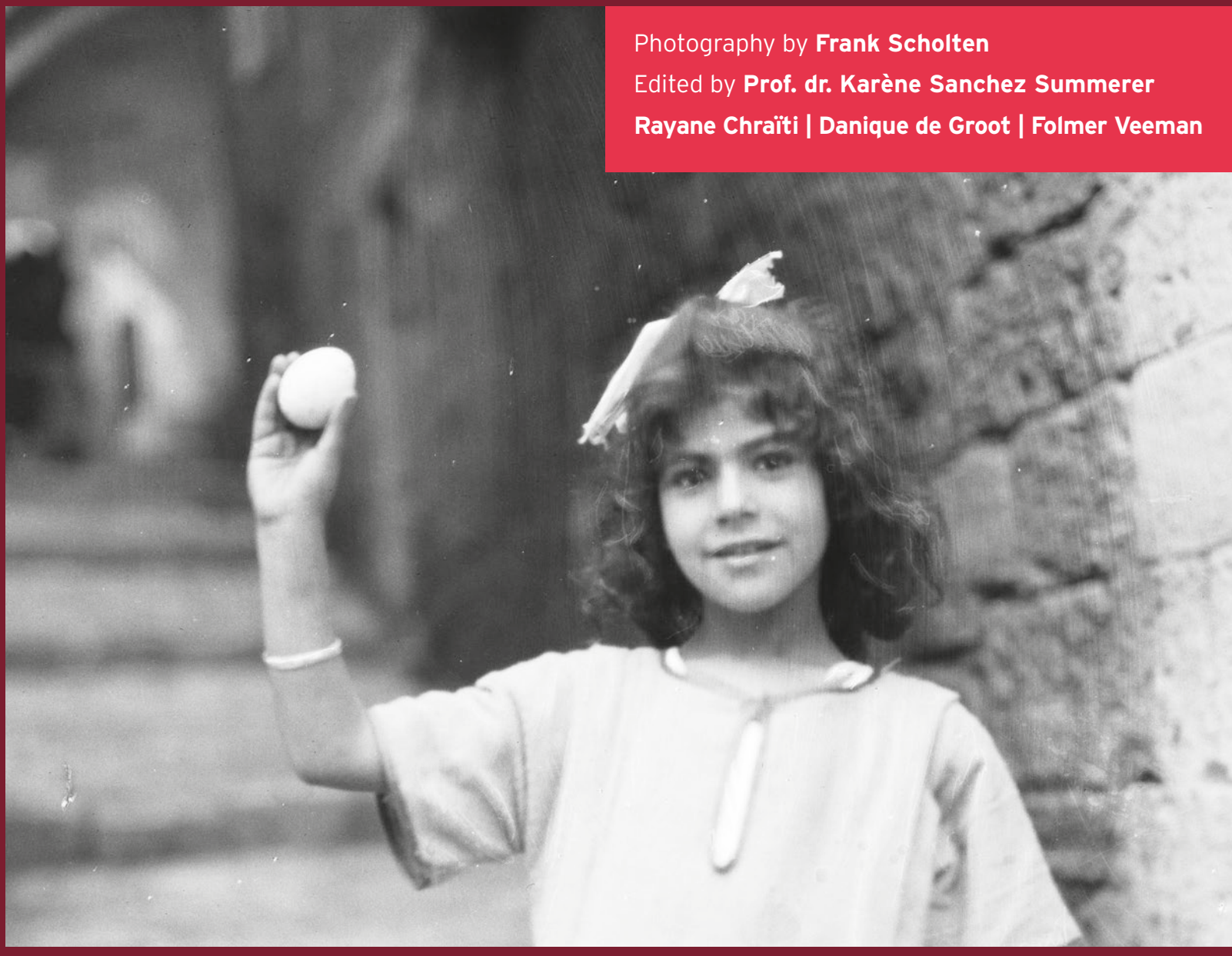
100 years after Frank Scholten's visit to the 'Holy Land'



Photography by **Frank Scholten**
Edited by **Prof. dr. Karène Sanchez Summerer**
Rayane Chraïti | Danique de Groot | Folmer Veeman

REVISITING PALESTINE ILLUSTRATED

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Photographs from the Frank Scholten collection

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A young Palestinian Orthodox girl celebrating Easter
Jaffa 1921-23

This photograph is one of the iconic Scholten's images: an Arab Greek Orthodox girl at Easter in Jaffa; taken in Jaffa's Old City, likely on Easter Sunday after the church service (in this period, around 10% of the Palestinian population were Christian, about half of whom were Orthodox). This photograph is emblematic about the intimacy in Scholten's camera: people are less staged, almost in an 'impressionistic' approach (S. Tamari).

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Frank Scholten, auto portrait
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa, Tel Aviv Sarona*, 04: 0004

Foreword

It is a great pleasure and honour to write the foreword to this delightful publication on behalf of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East (NINO). Frank Scholten and NINO, which was founded in 1939, are closely connected. Scholten was on good terms with one of its first directors, Professor Frans de Liagre Böhl (1882-1976) and during the last years of his life he could be found in the institute at the Noordeindsplein in Leiden. In the NINO library, he worked to complete his life-long ambition; the publication of a series of books for the general public with photographs of the Holy Land, accompanied by verses of Holy Scriptures from the Bible, Talmud, and Quran. He first published two volumes in French, which later appeared in German, English, and Dutch translations. Scholten's plan to publish many more volumes did not materialize due to various circumstances. After his untimely death in 1942 – he was only 61 – all his photographic material and documentation came to NINO. These include the thousands of photographs he made during his travels through the Middle East, which are at the heart of the present publication.

For a long period, the Scholten collection led a dormant existence, though there was occasional interest from individual scholars. This changed about six years ago, when Professor Karène Sanchez Summerer, the editor of this book, learned about the collection and immediately recognized its value and potential. Several projects were set in motion, including a joint project of NINO and Leiden University Library, funded by the Frank Scholten Fund, to digitize all photographs of Scholten. This project was concluded in 2022, and his photos are now freely available online (https://digital-collections.universiteitleiden.nl/view/collection/frankscholten).

Thanks to the tireless energy and infectious enthusiasm of Karène and Sary Zananiri, the last years have witnessed a true Scholten revival; it is wonderful to see that his work is now getting the attention it deserves. NINO is immensely grateful to Karène and Sary, and to the authors of this book for making these unique visual resources on an important period of the history of Palestine known to a wider audience. Frank Scholten would surely have approved.

Willemijn Waal
The Netherlands Institute for the Near East
(NINO)

Introduction

Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri

Frank Scholten in context

During the turbulence of the period after the First World War, Dutch photographer Frank Scholten (1881-1942) travelled to Palestine with the aim of producing an 'illustrated Bible'. He travelled first through Italy and Greece in 1920, arriving in Palestine in 1921 where he would stay for two years. While the bulk of his photo collection is images of Palestine, his camera lens gives us a snapshot into modernity in the Eastern Mediterranean, particularly amongst Christian communities.

The Mandate was granted to Britain by the League of Nations at the San Remo conference in April 1920, but only came into full force in September 1923, thus making these two years extremely valuable to understand the social context of Palestine and of the early British colonial rule.

Scholten's documentation gives us a brief glimpse of Athens and Crete in 1920, just before he arrived in Palestine, the 'Holy Land'. He shows us a view of the world where the role and place of Christian communities began to morph quickly, both with the population exchanges between Greece and the new Turkish State, but also as Palestine was entering the era of the British Mandate (1922-1948), before the creation of the State of Israel in May 1948.

Scholten gives us a rare view of a very particular world that would set in motion the events which shape the region today.

Scholten's documentary approach to photography gives us scenes of an everyday modernity in Palestine with a particular attention to religion and ethnography. His lens shows us the complicated mosaic of communities in the Eastern Mediterranean at the moment when the impacts of the war cemented the competing nationalisms still current today.

A devout Catholic convert and a homosexual, Scholten left for a long trip to Palestine, to produce an 'illustrated Bible', and left rich material, composed of 12,000 negatives and 14,000 prints (postcards, books, a postcard correspondence with his friend Geertje, and other ephemera). It represents a work in progress towards a 16-volume set of books on the 'Holy Land', only two volumes of which were published.

As such, the original photographic prints are small and some of the negatives show signs of editing with white marks. There are also several photographic albums. Except for a two-volume book of his photographs, published in short runs first in French, then German, English and only one of the two volumes in his native Dutch, Scholten's sole exhibition *Palestine in Transition* was held at the Brook Street Art Gallery in London, February 25th to 19th, 1924 (unfortunately no catalogue exists from this exhibition).

Frank Scholten left no written information behind concerning his working method, the photographic tools available to him. He most probably used a travel

camera or a reflex camera of an unknown brand, a 9×12 camera for sheet film, according to Teresia Lidia Kwiecien, a simple and effective photographic process suitable for the travel-oriented snapshots. The required darkroom supplies (photo material, contact frame, chemicals, and developing trays), were easily transportable, ensuring that the shots taken could be developed and printed on the spot. This as well explains how Scholten managed to achieve such an immense production of photos within a relatively short period of time.

Photographing the 'Holy Land'

The landscapes of the 'Holy Land' have long been of interest to Western photographers and histories of photography in Palestine have been entwined in very particularised modes of imaging. The first photograph of Jerusalem was taken in 1839 by Frédéric Goupil-Fesquet, making Jerusalem one of the first cities outside of Europe to be photographed.

The holy sites and biblical histories of Palestine became a source of fascination for European photographers, both 'scientific' and commercial. Photographers like Auguste Salzmann attempted to employ a 'scientific' methodology using photography in his attempt to prove C. de Saulcy's theory that the physical remains of Jerusalem dated from the time of Solomon, rather than the Roman period. Commercial photographers like Félix Bonfils produced a vast quantity of images in the region often as photobooks and souvenir postcards to feed the growing Western appetite for the 'Holy Land'. American Colony's photographs (the American Colony was established in Jerusalem in 1881 by Amer-

Jewish couple who has recently migrated as part of the third aliyah, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe

NINO, F. Scholten, 6/109, Box A4

The image talks about Arab-Jewish relationships in the period. The woman, who stares directly into the camera, is wearing a veil over her hair in the Eastern European style, but at the same moment is wearing a traditional Palestinian *thob* (folk dress). The combination of the two speaks to a cultural transition, in which various confessional communities are actively engaged with one another.

ican expatriates, A. and H. Spafford, and their associates in Ottoman Palestine) also produced an important photographic production, as well as the Dominican Friars of the Biblical and archaeological School of Jerusalem (established in 1890, with the goal to study the Bible in the physical and cultural context in which it was written).

Apart from being prolific, Frank Scholten's work is incredibly diverse covering subjects as broad as events, both religious and secular, architectural explorations from villages that no longer exist to major cities like Jaffa, Haifa, Jerusalem and the fledgling township Tel Aviv, which was but a decade old when he arrived. He photographed historical and archaeological sites alongside modern building projects as well as various Jewish and German colonies. And, of course, he photographed people. Perhaps one of the hallmarks of Scholten's collected works is the thoroughness with which he imaged Palestine. His images of people cut across religious and confessional lines, ethnic backgrounds, class and urban-rural divides. He imaged people at work as well as in their leisure time, but most of all, he imaged people in the context of their daily life, rather than divorced from the landscape.

Scholten's approach was pluralistic. He read theological texts that ranged from Protestant to Catholic, he read socialist material, Zionist histories, he referenced texts in Dutch, French, German, Italian, and approximately half of what he read was also in English. He read different translations of the Bible cross referencing them against one another, showing a level of scholarly textual analysis.

The collection has been very recently digitalised and is accessible online since the autumn 2023, though its proper cataloguing (and thus, optimised search within this immense digital photographic database) will take more time. Except for his two-volume book of photographs – published in short runs first in French, then German, English and only one of the two volumes in his native Dutch – Scholten's sole exhibition *Palestine in Transition* was held at the Brook Street Art Gallery in London, 15th to 19th February 1924.

