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EPHEMERA OF A PROMISED LAND: TWO TRAVEL GUIDES IN A RECONSTITUTED JERUSALEMITE FAMILY ARCHIVE

Abstract

This article investigates Christian Palestinian involvement in tourism and Western pilgrimage in Mandate Palestine, and focuses on the tension between political identity and mercantile aspirations. It makes use of an ephemeral archive that highlights the possibilities of reconstructing a picture of Mandate-era Jerusalem based on such transient documents. The article examines two 1930s travel pamphlets, published in English and co-authored or co-edited by a Greek-Orthodox Jerusalemite, George M. Sahhar (1901–1976). Sahhar tourism enterprises in Jerusalem catered to an English-speaking British and American clientele, some associated with the British-Israelite movement. Both guides offer insight into Christian tour operators and the tastes of their clientele and indicate Western appetite for biblical and pseudo-historical narratives of Jewish connections to Palestine. Together, they illustrate the ambivalent instrumentality of Christian Palestinian entrepreneurs in biblifying Palestine for the Western imaginary and even propagating ideas of Palestinian progress as facilitated by Zionist modernity, a strategy now implicated in normalizing Israel's 1948 creation and later deployed in Israeli national narratives.

خلاصة

يبحث هذا المقال في انخراط المسيحيين الفلسطينيين في السياحة والحج الغربي إلى فلسطين خلال الانتداب، ويركّز على التوتر بين الهوية السياسية والتطلعات التجارية. وهي تستخدم أرشيفاً متلاشٍ يسלט الضوء على احتمالات إعادة بناء صورة القدس في عهد الانتداب بناءً على مثل هذه الوثائق المؤقتة. يفحص المقال كتيبين عن السفر من ثلاثينيات القرن الماضي، نُشرا بالإنجليزية وشارك في تأليفهما أو شارك في تحريرهما جورج م. سحّار (1901–1976). كانت شركة سحّار للسياحة في القدس تلبي احتياجات الزبناء البريطانيين والأمريكيين الذين يتحدثون الإنجليزية، وبعضهم كان مرتبطاً بالحركة البريطانية الإسرائيلية. يقدم كلا الدليلين نظرة ثاقبة لمنظمي الرحلات المسيحية وأذواق عملائهم ويشيران إلى الشهية الغربية للروايات التوراتية والتاريخية الزائفة عن الروابط اليهودية بفلسطين. ويوضحان معاً الأداة المتناقضة لرجال الأعمال الفلسطينيين المسيحيين في تصوير فلسطين للخيال الغربي كأنها ما زالت في عهد الإنجيل، وحتى الترويج للفكرة أن الحداثة الصهيونية سهّلت التقدم الفلسطيني، وهي استراتيجية

متورطة الآن في تطبيع إنشاء إسرائيل عام ١٩٤٨ ونشرها لاحقًا في الروايات
الوطنية الإسرائيلية.



INTRODUCTION: CULTURAL EPHERMERA AND SCALES OF HISTORY

It is difficult to resist a reading of history that is not punctuated by hindsight and the chronology of grand narratives. Some seventy-four years after the Nakba, there is an inclination to read archival ephemera of early twentieth-century history in late Ottoman and Mandate-era Palestine with a sense of nostalgia for a society destroyed by the rupture of mid-century politics and the interrupted trajectories of what might have been. The irrevocable disruption to Palestinian life effected by the Zionist state project, as realized in May 1948, not only displaced vast numbers of ordinary Palestinian residents but also altered how Palestine would be conceived thereafter. Yet, in its evisceration, Palestine has become a site of radical possibility and potential; and this conceptually radical site is one impetus for the aforementioned nostalgia. This article is the product of such influences – the desire to plot ephemera onto a disrupted national history and to locate a disrupted family history within the context of Mandate-era Jerusalem.

This article offers a microstudy of two Palestinian co-authored guidebooks written in the first half of the 1930s. These are not, in one sense, coincidentally linked together, since the co-author, George M. Sahhar, is a relative of the author of this article. The discovery of these primary sources pointed to both an incontrovertible connection with Jerusalem (prized by a Palestinian in the particularly distant diaspora of Australia) and the existence of a significant breadth of family in Jerusalem. In this sense, the accidental discovery spoke to the disruption of social and familial fabric effected by the Nakba generally, and specifically to the effects of displacement on the Sahhar family after 1948. I have come to regard these modest books as part of a process of reconstituting a family archive – through the marshalling of family papers both within our possession and discoverable through a variety of less-than-systematic strategies – as a means towards understanding the Sahhar family's embeddedness in Jerusalem.²

METHOD

One might wonder if these sorts of artifacts, linked together in an entirely intimate way, should hold any place, much less form the central catalyst to inquiry, in an academic paper. However, increasingly, I am of the view that scholars of Palestine must work rapidly to secure the links that remain to a pre-1948 reality; work that sits uncomfortably with the academy and yet is vital to the preservation of an historic record of what has, now only at the edge of living memory, been lost. While this article's methodology aligns with what Ann Laura Stoler calls an archival surge among Palestinians, which offers "an imaginative rethinking of political praxis," the use of ephemera in "making archives" is troubled in this context by a reconstituted archive that does not fit within a narrative of resistance.³ However, by engaging with a process of recording that does oppose colonial archives but rather seeks a language "beyond the ruins and outside of the museum" – to borrow Rana Barakat's theorization on thinking outside of settler dynamics in reclaiming the geography of Lifta – the article offers a refusal of settler (serving) narrative.⁴ In so doing, it makes an argument for the importance of reclaiming ephemera that might more easily be ignored, not simply because of its object value as ephemera but because of its content; yet this contribution at the margin of a developing archive employs methodology "undomesticated by normative standards of what counts as history and rule-driven documentation."⁵ Through that process, this article invests in an archive of liberation.

Neither is this work limited to a Palestinian application, having a strong valence in other indigenous contexts. For example, in their reframing of an "Australian" archive, Narungga scholar and poet Natalie Harkin and Wirradjuri scholar and writer Jeanine Leane assert that the archive "is everything; embodied, grounded and everywhere like a bottomless well or a map, deep and impossible to trace toward one specific origin or life-source."⁶ In the case of what Leane describes as the *re-membering* of a *dis-membered* history, the ephemeral document takes on a significance that exceeds its prior use-value or merits.⁷ In her work on visiting cards produced by the Franciscan Printing Press in Jerusalem at the turn of the twentieth century, Maria Chiara Rioli notes both the value of the source documents as well as their tenuous place in the archives, as things "destined for the trash," arguing that "the reclamation of abandoned sources can recast the definition of archives."⁸ Conversely, though indivisibly in the question of archives, is the problem of the absent archive, where Palestinians

have themselves had cause to disappear documents. Yet Mezna Qato reframes this disappearance and destruction as a form of resistance to colonization—which disrupts a unilateral “state will to narrate” by obstructing the assembly of a (complete) national archive.⁹ Thus absence and chance are key constitutive parts of the archives of the dispossessed. The guidebooks discussed in the following pages illustrate this precarity of sources and offer the opportunity to revive a history comprised of slight records, which illuminate a disappearing knowledge of people who worked in and profited from the tourism industry in Mandate-era Palestine.

At a 2004 conference concerned with a multidisciplinary approach to Palestinian social history, Thomas M. Ricks outlined a methodology in which one must recognize that memory is always, in a sense, *autobiographical*, and a reciter of memory must navigate between the self and a wider context.¹⁰ He impressed that

the need to begin to utilize the techniques, theoretical assumptions and research methodologies of oral historians . . . in the work of writing or “rediscovering” Palestinian history is clear. The “living memories” of the elder Palestinians pass from the historian’s reach at the moment of those people’s own passing away.¹¹

There is now an even greater need to supplement surviving oral histories with documentary ephemera. Such ephemera is thus transformed as a tool of remembering in the intimate context of familial oral histories and acts as an aid in substantiating received oral histories of the recent past. This is the work that remains possible in reconstructing an ever more elusive social history of pre-1948 Palestine.¹²

Drawing on these theorizations, which all work to decenter traditional ideas of what form, subject, or substance the archive should take, this article links the expanded idea of the archive with ephemera’s place in what might be regarded as the archive and in particular the archive of Jerusalem, in addition to the hearsay of oral histories generationally removed (once or twice) and the intersection of oral history with the autobiographical. Besides presenting an analysis of the guidebooks themselves, this article draws on news items and advertisements, digital archiving projects of Jerusalem, as well as

existent scholarship to reconstitute a view of both the familial and the local.

