



# Preface

Jerusalem has always held a certain mystique for visitors, be they pilgrims, travelers, or would-be conquerors. The Arab people and motifs that have been present in the city since its founding have never failed to fascinate and mystify. Jerusalem was the site of Europe's first interaction with legendary Arab figures like Omar Ibn Al-Khatib and Salah Eddin;<sup>1</sup> the reverence garnered by such leaders invariably led to a higher profile in the rest of the world for Arabs as a whole.

As much as Jerusalem has given to those who have visited her, outsiders have, in turn, left their own cultural imprints on the city. For many Arab Jerusalemites, it has been through the classroom that they have felt the impact of external culture. Artists like Sophie Halaby, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, and Nahil Bishara studied in the West at institutions in Italy, France, and the United Kingdom. Prominent intellectuals associated with Jerusalem and Palestine - Rashid Khalidi and Edward Said for example - have ties to the world's top universities.

The issue of Jerusalem is normally portrayed in a political-religious context, but the weight of historical and cultural factors cannot be overstated. The conflict extends into every facet of society, and in this sense the battle for Jerusalem has been markedly one-sided. This siege on Arabs and Arab culture is seen in every field, stretching from education - where students and teachers face a lack of classrooms and adequate materials - to architecture - where building restrictions and demolitions are the norm - and cultural events - which are disrupted or banned altogether.

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<sup>1</sup> While Salah Eddin's armies had clashed with European forces before, the battle for sovereignty over the Holy City marked the first time the West had come into close and sustained contact with him and established the image of both a cunning warrior and honorable foe. Salah Eddin's legacy, forever intertwined with the Holy City - has lasted well into modern times. Similarly, Omar Ibn Al-Khatib, who established a historic covenant with the city's Christian residents that promised safety and freedom of worship - was known for his piety and pragmatism and regarded as a wise and humble leader.

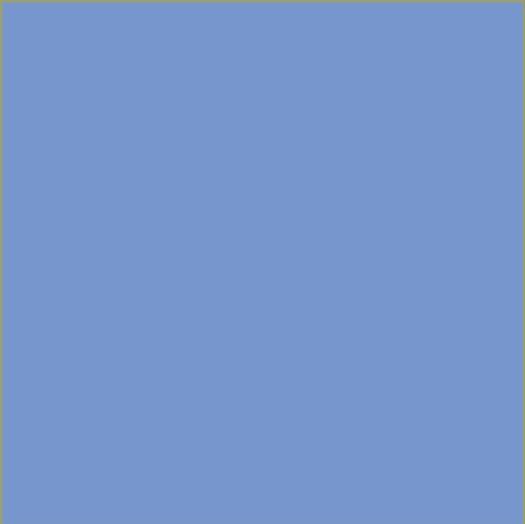
To begin a cultural movement is a Herculean task. Even maintaining the current institutions and resources available to Arabs Jerusalemites has proven too formidable a proposition in many instances. The economic hardships and security concerns that are prevalent in East Jerusalem and the Old City are enough to keep patrons away from the arts and stifle demand for cultural outlets. More to the point, the lack of an official infrastructure is the most daunting article to cultural and social development in the Arab sectors of the city. An official Arab presence in Jerusalem is not allowed, an intolerance that is evidenced by the Israeli closing of the Orient House, which served as the foremost political and cultural center of Palestinians in Jerusalem. In its absence, Arab Jerusalemites are left at the mercy of Israeli policies that are purposefully discriminatory.<sup>2</sup>

Yet against all odds and obstacles that Arab artists and citizens face on a daily basis, there are many groups and individuals who have been willing to take on the role and responsibilities to keep cultural development in the city alive (e.g., Al-Hakawati Theater, Al-Mama'al Foundation for Contemporary Art, Palestinian Art Court Al-Hoash). While their efforts are impressive, in the face of the occupying regime that has been instituted in the city, they are constantly faced with uncertain futures and remain reliant on the dedication of extraordinary individuals.

The publication of this volume is not intended as a survey of all artists of Palestine or of those most deserving of attention from the point of view of individual accomplishment. This publication is rather meant to give first an overview of the cultural heritage that Arabs have created in the Holy City and of the city's cultural manifestation that have inspired generations of local and foreign writers and artists. Arab culture in Jerusalem is a tangible entity; it can be seen and felt not only in the churches and mosques that fill the city, but also in its suqs and all throughout the winding streets and surrounding mountains, hills and valleys of East Jerusalem.

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<sup>2</sup> In terms of taxation, residency status, permit issuance, and social benefits as well as municipal budget allocations. Regarding the latter, East Jerusalem receives in less than 12% of the total despite making up over 33% of the city's population. This is even more extreme when looking at funds deducted for culture: these were approximately NIS 82 million in 2003, of which only 1% (!) was allocated to East Jerusalem.



# INTRODUCTION

“Jerusalem is Arab nationalism’s bride”; so wrote the Iraqi poet Muthaffer Al-Nawwab. Indeed, the city holds a lofty place in the concept of Arab identity, yet it is also a place that has seen more than its share of strife and contention. Yet as Arab Jerusalemites are increasingly persecuted, and as the attempts to pull Jerusalem further away from the Arab World continue, the city’s iconic status only grows in the eyes of all Arabs - be they Christian, Muslim, or secular. This bond is as intangible as it is incontrovertible, making it difficult to define and examine.

The Arab League named Jerusalem its “capital of Arab culture” for 2009,<sup>1</sup> and although Israeli authorities have, predictably, intervened to prevent and disturb celebrations in the city, Jerusalem remains a unique place whose people and visitors reflect diverse dynasties and cultures.

Culture is the embodiment of identity - it is how we define ourselves and our place in the world. The aim here is to present a vision of culture in the Holy City, as manifested in the accomplishments of writers, artists, teachers, and all others who have made the city of Jerusalem and Palestinian culture what it is today. Thereby the celebration of culture is not limited to local Palestinian or Arab culture but considers also the achievements of others since this particular city, throughout its history, has embraced so many different peoples, religions, languages and ideas, all which legacies of artistic expressions of all kinds.

Jerusalem is first and foremost known around the world as a Holy City. To be sure, it acts as such for millions of Arabs, both Christian and Muslim, as well as Jews. For Arabs the city is Al-Quds, “The Holy.” It is the site of Al-Masjid Al-Aqsa, “The Farthest Mosque”, as well as of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, in addition to dozens of other sacred sites. Holy places dot the city’s landscape, and millions of visitors each year are drawn by its mystique of history and sanctity.

This juried exhibit features works by twelve artists in a variety of media that speak to Jerusalem’s complex historical, religious and emotional significance and consider the need for a just and peaceful solution to the conflict, recognizing the rights of Palestinians in the city.

Still, Jerusalem is much more. For many Arabs and Palestinians Jerusalem represents the symbol for loss and hope of recovery, which has been expressed in poetry, paintings, and other forms of expression through the last decades. It is a living, breathing city with a remarkable history and a vibrant Arab culture. Arab Jerusalemites are a resilient and striking people living among an amalgamation of international influences. The heritage and history of Jerusalem can be overwhelming at times. The beginnings of the Islamic Empire can be found within the walls of the Old City, for example, and such historical significance can be

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<sup>1</sup> The initiative to name a capital of Arab culture was launched in 1995 by the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization. Arab culture ministers have named a different city each year since 1996. Damascus held the title in 2008.

both a burden and a blessing. Yet the importance of the cultural and historical aspects of Jerusalem in the eyes of Arabs as a whole cannot be overstated. The writing, painting, and other forms of expression that have been produced with Jerusalem in mind are a testimony to its centrality in the hearts and minds of the Arab world.

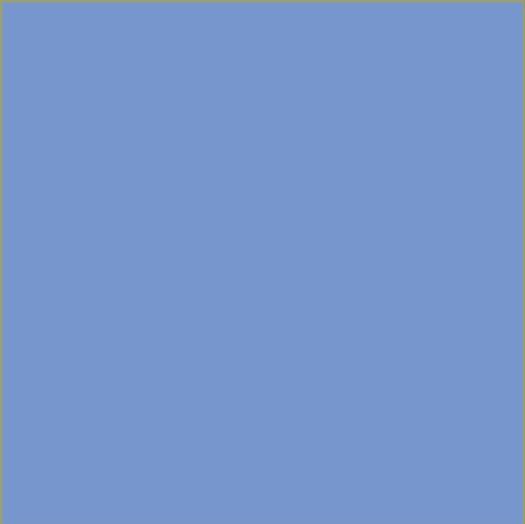
Unfortunately, the narrative of Jerusalem is one that is rife with conflict. The city today is not one of peace; it is one of separation, racism, and hostility. Jerusalem has been reduced to a political pawn, a final status issue that lies at the heart of the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict but that no one is ready to touch for fear of throwing the tenuous peace process into further doubt. Yet, the difficulties that surround access and rights in the city for Arabs have only increased their desire to maintain it as a part of their lives. This sentiment is especially true for those Palestinians who live so near and yet are kept away just the same. The world must realize that Jerusalem should be a free and open city, not an oppressive border town where an entire swath of its inhabitants are discriminated against.

In the end, culture is about our interactions with our environments, our fellow men, and ourselves. Arabs have a bond to the city that is different than connection held with any other city in the world. Mecca and Medina are holy sites whose political implications do not match those of Jerusalem. It is an international city, and the interactions between such disparate populations are evident in the streets of Jerusalem everyday. These days, though, that coexistence is rare. There is no cooperation in terms of urban planning, architectural integrity, or culture. The stark contrasts that have resulted prevent Jerusalem from being a single, cohesive entity. Rather, it is a divided city, and it remains to be seen whether this disunion can ever be reconciled.

Arabs have a long history of bringing culture and prosperity to the Holy City, and it is important to go beyond simple reminiscing and instead look at what those contributions have meant to Jerusalem and to the Arab World at large. Just as Arabs have had a profound effect on the city, the city has done the same in return.

Neither the Palestinians' dispossession and dispersal into various cultural realities, nor 62 years of assaults on and oppression of Palestinian education, journalism, literature, art, symbolism and folklore, have succeeded in destroying the determination of the Palestinian people to resist through culture, preserve their identity and heritage, and protect their roots. As a result, it is a great diversity of styles, genres and media that characterizes Palestinians' artistic expressions.

On the occasion of Al-Quds - Capital of Arab Culture 2009, PASSIA has produced this compilation of aspects of culture in the city in a bid to present the rich Arab-Palestinian culture between ancient heritage and modernity and to expand knowledge of the cultural diversity of the Palestinians. In addition, this publication features not only Palestinian-Arab poems and poets, authors, painters and other artists, but also acknowledges other international literary or art pieces that have been inspired by this unique city. The aim here is not to present an exhaustive survey but rather a representative overview of artwork celebrating Jerusalem's universal and thus international unique characteristics as well as cultures all over the world together with the rich Palestinian culture in Jerusalem.



# LITERATURE

## INTRODUCTION

The written word holds a special reverence in the Arab world and among the far-flung Muslim community. It comes as no surprise then, that Jerusalem has factored heavily into the poetry and prose of Arabs throughout history. From treatises to poems to theological works, the Holy City has been praised, mourned, and longed for over its millennia-long existence.

Literary scholar Salma Khadra Jayyusi calls poetry “the Arabs’ most rooted art form”,<sup>1</sup> a sentiment that rings true with regard to Jerusalem in Arab writing. Politics have always played a central role in Palestinian poetry, with Jerusalem acting as a frequent muse. Even before the 1948 Nakba, poets eschewed the romantic and existential themes that are more prevalent in Western and Eastern poetry in favor of political concerns. Poets like Ibrahim Tuqan, Abdul Rahim Mahmoud, and Abu Salma found their fame as a result of their efforts to awaken political consciousness and cooperation among Palestinian Arabs. This tradition has translated into modern times, as well, with the late Mahmoud Darwish being the foremost example of the renowned political poets.

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<sup>1</sup> Jayyusi, Salma Khadra. *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature*. Columbia University Press, 1992. Salma Khadra Jayyusi (1928-) is a poet, critic, literary historian, translator, anthologist, who was born in Salt, Jordan, to a Palestinian father and a Lebanese mother but she spent her childhood in Acre and Jerusalem where she finished her secondary education at Schmidt’s Girls College in Jerusalem. She graduated in Arabic and English Literature from the American University of Beirut and, later, obtained a Ph.D. from the University of London. She has taught at the Universities of Khartoum, Algiers, and Constantine, and in the US at the Universities of Utah, Washington, and Texas. In 1980, she founded PROTA (Project of Translation from Arabic), which aims at the dissemination of Arabic culture abroad, and serves as its director since. She has authored, introduced, edited, and translated numerous books which have added considerably to our understanding and knowledge of Arab literary and thought. One of her seminal book is *Anthology of Modern Palestinian Literature* (1992) offers an insight into contemporary Palestinian literature with samples of from the works of over 70 Palestinian writers and poets.

The reverence of Darwish and his status as 'the national poet of Palestine' are a throwback to ancient times, when master poets, storytellers, and dramatists were placed at the center of the popular social and political discourse. His words have been memorized, quoted, and debated throughout the Arab World and Israel by admirers and political rivals alike. Among those writing in the Diaspora today, longing and nostalgia for their lost homeland is an overriding theme that takes on political overtones. Jerusalem has long held a special place in such writings, where much emphasis is placed upon the Palestinian roles as victims, wanderers, and refugees. The words serve as battle cry and consolation.

Yet, the connection to Jerusalem goes beyond Palestinian writers, and Arabs as a whole have long attempted to put their connection to Jerusalem into words, as well. One of the most famous instances of this desire comes from Iraqi poet Muthaffar Al-Nawwab, whose "Watariyyat Layliyya" illustrates the lofty place the city holds across the Arab World. While the plight of the Palestinians is a ubiquitous theme in Al-Nawwab's poetry, the most frequently cited instance is found in this poem where Palestine, referred to as "Jerusalem," is portrayed as a bride that has been raped on her wedding night, and the leaders of the Arab World are blamed for not having protected her from this violation.<sup>2</sup>

Perhaps the most apt examples, however, lie in the tradition of the Fada'il Al-Quds (Praise or Merits of Jerusalem) genre of literature that first cropped up in the years of the Crusades and the counter-Crusades. These works touched on the sanctity of the city through themes of prayer and pilgrimage, and enhanced the desire on the part of the Muslims to reconquer the city, which they had lost in 1099. The Fada'il Al-Quds literature gained such importance that rulers such as Nureddin had them read aloud in public areas.

Towards the end of the 19th Century and into the early 20th Century, developments such as increasing educational opportunities, introduction of the printing press, rise of nationalism in the multi-national Ottoman Empire, and foundation of many newspapers and magazines providing space for all kinds of literary forms, heavily influenced Palestinian literature. Following the 1948 War, Palestinian literature was increasingly stimulated by the events surrounding the Nakba as well as its aftermath, i.e., exile, loss, dispersal and dispossession, and nearly another 20 years later, the experience of Israel's 1967 military conquest and occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including Jerusalem, inspired much expressive literature.

Palestinian contemporary literary work dealing with Jerusalem often covers political periods of the Palestinian national history in the second half of the 20th Century: the 1948 upheaval (e.g., Jabra Ibrahim Jabra's novels *Hunters in a Narrow Street*, 1960), and *The Ship*, 1970), the 1967 War (e.g., Mahmoud Shugair's

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<sup>2</sup> "Jerusalem is calling upon you; it is the bride of Arabism" - these were the desperate words of the renowned Arab nationalist poet Muzaffar Al-Nawwab in 1982 when Israel announced that the occupied city would be its «eternal and united capital». For the full poems see below under "Non-Palestinian Arab Poetry."

## LITERATURE

Another Shadow for the City, 1998) and the 1987 Uprising, also known as “first Intifada” (e.g., Ahmad Harb’s *The Other Side of the Promised Land*, 1990).

What should not remain unmentioned are the merits of the Jerusalemite scholar Dr. Kamil Jamil Asali (1925-1995) who held degrees from the University of London, the Jerusalem Law School and the Humboldt University in Berlin and wrote 15 books and many articles and papers on the history, archeology and Islamic heritage of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>

In the following, we will present a number of exemplary literary works of Palestinians that have dealt with Jerusalem. The focus will thereby lie on genres such as novels, poems, short stories and plays, while academic or journalistic works about the city – whether politically or religious-spiritually motivated - will be left out. However, we will also include the work of some foreign writers as Jerusalem’s place in literature and writing is not limited to the region but spans the globe.

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<sup>3</sup> Asali’s works include, inter alia, *Fada’il Beit Al-Maqdis Manuscripts*(A study and a bibliography), Amman, 1981; *Ajdaduna Fi Thara Beit-Al-Maqdis* (Islamic Mausolea and Cemeteries in Jerusalem), Amman, 1981; *Ma’ahid Al- ‘Ilm Fi Bait Al-Maqdis*(Islamic Institutions of Learning in Jerusalem), Amman, 1981; *Min Atharina Fi Beit Al-Maqdis* (Some Islamic Monuments in Jerusalem), Amman, 1982; *Watha’iq Maqdisiyya Tarikhiyya* (Jerusalem Historical Documents, Vol. I-III), Amman, 1983/1985/1989; *Beit Al Maqdis Fi Kutub Al Rihlat* (Jerusalem in Travel books), Amman, 1992; *Al-Quds F’l Tarikh* (Jerusalem in History), Amman, 1992.



POETRY

# WRITERS

## PALESTINIAN POETRY

Palestinian poetry is unique in that it both originates from and expresses the Palestinian socio-political situation. It is dominated by the Palestinian national theme and struggle as embodied in resistance to the Israeli occupation, and in the longing for independence and freedom.

The following samples of Palestinian writings and poems on Jerusalem are listed in alphabetical order according to the authors' family names.

## POETRY

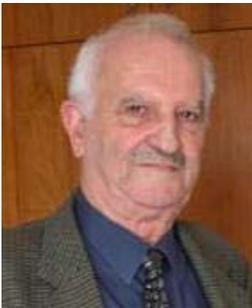


### ABDEL BAQI, AHMAD HILMI (1882-1963)

Born in Sidon, Lebanon, in 1878, Abdel Baqi moved with his family to Nablus, where he received his education. He served in the Ottoman Army and participated in the governments of Emir Faisal in Syria and of Emir Abdullah of Transjordan. In 1937, the British Mandate authorities in Palestine exiled him to the Secheylles Island, along with several other Palestinian leaders, for his political activism. A Palestinian nationalist and poet, Palestine functions in his poetry as a metaphor for his own emotions and the symbiotic tie between homeland and poet stands out clearly in his poetry.

