

Chapter I

Zooming In

THE CITY AND ITS SURROUNDINGS

Historical research is always bound by time and space. This is the special context which the historian brings into his investigation of a culture or an event. Yet formal definitions of time and space can sometimes be misleading. The pace changes from one century to the next, and from one place to another. Likewise, the spatial borders that are believed by any human culture to surround it may change over time. These changes occur in the imagined space itself, and in the feared unknown beyond its borders.

Descriptions of the district (*sanjaq*; Turk. *sancak*) of Jerusalem in the seventeenth century may suggest the way in which this area was viewed by its inhabitants, by their rulers, and by travelers coming from abroad. It could serve as a basis for understanding local politics, culture and economy. The description starts at the district's borders, goes on to the villages and the city, and then on to the smaller neighborhoods and to the individual house itself.

THE DISTRICT OF JERUSALEM IN PILGRIMS' ACCOUNTS

The inhabitants of Jerusalem and its surroundings in the seventeenth century left few descriptions of their world. Local travel accounts, or chronicles written in the area by its Muslim inhabitants, are very rare. Most descriptions were written by Christian and Jewish travelers who visited the area in the course of the century. Apart from the distorting conventions of style and literary expectations in such accounts, many of the non-Muslim

visitors were also torn between conflicting emotions. Their writing was conditioned by religious awe and longing for the biblical past; by misconceptions about the Orient, gleaned from generations of proto-Orientalist literature and Crusader myths; and by wide-eyed astonishment at its present-day rulers and inhabitants, so different, so strange and menacing.¹

Historians trying to uncover the mysteries of this past era are very much like these travelers of old. They too weigh anchor in a distant port, carrying their own burden of memories and misconceptions, images of past glory, and notions of decline and corruption. They too find it hard to reconcile their images of gloom with depictions of reality that offer a different understanding. Following the travelers in their encounter with the new world that surrounds them may therefore introduce us to this faraway land, and guide us through our first hesitant steps. From these works of fiction that combine myth and reflections of reality, we may then proceed to another viewpoint, another reality—that of the local inhabitants.

At the beginning of the century an unknown English traveler described the Muslim inhabitants of Palestine as a barbarous crowd, fond of adultery, sodomy, rape and other beastly deeds. "There is no evil deed on this earth not performed by the inhabitants of this Terra Sancta or holy land, which hath the name and nothing else" he said.² Others, trapped in romantic biblical images, described a fertile land of milk and honey. One of them went as far as to describe the gigantic grapes he found in the "valley of Eshkol" south of Bethlehem, similar to those carried on a pole between two by Moses' spies.

Descriptions of both kinds abound in travelers' accounts. Some manage to combine both aspects, praising the countryside and its beauty, and denouncing its inhabitants at one and the same time. Many travelers copied descriptions from each other, perhaps in order to satisfy the readers' demand for accounts of holy sites which they have not been able to visit. Their descriptions are therefore not very reliable, and should be cross-checked. Still, several provide a more or less accurate description of areas they traveled through, and a close examination reveals consistent changes over time.

The first encounter with the Holy Land may have been the sight of a small port, where their journey at sea came to an end. After a perilous journey through a sea infested with pirates of almost every creed and nation, the ships arrived at Jaffa, Acre, Gaza or Haifa. The sight was grim and ominous. The coastal towns, destroyed by the Ayyubids and the Mamluks in the wake of the Crusades, in order to prevent another invasion and the reestablishment of a Crusader stronghold on the shore, were left in their ruin until the end of the seventeenth century. These were meager villages that could hardly supply the basic needs of traders and commerce.

Apart from Gaza, which had a small wharf, all provided nothing but natural anchorages, devoid of any docks or wave breakers. French merchants trading in wheat and cotton preferred the town of Ramle, some twenty kilometers inland, to the almost deserted port of Jaffa.⁴

Other travelers came by land, mainly from Egypt, in organized caravans transporting hundreds of people at the same time. At the slow pace of the caravan, it took some twenty days to travel from Cairo to Jerusalem. Many travelers complained about the delays along the way:

[It was a] 20 days journey, which upon hors we could have come in 12, but the camels slow march and the Jews sabbathes whereupon the caravan rested did lengthen it to 20 which is the ordinary tyme that the caravan requires for that journey.⁵

Their first impressions of Palestine were, however, quite different. Having crossed the arid deserts of Sinai and the Negev, they were overjoyed at the sight of the stretches of fields and vineyards that welcomed them as they approached Gaza and the coastal plain.⁶

The road coming from Damascus was shorter and safer, but strangers still preferred to travel in company, usually with an armed escort. Highway robbers were not uncommon even along this main route, linking the capital of the province of Damascus with one of its major cities.⁷

Western Palestine, or the southwestern part of the province of Damascus, was divided at the time into four main districts (*sanjaqs*): Gaza, Lajjun (the northern valleys), Nablus and Jerusalem. There were minor border changes in the course of the century, but as a rule this administrative and military division remained fairly stable from the Ottoman conquest until the eighteenth century. Travel and commerce between districts was unrestricted, and there was no visible demarcation of the borders. The district of Jerusalem, which the travelers now entered, extended from Ramallah in the north to Hebron in the south, and from Jaffa on the Mediterranean coast to Jericho and the Jordan valley to the east of the city.⁸

Two main roads crossed the district, one along the Judean-Samaritan mountain range, running north to south, and the other, connecting the coastal plain in the west to the Jordan river valley in the east. The two mountain roads intersected in Jerusalem. Travelers coming from Jaffa followed the road east, along the plains to Ramle, to the valley of Ayalon, and then usually up the narrow creek of Bab al-Wad to the city. Those coming from Damascus, Acre and Haifa chose in most cases to travel south, through the plain of Esdraelon (Marj bari 'Amr), Jenin and Nablus, and the mountains of Samaria. Those coming from Cairo would choose either the road going north to Jaffa and hence east to Jerusalem, or the one leading northeast from Bayt Jibrin to Hebron, Bethlehem and finally Jerusalem.

