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Early Local Photography in Jerusalem

From the Imaginary to the Social Landscape

Issam Nassar

The history and development of photography in Jerusalem is a topic intimately connected with the religious significance and the complex socio-political history of the city. Several studies have been published on the subject. However, they deal, almost in their totality, with either European or early Zionist photography. The study of the development of photography as a craft practised by Jerusalem's indigenous population has been almost totally neglected. With the exception of a short chapter in a book written in Hebrew, no studies have been conducted on the subject.[1] The topic is both vast and complex. The following essay offers an overview of the development of what I will refer to as local photo- graphy in Jerusalem and, at the same time, tackles the problems involved in writing such a history. It is by no means a comprehensive study. But it is my hope that it will formulate a different understanding of the history of photography in Jerusalem and will pave the way for further studies on the subject.

The study of the emergence of photography as a craft practised in Jerusalem requires the researcher to examine a number of histories at once. For not only does it require knowledge of the craft itself, its history and ancestry, but it also requires that he or she be familiar with the history of Palestine and Jerusalem at the time when photography was taken up by the local population. Late Ottoman Empire and British Mandate Jerusalem was a city in transformation. The changing nature of the city was connected with both the politics of the period in question and to the transformations on a larger scale associated with modernization and modernity. Important changes in its role, the physical landscape and the demography were taking place in Jerusalem during that period. Similarly, the arrival of recent European inventions was drastically changing the way people lived and thought about their lives. Testimony of this can be found in the memoirs of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, a musician from Jerusalem who kept a diary about his life in the city from 1904 until the 1950s. In it, he described the introduction of the phonograph and cinematograph to the city in 1910. He also described, among many other events, the arrival of the first automobile in 1912 and the 'attempted' landing of an Ottoman military aeroplane in 1914.[2] Jawhariyyeh's diary provides us with a glimpse of the impact that the inventions mentioned above had. And given the nature of these inventions, it seems only natural that they would have affected the life of the population and of the city in ways that were never possible before.[3]

The introduction of photography in Jerusalem was an event that preceded by several decades the arrival of all the above-mentioned inventions. It took place at a time when the city was a small provincial town distant from the economic, cultural and political centre of the Ottoman Empire, which had ruled it since 1517. Indeed, despite its gradual growth in importance, Jerusalem's weight in the life of the empire did not yet exceed that of any other town its size. Its religious significance, however, gave it a special aura to both the worlds of Islam and of Christianity. Political events connected with the rise of colonial interests in the empire as well as with the Egyptian conquest of Syria — which included Palestine (1831–1840) — however, signalled the beginning of a new era in Ottoman openness. They also signalled the beginning of persistent European involvement in the affairs of the city, which would have a significant political and social impact in the region.[4]

Crucial in shaping the nature of this European involvement in Jerusalem was the latter's religious significance. The prominent place that it occupied in Christian religious imagination was behind the fact that the European worldview often placed Jerusalem at the centre of the world not just in a metaphorical sense but also geographically. The city and region where Jesus had lived and died seemed to arouse an ever-growing interest in Christian Europe. Over two thousand books on Palestine published in Europe and its American colonies between 1800 and 1878 attest to this.[5] So does the large number of travellers and expeditions that set out from various places in Europe to explore the Holy Land.

It is in this context of renewed European interest in the Holy Land that photography was introduced in

Palestine. More of a European development than a modernizing trend that emerged from within the city itself, the arrival of photography in Palestine was, like the advent of modernity in general, a process largely connected with political and social events whose centre lay in distant places. And it was also, in itself, an indication of the arrival of the new times. Early photographic interest in Jerusalem was very much linked to a complex web of European connections to the Near East at large as well as to Palestine itself. Prominent among such connections were the colonial and the scientific interests in the region, the romantic passion for imaginary and exotic sites and a revived Christian interest in biblical studies.[6]

As was the case with the earlier experience in Europe, the inception of the modern age in the region was marked by a number of developments in knowledge and technology. Photography, one of the earliest of a series of inventions which would alter the way people related to time and space, constituted also one of the first signs of arrival of the age of modernity in the region. It was followed by a number of inventions, such as the telegraph, the telephone, the bicycle, the automobile, and the plane, which also became powerful signs of the modern industrial and rational age.

Before its division in 1948, Jerusalem was a city that played a central role in the life of Palestine. The process of modernization that had begun in the nineteenth century in Palestine — and in many other centres in the Ottoman Empire — was by then already bearing fruit. The subsequent shift from Ottoman to British rule in itself further fostered considerable growth and development in the city. For under the British, Jerusalem ceased to be the small provincial town within a vast empire that it had been under the Ottomans. It emerged, instead, as the central city in a much smaller territory. In between the railway station — built under the Ottomans in 1882 to the south of Jerusalem — and the airport — built much later by the British to the north — there were new roads, buildings and numerous other signs of modernity.

But if the impact that these inventions had in the region could, to an extent, be easily imagined or inferred, that is not the case with the advent of photography. True, like many of the other inventions it drastically changed the way that people related to time and space. But only photography, with the revolution that it brought about in memory and knowledge, had the special power to reshape the past and, with it, the present. Indeed, the introduction of photography in the region by the Europeans would place them in a special vantage-point to 'redefine' or 'reconstruct' the history of Jerusalem and of the Holy Land.

Early European Photography of Jerusalem

Photography arrived in Jerusalem in 1839, the very same year in which Daguerre announced the invention to the world.[7] By the middle of the nineteenth century, pictures and images of Jerusalem were already popular in Europe and its western colonies. Depictions of the city were more readily available, in both art galleries and photographic exhibits, than those of any other Asian or African city, with the possible exception of Cairo. One could find photographs of Jerusalem exhibited alongside those of Paris and London — as the following description of an architectural photographic exhibit published in *The British Journal of Photography* on 15 March 1860 indicates:

> The photographs in this exhibit are judiciously classed by countries, although the various nations are unequally represented. France and England are greatly in the majority, as might have been expected: next follow Spain, Rome, Venice, Jerusalem and its neighbourhood.[8]

Indeed, the photographs in question were the joint work of Robertson and Beato, two wet-plate photographers who visited Palestine in 1857. Their work, together with that of many other European photographers at the time, made Jerusalem a place familiar to the Europeans. In fact, in the same article of *The British Journal*, the reviewer described how he actually found that the buildings of Jerusalem were 'as familiar as ... the public buildings of London'.[9]

