

EXHIBITION REVIEW

Jerusalem, Museums, and Discourses on Settler Colonialism

Review by Sa'ed Atshan and
Katharina Galor

Abstract

This article compares four museum exhibits of Jerusalem from different geographical and political contexts: the Tower of David Museum in Jerusalem, the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, and the Jewish Museum Berlin. It examines the role of heritage narrative, focusing specifically on the question of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and how it is either openly engaged or, alternatively, avoided. The authors employ an analytical framework of settler colonialism and specifically highlight the asymmetric power dynamics resulting from Israel's occupation of East Jerusalem, and how this political reality is addressed or ignored in the respective exhibits. The article also explores the agency of curators in shaping knowledge and perspective, and examines the role of the visitors community. The authors argue that the differences in approaches to exhibiting the city's cultural heritage reveal how museums are central sites for the politics of the human gaze, where significant decisions are made regarding inclusion and exclusion of conflict.

Keywords

Settler colonialism; Tower of David Museum; The Palestinian Museum; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Jewish Museum Berlin; Jerusalem; heritage narratives; visitor communities; curatorial practices.

Introduction

Jerusalem's cultural heritage, not unlike that of other settler colonial cities, cannot be exhibited in an "impartial" manner.¹ Jerusalem's cultural and artistic legacies are intimately tied to the city's geopolitical realities. Both the material and human landscapes are inherent to the structural asymmetries, an imbalance that transpires in all curatorial efforts to showcase the city. In this article, we document museum exhibits that center around Jerusalem, and explore them through the lens of current settler colonial discourses.²

In her 2015 article, "On Assumptive Solidarities in Comparative Settler Colonialisms," feminist studies scholar Dana Olwan provides a nuanced approach to placing Palestine/Israel within an analysis of settler colonial states. She writes, "Although a settler-colonial framework helps us recognize similarities and mutualities in struggles, it also runs the risk of disappearing the particularities and specificities of settler colonial states and the regimes of violence they enact on Indigenous peoples."³ At the same time, Olwan affirms the work of other Palestine scholars who bring "Israel into comparison with cases such as South Africa, Rhodesia and French-Algeria, and earlier settler colonial formations such as the United States, Canada or Australia, rather than the contemporary European democracies to which Israel seeks comparison."⁴

In his book *Heritage, Culture, and Politics in the Postcolony*, cultural studies scholar Daniel Herwitz explores heritage formation in South Africa, recognizing the relationship between colonialism, apartheid, and how South Africans mark their past in museums and other cultural spheres. Herwitz also delineates the parallels and critical differences between the contexts in South Africa and Israel/Palestine, arguing that in Israel as a settler state, heritage is shaped by an unbalanced relationship with the indigenous Palestinian population.⁵

Anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod also explores the complexities of discourses on settler colonialism with reference to Palestine/Israel. In her 2020 article, "Imagining Palestine's Alter-Natives: Settler Colonialism and Museum Politics," Abu-Lughod traces the rise of settler colonialism as a salient analytic for Palestine.⁶ She explicates both the potential limitations and strengths of adopting this framework of settler colonialism, particularly in a comparative lens to other contexts. Abu-Lughod considers the role of museums in either representing native cultures as static, or appropriating their cultures, or commemorating past and present harm against indigenous communities, or in empowering these populations and their political imaginaries. She demonstrates how the Palestinian Museum in the West Bank is an example of museum politics in service of what she terms "Alter-Natives," or a conceptualization of possible future political sovereignty for Palestinians and other native peoples. We draw upon Abu-Lughod's theorization of the relationship between museums and settler colonial discourses to reexamine our own ethnographic research in four different museums, looking specifically at their exhibitions on Jerusalem. It is in consideration of these debates that we highlight how two of the curatorial approaches can be understood as being in service of a settler colonial imagination,

while the other two actively challenge Israel's settler colonial project in Palestine.

