

UC Davis

UC Davis Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Title

Archival Photographs of Ramallah Reimagined Through Regina's Eyes

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/11p586gd>

ISBN

9798189237560

Author

Sakkab, Lena Marie

Publication Date

2026-06-25

Peer reviewed|Thesis/dissertation

Archival Photographs of Ramallah Reimagined Through Regina's Eyes

By

LENA MARIE SAKKAB
THESIS

Submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Art History

in the

OFFICE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

of the

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

DAVIS

Approved:

Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, Chair

Talinn Grigor

Diana Strazdes

Committee in Charge

2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iv
INTRODUCTION	1
EVALUATING THE ORIGINAL NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE ARTICLE’S BIAS	4
<i>MAYNARD OWEN WILLIAMS’ IMPERIAL EYES:</i>	7
<i>THE FRIENDS MISSION:</i>	15
ANALYZING THE SCANNED PHOTOGRAPHS WITHIN <i>PICTORIAL HISTORY</i>	18
<i>RAMALLAH’S MULTICOLONIAL POSITION, 1860-1940:</i>	21
<i>THE “DUAL CONTROL SYSTEM” FOR PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN:</i>	28
INUITING BENEATH THE COPIED PHOTOGRAPH WITHIN <i>HATHIHE RAMALLAH</i>	34
<i>PALESTINIAN WOMANHOOD REIMAGINED THROUGH DIASPORA:</i>	37
CONCLUSION.....	45
APPENDIX—A NOTE ON THE TEXT	49
FIGURE INDEX.....	51
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	61
Archival Sources	61
Studies.....	61

ABSTRACT

During the early twentieth century, *The National Geographic Magazine* consistently presented global indigenous cultures to an American audience. The *National Geographic* December issue from 1926 includes an article on “The Holy Land,” which displays three ethnographic portraits by Maynard Owen Williams of a 15-year-old schoolgirl who attended an American Quaker mission school in British Mandate Palestine. The 1926 article’s photographs and captions depicting Palestine have since been absorbed as visual evidence and cultural pride in diasporic texts and community magazines. Both Palestinian-American diasporic texts, the book *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, and the American Federation of Ramallah magazine, *Hādhihi Rām Allāh (Hahithe Ramallah)*, appropriate the original 1926 photographs as treasured evidence of existence. This thesis uses an indigenous feminist perspective to investigate multicolonial interactions (The *National Geographic* as American mass media, the Friends’ Girl School, and the British Mandate) within the archival photographs. This thesis uses decolonizing methodology, such as oral interviews, family photographs, and documents, to challenge previous narratives and descriptions of Palestinian women. This thesis also uses evidence compiled from the female Palestinian-Christian sitter’s ancestors and traditional archival methods to question how history is recorded, disseminated, and imagined in a diasporic community.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am thankful to Regina, for her life gave me mine, and allowed me to tell her story, which represents many Palestinian-Christian women's experiences, those in my family and otherwise. I'm thankful for them and their unacknowledged labor and steadfastness.

I am most grateful for my parents. My mother, Rana Ajlouni Sakkab, for instilling courage within me and granting me her good humor. My father, Shadi Sakkab, for encouraging my critical thinking. Alongside my parents, I am thankful to my brothers Ramez and Samer, as well as Denisa, Hana, Rebecca, and my beloved Ghost. Each loved one contributes to who I am as a person and writer. I am thankful to all my loved ones who took care of me the past two years.

The past two years at UC Davis have been transformative for me. Originally, I had most of my experience in contemporary art spaces, not academics. I am thankful to my friend and Professor from Sacramento State, Elaine O'Brien, who encouraged my devotion to art history despite (and because of) my oppositional personality, and in her words, "disobedience." Elaine's impact on me has been foundational to my practice and personhood. I am also thankful to my graduate Professor, John Lopez, who pushed me academically and professionally. As well as Shadie Mirmobiny for her generosity, as the Hossein Mirmobiny scholarship aided my research as it allowed me access to Williams's archive in Kalamazoo. Above all, I am most grateful for the members of my thesis committee.

My thesis committee, alongside Regina's metaphysical pull, propelled this project from beginning to end. When I first told Professor Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh about my idea, she continuously encouraged me to investigate for the entirety of my time here. I am grateful she

invited me to the human rights conference and introduced me to the world of provenance. Her guidance, teaching, groundwork, and scholarship gave me hope and a safe place to explore. Her intuition never led me astray. Alongside her, Professor Talinn Grigor's scholarship, spirit, and wit kept me hopeful during these dark times. I am grateful I got to witness her work on Armenian women who represent an ethnoreligious minority in Iran, as her ideas and work have inspired me and helped me reimagine how we document women's history. I admire her endless endurance. Professor Diana Strazdes's editing and guidance have shaped my work to be patient, concise, and clear. I am so thankful for all the time, care, and support she has afforded me to teach me her impeccable writing techniques despite my stubbornness bedeviling her. I cherish my memory of our walk to Dutton Hall and back to our beloved Everson. By miraculous chance, I met the three of them, was taught by them, and best of all, became a witness to their lives. I have absorbed everything they have taught me into my own vocabulary, scholarship, episteme, and pedagogy. My absorption of their language and methods will be, and has been, tenderly passed from me onto others and is evident throughout the succeeding text.

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, oral historian Yazan Kopty examined *The National Geographic Magazine's* ethnographic images of British Mandate Palestine (1917-1948) and asked, “Who specifically would speak on behalf of the subjects since they could not speak for themselves?”¹ Kopty’s question sparked *Imagining the Holy*, a methodology he created, which inserts Palestinian perspectives on the photographs to reverse tropes found in *The National Geographic Magazine's* depiction of Palestinians. Kopty’s method involves family photographs from and of the descendants, as well as interviews with descendants of the subjects captured in *National Geographic's* photographs of Palestine, both to extend Palestinian research and empower indigenous memory and knowledge.² My paper uses Kopty’s method of reimagining *National Geographic's* visual and textual depictions of Palestinians by researching the photographer, interviewing descendants, and using family archives. In addition to his method, I will include feminist, post-structural theory, and visual analysis as an art historian and descendant of my subject. This paper analyzes the media and people who (re)produced these images in conjunction with decolonizing archival sources such as oral history and portraits of family.

This paper focuses on portraits of a Palestinian girl published in *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1926 issue. In that issue, the article “The Birthplace of Christianity” contains picturesque color photographs of Jerusalem and Ramallah, a city around

¹ Yazan Kopty, “Edward Keith-Roach’s Favourite Things: Indigenising National Geographic’s Images of Mandatory Palestine,” in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, ed. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, (Brill, 2021), 309–39, 334.

² Kopty, “Edward Keith-Roach’s Favourite Things,” 310.

fourteen miles from Jerusalem. In 1926, Ramallah's population was majority Christian, and of interest for that reason to the photographers at *National Geographic Magazine*, such as Maynard Owen Williams (1888-1963). Ramallah, along with the rest of Palestine, was under British Mandate and saw to many changes during this period. Despite the city undergoing socioeconomic transformations, *National Geographic* and Williams depict Ramallah as timeless in their photographs, which are reinforced by written captions. The land and the people of Ramallah were inaccurately depicted in the magazine as idealized biblical settings and figures for an American audience. Palestine and its inhabitants were represented as timeless; *National Geographic's* portrait sitters were all unnamed in their caption, enabling the trope of Palestinians as anonymous. I attempt to reverse the anonymity of Regina Mousa Habib (1911-1977), a resident of Ramallah and one of Williams' subjects in "The Birthplace of Christianity."³

Along with investigating the original photographs of Regina using Koptý's method, I will analyze their reproductions by Palestinian Americans. For diasporic members of the Ramallah community, this portrait by Williams, published in *National Geographic*, was proof that Palestinians have always existed. *Hādhihi Rām Allāh (Hathihe Ramallah)*, a community magazine from the American Federation of Ramallah in 2005 published a portrait of Regina as a positive representation, ensuring these reproduced portraits are a sense of pride to the Christian Ramallah community because Palestinian existence was authenticated by *National Geographic* at a time of threatened erasure.⁴ Alongside community magazines, the Palestinian-American text, *Pictorial History of Ramallah* (1992), uses Regina's reproduced portrait as evidence, where,

³ Regina Mousa al Nablusci was her maiden name, before her marriage to Aziz Sarsor Habib in 1929. Regina will be referred to as Regina Mousa Habib throughout this text. She lived and died in Ramallah Palestine. She had six children. Towards the end of Regina's life she lost her hearing, rendering communication difficult for her. She died at age 67. Most of her descendants live in the United States, in Michigan and California.

⁴ *Hādhihi Rām Allāh* is the Arabic transliteration of the Hathihe Ramallah title.

contrasting her anonymity in *National Geographic*, her photo is named.⁵ Though proudly named, I analyze these reproductions as appropriations of her original photograph. Through this analysis, an asymmetrical archival power dynamic emerges and impacts representations of Palestinian women in media and how history is recorded, disseminated, and absorbed in a diasporic Palestinian-American community.

⁵ Naseeb Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah* (Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1992).

EVALUATING THE ORIGINAL NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE ARTICLE'S BIAS

In 1926, any American with fifty spare cents could purchase their own copy of *The National Geographic Magazine*'s Christmas-themed December issue. The December 1926 issue advertised itself to the buyer with an exclamation of "THIRTY-FOUR ILLUSTRATIONS IN FULL COLOR" printed boldly across its front cover, followed by article lists, authors, photographers, and illustrations (Fig. 1). Combined, each article's photographs amount to an impressive 132 "illustrations" printed in total. Framed around this information are acorns and oak leaves, the earth's globe cross-dissected four ways, and *National Geographic*'s iconic yellow border. The back cover of this issue includes an illustration of jolly Saint Nick using the "Parker Duofold Desk Set" to write his Christmas list, advertising the lavish desk set, which ranges from \$16 to \$36, as a possible gift for the reader (Fig. 2).⁶ Based on the front and back covers' visual cues, Christian upper-class Americans with an interest in global culture were *National Geographic*'s ideal audience.

This message of ideal audience is continuously visualized past the front cover. After turning the first page, the reader would be confronted with advertisements: San Diego vacations, Mediterranean cruises, Tiffany & Co, Cadillac, Radiola, and a Frigidaire advertisement (Fig. 3). The Frigidaire advertisement depicts a modern nuclear family. The family stands together in their modern American kitchen with black and white checkered tile, foregrounding the illustrated gender binary in the advertisement. In the checkered foreground, a modern, short-haired mother wearing a fashionable two-piece skirt suit with sheer stockings and pompadour heeled pumps is

⁶ Using USA inflation calculator, this amount would be approximately \$ 291--\$490. This tells us the audience for the National Geographic had disposable income.

blindfolded. Her aimless limp arm is guided by her daughter, who leads her blinded mother towards the fridge. As the young daughter, dressed in a pure white babydoll dress and little Mary Jane shoes on her socked feet, leads her mother, an older son dressed in a school uniform crouched down holds onto the open refrigerator door. The two children are both ecstatic. Behind this scene, a suave, black-suit and tie-clad father stands tall, his hand stabilizes his stance by holding onto the kitchen wall's archway. Stoic yet prideful, the father figure leans in watching this unfolding scene beside the new wide-open Frigidaire fridge he bought for his wife and mother of his children. A textbox below this image spells out: "No other gift can give such satisfaction," directly implying the man flawlessly satisfied the woman with the Frigidaire Fridge, equating his purchase with his sense of self as a provider for his idealized American family.

The viewer passes the black and white advertisement depicting an archetypal modern American family inside an innovative home to the colored photographs of Palestinians in "native" clothing, set in lush biblical nature settings free of kitchen appliances. This *National Geographic* issue, being a Christmas edition, focuses on biblical narratives of the "Holy Land" and emphasizes nostalgia attributed to the Middle East, promoting a primitive perspective in comparison to the modern viewer. Here, in the nostalgic Holy Land, the modern viewer stumbles upon three autochrome Lumières of Regina.

