

YA QUDS!

Academic Cultural Newsletter

Issue No. 2, October 2016



Centre for Jerusalem Studies
Al-Quds University

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Editors' note, Prof. Dr. Shukri Al-Abed and Dr. Maha Samman

Articles in English

Jerusalem 1994-2016

Urban Spatial Changes during Political Uncertainty

Scott Bollens

Mussala al-Marwani: An Unrecognised Palestinian Triumph?

Michael Dumper

The Fāṭimids in Jerusalem

Nour Abu Assab

On the 16th Anniversary of the Camp David Negotiations: How Ignorance of Jerusalem's Importance to Palestinians Doomed the Talks

Shibley Telhami

The Gypsies of Jerusalem: the Forgotten People

Amoun Sleem

Articles in Arabic

أسباب تقديس المكان إسلامياً

مشهور الحيازي

'الوضع القائم' في المسجد الأقصى والمخطط الإسرائيلي

أمينة بدران

أوسلو والقدس ...

منصور ناصرة

التاريخ المزعوم والعلم الحديث

رائد نسيبة

حقوق الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة في القدس الشرقية

هبة الأطرش

Editors' Note

Greetings and a warm welcome to the second issue of *Ya Quds!*.

Ya Quds! received many good words of encouragement following the first issue. We thank all those who have expressed their views and shared their suggestions. After all, it is you, our readers, whom we care about, so your comments and suggestions are very important to us. We hope that *Ya Quds!* will continue to offer valuable information and stimulate productive discussion about the city of Jerusalem. In this issue, as in the first, we did not seek to focus on a particular theme but have rather left it to the individual authors to select themes of interest and importance to them. All the articles are different, yet all are united by the word "Al-Quds." *Ya Quds!* is written about and for Jerusalem and its inhabitants, the stories and articles help to deconstruct the complex mystery and charm of this city.

What you will find in the following pages is a collection of ten articles, five in Arabic and five in English, written by academics and researchers whose contributions we are honoured to have in *Ya Quds!*. The five articles in English reflect various perspectives: historical (*The Fatimids in Jerusalem*), social (*The Gypsies of Jerusalem*), political (*Mussala al-Marwani: An unrecognised Palestinian triumph?*), and urban planning (*Urban Spatial Changes during Political Uncertainty*).

There are so many topics about Jerusalem on which we have yet to hear, so take hold of your pens and add your voices. We hereby send out a call for articles for the third issue of *Ya Quds!*. Articles may be in Arabic or English and should not exceed 1200 words. The deadline for submission is December 12, 2016. We look forward to your contributions.

The Centre for Jerusalem Studies team is also working hard to prepare for the upcoming conference on *Production of Inequalities: Realities and Prospects for Change in Jerusalem*, to be held on December 3–5 in Jerusalem and Abu Dis. We take this opportunity to invite all those interested in the topic to join us for this event.

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Jerusalem 1994-2016

Urban Spatial Changes during Political Uncertainty

Scott A. Bollens



People and Israeli Security forces inside Damascus Gate

Amid continued political impasses over the past 20 years, what have been the spatial trajectories of change in Jerusalem? How has the city under partisan occupation evolved spatially, politically, psychologically, and economically? Based on field research in 1994 and more recently from October 2015 to February 2016, here is what I have observed.

The stranglehold of Israeli control in Jerusalem continues and has intensified over the past 20 years. The regulatory regime remains biased and discriminatory against Palestinians. The result is the existence of a *de facto* binational urban state regime, strongly partisan, asymmetric, and unilateral. The city is divided in all but name.



The Israeli Settlement of Pisgat Zeev

There are plans in Arab East Jerusalem that are theoretically meant to guide development, but they are used by Israeli authorities instead to restrict and control, with constraints on outward growth (blue lines), open space, and future urbanizing designations, and restrictions on building volume. Further hindrances to Palestinian

development are land registration requirements that are at odds with Palestinian/Jordanian land patterns, roads cut through and at the edges of Palestinian villages, and designations of national parks to restrict Palestinian growth.

Israeli planning constitutes a restrictive mechanism that displaces and disempowers Palestinian Jerusalemites. There is a dizzying array of restrictive techniques and unspoken obstacles. Multiple layers of obstacles cumulatively result in the near impossibility of building. A disingenuous “mask” of technicality and neutrality is used by the Israeli system, and there is a mind-numbing planning and regulatory jungle full of obfuscation and “double speak”.

The power of planning lies in its near invisibility. Military actions by Israel are obvious, but planning decisions take place on the 5th floor of the Municipality Building. Yet, these planning decisions have far-reaching effects on the built landscape and inter-group disparities. Planning is a form of “structural violence” that creates the enduring structure of an unequal city. The result is that only about 14 percent of the area of annexed East Jerusalem is where Palestinians are allowed to develop, and much of this area is already developed.

