



Fig. 24.1: Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet, 1910–1914. Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, American Colony Photo-Dept. Photographic print, hand-tinted. Sven Hedin Foundation, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.

Rachel Lev

Chapter 24

Photography and *Genius Loci*: Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson’s “Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet” (1910–1914)

This chapter examines Jerusalem’s genius loci, as communicated in the work of the American Colony Photo-Department (ACPD) active in Jerusalem between 1896 and 1934. The ACPD’s photographs were distributed in Scandinavia and worldwide, and early in the twentieth century they shaped the idea of Jerusalem in people’s minds. Narrowing my study from the wider Jerusalem (“The Jerusalem code”), to a specific place in Jerusalem (“Genius Loci”), I try to examine the encrypted data of one photograph taken by the Swede Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson between 1910 to 1914: the “Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet [Mount of Olives].” While reading the photograph as a locus, a place, I rely on the Norwegian architect Thorvald Christian Norberg-Schulz’s (1926–2000) idea of the interconnectedness of natural and man-made qualities that, as a totality, constitute a pervading spirit of place or a genius loci. The chapter will examine the cultural setting of the American Colony in Jerusalem photographic collective (1896–1934) as well as the spatial dynamic that underlined their work.

The notion *genius loci*, was developed by Norberg-Schulz in his influential publication, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (1979), in which he investigated the theory of organization of space and built form.¹ His view was shaped by Martin Heidegger’s phenomenology of place: “A place is therefore a qualitative ‘total’ phenomenon which we cannot reduce to any of its properties such as spatial relationships, without losing its concrete nature out of sight.”² It is the dynamic inter-

¹ Christian Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture* (New York: Rizzoli, 1991).

² Norberg-Schulz, *Genius Loci*, 7.

Note: Thanks to Skans Victoria Airey for her translation of excerpts from the Sven Hedin Foundation archival materials; Håkan Wahlquist, Keeper of The Sven Hedin Foundation, the National Archive, Stockholm for his kind advise; Karolina Mikulska, Curator of Photograph Collections, Photograph Archive, Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm

Rachel Lev, Photography Historian and Museum Exhibition Designer; Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design (MA in Theory and Criticism of the Arts, in progress); and the American Colony Archive, Jerusalem

connectedness of natural and man-made spatial qualities that constitutes a *genius loci* of a place.

A Meeting in Jerusalem, August 1916

In August 1916, in the middle of WWI, the photographer Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson (1881–1958)³ met the renowned Swedish explorer Sven Anders Hedin (1865–1952) who was visiting Jerusalem “not as an explorer,” but “as a pilgrim.”⁴ The meeting between Larsson and Hedin proved instrumental for both. Hedin brought back with him to Sweden a vast collection of art photographs created by Larsson and ACPD photographers, as well as dozens of his own drawings of ethnic types and Jerusalem views, all recollecting his visit. These were shortly thereafter published in Sweden, and later in Germany. Larsson’s photographs constitute the majority of Hedin’s book *Till Jerusalem [To Jerusalem]*, published in Stockholm in 1917.⁵ The photograph “Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet” [henceforth referred to as “Augusta Victoria Stiftung”], by Larsson, included in Hedin’s *Till Jerusalem*, is of particular interest to this study of the notion of *genius loci* in photography.⁶

By the early 1900s, hand-painted biblical photographic images of Jerusalem and the Holy Land created by the ACPD were distributed to a wide clientele. When Sven Hedin amassed his own corpus of ACPD photographs, the collective’s work had already shaped the idea in people’s minds of a sacred Jerusalem. Unlike allegorical biblical photographs, the focus of “Augusta Victoria Stiftung” is a new architectural complex set amidst Jerusalem’s natural landscapes.

This chapter explores the spatial visual language of the hand-tinted photograph “Augusta Victoria Stiftung,” and Larsson’s traditional, yet critical interpretation of the inter-connectedness of natural and the cultivated landscapes, furthermore, the newly-built monument, and the cultural context behind its creation. The early imagery that was created by Larsson and the ACPD was nourished by their social and political awareness, their cultural and religious views, their extensive knowledge of the biblical history of Jerusalem and the Holy Land, but also by their clientele’s demand

³ Larsson was one of the 37 “Jerusalem Emigrants” of Nås, who settled in the American Colony (Jerusalem) in 1896.

⁴ Hedin 1915–1916. “Letters from Sven Hedin to his parents during his travels to the War Front and Orient, in 1915–1916, Volume XII.” Akt 136. The Sven Hedin Archive, The National Archive, Stockholm, Sweden. (Excerpts from Hedin’s Jerusalem’s visit were translated by Skans Victoria Airey, 2018).

⁵ Sven Anders Hedin, *Till Jerusalem* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Forlag, 1917).

⁶ American Colony (Jerusalem). 1914: 12. The 1914 photographs sales catalogue published by Vester and Co., the American Colony Stores, lists the photograph for the first time. Box 20, page 12, item 273, G. Eric Matson and Edith Matson papers, 1908–1977, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

for an ideal imagery of Jerusalem. It was etched into their art as a *genius loci*, conveying the idea of Jerusalem to the purchasers of these photographs. Integrating a political critical interpretation into a traditional biblical genre that was probably made to order, marks a transition in Larsson's work. His independent voice will become more evident in the years to come.

