



Jordanian Jerusalem: Postage Stamps and Identity Construction

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Postage stamps offer visual evidence of country's history as stamps are continuously produced for both internal and external consumption. Sent both domestically and abroad, the symbolic value of stamps is immeasurable. Vivid images on postage stamps depict events that are deemed worthy of visual commemoration and "reflect ideologies, aspirations and values attesting to political, social and cultural ideas and aesthetic tastes."¹ Stamps

¹ Ami Ayalon, "The Hashemites, T.E. Lawrence and the Postage Stamps of the Hijaz," in Asher Susser and Aryeh Shmuelevitz, eds., *The Hashemites in the Modern Arab World: Essays in Honor of the late Professor Uriel Dann* (London: Frank Cass, 1995).

convey a message about how governments want to depict the nation-states they rule over. The images on the stamps provide a sense of history, ideological vision, and competing identities.

As the boundaries between academic disciplines fade, historians no longer rely solely on documents as primary sources in history writing. With governments issuing postage stamps, historians can examine them for the official perspectives they convey. This article reviews Jordan's postage stamps to determine both the historical and the contemporary identities the Hashemite regime sought to promote from 1948-1967. Special attention will be paid to the symbolic representation of Jerusalem's holy places on Jordanian postage stamps as Jordan sought to create national symbols and traditions. Postage stamps, particularly the holy places stamps to be analyzed in this article, helped distinguish Jordan as a national entity as it put forth images to represent the budding nation.²

Images of Jerusalem and the holy places captured an important place in Jordanian postage stamps of 1948-1967. The fact that holy places appear so many times on Jordanian stamps during this time period, in contrast to the pre-1946 Amirate period, leads one to infer that the enlargement of

Jordan's geographical boundaries had an impact on the territorial ideology of Jordan's leaders. The incorporation of Jerusalem and the West Bank, and thus the holy places, became very strongly linked with the Hashemite monarchy's conception of Jordan. Even after 1967, when the holy places of Jerusalem and the West Bank fell under Israeli occupation, Jordan continued to represent Jerusalem and the holy places on stamps and bank notes, even choosing to make the city the focus of a national holiday.³

As a result of the first Arab-Israeli war (1948-49), a substantial portion of what had since 1920 been British-ruled Palestine came under the control of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, formerly known as Transjordan and until that time confined to the East Bank of the Jordan river. This portion of Palestine, renamed the West Bank and including the eastern sectors of Jerusalem, was soon formally annexed to Jordan and its population granted Jordanian citizenship. In the years that followed, the Jordanian government sought to quell a distinct Palestinian Arab identity among the population of the West Bank and foster loyalty to Jordan and to the Hashemite monarchy.

By most accounts, the incorporation of the West Bank into Jordan tripled the country's population and complicated its efforts at nation building. Transjordan had

² For more on postage stamps and history writing, see Harry W. Hazard, "Islamic Philately as an Ancillary Discipline," in James Kritzeck and R. Bayly Winder, eds., *The World of Islam, Studies in Honor of Philip K. Hitti* (London, 1960), pp. 199-232; Donald Reid, "Egyptian History Through Stamps," *Muslim World* 62, no. 3 (July 1972), pp. 209-29; Emanuel Sivan, "The Arab Nation-State: In Search of a Usable Past," *Middle East Review* 29, no. 3 (Spring 1987), pp. 21-20.

³ Sivan has noted that the celebration of the Prophet's Night Journey (*al-Isra' w'al-Mi'raj*), which during the 1950s served as a basis for Arab claims to all of Palestine, was transformed after 1967 to an official national holiday, a sort of "Jerusalem Day." See Sivan, "The Arab Nation-State," p. 26.

itself only come into being (under British auspices) in 1921. It remained under British mandatory rule until formal independence was achieved in 1946, and continued under strong British influence even after independence. The government of Amir (later King) Abdullah faced the difficult task of establishing a modern nation-state and creating a sense of Jordanian identity with precious few resources and no prior national tradition. This project was rendered more difficult because the population being incorporated had for some decades not only enjoyed a higher level of education and economic development but had also been developing its own sense of a distinct Palestinian identity.

