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Abstract

This chapter outlines the dramatic rise and fall of Jerusalem's late Ottoman city centre, whose physical destruction by British and Israeli planners was accompanied with its erasure from cultural memory. The cosmopolitan town centre around Jaffa Gate, emerging in the 1880s, embodied late-Ottoman notions of non-sectarian civic modernity, technological progress, and urban development. As the central node of the expanding network of neighbourhood, connecting the walled city to developments outside the walls, the new centre pointed towards a plural and integrative vision of manifold communities that made up the city. The 1917 British occupation brought an entirely new ethos to Jerusalem, based on historicism and ethno-religious segregation. The British viewed the city centre as an eyesore which they tried unsuccessfully to demolish, to make way for a park around the walls, that would accentuate Jerusalem's sacredness and historicity. The disdain to the town centre corresponded with a view of the city as a tapestry of segregated neighbourhoods, with no civic common identity. This vision was finally implemented by Israeli planners after the 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem, and the consolidation of "united" Jerusalem as a "divided city", a segregated city with rival communities and lacking a shared civic heart.

Figures

1. Celebrations of the completion of the Clock tower, 1907. On the right, the Sabil built 1901. Source: Israeli National Photograph Collection. Public Domain.

2. The border walls in Mamilla. Photographer: Van de Poll, 1964. Source: <u>Wikicommons</u>. license: Creative Commons. CC0.
3. Old City Park, in the site of former Ottoman post office, 2016. License: Creative Commons. CC BY-SA 4.0 Source: <u>Wikicommons</u>.

<u>Jerusalem's lost heart: the rise and fall of the late-Ottoman city centre</u>

Standing in the small plaza in front of Jaffa Gate of the Old City of Jerusalem, one is struck by the contradictory sense of space. Geographically speaking, this is Jerusalem's centre point, lying in what appears on the map as the heart of the city. The nearby Citadel and Jaffa Gate are among Jerusalem's most recognisable landmarks. But this geographic and symbolic centrality is at odds with the site's liminality: its function as a cross over point between the hegemonic Jewish-Israeli Jerusalem and the Arab-Palestinian East Jerusalem, unilaterally annexed by Israel and under occupation since 1967. The space of Jaffa Gate, which is characterised by flow of tourists, visitors and residents, accommodates its contradictions under the unmistakable sign of Israeli authority. And at the same time this liminal centrality only points to the absence of a city centre for Jerusalem that could contain its disparate constituencies in a civic and urban manner.

Jerusalem is one of the prime cases of "divided cities" discussed in urban studies, alongside Belfast, Beirut, and Nicosia (Calame et al., 2009). Such cities are characterised by sharp residential segregation according to ethnic, national or religious identity. In Jerusalem, effectively all neighbourhoods are understood as either "Jewish" or "Arab", and residential segregation is almost total.[1] The absence of a shared city centre is another typical characteristic of divided cities. Jerusalem is served by two distinct business centres: the Jewish-Israeli town centre of Jaffa Road, and the Palestinian business district of Damascus Gate. This division is the legacy of 19 years (1948-1967) in which the city was physically divided to Israeli West Jerusalem and Jordanian East Jerusalem. Physical partition ended in 1967, yet the division of commercial centres endured in 52 years of Israeli rule, despite – and perhaps due to - heavy handed planning and construction interventions of Israeli "unification". The persistence of the division points to the limits of Israel's unilateral annexation project. The absence of a shared city centre is tightly connected to the division of the city's neighbourhoods according to ethno-national logic. The absence of a common civic ethos makes it difficult if not impossible to sustain a city centre that could claim to serve all the city's populations.

But this was not always the case. From the 1880s to the 1930s, Jerusalem had a modern city centre offering civic, cultural, and commercial amenities to Jerusalem's diverse constituencies. It was located in Jaffa Gate, which today offers liminal centrality. The area begun to develop in the 1880s, and by 1900 Jaffa Gate was the undisputed heart of the city. Its character was decidedly Ottoman, Imperial, and non-sectarian. But British colonial rulers, who occupied the city in 1917, saw no merit in this area. British policy makers resolved to destroy much of the modern Jaffa Gate quarter in order to separate between the Old city and the new parts. The Ottoman vision of a civic, non-sectarian and modern Jerusalem - embodied in the Jaffa Gate area - was anathema to British officials who saw Jerusalem as an ancient city and a patchwork of ethnic and religious congregations, each in their own neighbourhoods. The British were unable to fully implement their plans, but their policies during thirty years rule drained commercial and civic activity from the Ottoman town centre to other parts of the city, as Jerusalem became increasingly segregated between Jews and Arabs. In late 1947, the former centre became a battleground between Zionist militias and Arab nationalists, and in the aftermath of the 1948 war, a no-man's land between Israel and Jordan. After the occupation of East Jerusalem in 1967, Israeli planners finally carried out the British colonial vision and physically destroyed almost the entire area. This staggered process of destruction was paralleled with an almost complete erasure of the Ottoman city centre from cultural memory and literature on Jerusalem. The civic and political importance of the area has been systematically downplayed or ignored altogether. Current day Jerusalemites not only have no shared city centre: they also are not aware that Jerusalem ever had such a centre.

