

Arts & Crafts and the Great City: Charles Robert Ashbee in Jerusalem

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The aim of the paper is to bring together art and the city by linking town planning and the Arts & Crafts movement. This association is evident in the theoretical writing and professional practice of the architect Charles Robert Ashbee (1863–1942), whose work is characterized by a blend of tradition and innovation. Ashbee, a prominent artist, served as a British town planner in Jerusalem, assisting its first governor, Sir Ronald Storrs, in laying out the city and providing services for its inhabitants. In Jerusalem, Ashbee received his only chance to realize his artistic urban Utopia. The paper discusses Ashbee as a town planner and explores his artistic urban ideal, revealing his comprehensive appreciation of the city and its constituent artistic and social traits, and his combination of the modern requirements of a growing city with traditional artistic ideals. This was the basis of Ashbee's work in Jerusalem and determined many of its results. In many ways, Ashbee's ideas still guide the development of Jerusalem to this day, embodying a unique contribution of the Arts & Crafts movement to modern town planning.

Introduction

General Ronald Storrs, the first District Governor of Jerusalem under British rule, was said to have been blessed with 'Napoleonic vision' for having provided Jerusalem with a town plan [1]. This, as well as many of his other actions in the city, was made possible by the machinations of a voluntary society whose secretary was the Arts & Crafts practitioner and architect Charles Robert Ashbee.

The story of Ashbee's life and artistic accomplishments is long and excitingly entangled in the rich life of Victorian England [2]. He was born in London in 1863 to a wealthy family and read history at Cambridge, where he became acquainted with the writings of Augustus W. Pugin (1812–52) and John Ruskin (1819–1900), idealists who strove to aid society and its art cope with the great difficulties posed by the modern industrial world. Following their

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lead, Ashbee believed that the art produced by a society was the only appropriate standard for appraising its happiness and well-being. After completing his studies, he moved into Toynbee Hall in London's East End, where he held an evening class in Ruskin's writings. Under the influence of William Morris (1834–96), in 1888 he founded the Guild and School of Handicrafts, which was intended to improve the quality of life of the workers, most of whom were local, and to ensure genuine and deserving artistic production. In 1901 Ashbee embarked on an adventure advocated by many but realized by few, and moved his Guild to Chipping Campden, a small village in the Cotswolds. The Guild's work in the village was, idealistically, fully integrated into village life and included a school and weekly lectures. The distance from London and lack of money eventually caused the dismantling of the Guild in 1906.

The move back into industrial London, from which he had briefly escaped, made Ashbee reconsider his attitude towards the Great City. In 1908, he wrote Craftsmanship in Competitive Industry: Being a Record of the Workshops of the Guild of Handicraft, and Some Deductions from their Twenty-One Years' Experience [3]. In this work he examined the city's advantages over the country and offered an initial compromise between the two conflicting sets of values.

This suggestion eventually turned into a full urban ideal, resting on artistic social ideals yet embracing the newly recognized advantages of proper town planning. His Utopia was partly realized in Britain, but only in Mandatory Palestine did Ashbee get the chance to realize it in full. Ashbee was the second British planner working in Jerusalem after its occupation by the British in 1917. His plan for the city was quickly overshadowed by that of Patrick Geddes, by then an established planner and the third one to arrive in the city, and was eventually considered to be less important. However, many of Ashbee's ideas and innovations were incorporated in Geddes' plan, and many of his other endeavours in the city had already made their mark. A new reading of Ashbee as a town planner provides a better appreciation of his contribution to the city, as well as allowing a renewed appreciation of Ashbee himself as a practitioner of the modern ideas of town planning, according to an original urban theory hitherto neglected. Such a reading also highlights one more strand of planning cities, that of the contribution of the Arts & Crafts movement, providing another perspective on the evolution of modern town planning, which was then in its early stages.

This paper discusses Ashbee's transformation from a traditional Arts & Crafts practitioner, opposed to the Great City and its industrial ills, into one who embraced, albeit reluctantly, the advantages of the Machine, eventually finding his way into the emergent town-planning movement. It will also describe Ashbee's urban theory, based on his well-established artistic ideals, yet incorporating many modern urban conventions and resting on many of his contemporaries' inventions, and finally culminating in his book of 1917, Where the Great City Stands [4]. After discussing Ashbee's experience as a town planner in Britain, his summons to plan Jerusalem will be presented as a direct result of his artistic background, and his goals and achievements in Jerusalem will be discussed as an attempt to plan the Holy City as an artistic, albeit modern, metropolis.

The dual goals of the article, therefore, are to present an artistic examination of town planning as it was finding its way at the beginning of the twentieth century, and to consider Ashbee's hitherto neglected work in Jerusalem as a culmination of his artistic ideals.

Guild, city and machine

GUILD AND MACHINE: SHOULD WE STOP TEACHING ART?

Ashbee's supposed reconciliation with the machine had been suggested by Nikolaus Pevsner as early as 1936. Although Ashbee was regarded as an established Arts & Crafts artist, representing the movement and its ideals both theoretically and artistically, Pevsner claimed that he was not so much a romantic artist symbolizing an era as a rebel, an exception in his time. Pevsner based his argument on the first axiom of Ashbee's much-disputed book, Should We Stop Teaching Art? (1911), which states: 'Modern Civilisation rests on machinery, and no system for the endowment, or the encouragement, or the teaching of art can be sound that does not recognise this' [5]. Pevsner asserted that Ashbee had thus abandoned the Arts & Crafts doctrine in favour of a basic assumption of the Modernist movement, and was intent on forging a path to the future by accepting the modern machine and its use [6].

One of the reasons later given for this apparent change was Ashbee's dramatic meeting with Frank Lloyd Wright (1867–1959), who convinced Ashbee of the advantages of modern machinery [7]. Ashbee met Wright for the first time on a visit to Chicago in 1900, and again in 1908. Ashbee's journal entries from his visits to America convey an excited celebration of the power of the machine [8]. In September 1911 Wright visited Ashbee in England, and asked him to write the introduction to a new book describing Wright's work [9]. It has been claimed that writing about Wright influenced Ashbee's own book [10], yet it is too often overlooked that Ashbee had already made the connection between the place of the machine in society and in the workshop in 1894, asserting that the former should be determined by its need in the latter, and later crediting Ruskin with the innovation [11].

If Should We Stop Teaching Art? is considered as a whole, it is clear that Ashbee did not turn his back on Arts & Crafts principles. These are emphasized throughout, combined with the qualities of the machine. In fact, the breakthrough achieved by Ashbee in this book is far greater than this, even though it has not been discussed previously. The book, it is true, does indicate Ashbee's coming to terms with the modern machine, but, even more, it shifts the focus from the admired country to the much-detested city.