THE SAHHAR GUIDEBOOKS

Both guidebooks discussed were purchased online from American booksellers and, as Rioli suggests, comprised the ephemera found in basements or attics, perhaps of American tourists to Palestine in the 1930s. Both booklets are cheaply produced and, coupled with their small size, as Sarah Irving observes, “designed to appeal to a short-term visitor.”¹³ The timing of the guidebooks’ appearance online in the last decade corroborate, if only inferentially, these theories of the ephemeral, even serendipitous, archive.

That the first guidebook became known to me was entirely coincidental – an idle online search that uncovered a book (more aptly described, when it arrived, as a pamphlet) co-authored by a person bearing my name and published in Jerusalem in 1931. It was the place of publication as much as the name that convinced me in 2013 (according to the booksellers receipt I have kept alongside the pamphlet) that this document constituted a part of my own absent family archive. The second text, a more substantial book, produced with a different co-author, was purchased some six years later in 2019.

Both guidebooks allude to another trend in the early twentieth century under British occupation which saw a rise in the number of commercial presses in Jerusalem. Typically owned by Christians, these played “a significant role in encouraging printing in the city of Jerusalem.”¹⁴ Yet while these presses were in some instances deployed to disseminate educational, cultural, and political ideas, as Fawaz Awdat Alnaimatt argues, many of the Christians using these resources were not part of a wider political project.¹⁵ Indeed, the guidebooks examined here suggest a commercial imperative that seems wholly out of step with the immediate interests of the Sahhar family in any political sense, or the Palestinian-Arab population, in Mandate-era Jerusalem. As such, these are somewhat ambivalent examples of travel writing by locals within – or against – a colonial framework.

In contrast with Sarah Irving’s study of similar publications, which might be conceived of as a forum for “writing back” (notwithstanding that several of the guidebooks in Irving’s study are likely co-authored by the same co-author of Sahhar’s earlier guidebook), Sahhar’s guides do not appear to present a peculiarly Palestinian narrative of place or prosecute a narrative, however

informally, of Palestinian identity and national aspirations.¹⁶ Lisa Taraki's arguments are instructive in this respect, where she notes there is a tendency among social and cultural historians to plot evidence through a tool of periodization, which accepts a "hegemonic Grand Narrative," and conceives of such data in relation to "critical moments in Palestinian history."¹⁷ Such an approach, she continues, eclipses "other, less dramatic events, especially those where resistance or catastrophe are not the defining quality of the period."¹⁸ These observations offer valuable caution in how to read the discussed guides. Yet, though they largely resist such incorporation into readings of a distinct or endemic national consciousness among the mercantile Christian middle class of Mandate-era Jerusalem, this did not trouble G. M. Sahhar's grandson. Himself a staunch advocate for Palestinian rights, George B. Sahhar reminded me of the divisions between the commercial imperatives of an ordinary business operator in the early 1930s and the framework of a national history that must have seemed quite remote to his grandfather, whose ventures were designed for a particular tourist market, whose tastes he no doubt understood.¹⁹ This anecdotal view is corroborated by Irving's archival reconstitution of the legacy of Stephan Hanna Stephan, which she characterizes as an ambivalent one in which a contemporary viewer needs to abandon "easy notions about what such commitments mean for people living, working, and thinking under occupation."²⁰

The Sahhar Guidebooks are co-produced English-language pieces and, like Sahhar, his collaborators were Christian Jerusalemites with wider links to the travel and tourism industry. The first—a slim pamphlet of thirty-two pages, entitled *Traveller's Note-Book for Palestine* (referred to as *Traveller's Note-Book* in this text), sold for the modest price of 50 mils—was published in 1931 by the Commercial Press Jerusalem (an enterprise owned by the Habash family)²¹ and authored by P. Afif and G. M. Sahhar.²² The guidebook includes seven photographs: one full page panorama of Jerusalem and six smaller images, in addition to a single full-page advertisement for the Fast Hotel with which Sahhar had a long connection.²³ The authors, identified only by initials on the title page, are helpfully named in the preface by one Robert Haydon Jones as Paul and George, friends and companions, so Jones reports, on his own travels through Palestine. It seems likely that the Paul Afif of the *Traveller's Note-Book* is the Boulos Afif whom Irving identifies as "a Jerusalem-based photographer who, during the 1930s, published several tourist maps of Palestine and co-authored the *Pathfinder Guide [to Palestine, Transjordan and Syria]*."²⁴ In

Afif's later work, Irving shows that, with his co-writers, they present "different national narratives" intended to shape the views of "European and American travellers who were believed to wield political influence."²⁵ As such, they "should be read against this backdrop in which tourism was closely enmeshed with the politics of identity and nationalism."²⁶

Afif and Sahhar's *Traveller's Note-Book* offers faint narrative prosecution of Palestinian national aspirations, presenting a textual mode of biblification of the Palestine imaginary, which, as Issam Nassar's work has shown, typifies English travel narratives of the nineteenth century.²⁷ Though it is not without subtle critique of its Mandate-era context, the *Traveller's Note-Book* relies on the imagery of biblical scripture in its selection and representation of noteworthy tourist sites and destinations. Thus, while the *Traveller's Note-Book* is an instance of a Palestinian-written guidebook to Palestine published earlier than the 1934 *Pathfinder Guide* (which Irving proposes may be the first of its kind), it perhaps lacks a dimension of cultural diplomacy in respect to Palestinian national aspirations which Irving attributes to the later guidebook.



Image 1: Morcos Essa at home in the 1930s with wife, Mary Silo Essa (seated), children, Issa, Edward, and Salwa, and a family friend from Lebanon. Courtesy of Nicole Hise Porter (Essa's granddaughter).

The second guidebook – a more substantial one hundred pages, entitled *The Traveller's Companion to the Holy Land: Being a Concise and Accurate Guide and Easy Reference when Travelling through Palestine, Syria and Transjordan* (referred to as *Traveller's Companion* in this text) – sold for 75 mils (listing the equivalent cost in both British Pound Sterling and American Dollars, clearly denoting its intended market) and boldly announced itself as a first edition, though it seems unlikely that any further versions were produced. The guidebook was published in 1935 by the “Modern Press” Jerusalem (established by Anton Lawrence in the early 1930s),²⁸ in association with Morcos Essa (Image 1); although, as the title page makes clear, the guidebook is not authored by but rather “compiled and edited” by Sahhar and Essa. Unlike the earlier guidebook, this 1935 publication appears to have been funded (or made profitable) by subscription, featuring some forty-eight advertisements for businesses predominately, though not exclusively, based in Jerusalem; by contrast, it features no photographs.

Essa, along with Sahhar, was a member of the Palestinian Hotels Employees Union in 1930, and it may have been through this membership that they met and decided to conduct the joint guidebook enterprise together. *The Palestine Gazette* lists Essa as a resident of the German Colony in December 1942 when he registered a partnership with Badie Ya’coub Sinunu of Talbieh “to buy, take over and operate as a running concern the ‘Pantiles’ pension and to run or operate hotels, pensions and/or restaurants.”²⁹ Correspondence with Nicole Hise Porter, the granddaughter of Essa, who emigrated to the United States in the early 1950s, confirms that Essa was an Assyrian Christian who lived in the Jerusalem Mamilla area. According to Porter and her mother, Salwa, Essa bought and ran another small hotel from the German Templars; called the Lendholt, the hotel (which Salwa heard later became a school) was located either next to or directly across from the Regent Cinema in the German Colony.³⁰

A RELATIVE IN THE ARCHIVES: WHO IS GEORGE MOUSA SAHHAR?

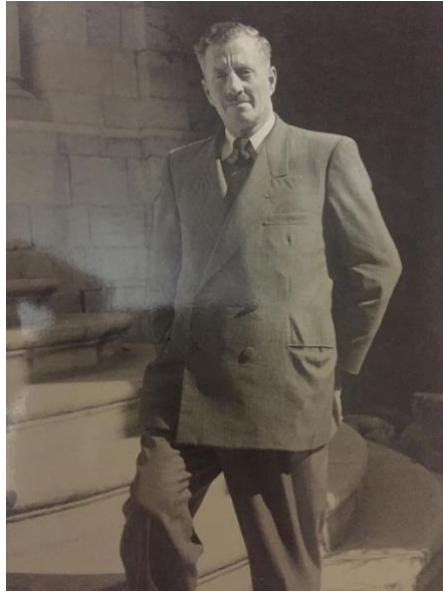


Image 2: George M. Sahhar, c. 1945. Courtesy of George B. Sahhar.