A city centre is typically not a residential neighbourhood. And yet its function and character are crucial to the configuration of the city's neighbourhoods. As the primary node in the city's networks of power, movement and exchange, the city centre encodes, in a physical way, the city's ethos and material experience, its hierarchies, governing discourse and logic of commerce. Neighbourhoods are often defined by their proximity and connection to the centre; and given the role of the centre as a transport hub, connections between neighbourhoods are mediated through the centre. As traveling from one neighbourhood to another often requires going through the centre and changing means of transport. Local neighbourhood shopping facilities and markets are often identified through their relation to the main shopping district. And above all, the centre embodies – in architecture, symbols, signs and amenities – the dominant civic ethos, political order and hegemonic understanding of the city, which affect and to a large degree define all neighbourhoods of the city. The hegemonic civic discourse is never neutral or natural; it is unavoidably political and articulated against state and global frameworks; it is inclusive of some groups, and exclusive of others. Transforming the city centre – or in Jerusalem's case, destroying it altogether – can have an

inevitable effect on the city's neighbourhoods, which, change as the meaning of the entire urban configuration shifts. Once a city centre is destroyed, it is inevitably replaced by a new centre or centres, as happened in Jerusalem after the 1948 war. But these embody a different urban order, and a different urban economy, as the city is forced to readjust its layout and logic. In Jerusalem, the destruction of the city centre led to a radical transformation of its urban space, which entrenched and normalised urban segregation as an inevitable trait of the city.

This chapter investigates the emergence of Jerusalem's late Ottoman city centre, its demise and subsequent destruction from the late nineteenth century to the late twentieth century. It seeks, firstly, to make a claim for the existence of such civic space, its embeddedness in Ottoman reforms and modernisation, and the manner it figured in Jerusalem's neighbourhood configuration. It discusses the erasure of the town centre from historiography of Jerusalem and from cultural memory. It then interrogates the staggered demise and destruction of the site, from British town planning measures, through the 1948 war, to post-67 Israeli measures of demolitions and transformation of the area – as part of a larger refashioning of Jerusalem as a segregated and divided city.

The late-Ottoman city centre

Throughout most of the nineteenth century, Jerusalem's political and commercial centre was located within the inner parts of the walled city, as it has been for many centuries. The key bodies of local government – the Sarai (governor's palace), the Municipality (established 1860s), and the Islamic court – were all located in the vicinity of the Haram al-Sharif. Jaffa Gate was the only gate in the Western side of the city walls. Its Arabic name was *Bab al-Khalil*, Hebron Gate, as it was the point of departure of the road leading south to Bethlehem and Hebron. It was also the starting point for the road westwards to Jaffa, and its European name "Jaffa Gate" (in Hebrew, *Sha'ar Yafo*) reflected strengthening importance of connection to Jaffa, as Palestine's main port and gateway for tourists and trade. Like all other city gates, it was kept locked after darkness. There were hardly any buildings outside the walls in that area. Those arriving at the gate noted its stark and solemn appearance, in contrast with the bustle of the city's inner streets. "I remember well the moment of our arrival to Jerusalem in front of the Gate of Bab al-Khalil" wrote the Jaffa-born Yoseph Eliyahu Chelouche of his visit to Jerusalem in 1876 as a small child. "The sight of the city walls terrified and upset my young soul and it felt we were entering a sealed and closed city". That stark impression of the gate contrasted sharply with the vivid activity inside the walls, where "the city was bustling with people, and all the roads and alleyways were full of men, women, donkeys and sheep" (Chelouche, 2005, p. 25)

However, from the 1880s onwards, shops, hotels, banks, and other institutions were constructed outside Jaffa Gate, in immediate proximity to the city walls, along both sides of the road leading to Jaffa, and on the street leading to the Mamilla Islamic cemetery. The development outside the walls coincided with new buildings and changes inside the walls, from Jaffa gate's plaza – where hotels, souvenir shops, tourist agencies and cafes were opened – through the revamped Batrak Market, to the new Muristan's Aftimus (Euthymius) Market, developed between 1880s and 1903 (Ben-Arieh, 1984, pp. 225–226). The result of this development within and without the walls was a contiguous area of commercial activity, extending from the western part of the walled city, through the open plaza of Jaffa Gate, alongside Jaffa Road. The Gate was no longer kept locked at night, and in 1898 it was rendered unnecessary by the filling of the moat, allowing a large opening with free and easy access for traffic. The opening, created by the Ottoman authorities before Kaiser Wilhelm II's visit to Jerusalem, conveyed in clear and visible terms the Ottomans' resolve to open Jerusalem to modernity. The commercial life beat of the city moved from the inner markets of the Old City to the new urban district. The sixteenth century Ottoman city Walls disappeared within an urban sprawl that created continuity, and no visual separation, between old and new.

The area hosted the central Ottoman post and telegraph office, as well as postal services of France, Austria-Hungary, and Italy. Bank branches included Credit Lyonnais, Imperial Ottoman Bank, Anglo-Palestine Company, the Deutsche-Palästina Bank, Palestine Commercial bank as well as the banks of Jerusalem based financiers Valero, Hamburger and Frutiger (Glass and Kark, 2018; Ben-Arieh, 1986, pp. 378–385). It was a major hub for tourism, with several large hotels, such as Fast, Imperial New Hotel, and Kaminitz Hotel (Chapman, 2018). Thomas Cook tourist agents had their office in this vicinity, and there were several souvenir shops. Photo studios - the quintessential trade of fin-de-siècle progress - proudly announced their services alongside both sides of Jaffa Road (Sheehi, 2015; Nassar, 2003). Local shops prided themselves with imported European goods, such as food products, alcoholic liqueurs, clothes, clocks, gramophones, marking a clear difference from the traditional markets inside the city walls.

"Jaffa Gate is now the biggest centre of our city, in terms of people and carriages passing through it" wrote one resident in a local paper in1905.[3] Jaffa Gate was the main local coach terminal, which served the Train Station and the southern neighbourhoods, as well as the north-western neighbourhoods such as Mea Shearim and the village of Lifta, soon to be incorporated into the city. As Jerusalem was spreading rapidly in geographical terms, these connections became crucial – it was no longer possible to navigate the city only by foot. Ottoman authorities planned to make Jaffa

Gate into the central hub for the Jerusalem tramway network – with three lines extending north-west and south (Dimitriadis, 2018).

