

BIRTHPLACE OF JESUS

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY AND THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

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Cover photo: The northern aisle inside the Church of the Nativity looking east

BIRTHPLACE OF JESUS

CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY AND THE PILGRIMAGE ROUTE

WORLD HERITAGE SITE NOMINATION DOCUMENT

MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND ANTIQUITIES
DEPARTMENT OF ANTIQUITIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

PALESTINE
2011



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His Excellency Ziad Al-Bandak, Presidential Advisor for Christian Affairs, Palestine

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This nomination dossier was prepared by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, Bethlehem, co-ordinated by Arch. Nada Atrash, Head of the Research and Training Unit, and edited by Dr. Julie Gardiner (UK)

The Charter on the Safeguarding of the of Palestinian Historic Towns and Urban Landscapes – ‘the Bethlehem Charter - 2008’ and the Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, adopted respectively in December 2008 and March 2010, were prepared within the framework of the Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan, a project funded by the Government of Italy and implemented by UNESCO in cooperation with MoTA, CCHP and the Municipalities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour.

This nomination dossier was prepared by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, Bethlehem, co-ordinated by Arch. Nada Atrash, Head of the Research and Training Unit, and edited by Dr. Julie Gardiner (UK)

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*State of Palestine – Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities,
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VOLUME II - ANNEXES

PRESIDENTIAL LETTER

I am especially pleased and indeed proud to present this nomination dossier to the World Heritage Committee, on behalf of all Palestinians, of course, but also on behalf of people everywhere. In an ideal world, The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, would surely have been one of the first properties inscribed on the World Heritage List; and with it the historic city of Bethlehem too, here represented by the traditional Pilgrimage Route through it to the Church, both in its own right as an integral part of the Church's context, and as an earnest of our intention to nominate the whole historic city in a second nomination.

This first nomination will come as no surprise to the Committee. The UN General Assembly at its 53rd Session (Agenda item 157) enthusiastically supported millennial celebrations in Bethlehem in 2000, describing it as '*...one of the most historic and significant sites on earth*'. At its 26th session in Budapest, 2002, the Committee followed that lead by passing a resolution actively encouraging the better protection and management in a World Heritage context of the Church of the Nativity, the Old City, Bethlehem and other major heritage sites in Palestine.

As a result, a survey and assessment of Palestine's cultural and natural heritage in 2002–04, part-funded by UNESCO, led to the publication in 2005 by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Palestine's *Inventory of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine* (to meet demand, reprinted in Arabic as well as English, 2009). The Committee received this at its meeting in 2005. The Inventory ranked 20 properties by their potential outstanding universal

value; Bethlehem came first.

Since 2005, greatly encouraged by the Committee's and UNESCO's continuing support, we have carried out much work (survey, assessment and conservation) in Bethlehem. A first World Heritage nomination can, therefore, now be made from a position of knowledge and strength achieved not least because you have encouraged us. I trust you are pleased with our efforts; as we understand it, we have moved to this point as you wished.

The essence of Bethlehem is that it is the birthplace of the founder of one of the world's major religions. As it has been for some two millennia, Bethlehem is a focus of Christian belief and worship; with Jerusalem, it is at the heart of the Christian world. Christmas, the most widely celebrated religious festival in the world, is based on the story of Jesus' birth in Bethlehem at a place now marked by the Church of the Nativity.

It seems peculiarly appropriate that I am able to commend this nomination to you during our celebration of Christmas, 2010, when both the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route are at the centre of our thoughts and activities.

Mahmoud Abbas
President
State of Palestine

LETTER OF THE GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

ΕΛΛΗΝΟΡΘΟΔΟΞΗ ΠΑΤΡΙΑΡΧΕΙΑ
ΙΕΡΟΣΟΛΩΜΩΝ



GREEK ORTHODOX PATRIARCHATE
JERUSALEM

No. 1173

Mr. Ziyad Al-Bandak
Presidential Advisor for Christian Affairs

Dear Mr. Bandak,

We are writing in relation to the latest developments and correspondence in connection with the efforts to promote Bethlehem as a city for World Heritage.

We cheer and commend these efforts and are ready to support this initiative. We give Our permission to the needed work proposed surrounding the Church of the Nativity and around Our various surrounding structures.

Asking the Almighty to bless these efforts with every deserved success.

With best wishes and Patriarchal blessings,

THEOPHILOS III
PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM

Holy City of Jerusalem
Saturday, November 12, 2010

LETTER OF THE CUSTOS OF THE HOLY LAND



CUSTODIA TERRÆ SANCTÆ

Prot C-099/10

Jerusalem July 9, 2010

Mr. Ziad EL BANDAK
Presidential Advisor
for Christian Affairs

Dear Mr. BANDAK,

Thank you for your letter and the initiative that is being taken for Bethlehem. It is always encouraging to see that work is being done for Bethlehem and the people there.

We understand that the work you will be performing is in the surroundings of the Church of the Nativity and our other convents and institutions in Bethlehem. We are wish to collaborate with the initiative in order to promote Bethlehem as a city for World Heritage and hence you have our permission to proceed with work around the organizations of the Custody in Bethlehem.

Wishing you all the success in the project.

Yours sincerely



Fr. Pierbattista PIZZABALLA
Fr. Pierbattista PIZZABALLA, OFM
Custos of the Holy Land

Cc: Fr. Jerzy KRAJ, Fr. Samuel FAHIM, Fr. Jean D'IDES, Fr. Sewryn LUBECKI.



ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՏԵԼԵԴԻՓՈՆ ԳՈՍՏԱՐԱՐ, 14235	Հեռագրա՝ 02-6271103	ՖԱՔՍ 02-6271079	ԵՐԿՈՍԱՐԱՄ
REAL ESTATE DEPT. P.O.Box: 14235	PHONE: 02-6271103	Fax: 02-6271079	JERUSALEM



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

View of Manger Square
looking east towards the
Church of the Nativity and
its *ensemble*

State Party

State of Palestine

State, Province or Region

Bethlehem

Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

Latitude 31° 42' 04" N to 31° 42' 32" N
Longitude 35° 12' 03" E to 35° 12' 35" E

Textual Description of the boundary(ies) of the nominated property

The boundary defines the proposed property, consisting of, to the east, the architectural ensemble of the Church of the Nativity and the three Convents: the Greek Orthodox, the Franciscan and the Armenian Convents, together with a small area of land immediately to its east; and, to the west, the Pilgrimage Route, in total 712 m long, now defined by Star Street, part of Paul VI Street and the north side of Manger Square. The Buffer Zone around the proposed property consists essentially of the Historic City of Bethlehem.

Justification, Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

This nomination is of a property valid in its own right for inscription on the World Heritage List; it is also the first part of a serial nomination which will include sites inside and surrounding Bethlehem, particularly those related to the story of the birth and life of Jesus. It is brought forward with the agreement of the three Churches responsible for the Church of the

Nativity and its architectural ensemble. The second nomination will include the Historic Town of Bethlehem, here basically the Buffer Zone, and further nominations could include such as the Historic Town of Beit Sahour, the Shepherds' Field, Beit Sahour, and Mar Saba Monastery in the Desert to the east.

Justification

Since at least the 2nd century AD people have believed that the place where the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, now stands is where Jesus was born. One particular cave, over which the first Church was built, is traditionally believed to be the Birthplace itself. In locating the Nativity, the place both marks the beginnings of Christianity and is one of the holiest spots in Christendom.

The original basilican church of 339 AD (St Helena), parts of which survive below ground, was arranged so that its octagonal eastern end surrounded, and provided a view of, the cave. This church is overlaid by the present Church of the Nativity, essentially of the mid-6th century AD (Justinian), though with many later alterations. It is the oldest Christian church in daily use.

Since early medieval times the Church has been increasingly incorporated into a complex of other ecclesiastical buildings, mainly monastic. As a result, today it is embedded in an extraordinary architectural ensemble, overseen by members of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Order of St Francis and the Armenian Church in a partnership (the Status Quo) established by the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

For most of the last 1500 years, Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity have been, as is still very much the case, a pilgrim destination. The eastern end of the traditional route from Jerusalem to the Church is along what is now officially called the Pilgrimage Route, that is, along Star Street, through the Damascus Gate, and along a short stretch of Paul VI Street and Manger Square. This route is still followed ceremonially each year by the Patriarchs of the three Churches at their several Christmases. The Christian Christmas, centred on Bethlehem, is the most widely-celebrated religious festival in the world.

Immediate Justification

The immediate justification for inscription is the World Heritage Committee's encouragement, formally recorded in 2002 at its 26th Session in Budapest, after the Church of the Nativity had been involved in military action. The Committee resolved that this Church and the Old City, Bethlehem, together with other major heritage sites in Palestine, should be better protected. As a result, a survey and assessment of Palestine's cultural and natural heritage in 2002–04, part-funded by UNESCO, led to the publication in 2005 by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, of an Inventory of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine (to meet demand, reprinted in Arabic as well as English, 2009). The Committee received this at its meeting in 2005. The Inventory ranked 20 properties by their potential outstanding universal value; Bethlehem came first.

Since 2005, greatly encouraged by the Committee's interest and support, much work (survey, assessment and conserva-

tion) has been carried out in Bethlehem. A first nomination can, therefore, now be made from a position of knowledge and strength

Statement of Significance

*'... the Palestinian City of Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus Christ
and one of the most historic and significant sites on earth'*
(UN General Assembly, 53rd Session, Agenda item 157,
53/27,
Bethlehem 2000; Annexes 2 and 3).

It is tempting to let the above quotation stand as the Statement of Significance without further elaboration. The following merely provides a gloss to it, adding some appropriate detail.

The essence of Bethlehem is that it is the birthplace of the founder of one of the world's major religions. As it has been for some two millennia, Bethlehem is a focus of Christian belief and worship; with Jerusalem, it is at the heart of the Christian world. Christmas, the most widely celebrated religious festival in the world, is based on the story of Jesus' birth which occurred here. Jesus' role as Issa, the divinely inspired prophet in Islamic belief, is also significant and underscores the sanctity of the place.

For two thousand years, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem has touched the beliefs of millions of people around the world, both Muslim and Christian. In addition, it drew the attention of Christians to the little town that was privileged to be the place of the Nativity. Bethlehem became a pilgrimage des-

tinuation, and then changed, particularly from the mid-19th century onwards, from a small agricultural village to a major tourist destination.

The ensemble of religious buildings above and clustered around what is believed to be the place of Jesus' birth is also unique, including as it does parts of the oldest known church building in the world still in daily use, the Basilica of Justinian. The ensemble contains buildings and spaces of the three Orders which look after the Holy place: Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian. The open area east of the Church is all land traditionally associated with, and still owned by, those three Orders. Not yet systematically examined below ground, the area is included in this nomination in particular because of its high potential as a scientific research resource of information about the millennium either side of the 1st century AD.

The pilgrims' route to the 'Holy Land' starts in Jerusalem, heading north to Hebron through the town of Bethlehem. That approach to Bethlehem is the only traceable route leading to the town during Iron Age and earlier times. The eastern end of that same route, the approach to and into the town, is that traditionally followed by Mary and Joseph on their way from Nazareth to Bethlehem; it is now followed each year during Christmas celebrations by the Patriarchs of the Western, Eastern and Armenian Churches, processing along Star Street and part of Paul VI Street to enter Manger Square and what was formerly the atrium in front of the west door of the Church.

Apart from route-related reasons, Star Street/Paul VI Street,

principal streets in the historic city, are also included in this nomination as an expression of the intention to include appropriate parts of the historic city in a subsequent nomination. This will be presented once the current detailed survey and evaluation of the historic fabric and urban landscape are completed and the recently agreed Guidelines (Annexe 12) for the management of historic Bethlehem and its surroundings have been tested in practice.

Criteria under which property is nominated

iv. The Church of the Nativity is an outstanding example of an early church in a remarkable architectural ensemble which illustrates both a significant stage in human history in the 4th–6th centuries AD and in later stages up to the present century.

vi. The Church of the Nativity, and the Pilgrimage Route to it, are directly associated with events and beliefs of outstanding universal significance.

Name and information of official local institution/ agency:

Organization: Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities
 Address: P.O. Box 534
 Bethlehem, Palestine
 Tel: + 972 (0)2 274 1581/2/3
 Fax: + 972 (0)2 274 3753
 E-mail: info@bethlehem-whs.pna.ps
 www.bethlehem-whs.pna.ps



Nomination boundaries and Buffer Zone



1. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PROPERTY

Aerial photograph of the
Church of the Nativity and
its *ensemble*

1.a Country

State of Palestine

1.b State, Province or Region

Bethlehem Governorate

1.c Name of Property

Birthplace of Jesus: the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem



Fig. 1.1 World map

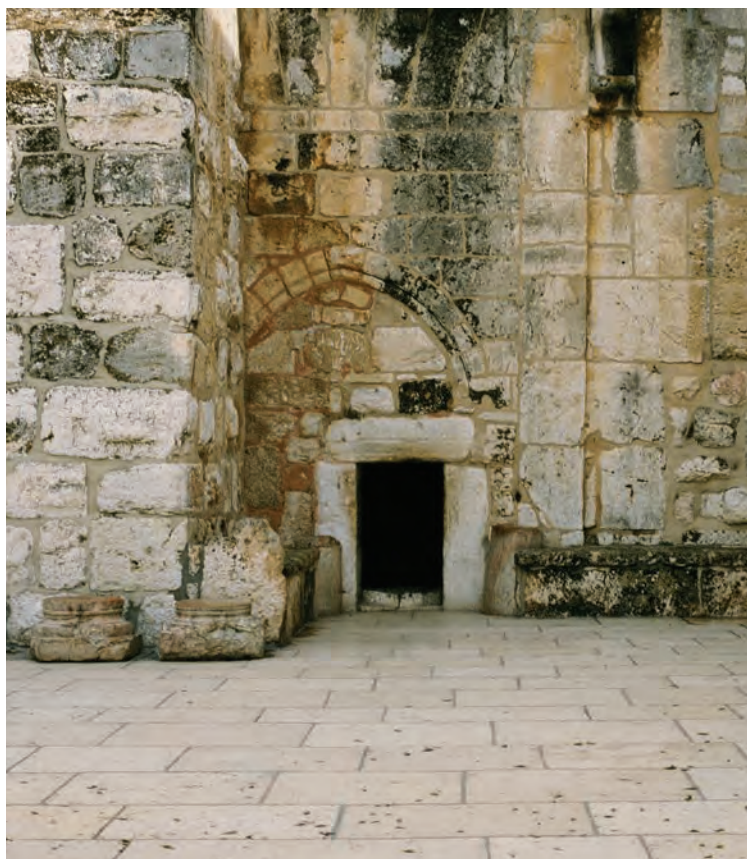


Fig. 1.2 Doorway of the Church of the Nativity

1.d Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

Grotto:	Latitude	31° 42' 14" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 25" E
B1:	Latitude	31° 42' 17" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 35" E
B2:	Latitude	31° 42' 04" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 28" E
B3:	Latitude	31° 42' 18" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 03" E
B4:	Latitude	31° 42' 32" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 14" E
C1:	Latitude	31° 42' 19" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 13" E
C2:	Latitude	31° 42' 16" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 14" E
C3:	Latitude	31° 42' 12" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 21" E
C4:	Latitude	31° 42' 12" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 31" E
C5:	Latitude	31° 42' 15" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 33" E
C6:	Latitude	31° 42' 25" N
	Longitude	35° 12' 14" E



Fig. 1.3 Map of the Nomination Area

- Church of the Nativity
- Convents Surrounding the Church; the Greek Orthodox Convent, Franciscan Monastery and Armenian Convent
- Pilgrimage Route and the Gardens East of the Church
- Buffer Zone

1.e Maps and Plans, showing the boundries of the nomintaed property and the buffer zone



Fig. 1.4 Palestine within the Middle East context



Fig. 1.5 Map of Palestine

- the Church of the Nativity
- the three Convents encroaching the Church
- the Gardens to the east of the Church



Fig 1.6 Aerial photograph of the Church of the Nativity, its architectural *ensemble*, and the gardens to the east of the Church



Fig. 1.7 Morphological plan of the Pilgrimage Route, the Church of the Nativity and its architectural *ensemble*

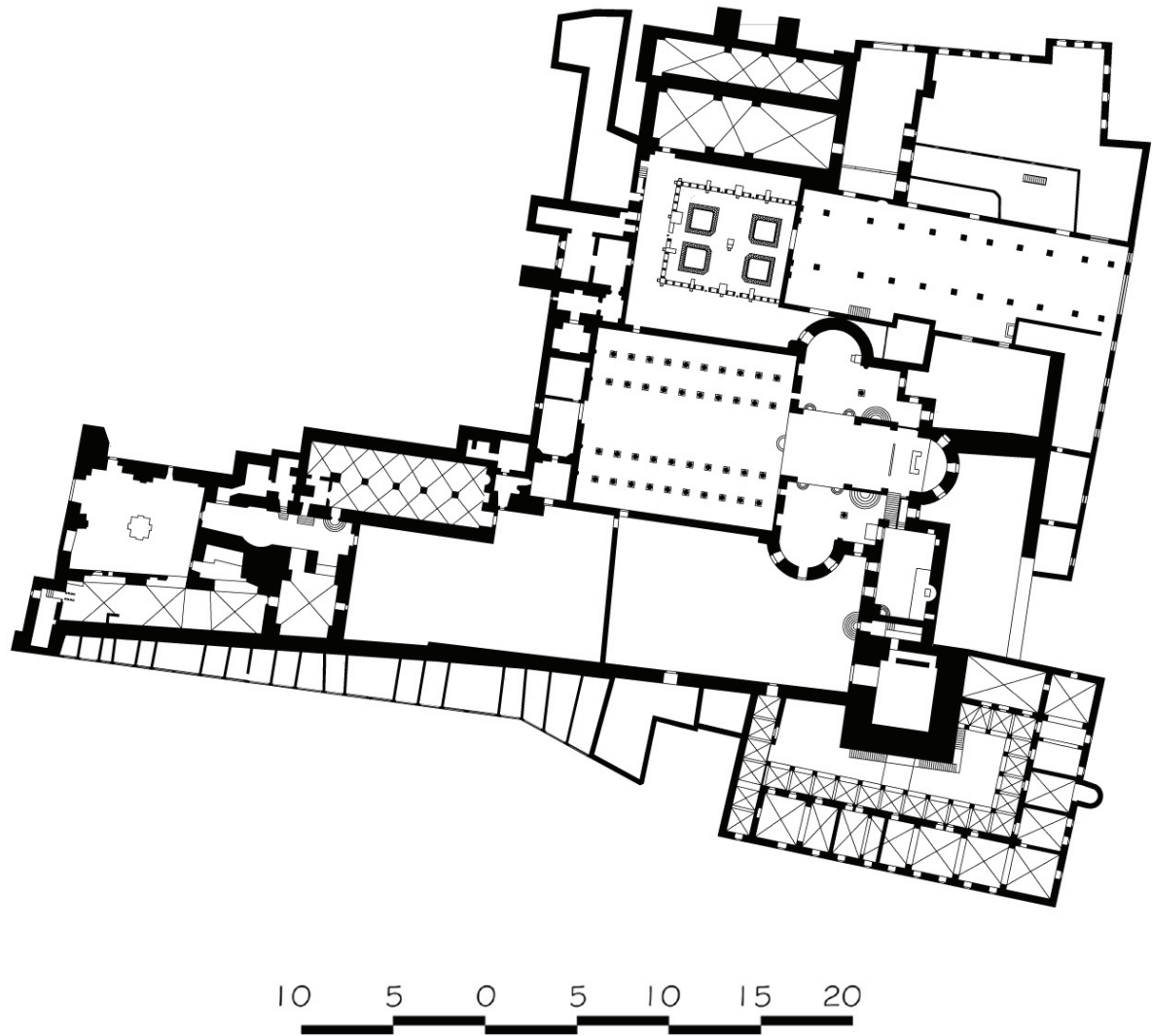


Fig. 1.8 Plan of the Church of the Nativity and its architectural *ensemble*

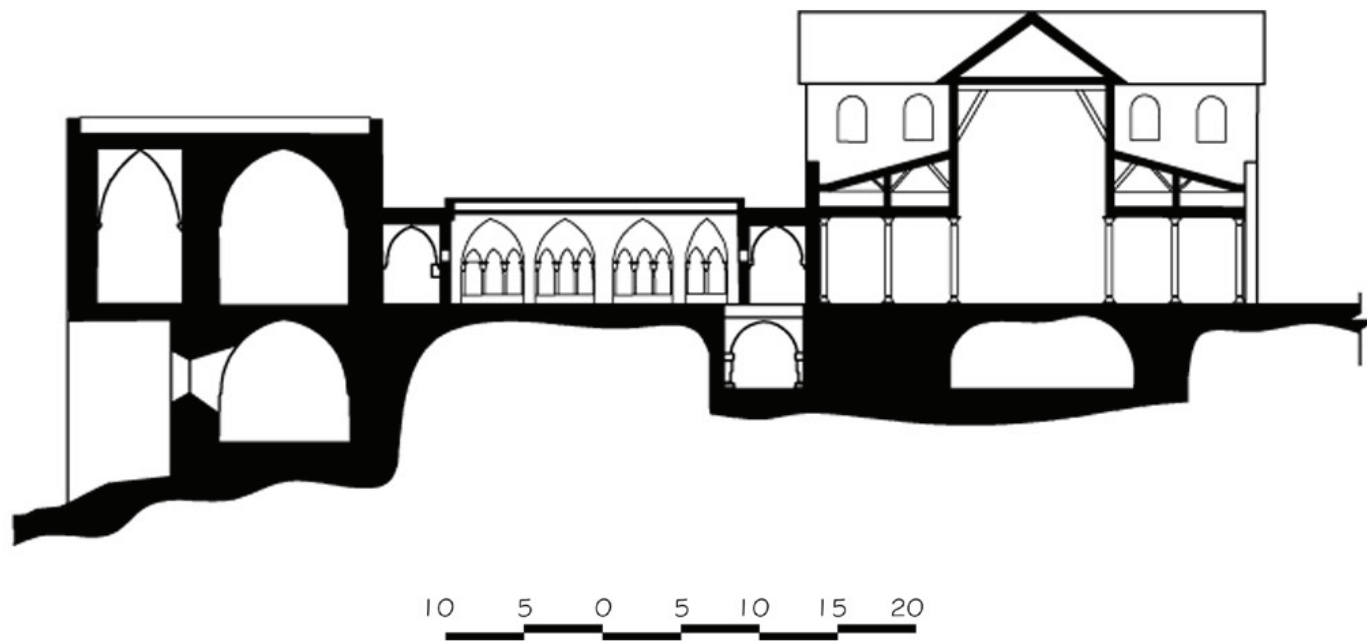
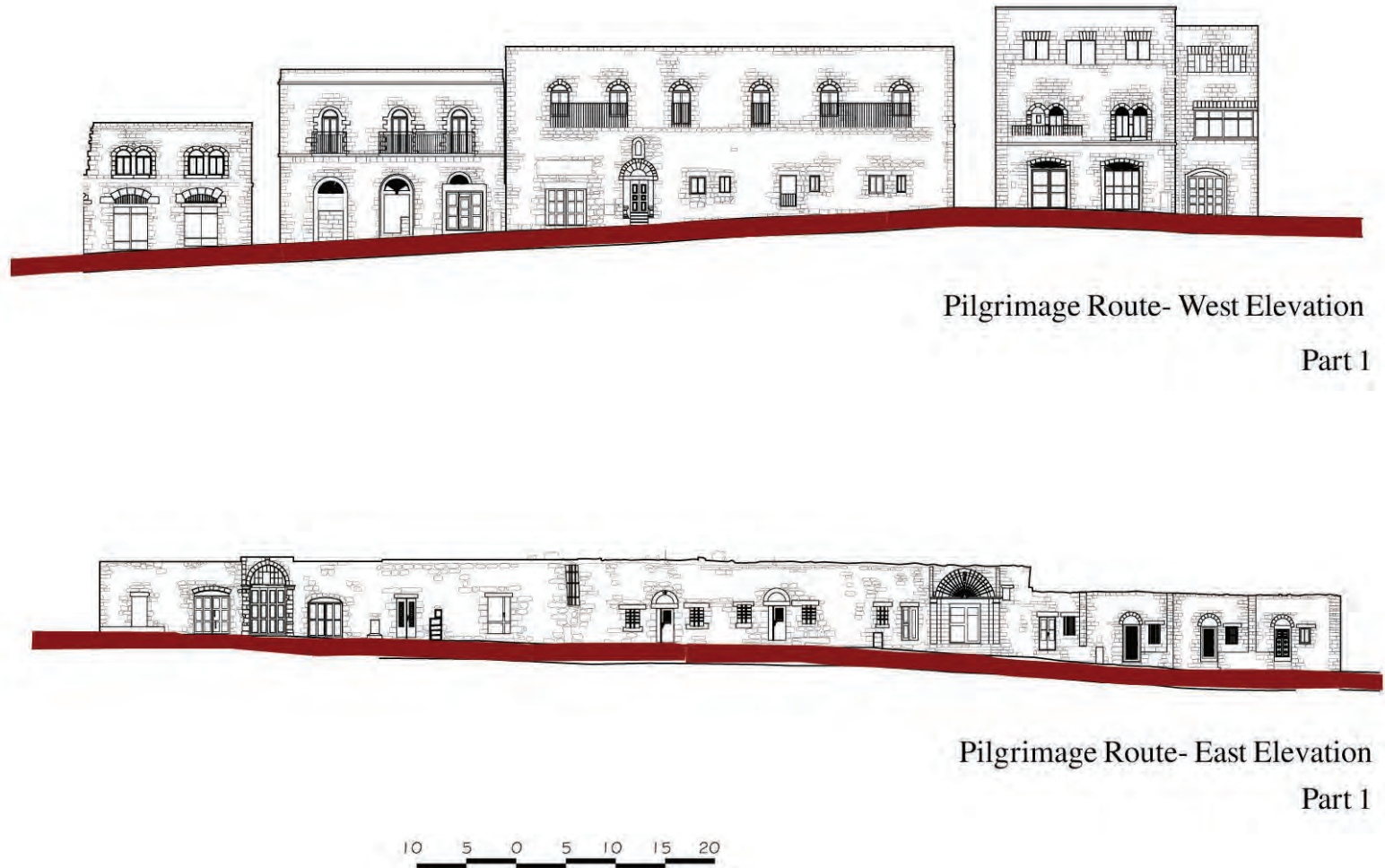


Fig. 1.9 Cross-section through the Church of the Nativity and its architectural *ensemble*

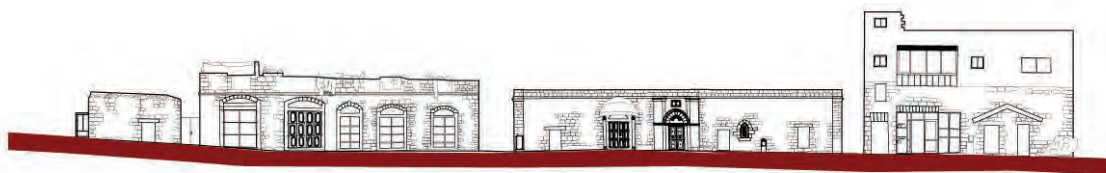


Fig. 1.10 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 1





Pilgrimage Route- West Elevation
Part 2



Pilgrimage Route- East Elevation
Part2

10 5 0 5 10 15 20



Fig. 1.11 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 2

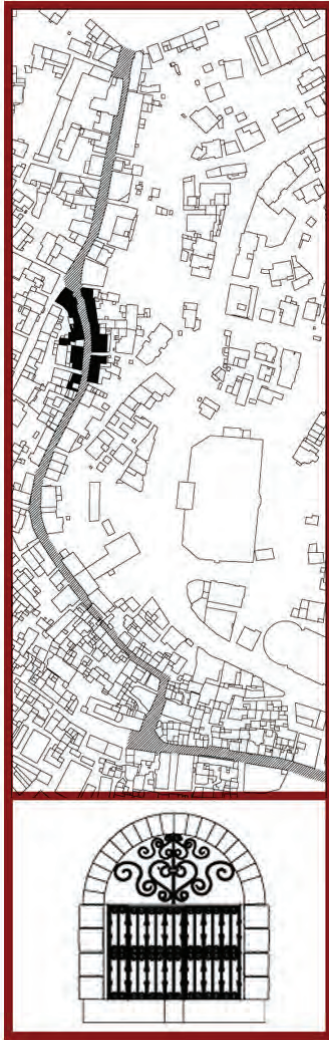
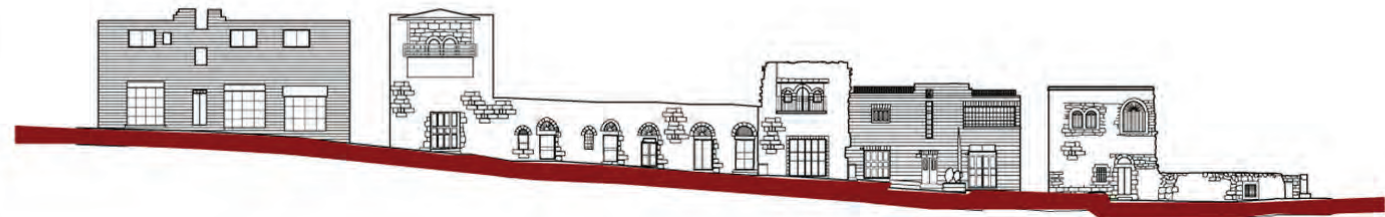


Fig. 1.12 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 3



Pilgrimage Route- West Elevation

Part 3



Pilgrimage Route- East Elevation

Part 3

10 5 0 5 10 15 20



Pilgrimage Route- West Elevation

Part 4



Pilgrimage Route- East Elevation

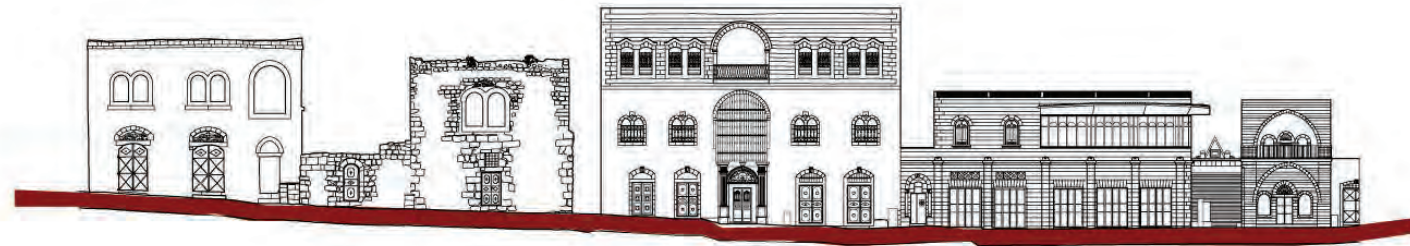
Part 4



Fig. 1.13 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 4

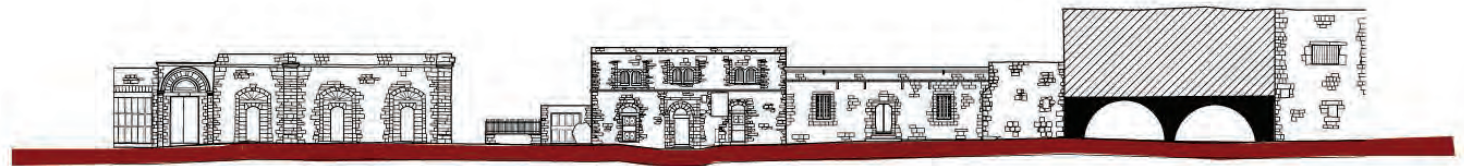


Fig. 1.14 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 5



Pilgrimage Route- South Western Elevation

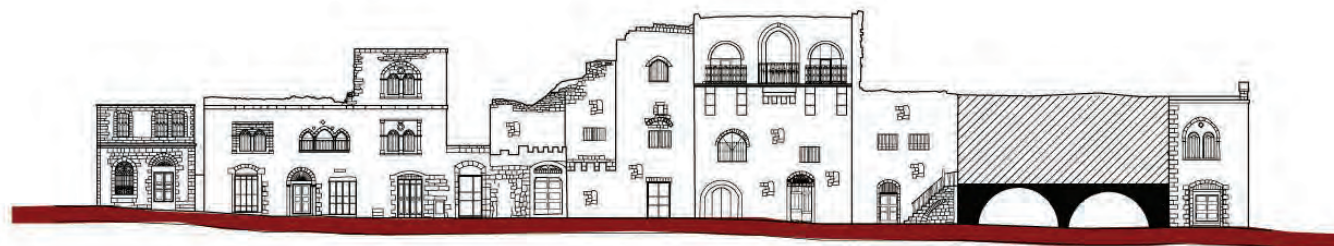
Part 5



Pilgrimage Route- North Eastern Elevation

Part 5





Pilgrimage Route- South Western Elevation

Part 6



Pilgrimage Route- North Eastern Elevation

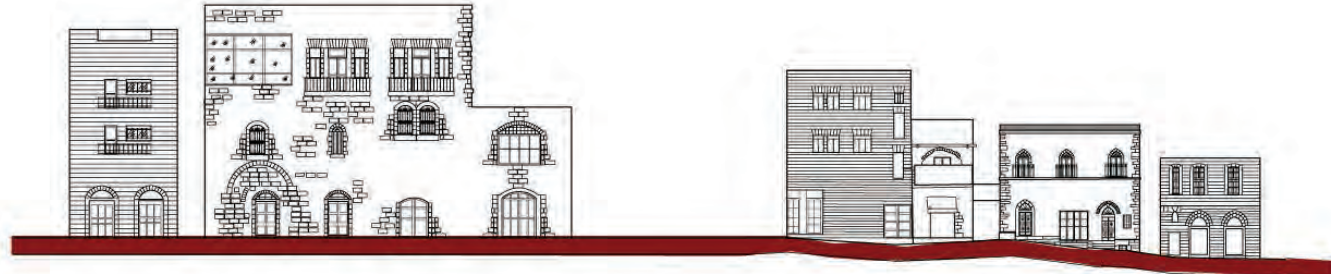
Part 6



Fig. 1.15 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 6

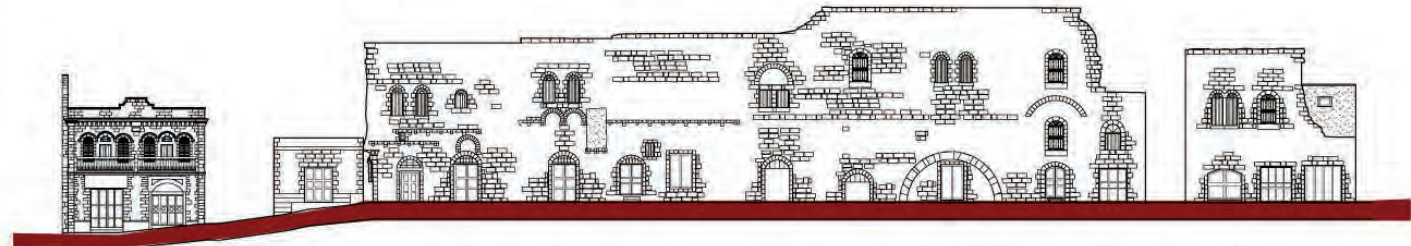


Fig. 1.16 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 7



Pilgrimage Route- South Western Elevation

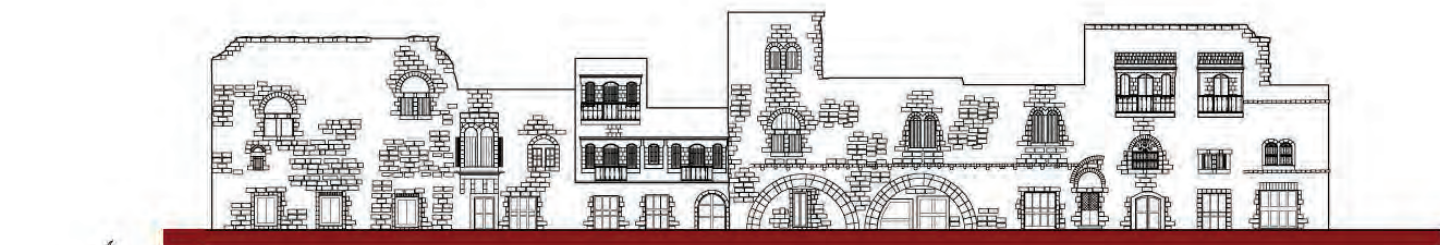
Part 7



Pilgrimage Route- North Eastern Elevation

Part 7

10 5 0 5 10 15 20



Pilgrimage Route- North Elevation

Part 8



Pilgrimage Route- South Elevation

Part 8

10 5 0 5 10 15 20



Fig. 1.17 Elevations of the Pilgrimage Route, part 8

1.f Area of nominated Property and proposed buffer zone

Pilgrimage Route:	4,699 m ²
Nativity complex:	25,098 m ²
Buffer Zone:	234,498 m ²
Total area of Core and Buffer Zones:	264,295 m ²



Fig. 1.18 Bethlehem from the north in the late nineteenth century, with the Church of the Nativity top left, and the eastern edge of Bethlehem town top right, its nearer edge is the line of present-day Star Street



2. DESCRIPTION

Terraced gardens east of
the Church of the Nativity,
looking towards the
Shepherds' Field

Prologue

The Property proposed for Inscription on the World Heritage List is topographically and structurally complex so we lay out here how we propose to describe it in this first section (a), of Chapter 2.

