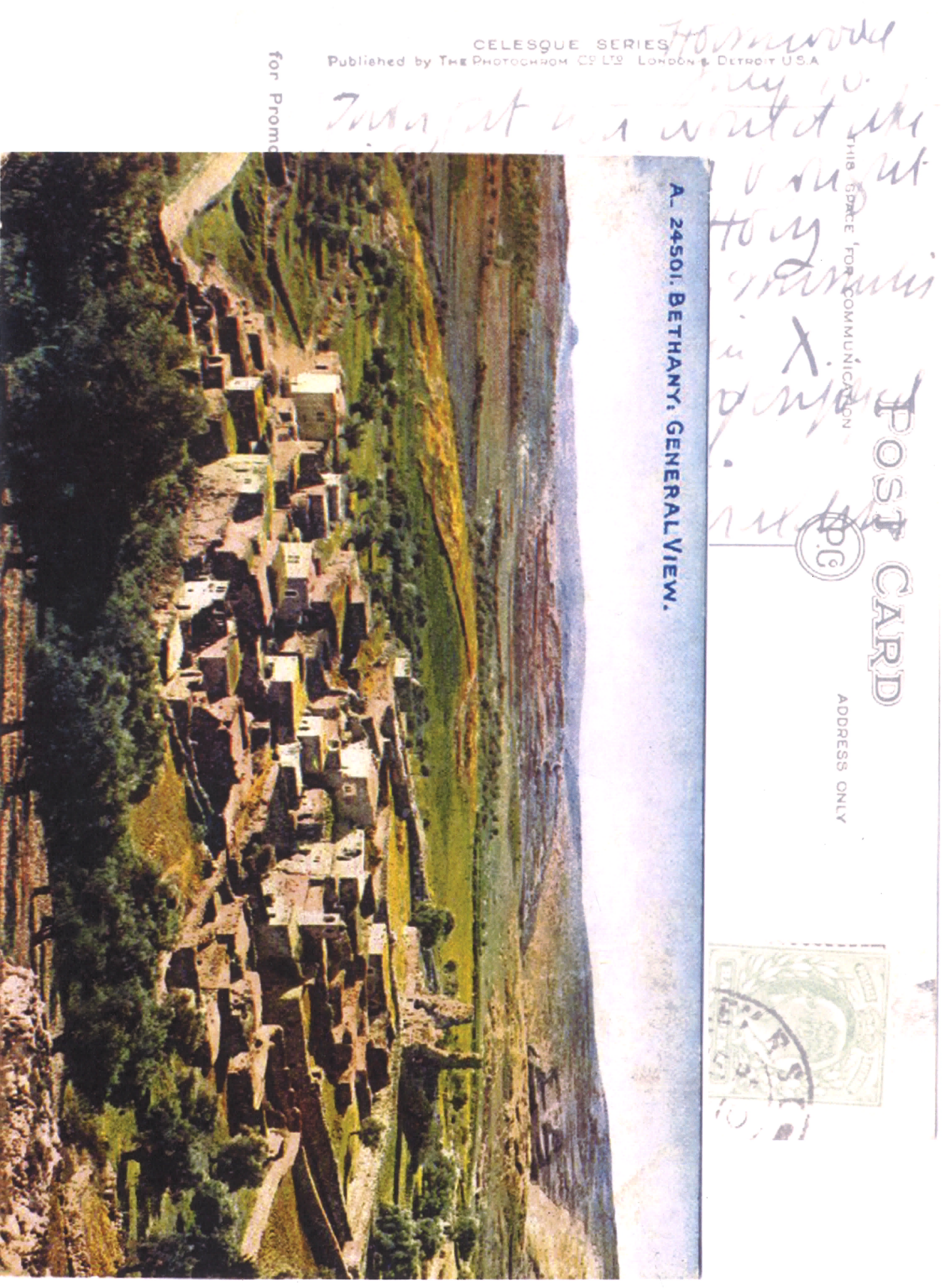


A. 24501. BETHANY: GENERAL VIEW.





# General Views: From Bethany to al-Eizariya



# International Training Programme Room 3 Project

25 August 2016

Supported by the Barakat Trust





## **Exhibition Brief:**

### **General Views: from Bethany to al-Eizariya**

The idea is to tell the story of a place (Bethany/al-Eizariya) through this postcard. On the first wall to the left, the audience would see material related to ancient Bethany through stories from the bible, mentioning its role as a pathway to Jerusalem located only 2 kilometers away. The wall could even be faced in similar bricks as the buildings might have had in ancient Bethany, and there could be a small miniature model of how Bethany may have looked in those ancient times.