The Jerusalem Municipality, the most important local political organisation, moved to Jaffa Road in 1896 (Tsoar and Aaronsohn, 2006). A short walk from the Gate, up Jaffa Road, were the Municipal gardens, with a café and frequent performances by the local Ottoman military band. A new water fountain was constructed just outside the gate in 1900. Most notable was the clock tower (FIGURE 1), erected in 1908 on top of the Gate to celebrate thirty three years to the reign of Sultan 'Abd al-Hamid II (Lemire, 2017). Similar clock towers were erected in city centres throughout the Ottoman Empire signalling the introduction of Western notions of time and public space (Wishnitzer, 2015). The clock tower of Jerusalem was funded by local donations and was a source of civic pride for the local population, as we find in the writing of local Christian Arabs and Sephardic Jews (Jawhariyyeh, 2013; Yehoshua, 1981, pp. 24–25). Other civic institutions included the Chamber of Commerce, a public theatre, and cafes. The offices of the local Arabic newspapers in Arabic *al-Quds* and *al-Asma'i* were also found here . The area was the first in Jerusalem to be lit at night, and cleaned and washed on a regular manner by the municipality (Ben-Arieh, 1986, p. 359).

The development of Jaffa Gate area has long been noted by historians, who highlighted many of the details discussed above. And yet the civic significance of the area, and the implications of this transformation for Jerusalem as an urban configuration, have largely been ignored. The historiography did not identify the site as the "city centre"; indeed, the term "Jerusalem's late-Ottoman city centre" is not one in use. Strikingly, on this point there has been little difference between Zionist scholars and scholars who are more sympathetic to the Palestinian perspective. Academic scholarship and general audience publications on Jerusalem fail to acknowledge the emergence or the destruction of a city centre. The municipality, clock tower and the new water fountain are often mentioned either in detail or in passing, but the accumulation of these aspects into a new urban and civic configuration is not acknowledged. This omission contributes to the widespread perception of Jerusalem as a city which has always been characterised by division and segregation.

Detailed discussion of the development of Jerusalem in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be found in the rich body of literature by Israeli historical geographers, most notably Yehoshua Ben-Arieh and Ruth Kark as well as architectural and urban historian David Kroyanker. These scholars, whose work has been published since the 1970s, have produced an impressive body of knowledge. They have relied primarily on European and Hebrew sources, and largely ignored

Arabic and Ottoman sources. In these accounts, the development of Jaffa Gate appears as an incremental part of the expansion of the city in terms of population, built area, and commercial activity (Kroyanker, 2005, 2009; Kark and Oren-Nordheim, 2001; Ben-Arieh, 1984, 1986). They emphasise the commercial importance of Jaffa Gate, and sometimes refer to it as Ottoman Jerusalem's Central Business District (CBD). But they do not take into account the site's political meaning and its civic role. In the most detailed study of the development of Jaffa street between 1860 and 1948 (Tsoar and Aaronsohn, 2006) the authors state that the Jaffa Gate area "functioned as a mixed CBD: Muslim, Christian and Jewish". The use of the term "mixed", rather than "public" or "common", is not accidental here, but indicates the dominant view of Jerusalem as essentially divided and segregated along ethno-religious lines. The city is seen as composed of distinct religious communities, which can come together, at most, to the purposes of commercial enterprise and exchange. In line with accounts by Western scholars and visitors to Jerusalem since the nineteenth century, this scholarship has presented the Walled city as composed of four clearly marked ethno-religious quarters (Armenian, Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox-Christian). The familiar pattern of the four quarters divides the walled city in a cross shape to clearly demarcated and separate ethno-religious spaces. In a city where confessional identity was so dominant, and where space always "belonged" to one group, an over-riding common identity was non-existent or extremely weak. "Public" space did not exist, and could not have existed. Commercial areas, such as Jaffa Gate or the markets within the Old City, were, in this reading, no more than neutral spaces, in which people from different quarters "mixed", but did not engage as members of the same community (Kark and Oren-Nordheim, 2001, p. 60). This view of Jerusalem as essentially segregated and dominated by religious identity, corresponds to a notion of Ottoman Jerusalem as inherently "backward", "colourful" and "Oriental" (Kroyanker, 2005). The development of Jerusalem is usually understood as driven primarily by foreign elements: Western imperial powers, Jewish philanthropic organisations and Zionism, which bring modernity and dynamism to an Ottoman backwater. This narrative is also echoed in popular histories of the city (Montefiore, 2012; Gilbert, 1996)

Such views did not go unchallenged. The magnificent two-volume *Ottoman Jerusalem,* presents a profoundly different understanding of the city's early modern and modern history (Auld and Hillenbrand, 2000). The book explores the Islamic, Arab and Ottoman aspects of Jerusalem between the sixteenth and twentieth century, as a living city full of culture. The compendium has 36 essays of all aspects of aspects of life in the city, from the Dome of the Rock to libraries. But it has no mention or discussion of the modern Ottoman city centre. The development of Jaffa Gate area is only mentioned in passing, as "the busiest commercial artery of the city" with hotels, souvenir

shops, and coffee houses (Auld and Hillenbrand, 2000, pp. 260–262). The emergence of the city centre is also not mentioned in the chapter on late Ottoman Jerusalem in the volume *Jerusalem in History*, edited by renown Jerusalem scholar Kamil al-'Asali (Schölch, 2002).