THE ROLE OF ARCHITECTURE

Wendy Kaplan has explained how Arts & Crafts artists related quality of product to the quality of the physical environment, believing that the latter shaped life and worker alike [12]. The connection between people, their work and their working environment was a basic one in Ashbee's thought. He empowered the guild with educational and social meaning by emphasizing its contribution to strengthening the traditional connection between people and their surroundings [13]. The workshop was assigned the task of creating a common style, symbolic and unique, through joint work and common goals, and Ashbee preached a close and direct connection between people's work and his lessons in design [14]. Ashbee proposed an educational system designed to support the profound understanding of the place and its natural evolution, thus developing honest industry true to its local origins.

In a lecture delivered in 1892, Ashbee examined the applicability of his ideas to his own field of expertise and claimed that architecture must have a common meaning; it must be

comprehensible to all and hence, *democratic* [15]. This goal could be achieved by keeping in constant touch with the people, their traditions and their needs. In the USA, Ashbee claimed, 'there is a greater sweep, a more logical planning, a wider outlook, a more conscious grasp of the coming needs of the community, a more scientific handling of industrial methods' [16]. His admiration for the American appreciation of English landmarks as symbols of an established tradition and a common style led him to promote the National Trust and its role in guarding national landmarks.

In a report written in 1911 for the Hungarian Ministry of Education, Ashbee discussed the national role of universities and their architecture, advocating the use of local styles in building [17]. He praised the new universities, which substituted a lack of history and tradition with close attention to the community and to local innovations, resulting in a sense of belonging; he condemned old universities which did not succeed in protecting their traditions. For a university to be sincere, Ashbee concluded, it must speak the local language and use styles and forms of local significance. Ashbee put these principles into practice while working at the Collegiate City of the University in Chelsea, alongside Patrick Geddes [18].

GUILD AND CITY

Writing in the aftermath of his guild's failed country endeavour, Ashbee offered a joint solution based on an urban setting, thus benefiting both the guild and the ailing city, incorporating his insights into both guild work and the city for the first time. In *Should We Stop Teaching Art?*, Ashbee tried to combine the benefits and unique characters of both the Arts & Crafts movement and the city through proper town planning.

As stated in the book's third axiom,

The purpose of the "Arts and Crafts" is to set a standard of excellence in all commodities in which the element of beauty enters. The tendency of machine industry is to "Standardise", that is to say, to create as many pieces of any commodity to a given type as is economically possible [19].

The workshop, as the basic artistic and social unit, should maintain the standard of life and provide education, while relating to the specific locality. The guild would form the basic productive unit, constituting the local artistic and industrial centre. The guilds would determine the role of the machine in society and would be in charge of it, as a local source of power. The local urban government should protect the guild from economic competition and regulate the use of the productive, yet potentially hazardous, machine [20]. In this way, the arts would protect the city, which in return would foster the guild's existence.

To Ashbee, the connection between the artistic guild and the growing city seemed obvious. Who other than the guild was able to create and preserve the local tradition and instruct the city in its proper planning, both in terms of beautification and in proper housing? He emphasized this connection in a lecture he gave in the autumn of 1916 on the contribution of the Arts & Crafts movement to urban problems:

It is at this point we touch the wider issue of the city. The workshop once established, with its group of ready-handed workers, it begins to influence the city and the life in which it is set. ... It is through the craftsmen of the workshops that the city can realize its individuality and make it manifest to all. We are there to bring back to the city many of those humanities of

which the Industrial Revolution has deprived it. ... The third stage in our development is implicit in the city's own growth [21].

Where the Great City Stands: the artistic urban theory

Ashbee's monumental book of 1917, Where the Great City Stands, can be viewed as a direct sequel to his work of 1911, strengthening the connection between art and city and giving it a concrete shape. The book opens by bluntly stating the interdependency of arts and the Great City:

We cannot have the Arts unless we are worthy of them, until we actually have cleaner, fairer cities, until we are more sensitive to landscape, until we have stamped out poverty and squalor, until we have got back again to the purity and simplicity of nature as we see and enjoy it in the countryside ... And, lastly, the appeal to history and tradition is true; for, though the individual creates, it is the continuous and unfolding life of the community that finds the individual his place. The city brings us this continuity [22].

The city was important for artists as it was the only place where they could now create, and the artists were important for the city, to guide its development along proper lines: 'However much we improve them our cities are but empty shells unless they hold some live creative enterprise, unless in every city there are men inventing, dreaming, finding the city its soul' [23].

Discussing the general rejection of the city, Ashbee claimed that artists before him resented the ugliness they saw around them and sought out different places and times, yet 'if we practice an Art that is no longer in and of our own time, that Art is of little consequence. ... The doctrine of Evolution has now become part of our thought' [24]. Ashbee's solution was based on a combination of the artistic principles he had propounded through the years and the moral rights of every city dweller. Co-ordinating the different components would result in a new system of civics, as hinted in the book's subtitle, 'A Study in the New Civics'.

Ashbee described the object of the book as 'fixing public attention upon the aesthetic movements of our time' [25]. He opens by repeating the axioms he had coined before, and expanding them, emphasizing the role of the city:

The new relationship of man to life which machine industry has brought with it, finds it fullest expression in the new life of our city. This implies that through the city and its proper adjustment to mechanical conditions will man realise again those finer values which the arts bring into life. Through the city we focus Civilisation [26].

In the book, Ashbee describes artistic movements of his time, from the Pre-Raphaelites through Futurism to Oriental influences. He describes the nascent Housing and Town-Planning movement and dwells on the Garden City idea, and discusses the progress of architecture, drawing on examples from around the world, as well as describing the plans of many American cities. About half the book is devoted to describing the shape of the projected synthesis of the new artistic city.

PLANNING FOR CRAFTS

Although marrying Arts & Crafts and the Great City idea was a great innovation, Ashbee's planning tools were not so new. He was well aware of the urban work and the writing of the time and incorporated useful tools from them into his theory.

In order to learn about the place and its uniqueness, guiding further building, Ashbee suggested conducting a survey before planning:

To bring this about in practice we have to understand, and this understanding comes to us through what is known as "city survey". In the city survey lies the method whereby the various functions of the new life find intelligent expression [27].

An expert (an American innovation) is recommended to examine the local problems and solve them scientifically [28]. The idea of the survey had been propagated by Patrick Geddes, derived from a similar ideal of planning a city according to its historical and social roots, thus guaranteeing its proper evolution [29].