Image 3: Australian Club (old Fast Hotel, Jerusalem). Matson Photo Service, 10 October 1940, Matson Registers v. 2 (1940-1946).

George Mousa (G. M.) Sahhar (1901–1976) (Image 2) was a Greek-Orthodox Jerusalemite Palestinian, who, according to his grandson, had a range of business interests in the tourism industry both in Jerusalem and later Jaffa throughout the Mandate period. Sahhar began in the tourism industry as an employee of the Fast Hotel, located adjacent to the New Gate of the Old City walls and proximate to the Mamilla commercial area. Sahhar's grandson suggests he may have commenced employment at the Fast Hotel as early as 1917, although three 1935 notices in the *Palestine Post* suggest that his employment more likely started around 1925.³¹ Here Sahhar arranged motor cars and tours for the hotel's clientele. His grandson recalls that the hotel was Irish-owned, although George Hintlian writes that the Fast Hotel was built by Armenians in the 1890s but took its name from the two German Templar brothers who established it (and Peter Manning notes it was later renamed the Australian Soldier's Club as shown in Image 3).³² In any case, it was during this period of employment that Sahhar produced the two guidebooks discussed here. The guidebooks themselves may have been intended to distinguish Sahhar's name from the Fast Hotel, or indeed from the Sahhar Brothers Tourist Contractors and Motor Car Owners, operated by my own grandfather, Abdullah Andoni Sahhar. After getting his start as a driver and guide for the offices of Thomas Cook & Sons, my grandfather established an independent agency in the late 1920s, staffed by himself and several of his brothers (Image 4). This endeavor may have been intended to facilitate future independent ventures as a business owner rather than as an employee. Shortly after the publication of Sahhar's second guidebook in 1935, he left employment at the Fast Hotel and established an independent tourist agency, as advertised in the *Palestine Post* in June 1935, located near the Fast Hotel.³³ By 1937, Sahhar seems to have become the tour manager for the Petra Travel Office, near the Latin Patriarchate, although perhaps not exclusively of other enterprises he was pursuing.³⁴

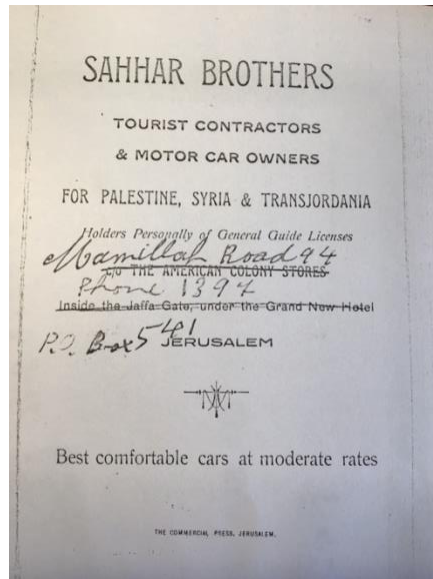


Image 4: Sahhar Brothers Pamphlet of Services, c. early 1930s. Sahhar Family Archive.

George Sahhar's grandson informed me that his grandfather owned two hotels, a cinema, and a sports club—which, based on the foregoing, must have been purchased sometime after the mid-1930s. The grandson (George B. Sahhar) details Sahhar's business ventures as follows:

[Sahhar lived in] Al-Baqa Al-Tahta was the name of the neighbourhood. . . . The street was renamed to "Emek Refaim." One of the hotels was Regency Hotel in Lower Baqa [and the] Cinema Regency. The house was also on the same street. The Sports Club was toward the end of the street, near the Greek Colony, where now there are all the coffee shops.³⁵

The other hotel owned by Sahhar was Qasr Al-Bahr (the Sea Palace) in Jaffa, which his grandson described as "a magnificent building on a hilltop overlooking the beach. It became a hospital after the Nakba."³⁶ A 1946 clipping from *Al-Difaa'* newspaper, supplied by Sahhar's grandson, verifies this story in part, though articles in the *Palestine Post* suggest he did not own the Sea Palace for long; in fact, his grandson confirms Sahhar had sold it before the Nakba.³⁷ A translation of the clipping (from the Arabic in Image 5) reads:

Hotel Opening: We found out that the “Cars Club” that is located on the Youth (Alshabab) Beach has now become a modern hotel – restaurant – bar, and contains all the conveniences. The owner and manager is George Al Sahhar, also the owner of the Regent Hotel in Jerusalem, we wish him good luck.³⁸



Image 5: Clipping from *Al-Difaa'*, 1946. Courtesy of George B. Sahhar.

While the *Al-Difaa'* article confirms some of Sahhar's grandson's recollections, the question of the Regent Cinema remains. Marina Parisinou, an associate producer of the Jerusalem, We are Here mapping project, has a familial connection, through her great-uncle Ferdinand (Nando) Shtakleff, to the Regent Cinema. It was Shtakleff who apparently renamed the cinema (formerly the Orient) the Regent; he took it over in 1940 and operated it until 1948 in partnership with William A. Thorogood, who is noted in the *Palestine Post* "as the lessee of the Regent Cinema."³⁹ Parisinou's inquiries also indicate that the Aweidah family operated the Regent Hotel, which may have been in existence for little more than a decade, between 1939 and 1947. The *Al-Difaa'* article, in stating that Sahhar was the owner of the Regent Hotel, may offer a crucial distinction between owner and operator/lessee of the Regent Building in whole or in part, although no further material has shed light on this theory.

“BEHOLD THE PROMISED LAND”: AMBIVALENT TEXTS IN THE MODERN FORMATION OF PALESTINE

One well-documented preoccupation of Palestinian society in the late Ottoman and early Mandate era, and which is evinced in travel materials of this period, is the emphasis placed on the notion of the modern.⁴⁰ The centrality of Palestine to the interests and activities of the great powers had, in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, resulted in the introduction of “various Western innovations and amenities into the region.”⁴¹ Moreover, the tourist demographic expanded, in the late Ottoman era, to include the “modern tourist pilgrim.”⁴² These tourists, in contrast with religiously affiliated Christian pilgrimages, were “as a rule members of the Protestant denomination, and hailed from Western and Northern Europe and America.”⁴³ Drawn from the upper-middle and upper classes, this new kind of tourist financed their own journeys and “expected the best possible service.”⁴⁴ Their requirements thus necessitated “the development of various tourist services.”⁴⁵

As Irving’s research highlights, guidebooks of this period “espouse elements of an ideology of modernity,”⁴⁶ often within an idiom in which Palestinian locals also demonstrate an internalization of the Western claim to a superiority of ideas.⁴⁷ Yet this picture is complicated by patterns of geographic (and social) mobility, particularly among Christian Palestinian merchants in the late Ottoman and Mandate periods, who Jacob Norris argues were not merely “passive bystanders” but participants and agents in shaping modernity.⁴⁸ Sahhar himself traveled often to Eastern Europe, according to his grandson, for both business and leisure. Unfortunately, more is not known about these activities, though they represent a more unusual horizon of travel in comparison to the networks established by Palestinian businesses in the Americas, Britain, and Western Europe. Beyond the commentary in the guides, a focus on modernity is evident in many of the advertisements featured in the *Traveller’s Companion*. The advertisement for the Fast Hotel (Image 6)—announcing the facility as “Strictly 1st Class” and boasting a quantity of “Private Bathrooms,” “Central Heating,” and “Hot & Cold Running Water”—is characteristic of the copy found in many of the guidebook’s eighteen advertisements for accommodation. Yet while the claim to provide “the best possible service” is ubiquitous, there is undoubtedly a recognition by those associated with the broader tourism industry of the expectations of their clientele and, simultaneously, an ability to leverage those requirements in exploiting the tastes of a potential market. As others have theorized, an important aspect of Zionist ideology, one that appealed at this time to the British, was its denial of

the modernity of early twentieth-century Palestinian society as contrasted with Zionism's capacity to tether itself to Western-centric ideals and expressions of modernity.⁴⁹ Mark LeVine argues that this misunderstanding of Palestinian modernity was in part enabled by the discursive relationship forged between modernity and colonialism.⁵⁰ And yet it is dismissive of Palestinian society to overlook its thriving cosmopolitan scene at the turn of the twentieth century; rather, Palestinian modernity was able to exist alongside the past, "to negotiate plural modalities of Palestinian life."⁵¹ Thus the guidebooks, as microcosms of the wider tourism industry, engage this interplay, deploying a Western-centric and orientalist view – widespread among their target audience – to their advantage.