In the first photograph, Regina Mousa Habib leans her back against a retaining wall built with gray stones, some shrubs are overgrown on the wall to her left as the cypress tree in the background is blurred (Fig. 4). The background's scant tonal contrast creates a haze of green, which flattens the photo's depth. Her body stands in the foreground as a light-colored linen veil called a *khirkeh* with red *tatreez*, or cross stitching designs, drapes around her, obscuring her

body, as she pulls the cornered end of her *khirkeh*, up halfway, across her body, seemingly to display her traditional Ramallah *tatreez* designs, such as *Miftah Khalil* or ‘key of hebron’ and *Iqamr biriish* or ‘moon with feathers.’⁷ Beneath her *khirkeh* is a dark indigo-dyed gown called a *thobe*, which features similar red *tatreez* stitching signifying she is from Ramallah. Her *shatweh*, or headdress, keeps the *khirkeh* in place. Her *shatweh* is illuminated by the sunlight bouncing off its dense decorative lining of silver and gold coins. One must imagine the *khirkeh*’s cloth and the *shatweh* coin’s weight on her head as the harsh midday sunlight casts dramatic shadows on her youthful teenage face. Regina stares directly at the camera with eyes unaffected by the sun and with a neutral expression. Beside her photograph on the page is an old man spinning a gray wool cake, held in one hand while threaded with the other on a wooden stick device.⁸ He wears a scarf turban, and earth-toned bulky garments, both are worn. He squints at the viewer with his tan wrinkled face as his frown casts a shadow behind his white mustache and beard. These colored photographs, side by side, create a binary of old, worn “native” men and youthful, beautiful “native” girls, distinctly contrasting them from the illustrated advertisements as primitive.

The photos of Palestinians read as primitive because of their strong contrast against the advertisements. The advertisements directly address the viewer through desire; they function as a way for the viewer to project their identity onto the people within the advertisements, which allows the ethnographic photographs to emphasize differences between “Eastern” and “Western” identity. The Frigidaire advertisement confronts the viewer with gender ideology, which assigns women as nurturing caretakers of the household and men as confident stoic providers. The novel appliances, the family’s attire, and the interior of the family’s house all illustrate American

⁷ Jehan S. Rajab, *Palestinian Costume* (London: Kegan Paul, 1989), 61.

⁸ A yarn cake is yarn in any fiber, such as wool or cotton, made into thread, then wound up clockwise into a ball with a hole in the center. A wool cake is, then, wool yarn thread wrapped into a sphere, ready to be unwound and used.

society progressing socio-economically while evoking modern American dream ideology. This is one advertisement of many that highlight themes of idealized gender, class, and race in the United States of America during the 1920s. After these American advertisements the viewer would reach the foreign content within the magazine, first an article, “Skirting the Shores of Sunrise,” on various locations in the Middle East with sixty-one black and white photos, next, “In the Birthplace of Christianity,” an article about Palestine with thirty-four novel autochrome Lumières, or, kodak branded colored film, followed by “Among the Shepards of Bethlehem.” Likely, these three articles allude to biblical narratives to emphasize the Christmas edition. This December 1926 issue was printed on the cusp of *National Geographic*’s rise as an American mass media company through their use of photographs and monetizes national interest in the “Holy Land.”

MAYNARD OWEN WILLIAMS’ IMPERIAL EYES:

In the book *Presenting America’s World*, by feminist scholar in geography Tamar Rothenberg, she investigates how *National Geographic* and its employees utilized their imperial eyes as an “apolitically heroic” strategy to document the world for Americans from 1888-1945. Rothenberg discusses the main actors within *National Geographic* Magazine, Maynard Owen Williams and Gilbert H. Grosvenor (1875-1966), and explains how their often opposing personal beliefs are infused within the texts and images published within the magazine. The magazine began as a scholarly journal in 1888 with only two hundred subscribers and without images. Images were later added in 1917 to interest average Americans, allowing for a much larger audience.⁹ The

⁹ Kopy, “Edward Keith-Roach’s Favourite Things,” 311.

magazine's introduction of photography sought to invite a more inclusive audience—average Americans who had gained interest in nationhood due to the Spanish war, and America's rapid rise to power.¹⁰ In 1919, *National Geographic* diversified its staff by hiring Williams as their first foreign correspondent, whose photography assisted the magazine's viewership growth during his thirty-year career with them.¹¹ As the magazine's "chief of foreign staff," Williams was producing work during a period of imperialism, globalization, modernization, and a growing concern with nationhood. By 1927, the magazine's membership had surpassed one million, cementing its authority in providing curious Americans with knowledge on global culture. The process of othering through Williams' staged picturesque photography is seen as truth to millions of Americans who are grappling with where America's place, ergo their own, in the world's stage. *The National Geographic Magazine's* ethnographic photography impacts and is impacted by modernity's epistemic shift on nationalism and identity.

As a foreign correspondent for *National Geographic*, Williams shares responsibility in educating average Americans on his travels, allowing him to gain an authoritative voice through the magazine. Maynard Owen Williams, as stated by Rothenberg, was a "white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant" whose identity shaped his perception of the world. Through Williams' eyes, he translated culture for his fellow Americans.¹² Williams, a Methodist-raised Protestant, began his world-travelling and journalism journey as a "Protestant missionary teacher" in Lebanon, where he corresponded with his hometown paper, *The Kalamazoo Gazette*. His journalism work evolved when he joined *The Christian Herald*, where he did relief work in Armenia.¹³ *National*

¹⁰ Ibid; 311-12.

¹¹ Tamar Y. Rothenberg, *Presenting America's World: Strategies of Innocence in National Geographic Magazine, 1888–1945* (Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), 99.

¹² Rothenberg, *Presenting America's World*, 99.

¹³ Ibid.

Geographic published Williams's article documenting his time in Armenia in 1919, which initiated his forty-one-year-long career with the magazine.¹⁴ Throughout his career, he often wrote about the Middle East. He was a man of faith. He believed in the beauty found in "God's world" and wanted to capture this beauty and share it with his audience. In one letter to *National Geographic*'s "formative editor, Gilbert H. Grosvenor," Williams says: "the greatest 'kick' a field man can have is to carry a million and a quarter members up to a high mountain, show them the world and say, 'it's yours, in a way it could not be without me.'"¹⁵ By stating this, he shows his desire to present his audience the world as he sees it. Williams's involvement as a photographer, writer, and their first foreign correspondent played an important role in establishing a national magazine to share cultural heritage with the American world.¹⁶

Williams provided protestant America, whose ideology he shared, his view of Palestine. He was not alone in this; his "Biblical lens" was shared by "the magazine's writers, photographers, editors and readers," whose perceptions of Palestine did not align with the contemporary state, creating an asymmetrical dynamic as Williams imposed his view on his subjects.¹⁷ This dynamic is also supported by biblical photography of Palestine being "lucrative".¹⁸ Later in his career, Williams stated: "the picture-lover still prefers pictures of Good Shepards, patient donkeys, supercilious camels and veiled women –scenes of biblical charm."¹⁹ By providing American "picture-lovers" with what they hoped for, he and *The National*

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Rothenberg, *Presenting America's World*, 102-104; Yazan, Kopty, "Edward Keith-Roach's Favourite Things," 311.

¹⁶ Kopty, "Edward Keith-Roach," 311.

¹⁷ Ibid, 318.

¹⁸ Sary Zananiri, "Imaging and Imagining Palestine: An Introduction," in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, ed. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, (Brill, 2021), 1-28, 8.

¹⁹ Rohenberg, *Presenting America's World*, 113.

Geographic Magazine benefited from biblical Palestine's marketability while contributing to the disparity between the American perception of Palestine and Palestine's reality.

Williams desired to show Americans the world *through* his photography, which was often staged according to his vision. His photograph captures Regina in his image. His vision is shown in his captions and his strategic staging within his photographs. The first image of her is captioned:

"A Christian Schoolgirl of Ramallah"

"A Scarf such as worn by this young woman may have served Ruth when she gleaned an ephah of barley in the fields of Boaz. It is heavy with silk embroidery and fringe. The dark gown is that worn on workdays or by those in mourning. Among the four main types of costumes seen in Palestine, those of Ramallah are the most attractive."²⁰

In this caption, she is categorized. Rather than using her name, she becomes a singular being, a Palestinian cultural stand-in, for an American audience to view. She is also equated to the biblical character "Ruth."²¹ Furthermore, her "gown" is extracted from its cultural meaning by Williams, and it's evident he was ignorant of its meaning, because in this *thobe*, the dark fabric, which is produced through multiple dyings of indigo, does not reflect work nor mourning, but rather, "superior circumstances" reflected by the cost of these dyings, and leisure time well spent embroidering.²² His caption also seeks to establish "four main types of costumes", a misguided view of Palestinian *thobes*, as *thobes* are complex garments, and devices of

²⁰ Maynard Owen Williams, "In the Birthplace of Christianity," *National Geographic Magazine* 50, (December 1926): 697-721; In addition, many regions would argue this, he is not of authority to claim which is best because he has no knowledge of the dress. At this time, many villages took thobes very seriously, and it was a respected artform as well as a symbol of status. Ramallah, however, was known for their embroidery and fabrics because the town had commercial prosperity compared to neighboring area.

²¹ Ruth was Williams' daughter's name. There could be some relation there if the name holds sentimental significance.

²² Shelagh Weir, *Palestinian Costume, Palestinian Costume* (London: British Museum Publications, 1989), 89.

indigenous knowledge passed down maternally.²³ Each region in Palestine produces them differently. Each one is specific to the woman who wears it. *Thobes* are embroidered intricately with motifs that represent personal information, such as marriage status and village origin; it is part of Regina's "female social world."²⁴ The viewer can barely see her intricate *thobe* in the photograph, as her portrait is focused on the "picturesque," not the detail of every meaningful stitch. The *thobe* tells the story of who she is, so if its meaning is removed, who does she become? For this photograph, she has become an aestheticized anonymous "stand-in" representing Christian Palestinian girls.

This aestheticized representation, however positive, is coercive, as it's through Williams's bias. His bias in this caption was typical of his style, which often created issues with his editor, Grosvenor, who wanted their magazine to be scientific and apolitical, whereas Williams sought a more personal and poetic approach.²⁵ Williams's staged photographs represent Tuhiwai Smith's idea that research is not an innocent or neutral act, because his photos are framed as apolitical and "neutral" while they in fact reflect his "cultural hypochondria," or desire to preserve what he believes is an ancient culture, biblical Palestine.²⁶ Williams was adamant in being against modernization that comes with Western dominion because he wanted Palestine to stay "natural" and "primitive"—he wanted to preserve its "biblical museum" atmosphere. He stated:

"In Ramallah, imported fringed shawls are supplanting the lovely embroidered scarfs which were the most beautiful in Palestine. The Automobile is

²³ Weir, *Palestinian Costume*, 103-104; additionally, many women bought premade *thobes*, for Regina Shadi Sakkab said it was likely she bought the dress part and embroidered it herself. This practice was common.

²⁴ Ibid; In addition, if a woman marries a man, she is supposed to adhere her motifs to the village he is from (the one they must likely reside in). The *thobe* becomes a way to signal if this woman belongs to a man. Or so Weir says, I would investigate this more if of interest.

²⁵ Rothenberg, *Presenting America's World*, 119-121.

²⁶ Gary D Sampson, and Eleanor M Hight, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), 60.

raising the devil with the “biblical museum” aspect of Palestine. The Jewish immigrants are changing styles in the whole region. Now, from the photographers’s standpoint, all this is bad. It is a case of now or never... these precious days for photographers of Palestine.”²⁷

Here, his concern is for foreign photographers to preserve the “holy land,” not for the local population. Palestinians in the early twentieth century were facing modernization through the British Mandate, a larger social-political issue Williams was unconcerned with, in comparison to the aesthetic changes, which had been well underway.²⁸

Opposing Williams’ archived photographs, Ellen Fleischman, in her book *The Palestinian Women’s Movement 1920-1948*, states Palestinian “schoolgirls in 1926 wore short skirts, high heels, and shingled hair” like their contemporary counterparts in the West.²⁹ This is undoubtedly true; during the British Mandate, many Palestinian women were dressing in Western clothes, including Friends’ students. In a 1926-27 yearbook photograph of the Ramallah Friends School (the Quaker girls’ school in Ramallah Regina attended) eighty-nine out of ninety-five girls were wearing a western uniform and appear in western hairstyles (Fig. 8). The upper class, urban, and “modern” Palestinian disinterested Williams, as these images would disrupt his promotion of dominant Palestinian stereotypes—peasants connected to the land.³⁰ Williams and *National Geographic* were aware that this stereotypical imagery of the Palestinian biblical peasant is what the American market, “picture-lovers,” were interested in.³¹ Williams, like most

²⁷ Rothenberg, *Presenting America’s World*, 112-113.

²⁸ The British takeover of Palestine after the collapse of the Ottoman empire led to the establishment of the Zionist settler state. Not only was the British Mandate a time of imperialism, but they wrote documents such as the Balfore agreement and the White Paper of 1939, which systemically oppressed the indigenous populations. They also used manipulative tactics of provoking violence amongst the people who lived there. This was not of Maynard’s concern in comparison to “feminine charm.”

²⁹ Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its “New” Women: The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 59.