The Photographic Space

Larsson's hand-tinted photograph titled "Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung" (Fig. 24.1), was taken soon after the monumental German building complex on Jerusalem's highest Mount Scopus range was completed (1910–1914).⁷

The photograph shows the building harmoniously embedded in Jerusalem's natural landscape. The complex in the upper left middle ground of the photograph borders the natural terrain of Jerusalem's Scopus mountain range and the pink-blue sky. The rough, sand-colored bossage walls of the building blend in with the surrounding hills, while the black-blue tiled roof plays off against the hazy blue backdrop of the northern Dead Sea and Moab (Jordan) mountain range. The sixty-five-meter high bell- and observation tower at the building's right dominates the landscape, uniting earth and sky, rendering a sense of stability and serenity to the composition. The sacred sites within the walled city of Jerusalem to the southwest, were consciously left out of the photographic space, showing the photographer's intention to turn the complex into the focal point of the work.

The color palette, dominated by reddish brown tones of the earth and deep greens in the foreground, and lighter brown, off-white, pale blue, and pink hues in the upper background, follows the practice of the ACPD, which was perfected in their hand-tinted photographs. A grove of dark green olive trees interspersed with cypresses and fruit trees fills the foreground. At the lower right, a lone human figure dressed in white is visible in front of the grove's low stone wall and gate. A paved white road stretches diagonally from the photograph's mid-right in the direction of the monumental building complex, linking the grand new structure with the cultivated landscape. The pale pink and blue sky illuminating the top third of the composition bestows a spiritual ambience to the whole scene, with the single figure in white like a contemplative note. Clearly, the photographer, Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, had made a

7 Hedin 1916. Untitled [Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet, 1914], hand-tinted monochrome photographic print, 24 x 30 cm., 0875.0004.A. Collection of Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson and the ACPD photographs, 1900–1916. The Sven Hedin Collection, Photograph Archive, Ethnographic Museum, Stockholm. Despite the fact that the photograph was published in Hedin's book in 1917, I refer here to the original hand-tinted photograph due to its unusual qualities in comparison to the published reproduction.

study of the relationship between the new monument and the natural and cultivated landscapes long before he positioned his camera and took the photograph.

Larsson's photograph of the "Augusta Victoria Stiftung" was purchased by the Swedish explorer Hedin, in August 1916, from the Vester & Co., American Colony Stores, Jerusalem.⁸ At the time, Hedin was visiting Palestine as a guest of Ahmed Djemal Pasha (1872–1922), Commander of the Fourth Army in Sinai, Palestine, and Syria during World War I.⁹ Larsson, then aged thirty-five, and his twenty-five-year-old colleague Lars E. Lind (also a Swede) had been commissioned by the Turkish Commander to accompany Hedin during his Palestine visit. Both photographers had immigrated to Jerusalem with their families from the village of Nås, in Dalarna, Sweden in 1896, with the wave of immigration that inspired Selma Lagerlöf's novel *Jerusalem* (1901) (Fig. 24.2).¹⁰

The bond between Larsson and Hedin, nourished by their mutual artistic sensitivity and knowledge of the Holy Land, led in 1917 to several ACPD photograph-based publications in Sweden. Among them, Hedin's *Till Jerusalem*, which was illustrated with photographs by Larsson and the ACPD photographers, as well as Hedin's drawings. Another publication was *Passover Celebrations of the Samaritans in Words and Pictures* with text by John D. Whiting and photographs by Larsson.¹¹ Both were published in Stockholm where a wide range of audiences could follow their authors' interpretations of Jerusalem's *genius loci*.

In his letters to his parents¹² and his book *Till Jerusalem*, Hedin describes in detail Larsson's photographic talent, his extensive knowledge of the land, and his close ties with the people of Palestine and the Levant:

On all the journeys I did in and around the city, Lars Larsson was my faithful companion, and a better guide than he is not to be had anywhere on this earth. He knew every nook and cranny of the city of Jerusalem, and every road, village and ruin in the whole of Palestine and Syria. If I had had my way I would rather have had his knowledge than all the wisdom of Baedeker, since he had travelled so very many times through the country in all directions, partly to take the photographs he sold to travelers and pilgrims, partly as a guide for tourists. He had friends among the

8 Hedin, August 28, 1916. Handwritten receipt of goods purchased by Dr. Sven Hedin from Fr. Vester & Co. The American Colony Store. Akt 345. Hedin Arkiv vid Riksarkivet [Hedin Archive, The National Archive of Sweden], Stockholm.

9 Djemal Pasha, *Memories of a Turkish Statesman 1913–1919* (London: Hutchinson; New York: George H. Doran Company, 1922).

10 Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem I. I Dalarna* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1901); Selma Lagerlöf, *Jerusalem II. I det heliga landet* (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers förlag, 1902).

11 John D. Whiting and Lewis Larsson, *Samaritanernas påskfest i ord och bild [Passover Celebrations of the Samaritans in Words and Pictures]*, with introductions by Sven Anders Hedin and Selma Lagerlöf. (Stockholm: Albert Bonniers Forlag, 1917). Limited edition, no. 159 of 300, in Rare Books Collection, American Colony Archive, Jerusalem.

