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Shared Space in pre-1948 Jerusalem?

Integration, Segregation and Urban Space through the Eyes of Justice Gad Frumkin

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THE SERIES

CONFLICT IN CITIES AND THE CONTESTED STATE

Editorial note
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Biographical note
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Shared Space in pre-1948 Jerusalem?

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Yair Wallach

Abstract

How segregated was late-Ottoman and British Mandate Jerusalem? This paper answers this question through the eyes of Gad Frumkin, who was born to a Jewish Orthodox family in the "Muslim Quarter", studied law in Istanbul, and became a judge in Palestine's Supreme Court under British rule. I examine places of encounter and inter-group dynamics that were played out in urban space, focussing on residential segregation, interaction in civic space and work places. Trajectories of segregation and integration are investigated within the larger social-political context. My aim is to problematise the notion of shared space and to move beyond simple dichotomies of segregation and integration. This is part of a larger research project, Conflict in Cities and the Contested State', on "shared space" in divided cities, looking at the dynamics, possibilities and preconditions of these encounters between rival ethno/national groups in contested cities.

Keywords

Introduction

Can we speak of "shared spaces" in Jerusalem before 1948? This article will examine this question by looking at the spatial dynamics of segregation and interaction of Jews and Arabs in late-Ottoman and British-ruled Jerusalem. By "shared spaces" I mean sites of encounter, which resist easy categorisation as belonging, territorially, to a single ethno-national group. I am interested in the actual sharing of space as it occurred in everyday life, rather than in idealised and elusive spaces of multi-ethnic harmony. Residential patterns, civic spaces, and workspaces, are studied here to gauge the role of urban space in determining the nature of Jewish-Arab interaction.

I address these questions through the eyes of one Jerusalemite, Gad Frumkin. Focussing on a particular individual is useful in two ways. Firstly, it emphasises that the perception of space depends critically on the embodied and situated subject; secondly, following closely spatial biographies of individuals is an

effective way to test and challenge common assumptions on ethnic boundaries. This is certainly the case with the individual described in this article.

Gad Frumkin was born in 1887 in the Old City of Jerusalem to an influential Hassidic Ashkenazi publisher. He started his career as a Hebrew journalist. In 1908, attracted to the causes of Ottomanism and Zionism, he developed political ambitions to run for the Ottoman Parliament, and studied law in Istanbul. After the 1917 British occupation of Jerusalem he was appointed Judge - due to intervention of Zionist leader Chaim Weitzmann - and promoted almost immediately to the Supreme Court, where he subsequently served for nearly thirty years. He was the most senior Jew in an official position during the Mandate, and had close ties with the Arab elite, being the only leading Zionist to have direct contact with the Mufti Hajj Amin al-Husayni in the 1920s. In the 1930s he was involved in negotiations with prominent Arab Palestinians over a bi-national regime in Palestine, but his efforts were rejected by the Zionist agency. His illustrious career was effectively terminated in 1948, when he was ousted from the Israeli Supreme Court. Until that point, Frumkin, a member of Jerusalem's Jewish eilte, had managed throughout his career to remain at the heart of the ruling establishment. At the same time, his strong ties with other ethnic-confessional groups had become increasingly at odds with tendencies within the Jewish-Zionist *Yishuv* (society) in Palestine. Thus Frumkin inhabited a position that was simultaneously at the centre and the margins, calling to question the definition of these categories as they are applied in Palestine/Israel.

The main source for this article is Frumkin's published memoir, *The Path of a Judge in Jerusalem* (Tel Aviv, 1954). The memoir is rich with anecdotes and observations of everyday life in late Ottoman and British Mandate Jerusalem. Frumkin is especially attentive to details of space, which makes him very useful for the current discussion. The memoir is hardly a new source: it has been used extensively by Israeli historians studying late-Ottoman and British Mandate Palestine, such as Ilan Pappe and Tom Segev. However, these historians relied on the memoir primarily to examine the political dynamics between Zionists and Arabs. They did not look at Frumkin himself, nor did they use his writing to rethink boundaries and interactions between communities in Jerusalem. Frumkin's personal history was studied in depth only by legal historian Nathan Brun, who focussed on his dismissal from the Israel's Supreme Court (Brun, 2002).

When considering the memoir, it should be borne in mind that it was written in the early 1950s, that is, five decades after Frumkin's childhood. An obvious concern is the reliability of memoirs after many decades; and while one could not accept Frumkin's accounts literally, there is ample evidence to show that he consulted his personal archive while writing the book, and he did not rely solely on his memory. But a further concern is the ideological bias of the book. Written after his ousting from Israel's Supreme Court, the memoir was undoubtedly designed to defend his legacy and his contribution to the Zionist project and to the establishment of Israel. In such context, Frumkin was likely to downplay details that could compromise his Zionist credentials. In one example, he omitted his relations with a leading anti-Zionist member of the Ottoman Parliament (Brun, 2008). There is a felt tension between the author's desire to recount his life story, and his wish to portray himself in a favourable light in the eyes of his Israeli readers. This ambivalence marks the memoir and makes it into a fascinating source, which often needs to be read against the grain. Especially interesting are Frumkin's descriptions of his close relations with the Arab Palestinian elite, or his Ottomanist disposition: these should be seen as understated, as he had little incentive to overstate aspects that could only detract from reputation as a Zionist. The fact that he nonetheless writes on these issues gives his comments greater credibility.

Alongside the memoir, this article is based on earlier writing of Frumkin: his journalistic articles in the Hassidic *Habatselet* newspaper between 1905 and 1909; his letters and notes, kept in his personal archive (at the Central Zionist Archives), and his legal writings and court rulings, compiled and published in Hebrew (Kassan, 1952).

