M rules below

JOURNEYS

We readers are fellow travelers: tossed in the sea with Odysseus and his crew, setting out for the Promised Land with Abraham, fleeing from Mecca to Medina with the Prophet Muhammad, or window shopping in London with Mrs. Dalloway. The journey, as both fact and metaphor, has always been a part of literature and central to the stories we tell and to how we understand our world.

But travel is not just the stuff of narrative. Writers are travelers too, even if their experiences on the road are not recorded on the page. For example, in the medieval Islamic world – a zone of shared culture, language, and faith stretching from Spain to India – scholars would spend decades traveling from city to city and from court to court, seeking knowledge, patronage, and spiritual guidance. The annual Hajj pilgrimage lent a destination and structure to these peripatetic itineraries, and many scholars ended their days in the holy city of Mecca, which thereby became a center of thought and creativity. This classical model continued into the modern age, when not only Muslim thinkers but also European students of Islam traveled through the Middle East in search of their own kind of enlightenment.

For Jews, Christians, and Muslims, the Holy Land is the archetypical destination of pilgrimage and a place of inspiration; it sometimes seems that all roads lead to Jerusalem. Pilgrims' accounts of their journeys demonstrate the importance of this land for all three religions and provide critical evidence of the social history and daily life of its inhabitants in different periods. Alongside these written travelogues, writers also used other means to record their experiences, including sketches, postcards, music, and even pressed flowers. Such notes from the journey testify not just to miles walked, nature documented, and landscapes viewed but also to the gap between fantasy and reality. The discomforts of the dirty and dusty country often fall short of the imagined and idealized Promised Land. Even for those who come to find refuge, the starkness of the Land of Israel can be a shock, even a disappointment.

Can you please with David what this line is?

The Wandering Poem

Muhammad al-Busiri, Ode of the Mantle, 1362

SAMUEL THROPE

The scholar and lexicographer Muhammad Firuzabadi (1329–1414) lived his life on the road. Born in the Iranian town of Firuzabad in 1329, he was educated in Shiraz and then traveled to Baghdad. From the age of twenty, he lived in Damascus, Jerusalem, Mecca, and Delhi, before finally settling in Yemen, where he became chief judge and died in 1415.

Throughout his peripatetic life, Fīruzabadi composed numerous works, most famously his Arabic dictionary, *The Surrounding Ocean* (*Qamus al-muhit*). His biographers relate that he was always studying, buying, and selling books as he traveled and taking every opportunity to read during the stops on his journeys. Firuzabadi was by no means exceptional for his time. Movement and knowledge were inseparably linked in the medieval Islamic world, with scholars traveling long distances to study with leading masters and books circulating far and wide.

In 1362, during a return trip to Damascus and, possibly, Jerusalem as well, Firuzabadi copied this later-illuminated manuscript of the *Ode of the Mantle* (*Qasidat al-burda*), a thirteenth-century mystical poem in praise of the Prophet Muhammad that is one of the most popular and widely quoted classical Arabic texts. Firuzabadi, who wrote a commentary of his own on the poem, was particularly interested in ~~the poem's~~ linguistic elements. While the fate of the manuscript in the intervening centuries is unknown, a Persian note written in 1911 and appended to this copy tells of its eventual return to Firuzabadi's homeland of Iran. The note was written by the manuscript's then owner, Lutf-Ali b. Muhammad al-Kazim, and relates the painstaking gathering of the sixteen folios of the manuscript from different locations over the course of twenty years. Despite al-Kazim's labors, the manuscript did not remain long in Iran, as stamps on the final pages indicate its approval for export in 1930.

Imam al-Busiri's *Ode of the Mantle* (*Kitab al-burda*) copied 1362, showing text, commentary, and floral illustration. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection. Ms. Yah. Ar. 784, folio 14r.

African Visions of Mary

Arganon – Ethiopian Prayer Book, 16th century

SHAY ESHEL

Arganon, Ethiopia, 17th century. A full-page illustration showing St. George killing the dragon, folio 1v. As with most of the illuminations in this manuscript, the style of depiction shows African influences.

Following page: Full-page illustration showing the Virgin Mary holding Jesus Christ as a child in her arms. The text's layout shows the influence of late medieval European patterns: two columns and the use of red and black ink. The Abraham Shalom Yahuda Collection, Ms. Yah. Or. 13, folios 94v–95r.