Ottomanism, its possibilities and contestations

The last two decades have seen the emergence of new historiography of late-Ottoman Jerusalem (and Palestine more generally) that sought to approach the late Ottoman era in a new way. Rather than project the Israeli-Palestinian conflict backwards onto the nineteenth century, this literature explores the possibilities of Ottoman modernity. Ottoman citizenship is seen as an overarching multi-confessional framework that allowed local agents to take an active role in civic development. Rather than exceptionalise Jerusalem, this literature aimed to position it within the broader context of modernising urban centres of the Ottoman Empire, which has seen growing interest (Freitag and Lafi, 2014; Hanssen et al., 2002). This literature has provided a robust challenge to the view of the city as essentially segregated and divided. Salim Tamari has shown that the paradigm of Jerusalem's Old City's four ethno-religious quarters was a European interpretation of local geography that did not correspond to the spatial perceptions of local residents or the Ottoman authorities. Jerusalem's urban layout was composed of a very different arrangement of neighbourhoods, which were far from religiously homogenous (Tamari, 2009). This new reading of the city's social-spatial units allows us to view an entirely different configuration of the late Ottoman city, which has implications for our reading of the city centre. Tamari's later work has explored in a rich and nuanced manner the power of Ottomanism (Osmanlıcılık) as an ideology and organising framework in late-Ottoman Jerusalem, not only as a cross-confessional national identity but also one of modernity and progress, at a time of rapid change. At the same time, Ottomanism was a project open to interpretations and contestations, as notions of identity, society, and space shifted (Tamari, 2017).

The new literature's contribution has been in studying the late Ottoman period not as a prelude to the conflict between Zionism and the Arab national movement, but rather as a era of dramatic change of its own logic and discourse (Büssow, 2011). Ottoman citizenship is seen as constitutive of a national identity which could accommodate significant ethnic, confessional and linguistic differences, allowing for new forms of politics, ideas, and expression (Jacobson, 2011; Campos, 2010). Michelle Campos has argued that Ottoman governance reforms from the 1860s, and local bodies such as the Municipal and the district councils, engendered a sense of urban citizenship which became more vocal after the 1908 constitutional revolution. Local (multi-confessional) elite actively discussed infrastructure projects, commercial development and political freedoms.

Campos's account of "shared urban space" does not address the built environment and physical urban space but rather focusses on more abstract "spaces" such as the press, commercial and civic institutions, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Freemasons lodges.

Abigail Jacobson was the first scholar to identify the civic significance of Jaffa Gate area in the late Ottoman period as "a social and political" centre and not only a commercial one (Jacobson, 2011, p. 5). Jacobson argues that the plaza in front of the gate, the Municipality, and the Municipal gardens, created new kinds of "public spaces", whose symbolic importance was in representing the new shape of the Ottoman state. This was, on the one hand, a top-down development, in terms of planning as well as official use of this area for national celebrations and ceremonies. Yet as Jacobson argues, at the same time this was a space that allowed people of various walks of life to experience Ottoman public space, negotiate, and contest the new civic order (Jacobson, 2011, pp. 54–56). Diaries and memoirs of Jerusalemites reveal that the area was used by members of all congregations and communities, and primarily men of means, who frequented the cafes, used the post offices and banks, required the services of the municipality, or strolled in the municipal gardens and listened to the Ottoman military band. They participated in patriotic demonstrations, purchased the latest fashion, and discussed politics in cafes (Wallach, 2016). The development of the new town centre was in line with similar transformations in other Ottoman cities throughout the empire, that created a new urban language of modernity through familiar symbols of flags and insignia, and landmarks such as clock towers, water fountains, and public institutions (Hanssen et al., 2002).

The town centre was also a site of social contestation. In some cities in other parts of the Empire, social conflicts were often articulated in intercommunal violence, sometimes even in massacres. Civic Ottomanism did not prove sufficient to prevent such escalations, and indeed, may have contributed to them by encouraging conflicting expectations which could not be accommodated (Freitag et al., 2015; Bedross Der Matossian author, 2014). However in Jerusalem of the early twentieth century, despite emerging tensions around the question of Zionism, social contestation was not articulated in sectarian terms. Rather, conflict was articulated in terms of class differences and in tensions between local Jerusalemites and the authorities (local, district and Imperial). The Jaffa Gate plaza was an area where rich and poor mixed, and known for its pickpockets and police presence.[4] One such social conflict along class and gender lines was the clampdown on peasant women, selling vegetables in the city's open market in the inner plaza of Jaffa Gate. The new elite believed the unruly peasant women spoiled the image of the new town centre, and attempted to force their authority to remove them from this place (Campos, 2010, p. 171). Another source of

contention was plans (by the police and district council) to regulate carriage transportation, against the wishes of carriage drivers. In 1913 and 1914 there were a number of driver strikes on this issue. On one night in June 1914, carriage drivers (including Muslims and Jews) met in a local Jaffa Gate café to agitate against the new regulations. On the next day, when a driver from Bethlehem arrived at Jaffa Gate to collect passengers as usual, the striking drivers attempted to prevent him from doing so. The matter soon descended to blows, and several drivers were arrested by the police. The local Jewish newspaper *Ha-Herut*, reported approvingly on the "non-compromising line taken by the police to ensure regulation like in any other city". While it reported that most Jewish drivers supported the strike, and in fact two Jewish drivers were arrested by the police for doing so, *Ha-Herut's* bourgeois sympathies, and its support for a modern and orderly town centre, clearly came before ethno-religious solidarity, at least in this case.[5]