³⁰ Issam Nassar, “Bearers of Memory: Photo Albums as Sources of Historical Study in Palestine,” in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, ed. Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, (Brill, 2021), 157–82, 181.

³¹ Zananiri, “Imaging and Imagining Palestine,” 9-10.

“western photographers,” did not want to photograph modern depictions of Palestinians because they saw the rural population and Bedouins as cultural “survivals from Biblical times” and wanted to capture and preserve this for Americans who cherished this familiar Palestinian trope.³²

He had a great concern with capturing beauty through his photographic (biblical) lens. He also believed “beauty is truth; truth is beauty,” but he defined and purposely staged what beauty was. In a letter, he said: “I have been guilty of posing pictures, of bringing old costumes to light, of adding something of MOW to them.”³³ Though it is clear from other instances that he dressed his sitters, added his essence to them, for Regina, this is more nuanced. In the 1927 girls’ school yearbook photo, nearly all of the schoolgirls wore Western-style uniforms (Fig. 8). Only a few, Regina being one of them, wore a *thobe*. Koptý’s argument in “Edward Keith-Roach” where the photograph cements the power dynamics of the photographed event, in this example, the power dynamic of a girl in Ramallah and a Western Man who has political power through his associates and his organization is capturing her image. Regina’s clothing, alongside her attendance at the Friends Girls School, led to her posing for him, and the power imbalance of a Fifteen-year-old girl being coerced into representing her heritage the way he saw it is permanently captured on the pages of *National Geographic*. If his photo of a Christian Palestinian school girl was similar to the Friends graduation photos (where graduating members of the Friends Girls School wore “shingled hair” and western attire), or if she was wearing the Quaker uniform, sitting at a desk, viewers might have different impressions of Palestinians compared to his staged image of Regina positioned in nature, wearing traditional clothing. Williams produces what Sontag may call

³² Weir, *Palestinian Costume*, 14; Zananiri, “Imaging and Imagining Palestine,” 11; Koptý, “Edward Keith-Roach,” 311.

³³ Rothernberg, “Maynard Owen Williams,” 110.

“bureaucratic photography,” in which his photographs serve to organize a society into categories visually and textually.³⁴ He enforced his cultural hypochondriac ideology to viewers through choosing a picturesque location and choosing the sitter by their dress and physical appearance, which emphasizes their otherness.

The National Geographic Magazine’s inclusion of Williams, as a foreign correspondent, coincided with their new branding, as they previously were a scholarly journal that included only academic writing.³⁵ In the early twentieth century, *The National Geographic Magazine* functioned as mass media that asserted the United States as a worthy Western country by reassigning its identity with heroic discovery while simultaneously categorizing the “other.” Williams was *National Geographic*’s first foreign correspondent and color photographer. He helped grow the magazine from a scholarly journal to one for every American citizen when he began working with them in 1919. His involvement in the magazine reflects Tuhiwai Smith’s statement that the public’s impression of indigenous people, especially women, derives from institutionalized research disseminated through “academic disciplines...[and]... scientific societies and scholarly networks.”³⁶ Williams’s impression of Regina and all Palestinian Christians is disseminated to the American public as truth because of the magazine’s authority as scholarly. In addition to its role as a colonizing actor in visually and textually portraying Palestinian women, Williams also worked with the Friends Mission School in Ramallah.

³⁴ Sontag, *On Photography*, 21-22.

³⁵ Kopy, “Edward Keith-Roach,” 311; additionally, NGS was founded in 1888 originally with about 200 members. By 1980, they had 10 million worldwide subscribers. Their rise to fame was indeed impacted by their decision to market towards a general audience.

³⁶ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous People* (London: Zed Books, 2012), 8.

THE FRIENDS MISSION:

The American Protestants and Friends missions did supplement Arab Nationalist demands, but they also continued believing the Greek Orthodox traditions to be backwards in comparison to their “modern” and “universal” ideas of gender. Despite their adapting practices, the Friends’ Girls school still fostered previous beliefs from their original practices. Missionary teacher in Ramallah’s Friends’ Girls School, Mildred White, emphasized “devotion.”³⁷ 1920s missionary practices continued to indoctrinate Palestinian students to American ideas of hygiene, motherhood, and devotion. The mission of “Christianizing” the “native” population of Ramallah continued and is represented in Regina’s caption, where her religious identity of Greek Orthodox is erased in favor of simply “Christian schoolgirl.” Here, at the gendered religious intersection, Palestinian woman attending the Friends Girls School absorbed their American missionary ideology.

In the 1920s, the Missions adapted their own language in conjunction with learning Arabic, rather than using primitivistic adjectives, as they had before. In the late nineteenth century, the Friends Missionary women referred to their work through strict dichotomies, in a “binary of the civilized” missionaries and “backwards” Palestinian students and servants.³⁸ It was the Quaker women’s mission to save the victimized Palestinians, whom they saw as inferior for their Eastern ways in comparison to their Western and civilized selves.³⁹ These attitudes slowly changed after World War I and the United Missionary Council of Syria and Palestine meetings that followed. Othman states that, alongside learning Arabic, missionary teachers began

³⁷ Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 90-91.

³⁸ Ibid, 37.

³⁹ Ibid, 31.

using terms such as “beautiful” when speaking about Ramallah’s traditional dress rather than words like “primitive.”⁴⁰ This is the same language Williams uses.

Williams, who was involved in the United Missionary Council through his work as a protestant missionary, also learned Arabic and adopted this language. From his original photographs and articles at *The Kalamazoo Gazette* and *The Christian Herald*, his language about Palestinian and Arab women changed significantly. In a *Kalamazoo Gazette* article from September 30, 1913, titled “Girls back home much superior to Orientals,” Williams wrote, “and as for beauty, the best thing you can say about your Oriental girl in real life is that she is veiled.” The rest of his paragraph describes how ugly, old-fashioned, and modest “Oriental” women are compared to American girls. And in a July 13, 1913, article: “If only the Holy Land could go back to its natural rock stage... [and]... the faces of Moslem women certainly justify.”⁴¹ It was likely a result of United Missionary Council delegations and pressure from Grosvenor to remain apolitical past 1919, that his view of Palestinian women evolved from thinking of them as “Old and bent” to Holy Figures in beautiful costumes. In fact, in his diary entries from 1925-1930, while he was traveling along the Levant, he wrote about “handsome women,” “women’s costumes,” and “beautiful girls in beautiful costumes.”⁴² And, during 1926, his time in Ramallah is marked by his friendship with the Kelseys.

The Kelseys helped orchestrate Williams' photographs of Ramallah. Unlike the previous Friends missionary beliefs, where modernization and conversion were their mission, Williams was a “cultural hypochondriac” who was invested in keeping Palestine’s primitive biblical

⁴⁰ Ibid, 92.

⁴¹ The Kalamazoo Gazette, Item I, Williams collection, Kalamazoo Michigan; Yet, Williams still had lines such as “well-bred” when describing Palestinian Muslem women well into his career with NGM. His attitude towards Moslem women differed from their Christian counterparts, as he found them both repulsive and sexually desirable.

⁴² Line a day diary, Item XXXVI, Williams collection, Kalamazoo Michigan.

fantasy alive.⁴³ He had a distaste for modernity and cared disproportionately about the beauty of his sitters and their ages, as Williams preferred girls in their mid to late teens.⁴⁴ This coincides with the Friends Girl school, as on February 26, 1926, Williams writes: “visited the Kelsey’s and laid foundations for pictures there Monday if it is good weather.” On the first of March 1926, Williams says in a diary entry: “Out to Ramallah Mrs. Kelsey helps me get some pictures but several women fail her. In desperation we go to Girls’ school and stumble on beauty.”⁴⁵ This date marks the fateful encounter Williams and Regina had, which would permeate her “beauty” in Palestinian texts. Williams, the Kelseys, and The Friends Mission, all contribute to the original photographs published in the 1926 article, and behind each contribution lies an Orientalist perspective.

⁴³ Gary D Sampson, and Eleanor M Hight, *Colonialist Photography: Imag(in)ing Race and Place* (Oxford: Routledge, 2002), 60; this term originates from Oscar Ortiz, in Mary Louise Pratt’s *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* it is used in Sampson and Hight’s text to describe French colonialists. I am appropriating this term in an American context.

⁴⁴ In a letter to his wife from February 4, 1937, he says “you know my habit of having a seventeen- or eighteen-year-old about.”

⁴⁵ Line a day diary, Item XXXVI, Williams collection, Kalamazoo Michigan.

ANALYZING THE SCANNED PHOTOGRAPHS WITHIN *PICTORIAL HISTORY*

Regina's portrait, past the original publication as informed entertainment, has an afterlife as evidence, once her image was reproduced in media such as *Pictorial History of Ramallah*. *Pictorial History of Ramallah* was published in 1992 by Chicago-born Naseeb Shaheen, who was an English Professor and author of many books chronologizing the city of Ramallah's history. In *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, Shaheen states that some of the first photographs of Ramallah were captured because the Society of Friends, or Quakers, "brought cameras with them" from England and the United States.⁴⁶ Within the photographic archive that is *Pictorial History*, many of these photographs, especially the oldest, from the nineteenth century, were taken by missionaries. Shaheen relies on photographic accounts published in *The Ramallah Messenger*, a society of Friends newsletter created by the Friends school. Within Shaheen's chapters on the Friends mission, he considers how these first photographic portrayals of Ramallah by the Missionaries preserved the city of Ramallah's past.⁴⁷

Alongside photographs from mission schools, and later, native photographers, *National Geographic's* photographs serve as evidence chronologized by Shaheen. Each archived photograph is scanned in *Pictorial History*. Shaheen mentions it is not until the 1920s, when some Palestinians return home from the United States after World War 1, that indigenous photography begins.⁴⁸ Shaheen sets out to name each person photographed, yet some fail him. In his copy of the May 1927 Friends Girls School yearbook photo, two of the ninety-five students

⁴⁶ Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah*, 7.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 44.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 8.

are cropped out (Fig. 7). The principal, Alice Jones, and other Friends teachers are named in Shaheen's book, but out of ninety-five girls—or ninety-three from Shaheen's copy—only seven are named, and Regina is not one of them. He may have had trouble because the original yearbook photograph, the one from the Friends School collection, has only twenty students named on its backside (Fig. 8.5).⁴⁹ Shaheen's reprint of Williams' photograph of Regina with her back against the rock, names her, and explains her *Khirkeh* to the reader. However, in her other published photographs, like her yearbook photo, within *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, she is unidentified.

In these republished images, archived in Shaheen's book, Regina appears clearly scanned from another source; in fact, the images are cropped, mirrored, and desaturated from their original, colored print. Reprinted in black and white, her face is flipped, yet still her uncertain eyes pierce the viewer as a small, polite smile settles her stare. Her face is the most defined part of the reprint, the detail of her stitched dress, and dense *khirkeh* is lost through her scanned image. Beside Regina is another unnamed woman, whose image is similarly cropped and mirrored. Their scarlet red stitching on indigo-dyed black garments and shining metallic jewelry from their original-colored Autochrome Lumières. The colorless scan disavows previous definition and flattens both women's features. Their scanned and reprinted photograph, as a copy of the original magazine's novel color photograph disconnected from the article and historic context, evaporates the viewing spectacle of color, leaving a depthless black and white photographic print in its wake.

⁴⁹ This image is extremely potent as it shows us how neglected the students were, their identities are forgotten.

Despite altering the photographs that are attached to the caption, Shaheed keeps the caption for the photos “MOSLEM AND CHRISTIAN NEIGHBORS OF EL-BIREH AND RAMALLAH” as is. The caption by Williams that Shaheed kept is as follows:

“Among the peasants and small-town dwellers of Palestine, the veil is seldom used for concealment. But convention makes it difficult to obtain photographs of women. This convention, which has religious significance to Moslems, is often equally strong among Christians. The woman at the left is a Moslem matron of El-Bireh, the other a schoolgirl of the Christian town of Ramallah. The chaplets of coins worn by both women are thought by some to have inspired the halo in sacred art.”⁵⁰

The two Palestinian women’s portraits side by side show minimal differentiation. Both women are veiled, directly photographed in the sun, smiling with similarly squinted brown eyes (Fig. 5). William’s caption highlights these similarities, which, interestingly, Shaheed does not interject or correct this caption. Yet, if viewed beyond the surface and understood historically, these photographs can approximate Regina’s position, therefore, Christian Palestinian women’s position, during 1926.