These characteristics are similar to what I observed in 1994 and can lead one to despair and frustration over the future of a genuinely shared Jerusalem. Jerusalem is an asymmetric, divided city that reflects and reinforces larger power imbalances between Israel and Palestine.

There are new features on the ground since 1994 meant to solidify Israeli control over Jerusalem and to create greater disparities – the most visible being the separation barrier. This barrier was built in the name of Israeli security but in all likelihood is just as much, if not more, a political line – a type of physical manipulation

of territory to solidify Israeli claims of political control. The barrier cuts off thousands of Palestinian residents from the city, and even cuts into Israel's designated Jerusalem municipal space in a few cases.



A view from Beit Hanina showing an Israeli settlement and a Palestinian built-up area

With 18 obstructive and heavily guarded checkpoints in the Jerusalem barrier, the barrier constitutes fortified space by Israel and exposes Israel's capacity and willingness to blatantly and visibly manipulate space in the name of control. This raw edge of the barrier is significantly more obvious than the more submerged layer

of planning control and manipulation carried out since 1967.

Another aspect of Jerusalem life that has changed since 1994 is the growing penetration of East Jerusalem Palestinians into West Jerusalem in terms of services, employment, and consumption. The lack of services in Palestinian Jerusalem means that Palestinians are increasingly needing to use services and spaces of West Jerusalem. This is upsetting to certain Jewish neighbourhoods as the identity of those using services shifts. Meanwhile, the lack of employment opportunities in East Jerusalem has led to a situation where 35,000 East Jerusalem Palestinians work in Jewish parts of the city on a daily basis; 65 percent of all construction workers in Jewish parts of the city are Palestinian, as are 52 percent of transportation workers and 75 percent of workers in the hospitality sector.

On the one hand, this economic interdependence in Jerusalem is consistent with Israeli goals of city "unification" in that it strengthens Israeli control, creating a subservient and dependent Palestinian population. But, on the other hand, the Israeli economy in Jerusalem is now increasingly dependent on Palestinian labor and more vulnerable to labor disruption such as might happen due to political strife.

Noticeable among the differences in 2016 compared to 1994 is the amount of "unlicensed" Palestinian development in Jerusalem and, in particular, the growth of Palestinian neighbourhoods on the West Bank side of the barrier but within Jerusalem Municipality. These two related phenomena have introduced greater



Separation wall, separating Ras Al-Amud from Abu Dis

complexities and contradictions into the urban landscape that are not consistent with Israeli political objectives.

Palestinian development of “unlicensed” housing in Israeli-defined East Jerusalem is overwhelming the Israeli legal and regulatory system aimed at containing and restricting it. According to Israeli data, the Arab percentage of city population increased from 30 percent of city population in 1995 to 37 percent in 2013. From 1995 to 2013, there were 126,000 new Arab residents of Jerusalem compared to 102,000 new Jewish residents. The most cited figure for the number of unlicensed units in Arab East Jerusalem is 20,000, which would mean more than 30 percent of

all Palestinian units in Jerusalem are not authorized by the Israeli state. Seventy percent of all new Palestinian construction from 2001 to 2010 is estimated to be unlicensed. The magnitude of this type of development is causing problems for Israel. One possible response would be house demolition by Israel of all unlicensed housing in Jerusalem. However, this would be politically impossible because Israel cannot destroy large amounts of urban fabric in what they deem “unified” Jerusalem as it can in Gaza or, in 2006, Lebanon.

The forms of Palestinian resistance to Israeli control in the city are both a weakness and a strength. They represent a weakness in that there does not exist a collective and organized strategy – such as would be led by government or public-private enterprise – that could build large-scale and integrated development projects in the Jerusalem area. Palestinian development in Jerusalem is largely residential and suffers from lack of road networks, community and public spaces, and economic activities. However, the strength of Palestinian counter-actions in Jerusalem is that hundreds of individual and family household actions are, cumulatively, creating a dispersed pattern of unlicensed development activity that is harder for Israeli control mechanisms to suppress and restrict. In terms of the politically loaded demographic numbers game, this is creating a stalemate that is

thwarting the goals of Israeli control.

At times, Israeli actions themselves cause consequences that work against their political goals of strengthening their control of Jerusalem. The location of the separation barrier in a way that puts the Jerusalem neighbourhoods of Shu‘fat Camp and Kufur ‘Aqab outside the wall is paradoxically (from Israel’s view) stimulating development in these places. From 2006 to 2010, 20 percent of all recorded residential construction in Arab East Jerusalem took place in Kufur ‘Aqab. By 2011, of 15 Arab neighbourhoods, Kufur ‘Aqab had the second most square meters of built space. Because these neighbourhoods are within the Israeli municipality, inhabitants have claims as Jerusalem residents and can count in city population numbers.

Earlier, in the first years of building the barrier around Jerusalem, due to the threat felt by many Palestinians of being put outside the wall and losing their Jerusalem ID cards, there was significant in-migration of Palestinians from the hinterland into the city proper, increasing population numbers. Again, Israel’s own actions created consequences that seemed contrary to their political goals of maintaining demographic majority as a path toward preserving political sovereignty.