Contemplate, for this world has become dark  
And Jerusalem has been plundered and divided  
Jewish hands have destroyed its landmarks  
So ask the Arabs, "Are you lifeless dolls?"

(From: Ibrahim Nasrallah, "The Poetic Expression of a Political Man – Ahmad Hilmi Abdel Baqi" (Reviews), Jerusalem Quarterly 25, Winter 2006).



### ABU HANNA, HANNA (1928-)

Abu Hanna was born in Reineh, near Nazareth, in 1928. He was a poet, writer, educator, and a political activist. He co-founded several cultural magazines and institutions and contributed to reforming curricula and educational policies. He has published 21 books of poetry, autobiography, studies and children books. Many of his poems depict the struggle for freedom of the Palestinians inside the Green Line.

## Jerusalem

I was in Jerusalem  
Went out with the early dawn  
Wandering in and around the city  
The arches of Jerusalem Old City like an open chest  
The many domes, the minarets –  
A sad kiss of the sun  
Life goes on, As usual.  
Yawning doors.  
The newspaper man paved the floor with the news  
The news cry over the fence in space  
The Damascus Gate prepares the morning fruit for the travelers  
The heart embracing its wounds and consoled by its visions.

(from the Diwan Qasa'ed Min Hadiqet As-Saber – "Poems of the Cactus Fig Garden")

## ABUDAYYEH, SALEH (1964-)

Abudayyeh was born in Amman, Jordan, and came to the United States at the age of 18. He is a poet and writer who lives in Minneapolis, where he co-founded in 1998, and still co-edits, the literary journal Mizna, a lively forum for literary work by Arabs and Arab-Americans. His poem "Jerusalem Sunflower" addresses the oppressed and occupied people in their struggle for their right against all odds.

### Jerusalem Sunflower

Her land was occupied  
Roots were exposed  
Name demonized  
Mouth gagged  
Dreams  
Were jailed  
But she countered  
With one brilliant smile.

Smile – the secret of her might  
And when the oppressor  
Came with a bulldozer,  
And a compressor  
To crush,  
Her seeds  
Source of power,  
And her prayer beads,  
She continued to shine -  
Her right.  
Will he see the light?



## AQEL, ABDUL LATIF (1943-1995)

Aqel was born in Deir Estia, near Nablus, in 1943. He was imprisoned for membership in the Communist Party while still in school. He later studied Philosophy and Social Sciences at Damascus University and earned two PhDs in Psychology from the US. Besides his work as Professor at An-Najah and Bethlehem universities he wrote poems and plays in both Arabic and English.

### Jerusalem

I am in Jerusalem  
And whoever is in Jerusalem  
Is surrounded by the wall, in which there is not a single stone  
Whose surface is not marred  
By stray purposeful bullets and pigeons nests  
The Al-Aqsa Mosque and the thousands of worshippers  
And 'Abdallah at the Jaffa Gate pressed like a can  
Woe, oh stray purposeful bullet  
I am Jerusalem and the song which the soldiers know  
And its mother does not know, the morning and the notebook  
Death, the people's spirit and the soil  
In it the woman longs for news  
Of weddings in summer  
And embroidery on brocade dresses.

### From Jerusalem to the Gulf [Excerpt]

Write to me, tell me how, when surrounded  
By palm trees and oil wells  
You weep when you remember  
Jerusalem and Jericho's honied crops  
How, surrounded by all that sand,  
You weep when the news of young students  
facing enemy bullets with books, and a thousand rods arouses you  
[...]

Write to me  
One letter of love can release  
in the prison and the prisoner  
the flowers of hope  
And on the walls of Jerusalem  
Thousand of ears of wheat

Write to me, do not write to me  
A time has begun in us  
A time ends in us  
What use are letters?

(Translated by Sharif Elmusa and Dick Davies)

## We Are the Victims

My people are too stunned to understand  
Why "Selma", their beloved homeland,  
Has been given to beasts who stifle breeze,  
And uproot blossoming almond trees;  
Those who steal even the moon-beams,  
And suck the water of our flowing streams,  
While allowing Jerusalem to become the prey  
Of violent intruders, not allowing us to pray:  
Thus, our original identity is obliterated,  
And our very presence is not tolerated!  
We are the victims whose blood of life  
Is sucked away in wild, unequal strife.  
While our land is deprived of its own soil,  
And plundered are the fruits of our toil!

## Woe to Them from Our Anger!

They descended upon our land, a flood  
Of death, pestilence, fire and blood:  
They created panic, hate, grudge, fear;  
They never headed the orphan's tear.  
They destroyed every standing monument,  
Never heading our plight or predicament!  
They filled Jerusalem with their dirt,  
And spread their plague to every outskirt:  
They intruded on our home, like mice,  
Yellow sand, cockroaches and dirty lice.  
They uprooted our lemons, figs and olive trees,  
And blocked every clean waft of breeze,  
And brought disease, misery and hunger:  
Woe to them from the eruption of our anger!



## AL-BAKRI, FAWZI (1946-)

Fawzi Al-Bakri was born in 1946 in the Old City of Jerusalem. After graduating from high school in 1965, he studied Arabic Literature, but was unable to finish due to the circumstances of the 1967 War. He worked as a teacher, journalist and newspaper editor. In the mid-1980s he published his first poetry collection (*Tramp of the Old City of Jerusalem, Nazareth*). He has written extensively on Jerusalem.

### Will Jerusalem Be Silent? [Excerpt]

God sanctified it ... prased be God  
What about Jerusalem,  
Oh Arabs with oil/drought/wrath  
Oh all the dervishes of the Arab League  
Let all your pulpits fall  
Let all the filthy celebrities fall.

[From the poetry collection: *Salouk Min Al-Quds Al-Qadima* ('Tramp of the Old City of Jerusalem'), 1980]



## BARAKAT, IBTISAM (1964-)

Born in Beit Hanina in 1964, Ibtisam Barakat grew up under Israeli occupation. After earning her BA from Birzeit University, she moved to New York, where she interned with *The Nation*. Later, she studied Journalism and Human Development and Family Studies at the University of Missouri-Columbia. Her work centers on healing the hurts of racism, sexism and the oppression of young people. She writes poems and short stories, has taught Writing Ethics at Stephens College, and is the founder of Write Your Life seminars.

### From "Diaspora, Step by Step"

A man from Palestine  
Who lived for forty years  
Away from his home, tells me:  
I used to be able  
To close my eyes  
And count the steps  
Of any street  
In the old city of Jerusalem

They were the wrinkles  
On the face of my old city,  
Inside of which I had a place

I used to be able  
To clench my eyes  
And visit my old household  
Inside the old city of Jerusalem

Now my eyes are failing.  
My memories are fainting.  
And the roads are blocked;  
I do not dare.

But his last word about daring  
Suddenly breathed defiance  
Into his face

He locked his hands:  
Looked up at me,  
And his eyes blinked rapidly  
And brushed my face.

Perhaps I can return  
One more time  
To that beloved place.



## AL-BARGHOUTHY, TAMIM (1977-)

Palestinian poet and political scientist, who was born in Cairo to a Palestinian father (poet Mourid Barghouthi) and an Egyptian mother. He has written four poetry collections and published several books.

### In Jerusalem

By our lover's house we passed but we were turned away...  
 By the enemy's laws and walls  
 A blessing it could be for me I said...  
 When you see it, what do you see?  
 What you cannot bear is what you see...  
 When from the side of the road its houses appear...  
 When every soul sees its lover ...  
 And every absentee surrenders to happiness...  
 To see him before their meeting is her secret as much as it is his...  
 Even her happiness does not give her safety...  
 When old Al-Quds you see once...  
 When the eye shall see it, where ever it turns the eye shall see it...  
 In Al-Quds... a cabbage vender from Georgia...  
 Tiring of his wife... a holiday he plans or his walls he shall paint...  
 In Al-Quds a Torah and an old man from upper Manhattan did  
 come...  
 Its codes and rules a Polish kid teaches...  
 In Al-Quds an Abyssinian policeman closes a road in the market...  
 A machinegun on a twenty years old settler's shoulder is carried...  
 A skullcap greeting the Wailing Wall...

Blond European tourists, Al-Quds they never see...  
 Photos they take for each other or with a reddish woman vender...  
 In Al-Quds soldiers with their boots as if over the clouds they creep...  
 In Al-Quds on the asphalt we prayed...  
 In Al-Quds. Others are in Al-Quds, except you...  
 History stirred at me smiling...  
 To see somebody else or err you thought???  
 Here they are facing you, they are the writing, and you are the margin ...  
 O son... a veil you thought your visit from city's face you shall remove...  
 To see from under it the hard reality of Al-Quds...  
 In Al-Quds everybody is there except you...  
 The city's epoch is two epochs...  
 A foreign epoch steps in tranquilly, it doesn't change...  
 As if in sleep it is walking...  
 And there is another one, latent and veiled...  
 Avoiding the foreign it is without sound walking...

Al-Quds knows itself...  
Ask any creature, and then all shall indulge you...  
With a tongue everything in the city is, when you ask it shall disclose...  
In Al-Quds the crescent is like an embryo more vaulting it becomes...  
Hunched-like it rests over domes...  
Through the years relations developed...  
The father's relations with his children...  
In Al-Quds buildings' stones are citations from the Koran and the Gospels...  
In Al-Quds beauty's identification is octagonal and blue...  
A golden dome looking like a curved mirror on top of it...  
Synopsised in it you see the sky's face...  
Coddled and brought near...  
Distributed like relief bags for the needy under siege...  
After the Friday sermon of a people  
For help open their hands...  
In Al-Quds the sky got mixed with the people, we protect it, it protects us...  
On our shoulders we always carry it...  
If time aggrieves its moons...  
In Al-Quds as if like smoke is the texture of the swarthy marble pillars...  
Overtops mosques, churches and windows...  
The morning's hand it holds to show its colored engraving...  
He says: "no it is like this"...  
She replies: "no like this it is"...  
If disagreement lengthy it becomes... they partake...  
Because outside the threshold the morning is free...  
But to enter if he wants, he has to accept God's judgment...  
In Al-Quds a school there is for a Mamluke\* from beyond the river he came...

In an Asfahan slave market they sold him...  
To a Baghdadi merchant...  
To Aleppo he came, its amir frightened he became of the blueness in his left eye...  
To a caravan going to Egypt he was given...  
To become years later the Mongol's defeater and the sultan...  
In Al-Quds a smell there is, which establishes Babylon and India in a perfumer's shop...  
By God a language it has, you will understand if you listen...  
And it tells me when tear gas bombs they shoot at me: "Don't worry..."  
Defused it gets when the smell of the gas wanes to tell me: "Did you see"...

In Al-Quds contradictions and miracles at ease it becomes and God's people won't deny...  
As if cloth pieces new and old they check...  
Wonders there by the hand are felt...  
In Al-Quds an old man's hand you shake...  
Or a building you touch...  
A poem or two, you, the son of the noble, on your hand palms you shall find incised...  
In Al-Quds in spite of the chain of nakabat (tragedies) a smell of childhood there is in the wind...

## LITERATURE

The wind of innocence...  
In the wind between two bullets, pigeons you shall see flying announcing a state ...  
In Al-Quds graves arrayed in lines they are, as if lines they are in the city's history and the book is its soil...  
Everybody passed from here...  
Al-Quds accepts anybody who visits it whether infidel or believer he is...  
In it I pass and its tombstones I read in all the world's languages...  
In it there is African, European, Kafjaks, Syklabs, Bushnaks, Tartars, Turks, and God's peoples.  
The doomed, the poor, landlords, the dissolute, and hermits...  
In it there is whoever treaded on the earth...  
Do you think it could hardly provide us alone with living???  
O you history writer what happened to exclude us alone...  
You old man, again reread and rewrite... mistakes you committed...  
The eye shuts and opens...  
Left wise the yellow car driver turned...  
Away from Al-Quds' gate...  
Al-Quds we bypassed...

The eye sees it in the right mirror...  
Its colors changed before sunset...  
If a smile surprises me...  
How it sneaked in between tears I don't know, she told me when I went far too far...  
"You weeper behind the wall... fatuous you are?  
Are you mad... Your eye shouldn't cry, you forgotten one from the book's text...  
You Arab your eye shouldn't cry... You should know that...  
In Al-Quds, all mankind is in Al-Quds but I see nobody in Al-Quds except you."

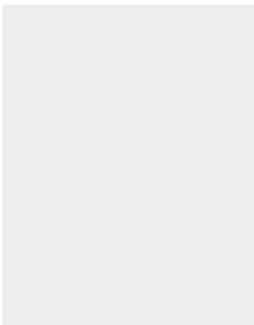


## **BSEISO, MU'IN (1927-1984)**

Mu'in Bseiso, a Palestinian poet and essayist, was born in Gaza (1927) and suffered exile and imprisonment. Until his sudden death in 1984, he worked for the PLO in Beirut.

### The God of Urushalim - A Poem

Let my right hand forget me,  
let my beloved's eyes,  
my brother and my only friend  
all forget me.  
If I remember not  
that the God of Urushalim  
lies heavily on  
our land,  
squeezing honey and milk  
out of drops of our blood,  
to live  
and hatch out monsters.



## **AL-BUHAIRI, HASAN (1921-1998)**

Palestinian poet, born in 1921 in Haifa, who lived in Syrian exile following the Nakba, an experience reflected in his poetry. He received the Jerusalem Prize in 1990.

### Victory Shall Be Ours Soon

Though darkness is stubborn,  
The night must conic to an end.  
O, Jerusalem! Be patient, noble,  
Raising thy head in a stand that is honorable.  
Stand solid, proud and free  
And stay lofty, though in sadness.  
Raise the flame of fighting pride  
High with banners that lead and guide.  
Remain steadfast, determined, firm:  
Victory shall be ours soon.  
The dark curse of Zionism  
Shall be dispelled tomorrow;  
Then we shall bid Time to dance  
Celebrating the triumph of our existence.

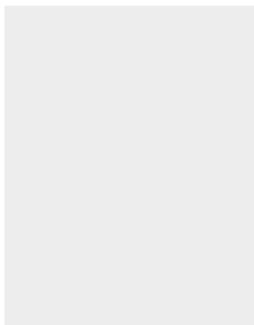


## DAMOUNI, AIDA HASAN

Aida Damouni is a Palestinian-American writer, born and raised in the US. Her articles, essays and poetry have appeared in numerous publications. She is the editor of 'Arab Culture and Identity at Suite101.com,' a website that has links to numerous different articles pertaining to the culture and customs of the Middle East. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology, and an MA in Education.

### This City [Excerpt]

Tell me your secrets, old city  
Teach me the ancient wisdom  
that fortifies your walls  
I want to unshackle you  
from your silence and sorrow  
dust off the evil  
that covers you  
Feel the calm  
of wind  
free  
Shine light on you once more  
One city, three prayers  
This city  
occupation, oppression  
prayers muffled  
How long?



## DAOUD, SIHAM (1952-)

Palestinian-Israeli poet Siham Daoud, born in Ramleh in 1952, who is also editor of the literary magazine Mashraf Quarterly for Arab Literature and recipient of the 1997 Berelson Prize for Jewish-Arab Understanding (for translating a series of poetry from Hebrew into English and a play from Arabic into Hebrew).

### The Volcano of Our Wrath

Once more, the Zionist serpents creep  
To my benighted Jerusalem, thinking I'm asleep:  
They want to dig their fangs in my soil,  
To plunder our vines, figs, wheat and oil;  
To deprive our moon of its glowing light,  
And to usurp our home, our life, our right;  
To obliterate from our land every feature

And to murder our destiny, our own future,  
To deny our existence, from the day of birth,  
And to wipe our history on this very earth;  
To bury us in a distant, forgotten tomb,  
Then to claim they "made the desert bloom"!  
But the volcano of our wrath under their feet  
Shall explode, burying their plots in defeat!



## **DARWISH, MAHMOUD (1942-2008)**

Born in 1942 in the village of Barweh in the Galilee, Darwish lived throughout all contemporary episodes of Palestinian history, which he uniquely expresses in his poetry. His political activism brought him house arrests and imprisonment. He studied and worked in the USSR, Cairo and Beirut, where he served as editor of the Journal "Palestinian Issues" and as the director of the Palestinian Research Center. As a member of the PLO Executive Committee, he lived in exile between Beirut and Paris until his return in 1996 to Palestine, where he settled in Ramallah. He has published around 30 poetry and prose collections, which have been translated into 35 languages. He is acclaimed as one of the most important poets in the Arabic language, and beloved as the voice of his people, often referred to as the national poet of the Palestinians. Some of his poems – famous throughout the Arab world - have been put to music. He founded the prestigious literary review Al-Karmel and received numerous awards, prizes and honors.

### In Jerusalem

In Jerusalem, and I mean within the ancient walls,  
I walk from one epoch to another without a memory  
to guide me. The prophets over there are sharing  
the history of the holy ... ascending to heaven  
and returning less discouraged and melancholy, because love  
and peace are holy and are coming to town.  
I was walking down a slope and thinking to myself: How  
do the narrators disagree over what light said about a stone?  
Is it from a dimly lit stone that wars flare up?  
I walk in my sleep. I stare in my sleep. I see  
no one behind me. I see no one ahead of me.  
All this light is for me. I walk. I become lighter. I fly  
then I become another. Transfigured. Words  
sprout like grass from Isaiah's messenger  
mouth: "If you don't believe you won't believe."  
I walk as if I were another. And my wound a white  
biblical rose. And my hands like two doves  
on the cross hovering and carrying the earth.  
I don't walk, I fly, I become another,  
transfigured. No place and no time. So who am I?

I am no I in ascension's presence. But I  
think to myself: Alone, the prophet Mohammad  
spoke classical Arabic. "And then what?"  
Then what? A woman soldier shouted:  
Is that you again? Didn't I kill you?  
I said: You killed me ... and I forgot, like you, to die.  
From "I See My Ghost Coming from Afar"  
I gaze upon the wind chasing the wind  
So that it might find a home on the wind  
[...]  
I gaze upon the procession of ancient prophets  
Climbing barefoot to Urashalem  
And I ask, will there be a new prophet for this new time?

(From: "I see My Ghost Coming from Afar;" compiled in the Collection  
Why Did you Leave the Horse Alone? 1995.)

