Cultural Heritage in Conflict: World Heritage Cities of the Middle East

Elvan Cobb
University of Pennsylvania, ec536@cornell.edu

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Cultural Heritage in Conflict: World Heritage Cities of the Middle East

Abstract
Following World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the political and population dynamics of the Middle East changed dramatically. New national borders, defined either by western mandates or by local sovereignties, included peoples and architectural legacies from a variety of religions and ethnicities. Under the unifying pressures of national ideologies, the diverse groups of the Middle East that coexisted under the Ottoman Empire were often pitted against each other. These negative dynamics among people were expressed as conflicts involving the built heritage of the ‘other.’ These conflicts sometimes took center stage, sometimes occurred stealthily and under the disguise of development and progress, and sometimes out of lack of respect for the past in general.

One of the core ideals of the World Heritage Convention has been to create unity among people by identifying outstanding examples of heritage that are 'universal' to humankind. By looking at the conflicted and contested World Heritage Cities in the Middle East, it may be possible to come to an understanding of the degree of success or failure of this premise. By understanding the role of conflict in heritage, preservationists can become better advocates for built heritage and more efficient mediators of heritage disputes. Moreover, the understanding of reasons and modes of conflict can lead to the emergence of a new path for World Heritage to pursue.

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Advisor
Randall F. Mason
Associate Professor

Program Chair
Randall F. Mason
Associate Professor
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ABSTRACT

Following World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the political and population dynamics of the Middle East changed dramatically. New national borders, defined either by western mandates or by local sovereignties, included peoples and architectural legacies from a variety of religions and ethnicities. Under the unifying pressures of national ideologies, the diverse groups of the Middle East that coexisted under the Ottoman Empire were often pitted against each other. These negative dynamics among people were expressed as conflicts involving the built heritage of the 'other.' These conflicts sometimes took center stage, sometimes occurred stealthily and under the disguise of development and progress, and sometimes out of lack of respect for the past in general.

One of the core ideals of the World Heritage Convention has been to create unity among people by identifying outstanding examples of heritage that are 'universal' to humankind. By looking at the conflicted and contested World Heritage Cities in the Middle East, it may be possible to come to an understanding of the degree of success or failure of this premise. By understanding the role of conflict in heritage, preservationists can become better advocates for built heritage and more efficient mediators of heritage disputes. Moreover, the understanding of reasons and modes of conflict can lead to the emergence of a new path for World Heritage to pursue.
1. INTRODUCTION

A recent New York Times article chronicles a conundrum in the preservation of a historic synagogue in Cairo, Egypt. The issues here move beyond a lack of funding or development pressures that face many preservation projects in other parts of the world. Rather, it is about the struggle to preserve the heritage that belongs to the 'other' in the Middle East in the light of current political conflicts. While Egypt spent $1.8 million dollars to restore the building, only a small group of people were allowed to be present when the successful completion of the restorations were celebrated behind security screens. In Dr. Zahi Hawass's words: "This is an Egyptian monument; if you do not restore a part of your history you lose everything...I love the Jews, they are our cousins! But the Israelis, what they are doing against the Palestinians is insane. I will do anything to restore and preserve the synagogue, but celebration, I cannot accept."¹

These comments by Hawass, the Secretary General of the Supreme Council of Antiquities in Egypt, highlight how architectural heritage preservation has become inseparable from political conflict in the Middle East of the past century. Egypt's restoration of the religious structure was a very positive development. Unfortunately, they were constrained by wider political frictions from opening the celebrations to the public. In other cases, significant places are lost or marginalized due to the sensitive nature of preservation work. Hawass's words, however, also underscore the complexity of disagreements in the Middle East. Here, the conflict seems to stem from political dynamics and hostilities rather than a dislike of the 'other' as a confessional group.

While this particular synagogue was saved, many significant places that belonged to the 'other' around the Middle East are being lost. These losses happen through a range of actions

or inactions: from active destruction to delayed maintenance and ignorance. Understanding the fundamental reasons for conflict and trying to identify possible solutions are, therefore, crucial to preserving the heritage of the Middle East in a comprehensive, socially conscious manner. However, in order to grasp the dynamics of conflict in heritage, we first need to distance ourselves from our preconceived notions about the Middle East. While many would consider the Middle East as a place that has always experienced conflict between religious and ethnic groups, a historical look at the region unveils a more nuanced trend. In the words of Ussama Makdisi and Paul Silverstein:

Although the Middle East has long been stereotyped as a region of primordial and endemic religious violence, in recent years a number of provocative works have indicated how the violent enactment of communal identity is a decidedly modern phenomenon tied to the (colonial) formation of and (postcolonial) tensions within nation states. Sectarianism does not, in other words, precede national politics and state creation, but rather is largely the effect of these processes. The assumed link between territory, history, and the body- at the basis of both sectarian and nationalistic claims- remains uncertain, as territories demarcate multiple, conflicting histories and bodies betray multiple descents. Indeed, one of the effects of violence is to inscribe ethnic and religious determinacy onto such unstable, embodied social fields and spaces.2

The Middle East and its cities of the 20th and 21st centuries are remarkably different from the ones that characterized the region in the preceding Ottoman Era.3 One of the main features of Ottoman cities, throughout the large domain of the Empire, was their ethnic and religious diversity.4 As the birth place of the three major monotheistic religions and at the juncture of many civilizations, the diversity of the Middle East should not come as a surprise. Yet, what is interesting is how the empire organized these peoples to live together with limited strife. Under the Ottomans, these diverse groups were organized according to the millet system. The millet system denotes a "religious community, community of the same confession or

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3 Most of the Middle East, including the Levant, was conquered by Ottoman Sultan Selim I in 1516/17.
the same rite." These groups had certain legal rights and privileges in the Ottoman Empire and were also subject to additional taxes above what Muslim Ottoman subjects paid. The urban scape was composed of residential quarters that supported the application of the millet system. While not an original Ottoman concept, it must have fit well with the Ottoman ideas of management. Religious and ethnic groups largely chose to live in the same quarter as the people they identified with; however, mixed quarters were not unknown. While the non-Muslim subjects tended to gather together, this was a 'natural social development' and was not enforced legally. According to Andre Raymond, with the system of millet quarters "whole sectors of the city were, thus, placed under a quasi-autonomous religious, administrative, and financial authority." The ideas of 'equality' and 'human rights' were not concepts that entered the Ottoman consciousness until the 19th century following the French Revolution. Therefore, Ottoman subjects were not treated with such considerations as tolerance as a matter of course, but rather they were protected, separate and unequal. As Suraiya Faroqhi puts it: "The willingness with which empires such as the Ottoman down to the eighteenth century accommodated separate and unequal communities has gained in respectability [in the scholarly discourse]. Or at least this is true when compared to the murderous attempts at 'national unification' which have been undertaken throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." The result of the Ottoman policies was the preservation of the architectural heritage of the 'other' intact with viable communities to maintain these places during 400 years of Ottoman dominance.

The fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire started during the 19th century and was completed


with the Treaty of Sevres in 1920, which officially brought an end to the six-hundred year empire and gave way to nation-states and foreign mandates in the Middle East. The processes that accompanied this dramatic transition, including population exchanges and social engineering projects resulted in the conflicted societies that we have come to know today. The former Middle Eastern society was highly cosmopolitan and the idea to divide this region into sovereign domains that centered around only one ethnicity, one history and one religion was destined to result in conflicts.

As mentioned above, diverse groups had managed to co-exist for centuries in the Middle East. The reasons for the hostilities towards the 'other' lie in the transition to nation states, rather than what is commonly believed to be ethnic and sectarian dislike of the 'other.' From the perspective of urban and architectural heritage, the desire of the newly established nation states to create a new identity for themselves resulted in the prioritization of some heritage and the marginalization of the heritage of the 'other' that did not fit into the promoted story. Additionally, in many parts of the Middle East, the diversity of people, which resulted in the variety of architectural heritage, disappeared with the population exchanges and social assimilation. Their heritage were left in the hands of groups that did not have a particular stake in that heritage. Also, in some parts of the Middle East, more than one group claimed ownership of the same architectural heritage. Therefore, the historical built environment became and continues to be the focus of conflicts.

Since the Ottoman Empire's decentralized administration system enabled the survival of diverse Middle Eastern architectural legacies for many centuries, it is worth exploring if a post-modern alternative to this model can be found. One of the existing mechanisms that can be examined within this perspective is the concept of World Heritage. From its inception to its current form, World Heritage has aimed to find a common unifying power in the places that have a 'universal' value. The 1994 Nara Document on Authenticity states that:
The diversity of cultures and heritage in our world is an irreplaceable source of spiritual and intellectual richness for all humankind. The protection and enhancement of cultural and heritage diversity in our world should be actively promoted as an essential aspect of human development. Cultural heritage diversity exists in time and space, and demands respect for other cultures and all aspects of their belief systems. In cases where cultural values appear to be in conflict, respect for cultural diversity demands acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the cultural values of all parties.\(^\text{10}\)

However, the decline in the preservation of the built heritage of the 'other' in the Middle East makes one question the efficacy of World Heritage in addressing issues of diversity, ethnicity, religion and conflict in historic cities. The World Heritage Convention assigns heritage management responsibilities to local and national authorities without providing many strategies or stipulations to deal with issues that arise in World Heritage Cities, especially when there is conflict and contestation surrounding the heritage. While there are many studies both in the heritage management and planning professions that try to address issues of management in historic urban centers and cultural landscapes, the discourse on areas that face ethnic, political or religious conflict in World Heritage Cities, is more limited. And when one starts looking at conflict outside of the categories of 'armed conflict' or wars, the scholarly works decrease even further.

Thus, this thesis aims to examine the effects of World Heritage on the conflicted urban-scapes in the Middle East. A case study based, cross-cutting approach is most suitable in order to identify different issues and trends in the heritage management of conflicted cities in the Middle East. This approach allows us to look at a region that was fragmented and thoroughly changed during the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) and 20\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries. Each fragmented part has its own stories, policies and politics. Therefore, three case studies were selected in three different countries: Aleppo in Syria, Mardin in Turkey, and Jerusalem. While Mardin is still on the Turkish tentative list to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, both Aleppo and Jerusalem are already World Heritage Cities.

\(^{10}\) UNESCO, ICCROM and ICOMOS, "The Nara Document on Authenticity," (Nara, Japan: 1-6 November 1994.)
As evidenced by the incident in Cairo, the ubiquitous issues related with the built heritage of the 'other' are complex in the Middle East. The three cities chosen as case studies provide an opportunity to evaluate three very different approaches to heritage management in the urban context that try to deal with this complexity. The cities are also all located near border zones, have diverse architectural heritages and are experiencing some sort of conflict surrounding that built heritage.
2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature Review on Conflict and Contestation of Heritage

Most World Heritage is considered to be contested heritage by many due to its dualities in global and local values as the sites become both part of a global network that assigns a 'universal value' to them and as they must continue to serve as part of the local heritage. Beyond this inherent conflict, the consequences of the listing also create tensions at World Heritage Sites, usually exemplified with the need to balance tourism and everyday living. While these are valid for almost all World Heritage Sites, some sites present additional conflicts and tensions that go beyond these regular experiences.

According to the Getty Conservation Institute's Historic Cities and Urban Settlements initiative, "Historic urban settlements are a unique reflection of the capacity of humankind to socially structure and organize space. Today, 242 cities or urban settlements are registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list, representing the diverse responses to the specific geographic and socio-economic conditions by local populations." 11 Historically, cities acted as places where diverse people could come together to exchange ideas or goods, where the specialization of services allowed for human creativity. While the diversity that resulted from these interactions can work in favor of innovations and the development of ideas in cities, under different circumstances, diversity becomes a source of conflict, contestation, tension and even outright warfare. The emergence of conflict usually coincides with several factors, such as being located within close proximity to borders, having diverse populations ethnically and/or religiously and having a heritage of imperialism or colonialism. Thus, studying the role of conflict and contestation in World Heritage Cities that have these characteristics enables us to understand the challenges and opportunities of conflict within the framework of World

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Heritage.