Our research reveals how the Tower of David Museum in East Jerusalem tells the city's history in a manner that reinforces Israeli state-driven narratives about the Jewish heritage of the city, marginalizing the Christian and Muslim histories, while eclipsing Palestinian national identity altogether. The erasure of Palestinians in this exhibit is an extension of Israeli erasure of native Palestinians. Jerusalem as portrayed in *Tahya Al Quds (Jerusalem Lives)* at the Palestinian Museum in Birzeit, on the other hand, features the city as militarily occupied by Israel. This reflects Jerusalem as the central stage of Israel's settler-colonial oppression of the Palestinian population. Jewish connections to the city are acknowledged merely as linked to the Israeli state's appropriation of the history and cultural heritage in service of the eviction of Palestinians from the city. *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York proceeds as if there were no settler colonialism in the United States or Palestine/Israel. Drawing upon reified historical relics from the distant past that represent an aestheticized projection of Jerusalem and a fantasy of pluralism in the city, the discomfort of bearing witness to colonization is beyond the realm of possibility for their visitors. Finally, *Welcome to Jerusalem*, the exhibition at the Jewish Museum Berlin, highlights the city's complex human, cultural, and religious past and present, using stimulating visual and artifactual displays and projections while also incorporating the conflict into the portrayal of the city. In this way, the Jewish Museum Berlin's truth-telling actively undermines Israeli settler-colonial narratives surrounding Jerusalem.

Tower of David Museum

Jerusalem's history museum asserts to present the city's multicultural past. Yet, in reality, it highlights its Jewish and Israeli heritages.⁷ Established by an Israeli nonprofit organization in 1989, it operates in concert with municipal and governmental agencies.⁸ Its official mission is to educate the public on the historical heritage of the city, by means of illustrative methods in lieu of original artifacts. Situated near Jaffa Gate, just inside the Old City, it proclaims Israel's ownership narrative of a "united" city, trying to counter its status of occupied territory according to international law.

The museum positions itself as a site that excludes Palestinians and their history. Located in an ancient citadel, it aspires to showcase Jerusalem's legacy in chronological order.⁹ Designed around a courtyard that incorporates archaeological remains (figure



Figure 1. Tower of David Museum organized around central courtyard featuring archaeological remains. Photo Katharina Galor.

1), the main displays in the surrounding exhibit halls feature replicas, models, reconstructions, dioramas, holograms, photographs, drawings, audio and video recordings, and, since October 2017, a hi-tech innovation lab using augmented and virtual reality technologies.¹⁰

The building dates from the Crusader period, with modifications and additions from the Ayyubid, Mamluk, and Ottoman periods.¹¹ The lack of adequate labels, however, dismisses the structure's Christian and Islamic legacies.¹² Examples are the Crusader column capitals at the museum entrance (figure 2), several Ayyubid and Mamluk inscriptions, and the Ottoman period *mihrab* and *minbar* (figure 3), incorporated in the single exhibit hall that summarizes the city's Islamic and Crusader periods.¹³ The building, however, merely functions as an anonymous decorative frame, directing the visitor's gaze primarily towards the carefully curated narrative orchestrated in the exhibit halls.

While the historical sequence does incorporate all main periods, events representing Jerusalem's Jewish and Israeli religious and national perspectives are clearly singled out and stressed. For instance, the final exhibit space until recently centered around Israel's capture of East Jerusalem in 1967, and the Israeli national holiday called "Jerusalem Day," which celebrates the city's "reunification" of East and West. The Palestinian and largely international perspective, which identifies this moment in the city's history as the beginning of Israel's occupation, is not included.¹⁴ The contested nature of the political reality and the mostly critical



Figure 2. Crusader column capitals without labels at the museum entrance. Photo Katharina Galor.



Figure 3. Ottoman period minbar without identifying label. Photo Katharina Galor.

voices against the biased display no doubt led to the overhaul of this room, which now ends the historical survey with a narrative of the British Mandate period. Other recent transformations include a so-called digital innovation lab and the integrated space of “Herod’s Palace and the Kishle,” highlighting the First and Second Temple periods.¹⁵ No doubt, the narrative caters to the museum’s public of mostly Israeli and American Jews, as well as Evangelical Christians, and largely excludes Palestinians.¹⁶ Just as the Israeli settler-colonial project seeks to systematically erase Palestinians, so does the historical narrative displayed in the Tower of David Museum.

