

# The Archival and Narrative Nature of the Photographic Albums of Wasif Jawhariyyeh

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This chapter, and the entire book, is devoted to the study of the photographic albums fashioned by Wasif Jawhariyyeh as the photographic history of Palestine. Although Jawhariyyeh wrote his memoirs and left us his song book, entitled *al-Safinah al-Jawhariyah*, the albums are seen here as standing on their own as objects, both in themselves and as articles of visual representation of the life and times of Jawhariyyeh in Jerusalem. However, it is important to keep in mind that for Wasif, they were part and parcel of his overall project, which he himself called “the Jawhariyyeh Collection,” and which includes the memoirs, the photographs, and the artifacts he collected before he was forced out of his home in the western part of the city after the Zionist conquest of that section in 1948.

The covers of the first of the albums state that the collection was “established” in 1924. However, it is unclear if the reference is for the photographic albums alone or the entire body of materials. Jawhariyyeh’s own description of the albums, stated on the cover of each, appears initially to be organized chronologically, with the first album bearing the title of “the Ottoman period in Jerusalem,” and the second “the pictorial history of Palestine during the British Mandate period.” However, in the later albums Wasif did not keep to his proposed periodization.

The task of analyzing photographic albums is not a straightforward process, but one that depends, to a large extent, on being able to unearth the multiple layers that constitute them. In general terms, photographic albums are multifaceted, by their own nature as artifacts and narratives. One layer relates to them being collections of individual photographs, each with its own history and context. The

second relates to the fact that they are books of visual narratives, through which stories are being told by their creator, in this case Jawhariyyeh, who saw them as part of his overall project. The third layer relates to their constituting an archive, by the very fact that they preserve photographs. Similarly, albums are significant in a very personal way to the individuals who created, organized, and preserved them, without minimizing the fact that they are products of the historical context in which they were created.

In what follows, I will examine the various layers that constitute the albums of Jawhariyyeh, including their being archives of images, narratives of a particular historical period, and as a construction of a certain *imaginaire*, as Stephen Sheehi will elaborate in Chapter Five, of social and political life in Palestine, and more specifically in Jerusalem. As the task is enormous, with seven albums constituted of more than nine hundred images, I will focus mostly on the first album in the collection, with occasional references to the second. This more granular process will allow the social history of the images as deployed by Jawhariyyeh to emerge. This social history, of course, is revealed in each photograph, but as the crucial part of this study, I point to the collective gathering of these images by Jawhariyyeh as a means to create an historical archive of the social and political life of the Palestine in which he lived.

#### THE ALBUMS AS ARCHIVES

Albums can be seen as an archive, in general, due to the fact that they document and preserve artifacts of certain moments that now belong to the realm of history. Jawhariyyeh organized these documents, artifacts, and moments in a particular order, just as archivists might. The Jawhariyyeh albums, I argue, acquire a certain excess level of importance due to the material loss of their original subject, Jerusalem as it was at his time. Images from Palestine before its conquest have become foundational elements within the collectivized nostalgia of the Palestinians. The fact that the albums are semi-chronologically organized and include photographs of leaders, rulers, elites, and locations, gave them the power of a narrative urgently needed in the process of nostalgia construction for dispersed Palestinians longing for the lost homeland.

Archives in themselves, as Jacques Derrida argued, synchronize the principles of time, space, and authority. In fact, the very name archive points etymologically to time, space, and order. As Derrida notes, the *archê*, the name given to the institution of the archive, refers to “beginnings,” “origins,” and “source of action.” The source of the term is *arkheion*, which although it referred initially simply to a “house,” became associated with the residence of the superior magistrates, or the archons, who had the power to declare laws.<sup>1</sup> A source of the power of the *arkheion* was the fact that it housed official documents. In this sense, the very idea of the archive from its inception was connected with the exercise of power. At the same

time, the *arkheion*, being a house, is a material place that physically exists and has its own address.

The archive as such combines time, space (with the historical, ontological, material), and authority. As collections of artifacts amassed in a certain order to serve a particular power structure, archives represent a vision of the unchallenged truths necessary for those in control. The materials states collect in the archives (for example, records of birth and death and location, criminal proceedings, taxes and licenses) are those important for the way they control society, exercise their authority, and preserve their memory as institutions. Although the collected materials are classified by certain principles of period, location, and institution, the most important principle is often related to the exercise of power and control. States and institutions are not the only authorities that create archives: individuals also make their own archives, synchronizing their own authority over time and space. However, when individuals collect, they often do not use the term archive to describe their collections or even think of them in archival terms. But the dynamics of collecting and ordering do not deviate much from the same principle of the exercise of power, albeit a different kind of power, one that relates to personal needs and desires.

Individuals collect documentary artifacts for various reasons, some of which include the need to preserve official documents necessary to survival in the legal and political structures in which they live, such as birth certificates, old passports, property deeds, educational or professional credentials. Other collections contain artifacts with sentimental value to personal, familial or communal lives. Additionally, individuals construct collections, in many cases, as ways to attest to how they see themselves and their roles in the world around them. Although individual collections are not often of great importance to state authorities, to historians they serve to highlight elements of the past both as practices and as sources for historical documentation. Historians use such materials not only as evidence of events that occurred in the past, but as pathways through which they can construct the *mentalité*, or the worldview, and the historical imagination related to the periods they study.

