



**Jerusalem Art  
History Journal:**

*An Undergraduate  
eJournal*

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**Histoire de l'art  
à Jérusalem :**

*cyberrevue étudiante  
de premier cycle*

—

2016. vol 03

Jerusalem Art History Journal: An Undergraduate eJournal /  
Histoire de l'art à Jérusalem : cyberrevue étudiante de premier cycle

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(514) 848-2424, ext. 4698

Free e-publication, available via the

Department of Art History, Concordia University

E-publication en libre accès via Département d'histoire de l'art

[jerusalemjournal.concordia.ca](http://jerusalemjournal.concordia.ca)

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Copy-editing / Révision des Textes

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Translation / Traduction

Translation Services, Concordia University /

Services de traduction, Université Concordia



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# Introducing the Guest Editors

—

LOREN LERNER,

*Editor-in-chief*

I want to thank Tara Ng and Kimberly Glassman for sharing the responsibility of guest editors for this third volume of the *Jerusalem Art History Journal: An Undergraduate eJournal*. Tara reviewed, revised and copy-edited the essays, while Kimberly did preliminary editing, organized the texts into sections and wrote the editorial.

Tara Ng recently completed her graduate studies in art history along with her master's thesis, entitled "'Addicts, Crooks, and Drunks': Reimagining Vancouver's Skid Road through the Photography of Fred Herzog, 1957–70." She is interested in socially engaged photography and the photographic representation of marginalized individuals and communities. Tara's writing is featured in the CCCA Academy e-publication *Global Engagements in Contemporary Canadian Art: Thirty-Nine*

*Exhibition Essays and Fifty-Five Artists*. Most recently she edited essays by students in Dr. Lerner's undergraduate seminar "Here's Looking at You Kid": Picturing Children, Envisioning Childhood for the website *Family Works: A Multiplicity of Meanings and Contexts*.

Kimberly is in her third year of undergraduate studies in art history (co-op) and psychology. Her research interests include investigating art history and visual culture analysis through a psychohistorical lens. Her writing is featured in Concordia undergraduate journals such as the *Yiara Magazine* and *AfterImages Magazine*, and has contributed writing to Dr. Lerner's undergraduate seminar "Here's Looking at You Kid": Picturing Children, Envisioning Childhood for the website *Family Works: A Multiplicity of Meanings and Contexts*. Kim currently holds the position of managing editor for the *Concordia Undergraduate Journal of Art History (CUJAH)* and has served as editor for the first *Arts & Science Federation of Student Associations (ASFA) Academic Journal, Between Arts and Science*. She recently completed a summer research fellowship at the Museum of Jewish Montreal.

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# Présentation des collaboratrices invitées

—

LOREN LERNER,  
*Rédactrice en chef*

Je tiens à remercier Tara Ng et Kimberly Glassman, qui ont dirigé conjointement la rédaction de cette troisième édition d'*Histoire de l'art à Jérusalem : cyberrevue étudiante de premier cycle*.

Tara a révisé et corrigé les articles; Kimberly a effectué la révision préliminaire, organisé le recueil de textes en sections et rédigé l'éditorial.

Tara Ng a vient de terminer ses études supérieures en histoire de l'art et son mémoire de maîtrise, qui s'intitule '*Addicts, Crooks, and Drunks*': *Reimagining Vancouver's Skid Road through the*

*Photography of Fred Herzog, 1957–70* (« toxicomanes, escrocs et ivrognes : réimaginer les quartiers mal famés de Vancouver grâce aux photos de Fred Herzog de 1957 à 1970 »). Elles s'intéressent à la photographie à portée sociale ainsi qu'à la représentation photographique d'individus et de communautés marginalisés. Ses écrits sont publiés dans la revue électronique *Art contemporain canadien et mobilisation universelle : trente-neuf textes d'exposition; cinquante-cinq artistes / Global Engagements in Contemporary Canadian Art: Thirty-Nine Exhibition Essays and Fifty-Five Artists* chapeauté par l'Académie du Centre de l'art contemporain canadien (CACC). Elle a tout récemment révisé des essais rédigés par des étudiants dans le cadre du séminaire de premier cycle de la professeure Lerner qui s'intitule «Here's Looking at You Kid»: Picturing Children, Envisioning Childhood for the website *Family Works: A Multiplicity of Meanings and Contexts* (« au plaisir de vous regarder, mes petits : dépeindre les enfants, imaginer l'enfance pour le site Web *portraits de famille : une multiplicité de sens et de contextes* »).

Kimberly en est à sa troisième année d'un baccalauréat en histoire de l'art (programme coop) et en psychologie. Elle s'intéresse en outre à l'analyse de l'histoire de l'art et de la culture visuelle sous l'angle de la psychologie historique. Ses textes figurent dans des revues étudiantes de l'Université Concordia comme le *Yiara Magazine* et le *After Images Magazine*. Elle a par ailleurs contribué des écrits au séminaire de premier cycle

de la professeure Lerner «Here's Looking at You Kid»: *Picturing Children, Envisioning Childhood* for the website *Family Works: A Multiplicity of Meanings and Contexts*. Elle occupe présentement le poste de directrice de rédaction au *Concordia Undergraduate Journal of Art History* (« revue d'histoire de l'art des étudiants de premier cycle de Concordia ») et a été rédactrice en chef du premier numéro de la revue spécialisée de la Fédération des associations en arts et sciences (FAAS), *Between Arts and Science* (« entre l'art et la science »). Elle termine actuellement un stage d'été en recherche au Musée du Montréal juif.

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# Editorial

—

TARA NG and

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN

*Guest Co-editors*

Although the city of Jerusalem is a concrete place with geographical boundaries, it is also a malleable concept that carries a multiplicity of meanings within different cultures, histories and religions. Simultaneously embodying the past, present and future, Jerusalem is perceived on the one hand as a utopia—a placeless, ideal Promised Land—and on the other hand as a geographical site whose ownership has been contested since biblical times. In a sense, critically approaching the subject of Jerusalem parallels a physical encounter with the holy city: one experiences the journey there, the historic landscape and its symbolic appropriation, the political strife, the return home, and eventually the optimistic hope and desire for a peaceful future.

This third issue of the *Jerusalem Art History Journal* features art history essays and texts on personal artworks or

research-creation projects by Concordia University students in Dr. Loren Lerner's 2015 undergraduate course *The City of Jerusalem: Ideas and Images*. These essays are organized into four sections that follow the aforementioned approach to the subject of Jerusalem. The first, entitled "A Journey to Jerusalem," explores the Holy Land from the viewpoints of different types of people who physically or metaphorically journey to Jerusalem, including pilgrims, tourists, art collectors, art dealers, looters, refugees and political leaders. "New Jerusalems and Public Art Interventions: A Changing Landscape" addresses the *double entendre* of the term "New Jerusalem," referring both to the reproduction or transposition of Jerusalem elsewhere, and to the art interventions that enact symbolic or material change within the city's landscape. "Hierophany: A Return Home" focuses on the notion of exile and identity through an analysis of cultural iconography and objects that point "home" to the Holy Land. Finally, "A Shared Jerusalem: Commonalities and Differences" deals with Jerusalem as the place of religions, artists and inhabitants of its past, present and future. The texts in this section acknowledge the differences that exist between the city's residents but emphasize the mutual values and beliefs of those separated by physical, political or social barriers. This section concludes with a call for understanding and peace in the Holy Land, pointing towards an optimistic future of compassion and reconciliation.

The essays in this volume innovatively examine how the art, architecture and material culture of Jerusalem have been shaped by the city's religious importance and by the various ethnic and religious groups that have resided in the city throughout its prodigious history. We hope that in exploring these art historical studies, artworks and research-creation projects you will discover a dynamic and captivating city that is both real and imagined, earthly and sacred, divided and shared.

# Éditorial

—

TARA NG et

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN

*Directrices de la rédaction*

Si Jérusalem est un lieu réel doté de frontières géographiques, c'est également un concept malléable qui revêt une foule de significations dans le cadre de cultures, d'histoires et de religions diverses et variées. Incarnant en même temps le passé, le présent et l'avenir, cette ville est perçue d'une part comme une utopie – une terre promise universelle – et de l'autre comme une zone géographique dont l'appartenance est contestée depuis l'époque biblique. Dans un certain sens, aborder le sujet de la ville sainte avec un œil critique s'apparente à s'y rendre physiquement : on vit le voyage, le paysage historique et son intégration symbolique, le conflit politique, le retour au bercail et, finalement, la vision optimiste et le désir d'un avenir pacifique.

Cette troisième édition d'*Histoire de l'art à Jérusalem* comprend des essais en histoire de l'art et des textes sur des œuvres

personnelles ou des projets de recherche-crédation réalisés par des étudiants de l'Université Concordia dans le cadre du cours de premier cycle donné par Loren Lerner en 2015 : *The City of Jerusalem: Ideas and Images* (« Jérusalem : idées et images »). Ces essais sont divisés en quatre sections qui traitent du sujet de Jérusalem en suivant le cheminement susmentionné. La première, intitulée « un voyage à Jérusalem », examine la terre sainte du point de vue de personnes en tous genres qui s'y rendent réellement ou métaphoriquement, entre autres des pèlerins, des touristes, des collectionneurs d'art, des pillards, des réfugiés et des dirigeants politiques. La section « les nouvelles Jérusalem et les interventions en art public : un contexte en pleine évolution » s'interroge sur le double sens du terme « nouvelle Jérusalem ». Celui-ci fait référence tant aux représentations – ou aux transpositions – hiérosolymitaines vues ailleurs qu'aux interventions artistiques qui illustrent les changements symboliques ou réels dans son paysage urbain. La section « la hiérophanie : un retour au bercail » examine la notion d'exil et d'identité par l'analyse de l'iconographie culturelle et des objets désignant la terre sainte comme leur patrie. La section finale, intitulée « une Jérusalem partagée : points communs et différences » porte sur Jérusalem en tant que contrée de religions, d'artistes et d'habitants d'hier, d'aujourd'hui et de demain. Les textes de cette dernière partie reconnaissent les différences qui existent entre les résidents de cette localité, mais insistent sur les valeurs et croyances communes à ceux et celles qui sont divisés par des barrières physiques, politiques ou sociales. Cette

section s'achève en lançant un appel à la compréhension et à la paix en terre sainte, laissant prévoir un avenir prometteur sous le signe de la compassion et de la réconciliation.

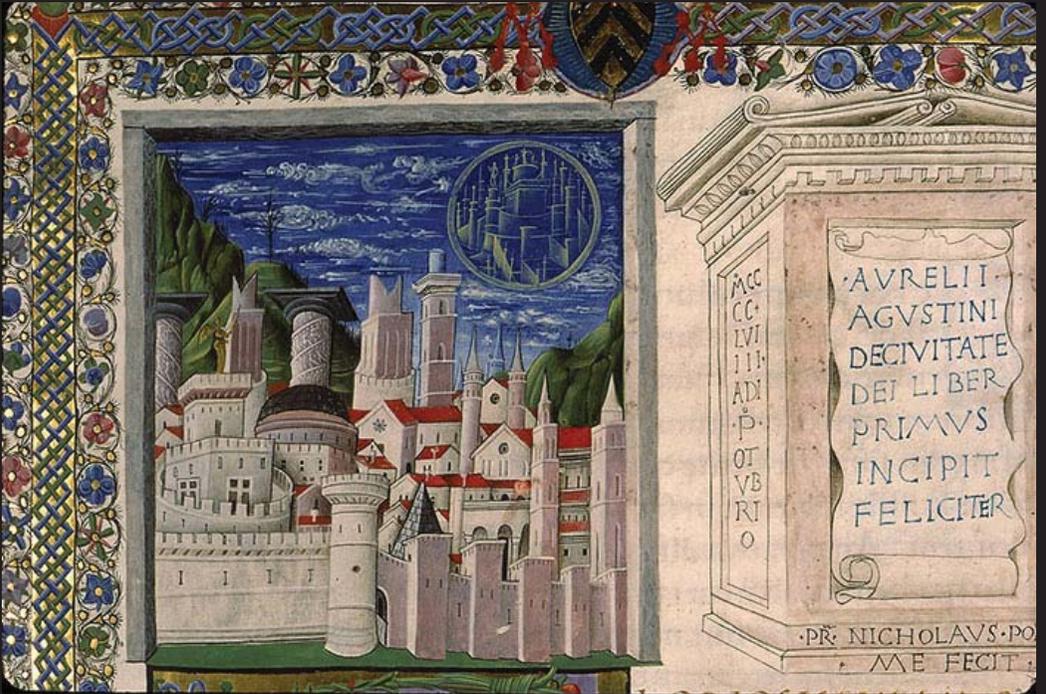
Les essais du présent numéro examinent de façon novatrice comment l'importance religieuse de Jérusalem et les divers groupes ethniques et religieux qui l'ont habitée au cours de sa fabuleuse histoire ont façonné son art, son architecture et sa culture matérielle. Nous espérons qu'en explorant ces études historico-artistiques, œuvres et projets de recherche-crédation, vous découvrirez une ville dynamique et captivante qui se révèle à la fois réelle et imaginaire, terrestre et sacrée, divisée et partagée.

# **A Journey to Jerusalem**

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# **Un voyage à Jérusalem**

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Niccolò Polano, *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, from Augustine, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*, 1459, paint, gold and ink on parchment, ms. 0218, f. 002, Sainte-Geneviève Library, Paris.

# Heavenly Jerusalem as the City of God: Representations through Illuminated Manuscripts of Saint Augustine's Theology of the Two Cities

—

GEORGES-ÉTIENNE CARRIÈRE

Originating in Late Antiquity and most often produced in monastic contexts, illustrated manuscripts became one of the main literary methods of disseminating Christian theology and catechism. They often took the form of the book of hours or other devotional books, and contained transcriptions of

philosophical treatises and canonical doctrines of Christianity. One seminal illustrated manuscript is Augustine of Hippo's (354–430) *City of God against the Pagans* or *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos* (426). Written in the wake of the sack of Rome by Alaric I (370/75–410) and the Visigoths in 410, this work aimed to counter Roman accusations that the fall of the Empire was due to the new Christian faith and the abandonment of traditional pagan practices. However, Augustine's manuscript became much more than simply a defence; it became an essential treatise on Christian theology. His separation between the City of God and the City of Man became part of the cultural landscape and even the arts as illuminated manuscripts of his works illustrated this theological approach to the Fall of the Empire. One example in particular is an illumination (fig. 1) from the defunct Paris Abbey of Sainte-Geneviève's (now housed at the Sainte-Geneviève Library) 1459 Roman manuscript of Saint Augustine's *De Civitate Dei*, copied by Jean Göbelin de Linz, decorated by Niccolò Polano and originally commissioned by Niccolò Forteguerra or Philippe de Lévis de Cousan.<sup>1</sup> Although the illumination's subtitle, *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, identifies both cities as fifteenth-century Rome,<sup>2</sup> the depiction of Saint Augustine's *Civitas Dei* (City of God) is actually an image of Jerusalem, or, more precisely, the Heavenly or New Jerusalem as the opposite of Rome.

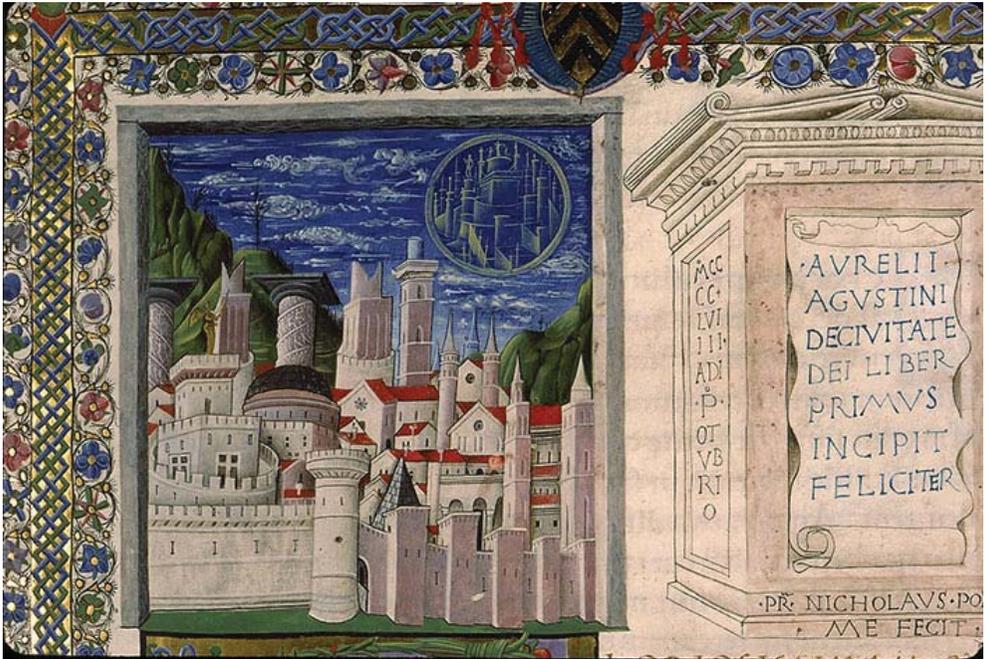


Fig. 1. Niccolò Polano, *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, from Augustine, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*, 1459, paint, gold and ink on parchment, ms. 0218, f. 002, Sainte-Geneviève Library, Paris.  
<http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/ouvrages/ouvrages.php?imageInd=5&id=3190>.

Augustine's defence of Christianity depicts world history as a conflict between God and the devil by dividing it into two distinct entities: the Earthly City or City of Man is where inhabitants engage in sin and the pleasures of the present, while the Heavenly City or the City of God is marked by an abandonment of earthly pleasures and dedication to the Christian faith and the eternal truths of God. As Rome was being sacked by the Visigoths, Augustine was the first to react to the end of the

Empire through sermons and letters. He divided human history into two timeframes: the present and eternity. Augustine asserted that the Fall of Rome was due to the impermanence of earthly kingdoms and earthly concerns in opposition to the eternal and permanent City of God.<sup>3</sup> As illustrated in *De Civitate Dei*, the city of Rome symbolizes the Earthly City. *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* (fig. 2), the illumination on its second page, showcases fifteenth-century Rome, recognizable through the surrounding hilly landscape and its landmarks, including the Trajan Column and its counterpart, the column of Marcus Aurelius, in the upper left part of the city; the Mausoleum of Hadrian and the dome of the Pantheon in the centre left; the Pyramid of Cestius in the bottom right corner; the Torre delle Milizie; the Torre dei Conti; and what seems to be the tower of the Campidoglio above it.



Fig. 2. Detailed view of Rome, Niccolò Polano, *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, from Augustine, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*, 1459, paint, gold and ink on parchment, ms. 0218, f. 002, Sainte-Geneviève Library, Paris.

<http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/ouvrages/ouvrages.php?imageInd=5&id=3190>.

The Earthly City was defined as a place where people—pagans in the case of Rome—engaged in the celebration of man-made idols who rivalled God, espousing politics and values that opposed those of the inhabitants of Heavenly City. The latter, who were submissive to God, were seen as a social community emphasizing common welfare for the sake of a celestial society that was truthful, friendly, desiring for its neighbour what it wished for itself and ruling for the good of its people. By contrast, the Earthly City was viewed as selfish, controlling social affairs for

the purpose of domination, greedy for praise, envious, desiring to subjugate its neighbors and ruling for its own advantage.<sup>4</sup> While Augustine considered the earthly world as a mixture of both conceptual cities, the similarities between the vices committed by the Earthly City and the politics of the Roman Empire are evident. As shown in this illumination depicting Rome, most of the city's monuments glorified emperors, particularly conquerors such as Trajan (53–117), whose column commemorated his victory over the Dacians (101–102, 105–106), and Marcus Aurelius (121–180), whose column celebrated his Danubian or Maromannic Wars (166–180). These monuments demonstrate that the Roman Empire subjugated its neighbors and ruled for its own advantage. The suggestion that Rome was the Earthly City is of no surprise; after all, Augustine's treatise is a defence of Christianity against accusations that the Christian God did not protect the city and the Empire as the traditional gods had.

Pagan deities and their celebrations were intrinsically linked to cities and their well-being, as well as to the virtues of the Empire; their abandonment could only result in the fall of the capital of the world, according to English historian Edward Gibbon in *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776). He asserts that the Church had discouraged the strengths of the Empire: the clergy had successfully preached patience and pusillanimity, and the last remains of military spirit—which made the Empire so powerful and glorious—were traded for piety. Large portions of public and private wealth were consecrated

to charity and devotion instead of the city. The emperor turned to synods rather than seizing his role as a conqueror, and the Church and state became distracted by fights between religious factions.<sup>5</sup> Gibbon's views clash with those of Augustine, who did not believe that the pagan gods had brought peace to Rome, as it had suffered catastrophes—whether natural or due to wars—at times when cults were still fully active. If the pagan gods had protected the city so well, then why was it not a new occurrence that the city suffered? Furthermore, Augustine asserted that the Roman world did not come into being as a result of fate but with God's blessing due to the Romans' natural values.<sup>6</sup> Despite the illumination's title, *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, Rome was not the eternal City of God that Augustine defended, but rather the impermanent City of Man he reviled for its glorification, pride, thirst for power and its celebration of man-made idols instead of God.<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to Rome as the Earthly City, a floating orb encasing an abstractly depicted city is shining through the sky above the right side of the walled city (fig. 3). This city is that of God. This ethereal *civitas*, rendered in sapphire blue and gold, does not showcase familiar landmarks that make it as clearly recognizable as Rome below. A central architectural entity stretches in a spiral-like manner towards the heavenly skies, flanked by a great number of crosses, walls, spires and towers. One tower on the left side of the central unit making up the city is topped with a sculpture of a man.



Fig. 3. Detailed view of the City of God, Niccolò Polano, *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, from Augustine, *De Civitate Dei contra Paganos*, 1459, paint, gold and ink on parchment, ms. 0218, f. 002, Sainte-Geneviève Library, Paris.  
<http://initiale.irht.cnrs.fr/ouvrages/ouvrages.php?imageId=5&id=3190>.

The apparent lack of identifiable places has its source in Augustine's early works, particularly *Confessions* (397–400). Whereas Rome is a sensible representation of reality, Augustine views heaven as beyond the material world, imaginative and spiritual.<sup>8</sup> In fact, as Robert J. O'Connell argues in *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine* (1978), to escape earthly realities and its evils, an ascensional aesthetic of escape from the sensible realm is required in the theologian's doctrine. The

abstract representation of the City of God is ascensional in that it is beyond our sensible realm; the beauty of God and therefore of His city is “beyond the graces of all created forms.”<sup>9</sup>

Augustine identifies the two cities as Jerusalem and Babylon in his treatise. Jerusalem must be the City of God in this illumination, since he refers to Rome as the second Babylon: “Roma quasi secunda Babylonia.”<sup>10</sup> Babylon was the antithesis of Jerusalem, which is the eternal place where perfection is reached.<sup>11</sup> Similar to Rome, Babylon was the city of the devil, according to the Book of Revelation 18:1–3: “She has fallen, [...] Babylon the great; and has become a habitation of demons, a stronghold of every unclean and hateful bird.”<sup>12</sup> After all, Babylon was trying to rival God by constructing the tower of Babel, and, like Rome, the morals of its citizens were in sharp contrast to those of Christians. Babylon was universally metaphorized as a whore, the embodiment of sin as proclaimed in Revelation 17:3–5:

I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet colored beast [to which Satan had given his power], full of names of blasphemy. [...] And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, Babylon had a symbolic name that was synonymous with confusion.<sup>14</sup> While *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* does not depict Rome in chaos, the city echoes the description of Babylonia—the metaphor of Babylon as a prostitute—in its pearly white walls and scarlet roofs; its imperial values and taste for power, signified by its monuments; and its use of purple as the imperial colour of the Roman Empire. The Italian Renaissance humanist Petrarch (1304–1374) reinforces the notion of Babylon as the embodiment of chaos and sin in his works, which are based on Augustinian doctrine and biblical texts, namely the Psalms. In *De vita solitaria* (1346–56), Petrarch posits that country and city life represent the spheres of spiritual and secular existence, respectively. He describes city life as an enslavement to earthly concerns leading to damnation. Meanwhile, Psalm 46 links the Eternal Jerusalem to country life, which offers freedom from enslavement to the chains of Babylon or earthly concerns.<sup>15</sup> Augustinian doctrine portrays Jerusalem as *visio pacis*, or vision of peace, and as equivalent to Zion, which means “a speculation or contemplation.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, Jerusalem is a peaceful state achieved through contemplation. This notion is supported by Augustine’s assertion that Christians are not in their right place on earth but are pilgrims that sojourn as alien, while their native city, Jerusalem, awaits them in heaven. Therefore we may consider the floating city as representing Heavenly Jerusalem in opposition to Rome, reflecting the biblical dichotomy between Jerusalem and Babylon.

Augustine's conceptualization of the Earthly City and of the City of God draws heavily upon the accounts of Saint John regarding the apocalypse and the coming of Heavenly Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation, the last book of the New Testament. In *The Cloisters Apocalypse* (ca. 1330), an illuminated manuscript made in Normandy, France, and conserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art's cloisters collection, *The Last Judgment* (fig. 4), *The New Jerusalem* (fig. 5) and *John Led to the New Jerusalem* (fig. 6) recall the Last Judgment and the presentation of Heavenly Jerusalem to Saint John of Patmos, two of the final acts of the apocalyptic prophecy.

*The Last Judgment* shows the scene where God will decide whether each person will either go to heaven or purgatory—where they will eventually be redeemed and go to heaven—or be doomed to hell. One of the main events of the apocalypse following the demise of Babylon is the triumph of good over evil at the Final Judgment. Those who have sinned and contributed to the fall of humankind will be separated from the believers, who will be redeemed of the sins of humanity in the ultimate victory of good over evil. In his treatise, Augustine similarly interprets the Fall of Rome as the end of the earthly pleasures of the pagans and the triumph of the Christian faith.



Fig. 4. Anonymous, *The Last Judgment*, from *The Cloisters Apocalypse*, ca. 1330, paint, gold, silver and brown ink on parchment, pages: 30.8 x 22.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/cl/web-large/DP225790.jpg>.

This illumination shows an enthroned Christ in a mandorla holding the book of life in which humans read their fates. Below Christ is a stone or cloud upon which sits various sections or copies of the book. To his left, Saint John is watching naked men read their fates. To his right are men who have already received their fates and are being swallowed by the fires of hell as a demon smirks under them. Saint John recalls this scene as being the creation of a new heaven and a new earth as the

first ones were no more.<sup>17</sup> In *The New Jerusalem*, the Heavenly Jerusalem is coming down from the heavens as God—rendered as a haloed figure in a mandorla—exclaims to Saint John:

Behold the dwelling of God with men. [...] And they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [He] will wipe away every tear from their eyes. And death shall be no more; neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain any more. [...] But as for the cowardly and unbelieving, and abominable and murderers, and fornicators and sorcerers, and idolaters and all liars, their portion shall be in the pool that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.



Fig. 5. Anonymous, *The New Jerusalem*, from *The Cloisters Apocalypse*, ca. 1330, paint, gold, silver and brown ink on parchment, pages: 30.8 x 22.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/cl/web-large/DP225750.jpg>.

The canonized prophet watches the scene as both moon and sun hover above, marking a timeless space without days and nights. He is sitting on a rock near the water as the city, “made ready as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2), descends, with her colourful, gilded walls covered in sapphires, emeralds, rubies and other precious stones.

The final illumination of this cycle shows Saint John being led to the New Jerusalem by an angel. The New Jerusalem that he accesses is a *Civitas Dei*—the Promised Land to believers, who comprise its population along with angels and God.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 6. Anonymous, *John Led to the New Jerusalem*, from *The Cloisters Apocalypse*, ca. 1330, paint, gold, silver and brown ink on parchment, pages: 30.8 x 22.9 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://images.metmuseum.org/CRDImages/cl/web-large/DP225791.jpg>.

In fact, the notion of the Promised Land as housing God Himself was not new. For the Hebrews, the Temple of Solomon was the permanent house of God on earth, as is the Third Temple prophesied in the Book of Ezekiel from the Old Testament. The Third Temple is described as the eternal dwelling place of the God of Israel on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem.<sup>19</sup> The apparent focus on a central architectural unit around which the whole city revolves in the depiction of the City of God in *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* is not unlike the idea of a third temple being built after the destruction of the two earlier temples by the Babylonians and the Romans.

The representations of floating cities in *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* and in *The Cloisters Apocalypse* are both essentially fantastical images with no particular reference points to the actual Jerusalem. They depict a New Jerusalem or metaphorical heaven, a space that is attained spiritually and beyond our sensible reality. The City of God in *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* is made of gold and what seems to be sapphire or some kind of glass; similarly, in *The Cloisters Apocalypse*, John describes the New Jerusalem as “pure gold, like pure glass.”<sup>20</sup> *The Cloisters Apocalypse* mentions the City of God as having no sun and no moon; although they are pictured in *The New Jerusalem*, neither seems to be illuminating the city. Rather, the Heavenly City is described as being lit by the glory of God; this is represented in *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* by the golden accents, which cast light and shadows on the city in the absence of a sun and moon.<sup>21</sup>

Another common feature between the images in *The Cloisters Apocalypse* and *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* is the marked distinction in the portrayal of pagans/sinners and Christians. Whereas the sinners are designated to the fiery pits of hell in *The Last Judgment*, those who are true believers are invited to the Heavenly Jerusalem in *The New Jerusalem*. *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City* similarly shows the separation between the *Civitas Terrestria* as the land of earthly pleasure leading to hell and the *Civitas Dei*, the promised land of the faithful. Therefore the City of God shown in *Rome, City*

*of God, and the Earthly City* is inseparable from the Heavenly Jerusalem because they are equivalent concepts, similar in both appearance and meaning.

In conclusion, although referred to as *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*, this image does not depict Rome as both the City of God and the Earthly City; instead, there is a clear contrast between Rome as a second Babylon or the City of Man and the Heavenly City or the New Jerusalem as the Promised Land for believers. This picture depicts the triumph of the Christian faith, represented by the Holy City hovering over Rome as the Earthly City. The notion of the Promised Land is still relevant today, as Jerusalem is visited by countless Christian pilgrims as not only the site of Christ's Passion but also the Holy City of God, His home amongst His believers, a conceptual *civitas* of Christianity.

#### NOTES

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- 2 F. 002 is referred to by France's Institut de recherche et d'histoire des textes du Centre national de la recherche scientifique databases as *Rome, City of God, and the Earthly City*.

- 3 Johannes van Oort, *Jerusalem and Babylon: A Study into Augustine's City of God and the Sources of His Doctrine of the Two Cities* (Leiden; New York: E.J. Brill, 1991), 58–59.
- 4 Paul Briens et al., eds., *Reading about the World*, vol. 1, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Orlando: Harcourt Brace, 1999), accessed November 17, 2015, [http://public.wsu.edu/~briens/world\\_civ/worldcivreader/world\\_civ\\_reader\\_1/contents\\_vol\\_1.html](http://public.wsu.edu/~briens/world_civ/worldcivreader/world_civ_reader_1/contents_vol_1.html).
- 5 Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. IV, ed. J. B. Bury (New York: Fred de Fau & Company, 1906), 160–69.
- 6 Van Oort, 65.
- 7 Ibid., 129.
- 8 Robert J. O'Connell, *Art and the Christian Intelligence in St. Augustine* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), 102.
- 9 Ibid., 113–15.
- 10 Augustine, quoted in Van Oort, 71.
- 11 O'Connell, 119–22.
- 12 Florens Deuchler, Jeffrey M. Hoffeld, and Helmut Nickel, *The Cloisters Apocalypse, Vol. II: Commentaries on an Early Fourteenth-Century Manuscript* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1971), 88.
- 13 Ann H. Hallock, "The Pre-Eminent Role of Babilonia in Petrarch's Theme of the Two Cities," *Italica* 54, no. 2 (Summer 1977): 294.

- 14 Van Oort, 121.
- 15 Hallock, 292–93.
- 16 Van Oort, 121–22.
- 17 Deuchler, Hoffeld, and Nickel, 94.
- 18 Van Oort, 116–17.
- 19 Ezekiel 40–42 (NIV).
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- 21 Ibid.

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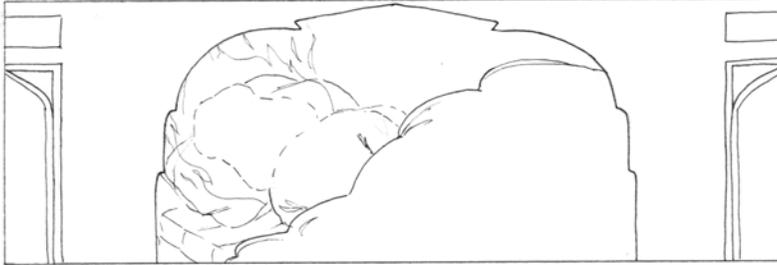
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A NIGHT JOURNEY  
VOLUME I.



Gabby Orellana, *A Night Journey, Volume I* (Page 1),  
ink on watercolour paper, 2015.



Gabby Orellana, *A Night Journey, Volume I (Page 2)*,  
ink on watercolour paper, 2015.



Gabby Orellana, *A Night Journey, Volume I* (Page 3),  
ink on watercolour paper, 2015.

# Muhammad's Night Journey: Comic Visual Exploration through a Western Perspective

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GABBY ORELLANA

*A Night Journey, Volume I* (2015) (figs. 1, 2, 3) is a three-page comic strip exploring the first of two parts—the *Isra* and the *Mi'rāj*—of Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey in the Qur'an. In the *Isra* journey, Muhammad travels on the steed Burāq from Mecca to Jerusalem, where he guides other prophets as they pray together. My work not only incorporates the dialogue featured in written versions of the myth, but also references visual representations of the narrative in Persian miniatures—that is, small paintings on paper—of the Ilkhanid (ca. 1256–1353) and Timurid eras (ca. 1370–1507). Although the Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey is a core canonical tale of Islam, my interpretation aims

to show that the narrative is an adaptive and shifting work that lends itself as an accessible entry point into Islam and its relationship to Jerusalem. Moreover, my comic strip bridges the gap between pictorial and written variations of the story.

As part of my research I studied facsimiles of the Persian miniatures illustrating Muhammad's Night Journey in the *Mir'âj Nâmeh* (Book of the Ascension of Muhammad) (1436) held at the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris.<sup>1</sup> This Turkish Islamic manuscript was produced in the city of Herat in Khorasan (modern Afghanistan), and was commissioned by Shāhrukh Mīrza (1377–1447), son of Timur (late 1320s/1330s–1405), who founded the Timurid Empire in Persia and Central Asia. I also examined the written versions of the myth by Ibn 'Abbas (ca. 619–687), Muhammad's cousin and a Qur'an scholar.<sup>2</sup> I documented symbolic and recurring elements of the narrative that have survived despite its many different translations and adaptations, and recorded other anecdotal details I felt would enrich my comic. I then created a written script of spoken passages accompanied by a plan of actions that would take place in specific panels. I also included small concept sketches of how the key panels would potentially look. I then proceeded to faintly pencil in the content of the pages, taking care to measure and compose each section based on the importance of the narrative action. Finally, I went over each pencil line with ink, varying the width of the line in order to emphasize the pictorial planes and certain details such as the ornamentation.

disrespectful act for the majority of Muslims. Consequently, painters have portrayed him using the imagery of the written word. Other techniques include masking, veiling or defacing pre-existing depictions of the Prophet. The concealment of his face is reminiscent of the visual comic convention known as the “masking effect,” which involves the juxtaposition of simplified, iconic characters with detailed and realistic backgrounds.<sup>3</sup> This technique amplifies the impact of a given picture: diminishing the amount of visual information to be digested allows the viewer to more easily grasp the meaning of the work. This is why iconic figures, such as a smiley face, provoke an almost instant understanding of their meaning.

Due to Chinese-Turkish artistic influences, the *Mirâj Nâme*'s illuminations are inhabited exclusively by icon-like figural representations.<sup>4</sup> Aside from the previously mentioned erasure of the Prophet's face, figures are depicted with emotionally blank faces in three-quarter profile. This monotonous appearance flattens the figures into rudimentary illustrations, yet the economy of detail produces a powerful impact by directing the viewer's attention to the subjects' dark, expressive pupils and long, slanted eyes. These simplified images are conducive to meditation in that they allow the viewer to project their own emotions onto them. In turn, as these iconic characters become more relatable, the transposition of the viewer and the characters becomes possible.

Another similarity between the Persian miniatures and the comic medium is the relationship between picture and text, wherein both elements contribute equally to the work's composition and to the viewer's interpretation. There are various types of combinations of words and pictures in comics; the desired effects and emotions extracted from the reader depend on how relevant both aspects are to the narrative. For example, one can amplify the effect of the other or provide additive commentary; text and visuals may even be divided to illustrate unrelated stories.<sup>5</sup>

Although there is only one image accompanying the Prophet's Night Journey in the *Mirâj Nâme*, Persian miniatures play a significant role in the telling of the other narratives in the manuscript. The rich texture of mosaic patterns in otherwise two-dimensional backgrounds infuses the scenes with a dream-like, spiritual quality. This and other similar recurring visual motifs lull the viewer into a sense of calmness. Small details urge the reader to physically move closer to the images to study them, generating a more intimate viewing experience and thus a stronger connection between the reader and the narrative. Although this manuscript was new to me, identifying familiar visual-literary devices in it made it easier for me to connect to the religious subject matter of the work and then to translate Muhammad's Night Journey according to a Western viewer's interpretation.

As a result of my study of the *Mirâj Nâme*, the comic's structure and aesthetics are influenced by traditional Persian art practices of the Ilkhanid and Timurid eras. However, due to the nature of the comic medium, my work departs from Persian miniatures in a few significant ways. One major difference is my exclusive use of black and white in contrast to the rich colours typically found in Persian miniatures. The purpose of this strategy is to clearly convey the meaning of each individual panel. When paired with the decorative elements and symbols proper to the Persian illustrative style, the application of colour overshadowed the textual components of the comic medium. Thus form supersedes colour in my narrative-driven piece.

Persian miniatures are typically framed by arabesque, geometric and floral patterns, often in gold or silver;<sup>6</sup> I used such motifs in my comic, along with the symbol of fire, to replace the use of lapis lazuli in Persian miniatures to symbolize divinity. This expensive pigment is used sparingly in scenes situated on earth with the exception of holy sites, such as the Prophet Muhammad's nightly resting space and the far-off Mosque in Jerusalem. In *On the Way to Jerusalem* (fig. 4) from the *Mirâj Nâme*, this hue imbues the starry night sky with a pure and ethereal quality.



Fig. 1. Gabby Orellana, *A Night Journey, Volume I* (Page 1),  
ink on watercolour paper, 2015.



Fig. 2. Gabby Orellana, *A Night Journey, Volume 1* (Page 2), ink on watercolour paper, 2015.



Fig. 3. Gabby Orellana, *A Night Journey, Volume I* (Page 3), ink on watercolour paper, 2015.

It was the Persian miniatures in the *Mirāj Nāmeḥ* that initially inspired me to translate the myth into a comic strip, as there are strong visual similarities between the two mediums. I was particularly interested in the relationship between figure and background in the Persian miniatures. For centuries leading up to the present, figurative representation of the Prophet Muhammad has been considered a forbidden and

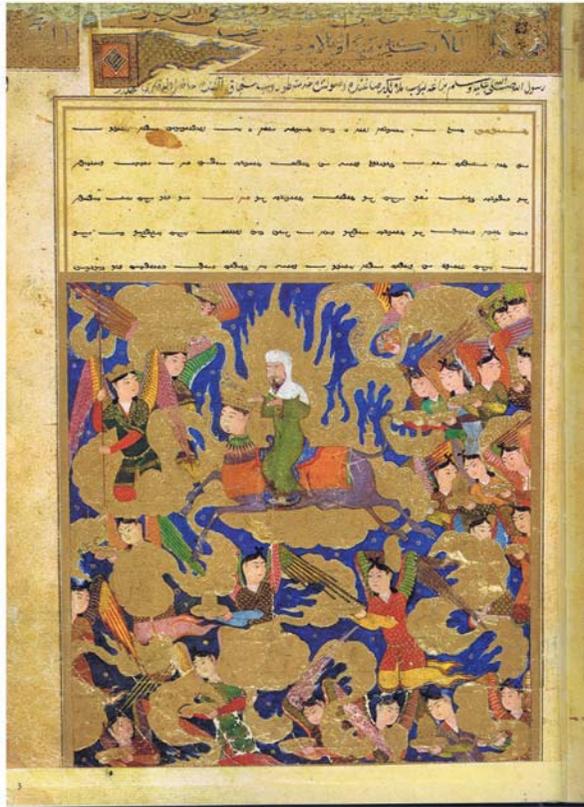


Fig. 4. Anonymous, *On the Way to Jerusalem*, from the *Mirāj Nāmeḥ*, 1436, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. Reproduced from Marie-Rose Séguy, *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet: Mirāj Nāmeḥ: Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (Manuscript supplement Turc 190)*, trans. Richard Pevar (New York: G. Braziller, 1977), 36.

I also changed the orientation of the picture plane from left to right. As can be seen in the illuminations *On the Way to Jerusalem* and *The Angel Gabriel Appears to the Prophet* (fig. 5), the figures are prominently moving towards the left, as Eastern manuscripts are traditionally read from right to left.<sup>7</sup>

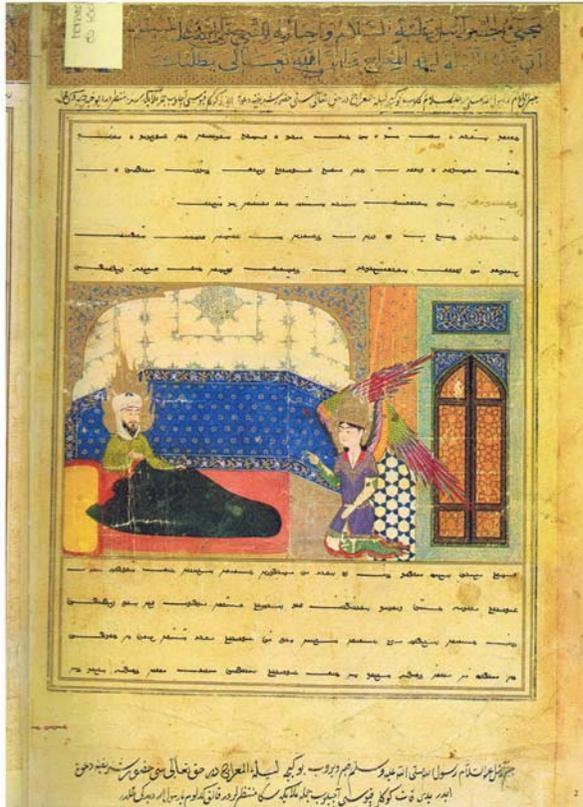


Fig. 5. *The Angel Gabriel Appears to the Prophet*, from the *Mirāj Nāmeḥ*, 1436, Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. Reproduced from Marie-Rose Séguy, *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet: Mirāj Nāmeḥ: Bibliothèque nationale, Paris (Manuscript supplement Turc 190)*, trans. Richard Pevar (New York: G. Braziller, 1977), 37.

In Western pictorial tradition, a figure's orientation towards the left suggests they are closed off from the world, isolated or returning to their original destination. It was thus important to change the orientation in my comic so that the Prophet is understood by the Western reader as advancing towards his

destination, departing from the familiar world to embark on a mystical journey.

In my approach to depicting the Prophet Muhammad, I attempted to bridge the Persian miniature painting style of the Ilkhanid and Timurid dynasties with a more modern tradition. Beginning in the fourteenth century, the Turco-Mongol tradition of the Timurid Empire encouraged artists to draw on traditions of Buddhist and Manichaean devotional art in their portrayal of the Prophet as an uncovered figure in illustrations of what were understood to be historical events.<sup>8</sup> However, since the sixteenth century, depictions of the Prophet in illuminated manuscripts have been aniconic. In order to both preserve the sanctity of the Night Journey and remain respectful towards the holy figure of Muhammad, his portrayal in my comic is symbolized by a blank outline. Other elements of my work reference art of the Timurid and the Ilkhanid periods, such as the three-quarter profile and clothing in which the figures are rendered, the lack of expressivity in their faces, their hand gestures and their postures. In incorporating these details, my work acquired the symbolism and ornamental value sought after in illuminated manuscripts. My comic thus not only recounts Muhammad's Night Journey, but it also alludes to the historical development of the Persian Muslim art of illuminated manuscripts.

My interpretation of Muhammad's Night Journey is but one of many versions that have emerged over the centuries. Indeed,

the story remains a fluid one on account of the uncertainty of what events actually took place and which version is considered to be the most faithful. Numerous details of the story are left vague in the original Qur'anic verses. After much consideration, I chose to base my narrative exclusively on the *Isra* portion of the Night Journey, which consists of the Prophet's departure from his sleeping chamber to the far-off Mosque of Jerusalem. Aside from the place of departure and the end destination of the night travel, the second part of the journey—the Ascension of Muhammad to Heaven—is missing direct references in the original verses.<sup>9</sup> As such, authors, painters and narrators had the freedom to create different interpretations of the Prophet's Night Journey, which are often more fantastical and engaging but remain true to the main points of the narrative.<sup>10</sup> In this way, the tale of the Night Journey is constantly changing and adapting to the needs of contemporary Muslim communities and readers. The title of my work, *A Night Journey, Volume I*, represents a rejection of the idea that one version of the myth must supersede all others. My intention is to highlight the spiritual message of the tale rather than considering it as a fixed canonical work. Indeed, the Prophet's Night Journey lends itself to artistic creativity, thus offering an accessible introduction to Islam.

My comic work, along with other iterations of the Night Journey, shares an important connection to the Muslim community in the city of Jerusalem. The familiar and tangible setting of the Holy

Land is an important facet of this mystical and fantastic narrative. Peter Webb links the narrative structure of the Prophet's Night Journey to traditional Western utopian narratives. The journey follows the characteristic pattern of departure from the familiar realm, crossing into the otherworldly but still known, before arriving in a mystical fictional place.<sup>11</sup> Muhammad's journey from Mecca to Jerusalem grounds this myth in earthly reality, which forces the reader to question the possibility that these events actually occurred. According to Frederick S. Colby, the universal structure of this important Islamic narrative bridges Western and Eastern perspectives and is thus a key source of its power.<sup>12</sup> In the same way that the characters in the story are to be interpreted as symbols, the settings of Mecca and Jerusalem are intended to conjure the idea of holy places. In dismissing the accurate depiction of architectural detail, my work aims not to paint a perfect depiction of the sites, but to communicate to the viewer the pure spiritual essence they hold.

To conclude, the adaptive and accessible nature of the Prophet's Night Journey—evident in its numerous pictorial and literary iterations—is the source of the myth's universal resonance. One may choose to approach the folktale as an historical account of actual events or simply as a fictional tale that symbolizes religious traditions of the past; however, the fact remains that the story is grounded in real locations imbued with symbolic meaning, creating a sense of wonder and utopianism in the mystical yet plausible world visited in the fantastic tale. In my comic,

the familiar setting of Jerusalem invites non-Muslim viewers on this spiritual journey grounded in the earthly realm.

#### NOTES

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- 2 Norman Calder, Jawid Mojaddedi, and Andrew Rippin, eds., trans., *Classical Islam: A Sourcebook of Religious Literature*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 19–16.
- 3 Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1994), 30–45.
- 4 Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Creators: A History of Heroes of the Imagination* (London: Phoenix, 2001), <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=0307817210>.
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- 7 *Ibid.*, 31.
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- 10 Peter Webb, "The Familiar and the Fantastic in Narratives of Muhammad's Ascension to the Heavenly Spheres," *Middle Eastern Literatures* 15, no. 3 (December 2012): 241.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 242.
- 12 Frederick Stephen Colby, *Narrating Mu'ammad's Night Journey: Tracing the Development of the Ibn 'Abbās Ascension Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), 2.

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Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Cover), 2015.



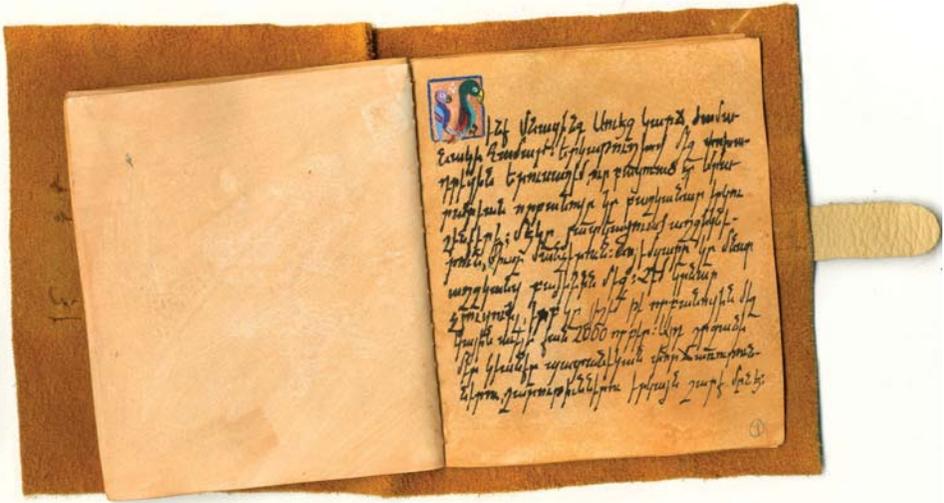
Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Page 1), 2015.



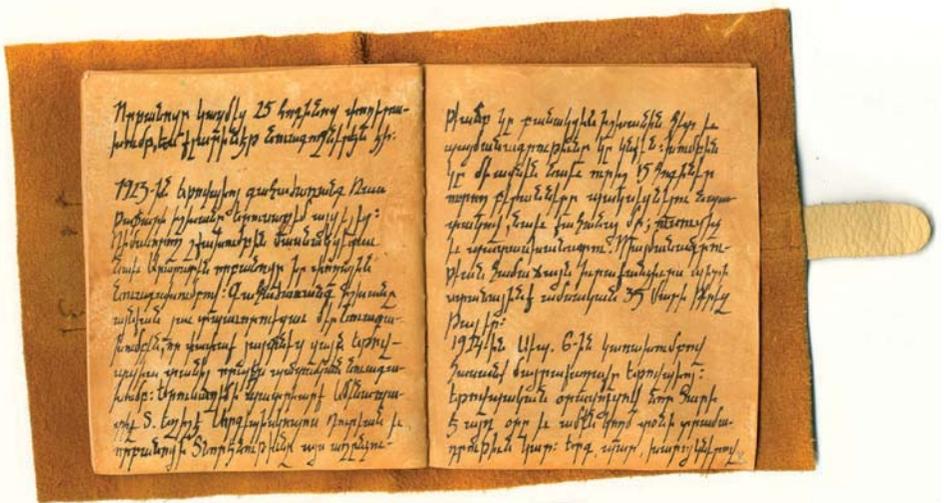
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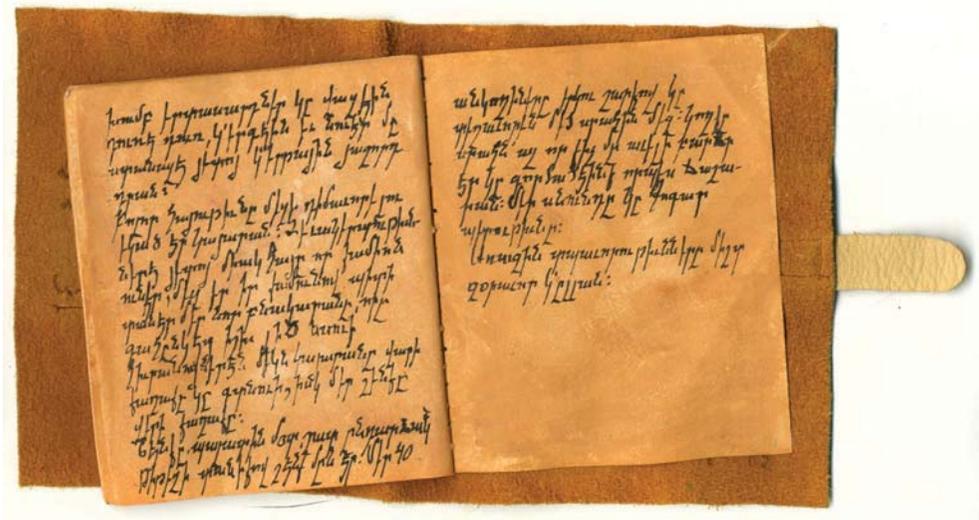
Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Page 4 and 5), 2015.