Essentially the description is from east to west, first across the hill at the end of Bethlehem ridge, beginning with the area of land east of the Church of the Nativity which is, nevertheless, a key part of the core area. Then the explanation deals with the extraordinary complex of buildings at the centre of this nomination: first the Church of the Nativity itself, beginning with the western elevation, since that is what the visitor sees to begin with, then goes round the interior in a generally clockwise manner, secondly targeting the structures on its north, namely the Church of St Catherine of Alexandria, the Chapel of St Helena and the Franciscan Monastery, and thirdly, the Armenian Convent on the south side of the Church of the Nativity and the Greek Orthodox Convent on the Church's south and south east.

The description then turns west again moving into the town of Bethlehem itself, to the far end of the Star Street, heading from there east along the Patriarchal Route into Manger Square and back to the Church of the Nativity, approached from the west as it has been approached for centuries along a traditional processional way.

2.a Description of Property

'The city of Bethlehem lies two short hours' distance south of Jerusalem, east of the road leading to Hebron, upon two moderately-sized hills, one at the east and the other at the west.



Fig. 2.1 The western elevation of the architectural ensemble of and around the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, viewed across Manger Square from the roof of Bethlehem Municipality

These hills are separated by a 'narrow pass'. The northward and eastward declivities are those where the houses of the place are chiefly found...¹

Located 10 km south of the city of Jerusalem in the limestone hill country of Judah, on the same hills as the biblical Ephrath (the 'Fertile Land'), Bethlehem lies 755 m above sea level. It straddles the spine and both sides of a peninsula jutting south-eastwards from higher ground, a peninsula whose eastern extremity ends with a slight saddle of lower ground and then a rise to create an almost separate hill. The Church of the Nativity, and archaeological evidence of earlier activity, occupy this hill at the eastern end of the peninsula.

¹ Ritter, C. 1968, *The Comparative Geography of Palestine and the Sinaitic Peninsula*, Greenwood Press, New York, 340

The Area East of the Church of the Nativity

Key Map of gardens to the east of the Church of the Nativity

- The Basilica of the Nativity
- The three Convents
- Field number 1: the Gardens on the East Side of the Franciscan Convent: the Franciscan Order
- Field number 2: the Gardens of the Greek Convent: Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
- Field number 3: the Convent of the White Sisters: the Custody of the Holy Land
- Field number 4: the Armenian Plot on North Side of Milk Grotto Road

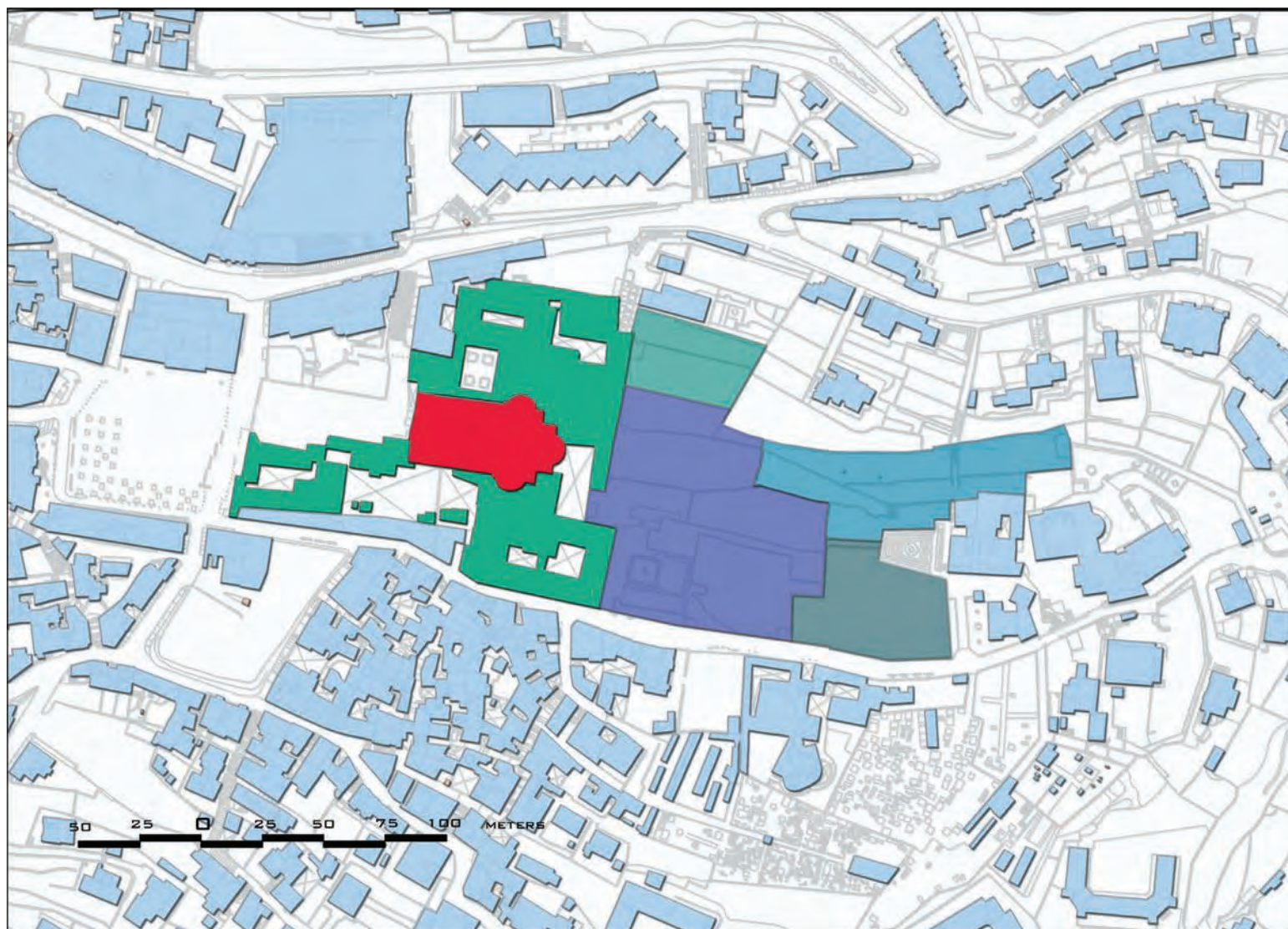


Fig. 2.2 The terraced gardens east of the Church of the Nativity, with terraces numbered according to text (CCHP 2010)

Introduction

East and south-east of the Church of the Nativity is an open area of land occupied by gardens and pasture (Fig. 2.2). The terraced gardens there are the only surviving open space within the borders of the historic town of Bethlehem. The garden along the north side of Milk Grotto Road is open to the public and provides an excellent and little-known view of the eastern side of the architectural complex (Fig. 2.2). Although there is much to be said on amenity grounds for safeguarding this area as open and accessible, visually it is not in itself remarkable. Beneath its surface, however, is a very high archaeological potential, with implications for the land-use here before and at the time of the Nativity and for the context and early history of the first churches here. It is primarily for this reason that it is included in the core area of the nomination.

The Terraced Gardens

Four different properties within the open area of fields are included in the core zone of the nomination. Their present boundaries appear to retain the fields' original morphology as depicted in lithographs of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Little or no controlled excavation has taken place in modern times in the vicinity of the Church except the ongoing excavations taking place under the Bethlehem Peace Center, 300 m to the west on the north side of Manger Square (for summary, see Manger Square below). During the 1990s, a site assessment was conducted by the Palestine Exploration Fund on the terraced gardens located east of the Church of the Nativity².



Fig. 2.3 One of the earliest photographs of the Church of the Nativity and the town of Bethlehem, taken by photographer Frances Frith from the fields to the east of the architectural ensemble, 1857, George Al Ama Collection.

Field number 1: the Gardens on the East Side of the Franciscan Convent *The Franciscan Order*

As observed in Bagatti (1952, 18, fig. 5; 19, fig. 7; 225, fig. 57)³, the reproductions of Bernadino Amico's plan of c. 1596, Mayer's drawing of 1749–1752, and Maus's plan of 1871, massive walls surround small garden plots on the east and north sides of the basilica and convent. Mayer shows unbuilt land descending very steeply and to the east; the location of these

² Miller, Robert D. II 2000, A Survey of Overlooked Potential Iron I Sites in North-Central Palestine, 157–68; Prag, K. 2002, Bethlehem: a Site Assessment: a brief assessment of the terraced gardens located to the east of the Church of the Nativity. The Palestine Exploration Quarterly 132, 169–81

³ Bagatti, B. 1952, Gli Antichi Edifici Sacri di Betlemme. In seguito agli scavi e restauri praticati dalla custodia di Terra Santa (1948–51), (Studium Biblicum Franciscanum 9: Jerusalem)

⁴ Map of Bethlehem (1/5000), Survey of Palestine Jaffa, Copyright strictly reserved – vide ordinance no. 16 of 1924: The Survey of Palestine was conducted between 1920 and 1948 under the British Mandate and, for the first time, covered all Palestine.

walls is similar to that shown in Harper (1888), and Harvey et al. (1910). In addition, the main wall of the monastic complex, which lies immediately east of the Church of St Catherine and west of the present gardens, still marks extra-mural gardens in the al-Atan Quarter in the 1937⁴. The 1888 view (Fig. 2.3 & 2.4) shows clearly that these terraces in the area of today's gardens were high, of relatively uneven rubble construction, and similar to the terraces along the whole north side of the ridge. Harper's (1888) photographic view shows the height of the eastern ridge accurately.

During the clearing of the area adjacent to the church in 1926, the Franciscans discovered 13 bells buried in the 14th century. It has subsequently been assumed that much of the area around the church has been excavated to bedrock.

Located directly east of the Franciscan Convent, the present monastery walls are of dressed stone c. 5 m high. Most of the central section of the modern terrace wall is founded on bedrock which outcrops at terrace level and is shown as a garden boundary in 1937 map. The dark garden soil suggested human activity.

Field number 2: the Gardens of the Greek Convent Greek Orthodox Patriarchate

This area is within the monastic wall which bounds it to the east. Located directly to the east of the Basilica and the Greek Convent, it appears to be divided into four east–west strips, parallel to Milk Grotto Road on the south, and to the Franciscan Gardens on the north. None of the current terraces was marked on the 1937 map or indeed illustrated in Vincent and



Fig. 2.4 View of Bethlehem from the north in the later 19th century (Harper 1888). The open, terraced area east of the Church of the Nativity is *top left*

Abel (1914, pl. ii) but they remain substantially similar to those visible in Harper's view of 1888. The present land-use is general non-intensive gardening, tending to neglect. The sloping character of the ground suggests that this area may be the archaeologically least disturbed garden close to the Nativity Complex.

Strategically this area of relatively level land just below the crest of the eastern ridge could have been enclosed within any Iron Age and Byzantine town defences here.

Field number 3: the Convent of the White Sisters The Custody of the Holy Land

The White Sisters is the name of the Order known elsewhere as the Sisters of Mary, the owners of this plot of land. The Order took over a building here in 1909 from the Dames du Calvaire (Mertens and Bannurah 1981). The original building can be

seen in a 1917 air photograph. Four major terraces/walls, up to 5 m high, comprise the Convent's property; on them are gardens. One terrace near the convent is flat and of grey soil; to the west a grey, chalky soil has produced some Iron Age II pottery; and further west still is a small plot of grey soil which also contains Iron Age II and recent pottery.

The southern side of the lower north terrace is supported at its east end by a 5 m high ashlar masonry wall built on bedrock; smaller terraces in this area also contain grey soil. As with the Franciscan Garden, these are much-tilled deep terraces on a steep hillside, which reveal no surface features but which may have local fill suggesting nearby Iron Age and later occupation.

Field number 4: the Armenian Plot on north side of Milk Grotto Road
The Armenian Patriarchate

A property of the Armenian Orthodox Monastery, this plot of land is accessible from the Milk Grotto Road. It drops steeply at its east end before the boundary wall.

The steep slopes, deep terraces and evidence of ancient burials which ring all but the western side of the slight hill on which these gardens lie may indicate that Iron Age II settlement was restricted to the higher ground (Fig. 2.2).

The existence of a long established system of terracing might imply imported soil and the shards noted in situ might not belong to the site at all. However, most of the Iron Age II and Byzantine shards are usually associated with the grey soil with much white chalky rock seems appropriate to the local geology.



Fig. 2.5 Terraced gardens of the Convent of the White Sisters east of the Church of the Nativity, looking east towards Beit Sahour, also known as the Shepherds' Field

There appears to be a 13th century decree in which Baibars permitted the Franciscans to restore the terraces and walls of their convent at Bethlehem⁵. Some terrace walls are of monumental yellow limestone ashlar masonry up to 6–7 m high and seem to relate directly to monastic development during the late 19th or early 20th century. Others are rough rubble, uncoursed, field-type terraces of the type illustrated in 19th century photographs. The potential significance of this whole area lies, however, behind the terraces and beneath the present surface, not because the area is on a hilltop but because of its proximity to the place where Jesus was born and where that event has been commemorated for the best part of two millennia.

⁵ Mertens, A. and Bannurah Dr. 1981, Chronological Walk through Bethlehem (Jerusalem)

⁶ Pringle, D. 1993, *The Churches of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem: A Corpus, Volume 1 A–K* (excluding Acre and Jerusalem) with drawings by Peter E. Leach (Cambridge University Press) 137. Caves were traditionally identified and used as stables

⁷ Craveri, M. 1967, *The Life of Jesus* (Grove Press), 35–6

According to some scholars, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehen is built over a cave that was originally a shrine to Adonis-Tammuz; The Church Father Jerome, who died in Bethlehem in 420, reports in addition that the holy cave was at one point consecrated by the heathen to the worship of Adonis, and a pleasant sacred grove planted before it, to wipe out the memory of Jesus. Modern mythologists, however, reverse the supposition, insisting that the cult of Adonis-Tammuz originated the shrine and that it was the Christians who took it over, substituting the worship of their own god. www.wikipedia.com

The Church of the Nativity

Table 2.1 lists some documented and dated events and interventions in the long and complex history and architectural development of the Church of the Nativity. It is based mainly on Pringle (1993) and Hamilton (1939).

The Constantinian Church

In Bethlehem, an established tradition existing in the 4th century AD enabled architects to identify a cave which the local people and their fathers had known and venerated for generations as the birthplace of Jesus Christ. Under the patronage of Constantine I and the Empress Helena⁶, the site was defined, and architects started to draw up plans taking the cave as the centre of a scheme to build a church on the spot where Jesus was born.

Building work began in 326 AD. Trees were cut down from the site and superfluous rocks were quarried away, removing the last remains of the old pagan life of the village⁷. The shape of the cave itself was adapted to architectural and devotional requirements; its rock roof was pierced with a circular opening, surrounded by a balustrade, that in turn was surrounded by a walkway, or *ambulatorium*, so that worshippers could move around the opening, look down from above and see the traditional manger and birthplace without actually entering the cave.

This structure was enclosed within an octagonal-shaped building, with an oculus (eye), or opening in the ceiling, set in the apex of the octagonal roof in perfect alignment with the birthplace. Each of the octagon's eight sides was over 25

ft (7.62 m) long. They formed the sanctuary of the basilican church which stretched away to the west in five aisles; the aisles were divided by four ranges of monolithic columns carrying Corinthian capitals. The sanctuary itself was paved with mosaics and most probably the church and the walls were covered with mosaics and painted stucco. As mentioned in Yoram Isafrir's article, *the Oldest Church Found? Ancient Churches in the Holy Land*, the octagonal structure above the Nativity Cave recalls the mausoleum ordered by Emperor Diocletian for himself in Spalato in Dalmatia, today Split in former Yugoslavia. Perhaps this is a prime example of the direct influence of imperial commemorative architecture on that of early Christianity.

The construction of the Church of the Nativity was completed in 339 AD.

Table 2.1 Documented and dated events and interventions in the history and architectural development of the Church of the Nativity

	Date/Period (AD)	Event or intervention
Byzantine Period	327–339	Construction of first Church of the Nativity by Constantine I and Empress Helena
	386	Erection of various convents for both men and women next to the Church
	529–30	Destruction of Constantine’s Church by fire, after the Samaritan Revolt (529) ¹
	530–33	Construction of Justinian’s Church of the Nativity, dedicated to St Mary
	614–629	Church survives the Persian occupation, supposedly because of image of Magi on mural mosaic
Early Islamic Period	634	The Patriarch of Jerusalem did not dare to celebrate Christmas in Bethlehem for the first time in three centuries
	Muslim rule	Southern transept turned into a prayer area for Muslims – Church survived destruction again
	1009	Survived Caliph Hakim’s order to demolish Christian monuments
Crusader Period	1099–1187	Occupation of Bethlehem by the Crusaders
	12th century	Erection of new structures around the Church including a hospital and a hospice for poor pilgrims
	12th century	Construction of two bell towers on either end of the Narthex ²
	1100 Christmas Day	Baldwin I crowned king in the Church of the Nativity ³
	1119	Baldwin II crowned king in the Church of the Nativity
	1130	The body of Joseph of Arimathea was transferred to the Church and placed on the western side of the choir, presumably against the chancel screen
	1130	At least one series of paintings executed on the columns, including the Virgin and Child Icon on the second column of the southern colonnade
	1160	General restoration of the Basilica took place
	1161–1169	Completion of the restoration of the wall mosaics by the monk Ephraim
	c. 1165	Main altar and crypt rebuilt by the Crusaders
Early Ayyubid Period	1187, 15 September	Bethlehem fell under the rule of Sultan Saladin
	1191	Recapture of Bethlehem by the Crusaders
	1227	Two wooden doors with inscriptions in Arabic and Armenian were installed giving access, as now, to the narthex and nave of the Basilica
Crusader Period	1229	Bethlehem recaptured by the Franks
	1240s	The Church’s properties and possessions damaged
Late Ayyubid Period	25 April 1244	Bethlehem fell under Khwarezmians Turks’ rule ⁴
	12th–13th century	The two side doors of the narthex were closed and the central western door was reduced to its current size ⁵
	1244	The Greek Orthodox Church became responsible for the guardianship of the high altar

Mamluk Rule	1263	The <i>monasterium</i> of Bethlehem was destroyed by Sultan Baybars.
	1266	Latin residents were expelled from Bethlehem
	May 1271	Latin pilgrims allowed back into Bethlehem
	1277	The Western rite was allowed in the Church of the Nativity
	c. 1448	Philip, Duke of Burgundy, was allowed by Pope Nicolas V to send to Jerusalem artisans, wood, iron and other materials for repairing the roof of the Church
	1452	Bells removed from the bell-tower upon the order of Mohammed II and buried nearby
	1461	Roof timbers rotting and the structure falling daily into ruin, especially above the choir of the Church
	1480	Wood was brought from Venice and lead given by King Edward IV of England to renew the roof
Early Ottoman Period	1596–1626	Marble floors of the Church were removed by the Turks for re-use in building
	1670	Lead stripped from the roof
	1671	Roof repaired and a wooden iconostasis installed by the Greeks who brought wood from Isranbul and carpenters from Chios and Mytilene
	1717	Silver star embedded on white marble by the Catholics to mark the spot where Jesus was born
Late Ottoman Period	1834	Earthquake necessitated immediate repairs
	1842	Roof and pavement of the Church again repaired and internal walls re-plastered
	1847	Silver star marking where Jesus was born stolen, an incident contributing to the Crimean War (1854–56)
	1852	The <i>Status Quo of the Holy Places</i> ⁶ was issued, defining and listing properties and rights in the Church of the Nativity
	1853	Silver star presented by the Ottoman Sultan to replace the stolen star was fixed in the floor to mark where Jesus was born
	1869	Fire destroyed furnishings and most of the remaining mosaics in the Crypt
	c. 1875	Bell-tower was built on top of the Greek Orthodox Monastery
British Mandate	1918	Chancel screen destroyed on the orders of the Military Governor of Jerusalem, Sir Ronald Storrs
	1933–1935	Excavation to prepare a structural survey of the building was conducted by the British Mandate
	1935	External forecourt and interior of the Church were re-tiled, exposing in places the Constantinian mosaic floor; narthex roof supported with wooden props
Israeli Military Rule	1990	Roof repaired by Israeli military authorities ⁷

Palestinian Administration

2001, April–May	39-day siege of the Church of the Nativity by Israeli military forces
2005	‘Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and Old City of Bethlehem’ listed first in the <i>Inventory of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine</i> published by Palestine and presented to the World Heritage Committee in July
2010	Preparation of a dossier nominating ‘Birthplace of Jesus: Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem’ for inscription on the World Heritage List; start of work to prepare a survey and assessment study of, and conservation plan for, the roof of the Church of the Nativity

Notes to Table 3.1:

- ¹ The Egyptian Patriarch Eutychius of Alexandria also known as Sa’id Ibn Batriq wrote in his description of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem during the ninth century that King Justinian the Apostle ordered the demolishing of the Church in Bethlehem because it was a small one, and its replacement with a great and large Church...
- ² Ringing bells existed in Bethlehem between 1227 and 1244. During Turkish rule bells were not allowed to ring and the two bell towers were demolished. They were not replaced later because by the time it became possible to build bell towers again, the Status Quo of the Holy Places was in operation and no alteration to the Church was allowed.
- ³ According to R.W. Hamilton’s Guide to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem, it was on Christmas Day of 1101 that Baldwin I was crowned as king, and his successor followed his example in 1122.
- ⁴ During Turkish rule, the floor marble was removed in various periods for re-use in other buildings, cf Pringle (1993)
- ⁵ The first reduction to the size of the pointed arch that can still be observed on the main elevation was in medieval times but is not closely dated, cf Hamilton (1939)
- ⁶ The Status Quo of the Holy Places was first declared in 1852 by Sultan Abdul Majid, and guaranteed in the Article LXII of the Treaty of Berlin in 1878
- ⁷ The Time Scottish edn., 24 November 1990; 10

⁸ Tsafir, Y. 2008, Oldest Church Found? Ancient Churches in the Holy Land; an article which has been adapted from the first chapter of *Ancient Churches Revealed*, ed. Yoram Tsafir (Israel Exploration Society and Biblical Archaeology Society 1993); www.bib-arch.org

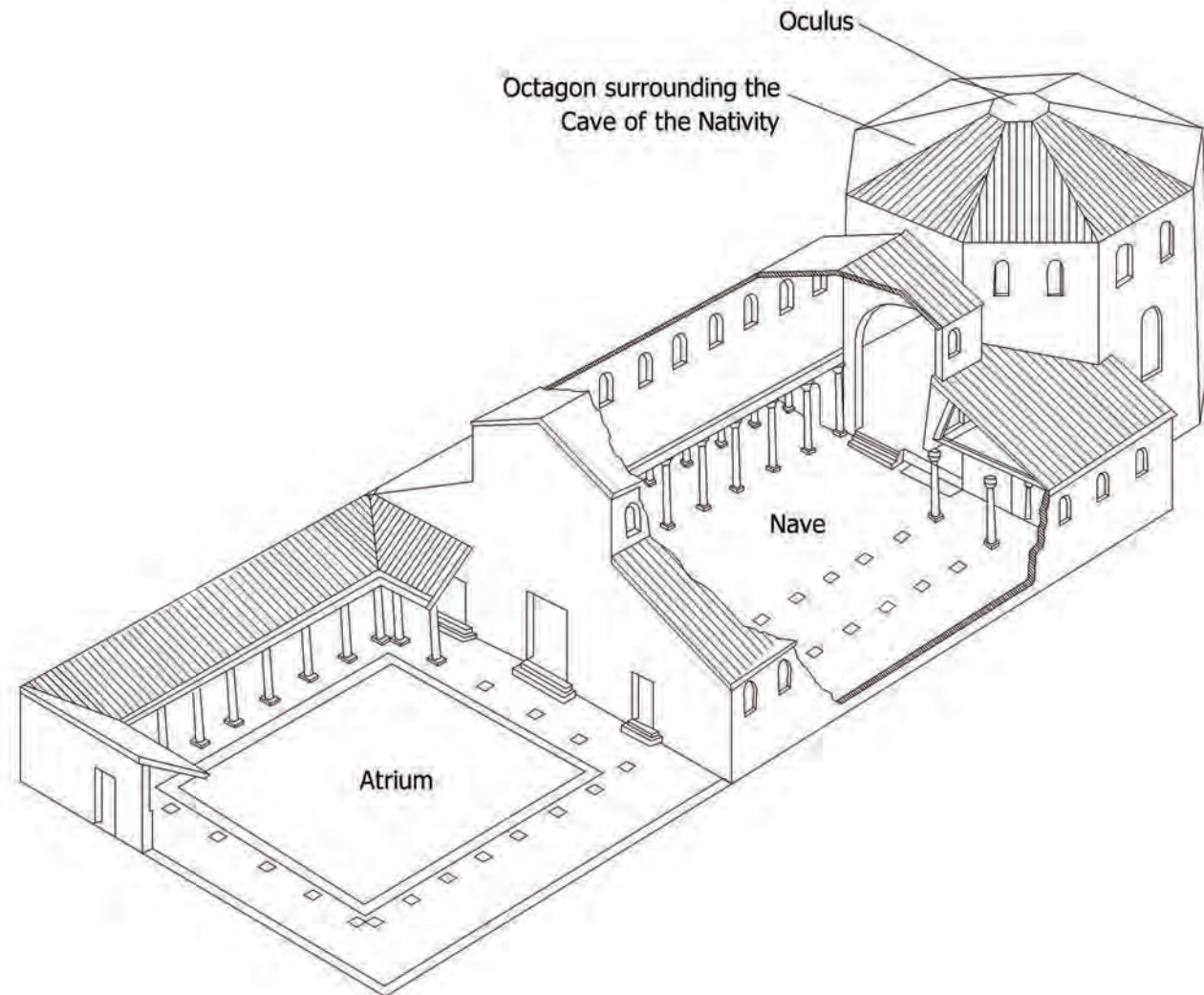


Fig. 2.6 Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem. An oculus (eye), an opening in the roof of the octagonal building, aligned directly above the traditional Cave of the Nativity, allowed light into the octagon (after R. Krautheimer in Tsafir 1993⁸)

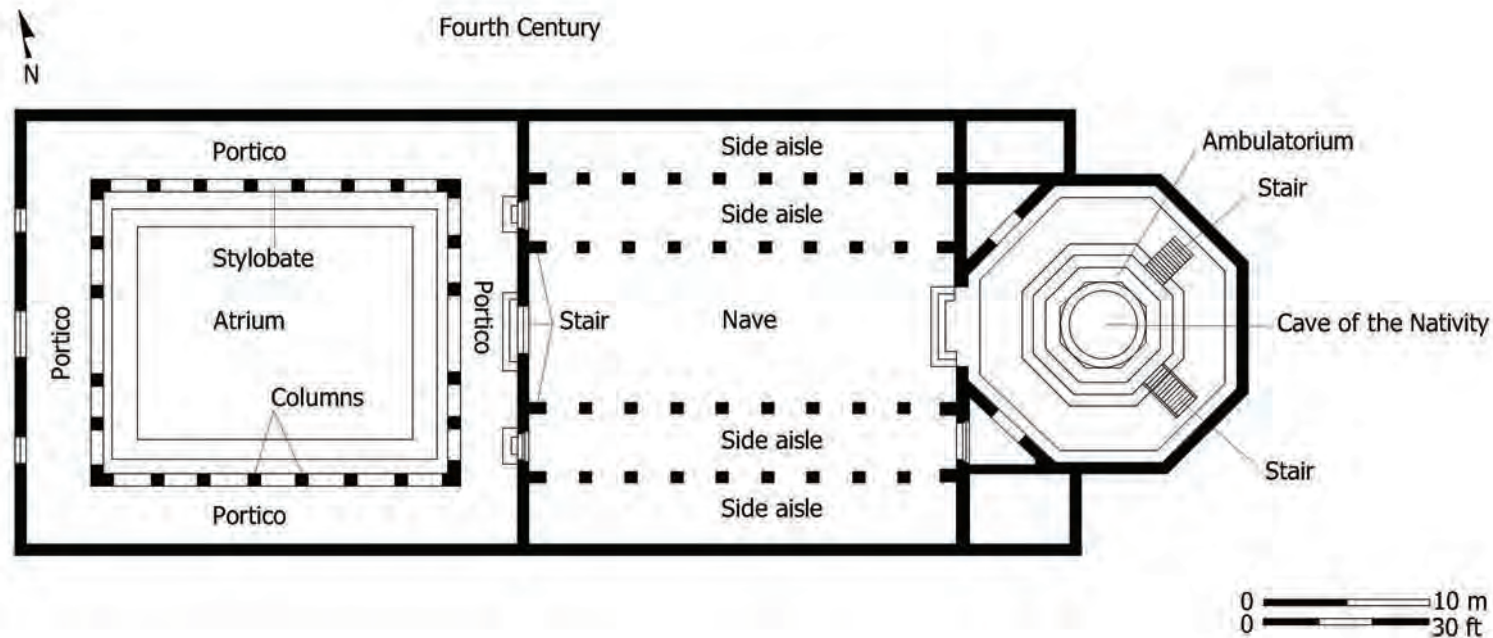


Fig. 2.7 Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, one of the four churches that Constantine built in Palestine, combined a basilica plan with an octagonal commemorative plan. A raised octagonal platform, or ambulatorium (walkway), was built over the traditional Cave of the Nativity. Two stairways (probably one for approach and one for departure) gave access to the platform, which included a balustrade around the opening to the cave. Pilgrims could climb the platform and look into the cave (see text and Fig. 2.5). Although this design accommodated the pilgrims well, the lack of space for an altar and chancel must have made it difficult to hold religious services (after E. T. Richmond 1936)

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Pringle 1993, 137

¹¹ Holy Innocents: the Children in the area of Bethlehem slain by Herod; mentioned in the New Testament (Matthew, ii, 16–18: ‘Herod perceiving that he was deluded by the wise men, was exceeding angry; and sending killed all the men children that were in Bethlehem...’)

The main church included a typical basilica plan of 80 ft (24.38 m) long, two main rows of columns on either side of the nave. The octagonal part was reached by two stairs, probably one for ascending and the other for descending, while in front of the church to the west four porticos enclosed a square open courtyard⁹. Construction of the Church of the Nativity was followed by convents for women and for men respectively by St Jerome and his lady companions Paula and Eustochium¹⁰.

Fourth and 5th century writers describe the decoration and equipment of the church – its gold, silver and embroidery; its marbles and mosaics and frescoes; its silver manger replacing an original of clay; its jewelled lamps and vessels – as being all of astonishing richness.

Although the overall plan of the Church of the Nativity facilitated the viewing of the Cave of the Nativity by a stream of pilgrims, attaching a large basilica to the octagonal sanctuary had a serious drawback in that it did not allow space for the regular Christian service for both the altar and the priest. If Communion was held at the Church, which is most likely, it must have taken place under particularly uncomfortable conditions; this drawback was later corrected in Justinian’s Church.

Towards the end of the 4th century, Constantine’s church stood at the east end of a long street forming the backbone of a small town, Bethlehem, important only for its memories; but the place was already destined to become an important destination for Christian Pilgrims from all over the world (Hamilton 1939, 8–10).

