

An Air-Smelling Event: The Metamorphosis of Simon the Just and His Shrine

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Abstract

The appropriation of Simon's shrine as an exclusively Jewish site of worship marks a progression of national-religious claims over several sites that used to be shared (as well as celebrated) by multiple religious communities. These include Rachel's Tomb (at the northern entrance to Bethlehem), Nabi Samwil (northwest of Jerusalem), and Nabi Rubin (south of Jaffa), a particularly important shrine, whose festival brought revelers from the central and southern townships of Palestine every August. The promotion of Jewish claims over joint communal shrines did not take place until two decades after the Israeli occupation of 1967. It coincided with the ascendancy of nationalist ideological hegemony over religious parties (Degel haTorah, Shas, and other Mizrahi movements).

Keywords

Simon's shrine; religious festival; nationalist ideology; pilgrimage sites; Shaykh Jarrah.

An "air-smelling event" (referencing the Arabic phrase *shamm al-hawa* – or what the Egyptians call *shamm al-nasim* [smelling the breeze]) is the term used to describe the spring festival of Simon the Just (Shim'on ha-Tsadik in Hebrew, also known as Simeon the Just or Simon/Simeon the Righteous) in a 1927 *National Geographic* account of this popular pilgrimage site in northern Jerusalem.¹ In the nearly hundred years since that article was published, the celebration, its physical site, and its audience have undergone major transformations. The moment of comity described in 1927 would quickly be overshadowed by the

communal strife of 1929 and the outbreak of the Arab Revolt of 1936–39.² During the 2021 clashes in East Jerusalem, the shrine of Simon the Just became a focus of Jewish zealots' claims for a foothold in the Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood. The claims were linked not only to historical entitlements over the tomb/shrine, but also to surrounding properties whose leases were held by Jews before 1948.³

One feature of this contestation was the meaning and relevance of shrines and *maqamat* (sing. *maqam*) for popular religious belief and their transformation in the twentieth century from syncretic sites of worship and visitation to exclusive nationalist domains for their new “born again” adherents.⁴ This development marked several sites in Bilad al-Sham, and Palestine in particular. Shrines dedicated to al-Nabi Musa (Jericho), al-Nabi Rubin (Jaffa), St. George/al-Khadr (Lydda, Bethlehem), and al-Nabi Salih (Ramla) were leading sites in central and coastal Palestine that served Muslim, Jewish, and Christian adherents during their “seasons” or *mawasim* (sing. *mawsim*).⁵ These sites provided healing and therapeutic functions throughout the year, but they were mainly the sites of public festivities during their associated holy persons' seasons.⁶ During the late Ottoman and early Mandate period, many of these sites of public celebration became subject to communal and sectarian clashes as the Zionist movement asserted territorial claims over land. This process led to a “nationalization” of shrines/maqamat as exclusive domains for their putative religious community. This was particularly the case with Nabi Musa (Moses) whose maqam turned into an arena for nationalist mobilization during the 1920s and 1930s.



Figure 1. The only published image from Maynard Williams, “Simon the Just Festival,” as it appeared in Edward Keith-Roach, “The Pageant of Jerusalem,” *National Geographic* 52, no. 6 (December 1927).

In what follows, I examine and discuss the transformation of the shrine of Simon the Just in Shaykh Jarrah from a site of communal visitation to a nationalist shrine

of territorial contestation. Although ostensibly a tomb for an ancient Jewish rabbi, its festival came to be celebrated as a “coming of spring” by local Mizrahi Jews, as well as Christian and Muslim Palestinians.

The historical roots of these celebrations indicate the substantial transformation that has engulfed popular attitudes toward the saint, as well as the manner in which nationalism and ethnoconsciousness affected these attitudes. Simon the Just was the Jewish high priest during Alexander’s conquest of Palestine (333 BCE) and held office for forty years. Josephus claims that Alexander travelled to Jerusalem expressly to meet with Simon the high priest, where he demanded that a statue be constructed for him in the temple. Simon reputedly refused, promising that instead all sons of priests born that year will be named after Alexander.⁷ According to Josephus and other Jewish sources, Simon rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem that had been destroyed by Ptolemy.⁸



Figure 2. Rembrandt, *Simeon with the Infant Jesus in the Temple* (1669), Nationalmuseum, Stockholm, available through the Web Gallery of Art, online at (wga.hu) bit.ly/3F7jT2d (accessed 16 August 2023).