The Palestinian Museum

The foundational principle of this newly built museum is to display the Palestinian heritage as a national endeavor. Located in the West Bank, at only 25 km distance from Jerusalem but separated by the wall and checkpoints controlled by the Israeli military, the museum opened its doors to the public in August of 2016. Taawon (Welfare Association), a non-profit foundation devoted to humanitarian and development projects for Palestinians, established the museum. Initially, it was intended primarily to memorialize the Nakba. The project, however, quickly expanded its mission to document Palestinian history more broadly, and to



Figure 4. Vera Tamari’s plexiglas, iron, and wire screen sculpture “Home” in the Palestinian Museum garden terrace, as part of the *Jerusalem Lives* exhibit. Photo Katharina Galor.

engage with its society, art, and culture from the early nineteenth century onward.¹⁷ *Jerusalem Lives (Tahya Al Quds)*, planned as the museum’s inaugural exhibition between August 2017 and January 2018, fulfilled all of these principles.¹⁸ At the center of the temporary show was Israel’s occupation of Jerusalem and the suppression of its Palestinian population, presenting this political act as a “failed project of globalization,” economically, politically, ideologically, and culturally. Israel’s investment in trying to project the image of Jerusalem as a cosmopolitan and multicultural city, with a religiously and ethnically diverse population, was exposed as deceitful. A range of artistic media, including scale models, original artifacts, maps, posters, and videos, some of them interactive, were displayed on walls zigzagging through the building. Contemporary artworks and sound installations by Palestinian, Arab, and international artists, both within the building as well as in the terraced gardens, engaged the main narrative. Exemplary projects of the outdoor spaces included Vera Tamari’s sculpture “Home” (figure 4), consisting of a caged stairwell evocative of the former Palestinian houses in Jerusalem’s Old City, fenced in since 1967 for “security reasons;” Khalil Rabah’s “48%, 67%,” (figure 5), part of the artist’s larger project called *Palestine after*

Palestine New Sites for the Museum Department (2017) about the distressing events of ethnic cleansing; and Nina Sinnokrot’s “KA (Oslo)”, a 2 JCB 3CX 1993-model backhoe arm (figure 6), embodying the physical destruction of Palestinian homes and villages by Israel. Despite media attention, and the presence of a distinguished group of visitors on the inauguration of the exhibit, the total number of visitors was regrettably low, in part given the museum’s remote location and difficult access, but mostly a result of the dispersed population since Israel’s occupation. Partaking in cultural events, after all, is a privilege that most Palestinians cannot enjoy under the current situation.¹⁹

The task of asserting a Palestinian cultural legacy is closely linked to the political struggle of resistance. As a result, Jerusalem’s Jewish heritage was not integrated into the display of *Jerusalem Lives*. And while the struggle unites, various factors contributed to the curatorial challenge of featuring a single heritage narrative. Other than the geographic fragmentation among the Diaspora, Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, Palestinians differ by religion between Islam and Christianity, not to mention secular and Islamist streams – all societal disparities that shape the various heritage perceptions. The settler colonial discourse is here engaged from the perspective of the colonized, a concept that frames the narrative and contextualizes the artifacts.

The Metropolitan Museum of Art

On 26 September 2016, the Metropolitan Museum of Art opened a three-month long exhibit *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven*, allegedly doing justice to the city’s Jewish, Christian, and Muslim legacies without ideological bias. The lavish display of artifacts included more than two hundred works of art from around the world.²⁰ Curators aimed to project a narrative of harmonious religious and ethnic



Figure 5. Khalil Rabah’s “48%” steel sculpture in the Palestinian Museum garden terrace, as part of the *Jerusalem Lives* exhibit. Photo Katharina Galor.



Figure 6. Nina Sinnokrot’s backhoe arm installed on the museum terrace, with the arms raised up to the skies in a gesture that recalls despair and prayer. Photo Sa’ed Athsan.

co-existence, focusing on the city's flourishing commercial activity, cultural richness and symbiosis.²¹ The actual conditions of Jerusalem's sociohistorical context, including hostility and tension, or hardship and disease, were elided by featuring an almost endless display of the most exquisite and eye-catching objects, reminiscent of Jerusalem or at least of an imaginary ideal. Artefacts encompassed architectural details, glass, metal, and ceramic vessels and objects, jewelry, textiles, manuscripts, and maps. Among those, less than a handful were actually from Jerusalem, an embarrassing shortcoming masked by the projection of Jerusalem photographs onto the walls of the gallery spaces, and by the presentation of videos featuring interviews with Jerusalem residents and historians (figure 6). Artefacts included a fourteenth-century Mamluk mosque lamp of Sultan Barquq from Syria; the twelfth-century "Chasse of Ambazac" made of gilded copper, champlevé enamel, rock crystal, semiprecious stones, faïence, and glass from Limoges, France (figure 7); a fourteenth-century illustrated Passover Haggadah manuscript page from Catalonia with the words: "next year in Jerusalem, amen;"



Figure 7. Entrance Hall of *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, featuring photographs of Jerusalem to make up for the lack of artefacts with a Jerusalem provenance. From the museum website. www.metmuseum.org/exhibitions/listings/2016/jerusalem/exhibition-galleries.