In the 6th century, as revealed by the excavations in the nave, the Constantinian Church was destroyed by fire. What could be interpreted as archaeological evidence for this event was represented by a thick deposit of ash, burnt wood and broken roof-tiles covering the mosaic pavement of the first Church. Both the destruction of the Church and its rebuild as Justinian’s Basilica took place after the Samaritan Revolt of 529.

The Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem

Justinian’s Church was constructed in 533 AD. The new Basilica was dedicated to the Virgin Mary. In replacing the destroyed Constantinian Church, it followed precedent in that its chancel lay above the Cave of the Nativity. The Church also contains the tombs of St Jerome, St Paula and St Eustochium beneath the northern transept, and of the Holy Innocents¹¹ beneath the southern transept.

The reconstruction of the Church of the Nativity allowed the correction of the drawbacks inherent in the Constantinian structure. While the nave was not greatly changed, a narthex was attached to the western end of the church, cutting off part of the atrium. At the eastern end, the octagonal structure was removed and replaced with three apses in a cloverleaf plan. This eliminated the difficulties that had stood in the way of celebrating the services: it became possible to install a chancel and altar in the church and to hold regular prayer services and ceremonies. The pilgrims, who were mainly interested, as they are today, in visiting the Cave of the Nativity, and not in the daily prayers of the church, entered the Cave by a flight of stairs on one side and left by another on the other side. It was therefore possible to maintain the daily services without

interference, even if large numbers of pilgrims were visiting the cave below the chancel (Annexe 9).

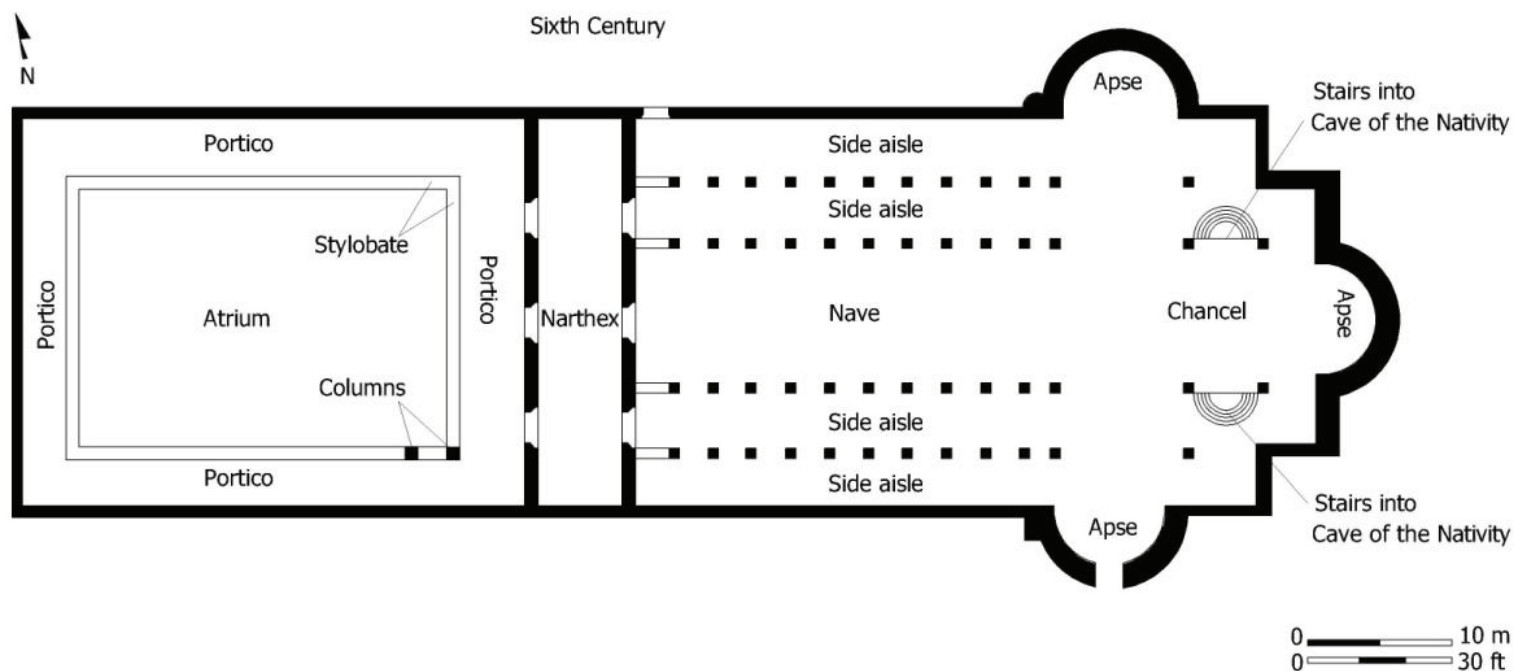


Fig. 2.8 Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem: a remodelling in the time of Justinian replaced the octagonal building and *ambulatorium* at the east end. A narthex at the western end of the nave was also added, while the *atrium* was repositioned a little further west (after E. T. Richmond 1936)

The Basilican Church Today

The Narthex

Currently entered from a small iron door at the centre of its western elevation, the narthex of the Church of the Nativity, which replaced the eastern part of the atrium, had originally three grand doors of which the northern and southern were concealed during the Middle Ages; there are indications that the southern door was concealed before the Crusaders' Period. The central door was reduced twice, first during the 12th century (the traces of the pointed arch to which this reduction was made are obvious on the western elevation) and the second time during the Mamluke and Ottoman Period, to prevent horses getting into the Basilica. To the north of the narthex stands the Franciscan Guest House, while on the south stands the Armenian Convent¹² which serves as a but-

treass to the southern part of the front wall; without it the front wall of the Narthex would have fallen¹³; in addition the buttress, which was erected during the 19th century and conceals the northern entrance of the narthex, also prevents an imminent collapse of the wall¹⁴.

The structure was added to the Church after Justinian's refurbishment to replace the old atrium¹⁵ had been covered with a medieval vaulted roof to replace the original wooded structure. The roof of the narthex was later supported with Armenian-made wooden scaffolding that has survived the ravages of insects and decay for the past eight centuries.

The narthex ran the whole width of the church but has been subdivided by partitions of varying dates. The space is divided

¹² Harvey, W. et al. 1910

¹³ Harvey, W. et al. 1935, 3

¹⁴ Hamilton, R.W. 1939, A Guide to Bethlehem (Government of Palestine Department of Antiquities, Jerusalem), 39

¹⁵ The narthex started to be a phenomenon in most of the churches that were built after the 5th century which makes the narthex of the Church of the Nativity among the pioneer examples of the structure. Yonah, M. A. 1993, The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavation in the Holy Land, Bethlehem, Volume 1, ed. Ephraim Stern (Israel Exploration Society & Carta), 208



Fig. 2.9 (Left) The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem: the western forecourt and elevation from the eastern edge of Manger Square; (right) interior of the nave with double columns to either side, looking west.

into three parts; the central part which is used as vestibule to the narthex, and the northern and southern side, each of which has two chambers; a lower and an upper chamber. The lower chamber on the northern side was used as a fuel store for the Franciscans and is now a part of the Franciscan St Helena's Chapel. It has Byzantine frescos drawn on the east and west walls and also on its medieval vaulted ceilings, while the upper part of the chamber is vaulted and covered with plasters and whitewash¹⁶. The southern two chambers are part of the Armenian Convent, which is entered from the vestibule to the lower level of the southern part.

West of the narthex, in the central doorway to the nave, stands a rare wooden carved door from the Crusader period: it was a gift from Constantine, King of Armenia in 1227. The carved panel shows an arabesque display of floral engravings; in addition it has some crosses and a very interesting inscription in both Arabic and Armenian. The Arabic inscription reads as follow: 'this door was finished with the help of God (be He exalted), in the days of our Lord the Sultan Malik al-Mu'azzam in the month of Muharram in the year 624H'.

The Armenian inscription reads as follow: '*the door of the Blessed Mother of God was made in the year 676 by the hands of the Father Abraham and Father Arakel in the time of Hethum son of Constantine, King of Armenia. God have mercy on their souls*' (Hamilton 1939, 39)¹⁷.

According to *the Status Quo of the Holy Places*, the Vestibule of the Narthex is entirely a Greek Orthodox property with the exception of the two steps that lead to the Armenian Convent; these two steps are cleaned by the Armenians and not Greek Orthodox staff during both the daily and official cleanings.

The four sides of the vestibule of the narthex are divided as follows: the northern side contains the guards' room and is in the control of the government; the southern side is the entrance that leads to the Armenian Convent; the eastern side contains the engraved wooden door that leads inside the Church; and the western side contains the iron door that enters the narthex from the forecourt¹⁸.

The Roof

The roof consists of 17 longitudinal wooden trusses; 12 support the nave and side aisles while the rest support the eastern apse. Ten additional trusses support the northern and southern apses. The existing roof timbering is derived mainly from the repairs of 1842¹⁹. The high roof of the central aisle and transepts is composed of planks covered with thick lead and supported below by a great number of small rough purlins. They rest upon properly trussed principal rafters joined at their lower ends by tie beams which are strengthened by wooded brackets jutting from the walls.

Timber wall plates running lengthwise in the top of the walls distribute the principal rafters. Iron straps fastened about the ends of the tie beams and over the feet of the principal rafters make the connection secure. Other straps pass through the walls and, pinned by long vertical bars of iron, assist the tie beam to grip the wall plates and keep the walls from bulging outwards. The lower roofs, also lead-covered planks, lean against the high walls of the central spans of the nave and choir, and against the eastern walls of the central spans of the transepts.

¹⁶ Harvey 1935, 3

¹⁷ Boas A.J. 1999, *Crusader Archaeology. The Material Culture of the Latin East* (Routledge, London), 162. See also, Harvey et al. 1910

¹⁸ Cust, L.G.A. 1980, *The Status Quo in the Holy Places with an annexe on the Status Quo in the Church of the Nativity – Bethlehem* by Abdullah Effendi Kardus, M.B.E, (Jerusalem), 39 & 50

¹⁹ Hamilton 1939, 41

²⁰ The architectural description of the roof is based on Harvey 1935



All the roof timbers can be seen from within the Church. They are all of pine wood. The high lead-covered planks all have projecting eaves supported upon small projecting rafters at a slighter pitch than the upper part of the roof, while the upper ends of these little rafters are supported on the lowest purlin, about a foot within the wall of the Church²⁰.

In August 1448 Pope Nicolas V granted Philip the Duke of Burgundy permission to send some equipment to repair the roof of the Church of the Nativity, but for some reason the work was not carried out until, Louise de Rochechouart wrote, 1461: 'In the roof the timbers which were constructed in ancient times as a covering are rotting, and this structure is falling daily into ruin, especially above the choir'. Almost twenty years later, in 1480, major repairs took place inside the



Fig. 2.10 (Left) Interior of the Church of the Nativity, looking east along the nave; (right) wall of the ancient nave with fragments of mosaics

Church under the supervision of Tomacello, the Guardian of Mount Zion. To repair the roof, wood was brought from Vince and lead was provided by King Edward IV of England.²¹

By 1670 the roof-lead had been stripped in several places and used in the manufacture of ammunition²², and repair was once more urgently required. This time works were conducted by the Greek Orthodox Church which took the opportunity to add the wooden iconostasis. The wood was imported this time from Istanbul and the carpenters were brought from Chios and the Greek city of Mityelene²³.

After 1670, the roof was repaired twice, first in 1842 – again by the Greek Orthodox Church – and again in 1990, when the works were implemented by the Israeli military authorities. Despite this relatively recent repair, in 2008 the Church of the Nativity was pinpointed as one of the 100 most endangered sites in the world²⁴. The roof-timbers have not been

replaced since the 19th century and are rotting. The Palestinian Government has recently created a committee²⁵ for the restoration of the roof of the Church of the Nativity²⁶.

The Columns of the Church of the Nativity and their Paintings

The Corinthian columns in the church are of the red limestone that is usually excavated from the quarries near Bethlehem. According to R.W. Hamilton, the stone takes a good polish and has been often described as marble. It has generally been supposed on stylistic grounds that the columns with their capitals and bases were first cut for Constantine's church and were reused in the 6th century by Justinian. Excavations in 1933 revealed, however, that the Constantinian basilica can hardly have had more than 36 columns, whereas Justinian's Church has 46 columns plus four columns in the corners. The Byzantine mosaic floors below the top of the foundation

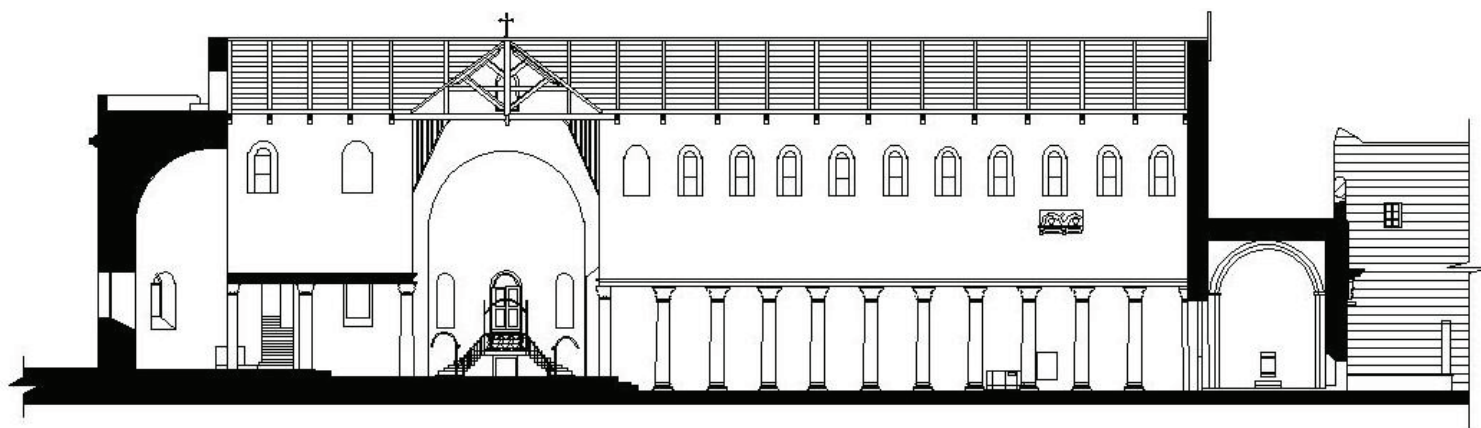


Fig. 2.11 A longitudinal section reproduced after Harvey 1935

²¹ Edward IV (28 April 1442–9 April 1483) was King of England from 4 March 1461 until 3 October 1470, and again from 11 April 1471 until his death

²² Cust 1980, 37

²³ Pringle 1993, 40

²⁴ World Monuments Watch, List of 100 Most Endangered Sites 2008, World Monuments Fund

²⁵ The Presidential Committee for the Restoration of the Church of the Nativity was established through a Presidential Decree and is composed of the President's Consultant in Christian Affairs; representatives of the three Churches: the Greek Orthodox Church, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Orthodox Church; and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities in addition to other experts in the field

²⁶ The work on the first phase of the conservation plan for the roof of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is expected to be complete by mid-2011

²⁷ Along with the wall paintings in Church of St Jeremiah in Abu Gosh near Jerusalem. Ibid., 158



Fig. 2.12 The 4th century architecture and the 6th century foundation of the columns as published in the *Guide to Bethlehem* (Hamilton 1939, pl. 4)

walls and about 80 cm below the existing columns furthermore indicate that the earlier church was demolished before the reconstruction of the current structure.

Above the capitals of the columns a continuous line of tie beams, made of wood, keyed and butted together, eliminate any movement of the columns but do not support the wall built on top of them. The load of that wall was distributed directly to the columns through the stone arches composing the wall itself, and hidden behind the plaster coating it. Original tie-beams are distinguished by their decorated so sides.

Traces of the paintings that once decorated the church survive on the upper part of the columns. While the majority of

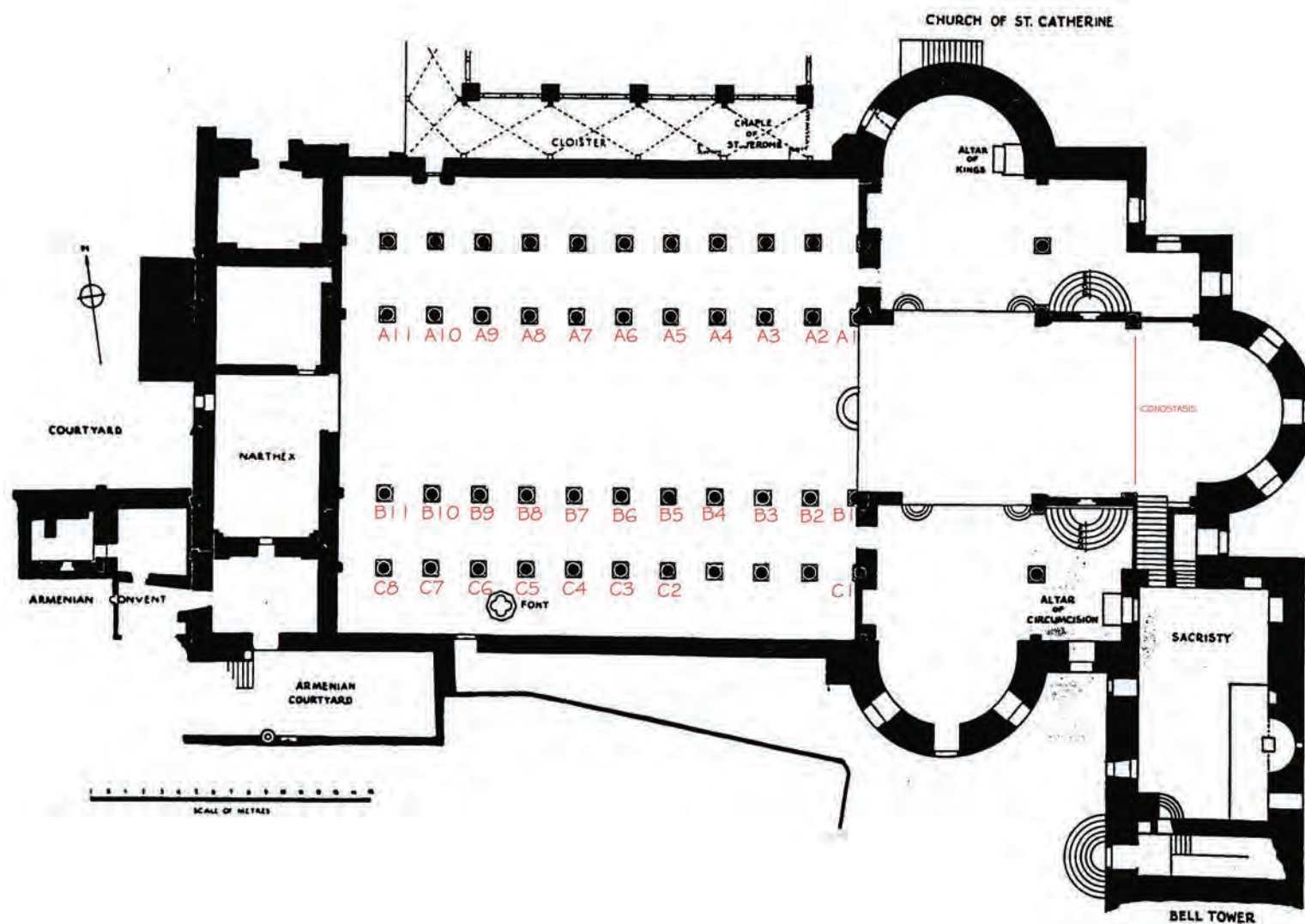


Fig. 2.13 The Byzantine capital and tie beam

these paintings date to the Crusader renovation of the Church (1165–1169), some were dated to the 1130 by inscriptions on them. Some, however, are later than the 12th century.

Although all 11 columns of both the northern and southern central rows of columns have paintings of different Christian ancestors and saints, three columns of the southern side row and none of the northern side row were painted. The paintings on the columns of the Church of the Nativity are considered to be the best among the few surviving examples of art of the Jerusalem Kingdom during the Crusader period²⁷.

The majority of the paintings on the columns were of male saints, with a few female saints who lived and died in Palestine. They include St Sabas, St Theodosius, and St Euthym



A1 Crucifixion Scene*, A2 St. John the Evangelist*, A3 Virgin Galaktotrophousa*, A4 St. Cataldus*, A5 St. Damianus*, A6 St. Cosmas*, A7 St. Leonard*, A8 St. George*, A9 St. Euthymius*, A10 St. Anthony*, A11 St. Macarius*

B1 St. Mary Magdalene*, B2 St. Magdalene*/St. Fusca*, B3 St. Omiphinus*/St. Humohery*, B4 St. Elias or St. Eijiah*, B5 St. John the Baptist*, B6 St. Vincent*, B7 St. Olaf*, B8 St. Canute*/St. Knute*, B9 St. Stephen*, B10 St. Sabas*, B11 St. Theodosius*

C1 Undefined Painting, C2 St. Margaret*, C3 St. Anne*, C4 Brasius Virgin Glykophlousa*/St. Leo*, C5 Virgin and the Child*, C6 No Painting*/St. Blaise*, C7 St. Bartholomew*, C8 St. James*.

*Hamilton's Guide to Bethlehem, *Adrian Boas, *Folda's Crusader Art

²⁸ Hamilton 1939

²⁹ Folda 1995

³⁰ Boas, J. 1998, Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: The Frankish Period: A Unique Medieval Society Emerges, Near Eastern Archaeology 61(3) (American Schools of Oriental Research)

Fig. 2.14 Plan of the Church of the Nativity displaying the painting on each column; the plan was prepared at CCHP with reference to Hamilton (1939)²⁸, Jaroslav Folda's Art of the Crusaders in the Holy land 1098–1187²⁹, and Adrian J. Boas's Archaeological Sources for the History of Palestine: The Frankish Period³⁰

³¹ Freeman-Grenville 2004

³² Folda 1995, 366

³³ Ibid., 369

ius, respected and honoured equally by the Eastern and Western Churches. The paintings depict members of an earthly church hierarchy: bishops and deacons, laity, soldier saints, kings, monks, and nuns; and of a heavenly hierarchy: Prophets, Apostles, the Virgin Mary, St Anne, and a Crucifixion. In addition, among the sanctified monarchs depicted are Olaf of Norway and Canute of Denmark and England³¹.

The column-paintings in the Church of the Nativity constitute a unique assembly of Crusader painting and reflect the work of a school of painters rather than a single artist. Most of the column-paintings are in a Byzantine style with Greek in-

scriptions written on an open scroll e.g. the column painting of John the Baptist. The painted column of John the Evangelist can be considered the most elegant among them all. The paintings reflect special techniques with refined forms, strong modelled draperies, and three dimensional characteristics³².

The painted columns of Saints Theodosius, Sabas, Antony, Euthymius, Macarius, and Stephen represent Palestinian Saints while reflecting Byzantine artistic influence in local Palestinian art. In contrast, in other column-paintings, such as those of Saints Fusca, Marina I, and Leo (Leonard), the Byzantine style is less in evidence.³³



Fig. 2.15 The south aisle looking west; thirty of the nave's 44 columns carry Crusader paintings of saints and the Virgin and Child, although age and lighting conditions make them hard to see. The columns are of red, polished limestone; most have been re-used from the original 4th century Constantinian basilica



Fig. 2.16 Tourists gathering for a picture in the northern aisle inside the Basilica

The Walls of the Nave of the Church and their Mosaics

Both the northern and southern walls of the nave have 11 semi-circular arched windows. The one on to the eastern end is closed on both sides, but the rest allow natural light into the Basilica. Each of the apses has four windows, two on each side.

Remains of the mosaics that covered the two walls during the Crusader Period can still be seen clearly on the two walls. The mosaic on the southern side depicted the seven General Councils of the Church, while that on the north was of the Six Provincial Councils of the Greeks. This administrative theme emphasises the fundamental agreement on dogma be-

tween the Greek and Latin Churches.

On the western wall, a Tree of Jesse showed all the prophets who spoke of the coming of the Messiah, including the pagan Roman Sibyl and Balaam's ass, while the mosaics in the eastern end of the church were devoted to scenes from the New Testament. Although only portions of the wall mosaics survive due to a defective roof, careful records made by scholars since the 18th century make it possible to restore most of them.

Most probably between 1167 and 1169, Amaury, the King of Jerusalem, sought an alliance with Emperor Manuel of Byzantium, which led to an arranged royal marriage between Amaury and Princess Maria. This event created a unique



Fig. 2.17 Reconstruction of the mosaic on the east wall of the northern transept, by William Harvey (1935)

³⁴ Moshe Stekelis, Michael Avi-Yonah, Vassilios Tzaferis, Bethlehem, an article published in Stern, Ephraim, 1993, The New Encyclopedia of Archaeological Excavations in the Holy Land, The Israel Exploration Society & Carta Israel (203-210)

³⁵ Hunt, L-A. 1991, Art and Colonialism: The Mosaics of the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem (1169) and the Problem of 'Crusader' Art, (Dumbarton Oaks Papers 45, Dumbarton Oaks, Trustees for Harvard University), 77 (<http://www.jstor.org/pss/1291693>)

³⁶ Vassilios, T. in Stekelis et al. 1993, 209

³⁷ Harvey et al. 1910, 34

³⁸ Ibid.

collaboration between Baldwin III, King of Jerusalem, and the Byzantine Emperor Manuel Comnenus. A Church programme developed from this event played a role in crystallizing a theological debate between the Orthodox, the Latins, and the Eastern Christian Churches; another outcome was a campaign to restore the Church of the Nativity. This restoration included work by a group of Palestinian and Egyptian artists among whom was Basilis whose name appears on the wall of the nave; another was Ephram whose name appears twice, once as a Painter of History – *historiographus* – and the other as a Mosaic master – *mosaitor*.³⁴

The inscriptions inside the mosaics are trilingual to suit the multicultural environment of the 12th century. While the first two languages were Latin and Greek to serve the predominant religious communities in the Holy Land – Catholics and Orthodox – the third language was Syriac to serve the Monophysite 'Jacobite' community whose influence was rising in the 1160s.³⁵

The mosaics of the two transepts at the end of the nave pictured events from the life of Jesus Christ, for example the Annunciation, the Nativity, Jesus' entrance to Jerusalem, and the Last Supper.³⁶

The decorations on the two long walls of the nave consist of various depictions of Ecumenical Councils; while the northern wall of the nave was decorated with six Provincial Councils. Beginning from the east, they were at Ancyra, Antioch, Sardica, Gangrae, Laodicea, and Carthage. Today only two Councils survive, Antioch and Sardica, with some fragments from Gangrae Council.



Fig. 2.18 Reconstruction of the mosaic on the east wall of the southern transept by William Harvey (1935)

The southern wall displayed seven Ecumenical Councils: the First Council of Nicaea, the First Council of Constantinople, the Councils of Ephesus and Chalcedon, the Second Council of Constantinople, the Third Council of Constantinople, and the Second Council of Nicaea.³⁷ Only the First Council of Constantinople, the Council of Chalcedon, and the Third Council of Constantinople have survived. The destroyed Second Council of Nicaea, as inscribed in Latin, was apparently unique.³⁸



Fig. 2.19 Reconstruction of the mosaic on the northern wall of the nave by William Harvey (1935)

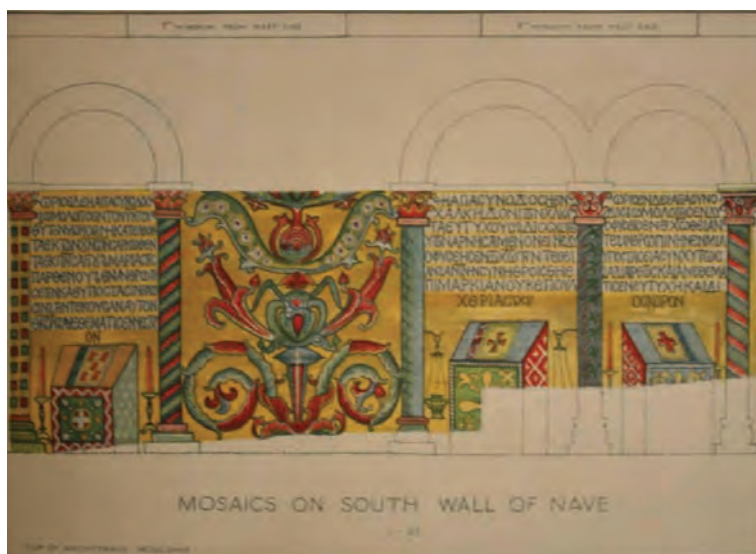


Fig. 2.20 Reconstruction of the mosaics on the southern walls of the nave between the 7th and 8th windows by William Harvey (1935)



Fig. 2.21 Reconstruction of the mosaics on the southern walls of the nave between the 7th and 8th windows, by William Harvey (1935)

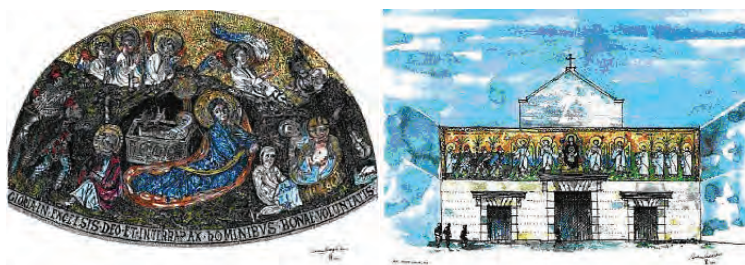


Fig. 2.22 Fig. 2.22 (Left) A fairly reliable reconstruction of the medieval mosaic in the alcove above the altar which was severely damaged by hooligans in 1873 (Palestine Exploration Fund 2004); (Right) A reconstruction of the western elevation of the Church of the Nativity by A.G. Walls 2003. This is based on references to a mosaic, probably of Justinian's restoration, of the adoration of the Magi, represented as Zoroastrian priests, on the main façade of the building, at the time of the Persian invasion in 614 and in a synodical letter 836.³⁹

³⁹ Harvey et al. 1910, 19–20

⁴⁰ Harvey et al. 1910, 19–20

⁴¹ Yonah, M. A. in Stekelis et al. 1993, 206

⁴² Finegan, J. 1992, *The Life of Jesus and the Beginning of the Early Church*, in *The Archaeology of the New Testament* (revised edition, Princeton University Press, Princeton), 34

⁴³ The description of the Cave of the Nativity is based on that prepared by William Harvey in Harvey et al. 1910, 6–7

The Floor of the Church of the Nativity

The floor is currently tiled with local hard red stone. About 80 cm below it, visible under protective wooden covers inside the basilica, are the remains of the marvellous mosaic floor of Constantine's Church which, in a great 'carpet' of geometrical forms, covered the nave and aisles. The technique used was similar to that at the imperial palace in Constantinople⁴⁰; the design is similar to that of the frigidarium at the Umayyad Palace of Hisham at Khirbet Al Mafjar, Jericho.

The excavations inside the Church of the Nativity in 1935 indicated that the mosaic floor under the existing nave and aisles date to the period between Constantine's and Justinian's Church, perhaps in the early 5th century⁴¹. Within it is the Greek Word IXΘYC ('fish'), rich in Christian allusion. The

Chi-Ro is considered to date to the early Byzantine period; 'Savior', inscribed in one of the mosaic panels, indicates that the mosaics are earlier than 427 AD, the date that Emperor Theodosius II forbade the use of Christian signs or symbols in floors⁴².

*The Cave of the Nativity*⁴³

Two flights of red-brown limestone steps lead down from both aisles of the Church to a cave below the central crossing. Here, it is believed, Jesus was born. On both sides, before entering the Cave, the upper flights of steps are arranged in concentric semi-circles forming a half-conical pit that sinks below the floor of the Church. Below is a decorated second flight of steps, and a door to the Cave.



Fig. 2.23 details of the geometric mosaic floor



Fig. 2.24 (Left) Star marking the traditional place at which it is believed that Jesus was born; (right) the Cave of the Nativity showing the place where the star is embedded

The wall on both sides of the door is covered with red and silver curtains. The bronze door-leaves may be of the Crusader Period, though their design reflects Byzantine influence. Below them, on both sides, another flight of steps descends to the marble-paved floor of the Cave of the Nativity itself, slightly east of the steps' base. In this floor an ornamental star was originally placed in 1717 to mark the place of Jesus' birth; it was inscribed *HIC DE VIRGINE MARIE JESES CHRISTUS NATUS EST* ('Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary'). This original star was removed in 1847, an incident which contributed to the Crimean War (1854–6). It was replaced in 1853 by a silver star from the Ottoman Sultan.

A Byzantine concept of the Nativity was illustrated in mosaics, traces of which were recorded inside the Cave. The scenes

included Jesus being put in the manger, including three open arches and a masonry manger, a form argued to recall an Early Christian design⁴⁴; and the Virgin Mary, uniquely with Latin inscriptions, the shepherds and angels, the Child being washed, the Magi⁴⁵, and Joseph sitting at Mary's feet. The walls of the Cave are partly lined with marble and partly covered with brightly-coloured silks or painted buckram.

South west of the foot of the southern staircase, three steps descend to a lower grotto that commemorates the placing of the infant Jesus in the manger. Marble colonettes of the Crusader Period again ornament the angles of the cave, and fragments of older shafts indicate an earlier roof-support arrangement. A hole in the north-western corner of this grotto is believed to be that into which the Star of Bethlehem fell after guiding

⁴⁴ Folda 1995), 378

⁴⁵ Ibid., 371

⁴⁶ Cust 1980, 60

the Wise Men to this spot. In the south-western corner a door opens into a passage that connects the Cave of the Nativity to the other caves on the northern side of the Church beneath, and accessible from, the Church of St Catherine. The walls of these caves are either of plastered masonry or of natural rock; roofs are of rock also; and the floors are partly of limestone slabs. The full extent of the complex of caves of which the Cave of the Nativity is a part is unknown.



Fig. 2.25 The Grotto of the Manger. During the Catholic midnight mass on 25 December, the statue of Jesus the infant is brought from the Church of St Catherine and placed inside the Cave of the Manger; the statue remains there until 6th January when, during the Catholic Epiphany service, the statue is carried back to the Church of St Catherine⁴⁶.