Annexation of the West Bank gave Jordan control of some of Islam's holiest sites, especially the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque, located on the *al-Haram al-Sharif* (Noble Sanctuary) in Jerusalem's Old City. Though local clerical and lay personnel generally continued to staff the institutions administering and financing the holy sites, ultimate control was transferred to government officials and agencies based in Jordan's capital Amman on the East Bank. It was there in Amman that key issues regarding Islamic affairs and policy toward the Muslim holy places were discussed and resolved. As a result of the June 1967 war, of course, Jordan lost control of Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank to Israel. While Jordan to this day retains a special connection (recognized in the Israel-Jordan Peace Treaty) with the Muslim holy places of Jerusalem, its loss of direct control marked the end of an era, and thus a logical

stopping point for this study.⁴

A survey of Jordan's postage stamps from 1948-1967 illustrates that Jordanian national consciousness was bound up as much with events in Palestine, with holy places as the most prominent feature, as it was with the Hashemite legacy and the 1916 Arab Revolt led by Sharif Husayn, father of Jordan's founder and first king, Abdullah. Jordan was by no means the first to put Jerusalem's holy places on its postage stamps. Other countries or political entities had illustrated their postage stamps with images of the holy places in order to demonstrate their military might or carve out their ideological position. The Ottoman Empire for example, had issued "stamps showing Ottoman troops... [at] the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem..."⁵ Britain's mandatory government in Palestine had likewise issued stamps representing the holy places, as had Arab Palestinians

⁴ For reproduction of the texts affirming Jordan's position vis-a-vis the holy places in Jerusalem, see *Ma'rakat as-Salam: Watha'iq Urduniyya (al-Musar al-Urduni-al-Isra'ili) Min Mu'tamar Madrid ila l'lan Washington* [Battle for Peace: Jordanian Documents (The Jordanian-Israeli Track) From the Madrid Conference to the Washington Declaration], published in Jordan by al-Dustour al-Tijariyya, 30 July 1994, esp. pp. 87, 98, and 99.

⁵ Reid, "Egyptian History through Stamps." These stamps, along with stamps showing Ottoman troops in Sinai symbolizing the reassertion of Ottoman control in Egypt, were imagined for a military thrust into Palestine, which was successfully countered by the British. As a result, the Ottoman "Dome of the Rock" stamps had to be withheld from circulation and came out only after the war with an overprint which indicated that the intended meaning of the symbol on the stamp had changed with the new historical reality following the war. The quotation is found on p. 234.

serving the resistance during the revolt in 1938, among others.⁶ During the 1940s, newly independent Arab states had also produced holy places stamps, responding to an Arab League resolution by issuing stamps in support of Palestine's Arabs. The image on the stamps was often Jerusalem's Dome of the Rock, which served as a symbol and the focal point of the Palestinian struggle against Zionism.

As part of the joint Arab decision, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan also issued a stamp series to support Palestine's Arabs. Shortly after Jordan's independence in 1946, the Kingdom made a decision to issue a "Palestine Aid" stamp series, which was based on a resolution taken by the Arab League intended to assist the Arab population in Palestine.⁷ The decision to issue the "Aid" stamp series publicly affirmed the Hashemites' commitment to save Palestine from the Zionists, although

this occurred even while King Abdullah was covertly dealing with them. The Jordanian Parliament made a decision on 22 July 1946 to implement this resolution, and by Royal Decree on 17 August 1946, Temporary Law 20 of 1946, entitled "The Additional Stamps Law," was issued.⁸

"The Additional Stamps Law" aimed to raise funds for the Arabs of Palestine through special postage and revenue stamps depicting holy places in Palestine. It became effective from the date of the law's



publication in the Official Gazette in August 1946. The law requisitioned the proceeds from the stamps for the benefit of the Arabs of Palestine. The images were designed by Jordan's first native stamp designer, Ya'qub al-Sukkar.⁹ Jordanian-designed and Jordanian-issued, the stamps were sold in Jordan as a way to collect funds for the Arabs in Palestine.¹⁰

While little is directly known about how al-Sukkar came to choose the subject matter for his designs, a review of the historical context suggests some answers.¹¹ By choosing holy places, the Jordanian

⁶ Nabil Sha'ath, *Palestine Stamps 1865-1981* (Beirut: Dar al-Fata al-Arabi, 1981), Section A, pp. 132-53 and 154-58.