For the sake of clarity, the discussion is divided schematically to "residential spaces", "civic spaces", and "work spaces". However, I do not intend to argue that these were separate spaces. Quite the contrary, commerce, labour, political activity, social relations were interlinked and often occurred in the same environment. In the Old City, for example, the Frumkin's printshop was located within their home, and their social relations with their neighbours and landlords, the Hussayni family, extended into political issues and business dealings.

Residential Spaces: Segregation and Integration in the Old City

Jerusalem is typically described as a city that has always maintained high level of residential segregation along ethnic and confessional lines. In European guide books and travel accounts since the early nineteenth century, one encounters the layout of Jerusalem arranged along four confessional quarters: Christian, Armenian, Jewish and Muslim. The basic cross shape of the city, with two main streets cutting north-south and east-west, separating between these four quarters, was the organising principle through which Jerusalem was encountered, experienced and understood by Western visitors and scholars, and is still dominant in the historiography (Kark and Oren-Nordheim, 2001).

This historical perception has ramifications for the present condition of the city. Influential mayor Teddy Kollek, who ran the city between 1965 and 1993 and orchestrated the "unification" of Jerusalem after the 1967 occupation of East Jerusalem, explained his philosophy in the following terms:

> Within the Old City Walls there were [historically] separate quarters: the Christian quarter, the Armenian, Greek, Ethiopian... Coptic, Jewish, Muslim, etc. The [quarters] maintained good relations between them, with ups and downs, for many centuries. We are continuing this tradition. Jerusalem is not a melting pot, we are not trying to make "Goulash" from everybody. It's a mosaic of different cultures and civilisations living together in one city. We are interested in preserving this state of things and this will be the city's character in the future" (Teddy Kollek, interview with Jacob Malchin, 1984; available at <www.freejudaism.com>, accessed on 27th April 2010.

Kollek's rhetoric celebrated age-old, voluntary segregation as a recipe for tolerance and cultural diversity. However, in practice Kollek's policies were highly discriminatory: the construction of Jewish-only neighbourhoods and the neglect of Palestinian neighbourhood under the pretence of "non intervention", leaving Palestinians without adequate planning and public services (Cheshin *et al.*, 1999). Thus, Kollek used the "mosaic" metaphor to justify the creation of checker-board pattern of self-segregated Jewish neighbourhoods and Arab ghettos locked between them. More recently, in the 2000s, Jerusalem's "natural" polarisation along ethno-national lines has been presented as a key reason to its inevitable political division between Israelis and Palestinians (Kimchi, 2008).

The dominant notion of the four historical segregated quarters was challenged persuasively by Salim Tamari, who argued that such quarters did not exist in the local imaginary of the city before the late 1930s, and that the Old City was far more mixed in confessional terms. Tamari based his reading on the memoirs of Wāsif Jawhariyya, a musician and a civil servant in the Jerusalem Municipality, a Christian Arab who was born and raised within the supposed confines of the Muslim Quarter during the late-Ottoman rule (Tamari and Nassar, 2003, Tamari and Nassar, 2005). Portraying an intricate picture of inter-communal links and relationships, based on patronage, trade, business and neighbourly relations, Tamari argued that the image of Jerusalem as a segregated city, divided into ethnic-denominational quarters, was a projection of Western scholars and visitors, which became reality when it was imposed on the city during the Mandate era. Locally, the city was perceived through neighbourhoods or localities (*Mahallat*), which were ethnically and religiously mixed.

How do Tamari's conclusions apply also to Jewish residential patterns in Jerusalem? The historiography has presented the Jewish Quarter in the south east area of the Old City, as a centuries-old spatial-demographic reality (Ben-Arieh, 1977-1979, Kark and Oren-Nordheim, 2001). And yet the term Jewish Quarter (*ha-rova ha-yehudi*), almost never appears in local Hebrew sources before the twentieth century. Rather, we find the term "Street of the Jews", referring to a main street and its side streets, with dominant Jewish (Sephardic) presence since the 15th century.[i] This area was not, however, exclusively Jewish, nor did all Jews reside in this locality. In late-Ottoman census documents (Arnon, 1992) and in the Islamic court records (Cohen *et al.*, 2003) we find ample evidence of Jewish presence in virtually all parts of the city. Ashkenazi Jews arriving to the city in large numbers since the middle of the nineteenth century chose to settle in the localities of al-Wad and Bab al-Hutta, in the north east parts of the city, as noted in Shabtai Zecharia's survey of historical Jewish presence in the "Muslim Quarter" (Zecharia, 1985). In memoirs of Jews residing in these areas, such as Frumkin, (Yellin, 1924, Shiryon, 1943), we find no indication that they perceived themselves as living outside the Jewish area of Jerusalem. Nor is it clear why the Ashkenazi and Sephardic communities, given their differences in ritual, language and culture, should naturally reside in the same part of town.

Gad Frumkin was, in his own words, one of the "children of al-Wad" - a locality in the heart of the Old City, which housed the Serai (government house) and

the Mufti's house. Al-Wad was a predominantly Muslim area which had large Jewish presence around the turn of the century, made up of Ashkenazim (mostly Hassidic), as well as north African Jews. According to 1905 census documents, Jews made up at least 45% of households (Arnon, 1992). The area was known in Hebrew as "Hebron street", as it housed a large number of Jews that originally settled from Hebron. There were numerous synagogues and Jewish religious schools in the area. The Frumkins lived in a small compound with two little courtyards, the family print shop, and a small synagogue - bordering on the mansion of the Jerusalem Mufti from the al-Husayni nobility. The Al-Husayni were also Frumkin's landlords, and they had good relations with Gad's father, Yisrael Dov Frumkin. This fact facilitated in the 1920s the connection between Gad Frumkin and Hajj Amin al-Husyani, the Grand Mufti and the rising political leader of Arab Palestine.