Furnishings and Portable Objects

In addition to the uniqueness of the building, its floors, walls, and ceiling, the Church of the Nativity is a museum of Christian art; it contains an assemblage of hundreds of art pieces that also reflect the development of religious art in Palestine, and the influences that affected it. Icons, etchings, and stone and wooden engravings that date as far back as to the 15th century are kept within the premises of the Church and the three Convents surrounding it. Yet no comprehensive inventory documenting all movable objects inside the premises has been conducted. A detailed description of the Church of the Nativity written by Felix Fabri in the 16th century, after his pilgrimage to Palestine, noted ‘a barn without hay, an apothecary’s without aromatic pots, a library without books’, ex-

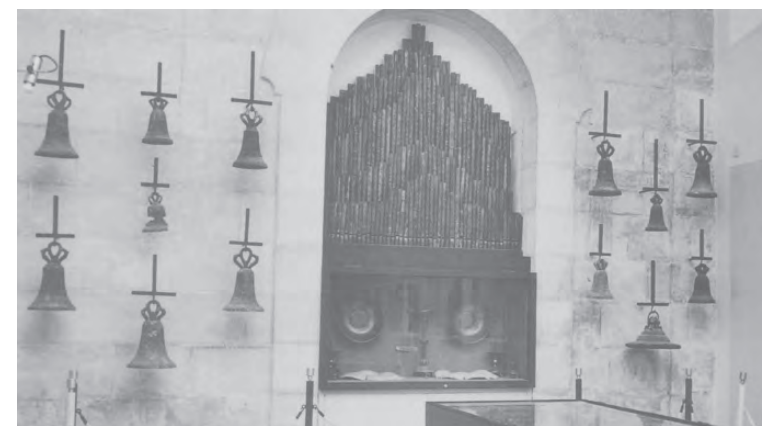


Fig. 2.26 Thirteen copper bells from two 12th century carillon sets and the remains of a water organ consisting of 250 copper pipes (fistulae-reduced diameter pipes) on display in the Museum of the Flagellation in Jerusalem. Items were found in 1906 (Courtesy of the Stadium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem)



Fig. 2.27 (Left) One of a pair of 17 cm high silver candlesticks with inscriptions around their bases reading: ‘Cursed be he who takes me away from the holy grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem’; the object is one of the Liturgical Objects that were discovered in two separate finds in 1863 and 1906; (right) a cast showing the martyrdom of St Thomas as engraved on one of the brass bowls that show various scenes of his life (courtesy of the Studium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem)

plaining that the Church was empty of portable decorations. Finds that date to earlier times were found in various excavations conducted inside and around the Church and are now kept in museums, e.g. two engraved brass bowls of c.1140 decorated with scenes from the life of St Thomas; two silver candelabra, organ pipes, and 13 copper bells are in the Franciscan Museum of the Flagellation in Jerusalem⁴⁷.

In the western side of the southern aisle is an octagonal font, probably of the 6th–7th centuries and made of hard, red local limestone. Its location may be original, though at a lower level, and is appropriate to the old baptismal rites: *‘the catechumen arrived from the outside, received baptism and then entered the*

church.’ The font is connected to a still-existing underground water cistern. It is possible that the water required for baptisms was drawn from here, and was allowed to run back into the cistern through runnels below the font.

⁴⁷ Boas 1999, 162; see also, Harvey et al. 1910, 166–7



Fig. 2.28 (Top) The font in the Church of the Nativity; (bottom) Greek inscription on the font.

⁴⁸ Hamilton 1939, 67–8

⁴⁹ Evseyeva 2007, 114

⁵⁰ Melkite refers to the Catholics of Middle Eastern origin who follow the Byzantine worship, theology and spirituality, the name Melkite is from the Aramaic word “Melek” meaning King.

By the 12th century, the baptismal functions of the cistern had been forgotten and were replaced by a tradition that this was the well into which the Magi’s star fell on their arrival to the town; a later version said that the Magi watered their beasts here. Yet again, and less popularly, it was said that this was the well from which David in the wilderness longed to drink⁴⁸.

In the eastern nave, behind the iconostasis, a Greek icon of the Virgin Mary Enthroned, 123 x 90 cm, is of the late 16th century and one of the oldest in the Church. It may have been brought there. It is similar to others in Mar Saba Monastery in the Judean Desert. The majority of the icons are attributed to 17th century artists, among them the Cretan painter Jeremiah Paladas. A monk



Fig. 2.29 (Left) Virgin Mary Enthroned icon, 2010; (right) Virgin Mary Enthroned icon attributed to Jeremiah Paladas

at St Catherine’s Monastery on Mount Sinai between 1602 and 1639, he contributed to painting the iconostasis of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem as well as the iconostasis of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem; and also to the church in St Catherine’s Monastery in Sinai and the cathedral in the Old Patriarchate in Cairo⁴⁹.

The *post-Byzantine* or *Greek* iconostasis is composed of three tiers: the uppermost displays the extended Deesis or Deësis drawn in circular frames; the middle tier displays the 12 great Christian feasts; the first tier, as in all Byzantine and Russian iconostasis, displays on the right side of the central gates to the sanctuary an icon of Christ the Pantokrator and on the left an icon of the Theotokos (Mother of God) and other local saints. An inscription in a circle placed on the top of the iconostasis reads “*Presented from his Excellency the Metropolis of Kyrenia Dio Necios to the Holy Land 1853*”. The small replicas used for veneration in front of the Sovereign are all 19th century icons of the Russian school of iconography.

During the 1869 fire part of the iconostasis was harmed, and works to renovate it were carried out by the Greek Orthodox Church. The icons embedded in the iconostasis were either reconstructed or renovated.

The most significant icon inside the Basilica is that of the Virgin Mary of Bethlehem, a 17th century Melkite⁵⁰ icon attributed to an unknown Arab artist, either a local artist trained in Aleppo or by an Aleppian master from Syria. It is one of the oldest icons displayed in the Basilica; embroidered cloth and silver bas-relief was probably added to cover it in the 19th century.



Fig. 2.30 The wooden iconostasis inside the Basilica



Fig 2.31 The Melkite Arab icon of Virgin Mary of Bethlehem

⁵¹ Boullata, K. 2009, *Birth of a Pictorial Language 1850–1948*, Palestinian Art from 1850 to the Present (SAQI, London San Francisco, Beirut), 41–103

⁵² Evseyeva 2007, 114

Many other Arab Melkite icons displayed inside the Basilica were painted by local artists belonging to the Jerusalem school of iconography. One is signed by Ibrahim Abtoui. This School was influential in the development of pictorial art in Palestine in the late 19th century⁵¹.

The Chapel of St George contains some noteworthy treasures including many significant icons. Among them is an icon signed by one of the most important iconographers, Victor the Cretan, a priest from Candia⁵², active between 1651–1697. The icon of Virgin Eleousa was a gift to the Church from one of the pilgrims; both the names of the artist and the pilgrim are signed on the icon. Another icon attributed to Victor is of Christ as the High Priest; it is also kept inside the Chapel of St George, as is a painted but partly burnt cross of 1681 signed by an unknown artist called Vasilius. Both icons are part of the iconostasis located in the Chapel of St George.



Fig. 2.32 The Melkite Virgin Mary icon, inscribed by the Palestinian iconographer Ibrahim Abatouli of Jerusalem; the icon was presented to the Church by Saleh Ibrahim Assaf in 1910

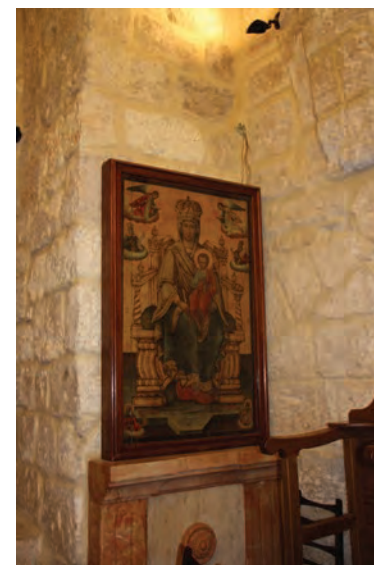


Fig. 2.33 (Top) The recently renovated cross painted by Vasilius in 1681; (left) an unsigned Melkite icon of Virgin Mary Enthroned in the Chapel of St George

Structures around the Church of the Nativity

The Church of Saint Catherine of Alexandria

The Church of Saint Catherine of Alexandria is adjacent to the Basilica on its north. A door in the Basilica's western wall opens into a passage that leads to the 12th century arcaded courtyard of St Augustine. It measures 26.5 m (E–W) by 25.0 m (N–S) and was revealed during the construction of the existing Church in the late 19th century.

The church was first recorded in the 15th century and has served as the principal church of the Roman Catholics in Bethlehem since their exclusion from the high altar of the main church in the 13th century. An earlier plan of this church is shown on the drawings made by Amico in 1596 and by M. Mauss in 1871. It consisted of an elongated rectangle, 27 m by 6 m internally, divided roughly equally into nave and choir; while the eastern part, as it appears from Amico's plan, is an addition to a room originally only 6 m by 15m which lay immediately next to the north transept of the main church. It seems likely that this room was the chapter house of the 12th century convent. To the north of it ran the east range, no doubt containing on its upper floor the dormitory of the canons. Amico's plan shows this range to have been sub-divided in his day into sacristies and other smaller chambers. Today only its northern end survives, 8 m wide internally and with groin-vaulting carried on one of what may once have been a line of central rectangular piers⁵³.

The western arcade has five arches; while four windows on the sides have the same details of those on the northern and southern elevation, the central opening is kept open, and has a door that connects the courtyard to the external atrium of



Fig. 2.34 (Top) The rose window (bottom) the courtyard and statue of St Jerome at St Catherine's church in Bethlehem

⁵³ Pringle 1993

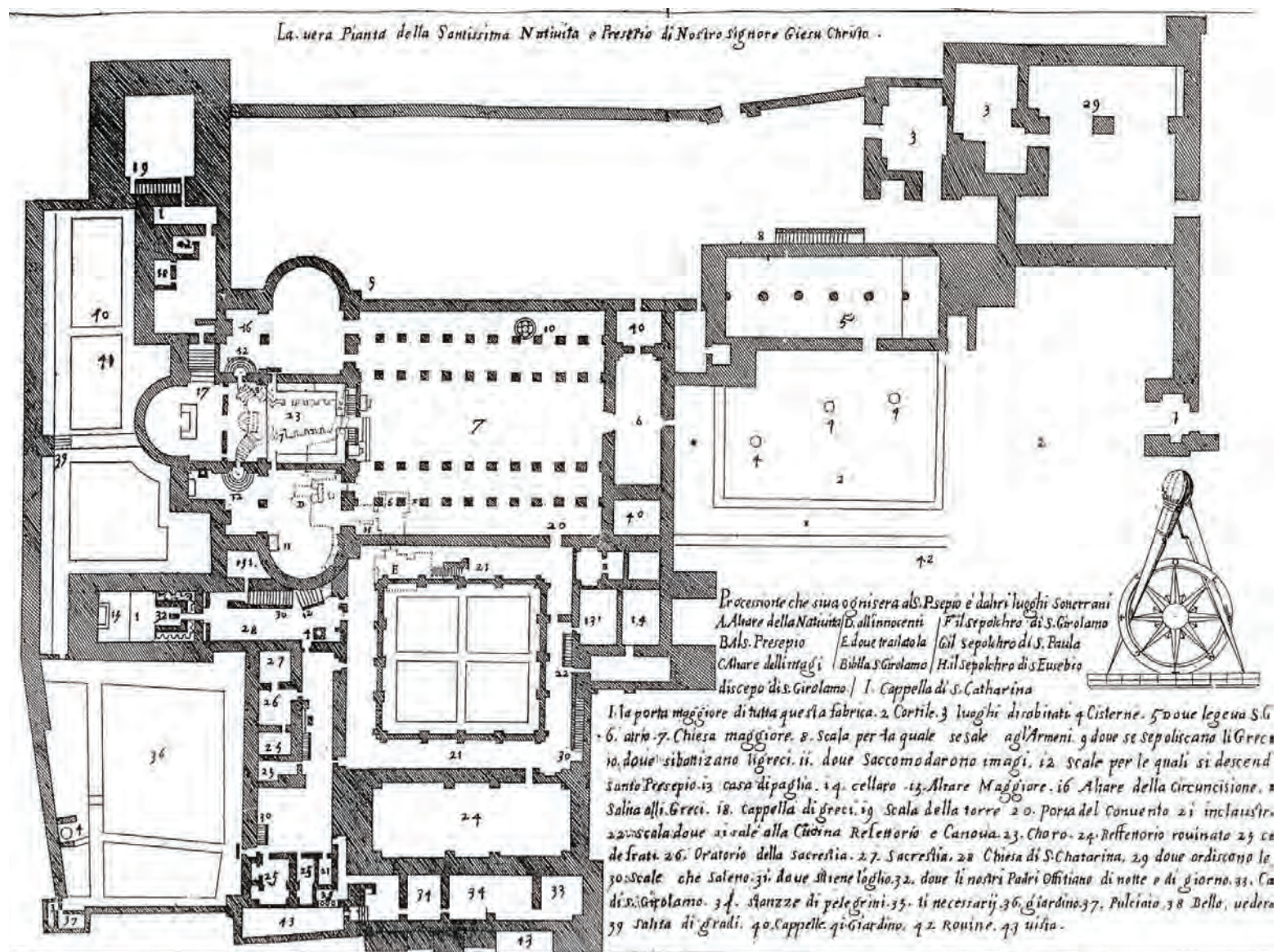


Fig. 2.35 The survey of Bernardino Amico of the Church of the Nativity and the surrounding convents c. 1596 upon his visit to the Holy Land, as published in *Trattato della Pianta & Immagini degli Sacri Edifizi di Terra Santa* in 1619.

the Basilica. The Italian artist A. Mortet carved the existing wooden and bronze door of the Church in 1950; the door carries sculptures for St Jerome, St Eusebius of Cremona, and the Lady Paula and her daughter Eustochium. The façade is topped with a statue of St Catherine of Alexandria. Five bells made by Pietro Kolpacino in 1882 were hung in the bell tower; they are engraved with writings in Latin and pictures of various saints including the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist, Joseph, Paul, and Jerome.

The eastern arcade was integrated into the Church of St Catherine in the expansion of 1949, but the façade and its five arches were integrated into the Church; the four on the sides are closed with stone and are the western walls of the Church of St Catherine of Alexandria; and the one in the middle is the main entrance of the Church. The 6th century walls of the Church of the Nativity compose the elevation of the southern arcade, while the Franciscan Monastery, St Anton Benevolent Society and St Helena's Chapel surround the northern and western arcade.

The courtyard was restored in 1948 by A. Barluzzi along with the surrounding Franciscan cloister, utilizing columns and capitals from the 12th century monastery. At its centre stands a pillar supporting a statue of St Jerome, one of the founders of the monastic community in Bethlehem.⁵⁴

In the floor of the eastern part of the southern arcade, adjacent to the wall of the Church of the Nativity, a steel grill covers stairs that lead down to the Grotto of St Jerome which is also accessible from the Church of St Catherine. In the western part of the same arcade a door leads to the Basilica.

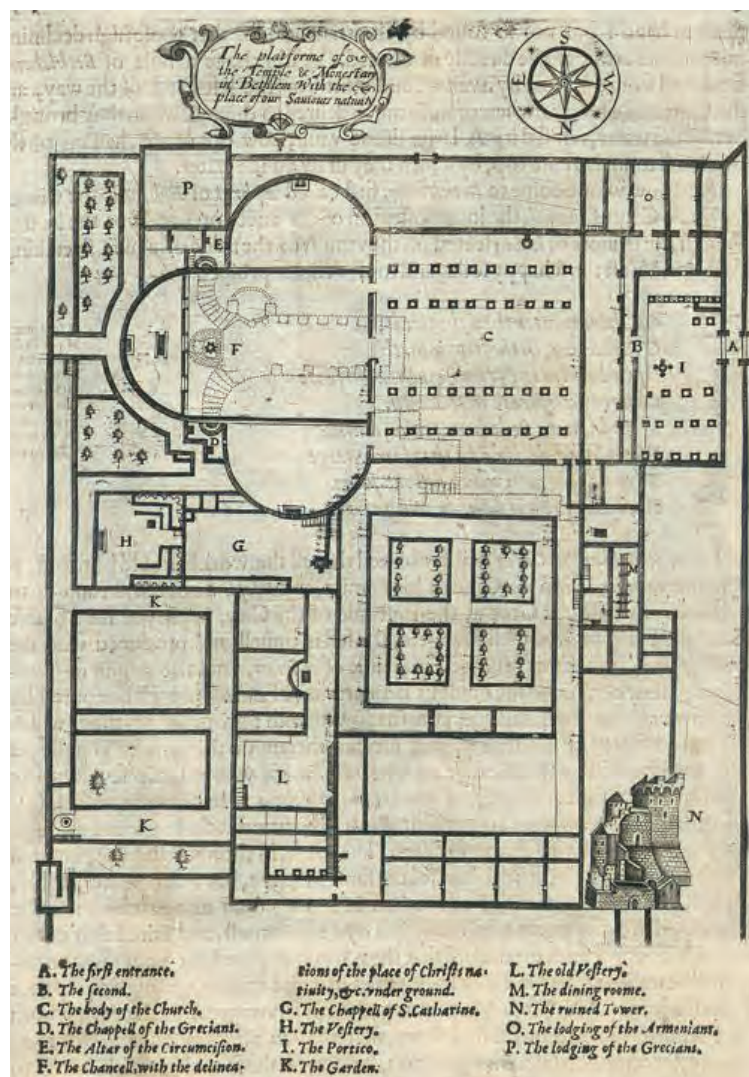


Fig. 2.36 The “Platform and the Temple & Monastery in Bethlehem with the Place of Our Savior Nativity”, an etched map by an anonymous engraver after a picture by George Sandys: 1577-1664, an English traveller

⁵⁴ Hamilton 1939, 11

⁵⁵ 2001 لؤي عياد، كنيسة المهدي،

⁵⁶ Murphy-O'Conno, J. and Cunliffe, B. 1998, *The Holy Land* (Oxford Archeological Guides, Oxford University Press). The Grottos are also mentioned and described in Hamilton 1939, 77–8

⁵⁷ *Restoration of St Catherine's Church at Bethlehem, the Holy Land News and Current Affairs* – the Franciscan Cyberspot, December 21, 1999 (www.christusrex.com)

⁵⁸ According to Hamilton (1939), the 13 bells were found in 1923

⁵⁹ Pringle 1993, 140

⁶⁰ Hamilton 1939, 68

In 1882 the Church of St Catherine replaced, and was built over, the ruins of the Augustinian, 12th century Crusader monastery. This fixation with a particular spot, similar to that dictating the precise position of the Church of the Nativity, reflected the Christian tradition first recorded in the 15th century that Saint Catherine of Alexandria celebrated her mystical marriage with Jesus there. The new, and still extant, Church had three aisles and two altars; the altar to the right was dedicated to St Antonio and the one to the left to St Francis. A niche in the southern elevation of the Church holds an altar, a statue of the Virgin Mary and baby Jesus, used in Christmas celebrations⁵⁵.

Just to the right upon entering the church, next to the niche of the Nativity scene, medieval stairs descend to a series of caves that expand beneath the Church of the Nativity, and connect at their eastern end, through a door that is kept locked, with the grotto of the Nativity. Here rock-cuttings and ancient tombs with various modern additions commemorate different people and traditions including⁵⁶:

- Chapel of the Innocents: the tomb of infants slain by Herod the Great (Matt. 2:16);
- Chapel of St Joseph: dedicated to the husband of Mary;
- Tombs of St Paula and her daughter Eustochium; who made a pilgrimage with Jerome c. 485 and later settled in Bethlehem;
- Tomb of St Jerome; a church father from Italy who translated the Bible into Latin (the Vulgate);
- Study of St Jerome; where Jerome is said to have written and worked on his translation; and
- Tomb of Eusebius; Jerome's successor as head of the monastery.

In order to prepare Bethlehem for the Millennium, restoration and expansion works were implemented in the Church of St Catherine of Alexandria. The eastern wall was moved 21 m. In its centre, the stained glass window representing the crib scene alongside the figures of St Francis and St Anthony was a gift from Cardinal Monsieur the King of Belgium in the 1920s⁵⁷.

The Chapel of Saint Helena

Two bell towers at least four storeys high were added by the Crusaders to flank the western elevation of the Basilica. The base of the northern one, accessible from the western side of the courtyard in front of St Catherine's Church, is now St Helena's Chapel. The Chapel is a room 6 x 8 m with a groin-vault springing from four corner pilasters. Three bells from the carillon were found hidden in the Latin cloister in 1863, and 13 more in 1906⁵⁸; of 13th rather than 14th century date⁵⁹, they are now in the museum at the Franciscan Monastery of the Flagellation in Jerusalem⁶⁰.

Like the walls and the columns of the Basilica, St Helena's Chapel was also frescoed with paintings of which some fragments remain. The paintings in the chapel were restored in 1948; in 1950, the artist C. Vagarini worked on the greatly damaged figurative cycle on the eastern wall.

Another restoration of the Chapel in 1998, aimed at increasing its capacity and liturgical flexibility, also included the restoration of the paintings, this time by experts from the Veneto Institute for Fine Arts, directed by Renzo Ravagnan. The litur-



Fig. 2.37 Frescos inside the Chapel of St. Helena in Bethlehem

gical renovation was conducted by the architects Luigi Leoni and Chiara Rovati from the Centre of Pavia. The works included the floor of ancient balata, a new altar made of a single block of white Bethlehem stone, and seats of the celebrants and concelebrants placed in the centre near the southern wall on an axis with the wooden pews and designed in a curve for the optimum capacity⁶¹.

The Franciscan Monastery

Encroaching on the Church of St Catherine's from the north, the Franciscan Monastery is a complex that has also changed over 1500 years. The cloister, as it appears in lithographs, was first added to the north of the Church of the Nativity in the 12th century during the Crusader period, and was given to the Canons of St Augustine⁶². The Cloister was perhaps built, according to Hamilton (1939), on the site of the convent just north of the Basilica in which Paula and the nuns may have lived after their tour in the Holy Places and Egypt accompanied by St Jerome. According to the writings of St Jerome, Paula settled in Bethlehem where she founded two convents: one for men and the other for women. The nuns lived 'beside the Church' where they came to worship every Sunday.⁶³ Since 1347, the Western Church has been represented by the Franciscans, who have occupied the cloister and convent of the Canons of St Augustine.⁶⁴

The structural phasing of the Franciscan Cloister was describe by Denys Pringle (1993, 140), using material in Fr. Basil (1466), Bernardino Amico (1620) and Francesco Quaresmi (1626); the archaeological investigations of Antonio Baluzzi (1949) and Fr. Bellarmino Bagatti (1952); and the 1988 survey

⁶¹ Piccirillo, Brother Michele of, 'Bethlehem: the Restoration of St. Helena's Chapel, next to the Basilica of the Nativity is Completed'. The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, Franciscan Cyberspot, www.christusrex.org, January 2008

⁶² The Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land, Franciscan Cyberspot, history of the Catholic Church. From Justinian to the Crusaders www.christusrex.org

⁶³ Hamilton 1939, 10

⁶⁴ Pringle 1993, 139

of the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem. The description points out that, during the 12th century, a convent for the Augustinian canons serving the Church was constructed north of the church in the area now occupied by the Franciscan Convent and Church of St Catherine. The medieval buildings were set around a rectangular courtyard. A small door at the south end of the western portico led into the north aisle of the Church, and a stair in the southern one gave access to the grottos. The Cloister was restored to the design of A. Barluzzi in 1947–8.

On the north side of the cloister was a rectangular building, some 26.5 m by 9 m, which Amico identified as a ruined refectory. Because the terrain slopes steeply northwards, a gallery was carried on a series of three massive barrel-vaults opening northwards. This is now enclosed by structures of the

early 20th century. A second function of the barrel-vaults was evidently to act as buttressing for the ‘refectory’ and the other room of similar proportions which still survives beneath it.

This lower room is covered by a pointed barrel-vault some 7.8 m high, running east–west. In the north wall are three double-splayed lancet windows from which the room formerly would have received its light. The western door is 1.95 m wide and appears to have been the principal means of access in the 12th century, although the room was also accessible from a vaulted staircase in the thickness of the west wall of the cloister. The western part of the Convent was replaced by the Franciscan Pilgrimage Residence, the *Casa Nova*; the eastern range of the Convent was destroyed when the church of St Catherine was enlarged in 1874–1882.



Fig. 2.38 Important comparisons, as viewed from the north: before and after the towers, and the modern construction to the north of the Franciscan Cloister. Left photo by George Saboungi c. 1880, Right photo by Felix Bonfils c. 1885, both photographs George Al Ama Collection.

The Armenian Convent

Accessible from the southern side of the Narthex is the Armenian monastery. A substantial part of it dates probably to the 12th century but earlier masonry exists by the kitchen and immediately adjoining the Basilica. Most of the more recent parts of the building were constructed at the beginning of the 17th century by the Patriarch Krikor Baronder; the bell tower was added in 1930⁶⁵. A flight of stairs leads up to the living quarters of the monastery; a doorway opens on to a walled garden separated by a wall from the Greek Orthodox garden to the east. Another door leads into the southern end of the Narthex and yet another leads into a private room now belonging to the monastery but originally built in the south-east corner of Justinian's cloister.

An extant room on Bernardino Amico's plan is in an area of considerable structural complexity. It occupies the angle

formed by the southern and the eastern colonnades of the atrium; the corner pier and the base and shaft of the first column toward the west can be seen built into the left hand wall of the entrance while the remaining columns of the southern colonnade are probably built into the main wall of the monastery overlooking the courtyard.

A series of rooms directly above contains the upper parts of the corner pier and column of the atrium and a part of the lintel of Justinian's southern closed door leading into the narthex from the atrium. Adjacent are the remains of a medieval refectory, commonly known as the School of St Jerome. This great room was renovated during the preparations for the Millennium celebrations in Bethlehem, and is associated with St Jerome since it encroached on to Justinian's atrium and fragments of its original masonry are of 12th century workmanship⁶⁶.

⁶⁵ جقمان، حنا عبدا لله، جولة في تاريخ الأرض المقدسة من أقدم العصور حتى اليوم، بيت لحم ومقدساتها منذ أقدم العصور حتى سنة ١٨٠٠م - الجزء الأول، الطبعة الثانية ١٩٩٤. صفحة ١٤٥. (translation) Jacaman, H.A. 1994, A Tour in the History of the Holy Land, History of the Holy Site in Bethlehem until 1800 – Volume 1 (2nd edition), 145

⁶⁶ Hamilton (1939), 79–82



Fig. 2.39 Remains of the 12th century medieval refectory also known as the School of St Jerome

⁶⁷ Boullata, K. 2009, *Palestinian Art from 1850 to the Present*, SAQI, London, San Francisco, Beirut, 91



Fig. 2.40 View westwards from the top of the Greek Orthodox bell-tower towards Bethlehem's roofscape across Manger Square; the walled garden inside the Armenian Monastery is in the lower left corner of the photo

The Greek Orthodox Convent

Accessible from either the Sanctuary of the Basilica, or the narrow road south of the complex leading to the Milk Grotto, the Greek Orthodox Convent encroaches on the Basilica from both its southern and eastern sides. A common wall separates its courtyard from that of the Armenian Convent. A rectangular 12th century structure, perhaps formerly a sacristy, adjoins the sanctuary on the southern side of the Basilica, and serves today as the Chapel of St George. It is connected by a flight

of steps to the sanctuary of the Basilica. On the western wall of the Chapel, a marble bas-relief of St George, known locally as Al Khader and attributed to the Bethlehemite Jiries Nistas Senior, reflects local Palestinian art during the late 19th and early 20th century.⁶⁷

South of St George's Chapel, a massive tower defines the original south-eastern angle of the complex. The base of this tower, 16.4 m by 15.4 m with walls about 4.30 m thick, may well be of 6th century date. The upper section was rebuilt in the 12th century in fine rusticated masonry with smoothly finished borders.



Fig. 2.41 The marble bas-relief of St George on the western wall of the Greek Orthodox Convent

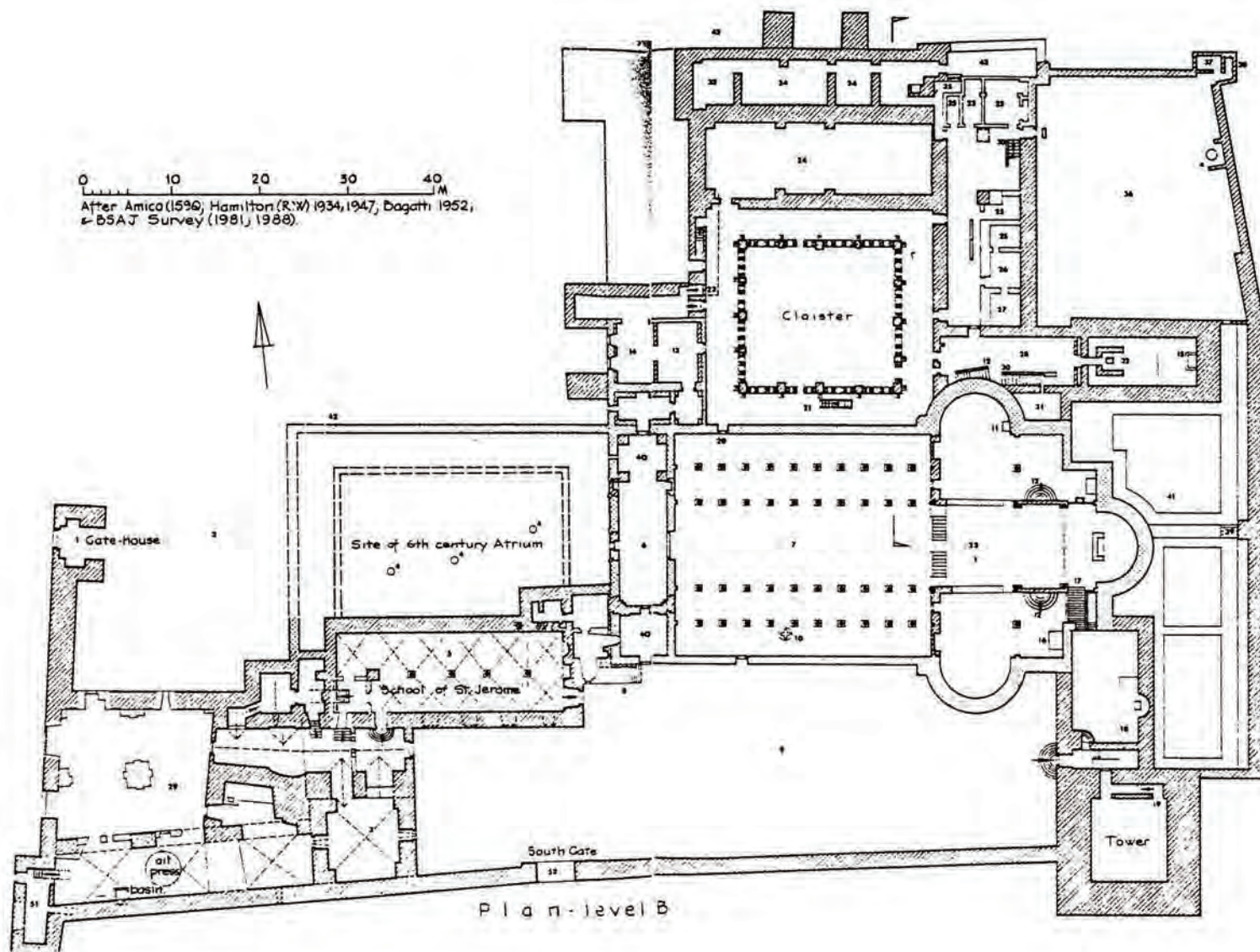


Fig. 3.42 Plan of the Church of the Nativity by Peter E. Leach after Amico (1590); Hamilton (1934 & 1947), Bagatti (1952), and the British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem (BSAJ) Survey (1981–2) as published in Pringle (1993).

⁶⁸ Pringle, D. 1993, 152–4

⁶⁹ جقمان. حنا عبدا لله. جولة في تاريخ الأرض المقدسة من أقدم العصور حتى اليوم. بيت لحم ومقدساتها منذ أقدم العصور حتى سنة ١٨٠٠م - الجزء الأول. الطبعة الثانية ١٩٩٤. (translated) Jacaman, H.A. 1994, A Tour in the History of the Holy Land, History of the Holy Site in Bethlehem until 1800 – Volume 1 (2nd edition, 145)

Amico indicates the existence of a stair leading to the upper floors within the thickness of the north wall; like the towers at Bethany and the monastery of St Sabas which were also built and rebuilt respectively in the 12th century, the function of this tower may have been to serve either as refuge for the religious community in times of danger or perhaps as a safe deposit for the church's valuables. For the latter purpose it was particularly well positioned, adjoining the sacristy.⁶⁸

Opposite the Basilica, next to the southern entrance of the convent, a bell tower was added in the second half of the 19th century; previously bell towers had been banned by the Mamluks. This was the first of three modern bell towers which are such a characteristic of the whole complex around the Church of the Nativity: one was added to the Church of St Catherine at the Franciscan Convent, and the other in the 1930s to the Armenian convent⁶⁹.

On the opposite side of the court of the Greek Orthodox Convent a flight of stairs behind an iron gate leads down into a series of burial grottoes extending under the southern aisles and nave of the church. Their masonry is Roman or Byzantine work. In the early Crusader Period they seem to have been associated with the Holy Innocents, for the Abbot Daniel (1106–7) wrote: *'On leaving the church by the right you find below the church a deep cavern where the remains of the Holy Innocents were buried and from where they were transported to Constantinople'*.

