

טורג'מן
בית תורג'מן
THE TOURJEMAN POST

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4, CHAIL HANDASSA, P.O.B 14005, JERUSALEM
TEL. 02-281278 02-281276

WELCOME TO THE TOURJEMAN POST

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tourjeman House was built in 1932 by the Arab family of the former owner of the land, Hasan Pasha Tourjeman.

During the War of Independence, the house was used by the Israeli army as a fort. The Fort was destroyed in 1967.

In 1983, under the auspices of the Tourjeman Family, the Tourjeman Post turned into a museum where the city reunited.

TOUR PROGRAM:
(time of tour - about an hour & half).

ENTRANCE and FIRST FLOOR- The entrance hall and the archives (open by reservation).

FIRST FLOOR - start with the "room of the new Jerusalem, each with its own style and architecture".

ON THE ROOF - The look out from the exhibition room "Jerusalem - a city at war 1947-1967". From here, head down to the old city.

SECOND FLOOR - The main exhibition hall is "Jerusalem 1967". At the end of the exhibition goes down to the "room" - show's the history of Jaffa Gate over the years.

IN THE BASEMENT is the movie theater. The program includes:

1. "Is Jerusalem Burning?"
2. "Follow Me" - six day war film on Jerusalem

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: programs for schools and groups along the 1948-1967 old border.

MUSEUM HOURS: Sun-Thurs. 9:00 - 15:00
Friday 9:00 - 15:00
Sat. closed

TELEPHONE: (02) - 277061, 277062

ADDRESS: 4 Chel Handassa St. Jerusalem

MAILING ADDRESS : The Tourjeman Post, Jerusalem

TRANSPORTATION: Bus: 1, 2, 11, 13, 27

The Politics and Poetics of Place

The Baramki House

Thomas Abowd

In Jerusalem, memory, colonizing power, and historical invention have interacted in myriad ways through successive waves of foreign domination. As the primary site of contest and confrontation between Palestinians and Israelis since 1948, Jerusalem has become an urban center and the site of a raging conflict between competing national imaginations. The politics of monuments in Jerusalem is part and parcel of history construction and has served a vital role in producing the past in a contested land. Not only do such sites of national remembrance project a particular notion of what has come before, but monuments - like historical archives - are also very much about the future. What is curious however about the Israeli ideological landscape is not merely that such places have been inscribed upon and scattered across an occupied Palestine, but the manner in which these places have so often served simultaneously as sites of remembrance *and* as locales of loss.

In this article I will focus on one particular Palestinian home owned by the Baramki family of Jerusalem. I examine how this structure straddles different eras in the city's history and different, deeply politicized spaces. I will also look at how the once-familial space has served multiple functions convenient to Israeli colonial power since the property's seizure in 1948.

Instances of stolen Palestinian properties transformed into Israeli national sites are not uncommon. Many of these places have, over several decades, been remade and dedicated to the memory of Israeli achievement, sacrifice, or longing. Arab properties - particularly homes - have proven critical in the Zionist 'memory mill'. As the Israeli state took over thousands of Arab homes throughout Jerusalem in 1948, the city was reconfigured discursively, no less than physically. In Jerusalem, as elsewhere, the space of the Arab home has been integral to the vast efforts to both settle and silence Palestine. Therefore, the city over the years has not only been a contested physical place but also a highly prized *idea*. As such, it has been brought into being through the discourses that describe it, through an articulation, for instance, of certain narratives of Israeli independence (*komimeyot*), defense (*gonen*), and redemption (*guela*).¹

These three terms are, incidentally, the names the Israeli state has given to three former Arab neighborhoods in today's West Jerusalem, cleansed of their Palestinian population in 1948 and whose homes today the Israeli state has filled with Israeli Jews. Israel, as I will argue, has only been able to 'overwrite' the history of Palestinian existence in Jerusalem and change the meaning of specific locales because it was first able to disappear the Arab population. Epistemic violence has followed in the wake of the violence of large-scale displacement.

The Production and Destruction of the Past

Palestinian homes have, since 1948, been appropriated and transformed into Israeli sites of all kinds: kindergartens; centers for psychoanalysis; clubs for new Jewish arrivals (*olim*); Holocaust memorials; restaurants; and even shelters for animals. These transformations have been, in each instance, a metonym for the larger process of colonial appropriation in the city. In a few cases, these houses have served a strictly ideological function, underscoring the productive nature of representational power. A partially destroyed Arab home on the road from Tel Aviv to Jaffa was seized from its owners by Israel in 1948 and later transformed into what is today known as the 'Etzel Museum'. The remnants of this badly damaged structure are meant to memorialize the role of Menachem Begin's paramilitary Etzel organization (a group that called for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine's Arabs) in 'liberating' Israel.

