

Palästina in 18 German Archives



By Carol Khoury

Studying Palestine, regardless of motivations and scope, has been a common interest among many Western countries since at least the mid-seventeenth century. One can argue, however, that the early foundations of “Palestine studies”

in its current form were laid in the very early twentieth century with a cornerstone contribution by the German scholar Gustaf Dalman, who was the first to use the term *Palästinawissenschaft* (lit.: Palestine science).

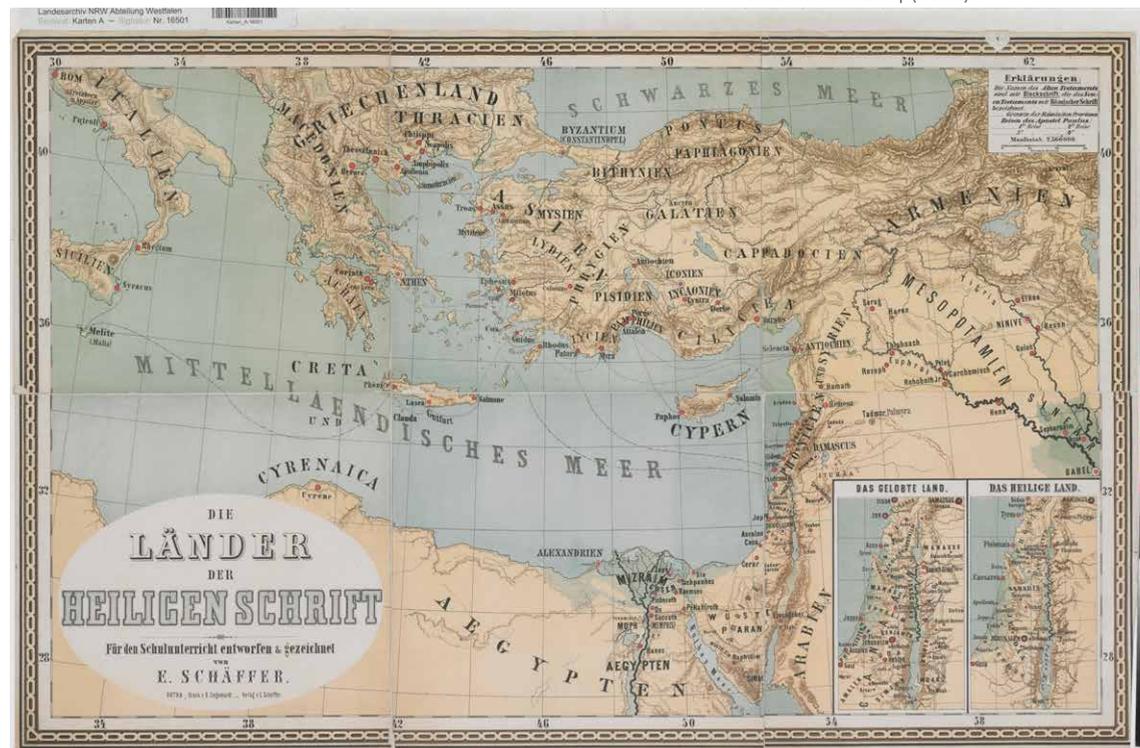
The Germans were much invested in Palestine, as evidenced in the extremely diverse and branched archives on Palestine collected by Germans and available now in Germany, in other German-speaking or European countries, as well as in Palestine. A detailed survey of all sources is beyond the scope of this article; nonetheless, the partial survey of archives presented below aspires to attract new interest and to serve as a starting point for further investigation. This alphabetical list of sources is in no way comprehensive or complete, but it is certainly a journey of institutional archives as well as a journey back in time! Enjoy!

Archives in North Rhine-Westphalia (LNW):ⁱⁱ The German Society of the Holy Sepulchre was the first among Germanophone Catholic missionaries to appear in Palestine shortly after its founding in Cologne in 1855, but starting in 1895 it became the German Society of the Holy Land. Famous for setting up and managing institutions such as Tabgha Pilgrims’ House, the Paulus Hospice, and Dormition Abbey, the society started in 1857 to publish *The Holy Land: Journal of the Society of the Holy Sepulcher* that later became *The Holy Land: Journal of the Society of the Holy Land*. In 1927, the society started publishing *News Bulletin of the German Society of the Holy Land*. All issues of all three publications can be found in LNW as well as in the library of Dormition Abbey in Jerusalem.