This wall could also mention other important events and sites in that area such as Muslims settling there in the 7th century, and a mosque built there by Saladin (al-Aziz Mosque in 1187), also an 11th century tower built by the crusaders (to be shown in an interactive map, which the audience will see in the next)

The postcard itself will be mounted on the wall opposite to the entrance and underneath it next to the label would be a map from ancient times on a touchscreen with a slider-control, which has a timeline reaching to present-day al-Eizariya (user interactivity) depicting the changes affecting Bethany over time (from ancient times to the present linking the ancient site to the socio-political issues of today)

The third and last final wall in room 3 would be about present-day al-Eizariya, concentrating on the "marginalization" of the town and the poor infrastructure there, mentioning the overcrowding, providing more information on the general situation of nearby Jerusalem. This space would also include, most importantly, a video of less than 5 minutes-featuring interviews with residents of the town today, asking them what the sites mean to them, what their challenges are, and how their lives have changed with time, the difficulties they face, do they feel this place to be "holy" as it may have once been, and more, making the voices of the residents there today be heard and sending the message they want to send.

## Looking Forward to a Better Future

Today, Bethany is known as al-Eizariya, an Arab town near occupied Jerusalem, in the West Bank. Located only 2 kilometres away from the al-Aqsa Mosque, al-Eizariya is known as Jerusalem's eastern gate and is home to a population of 30,000 Palestinians making it the second largest Palestinian municipality in the Jerusalem Governorate.

After 1967, lands from al-Eizariya were confiscated and annexed to the nearby settlement of Ma'ale Adumim and control over water sources was taken over by the Israeli Authorities. Today, many residents face unemployment with the decline in agriculture and overpopulation.

The Israeli Authorities started building a wall around the West Bank in 2002, and continue to build it until today, isolating al-Eizariya from the rest of Jerusalem, making it difficult for the residents to access medical centers, schools, and markets.

Despite all the difficulties they face, the residents aim to develop al-Eizariya independently and with the help of development projects in order to provide a better outlook for future generations.

## The use of postcards

For over a hundred years (1870), people have used postcards to send mail to family and friends all over the world. The postcard nevertheless has been used for more than just mail. Postcards have depicted pictures of events, places, people, and often carried a message, sometimes functioning as propaganda, other times as souvenirs, and sometimes as advertisement.

In Palestine, many postcards depicted an expected and typical image of the "Holy Land", believed to be the cradle of many faiths and religions and holy to Muslim Christians and Jews. Images of the 'Holy Land' at the time, often depicted biblical imagery with a focus on specific holy places and images of shepherds, or locals dressed in certain ways. These images were often staged by a photographer reinforcing people's expectations of the place, and completely discarding the reality of conflict and hardships of daily life there.

Postcards today are being used more than ever as gateways into the lives of people in the recent past, and have been useful for research into a certain era's social heritage.

## Bethany through Time

This specific postcard from Palestine is showing a general view of ancient Bethany, or present-day al-Eizariya العيزرية . The name of the town derives from the word for Lazarus in Arabic, Eli'azar.

Bethany is a popular site of pilgrimage. It is believed by many to be the site of the miracle at the Tomb of Lazarus, which is mentioned in the New Testament. It was here that Jesus was thought to have brought Lazarus back to life and raised him from death.

It is also claimed that Bethany is the site where Jesus rested for drinking and washing while traveling from the Jordan Valley to Jerusalem and also the site where Jesus is said to have ascended up to heaven leaving his disciples.

Its sanctity has led it to be associated with many other biblical events. For example, it is believed to have been the location of the house of Simon (Sam'an) the Leper, and the location of the visit by Jesus to Mary and Martha (Lazarus' sisters).

Postcard  
Palestine, 1910

This 8.6 x 13.9cm postcard printed on paper depicts a reproduction of a painting by an unknown painter showing a general view of Bethany and its surroundings.

Published and printed in London by Photochrom Co., Ltd. This postcard has been previously used and mailed. A vicar had acquired this postcard in the 'Holy Land', but it appears to have been sent from England by a lady called Geraldine to a Miss Jackson, here in London.

EPH-ME.3007