

## Editorial

# Five Decades of Marginalization of Arab Jerusalem

Essays on Musrara,  
Demography, Archaeology,  
and Jerusalem's International  
Connections

Only when you finish reading Nazmi Jubeh's "Five Decades of Subjection and Marginalization" does it dawn on you that nearly half a century has gone by in Jerusalem's tumultuous history since its annexation by Israel. The transformation has been incremental, but the result has been a radical rupture from the earlier years of the "divided" city. Today, Jerusalem is hermetically sealed from its Palestinian hinterland, and subject to a series of juridical and physical measures of separation, which seem irreversible. We say "seem irreversible," because on the issue of demographic control, the cornerstone of Israel's annexationist policies, these mechanisms are failing. "It is worth pointing out," Jubeh writes, "that despite the manifold mechanisms of expulsion employed by the occupation in Jerusalem to get rid of the maximum number of Palestinians, they now constitute nearly forty percent of the population of what is called 'united Jerusalem,' when they had numbered under twenty percent in 1967." While the author does not suggest that this be the battle cry of Palestinian demographic nationalists to determine the future of the city, it does point to the limitations of a system of rule based on economic integration, segregated zoning, and juridical separation.

The discrimination, marginalization, and daily struggle for survival that Jubeh's essay describes are given statistical weight in the review of the Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) Jerusalem statistical profile for 2015, reproduced in this issue of *JQ*. At the same time, undertaking such a statistical survey is itself evidence of Israel's efforts to sever Jerusalem from its Palestinian hinterlands in the West Bank. Under current Israeli law, the PCBS is banned from collecting data in annexed Jerusalem. That it continues to try to do so is admirable but must necessarily limit some of its abilities. The current profile,

for example, does include an important, but brief, section on Israeli violations, including illegal house demolitions. But the section on education does not have the data to highlight the difficulties Jerusalem Palestinians face, for example, in obtaining basic education need either house-to-house surveys or access to Jerusalem school and municipal records that are unavailable to PCBS. How does PCBS circumvent those limitations on collecting data in their own city? They divide Jerusalem and the governorate (as defined by the Palestinian Authority) into two regions: Area J1, which comprises neighborhoods annexed by Israel after 1967 to the greater Jerusalem municipality; and Area J2, which includes areas excluded by the Israelis from Jerusalem, but which constitute the extensions of Arab Jerusalem – such as Kafr ‘Aqab, Sur Bahir, Bayt Hanina, and Bayt Iksa. The result is an exercise of imaginative geography that tries to provide a profile of a city that is suspended between two sovereignties – or rather one imperial sovereignty and another with an absence of autonomy, even of the kind currently enjoyed by the Palestinian Authority.

Meanwhile, the extent of the changes that have taken place over the last half-century in Jerusalem, and beyond, are described in Paola Caridi’s lyrical history of a single Jerusalem neighborhood, Musrara. Caridi’s “Musrara, the Center of the World” reviews the spatial and demographic transformations that have taken place in this core area of new Jerusalem, tracing the seam lines that dissected it and the fate of the Arab houses following the (post-1967) Begin plan to renovate “abandoned buildings” in Jerusalem to make way for Mizrahi residencies and in the wake of more recent patterns of gentrification.

Moving inside the walls of the Old City, one is quickly confronted with reminders of a more distant past: Jerusalem of King Herod (r. 37–4 BCE). The Israeli government and various other Israeli institutions spend millions of dollars annually to enhance the public image of King Herod, who has evolved from being a villain to the hero of the Judeo-Christian public. Much of this commitment is motivated by religious, cultural, and economic aspirations. These, however, cannot be separated from the political agenda, which seeks to strengthen Israel’s control over East Jerusalem, using archaeology as a tool to promote this image. Archaeological activity and the associated tourist industry are entirely controlled by Israel with little or no participation of Palestinian individuals or institutions. Katharina Galor’s “King Herod in Jerusalem” examines these debates in archeology and historiography to examine the shifting image of this controversial ruler of Roman Judea.