Image 6: Hotel Fast Advertisement, full inside cover of the *Traveller's Companion*, 1935.

In relation to tour itineraries, Doron Bar and Kobi Cohen-Hattab write that the preference of the modern tourist pilgrim was to hire local guides, who "speaking both [their] languages and the local vernacular, also functioned as interpreters. These were the Dragomen, who featured in both the literature and guidebooks of the period."⁵² In

addition to these local guides, the modern tourist pilgrim relied on both the Bible and tourist guidebooks for aid, and the proliferation of guidebooks such as those by Cook and Baedeker provides “proof of the growing number of modern tourist pilgrims who visited Palestine.”⁵³ Bar and Cohen-Hattab observe a key difference between these travel materials and religious guidebooks in that while the latter had provided a circumscribed field of religious data, the new guidebooks

offered a wealth of information and tips on living expenses, the local currency, accommodation, the location of post office and telegraph services and even advice on local customs. They contained descriptions of Palestine’s many sites, both holy and secular, and they suggested slow excursions through the various regions of Palestine.⁵⁴

It is in this vein that Sahhar and Essa’s 1935 *Traveller’s Companion* is reviewed in the *Palestine Post*’s “Recent Books” section. Established in 1932 by Gershon Agronsky, who purchased and incorporated the earlier English language paper the *Palestine Bulletin*,⁵⁵ the *Palestine Post* took “a broadly Zionist perspective, addressed itself to Palestine’s English-speaking audience in general, and was less bellicose than Hebrew-language newspapers.”⁵⁶ Indeed the British Mandate “considered the *Post* to represent the Yishuv’s voice.”⁵⁷ Along with another guide the review pronounces, “We have received two pamphlets of slight or doubtful value to the tourist.” An extract of the review reads, “It is wholly ‘Palestinian-made’ – Palestinian printing, spelling, syntax and misprints all complete in generous measure. It is composed in the genuine language of the dragoman.”⁵⁸

This encapsulates a dismissive view of Palestinian operators by the paper which ridicules the attempt to emulate European travel writing. Yet for Sahhar, the value seems to lie simply in the review’s inclusion, rather than its content, as it publicized his name and business interests. Sahhar continued to advertise in the *Palestine Post*, recognizing that his own market were its readers, which included “British government officials, as well as English-speaking members of the immigrant Zionist community, and other English-speaking Palestinians.”⁵⁹ Indeed, he appears to have been on good terms with those at the *Palestine Post*, and the evidence suggests this was mutual: despite the *Post*’s disparaging review of the *Traveller’s Companion*, it takes out an advertisement in the same guidebook, a modest one-third

page, in which the copy describes it as “Dedicated to serve, in the tradition of Western Journalism, the newspapers needs of the English reading public of the Middle East.”⁶⁰ Compared with Irving’s observation of Stephan Hanna Stephan, that he “had to make daily decisions and negotiations about his relationship with Zionist Jewish immigrants and with colonial British managers, colleagues, and perhaps even friends,”⁶¹ Sahhar’s use of politically dubious newspapers reflects similar concerns and factors.

Reportedly, a significant number of the Sahhar family’s clientele derived from a group known as the British Israelites.⁶² While never a mainstream ideology, it enjoyed some popularity in the British Empire, notably in New Zealand and the United States, and combined “British imperialism with a peculiar interpretation of the Bible, by which Britain replaced the Jews as God’s chosen people.”⁶³ The movement appears to have reached its height in the early 1920s, with some estimated 20,000 in its membership.⁶⁴ A high profile adherent was the nineteenth prime minister of New Zealand, William Massey, who served from 1912 until his death in 1925. As Reynolds observes of Massey, his “British Israelite philosophy was extreme, not to say eccentric, but it reminds us that we should not breezily project back to the Great War era the nationalism of a postcolonial age.”⁶⁵ It is similarly well to recall that the political imperatives of Zionism must have looked very different to Sahhar, his co-authors, and colleagues in the early 1930s, who, if not political visionaries, could not be blamed for their lack of foresight in courting a clientele associated with such ideas and attitudes for a modest commercial gain. Such studies, as Taraki acknowledges, tend to be met with little enthusiasm and “may be construed as an indictment of the national commitment or seriousness of purpose of the social groups under study.”⁶⁶ Yet while Zionists may have recognized the political tool of tourism, Palestinian Arabs were perhaps less prescient of the industry as crucial to national image-making in the Mandate.⁶⁷

Nassar writes that the tradition of nineteenth-century English travel writing tended to freeze representations of Jerusalem, and that

this image of Jerusalem was what led to its eventual colonization by England in 1917 and to British—and American—support for the creation of the state of Israel in 1948. By promoting the Jews as the future heirs of Palestine,

nineteenth-century English visitors were already paving the way towards its colonization.⁶⁸

As opposed to Zionist efforts in the Mandate era to educate the Jewish public and to give them the experience of “the nature of the country,”⁶⁹ – including through the creation in the 1920s of the Zionist Information Bureau for Tourists and a Palestine-based association of Jewish tour guides – there was no such parallel in Palestinian-Arab engagement in the industry, which was directed towards offering guidance to the foreigner rather than the local.⁷⁰ Thus, their services were necessarily shaped by the desires of the Western imaginary, including in the reproduction of narratives more readily identified with Zionist cultural diplomacy. Though some Palestinian guides availed themselves of the opportunity to present visitor narratives useful to Palestinian politics of identity and nationalism, the later Sahhar co-production suggests this was not the rule.⁷¹

TRAVELLER'S NOTE-BOOK (1931)

Sahhar and Afif's 1931 *Traveller's Note-Book* is divided almost equally into information on Jerusalem and other destinations of interest in Palestine, the selection principally informed by religious merit and focus on places related the life of Jesus Christ. This framing is foreshadowed by Robert Haydon Jones, who writes, “The presence of the Saviour is felt at every turning; history breathes from every stone. Traveller, welcome, and behold the Promised Land!” (*Traveller's Note-Book*, 5). The foreword makes the claim that while “Palestine wants to be seen . . . to know where to look is sometimes not so easy” (5). Jones thus praises the assistance of Afif and Sahhar, whose “thorough knowledge of their country, their familiarity with the Bible, their sincere loyalty, and their keen perspicacity . . . made Jerusalem and its environs [mean] so much to me” (5). This highlights the role of the Palestinian guide and dragoman in making biblical history legible in the modern landscape. Certainly, Afif and Sahhar are attentive to the European traveler when they suggest, for example, that in Jericho, “the heat during summer . . . is rather excessive and Europeans hardly can remain there for a long time” (21). Or perhaps more specifically their work is geared toward tourists drawn from the British Empire, reflected in a rather lengthy entry on one of the eight “War Cemeteries of Palestine, which are administered by the Imperial War Grave Commission” under the title “Mount Scopus and Mount of Olives” (18),

an item which further includes other Mandate trivia of the recent decades—though there is scant contemporary commentary in the majority of the entries.⁷²

In examining the tropes common to foreign travel writing of Palestine, Nassar writes that for most travelers “the real Palestine was the one described in the books rather than the one they saw.”⁷³ Afif and Sahhar appear to have had a keen if implicit sense of this, and in particular of European travelers’ interest in sites of biblical significance. The description of Jerusalem’s Old City is described as if on a guided walk; for example, in turning from an entry at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to the Muristan, Afif and Sahhar write, “We leave the pavement of the Basilica through a small door and come into a locality named Muristan (hospital)” (9).