Carried away by their biblical imagination, they were enchanted by the land's beauty and its natural fertility. At this period there were still vast areas of natural forest and grasslands. Roger, a Frenchman who visited Palestine in the 1630s, describes the many kinds of wildlife: lions, buffaloes, camels, leopards, boars, jackals and hyenas. A change in emphasis is apparent at the beginning of the eighteenth century, in the accounts of English travelers like Sandys and Maundrel. They describe an interim state where some areas are still intensively cultivated and abound in pasture, while others are depopulated and poor, overgrown or covered by marshes.⁹

In our century, however, travelers were still impressed by what they saw as their mules carried them inland. Those coming from Jaffa described the fields of cotton and vegetables, and noticed a change in the pattern of cultivation as olive trees and other fruit-bearing trees gradually dominated the landscape when they moved into the hills:

The conuntry ajacent [to Ramle] abounds in cotton which can be spun in very fine yarn they sell at 14 pence a pound. [. . .] We marched east and by south 6 myles through a vally pleasent and fertill [. . .Then] we marched SE [southeast] through a hilly country yet fruitful in cornes e ayle e more populus then the plaines of Gaffa¹⁰

Those coming from the north and south had the same impressions. John Sanderson, following the northern route at the beginning of the century, remarked that the meaning of the name Jenin in Arabic is paradise, and indeed "so pleasant is this place and ciation that well may it be cauled paradice."¹¹ Those coming from Hebron in the south were impressed by vineyards, fruit orchards and vegetables grown in the valleys and plains.¹²

Disappointment and fear replaced elation as they entered the more mountainous regions and climbed the steep valleys and hills. The wide and comfortable roads of the plains gave way to narrow and rocky paths. The northern road seemed more comfortable at first, but as it approached Jerusalem the surface became so uneven that even mules and asses found it hard to traverse.¹³ Those coming from Jaffa and Ramle encountered an even more arduous journey. "We arrived at a very narrow valley, strewn with boulders and pebbles" writes Jean Doubdan. "These are the bad roads that will carry us almost as far as Jerusalem." This road was particularly difficult for the cumbersome caravans coming from Egypt, as one traveler remarks: "[The way was] very unsafe both for us and the camels which doe not agree to march upon hard stony and uneven ground."¹⁴

Many travelers felt they were entering a dangerous, wild forest. Some had visions of terrible beasts and wild half-naked barbarians. The tension and mystery they felt on the way, (doubtless embellished and exaggerated for the sake of their readers), heightened their expectations as they approached the holy city.¹⁵

As night descended, they looked for a safe shelter to sleep in. Along the roads there were several hostels, usually called *khān* by the locals, or *kale* (citadel) by the Ottoman government. Some were ancient, dating back to Crusader or Mamluk times, others were built or restored by the Ottomans with two purposes in mind. They were both fortresses manned by a small garrison, intended to secure the main routes, and inns for travelers, merchants and pilgrims. In the eyes of Western guests they were very uncomfortable, nothing more than a square court surrounded by stone walls. Travelers were not given rooms or food, and had to settle for the relative security afforded by the walls and the soldiers.¹⁶

From time to time along the road, the travelers had to set up camp in one of the villages. In larger ones they could sometimes find an Ottoman official or a Christian monastery that would take them in, but in most cases they relied, grudgingly at first, on the hospitality of villagers. D'Arvieux, a French nobleman who served the local governing family of Turabay in the district of Lajjun for several years, describes the system of village hospitality. In every village, he writes, there is one sheikh who is appointed by the governors as headman. This sheikh is ordered to erect a guesthouse, called a *manzil*. It is usually situated near the sheikh's house, and has two levels. Visitors are supposed to store their belongings and sleep on the higher level, and to tie up their mounts on the lower level. No charge is required for the lavish hospitality. In return these village headmen are exempted from certain taxes.¹⁷

As they would leave the village and return to the road, the travelers would once again be seized by fear and tension, no doubt fueled by the frequent appearance of armed horsemen demanding a sum of money as toll (*ghafār*, or "caphare.") Described in almost every traveler's account, often gesturing with their guns or spears, they had the appearance of desperate highway robbers. Descriptions of Palestine throughout the Ottoman period abound in stories about such adventures in which, miraculously, no one gets hurt. *Sijill* records, however, suggest a different explanation. An event recorded in 1680 may serve to elucidate this frequent misunderstanding:

When visitors to the graves of the holy prophets, and to [the grave of] our lord *al-Kalīm*, may he rest in peace¹⁸ ended their pilgrimage and intended to return to their homes, news had reached them that a quarrel broke out between the villagers of Bayt Ikṣa, and those of Bayt Liqya, both attached to the *waqf* of the *Khāsikiyya*.¹⁹ The apparent reason for the quarrel was the allocation of *ghafār* payments. [The pilgrims were afraid that] if they returned [while this dispute was going on] they would be attacked by brigands. They [decided] that they cannot leave Jerusalem unless it was settled, since the road in

question is favored by highwaymen and other menaces (*arbāb al-makhfāt wa-l-takhwīf*.)

They asked the qadi, therefore, to summon both sides and solve this problem. First the qadi summoned a representative of the Khāshikiyya *waqf*, and the supervisor (*mutawalli*) himself arrived. As the qadi instructed him, he brought to court the headmen (*al-mashāyikh wa-l-mutakallimīn*) of both villages. To the qadi's questions they replied that in the past both villages guarded the road, and divided the tolls equally among those accustomed to receive them. The dispute arose when a certain person from Bayt Liqya decided that he should take all gains and was not prepared to share them with others in his own village, or with the villagers of Bayt Iksa.