⁷ Reference to the Arab League Resolution is found in R.T. Ledger M.B.E., *Philatelic History of Jordan 1922-1953* (Amman: Published by the author [Printed in Jerusalem at Greek Convent Press], 1953), p. 70. While the text of the Arab League resolution was unavailable to the present author, see Sha'ath, *Palestine Stamps*, for confirmation of this. He notes that "in 1947, for the first time, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon all issued stamps with a Palestinian theme in a coordinated fund-raising campaign for the resistance. The stamps were overprinted with the appeal "Save Palestine" or "Palestine Tax" (p. 12). According to a display in the Postal Museum at the Jordanian Postal Ministry in Amman, Jordan, the stamps were designed by Ya'qub Yusuf al-Sukkar as a result of the enacted law and bear the slogan "In support of Palestine's Arabs" (*I'ana Arab Filastin*). The author would like to thank the Jordanian Postal Ministry's employees for their assistance.

⁸ *Official Gazette* No. 869 of 17 August 1946 and Sa'd Abu De'ah, *al-Bi'ah as-Siyasiyyah wa-Tatawwur A'maal al-Barid fil-Urdun* [The Political Environment and the Development of the Postal Service in Jordan] (Amman: Lajnat Tarikh al-Urdun, 1993), p. 31.

⁹ Ya'qub al-Sukkar's family was from Transjordan. He began designing stamps for the Amirate of Transjordan in 1927. See the exhibit at the Postal Museum at Jordan's Postal Ministry in Amman, Jordan.

¹⁰ The stamps were printed by Thos. De la Rue & Co. in the United Kingdom.

¹¹ Documentation for why these images were chosen to appear on the stamps was unavailable to the present author.

government was appealing to two sometimes competing and at other times complementary identities. While these images evoked Arab nationalist feelings, fostering Arab support among Jordanians for the Arabs of Palestine, they may also have appealed to an Islamic sense of identity, expressing religious identification with the holy places of Islam.¹² The stamps all bear images of Muslim holy places and include the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem, the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron, and the Jazzar Mosque in Acre. The proceeds were not considered Government revenue, but rather constituted a fund. The expenditure from the fund was controlled by a specially convened Committee whose role was to appropriate the money for construction and development projects benefiting Palestine's Arab population. The first supply of these postage stamps was placed on sale in the Kingdom on 31 May 1947.¹³

In the aftermath of the 1948 war, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan had to adjust itself to a radically new regional situation. The British had ended their mandate, the Zionists had declared the State of Israel, and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs had been dispersed from their homes, the majority of them seeking refuge within the expanded borders of Jordan. The change in Jordan's territorial composition forced a change in the ideological construction of the nation in

¹² At this time, "Jordanians" refers to the population living in the pre-1948 borders of Jordan, which was limited to what was known as Transjordan (later named the East Bank).

¹³ Ledger, *Philatelic History*, p. 70.

Jordan. Postage stamps were an important medium for re-imagining the nation, as changes in the above mentioned stamp series suggest. While the Jordanian-issued "Palestine Aid" stamp series remained in circulation in the enlarged Jordanian territory, it underwent a significant alteration. When the first issues appeared on 5 October 1948, the stamps were overprinted with the word "Palestine" (*Falastin*) in Arabic and English.

The historical context suggests several explanations of the meaning conveyed by the overprinted "Aid" stamps. Jordan may simply have been continuing its show of support for the Arabs of Palestine. If this were the case, then the show of support would have reached both banks of the newly unified kingdom; all stamps were overprinted and all stamps were available for purchase and circulation in both banks of the country.