Outside Jerusalem, Afif and Sahhar lead the traveler (primarily) north. In Nazareth, they state that the city “owes all its celebrity to the fact of being the town of the Incarnation of the Word and of being the place chosen by the son of God to pass his youth up to the age of 30 years” (28). This is a common presentation of Nazareth, echoed in the 1935 *Traveller’s Companion* and in the 1941 *Steimatzky’s Palestine Guide*. The latter states, “It was through Jesus that this town gained fame.”⁷⁴ Afif and Sahhar conclude, “There are no buildings of antiquity except the greek-catholic [*sic*] church, which is claimed to stand on the site of the Synagogue where Jesus preached” (28). The entry for Capernaum on the shores of the Galilee notes,

This town was the centre of the messianic work of Jesus; here he preached very often and manifested his Power by miracles. Nevertheless the inhabitants assumed a hostile attitude towards Him and attracted upon themselves an awful anathema. The town disappeared in the 4th century. (29)

This description is characteristic of the entries in the guide, offering biblical and historic anecdotes embedded in sites of interest, and adapting a live guided experience to the page through noting spatial movements within (though generally not between) cities. Moreover, as Nassar has observed, the traveler who may have possessed a detailed knowledge about the places of their tour, also “understood what they did not read about as well” and thus “events and places to which visitors failed to find any textual references were often viewed as worthy of dismissal.”⁷⁵ Thus Ramallah is wholly absent from the

Traveller's Note-Book, nor is it mentioned in the later 1935 *Traveller's Companion*; as a city for Palestinians, it remains unmarked for the market of the Palestinian authors of these guidebooks.⁷⁶ In contrast, the 1941 *Steinmatzky's Palestine Guide*—which as part of a Zionist tourist production may be understood as reconnaissance, intended to map out a more detailed topography of a place—does spend a paragraph on Ramallah, noting that “the rich people of Jerusalem come here for the summer.”⁷⁷

Yet there are several curiosities in this work deserving of mention in contextualizing the *Traveller's Note-Book's* place in a project of Palestinian identity-making or national imagining. The introduction to the city of Jerusalem traverses in a single page the history of the city from “prehistoric times,” concluding with an itemization of destruction, occupation, and conquest, which ends with the statement that “on December 9th 1917 the city fell into the hands of the allied troops under General Allenby” (7). Though absent elsewhere, this declaration is certainly to be read as a criticism of the British Mandate, suggesting yet another chapter of conquest, with no mention—unlike the later book—of the virtues of the League of Nations’ Mandate scheme. A second point which works to situate the identity of the co-authors is the entry on Haifa and Mount Carmel, and by way of contrast, their summation of Nablus or Hebron. Of Haifa and Mount Carmel, the authors write,

It is the only place in Palestine with some industry having Cement, Soap, and Tobacco factories. The prospects of the future are enhanced by the Harbour works begun in 1929 and by the oil pipe-line Mossul-Haifa, for which preliminary works are in course of execution. (30)

This portrayal of Haifa sits in stark contrast with the entries on Nablus or Hebron—both of which are described as “Moslem” towns; and despite their repute for industry, the *Traveller's Note-Book* makes no mention of these (24–25). Yet while this may intersect with the outlook of Christian-Palestinian authors, this omission was also typical of British imperialist interests and bias. Haifa, regarded in the British imperial imagination as “the gateway to the Middle East,” was prioritized for development, while Nablus was relegated to the periphery.⁷⁸ In sum, the *Traveller's Note-Book*, though broadly complicit with the demands of a Western imaginary, and thus presenting an ambivalent instrumentality of Christian-Palestinians in acceding to the

bibliofication of their homeland, does, in addition, offer glimpses of the class and communal identity of their authors, and a criticism, if neither overt nor sustained, of the British Mandate.

TRAVELLER'S COMPANION (1935)

A survey of the advertisements in the *Traveller's Companion* indicates the diverse businesses with which its co-producers, Sahhar and Essa, had some association. There are advertisements for international transport, such as the Lloyd Triestino Navigation Company; for travel agents, including W. Fast; for Messrs. D. N. Tadros, Nimmo & Co., agents for an impressive number of connecting services and who advertised offices in four Palestinian cities; an advertisement from my own grandfather's business, Sahhar Bros. Tours & Motor Car Service; and for holiday accommodations, not only in Jerusalem – in which six establishments are listed, representing one third of the total number advertised – but also in other destinations within Palestine (Haifa, Tiberius, and Tel Aviv) as well as in Lebanon (Baalbek, Bécharré, and Beirut), Syria (Damascus), and Egypt (Cairo). In addition, there are a range of advertisements for businesses in Jerusalem that indicate what services the anticipated purchasers of the *Traveller's Companion* might desire. These include the Eden and the Edison cinemas; the Hanania Brothers' photo dealership; the Issac J. Cohen Stores, outfitters for men, women, and children; "The Eagle Eye" Optical Stores; the Cigar and Tobacco shop; three "oriental" bazaars; and a number of restaurants and cafes.

Several of these businesses catered to British employees of the Mandate, including the "oriental" goods stores; "The Eagle Eye" Optical Stores, reportedly "optician to H. E. The High Commissioner for Palestine"; the Daroutis Hotel, which offered "special rates for Government officials"; and the services of Wm. Stapeldon & Sons, who offered rebates "on 1st and 2nd Class To Personel [*sic*] of British Forces & Govt. Officials" as well as "Special Furlough rate 3rd Class to London" (*Traveller's Companion*, 10, 21, 35, 67). Another target audience is a European one, likely a European Jewry; for example, the Hotel Herzlia on Ben-Jehuda Street offering a "European Kitchen"; the Café Tabour offering Viennese cooking with a logo incorporating Hebrew and a menorah; or the Rotman House Hotel and Pension offering European "Cuisins [*sic*] (kosher)" (23, 30, 44). This latter advertisement suggests that the guidebook authors contemplated a Jewish tourist market among their audience, while the Jewish businesses themselves seem to express a desire to "out-European" the Palestinian-Arab competitors. While the advertisements do not point conclusively to an intended

audience, in combination with the content, the guidebook is certainly designed for a Jewish, or Zionist, market.

This longer guidebook lacks the earlier *Traveller's Note-Book's* implicit criticism of the British Mandate. On the contrary, the introduction to Jerusalem states, "The Mandate for 25 years was entrusted to Great Britain by the League of Nations . . . under which the Jews were allowed to *return* from all parts of the world to build their national home" (9, emphasis mine). The guidebook makes a number of observations about Jewish industry and also seems to lend its support to the colonial notion of Zionist modernity. One section, "How the Jews are Building in Palestine," begins "The financial side of Jewish *repatriations* is covered from funds given voluntarily by world Jewry" (56, emphasis mine). This language of "return" and "repatriation" demonstrates unequivocally the Zionist periodization of Jewish history which locates its origins between people and land in antiquity and which regarded the Mandate era as instrumental to ending the long period of "exile."⁷⁹ Of the Jewish National Fund (JNF), the guidebook reports, "Its purpose is to buy land in Palestine with funds voluntarily contributed by Jews and to administer such land as the common inalienable property of the Jews" (56–57). Several pages later it notes that the JNF has acquired a plain between Haifa and Acre and that it is now known as Emek Zebulun: "A few years ago this place was covered with swamps, but by the efforts of the Jews they were drained and new colonies have been started" (60). Entries appear on both Jaffa and Tel Aviv, however the citrus trade of Jaffa is described in the passive voice: "Jaffa is renowned for its orange groves and it is estimated that it exports over seven million cases of oranges a year" (56), while Tel Aviv is praised as "a centre of Jewish activity, specialising in citrus growing" (58). Tel Aviv is noted for the "surprising" rapidity of its growth, having (in 1935) "the largest budget of any Municipality in the country," for establishing a remarkable number of educational establishments and boasting impressive Jewish industry, specifically manufacturing (57). The settlement is also praised for having hotels which can compete with "the best in Europe," particularly according to Sahhar and Essa, the Palatin Hotel, "which is considered to be the leading hotel in the city," and which, perhaps not coincidentally, has a full page advertisement on the facing page (58–59). Again in these observations one is confronted with Zionist national narratives that are integral to myths of settler-colonial conquest and to the national narratives later nurtured in the new state of Israel; an idea of settler entitlement through "development," that the Palestinian

Arabs live in uncultivated wilderness, that the Jews were indeed “making the desert bloom.”⁸⁰

In this guidebook, the entry on Haifa does note the thriving industry of the city, and its connection to the world via foreign investment and transport links, including airways and rail. However, the inflection differs from the *Traveller's Note-Book*, singling out the Jewish quarter for particular mention, in addition to the German Templers' suburb where “several industrial establishments” are maintained (76). The narrative indicates some enthusiasm for the British Mandate and contains far less reference to the life and deeds of Jesus Christ. For instance, the entry on Capernaum makes no mention of Christ at all (73-74). Rather ancient history is invoked, referring to an exclusively Jewish past,⁸¹ the history of various Muslim conquests in the common era, the Crusades, and even Napoleon's unsuccessful siege of Acre. But most notable is the focus on the contemporary site of Palestine as one undergoing transformation in consequence of the Mandate's framework and Jewish ingenuity.

