

Ways of Seeing the Palestinian Visual Archive

The photographic oeuvre of Wasif Jawhariyyeh (1897–1968), if one may call it that, is no longer unknown. His albums, ostensibly titled *Tarikh Filistin al-musawwar* or the “Illustrated History of Palestine,” have been explored by a number of different scholars in an array of venues, largely focusing on representing historic Palestine “before the diaspora.”¹ With a large handful of notable exceptions, most of the images themselves, as we will see in this book, were produced by marquee indigenous and expatriate studios and, therefore, can be found elsewhere. As such, the photographic bricolage that structures these albums (individually and if approached as an *oeuvre* or an archive) makes us ponder both the “history of photography in Palestine” and “the history of Palestine through the photograph.” Whether an *oeuvre*, an archive, or an individual enunciation, we are compelled to consider photographic collection and visual narration as an act, as a document and as a testimony. Rather than consider the “history of photography in Palestine” and “the history of Palestine through the photograph” as separate fields of inquiry, we posit that Wasif Jawhariyyeh’s albums allow us to seek the confluence, overlaps, departures, tensions, and interplay between the two.

The most fundamental assertion of this book is that the juncture between the history of photography in Palestine and the history of Palestine through photography offers us evidence of the unbroken field of material, historical, and collective experience that constitutes an uncontested continuum of what is Arab Palestine, from its living past to its living present. Here, we would argue against a nostalgic reading of Jawhariyyeh’s photographs, a reading that suggests the loss and erasure of Palestine as a historical and present fact. Certainly, as Tamari’s contribution shows, particular forms of melancholy may haunt these images or play a role in organizing their selection. “Haunting” is relational, however. Therefore, we indubitably acknowledge that the Zionist settler-colonial ethos is built on the erasure of

the Palestinians from their homeland. This ethos has translated into a coordinated, sustained, and targeted program to forcefully remove Palestinians from their lands as readily as from history books and the visual field of the “Holy Land” itself. In this way, a melancholic reading or the invocation of haunting may do nothing to disrupt settler colonial futures.

The three readings presented here, while historical in nature, locate the *meaning* of the social life of photography in living Palestine. A reading and close examination of Jawhariyyeh’s seven photographic albums that affirm the social life and material reality of Palestinians inevitably interrupts and denaturalizes the logic of Zionist settler colonialism. *Camera Palæstina*, then, hopes to contribute to the body of scholarship that witnesses the history of Palestine that settler-colonial ideology, economy, and state power relentlessly work to erase. In this regard, our engagement with Jawhariyyeh is both an “archaeology of [indigenous] knowledge” and an exercise in Arab knowledge-production whereby we three scholars engage with the empirical and social ways the living history of Arab Palestine intersects, informs, and emerges in the living present of Palestine. We, therefore, explore a historical Palestinian visuality, identifying that it is inextricably entangled within a hegemonic Orientalist, Zionist, and colonialist visuality. But also, like Arab modernity itself, we mark Palestinian presence in the construction of this visuality and amplify how that presence grows from and is riveted to Palestine, historically, geographically, socially, and culturally.

We, as authors of this book, have three different disciplinary backgrounds. Our friendship and collaboration came together precisely because of our shared interest in and affection for photography, Wasif, and Palestine. Each of us approach the Jawhariyyeh albums from different perspectives: cultural, political, and social history. Our contributions offer varying, albeit not conflicting, readings of Jawhariyyeh’s albums. We offer three intertwined perspectives on the position of these albums vis-à-vis the social and political life of late Ottoman Palestine, without assuaging, displacing, or glossing over the antagonistic and agonistic difference(s) within that very counter-history we seek to highlight. Indeed, Jawhariyyeh’s albums are eclectic. The diversity of methodologies and disciplines that we offer in this book uniquely equips us to creatively approach Wasif’s multifaceted albums through a number of different disciplinary lenses, namely through the study of photography, history, and historical sociology. Jawhariyyeh’s oeuvre, in fact, demands such an approach, channeling us to deliberate the overlay and relationship between history, space, politics, written narrative, and photography.

The challenge in writing this book, therefore, lies not in disputing the framing, the organization, or the representational register of photographs cast by hegemonic narratives, whether they be nationalist, Orientalist, or Zionist. We are not overly concerned with whether or not a character-type of a coffee-seller or shoemaker is true or false, or even if Jawhayyireh exaggerates or downplays a particular event or personality. Nor do we consider the mass of images to offer a definitive social

history of twentieth-century Palestine or a comprehensive knowledge of social use of photography in the Arab world before World War II. However, if we are not offering a comprehensive history of the Mandate or photography, we do actively seek to locate contexts: of Arab modernity in Palestine, political activism and aspirations of independence during the British mandate, of social relations within Jerusalem (al-Quds) and Palestine (Falastin) in the wake of the Ottoman Empire and rise of new sorts of ruling classes, and, of course, of Zionist settler colonialism which foreshadowed mass, organized, and calculated Zionist violence against the Palestinian people that would result in their dispossession. Considering these multiple, coinciding contexts, the challenge in reading these images, individually, and these albums, collectively, arises from all the ways the images and albums communicate. To whom are they speaking, and how do they communicate to us within their multiple contexts? What is the discursive, class, gendered, and political work that each of these photographs do, individually and collectively as albums?