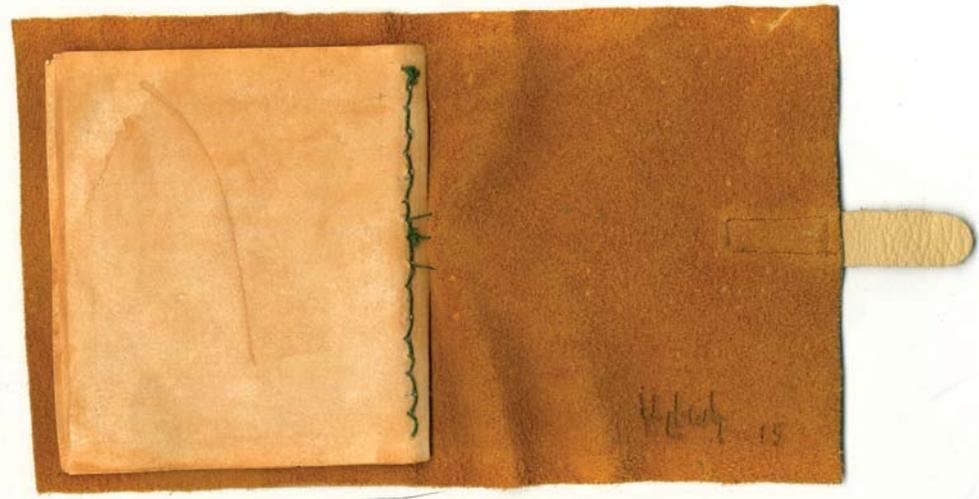
Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Pages 6 and 7), 2015.



Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Pages 8 and 9), 2015.



Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Pages 10 and 11), 2015.



Alyag Malkhassian, *The Forty Orphans* (Page 12), 2015.

# Armenian Illuminations: Strange Connections between Nations

—

ALYAG MALKHASSIAN

With such a deep ancestry as ours, it can be hard to decide where to begin learning about the history of the Armenian people. I have delved into my own family past, and discovered a captivating connection between my Armenian great-grandfather, Jerusalem and Ethiopian royalty. In this essay I will recount how the musical band Arba Lidjotch (fig. 1)—which consisted

of forty Armenian orphans living in Jerusalem, including my great-grandfather—was discovered and adopted by Ethiopia’s regent Haile Selassie I (1892–1975) and became the first royal Ethiopian brass band. I will also discuss my illustrated manuscript of my great-grandfather’s story, entitled *The Forty Orphans* (2015), and explain my intentions behind this work.



Fig. 1. “The Arba Lijoch, photographed by Haigaz Boyajian, royal photographer of Ethiopia.” Reproduced from Ani Aslanian, “In the Company of Emperors: The Story of Ethiopian Armenians,” *The Armenite*, last modified October 6, 2014, accessed April 5, 2016, <http://thearmenite.com/2014/10/company-emperors-story-ethiopian-armenians/#prettyPhoto>.

In the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide (1915–1918), the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem (the bishop of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church in Jerusalem), Yeghishe Tourian (1860–1930), was faced with the task of housing over eight hundred Armenian orphans from Dayr al-Zur and other parts of Syria. Orphanages were opened in Saints James Cathedral, the Holy Cross Greek Convent and in Nazareth.<sup>1</sup> In 1924, Haile Selassie visited the Middle East to create political connections. In Jerusalem he noticed the Saints James Cathedral, and while passing by it, he heard wonderful music coming from inside. On further inspection, he learned that the musicians were orphans from the Armenian genocide who belonged to the band Arba Lidjotch.<sup>2</sup> Haile Selassie decided to adopt the members of the band—which consisted of forty children between the ages of twelve and eighteen—and to bring them back with him to Addis Ababa. This was welcomed by the patriarch because it meant forty less mouths to feed. These orphans went on to become the first royal brass band of Ethiopia, introducing brass instruments to a nation that had used primarily wood and string instruments. Their Armenian bandleader, Kevork Nalbandian (d. 1977), composed the first Ethiopian national anthem, entitled *Teferi Marsh, Ethiopia Hoy*, which played during Haile Selassie's coronation in 1930 and was used until the end of the emperor's rule in 1974.<sup>3</sup>

Formally resembling a gospel, *The Forty Orphans* is an illuminated manuscript of the story of my great-grandfather, Hovannes

Megrdich Malkhassian, who was one of the forty orphans adopted by Haile Selassie.<sup>4</sup> I was inspired by the Melisende Psalter (1131–43) (fig. 2), which was produced by scribes and illuminators in the scriptorium of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup>



Fig. 2. *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, from the Melisende Psalter, 1131–1143, parchment, 21.5 x 14.5 cm, Egerton MS 1139, f. 5v, British Library. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melisende-Psalter\\_f5v.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Melisende-Psalter_f5v.jpg).

I also studied a few of the thirty thousand Armenian illuminated manuscripts that exist around the world. In 2013, I visited the Armenian Museum, Matenadaran, where ten thousand of them reside, and was blown away by the beauty and details of these tiny books (fig. 3).<sup>6</sup> My book is small in scale, measuring 4 x 4.5 inches. My aim was to mimic real manuscripts and to experience what it is like to create an illuminated miniature. It was quite a gruelling process but the result was very satisfying. I wrote the text in Armenian to stay true to tradition and to create an authentic work for myself and my family. I want the viewer to be afraid to touch it because it looks like a real ancient manuscript. I would also like the viewer to experience the nostalgic feeling that this story of my rich ancestry gives me. Key passages from my great-grandfather's memoirs lend the narrative in my work greater authenticity and emotion.<sup>7</sup> I thought that such an amazing and little known story should be given the attention it deserves.



Fig. 3. T'oros Roslin, *Canon Table Page*, 1256, tempera and gold paint on parchment, 19 x 26.5 cm, J. Paul Getty Museum. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T%27oros\\_Roslin\\_\(Armenian,\\_active\\_1256\\_-\\_1268\)\\_-\\_Canon\\_Table\\_Page\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project\\_\(6915047\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:T%27oros_Roslin_(Armenian,_active_1256_-_1268)_-_Canon_Table_Page_-_Google_Art_Project_(6915047).jpg).

Although my manuscript features religious elements that are integral to the narrative, I have chosen to make it a secular work because religious difference has been one of the primary causes of war throughout Jerusalem's history. The image of the Saints James Cathedral is not meant to portray it as a place of religious worship but as the setting where Haile Selassie and

my great-grandfather met. I have depicted Haile Selassie as a saviour-like figure to the Armenian orphans based on the fact that he is considered a religious leader in Rastafarianism.<sup>8</sup> Haile Selassie was a fair man and deserves this recognition. My depiction of him was inspired by a colour portrait (fig. 4), which in turn is based on a black and white photographic portrait taken at his coronation on November 2, 1930.<sup>9</sup>

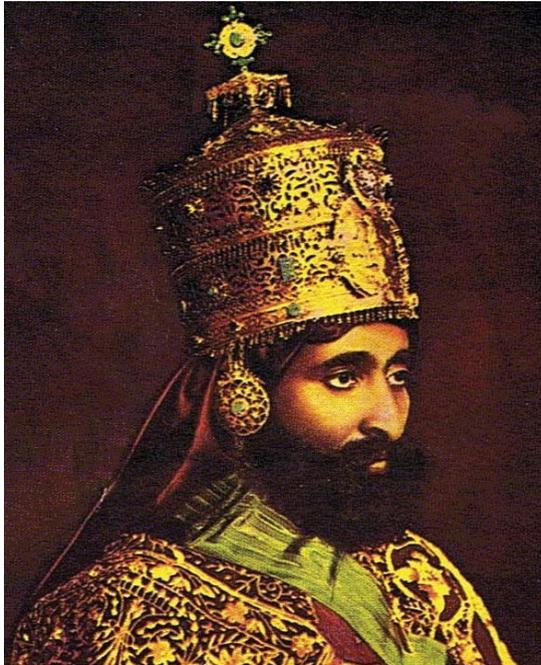


Fig. 4. The Emperor Haile Selassie 1<sup>st</sup> of Abyssinia, 1930.

<http://d39ya49a1fwv14.cloudfront.net/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/HS2.jpg>.

Interestingly, the relationship between Ethiopia and Armenia does not begin with the orphans of the Armenian genocide. They share the same orthodox religion, Armenia becoming the first Christian nation by law in 301 CE and Ethiopia the second in 316 CE.<sup>10</sup> Their alphabets are quite similar, as well, possibly due to this religious connection. "It is said that when Mesrob Mashtots was creating the Armenian alphabet in 406 AD, looking to distinguish themselves from their counterparts and to express their beliefs in their own language, he used Ethiopian literature as an example for completing his alphabet."<sup>11</sup> Because of their shared religion, Armenians and Ethiopians served as each other's "honored visitors, as well as servants, advisors, trade agents, and even diplomatic envoys."<sup>12</sup>

It is clear that Armenia and Ethiopia were bound culturally, religiously and politically. I am so lucky to be aware of these links and proud to be able to share the story with the world and help create a greater sensibility to unlikely relationships around the globe. Having explored the story of my great grandfather, explained my work and inspirations and looked at some other connections between these two countries, I hope that I have contributed to this fascinating narrative of two worlds coming together. I am very happy to have been able to tell it to you.

## NOTES

- 1 Bedross Der Matossian, "The Armenians of Palestine 1918–48," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 41, no. 1 (Autumn 2011): 31–32.
- 2 Frank Tenaille, *Music is the Weapon of the Future: Fifty Years of African Popular Music* (Chicago: Lawrence Hill Books, 2002), 166.
- 3 Boris Adjemian, "La fanfare arménienne du négus : Représentations des étrangers, usages du passé et politique étrangère des rois d'Éthiopie au début du 20<sup>e</sup> siècle," *Vingtième siècle. Revue d'histoire*, no. 119 (juillet–septembre 2013): 85–87.
- 4 *The Forty Orphans* includes the names of the forty orphans.
- 5 *Psalter (The 'Melisende Psalter')*, 1131–43, parchment, 21.5 x 14.5 cm, Egerton MS 1139, British Library. [http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Egerton\\_MS\\_1139](http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Egerton_MS_1139).
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- 12 Richard Pankhurst, "Armenian Involvement in Ethiopian Asian Trade: 16th to 18th Centuries," in *Armenians in Asian Trade in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Sushil Chaudhury and Kéram Kévonian (Paris: Maison des Sciences de l'homme, 2008), 120.

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# How to Loot a Work of Art

by JASMINE KANTER

"Crimes involving culturally relevant material are crimes that embody a unique spectrum of harm beyond what can legally be construed as simple tangible loss." —Niles Pezans and Nylke Beaman Preble

Antiquities are fair and implacable. Broken a material form, they represent a loss of history and cultural knowledge. Archaeologists have estimated the numbers of objects in their custody that are removed from their context by looting, without documentation, at a almost impossible to measure their meaning or function. Many more objects are lost to looters' destructive practices—after every marketplace town break as high as 30 other sites will have been looted. In a survey of 2,350 archaeological sites in 2008, 98% reported looting in the area of their site, and only 7% had the chance of looting being reduced to decreasing.

"Theaters, houses, museums, collections, and officials... all tend to work on the assumption that the market is composed of 'legitimate' and 'illegitimate' dealers and that therefore if the 'bad apples' can be excised the 'legitimate' market can flourish without hindrance and will not be in danger of constituting an individual criminal case." —John Davidson

Laws and regulations relating to stolen art and antiquities vary from nation to nation, making legal trade incredibly hard to regulate. For example, in the United Kingdom, a prosecutor must first prove that an object was stolen, privately or as an unlicensed, whereas archaeological sites in a village on the other side of the world—well don't consider legal requirements as relevant, though most stolen objects are illegal exports.

Regulators require documentation used to observe wrongdoing rather than guard against it. Dealers are required to ask for permission—documentation that proves their legal status—but many feel it's better because they have no personal interest in that "proof" because it's better to look like they're doing it right than to look like they're doing it wrong. In the above example, the UK prosecutor can work to prove that the artwork had knowledge or belief that the object was stolen, and looting to ask for permission does not constitute adequate proof.

"The recent processes of globalization, colonialization, exploration, and advances in technology have meant that western culture and its acquisitive nature have descended on every corner of the globe in an unprecedented manner." —Niles Pezans and Nylke Beaman Preble



Dealers expect the customer to conduct research in advance and to know about the objects they are buying, including whether they are stolen. They expect the customer to understand the provenance of the objects and to be able to provide it. They expect the customer to be able to provide the provenance of the objects and to be able to provide it. They expect the customer to be able to provide the provenance of the objects and to be able to provide it.

## WHAT IS LOOTING?

The word *looting* is intended to mean every kind of theft during wartime, regardless of the organization, objectives, membership, or goals. In peacetime circumstances, most are not even more problematic, since they denote an implicit power structure between looting and those doing the looting as such. Looters thus don't hold themselves or each other to a wide range of justifications and rationalizations. Still, looting is widely regarded as a crime due to its clear relationship to periods of violent upheaval and conflict.

"Although it may be difficult to label a political movement from a single act of looting, the political breakdown of law and order, and the temporal possibility of acts commonly deemed criminal, are sufficient and legitimize the categorization of looting as a political act, or at least an act enabled by political context." —Dan Coates

Antiquities from archaeological sites are prime targets for looting. Since illegal excavations could never be documented, the majority will never be traced, never reported. Modern art is in multi-billion to the public, the police, and art dealers, past clients and donors and rarely more precious, and is estimated to link only 80% of the market value. The public loots, and the looting of antiquities, the market that remains it, and its role in modern art world.



## The Art & Antiquities Trade

"It is in part tolerated because it is considered a victimless crime."

In a black market, the goods and their transactions are valued increasingly and consistently. They come with a wide market, but goods are sold through in their means of production. In an art market, the goods and their transactions are valued increasingly and consistently. They come with a wide market, but goods are sold through in their means of production.

The introduction to work projects in the differences in law and practice regarding stolen art in different nations. In the United States, most art is stolen, and it is almost impossible to trace. However, in many European countries and law countries, a proper purchase is often not the "other aspect," good title "is no longer" stolen. Nevertheless, it is a major part through which stolen goods are sold, and the most common way of being a complete loss purchase "is no longer" stolen, which they can recover body and legally through the market.

"The trade in stolen art and antiquities is the largest illegal market in the world. In 2008, the art market in the US was valued at \$1.5 billion, and the art market in the UK was valued at \$1.2 billion. The art market in the US is valued at \$1.5 billion, and the art market in the UK is valued at \$1.2 billion. The art market in the US is valued at \$1.5 billion, and the art market in the UK is valued at \$1.2 billion.

## ISIS and Antiquities Trafficking

"Al-Qaeda, anticipating that its accession would freeze after the September 11 attacks, sought to reconfigure the finances by selling money into a diverse portfolio, which included antiquities. Antiquities trafficker Mohamed Alkhatib approached a German art professor about possible Afghan antiquities... Alkhatib's reasons to finance the purchase of an airplane."

- The UN Convention Report
- ISIS, an offshoot of al-Qaeda, has recently overthrown in the biggest country there in the world, largely owing to its strategic exploitation of cultural heritage, taxation of rebel populations, and trafficking of stolen antiquities.
- About 90% of Syria's cultural and historic sites are located in ISIS-occupied areas, many of them UNESCO world heritage sites.
- ISIS requires high levels of employment to increase funds to buy archaeological sites.
- It demands an estimated US \$200 million per year in looting and collaborating with organized crime networks and traffickers, and takes commission for certain types of antiquities.
- It now receives US \$10 million from the plunder of a single site.
- In February 2015, the UN Security Council endorsed the ban of activities from Syria.

- Assyrian Green Church, 1200 years old, blown up
- Hama, archaeological site, 2000 years old, blown up and bulldozed
- Khirbat al-Fay, 2700 years old, razed
- Nimrud, city, 3000 years old, bulldozed
- Artifacts from the Nimrud Museum, Mosul, 6000 years old, shogchamunered

Destroyed by ISIS in 2014

**THE EXTENT OF LOOTING IN SYRIA AND IRAQ**

An excavation in southern Iraq of the region by researcher Jane Cameron reveals that:

- The most common kind of looting is low density, minor looting. Major looting is low density, minor looting. Major looting is low density, minor looting.
- Seven American looting sites in such a short time frame that it could only be accomplished by teams of people working with machinery.
- Looting is most frequent and widely spread in Kirkuk and especially in the north, that is in ISIS territory.
- However, about half of all looting in ISIS territory is in desert areas—42% were in the Syrian region, 44% in Iraq, and 90% in Kirkuk territory.

"This is what total annihilation really looks like."

ISIS destruction and looting of antiquities should be understood as an important component of its cultural, religious, and ethnic war. By not only targeting churches, mosques, and other heritage items, but also the groups of people in charge of their preservation, it aims to erase the sense of community and identity. ISIS destruction of ancient buildings and objects has been declared a war crime by UNESCO under article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, and the Hague Convention of 1994 among others. "Not only is there a legal precedent for giving ISIS' destruction a war crime, but also a historical one given by virtually every genocide in the 20th century." (Jihad Khatib)

In the same end, ISIS constructs and widely disseminates propaganda videos of the destruction of ancient sites and towns. They never let the group's looting as an easy way of a lot of cash, square later take, based on its intention to present itself as a legitimate Islamic state and to attract and support the international community. ISIS' campaign of destruction has been characterized by the scale as one of national annihilation, but their targeting of these objects, and the ways they operate with their values, show a sophisticated understanding of the contemporary consumer values attached to cultural heritage in the globalized world. (Omar Hammad) By targeting ancient monuments, statues, churches, mosques and other works of art, ISIS signals its opposition to the values of the international community.

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# How to Loot a Work of Art

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JASMINE KANTER

My infographic, *How to Loot a Work of Art*, was inspired by satellite images depicting the scale of looting in Syria (fig. 1), as well as by stone panels from the Southwest Palace of Sennacherib at Nineveh (in present-day northern Iraq) showing the siege and capture of the city of Lachish in the Kingdom of Judah by the Assyrian King Sennacherib (704–681 BCE) in 701 BCE (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 1. *Looting at Dura-Europos*, 2 April 2014, satellite image. Reproduced from American Association for the Advancement of Science, *Ancient History, Modern Destruction: Assessing the Current Status of Syria's World Heritage Sites Using High-Resolution Satellite Imagery, Part One – December 2014*, by Susan Wolfenbarger, Jonathan Drake, Eric Ashcroft, and Katharyn Hanson (Washington, D.C.: American Association for the Advancement of Science, 2014), accessed March 7, 2016, [http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/reports/AAAS\\_Syria\\_TWHS\\_Report1\\_Dec2014.pdf](http://www.aaas.org/sites/default/files/reports/AAAS_Syria_TWHS_Report1_Dec2014.pdf), 7. © DigitalGlobe | U.S. Department of State, NextView License | Analysis AAAS.



Fig. 2. Anonymous, *Siege of Lachish*, 700–681 BCE, stone, British Museum.  
<http://www.bible-architecture.info/Lachish.htm>.

Violence and looting became inextricably linked in my mind, and I sought to examine this relationship in my research. While looting and pillage by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIS) are resoundingly condemned by the international community,<sup>2</sup> many antiquities themselves show such crimes being carried out millennia ago. This caused me to question prevailing notions of art's place in society. Western norms assert that the proper place for a work of art is in a museum where it can be displayed for the good and appreciation of all. However, as these ancient pictures suggest, looting and destruction have always accompanied pieces of art. My project investigates the act of looting, as well as the hidden and taboo paths an antiquity might take over the course of its life.

Why are antiquities looted? Why are they destroyed? The main motivation for looting is broadly assumed to be greed; indeed, antiquities sell. The exploding trade in Near Eastern antiquities is due in part to the increased access to supply since the conflict in Syria and Iraq began and growing demand from the West.<sup>3</sup> But looting is also closely tied to politics; if not a political act in itself, it is “an act enabled by political context.”<sup>4</sup>

A 2015 article in the *Globe and Mail* about the decision of the Bible Lands Museum Jerusalem to exhibit ancient Babylonian tablets that may have been illegally excavated and smuggled out of the Middle East exposes the thorny problems surrounding the public display of stolen antiquities.<sup>5</sup> Although David Sofer, the collector who loaned his collection of cuneiform tablets to the Museum,<sup>6</sup> claims that he acquired them through legitimate channels in the 1990s, a large number of these objects flooded the Western antiquities market around this time due to looting during the First Gulf War (1990–91). Sofer believes that if he hadn’t bought the artefacts, “these things would be lost, and wouldn’t be recognized for what they are.”<sup>7</sup> On the one hand, Amanda Weiss, director of the Bible Lands Museum, states: “We are not interested in anything that is illegally acquired or sneaked out.”<sup>8</sup> On the other hand, she declares, “It is the role of a museum to protect these pieces. It’s what we’re here for.”<sup>9</sup> Although a number of American museums and other institutions, such as the American Schools of Oriental Research, have resolved not to exhibit or study any artefacts of unknown

provenance, the historical value of cuneiform tablets has made them an exception to the rule.<sup>10</sup>

Sofer's and Weiss's remarks reflect an attitude of entitlement among many Western buyers of antiquities.<sup>11</sup> The grey market is facilitated by legal inequalities between nations,<sup>12</sup> and, in a larger sense, by political and economic inequalities, as well. The West has wealth, scholarly institutions and stability, whereas Iraq and Syria are economically underdeveloped, struggling to survive and under attack by ISIS. Buyers rationalize that they are protecting antiquities, saving them from people who do not "appreciate" them,<sup>13</sup> but it is their monetary worth that makes these antiquities such attractive targets for destructive looters. Herein lies the difficult contradiction at the heart of the museum director's protest: cultural discourse asserts that antiquities nurture the spirit of mankind, but they also wield brute economic power as material objects.

The public holds a misinformed, romanticized perception of the antiquities trade. The majority of dealers—and certainly most buyers and collectors—are unaware of the trade's status as a grey market.<sup>14</sup> The defensive tone of Sofer's and Weiss's remarks remind me of an illuminated miniature in Jean de Courcy's (1360–1431) universal chronicle *La Bouquechardière* (written between 1416 and 1422) depicting the looting of Jerusalem by Christian Crusaders after its capture in 1099 (fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> The

colours are warm, soft and pleasant, and the city streets and buildings are as clean as if their original inhabitants had simply disappeared. The sumptuously attired conqueror converses with a companion, casually gesturing at the growing pile of golden plunder before him, while his curious knights crane their necks to take a look over his shoulder. This painting, cleansed of the fire, corpses and blood of the actual battle, mimics the rosy outlook adopted by most in the art trade: there are good guys and there are bad guys, and never the twain shall meet.

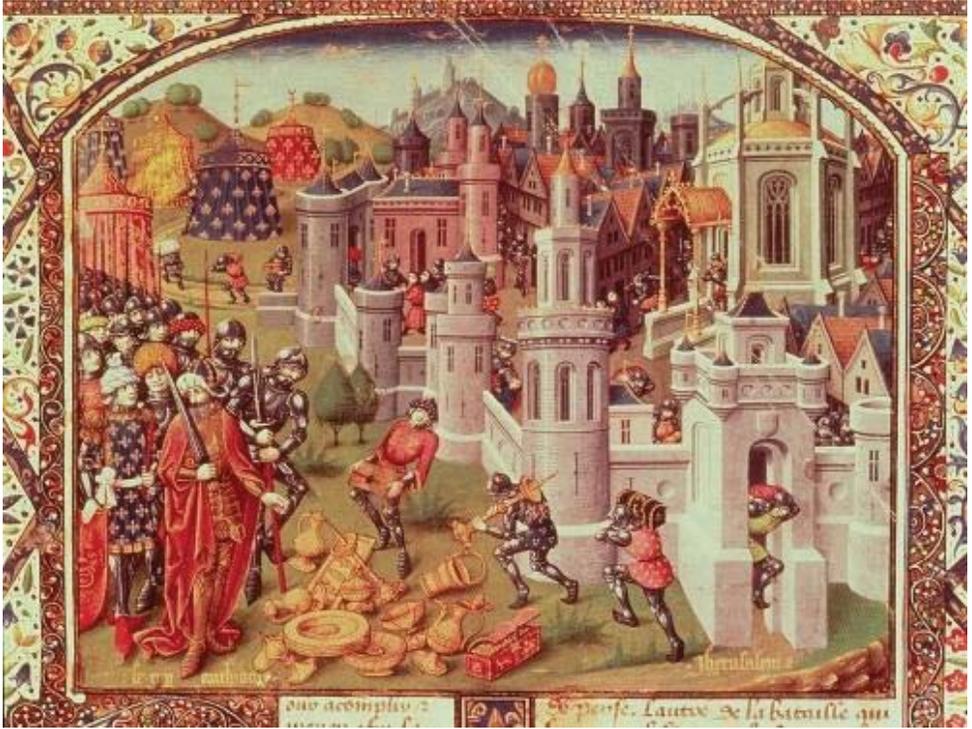


Fig. 3. Anonymous, *The Looting of Jerusalem after the Capture by the Christians in 1099*, 16.5 x 19.5 cm, from Jean de Courcy, *La Bouquechardière*, 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 15<sup>th</sup> c., vellum, MS. fr. 20124, f. 331, Bibliothèque nationale de France.

[http://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting\\_197816/Courcy-Jean-de/The-Looting-of-Jerusalem-after-the-Capture-by-the-Christians-in-1099](http://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting_197816/Courcy-Jean-de/The-Looting-of-Jerusalem-after-the-Capture-by-the-Christians-in-1099).

The illegal trade of antiquities thrives in our globalized world, relying on legal loopholes and locating wealthy buyers outside of the object's war-torn area of origin. This grey market was created by the transnational perspective of its participants and is maintained by the transnational scope of organized crime.<sup>16</sup> The art and antiquities market is esoteric, nebulous and difficult

to grasp; however, it is also the unspoken social, political, economic and legal context of every art purchase in the world. According to my research, one of the best measures for bringing the market under regulation is to make it better understood by the public,<sup>17</sup> and to that end I have tried to make a contribution with my infographic.

ISIS's campaign of destruction in Syria and Iraq is one of the most worrying findings of my research. Their aim to target cultural heritage suggests a sophisticated understanding of the value system of the international community; to put it less prosaically, it knows how to get the world's goat.<sup>18</sup> Simultaneously, the trendiness of Near Eastern art and antiquities is partly fuelled by the desire to "save" some of humanity's oldest works of art from destruction.<sup>19</sup> I suspect that ISIS may not only be benefitting from the popularity of Near Eastern antiquities, but contributing to that trend by manufacturing images of destroyed artefacts. It is an elegant and effective business model: destroy one ancient statue on camera for posterity, sell nine more off-screen to alarmed buyers. Until collectors, dealers and museums understand the intricacies of the grey market, the looting of antiquities and the destruction of archaeological objects seem fated to continue.

The greatest visual influence on my infographic was the collages I make in my spare time (fig. 4). I like the contrast between torn edges and smooth cuts, and the poetic effect of

combining unassociated images, words and phrases to suggest new meanings. Collage is an appropriate medium to evoke the convoluted, secretive world of art dealing, and to mimic the “legal patchwork” of the trade. Conversely, the flatness of collage allows for the clarity and simplicity of compartmentalized sections.

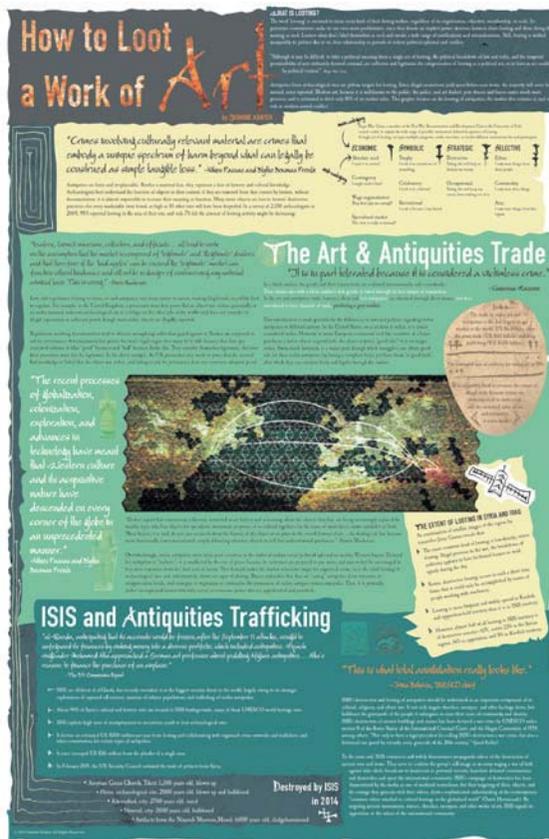


Fig. 4. Jasmine Kanter, *How to Loot a Work of Art*, 2015, digital collage.

A number of antiquities that I came across convinced me that two-dimensionality is an important feature of historical depictions of looting. For instance, in a wall painting in the Dura-Europos synagogue (in modern-day Syria) entitled *The Ark in the Land of Philistines and the Temple of Dagon* (3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE) (fig. 5), broken statues of idols in Dura-Europos appear to float on the picture plane, while the rest of the scene seems to take place in a three-dimensional space that recedes to the Temple in the background.



Fig. 5. Anonymous, *The Ark in the Land of Philistines and the Temple of Dagon*, 3<sup>rd</sup> c. BCE, west wall, register B, Dura-Europos synagogue, Syria. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DuraSyn-WB4-Ark\\_and\\_Temple\\_of\\_Dagon.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:DuraSyn-WB4-Ark_and_Temple_of_Dagon.jpg).

These objects are simplified like icons, a pictorial inventory recalling early writing systems. Similarly, *The Looting of Jerusalem after the Capture by the Christians in 1099* contains clearly delineated object types, and the Lachish relief panel features clear, iconic forms such as the siege machines and equipment of the conquerors and conquered. The compulsion to include pillaged items in depictions of warfare strongly reinforces the relationship between looting and violence. As an artist, I thought it was important to allude to this point in my own work, hence the layering of many flat panels and objects that structure the visual journey through the infographic.

The aforementioned *Globe and Mail* article about the public display and scholarly analysis of possibly stolen cuneiform tablets inspired me to include my very own tablets in the middle right, as well as small cuneiform characters throughout the piece. The golden lines on the left side of the poster are not purely decorative, as they also roughly show proportional longevities of their corresponding city or artefact before their destruction by ISIS in 2014. Photos of antiquities from the *Emergency Red List of Syrian Cultural Objects at Risk* and the *Emergency Red List of Iraqi Cultural Objects at Risk*, published by the International Council of Museums, appear as ghostly figures, symbolizing how such items disappear through the obscurities of the grey market.<sup>20</sup>

It was difficult to select a colour scheme. Because of their age and materials, the predominating palette in Near Eastern antiquities and architecture is sandy and faded. These colours are too warm to adequately convey the severity of the subject matter, so I opted for the green of oxidized copper, the pale gold of jewellery and ornaments, and the rich teal of ancient mosaics. Finally, for contrast, I added orange to suggest the volatility of conflict in Syria and Iraq that enables the ongoing looting of their cultural resources.

#### NOTES

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Jay Ginsberman, *The Writing on the Wall*, 2013, newspaper, acrylic, encaustic on wood panel, 24 x 36 cm. <https://www.behance.net/gallery/10788721/Julie-M-Gallery-Emerging-Jewish-Artist-Fellowship-2013>.

# Jerusalem: A Multi-Layered City through the Work of Jay Ginsberman

—

LOUIS ANGOT

Discussing historical archaeology in Palestine and Jerusalem, anthropology professor Uzi Baram introduces a concept employed by cultural anthropologists known as “thirdspace,”<sup>1</sup> which moves beyond the binary understanding of space as either fantasized or lived and complex, allowing for an “interpretation of multiple, overlapping and ideologically constructed places.”<sup>2</sup>

According to Baram, Western travellers' Orientalist depictions of the Holy Land during the Ottoman Period (1517–1917) are valuable to the study of Ottoman Palestine despite their historical inaccuracy, as they offer important insight into a part of history that would otherwise be left behind.<sup>3</sup> This paper therefore aims to demonstrate that every artistic interpretation of Jerusalem is a valid one, whether it be that of an outsider or insider, a Jew, a Muslim or a Christian. Yet I also want to explore the difficulties faced by artists who are defined as “Other”—in other words, not Western, white and male. I have thus chosen to conduct a case study on Jewish-Canadian artist Jay Ginsberman (b. 1993), who is studying graphic design at the Ontario College of Art and Design University (OCADU) in Toronto and identifies as gay and genderqueer. With an artistic point of view still in the process of being shaped by various influences and aspects of his identity, Ginsberman proves through his work that even if he has yet to become a full-fledged artist, his point of view is valid. Moreover, as someone who was raised and lives in Canada but has visited Jerusalem on a few occasions, Ginsberman creates artworks about the city that merge the imaginary and the real.

Ginsberman was born in Thornhill, a predominantly Jewish suburb in the Greater Toronto Area. In elementary school, he was one of a few Reform Jews, and was surrounded by members of more conservative denominations. In high school, however, his comrades were very secular. Ginsberman subsequently developed a liminal religious identity, identifying with neither

Orthodox Jews—he does not eat kosher and does not go to the synagogue often—nor secular Jews. This experience has resulted in an enduring concern with identity. Ginsberman explains, “I’ve been really obsessed with identities and how people divide each other up.”<sup>4</sup> As a gay and genderqueer individual, he navigates several identities that society defines as “Other” in order to normalize the Western, privileged, straight, cisgender, white male and reinforce monolithic dichotomies such as white/non-white, masculine/feminine and Western/Eastern.<sup>5</sup> Visual theorist and cultural analyst Griselda Pollock argues that this binary thinking is prevalent in art circles, such that “Western white men produce *art*,” while “the rest of us produce art that must be qualified by an adjective.”<sup>6</sup> Pollock observes that the labelling of art and artists as “Other” not only devalues them, but also prevents the viewer from discovering the potential universality of artworks.<sup>7</sup> Ginsberman has been contemplating this issue in relation to his own work, saying, “I’m still trying to figure out if I should make queer art, Jewish art, or just art.”<sup>8</sup>

Ginsberman began his art practice by using graphic design as a conceptual medium, applying the knowledge and techniques learned in class to his artworks, such as mixing asymmetry and symmetry and playing with the size of forms to manipulate the visual hierarchy. He is currently expanding his practice by using semiotics to explore the creation of his own gender. In addition to his collages, paintings and graphic designs, Ginsberman has also created a drag persona named Ivana Slapavitch. This

character is a form of escapism from the rigidity of school and gallery and design contracts. However, it is clear he considers himself a designer first when he says, “My gender is designer.”<sup>9</sup>

Ginsberman's *The Writing on the Wall* (2013) (fig. 1), created as part of his participation in the Julie M. Gallery Emerging Jewish Artist Fellowship, was first exhibited at the 918 Bathurst Gallery in Toronto with two other pieces, and later at the University of Toronto's Koffler House. It is now on extended loan to the Toronto-based Palestinian centre Beit Zatoun.<sup>10</sup>



Fig. 1. Jay Ginsberman, *The Writing on the Wall*, 2013, newspaper, acrylic, encaustic on wood panel, 24 x 36 cm. <https://www.behance.net/gallery/10788721/Julie-M-Gallery-Emerging-Jewish-Artist-Fellowship-2013>.

Created with the help of Ginsberman's mentor, Israeli-born artist Nava Waxman (b. 1974), the piece is an abstract interpretation of Jerusalem set in a simplified and idealized landscape. The city's architecture is made up of fragments of newspaper articles. The work recalls naïve art in its simple colour palette, pure lines and use of the collage medium. However, the artwork reveals a plurality of profound meanings upon closer analysis. Ginsberman incorporated text from newspapers in Arabic, Armenian and Hebrew because he wanted to showcase the diversity of voices in Jerusalem: the West and the East, the Christians, Jews and Muslims, the old and the new. The walls and the domes are composed of Arabic, Armenian and Hebrew texts layered over one another, signifying the tendency of groups in Jerusalem to build new structures on top of pre-existing ones.<sup>11</sup> *The Writing on the Wall* was completed around the time of the Israeli elections, a political reality that manifests itself in the artist's piece through the inclusion of the logo of Shas, an ultra-orthodox religious political party founded in 1984, in the upper middle part of the collage.<sup>12</sup> The newsprint varies in colour from greyish yellow to a more off-white tint, symbolizing the contrast between the old and new buildings that characterize the city.

*The Writing on the Wall* may be interpreted not only as a vision of contemporary Jerusalem, but also as Jerusalem unearthed, where each strata of its history is visible. The improvisational feel of Ginsberman's work reflects the way the city was built, since it grew organically with no true urban planning, apart for

the Roman period (63 BCE–313 CE) and the idea of the walled city.<sup>13</sup> Ginsherman also wanted to convey the anachronistic feeling of Jerusalem in his piece, something Robert Ousterhout argues many artists were confronted with when visiting the Holy City. He describes it as a “diachronic tableau that challenged the viewer to situate events in relation to one another,”<sup>14</sup> and a place where they were “confronted with anachronisms and jarring chronological juxtapositions at almost every turn.”<sup>15</sup>

The texts in Ginsherman’s work were extracted from newspapers published in Toronto and thus allude to his Canadian identity. While it was easier to collect local news articles, it was also his intention to show the perspective of someone who has visited Jerusalem before but is ultimately an outsider. Even though Ginsherman has spent a total of only five weeks in Jerusalem, he has managed to capture many qualities of the Holy City in *The Writing on the Wall*.

Through the medium of digital art, Ginsherman once again plays with the notion of a complex, fragmented city that is ultimately united in *Fragments Sewn Together* (fig. 2), which he conceived for a graphic design class.



Fig. 2. Jay Gins Sherman, *Fragments Sewn Together*, 2014, digital print, 18 x 24 cm.  
<https://www.behance.net/gallery/26418603/To-Convey-a-City>.

The goal of the project was to convey the essence of a city, and to integrate a visual hierarchy and narrative into the piece. Hebrew and Arabic characters of different sizes and colours are scattered across the composition, representing the heterogeneous neighbourhoods of Jerusalem. The cropped photographs of Jerusalem vary in opacity to signify what is visible, hidden and bound to disappear. A watermark, inspired by Palestinian patterns,<sup>16</sup> was added as a mandatory component

of the assignment. The poem at the bottom right is reminiscent of ones written by medieval pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem, and includes an English translation of the chorus of one of the most famous Israeli songs, *Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*: "Oh, Jerusalem of Gold, and of light and of bronze, I am the harp for all your songs."<sup>17</sup> Written and first performed by renowned Israeli singer-songwriter Naomi Shemer (1930–2004) before the Six-Day War in 1967, this song became Israel's unofficial anthem.<sup>18</sup> It also became popular among the Israel Defence Forces, which are a major part of Israel's popular culture and identity.<sup>19</sup> Dalia Gavriely-Nuri notes important religious and messianic symbolism in the song: "[T]he song opens with a synaesthesia, mixing the sense of taste [...], smell [...], and hearing."<sup>20</sup> By including this culturally significant song, *Fragments Sewn Together* captures the essence of a city that awakens the spirit by galvanizing all the human senses.

All of the forms in the print are overlapping, resulting in an image of organized chaos that echoes the haphazard development of Jerusalem's architecture. Ginsherman is inspired by Russian Constructivism and the Bauhaus, as well as by artists such as Alexander Rodchenko (1891–1956).<sup>21</sup> These influences are evident in Ginsherman's works, most notably in the creation of a visual hierarchy through lettering and in the use of negative space. The Constructivists often produced collages,<sup>22</sup> and Ginsherman uses this medium in *Fragments Sewn Together* to represent the collage-like appearance of Jerusalem's eclectic

architecture. Not surprisingly, Ginsherman grew up wanting to become an architect, and fervently studied the biography of renowned American architect Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959). *Fragments Sewn Together* showcases Ginsherman's skills as a graphic designer, as well as an artistic style that differs from *The Writing on the Wall*. Similar to the rich architectural legacy of Jerusalem, *Fragments Sewn Together* contains layers of history and meaning.

The depth of Ginsherman's works may be better understood by examining his travels to Jerusalem and an intervention he carried out at the Western Wall. The artist had the chance to visit Israel and Jerusalem on three separate curated trips: the first was with his synagogue; the second was with an organization called North American Federation of Temple Youth (NFTY), which offers summer programs in Israel for Jewish teens;<sup>23</sup> and his third trip was with Taglit-Birthright Israel, a non-profit organization that offers free trips for young Jewish adults.<sup>24</sup> Prior to visiting Jerusalem, images and words of the Holy City already existed in Ginsherman's daily life, such as on the walls of the synagogues he attended and in the songs he sang. Seeing the city he had heard about his whole life felt unreal, like being in a movie: "It's foreign, but so familiar."<sup>25</sup> Comparing Israeli cities to Canadian cities, Ginsherman says, "Tel-Aviv is like Toronto, Jaffa is like Montreal."<sup>26</sup> Yet Jerusalem felt like no other place he had visited before, and it seemed to be constantly evolving at an unfathomable pace. He

explains that on one trip he returned to the Holy City after one month to find it had already changed. Ginsberman notes that he did not have the chance to visit Jerusalem on his own and to engage in a personal, intimate experience of the city. Indeed, organized trips require participants to stay together at all times and follow a pre-arranged itinerary. Ginsberman speaks about these journeys as a sort of performance, because he could not explore the city as he wished and therefore was unable to be himself. For example, during his travels he would have liked to see Jerusalem's gay venues.

During his Birthright trip, however, Ginsberman managed to somewhat break away from the constraints of previous coordinated excursions. His trip included a visit to the Western Wall, one of the most sacred sites in Judaism and "an object of pilgrimage and veneration for nearly two thousand years."<sup>27</sup> It is also a gendered place, as women and men must pray in separated sections. They are segregated by a partition, called a *mechitza*, and the women's section is much smaller than the men's.<sup>28</sup> Stuart Charmé describes the men's section as a representation of a new reality of a Jewish state where Jews are free to worship, whereas the women's section signifies the older reality, where Jewish behaviour had to be quiet and restricted.<sup>29</sup> As a genderqueer individual, Ginsberman found it disturbing that he would very well have been barred from praying at the Wall if not for the fact that he passes as a man. In an interesting gesture, he followed in the tradition of placing notes and prayers

in the cracks of the Western Wall, but instead of placing a prayer, he drew a reinterpretation of the Six Nations flag which he placed in plain view for everyone to see (fig. 3).

Ginsherman's drawing uses the main lines and colours of the original flag (fig. 4), but remodels two diamond shapes to cross over one another to form a smaller third one.

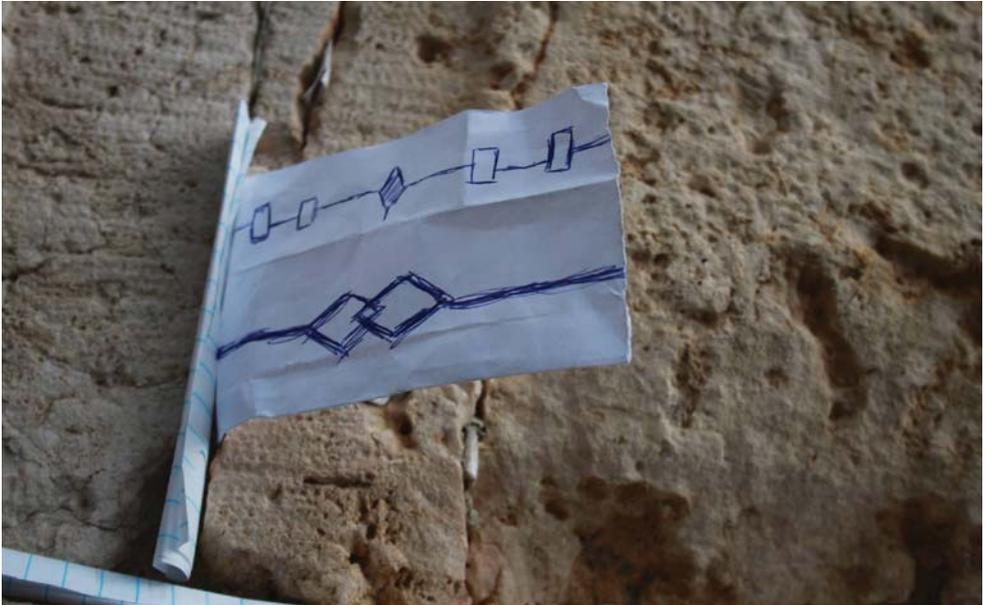


Fig. 3. Jay Ginsherman, Photograph of reinterpretation of the Six Nations flag inserted into a crack in the Western Wall, n.d., Jerusalem.

Ginsberman was inspired by the peaceful and united nature of Iroquois people, even if he was aware of the appropriative nature of this gesture. His drawing represents an idealized, conflict-free state that Israel could achieve if it followed the values of the Iroquois Confederacy.<sup>30</sup> This intervention reveals that Ginsberman is aware of oppressed Others living in Canada, and as an oppressed Other himself, he is interested in what people with similar experiences have achieved.

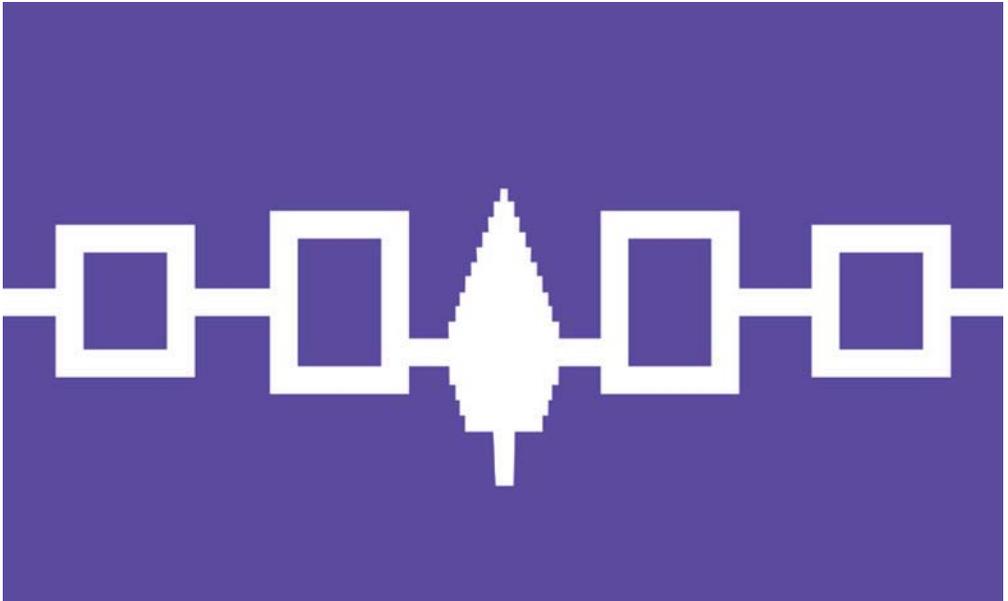


Fig. 4. Himasaram, Zscout370, *Flag of the Iroquois Confederacy, Hiawatha Belt*, 2005. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag\\_of\\_the\\_Iroquois\\_Confederacy.svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flag_of_the_Iroquois_Confederacy.svg).

This essay has explored how the multiple layers of an artist's identity may resonate with the city of Jerusalem and its own multifaceted history and architecture. Jerusalem and other cities should be analyzed like artists: as uncategorizable, complex beings. Indeed, there are many parallels between Ginsberman's work and development as an artist and the architectural development of the Holy City. Although he has spent limited time there, his vision of Jerusalem is nonetheless valid, as it combines the imaginary and the real in a way that captures the complexity of the city.

#### NOTES

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- 7 Ibid., 44.

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- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 Baram, 106.
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- 17 Dalia Gavriely-Nuri, "The Social Construction of 'Jerusalem of Gold' as Israel's Unofficial National Anthem," *Israel Studies* 12, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 104.
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- 30 Ginsherman.

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Florence Seymour-Provencher, *Chronicles of a Naive Backpacker in Jerusalem (Cover Page)*, 2015, 15.2 x 30.5 cm.



Florence Seymour-Provencher, *A Lesson in Modesty*, 2015, watercolour and ink, 15 x 30.5 cm.



Florence Seymour-Provencher, *The Checkpoint*, 2015,  
watercolour and ink, 15 x 30.5 cm.



Florence Seymour-Provencher, *Lost*, 2015,  
watercolour and ink, 15 x 30.5 cm.

# Chronicles of a Naive Backpacker in Jerusalem

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FLORENCE

SEYMOUR-PROVENCHER

*Chronicles of a Naive Backpacker in Jerusalem* (2015) is a graphic account of the adventures of a young woman visiting the Holy Land. Although the city is historically fascinating, I fear that it has become a touristic spectacle, which devalues its religious properties. Annabel Wharton explains: “In the globalization economy of the turn of the millennium, Jerusalem is experienced in the West as spectacle. Spectacle is performance that demands attention, but refuses reciprocity; it is a display that avoids local content, but produces a local effect. Spectacle is politics or ideology that pretends to be entertainment.”<sup>1</sup> Due

to the ease of modern travel, Jerusalem is no longer restricted to faithful pilgrims but is now also open to the curious tourist. Having travelled around Eastern Europe and Asia, I have come to the realization that although it is not my intention to offend people of local cultures, I often do. No matter how prepared I feel for a new adventure, I always feel ill-informed. Therefore, the naive, blue-haired character in *Chronicles of a Naive Backpacker in Jerusalem* (fig. 1) is loosely based on my own backpacking experiences, but also anticipates my visit to Jerusalem in January 2016 as a curious tourist.

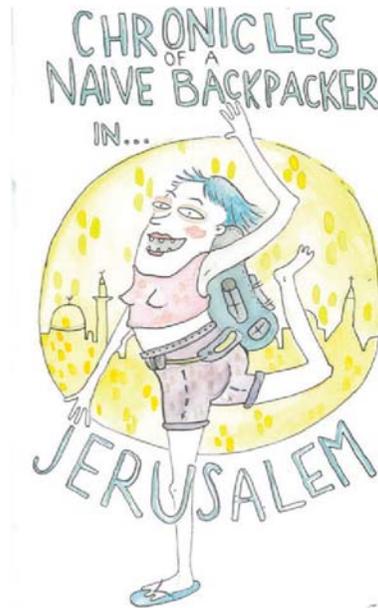


Fig. 1. Florence Seymour-Provencher, *Chronicles of a Naive Backpacker in Jerusalem* (Cover Page), 2015, 15.2 x 30.5 cm.



Fig. 2. Florence Seymour-Provencher, *A Lesson in Modesty*, 2015, watercolour and ink, 15 x 30.5 cm.



Fig. 3. Muhammad visits hell in this fifteenth-century Persian illumination. Reproduced from "Islamic Depictions of Mohammed in Full," Muslim Issue, last modified December 1, 2012, accessed April 6, 2016, <https://themuslimissue.wordpress.com/2012/12/01/islamic-depictions-of-mohammed-in-full/>.

My project consists of a cover and three pages of illustrations on heavy watercolour paper. I used India ink, watercolour and pen for the black outlines of the drawings. Each page contains a separate story relating to modesty, ownership or chaos. The first strip is titled *A Lesson in Modesty* (fig. 2) and is inspired by an illumination in a fifteenth-century Persian manuscript of the *Mirāj Nāmeḥ* in which Muhammad visits hell (fig. 3).