The famous German Society for the Exploration of Palestine, alternatively called the German Palestine Society, was founded in 1877. In 1878 in Leipzig, it started publishing the *Journal of the German Palestine Society* that later became the official journal of the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology (GPIA; more information available under Gottlieb Schumann Institute below). All its issues are available in the institute’s library and in LNW.

Archive of the Regional Church, Stuttgart:ⁱⁱⁱ One of the most prominent personalities of the Germanophone missionary movement was without doubt Johann Ludwig Schneller, founder of the Syrian Orphanage.

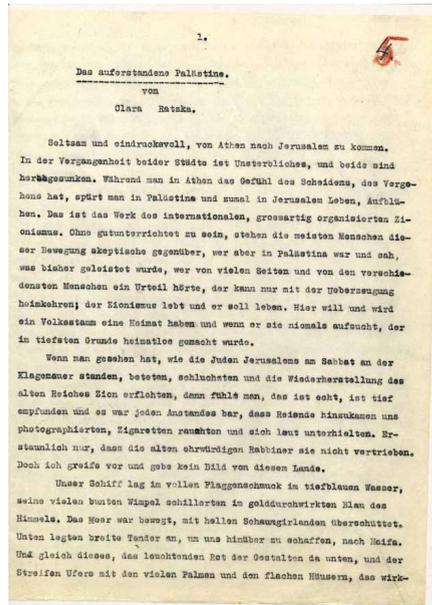
Palestine East Mediterranean School Map “The Lands of the Holy Scriptures” before 1914. Available at LNW, Archivsuche | Archive in Nordrhein Westfalen | (nrw.de).^{xx}



From the year 1862 on, Schneller published the *Annual Report of the Syrian Orphanage in Jerusalem*. Beginning in 1886, he also released a journal with more general information on his missionary activities, called *The Messenger from Zion*, later renamed *The Schneller Messenger*. The main part of the orphanage's archive ended up in Stuttgart; another part found its way into the collection of the Ben-Zvi Institute that now holds a few diaries and about 750 photographs. Some pictures date back as far as the turn of the century, but the bulk of them were taken in the 1920s and 1930s and mostly capture images of the daily life of orphanage employees.

The archive also contains about 10,000 pictures taken by worth-mentioning missionary Paul Hommel. A professional photographer from Stuttgart, he travelled around Palestine numerous times from 1927 on, taking photos of missionary establishments, local inhabitants, and Jewish and German settlements. Hommel's collection ended up in Stuttgart. The photos are found in the collection "Bildnissammlung historische Fotos aus Palästina."

Bavarian State Archives, Munich:^{iv} Even though Germany's military presence in Palestine was very short (c. mid-1917 to c. September 1918), the Germanophone archives offer a treasure of written and visual archival material for the whole duration of WWI. By far, the largest and most comprehensive collection of photographs is held by the Bavarian State Archives. Available online, it consists of nearly 3,000 photos, around 400 of which are ground photographs while the rest are aerial ones taken between November 1917 and September 1918 by the Bavarian Air Force Department 304 for the



First page of Clara Ratzka's *Das auferstandene Palästina* (The Resurrected Palestine), a travelogue written in 1928. Available at Münster city archive.^{xx}

Jildirim Army Group. They map in detail neighboring territories and all regions of Palestine from Saida to Gaza. This unique and novel collection (the airplane was just being developed at this time) offers a sort of visual encyclopedia of Palestine and may be used to acquire different data for a range of research focuses. All photographs are described in detail in German. One hundred of these photographs were chosen by Dalman (see more under Gottlieb Schumacher Institute) and published in 1925 in *Hundert Deutsche Fiegerbilder aus Palästina* (One Hundred German Aerial Photographs from Palestine).

Dormition Abbey Library, Jerusalem:^v This archive holds mostly the same material as the LNV.

Evangelical Central Archives, Berlin:^{vi} While German missionaries to Palestine date back to the Middle

Ages, the Protestant Church was the first to commence direct activity in Palestine by establishing a joint British-Prussian bishopric in 1841. Protestant missions in Palestine were supported initially by the Jerusalem Society and later on by the Jerusalem Foundation. Both foundations initially assisted existing establishments, and from the 1860s onward founded their independent communities. In 1853, *Annual Report of the Jerusalem Society* started to appear. The issues from the years 1853–1881 can be found at the GPIA. Today, the archive holds documents of these institutions as well as the files of the Protestant Church's Office of Exterior Relations that are concerned with the Jerusalem community.

Forum for International Photography, Mannheim:^{vii} Part of the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums in Mannheim, the Forum for International Photography in Germany holds presumably the first coherent collection of photographs from Palestine. It also holds 36 unique photos of Jerusalem from 1864 by Jakob Lorent, and a 220-item collection of photos of religious and Biblical sites in the Levant by the Reiß siblings.

