

## EDITORIAL

# Pilgrims and Spies

Pilgrimage to the Holy Land has been a perennial source of travel literature and scholarship, ranging from pietistic medieval narratives during and after the crusades to the *fada'il* literature of Muslim visitors (for example, Mujir al-Din al-'Ulaymi's *al-Uns al-Jalil bi-tarikh al-Quds wa al-Khalil*) and works of historical sketches and photographic imagery that aimed at transporting the holy sites to people who could not bear (or afford) the hardships of nineteenth-century travel. They also include "secular pilgrimages" – mostly satirical – immortalized by Mark Twain (*Innocents Abroad*) and Herman Melville (*Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage to the Holy Land*) during their late nineteenth-century sojourns to Jerusalem.

By the beginning of the Tanzimat period, developments in transportation and communication catapulted Jerusalem, which had been a somnolent provincial capital of southern Syria, toward becoming a globalized city. Not the global city of God that was heralded by Constantine and Queen Helena; rather, it was globalized as a destination for pilgrimage, and virtually globalized through iconic representation and the marketing of its images and religious paraphernalia to a global audience of believers and non-believers alike. In her penetrating study of this transformation of sacred space, Anabel Wharton (*Selling Jerusalem*) discusses the commoditization of religion in which pilgrimage to the city has now been replaced by simulacra – that is, the replication of holy objects, relics, and actual sacred sites, in universal fairs, artistic exhibitions, and film. A good example of this spectacularized Jerusalem, as Wharton calls it, is the

Holy Land Experience constructed in Orlando, Florida, as a Disneyland type experience, where the attractions (for the tourist-pilgrim) are “replicated biblical sites, each of which acts as a stage for periodically performed entertainments.” These are spectacles of the holy city in the Western (or, rather, the Western evangelical) imagination, not the performative spectacles in Jerusalem. But what is common to both is the commoditization of religion and the fetishism of religious relics. In Jerusalem, however, popular religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had a mobilizational potency that challenged this commodification and transcended it. In the spectacles of Sabt al-Nur during Holy Week, for example, the participating crowds brought together spectators, actors, and believers seeking redemption at the same time.

Jacob Norris, the author of “Saint Marie-Alphonsine and the Resurrection of Jubra’il Dabdoub” (in *JQ* 73), an outstanding piece on the sociology of religiosity, is the guest editor of this issue’s rich collection on pilgrims and pilgrimage to Palestine. Norris’s introduction (page six) reviews for the reader the highlights of the themes of this collection: “Jerusalem syndrome” and religious mania among pilgrims during the British Mandate; the position of Abu Ghush and the exactions of pilgrimage routes from Jaffa; understanding pilgrimage as a sacrament; comparing holy cities in conflict; the sacred status of Joseph’s tomb in Jerusalem as a contested space; Jerusalem tattooists and European pilgrims; and the photography of the École biblique on nineteenth-century pilgrimage, along with photos of the sacred trees at shrines. We are also delighted to publish a review of *Ordinary Jerusalem* – no ordinary book – on our pages. Our Facts and Figures section shows the data for the annual activity of West Bank hotels since 1996.

This issue contains one major article not related to pilgrimage. “Loyalty and Betrayal” is the subject of Chloe Bordewich’s intriguing study of Ottoman intelligence and the memoirs attributed to the enigmatic ‘Aziz Bey, the presumed head of the Ottoman General Security Directorate in Damascus during World War I. Bordewich successfully deconstructs (and in some cases deciphers) a number of Arabic, Turkish, and Ottoman contemporary documents in search of what really happened between 1916 and 1918. Several issues emerge: although ‘Aziz Bey is a real person, and seemingly a leading figure in Ottoman intelligence as well in the Special Operations Department (*Teşkilat-i Mahsusa*), his actual presence in Damascus or Jerusalem, as well as his authorship of this memoir, is questionable. A main target of Ottoman intelligence at the time was Arab secessionist movements, as well as groups who were in contact with British and French colonial forces, and the publication of ‘Aziz’s so-called diary (in *al-Ahrar* in 1932, and again in book form in 1937) prompted internal debates in the post-war Arab Levant on the role of Arab figures who were functionaries of the Ottoman administration, and especially those who collaborated with Cemal (Jamal) Pasha in Syria and Palestine during the war. The conflicted positions of Emir Shakib Arslan, a close ally of Jamal Pasha, and Shaykh As‘ad al-Shuqayri, the mufti of the Ottoman Fourth Army from Acre, came under particular scrutiny. Both figures justified the crackdown on Arab nationalists by Jamal Pasha as a

preventive measure in defense of the “integrity of the Ottoman state.” Bordewich also introduces new material on the interception of the NILI group (a pro-British Jewish spy ring that operated from Atlit and Zichron Ya’akov under the leadership of Sarah and Aaron Aaronsohn), and the presumed use of sexual allures to trap oppositional political figures. It seems that this discovery by Ottoman intelligence was a turning point in Jamal Pasha’s (and possibly the CUP’s) attitude toward Jewish settlement in Palestine – from admiration for their modernist technology and communal settlements to hostility and enmity. Bordewich’s original and penetrating research of intelligence and espionage in Palestine and Syria thus adds significantly to our knowledge of Arab and Turkish nationalism in the waning days of the Ottoman state and the political fallout of wartime maneuvering in its aftermath.

Corrigenda:

In *Jerusalem Quarterly* 77, the caption of Figure 3 (page 130) of Nadi Abusaada’s article “Self-Portrait of a Nation” misstated the Exhibition and the year. The correct caption should be: Figure 3. Two pages from the guidebook for the Second Arab Exhibition showing an architectural plan and a list of participating companies. Source: Arab Exhibition Company, 1934.