12 Hedin, "Letters from Sven Hedin to his parents."



Fig. 24.2: Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, photographing in Tibne, Jordan, 1910. American Colony Photo-Dept. photographers. Glass lantern slide. Uppsala University Library Collection.

Bedouin far beyond the mountains of Moab, and he had been long and often in Petra. He had sailed the Dead Sea from shore to shore. He had visited all the coastal towns, and was an intimate of the monks in the monastery on Mount Sinai. It was a joy to wander or travel in his company, for he had information on everything at his fingertips. He was well versed in the varied history of the country and knew his Bible by heart even if only in English, which tripped off his tongue just as easily as Swedish.¹³

¹³ Hedin, "Letters from Sven Hedin to his parents."

Of the 264 photographs purchased by Hedin from the ACPD,¹⁴ a selection of 134 (all credited “Larsson,” but only eight credited “Copyright L. Larsson Jerusalem”)¹⁵ were used to illustrate *Till Jerusalem*.¹⁶ Among these was “Augusta Victoria Stiftung.” In *Till Jerusalem* Hedin recalls his visit to Augusta Victoria: “a most beautiful view of the Holy Land, including the Temple Mount, Gethsemane, the Russian Maria Magdalena Church, where Jesus rested after fleeing Jerusalem, the Haram el Sharif where the temples of Solomon and Herod once stood. Mount Scopus and the Moab mountain range are seen at distance.”¹⁷

Pilgrimage or Political Domination?

Wilhelm II, Kaiser of Germany and King of Prussia inaugurated the Church of the Redeemer, the first Lutheran church in Jerusalem on his visit to Palestine in October 1898, and decided to build the Augusta Victoria Stiftung on the Mount of Olives at the request of the German Protestant community in Palestine. Officially a religious pilgrimage site, the location of the complex on the Mount of Olives was linked to the Ascension of Christ, but it also offered an unusual strategic advantage bordering the highest mountain range of Jerusalem and the deep slope towards the Dead Sea.

According to historian Lily Arad, Kaiser Wilhelm II described his pilgrimage to Jerusalem as a new and wonderful Crusade under the signs of peace and love that

14 Sven Anders Hedin, August, 1916. Collection of Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson and the ACPD photographs, spanning the years 1900–1916. The Sven Hedin Collection, Ethnographic Museum, Photograph Archive, Stockholm. The photographs purchased by Hedin in 1916 consisted of the following: 264 photographic prints by Larsson and ACPD photographers and one photo album titled “The Life of Christ” (possibly reproduction photographs featuring the paintings by British artist William Hole [1846–1917]). The purchase receipt lists “109 Albumenized [Albumen] Photographs; 15 Bromide Photographs; 1 Panorama of Jerusalem, col. [hand-tinted]; 1 Panorama of Jerusalem, Sepia; 60 Coloured photos of Locusts [Jerusalem’s Locust Plague, 1915]; 26 Photos, coloured [hand-tinted]; 26 Photos, Sepia; 9 Photos Sepia Long. Of the 264 photographs purchased by Hedin in Jerusalem the known photograph collection at the Ethnographic Museum in Stockholm consists only of some 115 photographs.

15 Hedin attributes all of the photographs in his book to Larsson and does not mention any of the other ACPD photographers. Only eight of the photographs in the book including “Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet,” are actually credited as “copyrighted” to Larsson. Whether the “copyrighted” photographs were taken by Larsson himself and the rest collaboratively with his colleague photographers should be further explored. John D. Whiting attributes the Jerusalem Locust Plague series to Larsson. See John D. Whiting and Lewis Larsson, “Jerusalem’s Locust Plague. Being the Description of the Recent Locust Influx into Palestine, and Comparing Same with Ancient Locust Invasions as Narrated in the Old World’s History Book, the Bible,” *National Geographic Magazine* 28, no. 6 (1915): 511–50, 513.

16 Hedin, *Till Jerusalem*.

17 Hedin, *Till Jerusalem*, 298. Translated by Skans Victoria Airey.

reconcile enemies, “however, in the second half of the nineteenth century, at the pinnacle of imperialism and colonial expansion, this expression conveyed not only Christian faith and a romantic concept of the medieval Crusades, but also important political issues.”¹⁸

In the “*Deutsche Bauzeitung*” in 1911, the architectural significance of the Augusta Victoria compound was reviewed as a gift of German cultural achievement to the Holy Land, despite the loss brought by it to the city’s historical character:

The group of German buildings is significant as an important phase, as they complement the efforts of the municipal authorities of Jerusalem to create a city whose architecture meets the needs of the present day. It is probable that as a result of these efforts, part of the historical character of the city and the landscape will be lost, and this is of course regrettable, but also inevitable – for why should a city of such international importance as Jerusalem not be permitted to participate in the achievements of culture of our own day and age.¹⁹

In her 2005 study of the Augusta Victoria complex, Arad noted that the name given to the foundation, “Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet,” with its Church, Pilgrim’s Hospital, and hostels, intended to associate the monument with the biblical meaning of the Mount of Olives, despite the fact that the complex was actually built on the Mount Scopus range.²⁰ Arad also commented that: “Though it is unlikely that the compound was consciously built for military purposes, it did serve as Turkish, German, and British headquarters, proving that the fortress-like building, would easily be a natural fit to a strategic military position.”²¹

