

CONTESTED PUBLIC SPACE IN “DOWNTOWN JERUSALEM”: JAFFA GATE AND THE MUNICIPAL GARDEN IN LATE OTTOMAN JERUSALEM

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Abstract | Focusing on “downtown” Jerusalem during the final years of Ottoman rule in the city, this chapter demonstrates how streets, gardens, and squares served multiple purposes, sometimes simultaneously, especially during periods of war and conflict. It focuses on three main sites: Jaffa Gate, the Municipal Garden, and Jaffa Road, and examines their different uses and functions during the final years of Ottoman rule, including World War I. These areas were controlled by the Ottoman authorities, but were also simultaneously claimed and used by various groups for other purposes. The analysis of public sites in Jerusalem serves to demonstrate how public space was contested and negotiated during this time of crisis. In the words of Henry Lefebvre, “Space is permeated by social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations.” Indeed, the city, I argue, should be viewed and analyzed as a dynamic, active, changing setting that sets the stage for different kinds of interactions, negotiations, and conflicts. I view space and place as intimately bound up with the constitution of social identities, and as deeply embedded in historical conflicts and processes. These processes may be wars and conflicts, political changes, colonial or post-colonial dynamics, and everyday practices.

INTRODUCTION

When conceptualizing the notion of the city, the urban theorist Lewis Mumford wrote in 1937:

The city in its complete sense is a geographic plexus, an economic organization, an institutional process, a theatre of social action and an aesthetic symbol of collective unity. The city fosters art and is art; the city creates the theatre and is the theatre. It is in the city, the city as a theatre, that man’s more purposive activities are focused, and work out, through conflicting and cooperating personalities, events, groups, into more significant culminations.¹

This article draws on Mumford’s description of the city as “a theatre of social action” to analyze what, in today’s terminology, can be termed the “downtown area” of Jerusalem during the late Ottoman period. This area, stretching between Jaffa Gate, Bab al-Khalil, and Jerusalem’s Municipal Garden, was considered to be *the* public space of the city. However, did this area indeed represent collective unity, as Mumford suggested? How did this area play out as a “theatre of social action”?

The chapter focuses on three sites in this area: Jaffa Gate, the Municipal Garden, and Jaffa Road, and examines their different uses and functions during the final years of Ottoman rule, including during World War I. These areas were controlled by the Ottoman authorities, but were also simultaneously claimed, understood and used by diverse groups for other purposes, thus turning this downtown area into a

¹ Lewis Mumford, “What is a City?,” *Architectural Record* LXXXII (1937), p. 94.



contested space that was claimed and used by various groups that were often in conflict with each other.

The sources referenced for this chapter demonstrate the plurality of agents that were active in this area. They include the municipal records of the Jerusalem municipality, and Hebrew and Arabic archival sources and memoirs. The present study connects the physical space with these archival records to demonstrate how this public space contributed to the creation of the notion of *citadinité*, urban citizenship, and to the formation of close ties between the inhabitants of the city and their urban environment.² As Henri Lefebvre argued in *The Production of Space*, every society produces its specific space. This spatialization process is connected to individuals through spatial practices and representations, but is also an instrument for those in power.³ This chapter examines the nature of this interplay between the inhabitants of the city, their urban environment, and the municipal authorities.

PUBLIC SPACE, IDENTITY AND POWER

What makes a certain space "public," and how is it different from other spaces in a city? The debate on these issues is of particular interest to urban geographers, sociologists, and historians dealing with questions related to the idea of "public space," and the connections between space, identity, and power. The notion of urban public space can be traced back to ancient Greece, where public space was defined as the place of citizenship, in which public affairs and legal disputes were conducted.⁴ However,

as Don Mitchell points out, this definition also underscored another characteristic of the public space, as the meeting place of those in power, and the exclusion of all those who are not part of the "public," such as women, slaves and foreigners.⁵ This original definition already contains the kernel of one of the basic tensions within public space; namely, the question of inclusion and exclusion of certain social, religious, and ethnic groups. A public space should theoretically enable encounters between individuals and groups who would not meet otherwise.⁶ Throughout the years, struggles for the inclusion of certain groups in the public space have created a countertrend where marginal groups use the space to claim their rights.⁷ Hence, public spaces can take on symbolic as well as practical meanings through a process of negotiation between different groups, suggesting that the practical and symbolic usage of space can be negotiated and changed.⁸