In 1838, the French adventurer and renowned geographer Antoine d'Abbadie (1810–1897) came upon a magnificent sixteenth-century manuscript: an Ethiopian prayer book dedicated to the Virgin Mary (Arganon). Written in the holy Geʿez language and decorated with beautiful iconography of Mary with the child Jesus, it also contains illustrations of Saint George killing the dragon and other expressive and colorful examples of Ethiopian religious art. D'Abbadie was so impressed by the manuscript that, despite its unusual weight and size, he took it with him on his travels throughout Ethiopia, making it "my pillow when sleeping on the bare ground and my seat when breaking my unleavened bread with the Ethiopian, the Shaho and the Badawi."

On a short visit to Rome, before returning to Ethiopia, d'Abbadie presented the manuscript to Lord Hugh Clifford, an enthusiastic collector. The rare manuscript passed through several hands before its incorporation into the collection of the National Library. One can only presume that the original Ethiopian scribe and illuminator of this manuscript would have been more than happy to know that their work of art had found its way to Jerusalem, the origin of Ethiopian religious and national identity. For Jerusalem is the place where, according to Ethiopian tradition, King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba fell in love with each other's wisdom and spent one last night together, conceiving the first emperor of the centuries-old Ethiopian Solomonic dynasty.

Sketching the Holy Land

The Album of Claude Reignier Conder, 1872–1875

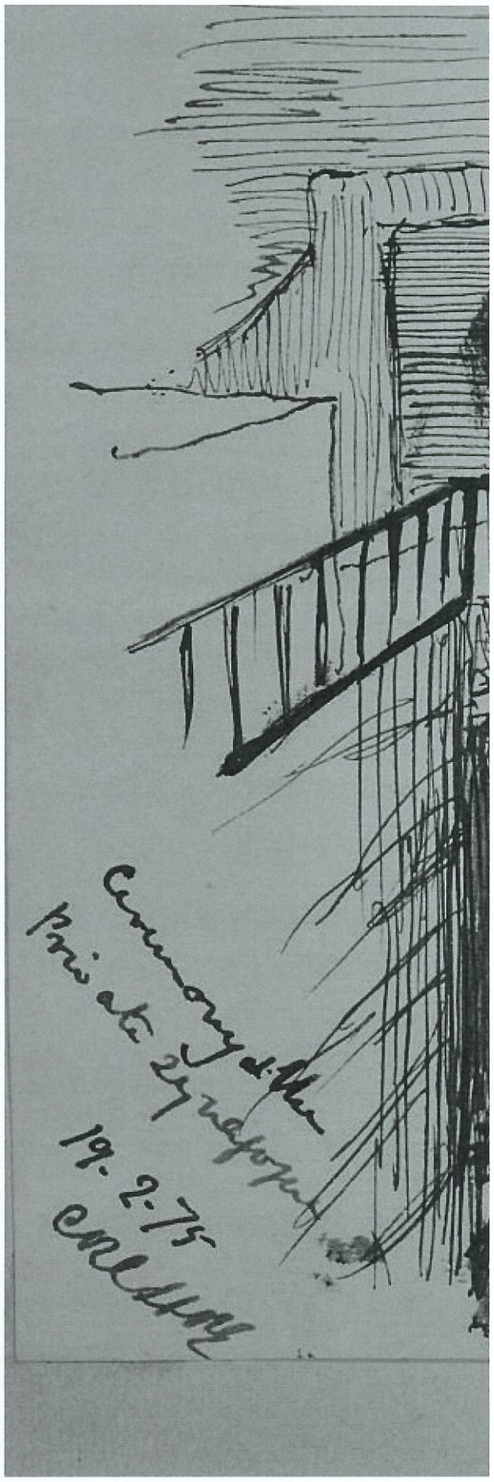
MILKA LEVY-RUBIN

In 1872, Claude Reignier Conder (1848–1910), a twenty-four-year-old surveyor, draftsman, and lieutenant in the British Corps of Royal Engineers, arrived in the Holy Land. Conder was commissioned to continue the recently begun survey of Palestine that had been initiated by the Palestine Exploration Fund, an organization devoted to the scientific research of the Holy Land. Together with his fellow officer, Horatio H. Kitchener – who was to become the renowned British secretary of war during World War I – Conder produced an ordnance survey of Palestine on twenty-six sheets in just three years.

These were tumultuous times. The Ottoman Empire was declining, and Western powers, driven by military and economic interests, sought to strengthen their foothold in the East. Western explorers, adventurers, and researchers were roaming this ancient historic stage, eager to discover the secrets of the ancient Near East.