Wasif fashioned his albums in a way that gave them the aura of officialdom. The first photograph in album no. 1, for example, was supposed to be that of the Ottoman Sultan Abdülhamid II, and the emblem of the Ottoman state. Jawhariyyeh never inserted the photograph, but he did leave a blank space for it. He adorned the notebook that accompanied the album with the emblem and dedicated it to both the Sultan and the governor of Jerusalem (fig. 2.1). The dedication reads as follows:

I adorn this book with the emblem of the Ottoman state [ . . . ] his royal majesty Sultan Abdülaziz, one of the great kings of the Ottoman State who was followed in the high position by his brother Sultan Abdülhamid. And with a photo of his Excellency Ra'uf Pasha, the *mutasarrif* of Jerusalem.

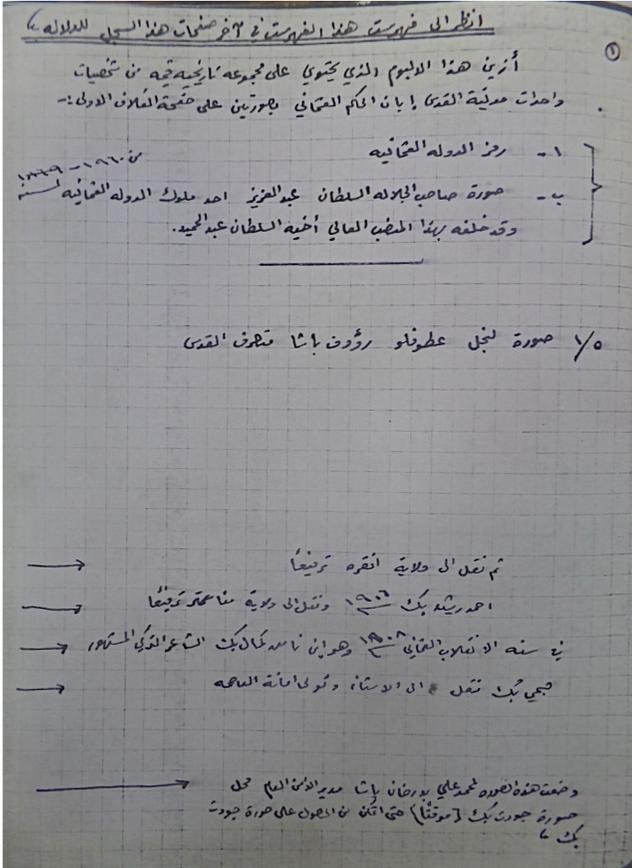


FIGURE 2.1. Jawhariyyeh's description of the inclusion of the photographs of the Sultan. Index to Jawhariyyeh Collection, IPS Beirut.

Interestingly enough, if the album collection started in 1924, as stated above, then this dedication to the sultan would have been meaningless, considering that the sultanate no longer existed and the Sultan himself would have been dead for more than six years. Dedicating a personal collection—an album in this case—to any ruler appears to be an unusual, if not peculiar, act to say the least. More oddly still, the Sultan to whom he dedicated the album had been removed from power in 1909, when Jawhariyyeh himself would have been no more than a teenager. In addition, in his own memoirs Jawhariyyeh showed disapproval, if not outright animosity, towards this specific sultan.

The dedication, then, did not serve Wasif as a means of getting favors from the Ottoman authorities, as was the traditional motivation for the practice. Still, such an act of dedication could serve as an indication of Jawhariyyeh's intention in collecting the photographs and fashioning them into an album. It functions as a means of giving the album an aura of formal legitimacy. By including such a

dedication, Wasif intended to give merit to the album as a public work and showcase it as if it was a published book.

The archival nature of the albums is further confirmed by examining the seven albums that were intended to be divided chronologically, starting with the late Ottoman period and ending shortly before the events of 1948, although after the first two albums Jawhariyyeh did not consistently maintain chronological organization. They focus on life in Jerusalem, including the political changes that were taking place at each period. The fact that Jawhariyyeh kept a separate notebook for each of the albums, in which he described every picture included, adds to our knowledge on the period depicted. Therefore, from today's standpoint, the albums put together can be described as records documenting the liminal period separating Ottoman rule in Palestine from the creation of the state of Israel. In this sense, the albums can function as an infusion of memories from a period that predates its owner's departure from Palestine in the aftermath of the *Nakba* of 1948. The events of that year had acquired a special meaning within the collective Palestinian memory, not only as references to the past lost, but also as a defining moment, a great juncture, in the historical narrative of the Palestinians.

#### THE STRUCTURE AND THE NARRATIVE

The narrative presented via the albums functions on several levels. The first is connected with the choice of photographs to include and the way they are organized in the albums. By ordering the photographs in a certain manner, Jawhariyyeh was telling us a story, a visual one in this case. The second level, the captions he provided each photograph in the album, reveals the significance of the photographed in the eyes of Jawhariyyeh. While the visual in each photograph depicts certain people, places or objects, the captions describe how Wasif understood them. The third level derives from the description and information Wasif gave to each photograph in the accompanying notebooks. And the last is drawn from the photographs in the albums and the memoirs Wasif wrote in which he sometimes refers to some specific photographs.

On the visual level, the photographs narrate a story about Jerusalem in which the nobility and the ruling political and religious elites play a central role. The narrative is internally coherent, presenting Jerusalem as a central city in the Ottoman empire, with rulers who were exceptional, and local notables who were, to some extent, the movers and the shakers in the city's life. Then the narrative moves to focus on the Great War in Palestine, with images of troops marching, leaders posing, and soldiers in the trenches.