Public spaces thus have multiple purposes and functions. Ideally, a space is considered public if it has been provided and is managed by public authorities, and is open and available to all. It is a place of simultaneity, an exploration of difference and identity.⁹ The connections between identity, space, and power within the spatial politics of a city lead to a number of key questions. How are multiple elements of identity manifested in urban spaces? How does people's experience shape the spaces and the struggles taking place in them? How can space be reordered and reinterpreted in light of struggles and acts of protest that are taking place within it?¹⁰ As shown below, space and place are intimately bound to the construction of social identities, and are deeply embedded in historical conflicts and process. Potentially,

2 The concept *citadinité* has been developed further in recent years and utilized in the context of Jerusalem as part of the "Open Jerusalem" project directed by Vincent Lemire. See Angelos Dalachanis and Vincent Lemire, "Introduction: Opening Ordinary Jerusalem," in idem (eds.), *Ordinary Jerusalem 1840–1940: Opening New Archives, Revisiting a Global City* (Leiden: Brill, 2018), pp. 7–8; <http://www.openjerusalem.org> (accessed 17 October 2021).

3 Henry Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 31.

4 Don Mitchell, "The End of Public Space? People's Park, Definitions of the Public, and Democracy," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 85/1 (March 1995), p. 116; Margaret Crawford, "Contesting the Public Realm: Struggles over Public Space in Los Angeles," *Journal of Architectural Education* 49/1 (September 1995), p. 5.

5 Mitchell, "End of Public Space?," p. 116.

6 Susan Ruddick, "Constructing Difference in Public Spaces: Race, Class, and Gender as Interlocking Systems," *Urban Geography* 17/2 (1996), pp. 132–133.

7 Mitchell, "End of Public Space?," p. 117.

8 John Lawrence, "Public Space, Political Space," in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War: Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 280.

9 Ali Madanipour, *Public and Private Spaces of the City* (London: Routledge, 2003), pp. 157–158.

10 These questions were raised in Meghan Cope, "Weaving the Everyday: Identity, Space, and Power in Lawrence, Massachusetts, 1920–1939," *Urban Geography* 17/2 (1996), pp. 179–180.

they are the active medium for the construction of new class cultures and sexual and gendered identities, and a place where marginalized identities can be challenged or confirmed. Urban space should be viewed as an active space, a site of political action that involves conflicts over the meaning and interpretations of space.¹¹ As Meghan Cope has noted, one's identity is conditioned by multiple sets of power relations, which occur across space, through space, and require the use of space as an element of control, opportunity and regulation.¹²

In the case of late Ottoman Jerusalem, the spaces discussed here are illustrative of the tensions between the inclusion and exclusion of certain groups within the public space, as well as the struggles over the nature of this space in the city, and the interplay between different agents that claim the space.

PUBLIC SPACE IN LATE OTTOMAN JERUSALEM

The Tanzimat reforms of the mid-19th century turned Jerusalem into a major administrative center in Bilad al-Sham that underwent a series of economic, legal, social, and urban transformations. The key marker of its importance within the Ottoman context is the change in its legal status in 1872, when it became an independent district, or *Mutasarriflik*, whose governor was under the direct control of Istanbul. From an urban point of view, Jerusalem was also the first Ottoman city after Istanbul in which a municipal council was appointed. This corresponded to its growing political, religious, and administrative status in the eyes of the Ottoman center, but also highlighted its importance as regards the foreign powers active and present in the city.¹³

A municipal council had existed in Jerusalem since 1863, but its functions were only regulated by law in 1875 and 1877. In 1896, the municipality moved from its old location in the Old City to a new building at the corner of Mamilla (*Mamun Allah*) and Jaffa Street.¹⁴ The area around the municipality, Jaffa Gate (see Figure 1) and Jaffa Road (see Figure 2), became the commercial, social, and political hub of the city and connected the Old City (see Figure 3) with some of the new neighborhoods during the final years of Ottoman rule. This area received a developmental "boost" during the 1870s as a result of the preparation for Austrian Kaiser Franz Josef's visit to Jerusalem, and the paving of Jaffa Road. Carriages and wagons were first allowed to enter the Old City in 1898, on the occasion of the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm II. In preparation for this visit, the municipality received funding for public works, as part of the government's attempt to turn Jerusalem into a model city for the world.¹⁵