It is in the living cross-section of these contexts that the photography exists and that we find what we might call the “Palestinian spectator,” or, more simply, the Palestinian agentic subject. This subject or “spectator,” we will show, is not a passive Palestinian onlooker, a lost subject of the past, or a unified nationalist and historical (male) actor. Indeed, our critical approach to this collection is that the Palestinian subject of photography is far too often represented as passive and one-dimensional, with few exceptions. Indeed, it is not coincidental that among those exceptions are the images produced by photography units of the PLO and PFLP, who portrayed Palestinians (*fiḍa’iyin*, fellahin, and refugees alike) as actively maintaining Palestinian identity along with a claim to all of historic Palestine.²

In other words, the starting point for this study is rejecting a nostalgic framework that erases social relations within the Palestinian polity and sees Palestinians in photographs as one-dimensional, frozen, lost, and tragic objects of the past. On the contrary, we see in the active presence of Palestinian subjects in the photographs the precedent to the counter-visibility offered by the Palestinian Resistance. To understand the Palestinians themselves as subjects of their own visual field is to see an *indigenous* visual understanding (or visibility) that stands opposed to dominant hegemonic regimes, whether they be Orientalist, British colonialist, or Zionist settler colonialist, that negate their presence physically, historically, and visually. To be clear, Palestinians always simultaneously co-existed, contested, and, at times, collaborated with those colonial regimes and visualities. What we are saying, however, is that they did so as visual, willful subjects, who populated and belonged to the Palestine.

We approach Jawhariyyeh’s seven albums as a rare opportunity. They provide us with a chance to collaboratively examine an indigenously-composed visual compendium to Palestine during the late Ottoman and Mandate period. It is a visual compendium composed as a documentary project and a self-consciously—and at times, self-reflective—historical project. Therefore, we have an opportunity to

encounter a Palestinian spectator. It may be rightly observed that Jawhariyyeh's images of the "Palestinian" was saturated with his own class, gendered, and geographic prejudices and assumptions. Compressing Jawhariyyeh's prejudices into a national subject, however, may be productive in revealing a composite of the "Palestinian spectator," who functions as a compendium of a number of subject positions (male, female, peasant, bourgeois, Christian, Muslim, etc.) just as these albums themselves are multifaceted, allowing many competing subjectivities to emerge. Despite the differences in our own approaches, in our journey through Jawhariyyeh's albums each of us encountered the Palestinian as an active and mindful national, class, and gendered subject or "spectator," not as a displaced subject of history whose relationship to the photograph is one of nostalgia and passivity. We found a complex transhistorical subject, who cohabitates temporalities of a regime of visibility (now and then) that understands Palestine not as a historical bygone but *as a lived and living social fact*. More simply put, this book offers a *popular* history of the Palestinian subject, of Palestinian photography, and of Mandate Palestine (especially centered around its historical capital, Jerusalem) as emerging through the visual archive that connects them. It is a popular history that writes Palestinians back into the history of both Palestine and the photography of it.

A BRIEF HISTORY: INDIGENOUS PHOTOGRAPHY IN PALESTINE

Currently, an emerging history of photography in Southwest Asia is freeing us from the hegemony of a Eurocentric history of photography, one that sees indigenous production only through the prism of mimicry. Recent scholarship is provincializing European photography and dispelling the conception of photographic practice as a European import and, therefore, indigenous and foreign photographs as two discrete practices.³ Therefore, this study first acknowledges that photography as a medium of Jawhariyyeh's history-telling must be understood within the context of the history of photography in the Arab world and within the context of the late Ottoman period and *al-nahdah al-'arabiyah* (the Arab Renaissance).⁴

Within a short period after its "invention" in 1839, the Ottoman court adopted photography and it is said to have been practiced by Sultans Abdülmacid and Abdülaziz. The Abdullah Frères and Pascal Sébah (and eventually his son Jean) would become the Ottoman Middle East's most renowned photographers, far surpassing any European photographer in prestige and output, if not quality. Less well-known is that, in 1861, Muhammad Said Pasha, the Wali of Egypt, sent the first photographer and cartographer, Muhammad Sadiq Bey, to Medina. Sadiq Bey would be the first to photograph Mecca some years later. By the turn of the century, Armenian and Arab photographers became established in Palestine. It is their production that makes a considerable appearance and imprint within Jawhariyyeh's albums.

When we speak of Arab Palestine, we do not intend to displace, ignore or undervalue the non-Arab population of Palestine, particularly Armenian Palestinians who have been an integral part of Palestinian and non-Palestinian Arab society for centuries. In fact, Palestine's most famous photographer was Garabed Krikorian (1847–1920), an Armenian Jerusalemite. Krikorian was Palestine's most prolific studio photographer. Virtually everyone within Jawhariyyeh's milieu would have had their portrait taken by Krikorian's studio sometime during their lifetime, which would explain the number of Krikorian portraits in the albums. Krikorian was a member of Jerusalem's ancient Armenian community and learned photography from the Armenian patriarch of Jerusalem, Yesayi Garabedian (1825–85), who himself was a photography pioneer in Palestine and the Arab world. Garabedian established Palestine's first native-run *atelier* in Jerusalem's Armenian Monastery of St. James in 1859, where he institutionalized photography as a part of the curriculum.⁵ Apart from this accomplishment and writing a number of photography manuals in Armenian, which remain unpublished, he is best remembered for training several generations of leading Armenian photographers, most prominently Krikorian. By the 1880s, Krikorian had a studio outside the Bab al-Khalil, or "Jaffa Gate," near Jerusalem's Central Station, the Hotel Fast, and the Thomas Cooke Travel office, all of which provided him with a thriving business.⁶