Today, the Middle East is associated with various conflicts, making this region a good ground for studying the issues of World Heritage in conflict or contestation. As the birth place of three major religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the area is spiritually significant to a large portion of the world's population. This fact plays an important role in the contemporary political agendas of the nation states located within this region and affects the way that cultural heritage is treated. In addition, as the juncture of Asia, Europe and Africa, the region is strategically important and plagued by political conflicts. Political uncertainties in the region as well as actual armed conflicts threaten cultural properties daily. Moreover, oil reserves in several of the Middle Eastern countries and other precious resources make this an economically significant area that attracts foreign investments, and consequently results in foreign interventions in the Middle Eastern countries. Thus, the Middle East's World Heritage Cities present an opportunity to examine the relationship of the built environment and the origins and consequences of conflict within these cities.

As conflict and contestation is part of the daily life in the Middle East, one must understand the role of conflict in society in order to attempt to implement policies in conflict societies. Otomar Bartos and Paul Wehr provide ways to understand and work with conflict in their book: Using Conflict Theory. The book opens with the statement that in our contemporary society, people who are dealing with conflicts not only need to know how to de-escalate them but also how to utilize the conflicts constructively. The desire to understand conflict has been growing with every new human conflict around the world. The initial set of conflicts that attracted scholarly discourse were the class conflicts developed during the industrial era between factory workers and owners. This type of conflict was taken on by Karl Marx and his followers providing both a good understanding of the issues as well as a framework for political/economic revolution. A second wave of conflicts occurred at the end of the 19th
century when ethnic conflicts resulting from the rise of ethnic nationalism arose and served both national and imperial agendas. The authors name writers such as George Simmel who stated that conflicts between groups were not instinctual but they were social processes. The result of colonialism was a group of rebels that tried to free their people from oppressors. The earliest activists of this type of conflict included Simon Bolivar and Toussaint l'Ouverture. Ghandi's nonviolent resistance was an important episode in the development of conflict-resistance. The next stage was the development of organizations, such as the United Nations that try to understand and arbitrate conflict; these were due to the horrendous happenings during the two world wars. After the World War II, many places around the world experienced liberation from colonial powers. Due to the disregard to ethnicities in the development of colonial boundaries, newly liberated states included multiple ethnicities but wanted to center these diverse people on one nationalistic idea that resulted in these post-colonial conflicts.12 While they had co-existed until the end of the 19th century in relatively peaceful terms, modernism and nationalism had changed the dynamics among different groups of people.

It is important to define conflict at this juncture. While the definitions of conflict differ from one scholar to another, the explanation provided by Bartos and Wehr provides a satisfactory definition for the purposes of this thesis: "A situation in which actors use conflict behavior against each other to attain incompatible goals and/or to express their hostility"13 While the conflict behavior is described as an umbrella term in the definition, one of the ways that conflict behavior occurs is by disregarding, ignoring, obscuring or outright demolishing the cultural properties and heritage of the 'other.' In short, not respecting the cultural rights of a group is one way that conflict behavior occurs.

Acknowledging this conflict behavior, in 2001, UNESCO adapted the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity. In this document, UNESCO concedes the importance of cultural

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13 Ibid. p. 13.
diversity and inter-cultural dialogue as one of the best methods to guarantee peace. In Article 7, the document states that "Creation draws on the roots of cultural tradition, but flourishes in contact with other cultures. For this reason, heritage in all its forms must be preserved, enhanced and handed on to future generations as a record of human experience and aspirations, so as to foster creativity in all its diversity and to inspire genuine dialogue among cultures." However, in the 13th clause of the Action Plan, the document includes this statement: "Formulating policies and strategies for the preservation and enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage, notably the oral and intangible cultural heritage, and combating illicit traffic in cultural goods and services." While this statement acknowledges that the heritage preservation is important, the emphasis on the oral and intangible cultural heritage understates the importance of preserving the built environment as a way to preserve cultural diversity.

Due to the importance of built heritage in establishing community identity and maintaining a social memory, historic monuments usually end up being the target for cultural rights violations. Robert Bevan's book: *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War*, records the multitude of destruction of cultural property around the world through conflicts. He posits that "such destruction not only shatters a nation's culture and morale but is also a deliberate act of eradicating a culture's memory and, ultimately, its existence." The volume includes a plethora of instances when the cultural properties are especially targeted in order to demoralize people and destroy culture. He argues that the annihilation of cultural property amounts to a cultural genocide in many cases and that cultural genocide should be punishable by international law to the same degree as genocide of a people. Comparatively, the understatement in the UNESCO document does not do justice to the importance of the built environment for preserving diversity.

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15 ibid.
17 ibid.
In a similar trend, in his key-note speech to the 2009 World Heritage Cities Congress in Quito, Francesco Siravo talked about the loss of historic fabric as a result of ideological conflict as one of the four important factors that causes harm to historic cities.\(^{18}\) In his example of Rome, Siravo examines what he calls the "'pick-axe era', whose uncontested hero is Benito Mussolini." In his effort to create a new Rome that was worthy of its new 20th century glory, Mussolini demolished parts of historic Rome. By the time the Mussolini Era had ended, some of the most vibrant areas of Rome had been destroyed. Siravo continues with a more recent example, that of Bucharest. Nicolae Ceausescu’s interventions on the city also resulted in the replacement of the city center with modernist architecture of questionable quality. Siravo concludes his section on ideological destruction with Samarkand and Kashgar both in Central Asia. In the case of Kashgar, the demolition of the Islamic city ostensibly to prevent damage through earthquakes is currently displacing the Uighur minority to concrete public housing to the outskirts of Kashgar.\(^ {19}\) While it is highly unlikely that Kashgar will be nominated to become a World Heritage City anytime soon due to the political agenda of the Han Chinese in power, the historical significance of the city as well as its destruction is well documented.

Decisions such as not nominating Kashgar to the World Heritage List are another way that World Heritage Status can be leveraged in favor of the groups in power. Van der Aa, in her 2005 dissertation, comes to four main conclusions on the state of world heritage sites. First, the implementation of world heritage happens at the national level rather than at the local or global settings. Thus, nomination of Kashgar falls onto the shoulders of the national government in Beijing rather than the local ethnic minority: Uighurs. Moreover, the sites already on the World Heritage List do not always have the justification for the criteria of 'universal value,' but it is a useful tool for local and national stakeholders to achieve goals such as higher tourist numbers and greater reputation. Lastly, she states that the international dimension of the

\(^{18}\) The other three factors include: Loss as a Result of War; Loss in the Name of Progress and Loss Through Neglect and Small-scale Development.