The plaza in front of the Jaffa Gate became the city's "central bus station", where carriages and wagons served both tourists and merchants displaying their wares at the entrance to the Old City. This transportation business was highly organized and monitored by the municipality. In April 1909, the municipality announced that all carriage owners and drivers would be assigned a number and required to obtain a license to convey passengers.¹⁶

The Jaffa-Jerusalem railroad line, which

1917," in Ulrike Freitag and Nora Lafi (eds.), *Urban Governance under the Ottomans* (London: Routledge, 2014), pp. 97-141. As Büssow argues, in the late 1860s the central Ottoman government developed Jerusalem into a model Tanzimat city, by introducing new standards of urban planning and administrative reforms. *Ibid.*, p. 106.

14 Salim Tamari and Issam Nassar (eds.), *al-Quds al-uthmaniyya fi l-mudhakkirat al-Jawhariyya: al-Kitab al-awwal min mudhakkirat al-musiqi Wasif Jawhariyya, 1904-1917* [Ottoman Jerusalem in the Jawhariyya Memoirs: The First Book of the Memoirs of the Musician Wasif Jawhariyya, 1904-1917] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyya, 2003), pp. 108, 157-158 [in Arabic]; Ruth Kark, "Pe'ilut 'iriyat Yerushalayim be-sof ha-tqufa ha-'othmanit [The Work of the Jerusalem Municipality at the End of the Ottoman Period]," *Cathedra* 6 (1977), pp. 82-83 [in Hebrew].

15 David Kroyanker, *Rehov Yafo Yerushalayim: Biografia shel rehov, sipura shel ir* [Jaffa-Street Jerusalem: A Biography of a Street, a Story of City] (Jerusalem: Keter, 2005), pp. 20-24 [in Hebrew]; Büssow, "Ottoman Reform," pp. 109-110.

16 JM-AIY Ottoman registers vol. 14/p26b/item 136 (21 April 1909). All municipal records were retrieved from the Open Jerusalem Database.

11 Simon Gunn, "The Spatial Turn: Changing Histories of Space and Place," in Simon Gunn and Robert Morris (eds.), *Identities in Space: Contested Terrains in the Western City since 1850* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2001), pp. 9-11.

12 Cope, "Identity, Space, and Power," p. 187; Ruddick, "Constructing Differences," p. 135.

13 Haim Gerber, "A New Look at the *Tanzimat*: The Case of the Province of Jerusalem," in David Kushner (ed.), *Palestine in the Late Ottoman Period: Political, Social and Economic Transformation* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1986), pp. 31-45. On forms of urban government in Jerusalem and its environs, see Johann Büssow, "Ottoman Reform and Urban Government in the District of Jerusalem, 1867-



Figure 1: The Jaffa Gate.

Source: American Colony Photo Department, Jerusalem (El-Kouds). The Jaffa Road, Main Thoroughfare of the New City, c. 1898-1914, photograph, Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress Online Catalogue, LC-M36- 320, <https://loc.gov/resource/matpc.06541/> (accessed 21 September 2020).



Figure 2: The Jaffa Road.

Source: American Colony Photo Department, Jerusalem (El-Kouds). Jaffa Gate, c. 1907-1914, photograph, Matson (G. Eric and Edith) Photograph Collection, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress Online Catalogue, LC-M32-D-23-[A], <https://loc.gov/resource/matpc.07476/> (accessed 21 September 2020).

was inaugurated in September 1892, also contributed to the thriving atmosphere of this area. The station was located in the valley of Emek Refa'im, around 500 meters southwest of the Old City, and was an important connection between the coastal plain and the cities of Jaffa and Jerusalem. Like other cities worldwide, in Jerusalem the railway station was simultaneously a frontier and liminal zone for transition, arrival and departure. The train station attracted public attention and became the center of the cityscape.¹⁷ Receptions for foreign and domestic dignitaries took place there, drawing

large crowds. Tourists were met at the train station by hotel representatives, as well as by carriage drivers offering tours of the city.¹⁸ One of the most popular routes was along Jaffa Road (see figure 2), in addition to the holy sites. The carriage drivers were fluent in a range of languages and acted as guides and interpreters for tourists.¹⁹ Symbolically and practically, in Jerusalem the railroad line and train station were signs of modernity and the polarity of urban space.²⁰

17 Adrian Gregory, "Railway Stations: Gateways and Termini," in Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 23–27.

