



Under Pressure: Representation, Information, and The Archive in Palestine

This guide aims to be an *entry point* to scholarship that deals specifically with the problems faced by information institutions such as libraries and archives in Palestine. Information institutions in Palestine face a unique set of pressures that stem from a settler-colonial history and the ongoing occupation of its land. The contributions in this guide offer historical, material, and theoretical analysis of how such conditions came to be and what strategies and tools have been adapted to confront these restrictions while nevertheless trying to preserve and make accessible information about Palestine.

While this guide is written in the form of a syllabus, its form by no means suggests any type of linear progression, nor that the categories used to lump readings are necessarily the most appropriate. Instead, we recognize that any attempt at offering any taxonomy to the subject of information in Palestine would be impossible given the paucity of sources and research, fractured by the very conditions of oppression that make it unique. As such, this syllabus offers an ad-hoc ten-week syllabus using potential themes that are designed to facilitate research into the field, raise discussions about the state of information in Palestine and promote further inquiry into the historical conditions of LIS in Palestine.

Created by the Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, Archives Working Group

1. Identity and the Politics of Representation

Said, Edward W. 1986. *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*. Columbia University Press.

Sa'di, Ahmad H., and Lila Abu-Lughod, eds. 2007. *Nakba: Palestine, 1948, and the Claims of Memory*. Cultures of History. New York: Columbia University Press.

Qato, Mezna. n.d. "Returns of the Archive." *The Nakba Files* (blog).
<https://nakbafiles.org/2016/06/01/returns-of-the-archive/>.

Mermelstein, Hannah, and Vani Natarajan. 2014. "In the World Knowledge, Access, and Resistance: A Conversation on Librarians and Archivists to Palestine." In *Informed Agitation: Library and Information Skills in Social Justice Movements and Beyond*, edited by Melissa Morrone. Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press.

2. Memory, heritage and national identity

De Cesari, Chiara. 2019. *Heritage and the Cultural Struggle for Palestine*. Stanford, California : Stanford University Press,.



Abu El-Haj, Nadia. 2001. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-Fashioning in Israeli Society*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Zerubavel, Yael. 1995. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. University of Chicago Press.

Butler, Beverley. 2010. "‘Keys of the Past: Keys to the Future’ - A Critical Analysis of the Construction of the Palestinian National Museum Policy as an Alternative Deconstruction of Routinised International Heritage Discourse." *Present Pasts* 2 (1). <https://doi.org/10.5334/pp.28>.

3. Looting, stealing, and the fracturing of the Palestinian archive

Masalha, Nur. 2012. "Appropriating History: Looting of Palestinian Records, Archives and Library Collections, 1948–2011." In *The Palestine Nakba Decolonising History, Narrating the Subaltern, Reclaiming Memory*, 135–47. London: Zed Books.

Sela, Rona. 2018. "The Genealogy of Colonial Plunder and Erasure – Israel’s Control over Palestinian Archives." *Social Semiotics* 28 (2): 201–29.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1291140>.

Amit, Gish. 2008. "Ownerless Objects? The Story of the Books Palestinians Left behind in 1948." *Jerusalem Quarterly*, 14.

Amit, Gish. 2011. "Salvage or Plunder? Israel’s Collection of Private Palestinian Libraries in West Jerusalem." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 40 (4): 6–23.
<https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2011.XL.4.6>.

Fischbach, Michael R. 2003. *Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*. Columbia University Press.

4. The Question of (the archives of) Palestine

Doumani, Beshara. 2009. "Archiving Palestine and the Palestinians: The Patrimony of Ihsan Nimr." *Jerusalem Quarterly*, no. 36 (Winter).

Habash, Lourdes, and Raed Bader. 2014. "The Palestinian Digital Archive between Anarchy and Anti-Method: A Critical View." In *Tomorrows*. Birzeit University.

Davis, Caitlin M. 2016. "Archiving Governance in Palestine." *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies*, 18.



Heacock, Roger. 2011. "Locating and Opening Palestinian Archives: A National Priority." *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1801124>.

5. Libraries and Palestine

Khader, Majed. 2012. *2.17 Palestinian Territory, Occupied. Challenges and Obstacles in Palestinian Libraries. Libraries in the Early 21st Century, Volume 2*. De Gruyter Saur. <https://www.degruyter.com/document/doi/10.1515/9783110292855.425/html>.