In summary, despite consistent and intensifying Israeli structural efforts to strengthen its hold over Jerusalem, the Palestinian presence in and around the city (in terms of residential development) is greater today than in 1994. Israel is not winning the competition, and the situation represents more of a stalemate. This brings into question the ability of any governing regime to “control” a city through partisan policy. Forty-eight years of such policies have not gained Israel true control over the city.

Jerusalem appears to an outsider as an unsustainable situation that, lacking political resolve, is going to last a long time. Political and material asymmetry creates frustration and violence, which creates further consolidation and tightening of control by Israel. There exists an unfortunate downward cycle, further perpetuated by a focus on the symptoms of the inequality rather than on the root issues of political sovereignty conflict.

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Mussala al-Marwani: An Unrecognised Palestinian Triumph?

Michael Dumper



Al-Marwani Mosque-View from inside

In the midst of recent tensions and controversies surrounding the access of non-Muslims to the Haram al-Sharif, observers and researchers may have overlooked the significance of a remarkable achievement that has occurred in Jerusalem: the restoration and rehabilitation of Mussala al-Marwani, or the Marwani

Mosque. The opening of this mosque under the Haram al-Sharif in 2000 may have triggered increased Israeli surveillance and intervention on the site but, nevertheless, the work probably constitutes the most extensive and most ambitious project undertaken since the Ottoman period. The Marwani Mosque, sometimes referred to as the Marwani Prayer Hall, is located in the southeast corner of the Haram al-Sharif in an area also known as Solomon's Stables. It was named after the father of the builder of the Dome of the Rock, Caliph Abd al-Malik, although some sources question the connection to Caliph Abd al-Malik and prefer to emphasize the link with the Crusader use of the site as stables, comprising some 500 square metres.

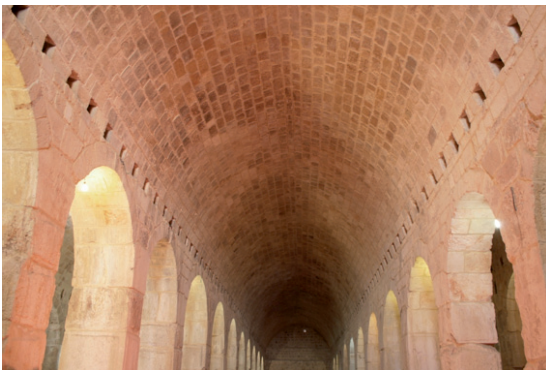
The Mosque itself was created out of subterranean vaults supported by 88 pillars and divided into 12 galleries in rows. During the Crusader period the vaults were used as stables by the King of Jerusalem, Baldwin II (118-1131 CE) but were subsequently sealed off by Salah Ed-Din after his conquest of the city in 1187. Between August 1996 and March 2001, the Waqf Administration carried out extensive rehabilitation work. They also received the cooperation of the Islamic



Al-Marwani Mosque-View from inside

Israeli opposition, involving running battles with the police, legal petitions by pressure groups, and critical reports by the Israeli Antiquities Authority.¹ Nevertheless, the rehabilitation work greatly enhanced the standing of both the Islamic Movement and the Waqf Administration in the Islamic world.²

On a tour of Mussalla al-Marwani Halls in February of this year, I was very much struck by the achievement of the Waqf Administration in completing this project. I have visited the Halls during various phases of excavation and rehabilitation and so am familiar with their layout. On this visit, however, which occurred after considerable absence, it sunk in what has been accomplished at this site. The galleries inside the Mosque are quite awe-inspiring in their beauty and proportions, reminding one of the grace and elegance of the admittedly much more delicate mosque in Cordoba in Spain, yet the size and grandeur are quite astonishing. I am not a conservation architect or a historian, but surely it is not inaccurate to conclude that this project, however contentious, must be the most ambitious



Ceiling of passage in the Al-Marwani Mosque

Movement inside Israel, which mobilised funds and supplied Palestinian volunteers. The underground site was transformed into one of the largest mosques in the world (4000m²/ 1 acre). On the one hand, the work generated popular Palestinian support but, on the other, it also provoked widespread

and most extensive activity undertaken on the Haram al-Sharif since the Ottoman period. I am not aware of a project of equal scale and magnitude.

One can see how, in the light of all the other recent controversies concerning the status quo of the Haram al-Sharif and the question of

access for prayers to non-Muslims, the scale and scope of this work has not been recognised. What is astonishing is that such a monumental renovation and expansion of public space for the Muslim community has been undertaken in full sight of the Israeli security and antiquity authorities. I would argue that Palestinians and the Muslim community have been so focused on the erosion of their control over the Haram al-Sharif by the Israeli authorities that they themselves have not appreciated what has been achieved. One could argue that failing to portray the rehabilitation of Mussalla al-Marwani as a dramatic triumph in the face of the overwhelming power of the Israeli state is an opportunity missed to convey this example of Palestinian skills, expertise, and competence.