18 Ya'akov Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom* [Jerusalem in the Old Days], vol. 1, 3 vols. (Jerusalem: R. Mass, 1977), pp. 71, 79–80 [in Hebrew].

19 Avraham Shmuel Hirschberg, *Be-Erets ha-mizrah* [In the Land of the East] (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, 1977), pp. 274–275 [in Hebrew].

20 Vincent Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900: The Holy City in the*



Figure 3: Jerusalem: Old City, City Center and Jaffa Road, c. 1917.

Source: "Jerusalem". Survey of Egypt, c. 1907. The Eran Laor Cartographic Collection, NLI, Jer 334. Appears in a modified version in: Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem Between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), p. 57.

Jaffa Gate served as the main entry point to the Old City, and thousands of residents and tourists passed through daily.²¹ The relocation of the municipality to a new building in 1896 turned the area into what Lemire has called "the beating heart of a new urbanness."²² The presence of the municipality was very much felt. It owned real estate in the area of the Jaffa Gate and rented out these shops to provide income for the municipality.²³ In April 1899, the municipality decided to build a center for inspectors and sergeants in the vicinity of the Jaffa Gate to increase the visibility of the cen-

tral and urban administration.²⁴ The army also owned stores around the Gate and rented them out.²⁵ The plaza in front of the Jaffa Gate was a lively area at all times, with the constant movement of carriages, horses, and donkeys, as well as bustling coffee houses that catered to merchants and passers-by who read (also out loud) newspapers or just chatted and gossiped.²⁶

Jaffa Road was a thriving economic, social, and tourist area as well. In her memoir, Itta Yellin, the wife of the famous Jerusalemite educator and public figure David Yellin, described the view from her apartment, overlooking Jaffa Road: "On Saturdays and during the holidays, whenever dignitaries came to the city, the street would fill with thousands and

Age of Possibilities (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017), pp. 95–98.

21 Kroyanker, *Rehov Yafo*, p. 28.

22 Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900*, p. 123.

23 *Ibid.*, p. 124.

24 JM-AIY, vol. 3/P32a/item 228.

25 JM-AIY, vol. 12/p5a/item 30.

26 Hirschberg, *Be'eretz ha-Mizrah*, p. 274.

thousands of people, Arabs, Jews, priests, and tourists from all nations. On occasion, the Turkish military band passed by and added some joy for those whose windows overlooked the road.²⁷ Foreign Russian, Ottoman, Austrian, Italian, and German post offices were located nearby, and contributed to the international atmosphere and the foreign presence in the city. The branches of the important banks, including the Anglo-Palestine Bank, *Crédit Lyonnais*, and the Anglo-Egyptian Bank were also situated near Jaffa Gate. From the early 1900s, several mercantile emporia and stores belonging to Arabs, Armenians, Greeks, Germans, and some Jews, opened and sold imported textile products, appliances, and food. In his memoirs, Ya'aqov Yehoshua calls this area the "European Market of Jerusalem," where the shopper could find imported food from Europe, alcoholic beverages, clothing, and even cosmetic products.²⁸ These stores were required to obtain operating authorizations from the municipal authorities. They attracted the local population as well as tourists.

The first three photography stores in Jerusalem, owned by Armenians, Greeks, and Arab Christians, were opened there as well. The American Colony Store, which sold souvenirs, guidebooks, and photographs of Jerusalem and Palestine, opened near Jaffa Gate. The hotels catered to different types of tourists. Hughes Hotel mainly had a British clientele and later the members of the Zionist committee. Across the street, behind the city garden, was Hotel de France, where many French tourists stayed. Hotel Fast, which was owned by the Armenian Patriarchate, had primarily German, Austrian, and later British and Arab tourists. Hotel Amdourski (or Hotel Central) was located on the plaza near Jaffa Gate, and was both a hotel and a venue for weddings for the Jewish community in the city.²⁹ Smaller hotels and guest houses owned by Jews and Arabs were also located there.³⁰ These hotels, as well as the travel agencies which had offices on the street,

turned this area into a center for tourist and foreign activity.³¹

The municipality was aware of the importance and centrality of this area and was present both physically and symbolically. In 1900, it decided to hire a street cleaner to clean the roads around Jaffa Gate. The municipal records indicate that there were discussions about whether to sprinkle water on the roads to clean them.³² The plaza in front of Jaffa Gate was cleaned by sprinkling water on it, especially in preparation for special visitors and dignitaries to the city.³³ Street cleaning was not new, however. As early as 1864, the Ottoman authorities established a special commission in charge of street cleaning.³⁴ The road leading to the Gate was widened and old stores were demolished to make room for new ones.³⁵ Clearly, Jaffa Road became a mixed urban locale that served social, economic, and administrative functions for all of the city's inhabitants, as well as for its visitors, and where people interacted and communicated.