In “The Oil Press Complex of Khirbat al-Tira,” al-Quds University archaeologist Salah Hussein Al-Houdalieh reports on his excavations from Khirbet al-Tireh, fifteen kilometers north of Jerusalem. Houdalieh’s careful analysis of one aspect of this important Byzantine site – its ancient olive presses – is a model of how Palestinian archaeology can work. In a companion piece by Raja Shehadeh, “An Archeologist in al-Tira,” the writer muses about the work of Palestinian archeologists, and contrasts them with their Israeli counterparts. Shehadeh notes that:

Most of the artifacts displayed at the 2013 exhibit about King Herod the Great at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem were illegally removed from sites in the occupied West Bank. In the words of the Israeli archaeologist Raphael

Greenburg who is one of the founders of Emek Shaveh, the alternative archaeology organization, “Archaeologists are in the business of creating collective memories.” While Israel has mobilized resources to produce these memories – unfortunately often of an exclusivist cast – Palestinians have perhaps not felt the need to do the same. The energy and enthusiasm of Dr. Houdalieh and his students, however, are a reminder that much can be lost without more sustained initiatives to save what remains.

Two pieces in the current issue of *JQ* shine a spotlight on Jerusalem’s international reach, both extending out into the world and drawing those from around the world to it. In “I Went to Defend Jerusalem in Cordoba,” Najati Sidqi – readers of *Jerusalem Quarterly* will remember an earlier essay on “The Enigmatic Jerusalem Bolshevik” in *JQ* 14 (2001) – describes his arrival in Spain to join the ranks of the Republican Spanish government against the pro-Franco forces on behalf of the Comintern. Sidqi was one of the very few Arab militants who joined the Republican forces, and one of four Palestinian Arabs whose names are known. The fascist forces included tens of thousands of Maghribi forces (mostly from Morocco). Sidqi’s mission, explained in greater depth in his memoirs, had little to do with his fighting abilities; rather, he was to use his skills as a publicist to undermine the morale of the Arab fighters on the fascist side and to bring them over to the Republican side.

In “An Indian Corner in Jerusalem,” Penny Johnson reviews two recent books on the Indian presence in Palestine: *Indians at Herod’s Gate: A Jerusalem Tale* by Navtej Sarna, and *From India to Palestine: Essays in Solidarity*, edited by Githa Hariharan. Sarna, a former Indian ambassador to Israel, centers his book around the history of the Indian Hospice in Jerusalem. As Johnson tells us: “It is an engaging story replete with Indian saints and soldiers, Indian pilgrims and princes, and a Jerusalem Indian-Palestinian family that has kept an ‘Indian corner’ alive in Jerusalem through wars, conquests, and occupation.” The edited volume *From India to Palestine* contains contributions from an array of Indian writers – poets, scholars, and activists. They explore the historical connections between India and Palestine as well as the current efforts to build solidarity and political support for Palestinians, despite increasingly friendly official ties between Israel and India. The book also includes more lyrical contributions, including one by Meena Alexander, who stayed at the Indian Hospice in 2011, when she was Poet in Residence at al-Quds University. Her poem “Indian Hospice,” in fact, serves as an opening to Sarna’s book.

Finally, in this issue Hanna Caldwell examines the legacy of the All-Palestine Government set up by Hajj Amin al-Husayni and his associates in Gaza following the war of 1948 and the conquest of Palestine by the Haganah and the Revisionist militias. Her analysis of the impossibility of establishing Palestinian sovereignty in the wake of the loss of territory and in a regional context of intense rivalry is a sober reminder of the difficulties facing Palestinians today: the land of Palestine continues to be usurped and the political situation in the Arab world is particularly precarious. However, Caldwell’s conclusion holds within it a spark of hope: “However broken and factionalized the

Palestinians found themselves at this juncture, a more refined and coherent sense of national identity took hold, reinforcing Palestinian consciousness that they could only depend on themselves.” This echoes Jubeh’s insistence that the continued refusal of Jerusalem’s Palestinians to surrender, despite the all-out assault on their infrastructure, institutions, economy, and lives, only proves that “in the mind of the colonized, the colonists have failed, everywhere and at all times.”

With the current issue we welcome to the editorial board of *JQ* Carol Khoury, who, as Managing Editor, will be helping with the production of *JQ*. Ms. Khoury comes with a rich experience as translator and writer. Most recently, she has edited and translated Yasmine Zahran’s historical novel *Ghassan Resurreced*, a biographic study of Ghassani dynastic rule in pre-Islamic Arabia. *JQ* will undoubtedly benefit greatly from her talents.