The truth of the past, the 'real story', cannot - as Trouillot cogently asserts - simply be retrieved whole and unsullied as if pulled from history's 'file cabinet'.² Memory is mediated through a host of present-day issues, political concerns, and prejudices, and is thus often highly contested and fluid. The epistemological issues and concerns about such sources are indeed real ones. But neither is history completely 'up for grabs', 'undecidable', or simply an effect of dominant epistemologies. Though the memories of both national communities must be examined in a critical way, their the limitations of that retrieval does not necessarily discount what those affected by traumatic events have to say.

The Baramki House

A home owned by the Palestinian Baramki family has served various functions for



Travelers queue to enter Israeli-controlled Jerusalem through Mandelbaum Gate, just next to the Baramki family home. Source: G. Baramki.

the Israeli state since it was taken from its owners in the spring of 1948. I wish to examine what its fate (and that of the family who once lived there) might tell us about the politics of history construction and the way memorials to Israeli military power involve as much an active forgetting as they entail a steadfast remembering.

The structure of our interest was built in 1934 in the neighborhood of Sa'ad Said. During the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948, this neighborhood and the homes and buildings that comprised it were split between the Jordanian-held east and Israeli-held west sides of the city by a 'no man's land' of barbed wire and fences that fractured the city for the next 19 years. The Baramkis were one of thousands of families in Jerusalem who fled familial spaces during the violent spring of 1948 for what they believed were temporary havens.

Andoni Baramki, a young Palestinian architect of renown, designed the home. Like the many other structures in Jerusalem that were also his creation, this one featured a distinctive, hybrid use of Corinthian columns and Arab-style arches and verandas. Baramki experimented with the use of red and white stones, which he often utilized in the same arch or façade and which would become one of his architectural trademarks. His work still dots Palestine's landscape of loss, particularly in the formerly Arab neighborhoods of West Jerusalem, such as Baqa and the German Colony, that are today populated by Israeli Jews.

The Baramki house, as it happened, came to rest precisely on the edge of the emerging frontier between the Israeli and Jordanian-ruled segments of the city during the years the city was physically divided between 'east' and 'west' (spatial designations that

had never meant anything before the city was partitioned in 1948). This arbitrarily-defined boundary, drawn by Israeli and Jordanian generals in a perfunctory manner across a formally undivided landscape, actually ran along the outer edge of this Baramki property. Not a few of the structures in the vicinity (usually Palestinian) were actually sliced in half by the width of the pen used to draw the border.

Mammoth, well-fortified, and strategically positioned, the Baramki's imposing three-story stone structure was commandeered by the sentinels of the budding Jewish state only weeks after its Arab occupants had fled. In the days after the border was established, the Israeli military transformed the house into an army post. Weapons were placed behind the home's thick limestone walls and aimed across a mixture of mines and barbed wire that separated Israeli forces from those of the Jordanians only meters away. The doors were reinforced and its front entrance sealed. The structure's exquisite arched windows were filled in with concrete and made into turrets so that only a thin aperture, narrow enough to accommodate a gun and the gaze of a marksman, remained. The interior was cleared for the housing of troops. The 'state of emergency' along the city's dividing line and the hits absorbed by the home-turned-fortress eventuated in the gradual wearing down of the structure's exterior.

Israeli forces stationed at this site were positioned to stem what the new Jewish state referred to as 'Arab infiltration' across the newly-crafted frontier. The use of the term 'infiltration' itself was a discursive move that served to simultaneously delegitimize certain kinds of crossings and claims to properties, while at the same time solidifying Israel's presence in West Jerusalem. All Palestinian attempts to secretly cross this dividing line could

only be regarded as acts of hostility and terrorism. Once this segment of the city was secured as Israeli national space and its presence began to assume a taken-for-granted quality, and despite that these homes and properties were only recently expropriated from Palestinians, the area was said to comprise the Jewish people's 'eternal capital'.