\(^{19}\) Francesco Siravo, *Historic Cities and their Survival in a Globalized World.* (Quito, Ecuador, 2009.)
World Heritage Convention lies in the cooperation between countries. The dependence on the national government to nominate sites increases the political power of world heritage in subtle ways causing some sites not to be listed or listed on time due to political agendas. For example, Mecca, the holiest city of Islam, did not get listed until 2004. She suggests that if everyone could nominate sites, the biases that occur in the nomination process for world heritage might become less of an issue. She also posits that the ability and willingness to delist properties may enforce the preservation of World Heritage properties.\textsuperscript{20}

The contested nature of World Heritage was taken up during a conference in London, England in 2002. Its proceedings were then published in the International Journal of Heritage Studies. In the editorial to the series of papers, Raoul Bianchi and Priscilla Boniface summarize some of the general themes that emerged in the conference. One of main outcomes of the meeting is the understanding that "given that many important monuments and sites constitute repositories of national and or regional memories, their incorporation onto the World Heritage List accentuates tensions around universal values of cosmopolitanism, discourses of citizenship, patterns of exclusion and the symbolic meanings attached to these sites."\textsuperscript{21} With this understanding, the authors then identify a major deficiency in World Heritage as not being sensitive to the inclusion of 'locals' in the decision making processes in both subtle and explicit ways.\textsuperscript{22} Julie Scott's contribution to the same conference articulates the conflict in the perception of World Heritage as part of the 'global landscape' as well as intertwined with the nation-building practices. These two modes of World Heritage are then juxtaposed with two methods of citizenship, a world citizenship based on inclusionary democracy and another specific to the nation-building process that is bound by ethnicity, religion, state and class.\textsuperscript{23} The opening of her article examines New7Wonders.com: a website launched to

\textsuperscript{20} "Preserving the heritage of humanity? Obtaining World Heritage Status and the Impacts of Listing," [S.l.: s.n.] University Library Groningen] [Host] [database online]. S.l.; Groningen.
\textsuperscript{22}ibid.
\textsuperscript{23}ibid.
select the new wonders of the world through a completely democratic process where every citizen of the world had an equal vote. Yet, as Scott brings to our attention, the participants are identified by their nation in addition to their name. While the intentions of the website might be trying to go beyond the national, the selection of the new wonders was infused by nationalism exemplified by the Turkish campaign to include Hagia Sophia in the list. The result: over half of total votes were from Turkey. As Scott points out, the use of heritage for creating identities is not new. While the rest of the article explores the specific example of the tensions between a universal heritage and a national heritage and the impact of their use in the political scene as identity building mechanisms, the initial example is poignant in demonstrating the conflicts that arise with world heritage: are they universal or belonging to one nation or do these places bring people together or sharpen the differences in opinion on identity, memory and patrimony?24

Tijana Rakic and Donna Chambers also examine the dilemma of national vs. universal in their article, *World Heritage: Exploring the Tension Between the 'National' and the 'Universal.'* The authors posit that the dilemma between national and universal makes World Heritage contested heritage as a default. As the inscription of a site to the World Heritage List elevates its importance and endows 'universal' value on those sites, the notion of national and local values of the site change. This change results in debates over ownership and belonging to that heritage.25

Certain sites, such as religious buildings, within historic cities become sources of higher degrees of conflict. Daniel Olson's *Management Issues for Religious Historic Attractions* focuses on the conflicts especially experienced in religious sites that end up becoming tourist attractions.26

25 Chambers, Donna P; Rakic, Tijana, World Heritage: Exploring the Tension between the National and Universal. (2007)
As issues surrounding the religious sites in contested cities usually mirror the larger issues in that city, their plight is especially important while trying to manage the future of a contested World Heritage City. Balancing the management of religious sites as tourist attractions and their religious purpose as houses of worship demand special strategies in management. For example, admission fees are routinely collected in other heritage sites, but the fees become a conflict in religious sites as visitors usually have an aversion to pay in order to pray. On the other hand, many visitors do not come to religious sites in order to worship perhaps making it more ethical to charge fees. Several religious buildings around the world do not charge fees to people of that faith, but collect fees from all others.

Buildings or monuments that become icons of a group regardless of their tourist appeal, also attract more than their fair share of antipathy, such as the 9/11 attack on the World Trade Center. In Lynn Meskell's article titled Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology, Meskell evaluates the cultural roles of the 9/11 site in Manhattan and the Bamiyan Budhas in Afghanistan. While she acknowledges Frank Matero's discussion on the moment of preservation being a historic and significant event, she also posits that the moment of destruction is a culturally situated one. She presents the vandalism against Taj Mahal by Hindu radicals who were anti-Muslim in 2001 and the demolition of the Ottoman Fort in Mecca by the Saudis. While the Turks blamed the Saudis with 'cultural massacre,' and for trying to eradicate any Ottoman heritage from Mecca, the Saudis defended their action by stating that this was a way to accommodate more pilgrims to the Ka'aba. She presents us with the question of: "What is to be done with dissonant heritage, heritage that does not conform to prevailing norms or sites that are inherently disturbing?" 

Efforts to understand the politics of heritage sites in contested cities have been undertaken, especially for high profile conflict cities such as Belfast, Mostar and Jerusalem, the

27 ibid.

quintessential conflict city. Michael Dumper in his *The Politics of Sacred Space: the Old City of Jerusalem in the Middle East Conflict* examines the issues of access to religious sites within the light of historical and political developments that took place in the city. While the information contained in the book is spared for the case study of Jerusalem in this thesis, the interactions of the three religious communities in this city demonstrates the difficulty in managing a historic city of this type of contestation. As the author points out the struggle that revolves around the historic places of Jerusalem is the result of a long history of disputes as well as the central role that Jerusalem plays in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.29

While documenting the cultural heritage issues in a conflict city such as Jerusalem is important, a comparative study among similar conflict cities may provide opportunities for understanding better than a thorough examination of one city. Scott Bollens provides such a framework to examine contested cities in his work: *Comparative Research on Contested Cities: Lenses and*

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Scaffolding. While the study does not explicitly talk about the ways we should approach heritage in contested cities, it nonetheless gives guidelines to possible ways one can intervene in such cities with the assumption that good policy decisions could improve the chances of peaceful co-existence. Scott promotes the use of a multi-site, multi-theme approach in an interdisciplinary manner: "The study of the multidimensional political, territorial, historic, economic, and social-psychological attributes of contested urban societies requires a deeply grounded, intensive case study approach utilizing immersion in the city's day-to-day culture."  