Alternatively, in displaying solidarity, Jordan may have been yielding to British influence, which persisted during this period. Unable to settle the Arab/Jewish problem in Palestine, the British chose to leave, but their control over Jordan lasted well into the 1950s. With the stamps, the British may have wanted to make a last ditch effort to support Palestine's Arabs, albeit through Jordan.

The most likely explanation, however, has to do with the birth of the State of Israel in 1948. By overprinting the stamps, Jordan may have been trying to counter the newly created Jewish State by not allowing the idea of Palestine to dissipate with the British departure. This concern to support Palestine, however, would soon yield to more pressing national concerns, as

temperatives resulting from the official unification of the east and west banks came to dominate policy-making.

With the changes of 1948-1950, Jordan's efforts focused on Jordanian unity. In 1950, Jordan officially declared the unity of the east and west banks into the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.¹⁴ No longer would the area of central Palestine be referred to as "Palestine," but as the "West Bank" of Jordan. Indeed, in 1950 the government enacted a new regulation abolishing the usage of the word "Palestine" as a reference for the West Bank of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.¹⁵ Policy regarding postage stamps reflected this change. On 4 May 1951 a parliamentary decision earmarked the revenue from the sale of Aid stamps for development and construction work in the entire country, thereby turning the proceeds into Government revenue. Although the regular Parliament was not in session to confirm its status as a law, the decision was confirmed by Royal Decree and became effective as Temporary Law 67 of 1951 on 16 May 1951. This temporary law implied that revenue from the sale of this special stamp series bearing the slogan "In support

of Palestine's Arabs" would no longer be directed to helping, *separately*, the Arabs of Palestine, as the original Arab League resolution likely stipulated and the 1946 "Additional Stamps Law" confirmed. Now these funds were to become available for *all* Jordanians and Jordanian projects as determined by Jordanian authorities.¹⁶

When the regular session of Parliament convened to confirm Temporary Law 67, however, Parliament refused to confirm its status, and it was accordingly annulled and withdrawn by a Cabinet decision made on 31 December 1951. As of 1 January 1952 Palestine Aid stamps were recalled from sale in Jordan, although the law was only published in the Official Gazette on 16 January 1952.¹⁷ Rejected by the Parliament, the law was scrapped, along with the stamps a short time later. The removal of the "Aid" stamps from circulation reflected an evolving nationalist reorientation toward holy places, toward Palestine's Arabs, and toward Jordan's new historical and geographical reality, both of which were intricately interwoven at this historical juncture. By removing "Aid" stamps with their holy places images from circulation, the Jordanian government sought to effectively remove the illustrated link between Palestinians and the holy

¹⁴ This was officially enacted in 1950 legislation. See the English translation of the "Resolution Adopted by the Jordanian Parliament Providing for the Unification of the Two Banks of the Jordan River," 24 April 1950, in *Constitutional Developments*, vol. 1 of *The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record*, ed. M. Khalil (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), p. 54; the Arabic original can be found in *Majmu'at al-Qawanin wal-Anzima* [Collection of Laws and Regulations], vol. 1 (Amman: Jordanian Syndicate of Lawyers, 1957), p. 4.

¹⁵ *Nizam* No. 1 for 1950, found in *Official Gazette* No. 1012 of 1950.

¹⁶ All Jordanians at this time encompasses East Bank Jordanians (i.e. Transjordanians), West Bank Jordanians (i.e. Palestinians), and Arabs who had fled from the part of Palestine that became Israel to the East Bank of Jordan.

¹⁷ This section was based on Ledger, *Philatelic History*, p. 70. See also *Official Gazette* No. 868 of 1 August 1946, *Official Gazette* No. 1965 of 16 May 1951, and *Official Gazette* No. 1096 of 16 January 1952.

places of Palestine, a decision initiated and solidified by legislation.

To summarize, the "Aid" stamps had originally been initiated to support Arabs beyond the borders of Jordan, even at such close proximity. In a second phase, the "overprint" series carrying the word "*Falastin*" fostered a sense of unity while sustaining the idea of Palestine. In the final stage, however, stamps that were originally issued to support Palestine's Arabs came to be perceived as contrary to the new goal of promoting national unity. Home to more than 700,000 Arabs from Palestine, Jordan wished to integrate this population into a Jordanian nation-state and not encourage it to retain a separate Palestinian identity. Thus the stamps were eliminated.