Mermelstein, Hannah. n.d. "Overdue Books: Returning Palestine's 'Abandoned Property' of 1948," 21.

Stillman, Larry. n.d. "Books in Space: Contested Territories and Memories," 23.

Roberts, Deanna K. 2020. "Libraries and Access to Information In Palestine: Impacts of Military Occupation." *Atla Summary of Proceedings*, December, 32–57. <https://doi.org/10.31046/proceedings.2020.1900>.

6. Methods: Fieldwork, archives, oral history and the problems of historiography

Banko, Lauren. 2012. "Occupational Hazards, Revisited: Palestinian Historiography." *The Middle East Journal* 66 (3): 440–52. <https://doi.org/10.3751/66.3.13>.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2018. "Doing Things with Archives." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1).

Sleiman, Hana, and Kaoukab Chebaro. 2018. "Narrating Palestine: The Palestinian Oral History Archive Project." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 47 (2): 63–76. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2018.47.2.63>.

7. In the Zionist Archives

Azoulay, Ariella. 2015. "Photographic Conditions: Looting, Archives, and the Figure of the 'Infiltrator.'" *Institute for Palestine Studies*, no. 61 (Winter): 6–22.

Tirosh, Noam, and Amit M. Schejter. 2020. "The Regulation of Archives and Society's Memory: The Case of Israel." *Archival Science*, March. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-020-09337-w>.

Azoulay, Ariella, and Charles S Kamen. 2015. *From Palestine to Israel A Photographic Record of Destruction and State Formation, 1947-1950*. London: Pluto Press.



Anziska, Seth. 2019. "Special Document File: THE ERASURE OF THE NAKBA IN ISRAEL'S ARCHIVES." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 49 (1): 64–76. <https://doi.org/10.1525/jps.2019.49.1.64>.

Akevot. 2019. "SILENCING: DSDE's Concealment of Documents in Archives." Tel Aviv: Akevot.

8. Cultural Institutions under Occupation

Barakat. 2018. "Lifta, the Nakba, and the Museumification of Palestine's History." *Native American and Indigenous Studies* 5 (2): 1. <https://doi.org/10.5749/natiindistudj.5.2.0001>.

Burke, Francesca. 2020. "Exhibiting Activism at the Palestinian Museum." *Critical Military Studies* 6 (3–4): 360–75. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23337486.2020.1745473>.

Bshara, Khaldun. 2013. "Heritage in Palestine: Colonial Legacy in Postcolonial Discourse." *Archaeologies* 9 (2): 295–319. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11759-013-9235-2>.

9. Speaking back—the potential history of non-violence and *becoming* Palestine

Azoulay, Ariella. 2013. "Potential History: Thinking through Violence." *Critical Inquiry* 39 (3): 548–74. <https://doi.org/10.1086/670045>.

Azoulay, Ariella. 2019. *Potential History Unlearning Imperialism*. New York: Verso.

Butler, Beverley. 2020. "Archives 'Act Back': Re-Configuring Palestinian Archival Constellations and Visions of Social Justice." In *Archives, Recordkeeping, and Social Justice*. Routledge.

Abbas, Basel, and Ruanne Abou-Rahme. 2013. "The Archival Multitude." *Journal of Visual Culture* 12 (3): 345–63. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1470412913502031>.

Gutman, Yifat. 2021. *Memory Activism: Reimagining the Past for the Future in Israel-Palestine*. Vanderbilt University Press.

Hochberg, Gil Z. 2021. *Becoming Palestine: Toward an Archival Imagination of the Future*. Duke University Press.



10. Decolonize

Sayigh, Rosemary. 2015. "Oral History, Colonialist Dispossession, and the State: The Palestinian Case." *Settler Colonial Studies* 5 (3): 193–204. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.955945>.

Stoler, Ann Laura. 2018. "On Archiving as Dissensus." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 38 (1): 43–56. <https://doi.org/10.1215/1089201x-4389967>.

Abu-Lughod, Lila. 2020. "Imagining Palestine's Alter-Natives: Settler Colonialism and Museum Politics." *Critical Inquiry* 47 (1): 1–27. <https://doi.org/10.1086/710906>.

Sela, Rona. 2021. "Ghosts in the Archive: The Palestinian Villages and the Decolonial Archives." *GeoJournal*, May. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-020-10364-4>.