This display of the two Palestinian women, one Muslim and one Christian, may emphasize their primitive lifestyle juxtaposed with the “modern” settlers in Palestine. Regina had direct interactions with these settlers as she attended the Friends Girls School. Despite Palestine’s Christian population being vast and diverse, the Palestinian Christian identity is understood as monolithic in relation to the other Abrahamic religions: Islam and Judaism.⁵¹ And in Regina’s third photograph’s caption, just Islam. Regina was Greek Orthodox, yet in her caption, she is categorized as simply “Christian.” Every unpublished and published caption,

⁵⁰ Maynard Owen Williams, “In the Birthplace of Christianity,” *National Geographic Magazine* 50, (December 1926): 697-721.

⁵¹ Anthony O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics, and Society in the Holy Land* (London: Melisende, 1999), 11.

label Regina as being a Friends Girls School student, meaning her conversion to American Friends—or Quaker—religion is implied in relation to her label as “Christian.” Enaya Hammad Othman in *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood* discusses how conversion was an original goal for the Friends’ mission school during the late Ottoman period, and during the British Mandate Period, ideas of conversion advanced and adapted.⁵² By analyzing Regina’s political position as a student attending an American mission school in 1926, her portraits represent the conjunction of multicolonial presence and gendered oppression that Palestinian Christian women faced at the Friends school and in society.

RAMALLAH’S MULTICOLONIAL POSITION, 1860-1940:

Regina’s portraits identify her as a Palestinian-Christian in Ramallah, an identity which was vast and diverse yet minoritized under Ottoman rule. In Ottoman Palestine, three-fourths of the Christians were Greek Orthodox.⁵³ This would change after the Ottoman Empire collapsed, as Palestinians navigated and adapted throughout multiple imperial political systems. Regina’s position as a Palestinian-Christian appears depthless from the caption, yet her cultural experience in 1926 reflects penalized and privileged political entanglement, from the Ottomans’ systemic marginalization of Christians, the British Mandate’s absorption of the Ottoman System, and the Friends missions, which benefited from both imperial powers. These empires affect Regina and

⁵² Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 91.

⁵³ Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 11; Jerusalem alone is home to multiple Christian communities, Armenian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Greek Orthodox, Greek Catholic, Syrian Orthodox, Syrian Catholic, Chaldean Catholic, Assyrian and Maronite to name a few, see O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 11.

her community's culture through governmental systems managing education and mobility of Palestinian-Christians.

During the Ottoman Empire's control of Palestine, Palestinian Christians "were given the status of *dhimmis* or protected people" in the Ottoman *millet* system, a system that was an evolution of tolerance to "non-Muslims" found in Islamic tradition.⁵⁴ This *millet* system allowed some autonomy to each *millet*, or religious community, within the Ottoman Empire. The *millet* system tolerated Palestinian Christians practicing their religion under the Ottoman empire as long as the communities "paid special taxes" and accepted Muslim rule as superior. The Christian population under Ottoman Palestine had many other restrictions, such as wearing a specific type of clothing, being forbidden from bearing arms and riding horses. Many Palestinian Christians under the Ottomans, who lived outside of the Christian epicenters surrounding Jerusalem, were not allowed to own land. The taxes paid to the Ottoman Empire from Christian subgroups from the sixteenth to the twentieth century appear as evidence in *Pictorial History of Ramallah* to validate the oral storytelling of Ramallah's founding history, as Ramallah was a majority Christian village.⁵⁵ These taxes increased during the late Ottoman period, resulting in a large migration of Palestinian Christians in the Ramallah-AL Bireh district.⁵⁶ In the Ramallah-AL Bireh or "Jerusalem district," the central Christian communities had Ottoman *waqf* endowments, or religious law, which allowed them to purchase and own land. Ramallah is one town in this region that granted Christian's land ownership. Outside of this region, owning land

⁵⁴ O'Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 17.

⁵⁵ Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah*, 11-12.

⁵⁶ Hadeel, Fawadleh, "Emigration of Arab Christians from Palestine: Ramallah-Al-Bireh District-A Case Study / هجرة المسيحيين العرب من فلسطين: محافظة رام الله والبيرة نموذجا," *Bethlehem University Journal* 33, (2015), 146-65, 150; additionally, regions outside Palestine within the Ottoman empire had 40 million Christian Arabs emigrate in 1850-1914.

was rare for Christians because Palestinian Christians were categorized as inferior subjects within the Ottoman political system.

Occupations and education for Christian Palestinians compared to Muslims differ according to a census from the British Mandate of 1931. The population of Christians in comparison to Muslims and Jews was significantly lower.⁵⁷ This low percentage in comparison to the Jewish population could be a result of foreign settlers increasing as Arab Christians emigrated due to Ottoman imperial oppression and the British Mandate's systematic impoverishment.⁵⁸ For the Christian population, work in "industry and commerce or practiced professions" significantly outweighed jobs in agriculture, and even rural inhabitants were more inclined towards roles such as a "shopkeeper."⁵⁹ Though peasants tended local agriculture, many did not because during the Ottoman Empire, it was rare for Christians to own land. In the same 1931 census, literacy amongst Palestine's population was imbalanced. In the Jerusalem district, where Ramallah is located, Christian literacy was significantly higher compared to Muslim communities (especially for women) because there were more mission schools than government schools between 1920 and 1930.⁶⁰ The Friends mission established both a girls' and a boys' school in Ramallah as the city grew in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Ramallah emerged as a Christian village during the Ottoman Empire. Ramallah's population steadily grew in the nineteenth century; by 1870, there was a reported approximation

⁵⁷ Zaiman, "Census of Palestine, 1931," *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 96, no. 4 (1933): 660–62; The population of Christians was 8.82% compared to Muslims at 73.34% and Jews at 16.86%. This low percentage in comparison to the Jewish population could be a result of foreign settlers increasing as Arab Christians emigrated due to Ottoman imperial oppression and British Mandate's systematic impoverishment.

⁵⁸ Fawadleh, "Emigration of Arab Christians," 151.

⁵⁹ O'Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 40.

⁶⁰ O'Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 39; Christian literacy was seventy-one percent for men and forty-eight percent for women. This rise was impacted by the increase of Christian missionary school projects, such as the Friends' school in Ramallah, as between 1920 and 1930, 20,288 students attended government schools, and 23,797 attended missionary institutions.

of two thousand people.⁶¹ The Ottoman *millet* system allowed the Christian community to “administer its own schools” outside of the state’s public schools, which were centered on religion during the Ottoman Empire.⁶² With the “Ottoman Tanzimat Reforms,” which allowed Western institutions, therefore missions, to be built in Ottoman territories.⁶³ As Shaheen states, during this time, some of the first photographs of Ramallah were taken by the Friends. In a scanned image from 1905 by an unnamed photographer, Shaheed shows ‘Esa Abu Shahla in Jerusalem as he navigates “the difficult task of securing” land for the Friends boys’ school.⁶⁴ Obtaining land in Ottoman Palestine required multiple factors. These factors: complex religious rights for land through the millet system, as well as the religious focus in public schools, enabled many Palestinian Christians to attend missionary schools during the late Ottoman period as mission schools multiplied and Ramallah’s population grew.

In addition, the conceptual “Holy Land” intrigued Western scholars to travel there for missionary work. Academic and archaeological interest in studying “the Holy Land” increased European presence, promoting pilgrimages and missionary work in Palestine. Missionary work in Palestine began in the seventeenth century and inevitably resulted in the restoration of old churches, the establishment of new churches, new convents, schools, and hospitals.⁶⁵ These factors, missionary work and increased Western presence, combined with the previous *millet*

⁶¹ In alignment with oral history, Enaya Hammad Othman stated that first the Haddad, “a Christian Arab tribe,” immigrated to Ramallah in the sixteenth century, followed by the Ajlouni family tribe and others in the eighteenth century. Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 18; By 1902, Ramallah was made a “district seat for thirty surrounding villages” by the Ottoman government, see Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah*, 24.

⁶² Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 10-12.

⁶³ Enaya Hammad Othman, “Deconstructing the Dogma of Domesticity: Quaker Education and Nationalism in British Mandate Palestine,” *Journal of Colonialism & Colonial History* 19, no. 1 (2018).

⁶⁴ Shaheen, *A Pictorial History of Ramallah*, 37; in addition, the boys school was built after the girls school in 1909.

⁶⁵ O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 23.

system allowing Christians “rights and control” over education, culminated in the Friends school being established in Ramallah.

The Girls Training home (the Friends school) was one of the first girls’ schools in Palestine. Missionary schools affected the Christian population of Palestine the most, as they gave them an opportunity to receive education outside of the Public Ottoman system, which focused on Islamic teaching. However, missionary presence in Palestine sought more than to educate; they wanted to convert the local Christian population and increase Western influence on the Holy Land.

One feature of Friends’ conversion efforts was their published magazine, *The Ramallah Messenger*. *The Ramallah Messenger* was created in the late nineteenth century and documented their mission for the religious members back in New England by publishing visual and textual updates of The Girls Training Home and the Boys Training Home as they were established. In a scanned copy of *The Ramallah Messenger* newspaper from December 1906, an image of “one of Ramallah’s most prosperous men,” who, according to the missionaries, shows his prosperity with a paved floor. Yet despite his wealth, according to the Friends’ missionaries, he still has a “peasant” bed. *The Ramallah Messenger* does not name this man nor his family within the photograph; Shaheen uses this scanned image and states that no living member of Ramallah could identify him.⁶⁶ *The Ramallah Messenger* documented peasant life and detailed how converted Palestinian Quakers allowed the Friends to use their own homes and land for the schools, such as the first Girls Training home in 1886, sparked by “Miriam’s request.” Images of Palestinians, like the anonymized Regina and unnamed wealthy peasant, for the Friends mission

⁶⁶ Shaheen, *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, 34.

were used to appear collaborative with Palestinians, when the Friends wanted to gain influence in biblically important regions.

Missionary and Palestinian collaboration during the Ottoman Empire continued after the state was transferred to the British around the end of World War I. Post World War I, Eastern Orthodox communities were desecrated from the war, “periods of famine, and by repeated massacres.”⁶⁷ In 1916, there was a typhoid plague that devastated Ramallah, nearly 30% of its people died.⁶⁸ Allied occupation of Ottoman territories introduced the mandate period to their previous territories, leaving the Levant region in British and French control. Britain’s mandate of Palestine was unique compared to others in the Levant region. Stated by Anthony O’Mahoney:

“The British mandatory power in Palestine was charged with promoting the political, administrative and economic conditions to ensure the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people, while protecting the civil and religious rights of the rest of the population. Considering the terms of the mandate, it was inevitable that the British authorities found it difficult to accommodate the different aspirations of the Arab, Muslim, and Christian and the Jewish communities.”⁶⁹

In addition to these difficulties in administrating accommodations, the British mandate also absorbed the Ottoman *Millet* system, meaning the Christian communities of Palestine continued to be treated as a minority.⁷⁰ Before the First World War, the Arab-national movement was aligned loyally to the Ottoman-Palestinian national identity, as an Arab ruled nation.⁷¹ The post-war mandate period changed the landscape from a “single Islamic authority” to multiple religions and states in the Arab region, including Zionist colonialists. This “new religious-political” frontier during the mandate period intersected with a rising Arab-nationalist

⁶⁷ O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 28.

⁶⁸ Shaheen, *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, 8.

⁶⁹ O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 28-29.

⁷⁰ O’Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 32.

⁷¹ Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 161.

movement, causing turmoil within Arab Christian communities.⁷² Despite this, many Christians, such as Khalil Totah, were active in the Arab-nationalist movement; in fact, it was Khalil Totah who negotiated with the Friends School and United Mission Council of Syria Palestine to ensure teachers learned Arabic. Anti-Christian views in the Arab-Nationalist movement exacerbate Palestinian Christian national belonging as marginalized groups within national legislation.

The National Geographic Magazine, *The Ramallah Messenger*, and elite Palestinians with mobility all collaborated to create visual and textual resources documenting Ramallah through its modern era. Shaheen himself documents his family history throughout *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, validating his memory through scanned photographs and compiling data from previous empires. Images of Ramallah told through these sources, mobile elite, missionaries, and ethnographic photography, may neglect memory of Palestinians outside the preferred religion, class, and gender. The Friends school yearbook photograph, which names less than one quarter of the girls, both documents history and erases individuals. The mission's school photography assisted in assimilating indigenous populations into Western practices, as the photograph frames difference (the girls who wear thobes, like Regina) and displays assimilation (the named and known girls in western uniform).⁷³ All this imagery shows that Palestinian Christian identity during the transition of Palestinian land from the Ottomans to the British was complex, both privileged and penalized, while remaining unseen vis-à-vis images by documenters within specific positions of power. Regina, who survived the Typhus plague, World War I, and attended the mission schools, while existing in a minoritized position, her history in

⁷² Itamar Radai, "The Rise and Fall of the Palestinian-Arab Middle Class Under the British Mandate, 1920-39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, no. 3 (July 2016): 487-506, 503-504; Because Christians were favored by the British imperialists during the rebellion against the British mandate in 1936-39, Arab and Non-Arab Christians, such as Greeks and Armenians, were seen as traitors, see O'Mahony.