One could go further. One should also acknowledge that together with the renovation of the Al-Aqsa and the Dome of the Rock in the 80s and 90s (which attracted international acclaim and an award by the Aga Khan Foundation) and the renovation work carried out by the Palestinian Welfare Association and the Waqf Administration on Mamluk *madrasas*, *turbas*, and *hamams* among other sites in the Old City itself (which also received an Aga Khan Award), Palestinian public space has made a great deal of progress. In the midst of so many difficulties in asserting a Palestinian identity under Israeli occupation in East Jerusalem, these are great examples of what can be achieved.

Professor Michael Dumper is Professor in Middle East Politics, University of Exeter. He was awarded several long-term research grants and worked on projects related to the future of Palestinian refugees, conflict in cities, and peace initiatives. He has several publications, of which three are on Jerusalem.

Photos in this article are courtesy of Awqaf.

Endnotes:

1. Most notably the Committee for the Prevention of Destruction of Antiquities on the Temple Mount and the Temple Mount Faithful; Gideon Avni and Jon Seligman. *The Temple Mount 1917–2001: Documentation, Research and Inspection of Antiquities*. The Israeli Antiquities Authority (Jerusalem: Keter Press Enterprises, 2001), 42; Nadav Shragai, ‘The Breach of the Temple Mount: a Swift Kick at Jewish History’, Ha’aretz, February 12, 1999.

2. See Nimrod Luz, ‘The Glocalisation of al-Haram al-Sharif Landscape of Islamic resurgence and national revival: Designing memory, mystification of place’ (September, 2009), 1-39. http://www.ntnu.no/eksternweb/multimedia/archive/00051/Nimrod_Luz_51579a.pdf.

The Fāṭimids in Jerusalem

Nour Abu Assab



Fatimid Engraving. Photo by Mr. Eihab Al-Jallad

This article aims to investigate whether the Fāṭimids played a role in adding new constructions in Jerusalem or in affecting its intellectual and social life. The researcher consulted historical sources to determine whether the Fāṭimids had erected new institutions or contributed to Jerusalem's cultural activities. Before tackling the issue of contributions, this paper will begin

with a brief historical background about the Fāṭimids.

Jerusalem came under the Fāṭimid rule in 970 CE (Schick 1998, 78) when Jawhar, the general of Al-Mu'izz (reigned 953-975 CE), defeated the Ikhshīdīd troops at Al-Ramlah (Hitti 1950, 563). In 969, the Fāṭimids conquered Al-Fuṣṭāṭ in Egypt and captured it coming from North Africa, where they had originally established their state in 909 CE (Ibn Khaldūn 1999, v. 4, 33; Sanders 1994, 1). It is important to mention that the Fāṭimid state (Caliphate) was based on *Ismā'īlism* (Ibn Khaldūn 1999, v. 4, 33; Al-Maqrīzī 2002, v. 2, 597). Ibn Khaldūn says that *Ismā'īlism* derives from the Twelver *Shī'ism* (Ibn Khaldūn 1999, v. 4, 32). So the *Ismā'īlīs* were *Shī'īs* but considered among the extremist sects (*ghulāh*) (Al-Maqrīzī 2002, v. 2, 597). The *Ismā'īlīs*¹ trace their origins to *Imām Ismā'īl*, the son and designated successor of *Imām Ja'far Al-Šādiq* (d. 765 CE). Although *Imām Ismā'īl* died during the life of his father, the *Ismā'īlīs* asserted that the *Imāmate* remained in his line and was passed to his son Muḥammad who, as the *Ismā'īlīs* believe, did not really die but went into concealment and would eventually return as *Al-Mahdī* (the guide) (Ibn Khaldūn 1999, v. 4, 33; Sanders 1994, 1).

The Fāṭimids were able to extend their sovereignty, besides Palestine, over Syria, Al-Hijāz, Yemen, and Sind (Nasr 1977, 235). One of the factors that facilitated the Fāṭimids' control over Palestine was the support of the Byzantines with the involvement of the native local Christians (Peters 1984, 242). Nevertheless, this did not

mean that attaining sovereignty over Palestine was an easy task. The Fāṭimid rule over Palestine had begun after a long period of warfare between the Fāṭimids and their opponents from the Arab tribes, i.e., the Syrian tribesmen of (*Banū*) ‘Uqayl and the Palestinian tribesmen (*Banū*) Ṭayyi’. The Fāṭimids also fought against the Qarmatians, the Turks, and the Byzantines in a continuously changing array of alliances. The battle of Ughwana between the Fāṭimids and the Jarrāhids took place in 1029 CE and resulted in the victory of the Fāṭimids (Schick 1998, 78). When the Fāṭimids eventually came to rule over Palestine, they safeguarded the gateway to the centre of their Caliphate in Cairo (Harris 2005, 68).