It should not be inferred here that religious symbols and postage stamps define Jordanian national identity during this time period. Postage stamps were a tool that served to document the "historical" present at the time they were issued and to later identify the "historical" past. They illustrate one means among many by which a collective Jordanian national consciousness was fostered during a period of instability and transition.

To commemorate "national" unity in its postage stamps, Jordan issued during this period a series that carried the slogan "Commemorating the Unity of Jordan" (*Zikra Wahdat al-Urdun*). This series was again designed by Jordan's premier stamp designer, Ya'qub Sukkar, and is replete with images which represent the national identity Jordan was defining at this time. The



scene on the stamps represents the entire Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in its new post-1948 geographical demarcation; it includes the "West Bank" and the "East Bank" of the Jordan River, with the Dead Sea in its geographical place in the middle of the stamp, but does not delineate any particular borders. The "Unity" stamp preserves the Arabesque border used in pre-independence stamps, perhaps a legacy from the stamps issued by the Hijazi government of King Abdullah's father, Sharif Husayn of Mecca, illustrating Jordan's national origins in that region as well. What is most striking about the stamp, however, are the two historical sites serving as symbols of identification for Jordanians on their respective sides of the Jordan River.

On the East Bank side of the stamp there is a picture of the Nabatean Treasury (*al-Khaznah*), while on the West Bank side is the Umayyad-built Islamic Dome of the Rock.¹⁸ These two historical monuments embossed on the stamp reflect the most outstanding architectural inheritance of each side of the newly unified Kingdom. The Dome of the Rock is a definitive symbol with religious, political, and national significance. When it fell into the Jordanian sphere after 1948, Jordan appropriated this Palestinian, Arab, and Islamic symbol for its own national purposes.

The Dome of the Rock is an obvious symbol for nationalist purposes. Less obvious, perhaps, is how the Nabatean monuments were blended into Jordan's

¹⁸ This is erroneously referred to in Ledger, *Philatelic History*, as the Mosque of Omar.

national consciousness. With a thin history to draw on when searching for national traditions and symbols, Jordan found comfort in the architectural investment bequeathed to its modern state. Like other states in the region, which reached back to an ancient Babylonian, Egyptian, or Israelite past when constructing their modern national identities, so too could Jordan stretch back to its ancient Nabatean past and offer the magnificent monuments that Jordan inherited as proof of a great heritage. With a great past on both banks of the Jordan River, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan had ample evidence of its national heritage. It is in this vein that one finds both the Dome of the Rock and the Nabatean Treasury appearing on postage stamps as Jordan represented a unified country.

One should not be mistaken in thinking that a division between the two banks actually exists based on the "Unity" stamp. It is true that a unique historical site appears on a particular side of the country and that the stamp seems to reflect national symbols for separate ethnic groups—the Dome of the Rock for West Bankers (i.e. Palestinians) and the Treasury for East Bankers (i.e. Transjordanians). While the stamp refers to pre-1948 borders when the boundaries of Jordan did not include Jerusalem, it allows the viewer to now consider the unity of the country with the major monuments revealed in their proper context, on one stamp, representing one country.

The aphorism "Commemorating the Unity of Jordan" embossed across the center of the stamp or across the two banks implies that this is one united nation-state,

Jordan, encompassing *all* of the historical and religious sites, appropriated as national symbols, within its newly enlarged borders. The reference to the "unity" of Jordan on the stamp implies that these two areas have always belonged together politically, rather than their being forced together or "unified" for political expediency in a particular historical moment. Prior to 1948, however, there is no record of there ever being a state or political entity made up of this territorial composition which the stamp seems to commemorate.