Conder, a well-educated English Protestant, was likewise much intrigued by his encounter with the Holy Land. This scrapbook, put together by Conder's family and donated to the National Library by his grandson in 1961, contains a wealth of handwritten letters accompanied by beautiful sketches that Conder sent home during his three-year sojourn. These sketches allow us to view Palestine through European eyes, with Arab women drawing water and local Jewish wedding practices embedded in the ~~local~~ landscape.

The letters contain many impressions and anecdotes. They capture his disillusionment with the Holy Land: "Palestine is certainly in parts a rich and fertile and beautiful country...In other parts, it is miserable and the villages and towns are the reverse of picturesque." They also reflect his high self-esteem and aspirations: "I am...very happy for things are going very well and if it pleases God to take me safe through my three years in Palestine I will make a name on my return which will throw my predecessors in the shade."



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Sketches from Conder's scrapbook, *The Claude Reignier Conder Collection.* Donated by Eliyahu Elath. V 1209/01.

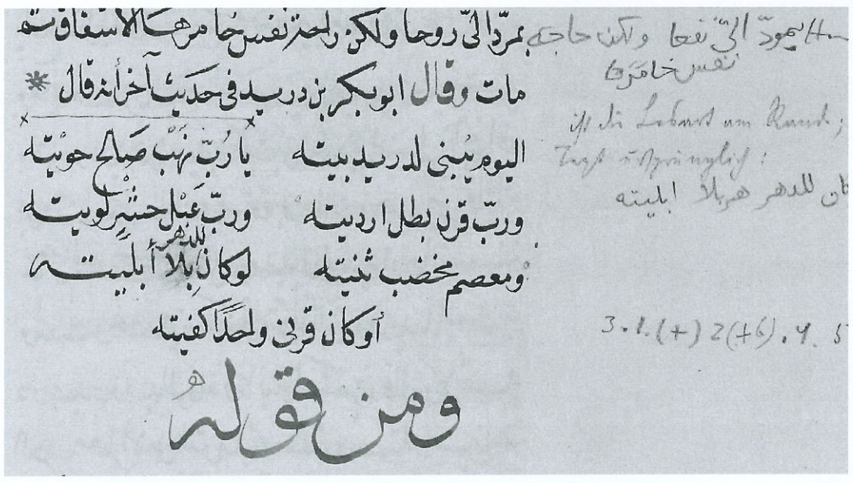
Above: A Jewish wedding ceremony in Jerusalem, from a letter Conder sent from Ottoman Palestine to his mother in England, February 19, 1875.

Following page: Arab women and their clothing, from Conder's letter to his mother dated November 18, 1872.

A Jewish Scholar in al-Azhar College

The Ignaz Goldziher Manuscript Collection 1873–1921

SAMUEL THROPE



Goldziher's notes and emendations in Arabic and German on a manuscript of Abu Hatim al-Sijistani's *News of the Aged* (*Akhbar al-mu'ammarun*) copied in Cairo in 1892. Folio 13v (left) and folio 1r (right). Ms. Ar. 2.

In January 1874, a young scholar of Islam, Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921), met with Shaykh Abbasi, the rector of Al-Azhar, Cairo's illustrious university. Goldziher's goal was to convince Abbasi to admit him as the first-ever non-Muslim student.

When Abbasi asked Goldziher to state his religion, the latter replied in fluent Arabic with a clever deflection: "My name is Ignaz al-Majari, I was born among the *ahl al-kitab*, and I believe that I shall be resurrected with the confessors of oneness."

Rather than confessing his true identity as an observant Jew, Goldziher called himself first a Hungarian (*majari*), then one of the Islamically-sanctioned "people of the book," and finally a believer in divine unity. Goldziher went on to demonstrate his erudition in Islamic law and was successfully admitted to the university.

Despite his outstanding scholarship and rare first-hand familiarity with Islam, Goldziher was not awarded a university position upon returning to Budapest. Largely because of his refusal to convert to Christianity, he spent most of his professional life as the secretary of the Jewish community. Nonetheless, by the time of his death in 1921, he was renowned as Europe's preeminent authority on Islam.

In that same year, the Zionist Executive was discussing the establishment of the Hebrew University and saw Goldziher's collection of 6,000 books and manuscripts as central to the project. The Goldziher Library, which arrived in Jerusalem in 1924, remains the core of the National Library's Islam and Middle East Collection today.