The Lutheran Church of the Redeemer in the Muristan Crusader compound, gifted to the Emperor by Abdul Hamid II, was the first building project in Jerusalem initiated by Kaiser Wilhelm II. During his six-week tour in the region, the Kaiser entered the city like a “fairy-tale figure” on a white horse in a guard uniform with eagle helmet, and his speeches avoided political and religious contention.²² The Imperial entourage, along with hundreds of guests including delegations from Scandinavia and the United States, consecrated the Church of the Redeemer on October 31, 1898, “with trumpets and trombones, pomp and pageantry.”²³ At the end of the ceremony, the Kaiser knelt at the altar and vowed to “serve the Lord for all eternity.”²⁴

18 Lily Arad, “The Augusta Victoria Hospice on the Mount of Olives and Kaiser Wilhelm II’s Peaceful Crusade,” in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes 9/10* (Hannover: Selbstverlag des Deutschen Evangelischen Instituts, 2005), 126.

19 As quoted in Peter Lemburg, “Prussia in Jerusalem,” in *Welcome to Jerusalem*, eds. Margaret Kampmeyer & Cilly Kugelman (Berlin: Jüdisch Museum, 2017), 123. [quoting “Die neuen Bauten im Heiligen Land,” in *Deutsche Bauzeitung*, no 45 (1911): 17].

20 Arad, “The Augusta Victoria Hospice,” 128.

21 Arad, “The Augusta Victoria Hospice,” 126.

22 Lemburg, “Prussia in Jerusalem,” 121.

23 Lemburg, “Prussia in Jerusalem,” 121.

24 Lemburg, “Prussia in Jerusalem,” 121.

The Church of the Redeemer was erected over the remains of Constantine's Church of the Resurrection, first restored by the Crusaders. In Bethlehem, the Kaiser built the Lutheran Church of Christmas Night that was similarly inspired by the ancient church originally built by Constantine and restored by the Crusaders. The Ascension Church in the Augusta Victoria complex commemorated the same Christian event.²⁵ In 1910, the Augusta Victoria Stiftung, St Mary Church on Mt. Zion (the "Dormitio"), and St Paul's Hospice were consecrated in Jerusalem. The Muristan was developed further, eventually including The German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, a German state-church institution, established by Kaiser Willhelm II and dedicated to study of the Holy Land's antiquities (headed from 1903 by the Swedish Professor Gustaf Herman Dalman, who would also become Honorary Consul General of Sweden in Palestine).²⁶ Unlike the "modest" architectural style of the Church of the Redeemer, criticized for its lack of German idealism and dominance, Augusta Victoria's architecture "returned" the lost dignity to its initiators.

American Colony member and photographer Lars E. Lind writes on Germany's influence in the Holy Land: "All in all, Germany had supplanted Britain, in every field of influence – educational, medical, agricultural, mercantile and cultural. It took the Kaiser himself to bring all this crashing to oblivion by declaring war on August 2, 1914, and what was left of German influence between the two world wars disappeared altogether under Hitler in 1939."²⁷

The Kaiser's visit gave rise to the first significant photographic commission of the newly established American Colony Photo-Department, where "photography assumed an active part in exploration of the region, trying to link between the Bible and the Holy Land."²⁸ The young photographers followed American Colony member Elijah Meyers, who demonstrated an open-air master class of photography in action, which enabled them an active front row view to a grand historical event. Larsson, who was then just seventeen years old, joined Meyers and Frederick E. Vester and followed the Kaiser's entourage, and it is likely that he took quite a few of the photographs during the imperial visit, along with his photographer-colleague Furman O. Baldwin.

Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson's photograph "Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Stiftung," was taken from Mount Scopus, some six hundred meters northwest of the complex. The carefully staged focal point and the manner in which it was visually cropped from

²⁵ Arad, "The Augusta Victoria Hospice," 129–30.

²⁶ Lewis Larsson succeeded Dalman as Swedish consul in Jerusalem from 1920. See Jacob H. Grønbaek, "Lewis Larsson. A Swede in Jerusalem in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in *Living Waters*, eds. Egon Keck, Svend Søndergaard & Ellen Wulff (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 1990), 83. See also Chapter 26 (Inger Marie Okkenhaug), 518–39.

²⁷ Lars Lind, "Jerusalem Before Zionism and the American (Swedish) Colony," 18, unpublished manuscript. Lars E. Lind Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

²⁸ Eyal Onne, *Photographic Heritage of the Holy Land, 1839–1914* (Manchester: Institute of Advanced Studies, Manchester Polytechnic, 1980), 8.

adjacent historical monuments of the Old City of Jerusalem while its isolated positioning against the vast natural backdrop of the Mount Scopus topography rendered the impression of it as a rare jewel linking earth and sky. Under this false impression, Larsson concealed another message: by juxtaposing the lone Arab immersed in his orchard in the lower photographic space and the monumental German complex at the centre-top, Larsson encoded also the tension between the local tradition of cultivation of the Land and a foreign German Crusader style, grounded in the Kaiser's wish to strategically dominate Jerusalem.

