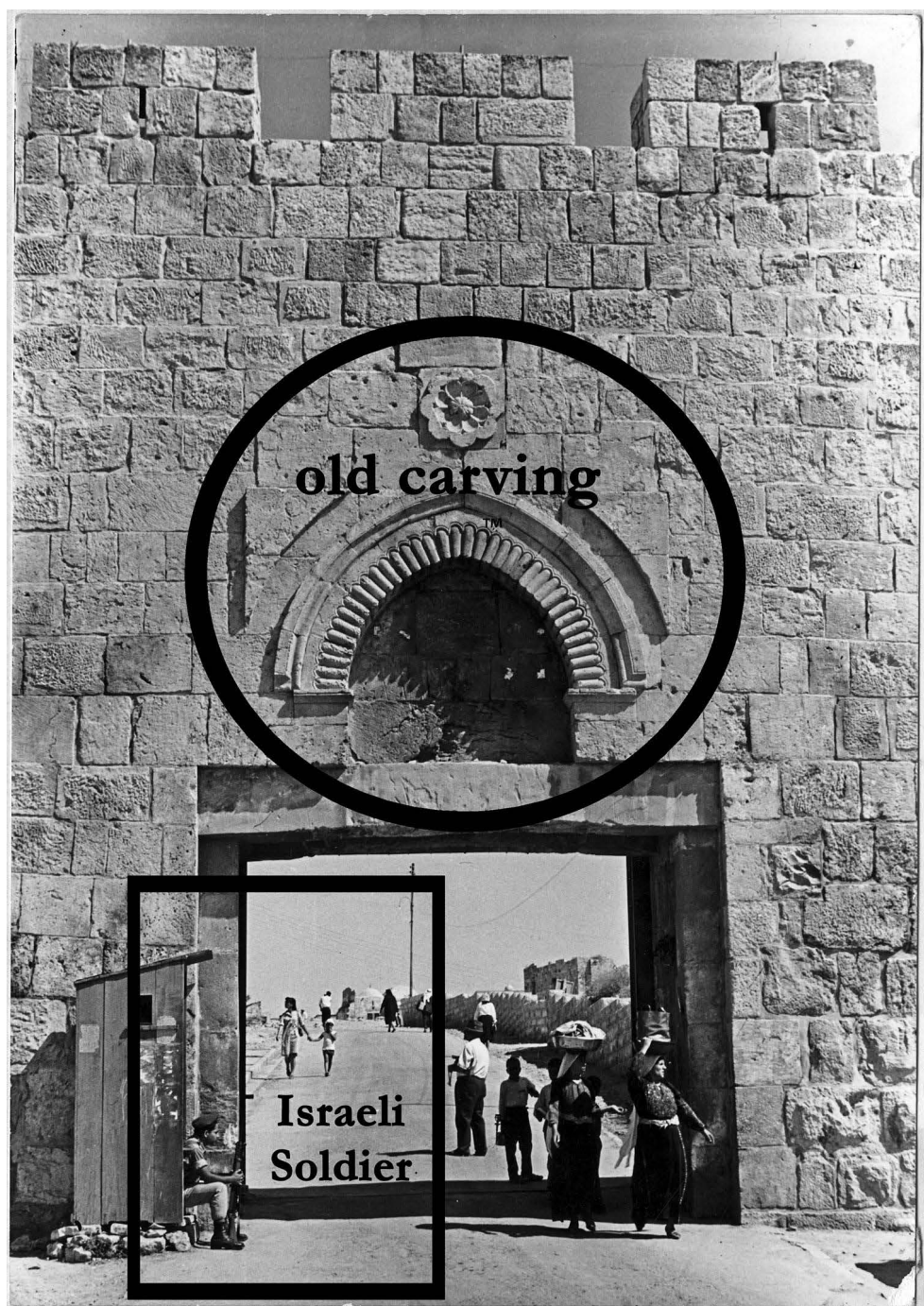
Figure 14. Close up of the outer facade of the Mughrabi Gate in 1967–68. The last stage of the gate before today's, which is now enlarged and deepened by the street having been lowered. Courtesy of École Biblique from a print in a private collection lent for scanning, scan no. Ely 09.

Endnotes

1 The old condition of Lions' Gate, on the other hand, is well documented in the oldest photographs. In addition to a Salzmann photo of 1854, there is a J. Roberston & F. Beato photo of 1857 – and Bonfils number 273 – that show the interior of the baffle still in place, with the passage being accessed (from the outside) by turning to the left in the gatehouse. However, another Bonfils a few years later, the new vertical version of number 273, shows the new door pierced. Dozens of other photographers will attest to this novelty, whose origin was the need to allow the horse-drawn carriages, or fiacres, to pass, as the guests of honor of the Austrian Hospice.

2 The gate was closed in 1842, according to W.H. Bartlett, *Walks about the City and Environs of Jerusalem*, 2nd ed. (London: Strahan, 1850), 127.

3 See "Plan de la Ville de Jérusalem dressé en 1888 par l'abbé Henri Nicole," Paris (at the École Biblique).

4 See *Ordnance Survey of Jerusalem, 1864–65*, ed. Charles W. Wilson (London: Authority of Lords Commissioners of Her Majesty's Treasurer, 1886).

5 See Meir Ben-Dov in *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, ed. Hillel Geva (Jerusalem: Israel Exploration Society, 1994), 317–20.

6 Geva, *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, 217–19.

7 For instance, see two early 1940s photos in Matson (G. and Edith) Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC: "Dung Gate," online at (loc.gov) bit.ly/3CGCXml; and "Dung Gate," online at (loc.gov) bit.ly/3eFMGRJ (accessed 5 October 2022).

8 Also see the map of 1894 by J. Bliss in A.C. Dickie, *Excavations at Jerusalem, 1894–1897* (London: Palestine Exploration Fund, 1898).

9 *Ancient Jerusalem Revealed*, 318, right column.

10 See *Jerusalem: The Saga of the Holy City* (Jerusalem: Universitas-Publishers, 1954), foldout at end of book.

A New Horizon in an Old City

Amin Shunnar, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* Magazine, and the Intellectual History of 1960s Jerusalem

Adey Almohsen

Abstract

This article offers a window into the intellectual history of Jordanian-ruled Jerusalem during the 1960s by means of a deep study of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* (New Horizon) – a Jerusalemite cultural and literary serial, which ran from 1961 to 1966 under the editorship of Palestinian poet Amin Shunnar (1933–2005). The bulk of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s content took Palestine as a core concern and saw in it a creative intellectual impetus. This article parses the contents of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* and the writings of its editor on the 1948 Nakba to evoke a picture of cultural life in Jerusalem on the eve of Israeli occupation.[1]

Keywords

Jerusalem; Nakba; *iltizam* (commitment); Amin Shunnar; *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* (New Horizon); intellectual history; print culture; Jordan; Palestine

Shunnar: When did [you] begin writing?

Malhas: Right after the Nakba. Unquestionably, the Nakba had been the catalyst.

—"Colloquim on the Short Story," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* (May 1962)[2]

Jerusalem has often been cast in binary terms: East versus West, Old versus New, tradition versus modernity, stasis versus progress. Indeed, former inhabitants

of East Jerusalem during its Jordanian period (1950–67) remember it as a "feudal, clannish" place with "little cosmopolitan outlook;" "a city at a dead end" arrested by the religious traditions precariously residing within its ancient walls.[3] West Jerusalem, in contrast, has been exalted as the city's "more dynamic half;" a modern metropolis, home to art galleries, fashion boutiques, and lively coffee shops.[4] After the 1948–49 Arab-Israeli War, East Jerusalem fell under the dominion of an illiberal monarchy that saw the city as a cultural and political challenge to its rapidly evolving seat of power in Amman. East Jerusalem may have been reunited with its western counterpart in 1967 by Israeli fiat, but it has since become an occupied city encroached upon from all angles by an Israeli government keen on squeezing out its Palestinian inhabitants to replace them with Jewish settlement.

In place of binaries and dichotomies, I put forth here the story of an intellectually vibrant East Jerusalem in the 1960s, where different ideational and critical trends wrestled and where contradictory notions about nation and literature coexisted. I retell this aspect of the city's history through an examination of that period's print culture and literary journalism. In particular, my historical inquiry is guided by a deep study of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* (New Horizon), a Jerusalemite "little magazine"[5] that ran from 1961 to 1966 under the editorship of Palestinian poet Amin Shunnar (1933–2005).[6] I read in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* the intellectual upshots of a fraught political moment in Jordanian and Palestinian histories through the lens of "Jerusalemite modernism" (*al-hadatha al-maqdisiyya*), a literary movement it represented and advanced. Jerusalemite modernism may have borrowed from comparable modernist movements in Beirut and elsewhere in the Arab world but its priorities and characteristics arose from the socio-political and cultural conditions experienced in Jerusalem and by Jerusalemites during the final days of Hashemite rule. The bulk of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s content – be it short stories, poems, articles, or news reports – took Palestine as a core concern and saw in it a creative intellectual impetus. Thus, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* represents an inimitable register of post-1948 Palestinian writing and thinking that warrants analysis. This article dissects the contents of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* and the writings of its editor on the Nakba and its effects; assesses his position on the day's intellectual battles from modern poetry to *iltizam* (commitment in literature); and repurposes the magazine's local reports to evoke a picture of cultural life in Jerusalem on the eve of Israeli occupation.

A Poet and a Periodical

In June 1967, Amin Shunnar exited Jerusalem for the last time and settled in Amman until his death on 18 September 2005 – days shy of the forty-fourth anniversary of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s first issue.[7] Shunnar may have lived into his seventies, but he did so reclusively in the fashion of a Sufi hermit.[8] Dispossession after the 1967 war and the 1970–71 civil war in Jordan weighed heavily on the sensitive Shunnar. He ceased to publish and chose to lead a lonely, pensive life with minimal social contact. Mahmoud Darwish lamented Shunnar's wasted brilliance and isolation, seeing in him "a [poetic]

talent that self-destructed too soon."[9] This article, though, presents Shunnar at the height of his career as poet, editor, critic, and novelist between 1961 and 1966.
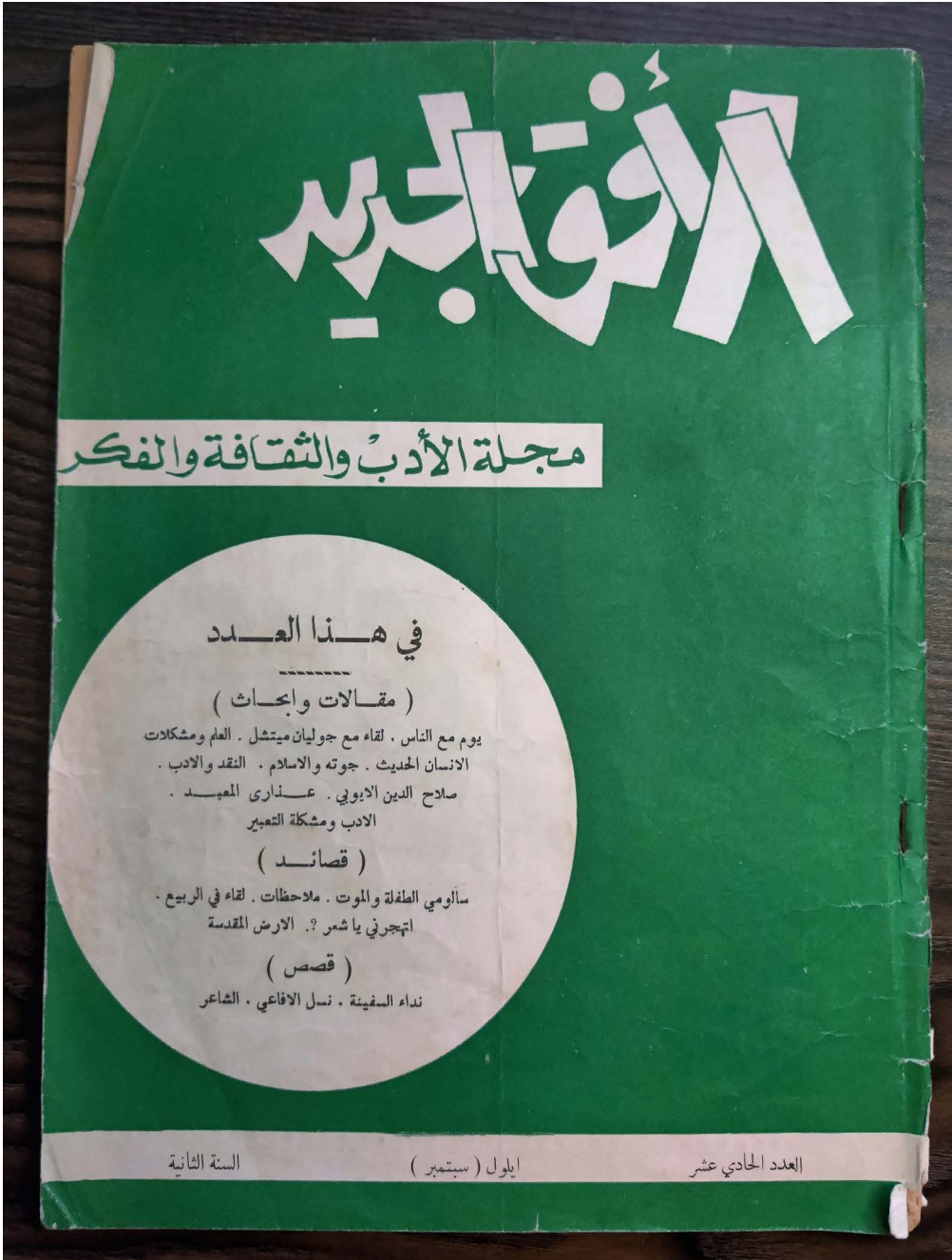

Figure 1. Front cover of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s September 1963 issue. Photo by author.