In the memoirs we find detailed descriptions of the web of relations between Ashkenazim and Arabs. These relations focussed on economic matters - commerce, work, and real estate; as well as civic and political matters. But connections with non-Jews were also a necessary feature of Jewish religious life, as Jews relied regularly on gentiles to perform certain forbidden tasks on Jewish festivals and on the Sabbath, such as making fire and turning lamps on and off. Thus we find in the memoirs the story of "der Bashitke", Musa Bashit, an Arab coal-vendor, who used to buy the leavened bread (*Chametz)* from the Ashkenazi communities during the Passover season. "Reb Moshe", as he liked to refer to himself, spoke excellent Yiddish and Ladino, and used to finish his work day smoking the pipe in a Sephardic cafe in the Street of the Jews. The everyday reliance on gentiles meant that Jews had to reside in proximity to non-Jews, and an exclusive Jewish residential community was simply unthinkable. An account published in Frumkin's paper, the *Habastelet*, on a visit to the Jewish neighbourhood of Neveh Tsedek outside Jaffa, records the complications involved in living in an exclusive Jewish community through this somewhat humorous conversation between the reporter and a local Jew:

> "There is no neighbourhood of gentiles nearby […] and what do you do on the Sabbath and festivals?
> "Let us be thankful to the thieves [...] it is a real miracle, that the thieves have made this place their favourite place".
> "Aha, so you catch the thieves and make them into "Sabbath gentiles"?"
> "Why are you turning everything upside down? […] it's more simple and straightforward. When the residents realised the situation [with the thieves], they petitioned to the government to place a garrison here, and they - the

gendarmes - they protect us from fire and also light the way for us when the
need occurs". [Habatselet, 27 April 1908]

An interesting gauge to the level of Ashkenazi-Arab interaction is the use of
Arabic words and idioms in Yiddish. A 1930s study of "Palestinian Yiddish" spoken in
Jerusalem and Safad found no less than 700 expressions, idioms, words and terms
borrowed from Arabic: from everyday greetings and obscenities to building trade
terminology, weighs and measurements and agricultural terms (Kossover, 1966). In
comparison, the study found only 35 expressions borrowed from Ladino, the
language of Sephardic Jews, limited to food and household objects. This suggests
that Ashkenazim had closer interaction with Arabs than with Sephardim; and that the
Ashkenazi-Arab encounters were frequent and diverse, encompassing aspects of
business, politics and administration, alongside social everyday life.

A key driver of the interaction between the different communities was through
movement in the city. The quotidian rhythms of urban life often receive little attention
in discussions of segregation and polarisation. The daily routes of people through the
city are by necessity ephemeral and difficult to trace, compared with residential
patterns, that can be mapped with the aid of archival evidence such as census
documents. However, movement is key to the formation of the subjective experience
of the city, and it necessarily involves chance encounters. The paths and roads used
reflected, no doubt, wider social and political patterns; they depended on social
status, ethnic identity and gender. Nonetheless, a wide array of people encountered
each other in the streets of the city, in planned and chance meetings. Frumkin
chooses to introduce Jerusalem to his readers through four "walking tours", following
the footsteps of his errands and leisurely escapades as a child. The iconic sacred
sites of the Old City, the Dome of the Rock, Wailing Wall and Holy Sepulchre, are
hardly mentioned in these tours. Rather, Frumkin describes small alleys, shops and
vendors; he pays most attention to Ashkenazi institutions and merchants, but is
careful to describe other craftsmen, shop owner and officials. One such description,
of his errands to the Ottoman *Mutassaref* (Governor) offices, starts with a visit to the
shop of a Sephardic Jew, before crossing the yard of *Serai,* making his way through
a crowd of Muslim villagers, encountering the two Ashkenazi *Mukhtar*s (appointed
representatives); ascending to the Governor offices, he encounters Turkish clerks
and the head of Ottoman education, a local noble Arab; and all this is timed carefully
with the arrival and departureof the Ottoman Pasha from his residence outside the
city gates, through al-Wad street to the *Serai*. This account demonstrates that the

necessities of business, commerce or subsistence required from everyone to travel through the city, and in this process to encounter members of other communities.

At the same time this image of high level of "mixing" and interaction should not create the impression that religious and ethnic identities did not matter. Nor is it my intention to portray late-Ottoman Jerusalem as a idyll of multi-ethnic harmony. Certainly such nostalgic portrayals exist, but Frumkin's memoirs is not one of them. Frumkin himself maintains that the frequent encounters did not lead to mutual understanding: "Arab and Jewish courtyards were adjacent, and the children met and quarrelled with each other: these were two separate worlds lacking any mental or cultural proximity." (Frumkin 1954:323) From other accounts we also know of common street fights between Ashkenazi boys on the one hand, and Arab and Sephardic boys on the other (Yehoshua, 1979).