## HAMDAN, YOUSEF (1942-)

Yousef Hamdan is a contemporary Palestinian poet. He is the author of several collections of poetry, as well as children's literature. His poem "To Jerusalem," proposes a life of peace for all:

### To Jerusalem [Excerpt, final verse]

I want you to be a Kaaba for the people of earth  
A spacious house,  
Without guards;  
I love you... a voice from a minaret,  
The sound of horns  
Mingled with church bells.  
I love you, a jasmine in the open air.



## HAMMAD, SUHEIR (1973-)

Suheir Hammad is a poet, author and political activist, born in 1973 in Amman, Jordan, to Palestinian refugee parents, who immigrated to Brooklyn NY in 1978. Suheir has been touring with the Emmy Award-winning Russell Simmons' Def Poetry Jam show on Broadway and has produced plays as well as published several books, including *Born Palestinian, Born Black* (Harlem River Press, 1996) and *Zaatar Diva* (Cypher Books, 2006). She is the recipient of numerous awards and fellowships.

### jerusalem Sunday

jeru  
salem  
sun  
day  
three muezzins call idan  
where one's allah begins another's  
akbar ends inviting the last  
to witness mohammad's prophecies  
church bells ring the sky  
an ocean shade of blue above  
christ's tomb and the stones  
of this city witness man's weakness  
boys run by the torah  
strapped to their third eye  
ready to rock their prayers  
the roofs of this city busy as the streets  
the gods of this city crowded and proud  
two blind and graying  
arab men lead each other through  
the old city surer of step than sight  
tourists pick olives from the cracks  
in the faces of young and graying  
women selling mint onions and this  
year's oil slicking the ground  
this city is wind  
breathe it  
sharp  
this history is blood  
swallow it  
warm  
this sunday is holy  
be it  
god



## HUSSEIN, RASHID (1936-1977)

Born in Musmus, near Umm Al-Fahm, in 1936, Rashid Hussein wrote his first poetry while still a pupil. Much of his poetry dealt with national issues such as the tragedy of the Palestinian refugees, life under Israel's military government, and land confiscation. He worked as a school teacher in Nazareth and served as editor of MAPAM's (The United Workers Party) Arabic-language literary journal Al-Fajr. Later he lived in Paris, New York, and Syria, where he established the Palestinian Studies Association. In the mid-1970s he was correspondent for the Palestinian delegation to the UN in New York, where he died after a mysterious fire incident in his room. He published many poetry collections and translated several works from Hebrew into Arabic. The motif of resistance and fight is frequently found in Hussein's prose, as seen in his poem on Jerusalem:

### Jerusalem and the Hour

The hour in Jerusalem was a minute past one killed, one wounded  
Therefore whenever a child passes by the occupiers of Jerusalem's  
springs  
A child, a small girl  
Their eyes, their senses, search  
Her chest,  
Her womb,  
Her mind,  
For a bomb  
And if they find nothing they still insist  
"this small girl  
Was born in Jerusalem  
And whoever is born in Jerusalem  
Will become a bomb  
Indeed ... anyone born in the shadow of bombs  
Will become a bomb"



## **AL-KARMI, ABDUL KARIM (ABU SALMA) (1907-1980)**

Abu Salma was born in 1907 in Haifa, where he later studied Law and worked until Jewish forces captured the city in April 1948. Much of Abu Salma's poetry is dedicated to his love and yearning to Palestine. Two years before his death he received the Lotas International Reward for Literature; he was also awarded the title 'The Olive of Palestine.'

### **The Perfumed Horizon [Excerpt]**

Neighbor... How I envy the morning's kisses  
And the tremble of wandering rays  
Have you stolen your charm from Jerusalem's countenance  
Or from its beloved flaxen dawn?  
I do not know: has my land beautified you  
Or are you reflected in all I see?

From "The Perfumed Horizon",  
Translated from Arabic: Tania Tamari Nasir, and Khaled Mattawa



## **KHALILI, ALI (1943-)**

Ali Khalili was born in Nablus in and is the author of The Palestinian Hero in the Folkloric Tale. For 20 years he was the editor of the daily newspaper, Al-Fajr ("The Dawn"). Later he directed the Palestine Authority's Ministry of Culture. He lives in Ramallah. His prose are preoccupied with the unity of the land.

### **Do Not Let It Slip Down Your Chest [Excerpt]**

Melt in Jerusalem  
Feel its famine and its history  
All its beauty and its every quarter, and say  
To yourself that this wall is your body  
That this city is your gate to  
The world  
Down in the sadness of Jerusalem  
And come out of it inside it, toward it  
...  
Are these your ahnds or the horizon of the ancient locked  
Markets?  
...  
You have arisen from your grave and searched for  
Yourself in ancient manuscripts  
...  
Don't let Jerusalem fall from your chest  
And don't you stumble!



### MAHMOUD, ABDUL RAHIM (1913-1948)

Born in Anabta near Tulkarem in 1913, Abdul Rahim Mahmoud grew up in a period widely seen as the origin of "resistance" poetry covering the struggle against the Zionists and the British. He joined the resistance of the 1936-1939 Revolt and later trained in the Military College in Iraq. After returning to Palestine he worked as a teacher in Nablus and participated in the resistance against the Zionist; he was killed in combat in the Shajarah battle near Nazareth in 1948. One of his most notable poems is "The Aqsa Mosque," which was written as a salute to Prince Saud Ibn Abdul Aziz during his 1935 visit to Anabta, but is actually a call to the prince and to all to take action against the theft of his homeland, Palestine. "The Aqsa Mosque" - which was recited on August 14, 1935 during the visit of Prince Saud Ibn Abd Al-Aziz to Anabta - later became famous for these prophetic words about the loss of Palestine:

#### The Aqsa Mosque

Honorable Prince! Before you stands a poet  
 whose heart harbors bitter complaint.  
 Have you come to visit the Aqsa Mosque  
 or to bid it farewell before it is lost?  
 This land, this holy land, is being sold to all intruders  
 and stabbed by its own people!  
 And tomorrow looms over us, nearer and nearer!  
 Nothing shall remain for us but our streaming tears,  
 our deep regrets!

\*\*\*

Oh, Prince, shout, shout! Your voice  
 might shake people awake!  
 Ask the guards of the Aqsa: are they all agreed to struggle  
 as one body and mind?

Ask the guards of the Aqsa: can a covenant with God  
 be offered to someone, then lost?  
 Forgive the complaint, but a grieving heart needs to complain  
 to the Prince, even it makes him weep.

(Translated by Sharif Elmusa & Naomi Shihab Nye)



## MAJAJ, LISA SUHEIR (1960-)

Born in Iowa in 1960 to an American mother and a Palestinian father, Majaj grew up in Jordan. She earned her BA from the American University of Beirut and two MAs from the University of Michigan. A poet, writer and critic, she has published poetry, non-fiction, academic articles and reviews in a wide range of journals and anthologies, and in two poetry chapbooks. In 2007, she was awarded the Del Sol Press Annual Poetry Prize.

### Jerusalem Song

Your walls fold gently  
a wingspan  
embracing the dreaming city

Your air drifts with the odor of incense.  
women's voices floating upwards.  
a twist of prayer toward heaven's ear.

I hold your name beneath my tongue  
like a seed  
slipped into the mouth for safekeeping.

Jerusalem, fold me like a handkerchief  
into your bosom. I am  
one word in a lover's letter.

A chip of blue tile in your sky.  
Even those who have never seen you  
walk your streets at night.

We wipe your dust from your feet  
each morning, rise from our beds wearied  
by the long distances

We have traveled to reach you.  
See how we save even the broken bits of pottery  
Fitting fragments together

Along jagged lines to remember you.  
Jerusalem, we are fledglings  
crying for a nest!



## MUTRAN, KHALIL (1872-1949)

Poet and journalist, who was born in Baalbek, Lebanon, to a Palestinian father, and raised in Beirut. At the age of 18 he left to France, but two years later settled in Egypt, where he worked at Al-Ahram and also contributed to other papers, before founding his own magazine, Al-Majalla al-Misriyya. He published poetry and worked in translation (including works of Shakespeare, Corneille, and Victor Hugo into Arabic). After a long journey through Syria and Palestine in the mid-1920s, he claimed himself as a poet of the Arab countries. In the 1930s he chaired the Apollo literary group and became director of the Al-Firqa al-Qawmiyya (National Company) of the Egyptian theatre. He was also known by the nickname Sha'ir Al-Qutrayn (the poet of the two countries).

### Greetings to the Noble Jerusalem [Excerpt]

Peace be on the noble Jerusalem and those in it  
To the [city] which gathers opposites in the heritage of its love  
To the pure town under whose soil  
Hearts whose depths became part of its soil.

...

It arouses love wherever stepped  
The feet of the Redeemer of men out of his overflowing love.



## AL-QASSEM, SAMIH (1939-)

Samih Al-Qassem was born in 1939 in Zarqa, Jordan, to Palestinian Druze parents from the Galilee. He grew up in the village of Rama in northern Palestine and was a leading figure of the “resistance poets” of the 1950s. Well-known throughout the Arab World, his poetry has most notably been influenced by the defeat of the Arab armies to Israel in 1967. He has published numerous books of poetry, several novels, collections of plays and essays, and currently works as a journalist in Haifa, where he also runs the Arabesque Press and the Folk Arts Centre and is the editor-of-chief in the Israeli Arab newspaper Kul al-Arab.

### A Palestinian Psalm [Excerpt]

From this wounded land,  
Purgatory of sorrows,  
The orphaned birds call you,  
O World!  
From Gaza, Jenin. Old Jerusalem:  
Alleluia.  
Under the sun, in the wind in exile,  
Hearts and eyes once sang:  
'Lord of Glory'. We've been tired  
too long  
Send us back!  
Alleluia, Alleluia.

“The link between Israel and western colonialism is evident to the poet. The diplomatic support to Israel given by the United States convinces the poet that the United Nations is not the proper forum to seek redress”<sup>1</sup>:

Oh esteemed security council  
For twenty years I called on you  
And today, through the storms  
My voice comes to you as a red rose  
From the field of crime  
Farewell, Farewell  
Until we meet again  
In the old city  
of Jerusalem.

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Ibtisam Abu-Duhou, “Postcolonial Fictions,” Span No. 36, <http://www.mcc.murdoch.edu.au/ReadingRoom/literv/SPAN/36/Ibtisam.html>

## Sermon for the Friday of Redemption [Excerpt]

I am the king of Jerusalem.  
Descendent of the Jebusite.  
Not you, Richard ...  
From the Negev to the highest peaks of Galilee  
Gather up your swords, gather up your shields, Richard  
and start emigrating.  
You are destined to wane, I am destined to wax ...  
The time has come to emigrate, Richard ...  
I am the king of Jerusalem  
leave me the cross  
leave me the crescent  
and the star of David ...  
If you wish, you will emigrate alive  
and if you wish, you will emigrate dead.



### QLEIBO, ALI (1954-)

Ali Qleibo is an artist, author and cultural anthropologist, who was born in Jerusalem and educated in the US. He is author of several books, including *Before the Mountains Disappear*, an ethnographic description of everyday Palestinian life, *Surviving the Wall*, which documents aspects of contemporary peasant Palestinian culture, and *Jerusalem in the Heart*, a cultural guide to the social historical aspects of Jerusalem, illustrated with his own art work and photographs. He also lectures on Ancient Classical Civilizations at Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, writes plays and has exhibited his artwork both locally and internationally.

## A City of Stone

Jerusalem has and continues to be  
the center of strife.  
The stones of Jerusalem's edifices  
have been carved of history.  
Palestine represents a point of intersection wherein  
numerous civilizations flourished.  
The rise and fall of these civilizations  
have left infinite traces.  
Their remains were used as elements,  
absorbed and assimilated,  
in the cultural ethos of the nations that followed.  
The façades of the houses,  
palaces, theological colleges, mosques,

churches, temples, zigzagging streets and alleys  
are silent witnesses  
to the different intellectual,  
religious and spiritual contributions of  
the Jebusites, Canaanites, Hebrews, Arameans,  
Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Umayyads,  
Fatimides, Crusaders, Ayyubides,  
Mamlukes and Ottomans  
who have superseded each other.  
I wake up every morning and see  
the remains of an ancient civilization...  
The dome,  
seven meters and a half above my pillow,  
is cracked and humid.  
I look at the damp spots  
where the paint is peeling,  
and onto other areas  
where the plaster has fallen off.  
In the sunlight,  
a few dust particles glitter and fall  
as more plaster disintegrates.  
My existence in Jerusalem  
becomes a daily poem  
binding me closely  
to my historic roots,  
to my magic ancestral world.

(From: Qleibo, Ali. Jerusalem in the Heart. A Kloreus Publication, 2000.)

## The Lost City

Nostalgia, longing, and an unfathomable sense of loneliness envelop Jerusalem in a halo of huzon; sublime melancholy; a bittersweet refrain whose echo reverberates behind every step in Jerusalem.

My vision of Jerusalem is intimately personal.

Jerusalem floats as a vision of gold. Yellow ochre, cream, grey, pink, and red bounce off the meleke and mizzi stones from which the City of Light has been hewn impart a magical luminescent quality. This variety of carved stone: White mele stone, cream-coloured limestone and red-coloured and grey crystalline dolomite give Jerusalem its unique character. The setting sun reflected on the cream-coloured limestone facade of both ancient and modern structures gives them a golden hue. The light bounces off the facades of sumptuous Mamluk and Ottoman edifices, dissolves the spectrum of lustrous colours, and

soaks Jerusalem labyrinthine alleys in a haze of translucent amber honey.

I stand on the rooftop of the Austrian Hospice and overlook the illegal shacks, the TV antennas, the satellites, the black plastic water reservoirs or the piles of rubbish.

I still see my city with the eyes of a lover. Like an old married couple, I see my love always as at first sight... forever young. I do not stop at the wrinkles. I go beyond them to the image I once glimpsed when I first fell in love.

The reality is that of the heart.

Jerusalem of my youth lives in me.

A euphoric blend of sounds, smells, and images - documented by my works - heightens the poignant melancholic nostalgia.

The first aroma that assails one upon entering Damascus Gate, immediately after walking down the stairway, is that of roasted coffee from Izhiman's Coffee Shop at the juncture of Al-Wad St. and Suq Khan Az-Zeit. The aroma of freshly roasted coffee and ground coffee dissolves in that of freshly baked bread and merges with the pungent aroma of pickles, olives, and cheese in the Al-Hidmi Grocery. Gradually the smell of pickles gives way to rose water. Deep beyond Suq Khan Az-Zeit, in the far southern corner of the spice market, at its articulation with Bazaar St., the aromas of the Old City reach their peak with the smell of zalabieh.

Round golden fritters glitter in the zalabieh shop on one side of David St. Meters of colourful textiles hang outside the cloth shop on the opposite side of the street. Herbs, perfumes, incense, and spices from the spice market drench the air. Aromas, colours and shapes vie with each other to intoxicate and thrill eye and nose.

The Jerusalem of the early fifties lives on. Our Friday visits to mother's grandmother in her ancient tower house hewn of Herodian stones in "Baab al-Item" survives intact in my mind. Dream and reality weave the fabric of my memory of my mother's grandmother Aisha - the deep blue eyes and the blonde braid - into the rich tapestry of Al-Quds. Widowed and left with six children at 26, she tied her hair into a single braid and made a vow of celibacy that lasted from 1909 until she passed away in the seventies. A Nuseibeh, she lived in the ancient family home, like all members of patrician families, north of Al-Aqsa. In my mind's eye I still see her, already very old, seated on the windowsill, the mastabah, watching the hubbub of the Via Dolorosa below and the Herodian tower rising above her home. From the same

window mother remembers watching the procession of Nebi Musa in the street below as it made its way to St. Stephen's gate. A mere child of nine, little did she know that she would be the sister-in-law of the handsome Qleibo carrying one of the Jerusalem family banners.

Nebi Musa, the fanfare, the old families, their banners, and their endowments along with the Herodian tower have ceased to exist. My uncle who carried the family banner is long dead. In fact, almost everyone I knew and whose lives were intertwined with Jerusalem's history as established by the Caliph Omar in the seventh century and as confirmed by Saladin in the twelfth century have passed away. Time changes and rearranges. Ancient monuments have fallen into disrepair, edifices have disintegrated, and stones have been put into secondary usages in new buildings. Barely a few familiar traces have survived the tremor of the Nakba and the Six-Day War.

In a photo exhibit at my daughter's school, I ran into a sixty-year-old photo of Aisha's intact window in the shadow of the Herodian tower. The black-and-white photo conjured my image of Jerusalem; the Jerusalem that still lives in my heart.

My generation has inherited the heavy weight of our predecessors' defeats.

The battle of Jerusalem, pending a miracle, is lost.

All is gone. All is vanity.

We live in longing.



## RASHID, HARUN HASHIM (1927-)

Harun Hisham Rashid is a Palestinian poet born in Gaza, where he lived and worked, among others as teacher and director of the Sawt Al-Arab broadcasting station, until 1967, when he was after the fall of Gaza to the Israeli's eventually compelled to leave the region. His poetry is among those contemporary writings most committed to the Palestinian cause, he describes in his simple, direct and highly expressive verse the plight of Palestinians uprooted from their homes, their inner torment, and the deep feelings of loss and alienation that they have known throughout the years. Rashid has published several poetry collections, including *With the Strangers* (1954) and *The Rebellion of the Stone* (1988).

### Poem to Jerusalem

For the sake of a city that's imprisoned,  
 For its Dome and Al Aqsa Mosque,  
 For the annihilated sanctuary  
 Where Muhammad's feet once stood,  
 For all this city has endured,  
 And for all it has preserved,  
 For Mary and Jesus,  
 For all the beings she has known,  
 For my city's sake,  
 Raped and abused,  
 On its wounded brow  
 God's words are effaced.  
 I call on all our dead  
 And all our living  
 With verses from the Bible  
 If only they could hear  
 With verses from the Quran  
 In the name of God  
 Calling the young among them and the very old  
 Calling them from my depths  
 To every brave fighter  
 I tell them the struggle is for Jerusalem  
 I call on them to resolve and have faith  
 Tell them how Jerusalem's sanctity is wounded  
 I call upon them all to help Jerusalem  
 She cannot wait any longer,  
 She overflows with grief.

From the Atlantic to the Arabian Gulf  
 I call upon you in the name of God  
 With the purity of anger I beseech you  
 For the city with the humiliated eyes  
 I call you in your name,  
 I call my Arabic people.