As a matter of fact, we know that more than 250 different photographers — most of them Europeans — worked in the Near East between the years 1839 and 1885. And we also know that many of them photographed Jerusalem.[10] One can only assume that by the turn of the twentieth century, the number of photographers would have been significantly higher, for the gelatin plate negative and the transparent nitrocellulose film — developed by George Eastman in 1888 and in 1891 respectively — had made photography easily accessible to a wider public. The new types of negative freed photographers from having to carry along the bulky glass negatives they had previously used and enabled tourists to take their own cameras along with them to their various destinations. While it is impossible to make an estimate, the number of amateur photographers who took pictures of Jerusalem in the nineteenth century is likely to have been very large.[11]

Despite their diverse backgrounds and their large numbers, early photographers working in Jerusalem often performed similar functions and served a similar clientele. In most cases they produced photographs that corresponded with the image of Jerusalem as the Holy City, with the purpose of selling them either abroad or to visiting pilgrims. Visiting photographers from Europe dominated the scene for quite a few years. However, little by little a different group of photographers began to emerge who were either from the region or had resided in it for some time. As we will see, some of them continued the type of work undertaken by the first visiting photographers, while some others began to employ photography in new ways. But, contrary to what might be thought, the diverging trends did not necessarily correspond to the photographers' being a foreigner or a native of the area.

That the focus of this study is local photography in Jerusalem necessarily implies that a classification of the early photographers of Jerusalem into local and non-local is, somehow, to be carried out. Due to various elements connected with the period, the nature of the new career and the city in question, as will be seen in the following sections, a categorization of photographers along the lines of foreigner and local will prove fruitless. The Ottoman *millet* system — a non-Muslim religious community — that existed at the time makes the distinction between local and foreigner highly problematic, especially in cases when the photographers were Ottoman citizens but not from Jerusalem. Under this system, belonging to Jerusalem — or any other Ottoman city for that matter — was connected more to belonging to recognized *millet* already established in the city than to facts of birth. In other words, an Armenian who was not born in Jerusalem, would have felt at home in the city simply because there was already an Armenian community that would have welcomed him as one of its members.[12]

For the purposes of this study and for reasons that will become clear, I would like to suggest that the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century professional photographers who worked in Jerusalem can be grouped into three — rather than two — large categories. These are mainly based on the photographers' backgrounds and the kinds of images they produced.[13] These categories are (1) visiting photographers, (2) resident photographers and (3) local photographers — the subject of our current study. As we will see, the latter category was late to appear on the scene, and, as I will argue, the history and development of local photography was very much connected with the work of photographers in the first two categories. For they either trained with them or at their studios or tried to perform the same function; to produce for the tourist market images that presented Palestine as the Bible Land.

Visiting and Resident Photographers

The earliest images of Jerusalem were typically taken by photographers who came from abroad and who were commissioned to photograph the region by governmental agencies and archeological, religious or missionary organizations. This group of people, whom I have denominated visiting photographers, includes photographers like Frederic Goupil-Fesquet — who took the very first photograph of Jerusalem in December 1839 — and Horace Vernet. Representatives of a significant number of photographers, both Goupil-Fesquet and Vernet were on an official mission sent by the French government with the purpose of bringing back images of the rest of the world.[14]

Also relatively common were photographers sent by scientific or archaeological organizations. The earliest photographer in this group was Louis de Clercq, who accompanied a French archaeological expedition to the Near East headed by Emmanuel Guillaume Rey in 1859 and who published a series of albums under the general title of *Voyage en Orient*.[15]

Other photographers who fall in this general category were either missionaries or individuals sent by religious organizations.[16] Well known missionaries such as James Graham, the lay secretary of the London Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews in 1853, was one such photographer. He stayed in Palestine for a period of three years during which he photographed many sites relevant to biblical history.[17]

The category I have referred to as resident photographers consists of photographers who came from other regions — usually from within Europe — and who started their own photographic establishments in various cities in the Near East — in most cases, Beirut, Istanbul or Cairo. Among them were Felix and Lydie Bonfils who moved from France to Beirut and established a photographic studio in 1867 and who, along with their son Adrien, photographed the Near East extensively from 1867 until the early part of the twentieth century.[18] Another European photographer whose studio competed with the Bonfils establishment was Tancrede R. Dumas, whose arrival in Beirut seems to have coincided with that of the Bonfils.[19] Several other photographers established studios in Instanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. They include J. Pascal Sebah, who established a large studio in 1868, and the Armenian Abdullah brothers, Horsep, Vichen, and Kevork, who in 1862 were appointed as court photographers to sultans Abdul Aziz and Abdul Hamid.[20] Others settled in Egypt and established studios in Cairo, Alexandria, and other cities. Such was the case of, for instance, L. Fiorillo, an Italian photographer who established a studio in Alexandria in the 1870s.[21]

Another photographer that belongs to this group is the Port Sa'ed based, Zangaki. The photographs taken by Zangaki cover an extensive part of the region over a period of time that extends from the 1870s to the turn of the twentieth century. We lack any solid information about Zangaki, but it appears that the name might have been used by more than one photographer (possibly two brothers of Greek origin — one of whom appeared often in the photographs wearing a straw hat).[22]

Despite the difference in the degree of acquaintance with the region between visiting and resident photographers, it is significant that they produced very similar pictures. Indeed, the images that the resident photographers captured were not essentially different from those captured by the visiting photographers — especially when the former were hired by archaeological or biblical organizations. For the core of their work consisted of photographs that were in demand in the tourist market both in the Near East and abroad and that could be thought of as 'images' with biblical points of reference. That is, they documented places and 'types' of people mentioned in the Bible. A very large number of photographs

from these individuals remain whose captions make it clear that the subjects of the picture were only meant as biblical 'icons'. It is very common to find photographs entitled *Woman from Nazareth* or *from Bethlehem, Fishermen at the Sea of Galilee, Shepherds with their Flock near Bethlehem*, and even *Ruth and Boaz*.