Born in Lebanon and having moved to Palestine as a child, Khalil Raad apprenticed with Krikorian. Raad opened a rival studio across the street from his mentor by the 1890s, causing a scandal. After two decades of acrimony, Raad's niece, Najla, married Johannes Krikorian, Garabed's son. The two studios decided to collaborate and share the Palestinian market. The Krikorian studio would produce studio portraiture while the Raad shop focused largely on the tourist market, photographing current events and religious and archeological sites. According to the advertisement on the cover of his 1933 *Catalogue for Lantern Slides and Views*, Raad was the "photographer of sites, scenes, ceremonies, costumes, etc."⁷ That said, Krikorian, too, catered to the thirst for biblical and Orientalist imagery, producing countless studio portraits of tourists (and middle- and upper-class Palestinians), who would dress in "native," "traditional," often Bedouin, villager or peasant costume.⁸

Krikorian and Raad were not the only Palestinian photographers. They had contemporaries such as the enigmatic Daoud Sabounji (Sabunji), related to Georges Sabounji, ostensibly the first Arab studio owner in Beirut.⁹ Based in Jaffa, Daoud Sabounji's photographs are known particularly because he, along with Raad and the Ottoman Turkish photographer 'Ali Sami Bey, were charged with photographically documenting Kaiser Wilhelm's and his wife Augusta Victoria's visit to Palestine in 1898. Palestinian photographers such as Issa Sawabini also photographed the royal visit. Trained in Russian, Issa Sawabini opened a flourishing Jaffa studio in the 1890s (fig. 1.1).

The American Colony's story is better known, and they are responsible for a large number of iconic images, both of current events and tourist images, of Palestine. It is not coincidental that, among all ateliers and photographers, Jawhariyyeh



FIGURE 1.1. Celebration for the arrival of the Ottoman pilot Nuri Bey Nuri and his co-pilot Isma'il Bey. Their departure from Yaffa was the afternoon of 1 April, 1914. Photographer: Issa Sawabini. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

relies extensively on the American Colony production. The American Colony Photography Department grew out of a messianic colony of American immigrants of Swedish origin, who initially started an atelier as one of a number of means to generate revenue. While Fredrick Vester and John Whiting started it, Elijah Meyers, an Indian Jewish convert to Protestantism, is known for taking it over and training Lewis Larson and G. Eric Matson, who would run the studio for two decades. Less noted, Palestinians Fareed Naseef (Nasif) and the brothers Jamil and Najib Albina worked in the Photography Department as photographers and what we would call today fixers.¹⁰ Better known is that Hanna Safieh (Safiyah) (1910–79) apprenticed in the American Colony. Like Jawhariyyeh, Safieh also worked in the British Mandate government as a Public Information Officer, or effectively the official photographer for the Mandate administration.¹¹

WASIF JAWHARIYYEH'S ALBUMS

The original, handwritten version of the Jawhariyyeh Photographic Collection is located in Athens at the Jawhariyyeh family home. An un-indexed photographic album in the Athens collection also contains a number of personal family photographs and other loose images, many of which are amateur photographs not produced by commercial studios. While we do not know if Wasif himself took some of these photographs, it seems quite certain that he or his family or friends did. A typewritten facsimile of the original albums, a typed index of the reference catalogue, and a handwritten index are archived at the Institute of Palestine Studies (IPS) in Beirut, where the bulk of our research was completed. The Collection is composed of five components: hand-written memoirs in three bound volumes; seven volumes of photographic albums—captioned and numbered; a seventy-eight-page reference catalogue; a fourteen-page index and summary of



FIGURE 1.2. Wasif Jawhariyyeh's Original Index Sample—Volume One of Photographic Album. Jawhariyyeh Collection, IPS Beirut.

the reference catalogue; and, finally, a folder containing un-indexed photographs (in Athens only).

Wasif organized his photographic collection into seven albums containing a total of 890 images taken by well-known Armenian, Arab, and European photographers from the period. The albums were arranged chronologically and thematically—almost exclusively around the people, notables, and landscape of Jerusalem and its vicinity. While including a number of portraits of Ottoman provincial governors, foreign dignitaries, colonial officers and administrators, the first two volumes are largely populated by Palestinian notables, judges, doctors, craftsmen, mayors of the city, doctors, and clerics—the first album devoted to Ottoman Jerusalem and the second to Mandate Jerusalem. The subsequent volumes contain Jerusalem landmarks and buildings, neighborhoods, ceremonial processions and historical events (such as the constitutional revolution demonstrations). Volumes 2 and 3 cover the end of the Ottoman administration and events and people from World War 1. Along with images of army installations, military maneuvers, public hangings, and trench warfare, we meet military commanders, officers, and public personalities from Palestine, Syria and Anatolia. Volumes 3 and 4 contain material on the military administration of Palestine (1918–20), the British Mandate, and begin to witness the mobilization of Palestinians against both British colonialism and Zionist settlement. The last two volumes are largely concerned with representing the Jerusalem cityscape and the landscape around the city itself. All photographs are captioned and frequently marked with numbers corresponding to the names and references to people and places (fig. 1.2).

There are several important differences between the IPS collection (Beirut) and the Athens collection—the most significant being the enhanced clarity of Athens over the Beirut copy. The Athens collection contains numerical entries on the photographs whose identification is available on the back of the glued photographs. Those are not available in Beirut except on the few photographs that are captioned underneath. Additionally, the Athens collection contains a number of family photographs that are missing from the Beirut collection. As we will see, the coherence of these albums comes less from their organization than a reading of this organization.