In its post-1948 boundaries Jordan was passing through one of many struggles to establish historical traditions as its borders were being altered. This historical event has sometimes been described as "unification" (*Tawhid*), a better term perhaps than "unity" to characterize the situation of the fusing together of two separate political entities.¹⁹ The project of "unity" or "unification" began under Abdullah, but took shape under his grandson Hussein, who ascended the throne in 1953.²⁰

Upon King Hussein's accession, Jordan immediately issued an "enthronement stamp" series, which carried only the image of the young King. The next issue during

¹⁹ It must be remembered here that although similar in social and cultural attributes, not to mention religions, Palestine and Transjordan were politically distinct. In 1927 the British established a separate administrative system for the Amirate of Transjordan under a British High Commissioner.

²⁰ Talal, Abdullah's son and Hussein's father, ascended the throne following his father's assassination, but abdicated a short time thereafter. As a result he is not mentioned in detail here.

his reign, or the first following the enthronement stamp, was a series in 1954 depicting the holy places and



historical sites of the Kingdom, including the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, the Nabatean Monastery (*Deir*) in Petra, and the archeological remains of the ancient Greek Temple of Artemis in Jerash. The arabesque style border reminiscent of earlier Hashemite stamps, whether under Abdullah or his father, still remains, but after this issue is hardly used again on Jordanian stamps. The 1954 series suggests Hussein's approval of the use of Jordanian holy places and historical sites in developing a budding national consciousness under his leadership.

The series appeared shortly after the start of renovations on the Dome of the Rock. Indeed the Dome's image would appear again on stamps in 1955.²¹ Already in the 1920s Hussein's great grandfather, Sharif Husayn, ruler of Mecca, began a tradition that came to be known as the "Hashemite renovations" when he completed renovation on Jerusalem's holy places.²² King Hussein's renovations on the Dome of the Rock were undertaken almost

immediately after his ascension to the throne in 1953. His renovations of the Dome of the Rock in 1953-1964 continued a link between the Hashemite family and the holy places of Jerusalem, cementing this tradition into the national consciousness. The imagery on the stamp laid claim to the holy places in Jerusalem as Jordanian national symbols while official speeches often noted that these were a tribute to civilization and belonged to humankind. This symbolic national imagery would be evoked again upon completion of the renovations, instilling tradition of Hashemite renovations in Jerusalem into the Jordanian national imagination.

One of the most prominent stamp series issued in 1965, shows a profile picture of King Hussein overlooking the entire Dome of the Rock complex on the Noble Sanctuary (*al-Haram al-Sharif*). To mark the completion of the renovations in 1964 King Hussein presided over a ceremony attended by religious and world leaders. The Jordanian newspapers gave wide coverage to this grand event, which symbolized the dominion of Jordan and King Hussein over Jerusalem and the holy places. The excitement was great, not subsiding until the middle of 1965. As a reminder of Jordanian national identification with its holy city of Jerusalem, a stamp series was issued that showed Hussein, as constitutional monarch of the nation-state, serving as guardian and caretaker of the nation's most treasured gift.²³ This occurred at a time when Jordan was stepping into the world spotlight in the mid-1960s.

²¹ This was similar in appearance to the 1954 series. See Sha'ath, *Palestine Stamps*, section B, figure 127.

²² The Hashemite family would continue this tradition of financing the renovations of the holy places through the 1990s, 25 years after the loss of Jerusalem to Israeli occupation.

Holy places had appeared on Jordan's postage stamps in 1963 as well. Then it was not solely the Islamic holy sites that were depicted, but the Christian sites as well. The Kingdom depicted its holy places, all found in the West Bank towns of Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Hebron. During this time, Jordan had found itself embroiled in ideological disputes over Arab nationalism in its Nasserist version and Hussein's own conservative (or Hashemite) brand. The King saw "Jordan as a 'model state' based on the teachings of Islam, the principles of the Arab Revolt, and friendship with the West."²⁴ By illustrating Islamic holy sites on Jordan's postage stamps, Jordan would be upholding its claim to be the defender of an Arab nationalism based on the teachings of Islam. At the same time, by displaying the Christian sites, it would be demonstrating friendship with the West as well as expressing its commitment to its own Christian population.²⁵ Accommodating the Christian West also led to the historic event of 1964 in which the leader of the Christian world in the West, the Holy See,

made a pilgrimage to Jordan, the "Holy Land."