This illumination depicts women being hung by their hair and tortured by a demon for exposing their hair in public. It is a violent image that reveals the extent to which modesty is valued in Islam. My response to this picture was to replace the burning women with my naive backpacker wearing revealing clothing in *A Lesson in Modesty*. On the right side, leaders from the three monotheistic religions in Jerusalem frown at her immodesty. Luscious long legs and arms are reaching up from the flames, all victims of Western dress in a foreign and conservative setting.

Another source of inspiration for *A Lesson in Modesty* was *Jerusalem: Holy Business as Usual* (1978), written by Yehuda Haezrahi and illustrated by Israeli artist Shemuel Katz (1926–2010). This book depicts the effects of greed in Jerusalem within the contexts of the military, religion and economy.<sup>2</sup> In one illustration, Katz depicts a family composed of a mother, father and son entering various sacred sites and adjusting their

clothing to match each religion's standards of modesty (fig. 4). For example, the wife wears her scarf on her head in the synagogue, on her shoulders in the church and over her face in the mosque, and then is nearly naked in a bikini at the holy waters. Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem, describes the city as a place "where the ankle-length robes of its residents long preceded the maxi-coat rage, a city of miniskirts and archeological excavations, aerials and church spires."<sup>3</sup> Ultimately, it is important that my naive backpacker show some degree of modesty and understanding that Jerusalem is an old city in a modern world.



Fig. 4. Yehuda Haezrahi and Shemuel Katz, *Jerusalem: Holy Business as Usual* (Tel Aviv: Spotlight Publications, 1970), n.p.

Canadian cartoonist Guy Delisle's (b. 1966) *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City* (2011) has helped me better understand Jerusalem's past and present.<sup>4</sup> Since Delisle's wife works for Doctors Without Borders, the pair and their children must often relocate to war-stricken areas such as North Korea and Burma. Delisle's observations form the basis of his graphic novels, which are at times satirical but also thoughtfully examine

the complex histories of the places he visits.<sup>5</sup> In *Jerusalem*, Delisle's wife is working in the Gaza strip while he takes care of their two children and writes about the clashes between and within monotheistic religions in Jerusalem, the frustrations of trying to find Western comforts in an eastern city, the oddities of a militarized city filled with tourists from all around the world and the trivialities of checkpoints (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Guy Delisle, *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy Land* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012), 119.

Drawing on Delisle's work, my second story, *The Checkpoint*, underlines Jerusalem's various military occupations throughout history (fig. 6).

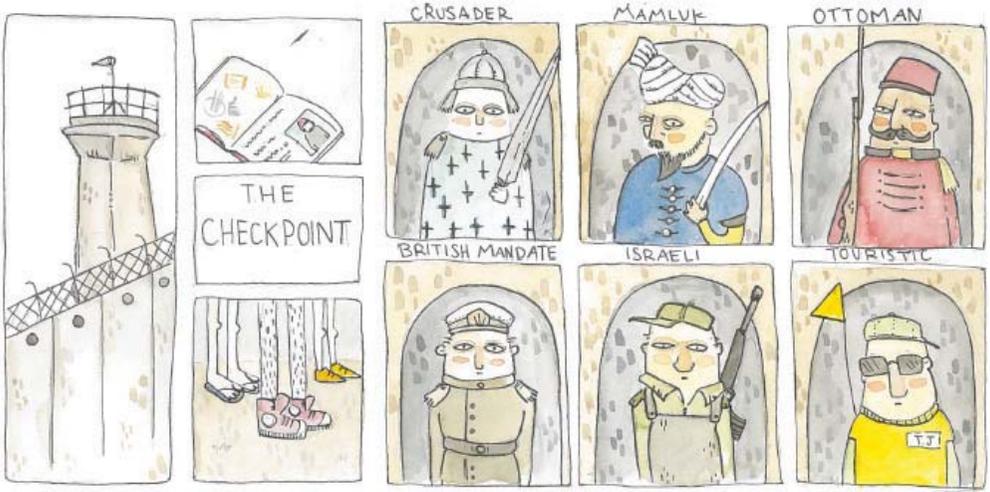


Fig. 6. Florence Seymour-Provencher, *The Checkpoint*, 2015, watercolour and ink, 15 x 30.5 cm.

Haezrahi writes: "In Jerusalem's thousands of years of history, the City has been subject to numerous changes. Huge and mighty armies came from afar to conquer it, retreating after a while only to be replaced by other conquerors."<sup>6</sup> In my story, the naive backpacker is waiting in line at a checkpoint where she is greeted first by the Crusader, then the Mamluk, the Ottoman, the British, an Israeli and finally the tourist guide. The composition was inspired by Delisle's portrayal of the various types of Christians (fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Guy Delisle, *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy Land* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012), 111.

I wanted to stress that although Jerusalem has been a centre of religious faith for thousands of years, its history is also wrought with conflicts over its ownership. With the rise of tourism, the city is starting to belong to commercialism. This is illustrated in Katz's *Via Dolorosa*, where the street is overcrowded with tourists (fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Yehuda Haezrahi and Shemuel Katz, *Jerusalem: Holy Business as Usual* (Tel Aviv: Spotlight Publications, 1970), n.p.



Fig. 9. Guy Delisle, *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy Land* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012), 24.



Fig. 10. Florence Seymour-Provencher, *Lost*, 2015, watercolour and ink, 15 x 30.5 cm.

In *Jerusalem*, Delisle spends a lot of time getting lost due to Jerusalem's unorganized medieval city planning (fig. 9).

In *Lost* (fig. 10), the naive backpacker is lost while holding a segment of the mid-sixth-century Madaba Map, which forms part of a floor mosaic in the Byzantine Church of Saint George in Madaba, Jordan.<sup>7</sup>

Delisle often includes a map of Jerusalem in his book (fig. 11); I chose to do the same in this panel because it emphasizes the feeling of smallness when one is lost.

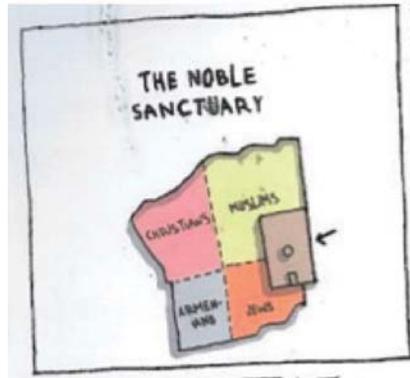


Fig. 11. Guy Delisle, *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy Land* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012), 138.

This semester's lectures inspired many other ideas for panels that I was unable to produce due to lack of time or artistic ability. For example, in one adventure, my naive backpacker would have been frustrated by the long lines to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and taken a shortcut though the window by climbing the immovable ladder, which has been part of the church's façade since the nineteenth century due to the status quo.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, I wanted to depict crowds around the "wounded" Zion Gate carrying Band-Aids and "get well soon" cards, alluding to the numerous bullet holes it received during the War.<sup>9</sup> The conservation board chose not to restore the gate to its former state as an homage to the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. It has since become a "source of attraction for many of the visitors in the Old City."<sup>10</sup> My illustration would have represented my naive backpacker's literal understanding of the Zion Gate as well as a call for peace from various groups in Jerusalem.

In conclusion, *The Chronicles of a Naive Backpacker in Jerusalem* is naive in itself since I have yet to visit Jerusalem. However, I intend to continue this project as an online comic series during my exchange next semester as a way to underline the selfish joys of travel coupled with local oddities.

#### NOTES

- 1 Annabel Wharton, *Selling Jerusalem: Relics, Replicas, Theme Parks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 190.
- 2 Yehuda Haezrahi and Shemuel Katz, *Jerusalem: Holy Business as Usual* (Tel Aviv: Spotlight Publications, 1970).
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Guy Delisle, *Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy Land* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2012).
- 5 "Jerusalem: Chronicles from the Holy City by Guy Delisle," Drawn & Quarterly, accessed April 6, 2016, <https://www.drawnandquarterly.com/jerusalem>.
- 6 Haezrahi and Katz.
- 7 Caspar René Gregory, "The Mādaba Map," *Biblical World* 12, no. 4 (October 1898): 247.
- 8 James Lancaster, "The Church and the Ladder: Frozen in Time," Coast Daylight, last modified February 28, 2015, accessed November 2015, <http://coastdaylight.com/ladder.html>.
- 9 "Zion Gate," Bible Walks, last modified October 10, 2008, accessed April 6, 2016, <http://www.biblewalks.com/Sites/ZionGate.html>.

- 10 "The Jerusalem City Wall Conservation Project," Israel Antiquities Authority, accessed November 14, 2015, [http://www.antiquities.org.il/jerusalemwalls/about\\_eng.asp](http://www.antiquities.org.il/jerusalemwalls/about_eng.asp).

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**New Jerusalems  
and Public Art  
Interventions :  
A Changing  
Landscape**

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**Les nouvelles  
Jérusalem et les  
interventions en art  
public : un contexte  
en pleine évolution**

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Western façade of the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion, 17<sup>th</sup> c., Aksum, Ethiopia

# The Promised Land: Aksum, Ethiopia and the Ark of the Covenant

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SHAWN CONTANT

The concept of Zion is deeply rooted in the religious ideologies and practices of many different groups, with cultural implications extending beyond one singular people, country or culture. Originally referred to in the Hebrew Bible as the hill of Jerusalem where the city of David was built, for the Jewish people Zion is the symbolic and national homeland of Judaism. For many

Christians according to the New Testament it is a sacred religious community and the heavenly city of God where God's elect will reside.<sup>1</sup> The Rastafarians in Jamaica,<sup>2</sup> however, consider Zion to be Ethiopia, where the Ark of the Covenant is said to have resided since the time of Solomon (ca. 970–931 BCE), when it was supposedly taken to Ethiopia from the Temple of Solomon.<sup>3</sup> The Ark of the Covenant is a “chest of acacia wood that contained the two tablets of the Ten Commandments and, according to the New Testament, Aaron's budding rod and a golden urn filled with manna.”<sup>4</sup> Many Rastafarians and Ethiopians believe the Ark is housed in the Chapel of the Tablet at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion, in the northern city of Aksum, the former capital of the Kingdom of Aksum (ca. 100–940). Although both Aksum and the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion have undergone dramatic changes over the centuries, Ethiopian Christians and Rastafarians maintain that these sacred sites represent Zion.

The classic Ethiopian chronicle of kings, known as *Kebra Nagast*, traces the line of Solomon to Ethiopia and recounts how the Ark of the Covenant came to be located there.<sup>5</sup> The legend begins with the Queen of Sheba's visit to Jerusalem where she met King Solomon. Infatuated by him, the Queen of Sheba—identified as Makeda, Queen of Aksum<sup>6</sup>—conceived a child with him in Jerusalem, but the child, Menelik I, was born in Ethiopia. Upon discovering the identity of his father, Menelik returned to Jerusalem. Fearing for his son's life, however, Solomon ordered

that he return to Ethiopia, accompanied by Judean noble youths to guarantee his safety. Displeased with the king's command, these young men decided to steal the Ark of the Covenant and take it with them to Ethiopia. Many Ethiopians at the time believed that the facility of this action was in fact the will of God. Ethiopia was widely seen as the second Zion, and Aksum as the New Jerusalem. Unlike the Old Testament's interpretation of Zion as God's special habitation, the *Kebra Nagast* understands the Ark of the Covenant to be the place of God's dwelling.<sup>7</sup> The veracity of this chronicle is disputed by historians who contend that it dates to the fourteenth century and was commissioned by descendants of Menelik wishing to prove their power was ordained by God.<sup>8</sup> However, Ethiopian believers contend that the *Kebra Nagast* is based on an ancient text.<sup>9</sup> According to the Bible, the Ark eventually made its way from Mount Sinai to Jerusalem, where it was kept in the Temple of Solomon for 400 years, until the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BCE.<sup>10</sup> Its subsequent fate is not described in the Bible. It is impossible to determine whether the Ark is in fact housed in the chapel at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion because no one is permitted to see it. The Ark is only ever seen and guarded by one priest, who is appointed for life and, in order to remain pure, must never leave the cathedral precinct.<sup>11</sup>

Nonetheless, the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion is viewed by many religious followers as the most sacred site in Ethiopia. The original church building was possibly commissioned in the

fourth century by King Ezana (320s–ca. 360), the first ruler of the Kingdom of Aksum to accept Christianity as the primary religion of Ethiopia.<sup>12</sup> The church was destroyed by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi (ca. 1506–1543), the Muslim leader of the state of Adal, during the jihads of 1531 to 1543.<sup>13</sup> Many of the records of the church were also destroyed during these battles, leaving its history shrouded in legends and its architectural appearance relatively unknown. Fortunately, in 1520, eleven years before the start of the jihads, a Portuguese priest named Francisco Álvares (ca. 1465–1536~1541) visited Aksum and gave a detailed description of the original church building:

“[It is] very large; it has five aisles of good width and of great length, vaulted above, and all the vaults closed, the ceiling and sides all painted. Below, the body of the church is well worked with handsome cut stone; it has seven chapels, all with their backs to the east, and their altars well ornamented. It has a choir after our fashion, except that it is low, and they reach the vaulted roof with their heads; and the choir is also over the vault, and they do not use it. This church has a very large circuit, paved with flagstones like the lids of tombs. This consists of a very high wall, and it is not covered over like those of the other churches, but is left open. This church has a large enclosure, and it is also surrounded with another larger enclosure, like the enclosing wall of a large town or city.”<sup>14</sup>

With the help of the Portuguese, Muslim rule and influence were eventually overturned and, to some degree, expelled. The church was then rebuilt in the seventeenth century by the Ethiopian emperor Fasilides (1603–1667) with the assistance of Portuguese workmen, and it is this reconstruction that exists to this day.

The church was designed in the Gondarine style (figs. 1, 2), which was introduced in the sixteenth century and remained popular until the mid-eighteenth century. Drawing heavily on Portuguese influences, this style is evident in the church's rectangular grand plan. Built on a raised platform, the church is 111 feet long and 51 feet wide, with high walls made of small stones featuring chiselled edges.<sup>15</sup> On the long sides there are three doorways each, as well as waterspouts to drain water from the roof, while both the longer and shorter sides have numerous arched windows showcasing wooden strapwork.<sup>16</sup> The edifice also features a roof terrace, complete with battlements, a square observation tower and windows in full arch—all elements of the Gondarine style.<sup>17</sup>



Fig. 1. Western façade of the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion, 17<sup>th</sup> c., Aksum, Ethiopia. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:382a-21.1.-Aksum-Maria\\_Zion.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:382a-21.1.-Aksum-Maria_Zion.JPG).



Fig. 2. Western and northern façades of the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion, 17<sup>th</sup> c., Aksum, Ethiopia. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:382-21.1.-Aksum-Maria\\_Zion.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:382-21.1.-Aksum-Maria_Zion.JPG).

Inside the church there is a vestibule, and behind that is the Holy of Holies, closed to everyone but the priests of the church. For some time, men were able to enter the vestibule but women were strictly forbidden from entering the church building.<sup>18</sup> In 1955 Emperor Haile Selassie (1892–1975) ordered the construction of the Church of St. Mary of Zion beside it, which women are able to enter.<sup>19</sup>

The Church of St. Mary of Zion (1964) (figs. 3, 4) is neo-Byzantine in style. Despite some subtle Ethiopian influences, it stands in stark contrast to the old Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion. The cathedral features a copper-covered, semicircular dome, several pendentives and arched windows made of blue and brown glass. The spire of the church is in the shape of a Celtic cross.



Fig. 3. Church of St. Mary of Zion, 1964, Aksum, Ethiopia.  
Photo credit: Kaiserin Lee. <https://flic.kr/p/FVMGzU>.

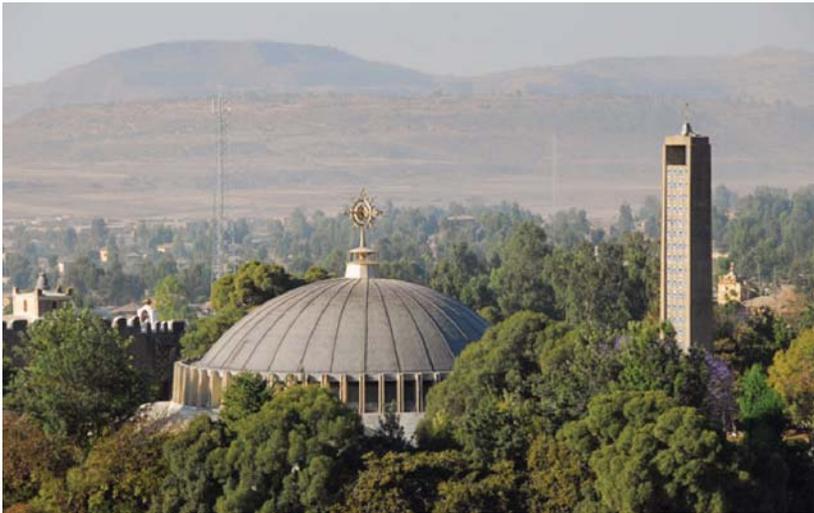


Fig. 4. The dome and bell tower (right) of the Church of St. Mary of Zion.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church\\_of\\_Our\\_Lady\\_Mary\\_of\\_Zion#/media/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Our_Lady_Mary_of_Zion#/media/File:Church_Our_Lady_Mary_Zion_Axum_Ethio.jpg)  
[File:Church\\_Our\\_Lady\\_Mary\\_Zion\\_Axum\\_Ethio.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_of_Our_Lady_Mary_of_Zion#/media/File:Church_Our_Lady_Mary_Zion_Axum_Ethio.jpg).

Outside of this building, piercing the horizon, is a large bell tower reminiscent of the granite steles that are common to the area. Predating the arrival of Christianity, these steles, or obelisks, marked the graves of deceased emperors and nobility, often reaching staggering heights of seventy to one hundred feet.<sup>20</sup> These objects were most likely the inspiration for the new church's bell tower.

While there was much focus on the construction of this new church, an adjacent chapel was simultaneously being built to serve as the new home of the Ark of the Covenant.<sup>21</sup> Funded by Empress Menen Asfaw (1891–1962) and completed in 1965, the modern, two-storied, rectangular Chapel of the Tablet (fig. 5) features rectangular windows and cross-shaped muntins. The building is accented by ox-eye windows and pediments on each side, and has a small green dome with a silver cross spire. After its construction, the chapel was used to hold not only the Ark, but also the church's treasures and the royal crowns of past emperors.



Fig. 5. Chapel of the Tablet (right), 1965, Aksum, Ethiopia.

Photo credit: hhesterr. <https://flic.kr/p/9fR1sr>.

Although Aksum was once the great capital of the Kingdom of Aksum, by the mid-seventh century it had been mostly abandoned and was no longer of significant political importance. Despite the city's declining political status, it continued to hold much religious and historical prestige,<sup>22</sup> and was used as a ceremonial coronation site to reinforce the newly crowned Ethiopian kings' lineal ties to Menelik I and King Solomon.<sup>23</sup> If a crisis or political turmoil prevented a king from holding his official coronation ceremony at the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion, a

secondary “coronation” in Aksum would be held for ceremonial purposes (circumstances permitting). This was commonplace despite the completion of an initial, official coronation, which would have taken place at a church chosen for its convenience. A new crown was constructed for each new emperor for his coronation, while the crown of the previous emperor was given to the Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion to be stored in the treasury. Due to the destruction wrought by Ahmad ibn Ibrahim al-Ghazi, less than thirty crowns remain today in the Chapel of the Tablet, the oldest probably being that of Emperor Fasilides, presented to the cathedral after its rebuilding.<sup>24</sup> After the demise of imperial rule in Ethiopia in 1974, Aksum was no longer used as a coronation site but has remained the foremost religious site in the country. Every 21 Hedar (known as the 30<sup>th</sup> of November in the Gregorian calendar), the city becomes a place of pilgrimage for the Hedar Seyon (the feast of Mary), which celebrates the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant in Aksum.<sup>25</sup>

The Church of Our Lady Mary of Zion has a long history as a religious centre in Ethiopia, despite the many changes to its physical form as a result of Aksum’s turbulent history. The eventual arrival of the Ark of the Covenant from Jerusalem to this city propelled it to a new level of notability. The religious significance of the arrival of the Ark is underscored by the reverence with which followers treated Aksum following this event. Although it no longer functions as a coronation site and does not hold the same political prestige as it once did, the religious

importance of the church grounds will remain as long as the Ark is held there. Whether or not the imperial lineage of Ethiopia's former kings can be traced back to the biblical Queen of Sheba and King Solomon, many Ethiopians and Rastafarians believe that the chapel of Our Lady Mary of Zion contains the Ark, and will therefore continue to regard Ethiopia as the promised land of Zion and the rightful home of the Ark.

#### NOTES

- 1 Michael Patella, "Mount Zion," *Bible Today* 48, no. 2 (March 2010): 91.
- 2 Rastafari is an Abrahamic, pro-black, religious movement that began in the 1930s in Jamaica, after Haile Selassie (1892–1975) was crowned emperor of Ethiopia in 1930. Like Christians, Rastafarians believe in a triune God (named Jah), although they hold that Haile Selassie was a reincarnation of Jesus. As the Messiah, Haile Selassie is expected to lead Rastafarians back to Zion, which they have identified as Ethiopia. Rastafarians also adhere to most parts of the Bible, but believe that its teachings have been perverted by "Babylonian"—that is, white, Western—culture. To express their opposition to the oppression of Western, white culture, Rastafarians developed counter-hegemonic practices that celebrate their black heritage, such as "the adoption of dreadlocks and beards, the smoking of marijuana during ritual circle celebrations known as 'reasonings' or *binghi*, the distinctive style of Rasta

drumming, and the symbolic red, green, and gold colors of the Rastafarian flag.” See Catherine Beyer, “Rastafari: An Introduction for Beginners,” last modified December 10, 2014, accessed November 2015, <http://altreligion.about.com/od/alternativereligiionsaz/a/rastafari.htm>; “Haile Selassie and Africa,” BBC, last modified October 21, 2009, accessed November 2015, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/rastafari/beliefs/haileselassie.shtml>; Mark Juergensmeyer and Wade Clark Roof, *Encyclopedia of Global Religion* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2012), 186.

- 3 L. Alan Eyre, “Biblical Symbolism and the Role of Fantasy Geography among the Rastafarians of Jamaica,” *Journal of Geography* 84, no. 4 (1985): 145.
- 4 David Noel Freedman and Allen C. Myers, *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2000), 102.
- 5 George A. Lipsky et al., *Ethiopia* (New Haven: HRAF Press, 1962), 6.
- 6 René Brus, “Ethiopian Crowns,” *African Arts* 8, no. 4 (Summer 1975): 8, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3335077>.
- 7 Edward Ullendorff, *Ethiopia and the Bible* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 83.
- 8 Paul Raffaele, “Keepers of the Lost Ark?” *Smithsonian Magazine*, December 2007, accessed November 2015, <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/people-places/keepers-of-the-lost-ark-179998820/?no-ist>.

- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Ullendorff, 103.
- 11 Marilyn E. Heldman, "Architectural Symbolism, Sacred Geography and the Ethiopian Church," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22, no. 3 (August 1992): 234, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1580918>.
- 12 Ibid., 226.
- 13 Karl W. Butzer, "Rise and Fall of Aksum, Ethiopia: A Geo-Archaeological Interpretation," *American Antiquity* 46, no. 3 (July 1981): 483, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/280596>.
- 14 Stuart Munro-Hay, *Aksum: An African Civilization of Late Antiquity* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991), 10.5.
- 15 Stuart Munro-Hay, *Ethiopia, the Unknown Land: A Cultural and Historical Guide* (New York: I.B. Tannis, 2002), 304.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Berry LaVerle, "Architecture and Kingship: The Significance of Gondar-Style Architecture," *Northeast African Studies, New Series* 2, no. 3 (1995): 7, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41931110>.
- 18 Norbert C. Brockton, *Encyclopedia of Sacred Places* (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1997), 16.
- 19 Nicholas J. Santoro, *Mary in Our Life: Atlas of the Names and Titles of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and Their Place in Marian Devotion* (Bloomington: iUniverse, 2011), 641.

- 20 Lipsky et al., 132.
- 21 Brockton, 16.
- 22 Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Ethiopia: A Country Study*, ed. Thomas P. Ofansky and LaVerle Berry (Washington: Library of Congress, 1993), 12.
- 23 Munro-Hay, *Aksum*, 7.6.
- 24 Brus, 8.
- 25 Stuart Munro-Hay, *The Quest for the Ark of the Covenant* (New York: I.B. Tannis, 2007), 48.

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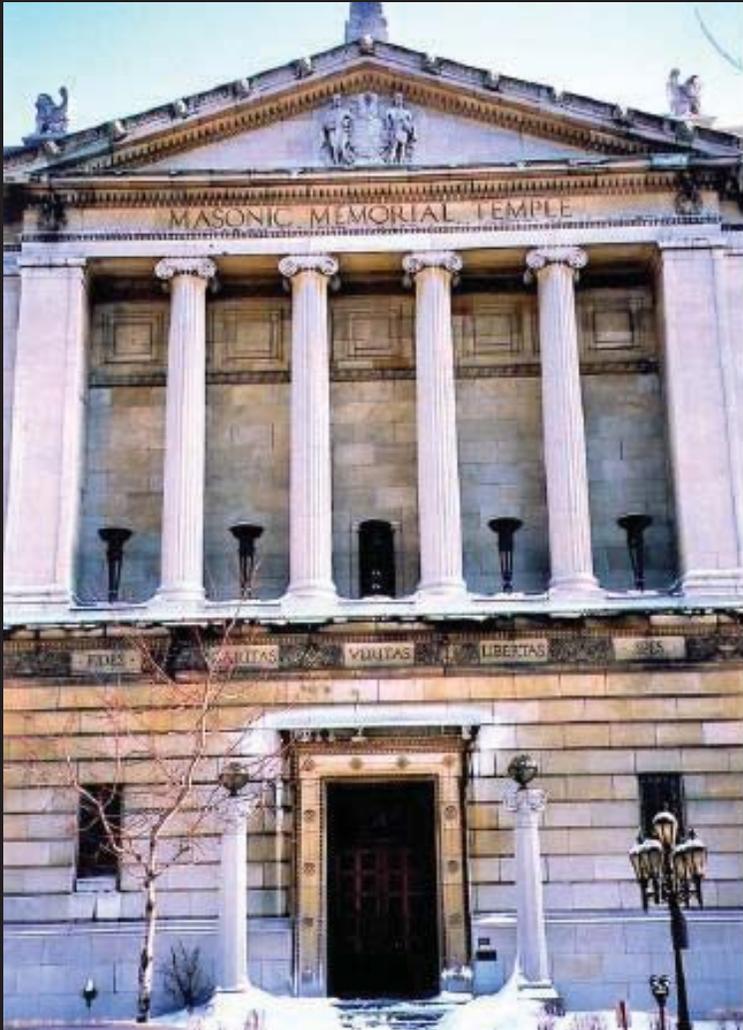
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General view of the Montreal Masonic Memorial Temple.  
2295 Saint-Marc Street and 1805 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal.  
Photo credit: Parks Canada Agency, A. Waldron, 2000.

# The Grand Lodge of Quebec: A Freemasonic Appropriation of Solomon's Temple as Symbol of Jerusalem

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CYNTHIA CATEL

The biblical, cultural and historical traces of Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem have captivated the imagination of Western societies since the time of the Crusades (1096–1487), when the Temple Mount became a religious site of warring interests and the location of the former Temple became a coveted site for Christian pilgrimage. The symbolic and allegorical

appropriation of Solomon's Temple within Western esoteric practices from the seventeenth century onwards culminated most notably in the Freemasonic Order, which proclaims the Temple as its founding site. Although this narrative is traditionally and academically understood to be mythological and unprovable, Masonic practice and belief assert that the Masonic Lodge embodies a temporal connection to the ancient Temple of Jerusalem through its architectural and spatial design, its ornamentation and through the rituals enacted within its walls. This paper will examine the function of the Grand Lodge of Quebec (also known as the Montreal Masonic Memorial Temple) as a symbolic reconstruction of King Solomon's Temple. I will analyze the significance of the Grand Lodge's exterior and interior architectural features within the context of Freemasonic iconography and myth, and will also examine the role of ritualistic performance within the Lodge in order to articulate the visual and symbolic relationship between the modern building, the former Jewish Temple and the Masonic eschatological concept of the "Celestial Jerusalem."<sup>1</sup> These metaphorical links represent a unique connection between the city of Jerusalem and the contemporary cityscape of Montreal.

Freemasonry is defined as "a science of morality, veiled in allegory, and illustrated by symbols."<sup>2</sup> It is also a philosophy that teaches two doctrines: "the unity of God and the immortality of the soul."<sup>3</sup> Freemasonry became a legally accepted and constituted fraternal organization in both England and Scotland

in 1717 with the formation of the Grand Lodge of England.<sup>4</sup> It is a members-only, exclusively male order that grew out of the stonemasons guilds established in Scotland in the seventeenth century.<sup>5</sup> These stonemasons manually worked with brick, stone and mortar,<sup>6</sup> which is known as Operative Masonry.<sup>7</sup> The mystical, mathematical, geometric and symbolic knowledge of the Freemasons is believed to have come from the descendants of the Knights Templar, who settled in the Northern Isles after the Order disbanded in France in 1307.<sup>8</sup> Most historians agree that James IV of Scotland (1473–1513) brought Freemasonry from Scotland to England,<sup>9</sup> where it blossomed into a secret fraternal society accepting Speculative Masons, who engage in the symbolic and ritualistic practices of Freemasonry rather than in the skilled trade.<sup>10</sup> Members congregated for private meetings in an expanding network of Lodges, where there were three degrees of initiation and oaths of secrecy. Arcane rituals were performed by the Grand Master and the initiates for the purpose of transmitting esoteric teachings known as the Ancient Mysteries.<sup>11</sup>

Freemasonry later emerged in France in the 1730s, where it was embraced by the Jacobites, who supported the exiled, pro-Catholic House of Stuart.<sup>12</sup> They expanded the three-degree system of initiation (known as Craft Masonry<sup>13</sup> or the Blue Lodge degrees<sup>14</sup>) to a system of thirty-three degrees—known as the Scottish Rite<sup>15</sup>—by combining the initial degrees with esoteric teachings of the Knights Templar that had remained underground in France.<sup>16</sup>

However, in 1751, members who opposed the modern changes taking place at the “Premier” Grand Lodge of England formed the Most Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons according to the Old Institutions,<sup>17</sup> calling themselves “the Ancients” in opposition to “the Moderns” of the “Premier” Grand Lodge of England.<sup>18</sup> In 1813, the two competing groups came together to form the United Grand Lodge of England.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, the rituals and traditions associated with both institutions were combined within the Book of Constitutions, the governing doctrine of all the Lodges in Britain.<sup>20</sup>

The use of Solomon’s Temple as a symbolic vehicle for the Order’s myths and practices at the time of its public acceptance as a formal organization in the early eighteenth century was arguably a means of concealing some of their beliefs, which would have otherwise been deemed heretical by a society still firmly entrenched in Judeo-Christian beliefs and moral conduct. Although the only religious requirement for membership involves the belief in a supreme governing Deity (termed “the Grand Architect of the Universe”),<sup>21</sup> and there is no outright adherence to Judaism, Christianity or Islam, Freemasonry integrates biblical and Talmudic stories into its history and mythology.

The brotherhood traces its lineage back to the time of Noah, who received from God the two doctrines of Freemasonry, that is, the unity of God and the immortality of the soul. Noah passed

on this divine knowledge to his patriarchal descendants, the Noachites; Masonic writers have called this speculative practice “Pure or Primitive Freemasonry.” After the dispersion at Babel, wherein many abandoned the Noachites and lost sight of the divine truths, a second type of Freemasonry emerged among the Gentiles, which Masonic writers have called “Spurious Freemasonry.” This form of Freemasonry was practiced by some priests and philosophers who “retain[ed] only dim and glimmering portions of the true light.”<sup>22</sup> They shared their divine knowledge with selected members of the masses by initiating them into the Mysteries, which were allegorical and symbolic teachings that revealed the two doctrines of Freemasonry.<sup>23</sup>

It was during the construction of Solomon’s Temple that Speculative Masonry—represented by Primitive Freemasonry and Spurious Freemasonry—merged with Operative Masonry. The building of this edifice brought together the Israelites under King Solomon, who practiced Primitive Freemasonry, and the Tyrians under Hiram, King of Tyre, many of whom were Spurious Freemasons and also Operative Masons, that is, architects and builders by profession.<sup>24</sup> Thus the doctrines and rituals of Speculative and Operative Freemasonry were amalgamated in Jerusalem and a single institution emerged, mirroring the founding of the United Grand Lodge of England in 1813, when the two opposing factions united to create one Masonic organization.<sup>25</sup> The formative moment at Solomon’s Temple is shared with all candidates during the third degree in the brotherhood

as part of an allegory about the chief architect of the Temple, Hiram Abiff, who is murdered by men wishing to extract from him the Master Masons' secret passwords.<sup>26</sup>

Guy L. Beck states that the "image of the Temple in Jerusalem functions centrally and positively in Freemasonry as a symbol of both the expanding moral order on earth and a celestial lodge above in the Masonic eschaton."<sup>27</sup> Freemasons believe that the "New Jerusalem" can be achieved on earth through the expansion of their Order and the promotion of their moral influence on society and within government.<sup>28</sup> According to the famous Masonic historian and writer Albert Mackey, the Temple of Solomon is the "material symbol of the world,"<sup>29</sup> a microcosm of the universal,<sup>30</sup> and a symbolic vehicle through which the modern incarnation of Freemasonry as a fraternal body is explained. The Masonic blend of allegorical and para-biblical storytelling explains the synthesis of stonemasons' traditions and ancient esoteric teachings in the development of a unified system of science, religion and social ideology intended to further the moral progress of society as a whole.<sup>31</sup> This is to culminate in the utopian manifestation of the New Jerusalem, epitomized as a "Celestial Lodge," which the Masons understand as a macrocosm of the Tabernacle of Moses, or of Solomon's Temple.<sup>32</sup>

British Freemasonry was transported across the Atlantic into Canada during the latter half of the eighteenth century, flourishing from the 1860s until the onset of the First World War.<sup>33</sup> The

Grand Lodge of Canada was founded in Ontario in 1853. In 1869, the Grand Lodge of Quebec established itself as an independent, self-governing provincial body of Masonry,<sup>34</sup> severing ties with the English Lodge because it sought to remain sovereign and was unwilling to declare loyalty to England, a requirement for official recognition.<sup>35</sup> This rift was mended in 1906,<sup>36</sup> although the Grand Lodge of Quebec retains some independence. For instance, it uses its own Book of Constitutions, called *The Book of Constitution of the Grand Lodge of Quebec: Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons*, which omits passages where ceremonial lip service is paid to the British throne.<sup>37</sup>

The Montreal Masonic Memorial Temple was constructed in 1930 in downtown Montreal, on the corner of Sherbrooke and Saint-Marc Streets, where it stands to this day (fig. 1). It is a remarkable edifice designed by the architect John Smith Archibald (1872–1934) in the Beaux-Arts style.<sup>38</sup> The significance of Solomon’s Temple within Freemasonic lore, practice and architecture is evident in the design of the Grand Lodge of Quebec. As such, this building is symbolically and physically connected not only to other impressive Lodges throughout the world, but also to the biblical Jerusalem and the future “Celestial Jerusalem.”<sup>39</sup>

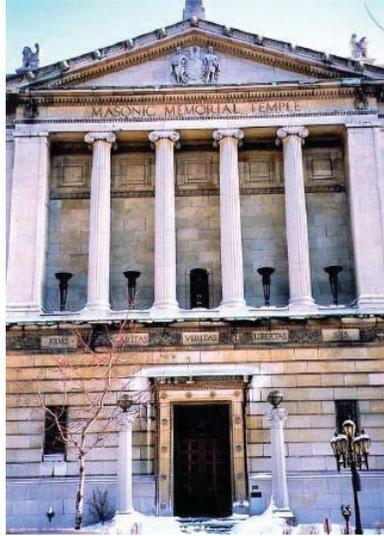


Fig. 1. General view of the Montreal Masonic Memorial Temple.  
2295 Saint-Marc Street and 1805 Sherbrooke Street West, Montreal.

Photo credit: Parks Canada Agency, A. Waldron, 2000.

<http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/image-image.aspx?id=12542#i2>.

A Neoclassical, majestic structure, the Masonic Memorial Temple consists of a base, main body and entablature.<sup>40</sup> A central triangular pediment containing high-relief decoration and topped with an acroterion is propped up by four Ionic columns in the round and two Ionic pilasters flanking the portico. The cornice features decorative carvings, while the foundation frieze displays classical and Masonic motifs which are emphasized by the smooth limestone facing of the façade.<sup>41</sup> The central bronze door is framed by two freestanding columns representing the pillars Jachin and Boaz of Solomon's Temple.<sup>42</sup> Topped with

lit glass spheres and adorned with decorative details, these columns draw the visitor's eye upwards to the portico. Round, carved relief medallions also adorn the building; there are two on the Sherbrooke Street side and two on the Saint-Marc side.

Signifying the Arts and Sciences,<sup>43</sup> the decorative pair of low-relief sculptures on the Sherbrooke Street façade depict two of the nine muses belonging to the mythological-religious culture of Classical Greece.<sup>44</sup> On the right is Terpsichore (fig. 2), whose lyre or harp marks her as the inspiration for music and dance.<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 2. John Smith Archibald, *Grand Lodge of Quebec (Detail of Medallion of Terpsichore)*, 1930, Queenston limestone. Photo credit: Cynthia Catel.



Fig. 3. John Smith Archibald, *Grand Lodge of Quebec (Detail of Medallion of Urania)*, 1930, Queenston limestone. Photo credit: Cynthia Catel.

On the left is the Muse of Astronomy, Urania (fig. 3), sitting with her celestial globe and holding a small staff.<sup>46</sup>

Following the Renaissance, Terpsichore and Urania were regarded as moral protectors whose powers of influence extended from the material to the heavenly worlds.<sup>47</sup> The inclusion of these two figures on the façade of the Lodge not only serves as a nod to the supernatural forces of classical creativity, but also alludes to the collective role of the Freemasons as the moral progenitors of the future. Referencing Eusebius, Mackey states: "The Muses teach hidden things above the vulgar

comprehension. [W]e [Masons] pay special attention to Urania and Terpsichore, ... aerial agents employed by the Almighty in the creation and preservation of the Universe."<sup>48</sup> These two medallions thus elevate the Lodge as a building associated with great moral character. Observing these images reminds members of their moral superiority and their obligation to harness the Masonic teachings as spiritual bread to nourish the world. Like the manna of the Israelites, the Freemasons believe that their arcane knowledge has a divine dimension. This is explained in a passage by famous Freemason and author Manly P. Hall in his book *The Lost Keys of Freemasonry*:

Arts, sciences and religions are monuments standing for what humanity has already accomplished.

Masonry is a university, teaching the liberal arts and sciences of the soul to all who will attend to its words. ... Hence a Mason is a builder of the temple of character, ... realizing that the completion of the temple he was building to the King of the Universe was a duty which he owed to his God, his brother and to himself.<sup>49</sup>

The two medallions on the Saint-Marc façade showing a Templar knight and Isaac Newton (1643–1727) relate to the historical development of Freemasonry. Not only do they solidify the link between the liberal arts and religious sciences within Freemasonry, but they also mark the Lodge as the temple of the “New World.” On the left side of the façade is a reference to the

Knights Templar (fig. 4): a soldier in profile is atop his steed, carrying a sword and wearing the armour typically associated with the Crusaders, and holding a shield emblazoned with the recognizable Templar Cross.



Fig. 4. John Smith Archibald, *Grand Lodge of Quebec (Detail of Medallion of a Templar Knight)*, 1930, Queenston limestone. Photo credit: Cynthia Catel.



Fig. 5. John Smith Archibald, *Grand Lodge of Quebec (Detail of Medallion of Isaac Newton)*, 1930, Queenston limestone. Photo credit: Cynthia Catel.

The Knights Templar has strong connections to both Solomon's Temple and Freemasonry. This medieval Catholic military order protected Christian pilgrims in the Holy Land during the Crusades,<sup>50</sup> and its headquarters was based in the area where Solomon's Temple formerly stood. The medallion depicting a Templar knight refers to the unification of Speculative and Operative Masonry during the building of Solomon's Temple and again in the Middle Ages during the Crusades. Similar to the Freemasons, the Knights Templar linked themselves to the masons from Tyre who built Solomon's Temple.<sup>51</sup> The medallion alludes not only to the Operative Masonry practiced by the ancestors of the Knights Templar, but also to the mythological unification of Operative Masonry and Speculative Masonry during the erection of Solomon's Temple.<sup>52</sup> The merging of the two types of Masonry is believed to have actually occurred during the Middle Ages, when stonemasons encountered a group of de-facto Templar knights who had imported their esoteric teachings into Scotland after the disbandment of the Order in 1307.<sup>53</sup>

To the right of this medallion is a portrait of Isaac Newton in three-quarter profile (fig. 5). He is sitting on a stack of books and holding an apple, which appears to have just fallen from the tree behind him.

This portrayal of Isaac Newton is multilayered in its meaning. First, it functions as a signifier of scientific theory by depicting

the scene of the falling apple which led to Newton's development of the theory of gravity. This image and the one referencing the Knights Templar represent the different types of knowledge that the Freemasons possess, thereby emphasizing the role of the Lodge as a vehicle for moral, cultural and social improvement.<sup>54</sup> Secondly, this emblem of scientific theory underscores "the relationship between antiquarianism, history and natural philosophy,"<sup>55</sup> which influenced Freemasonry in the eighteenth century and helped to "establish [them] as the most widespread form of secular association in ... England, providing a model for other forms of urban sociability and a stimulus to music and the arts, ... whose members were of the Royal Society and the Society of Antiquaries."<sup>56</sup> Thirdly, Newton was not only a naturalist, alchemist, Freemason and a member of the Royal Society, but he was also a Deist who was obsessed with studying both the Old Testament and the New Testament. He spent a significant amount of time trying to unravel the prophetic timeline laid out in Jewish scriptures. He also studied the Tabernacle and Solomon's Temple, believing that they symbolized a "microcosm of the universe and [served as material] models of proper governance for the Church."<sup>57</sup> Newton's theories regarding the Tabernacle and the Temple of Solomon directly link to the ideology of the Freemasons, who view the Lodge as a microcosmic re-construction of Solomon's Temple and as a monument to the macrocosmic "Celestial Jerusalem," which they believe their actions will manifest within the earthly realm.<sup>58</sup>

In addition to these four medallions, other features of the Lodge's exterior reference Solomon's Temple, such as the two columns flanking the main entrance (fig. 6).



Fig. 6. John Smith Archibald, *Grand Lodge of Quebec (Detail of Pillars)*, 1930, Queenston limestone and glass. Photo credit: Cynthia Catel.

The oblong, hexagonal shafts rise from solid square bases, dressed with ornamental relief tracery along the bottom and relief frieze motifs along the top incorporating Masonic symbols, most notably the square and compass.<sup>59</sup> Standing approximately six feet tall, the columns are crowned with a pair of winged bulls and glass spheres; the one on the left represents a terrestrial globe, while the one on the right is a celestial globe decorated with tiny astrological sigils and planetary symbols.<sup>60</sup> These pillars represent the columns Jachin and Boaz of King Solomon's Temple as described in the Old Testament in 2 Chronicles 3:17: "He set up the pillars at the front of the Temple, one on the right hand and the other on the left and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin and the name on the left, Boaz."<sup>61</sup> The winged bulls or winged ox (possessing horns) at the top of the columns are cherubim, which were featured on the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies.<sup>62</sup> The winged ox in Christian iconography is usually associated with the Apostle Luke, but its physical traits also resemble the description of one of the cherubim in the Book of Revelation.<sup>63</sup> The Bible does not precisely describe the tops of these pillars. Within the modern Masonic tradition, the use of globes was introduced as the capitals, one representing the earthly realm and the other, the celestial realm.<sup>64</sup> The columns therefore not only recall the First Temple, but also reinforce the notion that the Lodge is a divinely inspired edifice embodying the supernatural and metaphysical authority and teachings required to manifest the future "Celestial Jerusalem."<sup>65</sup> The pillars of Jachin and Boaz also appear within Lodge rooms, usually

at the centre of the space, framing the vertical axis and demarcating the location designated for the altar.<sup>66</sup>

The high relief decoration in the centre of the pediment (fig. 7) further identifies the Lodge as a metaphorical reconstruction of the Temple of Solomon.



Fig. 7. John Smith Archibald, *Grand Lodge of Quebec (Detail of Pediment Relief)*, 1930, Queenston limestone. Photo credit: Xavier Comtois. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Montreal\\_Masonic\\_Memorial\\_Temple\\_9.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Montreal_Masonic_Memorial_Temple_9.JPG).

Two partially nude male figures are wearing loosely draped garments. One is holding a helmet beneath his arm, while the other is carrying a scroll to conceal his nudity. They display *contrapposto* poses as they stand casually with their free elbows resting on the large coat of arms separating them. Each figure is leaning on a sword encircled by a snake. This sculpture's symbolism partly derives from the arms of the United Grand Lodge of England (fig. 8), which combine the arms of the Ancient and Modern Grand Lodges to signify their union.<sup>67</sup> The arms of the Modern Grand Lodge on the left contain three castles and a pair of compasses, while the arms of the Ancient Grand Lodge on the right side feature a lion, ox, eagle and man with arms raised. The Ark of the Covenant, flanked by cherubim, forms the crest above the shield.<sup>68</sup>



Fig. 8. Current arms of the United Grand Lodge of England. Reproduced from *Arts Quatuor Coronatorum* 83 (1970): 377, <http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/grandlodge/seal/ugle.html>.

The main difference between the arms of the United Grand Lodge of England and the sculptural relief on the pediment of the Grand Lodge of Quebec is that the cherubim flanking the shield of the former are replaced with male figures in the latter. Their swords are referred to as "Tyler swords" in Masonic symbolism; they represent the "flaming sword which was placed at the east of the Garden of Eden, protecting the tree of life."<sup>69</sup> This type of sword is carried by a Mason who sits outside the entrance of the Lodge to guard and protect the space from any unwanted gazes.<sup>70</sup> The serpents along the shaft are reminiscent of the caduceus of Hermes, which is a symbol for Hermeticism, or secret esoteric teachings. The combination of religious and Freemasonic iconography in this sculpture elevates the Lodge to the status of a dwelling of the Most High, whose teachings are likened to Hermetic and Kabbalistic knowledge and protected by the two male Masonic guardians.

References to Solomon's Temple extend to the interior space of the Lodge. Not only does the spatial layout allude to the Temple, but the Masonic rituals and ceremonies also serve a performative, symbolic and literal function in re-creating Solomon's Temple and providing a (Masonic) template for the "New Jerusalem."<sup>71</sup> The interior of the building features a central spiraling staircase providing access to three vertical floors. Each floor is divided into a central section with two side spaces, and contains both full and half stories. The core of the

building consists of four primary rooms arranged in a vertical hierarchy.<sup>72</sup> The lecture hall is in the basement; the Memorial banquet hall (representing the first Masonic degree) is on the first floor; the main Blue lodge room (representing the second Masonic degree) is on the second floor;<sup>73</sup> and the Scottish Rite room (representing the third Masonic degree, or that of the Master Mason) is on the third floor.<sup>74</sup> The core of the Lodge is intended to mirror the placement of the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies—that is, the inner shrine—of the First Jewish Temple.<sup>75</sup> This allows the rooms to function as symbolic Arks of the Covenant (containers of the divine), wherein the practices, rituals and secrets are known only to eligible Masons (symbolizing the elect Priesthood).

The Grand Master chair is located centrally and slightly elevated along the eastern wall of the Blue lodge room and is accompanied by additional chairs to the left and right, usually designated for the Officers of the Lodge (fig. 9). Additional seating is available along the perimeter of the room for brethren.<sup>76</sup>



Fig. 9. View of Blue lodge room inside the Grand Lodge of Quebec.

Photo credit: Parks Canada Agency, A. Waldron, 2000.

<http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/image-image.aspx?id=12542#i3>.

The egalitarian seating arrangement allows members to sit together regardless of their status or title outside of the room.<sup>77</sup> The altar is located along the central axis in the middle of the room and features a Masonic Bible, candles and a square and compass, recalling the altar within the inner court of King Solomon's Temple.<sup>78</sup> Behind the Grand Master's chair is a dark curtain creating a visual separation and demarcating what would be the Holy of Holies within the Jewish Temple.<sup>79</sup>

Through the performances and rituals undertaken in this "sacred" space, "the master of the lodge ... metaphorically be[comes] King Solomon and the lodge be[comes] Solomon's temple."<sup>80</sup> The oath undertaken by the initiate at the altar is

a symbolic sacrifice paralleling those made at the Jerusalem Temple by the High Priest. These performative and secretive rituals, shielded from the eyes of the public, can be understood as symbolic theatrics “intended on distancing the exterior and temporal world.”<sup>81</sup> Through the theatrical manifestation of their beliefs,<sup>82</sup> Freemasons trace their lineage (real/imagined/exaggerated) to the Solomonic period as a means of reconciling and containing their arcane and mystical beliefs within a recognizable, non-threatening and encoded system of signs and symbols, whose true meanings are only disclosed within the brotherhood. The individual Mason, who is asked to learn, practice, appropriate and develop the secret esoteric knowledge of the brotherhood, improves not only himself but also the world. He therefore represents a microcosm of the Temple of Solomon.<sup>83</sup> His heart, transformed by Freemasonic knowledge, houses the “light”<sup>84</sup>—a metaphor for truth and knowledge.<sup>85</sup> As a member makes his way up the ladder of degrees, this “light” is believed to purify and renew him, akin to the biblical ritual of atonement or the sacrament of repentance.

The Grand Lodge of Quebec, standing as a remarkable architectural landmark in the heart of downtown Montreal, often goes unnoticed by locals today. But to those intrigued by the secretive nature of Freemasonry, many details embedded in the decorative details of the building serve as signifiers of their utopian, interventionist aims to influence the world by means of esoteric knowledge and practices. These are the men in high

social, political and institutional positions, the men who congregate to share arcane religious and philosophical teachings in secret and the men who believe that they have acquired the divine truth, the Philosopher's Stone or the Holy Grail, which is spiritually transformative and which they do not wish to openly share with the rest of us. By erecting the Lodge as a symbolic, metaphoric, performative and visual re-creation of the Temple of Solomon that connects its members spiritually and symbolically to Mount Moriah in Jerusalem, the Freemasons situate themselves as a priesthood engaging in secret moral, religious and cultural practices that define their vision of the "New Celestial Jerusalem" on earth.<sup>86</sup>

## NOTES

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Dale Chihuly, *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000*,  
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# Stone and Glass: *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000*

—MICHELLE SONES

Jerusalem is an ancient city whose history is contained in its stones. The American glass artist Dale Chihuly (b. 1941) explored this relationship in his exhibition *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* (1999), which took place in the ancient Jerusalem Citadel (fig. 1). The show celebrated the new millennium by examining the contrasts between new and old, and between glass and stone. These dissimilar materials worked together to create a simultaneously modern and historical setting. Chihuly avoids explicit meaning in his works and even sometimes insists that they are simply meant to be beautiful, not

meaningful. However, Chihuly set up the space in the Citadel in such a way as to inspire contemplation. *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* encouraged visitors to reflect on the past, present and future of Jerusalem by connecting the history and materials of the site to their present day uses.