The photographer who envisioned the photographic space and visualized its encoded messages, and the unknown painter who rendered it in colour, worked collaboratively to convey the actual dissonance between the monument the Grove. The dissonance, between the Kaiser's declared and concealed aspirations would eventually determine the complex's destiny, turning it into Ottoman and German War headquarters during World War I and a home of the military and civil British administration in Palestine from 1917.

Larsson and his photographer- and painter colleagues were able to explore the relationship between "being in the world" and place, and they staged these properties and characteristics as the photograph's *genius loci*, to indicate the total man-place relationships in and around Jerusalem.

Visionaries vs. Creators

The impact of the Swedish-American Colony on the city's spiritual and cultural scenes in the early 1900s was disseminated in Scandinavia through Selma Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*, and through numerous written accounts by Scandinavian travelers to the Holy Land who published extensive reports on life in the Colony before and after Selma Lagerlöf and Sophie Elkan's visit of March 1900. Among these visitors were Vicar A. Nordlander, 1897; K. J. Bohlin, 1899; Victor Hugo Wickström, 1900; Henrik Steen, 1903; Erik Aurelius, 1910; Klas Pontus Arnoldson, 1913; Hilma Granqvist, 1925 and 1931; Laura Petrie, 1930; and Emil Rodhe, 1931.

The Christian messianic collective of around 150 people from seventeen nationalities (most were Swedish and American), was established in Ottoman Jerusalem in 1881 by Horatio G. Spafford (1828–1888) and the Norwegian-American Anna T. Spafford (1842–1923). The Spaffords, who were followed to Jerusalem by a small group of friends and relatives, were in quest of spiritual enlightenment after a series of tragic losses.

Their religious philosophy in the early years was founded on universal humane ideals, which they sought to extract from the primary biblical sources by way of study and practice. During the first years in Jerusalem, they adopted celibacy as a way of life, aspired to purification, and longed to become witnesses of an ethereal Second Coming. Refusing paid work, they were supported by Arab neighbours and friends as well as by

local banks, and by the mid-1890s, their debts mounted to about eight thousand dollars. By then, more than a third of the founders had died, among them Horatio G. Spafford. Among the newcomers who joined the Colony during its early years were Elijah Meyers of India, a Jack-of-all-trades who would establish the photographic venture in 1896, and Clara Johanna Brook, a British kindergarten teacher, pianist, and able painter who would become a school teacher.

In 1894, in an attempt to release the community from its heavy debts, nine members of the collective including Anna Spafford returned to Chicago. Their objective was to access funds that a few of them were entitled to by inheritance. The group remained in Chicago for almost two years, during which time they held open services and won not only the court cases, but also the faith of sixty-eight new believers who decided to follow them to back to Jerusalem in 1896. Forty of the sixty-eight newcomers were Swedish immigrants to America, whom had formed the Swedish Evangelical Church in Chicago around Pastor Olof Henrik Larsson (1842–1919), and twenty-eight were of American origin. Three months later, thirty-seven Swedes from the village of Nås, in Dalarna – a sister spiritual community of the American-Swedish Evangelical Church of Chicago – would join them in Jerusalem.

The Spafford's first home within the Old City of Jerusalem had become too small to accommodate the extended community and soon after their arrival to Jerusalem they moved to a more spacious residence, the former home of Rabbah Daoud Effendi al-Husseini, and his four wives, situated in the Sheikh Jarrah quarter northwest of Jerusalem's Herod's Gate. Many of the newcomers who could not cope with Anna T. Spafford's leadership, or with communal life, or the living conditions in Palestine, either died soon after their arrival or left the Colony empty-handed.

Around 1900, the Colony started operating seasonally as a hostel for paying guests, in addition to establishing an agricultural farm; a food and canning industry; a bakery; as well as dress-making, weaving, and carpentry workshops. An elementary school was set up, headed by John E. Dinsmore – a biblical scholar and botanist – where boys and girls, Christians, Muslims, and Jews, studied together.

Travel and Exploration

Exploration of the land as an aspect of faith was etched into the identity of the American Colony's members from its founding by Horatio and Anna Spafford. Travel continued to mark the congregation's faith and creative identity as younger members adopted exploration-related professions, which included archaeology, land surveying, tour guiding, photography, botany, education, ethnography, and hosting. The latter – hosting – exposed them to like-minded explorers and artists who would often stay for prolonged periods as their guests.