Shunnar was born in 1933 in al-Bireh. He completed his secondary schooling in 1951 and soon after taught Arabic at the Ibrahimiyya College in Jerusalem.[10] Throughout the 1950s, Shunnar published poetry in Jerusalemite papers – *Filastin*, *al-Sarih*, and *al-Jihad* – and in pan-Arab literary serials such as *al-Adab*.[11] In 1961, Shunnar attracted the attention of the owners of Jerusalem's *al-Manar* newspaper and publishing firm (Dar al-Manar), who saw potential in the young poet and singled him out to command their forthcoming cultural and literary magazine, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*.[12] Palestinian journalist Jum'a Hammad was the magazine's founding editor but his role was ceremonial and lasted for mere months. It was Shunnar who ended up editing and curating every issue of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, from its inception on 30 September 1961 until its demise on 31 October 1966. In addition to his regular editorials, Shunnar composed nineteen poems and authored dozens of literary critiques, book reviews, and philosophical essays throughout the magazine's five-year run.[13]

Al-Ufuq al-Jadid was a passionate, personal affair for Shunnar. From his "tiny office," Shunnar scrutinized every word that appeared in the magazine, corresponded with readers and contributors, posted invitations to events sponsored by *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, and offered advice to budding poets.[14] Atop his editorial duties, Shunnar absorbed himself in matters of distribution, printing, and cover design.[15] In the second issue of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, Shunnar patently laid out the intellectual and manual labor he had undertaken to put together the magazine.

> The first issue of your magazine, how was it prepared, curated, and printed? You may rightfully retort, "None of this is my business! All that matters to me is to consume the 'main dish' as I would like" . . . But do not I have the right, as well, to provide you with "the receipt"? Listen thus.
>
> A stream of written contributions hits my desk; this is followed by a process of reading, sifting, and selecting what ought to appear in a given issue. As soon as this process concludes another begins, that of planning. Planning is first done on paper, with materials arranged in a form that pleases the reader, as you have seen. Thereafter, the printing press is contacted; and their "huge" machine is then set in motion to carve out the beautifully crafted plan unto the mud of reality . . . This would have not been possible without the press first agreeing to spare us their time and energy for a few days determined by "the logic of numbers and accounting." Only then were we able to determine, for you, my dear reader, the date of our first rendezvous . . .
>
> . . . All this is uncomplicated in comparison to the mother of problems: organization! Specifically, the assembling and arranging of materials for the printing press . . . They would say: this subject did not fill the sheet, fill it! This topic exceeded its allotment, cut it down! And I would cry: No, no, we must stick to the plan I designed.

> . . . There is far more which one could detail, but I merely hoped to disclose to you the magazine's invoice; and for it you owe us nothing since you have gratefully paid off your share.[16]

A tad dramatic, this quote underscores Shunnar's devotion to the venture that was *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* as well as his attentiveness to its day-to-day operations.[17]

Shunnar was equally keen on turning his magazine into a democratic forum during an era of authoritarian rule in Jordan and most of the Arab world, a sentiment he stated from the first issue of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* in September 1961: "We aim for this magazine to be a meeting place where varying tendencies engage [and] a domain where ideas, from all horizons, tussle earnestly and productively."[18] Jordanian novelist and parliamentarian Fakhri Qa'war remembered Shunnar – his Arabic teacher at Ibrahimiyya College – as an "open-minded, creative human," whose tolerance and grace were reflected in his cultivation of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* into a fertile ground for the emergence of diverse forms of thinking as well as in the care he conferred upon young writers.[19] Throughout his editorial career, Shunnar remained faithful to making *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* accessible to a multiplicity of viewpoints. Therefore, it was not surprising to find, at times within the span of a single issue, contributions from those holding as divergent views as the Nasserite Iraqi poet 'Abd al-Wahhab al-Bayati; the liberal-leaning Jabra I. Jabra; the leftist, feminist Syrian novelist Ghada al-Samman; or the conservative Islamist Muhammad I. Shaqra.[20]

Al-Ufuq al-Jadid published poetry and short stories, covered and promoted art exhibitions, and included primers and full studies on a range of topics: from philosophy, psychology, and astronomy to linguistics, history, and religion.[21] The magazine's cohort coordinated a series of public lectures; conducted interviews with local intellectuals or those touring Jerusalem; and organized symposia on topics such as: science and the modern human, the crisis of Arab thinking, and literature east and west of the Jordan River. Shunnar also commissioned the translation of material into Arabic, including forty-six short stories by three dozen authors – with the lion's share of translations stemming from the American literary canon, including several short stories by Pearl Buck, John Steinbeck, and Ernest Hemingway.[22]

As an editor and an educator, Shunnar also wished to keep his readers abreast of cultural happenings in the region. He thus regularly solicited friends to send *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* reports covering literary events, book launches, and musical concerts in Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, and Beirut.[23] The late Palestinian poet and critic 'Izz al-Din Manasra recalled his first meeting with Shunnar in October 1964 before leaving for Cairo University. A villager from Hebron, Manasra visited Shunnar in his Jerusalem office with a basket of grapes in hand. And though Manasra felt embarrassed by his rustic gift and dreaded the meeting, Shunnar greeted him calmly and invited him to publish his poetry in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* and to serve as its correspondent in Cairo.[24] Even as Manasra began to lean leftward during his studies in Cairo, Shunnar continued to publish his contributions and, in a later meeting, told him that what ultimately mattered is "creative ability and multiplicity in thought" not partisan politics.[25]

Figure 2. Coverage of one of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s symposia on the topic of modern science and a picture of its participants (left to right: Hind al-Husayni, Yusuf al-Najjar, 'Abd al-Rahim 'Umar, and Amin Shunnar). Photo by author.

Shunnar's commitment to promising authors from either bank of the Jordan River was most apparent in the arena of the short story, employing his magazine and his critical intellect to sharpen their skills. Across seventy-plus issues, Shunnar sanctioned the publication of 117 short stories by forty-six writers, who mainly hailed

from Jordan, Jerusalem, and the West Bank.[26] Shunnar and seasoned critics evaluated published short stories and extended recommendations in a dedicated section titled "In Critical Balance" (*fi mizan an-naqd*).[27] After 1967, this generation of short-story writers – which benefited from Shunnar's generosity and convened on the pages of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* – came to modernize the short-story genre well beyond Jordan and Palestine and took the magazine's name as their historic moniker: *jil "al-Ufuq al-Jadid"* ("New Horizon" Generation).[28] This youthful cohort – which included the established Palestinian novelists Mahmud Shuqayr and Yahya Yakhluf – experimented with the literary genre, publishing short stories that took the Nakba and the Palestinian experience as central themes.[29] Over the years, the quality of these short stories improved, particularly with regards to the Nakba, as writers gave up tropes of "lost paradise" and instead attended to the tragedy's density in individual and social terms and contemplated questions of "struggle, nostalgia, and consciousness."[30] Indeed, a member of that generation of short-story writers, Subhi Shahruri, suggested that *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* represented a "point of rupture" in the history of Palestinian letters, thwarting "the literature of bereavement, sad oranges, and lost paradise."[31]

The Nakba's Horizon

Jordan's political atmosphere constricted considerably over 1957–58; two thunderous years that had seen the dissolution of Sulayman al-Nabulsi's progressive government, the prohibition of political parties, the merger of Syria and Egypt into the United Arab Republic, and a bloody coup deposing the Hashemite monarchy in Iraq.[32] Even as these developments heartened Jordan's opposition front of Arab nationalists, Ba'thists, and communists, King Hussein managed to defuse internal and external threats to his crown through a campaign of repression and with the apprehensive support of London and Washington.[33] With the break of the 1960s, in an attempt to segment the country's political opposition and to drum up the loyalty of the (East) Jordanian population, the Hashemite cultural regime enacted what had been retroactively labelled as a process of "bedouinization" – endorsing an exclusivist nationalism that appealed to primordial ties of "religion, tribe, clan, and family" and that othered Palestinians in radio, music, soccer, and food.[34] These national and cultural transformations intensified the alienation of West Bank and Jerusalem Palestinians and rekindled the flame of a separate Palestinian identity inside the "unified" kingdom – a development that would hit its apex in 1964–65 with the establishment of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the rise of the militant wing of the Palestinian National Liberation Movement (Fatah).[35] This independence was detectable in Shunnar's *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, whose literary preoccupation designated it as a site of elusive resistance, where political messages panning the "Arab regime" (*al-nizam al-'Arabi*) – a polysemous yet nebulous target – were variably cloaked in the garb of short stories, poems, or critical essays. Displays of this increasingly autonomous Palestinian identity appeared in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* between 1961 and 1966, perhaps best exemplified in the magazine's attitudes toward the Nakba and its legacies.

Shunnar inaugurated *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* with an editorial outlining the magazine's motives and aims. Although such opening gambits were common practice, what was unprecedented was Shunnar's treatment of the Nakba as his magazine's *raison d'être* from the start: "Exactly in this country – where the horizon of the Nakba stretches before our eyes and where the nation of aggression stands in our face as a ringing reminder of our people's infirmity and failure – there is dire need for a literary renaissance that depicts the catastrophe's horrors and vividly perpetuates its memory."[36] Even more, Shunnar intended for *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* to be a springboard for a movement in arts and letters "which relives the Nakba's diverse emotions . . . and discloses its torments potently and piercingly."[37] As a whole, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s first issue foretold Shunnar's zeal to spotlight Palestinian voices. It featured an autobiographical short story by Mahmud al-Irani recounting expulsion from Jaffa and the miseries of refugee life; a painting by Palestinian artist Kamal Boullata portraying what appears to be an aging refugee donning a *kufiya*; a critical study of the poetry of Fadwa Ṭuqan by Palestinian academic 'Isa Boullata; and an account of upcoming publications and translations by Palestinian exiles Samira 'Azzam and Salma Khadra' Jayyusi.[38]

Shunnar returned to address the Nakba and its literary outcomes in November and December 1961. He bemoaned that, despite their preponderance, literary expressions of the Nakba – or *adab al-nakba* – had foundered in communicating its gravity.[39] According to Shunnar, Nakba literature had been characterized so far by "distasteful verses, jarring slogans, lame efforts, and boorish outcomes."[40] To counter this, Shunnar advised future writers, poets, and artists to produce works stemming from the peculiar experiences of the Nakba and to do so genuinely without "conjuring ideas or aesthetics external to our individuality, sentiment, and sensibility."[41] Shunnar closed by warning that the question of Nakba literature was not simply aesthetic but existential and historical. Failure to illustrate the Nakba and its pains creatively meant that the historical record would write off Palestinians as a people whose tragedy "removed them from their homeland and robbed them of their affects and their humanity."[42]