Having heard the evidence, the qadi instructed both sides to return to the old arrangement, and to protect travelers from robbers along the stretch of road passing through their villages. If anyone traveling on this road is robbed or harmed in any way, the qadi warned, he would hold them responsible, and order those in charge of the village to punish them.²⁰ In view of this decision both sides declared a truce, and decided to divide the *ghafār* money equally between the two villages. If anyone travelling on that road will lose anything, they promised, they will either return it or reimburse him.²¹

Integrating villagers and bedouins into the road defence system in return for a fee they had the right to collect from travelers on the road was apparently an official Ottoman (or at least local) government policy. Sometimes these villagers demanded more than they were allowed to, and from time to time real robbers masqueraded as road guards, but in most cases *ghafār* was legal payment for services rendered, and even imposed as a duty by the authorities. But seeing the unruly villagers, their authoritative manner, and the lack of any direct communication, gave rise to a myth of insecurity, violence and robbery on the way to Jerusalem, repeated endlessly in travelers' accounts.

A bit shaken, but usually safe and sound, the travelers could finally see Jerusalem from the hilltops surrounding it. They were struck by its stone walls, and by the many domes, turrets and minarets. Excited and relieved they knelt and prayed, and then hurried down to the city's imposing gates.

PHYSICAL WALLS, MENTAL WALLS

Any attempt to describe the city itself presents some of the questions debated for many years under the general heading of "the Islamic city"—

questions related to the specific character of Islamic cities as opposed to non-Islamic ones. A possible starting point for this debate is Max Weber's book, *The City*, where he sets the "Western city" in opposition to other types of cities. In Western and central Europe, he writes, cities emerged as a result of political and economic forces. The outcome was the creation of a social structure—the urban community—which is unique to the West, and almost unknown in other cultures. Among the conditions leading to the creation of an urban community were a predominance of trade and commercial relations, the existence of a citadel or ramparts, a marketplace, courts of law possessing a degree of autonomous jurisdiction, and at least partial political autonomy.²²

In the Orient many of these conditions existed, says Weber, but in most cases cities had no administrative autonomy and lacked the ability to form urban associations: "The city as corporate *per se* was unknown."²³ This fact finds expression in the physical layouts of Oriental cities. Communal associations in the Islamic world were always on a narrower basis—guilds or neighborhoods. Control was always in the hands of a monarch, through ministers or slaves, and never transferred to notables or elders in the city. Even in the modern era, when the Ottoman Empire reformed the municipal administration of Mecca, it created some sort of balance between several authorities, but not a corporate unity of the city itself. In the urban centers of the Orient, he concludes, the urban community never existed as a framework.

From a relatively early stage, observers of Islamic cultures focused on three issues suggested by Weber's formulation. One questioned the existence of a municipal authority in the city. Another applied itself to corporate action, or to questions pertaining to the emergence of an urban community in Muslim cities. A third examined the layout of the city itself, and the way it reflects the social realities of the city. Most observers did not distinguish between the three issues in their research. Von Grünebaum, for instance, following the French historian Marçais, concludes that Islamic cities had no municipal authority to guide them, and that this was reflected in their appearance as a haphazard collection of ethnic or religious neighborhoods. Since no frameworks existed for corporate action on the municipal scale, this helter-skelter city design is typical of the Islamic world.²⁴

This attitude finds full expression in the writings of Ira Lapidus on Muslim cities in the late Middle Ages. Looking at Cairo, Damascus and Aleppo in the Mamluk period, Lapidus draws the conclusion that in these cities guilds and Sufi brotherhoods were loosely knit organizations that did not provide a basis for communal cooperation. Other types of organization, on a larger scale, were practically nonexistent. In his opinion, any

kind of corporate feeling must have centered around the ulema ('*ulama*'), and since the religion regarded politics as part of its responsibilities, the ulema considered day-too-day administration in the city part of their duties. The ulema were the only cohesive element inside the city, and conducted its affairs through various networks of patronage and clientship. According to Lapidus the most efficient networks were those that united people according to their adherence to any one of four Islamic schools of jurisprudence (*madhhabs*.) If any sort of organization can be found in these cities, it is therefore bound to be along the lines of these networks.²⁵

In a later article Lapidus reaffirms his views on the Muslim city, and defines it as a geographic location of social groups whose members and activities were either greater or smaller in scope than the pale of the city itself. Cities were physical entities, but not social bodies unified by typical Islamic qualities.²⁶

In a recent article, Janet Abu-Lughod criticized this attitude. In books on the Islamic city, she writes, one can find chains of transmission, like the ancient *isnāds* attesting to the authenticity of hadith statements. Most research works on Islamic cities were based on a study of one case, or very few cases, in the same region. Usually it does not examine the whole range of cities in the Islamic cultural sphere. Many of these works, like those of von Grünebaum and Marçais, draw on a distinct corpus of research—a North-African paradigm that dates back to the period of French colonial rule of the Magreb. Another "chain of transmission" which includes, among others, the works of Lapidus, focuses on the cities of Egypt and the Fertile Crescent. These two distorted views of the Islamic city have created false images, and described situations particular to one area as total truths pertaining to the totality of Islamic culture.²⁷

According to Abu-Lughod, the first doubts concerning these examples were raised in a study by Hourani and Stern which undertook to examine the concept of Islamic cities. In this work, which serves as a basis for her own conclusions, Hourani and Stern pointed out the specificity of these earlier examples, and mentioned several other Islamic cities that do not fit the structures suggested by former researchers. Another critique of this reigning paradigm appears in an essay by the anthropologist Dale Eickelman, suggesting that instead of a sole Islamic model, there should be several different ones.²⁸