With very few exceptions, neither Jew nor Arab was permitted to cross over to the other side of the city, an arrangement which held from May 1948 until June 1967. Though the division of Jerusalem prevented Israeli Jews from visiting the Old City and the Wailing Wall, sealing the border also ensured that the Arab homes from which tens of thousands of refugees had fled from Jerusalem's west side could not be contested. Israeli law deemed the families 'absentees'.³

In the wake of the flight of the refugees, the Israeli army reconfigured the Baramki home discursively no less than physically. Emptied of its Arab occupants, the home took on new meanings and began to be known by those on the Israeli side of the border as the 'Tourjeman Post'.⁴ Its military significance was bound up with the Mandelbaum Gate complex, which existed just north of the property and was the one crossing point between the east and west sides of the city. Though tourists, pilgrims, and other foreigners were permitted to cross here, Jerusalem's residents - Palestinians and Israelis - were precluded from entering the other side.

The social cartography of the city was altered during that moment of partition and division. In the months and years that followed, Jewish immigrants who knew little or nothing of the pre-1948 city were housed in the vicinity of the Baramki home and in other emptied Arab neighborhoods that ran along the East-West frontier. These



On right, architect Andoni Baramki (b. 1925) Jerusalem, with his family. Source: G. Baramki.

neighborhoods included Musrara (a few dozen meters south of the Baramki home); parts of Abu Tur (just south of the Old City); and the vicinity of the Mamilla neighborhood below Jaffa Gate (Bab al-Khalil).

Memories of Waiting

Exile is a condition shared by many Palestinian Jerusalemites, but there is something fairly distinct about the Baramki case. Unlike nearly all Palestinian families made exiles and refugees in 1948, the Baramkis had the dubious privilege of being able to see their home on the Israeli-held side of the ‘no man’s land’ during the years of the ‘divided city’ (from 1948 to 1967). Climbing certain sites on the east side’s hilly terrain and risking sniper fire,

family members would occasionally visit the borderlands to peer across the frontier at their lost property.

Much mystery nagged at the Palestinian exiles as they worried about Jerusalem’s division and their homes. Questions of ‘when’ they would return gradually evolved into questions of ‘if’. Would the wall of separation ever be brought down? The dividing line was visible from numerous vantage points and the tens of thousands of Palestinian exiles residing in East Jerusalem regarded it as a continual reminder of their condition of displacement. But what could not be seen from East Jerusalem vantage points were the multiple ways in which former neighborhoods of Arab residence on the west side, such as Talbieh, Qatamon, Baqa, and Musrara were being made anew.

June 1967: Making the Land ‘Whole’

The years of the ‘divided city’ were to end suddenly and dramatically. During six days in June 1967, Israeli forces conquered Jordanian-held East Jerusalem in lightening fashion. Within a few weeks of taking the east side (and after some internal Israeli debate), the division of concrete and barbed wire which had for 19 years separated the two sides was brought down by the victors. The city, declared Israeli officialdom, had now been ‘reunified’ and ‘liberated’.

Once the streets of East Jerusalem had been quelled and the physical partition was removed, Arabs and Jews raced across to the other side in curiosity. Thousands of Palestinian refugees who had waited nearly two decades to return made their way back to their former neighborhoods and homes. Hundreds of thousands of Israeli Jews streamed to the Western Wall and the Jewish Quarter of the Old City within the first few days of the city’s ‘liberation’.

The Israeli conquest of the east side had seemingly opened up possibilities for Palestinian exiles to reclaim properties taken from them in 1948. Initially, many refugees relate that there existed a pervasive belief among the displaced that they would finally be able to repossess their homes after nearly two decades of exile. They had not, after all, repudiated their claims to these properties. United Nations resolutions called for their right to return, and they kept the keys and deeds from the pre-1948 period that signified ownership. But the reality of reclaiming their property was rather more complex. Palestinian Jerusalemites would, ironically, remain exiles within the newly-reconfigured Israeli municipality - refugees within their own city.

The ambivalence of these sentiments spoke to the ways in which the city had become simultaneously unified and fractured. Streets, squares, and locales had been given new

names and numbers. Arabic was almost completely absent from this segment of the city and refugees describe the pervasive strangeness and inscrutability of a Hebrew that had ‘taken over’ and been emblazoned on everything they once knew.