⁷³ Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *School Photos in Liquid Time: Reframing Difference* (Washington: University of Washington Press, 2021), 71.

Pictorial History of Ramallah extends to reinstating Williams' captions, reiterating the importance of the Friends Girls School, and naming her as the spouse of Aziz Habib.

THE "DUAL CONTROL SYSTEM" FOR PALESTINIAN CHRISTIAN WOMEN:

Regina's identity as a Palestinian-Christian woman positions her under religious, ethnic, and gendered restrictions managed by outside colonial powers (the Friends school and British Mandate) and inside by her Palestinian community. Her intersectionality is influenced through laws in place, which created divides between religious groups that affected occupations and education, because this intersection affected women the most. Within the Ottoman rule, clothing played a restrictive role in determining Palestinian subjecthood based on location. Under the Ottomans, Palestinians were forced to present themselves as "inferior" through "wearing distinctive clothing."⁷⁴ For Palestinian Women, during the Ottoman Empire, urban women and rural women experienced sense of self differently through their clothing. As Fatma Kassem posits in her book *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory*, urban women felt less secure than Village women because of the Ottoman era's lack of security, therefore many women were secluded to the home or would cover "themselves completely when they went out."⁷⁵ For access to public space, women within cities would "cover themselves head to toe in black" while women in villages wore thobes, or dresses that had their origins stitched

⁷⁴ O'Mahony, *Palestinian Christians*, 18.

⁷⁵ Fatma Kassem, *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory* (London: Zed Books, 2011), 182; Kassem's book is a wonderful narration of the 1948 Nakbah documented through oral histories recorded by Palestinian women who experienced this tragic event.

onto them.⁷⁶ For Ramallah women, like Regina, they wore Ramallah thobes because they had more community security than urban cities like Jerusalem.

Another restrictive intersection for Palestinian-Christian women was access to education. For Palestinian women, mission schools and gendered social rituals within the community made access to education politically charged. Education was imbalanced because there were more missionary schools than public ones, which resulted in Christian women having more access to education than women within the majority Muslim population.⁷⁷ For Palestine's public schools, Othman notes that out of 20, 288 students, only 942 students who attended were girls, while 669 girls attended mission schools.⁷⁸ Female education was asymmetric to their male counterparts, who had more access to education, both in public and mission schools.

In addition, public education for Palestinian women during the British Mandate period was severely underfunded. In *Portraits of Palestinian Women* by Orayb Aref Najjar, Najjar challenges the Orientalist "misperception" that "thanks to the efforts of missionaries and colonial administrations," Arab women could obtain an education.⁷⁹ Before the British Mandate, only 19 percent of students in public Ottoman schools were girls, and despite the colonial claim to educate, nearing the end of the British Mandate period in the mid-1940s, only half of Palestine's villages received public primary schools, and out of four hundred of these primary schools, only forty-six were for girls. During the Mandate and Ottoman periods, most girls' schools were private.⁸⁰ These private girls' schools were "concentrated in Jerusalem, Ramallah, and the

⁷⁶ Kassem, *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories*, 183.

⁷⁷ Zaiman, "Census of Palestine, 1931," 660–62.

⁷⁸ Othman, *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood*, 13.

⁷⁹ Orayb Aref Najjar, Kitty Warnock, and Rosemary Sayigh, *Portraits of Palestinian Women* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992), 14.

⁸⁰ Najjar, *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, 15.

coastal cities.” For middle-class girls living in these cities, primary education was common, leaving out rural or Bedouin groups; however, for all women, regardless of class, graduating and pursuing further education was rare.⁸¹

Considering the Ramallah Friends’ Mission school taught women home economics until around the 1930s, and in an Interview with Regina’s granddaughter, who also, much later, attended a private and previous mission school, she said she learned housework, like cleaning, from school.⁸² The “education” girls received from colonial projects would likely differ greatly from their male peers. In addition, as Najjar notes, “lack of education” is perceived as “exclusion from culture,” which neglects ways Palestinian women experience politics and “cultural production.”⁸³ Palestinian women’s experience is invisible in Williams’ portraits and captions of Regina and others, because the mission school’s reality (missionary assimilation through a focus on housework and physical appearance) is disavowed by his focus on her garments.

One way many rural Palestinian women experienced political “cultural production” was through self-fashioning. According to interviews Ellen Fleischmann conducted and discusses in her book *The Nation and Its “New” Women*, Christian and Muslim women began to veil, even if they had not previously, during the British Mandate. For Palestinian women, veiling was a political act because they wanted to “distinguish themselves from Jews and emphasize their Arabness.” This act was especially true with Christian Palestinian women who, when interviewed, stated: “They wanted to be like other Arabs.”⁸⁴ In addition to veiling, their prerogatives were dressing modestly (such as wearing all black head to toe) and wearing no

⁸¹ Najjar, *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, 15-17.

⁸² Amal Sakkab Habib (Granddaughter of Regina Mousa Habib), oral interview with author, December 16, 2025.

⁸³ Najjar, *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, 15.

⁸⁴ Ellen Fleischmann, *The Nation and Its “New” Women: The Palestinian Women’s Movement, 1920-1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 57.

makeup, because they wanted to emphasize the very thing that Othered them from the European colonists and settlers.

Although the men in these women's lives had different views on their way of dressing, many of which discouraged or encouraged their dressing tastes, depending on individuals. This influence on women's behavior conducted by community members, familial men, and husbands is part of what Najjar considers dual control.⁸⁵ This act of dual control of Palestinian women differs by regions, as coastal cities and inland villages progress socially at differing rates. Alongside region, class, and religion also play a role in how women are treated within the family.⁸⁶ For women in Ramallah, especially Regina, dual control on their behavior would be, and has been discussed by each interviewed member, as betrothing marriages to relatives to keep land in the family.⁸⁷ Before marriage, female behavior was monitored closely by both family members and the community. Purity for Palestinian women was a public concern. Najjar states that "daughters were carefully guarded after the onset of puberty and married at an early age to parentally arranged unions that reproduced clan, class, and sectarian ties."⁸⁸ This, for one, grants women no agency in choosing their companions, disavows independence, and forces women into the role of homemaker. Regina's marriage certificate documents that she got married on December 7, 1929. Her marriage certificate and copies of it interchange her age from seventeen to eighteen years old. On her marriage certificate, it states "Landowner, housewife" as her occupation. Her death certificate and birth certificate appear lost. Her identity remains

⁸⁵ Najjar, *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, 19.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Enaya Hammad Othman has a book on this, titled *Crafting Marriages*, if of interest.

⁸⁸ Najjar, *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, 19.

completely tied to her marriage status. She had a lack of agency in defining who she was in her own culture, as well as in the Western world.

For Regina, from her descendants' accounts and a lack of a graduation photo in the Friends collection, she left school, got married, and had six children. According to an account from her son, Hanna Habib, when he was born, Regina broke her hip, causing his older sister, Wedad, to stop attending school at age fourteen to help raise him.⁸⁹ In addition, Regina's granddaughter considers her mother (Regina's daughter), Mariam Habib Sakkab, who had an interest in becoming a doctor, yet Regina's husband, Aziz Sarsor Habib, forbade their daughter. Regina and her husband opted to send their eldest son to the United States of America for higher education. According to Amal Habib Sakkab and other interviewed descendants, education for Palestinian-Christians was revered (prevalent since the British Mandate's favored Christian subjects), and despite its revered status, Regina did not encourage her daughters to finish school or attend university.⁹⁰ As it appears, education past grade school, as well as the mobility education incited, was reserved for men in her family.

Regina's experience, as a Palestinian-Christian woman in 1926, is obscured by Williams' published photography and his photographs' copies within Shaheen's *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, and other sources. Her complicated position, of being under dual control from the community members inside the domestic sphere and outside, as well as being a citizen under the British Mandate, while attending the Friends Mission, is unexplored in her visual and textual descriptions. Regina's entangled memory, remaining unexplored within pictorial history, reflects Sontag's idea of how "the ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: 'there is the

⁸⁹ Hanna Habib (son of Regina Mousa Habib), oral interview with author, September 2, 2025.

⁹⁰ Amal Sakkab Habib (Granddaughter of Regina Mousa Habib), oral interview with author, December 16, 2025.

surface. Now think—or rather feel, intuit—what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way.”⁹¹ To intuit beyond Regina’s posed portrait photography by Williams is to view the photographed event through her eyes instead of his. Viewing the event through her eyes uncovers hidden or silenced history, or her reality beyond her image, and by analyzing the misaligned realities of Williams’ perception and Regina’s experience, reasons for the original photograph’s presentation of her as a biblical figure may emerge.

⁹¹ Sontag, *On Photography*, 23.

INUITYING BENEATH THE COPIED PHOTOGRAPH WITHIN *HATHIHE RAMALLAH*

Before an interview with Regina Mousa Habib's granddaughter, Amal Sakkab Habib, she pulled out a folder filled with miscellaneous documents pertaining to Regina. Alongside Regina's multiple photocopied proof of marriage (one in Arabic, one typed in English, and one handwritten), was a folded-up snippet from a 2006 *Hathihe Ramallah* magazine issue, this segment boasted: "RAMALLAH SCHOOL GIRLS IN *The National Geographic Magazine*, 1926" with four reprinted portraits followed by a brief description (Fig. 12). Regina's granddaughter remarked how they had not known about these images until they saw it printed in the bilingual community magazine created by the American Federation of Ramallah. Born before photography was widespread, Regina had few photographs in this folder, as well as from other relatives. All these family photographs mark her wedding, depict her holding her children, or beside her husband. It appeared Regina's only surviving solitary portraits were taken by Maynard Owen Williams. Which were unknown to her family until republished in *Pictorial History of Ramallah* and *Hathihe Ramallah*. Regina's photograph from *The National Geographic Magazine* appropriated by her family connects what Sontag theorizes in *On Photography*; photographs take inventory, tell history, provide evidence, and record family affairs. Yet, this cherished magazine segment of Regina, cut out by her granddaughter, contained the only portrait of Regina from the original source, where she is frowning, which consequently made her identifiable as her ancestors recognized the generational glare.

Printed next to Zahweh Jaber, who is identified by her spouse and children within *Hathihe Ramallah's* caption, Regina's colored image is once again printed in an American magazine (Fig. 12). In contrast to *Pictorial History*, these appropriated photographs have an increase of saturation. They are also printed smaller than their original copies (despite *Hathihe*

Ramallah having wider pages than *The National Geographic Magazine*), and the captions are erased. In this saturated segment cut out of page four, Regina's eyes are directed at the viewer with an unwavering, steely gaze. Her jaw appears clenched, evident tension signaled by her firm upper lip and her hand curled into a tight fist on her lap. Her demeanor reveals discomfort, perhaps with being photographed. Because of *Hathihe Ramallah*'s size and saturation, her reprinted image is blurry, and the intricate details of her stitching muddy together, while her glare is also less potent than it's original. Yet here, within the differences, a reality emerges.

Regina's discomfort is ignored in favor of utilizing *National Geographic*'s caption as a positive representation of Ramallah's history within a diaspora. As a community organization, Ramallah American Federation began with immigrants in 1951, and in 1952, they created their own magazine *Hathihe Ramallah*. *Hathihe Ramallah* began in Michigan and continues disseminating its magazines throughout the nation today to fifty thousand Palestinian-Americans with its consistent goal: cultural preservation.⁹² *Hathihe Ramallah*'s goal of cultural preservation is illustrated in Regina's segment from the 2005 winter issue. In this segment, they state:

"In December 1926, Volume L. No.6, *The National Geographic Magazine* published the first color issue of the magazine totally dedicated to Palestine ~ The Holy Land. By coincidence, Mr. Chris Anton Ajlouni was able to obtain a good copy... [and]... so we can show you these pictures of beautiful young Ramallah school girls as they appeared in 1926. Chris identified the girl (upper left) as his grandmother, Zahweh Jaber. She was married to Easa Ghannam and had five children; Shawki, Fuad, Adel, Katheryn, and Adla.

Note: The article said that the Shiny Chaplet of Coins (Shatweh) worn by these girls are believed to have inspired the "halo" in sacred art. We are proud that Ramallah had international Fame even in 1926."⁹³

⁹² AFRP history - American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine - The Unity of the Ramallah Family (2023).