Ashbee encouraged the establishment of local museums to host collections of personal documents and old artefacts. The museums would be the repositories of the survey results, presenting the society as a whole and testifying as to its history, tradition and needs [30]. They would host permanent and temporary exhibitions and maintain the local urban *standard*. The museum in the city was also a Geddesian idea that was warmly welcomed by Ashbee [31].

The actual layout of the town suggested by Ashbee resembled the initial Garden City diagram of Ebenezer Howard in 1898, highlighting the natural tendency of people to concentrate in small communities, this time around the Guild as a natural centre. Repeating and improving on this basic model, Ashbee suggested that the guilds be grouped according to their specialization. The organization should be done through a central craft museum or artistic institute, both productive and educational (Fig. 1). The centre would thus be responsible for the distribution of power, both spiritual and actual, and would constitute the ultimate expression of Ashbee's notion: that 'every progressive city has suddenly made the discovery that it must have a Civic Centre' [32]. This would be the city's art centre, holding permanent and temporary exhibitions. There would also be art galleries, shops for endowment and a small university of Arts & Crafts [33].

By emphasizing the importance of proper building regulation, Ashbee was once again drawing the connection between the quality of the life of the worker and the quality of his working and living environment. As a work of art, Ashbee claimed, the city must be moral and supply its inhabitants with all that complies with the proper 'standard', a term associated with the quality of a work of art and with living conditions for the workers, and now associated with life in the city: It was now the city's responsibility to provide that standard of living. As emphasized by modern building regulation, this would consist of sufficient air, water and light and the control of noise and dirt [34]. However, it also included public buildings, cultural institutes, a creative centre for city life, an art school, a museum and other amenities. A community that wants art must keep its streets clean, Ashbee claimed, thus justifying building ordinances as 'ethical forces at work' [35]. Similarly, Ashbee discusses the importance of zoning, green lungs and open spaces, while condemning urban poverty, disease, drink and waste [36].

Preservation was an important principle in Ashbee's city planning, again proceeding from the aspiration to develop the city according to its roots in its architectural character. Historical landmarks should be preserved for their beauty as well as their historical value, as should historical open spaces, parks and tree-lined boulevards [37]. Ashbee also emphasized the place of the country in the city. He claimed that the rehabilitation of the two was mutual

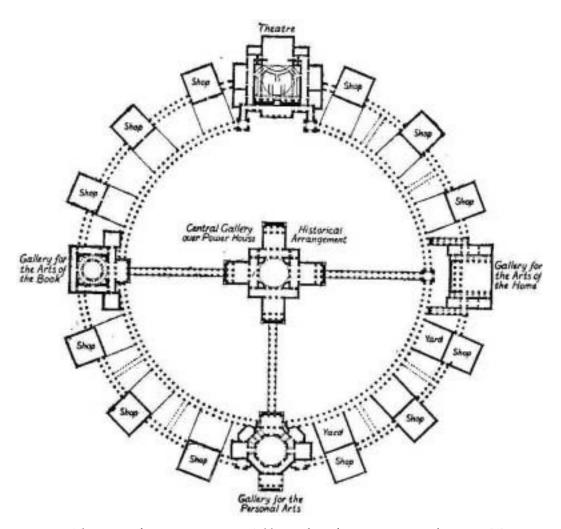


Figure 1. The centre of town (source: C. R. Ashbee, Where the Great City Stands, op. cit. [4]).

and therefore offered a practical arrangement in which the village is viewed as an artistic guild deserving the same support as the city [38].

The role of city planning: active urban work in Britain

PRESERVATION

Ashbee's practical experience of and interest in cities were demonstrated as early as 1893, when he became involved in local preservation. He founded the Watch Committee for

Greater London, devoted to the recording of historical buildings, which was acknowledged by the London County Council in 1896. In the first official volume of the *Survey of London*, published in 1900, Ashbee extended the city's responsibility for its historical buildings, proclaiming it to be the guardian of a history common to many [39]. He claimed that Building Acts were not enough:

Building Acts are but little protection against bad or slovenly building ... nothing is done to protect the open spaces, the trees or gardens ... if there is any beautiful object of the past, some house, perhaps, that could be utilised for library, club, museum, school or parish purposes, it is torn down ... all those things that make a locality interesting, and that were instinctively felt and understood by our ancestors, they are merely dismissed by the people [40].

In 1896, following the proposal to demolish Trinity Hospital in Mile End Road, Ashbee organized a campaign, followed by a monograph on the building, which symbolized an era and its virtues. The building was saved [41].

Dromenagh Estate. In 1906 Ashbee got the chance to develop the new Dromenagh Estate at Iver Heath [42]. In his plans, Ashbee proposed to treat the whole estate 'as a unit capable of being developed before all things as a thing of beauty' [43]. He described the surroundings, the preservation of standing trees, and considered local building materials. Ashbee's local survey guided him in choosing the appropriate elements of design and even the building materials.

The Ruislip Estate. In 1909, the Housing and Town Planning Act was published and Ashbee joined the Architectural Review's Advisory Committee on Town-Planning and Housing [44]. A year later, he took part in the first competition for the planning of the Ruislip Manor Estate in north London. The sixty plans submitted reflected the different interpretations given to the Act and the diversity of planning attitudes, as discussed in the many articles that accompanied the competition [45]. Ashbee's sketch of the town's centre consisted of the guilds and their workshops, surrounded by various public buildings. Green spaces and tree-lined boulevards are scattered throughout the city, with each house enjoying its own garden. Ashbee's plan was not chosen but it was highly praised [46].

Dublin. In 1914 Ashbee participated in an international planning competition for the city of Dublin, organized by Patrick Geddes. Ashbee conducted several surveys, including the historical development of Dublin, the physical and functional components of the centre of the city and the city's location in its environs. In his plan, he stressed the importance of the city's traditional guilds, incorporating them in the reconstructed town centre. Existing historical buildings were to serve as a People's Palace, an ethnographic museum, a theatre, an opera house and a weavers' hall. Ashbee used the existing open spaces and bathing places as a basis for the town's park system. He proposed establishing a 'shade tree ordinance' as in America, and a society for recording and preserving historic Dublin. He also recommended enactment of zoning regulations to protect the historic areas as well as to control the height of buildings [47].

The winning plan was that of Patrick Abercrombie, Professor of Civic Design at the University of Liverpool, together with Sydney Kelly and Arthur Kelly. Geddes did not

approve of the winning plan; in fact, he had gone out of his way to praise Ashbee's. The judges agreed that 'No other report expresses a fuller and more comprehensive grasp of civic problems' [48].