The Citadel (fig. 2) was originally a military fortress built by the Hasmoneans in the third century BCE.<sup>1</sup>

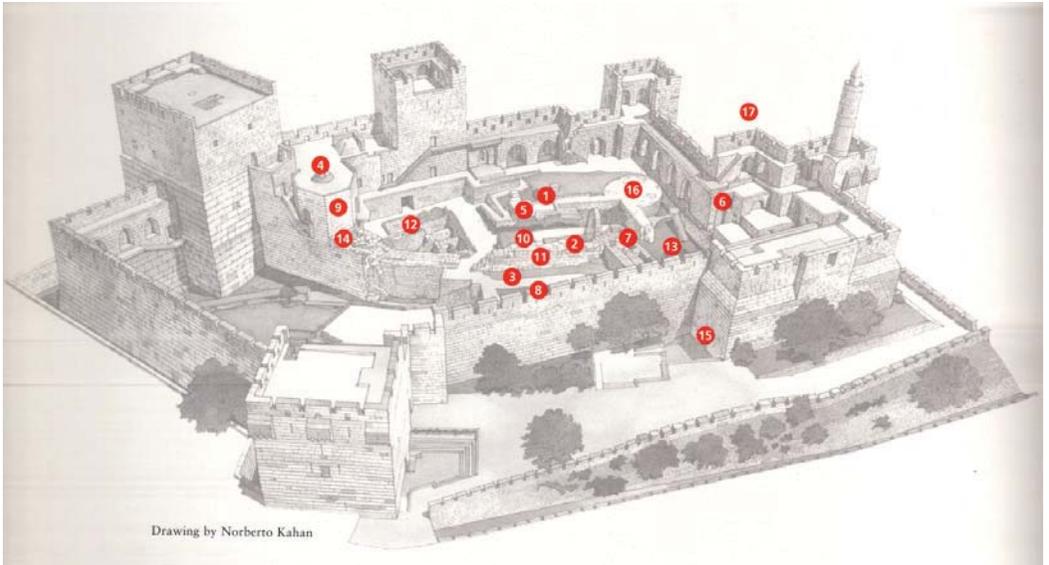


Fig. 1. Norberto Kahan, Exhibition layout for *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* in the Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem, 1999. Reproduced from Dale Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 12.



Fig. 2. The Tower of David Citadel, ca. 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE, Jerusalem, Israel.  
[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4f/Jerusalem-\\_The\\_Tower\\_of\\_David\\_Citadel\\_%285727673472%29.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4f/Jerusalem-_The_Tower_of_David_Citadel_%285727673472%29.jpg).

Like most of Jerusalem, the Citadel has been destroyed many times by the violence of war and rebuilt over the centuries by the ruling powers. Archaeological excavations have uncovered additions and reconfigurations to the structure by the Romans, Arabs, Crusaders, Mamluks and Ottomans. During the Second Temple period, Herod the Great (74/73–4 BCE) restored the derelict Citadel walls and built three towers, named after his brother Phasaël, his friend Hippicus and his sister Miriam.<sup>2</sup> Byzantine Christians mistakenly attributed Herod's last

remaining Phasael Tower to the biblical King David and renamed it the Tower of David.<sup>3</sup> The Mamluks and the Ottomans built most of the structure that exists today in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, respectively.<sup>4</sup>

In 1989, the former military fortress was converted into the Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem. The Museum tells the narratives of Jerusalem beginning over 4000 years ago up to the present day. The aim is to include histories from the three monotheistic religions that consider Jerusalem to be a holy place: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.<sup>5</sup> The building itself, as a layered piece of history, contributes to the telling of Jerusalem's stories. Multiple archaeological excavations of the courtyard in the twentieth century revealed remains of previous structures, as well as Roman tiles, pottery,<sup>6</sup> arrowheads and other ammunitions from the Hellenistic period.<sup>7</sup> To walk through the Citadel is to walk through history. The stones in this building have stood for over 2000 years and testify to the durability of the material and to the ancient legacy of Jerusalem.

Chihuly took the history of the site into account when planning *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000*. Although he was not explicit in matching sculptures with particular locations for historical significance, the connection adds an additional layer to the meaning of the work. An example of such an occurrence is *Red Spears* (1999) (fig. 3), set in the courtyard among ruins from the time of the Crusaders (fig. 1, no. 1).<sup>8</sup> The sculpture was

composed of 247 spears made of bright red glass. The spears were arranged in a long tent formation, supported by an interior metal frame hidden by the glass, and were set in the grass, which had grown to cover some of the ancient stones. Standing in the grass, the spears appeared as if they could have been planted in the ground and grown out of the soil. In this location, the glass spears were reminiscent of the kinds of weapons used by Christian soldiers during the Crusades in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries. The two rows of spears leaned forward toward each other in a fairly combative position, almost as if they were *en garde*, ready to fight.

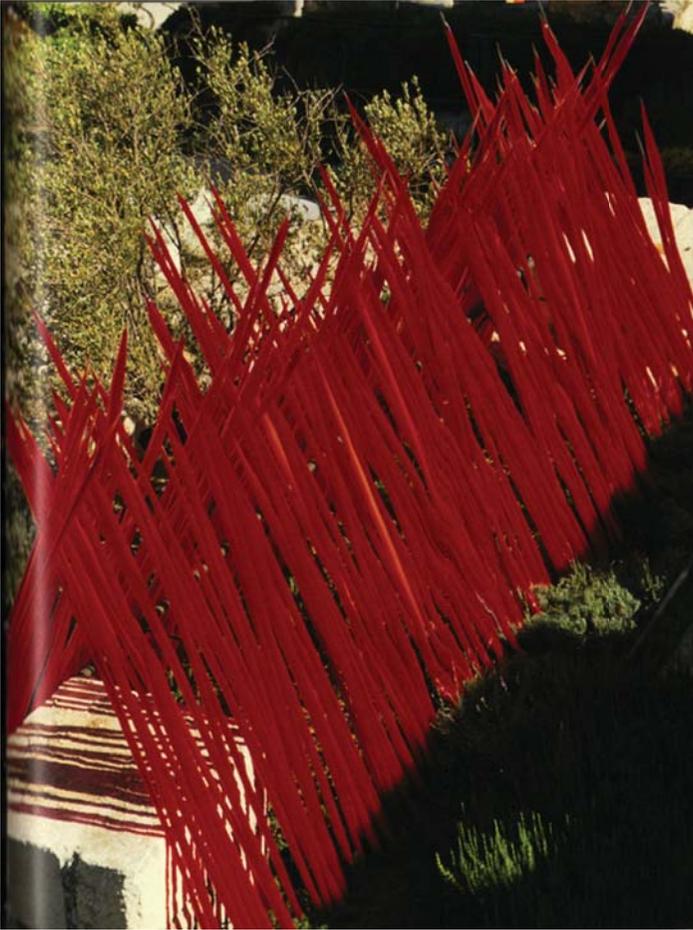


Fig. 3. Dale Chihuly, *Red Spears*, 1999, hand blown glass, 6.5 x 29 x 12 feet, Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Reproduced from William Warmus, *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 1999), section 14.

While the red colour may have evoked thoughts of blood and the violence that took place in the Citadel (and the rest of Jerusalem) in the past, the sculpture was much livelier than this interpretation would suggest. The glass spears would be ineffective in combat—being easily shattered upon impact—but they beautified the Citadel and allowed visitors to enjoy the space not only as an art exhibit, but also as a piece of history.

Chihuly took advantage of architectural features of the Citadel to enhance the presentation of his sculptures. Along the southern wall of the Citadel stands a circular platform that was once the foundation of a round tower during the Early Islamic period (7<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> c.) (fig. 1, no. 16). On top of this base, Chihuly erected his own version of a tower. *Crystal Mountain* (1999) (fig. 4) was the largest piece in the exhibition, measuring fifteen metres tall and eleven metres in diameter. The mountain was covered in 2000 crystals made of polyvitro, a plastic material that was cast in moulds of glass chunks.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 4. Dale Chihuly, *Crystal Mountain*, 1999, Polyvitro and steel, 40.5 x 37 feet, Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Dale Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 162.

The steel frame was visible beneath and between the layers of crystals fastened to the ends of intersecting metal rods, which were left in their raw industrial state. The sculpture was at once delicate and crude, with elements that Chihuly describes as “brutto,” such as the sharp lines of the unfinished rebar.<sup>10</sup> The exposed and unfinished materials contrasted with the fragile crystals, revealing the underlying roughness that reflected the stones of the Citadel. *Crystal Mountain* was made to correspond to the grand scale of the Citadel.<sup>11</sup> It was large enough to be impressive and to command the viewer’s attention, but not so large that it dominated and overwhelmed the space. Erected on an ancient tower base, the mountain rose above the visitors and even above the walls so that it was visible from outside the Citadel. Like the original tower, there was a way to climb into the centre of the mountain from an entrance in the base, giving the visitor an entirely different perspective of the work.<sup>12</sup> This modern tower evoked a variety of reactions from visitors depending on their backgrounds. What one person saw as Mount Sinai, another saw as rock candy, the Burning Bush or the Crucifixion. The range of responses demonstrates not only the ability of the sculpture to be interpreted in many ways, but also the diversity of the visitors to the Citadel. Jerusalem was at various times under the control of different ethnic and religious groups, and the city’s current multiculturalism is shown in the architecture and in people’s responses to *Crystal Mountain*.

Exhibiting outdoors is unusual for Chihuly, who mainly displays

his sculptures in museums and galleries.<sup>13</sup> Open air exhibitions provide their own set of challenges as well as advantages over indoor exhibitions. Chihuly's interest in the ability of light to cast shadows, alter colours and react with different materials makes light an important component in all of his works. Lighting can be manipulated and controlled in galleries to achieve desired effects, but outdoor exhibitions rely primarily on natural lighting.<sup>14</sup> In Jerusalem, the sun is strong and provides a much brighter light than any artificial sources. In order to take advantage of the sun, Chihuly left the frame of *Crystal Mountain* exposed to allow light to penetrate the sculpture and hit the crystals from all sides. Too many crystals would have created an opaque surface, which would have prevented the light from permeating the sculpture. Chihuly chose a golden pink colour to be "bright and light and joyous on top of the heavy steel structure."<sup>15</sup> He used colour to lighten up the steel frame in the same way it was used throughout the Citadel. The rigidity of the stones was softened with the addition of colour. Translucent materials contrasted with the solid stones, making the space feel lighter and alive. Light and colour in the glass sculptures converted the space visually from an ancient military fort to a place to enjoy modern art.

The sound installation that accompanied *Crystal Mountain* also contributed to the transformation of the Citadel by incorporating sounds from outside the walls. American composer Jonathan Berger (b. 1954) recorded the religious sounds of

Jerusalem's Old City and created a piece of music that would be heard at *Crystal Mountain*. The sounds included church bells, voices chanting, a *muezzin's azan*—the Islamic call to prayer—and a cello accompanying a cantor's prayer.<sup>16</sup> Each of the religious sounds was scheduled to play at the respective times of prayer. "Echoes of Light and Time" was an interactive element of the sculpture featuring sensors positioned among the crystals that detected changes in the environment, such as the intensity of light, temperature and the movement of the sun across the sky.<sup>17</sup> The program responded to these daily variations in atmosphere to produce a slightly different piece of music each day. "Echoes of Light and Time" brought the city inside the walls of the Citadel, reflecting the intermingling of the three monotheistic religions within Jerusalem and reminding the viewer of the context and location in which they viewed these works. As a multicultural, multiethnic and multi-religious city, Jerusalem's past and present have been characterized by the struggle of its diverse population to coexist peacefully. Chihuly does not aim to make an overt religious or political statement with his art. By acknowledging the presence and contributions of these three religions, his work was rather a testament to the people who built the city in the past, those who reside there today and those who will continue to contribute to the culture and society of Jerusalem in the future.

Chihuly's art often pushes the boundaries of what can be accomplished with glass. In an essay about *Chihuly in the Light*

of *Jerusalem 2000*, Chihuly writes, "I have spent my life as an explorer searching for new ways to use glass and glassblowing to make forms and colours and installations that no one has ever created before."<sup>18</sup> In this exhibition, Chihuly displayed both experimental glassworks and more traditional pieces made using ancient techniques. *Hebron Vessels* (1999) (fig. 5) was one of two traditionally crafted glass pieces and was the only local work to be included in the show.<sup>19</sup>

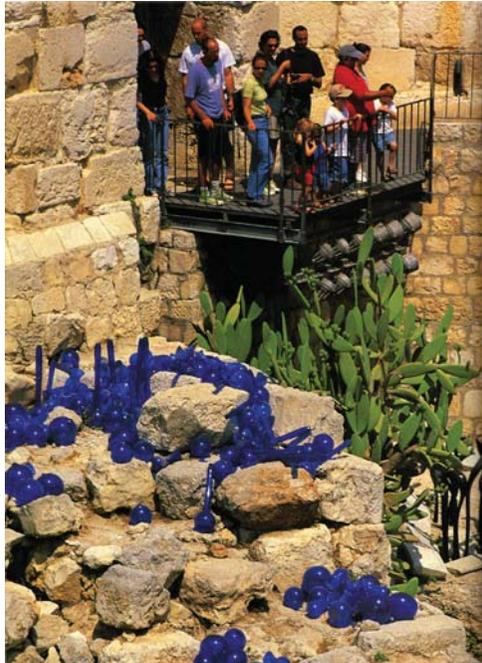


Fig. 5. Dale Chihuly, *Hebron Vessels*, 1999, hand blown glass, Tower of David Museum of the History of Jerusalem, Jerusalem. Reproduced from Dale Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 138.

*Hebron Vessels* was composed of 200 blue vases made by glassmakers in the nearby Arab town of Hebron, southeast of Jerusalem. The round bottom vessels, all in the same shade of cobalt blue characteristic of Hebron glass, varied in size, with some featuring excessively elongated necks and others hardly a lip. The vases were placed among the remains of the First Wall, the original wall of the Citadel built by the Hasmoneans (fig. 1, no. 14).<sup>20</sup> The vessels lay on their sides, upright or upside down, heaped in piles and scattered amidst the stones. This arrangement made the vases look like they belonged in the space, as if they could easily have been part of an archaeological dig, uncovered among the ruins.

*Hebron Vessels* connected the exhibition to the larger history of glassblowing as well as to the development of the practice in areas around Jerusalem. The first glass artefacts discovered were beads in Mesopotamia dating back over 5000 years, leading archaeologists to believe glass was invented somewhere in this region.<sup>21</sup> One version of the legend of the origin of glass comes from Pliny the Elder (23–79 CE), a Roman historian who wrote in his *Naturalis Historia* (77–79 CE) of how Phoenician sailors were the first to accidentally create and discover glass. As the story goes, the sailors landed on the shores of Syria one night and used blocks of soda instead of stones to support their pot in the fire. The chemical reaction between the soda, fire and sand created a clear liquid that hardened into the first man-made glass.<sup>22</sup> Although there is no way to confirm if this is in

fact the way glass was first created, archaeologists are more certain about where the practice of glassblowing first developed. The oldest blown glass artefacts come from the Syro-Palestinian coast, where archaeologists believe this technique was invented sometime in the first century BCE.<sup>23</sup> A glassmith would blow a blob of liquefied glass collected on the end of a hollow tube into a bubble to give it shape. Prior to the invention of glassblowing, the process of casting glass vessels took several days, resulting in expensive luxury items that were only available to the elite.<sup>24</sup> The versatility that blowing offered glass makers allowed for the creation of inexpensive containers that were more quickly made and readily available to a wider population than before. The majority of glassblowing techniques in use for centuries, and still today, were developed within the first few hundred years of the invention of glassmaking.<sup>25</sup>

Chihuly's inclusion of Hebron glassworks in *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* created a direct link between the past, present and future of glassblowing. Contemporary glassblowers working in a 500-year-old shop created these vases specifically for the exhibition. When Chihuly visited the shop before commissioning the objects, he was amazed to find that the gaffers continue to use the same tools and methods as those who worked in the same shop 500 years ago.<sup>26</sup> For example, rather than using a glassblowing bench, the glassmakers in Hebron roll the blowpipe along their legs to keep the molten glass spinning. The enduring local traditions of glassblowing were celebrated

in *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000*. *Hebron Vessels* was a tribute to the history of glassblowing in the region, to the present creations of local gaffers and to the continuation of the craft by future artisans.

The contrast between the materials of the colourful glass sculptures and the pale stone Citadel walls was apparent throughout the exhibition, and was especially clear in works such as *Hebron Vessels*, where the glass was in direct contact with the stones. The blue vases were scattered among the pile of stones, seemingly on the verge of shattering at any second. However, glass and stone, apparently in constant opposition, share a fundamental commonality, as sand, a product of the erosion of stones, is the primary ingredient in glass. What was once stone is now glass in one shape and can be transformed into another form of glass in the future. Glass can be shattered and melted down again to become something completely different in an everlasting cycle of recycling and regeneration. On the surface, stones appear strong, heavy and enduring, while glass is fragile, light and ephemeral, when in fact glass is simply stone in another state.

Set on the eve of the new millennium, *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem* caused visitors to contemplate the future of Jerusalem while also celebrating its past. The contrasts between new and old, between fragility and solidity, and between glass and stone initially appeared to be absolute. Upon further

examination, however, commonalities began to emerge among these elements. The exhibition in the Citadel was arranged in such a way as to enhance the contrasting natures of the ancient stone and modern glass so that visitors could examine them in their own ways.

#### NOTES

- 1 Anthea Gerrie, "Jerusalem the Citadel," *History Today* 58, no. 9 (September 2008): 12.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 "The Origin of the Name," Tower of David, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.tod.org.il/en/citadel/tower-of-david-the-origin-of-the-name/>.
- 4 Gerrie, 13.
- 5 Shosh Yaniv, "The Tower of David and Chihuly's Glass Exhibition," in *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000*, ed. Dale Chihuly (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 8.
- 6 Hillel Geva, "Excavations in the Citadel of Jerusalem, 1979–1980: Preliminary Report," *Israel Exploration Journal* 33, no. 1/2 (1983): 64–67.
- 7 Gerrie, 13.
- 8 Sharon Kanon, "Color with a Touch of Glass," in *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000*, ed. Dale Chihuly (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 200.
- 9 Dale Chihuly, "Lecture at Rackham Auditorium" (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan, November 2, 1999),

quoted in Dale Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 163. Originally, Chihuly wanted to use old glass that had been taken from factories that were no longer in use, but the frame could not support the collective weight of the crystals, so he opted for a lighter weight material that would offer the desired effect and maintain the same shape.

- 10 "Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000," directed by Peter West (Seattle: Portland Press, 1999), quoted in Dale Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 152.
- 11 Chihuly, "Lecture," quoted in Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000*, 163.
- 12 William Warmus, *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 1999), section 7.
- 13 This is not Chihuly's first outdoor show. Previously Chihuly exhibited chandeliers hung above the Venice canals in *Chihuly Over Venice* (1997).
- 14 Dale Chihuly, "Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem," in *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000*, ed. Dale Chihuly (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 32. *Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem* was also open on some occasions for nighttime exhibitions. Two hundred light fixtures were installed throughout the citadel for night visitors.
- 15 Chihuly, "Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem," 32.
- 16 Kanon, 200.

- 17 Ibid., 201.
- 18 Chihuly, "Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem," 30.
- 19 Dale Chihuly, "Lecture at Victoria and Albert Museum" (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, October 13, 1999), quoted in Dale Chihuly, ed., *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 106. The other sculpture in this show made using traditional glassblowing methods is *Fishing Floats* (1999), which was executed in Hokkaido, Japan and installed in a pit in the Citadel.
- 20 "Citadel Map," Tower of David, accessed November 16, 2015, <http://www.tod.org.il/en/citadel/citadel-map/>.
- 21 Lisa Parks, "Israel's Fragile Legacy: 2000 Years of Glassblowing," in *Chihuly Jerusalem 2000* ed. Dale Chihuly (Seattle: Portland Press, 2000), 202.
- 22 Pliny the Elder, *The Natural History*, ed. John Bostock (London: Taylor and Francis, 1855), Book XXXVI, Chapter 65, no. 26, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.02.0137%3Abook%3D36%3Achapter%3D65>.
- 23 Parks, 203.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Ibid.
- 26 "Chihuly in the Light of Jerusalem," Vimeo video, 6:45, posted by "Chihuly Studio," June 2, 2014, <https://vimeo.com/97165343>.

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Anish Kapoor, *The Dirty Corner*, 2011, Cor-Ten steel, earth and mixed media, 8.9 x 6.55 x 60 m, Palace of Versailles.

# Anish Kapoor: Revealing the Dirty Corners of Society's Prejudices

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SASHA KILLALEA

When freedom of expression is employed to demean and discriminate against others, whether religiously or politically, it no longer remains a matter of free expression, but one of hatred. While the debate of hate speech being defended as free speech continues to be a polarizing issue within art, literature and the media in the twenty-first century, one cannot ignore

the highly offensive, anti-Semitic graffiti that defaced British-Indian artist Sir Anish Kapoor's (b. 1954) sculpture *The Dirty Corner* (2011) at the Gardens of Versailles in France. This work was one of six on display at the Gardens as part of a major solo exhibition that took place between June and November 2015. Taking into consideration Kapoor's Jewish heritage, this paper explores *The Dirty Corner's* allusion to the *shofar*, a musical instrument used in Jewish religious ceremonies that symbolizes peace and redemption, and how these meanings were compromised by its recent vandalism and by a court order to remove the graffiti. Violence is a constant reality for Jews; thus Kapoor's failed appeal to leave the racist messages on his sculpture only deepens the significance of his piece, as it brings to the forefront the worsening trajectory of current society and its need for tolerance.

Once the playground of Marie Antoinette (1755–1793), the Gardens of Versailles are vast, lush and rich with history. Their foundations are the outcome of centuries of brilliant creativity and the dissemination of French culture. Therefore, you can imagine people's shock when a sixty-metre-long, rusty, steel, funnel-like sculpture surrounded by a pile of rocks appeared on the regal grounds (fig. 1). *The Dirty Corner* made headlines not only for its scandalous placement within such a traditional setting, but also for Kapoor's reactions after it became the target of three anti-Semitic acts of vandalism.



Fig. 1. Anish Kapoor, *The Dirty Corner*, 2011, Cor-Ten steel, earth and mixed media, 8.9 x 6.55 x 60 m, Palace of Versailles. Courtesy AFP. Reproduced from AP, "‘Sexual’ Anish Kapoor Sculpture at Versailles Provokes Outrage," *Telegraph*, June 5, 2015, accessed November 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/11655142/Sexual-Anish-Kapoor-sculpture-at-Versailles-provokes-outrage.html>.

Kapoor removed the yellow paint used in the initial act of vandalism in June (fig. 2), labelling it as "the dirty politics of exclusion, marginalization, elitism, racism and Islamophobia,"<sup>1</sup> and questioning whether "the political violence of the vandalism make[s] *Dirty Corner* 'dirtier.'"<sup>2</sup> However, the artist was unwilling to erase the second and third more descriptive September attacks (fig. 3).



Fig. 2. Unknown vandals splattered yellow paint on *The Dirty Corner*.  
Reproduced from Anish Kapoor,  
Instagram post, November 2015, accessed November 2015,  
[https://www.instagram.com/p/9jHZ07GF2L/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/9jHZ07GF2L/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).



Fig. 3. Graffiti covering *The Dirty Corner*.

Reproduced from Anish Kapoor,

Instagram post, September 2015, accessed November 2015,

[https://www.instagram.com/p/7Se9zhmF7V/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/7Se9zhmF7V/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).

Phrases painted in white on the sculpture and rocks included: “La reine sacrifiée, 2 fois outragée” (The sacrificed queen, twice outraged) (fig. 4); “SS Sacrifice Sanglant” (Bloody SS Sacrifice) (fig. 5); “Le 2nd VIOL de La Nation Française par l’activisme JUIF DEVIANT” (The Second RAPE of the Nation by JEWISH DEVIANT activism) (fig. 6); and “Le Christ est roy á Versailles” (Christ is king at Versailles) (fig. 7). While many would argue these messages should have been removed, Kapoor chose instead to incorporate these remarks into his piece to draw attention to and engage in the broader issue of public intervention and how it should be tolerated.



Fig. 4. The phrase “La reine sacrifiée, 2 fois outragée” was painted on *The Dirty Corner*. Photo credit: Francois Guillot / AFP. Reproduced from “‘Dirty Corner’, le vagin de la Reine d’Anish Kapoor restera avec les inscriptions antisémites,” *Metro News*, September 7, 2015, accessed November 2015, [http://www.metronews.fr/culture/dirty-corner-le-vagin-de-la-reine-d-anish-kapoor-restera-avec-les-inscriptions-antisemites/moig!vJETgXXiD6rDU/?utm\\_source=dlvr.it&utm\\_medium=twitter](http://www.metronews.fr/culture/dirty-corner-le-vagin-de-la-reine-d-anish-kapoor-restera-avec-les-inscriptions-antisemites/moig!vJETgXXiD6rDU/?utm_source=dlvr.it&utm_medium=twitter).



Fig. 5. The words “SS Sacrifice Sanglant” were written on *The Dirty Corner*. Reproduced from Anish Kapoor, Instagram post, September 2015, accessed November 2015, [https://www.instagram.com/p/7S2enaGFwY/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/7S2enaGFwY/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).



Fig. 6. The words "Le 2nd VIOL de La Nation Française par l'activisme JUIF DEVIANT" were written on the interior of the steel sculpture of Kapoor's *The Dirty Corner*. Reproduced from Anish Kapoor, Instagram post, September 2015, accessed November 2015, [https://www.instagram.com/p/7Sn7NbGF8\\_/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/7Sn7NbGF8_/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).



Fig. 7. The phrase “Le Christ est roy à Versailles” was scrawled on the exterior of the steel sculpture of Kapoor’s *The Dirty Corner*. Reproduced from Anish Kapoor, Instagram post, September 2015, accessed November 2015, [https://www.instagram.com/p/7SzcFXGF4P/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/7SzcFXGF4P/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).

Art erected in public spaces often attracts lively and complex debates. A notoriously controversial artist, Kapoor produces large public art installations that arouse both admiration and disdain due to their often daring and questionable designs. For instance, *Orbit* (2012) (fig. 8), a sculpture of spiralling red steel designed for the London Olympics, was compared in the *New York Times* to a “contorted mass of entrails.”<sup>3</sup> Likewise, *Shooting into the Corner* (2008–9) (fig. 9) generated mixed reviews for evoking a firing squad.



Fig. 8. Anish Kapoor, *Orbit*, 2012, steel, 115 m, Queen Elizabeth Park, Stratford, London. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ArcelorMittal\\_Orbit#/media/File:ArcelorMittal\\_Orbit\\_at\\_night.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ArcelorMittal_Orbit#/media/File:ArcelorMittal_Orbit_at_night.jpg).



Fig. 9. Anish Kapoor, *Shooting into the Corner*, 2008–9, mixed media, dimensions variable. Reproduced from Dhruv Damle, “‘Shooting into the Corner,’ by Anish Kapoor,” Dhruv’s ITP Blog, last modified October 14, 2015, accessed November 2015, <http://dhruvdamle.com/itpblog/shooting-into-the-corner-by-anish-kapoor/>.

However, *The Dirty Corner* exemplifies a unique case for Kapoor, as interpretations of it progressively changed over the course of the exhibition. This work first stirred public discontent after Kapoor described it in *Le Journal Dimanche* as a symbol of the “sexual nature” of Queen Marie Antoinette.<sup>4</sup> Online critics swiftly branded the sculpture as an attack on French culture and heritage, earning it the nickname “The Queen’s Vagina.” Shortly after, he retracted his comments and told reporters during the exhibition opening that “the point is to create a dialogue

between these great gardens and sculptures."<sup>5</sup> In France, public sculpture has a very high level of cultural significance and history behind it, and art objects, particularly contemporary ones such as *The Dirty Corner*, frequently attract politically motivated graffiti and vandalism. Leaving the graffiti was a canny decision on Kapoor's part as it served as a reminder of the intolerance and hate that exists in our society. In an interview published in *Le Figaro*, he remarks: "I had already questioned the wisdom in cleaning it after the first vandalism. This time, I am convinced that nothing should be removed from these slurs, from these words which belong to anti-Semitism that we'd rather forget...from now on, in the name of our universal principles, these abominable words will become part of my work, they will overlay it and stigmatize it."<sup>6</sup> Kapoor's choice to not remove the graffiti from public view adds character to the piece, providing it with a more forceful message.

However, those who disagreed with Kapoor believed the racist messages degraded the Gardens of Versailles, which are a national treasure. Perhaps if the installation were situated on more neutral grounds fewer people would have cared about having the graffiti eradicated. Does leaving the vandalism in place effectively give the perpetrators a national platform to air their condemnable views? Fabien Bouglé, a right-wing councillor of Versailles, certainly thought so and filed a complaint against Kapoor and the president of the Palace of Versailles, Catherine Pégard, claiming the pair were inciting "racial hatred

[and] public insults”<sup>7</sup> and demanding the work be cleaned. Following the court’s ruling in favour of Bouglé, Kapoor posted a message on his Instagram expressing his anger over the decision. On September 20, 2015, beneath a picture of the sculpture covered up by black sheets (fig. 10), Kapoor stated: “The racists in France have won a court judgement forcing the racist graffiti to be covered, blaming the artist and Versailles for inseminating [sic] racist propaganda. It is as if a woman is raped and blamed for her own rape.”<sup>8</sup>

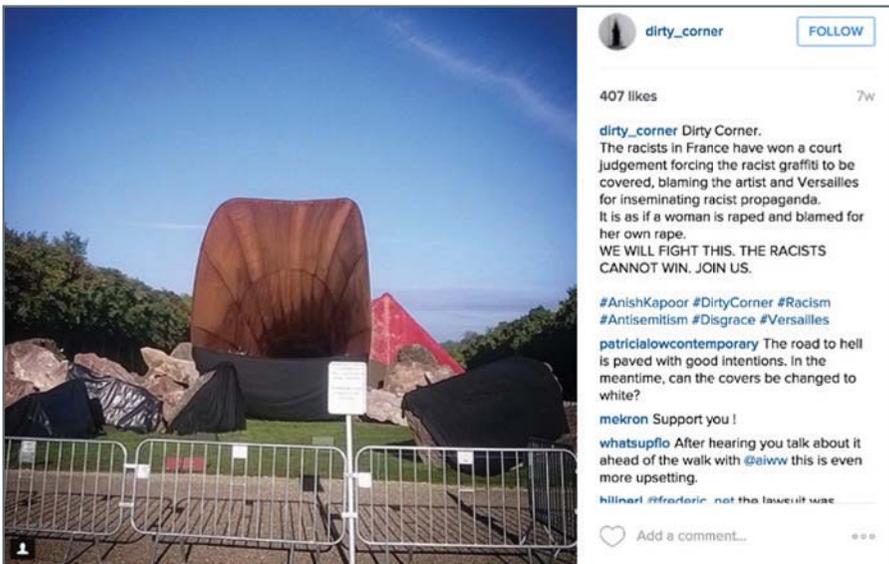


Fig. 10. Black sheets were used to cover up graffiti on *The Dirty Corner*. Reproduced from Anish Kapoor, Instagram post, September 2015, accessed November 2015, [https://www.instagram.com/p/72EYsYGF2Q/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/72EYsYGF2Q/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).

As someone who is not afraid to be provocative, Kapoor, in a somewhat defiant act, did cover up the white tags, but just barely. In what may be viewed as an appeal for transparency, dabs of white paint could still be seen around the edges of the gold leaf, the material used to conceal the words (fig. 11).

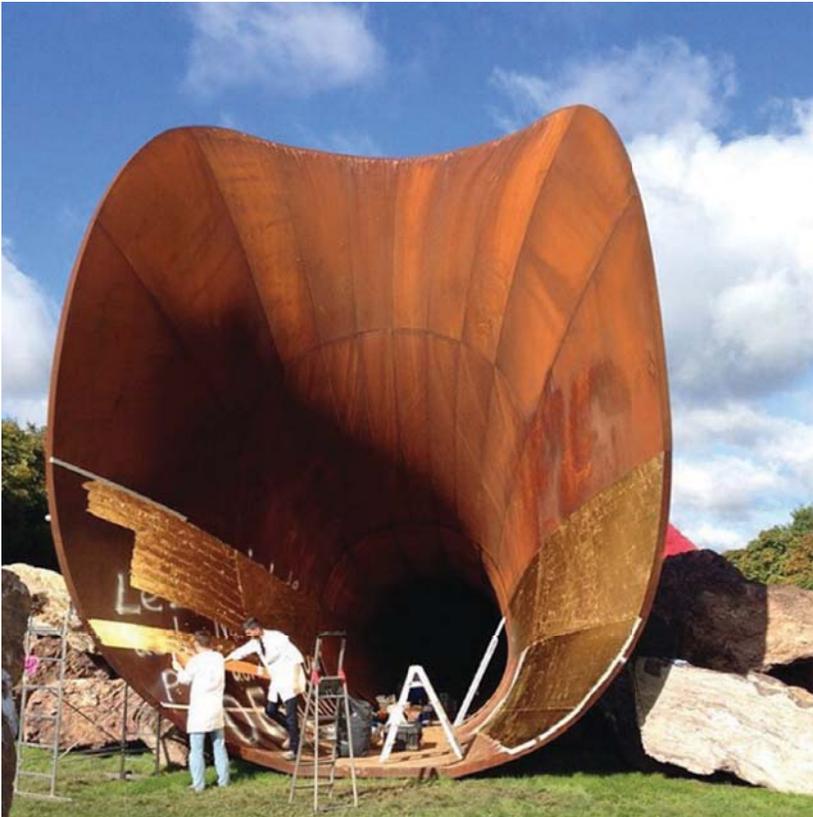


Fig. 11. Gilding taking place on *The Dirty Corner*. Reproduced from Anish Kapoor, Instagram post, October 2015, accessed November 2015, [https://www.instagram.com/p/7-eUjjGF0p/?taken-by=dirty\\_corner&hl=en](https://www.instagram.com/p/7-eUjjGF0p/?taken-by=dirty_corner&hl=en).

The gilding was described by Kapoor as a “royal approach,”<sup>9</sup> and “an act of transformation which turns the nastiness into something else.”<sup>10</sup> If art is meant to speak to people, one could argue the subsequent addition of the gilding makes the sculpture speak louder than before and raises the question of artistic freedom. Moreover, the work comments on society’s tendency to sweep prejudice and hatred under the carpet, or, in this case, literally cover it up and turn a blind eye.

The attacks on *The Dirty Corner* may be juxtaposed with artist Paul McCarthy’s (b. 1945) similarly controversial inflatable public sculpture *Tree* (2014) (fig. 12), which, depending on whom you ask, either bears resemblance to a Christmas tree or a sex toy. *Tree* was erected at the Place Vendôme in Paris, but after only a day, the sculpture was unhooked from its air source and its support cables were severed. Furthermore, McCarthy was slapped across the face by a stranger and told that his work did not belong in the Place Vendôme.<sup>11</sup>



Fig. 12. Paul McCarthy, *Tree*, 2014, inflatable, dimensions variable, Place Vendôme, Paris. Reproduced from “The Best Christmas Trees,” Look Lateral, last modified December 22, 2014, accessed November 2015, [http://www.looklateral.com/en/the-best-christmas-trees/5-best-en/13142/#11\\_lightbox\[11\\_gallery\]/1/](http://www.looklateral.com/en/the-best-christmas-trees/5-best-en/13142/#11_lightbox[11_gallery]/1/).

However, unlike Kapoor, McCarthy did not wish to reinstall his piece. Whether or not the artist intended his sculpture to have sexual connotations—he told French newspaper *Le Monde* that it all began in good jest—he maintained that one needs to keep an open mind, stating, “[I]t’s an abstract work. People can be offended if they want to refer to the plug [sex toy], but for me, this is more of an abstraction.”<sup>12</sup> After all, art is not just about beauty; it is also about holding up a mirror to society at just the right moment. The intensity of the responses towards both Kapoor and McCarthy and their work suggests that they broached particularly sensitive issues. Only those who do not appreciate art and culture criticized Kapoor’s work for bringing to the surface attitudes that need to be addressed.

Similar to *Tree*, *The Dirty Corner* is open to multiple interpretations, which presumably resulted in its vandalism. Although it has not been confirmed by Kapoor, the steel sculpture is redolent of a *shofar*, a Jewish musical instrument made from a hollowed-out ram horn, while the surrounding rocks may allude to the stones of Jerusalem, the remnants of the Temple. Today the *shofar* symbolizes peace and redemption, although in biblical times it was a signalling device during times of war. As Pete Hamill explains in *Snow in August*, Joshua notoriously played the *shofar* “to flatten the walls of Jericho.”<sup>13</sup> Similarly, James Maloney states: “[T]he Israelites believed that the *shofar* frightened their enemies and even the devil himself.”<sup>14</sup> However, according to Andrea C. Paterson, the *shofar* has multiple uses and therefore cannot be attached to any individual custom. Indeed, during the Second Temple period in Jerusalem, the *shofar* was played at all the important festivals, such as the feast of Succoth and the Water Libation ceremony, and also at the start of each month.<sup>15</sup> Paterson maintains that the instrument is a “ritual object, which has been interpreted symbolically more than any other,”<sup>16</sup> and while acknowledging its past military traditions, explains that “now the *shofar* calls for strength and healing.”<sup>17</sup> Paterson lists a number of additional reasons for sounding the ram’s horn that reflect more positive meanings, such as “reminding Jews of the prophets’ words about justice, peace, goodness and mercy.”<sup>18</sup> During the Jewish New Year holiday of Rosh Hashanah, the *shofar* may be heard being blown up to 100 times at three different octaves. Michael Keene

elaborates: "These three different sounds are used to call on people to repent from their sins."<sup>19</sup> The *shofar* is also blown at the end of Yom Kippur, or the "Day of Atonement," when Jews fast and atone.<sup>20</sup> This instrument is therefore intertwined with the concept of redemption.

While Kapoor's roots can be traced to India, where he was born in 1954 to an Indian Hindu father, his Jewish ancestry comes from his mother, an Iraqi Jew. One might assume that because Kapoor's mother was the daughter of a rabbi, religion may be a source of influence on his work. However, when asked if there was "any Jewish input in his upbringing" in an interview with Julia Weiner for the *Jewish Chronicle Online*, Kapoor elusively stated, "My parents were both cosmopolitan and modern," arguably putting to rest any possibilities of Jewish subtext in his art.<sup>21</sup> In his book *This Is Not the Way: Jews, Judaism and the State of Israel*, David Goldberg maintains that "[r]eligion was only a minor element in [Kapoor's] overall creative development, unless one makes the dubious claim that being Jewish gives you a unique empathy with, and insight into, certain human conditions."<sup>22</sup> In spite of this, it is hard to ignore the Jewish symbolism that permeates *The Dirty Corner* and a few other installations by Kapoor. *Memory* (2008) (fig. 13) ostensibly grapples with the murdered Jewish population during the war.<sup>23</sup>



Fig. 13. Anish Kapoor, *Memory*, 2008, Cor-Ten steel, 14.5 x 8.97 x 4.48 m. Photo credit: Alex Davies. © Anish Kapoor. <http://anishkapoor.com/128/memory>.

*Svayambh* (2007) (fig. 14) alludes to the trains on which the Nazis deported Jewish individuals to concentration camps.



Fig. 14. Anish Kapoor, *Svayambh*, 2007, wax and oil-based paint, dimensions variable. © Anish Kapoor. <http://anishkapoor.com/138/Svayambh.html>.

*Turning the World Upside Down* (2010) (fig. 15) is a large, reflective, hour-glass sculpture on display in Jerusalem that can be related to the spiritual importance of the Holy City and interpreted as a reflection of the earthly and the Heavenly Jerusalem.



Fig. 15. Anish Kapoor, *Turning the World Upside Down*, 2010, stainless steel, 5 x 5 x 5 m, Crown Plaza, Israel Museum, Jerusalem. © Anish Kapoor. <http://anishkapoor.com/111/Turning-the-World-Upside-Down.html>.

Denis Vidal, in “The Return of the Aura: Anish Kapoor: The Studio and the World,” analyzes the influence religion has on Kapoor’s artistic practice, declaring that “one cannot fail to notice Anish Kapoor’s expert use of all sorts of mythological and religious connotations in his work – whether Hindu, Jewish, Christian (or) Islamic.”<sup>24</sup> Kapoor’s fears of being categorized by his Jewish heritage have appeared to settle, given his 2015 exhibition *My Red Homeland* at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre—a rather ironic title given Kapoor’s most recent state of

affairs and subjection to utter intolerance. Speaking to *ArtSlant* on his reason for exhibiting at the Jewish museum, the artist explained, "It's odd for me to show in a museum of Jewish history, my instinct tells me to keep away. But I felt that there is something going on here which may be about a bigger community, a bigger thing than Moscow."<sup>25</sup> Kapoor is ultimately creating new approaches to the reading of sculptural installations, bringing racial and religious tensions to the surface.

Art need not speak directly to its creator's nationality or the specific culture from which it originates. However, art is not produced in a vacuum; it is inspired by that which already exists in the world and is often in conversation with other cultural entities. Therefore, scepticism toward Kapoor's rejection of any Jewish connotations attached to his practice, especially given his Jewish heritage and the particular design of his sculpture *The Dirty Corner*, is understandable. Despite its challenging location, the sculpture triumphantly found its niche after the anti-Semitic attacks against it. Kapoor's work, which celebrates peace and redemption due to its emulation of the *shofar*, took on an added dimension, showing the dirty corners of the human mind and reflecting the artist's courage to take on the consequences in order to do so.

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Allan Kaprow, Documentation of *Fluids*, 1967, Los Angeles.

# On Liminality and the Performance of Space: Allan Kaprow's *Fluids* at the Temple Mount

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DJAMINA VICTOR

Documentation became a central part of the performance art that saturated the American cultural scene in the 1960s. Indeed, without being recorded for posterity, performance works could not be perpetuated and ultimately did not *exist*. For the common art viewer who was not part of the few who got to witness these performances, the photographic documentation constituted the work. Allan Kaprow (1927–2006), perhaps most famous for coining the term “Happenings,” was one of the artists for whom documentation became an inherent part of their performance

practice. Formally trained and later influenced by the historical avant-garde (especially the Dada movement) and Jackson Pollock's (1912–1956) action painting, Kaprow conceptualized a practice that he believed could be aesthetic yet indistinguishable from everyday experience. If at first his Happenings were decidedly performative, towards the end of the 1960s Kaprow was committed to what Bourriaud famously theorized as "relational aesthetics."<sup>1</sup> Indeed, the artist was concerned with creating an environment in which there would be no distinction between the performer and the audience. What came to fruition was a communitarian, social and collective production in which the conditions of encounter were played out, with the participants playing as decisive a part in the completion of the work as its artist.

For *Fluids* (1967), fifteen roofless ice enclosures were built by volunteers at different sites around Los Angeles (fig. 1). *Fluids* was commissioned by the Pasadena Art Museum as part of a midcareer retrospective. The ice structures had no apparent purpose but to faithfully melt away in the damp heat of the Pacific Coast.



Fig. 1. Allan Kaprow, Documentation of *Fluids*, 1967, Los Angeles.  
<http://www.leftmatrix.com/kaprowfluidimg.jpg>.

Yet Kaprow argues:

Happenings are events that, put simply, happen. Though the best of them have a decided impact—that is, we feel, “here is something important”—they appear to go nowhere and do not make any particular literary point. In contrast to the arts of the past, they have no structured beginning, middle or end. Their form is open-ended and fluid; nothing obvious is sought and therefore nothing is won, except the certainty of a number of occurrences to which we are more than normally attentive.<sup>2</sup>

Therefore, Kaprow's Happenings introduced principles of contingency, phenomenology, ephemerality and—most pertinent to this essay—relationality, both between the participants and between an object and its surrounding environment (figs. 2, 3). Kaprow vouched for the total apoliticization of his art, believing that the philosophical implications of his work would only be corrupted by political goals.<sup>3</sup> However, his process of selecting environments soiled them with a purpose that cannot be completely reconciled with a self-declared detachment from any political agenda. Site-specificity and the politics of choice thus reveal Kaprow's biases.



Fig. 2. Allan Kaprow, Documentation of *Fluids*, 1967, Los Angeles.  
[http://www.allankaprow.com/images/fluids/7\\_fluids\\_1967\\_julian\\_wasser.jpg](http://www.allankaprow.com/images/fluids/7_fluids_1967_julian_wasser.jpg).



Fig. 3. Allan Kaprow, *Fluids*, 1967, Getty Research Institute. Courtesy of Allan Kaprow Estate. Photo credit: Julian Wasser. [http://www.berlinartweek.de/en/program/calendar/detailview/termin/stadtbild\\_fluids\\_a\\_happening\\_by\\_allan\\_kaprow\\_1967\\_2015-5.html](http://www.berlinartweek.de/en/program/calendar/detailview/termin/stadtbild_fluids_a_happening_by_allan_kaprow_1967_2015-5.html).

By performing in a particular environment or setting up the conditions of encounter for the participants in a particular environment, Kaprow lends himself to the inherent politics and existing connotations of the chosen space. I believe that the artist was thoroughly aware of the realities of Jerusalem's Temple Mount when, thirteen years after *Fluids*' inception, he decided to recreate an ice wall perpendicular to the politicized and sacred precinct of the Western Wall. This essay seeks to understand the implications of Kaprow's practice and of the presence of his work on the Temple Mount, a space contested and charged with sensitivities and political proclivities. I argue that the location of Kaprow's *Fluids* at this historical site becomes an encumbered statement that alludes to the construction of limits peculiar to political and religious contexts while simultaneously betraying the fragility of their production. As Kaprow articulates: "While there was an initial version of *Fluids*, there isn't an original or permanent work. Rather, there is an idea to do something and a physical trace of that idea. ... *Fluids* continues and its reinventions further multiply its meanings."<sup>4</sup>

*Fluids* was originally meant to occupy roughly twenty sites in the metropolitan area of Los Angeles, as stated in Kaprow's poster for the project (fig. 4). Instead, 405,000 pounds of ice were delivered to fifteen different locations that had widely differing contexts.<sup>5</sup>

# FLUIDS

A HAPPENING BY  
ALLAN KAPROW



DURING THREE DAYS, ABOUT TWENTY  
RECTANGULAR ENCLOSURES OF ICE  
BLOCKS (MEASURING ABOUT 30  
FEET LONG, 10 WIDE AND 8  
HIGH) ARE BUILT THROUGHOUT  
THE CITY. THEIR WALLS ARE  
UNBROKEN. THEY ARE LEFT TO MELT.

THOSE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING SHOULD ATTEND A PRELIMINARY MEETING AT THE PASADENA ART MUSEUM, 46 NORTH LOS ROBLES AVENUE,  
PASADENA, AT 8:30 P.M., OCTOBER 31, 1967. THE HAPPENING WILL BE THOROUGHLY DISCUSSED BY ALLAN KAPROW AND ALL DETAILS WORKED OUT.

10

Fig. 4. Allan Kaprow, Poster for *Fluids* (with Score), 1967, Getty Research Institute.  
[http://www.kaprowinberlin.smb.museum/library/images/KAPROW\\_Fluids\\_1967\\_Poster.jpg](http://www.kaprowinberlin.smb.museum/library/images/KAPROW_Fluids_1967_Poster.jpg)

In the span of three days, the ice blocks were arranged and stuck together with rock salt, forming sculptures that were seventy feet long, ten feet wide and seven feet high, with Kaprow visiting most of the production sites (fig. 5). The discrepancy between the plan (or what Kaprow called a “score”) and the actual event reiterates the idea of the chance encounter and the possibility of failure rooted in the everyday that one can find in Kaprow’s work.



Fig. 5. Allan Kaprow, Documentation of *Fluids*, 1967, Los Angeles.

<https://artdone.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/dennis-hopper-allan-kaprow-fluids-los-angeles-1967.jpg?w=639>.

The ice structures were an example of what Walter De Maria calls “meaningless work” in the sense that they had no conventional purpose: they melted within a day (even melting while they were being built) and achieved no commercial or financial merit.<sup>6</sup> Instead, what was accomplished was a democratized art production calling for volunteers who, upon entering, became insiders whose communal experience of labour came to be constitutive of the work’s aesthetic.<sup>7</sup> For Kaprow, the repetitive work is philosophical instead of instrumental and offers social insight.<sup>8</sup> This insight has been contextualized as an allegory of capitalism underlining the pervading truth that monotonous, mundane, alienated work is inevitably at the heart of any material/physical foundation. Although this conclusion alone could be enough to dismiss Kaprow’s ambition of keeping his art separate from politics, he also states: “Happenings are not just another new style. Instead [...], they are a moral act, a human stand of great urgency, whose professional status as art is less a criterion than their certainty as an ultimate existential commitment.”<sup>9</sup>

Hence, Happenings are not only inherently reflective but they also preach a disengaged liberalism. Kaprow’s worldviews are never embedded within the Happenings but always insinuated. Meaning is never static or even stated and action is revered above communication. The conclusions that will be extracted from them are continuously subjective and perhaps a projection of our own personal and societal trepidations. In the case of

*Fluids*, the question, then, is whether everyday space is always fundamentally political. By building a structure that requires heavy physical and participatory work but is left to melt, property is rapidly dismantled.

Aside from such philosophical theorizations, however, it can be positively argued that at least two of Kaprow's Happenings were outright political, even if only in the process of site selection, which unequivocally betrays the artist's awareness of their surroundings. The neutrality of their materials, their irreverent absurdity and their ephemerality are all concepts that let transpire Kaprow's own liberal and left-leaning dispositions, but cannot be read as separate from their context. One finds such an occurrence in *Sweet Wall* (1970), for which Kaprow and volunteers built a concrete wall where blocks were held together by white bread and jam. The wall stood in proximity to the Berlin Wall and was undone as soon as it was completed. Six years after the fact, Kaprow reflected:

"Sweet Wall," looking back [...] contains ironical politics. It is a parody. It is for a small group of colleagues who can appreciate the humor and sadness of political life. It is for those who cannot rest politically indifferent, but who know that for every political solution there are at least ten new problems. ...As parody, "Sweet Wall" was about an idea of a wall. The Berlin Wall was an idea too: it summed up in one medieval image the ideological division of Europe.

But it also directly affected the lives of more than three million residents, at least six governments, as well as countless non-Berliners who at one time or another would be involved in that city. As an idea for a handful of people, "Sweet Wall" could be played in the mind without serious consequences at the time. Like the wall with its bread and jam, symbols could be produced and erased at will. The participants could speculate on the practical value of such freedom, to themselves and to others. That was its sweetness and its irony.<sup>10</sup>

*Fluids* will have similar, if not graver, implications in the context of Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

The essentially forgotten 1980 construction of an ice wall in the vicinity of the Temple Mount reaffirms the vital importance of documentation in the practice of ephemeral, performative art. While very little is known about the actual circumstances that instigated this project, I will highlight the realities that mark this work as a decisive departure from Kaprow's often ambiguously politicized work towards an overtly politicized one.

It is virtually impossible that Kaprow would have been unaware of the significance of the Temple Mount. His ice sculpture stood near its colossal Western Wall, presumably at the (then recently established) Western Wall plaza. The Temple Mount is believed

to have housed Solomon's Temple (also known as the House of the Lord or, more simply, the First Temple), built in the tenth century BCE and destroyed in the year 587/86 BCE by the Babylonians after Jerusalem's siege. The construction of the Second Temple by Judeans returned from exile is dated a little more than five decades after the First Temple's demolition. Like most events that have occurred on the site, these dates are contested and debated to this day. Some scholars also suggest that a Jebusite/Canaanite temple preceded the Solomonic Temple.<sup>11</sup>

From the viewpoint of the Jewish faithful, the significance of Jerusalem as a site chosen by God was first marked by the binding of Isaac on the Temple Mount as described in Genesis 22.<sup>12</sup> The Temple Mount is also the place where the Holy of Holies was located and where it continues to be situated today, precisely beneath the Dome of the Rock. Furthermore, the Temple Mount remains the established location of apocalyptic predictions where earth and the heavens shall converge. After the destruction of the First Temple and the consequent Babylonian exile, a second temple was erected, ca. 500 BCE. Reconstruction projects under Simeon (ca. 143–134 BCE) and Herod (74/73–4 BCE) (ca. 37–4 BCE) would ensure the revival of the magnificence of the First Temple. Simeon conquered the Acra fortress, which the Book of Maccabees equates to the Temple Mount's fortification, and instigated a three-year project to flatten the hill on which it stood.<sup>13</sup> The result was the Mount's elevated height, superseding its surroundings in stature.