Given the fact that European photographers came to the region with rather specific agendas, it was perhaps only natural, then, that the early photographic images of Jerusalem should have reflected the needs, desires and interests of the European photographers and audiences rather than those of Jerusalem's society itself. The background of the photographer and the reasons behind his trip to Palestine often determined his choice of subject matter. While a visiting photographer who accompanied an archaeological or biblical study was likely to produce images of ancient ruins of biblical sites, a resident photographer was more likely to produce images to satisfy the demand of the growing tourist industry. Generally speaking, the photographs produced by early European photographers — both visitors and resident — depicted Jerusalem as an unpopulated biblical site. As I have argued elsewhere, in early European photography of Palestine, the people of the region were either absent, shown as unclean and primitive people, or used to re-enact a biblical scene.[23]

Still, there were a few photographers working in Jerusalem who belonged to neither of the categories I have mentioned. Such is the case with photographers commissioned to produces stereoscopes by American companies like Underwood and Underwood or Jewish immigrant (Zionist) photographers who worked in Palestine at the time. Because such photographers arrived late on the scene (after the1890s) and had limited influence on the emergence of a local photographic scene in Jerusalem, this study will not consider them.[24]

Local Photographers: The Problem of Definition

As the above discussion suggests, the overwhelming majority of nineteenth-century photographers working in Jerusalem were Europeans. The few exceptions to this rule were Ottoman subjects from regions far away from Jerusalem and Palestine. The argument can be made, however, that towards the end of the nineteenth century, a photographic tradition, which was distinctly local, began to emerge in Jerusalem. As we will see below, three photographic studios had been established in Jerusalem by the turn of the century. During the early twentieth century, photography was a local career and a number of photographic establishments in Jerusalem served a growing demand for photographs among the local society.[25]

But the argument is not without difficulties. The traditionally accepted definition of local as exclusively determined by the photographer's birth place, family ties, residency or ethnicity is problematic in the context of the present discussion. Take the case of Mandel Diness, a Russian immigrant and an early photographer who worked in Jerusalem in the 1850s. Diness has been celebrated by some as 'Jerusalem's first professional photographer'.[26] That he was of Jewish origins and had been introduced to photography in Jerusalem appears to be the basis for the claim that Diness was the first local photographer in Palestine. However, if localism were to be defined in ethnic or linguistic terms, Diness certainly would not qualify as local. The same could be said were we to adopt, for the sake of argument, the Zionist paradigm that makes every Jew a native of Palestine, since Diness was Jew who converted to Protestantism. Similarly, were local used to denote Ottoman citizenship, Diness would still fail to fit the description for he was a Russian brought under the protection of the British consulate in Jerusalem.[27]

The Diness case raises an important question regarding the use of terms. Why are we using the term local to refer to early Palestinian photographers instead of terms like indigenous and native? In the process of answering this question, it is important to realize that it took a considerable time before photography itself became part of the local scene in Jerusalem. For most of the nineteenth century, the practice of photography remained limited to people and activities that did not really belong in the various spheres of the natives' lives. That natives of the country started to engage, at some point, however, in the practice might be of special importance in the context of national and sectarian histories. It is my conviction, nonetheless, that when discussing photography — an activity that became part of the social landscape and the market economy of Palestine — the identity of the practitioner is far less important than the purposes for which he chose to engage in the practice. This is especially true in a place like Ottoman Palestine, in light of the fact that the social and economic landscape was dependent on laws and structures connected to the *millet* much more than to origins and genealogies. The recognition by the *Sublime Porte* (i.e., the Ottoman Sultan or his government in Istanbul) of the group to which a person belonged was often more important in determining his or her relation to the place (in the sense of belonging and citizenship) than the origin of the person. The genealogy of local photography in Palestine clearly illustrates this, for the early photographers were natives to Palestine because they were members of recognized *millet*, such as Armenian or Orthodox, rather than because of their own personal history in the country. Additionally, using the terms native or indigenous in their strictest sense, i.e., to refer to a person's origin in relationship to a place, might lead to the exclusion from our discussion of an important group that considered Palestine its home, despite the fact that the origin of the group was elsewhere. By this I am referring to the Armenian community of Jerusalem, from which some of the very important early photographers came. It is for this reason, among others, that I prefer to use the term local, as

opposed to native and indigenous, in connection with the study of early photography in Jerusalem.

Still, the task of defining the term local is in itself not as easy as it might seem. The distinction between foreign and local photography is a difficult one as the beginnings of local photography in Jerusalem were very much connected with the activities of European photographers in the region. Additionally, the unusually strong presence of foreigners and the highly visible ethnic and cultural diversity of Palestine in the nineteenth century makes such a task even more complicated.

Furthermore, the nature of history writing itself complicates matters even more, especially in the case of the history of Palestine. In the attempt to produce a coherent narrative that connects current national claims with the land itself, historians sometimes selectively choose certain past events while ignoring others. In this regard, questions regarding objectivity and exclusion of certain events and people must be raised specially in light of the heated debate over history connected with the Israeli Palestinian conflict. The implications of such contestation of history on attempting to define what is local and what is not are far reaching. To illustrate this point, consider the following table, presented by Eyal Onne in his study of the photographic heritage of the Holy Land, which lists photographers who worked in Palestine between 1839 and 1914 by nationality.[28]

The table actually suggests that none of the photographers who worked in Palestine in the period in question were natives. It is no accident that the word Palestinian does not appear in Onne's table, except in relationship to the members of the German Pietistic sect known as the Templars.[29] Hardly the straightforward classification by nationalities that it purports to be, Onne's table reveals at least as much about the author's premises as about the nationalities of the photographers. Firstly, it privileges the condition of being a Jew by dividing each nationality into

Nationality	Photographers
English	53
Scottish	2
Irish	1
English Jews	2
Italian English	1
French	15
American	11
Swedish American	1
Armenian	11
German	3
German Jews	2
Palestinian German	1
Swiss	3
Italian	2
Russian Jews	2
Turkish	2
Austrian	1
Austrian Jews	1
Indian Jews	1
Unknown	19

Jews and gentiles. It also conceals the fact that the photographers referred to as Armenian and Turkish were members of communities who were native to the region. If we add to this the fact that Onne divided the English, the Austrians and the Russians into Jews and non-Jews, it becomes evident that he is taking as one of his premises the Zionist belief that a 'national' affinity exists between anyone who is Jewish and Palestinian. One can only wonder about the absence of local Arab photographers like Khalil Raad who worked in Jerusalem before 1914. Equally disturbing is the fact that Onne's information contradicts the data found in Alexander Scholch's study of Palestine in the second half of the nineteenth century. According to two different tables included in Scholch's book, there were four photographers — described as three local Greek Orthodox and one Armenian — in Jerusalem in 1877 and only one year earlier the number was two (described as local Christians).[30] The Zionist discourse and its insistence on ignoring native histories of Palestine has played no small role in the obliteration of Arab and local Armenian photographers in the writing of the history of photography in Jerusalem.