## **SHEHABI, DEEMA (1970-)**

Palestinian-American poet and editor Deema Shehabi was born in Kuwait in 1970 to a father hailing from Jerusalem and a mother originally from Gaza. She has visited both cities with her family on numerous occasions. In 1988 she moved to the US to study History and International Relations (BA) at Tufts University, and later Journalism (MS) at Boston University. She is the Vice-President for RAWI (the Radius of Arab-American Writers Inc.) Her work has appeared widely in anthologies and journals. The Palestinian narrative is still present in her poetry. The following poem she wrote in 2006.

### **At The Dome Of The Rock**

Jerusalem in the afternoon is the bitterness of two hundred  
winter-bare olive trees fallen in the distance. Jerusalem  
in the soft afternoon is a woman sitting at the edge of the Mosque  
with her dried-up knees tucked beneath her, listening to shipwrecks  
of holy words. If you sit beside her under the stone arch facing the  
Old City,  
beneath the lacquered air that hooks into every crevice of skin,  
your blood will unleash with her dreams, the Dome  
will undulate gold, and her exhausted scars  
will gleam across her overly kissed forehead.  
She will ask you to come closer, and when you do,  
she will lift the sea of her arms from the furls  
of her chest and say:  
this is the dim sky I have loved ever since I was a child.



## SHIHAB NYE, NAOMI (1952-)

Naomi Shihab Nye was born in St. Louis, Missouri, to a Palestinian father, who was forced into exile in 1948, and an American mother. During her high school years, she lived in Jordan, Jerusalem, and San Antonio, Texas, where she still lives. She is poet, songwriter, and novelist, and has authored and/or edited over 20 volumes of poems and literature. As a result of her father's experiences, she learned the importance of place and of being connected - a theme that has been central to her writing ever since.

### Jerusalem

"Let's be the same wound if we must bleed.  
Let's fight side by side, even if the enemy  
is ourselves: I am yours, you are mine."  
-Tommy Olofsson, Sweden

I'm not interested in  
Who suffered the most.  
I'm interested in  
People getting over it.

Once when my father was a boy  
A stone hit him on the head.  
Hair would never grow there.  
Our fingers found the tender spot  
and its riddle: the boy who has fallen  
stands up. A bucket of pears  
in his mother's doorway welcomes him home.  
The pears are not crying.  
Later his friend who threw the stone  
says he was aiming at a bird.  
And my father starts growing wings.

Each carries a tender spot:  
something our lives forgot to give us.  
A man builds a house and says,  
"I am native now."  
A woman speaks to a tree in place  
of her son. And olives come.  
A child's poem says,  
"I don't like wars,  
they end up with monuments."  
He's painting a bird with wings  
wide enough to cover two roofs at once.

Why are we so monumentally slow?

Soldiers stalk a pharmacy:  
big guns, little pills.  
If you tilt your head just slightly  
it's ridiculous.

There's a place in my brain  
Where hate won't grow.  
I touch its riddle: wind, and seeds.  
Something pokes us as we sleep.

It's late but everything comes next.



## **TUMA, KHALIL (1945-)**

Khalil Tuma was born in Beit Jala in 1945 and later obtained a BA in English Literature from Bethlehem University. He has worked in the hotel business and as reporter, correspondent, editor of the English language Al-Fajr, and translator. He was a co-founder of the Palestinian Writers' Union in the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the early 1980s and has published several collections of his poetry.

### The Old Crime in Jerusalem

This way, my visitor from Bethlehem,  
The path of Saladdin takes you to Jerusalem!  
The story of Jerusalem is very long:  
It is now besieged with Wrong;  
Its steps on this road are faltering,  
While the refugees are still wandering.  
Jerusalem bought a lantern of oil,  
With tears and blood on its benighted soil,  
As hearts that used to be full of joy  
Were destroyed, like a small toy,  
By a pirate who came from the West  
On a virulent storm, in order to wrest  
From us the triumph of Saladdin's time,  
Which one day crushed the old crime!

### Saladdin's Jerusalem

Saladdin's path leads to Jerusalem of old,  
Whose story is long when it is told:  
This is the city with domes of gold  
Liberated by his knights, brave and bold.  
The flower of cities has been ravished,

Raped, looted, stormed and famished,  
 Fell prey to hellish horrors and fears,  
 Filling its alleys with terror and tears!  
 It used to endow the world with light,  
 And faith and hope, shining, bright;  
 But now, great is its tragic plight,  
 And dark and forborne its painful night!  
 Yet, Saladdin's horses may come any time,  
 To wipe out the traces of Zionist crime!



### TUQAN, FADWA (1917-2003)

Born in Nablus in 1917 (sister of poet Ibrahim Tuqan), Fadwa Tuqan became one of the most important contemporary Arab poets. Her early works dealt with love and social protest, while after 1967, she increasingly began writing patriotic poems, capturing the Palestinians' sense of loss and defiance. She gained poetry prizes from Italy, Greece and Jordan, as well the Palestinians' Jerusalem Award for Culture and Art in 1990.

#### Face Lost in the Wilderness

Do not fill postcards with memories  
 Between my heart and the luxury of passion  
 stretches a desert where ropes of fire  
 blaze and smolder, where snakes  
 coil and recoil, swallowing blossoms  
 with poison and flame.

No! Don't ask me to remember. Love's memory  
 is dark, the dream clouded;  
 love is a lost phantom  
 in a wilderness night.  
 Friend, the night has slain the moon.  
 In the mirror of my heart you can find no shelter,  
 only my country's disfigured face,  
 her face, lovely and mutilated,  
 her precious face ...

How did the world revolve in this way?  
 Our love was young. Did it grow in this horror?  
 In the night of defeat, black waters  
 covered my land, blood on the walls  
 was the only bouquet.  
 I hallucinated: "Open your breast,  
 open your mother's breast for an embrace

priceless are the offerings!"  
The jungle beast was toasting in the  
tavern of crime; winds of misfortune  
howled in the four corners.  
He was with me that day.  
I didn't realize morning  
would remove him.  
Our smiles cheated sorrow  
as I raved: "Beloved stranger!

Why did my country become a gateway  
to hell? Since when are apples bitter?  
When did moonlight stop bathing orchards?  
My people used to plant fields and love life  
Joyfully they dipped their bread in oil  
Fruits and flowers tinted the land  
with magnificent hues -  
will the seasons ever again  
give their gifts to my people?"  
Sorrow - Jerusalem's night is silence and smoke.  
They imposed a curfew; now nothing beats in the  
heart of the City but their bloodied heels  
under which Jerusalem trembles  
like a raped girl.

Two shadows from a balcony stared down at the City's night. In the  
corner a suitcase of clothes,  
souvenirs from the Holy Land -  
his blue eyes stretched like sad lakes.  
He loved Jerusalem. She was his mystical lover.  
On and on I ranted, "Ah, love! Why did God abandon  
my country? Imprisoning light, leaving us  
in seas of darkness?"  
The world was a mythical dragon standing  
at her gate. "Who will ever solve this mystery,  
beloved, the secret of these words?"

Now twenty moons have passed,  
twenty moons, and my life continues.  
Your absence too continues. Only one memory remaining:  
The face of my stricken country filling my heart.

And my life continues -  
the wind merges me with my people  
on the terrible road of rocks and thorns.  
But behind the river, dark forests of spears  
sway and swell; the roaring storm

unravels mystery, giving to dragon-silence  
the power of words.  
A rush and din, flame and sparks  
lighting the road -  
one group after another  
falls embracing, in one lofty death.  
The night, no matter how long, will continue  
to give birth to star after star  
and my life continues,  
my life continues.

(From: Modern Palestinian Poetry, translated by Patricia Alanah Byrne with the help of the editor [Salma Khadra Jayyusi], and Naomi Shihab Nye).



## TURKI, FAWAZ (1940-)

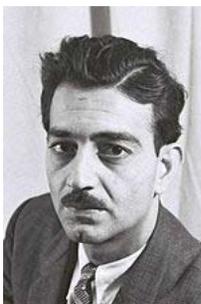
Turki was born in Haifa in 1940, but grew up as a refugee in Beirut after his family fled Palestine during the War of 1948. He later worked in Saudi Arabia, taught in Europe and in Australia, and traveled widely in India, the Middle East, and the US. Turki is a poet and author whose prose and poetry is deeply effected by the theme of exile and the Palestinian cause. Amongst his renown works are *The Disinherited: Journal of a Palestinian in Exile* (New York, 1972) and *Exile's Return: The Making of a Palestinian American* (New York, 1994).

## Osama Jibril of Jerusalem

As he played backgammon  
in the side street café  
in the back streets of Jerusalem,  
where he felt safe,  
because our culture had pierced,  
the walls of the Dome,  
our music hung in the air,  
our muezzin bespoke of history,  
our workers  
(begrimed by the work they had done  
for our oppressors)  
were home –  
the military governor  
issued an edict

for the arrest of Osama Jibril.  
I am afraid  
he said,  
to return to that savage abyss  
of dark night.  
But before I feel the blows  
of your whips, before I feel the dampness  
of your dungeons,  
before I feel the crush  
of your torture,  
before I am cowed  
by your threats,  
I want to tell you  
that you cannot wrest from us  
the blood of our martyrs,  
the vision of our patriots,  
the memory of our homeland.  
We will resume our journey  
muttering cruel prayers  
and drinking rain.

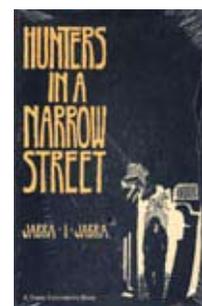
## NOVELS, MEMOIRS AND CULTURAL COMPILATIONS



Noted Palestinian writer and politician from Israel **Emile Habibi** (1921-1996) was born in 1921 in Haifa. In his early life he worked in many fields until he began seriously writing in the early 1960s. He was also a member of the Palestine Communist Party (PCP) and editor-in-chief of its *Al-Ittihad* (the Union) paper. After the 1948 War, Habibi co-founded the Israeli Communist Party (ICP). For his writings, among which are *The Secret Life of Saeed*, the *Ill-Fated Pessoptimist* (1974) and *Saraya, the Ogre's Daughter* (1991), he won many prizes and awards. In his short story *Mandelbaum Gate* (1952) Habibi depicts the fragmentation of time and place after 1948 with the separation of Palestinians inside the Green Line from the West Bank and Jerusalem. The story is told by a narrator accompanying an elderly woman haunted by the irony of division on the Mandelbaum Gate.



Palestinian novelist, translator and literary critic **Jabra Ibrahim Jabra** (1920-1994)<sup>1</sup> thematizes Jerusalem as an idealized childhood memory-based place in his novel *Hunters in a Narrow Street* (1960) which portrays the myriad conflicts between Arabs and Jews. The image of beauty is revealed through picturesque landscape imagery and the fate and struggles of the protagonists Jamil and his fiancé Leila who are torn apart in a war-torn city. This reflects Jabra's own link to the city:

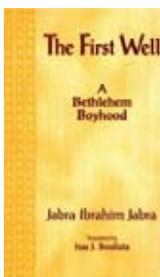


<sup>1</sup> Jabra Ibrahim Jabra was born in Bethlehem in 1920 to a Syriac-Orthodox family. Educated in Jerusalem, he later obtained an MA in English Literature from Cambridge University. Following the 1948 events, Jabra was forced to flee and settled in Baghdad, where he taught, among other things, at the university. He produced some 60 books, including novels, poetic divans and translated material, and won numerous Arab and international literary prizes and medals.



“My Palestinian sense of belonging is that like of the peasant to his soil, of the farmer to his tree, of the inhabitant to his home. This is how I loved Jerusalem. This how I loved Palestine and my land in which I roamed, dozed off, loved, and dreamed. I remember the soil of Jerusalem, the rocks of Jerusalem as if I remember the jewels of the world. My attachment to Jerusalem is of deep love and spiritual integration.<sup>2</sup>”

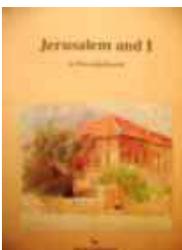
In another novel, *The Ship* (1970) Jabra emphasizes “the symbiotic interrelationship between Jerusalem and its Palestinian population” as “expressed by the image of the ‘trinity’ which comprises Christ, the Palestinian protagonist, and the City” – all three of which are made “of the same ‘rocks’” of the same pastoral scenic landscape.<sup>3</sup>



In his autobiographic account *The First Well: A Bethlehem Boyhood* (1987), which takes place in Bethlehem, where he spent his early years, and in Jerusalem, where his family moved and where he graduated from Rashidiyya School and later obtained degrees in Education and English Literature from the Arab College, Jabra describes the places and landscapes of his childhood and the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish cultures of Bethlehem and Jerusalem, which has inspired his life and art: “The beautiful Jerusalem was there for me to discover, neighborhood by neighborhood, stone by stone, the old part and the new, its past and its present.”<sup>4</sup>



With her memoirs *Jerusalem and I: A Personal Account* (1987), **Hala Sakakini** (1924-2002), daughter of the late Palestinian writer Khalil Sakakini and co-founder of the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center in Ramallah, provides a rich documentation of her encounters with Jerusalem. Having lost the family house in the Katamon neighborhood of West Jerusalem, Hala recalls her memoirs of Jerusalem, with extensive details of daily life in West Jerusalem before 1948.



Rather than the landscape beauty or village image of Jerusalem, **Ahmad Harb's** novel *The Other Side, of the Promised Land* (1990) puts the sociological and spatial aspects of the city in the foreground, while telling the story of Palestinian peace activist Hadi and his Jewish wife, who, against all odds, establish the “Bridge Office” in Wadi Al-Joz to work for peace between Israel and Palestine. However, they are soon disillusioned with the realities prevailing in the city, be it Israel's discriminatory policies vis-à-vis the Palestinians or the Palestinians' clan-oriented social structure, and this effects likewise their relationship.



2 As quoted by Ahmad Harb, “Representations of Jerusalem in the modern Palestinian novel,” *Arab Studies Quarterly* (Summer 2004).

3 Ibid.

4 Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim. *The First Well: A Bethlehem Boyhood*. London, Riyad Al-Rayyes Books, 1987.

**Ali Qleibo's** *Before the Mountains Disappear: An Ethnographic Chronicle of the Modern Palestinians* (1992) is a rich collection of essays, anecdotes and ethnographic detail. Qleibo, a Jerusalemite artist and anthropologist, provides here his testimonies of Jerusalem, including encounters in the aftermath of the first Intifada, portrayals of some of Jerusalem neighborhoods, cultural heritage and insights, and narratives. *Jerusalem in the Heart* (2000) is another work by the same author, in which he, in his own words, described "the lived moment and preserve the memories of my city as imprinted in my heart's eyes before they disappear." The book – a cultural guide to the social historical aspects of Jerusalem told by an imagined visitor, Aziz, who leads the reader through the streets, alleys and quarters of Jerusalem - is illustrated with the author's own art work and photographs.



In his autobiographical novel *Another Shadow for the City* (1998), **Mahmoud Shuqair's** - who was exiled by the Israeli occupation authorities in 1975 and only allowed to return under the terms of the 1993 Declaration of Principles - the protagonist experiences exile and return in the wake and aftermath of the 1967 War raging through Jerusalem, the home of his childhood memories. "The governing image of Jerusalem in Shuqair's novel is that of the mother who gives birth to 'the son'," which stresses the spiritual and existential significance of Jerusalem to the Palestinians.<sup>5</sup>



Jerusalem born **Issa J. Boullata** is a writer, literary scholar and critic, educator and translator who started his academic career with a PhD in Arabic Literature from London University in 1969. Formerly Professor of Arabic Literature at McGill University in Montreal, he introduced and translated a ground-breaking poetry anthology *Modern Arab Poets, 1950-1975* (1976) and has translated a number of contemporary Arab authors, including Jabra Ibrahim Jabra and Hisham Sharabi. Issa J Boullata's own writings in Arabic include the biography *Badr Shakir Al-Sayyab: His Life and Poetry*, and the novel *A'id ila Al-Quds [Returning to Jerusalem]* (1998), which is about the fate of a Jerusalemite in the Diaspora, pitted against the politics and international events surrounding his homeland (e.g., 1967 Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the civil war in Lebanon, the Iraq-Iran war of the 1980s, international arms sales, etc.). The book is also about exploration of personal roots and witnessing the plight of one's people, which eventually induce the novel's protagonist – who would love to go back to Jerusalem but knows that the Israeli authorities would prevent him - to quit his life as a professor at Georgetown University and seek to serve his people in one of the Arab cities.

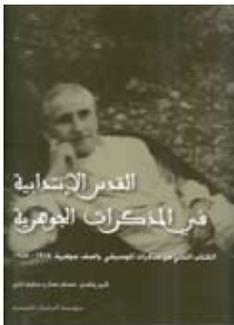


Palestinian-American literary theorist **Edward Said** (1935-2003) was one of the most celebrated cultural critics of the postwar world. Of his many books of literary, political, and philosophical criticism, *Orientalism* (1979) a brilliant analysis of how Europe came to dominate the Orient through the creation of the myth of the exotic East, was probably the best known. Said was born in Jerusalem where he spend most of his formative years before moving to the US, where received

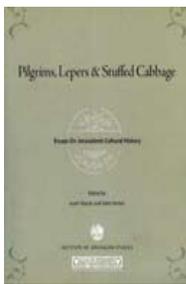
<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



his MA from Princeton and his PhD from Harvard University. Later he became a University Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and was a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Royal Society of Literature, and the American Philosophical Society. He was often referred to as Palestine's "most powerful political voice". Said's career as a thinker spans literature, politics, music, philosophy, and history. His *Out of Place – A Memoir* (2000), offers a fascinating account of the personal development of a critic and thinker who has straddled the divide between East and West, and in the process has redefined Western perceptions of the East and of the plight of Palestinian people. In the first part of the book, Said writes with great passion and wit about his family and his friends from his birthplace in Jerusalem.



*Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyyeh Memoirs and Mandate Jerusalem in the Jawhariyyeh Memoirs: Excerpts from the Memoirs of the Musician Wasif Jawhariyyah: Volume 2, 1918-1948* (edited by Salim Tamari & Issam Nassar, 2003) contain the two volume diaries of **Wasif Jawhariyyeh** (1897-1973) a composer, Oud musician and historian from Jerusalem cover a critical period of modern Jerusalem: the end of Ottoman rule and the Mandate years. Besides chronicling the author's life these diaries include rich descriptions of daily life, religious and popular customs, and relations between the different communities. The book is supported by photographs and extensive details.