⁹³ *Hathihe Ramallah*, 2005 winter issue, 4. TK.

Here, what *Hathihe Ramallah* is describing (“we are proud”) is that for members of the Ramallah community, this portrait by Williams published in *The National Geographic* was proof that Palestinians have always existed. And even better, in the caption, these girls were “beautiful young Ramallah school girls,” they were a positive representation for a nation and Ramallah’s tight-knit region. This republished portrait of Regina in *Hathihe Ramallah*, a diasporic community magazine, became a source of pride to the Christian Ramallah community because Palestinian existence was authenticated by *National Geographic*. By having positive accounts published about Palestine, the original photograph as evidence reprinted seemed to combat threatened cultural erasure of a post-1948 Palestinian reality. Yet, these photos function as “virtual culture” where they cannot exist without Western intervention, the Friends Girls School, the British Mandate, and Williams’s photographic lens.⁹⁴ They also perpetuate an imagined community for Ramallah, where the women appear as homogenous holy figures, good and pure, and reflect Western perspectives on the primitive Arab. Ramallah’s regionalist past, celebrated here in the caption, is unknowingly narrating their imagined community through the eyes of a Protestant missionary with concerning views on Arab women.⁹⁵

The copied image published in *Hathihe Ramallah* through its saturation and mimesis of the original’s artificial context, neglects Regina’s powerful glare seen better in its original version found in the 1926 *The National Geographic Magazine* December issue (Fig. 13). Here, Regina’s glare is striking and as Roland Barthes says “pierces” the spectator, or the active viewer, because her direct gaze refuses to appear docile which breaks the image free from its

⁹⁴ Orientalism (TK)

⁹⁵ As articulated by Tamar Rothernberg, he found the natives he photographed erotic. As articulated by his older writings he found them disgusting. Most likely, both feelings coincided. In Williams collection at Kalamazoo Michigan, he had multiple erotic writings about Arab women. “Desert Love” to name one.

smiling peasant convention.⁹⁶ In accordance with her other portraits, the glare simultaneously breaks the illusion while drawing attention to it because Regina's portrait with her piercing gaze assumes the prior smiling photo represents a "mask." This smiling mask transforms her image into a "product" of Palestinian society and Palestinian history recorded by an outside source, the American photographer.⁹⁷ Williams' perception of Regina being articulated as an accepted truth representing women of Ramallah reflects what Linda Tuhiwai Smith considers as journalistic writing that reinforces myths, like how the headdress inspired the halo, which is happily accepted by the magazine author despite it being fabricated by Williams.⁹⁸

Because many diasporic Palestinian Christians do not return to Palestine, reproduced images like Regina's within community magazines and texts facilitate a diasporic idealization of the homeland. The Holy Land myth cultivated through *National Geographic's* biblical imagination is absorbed within diasporic consciousness, consequently causing Palestine to be seen and understood conceptually as an unreachable, mythical place. This mythical imagination reinforces nostalgia for a time before the Nakba, which may erase hardships faced by Palestinian Christians during the Ottoman and British Mandate periods.

PALESTINIAN WOMANHOOD REIMAGINED THROUGH DIASPORA:

Regina, as presented in the photograph's caption, is named a "A Christian Schoolgirl of Ramallah." Her privileged position in 1927, of receiving an education, is lost to the viewer

⁹⁶ Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, Traduit par Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 33.

⁹⁷ Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 42.

⁹⁸ Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 37.

because of her visual and textual portrayal as a peasant. Because these three images of Regina have been reproduced, their image's "meaning multiplies and fragments into many meanings." These meanings, suggested by John Berger in *Ways of Seeing*, are dependent on the context in which the reproduced image is.⁹⁹ When first published in the 1926 December issue of *National Geographic*, Regina's reproduced images live in the homes of *National Geographic*'s million subscribers. In the 1980s, after being photocopied, it exists as visual evidence in *Pictorial History of Ramallah*. In 2005, reproduced photocopies were sent in by a community member and published in *Hathihe Ramallah*, a Palestinian American magazine, as a sense of cultural pride. These images of Regina transform her conceptually depending on the medium in which it is reproduced and the viewers' reception. Each media has a different set of viewers. For diasporic Palestinian-Americans, these reproduced images conjure different feelings than the original Americans reading the *National Geographic*, as well as the man who first photographed her, who facilitates how this image translates information to the viewer.

In the second image of Regina (Fig. 5), Williams discussed the veil in his caption, stating, "convention makes it difficult to obtain photographs of women." This raises some concerns when paired with his history of seeking feminine beauty. The veil he referred to is a scarf called a *khirkeh*.¹⁰⁰ Regina's is complete with typical Ramallah motifs such as *Miftah Khalil* or 'key of hebron' and *Iqamr biriish* or 'moon with feathers'.¹⁰¹ Regina's "chaplet of coins" in reality is a *shatweh*. When he says "thought by some" to be reflecting of halos in religious art, he must be referring to other foreigners who thought this, because the headdress is a counterpart to the

⁹⁹ John Berger, Sven Blomberg, Christine Fox, Michael Dibb, and Richard Hollis, *Ways of Seeing* (London, England: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1973), 19-20.

¹⁰⁰ However, here is where Willam's might have gotten the idea for the gown being used for mourning, because the *khirkeh* and *shatweh* are dark and covered when worn by widows or in mourning.

¹⁰¹ Jehan S. Rajab, *Palestinian Costume* (London: Kegan Paul, 1989), 61.

men's *tarbush*.¹⁰² Like the indigo, the coins are a status symbol, symbolic of the family and village's wealth. Ramallah was growing as a city and acquiring wealth, and despite their claim of their peasant-hood, Regina's family owned land and were landlords.¹⁰³

Though it cannot be confirmed that Regina did in fact stitch her scarf by hand, we do know from interviews that she knew how and that she did wear headscarves. Tatreez is described by Jehan Rajab in *Palestinian Costume* as devices of indigenous knowledge passed down maternally.¹⁰⁴ Regina's Tatreez was discussed by Regina's sister-in-law, Suad Habib Ahwal. She and Regina practiced this Palestinian cross-stitching, and according to her, Tatreez was something that you learned from observing others, affirming it as a communal female pastime.¹⁰⁵ Regina's sister-in-law also stated that she and Regina did not talk about politics or what it meant to be Palestinian. Regina's sister-in-law and other ancestors' accounts all affirm that she was religious and that she did wear a headscarf. However, this headscarf Regina wore differs from the Khirkeh from 1926 her photographs, which Shaheen says was worn on special occasions. In Regina's wedding portrait, she wears an imported silk headscarf with multicolored floral stitching and a twisted thread fringe. Nonetheless, wearing a headscarf casually during the British Mandate, as previously discussed, was seen as a political act, a way to signify one as Arab at a time of settler growth and "modernization" or western intervention. Perhaps, rather than speak of her heritage, Regina chose to show it, contrasting her classmates who wore the

¹⁰² Weir, *Palestinian Costume*, 179.

¹⁰³ This has a lot of meaning at this point in Palestine, with many landlords living in the city and lots of dubious land grabs were happening.

¹⁰⁴ Weir, *Palestinian Costume*, 103-104.

¹⁰⁵ Suad Habib Ahwal, oral interview with author, translated by author, Shadi Sakkab, and Amal Sakkab Habib, January 2, 2026.

Quaker uniform by wearing her Palestinian thobe, which has stitching indicating where she was from.

Regina's decisions to glare while posing and wearing her thobe to a mission school are unknown to the viewer because of her portrayal in the original magazine. The original event of the photograph (Williams using his missionary connections with the Kelseys to take photographs of schoolgirls in Ramallah's Friends school) haunts the reproductions because it politely obscures Regina's identity and immobilizes her character through Williams's "innocent" and "heroic" yet colonizing gaze.¹⁰⁶ Williams' bias towards Regina Mousa Habib is evident within his three published portraits. Yet, his bias goes further because he kept a photograph of Regina in his private photo collection. In Williams's private photo collection, he has 114 photographs, 25 of which are of Palestine and 7 are of Palestinian women. His personal caption for Regina, he says, "a very pretty Christian schoolgirl in the American Friends' mission."¹⁰⁷ Corresponding to Williams's interest in capturing "feminine charm" and preserving the biblical past of Palestine, he is facilitating Regina's image to appear as a biblical figure in an imagined Holy Land.

Williams's perspective aestheticizes both Regina and her *thobe*. His erasure of the cultural meaning from the garments transforms the *thobe* from a rich contemporary, ever-evolving, cultural device to a dress worn simply for aesthetic value. Like the aestheticized thobe, the women wearing them have their context removed, and cannot be easily categorized. Williams's ethnographic photography is, as Rothenberg suggests, based on his understanding of traditional dress, which "reveals the consciousness with which contributors and editors saw

¹⁰⁶ This "innocence" is described at length by Tamar Rothenburg, and she gets this from *Imperial Eyes* by Mary Louise Pratt. Pratt, details how "innocent" and "heroic" gaze are utilized by European travelers, who document the "other" through their imperial gaze.

¹⁰⁷ Item XXXIII, Williams collection, Kalamazoo Michigan.

people they photographed as the representatives of or stand-ins for their designated and predated culture.”¹⁰⁸ Embedded in his photography, his biblical lens is imposed through the staging of his subjects and his photograph captions. Through Williams’s translation, the *thobe* becomes a dress, and the wearer becomes objectified and anonymous, representing a monolithic culture of the biblical past. This trope is presented in *The National Geographic Magazine* to American viewers, who internalize what they are seeing and reading as truth. *National Geographic Magazine* establishes a modern American viewer and a primitive subject from immobilized Eastern nations. Williams’ photograph navigates the spectator’s sense of self and sense of other, as Berger states: “We never look at just one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.”¹⁰⁹ For Williams’s American viewers, these images of Regina, which visually signify biblical Palestinian peasant tropes, establish the subjects as primitive other while the viewer categorizes themselves as modern.

Portraits of Palestinian women photographed by Maynard Owen Williams disseminates his bias to an American audience through *The National Geographic Magazine*’s authority. His images were disseminated later, in textbooks about Palestinians. Williams and *The National Geographic Magazine* directly influence the stereotypical image of Palestinians as peasants connected to the land, and the commodifiable image of biblical figures living in the past. When his photos of Indigenous Palestinian women are compared to other ethnicities living in British Mandate Palestine, Palestinian women are only featured wearing *thobes*. Their dress and depiction reflect the idea of women as bearers of cultural tradition. This idea is furthered through Williams’s vision, and the absorption of Williams’s vision by diasporic texts.

¹⁰⁸ Rothenberg, *Presenting America’s World*, 110

¹⁰⁹ Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, 9.

The National Geographic Magazine and Missionary projects functioning as an authoritative source allows ethnographic images produced by Williams and others to be republished in *Pictorial History of Ramallah* as evidence, therefore an illegitimate documentation of Palestinian womanhood is absorbed in diasporic text. In *Pictorial History*, when we rely on textual and traditional evidence such as documents and photographs from colonial projects like the Friends School and *The National Geographic*, we lose cultural understanding, therefore limiting our perception of the Palestinian past. The archival imbalance from the Palestinian perspective recorded in our texts renders our own history depthless, as the scanned and flipped black and white photographs.

Regina's black and white photograph within *Pictorial History*, though named, reestablishes Williams' narrative for Palestinians, thus presents Palestinian women as an idealized docile peasant. A perfect impressionable native girl, Regina, aged fifteen in this photograph, smiles small at the viewer (Fig. 5). Her delicate, fair-skinned face braves the sun, causing her uncertain brown eyes to squint. Her soft facial features, illuminated by sunlight, are the focal point of the portrait; her traditional clothes blurred, despite being described verbosely in the caption.¹¹⁰ Her dress defines her, as said by Fanon, "It is by their apparel that types of society first become known."¹¹¹ Similarly, her "type of society" is seen as visual evidence. As Sontag says, "photographs are valued because they give information. They tell one what there is; they make an inventory."¹¹² Regina's photo constructs her identity based on values and restrictions

¹¹⁰ Her traditional clothes include a *thobe*, a *khirkeh*, and a *Shatweh*. Her *Shatweh*, or headdress is lined with dense rows of silver and gold coins, which, in the caption for Regina's portrait, are described as "chaplet of coins" that had "inspired the halo in sacred art."

¹¹¹ Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 365; Franz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in *A Dying Colonialist*, trans. Haakon Chevalier (New York: Grove Press, 1965), 42.

¹¹² Sontag, *On Photography*, 22.

diffused from the Friends' mission and British imperialism. Her image is disconnected from her historic context and used within an educational magazine as social and visual inventory of a community. It is through the categorization of Regina's dress that she is perceived through her *thobe* and immobilized as an anonymous cultural stand-in. Through this anonymization, the image reflects how Christian Palestinian women had both special privileges and shackles in 1926.