Frumkin's descriptions of late Ottoman Jerusalem resonate with recent debates on urban multi-culturalism. While ethnic difference, inclusivity and openness are celebrated (at least in rhetoric) in many global cities, there are also fears for community cohesion, and the danger of "living together separately" (Romann and Weingrod, 1991, Falah, 1996), with communities leading "parallel lives" in the same city (Cantle *et al.*, 2006). Some scholars and policy makers are concerned about the detrimental effects of "voluntary segregation" (Valins, 2003), others point out that physical proximity and "mixing" is no guarantee for mutual understanding or fruitful dialogue ((Phillipps, 1996, Cole and Goodchild, 2000, Amin, 2002, Clayton, 2008) . In my view, it is counter-productive to think of "segregation", "integration" and "inclusiveness" in absolute terms and as simple dichotomies. Rather, these terms refer to a spectrum of possibilities, which are not always quantifiable and measurable and rely much on subjective perceptions. Furthermore, inter-communal interaction can take on many shapes; two communities can have strong commercial interaction with minimal level of inter-marriages, for example.

Frumkin relates that his more meaningful encounters with Arabs occurred not in the street but rather in domestic space. Frumkin's father had close relations with Arab elite families such as al-Alami, al-Husayani, Qutub and others. Frumkin's involvement in municipal and Jewish communal affairs, his dealing with the Serai as well as his commercial activities put him in contact with these families, and they were frequent visitors at Frumkin's house in al-Wad. Due to his father's links with Arab scholars and public figures, Frumkin grew up to become more familiar with Arab

Jerusalem than other Ashkenazim. He also received private Arabic lessons at home, and spoke and understood Arabic well even before he departed for law studies in Istanbul.

In 1905 the family decided to move out of the Old City to a more convenient house closer to the Jewish residential developments outside the walls. As Salim Tamari has observed, residential neighbourhoods outside the walls were more segregated along ethnic and confessional lines than the Old City (Misselwitz and Rieneits, 2006). Issues of landownership and investment, according to Tamari, were the prime reason for the segregated nature of development. It is noteworthy, however, that the Frumkins did not choose to settle in one of these Jewish-only neighbourhoods, but rather chose the Abyssinian quarter, a mixed area populated with wealthy Arabs, Jews, and Europeans. The quarter was popular with Jewish modernising intellectuals, such as Eliezer Ben-Yehuda and David Yellin, alongside more recent Zionist immigrants. The area was the centre of modern Jewish education in Jerusalem: it housed the arts and crafts school Bezalel the German-sponsored school Lemel, and its teachers' seminar, the Bnei Brith Library, as well as a commerce school (Zecharia, 1996). The area teemed with young students and teachers, many of them from the agricultural Jewish colonies, or new immigrants in Palestine.

Frumkin, an 18-year old Hassidic Jerusalemite, was not naturally close to these circles, which referred to themselves to as "the New Yishuv" (Jewish community). However, through various chance encounters he found himself drawn to these "youth of the Abyssinians". He joined their discussions, and partook in their gymnastics, singing, dancing and outdoor excursions, walking in the moonlight westwards to the fields at the outskirts of the city. Fascinated and attracted to the new milieu, Frumkin was moving away from Hassidic modernising circles towards Zionist notions of Jewish identity and Jewish future in Palestine - manifested in his 1909 wedding to Hannah Eisenberg, the daughter of citrus magnate from the Zionist colony Rehovot. In his memoirs he attributes his ideological transformation to the new surroundings of the Abyssinian quarter and the encounters they facilitated. During his wanderings in the "Latin quarter of Jerusalem", as he describes the neighbourhood, Frumkin established contacts with the Zionist leadership, taking him later to the agricultural colonies, to Jaffa, and later to Istanbul and London as representative of the Jewish "New Yishuv". However, moving out of the city walls also allowed him to develop his ideas in another direction - that of integration in the

local Arab environment and the Ottoman system. In the early twentieth century, Zionism, Ottomanism, and integration with the local Arab society did not seem as contradictory options. New civic spaces, emerging in the late nineteenth century, were able to contain and support these different trajectories.

New Civic Spaces

The question of civic and public space in Middle Eastern cities has long been contested in the historiography (for overview see AlSayyad, 1991, Shami, 2009) Some scholars, from Max Weber onwards, have argued that Islamic cities traditionally were characterised by an absence of civic spaces. In contrast with European medieval cities, Middle Eastern urban centres lacked municipal organisation and autonomous guild-like socioeconomic structure, and this manifested in their urban layout. Scholars of Jerusalem who have followed this line of thinking, emphasised the lack of European styled civic spaces such as impressive city squares or monumental civic buildings in Jerusalem prior to the twentieth century, seeing it as symptomatic of the "primitive" character of Ottoman Jerusalem and Islamic cities in general ((Ben-Arieh, 1977-1979, Kroyanker, 1993). In contrast with this approach, other scholars of Islamic cities have often stressed the importance of city markets, coffee houses, bathhouses, the main mosque and its square, as archetypical social spaces of congregation and encounter. Others still have questioned the validity of a Eurocentric framework and the terminology of "public space" to study Middle Eastern cities (AlSayyad, 1991).