However, on the level of the captions, the story narrated becomes a little different. It is a story in which Wasif tells us the meaning for each and every picture, often passing judgment or making observations about the depicted events. The choice of captions is not innocent and reflects Wasif's view, and perhaps his



FIGURE 2.2. Picture with arrow pointing to Wasif Jawhariyyeh's home in the Old City. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

reasoning for the choice, of each photograph. While it is true that photographs document and capture singular events in a purely mechanical fashion through the images they preserve on the tin plate, albumen print, or paper, in themselves, they fail to capture the temporal or the social contexts in which they were produced. Photographers, collectors, and owners, such as Jawhariyyeh in our case, therefore, resorted to the written caption to fill in some of the missing information. Captions, however, as important as they are in providing contextual information, provide only partial rather than total descriptions, and are dependent on the interest and knowledge of their writers. A caption given to a photograph of a holy site in Jerusalem can be as simple as the common name of the building currently there, "The Dome of the Rock," or as ideologically freighted as "the site of Solomon's Temple." Describing what is depicted in the picture as the dome or the site, as in our example, only presents us with fragments of the endless possible captions for the image. We can, in fact, imagine various possible captions for the same photograph: "my visit to Jerusalem on a certain date," or "the photographer Bonfils is trying his new camera," or "a holy Muslim site in Jerusalem." The same could be said of any of the captions in Jawhariyyeh's albums. They function as references to the narrative that he chose to weave, rather than as simply general descriptions of what we observe in the photographs. In his first album, for example, Wasif included a photograph of the Old City of Jerusalem from the north (fig. 2.2). The caption he gave to the picture reads as "al-Saadiyeh (*al-S'adiyah*) neighborhood of

Jerusalem,” although this particular neighborhood does not actually appear in the photo, as it is located behind the city wall that we see. Wasif added an arrow to the photo, pointing to the location of his childhood home in the city.

Many examples of such selective captions are found in the albums. One more example is the photograph of the surrender of Jerusalem. Wasif took pains in naming each of the Palestinian individuals in the photograph, and even left an empty space in his notebook for the names he forgot, but at the same time, failed to name the two British officers that appeared next to the mayor and his entourage, or the name of the child present in the picture. This stands in stark contrast with the commonly used captions for this widely known photograph were the names of the two British officers are the only ones mentioned. In a book that was widely read in the West, Bertha Spafford Vester, a member of the American Colony group in Jerusalem, failed to mention a single name when printing this photograph besides those of “Sergeant Hurcomb and Sergeant Sedgewick of the 219th Battalion London Regiment,” along with the mayor, who she does not name.<sup>3</sup>

The two different captions reveal two different worldviews, one that placed the natives at center stage, and the other that placed the British in the center. In fact, between the photograph, the caption he gave it in the album, and his written memoirs, we are able to witness a practice of Wasif that is present in all the albums: inserting himself in a picture in which he was not present. In narrating the surrender of the city on December 9, 1917, he pointed out that the surrender flag that appears in the photograph was delivered by him personally “to the person holding it in the photograph.”<sup>4</sup> His innovative self-inserting narrative into the historical record is not limited to such passing observations as this about the flag, but goes beyond it in his memoirs in which he presents us with details about his movement on that day. On the morning of the surrender, Jawhariyyeh states that he “went with [his] brother Khalil and some friends to Sheikh Badr [the location where the event took place] and headed for the very site where the mayor of Jerusalem had surrendered the city.” He might not have been in the photograph, but he was at the site, even though at a later time. Furthermore, Wasif presents us with an account describing the mood in Jerusalem on that day:

I remember that day as being one of the happiest for the people. They were dancing on the pavement and congratulating each other. Many young Muslim and Christian Arab men, most of whom had been conscripts in Jerusalem during the Turkish era, had changed their army uniforms into civilian clothes in a ridiculous fashion, fearing that the occupying British army might arrest them in their military uniforms and take them as war prisoners. One would be wearing his military trousers and a pair of wooden clogs, with one of those jackets normally worn over the *qumbaz* and an ancient fez on his head, while another wore a *qumbaz* and a *kalpak*, as he did not have a fez.<sup>5</sup>

In a sense, Wasif Jawhariyyeh takes us, his readers/viewers, on a journey through which we can grasp the general disposition of the people of the city on that day. It

is the power of his simultaneous narrative describing the same time of the grand event that made him a witness to the event even if he was not physically present at the specific moment documented in the photograph.

Decisions about which photographs to include in the albums, along with the captions provided and the description in the accompanying notebooks, point to a conscious exercise of power by Wasif. The organization of the albums and the order in which the photographs were displayed is another indication of his mindful exercise of power of authorship. As no solid information was provided regarding the photographers or the context in which the images were produced, the authority and the agency in this case resides with the collector of the images and the creator of the albums, Wasif Jawhariyyeh himself. What mattered to him enough to include in the albums is far more specific than all the pictures that he could have had at his disposal at the time. He chose which ones to include, exactly in the same manner as an archivist would choose what is worth preserving and what is not. His selectivity is not innocent but is a product of how he saw his world and his role in it. He thus exercised the same power as all archivists: to establish the very apparatus of the archive.

#### JERUSALEM IN THE LATE OTTOMAN PERIOD

As mentioned above, Wasif dedicated his first album on the Ottoman period to both the sultan and to the governor of the Jerusalem district. The choice to dedicate the album to an earlier governor of the city is as peculiar as the choice of sultan. The named governor, Ra'uf Pasha, was in Jerusalem before Wasif came of age, and it would not have been possible for him to remember the governor. It is very likely that Jawhariyyeh was echoing his father's admiration for the specific regime that had been overthrown and replaced by one that was significantly different, and perhaps had elements of an anti-Arab xenophobia much more than its predecessor. His father, Jiris Jawhariyyeh, was a "lawyer in his younger years and stood out as a Christian lawyer at Jerusalem's Muslim sharia law courts"<sup>6</sup> during the period of both Sultan Abdülhamid and governor Ra'uf Pasha—whose picture appeared in the first album (fig. 2.3).