It seems that the veneration of Simon the Just by Jewish pilgrims at the Shaykh Jarrah site was a much later practice. In the twelfth century, Benjamin of Tudela identified Timna, near Tiberius, as the site of Simon's shrine. By the fourteenth century, it shifted to the Jerusalem site, although others continued to visit it near the Sea of Galilee. It was revived again in the early nineteenth century with the increased pilgrimage to Jerusalem during the late Ottoman period.⁹ In 1871, however, Charles Clermont-Ganneau, the leading French archeologist at the time, discovered an inscription in the supposed site of Simon's tomb that indicated that it was the tomb of Julia Sabina, a Roman matron, leading him and later archeologists to question the authenticity of the gravesite.¹⁰ This, however, did not deter continued Jewish worship at the site, and, according to Isaac Reiter, a Jewish residential presence developed around the tomb in the last third of the nineteenth century. During this time, the shrine became the center for shared spring communal celebration by Jews, Muslims, and Christians, as witnessed by cotemporary visitors.¹¹ Such accounts indicate that the festival's ritual dimension was primarily Jewish. The site itself was under Arab ownership, but Jews performed the actual celebrations, which included "candle lighting, dancing, prayers, haircuts for children, and monetary donations."¹² Muslims and Christians, though, came out to "smell the air." This shared observance of the shrine of Simon the Just is most likely a modern nineteenth-century phenomenon, facilitated, I would suggest, by increased security outside the city walls and the growth of Shaykh Jarrah in the second half of the nineteenth century as a bourgeois neighborhood for Jerusalem's primarily Muslim upper class.

Two important sources are available for the communal veneration of Simon the Just at the site in Shaykh Jarrah in the twentieth century. Wasif Jawharriyeh's description in the early twentieth century of *shat-hat al-Yahudiyya* (Jewish outdoor festival), attesting to the recognition by Palestinian Arabs at that time of the holy figure's Jewish origins, and Maynard Owen Williams's ethnographic notes and images from his visit to the site in 1927.¹³ The latter were produced as part of a work commissioned by *National Geographic* magazine, accompanying an article penned by Edward Keith-Roach, the British district commissioner of Jerusalem, published under the exotic title "The Pageant of Jerusalem."¹⁴ Only one of Williams's photographs appeared alongside Keith-Roach's article, but unreleased and unpublished archival material (mostly photographs) provide insight on the shrine and its uses in the early Mandate period and before the transformation of these religious sites into arenas of exclusivity.¹⁵

The immediate post-World War I period marked a kind of liminal period for the shrine as a site of a shared communal Palestinian event. Ottoman communal events were still being celebrated, and the impact of nationalist appropriation of religious motifs with the onset of Zionism had not yet fully set in. These shared celebrations of Simon the Just were vividly captured in the 1920s by Williams's camera. However, the bulk of Williams's notes and his photographs remained dormant in the National Geographic archives until they became accessible in 2021. This cache constitutes an important eyewitness account of these communal celebrations. In particular, Williams vindicates the observations of contemporary writers like Jawhariyyeh about the nature of the festival of Simon the Just and its attendees.

Jerusalemite *Shat-hat*

In his memoirs, Wasif Jawhariyyeh refers to two spring festivals that took place in north Jerusalem. Those were the summer outings (*shat-hat*) of Sa‘d wa Sa‘id, and the Yahudiyya festival in Shaykh Jarrah. Both outings were held within the same area separated by less than half a kilometer. He describes the former as a festival “merely intended to provide locals, both Christian and Muslim, with an opportunity to go out, and had no religious basis.”¹⁶ Rather, the festival seemed oriented around enjoying the green space outside the city’s walls during the heat of the summer: “Olive trees abound in this area [Sa‘d wa Sa‘id], and since it is close to the Old City ... the people of Jerusalem have long taken to the habit of going there at sunset when the gates of the city are closed. Thus, in summer, families with children left the city every afternoon and went there for a promenade.”¹⁷

The Jewish festival by contrast was a much wider event involving Arab Christians and Muslims as well as Jews. Jawhariyyeh writes:

There are two caves in the quarter of Shaykh Jarrah in Jerusalem, near the lands of Abu Jubna’s mortmain which Jews believe to be the graves of Shimon. I think Jews visited these graves twice a year, spending the day under the olive trees. Most of them were Eastern Jews who observed the Eastern traditions, the country’s Arab traditions in particular. They had string bands. I remember Haim, the oud player from Aleppo who had a voluptuous high voice and sang Andalusian *muwashah* [free verse] mostly. And so, everyone spent the entire day singing songs and *uhzuja* [ditties]. The Christian and Muslim Arabs of Jerusalem celebrated with Jews, and families went along to take part in what is known to the Arabs as *al-Yahudiyya* [the Jewish Festival]. That part of the mountain was therefore crowded all the way down to the valley with locals and ambulant sellers. My brothers and I never wasted an opportunity to be among them.¹⁸

Although Jawhariyyeh distinguishes between the “secular” Sa‘d wa Sa‘id festival and al-Yahudiyya, which was based on veneration of Simon the Just, the putative sectarian origin of the site did not impede its shared veneration, as was the case of al-Khadr, Nabi Rubin, Nabi Salih, and other biblical and Qur’anic figures. Jawhariyyeh also emphasizes the Mizrahi Jewish (what he calls “Eastern Jewish” – *yahudi sharqi*) presence at al-Yahudiyya. These observations about the syncretic nature of Simon the Just are particularly valuable since references to the festival in contemporary memoirs by local or European sources are scarce. Another exception is the account of Pinhas Grayevsky (1873–1941), a Jerusalem historian who lived in Yemin Moshe (west of Bab al-Khalil) and wrote about Jewish life in Jerusalem in the 1870s. He noted that Arabs participated in the festivities of Shimon haTsadik and that “the wives of the Ishmaelites [that is, Arabs] would also come and stake a permanent place on the hill facing the square.”¹⁹

An Olfactory Moment

Maynard Williams described the Feast of Simon the Just as a remarkable event “because at this time Jews, Moslems, and Christians get together near the beginning of Nablus Road at the extreme north edge of the city outside the walls for an ‘air smelling’ sort of picnic and country fair.”²⁰ Williams’s caption is accompanied by a striking series of eight images that were never used with the original article. These “captured moments” take the viewer to an era that has largely disappeared from the annals of Palestinian history – Arabs of various religions and Mizrahi Jews, quite often indistinguishable in their dress, reveling in socializing, food and drink, and music. One photograph in the series shows a children’s playground equipped with a small (obviously temporary) wooden Ferris wheel. Across from the playground sit the villas of the Jerusalem aristocracy – the Husaynis, the Jarallahs, and the Nashashibis – who have already expanded into the northern hills of Shaykh Jarrah.

The single photograph that appeared with the original Keith-Roach article does not convey the intensity of the interaction between the revelers found in the archival photographs. Rather it presents an idyllic picnic scene with a caption describing Jerusalem as “a city of three faiths, that is still the holy city for all.”²¹ Keith-Roach writes: “The religious festivals bring their own pageantry to the city. There are Moslems with all



Figure 3. Detail from “Arab Jews,” one of Maynard Williams’s unpublished photographs of the Simon the Just Festival, Jerusalem, 1927. National Geographic Archives.

their adherents ...; Christians of all denominations ...; the Jews divided into Ashkenazim, Sephardim, Karaites, Yeminites, etc.”²² The impression he gives is of three communities coexisting, but each in its separate domain – the “mosaic society” that Teddy Kollek elevated several decades later.²³ It seems clear that Williams and not Keith-Roach had recorded the syncretic features of the event. Williams’s images, I suggest, show not only Jews, Muslims, and Christians celebrating and intermingling but a moment of de-ethnicized communal gathering. The olfactory moment (the “air-smelling”) united the crowds, and – at least momentarily – created a shared experience of public euphoria.