A crosscutting thematic study similar to this thesis was undertaken by Oliver Creighton. Creighton explores the conflicts between the walled cities that are inscribed on the World Heritage List. His comparisons explore the dissonance between the physical fabric and the contemporary communities living within these walled settlements. Like many authors, Creighton also cites the inherent conflict between the local and global nature of World Heritage Sites. He points out the violent histories of walled cities and the changed attitudes towards these places. He also points to the restrictive nature of walled cities that create boundaries between what is inside and what is outside. Creighton then expands his essay with examples from Europe, Middle East and Northern Europe. Many of the walled cities he examines are in border zones and have changed allegiance in the near past, as observable in the recent names of the towns: Caernarfon/Caernarvon and Mazagan/El Jadida. The current populations also do not always feel an attachment to their built environments. As the author pointed out, the change in political regimes and subsequent migrations, cause this alienation and separation from the built environment. The Old City of Acre is a good example to this phenomenon with its 18th century Ottoman architecture and its post-1948 residents who are Palestinian-immigrants without a sense of belonging to Acre. In his conclusion, Creighton states that:

"The 'enclave heritage' of dispossessed groups, the layered identities of walls and their often very tangible references to disputed periods of the past, and their complex interrelationship

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with the built environment all create extraordinarily complex philosophical challenges for heritage management.”31 While the author limits his arguments to walled cities, it is easy to see that the conflicted nature of world heritage cities goes beyond this classification. Indeed, it is a result of changing political regimes in diverse areas of the world that make the study of a particular region, such as the Middle East, an informative one.32

In their guest editorial to *Anthropology Today*, Mike Rowlands and Beverley Butler succinctly state that the challenges of preservation in conflict and post-conflict societies lie in creating alternative stories to the traditional heritage narrative. The authors also promote a "mosaic approach that considers each identity as having an equal knowledge of the other and a tolerance for its place."33 They reiterate that the concept of 'care' emerges as an important concept in the preservation of conflicted areas. As heritage is "increasingly seen as offering recognition, through a valuation of the cultural heritage of formerly colonized and under-represented populations," the article concludes with the suggestion that common heritages can play an important role in the discourse on conflict and preservation.34

Thus, the phenomenon of conflict in the World Heritage Cities is a multidimensional issue that goes beyond the physical conservation of monuments and sites. Rather, it is an issue that needs to be addressed in an interdisciplinary manner. The subject has already piqued the interest of scholars from a variety of academic fields ranging from political science to anthropology and historic preservation. Utilizing this wide-range of information wisely, one could attempt to come up with strategies in heritage management that take the complexities of the subject into account.

32 ibid.
34 ibid.
**Literature Review on World Heritage**

The 1972 World Heritage Convention was the culmination of a way of thinking about and treating cultural and natural heritage around the world by acknowledging that some heritage has a 'universal value.' The World Heritage Convention enables and administers mechanisms such as the World Heritage List, the World Heritage Fund and the World Heritage at Risk List. The consequences of the Convention, both positive and negative, are far reaching and have been a popular subject in the cultural heritage studies scholarship.

Jukka Jokilehto provides a history of the international involvement in the preservation of cultural heritage in her *History of Architectural Conservation*. During the 18th and 19th centuries, many countries established legal frameworks for the preservation of their monuments and sites. The concept of a 'universal heritage' was also developing during the same time period and this concept-eventually materialized in the form of international conventions and agreements. Earliest examples concerned themselves with the state of heritage in the event of warfare. These early efforts did not stop the destruction of cultural property during the First World War resulting in the burning of the Library at University of Louvain and the bombing other Reims Cathedral.35

In 1919, during the Paris Peace conference, the victorious Allied forces established the League of Nations. Under the auspices of the new League of Nations, an International Museums Office was established. One important action of this institution was to organize a meeting on the conservation of architectural monuments, which resulted in the Athens Charter of 1931.36

Within a decade of the Athens Charter, the world faced another great war. Starting in 1939, the Second World War wracked even greater havoc than the First World War with the
advancement of war technologies. The loss of life was enormous, so was the loss of cultural property. After the war, Europeans started wide-spread reconstruction efforts and many discussions ensued on how to undertake these efforts. After the WWII, League of Nations gave way to the United Nations. UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was charged with the task to form an International Committee of Monuments. A meeting was organized in Venice and its proceeding resulted in the Venice Charter of 1964.\textsuperscript{37}

In the Struggle to Save Our World Heritage, Michel Batisse, who was instrumental in the preparation of the World Heritage Convention, describes the evolution of the World Heritage Convention and some of the issues surrounding its implementation. A demand to protect sites on an international level did not arise until after the World War II. While post-war nations did not feel ready to take the responsibility of the war-damaged sites, the decision of Egypt to build the Aswan Dam on the Nile River prompted an international concern. When both Egypt and Sudan applied to UNESCO in 1959 for assistance, an international safeguarding mission, first of its kind, was launched. The Nubia Campaign, as it came to be known, was a success and engendered the idea that conservation of some monuments should be a shared responsibility among nations.\textsuperscript{38}

As a result of the publicity generated by the Nubia Campaign, many more nations requested assistance from UNESCO. Most of these nations were founded after World War II, when the world experienced the collapse of the colonial empires and the rise of nation-states from the ashes of these empires. Historic monuments and sites located within these new nations were crucial to the creation of a national identity and the legitimization of these new nations. While Jokilehto ties the origins of the Venice Charter to the developments in Europe, Batisse associates them with the developments in the newly formed nation-states. According to Batisse, guidelines were necessary for assisting the nation states in protecting their cultural

\textsuperscript{37} ibid.

heritages. In 1964, an international group met in Venice to write and sign a charter for the conservation and restoration of monuments and sites. This groundbreaking charter is known as the Venice Charter. The International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was founded as a direct result of the Venice Charter under the initiative of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). ICOMOS, as described on its website, is "an international, non-governmental organization dedicated to the conservation of the world's historic monuments and sites." ICOMOS was involved in the Nubia Campaign and other salvage projects that followed.39