The definition of local is essentially a theoretical problem before anything else. According to the Oxford dictionary, it refers to a state characterized by an attachment to a certain locality and by 'interests arising out of such attachments'.[31] The production of locality, in my view, is a process that evolves through history and is based on the idea of the negation of what is not local. In this process several elements are at play which cannot be reduced only to the spatial element. Locality, as Appadurai has argued, is connected more with relations and contexts than with places and location. Locality is essentially a quality that is 'constituted by a series of links between the sense of social immediacy, the technologies of interactivity, and the relativity of contexts'.[32] In other words, locality becomes an issue connected more with social context than it is with the physical place. It is the context in which the images were produced, exchanged, viewed and assigned meanings that must be placed at the core of our attempt to discern what is local from what is not. In this context, the subject of the photograph becomes crucial since it is very clear that the different markets of exchange were interested in the image based solely on what it depicted and on its subject's relation to the community in question. Christian Europe, for instance, was very interested in Holy Land images much more than it was interested in the people of Palestine.

In light of the above discussion, it seems safe to claim that it was the image and not the photographer that mattered most. If the picture depicted the desired image, then it was in demand regardless of who produced it. It is for this reason that, in examining the emergence of local photography, it is fruitless exclusively to focus on the national, ethnic of religious identity of the photographers at the expense the work they produced and its relation to the local society. Whether the photographers were Armenians,

Arabs, European residents, Muslims, Christians or Jews, what confers on them the designation 'local' is essentially the work that they produced. If their photographs reflected the fabric of Palestinian society at the time by representing its life from within, and if it catered to the local demand for photographs, rather the tourist demand for holy land paraphernalia, then the title of local photography can be assigned to such work. In other words, local photography is any photography that represented social life in Palestine as opposed to biblical landscape or Zionist photography that was exclusively representing the Jewish settlement project in Palestine. In this sense, the pictures of Ramallah taken by the American Elihu Grant between 1901 and 1904 can be called local photography. Not only do they capture life in the town but they were also produced for the benefit of the town — despite the fact that Grant himself was an outsider.[33] The same could be said of some of the work by the photographers of the American Colony in Jerusalem.

The Beginnings of Local Photography

In light of the preceding discussion, it appears that the beginnings of local photography in Jerusalem can be traced back to the 1860s. The groundwork for the rise of photography as a local practice, as far as we can verify, was laid at the Armenian convent of St James where in the 1860s the Armenian Patriarch Yessayi Garabedian started what would become the nucleus of this local phenomenon. Towards the end of the 1850s, Garabedian had started courses in photography within the Church compound in the Old City of Jerusalem. In 1863, he left Jerusalem for Europe where he visited Manchester, London and Paris. There he kept abreast of the latest developments in photography. His return to Jerusalem in 1863 and subsequent appointment as patriarch did not 'dampen his enthusiasm for photography'.[34] Many of Garabedian's students went on to practise professionally, and soon controlled the local market. It was from his courses that the two earliest local photographers in Jerusalem started. They were Garabed Krikorian and Ezkiel Vartabed Kevorkian.[35] Very little is known about the work of the latter. The former, however, became the owner of the first photographic studio in Jerusalem in 1885. The studio, located outside of Jaffa Gate, soon became an important photographic establishment out of which a new generation of photographers would spring. Even the location of the studio would also acquire significance, for most of the early photographic establishments later on were located in the vicinity of Krikorian's studio.[36] The court outside Jaffa Gate was, at the time when Krikorian opened his shop, Jerusalem's 'Central Station'. Not only was the location packed with horse carriages, cars and travellers arriving from the villages nearby as well as from Jaffa and Bethlehem, but it was next to Hotel Fast, perhaps the most important hotel in Jerusalem at the time, and to Thomas Cook's Travel Office. Although we cannot be certain about Krikrorian's reasons for choosing the site for his shop, it would seem safe to assume that it was connected to the area's being the main tourist stop in town. After all, Holy Land pictures were in demand all around the world. Regardless of the original reasons, the fact remains that Krikorian's shop was the first of a number of photographic studios that opened on the block.

In 1913, Garabed handed over the studio to his son Johannes, who managed it until it was closed down in 1948. The young Krikorian first learnt photography from his father, who later on sent him to Germany in order further his knowledge of the craft. Following his return to Jerusalem, Johannes married Najla, the niece of Khalil Raad, his father's apprentice and later on his competitor, who helped him at work, often hand-colouring prints.

For all we know, this competitor, Raad, was the first Arab photographer in Palestine. Although of Lebanese origins (born in Bhamdoun in 1854 to a father from Sibnay), Khalil Raad grew up in Jerusalem at the St George school. His photographic career began at the studio of Krikorian were he first worked. However, his relationship with Krikorian deteriorated rapidly following his decision to start his own photography shop across the street from his master's studio.

Right before the start of WWI, Raad went to Switzerland where he furthered his knowledge of the craft from the Swiss photographer Keller. Following his return to Jerusalem, he was appointed the official photographer of the Ottoman Army. Nonetheless, according to an unpublished dairy of a member of the American Colony in Jerusalem, the title of court photographers was exclusively given to the photographers of the Colony (particularly to H. L. Larsson) by Jamal Pasha — the Ottoman military ruler of Palestine at the time — and not to Raad.[37]

Khalil Raad became known for his studio portraits as well as for his picturing of family events. Edward Said recalls in his memoirs how his own family was in the habit of getting their portraits taken by Raad in Jerusalem. Said presents us with a detailed description of what he called 'the demanding rigor of Khalil Raad's hooded tripod camera'. Raad, who is described as 'a slightly built white-haired man', use to take 'a great deal of time [to arrange] the large group of family and guests into acceptable order'.[38]

Despite the diversity of subject matter in his work (which include some of the best landscape images of Palestine), Raad was essentially, unlike the photographers of the American Colony, a family photographer.[39] His career essentially revolved around the production of portrait photography. Nevertheless, the collection of photographs for sale listed in his catalogue included many images of the landscape and of rural life in Palestine. These catalogues were basically large albums containing small prints with brief captions describing the subject matter of the photographs as well as the serial numbers that Raad engraved onto the negative. It is worth noting that although such pictures represented the landscape of Palestine at the

time, the captions used the biblical names for the photographed sites. Unlike the visiting European photographers, however, Raad was no doubt aware of the names used at the time by the Palestinians to refer to such sites. His resorting to biblical names could very well be explained by the fact that the pictures in his albums were intended for sale to tourists and pilgrims visiting the Holy Land.

Raad's photographic career came to an abrupt end when Jerusalem was divided in 1948 and his studio became inaccessible after the area outside Jaffa Gate became a border zone separating Israeli-controlled west Jerusalem from the Jordanian-held Old City. Raad was by no means the only photographer to lose his shop in 1948. At least two other photographers who either had their studios close to Raad's or in the area that fell to the occupation of Israel found themselves in the same situation. Hanna Safieh, Jerusalem's first documentary photographer, also lost access to his shop located on the part of Jaffa Road that fell under Israel's control. So did the photographer Sama'an al-Sah'har.