Figure 8. Twelfth century "Chasse of Ambazac" from Limoges in France. Photo Allison Meier, online at hyperallergic.com/349211/metropolitan-museum-of-art-jerusalem/.

and several intricately sculpted twelfth-century limestone capitals from the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth (figure 8), an artistic tradition that differs greatly from the Jerusalem workshops, one of numerous curatorial deficiencies.²² Curators used the recognition of Jerusalem along with an idealized perception of the intertwined Jewish, Christian, and Muslim legacies as a way to market a concept that would appeal to the anticipated visitor community. It appears that both critics and most of the roughly two hundred thousand visitors were charmed by the dazzling array of prized artifacts, obfuscating the lack of historical depth and accuracy.²³ Jerusalem's complicated histories of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim cultures, rife with wars and conflict, not to mention contested Israeli and Palestinian heritage narratives, were largely whitewashed. Settler colonial dynamics, tension, and asymmetric power dynamics, both past and present, were thus effaced entirely.

Jewish Museum Berlin

Welcome to Jerusalem, a temporary exhibit on display at the Jewish Museum Berlin between 11 December 2017 and 30 April 2019 featured two thousand years of history, structured thematically and presenting all three monotheistic heritage narratives (figure 8).²⁴ Displaying both authentic artifacts and replicas, including maps, models, and media installations, this show explored historical and religious perspectives, highlighting people's daily lives while engaging political repercussions of the Israel-Palestine conflict. The JMB's central mission has been "to study and present Jewish life in Berlin and Germany and to create a meeting place for the wider community."²⁵ More so than any European and even any other German city, Berlin assumes responsibility for the atrocities committed during World War II and engages with the past and ongoing consequences – a process known as mastering the past or *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.²⁶ In German public discourse this responsibility extends to a commitment to the safety of Israel, and hence the judgment of all forms of Israel criticism as anti-Semitic. The non-exclusive focus on Jerusalem's Jewish heritage perspective in the Berlin museum thus resulted in criticism of the *Welcome to Jerusalem* exhibit, despite the effort toward a historically balanced and accurate display.²⁷ Thematically the galleries engaged traditional themes including shifting borders, pilgrimage, sacred sites, monuments, and artifacts. It did, however, also investigate contentious debates around Zionist principles, religious fundamentalism, nationalist tendencies, and Israel's occupation, incorporating diverse political outlooks. Among these were the consideration of "Religious Perspectives on Jerusalem" engaging various controversial acts of spiritual advocacy, including an anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox group participating in Palestinian solidarity protests; adherents of the Temple Mount Movement and their efforts to breed a red cow for sacrificial rituals; and finally Miri Regev, Israeli Minister of Culture and Sports in an evening dress decorated with a picture of the Dome of the Rock alongside images from social media platforms parodying the dress (figure 9). Another critical engagement with Jerusalem's turbulent history was the Film-Rotunda referred to as "Conflict" featuring a 20-minute video survey juxtaposing historical footage from multiple archives (figure 10).



Figure 9. Twelfth century capitals from the Church of the Annunciation in Nazareth indicative of a workshop that was clearly distinct from contemporary workshops in Jerusalem. Photo Allison Meier, online at hyperallergic.com/349211/metropolitan-museum-of-art-jerusalem/ (accessed on 19 October 2021).