The municipal public garden (*al-muntaza al-baladi*), al-Manshiya, was located nearby and contributed to the lively atmosphere. Set up near the Russian Compound in 1892 by Jerusalem's mayor Husayn Salim al-Husayni to fight epidemics and to develop a green recreational space in the city center (and not its outskirts), it was an important site in the city's life during the final years of Ottoman rule and during World War I.³⁶ First and foremost, it was a social, open space, a place of leisure, in which Jerusalemites, as well as governmental officials and military personnel could stroll while enjoying the music played there every afternoon on Fridays, Saturdays, and Sundays. In the café located in one of the corners, people could drink coffee or cold beverages and smoke a nargilah, and a library also operated in the garden. Ya'aqov Yehoshua recalls in his memoirs that during the British military regime after the occupation of the city, the library served British military and civic

27 Itta Yellin, *le-Tse'etsai: Zichronot* [To my Offsprings: Memories] (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1979), p. 32 [in Hebrew].

28 Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom*, vol. 3, pp. 82–85.

29 *Ibid.*, pp. 88–89.

30 Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom*, vol. 1, pp. 73–74; vol. 3, pp. 78–80.

31 Kroyanker, *Rehov Yafo*, pp. 28–30.

32 JM-AIY, vol. 9/p6a/item 40.

33 Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom*, vol. 1, pp. 53–56.

34 *Ibid.*, pp. 36–37.

35 BOA, BEO., 1171/87765; 1168/87544.

36 Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom*, vol. 2, pp. 33–36; Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900*, p. 121.

personnel, and had primarily English books.³⁷ The municipal council also discussed the possibility of using the room behind the library as a coffee house, where coffee would be served for free to the members of the military band.³⁸

The flowers grown in the garden were sold in a nearby flower shop owned by a Greek proprietor, and the garden contained a storage building for flags and lights that were used to decorate the city during celebrations, as well as fire-fighting equipment.³⁹ The municipality also dealt with the maintenance of the garden: a new gardener was appointed for the park in May 1892 after the old gardener resigned.⁴⁰ The municipality was in charge of organizing the public space around the garden. In some instances it decided to demolish some stores and rent the spaces temporarily to the police to turn them into a police station.⁴¹ To enhance the green spaces, the municipality planted trees along Jaffa Road in 1905, and installed the first public lighting network and the first garbage cans along the street.⁴²

"A THEATER OF SOCIAL ACTION": CONTESTED PUBLIC SPACE IN JERUSALEM

The public garden served not only as a place of leisure, but also as a political site. During the late Ottoman period, it was a gathering place for government celebrations and special announcements, as well as for demonstrations of all kinds. During special celebrations for the Ottoman Empire, a military band played there thus bringing together people from the various communities in the city.⁴³ Some of these celebrated Ottoman victories (or proclaimed victories) on the battlefield, some were designed to collect money for charity, and still others were to highlight the government's authority. These celebrations are mentioned and discussed quite frequently in Wasif al-Jawhariyya's memoir and in Ihsan Tourjman's diary, though from

different perspectives. Jawhariyya's father, Jiryis, was the supervisor of the garden. He was also in charge of planting and maintaining the trees on the road leading from Jaffa Gate to the municipal hospital and, when his contract period was over, the municipal council discussed who would replace him.⁴⁴ His son, Wasif, was a musician who played at many of these events, and mentions them mainly as part of his lively and vivid account of musical and artistic life in late Ottoman Jerusalem.⁴⁵