Perhaps one of the most telling aspects of Scholten's cultural production is the subtle nuances of the various language editions of the books he published. While images remain the same across the various language editions, the various quotations, particularly secular references, shift subtly. An initial analysis of the section detailing information of the various Christian communities of Palestine shows emphasis changes with regard to the milieu which Scholten is addressing. For the French edition, extra emphasis is placed on both Catholic and Armenian communities, those with whom France had actively built relationships in the 19th and early 20th Centuries. In the German edition, the particularly, the German Templar colonies and to a lesser degree Anglicanism, a reflection German interests and the shared Anglo-Prussian bishopric that created the first official Protestant presence in Palestine in 1842. The English edition also focuses on the Templars and Anglicans, but with a bias to the Church of England. While I have not yet undertaken a comparative study of sections on the Muslim and Jewish communities, it is likely that the colonial relations with each of those communities will follow similar geopolitical relations between the European states that Scholten was addressing in different languages and the communities living in early 1920s Palestine.

In considering these subtle variants it becomes apparent that each edition, while predominantly similar (and in terms of photographic content exactly the same), remediates the landscape to different national

audiences in slightly different ways. It is tempting to ascribe these differences to a means of marketing his books to different communities, and it is likely that this is one reason for these differences. But this also denotes a sophisticated cognisance relations between different communities and their European allies.

Christian Communities and Nationalism in the 'Holy Land'

The consequences of WWI had significant impact on Christian-Muslim relations in the Eastern Mediterranean. While the context in the north led to displacements with population exchanges in early 1920s, this shifting relationship in Palestine was quite different, forming what has been a long lasting cultural and political affinity.

The Christian relationship to Islam shifted dramatically in this period. On the one hand increasing animosities between Greece and Turkey with Population Exchanges and on the other the subsuming of religious identities as both Muslim and Christian Arabs forged new secular identities with the birth of Arab nationalism.

The period Scholten captured was on the eve of a time of tumultuous change for Christian communities in the Eastern Mediterranean. The Scholten collection shows the connections between Arab Orthodox communities, Greeks living in Palestine at the time and brief glimpse of Greece before the notorious population exchanges, and beyond with various Jewish communities and the Muslim population. We get a sense of the lost interconnectedness of communities across

Jaffa Gate/ Bab el Khalil, Jerusalem
NINO, F. Scholten, ***Photographic print,*** 02: 0227

In 1908, the Clock Tower was built to commemorate Sultan Abdul Hamid II's silver jubilee. Along with much of the 19th- and early 20th-century architecture in the Old City, it was demolished by the British, giving us a contradictory sense of archaeological influences. On the one hand, the new modern industries of tourism, on other ideas of preservation that rejected modern construction.

the Eastern Mediterranean before the disruptions that modern nationalism forged.

While we cannot take the Arab Orthodox and Catholic communities of Palestine as a politically homogeneous entity, there was a very different relationship that took place between Muslim and Christian Arab Palestinians who involved themselves with the burgeoning Arab nationalist movement. This alliance created an interesting set of debates such as those around the Arabisation reform movements of the Jerusalem Patriarchates, the seminal role of the Orthodox community in setting up Arab nationalist newspapers and the large Orthodox representation in the cultural sector, particularly literature and the visual arts, as well as attempts to arabise the Orthodox Patriarchate and the Catholic clergy.

The formative context of Arab nationalism operated in ways that created a sub-set of Arab Orthodox nationalism that came to have great influence. This is exemplified by the ways in which culture in Palestine rapidly changed with the establishment of Orthodox Clubs, the secularisation and participations of Christians in historically Muslim festivals like Nabi Musa and the burst of often-Christian owned and run publishing houses after the Young Turk Revolution.

The RUG MA seminar 'Understanding Sectarianism and minorities in the Middle East. A Global Approach' (Autumn 2023) focused on mainly Christian communities from a connected perspective, and therefore envisaged the newly online released Scholten collection as an ideal pedagogic tool to dive into these concepts of Sectarianism and minorities during the first half of

Imwas (biblical Emmaus)
NINO, F. Scholten, ***Photographic print***

Imwas was an important site where Jesus was said to have been seen after his resurrection. There were several archaeological expeditions in Imwas through the British Mandate period. Tourists would often visit archaeological sites because of their religious importance, something that was encouraged through the plethora of guide books written by archaeologists and the British Mandate Antiquities Department in Palestine.

the 20th century. This specific setting also explains why several of the photographs presented in the three following chapters present various aspects of Christian communities, more than on Muslim and Jewish communities.

Palestine in Transition

Scholten's sole exhibition during his life time was called *Palestine in Transition* (London, 1924). While motivations for photo project were religious, Scholten was well aware of the changing life of Palestine. He found bustling cities that were changing rapidly, motivating much of his documentary approach to the region. Despite the religious focus of his project, the collection tells us much about modernity in Palestine, particularly processes of urbanisation, population movements and class and communal dynamics in the years that the British Mandate over Palestine was being formalised.

Unless the name of an author is specified, all captions come from the Photographic exhibition 'Arab Orthodox Christians, Nationalism and the Holy Land' (Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, INALCO Paris- Summer 2022 & Groningen UB- Autumn 2023)

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The Franck Scholten collection (NINO) is being kept at the Leiden University Library Special collections and has been researched by the NWO VIDI project team 'CrossRoads. A connected history of European Cultural diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine (1918-1948)' (PI Prof. dr. Karène Sanchez Summerer, Middle Eastern Studies) and recently digitised. https://www.nino-leiden.nl/collections/frank-scholten-legacy

Maps of Jaffa-Tel Aviv, Palestine, Jerusalem region and Jerusalem, showing the approximate locations of photos throughout this volume

Created for this volume by Geodienst, Railways and maps' contours from Palestine Mandate archives, Public Record Office: *Times Atlas 1920* for Jerusalem map, *Survey of the Palestine* for the 1930 Jaffa-Tel Aviv map; NB the names and spellings on these maps are consistent with the sources from which they are taken (in brackets, on the map of Jerusalem, the information that does not appear on the original map)

CHAPTER 1

The People of the Land

Person leaning forward to touch water
NINO, F. Scholten, *Ain Duke*, 17

When Scholten arrived in Palestine in 1920, it was with the intention of capturing a supposedly timeless Palestine, frozen in time, which would have remained virtually unchanged since biblical times. He immortalised the characters in the landscapes, like a biblical arcadia borrowed from classical painters. This biblification, to be achieved by his camera, contrasted with a modernity he opposed and might have feared would soon erase this 'ancient Palestine'.

His desire to compulsively immortalise everything goes beyond his original intention, and reveals a more complex reality through his work: the immense collection he has bequeathed is both a portrait of a diverse Palestine, formed by multiple waves of immigration since antiquity, and a precious witness to the period of major changes Palestine went going through during his stay.

Scholten immortalised what he saw, but his photographs were not intended to establish a taxonomy of the communities. This chapter aims to offer a glimpse at the plurality of Palestine before the major demographic changes that were to take place during the rest of the 20th century, without, by any means, providing an exhaustive overview.

Scholten's photographs reflect the importance of the three Abrahamic religions in late Ottoman, early Mandate Palestine. The same areas were home to the bibli-

Three men playing chess
NINO, F. Scholten, Jerusalem, *Chrétiens*, 2: 72

cal Jewish and Christian narratives and numerous holy sites, making it a territory of major importance for these two religions.

His many visits over more than two years were not confined to the towns, but he also widely photographed the countryside.

As soon as Islam appeared in the 7th century, the three Abrahamic religions were present on this territory, with various political systems impacting inter-communities' relations, and various predominant religious systems. The cohabitation between these different populations had therefore been going on for several centuries, especially in the towns.

The Muslim population was very diverse: some Bedouins originated in migrations from the Arabian Peninsula, other were Islamised during the Arab conquests, the black community (many coming from Sudan, also controlled by the British since 1899) identified themselves as from Palestine; their presence resulted from the slave trade between sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East.

Scholten's photographs offer a portrait of a complex Palestine, populated by various communities, sedentary rural populations and urban populations of different ethnic origin, at times mixed, different confessions, creating changing dynamics. Other social markers play an important role in the social structure of this territory.

An Afro-Palestinian man holding two vases with flowers in a newly constructed neighbourhood
NINO, F. Scholten,
Jaffa, Tel Aviv, Sarona, 02: 68

Boy feeding a goat
NINO, F. Scholten, *Tel Aviv*, 551-587: 26

Group of people travelling by camel
NINO, F. Scholten, *Samarie*, 3: 35

Caravan of loaded camels, moving along an unpaved road, a donkey part of the convoy, and men on foot are guiding the caravan, wearing traditional head scarf *keffiyeh* and *garb* (long tunic and a jacket over it), veiled women on the backs of dromedaries, sheltering from the sun under parasols/umbrellas, *miẓalla*, used in the Middle East since Babylonians (and later by sultans of Muslim eastern dynasties on their mounts in processions to symbolize power and independence): Scholten catches another 'instantané' of a daily traditional life scene.

A long, unobtrusive line, laid down on the rolling horizon towards the vanishing point of the image. This line contrasts with the imposing, distinct forms of the camel caravan. The scene was immortalized in Samaria, East of Jaffa. The railway line is probably that of the Jezreel Valley railway, of which the construction began at the end of the 19th century under the Ottoman Empire and which was inaugurated in 1905. It links the city of Deraa in Syria to Haifa in Palestine and crosses the region of Samaria. When Scholten was in Samaria, the rail network was underdeveloped, so traditional transport like this camel caravan was still in use.

Men wrapping oranges and putting them into crates
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa la Belle*, 201-250: 32

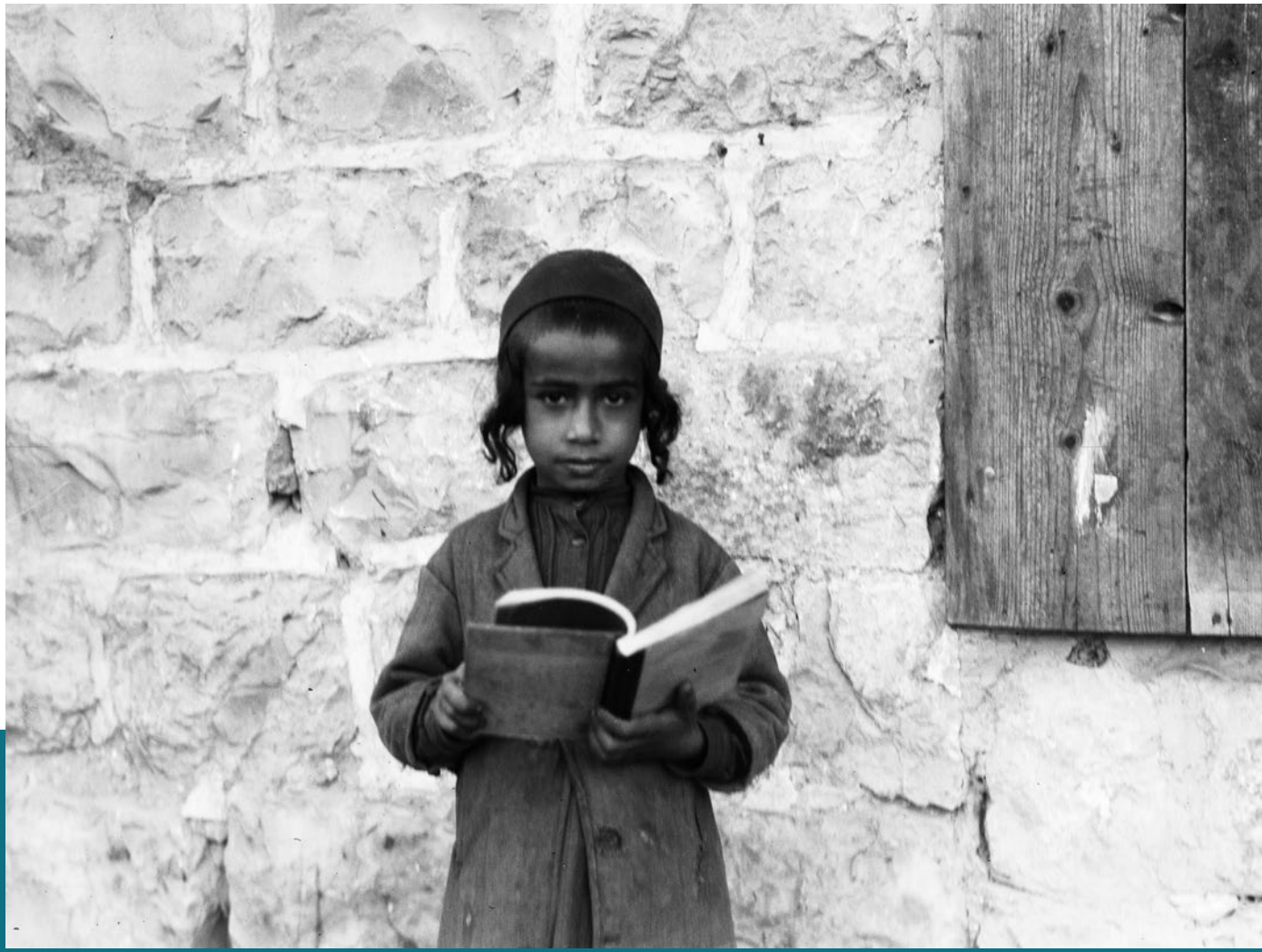
The Bedouins, originally from the Arabian desert, mainly settled in the southern territories of Palestine, in arid areas with relatively few mountains and many Bedouins were camel-drivers. They were raising camels for a living and were using them mainly for transport. The Bedouins controlled important trade routes across the Middle East, and played a major role in transporting goods. Camels were also useful in more urban environments, and were requisitioned to transport the famous Jaffa oranges to the port.