Born in 1910 to a Palestinian Arab family from Jerusalem, Safieh started working at the American Colony Photographic department, which was established in 1898 to meet a growing demand of pictures from the Holy Land. There Safieh worked as an apprentice of the Swedish photographer Eric Matson (1888–1977), with whom he collaborated until the end of Matson's career in Palestine in 1946. During the last few years of British rule in Palestine, Safieh was employed by the Mandate government as a Public Information Officer. Working as a photographer for the government provided him with ample opportunity to capture the events that were taking place around him.Unfortunately, only a handful of his pictures of that period are known to us today. Most of his photographic collection dating from before 1948 was stolen from his studio in Jerusalem in the aftermath of the 1967 war. A number of his photographs from that period survived, however, as the result of the fact that they had been published abroad in a number of newspapers and journals. Among Safieh's customers were internationally known journals and media outlets such as the *National Geographic Magazine*, the *Readers Digest*, the *London News* and the Associated Press Services. Of particular importance are the photographs he took in the aftermath of the massacre that took place on the night of 9 April 1948, at the village of Deir Yassin in Jerusalem's western section. Other important events captured by Safieh include the funeral of the Palestinian leader Abd-al-Qadir al-Hussieni, killed in early April 1948 in the battle of al-Qastal near Jerusalem. His images of both the battle site and of the funeral constitute important historical records in the history of Palestine. Equally important are his images documenting the fall of the Jewish quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem in May 1948 to Arab fighters. His picture of Jewish fighters being escorted by officers from the Jordanian Army has, in fact, already made it into a number of history books.[40]

Krikorian, Raad and Safieh were not the only photographers that worked in Jerusalem in the period before 1948. Records show that a number of photographers were active in the city at the time. Among them we can count Ali Za'rour (1901–1972), Anton and Joseph Mikhail Carmi, Sama'an al-Sah'har, the studios of Elia in the Old City, Diana (location unknown) and the photo dealers Hanania Brothers (location also unknown). Za'arur, who worked in Jerusalem from 1936 on, was one of the first Muslim photographers in Palestine. The Carmi brothers, on the other hand, were the official photographers of the Russian Orthodox Church in Jerusalem from the end of the nineteenth century. As for Sah'har, all we know is that he owned a photographic studio that was located on the outside of the New Gate of the Old City in the mid 1940s. Following the division of the city, his studio remained in what was considered to be no, man's land and he moved his practice to Bethlehem.

Early Local Photography and the Question of Representation

The presence of a number of professional local photographers who worked in Jerusalem in the early part of the twentieth century points to the birth of a new

Figure 1. Khalil Raad, *Studio portrait of tourists photographed in traditional Arab clothing*, Jerusalem, Palestine, 1930. Coll. MK/Fondation Arabe pour l'Image.

photographic tradition, at least with respect to the way in which Palestine and its people were depicted.

A quick examination of a number of works of early local professional photographers indicates that in many ways the commercial photographs of Palestine that they produced for the tourist market were not different from those produced earlier by their European counterpart. However, images of holy sites, religious ceremonies, visits of statesmen and views of major cities were not the only works local photographers produced. The bulk of their photographic production was, rather, connected to the life of their community, for they photographed personal, family and other social occasions and documented political changes in Palestine. Hence, the bulk of their work belongs to the genre of portrait photography. This is not to say that early European photographers — particularly residents with studios in the region — were not engaged in the production of portraits. Still there are important differences in how the two groups, local and resident, related to, and produced, portrait photography.

A typical trend in early European portrait photography in Palestine showed human figures whose identity as individuals was consistently ignored, to the point that the argument could be made their identity was obliterated. As I have already mentioned, people appeared in images taken by Dumas, Bonfils and others as representatives of types of people living in the Holy Land (a number of pictures entitled 'a woman from Bethlehem' illustrate this point). In a way, the choice of pose, setting, object, and subject was in the hands of the photographer. In contrast, in local photography, the object of the picture was his or her own subject. In a sense, it was they who decided to get photographed and chose the kind of pose and image they wanted to appear in. Interestingly enough, however, in doing so, they often imitated images they had seen in early European photography. For example, it was not uncommon for urban women to be photographed dressed as Bedouins or Bethlehemites. The studios of Krikorian and Raad — among others — had a number of attires at the disposal of their customers who could chose to be photographed disguised as other 'more exotic' locals. That they often chose to do that might be explained by the fact that many of the customers of the early local studios were more likely to be from the wealthy and urban segments of the Palestinian society. It appears that the newly emerging class of urban aristocracy had fully adopted European attire and style of life and with it adopted the perception of viewing peasants and Bedouins as exotic Orientals. Despite the fact that the resulting image could in many cases by very similar to those commonly produced by European photographers, the role of the individual being photographed — as a passive object or as an active participant in the choice of subject — remains an important distinction in the context of the present discussion.

The practice of early photography reveals several important trends that dominated the work of the Jerusalem photographers at the time. The first and perhaps the most common trend was the production of family portraits. Many rich or middle class urban families started early on to get studio portraits of the entire family taken. This trend was rather common among Christian Arab families at first, but rich urban Muslim families quickly adopted it as early as the 1920s. The work of Johannes Krikorian presents us with numerous examples of this genre. The most typical of such photographs would have the head of the household — i.e. the man — standing in the middle of the photograph, while his wife is to his side in a lower position surrounded by the rest of the family. The patriarchal nature of Arab society in Palestine at the time is evident in such images. A studio portrait taken in 1911 by the Jaffa based photographer Issa Sawabini shows the father (Alfred Roch) standing with a finger pointed towards his baby daughter (Ortineh), who is held by her mother (Olinda). The mother is dressed in a manner that suggests she belonged to Victorian America. The photograph thus presents us with a mélange of ideas and attitudes belonging to various cultural trends at the time. A contrast between the postures of Mr and Mrs Roch in the photograph brings to mind John Berger's observation regarding the existence of a convention in modern European art where 'men act' and 'women appear'.[41] The

Figure 2. Issa Sawabini, *Alfred and Olinda Roch with their daughter Ortineh*, Jaffa, Palestine, 1911 Coll. Samia Salfiti/Fondation Arabe pour l'Image.

set up and the gesture of the father is intended to affirm values of patriarchy upheld strictly within Arab society of the time, and the posture of the mother suggests that she was attentive to the way she would appear to the viewers. The attire of all three shows the trend towards westernization among local aristocracy. As time went by photographs of the family without the patriarch started to become common in certain regions and social classes. Immigration to the Americas or drafts into the wars might explain the absence of the father. In fact, it is likely that such photographs were taken for the benefit of the absent father.