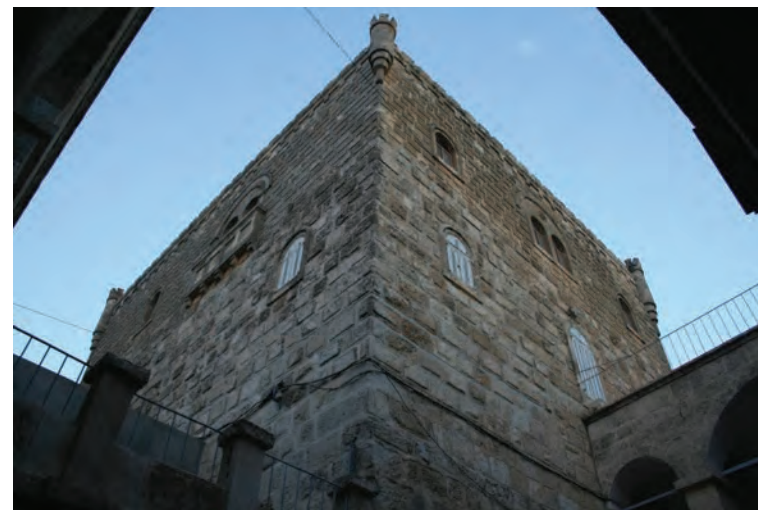


Fig. 2.43 (Top) The 19th century bell tower at the Greek south-western corner of the complex; (right) the tower or donjon, at the south-eastern corner of the fortified cathedral Greek Orthodox complex. The lower part may be 6th century, the central part certainly 12th century, and the upper part 19th century



The Pilgrimage Route

Bethlehem was always considered a satellite city of Jerusalem so the route connecting them was important. The evolution of Bethlehem (Fig. 2.44) shows that the first track to connect the cities follows, at its southern and eastern end, the road known today as Star Street. This was the main route into the historic city centre as well as the main approach to the Church of the Nativity.

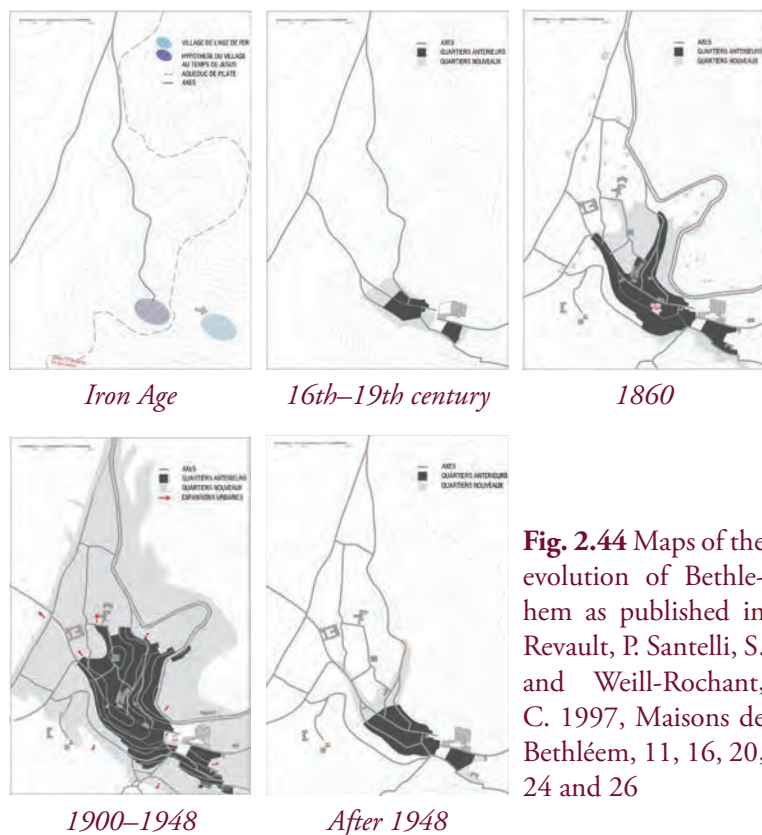


Fig. 2.44 Maps of the evolution of Bethlehem as published in Revault, P. Santelli, S. and Weill-Rochant, C. 1997, *Maisons de Bethléem*, 11, 16, 20, 24 and 26

In his description of the journey from Jerusalem to Bethlehem in 1887⁷⁰, J.L. Porter wrote about the Pilgrimage Route: ‘*Bethlehem is now before us, standing on a narrow ridge which project eastward from the central range of the hills of Judah, and break down in terraced slopes to deep glens on the north and south, and to a broad reach of table-land on the east. The terraces are covered in vineyards, and studded with olives; they sweep down the ridge regular as steps of stairs. On the eastern brow of the ridge, separated from the crowded village by an open esplanade, is the convent, like a large feudal castle. It is a huge pile consisting of the Church of the Nativity and the three convents – Latin, Greek and Armenian abutting on its northeast and south sides*’.

Porter was looking at the ‘huge pile’ of the Church of the Nativity from the west, from a point at or very close to the start of the Pilgrimage Route. Most of the area in Porter’s description is now built up but through it the line of the old trackway approaching the Church from the west is still perpetuated, largely by a paved street called Star Street, flanked continuously by buildings on both sides. Here our concern is primarily with the Route itself, the line it follows on the ground, rather than with a detailed description of the buildings which define the Route laterally on both its sides.

This description of the Pilgrimage Route begins at the west end of Star Street, west of King David’s Wells (*Abar Al Malek Dahoud*). Eastwards, the Route defines the historical route believed to have been walked by the Virgin Mary and Joseph on their visit to Bethlehem. King David’s Wells, between our starting point and the Damascus Gate (*below*), are associated with the time when David and his men were driven to the hills, to the Cave of Adullam⁷¹, where their adventures be

⁷⁰ Porter, J.L. 1887, *Jerusalem, Bethany, and Bethlehem* (Ariel publishing house, Jerusalem), 116

⁷¹ Vilnay, Z. 1992, *Legends of Palestine* (the Jewish Publication Society Press, Pennsylvania); the cave also known as Magharat Khareitun is located to the south-east of Bethlehem and, according to the Bible, the cave was used as a resort for everyone that was in distress, in debt or in discontent

⁷² 2 Samuel xxiii, 14–16

⁷³ Shaffer, Y. 2001 Changes in the Building Technologies in Israel from Ancient Times Until the 20th Century and their Influence on Everyday Life, in UNESCO, More than Two Thousand Years in the History of Architecture, Safeguarding the Structure of Our Architectural Heritage, proceedings of the International Congress, in partnership with Bethlehem 2000 Project (Maison De L'UNESCO, Paris)

⁷⁴ Ibid

came the theme of various epic tales. During one summer's day David was *'in an hold and the garrison of the Philistines was then in Bethlehem. And David longed and said, Oh that one would give me drink of the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate! And three mighty men brake through the host of the Philistines, and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem, that was by the gate, and took it, and brought it to David: nevertheless "he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto "the Lord"'* ⁷². The existing buildings are of late 19th and early 20th century date.

Many of the buildings along Star Street eastwards are of similar date, incorporating the development of Roman-Byzantine techniques and reflecting different phases in the town's history. The cross-arched room structure, a Roman-Byzantine technique introduced into Palestine in the 1st century BC, continued to be developed and was used until the beginning of the 20th century⁷³. Other Roman-Byzantine techniques used over a similar time-span and visible in Star Street include the arch, the vault, and the use of lime-stone 'cociopesto' concrete, mortar and plaster. A wide range of shapes and details are apparent on numerous buildings which are unique personal creations appropriate to the wishes of the owner and the capabilities of the builder.

Roman building techniques continued in use until the introduction of the steel-beam and Portland cement with the arrival of the steam railway. The opening of the Jaffa-Jerusalem line meant that, by 1910, the new I Beam and Portland cement techniques had largely replaced all lime-based plaster, mortar and Roman concrete construction⁷⁴. Both this long continuity and sudden change about a century ago are reflected in the

architecture along Star Street.

Although built using Roman technique, the one- or two-storey buildings lining the Street follow the topography of the landscape: they often cut into the hillside on the south and are supported from below on the north. They also demonstrate sophisticated craftsmanship in stone decoration. The Route reflects the way of life c. 1900, still intermittently present today, lined as much of it is by family buildings with shops and workshops at street level where mother of pearl artefacts were made and sold, and with domestic quarters at another level either above (on the south side of the Street) or below (on the north).

Families that resided the Star Street belonged to the Tarajmeh Clan (the Translators), who were most famous for their skills in the various local handicrafts, and the Herezat Clan, who were skilled in carving beads. The carving of beads, crucifixes, models of the Cave of the Nativity and of the Holy Sepulchre in olive wood, mother of pearl, and bituminous limestone from the Dead Sea has for centuries been one of the trades of the Bethlehemites; such handicrafts were brought to the town by the various missionaries in an attempt to introduce jobs to their followers, and were usually handed down from father to son.



⁷⁵ Rubin, R. 2006, Relief Maps and Models in the Archives of the Palestine Exploration Fund in London, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 138(1), 43–63

Fig. 2.45 (Left) Workers in Mother-of-Pearl, 1905 (American Colony Photographers); (right) Bead Merchants, 1893 (Album de Terre Sainte, Paris)

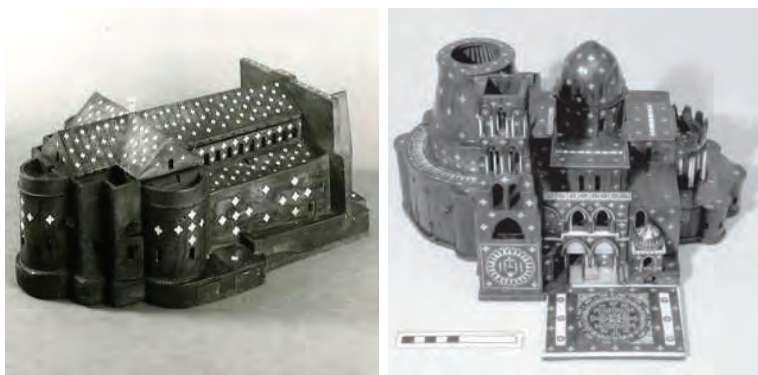


Fig. 2.46 (Left) Model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; (right) model of the Church of the Nativity, they are at the British Museum, London. Both models are of wood and inlaid mother of pearl and were probably made in Bethlehem. The date of acquisition on the Church of the Nativity model is 1753 (Palestine Exploration Fund)

According to the Palestine Exploration Fund, a variety of models of structures, sites, and monuments made of wood and inlaid with mother of pearl were collected by researchers and staff of the Fund and are now stored in its premises in London. A detailed description of the wood and mother of pearl industry was documented by Jonas Korte in 1741 and many other travellers during the early 18th century⁷⁵.

Another historical feature of the Street, best appreciated on foot, are the stone stairways to left and right between the buildings: on the northern side, where they are steep and narrow, they lead to the agricultural fields, while wider and more monumental steps connect Star Street with the city centre.



Fig. 2.47 (Left) Unpaved track, now Star Street, sloping up from the north west towards the Damascus Gate in an illustration of 1893 (but see the built-up reality in a photograph below of the same area 16 years earlier), with a prominent town house on the right and the Church of the Nativity in the distance to the left; (right) part of the same view in 2010, with the Damascus Gate consolidated but truncated and Star Street paved for pedestrians but still scarred by one-way traffic



Fig. 2.48 (Left) Pilgrims approaching Bethlehem along the now-revetted track to the Damascus Gate: early 19th century; (right): Damascus Gate: part of a photo by Felix Bonfils c. 1880 showing the line of the traditional track leading to the Gate already defined by buildings along an incipient Star Street.

Prominent along the Street are the Melkite Greek Catholic Church on the right and the St Joseph Rosary close by on the left. Both are ‘outside’ the main historical structure along the Street, the *Qos Al Zarara*, named in earlier lithographs as Damascus Gate. This Gate is assumed to be one of the main entrances to the old core of Bethlehem as shown on lithographs of the 16th and 17th centuries.



Fig. 2.49 Mamluk engraving on the window lintel on the first floor of the western elevation of Damascus Gate. The inscription on the plaque next to the Gate reads: ‘*Old Gate ‘Qoos Zarara’*: the oldest references to Bethlehem and archeological remains suggest that small as it was, Bethlehem was referred to as a city because of the walled enclosure surrounding it. This Qoos, or arch, is the traditional main gate to the city coming from Jerusalem and tradition has it that was through this gate that Mary and Joseph entered Bethlehem when she gave birth to Jesus. The wall probably existed in Canaanite times, and was rebuilt several times over before it was finally destroyed by Mamluks in 1489.’

This main gate into Bethlehem is clearly of considerable architectural complexity, as is to be expected of a structure which has been standing for well over a thousand years despite being officially ‘destroyed’ some 600 years ago. Two cross vaults form its arch externally, above which is a two storey residential building. The residential complex, or Hosh, is entered from inside the town, but still has a window that overlooks the road on the first floor and a double window on the second. The lintel of the window on the first level is decorated with Mamluk engravings, and the double window on the second level is supported with an arch: a typical local construction method that is constantly repeated in the historic town of Bethlehem, while a more sophisticated form decorated with engraved stone and ornaments occurs in the suburbs.

Along Star Street as elsewhere, modern linear residences and composite large scale buildings were constructed either side of 1900, often with decorated doorways instead of simple openings.



Fig 2.50 Examples of three main entrances along Star Street that, in reflecting contemporary taste c. 1900, utilise decoratively local skills in masonry and ironwork

⁷⁶ Bethlehem had master stone-cutters who were renowned and much in demand all the way north to Nazareth. In his important two-volume work on nineteenth century Jerusalem, Ben-Arieh mentions that in 1908 there were 1,000 stone-cutters from Bethlehem working in Jerusalem. This 'Heritage' however seems to be totally lost and the few living builders who belong to this tradition are disappearing.

Dabdoub-Nasser, Christiane 2005, *Anatreh Quarter: an Urban and Architectural Study of a Bethlehem Quarter*, CCHP, 32

Star Street turns sharply right towards its east end, as if diverted at one stage around a building or buildings built across its line; two rows of houses along its the two sides here exhibit fine stone carving on buildings which represent the social and economic status of the town at the time. Indeed, Bethlehemites enjoyed a high reputation in Jerusalem as well as the rest of Palestine in the cutting and dressing of stone. In the late Ottoman period and under the British Mandate some 500 craftsmen from the town were engaged in constructing mansions, governmental buildings, public buildings etc in and around Bethlehem⁷⁶.

Inside the Gate, up the hill as far as the junction with Paul VI Street, the same architectural style as outside continues but

residents inside the Gate have tended to replace their modest vernacular residences with more sophisticated buildings: Dar Ghazzawi is one example with its two shops on the ground floor housing during the 1930s the first post office in Bethlehem. Dar Mansour, facing Dar Ghazzawi, also reflects the transition in the lives of the Bethlehemites during the late 19th-early 20th centuries; it now houses the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation.



Fig. 2.51 (Right): Stone cutters, early 20th century; (Left) Stone quarries near Bethlehem, c. 1900.

77 Assyrian Genocide



Fig. 2.52 (Left): the Ghazzawi family standing in front of their—1930's century (courtesy of Ghazzawi Family); (right): Dar Ghazzawi 2010



Fig. 2.53 (Left): The daily life of Bethlehemites in the main street leading to the Church of the Nativity; the photo is taken towards the west looking at the Syriac Orthodox Church 1930's; (right): a new photograph of the same view: no major changes have occurred on the northern elevation of the route; the buildings on the southern side were demolished in order to widen the street in 1956

The alley to the west next to Dar Mansour leads to the Assyrian Quarter, one of the oldest quarters in the town. Syriac *Hosh* was inhabited by Assyrians; also known as Syriacs, from about 1838 onwards but the majority arrived following the Tur Abdin massacre⁷⁷ at the beginning of the 20th century.

On reaching the junction with Paul VI Street, the Pilgrimage Route turns left and east along Paul VI Street to Manger Square. Late 19th century buildings on the north side of the Street face newer buildings on the south, but the view is

hardly changed from a hundred years ago: souvenir shops of the locals on both sides of the road, the (rebuilt) mosque of Omar at the end of the southern side of the Street, and the fortress-like structure of the Church of the Nativity in the background.

Built in 1860, the Mosque of Omar is the only Muslim Shrine within the borders of the historic town of Bethlehem. Named after the Caliph Omar Ibn Al Khattab, the land it occupies was donated by the Greek Orthodox Church.



Fig. 2.54 (Left): A Bethlehemite wearing traditional dress shops for the family's daily needs in the main street, now Paul VI Street, leading to the Church of the Nativity (just visible in the background); (right): the same view 70 years later



Fig. 2.55 (Left): The Mosque of Omar during the 1940s (photograph published in the Jerusalem Post by Katherine Stewart); (right): the modern reconstruction of the Mosque of Omar in 2010



Fig. 2.56 Bethlehem marketplace, now Manger Square, during the early 20th century, looking west towards the original Mosque of Omar from in front of the western facade of the Church of the Nativity; the buildings to the left were demolished in 1956 (The American Colony and Eric Matson Collection of South Palestine)

The Mosque stands at the junction of Paul VI Street and (the modern) Manger Square; the Street, formerly Main Street, continued eastwards into a small plaza before the forecourt in front of the Church of the Nativity. This was the local market where people from the surrounding villages would gather to sell their goods (seasonal fruits, vegetables, and grains), buy their needs from the shops, and then return to their villages: a habit that is still practised today.

This small plaza was greatly enlarged in 1956 when its southern side was demolished as part of a (Jordanian) government scheme to adjust the fabric of the town to the demands of modern life and increasing tourism. The market place was moved to the



Fig. 2.57 General view of Bethlehem Marketplace looking towards the western façade of Church of the Nativity; photo by Bruno Hentschel 1899, George Al Ama Collection

south-western part of the historic town to reduce the pressure on the area surrounding the Church, and the existing residential quarter on the south side of Main Street and on the north of the Mosque was demolished to create a 60 x 80 m square in front of the Church. Being the only open area within the historic town of Bethlehem, Manger Square, as it was called, is now the local community's daily social gathering space and the stage for all processions, celebrations, and festivals in the town.

The north side of the Square is now visually dominated by the new Bethlehem Peace Center. This replaced the British Mandate Governmental building that had been used as the Israeli police headquarters in Bethlehem, replacing its use as the Ottoman police building. In other words, the Peace Centre replaced a building from which occupying foreign governments had enforced their rule for centuries. The new building was constructed to spread a message of peace, democracy, religious tolerance, and diversity.

Its construction revealed, not surprisingly, substantial remains of early structures, probably of the 5th–6th centuries AD. Two archaeological excavations were conducted by the Palestinian Department of Antiquity: in 1999, and in 2009 during the establishment of the new Riwaya Museum in the basement of the Peace Center. They showed that the first activity here was in the Byzantine Period, with floral-decorated mosaic floors seeming to be part of a basilican church or monastery represented by remains of an aisle and two rectangular rooms opening off it. Following a fight and a fire in the Grotto in 1873, Al Saraya, an Ottoman Governmental building, was constructed on the land opposite the Greek Orthodox cemetery. The building was burnt down in 1938 during the Pal

estinian rising against the British. A British Police building replaced the Ottoman building and continued to be used until 1995, when it was replaced by the Bethlehem Peace Center in 1999.

In the south eastern corner of the site, formerly at the entrance to the atrium of the Church of the Nativity, was a large cistern of three chambers, cut in the soft natural limestone and used to collect rainwater after it had passed through a sedimentation tank. It was about 8 m deep; its walls were coated with solid thick coarse layer, then a thin smooth layer of mortar to prevent leakage; and it could hold up to some 100 m³ of water. The eastern side of a chamber included a relief cross which pointed to the entrance of the Nativity Church. Several ceramic pitchers were found in it dating to the medieval and Ottoman periods but the structure is probably Byzantine in origin. Its position and size suggest use by pilgrims to the Church of the Nativity.



Fig. 2.58 Mosaic fragments (left), and cistern (right) under the Bethlehem Peace Center



Fig. 2.59 (Left) Christmas procession approaching the former market place during the Jordanian Administration (1940–1946) before the demolition of the Residential Quarter on the left in what was to become Manger Square. (Right) a Children's peace procession on 3 December, 2010, crossing the Manger Square and heading towards the Church of the Nativity, with the Bethlehem Peace Center on the right of the photograph

The Forecourt between Manger Square and the West Front of the Church of the Nativity

‘... On the eastern brow of the ridge, separated from the crowded village by an open esplanade, is the convent, like a large feudal castle. It is a huge pile, consisting of the Church of the Nativity and the three convents-Latin, Greek, and Armenian abutting on its north, east, and south sides.’⁷⁸

The forecourt to the Church of the Nativity marks the historical eastern edge of the Town. It is defined on its east by the Church, on the south by the Armenian Convent, and on the north by a wall that separates it from land which was up until the early 20th century occupied by the Greek Orthodox Cemetery.

The forecourt was paved in 1932. Archaeological excavation beforehand allowed comparison to be made with previous plans, lithographs, and writings describing the Church and its surroundings e.g. of Bernardino Amico⁷⁹, and of Quaresmius⁸⁰ who travelled and documented Jerusalem and the Holy Land between 1616 and 1626.



Fig. 2.60 (Left) a view of the Greek Orthodox Cemetery c. 1870, and the empty plot of land where the Saraya (Ottoman governmental office building) was built in 1873. (Right) The Saraya building, 1894. photo by Ch. Scolik, George Al Ama Collection.

During the rule of Emperor Constantine the First, 306–337 AD, the area of the present forecourt was occupied by the atrium, with the Church on the eastern side. It was 26.50 m in length and 18.25 m in width; ‘115 palms 3 inches long by 79 palms 3 inches wide’ as described by Amico and revealed by excavation⁸¹. The entrance was on the west.

The Western Elevation

No traces remain in the elevation of St Helena’s 4th century Church which was destroyed during the Samaritan’s rebellion of 529. Traces of the original wall of Emperor Justinian’s Church can, however, still be traced on the western elevation of the Church overlooking the former site of the atrium.

The wall mosaic with images of the Magi which saved the Church in 614 has completely disappeared.⁸² Traces of the three original entrances that once led to the narthex remain, however: the central door is still in use while the other, smaller, two were blocked. A horizontal lintel indicates the original height of the once-monumental central door; a reduction in its size during the Crusader Period is indicated by the traces of a Gothic arch below the original opening; stone courses above this arch have the characteristics of 12th century stone dressing.⁸³ Sometime after 1515, this doorway was further reduced to prevent horses being quartered in the Church; and the window to the right of the doorway was blocked.

The southern door was blocked by the extension of the Armenian Convent towards the Atrium, while the northern door was blocked by an early 19th century buttress inserted to prevent an imminent collapse of the outer wall of the Narthex.

⁷⁸ Porter, J. L. 1887 *Jerusalem, Bethany and Bethlehem*

⁷⁹ Shalev, Z. 2009 *Christian Pilgrimage and Ritual Measurement in Jerusalem* (Max Planck Institute for the History of Science preprint 384)

⁸⁰ Quaresmius, Franciscus (1583–1650) an Italian writer and Orientalist who contributed through *Historica, theologica et moralis terrae sanctae elucidatio: in qua pleraque ad veterem et praesentem ejusdem terrae statum spectantia accurate explicantur* to the documentation of the history, geography, archaeology, Biblical, and moral science in the Holy Land

⁸¹ Amico 1596, the palm is approximately 23 cm and is divided into 12 inches

⁸² Harvey *et al.* 1910, 19–20

⁸³ Murphy-O’Connor, J., 1998 *The Holy Land – an Oxford Archaeological Guide from Earliest Times to 1700* (Ecole Biblique et Archéologique Française, Jérusalem, 4th edition (revised and expanded))

⁸⁴ Hamilton 1939, 39

⁸⁵ The British Museum, information bequeathed by Sir Hans Sloane

⁸⁶ Cust 1980. The Status Quo begins with the Orthodox cemetery, the Square in front of the Church of the Nativity, the northern side of the Armenian convent overlooking the square aforementioned, and the western outside wall of the Church as far as the point where the Casa Nova and the old building join together

⁸⁷ Many of the column bases still rested in the forecourt of the Church, and have now been placed against the wall of the church at the far end of the court. In addition to these, some fragments of the southern colonnade were embedded in certain inner walls of the Armenian convent, who have recently made vestiges visible by opening certain rooms and fitting them with electric light (Hamilton 1939)

⁸⁸ Bernardino Amico spent 5 years (1593–1597) making fine and exactly observed plans, drawings of façades, and sections of buildings in Palestine, Bethlehem, and Cairo

⁸⁹ Krikor Bronder or Krikor V. Markarian Kantasetsi was the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem (1613–1645) replacing Tavit II Merdistiby popular demand, he also constructed the Armenian Quarter in Jerusalem and was acknowledged as Greatest Patriarch of Jerusalem

Of the two side doors, only the tips of the cornice mouldings can still be seen protruding apologetically a few inches beyond their respective obstructions ⁸⁴.

The parapet of the Narthex, referred to as modern in Harvey (et

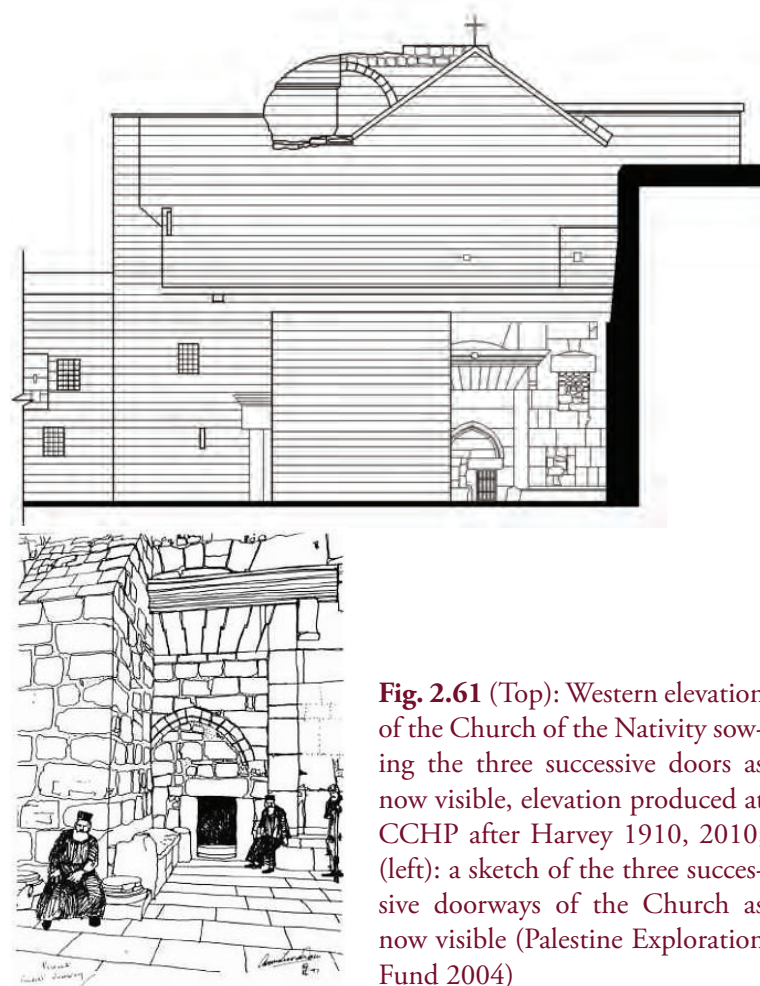


Fig. 2.61 (Top): Western elevation of the Church of the Nativity showing the three successive doors as now visible, elevation produced at CCHP after Harvey 1910, 2010; (left): a sketch of the three successive doorways of the Church as now visible (Palestine Exploration Fund 2004)

al.) 1910, is structurally and architecturally insignificant, and is easily differentiated from the older, larger stones. The parapet of the Narthex appears on the 17th–18th century model of the Church of the Nativity in the British Museum.⁸⁵

North of the forecourt of the Church, the Pilgrimage Residence, owned by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate and run by the Franciscan Brothers, was constructed in 1982. Its construction followed the rule of the Turkish Government, mentioned in Abdullah Effendi Kardus's copy of the *Status Quo of Holy Places*⁸⁶, that the Orthodox Church can only build, if it so desires, at the back of the cemetery on the Beit Sahour old road and no further south than the plain wall enclosing the back part of the cemetery on the north side of the forecourt.

The fortress-like walls of the Armenian convent south of the Atrium reflect the appearance of the Church and its annexes before their dismantling by Sultan Beibars in the 13th century; accumulations of various additions to the Convent tell the story of the complex: a substantial part of the Convent date to the 12th century, although some traces of the older building can be spotted on the elevations. The encroachment of the building towards the Atrium to the north utilized the remains of Justinian's demolished Atrium as foundations⁸⁷, as illustrated by Amico⁸⁸; although three of the five original windows of the second floor can still be observed on the main elevation. The more recent parts of the building were constructed either as floor additions or projections toward the Atrium by the Patriarchate Krikor Baronder⁸⁹ around 1621, most probably after the surveys of Bernardino Amico. The bell tower on top of the Armenian Monastery was added later.

2.b History and Development

Historical Summary

The first remains of human occupation in the area where Bethlehem was subsequently sited date back to the Iron Age (c. 1100 BC). Variants of the name 'Bethlehem' occur in the Bible so it is possible that the place was recognised, and that some form of settlement existed, at times in the last two centuries BC. Recent archaeological excavation has demonstrated a significant, hitherto unrecognised, settlement in the Roman period. In an area of sub-surface features used in late prehistory, the cave where Jesus is traditionally believed to have been born has been venerated by Christians since at least the time of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine in the 3rd century AD. The Emperor was able to identify a particular cave as the site of Jesus' birth by using stories told by the local residents at the time.

The first Church was built over the Grotto of the Nativity under the patronage of Emperor Constantine's mother Helena, and dedicated on the 1 May 339. It lasted almost two centuries before being burnt down during the Samaritan revolt in 529. The Basilica in its current form was rebuilt later in the 6th century (565) by the Byzantine Emperor Justinian. When the Persians invaded in 614, they left this Church intact.

The Church's large fortress-like western exterior stands today as a testament to its subsequent turbulent history; for centuries, it was one of the most fought-over of Holy Places. It was seized and defended by a succession of armies. In the 11th century Crusaders renovated the church. In 1187 the battle of Hattin returned the whole place to Muslim rule. Bethlehem, like all other cities, fell marking the end of the Crusader rule; the Church reverted to the care of its original guardians, the

Greek or Syrian clergy. The fabric came to no harm, for it was universally respected, and Muslims resumed their old custom of praying in the southern apse. A Muslim writer of the time gives the Franks credit for changing nothing during their occupancy.

Control of the Church continued to involve it in warfare, into the 19th century and up to the present day. As late as 1852, Napoleon III declared the entire complex French property, an act which brought him into conflict with Russia which supported the rights of the Eastern Orthodox Church. Matters were resolved in the Treaty of Berlin (1878) which recognised the 'Status Quo' as the form and practice of governance of the Church, a resolution which continues to the present. But even peaceful intentions could be perverted militarily at this troubled site: King Edward IV of England donated wood from English oaks for the ceiling and lead to cover the roof, but the latter was taken by the Ottomans to melt down for ammunition. The legacy of that removal, and subsequent lack of repair, is that, with much of the roof timber now rotted, the roof is in urgent need of wholesale renovation.

And the saga continues. The background to this nomination was military action in and around the Church in 2001 so, sadly, the violent nature of its history continues. As this nomination is prepared (2010), the Church's involvement in and remarkable survival from assault over some 1500 years continues under military occupation.

Historical Bethlehem

Bethlehem's history is inseparable from that of the rest of Palestine, which witnessed two crucial periods: the Byzantine Period and the last stages of the Ottoman Period (1860–1918), followed immediately by the British Mandate (1920–1948).

Physically, present-day Bethlehem has evolved from a Byzantine and then medieval town; historically it dates back to the Ottoman Period. Until recently, the few archaeological excavations in the town indicated that it is indeed built on the remains of the Byzantine and 11th century town. But now archaeology has demonstrated early Iron Age activity (1st millennium BC) on the east and south sides of the hill later occupied by the Church of the Nativity, producing material suggesting a settlement dating to about the time of Jesus under the core of the medieval town, and excavated substantial late Roman/Byzantine structures underneath the Peace Center on the north side of Manger Square (currently being consolidat-

ed to provide the core of a new museum beneath the Center). A Roman aqueduct en route between Solomon's Ponds and Jerusalem passes close by, unerringly picking out the 'saddle' or col between the western slopes on which stands the historical town and the slightly higher ground to the east bearing the Church of the Nativity.

Bethlehem is, however, a name to conjure with as well as a place. It has kept its name and identity throughout the last two millennia. It is sacred to three major religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It plays a significant part in the Old Testament, in the history of the Israelites, both before they entered Egypt and slavery, and after the Exodus. It appears in the Old Testament as Ephrat, where Rachel, wife of Jacob, died during childbirth. The Tomb of Rachel, now in Bethlehem, is a pilgrimage place for Jews and Muslims alike. Naomi and Ruth are among other persons with Bethlehem connections in the Bible; Samuel anointed King David there and so is the well from which Da-



Fig. 2.62 Aerial view over the eastern part of historic Bethlehem, with Star Street in the foreground right centre and the Church of the Nativity ensemble in the middle distance left centre (1983)

vid's warriors brought him water near the Damascus Gate. The New Testament Gospels of Matthew and Luke identify Bethlehem as the birthplace of Jesus of Nazareth.

The status of Bethlehem has, in historic times, been intertwined with its religious significance as the birthplace of Jesus and its traditional situation as a satellite village of Jerusalem. According to the Christian tradition, perhaps as early as the 2nd century AD, a cave is identified as the site of Jesus' birth. From the 4th century, the history of Beit Lahem became associated with that of the Church of the Nativity; this gave the city its mythical stature and its international appeal. Commissioned by Queen Helena in 326, the Church became the focal point of the town and influenced its urban development, the life of its inhabitants and the shaping of their consciousness. Rebuilt by Justinian in the 6th century, the new Basilica continued to mark the traditional site of the Nativity, as it does to this day, now as an iconic pilgrimage destination for Christians from all over the world.

From Byzantium to the Ottoman Empire

The Byzantine Period witnessed the apogee of the town, starting from 530–533 when Emperor Justinian rebuilt the Church and the town wall, expanding the boundary to include the crest of the hill which overlooks the surrounding winding valleys. From the description of travellers and pilgrims who wrote about Bethlehem, its history and its religious centrality, it is doubtful whether the Church quarter existed before the latter part of the Ottoman Period. If it did, it could not have been part of the small town that stretched east–west along the top of the ridge and developed westwards within the walled enclosure.