However, most Bedouin camel drivers were living in southern Palestine, particularly in the Negev desert. Their way of life is mainly nomadic or semi-nomadic, and camel and goat herding required them to travel regularly in search of water and pasture for their animals. During the 19th century, the Bedouin communities, based on a tribal structure, underwent changes with the arrival of farming groups (*fellahin*) from the settled rural areas of Palestine. They associated with the latter by renting and cultivating their land, which

Bedouin woman preparing bread
NINO, F. Scholten, *Porte d'entrée*, 301-350: 02

led to a transformation from a completely pastoral to a semi-agricultural way of life. Farmers and Bedouins formed tribes, which also included families of former Sudanese slaves; the Bedouins remained a distinct group who called themselves 'nobles'.

Their nomadic lifestyle posed a challenge to the successive Ottoman and then British authorities, as their nomadic and semi-nomadic way of life did not correspond to application of power over a particular territory demarcated by borders. The Bedouin's semi-nomadic lifestyle meant that they frequently crossed borders, disrupting the 'order' and threatening the 'security' that the British were trying to establish. What made the relationship between the Bedouin and the colonial authorities so complex is that their regulation was based on a territorial dynamic incompatible with the Bedouin way of life, mainly in terms of land regulations and policies, and the protection of borders, whereas the Bedouin camel-drivers had to travel to graze their camels and the region in which they lived did not correspond to the borders established under the British Mandate.



Jewish Yemenite child with a book
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Juifs*, 3: 05

Boy holding a bear on a chain, group of boys standing around them
NINO, F. Scholten, *Tel Aviv*, 401-450: 22

In the foreground of this photo, a group of young boys, gathered on the footpath of an unpaved street, one of them holding a bear by a chain attached to its snout, has probably come to admire the bear. A whistle hangs from their belt. On the road to the right is another group of children, perhaps a little younger. Their heads are covered with white hats, but unlike the first group, they walk barefoot. Some of these children, dressed in European style, most probably belong to Ashkenazim communities, who migrated from Central Europe. The last character in the photo contrasts with the rest of the groups. The boy's tanned face is turned, focused on the bear he's holding by a chain. He is wearing a *hatta*, a scarf on his head and dressed in a *sirwal*, a traditional pair of baggy trousers and a large jacket. These are the traditional Arab clothes of the region. He is barefoot, which, unlike other Arabs in the region, is often the case for Bedouins. He has come to entertain the crowd with his bear.

At the beginning of the last century, bear showmen were widespread throughout the Middle East, showing

them in public squares, making them dance to the beat of tambourines, like the one slung over the boy's shoulder. The bear is thought to have originated from the Syrian and Lebanese mountains, which were home to bears until the middle of the 20th century, when it disappeared, hunted by man for its fur.

This gathering bears witness to new relations between the communities that made up Mandate Palestine and captures the transitional period after the Ottoman Empire's fall and the start of the British Mandate, marking increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. It shows new interactions between recent immigrants and long-standing communities.

Scholten photographed Jewish sacred places like the Wailing Wall, against which Jews came to pray and deposit their prayers inscribed on small pieces of paper slipped between the rubble, as well as the long established Yishuv communities around spiritual centres like Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias but also newly built spaces and various cultural activities, from more recently arrived communities.

Author **Rayane Chraïti**

Children standing beside a poster for the movie 'After Six Days'.
NINO F Scholten,
Jerusalem, Juifs, 1: 08

Two old men sitting in the remains of a structure with their cattle

NINO, F. Scholten, *Bethlehem*, 3: 30

This image of two old men in Artas, a traditional village located to the southwest of Bethlehem, carries a biblical significance, referring to Hortus Conclusus, the scene in which the Virgin Mary is depicted in Christian iconography, but also alluding to King Solomon's Garden, mentioned in Solomon's erotic Canticles.

Scholten tried to capture moments from the daily life of people in different villages. This image, as many others, seem to not be staged, providing a sense of Scholten's impressionistic approach and his capture of the "quotidien" and tradition, history and cultures of the Holy Land before it gets lost into modernity (on this point, see Tamari and Wallach's comments, 2023).

The traditional headgear worn by rural men, the ruins and the presence of the sheep illustrate a way of life rooted in immemorial times. The men seem to have a conversation and exude strength and calmness, sitting there and smoking Hookah (or Shisha or Argile). The sheeps, standing by their side are not only livestock, but companions, embodying the strong relationship between man and animal.

The frozen moments captured, landscapes, and people in daily lives close to their traditions become vessels of memory.

Author **Thara Issa**

Greek Orthodox Religious procession
NINO, F. Scholten, *Porte d'entrée*, 101-150: 22

While the majority of Palestine's Orthodox community was Arab, the ethnic Greeks intermingled with their Arab coreligionists but maintained all key positions in the clerical hierarchy. The modern Greek State had been founded only a century earlier, and there were many Greek communities living in the former Ottoman Empire and several Greek families who arrived and stayed in Jerusalem, while the rising nationalism through the 20th century saw many of these communities returning to Greece, first with the Greek-Turkish population exchanges in 1922-23.

Group of people on a ferris wheel, Mar Elias monastery in the background

NINO, F, Scholten, *Weg, Jerusalem, Bethlehem*, 084

A group of people stands in front of the Mar Elias Monastery in South Jerusalem. Situated on a hill along the route from Jerusalem to Bethlehem. The route between Bethlehem and Jerusalem holds great religious significance within Christianity. Both are cities in which important biblical events have taken place, such as the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem and his crucifixion in Jerusalem. The presence of children on a Ferris wheel suggests a celebration of a significant religious or cultural day. Mar Elias is a Greek Orthodox Monastery, named after the Prophet Elijah, an important figure in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, known as Elias in Greek. According to Christian tradition, the prophet Elijah rested here.

Eastern Orthodoxy has a rich history in and around the area. The site is one of the stops on the pilgrimage route to Bethlehem for Christians. The monastery is also a place visited by Jews and Muslims, partly because of the important role of the prophet in both religions.

In this period, around 12% of the Palestinian population were Christian (census of 1922), more than half of whom were Orthodox. Many Christian Palestinians were historically of Orthodox background, the other important group being the Greek Catholics (Melkites) mainly based in Galilee (and a much smaller group of Latin Catholic in Jerusalem, Bethlehem and the surrounding villages), with a growing number of Protestant Arabs, due to the presence of Protestant missionaries mainly during the second half of the 19th century. Most Christian communities lived in cities, yet several Melkites were living in rural areas.

Author **Etkin Armut**

Arab Orthodox children celebrating Easter
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa*, 28: 046

For Orthodox Palestinians, Easter was the major religious celebration of the year. Here a family can be seen with candles decorated for Palm Sunday. For younger family members, palm fronds would be woven into a series of baskets on the central stem and filled with flowers as part of the festive procession. Of particular note in this image is the ways in which tradition and modernity intermingle. On the one hand, fashionable modern clothing like boater hats and Sunday bests, on the other, the enamelled locket in the traditional Palestinian style with an image of the Virgin Mary around the baby's neck.

Man in his candle shop, near the Holy Sepulchre, Jerusalem
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 71

Diaries from the period discuss the fact that various vendors in the pilgrimage market tended to focus their wares towards specific communities. Orthodox Palestinians tended to focus on objects for various Orthodox communities. After the Russian Revolution, the nature of such businesses began to broaden, acclimating to a reduced flow of Orthodox pilgrims from Russia and to a lesser extent Eastern Europe, but nevertheless retained the important materials for worship such as candles. This had significant parallels with Palestinian visual art. Many artists who had traditionally produced icons began to turn to more secular modes of painting, most notable among them, Nikola Saig.

Clergymen with a processional cross and banner and a group of people standing by

NINO, F. Scholten, *Bethlehem*, 3: 28

This snapshot of a religious ritual depicts a vivid moment of Christian life in Bethlehem. Some are looking at the camera, some are focussing on the cleric with his cross in his hands, while a group of children banners are held in the air, one with Mary and the infant Jesus in the center. The surroundings appear to be an outdoor public square on the way to the Church of the Nativity. The boy looking at the camera indicates a certain familiarity with modern photographic processes. Scholten may have interacted with the community before taking the picture, which explains the boy's familiarity with the camera.

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during the First World War, when Bethlehem came under British mandate, the city remained a significant center for Christian pilgrimages, with its vibrant Christian population actively participating in religious life through churches, monasteries, processions, and liturgical events, of importance for the three major Arab Christian communities from Palestine: the Latin, the Melkites (also named the Greek Catholics) and Arab Orthodox Christians, attracting pilgrims from various Christian denominations as the traditional birthplace of Jesus Christ. The Greek Catholics joined the Roman Catholic Churches in 1724 (*Unification*), and were among the first Christian communities to adopt the Arabic language, aiming at articulating orthodox Christian doctrines. Mainly established in the region of Galilee, they participated in the Arab national movement in Palestine early on.

Author Mariem Rouatbi

Greek Cleric walking in front of the Armenian Patriarchate
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem*, 5: 53

As early as the 7th century, the Armenian Orthodox Church settled in Jerusalem and played an important role as shared guarantor, with the Greek Orthodox and Latin Churches, of the most sacred sites of Christianity in the Holy Land. Initially a destination for pilgrimage in the early Christian era, the St. James Monastery progressively hosted an Armenian community and the Armenian Apostolic Church's Jerusalem Patriarchate. This Patriarchate was established after the Muslim conquest of Jerusalem in 637, granting the Armenian Patriarch in return for its support the safeguarding of their possessions and freedom of religion.

In the 15th century, under the reign of Memet II, the Ottoman Empire established its millet system. This system was based on the recognition of different religious communities by granting them a degree of autonomy in the management of their own internal affairs, including religious, legal and educational matters. Each millet represented a distinct community entity, characterized by religious belief rather than ethnic or linguistic aspects, and was headed by a patriarch acting as mediator between the millet and the central authority.

Armenians adapted to the successive political powers in Palestine. Their acquired rights in the management of the Holy Places, alongside the Catholics and Orthodox, resulted from fierce struggles, and the mobilisation of political, religious and economic elites who committed to maintaining the Armenian presence. For centuries, on the

occasion of the Easter celebrations, several thousand Armenian pilgrims arrived by sea and land from Armenia, Crimea or Constantinople (Istanbul was adopted as the city's official name in 1930): the monastery was transformed into a huge camp, sheltering pilgrims.

In this picture, we see a cleric passing by front of the same door that grants access to the Armenian Patriarchate. He clearly is the focus of the picture; his black garment contrasting against the light colours of the streets make him, despite being blurred, clearly pop out of the picture. His face or personality might not have been crucial for the story Scholten aims to narrate: the focus on the daily life in Jerusalem and the cleric as a part thereof.