Herod's later contribution to the precinct has been widely accepted as the most significant one that modern visitors can see today. The Herodian expansion was so massive that it lasted longer than his lifespan. The central reason for its reconstruction seems to have been the enlargement and renovation of the site to accommodate as many pilgrims as possible, but, more importantly, it was an ostentatious affirmation of Herod's power. The new Temple became the largest of its time, with a territory of more than thirty-six acres. Its retaining walls can still be observed to this day. The Temple Mount during Herod's time was the host of many of the city's activities: its courts, which were either based in its precinct or nearby; numerous pilgrims' destinations; and areas for the sale of sacrificial animals.<sup>14</sup> The First Jewish Revolt (66–70 CE) culminated in the Roman destruction of the Second Temple. The Temple's site continued to be of religious significance; at the same time, the loss of the Temple gave rise to spiritual changes. The Temple Mount nonetheless persisted as a pivotal focus of Jewish tradition and legend. After the Bar Kochba Revolt (132–135 CE), the city was levelled, a Roman city was recreated in its place, Aelia Capitolina, and a pagan shrine dedicated to Jupiter was erected. The possible presence of a pagan temple is recorded in Jewish literature of the time and debated by historians.<sup>15</sup>

The emergence of the New Testament and the rise of Christianity provided new historical layers to the already loaded site: Jesus spent much of his childhood there and it is also alleged to be the place where Satan tempted him.

In the fourth century, there was a renewed sense of Jewish hope as the Emperor Julian (330–363 CE) planned the reconstruction of the Temple. However, these aspirations were cut short by his sudden death. A little over three decades later, the conquest of Jerusalem by the Muslims (635–38 CE) culminated in the building of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aqsa Mosque. For Muslims, the importance of the Temple Mount—also known as the sacred Esplanade or Haram al-Sharif—is second only to Mecca and Medina, and it is the location from which Muhammad reached the Heavens, concluding his famous Night Journey.

There has ever since been a succession of ruling regimes in the city of Jerusalem and an alarming number of casualties. In 1099, Christian Crusaders conquered Jerusalem and massacred both Jews and Muslims. The Muslims eventually regained control of the city in the mid-thirteenth century, followed by the Mongols in 1260, who were almost immediately forced to evacuate by the Mamluks. Occupation by the Ottoman Turks in 1516, the British in 1917 and the Jordanians in 1948 and the current Israeli annexation followed.

The quick summary presented above does not do justice to the specificities of the site's history, but it nonetheless emphasizes the spiritual connotations of the hallowed space. Its religious importance makes it a very powerful political tool. As its history

is one that is loaded with paradoxical and debated ambiguities and particularities, it is best to stress the modern events that inform the Temple Mount's religious and political significance and that would have been the most relevant to Kaprow when building his ice wall outside its boundaries.

On June 7, 1967, the Six Day War concluded with Israel's conquest of the Old City of Jerusalem. Although the Israeli have rhetoricized their occupation of Jerusalem as "an opportunity to correct an historical injustice,"<sup>16</sup> to the millions of Palestinian Muslims settled in the area for centuries, this was an affront to their reality. The status quo was quickly tested when an Israeli flag was flown over the Dome of the Rock and almost immediately removed under the command of Israel's then Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan.<sup>17</sup> Only two days after the conquest, the area in front of the Western Wall was cleared and Muslim property was destroyed to make way for the present-day Western Wall plaza. The decision was hastily made after nineteen years of Jewish exclusion from the Old City under Jordanian rule. The prohibition was not so different than what the Jews had experienced during the Christian Roman Rule, when they were barred from the premises of the Temple Mount. Under British rule, their right to the space in front of the *Kotel* and the extent of their activities in the area were also called into question when the reigning British government sided with the Muslims and reinstated their jurisdiction. Although Jewish religious law

(*Halakhah*) forbids Jews from entering the Temple Mount for devotional purposes,<sup>18</sup> the Western Wall has remained the area closest to their most sacred site.

In August 1967, the Israeli government decreed that the keys to the Bab al-Magharibah (the gates to the Haram al-Sharif) should be handed over. The Muslims refused to conform “on the grounds that the gates to the Haram al-Sharif are an inseparable component of the compound [and that] Haram al-Sharif is solely and irrefutably Islamic property—guaranteed and supported as such by international law and the site’s long Islamic history.”<sup>19</sup> The Israeli responded by sending troops to recuperate the keys and forcefully seize them if need be. The Israeli government began work on a tunnel along the western side of the Temple Mount the following year, guaranteeing autonomous access to the site and therefore undermining Muslim authority.

The mounting tensions have resulted in fanatic tendencies among both sides of the conflict, guided by emotional rather than logical rationales. Evidently, neither side forms a coherent, hegemonic whole or presents a unilateral view of the conflict. Although the Haram or Temple Mount is still under Waqf control and sovereign from Israel, Jews and Muslims alike have augmented the site’s significance as not only central to their faiths but also as a nationalistic symbol and an emblem of their struggle. International consternations and inferences have prevented the extreme boiling of the conflict but are manifestly

limited when it comes to stopping independent rebellion. Accordingly, the most dramatic event witnessed by Kaprow before 1980 would have been the fire started by Michael Dennis Rohan, an Australian Christian fundamentalist, inside the Al-Aqsa Mosque on August 21, 1969. When appearing before the court, Rohan reasoned that he had acted on divine instructions to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to allow the rebuilding of the Jewish Temple on the Temple Mount.<sup>20</sup> The Mosque was rebuilt with the collaboration of Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Italy and UNESCO. The arson only encouraged further antagonistic sentiments, with the Muslim side blaming the Jewish for the presence of the fanatic on the compound.

In response to this sensitive context, Kaprow's art becomes a passing criticism of the construction of meaning and the rhetorics of ideology. The ice wall is erected, mimicking the very site on which it is placed, yet it is left to disappear as if it never was (fig. 6).



Fig. 6. Allan Kaprow, Documentation of *Fluids*, 1980, Jerusalem.

[http://www.jerusalemseason.com/sites/default/files/media/image/event/field\\_ev\\_image/1600%20kaprow.jpg](http://www.jerusalemseason.com/sites/default/files/media/image/event/field_ev_image/1600%20kaprow.jpg).

What is reflected upon is the concept of liminality introduced by the Western wall, as well as the division of space and the ways in which limits shape human interactions. Within this framework, architecture is not regarded “solely as a spatial factor but always also [seen] as a reflection of functional and historical change.”<sup>21</sup> In an analysis devoted to the performance of architecture in both Kaprow’s and Robert Morris’s (b. 1931) work, art historian Philip Ursprung describes the first staging of *Fluids* as follows: “From a distance the edifices constructed from roughly hewn blocks had the air of archaic temples, inaccessible to unbelievers, sanctuaries for the preservation and presentation of all that

was most sacred. As such they highlighted the role of architecture in drawing liturgical and political boundaries."<sup>22</sup> Ursprung further states that "*Fluids* uses architecture as a metaphor for how the general acceptance of categorical norms places constraints on artistic possibilities."<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Kaprow's wall can be understood as a counter-actualization of the Western Wall, and what Gilles Deleuze theorizes as a process of becoming a "citizen of the world," or a neutral body. The sculpture "produces surfaces and linings in which the event is reflected, finds itself again as incorporeal and manifests in us the neutral splendor which it possesses in itself in its impersonal and pre-individual nature, beyond the general and the particular, the collective and the private."<sup>24</sup> The eternal, objective truth which precedes connotative developments and which Kaprow seeks is hence what he builds in the neutral, pre-signified materiality of the ice wall and lets disappear again as soon as the wall is resignified and contextualized in the viewer's mind. Through Kaprow's intervention, then, one can uncover the awareness that the Western Wall is made of stone and thus essentially disambiguous, but acquires a bold and grand entity because of human processes of signification and historicization. As the liminal space between Jewish rites and Muslim activities, the Western Wall "may perhaps be regarded as the Nay to all positive structural assertions, but as in some sense the source of them all, and, more than that, as a realm of pure possibility whence novel configurations of ideas and relations may arise."<sup>25</sup>

In effect, in its simple materiality, the Western Wall is “neither here nor there; [it is] betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremony.”<sup>26</sup> The Western Wall, before becoming the manifestation of the politics and spirituality it symbolizes, before becoming the sum of the ideological division of the Jewish and Muslim conflict, is, in essence, just a wall. By building an ice fortification that is inevitably destined to melt, space and the construction of its limits on the Temple Mount are laid bare and are specifically what Kaprow is calling attention to by performing a transient architecture.

In August 2015, Kaprow’s ice sculpture was rebuilt near the Western Wall, at the archaeological park for Jerusalem’s Season of Culture.<sup>27</sup> Artists of all practices, faiths and origins were called upon to proclaim art and culture’s sovereignty in political and religious matter and to reinstate the supremacy of freedom of expression. The event almost did not take place because of the fifty-day war that erupted between Israel and Hamas in Gaza. Some events were cancelled, while others were postponed. However, the public and the organizers still mounted the ice enclosure (fig. 7), ice block per ice block, in a show of self-determination and solidarity, building a spatial limit that would start melting into oblivion immediately after completion. Perhaps this actively suggests that human actions give meaning to temporal events, or passively affirms that, like ice, stone separation barriers cannot last forever.



Fig. 7. *Ice Happening 1980/2015*, a restaging of the original by Allan Kaprow, 2015, Jerusalem. Photo credit: Danielle Shitrit. <http://www.apollo-magazine.com/yael-bartana-brings-controversial-new-work-to-jerusalem-season-of-culture/>.

#### NOTES

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# **Hirophany : A Return Home**

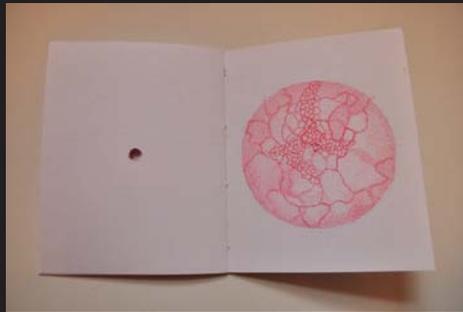
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# **La hiérophanie : un retour au bercail**

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Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 1)*, 2015, paper, ink.



Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 2)*, 2015, paper, ink.



Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 3)*, 2015, paper, ink.



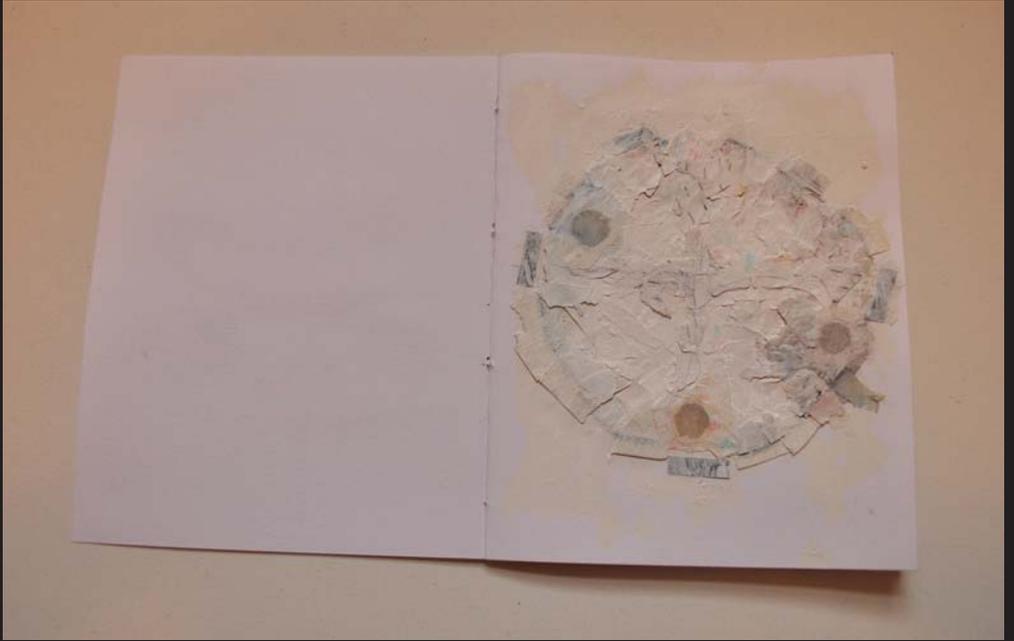
Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 4)*, 2015, paper, ink.



Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 5)*, 2015, paper, ink.



Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 6)*, 2015, paper, ink.



Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 7)*, 2015, paper, ink.

# Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem

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NICOLE ADAMA

My work *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem* (2015) began with an interest in the connection between Mircea Eliade's concept of "hierophany" and the Heavenly Jerusalem. A hierophany is a manifestation of the sacred as a centre point; all things lie in reference to this break in profane space.<sup>1</sup> The description of the Heavenly Jerusalem in the Bible is similar to that of Eden—the original spiritual state—because the two mythical places were created at the same time, in *aeternum*, or "eternity."<sup>2</sup> To be human is to live in exile from the original homeland; a profane existence is the default ontological state instead of what should be a sacred existence.<sup>3</sup> Exile is part of a process of reconciliation with the sacred, made possible through Christ.<sup>4</sup> In the Christian

scriptures, various symbols are used to indicate a spiritual centre from which God's people are exiled and to which they desire to return. To embark on a life of spirituality is to journey back to the sacred centre.

*Plan of Jerusalem* (ca. 1190–1200) (fig. 1), a late-twelfth-century Crusader map of Jerusalem, conflates the earthly and the Heavenly Jerusalem, demonstrating the blurred line between myth and reality for Christians in the medieval period.

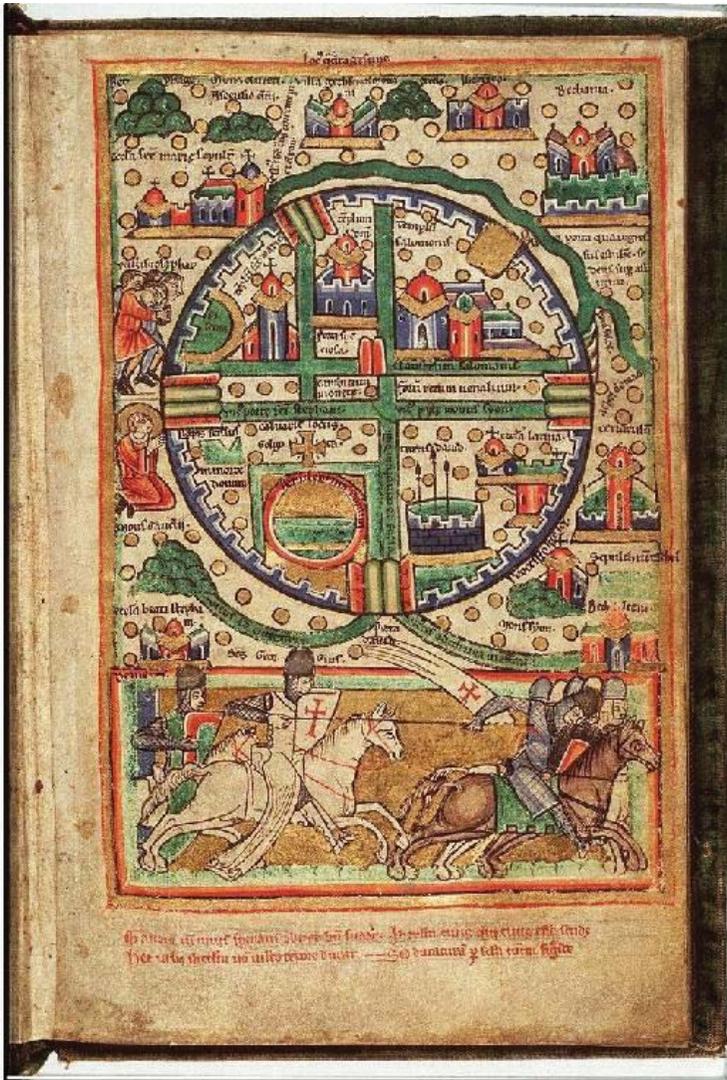


Fig. 1. *Plan of Jerusalem*, ca. 1190–1200, vellum, 15 x 14 cm, 76 F 5, Fol. 1r sc. 1, National Library of the Netherlands. © National Library of the Netherlands. [http://manuscripts.kb.nl/search/images\\_text/extended/titleImage/plan%20of%20jerusalem](http://manuscripts.kb.nl/search/images_text/extended/titleImage/plan%20of%20jerusalem).

*Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem* explores how the creator(s) and twelfth-century viewers of this map drew on narratives of exile in the Bible in their interpretation of the Heavenly Jerusalem as a hierophany. My work has pages that open from right to left, reversing the traditional Western format of books so that the viewer feels as though he/she is uncovering layers, instead of merely turning pages. As each layer is unveiled and reveals more information, the hierophany is continuously reinterpreted and built upon. The book begins with a hierophany, a circle drawn in graphite with a centre point surrounded by red dots. The circle often appears in the art of world religions, and the *Plan of Jerusalem* shows that Christianity is not exempt from this convention.<sup>5</sup> This map is one of several created in the medieval era that present the walls of Jerusalem as a perfect circle, punctuated five times with gates.<sup>6</sup> Portraying Jerusalem as a centre was also customary in world maps until the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Circles are often used as spiritual symbols to express wholeness and unity, which is interesting when considering the definition of a hierophany as a point around which everything revolves.<sup>8</sup> The circle signifies that the sacred is perfect and holds an elevated significance, as opposed to the fragmented state of existence that makes up the rest of the world. My work begins with a simplified image to create a meditative and abstract space, reminiscent of the abstract nature of the sacred.

I began using collage on the third page to show how the concept of the New Jerusalem has evolved over time on account of “differences in religious experience explained by differences in economy, culture, and social organization – in short, by history.”<sup>9</sup> Since language is insufficient to describe the sacred—Eliade states that “language is reduced to suggesting”<sup>10</sup>—I have employed collage in my work to convey the difficulties of understanding the sacred through profane experience. Textual materials that I have collected over the years are collaged together, echoing the fusing of the mythical and the real in the *Plan of Jerusalem*. The overlapping fragments of text represent all the literature that has been produced throughout history about the Heavenly Jerusalem. Each writer’s religious experience and understanding of the New Jerusalem was informed by the particular historical context in which he lived.<sup>11</sup> My work thus not only represents my own idiosyncratic interpretation of the Heavenly Jerusalem, but it also speaks more broadly to the way in which intertextuality has historically shaped the collective understanding of the Heavenly Jerusalem. Just as the *Plan of Jerusalem* draws on the earthly Jerusalem to visualize the Heavenly Jerusalem, I have used profane materials to construct my own vision of the New Jerusalem as a hierophany.

The lower portion of *Plan of Jerusalem*, featuring Christian Crusaders on horseback, alludes to the exile of Christians from Jerusalem. The Crusaders were formed in the late eleventh century to battle Muslims in the Holy Land. The full significance of

the concept of exile as an intrinsic element of the map and as the impetus for holy war can only be understood in relation to the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Intricately interwoven into the Christian narrative is the thread of exile which can be traced to Eden, the founding narrative upon which the entire Bible is built. The story is the archetypal example of the original homeland where God walked openly among people in this sacred centre or hierophany. Eden describes a life without suffering because there was nothing lacking; it was whole and not fractured, and therefore great nostalgia was attached to it.<sup>12</sup> Adam and Eve, the first and only humans to live in the Garden, were cast out forever because they had bitten into the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.<sup>13</sup> God had stipulated that if they were to disobey Him, they would die.<sup>14</sup> The death He warned of was evidently not a physical death, but a metaphysical death: the fruit alienated Adam and Eve from God. Eden, the dwelling place of God, is re-symbolized in other places within the Bible as the desert tabernacle and the Temple.<sup>15</sup> Eden is also inextricably linked to Heavenly Jerusalem because the former is the lost state of sanctity, while the latter is the reconciliation; it is salvation.<sup>16</sup> The nostalgia of Eden shifts into hope and desire for Heavenly Jerusalem; this is evident in the *Plan of Jerusalem*, which proclaims that in conquering Jerusalem through Holy War, salvation will be attained. The Crusades, much like pilgrimage, were a metaphor performed in reality, signifying life as a journey between exile and the homeland.<sup>17</sup> Metaphor and reality are conflated, just as in the map itself.

This journey is represented in *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem* by the evolution of the hierophany that occurs with each page. The first page (fig. 2) depicts only the hierophany, the underlying essence of Eden and Heavenly Jerusalem.



Fig. 2. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 1)*,  
2015, paper, ink.

On the next page (fig. 3), greater movement among the red dots indicates a living centre that is “saturated with being” and does not die because it exists in “sacred time.”<sup>18</sup> Eliade describes this mode as being “a primordial mythical time made present.”<sup>19</sup> Eden and the Heavenly Jerusalem exist in sacred time because they exist in eternity.

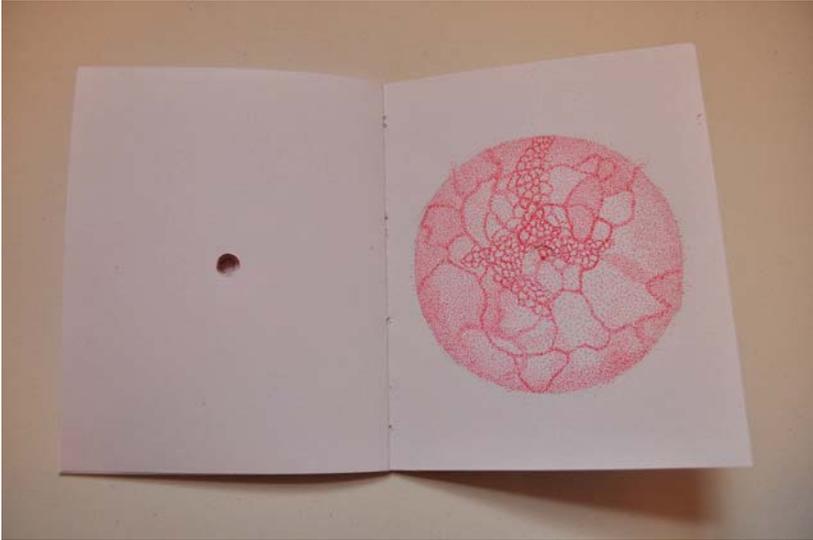


Fig. 3. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 2)*,  
2015, paper, ink.

As the layers are added, the hierophany is reinterpreted with elements taken from normal everyday life. I used a lot of atlas materials because the hierophany is geographically pinpointed in the *Plan of Jerusalem*, and because territory alludes to the idea of ownership. Additional materials appear and the hierophany becomes more complex, signifying the historical development of the notion of the New Jerusalem leading to the twelfth-century understanding of it as represented in the *Plan of Jerusalem* (figs. 4–6).

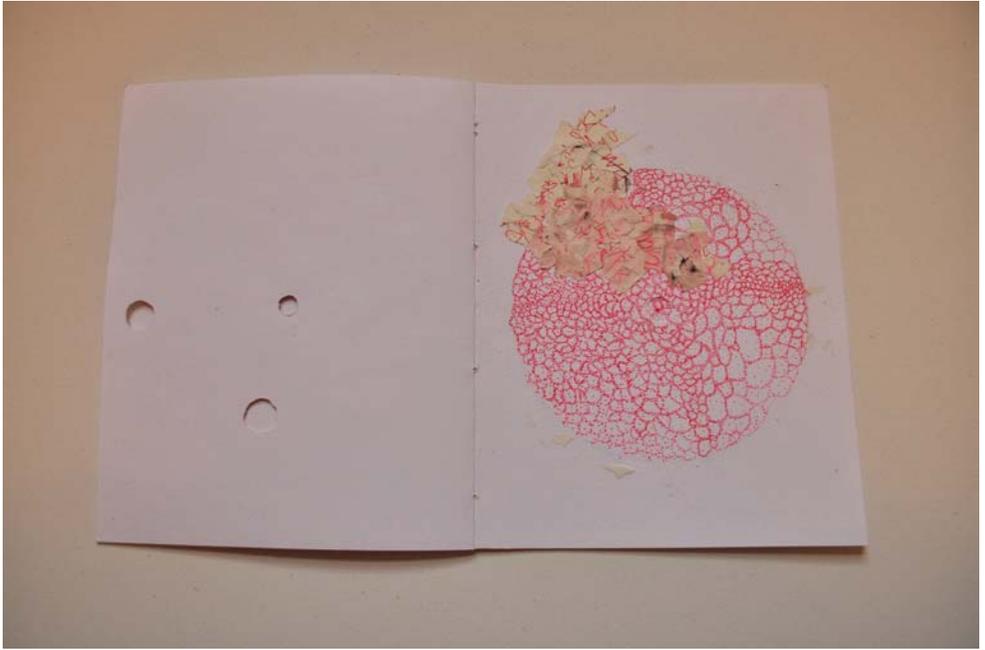


Fig. 4. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 3)*,  
2015, paper, ink.

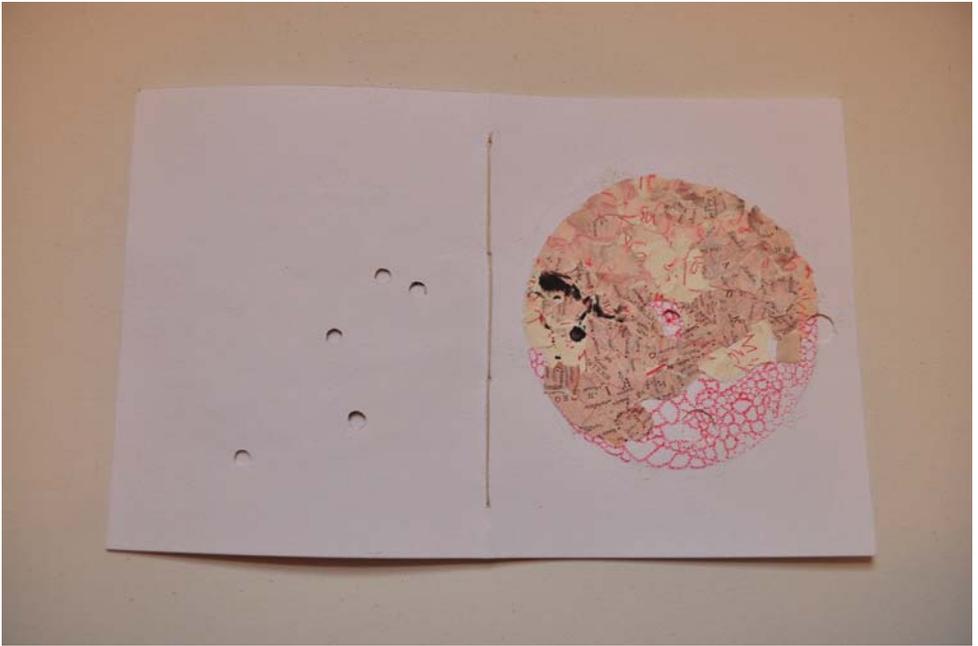


Fig. 5. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 4)*, 2015, paper, ink.



Fig. 6. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 5)*,  
2015, paper, ink.

I have subtly referenced Eden in the sixth layer (fig. 7) by creating within the circle a lush, green space with plants and rivers.



Fig. 7. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem (Page 6)*,  
2015, paper, ink.

The next layer (fig. 8) incorporates even more materials, but this time, they are draped with a veil of white paint in order to completely redefine and unify all elements to convey one authoritative message.

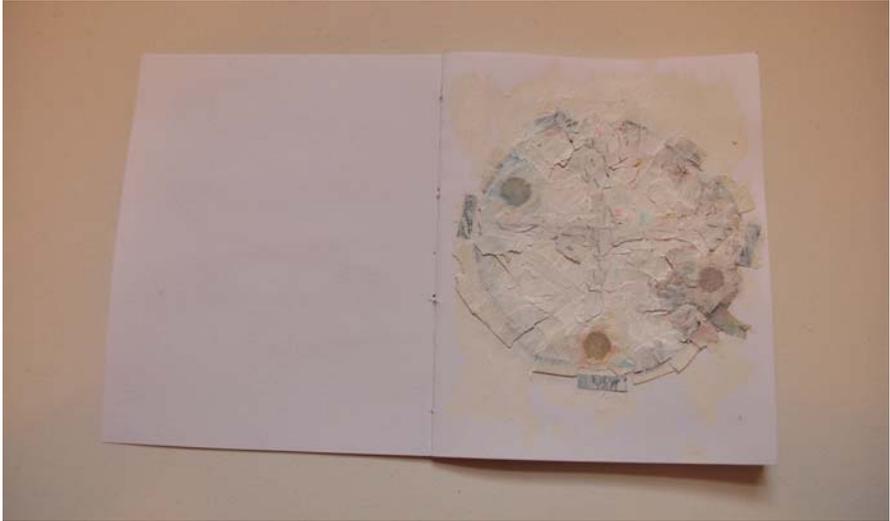


Fig. 8. Nicole Adama, *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem* (Page 7),  
2015, paper, ink.

The *Plan of Jerusalem* was a vehicle of communication intended for a purely Christian audience;<sup>20</sup> the message it carried was that of salvation for an exiled people. The city of Jerusalem is depicted as a hierophany, a sacred, circular centre point. The twelfth-century viewer would have understood Jerusalem's significance as the site of the Heavenly Jerusalem and as the continuation of Eden. My work *Hierophany and Heavenly Jerusalem* signifies the twelfth-century collective Christian understanding of Heavenly Jerusalem. Christianity has since experienced many metamorphoses; what it was then is not what it is now. Jerusalem's place is constantly shifting within this narrative, continuously reinterpreted but always in reference to the sacred.

## NOTES

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- 2 Ibid., 60.
- 3 Issam Nassar, *European Portrayals of Jerusalem: Religious Fascinations and Colonialist Imaginations* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen Press, 2006), 22.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Aniela Jaffé, "Symbolism in the Visual Arts," in *Man and His Symbols*, ed. Carl G. Jung (London: Dell Publishing, 1964), 266.
- 6 Rehav Rubin, "Sacred Space and Mythic Time in the Early Printed Maps of Jerusalem," in *Jerusalem: Idea and Reality*, ed. Tamar Mayer and Suleiman Ali Mourad (London; New York: Routledge, 2008), 123.
- 7 Nassar, 14.
- 8 Jaffé, 266; Eliade, 10.
- 9 Eliade, 17.
- 10 Ibid., 10.
- 11 Ibid., 17.
- 12 Ibid., 207.
- 13 Gen. 1–3 (New Revised Standard Version).
- 14 Gen. 2:16 (NRSV).
- 15 Lisfa Schachter, "The Garden of Eden as God's First Sanctuary," *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (April 2013): 74,

- [http://jbq.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/412/jbq\\_41\\_2\\_gardenofeden.pdf](http://jbq.jewishbible.org/assets/Uploads/412/jbq_41_2_gardenofeden.pdf).
- 16 Eliade, 207.
  - 17 Nassar, 11.
  - 18 Eliade, 12.
  - 19 Ibid., 68.
  - 20 Rubin, 124.

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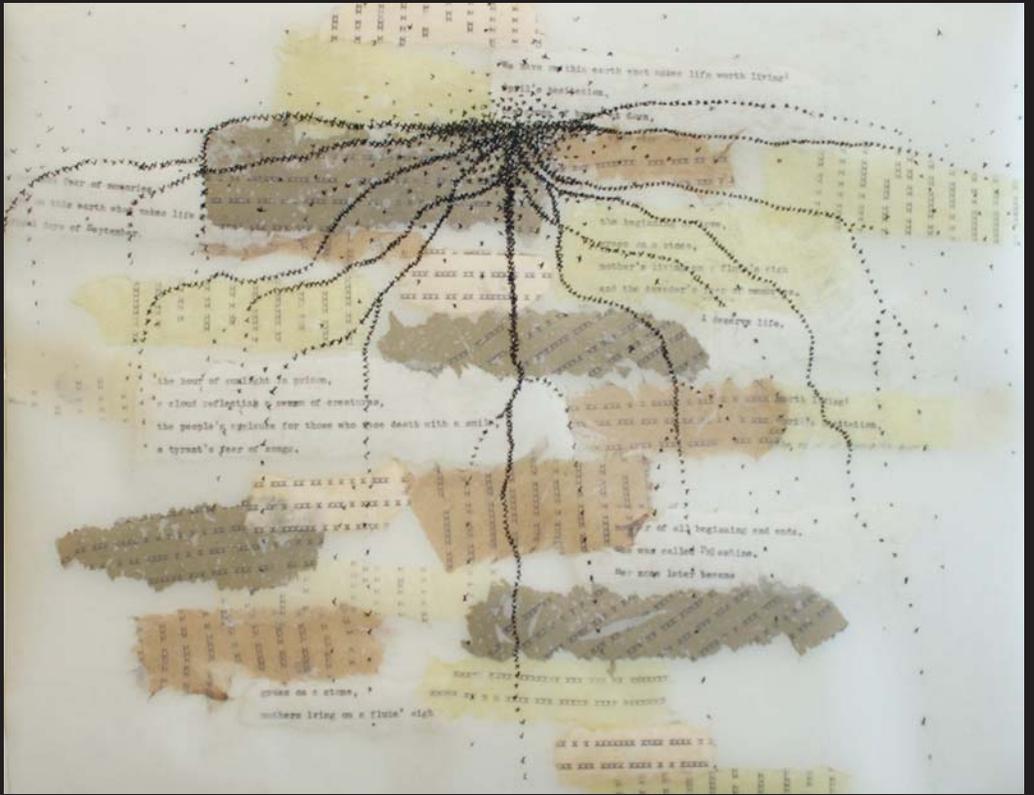
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Karen Boyles, *Sabr*, 2015, rice paper, type, charcoal on Mylar.

# *Sabr*: Mapping Palestinian Memory and Resistance

—

KAREN BOYLES

"I use my pen to draw cross stitches which became nowadays my language. ... It is carrying a softer voice, conveying messages, recounting my past, preserving my heritage, shedding light on my history, creating dialogues and spreading awareness to my cause."<sup>1</sup>

—Najat El-Khairiy

“Today, memory continues to be the connective tissue through which Palestinian identity is asserted and it is the fuel that replenishes the history of their cultural resistance.”<sup>2</sup>

—Kamal Boullata

As an artist I am interested in exploring issues concerning landscape: how humans relate to a landscape, and how our places of dwelling influence us culturally, socially, spiritually and politically.<sup>3</sup> Much about our collective histories can be read through landscapes. Moreover, artistic representations of landscapes can tell us a lot about the history of a place, including who lived there, their interests and their impact on their surroundings. However, because such images are subjective, they may reveal certain realities and conceal others. Although maps have historically been understood as objective representations, they, too, are subjective constructions. For centuries, maps have served imperialist interests by documenting landscapes in ways that justify the colonial appropriation and possession of foreign lands.<sup>4</sup> Maps and artworks created by the Crusaders, pilgrims and other European colonizers depict Jerusalem as an idealized landscape imbued with Christian ideals or linked to biblical events. The actual contemporary inhabitants of the city are often absent in these images.<sup>5</sup> For example, a Crusaders map from a twelfth-century picture Bible (fig. 1) portrays the city in “God’s order”<sup>6</sup> and in the shape of a cross, despite the fact that the city’s residents at the time were primarily Muslim or Jewish.

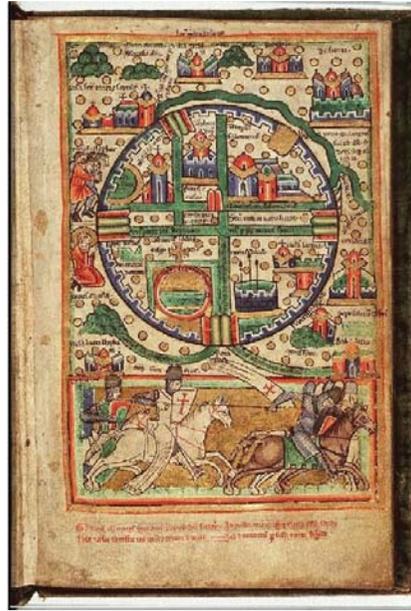


Fig. 1. *Plan of Jerusalem*, ca. 1200, vellum, 15 x 14 cm, 76 F 5, Fol. 1r sc. 1, National Library of the Netherlands. © National Library of the Netherlands. [http://manuscripts.kb.nl/search/images\\_text/extended/titleImage/plan%20of%20jerusalem](http://manuscripts.kb.nl/search/images_text/extended/titleImage/plan%20of%20jerusalem).

Scottish painter David Roberts's (1796–1864) landscape drawings and lithographs of the city, such as *Citadel of Jerusalem April 19 1841* (1842) (fig. 2), illustrate nineteenth-century Jerusalem as an idealized place unchanged since biblical times. Peppered with “native” inhabitants, these pictures represent an Orientalist view of Jerusalem that appealed to Western viewers.<sup>7</sup>



Fig. 2. David Roberts, *Citadel of Jerusalem April 19 1841*, 1842, colour lithograph, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/David\\_Roberts#/media/File:1840\\_jer\\_salat.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/David_Roberts#/media/File:1840_jer_salat.jpg)

This tradition of excluding the inhabitants of Jerusalem in artistic portrayals of the city continued into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Under Zionist influence, the State of Israel adopted the visions of nineteenth-century European architects and planners, such as Charles Robert Ashbee (1863–1942),<sup>8</sup> as part of a movement to legitimize the expansion of parkland around the Old City, while dispossessing Palestinian inhabitants of the area in the process (figs. 3, 4).<sup>9</sup> The power of visual images to perpetuate colonial interests is exemplified by the resulting expulsion of Arab people from lands that they had inhabited for thousands of years.



Fig. 3. A photograph looking towards Jaffa Gate from outside the Old City showing the buildings along the road to Jaffa Gate, 2013, Jerusalem. © Doug Rathburn. <http://www.rathburn.net/hol/Israel/Israel13.html>.

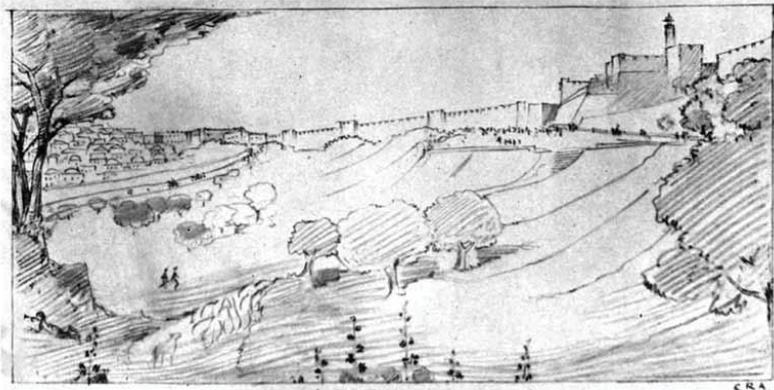


Fig. 4. Charles Robert Ashbee's drawing *Jaffa Gate and Citadel To-Day* provides the same view of the Old City as fig. 3, except the buildings have been substituted with a pastoral landscape. Reproduced from Charles Robert Ashbee, *Jerusalem, 1918–1920: Being the Records of the Pro-Jerusalem Council during the Period of the British Military Administration* (London: J. Murray, 1921), no. 44.

In response to the artistic tradition of picturing Jerusalem in ways that advance colonial interests, I sought to present a side of Jerusalem's history that is less often seen in visual art. My research and resulting artwork stemmed from the question: How can one map the Palestinian experience of the colonization of their traditional land? During my research I discovered the work of Kamal Boullata (b. 1942), a modernist painter and art historian who has been a powerful voice for Palestinian culture. Since 1967 he has been living in exile from Palestine and Jerusalem, where he was born.<sup>10</sup> In his work, Boullata often explores themes related to his Palestinian homeland and diasporic identity.<sup>11</sup> While studying his writings and artworks, I learned that poetry and language were historically the primary source of cultural expression in Arab culture, and it is only very recently that, as a result of Western influence, the visual arts have become more commonly practiced.<sup>12</sup> Boullata incorporates both Biblical and Qur'anic texts into his modernist abstract works (fig. 5).

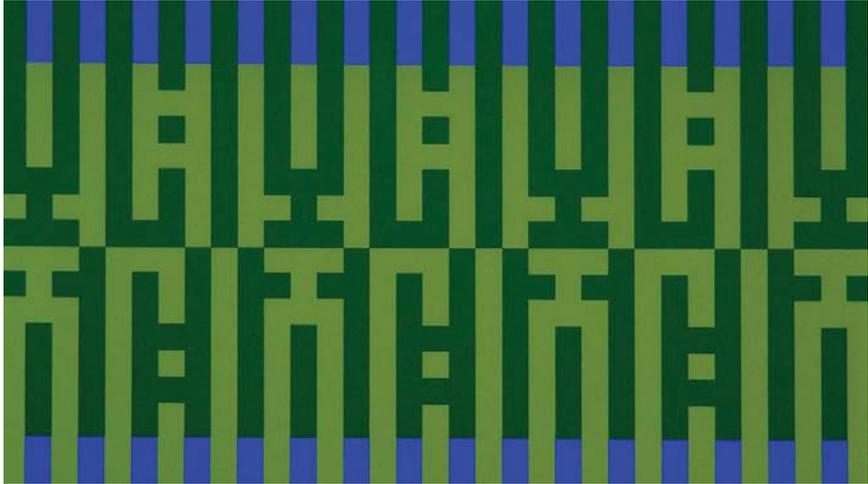


Fig. 5. (Detail) Kamal Boullata, La Ana Illa Ana (There Is No 'I' But 'I')

1983 Silkscreen 60 x 40 cm,

Image Courtesy of Meem Gallery, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah

<http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/events/jumanamanna-kamalboullata/>

By combining both Arabic and Western traditions in his works, Boullata articulates his experience of displacement, which he refers to as living in a “No-Man’s-Land.”<sup>13</sup> He describes himself as someone living in a state of exile from the centre of native culture, both physically and in terms of his work. However, he claims that this has neither completely cut him off from his cultural memory nor brought him closer to the Western mainstream.<sup>14</sup> For example, his use of squares are inspired not only by modernist abstract painting, but also by the arabesques of the Dome of the Rock, the traditional cross-stitched embroidery

of Palestinian women and the Byzantine iconography of Jerusalem. These elements are all critical parts of his cultural memory that, according to him, act as a “bridge linking the two sides of his cultural formation.”<sup>15</sup>

During my research, I also explored the work of Najat El-Khairy (b. 1948), another Palestinian artist living in exile. Based in Montreal, Canada, El-Khairy was born in the year of the Nakba, or the “catastrophe,” the forced Palestinian exodus from Palestinian territories that paved the way for the formation of the State of Israel. She paints traditional Palestinian embroidery patterns on porcelain tiles as a means of permanently preserving an important part of Palestinian cultural heritage (fig. 6). Her work has been exhibited internationally, including at the United Nations in New York City.<sup>16</sup>

I was fortunate enough to interview El-Khairy, who spoke about how her experience in exile and her time visiting occupied Jerusalem as an adult drove her to create artwork in support of her people. According to her, the purpose of making her art is threefold: 1) to preserve Palestinian cultural heritage; 2) to raise awareness of the plight of her people, whom she sees as being in a process of dispossession not only from their homeland, but also from aspects of their culture which are being appropriated by the State of Israel, such as traditional foods and textiles like the *keffiyeh*, a Palestinian chequered headdress;<sup>17</sup> and 3) to present an alternative perspective of who the Palestinian

people are, in contrast to stereotypes in mainstream media which portray them as extremists, terrorists and “Other,” and therefore expendable.<sup>18</sup>



Fig. 6. Najat El-Khairy, *Fields of Palestine*, 2015, painted porcelain tile, 30.5 x 30.5 cm. [http://www.najat.ca/portfolio-all?tag=fieldsofpalestine\\_info](http://www.najat.ca/portfolio-all?tag=fieldsofpalestine_info).

El-Khairy wants to show the world that Palestinians not only have a long and complex cultural history deeply embedded in their connection to their homeland, but they also are a modern and skilled people who, in spite of the destruction and

occupation of their homeland, have excelled in the arts, sciences and politics, amongst countless other fields.<sup>19</sup>

El-Khairy paints patterns that have a connection to specific Palestinian villages. According to her, the patterns have a language of their own, telling stories of the villages from which they originated. Her work attests to the strong tradition of oral history and storytelling that exists within Palestinian culture, and links memory to history, culture and land.

El-Khairy and Boullata both exemplify a resistance to cultural annihilation despite living in a state of exile, and their art helped me to begin answering the question of how to map the Palestinian experience of the colonization of their traditional land. I also considered the works of other Arab artists and poets, and noticed that a vital aspect of the Palestinian people's collective identity is the memory of their homeland. According to Boullata, unlike the Northern European conception of land as territory to be conquered or possessed, Palestinians view land as being as indistinguishable from the self as one's body.<sup>20</sup> As a starting point for my work, I looked at how ideas of memory, land, body and identity are conveyed in language and poetry as a continuum. I also studied the geography, flora and fauna of Palestine. Since time immemorial, Palestinians have used cacti to delineate the borders of villages and farmlands. To this day cactus roots still mark the borders of those ancient territories, despite the destruction of those places to make way

for the separation wall and Israeli settlers.<sup>21</sup> The word *sabr*, meaning “cactus” in Arabic (which I chose as the title of my work), also denotes “patience” and “perseverance,”<sup>22</sup> and suitably articulates the struggle of the Palestinian people. I see the *sabr* as a powerful emblem of resilience, collective memory, the Palestinian homeland and the refusal to be destroyed.

My research on Palestinian artists and history inspired me to create an abstracted map that incorporates different symbols of Palestinian collective memory and resistance (fig. 7).

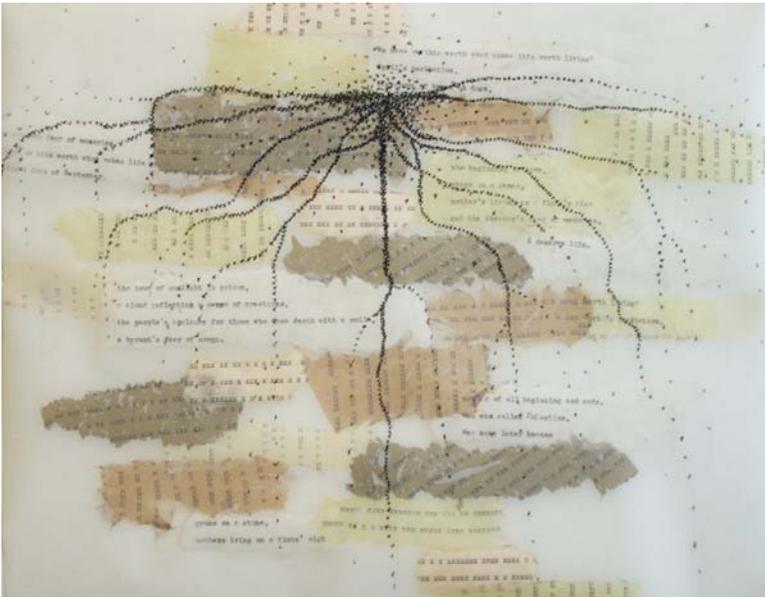


Fig. 7. Karen Boyles, *Sabr*, 2015, rice paper, type, charcoal on Mylar.

To represent memory, or a distance between present and past, I layered drawing, text and collage on both the front and the back sides of a translucent sheet of Mylar. Signifying the past, the underside features rice paper containing typed lines from a poem by legendary Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (1942–2008) entitled *We have on this earth what makes life worth living* (1986):

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:

April's hesitation,  
the aroma of bread at dawn,  
a woman's point of view about men,  
the works of Aeschylus,  
the beginning of love,  
grass on a stone,  
mothers living on a flute's sigh  
and the invaders' fears of memories.

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:

the final days of September,  
a woman  
keeping her apricots ripe after forty,  
the hour of sunlight in prison,  
a cloud reflecting a swarm of creatures,  
the peoples' applause for those who face death with  
a smile,  
a tyrant's fear of songs.

We have on this earth what makes life worth living:  
on this earth,

the Lady of Earth,  
mother of all beginnings and ends.  
She was called Palestine.  
Her name later became  
Palestine.  
My Lady,  
because you are my Lady,  
I deserve life.<sup>23</sup>

This poem addresses the small but beautiful moments of everyday life, interwoven with acts of resistance against an occupying force. I also included swaths of rice paper with the typed letter "x" to symbolize the tradition of Palestinian cross-stitched embroidery. I wanted to convey the idea that embroidery itself is an extension of Arab text and oral history, as it is an essential tool for historical documentation and storytelling. The strips of paper bearing both poetry and visual art are configured into a map-like formation that symbolizes the patch-work appearance of Palestinian agricultural fields. Poetry, embroidery and land are unified, representing the geography of Palestinian collective memory. My decision to attach these elements to the back of the Mylar is intentional, as I wanted to articulate the experience of distance and exile through the materiality of the work. Although the viewer is able to see the rice paper on the back side of the Mylar, the plastic sheet acts as a sort of barrier, creating a metaphoric distance between the viewer and the past, homeland and traditional culture of Palestine.

The surface layer of the Mylar signifies the present. Here I drew the roots of a cactus, the plant that still maps out the ancient boundaries of now-razed Palestinian farmlands and villages. The roots are composed of small cross-stitches, which connect the present to the past by echoing the x's on the rice paper, and tie embroidery to text by forming a design composed of letters. Moreover, the image of cactus roots speaks to the resilience of Palestinian culture and the power of oral history and collective memory in the face of systematic dispossession. *Sabr* subverts the tradition of colonial mapping by reclaiming the medium as a way to present and celebrate the connection of Palestinians to their homeland, culture and collective memory.

#### NOTES

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- 2 Kamal Boullata, *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (London: Saqi Books, 2009), 103, quoted in Jean Fisher, Review of *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present*, by Kamal Boullata. *Third Text* 24, no. 4 (July 2010): 487.
- 3 For more information about my art practice, see <http://www.karenboyles.net>.
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- 6 Ousterhout, 160.
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- 9 Wendy Pullman and Maximillian Sternberg, "The Making of Jerusalem's 'Holy Basin,'" *Planning Perspectives* 27, no. 2 (April 2012): 241.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 *Online Encyclopaedia*, "Boullata, Kamal (1942–)," accessed March 17, 2016, <http://encyclopedia.jrank.org/articles/pages/5618/Boullata-Kamal-1942.html>.
- 12 Kamal Boullata, "Facing the Forest: Israeli and Palestinian Artists," *Third Text* 3, no. 7 (1989): 80.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Boullata, *Palestinian Art*, 311.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid., 312.
- 17 "Exhibitions," Najat El-Khairy , accessed November 15, 2015, <http://www.najat.ca/exhibitions>.
- 18 Najat El Khairy, interview by Karen Boyles, November 2, 2015.
- 19 Ibid.

- 20 Ibid.
- 21 Jean Fisher, "Joy Reflected Upon a Lake of Sorrow: Reading Kamal Boullata," accessed November 2015, <http://www.jeanfisher.com/joy-reflected-upon-a-lake-of-sorrow-reading-kamal-boullata/>.
- 22 Qamar-ul Huda, "Patience (*Sabr*) as an Aspect of *Jihad*," in *Crescent and Dove: Peace and Conflict Resolution in Islam* (Washington: US Institute of Peace Press, 2010), 50.
- 23 Mahmoud Darwish, "On This Earth," Poem Hunter, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://www.poemhunter.com/mahmoud-darwish/>.

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Isabel Devine-Carter, *Culture of the Stone I*, 2015,  
copper etching on paper, 27.9 x 38.1 cm.



Isabel Devine-Carter, *Culture of the Stone II*, 2015,  
copper etching on paper, 27.9 x 38.1 cm.