During World War I, under the leadership of Cemal Pasha, the Ottomans escalated their attempts to control and shape the centre of town – and the larger ethos of Jerusalem. Large military processions, patriotic marches and official ceremonies were held here, to mark the Ottoman entry to the war and to celebrate the campaign against British-ruled Egypt. Allied-owned post offices and banks were closed; "enemy languages" were banned on shop signs and adverts (Wallach, 2020). School children, of all denominations, routinely marched waving flags to show the nation's support for the military effort (Jacobson, 2011, pp. 59–60). And yet as the war efforts floundered, criticism of the Ottoman authorities was carefully discussed in local cafes (Tamari, 2011a). The Ottomans moved to more repressive means of demonstrating their rule. Jaffa Gate, the site of Ottoman modernity and civic progress, became the site of state violence and public executions. Several public hangings took place in Jaffa Gate, including that of the Mufti of Gaza, who was suspected of supporting Arab nationalist rebels, and of five soldiers who were accused of being deserters - two Christians, two Jews and one Muslim (Jacobson, 2011, pp. 59–60). These public executions were designed to intimidate the local population which became increasingly disillusioned with the Ottoman state. It was a violent attempt to establish law, order and discipline. It confirmed the significance of the town centre to the Ottoman ethos. It also manifested that both repression and resistance were not perceived in sectarian lines, of one religious group against the other, but rather in terms of broad alliances against an increasingly oppressive rule.

British undoing of the Jaffa Gate Centre

Unlike the Ottoman authorities and local elites, European visitors were less impressed by the new centre, as it did not fit their ideas of what Jerusalem should look like. Pierre Loti, French Orientalist writer, visited the city in 1894 in search of 'the real Jerusalem, the Jerusalem that we have seen of

old in pictures and prints'. Loti was shocked to arrive at the town centre 'as commonplace as a Parisian suburb' (Loti, 1915, p. 172). Theodor Herzl, the Zionist leader, who visited the city in 1898, similarly disliked the mixing between Old and New, sacred and profane. In his diary, he spelled out the vision for the city: "I would clear out everything that is not sacred, set up workers' houses beyond the city, empty and tear down the filthy rat-holes, burn all the non-sacred ruins, and put the bazaars elsewhere. Then, retaining as much of the old architectural style as possible, I would build an airy, comfortable, properly sewered, brand new city around the Holy Places" (Herzl, 1958, pp. 283–284).

The British rulers of Jerusalem, who occupied the city in December 1917, had similar sentiments. The earliest signal of the attitudes towards Jaffa Gate area could be seen General Allenby's ceremonial entry to the city, on the 11th December 1917. Following detailed choreographic instructions from Mark Sykes in London, Allenby and his officers dismounted at Jaffa Gate, and entered the walled city by foot, not through the 1898 opening but through the sixteenth century gate (Bar Yosef, 2001). This entry was designed to convey respect and reverence to the Holy City, a message that was then underlined in Allenby's proclamation at the footsteps of the Ottoman citadel, pledging to keep the religious status quo, and protect sacred places of the three religions. This message was conveyed in propaganda material as the British sought to capitalise on Jerusalem's resonance with global audiences from Ireland to India. Allenby's reverential foot entry marked the walled city as sacred space, to be separated and isolated from the modern secular city outside the walls. The projected sharp division between "Old" and "New" became a founding principle in British urban planning policy in Jerusalem (Tamari, 2011b; Hyman, 1994). This had profound implications for Jaffa Gate, which overnight transformed, yet again, from the city centre into an imaginary liminal threshold and transition point.

The British invested considerable efforts in urban planning in Jerusalem, but their efforts focused almost exclusively on the "conservation" of the Old City. These efforts were led, in the first eight years of British rule, by Governor Ronald Storrs, who believed that the primary mission of the British was the preservation of Jerusalem as what we would call today a "world heritage city". This mission was far less contentious than British commitment to Zionism and the "Jewish National Home" (which was the primary aim of the British Mandate, despite vocal Arab opposition).

The desire to isolate the walled city from the new parts was key to British policies in Jerusalem, and was shared by virtually all British officials. They saw the late Ottoman development, especially around Jaffa Gate, as nothing but an eyesore. The Arts and Crafts writer, artist and theorist Charles

Ashbee, was recruited by Governor Storrs as Civic Advisor, in charge of planning and civic improvement. Ashbee concurred entirely with Storrs's aesthetic ideals, although his political motivation was somewhat different. He hoped to use Jerusalem as his testing ground for urban ideas, in hope to save it from the monstrous effects of industrial modernity. He was hostile to Zionism, and admired the Islamic Oriental city which he thought Jerusalem was (Hysler-Rubin, 2006; Gitler, 2000; Crawford, 1985; Ashbee, 1917). Ashbee's plans dealt with the Jaffa Gate area with much detail. His ambition was the clear the buildings outside the walls to allow for a large park system that would circle the Walls set the Old City apart. Ashbee's plans did not stop with demolishing the late Ottoman centre, which was obstructing the view of the city walls; he also recommended refilling the gap in the walls, and proposed dome-shaped caravanserais below the gate, for the Bedouins coming to the city with their camels to trade. For Ashbee, the question was not only the aesthetic appearance of the city walls, but also the preservation of a traditional way of life. But in the words of Ron Fuchs and Gilbert Hebert, by 'seeking to sustain an already-anachronistic institution, his idea was as reactionary as it was patronizing' (Fuchs and Herbert, 2001, p. 93). Ashbee mocked the modernist zeal of local Jerusalemites, and their desire to continue the late Ottoman drive towards development. "[Arab Mayor Ragheb Nashashibi] wants to make of Jerusalem a city like Paris, a continuous Champs Elysees with abundance of Kiosks, ', wrote Ashbee in his *Palestine Notebooks*, 'but I tell him I am no Haussmann and we must agree to differ' (Ashbee, 1923, p. 158).