*Pilgrims, Lepers & Stuffed Cabbage: Essays on Jerusalem's Cultural History* (edited by Issam Nassar & Salim Tamari, Institute of Jerusalem Studies & Center for Jerusalem Studies, 2005) is another worthwhile anthology, containing eleven contributions by historians, sociologists and anthropologists on issues pertaining to Jerusalem's recent history. The book includes topics such as: pilgrimage; Jerusalem in the 19th century travel narratives; modern histories of Jerusalem's Old City culinary practices; history of Jerusalem's Damascus Gate, and other ethnographic, historic and biographic themes.



**Kamal Boullata** was born in Jerusalem in 1942. He studied at the Fine Arts Academy in Rome and at the Corcoran Gallery School of Art in Washington, DC. In 1993 and 1994 Kamal was awarded Fulbright Senior Scholarships to conduct research on Islamic art in Morocco. His art work has been exhibited throughout Europe, the US and the Middle East and his writings on art have appeared in numerous publications worldwide. Boullata has also published several limited edition artists books. His *Palestinian Art, 1850-2005* (Saqi Books, Beirut, 2009) contains historical writings and art criticism, with vivid photographs of the pieces discussed. The book is a diverse selection featuring pre-1948 paintings alongside contemporary media works, highlighting the political concerns of Palestinian artists – whether living in Palestine or in the Diaspora - and their unique contributions to modern Arab culture. Works by artists who are examined alongside those of artists.

## NON-PALESTINIAN ARAB POETRY



### HADDAD, FUAD (1930-1985)

Egyptian poet Fuad Haddad with his famous colloquial style of poetry has used the written word as a tool for expressing his faith in the beauty and righteousness of Jerusalem. His poetry is nationalist with religious undertones and critical social and political statements. In one piece, Haddad used the symbolic function of the misahharati – a person who walks through the streets during Ramadan, chanting verses to the beat of his drum to wake people up before dawn – to hint at the need for people to wake up. The poem was put to music and sung by the late Sayed Mekkawi, and is rerun by Egyptian TV throughout Ramadan every year.

### Al-Misahharati

Misahharati, a soldier of this earth  
 A drummer, each beat a prayer  
 I long for my song like a father whose child,  
 embraced by Al-Quds appeared, on the path  
 Teach me God thirst and hunger  
 Make tears for my eyes  
 Make ribs for my heart  
 Make me, in pulse and breath, the voice of the martyr  
 A Palestinian vein, a planted tree,  
 Earth root branching in the nights --  
 Heard by an uncle in every town.  
 A refugee's wounds never heal



## AL-MALA'IKA, NAZEK (1922-2007)

Iraqi poetess Nazek Al-Mala'ika, born in Baghdad in 1922 and was famous as the first to write Arabic poetry in free verse rather than classical rhyme. After 40 years of teaching Arabic and literature in Iraqi schools and universities and writing prose and literary criticism, Al-Mala'ika left Iraq in 1970, two years after Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party came to power. She lived in Kuwait and later Cairo where she died in 2007.

### A Lily called Al-Quds

If the morning of death's winds  
Should pass  
Obliterate the echo of our lives  
-- and God reckons with us:  
"Have I not given you a homeland?"  
Have I not let waters flow like mirrors  
Decorated it with stars, embellished it with lovely maidens  
Built trellises of vines and strewn fruits everywhere?  
Colored even the stones?  
Have I not raised its summits and mountains  
And laid down shades  
Covered its valleys with trees  
Burst open its fountains, crowned it with lilies?  
Poured glowing light and greenery on its road bends  
Made the earth fragrant and soft  
Haven't I lit the slopes with starlight  
And planted the moon in the darkness of your nights?  
What have you done with all this rich harvest?

\*\*\*

God will ask us one day,  
What shall we say?  
Yes, we were granted the summits, the streams and the  
glory of the hills,  
the eyelashes of stars  
the hair of the fields  
But we did not protect them  
Did not drive death away nor  
The wayward winds  
And it became like a lily in the  
Midst of a roaring flood  
Yes and we pushed our moons to extinction

Our ignoramuses gambled with the morning sun  
With the hills,  
With the plains  
With a lily called Jerusalem that sleeps next to a stream

## LITERATURE

To a hill  
A vine tree? Bends on it  
The sky rains with reverence  
The seasons pray  
And its wheat stalks kneel, its fields keep night vigil  
To God,  
And through its amber mosque the Prophet  
Went on his nocturnal journey  
But what did we do with our white rose?

\*\*\*

God, You know what we have done  
With our rose,  
We've plucked its petals and poured its  
Fragrance away  
Gave its riches to the arms of an ogre  
To the jaws of a hungry scorpion  
So how can we reach it?  
We fear that tomorrow, the fog shall arrive  
And fog nights are long  
And will stop our feet from arriving,  
The age of fog might linger and our stars  
Might perish and then the deluge will come  
To drive away our seedlings  
And the shadows of dark get longer,  
We'll drown in our stupor  
And the winds shall blow and wipe out our lost paradise  
Our hopes shall fade away, with all their wide horizons  
And our wheat stalks shall wilt. God, Your forgiveness!  
What shall we say and on Your threshold how shall we stand?  
You have granted us the free wing  
And we have invented the chains



## NAWWAB, ISMAIL IBRAHIM

Ismail Ibrahim Nawwab is a Saudi Arab born in Mecca, who earned his degrees and later lectured at the University of Edinburgh in Scotland. He was also a former Professor at the University of Malaya in Malaysia and general manager at Saudi Aramco. He is co-editor of "The Foundations of Islam."

### The Thrice-Loved Land

There's husbandry in heaven;  
Their candles are all out.  
Peace finds no nourishment in the thrice-loved land,  
Olive orchards lie blighted,  
Orange groves wither away.  
In the City,  
Transplanted Sharons and Shamirs.  
Fed on the milk of myths,  
Floating on the foam of invincibility.  
Go on the rampage.  
Uzis.  
Rat-a-tat! Rat-a-tat!  
Lazarus is dead.  
He shall not rise again.  
Turning their backs on the quotidian scene,  
Samson and Delilah, arms in arms,  
Comb their hair, walk the street,  
And swagger into a neon-lit, gyrating discotheque.

Here rests the head upon the lap of Earth.  
Lazarus is dead.  
He shall not rise again.  
How the Galilean loved him!  
Bygone footsteps  
Indelibly imprinted in the corridors of time:  
The Son of Mary  
And the Meccan Messenger on a nocturnal journey  
Trod this holy ground.  
Now their footprints fill with blood.  
Leafless Jerusalem laments.  
The City awaits  
The second coming of  
A sandalled saviour knight.



### AL-NAWWAB, MUTHAFFAR (1932-)

Born to an aristocratic family in Baghdad in 1932, Muthaffar Al-Nawwab is a renowned Iraqi poet, playwright and activist. He completed his formal education in Iraq but had to flee in 1963, after the political struggle between the nationalists and communists, to whom he belonged, intensified. His flight was unsuccessful and he ended up in Iraqi prisons and later lived in hiding for some time. He was later allowed to go to Beirut, from which time on he was on the move living for different periods in cities of the Middle East as well as in Eritrea, Greece, France, Bangkok, and Latin America. Throughout the decades of wandering and exile, he has composed and performed his poetry. In 1982, when Israel announced that the occupied city of Jerusalem would be its "eternal and united capital," he gained fame with his desperate words: "Jerusalem is calling upon you; it is the bride of Arabism."

### Jerusalem is Arab Nationalism's Bride

Jerusalem is the bride of your Arabness!!  
 So why did you usher all the fornicators of the night into her room,  
 And stand eavesdropping from behind the door to the screams of her  
 torn virginity?  
 You drew your daggers, and swelled with pride  
 And you yelled at her to keep quiet, for honor's sake  
 How honorable of you!!  
 Sons of bitches, can a woman being raped keep quiet?  
 You sons of bitches! I'm not ashamed to tell you what you really are!  
 A pigsty is cleaner than the cleanest of you. Even a tombstone would  
 be moved.  
 But you? Not a single fiber in you flinches!"

[From: Muthaffar Al-Nawwab, "Watariyyat Layliyya" (Night Strings, 1970-75 published in Beirut in book form with two accompanying audio cassettes of the poet's recitation of the poem.)]



## QABBANI, NIZZAR (1923-1998)

Born in Damascus in 1923, Nizzar Qabbani, was a Syrian diplomat, essayist, playwright, and one of the most popular poets in the Arab World. His poetic style was famous for its simplicity and elegance in exploring themes of love, feminism, religion, and Arab nationalism.

### Jerusalem

I wept until my tears were dry  
I prayed until the candles flickered  
I knelt until the floor cracked  
I asked about Mohammed and Christ  
Jerusalem, luminous city of prophets,  
Shortest path between heaven and earth!

Jerusalem, you of the myriad minarets,  
become a beautiful little girl with burned fingers.  
City of the virgin, your eyes are sad.  
Shady oasis where the Prophet passed,  
the stones of your streets grow sad,  
the towers of mosques downcast.  
City swathed in black, who'll ring the bells  
at the Holy Sepulchre on Sunday mornings?  
Who will carry toys to children  
on Christmas Eve?  
City of sorrows, a huge tear  
trembling on your eyelid,  
Who'll save the Bible?  
Who'll save the Qur'an?  
Who will save Christ, who will save man?

Jerusalem, beloved city of mine,  
tomorrow your lemon trees will bloom,  
your green stalks and branches rise up joyful,  
and your eyes will laugh. Migrant pigeons  
will return to your holy roofs  
and children will go back to playing.  
Parents and children will meet  
on your shining streets,  
my city, city of olives and peace.



## **TAHA, ALI MAHMOUD (1902-1949)**

After finishing school, Ali Mahmoud Taha graduated from the Faculty of Applied Arts in 1924. He worked as an engineer until entering the Parliament. Ali Taha was considered both a vanguard of romantic poetry and a nationalistic and provocative writer. His first collection of poems was published under the title *The Lost Sailor*, which became one of his nicknames. He was one of the very few Egyptian poets of his time who mentioned Jerusalem.

### **Anthem of Jihad for Palestine Day**

My brother, if we have a sister in Jerusalem  
The slaughterers have prepared knives for her  
My brother, rise to the direction of prayer, both east and west  
And let us protest both church and mosque.

## FOREIGN LITERATES AND WRITINGS



Jerusalem's place in literature and writing spans the globe, its virtues extolled by literary giants from numerous European and other non-Middle Eastern nations, such as Britain's William Blake, Italy's Torquato Tasso, and Ireland's Eliot Warburton to name but a few. Many of the early visitors to the city were drawn there by spiritual yearnings for religious pilgrimage, which is reflected in the earliest portrayals of the city.

The following samples of foreign poetry, story-writing and travelogues are organized in chronological order.

Among the first one to be mentioned here is 16th-Century Italian poet **Torquato Tasso** (1544-1595), who is probably best known for his poem ***La Gerusalemme liberata*** ('Jerusalem Delivered'). Published in 1580, the poem depicts a highly imaginative version of the combats between Christians and Muslims during the siege of Jerusalem at the end of the First Crusade, which had been ordered by Pope Urban II in 1094 as a way for European Christians to "liberate" Jerusalem from the Muslim Turks. The leader of the First Crusade, Godfrey of Bouillon, eventually defeated the Turkish armies stationed in Jerusalem and set up the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem. The poem, which is divided into twenty cantos evolves around Godfrey's desire to capture the city but adds several players and a good deal of magic.

## Jerusalem Delivered (Excerpt from Book Three, III)

Feathered their thoughts, their feet in wings were dight,  
 Swiftly they marched, yet were not tired thereby,  
 For willing minds make heaviest burdens light.  
 But when the gliding sun was mounted high,  
 Jerusalem, behold, appeared in sight,  
 Jerusalem they view, they see, they spy,  
 Jerusalem with merry noise they greet,  
 With joyful shouts, and acclamations sweet.



In his famous play **King Henry IV** English poet and playwright William Shakespeare (1564-1616) mentions Jerusalem in a few places:

### Part I, in Act 1 Scene 1:

**KING:** But I have sent for him to answer this; And for this cause awhile we must neglect Our holy purpose to Jerusalem.

### Part II, in Act 4 Scene 5:

**KING.** Doth any name particular belong Unto the lodging where I first did swoon?

**WARWICK.** 'Tis call'd Jerusalem, my noble lord.

**KING.** Laud be to God! even there my life must end. It hath been prophesied to me many years, I should not die but in Jerusalem; Which vainly I supposed the Holy Land: But bear me to that chamber; there I'll lie; In that Jerusalem shall Harry die.

### Third Part, in Act 5 Scene 5:

**QUEEN MARGARET.** So part we sadly in this troublous world, To meet with joy in sweet Jerusalem.



The poem **Jerusalem** (1804), by Great Britain's William Blake (1757-1827) was actually an excerpt from the preface to one of his "prophetic books" entitled Milton. Jerusalem is here the symbolic residence of a humanity freed of the inter-related chains of commerce, British imperialism, and war. This poem was set to music by composer Hubert Parry in 1916, and has since seen many variations.

## Jerusalem

And did those feet in ancient time  
Walk upon England's mountains green?  
And was the holy Lamb of God  
On England's pleasant pastures seen?

And did the Countenance Divine  
Shine forth upon our clouded hills?  
And was Jerusalem builded here  
Among these dark Satanic Mills?

Bring me my bow of burning gold!  
Bring me my arrows of desire!  
Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold!  
Bring me my chariot of fire!

I will not cease from mental fight,  
Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand,  
Till we have built Jerusalem  
In England's green and pleasant land.

Another famous piece by Blake is this poem:

## England! Awake! Awake! Awake!

England! awake! awake! awake!  
Jerusalem thy Sister calls!  
Why wilt thou sleep the sleep of death  
And close her from thy ancient walls?

Thy hills and valleys felt her feet  
Gently upon their bosoms move:  
Thy gates beheld sweet Zion's ways:  
Then was a time of joy and love.

And now the time returns again:  
Our souls exult, and London's towers  
Receive the Lamb of God to dwell  
In England's green and pleasant bowers.

Also well-known is Blake's promise to the Christians in Jerusalem:

## From the book 'Jerusalem'

I give you the end of a golden string;  
Only wind it into a ball,  
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,  
Built in Jerusalem's wall.



Perhaps the most obvious image of Jerusalem in 19th Century was that of the city's divine holiness, which has been reflected in numerous travel writings and accounts. Among the early works of this genre to be mentioned here is the best-seller, *Itinéraire de Paris à Jérusalem* ("Itinerary from Paris to Jerusalem") by the reactionary romantic **Francois Chateaubriand** (1768-1848), which was first published in 1806 (and in English translation in 1811). The book was based on notes he made on his travels to Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, Egypt and Spain as part of his research for an epic in prose set during the Roman persecution of early Christianity he intended to write. What struck Chateaubriand most about Jerusalem was not the city's splendor but its fall from past (biblical) greatness, and the absence of the Temple which had, after all, been destroyed 2,000 years earlier. He writes of his first sight of Jerusalem:

Nothing can replace the emotion of upon seeing Jerusalem, whose name awakes the memory of so many mysteries beyond the imagination; it seems that all must be extraordinary in this extraordinary city. ... Then I understood what the historians and travelers reported of the surprise of the Crusaders and pilgrims at their first sight of Jerusalem.... I stood there, my eyes fixed on Jerusalem, measuring the height of its walls.... and seeking in vain the Temple...<sup>1</sup>

He further describes the city as follows:

When you enter the city you find no consolation for the sadness of its exterior. You wander in the tiny unpaved streets which rise and descend over the uneven terrain and you walk amidst clouds of dust and over slippery gravel. The cloths thrown between one house and the other add to the darkness of this labyrinth; vaulted and filthy bazaars succeed in banning the light from the desolate city.... There is no one on the streets, no one at the gates of the city...<sup>2</sup>

1 Ford, Talissa J. "'Jerusalem is scattered abroad': Blake's Ottoman geographies." *Studies in Romanticism* (Winter 2008).

2 Ibid.



The poem entitled The Airs of Palestine was first published by **John Pierpont** (1785-1866) in 1816 (Baltimore: B. Edes; various reprints). It is probably the most famous of his poems, and provided the title for his book *Airs of Palestine and Other Poems* (Boston: Munroe, 1840), which also includes a poem on Jerusalem:

## Jerusalem

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
How glad should I have been,  
Could I, in my lone wanderings,  
Thine aged walls have seen!-  
Could I have gazed upon the dome,  
Above thy towers that swells,  
And heard, as evening's sun went down,  
Thy parting camels' bells:-

Could I have stood on Olivet,  
Where once the Saviour trod,  
And, from its height, looked down upon  
The city of our God!  
For is it not, Almighty God,  
Thy holy city still,-  
Though there thy prophets walk no more,-  
That crowns Moriah's hill?

Thy prophets walk no more, indeed,  
The streets of Salem now,  
Nor are their voices lifted up  
On Zion's saddened brow;  
Nor are their garnished sepulchres  
With pious sorrow kept,  
Where once the same Jerusalem,  
That killed them, came and wept.

Jerusalem, I would have seen  
Thy precipices steep,  
The trees of palm that overhang  
Thy gorges dark and deep,  
The goats that cling along thy cliffs,  
And browse upon thy rocks,  
Beneath whose shade lie down, alike,  
Thy shepherds and their flocks.

I would have mused, while night hung out  
Her silver lamp so pale,  
Beneath those ancient olive trees  
That grow in Kedron's vale,

Whose foliage from the pilgrim hides  
The city's wall sublime,  
Whose twisted arms and gnarled trunks  
Defy the scythe of time.

The garden of Gethsemane  
Those aged olive trees  
Are shading yet, and in their shade  
I would have sought the breeze,  
That, like an angel, bathed the brow,  
And bore to heaven the prayer,  
Of Jesus, when in agony,  
He sought the Father there.  
I would have gone to Calvary,  
And, where the Marys stood  
Bewailing loud the Crucified,  
As near him as they could,  
I would have stood, till Night o'er earth  
Her heavy pall had thrown,  
And thought upon my Saviour's cross,  
And learned to bear my own.

Jerusalem, Jerusalem,  
Thy cross thou bearest now!  
An iron yoke is on thy neck,  
And blood is on thy brow;  
Thy golden crown, the crown of truth,  
Thou didst reject as dross,  
And now thy cross is on thee laid,  
The Crescent is thy cross!