Friedrich Schiller University, Jena: Here, one finds the Alphons Stübel Collection of Early Photographs of the Orient.^{viii} It comprises about 550 pictures taken in the Levant before 1904 (mostly mid- and late nineteenth century). A small part of the collection is accessible online, of which 61 photos are recognized as being from Palestine. Most were taken by the Bonfils Studio.

German Archive of Photographers: One of the private collections from WWI's Palestine front belongs to Rudolf Kroll,^{ix} at the time a German Imperial Radio operator. His photos show soldiers as well as local

Foreign archives are works of magic. They serve as windows for their creators; they serve as mirrors for their subjects.

inhabitants. Around 40 items can be seen in high quality and downloaded from the website.

German Federal Archives, Berlin:^x One year after the joint British-Prussian bishopric was founded in 1841, Prussia in 1842 was the first Germanophone state to establish a consulate in Jerusalem, and later established vice-consulates in Acre, Haifa, and Jaffa. The original documents of these bodies are held in the Israel State Archives in Jerusalem (as are those of the Austrian consulate in Jerusalem (1903–1938), some of the Templer colonies' documents, and documents of local National Socialist German Workers' party [NSDAP or Nazi party] cells). About half of these sources are scanned and uploaded in very high quality. The German authorities after WWI copied the consulate's 2,700 files and distributed them amongst German state archives, including the Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin, and numerous regional branches of the Federal Archives.

Aside from copies of the consular documents from Palestine, the Federal Archives hold a collection of some 100 photographs from Palestine from WWI and individual pictures from later periods. Several personal collections of officers and soldiers of the German army comprise not only further photos, memoirs, and correspondence but also operational



Gustaf Dalman 1902 (?)
(Dalman-Nachlaß Greifswald)

Gustaf Dalman, c. 1902.
Available at Greifswald
University.^{xii}

maps of war activities, flight logbooks, and similar material of military nature. Berlin's Federal Archives furthermore contain two files of particular interest to military history: The first includes photographs of mostly buildings and landscape by Franz Gürtner, a German officer who travelled across the Levant, including Palestine, in 1917–1918. The second piece is a book called *Luftgeographische Beschreibung von Syrien-Palästina (Aerial Description of the Geography of Syria-Palestine)*. It was printed in 1941 for the internal use of the German army and could represent a fascinating supplement to the aerial photographs from WWI.

German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in the Holy Land (GPIA), Jerusalem:^{xiii}

In 1900, the German Protestant Institute of Archaeology (GPIA), the research Unit of the German Protestant Institute for Classical Studies of the Holy Land, was established in Jerusalem, and the theologian Gustaf Dalman became its first director. Dalman ranks high

in terms of material and intellectual legacy. Working in Palestine 1900–1914, and on Palestine until his death in 1941, Dalman left a tremendous amount of material and various collections: stones, wood pieces, animals, 314 stuffed birds, a herbarium of over 900 plant species, objects of daily use, musical instruments, coins, clothing, an archaeological collection, limestone models of oil presses and graves, as well as an extensive photo collection and a library.

The main body of Dalman's collection, about 15,000 items (mostly photographs), is held by the Gustaf Dalman Institute of Ernst Moritz University in Greifswald, where Dalman taught after returning to Germany. Some 2,000 pictures are accessible online; the remaining about 300 pictures remain in glass negatives at the GPIA offices on the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. In addition, the Gustaf Dalman Institute holds a rich library, mostly in German, on the physical and

historical conditions of Palestine. Its cartographical collection also deserves attention, as it contains historical maps of Palestine from the seventeenth century on, and military maps used by the British and German armies in 1917–1918. Furthermore, the Dalman Institute holds all issues of the GPIA's *Annual Review on Palestine of the German Protestant Institute for Archaeology of the Holy Land in Jerusalem*, published 1905–1941.

Other GPIA holdings include all issues of the *Journal of the German Palestine Society*, published by the German Palestine Society (see LNW); the *Annual Report* from the years 1853–1881, issued by the Jerusalem Society and the Jerusalem Foundation (see explanation under Evangelical Central Archives); all publications issued by the German Society of the Holy Sepulchre (see LNW) during the years 1870–1930; and the issues of Hoffmann's *Sentinel* (see Temple Society Archive, Stuttgart) published in 1895 and from 1898 to 1904.