Williams also captured the festival at a significant moment during which the communitarian character of the event was turning into a social outing while still retaining traces of being a religious shrine visitation. But Williams was not particularly attuned to the ethnic character of the Jerusalem ceremonials. His main concern, as he confessed, was modernity’s destructive impact on the disappearing world of Palestinian tradition. “Here was a city, sacred to Moslem, Jew, and Christian,” he wrote, “losing the character for which it had been distinguished for centuries. I longed to record something of it before it was too late.”²⁴ Like Tawfiq Canaan and others, Williams wanted to record the ethnography of Palestine before it was overtaken by modernity, preserving what he saw as the “immutable east” by freezing a fusion of these contradictory moments in his photographic images.

A similar kind of logic can be seen in the recordings of Robert Lachmann, a German ethnomusicologist who moved to Shaykh Jarrah in the 1930s and lived in the vicinity of Simon the Just’s shrine.²⁵ While in Jerusalem, Lachmann recorded performances by native musicians, as well as pieces by migrant Yemenis, Kurds, Moroccans, and “gypsies.”²⁶ I could not locate a recording of any celebratory incantation from the festival of Shimon haTsadik, but there are many recordings of Coptic, Samaritan, Jewish, and Muslim festival music – all aimed at preserving the “purity” of these traditions’ original performances from Lachmann’s Orientalist and essentialist perspective.²⁷

But contemporary observers of the urban ceremonial scene, such as Khalil al-Sakakini and Jawhariyyeh, were not saddled with either biblical themes or exoticism when observing or participating in such events, and did not particularly see their city as a mosaic of coexistence. Rather, they experienced these events as a common ground for the urban population whose religious affiliation, though distinct, was not paramount. Attendees were there, and participated, as compatriots sharing the same common space of the city. They shared the music, food, and language of the city. Religious iconography lurked in the background, but it had largely been replaced by “secular” revelries.

Williams’s unpublished images vividly reveal this shared communal moment of “air-smelling.” In one, the large number of celebrants fills the area outside the tomb area, apparently oblivious to any religious ritual that may have been taking place there.

Neg.#43261-A-Photo by Maynard Owen Williams

PALESTINE - JERUSALEM

The Feast of Simon the Just, remarkable because at this time Jews, Moslems, and Christians get together near the beginning of the Nablus Road at the extreme north edge of the city outside the walls for an "air-smelling" sort of picnic and county fair. Jerusalem, Palestine.

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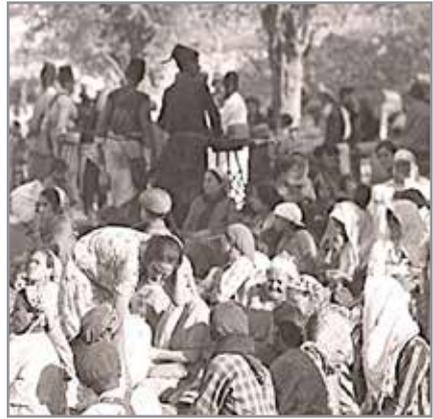


Figure 4. Among Maynard Williams's unpublished photographs with description of the Simon the Just Festival, Jerusalem, 1927. National Geographic Archives.

A second photograph reflects the carefree picnic-like nature of the event. Men are dressed in *frangi* jackets with *tarabish* (fezzes) and *qanabiz* (traditional robes) and women wear European skirts and dresses. Men and women intermingle in the open space – a phenomenon that does not occur in traditional *mawasim* like *Nabi Musa*. In the latter *mawsim*, probably the largest and most “national” of the spring festivals in Palestine, viewers and participants alike were engulfed in the militant atmosphere that accompanied the revelers, as well as with the conspicuous presence of the state through its gendarmes and public officials.

Williams's photographs convey an apparent spontaneity and tranquil atmosphere. This contrasts clearly with images of the crowds at formal and state-sponsored events such as the procession of *Nabi Musa*, which took place around the same time of year. Michael Talbot, discussing the reaction of the Jerusalem crowds to celebrations by Ottoman musical bands, noted the significantly less spontaneous nature of *Nabi Musa*.



Figure 5. “Smelling the Air with the Ishmaelites.” Additional unpublished photographs from Maynard Williams’s images of the Simon the Just Festival, (wooden Ferris wheel, lower left) Jerusalem, 1927. National Geographic Archives.