Isabel Devine-Carter, *Culture of the Stone III*, 2015,  
copper etching on paper, 27.9 x 38.1 cm.

# Culture of the Stone

—

ISABEL DEVINE-CARTER

*Culture of the Stone* (2015) is a series of three copper etchings representing the Stone of Anointing, Stone of Ascension and Foundation Stone, respectively. These stones are only a few examples of the many sacred sites throughout Jerusalem that hold significance for Jews, Christians and Muslims around the world. While these places are associated with particular religious narratives, the very dirt and rocks of the entire city of Jerusalem are imbued with a similar spiritual power. The depiction of these stones was my attempt to engage with the visual experience of the relics that many pious individuals have in journeying to Jerusalem. It is generally the stories behind the relics that attract visitors. However, the loaded history surrounding these stones is not immediately apparent, as the viewer is confronted with, quite simply, a piece of earth. As an artist, I am interested

in creating ambiguous textures that blur the boundary between micro and macro universes. In portraying these three relics, I sought to capture the non-pictorial, unmanufactured, decidedly ambiguous nature of these sites in contrast to the intensity of their religious meaning. What intrigued me initially was the organic textures of the stones, and I have used the copper etching process to mimic them in my prints.

Although the Stone of Anointing, Stone of Ascension and Foundation Stone are all housed in religious buildings, I removed them from their current physical context in my prints as a means of engaging directly with the images of the stones. I find it particularly interesting that in visiting these holy relics, the viewer is confronted with an organic, largely untreated piece of stone, and from there he/she must connect with history and the spiritual. While the grandeur of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre cannot—and should not—be ignored when visiting the Stone of Anointing, it is the Stone itself that holds the weight of spiritual experience, as it marks the spot where the body of Jesus Christ was prepared for burial.<sup>1</sup> The same can be said of the Chapel of Ascension and its Stone of Ascension, where Christ was believed to have ascended into heaven.<sup>2</sup> The location of the Foundation Stone is more complex, as the relic holds significance for both Jews and Muslims but is housed within a mosque to which Jews do not have access for prayer. For Jews, it is the site of the creation of the world and of the binding of Isaac, while for Muslims it is the place where Ishmael

was nearly sacrificed and Muhammad ascended into heaven with the angel Gabriel.<sup>3</sup>

I was also attracted to recreating the visual experience of these holy stones as symbolic of a greater tradition within Jerusalem's history. Throughout the nineteenth century artists journeyed to the Holy Land to document the landscape. The terrain of Jerusalem is imbued with sacred power, just like the holy stones I have depicted. Artists such as David Roberts (1796–1864) and Frederic Edwin Church (1826–1900) travelled through the Middle East, including Jerusalem, to portray the land that so many religious figures once stood upon. The spiritual and intimately personal quality of Church's experience with the holy landscape in his painting *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives* (1870) (fig. 1) is evident when compared to Roberts's 1847 lithograph of the same title and depicting the same scenery (fig. 2). While Church's painting shows a lush landscape leading to a glowing city of stone, Roberts's picture shows a barren landscape with the city just barely distinguishable from the mountains. Church's belief that a landscape can unlock "our innermost heart" is what defines many people's encounters with the terrain of Jerusalem and with the holy stones I have depicted.<sup>4</sup> Attempting to capture the sacred quality of the land is perhaps a fool's errand, but to show one's "innermost heart" is a more surmountable and honest task. I have attempted to do just this in my *Culture of the Stone* series.



Fig. 1. Frederic Edwin Church, *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, 1870, oil on canvas, 137.8 x 214.3 cm, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art. <http://www.wikiart.org/en/frederic-edwin-church/jerusalem-from-the-mount-of-olives-1870#supersized-artistPaintings-319462>.



Fig. 2. David Roberts, *Jerusalem from the Mount of Olives*, 1847, lithograph on India paper with watercolour, private collection. <http://www.the-athenaeum.org/art/detail.php?ID=70630>.

In an attempt to connect with the Stone of Anointing, Stone of Ascension, Foundation Stone and the Holy Land of Jerusalem as a whole from a great distance, I did what any rational consumer would do: I ordered a Jerusalem stone online. The website My Holy Stone allows anyone to own a piece of the Holy Land for what I saw as a small price. Small gifts available for sale through My Holy Stone are carved from stone quarried on the outskirts of Jerusalem. I thought that an actual stone from Jerusalem would be the perfect accompaniment to my prints, as the introduction to the website and to the Jerusalem stone states:

Walking the streets of Jerusalem, one cannot help feeling something in the air. Could it be its 3,000 year history? Perhaps it is the variety of people and religions? Some suggest its secret is captured in its ancient structures, in its buildings and in its stones - and it makes you want to hold onto it forever. You too, can capture the essence of Jerusalem and keep it with you for eternity with the Jerusalem Stone. The Jerusalem Stone ensures you can carry a piece of Jerusalem, not just in your hearts but in your hands.<sup>5</sup>

It was precisely my intention to form this connection with Jerusalem through its land, so I ordered a gift pack containing several small rectangular cuts of Jerusalem limestone. I hoped the stones would provide insight into my prints or possibly a twenty-first-century sense of materiality and place. I imagined

that holding the stones might offer \$17.99's (plus shipping) worth of holiness and that I, without ever leaving my Montreal apartment, could experience the land of Jerusalem. But alas, just as Roberts and Church must have done during their many months of travel, I waited. In fact, I am still waiting, after more than a month, for my sacred package to arrive. So in the end, *Culture of the Stone* was informed not by the materiality of the Jerusalem stone, but by the knowledge that it can be purchased and the reality of distance.

#### NOTES

- 1 Jerome Murphy-O'Connor, *The Holy Land: An Oxford Archaeological Guide* (London: Oxford University Press, 1998), 51. The current Stone of Anointing dates to 1810 and was placed in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre after a fire ruined the original stone, which dates to the twelfth century. See Robert J. Wright, *The Holy Sepulchre: The Church of the Resurrection, an Ecumenical Guide* (Jerusalem: Ecumenical Theological Research Fraternity in Israel, 1995), 15–16.
- 2 Bianca Kühnel and Mira Reich, "Crusader Sculpture at the Ascension Church on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem," *Gesta* 16, no. 2 (1977): 41, doi:10.2307/766729.
- 3 Nuha Khoury, "The Dome of the Rock, the Ka'ba, and Ghumdan: Arab Myths and Umayyad Monuments," *Muqarnas* 10, no. 57 (December 1992): 57, doi:10.2307/1523172.

- 4 John K. Howat, *Frederic Church* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 149.
- 5 "Jerusalem Stone: A Unique Gift from the Holy City," last modified November 17, 2015, accessed November 2015, <http://www.thejerusalemstone.com/the-jerusalem-stone-gift-pack.html>.

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# I Now Pronounce You God and Jerusalem: An Analysis of the *Ketubah* and Its Relationship with the Holy City

—

KIMBERLY GLASSMAN

The Jews' expulsion from their ancestral home of Jerusalem and their desire to return to it are the key forces shaping their cultural identity.<sup>1</sup> To borrow Robert Ousterhout's term, the Holy City has become a "locus of memory."<sup>2</sup> While Ousterhout describes the medieval pilgrim's Jerusalem as "imagined, recollected, and thought about in a variety of ways,"<sup>3</sup> I propose that

in the Jewish tradition, Jerusalem is unitedly thought of as one collective. The *locus* of memory generates a *collective* memory which grows into a basis for the development of a cultural identity.<sup>4</sup> Text, images and rituals form a body of temporal material reused through the generations to preserve Jewish culture, cultivate a Jewish identity and articulate a cultural longing for Zion and Jerusalem.<sup>5</sup> The Jewish marriage contract, the *ketubah*, is an example of Jewish material culture that fulfills these functions. This essay will analyze the iconographic details of two *ketubot*—one from late-eighteenth-century Rome and another from early-twentieth-century Bombay<sup>6</sup>—within the context of the Jewish wedding ceremony to demonstrate the timeless, culturally specific symbols within this celebration. Through the act of marriage Jewish people are led on a journey—or pilgrimage—back to their homeland.

## PART I: THEN AND NOW: THE ORIGINS OF THE *KETUBAH* AND THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

According to David and Esther Gross, there is a hint of the messianic in every Jewish wedding ceremony, wherein the union of a Jewish man and woman parallels God's promise to reunite the Jews with the land of Israel. Hosea (8<sup>th</sup> c. BCE) is recorded as one of the first biblical prophets to metaphorically describe God's anger with the Jewish people for having abandoned God's teachings as a messy divorce,<sup>7</sup> stating: "She [the Jewish people]

is not my wife and I am not her husband.”<sup>8</sup> “God [had] ‘married’ Israel by means of the covenant, however Israel was unfaithful to this covenant by means of her ‘whoring’, and thus God sent her away.”<sup>9</sup> In “later happier days,” God promises to return God’s people to Jerusalem.<sup>10</sup> According to the Hebrew Bible, God created the world in six days. A sage asks, “And what has [God] been doing since then?” To which a second sage responds: “[M]atching up men and women for marriage. For each marriage is like a new world”<sup>11</sup>—that is, the future world of a Jewish Jerusalem.

To date, few concrete historical details are known about the initial development of the *ketubah*, which is also sometimes called the *sefer ketubah* (*ketubah* book) or *shetar ketubah* (*ketubah* document).<sup>12</sup> During the early stages of Judaism, wedlock did not require any religious ceremony because it was considered a secular or civil matter.<sup>13</sup> The wedding of Isaac and Rebecca, described in Genesis, is the first documented Jewish wedding.<sup>14</sup> However, it is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah as “a binding deed written by the husband and prescribing his behavior towards his wife” to protect her rights and interests.<sup>15</sup> For this reason, the *ketubah* is thought to have been regularized after the Babylonian Exile (586–538 BCE).<sup>16</sup> Scholars speculate that upon the Jewish people’s return to Zion, marriages between Jews and non-Jews began to multiply, intensifying the need for legal validity to ensure the purity of the Jewish family.<sup>17</sup> The *ketubah* gained popularity and became standardized during the

Geonic period (589–1038), when Jewish life was given a formal structure in the schools and law courts of northern Babylonia.<sup>18</sup> Generally speaking, it was not as crucial at the time to use the *ketubah* to legitimize marriages in Jerusalem because according to the practice of Moses and Israel, “in the land of Israel, it was both obvious and self-evident” that a Jewish couple was married.<sup>19</sup> However, once separated from their homeland, the evidence was lost and legally documented proof became necessary.

The Jewish marriage process is a metaphor for the return of Jews to their homeland. Every step of the marriage embodies this journey towards ownership, propriety and sacred proximity to Jerusalem, which is considered their “real” home. The rabbis teach Jewish men: “Do not call your wife ‘wife’ [...] “Call her ‘my home’,”<sup>20</sup> meaning that through marriage they also enter into union with Jerusalem.

It is customary for the groom to wait under the *huppah* (fig. 1), the canopy under which the Jewish marriage ceremony is performed.<sup>21</sup>



Fig. 1. A *huppah* at the Sixth and I historic synagogue in Washington, D.C., March 26, 2006. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chupah\\_closeup.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chupah_closeup.JPG).

The *huppah* is reminiscent of the tents used by the Jews as temporary substitutes for the Temple of Solomon after its destruction in 70 CE.<sup>22</sup> Even though synagogues were established in foreign lands after the Jewish people began to disperse, marriages have continued to take place under a canopy. The semi-permanence of the structure emphasizes the displacement of the Jews, who engage in collective memory while simultaneously taking part in ancient religious customs.

Once under the *huppah*, the couple drinks a cup of wine followed by the recital of seven blessings that reflect “the impassioned hopes of the prophet Jeremiah, who prophesied a new age for the Jewish people, when they would return from exile and redeem the country that had been laid to waste.”<sup>23</sup> The groom then stomps on an empty glass, “breaking it as a remembrance to the Temple that was destroyed in Jerusalem two millennia ago.”<sup>24</sup> It is only after having recognized the void left by the destruction of the Temple that the bride and groom are permitted to seal their union with a kiss. The seven blessings point towards Jerusalem as the heavenly city, as the Garden of Eden and as their rightful home. Consider this example:

Blessed are you, LORD our God, sovereign of the universe, who created joy and gladness, groom and bride, mirth, song, delight and rejoicing, love and harmony and peace and companionship. Lord our God, may there ever be heard in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem voices of joy and gladness, voices of groom and bride, the jubilant voices of those joined in marriage under the bridal canopy, the voices of young people feasting and singing. Blessed are you, Lord, who causes the groom to rejoice with his bride.<sup>25</sup>

Additionally, the *ketubah* is formally presented aloud before the end of the wedding ceremony. After the wedding day, it is mandatory that every Jewish couple keep their marriage contract in

their home. Their family space is thus transformed into a sacred space symbolizing the land of Jerusalem, while the *ketubah* serves as a promise to return to that family “home.” Therefore, once two Jewish individuals promise their lives to one another, they also promise themselves to God and the Promised Land. Every moment of their lives thereafter will serve as a memorial to the Holy City and to the promise of a messianic return—and it all commences with the iconography of the very contract which sets them on this journey.

## PART II: THE *KETUBAH* IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ROME

My first case study focuses on an Italian *ketubah* from Rome, created in the Jewish year 5531 (1771) for Yedidyah Chaim *ben* (son of) David Bondi (bridegroom) and Regina *bat* (daughter of) Mordekhai Shmuel Veneziano (bride).<sup>26</sup> The first Jews to travel to Rome were the envoys of Judah Maccabee in 161 BCE. They wished to reach the “Eternal City” in an era when the Jews still maintained an alliance with the Roman Empire.<sup>27</sup> When Israel was conquered by Rome in 66 BCE, the Israelites’ migration to Rome continued.<sup>28</sup> It was not until the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, under the Roman emperor Titus (39-81 CE), that the Jewish-Roman alliance was broken and Jews were sold into slavery.<sup>29</sup> Approximately ten thousand Jews were transported to Rome as work hands to help build

the Colosseum, which was completed in 80 CE. Despite their enslavement, Jewish communities and Jewish life thrived in Rome.<sup>30</sup>

The fate of Roman Jews depended largely on who was ruling Italy at the time. The Jewish people lived in relative peace under Aragon rule until 1492, when King Ferdinand (1452–1616) and Queen Isabella (1451–1504) banished the Jews from Spain. Between 1492 and 1541, many relocated to areas in central and northern Italy such as Rome, Milan, Ancona, Venice and Livorno. By the latter half of the sixteenth century, the Church had instated a papal bull proclaiming that all Jews were to be kept in ghettos. They also had to differentiate themselves by wearing a *contrassegno* (identification), and all of their commercial and civil rights were stripped away. A ghetto was established in Rome in 1555, and although it was overpopulated and filthy, the Jews were permitted to freely study the Torah within this space. Ironically, within these enclosed walls, Jewish culture flourished.<sup>31</sup>

It is likely that Bondi and Veneziano—the couple in question—were living in a ghetto at the time of their marriage, as the date of their *ketubah* falls before Napoléon Bonaparte's (1769–1821) first Italian campaign (1796–97), which resulted in his conquest of northern Italy and subsequent abolishment of the law restricting Jews to ghettos.<sup>32</sup> The iconographic details of the work demonstrate an amalgamation of Jewish and

Italian culture. Like all *ketubot*, the main feature remains the remembrance of and orientation towards Jerusalem.

The main text of the *ketubah* (fig. 2) is inscribed in traditional square Hebrew script. The Hebrew word sitting on top of the square text translates to “Wednesday,” indicating the day of the wedding. Measuring 67 x 51 centimetres, the document is rendered in *maniera grande*, a distinguishable characteristic of the Italian *ketubah*.<sup>33</sup> It was during the seventeenth century that the Jewish marriage contract expanded in size and began to incorporate more artistic motifs. Images became a dominant feature containing symbols understood universally by members of the Jewish Diaspora.<sup>34</sup> Recurring visual motifs in *ketubot* thus transcend space and time, permitting a culture to thrive based on a collective memory.

The medallion above the text shows an eastern view of the city of Jerusalem (fig. 3).

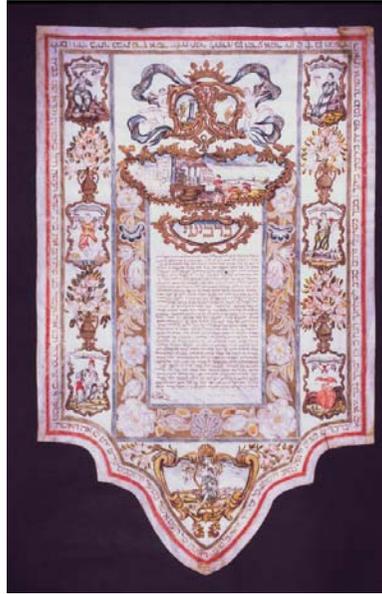


Fig. 2. Anonymous, *Ketubah*, 1771, parchment, 67 x 51 cm, KET 8\* 901/134, National Library of Israel Collection. <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/jewish-collection/ketubbot/ketexhibit/Pages/Rome-Italy-1771.aspx>.



Fig. 3. Detail of *ketubah* showing city of Jerusalem. Reproduced from David Davidovitch, *The Ketuba: Jewish Marriage Contract through the Ages* (New York: Adama Books, 1985).

In the centre, King Solomon is enthroned on an elevated platform, wearing a crown and blue and yellow robes, and holding his royal sceptre in his right hand.<sup>35</sup> It was customary for artists to depict biblical figures whose names were related to those of the bride and groom. Shalom Sabar explains: "Yedidyah, according to the Midrash, is the name of King Solomon, who was the friend, 'yedid', of God."<sup>36</sup> Accordingly, the artist who created this *ketubah* chose to depict a significant moment in the life of King Solomon. The text that appears on the right in the sky translates to: "And when the queen of Sheba has seen all the wisdom of Solomon" (I Kings 10:4). Thus this scene represents the meeting of King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, who is the crowned figure dressed in red and blue. Although Sabar contends that Solomon is seated in "his fancy palace on the left,"<sup>37</sup> it is also possible that he is situated in front of the arcade (*mawazin*) on the western side of the Dome of the Rock (fig. 4). As Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn explain: "An elevated platform with stairways and arcades (*mawazin*) supporting the Dome of the Rock was created to compensate for the gradually ascending terrain, from the margins toward the center."<sup>38</sup>



Fig. 4. "Dome of the Rock, view from SW, with Mount Scopus (left) and Mount of Olives (right)," April 9, 2011. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome\\_of\\_the\\_Rock#/media/File:Dome\\_of\\_Rock,\\_Temple\\_Mount,\\_Jerusalem.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dome_of_the_Rock#/media/File:Dome_of_Rock,_Temple_Mount,_Jerusalem.jpg).

During the Italian Renaissance, Italian Jewish artists began to employ the image of the Dome of the Rock as a symbol of the (biblical or future) Temple; this practice can be traced back to the Christian Crusaders.<sup>39</sup> In the *ketubah*, the Dome of the Rock may be the building standing slightly to the right behind the arcade. According to Pamela Berger, Italian Renaissance depictions of the Dome of the Rock show "a dome above a multi-sided ambulatory resting on a platform of several steps."<sup>40</sup> To the left of the Muslim shrine is possibly the Tower of David (fig. 5), portrayed as the tallest structure with a slightly rounded roof bearing a faint Star of David.<sup>41</sup>



Fig. 5. Tower of David, April 18, 2006.

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Y-M\\_017.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Y-M_017.jpg).

Unlike northern views of Jerusalem, this eastern perspective of the walled city emphasizes its sanctity apart from the world of the profane by including the space outside of the Holy City, thus underscoring the feeling of “here” and “there,” and of “home” and “away.” Excerpts from Psalm 128 are found on the outermost border of this *ketubah*, suggesting that the ideal city of Jerusalem represents “the ideal home of the married couple, the fruitful housewife, the thriving children.”<sup>42</sup> This psalm is

usually recited at Jewish wedding ceremonies.<sup>43</sup> The image of the city of Jerusalem at the top of the *ketubah* illustrates that the Holy City is the “highest joy” (Psalm 137:6).<sup>44</sup>

Above the narrative scene sits an elaborately rendered crown. On the left, between the arches of the crown, a lion is standing next to a coronet hovering above a pillar (fig. 6). The lion is symbolic of Judah, the capital city of which is Jerusalem.<sup>45</sup>



Fig. 6. Detail of *ketubah* showing crown with lion and crowned pillar. Reproduced from David Davidovitch, *The Ketuba: Jewish Marriage Contract through the Ages* (New York: Adama Books, 1985).

The many crowns in the document point to Jerusalem. King Solomon represents the “Crown of the Kingdom.” The crown on top of the pillar may allude to “Moses as the Crown of the Torah,”

but it also visually displaces the crown of the Roman rulers onto the pillar which is in the possession of the lion, suggesting the supremacy of the Jewish law.<sup>46</sup> This is a plausible reading considering that every marriage contract reiterates: "Behold thou art consecrated unto me according to the law of Moses and Israel."<sup>47</sup> Therefore, the artistic narrative and symbols in Bondi and Veneziano's *ketubah* signify that they signed a document that not only bound them together in matrimony under the Jewish law, but also sent them on a journey back to the Holy City.

There are other less conspicuous symbols of Jerusalem hidden in the popular Italian iconography of *ketubot* of the time. While their decoration usually incorporates plants, the abundance of roses surrounding the text in Bondi and Veneziano's marriage contract is distinguishably Italian. The red flowers symbolize passion and love, while the white flowers connote purity. The roses are rendered in a naturalistic manner first seen in Italy in the fourteenth century with the publication of *Circa Instans* (ca. 1300) in southern Italy.<sup>48</sup> The figure in the centre at the bottom of the document (fig. 7) however sits on what appears to be olive branches, which represent Mount Sinai and Jerusalem.



Fig. 7. Detail of *ketubah* showing medallion at bottom centre featuring what appears to be a woman sitting on olive branches and sweeping with a broom. Reproduced from David Davidovitch, *The Ketuba: Jewish Marriage Contract through the Ages* (New York: Adama Books, 1985).

The border of the *ketubah* features seven medallions containing allegorical figures. Artists often looked to popular guide books that listed the allegories alphabetically, and chose whichever ones were most suited to the couple named in the marriage contract.<sup>49</sup> The six figures on the periphery seem to represent the four cardinal virtues from ancient Greek philosophy (prudence, justice, temperance and fortitude) and select theological virtues from the letters of Saint Paul of Tarsus that were adopted by Church fathers (faith, hope, charity and love).<sup>50</sup> While I have not deciphered all of them, the figure on the bottom left (fig. 8) is labelled “Carita” (Charity). Traditionally, the crowned figure of Charity is “seated, supporting a small naked boy who she nurses.”<sup>51</sup>



Fig. 8. Detail of *ketubah* showing medallion at bottom left portraying *Carita*.  
Reproduced from David Davidovitch, *The Ketuba: Jewish Marriage Contract through the Ages* (New York: Adama Books, 1985).

Although the figure at the bottom is rendered in a similar fashion, it is more likely a Jewish symbol than an Italian one, because while the six figures on the left and right are accompanied by Italian labels, the figure on the bottom sits under a Hebrew one. There is therefore a fusing of cultures which may demonstrate the struggle of Jews living in Rome who see their “true city” as lying elsewhere. Communicative memory leads to a social identity, while collective memory leads to a cultural memory.<sup>52</sup> The Jews of Italy fought internally with their need to live social lives and their desire to maintain cultural values and traditions,

a struggle which culminated in the designs of the *ketubah*, such as this one.

The ostensibly female figure sitting on olive branches is sweeping with a broom, which may be a reference to the *mizinke* dance. “Mizinke” is a Yiddish term meaning “the youngest daughter”;<sup>53</sup> accordingly, this dance is customary among Ashkenazi Jews at the wedding of the last daughter to be married. The Klezmer song “Di Mizinke Oysgegebn, the Youngest Daughter is Given Away” is played while wedding guests gather in a circle around the parents of the bride. The mother holds a broom as she and her husband are crowned with laurels. The origins of the *mizinke* are unclear, but Lubow Wolynetz, curator and librarian at the Ukrainian Museum and Library of Stamford, Connecticut, proposes that the dance may be related to a Ukrainian practice at weddings that was documented by Ukrainian ethnographer Pavlo Chubynsky (1839–1884) in the latter half of the nineteenth century. Wolynetz explains:

When the [Ukrainian] wedding celebrations were coming to the end (after a few days), wedding guests would put the parents of the bride or groom on a wagon and take them to the village inn (bar) for the so-called “selling of the parents,” which meant the parents had to buy everyone a drink. If the parents married off their last child (son or daughter) then the guests would make wreaths and place them on the heads of the parents and thus take them to

the village inn. In this frolicking way the wedding celebrations would come to the end.<sup>54</sup>

Wolynetz speculates that since many owners of taverns and village inns in Ukraine were Jewish, they must have frequently witnessed this ritual taking place and incorporated elements of it into the Jewish wedding.<sup>55</sup>

It is possible that the *mizinke* was brought to Rome by Ashkenazi Jews and that the figure carrying the broom in the *ketubah* alludes to this dance. This in turn suggests that Veneziano was the last daughter in her family to be married. Although Italian Jews were separated from their ancestral home, their Jewish culture was interwoven into their Italian identity. In this *ketubah*, the land of Israel is evoked through numerous images and symbols belonging to a fusion of different traditions.

### PART III: THE *KETUBAH* IN TWENTIETH-CENTURY BOMBAY

My second case study focuses on an early-twentieth-century *ketubah* (fig. 9) from Bombay, India, belonging to Shalom *bar* (son of) Aharon and his bride Rivka *bat* (daughter of) Binyamin, and written in Aramaic and Hebrew.<sup>56</sup>



Fig. 9. Anonymous, *Ketubah*, August 14, 1911, ink and paint on paper, Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Yale University. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ketubah\\_\(4\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ketubah_(4).jpg).

Importantly, the date of the contract is noted not only as August 14<sup>th</sup>, 1911, but also as the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Menachem* 5671 in the Hebrew calendar. *Menachem*, meaning “to comfort or console,” refers to the month of Av, the eleventh month of the civil year and the fifth month of the ecclesiastical year. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, the First and Second Temples of Jerusalem fell. The *haftarot*—readings

from the Prophets in the Hebrew Bible—that take place in the three weeks leading up to the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av describe the people of Israel needing to be comforted during this month for their great loss.<sup>57</sup> In biblical times, no weddings were allowed until the 10<sup>th</sup> of Av. Jews commemorate the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av with a fast day called *Tisha B'Av*. The decision to date the *ketubah* to the 20<sup>th</sup> of *Menachem* as opposed to the 20<sup>th</sup> of Av makes a statement. The couple found yet another way to link themselves to Jerusalem: they joined together in matrimony to regain what was lost on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Av, and to amend what originally caused that month to be referred to as *Menachem*.

There have been different waves of Jewish immigration to India since ancient times. The couple named in this *ketubah* were from Bombay and most likely descended from Jews who arrived in the city from Bagdad during the nineteenth century.<sup>58</sup> Jewish identity in India underwent changes as Indian nationalism grew between 1870 and 1918. The Bene Israel, or “sons of Israel,” a historic community of Jews in India, expressed their loyalty to the British crown, claiming it was one of their primary duties to be faithful to Queen Victoria. More specifically, the Bombay Bene Israel community prepared an address to the Queen that stated: “If the Government of Queen Victoria had not been in India, then even the remnant of the Israelite community would not have been left.”<sup>59</sup> However, there was a part of the Jewish community that still identified with the Indians and constantly

struggled with maintaining their Jewish identity. In the first two decades of the twentieth century, the Jews in Bombay became divided into two factions, mainly because of clashing personalities.<sup>60</sup> The Jewish communities were in constant conflict with one another and with themselves, caught between their inherited Jewish identity, identifying as Indian and remaining loyal to the British crown at a time when India was seeking autonomy. These difficulties are expressed pictorially in the iconography of the Jewish marriage document.

Similar to the first *ketubah* I examined, the one belonging to Shalom and Rivka is dominated by artistic imagery and picturesque calligraphy. The text in the lower portion of the contract explains the terms of the contract, while the text enclosed in the oval shape and forming the outer border includes blessings for the couple and biblical verses.<sup>61</sup> The outer border contains verses from Psalms 137 and 128. A crown is placed above the text, emphasizing once again that "Jerusalem [is] Above [their] chief joy,"<sup>62</sup> the chief joy being the union of marriage. They say that your wedding is one of the happiest days of your life, but, according to the Jewish tradition, it must always fall second to the day Jews re-enter the Holy City. The crown carried a dual meaning for Indian Jews in the early twentieth century: although it was traditionally seen as a representation of the divine kingship or crown of the Torah in Judaism, it was also a reference to the British monarchy which ruled over India at the time.<sup>63</sup>

After the groom breaks the glass to conclude the wedding ceremony, it is customary to recite Psalm 137:5, which appears at the top of this *ketubah* and reads: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem, May my right hand forget her skill."<sup>64</sup> The wedding party claps and cheers in celebration after the breaking of the glass, although it signifies the destruction of the Temple. It is important to note, however, that this particular meaning was only introduced in the fourteenth century by the anonymous author of the *Kol Bo* to suggest the ongoing mourning of the Jewish people.<sup>65</sup> What was once an act of remembrance has turned into a celebratory custom, demonstrating yet again how the act of trying to recapture a tradition can, paradoxically, shape a new one.

Since figurative representations of God are prohibited in Judaism, most illuminations, including those of *ketubot*, feature geometric and floral designs that symbolize a connection with nature and the divine.<sup>66</sup> Shalom and Rivka's *ketubah* contains Indian motifs such as exotic birds and local flora.<sup>67</sup> The peacock, the most dominant icon in the document, is distinctively Indian and frequently appears in the religion, art and folklore of South Asia.<sup>68</sup> A beloved national symbol, the peacock became the official "National Bird" of India in 1963.<sup>69</sup> However, this bird also has its place in the Jewish tradition: Symmetrical pairs of peacocks appear in synagogue decorations of the Talmud period. Moreover, legend has it that a "golden peacock" encountered a golden eagle on the fourth step of Solomon's throne.<sup>70</sup> These Temple steps are described in I Kings 10:18–20 and 2

Chronicles 9:17–19. Although we do not see any peacocks in the Italian *ketubah* mentioned in Section II, the steps to the Temple of Solomon are rendered in gold, referencing the same excerpt from the Jewish writings. The gold borders in this twentieth-century Indian *ketubah* reiterate the divinity of the Holy City, similar to the decorative elements of the eighteenth-century Italian *ketubah*. These two examples of Jewish material and religious culture show how the *ketubah* unites and connects all Jewish people to God and to their Holy City through matrimony.

## CONCLUSION

The art of a culture helps unite a people together across time and place. Identity is generally defined as a person's concept and expression of the self and the concept and expression of his/her affiliations, such as culture.<sup>71</sup> However, Jewish culture has absorbed its individuals, who, over time, have equated their self-concept with their affiliate-concept. The Temple of Jerusalem consumed the Jewish religion, becoming the very nexus of Jewish identity itself. The *ketubah* is but one example of Jewish art pointing towards Jerusalem and the Temple. Paradoxically, the influence of the Temple only increased once it was destroyed. In times of intense disorientation, people look for a clear sign, explanation or path to follow. The Jewish people have used the icon of the Holy City to reorient and centre themselves through the continuous act of mourning and commemoration, which has consequently shaped their identity.

## NOTES

- 1 The belief that Jerusalem is the ancestral home of the Jewish people is highly debated amongst other religions and remains disputed to the present day. This paper focuses on the Jewish people's belief regarding what they consider to be their ancestral home.
- 2 Robert Ousterhout, "'Sweetly Refreshed in Imagination': Remembering Jerusalem in Words and Images," *Gesta* 48, no. 2 (2009): 153.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 I use the term "culture" instead of "religion" in this essay because I want to discuss the defining characteristics of the Jewish people, specifically the use of the Temple of Jerusalem in their art. I do not address their collective beliefs and world views, but only examine how they have maintained a collective identity through rituals and visual iconography.
- 5 Jan Assmann and John Czaplicka, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *New German Critique*, no. 65 (Spring–Summer 1995): 125–33; Shalom Sabar, "Above My Chiefest Joy," National Library of Israel, accessed November 2015, <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/jewish-collection/ketubbot/ketexhibit/Pages/default.aspx>.
- 6 Bombay was the colonial name of Mumbai until 1995.
- 7 David C. Gross and Esther R. Gross, *Under the Wedding Canopy: Love and Marriage in Judaism* (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1996), 44.

- 8 Ibid., 11.
- 9 Michael L. Satlow, *Jewish Marriage in Antiquity* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 42–43. In fact, in the Ten Commandments, adultery and idolatry are linked in the arrangement of the tablets, side by side: “III: Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven images,” and “VII: Thou shalt not commit adultery.”
- 10 Satlow, 42–43.
- 11 Gross and Gross, 11.
- 12 David Davidovitch, *The Ketubah: Jewish Marriage Contracts Through the Ages* (Tel-Aviv: E. Lewin-Epstein, 1968), 114.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 Gn 24:67 (New International Version).
- 15 Davidovitch, 114.
- 16 Ibid.; *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, “Babylonian Exile,” last modified February 26, 2016, accessed May 2, 2016, <http://www.britannica.com/event/Babylonian-Exile>.
- 17 Davidovitch, 113.
- 18 Ibid., 112.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Gross and Gross, 20.
- 21 Ibid., 27.
- 22 Alan Balfour, *Solomon’s Temple: Myth, Conflict, and Faith* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015), 74.

- 23 Ibid., 44.
- 24 Ibid., 27.
- 25 Dan Cohn-Sherbok, George D. Chryssides, and Dawoud El-Alami, *Love, Sex and Marriage: Insights from Judaism, Christianity and Islam* (London: SCM Press, 2013), 51.
- 26 Shalom Sabar, "Rome, Italy, 1771," National Library of Israel, accessed November 2015, <http://web.nli.org.il/sites/NLI/English/collections/jewish-collection/ketubbot/ketexhibit/Pages/Rome-Italy-1771.aspx>; Mathilde Tagger, "Sephardic Ketubot from Italy," SephardicGen, accessed November 2015, <http://goo.gl/F8Gdc4>.
- 27 Steve Hall and Shoshannah Zirkin, "Jews in Italy," in *Encyclopedia of the Jewish Diaspora: Origins, Experiences, and Culture*, vol. 1, ed. Mark Avrum Ehrlich (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 2009), 865.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Mireille Hadas-Lebel, "Rome and the Destruction of the Temple in Jewish Sources between the End of the First Century and 135 CE," in *Jerusalem against Rome*, trans. Robyn Fréchet (Leuven; Dudley: Peeters, 2006), 111.
- 30 For example, in 100 CE, the oldest known synagogue in the West was established at Ostia. See Hadas-Lebel, 111; Mark M. Jarzombek and Vikramaditya Prakash, "Palace of Domitian," in *A Global History of Architecture* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2011), [https://books.google.ca/books?id=HL2I\\_t\\_ZyQoC&lpg=PT509&vq=domitian&pg=PT509#v=onepage&q=palace%20of%20domitian&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=HL2I_t_ZyQoC&lpg=PT509&vq=domitian&pg=PT509#v=onepage&q=palace%20of%20domitian&f=false).

- 31 Jacqueline Gomperts, "Jews in Italy: A Long History and Cultural Heritage," In Italy Online, accessed November 2015, <http://www.initaly.com/regions/ethnic/jewish.htm>; Kenneth R. Stow, *The Jews in Rome: The Roman Jew*, vol. 1 (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1995): xi–xv.
- 32 Mitchell Duneier, *Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2016), 11.
- 33 Roni Wienstein, *Marriage Rituals Italian Style: A Historical Anthropological Perspective on Early Modern Italian Jews* (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 423.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 Aliza Cohen-Mushlin, *Scriptoria in Medieval Saxony: St. Pancras in Hamersleben* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2004), 122, <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=3447046228>.
- 36 Sabar, "Rome, Italy, 1771."
- 37 Ibid.
- 38 Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem: From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2013), 158, <https://books.google.com/books?isbn=030019899X>.
- 39 Raphael Patai and Hayah Bar-Yitshak, *Encyclopedia of Jewish Folklore and Traditions* (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 2013), 276–77.
- 40 Pamela Berger, *The Crescent on the Temple: The Dome of the Rock as Image of the Ancient Jewish Sanctuary* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 267.

- 41 Ibid., 264–67.
- 42 Patai and Bar-Yitshak, 277–78.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 Psalm 137:6 (NIV); Patai and Bar-Yitshak, 278.
- 45 Ellen Frankel and Betsy Platkin Teutsch, “Lion,” in *The Encyclopedia of Jewish Symbols* (Northvale: J. Aronson, 1992), 98.
- 46 Rachel Hachlili, *Ancient Jewish Art and Archeology in the Diaspora* (Leiden: Brill, 1998), 180.
- 47 Louis Epstein, *The Jewish Marriage Contract: A Study in the Status of the Woman in Jewish Law* (New Jersey: Lawbook Exchange, 2004), 56.
- 48 Celia Fisher, *Flowers in Medieval Manuscripts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 7.
- 49 Sabar, “Rome, Italy, 1771.”
- 50 It is possible that the artist who was commissioned to decorate the *ketubah* may have been Christian.
- 51 Andrea Bayer, *Art and Love in Renaissance Italy* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art; London: Yale University Press, 2009), 140.
- 52 Assmann and Czaplicka, 125–133.
- 53 Reuven Becker, “Exploring One of the Most Puzzling Rituals at a Jewish Wedding,” *Jewish Action*, last modified June 16, 2014, accessed November 2015, [https://www.ou.org/jewish\\_action/06/2014/mizinke-dance-tradition-folklore/](https://www.ou.org/jewish_action/06/2014/mizinke-dance-tradition-folklore/).

- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 "Ketubah : Bombay, India, 1911, August 14," Beinecke Rare Book & Manuscript Library, accessed November 2015, <http://brbl-dl.library.yale.edu/vufind/Record/3442519>.
- 57 Menachem Posner, "10 Special Haftorah Readings," Chabad.org, accessed November 2015, [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/1903305/jewish/10-Special-Haftorah-Readings.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/1903305/jewish/10-Special-Haftorah-Readings.htm).
- 58 Davidovitch, 96–97.
- 59 Joan G. Roland, *The Jewish Communities of India: Identity in a Colonial Era*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New Brunswick: Transaction, 1998), 35–36.
- 60 Ibid., 41–42.
- 61 Melanie J. Wright, *Studying Judaism: The Critical Issues* (London: Continuum International, 2013), [https://books.google.ca/books?id=3Qt8AAAAQBAJ&lpg=PP2&dq=wright%20studying%20judaism&pg=PT39#v=onepage&q=Shalom%20bar%20\(son%20of\)%20Aharon%20and%20his%20bride%20Rivka%20bat%20\(daughter%20of\)%20Binyamin&f=false](https://books.google.ca/books?id=3Qt8AAAAQBAJ&lpg=PP2&dq=wright%20studying%20judaism&pg=PT39#v=onepage&q=Shalom%20bar%20(son%20of)%20Aharon%20and%20his%20bride%20Rivka%20bat%20(daughter%20of)%20Binyamin&f=false).
- 62 Psalm 137:6 (NIV).
- 63 Ibid.
- 64 Psalm 137:5 (NIV).
- 65 Maurice Lamm, "The Breaking of the Glass," Chabad.org,

accessed November 2015, [http://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/313726/jewish/The-Breaking-of-the-Glass.htm](http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/313726/jewish/The-Breaking-of-the-Glass.htm); Abraham P. Bloch, *The Biblical and Historical Background of Jewish Customs and Ceremonies* (New York: KTAV, 1980), 374–75.

66 Wright.

67 Ibid.

68 Ibid.

69 Krishna Lal, *Peacock in Indian Art, Thought and Literature* (New Delhi: Abhinav, 2006), 11–12.

70 Joseph Shadur and Yehudit Shadur, *Traditional Jewish Papercuts: An Inner World of Art and Symbol* (Hanover: University Press of New England, 2002), 99.

71 Seth J. Schwartz, Koen Luyckx, and Vivian L. Vignoles, *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (New York: Springer Science & Business Media, 2011), 413.

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My balcony in Lifta, post-performance, June 2014

# Thoughts on Nostalgia, Melancholia and Mourning in Lifta

—

AMÉLIE ELIZABETH PELLY

Most of us, both historians and laypersons,  
know that the past is irrecoverable,  
but what do we do with relics and material orphans  
'so vivid, so tantalizingly concrete,  
that we cannot help  
but feel deprived' in their presence?

Michael Ann Holly, *The Melancholy Art*

## FOREWORD

In 2013, I was brought to Lifta (fig. 1). At the time, I was an exchange student at the Bezalel Academy and every proposal for discovery was welcome. I do not remember why I first visited the village, and I do not believe I knew anything about it, yet it has never left me since.

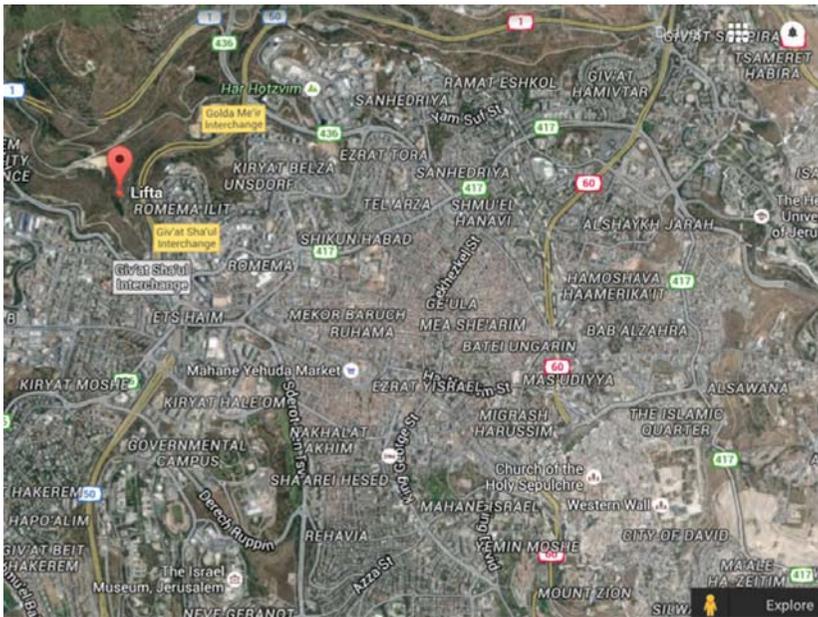


Fig. 1. Satellite view of Lifta and Old Jerusalem to the right, Google Maps. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Lifta,+Israel/@31.788529,35.2000153,3180m/data=!3m1!1e3!4m2!3m1!1s0x1502d6393b154621:0xe7917e3fc5b5f8fb>.

My spirits were lifted by the tint of travel and Jerusalem's light. Friendship, love and creativity were at an all time peak. I returned to Lifta countless times, for friend's photography projects, picnics, class outings. Lifta exerted upon me—and others, dare I say—an attractive pull.

I began calling one of the ruins, located on the upper left slope, mine. There I sat on the balcony overseeing the spring, the valley and the sunsets, and planned for the future (fig. 2). This moment of extreme joy sealed Lifta into my memory as home in Jerusalem. Soon enough, however, I was forcefully reminded that this home was only a *moment in space*. All that remained of this extreme plentitude was the space, the ruins of time.



Fig. 2. My balcony in Lifta, post-performance, June 2014.

There came a moment when a professor required the creation of a political art project. This is when Lifta began to transform before my eyes into a space of generalized nostalgia for others

besides myself. Research into Lifta's history proved me everything but unique in my excruciating desire to return. Former residents' testimonies amplified my understanding of Lifta as a site of nostalgia and melancholia.

Hence, politics and intimacy merged to create *66 years, 7 months later* (fig. 3), a performance wherein the two sources—personal and historical—of nostalgia and melancholia met.<sup>1</sup>



Fig. 3. Amélie Elizabeth Pelly, Still from *66 Years 7 months later*, 2014, site-specific performance. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBIIUgdd1mA>.

My body, in an attempt to reclaim the past moment through the physical remains of Lifta, rubbed against the home until it could no longer tolerate the cuts (fig. 4). *Une douce violence* characterized both personal and political feelings, and embodied the longing for home the heart cannot express.



Fig. 4. Katy Hundertmark, Photo Documentation of Amélie Elizabeth Pelly, *66 years 7 months later*, June 2014, film print.

Because time has passed, I may now revisit the subject with less emotional upheaval. This essay will seek out where in Lifta—as both a physical entity and as memory—nostalgia, melancholia and mourning flower.<sup>2</sup>

\* \* \*

## THE FIRST TRAIT OF LIFTA IS LOSS.

In January 1948, Liftawis were expelled from their homes by the Israeli army. That day, the inhabitants who had not already fled, took a few belongings and set off for what they thought was a temporary evacuation. Some even locked their doors, in hopes of returning promptly to a place they still knew.<sup>3</sup> Palestinians recall this period as the Nakba, while Israelis write it into their War of Independence discourse. Previous to the expulsion of its Arabic residents, Lifta was a village of 450 houses, a plentiful land with olives trees, plums, roses and children.<sup>4</sup> The day their exile began, Liftawis lost their home, which Russian writer and media artist Svetlana Boym (b. 1966) equates with the loss of one's "sense of intimacy with the world."<sup>5</sup>

Simultaneously, Lifta was deprived of a substantial part of herself.<sup>6</sup> Once depopulated, Lifta was seized by the Israelis, who sought to secure it via the settlement of Yemenite Jews emigrating from Yemen in the late 1940s and 1950s, and later of Kurdish Jews fleeing from Iraq. Save for a few Israeli squatters, Lifta has remained uninhabited since the departure of the Kurdish Jews in the mid-1960s.<sup>7</sup> The Yemenites recalled how sterile Lifta was, without a viable spring, and located far from the city and only accessible by arduous paths.<sup>8</sup> Lifta became a land of ruins, suspended somewhere in time, with a present so meagre it could only be considered in terms of its future or past. Both Lifta and its former residents are bearers of nostalgia and melancholia.



Fig. 5. Genevieve Lebleu, *View of Lifta's Northern Slope*, June 2014, digital photography.

\* \* \*

## OF NOSTALGIA

Nostalgia may be defined as a longing for a home that no longer exists or, in some cases, for a home that has never existed.<sup>10</sup> It is a sentiment of loss and displacement. Boym formulates this notion as “a romance with one’s own fantasy” of the lost home which “can only survive in a long-distance relationship.”<sup>11</sup> Inherently human in its reach, can nostalgia appear within the physical remnants of Lifta?

There are many examples of nostalgia directed towards Lifta, emanating from the groups defending its memory. The Lifta Society was founded in response to Israel's desire to transform the land west of its entrance into modern living complexes. The Society's mandate is to counter the tendency of people to forget and overlook the village's past. It is no surprise that their main ammunition is the people of Lifta themselves: employing emotions in their defence, the Society showcases written and video interviews of the refugees' experiences of their traumatic expulsion.<sup>12</sup> Laura van Rij, a researcher for the non-profit organization Zochrot, gathered several interviews with former residents of Lifta. Of the eight people who shared their memories of the land with Van Rij, only two did not remember Lifta as a place of splendour and bliss. One of the more modest recollections is from Tzipi Kirma, who concedes that her life in Lifta was arduous but believes it should be conserved, since "[a] lot of people have nostalgic feelings about Lifta."<sup>13</sup> When seeking to situate nostalgia, one can observe it in the new homes of the exiled in the form of objects (memorabilia, photography, furniture and such) related to their lost home (fig. 6).<sup>14</sup> Still, can this sentiment be present within Lifta itself? Or does nostalgia uniquely reside within the people who have lost their home?<sup>15</sup>



Fig. 6. Laura van Rij, A former resident in her home, June 2013.  
<http://www.zochrot.org/en/article/54891>.

Nostalgia is a longing for the past which can be located within the past itself—in this instance, within a site of ruins. Objects that have made their way to such a place after the traumatic event may provoke nostalgia. Depreciable items, such as mattresses or bathing towels, can be found in contemporary, depopulated Lifta (fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Ariane Lorrain, *Lifta*, digital photography.  
<http://cargocollective.com/ArianeLorrain/Lifta>.

These objects are perhaps the strongest signs of nostalgia within the village, for they suggest the return—however brief—of people burdened with longing. These items trigger a displaced nostalgia: *Is it possible they are still used? Have people returned? How beautiful this site must have been.* These objects contrast with the ruins due to their conceivable lifespans, their incapacity to avoid being bleached by the sun and crusted by the sand. They reveal how people still identify with and long for a time lost, a time of livability.

The term “abandoned” no longer describes the present state of the village. Of the fifteen times or so I was in Lifta, I was never alone. Occasionally, I was solely in the company of exchange students. However, most of the excursions were shared with Orthodox Jews, both young and old, coming to bathe (fig. 8).



Fig. 8. Genevieve Lebleu, *View of Lifta's Spring, upon Descending into the Village*, June 2014, digital photography.

Tourists hiking along the Jesus Trail—part of the larger Jerusalem trail—also populated the scenery.<sup>16</sup> Almost every trip I made to Lifta included some *flâneur* or another, usually hidden in the greenery. Hence, given the diverse presence

of contemporary visitors, it is tempting to declare it is being repopulated, but all that these characters have in common is the transience of their stay.

\* \* \*

## OF MELANCHOLIA AND MOURNING

I will never forget, my world is here.<sup>17</sup>

—Yakoub Odeh, former resident of Lifta

Desolation overtakes anyone who thinks of being so forcefully removed from one's home. The melancholic, according to Robert Burton, is nothing but "a utopian dreamer who had higher hopes for society."<sup>18</sup> Similar to nostalgia in this regard, melancholia is accepted as a state resulting from loss, either physical or unconscious.<sup>19</sup>

There is a melancholic aura within Lifta. Julia Kristeva, in her essay concerning the translation of mood into language, claims that "psychic representations of energy displacements [are] caused by external and internal trauma."<sup>20</sup> Lifta's trauma occurred in many stages—depopulation, bombing, temporary populations—and beyond its "psychic" aura, it offers physical representations of trauma.

Contrary to its sister nostalgia, melancholia is independent

from the personal experience of loss. Lifta is a home that is no longer accessible or viable. The characteristics of Lifta, such as its homes without roofs and the emptiness of the valley in which it is perched, evoke melancholia.

The roofless architecture of Lifta is assuredly melancholic. The sky peers into the ruins through ragged and violent orifices. The scorching middle-eastern sun cannot be kept out, nor the dust, nor the seeds that have come from flowers and plants within the rooms. Home is no longer within. The “motherly” embrace a roof provides is no longer existent.<sup>21</sup> The home has become a carcass. All these elements amount to a sense of exposure and frailty.

With regards to the intimacy created by a ceiling, Boym’s definition of home as the intimate resonates with Gaston Bachelard’s observations of the dialectics of inside and outside in *The Poetics of Space*. Bachelard recalls Rainer Maria Rilke (1875–1926), an exiled Bohemian-Austrian poet, writing about the calm, secure sense of *being within* and the staggering fear of the exterior.<sup>22</sup> Granted, there is a certain beauty in having myriads of stars as a ceiling, but the violent means through which the roof was removed conjures melancholia. Moreover, the beauty of the stars is often usurped by the vertiginous realization of smallness and insignificance, thus merging the sublime with the melancholic.