Abu Lughod's own work focuses on the physical structure of the city. Cities and quarters in which Muslims reside are easy to identify even in faraway countries and in cultures that differ greatly from each other, she claims. This should lead to the conclusion that Islam *does* have certain common features, different from those that characterize other cultures. A city's structure is influenced by its topography, the building materials

used, means of transportation, social organization and municipal legal codes. Since topography, means of transportation and building materials are different in every location, the domains relevant to an investigation of specifically Islamic influences are social organization, and relevant Islamic legal systems.²⁹

Three dominant traits of Islamic cities stand out in these domains: separation of religious communities, gender-oriented prohibitions, and the legal system bearing on property. All Islamic cities therefore display a space laden with semiotic meaning. The city's streets and houses are warning signs and instructions, advising the stranger on the proper way to act.³⁰

Cultural conditions separating between Muslims and other "people of the Book" (mostly Christians and Jews, but later also Hindus, Buddhists, etc.) did not evolve as a direct result of Islamic teachings, but rather as an outcome of long periods of war and strife. It may therefore be categorized as an historical, not an "Islamic," cultural phenomenon. Still, it is typical of almost all Islamic cities. The second trait—gender prohibitions—is indeed uniquely Islamic in its extent. Islam lays down strict rules of separation that minimize the possibility of invading women's privacy even by sight, not just by physical or verbal contact. The structure of the house, the location and shape of doors and windows, the distance between houses, all these stem to a certain extent from the laws and norms of separation.

The third trait—Islamic property laws—defines the priorities and rights in urban planning. In the Islamic legal system, the owner himself has first priority in designating urban space. His neighbors also have certain rights, mainly concerning their own privacy, while the authorities have almost no rights at all. When, at times, this distinct set of property laws was enforced by a weak government, or a negligent administrative system, the obvious result was some disorder: concealed approaches leading to the house became more important than the main road itself, and the resulting chaos blurred what remained of the original plan.

Abu Lughod concludes that the debate should be focused not on the typical structure of "the Islamic city" but rather on the specific Islamic framework in which such cities were established and governed, and which contributed to their special character. Islamic cities vary a great deal, as regards their structure, and the relationship between various functions within them, but the shared historical and cultural heritage did create a measure of resemblance, which unites all Islamic urban settlements.

Suraya Faroqi adds another dimension to the debate. The importance attributed to religion in defining the structure of the city is exaggerated, she claims. It certainly has a role in defining the shape and structure of

buildings and cities, but ascribing so much importance to religion implies that there are no real changes over time in moral and social normative systems. Such an assumption renders all social history meaningless. There is no doubt that significant changes have occurred in relation to morality and society throughout Islamic history. These changes were reflected in the structure and administration of cities, and even of single houses. Modern research should examine these changes, and lay aside the discussion of perennial aspects of religion and culture.³¹

In order to put these contrasting views in focus, let us now turn to a description of Jerusalem as one example of an Islamic city. It is true that the city itself was not founded in the Islamic era. Its general layout was determined many years before it was conquered by Islam. During the long period of Islamic rule Jews and Christians were a significant part of the population, and influenced the city's form and its functions. The centers of meaning and gravity inside the city were dictated to a certain extent by its topography. Still, Jerusalem was (and is) a holy Islamic city, and many of its inhabitants were Muslim ulema and clerics committed to upholding the tenets of Islamic religion and culture. In light of the data gathered about the city, we can begin to address the questions posed by modern research concerning the Islamic city—did its physical structure reflect its Islamic character? Was it an “urban community” as defined by Weber, or just a conglomerate of streets and houses, a geographical accident that did not correspond to any social body, as Lapidus describes it? Did the Ottoman government maintain some sort of a municipal administrative system, or was the city run by its inhabitants according to patronage lines? Following the city's description, we may resume the thread of the debate and try to answer some of these questions.

Rebuilt by Kanuni Sultan Süleyman (the Magnificent) in the mid-sixteenth century, the walls around the city of Jerusalem still stood high and imposing a century later. From descriptions made by travelers and from local documents, it appears that the wall was still seen as an efficient means of defending the city and its inhabitants. One traveler, later thrown into jail on suspicion of being a spy, describes the fortifications around the city:

Upon the south side of Jerusalem there is a great iron gate whereon are planted seventeen pieces of Brass Cannon and is as large as the West gate of the Tower of London, the walls being very thick and fifty eight or sixty foot high. The North wall is not so strong and hath been often surprised but the South nearer on the East is impregnable, the bow of the hill on which the wall standeth being five times higher than it; on the North wall are 25 pieces of brass

cannon near the gate which is also of iron; the East gate, a little without which St. Stephen was stoned, is to this day called by his name; there are five pieces of Cannon planted between the ruins of Port Aurea, or the Golden Gate, and the West Gate through which I first entred and where I saw fifteen pieces of Cannon more to secure it, which are iron as the rest. To conclude, Jerusalem is the strongest City that I saw in all my travels from Grand Cairo hither.³²

The big gates were locked and bolted at sunset, and gate-keepers were placed at every entrance to make sure no one entered without inspection. Even during daytime entrance to the city was controlled. Christian and Jewish pilgrims were not allowed to enter by themselves. They had to unbuckle their swords and hold them in their hands, and to await formal escort. Sometimes they were received and escorted by the city's police officer, the *sūbāshi*.³³ In other cases the heads of their congregations were allowed to welcome the guests and accompany them on their way into the city. Visitors belonging to sects who had no representation in the city sometimes identified themselves as members of other sects and requested their protection. The defence expert mentioned above, a ship's captain by trade, was thrown in jail when, too proud to pretend, declared he was an Englishman, "for the Turks absolutely denied that they had ever heard either of my prince or my country, or that they paid any tribute."³⁴