With Shunnar having fired the first salvo, debate over the Nakba and its literary outputs soon engrossed established authors alongside lay readers and Palestinian refugees. By the end of 1961, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* had received dozens of letters and postcards on the topic – most of which stressed the need for a literature capable of captivatingly and originally articulating the profundity of the Palestinian Nakba.[43] One such letter maintained that the Nakba had become the raw material of "false slogans" and "skin-deep, contrived ardor."[44] Another letter hoped for a Nakba novel that could acutely convey its experiences to a global audience, proposing John Steinbeck's *The Moon Is Down* (1942) as a yardstick.[45]

Impassioned exchanges about the Nakba, its meaning, and its literature were not limited to *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s first year. One noteworthy discussion unfolded in early 1964, shortly after *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* announced the results of its short-story contest. The main theme of the contest, as Shunnar stipulated in July 1963, was the "Palestinian Nakba, in its impacts or manifestations."[46] The jury withheld the first prize, citing the lack of a worthy contender from the forty-plus submissions they had

received. Instead, they selected eight short stories for the remaining prize pool with the promise of serializing them across *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s third year issues (1963–64).[47] A reader from Irbid wrote to *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* in March 1964 taking issue with the entry submitted by Palestinian writer Subhi Shahruri, which took third place in the contest, criticizing it as a "mediocre story that failed to voice the Nakba."[48] Shahruri responded in the following issue, stressing the need to define the Nakba before passing judgment or posing criticism, and adding that the Nakba's immediate meaning differed from its comprehensive effect. The former referred to the specific events of 1947–49 and the mass exodus of Palestinians, whereas the latter concerned the Nakba's legacy as the harbinger of crises in the Arab world and as the root of Palestinian and Arab failures in the contemporary period. Shahruri blamed the critic for overlooking the fact that his short story had dealt with the Nakba in the second, far-reaching sense. In closing, Shahruri opined that the Nakba could not be limited to its palpable economic, social, and political harms. Why? Because the Nakba has effectively become "our general environment and the air we breathe, penetrating every aspect of our lives including our dreams … [and our] unconscious."[49]

In January 1965, Shunnar dedicated one of the magazine's lengthiest issues to the thorny subject of Nakba literature.[50] In preparing this special issue, Shunnar posed the following question to Arab and Palestinian intellectuals: "None of the Nakba literature that had been published thus far merits memorialization as an existential record of its history. How would you interpret this curious phenomenon?"[51] Shunnar opened the special issue by suggesting that much of what has been produced under the banner of Nakba literature was driven by a "mercurial affection [which] chokes literature's breath of life."[52] Moreover, the absence of a work of Nakba literature worthy of veneration reflected larger civilizational crises in the Arab world. However, breaking out of this cycle of stagnation was not impossible. "This tomorrow," according to Shunnar, would be within reach once Palestinians and Arabs are no longer "spun by the Nakba's vertigo and crushed under its weight."[53]

Jabra Ibrahim Jabra was the earliest to entertain a response to Shunnar's query. He disavowed Shunnar's assured tone and felt that it was impetuous to pass final judgment on Nakba literature. A more productive question, Jabra suggested, would have been about "the Nakba's bearing on literature."[54] Since 1948, no work of literature or poetry could escape "the Nakba's atmosphere and psychological world," even if it does not deal outright with "the subjects of refuge, exile, valor, martyrdom, or any other tragic aspect of the Nakba."[55] Jabra implored Shunnar and other intellectuals to uphold all works of Nakba literature – regardless of their caliber and canonical value – and to treat them as "existential records" and parts of a greater Nakba archive.[56] Salma Khadra' Jayyusi likewise objected to Shunnar's arbitrary assumptions about Nakba literature and explained that our "entire lives have been touched by the Nakba and all [Arab] writing had been inspired by it."[57] Jayyusi found a fair amount of Nakba literature to be of "good and very good quality;" however, the discrete and scattered nature of this corpus prevented these works from receiving the exposure they deserved.[58] This cross-examination of Nakba literature equally ensnared a young 'Izz

al-Din Manasra. He suggested that, in spite of its abundance, Nakba literature did not reach the level of a "world literature."[59] This ill-fated actuality was due to three main reasons, according to Manasra: the unending disagreement over the basic causes of the Nakba; the reluctance of eminent Arab intellectuals to produce works that would enrich the Nakba's canon; and, the lack of historical knowledge about the Nakba in the Arab cultural field and its marginal resonance therein.[60]

Although a poet by training, Shunnar paid a great deal of attention to the arts scene in East Jerusalem and his magazine documented local exhibits and opened its pages to Palestinian artists. In April 1963, for instance, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* covered an art exhibit held in Jerusalem and interviewed its participants. The Nakba and its tragic scenes inspired many of the paintings and sculptures at this exhibit, as reflected in the titles of the works on display: "Refugee Women at a Spring," "The Dispossessed," "The Tent," and "Behind the Barbed Wire" among others.[61] The artists – who hailed from both banks of the Jordan River and who were evenly divided between men and women – regarded the Nakba as "a starting point" and a force thrusting them to "illustrate the hope of return."[62] In his report, Shunnar intimated that this exhibit promised a bright future for the arts in Jerusalem and signified "the crystallization of an artistic renaissance . . . which will express, truthfully and forcefully, the calamity of Palestine and which will reveal the dawn of [our] imminent return."[63] Shunnar had what he ached for in the following year, with East Jerusalem hosting exhibits for three Palestinian artists. In January 1964, an exhibit in the Ambassador Hotel featured works of the Nablus-born 'Afaf 'Arafat upon her return from an arts fellowship in England.[64] Arafat's paintings adorned *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s February 1964 issue and a young Vladimir Tamari reviewed her works. In May 1964, another exhibit was organized by Isma'il Shammut and Tamam al-Akhal – a wedded pair and lifelong artistic partners. This was not the first time *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* featured Shammut and Akhal; indeed, reproductions of their artwork regularly graced the magazine's covers and pages.[65] In an interview about their 1964 exhibit in Jerusalem, Shammut and Akhal identified the Nakba as the spark of their creativity and the "school" to which their paintings belonged – as opposed to any other established tendency.[66] Shammut stressed the need to convert Jerusalem into a hub for Nakba art (*fann al-nakba*) through exhibits and educational programs. Doing so would not only eternalize the memory of the Nakba among Palestinians but would broadcast their national cause via the universal language of art. Shammut compared his artistic mission to that of a "soldier" and considered his paintings "a weapon [he] brandish[es] to defend [Palestine]."[67] In concert, Akhal argued that painting represented a potent tool to record a people's history and to convey their experiences to a global audience. It was this desire to chronicle the Nakba that animated her work and Shammut's. Ultimately, Akhal believed that her paintings and Shammut's – which stemmed from their personal tragedies of dispossession from Jaffa and Lydda, respectively – constituted a "historical register . . . of our humanity as a people."[68]

Within the intellectual history of the Arab 1960s, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* was without equal. No other magazine treated the Nakba as its *raison d'être*. No other magazine

focused on Palestinian concerns so intensely and so frequently. Pan-Arab serials and circles gave core Palestinian topics, including the Nakba, only marginal coverage before 1967. Consider, for instance, how the 1957 Arab Writers' Congress in Cairo spoke of Palestinians as an abstract mass of a "million refugees" and how they reduced their plight to an imperial plot against the "sacred cause" of Arab unity.[69] Shunnar's *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* by contrast entertained dozens of theoretical debates on the Nakba, with those presented here only a miniscule portion. Further, the magazine and its editor took practical steps toward developing a distinct Nakba literature. This was evident in the care Shunnar devoted to short-story writers. He organized colloquia on the future of the short story; tended to young talents and gave them constructive criticism; and designed a contest for the Nakba short story in 1963. *Al-Ufuq al-Jadid* therefore surpassed its animus. More than just a magazine, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* was the nexus of a full-blown modernist intellectual movement in Jerusalem. This movement, with Shunnar at its head, succeeded in establishing East Jerusalem as a center for modernist arts and letters. Crucially, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* and Shunnar achieved this at a time when the Jordanian administration shored up Amman as the kingdom's cultural capital and consigned Jerusalem to the status of a tourist attraction.

To Commit or Not to Commit

Despite its preoccupation with the Nakba and other Palestinian concerns, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* did attend to its Arab sphere and to the intellectual battles unraveling around it. *Al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s lifespan, 1961–66, coincided with escalating disputes over literary commitment (*iltizam*)[70] and poetic modernism[71] across the Arab world. Shunnar was mindful of these intellectual battles and held personal views on them. Still, Shunnar wanted *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* to be a "free-for-all field of play," where everyone was welcome regardless of their intellectual and literary politics: "This magazine is not bound by a specific trend in literature nor does it belong to a particular school of thought . . . it is an establishment whose wealth derives from a fidelity to principled ideas and whose *modus operandi* lies in the advancement of independent thinking."[72] *Al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s first symposium in September 1961 addressed these region-wide dynamics and spelled out the priorities of the magazine and of its nascent cohort. The symposium's participants – Shunnar, Palestinian author Mahmud al-Irani, and Jordanian intellectuals Husni Fariz and 'Abd al-Karim Khalifa – conceded that the raging issue of "commitment (*iltizam)* versus freedom" was a distraction and a "fad," a vain battle whose warring factions were detracted from producing literature "emanating from dilemmas on the ground."[73] For Shunnar and his guests, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* should not decree that writers "comply with a specific tendency"; rather, it should labor "to create a fitting creative environment," wherein budding talents from both banks of the Jordan River could prosper.[74]

Although Nakba arts and letters were key concerns for *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, Shunnar did not see their future in *iltizam*. Why? Because *iltizam* "defiled the purity of the word" and its partisans reduced writing to the ammunition of their "futile and savage

war."[75] Shunnar also decried art's lost potential in the age of *iltizam*: "Art was once an escape, a haven, and a salvation. . . . Why has art become a captive and a serf; ordered, directed, and commanded?"[76] Instead, Shunnar appealed to Palestinian writers and artists to leave behind the "incessant controversy surrounding *iltizam* and the purposefulness of literature" and to create works that rise to "the level of life – our life – in its depth, acuity, and density."[77] Shunnar was not alone. Fadwa Tuqan, when asked about the topic in an interview with *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, stated that she "neither accepted nor tolerated *iltizam*" and refused to be a "poet for the cause" – as did her brother Ibrahim Ṭuqan.[78] Drastically, she added that she would favor "deadly silence" over the composition of poetry fitted to a mold or circumscribed by an issue.[79] For Tuqan, "genuine poetry" had no blueprint from which to work.[80] It was simply stimulated (not stipulated) by the truth and spontaneity of personal and national misfortune.[81] Shunnar's poetry in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* echoed these values. His poems – written in free verse (*shi'r al-taf'ila*) – were deft and elegant; modernist in construction and contemporary in vocabulary, yet heavily grounded in the mud of the Nakba and its lived effects and affects. Such was the case in "*al-Sa'm*," ("Tedium"), one of Shunnar's early poems in the magazine, where he described the bleak and weary nature of the Palestinian condition and the futility of Arab solidarity, which offered Palestinians nothing more than contempt and the negation of their autonomy.[82]

> Joseph, thus, sunk deep in the well
> And the night squeezed its light from his eyes . . .
>
> . . . Dear God, if I were to dwell here, I would be torn apart by the sword of tedium.
> And, if I were to be extracted by the feet of ants dipped in blood,
> I would trade my spirit for penitence . . .
>
> . . . [Joseph:] My soul wishes for a hurricane of flames
> To exacerbate the pain; to resurrect the memory in my heart.
> Only then I could live with my body and soul
> Away from the well, free from deceit.
> Yet what have I endured but tedium,
> Chewing my days, grinding my soul, and disgorging my heart,
> Before disposing of me like bits of ember.
>
> What if I yell from the pit of my misery: "O, Sama'!"
> And my melody becomes mightier than the hand of death . . .
> . . . Ugh, if my shrieks could shake off
> The darkness of the well and force the serpents to retreat in humiliation.