The young soldier Ihsan Tourjman, on the other hand, describes these celebrations much more critically as decadent and immoral, and points to them in order to demonstrate the extent of Ottoman corruption and immorality, especially during the difficult times of World War I and the major crisis that this war brought to the city. These celebrations irritated Tourjman and reinforced his growing frustration and antagonism towards the government's attitude to the local population and its activities. In April 1915, for example, Tourjman described a celebration that took place in the city, possibly in al-Manshiya or in the nearby Notre Dame Church compound:

The city today is decorated in the most beautiful way [...] Wouldn't it be better if the government didn't celebrate and [instead] mourned together with its subjects? Wouldn't it be better to spend this money on the poor and miserable? This evening, many beautiful women from Jerusalem participated in the celebration. There were [alcoholic] beverages for everyone and music [...] but that wasn't enough, because they invited prostitutes from Jerusalem to attend this celebration. And I was told that there were more than fifty known prostitutes [present] that night. Every officer or *pasha* took either one or two or more women and walked in the garden [...] The men are telling secrets of the state to these women, because they are drunk [...]⁴⁶

37 Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom*, vol. 2, p. 35.

38 JM-AIY, vol. 3/p49b/item 335.

39 JM-AIY, vol. 14/-21b/item 102.

40 JM-AIY, vol. 1/p11b/item 68.

41 BOA, DH. MKT., 776/69; JM-AIY, vol. 13/p13b/item 75.

42 Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900*, p. 122.

43 Yehoshua, *Yerushalayim tmol shilshom*, vol. 2, p. 34.

44 JM-AIY, vol. 12/p17b/item 108.

45 Tamari and Nassar, eds., *al-Quds al-uthmaniyya*, p. 28.

46 *Yawmiyyat Muhammad 'Adil al-Salah min ahl al-Quds, 1915-1916* [The Diary of Muhammad 'Adil al-Salah, a Resident of Jerusalem], NLI-MS., AP.Ar.46, p. 47 (26 July 1915)

Thus the garden had multiple functions and purposes in the city. In times of war, it served simultaneously as the site of demonstrations for and against the government, a place of leisure, and a venue for various celebrations. It was considered an important place in the cityscape by the municipality and the Ottoman authorities, which tended it well.

Nevertheless, Jaffa Gate was a good example of a contested political public space in the city. Its centrality as the main gate to the Old City, and its importance as a transportation center and as a center for business and recreation have been presented above. However, during and following World War I it was used for other purposes. During the war, this area became the site of demonstrations, parades, and public executions. When Cemal Paşa ordered the hanging of people suspected of being Arab nationalists such as the Mufti of Gaza, Ahmad 'Arif al-Husayni, the hangings took place at the entrance to *Bab al-Khalil*. Defectors from the Ottoman army were also hanged in Jaffa Gate. On 30 June 1916, for example, two Jews, two Christians, and one Muslim, all accused of defecting from the army, were hanged there.⁴⁷ The hangings were indeed public: in the photos, one can see the hanged men dressed in white, surrounded by Ottoman officers and soldiers. Behind them are spectators observing the scene. These hangings of political activists at the city gate were a manifestation of Ottoman authority in the city, but also turned into very powerful symbols of Cemal Paşa's cruelty and abuse of the residents of Jerusalem, as well as other areas in Palestine and Greater Syria.

Jaffa Gate was a place for other forms of political manifestations as well. During World War I, several pro-Ottoman parades ended up or passed through the Gate on their way from the Old City to the municipality area. Khalil al-Sakakini mentions several of them in his diary. He also describes the march of recent conscripts that passed near Jaffa Gate. The area in front of the Gate was crowded with people who were waiting for the soldiers. He too was

looking for some friends he wanted to say goodbye to just before they left the city. For Sakakini and others, this area became a site of collective farewell to the drafted soldiers.⁴⁸

Yet another momentous event took place near Jaffa Gate in December 1914. When the news came that Ottoman troops would pass through Jerusalem on their way to the Egyptian front, the Jewish Ottomanization Committee decided to organize a reception for them at the entrance of the Jaffa Gate. The committee decided that a special "gate of honor" would be built at Jaffa Gate by Jewish carpenters under the supervision of Professor Boris Shatz, the director of the Bezalel art school. The leaders of the Jewish communities and the heads of schools in Jerusalem stood under two tents near the Gate and greeted the soldiers and presented them with special gifts. Muslim, Jewish, and Christian students lined the road leading to Jaffa Gate, waving Ottoman flags. Once the Ottoman troops, headed by the commander of the army, reached the Gate, they were presented to municipal officials and the heads of the various communities of Jerusalem, who greeted them warmly. The Gate in this instance was a place of celebration and show of political support of the Ottoman forces.⁴⁹