The formal, static, wooden stances and carefully composed diversity of the Jerusalemite crowd mirror those of the official photographs and the newspapers’ panegyrics and laudatory narratives. Just as the joy spread by the band in the accounts of *Havatzet* [newspaper] was formulaic and repetitive, so too are the images of a populace awkwardly represented by endless posed images of silent, straight-faced gatherings under arches and outside public buildings.²⁸

Talbot’s detailed analysis of the photographic images of musical performances punctures the illusion that these events were “joyous public celebrations,” ignited by “sparks of happenstance” in official parlance. The tension between the official narrative and the photographic record, Talbot suggests, “tells us something important about the relationship between state and subject in that one moment, from which broader ideas can be explored.”

Although the scene has not been staged for the camera, it shares an aesthetic with the wider corpus of posed Hamidian images. The band conveys an image of professionalism, but the reaction of the crowd gives a hint at the quality of their performance. The diversity of the crowd is itself illusory, a temporary gathering that would soon dissolve back into its constituent parts.²⁹

One reason for these “wooden stances” was the nature of the photography arranged during the musical event, which required participants to remain still for extended periods. But state sponsorship of Nabi Musa proceedings, with gendarmes ensuring law and order, was a distinguishing feature that helps explain the difference between it and the relaxed and spontaneous character of revelry at Simon the Just. In this regard, Simon the Just’s festival likely shared more in common with Nabi Rubin festivities held on the southern shores of Jaffa. In Nabi Rubin, as in the case of Simon the Just, the state and its gendarmes were absent, freeing celebrants to express themselves and engage with the event spontaneously and with minimal official regulation.



Figures 6 and 7. Nabi Rubin celebrations, c. 1935. G. Eric and Edith Matson Photograph Collection, Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Washington, DC.

The Limits of Communal Boundaries

Ethnography and historical photography can illuminate these lost worlds of communal shared space. Simon the Just, a sage in Jewish tradition, was celebrated as a local holy figure by Jerusalem Muslims during *shat-hat al-Yahudiyya* even though he does not appear in the Qur'an or any Muslim tradition. Unlike Moses (Musa), Jacob (Ya'qub), Reuven (Rubin), Simon the Just has not been Islamicized. Even Clermont-Ganneau's 1871 discovery of epigrams indicating that the tomb belonged to a Roman matron called Julia Sabina did not deter his followers from their annual spring visitation. We have little evidence from contemporary records that the site was visited by Ashkenazi pilgrims; the bulk of its pilgrims at the end of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth appear to have been Yemeni and Moroccan Jews, as well as local Muslim and Christian revelers. Wasif Jawhariyyeh gives a vivid description of the syncretic celebration by Jews, Muslims, and local Christians of the spring festival of *al-Yahudiyya*. The term *al-Yahudiyya* is significant since it distinguishes the site's Jewish origins without necessarily establishing it as an exclusively Jewish festival. This should be contrasted to Nabi Musa, Nabi Rubin, and Nabi Ayyub festivals – all celebrating Old Testament prophets, and in which Jews and Christians actively participated, but whose patrons were mainly Muslims. The synergies of these religious ceremonies were not only formal attestations of coexistence between the three communities; they were shared communal events. The Jewish performers in the event honoring Simon the Just were also Jawhariyyeh's partners in a "secular" music band that celebrated weddings in the Old City.³⁰ But although events like the Simon the Just festival were neither denominational nor sectarian, to describe them as "secular" is problematic given their ritually religious character.

Two major transformations had significant impact on the veneration of Simon the Just, along with most other *mawasim* dedicated to popular holy figures and prophets in Palestine. The first was a process of secularization that essentially reconfigured the ceremonial into a social event, a public outing almost bereft of its religious origins. This is what we witness in the case of Nabi Rubin celebrations in Jaffa.³¹ The second was a process of nationalization of the ceremonial. This is what happened to the *mawsim* of Nabi Musa in the 1930s, ostensibly as a return to its original purpose as established by Salah al-Din in the twelfth century as a preemptive deterrence against the possibility of Christian pilgrimage turning into a military campaign. During the rebellion of 1936, Nabi Musa became a rallying cry for Palestinian mobilization against Zionist immigration and the Balfour Declaration.³² Simon the Just's tomb, however, remained largely free of politicization until the 1990s, more or less the same trajectory as the Nabi Rubin site in southern Jaffa.³³