Though a sense of vibrant Palestinian life is similarly missing from Sahhar's earlier guidebook, its focus on the Western (British) audience's appetite for biblicization is not without comment on the sectarian composition of populations or occasional glimpses of Palestinian-Arab modernity. In contrast, the 1935 guidebook has much to say of the Yishuv community and the welcomed impact of Jewish immigration to Palestine. The frontispiece of the guidebook notes that Sahhar and Essa were responsible for its compilation and editing, which may indicate they liberally borrowed the text of the *Traveller's Companion* from elsewhere (a possibility, given the nascent state of copyright law in Mandate Palestine and the guidebook's tenor, a likely safeguard against such legal action).⁸² Despite the proclamation of “1st edition” on the cover of the *Traveller's Companion*, which denotes they had once held an alternative intention, Sahhar and Essa appear to have had no appetite for producing further editions—it may be that the politics that crystalized in the 1936 revolts at last declared the limits of any reasonable commercial interest they could have in such a publication.

AN ARCHIVAL CURIOSITY

Around 2019, I became aware of an inventory listing for the *Traveller's Companion* at St Antony's College, Oxford. It is held in the Trevor Kirby Collection, gifted among seven boxes of archival material to the college

by Trevor Roland Kirby (1923–2015). Kirby, while serving in the Royal Artillery, volunteered for the Palestine Police, where he appears to have served between 1944–1948.⁸³ Of five guidebooks noted in this inventory, two predate Kirby's arrival to Palestine in the mid-1940s by approximately a decade, these being the *Traveller's Companion* and a guide by Alexander R. Cury, *Jerusalem: How to See It. Including Palestine, Syria and Lebanon* (1933). According to Rachel Mairs, this is likely the same Iskander Khoori, born in Egypt around 1896–1898, who was perhaps the most successful Arabic phrasebook author of the First World War in Egypt.⁸⁴ Cury "described himself as 'Syrian' in origin and a journalist by profession," whose writings comprised "occasional romantic Oriental stories for *The Sphinx*."⁸⁵ Tourism was clearly the real success of Cury's career, however, and he wrote a number of guidebooks in the How to See It series on cities in Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Cyprus, and others "which appeared in new editions into the 1960s, mostly issued by Khoori/Cury's own publishing house, *World-Wide Publications*."⁸⁶ The WorldCat listing indicates that the Jerusalem guide was issued "under the patronage of T. E. the High Commissioners in Palestine, Syria & Lebanon," and included color illustration, portraits, and a map, with the 1933–34 print run being the eighth of fifteen editions printed between 1910 and 1937.⁸⁷ The popularity of Cury's guidebooks, as evinced in the number of print runs, make his place in Kirby's archive quite explicable. The presence of Sahhar and Essa's *Traveller's Companion* seems by contrast a chance coincidence. However, even in the arbitrary archive, there is an interesting serendipity – Sahhar and Essa were certainly aware of Cury, and likely he of them; this is documented in an exchange of letters in *the Palestine Bulletin* in 1930.

The exchange was prompted by a piece published on 26 June 1930, in which it was reported that "a correspondent writes to us and complains that hotels in Palestine . . . are importing 'many hundreds of Egyptians,'" further stating that "the Arabs and Jews of Palestine could also do the work."⁸⁸ The question of Egyptian labor in Palestine was front page news the following day, and a debate in the British Parliament was anticipated. The defender of the scheme, Dr. Drummond Shiels, asserted that Egyptians were only admitted "when Palestine [*sic*] labour is not available. The position, he said, is therefore safeguarded."⁸⁹ The scheme's opponents noted, to the contrary, widespread unemployment in Palestine owing to the introduction of Jewish immigration.⁹⁰ In response, Alex R. Cury wrote a letter to the editor. Published on June 29, it is entitled "The Palestinians are not

'Servants'' and offers a rather dismissive account, and in light of Cury's own background, a curious one, of Palestinian employee's unfitness for service in the hotel industry (reproduced in Image 7).⁹¹

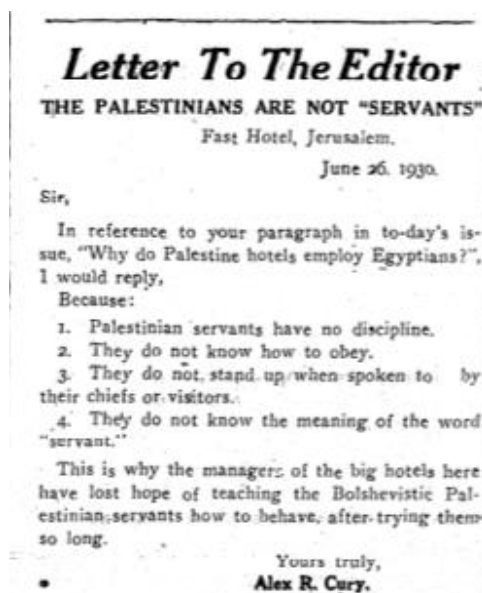


Image 7: *Palestine Bulletin*, 29 June 1930. The National Library of Israel.

The letter head suggests that Cury was connected in some capacity to the Fast Hotel, where Sahhar was then employed. Cury's letter sparked several further letters to the editor including a July 3 letter entitled "The Truth about Palestinian Servants," signed "George Sahhar; M. Essa; Raja Tabar" on behalf of the Palestinian Hotels Employees Union (reproduced in Image 8).⁹² The Union earnestly addresses Cury's points, although the text illustrates the ambivalence of the authors towards questions of Palestinian subordination and the perseverance of self-orientalizing views. One presumes it is a veiled insult aimed at Cury, however, when they note, "We can guess what sort of person he is" – Sahhar, at least, was almost certainly well aware. Within the month, Sahhar abruptly resigned from the union, announced in a public notice in the *Palestine Bulletin*, though he remained at the Fast Hotel a further four-and-a-half years.⁹³ One wonders if Sahhar's union resignation was prompted by pressure that may have been exerted on him by his employers, perhaps due to the influence of Cury in the industry, or if it marked a more personal realignment of values from union advocate to entrepreneur.⁹⁴ If one

can draw no other conclusions from this, it is surely an irony that Sahhar, Essa, and Cury should be permanently united by the Kirby Collection inventory.

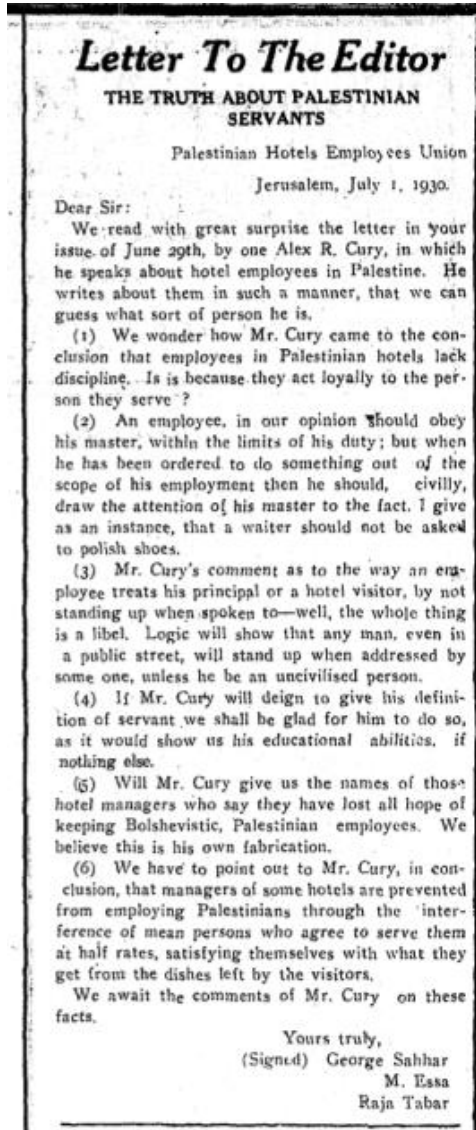


Image 8: *Palestine Bulletin*, 3 July 1930. The National Library of Israel.

CONCLUSION: TOMORROW IS NOT PROMISED

There is a limit to how the Sahhar co-authored guidebooks can be

related to a contemporary program of Palestinian national consciousness. It is an elusive task to find hints of that resistance in mundane publications likely intended to improve their producers' standing in Mandate-era Palestine's tourism industry. No doubt Sahhar and his co-authors conceived of the projects to build their reputations and increase tour and hotel bookings—in short, to aid in establishing their ubiquity and distinguish them from the many others engaged in the tourism industry of the 1930s. It is doubtful that in the early 1930s these men had any sense of their place, or participation, in the history-making of what may now be plainly read as a disappearing Palestine.