Yet, every time I frightfully screamed: "O, Sama'! It is you
Who bridges the abducted body and the stabbed soul."
She would ridicule me. She would deny me.
She would shout – as the ants listened on the walls of the well:
"There is no point in waiting. And for the defeated no escape.
Dead you are . . . and your well bottomless."[83]

In his critical texts, Manasra claimed that Shunnar's poems – and those who took inspiration from him in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* – had as their objective "the destruction of . . . Nakba poetry [*shi'r al-nakba*]."[84] This was far from the case. Rather, as the prior section proves, Shunnar and *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* sought to develop a distinct form of Palestinian art, poetry, and literature. A literature that renounced *iltizam* without rejecting its focus on the real world. A literature that embraced modernism without mimicking its fetish to experiment for the sake of experimentation. And, most significantly, a literature which defied the Nakba's negative impact and mutated its tragedy to a modernizing, creative force of change. Shunnar's poetry in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* thus signified a move from the realm of theory to that of praxis; from conceptualizing a Nakba literature to composing it. In effect, what Shunnar offered his readers – in and through *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* – was an indigenous and modern poetic formula capable of expressing the pains of the Nakba without hyperbole.

Unfortunately, however, the modernist movement that *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* engendered was obscured not so much by the magazine's demise in 1966, but by what came to be known as "resistance literature" (*adab al-muqawama*). And, as the irony of history would have it, it was on the pages of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* where the Galilee's resistance poets first appeared – slightly before their espousal by Ghassan Kanafani and Beirut's periodicals.[85] The 1960s writings of Kanafani – simultaneous to *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* – had proposed the evaluation of literature in terms of a given text's reflection of the "commitments and tasks of the Palestinian cause."[86] In distinguishing certain literature as resistant – and therefore Palestinian – Kanafani sought to delimit a Palestinian canon that omits the anxieties of exile in favor of nationalist pragmatics. To put theory into praxis, Kanafani introduced the reader to the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish and other Galilee poets as a model to be emulated by future writers. Kanafani thus shirked the abstract poetry of exile in favor of the concrete "poetry of the occupied land," which sharply portrayed Palestinian resistance inside Israel. After the 1967 war, Kanafani's literary theory that measured Palestinian writing against a yardstick of resistance would be translated in military terms with the PLO's institutionalization of a Palestinian national culture that sanctified the rifle. Ultimately, I argue that both the notion of resistance literature and the "lost years" narrative, which claims that Palestinians were in a state of cultural and political inertia in the Nakba's immediate aftermath, complement one another.[87] Jointly, they efface Palestinian thinking of the 1948–67 period – *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* presenting a case in point – as either non-resistant and thus insignificant and unworthy of canonization, or as non-extant due to the debilitating shocks of the Nakba.[88]

Conclusion

Despite his take on the debates of his day and despite his literary preferences, Amin Shunnar was exceptionally democratic in his editorial role. Shunnar included classical metered poems alongside modern free ones, and published the opinions of those who attacked him. In one instance, a conservative critic objected to Shunnar's slippage into the realm of "cryptic and symbolic poetry" – a reference to Shunnar's 1957 poetry collection, *al-Mash'al al-Khalid* (The eternal torch), composed in classical verse.[89] Even more, the critic indicted *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* for its participation in a "poetic Nakba," disseminating poetry that was "nauseating" and foreign to the Arab spirit.[90] Shunnar gracefully responded by elucidating that the magazine welcomed all kinds of poems – metered or not – and that its only criteria were sincerity and artistry.[91] Manasra, likewise, noted Shunnar's democracy and cited that *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* has been described as "a magazine owned by the Muslim Brotherhood,[92] edited by an existentialist-Tahriri poet,[93] and filled with contributions from communists, Arab nationalists, Ba'thists, monarchists, independent leftists, and liberals."[94] Still, the question begs: why *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*? Why Shunnar? And why Jerusalem?

Al-Ufuq al-Jadid – not just as a magazine but as a sweeping intellectual project – stands as an exceptional chapter in the intellectual history of Palestinians, albeit one that is underhistoricized and undertheorized.[95] After the expulsion of 1948, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* succeeded in intellectually, if not physically, repatriating Palestinians in Jerusalem and in offering them a literary home from where they could ponder their exile and its antinomies. *Al-Ufuq al-Jadid* was unlike any of its contemporaries. Its contents encompassed the diversity of Palestinian intellectual history before 1967 in poetry, short stories, criticism, and essays. Shunnar shepherded this diversity of voices into a peculiarly Palestinian modernist movement. The events organized by *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* and its coterie transformed East Jerusalem into a central node within the larger map of Arab modernisms in the wake of World War II – a modernism whose beating heart was the Nakba. Still, being in Jerusalem – and thus on the margins of 1960s Arab intellectual history – accorded Shunnar and his magazine critical distance from the heated intellectual battles waged in Cairo and Beirut. In effect, this participation from the periphery allowed *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* to escape doctrinaire positions espoused by magazines such as *al-Adab*, *al-Thaqafa al-Wataniyya*, and the Egyptian serials commandeered by the likes of Yusuf al-Siba'i, the brigadier-cum-intellectual and cultural trustee of Egyptian president Gamal Abdul Nasser.

Despite its openness and vigor, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* did not escape the usual fate of most little magazines: bankruptcy and eventual dissolution. *Al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s closure coincided with Jerusalem losing out to Amman as Jordan's cultural capital after years of systemic neglect from the central government.[96] The magazine's parent company, Dar al-Manar, responded to the situation in 1966 and elected to cease operations in Jerusalem and to move to Amman together with their printing press.[97] The move was also prompted by Dar al-Manar's unwillingness to continue funding what they deemed to be "a source of deficiency" for their business.[98] Escalating problems crushed Shunnar

and *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* that year, with the Jordanian Ministry of Education delivering the coup de grâce when it reneged on its subscriptions to the magazine.[99] According to Palestinian critic Khalil al-Sawahri, the ministry's subscriptions and donations had kept the magazine afloat and without them *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* was no longer a tenable undertaking.[100] Shortly after its last issue in late 1966, Shunnar penned a eulogy for *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*, whose closure he felt as a "cataclysmic loss."[101] He accused Jordanian and Arab cultural authorities of failing to subsidize the magazine and lamented that *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* had sprouted in soil hostile to critical thought.

> With its last issue this week, the journey of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* magazine has ground to a halt. The seeds of its morbid fate have been planted in its viscera since birth . . . This magazine did not germinate in a healthy environment, because in our enormous Arab world there exists no foothold for genuine cultural magazines. It was born an alien and lived its short life as do vagabonds: sheltering in the shade, muttering to the few, and fading day-by-day like a candlelight . . .
>
> . . . Why was this magazine fated to death? Do not ask me. Pose the question to the cultural regimes in our Arab world. Why have they chosen to spurn the pure and bright word? . . . Do not ask me. Pose the question to the masses of readers enslaved by nude imagery, excited by the frivolous and the pallid, and delighted by the vacuum of chaos! Do not ask me. For the magazine's final issue was a witness, a foretoken, and an indictment.[102]

The Jerusalemite modernism that Shunnar's *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* embodied did not go unnoticed, nevertheless. The high priests of Arab modernism in Beirut – Unsi al-Hajj, Yusuf al-Khal, and Shawqi Abi Shaqra – surely recognized it in 1968 when they awarded Shunnar and the Jordanian Taysir Sbul first place in a literary contest organized by *Mulhaq al-Nahar*, the Lebanese newspaper *al-Nahar*'s weekly cultural supplement, which featured over a hundred submissions from all corners of the Arab world.[103] In spite of this moment of fame and acknowledgement, Jerusalemite modernism was quickly forgotten. Yet, this probably had more to do with the movement's inopportune historical timing than with any lack of ingenuity. The movement that *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* represented and Shunnar headed was caught between two transformative moments in Arab intellectual history. On one end, it was buffeted by the boisterous deliberations over *iltizam* and the modernization of Arabic poetry (*al-hadatha al-shi'riyya*). And on the other end, it was overshadowed by the monster that was Kanafani's resistance literature and the poetry of the occupied land. In the final analysis, Shunnar and *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* provided a unique modernist experiment and put forth an alluring literary prototype – that of a modern Palestinian literature grounded in the reality of the Nakba and unencumbered by avant-garde excesses. Sadly, this experiment and this prototype did not survive the tremors of 1967. Shunnar himself retreated after

the 1967 war and occupation and the carnage of Black September in 1970, giving up poetry and leading a cloistered life in Amman.

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Endnotes

1   All translations are by the author unless otherwise noted. Research for this article was partially supported by a grant from the Palestinian Museum, Birzeit. Portions of this article were adapted from my award-winning doctoral dissertation: Adey Almohsen, "On Modernism's Edge: An Intellectual History of Palestinians After 1948" (PhD diss., University of Minnesota, 2021). This article offers a primer for a fuller investigation of Jerusalem's print culture and intellectual history during the Jordanian period that is the focus in my evolving monograph (see author's bio).

2   Amin Shunnar, ed., "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*: ma' al-qissa" [*al-Ufuq al-Jadid* colloquium: on the short story], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 16 (May 1962): 20.

3   Quotes culled from the descriptions of the city's former inhabitants, including American diplomat Eugene Bird and Palestinian surgeon and Jerusalem native John N. Tleel, from: Kai Bird, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate: Coming of Age between the Arabs and the Israelis, 1956–78* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 3; Laura S. Schor, "Jordanian Jerusalem: 1948–67," in *Sophie Halaby in Jerusalem: An Artist's Life* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2019), 112; and John N. Tleel, *I Am Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Dimitri Road, Old City, 2000), 106.

4   Bird, *Crossing Mandelbaum Gate*, 3; Schor, "Jordanian Jerusalem," 114.

5   Many "little magazines" are printed literary serials that defy custom, celebrate experimentation, and dwell on the fringes of intellectual culture. Little magazines – being rebellious by nature and non-commercial in intent – have attracted avant-garde writers unable or unwilling to publish their work in the "dignified press." It is not surprising, therefore, that the history of little magazines had been bound up with modernism the world over. Editors of little magazines have contributed likewise to the medium's peculiarities. Shunnar in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* viewed the commercial press with apprehension and attributed to it much of the Arab world's cultural failings. Not unlike his international peers, Shunnar stressed the need for literary modernization and reform. Eric Bulson, *Little Magazine, World Form* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017), 1–4, 21–22. Frederick J. Hoffman, Charles Allen, and Carolyn F. Ulrich, *The Little Magazine: A History and a Bibliography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947), v, 1–5; Amin Shunnar, "Qari'i al-'aziz [My dear reader]," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 17 (June 1962): 47; Amin Shannar, "al-Turath al-Mu'asir" [Contemporary heritage]," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 3, no. 11 (October 1964): 1.

6   Ziyad A. Salama, "Amin Shunnar: masira adabiyya wa fikriyya" [Amin Shunnar: a literary and intellectual journey], *Afkar* (Amman), no. 253 (2009): 84.

7   Salama, "Amin Shunnar," 85.

8   For more on Shunnar's Sufism, refer to: Muhammad Abu Rumman, "al-Tasawwuf ghayr al-mar'i: al-adab wa-l-thaqafa wa-l-fann" ["Invisible" Sufism: literature, culture, and art], in *Asrar al-tariq al-sufi: mujtama' al-tasawwuf wa-l-zawaya wa-l-hadhrat fi la-Urdun* [Secrets of the Sufi path: Sufi society, spaces, and practices in Jordan] (Bonn and Amman: Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, 2020), 305–15.

9   Hamdi al-Sakkut, ed., *Qamus al-adab al-'arabi al-hadith* [Dictionary of modern Arab literature] (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-Misriyya al-

'amma li-l-kitab, 2015), 127.

10 Ibrahimiyya College was a primary and secondary school founded in 1931 in Jerusalem by Palestinian educationalist Nihad Abu Gharbiyya (1913–2009). "Mu'assis al-kuliyya wa bani sarhiha al-shamikh" [The college's founder and builder of its lofty edifice], Ibrahimiyya College website, online at www.ibrahimieh.edu/articles/view/18 (accessed 1 March 2021); Salama, "Amin Shunnar," 84.

11 Shunnar published his first poems in Jerusalem's *al-Sarih* when he was a high school student in 1949. In 1957, Shunnar selected some of his early poems and collated them into a collection titled *al-Mash'al al-Khalid* (The eternal torch). Ibrahim Khalil, *Amin Shunnar: al-sha'ir wa al-Ufuq* [Amin Shunnar: the poet and the horizon] (Amman: Matabi' al-dustur al-tijariyya, 1997), 16.