Both Wasif Jawhariyyeh's account of *shat-hat al-Yahudiyya* and Maynard Owen Williams's notes and photographs thus captured the communal celebration of Simon the Just at a crucial transition period, while also documenting a moment

of unique intermingling of dress codes and genders, not common to other Jerusalem mawasim such as Nabi Musa. These joint celebrations should not, however, blind us to the communal boundaries that separated religious communities in urban neighborhoods. Although religious quarters were never insular in habitation, social mixing, or ritual, they were nevertheless demarcated by distancing mechanisms rooted in the language of difference. Festivals were often clearly identified as Christian (Sabt al-Nur, Good Friday, Ghattas), Muslim (Laylat al-Qadr during Ramadan), or Jewish (Lag baOmer, Purim), even when members of other religious groups participated in the festivities.



Figure 8. The ambiguous ethnicity of Simon the Just's celebrants. Detail from Maynard Williams's unpublished photographs of the Simon the Just Festival, Jerusalem, 1927. National Geographic Archives.

In 2010 the Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood of Jerusalem, where the shrine of Simon the Just is located, became a battleground between Jewish settlers and Palestinians over the expanded settlement activities in East Jerusalem. The appropriation of Simon's shrine as an exclusively Jewish site of worship marks an advancement of national-religious claims over several sites that used to be shared (as well as celebrated) by multiple religious communities. These include Rachel's Tomb (south of Bethlehem), Nabi Samwil (northwest of Jerusalem), and Nabi Rubin (south of Jaffa). The latter was, by most counts, a particularly important shrine, whose festival brought revelers from the central and southern townships of Palestine during the month of August.³⁴ The promotion of Jewish claims over joint communal shrines did not take place until two decades after the Israeli occupation of 1967. It coincided with the ascendance of nationalist ideological hegemony over religious parties (Degel haTorah, Shas, and other Mizrahi movements).

The eviction of Palestinian families from around the Shim'on haTsadik, Karm al-Mufti, and Umm Harun areas in Jerusalem's Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood began in earnest in 1985 and accelerated in 2008, 2010, and 2022.³⁵ Protests against the evictions succeeded in halting some of these evictions and in legal recognition of Palestinian rights in some of these properties. At issue was Jewish putative ownership of properties in the area before 1948, and new purchases made by the American Jewish financier Irving Moskowitz.³⁶ The forcible imposition of Israeli legal ownership over these properties,

however, was seen as potentially opening Pandora’s box with regard to much larger Arab claims for restitution of lost properties inside Israel, including substantial claims in West Jerusalem (Talbiyya, Qatamun, Musrara, Baq‘a, and so on).³⁷ This explains the initial hesitancy of Israel’s government and courts in proceeding with these evictions. Settling the area of the shrine became the overriding factor that justified Israeli state support for religious (and non-religious) Zionists taking over Palestinian homes in Shaykh Jarrah, relegating all possibilities of shared space, as well as shared communal celebrations, to the distant past. Though Simon the Just’s tomb is a minor religious shrine, its fate was emblematic of similar encroachments at the national level – Nabi Samwil, Qabr Rahil (Rachel’s Tomb), and Nabi Rubin are the most recent examples.

One victim of Zionist claims and impositions in the case of Simon the Just, however, is the demise of a historical practice in Palestine where the sharing of shrines and their seasonal festivals heralded the promise of an overlapping shared identity in society at large – in which different neighborhoods, social status, and religious identities were not sources of conflict, but reinforced a communal urban space that came to be renewed every spring.