What has largely gone unnoticed, in the scholarship on Jerusalem, was the emergence of new civic spaces as part of a dramatic re-organisation of the late-Ottoman city. The development of Jerusalem in the late nineteenth century has been described in terms of growth and expansion, with the main narrative being the spreading out of the city beyond the city walls. This description characterises both scholars hostile to Ottoman legacy, such as Ben Arieh (1977-1979), and to more sympathetic ones such as Alexander Schölch (1993). And yet the development of the city in the final decades of Ottoman rule involved more than a straightforward expansion: it spelled a profound re-articulation of urban layout and civic identity, modelled on European notions of public space and civic institutions. The newly-founded Municipality, with representation of the city's main ethnic-religious groups,

played a key role in this transformation. A municipal hospital, an archaeological museum, a theatre, a railway station, municipal gardens and a privately-sponsored public library were among the new establishments opened during this period. The centre of the city - politically and economically - shifted decidedly westwards, from the inner parts of the Old City and the Haram environs to the area of Jaffa Gate. This was the result of official initiatives, local private entrepreneurship, and European influence. Jaffa Gate emerged as the modern town centre, boasting several post offices, banks, cafes, hotels, photographer studios, shops of imported goods and the main transport hub. It was also the site of the new Municipality offices, the rebuilt Ottoman barracks, and the town clock tower, erected in 1906. The clock tower reflected a new perception of universal time that appealed to all residents (Wallach, 2010), different from confessional ways of thinking and marking time, such as Islamic calls for prayer and the bells of Christian churches. The new centre developed on the seam line between the Old City and the new parts, connecting the two in an organic way. The commercial buildings that sprang up concealed the city walls, obscuring the difference between "Old City" and Jerusalem's new parts. A continuum of public open space stretched from the inner parts of the Jaffa Gate, through the small plaza in front of the Gate, alongside Jaffa street and the Mamilla road, to the new Municipal gardens further up the road. Clearly these developments reflected European notions of modern urbanity, and some Western visitors, searching for the Biblical city, were shocked and disappointed to see Jerusalem " as commonplace as a Parisian suburb" (Loti, 1915:42) yet for Jerusalemites and the Ottoman authorities, the new town centre was a showcase of the city's modernity and progress. This site facilitated frequent and diverse interaction between tourists and residents and between the different ethnic/religious groups. But furthermore: by providing an urban context to the new Ottoman framework, it also created the possibility of a shared identity, that did not exist previously in the Old City, despite frequent and amicable interaction between different groups. The urban re-organisation of Jerusalem was predicated on Ottoman political and administrative reforms, the Tanzimat (Gerber, 1985). The new Ottoman citizenship law of 1869 promised equality to all citizens, regardless of their confessional identity. This was the administrative basis of new civic institutions such Jerusalem's municipality, which included Jews and Christians as city councilors.

Gad Frumkin grew up in this transforming landscape, and he was watching these changes with great interest. After the family moved to the new part of the city, young Gad continued to work in his father's printshop in al-Wad, travelling daily by foot to and from the Old City. He recounts that there were two routes to walk from the

Abyssinians to al-Wad. The quiet and shorter route passed through the sparse settlement north of the Old City, along Jewish and Muslim houses, through vineyards and groves, entering the city through Damascus Gate. Frumkin recalls fondly the "fields of ripening wheat, the song of the birds chattering from the top of the olive trees" in the pastoral landscape north of Damascus Gate (Frumkin 1954:130). The other route, busy and longer, took Frumkin through the hustle and bustle of Jaffa street, past the municipal gardens, and the city centre of Jaffa Gate; it was this route which was to shape Frumkin's life and outlook. The dramatic 1908 revolution, as experienced by Frumkin in the new city centre of Jerusalem, had a determining impact on his future career.

In 1906 Frumkin became the de-facto editor of his father's newspaper, the Habatselet. He changed the character of the newspaper, introducing more news reports on events in Jerusalem, Palestine and the Ottoman Empire. While previoudly the *Habatselet* limited itself largely to Jewish affairs, it now reported more on general developments in Jerusalem as well as international news, articles on science and exploration, and translated prose, for example of the French writer Jules Vernes. With the outbreak of the 1908 "Young Turk" revolution, *Habatselet* was early to announce the dramatic reinstitution of the ottoman constitution on a full page, celebrating the new age of freedom and equality with special reports from Jerusalem and Jaffa. Soon afterwards the newspaper started to refer to the local Jews as "Ottoman Jews", rather than "subjects of the Sultan".

In Jerusalem, the revolution was marked and celebrated in a large event in the Jaffa Gate area: a procession from the Ottoman barracks inside the walls, through Jaffa street to the Municipal Gardens outside the walls. Frumkin, who was keen to witness the event, arrived at the municipal gardens directly from the press, in his work clothes. "Where are the celebrating Jews? Are they taking part in this celebration, are they voicing their opinions in public? " he asked himself (Frumkin 1954:146). He noticed the almost complete absence of Ashkenazi Jews, while the Sephardim who were present in large numbers "intermingled with the Arabs, and together they were more interested in cracking nuts, drinking lemonade and listening to the army band playing in the intervals between speeches than in the speeches themselves" (ibid). Frumkin came home around midnight and wrote an article on the demonstration, concluding by calling on Jewish youth to study Arabic and Turkish, "so that they can follow the events and prepare themselves to become equal partners in the new system". The following day he discovered that his father (still the

chief editor of the newspaper) had deleted these lines calling for integration. Y.D. Frumkin apparently believed that this went too far. The issue of studying foreign languages was extremely sensitive in the Ashkenazi community, and this idea was strongly resisted by conservative circles, in fear that they would lose control over the younger generation (Friedman, 2001). Gad Frumkin was outraged by his father's intervention, and confronted him at the newspaper offices in al-Wad. Their short and angry exchange ended with an irrecoverable break between father and son, as Gad quitted the room without asking permission. The father's cluttered small office, within the closed confines of the al-Wad print-shop, appears in Frumkin's description as the complete opposite to the open space of exciting possibilities of the municipal gardens. While Y. D. Frumkin's attitudes were relatively liberal and open for an Ashkenazi Orthodox, his horizons proved ultimately too limited and insular for his son. Young Frumkin decided to embark on his own separate way: first contemplating to establish his own newspaper, then deciding to travel to Istanbul to study law, in the hope of running for the Ottoman parliament. He left Palestine several months later against the wishes of his father, who actively tried to prevent him from doing so. The description of this formative break between Orthodox father and a modern son challenges the perceived boundaries between Palestine's Orthodox Jewish community ("Old Yishuv") and the Zionist "New Yishuv". It appears that Y. D. Frumkin, albeit sceptical and critical of political Zionism, did not try to stop his son associating with Zionist circles. He was willing to accept his marriage to a family of Zionist colonists, but would not allow him to preach for active integration in Arab and Ottoman Palestine.