Educational work in Cairo and invitation to Jerusalem

Finding himself out of a job during the war, in 1916 Ashbee received a post as an English teacher in Sultania Training College in Cairo. For Ashbee, Cairo embodied the ultimate traditional society, still preserving its unique local style. Ashbee was drawn to the local traditional crafts, lamenting the disappearance of the medieval city and its customs in face of modern, uniform British education. In his diaries he described the local artists and their crafts [49]. He encouraged his students to cherish their heritage and wear their traditional costume, advancing his ideas about the connection between crafts and the locality. His suggestions about just local reconstruction were summarized in a report he presented to Lord Milner in 1919 [50], in which he discussed British responsibility to the people of the Orient and wondered whether modern Egyptian life could be honest [51].

In April 1918, in Alexandria, Ashbee met William McLean, the local municipal engineer. McLean had just completed the first plan for Jerusalem, whither he had been summoned by Ronald Storrs, the city's military governor. Storrs found the city in a state of devastation, ruined by years of Turkish rule and a harsh war [52]. In general, the British cared for the city and its inhabitants while doing their best to maintain the status quo [53]. McLean's plan mainly limited building in the Old City. It was approved in July, and was immediately followed by new municipal orders based on the quadruple zoning scheme McLean had suggested; however, the plan was soon criticized for its rigidity and was abandoned almost completely [54]. It seems that Storrs himself wanted more for the city, as he later wrote:

Later in the year 1918, hearing of the presence in Egypt of the architect Mr C. R. Ashbee, a friend and disciple of William Morris, a member of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, and of the National Trust, and well known for his skill and enthusiasm for civic development with its kindred Arts and Crafts, I wrote to him requesting him to visit Jerusalem and write a report on its possibilities in this respect [55].

Later, Storrs wrote about his need of a man like Ashbee, who could help him 'to carry out in detail the execution of this highly technical programme' [56]. In his memoirs, Storrs described his search for 'a Technical Assistant, something more than an Architect and a Town Planner' [57]. In his meeting with Ashbee, McLean mentioned Where the Great City Stands and told him that Storrs and he had agreed that they should consult him about different projects. 'Will you come and help?', he asked [58].

INITIAL REPORT AND THE PRO-JERUSALEM SOCIETY

Ashbee was summoned to Jerusalem for the first time in June 1918. Eventually he was appointed as Storrs' Civic Advisor and, later, as Chairman of the Pro-Jerusalem Society [59]. Composed of delegates from various populations living in Jerusalem, the Society represented the joint municipal objectives of Ashbee and, apparently, of Storrs as well [60].

Ashbee regarded his first task as being to investigate and report on the arts and crafts of the city and its surrounding district, as the initial stage in a preliminary survey for planning [61]. The first part of the report included a meticulous description of arts and crafts workshops, as well as of schools and religious organizations practising crafts in Jerusalem and its districts, a review of traditional and modern building in Jerusalem, and the state of agriculture in the city's environs.

The second part of the report was a detailed plan for the rehabilitation of the city, its crafts and its buildings, based on Ashbee's urban Utopia. A central Civic School was to serve as headquarters of both the new guild system and the restoration of the city as a whole. The city, its arts, its construction and even its machinery would all be conducted through this institution, with the guildsmen in charge. The students, apart from producing good crafts, would serve as the city's surveyors and draw its maps. They were also to be in charge of any new plans for its extension or reconstruction, thus constituting the office of the City Engineer. The School, serving as the city's nucleus, was to be placed in the Citadel, properly centred both geographically and spiritually. Other local elements, such as historical remains, parks, water sources and the like, were to be incorporated in the plan accordingly. 'Jerusalem', wrote Ashbee, hoping for the ultimate realization of his plans, is a 'City of the Mind, and in it as such nothing is impossible' [62].

During his time in Jerusalem Ashbee did not achieve all he aspired to, yet he accomplished many of his goals for the rehabilitation both of the city and of its crafts.

Rehabilitation of the city and its crafts

ARTS & CRAFTS IN JERUSALEM

Ashbee's greatest artistic accomplishment in Jerusalem is undoubtedly the revival of the craft of glazed tiles, which had been used to decorate the Dome of the Rock. In this project he was assisted by David Ohanessian, a master craftsman from Kutahia, Armenia, who had brought with him his own workpeople [63]. The original furnaces were discovered in an archaeological survey on Harem el-Sharif (Temple Mount) and were put into use. However, work stopped shortly afterwards for lack of funds. Ohanessian received his own workshop, where he eventually produced tiles which were used in the redecoration of the Citadel and as signs for the city's streets [64].

Other minor successes included the establishment of a weaving industry, called the 'Jerusalem Looms'. The workshops were situated in the rehabilitated Suq el-Qattanim, the traditional location of weavers. The looms were supplied by the Red Cross [65]. Another project was the regrouping and employing of some old glass-blowers in Hebron, whose greatest accomplishment was the redecoration of Government House, a project which was carried out by local craftsmen under Ashbee's supervision and which for him became the ultimate proof of the viability of guild co-operation [66].

MUSEUM AND EXHIBITIONS

Three exhibitions took place during Ashbee's time in Jerusalem. The first was devoted to various types of local crafts, with a separate section for local planning. Among the participants

were students of Bezalel, the modern Hebrew Arts and Crafts School. The exhibit attracted wide public support [67]. In 1922 Ashbee displayed craft objects he had collected from across the country in an exhibition entitled 'Palestine Crafts and Industries' [68]. The exhibitions took place in the Citadel, which, after due rehabilitation, was intended to serve as the city's permanent museum.

PRESERVATION AND REHABILITATION

For the British administration in Jerusalem as well as for Ashbee, conservation was a general goal:

In the conservation of a city ... what we are conserving is not only the things themselves, the streets, the houses, spires, towers, and domes, but the way of living, the idealism, the feeling for righteousness and fitness which these things connote, and with which every city with any claim to dignity and beauty is instinct [69].

The Pro-Jerusalem Society worked out a system for the protection of the Holy City in accordance with Storrs' regulations and Ashbee's stated goals [70]. Ashbee recorded many different instances of active preservation, including work in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem and the Garden of Gethsemane on the Mount of Olives, as well as the conservation of unique examples of local building crafts [71].