GPIA also holds the issues published in 1881 and 1886–1891 of *Jerusalem: An Annual Paper for the Promotion of Scientifically Accurate Knowledge of Palestine Today and in the Past*. It was the second scholarly journal on Palestine (after the *Journal of the German Palestine Society* explained under LNW), and appeared in Jerusalem 1881–1913.

Gottlieb Schumacher Institute (GSI), Haifa:^{xiv} This archive is very important. Situated in Haifa's Keller House, the Gottlieb Schumacher Institute (GSI) holds materials collected from the houses of Templers, most notably from the documents and private belongings of the architect Karl Rugg, the founder and correspondent of the NSDAP cell in Palestine, and all issues of Hoffmann's *Sentinel* (see Temple Society Archive, Stuttgart).

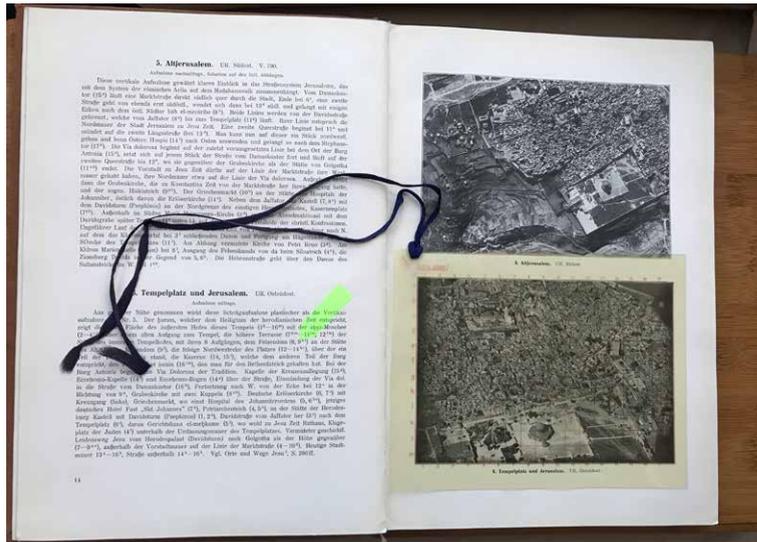
Gustaf Dalman Institute, Greifswald:^{xv} As explained under German Protestant Institute of Archaeology in the Holy Land, the main body of Gustaf Dalman's work, about 15,000 items (mostly photographs), is held by the Gustaf Dalman Institute of Ernst Moritz University in Greifswald, where Dalman taught after returning to Germany.

Humboldt University, Berlin:^{xvi} This archive contains the collection of Hugo Greßmann, one of the many theologians who visited Palestine and was hosted by GPIA. He travelled around Palestine in 1906 and brought back to Germany his whole collection of some 1,500 glass negatives that were mainly bought from American Colony photographers.

Museum Ludwig, Cologne:^{xvii} Similar to the collections held at the Forum for International Photography, Museum Ludwig in Cologne holds three notable collections. Here, one can find an album of photos taken in the 1850s by Wilhelm von Herford, an employee of the Prussian consulate, and another album called *Jérusalem* by Auguste Salzman, dating from 1855. In addition, there is the Francis Firth collection from 1860, titled *Sinai und Palästina*.

Museum of Ethnography, Stockholm:^{xviii} Sweden owns an interesting Germanophone source on Palestine, held at the Museum of Ethnography in Stockholm. It contains a travelogue in German titled *Jerusalem* (published in Leipzig in 1918) along with 83 negatives, which are the result of a journey to the Palestinian front in 1916, taken by the famous Swedish explorer Sven Hedin.

Political Archive of the Federal Foreign Office in Berlin: See explanation under Federal Archives,



A page of Dalman's book, with the grid placed on top of photo to correspond to the annotated caption. Photo by author.

Berlin, regarding originals at Israel State Archives.

Temple Society Archive, Stuttgart^{xvii}

The Templers have a huge presence in several archives. According to the current website of the Temple Society, "The name 'Temple,' based on New Testament texts ... expresses itself through the members of the community who see themselves as living components of God's temple." In a sense, they were the spearhead of the direct Germanophone colonization of Palestine that commenced in 1868; however, their founder and spiritual leader Christoph Hoffman was in Palestine for over a decade prior to that year. In 1845, Hoffman started publishing *South German Sentinel*, which later became the official mouthpiece of the Temple Society. Until 1949, the *Sentinel* (it changed names several times: *The Temple's Sentinel* and *Jerusalem Sentinel*) kept an up-to-date record of what happened in the colonies. Stuttgart's Archive of the Temple Society holds, in addition to a full record of the *Sentinel* publications,

all works of the society's founder and spiritual leader Christoph Hoffmann and his collaborators, reports by the Templers, and a collection of all available works on the Templers' history. Moreover, it holds a genealogical collection on the members, as well as literature on and photographs of Palestine.