The new possibilities of modernity within the Ottoman system did not demand necessarily an explicit articulation in political speeches. Rather, these possibilities were embodied in practices and woven into everyday life through manifold physical and sensory experiences in the civic spaces in Jerusalem. These experiences could take the form of looking at the clock tower, reading news telegrams posted outside the Ottoman post offices, talking politics with friends in a Jaffa Gate cafe, listening to the army band playing patriotic tunes in the Municipal Gardens, or purchasing Western clothes in a shop of imported goods. All of these involved a constant redefinition and articulation of identity for local Jerusalemites. The Ottomanist vision, whether articulated consciously or not, allowed members of Jerusalem's diverse communities to come together and celebrate a common identity that was tied closely to the civic spaces of the city. This Ottoman vision lost its appeal during the first World War, as the campaign of harsh military repression alienated the city's

population from the Ottoman regime (Tamari, 2011). In 1917, British occupying forces were welcomed by the overwhelming majority of the population. And yet this unanimity soon disappeared as British plans for Palestine became known. The British pledge to make Palestine into a "Jewish National Home" opened a rift between local Jews and the Muslim and Christian population – increasingly defining themselves in national terms, as Arab Palestinians. The very same civic spaces that were used during the late-Ottoman period for popular celebrations, became battle grounds between nascent ethno-national visions. In April 1920 the plaza in front of Jaffa Gate - formerly the cosmopolitan bustling centre of the mutli-ethnic Jerusalem - became the site of the first anti-Zionist violent riot in the history of modern Palestine (the "Easter riots"). This was only the beginning of a violent conflict that would continue throughout the twentieth century and beyond.

Work Spaces

The political developments during the British Mandate encouraged Arab Palestinians and Jews to see themselves in antagonistic terms, as competing ethno-national communities. The tendency towards residential segregation in Jerusalem intensified, with the construction of Jewish and Arab middle-class neighbourhoods in the new parts of the city. Frumkin himself was one of the founders of Rehavia, a Jewish-only bourgeois neighbourhood. His decision to move there from a mixed neighbourhood dominated by the Arab elite can certainly be read as a statement in favour of Jewish-Zionist separatism. However this reading would be too simplistic. Frumkin continued to come into daily contact with Arab circles, in his work in the courts. Through his professional role and social contacts, Frumkin remained committed to Jewish-Arab dialogue and integration, unlike most Zionist leading figures.

Discussions on segregation and integration in divided and polarised cities have largely treated issues of labour and trade as secondary when compared with residential patterns. Without a close analysis of the spaces of work and commercial encounter, one can easily fall into a trap of imagining these cities as sharply divided between zones of homogenous identity, with movement across the divide limited to a minimum. Such a picture can be very misleading. In British Mandate Palestine, the labour market and commerce were an arena of competition and cooperation. As social historian Deborah Bernstein has shown, political leaderships on both sides

attempted to restrict economic exchange between communities. The Zionist leadership championed Jewish labour and produce, while Arab leadership promoted a boycott of the Jewish sector (Bernstein, 2000). However, economic relations continued even in sites of very high segregation, such as the Hebrew city Tel Aviv (Bernstein, 2008). In Jerusalem, it seems, economic ties were stronger than in other cities. Arabs and Jews used the same commercial centre along Jaffa street. The Mandatory courts at the Russian Compound, in which Frumkin worked, provided one example of a shared workspace.

Frumkin became a judge in Jerusalem's county court in 1918. His appointment was secured through the intervention of the Zionist Leader Chaim Weizmann with the British authorities. Weizmann saw Frumkin as a natural candidate to be the Zionist representative in the court system. While Frumkin himself objected to being presented as "the Jewish judge", he was happy to receive a monthly salary from the Jewish Agency to complement his income from the courts (Brun, 2002). Within less than two years, Frumkin was promoted to the Supreme Court, where he subsequently served for 28 years to become the most senior judge. Frumkin was the only Jewish Judge in the Supreme Court, alongside several Arab Palestinians and British Judges. He was, effectively, the highest-ranking Jew in an official position in the Palestine Mandate.

The courts were located in the Russian Compound, the large enclosure of public buildings built by the Tsarist Empire in the 1850-1860s to accommodate Russian pilgrims to Jerusalem. The Compound was taken over by the Ottoman authorities during the war and used for military and administrative offices, and the British found the large modern buildings similarly useful. The compound was located northwest of the Old City, between the commercial Jaffa street and the prestigious street of European consulates, schools and hospitals (Prophets street). In residential terms the area was mixed between local Jews, Muslims and Christians, as well as European residents. The courts were the site of frequent encounters of Jews, Arabs and British officials. Translators, lawyers, litigants, prosecutors, witnesses, judges, police, journalists and visitors mingled on a daily basis. Frumkin describes his own encounters in the 1930s in the following words:

> I encounter Arabs every day. They are the majority of my "customers" in
> court, I come across them as friends … finding myself - sometimes
> inadvertently, in conversation with Arab men of all factions coming to visit my
> friends the Arab judges in the office, and listening to the conversations of

young Muslim and Christian clerks in the court, and students in the law school (Frumkin 1954:323).