However, Ashbee's most important act of preservation was the cleaning and rehabilitation of the Citadel, which continued long after he had left Jerusalem [72]. The Citadel was also intended to form the entrance to a promenade encircling the Old City, based on the Ottoman walls. The entire city could be viewed from it, and it would also serve as the heart of the city's park system [73]. Gardens were laid out all around the new promenade, inside the Old City and around it, just as Ashbee had recommended in his report (Fig. 2) [74]. Ashbee suggested cleaning up a few of the adjacent reservoirs and filling them with water, for the health and enjoyment of the inhabitants (Fig. 3). The local *suqs* (markets) – both exquisite remnants of the old medieval city and home of the surviving crafts – received special attention. Ashbee drew numerous plans for rehabilitating the *suqs* of the Old City and establishing new ones in the New City, using similar local elements [75].

Only a few of Ashbee's photographs of locations in the Old City, attached to his suggestions for rehabilitation, found their way into the Pro-Jerusalem Society records and even fewer of the suggested projects were realized. One project that was never carried out was an impressive plan for a stadium to be built inside the Old City, in intriguing proximity to both the Jewish Western Wall and the Muslim Al-Aqsa mosque (Fig. 4). Ashbee himself planned a few new buildings for the city featuring local building elements, but none was ever built [76].

Planning the new city of Jerusalem

In 1919, another town planner appeared in Jerusalem: Patrick Geddes, an established success in India, was invited by the Zionist Commission to plan the new Hebrew University. While in Jerusalem, Geddes was invited to join the meetings of the Pro-Jerusalem Society. He commented on McLean's plan and offered the city's governor a report and a plan of his

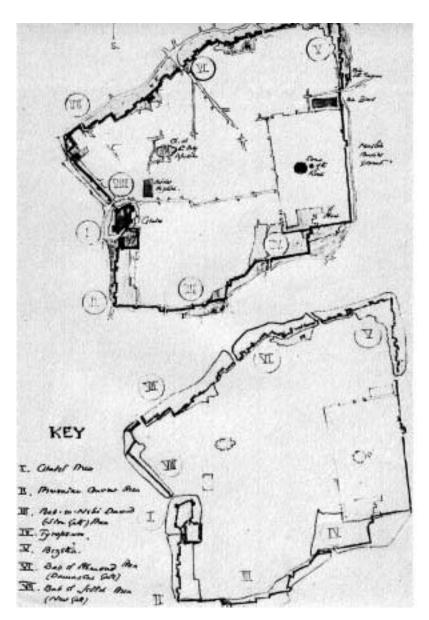


Figure 2. Plan for rehabilitation of the city walls and promenade (source: Ashbee's files, Jerusalem Municipal Historic Archives).

own [77]. Geddes' report generally embraced Ashbee's work in the city and his plan incorporated many of his earlier suggestions.

The first local Town Planning Ordinance was approved in 1921, and Ashbee was appointed secretary of the Town Planning Committee of Jerusalem [78]. As the only official

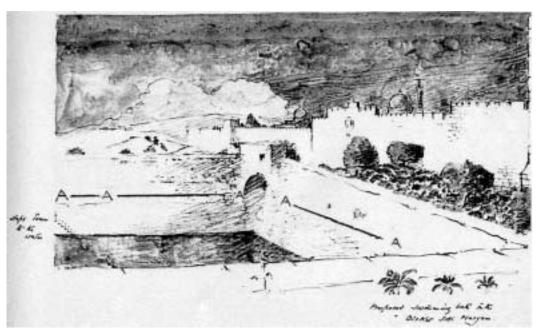


Figure 3. Plan for the rehabilitation of Sitti Maryam's pool (source: Ashbee's files, Jerusalem Municipal Historic Archives).

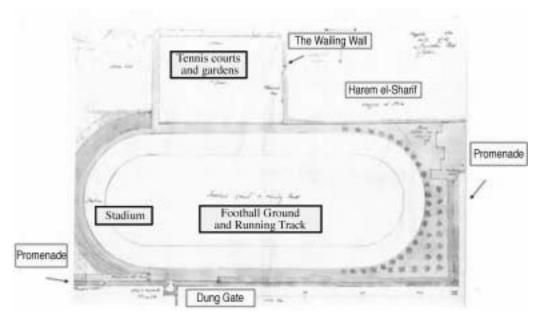


Figure 4. Plan for a stadium and tennis court (source: Ashbee's archives vol. 1, Felicity Ashbee, London (edited)).

planner working in Palestine at the time, he was also appointed to the Central Town Planning Committee, where he was asked to report on the condition of planning in Palestine [79]. It was decided that every town should have a town plan; Ashbee was to advise [80].

Ashbee presented a plan for Jerusalem at the first meeting of the Jerusalem Planning Committee in 1921 [81]. It was by now the third plan suggested for the city and incorporated elements suggested by both McLean and Geddes.

THE PLAN

Ashbee called his plan the Jerusalem Zoning System (Fig. 5). It was based on the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem, which he defined for the first time, and encompassed five surrounding villages. The plan consisted of five different zones or land uses: roads; parks and open spaces; areas reserved for special treatment; business and residential; and finally industry and workshops. The plan perpetuated McLean's first policy of conservation by defining the Old City and its environs as an area for special treatment. Accordingly, the area immediately surrounding the Old City, defined by McLean as a restricted building zone, was reserved for parks; it included what Geddes called 'the most sacred park in the world', which featured several historical cemeteries [82]. The plan also included six industrial zones which initially covered a large part of the city, presumably secured for various crafts, though these were eventually reduced in size. The rest of the planned area was generally reserved for residence. The New City was planned along the road network suggested in Geddes' plan, which continued the existing roads originating in the Old City.

Ashbee's plan was approved and eventually became the first official plan for Jerusalem. All later plans were based upon its guidelines, consecrating the preservation of the Old City and its park surroundings, as well as continuing its natural road network.

Ashbee worked in Jerusalem for three and a half years until his resignation on 9 March 1922. The main reason for his abrupt departure was the building of a new drainage system in the city, which served mainly Jewish neighbourhoods and harmed other parts of the city, including Ashbee's residence in one of the Arab neighbourhoods [83]. This was apparently just the tip of the political iceberg for Ashbee, who disapproved of the British support for the Jewish homecoming. A more bureaucratic reason apparently had to do with Ashbee's professional position, which was being undermined by the newly established government departments.

Ashbee's replacement was a young architect named Clifford Holiday, a prize student of Patrick Abercrombie and warmly recommended by him to Ronald Storrs. Ashbee continued to write about planning matters in England and to follow the progress of the cities in Palestine [84]. His plan for the city continued to serve as a guideline for later British planners, determining its shape to this very day.