After 638, the town remained restricted within the enclosure of the Justinian wall until 1489, when the Ottoman Sultan Selim I destroyed it altogether. Subsequently, it slowly declined until 1860, when it witnessed another period of relative prosperity. This came in a context where the interplay of many factors operating at local, regional, and international levels crossed with commercial, religious and political interests. This dynamic led to a new configuration in the cultural and socio-economical life of Bethlehem and a course towards modernisation. Both provide the context for the urban development of the town.

European influence

The 19th century witnessed important developments in European ambitions and diplomacy in the Middle East and their repercussions on Palestine were momentous. Russia, England, Austria, France, and later on Germany regarded the affairs of the declining Ottoman Empire with much interest. What started as commercial ambition, especially where England was concerned, soon evolved into political intervention as the powers played out their rivalries on Ottoman territory. Their initial support for numerous Christian communities, particularly in the Holy Land, contributed to a dramatic transformation of the social and economic scene, and paved the way for more European interference in local affairs. The British opened their first consulate in 1847, soon followed by the other Powers. European influence on the Porte Sublime increased and the consulates increasingly operated like miniature local governments.

⁹⁰ A document defining laws, taxes and tariffs.

⁹¹ The Tanzimat literally means ‘re-ordering’; the word refers to the administrative reforms according to which the territories of the Empire were divided. Palestine was divided into three Sanjaks, administrative sectors, and Bethlehem was part of the Jerusalem Sanjak

⁹² This was followed by the building of a railroad between Jaffa and Jerusalem in 1892

⁹³ Ben-Arieh, Y. 1986, *Nineteenth Century Jerusalem, The Emergence of the New City* (Yad Izhak Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem/Saint Martin’s Press, New York), 400

The Capitulations of the Ottoman Empire

The restitution of the Capitulations⁹⁰, a document initiated in the 15th century in order to encourage and regulate commerce with European states, strengthened the foreign foothold within the Empire and notably in Palestine. There, the management of many Christian holy sites and the presence of a substantial Christian community of many denominations provided governments, passing as protectors of these communities, with the excuse to delve into the internal affairs of the Empire. At the social level, the impact of this development was quite marked as many foreign missions established themselves in the Holy Land, introducing education and health services through the many schools and hospitals they founded and maintained. However, the renewed Capitulations soon became onerous to Turkey as the growing number of foreign residents within the Empire, supported by their consulates, abused the privileges it granted.

The Tanzimat

The establishment of the Tanzimat⁹¹, the body of reforms undertaken by Turkey in 1838, contributed to changes at the local level, although at a painfully slow pace. It was 1895 before Bethlehem was up-graded to a Municipality with an elected Mayor. The Tanzimat also granted equal rights to non-Muslims living in the Ottoman Empire, opening the country further to foreign presence. It attracted religious missions for example, desirous to settle in the Holy Land and develop the interests of their Arab brothers and sisters.

The number of pilgrims multiplied substantially. The building

of new roads was primarily meant to meet the needs of this new influx. A road connecting the port city of Jaffa to Jerusalem was eventually extended to Bethlehem in 1881 and to Hebron in 1888⁹². A few years later, during the Mandate, the British invested substantially in improving transport and communications.

As a result, convents, monasteries, churches, hospitals, schools, and pilgrims’ hostels sprang up, mainly in Jerusalem but also in Bethlehem where the majority of the inhabitants were Christian. Bethlehem saw its first school in 1888, when a group of British ladies founded one near the Church of the Nativity. That the schools, hospitals, and convents, many of them massive fortress-like structures, were located outside the town encouraged the inhabitants to leave the unwholesome situation of the old quarters and build new homes in their vicinity. This was certainly true for many returning emigrants who now expected higher standards of living. A building boom brought an era of enterprise and prosperity to Bethlehem, triggering urban development, which continued through the British Mandate. This process started the growth of the city beyond the limits of the tight and densely populated ‘historic’ quarters. We have already seen these developments reflected along Star Street and its vicinity.

This period also saw the development of local crafts and the introduction of new ones, such as leather tanning and the manufacture of confectionery. In 1908 there were 1000 stone-cutters from Bethlehem working in Jerusalem⁹³. Bethlehem’s renowned master stone-cutters were much in demand all the way north to Nazareth. Mother-of-pearl products, olive wood-carving, and the production of religious artefacts catered for the growing pilgrim and tourist trade. Star Street was subject to, and reflects, these influences.

The Modern Period

The period between 1860 and 1948 witnessed relative prosperity and urban development on the north western edge of the town, as along Star Street. Education became more widespread, and commerce thrived. The educational activities of the 19th century provided the stimulus of new ideas, as did increasing Bethlehemite trade with Europe, the Americas and the Far East. An influx of 'new' money encouraged the emergence of an enriched bourgeoisie who, with sophisticated tastes and higher living standard, embarked on erecting the beautiful mansions that are synonymous with the town, particularly in its outskirts. But it was during the early twentieth century that Bethlehem was really thrust into the modern age.

Controversial as much as this period might be, particularly in the consciousness of Palestinians, it nevertheless witnessed remarkable developments, primarily in the field of education⁹⁴. Schools were opened after the disruption of the war period and new elementary schools were opened in Bethlehem and indeed in every town in Palestine. Arabic became the medium for instruction. Although there were none in Bethlehem, secondary schools and training colleges were opened; a new generation became a part of the new class of civil servants who served in the British administration. After the events of 1947-49 resulting in the displacement and dispossession of 725,000 Palestinians, people were able to establish themselves in interesting jobs, especially in the Arab World, which was then still poor in human resources.

The Catastroph of 1948 – the Palestinian Nakbeh

The irruption of the Arab-Israeli war in 1948 and the tragedy of the Nakbeh⁹⁵ ended an era in the history of Palestine and Palestinians, and Bethlehem had its share of this national disaster on many levels.

As a result of the creation of the State of Israel on 78% of Mandate Palestine, more than 725,000 Palestinians were displaced; Bethlehem witnessed an influx of large numbers of refugees, tripling its population overnight from 9000 to 35,000 inhabitants. Most of the refugees came from villages surrounding Bethlehem towards the south and south-west, and although many of them settled in the three camps that were established between 1949 and 1951, some of them lived in the historic centre.

The loss of much of Palestine and, with it, the loss a short-lived economic prosperity unprecedented in the history of the country, speeded up emigration; many of the Bethlehemites who had started having substantial property and businesses in Jerusalem lost them irretrievably; they left to seek their fortune elsewhere. The legendary pull of the cousin in America, so far sporadic, became a reality as more people left en masse and for many, severed all ties with the old country.

Finally the influx of rural refugees from the surrounding countryside transformed the demographic and cultural profile of the city; the exacerbated massive emigration of the educated urban class started a process of ruralising Bethlehem's culture; the Israeli occupation of what remained of Palestine in 1967, the Intifada of December 1987 and the second Intifada which

⁹⁴ In 1919 the British Military Administration voted £53,000 for the education budget as quoted in Luke, H. C. and Roach, E.K. (eds) 1922 *The Handbook of Palestine* (Macmillan, London)

⁹⁵ Nakbeh in Arabic signifies *Catastrophe* and refers to the dispossession and displacement of Palestinians from their land in 1948

erupted in September 2000 were also key dates in the escalation of the emigration from the town. Life in Bethlehem today is as much the result of these very recent events and developments as it is over millennia of history.



3. JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION

The Silver Star marking
the birthplace of Jesus

JUSTIFICATION FOR INSCRIPTION

Introduction

Birthplace of Jesus: the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem, is a nomination of 29,797.60 m² in area focussing on the Church of the Nativity and its architectural ensemble. That focus is sharpened by the inclusion of the Pilgrimage Route, also known as the Patriarch Route, the eastern end of the traditional route from Jerusalem into Bethlehem leading to the Church of the Nativity. This route, now perpetuated by Star Street, the eastern end of Paul VI Street and the north side of Manger Square, is still followed today by all Patriarchs coming to Bethlehem to celebrate Christmas. The Buffer Zone (Fig. 1.1) is the Historic City of Bethlehem.

This nomination is conceived as one proposing a property valid in its own right for inscription on the World Heritage List and also as the first part of a serial nomination which aims to include sites inside and surrounding Bethlehem, particularly those related to the story of the birth and life of Jesus. It is brought forward with the agreement of the three Churches responsible for the Church of the Nativity and its architectural ensemble. The intention is that the second nomination will include the Historic Town of Bethlehem, here basically the Buffer Zone, and further nominations could include such as the Historic Town of Beit Sahour, the Shepherds' Field, Beit Sahour, and Mar Saba Monastery in the Desert to the east.

Justification

Since at least the 2nd century AD people have believed that the place where the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, now stands is where Jesus was born. One particular cave, now below the Church, is traditionally believed to be the Birthplace itself. In locating the Nativity, the place both marks the begin-

nings of Christianity and is one of the holiest spots in Christendom. The original basilican church of 339 AD (St Helena), parts of which survive below ground, was arranged so that its octagonal eastern end surrounded, and provided a view of, the cave. This church is overlaid by the present Church of the Nativity, essentially of the mid-6th century AD (Justinian) though with many later alterations. It is the oldest Christian church in daily use.



Fig. 3.1 A pilgrim lighting a candle inside the Church of the Nativity during Christmas celebrations 2010

Since early medieval times the Church has been increasingly incorporated into a complex of other ecclesiastical buildings, mainly monastic. As a result, today it is embedded in an extraordinary architectural ensemble, overseen by members of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Order of St Francis and the Armenian Church in a partnership (the Status Quo) established by the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

For most of the last 1500 years, Bethlehem and the Church of the Nativity have been, as is still very much the case, a pilgrim destination. The eastern end of the traditional route from Jerusalem to the Church is along what is now officially called the Pilgrimage Route, that is, along Star Street, through the Damascus Gate Qos Al Zarara, and along a short stretch of Paul VI Street and Manger Square. This route is still followed ceremonially each year by the Patriarchs of the three Churches at their several Christmases. The Christian Christmas, centred on Bethlehem, is the most widely-celebrated religious festival in the world.

Immediate Justification

The immediate justification for inscription is the World Heritage Committee's encouragement, formally recorded in 2002 at its 26th Session in Budapest after the Church of the Nativity had been involved in military action. The Committee resolved that this Church and Old City, Bethlehem, together with other major heritage sites in Palestine, should be better protected. As a result, a survey and assessment of Palestine's cultural and natural heritage in 2002–04, part-funded by UNESCO, led to the publication in 2005 by the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism



Fig. 3.2 View of the Damascus Gate 'Qos Al Zarara' along the Star Street

and Antiquities, of an Inventory of Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites of Potential Outstanding Universal Value in Palestine (to meet demand, reprinted in Arabic as well as English, 2009). The Committee received this at its meeting in 2005. The Inventory ranked properties by their potential outstanding universal value; Bethlehem came first.

Since 2005, greatly encouraged by the Committee's interest and support, much work (survey, assessment and conservation) has been carried out in Bethlehem. A first nomination can, therefore, now be made from a position of knowledge and strength.

3.a Criteria under which inscription is proposed (and justification for inscription under these criteria)

Birthplace of Jesus: the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route is nominated under two criteria:

iv. The Church of the Nativity is an outstanding example of an early church in a remarkable architectural ensemble which illustrates both a significant stage in human history in the 4th–6th centuries AD and in later stages up to the present century.

vi. The Church of the Nativity, and the Pilgrimage Route to it, are directly associated with events and beliefs of outstanding universal significance.

3.b Proposed Statement of Outstanding Universal Value

'The Palestinian City of Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus Christ and one of the most historic and significant sites on earth. With Jerusalem, it is a key place in the origins of Christianity, one of the world's great religions: Christianity began here.

A remarkable ensemble of religious buildings has developed since 339 AD over and around the traditional place of the Nativity, remarkable as an ensemble, remarkable as buildings individually and remarkable in that the buildings continue in daily use for Christian worship. Indeed, the Church of the Nativity is the oldest church in the world still used for daily worship.

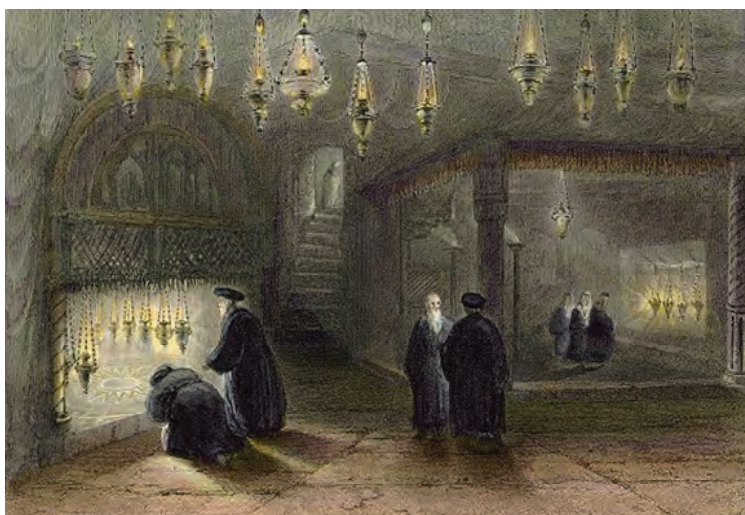


Fig. 3.3 Shrine of the Nativity, Bethlehem, engraved by E. Chailis after a picture by W.H. Bartlett, published in *The Christian in Palestine*, c. 1840

This place has, over nearly two thousand years, not just witnessed but contributed to four other notable developments: it became the nucleus of an increasingly important town, at times fortified and now rich in its historic streetscape and buildings; its history is characterised, from Biblical times to the present, by an unceasing ebb and flow of military activities, of invasion, conquest, occupation and withdrawal, evidenced not least in the fabric of the architectural ensemble at the Church of the Nativity; it became, and remains, the destination for long-distance as well as local religious pilgrimage from the Christian world while in more recent times developing a role as a significant tourist destination; and it is the focus of the annual, worldwide religious festival of Christmas when town, historic street pattern and buildings, pilgrims, tourists and religious leaders come together in celebration of Jesus' birth by processing through Bethlehem towards the Church of the Nativity.

The outstanding universal value of the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route, Bethlehem, lies, therefore, in the place itself being unique, as the birthplace of the founder of a great religion, a religion which for Believers saw the Son of God made man in Bethlehem and for everybody stimulated profound developments in philosophy and morality, war and peace, social and personal behaviour. The place possesses the monumental quality to go with this intangible status, religious at and around the Church of the Nativity, secular in Bethlehem itself. Yet, basically, it is an iconic place, for better or for worse a place of great events and great thoughts for all mankind to ponder. And it is accessible, for all mankind to visit, truly a heritage of the world and a symbol of that peace – a very Christian message - the region so desperately needs and the world so wishes for the region.'

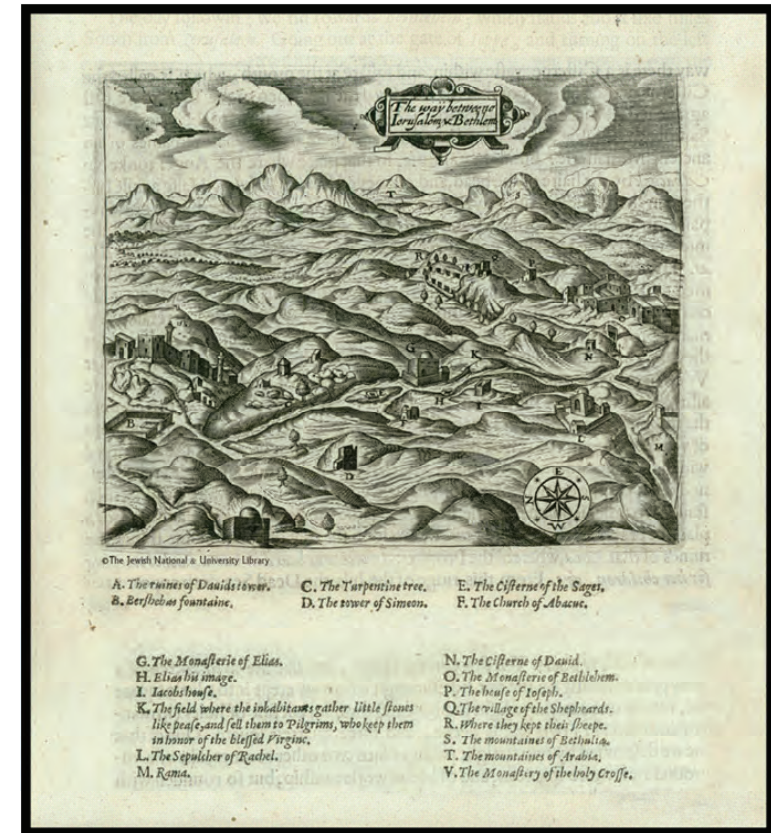


Fig 3.4 The Way Betweene Ierusalem and Bethlem, by George Sandys (1578–1644) from Sandys, G. 1621 *A Relation of a Journey... Containing a Description of ... the Holy Land* 2nd edition (W. Barren, London), p. 175

3.c Comparative Analysis

Similarities in some respects lie in the Old City of Jerusalem (148rev, inscribed 1981 under criteria (ii), (iii) and (vi)) and Vatican City (286, inscribed 1984 under criteria (i), (ii), (iv) and (vi)). Bethlehem, however, is genuinely unique, in the proper sense of that word, and to seek analogues in a World Heritage context may mislead and possibly demean.

In the sense defined above – ‘*The essence of Bethlehem is that it is the birthplace of the founder of one of the world's major religions*’ – the only comparable World Heritage site is Lumbini, the Birthplace of the Lord Buddha, Nepal (666 rev, inscribed 1997 using criteria (iii) and (vi)). Siddhartha Gautama, the Lord Buddha, was born there in 623 BC and it soon became a place of pilgrimage. Among the pilgrims was the Indian Emperor Ashoka, who erected one of his commemorative pillars there. As the birthplace of the Lord Buddha, the sacred area of Lumbini is one of the holiest places of one of the world's greatest religions, and its remains contain important evidence about the nature of Buddhist pilgrimage centres from a very early period.

Of course, many other holy, religious sites of great significance exist, not by any means necessarily associated with a ‘holy’ birth. Mecca is an obvious example: outstanding religious centre that it is, it is neither a place of birth of the founder of a major religion nor is it a World Heritage site. Some other holy places are World Heritage sites. An example is Takht-e Soleyman – Iran (Islamic Republic of) (1077, inscribed 2003 under criteria (i–iv and vi)). Primarily an archeological site, it includes a major Zoroastrian sanctuary partly rebuilt in the Ilkhanid (Mongol) period (13th century) and a temple of the Sassanian period (6th and 7th centuries) dedicated to Anahita. The site has important

symbolic significance. The designs of the fire temple, the palace, and the general layout have strongly influenced the development of Islamic architecture. Its longevity as a cult centre is comparable to that of Bethlehem: the worship of fire and water has continued there for some two and a half millennia. It also represents an outstanding example of Zoroastrian sanctuary, being the foremost site associated with one of the early monotheistic religions of the world.

Together the Church of the Nativity and Bethlehem are unique, in spiritual, theological, historical and architectural terms. And the whole is indeed greater than its parts. Thereby, rather than in comparisons, rests the case for inscription on the World Heritage List.

3.d Integrity and/or Authenticity

Integrity

The integrity of the architectural ensemble embracing the Church of the Nativity and its neighbours is conceptually unimpaired and only physically diminished in relatively minor respects by modern additions. The immediate surrounds included in this nomination embrace a small area of land to the east and some other structures directly associated with the ensemble, an area known to contain as yet systematically unexamined and largely undisturbed evidence of occupation and burial from the early centuries AD back to at least the mid-2nd millennium BC.

The approach to the Church via Star Street and Paul VI Street retains the street width and line fossilized by urban develop-

ment since c. 1800 AD. This ‘width and line’, as well as defining a working street in a busy town, now formalize a commemorative route for religious ceremony. For the purposes of this nomination, the significant historical and religious feature is this line in the urban fabric rather than the architectural and historical features of the individual buildings which collectively delimit that line. Nevertheless, a few buildings of earlier date still stand and the street is now mainly defined by facades of the 19th and 20th centuries. The general aspect, almost completely in pale yellow limestone, is attractive. Most of the buildings incorporate traditional design and appearance, for example with living accommodation above and workshops at street level opening out on to the street. Most importantly, the relatively few unsympathetic modern intrusions are along the south side of Paul VI Street and around Manger Square.

Authenticity

Located on the spot believed to be the birthplace of Jesus Christ for some 1800 years, the Church of the Nativity is one of the most sacred Christian sites in the world. There was only one Jesus and he was born in Bethlehem: in relation to this outstanding fact, the authenticity of the place is unimpaired and unquestionable. That authenticity has been enhanced by worship at, reverence for, and pilgrimage to the site since at least the 4th century AD, and probably earlier, up to the present. The sanctity of the place today is represented and maintained by members of the three churches (Greek Orthodox, Franciscan and Armenian) occupying the site. It also underpins the traditional protection of the site by the local population.

Its sanctity may well have been recognised by 200 AD. It was certainly known when the Emperor Constantine, through his

mother Helena, founded a church in 329 AD over what was, already by then, recognised as the cave in which Jesus was born. Christians have actively worshipped there ever since. Following a revolt and the destruction of the original church by the Samaritans in 529 AD, Emperor Justinian ordered the remains to be levelled and a larger church to be built on the same site atop the Constantinian site. Archaeological evidence accords with that version of events: extents of 4th century mosaic survive well under rubble beneath the present floor. Much of the structure of the Justinian Church survives (though not the roof – *see below*) in the fabric of the standing Church of the Nativity. Alterations, and additions creating the present architectural *ensemble*, have changed the church and complex structurally and, in so doing, have very much fortified the spiritual and iconic values of the place while adding to its architectural interest.

Although there is very little doubt about Bethlehem being Jesus’ birthplace, the authenticity of the particular grotto beneath the Church of the Nativity revered today as the actual place of the birth might be questioned; and in fact no documentary or scientific evidence proves the point (see Annex 5). Yet the construction above this grotto of St Helena’s Church in 339 AD to commemorate the birth attests to a seventeen hundred year-long tradition of belief that this particular grotto was indeed the birthplace. The existence of such a long-held belief and the observance of it on the spot lend a significant authenticity to the place parallel to the demands of scholarship.

The Pilgrimage Route

Describing Star Street, Hamilton (1939) wrote ‘the approach to Bethlehem was beyond the fork; a few meters to the south of Rachel’s Tomb, the modern road follows the line of the aqueduct, encircling the eastern extension of the town, until it rises in a sharp upward curve to the right, and ends in an open space in front of the Church of the Nativity.’



Fig. 3.5 Pilgrims heading to the Church of the Nativity through the Damascus Gate ‘Qos Al Zarara’, engraved by Van De Valde, 1857

Star Street, now in part that ‘modern road’, is barely two hundred years old in its present form as an urban street. In the 17th century, and presumably earlier, it was a dirt track with a few buildings along it leading to the gate. This was the southern end of the principal way connecting Jerusalem and Beth-

lehem, traditionally the way followed by Joseph and Mary as they entered Bethlehem. Its special significance is now marked by its being the processional route of the Patriarchs to the Church of the Nativity at Christmas. The area was mainly associated with the Tarajmeh (‘translators’) clan (family) famous for their very high artistic level of production of Mother of Pearl handicrafts.



Fig. 3.6 Rachel’s Tomb, near Bethlehem engraved by S. Bradshaw after a picture by W.H. Bartlett, published in *The Christian in Palestine*, about 1845



4. STATE OF CONSERVATION AND FACTORS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY

The extension of Bethlehem towards north, showing the Separation Wall encroaching the town

4.a Present state of conservation

The Church of the Nativity

The roof timbers of the Church are rotting, and have not been replaced since the 19th century. Rainwater seeps into the building and damages not only its structural elements but also its 12th century wall mosaics and paintings. Due to this influx of water, there is also an ever-present chance of an electrical short-circuit and fire. In 1834, the Church suffered extensive earthquake damage and, given the present condition of the sanctuary, another earthquake, or even an earthquake tremor, could be catastrophic. It has recently been identified on the World Monument Watch List for 2008 as one of the world's 100 Most Endangered Sites. If this property were already a World Heritage Site, it might well be considered for immediate entry on the List of World Heritage in Danger.

For the site to be preserved, its three custodians – the Greek Orthodox Church, the Armenian Orthodox Church, and the Franciscan Order – would have to coordinate their efforts, but such collaboration has not occurred in nearly 1000 years. However, through a presidential decree, Palestine, in cooperation with the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate have jointly formed a committee for the restoration of the roof of the Church of the Nativity. The commencement of the first stage that includes surveys, assessment study, and preparation of the conservation plan for the Church has already started, and is being implemented by Community Development Group – Bethlehem in a joint venture with the Italian Team of Experts led by Professor Remigio Rossi after which the restoration of the roof will start immediately. According to the Palestinian Presidential Committee for the

Restoration of the Roof of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem the Basilica is facing severe damage because of:

- a.
- b. Water penetration through the roof.
The water is causing damage to the mortar, plaster, and pointing, wall mosaics, as well as wall and column paintings.
- c. The use of inappropriate building materials is worsening the general conditions of the Basilica.
The Basilica is suffering from additional problems because of
- d. the lack of proper maintenance, especially in the last 50 years.
The huge number of visitors is adding up to the speed of deterioration inside the Church.
- e.

The Pilgrimage Route

Star Street and Manger Square were at the centre of Bethlehem's celebrations to welcome the new millennium throughout the period of 1995–2000. The Bethlehem 2000 project focused on preparing Bethlehem for the event and Star Street and Manger Square were subject to conservation and rehabilitation works (Annexe 9).

The Municipality of Bethlehem, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation have published clear guidance for the protection of the Historic Town and individual historic buildings (Annexe 12) and are continuously performing maintenance and rehabilitation works on Star Street as well as in the Historic Town of Bethlehem, the proposed Buffer Zone of this nomination.

⁹⁶ Source: GIS database Unit – Applied Research Institution of Jerusalem – ARIJ 2009

⁹⁷ 1 dunum = 1000 m²

⁹⁸ Area A: Palestinian control

⁹⁹ Area B: Palestinian civil control, Israeli military control

¹⁰⁰ Area C: Israeli military control



Fig 4.1 the Melkite Catholic Church, behind which part of Qos Al Zarara 'Damascus Gate' and the historic town of Bethlehem appear in the background

4.b Factors affecting the property

i Development pressures (e.g. encroachment, adaptation, agriculture, mining)

Located within the historic town of Bethlehem, a place under considerable economic, military, and tourist stress, the Church of the Nativity and its architectural *ensemble*, and the Pilgrimage Route, are in general inevitably affected by development pressures on their environs.

According to the Oslo Interim Agreement, signed in September 28, 1995, between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli Government, the lands of the city of Bethlehem were classified into areas A and C: area A occupies city

centre and the populated areas surrounding it, while area C is the outer zone around the periphery of the town.

Land classification in Bethlehem according to Oslo II Agreement in 1995 ⁹⁶		
Land Classification	Area (dunum) ⁹⁷	Percentage of Total Area
Area A ⁹⁸	6007	56.6%
Area B ⁹⁹	0	.
Area C ¹⁰⁰	4603	43.4%
Total Area	10,610	100%

Palestinians are limited to building in Area A while Area C is controlled by the Israeli military. This causes pressure on the historic town. In addition, the accelerating need for commercial and accommodation building has led to economic development on the margins of the historic towns. The result of these factors is:

1. New constructions: around the Core Zone of the Nomination and its Buffer Zone; the Church of the Nativity, the Pilgrimage Route, and the Historic Town of Bethlehem, disturb the urban fabric, and have a negative impact on the views.
2. Minor additions: in the Historic Town; mainly to improve living conditions, such additions may impair the view they are now prohibited by the *Guidelines* ¹⁰¹.
3. Services: the requirements of daily life, including electricity, communications, and water supply, have resulted in water tanks, solar panels, satellite dishes, and suchlike being installed on the roofs of the buildings; this has affected the

building typology of the area and characteristically creates a visual clutter.

All the above factors also affect the urban composition of the area, the skyline of the town, and the views from and towards the Church, the three Convents, and the Pilgrimage Route.

ii Environmental pressures (e.g. pollution, climate change, desertification)

The sharp increase in the number of vehicles, and the inadequate provision for parking, in addition to small industries within the historic town, have produced a polluted environment.



Fig 4.2 the extension of Bethlehem towards the north, showing the Wall encroaching the town

Air Pollution: is negatively affecting the façades of both the Church and the buildings along the Pilgrimage Route.

Lack/excess of water: the abandonment and misuse of existing water cisterns (as cesspools and waste water collectors), leads to water leakage and inadequate water collection, as well as structural damage to buildings as a result of water infiltration.

iii Natural disasters and risk preparedness (earthquakes, floods, fires, etc.)

Because of the current situation of the Church, the main factor affecting the property is rain water: the leakage of water inside the building causes major damage to the structure itself and both decoration and movable objects inside the Church.

This factor is recognised as requiring immediate intervention as described below, along with other factors:

Rain Water: leaking inside the Church through the roof is harming the interior of the church, the roof timber, the wall mosaics, and the icons.

Water Crisis: Bethlehem faces a water crisis during both summer and winter; the water supply is sometimes cut off for several consecutive days for two main reasons:

1. Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) depends largely on water purchased from the Israeli company Mecorot to supply Bethlehem and the other Palestinian towns and vil-

The *Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour*, a document adopted by the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, the Ministry of Local Government, Bethlehem Governorate, the municipalities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation in March 2010, and contains the main guidelines for the intervention in the three Historic Towns

¹⁰² According to Applied Research Institution of Jerusalem the annual average rainfall in Bethlehem district is 500 mm; below is a table of the annual rainfall between 2001 and 2008:

Year	annual rainfall(mm)
2001	524.3
2002	505.5
2003	695.6
2004	396
2005	536
2006	612
2007	360
2008	373

lages; but, since there is insufficient water to supply all these places at the same time, arrangements to pump and distribute water on a periodic basis have to be made.¹⁰²

2. Despite the fact that the PWA has rehabilitated and renovated part of the water network and constructed new water reservoirs, a continuing high loss of water is a major factor causing the water crisis in Bethlehem.

Fire hazards: as a result of the water leakage problem through the roof, the already old and partly-rusted electricity network installed inside the building represents a considerable fire risk. A conservation plan is being prepared to conduct a study about the Church, and prepare the suitable plan to solve this problem.

iv Visitors/tourism pressures

It should be stressed that these pressures fluctuate with the military situation and that the tourism industry itself is under-developed so that there is a potential for even more pressure than at present

Almost ever since the arrival of the shepherds and the Magi, soon after the birth of Jesus, Bethlehem has been a destination for pilgrims and other visitors. Eventually, the community started gradually changing from an agricultural community to one very much depending on pilgrims and tourists. Visitor numbers now fluctuate according to the political and military situation but they are approaching a million in 2010, the sort of number which can only add to the pressures on the Church

and town. There is clearly an urgent need to manage this inflow appropriately and to adapt the town itself to its needs and visitor expectation, especially as the local tourist industry is relatively under-developed. Obvious needs are not just for more parking but to control the demands for more commercial buildings, hotels, pilgrims residences, and other accommodation for tourists; yet it is vital for the local economy that more visitors stay in Bethlehem and its surrounds rather than, as is the case at the moment, bus in for a couple of hours and then depart with their 'tourist dollars' (or roubles or yen).

Yet, in a repeating pattern, people are already leaving the historic centre and moving to the new homes and offices in the suburbs and further afield where accessibility is easier and living standards higher. This itself is leading to:



Fig. 4.3 Pilgrims in the south aisle, where the average number of visitors exceeded 2500 person/day

Functional and Social Disfigurement: Residents moving out of the historic town are causing deterioration of the social and urban structure inside the historic town.

Urban Planning Disfigurement: interventions to satisfy the requirements of modern tourism standards has negatively affected the urban fabric, with its narrow streets and small masses of buildings being surrounded by massive and bulky buildings, often of concrete or reconstituted limestone e.g. most obviously and unfortunately north-west of the Church of the Nativity.

Architectural Disfigurement: the interventions implemented on some of the buildings in order to convert them to structures that serve the new function of the historic town have affected the architectural appearance of the buildings.

The Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Sahour and Beit Jala has addressed such problems and provided guidelines to mitigate them but it now remains to be seen whether they can be effective in reversing existing negative impacts and avoiding further inroads to a still largely homogenous urban fabric.

v Number of inhabitants within the property and the buffer zone

The number of inhabitants in the three Convents: 34 inhabitants, with ten in the Greek Orthodox Convent, *nineteen* in the Franciscan Convent, and five in the Armenian Convent.

An estimated 500 inhabitants live along the two sides of the

Pilgrimage Route, while some 5000 inhabitants are estimated to live in the Buffer Zone.



5. PROTECTION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE PROPERTY

5.a Ownership

The property nominated for the inclusion in the World Heritage List is identified as listed below:

1	The Basilica (Church of the Nativity)	The Greek Orthodox Church, Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Church according to the Status Quo of the Holy Places (1852)
2	The Armenian Convent	The Armenian Patriarchate
3	The Greek Orthodox Convent	The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate
4	St Catherine's Church and the Catholic Convent	The Custody of the Holy Land
5	Bethlehem Peace Center and Al Riwaya Museum	Bethlehem Municipality – Public Property (forming the north side of Manger Square)
6	The Mosque of Omar	An Islamic Waqf (at the north western corner of Manger Square)
7	The Syrian Orthodox Church	The Syrian Orthodox Church
8	St Joseph School and Church	The Custody of the Holy land
9	The Melkite Catholic Church	The Roman Catholic Church

Numbers 5–9 are close to, but not part of, the Pilgrimage Route. They are, however, in the Buffer Zone.

There are also numerous private properties along the Pilgrimage Route itself.

5.b Protective designation

The protection of the Church of the Nativity is jointly implemented by the three Churches – three Christian denominations – the Greek Orthodox Church, the Franciscans through the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Church; the rights, privileges, and possessions of these communities are protected by the Status Quo in the Holy Places (1852) as guaranteed in Article LXII of the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

The protection measures for the Core Zone are divided into two sections: the first one concerns the protection of the Church of the Nativity and the three surrounding convents, while the other part concerns the protection of the urban fabric surrounding the Pilgrimage Route.