Unknown Muslims also had to go through some identification process before they were allowed to enter. *Dhimīs* (non-Muslims living in Islamic lands) and *ḥarbīs* (non-Muslims from non-Muslim lands) had to pay entrance fees. Complaints were sometimes sent to the Sublime Porte in Istanbul, requesting a diminution of the fee.³⁵

Both the Ottoman central government and the local administration saw the maintenance and defence of the wall as an important task. At the beginning of the century several firmans (Imperial decrees) were sent to the local governor, instructing him to rebuild parts of the wall. In the city itself the qadi made sure the wall was maintained as the city's main defence. It seems that the inhabitants themselves appreciated the importance of the wall and the measure of security it afforded:

On the 20th of Rabi' al-awwal 1033 (24 Jan. 1624) several people, including the governor Muḥammad Pasha, the *mufti* (jurisconsult) Zakariyya *efendi*, the *khatīb* (preacher) in al-Aqsa, the *mi'mār bāshi* (chief architect) in the city,³⁶ and many others, came to court, and reported to the qadi that several Christians in the city built their houses contiguous to the wall. They claimed that these structures may undermine the city's security. Having checked the implications, the qadi instructed all inhabitants of the city to build their houses

at a distance of four *dhirā'* (yards³⁷) from the wall. Houses touching the wall will be destroyed, he warned, and their owners will be flogged seventy times.³⁸

A month later, however, several people returned to court, among them *sheikh al-sūq* (head of the market) and several soldiers in the local citadel. They reported that Gregor, the Armenian archbishop (*muṭrān*), was among the people whose houses were adjacent to the wall, and as a result of the former decree part of his house was destroyed. Since then, they said, thieves and bandits have picked the narrow passage near archbishop Gregor's house as their favorite spot. They lurk there day and night, and attack innocent passers-by. The qadi therefore issued another decree, permitting the Armenian dignitary to rebuild his house at that spot. There may have been other reasons for the new decision. Perhaps it was bought with Armenian money. But the exception demonstrates only that as a rule these new regulations were enforced, houses were demolished, and the testimony of Muslim witnesses was a necessary prerequisite to changing the former decision.³⁹

What was it that motivated the Ottoman government, the city's local rulers, and the rest of the population, to be so adamant about the wall? Why did they invest so much time and money to maintain and rebuild it? One possible answer is the fear of bedouin attacks on the city. The Ottoman government saw Jerusalem as a city on the desert's edge, in need of protection from nomadic assaults. But such assaults did not occur in seventeenth-century Jerusalem, and local authorities were usually on good terms with the bedouins. Another possible motivation, and one that seems closer to the truth, is the fear of a resurgence of the Crusades, or of a pre-meditated Christian attack on the city.

A major cause for concern in the eyes of the Ottoman government at the beginning of the century was the aspiring young Lebanese amīr, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Ma'nī (the Second). A letter sent by Pindar, the English ambassador in Istanbul, in 1614 echoes this Ottoman concern. At that time Ottoman agents reported that the rebellious amīr, who found shelter in the court of Tuscany in Italy, prepares to gather a fleet and return to the Lebanon, where he will recruit an army, and set out to conquer Palestine and Jerusalem. Such apprehensions were augmented by news of the establishment of a new religious-military order in Tuscany, specifically intended to lead the new crusade. The Ottoman fleet, writes ambassador Pindar, is deployed along the Lebanese coastline to prevent a landing, but if such a landing were to take place in spite of these efforts, instructions were sent to the pasha of Damascus. He is to go to Jerusalem and expel

all monks and priests residing there, apparently to prevent their acting as a fifth column to help the rebel's forces when they reach the city:

They are in great jealousie of some intendment by the Christians to assist the Emir of Sydon and therefore they have well guarded those seacosts to prevent his landing, and the cheife employment of the Captan Bassaw (the Ottoman admiral) is to withstand anie sea forces may be sent with him, which is causing of his going out two monthes sooner then was accustomed. And in the meane time for fear of anie practice by the Christian princes about the Hollie land (as this conceipt is rayseed because of the Emir of Sydon, if he weare established againe in his country) the Bassa (governor) of Damascus hath order to goe to Jerusalem and to turn out all the friars and Christians, and to prohibitt all secoors hether of pilgrims or other.⁴⁰

Threats posed by the recalcitrant Lebanese amīr continued to bother the Ottoman government in Istanbul, Damascus and Jerusalem for several decades. In 1623 Fakhr al-Din did in fact invade the Palestinian coastal plain, and was stopped only by a coalition of local forces on the banks of the Yarkon ('Ujja) river, not far from Jaffa. Even in the thirties, until his defeat, and finally his execution in 1635, the amīr and his armies posed a threat to the Ottoman center. The authorities and the local population in Jerusalem, as in many other parts of the empire, were united by fear of a renewed crusade led by the amīr, aimed at the reestablishment of Christendom in Jerusalem.