While the desire to have an international mechanism to protect cultural heritage was developing, a parallel movement was going on to conserve the outstanding natural areas of the world. The convergence of these two movements resulted in the creation of the World Heritage Convention in 1972, where both the natural and cultural properties of 'outstanding universal value' are included. The Convention is an "international legal instrument through which countries voluntarily commit themselves to protect monuments and sites within their territory that are recognized to be of such outstanding value that safeguarding them concerns humanity as a whole."40

While there are many sources that describe the history and implementation of the World Heritage Convention, The World Heritage Information Kit published by the UNESCO World Heritage Centre provides one of the official versions. The document describes heritage as a "legacy from the past."41 And the sites inscribed on the list are of universal value and therefore belong to the humanity. One of the most significant features of the 1972 Convention is the linking of natural and cultural sites together. The Convention defines the duties of various parties in the preservation of sites. Each nation ratifying the Convention pledges to protect

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39 ibid.
40 ibid.
41 World Heritage Centre, World heritage information Kit, (Paris, France: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, 2005.)
both its World Heritage Sites and its own national heritage. The Convention also encourages the state-parties to incorporate preservation schemes within their local, regional and national plans.

*World Heritage: Challenges for the Millennium* is another UNESCO publication aiming to evaluate the current state of the World Heritage in the 21st century in light of its history as well as the new priorities that emerged within the United Nations: humanitarian aid, social and economic development and environmental protection. Tumu Te Heuheu points to these new reform movements that have emerged within the UN and states that the contributions of the World Heritage to these movements, as Te Heuheu states, 'an opportunity and a challenge,' must be reflected upon by the World Heritage community.\(^{42}\)

The document also provides a background on the World Heritage Cities. It identifies two trends in the inscription of historic cities to the WHL. Before mid-1990s, cities with picturesque elements were selected for inscription. Since then, the context and the setting of the city as well as its social and cultural aspects gained importance that resulted in the inscription of cities such as the Stone Town of Zanzibar and Macau.\(^{43}\)

A World Heritage Cities Programme was established in 2001. This programme aims to find a balance between the changes necessary in a living city and preserving their character. A symposium was held in Vienna in 2005 and the *Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture—Managing the Historic Urban Landscape* was an important outcome of this meeting. The meeting was specifically organized to examine the contemporary architecture within a historic city and acknowledges the importance of careful consideration of the historic urban landscape with a culturally and historically sensitive approach that involves all the related parties and experts in the consultation process and respecting the authenticity

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\(^{43}\) ibid. p. 92.
and integrity of the historic built environment.\textsuperscript{44}

The World Heritage Cities Programme is not the only functionary trying to find better ways to preserve historic cities. Organization of the World Heritage Cities was founded in 1993. Their goal is to assist the World Heritage Cities in dealing with issues that arise in the management of historic urban environments through training and seminars. It also acts as a portal of information on this topic. Their mission statement is:

\begin{quote}
An international non-profit non-governmental organization, the Organization of World Heritage Cities (OWHC) was created to assist member cities adapt and improve their management methods in relation to the specific requirements of having a site inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. In accordance with its General by Laws, the OWHC has the following goals:

- contribute to implementation of the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage and the International Charter for the Protection of Historic Cities;
- encourage, on both regional and international levels, cooperation and the exchange of information and expertise among historic cities throughout the world in close collaboration with other organizations pursuing similar goals while emphasizing action likely to support the efforts of cities located in developing countries;
- in cooperation with specialized organizations, ensure better links between research undertaken by specialists or experts and the needs of local management;
- Sensitize the populations to patrimonial values and their protection.\textsuperscript{45}
\end{quote}

Historic Cities and Urban Settlements Initiative of the Getty Conservation Institute's main goal "is to contribute to the preservation of historic cities through the development of projects that focus on key challenges in the conservation of urban environments and that improve conservation practice in the field."\textsuperscript{46} The Getty Initiative has worked on projects Ecuador, China, Egypt, Southeast Asia, Jordan, and Tunisia. In addition to their efforts to work with the Organization of World Heritage Cities, they also research the challenges in the conservation of

\textsuperscript{44} ibid. p. 95.
The Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme promotes the preservation and rehabilitation of buildings and public spaces in historic cities of the Islamic World. Aga Khan Historic Cities Programme "undertakes the restoration and rehabilitation of historic structures and public spaces in ways that can spur social, economic and cultural development. Individual project briefs go beyond mere technical restoration to address the questions of the social and environmental context, adaptive re-use, institutional sustainability and training."48

Reports of the rehabilitation and preservation activities as well as other scholarly publications by Aga Khan Trust for Culture constitute a substantial body of work in the management of historic cities. As most cities in the Middle East have an Islamic heritage, their publications provide relevant guidelines for this thesis. For example, *Zanzibar: A Plan for the Historic Stone Town* by Francesco Siravo details the actions taken by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture in the preparation of a master plan. The goal of this master plan was to identify the historic resources in the Stone Town and to set guidelines for new development both at micro and macro levels to achieve balanced development. In support of this balanced development, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture committed to further actions such as training of craftsmen in traditional building trades and promoting cultural heritage through a cultural center.49

A newer approach in understanding historic sites, including historic cities, has been incorporated into the World Heritage Convention in 1992. In *World Heritage Cultural Landscapes*, Mechthild Rössssler examines the role of cultural landscape concept as a category for World Heritage Sites. The cultural landscape approach brings the tangible and intangible heritage as well as the natural and cultural aspects of the World Heritage together. As Rössssler points out,

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47 ibid.


the cultural landscapes represent "a tightly woven net of relationships that are the essence of culture and people's identity."\textsuperscript{50} Also at this time, the participation of local groups was deemed necessary for the first time in the World Heritage Convention's development. A new clause was added to the Operational Guidelines that stated: "Participation of local people in the nomination process is essential to make them to feel a shared responsibility with the State Party in the maintenance of the site."\textsuperscript{51} As she enumerates the impact of the cultural landscape concept on the understanding of World Heritage, Rössler states that this new approach has led to the recognition of intangible values in a place and to the local and indigenous heritage. This aspect also contributed to an increased awareness of the importance of local heritage and even some cases to a revival of almost ceased traditions.\textsuperscript{52}

Cities, like Mardin in Turkey, have been placed on the tentative list under this cultural landscape category. As cities most often succeed or fail depending on their geographic location, defensibility, access to resources and trade routes, it is important to evaluate and consider them within their landscape. Therefore, the ideas developed around the preservation of cultural landscapes, such as respect for the layers of history and public participation can be an important tool for the management of historic cities.