The end of the nineteenth- and the beginning of the twentieth century saw the establishment of state-sponsored religious research institutes in Jerusalem, whose new inhabitants' knowledge and aspirations complemented those of the Colony: such as the French *École Biblique et Archéologique Française* founded in 1890, followed by the American School of Oriental Research (today the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research) founded in 1900, and the *Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für Altertumswissenschaft des Heiligen Landes* [The German Protestant Institute of Archaeology] founded in 1900 (established by the German Protestant Church Conference in Eisenach: later confirmed by Kaiser Wilhelm II). The new inhabitants of these institutions established close ties with their neighbouring communities which harboured similar interests. Events were arranged and these meetings proved formative and led guests and hosts into fruitful exchanges and common ventures. For young Colony members, it was a further schooling, and many of them developed their knowledge of the land. Lars E. Lind recalls in his memoir:

Archaeology seemed to spur on the study of theology. A majority of the annual students from the colleges of Europe were theological graduates; Palestine Archaeology was in fact inseparable from Bible research. The Colony was a host to the great majority of American students and the young men of the Colony, thanks to their intimate knowledge of the land and the Arabic language, became the guides and interpreters of the annual excursions.²⁹

The Swedish-German Professor Gustaf Herman Dalman (1855–1941), who headed The German Protestant Institute of Archaeology, and the Colony member John E. Dinsmore, laid the foundation for botanical research in the Levant.³⁰ The German missionary architect and model-maker Conrad Schick (1822–1901) inspired Colony members Elijah Meyers, who became an interpreter of his Jerusalem models, and the young Ernest F. Beaumont, who excelled in topographical model-making.

The Memory of Photography

The American Colony Photo-Department was established by Elijah Meyers, an Indian-Jewish convert who arrived in Jerusalem in 1889. The ACPD rapidly turned into a booming business and the collective soon purchased Ferdinand Ludwig Vester's store in Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate, from which their products and other memorabilia were sold to tourists and distributed worldwide. Throughout its thirty-seven years of activity, the ACPD comprised between ten to fifteen photographers, and about eight

²⁹ Lind, "Jerusalem Before Zionism and the American (Swedish) Colony," 209.

³⁰ John Edward Dinsmore and Gustaf Dalman, *Die Pflanzen Palästinas: auf Grund eigener Sammlung und der Flora Posts und Boissiers*. Text by John E. Dinsmore, with Arabic names by Gustaf Dalman (Leipzig: Deutschen Verien zur Erforschung Palästinas, 1911).

painters, as well as printers, album binders, editors, writers, and distributors. The Photo-Department's enterprise and body of work remains unmatched by any other photographic venture active in the Levant between the years 1896 and 1934. The photographs they took before World War I, across Jerusalem and Palestine, convey the interconnected and open relationships between the inhabitants and places of the Middle East; a kaleidoscopic vision that has not been attainable since.

The photographs were embossed with the Photo-Department logo crediting the collective and rarely were individual photographs attributed to a specific photographer. Young adults of the Swedish "Jerusalem Immigrants" as well as Americans, Indians, and Palestinians formed the original collective. Swedes Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, Lars E. Lind, Olof E. Lind, G. Eric Matson, G. Olof Matson, and possibly Maria Lund, were among the leading personalities responsible for the Photo-Department's international reputation. Americans Edith Yantiss (Matson), Ernest F. Beaumont, Furman O. Baldwin, Norman A. Baldwin, John D. Whiting; Frederick E. Vester from Germany; Elijah Meyers from India; and Palestinians Jamil Albina, Najib Albina, and Fareed Naseef were among the contributors to this venture. The young photographers who originally had gathered around Elijah Meyers soon after the Swedish emigration of 1896, ranged in age from twelve to sixteen with the oldest being Furman O. Baldwin, aged twenty. The younger members of the ACPD were influenced by the religious views of their visionary parents, but, at the same time, they grew up exploring the real terrain and sights of the Holy Land in challenging photographic expeditions. The social dynamic of the collective, their dedication to study, travel, and exploration of the land, enabled the ACPD photographers to constantly explore the borders of the photographic space and develop a wide range of genres.

Articles of their shared observations of the Holy Land's inhabitants and places were published in the "National Geographic Magazine" between 1913 and 1940. The articles written by the American Colony member John D. Whiting (1882–1951) were illustrated with ACPD photographers. The first article "From Jerusalem to Aleppo," was published in 1913, and this was followed by "Village Life in the Holy Land" in 1914, and "Jerusalem's Locust Plague" in December 1915.

Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson had a central role in shaping the ACPD destiny and its genre of art photography. As a teenager, Larsson travelled throughout the Levant, participating in extensive photo-expeditions. During these outings, he forged close ties with lay people and dignitaries alike. Larsson took over the running of the ACPD from Elijah Meyers around 1905 and remained at its head for more than twenty years.

A typed document, "The Chief Industries of the American Colony," described the ACPD in 1907 under Larsson's leadership:

This branch occupies several of the young men of the Colony. They take thousands of views of sites, ceremonies, customs etc., in and around Jerusalem and throughout Palestine and Syria

that are included in the different series of the photographs that are sold at Fr. Vester & Co., The American Colony Stores under the Grand New Hotel in Jerusalem, as well as series of Lantern slides and Stereoscopic Views and Postal Cards and Colored photographic albums . . . about 14,500 to 16,500 are sold during a traveling season.³¹

Art photography was one genre among a wide variety of artistic, academic, and documentary styles mastered by the photographic collective, but it is through the art photographs that they conveyed their combined interpretation of a timeless, often idealized *genius loci* of Jerusalem.