Hence, the dedication could be read in some ways more as honoring his father than as reflecting his own politics, which based on his published memoirs appear to have included opposing the Hamidian regime. Still, there is another possibility that could explain such a dedication: namely that the compiler of the album aimed at reflecting the dominant discourse of the periods he was documenting. A sign of such an act can be seen in the photographs of the other authority figures that he included in his albums. Such figures include Jamal Pasha, the head of the fourth Ottoman army in Palestine during The Great War, who is often referred to in the memoirs as "the butcher," as well as the British governors and High Commissioners, who he also opposed, considering them to be enablers of the Zionist colonization of Palestine.<sup>7</sup>



FIGURE 2.3. Photo of Ra'uf Pasha, the *mutasarrif* of Jerusalem, as it appeared in the first album. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

For the most part, Wasif failed to credit the photographers, or to mention the sources of where and how he came to acquire each of these pictures. Only on a few occasions do we find in the notebooks references to certain photographers, such as the photography department of the American Colony in Jerusalem, which Wasif credited for panoramic photographs like that of the Bazaar in Jaffa, or the general view of Ramlah. Other credits were given to the Beirut-based photographer Bonfils, for an image of Ramlah, or for the photographer Doumiani for pictures of Christian religious festivities in the city. As for the sources of the photographs, Wasif failed to name the individual source for each of the photographs he inserted in his album, but he did mention in the notebooks that accompany the albums how he came to acquire some of the pictures:

I was able, thanks to God, to collect rare and historical pictures from a number of individuals whose affection I am indebted to, such as Sheikh Khalil al-Khalidi, Ahmad Sameh (Samih) al-Khalidi Ismail Bey al-Husseini, Raghib al-Nashashibi, Bishara Habib, and others. May God rest their souls.

The names above are those of some of the most important notables of Jerusalem at the time; mentioning them serves Jawhariyyeh well in placing himself as a member, or at least an acquaintance, of the city's elites. The above note refers to the portrait photographs that he placed at the beginning of the first album, rather than to the rest of the collection, which has more of a public nature with its focus on events, processions, and locations. Photographs of a public nature were perhaps easily accessible through the tourist shops in the city, unlike the individual portraits of the notables and leaders. The mere number of portraits of notables, Ottoman officials, governors, and mayors of the city constitutes an important visual archive, perhaps not available anywhere else. As a member of the Greek Orthodox community with strong ties to Patriarch Damianos, who is mentioned several times in the memoirs, Wasif devoted an entire section in the first album to the Orthodox clergy in the city.<sup>8</sup> The album includes fifteen pictures of the various priests of the city, as well as a number of pictures of what he described in his notebook as "the Arab men of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem." The section on the Orthodox men and priests comes immediately after the long section on the notables of the city, which includes images of mayors, judges, writers, local members of the Ottoman administration, and others. Although in the second album we find similar photographs of the British administrators of the city, the collection in the first album is very significant as it constitutes an archive not found anywhere else. All of the photographs of the "elites" are studio portraits, which makes the photographed subjects appear at their best, in an authoritative manner befitting how Jawhariyyeh represented them in his diaries.

It is worth pointing out, however, that in the section on the Orthodox priests we find a postmortem photograph of Father Saadeh (S'adah). It is the only postmortem image in the collection, if we do not consider the images of dead



FIGURE 2.4. The procession of the Patriarch leaving the Church of the Holy Sepulcher. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.



FIGURE 2.5. Festival of Nabi Musa, 1919. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

soldiers in the second album. Where the dead soldiers were in the theater of battle, Saadeh's photograph constitutes a portrait of a named individual, as it is part of the section of images of the clergy. Perhaps this was the first and last known picture of the priest, and no others were taken in his lifetime. Postmortem photography was common at the time in Palestine and elsewhere, with photos of dead loved ones being taken if there were no photographs of them alive. This particular picture is part of Khalil Raad's collection at the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut; however, Wasif failed once again to name either the photographer or his source.

The following section in the album includes photographs of religious processions in Jerusalem (fig. 2.4). This is in line with the descriptions of such festivities that appeared in the published memoirs. But unlike the memoirs, in which the festivities of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities are described, the majority of the photos in the albums are of Christian, and particularly Orthodox, processions, although a few images of the Muslim festival of Nabi Musa are included (fig. 2.5). In a sense, Wasif has already set up the stage for his narrative in the first album, set within the realm of official Ottoman Jerusalem. Despite any reservations he came to have about that period, he attempted in his album to present it in a positive light as if it was a project of great success.



FIGURE 2.6. Photo from the visit of the emperor. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

#### THE VISIT OF EMPEROR WILHELM TO JERUSALEM:

The first album appears to some extent to be chronologically organized, with one major exception: the visit of the German emperor to Palestine. This visit took place in 1898, when Wasif was only a toddler, and he was therefore not an eyewitness, yet he still thought it was a significant enough event to include in the album. There is no doubt that the visit was a major event in the life of Jerusalem, and as such, it is likely that its memories were still reverberating in the city many years later. This was perhaps the first visit by a head of state to Jerusalem since the days of the crusades. Royals visited the city in the nineteenth century; Prince Edward (later to be King Edward VII) traveled to Palestine in 1862, and the photographer Francis Bedford accompanied the prince to document the trip, but this was not an official state visit like Wilhelm II's. Wilhelm's arrival brought jubilation to the city, and to a number of Ottoman officials as well as German. It was heavily photographed and the images were used for many years in the commercial advertising of the various photographers who were competing over the title of "official photographer of the emperor" (fig. 2.6). The American Colony photo department made that claim, and so did Garabed Krikorian and Khalil Raad. One would imagine, then, that each sold pictures of the event. If Wasif was collecting his photographs from the local market, then photos of the visit would have been easily accessible. Interestingly enough, the visit is recorded in Wasif's memoirs, despite the lack of any reference to himself or to his family—a trope that is common in the memoirs.