Conclusions

ASHBEE'S ARTISTIC URBAN PLAN EVALUATED

Ashbee's planning tools and even some of his ideals were far from original. He incorporated many elements derived from theoreticians and planners working at the same time. Of all the

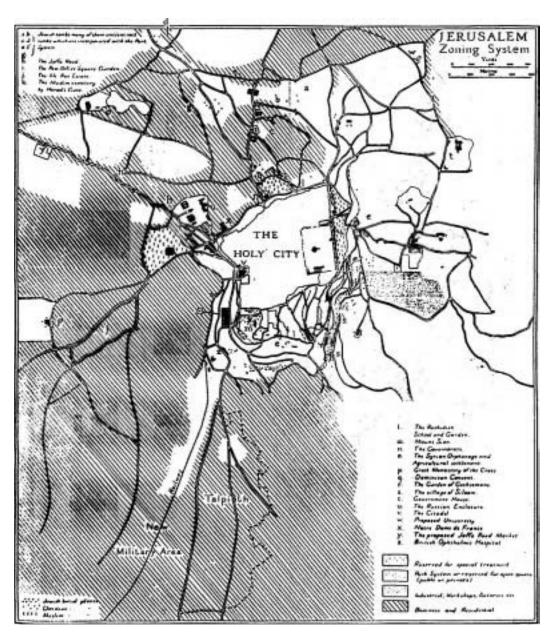


Figure 5. Jerusalem Zoning System (Ashbee's plan for Jerusalem) (source: Ashbee's files, Jerusalem Municipal Historic Archives).

planning principles Ashbee discussed, his proximity to those of Patrick Geddes is most apparent [85]. Ashbee's perception of the city is comprehensive and synthetic; moreover, it derives its logic from natural evolution, preserving and continuing its artistic and craftsmanship tradition.

Ashbee's originality lay in his integration of apparently different movements; those of Town Planning and the Arts & Crafts, which in spite of their common origins seem to share very little. Peter Davey described the alienation that existed between them at the time, recalling the anti-urban vision reflected by William Morris in *News from Nowhere* as a general explanation for the absence of the city as a separate entity from the various writings of the artists. As a result of his work concerning the city, Ashbee is mentioned by Davey as an exception among his artist friends [86].

This unique connection charged Ashbee's planning vocabulary and tools with an artistic dimension. The calculated physical *standard*, which was discussed greatly and eventually established by law, received an artistic significance, deriving from Ruskin's thought, that of the *artistic standard* of life. Building regulations were charged with the greater moral significance of securing a safe and happy working environment for artists, craftsmen and city dwellers.

Most importantly, the Great City received artistic approval. Far from adopting the gospel of the Modern Movement, Ashbee succeeded in going beyond his contemporaries, realizing the advantages of the Great City and looking for artistic, living solutions within it and not outside it. Thus, while 'the Arts and Crafts movement began with the object of making useful things, of making them well and of making them beautiful' [87], Ashbee was accomplishing these goals in the greatest form of living known, wishing to design the largest working environment taking shape at the time, seeing the city as 'an intellectual vessel in which his earlier ideas would be carried, not greatly changed in themselves, but with greater force and a broader application' [88]. Ashbee thus projected onto the city the good traits he had been looking for in his artistic work. Using these principles and aided by the elements of design being developed around him, he planned a good city for a good society. In his plans, Ashbee demonstrated the urban ideal towards which he was striving, offering concrete shape to his artistic city and using the various tools he had mastered.

CRITICISM

However, giving the city control over the machine remained a mainly symbolic task. Ashbee never fully incorporated the industrial machine in his theory, urban or artistic. Earlier critics have also claimed that the physical appearance of Ashbee's city is hard to imagine [89]. This may be explained partly by the fact that Ashbee's two major plans were never realized and were later lost. Nor does his book outline an overall town plan. It must be remembered, though, that Ashbee's plan was only a conceptual one; its realization was bound to differ from city to city, taking the shape of the specific locality's style and progress. His simple acceptance of American skyscrapers and other modernist buildings, when they were the result of local growth, provides one example.

Moreover, Ashbee's book should not be viewed as a planning manual, such as Unwin's book, *Town Planning in Practice*, for example. He himself claimed:

The book does not purport to be technical. It is not a book for experts ... the appeal ... is ... to the practical man – the idealist, man or woman, who wants to see something of the finer life built around him, wants to help in it and understand it' [90].

It is rather a summation of Ashbee's thought, based on his writings and ideas. Its main novelty lies in its combination of the major ideas in his life – artistic ideals that he had

refined over the years and the planning theories of his time. Its importance lies in his goal of supplying the city with greater ideals, those of providing a good living environment for a good and prosperous society. Nor was his urban ideal a complete scheme, allocating each urban factor its proper place within the plan.

Nevertheless, Ashbee's was a complete concept, taking into account both the appearance of the city and the welfare of its inhabitants, and was firmly based on the social and artistic as well as the urban notions of the day.

JERUSALEM AS A UNIQUE EXAMPLE OF TOWN PLANNING

Ashbee was invited to Jerusalem because of his artistic bent and his urban awareness. In Jerusalem, Ashbee manifested his urban ideal to the full. His work in the city started with a thorough report, with Ashbee viewing himself as the appointed city director, called in to enlighten local public opinion [91]. The report was followed by the rehabilitation of three local working guilds, by the physical rehabilitation of a potential, central museum and by a proper city plan, carefully laid out with regard to existing historic features.

Ashbee's plan for the city was the first to be accepted formally and, as such, has a great and lasting influence upon the city. Many of his local plans for Jerusalem have been realized over the years, and some of his great successes still serve the city and its inhabitants. Examples include the Citadel, now a most successful museum, as well as the city walls promenade. The guidelines set by Ashbee's plan for Jerusalem continue to determine the shape of Jerusalem to this day.

Ashbee's most important contribution to Jerusalem was the balance he implanted between preservation on the one hand and development on the other, using the natural elements of the city as the seeds of its expansion. Yet this is also the greatest criticism of the plan. It lacks a serious treatment of municipal problems, such as housing, and dwells on rehabilitating its traditional traits, rather than exploring and fostering possible modern advances. Even the rehabilitated guilds were not always fully local.

The reasons for the partial nature of Ashbee's success are numerous, including the political and administrative situation in Jerusalem at the time, as well as cultural differences and preferences [92]. Those who followed Ashbee in the planning of the Holy City, both old and new, added to his original plan and altered it. The city itself grew both in size and in population and, as elsewhere in the rapidly urbanizing world, it was not the local arts that led the way. And yet Ashbee's Jerusalem plan of 1922 demonstrates his comprehensive appreciation of the city and its constituent artistic and social traits. Ashbee's Jerusalem still constitutes a superb demonstration of a bygone urban theory, which nevertheless deserves a place among more established urban theories, continuing to present some truths that could and should be incorporated into contemporary views of the city [93].