The very slopes that hold the village together exude melancholia. Upon arrival atop the slope of the village and before entering, one must *gaze down* into Lifta's bare exposed bones of steel and rock. With Jerusalem's bustling bus station a few metres behind, the surrounding urban setting and topography only amplify the image of *something* which used to *be*. This contrast between urbanism and ruins—and between above and below—evokes desolation and tints Lifta with melancholic sentiment. Furthermore, the shapes of the slopes are redolent of an embrace. The slopes are at once enticing and exert a pull downward into melancholic contemplation. *La vallée est une crevasse, avec ses flancs non dissimilaires à celles si consolantes et prometteuse d'un amant, d'une mère.*<sup>23</sup> Lifta's "charred, skeletal remains" are beautiful nonetheless.<sup>24</sup>

Kristeva poses questions that address the heart of our concerns with Lifta: "Can the beautiful be sad? Is beauty inseparable from the ephemeral and hence from mourning? Or else is the beautiful object the one that tirelessly returns following destructions and wars in order to bear witness that there is survival after death, that immortality is possible?"<sup>25</sup> Lifta's beauty, melancholic and slow, "emerges as the admirable face of loss, transforming it in order to make it live."<sup>26</sup> Kristeva refers to Freud's claim in his essay "On Transience" that beauty is only visible when mourning begins. But hope of return endures in the Liftawis, proof that mourning is far from complete—and arguably has not commenced, if we accept Freud's assertion.

For those Liftawis residing in East Jerusalem, their nostalgia is perpetuated by the accessibility of Lifta. Although there is no foreseeable possibility of permanent return, many of the children of Lifta can visit. It becomes an impossible task to reimagine one's home elsewhere when the original is physically near. Yet Lifta has changed so drastically and continues to morph— physically, spatially and conceptually—so that it paradoxically heightens the truth of irreversibility while at the same time encouraging hope of a reversal of fate.

An interesting thing to note about this stagnant state of mourning is that Lifta compels even outsiders to mourn her. Although second-generation Liftawis do not perceive the need to return, to protect the village, the Lifta Society, which defended Lifta in court against the residential complex plans, is composed of a diverse group of historians, refugees, Israelis and Palestinians.<sup>27</sup>

\* \* \*

As time continues to slip, nostalgia, melancholia and mourning continue to coalesce in Lifta. Nostalgia may dissipate first, as its exiled vessels will eventually die. Melancholia depends largely upon the ruins' stable degradation, but only until a certain unidentifiable moment passes, when it will cycle back into impertinence. Mourning will unlikely occur soon, for too many groups are working to avoid losing Lifta as it is currently.

Should the village remain in a perpetual state of melancholia (that is, ruins) over the loss of its native inhabitants? Should Lifta be reclaimed by another, transformed and erased? Or should it remain unclaimed, as a land of transient beings and sublime nature?

To diverge from the essentially political question of possession, I propose that mourning for Lifta remain in suspense. Has Lifta's beauty not acted as an invitation, welcoming bathers, hikers and nostalgic *flâneurs*? Yet the acting force of sublimation occurring within Lifta is no longer within those transient beings. What attracts them, what makes Lifta attractive, is her melancholic *laissez-allez* (abandonment), wherein nature, most sublime, has taken control. Lifta may possibly be the sole unclaimed land in her country, with her stagnant waters and homes without thresholds.

#### NOTES

- 1 "66 Years 7 months later," YouTube video, 17:16, from a site-specific performance held in June 2014, posted by "softpinkmelie," June 16, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aBIIUgdd1mA>.
- 2 I will purposely omit political considerations as they are part of a dark labyrinth I dare not venture into with so little pages to fill. This essay strives to seek out only aesthetic, psychoanalytical and/or phenomenological elements of Lifta.

- 3 Laura van Rij, "Sari Nasir, Former Resident of Lifta," accessed November 20, 2015, <http://www.zochrot.org/en/testimony/54940>.
- 4 Van Rij, "It's All about People: Narratives from Lifta," Zochrot, last modified June 2013, <http://www.zochrot.org/en/article/54891>.
- 5 Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), 251.
- 6 Lifta, like Jerusalem, will be referred to as "she" through this essay, with respect to the imagery of the village.
- 7 Whitney Boykin, "An Introduction to Spatial History," *Spatial Histories*, last modified February 19, 2015, <https://spatialhistories.wordpress.com/tag/lifta/>.
- 8 Van Rij, "Tzipi Kirma, Former Resident of Lifta," accessed November 20, 2015, <http://www.zochrot.org/en/testimony/54918>.
- 9 Van Rij, "It's All about People."
- 10 Boym, 7.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Van Rij, "It's All about People."
- 13 Van Rij, "Tzipi Kirma." It is also important to note that Kirma and the second least enthusiastic former resident interviewed were part of the population of Yemenite Jews who settled in Lifta. They knew wealth previously in Kurdistan and arrived in a poor and unpolished Lifta.

- 14 Boym, 3.
- 15 For some, the occurrence may be considered as idealization. Alternatively, Boym describes a process called the art of intimation in which the displaced individual enacts a game of re-localization. There is an interesting parallel to be made between such reflective behaviour from a person who has suffered loss but undergoes melancholia. In melancholic loss, the past becomes like the present, and tinted with self-criticism and blame. In nostalgic loss, the past only becomes more ideal. See Boym, 250.
- 16 "Jerusalem Trail," <http://jesustrail.com/hike-the-jesus-trail/middle-east-hiking-trails/jerusalem-trail>.
- 17 Van Rij, "Yakoub Odeh, Former Resident of Lifta," <http://www.zochrot.org/en/testimony/54909>.
- 18 Boym, 5.
- 19 Freud differentiates mourning from melancholia by its finality: the former will eventually resolve itself with the passing of time, while the latter may become mania and result in self-disregard. Both conditions will dissipate only when the libidinal object (the object of desire, which is lost) will be replaced. From the testimonies to which I have access, there is no trace of such melancholic behaviour as defined by Freud. Of more interest is the poetic sentiment of melancholia, which is embodied in Lifta itself. See Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," *Standard Edition* 14, no. 239 (1917): 1957–61.
- 20 Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 99.

- 21 Here I am borrowing loosely from Freud's theories.
- 22 Gaston Bachelard, *La poétique de l'espace* (Vendôme: Presse universitaire de France, 1972).
- 23 This translates to: "The valley is a crevasse, with its flanks similar to those so consoling and promising of a lover, of a mother."
- 24 Joshua Vasella, "Thoughts on Lifta," <http://www.liftasociety.org/news/thoughts-on-lifta>.
- 25 Kristeva, 98.
- 26 Ibid., 99.
- 27 Daphna Golan, Zvika Orr, and Sami Ershied, "Lifta and the Regime of Forgetting: Memory Work and Conservation," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 54 (2013): 70, accessed November 12, 2015, <http://bit.ly/1Nt6kpk>.

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———. “Sari Nasir, Former Resident of Lifta.” Accessed November 20, 2015. <http://www.zochrot.org/en/testimony/54940>.

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# **A Shared Jerusalem: Commonalities and Differences**

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## **Une Jérusalem partagée : points communs et différences**

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Jerusalem: Voice of God  
<https://youtu.be/OYI-7Phya78>

# Jerusalem: Voice of God

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SANTINO CIARMA

Since its foundation nearly five thousand years ago, Jerusalem has remained an ever-changing city. As a holy place for Christians, Muslims and Jews, the Holy Land's history is fraught with tensions among these religious groups. However, considering the globalized, multicultural world we live in today, I believe the issues surrounding religious difference and oppression in Jerusalem are unacceptable. For this reason, I created *Jerusalem: Voice of God* (2015),<sup>1</sup> a video examining the shared importance of the city of Jerusalem as a religious conversation with God. Jerusalem is like a mirror: God is reflected in the city, while the city and its people are a reflection of God. I believe that this shared city represents a choir of different voices that are all ultimately preaching variations of the same word. Perhaps I am naive, but there has to be a way for people to coexist harmoniously in Jerusalem.

When I began to think about how I could represent the ensemble of distinctive voices within the walls of Jerusalem, I wanted to understand the significance of some of the religious sounds that are commonly heard in the city and what it feels like to hear them. In his essay "Old Jerusalem," Gerard McCarthy vividly describes the sounds of Jerusalem: "As I stood there a church-bell rang. Suddenly, a loudspeaker was turned on nearby, and the sound of the church-bell was drowned out by the loud call of a muezzin. Soon the voice was joined by voices from other mosques, filling the air above Old Jerusalem."<sup>2</sup> McCarthy's account enabled me to imagine myself listening to these multiple sounds overlapping one another. But because I had never actually heard a Muslim call to prayer before, I decided to listen to various versions on YouTube. Coincidentally, in one of the clips, McCarthy's exact description seemingly took place: behind the beautiful Muslim call to prayer playing through the loudspeaker, I could hear the church bells ringing like an added instrument to an orchestra.<sup>3</sup> In this moment I realized how I wanted to represent what I had only read about in tourist reviews: a crescendo of the Abrahamic religious sounds that call Jerusalem home.

In *Jerusalem: Voice of God*, I sought to recreate and combine sounds that are emblematic of the three primary religions of Jerusalem. I had already decided to incorporate the Muslim call to prayer because it is a key aspect of daily life for Muslims in the Holy Land. To symbolize Christianity, I searched for sounds

that early Roman Catholics would have heard in their basilicas and churches around the time of the Catholic Church's inception. On YouTube I found "Dixit Dominus Domino Meo,"<sup>4</sup> an old Roman Catholic chant based on Psalm 110, which states that the priest who is singing will be a priest forever, thus representing God's right hand where the power of Jerusalem (*Sion*) is passed directly to him.<sup>5</sup> During the age of the Roman emperor Constantine I (272–337 CE) and his expanding empire, Psalm 110 could have been understood as God being vengeful. However, a more contemporary interpretation suggests that God is entrusting the sceptre of Jerusalem—quite possibly a reference to Jesus as king—to priests who accept their responsibility as God's right hand.

I finally turned my attention to the earliest settlers of Jerusalem, the Jews, and began to question how I would represent their religious veneration through sound. I considered the psalm "If I Forget Thee, O Jerusalem," but all the versions I found sounded too contemporary. Judaism is older than both Islam and Christianity—I wanted to find a sound that brought me back 3000 years! Finally, I found an audio clip of a Hebrew chant of Psalm 95, which calls on the devout to sing complete praise to God for all His greatness, and to make joyful noise in reverence of Him.<sup>6</sup> I chose to use this Hebrew chant in my work because when I read its translation I was immediately reminded of the direct praise of Allah in the Muslim call to prayer.

I was now concerned about how I would layer these sounds, and the effects my decisions would have on the meaning of my piece. Was my video going to open by “kicking down the doors” sonically, so to speak, or did I want to gradually introduce the sounds? More importantly, how was I going to unite these sounds to emphasize likeness and harmony among the three religions? I found answers to these questions by examining Polish artists Czesław Dźwigaj (b. 1950) and Michał Kubiak’s (b. 1946) outdoor sculpture *Tolerance Monument* (2008) (fig. 1),<sup>7</sup> installed in a park between the Jewish and Palestinian neighborhoods in Jerusalem. In this work two pieces of metal are linked together by an olive tree sprouting in the middle. The artists’ statement is etched on the monument in Hebrew, English, and Arabic: “The tree enables the two parts of the column to link together in symbolic coexistence.”<sup>8</sup> Like the harmonious coalescence of elements in the sculpture, my work aims to connect the Abrahamic religions by creating the illusion of a single choir composed of the different voices—both literal and symbolic—of the city of Jerusalem. Similar to Dźwigaj and Kubiak’s monument, *Jerusalem: Voice of God* expresses the possibility of bridging the gap between differences and affecting some change.



Fig. 1. Czesław Dźwigaj and Michał Kubiak, *Tolerance Monument*, 2008, Jerusalem.  
Photo credit: Thomas Graham. <https://flic.kr/p/7wqmLq>.

I was also inspired by the newly erected Arab Museum of Contemporary Art's (fig. 2) 2015 opening exhibition *HIWAR*.<sup>9</sup> The museum's mandate is "to promote peace and dialogue by means of art activities, mutual confidence building between neighbors and a strengthening of values of equality and mutuality, leading towards the creation of an infrastructure for human dialogue and coexistence between communities."<sup>10</sup> Accordingly,

*HIWAR* aimed to establish a safe environment for artistic conversation. The museum's website elaborates:

The word "HIWAR" in Arabic has two main definitions: either to describe a calm conversation between two or more people, or (especially in a political or conflict context) to describe a process by which two or more parties engage in a conversation that is calm and free from animosity with the aim of reaching an agreement on a certain issue. These two definitions are exactly the same ones found in dictionaries to define the English word Dialogue. "HIWAR" dialogue is a process that allows people, usually in small groups, to share their perspectives and experiences with one another about difficult issues. "HIWAR", dialogue is not about winning an argument or coming to an agreement but about understanding and learning. Dialogue can lead to both personal and collaborative action. "HIWAR" dialogue is a spiritual, transformative journey of understanding the other.



Fig. 2. Arab Museum of Contemporary Art, Sakhnin, Galilee. Photo credit: Belu-Simion Fainaru. Reproduced from Shany Littman, "When Is an Arab Museum Not an Arab Museum?" *Haaretz*, June 23, 2015, accessed November 2015, <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/culture/premium-1.662641>.

The exhibition's intent greatly inspired my work. Art has the power to create a conversation and exchange where we can discuss equality and cooperation for peaceful living; this became an additional subject of interest in my video.

After much research and contemplation, I decided to structure my video as a very loose historical progression of time. I incorporated images of events commonly known to the residents of Jerusalem, but the viewer's focus is primarily on the various voices and sounds emanating throughout time, up to this day. With the hope of inspiring a sense of multiculturalism and

appreciation for the city as a conversation with God as opposed to a battleground, *Jerusalem: Voice of God* will speak to you, if you choose to listen.

#### NOTES

- 1 "Jerusalem: Voice of God," YouTube video, 5:26, posted by "Tino C," November 23, 2015, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYI-7Phya78>.
- 2 Gerard McCarthy, "Old Jerusalem," *Irish Pages* 5, no. 1 (2008): 17.
- 3 "Call to Prayer in Jerusalem," YouTube video, 4:58, posted by "joelman42," December 27, 2008, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KoAt3Ub6fLE>.
- 4 "Old Roman Catholic Chant – Dixit Dominus Domino meo," YouTube video, 2:52, posted by "ZrinjskiPetar," May 24, 2011, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS\\_AjMPqyO4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FS_AjMPqyO4).
- 5 Ps. 110: 1–7 (New International Version).
- 6 "Lost Melodies – Hebrew Chanting – Psalm 95," YouTube video, 2:35, posted by "Mordechai72," March 1, 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HEfF8fr5stY>.
- 7 "The Tolerance Monument in Jerusalem," Jerusalem.com, last modified February 13, 2013, accessed November 17, 2015, [http://jerusalem.com/articles/jerusalem/the\\_tolerance\\_monument\\_in\\_jerusalem-a2032](http://jerusalem.com/articles/jerusalem/the_tolerance_monument_in_jerusalem-a2032).
- 8 "Tolerance Monument & Park," Jerusalem Foundation, last modified 2008, accessed March 20, 2016, <http://projects>.

jerusalemfoundation.org/community/parks-gardens/  
tolerance-monument-park.aspx.

- 9 "The Arab Museum of Contemporary Art," Mediterranean Biennale, accessed November 17, 2015, <http://www.mediterraneanbiennale.com/en/amoca.html>.
- 10 Ibid.

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Melodie Ratelle, *Planting Religions*, 2015, linen, handmade lokta paper, glass and metal beads, 40.6 x 40.6 cm.

# *Planting Religions:* An Artwork

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MELODIE RATELLE

My research on the symbolism of specific species of vegetation in Judaism, Islam and Christianity—the three predominant religions in Jerusalem—has culminated in my artwork *Planting Religions* (2015) (fig. 1), which explores the parallels between the enduring religious and social struggles in the Holy Land and the competition of plants in the wild. Although this might seem like a negative view of both nature and humankind, there is a sense of harmony among the symbols representing each religion in my work, suggesting the possibility of the acceptance of religious diversity and collective survival in Jerusalem. *Planting Religions* draws comparisons between the civilized world of art and religion and the uncivilized world of nature.



Fig. 1. Melodie Ratelle, *Planting Religions*, 2015,  
linen, handmade lokta paper, glass and metal beads, 40.6 x 40.6 cm.

My work incorporates prominent symbols and styles of vegetation in Jewish, Islamic and Christian art. The design on the left is the Jewish menorah, which strongly resembles a plant found in Jerusalem called *Salvia palaestina* (fig. 2).<sup>1</sup>

Traditional Ethiopian menorahs resemble branches and leaves and can move, almost like trees in the wind (fig. 3).



Fig. 2. "A *Salvia* plant with its central Menorah stem twisted so that the six branches are in one plane." Reproduced from Avinoam Danin, "Plants of the Bible: The Tabernacle Menorah," Flora of Israel Online, last modified January 17, 2015, accessed November 2015, [http://flora.org.il/en/books/plant-stories-2/chapter-n/useful\\_plants\\_n1/](http://flora.org.il/en/books/plant-stories-2/chapter-n/useful_plants_n1/).



Fig. 3. "A typical North African Hannukah Menorah. Branches decorated with bract-shaped elements resembling those of *Salvia palaestina*." Reproduced from Avinoam Danin, "Plants of the Bible: The Tabernacle Menorah," Flora of Israel Online, last modified January 17, 2015, accessed November 2015, [http://flora.org.il/en/books/plant-stories-2/chapter-n/useful\\_plants\\_n1/](http://flora.org.il/en/books/plant-stories-2/chapter-n/useful_plants_n1/).

According to Exodus 25:31–40, the menorah dates back to the time of Moses, who was instructed by God to build one for the Tabernacle housing the Ark of the Covenant. The menorah is a central feature of the Jewish holiday Chanukah. As the story goes, after the success of the Maccabean Revolt (167–160 BCE), the Jews rededicated the Temple but discovered that there was only enough oil to light the menorah for one night, although it is supposed to remain lit every night. Remarkably, the oil lasted for eight days, until more oil had been procured. This miracle is celebrated during Chanukah.<sup>2</sup>

The centre of my piece features an Islamic design inspired by the decoration on the dome of the Shah Mosque (1611–1629) in Isfahan, Iran (fig. 4). This tiled pattern is found on the domes of other mosques, such as the Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque in Isfahan. I was interested in this pattern because of its placement on the part of the Shah Mosque closest to the sky, which most religions regard as the entrance to heaven. In accordance with the Hadith, sacred Muslim architecture generally does not contain figurative imagery, but instead often features patterns informed by nature.<sup>3</sup>

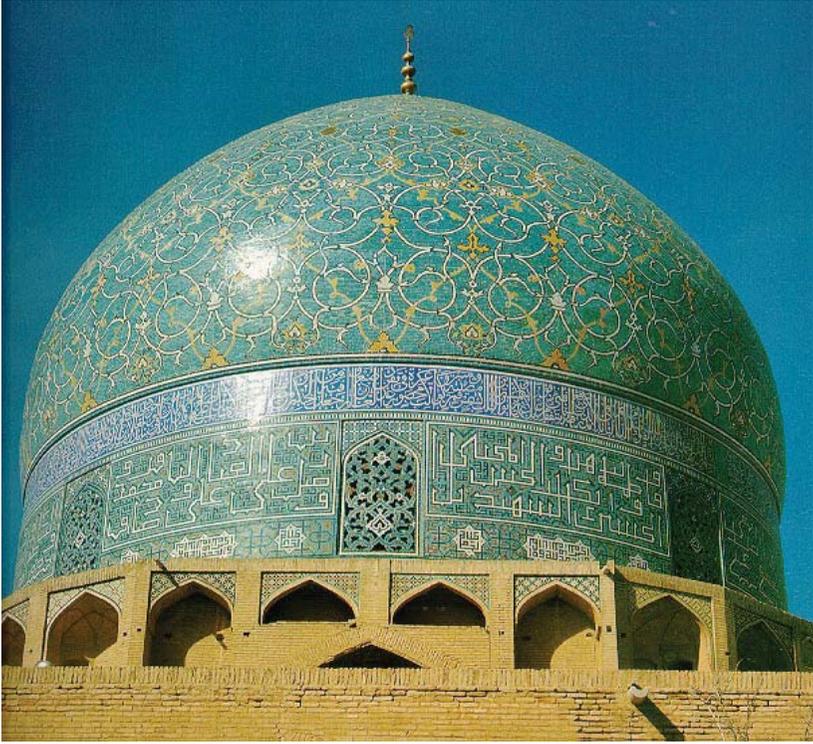


Fig. 4. Dome of the Shah Mosque in Isfahan, Iran, 1611–1629.  
Reproduced from “Early Islamic Art,” Bowersarthistory,  
last modified May 15, 2014, accessed November 2015,  
<https://bowersarthistory.wikispaces.com/Early+Islamic+Art>.

On the right-hand side of *Planting Religions* is a grape tree representing the blood of Christ. In the Christian faith sacred wine is sometimes used in rituals as a symbol of Christ. The sixteenth-century *Eastern Orthodox Icon of Jesus Christ as the True Vine* (fig. 5) shows Christ as the strong trunk and the twelve apostles resting on his branches.

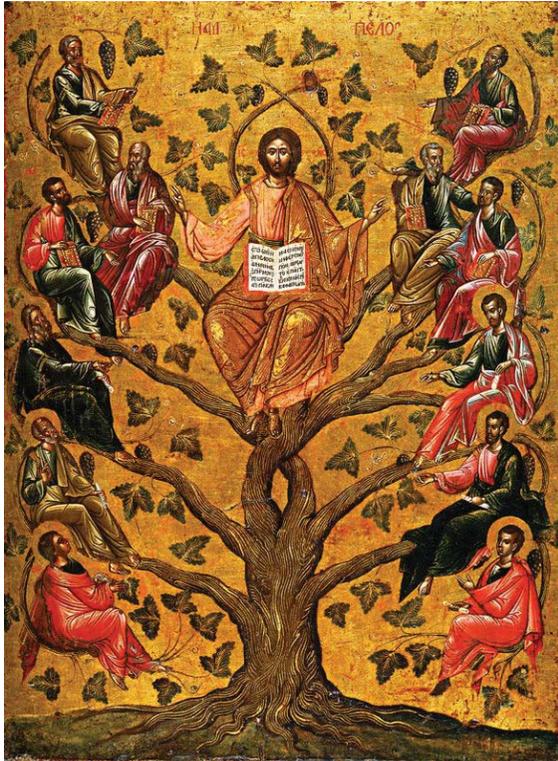


Fig. 5. Anonymous, *Eastern Orthodox Icon of Jesus Christ as the True Vine*, 16<sup>th</sup> c., 35 x 39 cm, Byzantine & Christian Museum, Athens. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christ\\_the\\_True\\_Vine\\_icon\\_\(Athens,\\_16th\\_century\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christ_the_True_Vine_icon_(Athens,_16th_century).jpg).

Each of the three major religions in Jerusalem subscribes to some version of heaven. Heaven and its pearly gates are depicted in the upper centre of *Planting Religions* as a rounded yellow shape within a square border. The resemblance of heaven to the sun was intentional, as plants tend to grow upwards towards the sunlight, which is necessary for their development. The plants

in my piece are reaching for heaven's gates as a symbol of the eternal quest of followers of Islam, Christianity and Judaism to serve God or Allah in hopes of reaching this golden land of paradise. The sunlight inside the gate signifies the ultimate love and light of the divine. In many religions heaven's gates feature white pearls;<sup>4</sup> making a play on the French word for beads, "perles," I constructed the entrance using white glowing beads.

The plants in my piece are not merely part of a decorative pattern; rather, they are the central elements, and not only possess religious significance but also allude to the competitive nature of wild vegetation. Although plants are often represented in visual art as aesthetically pleasing, they have an unattractive side: when a plant feels that its natural resources, such as light, water and minerals, are being depleted and threatened, it will become aggressive and begin to fight.<sup>5</sup> However, healthy plants will not try to harm one another. The behaviour and interactions of vegetation may be compared to religiously motivated missions to "save" Jerusalem. For instance, beginning in the late eleventh century, the Christian Crusaders aimed to ensure that Christian pilgrims would be able to safely visit holy sites in Jerusalem that were under the control of Muslims. Having studied religious and medieval history, I cannot help but notice the barbaric actions that take place in battles over resources or religion. Unfortunately, history reveals that people tend to react negatively to those who are different, often competing against them as though they were living according to the laws of the

jungle. While Jews, Christians and Muslims consider themselves to be very different from one another now, throughout history there were periods where they worked together on common ground. People in Jerusalem shared agriculture, water, soil, herbal remedies and knowledge. Their common location and climate created these similar ways of living, yet they never fully considered themselves to be of the same mother.

I chose to create a mosaic because this medium is found in the art and architecture of the three major religions of Jerusalem. Mosaic art is defined as “a decoration of a surface with designs made up of closely set, usually variously coloured, small pieces of material such as stone, mineral, glass, tile, or shells.”<sup>6</sup>

I was initially intrigued by the technique used to produce Christian Byzantine mosaics (fig. 6), and began to research Jewish and recent Islamic mosaics, as well (figs. 7, 8).

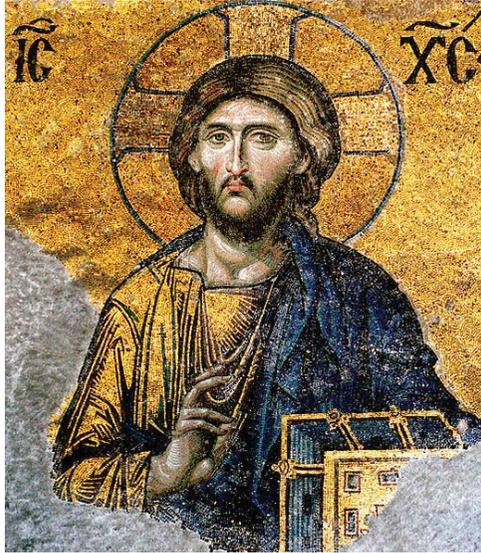


Fig. 6. Detail of Deesis mosaic showing Jesus Christ, 532–37, Hagia Sophia, Istanbul. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagia\\_Sophia#/media/File:Jesus-Christ-from-Hagia-Sophia.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hagia_Sophia#/media/File:Jesus-Christ-from-Hagia-Sophia.jpg).



Fig. 7. Floor mosaic at Shalom Al Yisrael Synagogue, Jericho, late 6<sup>th</sup>/early 7<sup>th</sup> c. Photo credit: Yonathan Gormezano. Reproduced from Ari Z. Zivotofsky and Yosef N. Zivotofsky, "Visiting the Holy City of Jericho," *Jewish Life in Jericho*, accessed November 2015, <http://www.jewishjericho.org.il/english/thoughts/VisitingTheCityofJericho-en.html>.

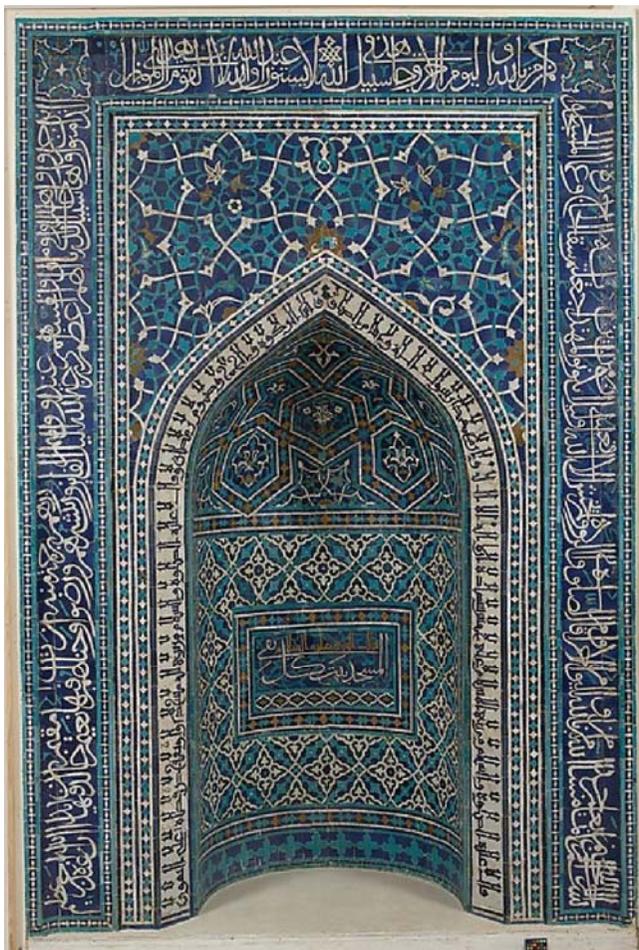


Fig. 8. *Mihrab (Prayer Niche)*, 1354–55, mosaic of polychrome-glazed cut tiles on stonepaste body; set into mortar, 343.1 x 288.7 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/449537>.

My mosaic is mounted on Nepalese lokta paper glued on top of cardboard. This slightly creamy and textured paper—made of the inner bark of specific species of evergreen bushes—gives the work an aged appearance. I drew the three designs on the paper, arranging them into a kind of circular symmetry. The plants are growing and infringing on one another, but there is also a sense of harmony and acceptance. Creating a detailed and shimmering mosaic made of such small glass and metal beads was a time-intensive process. I realized very quickly that I needed smaller tools than my fingers, and ended up using a Q-tip and a floss toothpick. I found it interesting that I was using objects that are usually found in the bathroom—which connotes uncleanness and the corporeal—to delicately set into place golden beads representing holy symbols.

*Planting Religions* does not speak only of competition between Judaism, Islam and Christianity, as it is also a symbol of something we all share. Like plants, we have our needs as humans on this planet and there are ways to see our similarities rather than our differences in order to achieve progress. This project showed me that there is no difference between the “uncivilized” and “civilized” world. We are all on this planet together, and everything is connected. Studying religious beliefs as well as the nature of humans and plants has allowed me to discover some of the commonalities between the convictions, values and art of Jews, Muslims and Christians.

## NOTES

- 1 Avinoam Danin, "Plants of the Bible: The Tabernacle Menorah," *Flora Israel Online*, last modified January 17, 2015, accessed November 2015, [http://flora.org.il/en/books/plant-stories-2/chapter-n/useful\\_plants\\_n1/](http://flora.org.il/en/books/plant-stories-2/chapter-n/useful_plants_n1/).
- 2 Tracey R. Rich, "Channukkah," *Judaism 101*, accessed November 2015, <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday7.htm>.
- 3 Finbarr Barry Flood, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *Art Bulletin* 84, no. 4 (December 2002): 643.
- 4 For example, Revelation 21:21 (New International Version) states: "The twelve gates were twelve pearls, each gate made of a single pearl. The great street of the city was of gold, as pure as transparent glass."
- 5 "Competition," *Marietta College*, last modified November 1, 2008, accessed November 2015, <http://w3.marietta.edu/~biol/biomes/competition.htm>.
- 6 Frederick O. Waage, *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Mosaic," last modified June 1, 2004, accessed November 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/art/mosaic-art>.

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Anonymous, *Pidyon Haben* Dish, 19<sup>th</sup> c., Jewish Museum, London.

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/pidyon-haben-dish-vienna-19th-century/aQFHJCUhKJvxow?hl=en>.

# The Role of Sacrifice in Judaism and Christianity: Doctrine, Ceremony and Art

—  
ERIN WILSON

The concept of sacrifice appears often in the doctrines of the Jewish and Christian faiths. Pivotal to the notion of God as almighty Creator, sacrifice is understood to be a literal and metaphorical instrument of testifying to one's boundless faith. Various artists throughout history have created dramatic and emotional artworks portraying the act of sacrifice within central events in Jewish and Christian scriptures that provide examples of piety and extreme devotion, and emphasize that unflinching belief in God is the foundation of personal faith.

According to the Hebrew Bible, the most holy God Yahweh states: “[T]he first-born of your sons you shall give to me.”<sup>1</sup> Biblical legislature gave first-born male humans and animals—called *bekhor*—a special status, as they were considered sacred and the exclusive possession of God.<sup>2</sup> Following the tenth plague inflicted on the first-born Egyptian males, God acquired title to the first-born of man and beast in Israel for having spared them the plague. However, sacrifice was only practiced with animals and agricultural products. The literal practice of sacrifice was metaphorical, interpreted as the cultic service of the Levites.<sup>3</sup> The Hebrew religion did not practice human sacrifice, as shown by the well known example of Abraham and his son, Isaac. A ram was substituted for the founder’s son, eliminating forever any possibility of human sacrifice among the Jews.

In Genesis 22, Abraham is called on by God to sacrifice his only son as a test of his faith. Even though the future of his lineage and of his son will be destroyed, Abraham obeys this command to demonstrate his profound and exceptional belief in God.<sup>4</sup> He leads Isaac to an altar and binds him, but just before he commits the act, an angel of God intervenes and stops him, substituting a ram for Isaac. This biblical passage demonstrates Abraham’s boundless obedience to God and His divine command, as well as his belief in God’s will to make infinite demands of human-kind due to the absolute dependence of every creature on its Creator.<sup>5</sup> The role of the ram as a substitute for Isaac as chosen

by God represents His choice to save Isaac, which stands as the ultimate right of God. Because Isaac was a gift, born of a barren woman, he serves as the seed of Israel; by redeeming Isaac, God thus redeems all of Israel.<sup>6</sup> The two underlying themes of Genesis 22 are the dedication of the first-born and the sacrifice of the beloved son for the salvation of the people, portraying the reciprocal trust between humankind and God.<sup>7</sup>

An artistic depiction of Abraham and Isaac that captures the emotional atmosphere and the divine intervention of God in the affairs of human beings is *Abraham's Sacrifice* (ca. 1663) by Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn (1606–1669) (fig. 1). Abraham displays anguish as he obediently carries out the task allocated to him by God. The emotive power of the scene is enhanced by the stiff terror gripping Isaac; his tense, clasped hands; the subtle glow and abundance of reds in Abraham's robe and in the bowl to catch Isaac's blood; and the compact composition.<sup>8</sup>



Fig. 1. Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Abraham's Sacrifice*, ca. 1663, oil on a composite of linen strips, 192 x 167 cm, private collection. Reproduced from Michael Jaffé, "Abraham's Sacrifice': A Rembrandt of the 1660's," *Artibus et Historiae* 15, no. 30 (1994): 194.

The simplified composition includes no representation of the sacrificial ram, but gives the angel of God a central, dominating presence in the painting. The angel's wings, spanning the width of the picture and expanding beyond the frame, shield the two men. The angel grasps Abraham's shoulder as a sign of comfort, while swiftly extending his other hand over Isaac to relieve Abraham of his heart-wrenching task. The scene is flooded in deep shadow, except for a bright light illuminating Abraham, Isaac and the angel, emphasizing not only God's intervention and His mercy, but also Abraham's obedience as His faithful follower. Representing the tense scene when the angel of God intervenes at the last moment to prevent Abraham from sacrificing his only son, Rembrandt's painting captures the essence of action and grief prior to the ram appearing as a substitute for Isaac.

An artistic rendering of Abraham and Isaac from the medieval period presents a more allegorical and complete illustration of the story compared to Rembrandt's expression of a single, strained moment (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Anonymous, *Mahzor*, first half of 14<sup>th</sup> c., Oxford, Bodleian Library.  
 Reproduced from Joseph Gutmann, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Medieval Jewish Art,"  
*Artibus et Historiae* 8, no. 16 (1987): 71.

This drawing is featured in a *mahzor*—a Jewish prayer book used on the High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur—produced in Southern Germany in the first half of the fourteenth century. It contains several stations representing the events of Isaac’s sacrifice. On the right, Abraham is laying his hand on Isaac’s concerned face, while his other arm is raised and holding a dagger. Unlike Rembrandt’s painting, the angel’s presence is only signified by an arm and wing materializing out of thin air to intercept Abraham’s action. At the centre of the illustration, a ram stands tangled in a bush prior to becoming a substitute for Isaac. To the left, a man riding on horseback blows into a ram’s horn or *shofar*; this instrument alludes to the sacrifice of the ram in place of Isaac. This allegorical picture portrays Abraham as the paragon of faith in God.<sup>9</sup>

The role of sacrifice in Judaism inspired the ceremony of the *Pidyon Haben* or “redemption of the first-born son,” which connects the first-born sacrifice of animals with the first-born son and offers money as a substitute for the boy’s lifelong service in the Temple. The ceremony, originally officiated by a *Kohen* (a patrilineal descendant from the priestly family of Aaron), involves a father paying five *shekels*—or other objects—to redeem his son.<sup>10</sup> As a ritual rooted in the concepts of sanctity, the *Pidyon Haben* represents a dedication to God.<sup>11</sup>

The *Pidyon Haben* has inspired Jewish artists and artisans to create special ceremonial objects such as silver plates on which to place the sons (figs. 3, 4).<sup>12</sup> These plates contain engravings of Abraham and Isaac at the centre with Abraham’s arm stretched above his head, holding a dagger, while the angel of God and the ram are also included in the composition. Zodiac signs embellish the borders of the plates. One of the zodiac signs for the Hebrew month of Tishri is the scale, representing the human deeds that are weighed on the scales of judgment.<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 3. Anonymous, *Pidyon Haben* (the Redemption of the First-Born) Plate, 1838, silver, 2 x 26.2 x 37 cm, Israel Museum, Jerusalem. © The Israel Museum, Jerusalem, by Avi Ganor.



Fig. 4. Anonymous, *Pidyon Haben* Dish, 19<sup>th</sup> c., Jewish Museum, London. <https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/asset-viewer/pidyon-haben-dish-vienna-19th-century/aQFHJCUhKJvxow?hl=en>.

The direct connection between the *Pidyon Haben* and the story of Isaac and Abraham emphasizes sacrifice and redemption as fundamental to unflinching obedience and devotion to God in Judaism. The *Pidyon Haben* is also a reminder that all are created by God and therefore owe their existence and faith to Him.

Similar themes of sacrifice and atonement are present in the story of Jesus Christ, particularly in his presentation at the Temple and his Crucifixion. The symbolization of sacrifice in the New Testament focuses on the death and resurrection of Christ, which plays an important role in the soteriological thinking, or salvation theory, of Christianity.<sup>14</sup> The willingness of Jesus to sacrifice himself for the sins of humanity and his subsequent resurrection represented a new covenant between God and His believers.<sup>15</sup> According to Paul, Christ's death on the Roman cross was seen as analogous to the offering of a Passover lamb, which is reminiscent of the role of the ram in the story of Abraham and Isaac. Christ served as a mediator between God and humans, as through him the atonement of sinners and their reconciliation with God were fulfilled.<sup>16</sup> A ceremony inspired by the sacrifice of Christ is the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, or Candlemas, which commemorates the day that Jesus was brought to the Temple for his own participation in the *Pidyon Haben*.



Fig. 5. Franz Anton Maulbertsch, *Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, ca. 1750, oil on canvas, 69.5 x 52.3 cm, Cleveland Museum of Art. <http://amica.davidrumsey.com/luna/servlet/s/719hx4>.

One example of an artistic rendition of the presentation of Christ is Franz Anton Maulbertsch's (1724–1796) *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple* (ca. 1750) (fig. 5), which utilizes the Baroque style to communicate a sense of vitality, force and imaginative fantasy.<sup>17</sup>

The composition includes Simeon standing in the centre and holding baby Jesus, while Mary kneels to the right. The melodramatic ambiance, rich colours and the aura of eerie mystery created by the variations of light and shadow not only convey the sense that a monumental event is occurring,<sup>18</sup> but also portend his eventual sacrifice for the redemption of humankind in his adult life. In the top left-hand corner of the painting, a small angel flying above the procession pulls aside a curtain as if to introduce the baby Jesus to his newborn life and eventual fate as the sacrificial lamb of God. As previously mentioned, the *Pidyon Haben* represents a sacred ritual; so too was Jesus's life, as his own conduct was pure and sinless, but he was destined to be betrayed by others and to die on the cross for our sins. While the five silver coins at the *Pidyon Haben* represent the evolution from animal sacrifice to a money substitute according to Jewish tradition, it was the sacrifice of Jesus in the Christian religion that paid for the redemption of humankind.<sup>19</sup>

A second artwork of the presentation of Jesus is the *Diptych with Presentation of Christ in the Temple and Crucifixion* (fig. 6), produced by an unknown artist in the fourteenth century. Unlike Maulbertsch's Baroque painting, this medieval piece does not capture the appropriate emotional responses of the scenes, such as happiness at the presentation of Christ and extreme anguish at the Crucifixion, as the figures all display uniform facial expressions. This work presents a direct connection between Jesus's *Pidyon Haben* and his Crucifixion by placing

the two scenes next to each other in ivory carvings. The strategic positioning of figures and use of colour further convey the relation between the two events. The presentation of Christ contains a red background, with warmth to signify the blessedness of the event, while the Crucifixion features a blue background, indicating the pain and loss caused by the death of Jesus Christ. The artist has included identical arched structures above each event, colouring the arch above the presentation of Christ blue and the one above the Crucifixion red.

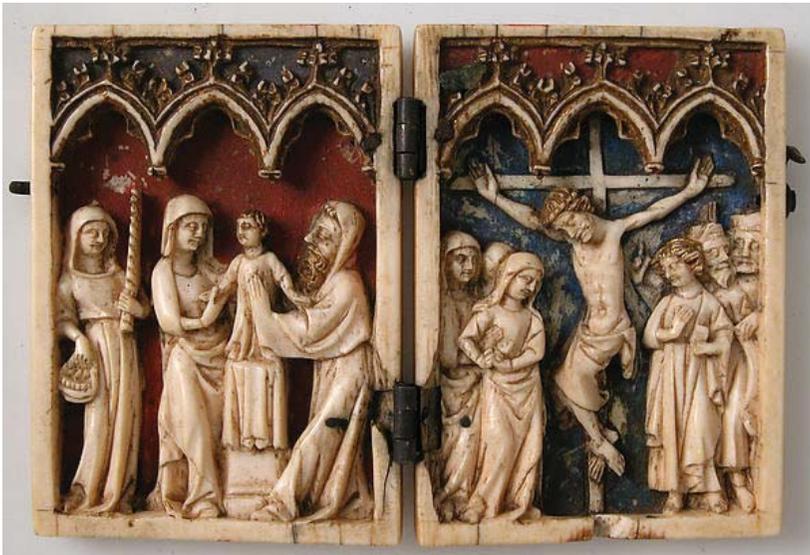


Fig. 6. *Diptych with Presentation of Christ in the Temple and Crucifixion*, 14th c., ivory, polychromy, metal mounts, overall (open): 7.2 x 11 x 1 cm; overall (closed): 7.2 x 5.2 x 1.8 cm, Metropolitan Museum of Art. <http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/467471>.

The inclusion of both colours in each scene represents how the presentation of Christ and his eventual Crucifixion are both inextricably connected through the themes of redemption and sacrifice. In addition to the cohesive colour scheme, the placement of the young Jesus on an altar on the left matches that of the adult Jesus on the right. The altar that Christ stands on and the cross that Jesus is crucified on are both in linear and central positions on each side of the diptych, stressing the importance of Christ as a sacrificial figure in the Christian faith.

This essay has examined how artistic interpretations of narratives of sacrifice in Jewish and Christian scriptures encourage viewers to emulate the depicted figures by practicing piety and extreme devotion to God. The theme of sacrifice is most pronounced in the biblical narrative of Abraham and Isaac. Rembrandt's painting *Abraham's Sacrifice* provides an emotional composition with the angel of God as a central figure in the scene, while the fourteenth-century medieval illustration presents a full allegorical depiction of the narrative which includes the ram as a symbol of God's mercy. Sacrifice in Judaism is symbolically carried out during the *Pidyon Haben*, which inspired the creation of plates bearing engravings of Abraham and Isaac on which to place the son. In the Christian faith, the willingness of Jesus to sacrifice himself for the sins of humanity revealed Christ as a mediator between God and humankind. The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple marks the day that baby Jesus was brought to the Temple for the *Pidyon Haben* ceremony and for his own

redemption, which foreshadows Christ's later Crucifixion for the redemption of humanity. Maulbertsch's Baroque painting *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple* evokes the emotion and melodrama of Christ's redemption, while the fourteenth-century diptych provides a direct connection between Jesus's *Pidyon Haben* ceremony and his eventual Crucifixion. Inspired by the steadfast faith of these biblical characters, artists depicted these scenes of devotion and sacrifice in powerful ways that moved viewers to reinforce their own devotion to God.

#### NOTES

- 1 Karin Finsterbusch, Armin Lange, and K.F. Diethard Römheld, eds., *Human Sacrifice in Jewish and Christian Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 91.
- 2 "JHOM - Firsts – Firstborn," *Jewish Heritage Online Magazine*, last modified 2011, accessed November 6, 2015, <http://jhom.com/topics/firsts/firstborn.html>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 Finsterbusch, Lange, and Römheld, 67.
- 5 Ibid., 71.
- 6 Ibid., 83.
- 7 Ibid., 85.
- 8 Michael Jaffé, "'Abraham's Sacrifice': A Rembrandt of the 1660's," *Artibus et Historiae* 15, no. 30 (1994): 209.

- 9 Joseph Gutmann, "The Sacrifice of Isaac in Medieval Jewish Art," *Artibus et Historiae* 8, no. 16 (1987): 74.
- 10 Nissan Rubin, "Coping with the Value of the Pidyon Ha'ben Payment in Rabbinic Literature: An Example of a Social Change Process," *Jewish History* 10, no. 1 (Spring 2006): 39.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 310.
- 12 *Ibid.*, 315.
- 13 Gutmann, 74.
- 14 Finsterbusch, Lange, and Römheld, 4.
- 15 *Ibid.*, 197.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 195.
- 17 Henry S. Francis, "Franz Anton Maulbertsch: The Presentation of Christ in the Temple," *Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art* 51, no. 1 (January 1964): 15.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 19 Carroll Roberson, *The Christ: His Miracles, His Ministry, His Mission* (Green Forest: New Leaf Press, 2005), 24.

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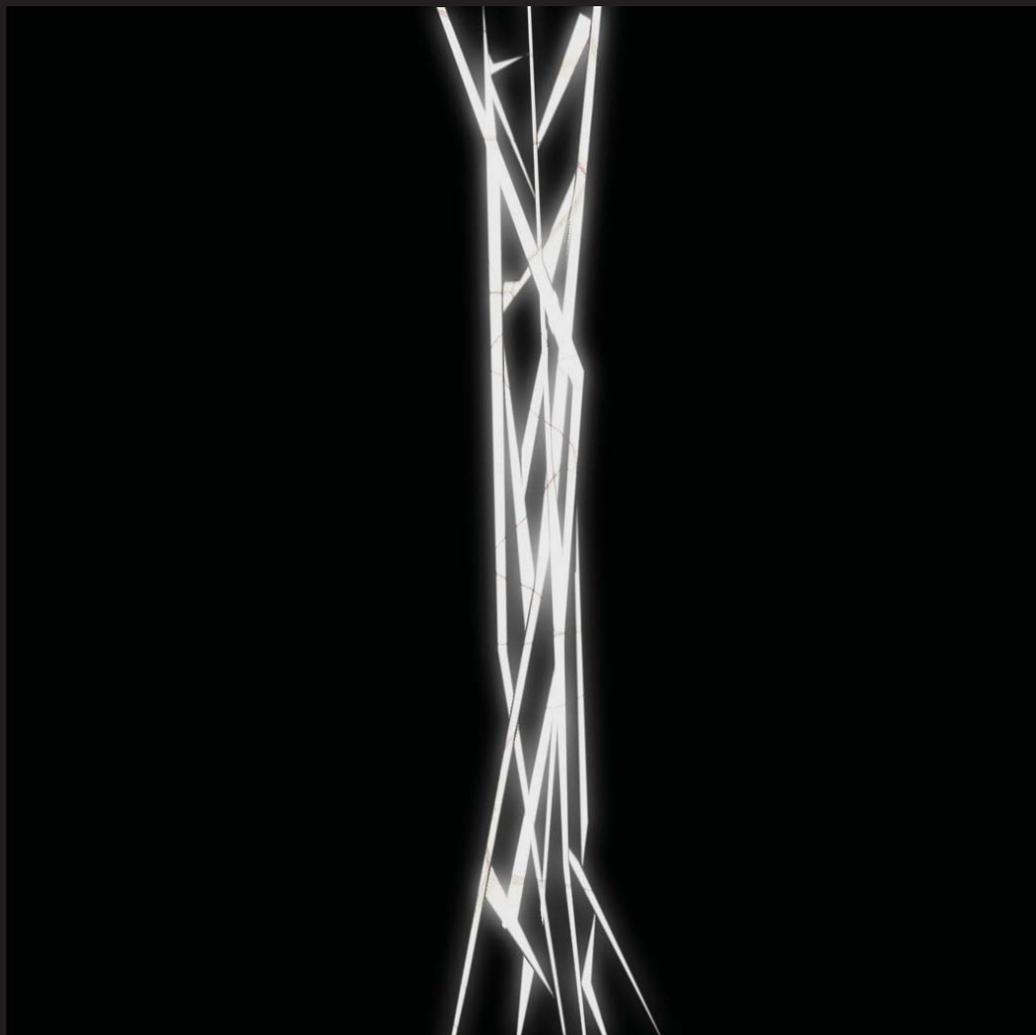
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Adélaïde Ménard-Tremblay, *Amidst Mayhem*, 2015, digital art.

# In between Hope and Lament: Allegories through Modern Art

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ADÉLAÏDE MÉNARD-TREMBLAY

Jerusalem has had a long, bleak history of battle and blood over its territory, and sadly, the present day is no different. The ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems like an endless nightmare for many since no one has been left unscathed. Each group continues to staunchly defend its entitlement to its homeland while feeling threatened by the opposition, which has led to almost no compromises.<sup>1</sup> My artwork *Amidst Mayhem* (2015) was inspired by my research on this enduring issue, as well as by the works of Israeli artist Larry Abramson (b. 1954) and of Palestinian artist Jumana El Hussein (b. 1944), which express the artists' feelings and thoughts regarding the conflict and its impact. I was interested in exploring Abramson's and El Hussein's works not only because they use the same

visual language, but also because they offer perspectives from opposing sides of this struggle over territory and nationhood. Although these two artists cannot be regarded as representative of the ethnic group to which they belong, their works still provide important insight into the situation. My artwork addresses the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and incorporates the two styles of the artists.

Three main groups are involved in this conflict: Jewish Zionists, Arab Muslims, and the American and European superpowers, who mainly seek to benefit from the situation.<sup>2</sup> Both Zionists and Islamists claim entitlement to the land of Jerusalem. "The Land of Israel was the birthplace of the Jewish people" is the first line in Israel's Declaration of Independence, written in 1948.<sup>3</sup> Yet this principle has been etched into the history of Jews for millennia. The Book of Genesis, which details the times of the biblical patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, describes the origins of the Jewish people in Israel.<sup>4</sup> Israel's Declaration of Independence, accorded by the United Nations, outraged Arab Palestinians who rejected the division of land between them and the Jewish population. A compromise was reached in the Oslo Accord (1993) wherein Palestinian authorities would have a state of their own near the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>5</sup> But as we can see today, this resolution still has not been implemented and may never be. Indeed, more violence has erupted since the stalemate of the peace process in 2000. Since then, Israel's population in the West Bank and Gaza has doubled and

a 709-kilometre wall now cuts into Palestinian land.<sup>6</sup> Religion and politics are making the peace process nearly impossible, which in turn makes the achievement of peace in the near future rather improbable.

However, many individuals have hope that the conflict will be resolved one day, and are intent on raising public consciousness of the current state of affairs. Abramson is an Israeli artist who was born in South Africa to a Zionist family. He later became the chairman of the Fine Arts Department at Bezalel.<sup>7</sup> His works often feature black squares, skulls, planks of wood, dry branches, networks of cracks, fragments and roots.<sup>8</sup> His series *1967 (Ha'aretz)* (2011–12), featured in the exhibition *1967* at the Gordon Gallery in Tel Aviv, is composed of fifty-two paintings made of oil, crayon and graphite on sheets of the *Haaretz* newspaper from the period of the Six-Day War (1967) (fig. 1). The sheets are hung side by side to form a monumental work that explores themes of chaos and lament.<sup>9</sup> The overall exhibition was a tribute to what Abramson calls the loss of Israeli utopia.<sup>10</sup> He envisions this loss as “a sunlit apartment complex drawn from real-estate brochures, surrounded by an abstract color field landscape, devoid of vegetation or people.”<sup>11</sup> To further prove his point, Abramson wrote on one of the painted sheets the modified phrase “Et in Canaan ego,” a reference to Poussin’s painting depicting the moment a group of shepherds discover the presence of Death even in Arcadia.<sup>12</sup>



Fig. 1. Larry Abramson, *1967, from the Series "1967 (Ha'aretz),"* 2011–12, oil, crayon and graphite on newspaper. Courtesy Gordon Gallery. <http://www.gordongallery.co.il/Programme/Default.aspx?p=188>.