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Endnotes

- 1 Edward Keith-Roach, “The Pageant of Jerusalem: The Capital of the Land of Three Great Faiths Is Still the Holy City for Christian, Moslem, and Jew,” *National Geographic* 52, no. 6 (December 1927): 635–81.
- 2 In this sense, the 1927 festivities predated what Hillel Cohen called “year zero of the Arab-Israeli conflict”: Hillel Cohen, *Year Zero of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1929* (Waltham, MA: Brandeis University Press, 2015).
- 3 Nazmi Jubeh, “Hayy al-Shaykh Jarrah wa ma‘arakat al-baqa’” [Shaykh Jarrah neighborhood and the battle of survival], *Majallat al-dirasat al-Filastiniyya* 127 (Summer 2021): 34–66.
- 4 Yitzhak Reiter and Lior Lehrs, *The Sheikh Jarrah Affair: The Strategic Implications of Jewish Settlement in an Arab Neighborhood in East Jerusalem* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Institute for Israeli Studies, 2010), online at (jerusalemstitute.org.il) bit.ly/46xIyZp (accessed 21 July 2023).
- 5 Andrew Petersen, *Bones of Contention: Muslim Shrines in Palestine* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).
- 6 Tawfik Canaan, *Mohammedan Saints and Sanctuaries in Palestine* (London: Luzac, 1927). See also Marcela A. Garcia Probert, “Exploring the Life of Amulets in Palestine: From Healing and Protective Remedies to the Tawfik Canaan Collection of Palestinian Amulets” (PhD diss., Leiden University, 2021).
- 7 Wilhelm Bacher and Schulim Ochser, “Simeon the Just,” *Jewish Encyclopedia*, online at (jewishencyclopedia.com) bit.ly/3PHDpXY (accessed 10 October 2022).
- 8 See Bacher and Ochser, “Simeon the Just.” There is also a Christian Simon the Just (or Righteous) venerated by Catholics and the

- Orthodox Church. Charles Seymour, Jr., writes: "According to the Evangelist Luke (2. 25–35) Simeon (Symeon) was the 'just man' who received in his arms the Infant Christ when He was presented at the Temple." According to various traditions, Saint Simon is buried in Constantinople, Croatia, or Venice. Charles Seymour, Jr., "The Tomb of Saint Simeon the Prophet, in San Simeone Grande, Venice," *Gesta* 15, no. 1–2 (1976): 193–200, quote at 193.
- 9 Yosef Eisen, "Shimon Hatzadik (Simeon the Just)," Chabad.org, online at (chabad.org) bit.ly/3tgX09Q (accessed 21 July 2023); Bacher and Ochser, "Simon the Just."
 - 10 Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Jerusalem: The Biography* (New York: Vintage, 2012), 63; Dan Bahat, *Illustrated Atlas of Jerusalem* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1990), 67.
 - 11 Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904–1948*, ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (Northampton, MA: Interlink, 2013), 58; Keith-Roach, "Pageant of Jerusalem."
 - 12 Reiter and Lehrs, *Sheikh Jarrah Affair*, 16.
 - 13 Wasif Jawhariyyeh, *al-Quds al-'Uthmani fi al-mudhakkirat al-Jawhariyya: al-kitab al-awwal min al-musiqi Wasif Jawhariyya, 1904–1917* [Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyya memoirs: the first book of the musician Wasif Jawhariyya, 1904–1917], ed. Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2003).
 - 14 Keith-Roach, "Pageant of Jerusalem"; Maynard Owen Williams, "Color Records From the Changing Life fo the Holy City," *National Geographic* 52, no. 6 (December 1927): 682–707.
 - 15 Maynard Owen Williams, National Geographic Archive (1927, indexed 1942).
 - 16 Jawhariyyeh, *Storyteller of Jerusalem*, 61.
 - 17 Jawhariyyeh, *Storyteller of Jerusalem*, 61.
 - 18 Jawhariyyeh, *al-Quds al-'Uthmani*, 74–75.
 - 19 Reiter and Lehrs, *Sheikh Jarrah Affair*, 16, quoting Yehoshua Ben-Arieh, *'Ir bi-re'i tekufah: Yerushalayim ba-me'ah hatasha'-'esreh* [A city in the reflection of an era: Jerusalem in the nineteenth century] (Jerusalem: Yad Yitzhak Ben Zvi, 1977), 39–41; and Pinhas Ben Zvi Grayevsky, *Sefer haYishuv* [Book of the Yishuv] (Jerusalem: Solomon Press, 1938–39). It was not uncommon in the late Ottoman period for Ashekanzi Jews to use the term "Ishmaelites," and it was not necessarily pejorative, although it performed a *distancing* function. See, for example: Michael Talbot, "Sparks of Happenstance: Photographs, Public Celebrations, and the Ottoman Military Band of Jerusalem," *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 45, 47.
 - 20 Maynard Owen Williams, Negative #43261, National Geographic Archive (1927, indexed 1942).
 - 21 Keith-Roach, "Pageant of Jerusalem."
 - 22 Keith-Roach, "Pageant of Jerusalem," 667.
 - 23 Meron Benvenisti, "Teddy Kollek: The Last Optimist," *Eretz-Israel: Archaeological, Historical, and Geographical Studies*, Teddy Kollek volume (2007): xi–xiv.
 - 24 Williams, "Color Records," 68187–88.82.
 - 25 Lachman had already established himself as an authority on popular Arab religious music from his work on Jewish incantations from Jerba in Tunis. See Robert Lachmann, *Cantillation and Song in the Isle of Djerba* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University Archives of Oriental Music, 1940). See also Robert Lachmann, *The Oriental Music Broadcasts, 1937–1936: A Musical Ethnography of Mandatory Palestine*, ed. Ruth F. Davis (Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2013).
 - 26 Many, such as the incantation of a Samaritan priest from Mount Gerizim in Nablus, were recorded *in situ*, but most were recorded in the studios of the Palestine Broadcasting Service on Prophets Street where Lachman hosted a program called "Oriental Music." See Ruth Davis, "Ethnomusicology and Political Ideology in Mandatory Palestine: Robert Lachmann's 'Oriental Music' Projects," *Music and Politics* 4, no. 2 (Summer 2010). Apparently, Lachman's main language was German and he spoke Arabic but not Hebrew while he was in Jerusalem.
 - 27 Ironically, this essentialism undermines and transcends the Arab-Jewish binary that became a standard framework for viewing folk traditions from this period. One can see this subversion in several episodes recreating Lachman's recordings, including a Sephardic Jerusalemite singer chanting in Ladino and Arabic and a Nabulsi Samaritan rabbi's incantation from the Torah, in Jumana Manna's film *A Magical Substance Flows into Me*. See: Elisa Adami, "Jumana Manna, Chisenhale, London, 18 September to 13 December," *Art Monthly* 391 (November