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Notes and references

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- 8. See, for example, the entry from 18.11.1900, quoted in Ashbee's *Memoirs*, vol. I, unpublished typescript, King's College Modern Archives, Cambridge.
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- 18. University Hall of Residence & Crosby Hall, Chelsea (Officially Recognised by the University of London), Warden: Professor Patrick Geddes, Visitor: the Principal of the University of London, the University and City Associates of London Ltd., [Directors: James Martin White, Sir Thomas Barclay, N. P. W. Brady, Sir William Henry Dunn, Professor Patrick Geddes, Thomas Waterman Hellyer, George Montagu, R. C. Norman, secretary: John Ross, 2, More's Garden, Chelsea, S. W.] [1910?] pp. 1–7. See also A. Crawford, op. cit. [2] pp. 160–1.
- 19. C.R. Ashbee, *op. cit.* [5], p. 2.
- 20. Ibid., pp. 32-4, 100-3.
- 21. C. R. Ashbee, The Arts and Crafts Exhibition: Its Civic and Educational Aspects. *Sociological Review* 9 (1916–17) 53.
- 22. C.R. Ashbee, op. cit. [4], p. 57.
- 23. Ibid., p. 13.
- 24. Ibid., p. 6.
- 25. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
- 26. *Ibid.*, Axiom no. 7, p. 3.
- 27. *Ibid.*, pp. 57–8.
- 28. Ibid., pp. 100-6.
- 29. See, for example, P. Geddes, The Survey of Cities, *The Sociological Review* I (1908) 74–9, where Geddes mentions the establishment of a 'Cities Committee to promote the Survey and Investigation of Cities'. A thorough survey-before-planning had already been carried out by Geddes in 1904 during the planning of Dunfermline; see his *City Development: A Study of Parks*, *Gardens, and Culture Institute, A Report to the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust.* Edinburgh: Geddes and Company, Outlook Tower, and Bournville, Birmingham: The Saint George Press, 1904. The theme had been further developed by Geddes in a series of lectures entitled The City Survey, *Garden Cities and Town Planning* 1 (February 1911) no. 1, pp. 18–19; no. 2, pp. 31–3; no. 3, pp. 56–8. It had become a well-regarded practice and was incorporated in many planning articles and manuals written at the time. See, for example, R. Unwin, *Town Planning in Practice: An Introduction to the Art of Designing Cities and Suburbs*. London: Ernest Benn, 1909.
- 30. C. R. Ashbee, op. cit. [4], pp. 116–20.
- 31. Such was Geddes' long-lasting work at the Outlook Tower, described by Charles Zueblin: The World's First Sociological Laboratory, *The American Journal of Sociology* IV (1899) 577–92; see also P. Geddes, *City Development ..., op. cit.* [29]; P. Geddes, A Suggested Plan for a Civic Museum (or Civic Exhibition) and its Associated Studies, *Sociological Papers*. London: Macmillan & Co., 1907, pp. 197–236.
- 32. C. R. Ashbee, op. cit. [4], p. 59, referring here to an ideal urban setting described earlier in his book *The Building of Thelema*. London: J. Dent, 1910.
- 33. C. R. Ashbee, op. cit. [4], pp. 114–26.
- 34. *Ibid.*, pp. 68–73. A great contribution to this subject has been made by Unwin, see R. Unwin, *op. cit.* [29].
- 35. C. R. Ashbee, op. cit. [4], p. 60.

- 36. Ibid., p. 82.
- 37. Ibid., pp. 21-8.
- 38. Ibid., pp. 139-50.
- 39. C. R. Ashbee, The Survey of London: Being the First Volume of the Register of the Committee for the Survey of the Memorials of Greater London, Containing the Parish of Bromley-By-Bow, edited by C. R. Ashbee from the Material Collected by Members of the Survey Committee and Printed under the Auspices of the London County Council. London: P. S. King and Son, 1900.
- 40. Ibid., p. xxviii.
- 41. C. R. Ashbee, *The Trinity Hospital in Mile End: An object lesson in national history*. London: The Guild & School of Handicraft, 1896. See also A. Crawford, *op. cit.* [2], pp. 61–3.
- 42. C. R. Ashbee, On the Dromenagh Estate at Iver Heath. The Studio 36 (1906) 47-52.
- 43. Ibid., p. 47.
- 44. See G. Pepler, Town Planning Powers under the Housing, Town Planning etc., Act, 1909. Garden Cities and Town Planning 2, 1 (January 1912) pp. 4–10; W. Ashworth, The Genesis of Modern British Town Planning: A Study in [the] Economic and Social History of the Nineteenth Century. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, p. 167; H. Meller, Towns, Plans and Society in Modern Britain. New Studies in Economic and Social History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.
- 45. See: Ruislip Manor, Garden Cities and Town Planning 1 (April 1911) 63 for the winning plan; The Ruislip Manor Competition: A Study in Comparative Town Planning. Town Planning and Housing, Supplement to the Architectural Review 29 (1911) 171–9; A. W. Thompson, Ruislip Manor Town Planning Scheme. Garden Cities and Town Planning 3, 1 (1913) 7–15; The Ruislip-Northwood and Ruislip-Manor Joint Town Planning Scheme. Town Planning Review 4, 2 (1913–14) 133–44. See also A. Crawford, op. cit. [2], pp. 155–6.
- 46. 'Mr. Ashbee, in a well thought report that accompanied his plans, claimed that the historic and natural traits of the site must determine its shaping ...'. The Ruislip Manor Competition, *ibid.*, p. 179; See also A. Crawford, *op. cit.* [2], pp. 178–9.
- 47. J. Nolen, Greater Dublin. Garden Cities and Town Planning 7, 1 (January 1917) 8–9; H. Meller, Patrick Geddes: Social Evolutionist and City Planner. New Studies in Economic and Social History. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990, pp. 183–90. All that remains of the plan submitted by Ashbee and his partner, G. H. Chettle, are two copies of a 72-page report, including some 100 partial drawings. These are to be found at Dublin University and at Cornell University. Except for a few notes in his diaries of the time, there is no other documentation of Ashbee's work in Dublin. My analysis of the plans are based on a detailed article describing the report: M. J. Bannon, Dublin Town Planning Competition: Ashbee and Chettle's "New Dublin": A Study in Civics. Planning Perspectives 14 (1999) 145–62. This is perhaps the only article dealing with Ashbee in relation to town planning.
- 48. *Ibid.*, p. 145: 'Had circumstances not prevented its completion, the author of the premeditated design might have found in this a more serious competitor'.
- 49. Quoted in Ashbee's Memoirs, op. cit. [8], vol. V.
- 50. A draft of the report is included in Ashbee's *Journals*, 1919, King's College Modern Archives, Cambridge; a synopsis is included in his book, *Palestine Notebook 1918–1923*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1924, which eventually became the first volume of his memoirs.
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- 53. G. Bigger, British and Jewish Policy and Action in the Development of Jerusalem between 1918–1925. MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 1974 [in Hebrew]; N. Shepherd, *Ploughing Sand: British Rule in Palestine 1917–1948*. London: John Murray, 2000.