Throughout Ottoman domination, the lives of Armenians were not solely centred around their community despite the highly sectarian system of the Ottoman regime.

Armenians in Jerusalem considered themselves an integral part of the Palestinian society, actively participating in the city's economic life. Jerusalem's Armenians mostly spoke Arabic with their fellow neighbours, while maintaining the Armenian language within the community (as reflected on the inscriptions at the entry door of the St James monastery).

They were involved in various professions such as banking, blacksmithing, and masonry and jewellery. In the nineteenth century, many Armenians in Jerusalem started businesses in printing: in 1833, the first printing press of Jerusalem was opened by Armenians.

The community was divided between a vast majority of Orthodox Armenians and a minority of Catholic Armenians. The Armenian Catholic Church was officially founded in 1742. Its official recognition by the Pope marked the separation of the Armenian Catholic and Orthodox Church.

In the foreground of the photo on page 34, the church's main entrance can be seen, with its large wooden door adorned with stone columns, with four different languages (from bottom to top in Arabic, French, Latin and Hebrew, the name of the church, *Église Notre-Dame du Spasme* more commonly known today as *Church of Our Lady of Sorrows). Notre-Dame du Spasme* was reconstructed in 1881 to serve as a pilgrimage site. At that time, Catholic pilgrimages were expanding rapidly with pilgrims getting more fascinated by the Near-East.

In the 19th century, the Ottoman authorities introduced the Tanzimat reforms to counter the rising nationalism of religious minorities. This led to greater power being given to secular populations seeking to balance power with the historical religious authorities. The Armenian National Assembly, for example, was created to counterbalance the power of the Armenian Patriarchate, which, until then, had represented the main source of authority within the community.

The end of the Ottoman Empire and commencement of the British mandate altered the nature of the Armenian community in Palestine drastically, caused by two developments. Firstly, the large number of refugees fleeing the massacres in Anatolia profoundly changed the demographic composition of the Armenian community. From the start of World War I, many Armenians sought shelter mainly in the premises of the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate of Jerusalem following the massacres in Cicilia by the Turks. The Armenian community in Jerusalem previously consisted of between two and three thousand people. This number doubled in the five years following due to this influx of refugees and in 1925, there were about 15.000 Armenians in Palestine. This massive arrival of several thousand survivors of the 1915 genocide

Entrance to the Armenian Patriarchate, the fourth station on the Via Dolorosa
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem*, 5: 06

created new needs and the creation of a school, sports and cultural clubs, and a theatre.

Secondly, the British Mandate and its regulations influenced the position of Armenians towards other communities of Palestine heavily. The Mandate preserved the existing Ottoman *millet*-system. However, while the British focused on the separation of Jews and Arabs, Armenians were marginalized while they were neither Arabs nor Jews. Even though Armenians were integrated in Palestinian society, the majority of their community was now refugee, not being as tied to the Arabs as the indigenous Armenians of Jerusalem. Shifting away from their Arab Muslim and Christian fellow neighbours, the Armenian national identification amplified during the Mandate period. The Armenians of Jerusalem had a flourishing period of newly established civil society associations during the British Mandate.

Authors Noortje Fuller and Romain Breton

Crowded Manger Square with the Church of the Nativity in the background

NINO, F. Scholten, *Photographic print*, 02: 1076

In this photo, we can see the manger square in Bethlehem with the Church of the Nativity in the background. This church was originally constructed in 339 AD on top of the cave where Jesus Christ is believed to have been born. It is one of the oldest Christian churches in daily use and, because of its importance, was used by multiple different Christian churches and confessions.

The church itself has seen a turbulent history. From the period when it was commissioned to be built by Byzantine Emperor Constantine until the Holy Land's conquest by the Muslim armies, it was ruled by the Byzantine Church. Under Muslim rule, it was spared from destruction, and mostly protected, even when other important churches such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were not. When the Crusaders conquered the Holy Land from the Muslims, they massacred most of the population of Jerusalem and established a Latin kingdom. The Church of the Nativity came under the jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Church and the other Christian denominations in the city received a subordinate status. When the Crusaders left the Holy Land the Byzantine Church regained its primacy. Under Ottoman rule, the Romans and the Byzantines were in fierce competition over the Church of the Nativity.

Crowded Manger Square with a minaret in the distance
NINO, F. Scholten, Bethlehem, 2: 08

This mosque was built in 1860 on land granted for this purpose by the Greek Orthodox Church in honour of prophet Omar (581-644), who had conquered Jerusalem from the Byzantine Empire and stopped at the Church of the Nativity to pray. Omar then declared that the Church of the Nativity would be protected and not turned into a mosque, and that Christians would be free to practice their faith under Muslim rule. Instead, the location that he picked was at that time a small Christian oratory on the site where the biblical kings David and Solomon were thought to be buried. Only centuries later was the building, which until that point contained only a shrine of Omar, turned into an actual mosque. The changing of the oratory into a mosque resulted in tensions between the Christian and Muslim communities.

The Church of the Nativity has continuously experienced intra-Christian tensions and conflict, as the multiple different confessions lay claim to it and fight over its primacy. It is ruled through the provisions of the *Status Quo of the Holy Places*, established by the Treaty of Berlin in 1878.

The Mosque of Omar is an example of both religious co-existence and tensions, as it was built over an originally important Christian space, but with the blessings of the Christian leaders at the time. Over time however, this has also led to tensions between the local Muslims and Christians. Yet, the larger picture of the Manger Square with the Church of the Nativity and the Mosque of Omar shows two religious spaces coexisting.

Author **Louise Brouwers**

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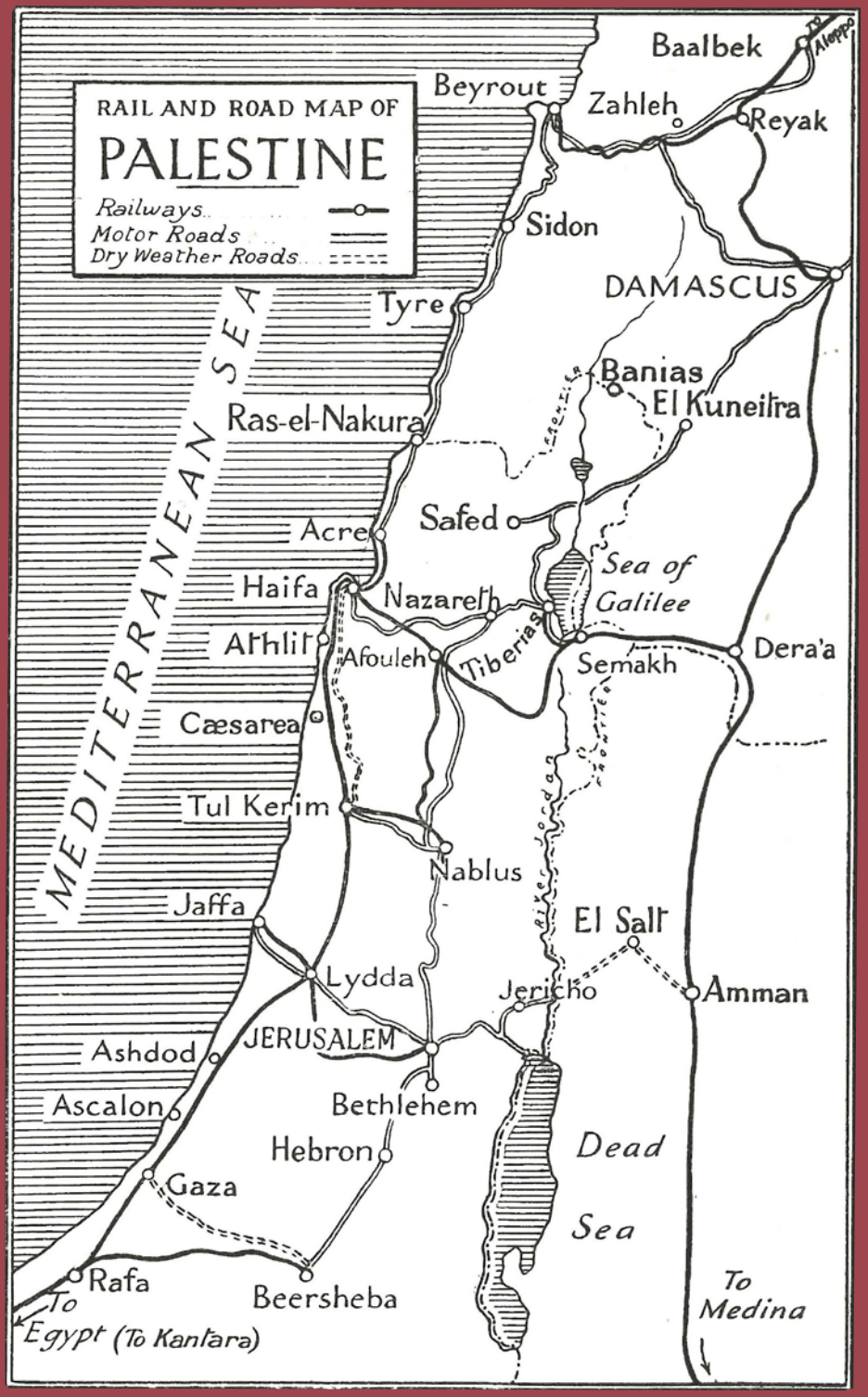


Rail and road map of Palestine from the
1925-1926 Egypt & Palestine travel brochure by Thomas Cook

Graciously provided by the Thomas Cook Archive, Record office for Leicestershire, Leicestershire & Rutland

CHAPTER 2

Making the Holy Land

Boats and railway in Jaffa seen from higher ground
NINO, F. Scholten, *Porte d'entrée*, 001-050: 21

This image illustrates the synergy between traditional pilgrimage and modern transport in 1920s Palestine. Boats and railways facilitated access to sacred sites, reflecting the deep spiritual connections pilgrims forged with the region's religious heritage.

The influx of pilgrims also sparked a growing fascination with tourism in Palestine. As these pilgrims set out on their spiritual journeys, many were drawn in by the region's diverse history, stunning landscapes, and cultural heritage. This shift marked a turning point as the Holy Land expanded beyond its religious significance to attract secular travellers eager to uncover its mysteries. This era saw the beginnings of tourism infrastructure taking shape, catering not just to pilgrims' spiritual needs but also to the curiosity of worldly explorers.

Few places in history have sparked as much imagination and spiritual longing as the Holy Land. Embedded in the hearts and minds of believers worldwide, this 'Holy Land' symbolized, across various periods, the coming together of faith, tradition, and heritage.

From the 1920s onwards, Palestine emerged as a beacon of religious pilgrimage, drawing believers from every corner of the earth. This period marked a fusion of traditional pilgrimage practices with the arrival of modern transport like railways, making sacred sites

The image of children proudly holding three British flags in front of a stall embodies the diverse national influences shaping Palestine's cultural landscape during the early 20th century. The presence of British symbols hints at the overarching influence of the British Mandate in Palestine. These flags symbolize one of the various geopolitical realities of Palestine under British control, with the British Mandate leaving its mark on the region's social fabric alongside other influential nations mentioned throughout the chapter. Through such scenes, we glimpse the intricate interplay of colonial powers and local communities, each leaving a distinct imprint on Palestine's evolving identity.

Children in front of a stall. Three British flags
NINO, F. Scholten, *Colonies juives, Judée*, 4: 34

more accessible than ever before. Motivated by deep spiritual devotion, pilgrims embarked on challenging journeys to soak in the sanctity of the land, forming powerful ties to its religious and historical importance.

The bustling shopping street and vibrant marketplace scenes captured in these images reflect the growing interest in tourism in Palestine during the early 20th century.

In the midst of pilgrims and tourists flooding in, Palestine became a melting pot of different nationalities, each leaving a lasting impact on its social and cultural scene. Nations like Russia, Italy, and France (among the most influential), motivated by historical connections and strategic interests, set up cultural, religious, and diplomatic outposts in the region.