more so than any European and even any other German city, Berlin assumes responsibility for the atrocities committed during World War II and engages with the past and ongoing consequences – a process known as mastering the past or *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*.²⁶ In German public discourse this responsibility extends to a commitment to the safety of Israel, and hence the judgment of all forms of Israel criticism as anti-Semitic. The non-exclusive focus on Jerusalem's Jewish heritage perspective in the Berlin museum thus resulted in criticism of the *Welcome to Jerusalem* exhibit, despite the effort toward a historically balanced and accurate display.²⁷ Thematically the galleries engaged traditional themes including shifting borders, pilgrimage, sacred sites, monuments, and artifacts. It did, however, also investigate contentious debates around Zionist principles, religious fundamentalism, nationalist tendencies, and Israel's occupation, incorporating diverse political outlooks. Among these were the consideration of "Religious Perspectives on Jerusalem" engaging various controversial acts of spiritual advocacy, including an anti-Zionist ultra-Orthodox group participating in Palestinian solidarity protests; adherents of the Temple Mount Movement and their efforts to breed a red cow for sacrificial rituals; and finally Miri Regev, Israeli Minister of Culture and Sports in an evening dress decorated with a picture of the Dome of the Rock alongside images from social media platforms parodying the dress (figure 9). Another critical engagement with Jerusalem's turbulent history was the Film-Rotunda referred to as "Conflict" featuring a 20-minute video survey juxtaposing historical footage from multiple archives (figure 10).

In contrast to the three other Jerusalem shows examined here, the JMB exhibit did not elide the contentious nature of the city's religious, historical, and cultural legacy.²⁸

Despite historical accuracy, the show was accused of being “non-Jewish,” “Israel critical,” and “pro-Palestinian.”²⁹ Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu requested that Germany’s chancellor Angela Merkel retract all state funding in support of the Jewish Museum, as the curation diverted from Germany’s usual Zionist narrative tendencies.³⁰ A diverse visitor community of Germans and international tourists came to see the exhibit, both a sophisticated and well-informed public as well as visitors without prior knowledge.³¹ The exhibit mirrored Berlin’s general drive to be pioneering, inclusive, honest, and critical. Despite public reproaches from Netanyahu, Jeremy Issacharoff, Israel’s ambassador to Germany, and Josef Schuster, director of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, *Welcome to Jerusalem* drew significant crowds of visitors who were eager to explore the city’s multidimensional sociopolitical and religious-historical legacies. The complexity of the settler-colonial context was not ignored while doing justice to the city’s rich and intertwined Jewish, Christian, and Muslim heritage. The Jewish Museum Berlin’s exhibit therefore undermined Israeli settler colonial narratives on Jerusalem.



Figure 10. Multi-media display of the three monotheistic heritage narratives on display at the Jewish Museum Berlin’s temporary exhibit *Welcome to Jerusalem*. Photo Thijs Wolzak.



Figure 11. Miri Regev wearing an evening dress featuring the image of the Dome of the Rock, adherents of the Temple Mount Movement and their efforts to breed a red cow for sacrificial rituals, and anti-Zionist Ultra-Orthodox group participating in Palestinian solidarity protests (from left to right). Photo Thijs Wolzak.

Conclusion

Representations of Jerusalem have different meanings and implications for those who are colonized, those who perpetrate colonization, and finally for those who are external to the conflict but take an active part in the discourse surrounding it. The four Jerusalem exhibits that we have analyzed reveal different curatorial choices that are shaped by this settler colonial context, and they intentionally or unintentionally take positions on the city’s contested heritage.

The religious and historical legacy of Jerusalem has played a key role in the ongoing



Figure 12. The Film-Rotunda named “Conflict” showing a video survey with historical footage from multiple archives. Photo Thijs Wolzak.

geopolitical conflict among Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, and regardless of the mission of the exhibit or museum, the display – in dialogue with the visitor communities – takes an active role in fostering a particular narrative perspective and positioning. The different themes and narratives chosen, however, often reflect and inflect the identity politics of the targeted visitor communities, rather than serving as an educational mission and platform that stands for itself.³² The visitor’s knowledge and understanding of the conflict remains a product of engagement and dialogue, in which museum and visitors take part together in a form of silent political activism under the guise of cultural engagement.³³

The Tower of David Museum, in highlighting Jerusalem’s history through the lens of the Israeli settler colonial state objectives, while erasing the Palestinian presence and narrative perspectives, reinforces the existing confrontational national divides over Jerusalem. *Jerusalem Lives* at the Palestinian Museum engages the conflict by focusing on Palestinian narratives and by excluding Jewish narratives that resonate with the Israeli state. Suffering from a relative lack of visitors, the conditions of viewing at the Palestinian Museum are shaped by Israeli state subjugation of ideas, bodies, and movement across lines of difference, mirroring the reality of Jerusalem

