

Real Time and Researcher's Time

For the historian, a diary is also a source text. It can be an extraordinarily useful source if it addresses issues which are of interest to scholars. Its singularity (assuming that no changes have been made in it) lies in the fact that it was written in real time. "Researcher's time" and "real time" are in a state of dialogue. Therefore, in addition to these introductory remarks, Gurney's diary is accompanied by footnotes which shed light on words, terms, and events that are mentioned in the text. I have also added, in the body of the diary itself, though without intervening in the text, "Perspectives" of time and research. This indirect dialogue between the source (in this case, the diarist) and the historian is not intended to "correct" the author of the diary, who of course had no way of knowing "what would happen". Its purpose is to elucidate some of his remarks from the perspective and interests of contemporary research. The order of the Perspectives is effectively dictated by the diarist, who reacted to what was engaging him at a particular time or even on a particular day. That said, it will be clear that the choice of the subjects for the Perspectives naturally reflects my own interests. The reader, though, might be interested in other themes which are suggested by the diary but are not addressed in the Perspectives. Can a diary from the past that is supplemented by comments from the perspective of the present enhance our understanding of contemporary events in Israel and Palestine? It is my fervent hope and belief that it can.

The full details of secondary sources cited in the footnotes in abbreviated form appear in the bibliography at the end of the book. More information about officials and other individuals, who are mentioned in the diary and the footnotes only in the context of their position at the time, can be found in an appendix of Biographical Notes.