It was not mine, nor will it be,  
To see the bloody rod  
That scourgeth thee, and long hath scourged,  
Thou city of our God!  
But round thy hill the spirits throng  
Of all thy murdered seers,  
And voices that went up from it  
Are ringing in my ears,-

Went up that day, when darkness fell  
From all thy firmament,  
And shrouded thee at noon; and when  
Thy temple's vail was rent,  
And graves of holy men, that touched  
Thy feet, gave up their dead:-  
Jerusalem, thy prayer is heard,  
His blood is on thy head!



English clergyman, poet, and historian **Henry Hart Milman** (1791-1868), who was also the dean of the St. Paul's Cathedral in London, has authored several dramatic poems and important historical works. These include *The fall of Jerusalem*: a dramatic poem (1820), which poetically and at book-length described the situation of the Jews during the siege of Jerusalem.



American lawyer, editor and poet **John G. C. Brainard** (1796-1828) who preferred the literary over the legal career in his short life. In 1824-5 he published a first volume, *Occasional Pieces of Poetry* which contained both previously published and unpublished poems. Among those was the poem *Jerusalem*, introduced by the following lines:

The following paragraph from the *Mercantile Advisor* suggested the lines below it.

The following intelligence from Constantinople was of the 11th October, 1824. - "A severe earthquake is said to have taken place at Jerusalem which has destroyed great part of that city, shaken down the Mosque of Omar, and reduced the Holy Sepulchre to ruins from top to bottom."

## Jerusalem

FOUR lamps were burning o'er two mighty graves -  
Godfrey's and Baldwin's - Salem's Christian kings;  
And holy light glanced from Helena's naves,  
Fed with the incense which the Pilgrim brings, -  
While through the pannelled roof the cedar flings  
Its sainted arms o'er choir, and roof, and dome,  
And every porphyry-pillared cloister rings  
To every kneeler there its "welcome home,"  
As every lip breathes out, "O Lord, thy kingdom Come."  
A mosque was garnished with its crescent moons,  
And a clear voice called Mussulmans to prayer.  
There were the splendors of Judea's thrones-  
There were the trophies which its conquerors wear-  
All but the truth, the holy truth, was there:-  
For there, with lip profane, the crier stood,  
And him from the tall minaret you might hear,  
Singing to all whose steps had thither trod,  
That verse misunderstood, "There is no God but God."  
Hark! did the Pilgrim tremble as he kneeled?  
And did the turbaned Turk his sins confess?  
Those mighty hands the elements that wield,  
That mighty power that knows to curse or bless,  
Is over all; and in whatever dress  
His suppliants crowd around him, He can see  
Their heart, in city or in wilderness,  
And probe its core, and make its blindness flee,  
Owning Him very God, the only Deity.

There was an earthquake once that rent thy fane,  
 Proud Julian; when (against the prophecy  
 Of Him who lived, and died, and rose again,  
 "That one stone on another should not lie,")  
 Thou wouldst rebuild that Jewish masonry  
 To mock the eternal word. - The earth below  
 Gushed out in fire; and from the brazen sky,  
 And from the boiling seas such wrath did flow,  
 As saw not Shinar's plain, nor Babel's overthrow.  
 Another earthquake comes. Dome, roof, and wall  
 Tremble; and headlong to the grassy bank,  
 And in the muddied stream the fragments fall,  
 While the rent chasm spread its jaws, and drank  
 At one huge draught, the sediment, which sank  
 In Salem's drained goblet. Mighty power!  
 Thou whom we all should worship, praise, and thank,  
 Where was thy mercy in that awful hour,  
 When hell moved from beneath, and thine own heaven did lower?  
 Say, Pilate's palaces - proud Herod's towers -  
 Say, gate of Bethlehem, did your arches quake?  
 Thy pool, Bethesda, was it filled with showers?  
 Calm Gihon, did the jar thy waters wake?  
 Tomb of thee, Mary - Virgin - did it shake?  
 Glowed thy bought field, Aceldama, with blood?  
 Where were the shudderings Calvary might make?  
 Did sainted Mount Moriah send a flood,  
 To wash away the spot where once a God had stood?  
 Lost Salem of the Jews - great sepulchre  
 Of all profane and of all holy things -  
 Where Jew, and Turk, and Gentile yet concur  
 To make thee what thou art! thy history brings  
 Thoughts mixed of joy and woe. The whole earth rings  
 With the sad truth which He has prophesied,  
 Who would have sheltered with his holy wings  
 Thee and thy children. You his power defied:  
 You scourged him while he lived, and mocked him as he died!

There is a star in the untroubled sky,  
 That caught the first light which its Maker made -  
 It led the hymn of other orbs on high; -  
 'T will shine when all the fires of heaven shall fade.  
 Pilgrims at Salem's porch, be that your aid!  
 For it has kept its watch on Palestine!  
 Look to its holy light, nor be dismayed,  
 Though broken is each consecrated shrine,  
 Though crushed and ruined all - which men have called divine.

(From: Brainard, John G. C. Occasional Pieces of Poetry, New York, 1825)



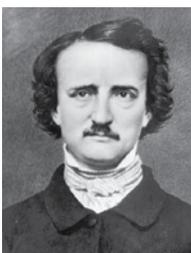
American poet **James A. Hillhouse** (1789-1841) was a Yale graduate who worked as a merchant but devoted much of his time to his writing. Among his principal works are *Hadad: A Dramatic Poem* (1825), from which the following is an excerpt:

## Hadad's Description of the City of Jerusalem

'T is so; the hoary harper sings aright;  
How beautiful is Zion! Like a queen,  
Arm'd with a helm, in virgin loveliness,  
Her heaving bosom in a bossy cuirass,  
She sits aloft, begirt with battlements  
And bulwarks swelling from the rock, to guard  
The sacred courts, pavilions, palaces,  
Soft gleaming through the umbrage of the woods  
Which tuft her summit, and, like raven tresses,  
Waved their dark beauty round the tower of David.

Resplendent with a thousand golden bucklers,  
The embrasures of alabaster shine;  
Hail'd by the pilgrims of the desert, bound  
To Judah's mart with orient merchandise.  
But not, for thou art fair and turret-crown'd,  
Wet with the choicest dew of heaven, and bless'd  
With golden fruits, and gales of frankincense,  
Dwell I beneath thine ample curtains. Here,  
Where saints and prophets teach, where the stern  
law  
Still speaks in thunder, where chief angels watch,  
And where the glory hovers, here I war.

(From: *Sacred Poets of England and America, for Three Centuries*.  
Edited by Rufus W. Griswold. New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1848.)



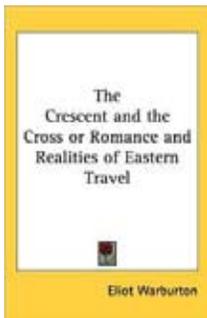
American poet, short-story writer, and critic **Edgar Allan Poe** (1809-49), who is best known for his horror and detective stories. His *Tale of Jerusalem* (1832) is a parody of a popular novel from 1828, *Zillah - A Tale of Jerusalem*, by Horace Smith (1777-1849). It describes two priests whose job it was to lower the baskets of gold in the holy city of Jerusalem. Poe ends with the pigs being raised instead.

## LITERATURE



French poet **Alphonse de Lamartine** (1790-1869), who had a distinct affection for the Bible and its land, published the literary record of his 1832-3 journey in *Voyages En Oriente* in 1835 (English: "Recollections of the East" 1838). He was rather disappointed by what he found:

"(Outside the walls of Jerusalem) we saw nothing living. We heard no sound of life. We found that same emptiness, that same silence that we would have expected to find before the buried gates of Pompei or Herculanium...total silence reigns over the city, along the high-ways, the villages... the whole country is like a graveyard."<sup>3</sup>



In a popular account of his travels throughout Greece, Turkey, Egypt and the Levant in 1843 – *The Crescent and the Cross Or Romance and Realities in Eastern Travel* (1845) – Irish novelist **Eliot Warburton** (1810-1852) devoted a whole chapter (Chapter III – Jerusalem) to the city, starting with the following paragraph:

It was indeed Jerusalem - and, had the Holy City risen before us in its palmiest days of magnificence and glory, it could not have created deeper emotion, or been gazed at more earnestly or with intense interest.

So long the object of eager hope and busy imagination, it stood before me at length in actual reality ... the object of the world's pilgrimage for two thousand years! All its history, so strangely blended with holiness and crime, with prosperity and desolation, with triumph and despair, and a thousand associations, came thronging into recollection, peopling its towers and surrounding plains with the scenes and actors of long, eventful years.



The poetry of Irish poet and critic **Aubrey de Vere** (1814-1902) was characterized by its seriousness and religious enthusiasm. The 'Ode to Jerusalem' is part of his volume of verses *The Search After Proserpine, Recollections of Greece and Other Poems* (1843), an imitation of the Greek style epic.

### Ode to Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Jerusalem!  
If any love thee not, on them  
May all thy judgments fall;  
For every hope that crowns our earth,  
All birth-gifts of her second birth,  
To thee she owes them all!

<sup>3</sup> Alphonse de Lamartine, *Recollections of the East*. Philadelphia: Carey, Lea & Blanchard: 1838.

Deep was thy guilt, and deep thy woe;  
The brand of Cain upon thy brow

Each shore has felt thy tread:  
No Altar now is thine; no Priest;  
Upon thy hearth no paschal feast:  
The paschal moon is dead.

When from their height the nations fall,  
The kind grave o'er them strews her pall  
They die as mortals die:  
But He who looked thee in the face  
Stamped there that look no years erase,  
His own on Calvary.

Awe-struck on thee men gaze; and yet  
Confess thy greatness, own our debt;  
And trembling still revere  
The Royal Family of man  
Supporting thus its blight and ban  
With constancy austere.

Those Sciences by us so prized  
The sternness of thy strength despised,  
Devices light and vain  
Of men that lack the might to live  
In that repose contemplative

Which Asian souls maintain,  
By thee the Book of Life was writ;  
And, wander where it may, with it  
Thy soul abroad is sent:  
Wherever towers a Christian Church,  
Palace of Earth, Heaven's sacred Porch,  
It is thy monument.

Thy minstrel songs, like sounds wind-borne  
From harps on Babel boughs forlorn,  
O'er every clime have swept;  
And Christian mothers yet grow pale  
With echoes faint of Rachel's wail  
Our maids with Ruth have wept.

Thou bind'st the Present with the Past,  
The prime of ages with the last:  
The golden chain art thou,  
On which alone all fates are hung

Of nations springing, or upsprung,  
Earthward once more to bow.

Across the World's tumultuous gate  
Thou flingest thy shadow's giant weight;-  
The mightiest birth of time  
For all her pangs she may not bear  
Until her feast she bids thee share  
And mount her throne sublime.

Far other gaze than that he pours  
On empires round thee sunk, and shores  
That once in victory shone,  
Far other gaze and paler frown  
The great Saturnian star bends down  
On cedared Lebanon.

He knows that thou, obscured and dim,  
Thus wrestling all night long with him,  
Shall victor rise at last:  
Destined thy mystic towers to rear  
More high than his declining sphere  
When, downward on the blast,  
God's mightiest Angel leaps; and stands,  
A Shape o'er-shadowing seas and lands;

And swears by Him who swore  
A faithful oath and kind to man  
Ere worlds were shaped or years began,  
That "Time shall be no more."

(From *The Search After Proserpine, Recollections of Greece and Other Poems*,  
Oxford: JH Parker London, 1843)

**Nicholas Michell** (1807-1880) was a well-known Cornish writer and poet who devoted much of his works to poetical descriptions of existing remains of ancient people and Kingdoms in the old and new world. The following is an excerpt from his *Ruins of Many Lands* (1850), which is a long poem describing the archaeological remnants of such places as Egypt, Rome, Carthage, Athens, and much more. The following part on Jerusalem appears in Part III of the book which is subtitled "Ruins of Miscellaneous Ages".

## Jerusalem

AWAKE! behold! within the mountain zone  
That, circling, girds her stern and desert throne,  
Immortal Salem sits, famed Zion's queen.  
Stretching her hands, and weeping o'er the scene.  
Immortal? - yes, though ills have laid her low.  
Patient in ruin, deathless in her woe! -  
And do we gaze, our weary wanderings past.  
On Sheba's envy, David's pride at last?  
The city prophets blessed, and kings revered,  
The saintly loved, the barbarous nations feared?  
What lips have kissed these stones! what holy sighs  
And burning prayers have mounted to those skies,  
As zealous pilgrims, kneeling on the sod.  
Have hailed the towers so favored once by God!  
Methinks we see those travellers from the West,  
With weary limb, and soiled and tattered vest.  
Just as they gain the last hill's stony brow.  
And glorious Salem bursts upon them now.  
The aged man whom peril, naught could daunt,  
With eager step still presses to the front.  
Throws back his locks, and spreads his hands on high,  
Light long-unknown rekindling in his eye,  
And blesses Heaven 't is his that scene to view,  
Ere his bones rest beneath the funeral yew.  
The maiden, taught from earliest hour to deem  
That city holy as a seraph's dream.  
Half veils her face in awe, and, bending meek,  
Vents in deep sobs all, all she may not speak.  
E'en the small child, that ran beside his sire.  
Hath caught from those around the hallowed fire,  
Drops on his knees with calmed and solemn air,  
And lisps from cherub mouth the simple prayer,  
Raises his eyes, each orb a sapphire gem,  
And folds his hands, and cries, - "Jerusalem!"

The heart may be forgiv'n the thoughts that burn,  
And feelings thus warm-gushing from their urn.  
Shall not our breast, too, throb, our spirit glow,  
And trembling tears of speechless rapture flow?  
Oh! come, bright angels, haunting Kedron's rill!  
Heaven's starry forms o'er Zion hovering still!  
Warm and inspire, shed round me fervour's beams,  
And lap my soul in beatific dreams !

Where through the world shall traveller hope to tread  
Soil blessed as this, though beauty long hath fled?  
With every scene we see is linked a spell,  
And every rock we climb a tale can tell.  
The ground is holy, - sainted memories rise, -  
Cities decay, but naught of spirit dies.

Sure shapes aerial walk yon desert vale,  
Speak from the cave, or murmur on the gale;  
We seem to hear Siloam's rocks among  
David's sweet lyre, Isaiah's hallowed song;  
And glowing fancy hails that form divine,  
Where to the winds yon olive boughs repine -  
The form of Him, who came to teach and save,  
Unlock heaven's gates, and triumph o'er the grave.

Salem! since David stormed her craggy height,  
And dwelt where scoffed the vaunting Jebusite,  
What stern, what varied fortunes has she known,  
Now conquering nations, now herself o'erthrown!  
To-day her Temple glitters wide and far.  
Shining in glory like a new-born star;  
Tyre gives her arts, and Ophir sends her gold.  
And monarchs burn at all their eyes behold.  
Chaldea comes, - she darkens Salem's fame.  
Her walls are stormed, her Temple sinks in flame.  
And distant far, where Babel's waters sweep.  
Her prophets pine, her captive children weep.

Woe's midnight past, again dawn freedom's hours.  
And Salem smiles, the new-built Temple towers;  
Once more the caravan from Yemen comes,  
The altar burns, and busy commerce hums;  
Once more his lion front stern Judah shows.  
And heroes rise to brave their country's foes.

But lo! o'er western hills that gathering cloud,  
Where muttering thunder peals more loud and loud.  
And forked lightning glitters down the sky, -  
'T is the dread flash of Rome's avenging eye!  
The Titan stalks, - beneath his coming tread.  
Towns bow in dust, and Syria quakes with dread;  
"Where'er he moves, the oldest empires fall,  
And Rome, wide-conquering Rome, seems lord of all.  
Gihon's long bill presents a ridge of spears.  
And filled with bucklers Kedron's vale appears;  
While north and south the bristling troops advance.  
And bear war's engines on, and shake the lance.

Girt on all sides, doomed Salem sees her grave;  
Her cup of woe is full, and naught can save.

O direst fruit of crime and hate and rage;  
O bloodiest leaf in History's warning page!  
Was it too little Rome besieged her wall.  
But Salem's sons by Salem's sons must fall?  
See! Hebrew chiefs above yon mangled heap,  
Their kindred slain, exult when all should weep;  
In civil strife true valor ceased to glow,  
'T was who should crush his fellow, not the foe.

Dread sights, they tell, foreran the city's doom,  
Meteors, like swords, blazed fierce in skies of gloom;  
O'er Gihon's steep as sank the sun's red rim,  
Chariots of fire raced round the horizon's brim,  
And mail-clad warriors, shaking spears of light,  
Spurred their fierce steeds, and climbed the zenith's height.  
Hark! to the dismal cry, that, night and day,  
Sounds from the wall, the street, and winding way!  
"Woe to the city!" thoughtful, pale, and sad,  
Wends the tall form, in mourning garments clad:  
" Woe to the city !"- mock'ry, scourgings given,  
Check not that voice - a voice which seems from heaven;  
Still 'mid the battle's roar, the murmurs low  
Of dying pain, is heard that cry of "woe!"  
But Pestilence now rides the tainted air,  
And white-faced Famine smites its thousands there;  
Sons from their starving parents tear the food,  
Sisters cast lots that one may yield her blood.  
Harrowing the heart a tale the Hebrews tell,  
Where Love to Nature's instincts bade farewell;  
She nursed her child, she clasped its form so weak,  
And with fond tears bedewed its smiling cheek.  
Her worshipped star, her flowret in the wild.  
Her life of life, was that young cherub child!

But hunger gnaws within - no food - no drink -  
She looks, she starts, and, maddening, seems to shrink,  
Then turns, and looks again with wolf-like eye,  
Sheds many a tear, heaves many a frantic sigh;  
The demon Hunger fills her veins with fire,  
Memory grows dim, and Love's last rays expire,  
With hands that tremble, and with lips that rave,  
She takes her infant's life, her own to save.

O Titus! Titus! "darling of mankind,"  
 That saw his virtues, to his errors blind,  
 Extolled his feeling heart, his justice praised,  
 And to his honor busts and arches raised;  
 But Salem's name in blood must written be,  
 The leprous spot that blasts his memory!  
 What though he rears his countless captives high,  
 To crosses nailed, that friends may see them die.  
 The Hebrews shed no tears, for woe has worn  
 Their senses dull, and more may scarce be borne:  
 Pangs, like old wounds, oft lull though will not heal.  
 Excess of feeling makes us cease to feel.