The second trend that developed was associated with photographers from missionary groups that worked in Palestine at the time. It was common for missionary schools to hire photographers in order to produce images showing their charitable activities for the benefit of their founders abroad. The work of the missionary E. Grant in Ramallah in the 1910s is a good example. Grant often photographed the people of Ramallah, especially those who were associated with the Quaker school (The Friends School). His pictures often appeared in publications in Quaker publications coming out of Philadelphia in the United States -- where the Quakers had their headquarters at the time. Photographing the graduating classes in the missionary schools was another area in which photography was regularly employed. This is one type of work in which many local photographers were active, particularly Khalil Raad, and Issa Sawabini of Jaffa.[42]

The third trend that was common in certain areas, particularly areas that had a significant Christian population, was post-mortem photography (photographing the deceased before or during the funeral). Photographs of deceased clergy, especially patriarchs and bishops, can be found in photographic archives of many churches of Palestine dating back to the late nineteenth century. This tradition, which appears to have been limited at first to the clergy, seems to have become popular among the Christian population in the early part of the twentieth century. In fact it was not uncommon for local photographic studios to advertise that they specialized in funeral pictures. In many instances, the deceased would be photographed in an almost standing position, with the coffin pushed up a little surrounded by the family. It is not known how this tradition emerged in early photography of the Near East. Nonetheless, post-mortem photography was not unknown at the time in other parts of the world. On the contrary, it was practised in early American photography as well as in early Indian photography. The resort to the post-mortem photographs in the case of

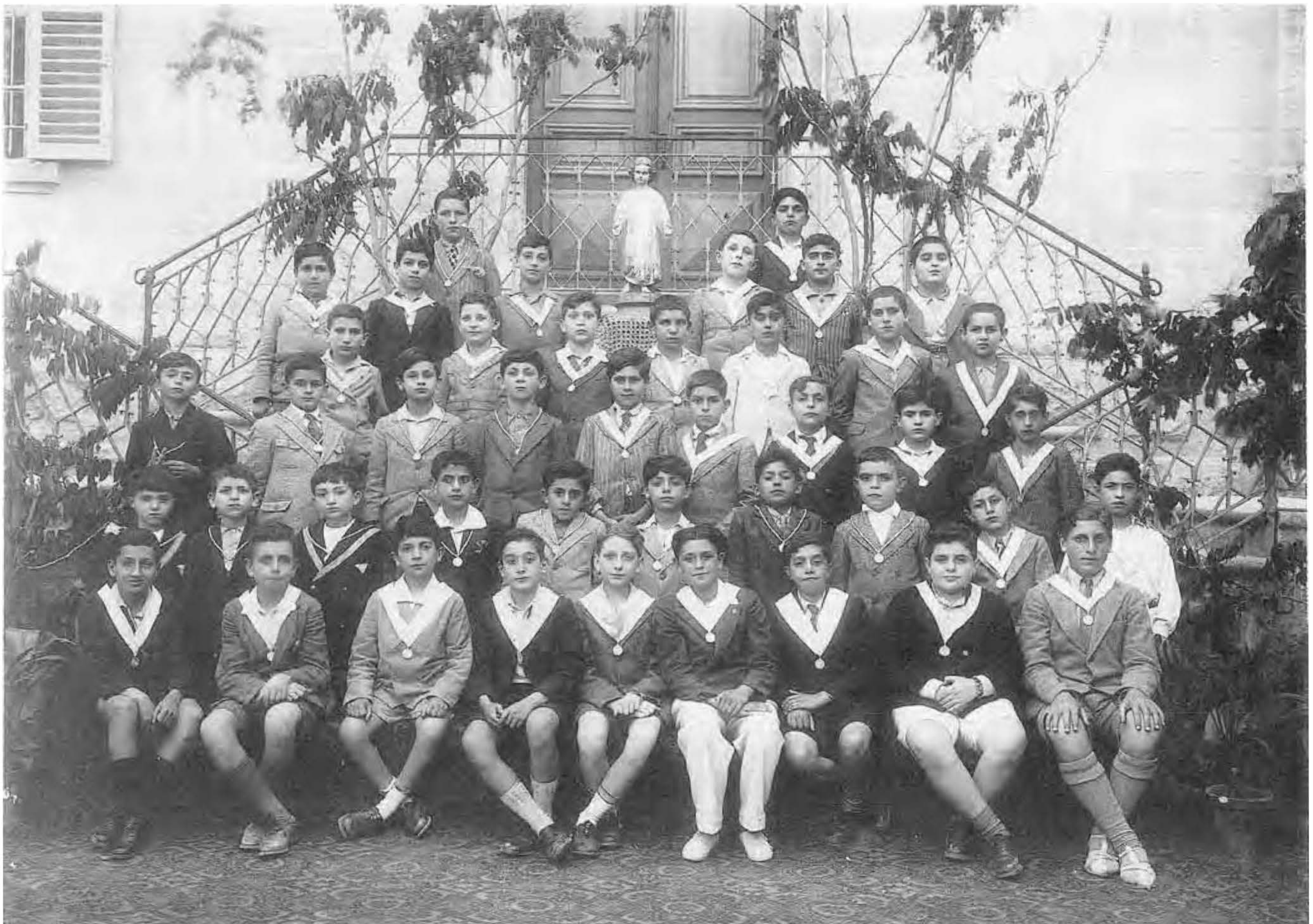

Figure 3. Photographer unknown, *School Picture, the "Frères des Ecoles Chrètiennes" in Jerusalem*, circa 1932, Coll. Leila Kardus/Fondation Arabe pour l'Image.

Figure 4. Khalil Raad, An example of postmortem photography, picture of father Sa'ati circa, 1930s. Coll. Institute for Palestine Studies.

Palestine was perhaps due to the fact that the subject was not photographed during his or her lifetime. It is possible that the subject's last picture was also the first. Taking a picture with the deceased surrounded by the family members was perhaps, as Christopher Pinney pointed out in his discussion of this phenomenon in the case of India, 'an expression of a combination of love ... and the need for grief-stricken relatives to cling to memories of the deceased'.[43] The last point might explain why post-mortem photography did not fully disappear for we still find pictures of deceased people that were taken recently.