In both guidebooks, Sahhar and his co-authors engage in popular tropes for a Western market. In the earlier *Traveller's Note-Book*, this approach follows themes well established in nineteenth-century foreign travel writing and, as Nassar observes, drawing on Homi Bhabha's concept of fixity, consigns Palestine, and Jerusalem particularly, to a mode of representation that presented "a static Holy Land."⁹⁵ Nevertheless, in this 1931 text, traces of Afif and Sahhar's own nationalist, religious, and class sentiments may still be found, including in the framing epigraph, a common expression to Palestinians which is written in Arabic, transliterated, and translated, "Shuf al rafiq Qabel el tariq / Take a companion before you decide on the route" (3). The later *Traveller's Companion* similarly conforms to a popular trope, this time of modern comfort—which in this instance is entangled with ideas of Zionist modernity.⁹⁶ Clearly however, Sahhar and Essa conceive of this publication as a profitable business venture, guided by their knowledge of an intended audience. That both of these modes of representing Palestine would become key themes in Israeli national narrative making is in retrospect a tragic irony of an otherwise historically inconsequential business enterprise.

In this sense, the guidebooks suggest that in the early 1930s, the future of Palestine was not yet a foregone conclusion. Indeed, the absence of any further editions of the *Traveller's Companion* may speak to a recognition by Sahhar and Essa that in light of the revolts, further editions would be politically insupportable and even detrimental to their own nationalist interests. That this was not obvious to middle-class Jerusalemites who were not at the forefront of politics, as late as 1935, is in itself a lesson in reading the ephemera of the archives. And it is a reminder that retrospective employment of history to align with hegemonic grand narratives—as Hayden White's work on the nature of narrative and narration in historiography underlines—risks

overlooking the social and cultural reality for ordinary Jerusalemites in 1930s Palestine.⁹⁷ These were, after all, businessmen, who had no particular sense that they were publishing texts at the midpoint of Mandate-era Palestine, or that there would be no Palestine about which to produce a guidebook in thirteen years' time.

NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Sary Zananiri, Sarah Irving, and Karène Sanchez Summerer for their invitation to present this research and generous comments in the preparation of this article. Also, to Jacob Norris and Jeanine Leane for valuable suggestions, to George B. Sahhar and Nicole Hise Porter for sharing with me knowledge of their grandfathers, to my father Joseph for sharing knowledge of his father, to Rachel Mairs who made the connection between Alexander Cury and Iskander Khoori, to the two anonymous reviewers who gave helpful feedback, to the *Mashriq & Mahjar* team who were a pleasure to work with, and Justin Tighe for diverse assistance in the research.

² This echoes Issam Nasser's examination of family albums and vernacular photography to "reclaim Palestinian life in Palestine" and to "further our knowledge of that life." Nasser, "Bearers of Memory: Photo Albums as Sources of Historical Study in Palestine," in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, ed. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri (Leiden: Brill, 2021), 157–58.

³ Ann Laura Stoler, "Archiving Praxis: For Palestine and Beyond," *Critical Inquiry* 48, no. 3 (2022): 571–72.

⁴ Stoler, "Archiving Praxis," 592; Rana Barakat, "Lifta, the Nakba, and the Museumification of Palestine's History," *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5, no. 2 (2018): 10.

⁵ Stoler, "Archiving Praxis," 577.

⁶ Jeanine Leane and Natalie Harkin, "When Records Speak We Listen: Conversations with the Archive," in *Law's Documents: Authority, Materiality, Aesthetics*, eds. Katherine Biber, Trish Luker, and Priya Vaughan (London: Routledge, 2021), 51.

⁷ Leane and Harkin, "When Records Speak We Listen," 53.

⁸ Maria Chiara Rioli, "Introducing Jerusalem: Visiting Cards, Advertisements and Urban Identities at the Turn of the 20th Century," in *Ordinary Jerusalem, 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City*, eds. Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire (Leiden: Brill, 2018), 49.

- ⁹ Mezna Qato, "Returns of the Archive," The Nakba Files, 1 June 2016, <https://nakbafiles.org/2016/06/01/returns-of-the-archive/>.
- ¹⁰ Thomas M. Ricks, "Memory Research and the Autobiographical Past," in *Between the Archival Forest and the Anecdotal Trees: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Palestinian Social History: Ninth International Conference, November 21st–22nd, 2004* (Birzeit: Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies, Birzeit University, 2004), 7.
- ¹¹ Ricks, "Memory Research," 12.
- ¹² This argument is similarly made in Adel Manna, "From Seferberlik to the Nakba: A Personal Account of the Life of Zahra al-Ja'uniyya," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 30 (2007): 72.
- ¹³ Sarah Irving, "'This is Palestine': History and Modernity in Guidebooks to Mandate Palestine," *Contemporary Levant* 4 (2019): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20581831.2019.1594613>.
- ¹⁴ Fawaz Awdat Alnaimatt, "The Christians of Jerusalem During the British Mandate, 1917–48," *Contemporary Arab Affairs* 10, no. 1 (2017): 132, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48599954>.
- ¹⁵ Alnaimatt, "The Christians of Jerusalem," 134.
- ¹⁶ Irving, "'This is Palestine,'" 2, 4.
- ¹⁷ Lisa Taraki, "The Palestinian City Reborn: The Middle Class as Historical Agent," in *Between the Archival Forest*, 89.
- ¹⁸ Taraki, "The Palestinian City Reborn," 89.
- ¹⁹ Facebook direct message to author, 16 December 2019.
- ²⁰ Sarah Irving, "'A Young Man of Promise': Finding a Place for Stephan Hanna Stephan in the History of Mandate Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 73 (2018): 58.
- ²¹ George Hintlian, "An Attempt to Reconstruct the Pre-48 Arab Commercial Center of Jerusalem," in *Between the Archival Forest*, 28.
- ²² P. Afif and G. M. Sahhar, *Traveller's Note-Book for Palestine* (Jerusalem: the Commercial Press, 1931).
- ²³ Three of the images show initials in the right lower corner, either "PK" or "RK," which suggest the photos were not supplied by Paul/Boulos Afif.
- ²⁴ Irving, "'This is Palestine,'" 1, 3.
- ²⁵ *Ibid*, 3–4.
- ²⁶ *Ibid*, 4.
- ²⁷ Issam Nassar, "Jerusalem in Nineteenth-Century English Travel Narratives," in *Pilgrims, Lepers & Stuffed Cabbage: Essays on Jerusalem's*

Cultural History, eds. Issam Nassar and Salim Tamari (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2005), 48–53.

²⁸ For further information, see “Printed in Jerusalem: Mustamloun,” The Palestinian Museum, exhibition website, 2020, <https://www.palmuseum.org/printed-in-jerusalem>. The Lawrence family donated the collection to Jerusalem’s Palestinian Heritage Museum at Dar Al Tifel Al Arabi in 1998.

²⁹ *The Palestine Gazette* 1236 (3 December 1942): 1327, https://www.nevo.co.il/law_word/law21/pg-e-1236.pdf. The Pantiles Hotel on King George Street primarily served a clientele of foreign newspaper reporters and senior British Army Officers. Mona Hajjar Halaby, “The Sinunu Family,” public post on British Mandate Jerusalem Photo Library page, Facebook, 27 September 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/BMJerusalemPhotoLib>.

³⁰ Nicole Hise Porter, “The Sinunu Family” response on public post on British Mandate Jerusalem Photo Library page, Facebook, 26 March 2022, <https://www.facebook.com/BMJerusalemPhotoLib>.

³¹ Facebook direct message to author, 22 November 2019; Advertisement, *Palestine Post*, 4 June 1935, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1935/06/04/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>; Advertisement, *Palestine Post*, 13 June 1935, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1935/06/13/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>; Advertisement, *Palestine Post*, 17 June 1935, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1935/06/17/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

³² George Hintlian, “An Attempt to Reconstruct,” 26, 30; Peter Manning, *Representing Palestine: Media and Journalism in Australia since World War I* (London: I. B. Taurus, 2018), 77.

³³ Advertisement, *Palestine Post*, Jerusalem, 4 June 1935, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1935/06/04/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

³⁴ Advertisement, *Palestine Post*, 18 April 1937, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1937/04/18/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

³⁵ Facebook direct message to author, 11 November 2019. I am convinced that Sahhar’s grandson must be referring to the Regent Cinema and Hotel in this correspondence.

³⁶ Facebook direct message to author, 11 November 2019.