In Palestine, the Fāṭimids continued to rule the country until the Seljūks invaded it in 1071 CE. The Seljūks represented the *Sunnī* Islam in opposition to the *Shī‘ī* *Ismā‘īlī* Fāṭimids. However, not all the areas came under the Seljūks’ rule, because the coastal cities remained in the hands of the Fāṭimids. The Seljūks interrupted the Fāṭimid rule in Palestine. To elaborate, after the Seljūk Sultanate had reached its widest dimensions, from the borders of Afghanistan to the frontiers of the Byzantine Empire in western Asia Minor, and after capturing Aleppo in 1070 CE (Ibn Khaldūn 1999, v. 5, 7-11), it pushed into Palestine and captured Al-Ramlah, Jerusalem, and other towns in the south, such as ‘Asqalān (Ibn Al-Qalānīsī 2002, 16). In 1098 CE, the Seljūks again surrendered Jerusalem to the Fāṭimids (Ibn Al-Qalānīsī 2002, 31). Given the previous information, when the Crusaders reached Jerusalem in 1099 CE (Hitti 1950, 575), the Fāṭimids were in control of Jerusalem but not all of Palestine.

With the arrival of the Crusaders, the Fāṭimid troops had remained in ‘Asqalān, which was a seaport (William of Tyre 2003, v. 1, 442) and became the base for the fleet for a period of time (Ibn Khaldūn 1999, v. 5, 187), then they withdrew westwards to Egypt, the centre of their Caliphate (Ibn Al-Qalānīsī 2002, 15). Thus, Jerusalem was Fāṭimid for longer than a century, but did this have any impact on the architecture and the intellectual and social activities in Jerusalem?

The travellers’ accounts are considered one of the main sources that help to portray a view of the city and its mosque. Khusrū² (d. 1088 CE), the Persian traveller, reports that the Fāṭimids established an “excellent” hospital “bimaristan” and a mosque at the “edge” of Hinnom Valley. According to Khusrū, a great number of sick people was served at the hospital, which was funded by considerable sums given for the healing of the sick, affording fixed salaries for physicians. In this regard, many endowments were made to keep the hospital working (Khusrū 1993, 68).

Al-Maqdisī³ (d. 990 CE), the geographer and traveller, also testifies as to the prosperity of the city when he reports that the city was well looked after under the

Fāṭimids. It could be argued that there was much interest in the structure of the city as well. In this regard, Al-Maḡdisī⁷ mentions that the city was built professionally (Al-Maḡdisī 1877, 166). Under the Fāṭimids, Jerusalem was a large city with a very clean market, rich in goods and crafts. Economically, Jerusalem appeared to be a suitable place for visitors because its prices were moderate and plenty of fruits and vegetables were offered for sale (Khusrū 1993, 67).

Al-Aqsa Mosque appeared to be at the heart of the Fāṭimids' interest. Al-Maḡdisī points out that Al-Aqsa Mosque was at that time the greatest in the Muslim world (Al-Maḡdisī 1877, 166). The Fāṭimids' interest can be seen from the amount of restoration they pursued. For example, in 1016 CE, an earthquake resulted in damage to Al-Aqsa Mosque; the Dome partly collapsed and part of Dāwūd pulpit fell down (Al-Ḥanbalī v. 1, 443). Al-Zāhir rebuilt what was damaged by that earthquake in 1022 CE. In 1033 CE, another earthquake shook Jerusalem, affecting the Mosque and the walls of the city, so they were rebuilt in the same year (Asali 1990, 118). The Fāṭimid caliphs tended to have their names commemorated in Al-Aqsa Mosque and in Jerusalem. One example mentioned by Khusrū is an inscription that honoured the Sultan of Egypt (the Fāṭimid Caliph⁴), which was set over a great gateway⁵ and crowned with a dome (Khusrū 1993, 70).

The Fāṭimids seem to have highly regarded Al-Aqsa Mosque. Under their rule, people from all over Palestine and the Levant came to visit the Mosque during the time of pilgrimage in cases where performing a pilgrimage to Mecca was not affordable. Khusrū also says that at times as many as 20,000 Muslims came to Al-Aqsa with their families during the first 10 days of *Dul Ḥijjah*,⁶ and some made sacrifices at the terrace of the Dome of the Rock for the *Al-Adḥa* Feast (Khusrū 1993, 68). This suggests that the Fāṭimids paid much attention to Jerusalem, as the aforementioned ritual had exclusively been performed in Mecca. The Fāṭimid Caliph granted special attention to the Dome of the Rock, in particular, and that motivated the Caliph⁷ to send a huge silver lantern, as well as a huge perfumed candle, to decorate the Rock. And in order to gain the honour, the Caliph's name was carved in gold around that candle. In addition, Al-Ghūrī, an influential Fāṭimid figure, erected a position at the southern part of the Dome that could be reached by three ladders and that led to a passage and windows where he commemorated his name (Khusrū 1993, 80–82). The Fāṭimids' interest expanded to the surroundings of the walled city, i.e., to the Al-Sāhirah area. The people at that time believed that this would be the area of Resurrection and awaiting accountability on the Day of Judgement, so they stayed there until the end of their life (Khusrū 1993, 68), which would suggest a flourishing and prosperous area due to the huge number of residences.