Protecting the Church of the Nativity and the three surrounding convents:

- The protection of the Church of the Nativity is jointly implemented by the three Christian Churches, the Greek Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church through the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Church; the rights, privileges and possessions of these communities are protected by the Status Quo in the Holy Places (1852) as guaranteed in Article LXII of the Treaty of Berlin (1878).

- The Protection and Restoration of the Roof of the Church of the Nativity is a project that was adopted by the

Palestinian Presidential National Committee for the Restoration of the Roof of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Under this project (2010), a bid invited international experts to participate in the process of preparing a Survey, Assessment Study, and Preparation of a Conservation Plan for the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem.

- According to the Jordanian Old Antiquities Law no. 51/yr 1966 applied in the **West Bank**, Article no 2/c, an Ancient Archaeological Remain is defined as '*any mobile or fixed object constructed, engraved, built, discovered, made or modified by the human race before the year 1700*'. And/or '*any object, mobile or fixed, that dates back to after the year 1700, declared by the minister as an archaeological ancient object*'. These objects are protected under the law.

Protection of the Pilgrimage Route – Star Street and the part of Paul IV Street and Manger Square that connects Star Street with the Basilica is achieved through a range of measures:

- *The Charter on the Safeguarding of the of Palestinian Historic Towns and Urban Landscapes – 'the Bethlehem Charter - 2008'*, adopted by the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Bethlehem Governorate, The Municipalities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation – Bethlehem; and witnessed by the Consul General of Italy and the Representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the Palestinian Authority (UNESCO) on 21 December 2008 (see *Annexe 11*).

- *The Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour*, adopted by the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities, Bethlehem Governorate, The Municipalities of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation – Bethlehem; and witnessed by the Representative of the Consulate General of Italy and the Representative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to the Palestinian Authority (UNESCO) on 3 March 2010 (see *Annexe 12*).

- *The General Rules for the Protection of Historic Areas and Historic Individual Buildings*, 'Annex no. 10', approved by the Higher Council of Planning in its meeting no. 4/2006 held on 11 March 2006 according to decision no. 54 to approve the General Rules for the protection of Historic Areas and individual Historic Buildings. These rules are considered part of the Building and Planning Regulations for the Local Authorities approved with a decision of the Higher Council of Planning no. 20 on 24 August 1996, and applied in the **West Bank** (see *Annexe 13*).



Fig. 5.1 A Greek Orthodox priest inside the Basilica where according to the Status Quo the Greek Orthodox manage the majority of the place

5.c Means of implementing protective measures

Management is exercised by different bodies, characteristically jointly, at different levels in different parts of the nominated property.

- The Church of the Nativity is the responsibility of the three Churches jointly, though the Greek Orthodox Church is responsible for the majority of the Basilica. A secular interest in the management of such an iconic building is currently represented by the Presidential Committee charged with advising the three Churches in the matter of conservation of the whole Church of the Nativity and working towards restoration of the roof 2010–11.

- Each of the three Churches manages its own estate.
- Star Street and other parts of the Pilgrimage Route are managed by Bethlehem Municipality with the advice of the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation.

5.d Existing plans related to municipality and region in which the proposed property is located (e.g. regional or local plan, conservation plan, tourism development plan)

- The Building and Planning Law no. 79/year 1966
- The Old Antiquities Law no. 51/year 1966
- The Local Committee Building and Planning Regulation Bylaw no. 30/year 1996, issued on 24 August 1996 by the Higher Planning Council
- The Annex 10; the General Rules for the Protection of Historic Areas and Historic Individual Buildings.
- Charter on the Safeguarding of the Palestinian Historic Towns and Urban Landscapes ‘The Bethlehem Charter – 2008’.
- Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour.

The above mentioned plans are executed through the following agencies:

- Bethlehem Municipality: through the Building and Planning Committee.
- The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation: implementing agency on the Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan, and its outputs; the Charter on the Safe-

guarding of the Palestinian Historic Towns and Urban Landscapes ‘The Bethlehem Charter – 2008’ and the Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala, and Beit Sahour.

- The three Churches: the Greek Orthodox Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Armenian Church.

5.e Property management plan or other management system

There is no single management plan for the whole of this nomination; nor, in the circumstances, can there be one. Nevertheless, the two main components of the nomination each has its own management objectives and arrangements; in general, these are in harmony both between and within themselves.

The Church of the Nativity is managed under the terms and provisions of the ‘*Status Quo*’ (Annexe 7) currently supplemented by an advisory committee formed by the Palestinian President. Each of the three adjacent Convents is maintained under its own arrangement: the Armenian Convent is controlled by the Armenian Patriarchate in the Holy City of Jerusalem; the Greek Orthodox Convent by the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate in the Holy City of Jerusalem; and the Franciscan Convent and the Church of St Catherine by the Custody of the Holy Land, Holy City of Jerusalem.

The second main component, the Pilgrimage Route, principally Star Street, is part of the Municipality of Bethlehem and is therefore covered by the provisions of ‘*Building and Planning Law 30, 1996*’ (some 50 pages long so not here re-

produced), of ‘*the Bethlehem Charter 2008*’ (Annexe 11), of the ‘*Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, 2010*’ (Annexe 12), and of the ‘*General Rules for the Protection of the Historic Area and Historic Individual Buildings, Bethlehem, 2006*’ (Annexe 13). ‘*Protection*’, ‘*Conservation*’, and ‘*Rehabilitation*’ are the stated objectives of the last two enactments, and the ‘*Charter*’, which is already working well in the Historic Town, embodies a statement of principles as well as working practices to achieve those objectives.

5.f Sources and levels of finance

Sources of Finance for the Church of the Nativity

- The Presidential Treasury for the Restoration of the Roof of the Nativity, run through the National Committee for the Restoration of the Roof of the Church of the Nativity.
- The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate for the Greek Orthodox Convent.
- The Custody of the Holy Land for Saint Catherine’s Church and the Catholic Convent.
- The Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate for the Armenian Convent.

While the level of financing for the three convents depends on the need for intervention to maintain, conserve, or restore a certain part of that convent, and the assessment of the consultancy engineer in charge, the Presidential fund has undertaken to prepare the assessment study for the Church of the Nativity, and implementing the conservation of the roof depending on the assessment, disregarding the cost because of

the importance of such a monument.

Sources and Level of Finance for the Pilgrimage Route and the Buffer Zone of Nomination (the Historic Town of Bethlehem)

- The taxes and fees collected from the residents and shops in the area.
- The annual contribution of Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce to rehabilitate and prepare the Pilgrimage Route for Christmas Celebrations.
- The various contributions of the different funding agencies and consulates for the purpose.

The amount of the contributions and funds invested in the Pilgrimage Route vary and depend on the need for intervention.

The municipality of Bethlehem is in charge of cleaning the Route and performing the general maintenance, backed up with the technical support of the Jerusalem District Electricity Company (the electricity provider for the town), Bethlehem Water and Sewage Authority (the provider of water and sewage services for the town), and the Palestinian Telecommunication Company (provider of telecommunication services for the town).

5.g Sources of expertise and training in conservation and management techniques

The sources of expertise and training in conservation and management in the site vary to include:

- The national and local authorities which include:

1. the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities;
2. the Ministry of Local Government;
3. the technical team at the municipality of Bethlehem;
4. Bethlehem Governorate.
- The educational institutions which include:
 1. The Faculty of Architecture and Engineering at the Universities of An Najah in Nablus, BirZeit in the town of BirZeit, the Polytechnic University in Hebron;
 2. The Higher Institute of Archaeology at AlQuds University;
 3. The Faculty of Law and Management at the University of BirZeit;
 4. Various international universities and educational institutions.
- The four working cultural heritage organization in Palestine:
 1. The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation – Bethlehem;
 2. Riwaq – center for architectural conservation;
 3. The Old City of Jerusalem Revitalization Programme – the Welfare Association;
 4. The Hebron Rehabilitation Committee.
- The technical support and guide of the UNESCO Office – Ramallah;
- The technical support of the EuroMed Heritage;
- The technical support of RehabiMed;
- The technical support of the Palestinian engineers' Association/Bethlehem.

5.b Visitor facilities and statistics

Statistics of the visitors visiting the Church during the past 3 years

According to the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities (see Annexe 10), the number of visitors to the town of Bethlehem 2007–9 has varied (see Table below). The number of tourists during the first quarter of 2010 has reached 235,669.

Year	Number of visitors
2007	408,157
2008	830,428
2009	684,634

Along the Pilgrimage Route heading to the Nativity are the following visitor facilities

- The Palestinian Heritage Centre: an exhibition which aims to revive, document, preserve, and promote the arts of Palestinian heritage such as dresses, jewellery, furniture, and embroidery.
- Beituna Al Talhami Museum: a folklore museum that displays life in Bethlehem during the previous century, through tools and equipment in a traditional building; the museum also has a few documents and photographs that go back to the beginnings of the 20th century.
- The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation: charged with the mission of preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage in the Bethlehem district, the Centre offers information on traditional buildings and customs, in

addition to guidance and brochures about tours inside the historic town.

- Bethlehem Peace Center: cultural association that aims at enhancing the spirit of democracy and respect for religion, promoting peace and culture through conducting related activities.
- The Tourist Information Centre: located in Manger Square the Centre offers maps, brochures, information, and guidance to the visitor to Bethlehem.
- Al Riwaya Museum: a narrative museum currently under construction, it will feature exhibits about Palestinian culture and living history, in addition to containing a crypt with excavated archaeological remains in situ dating back to the Byzantine period.

5.i Policies and programmes related to the presentation and promotion of the property

Several policies are in place, and programmes are performed, to promote the Pilgrimage Route and the Church of the Nativity, among which the most important are:

- the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities programmes and activities;
- the different programmes of Alternative Tourism that promote staying in and discovering the Town implemented through the Alternative Tourism Group ATG, the Palestinian Centre for Conflict Resolution – Wi'am;
- the annual Christmas Market in Manger Square on the first Advent Sunday;
- the Christmas celebrations which include, in addition

to the traditional Christmas Procession, various performances and celebrations in the Town, and usually start on the first Advent Catholic Sunday (late November/early December) and last until the 20th January (the Armenian Christmas) (see Annexe 4);

- the annual Olive Harvest Festival on the last Saturday of October;
- the tour guiding and tourism courses that aim at creating expertise in the field, given by the educational institutions in Town, Bethlehem University, Dar Al Kalima Institution – the International Centre of Bethlehem, and Bethlehem Bible Collage;
- the contribution of the cultural heritage institutions to promote the site such the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation, the Palestinian Heritage Centre and the Alternative Tourism Group.

The above events are in addition to the various religious processions, cultural events, concerts, and art exhibitions conducted by various institutions in the town at Manger Square.

5.j Staffing levels (professional, technical, maintenance)

- Professional Staff:
 1. The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation
 2. The Local Universities; BirZeit University and the Polytechnic University of Hebron
- Technical Staff
 1. The Technical Office at the Municipality of Bethlehem;

2. The National Committee for the Restoration of the Roof of the Church of the Nativity of Bethlehem;

3. The engineering consultancy offices of the three churches: the Greek Orthodox Church, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Orthodox Church.

4. The Palestinian Engineers' Association/Bethlehem.

- Maintenance Staff:

1. The Maintenance and Technical Departments of the Municipality of Bethlehem.

2. The maintenance of engineering consultancy offices of the three Churches: the Greek Orthodox Church, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Orthodox Church.



Fig. 5.2 Tourists standing in queue in the southern nave of the Basilica in order to get inside the Grotto, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities expects the number of visitors to Bethlehem to approach 1 million by the end of 2010



6. MONITORING

6.a Key indicators for measuring state of conservation

Despite the lack of obvious key indicators for measuring the state of conservation within the nominated property at present, the following indicators are taken into consideration:

Key indicators for measuring the state of conservation in the Church of the Nativity

- Despite the fact the all stakeholders realize the state of conservation of the Church of the Nativity, pinpointed as one of the 100 most endangered sites in 2008¹⁰³, it was not up until recently that a committee for the restoration of the roof of the Church of the Nativity was established.
- In addition to the studies and works of the restoration of the roof, the Committee¹⁰⁴ is responsible for submitting a conservation and management plan of the Site. This study will form the base for all future interventions in the Site¹⁰⁶.

Key indicators for measuring the state of conservation in the three Convents adjacent to the Church of the Nativity

- none exist

Key indicators for measuring the state of conservation along the Pilgrimage Route

- During the works conducted by the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation on the Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management, a general census on the buildings inside the Historic Town of Bethlehem was carried out. It recorded the general state of conservation of all buildings, occupied or otherwise, within the targeted area. This record is in continuous use by the Centre in commenting on all applications for struc-

tural change within the Historic Town, and it is the intention to update the whole record systematically early in 2011.

6.b Administrative arrangements for monitoring the property

Administrative arrangements for monitoring the Church of the Nativity

- The Presidential Office in cooperation with the three churches responsible for managing the Basilica according to the Status Quo of the Holy Places has established a committee to monitor the Church and to be responsible for the implementation of any conservation and restoration works required.
- The Committee is composed of the President's Consultant in Christian Affairs, and representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Orthodox Church, and of the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, in addition to other experts in the field.

Administrative arrangements for monitoring the Convents surrounding the Church of the Nativity

- The three Churches are each responsible for monitoring their own property, a matter that is taken care by their technical consultant, although advice is often sought from professionals.

¹⁰³ World Monuments Watch, List of 100 Most Endangered Sites 2008, World Monuments Fund

¹⁰⁴ The Presidential Committee for the restoration of the Church of the Nativity was established through a presidential Decree and is composed from of the President's Consultant in Christian Affairs, representatives of the three churches; the Greek Orthodox Church, the Custody of the Holy Land, and the Armenian Orthodox Church, and the Minister of Tourism and Antiquities, in addition to other experts in the field.

¹⁰⁵ The work on the first phase of the conservation plan for the roof of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem is expected to finish by mid-2011

Administrative arrangements for monitoring the Pilgrimage Route

- The monitoring of the Pilgrimage Route up to 2008 was the responsibility of Bethlehem Municipality alone. After the adoption of the Charter of the Safeguarding of the Palestinian Historic Towns and Their Cultural Landscape – Bethlehem Charter 2008 and the Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour, the responsibility became a shared one between the Municipality and the Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation. This arrangement is executed in cooperation with the Office of Antiquities/Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities

Addresses of the different parties responsible of the monitoring of the property:

The Church of the Nativity and the Greek Orthodox Convent in Bethlehem

The Greek Orthodox Patriarchate – Jerusalem, Office of the Patriarch

His Beatitude Theophilos III, Patriarch of Jerusalem,
Greek Orthodox Patriarchate,

P.O. Box 14518, 91145, Jerusalem

Tel: + 972 (0)2 627 1657
+ 972 (0)2 627 4941 (08:30-12:30)
+ 972 (0)2 626 1283 (20:00-23:00)
+ 972 (0)54 210 4738 (24 hours)

Fax: + 972 (0)2 626 1283

E-mail: patriarch.theophilos@jerusalem-patriarchate.info

The Church of the Nativity and the Franciscan Monastery

The Custody of the Holy Land – Jerusalem

His Excellency Fr. Pierbattista Pizzaballa, OFM

Custos of the Holy Land

St. Saviour's Monastery

P.O. Box 186, Jerusalem 91001

Tel: + 972 (0)2 626 6363/1

Fax: + 972 (0)2 626 4717

E-mail: custodia@custodia.org

The Church of the Nativity and the Armenian Convent in Bethlehem

The Armenian Patriarchate of St James - Jerusalem

His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian

Real Estate Department

The Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem

P.O. Box 14235

Jerusalem

Tel: + 972 (0)2 627 1103

Fax: + 972 (0)2 627 1079

E-mail: info@armenian-patriarchate.org

The Pilgrimage Route and the Historic Town of Bethlehem

The Municipality of Bethlehem

Manger Square

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E-mail: info@bethlehem-city.org
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 and Cultural Heritage - Ramallah*

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 Tel: + 972 2 240 9891
 Fax: + 972 2 240 9560
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The Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation – Bethlehem

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 Fax: + 972 (0)2 276 6241
 E-mail: info@cchp.ps
www.cchp.ps

6.c Results of previous reporting exercises

Results of previous reporting exercises on the Church of the Nativity

The Church of the Nativity, in the light of the WATCH report and the Committee for the Restoration of the Roof of the Church of the Nativity, is an endangered monument:

- timber roofs are rotting; there has been no restoration work since the 19th century;
- the water leaking inside the roof is threatening to damage the 12th century mosaics on the wall, in addition to the ever present chance of an electrical short-circuit and fire; the structural condition of the Church is itself critical due to the earthquake of 1834, and intervention is required to consolidate the foundations of the building

Results of previous reporting exercises on the Convents surrounding the Church of the Nativity

- Although there has not been any formal report on the three convents, the three Churches in charge of them are continuously maintaining the fabric which is considered to be in good conservation condition.

Results of previous reporting exercises on Pilgrimage Route and the proposed Buffer Zone (the Historical Town of Bethlehem)

The Research conducted during the preparation of the Bethlehem Area Conservation and Management Plan has revealed the following:

- the service networks (electricity, water, and telecommunications) have all been rehabilitated as part of the Bethlehem 2000 Project;
- the façades of the Buildings were all rehabilitated un-

der the Bethlehem 2000 Project, in addition to paving the roads;

- repairs or maintenance works are required in small parts along the Route in order to improve its current situation;
- solutions must be implemented to replace the small concrete outbuildings, water tanks on the roofs, inappropriate roof tiles, and other minor details that disturb the overall visual quality of the historic roofscape.



Fig. 6.1 Scout groups marching in the Manger Square, on their way to meet the Patriarch, marking the beginning of Christmas celebrations; the Patriarch is usually in a car that follows the groups on their way back



7. DOCUMENTATION

Detail of the mosaics on the
northern wall of the nave

7.a Photographs, slides, image inventory and authorization table and other audiovisual material

Bethlehem is well-documented in terms of written sources from the Old Testament onwards. Early travellers, often on their way to Jerusalem, often make passing reference to the small town. It occurs in Ottoman sources, and is of course profusely documented in written materials from the 17th cen-

tury onwards. Here we concentrate on the visual material: the following is a selection from the rich archive of Bethlehem to illustrate the town and Church themselves but also to indicate the nature of that visual material.

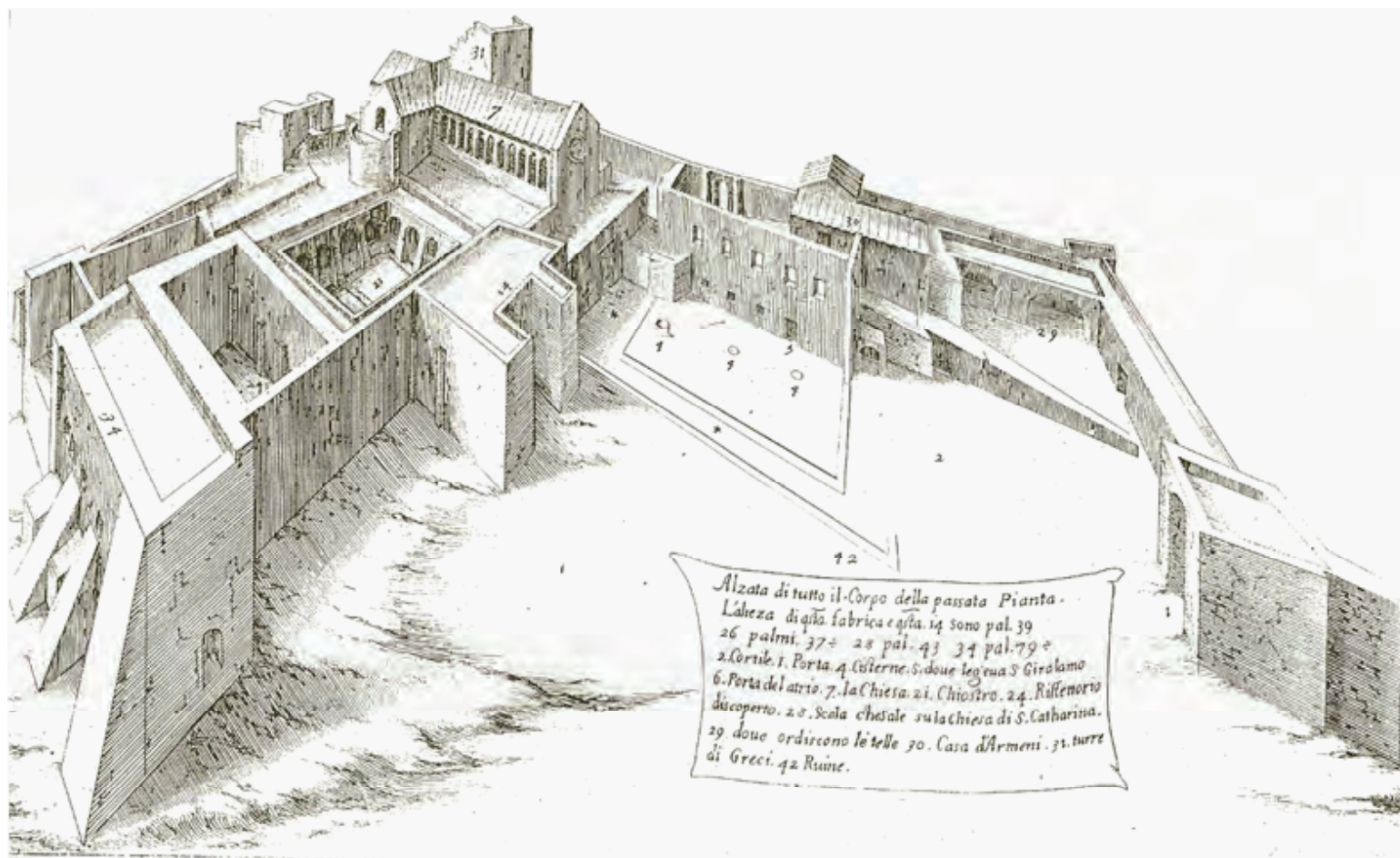


Fig 7.1. An axonometric view of the Church of the Nativity and the surrounding ensemble drawn by Bernardino Amico in 1596 after his visit to the Holy Land, as published in *Trattato della Pianta & Immagini degli Sacri Edifici di Terra Santa* in 1619.

Historical Aerial Maps of Bethlehem



Fig. 7.2 Bethlehem, near vertical aerial photo, from the south-east (1917)



Fig. 7.3 Bethlehem, aerial photo from the south-east (1937); Bethlehem Municipality



Fig. 7.4 Bethlehem, aerial photo 1976; Bethlehem Municipality



Fig. 7.5 Bethlehem, aerial photo from the south-east (1993); Bethlehem Municipality



Fig. 7.6 Bethlehem, aerial photo 2003; Bethlehem Municipality



Fig. 7.7 Bethlehem, aerial photo (2007); Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation

Photographs of the Church of the Nativity and the town of Bethlehem

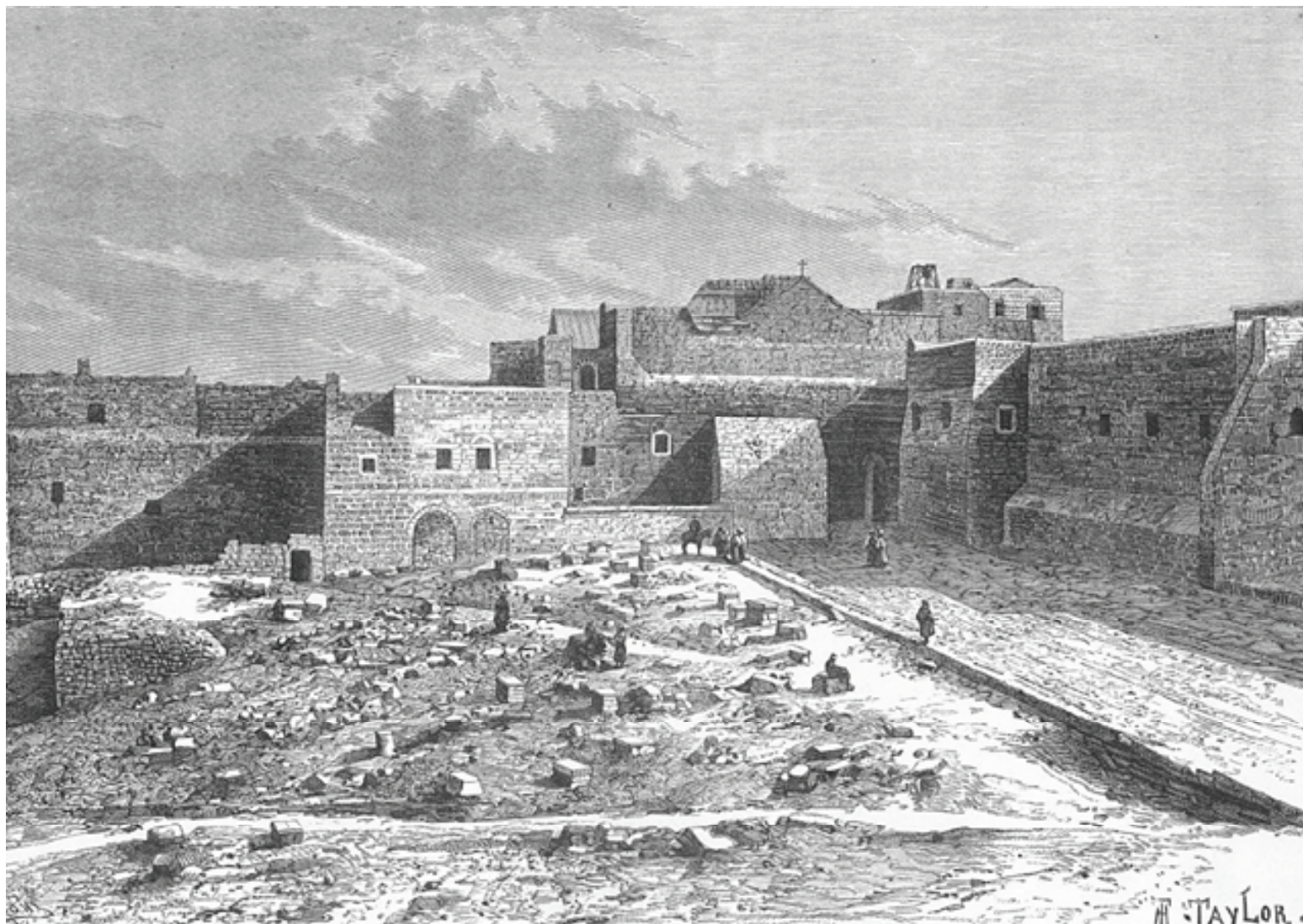


Fig. 7.8 The architectural ensemble of and around the Church of the Nativity, from the west, overlooking the Greek Orthodox cemetery and the forecourt, as illustrated in J.L. Porter D.D. 1887, *Jerusalem, Bethany and Bethlehem* (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson)



Fig. 7.9 A photograph of Church of the Nativity c. 1880. From the start of Star Street, looking south-east; the Zarara Gate along the Pilgrimage Route shows in the middle right of the picture; the bell towers were not yet built, photograph by Felix Bonfils c. 1880, George Al Ama Collection



Fig. 7.10 The western elevation of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in 1894, after the construction of the bell tower of the Greek Orthodox convent and the Church of St. Catherine, Photograph by Ch. Scolik, George Al Ama Collection



Fig. 7.11 A late nineteenth century of the Church of the Nativity and architectural ensemble, with bell towers; the tower of the mosque in the north-west corner of Manger Square is visible, top right from the north-west

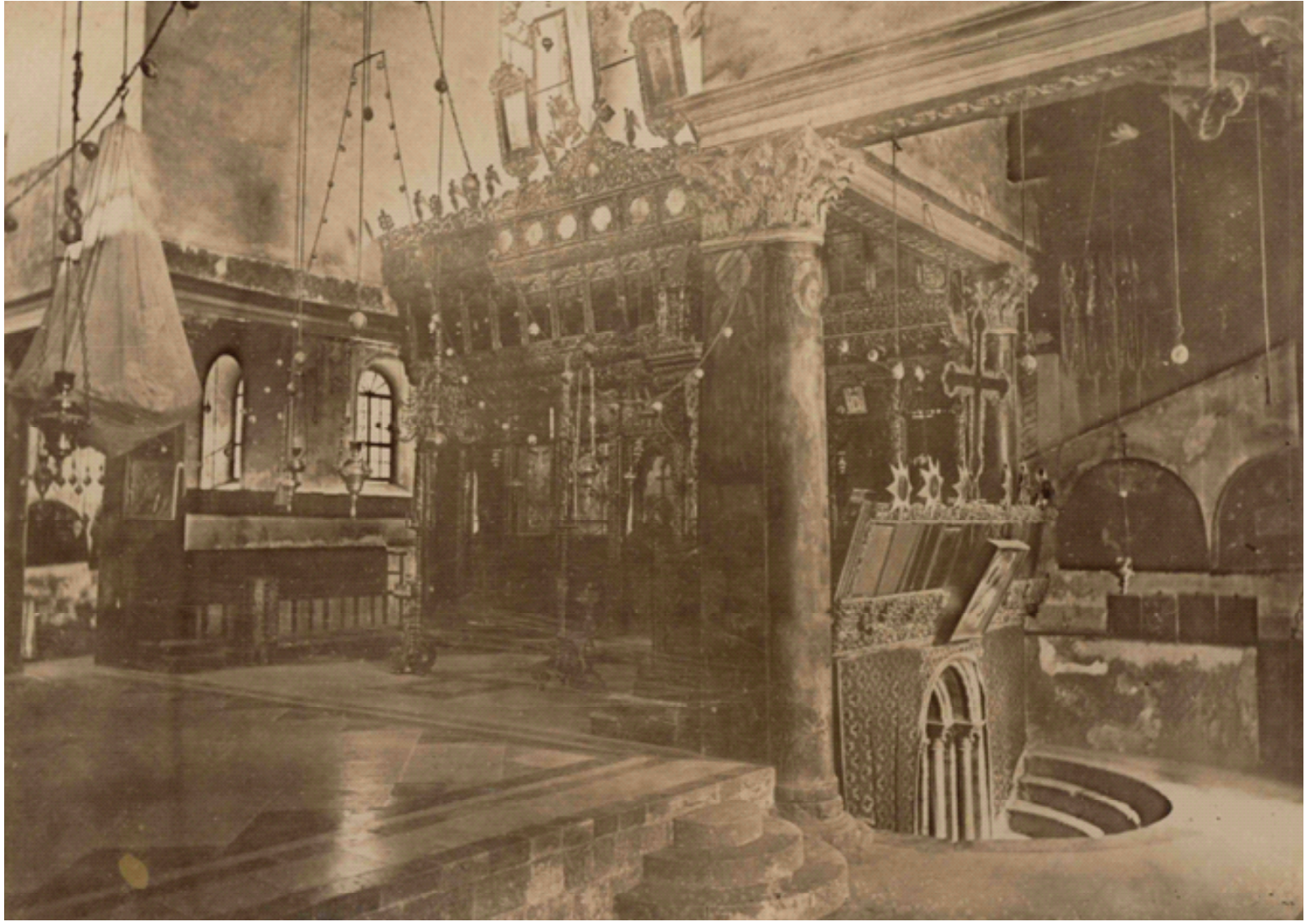


Fig 7.12 The wooden Chancel inside the Church of the Nativity, a photograph by Felix Bonfils c. 1870, the central lamp is covered with a white cloth, a tradition that the Church follows during Lent; George Al Ama Collection

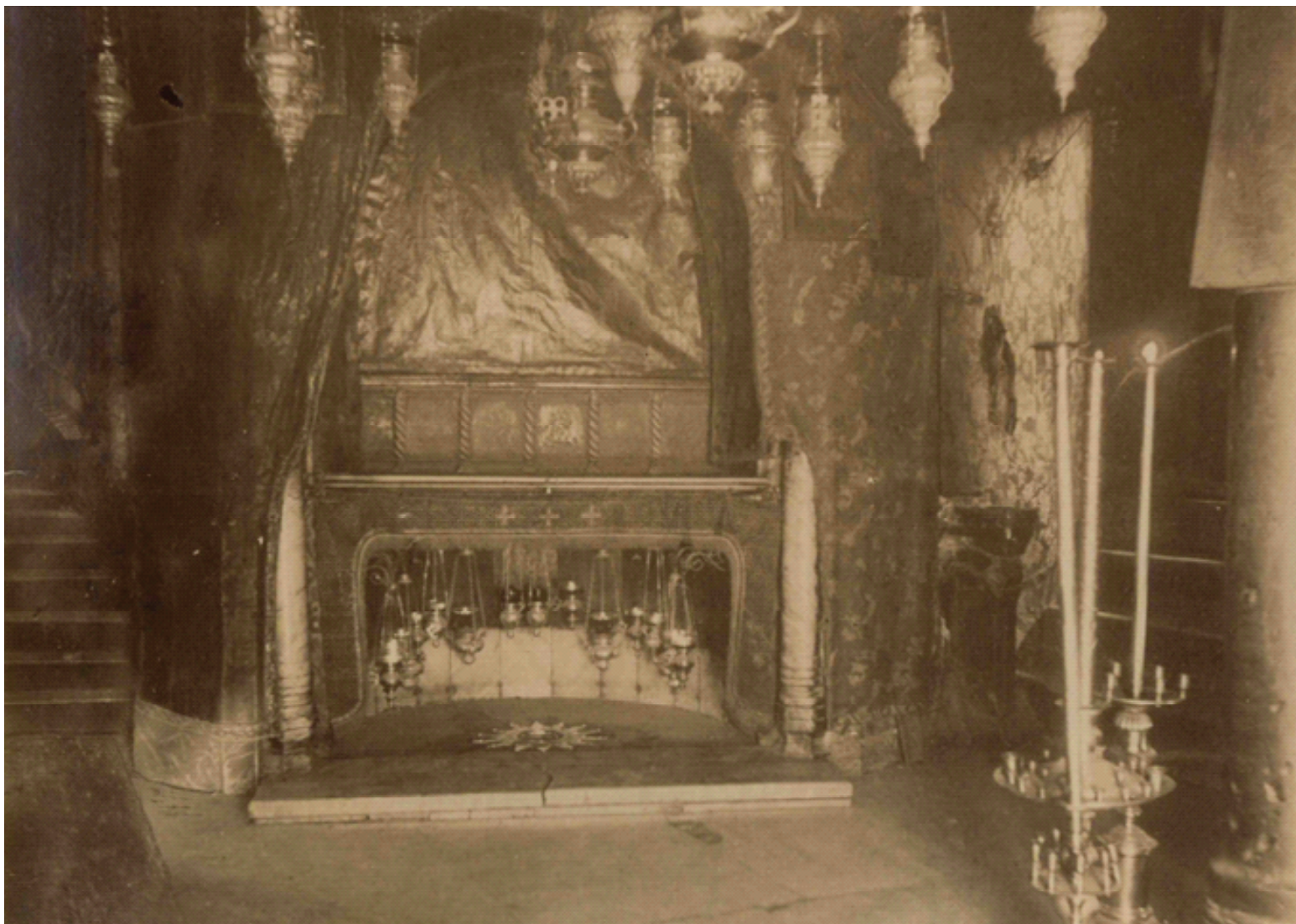


Fig 7.13 The Star of the Nativity above which sixteen lamps hang, four of which belong to the Catholics, six to the Orthodox Church, and six to the Armenians. Photograph by Felix Bonfils – c. 1870, George Al Ama Collection