Zionism on the Map

Panorama of the Land of Israel, 1897

HEZI AMIUR

Close-up of *Panorama of the Holy Land* (*Panorama des heiligen Landes*) published by the Salo Schottlaender printing house, Breslau, c. 1897, showing both ancient and modern Jerusalem. The Eran Laor Cartographic Collection. Pal 1134.

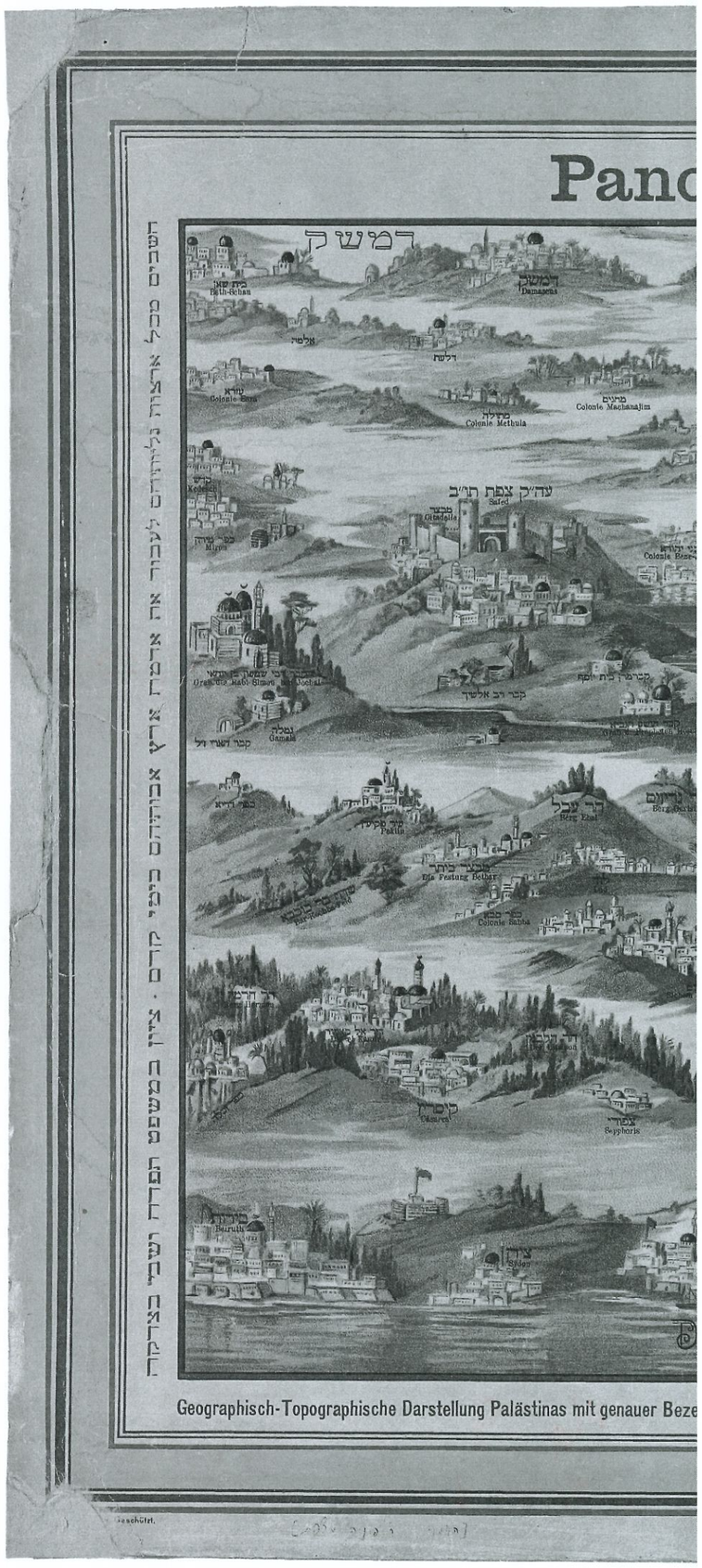
How does one reach Jerusalem from Damascus? What is the location of the sites from the stories of the biblical forefathers or the Mishnaic sages? These questions were addressed in various late-nineteenth-century maps employed by travelers – both researchers and religious pilgrims – to the Land of Israel.