In this chapter, we peel back the layers of pilgrimage, tourism, and international presence that shaped the Holy Land's identity. Through the lens of history, we witness Palestine's enduring legacy as a centre of faith, a sanctuary for those seeking spiritual enlightenment, and a meeting point of diverse cultures, a journey through time as we navigate the intricate pathways of memory and myth to uncover the essence of the Holy Land in its making.

Author **Danique de Groot**

Shop
NINO, F. Scholten,
Jaffa, 06: 065

Shopping street, old city of Jerusalem
NINO, F. Scholten, *Varia*, 05: 13

In this image, we can see Russian Christian pilgrims soaking cloth and objects to bless in the waters of the Jordan River. Multiple diaries and memoirs recount the practice of Orthodox pilgrims undergoing a second baptism in the Holy River, with priests ministering from boats. The pilgrims would carefully wrap their clothes and, once dried, transport them back home. This image is significant within the historical context of Christian communities during the early 1920s because it reflects a deeply rooted religious tradition and the spiritual importance attributed to the Jordan River and its transnational character, as many pilgrims from Eastern European nations visited it. The women in the picture adhere to a traditional and modest dress code that reflects their religious beliefs and cultural identity. The female pilgrims wear headscarves and long ankle-length dresses with aprons, embodying the principles of modesty inherent in Orthodox teachings.

This scene of devout religious practice amidst the Jordan River was a manifestation of the broader cultural and religious tapestry of Palestine during the early 1920s. With the establishment of the British Mandate, the region experienced a complex interplay of cultural, religious, and political dynamics. The Ottoman legacy and the subsequent British influence further shaped this religious landscape, influencing not only the spiritual practices but also the cultural expressions of the community.

In this context of religious significance and identity formation, European countries aimed to facilitate the pilgrimage of their citizens by building churches and infrastructure while establishing cultural spheres of influence within Palestinian communities. These interactions often followed communal lines, such as Russians engaging with Orthodox Palestinians. Numerous establishments in the

Russian Pilgrim women washing clothes in the river

NINO, F. Scholten, *Jourdain Mer Morte*, 1: 0005

'Holy Land' served as dual representations of both national identity and religious affiliation, solidifying the denominational standing of diverse European nations. While these institutions played a role in promoting pilgrimage and tourism to Palestine, they concurrently functioned as nationalist initiatives with substantial cultural diplomacy agendas. These cultural diplomacy efforts were particularly notable among Palestinian Christians. During this era, approximately 12% of the population of Palestine were Christian, with around half adhering to the Orthodox denomination. While the majority of Christian Palestinians historically followed the Orthodox tradition, the influence of the Crusades and subsequent missionary activities led to a rising number of Catholic and Protestant Palestinians.

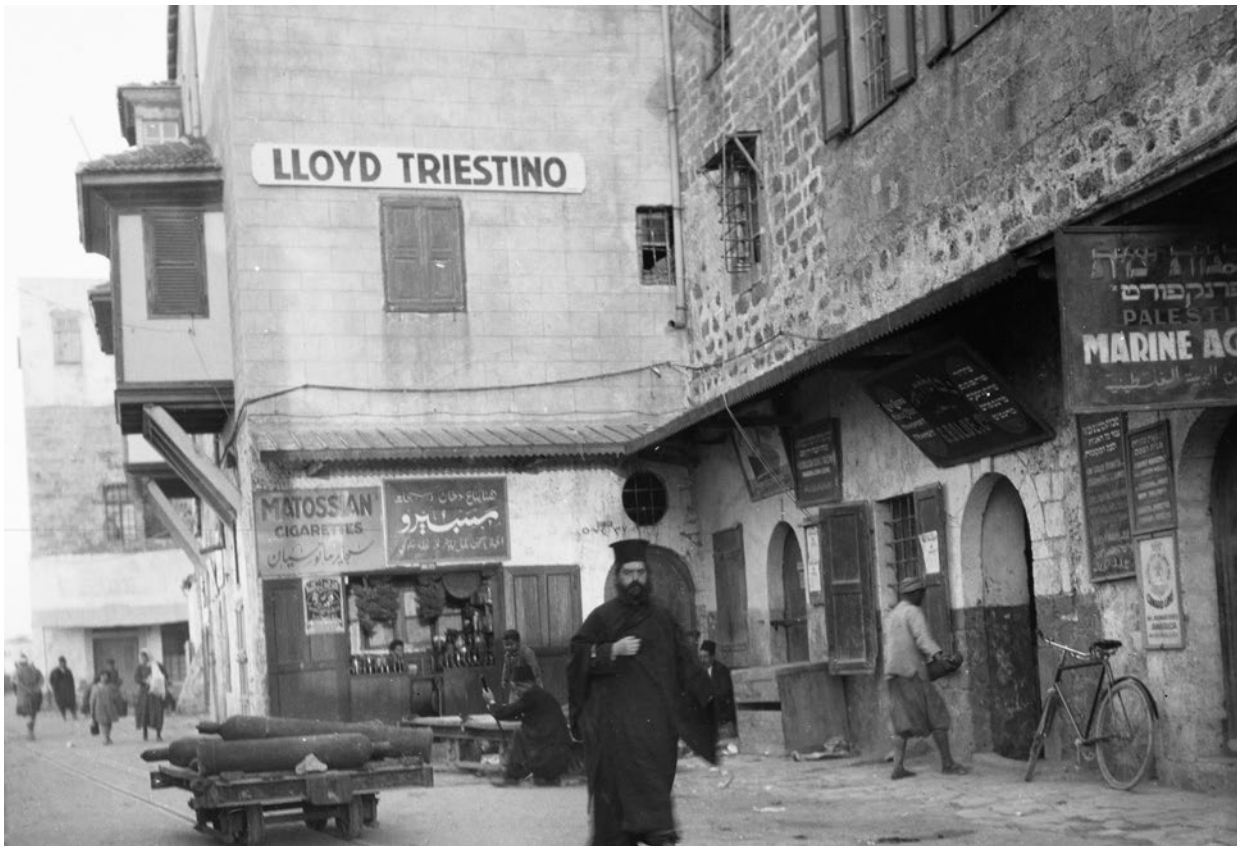
As modern life underwent technological and cultural transformations, pilgrimage gradually evolved into a broader tourism industry. The Jordan River held notable importance as a pilgrimage destination. Christian pilgrimages to Palestine, particularly along the Jordan River, were imbued with deep religious significance. Pilgrims from Orthodox communities engaged in rituals and practices symbolizing spiritual renewal and purification. The Jordan River, traditionally believed to be the site of Jesus Christ's baptism, held immense sanctity, drawing devotees seeking a connection to this sacred event Pilgrims, often from various national and ethnic backgrounds, immersed themselves in the waters, partaking in a symbolic act of cleansing. The pilgrimage experience, with its communal prayers, processions, and rituals, served as a unifying force among Christians, transcending geopolitical boundaries.

Author **Mirte Goodijk**

While new institutions and churches continued to be built, older sites like the Garden of Gethsemane underwent renovations to appeal to the lucrative tourism industry. Here, the ancient olive trees which are said to date from the time of Christ, are landscaped into the new garden for tourists and pilgrims to visit under the auspices of the Catholic Custodia di Terra Sancta. There was much controversial competition for control of Holy Sites by the various Christian denominations, a continuity of the Status Quo agreements on their administration in the 1850s.

Garden of Gethsemane
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 46

Men and donkeys on a square in front of the "Jamal Brothers Tourist Office"
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem*, 5: 54



Greek priest in a street in Jaffa; advertisement on the wall for the maritime company and Tour operator Lloyd Triestino
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa*, 29: 37

Modern tourist infrastructure had been developed through the course of the 19th century. Transnational tourist operators like Thomas Cook and Lloyd Triestino developed tours, often in conjunction with local operators to service the booming industry in the interwar period.

In West Jerusalem's fashionable 'New City', new photographic studios, souvenir and antiquities stores began to develop. These shops primarily supported the tourism market as travel for leisure once again became possible after the war. Many of the souvenir stores catered to pilgrims with religious goods such as icons, carved mother of pearl and other objects of devotion.

Street scene
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 06

Garden and upper part of Notre Dame (Assumptionnists), with the French flag
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 08

Various institutions like Notre Dame de Jérusalem, the Austrian Hospice and Sergievsky at the Russian Compound had been established in the late 19th century to facilitate pilgrimage to Palestine. Many of these institutions were a form of national as well as religious representation in the 'Holy City', affirming the denominational status of different European nations. This produced a sense of nationalist competition among Europeans in Palestine.

Tourism and pilgrimage were also formative for Bethlehem. The city became the centre of mother of pearl carving, in addition to its significance for the birth of Christ.

Women walking in the streets around Manger Square, with buildings and people in the background

NINO, F. Scholten, 05, *Bethlehem*, 07

Graves on Mount Olive and the Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene in the background

NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 37

This photograph captures a serene and picturesque scene. In the foreground, a row of graves is portrayed on the Mount of Olives, the weathered gravestones creating a sacred atmosphere. From biblical times until the present, the cemetery has been used for Jewish burials. According to Judaism, the resurrection of the dead will begin on Mount Olive when the Messiah comes, therefore holding great religious and historical significance. The Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene in the background dominates the photograph. The Church of Mary Magdalene rises above the trees majestically, and the church's architectural features highlight the Russian religious artistry and influence in Jerusalem and beyond, in the Holy Land. This photograph serves as a window into the existence of religious minority communities in Palestine.

The 1917 Russian Revolution marked a significant shift for the Russian Orthodox Church, leading to reduced religious activities due to the Bolshevik government's separation of church and state, and a halt in the activities of the Imperial Orthodox Palestine Society, founded in 1882. The onset of the Russian Civil War in 1918 intensified religious persecution, prompting Russian Christians to seek refuge in Palestine. This migration was part of an ongoing trend, with Russian Christians heading to Palestine since 1847. Consequently, there was already a notable Russian influence in Palestine by 1917, evident in religious and architectural contributions like the Church of Mary Magdalene and the Russian Ecclesiastical Mission in Jerusalem.

The arrival of Russian Christians posed unique challenges for the already existing Christian minority groups in Palestine like members of the Armenian Apostolic Church and Greek Orthodox Church. The contrast in the photograph between the ancient Jewish cemetery and the imposing Russian Orthodox Church is inviting to explore not only the shared spaces of worship but also the nuanced relationships and conflicts that unfolded among these minority groups.

The Holy Sites, encompassing landmarks like the Church of the Resurrection and the Tomb of the Virgin, were subject to overlapping claims of authority. The Russian Orthodox Church vied for control over the Catholicon of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, leading to tensions with the Greek Orthodox Church, despite the latter's dependence on Russian funding for renovations. Similarly, disputes over the Church of the Resurrection's authority arose between the Armenian Apostolic and Greek Orthodox Churches, with fears of one group dominating the others. Cultural disparities further complicated relations. Language barriers and distinct Orthodox practices, from bell ringing to christening ceremonies, created misunderstandings between the Russian, Greek, and Armenian communities. While these differences existed, shared experiences of oppression and a desire to preserve cultural heritage often fostered cooperation and harmony among the Christian communities in Palestine.

Author Danique de Groot

Church of Mary Magdalene seen from higher ground. Dome of the Rock in the background

NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 64

Like the institutions that facilitated pilgrimage, many nations also established new churches, such as the Russian Orthodox Church of Mary Magdalene, built in 1888. Palestinian Christians often had involvement with such churches, which had its own impact on indigenous Christians. The Halaby family, for instance, who had close relations with the Russians in establishing Mary Magdalene, produced the iconographer Khalil Halaby as well as the Palestinian modernist painter Sophie Halaby.

Bank of Rome, Jaffa Gate/ Bab el Khalil, with the flag of the Monarchy of Italy
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jérusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 60

Palestine was home to many communities with European roots. In his photograph, Frank Scholten stumbled upon the flag of the Italian Kingdom numerous times, for example when he walked through the streets of Jerusalem when he saw the *Banco di Roma* or when he visited a Catholic educational institution where a group of Catholic nuns and their pupils proudly hold the Italian flag. Through his lens, it is shown that the relatively small Italian Catholic community has left an indelible mark on Palestine by establishing various sponsored institutions. This photograph shows how Muslim women wander across the street where they stumble upon a man dressed according to European cultural standards outside of the bank, run and funded by the Italian community in Palestine. This snapshot of ordinary life illustrates communities' entangled lives.