Local rulers—the governors of Jerusalem—were aware of this clear and present danger. The tribulations suffered by a French consul who arrived in the city in 1623 attest to this pervasive fear and suspicion. Jean Lempereur had obtained his nomination as consul in Jerusalem after a protracted series of negotiations by the French ambassador to the Porte. Bearing a royal Ottoman decree he proceeded to the city with an impressive entourage, and finally presented his credentials to a haughty and reserved local qadi. He was allowed to reside in the Christian neighborhood, provided he would pay at some later date a sum of money promised in the decree.⁴¹

Before long the new consul found himself at odds with the governor and the qadi. Lempereur thought the reason was the governor's greed and his own insistence on the rights of French merchants in Ramle. But in a letter he sent to the king of France on the 20th of November 1624 he claimed that the governor undermines his position, alleging that he is cooperating with the amīr Fakhr al-Dīn, and that he intends to deliver the city of Jerusalem into his hands. The governor, writes Lempereur, managed to convince his superiors in the provincial capital. They in turn

sent a contingent of twenty horsemen to detain the consul and fetch him to Damascus, where he was made to pay a large ransom. It seems, then, that this new crusade created real, tangible fears, that could be manipulated by the local governor. It may also have been, of course, the real reason for the consul's deportation, and there might have been an element of truth in the allegations.⁴²

Fear of a renewed crusade was pervasive in the Muslim community of Jerusalem throughout the century. Doubdan, who visited the city many years later, describes a riot sparked by restoration work in the convent of the Holy Saviour (St. Sauveur) in 1652. In the course of repairs local Muslim construction workers began to excavate under the convent. Several ancient rooms were discovered, and soon rumors began to circulate. The inhabitants of the city, already suspicious of the monks who "were building a castle in order to destroy the city, and by this means would soon become our masters" told stories of a long tunnel being dug by the Christians. Through these tunnels, the rumor persisted, Christian armies will invade the city. Some said these tunnels led to Jaffa, and others thought they may lead to Malta, to the fortress of the knights of St. John, their formidable enemies.⁴³

Alongside the physical walls of the city, then, another set of walls was erected—mental walls that blocked out other cultures, other ideas. The Muslim population of Jerusalem saw in every Christian action a hidden meaning, in every Western idea a Trojan horse carrying the avant-garde of a new crusade. The Christian population of Jerusalem was suspected of being a potential fifth column, waiting for an opportunity to betray the city. These suspicions competed with the traditional Muslim attitude of tolerance towards the "people of the Book", set higher sectarian walls, and hampered interconfessional relations. Each community led its own life, integrating with all others in trade and the labor market, but shunning intellectual contact.⁴⁴

Events that left a deep impression on one community—the miracles and wonders of the Sufi sheikh Muḥammad al-'Alami, the mystic Lurian Kabbala developed in the Jewish communities of Safad and Jerusalem, the rise and fall of the false messiah Shabbetai Zevi, the original reform ideas of Cyril Lukaris debated by the Greek-Orthodox church in Jerusalem—echoes of all these hardly penetrated the walls of suspicion, and failed to leave a lasting impression on the culture and life of neighboring communities. In this state of affairs the physical separation of these communities was accentuated, and each community preferred to enclose itself in its own perimeter.

THE CITY AND ITS INTERNAL DIVISION

The territory demarcated by the walls in the seventeenth century is almost identical to the area of today's walled city of Jerusalem. Only minor changes in the gates and walls were carried out since the restoration of the walls by Sultan Süleyman, apparently as part of his millenarian campaign.⁴⁵ The city's population was relatively small. On the basis of demographic data from the previous century, it can be assumed that the population did not exceed ten thousand inhabitants throughout the century. Maps drawn by travelers and pilgrims, though inaccurate, convey a sense of large open spaces, and no density of population anywhere in the city.

In a research based on sixteenth century Ottoman tax surveys,⁴⁶ Amnon Cohen and Bernard Lewis have found that whereas in the Mamluk period the city's quarters had some homogeneous character based on ethnic communities or social distinctions, this state of affairs gave way to a much more heterogeneous mix, both socially and ethnically, at the beginning of the Ottoman period. They attribute this mainly to the influx of immigrants from other parts of the empire. This situation began to change a century or so after the conquest. Quarter perimeters were still not clearly defined, the area was not yet divided into the four distinct quarters characteristic of today's walled city, but some sort of division along ethnic and religious, as well as social lines, did emerge.⁴⁷

Confessional neighborhoods evolved around the religious centers of meaning in the city. The Muslim population gathered around the Haram (Temple mount), mainly in the northeastern areas. The Christians tended to buy and build their houses around the Holy Sepulcher convent, and when the Franciscan convent moved from Mount Zion to this area in the mid-sixteenth century, another center of meaning drew Christians together. Armenian Christians preferred the vicinity of their own convent in the southwestern part of the city. The Jews found themselves, whether by default or because they chose to reside near the Wailing wall, in the southern neighborhoods: al-Sharaf, al-Maslakh and al-Risha.

This division, though recognized by all inhabitants, was not strictly adhered to, or imposed. Muslims resided (or at least bought and rented houses) in all quarters. The *sijill* contains numerous sales deeds in which Jews and Muslims, including some wealthy notables of the local elite, buy houses in Jewish neighborhoods, either from Jews or from other Muslims. No limitation was imposed on Christians or Jews wishing to buy houses in Muslim neighborhoods, but most preferred the safety of their own communities. As a result of growing tensions, the process of sectarian separation was apparently in one of its active stages.⁴⁸

As in the city of Aleppo a century later, people had close ties with their neighbors, cooperating in law suits against “immoral” residents of the quarter or corrupt officials, but in contrast to the seemingly structured Aleppine quarter, in Jerusalem this communal action did not correspond to any administrative unit. It appeared to be a spontaneous reaction to circumstances, shared between several neighbors, who decided to take action on their own initiative.⁴⁹

It is harder to determine whether neighborhoods reflected social or economic differences. Did all members of the elite prefer to reside in the same areas? Were some areas considered more aristocratic than others? At first sight the *sijill* seems to suggest that people of every economic and social background, including villagers, bought houses everywhere, but in this respect evidence in the *sijill* might be misleading. Buying a house, or part of one, was sometimes a mere investment, motivated by economic considerations, and did not always reflect people’s preferences in choosing their home. Local notables saw immovables as a relatively safe investment, and bought houses and courtyards in quantity. The *shari’a*’s partnership laws also made it possible for people to invest in tiny fragments of such property. Townspeople, as well as villagers and even total strangers, could, for example, buy one *qirat*—one part in twenty-four—of a luxurious, well-situated house, which would then be rented out, providing a steady income. These purchases reflected neither the buyer’s status, nor his choice of residence.