Thus, we may conclude that conflict is thoroughly infused in the ideology and practice of World Heritage. While the World Heritage Committee and UNESCO would like to paint World Heritage as a unifying, all-encompassing cosmopolitan concept, in reality World Heritage operates in places of conflict and adds another layer to the complexities of conflict within these places. As the site of many current conflicts, the Middle Eastern cities emerge as ideal places to examine the role of conflict associated with World Heritage.

\textsuperscript{51} Quoted in ibid. p. 45.
\textsuperscript{52} ibid. p. 37-40.
3. MARDIN

The city clings to the southern flank of the last escarpment of the Taurus Mountains, facing the vast plains of Mesopotamia. From above, a neat line is visible marking the last convulsions of the massif – mushroom and mud tinted – beyond which a sea of green takes possession of the Earth’s crust. This is the cartoon geography of a semi-mythical place; Mesopotamia, the land between the rivers Euphrates and Tigris, aka The Cradle of Civilisation. But it wasn’t just myths that were created here. It was history. – By Sankha Guha, 28 March 2010, The Independent

Mardin is located within 20 kilometers of the modern Turkish-Syrian border. Historically, the city commanded the trade routes due to its proximity to an easy passage through the mountains. This advantageous situation is enhanced by the easily defensible hilltop location.
Until the last century or so, Mardin has been considered impregnable. While this was an enormous advantage for defense, it was also a hindrance for commerce. In the pre-modern times, loaded camels could not ascend the steep slope. In modern times, while the railroad connection lies near the town, Mardin is not directly accessible by train, with the nearest station being about five kilometers away from the city center.53

The earliest textual reference to Mardin was during the Roman Era when Ammianus Marcellinus mentioned a fortress at this location. After being under the control of the Byzantine Empire, the Islamic forces occupied Mardin in 640. While providing few details about Mardin, Arab geographers stressed its importance. For example, Ibn Haukal mentions that "in the vicinity of Nisbin, there is a mountain called Mardein, which, from the bottom to the summit, measures two farsangh; and on it is another impregnable castle."54 Yakut "speaks of the splendour of the

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quarters outside Mardin," i.e. below the town itself and "its many madrasa, khanakahs, etc.; as to the ka'la, there is nowhere in the world so strong a defense; its dwelling-houses rose in terraces one above the other." 55

Artukids were a Turkmen dynasty established at the end of the eleventh century under the patronage of the Seljuks. As the Seljuk power declined, the Artukids gained control of much of southeastern Turkey. However, with the rise of Zengids and Ayyubids, they had to shrink their territory to Mardin. Mardin, as described above, was an impregnable castle and proved to be a good stronghold for the Artukids. According to Arab geographer Ibn Battuta's account from this time period, Mardin was a prosperous town under Artukid control. Another factor that contributed to Mardin's commercial life and its cultural efflorescence was the presence of a strong Christian community among the townspeople. From 1171 to 1207, Mardin was the seat of the Jacobite Patriarchate (and again from 1555 onwards). 56

Although Mardin endured an eight-month siege during the Mongol attacks that swept this region in the 13th century, it was never taken. Later, under Timur's orders, the Akkoyunlu tried to gain control of Mardin. Following this episode, Mardin seems to be a desired city among the Akkoyunlu and Karakoyunlu, who both tried to capture the city.

In 1507, an anonymous merchant from Venice visited Mardin and recorded his observations in The Travels of a Merchant in Persia. According to his account, the city was under the control of the Akkoyunlu at the beginning of the sixteenth century. 57

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55 ibid.
as houses, and which always seem about to fall. At the foot of this castle the city is surrounded by high walls, and, as I have said, is situated on a high mountain, and has within it beautiful palaces and mosques... This city is so high, that from within, looking down towards the east, it appears hanging over, like the battlement of a fortress...This city is inhabited far more by Armenian Christians and Jews than by Mahometans, and each sect officiates in its separate church, according to their custom.  

Right after his visit, the Ottomans took control of the city in 1516. The diversity of the town seems to have continued under the Ottoman control. While diversity was a common feature in the Middle East, the specific mention of this diversity by various travelers suggest that Mardin was perhaps a more diverse a city than many others. Mardin was made a sancak (territorial subdivision of a province in the Ottoman Empire) within the eyalet (province in Ottoman Empire) of Diyarbakır in 1534. The city stayed under Ottoman control until 1832 when the Kurdish Beys of the region rebelled against the reforms of Sultan Mahmud II.  

Many eighteenth and nineteenth-century writers comment on the diversity of Mardin's inhabitants. For example, in 1766, traveler C. Nieburh counted 1,000 Christian and 2,000 Muslim inhabitants. Dupre estimated the population of the town as 27,000, of whom 20,000 were Turks, 3,200 Jacobites, 2,000 Armenians and 800 Shamsiyya. In 1835, J. Hammer-Pugstall wrote that "Sunnis and Shias, Catholic and Schismatic Armenians, Jacobites, Nestorians, Chaldeans, Sun-, Fire-, Calf- and Devil-worshipers dwell one over the head of the other."  

At the end of World War I, the former Ottoman Empire was reduced to a small area around


59 Minorsky, Mardin.

60 Quoted in Minorsky, Mardin. (C. Niebuhr, 1766, Reisebeschreibung, Copenhagen 1778, ii, 391-98.) and (A. Dupre, 1808, Voyage, i, Paris 12 (rep), iv, 242.)

61 ibid.