Some fight despairing, some in caverns hide,  
 These mope in madness, and their God deride;  
 While others full of zeal, in frenzy strong,  
 Still call on Heaven to avenge their country's wrong,  
 And half expect, down stooping from above,  
 Messiah's form will come in power and love,  
 And with one wave of glory's dazzling sword.  
 Scare from their holy walls the Pagan horde.

'T is o'er, - a deadlier struggle earth ne'er knew,  
 E'en fiends might shrink those scenes of blood to view;  
 'Tis o'er, - a million hearts lie cold and still,  
 And Rome's dread eagle soars on Zion's hill.  
 Salem, the home of prophets, helpless lies.  
 The mean one's jest, the raging heathen's prize.  
 Tire wraps her towers, her blazing Temple falls.  
 With all its golden spires and cedared halls.  
 Yes, that proud fane, as by an earthquake's shock.  
 Is hurled to dust, and levelled with the rock;  
 And o'er its site must pass the Latian plough -  
 Seraphs! look down from heaven, and pity now!  
 And if in your blessed eyes grief e'er appears.  
 For lost and ruined Salem shed your tears!

Time soothes the sharpest pang, and pitying throws  
 O'er harsh despair the softness of repose;  
 There reigns a quiet in this land of grief,  
 As if to Salem ages brought relief:  
 But ah! still strong her injured children's woe,  
 Though noiseless all, deep, deep the currents flow.  
 Where are her hallowed ruins?—few remain,  
 E'en for her ancient walls ye search in vain,  
 Her buildings crushed, o'erturned by barbarous hands,  
 Unchanged alone the hills on which she stands.\*  
 See! yon proud Mosque, its courts and crescents shine.

Where stood great Solomon's far-blazing shrine!  
The Turk on Zion, too, hath reared his pile,  
Master and judge, who deems all others vile,  
Scowls his disdain on Christian and on Jew,  
And scoffs their zeal to mark, their tears to view,  
Calls on his prophet, chants his Koran-prayer,  
The creed of Mecca all triumphant there.  
Yet 'midst these scenes, a dark perplexing maze,  
Some relics moulder - wrecks of other days.  
Cross Hinnom's vale, good Hebrews view with shame,  
Where once to Moloch burned the idol-flame;  
Wend o'er the waste where now no flowret springs,  
But bloomed of yore the "Garden of the Kings;"  
Ye reach an opening pierced in Ophel's side,  
While high beyond the huge Mosque lifts its pride, -  
'Tis cool Siloam's fount; when palms grew round,  
Here Jewish minstrels woke their harps' sweet sound,  
And Hebrew sages, on these rocks reclined,  
Taught listening crowds, and scattered pearls of mind.  
This rugged path the bless'd Apostles trod,  
Beneath yon arch once stood their king - their God;  
And here the wretch whose eyes were sealed in night,  
At Mercy's word, received the gift of sight.

Now, on these steps worn smooth by countless feet,  
Young Arab maids at eve are wont to meet,  
Their fair heads bearing pitchers, and their hands  
Wreathing the well's dark sides with flowery bands.  
Thou blessed fount! whose crystal waters still  
Bubble unchanged beneath that holy hill,  
Fire, War, and Ruin, wasting on each side,  
Have left untouched thy pure and sparkling tide,  
A living coolness in that cell below,  
Health in thy dew, and music in thy flow.  
Sure angels, while deserting Salem's towers,  
And Zion's Mount, and David's perished bowers,  
Might hither come, and sorrowing vigil keep,  
Glide through the shade, above those waters weep,  
And fold their wings, resolving ne'er to flee,  
The lingering guardians, hallowed fount! Of thee.

But hath the Hebrew, 'neath Oppression's reign,  
Resigned all feelings save the thirst of gain?  
No; let those stones, down which green ivies fall-  
The sole poor remnant left of Salem's wall -  
Those stones attest how warmly Hebrews feel  
For that loved home, whose woes they cannot heal.  
"The Wailing-Place" - when Sabbath eve descends,

And to their slavish toils a respite lends,  
 Mark yon sad groups, who fix their mournful eyes  
 On those rude stones their hearts so dearly prize;  
 Here, kneeling on the flints, to heaven they pray  
 To bless their brethren, scattered far away;  
 They ask for strength their weight of ills to bear,  
 Hope brighter hours, and wrestle with despair:  
 Then through the chinks they sigh, and pale lips keep  
 Pressed to the wall, and spread their hands and weep.  
 From broken hearts that wailing seems to rise,  
 And ask for help and pity of the skies:  
 No sound more plaintive ever heavenward stole,  
 Or woke the listener's tear, and touched his soul.\*  
 We enter Kedron's vale, -the stony height  
 Once crowned with olive-forests, bounds our right:  
 Age after age men yielded up their breath,  
 Till millions slumbered in this glen of death;  
 And here, with those he loves, in peace to lie,  
 Is still the hapless Hebrew's latest sigh.  
 Ah ! where so sadly sweet may scene be found?  
 Though flowers no longer deck the shrunken mound,  
 And plane and yew have ceased their shade to cast,  
 They, voiceless mourners, dead themselves at last,  
 Here, deep below sad Salem's eastern walls,  
 The garish sunbeam mildly-tempered falls;  
 Perched on the tombs soft plains the hermit bird,  
 And scarce the Pagan's Allah-cry is heard:  
 Through all the Kedron pours its placid rill,  
 Sweet Nature's child 'mid death surviving still,  
 Its low-breathed voice like whispers from the graves,  
 As their stone fronts its limpid wavelet laves.  
 The rocks of Olivet are piled above,  
 Whose shade steals down, as if in hallowing love.  
 In such a spot the soul, till judgment-day,  
 Might wish to leave her frail and cumbering clay,  
 Revisiting, at moonlight's holy hour,  
 That vale of peace, where Death has built his bower. (...)



French writer **Gustave Flaubert** (1821-1880) visited Jerusalem in 1850 as part of a tour of the Levant with his friend, Maxime du Camp.<sup>4</sup> His views of the city were scathing, as he did not find the imagined and hoped-for beauty but the "real" Jerusalem:

"Ruins everywhere, and everywhere the odor of graves. It seems as if the Lord's curse hovers over the city. The Holy City of three religions is rotting away from boredom, desertion, and neglect."

<sup>4</sup> See some of his works in the section on Old Photographs in this book.

Subsequently, Flaubert advised: "If you are a true believer don't go to the Holy Land".<sup>5</sup>

**Bayard Taylor** (1825-1878) was an American poet, literary critic, translator, and travel author, who described his extensive travel through parts of Europe and the Middle East in *The Lands of the Saracen Or Pictures of Palestine, Asia Minor, Sicily, and Spain* (1854). His journey also took him to Jerusalem in 1852, the first view of which he described as follows:



From the descriptions of travellers, I had expected to see in Jerusalem an ordinary modern Turkish town; but that before me, with its walls, fortresses, and domes, was it not still the City of David? I saw the Jerusalem of the New Testament, as I had imagined it. Long lines of walls crowned with a notched parapet and strengthened by towers; a few domes and spires above them; clusters of cypress here and there; this was all that was visible of the city. On either side the hill sloped down to the two deep valleys over which it hangs. On the east, the Mount of Olives, crowned with a chapel and mosque, rose high and steep, but in front, the eye passed directly over the city, to rest far away upon the lofty mountains of Moab, beyond the Dead Sea. The scene was grand in its simplicity. The prominent colors were the purple of those distant mountains, and the hoary gray of the nearer hills. The walls were of the dull yellow of weather-stained marble, and the only trees, the dark cypress and moonlit olive. Now, indeed, for one brief moment, I knew that I was in Palestine; that I saw Mount Olivet and Mount Zion; and--I know not how it was - my sight grew weak, and all objects trembled and wavered in a watery film. Since we arrived, I have looked down upon the city from the Mount of Olives, and up to it from the Valley of Jehosaphat; but I cannot restore the illusion of that first view.

At a later chapter he observes the following:

Jerusalem, internally, gives no impression but that of filth, ruin, poverty, and degradation. There are two or three streets in the western or higher portion of the city which are tolerably clean, but all the others, to the very gates of the Holy Sepulchre, are channels of pestilence. The Jewish Quarter, which is the largest, so sickened and disgusted me, that I should rather go the whole round of the city walls than pass through it a second time. The bazaars are poor, compared with those of other Oriental cities of the same size, and the principal trade seems to be in rosaries, both Turkish and Christian, crosses, seals, amulets, and pieces of the Holy Sepulchre.

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<sup>5</sup> Chen, Sarina, *The Sense of Seeing Jerusalem- Reflections on Pilgrimage to Jerusalem in the Nineteenth Century*, 2004.

Taylor was not as sentimental as other travelers who had preceded, describing what he saw in a relatively practical, blunt style. However he still produced a beautiful poem about Jerusalem, which was published in another work of his, entitled *Poems of the Orient* (1855):

## Jerusalem

Fair shines the moon, Jerusalem,  
Upon the hills that wore  
Thy glory once, their diadem  
Ere Judah's reign was o'er:  
The stars on hallowed Olivet  
And over Zion burn,  
But when shall rise thy splendor set  
Thy majesty return?

The peaceful shades that wrap thee now  
Thy desolation hide;  
The moonlit beauty of thy brow  
Restores thine ancient pride;  
Yet there, where Rome thy Temple rent,  
The dews of midnight wet  
The marble dome of Omar's tent,  
And Aksa's minaret.

Thy strength, Jerusalem, is o'er,  
And broken are thy walls;  
The harp of Israel sounds no more  
In thy deserted halls:  
But where thy Kings and Prophets trod.  
Triumphant over Death  
Behold the living Soul of God —  
The Christ of Nazareth!

The halo of his presence fills  
Thy courts, thy ways of men;  
His footsteps on thy holy hills  
Are beautiful as then;  
The prayer, whose bloody sweat betrayed  
His human agony,  
Still haunts the awful olive shade  
Of old Gethsemane.

Woe unto thee, Jerusalem!  
Slayer of Prophets, thou,  
That in thy fury stonest them  
God sent, and sends thee now: -

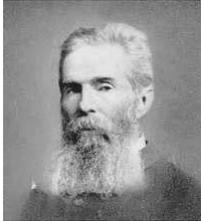
Where thou, Christ! with anguish spent,  
Forgave thy foes, and died.  
Thy garments yet are daily rent -  
Thy soul is crucified!

They darken with the Christian name  
The light that from thee beamed,  
And by the hatred they proclaim  
Thy spirit is blasphemed;  
Unto thine ear the prayers they send  
Were fit for Belial's reign,  
And Moslem cimeters defend  
The temple they profane.

Who shall rebuild Jerusalem? -  
Her scattered children bring  
From Earth's far ends, and gather them  
Beneath her sheltering wing?  
For Judah's sceptre broken lies,  
And from his kingly stem  
No new Messiah shall arise  
For lost Jerusalem!

But let the wild ass on her hills  
Its foal unfrighted lead.  
And by the source of Kedron's rills  
The desert adder breed:  
For where the love of Christ has made  
Its mansion in the heart.  
He builds in pomp that will not fade  
Her heavenly counterpart.

How long, O Christ, shall men obscure  
Thy holy charity -  
How long the godless rites endure,  
Which they bestow on thee?  
Thou, in whose soul of tenderness  
The Father's mercy shone,  
Who came, the sons of men to bless  
By Truth and Love alone.  
The suns of eighteen hundred years  
Have seen thy reign expand.  
And Morning, on her pathway, hears  
Thy name in every land;  
But where thy sacred steps were sent  
The Father's will to bide,  
Thy garments yet are daily rent -  
Thy soul is crucified!

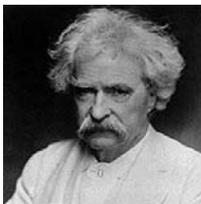


The famous American author ("Moby Dick") **Herman Melville** (1818-1891) who traveled through Europe and the Levant in 1857, spending 18 days in the Holy Land, mainly in and around Jerusalem. He was amazed by this experience and later wrote a two-volume epic poem entitled *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876), in which he describes the sights of the city as follows:

## The Hostel

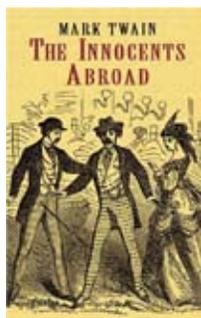
"The start this morning - gun and lance  
 Against the quarter-moon's low tide;  
 The thieves' huts where we hushed the ride;  
 Chill day-break in the lorn advance;  
 In stony strait the scorch of noon,  
 Thrown off by crags, reminding one  
 Of those hot paynims whose fierce hands  
 Flung showers of Afric's fiery sands  
 In face of that crusader-king,  
 Louis, to wither so his wing;  
 And, at the last, aloft for goal,  
 Like the ice-bastions round the Pole,  
 Thy blank, blank towers, Jerusalem!"

(From: *Clarel*, Part I. Jerusalem, "The Hostel")



Among the writers who were preoccupied with describing the sight of Jerusalem was **Mark Twain** (1835-1910), who visited the Holy City in 1867 and later wrote intensively about it in *The Innocents Abroad* (1869). His first sight of the city he described as follows:

"At last, away in the middle of the day, ancient bite of wall and crumbling arches began to line the way - we toiled up one more hill, and every pilgrim and every sinner swung his hat on high! Jerusalem!"



Perched on its eternal hills, white and domed and solid, massed together and hooped with high gray walls, the venerable city gleamed in the sun. So small! Why, it was no larger than an American village of four thousand inhabitants, and no larger than an ordinary Syrian city of thirty thousand. Jerusalem numbers only fourteen thousand people..."

"I think there was no individual in the party whose brain was not teeming with thoughts and images and memories invoked by the grand history of the venerable city that lay before us..."

"The thoughts Jerusalem suggests are full of poetry, sublimity and more than all, dignity."

Having later entered the city and wandered through its streets he observes: "Jerusalem is mournful and dreary and lifeless. I would not desire to live here," but then goes on to describe in detail the holy places, saying: "The sights are too many. They swarm about you at every step; no single foot of ground in all Jerusalem or within its neighborhood seems to be without a stirring and important history of its own." Regarding the Dome of the Rock, he wrote:

I need not speak of the wonderful beauty and the exquisite grace and symmetry that have made this Mosque [of Omar] so celebrated - because I did not see them. One can not see such things at an instant glance - one frequently only finds out how really beautiful a really beautiful woman is after considerable acquaintance with her; and the rule applies to Niagara Falls, to majestic mountains and to mosques - especially to mosques.

After detailed visits to the Old City and its sites, Twain comes up with this assessment:

... all that will be left will be pleasant memories of Jerusalem, memories we shall call up with always increasing interest as the years go by, memories which some day will become all beautiful when the last annoyance that incumbers them shall have faded out of our minds never again to return... To us, Jerusalem and today's experiences will be an enchanted memory a year hence - memory which money could not buy from us.

Wrapping up his entire journey, he wrote:

Renowned Jerusalem itself, the stateliest name in history, has lost all its ancient grandeur, and is become a pauper village; the riches of Solomon are no longer there to compel the admiration of visiting Oriental queens; the wonderful temple which was the pride and the glory of Israel, is gone, and the Ottoman crescent is lifted above the spot where, on that most memorable day in the annals of the world, they reared the Holy Cross. (...)

Palestine is desolate and unlovely. And why should it be otherwise? Can the curse of the Deity beautify a land? Palestine is no more of this work-day world. It is sacred to poetry and tradition - it is dream-land.



**Alfred Tennyson** (1809-1892) was Poet Laureate of the United Kingdom and is one of the most popular and most quoted English poets of his time. In 1882 he wrote the following poem:

## The Fall of Jerusalem

Jerusalem! Jerusalem!  
 Thou art low! thou mighty one,  
 How is the brilliance of thy diadem,  
 How is the lustre of thy throne  
 Rent from thee, and thy sun of fame  
 Darken'd by the shadowy pinion  
 Of the Roman bird, whose sway  
 All the tribes of earth obey,  
 Crouching 'neath his dread dominion,  
 And the terrors of his name!

How is thy royal seat—whereon  
 Sate in days of yore  
 Lowly Jesse's godlike son,  
 And the strength of Solomon,  
 In those rich and happy times  
 When the ships from Tarshish bore  
 Incense, and from Ophir's land,  
 With silken sail and cedar oar,  
 Wafting to Judea's strand  
 All the wealth of foreign climes—  
 How is thy royal seat o'erthrown!  
 Gone is all thy majesty:  
 Salem! Salem! city of kings,  
 Thou sittest desolate and lone,  
 Where once the glory of the Most High  
 Dwelt visibly enshrin'd between the wings  
 Of Cherubims, within whose bright embrace  
 The golden mercy-seat remain'd:  
 Land of Jehovah! view that sacred place  
 Abandon'd and profan'd!

Wail! fallen Salem! Wail:  
 Mohammed's votaries pollute thy fane;  
 The dark division of thine holy veil  
 Is rent in twain!  
 Thrice hath Sion's crowned rock  
 Seen thy temple's marble state,  
 Awfully, serenely great,  
 Towering on his sainted brow,  
 Rear its pinnacles of snow:  
 Thrice, with desolating shock,  
 Down to earth hath seen it driv'n  
 From his heights, which reach to heaven!

Wail! fallen Salem! Wail:  
Though not one stone above another  
There was left to tell the tale  
Of the greatness of thy story,  
Yet the long lapse of ages cannot smother  
The blaze of thine abounding glory;  
Which thro' the mist of rolling years,  
O'er history's darken'd page appears,  
Like the morning star, whose gleam  
Gazeth thro' the waste of night,  
What time old ocean's purple stream  
In his cold surge hath deeply lav'd  
Its ardent front of dewy light.  
Oh! who shall e'er forget thy bands which brav'd  
The terrors of the desert's barren reign,  
And that strong arm which broke the chain  
Wherein ye foully lay enslav'd,  
Or that sublime Theocracy which pav'd  
Your way thro' ocean's vast domain,  
And on, far on to Canaan's emerald plain  
Led the Israelitish crowd  
With a pillar and a cloud?

Signs on earth and signs on high  
Prophesied thy destiny:  
A trumpet's voice above thee rung,  
A starry sabre o'er thee hung;  
Visions of fiery armies, redly flashing  
In the many-colour'd glare  
Of the setting orb of day;  
And flaming chariots, fiercely dashing,  
Swept along the peopled air,  
In magnificent array:  
The temple doors, on brazen hinges crashing,  
Burst open with appalling sound,  
A wond'rous radiance streaming round!