Unlike these travelers, many Jews living in the Diaspora did not need practical geographical information but, rather, sought to decorate their homes with an attractive image of the Holy Land. They therefore turned to illustrations, then known as panoramas and today referred to as cartographic tablets.

A typical cartographic tablet featured a lengthy printed title running around its border, beginning with the words "The contours of the Holy Land and its borders" and followed by details such as "its cities, villages, mountains, and hills," etc. The map was a general drawing of the land, including the four holy cities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed as well as other familiar sites from the ancient past, and was a way of marking the graves of the righteous throughout the generations.

This illustrated tablet, while similar to its predecessors, also represents a new Jewish perspective on the land and a modern expression of the Jewish people's historical commitment to it by including in the title: "all the regions and colonies where Jews have settled in returning from their lands of exile to work the land of their forefathers as in times past." Indeed, this map features all the new settlements founded by the First Aliyah immigrants beginning in 1882. The settlements, as well as several new modern institutions in Jerusalem and Jaffa, are arranged according to their locations in Judea, Samaria, the Upper Galilee, and the Golan.

While it is difficult to determine the exact provenance of this map – the first to feature the new Jewish settlements in the Land of Israel – it was possibly printed in late 1897.



Panorama of the Holy Land (*Panorama des heiligen Landes*), published by the Salo Schottlaender printing house, Breslau, c. 1897. This map of the Land of Israel features Jewish settlements established by those who came as part of the First Aliyah alongside biblical and holy sites. The Eran Laor Cartographic Collection. Pal 1134.

The Visionary as Pilgrim

Theodore Herzl's Postcards to his Daughter from Jerusalem, 1898

GALIA RICHLER GREBLER

Theodor Herzl (1860–1904), the father of modern Zionism, visited the Land of Israel only once in his life. Herzl's journey, accompanied by a Zionist delegation, was organized hastily for the purpose of meeting Emperor Wilhelm II and persuading him to sponsor the Zionist enterprise. For three years, Herzl had been trying in vain to meet with the Emperor and then received an invitation to greet him in Jerusalem – a central stop on the Emperor's journey to the Holy Land.

Two days after he arrived in Jerusalem, Herzl sent two postcards to his eldest daughter, eight-year-old Paulina. He sent her a "souvenir from Jerusalem" postcard that had been issued in honor of the Emperor's visit. It features the Temple Mount in the center and a portrait of ~~Emperor~~ Wilhelm II on the left above the eagle symbolizing the German royal family. On the back of the postcard, Herzl wrote (in German): "To my good Paulina, gentle kisses from your devoted father in Jerusalem." The second postcard depicts the Cave of the Patriarchs and the ancient holy city of Hebron.

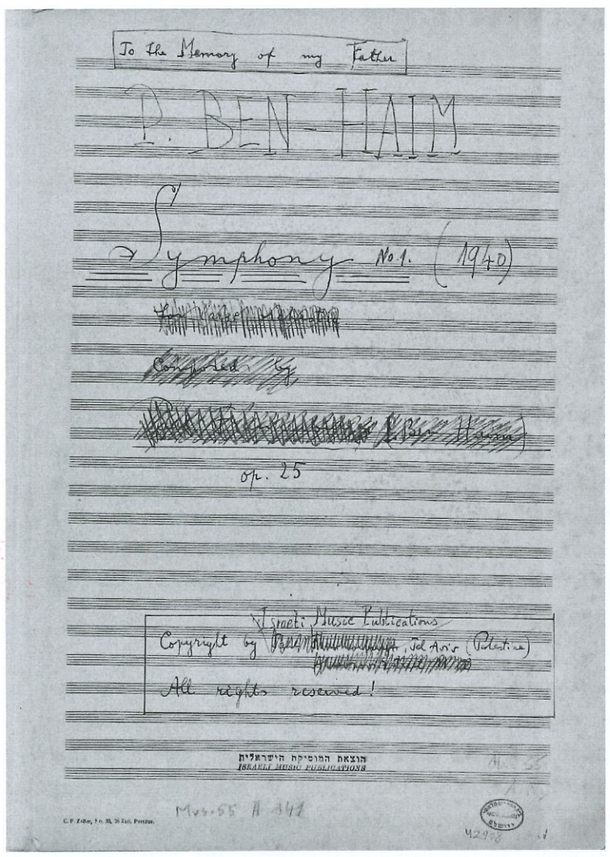
Herzl's impressions of Jerusalem and the rest of the country and his meetings with members of the old and new Jewish communities living in the Land of Israel appear in his novel *Altneuland*, which he wrote four years later. He described his optimistic vision for creating a new society in the ancient land. The Old City of Jerusalem depicted in his novel is home not just to the Dome of the Rock but also to another imagined structure called "The Sanctuary of Peace," a replacement for the Temple. However, as the two postcards he chose to send to his daughter attest, Herzl paid attention not only to the utopian future but also to the two ancient holy cities.