The establishment of Catholic institutions in Palestine has a long history with global missionary activities that have left an emphatic stamp on Palestine. Especially the French, but also the Italians and other Europeans were active in missionary activities during the 19th and early 20th centuries. These groups who acquired large plots of land and built religious and missionary institutions like churches, monasteries, and schools. Especially the schools had a great impact on social and cultural life in Palestine with youth education, adult education, and women's education and the school's activities influenced the identity formation of the local population with multilingualism.

The Catholic educational institutions were established with the support of European colonial powers, but they were not intended as a tool to establish and maintain a separation between the Muslim majority versus the Arab Catholic community and other minorities. Instead, these schools opened their doors to other communities as well, including Muslim and Jewish children, though far less numerous. In this way, French and other European languages and cultures spread in a multilingual Palestine in which English and French, and to a lesser extent Italian, dominated the spheres of government, education, and communication at the beginning of the 1920s.

A clear Italian fingerprint can be seen in the Palestinian lands with many established Italian institutions, like the schools, banks, and hospitals that Scholten all came across during his travels. The Italian presence in Palestine witnessed an expansion during the 1920s and 1930s when schools and even hospitals were built as part of Benito Mussolini's endeavour to further promote Italian interests in the Middle East.

The Italian Catholic community was an integral part of the society in Palestine and despite its demographic status of a minority, left an indelible mark on Palestine due to the establishment of these institutions.

Author Bas Hamhuis

This photograph captures a scene of profound significance: a group of Italian nuns, standing united with children proudly holding the Italian flag. This flag becomes the visual focal point, underlining the critical connection between the Italian State and the nuns during a period where the Latin Roman Catholic Church was increasingly subordinated to Italy. The colonial-imperial context is vital in understanding the power dynamics at play in this image: Italy strategically employed its Catholic missionaries to wield influence in a British-colonial environment, and more generally around the Mediterranean, as illustrated by the ANSMI (National Association for Assistance to Italian Missionaries). The children, alongside the nuns, introduce an intergenerational layer, emphasizing the continuity of cultural identity, in a context of intricate interplay of various religious and ethnic groups under the British rule.

Italian cultural diplomacy in Palestine was a multidimensional endeavor shaped by historical, religious, and political considerations. The late 19th and early 20th centuries saw Italy grappling to establish a substantive presence in the region, not only to secure religious interests but also to navigate the intricate geopolitical landscape. Italian diplomats recognized the significance of Catholic institutions as instrumental tools in cultural diplomacy. These institutions become conduits for Italy to assert its presence, challenge the traditional dominance of the French, and forge connections with the local population. The photograph encapsulates this multifaceted approach, where religious figures stand as ambassadors of both faith and cultural identity.

Italian cultural diplomacy in Palestine faced both successes and challenges. The Salesians and Franciscans left lasting marks on Palestine's social and cultural fab-

Nuns and children pose with the Italian flag
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa*, 28: 093

ric, yet their educational initiatives were hampered by limited support from Rome and close ties to religious institutions, and a context of indigenous clergy claims for Arabization. Italian officials grappled with legal and administrative hurdles, often redirecting their efforts to areas where success seemed more attainable. The legal matters surrounding access to Italian female schools in Jaffa highlight the complexities of navigating the Ottoman Empire and later the British Mandate. Despite attempts to exert cultural influence through education and symbolism, bureaucratic challenges frequently impeded Italian initiatives. This image stands as a testament to the multifaceted nature of Italian endeavors, from religious institutions to legal matters.

Author Veerle van der Put

Front view of the Schneller Orphanage
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens,* 2: 18

The photograph shows the front view of the Schneller Orphanage, also known as the Syrian Orphanage, founded in Jerusalem in 1860 by German Protestant missionary Johann Ludwig Schneller. The Schneller Orphanage, founded amidst the tumult of the Mount Lebanon civil war (1860-1861, between the local Druzes and Christian communities who were massacred), emerged as a beacon of hope in Jerusalem, offering refuge and education to children orphaned by conflict. This institution, synonymous with Protestantism's influence in Palestine, not only provided essential care but also played a pivotal role in shaping the region's social and educational landscape.

Through this photograph, we glimpse the intricate web of missionary efforts, showcasing the transfer of ideas from South Germany to Palestine and highlighting the profound impact of foreign missionaries in spreading their faith and providing humanitarian aid. Moreover, Schneller's reports offer poignant insights into the lives of orphaned children, shedding light on their emotional struggles and the missionary ethos that underpinned their care.

Amidst Ottoman reforms, Protestantism found fertile ground in Palestine, contributing to some aspects of its modernization despite cultural and religious tensions it also produced. Through institutions like the Schneller Orphanage, missionaries left an enduring legacy.

Author **Kirsten Meijerman**

Catholic Church of Ramleh seen from afar. Automobiles parked on the right

NINO, F. Scholten, *Ramleh*, 01

This photograph shows the Franciscan Monastery of St. Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea in the city of Ramleh, its newly finished church towering over the nearby minarets of the small city. An interesting dimension of the legacy of the Italian Franciscan order in Palestine is found in its orphanage in Jerusalem. Here, young boys would study European languages, learn trades, and sing in a choir. The Franciscan choir, made up of friars and orphan boys, would see its music disseminated within Palestine in a form of cultural diplomacy cementing the place of the Franciscan order in the public space.

Author **Folmer Veeman**

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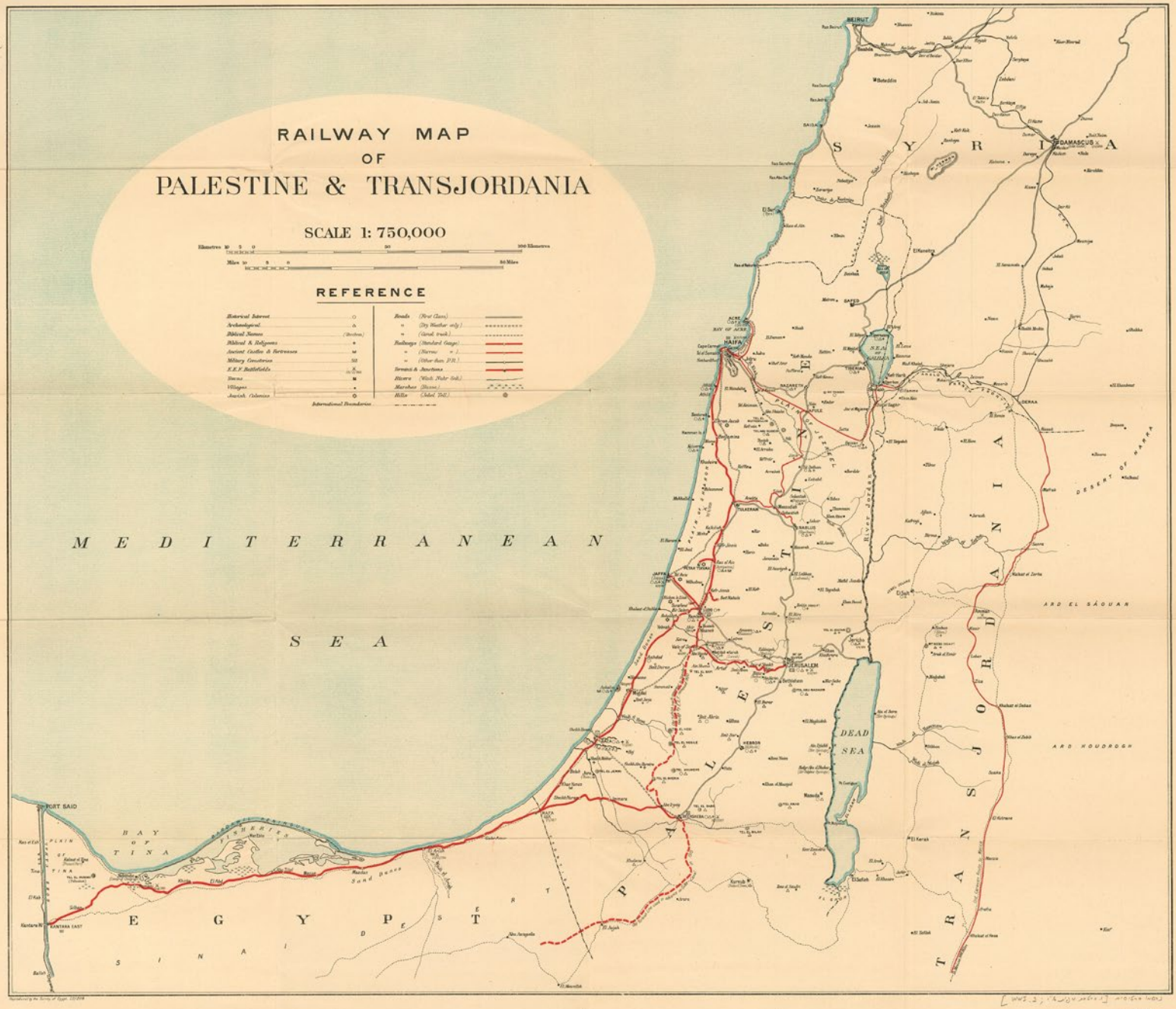

Railway Map of Palestine & Transjordan

Sir Harry Luke, The Handbook of Palestine (London, 1922) accessed through the Eran Laor Cartographic Collection

CHAPTER 3

New dynamics in Mandate Palestine

The early 20th century would see Palestine draw ever more international attention. The First World War and the following transmission of power from the Ottoman Empire to the British Mandate would bring questions of identity and (pan-)nationalism to the fore in a region that was ever more connected to the world at large.

After hundreds of years of Ottoman rule in Palestine, the British Mandate would bring new influences to the area. People from the furthest reaches of the British empire found themselves drawn to the Holy Land for differing reasons, as a part of military operations, but also for economic or religious reasons. The late Ottoman and early British influences and impact in Palestine are visible in Scholten's photographs in minor and major ways. His snapshots of daily life reveal some hints, from signage and dress to the people present in the photographs.

The Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire had brought a new spirit of Arab unity and the early 20th century was to be a formative period for Arab (pan-) nationalist thought. Arab kingdoms were instated in Iraq and Transjordan, but other regions would remain under the French and British mandates.

Meanwhile, Jewish migrations to Ottoman Palestine had been continuing steadily over the past decades. In recording his encounters with Jews in Palestine, Scholten's photos reveal the growing presence of various (ethnic and religious branches) Jewish social and cultural organizations, often presented in group photographs. In this way, Scholten documented many enduring identity markers for the Jewish communities of Palestine, from labour unions to football teams and from festivals to flags.

On his journey through Palestine, Frank Scholten witnessed, through his camera, these changes both consciously and unconsciously. As much knowledge is to be gained from his photographs of notable individuals as there is from his snapshots of daily life. This, too, is apparent in the photographs presented in this chapter, where international influences and proto-nationalist developments meet.

Scholten arrived at the port of Jaffa in early 1921. While Jerusalem held global religious importance, Jaffa was the primary economic and cultural centre, owing to its port. Trade and shipping were important to Jaffa, connecting it to other Mediterranean port cities such as Thessaloniki, Smyrna, Beirut, Alexandria and further afield to Western trading centres like Marseille and Manchester as well as North and South America. The 1920s saw the return of many Arab Palestinian traders who had migrated in the late Ottoman period, particularly to South America, bringing new wealth back to the country.

Men, buildings and boats, Jaffa
NINO, F. Scholten,
Porte d'entrée, 001-050: 1

Town square with carriages and the clock tower, Jaffa. Shops on the sides
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa la Belle*, 001-050: 20

Cities like Jaffa and Jerusalem changed radically in the 19th century. With Mohammed Ali Pasha's Palestine campaign in the 1830s, the ailing Ottoman State launched the Tanzimat Reforms as a means of modernising the Empire and secularising bureaucracy. From the 1840s onwards, Palestine underwent a significant process of urbanisation, breathing new life into its ancient cities. The Jaffa Clocktower was one of many established through the empire in the early 20th century to commemorate the Silver Jubilee of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's rule. These clocktowers were a symbol of modernity in Palestinian cities, reflecting the agenda of the Ottoman State.