## THE GREAT WAR IN PALESTINE

While the first half of the album illustrates the city's rulers and other significant people in power, the second half of the album is devoted to The Great War in Palestine (1914–18), with a large number of photographs that include, but are not limited to, many Ottoman officers and leaders. This section of the album appears to be chronologically organized as well as carefully planned. With a number of images, including a portrait, of Jamal Pasha, the leader of the Fourth Ottoman Army in Syria, then moving on to the “celebrations” held in support of the war effort, the album chronicles the activities of the soldiers in trenches pointing their guns, and medical staff posing for the camera. Together, the pictures in the album appear to be an official narrative presenting leaders, a jubilant population, the marching of soldiers, and medics at work on the front as if this were a story of success.

Most of the images can be traced to two photographic collections, those of John Whiting of the American Colony Photo Department, and the Arab photographer Khalil Raad. Both of those photographers were employed at points to document the Ottoman war efforts in southern Palestine and the Sinai Peninsula. Like elsewhere, Jawhariyyeh failed to credit the photographers, which could be taken as an indication of his disinterest in the pictures in themselves as artifacts, as opposed to his interest in the photographed individuals and groups. It is very likely in this case that the images were bought by Wasif directly from the shops of both near Jerusalem's Bab al-Khalil.

Wasif frames the war in terms of official Ottoman activities, and takes a celebrative tone for the most part. Much of the section on the war includes photographs illustrating the lives of Ottoman soldiers at various locations. Wasif himself was conscripted into the Ottoman navy in the Dead Sea, but the album lacks any images of him or of the specific location where he served.

But one image is more ambiguous; Wasif interrupts the official narrative by including a picture of the hanging of a war deserter (fig. 2.7). This photo is one of only a handful of wartime Jerusalem. The hanging took place outside of the Bab al-Khalil of the Old City of Jerusalem, and was photographed by Khalil Raad, whose studio was located across the street from the execution site. Wasif captioned it, “that is how people were hanged on the gallows—at the Bab al-Khalil square—during the reign of Jamal Pasha, ‘the Butcher.’” This caption represents the only time Wasif appears to be critical of the Pasha who is present so often in the album, the memoirs, and the notebooks. Wasif further elaborates on this photograph in his notebook, stating that the hanged man was a member of the navy, and providing the names of the Ottoman soldiers present in a matter-of-fact tone, even mentioning their military ranks. Jamal Pasha appears in several photographs in this section, always looking his best with an aura of authority, not as the ruthless commander who is remembered in Greater Syria (Bilad al-Sham), as well as in the memoirs of Jawhariyyeh himself, as “*al-Safah*,” the “blood-shedder,” usually translated as “the Butcher.”



FIGURE 2.7. Picture of a public hanging. (See Figure 4.3) Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

#### THE ARRIVAL OF THE FIRST PLANE

A rare photograph of the landing of the first Ottoman plane in Palestine is included among the first photographs of the war (fig. 2.8). The plane, according to the caption, arrived in 1914 in Jaffa, but crashed near *Tabariyah* (Tiberias) in the north. Wasif provides the name of the captain and his assistant and informs us that their death was a great tragedy in the “Ottoman kingdom.” The photograph is not signed by its maker, and Wasif does not give any information on it. Without the exact date, we cannot be certain whether this was actually the very first plane to land in Palestine or not. There is another photograph in the collection of the American Colony, dated April 1, 1914, of an Ottoman plane with its captain standing in front. This photo’s caption states that it is the first plane to land in Jerusalem, with no mention of the fate of the plane or its pilots. Considering that the date of this photograph is April 1st, four months before the Ottomans entered The Great War, and three before the war started, it is very likely that Jawhariyyeh was confused about the arrival of the “first plane.” In his diary, he writes that the plane arrived after the war started, and that it did not make it to Jerusalem before it crashed.

Still, the photograph of the Ottoman plane constitutes an important visual reminder of the existence of Ottoman aviation. Shortly before the Ottomans’ entry into the Great War, the empire had five aircraft and six pilots, which might explain why the death of two of them was mourned widely in the sultanate, as Jawhariyyeh informs us.<sup>9</sup> While Wasif notes that the plane never arrived in Jerusalem, in his



FIGURE 2.8. Arrival of a Turkish (Ottoman) military plane at Yaffa under the leadership of the officer Nuri Bey, accompanied by his co-pilot Isma'il Bey, 1914. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.

memoirs he still describes the pilot, Nuri, as if he had known him well, calling him “one of the best-educated young pilots.” The crash of the plane was so grave that, Jawhariyyeh writes, “a special song was composed and sung all over the country to commemorate their deaths, which were seen as a bad omen.”<sup>10</sup>

#### WAR PROPAGANDA

Several photographs in the album were devoted to soldiers and to their military activities, which could be seen as tools of Ottoman propaganda. Among the latter category, we can include the photograph that shows a motorboat in Jerusalem being transported from Jaffa to the Dead Sea, dragged by horses. The photograph is from the collection of John Whiting and appears in the American Colony albums that were dedicated to him. The caption in the Whiting collection dates the photograph to the year 1917. Wasif’s description of this photograph in the notebooks provides us with more details about the image:

A photograph of the first motor boat that the Turkish army brought into Jerusalem on the street outside of the headquarters that used to be Notre Dame. The building was taken over and made into the headquarters of the army inspector, whose name is ‘AliRushan Bey, who appears standing on the boat with Nihad Bey, his assistant, next to him. The boat was a gift to an assistant to the late Hussein Hashim al-Husseini towards the end of the war due to his service in erecting the first port on the Dead Sea [ . . . ] with the aim to transport grains from East Jordan.