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- 55. R. Storrs, preface to C. R. Ashbee (ed.), Jerusalem 1918–1920, Being the Records of the Pro-Jerusalem Council during the Period of the British Military Administration. (Ashbee, PJS vol. I.) London: John Murray, 1921, p. vi.
- R. Storrs, preface to C. R. Ashbee (ed.), Jerusalem 1920–1922, Being the Records of the Pro-Jerusalem Council during the First Two Years of the Civil Administration. (Ashbee, PJS vol. II.) London: John Murray, 1924, p. vi.
- 57. R. Storrs, op. cit. [52] p. 312. Storrs knew Ashbee already, as he mentions an interesting lecture he had heard from him in the past.
- 58. Letter, Ashbee to his wife, June, 1918, quoted in Ashbee's Journals, op. cit. [50].
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- 60. Listed in Ashbee, PJS vol. I, op. cit. [55], p. vii. Ashbee claimed that the Society's charter was modelled upon the British National Trust. C.R. Ashbee, *Palestine Notebook*, op. cit. [50], p. 139. As advisor, Ashbee had no legal authority and his actions in Jerusalem must be seen in relation to the actions of the Society itself. Ashbee recorded these in two volumes, PJS vol. 1, op. cit. [55] and vol. 2, op. cit. [56].
- 61. Report by Mr. C. R. Ashbee on the Arts and Crafts of Jerusalem and District. August 1918. Jerusalem Municipal Historic Archives, Ashbee's files.
- 62. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
- 63. R. Storrs, op. cit. [52], p. 325; Ashbee, PJS vol. I, op. cit. [55], pp. 31–2.
- 64. Ashbee, PJS vol. 1, *op. cit.* [55], pp. 29–31; vol. 2, *op. cit.* [56], p. 31; R. Storrs, *ibid.*, p. 314. A lively description of this workshop is supplied by Ashbee's daughter, who grew up in Jerusalem and recorded its life: F. J. Ashbee, *Janet Ashbee: Love, Marriage, and the Arts and Crafts Movement.* New York: Syracuse University Press, 2002, pp. 175–80.
- 65. The Pro-Jerusalem Society Quarterly Bulletin, June 1922, Antiquities Authority Archive, box 3 file atq 672/1; Ashbee, PJS vol. I, op. cit. [55], p. 34; vol. II, op. cit. [55], pp. 29–30; R. Storrs, ibid., pp. 314–16.
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- 68. Exhibition of Palestine Crafts and Industries (Catalogue). Jerusalem, 1922.
- 69. Ashbee, PJS vol. II, op. cit. [56], p. 5.
- 70. Ashbee, PJS vol. I, *op. cit.* [55], pp. 16–18. Separate articles describing the documentation and conservation done by experts are attached to both volumes.
- 71. Storrs' Archives, Pembroke College, Cambridge, Jerusalem File 1920–1921; R. Storrs, *op. cit.* [52], pp. 310–11; correspondence in the Antiquities Authority Archives, file atq/1625.

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- 73. Ashbee, The Pro-Jerusalem Society, op. cit. [65].
- 74. Jerusalem Municipal Historic Archives, Ashbee files; Ashbee's Jerusalem Papers, private archive, Felicity Ashbee, London.
- 75. Ashbee, PJS vol. I, op. cit. [55], pp. 5–8; vol. II, op. cit. [56], pp. 21–5.
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- 78. Geddes and Ashbee commented on the Ordinance: Note on the Revised Draft of the Town Planning Ordinance, July 1920, Central Zionist Archives file L18 50/5; C. R. Ashbee, Jerusalem Betterment and Town Plan 1920, Central Zionist Archives file L18 78/5.
- 79. C. R. Ashbee, *Recommendations to the Central Town Planning Commission*, 4 April 1921, Israel State Archives, box 1659 file 103/1.
- 80. Central Town Planning Committee, July 1921, Israel State Archives box 103/1 file 1659. Ashbee, PJS vol. II, *op. cit.* [56], pp. 15–19.
- 81. For a thorough analysis of the plans see B. Hyman, op. cit. [59].
- 82. P. Geddes, op. cit. [77], p. 20.
- 83. Storrs' Archives, Pembroke College, Cambridge, Jerusalem File 1921–1922; see also his correspondence with Zionist authorities, May to December 1921, Central Zionist Archives, file L 78/5.
- 84. Saving the Countryside. *Artwork* **20** (Winter 1929) 278–83; The Palestine Problem. *The English Review* **38** (January–June 1924) 805–7; Deadlock in Palestine. *Asia* **35** (August 1935) 453–7; The Palestine Problem Reviewed after Ten Years. *The English Review* **61** (1935) 529–39.
- 85. A. Crawford points out this similarity too (op. cit. [2], p. 168).
- 86. P. Davey, op. cit. [2], pp. 139–45; W. Morris, News from Nowhere, or: An Epoch of Rest, [serialized in the Commonweal, 11 January-4 October 1890, published in book form and revised, Boston 1890, London 1891] in William Morris, News from Nowhere and Other Writings, Clive Wilmer (ed.), Bungay: Penguin Books, 1993, pp. 41–230. Davey mentions Ashbee together with William Richard Lethaby as two exceptional Arts & Crafts artists for their work in the city.
- 87. C.R. Ashbee, Craftsmanship in Competitive Industry: Being a Record of the Workshops of the Guild of Handicraft, and Some Deductions from their Twenty-One Years' Experience Craftsmanship in Competitive Industry. Campden: Essex House Press, 1908, p. 5.
- 88. W. Kaplan, op. cit. [12], p. 11.
- 89. See, for example, a review in *The Times* (February 15, 1918). For a detailed discussion of Ashbee's urban work and accomplishments in Jerusalem see N. Hysler-Rubin, *Charles Robert Ashbee: His Urban Thought and its Implications in Jerusalem 1918–1922* (MA thesis, Hebrew University of Jerusalem), 2000 [in Hebrew].
- 90. C. R. Ashbee, op. cit. [4], p. 2.
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- 93. After L. Lambourne, op. cit. [2], p. 141.