Still, there are indications of alignment along economic and social lines, at least in the Muslim community. This can be gleaned both from the recorded inheritance of deceased inhabitants of the city, and from large auctions of property, usually offered for sale by wives and daughters who inherited houses and wished to sell them. In some cases it is clear from lists of furniture and personal belongings attached to the record, that the house being sold was indeed the main residence of the family. This can also supply further evidence about its economic and social status.

The considerable diversity of such records implies that neighborhoods in themselves in fact had no homogeneity, and that their borders did not define social or economic strata. Rich and poor, high and low, lived in the same areas. On the other hand, they indicate some sort of socio-economic differentiation within certain neighborhoods, in relation to the area’s proximity to centers of meaning. Wealthier people tended to live closer to their sacred shrines. In predominantly Muslim areas, a house closer to the Haram was apparently preferred. The farther away from the Haram, the less attractive, and probably the less wealthy the neighborhood.

Rich and influential notables bought houses near the gates leading to al-Aqsa and to the Dome of the Rock. Others resided in houses looking into the Haram. Thus, the wealthy 'Asali family bought a house "straddling the Gate of the Chain" (Bāb al-Silsila) close to the Kaitbay madrasa. Another notable endowed as *waqf* a house in the same area which was formerly the private residence of Musa Pasha ibn Ridwan, a governor of Gaza and Jerusalem. Many notables lived in Bab Hutta, close to the northern gates of the Haram, while others chose the eastern parts of Bab al-'Amud, along the alleys leading to the mosques.⁵⁰

URBAN CONTROL AND THE PUBLIC DOMAIN

City life flowed around several religious and administrative centers. Separate sectarian cohesion was maintained and reproduced in religious institutions—mosques, Sufi lodges, churches, convents and synagogues. These were not just places of worship and prayer. In many cases they hosted a whole spectrum of community life. In a short treatise written by Abu al-Fath al-Dajjāni, a seventeenth-century scholar, about the deplorable state of al-Aqsa and other mosques, the purist Sunni author describes the ḥaram as a place of worldly pursuits and enjoyment, condemning women's gossip, petition writing, singing and dancing, selling and buying. The ḥaram has even become a playground for little children and a meadow for grazing sheep, he complains.⁵¹ The same was true, to a smaller extent, in regard to the Holy Sepulcher, and to other convents and synagogues, where Jewish or Christian congregations met to discuss religious, as well as worldly matters, and to celebrate holidays, holy days and festivals.

The "secular" life of the city revolved around a different set of institutions.⁵² These institutions, though representing Muslim rule and superiority, tended to be more tolerant towards other religions, and allowed a greater deal of social and economic interaction between the communities. First and foremost among them was the *sharī'a* court (*majlis al-sharī' al-sharīf*, literally: "the council of the noble law"). This establishment, at the entrance to the Ḥaram, near the gate of the chain (Bāb al-Silsila) contained the qadī's court. The range of its activities and responsibilities, however, transcended that of any Western equivalent. In fact the district qadī was also acting mayor in charge of municipal planning, maintenance, social welfare and hygiene; chief notary; police commissioner; and part-time purser for the Ottoman government. A description by the Ottoman traveler Evliya Çelebi, may reflect some of the *sharī'a* court's responsibilities:

Twenty *ağas*⁵³ serve by Imperial decree under the molla⁵⁴ of Jerusalem.⁵⁴
The first is the *muhzir başı* who was appointed by the Sultan in an

official ceremony. He is in charge of keeping the gates at night, and is aided in his duties by Imperial forces. The second *ağa* is the *su nazırı*, (supervisor of water supply). The third *ağa* is the *mimar başı*, in charge of construction and repairs. The fourth is the *mühendisbaşı* (chief engineer). The fifth is the *mu'temedbaşı* (chief purser). The sixth is the *sarrafbası*, head of the money changers, who pays the ulema their yearly Sultanic grant. The seventh *ağa* is the *veznedarbaşı* (treasurer). The eighth is the *subası* (in charge of public order). The ninth is the *bazarbaşı* (market supervisor). The tenth is the *şehir Kethüdası* (city deputy) and the eleventh is the *bezazıstan kethüdası* (deputy in charge of the inner market). Finally, every day all heads of merchant guilds (*esnafın şeyhleri*) present themselves at the council to perform their duties.⁵⁵

It is well known that Evliya's writing tends to exaggerate and embellish, and cannot be considered an accurate description. Furthermore, few of the officers he mentioned appear in any capacity in the period's *sijills*, but as an overview of the *shari'a* court, Evliya's description is not totally inaccurate. *Sijill* records describe the court's involvement in almost all spheres of activity mentioned: the qadi used to send his chief architect to examine requests for building, restoration and demolition, and granted authorizations on the basis of his reports. The city's economic activity was coordinated by his court with the head of the market (*shaykh al-sūq*), the market supervisor (*muhtasib*),⁵⁶ the scales supervisor (*kayyāl bāshī*) and the head of the merchants (*shaykh al-tujjār*), who represented all merchants and artisans. Special teams of investigation, made up of the local police officer (*subāshī*), the court summons officer (*muḥḍir bāshī*) and court scribes, were sent to investigate crimes and filed reports. The court served as purser and treasurer for the government in some matters of tax collection, and in payments made by the central government to officials and notables in the city.⁵⁷