Jerusalem's Old City saw much significant restoration and renovation in the years after the war, particularly under the auspices of the British instituted Pro-Jerusalem Society. This period was fundamental to shaping the urban planning of the city as it is today, but despite the preservation carried out, well-to-do Jerusalemites continued to leave the Old City for the new middle-class suburbs in the West of the city. Modern British ideas of heritage preservation greatly impacted on the ancient quarters of Jerusalem. This was very different to the ways in which the British treated Jaffa, which in 1936 would see the Old City walls demolished and boulevards for military access cut through the ancient port city during the Arab Revolt.

Landscape view overlooking buildings and church towers
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Chrétiens*, 2: 11

Nebi Musa festivities on the square in front of the American Colony and the Jaffa Clock Tower

NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Nebi Musa*, 008

The Nebi Musa festival (Prophet Moses Festival) was significant Muslim religious holiday in Palestine. It is the only Muslim festival to be held according to the Christian calendar, a week-long festival commencing on the Friday before Good Friday of the Orthodox Easter. The festival would start in Jerusalem with a procession to the Nebi Musa shrine in a village of the same name near Jericho. This image is taken at the Old City's Jaffa Gate.

In the 1920s, it transformed from a religious festival into a nationalist expression after the Nebi Musa Riot in 1920. Christian Palestinians began to take part in the Nebi Musa procession with the rise of Arab nationalism. This had parallels with Muslims taking part in the Feast of St George, in the village of Al Khader (St George), near Bethlehem.

Team of Maccabi Tel Aviv Football Club
NINO, F. Scholten, *Tel Aviv*, 201-250: 72

Scholten photographed diverse cultural events, including some of the sportive events, like the Maccabi football club gatherings. The public display of sports in newly constructed urban spaces in Palestine exhibited physical dexterity, celebrated sports as 'civilised' activities, and played a role in redefining communal divisions. During the last quarter of 19th century, many Arab sport clubs were created in the Ottoman empire, to the point that a sport *Nahda* (renaissance) is evoked by historians. In late Ottoman Palestine, diverse array of ethnic and religious backgrounds established and joined athletic clubs.

The first Maccabi club was founded in Tel Aviv in 1906, from 1912 onwards, events organised with European countries Jewish associations counterparts. The Maccabee World Union was created in 1921, and institutional and ideological connections were formally established with the Zionist organisation (created in 1897 in Basel, Switzerland).

This photograph illustrates the connections between sports, masculinity, nation building, and communal, imperial and national identities.

Author Folmer Veeman

Group of people. Jewish boys, Arabs, and Punjabis
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem*, 5: 36

This photograph gives a glimpse of the diversity of the population in Palestine, here Jerusalem, at the beginning of 1920s. Three distinct groups of people appear: Jewish boys are standing in front; in the background, several Arab men standing with fezzes on their heads; two men are sitting looking straight into the camera. They clearly look different from the rest of the men, we can tell from their turban that they are Punjabis (a region in India with mainly Muslim inhabitants). In addition, several signs of a multilingual and multicultural society and influences appear in the photography: shop inscriptions at the top written in both Latin and Arabic scripts, various types of clothing central Europe, traditional Arab in the back, as well as Punjabi.

Indian forces made up an important part of the British war effort during the First World War and especially in the

campaign against the Ottomans in the Middle East. When the war ended in 1918, British and Indian troops remained in Palestine to control the new Mandate territory.

The complex matter of religious and ethnic diversity within the British forces worried British officers, especially given that Muslim Indian troops such as the Punjabis would be fighting against their coreligionists in Palestine. Yet, there would be no significant complications arising from this situation. Interestingly, India would turn out to have another religious minority with ties to the Holy/ Promised Land. India was also home to a group of Indian Jews also called the *Bene Israel*.

Throughout the centuries the communities of the Holy Land grew more and more diverse as a result of conquest, migration and trade. This snapshot of life in Jerusalem taken by Frank Scholten serves to show how this diversity was omnipresent, and how new impulses such as the arrival of the British Mandate would leave their own stamp on history.

Author Esther Elverdink

Street vendor selling the newspaper *Falastin*
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa la Belle*, 101-150: 43

Another of Scholten's iconic images, the newspaper boy, demonstrates how influential *Falastin* had become, having effects on all quarters of Palestinian society. Here a young newspaper boy sells papers in the fashionable new suburbs of Jaffa. Such images show an Arab iteration of modern life in the 1920s, but also how media played a significant role in mediating Arab nationalist affairs across different class and confessional groups. It also demonstrates how the Orthodox community was heavily involved in the broader Arab nationalist struggle, marking a prioritisation of national over communal identity.

Group of boys in front of a Talmud Torah school, Tel Aviv-Yafo (in Hebrew above the school's door)

NINO, F. Scholten, *Tel Aviv*, 201-250: 67

Islamic cleric and Amin al-Husseini on chairs in a garden
NINO, F. Scholten, Jerusalem, 5: 28

Yacoub Boukhari (left) was an influential Sufi in Jerusalem, who head the Naqshbandi Wali. Mohamad Amin Al Husseini (right), was from the influential Husseini family. In 1929 he would succeed his brother as the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and become one of the most influential and divisive figures of Arab nationalism in Palestine.

This photo was taken in the years before he became Grand Mufti, but it demonstrates his career trajectory. Christians were divided on whether to support the Husseini or the Nashashibi family who both took different Arab nationalist stances. Aal Isa, for his part, had sided with the Husseini camp. He is described as the most prominent figure in Palestine during the Mandate Period. He was a nationalist and influential player in Jewish-Muslim relations. Al-Husseini was born in Jerusalem in 1897 as son of Tahir al-Husseini, who served as an Islamic judge in the city. Many in his influential al-Husseini family had served as mayors of Jerusalem. Al-Husseini was close to the director of the *Alliance Israélite Universelle* in Jerusalem (an organization created in 1860, dedicated to education and the protection of human rights for Jews around the Mediterranean), Albert Antebi and his eldest son André, and later with the renowned Salafi intellectual Rashid Rida. During the British Mandate Palestine's inception, Amin al-Husseini was appointed as Mufti. When Scholten took this photograph, Palestine found itself on the eve of becoming the British Mandate of Palestine. Amin al-Husseini, played a role in inciting the crowd with anti-Zionist slogans during the 1920 Nebi Musa festival. Facing arrest, he fled to Jordan and later Damascus but was pardoned and appointed Mufti by Sir Herbert Samuel shortly after. The violence not only led to casualties but also deepened mistrust among the communities.

Author Chloë Zoer

Children enjoying a peepshow
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jerusalem, Nebi Musa*, 012

While there were important political shifts going with Nabi Musa, there was also a social aspect to it as well. Festivities included entertainments such as the *Sunduq al Ajab* ('raree' or 'peep' show), Ferris wheels, foods and drinks, making it a sociable as well as political occasion. Even for rural Palestinians, modern technologies such as the *Sundaq al Ajab* were transforming the ancient landscape, paralleling the broader shifts in society.

Building in Sarona with two flags
NINO, F. Scholten, *Jaffa, Tel Aviv Sarona*, 01: 057

At first glance, this does not seem like a particularly interesting image; yet, the flag with the recognizable Star of David, between June 1921 and November 1923, in front of a building side by side with the British flag does constitute an interesting sight.

Following the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I and the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine, there was a significant increase in Jewish migration to the region. During the 1920s and 1930s, waves of Jewish immigration took place (*aliyot*, 'ascent' in Hebrew), influenced by various factors, including the rise of political and territorial Zionism, which advocated for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. While the first aliyah 1881 and 1903, bringing Jews mainly from Eastern Europe and Yemen to Ottoman-controlled Palestine. The second Aliyah, from 1904 to 1914, saw 40,000 Jews move due to Zionist ideals and Russian pogroms. The third Aliyah, between 1919 and 1923, added 35,000 Jews motivated by the Balfour Declaration (November 1917) and Zionism. From 1924 to 1929, the fourth Aliyah brought around 82,000 Jews, mainly from Poland and the U.S. The largest, the fifth Aliyah, before WWII, saw over 250,000 Jews migrate due to rising Nazism and anti-Semitism in Europe.

During the British Mandate period in Palestine, between 1920-1948, the blue and white flag with a start of David at its centre was used as a symbol of Jewish national aspirations by the Zionist movements, adopting the white and blue flag in daily use, congresses and events.

Author Lysanne Gerrits

Man standing in a new neighbourhood, Tel Aviv
NINO, F. Scholten, Tel Aviv, 17: 04

Much as the conflicts with the ethnically Greek hierarchy of the Jerusalem Patriarchate had significantly shaped communal relations for Arab Orthodox. The Third Aliyah (wave of Jewish migration) had a significant impact on nationalism. By the early 1920s, Tel Aviv, established as a new Jewish housing estate on the outskirts of Jaffa in 1909, began to grow into a city. The Third Aliyah and its Zionist ideology resulted in new Jewish administrative infrastructures such as the *Histradut* (Labour Federation), effectively galvanising Arab nationalism in the years after the Balfour Declaration (1917).

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Epilogue

Scholten's two volumes *Palestine Illustrated* received very favourable reviews after they were published in late 1920s and early 1930s. Both *Falestin*, one of the most important Arab newspapers in Palestine, based in Jaffa and established by editor 'Isa al 'Isa, and *Haaretz*, first published in 1918 as a newspaper sponsored by the British military government in Palestine, then taken over by a group of socialist oriented Zionists in 1919 and various successive editors, were enthusiastic about them. The review in *Falestin* fondly recalls "the young Dutchman and his camera".

The sole exhibition, *Palestine in Transition*, held at the Brook Street Art Gallery in London, February 25th to 19th, 1924 was also well received. Most unfortunately, no catalogue exists from this exhibition, as no proper captions of this immense collection, released online very recently, were established, beyond the first collective efforts by the Leiden University Special collection, with volunteers to establish metadata (April-June 2023), in order to release the collection online (autumn 2023).

Scholten's photographs stand out and differ from other European photographers of the 1920s, but also from local photographers: subjects appear to have engaged strongly with him, a non-commercial photographer. People are less staged, Scholten almost appear at times, as if wasn't behind his camera; other times, when more staged, a real complicity between Scholten and his subjects surfaces. Scholten addressed some of the new industries in this so-perceived by then 'ancient land', but documented the modern transformations that were taking place, not focusing on a specific group, nor only elites. He often took photos in series, particularly with industry, which indicates that he was trying to document a process. He did attempt to recreate biblical scenes.

Scholten died in 1942 and bequeathed his photographic archive and documentation to NINO (The Netherlands Institute for the Near East). The photographic collection was then transferred from NINO to Leiden University Library (Special Collections) in 2007. Although it is one of the most numerous visual collections depicting Palestine, it has been only occasionally accessed by researchers until 2017, when the NWO research group *Crossroads* took the initiative in researching it and organised 7 photographic exhibitions.

We can only hope for a wide audience engagement with this amazing photographic collection and detailed captions to unveil the rich tapestry of early 1920s Palestine.

Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri

FRANK SCHOLTEN'S „PALESTINA"

UIT DE RECENSIES OVER DE NEDERLANDSCHE UITGAVE :

o.a.
Een levenswerk en een monument. (*Algemeen Handelsblad*).

Een universeele arbeid en voor alle tijden. Een werk als dit verschijnt niet elke kwart-eeuw. (*Het Vaderland*).

Een werk, dat we met eerbiedige bewondering beschouwen als een monument door samenwerking van wetenschap en kunst tot stand gebracht. (*Prof. Dr. H. Th. Obbink*).

Het geschrevene, dat na eeuwen nog zal spreken. Een levenswerk, dat niet zal veroudeeren. (*Limburger Koerier*).

Dit werk is een unicum.
(*Prof. Dr. N. Greitemann, Groot Seminarie Warmond*).