While the caption of the original photographer was plain and formal, Wasif's caption not only points out the two important individuals in the picture, but explains the significance of the boat in relation to the economic situation at the time. A sea embargo by the British and French fleets on the shores of the Mediterranean had stopped the imports to Palestine arriving from Europe or Turkey, and Jordan, perhaps due to its proximity to the plains of Hawran in southern Syria, was the main source of grains coming into Palestine.

Among the themes covered in the photographs in this section are soldiers, or officers, standing in individual or group portraits in front of official buildings or their encampments. We also find a few images of troops in the trenches on their stomachs, pointing their guns at what seem to be enemy positions. Those photographs, also from the Whiting albums, appear to be staged. While soldiers are keeping low in the trenches, possibly in order to suggest that they were trying to avoid enemy fire, the angle at which the photos were taken suggests that the camera was placed on a higher level, with its operator standing in full view. If enemy fire was a concern, then a photographer standing in clear view outside the trenches would have been in grave danger. The soldiers are organized in lines, and the fact that they all appear in positions that do not block other soldiers is another indication that the pictures were taken with plenty of time to arrange their subjects, during non-combat moments. The smiling faces or relaxed postures of some of the soldiers also suggest that the kind of stress associated with battle is actually absent.

Still, the careful planning of the images does not make them "fake" or unworthy of our consideration. To start with, they are pictures taken on location, not in a studio, and the individuals appearing in them are genuine soldiers who were stationed at the particular photographed places. Their military status is apparent; the weapons they hold are the ones they used in combat; and the trenches were indeed dug in anticipation of battle. Other photographs, which show troops in military formations or marching through Jerusalem or other locations, do not suggest any form of staging beyond the choice of vantage point and timing.

A number of pictures depict leaders and officers during their visits to Palestine or to the front. Photographs of the visit of Enver Pasha (the Ottoman Minister of War) to Jerusalem accompanied by Jamal Pasha (fig. 2.9) or poses by famous doctors (such as Dr. Tawfiq Canaan), other officers (such as the Mersinli Jamal Pasha), Governor Zaki Bey or Nashat Bey, are informative about the war effort as well as significant regarding the careers of the photographed individuals.

Despite a few pictures in which wounded soldiers display their injuries to the camera, the core of the collection in the album illustrates great organization and readiness for the war (fig. 2.10). The album, then, is more of a piece of visual propaganda than a rigorous coverage of the war and its high cost. The photographs are organized in a "patriotic" fashion that presents a rather heroic narrative. What is clear is that Jawhariyyeh fashioned his albums as a historical record of the times—and of his making of them—more than as a reflection of his personal



FIGURE 2.9. Photo of Enver Pasha at al-Haram al-Sharif, Jerusalem. Jawhariyyeh Album 1, IPS Beirut.



FIGURE 2.10. Distribution of food to Ottoman troops in Palestine. Jawhariyyeh Album 2, IPS Beirut.

feelings or the ties he might have had with the leaders whose photographs adorned his albums. His album of the Ottoman period ends with a famous photograph showing the surrender of Jerusalem to the British forces on December 9, 1917, in which the mayor of the city and his entourage posed with a white flag next to the two soldiers that they encountered on that day (fig. 2.11).



FIGURE 2.11. Mayor's entourage upon surrendering Jerusalem, December 1917. Album 2, IPS Beirut.

Taken by Lars Larson, a photographer from the American Colony group in Jerusalem, this rather famous image had already appeared in numerous publications, with various captions usually highlighting the names of the two British officers. It constitutes a fortuitous example of simultaneous, non-intersecting histories in which the people of the city are often left out. Not only does Jawhariyyeh fail to mention the names of the two officers and instead list the names of everyone else present, but he describes in his caption where he himself was at the time of the event despite his not being in the photograph, or even in the vicinity of the location on which it was shot. By inserting himself into the story, Jawhariyyeh was, in fact, exercising his authority as an archivist and a narrator in the exact fashion discussed above. In his memoirs, Wasif wrote:

On this day, my brother Khalil, my mother, my brother Fakhri, and I were at my sister 'Afifah's home on the western side of Saint Julian Street. I recall that on that day all Christian denominations rang their church bells to celebrate this happy occasion and held services in their churches. After Hussein Bey al-Husseini officially surrendered the city, the American Colony in Jerusalem published a photograph of historic value, which I have kept in the Jawhariyyeh Collection.<sup>11</sup>

Although Jawhariyyeh was not part of the event, he frames its history, as stated above, not in the context of war, or any other events in Palestine, but in relation to what he was doing. In doing so, Jawhariyyeh deviated from the use of linear time, to the use of what Walter Benjamin called “homogenous, empty time.” As Benedict Anderson explained, in this kind of time “simultaneity is . . . transverse, cross-time, marked . . . by “temporal coincidence, and measured by clock and calendar.”<sup>12</sup> Wasif inserted himself in the history of a moment with great significance through exercising the power to fashion time and place such that the surrender of the city took place when he was visiting his sister, rather than “when the British won the battle” or “when the Ottomans withdrew,” or any other time that would have been possible as a reference.