Two postcards sent by Theodor Herzl to his daughter Paulina from his travels in the Land of Israel during Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit, October 30, 1898. Top: The Temple Mount in Jerusalem. Bottom: The Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. Schwad 01 05 314 VII.

The Land of Israel's First Symphony

The Paul Ben-Haim Archive, 1909–1984

GILA FLAM



Paul Ben-Haim, Symphony no. 1, opus 25 (1940).

Left: Cover page of autographed score, black ink with corrections in blue pen. The birth name Paul Frankenburger has been erased twice and replaced by the name Paul Ben-Haim. A dedication "To the memory of my father" by the composer and place and date, Tel Aviv, 1940.

Right: First page of the score for symphonic orchestra, black ink on paper with remarks in red and blue pencil. The Paul Ben-Haim Archive. Mus. 0055 A 341.

The first symphony ever written in the Land of Israel was composed by an immigrant composer.

Munich-born Paul Frankenburger (1897–1984) studied music and became a conductor at the Augsburg Opera House. Dismissed from his position when the Nazis assumed power, he visited Palestine in 1933 to examine opportunities as a musician, meeting the violinist Simon Bakman. Bakman asked him to join his concert tour around Palestine as a piano accompanist, but Frankenburger declined the offer due to having no work permit. Bakman suggested overcoming this obstacle by Frankenburger presenting himself with a Hebrew surname. Frankenburger chose the name Ben-Haim (literally, the son of Haim) based on the first letter of his father, Heinrich's, name. Several months later, Frankenburger, now Ben-Haim, immigrated to Palestine with his wife.

Fresh off the boat, Paul Ben-Haim continued his musical career as a teacher, pianist, and composer. Under the encouragement of Leo Kestenberg, the musical director of the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra, Ben-Haim started composing a symphony in August 1939. He completed it on June 20, 1940, against a backdrop of events such as the outbreak of World War II, the bombing of Tel Aviv, and the death of his father.

Although his name change occurred several years earlier, the front cover of the original manuscript shows that the name Frankenburger was written first, then erased with black ink, and replaced by Ben-Haim in both Hebrew and English. Likewise, on the title page, Ben-Haim erased his German name and added the dedication: "To the memory of my father."

The symphony was premiered in January 1941 by the Palestine Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Ben-Haim in Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa and in a radio broadcast. The enthusiastic reviews it received deeply influenced the future direction and style of the new national Jewish music.

Illustrating the Flora of Palestine

The Naomi Finebrun-Dothan Archive, 20th century

HILA ZAKSENBERG

In 1944, the groundbreaking botanist Naomi Feinbrun-Dothan (1900–1995), armed with a field notebook and a straw hat, set out on a research trip to Egypt atop a camel. This was one of numerous research and specimen-finding expeditions she undertook throughout the Land of Israel and the Middle East, disregarding all borders except those of climate zones and natural habitats. The findings were collected on-site and later transferred to the nascent herbarium at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where they were dried, preserved, and cataloged. Feinbrun-Dothan's studies were published periodically in academic journals and books for the general public, addressed "to the residents of the land, to tourists...to readers in the diaspora eager to get to know the country and its flora." These publications featured botanical illustrations by Ruth Koppel, Feinbrun-Dothan's lifelong colleague and partner.

In 1960, Feinbrun-Dothan and Koppel published *Wild Plants of the Land of Israel*, the only one of their joint publications printed completely in color, including descriptions and illustrations of the Jerusalem pine, the poppy, the oleander, and the Egyptian clove. Koppel's handwritten notes on the galleys of this volume shed light on her artistic process and commitment to depicting the specimen accurately. The partners' work culminated in the publication (in collaboration with Professor Michael Zohary) of *The Flora of Palestine*, a monumental research project documenting all local flora and the environs.