³⁷ See "In Jaffa," *Palestine Post*, 27 June 1947, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1947/06/27/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>; "Sea Palace," *Palestine Post*, 30 October 1947, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1947/10/30/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

³⁸ Translation courtesy of Noura Mansour, 6 February 2021.

³⁹ "Retirement of Mr W. A. Thorogood," *Palestine Post*, 10 March 1940, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1940/03/10/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>. See also Marina Parisinou, "At the Regent," My Palestinian Story, blog, 10 December 2018, <https://mypalestinianstory.com/at-the-regent/>; Jerusalem, We Are Here, digital mapping project, accessed 26 March 2022, <https://info.jerusalemwearehere.com/>.

⁴⁰ The implications of the modern in the Palestinian context is interrogated by Sherene Seikaly, *Men of Capital: Scarcity and Economy in Mandate Palestine* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016), 15–17.

⁴¹ Doron Bar and Kobi Cohen-Hattab, "A New Kind of Pilgrimage: The Modern Tourist Pilgrim of the Nineteenth-Century and Early Twentieth-Century Palestine," *Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2003): 134.

⁴² Bar and Cohen-Hattab, "A New Kind of Pilgrimage," 137.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 137.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 141.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 139.

⁴⁶ Irving, "'This is Palestine,'" 5.

⁴⁷ Irving, "'A Young Man of Promise,'" 48.

⁴⁸ Jacob Norris, "Mobile Homes: The Refashioning of Palestinian Merchant Homes in the Late Ottoman Period," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 83 (2020): 9–11, 30–31.

⁴⁹ Yoni Molad, "Zionism: An Unfinished Revolution?," *Arena Journal* 43/44 (2015): 185–87. See also chapter 1 of Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine 1880–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

⁵⁰ LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*, 16.

⁵¹ Micaela Sahhar, "The Map Here is Useless? Transformations of Resistance in Ramallah," *Arena Journal* 51/52 (2018): 107.

⁵² Bar and Cohen-Hattab, "A New Kind of Pilgrimage," 141.

⁵³ Ibid, 141.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 141.

⁵⁵ The earlier *Palestine Bulletin* was established in 1925 and run by the Palestine Telegraphic Agency, a subsidiary of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, owned by Jewish-American entrepreneur, Jacob Landau. Michael D. Birnhack, *Colonial Copyright: Intellectual Property in Mandate Palestine* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 212,

<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199661138.001.0001>. Landau was also a joint owner of the *Palestine Post*. In its final years, the *Palestine Bulletin* was part of an important copyright case, in which the Palestine Telegraphic Agency took an Arabic language paper, *Al Hayat*, to court over the use of news first printed in the *Palestine Bulletin* (*Palestine Telegraphic Agency v Jaber*, 7 November 1931). Birnhack notes:

The case should be read also on the background of this political context: A Jewish-owned business . . . sued a nationalistic Arab newspaper. The British government had no reason to interfere in such a dispute; it was probably all too happy to see that its interest in silencing the Arab national views were fulfilled by others. (216)

⁵⁶ Andrea L. Stanton, "Locating Palestine's Summer Residence: Mandate Tourism and National Identity," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 47, no. 2 (2018): 50.

⁵⁷ Birnhack, *Colonial Copyright*, 221.

⁵⁸ "More Aids to Tourists," *Palestine Post*, 3 February 1935, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/pls/1935/02/03/01/?&e=-----en-20-1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁵⁹ Stanton, "Locating Palestine's Summer Residence," 50. That both guidebooks surface in American booksellers' catalogues further confirms this.

⁶⁰ George M. Sahhar and Morcos Essa, *Traveller's Companion to the Holy Land: Being a Concise and Accurate Guide and Easy Reference when Travelling through Palestine, Syria and Transjordan* (Jerusalem: Modern Press, 1935), 71.

⁶¹ Irving, "A Young Man of Promise," 58.

⁶² This is confirmed by my father, Joseph Sahhar, in recollections of his father Abdullah Andoni Sahhar, and the grandson of Sahhar, George B. Sahhar.

⁶³ Sheree Ann Trotter, "Zionism 'at the Uttermost Ends of the Earth': A New Zealand Social History c.1900-1948" (PhD diss., University of Auckland, 2019), 60.

⁶⁴ Trotter, "Zionism," 60.

- ⁶⁵ David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Legacies of the Great War in the Twentieth Century* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), chap. 3, iBooks.
- ⁶⁶ Taraki, "Palestinian City Reborn," 92.
- ⁶⁷ Kobi Cohen-Hattab, "Zionism, Tourism, and the Battle for Palestine: Tourism as a Political-Propaganda Tool," *Israel Studies* 9, no.1 (2004): 65, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/30245744>.
- ⁶⁸ Nassar, "Jerusalem," 59.
- ⁶⁹ Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 46; Rebecca L. Stein, *Itineraries in Conflict: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), 155n30.
- ⁷⁰ See, for example, Stanton, "Locating Palestine's Summer Residence," 44–62, which discusses patterns of travel among Palestinians in the Mandate era to Lebanon.
- ⁷¹ Irving, "'This is Palestine,'" 3–4.
- ⁷² This points to another emergent market of "pilgrimage," though it is not pursued in the *Traveller's Note-Book*, which makes no reference to other significant sites of Allied campaigns in Palestine.
- ⁷³ Nassar, "Jerusalem," 46.
- ⁷⁴ Zev Vilnay, *Steimatzky's Palestine Guide* (Jerusalem: Steimatzky, 1941), 202; Sahhar and Essa, *Traveller's Companion*, 66.
- ⁷⁵ Nassar, "Jerusalem," 47.
- ⁷⁶ Sahhar, "The Map Here is Useless?," 111.
- ⁷⁷ Vilnay, *Steimatzky's Palestine Guide*, 257.
- ⁷⁸ Roger Edwin Higginson, "Colonial Under-Development in Mandate Palestine: British Governance in Nablus, 1917–1936" (PhD diss., University of Sussex, 2020), 8.
- ⁷⁹ Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 15–17.
- ⁸⁰ Norman Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, 2nd ed. (London: Verso, 2003), 89–98.
- ⁸¹ The entry on the history of Jerusalem begins: "About the year 1900 BC Abram, the Grandfather of Israel, with Lot, his nephew, left their native place . . . to come to the Promised Land" (*Traveller's Companion*, 6).
- ⁸² Birnhack, *Colonial Copyright*, 254–55. This is in distinction to the case mentioned in note 53 (above).

⁸³ GB 165-0585, Trevor Kirby Collection, Middle East Centre, St. Antony's College, Oxford, accessed 26 March 2022, <https://www.sant.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/gb165-0585-trevor-kirby-collection.pdf>.

⁸⁴ Rachel Mairs, *Arabic Dialogues: Learning Colloquial Arabic through Phrasebooks 1798–1945* (forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Mairs, *Arabic Dialogues*.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ WorldCat, s.v. "Jerusalem: How to See It, Including Palestine, Syria & Lebanon ...," accessed 26 March 2022, <https://www.worldcat.org/title/jerusalem-how-to-see-it-including-palestine-syria-lebanon/oclc/40100692>.

⁸⁸ "Egyptians in Hotels," *Palestine Bulletin*, 26 June 1930, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/plb/1930/06/26/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁸⁹ "Egyptian Labour in Palestine," *Palestine Bulletin*, 27 June 1930, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/plb/1930/06/27/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁹⁰ Mr. McShane (Labour) is named as one such opponent. "Egyptian Labour in Palestine," *Palestine Bulletin*, 27 June 1930, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/plb/1930/06/27/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁹¹ Alex R. Cury, letter to the editor, *Palestine Bulletin*, 29 June 1930, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/plb/1930/06/29/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁹² George Sahhar, M. Essa, and Raja Tabar, letter to the editor, *Palestine Bulletin*, 3 July 1930, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/plb/1930/07/03/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁹³ "Resignation," *Palestine Bulletin*, 22 July 1930, The National Library of Israel, <https://www.nli.org.il/en/newspapers/plb/1930/07/22/01/?&e=-----en-20--1--img-txIN%7ctxTI-----1>.

⁹⁴ Though the extent to which these roles were oppositional at the time is challenged by such inquiries as that of Seikaly, *Men of Capital*.

⁹⁵ Nasser, "Jerusalem," 53.

⁹⁶ Stanton, "Locating Palestine's Summer Residence," 53; Irving "A Young Man of Promise," 48.

⁹⁷ Hayden White, *Tropics of Discourse* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 121-23, 129, 134.