The heavy handed British intervention in town planning was part of the what Falestin Naily termed the "de-municipalisation" of Jerusalem (Naili, 2018). The Jerusalem Municipality, which, before 1914, was the leading force in development of the city, was assigned a decidedly minor role, as British officials seized control of planning decisions and reshaped the ethos and meaning of the city. As noted by Roberto Mazza, in the first decade of British rule, the Governor, his civic advisor, British-led Pro-Jerusalem Society, and the town planning committee left very little room for the locally-elected Municipality to influence decisions (Mazza, 2018). The downgrading of the Municipality corresponded to the downgrading and draining of the city centre as a shared space.

The civic promise of the Ottoman modern city centre, and the fact that it encompassed and facilitated an urban non-sectarian Jerusalemite ethos, appeared to have entirely escaped the British. They saw it as ugly commercial development, an unfortunate residue of Ottoman rule. The reasons for this judgement were not only aesthetic (and the fact that the city centre hid the beautiful ancient city walls from view): it was strongly tied to the British view of Jerusalem as a deeply segregated city which could not accommodate any common urban citizenship, and therefore could not possibly

have a single, shared, civic centre. The British working assumption was that the city's neighbourhoods were highly divided according to ethnic and religious logic. They adhered to the model of the Old City as composed of four ethno-religious quarters (Tamari, 2011b).

At the same time, the civic dimensions of the Jaffa Gate Centre appeared as a threat and a challenge, as space which could host opposition and protests against British policies. The new national Arab associations, the Arab Club and the Arab Literary Club, both opened offices in the area after 1918, and they campaigned here against the Balfour Declaration (al-Sakakini, 1982; Oskotoski, 1921). In early 1920, two large Arab demonstrations and marches were held in the city centre against British commitment to Zionism. In April 1920, the Jaffa Gate plaza was the site of the first anti-Zionist riot in Palestine. The Easter or Nabi Musa riots took place during the annual Muslim pilgrimage from Hebron and Nablus to Jerusalem. The pilgrimage became the scene of political speeches and then a violent confrontation, in which Jewish shops and passers-by were attacked (Mazza, 2015). The divisive nature of British colonial policies meant that, inevitably, civic space became a space for conflict between Arabs, Jews and colonial authorities.

The ambitious British plans to demolish much of the area and replace it with a park proved unpractical. It required the expropriation of dozens of buildings, and the compensation costs were prohibitive. As Storrs lamented in his memoirs: "A discerning conqueror in 1850 could have established the new shops, convents and hotels well away from the Old City and have left the grey ramparts in a setting of grass, olives and cypresses. By 1918 the time was past for seeing Jerusalem adorned as a bride" (Storrs, 1945, p. 315) But Storrs succeeded in removing the symbols of late-Ottoman progress - the Fountain and the Clock tower. Disregarding vocal opposition from the city council, the tower which, in his words, "too long disfigured" Jaffa Gate, was dismantled in 1920s (Fuchs and Herbert, 2001). The removal of the clock was the most symbolic expression of the British intention to freeze time and send Jerusalem back into the past.

While the city centre buildings were not demolished, the British allowed the decline of the Jaffa Gate centre through planning and purposeful neglect, as they drained it from civic content and allowed business to move elsewhere. The post office, the Municipality and government offices were relocated further up Jaffa Road and in the Russian compound. The British encouraged the development of commercial centre further up Jaffa Road, such as the Antymos Garden project, and the Mahne Yehuda vegetable market for Jewish shoppers. These projects, diverted shoppers and businesses westward to the upper part of the street (Kroyanker, 2009, p. 46).

Escalating tensions in the city as a result of the Zionist-Arab conflict led to greater segregation. Some contemporary accounts portray a clear-cut division between the Jewish-dominated upper Jaffa street and Arab-dominated lower part. In 1947, a Zionist guide to "new Jerusalem" described the area between Jaffa Gate and the new Municipality as an entirely "Arab city, including its flourishing houses of commerce; because after the 1929 [riots], Jews were gradually pushed away, and they have all but disappeared from here." (Shapira, 1947, p. 111). It describes the Municipal Gardens as the transition point between the Arab "Eastern" *al-Quds* and the Hebrew "Western" *Yerushalayim*. Similarly, the Arab Palestinian intellectual and politician, Arif al-Arif, in his notes on Jerusalem shortly before the 1948 war, describes a rigid separation between Arabs and Jews. He notes that the Mamilla commercial quarter, in what was the former Ottoman centre, was entirely Arab. He also lists the city's neighbourhoods according to national and religious identity, suggesting that segregation was near total ('Arif, 1961, pp. 431, 469). But such demarcation appears exaggerated, with evidence of Arab commercial and residential presence in the upper parts of Jaffa road, as well as the highly mixed Mamilla area. The Mamilla commercial centre was developed by Sephardic and Mizrahi Jewish merchants who moved out of the Old City after 1929, but wanted to retain their Arab clientele and their ties with Arab traders (Kroyanker, 2009, p. 111).

On the 2nd December 1947, the Mamilla area was the site of one of the first major inter-communal clashes of the 1948 war. Arab demonstrators, protesting against the UN partition plan, attempted to march from Jaffa Gate to Princess Mary Street and were blocked by British police. In the ensuing riots, Jewish shops were looted and burnt, Jewish militia shot into the Arab crowd; the Arab-owned Rex cinema was burnt down the following day (Kroyanker, 2009; Collins and Lapierre, 1988). In July 1948, the Israeli Defence Forces bombed many buildings in the area and effectively cut off Jaffa Gate from the west part of Jaffa Road. When the Israeli-Jordanian ceasefire came into effect, much of the Jaffa Gate area became a no-man's land between Jordanian-ruled Old city and Israeli West Jerusalem. The former city centre, the pride of the late Ottoman city, which continued to function as a site of inter-ethnic interaction through the Mandate, had become a border zone, and remained so for 19 years (FIGURE 2). Arab and Armenian shop owners fled to the Jordanian side of the city, leaving their property behind them. Much of it stood in ruin, while on the Israeli side, the Mamilla area became a slum, as somewhat-habitable buildings were used to house poor Jewish immigrant families, mostly from Arab countries. Ironically, this was the only time when the area became a residential neighbourhood. Up to 8,000 migrants lived in the Mamilla area, in former commercial buildings, in difficult conditions and often without running water (Kroyanker, 2009). During those years of partition, the two parts of the divided city developed their respective town centres. In the Israeli West Jerusalem, the Jaffa-Ben Yehuda "triangle" continued its pre-48