12 Salama, "Amin Shunnar," 84.

13 Khalil, *Amin Shunnar*, 15–17.

14 Shunnar even dedicated a regular section of the magazine to amateur writers titled New Talents (*mawahib jadida*). There, young writers shared drafts followed by critical comments from Shunnar and others. Ziyad A. Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil: dirasa fi fikrihi wa adabihi* [Amin Shunnar – the generation's educator: a study on his writings and thought] (Amman: Wizarat al-Thaqafa, 2020), 483.

15 Khalil, *Amin Shunnar*, 15–17.

16 Amin Shunnar, "Qari'i al-'aziz," 47–48.

17 Mohammad Shaheen, professor emeritus of English, University of Jordan, recalls a "drained" Shunnar "squatting" outside the printing press to make sure proofs of a given issue of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* were organized and published to his liking. Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil*, 488.

18 Amin Shunnar, "Qari'i al-'aziz," 49.

19 As quoted in Muhammad 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira fi Filastin wa al-Urdun: mundhu nash'atiha hatta jil* al-Ufuq al-Jadid [The short story in Palestine and Jordan: from its genesis to the generation of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*] (Amman: Jordanian Ministry of Culture, 2001), 42. For examples of Shunnar's support to young writers, consult Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil*, 486, 490–91.

20 See, for example: *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 3 (November 1961); vol. 1, no. 16 (May 1962); vol. 2, no. 10 (August 1963); vol. 3, no. 1

(December 1963); and vol. 3, no. 4 (March 1964). Palestinian novelist Mahmud Shuqayr also recalled how Shunnar made it possible for Jordanian communists banned and persecuted by the regime and its intelligence services – to send their different contributions to *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* under pseudonyms. Shuqayr quoted in Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil*, 483–84.

21 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 42–43.

22 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 52–53. Short stories authored by these three American authors appeared in *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 15 (May 1962); vol. 2, no. 1 (November 1962); vol. 2, no. 10 (August 1963); vol. 2, no. 11 (September 1963); and vol. 3, no. 8 (July 1964).

23 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 42–43.

24 'Izz al-Din Manasra, *Haris al-nass al-shi'ri: shahadat fi al-tajriba al-shi'riyya* [Guardian of the poetic text: testimonies of poetic experience] (Beirut: Dar kitabat, 1993), 65.

25 'Izz al-Din Manasra, "Amin Shunnar: al-Quds tajma'una (shahada)" [Amin Shunnar: Jerusalem unifies us (a testimony)], *Afkar*, no. 241 (2008): 74.

26 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 52–53.

27 Shunnar and *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* signaled their interest in modernizing and developing the craft of the short story east and west of the Jordan River early and on more than one instance. Two issues from May 1962 reported on the outcomes of a colloquium Shunnar organized around the topic of the short story, which included three veteran authors: Mahmud Sayf al-Din al-Irani (1914–1974) from Jaffa, 'Abd al-Rahim M. 'Umar (1929–1993) from Tulkarm, and Amin Faris Malhas (1923–1983) from Jerusalem. During the colloquium, Shunnar and Amin Malhas discussed the possibility of starting "a society for the short story that would be sponsored by *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* and tasked with helping amateur writers in all possible ways." Moreover, *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* dedicated its November 1962 issue to the short story. "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*: ma'a al-qissa," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 15 (May 1962): 6–9; "Nadwat al-Ufuq al-Jadid: Ma' al-qissah," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 16 (May 1962): 17–20; *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 2, no. 1 (November 1962); 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 208–10.

28 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 52–53.

29 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 211–13; Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil*, 499.

30 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 26–27, 52–53, 211–13.

31 Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil*, 480–81.

32 Avraham Sela, "The West Bank under Jordan," in *The Palgrave Handbook of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan*, ed. P. R. Kumaraswamy (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019), 283–93.

33 Lawrence Tal, *Politics, the Military, and National Security in Jordan, 1955–67* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 54–66.

34 Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 71–79; Beverly Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: A Hashemite Legacy*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2009), 37–39.

35 Sela, "West Bank," 283–93; Naim Sofer, "The Political Status of Jerusalem in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan 1948–67," *Middle Eastern Studies* 12, no. 1 (1976): 79–84.

36 Amin Shunnar, "Hadhihi al-majalla" [This magazine], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 1 (September 1961): 1.

37 Shunnar, "Hadhihi al-majalla," 1.

38 *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 1 (September 1961): 14–15, 18, 21–22, 35.

39 Neither Shunnar nor his contemporaries appear to have ever defined the term *adab al-nakba* (Nakba literature). Rather, their writings imply an intersubjective understanding of Nakba literature to mean any fiction and non-fiction writing by Arabs or Palestinians that takes the 1947–49 Nakba as a core inspiration, concern, theme, trope, or impetus.

40 Amin Shunnar, "Hawla adab al-nakba" [On Nakba literature], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 4 (November 1961): 1.

41 Amin Shunnar, "Adab al-nakba" [Nakba literature], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 5 (December 1961): 1.

42 Shunnar, "Hawla adab al-nakba," 2.

43 "Munaqashat" [Debates], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 5 (December 1961): 41.

44 Hasan al-Tal, "al-Ihsas wa-l-mufakkir al-mujahid" [Perception and the fighter–thinker], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 6 (December 1961): 44.

45 Ahmad Hasan Abu 'Arqub, "Adab al-nakba" [Nakba literature], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 6 (December 1961): 45.

46 "Shurut al-musabaqa" [Terms of the competition], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 2, no. 9 (July 1963): 11.

47 "Nata'ij al-musabaqa" [Competition results], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 3, no. 1 (December 1963): 85. The first prize was seven Jordanian dinars, equivalent to two hundred U.S. dollars in 2022.

48 Abu al-Qasim, "Munaqashat" [Debates], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 3, no. 4 (March 1964): 46.

49 Subhi Shahruri, "Munaqashat" [Debates], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 3, no. 5 (April 1964): 43–45.

50 Translations from this issue of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* on Nakba literature alongside an introduction to it – prepared by Adey Almohsen and Nora Parr – will be published next year in the *Journal of Arabic Literature* as part of their special issue titled: "Palestine as Theory."

51 Amin Shunnar, "Hawla adab al-nakba," 3.

52 Amin Shunnar, "al-Nakba wa-l-adab" [The Nakba and literature], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 4, no. 1 (January 1965): 1–2.

53 Shunnar, "al-Nakba wa-l-adab."

54 Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, "Hawla adab al-nakba", *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 4, no. 1 (January 1965): 3–4.

55 Jabra, "Hawla adab al-nakba."

56 Jabra, "Hawla adab al-nakba."

57 "Liqa' ma'a Salma al-Khadra' al-Jayyusi" [An interview with Salma Khadra' Jayyusi], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 23 (September 1962): 33–34.

58 Salma Khadra' Jayyusi, "Hawla adab al-nakba" [On Nakba literature], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 4, no. 1 (January 1965): 70.

59 'Izz al-Din Manasra, "Hawla adab al-nakba" [On Nakba literature], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 4, no. 1 (January 1965): 71–72.

60 Manasra, "Hawla adab al-nakba."

61 Amin Shunnar, "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 2, no. 7 (May 1963): 33–34.

62 Shunnar, "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 2, no. 7 (May 1963): 33–34.

63 Shunnar, "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*," *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 2, no. 7 (May 1963): 33–34.

64 Vladimir Tamari, "Fi ma'rad al-fannana 'Afaf 'Arafat" [On the exhibition of the artist 'Afaf 'Arafat], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 3, no. 3 (February 1964): 51–52.

65 Issues include: 1, no. 7 (January 1962), 3, no. 8 (July 1964), and 4, no. 1 (January 1965).

66 Khalil al-Sawahiri, "Isma'il Shammut: al-fannan wa-l-nakba" [Isma'il Shammut: the artist and the Nakba], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 3, no. 8 (July 1964): 36–41.

67 al-Sawahiri, "Isma'il Shammut," 40.

68 Tamam al-Akhal, "al-Fann wa-l-mujtama' wa-l-nakba" [Art, society, and the Nakba], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 4, no. 1 (January 1965): 16, 76–7.

69 Adey Almohsen, "Arab Critical Culture and Its (Palestinian) Discontents after the Second World War," *Arab Studies Journal* 29, no. 1 (2021): 56–83.

70 An Arabic term meaning "adherence." It refers to the notion of committing a work of art or literature to the socio-political facts on the ground as well as to the concerns of the masses – whomever they may be. *Iltizam*, which evolved in the Arab world during and after the Second World War, was the complex product of "local Arab influences (e.g., the critical works of Lebanese 'Umar Fakhuri and Ra'if Khuri as well as the poetry of Palestinian Ibrahim Tuqan) alongside both Jean-Paul Sartre's idea of engagement in literature and the Soviet model of socialist realism." Almohsen, "Arab Critical Culture," 75, note 6.

71 On the history of poetic modernism in the post-WWII Arab world, refer to: Almohsen, "On Modernism's Edge," 63–98; Mahmud al-Dab', *Qasidat al-nathr wa tahawwulat al-shi'riyya al-'Arabiyya* [The prose poem and transformations in Arab poetics] (Cairo: al-Hay'a al-'Amma li Qusur al-Thaqafa, 2003); Huda Fakhreddine, "The Prose Poem and the Arabic Literary Tradition," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 19, no. 3 (2016): 243–59; Otared Haidar, *The Prose Poem and the Journal Shi'r: A Comparative Study of Literature, Literary Theory, and Journalism* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2008); Mounah Khouri, "Prose Poetry: A Radical Transformation in Contemporary Arabic Poetry," *Edebiyat: Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures* 1, no. 2 (1976): 127–49.

72 Amin Shunnar, "Min ma'alim al-tariq" [Milestones], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 2 (October 1961): 1.

73 Amin Shunnar et al., "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*" [Colloquium of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 1 (September 1961): 23–6.

74 Shunnar et al., "Nadwat *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*."

75 Amin Shunnar, "'Indama dunisat al-kalima" [When the word was defiled], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 7 (January 1962): 1.

76 Amin Shunnar, "'Ala al-tariq" [Along the way], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 3 (November 1961): 1

77 Amin Shunnar, "al-Lu'lu' wa-l-mahar" [The pearl and the oyster], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 8 (January 1962): 1.

78 "Liqa' ma'a Fadwa Tuqan" [Interview with Fadwa Tuqan], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 13 (April 1962): 6–7.

79 "Liqa' ma'a Fadwa Tuqan."

80 "Liqa' ma'a Fadwa Tuqan."

81 "Liqa' ma'a Fadwa Tuqan."

82 Jabra said as much in more than one of his essays on *iltizam*. See Almohsen, "Arab Critical Culture," 68–69.

83 Selections from: Amin Shunnar, "al-Sa'am" [Tedium], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 11 (March 1962): 10. I thank Hamad al-Rayes and Huda Fakhreddine for their comments on my translation of the poem.

84 Manasra, *Haris al-nass al-shi'ri*, 118.

85 Manasra, *Haris al-nass al-shi'ri*, 66, 118.

86 Kanafani's articles on resistance literature first appeared in the Beirut-based literary supplement he edited between 1964 and 1967, *Filastin: Mulhaq al-Muharir*. In 1966, Kanafani's collected and edited his articles on the topic into a book published by Suheil Idris. Two years later, he expanded and modified the book and sent it to the PLO's Research Center. Ghassan Kanafani, *Adab al-muqawama fi Filastin al-muhtala 1948–66* [Resistance literature in Occupied Palestine] (Beirut: Dar al-Adab, 1966), 9–10.

87 I borrow the term from Rashid Khalidi. Although he coined the term, Khalidi did not sufficiently explain why these years were lost, nor did he prove otherwise. He poses the term as a critique of the historiography but reinforces it implicitly in his writings on the period. Khalidi is not alone. Edward Said had claimed as much in his monumental book, *The Question of Palestine*. Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 177–79; Edward Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Vintage, 1980), xv, 158.

88 This paragraph's arguments were adapted from Almohsen, "On Modernism's Edge," passim.

89 Mustafa Z. al-Kilani, "al-Ma'ida allati yasdur 'anha al-nas ja'i'in" [The table that leaves people hungry], *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 14 (April 1962): 46–7.

90 Kilani, "al-Ma'ida."

91 Amin Shunnar responded under Kilani's

critical comments in: *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* 1, no. 14 (April 1962): 47.

92 This refers to the Muslim Brotherhood leanings of the owners of Dar al-Manar, though, as suggested by the content of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* as well as their daily *al-Manar*, they were not doctrinaire in their Islamism.