for its Palestinian residents. *Jerusalem 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art models how curating conflict can also result in the elision of settler colonialism, responding to desires of sponsors, visitors, and others who prefer a sanitized aesthetic, displaying artefacts and images from a reified past, and the illusionary gaze onto an imagined pluralistic rather than conflict-ridden Jerusalem. *Welcome to Jerusalem* at the Jewish Museum Berlin instead curates in a manner that engages the conflict, caring for the past and present of Jerusalem in a way that has come to define so much of the German state and society's sensitive and nuanced recognition of its own history and responsibility. In their unapologetic refusal to cease bearing witness to Israeli or Palestinian cultural heritage, despite formidable external pressure to do so, we witnessed firsthand how the curatorial team has modeled collaborative curation. The high numbers of visitors to their Jerusalem exhibit demonstrates the strong desire among the larger public to face the realities of colonization, rather than to avert their eyes.

Museum curation in this and other contexts where there is an asymmetrical distribution of power must acknowledge disparities in access to resources and mobility as a result of settler colonialism. Just as Jerusalem cannot be evaluated apolitically, these exhibitions cannot be evacuated of the role of power in their own construction and curation. The four hundred thousand yearly visitors to the Tower of David Museum, for example, are largely Israelis and tourists whom Israel welcomes while it polices the presence of tourists in the West Bank. The visitors to *Jerusalem Lives* of the Palestinian Museum are already circumscribed by whom the Israeli state invites to or keeps away from Jerusalem. Many of the West Bank Palestinians who attended the exhibit could not visit the city of Jerusalem itself. Additionally, the town of Birzeit has often been under siege by Israel, which makes it a very different space from the state-sanctioned Tower of David Museum, which enjoys Israeli governmental support. In conceptualizing curatorial practices through ethnography, anthropologists are attuned to the heterogeneous nature of curation and the power that underlies how particular narratives are privileged over others. This knowledge is critical to scholarship that connects museum studies with settler colonial studies.

Sa'ed Atshan is associate professor of Peace and Conflict Studies at Swarthmore College. He is an anthropologist who specializes in Palestinian society and politics.

Katharina Galor is the Hirschfeld Senior Lecturer in Judaic Studies at Brown University. She specializes in the visual and material culture of Israel/Palestine.

