

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Like all books, this one is a collective endeavor that only authorial fiction puts under my name alone. My debts are of a length and depth impossible to capture here. I am first and foremost indebted to my ancestors who kept records of their life in Palestine as far back as 1500. I owe special thanks to my great-uncle Hai Elyachar for his work as archivist and family historian, and to my grandfather for the stories he passed on to me.

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I began something close to the shape of the current book in March 2020 while living in Ljubljana, Slovenia, during the COVID-19 pandemic and have been working on it ever since, in Cairo, Irvine, and Princeton. I had the great privilege and joy in 2020, between Ljubljana and Princeton, of participating in a writing group led by Therí Pickens, whose brilliant mentorship reshaped me in profound ways. Working in the group she led, together with Edward Jones-Imhotep, Chrystal Lucky, and Lora Levett in particular, changed the way I worked and inspired me on a weekly basis. As a draft and then drafts of this book came together, a number of friends and colleagues were generous with their time and critical feedback. For their engagement and contributions to my thinking, I am immensely grateful to Talal Asad, Étienne Balibar, Rana Barakat, Rosie Bsheer, Muna El Shorbagi, Will Hanley, Omnia El Shakry, Noura Erakat, Agustín Fuentes, Julia Gearhart, Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi, Onur Günay, Martin Kornberger, Huda Lutfi, Timothy Mitchell, Laila Hussein Moustafa, Joanne Randa Nucho, Janet Roitman, Danilyn Rutherford, Hanan Sabea, Gabriele Schwab, AbdouMaliq Simone, and Neferti Tadiar. For crucial feedback on my writing about family history and Palestine, I am indebted to Lila Abu-Lughod, Gabriele Schwab, Sherene Seikaly, Ngugi wa-Thiong'o, and Chandra Bozelko and the staff of the OpEd Project. My thanks as well to Nick Seaver for sending an article of mine to the novelist Robin Sloan. It was a boost in a difficult period of writing to read his characterization of my writing as “novelistic” and to learn that he had based a character in a new book on my depiction of Mr. Amir, the public sector banker. Work with an incredible editorial collective led by Martin Kornberger, with Geoffrey C. Bowker, Andrea Mennicken, Peter Miller, Joanne Randa Nucho, and Neil Pollock, on our book project *Thinking Infrastructures*, pushed forward my thinking about infrastructure in a

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