development to become the centre of the city. East Jerusalem, while retaining control over the Old City, lost almost all the modern neighbourhoods, public institutions, and the main commercial area of Jaffa Road and Mamilla. It developed a new commercial centre in the area of Damascus Gate. Interestingly, the municipalities of the two parts remained in the area of the former centre. West Jerusalem municipality was located in the Mandatory municipality building, while East Jerusalem municipality operated from a building in the inner plaza of Jaffa Gate. The two municipalities thus both appeared to make a claim to the remainder of what was once a single city. (al-'Asali, 2014; Kroyanker, 2005)

The final destruction: Israeli occupation in 1967

In June 1967 Israel occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In the immediate aftermath of the war, the Israeli government decided to annex East Jerusalem unilaterally. The Jordanian East Jerusalem municipality was disbanded. Even before the boundaries of the annexed area were decided, Defence Minister Moshe Dayan's ordered the removal of all barriers between the Western and Eastern parts of the city. What was a frontier zone was once again about to transform, this time into a "seam line" between the former two parts. Dayan's orders dictated a hurried timeframe, in which the border and no-man's land had to be cleared by the end of June 1967.

Officials in the Israeli Municipality of Jerusalem saw Dayan's clearance operation and the post-war turmoil as a golden opportunity to achieve what the British planned to do, but were never able to. They ordered the demolition and clearance of all the late Ottoman buildings adjacent to the city walls, in order to separate the Old city from the new parts. Between the 15th and the 29th of June, the Municipal maintenance department raced to demolish around 200 buildings of the former Ottoman town centre between Jaffa Gate and the Mandatory Municipal building (Benvenisti, 1976, pp. 124–126). This was probably the largest demolition effort in the history of modern Jerusalem. The demolition teams worked around the clock, night and day, in order to transform the area entirely before the city was officially "united". By the time the former border barriers were removed, the city walls between Jaffa Gate and the north-western corner of the Old City had become visible for the first time in 90 years. Shortly afterwards, in July 1967, in a meeting between government ministers and the Jerusalem municipality, Mayor Teddy Kolleck and former chief of staff and archaeologist Yigael Yadin suggested to declare the areas surrounding the city walls a "National Park" in keeping with 1920s British plans (Benziman, 1973, p. 269). Charles Ashbee's vision of the "Park System" was finally being materialised (FIGURE 3).

The Israeli project of Jerusalem's "re-unification" owed much to the British colonial discourse of Jerusalem. The desire to achieve visual isolation of the Old, "Holy" City from the "modern" town was inspired by British plans. But Israeli planners also internalised the British confessionalised view of the city as a patchwork of segregated ethno-religious communities - what Teddy Kolleck termed "mosaic" "

> Jerusalem is no melting pot, we are not trying to make "goulash" out of everybody, it's a mosaic of different cultures and civilisations, living in one city. This is the the condition that we try to preserve and it will be Jerusalem's character also in the future. I do not think everyone will blend together and will suddenly start conversing in Esperanto [...] (Malchin, 2009)

While speaking in grand and lofty terms of the city's "unification", and "bridging East and West", in practice Israeli plans aimed to mark clear separation between Arab-Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli areas (Pullan, 2007).

The demolition of the buildings adjacent to the wall, and the establishment of a park around the Old City, met with no resistance. This is unlike other Israeli interventions, such as the demolition of the Mughrabi quarter near the Western Wall, which caused an outcry (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1968), but the Ottoman town centre did not engender similar outcry. Israeli commentators, even those critical of official "unification" policies, saw the park as one of Kolleck's finest achievements. One critic praised the park as a rare example in which the aggressive Judaisation agenda was sidelined by real commitment to scenic and spiritual considerations (Benziman, 1973, p. 269) David Kroyanker, former architect in the Jerusalem municipality and a local champion of architectural conservation, similarly justifies the demolition as a historic and necessary intervention. Kroyanker sees no civic value in this area or its conservation for symbolic reasons (Kroyanker, 2005, p. 90).

Meron Benvenisti, Kolleck's advisor and depute played a key role in the demolition efforts as well as in the planning of the national park around the city walls. Benvenisti has long become disillusioned with the Israeli annexation of East Jerusalem and with Zionism more generally, yet he continues to take pride in his part of the demolition and the creation of the park. He stresses that the planners' approach was entirely "professional and non-political", and that efforts were made to minimise any adverse effects on the Palestinian population. Benvenisti, lambasts the "folly" and "hubris" of his generation whose vision was later hijacked by Jewish fundamentalists. As he points out, right wing governments later handed over the management of the national park to Jewish settler

groups such as ELAD, who use the park's planning regulations in their efforts to Judaise the Palestinian area of Silwan and turn it into a biblical theme park.