In 1964 and 1965, Jordan participated in many events, political, religious and cultural, all of which gave Jordan the opportunity to present religious symbols as national imagery on postage stamps. The first event, both religious and political in nature, was an official visit by Pope Paul VI to Jordan, the "Holy Land." The visit inspired a four-stamp series, all portraying holy places.²⁶ The stamps depicted four holy sites, two of them Islamic—the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem—and two Christian—the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem and the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Each holy place stamp shows the likeness of one of the leaders above the site. As national sovereign of the sites within Jordan's national boundaries, King Hussein is



shown next to the Islamic holy sites. The Pope is shown next to the Christian ones, but as a spiritual, not a political leader. This purely religious status of the Pope is indicated by his dress. He is in full religious regalia, a symbol that limits his

²³ Jordan was intended to be a constitutional monarchy as expressed in the constitution, which states that it is "a hereditary monarchy parliamentary in form." This is found in *Constitutional Developments*, vol. 1 of *The Arab States and the Arab League: A Documentary Record*, ed. M. Khalil (Beirut: Khayats, 1962), p. 55. The Arabic original of the constitution is found in the *Official Gazette* of 1952.

²⁴ Naseer H. Aruri, *Jordan: A Study in Political Development 1921-1965* (The Hague: Nijhoff, 1972), p. 175; see also an article written by King Hussein that appeared in *Life* magazine on 23 May 1960.

²⁵ The Christian population in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during this time is estimated at less than 10 percent of the total population.

²⁶ The visit also prompted the issuance of a special edition medallion with imagery similar to that on the stamps. The field of tourism also found ways to signify Jordan as the Holy Land as a result of the Pope's visit to Jordan.

influence solely to religious matters. By contrast, the King dons military attire, symbolizing the national military power that he as leader of Jordan exercises over all these sites within the boundaries of his country, especially the holy places. Interestingly, while the King has appeared on many stamps in the past and the holy places have appeared on stamps as well, this is the first time that he appears with the holy places on the same stamp, sealing his relationship as national ruler over the country and the holy places.²⁷

During the same visit, the Pope met with the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, an historic occasion in that the two figureheads had not met since 1439.²⁸ A stamp similar to the King/Pope stamp was issued, but this time with the three figures appearing over a background of Jerusalem. The Pope and the Ecumenical Patriarch are both in religious attire while between them is the King, this time in civilian clothing rather than in a

²⁷ Incidentally, the stamp series had strong reverberations in Italy as well. The Jerusalem-based newspaper *al-Jihad* reported on 4 April 1964 that the Jordanian-issued stamps entered the Italian market on the same day as they did in Jordan and were sold for nearly ten times their face value. The images on the stamps were not limited to Jordan's internal market nor just sent abroad on mail; they received mass consumption in the Italian market as well. An explanation for Italy's interest in the Jordanian-issued King/Pope/holy places stamps is a topic for another article. *Al-Jihad* reported on the same day that the Vatican had also issued a stamp on the occasion of the Pope's visit to the Holy Land, although the King did not appear on the Vatican stamps with the Pope, as the intended meaning was different.

²⁸ This was reported in *In Jerusalem this Week*, a fortnightly, independent travel and tourism magazine in Jordan, 20 January- 5 February 1964, p. 4.



military uniform. In the center position of the stamp, the King appears to hold dominion over his kingdom, including the holy city of Jerusalem, despite the presence of the two Christian religious leaders. The position of the national leader in civilian clothing between the two religious leaders marks a contrast which seems to affirm King Hussein's right, as national leader, to exercise political rule over the holy city and the Holy Land, while the other two hold sway in religious matters alone.

On the first anniversary of the Pope's visit to Jordan, another stamp series was issued bearing similar images of Jerusalem. Annual commemorative series might have followed, if not for the 1967 war. After the June War in 1967, Jordan had a more difficult time presenting itself as the Holy Land since the holy places were no longer within Jordan's boundaries.