Een standaard-werk van wereldbeteekenis.
(*Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, Groningen*).

Een Bijbelillustratie, die merkwaardig nieuw licht werpt op Bijbelteksten en op het land waarop zij betrekking hebben.
(*De Telegraaf*).

Dat zijn geen foto's meer, dat zijn gedichten en schilderijen. Het is of de meest eenvoudige zinsneden uit de Heilige Schrift naast deze beelden uit het leven van het Oosten, een heel andere beteekenis krijgen. (*Gazet van Antwerpen*).

Dit Nederlandsche werk is van wereldbeteekenis.
(*Het Boek in Vlaanderen*).

Zoodanig werk is nog nimmer verschenen. De H. Schrift krijgt hierin zin voor zin, woord voor woord, vorm en gestalte. Dit werk is een Palestina-epos, boeiend van begin tot eind.
(*Katholieke Parochie-klokken*).

Nederlandsch boekwerk ? Inderdaad ; van huis uit Nederlandsch van conceptie en opbouw groeide het boek reeds eerder tot het eenig en unieke levenswerk van een Nederlander.
10.000 foto's, die eene al belangwekkender dan de andere, wachten den dag waarop hun weelde een festijn voor alle oogen zal zijn.

EN MET STIJGENDE BEKOMMERING ZIET DE BIJBELWETENSCHAP OM NAAR HET UITBLIJVEN VAN VERDERE DEELEN.

Het is ten slotte toch niet anders denkbaar, dan dat de uitgave van een werk dat in alle landen van de wereld onder de meest vooraanstaande mannen zijn bewonderaars met honderden telt, dan dat die uitgave er komen moet? (*Utrechtsche Dagblad.*)

Buiten de reeds vroeger genoemden hebben de volgende persoonlijkheden nog hun bewondering voor het monumentale oeuvre over Palestina van Frank Scholten kenbaar gemaakt en velen van hen verklaard, dit het belangrijkste werk in het genre te achten en met ongeduld de verschijning der volgende deelen te gemoet te zien.

P. Beer, S. J., rector Pauselijk Bijbelinstituut te *Rome*.

P. Marcel Lobignac, S. J., directeur, en Prof. Dr. Robert Koeppel, S. J., hoogleeraar van het Pauselijk Bijbelinstituut te *Jeruzalem*.

H. Vincent en F. M. Abel, hoogleeraren aan de „Ecole d'études Bibliques" der Dominikanen te *Jeruzalem*.

P. Paul Lemaire, directeur van het Bijbelinstituut der Franciskanen te *Jeruzalem*.

Alle professoren van het College N.D. de France der Assumptionisten.

Dr. Nelson Glueck, directeur van de American School of Oriental Research te *Jeruzalem*.

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Prof. Dr. Hugo Bergmann, rector, en Prof. Dr. S. Klein, hoogleeraar van de Hebreeuwsche universiteit te *Jeruzalem*.

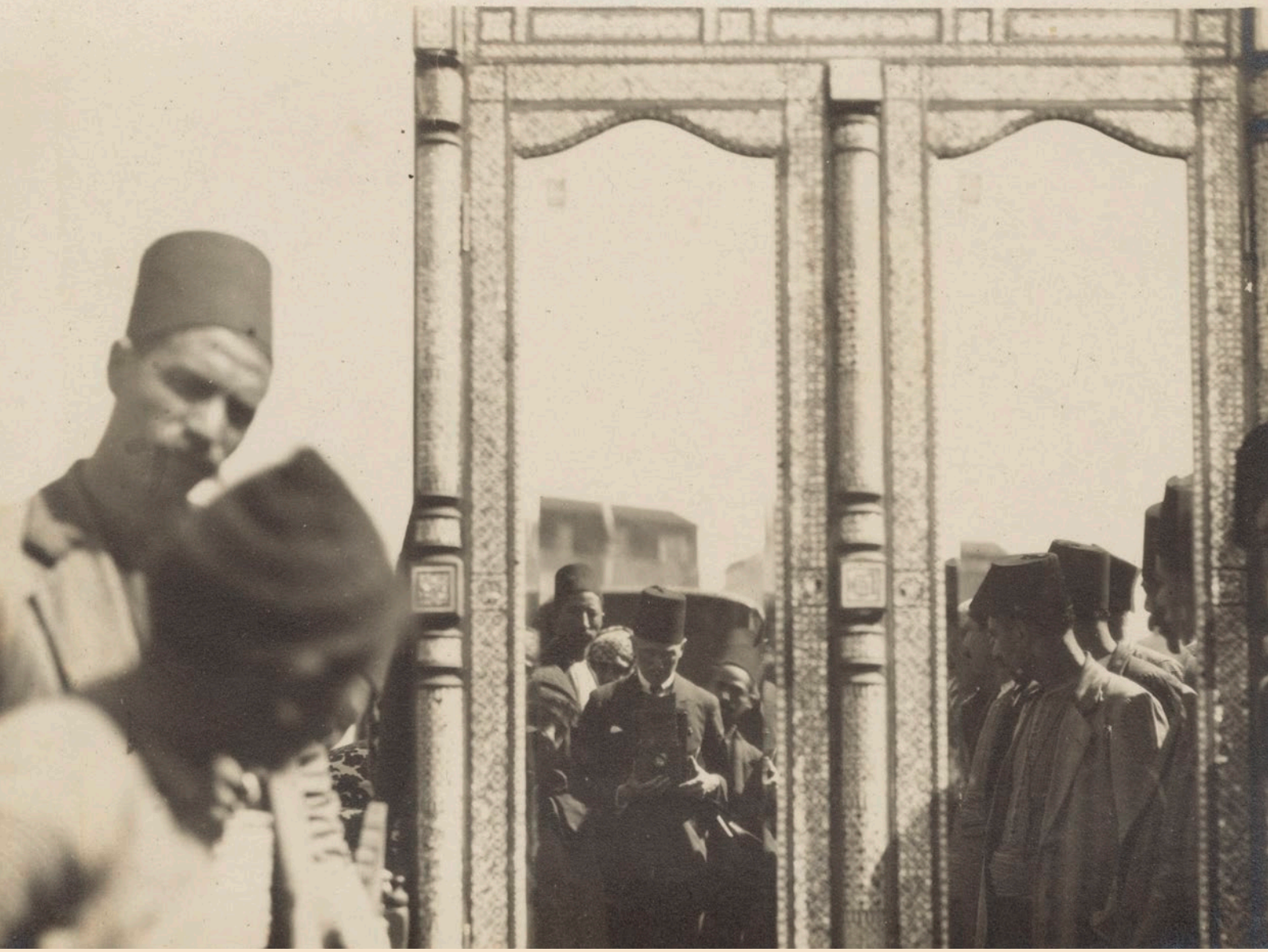
Prof. Dr. G. Weil, directeur van de Hebreeuwsche universiteitsbibliotheek te *Jeruzalem*.

Bayard Dodge, president, en Prof. Dr. Ingholt hoogleeraar van de Amerikaansche universiteit te *Beiroet*.

P. Paul Mouterde, S. J., hoogleeraar van de Katholieke universiteit te *Beiroet*.

Press clipping and list of reviews, in Dutch, of the first two volumes of *Palestine illustrated*

NINO, F. Scholten, *Press clipping box*



Frank Scholten holding a camera in front of a mirror, men around him

NINO F Scholten photographic print 19: 0624

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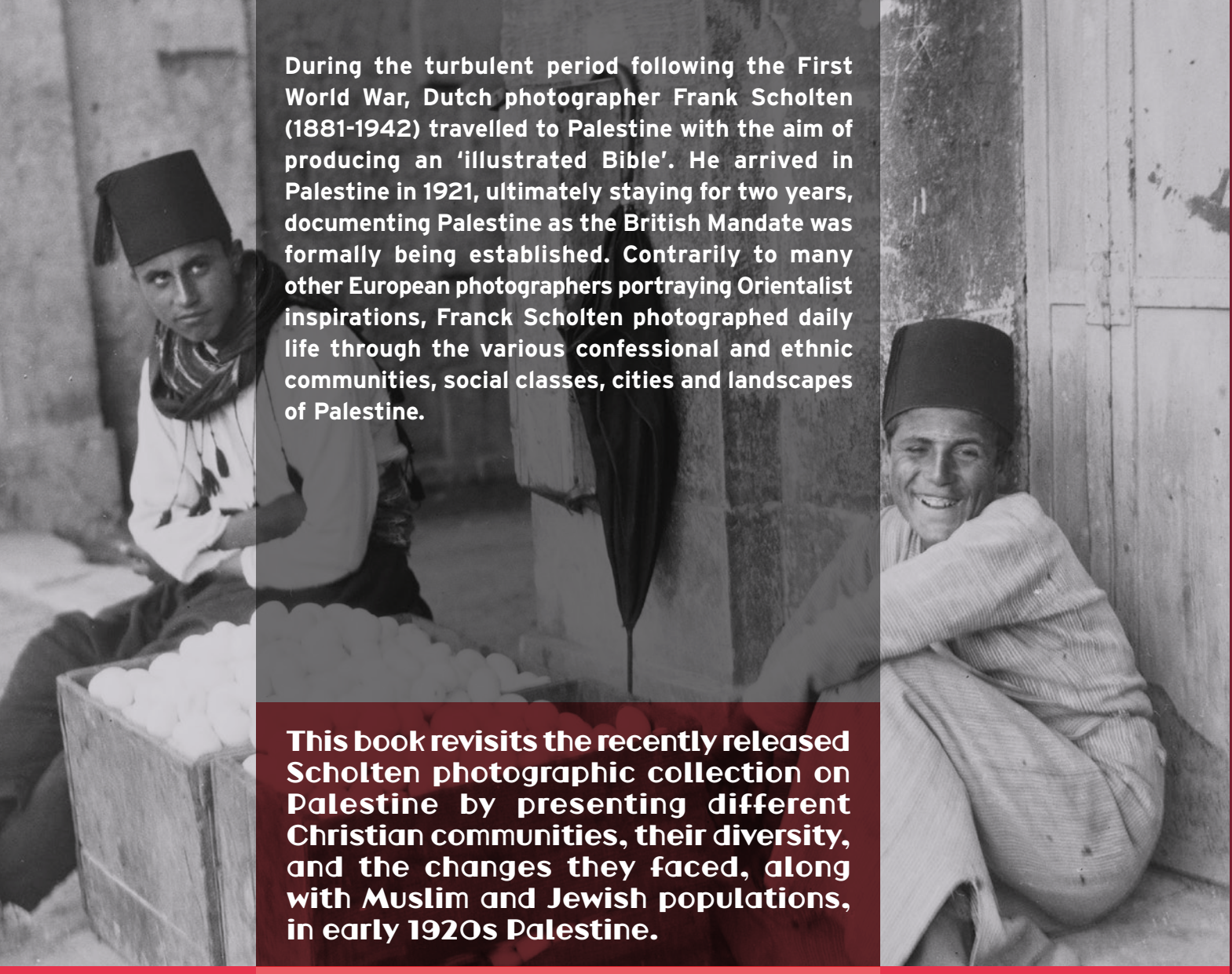

During the turbulent period following the First World War, Dutch photographer Frank Scholten (1881-1942) travelled to Palestine with the aim of producing an 'illustrated Bible'. He arrived in Palestine in 1921, ultimately staying for two years, documenting Palestine as the British Mandate was formally being established. Contrarily to many other European photographers portraying Orientalist inspirations, Franck Scholten photographed daily life through the various confessional and ethnic communities, social classes, cities and landscapes of Palestine.

This book revisits the recently released Scholten photographic collection on Palestine by presenting different Christian communities, their diversity, and the changes they faced, along with Muslim and Jewish populations, in early 1920s Palestine.

VMENA

Visions of the Middle East and North Africa, is a collaborative initiative between the Middle Eastern Studies programme at the University of Groningen and University of Groningen Press. Volumes published in the series highlight the diversity of the Middle East and North Africa by exploring culture and society through images and text. Individual volume themes are connected to departmental research, the series is inherently interdisciplinary incorporating fields such as sociology, history, cultural studies, and political science.

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