The Baramkis, too, crossed over the old frontier with their keys and deeds. They made the short walk through the former no-man’s-land that they had once peered across. They were, family members relate, forbidden access to their home by military authorities still stationed there. Legal attempts were made to reclaim their home but Israel refused to hand over to the Baramkis the badly-damaged property, claiming alternately that it was still required for purposes of Israeli ‘security’, that it was in need of repair and thus a hazard, and finally, that ownership of the property had shifted since the Israeli grid of legality had been imposed on Jerusalem. If Palestinians like the Baramkis stood any chance of retrieving property, the onus was placed on them to prove (to Israeli officials, in Israeli courts) that they had been wrongly classified as ‘absentees’.⁵

Re-configuring Jerusalem: The Discursive Construction of a Regime of Power

Following the 1967 War, the city’s physical dimensions began to undergo significant alterations as well - discursive no less than physical. Only weeks after seizing East Jerusalem, Israeli law was extended to this segment of the city and the occupied populations were subject to a host of new rules and prohibitions. The 60,000 ‘Arab inhabitants’ - as Israel referred to them - who had come under Israeli rule at the moment of conquest, were transformed almost overnight from *citizens* of the Jordanian monarchy into *permanent residents* (the rhetorical contortion highlighting the category’s actual

impermanence) within the enlarged Israeli municipality.

The physical division that had fractured Jerusalem was now gone. But the elimination of that form of forced separation between Arab and Jew gave way to emerging practices of drawing and policing other kinds of frontiers within a physically unified urban space. These acts included extending Israeli segregationist legislation over the whole of the Israeli-ruled city.

There is some measure of truth to Israeli claims of having ‘unified’ the city. However, bringing the land and the peoples of the city under the rule of one regime has not meant offering them equal rights before the law. Though Israeli law has been applied to the entirety of the city, these legal mechanisms have simultaneously divided the city in peculiar ways and discriminated against Palestinian populations.

In addition to the vast reordering of spaces in Jerusalem, a parallel ideological effort, a policy of knowledge construction, seemed equally at work in the ‘reunified’ urban center. Its raw material was so often not that which was new, but places and sites that existed decades before the Israeli state was established. As the borderlands were swept away and military emplacements were dismantled, one such post was kept intact along the line of the previous divide: the Baramki house, known by then as the ‘Tourjeman Post’.

Former Israeli deputy mayor of Jerusalem Meron Benvenisti recounts that this site, resting as it did on the edge of the former divide, was retained “for posterity”. However, nowhere in his extensive writings on the city does Benvenisti mention that the structure was originally a home. The property had become, in the dominant discursive order of things, ‘the former Tourjeman Post’ or the ‘Tourjeman Building’. It was to be left as a monument, but one that pointed to only one



The run-down splendour of the Baramki home, 1967.
Source: G. Baramki.

national history, one collective memory, one geographical imagination.

What precisely such a memorial was meant to convey symbolically for succeeding generations of Israelis - ‘for posterity’⁶ - was not clearly articulated at the time. But what was certainly evident was that two mutually exclusive visions of this structure and its past converged on the same locale - one foregrounded and the other silenced. The Baramki property was no longer seen simply as a home - or even as a home at all. Weathered by war, stripped of elements and traces that would indicate that this was once a familial space (including the removal of the family who owned it), the structure’s role as a military garrison had begun to assume a ‘taken for granted’ quality.

You know, this question of being defined ‘absent’ or ‘absentee’ by the Israeli Government is unbelievable.

Imagine, my father at the time [1967], a 70-year-old person going to the Israelis and telling them “here I am now and I want my property” and them telling him that, no, you are an ‘absentee’. And he said, “How am I absent? I am present!” He could not understand how he was absent and present at the same time!’

The Israeli Government never did permit the owner to step foot in his house again, and the elder Baramki died in exile in September 1972.

Domination on Display: ‘The Tourjeman Post Museum’

The encounter between the Baramkis and the Israeli state is emblematic of the multiple ways in which Palestinians are simultaneously ‘present’ and ‘absent’ in Jerusalem. The Israeli law defining Palestinian exiles as ‘absentees’ underscores the legal marginality Arabs inhabit in the Jerusalem of Israel’s imagination. But this marginality also points to the ways in which certain understandings of the city are remembered and recognized, while others are simply ‘absented’.

With the initiation of Israeli plans to reconfigure the city physically after 1967 (including the building of Israeli settlements and the redrawing of borders in East Jerusalem) arrived the equally material construction of depicting Jerusalem as a space that is uniquely vital to the Jewish people: a sacred place, an ‘eternal’ place, the ‘heart of the Jewish People’, ‘the city of King David’.