With that said, Wasif Jawhariyyeh was concerned with making his albums intelligible. He was a man of the people, and photography was a practice with an increasing mass appeal. His subjective imagination and way he saw Jerusalem grew out of a bourgeois national—and particularly a male, “middling”—selfhood, forged during the late Ottoman period, in the company of the empire-wide *effendiyyah* class.¹² Sherene Seikaly shows, however, that the “middle class” was not homogenous and had different political convictions and economic interests (for example, the position of merchants and the Palestinian bourgeoisie regarding the revolt and boycott of the 1930s, with its potential to harm the “national” economy).¹³ While appreciating the important work that has documented Palestinian nationalism as a project that stretches back well before 1948 (in contrast to Zionist assertions), Seikaly acknowledges the colonial epistemologies of nationalism as an analytic rubric and argues for expanding notions of subjectivity to “move beyond nationalism” to include striations of class (and gender) as constitutive of subjectivity.¹⁴ Squarely rooted in a particular petit-bourgeois functionary sensibility, the collection of photographic albums was fashioned, starting in 1924, by a complex character: an Orthodox Christian petit-bureaucrat, a fixer to his notable clients, an Ottoman citizen, a subject of British rule, a refugee, a Jerusalemite musician, an amateur collector, curator and antiquarian, and, above all, a self-styled local historian. He certainly interacted with the peasant and working classes of Jerusalem and its surroundings as much as he operated within the middle and upper classes of the city. As a collector of photographic images, Wasif’s eclectic approach was often influenced by the biblical and Orientalist framing of the very sources for his photography, most prominently photographic craftsmen like Raad, Krikorian, and Lars Larsson from the American Colony. Yet the albums depict the political life and social space of Jerusalem during his lifetime in the city, which ended in 1948. We also discern quite clearly that the organization and layout of the photographs was not haphazard but calculated and thought-through as there are two sets of numbers that organize and then reorganize the order in which the photographs were displayed and, therefore, the visual narrative presented. This book approaches the albums and its photographs on various levels: as a historical narrative; as individual photographs of various subjects; as historical documents on the period; and as sources for the study of the social relations in Palestine at the time.

FROM THE LATE OTTOMAN EMPIRE
TO THE MANDATE

The albums in question have their own history as a collection, not only in the way they were collected, composed, and re-composed, but also in their journey to their final resting place(s) in the Jawhariyyeh family personal collection in Athens and in Beirut at the archive of the Institute for Palestine Studies. Wasif collected the albums starting in 1924, though the first is devoted to an earlier period. The images themselves seemed to be a part of a larger project of gathering artifacts and objects from Palestine and the Arab world that would make up the Jawhariyyeh Collection. The latter included a substantial collection of objets d'art, ouds, and other musical instruments, which he began to display in his house in 1929. In 1948, following events in the neighborhood of the western part of Jerusalem where Wasif lived, the family fled their home, leaving behind, among other things, the albums themselves, carefully hidden behind a wall in the house. Fortunately, these were not discovered by the occupiers and hence escaped the organized looting that was taking place at the time by Zionist troops. The albums were unearthed only in the aftermath of the Israeli occupation of the rest of the city in June 1967. At this time, Wasif provided his brother-in-law, a resident of east Jerusalem at the time, with detailed instructions on where to find the albums. It was Wasif's good luck that the house was in the hands of a foreign consulate that allowed the brother-in-law to retrieve the albums from where they were hidden.

The albums ended up in Beirut, where Wasif lived in exile. There he was able to revisit them and make a copy of the entire album that he gifted to the Institute for Palestine Studies shortly before his death. One wonders if his desire to make a copy of his collection was a consequence of an anxiety about losing it once again, a fear that was not unfounded considering that the Israeli Army ransacked and appropriated the archives of the IPS during its brutal 1982 invasion. The original albums, along with a number of other images, were kept by Wasif's son, who by then had moved to Athens, Greece.

Wasif himself was born in the last decade of the nineteenth century when Palestine was under the rule of Sultan Abdülhamid II. The thirty-fourth sultan in the long history of the Empire was the longest ruling, as he ascended to the throne in 1876 at the height of the crucial reform period known as the *Tanzimat*. In December of the same year, he addressed the first elected Ottoman Parliament, *Majlis al-Mub'uthan*, which he dissolved shortly thereafter. Abdülhamid's period in power was unstable. The Empire went to war against Russia in 1877; French and British meddling in their foreign and internal affairs were at their height; and liberties and rights in the sultanate were restricted after he suspended the constitution, driving underground Arab, Turkish, and Armenian reformers and nationalists. While these events predated Wasif's life by some decades, their impact resonates beyond his early childhood years in Jerusalem during the tumultuous final decade of

Abdülhamid's reign. Wasif's father, Jeries (Jiris), was a member of the city council and close to the pro-Abdülhamid officials at the time. This may be why Wasif included in his album a portrait of the Sultan, along with a variety of Ottoman officials who governed the district of Jerusalem before his childhood. Coming of age after the Sultan was deposed in 1909, Wasif showed enthusiasm in his memoirs for the revolt of 1908 championed by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). In his albums, he included a photograph of the mass public celebration in Jerusalem upon the news of the Young Turk revolt and Abdülhamid's overthrow.

As the Empire entered into the Great War, Wasif and his brother were drafted and assigned to the Ottoman Navy at the Dead Sea. Jerusalem eventually fell to the British in December 1917. The event should not be underplayed. The context of World War 1, however, must not be read through the prism of European history. Forced conscription was imposed on the male population of Palestine, with many recruits being shipped to far-away fronts never to return.¹⁵ The period of the war was also a period of great economic hardships. A great famine resulted from a massive locust invasion in 1915, coupled with the sea embargo imposed on the eastern Mediterranean region by the British and French navies. Statistics suggest that one-fourth to one-fifth of the population of greater Syria perished in this famine.¹⁶

Strict military rule was imposed on Palestine and the region during the reign of Jamal Pasha, the Ottoman Governor of Syria from 1914 to 1918). The Pasha was a member of the ruling triumvirate that controlled the decision making in the Empire, and was appointed as the commander of the Ottoman Fourth Army in Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine. He is frequently represented in Jawhariyyeh's albums (fig. 1.3). Ottoman provisional law, granted to him in May 1915, endowed him with unprecedented emergency powers, which he was quick to use against the population. His orders to hang a number of Arab nationalist figures in Damascus and Beirut gave him the reputation of "the butcher" or *al-Saffah*. Considering his summary public executions of Arab nationalists and his role in the Armenian Genocide, the title became his nickname among the Arab and Armenian populations of the region.