Jaffa Gate served a completely different purpose in December 1917, when it became the symbolic and real gate to the city of Jerusalem, and to British rule over it, as seen in General Allenby's well-documented entrance and ceremony near the Gate.⁵⁰ The most obvious and symbolic building in Jaffa Gate was the clock tower. It was built in 1906 in homage to Sultan Abdülhamid II, and, like other clock towers in various locations throughout the Empire, this tower was an expression of Ottoman loyalty and of the spirit of change in the Empire. According to municipal records, the clock was sent to Beersheba in 1909, even though there was still no tower in which to hang it, and a

[in Arabic]. On this diary, see Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), pp. 66–81; Salim Tamari, *Year of the Locust: A Soldier's Diary and the Erasure of Palestine's Ottoman Past* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

47 Tamari and Nassar, eds., *al-Quds al-uthmaniyya*, p. 163.

48 Akram Musallam (ed.), *Yawmiyyat Khalil al-Sakakini* [The Diaries of Khalil al-Sakakini], vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Institute of Jerusalem Studies, 2004), pp. 132–133 (18 November 1914) [in Arabic].

49 Avraham Elmaliach, *Eretz Israel ve-surya bi-ymey milhemet ha-olam* [The Land of Israel and Syria in the Days of the World War I], vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Ha-Solel, 1928), pp. 70–73 [in Hebrew].

50 For a detailed analysis of this ceremony, its symbolic interpretations and meanings, see Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire*, pp. 117–135.

different clock was installed instead in Jerusalem.⁵¹ As Lemire has shown, the clock tower became a central part of the "Municipal Quarter," which consisted of the municipal hospital, the public garden, and the town hall. The clock tower dominated the landscape of Jaffa Gate and the entire area and, like other clock towers, was a symbol of modernization, and a temporal reference to public time, shared by all.⁵² The clock at the top of it was considered the most reliable time piece in town, and Jerusalemites set their own clocks by it. Another symbol of the Ottoman presence in the area was the *sabil*, the public water fountain, which was built near the Jaffa Gate in 1900, to celebrate 25 years of the reign of Sultan Abdülhamid II.⁵³ Both the *sabil* and the clock tower were removed by the British governor of Jerusalem, Sir Ronald Storrs, in 1921 and 1922, respectively, as part of the British attempt to re-organize Jerusalem and suppress its Ottoman past.

CONCLUSION

Henry Lefebvre has noted that "Space is permeated by social relations; it is not only supported by social relations but it is also producing and produced by social relations."⁵⁴ In Jerusalem, streets, gardens, and squares served multiple purposes, sometimes simultaneously, especially during periods of war and conflict. The city garden was a place for leisure and celebration, as well as a site for political protest, and is described and remembered differently by people who visited it. Jaffa Gate was used both as a political site for gatherings of various kinds (and hangings), and as a vibrant urban space for commerce and daily interaction between the city's residents. Spaces enable the manifestation of different social and political processes and influence and shape social identities, and need to be taken into account in the analysis of any cityscape.⁵⁵

51 JM-AIY, vol. 14/p38b/item 198.

52 On the history of clock towers in the Ottoman Empire as a sign of modernization of the Ottoman state and the organization of the urban space, see Avner Wishnitzer, "Qurey zman: Luhot zmanim, migdalei sha'on u-miqtsav ha-hayyim ha-ironi ba-imperya ha-othmanit [Webs of Time: Timetables, Clock Towers and the Urban Rythm of Life in the Ottoman Empire]," *Zmanim* 119 (2012) [in Hebrew]; idem, "Our Time": On the Durability of the Alaturka Hour System in the Late Ottoman Empire," *International Journal of Turkish Studies* 16 (2010) pp. 47-69; Lemire, *Jerusalem 1900*, p. 130.

53 Büssow, "Ottoman Reform," p. 116.

54 Lefebvre, *Production of Space*, p. 286.

55 Nicholas R. Fyfe, "Introduction: Reading the Street," in idem, *Images of the Street: Planning, Identity and Control in Public Space* (London: Routledge, 1998), pp. 1-10.