93 Referring to Hizb al-Tahrir, a pro-caliphate Islamist party founded in East Jerusalem in 1953 by the Haifa-born cleric Taqi ad-Din an-Nabahani. I certainly believe this is an unfair assessment of Shunnar's complex character and politics – let alone of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* as a diverse literary undertaking.

94 Manasra, *Haris al-nass al-shi'ri*, 136.

95 In French and English, to my knowledge, there is not a single study on Shunnar or his magazine. In Arabic, there exists a fair amount of literature on *al-Ufuq al-Jadid* (several of which were cited in this article). Most of this literature, however, is either descriptive or biographical. Save for the

valuable testimonies of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s contributors like Manasra and Shaheen, there is very little analysis of *al-Ufuq al-Jadid*'s place and role in Palestinian and Arab intellectual and literary histories.

96 Massad, *Colonial Effects*, 230–36; Kimberly Katz, *Jordanian Jerusalem: Holy Places and National Spaces* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 67–89; Sofer, "The Political Status," 84–90.

97 From a 1994 interview with Jum'a Hammad in 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 51.

98 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 50.

99 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 51; Salama, *Amin Shunnar – ustadh al-jil*, 500–502.

100 'Ubaydallah, *al-Qissa al-qasira*, 51.

101 Amin Shunnar, "*al-Ufuq al-Jadid*," *al-Manar*, 8 November 1966, 6.

102 Shunnar, "*al-Ufuq al-Jadid*."

103 "Nata'ij musabaqat *al-Mulhaq* li-l-riwaya" [Results of al-Mulhaq's literary competition], *Mulhaq al-Nahar*, 26 May 1968, 12.

Reflections of a Returning Daughter of Jerusalem

Rasmieyh Abdelnabi

Abstract

The author writes of returning to Jerusalem after growing up in the United States. She returned to her family's village of Shuʻfat and began working on reinstating her Israeli permanent residency which had been revoked due to her longtime absence from the country. The author explores the ways in which the Israeli settler-colonial project dispossesses Palestinians, not only physically but also emotionally and mentally, through the use of fear and punishment. However, despite the colonial project's efforts, Palestinians continue to resist by simply existing in their homeland and experiencing joy.

Keywords

Jerusalem; Shuʻfat, settler colonialism; native residents; Israeli permanent residency; dispossession; return; fear; joy.

When the Israeli military killed Shireen Abu Akleh in May, I was in shock and deeply sad. I needed to be with others to process all the grief I was feeling, so I decided to attend her funeral in Jerusalem. But fear took over and I thought of all the ways the Israelis might punish me as they have done to so many. The authorities could accuse me of going to an illegal political event. I spoke to a few friends who felt the same, so we decided to support each other and go as a group. We heard the Israeli police had attacked Shireen's coffin and pallbearers at St. Joseph's Hospital, and that the police had closed off access in and out

of the hospital. Therefore, we thought it best to go to the church in the Old City and join her funeral procession. The sun was beating down on us as we waited and waited for the police to allow Shireen's coffin to leave the hospital. The streets around the church were packed with mourners. The clear sky was full of planes and drones, no doubt monitoring the situation on the ground and taking note of who was at the funeral. Finally, her coffin arrived, but we did not see police around the church. Later, we would see a dozen or so foreign dignitaries leaving the church and wondered if that was why the Israeli authorities kept their distance and did not disrupt the funeral as they had done at the hospital.

As we started walking behind the funeral procession to the cemetery, we began to see dozens and dozens of Israeli soldiers and police officers. An older Palestinian man near me yelled "*Filastin*" and raised the victory symbol in front of a group of soldiers. My heart nearly stopped from fear over the possibility of them attacking us, since their fuses are so short when it comes to encounters with Palestinians. I closed my eyes for a moment, bracing for the worst. Instead, an Israeli soldier said angrily in rudimentary Arabic, "*Shu Filastin? Filastin mat*" (What Palestine? Palestine is dead). The comment had an oddly calming effect on me. I looked at her and thought, how can you say Palestine is dead with all these Palestinians around you? All of Palestine – those of us in historic Palestine and those in the diaspora – was mourning and honoring the voice of our people. I had nightmares the next few weeks, imagining the Israeli military would arrest me for attending the funeral. The fear of punishment and loss dispossesses us, but we still resist and find comfort in spaces within our homeland, especially when we collectively gather and make our presence known.

I was born in Jerusalem before the first intifada, but once the uprising began gaining traction and the Israeli military began responding violently, my father moved our family to the United States to avoid the political problems of the region. He did not want us to experience the political difficulties he endured as a child in post-Nakba Jerusalem, in the years immediately following the creation of the Israeli state. But I grew up longing for Palestine and wishing I could breathe her air and walk her streets. In 2002, I was finally able to return when my extended family there bought me a ticket as a high school graduation gift. I spent six joyful weeks with my aunts and cousins, forging new relationships, exploring the country, praying in al-Aqsa Mosque, and learning more about my family's history. I left yearning for more. Over the years, I made many trips back to the homeland, exploring and soaking up as much of it as I could before leaving again. But these trips were never enough for me.

In 2019, I made the decision to move back to Jerusalem and live in my family's village: Shuʿfat, ten minutes north of the Old City. I had been preparing for this move for at least two years. To live in the city legally, I needed to regain my Israeli permanent residency status. I tried to learn as much as I could about the topic, but it is a black hole, and no one actually fully knows how the Israeli Ministry of Interior makes decisions about Palestinians receiving permanent residency. One can only submit all the paperwork they ask for and pray that the government worker handling the case is having a good day. Since I left Jerusalem as a child, the Israeli government revoked

my residency and I had to apply to have it reinstated – an invasive, time-consuming, and expensive process. Since 1967, Israel has revoked or not renewed the residency of almost fifteen thousand Palestinian Jerusalemites; despite the status of "permanent" residency, holders are always at risk of revocation or nonrenewal.[1]

I knew that I would encounter numerous difficulties moving to Jerusalem from the United States, mainly living under a military occupation with soldiers and guns everywhere, but also because of the cumbersome Israeli bureaucracy, my lack of Hebrew-language skills, and possibly never being allowed to reclaim my residency. However, I felt hopeful when I learned in March 2017 that the Israeli Supreme Court ordered the Ministry of Interior to reinstate Akram Abd al-Haq's Israeli permanent residency.[2] Abd al-Haq had been fighting for decades in the Israeli courts to have his residency reinstated; his case was similar to mine, in that he left Jerusalem as a child and obtained a so-called foreign passport as a minor. Leaving the country for more than seven years or obtaining another citizenship are just two ways among many that the Israeli government uses to deny Palestinians residency. The justices ruling on his case indicated that Palestinian Jerusalemites hold a special status as "native residents."[3] This proved to be a game changer for me.

For decades the Israeli settler-colonial project has worked to dispossess us of our homeland by any means possible, for example, by forcing someone like me – a native person, born in Jerusalem and able to trace my lineage in the country going back centuries – to prove to Israeli Ministry of Interior workers that I have a right to live in my ancestral homeland. The process of getting my residency involved more fear than I had ever imagined or experienced. I lived in fear of one misstep or misunderstanding leading the authorities to revoke my residency and deport me. Despite the difficulties and ever-present fear, I viewed returning to Palestine and obtaining my residency as a prime example of *sumud*, or perseverance in staying on the land no matter what. My return and holding my ground is possibly the most Palestinian thing I could do to confront the settler-colonial project.

We Palestinians in Jerusalem experience Zionist settler colonialism in specific and incendiary ways, reminded every day of the project's goal to dispossess us of our land, culture, language, dignity, sense of belonging, and security. The different forms of dispossession – physical, emotional, and psychological – we experience invade our day-to-day lives by limiting our housing options, appropriating our land for so-called developments, and not providing adequate infrastructure, public spaces, or services for our neighborhoods. Instead, we experience heavily armed soldiers on public transportation, intrusive police stations, and surveillance and officers at every turn. As a returning native, my greatest challenge in Palestine is how to manage my fear and not allow it to consume my life.

Due to my precarious residency issue, I live in fear of doing anything that might lead to the revocation of my residency. Despite living and remaining in the country for nearly four years, I have only been granted temporary residency. I will still need to reapply every year for the next two years before the minister of interior grants me permanent residency, which I then must renew every five years. I think twice, three

times, before I do anything that could be misinterpreted or misconstrued by the Israeli authorities. When I first moved to Palestine, I would wake up in a panic at least twice a week thinking the Israeli authorities were going to tear down my door and arrest me. It was not rational, I knew I had done nothing wrong, but fear had seeped deep into my subconscious.

In addition to my residency issues, living in Shu'fat has not been a walk in the park. Coming to live in a space where I was only known through my parents was difficult and the adjustment period was painful. So many people were curious about why I would give up the United States to live in Palestine. When I explained I wanted to live in my country, I received blank looks from most people. My return was not easy for people to understand or process, which affected how I was treated. I may technically be *bint al-balad* (a daughter of the country), but my life did not make sense to them. I came back to Palestine because I wanted to, not because I married someone local or was taking care of elderly relatives. I was a single woman living fully independently, including having my own place. As a woman, I experience patriarchal limitations wherever I am in the world. In Palestine, those limitations affected my everyday life. If I wanted to fix something in my house, I needed an uncle or male cousin to intervene on my behalf because I was ignored or cheated when I attempted to do it on my own. Since I am single and considered a "family responsibility," my male cousins tried to control my movements and interactions. When I resisted their interference, they blamed my so-called bad behavior on my "foreign upbringing." Eventually, we got used to each other, and while I still experience disrespect, people know I am not afraid to protect my boundaries. Ironically, people say I behave this way because I grew up in the United States, but *khalti* (my mother's sister) told me I have always been protective of my space; even as a toddler in Shu'fat: I was known as "the pincher" because if someone touched or picked me up against my will, I would pinch them until they left me alone.

While it may seem like difficulties abound in living in Jerusalem, there is also plenty of joy. I am surrounded by family in a way I never experienced: my aunts, uncles, and cousins are part of my daily life. We celebrate together, we grieve together, we comfort each other. Fear and tension follow us in Jerusalem and as a returning native I am learning to keep these feelings in check. We still manage to live and experience happiness within these conditions. For example, while Ramadan is usually a joyous month for those who observe, filled with community and family gatherings, in Jerusalem it is a tense time for Palestinians. During this month, the Israeli authorities dispossess us of experiencing any joy or happiness. There are almost daily confrontations between the occupation authorities and Palestinian youth in the Bab al-'Amud area of the Old City. This space is one of the few communal places available to Palestinians where they can gather with friends and family. Over the last fifteen years, the settler-colonial government has turned it into a sterile space by installing three watchtowers and doing away with all its uniquely Palestinian elements, such as the sellers lining the area leading to the gate and the elderly women selling fruits and vegetables.

In May, I decided to take my younger cousins – a couple of whom wear *hijab* – to the Old City after *iftar* (the break of the daytime Ramadan fast) to shop because one of our relatives was visiting from the United States. Since moving to Palestine in 2019, I have avoided the Old City during Ramadan because of all the problems and the fear of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. We walked around for a while, but so many shops were closed, very unlike the bustling activity I remember of the Old City during Ramadan prior to my move. The Old City has suffered in the last several years due to high Israeli taxation on shop owners, the lack of licenses to develop or improve shops, the Israeli push for Palestinian businesses to open shops away from the city (mostly in Bayt Hanina and Shuʿfat), and more recently the lack of tourists due to COVID-19. After our walk, we decided to have some slushies on the steps in front of Bab al-ʿAmud. People were walking, laughing, drinking tea/coffee, and taking pictures of the area, which was decorated with lights. Things were relevantly calm until the Israeli police decided to arrest a boy. We do not know what happened and we did not see what the boy had been doing before his arrest. We just saw a group of police officers attacking him mercilessly and dragging him to one of their watchtowers. I told the girls we should leave, but they begged me to stay, so we moved away from the watchtower. I saw a friend of mine on her way home from praying at al-Aqsa Mosque. We all had a good time together, but I was getting antsy and wanted to leave before a major confrontation erupted.