Aware of the reputation of Jamal Pasha, in the first album Wasif included a photograph of a hanging that took place in Jerusalem. In his memoirs he even used the term *al-Saffah* to refer to the pasha—but not in the albums. Jamal featured in the first album as a grandiose leader with portraits that show him leading the troops. Jawhariyyeh's ambivalence towards the pasha was perhaps symptomatic of the entire population, and of his and his family's relationship with the Ottoman administration. On the one hand, he hated the pasha's rule, which was marked by the coup within the CUP by Enver, Talaat, and Jamal Pashas, who tended towards Turkish nationalism and suppression of Arab, Armenian, and other ethnic-based political movements in the multiethnic Empire. On the other hand, during the war Jawhariyyeh showed a level of patriotism towards the Empire, in

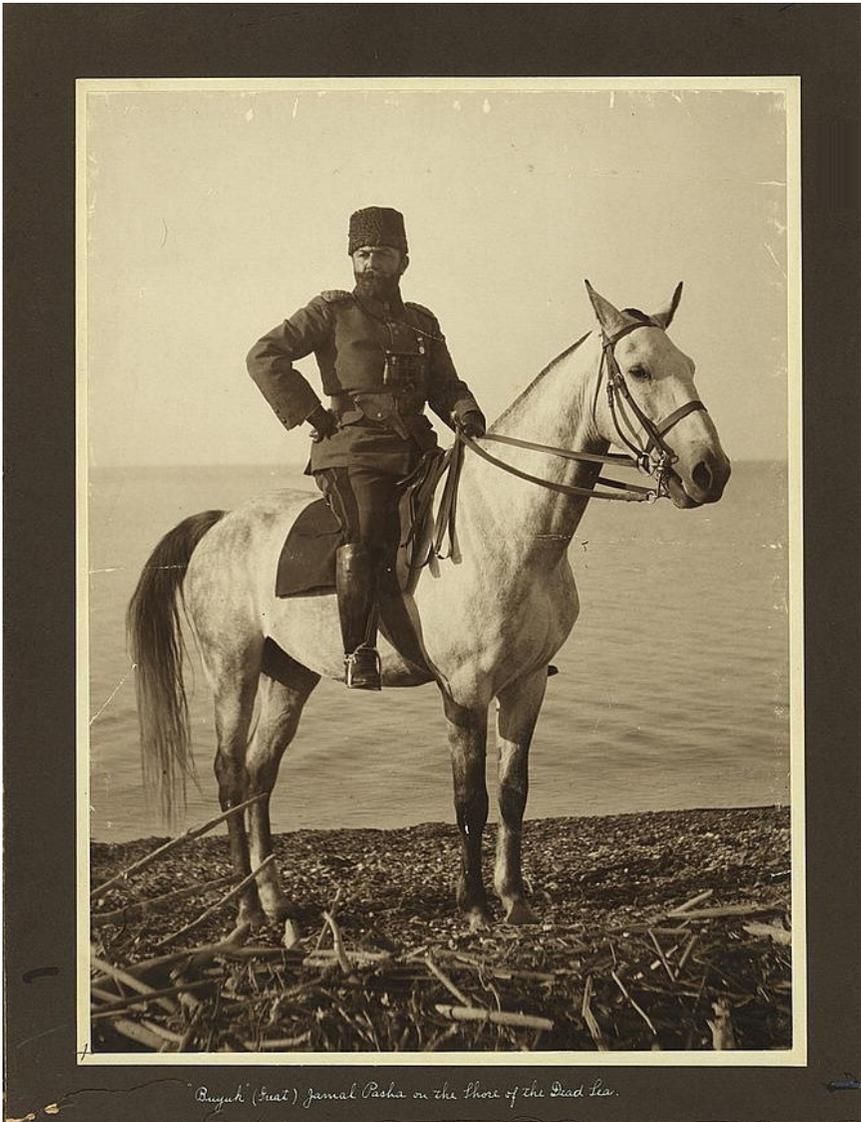


FIGURE 1.3. Jamal Pasha on Horse at the Dead Sea. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

whose military he and his brother served, that was characteristic of the majority of the population.

Moreover, in the political mind of Arab Palestine World War 1 marked, not only the end of the political order of the Ottoman Empire, but also a social order governed by Ottoman modernity. The Great War brought an end to centuries of a political, economic, and cultural order where Palestine was an integral part of a

regional home. This region was partitioned off by colonial powers against the will of its people. The rise of colonial borders disrupted the centuries of interconnected cultural, social and economic relations between Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, and Syria, if not Egypt, Iraq, and, what is now known as eastern Turkey. The collusion of the indigenous ruling classes to regularize this partition in the form of nation-states only perpetuated the mutilation of families, social relations, and economies that bound Arab, Armenian, Kurdish and Turkish communities in Southwest Asia. If the shifts, changes, and disruptions that accompanied World War 1 should not be underestimated, the Sykes-Picot Agreement, itself a product of that war, must be understood as nothing short of a cataclysmic disaster for Palestine as well as the population of Southwest Asia. This cultural, social, and economic fabric is clear in Jawhariyyeh's memoirs and, to a large degree, apparent in his index of this photographic narrative.