Members of the Baramki family were ‘permitted’ to cross the former divide to West Jerusalem in 1967. But they were not allowed access to their home until the early 1980s. The circumstances of their return were as odd as they were painful for the

owners. The Israeli Custodian for Absentee Property had turned the house (along with hundreds of other Palestinian homes) over to the Israeli Government for ‘public purposes’ long before the Arab owners were able to return to their property. In the early 1980s, the home underwent another transformation. Without notice, knowledge, or the permission of the owners, the Israeli Municipality stealthily reconstituted the dilapidated, former ‘Tourjeman Post’ into what became known as the [‘Tourjeman Post Museum’. This site, the Israelis declared, would now serve as a monument meant to memorialize the ‘reunification’ of Jerusalem. The structure’s interior and exterior were re-designed to recall what life was like in the city during the 19 years it was fractured between east and west. This, of course, is done solely from the perspective of those on one side of the frontier. Museum brochures and the plaque on the front door refer to the structure as: “Dedicated to the Theme: Jerusalem - A Divided City Reunited”. The home’s crumbling exterior was left in its damaged state - ‘for posterity’ - while a donation from a German family enabled the Israeli Municipality to reconfigure the interior. By maintaining the structure in the condition it had been between 1948 and 1967, those who appropriated the home sought to call attention to its history as one of military garrison, not as familial space. In the literature that the city produces for external consumption, it is never mentioned that the structure was in fact the home of a Palestinian family. Leaving the structure in a state of disrepair reminds those who encounter it of the sacrifices the embattled defenders of the budding Jewish State are said to have endured while hostile forces sought to destroy them. This particular presentation has also, to a significant extent, helped divert the onlookers’ gaze from the site’s other pasts.

Naming the Fact

Guns, mortars, and other weapons used during the 1948 and 1967 wars are exhibited, a sort of display of 'purity of arms'. These, visitors are told, are the weapons of a reluctant army, one comprised to battle enemies who refused peace and compromise. Remnants of the home's history as military emplacement are plentiful, including the reinforced turrets set within what were once arched windows. But all of these renovations are in a sense two times removed from the original home's interior. Though constructed in the space of a gutted house, the Israeli state officially established this representational site within a former army emplacement. Its appearance reflects and memorializes that past.

A trans-historical notion of Jewish identity and entitlement to the city is deployed powerfully at this locale. The claim to ownership of the city has, by this account, a biblical basis stretching back 3,000 years. No other people's notion of connection to Jerusalem, maintain Israeli officials and much of Israeli Jewish citizenry, has nearly the same legitimacy. In a document produced by the Israeli government press office and distributed at the museum, it is asserted that:

In weighing ostensibly competing claims to the city, it must be recalled that the Jewish people bases its claims to Jerusalem on a link which dates back millennia and to King David, and that there is no legal basis for the "historical" Palestinian claim that Jerusalem was their capital. Moreover, though the Palestinians may have a strong emotional attachment to Jerusalem, it does not necessarily follow that Jerusalem should become the capital of any Palestinian political entity.⁸

The museum (transformed again in 2002 into a new 'Museum on the Seam') allowed the

The Baramki House



WELCOME TO THE TOURJEMAN POST MUSEUM

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Tourjeman House was built in 1932 by the Arab architect Antony Baramki. The house is named after the former owner of the land, Hasan Bay Tourjeman.

During the War of Independence, and the years 1948-1967 when Jerusalem was a divided city, the house was an Israeli army fort. The Fort was part of the Mendelbaum Gate which was for 19 years the only crossing point between Israel and Jordan. In 1967, after the Six Day War, Jerusalem became united.

In 1983, under the auspices of the Jerusalem Foundation through the generosity of the Van Holtzbrinck Family, the Tourjeman Post turned into a museum. The theme of The Museum is "Jerusalem - A divided city reunited".

TOUR PROGRAM:
(time of tour - about an hour & half).

ENTRANCE and FIRST FLOOR: The entrance includes: storage place, bathrooms, library and archives (open by reservation).

FIRST FLOOR - start with the "room of the neighborhoods". It shows different neighborhoods in Jerusalem, each with its own style and architecture. From here up to the roof.

ON THE ROOF - The look out point - a panoramic view of Northern Jerusalem, also there is an exhibition room "Jerusalem - a city at war 1947-1948"; it includes pictures and maps on the war of independence. From here, head down to the second floor.