EXPLORING CONCEPTS OF PUBLIC SPACE THROUGH MEMOIRS AND MUNICIPAL RECORDS

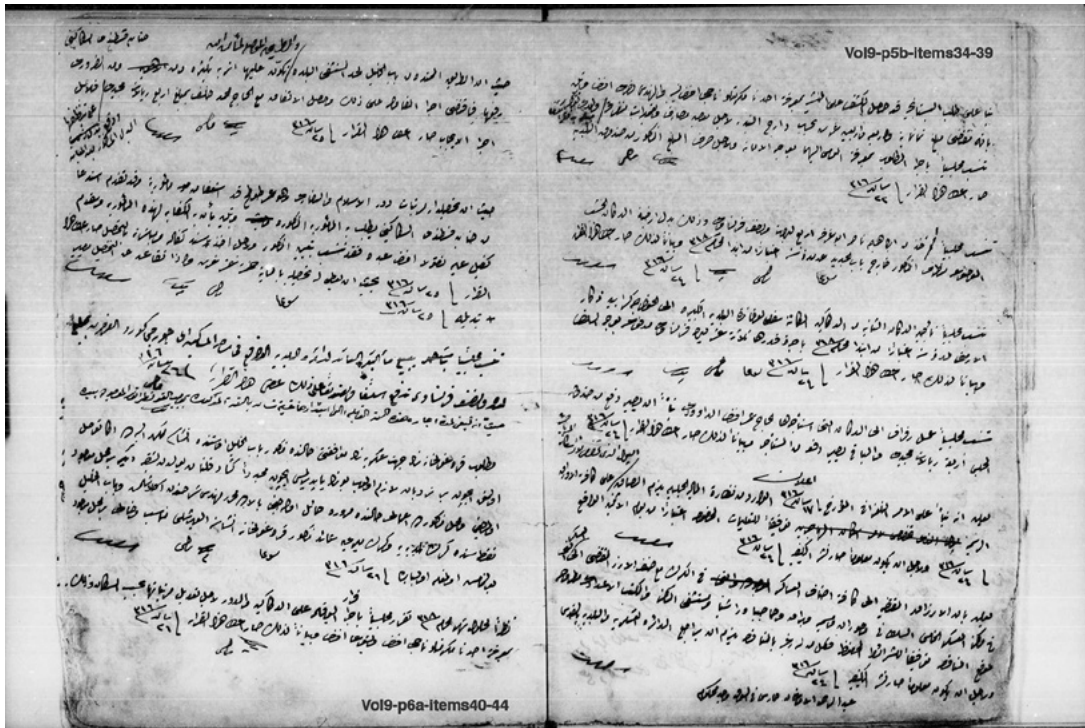


Figure 1: Sample Page from the Jerusalem Municipal Records.

This chapter explores the concept of “public space” in the context of late Ottoman Jerusalem. It focuses on three locations in “downtown Jerusalem”: Jaffa Road, Jaffa Gate, and the Municipal Garden. The sources researchers can potentially use include archival records, maps, photographs, municipal records, and memoirs. Here, two main primary sources were consulted. The first consisted of the Hebrew and Arabic memoirs of local Jerusalemites, such as Ya’akov Yehoshua, Itta Yellin, Ihsan Tourjman and Wasif al-Jawhariyya, who describe their lives in Jerusalem during the late Ottoman and Mandatory periods. The second source consisted of the municipal records of the municipality of Jerusalem.

The original municipal records can be found at the Jerusalem Municipal Archive (JMA) but were retrieved here from the

Open Jerusalem Database,¹ an ERC project led by Dr. Vincent Lemire. It consolidates thousands of archival records related to Jerusalem from the late Ottoman to the Mandatory period, including municipal and imperial records, church archives, communal (Jewish, Muslim and Christian) sources and private collections, among others.²

The Jerusalem municipal records are written in Arabic or Ottoman Turkish and are organized chronologically. The Open Jerusalem database contains 18 volumes of reports dating from 1892-1917. The sample page (see Figure 1) is a decision dated 8 May 1900 to hire a street cleaner for the roads near the Jaffa Gate (JM-AIY, vol. 9/ p6a/item 40).

1 Open Jerusalem, <http://www.openjerusalem.org> (accessed 8 March 2021).

2 <http://www.openjerusalem.org/our-collections> (accessed 8 March 2021).

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