By the same account, despite the damage that British rule wrought, Wasif includes a number of important photographs of Jerusalem's life during the war that include British presence. Their appearance speaks to the complex contradictions within the colonial bourgeoisie, their desire for liberation and their resistance to colonization but also their regressive desire to maintain and increase power through collaborating with colonial regimes, as Sherene Seikaly teaches us.¹⁷ Jawhariyyeh and his cohort were not above this. He documents the triumphal arrival of the British. Most notably, he provides a number of images of Allenby's entry into the city as well as the famous American Colony photograph of the surrender of the city, which will be discussed at some length in this book (fig. 1.4). By understanding the transition from Ottoman Palestine to the conquest of Palestine by the British, Wasif's images of British troops marching into Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate or the formal surrender of Jerusalem to the British by Hussein Hashim Husseini take on a significance experienced by Palestinians and Arabs in a unique and powerful way.

The British period is widely illustrated in the albums. Following a similar pattern to the one he used in the first album devoted to the Ottoman period, Wasif included photographs and portraits of various local leaders and British officials. Under British rule, the doors of Palestine were opened up widely for European Jewish immigration associated with the Zionist project. Yet, while representing religious leaders from the Old Yishuv, he includes few if any photographs of Zionist leaders. While the local Jewish community of Jerusalem is featured positively in his description of religious, social and ritual life in Palestine during the Ottoman rule in his memoirs, the photographs related to European Jewish colonizers in the albums are, to a large extent, limited to the settler project, including bombings and destroyed buildings resulting from Zionist violence against Palestinians and the British. A notable exception are the graphic and compassionate photographs documenting the 1929 massacre of the Jewish community of al-Khalil (Hebron),



FIGURE 1.4. British Troops Entering Jerusalem via Bab al-Khalil, 1917. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

a mixed community populated by both pre-Zionist Sephardi Jews from the Old Yishuv and some recent Ashkenazi settlers.

Many of the images found in Jawhariyyeh's albums (but not necessarily his photographic collection in total) can be found in other collections, particularly the American Colony and the Eric and Edith Matson Collection now housed at the Library of Congress. Apart from the considerable attention to political activism by Palestinian society during the Mandate, another significance of the albums lies in how Jawhariyyeh illustrates the very fabric of Palestinian society before 1948 not in order to evoke nostalgia but in order to visualize communities, events, rituals, and celebrations that are indigenous to the land of Palestine. This assertion is evident considering the photographs were largely collected throughout the Mandate period and in no way could Wasif had anticipated the catastrophe imposed upon him and the Palestinian people in 1948 by the Zionists with British quiescence if not active support.¹⁸ Following 1948, photographs in the albums were bound to acquire greater significance and become part of the collective memory of the Palestinians. Rather than thinking about this collective memory through a nostalgic lens, we consider that these photographs constitute a historical archive. Each and every one of them, separately or in conversation with other images in and out of the albums, functions as a living, historical document that informs us about a momentous period in the history of the region writ large.

PHOTOGRAPHY AS TITLE TO PALESTINE

Jawhariyyeh's albums are composed of photographs taken by various native and non-local photographers. As such, each image in the collection has a history of its own outside of the collection. These individual photographs tell a story, not only of a society and a worldview, but also of photography and its development in Palestine. Our book tackles the history of camerawork in Palestine and recognizes the role played by a number of local photographers. Photography had a long history in Palestine, dating to the arrival of the first photographers to the country in the same year in which the announcement of new technology was made, 1839. It quickly developed into a local trade practiced by a number of natives throughout the Ottoman lands, including Palestine. Local photographers such as Khalil Raad, Garabed Krikorian, Issa Sawabini, and Daoud Saboungi captured images of the land and the people, documenting customs, annual celebrations, and historic events as well as serving the thirst for "Holy Land" photographs. In contrast, European photographers focused almost exclusively on this latter market, concentrating mostly on scenes, panoramas, ruins, and buildings in Palestine through the prism of the "Holy Land," rather than as a socially-vibrant, inhabited contemporary space. The only other images Europeans may have produced are ethnographic or official, relating to their own economic, military, and political designs.

The history of photography in Palestine, as well as Palestinian photography, will be discussed throughout this book. For now, we would only like to note that the albums include a number of photographic genres. The composite nature of these albums come together as a singular narrative—a composite of various genres of photography and various types of photographers—that overwrites the power of the photographs taken by Orientalist photographers. Jawhariyyeh literally *authorizes* an indigenous narrative: one that is not exclusionary (that is, East vs. West), but a narrative of Arab modernity that compels us to read the mundane and the extraordinary, the Orientalist and the indigenous, as cogently and materially representing Palestinian reality, history, and visibility (all located within Arab, Armenian and Ottoman contexts).

That Wasif created seven photographic albums using largely commercial photographers' images indicates to us that the images, the narrative, Wasif's intent, and the *effect* need to be "read." If the collection is read as a narrative, one must ask how it unfolds, and why does the "author" choose to the visual progression he did? Indeed, we will see how his written memoirs differ from his visual account. This is not to say they contradict one another. Rather, the narrative seams in his "illustrated history of Palestine" differ completely from his memoirs. This book offers a number of different readings of these albums, but each of us notes the narrative shifts. We do not make these observations to disparage or dismiss the validity of Wasif's narrative. To the contrary, we seize on these seams as productive catalysts for generating knowledge about Palestine that has been displaced by Zionist aggression and settler colonialism.