The Loytved-Hardegg family archive has material that dates back to the year 1838, collected by Georg David Hardegg, the Temple Society's worldly leader and early mayor of the Haifa colony.^{xviii}

In Australia, where many Templers were interned during WWII, the Temple Society has its own archive at the Temple Society Australia Archives in Melbourne.

The Unity Archives, Herrnhut: The Moravian Church, which maintained a hospital for lepers in Jerusalem, known in English by its latter name Hansen Hospital, has several of its files here, with some dating back as far as the nineteenth century.

These archives contain treasures about the history of Palestine and Germany's interest in Palestine, the Holy Land. As more and more archives are being digitized and made available online, one can only expect to learn more about this topic. Overall, the rich material currently already available gives a fair insight, notwithstanding the dear need to make it accessible to a wider audience by providing fuller translations.

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Note: Given the limited scope of this article and for easier reading, the German names of the institutions and publications have been omitted. Access to most of the institutions can be found in links provided in the endnotes.

SCAN TO SHARE



- ⁱ This survey's findings are based mainly on a search using archivportal-d.de and deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de.
- ⁱⁱ For more information, please visit Archive in Nordrhein Westfalen at <https://www.archive.nrw.de/>.
- ⁱⁱⁱ See Landeskirchliches Archiv, Stuttgart, available at <https://www.archiv.elk-wue.de/>.
- ^{iv} See Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv, available at <https://www.gda.bayern.de/archive/hauptstaatsarchiv/>.
- ^v See Dormitio Abtei Jerusalem, available at <http://www.dormitio.net/abtei/index.html>.
- ^{vi} See Evangelisches Zentralarchiv Berlin, available at <https://ezab.de/benutzung.html>, for searches go to <http://kab.scopearchiv.ch/suchinfo.aspx>.
- ^{vii} See Reiss-Engelhorn-Museen, Forum Internationale Photographie, available at <https://www.rem-mannheim.de/forum-internationale-photographie/>, and <https://www.rem-mannheim.de/sammlungen/forum-internationale-photographie/>.
- ^{viii} For more information, please visit <https://www.uni-jena.de/191220-orientforschung>.
- ^{ix} To view the collection, visit Deutsche Fotothek at <https://www.deutschefotothek.de/>, search for Rudolph Kroll, and view photographs nos. 68 to 106.
- ^x To search the Bundesarchiv, please visit <https://www.bundesarchiv.de/DE/Navigation/Home/home.html>.
- ^{xi} For more information, please visit the website of the Deutsches Evangelisches Institut für die Altertumswissenschaften des Heiligen Landes (DEI) at <https://www.deiahl.de/en/>.
- ^{xii} For more information, please visit the website of the Gottlieb-Schumacher-Institut zur Erforschung des christlichen Beitrages zum Wiederaufbau Palästinas im 19. Jahrhundert at <https://resau.haifa.ac.il/2017/01/30/the-gottlieb-schumacher-institute/>.
- ^{xiii} For more information, please visit the website of the Gustaf Dalman Institut at <https://theologie.uni-greifswald.de/gdi/>.
- ^{xiv} For more information, please visit Humboldt-Universität Berlin, Sammlung historischer Palästinabilder, available at <https://www.theologie.hu-berlin.de/de/professuren/stellen/at/palaestina>.
- ^{xv} To search the collection of Museum Ludwig, please visit the website <https://museum-ludwig.kulturelles-erbe-koeln.de/>.
- ^{xvi} For more information, please visit Carlotta Museum's website and search for Sven Hedin, Jerusalem, at <https://collections.smvk.se/carlotta-em/web>.
- ^{xvii} For more information, please visit the website of the Tempelgesellschaft at <https://www.tempelgesellschaft.de/en/home.php>.
- ^{xviii} For more information, please contact the Tempelgesellschaft and visit <https://archivfuehrer-kolonialzeit.de/loytved-hardegg-familienarchiv-bestand>.
- ^{xix} Link: [Archivsuche | Archive in Nordrhein Westfalen | \(nrw.de\)](#).
- ^{xx} Link: [Archivsuche | Archive in Nordrhein Westfalen | \(nrw.de\)](#).
- ^{xxi} Link: [Gustaf Dalman - Deutsche Digitale Bibliothek \(deutsche-digitale-bibliothek.de\)](#).