We made our way to the light rail stop near an ultra-Orthodox Jewish neighborhood and, after we bought tickets from the machine, I turned to find a soldier glaring with hate and aiming his rifle at us, and a light rail security guard blocking our way. I became so scared for my younger cousins, especially the ones obviously Muslim. I looked at the soldier and guard – both probably in their early twenties – and said in English, "What's the problem? What happened?" The soldier just continued to look at me, but the guard started to stutter, perhaps surprised by my American accent, and said, "No, nothing is wrong. Everything is ok." They both started to back away from us. It was not the first time that my American accent has served as protection.

The guard went away, but the soldier kept glaring at us from a distance. I told my cousins to stay near me and despite my fears of the soldier losing it – since we know Israeli soldiers are trigger happy when Palestinians are around – I kept my eyes on him and was ever so careful not to make any sudden movement. Even in this very small way, I did not want him to think he had power over me and could dispossess me of my joyful experience in my city with my family. Unlike me, my cousins grew up in Jerusalem and were accustomed to soldiers and guns everywhere. They were unfazed by what had transpired and continued to laugh and joke with each other. I did not grow up in an environment where I was in constant fear of attack for simply being who I am (except for the weeks following 9/11 in the United States). They were so happy by our little outing. Watching them brought back some of the joy that the Israeli soldier and security guard tried to deprive me of as a Palestinian.

As a returning daughter of Jerusalem, I have built a life based on my undeniable connection to the country. I belong to this place the same way generations of my

ancestors have belonged. I live in the house built by my great-grandfather and where my father grew up. Every day I walk the same spaces where I took my first steps and ran after my mother, aunts, and grandmother. I occupy those spaces with confidence knowing I belong. I also work to instill a deep appreciation and respect for our homeland among the younger generation. On his numerous trips to Palestine, I share with my United States-based nephew stories about Palestinian history and culture. I explore different cities with him. His love for Palestine is one of my most important accomplishments and brings me immense joy. In these ways, I work to counter the dispossession I face existing within the Israeli settler-colonial project.

Rasmieyh Abdelnabi is a PhD candidate at George Mason University. Her dissertation examines Palestinian women's work, political economy, and cultural continuity. She resides in her ancestral village of Shu'fat in Jerusalem.

Endnotes

1 See: B'Tselem, "East Jerusalem," 27 January 2019, online at www.btselem.org/jerusalem (accessed 18 September 2022); Association for Civil Rights in Israel, "East Jerusalem: Facts and Figures 2019," online at (english. acri.org.il) bit.ly/3Tq9HHm (accessed 8 October 2022); "Israel Passes Law to Strip Residency of Jerusalem's Palestinians, Al Jazeera, 7 March 2018, online at (aljazeera. com) bit.ly/3ETapsC (accessed 18 September 2022); and Ariel David, "Who are East Jerusalem's 'Permanent Residents'?" *Haaretz*, 9 December 2014, online at (haaretz. com) bit.ly/3TzaC88 (accessed 18 September 2022).

2 "At the Supreme Court Sitting as the Court of Appeals in Administrative Affairs – AAA 3268/14 – Al-Haq v. Minister of Interior" (in Hebrew), Supreme Court of Israel, 14 March 2017, online at (supremedecisions.court.gov. il) bit.ly/3CIyEa0 (accessed 18 September 2022).

3 HaMoked: Center for the Defence of the Individual, "English Translation of At the Supreme Court Sitting as the Court of Appeals in Administrative Affairs – AAA 3268/14 – Al-Haq v. Minister of Interior," 15, online at www.hamoked.org/files/2018/1159582_eng. pdf (accessed 18 September 2022).

Archival Imagination and the Photographic History of Palestine

Review by
Nayrouz Abu Hatoum
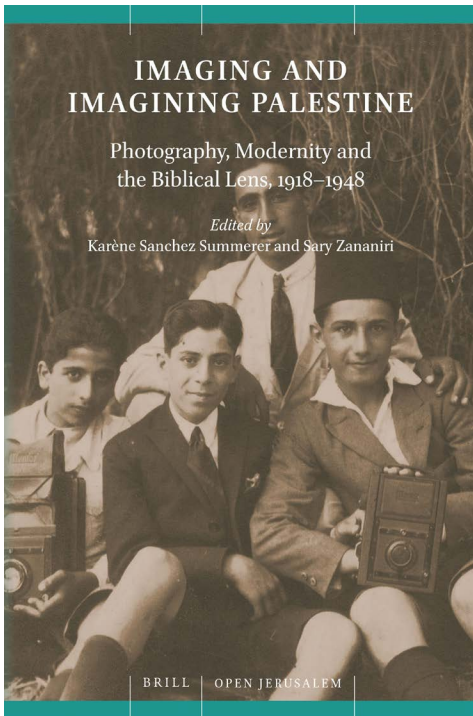
Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, eds., *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948,* Foreword by Salim Tamari. Brill, 2021. 432 pp. $191 (hardback).

Abstract

Imaging and Imagining Palestine takes us to the archive of early Palestinian photography. The book offers a selection of essays on the photographic collection during the British Mandate period in Palestine. The contributors reveal a world known to Palestinians outside the photographic frame. Through unearthing the Palestinian photographic archive, the book curates and visualizes Palestinian life and resistance during the British Mandate and before Israeli colonization. *Imaging and Imagining Palestine* demands the viewers of the photographic archive to read these visuals through an Indigenous framework that insists on seeing the agency of Palestinians in these photographic encounters. Indigenizing photography allows us to take risks in adopting a radical imagination that invites us to think about the liberatory aspect of documenting, archiving, and worldmaking for Palestinians that could have been realized had history taken another turn.

Imaging and Imagining Palestine offers a unique selection of essays about the potential of the archival imagination in Palestine. The book examines photography in Palestine during the British Mandate period (1918–48),

which was remarkably rich in events that altered the Palestinian political and social landscape, from the end of the Ottoman Empire and the imposition of British rule to burgeoning Zionist colonization and the Arab revolt of 1936–39. The contributions thus unearth a world known in the Palestinian collective memory through oral history and texts, yet one whose visual representation might not be as thoroughly familiar.

One main task of the book, edited by Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, is to expose Western colonial and Orientalist attachments to Palestine as a biblical landscape. Emerging colonial powers projected a biblical image and imagination of Palestine to render it not only legible but also governable and colonizable. As the collection of essays brilliantly shows, in Western colonial imaginations Palestinians carried the burden of representing biblical ways of living while being objectified and deemed outside progress and modernity. Beyond this, *Imaging and Imagining Palestine* proposes a decolonial understanding of the lives of Palestinians captured in varied photographic settings and kept in multiple archives, offering a thriving Palestinian presence juxtaposed against dominant narratives that erase them from history. Overall, the book teaches us that although European or American photographers dominated the visual scene in Mandate Palestine, the presence of Palestinian social, political, and cultural life forms should dominate our reading and viewing of such photographic archives. Palestinians were not passive objects or scenery in these photographic encounters.

Summerer and Zananiri have divided the book into three sections. Section one's essays focus on different photographic archives and their relationship to missionary, political, and religious institutions. Abigail Jacobson discusses the American Colony's photographic archive of the Jerusalem Orphanage; Inger Marie Okkenhaug writes on the Swedish Jerusalem Society's archives of the Swedish School in Jerusalem; Norig Neveu and Karène Sanchez Summerer focus on the Dominicans' Photographic Collection; and Issam Nasser addresses Palestinian family albums and vernacular photographic collections. These photographic projects illustrate the diverse religious and political missionary interests in Palestine, while tracing socio-cultural and political transformation in Palestinian society. As evident in this section, photographs of Palestinians circulated widely outside these institutions to the United States or Europe as a form of proof that Palestinians, children specifically, were undergoing "modernization" through Western education and discipline.

The second section focuses on photographers' life stories and journeys, emphasizing positionality and intention in the production of photographs. Rona Sela examines the life and work of the Lebanese-born Arab Jerusalemite Khalil Ra'd; Rachel Lev takes on the album diary of the American Colony's John D. Whiting; and Sary Zananiri turns his attention to the work of the Dutch photographer Frank Scholten. The third section proposes to reconsider and reconceptualize the importance of Indigenous perspectives in the production of photographs in Palestine. Stephen Sheehi offers a decolonizing methodology and epistemology of archival photography in Palestine. Yazan Kopty examines the *National Geographic* archives of Mandatory Palestine to insert his own family memory into the images and locate lost Palestinians' lived knowledge;

and Nadi Abusaada addresses the role of German and British aerial photography in understanding Palestinian urban spaces and the colonial attempts at governing them.

Reading the essays in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine* and looking at the curated photographic selection, one can feel how the inheritance of past uncertainty and loss made its way into Palestine's future after Zionist colonization. At the same time, building on Gil Hochberg's recent book *Becoming Palestine*, one realizes how the photographic archives might orient us toward an imagination for a future liberated Palestine.[1] The potential of such imagination is exemplified particularly in the essays of Nassar, Kopty, Sheehi, and Abusaada, and Zananiri's introduction. They call on viewers to do the work of rereading the photographic archive through an Indigenous framework that insists on the agency of Palestinians depicted in the photographs and of Arab and Armenian Palestinian photographers. Indigenizing photography allows us to take risks in adopting a radical imagination that invites us to think about the liberatory aspect of documenting, archiving, and world making for Palestinians that could have been realized had history taken another turn. Yet I found it somewhat perplexing, given *Imaging and Imagining Palestine*'s efforts to center the Palestinian narrative, as clearly articulated by Zananiri's introduction, that the discussion on Indigenizing photography is pushed to the last section. Starting with these texts could inaugurate the framework and the tone for the rest of the book.

Further, if Indigenizing photography and Indigenizing visual politics are significant frameworks for understanding the history of Palestine during the period of British colonization, then it is crucial to engage with Indigenous methodologies and literature in other but related settler-colonial and colonial contexts. There is ample scholarship in the U.S settler colonial context that resituates and makes dynamic Indigenous use of and engagement with various visual representations through cinematic and photographic archives. Indigenous Tuscarora scholar Jolene Rickard's concept of "visual sovereignty," for example, offers a way to look back at these archival materials and observe how Palestinians, as photographed subjects or as photographers, used photography to assert their political and cultural attachment to their community or the land.[2] In other words, visual sovereignty offers Indigenous scholars a methodology to revisit Indigenous visual archives and producers' legacy in order to establish a framework that centers Indigenous agency in the making of the visual landscape. Specifically, producers or actors have made Indigenous lives visible on celluloid, pushing against settler-colonial representations of Indigenous peoples. Further, colonial photographers and photographic archival projects in Palestine were also involved with other colonial projects. The book describes the journeys of some prominent figures in producing the photographic archive, such as Chicago residents Horatio Gates Spafford and Anna T. Spafford, who migrated from the United States to Palestine to help establish the American Colony in Jerusalem and may well have transferred settler-colonial sensibilities from one colonial space to another.

While *Imaging and Imagining Palestine* clearly identifies the role of Orientalism and the framework of biblification, to use Nassar's term, in understanding the photographic projects in Palestine, there is a missed opportunity in making linkages

between transnational colonial and settler-colonial projects that enable seamless transgressions and mobility of American or European settlers from one colony to another. Still, in laying the groundwork for such connections and in speaking to interdisciplinary scholars and a wider readership, *Image and Imagining Palestine* makes relevant and urgent contributions to such disciplines as Palestine studies, history, photography, visual studies, anthropology, urban studies, and gender studies.

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Endnotes

1   Gil Hochberg, *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021).

2   Jolene Rickard, "Diversifying Sovereignty and the Reception of Indigenous Art," *Art Journal* 76, no. 2 (April 2017): 81–84.

The Beauty of the Land

Palestinian Art at the 2022 Venice Biennale

Review by
Francesco Saverio Leopardi

Exhibition details: "From Palestine with Art," by Palestine Museum US, Executive Director, Faisal Saleh. Curator, Nancy Nesvet; 59th Venice Biennale Arte, Palazzo Mora, Venice, Italy, 23 April –27 November 2022, online at www.palestinemuseum.us/ (accessed 21 September 2022).

Abstract

At the fifty-ninth edition of the Venice Biennale Arte (2022), Palestinian art production is showcased at the exhibition "From Palestine with Art," curated by the Palestine Museum US and included as a parallel event to the Biennale. The exhibition, featuring Palestinian artists across generations and locations, draws on traditional Palestinian national imageries and discourse to shape a collective tale about the beauty of the land, both real and imagined. The dozens of works on display show the continuity of tropes that inform the formation and evolution of Palestinian national identity. At the same time, they also convey the diversity that characterizes the international dimension of a people with a long diasporic history. As the exhibition pursues interpretations and ideas of Palestinian beauty, its goal is to unveil what emerges artistically through and despite the hardships and suffering imposed by Israeli occupation. This Palestinian contribution to the Venice Biennale is a stage for wider recognition of the vibrant Palestinian artistic production globally.