Endnotes

- 1 As Sara Roy reminds us, “pure objectivity is unattainable” in scholarship on Israel/Palestine. Sara Roy, “Humanism, Scholarship, and Politics: Writing on the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no. 2 (2007): 56.
- 2 We compared the four museum exhibits on Jerusalem in a previously published article, focusing on curatorial choices, on the visitor communities, and on the human gaze. See Sa’ed Atshan and Katharina Galor, “Curating Conflict: Four Exhibitions on Jerusalem,” *Conflict and Society* 6 (2020): 1–17.
- 3 Dana Olwan, “On Assumptive Solidarities in Comparative Settler Colonialisms,” *Feral Feminisms* 4 (2015): 98.
- 4 Olwan, “On Assumptive Solidarities.”
- 5 Daniel Herwitz, *Heritage, Culture, and Politics in the Postcolony* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 154–57.
- 6 Lila Abu-Lughod, “Imagining Palestine’s Alter-Natives: Settler Colonialism and Museum Politics” in *Critical Inquiry* 47, no. 1 (2020): 1–27.
- 7 The blueprint for the creation of a history museum was already established under British Mandate rule. The High Commissioner established the Pro-Jerusalem Society and used the ancient citadel as a public venue for cultural events.
- 8 On the history of the museum and on how the curatorial choices reflect ideological choices, see Katharina Galor, *Finding Jerusalem: Archaeology between Science and Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2017), 79–80.
- 9 For more on memory and the davidization of Jerusalem, see Dana Hercbergs and Chaim Noy, “Mobile Cartographies and Mobilized Ideologies: The Visual Management of Jerusalem,” *Antipode* 47, 4 (2015): 942–62; and Dana Hercbergs, *Overlooking the Border: Narratives of Divided Jerusalem* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2018), 235–63.
- 10 Max Schindler, “Tower of David Museum Launches Hi-Tech Innovation Lab,” *Jerusalem Post*, 18 October 2017; and Lalla Merlin, “Eilat Lieber, Tower of David Museum, Jerusalem Hi-Tech Strategy,” *Blooloop*, 12 September 2018, 1–30. On the use of digital technology and its implications for visitors, see Loïs Tallon, ed., *Digital Technologies and the Museum Experience: Handheld Guides and Other Media* (Plymouth: AltaMira Press, 2008); and Daniela Petrelli et al., “Integrating Material and Digital: A New Way for Cultural Heritage,” *Interactions* 20, no. 4 (2013): 58–63.
- 11 On the architectural history of the citadel, see Mahmoud Hawari, “The Citadel (Qal’ a) in the Ottoman Period. An Overview,” in *Ottoman Jerusalem: The Living City, 1517–1917*, ed. Silvia Auld and Robert Hillenbrand (London: Altajir World of Islam Trust, 2000), 493–518. On the ideological implications of the museum, see Mahmoud Hawari, “‘Capturing the Castle’: Archaeology, Architecture and Political Bias at the Citadel of Jerusalem,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 55 (2014): 46–67.
- 12 On the lack of labeling for Islamic artifacts at the Tower of David Museum, see Nadia Abu El-Haj, *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israel Society* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 173–74. The chief curator of the citadel has written on the minimal use of labels at heritage sites. See Renée Sivan, “Presentation of Archaeological Sites,” in M. de la Torre, ed., *The Conservation of Archaeological Sites in the Mediterranean Region. An International Conference Organized by the Getty Conservation Institute and the J. Paul Getty Museum, 6–12 May 1995* (Los Angeles: The Getty Conservation Institute, 1997), 53. On the use of labels in museums more generally and on the cognitive and psychological factors when absorbing information, see Stephen Bitgood, “The Role of Attention in Designing Effective Interpretive Labels,” *Journal of Interpretation Research* 5, 2 (2000): 31–45.
- 13 Hawari, “The Citadel,” 92.
- 14 See Kaylin Goldstein, “Citadel into David’s Tower: Palestinian Memory and the Multicultural Fantastic,” *Radical History Review* 99 (2007): 173–86; and Mahmoud Hawari, “The Citadel of Jerusalem: A Case Study in the Cultural Appropriation of Archaeology in Palestine,” *Present Pasts* 2, 1 (2010): 89–95.
- 15 See the Tower of David website, online at www.tod.org.il/en/the-kishle (accessed 21 May 2021).
- 16 On the political aspects of evangelical tourism, see, Yaniv Belhassen, “Tourism, Faith and Politics in the Holy Land: An Ideological Analysis of Evangelical