Regina's privileged position in 1926, of being prosperous, owning land (by proxy of men), living in Ramallah, and receiving an education, is lost to the viewer because of her visual and textual portrayal as a peasant. One privilege was that in Ramallah, Christians could own land, which Regina's family did. Her family were not peasants as the image would suggest through visual cues, but rather, landowners. According to my interview with Regina's granddaughter, Amal Sakkab Habib, "[Regina] came from also middle-class family." Habib also said, "My mom [Regina's daughter] would say they had a whole mountain-like area, in Ramallah, that belonged to them."¹¹³ Another privilege was that she could attend school, but this privilege was double-sided. First, the privilege of school was only made possible by American missionaries and Ottoman Law allowing Christian's control of education. Second, the privilege of school is shadowed by the Friends' missionary school practices and beliefs in the 1920s. Regina attending the Friends' mission school meant she experienced Western colonists viewing her as racially inferior.

Regina living under the British Mandate meant she experienced explicit imperialism. Regina, being a woman, also led to little autonomy outside of the home, by both her spouse,

¹¹³ Amal Sakkab Habib (Granddaughter of Regina Mousa Habib), in an interview with Lena Sakkab, December 16, 2025.

family, and community. Regina's position as "village" woman affected by multicolonial forces left her powerless in forging her own identity. She is visually depicted, as McClintock states, "the symbolic bearers of the nation" while simultaneously denied "national agency."¹¹⁴ These reproduced photographs and their reinstated captions once reflect a prescribed role placed on her as well as an archival imbalance. Once our focus has shifted from blindly accepting the "authorized" published and archival sources to picturing the photographed events in Regina's perspective, we can evaluate and intuit the truth to how women in Regina's position were controlled, silenced, and othered.

¹¹⁴ McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*, 354.

CONCLUSION

The 1926 portraits and captions Regina is featured in, published within “In the Birthplace of Christianity” by Williams, were initially utilized to visually categorize Palestinians. According to Sary Zananiri in *Imaging and Imagining Palestine*, the categorization process under the British Mandate period reflects the emerging new nation-states created after the Ottoman period, and European modernity’s redrawing of class, race, gender, and nationhood.¹¹⁵ Regina’s portraits, when analyzed historically, reflect a moment captured in Palestinian history, where Palestine was undergoing colonial shifts. Palestinian portraits found in *National Geographic* are argued by Yazan Kopty in his essay “Indigenising *National Geographic*’s Images of Mandatory Palestine” to have been coercive bureaucratic tools to visually categorize the nation under imperial Britain’s rule. These three photographs and their captions categorize Regina as a Palestinian Christian schoolgirl for American viewers.

Although I answered Kopty’s first question, “who will speak on behalf of British Mandate subjects” (I did), the second remains: “Was a single new description enough to represent the perspective and experience of the subject?”¹¹⁶ Throughout this paper, I approximated Regina Mousa Habib’s perspective and experience in order to represent her lost voice. I used community media and scholarship which utilize colonizer accounts of Palestine. Williams’ photographs and captions which were reproduced as evidence in these texts. From the Ottoman taxes used in *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, to the 1931 Mandate census that

¹¹⁵ Zananiri, “Imaging and Imagining Palestine,” 4-6.

¹¹⁶ Kopty, “Edward Keith-Roach,” 344.

categorized and simplified the population for British diplomacy, much of Palestine's concrete history is recorded by outsiders. Colonial archival documents and taxation history have been used to determine truths within oral traditions of keeping history. These networks of influences oppress and document symbiotically. It may be nearly impossible to have a single description or meaning for an interconnected and mobile history represented by Regina's series of photographs.

The three reproduced images of Regina multiply into many meanings: collective pride in *Hathihe Ramallah*, pictorial evidence of existence in *Pictorial History of Ramallah*, and as entertainment for Americans who saw it first in the *National Geographic*. Her smiling photo depicts a beautiful Christian schoolgirl, who, unknown to the spectator and only revealed through intuiting beyond her photograph and caption: survived the Typhus Plague, attended school before education for women was mandated, and perhaps veiled politically. All this information is unknown to diasporic viewers because Williams' caption and interpretation become the authoritative source on her photograph.¹¹⁷ Her portrait represents, as Barthes says, a mask. Her mask exemplifies Marilyn Frye's idea in *Politics of Reality*, where she states to smile and appear docile is a requirement for oppressed people, and to do so is to "acquiesce in our situation" and "participate in our own erasure."¹¹⁸ In Regina's two smiling photos, she does what Williams and other curious Americans want to see. She "implicitly" reaffirms the caption calling her a beautiful peasant by smiling and appearing docile. In Regina's portrait, in which she glares, she breaks free of this docile convention. By refusing to smile, she refuses to acquiesce in her erasure. When Regina glares, to me, this is the punctum, the glimpse of truth within her situation. It is one small gesture she could have done to reclaim her agency.

¹¹⁷ Sontag, *On Photography*, 4.

¹¹⁸ Marilyn Frye, *Politics of Reality* (New York: Crossing Press, 1983), 2.

My attempt to reclaim Regina's agency by approximating her perspective through oral accounts about her, as well as family ephemera, counteracts the reprinted mimesis of Williams's missionary perspective facilitated by republishing his photographs and captions. My use of oral history was both to access ancestral knowledge from Palestinian Christian elders and to reclaim oral storytelling as a valid and credible cultural product created by women. For Palestinian women, the oral poetry and oral storytelling tradition has always been both communal and private, used for recording personal and political history.¹¹⁹ Palestinian women's oral traditions are impacted by continuous colonization, through structural systems of knowledge (the missionary materials within official archive sources), ongoing ethnic cleansing (the settler state), and diasporic loss of language. Language would need to be analyzed further throughout this topic, as language "carries culture" and is attached to colonial power.¹²⁰ It must be acknowledged that this paper is written using academic prose in English, limiting its accessibility and its ability to connect this production of knowledge with the very community this was written for: Regina's family.

Regina's life, dissected through vernacular sources, examines her personal and political position as a subjugated member of Palestinian society. Seeing from Regina's perspective sheds light on Ramallah women's complex marginal community that has been fractured by numerous empires and patriarchal society. Through collecting oral histories from both male and female descendants of Regina, analyzing family photographs and documents, Regina Mousa Habib's perspective manifests through fragments. Seeing from Regina's eyes also disavows the absorbed misinformation by diasporic texts that rely on archival sources from misinformed missionaries.

¹¹⁹ Najjar, *Portraits of Palestinian Women*, 17.

¹²⁰ Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 38; In the words of Linda Tuhiwai Smith, writing history in and of itself is dangerous: academic writing selects and arranges specific texts to present knowledge, producing a specific narrative of history.

Though this paper approximates her perspective, we may never know Regina, and many other Palestinian women's "true" perspective of this exact event because, like the blank names of the Friends school 1927 yearbook photo, it was not written down, recorded, remembered, or archived.

APPENDIX—A NOTE ON THE TEXT

The term “Middle East” is used throughout this text. Despite questionable origins, I use the term Middle East for simplicity when discussing the Southwest Asia and North African regions. For additional simplicity, I used the term “American” to discuss citizens from the United States of America.

I navigated answering questions about my main subject, Regina Mousa Habib, by reading family documents, examining photographs closely, and interviewing her descendants and people who knew her personally. For these interviews, I followed Orayb Aref Najjar’s method in *Portraits of Palestinian Women*. Following Najjar’s method meant the interviewees are named to combat anonymity found in the media I analyze. However, unlike Najjar’s compilation of oral history, most of my interviews were in English and do not span different groups of Palestinians; rather, I focus on Regina Habib’s inner circle, her children, grandchildren, daughter-in-law, and sister-in-law. These interviewees share a socioeconomic position as middle class, Greek Orthodox Palestinians from the West Bank, or the British Mandate’s “Jerusalem district” (Ramallah and Jericho), who now live in North America. This narrow diasporic Greek Orthodox Palestinian identity represents a marginalized group within an already marginal community. The Palestinian Diaspora, as it affects Greek Orthodox Palestinians, especially those from Ramallah, will also be a topic within this paper’s interviews and media, such as *Hathithe Ramallah*.

The names of Palestinian women researched within this paper will be written in the order of first name, maiden surname, and married surname. For example, Regina Mousa Habib’s maiden name was Regina Mousa al Nablusci, then when she married, it was Regina Sarsor, but that name transitioned from Sarsor to Habib, as the Sarsor family changed it, many when they

immigrated to the United States. For ease, I will only use the changed name (Habib) and maiden name (Mousa). As for the men I interviewed, their names remain unchanged. Interviewees include Amal Sakkab Habib, Shadi Sakkab, Hannah Habib, Nuha Habib, and Suad Habib Ahwal. I am thankful for my family, who allowed me to interview them, and for my father, Shadi Sakkab, my mother, Rana Ajlouni Sakkab, and my aunt, Amal Sakkab Habib, for assisting any translation done.

FIGURE INDEX

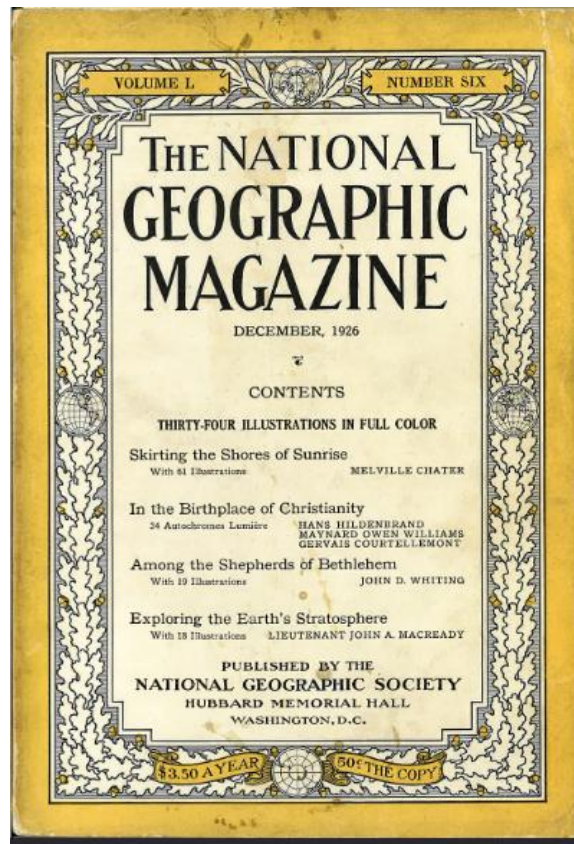


Figure 1: Front cover of *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1926 issue.

First Christmas for Parker Desk Sets!
—the Ones That Let the Pens Lie Down Without Drying

Non-Breakable Permanent Barrels—25 Year Duofold Points

Tapered Fountain Pens in attractive Desk Sets—pens that hold their own ink, so the desk can be freed of steel pens, pen holders and ink stands.—These are the newest, the most exciting Gifts that have appeared this Christmas.

But all the more reason to select the Set that lets the pens not only sit and stand upright, but also lie level when not in use, still keeping the points ever moist with ink, ready to write instantly!

That's exactly why popular favor has turned to Parker Desk Sets with Roll-and-Socket action. No other is like it. It keeps the pens out of harm's way—It lets this set be slipped in a drawer and locked up. Besides, you have here the celebrated Parker Duofold Pens with non-breakable Permanent Barrels and points guaranteed 25 years, not only for mechanical perfection but for use!

Any good pen counter can supply you if you specify the original "Geo. S. Parker Duofold." Write for illustrated circular if no Parker dealer is near.

THE PARKER PEN COMPANY, BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS
 NEW YORK - CHICAGO - CLEVELAND - DALLAS - SAN FRANCISCO
 TORONTO, CANADA - LONDON, ENGLAND

Parker Duofold Desk Sets
Gift Box Included

Set of One Paul or Paul Penman, Complete with Parker Duofold Jr. Pen, \$24.50

Black Glass Box, with 2 Parker Duofold Jr. Pens, \$27.00; Complete, \$31.50

Parker's Complete Roll-and-Socket Action permits the Pens to lie level without drying

One Black Glass Box, with 2 Parker Duofold Jr. Pens, \$31; Complete, \$35

Figure 2: Back cover of *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1926 issue.



*No other gift
can give
such satisfaction*

COULD any woman have a more wonderful Christmas? A beautiful new metal cabinet Frigidaire, with its lustrous white Duco finish and its spotless porcelain enamel lining—a gift that will prove an everyday convenience for years to come.