Keywords

Palestine; art; national identity; beauty; land; diaspora

The goal of the exhibition *From Palestine with Art*, included as a parallel event at the fifty-ninth edition of the Venice Biennale Arte 2022, is to represent the beauty of the land and its people, while avoiding the reiteration

of narratives and images focusing on violence and pain. The nineteen Palestinian artists showcased in the exhibition successfully depicted a collective image of what they considered as the most beautiful and meaningful characteristics of Palestinian culture, nature and identity, ranging from paintings of rural landscapes to traditional embroidery and portraits of celebrated Palestinian intellectuals.

From Palestine with Art was born as an idea of the Palestine Museum US (Woodbridge, CT), brought by curator Nancy Nesvet to Faysal Saleh, the museum founder, that Palestinian art needed to be adequately represented at the world-famous display in Venice. The exhibition ultimately found a home in the elegant premises of Palazzo Mora, on the popular Strada Nuova, hosted by the European Cultural Centre, and can be accessed freely by all visitors until 27 November 2022. The artists involved in the project were handpicked by the curator among those who were already collaborating with the Palestine Museum US. Nesvet was able to build from that a collective endeavor representing different branches of the Palestinian national community, with contributors from different generations and geographical locations, producing thirty original works exclusively for this exhibition.

The works are arranged in a single, high-ceilinged room adorned with traditional Venetian tiles. Facing the entrance, a wide painting depicting a rural landscape of lush flora and rolling hills welcomes the visitors. *In Pursuit of Utopia* by Nabil Anani is the expression of the author's frustration with the present political situation and, at the same time, the image of an alternative Palestinian reality where the absence of the Israeli military occupation allows the land and its dependents to thrive. Anani's painting seems to set the tone for the other works featured in the exhibition by conveying some of the most important tropes and imageries shaping Palestinian national identity. Palestinian celebration of attachment to the land, longing for it, and appreciation of its bucolic beauty overwhelms the viewer, and in opposition to the violations perpetrated by the occupiers. Many of the works draw inspiration from, or directly render, traditional elements that make up modern Palestinian national and political identity. The painting is surrounded by installations that explicitly refer to such elements, such as the olive tree whose branches are hung with keys donated by Palestinians who fled their homes during the 1948 Nakba but kept their keys as a symbol of their resolve to Return.

All that Remains by Ibrahim al-Azza is an intriguing reinterpretation of potent symbols of Palestinian identity that draw not only from the "Palestinian collective memory" but also from images of its present.[1] Two black and white kufiyas wrapped around pages written by Palestinians from all over the world hang from the ceiling, tied to barbed wire, remind the visitor of the clearest physical (and metaphorical) manifestation of Israel's infrastructure of occupation. Through the fabric of the kufiyas, it is possible to glimpse the hand-written script on the paper sheets written by different Palestinians of their own recollection of Palestine – and in their preferred language, a reference to the polyglot of a diasporic people. Similarly, Samar Hussaini reimagines the motives and colors of the traditional Palestinian *thawb* in her *Ahlan – With Open Arms*. Realized on canvas framing the entrance door, Hussaini's work

includes various media to redesign the embroidery patterns traditionally indicating the regional origins of the dress's owner.

Collective and personal memories, as well as identities, are also at the center of works that explore Palestinian heritage in a less explicit form. *Woman in All Her Moods* by sculptor Sana Farah Bishara is a two-piece bronze statue that communicates the artist's struggle in solidifying her own identity. As a Palestinian woman and mother, born in Nazareth and thus having Israeli citizenship, the artist must deal with external pressures while delineating her own self. Her sculpture can be arranged in different poses, symbolizing both a fragmented identity and its frailty due to its conflicting dimensions.

Not far from Bishara's works, the painting by Mohammed al-Haj, *Immigration*, has the power to connect the Palestinian collective experience to that of all national diasporas. Al-Haj's work is centered around the idea of displacement and powerfully conveyed by the faceless silhouettes that wander in a desert-like yellow space. The condition deriving from forceful displacement – whether by war, economic decline, or natural disasters – binds Palestinians and other people in the region and beyond who share the burden of being migrants.

As a historian, I could not help but reflect on the sources that informed an exhibition in which personal and collective memories occupy such a central place. Many of the featured works are based on the artists' exposure to oral history of not only historical events and the accompanying traumas, but also of the traditions that came to build Palestinian cultural heritage. Oral transmission played a key role in maintaining a sense of belonging and in the reformulation of a national community among Palestinians scattered throughout Arab countries following the Nakba. While often dismissed by traditional historiography, the thousands of oral accounts of what happened in 1948 began to be validated by new archival discoveries in the 1980s and are now gaining increased recognition.[2] The works featured in *From Palestine with Art* contribute to the international acknowledgment of a rich oral heritage; they provide an opportunity for the general public to encounter Palestine's most traditional aspects and contemporary reinterpretations, while highlighting the founding role of collective and personal stories transmitted across generations.

One installation in particular represents the importance that Palestinians attach to the preservation of their historical background, namely Salman Abu Sitta's *Map of Palestine 1877*. Placed on the floor, the map allows visitors to "walk" over Ottoman Palestine and engage with place names that no longer exist, particularly the hundreds of villages that were destroyed during the Nakba. The map, which is part of Abu Sitta's lifelong project of rebuilding Palestinian historical atlases,[3] is a testimony to Palestinian efforts at historical preservation, ultimately the essential pillar in the construction of a shared national identity.

While the exhibit is extremely successful in highlighting the beauty and significance of Palestinian national, cultural, and natural heritage, such a focus may also be seen as one of its limits. Some works are distanced from traditional imageries and themes but tend to be interpreted within the context set by other installations. The visitor

may leave wondering how Palestinian artists active today engage and interact with current discourses and techniques, how they ultimately fit in, in their international fields of action. The importance of constantly reaffirming Palestinian heritage and identity cannot be understated, as it is still threatened daily by Israel's settler-colonial endeavor. Nonetheless, conveying the contemporary and global dimension of Palestinian cultural production is arguably as important. This would help to represent an artistic scene that remains vibrant and prolific, in spite of the asymmetric power relations that all Palestinian, from all generations and places still face.

From Palestine with Art is a remarkable new step in the growth of Palestinian presence at the Venice Biennale. The greatest success of this exhibition is introducing a wider public to an incredibly rich artistic and cultural production while also asserting the existence and importance of the Palestinians' own historical narration". The curators contributed to the foundation for a persistent Palestinian national presence in Venice and paved the way for future representations of Palestinian artistic production at such a paramount international venue.

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Endnotes

1 Exhibition catalogue, *From Palestine with Art* (Woodbridge, CT: Palestine Museum US, 2022), 14–15.

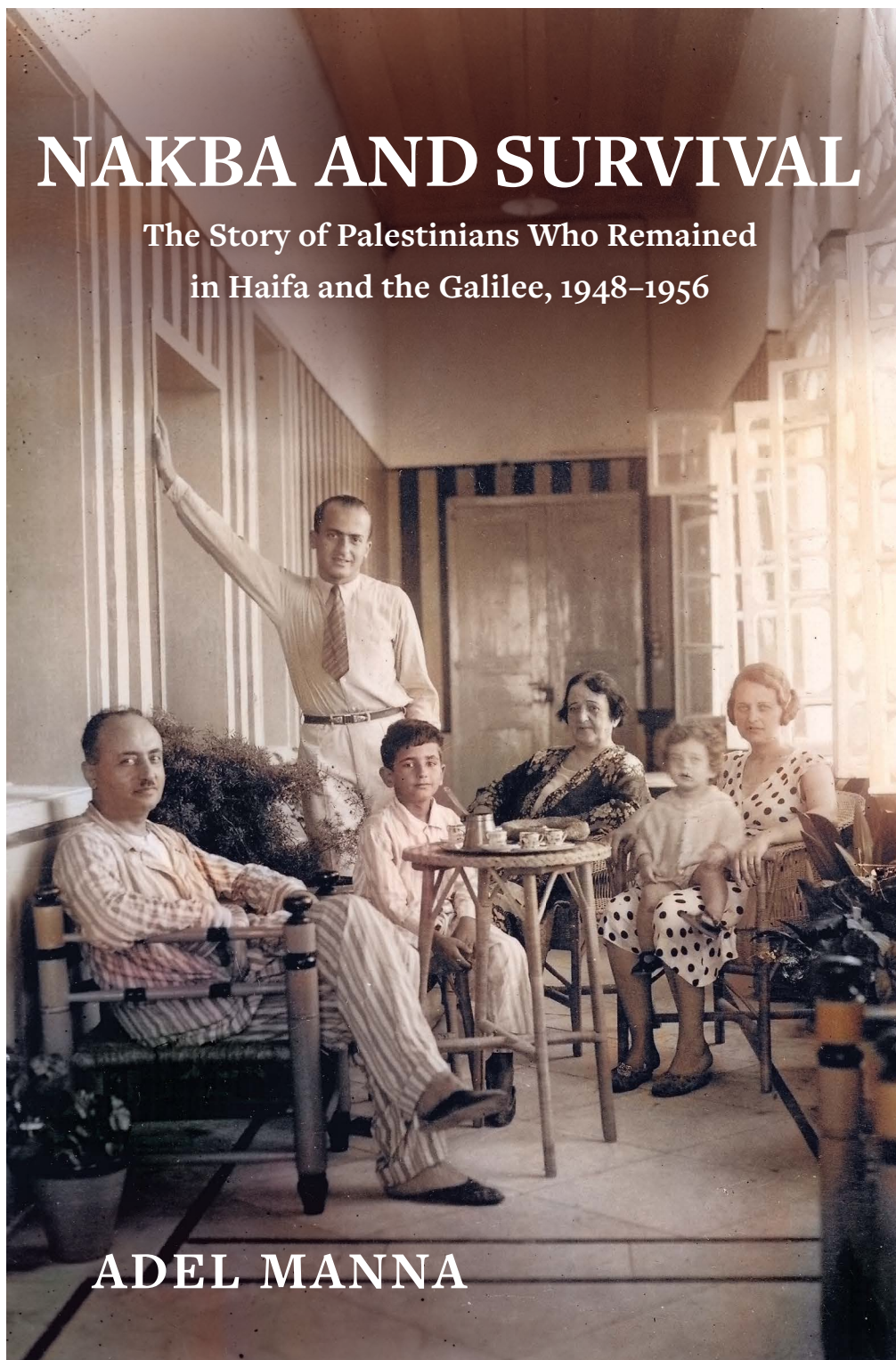2 See, for instance, Nahla Abdo and Nur Masalha, eds., *An Oral History of the Palestinian Nakba* (London: Zed Books, 2018).

3 See Salman Abu Sitta, *Atlas of Palestine (1871–1877)* (London: Palestine Land Society, 2020).

NAKBA AND SURVIVAL

The Story of Palestinians Who Remained in Haifa and the Galilee, 1948–1956

ADEL MANNA

The Ibrahim Dakkak Award
for
Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem

The Ibrahim Dakkak Award for Outstanding Essay on Jerusalem is an annual award launched by the *Jerusalem Quarterly* in 2017 to honor 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 (in English or Arabic) 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 or nominated for consideration should be based on original research and must not have been previously published or submitted for publication elsewhere. Essays 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 or nominated essay is in Arabic, the abstract and keywords should be in English.

Preference will be given to emerging/early career researchers and students.

Please submit or nominate 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. In the case of nomination, please provide a contact email address for the nominated author.

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Cover photo: Field photograph from Tell el-Nasbeh excavations in Ramallah area, 1935, showing women and girls carrying baskets of excavated dirt to the dump and then picking through the dumped sediment to collect sherds or other finds missed by the other workers. These finds were cataloged separately from in situ artifacts. Courtesy of Badé Museum. Online at (Badé Museum) bit.ly/3slv6Ws.

Back cover: Jumana El Husseini, (untitled), mixed media on paper, with small stones and glass pieces in the center, 80 X 65 cm, 1996.