The young ACPD photographers and Colony painters were inspired by the photographs taken by Felix Bonfils (1831–1885) of Jerusalem’s views and types, and which, between 1890 and 1910, were transformed through a photo-mechanical process into striking ink-based colour photo-lithographs created by the Photoglob Company in Zürich. As Olof E. Lind notes:

The Colony had one competing firm of Bonfils of Bayreuth [Beirut], whose photographs were sold throughout the country, but the colony soon produced better and more complete collections of historical sites, and later held the market in the photographic line. Enlargements, views, lantern slides plain and colored, and printing and developing private plates for students. It grew into an important and paying business.³²

Several of the Colony members as well as guest residents were able painters. British Colony member Clara Johanna Brook was one of its finest artists, in addition to being a schoolteacher who taught her pupils painting and art history outside the regular school curriculum. Other Colony members such as Ernest Forrest Beaumont, Lars Eriksson Lind, Edith (Yantiss) Matson, Bertha Spafford Vester, and Grace Spafford Whiting, are among the Colony members who practiced painting continuously. Among the American Colony long-term guests were the renowned American artist Corwin Knapp Linson (1864–1934) and Annie Linson,³³ who stayed at the Colony from 1898 to 1902; and Swedish artist and inventor Algot Sätterström (1880–1914), who was in Jerusalem between 1903 and 1905, and befriended the Colony artists and photographers.

Soon after the ACPD was founded, the young Colony photographers started experimenting with the Colony painters, as well as with long term resident painters and traveling experts whom mastered painting over photography in creating stunning hand painted photographs of Jerusalem and the Holy Land. “Photographers and

31 American Colony (Jerusalem): January 1907. Unpublished document. “The Chief Industries of the American Colony, Jerusalem, at the Present Time.” Part I, Box 2, Folder 19: American Colony in Jerusalem Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.mss/mamcol.033>.

32 Olof Lind, undated: 54. Typed manuscript, “The Life of One of the Ingmar Sons,” Box 3, Olof E. Lind Papers, MSS85935, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

33 Corwin Knapp Linson, “Sunset Near Jerusalem,” *The Century Magazine* 72, no. 2 (1906).

artists crossed each other's routes in the Holy Land," said Eyal Onne, and "the new art of photography and the traditional art of painting and drawing as practiced in the Holy Land, had bilateral relationships of give and take."³⁴ These bilateral relationships found their unique expression also within the American Swedish Colony and its Photographic Department.

The technique of tinting photographs set a new impetus to the trade. Thousands of famous religious paintings photographed on canvas paper and scenes of sacred sites were sold as fast as they could be produced. Sixty years after, the colour remains as vivid as when applied.³⁵

It was not until 1922 that the ACPD printed its first known specialized catalogue of art photographs; a fine selection of some 220 photographs spanning the years 1900 and 1922. With careful attention to composition and to staging of the photographic space, the photographers and painters mastered the genre in creating black and white, sepia, and hand-tinted photographic prints. Their artistic skill surpassed all other competitors in the field. Their staged works consisted of a careful organization of people's and objects' relationships in space to create dramatic compositions. "Jerusalem's Locust Plague,"³⁶ a photographic series taken by Larsson and the ACPD in 1915, displays the locusts' metamorphosis in a set of hand-tinted images; one to a page. The series is a unique example of the interdisciplinary discourse among the photographers, writers, explorers, and artists, and was one of the complete series purchased by Hedin in 1916.³⁷

The art photographs listed in the 1922 catalogue consisted of a variety of themes and formats: "Buildings, Picturesque Streets of Jerusalem, Streets in Bethlehem, Types of Men, Types of Women, Primitive Agriculture and Palestine Pastoral Life."³⁸ Among Sven Hedin's extensive purchase of ACPD art photographs were: Herod's Temple model by Architect Dr. Conrad Schick;³⁹ Jerusalem's Stephan's Gate; Jerusalem's David Street (Fig. 24.3); Panoramic View of Jerusalem;⁴⁰ Anna T.

³⁴ Onne, *Photographic Heritage of the Holy Land, 1839–1914*, 12.

³⁵ Lind, "Jerusalem Before Zionism and the American (Swedish) Colony," 83. Lind's remark remains true even today, one hundred years later.

³⁶ Hedin, Collection of Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson and the ACPD photographs, spanning the years 1900–1916. The Sven Hedin Collection, Ethnographic Museum, Photograph Archive, Stockholm. ID 0833 and ID 0875.

³⁷ Larsson and the ACPD, 1936. Photograph Album, "Locust," [Jerusalem's Locust Plagues of 1915 and 1930], Box II_02_07_18, ACPD collection of topical photograph albums, American Colony Archive, Jerusalem.

³⁸ American Colony (Jerusalem) 1922. *Catalogue of The American Colony ART PHOTOS, 1922*. Fr. Vester & Co., American Colony Stores, Jerusalem. Boaz Collection of Photography, Jerusalem.

³⁹ See Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), fig. 1.3.

⁴⁰ See Chapter 1 (Anna Bohlin and Ragnhild Johnsrud Zorgati), fig. 1.4.



Fig. 24.3: David Street, Jerusalem, 1900–1916. American Colony Photo-Dept. photographers. Photographic print, hand-tinted. Sven Hedin Foundation, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.



Fig. 24.4: Al-Aqsa Mosque, 1900–1916. Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, American Colony Photo-Dept. Photographic print, hand-tinted. Sven Hedin Foundation, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.