There are more than 250,000 Frigidaires in use—more than all other electric refrigerators combined. And any Frigidaire user

will tell you of Frigidaire's unvarying dependability and economy, and of the unequalled service rendered by the nation-wide Frigidaire organization.

The nearest Frigidaire representative will be glad to show you the new metal cabinet models and the Frigidaire units designed for installation in the standard makes of ice-boxes. New low prices and the General Motors deferred payment plan make Frigidaire very easy to buy.



"This modern ice man" calls once with Frigidaire and the ice never comes again

Frigidaire
PRODUCT OF GENERAL MOTORS

Be Sure it is a Frigidaire—Product of General Motors

FRIGIDAIRE CORPORATION
Dept. Y-48, Dayton, Ohio
Please send me a copy of the Frigidaire Catalog

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____

Figure 3: Frigidaire advertisement, *The National Geographic Magazine*, 1926.



© National Geographic Society

A CHRISTIAN SCHOOL GIRL OF RAMALLAH

A scarf such as that worn by this young woman may have served Ruth when she gleaned an ephah of barley in the fields of Boaz. It is heavy with silk embroidery and fringe. The dark gown is that worn on workdays or by those in mourning. Among the four main types of costumes seen in Palestine, those of Ramallah are most attractive.



Associated Press—photo by Maynard Owen Williams

A TURBANED PATRIARCH

Palestine is a land of comely young women and handsome old men. The years which affect the fleeting beauty of the former bring dignity and character to the faces of the latter, who are at their best when in repose, gossiping among themselves, soaking up the sun, or lazily spinning a handful of snowy yarn.

Figure 4: Maynard Owen Williams, *A Christian School Girl of Ramallah*, and *A Turbaned Patriarch*, autochrome lumiere print, scanned from *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1926.



Figure 5: Maynard Owen Williams, scanned autochrome lumiere from *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1926.



Figure 6: Maynard Owen Williams, scanned autochrome lumiere from *The National Geographic Magazine*, December 1926.



Figure 7: Scanned photograph in *Pictorial History of Ramallah*. Friends Girls School. May 1927. Courtesy of *Pictorial History of Ramallah*.

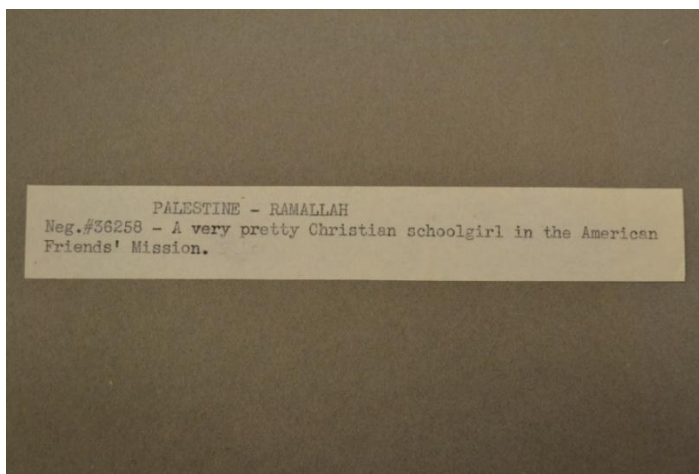


Figure 8: Friends Girls School. May 1927, photograph. Friends School Collection. Courtesy of the Palestinian Museum Digital Archive.

Figure 8.5: Back of photograph. Friends Girls School. May 1927, photograph. Friends School Collection. Courtesy of the Palestinian Museum Digital Archive.



Figure 9: Left to Right, Regina Mousa Sarsor (Habib), her daughter Maryiam, her husband Aziz Sarsor Habib, her mother-in-law Nasara, Hanna Habib, Nijmeh, and their children, Fareed, Jaleel, Widad, Aziza. Image from Ramallah Preservation Project. ca.1937.



PALESTINE - RAMALLAH
Neg.#36258 - A very pretty Christian schoolgirl in the American
Friends' Mission.



Figure 10: Regina Mousa Sarsor from Maynard Owen Williams' personal album, ca. 1926. Williams Collection. Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The Ramallah Messenger

Vol. 3

Lynn, Mass., December, 1906

No. 6

"Arise, Shine; for thy Light is come."



The above picture was taken in the house of one of Ramallah's most prosperous men. He and his wife stand at the left. The three others are neighbors who followed us in curiosity. The paved floor is one of the signs of riches, also the nicely whitewashed walls. Behind the curtains, in recesses of the walls, is the family bedding. A large sack of wheat, at the right, provides for home-made flour. Near it is the woman's household chest and

wardrobe. In front of the sack are the shoes dropped by one of the men as he entered. On the floor at the extreme right is the stove, a little clay brazier for charcoal. At the extreme left is a little cooking dish on the floor. Rather unusual are the pictures on the walls. And, marvel of all, is the low, narrow bedstead behind the householders. The usual peasant bed is a pallet on the floor.

—E. G.

Figure 11: *The Ramallah Messenger*, December 1906. Courtesy of *Pictorial History of Ramallah*.

RAMALLAH SCHOOL GIRLS IN THE NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC MAGAZINE, 1926



In December 1926, Volume L, No. 6, The National Geographic Magazine published the first color issue of the magazine totally dedicated to Palestine ~ The Holy Land. By coincidence, Mr. Chris Anton Ajlouni was able to obtain a good copy which contained these rare pictures from the Internet. He was kind enough to loan us the copy so we can show you these pictures of beautiful young Ramallah school girls as they appeared in 1926. Chris identified the girl (upper left) as his grandmother, Zahweh Jaber. She was married to Easa Ghannam and had five children; Shawki, Fuad, Adel, Kathryn and Adla.

If anyone of our readers can identify any others, please let us know so we can publish the names in the next issue.

Note: The article said that the Shiny Chaplets of Coins (Shatweh) worn by these girls are believed to have inspired the "halo" in sacred art. We are proud that Ramallah had international fame even in 1926.

Figure 12: "Ramallah School Girls," scanned Hathihe Ramallah clipping, ca. 2005.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Archival Sources

Maynard Owen Williams Collection, Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan.

The Ramallah Friends School Collection, The Palestinian Museum Digital Archive.

Studies

AFRP History - American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine American Federation of Ramallah, Palestine - The Unity of the Ramallah Family. (2023). Available at: <https://afrp.org/about-us/afrp-history/> .

Behdad, Ali. *Camera Orientalis : Reflections on Photography of the Middle East.* Chicago ; University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Berberian, Houri, and Talinn Grigor. *The Armenian Woman, Minoritarian Agency, and the Making of Iranian Modernity, 1860-1979.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2025.

Berger, John, Sven Blomberg, Christine Fox, Michael Dibb, and Richard Hollis. *Ways of Seeing.* London, England: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1973.

Bhabha, Homi. "Dissemination: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation," in *The Location of Culture.* Routledge classics ed. London: Routledge, 2004.

Brinson, Elizabeth, Davies, Gordon. *Sumoud: Voices and Images of the Ramallah Friends.* Friends United Press, Richmond, Indiana, 2014.

Edwards, Holly, Sterling, and Francine Clark Art Institute., Walters Art Gallery, Mint Museum of

Art., and Brian T Allen. *Noble Dreams, Wicked Pleasures : Orientalism in America, 1870-1930.* Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press in association with the Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2000.

<http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/description/prin022/00036685.html>.

Farago, Claire J. *Reframing the Renaissance : Visual Culture in Europe and Latin America, 1450-1650.* New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995.

Fawadleh, Hadeel. "Emigration of Arab Christians from Palestine: Ramallah-Al-Bireh District-A Case Study / هجرة المسيحيين العرب من فلسطين : محافظة رام الله والبيرة انموذجا / Bethlehem University Journal 33 (2015): 146–65. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26448665>.

- Furani, Khaled, and Dan Rabinowitz. "The Ethnographic Arriving of Palestine." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 40 (2011): 475–91. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41287744>.
- Fleischmann, Ellen. *The Nation and Its "New" Women: The Palestinian Women's Movement, 1920-1948*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003. <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/bios/ucal052/2002009719.html>.
- Frye, Marilyn. *The Politics of Reality: Essays in Feminist Theory*. First edition. Trumansburg, New York: Crossing Press, 1983.
- Gillies, John Wallace. *Principles of Pictorial Photography*. New York: Arno Press, 1973.
- Hirsch, Marianne, and Leo Spitzer. *School Photos in Liquid Time: Reframing Difference*. University of Washington Press, 2021.
- Ison, Mary M. "Uriah Hunt Painter and the 'Marvelous Kodak Camera.'" *Washington History* 2, no. 2 (1990): 30–47. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40073021>.
- Kassem, Fatma. *Palestinian Women: Narrative Histories and Gendered Memory*. London: Zed Books, 2011.
- Kopty, Yazan. "Edward Keith-Roach's Favourite Things: Indigenising *National Geographic's* Images of Mandatory Palestine." In *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, edited by Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, 309–39. Brill, 2021.
- Lewis, Reina. *Gendering Orientalism: Race, Femininity, and Representation*. New York: Routledge, 1996. <http://catdir.loc.gov/catdir/enhancements/fy0649/95016143-d.html>.
- Lydon, Jane. *Photography, Humanitarianism, Empire*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2016.
- Mahmood, Saba. "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival." *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2001): 202–36. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/656537>.
- McClintock, Anne. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest*. New York: Routledge, 1995.
- Najjar, Orayb Aref, Kitty Warnock, and Rosemary Sayigh. *Portraits of Palestinian Women*. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1992.
- Nassar, Issam. "Bearers of Memory: Photo Albums as Sources of Historical Study in Palestine." In *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, edited by Karène Sanchez Summerer and Sary Zananiri, 157–82. Brill, 2021.

- Nassar, Issam, Stephen Sheehi, and Salim Tamari. "Visual Interlude: Photographic Images from Ottoman and Mandate Palestine." In *Camera Palaestina: Photography and Displaced Histories of Palestine*, 1st ed., 5:45–77. University of California Press, 2022.
- O'Mahony, Anthony. *Palestinian Christians: Religion, Politics, and Society in the Holy Land*. London: Melisende, 1999.
- Othman, Enaya Hammad. "Deconstructing the Dogma of Domesticity: Quaker Education and Nationalism in British Mandate Palestine." *Journal of Colonialism & Colonial History* 19, no. 1 (2018). <https://doi.org/10.1353/cch.2018.0000>.
- Othman, Enaya Hammad. "Palestinian American Women's Marriages within and beyond Borders." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 18, no. 2 (2022): 195–215. <https://doi.org/10.1215/15525864-9767842>.
- Othman, Enaya Hammad. *Negotiating Palestinian Womanhood: Encounters Between Palestinian Women and American Missionaries, 1880s-1940s*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, 2018.
- Radai, Itamar. "The Rise and Fall of the Palestinian-Arab Middle Class Under the British Mandate, 1920-39," *Journal of Contemporary History* 51, No. 3 (July 2016): 487-506.
- Rajab, Jehan S. *Palestinian Costume*. London: Kegan Paul, 1989.
- Rose, Jacqueline. *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, 1986.
- Rothenberg, Tamar Y. *Presenting America's World: Strategies of Innocence in National Geographic Magazine, 1888–1945*. Hampshire: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007.
- Said, Edward W. *Orientalism*. 25th Anniversary edition / with a new preface by the author. New York: Vintage Books, 2003.
- Shaheen, Naseeb. *A Pictorial History of Ramallah*. 1st ed. Beirut: Arab Institute for Research and Publishing, 1992.
- Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Second edition. London: Zed Books, 2012.
- Sontag, Susan. *On Photography*. New York: Picador, an imprint of Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1990.
- Summerer, Karène Sanchez, and Sary Zananiri, eds. *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*. Brill, 2021.
- Sternberger, Paul Spencer. *Between Amateur and Aesthete: The Legitimization of Photography as Art in America, 1880-1900*. First edition. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2001.
- Stoler, Ann. "Colonial Archives and the Arts of Governance." *Archival Science*. 2. (2002) 10.1007/BF02435632.

Weir, Shelagh. *Palestinian Costume*. London: Published for the Trustees of the British Museum by British Museum Publications, 1989.

Williams, Maynard Owen. "In the Birthplace of Christianity." *National Geographic Magazine* 50, (December 1926): 697-721

Zaiman, A. "Census of Palestine, 1931." *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society* 96, no. 4 (1933): 660–62. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2341903>.

Zananiri, Sary. "Imaging and Imagining Palestine: An Introduction." In *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens, 1918–1948*, edited by Sary Zananiri and Karène Sanchez Summerer, 1–28.