Fig 7.14 The manger of the Nativity c. 1880 photographed by Felix Bonfils; George Al Ama Collection

Photographs of the Town of Bethlehem



Fig. 7.15 A photograph looking towards the west showing the eastern side of the Nativity ensemble and Bethlehem town 1857, photograph by Francis Frith – George Al Ama Collection



Fig. 7.16 The Town of Bethlehem on its hill as it shows in some of the early photographs. The view is westwards from approximately the position of the modern Casa Nova hotel; the figures, left centre, appear to be processing towards the Church of the Nativity across what is now the northern side of Manger Square c. 1850



Fig. 7.17 Same view of the Town of Bethlehem in 1894, photograph by Ch. Scolik, George Al Ama Collection



Fig 7.18 a panoramic view of Bethlehem from the west looking towards the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route c. 1880, photograph by George Saboungi – George Al Ama Collection



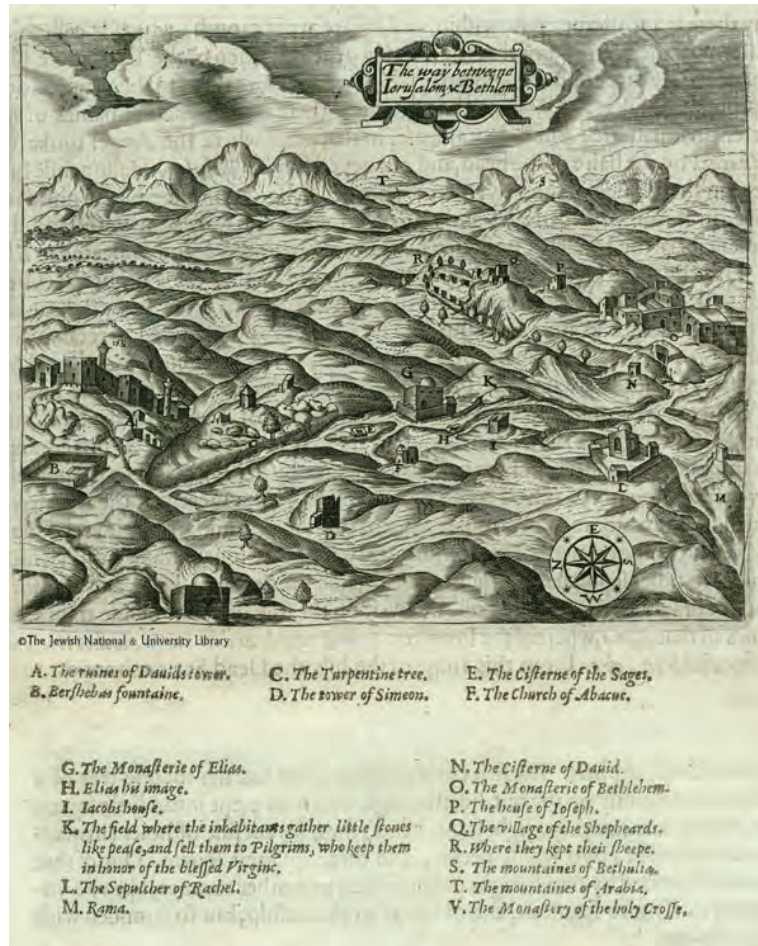


Fig. 7.19 The Way Betweene Ierusalem and Bethlem, by George Sandys (1578–1644) from Sandys, G. 1621 *A Relation of a Journey... Containing a Description of ... the Holy Land* 2nd edition (W. Barren, London), 175

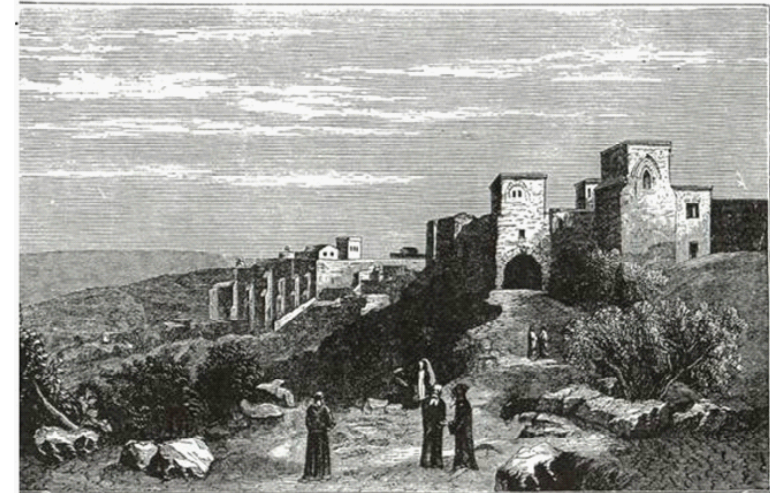


Fig. 7.20 View of the Damascus Gate on the Pilgrimage route into Bethlehem from Keav. Rev. K. *Among the Holy Places: A Pilgrimage through Palestine*, 1893, p. 112



Fig. 7.21 City of Bethlehem, by Luigi Mayer: pilgrims approaching the town 1805, George Al Ama Collection



Fig. 7.22 Bethlehem, by Cornelis de Bruyn (1652–1726/7), from Bruyn, Cornelus de 1698, *Reizen van ... door Klein Asia.. Aegypten, Syria en Palestina*. Delft, Henrik van Krooneveld (Henrik van Krooneveld, Delft), pl. 137, after p. 276

Cartographical Material



Fig. 7.23 Prospect der heutigen stadt Bethlehem von der Morgenseite betrachtet by Georg Borowsky (18th century) 276 x 494 mm



Fig. 7.24 Bethlehem Cite de David, et Ville de Judée, ou N. Seigneur prit Naissance by Jacques le Jeune Chéreau (1668–1776)
141 x 218 mm © The Jewish National & University Library



Fig. 7.25 View of the Church of the Nativity and the surrounding ensemble, by H. Fenn Pinx, dated approximately between 1890 to 1899 – George Al Ama Collection

Recent Documentation of the Property



Fig. 2.26 Star Street, entering the Pilgrimage Route



Fig. 7.28 Star Street



Fig. 2.27 a gate of a traditional Hosh, traditional house



Fig. 7.29 the Melkite Catholic Church along the Star Street



Fig. 7.30 a historic Stair connecting Star Street with the Buffer Zone; historically the agricultural terraces of the town



Fig. 7.32 Hosh Hannania, a demolished building that is designed to be reconstructed by September 2011



Fig. 7.31 Qos Al Zarara, the Damascus Gate, historic entrance to Bethlehem



Fig. 7.33 Star Street inside the Gate



Fig. 7.34 Ghazzawi Residence



Fig. 7.36 a view to the west towards the historic town of Bethlehem



Fig. 7.35 after turning to the right the first glimpse of the fortress-like ensemble



Fig. 7.37 the Mosque of Omar at the western end of Manger Square



Fig 7.38 the forecourt in front of the Church looking at the Armenian Convent walls and bell-tower



Fig. 7.39 the entrance to the Church of the Nativity



Fig.40: the nave of the Church looking east towards the iconostasis



Fig. 7.41 the red stone columns



Fig. 7.42 a column inside the Church



Fig. 7.43 the southern transept, leading to the Greek Orthodox Convent



Fig. 7.44 the northern transept: the Armenians have the custody over this wall which displays Armenian icons



Fig. 7.46 the roof of the Basilica



Fig. 7.45 the wall mosaics on the northern wall of the nave

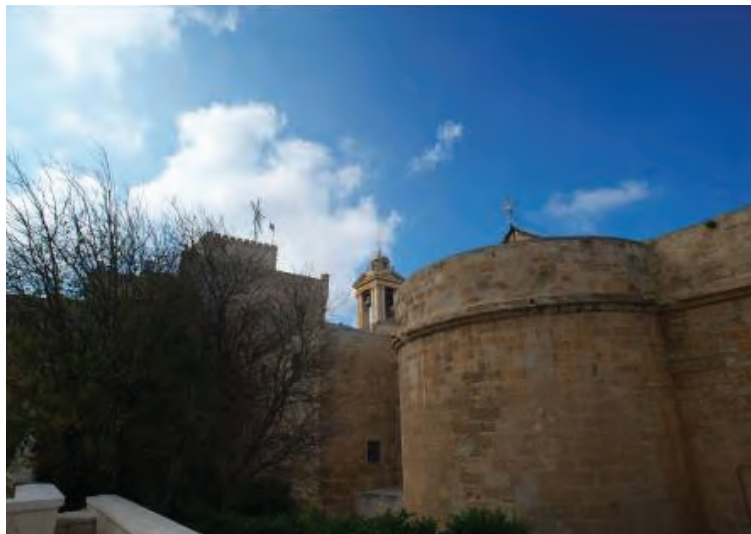


Fig. 7.47 the eastern wall of the Basilica



Fig. 7.48 the bones of the Children said to have been executed by King Herod when he could not find Jesus



Fig. 7.49 the Greek Orthodox Garden to the east of the Church



Fig. 7.50 the eastern elevation of St Catherine's Church and the Franciscan Convent



Fig. 7.51 the pipe organ inside St Catherine's Church



Fig. 7.52 St. Jerome's Arcade to the west of St Catherine's Church



Fig. 7.53: the courtyard of the Armenian Convent

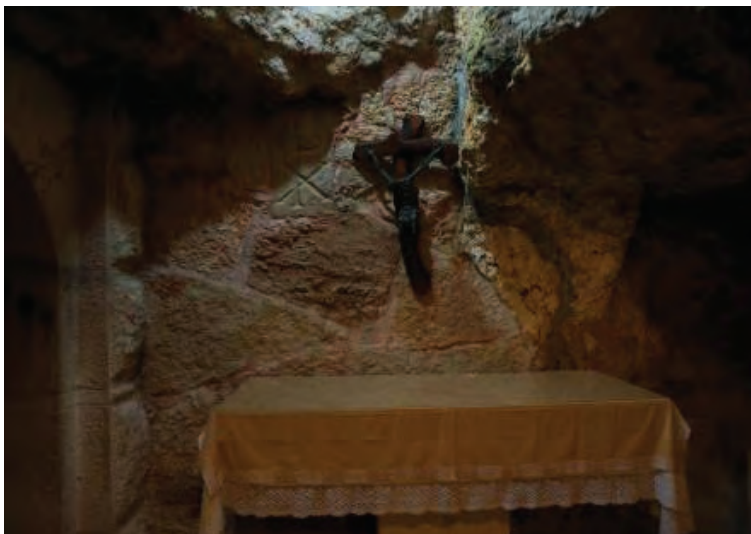


Fig. 7.54 St Jerome's Chapel, just beneath the courtyard of St Jerome, accessible now from the Church of St Catherine

Christmas celebrations and other activities in Bethlehem:



Fig. 7.55 Franciscan priests preparing the Church of St Catherine for the Christmas mass, an event that is broadcasted worldwide



Fig. 7.56 Bethlehem being prepared to receive Christmas 2010



Fig. 7.57 Annual traditional Christmas Market



Fig. 7.58 pilgrims praying inside the Basilica



Fig. 7.59 a Greek Orthodox priest leaving the Grotto



Fig. 7.61 scout groups the entering Manger Square in front of the car of the Latin Patriarchate



Fig. 7.60 an Assyrian Orthodox priest in the Manger Square before the arrival of the Latin Patriarchate



Fig. 7.62 Palestinian girls in traditional dresses during the reception of the Patriarchate



Fig. 7.63 Franciscan monks waiting the arrival of the Patriarchate



Fig. 7.65 Balloons in the air of Manger Square during the annual children's parade for love and peace



Fig. 7.64 Mayor of Bethlehem welcoming the Latin Patriarchate



Fig. 7.66 a metaphoric dining table during a paper exhibition; one of many exhibitions and events held at the Manger Square



Fig. 7.67 youngsters drawing to express the love of life



Fig. 7.69 Olive Harvest Festival



Fig. 7.68 His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI celebrating a mass in the Manger Square



Fig. 7.70 Choir during the visit of his Holiness Pope Benedict XVI

IMAGE INVENTORY AND PHOTOGRAPH AND AUDIOVISUAL AUTHORIZATION FORM

Id. No.	Format (Slide/ print/ video)	Caption	Date of Photo (mo/yr)	Photographer/Director of the video	Copyright owner (if different than Photographer/Director of the video)	Contact details of Copyright owner (Name, address, tel/fax, and e-mail)	Non exclusive session of rights
Cover Page		The northern aisle inside the Church of the Nativity looking east	2009	Federico Busonero	Federico Busonero/UNESCO	UNESCO	Yes
Chapter 1 Cover Page		Bell tower of the Melkite Catholic Church along the Pilgrimage Route, and the historic town of Bethlehem in the Background	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Chapter 2 Cover Page		The Star marking the place Jesus was born	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.1	Print	The western elevation of the architectural ensemble of and around the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem, viewed from the roof of Bethlehem Municipality	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP, 2010	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.3	Print	One of the earliest photographs of the Church of the Nativity and the town of Bethlehem	1857	Frances Frith	George Al Ama	George Al Ama Collection	Yes
Fig. 2.4	Print	View of Bethlehem from the north in the later 19th century (Harper 1888). The open, terraced area east of the Church of the Nativity is top left	1888	unknown			
Fig. 2.5	Print	Terrace gardens of the Convent of the White Sisters east of the Church of the Nativity, looking east towards Beit Sahour, also known as the Shepherds' Field	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP, 2010	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.9 Left	Print	the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem: the western forecourt and elevation from the eastern edge of Manger Square	March 2007		CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 2.9 Right	Print	The Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem: interior of the nave with double columns to either side, looking west	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.10 Left	Print	Interior of the Church of the Nativity, looking east along the nave	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.10 Right	Print	wall of the ancient nave with fragments of mosaics	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.12		The 4th century architecture and the 6th century foundation of the columns as published in the Guide to Bethlehem (Hamilton 1939, pl. 4)	c. 1921	published in the Guide to Bethlehem (Hamilton 1939, pl. 4)		CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.13		Byzantine capital and tie-beams	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.15		The south aisle looking west; thirty of the nave's 44 columns carry Crusader paintings of saints and the Virgin and Child, although age and lighting conditions make them hard to see. The columns are of red, polished limestone; most have been re-used from the original 4th century Constantinian basilica.	January 2011	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.16		Tourists gathering for a picture in the northern aisle inside the Basilica	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.23		Details of the geometric mosaic floor	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.24		Star marking the traditional site on which it is believed that Jesus was born	January 2011	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.24 Right		the Cave of the Nativity showing the place where the star is embedded	January 2011	Ibrahim Murra	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.25		The Grotto of the Manger	November 2010	Ibrahim Murra	CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 2.26		Thirteen copper bells from two 12th century carillon sets and the remains of a water organ consisting of 250 copper pipes (fistulae-reduced diameter pipes) on display in the Museum of the Flagellation in Jerusalem. Items were found in 1906			(Courtesy of the Stadium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem)		
Fig. 2.27 Left		One of a pair of 17cm high silver candlesticks with inscriptions around their bases reading: 'Cursed be he who takes me away from the holy grotto of the Nativity in Bethlehem'; the object is one of the Liturgical Objects that were discovered in two separate finds in 1863 and 1906;			(Courtesy of the Stadium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem)		
Fig. 2.27 Right		a cast showing the martyrdom of St Thomas as engraved on one of the brass bowls that show various scenes of his life			(Courtesy of the Stadium Biblicum Franciscanum Museum, Jerusalem)		
Fig. 2.28 Left		The font in the Church of the Nativity;	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.28 Right		Greek inscription on the font.	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.29 Left		Virgin Mary Enthroned icon;	June 2010	George Al Ama	George Al Ama/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.29 Right		Virgin Mary Enthroned icon attributed to Jeremiah Paladas	November 2010	Nada Atrash	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.30		The wooden iconostasis inside the Basilica	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.31		The Melkite Arab icon of Virgin Mary of Bethlehem	November 2010		CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig 2.32		The Melkite Virgin Mary icon, inscribed by the Palestinian iconographer Ibrahim Abatouli of Jerusalem; the icon was presented to the Church by Saleh Ibrahim Assaf in 1910	August 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 2.33 Top		The recently renovated cross painted by Vaselius in 1681	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romezi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.33 Left		An unsigned Melkite icon of Virgin Mary Enthroned in the Chapel of St George.	November 2010	Nada Atrash	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 3.34 Top		The rose window	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romezi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.34 Bottom		The courtyard and statue of St Jerome at St Catherine's church in Bethlehem	January 2011	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romezi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.37		Frescos inside the Chapel of St. Helena in Bethlehem	November 2010	Ibrahim Murra	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.38 Left		Important comparisons, as viewed from the north: before and after the towers, and the modern construction to the north of the Franciscan Cloister.	c. 1880	George Saboungi	George Al Ama	George AL Ama	Yes
Fig. 2.38 Right		Important comparisons, as viewed from the north: before and after the towers, and the modern construction to the north of the Franciscan Cloister.	c. 1885	Felix Bonfils	George Al Ama	George AL Ama	Yes
Fig. 2.39		Remains of the 12th century medieval refectory also known as the School of St Jerome	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romezi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.40		View westwards from the top of the Greek Orthodox bell-tower towards Bethlehem's roofscape across Manger Square; the walled garden inside the Armenian Monastery is in the lower left corner of the photo	October 2007	Ahmed Fanoun	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.41		The marble bas-relief of St George on the western wall of the Greek Orthodox Convent, and the main meeting room accessible from the courtyard and located in the southern part of the Convent	April 2010	Nada Atrash	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.43 Top		The 19th century bell tower at the Greek south-western corner of the complex	November 2010	Issam Juha	CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 2.43 Right		The tower or donjon, at the south-eastern corner of the fortified cathedral Greek Orthodox complex. The lower part may be 6th century, the central part certainly 12th century, and the upper part 19th century	January 2011	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.45 Left		Workers in Mother-of-Pearl	1905		American Colony Photographers		
Fig 2.45 Right		Bead Merchants	1893		Album de Terre Sainte, Paris		
Fig. 2.47 Left		Model of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre; (right) model of the Church of the Nativity, they are at the British Museum, London. Both models are of wood and inlaid mother of pearl and were probably made in Bethlehem. The date of acquisition on the Church of the Nativity model is 1753 (Palestine Exploration Fund			Palestine Exploration Fund		
Fig. 2.47 Right		Unpaved track, now Star Street, sloping up from the north west towards the Damascus Gate in an illustration of 1893 (but see the built-up reality in a photograph below of the same area 16 years earlier), with a prominent town house on the right and the Church of the Nativity in the distance to the left.	1893				
Fig. 2.47 Right		Part of the same view in 2010, with the Damascus Gate consolidated but truncated and Star Street paved for pedestrians but still scarred by one-way traffic.	December 2010	Ahmed Fanoun	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.48 Left		Pilgrims approaching Bethlehem along the now-revetted track to the Damascus Gate: early 19th century.					

Fig. 2.48 Right		Damascus Gate: part of a photo by Felix Bonfils c. 1880 showing the line of the traditional track leading to the Gate already defined by buildings along an incipient Star Street.	c. 1880	Felix Bonfils			
Fig. 2.49		Mamluk engraving on the window lintel on the first floor of the western elevation of Damascus Gate. The inscription on the plaque next to the Gate reads: 'Old Gate Qoos Zarara': the oldest references to Bethlehem and archeological remains suggest that small as it was, Bethlehem was referred to as a city because of the walled enclosure surrounding it. This Qoos, or arch, is the traditional main gate to the city coming from Jerusalem and tradition has it that was through this gate that Mary and Joseph entered Bethlehem when she gave birth to Jesus. The wall probably existed in Canaanite times, and was rebuilt several times over before it was finally destroyed by Mamluks in 1489.'	June 2010	Nada Atrash	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.50		Examples of three main entrances along Star Street that, in reflecting contemporary taste c. 1900, utilise decoratively local skills in masonry and ironwork	July, 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.51		(Left) Stone quarries near Bethlehem, c. 1900; (right): Stone cutters, early 20th century.	c. 1900				
Fig. 2.52 Left		The Ghazzawi family standing in front of their– 1930's century.	1930's		George Al Ama	George Al Ama	
Fig. 2.52 Right		Dar Ghazzawi 2010	November 2010	Rami Rishmawi	Rami Rishmawi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.53 Left		The daily life of Bethlehemites in the main street leading to the Church of the Nativity; the photo is taken towards the west looking at the Syriac Orthodox Church 1930's	1930s				

Fig. 2.53 Right		A new photograph of the same view, no major changes have occurred on the northern elevation of the route; the buildings on the southern side were demolished in order to widen the street in 1956	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.54 Left		A Bethlehemite wearing traditional dress shops for the family's daily needs in the main street, now Paul VI Street, leading to the Church of the Nativity (just visible in the background)					
Fig. 2.54 Right		The same view 70 years later	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.55 Left		The Mosque of Omar during the 1940s.	1940s	Photograph published in the Jerusalem Post by Katherine Stewart			
Fig. 2.55 Right		The modern reconstruction of the Mosque of Omar in 2010	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.56		Bethlehem marketplace, now Manger Square, during the early 20th century, looking west towards the original Mosque of Omar from in front of the western facade of the Church of the Nativity; the buildings to the left were demolished in 1956		The American Colony and Eric Matson Collection of South Palestine			
Fig. 2.57		General view of Bethlehem Marketplace looking towards the western façade of Church of the Nativity	1899	Bruno Hentschel	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 2.58		Mosaic fragments (left), and cistern (right) under the Bethlehem Peace Center	2010		MoTA	MoTA	Yes

Fig. 2.59 Left		Christmas procession approaching the former market place during the Jordanian Governance (1940–1946) before the demolition of the Residential Quarter on the left in what was to become Manger Square.		The American Colony collection			
Fig. 2.59 Right		A Children's peace procession on 3 December, 2010, crossing the Manger Square and heading towards the Church of the Nativity, with the Bethlehem Peace Center on the right of the photograph.	December 2010	Mohammad Kattoush	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.60 Left		a view of the Greek Orthodox Cemetery c. 1870, and the empty plot of land where the Saraya (Ottoman governmental office building) was built in 1873.	1873				
Fig. 2.60 Right		The Saraya building, 1894.	1894	Ch. Scolik	George Al Ama	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 2.62		Aerial view over the eastern part of historic Bethlehem, with Star Street in the foreground right centre and the Church of the Nativity ensemble in the middle distance left centre	1983				
Chapter 3 Cover Page		The entrance to the Narthex of the Church of the Nativity	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 3.1		A pilgrim lighting a candle inside the Church of the Nativity during Christmas celebrations 2010	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 3.2		View of the Damascus Gate 'Qos Al Zarara' along the Star Street	December 2011	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 3.3		Shrine of the Nativity, Bethlehem, engraved by E. Challis after a picture by W.H. Bartlett, published in The Christian in Palestine, c. 1840.	c. 1840				

Fig. 3.4		The Way Between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, by George Sandys (1578–1644) from Sandys, G. 1621 A Relation of a Journey... Containing a Description of ... the Holy Land 2nd edition, (W. Barren, London), p. 175	1621		The Jewish & University Libray		
Fig. 3.5		Pilgrims heading to the Church of the Nativity through the Damascus Gate 'Qos Al Zarara', engraved by Van De Valde, 1857	1857	Van De Valde	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 3.6		Rachel's Tomb, near Bethlehem engraved by S. Bradshaw after a picture by W.H. Bartlett, published in The Christian in Palestine, about 1845	1845				
Chapter 4 cover Page			December 2010	Alessio romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 4.1		the Melkite Catholic Church, behind which part of Qos Al Zarara 'Damascus Gate' and the historic town of Bethlehem Appear in the background	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 4.2		The extension of Bethlehem towards the north, showing the Wall encroaching the town.	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 4.3		Pilgrims in the south aisle where the average number of visitors exceeded 2500 person/day	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Chapter 5 Cover Page		A view of the Manger Square looking east towards the Church of the Nativity and its architectural ensemble, Bethlehem Peace Center is to the left	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 5.1		Greek Orthodox priest inside the Basilica where according to the Status Quo the Greek Orthodox manage the majority of the place	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig 5.2		Tourists standing in queue in the southern nave of the Basilica in order to get inside the Grotto, the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities expects the number of visitors to Bethlehem to approach 1 million by the end of 2010.	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Chapter 6 Cover Page		The eastern elevation of the Church of St Catherine	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 6.1		Scout groups marching in the Manger Square, on their way to meet the Patriarch, marking the beginning of Christmas celebrations; the Patriarch is usually in a car that follows the groups on their way back	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Chapter 7 Cover Page		Pilgrims in the southern aisle of the Church of the Nativity	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.9		A photograph of Church of the Nativity c. 1880. From the start of Star-Street, looking south-east; the Zarara Gate along the Pilgrimage Route show in the middle right of the picture; the bell towers were not yet built, photograph by Felix Bonfils.	c. 1880	Felix Bonfils	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.10		The western elevation of the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem in 1894, after the construction of the bell tower of the Greek Orthodox convent and the Church of St.Catherine.	1894	Ch. Scolik,	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.11		A late nineteenth century of the Church of the Nativity and architectural ensemble, with bell towers; the tower of the mosque in the north-west corner of Manger Square is visible, top right from the north-west.	n/a	n/a			

Fig. 7.12		The wooden Chancel inside the Church of the Nativity, a photograph by Felix Bonfils c. 1870, the central lamp is covered with a white cloth, a tradition that the church follows during the Easter lent	c. 1870	Felix Bonfils	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.13		The Star of the Nativity above which sixteen lamps hang, four of which belong to the Latins, six to the Orthodox, and six to the Armenians.	c. 1870	Felix Bonfils	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.14		The manger of the Nativity	c. 1880	Felix Bonfils	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.15		A photograph looking towards the west showing the eastern side part of the Nativity ensemble and Bethlehem town 1857.	1857	Francis Frith	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.16		The Town of Bethlehem on its hill as it shows in some of the early photographs. The view is westwards from approximately the position of the modern Casa Nova hotel; the figures, left centre, appear to be processing towards the Church of the Nativity across what is now the northern side of Manger Square c. 1850	c. 1850	n/a			
Fig. 7.17		Same view of the Town of Bethlehem in 1894	1894	Ch. Scolik	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.18		a panoramic view of Bethlehem from the west looking towards the Church of the Nativity and the Pilgrimage Route c. 1880.	c. 1880	George Saboungi	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.20		City of Bethlehem, by Luigi Mayer: pilgrims approaching the town 1805.	1805	Luigi Mayer	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes

Fig. 7.21		Bethlehem, by Cornelis de Bruyn (1652-1726/7), from Bruyn, Cornelus de 1698, Reizen van... door Klein Asia.. Aegypten, Syria en Palestina. Delft Henrik van Krooneveld (Henrik van Krooneveld, Delft), pl. 137, after p. 276					
Fig. 7.22		Prospect der heutegen stadt Bethlehem von der Morgenseite betrachtet by Georg Borowsky (18th century) 276 x 494 mm			The Jewish National & University Library		
Fig. 7.23		Bethlehem Cite de David, et Ville de Judee, ou N. Seigneur prit Naissance by Jacques le eune Chéreau (1668-1776) 141 x 218 mm			The Jewish National & University Library		
Fig. 7.25		View of the Church of the Nativity and the surrounding ensemble, by H. Fenn Pinx, dated approximately between 1890 to 1899 .	1890-1899	H. Fenn Pinx	George Al Ama	George Al Ama	Yes
Fig. 7.26		Star Street, entering the Pilgrimage Route	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.27		a gate of a traditional Hosh, traditional house	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.28		Star Street	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.29		the Melkite Catholic Church along the Star Street	July 2010	Philip Hihi	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.30		a historic Stair connecting Star Street with the Buffer Zone; historically the agricultural terraces of the town	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.31		Qos Al Zarara, the Damascus Gate, historic entrance to Bethlehem	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.32		Hosh Hannania, a demolished building that is designed to be reconstructed by September 2011	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 7.33		Star Street inside the Gate	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.34		Ghazzawi Residence	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.35		after turning to the right the first glimpse of the fortress-like ensemble	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.36		a view to the west towards the historic town of Bethlehem	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.37		the Mosque of Omar at the western end of Manger Square	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.38		the forecourt in front of the Church looking at the Armenian Convent walls and belltower	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.39		the entrance to the Church of the Nativity	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.40		the red stone columns	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.41		a column inside the Church	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.42		the southern transept, leading to the Greek Orthodox Convent	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.43		the northern transept: the Armenians have the custody over this wall which displays Armenian icons	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.44		the wall mosaics on the northern wall of the nave	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.45		the roof of the Basilica	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.46		the eastern wall of the Basilica	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.47		the silver star inside the Grotto	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.48		the Greek Orthodox Garden to the east of the Church	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 7.49		the eastern elevation of St Catherine's Church and the Franciscan Convent	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.50		St. Jerome's Arcade to the west of St Catherine's Church	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.51		the pipe organ inside St Catherine's Church	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.52		the courtyard of the Armenian Convent	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.53		St Jerome's Chapel, just beneath the courtyard of St Jerome, accessible now from the Church of St Catherine	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.54		the bones of the Children said to have been executed by King Herod when he could not find Jesus	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.55		Bethlehem being prepared to receive Christmas 2010	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.56		Franciscan priest preparing the Church of St Catherine for the mid-night Christmas mass, an event that is broadcasted worldwide	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.57		pilgrims praying inside the Basilica	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.58		a Greek Orthodox priest leaving the Grotto	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.59		an Assyrian Orthodox priest in the Manger Square before the arrival of the Latin Patriarchate	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.60		scout groups entering the Manger Square in front of the car of the Latin Patriarchate	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.61		Palestinian girls in traditional dresses during the reception of the Patriarchate	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.62		Franciscan monks waiting the arrival of the Patriarchate	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes

Fig. 7.63		Mayor of Bethlehem welcoming the Latin Patriarchate	December 2010	Alessio Romenzi	Alessio Romenzi/CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.64		Balloons in the air of Manger Square during the annual children's parade for love and peace	December 2010	Mohammad Kattoush	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.65		a metaphoric dining table during a paper exhibition in Manger Square; one of many exhibitions and events held at the Square considered as the heart of the town	September 2010	Nada Atrash	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.66		youngsters drawing to express the love of life	September 2010	Nada Atrash	CCHP	CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.67		His Holiness Pope Benedict XV celebrating a mass in the Manger Square	May 2009	Nidal Atrash	Nidal Atrash/CCHP	Nidal Atrash	Yes
Fig. 7.68		Olive Harvest Festival	October 2003		Bethlehem Peace Center	Bethlehem Peace Center/CCHP	Yes
Fig. 7.69		Annual traditional Christmas Market	November 2010		Bethlehem Peace Center	Bethlehem Peace Center/CCHP	Yes

7.b Texts relating to protective designation, copies of property management plans or documented management systems and extracts of other plans related to the property

- Charter for the Safeguarding of Palestinian Historic Towns and Cultural Landscape – Bethlehem Charter 2008 Annexe 11
- Guidelines for the Conservation and Rehabilitation of the Historic Towns of Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sa-hour 2010 Annexe 12
- The Status Quo in the Holy Places (1852) as guaranteed in Article LXII of the Treaty of Berlin (1878) – the Status Quo of the Nativity, Bethlehem by Abdullah Effendi Kardus, M.B.E., formerly District Officer, Bethlehem Sub-District. Annexe 7

7.c Form and date of most recent records or inventory of property

No.	Map	Description	Date of map
1	The town of Bethlehem Aerial Photo	12.5 x 12.5 cm/pixel Digital ortho-photo to scale of 1:1250 in national geodetic precision using a digital mapping camera manufactured by Rollei with 39 MP. Available at CCHP, Bethlehem Municipality, and MoTA	December 2006
2	Aerial Maps	Scale 1/500 in national geodetic precision, rectified at CCHP for the Bethlehem Area Conservation and management Plan. Available at CCHP	April 2008
3	The Star Street ground floor plan	Surveys for the ground floor of the buildings (scale 1/100) conducted for the Star Street Area Urban Rehabilitation Plan – City of Bethlehem 1999. A research conducted by the Spanish Agency of International Cooperation, A. Martin Ramos & A. Peropadre Muniesa. Available at AECi Jerusalem (a copy at CCHP)	1999
4	The Pilgrimage Route, Ground floor and elevations	Survey of the ground floor and the street elevations, scale 1/500, CCHP	2010

7.d Address where inventory, records and archives are held

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7.e Bibliography

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8.b Official Local Institution/Agency**Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities**

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8.c Other Local Institutions**Centre for Cultural Heritage Preservation – Bethlehem**

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9. SIGNATURE ON BEHALF OF THE STATE PARTY

The nave of the Church
looking east towards the
iconostasis

Mahmoud Abbas
President
State of Palestine



وزارة السياحة والآثار
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Bethlehem