Spafford at the American Colony Courtyard; The Jordan River; Bethlehem Peasant Spinning Wool; The Samaritan Priest with the Bible Scroll; The Al-Aqsa Mosque (Fig. 24.4); and a complete set of the Jerusalem's Locust Plague series (1915) tinted by Lars E. Lind (Fig. 24.5).⁴¹ An inventory of the ACPD shortly before its dissolution in 1934 shows that some eight artists worked simultaneously on producing hand-tinted photographs and glass lantern slides. The art photographs comprised more than just allegorical biblical scenes, and only some were hand-painted. Regardless of the subject, whether a building or a portrait, the art photograph aimed to present it as a sublime entity; a *genius loci* of the ideal timeless ambience.

⁴¹ American Colony (Jerusalem), *Catalogue of The American Colony ART PHOTOS*, 1922. The items listed in the ACPD 1922 art photographs catalogue, consisted of three formats: pictures, panels and panoramas. Pictures measured 24 x 30 cm and were available in either sepia tone or delicate hand-coloured prints. Panels measured 12 x 30 cm and were available in sepia or hand-coloured versions. Panoramas measured 25 x 55 cm and came in black and white, sepia, and hand-coloured.



Fig. 24.5: Jerusalem’s Locust Plague: Colony Members Fighting the Locust, 1915. Hol Lars (Lewis) Larsson, American Colony Photo-Dept. Photographic print, hand-tinted. Sven Hedin Foundation, Etnografiska Museet, Stockholm.

But this was only one stratum of a complex interpretation of layered data that was visually encoded in these photographs. The outbreak of World War I led the ACPD photographers to develop a less idealistic genre: War photography. The Augusta Victoria Stiftung photograph was created on the verge of these dramatic political changes.

Epilogue

Larsson’s careful organization of “Augusta Victoria Stiftung” photographic space, its aesthetics and encrypted criticism against the German domination of Jerusalem, and his love for Jerusalem’s primordial landscapes and its inhabitants, constitute as a totality his perception of Jerusalem’s *genius loci* shortly before World War I.

Soon after the photograph “Augusta Victoria Stiftung on Olivet” was taken, Palestine was plunged into World War I, and the function of the foundation changed

dramatically when Ahmed Djemal Pasha turned it into his and the allied German forces' headquarters between 1915 and 1917. On December 9, 1917, the morning after the Turks retreated from Augusta Victoria towards Jericho, Larsson took the rare set of iconic photos capturing the surrender of Jerusalem to the British in Sheikh Bader at the western outskirts of the city. Some hours later, Larsson and his photographer colleague Lars E. Lind were ordered to destroy these photographs by Major General Sir John Shea who was planning the staged entry of General Edmund Allenby to Jerusalem on December 11.⁴² Larsson resisted the order until Shea's Aid-de-Camp forced him to burn both the plates and all the prints in his presence.

In the following weeks, the British forces overtook Augusta Victoria and soon raised the British flag atop its roof turning it into Allenby's headquarters, an event also documented by the ACPD. Between 1920 and 1927 the complex was the official residence of the British High Commissioner in Palestine, until it was severely damaged by the 1927 earthquake and returned to its original owners, the Kaiserin Augusta Victoria Foundation. The title of the historical photo was changed in the ACPD art photographs catalogue of 1922 to "The Olivet Range with [the British] Government House," showing an apparent adaptation of the Colony photographers to the new regime.

With the beginning of the British Mandate in Palestine the leading architect of the British Arts and Crafts Movement, Charles Robert Ashbee, was commissioned by Sir Ronald Storrs to prepare a feasibility report for the restoration of the city of Jerusalem. In his report, he lamented the lack of sensitivity to Jerusalem's natural *genius loci* of Augusta Victoria among other similar political architectural statements:

Coming into the City from the old pilgrim route . . . we notice how the ancient Jerusalem is all but obliterated: we see the once golden dome no longer, we see a bastard Florence, a bastard Nuremburg, a bastard Moscow, an imitation Lourdes, a Bavarian suburb and an imitation Oxford . . . Round and about the City circuit within or without the walls we note an arrogant assertion of the various national codes. All modern buildings seem to have been strangely prophetic of the War.⁴³

The collection of art photographs created by the young men who could have been protagonists in Selma Lagerlöf's *Jerusalem*, were purchased by Hedin in 1916 from the Vester & Co. American Colony Store. Some of these photographs by the American

⁴² Rachel Lev, "Chronicles of a Surrender, December 9, 1917 – The Story of the American Colony Photo-Dept. Surrender Photographs," in *A General and a Gentleman – Allenby at the Gates of Jerusalem*, exhibition catalogue, (Jerusalem: Tower of David, Museum for the History of Jerusalem, 2017), 52e–74e.

⁴³ Ron Fuchs & Gilbert Herbert, "A Colonial Portrait of Jerusalem." *Hybrid Urbanism: On the Identity Discourse and the Built Environment*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (Westport: Praeger, 2001), 88.

Colony Photo-Department are preserved today in the Ethnographic Museum Photograph Archive in Stockholm.

Besides the aesthetic quality of these striking images, they carry the encrypted spatial narratives of what their creators envisioned.