

Photographs from the past:

Highlights from the Arab Studies Society Archive

The Israeli closure of Jerusalem's Orient House affected the work of several other institutions in the city. The Arab Studies Society is one such institution. Its fault in the eyes of the Israeli authorities stems from the fact that it is physically located in the same building as the Orient House. The Israeli raid on the Society resulted in the confiscation of many documents, images, maps, and other documentary materials. The media reported that among the items confiscated by the Israeli police during their raid on the Orient House were photographs from the archive of the Society. The two photographs in this section are from the collection of the Arab Studies Society; it is not clear whether or not the original plates of these images were confiscated by the Israeli authorities or not.

The two photographs date back to the last decade of Ottoman rule in Jerusalem. In the first, we see a crowd waiting at the Jerusalem railway station for the arrival of the train, possibly from Jaffa. In the second photograph, we see the process of paving the new roads in Jerusalem, possibly during WWI, as a result of the entry of the automobile into the city at the time. The offices of the Ottoman Red Crescent society can also be seen.

The collection of the Arab Studies Society is one of the few Palestinian collections in Jerusalem and when the Society re-opens, plans are underway to turn the photo section into a major photographic archive on Palestine.

Issam Nassar



A crowd at the train station in Jerusalem, late Ottoman period.



The paving of the new roads in the Old City during WWI.