The work of the courts demanded from Frumkin and his colleagues to maintain constant professional conversation on daily basis. The fact that Frumkin shared offices with Arab colleagues made him unique among prominent members of the Zionist elite. Few Zionist public figures came in direct daily contact with large numbers of Arab Palestinians, let alone worked together with them as peers. In some cases, ethno-national identity appeared to have played a role in legalistic differences and disagreement between himself and the Arab judges.[ii] And yet there is ample evidence of opposite examples, in which Frumkin and his colleagues collaborated closely. One such crucial case was the 1922 ruling by Frumkin and Justice Ali Jarrallah to deny US citizens an extra-territorial status. Jarrallah and Frumkin, ruling against the opinion of the British Judge, effectively terminated the Ottoman system of privileges (Capitulations) that allowed Western nationals impunity from the local legal system (Kassan, 1952:35-37). Frumkin was personally close to Jarrallah, and recalls with nostalgia their walks home from the courts, down Prophets street to Frumkin's house in the Musrara neighbourhood. The short walk lasted for long minutes as the two men stopped every few steps, engrossed in their discussions. "I used to call it "conversing our way home", rather than walking home", he writes (Frumkin 1954:241). Indeed, Frumkin's encounters did not end within the court premises, and developed into social relations and friendships. No doubt his earlier ties with the Arab elite, through his father's involvement in publishing and local Jewish affairs, were the basis of these close relations. Various social and official functions brought Frumkin into contact with prominent members in the Arab elite, and he entertained his Arab colleagues for dinners at his home. His house was a meeting point for Arabs and Zionist officials[iii], and he was the only Zionist figure to have direct personal contact with the Grand Mufti, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, who emerged in the late 1920s as the political leader of Arab Palestinians. Frumkin's daughter's wedding in the King David Hotel in 1935 was attended by a large number of distinguished Arab guests, including Ahmad Samih al-Khalidi, educator and head of the Arab College, Justice Mustafa al-Khalidi (Supreme Court, later Jerusalem mayor 1938-1944); the Mayor of Jerusalem Husayn Fakhri al-Khalidi ; and Musa al-Alami, Crown prosecutor and private secretary to the High Commissioner.

These professional and social encounters were formative for Frumkin's political outlook. He was close to Zionist political leadership, but was highly critical of

its dismissive attitudes towards "the Arab question". Frumkin repeatedly warned against the repercussions of neglecting Jewish-Arab relations. His criticism was reminiscent of similar warnings made by leading Sephardic figures such as Yoseph Chelouche (Chelouche, 2005) and Eliyahu Elayashar (Eliachar, 1980). In the early 1930s, against the background of growing tensions between Arabs and Zionists, Frumkin held a series of talks with Musa al-Alami, state prosecutor. Al-Alami, a Cambridge graduate and a member of the Arab aristocracy, was close to the leading Hussayni family, and an advisor to the High Commissioner. Frumkin held al-Alami in high regard, and was impressed by his professional and unbiased attitudes in the court. The two discussed a bi-national framework that could accommodate the national aspirations of Arabs and Jews. Significantly, their discussions included not only the issues of immigration and legislative institutions, but also emphasised cultural and economic integration, calling for language classes in Arabic and Hebrew, and opening up the labour markets of both sectors. These principles stood against official Zionist policies of cultural and economic isolation. In 1936, after the outbreak of the General Arab Strike, Frumkin embarked on a peace initiative enlisting to his cause four other leading Zionist figures from Jewish industry, agriculture and academia. In meetings with al-Alami, the "Committee of the Five" (as they later became known) developed a detailed work plan to stop the escalating conflict. This was probably the most serious attempt of its kind during the British Mandate. Loyal to the Zionist leadership, Frumkin informed the Jewish Agency Executive on the initiative, and allowed the negotiations to be taken over by Moshe Shertok (Sharet), head of the Political Department. However, the dominant Zionist labour party rejected the agreement, objecting strongly to restrictions on immigration and to the opening-up of labour markets. Shertok was left with no choice but to effectively terminate the negotiations (Herzog, 1995). Soon afterwards, Frumkin's confidant, Musa al-Alami, joined the preparations for an Arab armed revolt, and negotiated the supply of arms from Fascist Italy (Arielli, 2008). Frumkin himself remained loyal to the Zionist leadership, but decided to refrain from further political intervention, as he realized that his efforts did not reflect the wishes of the Jewish Agency. This extraordinary episode remains understudied today (for references see Hattis (1970), Heller (2003) and Sela (1972, 1973)).[iv] It seems that the initiative reflected Frumkin's horizon of political possibilities as seen by Jerusalem's local residents, Arabs and Jews. These possibilities were shaped by a history of close encounter between elite families as well as by the daily experience of encounter and dialogue.

The Supreme Court served as a common work environment of intellectual labour, where Arabs and Jews met each other as peers. While it was in many ways exceptional in British Mandate Palestine, the experience of a shared work and trade environment was certainly not exceptional, certainly in Jerusalem. Work and commerce served as prime reasons for bringing people together till the very end of the British Mandate. The new market for fruit and vegetables, *Mahne Yehuda,* located at the heart of Jewish neighbourhoods (Nahlaot, Romema, and Kerem Abraham) was co- owned by an Arab villager from Silwan, and depended almost entirely on produce from nearby Arab villages, sold by women villagers (Shrem, 2009). As documented in other Jerusalemite accounts and memoirs, Arab traders continued to come to the market until the end of November 1947, when the civil war broke (Michaeli, 2006). Despite attempts from the two national leaderships to minimise economic contact between the two sides, economic relations persisted and in Jerusalem they were probably stronger than in other places. While residential patterns were moving clearly in the direction of segregation, commerce and labour continued to bring Arab and Jews together and create sites of encounter throughout the city.