The presence of the Christians, who most probably included pilgrims and visitors, appears to be obvious. Al-Maḡdisī, without differentiating between the citizens and the travelers, tells that Jerusalem had many Christians, assuring that their number was so large that they were the majority (Al-Maḡdisī 1877, 167). The common presence of non-Muslims is also mentioned in Khusrū's account, as many Christians and Jews from "the Roman Area,"⁸ came to visit Jerusalem and venerate its great church and synagogue (Khusrū 1993, 67). As the city was accustomed to having visitors and strangers, it appears to have offered many accommodations. In addition to the pilgrimage accommodations previously mentioned, the city also had hostels to accommodate visitors, which Al-Maḡdisī argued to be expensive (Al-Maḡdisī 1877, 167). Mentioned by Runciman is the fact that, inside Jerusalem, pilgrims could stay at the Hospital of Saint John, which was founded by the merchants of Amalfi (Runciman 1991, 48). Al-Douri comments that with visitors and pilgrims comes much activity in crafts and trade (Al-Douri 1990, 118).

Thus economic activities flourished under the Fāṭimids. In this regard, there were numerous artisans, and each craft had a separate bazaar (Khusrū 1993, 67). The general observations of Al-Maḡdisī and Khusrū show that the city was well suited to having visitors and pilgrims, as it was clean, large, and offered plenty of goods and fruits.

Strangely, Al-Maḡdisī mentions in his book that Jerusalem had few Muslim scholars (*'ulamā'*) (Al-Maḡdisī 1877, 166). This might be due to the different beliefs the Fāṭimids adopted, for they were Isma'īlis, while the Muslims of Jerusalem were Sunnis. The difference in ideology prompted the Fāṭimids to seek their own educational institution, so they established Dār Al-'Ilm to propagate Ismā'īlī thought (Asali 1990, 117). However, although the number of scholars declined, Al-Aqsa remained the destination of Muslim worshippers, who came to visit, then stayed for longer periods (*mujāwirūn*), particularly inside the Dome of the Rock (Khusrū 1993, 80).

To conclude, the work carried out by the different Fāṭimid caliphs indicates that the Fāṭimids were not less keen than previous dynasties had been in asserting the sanctity and Islamic significance of Jerusalem. Therefore, new institutions were erected, and special attention was paid to Al-Aqsa Mosque. However, adopting the *Ismā'īlī* thought appears to have negatively affected the number of scholars and the intellectual activities inside Al-Aqsa Mosque, which nevertheless remained a destination for visitors and *mujāwirūn*.

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Endnotes:

1. Ismā'īliyah (Isma'īlism) are called Sabi'iyyah, or 'Seveners', because they recognize only seven Imāms (Brill 1987, v. 7, 23).
2. He visited Jerusalem in 1047 and wrote his detailed description.
3. He is also known as Al-Bishārī, born and brought up in Palestine in the 9th century.
4. Khusrū did not mention the name of the sultan.
5. Closing the gateway was As-Silsilah Gate.
6. The tenth month according to the lunar calendar.
7. Khusrū does not mention his name.
8. Meaning Europe.

On the 16th Anniversary of the Camp David Negotiations: How Ignorance of Jerusalem's Importance to Palestinians Doomed the Talks

Shibley Telhami



Junction between Sultan Sulaiman Road and Road number 1

July 2016 marks the 16th anniversary of the start of Camp David negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, mediated by the United States. The resulting failure reversed years of incremental advances in bridging the gap between Israelis and Palestinians and put an end to a period of hope that the conflict was on its way to resolution. No single issue was more responsible for the failure than that of Jerusalem.

As pointed out in my 2013 co-authored book, *The Peace Puzzle: America's Quest for Arab-Israeli Peace, 1989-2011* (with Daniel Kurtzer, Scott Lasensky, William Quandt, and Stephen Spiegel),

there is near consensus among scholars as well as participants from all three sides that the primary reason for the collapse of the negotiations at Camp Da-

vid was the issue of Jerusalem, even if other important issues such as refugees, borders, and Israeli settlements remained unresolved. This was particularly ironic as Jerusalem was the single issue over which there was no previous discussion or any serious preparation – not that the centrality of the issue was unpredictable. It is also striking how the American team had limited information about the Palestinian or the Israeli bottom line positions, particularly with regard to Jerusalem.



A view of the old city of Jerusalem

It isn't that the American team wasn't hearing some outside views that Jerusalem was central to the Palestinians; it is that there was a certain degree of disbelief and dismissal, at the same time that American officials fully accepted that the Israelis, divided as they may be, were unified on the issue of Jerusalem, with no serious openness to compromise, so they looked for compromise elsewhere.