- 2015): 29–30; Rebecca John, “Giving a Voice to Gaps and Cracks: Archival Critique in Jumana Manna’s ‘A Magical Substance Flows into Me,’” *Roots and Routes: Research on Visual Cultures* (June 2020), online at (roots-routes.org) bit.ly/48I0key (accessed 29 September 2023); and Hanan Toukan, “Music, Borders, and the Sensorial Politics of Displacement in Jumana Manna’s ‘A Magical Substance Flows into Me,’” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 67 (Autumn 2016): 117–23.
- 28 Michael Talbot, “Sparks of Happenstance: Photographs, Public Celebrations, and the Ottoman Military Band of Jerusalem,” *Journal of the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association* 5, no. 1 (Spring 2018): 33–66, quote at 65.
- 29 Talbot, “Sparks of Happenstance,” 66.
- 30 See Jawhariyyeh, *Storyteller of Jerusalem*, 87–88.
- 31 Mahmoud Yazbak, “The Muslim Festival of Nabi Rubin in Palestine: From Religious Festival to Summer Resort,” *Holy Land Studies* 10, no. 2 (November 2011): 169–98.
- 32 Awad Halabi, *Palestinian Rituals of Identity: The Prophet Moses Festival in Jerusalem, 1850–1948* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2023).
- 33 Reiter and Lehrs, *Sheikh Jarrah Affair*, 19.
- 34 Notably, no similar Jewish claims were made over the site of Nabi Musa or his spring festival. This is most likely due to the Jewish traditional narrative in which the burial place of Moses is in Mount Nebo in Jordan. Nabi Musa is also distinguished as a rallying ground for mobilization against European encroachment during the Crusades and later, in the 1920s and 1930s, against Zionist activities during the Mandate.
- 35 Jubeh, “Hayy al-Shaykh Jarrah,” 54.
- 36 Jubeh, “Hayy al-Shaykh Jarrah,” 56. Palestinian refugees from the Haifa and Jaffa regions who were expelled in 1948 were housed by UNRWA and the Jordanian government in properties in the area of Shim’on haTsadik. See Reiter and Lehrs, *Sheikh Jarrah Affair*, 93.
- 37 Reiter and Lehrs, *Sheikh Jarrah Affair*, 65–69.