A fourth trend in local photography is what I would term 'war photography'. This genre includes both studio portraits of men in army uniform and pictures of combat or events related to the various wars and rebellions that affected Palestine at the time. One can find pictures of Palestinian men in Ottoman army uniform and in British police uniform. Photographs of resistance fighters started to emerge later on. While the studios of Krikorian, Raad, and Sawabini (in Jaffa) produced this type of portraits, Hanna Safieh, Eric Matson and Ali Zarour produced similar pictures but on the field and outside the confines of the studio. Several photographs from the 1940s by Hanna Safieh, for example, show leaders such as Abdel Qader al-Hussieni posing for the camera surrounded by other armed men from the *al-Jihad al-Muqadas* forces that he led. Other pictures by Safieh include photographing the Arab attack on the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem in May 1948 as well as the battle of the *Gush Etzion* Jewish settlements (between Bethlehem and Hebron) in May 1948. According to an eyewitness account, Safieh travelled in the tank of Abdullah al-Tal, the commanding officer of the Jordanian Army, who captured the site from the Zionist forces in 1948. Other photographs documenting the Arab revolt of 1936, and the war of 1948 can often be found in family collections and in archives. Another photographer who documented the war of 1948 was the Gaza-based Abdel Razak Badran.[44]

Conclusion

The trends discussed above attest to the fact that there was indeed a local photographic tradition in Jerusalem, one that employed the medium in ways that were significantly different from the way Europeans had previously employed it. Clearly, photography had found its own place within the Palestinian society of Jerusalem as a way of documenting social life. In this regard, it is interesting to note that photography does not seem to have been viewed as an art, as much as it was viewed as a way of documenting social and private lives. Photographs that

Figure 5. Bakradjian, coll., *Three Palestinians in the British Police*, circa 1940s. Fondation Arabe pour L'Image.

Figure 6. Photogarapher unknown, Mr. Skafi in four different positions, Bethehem, Palestine, 1922, Coll. Fondation Arabe pour l'Image.

suggest that the medium was used as an art form are rather rare. One of the few such photographs dates back to 1922 and shows a man named Mr Skafi posing in four different positions. In an almost surreal setting three Mr Skafis are sitting around a dining table eating potatoes, while a head — also of Mr Skafi — is placed on a plate in front of them at the table!

One might argue that photography in Palestine had several beginnings and multiple histories. First there was the arrival of photography in 1839 as a European invention, which I have briefly outlined in an attempt to establish an initial frame of reference. With European photographers certain ideas and traditions in photography and in captions were gradually established. Then there was the 'beginnings' of photography as a local career at the hands of Armenian and Arab photographers. This beginning was largely connected with the advent of modernity into the Ottoman Empire and in particular into Jerusalem. The third 'beginning' was connected with the start of the Zionist colonization of Palestine which brought a number of photographers to the country to document the birth and the growth of the Jewish *Yishuv* — something to which I have barely referred. Studies on both Zionist and European photographers of Palestine are numerous. However, only a handful of articles has been written so far about local photography of Palestine. The current study attempts to bring into the picture a number of photographers who have so far been ignored and, almost more importantly, to carve a place into the history of photography in Jerusalem for what I have called a local photographic tradition. Needless to say, a lot of work remains to be done in the field. Not only is the study of the development of local photography important for understanding the advent of modernity in Jerusalem, but it also offers the social historian important material relevant to the social changes that were taking place at the time.

Early local photography left us a large number of records of political and daily life in Jerusalem. At the same time, it provides us with a glance of how people then viewed and 'framed' themselves. After all, it is worth keeping in mind the important role that photographs play in shaping what we know and how we know it. As has been rightly said, photographers 'alter and enlarge our notions of what is worth looking at and what we have a right to observe'.[45]

Notes

1. See Rona Sela, *Photography in Palestine in the 1930s–1940s*, Israel: Habibbutz Hameuched Publishing House, Ltd. 2000, 163–221 (Hebrew).
2. See Salim Tamari, 'Jerusalem's Ottoman Modernity: The Times and Lives of Wasif Jawhariyyeh', in *Jerusalem Quarterly File* 9 (issue summer 2000).
3. The plane crashed before it arrived in Jerusalem on its way from Jaffa. See 'The Memoirs of Wasif Johariyyeh', unpublished manuscript in the collection of the Institute for Palestine Studies in Beirut. See also Salim Tamari, ibid.
4. For further information on Jerusalem in the nineteenth century, see Alexander Scholch, *Palestine in Transformation (1856–1882):*

Studies in Social, Economic and Political Development, trans. William C. Young and Michael C. Gerrity, Washington, D.C: Institute for Palestine Studies 1993. See also A. L. Tibawi, *British Interest in Palestine 1800–1901*, London: Oxford University Press 1961.