Abramson most often works with allegories, thereby linking art with politics and modern painting with mythological symbolism. He has been described as a necrophiliac in the sense that “he enters the dead body of paintings with the aim of bringing it back to life, to breathe life into the corpse.”<sup>13</sup> Even though Abramson approaches his subject matter from a rather grim angle, it is apparent that through his paintings, he is trying to bring back to life the ideas of peace and hope.

The notion of finding hope in darkness is also evident in the works of El Husseini, a Palestinian artist who was forced to flee to Lebanon from Jerusalem in 1947. Although she is physically far from Jerusalem, she remains connected to her country by painting it. These paintings are mostly of cherished memories.<sup>14</sup> But since 2000, El Husseini's work, which was generally considered figurative and light, has turned abstract and dark (fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Jumana El Husseini, *Abstract Painting*, 2001, mixed media on paper.  
<http://jumanaelhusseini.com/Abstract.html>.

The reason for this change is El Hussein's assessment of the current state of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and her search for rebirth. Most of her new abstract paintings are sober and have geometrical shapes floating on the canvas. These shapes, often translucent and shimmering, symbolize hope.<sup>15</sup> While all of her paintings are mostly black, El Hussein says "she is in her happiest period since she feels resurgence in everything that she does."<sup>16</sup> By approaching this conflict from a new angle, she has rejuvenated herself by renewing her style and her approach. While I understand that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict cannot be easily resolved and that it is not only by changing one's viewpoint that peace will arise, I do believe that by seeing the situation differently like El Hussein did, we might be able to move past the current bloody standstill and achieve progress.

My research on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and on the works of Abramson and El Hussein led me to create *Amidst Mayhem* (fig. 3).

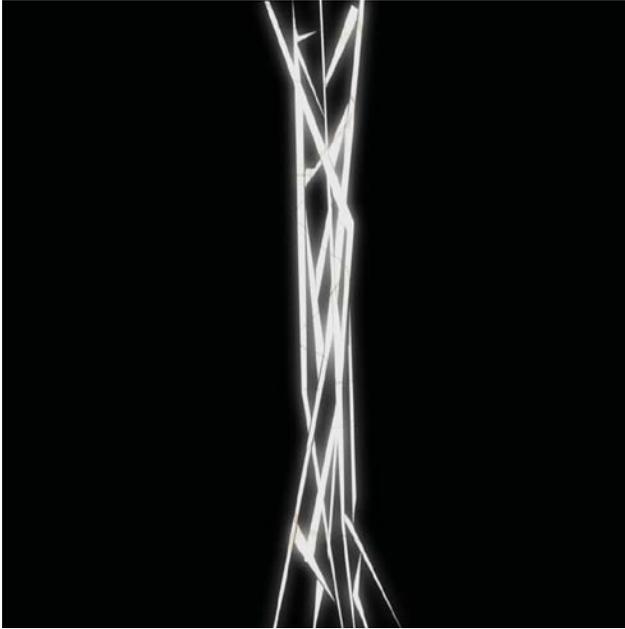


Fig. 3. Adélaïde Ménard-Tremblay, *Amidst Mayhem*, 2015, digital art.

I wanted to represent the breach between Palestine and Israel which has led to our current grim situation, where there is seemingly no solution to be found and all answers are filled with violence. The white cracks represent the confrontation between the two nations. Peace and hope have been engulfed by hatred. But when there is a problem, there is a solution. A glimmer of hope shines through the cracks formed by the confrontation. The cracks themselves are small, so only faint glimpses of hope can be seen. To really get to the heart of things, one would need to delve into the situation to get to the other side. But since both sides are not compromising, they stay as they are

as two black walls facing each other, and if neither concedes, the situation will stay as it is. This is my allegory regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and my tribute to Abramson and El Hussein. My work reflects and merges the points of view of both artists regarding the conflict by mimicking their visual styles as well as incorporating their allegories. I made my digital artwork with Adobe Photoshop. I digitally drew the white cracks on top of a black layer, and then duplicated the white cracks and added the filter effect “Gaussian blur” to create a halo effect around the cracks. After, I applied a cracked texture over the digitally drawn cracks. While it did not take long to produce the artwork, a lot of time went into the development of the concept. I would not have been able to conceive this artwork without a strong understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the people it concerns.

While this conflict may at first seem a morose subject to approach, it is necessary to do so because it is a global issue with consequences that extend beyond Jewish and Muslim communities. Despite ongoing violence and cruelty, those on either side of this conflict—such as Abramson and El Hussein—have not given up hope for peace. The process of conceiving *Amidst Mayhem* enabled me to become familiar with this major world issue. In analyzing the works of Abraham and El Hussein, I found that they express faith towards the future. While the situation may seem bleak, hope is not dead.

## NOTES

- 1 Eve Spangler, *Understanding Israel/Palestine: Race, Nation, and Human Rights in the Conflict* (Rotterdam: SensePublishers, 2015), 33.
- 2 Ibid., 1.
- 3 Cynthia Day Wallace, *Foundations of the International Legal Rights of the Jewish People and the State of Israel and the Implications for the Proposed New Palestinian State* (Lake Mary: Creation House, 2012), 128.
- 4 Selwyn Ilan Troen, "Israeli Views of the Land of Israel/Palestine," *Israel Studies* 18, no. 2 (Summer 2013): 101.
- 5 "The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian, accessed November 20, 2015, <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1993-2000/oslo>.
- 6 Leila Farsakh, "The One-State Solution and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Palestinian Challenges and Prospects," *The Middle East Journal* 65, no. 1 (Winter 2011): 55.
- 7 "Larry Abramson," Israel Museum, Jerusalem, accessed November 20, 2015, <http://www.imj.org.il/artcenter/newsite/en/?artist=Abramson,%20Larry>.
- 8 "Larry Abramson // 1967," Gordon Gallery, accessed November 19, 2015, <http://www.gordongallery.co.il/Programme/Default.aspx?p=188>.
- 9 Ibid.

- 10 William John Thomas Mitchell, "Bi-National Allegory: Israel-Palestine and the Art of Larry Abramson," *Studies in Romanticism* 49, no. 4 (2010): 668.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 Ibid.
- 14 "Jumana El Hussein Biography," Jumana El Hussein, accessed November 16, 2015, <http://www.jumanaelhusseini.com/Biography.html>.
- 15 "Jumana El Hussein Abstract," Jumana El Hussein, accessed November 23, 2015, <http://www.jumanaelhusseini.com/Abstract.html>.
- 16 Anne Mullin Burnham, "Three from Jerusalem," *Aramco World* 41, no. 4 (July/August 1990): 14.

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Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, 1995,  
soil, gravel, sand, other mixed media, 315 cm diameter

Sigalit Landau et  
Raeda Saadeh:  
Étude écoféministe  
comparative entre  
une artiste israélienne  
et palestinienne

—

AMÉLIE RONDEAU POLIQUIN

En raison des multiples conflits civils qui ont toujours lieu entre les Palestiniens et l'État d'Israël, Jérusalem, la ville sainte, demeure au cœur de l'actualité. Il est cependant important de noter que cette situation n'est pas nouvelle. Au contraire, l'histoire de celle-ci a été bel et bien marquée par de nombreuses occupations, dont celles des juifs, chrétiens et musulmans. C'est suite à l'immigration massive des juifs en

Palestine et plus particulièrement au cœur de Jérusalem, en raison des persécutions que les nazis leur ont fait subir durant la Seconde Guerre mondiale, l'État d'Israël a été déclaré en 1948 par l'ONU et reconnu par le Mandat britannique sur la Palestine qui prévalait à l'époque.<sup>1</sup> Encore aujourd'hui, elle est le sujet de plusieurs affrontements enflammés entre la communauté israélienne juive et la communauté palestinienne qui est en grande partie musulmane. Ces dernières tentent toutes deux de faire reconnaître leur droit de propriété sur le territoire. Bien qu'il soit facile de distinguer et ségréger ces communautés pour leurs différences socioculturelles et religieuses, cette opinion simpliste et populaire contribue à renforcer malencontreusement ces hostilités en niant l'humanité qui leur est commune. C'est pourquoi cet essai tente de démontrer la concordance de *Temple Mount* réalisée en 1995 et *Barbed Hula* en 2000 de l'artiste juive israélienne Sigalit Landau (b. 1969) par rapport à *Crossroad* et *One Day* réalisées toutes deux en 2003 par Raeda Saadeh (b. 1977), une artiste musulmane palestinienne, grâce à la philosophie du mouvement écoféminisme. Malgré leurs différences socioculturelles et religieuses, ces femmes démontrent une certaine corrélation visible dans leur travail artistique qui valorise la figure de la femme dans le contexte du Proche-Orient tout en ayant une conscience environnementale aiguë quant au territoire et dégât environnemental. Pour ce faire, les enjeux de l'écoféminisme seront en premier lieu appréhendés et c'est à partir de cette ligne directrice qu'il sera possible d'analyser ces œuvres d'art et de faire ressortir leurs similitudes.

Comme le remarque Karen J. Warren, l'écoféminisme est un mouvement qui est à l'origine guidée par des préoccupations pragmatiques dont la praxis est basée sur le politique et qui concerne donc tout enjeu commun aux femmes et la santé de l'environnement, dont la science, le développement technologique, le traitement envers les animaux, la paix, les mouvements antinucléaires et antimilitaires.<sup>2</sup> Selon Warren, ce mouvement féministe est donc "best viewed as one of several nontraditional approaches to environmental ethics and philosophy."<sup>3</sup> Dans l'optique du conflit israélo-palestinien, l'historienne et féministe Ivy A. Helman atteste qu'il est impératif de renverser la notion patriarcale quant à la domination territoriale par un peuple qui est traditionnellement marquée par la domination, le contrôle et la culture destructrice de la terre et dont "claiming [of ] new lands [has] often been violent and decimating for native peoples."<sup>4</sup> Afin de remédier à la situation, il est inévitable de revoir la relation que nous entretenons avec la nature et la terre, afin de réaliser qu'elles sont nécessaires à la survie de l'homme et que, pour ce faire, elles nécessitent le maintien de leur écosystème. Ainsi les communautés impliquées dans le conflit du Proche-Orient devraient considérer le renversement des conceptions dominatrices et destructives du patriarcat et, par ce fait même, élaborer de mesures visant à respecter la terre et c'est par ces démarches qu'il sera possible de concevoir la paix. Bien que la science, la technologie, l'industrialisation, l'expansion urbaine et l'économie de consommation de masse soient généralement perçues comme fautives dans la

dégradation environnementale, les religions jouent également un rôle primordial quant à leur impact écologique en raison de leur éthique et idéologie. C'est à partir d'un souci porté à l'égard de l'écologie et la justice sociale, orientée par un discours féministe, qu'il serait possible de faire coexister pacifiquement les Israéliens et Palestiniens au sein de leur ville sacrée.

Sigalit Landau, qui se considère comme féministe,<sup>5</sup> est une artiste multidisciplinaire variant son art entre la sculpture, la vidéo, la performance et l'installation.<sup>6</sup> Elle vit le jour à Jérusalem en 1969<sup>7</sup> et obtint son baccalauréat à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Bezalel de Jérusalem en 1994<sup>8</sup>. C'est à la suite d'un échange étudiant, réalisé à la Cooper Union de New York en 1993, qu'elle s'est d'abord concentrée, à la demande de ses professeurs, sur des problématiques sociopolitiques à travers ses œuvres<sup>9</sup>. Landau, qui se considère comme En 1995 elle réalise *Temple Mount* (fig. 1) une installation complexe qui a d'abord été exposée dans le Pavillon Billy Rose du Musée d'Israël<sup>10</sup>.



Fig. 1. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, 1995,  
soil, gravel, sand, other mixed media, 315 cm diameter.  
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sigalit\\_Landau\\_tempel\\_mount\\_5.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Sigalit_Landau_tempel_mount_5.jpg).

C'est à partir d'éléments disparates du quotidien, dont du sable, soupe au poulet, café, culture bactérienne, plexiglas, etc., (fig. 2) qu'elle créa un environnement qui rappelle symboliquement le paysage du Dôme du Rocher et de la Roche de la Fondation par l'essence de leurs formes, comme le démontrent ses études de dessin (figs. 3, 4).



Fig. 2. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, détail *Wounded Territory*, 1995, 500 computer mouse pads, chicken soup, coffee, sugar, fungus cultures, antibiotics, and Plexiglas, 250 x 210 cm.

[http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel\\_mount.php](http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel_mount.php)

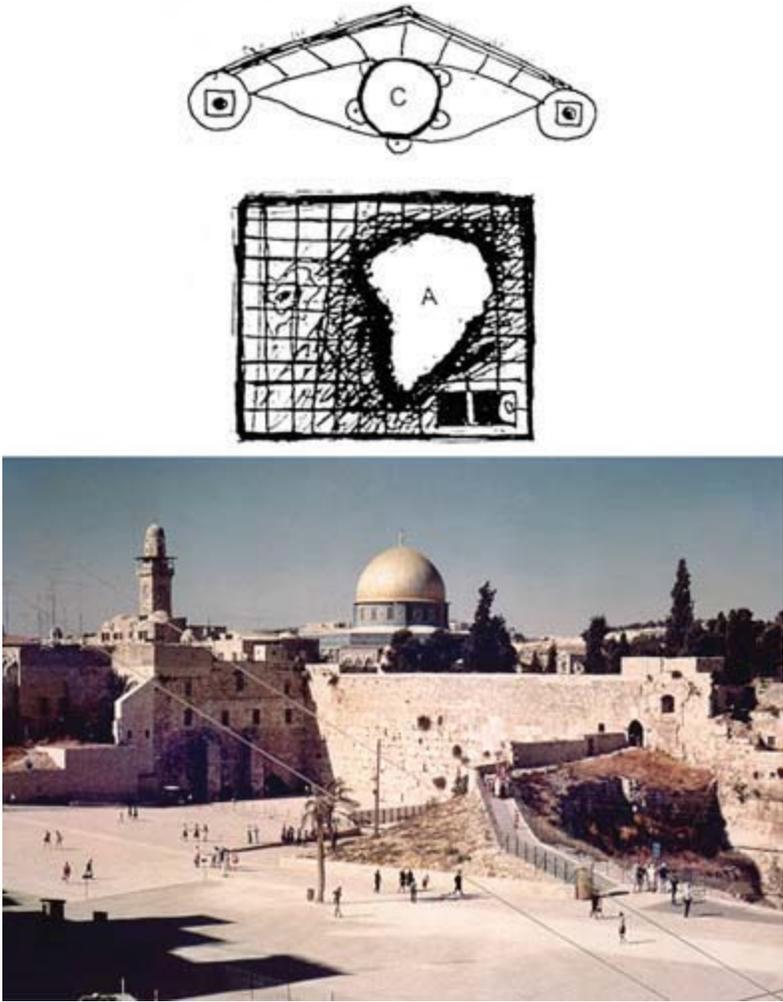


Fig. 3. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, 1995, study drawing.  
[http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel\\_mount.php](http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel_mount.php).

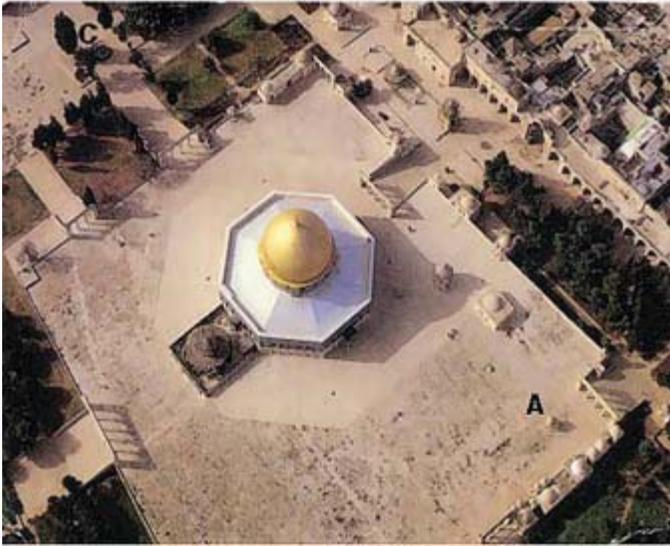
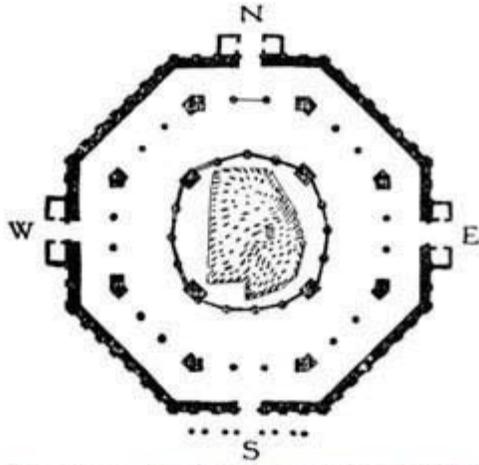


Fig. 4. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, 1995, study drawing.  
[http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel\\_mount.php](http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel_mount.php).

Cette installation se veut un dialogue ouvert vis-à-vis des conflits incessants entre les deux communautés juives et musulmanes résidant à Jérusalem. Puisque la Roche de la Fondation est au centre des dévotions de ces deux religions, elle se trouve à être au cœur des contestations quant à sa possession et c'est d'ailleurs pourquoi elle se trouve à être également l'élément central de cette œuvre. En effet, Landau affirme que "it is this holy site that is one of the top hurdles on the path to lasting peace between Israel and Palestine, and between Judaism and Islam."<sup>11</sup> Malgré la neutralité de la pièce peinte de blanc, l'ambiance créée par l'installation est intrigante, l'environnement semble chaotique et absent de toute trace humaine, à l'exception des détails sinistres que représentent les empreintes de mains fantomatiques sur le mur et la *Wet Nurse* (fig. 5) qui représente le corps, réalisé en papier mâché, d'une fillette de douze ans dont ses hanches sont percées par des «phalluship bones»<sup>12</sup> (fig. 6) et qui est pendu par le cou à l'aide d'une chaîne.

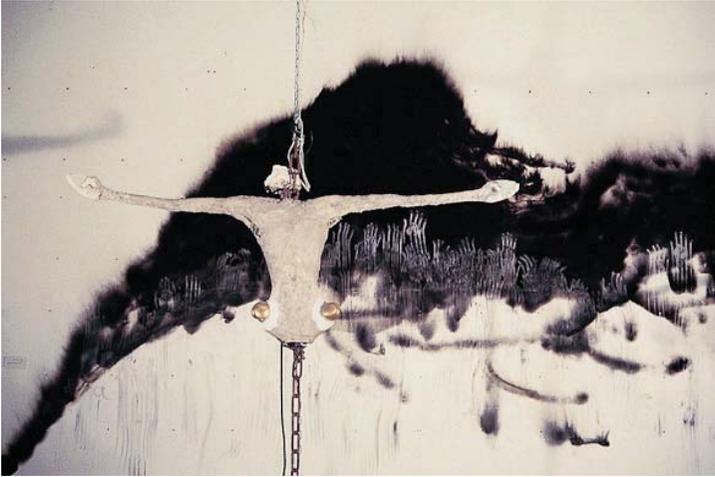


Fig. 5. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, détail *Wet Nurse*, 1995, Papier-mâché and mixed media, 110 x 170 x 40 cm.  
[http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel\\_mount.php](http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel_mount.php).



Fig. 6. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*, détail *Wet Nurse*, 1995, Papier-mâché and mixed media.  
[http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel\\_mount.php](http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel_mount.php).

Malgré la valeur religieuse du Rocher de la Fondation, l'installation semble, aux premiers abords, n'instaurer qu'un environnement apocalyptique dénué d'humanité. Landau prêche ainsi une vision antisioniste qui est à l'encontre de l'idée utopique d'un État juif en Palestine. Contrairement à une métaphore centrée sur la fin de l'humanité, Ariella Azoulay propose davantage que le chaos présent dans cette œuvre fait plutôt référence à la destruction engendrée par toute révolution et qui est d'ailleurs nécessaire afin de reconstruire la société sur de nouvelles bases, comme ce fût le cas pour la Révolution française.<sup>13</sup> En ce sens, l'installation suggérerait davantage l'idée d'une renaissance possible, voire même nécessaire entre ces deux communautés. D'ailleurs, la culture bactérienne qui peuple le plexiglas et reproduit la forme du Rocher de la Fondation, n'est-il pas l'organisme vivant le plus primitif qui est à l'origine de l'humanité? Cet espoir optimiste de collectivité fraternelle est d'autant plus renforcé par la participation active du public. En effet, ce dernier était invité à prendre les roches situées à l'extérieur du musée afin de les lancer adroitement à travers l'ouverture irrégulière de l'œil-tambourin (fig. 7).

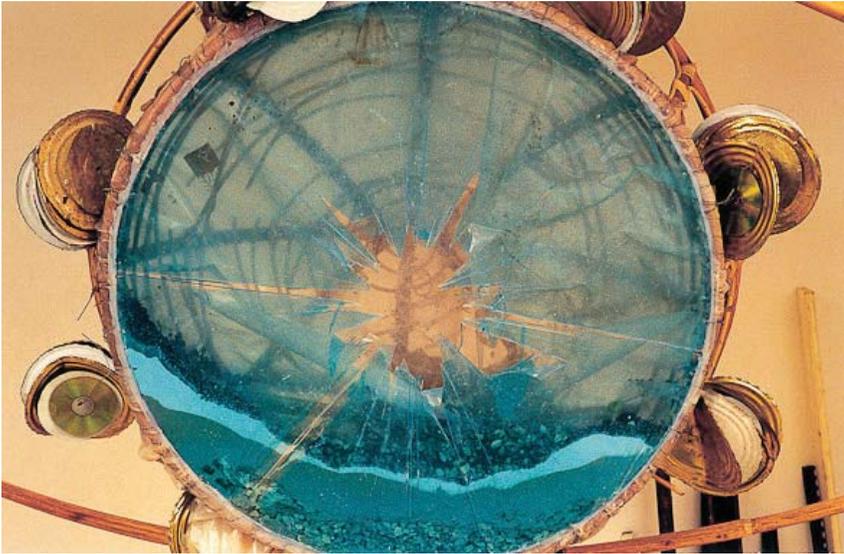


Fig. 7. Sigalit Landau, *Temple Mount*,  
detail *Tambourine-Eye*, 1995, soil, gravel, sand, other mixed media.  
[http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel\\_mount.php](http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/projects/tempel_mount.php).

L'installation pouvait ainsi devenir rapidement chaotique en raison du bruit assourdissant de la roche fracassant à tout coup les cymbalettes et le verre et celui, lorsque le tir était raté, de la roche retombant sur l'élément de verre situé au sol, abritant la culture bactérienne. Le tambourin a une valeur particulière dans le judaïsme, puisqu'elle est liée à l'histoire de Miriam qui fut le premier prophète de sexe féminin énoncé dans l'Exode.



Fig. 8. Sigalit Landau, *Barbed Hula*, 2000, Vidéo de 2 minutes.  
<http://www.sigalitlandau.com/page/video/Barbed%20Hula.php>.

Dans une création plus personnelle, Landau a réalisé *Barbed Hula* (fig. 8) en 2000, une performance documentée par une vidéo de deux minutes où l'artiste complètement nue fait du Hula Hoop sur une plage située entre Jaffa et Tel-Aviv à l'aide d'un anneau de fil barbelé.

Cette performance était en soi un « acte de désensibilisation »<sup>14</sup> où la question du danger et des frontières étaient exploitées. Les délimitations faisaient à la fois référence à la peau de Landau blessée par les pointes du fil métallique et symbolique par les frontières terrestres imposées par la mer morte qui,

selon Landau, est "the only peaceful and natural border Israel has."<sup>15</sup> À travers cette performance, elle s'attarde sur sa propre expérience physique qui permet d'exploiter une dimension émotionnelle et qui dénote à la fois de la réalité politique chaotique d'Israël. La position politique de Landau demeure cependant neutre dans cette performance. Au lieu de prendre parti, elle ne fait qu'illustrer la problématique humaine présente dans tout conflit territorial. D'ailleurs, malgré l'origine israélienne de l'artiste, elle a déclaré en 2014 que ses parents et elle "are unsure to this day which side of Jerusalem was [their] home. Maybe neither side was."<sup>16</sup> Bien que les pointes du Hula Hoop aient été tournées vers l'extérieur, son ventre n'en demeure pas moins meurtri par le mouvement centrifuge répétitif, voire infini. En cadrant le plan à partir de ses épaules jusqu'à ses genoux l'image suggère, malgré son sexe dénudé, l'universalité de la figure humaine. Cette technique permet au spectateur de ne pas s'attarder sur la figure personnelle de l'artiste, mais de voir plutôt le corps comme une simple victime. D'ailleurs, au cours de la vidéo, l'image zoome au niveau du bassin de Landau et du Hula Hoop qu'elle fait tourner autour d'elle, ce qui concentre ainsi le regard sur son nombril et fait du même coup allusion à l'image populaire de Jérusalem comme étant le nombril du monde. À travers cette performance, elle examine en quelque sorte "the inherent dichotomy of vulnerable human beings encircled by borders that are intended to protect, but which instead become sites of perpetual conflict and violence."<sup>17</sup> Il est intéressant de considérer la ressemblance visuelle entre le fil barbelé

utilisé par Landau et la couronne d'épines porté par Christ le martyr lors des épisodes de la Passion. Cependant, ce même fil barbelé peut à la fois être le symbole de frontières imposées par les guerres et qui peuvent faire écho aux camps de concentration durant l'Holocauste ou même le conflit israélo-palestinien actuel et c'est pourquoi, même si cette performance n'ait pas eu lieu à Jérusalem même, elle se rattache tout de même à la quête de possession complète du territoire saint.

Raeda Saadeh est née en 1977 à Umm al-Fahm en Israël. Elle a également étudié les arts visuels à l'Académie des Beaux-Arts de Bezalel de Jérusalem. Elle vit et travaille désormais à Jérusalem.<sup>18</sup> Sa pratique artistique est polymorphe par l'exploration de la performance, des installations vidéos et de la photographie. Saadeh vit parmi les contradictions, elle est en effet d'origine palestinienne, possède un passeport israélien, enseigne à la fois à des universités d'Israël et de Palestine et est finalement une artiste au sein de la société traditionnelle du Proche-Orient.<sup>19</sup> Considérant que toute personne est liée à la réalité de son contexte temporel et géographique, elle traite principalement à travers ses oeuvres du patriarcat présent dans l'unité familiale et sociétale musulmane qui contrôle avec rigidité le quotidien des femmes<sup>20</sup> et puis du contexte palestinien Post-*Nakba* qui fait référence à la fondation de l'État d'Israël en 1948.<sup>21</sup> *Crossroad* (fig. 9) est un autoportrait photographique réalisé en 2003 où l'artiste est représentée de la tête au pied et pose devant un décor résidentiel et anonyme. Elle se

trouve ainsi debout à l'extérieur d'une maison, devant une porte d'entrée entrouverte, une valise posée à ses pieds, emprisonnée et incapable de bouger par sa jambe gauche figée par un bloc de béton. Son expression faciale est neutre, elle fuit le contact avec le spectateur par son regard qui se dirige dans le hors-champ.



Raeda Saadeh, *Crossroad*, 2003

Fig. 9. Raeda Saadeh, *Crossroad*, 2003, photographie.

[http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume6/profile/Raeda%20Saadeh\\_37-39.pdf](http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume6/profile/Raeda%20Saadeh_37-39.pdf).

Saadeh ne cherche ainsi pas à émouvoir le public, mais plutôt lui signifier l'impossibilité qu'elle a de quitter sa résidence, son quotidien et son pays malgré l'occupation conflictuelle israélienne et les attentes dogmatiques qui sont portées envers les femmes des sociétés du Proche-Orient. Cette photographie illustre avec une simplicité efficace de la problématique socio-culturelle et politique qu'elle doit faire face au quotidien. La question du médium photographique vient d'ailleurs renforcer la véridicité du témoignage de Saadeh et est en plus pertinente à l'égard de la pratique contemporaine de l'artiste et de son idéologie moderne qui va à l'encontre de l'idée traditionnelle qui prévaut dans le Proche-Orient.

*One Day* (fig. 10) est quant à elle une autre photographie réalisée en 2003 qui la présente cette fois en pleine action, tirant, à l'aide d'une corde, la frontière de Jérusalem séparant les communautés israélienne et palestinienne qui est plus communément appelée «green line.»<sup>22</sup>



Fig. 10. Raeda Saadeh, *One Day*, 2003, photographie.  
[http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/features/keep-your-eye-on-the-wall-palestinian-landscapes\\_20879](http://www.yourmiddleeast.com/features/keep-your-eye-on-the-wall-palestinian-landscapes_20879).

Dans ce paysage de béton désertique, elle se trouve à être complètement seule. Cette frontière est le sujet dominant de l'œuvre par sa centralité dans le cadre et son caractère imposant qui est visible par l'épaisseur du béton, la hauteur du mur et la disposition de grillages de barbelés empêchant quiconque d'escalader le mur pour passer en territoire ennemi. Cependant, ce même site que Saadeh semble avoir choisi est à la fois intéressant puisqu'il présente la fin de cette frontière, ce qui en fait donc un endroit de passage aisé qui contraste fortement avec les barbelés situés au sommet du mur qui instaure plutôt un état conflictuel critique. Cette photographie a été publiée dans *Keep your Eye*

*on the Wall : Palestinian landscapes* un ouvrage d'Olivia Snaije et Mitchell Arbert qui présente des textes et des photographies palestiniennes à l'égard de l'occupation israélienne. En ce sens, Saadeh déclare que «the woman I represent is filled with ambition, weighed down with oppression [...] And every move she makes, every act, is an act that exhibits awareness towards her surrounding environment, while simultaneously being an act of revolt towards social conditions.»<sup>23</sup> Ses photographies ne sont cependant jamais des critiques sévères envers autrui. Comme elle l'explique : «I want to talk, not judge, [...] It is no good to point out their mistakes as if I want to teach them, but only try through my art to talk to them and to show them another point of view.»<sup>24</sup> C'est à partir de son propre corps qu'elle se met en scène dans ses photographies afin de contester et revendiquer ses idéologies. Cette pratique, qui a été grandement valorisée dans la pratique artistique du mouvement féministe, est utilisée par Saadeh afin de réaffirmer son contrôle sur son propre corps. Ce véhicule d'expression, que représente le corps féminin, est parfaitement adapté au discours d'émancipation féministe. Par l'entremise de son corps, elle cherche à libérer le contrôle qui est exercé par la société et les membres masculins de familles musulmanes à l'égard des femmes. Au cours d'une entrevue, elle a cependant bien expliqué que son art n'était pas uniquement réducteur à la seule cause musulmane et islamique. Au contraire, elle affirme que : «I am trying not to be identified with anything. I'd like to be universal and seen as any woman in the Universe. [...] I want my art to be for all women.»<sup>25</sup> En ce

sens, elle atteste qu'elle est «more concerned about the problem of being a human» et donc de permettre à toute femme d'être reconnue comme être humain.<sup>26</sup> Elle fait d'ailleurs référence entre autres à l'Occident et plus largement à l'histoire de ses œuvres d'art canoniques à travers l'ensemble de son oeuvre afin d'universaliser son discours d'émancipation. Cependant, Saadeh ne souhaite pas exporter son art dans l'Ouest, mais plutôt demeurer à Jérusalem afin de soutenir sa communauté et poursuivre sa lutte pour l'égalité des femmes. Contrairement à Landau qui est plus encline à voyager à l'internationale. Par conséquent, ces deux photographies demeurent plutôt une déclaration personnelle quant au combat constant qu'elle doit faire face au quotidien et inviter ainsi à créer un dialogue, sans toutefois imposer un regard critique et haineux.<sup>27</sup>

L'œuvre de ces deux femmes démontre bien le danger qui revient à stigmatiser les artistes par leur contexte socioculturel ou leur croyance religieuse, puisqu'elles démontrent plusieurs ressemblances. Malgré la diversité des médiums incluant tout autant l'installation, la performance et la photographie, la diversité de leurs pratiques religieuses propre au Judaïsme et à l'Islam, la similarité réside dans un dialogue créé autour de la figure de la femme par rapport aux sociétés du Proche-Orient et le rapport au territoire qui est conflictuel entre ces deux communautés religieuses. Ces œuvres sont loin de porter un discours et une idéologie simplement utopiques et naïfs. En effet, le dialogue qu'elles stimulent n'en est pas moins actuel par le conflit que font

face les communautés israélienne et palestinienne de Jérusalem où la cohabitation pacifique semble malheureusement improbable pour le moment. Afin de parvenir à un tel exploit, il serait nécessaire de reconsidérer la domination patriarcale envers la femme et plus largement celle faite envers la nature et du territoire sacré que représente Jérusalem. Malgré la dévotion portée par ses deux religions envers le Rocher de la Fondation et plus largement de la ville sainte de Jérusalem, ces derniers ne devraient pas chercher à imposer leur contrôle dogmatique sur ces lieux, mais plutôt à les valoriser par un climat de paix et d'ententes. En effet, il est important de reconnaître que les guerres ont le malencontreux effet de détruire écologiquement les territoires qui sont touchés par celles-ci, au point de les anéantir. Afin de préserver la sacralité des lieux, il est donc nécessaire de valoriser la protection de ce territoire, plutôt que sa destruction. Dans ce même ordre d'idée, n'oublions pas que ces deux doctrines religieuses pointent toutes deux envers le respect de l'homme à l'égard de la nature. En effet, les règles de puretés entre autres présentent dans le Judaïsme et la perception de la nature comme représentant de la parole et la volonté de Dieu par l'Islam atteste bien que l'homme ne doit en rien dominer cette dernière, mais plutôt la chérir en raison son aura divine. Puisqu'il est impératif d'établir une paix durable et la préservation de la ville sainte, il est crucial de reconnaître les droits d'autres croyances religieuses au sein des mêmes lieux de cultes.

En conclusion, les oeuvres de Landau et Saadeh semblent avoir été précédemment mis en relation l'une à l'autre uniquement lors de l'exposition *The Art of Life, between Traditions and Change in the Middle East* qui a eu lieu entre mars et juin 2014 au Musée du Château Uppsala en Suède. Cependant, je constate une démarche artistique et une idéologie féministe commune entre ces femmes. D'autant plus que ces œuvres sont d'actualités quant au conflit israélien palestinien et à l'émancipation de la femme au Proche-Orient dans une conception moderne qui tente de reconsidérer la tradition. Il est malheureusement trop aisé et simpliste de percevoir une opposition nette et précise entre ces différentes religions. Comme tente de le démontrer cet essai, ces deux religions ont en fait bien plus en communs qu'on puisse le penser. Malgré le climat islamophobe et plus largement xénophobe des cultures occidentales, il est impératif d'avoir une vision plus nuancée quant à la réalité du Proche-Orient et du combat quotidien qui a lieu envers les stéréotypes sexuels à partir des valeurs modernes d'égalité et de citoyenneté.<sup>28</sup> L'un des prochains pas semble donc être tout naturellement la cohabitation pacifique entre la communauté juive et musulmane de Jérusalem.

#### NOTES

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Deanna Hewitt, *Peace and Chaos in the Holy Land*, 2015,  
digital illustration.

*Peace and Chaos  
in the Holy  
Land: Research  
Creation*

—

DEANNA HEWITT

My illustrated work *Peace and Chaos in the Holy Land* (2015) explores Jerusalem's constant search for peace within the context of the history of warfare in the Fertile Crescent. Peace and destruction have always co-existed in the world, in the same way that light comes with darkness and life comes with death. My work references Jerusalem's continued efforts to balance these opposing notions in the search for harmony. Jerusalem has long been considered a place of religious sanctity and worship, but it has also been the object of desire for conquerors from countless

empires throughout the Middle East and Europe for the past several thousand years. I have referenced a variety of works in order to create this piece, most notably the sphinx figures uncovered at the ruins of the ancient Assyrian city of Nineveh (in modern-day Iraq) by Sir Austen Henry Layard (1817–1894), the labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral in France and a sculpture by Yitzhak Danziger (1916–1977) entitled *Nimrod* (1939). My deconstruction of the sphinx enables an exploration of the symbolism attributed to each individual creature, and signifies an internal struggle within a mythical being that was intended to portray strength and guardianship. By placing these figures around and over the labyrinth of the Chartres Cathedral—a symbol of pilgrimage to the Holy Land—in my work, Jerusalem becomes a potential unifier of multiple cultures that share a common belief in the importance of the city. Danziger's *Nimrod* represents humanity's ability to be many things, and as such, my work's allusion to this sculpture suggests that humankind is capable of both kindness and chaos. My digital illustration aims to portray Jerusalem as a dynamic place, embodying both historical and modern significance and in constant search of peace amid destruction.

*Peace and Chaos in the Holy Land* (fig. 1) was created digitally using Adobe Photoshop CC and a Wacom Cintiq Companion Hybrid graphics tablet, which allowed me to draw directly onto my tablet screen in a more naturalistic way than other digital illustration programs allow.



Fig. 1. Deanna Hewitt, *Peace and Chaos in the Holy Land*, 2015, digital illustration.

After sketching each creature using black lines, the shapes were shaded in black and white before being digitally manipulated to create a variety of hues within each form. These were then painted over using the brush tool in a manner similar to traditional painting. The square composition was built around the labyrinth in the centre of the image, helping to create a sense of visual balance that symbolizes the relationship between peace and destruction. I created a digital illustration to ensure that the conversation created by my work is not separated from

the experiences of modern Jerusalem. The images and symbols in the work reference ancient times within the region, but the themes discussed remain relevant today. It is important to remember Jerusalem not only as a historically significant location but also as a living community.

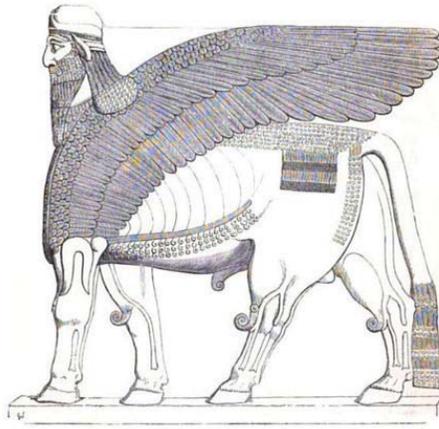
The sphinx has long been a symbol of guardianship in the Middle East (figs. 2, 3).<sup>1</sup> Notable examples of this creature in Middle Eastern architecture are located in the ancient settlement of Nineveh.<sup>2</sup> Each has the wings of an eagle and the face of a human, although some faces are bearded while others appear androgynous, and the bodies resemble either that of a lion or an ox.



Sphinx from S.W. Palace. (Nimrud.)

Fig. 2. Austen Henry Layard, *Sphinx from S.W. Palace (Nimrud.)*, 1894.

Reproduced from Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*,  
vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1849), 346.



WINGED HUMAN-HEADED BULL. (N. W. Palace, Nimroud)

Fig. 3. Austen Henry Layard, *Winged Human-Headed Bull (N.W. Palace, Nimroud)*, 1894. Reproduced from Austen Henry Layard, *Nineveh and Its Remains*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1849), 126.

According to Layard, the sphinxes were placed in pairs on either side of entryways: “[T]he two human headed lions, forming the entrance, led into another chamber, [...] [and] may have formed an outward facing to the building.”<sup>3</sup> Speculating on their function, Layard adds: “These sphinxes may have been altars for sacrifice, or places to receive offerings to the gods, or tribute to the king.”<sup>4</sup> This manner of positioning suggests the role of the sphinx as that of a guardian, sentry or protector. This is common among other sphinxes or creatures of this type, such as the Great Sphinx of Giza, which faces away from the Pyramids, or the two cherubim in Solomon’s Temple who guard the Ark of the Covenant. The large size of these creatures attests to their role as protectors, intended to overwhelm thieves who wished

to steal from these places of religious or stately significance.

Nineveh's ruins lie in the town of Mosul in the northern region of Iraq, some 800 kilometres northeast of Jerusalem. Settled in approximately 6000 BC, Nineveh became a significant place of worship for Ishtar, the Assyrian and Babylonian goddess of love, sex and war.<sup>5</sup> She is often portrayed as a lion or winged woman (fig. 4).

Indeed, the Ishtar Gate (575 BCE) (fig. 5), originally located in the ancient city of Babylon, prominently features lions.



Fig. 4. Anonymous, *Burney Relief / Queen of the Night*, 19<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> c. BCE, fired clay, 49.5 x 37 x 4.8 cm, British Museum. [http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection\\_online/collection\\_object\\_details.aspx?objectId=1355376&partId=1](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/collection_online/collection_object_details.aspx?objectId=1355376&partId=1).



Fig. 5. Lions decorate a section of the reconstructed Ishtar Gate at the Pergamon Museum in Berlin. Photo credit: Josep Renalias. [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Berl%C3%ADn\\_-\\_Pergamon\\_-\\_Porta\\_d%27Ishtar\\_-\\_Lions.JPG](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Berl%C3%ADn_-_Pergamon_-_Porta_d%27Ishtar_-_Lions.JPG).

The sphinxes beside the entryways at Nineveh may be derived from the iconography of Ishtar. However, the sphinx is found in many parts of the Middle East, and its origins may lie as far as Egypt. In 2013 a piece of a large sphinx statue (fig. 6) was uncovered in Tel Hazor in northern Israel, approximately 120 kilometres north of Jerusalem.<sup>6</sup> The granite fragment features the front paws of a lion and includes the inscribed name of Mycerinus, who ruled Egypt in 4000 BCE. This statue is believed to have originated near Cairo, and may have travelled to Israel either as a gift from Egypt or by way of looting. In any

case, this work demonstrates that sphinx sculptures were culturally prized, and provides evidence of the blending of cultures within this region.



Fig. 6. "Base of a Sphinx statue found by Hebrew University of Jerusalem archaeologists at the excavations at Tel Hazor, Israel, north of the Sea of Galilee." Photo credit: Amnon Ben-Tor and Sharon Zuckerman. Reproduced from Jonah Mandel, "Unique Egyptian Sphinx Unearthed in North Israel (Update)," Phys.org, last modified July 9, 2013, accessed November 2015, <http://phys.org/news/2013-07-archaeological-tel-hazor-sphinx-fragment.html>.

The sphinx is most often an amalgamation of the bodies of lions and oxen, the wings and talons of eagles, and the heads of humans. These creatures are often seen together even when not physically combined in the form of the sphinx. Chapter 1 of Ezekiel in the Hebrew Bible refers to the heavens opening and “four living creatures” soaring from the sky,<sup>7</sup> each possessing four faces, including “the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle.”<sup>8</sup> In March 398 in Bethlehem, Saint Jerome wrote a text entitled *Commentary on Matthew*, in which he associated the four creatures from these passages with the four Evangelists of Christianity.<sup>9</sup> In the preface Thomas P. Scheck writes: “The first face of a man signifies Matthew. [...] The second (face signifies) Mark in whom the voice of a lion roaring in the wilderness is heard. [...] The third (is the face) of the calf which prefigures that the evangelist Luke began with Zachariah the priest. The fourth (face signifies) John the evangelist who, having taken up the eagle’s wings [...] discusses the Word of God.”<sup>10</sup>

The Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Armenian cultures that occupy the four quarters of the city of Jerusalem attribute a variety of meanings to the lion, eagle and ox. Each animal is considered the leader of their order: “The lion is called ‘king of beasts’ while the eagle is ‘king of birds’,”<sup>11</sup> leaving the ox as king of domesticated animals. In Judaism, Judah is told that his “father’s sons will bow down [to him, for he is] a lion’s cub.”<sup>12</sup>

Featured on the Armenian coat of arms, the lion and the eagle suggest power and nobility. In Islam, the banner of the eagle was used by Abu Muslim (700–755) as a show of strength on the battlefield during the Abbasid Revolution to overthrow the Umayyad Caliphate in 747.<sup>13</sup> The Israelites regarded the ox as a valuable animal to own because of its strength and utility in farming;<sup>14</sup> this is referenced in the story of the golden calf in Exodus 32:1–6. By deconstructing the sphinx in my work, I am able to explore the symbolism of each individual being. Simultaneously, through their separation the work aims to suggest an unusual disunity between the creatures, which may be viewed as a metaphor for the current situation in the Middle East. A creature that was once associated with the noble charge of guarding the sacred is shown here as being disconnected from its purpose, struggling for peace but continually at war with itself.

Chartres Cathedral in France (1193–1250) is the home of the last surviving of seven original labyrinths that were placed in French Christian cathedrals between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries (fig. 7).<sup>15</sup> These labyrinths were created as sites of pilgrimage, most commonly symbolizing a journey to the Holy Land,<sup>16</sup> although other sources suggest it represents a journey towards God. Visitors travel inwards toward God, resting in His presence or in meditation at the centre of the labyrinth before finally returning along the same path with their newfound wisdom.<sup>17</sup>

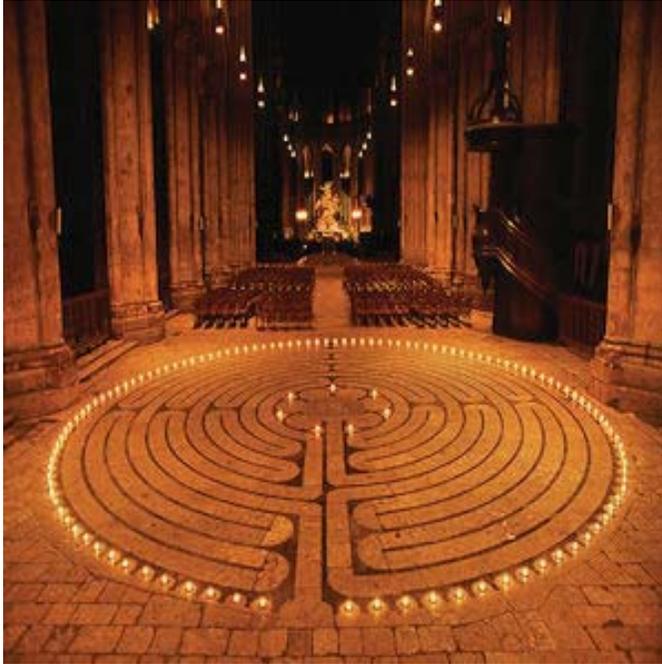


Fig. 7. Labyrinth at Chartres Cathedral, 12<sup>th</sup> c., stone, 12.6 x 12.3 m, Chartres Cathedral, Chartres, France. Reproduced from Valerie Sutter, "The Magnificence of the Cathedral Chartres," *The French Traveller*, last modified June 29, 2014, accessed November 2015, <https://www.frenchtraveler.com/magnificence-cathedral-chartres>.

The labyrinth featured in my illustration follows the same layout as the one at Chartres Cathedral, and is intended to symbolize Jerusalem as a centre of peace in the world. Despite its tumultuous history, Jerusalem remains a place of unification through the commonality of religious worship. This is represented in the composition of my work, in which all the creatures revolve around Jerusalem at the nexus of the labyrinth. The human figure is placed directly in the centre, over Jerusalem, as he tries to calm the other creatures. As such, my illustration is a call for unity between religions through a shared love of Jerusalem, but it is also an acknowledgement that peace cannot exist without destruction as its opposite. My work does not aim to judge the actions of the creatures depicted. It may look as though the lion is hunting the ox, or that the ox may injure the human out of fear, but ultimately these are creatures of nature, and they are all simply trying to survive.

The human figure depicted in *Peace and Chaos in the Holy Land* was inspired by Danziger's sculpture *Nimrod* (fig. 8).

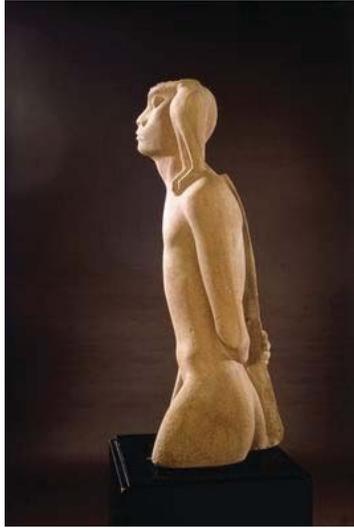


Fig. 8. Yitzhak Danziger, *Nimrod*, 1939, Nubian sandstone, 95 x 33 x 33 cm, Israel Museum, Jerusalem. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak\\_Danziger#/media/File:Danziger,\\_Itzhak,\\_Nimrod,\\_1939.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yitzhak_Danziger#/media/File:Danziger,_Itzhak,_Nimrod,_1939.jpg).

The work is made of red Nubian sandstone imported from Petra, and references the style of Ancient Egyptian sculpture, which is especially evident in the figure's facial structure and in the shape of the hawk on its left shoulder. The human in my illustration possesses similar characteristics, including wide lips and a broad nose, heavily lidded eyes, androgynous features and a lean body. The eagle in my work is flying towards the figure's shoulder, though whether this is an act of companionship or violence has been left purposefully vague. Nimrod is a biblical character who is commonly known as the leader of construction on the Tower of Babel, referred to as "the beginning of his

kingdom.”<sup>18</sup> He is also described in Genesis 10:11 in the Hebrew Bible as being responsible for building Nineveh.<sup>19</sup> The figure of Nimrod evokes many meanings, including “mighty hunter,”<sup>20</sup> king and founder of Babel. This settlement was intended to unify humankind in one location, but it defied the Word of God, which was to “be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth.”<sup>21</sup> Nimrod is therefore a symbol of the ability of mankind to be a hunter who kills or a king who constructs, a leader of a unified people or a defier of God. Danziger conveys the Janus-faced nature of Nimrod by giving his sculpture a semi-androgynous and racially ambiguous form.

Nimrod, who is positioned at the centre of the labyrinth in my illustration, represents humanity in constant search of peace, while Jerusalem, symbolized by the labyrinth, becomes the unifying factor. Rather than leave the animals to quarrel amongst themselves, Nimrod seeks to bring them together to form a sphinx that may once again serve as a guardian of peace in the Holy Land. Nevertheless, Nimrod’s ability to be perceived both positively and negatively alludes to the necessary balance between peace and destruction. None of the creatures depicted are inherently evil, but merely represent this balance in the world.

My work *Peace and Chaos in the Holy Land* examines the complex relationship between peace and chaos in Jerusalem. In deconstructing the sphinx, a symbol of guardianship, my work

explores the unique symbolism of the human, lion, ox and eagle in Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Armenian cultures. My illustration also symbolizes the internal struggle within the Middle East itself through the interactions of the four creatures. These beings are positioned over the labyrinth of Chartres Cathedral, which represents the Holy Land. In this way, Jerusalem becomes a potential unifier of cultures. The figure of Nimrod symbolizes the ability of humankind to be both good and evil. While Jerusalem, the Middle East and the entire world search for peace amongst the constant threat of destruction, it is important to remember that no one is inherently evil. Like the lion and the ox, everyone is just trying to survive.

#### NOTES

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- 3 Layard, 124–25.
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- 5 Philip Wilkinson, *Illustrated Dictionary of Mythology* (New York: Dorling Kindersley, 1998), 24.
- 6 Jonah Mandel, "Unique Egyptian Sphinx Unearthed in North Israel (Update)," *Phys.org*, last modified July 9, 2013, accessed November 2015, <http://phys.org/news/2013-07-archaeological-tel-hazor-sphinx-fragment.html>.

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- 8 Ezekiel 1:10 (NIV).
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