With the escalation of hostilities in 1946-1948, the Russian Compound area became a fortified zone, to which a special pass was required. Arab-Jewish tensions ran high even in the protected area of the courts, and some Jewish solicitors refused to attend hearings in fear of being attacked. Frumkin, who received death threats signed by an Arab militant group, travelled to the court directly by car and would have his driver waiting for him outside, in case of any eventuality. How different was this environment from the early 1920s walks of Frumkin and Judge Jarrallah down Prophets street, to their houses in the mixed neighbourhood of the Abyssinians and Musrara. Clearly the space for random interaction and chance encounters through movement in the city was narrowing down, leading to the partition of the city into two parts in 1948.

Conclusion: Urban Encounters, Urban Movement

How segregated was Jerusalem during the late-Ottoman and British Mandate period? This article approached this question through the eyes of one remarkable resident, Justice Gad Frumkin. His detailed accounts of the Ashkenazi community in al-Wad area challenges the dominant paradigm of the four confessional quarters. In contrary to the common image of Jerusalem as a "mosaic city", in which confessional

groups resided in segregated enclaves, it is clear that residential patterns of late-Ottoman Jerusalem involved high level of mixing, while the development of the new city led to greater segregation, especially during the late-Mandate period. Yet in this article I argued that in order to assess the dynamics of encounter in urban space, one has to move away from the focus on residential patterns and the territorial understanding of the city. I examined civic spaces and workplaces as sites of encounter which did not conform to a territorial parcelling of the city to "Arab" and "Jewish". Civic spaces such as the Municipal Gardens, emerging in the late nineteenth century, presented new places of interaction that were closely related to an inclusive Ottoman identity. These spaces allowed Jews and Christians to think of themselves as equal members of an Ottoman political community alongside the Muslim citizens. These abstract notions were embodied in events such as celebrations, concerts, and political demonstrations that took place in the late-Ottoman town centre. With the demise of the Ottoman empire and the establishment of the British Mandate, these civic spaces lost their common appeal, as the political horizons they represented no longer existed.

Spaces of commerce and work are also key to understand Arab-Jewish interaction. Frumkin's own work place, the Mandatory courts in the Russian Compound, provided one example of a shared work environment in which members of different groups met daily and cooperated. Frumkin's negotiations with Arab colleagues over a bi-national framework prove that sustained interaction can open up political possibilities. The courts were unusual in that they provided a shared arena for intellectual discussion, and yet work relations between Arabs and Jews were commonplace in Jerusalem, as we know from other accounts and places, such as the Mahne Yehuda fruit and vegetable market.

One issue to emerge through the article is the importance of movement to cross-ethnic encounters. Discussions of urban polarisation often neglect patterns of flow through the city. Urban movement is transitory and ephemeral, and yet it plays an important part in the daily reproduction of the urban experience. These movements inevitably bring together people from different groups, thus creating a far more complex picture than simple dichotomies. Movement through the city is rarely random, but is rather predicated on a set of conditions - from urban layout, to economic opportunities and political rights. Within this given framework, motion can nonetheless create new possibilities within space and society: it can open new routes, both literally and metaphorically.

Movement through the city play a key role in Frumkin's description of Jerusalem, and it was chance encounters that shaped his perception of the city and of himself. As his memoirs illustrate, it was impossible to walk through the Old City without encountering members of other ethnic groups, an illustration of how reductive it is to perceive the city as a flat and static mosaic. After moving to the Abyssinian street, outside the walls, repeated encounters with young Jewish students increased Frumkin's fascination with Zionism, while his daily walks through the modern city centre attracted him to the possibilities of the Ottoman system. Frumkin's walks with the Arab judge Jarrallah down Prophets' street are perhaps the best symbol of the everyday possibilities of ethnic diversity in work and residential areas, standing in sharp contrast to the segregated and fortified city of the late 1940s.

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Notes

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[i] This observation is based primarily on a survey of the two most important Hebrew newspapers in Jerusalem, the Frumkin's *Habatselet* (1870-1911) and Eliezer Ben Yehuda's Tsvi / ha-Or (1884-1915). Both newspapars are available electornically at http://www.jpress.org.il/view-hebrew.asp.

[ii] E.g. in 1942, Frumkin ruled against an appeal by the Ashkenazi community to recognise it as a separate religious community, asserting there is a single Jewish community in Palestine. His Arab colleague Justice Francis Khayyat, argued that Jews make up several separate congregations. Supreme court 42/109, 1942, in Kassan, S. (ed.) (1952) *Selected rulings by Gad Frumkin, Supreme Justice in Palestine 1920-1948,* Tel Aviv: Yehoshua Tsetsik.

[iii] See meeting between Chaim Arlozorov, head of the political department in the Jewish Agency, with Supreme Justices Khayyat, Khalidi and Jarrallah, 16 February 1932. Arlozorov, *Yoman Yerushalayim*, available <http://benyehuda.org/arlosoroff/jj_feb1932.html> February 2011.

[iv] The scholarship on bi-nationalist ideas in the Zionist Yishuv have largely focussed on the Brith Shalom, a group of European immigrant intellectuals with limited experience and knowledge of Palestine. Frumkin's initiative is mentioned in this context, although Frumkin was careful to distance himself from Brith Shalom in his autobiography.