- Pilgrimage,” *Current Issues in Tourism* 12, 4 (2009): 359–78. On the convergence of Zionism and evangelical support of Israel, see Stephan Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- 17 On the original intentions for the establishment of the museum, see Rana Anani, “Palestinian Museum to Showcase People’s History, Culture,” *Al-Monitor: The Pulse of the Middle East*, April 21 (2013).
 - 18 Though some cynical comments were made on the fact that the museum originally stood empty, a situation that resembled that of the Jüdisches Museum Berlin, the media coverage reporting on *Jerusalem Lives* was very positive. See among others, Nigel Wilson, “Palestinian Museum Highlights Jerusalem’s Isolation,” *Al Jazeera*, 27 August 2017; Hrag Vartanian, “A Garden of Possibilities at the Palestinian Museum,” *Hyperallergic*, 6 September 2017; Luzan Al-Munayar, “‘Jerusalem Lives’ at the Palestinian Museum Birzeit,” *Outlook. Art Exhibition Reviews, Arts and Culture*, 19 September 2017; and Nick Leech, “Reem Fadda’s Jerusalem Lives at the Palestinian Museum,” *The National*, 24 August 2017.
 - 19 On the impact of the humanitarian condition on the daily life of Palestinians, see Ilana Feldman, “The Humanitarian Condition: Palestinian Refugees and the Politics of Living,” *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights* (2012): 155–172.
 - 20 A catalogue complements the show. See, Barbara von Drake Boehm and Melanie Holcomb, eds., *Jerusalem, 1000–1400: Every People Under Heaven* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016).
 - 21 The media coverage of the exhibit was mostly positive. See, Yael Friedman, “Jerusalem, Medieval Capital of the World, Reimagined,” *Haaretz*, 22 October 2016; Holland Cotter, “Jerusalem as a Place of Desire and Death, at the Metropolitan Museum,” *New York Times*, 22 September 2016; and Jason Fargo, “Jerusalem Rebuilt in New York’s Green and Pleasant Land,” *Guardian*, 25 September 2016.
 - 22 On the singularity of Crusader architectural details in Jerusalem, see Katharina Galor and Hanswulf Bloedhorn, *The Archaeology of Jerusalem. From the Origins to the Ottomans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 207–8; Bianca Kühnel, *Crusader Art of the Twelfth Century: A Geographical, and Historical, or an Art Historical Notion?* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1994), 164–68.
 - 23 One of the keys to successfully promote a show and attract visitors is by reaching large and diverse interest communities and to highlight the visually and the contextually pleasant aspects. On successful museum marketing strategies more generally, see Neil G. Kotler, Philip Kotler, and Wendy I. Kotler, *Museum Marketing and Strategy: Design Missions, Building Audiences, Generating Revenue and Resources* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998). Information on visitors statistics can be found on the Met museum website, online at www.metmuseum.org/press/news/2017/2017-annual-attendance.
 - 24 The exhibit was planned to bridge the period from preparation until installation of the new permanent exhibition in the museum.
 - 25 For the mission statement, see online at www.jmberlin.de/en/about-the-organisation (accessed 21 May 2021).
 - 26 On Vergangenheitsbewältigung in post-war Germany, see, Gary S. Schaal and Andreas Wöll, eds., *Vergangenheitsbewältigung: Modelle der politischen und sozialen Integration in der bundesdeutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte* (Baden-Baden, Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 1997). On the commemoration of the holocaust in Europe, see Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (New York: Routledge, 2013). On holocaust memorials in Berlin and Paris, see Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany Since 1989* (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2005); and Sa’ed Atshan and Katharina Galor, *The Moral Triangle: Germans, Israelis, Palestinians* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2020), 88.
 - 27 This lack of focus on the Jewish heritage has been criticized in the press as radically anti-Israel. See Eldad Beck, “No Friend of Israel,” *Israel Hayom*, 27 December 2017. The German media was largely positive and used the opportunity to incorporate Trump’s recent recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital into the narrative. See, for instance, Christiane Habermatz, “Ausstellung ‘Welcome to Jerusalem’: Aufruhr im Vorhof zum Himmel,” *Deutschlandfunk Kultur – Fazit*, 9 December 2017; Udo Bdelt, “Ausstellung des Jüdischen Museums Berlin:

- Warum Jerusalem so eine umkämpfte Stadt ist,” *Der Tagesspiegel*, 11 December 2017; and Maria Wölfle, “Jerusalem-Ausstellung in Berlin. Wem gehört die Stadt?” *Spiegel*, 11 December 2017.
- 28 Mariana Salgado presented a paper on “Openness, Inclusion and Participation in Museums” at a conference in 2009 which summarizes and analysis the history of inclusion and participation as an approach to new curatorial initiatives. Online at www.researchgate.net/publication/233782466_Openness_Inclusion_and_Participation_in_Museums.
- 29 Among an endless storm of media coverage on these issues, see, for instance, Melissa Eddy and Isabel Kershner, “Jerusalem Criticizes Berlin’s Jewish Museum for ‘Anti-Israel Activity’,” *New York Times*, 23 December 2018.
- 30 See, for instance, Noa Landau, “Israel Demanded Germany Cut Funding to Jewish Museum in Berlin, Report Says,” *Haaretz*, 9 December 2018.
- 31 The sophistication of the exhibit is matched by the level of the catalogue. See Margret Kampmeyer and Cilly Kugelman, eds., *Welcome to Jerusalem* (Cologne and Berlin: Wienand Verlag and Jüdisches Museum Berlin, 2017).
- 32 Laurajane Smith has made a similar argument in the context of identity politics and nationalizing narratives in American and Australian museums. She argues that museums may be more usefully understood as arenas of justification rather than resources of public education. See Laurajane Smith, “‘We are ... we are everything’: The Politics of Recognition and Misrecognition at Immigration Museums,” *Museum & Society* 15, 1 (2017): 69.
- 33 On the construct of identity as a key to understanding the museum visitors experience, see John H. Falk, *Identity and the Museum Visitor Experience* (London and New York: Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2016). On the museological engagements with conflict, see Charlotte P. Lee, “Reconsidering Conflict in Exhibition Development Teams,” *Museum Management and Curatorship* 22, 2 (2007): 183–99; and Erica Lehrer, Cynthia Milton, and Monica Eileen Patterson, *Curating Difficult Knowledge: Violent Pasts in Public Places* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).