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City of Jerusalem Town Planning Scheme

Stock#: 68827
Map Maker: McLean
Date: 1918 August
Place: Alexandria, Egypt
Color: Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 24.5 x 23.5 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Presentation Copy of the First Urban Masterplan for Jerusalem.

This extremely important map of Jerusalem is the first attempt at a comprehensive urban masterplan ever attempted for the city. This proposal was the 1918 McLean plan for the city, a plan that instituted several regulations that still affect the layout and character of the city today.

In addition to showing the layout of the city as a whole, this map served to delineate two areas with newly imposed building restrictions. These areas served to act as a buffer between the Old City and new development. The map describes the regulations enforced in the upper left corner.

The map itself is beautifully and simply drawn. Reminiscent of many prints from the British mandate period in the Middle East, it shows parks, settlements, buildings, proposed roads, and much more from throughout Jerusalem. The map centers on the Old City, where numerous holy sites are named.

The plan "was submitted in June 1918. It was drawn up by the architect William McLean, the Alexandria city-engineer, at the request of General Allenby, the commander-in-chief of the British Army in Palestine. An additional master-plan was prepared by Prof. Patrick Geddes in 1919. . . [later urban planning] was done with strict reference to these plans" (Kark and Oren-Nordheim).

City planning for Jerusalem during the Mandate Period went through iterations very quickly; with this first plan coming in 1918, and revised plans in 1919, 1922, and 1930. Many future plans would follow the regulations proposed by McLean in his plan of 1918. He was particularly interested in separating the Old City from new development and reinforcing the role of the Old City as the architectural, but not functional,



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center of the city by establishing a green belt around it.

This edition is particularly notable as it contains a front pastedown with an onlaid photo facsimile of the original plan as endorsed by General Allenby with a manuscript note below reading: "Photograph of original plan endorsed as approved by General Sir Edmund Allenby G.C.B. G.C.M.G. and by the Municipality of Jerusalem. This plan was exhibited at the Royal Academy, London, 1919."

The map was printed in Alexandria for the Survey of Egypt. In all, this is a truly fantastic map and a rare opportunity for enthusiasts of this holy city.

McLean's Vision for Jerusalem

Prior to 1900, Jerusalem's city structure had been built up over millennia of conquests, politics, and religious wars. Rapid growth in the early twentieth century was altering the face of Jerusalem and threatening the historic Old City. The arrival of the British army into the city in late 1917 opened a new era in the city's history.

Affirming the all-important tri-religious structure of Jerusalem, the first and foremost goal of the British was to preserve the holy sites of the three religions that consider the city sacred. Field Marshal Viscount Allenby appointed William McLean to lead the initial planning of the city, which resulted in the present map. While McLean's plan suffered from a lack of detailed topographic maps, some of the building codes he suggested still affect the city. McClean's five main proposals for the city were as follows: "(1) a thirty-five-foot limit on building height, (2) a ban on industrial construction in the city, (3) prohibition of all construction immediately adjacent to the Old City walls, (4) limited construction on Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives and in the Valley of Kidron, and (5) exclusive use of stone for roofs, which on all public buildings had to be dome shaped." (Efrat and Noble). The map served to delineate the areas described in the third and fourth guidelines.

This masterplan, in addition to ensuring that new buildings fit the already-existing architecture, also encouraged development in the north, west, and south of the Old City. This was to limit development in climactically favorable areas and served to keep the skyline and views eastwards from the Old City intact, features frequently referred to in historical and religious texts. In addition, several holy sites, such as the Mount of Olives, were in the places designated as open spaces to preserve their special character.

This plan would be updated in 1919, 1922, and 1930 to account for new developments and refine proposals from the 1918 plan. One shortcoming was that the plan focused little on the developing outer areas of the city, these would be better connected to the Old City in the 1944 Kendall plan. After independence, parts of the plan were abandoned during various periods and development varied from



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orderly to unplanned. Today, some of the implications of this masterplan are still visible throughout the city. There is still some increased open space around the Old City, though developments have encroached on many of the designated areas. While East Jerusalem has grown rapidly in the past seventy-five years, the heart of the economic and political center is still to the west and south of the Old City. For all of these reasons, this map really provides the key to understanding Jerusalem today.

Provenance

An inscription to the work indicates that the plan was exhibited at the London Royal Academy in 1919. The Royal Academy catalog of that year lists this as item 1388, to be displayed in the architecture room next to a re-arrangement of Prince's Square in Marylebone and a war memorial for the Leys School, Cambridge.

A front pastedown photograph shows Allenby's approved example of the map, containing his signature and several annotations. The present example of the map contains McLean's signature, as does the photographed example.

The booklet bears another signature from McLean, in a presentation inscription to Colonel William Edward Donohue C.B.E. Having served in the Expeditionary Forces, he was then stationed in Alexandria where he was the manager of the Egyptian Transport Services.

Rarity

OCLC records copies at the National Library of Israel, BL, BNF, Stanford University, and two other institutions. We have been unable to locate another example of the map ever appearing on the market.

Detailed Condition:

Folding map backed on linen and mounted in original ¼ blue cloth boards, lettered: "FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION | City of Jerusalem Town Planning Scheme by W.H. Mc Lean M. Inst. C.E. Engineer in Chief - Alexandria Municipality | General Plan of the Scheme"