'Our blood be on our heads!' ye said:  
Such your awless imprecation:  
Full bitterly at length 'twas paid  
Upon your captive nation!  
Arms of adverse legions bound thee,  
Plague and pestilence stood round thee;  
Seven weary suns had brighten'd Syria's sky,  
Yet still was heard th' unceasing cry—  
From south, north, east, and west, a voice,  
'Woe unto thy sons and daughters!  
Woe to Salem! thou art lost!'

A sound divine  
Came from the sainted, secret, inmost shrine:  
'Let us go hence!'—and then a noise—  
The thunders of the parting Deity,  
Like the rush of countless waters,  
Like the murmur of a host!

Though now each glorious hope be blighted,  
Yet an hour shall come, when ye,  
Though scatter'd like the chaff, shall be  
Beneath one standard once again united;  
When your wandering race shall own,  
Prostrate at the dazzling throne  
Of your high Almighty Lord,  
The wonders of his searchless word,  
Th' unfading splendours of his Son!

(From: *The Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson, Poet Laureate*,  
Edited by W. J. Rolffe in 12 volumes, Macmillan and Co., 1882).

Scottish scientist and author **Charles Bell** (1818-1898), who travelled to Palestine in 1886 and wrote a prose in verse form entitled *Gleanings from a Tour in Palestine and the East* (1887). In this book he expressed his enchantment about Jerusalem with the following verses:

I count it, O Jerusalem, a joy,  
A life's great privilege to gaze on thee;  
This hope I fondly cherished from a boy,  
And thou art now a very part of me.  
Thou art enthroned for ever in my mind,  
And blent with all that's strongest in my faith,  
For ever in my heart of hearts enshrined,  
A memory to hold my thoughts till death.  
How fair the vision opening on the eye,  
As coming from the East o'er Olivet,  
You see the grand old Haram wall arise  
From Kedron's gorge, o'er which 'tis proudly set.  
A city richer far than words can tell,  
In memories that set the soul on fire;  
No other spot on earth has such a spell  
To thrill the heart and satisfy desire.  
On this hoar mount He stood, and walked those streets  
Knelt in that garden, gazed upon that sky,  
In whom the manhood and the Godhead meets,  
Blended in one to all eternity.  
Sorrows are thine, supreme beyond compare,  
For that thy streets the Christ, rejected, trod,

Who o'er thee wept tears of a great despair,  
Because He failed to win thee back to God.  
Yet Christian hearts will hold thee sacred still,  
And pilgrims flock to thee as to a shrine;

And dear shall be each dale, each stream, each hill,  
Since here both lived and died the Christ Divine.  
Nor will I e'er despair of thee; the light  
Of the prophetic word breaks through my fears,  
And o'er the future sheds a rainbow bright  
Which spans the torrent of my flowing tears.  
"Beulah" again shall be thy rightful name,  
Never shalt thou be called "forsaken" more,  
And all the world shall gladden at thy fame,  
And echo sound thy praise from shore to shore.  
O Jesus, O Jerusalem, O God!  
O tenderness Divine, O human tears!  
O mercy deep as ocean, and as broad!  
O grace as boundless as the boundless spheres!  
Though Justice, Truth, and Righteousness Divine  
Are marked on mouldering tower and crumbling wall,  
Yet God's compassions judgment far outshine,  
As seen in tears from Jesu's eyes that fall.  
Christ! I would know Thee only by Thy grace,  
Thine infinite and all-embracing love;  
Oh, lift on me the shinings of Thy face,  
And give me foretaste of Thy heaven above!

Among the more contemporary writers that have been deeply impressed or inspired by their visits to Jerusalem were Swedish writer Selma Lagerlöf, English author G.K. Chesterton, and Greek novelist Nikos Kazantzakis whose works are but two examples substituting here for all others who wrote about Jerusalem.



**Selma Lagerlöf** (1858-1940) was the first woman and the first Swedish writer to win the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1909. Many of her novels describe her Swedish homeland, but she also wrote on medieval supernatural and religious themes. A journey to Egypt and Palestine in 1899-1900, during which she visited the Swedes who left Nås parish in Dalecarlia for Jerusalem and now lived at the American Colony, inspired her for her two-part novel *Jerusalem: I Dalarna* (1901) and *Jerusalem: I Det Heliga Landet* (1902). Focusing on the inhabitants of a small village in Sweden, the novel follows the wave of religious awakening that swept across the Swedish countryside in the late 1800s and leave everything behind to make the pilgrimage to Palestine. The first volume describes the village and its people while the second volume details what happened to the ones who, eventually, gave up everything to emigrate to a country about which they know very little apart from what they've read in the Bible. In the first part of her novel she describes the longing for Jerusalem that came over the peasants, as follows:

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“The call came to one after the other and at the same time all fear and all hardship left them. It was a great, great joy that came over them. They no longer thought about their farms and their kinsfolk. They thought only of their society flourishing again; they thought of the glory of being called to God’s city.”

Upon her own arrival in Jerusalem, Lagerlöf depicts the city as

“the old earth’s haunted chamber, where one would expect to see past greatness descending from the mountains and the ancient dead sneak around in the darkness of night.”<sup>6</sup>

Later, Lagerlöf described the city in a letter to her Danish benefactor, Georg Brandes, as follows:

“You ought to see Jerusalem. I wish that you could stand on the old Temple Mount; it is so beautiful and magnificent that one readily believes everything that we are told about the temple’s glory and the little people’s greatness. And then Jerusalem, where the air is so burning with religion, where all people have experienced miracles, where the calmest people become fanatical, out of their minds in the strife between the different sects. It is not a pleasant city, but it is curious to encounter an entire society of fanatics.”<sup>7</sup>

At another point she wrote that the city of Jerusalem would always lie there;

“brood in sorrow over something that could never be undone and could never be forgotten. Perhaps it might become rich again, but never happy, never carefree like other cities.”<sup>8</sup>



English writer and journalist **Gilbert Keith Chesterton** (1874-1936). In 1919, he embarked on a journey across Europe to Palestine, the impressions and observations of which he wrote down in his philosophical travelogue *The New Jerusalem* (1920). Of the city itself, Chesterton said he fell in love with it at first sight, as it was here that he found the whole history of the world, the place where East truly meets West. The following are further quotations from his book:

I need not say I did not expect the real Jerusalem to be the New Jerusalem; a city of charity and peace, any more than a city of chrysolite and pearl. I might more reasonably have expected an austere and ascetic place, oppressed with the weight of its destiny, with no inns except monasteries, and these sealed with the terrible silence of the

<sup>6</sup> Vernes-Carlsson, Jan. “You Ought to See Jerusalem,” in: *Nordic Literature 1997*, Copenhagen: Nordbok/Nordic Council of Ministers, 1997, p. 42.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 44.

Trappists; an awful city where men speak by signs in the street.(...)

It is the intense interest of Jerusalem that there can thus be two universes in the same street. Indeed there are ten rather than two; and it is a proverb that the fight is not only between Christian and Moslem, but between Christian and Christian. At this moment, it must be admitted, it is almost entirely a fight of Christian and Moslem allied against Jew. But of that I shall have to speak later; the point for the moment is that the varied colours of the streets are a true symbol of the varied colours of the souls. It is perhaps the only modern place where the war waged between ideas has such a visible and vivid heraldry. (...)

Jerusalem is a small town of big things; and the average modern city is a big town full of small things. All the most important and interesting powers in history are here gathered within the area of a quiet village; and if they are not always friends, at least they are necessarily neighbours.



British artist and entrepreneur **Charles Robert Ashbee** (1863-1942) was a main force of the English Arts and Crafts movement. In spring 1918, he was summoned by the new Military Governor of Jerusalem, Sir Ronald Storrs, to survey the extant crafts in the city and advise on town planning. In Jerusalem, Ashbee saw this as a chance to realize his artistic expression and revealed comprehensive appreciation of the city and its constituent artistic and social traits. His work was a combination of the modern requirements of a growing city with traditional artistic ideals. His remarks on the city include the following observations:

It is a city unique, and before all things a city of idealists, a city moreover in which the idealists through succeeding generations have torn each other and their city to pieces. Over forty times has it changed hands in history. And perhaps partly because of all this and partly because of the grandeur of its site and surrounding landscape it is a city of singular romance and beauty.

(Ashbee C. R., Proceedings of the Pro-Jerusalem Society, 1920-1922)

The sites of the city were for Ashbee testimonies in stone of the symbolic and historical city:

Jerusalem, this city of the mind, is a type, and thus everything is possible within her. It is a great privilege to have a little of her shaping. One reads back to Suleiman the Magnificent, to Saladin, to Al Mamoun, to Herod, to Nehemiah, to Solomon...

(Ashbee, C.R. A Palestine Notebook: 1918-1923, London 1923.)



Greek novelist **Nikos Kazantzakis** (1883-1957), mostly known for his literary works (e.g., *Zorba the Greek*) was also a frequent traveler. In 1926-27, he visited the Middle East as a newspaper correspondent. In Palestine, he was deeply moved by the experience of Easter (which later became part of *The Last Temptation of Christ*), and in Jerusalem he was particularly struck by his visit to the Mosque of Omar (Dome of the Rock), and by the sight of Christians, Jews and Muslims living together. Many of his impressions he wrote down in his 1927 *Taxidevontas* ("Travels", later published in English as *Journeying: Travels in Italy, Egypt, Sinai, Jerusalem and Cyprus*). The following is an excerpt from the English translation of his account describing the Dome of the Rock:

## The Mosque of Omar

I walk around the Mosque of Omar [i.e., the Dome of the Rock) and my heart beats carefree, like a kid on the cliffs. I don't stretch my body toward heaven - this earth looks good to me. This country of mine is made especially for my soul and my body. (...)

... this Mosque of Omar comforts and reconciles my heart with the soil. It gleams brilliantly in the sun, sparkling, joyful, multicolored, like a gigantic male peacock. I stride hurriedly across the great square over the ancient quays of Jerusalem. I walk around the magnificent mosque for hours, delaying as long as possible entering the dark door and plunging into the refreshing cool marvel. I look through the embrasures at the surrounding vision of Jerusalem. Beyond, the Moab Mountains steam gently, they sway slightly and shimmeringly disappear in the sun. The Mount of Olives is before me, parched, thirsty, covered with dust; and below lies the city, eroded by the burning sun, its bald houses with their black window holes resembling skulls. Camels pass, one behind the other, swaying rhythmically, indestructible, as though they had set out thousands of years ago. (...)

The Mosque of Omar was rising in the sun, like a fountain of sculpted precious stones, climbing, playing a little in the air, circling, giving way and coming back to earth. It did not want to leave.

I approached fascinated. The Arabic letters, plaited like flowers, were turning into maxims of the Koran, intertwining like creeping vines on the columns, blooming, grasping the dome. Thus they embraced and captivated God in the blooming, wild vineyard of earth. My eyes were refreshed as I crossed the threshold and plunged into the multicoloured, mysterious shade of the temple. At first, as I came in from the raw light, I could not distinguish anything. Only a sweetness spilled over me and relieved me, like a bath; first my body and, immediately after, my mind. I walked on, trembling with joy and anticipation. This is how the faithful Moslems must walk in the dark, after death, in the cool paradise of righteous recompense. (...)



Our Jerusalem: An American Family in the Holy City (1881-1949) (1951) is a special account of the history Jerusalem and the founding of the American Colony told by **Bertha Spafford Vester**, the descendent of the Spafford family which left Chicago in 1881 believing to “witness prophecy and refresh the body and soul” only to stay in Jerusalem and to start a community, witnessing tumultuous historical transformations, which are depicted in Our Jerusalem, as are many encounters with world-famous personalities who visited or lived in Jerusalem at that time.



English poet, journalist, literary critic and former Oxford Professor of Poetry **James Fenton** (1949-) has won several awards and prizes for his works. In his poem Jerusalem (1988), Fenton expresses in alternating, mutually exclusive statements the conflicting claims the city inspires.

## Jerusalem

I.

Stone cries to stone,  
Heart to heart, heart to stone,  
And the interrogation will not die  
For there is no eternal city  
And there is no pity  
And there is nothing underneath the sky  
No rainbow and no guarantee –  
There is no covenant between your God and me.

II.

It is superb in the air.  
Suffering is everywhere  
And each man wears his suffering like a skin.  
My history is proud.  
Mine is not allowed.  
This is the cistern where all wars begin,  
The laughter from the armoured car.  
This is the man who won't believe you're what you are.

III.

This is your fault.  
This is a crusader vault.  
The Brook of Kidron flows from Mea She'arim.  
I will pray for you.  
I will tell you what to do.  
I'll stone you. I shall break your every limb.  
Oh, I am not afraid of you,  
But maybe I should fear the things you make me do.

IV.

This is not Golgotha.  
This is the Holy Sepulchre,  
The Emperor Hadrian's temple to a love  
Which he did not much share.  
Golgotha could be anywhere.  
Jerusalem itself is on the move.  
It leaps and leaps from hill to hill  
And as it makes its way it also makes its will.

V.

The city was sacked.  
Jordan was driven back.  
The pious Christians burned the Jews alive.  
This is a minaret.  
I'm not finished yet.  
We're waiting for reinforcements to arrive.  
What was your mother's real name?  
Would it be safe today to go to Bethlehem?

VI.

This is the Garden Tomb.  
No, this is the Garden Tomb.  
I'm an Armenian. I am a Copt.  
This is Utopia.  
I came here from Ethiopia.  
This hole is where the flying carpet dropped  
The Prophet off to pray one night  
And from here one hour later he resumed his flight.

VII.

Who packed your bag?  
I packed my bag.  
Where was your uncle's mother's sister born?  
Have you ever met an Arab?  
Yes, I am a scarab.  
I am a worm. I am a thing of scorn.  
I cry Impure from street to street  
And see my degradation in the eyes I meet.

VIII.

I am your enemy.  
This is Gethsemane.  
The broken graves look to the Temple Mount.  
Tell me now, tell me when  
When shall we all rise again?  
Shall I be first in that great body count?

When shall the tribes be gathered in?  
When, tell me, when shall the Last Things begin?

VIX.

You are in error.  
This is terror.  
This is your banishment. This land is mine.  
This is what you earn.  
This is the Law of No Return.  
This is the sour dough, this the sweet wine.  
This is my history, this my race  
And this unhappy man threw acid in my face.

X.

Stone cries to stone,  
Heart to heart, heart to stone.  
These are the warrior archaeologists.  
This is us and that is them.  
This is Jerusalem.  
These are dying men with tattooed wrists.  
Do this and I'll destroy your home.  
I have destroyed your home.  
You have destroyed my home.

# LIBRARIES

That Jerusalem has been an important center of scholarship and writing should come as no surprise given the city's lofty position in the Arab world. As a result, collections of texts ranging from some of the very first Qur'ans to treatises on Arab history and accomplishments were created and held inside the city. The absence of any governmental structure that can amass and preserve these tomes for public use has prompted a number of individuals and families to establish their own libraries and make their collections available to everyone. These invaluable institutions now dot the landscape of Jerusalem.

For many years, there existed a sort of competition between important Arab families in Jerusalem to see which could assemble a superior library. Today, only three of these libraries remain, each having grown in importance. With over 5,000 books and 12,000 manuscripts, the Khalidi Library (Al-Maktaba Al-Khalidiyya) that sits adjacent to the Haram Ash-Sharif in Jerusalem's Old City is the largest of these. Located in a historical Mamluk-era building, the collection has functioned as a library for over a century and contains works across a wide range of topics, with religious law being the most common subject.<sup>1</sup> Khadija, the daughter of Musa Effendi Al-Khalidi (military Qadi of Anatolia in 1932), is said to have thought of turning the family's book collection in the building into a public library that could help spread the learning of the general public. She motivated her grandson, Haj Ragheb Bek Al-Khalidi to start the library, which was officially launched in 1899 after seeking advice from experts from Damascus. The building was subjected to the dangers of Zionist expropriation and the case was taken to the court, which, in a rare case, ruled in favor of Al-Khalidi family.

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<sup>1</sup> Ajami, Jocelyn M. "A Hidden Treasure". *Aramco World*, Vol 44 No 6. Nov/Dec 1993.

Another important institution is the Al-Budeiri Library, which contains upwards of 700 rare manuscripts and 2,000 books. The library came into being through the efforts and wealth of Sheikh Mohammad Ibn Budeir (1747-1805), better known as Sheikh Al-Budeiri, who was known as the “Scholar of Jerusalem’s Scholars” before his death in 1805.<sup>2</sup> The final family library that remains important to Arab Jerusalemites is the personal collection of Fahmi Al-Ansari, who has made his more than 30,000 titles available to the public. The Al-Ansari Library, also known as Bayt Al-Maqdas, is located on Omar Ibn Al-As St. between Nablus Road and Salah Eddin. Founded in 1957, it contains all daily newspapers published in Palestine since 1967 and has an equally impressive collection of books on a variety of topics though with a focus on Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup>



As is true in the whole of the Arab world, mosque libraries have historically been an integral part of religious and scholarly life in Jerusalem. The study of religion only grew in importance as Islam spread throughout Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. Jerusalem remained at the center of the religious discourse, and mosques throughout the city held small book collections. These selections are usually quite modest, consisting of little more than the Qur’an and maybe a few additional works, and their importance has waned significantly in modern times. Not surprisingly, the library of the Al-Aqsa Mosque is the most prominent of these. Its manuscripts and published works are in both Arabic and English and are made available to researchers and students. Most of the volumes have a focus on Islam’s role in Jerusalem and Palestine. The Haram Ash-Sharif also houses the Islamic Museum, which boasts an impressive display of Qur’ans from all eras and all corners of the Arab World.

Finally, there are innumerable small collections held in institutions throughout the city. Foundations, nonprofit organizations, and even companies maintain modest libraries in their offices. Through these holdings, Arab history and culture are preserved for future generations, who may even see many of the collections consolidated into a public system one day. One such collection was housed in the Orient House as part of the Arab Studies Society. The facilities held more than 17,000 books, a document center with periodicals and photographs, and a wealth of historical papers pertaining to Jerusalem and Palestine.

2 “Families of Jerusalem and Palestine – Al-Budeiri family of Jerusalem.” [www.Jerusalemites.org](http://www.Jerusalemites.org)

3 Bergan, Erling. “Libraries in the West Bank and Gaza: Obstacles and Possibilities”. Presentation from Bibliotekarforbundet, Oslo, Norway.