Clinton's National Security adviser, Samuel Berger, described the sentiment after a dinner he had in Israel just two months before the Camp David conference this way: "I don't know about Yossi Beilin, but everybody at that dinner said 'Jerusalem is a red line which no Israeli prime minister can cross, and if he does, he'll be out of office'". There was no such sense about the Palestinian position on Jerusalem. As a senior Clinton Administration official told the authors of the *Peace Puzzle*: "You certainly had that in terms of sensitivities to the Jewish, Israeli views; you didn't have that on the other side. I don't know who in the State Department or elsewhere could've done that".

To my mind, Jerusalem has always been central. I was reminded of this in a direct way in 1991, during a meeting in Tunis with the late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat. I had gone to visit as part of a small delegation of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, which was engaged in Track II mediation efforts following the 1991 Gulf war. I asked Arafat if he agreed with the sentiment that the PLO had been significantly weakened after the Iraq war, after losing support from the Gulf Arab states and angering the sole superpower just as the Cold War ended. Not surprisingly, Arafat didn't much agree with this narrative, but as he spoke, it seemed he was aware that his counter-arguments appeared half-hearted to his listeners. He paused, straightened up in his seat, then wagged his finger insistently as he deliv-

ered his trump card: “don’t forget, I still have Jerusalem!”.

At the time of the Camp David talks, I was close to the American negotiating team, not only because I knew well many of its members, but also because I had been appointed on the American side of the Anti-Incitement Committee that was created after the Wye River agreements. I conveyed my views to both White House and State Department officials, before the Camp David Summit commenced, that Jerusalem was central to the Palestinians. In addition, I went to the press. Just days before the negotiations I published an article on July 14, 2000, in the *Los Angeles Times*, in which I wrote:

By “Jerusalem,” both Israelis and Palestinians refer largely to the Old City within the ancient walls that houses the most significant holy sites for Jews, Muslims and Christians. The symbolism evoked by these sites cannot be overcome by creative ideas of expanding the city’s boundaries. This symbolism is, in some ways, bigger than the Palestinian-Israeli conflict because it ultimately mobilizes Jewish and Muslim groups from outside the areas controlled by Arafat and Barak. Emotions run high on both sides when the issue of Jerusalem sovereignty is raised. When pollsters asked Palestinians if they agreed to Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem in exchange for Palestinian statehood in the rest of the West Bank and Gaza, an overwhelming majority rejected the Palestinian state if it did not include Jerusalem ... In the Arab and Muslim worlds, no issue with Israel mobilizes more people. Jerusalem is celebrated and invoked in political, religious and social rallies. The rhetoric in the Arab world on this issue has intensified since the success of the Islamic Hezbollah operations forced the Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. The dual message of militancy and religion has been put forth as an alternative to negotiations. Giving Israel sovereignty over the walled city would rally groups across the region against the deal. Unlike a powerful Egypt, which was able to withstand a decade of isolation in the Arab world for its 1978 Camp David deal with Israel, Arafat is too weak to prevail without substantial Arab nation support.

As the Camp David started, my fear grew that the Jerusalem issue would doom the negotiations. During the first week of the negotiations, I followed up with another article on July 21, 2000, in the *Washington Post*, in which I wrote:

It is no secret that many people on the U.S. and Israeli negotiating teams arrived at Camp David assuming this about the Jerusalem issue: If Yasser Arafat was offered a state in more than 90 percent of the West Bank and all of Gaza and some control over Muslim holy sites and Arab neighborhoods in Jerusalem, he would be willing to accept Israeli legal sovereignty over the old city. It is hard to know how this impression was formed when conventional wisdom

among most students of Arab and Palestinian politics was to the contrary. It is certainly the case that one never truly knows the absolute bottom line of the other party until it is tested in negotiations, and it is always worth trying to push the limits. But the likelihood that there was much Palestinian flexibility on this issue of Jerusalem was always small, if one listened attentively to both sides.

My warnings fell on deaf ears.

Since the failure at Camp David we have learned how unprepared the American team was about the issue of Jerusalem, which ended up taking up the lion's share of the negotiations and ultimately dooming them. As my co-author and I noted in the Peace Puzzle, "the absence of preparation on Jerusalem became clear early on with the frantic attempt to draft a non-paper. It also became clear that the leadership needed to be brought up to speed quickly on conceptualizing different approaches to the Jerusalem issue and for that, the team turned to Jonathan Schwartz," a State Department legal adviser, to "educate" the leadership about Jerusalem sovereignty issues in the middle of the negotiations.

The story of how the Jerusalem issue was taken up at Camp David is now well documented in our book, as well as many others, though with some variation. Part of the irony was that in fact more progress was made on this issue than was achieved in all the years of the negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians – just not enough for an all or nothing summit.