#### THE FIRST DECADE OF BRITISH RULE IN PALESTINE

The second album is entitled “The Pictorial History of Palestine During the British Period.” The very first photograph in this album is that of the surrender of Jerusalem, mentioned above. Wasif, in other words, chose to both end the first album and start the second one with this photograph, bridging both albums together.

The first group of images in the second album is devoted to the surrender of the city and the entry of General Edmund Allenby two days later—December 11, 1917. Several of the photographs that follow are of dead Ottoman soldiers being buried by the British. Jawhariyyeh also includes a few pictures of meetings between British officials and local Palestinian leaders. However, the most interesting section, in my view, is the one devoted to the bloody events of 1929, when riots and clashes between Jews and Muslims broke out at the Wailing Wall. Wasif’s album includes several pictures of the riots in Jerusalem, as well as pictures of Palestinian women demonstrating in protest. We cannot be certain, of course, but this protest could be the very first public action by women in Palestine. The photographs are rare and it is not clear what Wasif’s sources for them were, as they are not present in any of the known collections of photographers from that period.

The clashes spread to the nearby city of Hebron, where a massacre of Jewish residents took place. The albums document the aftermath of the massacre (fig. 2.12). This is an interesting addition that further enhances the significance of the collection, as Wasif documents the loss of Jewish life at the hands of his fellow Palestinian Arabs. Still, in his memoirs Jawhariyyeh decries the Zionist faction of Jabotinsky as responsible for the riots that lead to the massacres: “The Revisionist Zionist Party, led by Vladimir Jabotinsky, began to actively call Jews to arm and resort to force, and publicly demanded the takeover of the Wailing Wall in al-Buraq.”<sup>13</sup>

Other important photographs in the second album are devoted to the visits of Egyptian, Syrian, and Lebanese artists, singers, and musicians to Jerusalem. We find pictures of famous artists such as the dancers Tahia Carioca (Tahiyah



FIGURE 2.12. Page from the album showing the destruction of Jewish homes in Hebron and Jerusalem, 1929. Jawhariyyeh Album 2, IPS Beirut.

Kariyuka) and Badi'a Masabni, singers Farid al-Atrash and Amin Hassanayn, violin player Sami al-Shawa, comedian 'Ali al-Kassar, and composer 'Umar al-Batsh, among others.<sup>14</sup> While some of these pictures are portraits of the type usually given to fans by artists, other are from Jerusalem, showing the visitors with their hosts from the city. In some instances, a written dedication to Wasif appears on the pictures—as in the case of Sami al-Shawa, who according to Wasif became a close friend and a frequent visitor to Jerusalem. Shawa became “like a member of the Jawhariyyeh family,” Wasif wrote in his memoir; “whenever he was in Jerusalem, he would stay with us, as though he was one of us.”<sup>15</sup> The frequent appearance of those artists in Wasif's memoirs attests to the extensive web of his relationships to Arab artists from Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut, Alexandria, and Cairo who visited Palestine in the late Ottoman and Mandate periods, but also to the rich network of musicians, singers, artists, and performers that enriched the Palestinian cultural scene in that period.

Strangely enough, these photographs, although grouped together sometimes, are organized more chronologically than thematically. For instance, we find the photograph of the visit of 'Ali al-Kassar (fig. 2.13) appearing on the same page in the album with three other pictures. The first documents the ceremony for the opening of the Jerusalem branch of the YMCA, dated by Wasif as 1932. The second is of the visit of the Indian Muslim leader Mohammad 'Ali Jawhar, referred to by



FIGURE 2.13. The visit of ‘Ali al-Kassar to Jerusalem. Jawhariyyeh Album 5, IPS Beirut.

Wasif as Mohammad ‘Ali al-Hindi (of India).<sup>16</sup> And the third is of installing electric power in the Christian Quarter of the Old City, also dated 1932. If Jawhariyyeh was attempting to organize the album chronologically, then the mix of themes—which did not occur in the first album on the Ottoman period—would make some sense. Still, the fact that he dated the visit of al-Kassar to 1934, then placed the photograph before the three others from 1932, indicates that Wasif was not always meticulous or careful about the organization of the pictures.

Another important collection of photographs in the album devoted to the Mandate period documents the meetings, conferences, and activities of the Palestine Arab leadership in the city. However, this chapter will not discuss this topic, which I believe requires an entire publication.

#### IN CONCLUSION

The questions that this chapter set out to tackle relate to understanding albums as archives, as documentary evidence, and to how the Jawhariyyeh album collection functions as a narrative. Several suppositions have emerged to help us answer these questions. The first is the archival nature of the albums. It is clear from examining the Jawhariyyeh albums that they are an archive on their own, as well as

in connection to his entire body of work. The photographs are important, each on its own terms, and as a collection. Each of the photographs included, perhaps with no more than a handful of exceptions, depicts a certain individual, event, or place that is of significance to the period. They were organized and categorized by theme and date, although sometimes more rigorously than others. They include captions that describe them, as well as longer descriptions and comments in the notebooks. As in non-personal archives, the photographs are taken out of their original condition as intimate objects and turned into documentary evidence for a period or a theme.