The National Library is home to the joint archive of these remarkable women. This archive includes sketches, illustrations, and an extensive three-decades-long correspondence testifying to a symbiotic relationship between the scientist and the artist in which the professional and personal were intertwined. The archival materials offer a unique perspective on the story of the national, scientific, and linguistic enterprise to identify the local vegetation and develop an adequate Hebrew terminology. They also provide us with the rare personal testimony of two women, both immigrants and pioneers, making their way through the academic thicket in the early years of the State.

~~Left~~: Naomi Feinbrun-Dothan on a botanical research trip to Egypt, 1948.

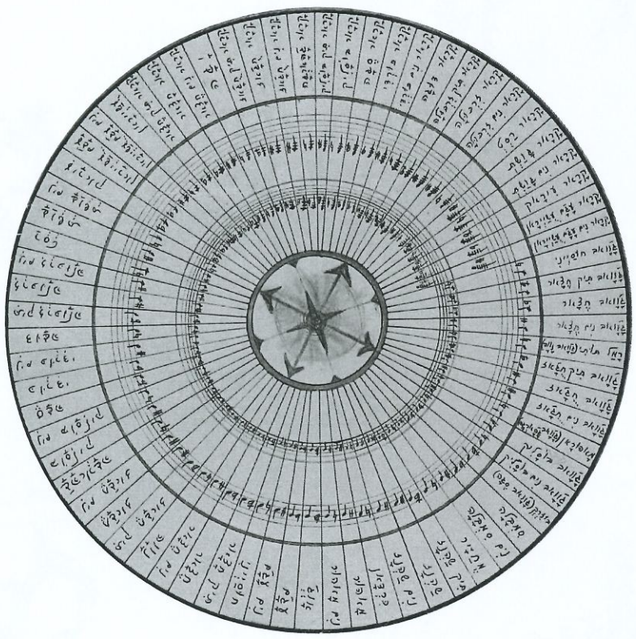
~~Right~~ and following page: Illustrations prepared for the publication of *Wild Plants in the Land of Israel* (*Tsimhe bar be-erets Yisrael*), Tel Aviv, 1960. The illustrations are by Ruth Koppel and the comments are handwritten by the author, Naomi Feinbrun-Dothan.

The Naomi Feinbrun-Dothan Archive. Donated by Uriel Safriel. ARC. 4° 2071.

The Forgotten Jewish Hero of Arabic Music

The Ezra Aharon Sha'ashu'a Archive, 20th century

GILA FLAM



Left and following page: Visualizations by Ezra Aharon of the Arabic *maqam* system in relation to Western notation, showing both as belonging to one universal system where the sounds and modes are connected with the four winds and the days of the week.

Right: A letter confirming the participation of Azoori Haroon (later Ezra Aharon) and his fellow musicians as representatives of the Iraqi government in the Congress of Oriental Music in Cairo, March 1932. The Ezra Aharon Archive. Mus. 294 G 1.

In the 19th and early 20th centuries, Jewish musicians in Baghdad played a central role in Iraqi music. Sharing a love of music with their Muslim neighbors, they were known and praised for their expertise, versatility, and innovation in composition and performance. One of these professional musicians was Ezra Aharon Sha'ashu'a (1903–1995), also known as Azoori Haroon or Azuri Efendi. An oud player and prolific composer, he was chosen in 1932 to head the Iraqi delegation to the inaugural International Congress of Arab Music in Cairo, where he was awarded the title of "best musician."

In Cairo, Aharon met the German Jewish ethnomusicologist Robert Lachmann, who had been sent by the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv to record the event. In 1935, Aharon moved to Jerusalem, where he reencountered Lachmann and joined him in documenting local musical traditions.

Aharon continued to perform and compose, writing hundreds of new religious and secular Hebrew songs in Western staff notation. He participated in the establishment of the Palestine Broadcasting Service (later Kol Israel) and was appointed Head of Oriental Music Programs in 1939. From 1951, he led the newly established Kol Israel Arabic Orchestra. His wide view of music and responsiveness to changing trends allowed him, as a conductor, to incorporate the more popular Egyptian musical style alongside his own Iraqi one. This served Kol Israel's goal of appealing to all Arab Jewish communities and the entire Arab world.

Aharon's contribution to Israeli culture was not acknowledged by contemporary Jewish society. Neither his musical talent and expertise nor his pragmatic approach saved him from the fate of many uprooted Jewish musicians from Arab countries, who were overlooked and rejected by the new, Western-oriented State of Israel. The rediscovery by young musicians and scholars in the twenty-first century of the music of their ancestors has offered hope for a renewed recognition of Arabic Jewish music.