Other affairs were conducted in the court building itself. Court cases ranged from theft and murder, to requests for welfare charity and child custody. Contracts and sales deeds were signed in the presence of the qadi and his aides, Marriage agreements were recorded, and divorce cases settled. Representatives of the population came to court to protest against corruption and misrule, and local governors chose the same establishment to convene notables and plebs. Villagers came there to pay their taxes, and *dhimmi*s (Christians and Jews) followed suit to pay the poll tax (*jizya*) imposed on them.⁵⁸

It is evident, therefore, that defining *majlis al-shar' al-sharif* as a mere court of law, does not take into account the immense range of public and

municipal activities conducted there in the Ottoman period (at least until the mid-nineteenth century). Although this institution will be referred to as the “*shari‘a* court,” it must be borne in mind that this was the city’s main social establishment, and that it wielded considerable political influence within and beyond the city’s walls.

Another institution of central economic and social importance was the market or bazaar. The marketplace in Jerusalem, as in most other Ottoman cities, was a well-organized, ordered exchange, supervised by the authorities. The market directed and defined the economic life of Christians, Muslims and Jews, who were sometimes members of joint commercial or artisanal unions. Slaves and servants traded there alongside members of local and governing elites. Janissary soldiers shared their meals with humble artisans. The market was a source for contagious rumors and a testing ground for economic policies.

The marketplace was therefore a stage set for confrontations of different social groups, where brawls and riots broke out. It was also the means for many to cross the social divide and move upwards. Making money through trade or manufacture was almost a prerequisite for social mobility. The market provided shelter for runaway slaves, unemployed soldiers, or villagers escaping exploitation by their landlords. The market was one of the main links between the city and its surrounding villages and bedouin tribes. Yet this was also a clearly structured and hierarchical institution, where villager, townsman and bedouin each had their place and function, where each recognized his role in an ancient order.⁵⁹

A leading social welfare role was fulfilled by the Khāsikiyya *waqf*. This was in fact a complex of institutions: large soup kitchens, stores, schools, hostels and mosques, dedicated in 1552 by Khaseki Hürrem Sultan, wife of Sultan Süleyman the Magnificent. The Khasikiyya, aimed at providing welfare for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, was the largest *waqf* ever established in Palestine. Scores of villages, in the vicinity of the city and even as far north as the *vilayet* of Tripoly (Tarablus al-Sham) in Lebanon, paid their taxes directly to the *waqf*’s officials. Many of the city’s poorer inhabitants, alongside some of the not-so-poor ‘*ulamā*, received a daily plate of food from the *waqf*’s kitchens (‘*imāma*.) Determining the right to such a daily portion (*tāsa min al-ṭa‘ām*) was part of the qadi’s duties.⁶⁰

In addition to its social role, the *waqf* also played an important part in the city’s economy. Its supervisors operated flourmills, olive and sesame oil presses, and bakeries. Many guilds sold most of their produce to the *waqf*. These supervisors and comptrollers determined the city’s economy to a large extent. The sheer numbers of ledgers, letters and firmans concerning the *waqf* in the *sijill* and in Istanbul’s archives attest to its importance in the eyes of the Ottoman authorities. Although the institution

seems to have declined at the end of the seventeenth century, a Damascene visitor to Jerusalem at the end of the century describes it as a thriving and dynamic institution:

Then we passed by the *Khāsiki Takīya*,⁶¹ famous in and around Jerusalem. We have found it full of goods and good deeds, its flourmill spinning on its hinge, and all its stores standing proud, brimming with charity and mercy.⁶²

Like the local market, the Khasikiyya *waqf* institutionalized the relations between the city and its rural hinterland. Khasikiyya officials bought large quantities of food and firewood from neighboring villages. Other villagers were paid to collect and purchase commodities for the *waqf*. Villagers were suppliers, either by law or by concession, but never eligible for welfare support themselves. This was reserved for townspeople. Like the market, therefore, the *waqf* functioned as both an intersection of city and village, and as a clear demarcation of the boundaries between them.

A lesser-known establishment was the hospital, *al-bimāristān al-Ṣalāhi*, named after its founder, Ṣalāh al-Dīn al-Ayyūbi (Saladin).⁶³ Travelers and pilgrims do not mention the hospital, perhaps because the Christian and Jewish communities had other, smaller facilities. Information about it in Muslim sources is also scant, and in our period it might have declined. But several records in the *sijill* indicate that towards mid-century there was at least one attempt to restore the hospital and renew its function:

On the 6th of Sha'bān 1045 (15 January 1636) sheikh 'Umar ibn 'Abd al-Samad, the supervisor of *waqf al-bimāristān al-Ṣalāhi*, arrived in court, and informed the qadi that parts of the hospital are ruined, and urgently in need of repair. At his request the qadi appointed a team, including a surveyor (*nā'ib al-kashf*) and the chief architect, to examine the building.

The team found out that new gates are needed for the staircase, and restoration work is necessary in *bayt al-marḍa* (the sick bay) and *bayt al-majānīn* (the mental institution.) Partial restoration is needed in *bayt al-mughṭasal* (the laundry/ bath) and *bayt al-kaḥḥālīn* (the eye clinic). Four *iwāns* (recess-like sitting rooms) have partially disintegrated, and so have the stone benches at the entrance. Other rooms are filled with dirt and garbage. The *mu'allim* (master builder) 'Abd al-Muḥsin was brought over, and estimated the overall cost at 552 *ghurūsh*.⁶⁴ [Prices are listed for each item on the list].

In view of this report the qadi allowed the *mutawalli* to carry on with the restoration, and to pay the necessary costs from the *waqf*'s funds as a first priority.⁶⁵