The photographs in the Jawhariyyeh albums are documentary visual evidence for a past that has faded in contrast to seminal events that followed the destruction of Palestine in 1948. As visual documents they have the power to take their viewers on a journey through late Ottoman and British Mandate Palestine. At the same time, they depict significant subjects and construct a visual aura of the periods they depict. As a narrative, the albums recount important elements of the modern history of Palestine, more specifically Jerusalem. The narration starts with photographs of the elites, and moves on to describe the visit of an emperor before delving into festivities and celebrations. It documents change in the infrastructure of Jerusalem—such as the arrival of electricity—as well as the changing landscape of the city. Wasif devoted a long section to the Great War, in which the viewer is introduced to the leaders of the army, the soldiers at the front lines, and is led towards the eventual surrender of the city to the British.

The second album continues the narration with similar tropes: photos of the powerful in the city, including the British leaders. Another element of the narrative that stands out in the second album, and in the other five albums which this chapter has not described, is the photographs of celebrity artists who visited Palestine. The shift in the narrative in this section is interesting, as Wasif takes us spectators into important elements of the social and cultural history of modern Palestine. The fact that he sometimes inserts a photograph of a famous artist on a page that includes other themes integrates the two events together. In this way, Wasif was not just narrating the history of musical performances in Palestine, but incorporating it within the context of the historical transformations that were taking place. As is evident in Wasif's written memoirs, he was a skillful narrator and storyteller. The way his albums are organized further confirms his mastery of narration.

The second album moves on to document grave events through more general images that show crowds, not notables as in the first album. The narrative presented in this section is more nationalistic in nature, even though on at least one occasion it documents the tragedy from the other side of the conflict by devoting a section to the massacre of the Jews of Hebron in a sympathetic tone. Was Wasif concerned about the fate of the Palestinian Jews at this time of intense Zionist colonization? Did he think of them as part of the Palestinian community that fell

victim to the unfolding events? While we cannot be certain, the memoirs offer us a clue, for those devoted to the Ottoman and early British periods indicate that among his social milieu were a number of Palestinian Jews. His description of Jewish festivities in the city, and of his performing on such occasions, is a clear indication of how the Jews of Palestine were seen as natives, unlike the Zionist immigrants. The albums in general illustrate life as it was seen and experienced by Wasif, the native son of Jerusalem. They represent life in the city before Palestine was colonized and, in its place, Israel was created. An important element of the Zionist conquest of Palestine has been the erasure of any memory of religious coexistence, a fact that the albums dispute.

In the words of the teacher of Saeed (Sa'id) in Emile Habibi's *The Pessoptimist*, "Conquerors, my son, consider as true history only what they have themselves fabricated."<sup>17</sup> Wasif managed in his albums, as well as his entire project, to preserve a memory of an alternative history of Palestine, one that is not fabricated by the conquerors. In doing so, Wasif wove his visual history in the form of a story in which events were not chronicled as a dry historical account, but rather as a personalized story in which he emerged as its protagonist. The most remarkable side of his visual narrative, in my view, resides in his ability to insert himself into the pictures even when he is not present in them. While in his written memoirs Wasif was at the center of events, as a witness to what was taking place around him, in his albums he inserted himself through the captions and the comments he recorded in the notebooks that he left alongside the albums.

Jawhariyyeh was not a national or renowned figure—or as he puts it in the very first line of his memoirs, "I am no skilled writer, famous historian, or experienced traveler." However, he insisted through his narrative, both the written and the visual, that he was an actor in the play that was being improvised all around him. Perhaps the best description that could be applied to him comes again from Habibi:

You said you never noticed me before. That's because you lack sensitivity, my good friend. How very often you have seen my name in the leading newspapers . . . [they publish] the names of everyone notable . . . but merely [give] general reference to the rest. The rest—yes that's me!<sup>18</sup>

Habibi's Saeed was a version of Voltaire's *Candide*, while Wasif's persona is more of the storyteller. However, like Saeed, Wasif was keen to mention that he often was in the company of local leaders, mayors, military officials, and renowned artists visiting Palestine. While there is little reason to doubt these accounts of being in the company of the famous, there is no concrete way to verify their truthfulness. Still, even without solid evidence, the narrations of the gatherings, and the events that he witnessed, are of great importance, as they allow us to imagine the time period and the events unfolding. Wasif might not have been the center of the events he recounts in his memoirs, but he certainly appears to be a witness who was present, whether directly or indirectly, at the time of the occurrences.<sup>19</sup>

Like his memoirs, Wasif Jawhariyyeh's seven albums function as bearers of memory, as well as testimonials for a time that has ceased to exist. They document a life bygone that spanned a period close to five decades, during which Jerusalem and Palestine changed hands from a large Ottoman Empire to a much smaller entity ruled by the even larger British colonial empire. This time witnessed the start of Jewish Zionist immigration to the country and ended with the complete disappearance of Palestine from the map of the region.

Jawhariyyeh, himself, was an eyewitness to an era that spanned the last decade of Ottoman rule over Palestine and the entire British Mandate period. His albums are organized chronologically, with the first devoted to the Ottoman period and the second to the British Mandate period. Still, the chronological order was disrupted in the rest of the albums, though they all were devoted to the British period. His memoirs narrate a history from the margins—not to be confused with the history of the margin. While the historical record might present a grand event in its relation to the linear history of the time, such as the surrender of Jerusalem to the British in 1917, Wasif's account presents us with the unexpected, in the sense that it details what he did on that day and how he felt about the surrender. His memoirs constitute a historical narrative from within, rather than from outside, and his careful photographic documentation of the event, along with the details he provided in the accompanying notebooks, function in the same manner.