With typical candidness and self-criticism, Benvenisti accepts his share of responsibility for the settler takeover of the Old City park:

> "I believe that one would be justified to condemn our naivety, and worse, to argue that, in the final outcome, we are no better from the zealots of ELAD, who harass the Arabs and dispossess them in the name of "the eternal glory of Israel". We, like [them], should not have intervened in occupied territory. But should we not deserve some credit for the aesthetic value of what we created around the Old City?" (Benvenisti, 2012, p. 200)

The "park system" vision, originally put forward in the early 1920s, served several different agendas over the following century. The ideological trajectories of British planners, late 1960s Israeli officials, and early twenty first century Israeli settlers should not be collapsed into one, and the differences between them should not be dismissed. In the 1920s Ronald Storrs saw Jerusalem as a site of world heritage, to be protected by the British as they act as benevolent guardians for both Zionist revival and Arab cultural presence. Charles Ashbee sought to experiment in Jerusalem his anti-industrial romantic ideas of the "City on the Hill", and to "defend" Arab Islamic culture from the invasion of electricity, automobiles and Zionist modernism. Israeli planners arrived after 1967 with a commitment to an "enlightened occupation": they wanted to make greater Jerusalem into a Jewish capital, while maintaining respectful and tolerant attitudes towards local Muslims and Christians (perceived as segregated religious groups rather than national indigenous population under occupation). While since the 1990s, a Israeli establishment dominated by right-wing groups increasingly used the "conservation" of the Old City as a mechanism to promote Jewish takeover efforts.And yet what they all share is the colonial Orientalist view, which dismissed the civic vision embodied in the Ottoman city centre, based on local non-sectarian governance. All ignored the wishes of the native population of Jerusalem in favour of an imperial vision; they sought to reverse the mundane modernisation and impose the weight of history onto the city; and they assumed that shared civic space and a common sense of Jerusalemness is impossible in a city which is by its nature segregated and divided. The success of British and Israeli officials was not only in forcing upon the city its original meaning, by reshaping the built environment. It was also in the effacement of the Ottoman Civic town centre from historiography and cultural memory of Jerusalem. The inscription of confessionalised space into Jerusalem's landscape, in manner that naturalised it as historical legacy and inevitable present and future, required the removal of urban citizenship in both physically and metaphorically.

After the Jaffa Road buildings near the wall had been destroyed, Israeli officials prepared the ground for a flagship revival project of the nearby Mamilla street,. The Mamilla regeneration was trumpeted as a vehicle to connect West and East Jerusalem and to cement the unification of the city (Nitzan-Shiftan, 2017). The project went completed only in the 2000s, in a considerably reduced dimensions from the original plans. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to review in detail the transformation of this project. It is interesting to note, however, that the Mamilla shopping arcade bears some resemblance to the Ottoman town centre: with hotels, cafes and luxury brands, it is one of the most globalised malls in Jerusalem today, and in many ways, the one which is most mixed in national terms (Shtern, 2016). Because of its proximity to the Old City and its central location on the North-South route (road no. 1), it is highly accessible to Arab Palestinians who make up significant presence as shoppers, workers (shop assistants, waiters, kitchen staff and cleaners) as well as pedestrians using the arcade as a route into the Old City. However, such commercial "shared space" has no civic undertones; the project was designed and is owned by Jewish Israelis. The Mamilla arcade was designed in stylised Orientalist style, but makes no reference to the Ottoman town centre, or to Arab heritage, such as the ancient Mamilla cemetery nearby. The handful of buildings chosen for conservation were the ones associated with Zionist and European history of the area, and not buildings with Arab or even local Jewish history (Kroyanker, 2009, p. 262). The dramatic modern history of this area is not mentioned anywhere in the arcade or near Jaffa Gate: - the celebrations of Ottoman constitutional revolution in 1908; the hanging of dissidents and army deserters in 1916; the anti-Zionist riots of 1920; and the Arab-Jewish clashes of December 1947 – all of these have been erased, together with the buildings and spaces where they took places. The undeniable success of the destruction of the late-Ottoman centre of Jerusalem is expressed in its parallel erasure from the literature on Jerusalem. British and Israeli planners thus succeeded in the perfect crime: not only were they able to demolish Ottoman urban fabric and the civic vision it embedded; they were also able to remove this vision from public memory.

Arliella Azoulay argues that house demolition is a primary trait of the Israeli regime, a strategy in the service of the Judaisation of urban space (Azoulay, 2013). These policies are characterised by takeover of space and the exclusion of Palestinians by forced removal, military rule or social exclusion. Thus, Israeli-designed "public space" – such as the Old City park and the Mamilla arcade - appear flawed as it fails in its "most important principle" - to be open for participation to all. In Azoulay's view, these policies can be challenged by the development of "civil imagination" which hinges on "being together of individuals, and not as a product of the governing power" - that is, the ability to imagine Jews and Arabs together, as a single civic group. The Ottoman town centre provides one of the more dramatic examples of colonial urban destruction of public space,

envisaged by the British and implemented under Israeli rule. But it also points to the limits of Azoulay's concept of a non-hegemonic civil imagination of "being together", which could circumvent the Arab/Jewish dichotomy. The Ottoman public space of Jaffa Gate was, in fact, a "product of the governing power". The Ottoman city centre was developed by a political regime which allowed for a shared identity, non-sectarian citizenship, and a local multi-faith elite. This is not to say that public space is merely a top-down creation, but rather that the Ottoman framework allowed for both power and resistance to operate on the basis of local non-sectarian identity. After 1917, the absence of such a common framework has made civil imagination virtually impossible. Perhaps the best example to that is the erasure of the town centre from both Israeli and Palestinian cultural memory of modern Jerusalem. This is precisely because the centre was Ottoman, Jerusalemite civic space which was neither "Jewish" nor "Arab", and therefore does not serve the dominant nationalist narratives. The possibility of imagining a common past, and a Jerusalem not defined by segregation, requires expanding the frame beyond the nationalist narratives of the conflict.

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