The theme of Jordan as the Holy Land took root in many areas. The tourist industry promoted the idea widely in English, French, and other non-Arabic language brochures and publications.²⁹ The theme continued with Jordan's participation in the World's Fair in New York in 1964, commemorated by a stamp series issued in 1965. While no images of

²⁹ The promotion of religious tourism is explored in detail in my forthcoming dissertation.

holy places appear on this series, the theme for Jordan's Pavilion at the World's Fair was holy places and the Dead Sea Scrolls, of which four were in Jordan's possession. This issue does not relate to any of the sites in Jerusalem per se, but points to the centrality of holiness and religion in constructing Jordan's national identity, and to the importance of religious artifacts and scenes in demonstrating Jordan's religious heritage and contribution to civilization. A Dead Sea Scrolls stamp series was issued later that same year. While such scrolls were important for their discovery in Jordan, they have more to do with Jewish and early Christian history than with Islamic or Arab history.³⁰ The importance of these other religious traditions to Jordan's history lies in Jordan's deep and lasting contribution to civilization. Depicting these religious artifacts and sites on Jordanian stamps was again an expression of Jordanian national imagery available for both internal and external consumption.

The postage stamps issued during 1966 display a tribute to the Christian holy places more so than to the Muslim ones. The first series seems to be a re-issue of the 1964 series marking the meeting of King Hussein, Pope Paul VI, and the Greek Patriarch, and was issued in honor of Pope Paul's visit to the United Nations. Perhaps the intent is to convey a sense of Jordan's international importance as illustrated by the places a symbolic figure as significant as the Pope decided to visit. Later the

same year two more issues also seem to honor the Pope's UN visit. The first of the two depicts the Stations of the Cross while the second has a Christmas theme. As a result of the Pope's visit to Jordan, a vast potential tourist market opened up. In the economic development plan of 1964-1967, tourism was a significant area intended for growth. Highlighting Christian sites on postage stamps was meant to serve that goal.

Jordan's borders after 1948 included an overwhelming number of Palestine's Arabs, primarily a refugee population, which was afforded Jordanian citizenship following the unification of the two banks. Furthermore, the new borders encompassed many of the holy places depicted on the "Aid" stamp series. Jordan was passing through a period in which building a national identity and "inventing" national traditions was crucial for its development, and incorporating holy places into these traditions was of grave importance for the infant nation.³¹ Seen in their historical context, the Jerusalem and holy places images found on Jordan's stamps during this time period offer a glimpse of how national identity was being created with religious symbols as an anchoring point.

A country with few previous shared traditions, Jordan faced a new historical and geographical situation with the incorporation of Jerusalem and the West Bank after the 1948 War. In 1967,

³¹ For more on "invented" traditions, see Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions," in Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 1-14.

³⁰ The part of Jordan where the scrolls were discovered in 1947 became part of Israel after the 1948-1949 war.

however, that situation changed again as Jordan lost Jerusalem, the West Bank, and most of the holy places to Israel's occupation of that area as a result of the June War. From 1948-1967, the appearance of holy places and Jerusalem on Jordanian-issued postage stamps reflected efforts by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to address its national interests. Jordan's production of these stamps was one means to illustrate symbols newly adopted for national identification. The significance of Jerusalem in Islam and Christianity served the Kingdom as a source from which to draw when constructing these national symbols. From 1948-1967, as the fledgling nation sought to establish a national identity for itself, postage stamps afforded a distinctive and powerful medium for associating Jordan with Jerusalem in the minds of Jordanians and the world community.

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مجلة الدراسات الفلسطينية

المنتصر و المهزوم في
الانتخابات الإسرائيلية
عزمي بشامرة

بناء الدولة اليهودية
١٨٩٧ - ١٩٤٨:
الأداة العسكرية
وليد الخالدي

غسان كنفاني : أسئلة و أجوبة
فضل النقيب

الملف (١)

الانتخابات الاسرائيلية، أيار / مايو ١٩٩٩
• النتائج • برامج الأحزاب
• الحكومة الجديدة

الملف (٢)

موقف إيهود براك
من مسألتي الجولان والجنوب اللبناني