FIGURE 1.5. Nicola Saig, *Caliph Umar at Jerusalem's Gates*, c. 1920. Courtesy of Shouman Foundation, Darat al-Funun, Amman.

For an example, let us return to the earlier discussion of the contradictions within Wasif as an Ottoman citizen, and later the tensions occasioned by shifting between his Ottoman affinities and being a subject of the British Crown. The first page of the album displays three images: a reproduction of the Ottoman tughra, a famous portrait of reform-minded Sultan Abdulâziz, and an etching of Jerusalemite painter Nicola Saig's "Caliph Umar at Jerusalem's Gates" (c. 1920) (fig. 1.5). We are forced to read these images together. In a handwritten explanation below the etching, Wasif explains how the image represents the legendary moment when Orthodox Patriarch of Jerusalem Sophronius surrendered the city in 637 to the Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab.¹⁹ Umar, one of the four Rashidun Caliphs, was aware of the sensitivity and value of Jerusalem as a religious city. He therefore granted the city's Christians religious and civil freedoms, in addition to permitting Jews to worship in the city for the first time in five centuries. This painting, placed adjacent to the Ottoman standard and the most renowned reformist Sultan, begs to be read allegorically.²⁰

Most obviously, the allegory speaks to the importance of interconfessional unity within the city of Jerusalem and the responsibility of the state to ensure that. "Concord and unity" (*al-ulfah wal-ittihad*) was an Ottoman idiom since the Tanzimat. Not only did it address the aspirations of burgeoning national movements within the Empire, but it also was a central organizing metaphor for governing

Lebanon, especially after the civil unrest and massacres of Arab Christians in Mount Lebanon and Damascus in 1860. Indeed Laura Robson and Michelle Campos, respectively, show us the political importance of stressing secular national identity and inter-confessional fraternity during the Mandate.²¹ Such a nationalist discourse arises from the literature of the *Nahdah*, where the Sultan Abdulâziz figures prominently.²² When one speaks then of Jawhariyyeh's Ottomanism, one speaks of a robust Arab nationalist discourse that finds representation within Ottomanism itself. Before the Turkish nationalist coup within the ruling committee of the CUP, such cultural nationalism was not inherently antithetical to parliamentary Ottomanism.

Yet, the full allegory might not be understood until one reaches the famous image of the surrender of Jerusalem to the British, which is discussed on a number of occasions in this book. That is, the first page of the albums is a nationalist statement issued after the Balfour Declaration, after the Mandate, and after Zionist colonialization became unambiguous as a European Jewish settler colonial project. The three images together express a national and subjective vision of Palestine, along with particular expectations of how Jerusalem, its citizens, and communities should be governed. Palestinian national identity arose out of the Ottoman Empire and was forged not in response to Zionist settler colonialism but through decades of indigenous Arab political writings and activism and, as Lauren Banko shows us, through British colonial policies that explicitly worked to discriminate against Palestine's native Arab inhabitants and favor Jewish Zionist "citizenship."²³

We may speculate as to Wasif's intentions when we consider which images he included, where he placed them, and their possible inter-relationships with adjacent images. Despite the considerable written resources he left us, including his memoirs and an index to his albums, the logic and reasoning for his choices are verbally unstated. We therefore are left with the effect of the albums and their material histories (which include the histories of their production and their indexical content). If we combine what we have learned from Banko and Ariella Azoulay, as well as a slew of Arab *nahdah* writers and thinkers, about the political rights of the modern Arab subject, we can understand the photographs in Jawhariyyeh's collection as the notarization of the visual title to the land of Palestine.²⁴ We can read the photographs, individually and collectively, as a visual docket that "documents" the "contract" of Palestinian citizenship, the legal and historic relationship of the indigenous people of Palestine to their country and their society. Therefore, juxtaposing Saig's painting of Umar entering Jerusalem with Sultan Abdulâziz and the Ottoman Standard attests to the expectation of Palestinian citizenship. The celebration of Palestinians in Jerusalem of the Young Ottoman Revolt, then, is both a claim to citizenship, experienced and promised, but also a demonstration to being deprived of it under the colonial rule of the British.

Beyond its service as a “contract” of Palestinian citizenship, as Azoulay might suggest, we seek also to consider paradigms of sociability (including those other than “citizenship” and “sovereignty”) that arise out of political and social discourse at play within the Palestinian Arab polity. In doing so, this book aims to demonstrate that the photographs in Jawhariyyeh’s albums, individually and collectively, authorize the propriety of Palestine and Jerusalem as its historic and lived city, not as an exclusive national project but also as a political right that was established in the preceding decades. We may consider this, however, with the understanding that “propriety” and property were also negotiated quite differently in the Arab world before World War 1, and even more so before the modern Ottoman Land Code of 1858, which introduced the equivalent of private property, titles, and deeds (*kawshun/kawashin*). Wasif’s compiling of these photographs, not after 1948 but throughout the Mandate itself, clearly authorizes these images—even if they were composed by parasitic Orientalist and expatriate entrepreneurial studios such as the American Colony—as a nontransferable *kawshun* to the historical patrimony of the Palestinians to their land if not national identity.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY IS COLLECTIVE

Cyrus Schayegh asks why we “study the Mandates through the lens of colonialism rather than decolonization.”²⁵ He reminds us that decolonization, like colonialism, is less an event than a process.²⁶ Corroborating Banko and Seikaly’s studies of Palestine during the Mandate, Schayegh suggest that, rather than an exclusively “state-centered,” unilateral, and linear analysis of mandates, we should consider a more dialectical reality where mandate regimes ruled, created policy, and acted in contexts that were equally constructed and defined by “playing the political game” with indigenous elites.²⁷ How then to think about Wasif Jawhariyyeh’s self-appointment as a chronicler of Palestinian political and social life? His intimate ties with, indeed service and indebtedness to, Jerusalem’s ruling families, are even more complicated in the context of his friendship with British officials and the government registry when he was working in the Werko Office of land taxation.