5. Reinhold Rohricht, *Bibliotheca Geographica Palestinae*, London: John Trotter Reprints 1989, 338–587.
6. For further elaboration on this, see Issam Nassar, *Photographing Jerusalem: The Image of the City in Nineteenth-Century Photography*, Bolder: East European Monographs 1997, 25–30.
7. In December of 1839, the same year in which Daguerre announced his invention of photography, Horace Vernet and Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet arrived in Palestine to photograph the country.
8. 'Architectural Photographic Exhibition', *The British Journal of Photography* (15 March 1860), 88.
9. Ibid., 88.
10. Nissan Perez, *Focus East: Early Photography in the Near East 1839–1885*, New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., Publishers 1988, 124–233.
11. The present study confines itself to photographs taken by professional photographers, for they were more widely accessible to the general public—both in the Near East and in Europe — and can be considered, in turn, the product of a market demand for Holy Land images. As such they illustrate more clearly the type of photographs that were sought by the public.
12. Millet is a recognized non-Muslim religious community in the Ottoman Empire that granted the community a large measure of internal religious and legal autonomy.
13. It is very possible that some photographers may belong in more than one category since they might have been motivated to photograph Palestine by more than one reason. In this sense, it can be argued that the background of the photographers had indeed an impact on their work.
14. This category includes several famous French photographers such as Maxime Du Camp and Auguste Salzmann. Both were dispatched — separately and at different times — to the region by French governmental agencies. Du Camp — generally thought to be the first to use calotype photography in the Middle East — was sent by the French Ministry of Education on an official mission to Egypt and Palestine in 1849 together with his friend, the novelist Gustave Flaubert. (For more detail, see Paul E. Chevedden, *The Photographic Heritage of the Middle East*, Malibu: Undena Publications 1981, 1. Augusta Salzmann, on the other hand, was sent by the French Ministry of Public Instruction to document Jerusalem and its environs in 1855 with the purpose of validating the theories of Louis Ferdinand de Saulcy. (For more detail, see Abigail Solomon-Godeau, 'A Photographer in Jerusalem, 1855: Auguste Salzmann and His Times', *October*, 18 (Fall 1981): 91–07.
15. For more information on Louis de Clercq, see Chevedden, *The Photographic Heritage of the Middle East*, 1–2. This group also includes several photographers who joined British expeditions, mostly organized by the Palestine Exploration fund — from the 1860s on — included photographers as part of their teams. Among such photographers were Henry Philips, James McDonald, and Horatio Herbert Kitchener. The Beirut based photographer Tancrede Dumas also worked in the 1870s for the American Oriental Society.
16. This group includes many of the commercial resident photographers of the next type who were commissioned occasionally to do such work.
17. Perez, *Focus East*, 171.
18. See Garney E. S. Cavin, *The Image of the East: Nineteenth-Century Near Eastern Photographs by Bonfils from the Harvard Semitic Museum*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press 1982, 17–37.
19. Perez described Trancrede R. Dumas as being of Italian origin. See *Focus East*, 160.
20. Ibid., 124.
21. Ibid., 163. Fiorillo's business seems to have merged with that of another photographer in the 1880s for the signature Marquis and Fiorillo appears on all of his later photographs.
22. Ibid., 233. Paul Chevedden, on the other hand, suggested that the two photographers were H. Arnoux and G. Zangaki, whose studio was in Port Sa'id. See Cnevedden, *The Photographic Heritage of the Middle East*, 3.
23. For detailed discussion of how European photographers presented Jerusalem and its people in the nineteenth century, see Nassar, *Photographing Jerusalem.*
24. The last group of photographers included those who were commissioned to produce stereoscopic images. This groups involves a large number of photographers, the majority of whom were Americans or worked for American distributors. Among them were William E. James (who produced a series of 150 images of Palestine in 1866), Benjamin West Kilburn (whose photographs date from 1865 and 1874), and William Herman Rau (who took a number of stereoscopic images during 1882). The Scottish John Cramb was commissioned in 1860 to produce stereoscopes by the publisher William Collins of Glasgow, and the British photographer Frank Mason Good also took stereoscopes in the 1860s. For more information see Dan Kyram, 'Early Stereoscopic Photography in Palestine', *History of Photography* 19 (Autumn 1995): 228–230.
25. It is important to note that the forefather of local photography, Yessayi Garabedian, described his fascination with photography in his memories calling it in Armenian *arhest* [meaning craft] instead of the world *arvest* [which means art]. See Ruth Victor-Hummel, 'culture and Image: Christians and the Beginnings of local Photography in 19th Century Ottoman Palestine', in Anthony O'Mahony, Goren Gunner and Kevork Hitlian, *The Christian Heritage in the Holy Land*, Jerusalem: Swedish Christian Study Center 1995, 186.
26. See Dror Wahrman, 'Mendel Diness — Jerusalem's First Professional Photographer?' *Cathedra for the History of Eretz Israel and its Yishuv*, (vol. 38, 1985), 115–120 (Hebrew).
27. Because Diness converted to Christianity he was shunned by the Jewish community in Palestine which tried to physically harm him and in fact managed to take away his wife and children. As a result, Diness sought refuge at the house of the British Counsul in Jerusalem. It was in that house, with the help of the wife of the consul, Mrs Finn, that Diness first learned of photography. He worked in Jerusalem capturing images of both the place and its Ottoman rules before he left in 1860 to the United States never to return again to the region. For more information on M. J. Diness, see *Capturing the Holy Land: M. J. Diness and the Beginnings of Photography in Jerusalem*, Cambridge: Harvard Semitic Museum 1993.
28. Eyal Onne, *Photographic Heritage of the Holy Land 1839–1914*, Manchester: Institute of Advanced Studies 1980, 25.
29. The Templars established several colonies in Palestine the late nineteenth-century. For more information on the Templars, see Naomi Shephard, *The Zealous Intruders: From Napoleon to the dawn of Zionism — The Explorers, Archaeologists, Artists, Tourists, Pilgrims, and Visionaries Who Open Palestine to the West*, San Francisco: Harper & Row 1987, 136–140.
30. The 1876 numbers are based in Warren's Underground Jerusalem and the source of the second is a study by Luncz. See Alexander Scholch, *Tahawulat Jathriyeh fi Falestin 1856–1882*, translated into Arabic by Kamel al-Assali, Amman: The Jordanian University 1988, 153–158.
31. *The New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*, Thumb Index Edition 1993, s.v. 'Localism'.
32. Arjun Appaudrai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dynamics of Globalization*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1996, 178.
33. Photographs taken by Grant were printed in The Ramallah Messenger, the newsletter of the Society of Friends in New England. See Nasseb Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah*, Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing 1992, 31.
34. Badr al-Hajj, 'Khalil Raad, photographe à Jerusalem', *Revue d' études Palestiniennes* No. 37 (Autumn1990), 99–100.
35. For further information see Victor-Hummel, 'Culture and Image'.
36. The fact that Krikorian, Raad, Safieh, and Freji had there studios on Jaffa Road close to the Jaffa Gate is peculiar. It can possibly be explained in light of the fact that all of those photographers were Christians who either lived or were connected with the quarters close to the location. Furthermore Jaffa Gate was the main gate through which pilgrims and tourists arrived to the city either from Jaffa by carriage or by train. The area had several inns for pilgrims and was the main transportation station for carts that traveled to other parts of the country. In the later years of British rule in Palestine, studios were still being established on Jaffa Road, but further to the north inside of the new part of the city.
37. Unpublished manuscript by a member of the American Colony in Jerusalem named Lind, page 298.
38. Edward Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf 1999, 76.
39. For more details on the life of Khalil Raad see Badr al-Hajj, 'Khalil Raad'.
40. For more information on Hanna Safieh, see Issam Nassar, 'Hanna Safieh: a Jerusalem Photographer', *Jerusalem Quarterly File* (Winter 2000), 24–28.
41. John Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, London: Penguin 1972, 45 and 47.
42. It is important to keep in mind that the shortage in photographers meant that people of the surrounding villages and towns regularly employed the Jaffa and the Jerusalem photographers, who travelled from town to another.
43. Christopher Pinney, *Camera Indica: The Social Life of Indian Photographs*, London: Reaktion Books 1997, 139.

44. Abdel Razak Badran was born in 1919 in Haifa. He lived between Safad and and Nablus before he moved to Cairo where he studied photography at the School for Applied Arts at Cairo where he studied photography at the School for Applied Arts at Cairo University. In 1941 he founded in Gaza a 'Studio for Art and Photography'.

45. Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 1977, 3.