The last time I met with the late Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, was during his last visit to Washington in January 2001, at the Ritz Carlton hotel where he was staying. I asked him about Jerusalem and about reports on what the Israelis had offered and what he had reportedly offered. Specifically, I asked him about reports that he had "offered" the Armenian Quarter to Israeli sovereignty. His answer was this: "They asked, but I replied that 'my name is Yasser Arafatian!'"

Jerusalem of course wasn't the only issue, and it is still difficult to assess if an agreement to end the conflict would have been possible in 2000, even if the issue of Jerusalem were settled. What is clear is that there was no way to have a final agreement without addressing Jerusalem. On this, nothing has changed since: The Jerusalem issue remains a key to any settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

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The Gypsies of Jerusalem: The Forgotten People

Amoun Sleem



An Alley in the old city of Jerusalem

A band of itinerant musicians and dancers hired by a Persian king? A caste of entertainers, commissioned to defend their homeland against a Hunnish invasion in the 5th century? Or a number of tribes sent out to Persia to a Turko-Persian general, never to return again? How and when did the Gypsies begin their migration, and how did they end up in Jerusalem of all places? In the early 18th century, historians established that the Gypsy people originated as a caste of entertainers in India who called themselves Dom, which meant “man” in their common language. The Dom of Jerusalem are one of the many communities of Gypsies who have settled throughout the Middle East. Like the Roma and Lom, their European and Armenian counterparts, the Dom have a consciousness that is both uniquely Gypsy

and heavily influenced by their host countries. Amidst the theories gleaned from historical records concerning the cause of their departure from India, the Dom of Jerusalem offer a legend that roots them firmly in the Middle East.

Long ago, two tribes led by two cousins resided in Syria. One cousin, upon killing the King, incited the wrath of the King’s daughter. Seeking revenge, the grieving princess turned the two tribes against each other and instigated a war between them, resulting in the death of both cousins. The princess was not satisfied, however, and issued a decree forcing the tribes to wander through the wilderness during the hottest hours of the day, to ride only donkeys, and to earn their living solely through dancing and music making. From there, some Dom travelled to India, Iraq, and even back to Syria. By acknowledging Syria, not India, as their ancestral homeland, the Dom altered the nature of the “man” to which their name refers in favour of a Middle Eastern identity. Today, the Dom live in several countries throughout the Middle East, and their culture has melded with that of the surrounding Arab environment.

As did the Gypsies in other countries, the Jerusalem Dom accepted the language and religion of the places they lived in. They are Muslims and speak Arabic as well as Domari – their native language. Domari is distinct even among the other

major Gypsy languages, Romany and Lom. Its close links to Punjabi were key determinants of the Gypsies' distant Indian heritage, yet Arabic's significant effect on the language speaks to the impact of the Dom's latest homeland. Whatever their adaptations in religion, language, or otherwise, Gypsies all over the world maintain a principal character that is singularly their own, and the Dom are no exception.

The Gypsies of Jerusalem remain a community infused by musical rhythms and song in keeping with Gypsy tradition but have abandoned their nomadic habits in favour of a more sedentary lifestyle. They have made their home in Jerusalem for over 400 years. Originally settling in an area outside the Old City called Wadi Al-Joz, the Dom later moved to a small neighbourhood called Burj Al-Laqlaq within the walls of the Old City. An ethnic minority, the Dom community has suffered in silence throughout the decades of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Their numbers dwindled significantly during the battles surrounding the foundation of the State of Israel. The greatest exodus occurred during the war of 1967, which caused nearly half of the Dom population to seek refuge in Syria, Lebanon, and even India.

Despite a deep-seated identification with Middle Eastern culture, the remaining two hundred families endure severe discrimination at the hands of Israelis and their Palestinian neighbours. Once lauded in Persian poetry as unparalleled entertainers, a series of cultural, political, and economic shifts have led the Dom to be regarded as despicable beggars. The shame of being a Gypsy is instilled at an early age when children enter school. Although the Dom consider themselves Palestinian, their non-Arab ethnicity elicits such intense abuse that nearly 60% of the Dom community has failed to complete elementary school. Unskilled and uneducated, the Dom are locked into a cycle of dire poverty and derision. The younger generation now prefers to assimilate fully into the surrounding Arab culture, spurning traditional dress, the Domari language, customs, or anything else that might distinguish them as Gypsies.

The Domari Centre in East Jerusalem was established to stem the deterioration of this once vibrant community and to restore its pride. Founded in 1999, the organization provides the traditionally underserved, minority population with economic empowerment, child development, women's support, and cultural preservation. Members of the community, primarily women and children, come for classes, training programmes, advice, and assistance. The Domari Centre takes particular care to rebuild the self-esteem of its youngest members, offering a child literacy programme, Domari language and culture courses, and new school supplies. The hope is that their little hands will eventually lift the Gypsies of Jerusalem out of the "untouchable" status from which they suffer through education and self-respect.

***Amoun Sleem** is a leader in the Gypsy community of Jerusalem and director of the Gypsy Community Center in Shu'fat, promoting the Gypsy history in the Middle East.*



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