

## History from the Margins

Jerusalem was an Ottoman city for the three centuries prior to the events highlighted in the various studies in this volume. Beginning in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, it witnessed a number of changes which had a profound and transformative effect on the city.

Several factors contributed to this process; the rising interest in Europe in biblical studies and archeology, improved modes of transportation—including steamships, rail, cars and later air flights—and the emergence of tourism as an industry, are a few among the many changes directly connected to Europe. But other internal factors within Palestine itself and within the empire at large also contributed to such transformations.

Most important among them were the introduction of the reform policies—*Tanzimat*—in the Ottoman system, and the period of the Egyptian rule in Syria—along with the changes it brought about regarding liberalization and religious equality.

Needless to say, in conjunction with the arrival of European settlers and missionaries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the emergence of Zionism and the beginning of Jewish immigration to Palestine that it brought about, and the revolt of the Young Turks in 1908—along with the re-institution of the constitution—were also among a number of political events which contributed, each in its own way, to the changes that took place and shaped Palestine during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The essays in this collection shed new light on our understanding of many of these issues. The first one, by Laura Robson, addresses the role played by the arriving Occidental travelers and the way they

presented and imagined Palestine. Bedross Der Matossian's essay examines the impact of the reforms brought by the Young Turks on the Armenian religious establishment in the city as well as the Armenian community in Jerusalem at large. The diary of Conde de Ballobar, the Spanish consul in Jerusalem from 1914 to 1920, is the primary source on which the study of Roberto Mazza is based. Mazza presents Ballobar as an important witness to the events taking place in the city during a critical period of both the Great War and the heavy handed rule of Jamal Pasha.

The next two studies, by Richard Cahill and Omar Khalidi, relate to the period of the British Mandate in Palestine. The latter deals with the Palestine *Awqaf* of the Indian Muslims including various Sufi *Zawiyas*. The former continues a his line of enquiry from an earlier essay in issue 38 on the "Black and Tans"—the auxiliary force that the British used to put down the Irish rebellion in 1919-1920 from whose ranks about 650 members were recruited by the British to serve in Palestine (JQ 38). Adila Laidi Hanieh, in conversation with artist Emily Jacir, explores the lost history of Jerusalem's transport network which connected the city to the neighboring countries. The last contribution, by Stephen Bennet, reviews Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks*, providing an account of the accumulative transformations of the Palestinian landscape that have led to its fragmentation.

All in all, this issue narrates histories of Palestine from the late Ottoman period in essays that, although different, complement each other in that they address historical events rarely studied before. Seen together, these essays highlight aspects relevant to the transformation of Jerusalem, not necessarily as causes, but rather as signs of the times. None of the historical essays deals directly with the native population of the city, but they do help us understand, rather, some of the changes that shaped the lives of the cities and their inhabitants in profound ways.

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