SECOND FLOOR - The main exhibition hall is about "Jerusalem, a divided city - reunited (1947-1967)". At the end of the exhibition go down the spiral staircase to the first floor and enter the "Jaffa Gate room" - show's the history of Jaffa Gate over the last century.

IN THE BASEMENT is the movie theater. Movies include:

1. "Is Jerusalem Burning?"
2. "Follow Me" - six day war film on Jerusalem.

EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS: programs and guided tours, within the museum, as well as around the city along the 1948-1967 old border by request and reservations.

MUSEUM HOURS:

Sun-Thurs.	9:00-17:00
Friday	9:00-13:00
Sat.	closed

TELEPHONE: (02) - 277061, 281278

ADDRESS: 4 Chel Handassa St. (on highway #1).

MAILING ADDRESS: The Tourjeman Post Museum, POB 14005, Jerusalem 91140.

TRANSPORTATION: Bus # 1,2,11,13,27,99.

visitor to use the actual physical structure of this home-turned-outpost-turned-museum to better understand the Israeli narrative of longing and redemption. At the end of the exhibit, all are invited to gaze out from the narrow slits in the filled-in, windows of the top floor, apertures that once served as turrets and where, during the dark days of the divided city, Israeli soldiers peered out bravely at an enemy apparently as 'faceless' today as then. From this vantage point, looking out in the direction of the fortified hilltop campus of Hebrew University, one can view the widening Jerusalem landscape and, within this representational context, one can imagine the former terrain as Israel's brave defenders and Jerusalem's 'liberators' once did.

By reenacting the practice of gazing across a once-divided landscape, visitors are meant to understand the significance of this site for the security of the budding state. One 'sees'

just what the beleaguered Israeli nation is said to have once seen, and which it now memorializes. Today, though, those who gaze out from behind these former turrets (themselves former windows), see a seamless whole, a unity achieved through Israeli victory. From this vantage point, Israeli collective memory and the myths that inform it ossify into 'historical truth'.

The Baramki house and the museums that have been constructed within its space exist simultaneously. The utilization of the home historically embodies two different but interconnected modes of domination. Serving first as an instrument of military conquest, the structure policed the borders imposed on the city by the dominant national community. Today, the once familial space is deployed in the service of epistemic violence, used to produce and police certain ideological and historical boundaries. The monument to Israeli military victory does more than simply denies the home's familial past. It elaborates a dominant series of myths that 'evaporate' the history of the Palestinian people more generally, while at the same time providing legitimacy for Israel's presence in all that it claims is Jerusalem.

A Palestinian family home of former architectural splendor, designed by a now deceased master of Palestinian architecture, serves today as a component of a different architecture of knowledge production, a scaffolding of truth-making, a foundation for epistemic violence. It continues to rest on the frontier of competing historical imaginations and memories, anchored in place but simultaneously on the moving edge of Israeli colonial power.

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Endnotes

¹ For more on how these very vaunted terms have played a role in Israeli colonizing schemes, see Anton Shammas' fascinating work on memory, loss, and the national imagination.

² For an extended discussion of this myth of history writing, see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*, (Boston, Beacon Press: 1995).

³ The 1949 Rhodes Agreement between Israel and the Arab states called for bringing the wall down. Israel refused to implement this, also ignoring the United Nations resolutions calling for the return of the Palestinians displaced in 1948.

⁴ Hassan Bey Tourjeman was a Palestinian who lived and owned the land on which Andoni Baramki built the Baramki house. There is also a Jewish family of the same name.

⁵ Meeting this Israeli standard for ownership was accomplished by Palestinian exiles in only a handful of known cases. To be successful, the Arab owner had to demonstrate sufficiently to the Israeli state in Israeli courts that when he or she fled West Jerusalem in 1948, they had not gone to a country 'at war with Israel'. Such read the provisions of Israel's "Absentee Property Law" (originally the "Enemies Property Law"). I came upon only one family, the Daoud's, who owned a property in Talbieh who were able to reclaim it after a several-year battle and after they proved that they had fled in 1948 to El Salvador, not a state 'at war' with Israel at the time of her birth.

⁶ Meron Benvenisti, *Jerusalem: The Torn City*, (Jerusalem, Isratypeset: 1976).

⁷ Interview with Gabi Baramki, 2003.

⁸ See *Israeli Government Press Office Report*, 1996, 12.