It is indisputable that Jawhariyyeh intended to document what he saw as key political activities and historical events during the Mandate. These activities were fundamentally anticolonialist, anti-Zionist, and nationalistic. But they were not also anticapitalist or against the indigenous Palestinian ruling class. Wasif was not a revolutionary, nor was he as much of a full-blown libertine as some like to project onto him. He was, undoubtedly, invested in the political status quo of Palestinian political life, as demonstrated by detailed attention given to photographs of Palestinian political congresses, intersectarian conferences, the meetings of the Arab Higher Committee, and visits by Arab and foreign Muslim dignitaries sympathetic with the Palestinian desire for independence (fig. 1.6). The intensity of



FIGURE 1.6. General Islamic Congress 1921: The meeting was held at Rawdat al-Ma'arif [Jerusalem], 1931. Album 2, IPS Beirut.

Jawhariyyeh's photographic albums increase during moments of uprising, protest, revolution, and armed struggle, but always maintain a strong political, social, and economic identification with the ruling Palestinian elites, splicing images of political congresses within images of uprisings and violence.

Keeping this in mind, this book expands on readings, techniques, and strategies of how one considers a decolonial prism to diffract the knot of history, the present, ideology, and the world. In the case of Palestine, Jawhariyyeh's albums are both intentionally and unintentionally political in presenting a particular form of "seeing," of visibility, that was a part of Arab modernity. Therefore, rather than think about decolonization only as a means of countering political action, Aníbal Quijano teaches us that the "coloniality of power" refers to the structures of oppression and inequality (including racial hierarchies) that are rooted in and created by but have outlived colonialism.²⁸ The coloniality of power in Palestine is threefold. The first layer is ushered in by the coloniality of power as introduced during the late Ottoman period; that is, social structures and worldviews that are based on the inequalities inherent to capitalism and modernity instituted by *indigenous* Arab nobles, bourgeoisie, and intellectuals (including *nahdah* intellectuals). These indigenous elites remained active (and complicit) throughout the Mandate and post-Mandate eras. The second is the coloniality of the British Empire itself and how it interlinks with (albeit asymmetrically) indigenous ruling classes. The third, and least surprising but most immediate, sustained, and destructive, is the coloniality of Zionism considered as a settler colonialist practice and worldview. Within this unequal triumvirate of coloniality, systems of hierarchy have been dialectically constructed. What binds this triple coloniality of power is knowledge production and different modes of extraction of surplus capital (land, labor, and resources), modes of extraction that fall doubly on Palestinian women.

On the most immediate level, Jawhariyyeh's albums are a composite text that visualizes Palestine during its transformation from an Ottoman province through

the onset of British colonial rule. We have no pretense about his intent. He was not, by any means, a subversive, radical, or prescient savant, a political activist, or a profound intellectual mind. But nevertheless, Wasif's careful construction of years of photographs he collected into a visual narrative about Palestine is unambiguously an attempt at producing indigenous knowledge about the community in which he lived. This kind of knowledge (and accompanying visual narratives) emerged itself within the coloniality of power of the Palestinian elite, but this knowledge does not exist apart from its relationship to the subaltern strata of Palestinian society that always assert themselves in ways that might not be readily intelligible.

While it would be a mistake to approach Jawhariyyeh's albums as a "family album," Marianne Hirsch does show us, using material from the United States, that family albums have typically supported accepted ideological configurations of the idealized family and society. Family photographic albums demonstrate a "familial gaze" as well as a familial look that accepts others as well as selves into the family's narrative.²⁹ Hirsch's insights direct us to not only consider the representational and ideological nature not only of Wasif's albums themselves—that is, why they might have been composed. She, and other scholars of photography, would have us seek out the discursive, representational, and visual languages that make them intelligible during the Mandate period when Palestinians were articulating a national identity under the conditions of modernity, capitalist transformations, British colonial rule, and Zionist settler colonialism. Wasif's albums certainly are organized according to a particular sort of "familial gaze," a gaze, in this case, of the Palestinian bureaucratic class, invested in forms of order and capital that may have benefited from, and certainly did not disrupt, the colonial order and its social hierarchies.

Having said all of this, we conclude by saying that we write this book to encourage reflection on Palestinian social history and Palestinian photography beyond the confines of one particular era—beyond, for example, the Mandate—just as Schayegh suggests. Likewise, we anticipate ways in which this study might contribute to more than just our understanding of these albums as an articulation of a particular, rather limited subject position, that is, the middle-class, nationalistic, male, heteronormative eyes of Jawhariyyeh. As the *auteur* of the visual narrative in his albums, Wasif appropriates Orientalist, commercial, and news photographs and arranges them into a chronologically and thematically coherent and, indeed, empirically sound and justifiable narrative. But few of these images "belong" exclusively to him. Considering that a large number of evocative and informative images also exist in his personal collection in Athens, his choice of these images in the composition of the albums incited us also to think beyond Jawhariyyeh himself. In peeling back the triumvirate of coloniality (indigenous modernity, British colonialism, and Zionist settler colonialism) that is intertwined with the deployment of appropriated images, we hope to begin to offer an opportunity to engage disparate but interconnected photographs as a transhistorical space to explore the collective identity of Palestinians in relation to their homeland and Jerusalem, their eternal capital.