62 Quoted in Marco Polo et al., The book of Ser Marco Polo the Venetian concerning the kingdoms and marvels of the East / e3. ed. rev. throughout in the light of recent discoveries ; Henry Cordier ; cWith a memoir of Henry Yule by his daughter Amy Frances Yule. (London:, 1903) p. 62.
Anatolian highlands by the Treaty of Sevres, which was signed in 1920 following the Paris Peace Conference. The Treaty of Sevres inflamed the nascent Turkish War of Independence. While the Turkish people were resigned to the fact that they may lose parts of the Empire, they were not willing to give up portions of Anatolia. The Treaty of Lausanne marked the end of the Turkish Independence War. The population exchanges that were decided upon as a result of the Treaty misplaced hundreds of thousands of people from the lands they considered home. Population exchanges were considered to be a solution to the conflicts among people. In a report written by Nobel Peace Prize winner Fridtjof Nansen to the League of Nations, he stated that "to unmix the populations of the Near East... will secure the pacification of the Near East." Since then the populations of the Middle East have been unmixing, resulting in societies that are unaware of or unwilling to acknowledge the cultural, religious and ethnical diversity that had dominated the region for millennia.

In 1923, the Turkish Republic was established and Mardin became one of its provinces. The final days of the Ottoman Empire were traumatic on many levels. The Empire was split into regions under the new system of nation-states that each embraced their own version of nationalism. More or less, each of these new nations adapted one language, one ethnicity and one common history. This idea was enforced by the implementation of reform movements that tried to gather the remnants of a variety of ethnic and religious groups around a common nationalistic idealism.

The highly politicized events of 1915 that displaced a large number of Armenians from Anatolia preceded the population exchanges that took place after the Treaty of Lousanne. According to Ottoman sources over 400,000 Armenians were relocated under the Temporary Law on the Measures Implemented by Military against those Opposing the Government Implementations

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at Wartime, which was put in effect on June 1, 1915. The estimates concerning the number of people killed during the events ranges from two hundred thousand in official Turkish accounts to one and a half million in some Armenian accounts. The events surrounding this relocation in 1915 have been a continuing source of conflict between Armenia and Turkey. Many Armenians would like the large scale population movement imposed upon them to be classified as 'genocide.' While Turkish sources typically acknowledge the deportations and that the thousands who had lost their lives, they are adamantly against the claims that a 'genocide' took place. "It is still hotly contested whether the massacres were intended to exterminate or simply relocate the Armenian population who inhabited the lands of the empire." Armenian and Turkish governments cannot agree on the terminology, the death toll and the objectives of this displacement. Both sides do acknowledge, however, that a large number of Armenians were displaced and perished under terrible circumstances.

While it is beyond the purview of this thesis to enter the discussions on the nature of this displacement, the effects of this change in population dynamics of the region is significant. As it can be seen in the 19th century estimates of population for Mardin, about two thousand Armenians were living in the city and many more in the surrounding areas. Again according to Ottoman sources, about 2,000 Armenians were massacred on the outskirts of Mardin. While all of the Armenians massacred may not be from the city, the events were nonetheless a severe blow to the former diversity of the city. "The real reasons for this action, and the means of its execution, are still hotly debated by historians. But, its consequence is not in dispute: the nearly complete disappearance of all Armenian and Syriac communities."

66 ibid.
67 Armenian Issue: Allegations-Facts.
Also relevant to this study is what happened to the built heritage of Armenians during and after this transition. In an Ottoman legislation passed on June 1, 1915, the following arrangements for Armenian property was made: "The properties owned by the Armenians subjected to immigration were protected under an order dated 10 June 1915...These commissions are to determine Armenian properties in the villages and towns that are evacuated, and to keep detailed record books. One of the books is to be kept in the regional churches, one to be submitted to the regional administration and one shall be kept by the commission."69 At the end of the World War I, the Ottoman Empire invited the relocated Armenians back. According to the December 31, 1918 decree, their properties were to be reinstated upon their return. "Buildings such as churches, schools, and the income generating locations will be returned to the society to which they belong."70

While the legislation seems to have been put in place to protect and reinstate Armenian properties, the Armenian accounts of the period differ. According to one firsthand account, the attacks on Christians intensified during July 1915 and Christian houses were sacked. "As for the monasteries, churches and Christians' property, the same thing happened to them there as had happened in Mardin: the men from the government confiscated them."71

Today, many Armenian churches and monasteries remain in Turkey, stripped from their once active communities due to the decrease in numbers, and within a society that is now mainly secular but nominally Muslim. The fate of any religious property, especially of non-Muslim faiths, is uncertain. The church on Akdamar Island on Lake Van, one of the better known Armenian churches in Turkey, has been recently restored, and serves as a tourist destination. The now uninhabited city of Ani in the province of Kars on the border between Turkey and Armenia presents great possibilities for becoming an important site in understanding and

69 Armenian Issue: Allegations-Facts.
70 ibid.
71 Quoted in Courtois, The forgotten genocide : eastern Christians, the last Arameans, p. 177.
remembering the difficult days that were experienced around the time of WWI. The site, however, lacks even the most basic amenities. While sharing the fate of many historical and archaeological remains in Turkey, it is difficult to judge the motives behind the negligence shown towards some of the Christian heritage. Due to its strategic location, modern day Turkish Republic was home to many civilizations. Their vestiges can be found throughout the country. However, the scarce resources make it impossible to properly take care of this entire heritage. Yet, many question the 'not-so-benign' neglect of the monuments of the 'other' in Turkey. Robert Bevan is one of the critiques of Turkey's actions: "The architectural legacy of Ottoman multiculturalism was a witness to the security and strength of the Pax Ottomanica. The careful and partial promotion by the Turks of only favoured elements of that heritage is, by contrast, evidence of modern Turkey's insecurity and weakness." \textsuperscript{72}

The strength and pluralism of Pax Ottomanica is obvious from the diversity of the architectural as well as the cultural legacy that is still present in the Middle East. If the Ottomans had applied a policy of assimilation for the duration of their rule throughout the Middle East, probably most of the diversity would have disappeared. However, the Turkish Republic was founded at a very different time in world history. The early days of the Republic were difficult but the country managed to pull itself up from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. The policies that characterized that era were a result of political and ideological decisions that aimed to distance the new Republic from the old Empire rather than out of weakness. Moreover, these policies were applied throughout the Middle East and they are not a strictly Turkish phenomenon.

\textbf{Turkish Context}

The traumas of World War I, including population exchanges, and the burning and destruction of many cities resulted in what is now known as the 'Turkish Amnesia' towards history. Unlike

\textsuperscript{72} Bevan, \textit{The destruction of Memory: Architecture at War}, p. 58-59.
many other countries in the Middle East that were dominated by colonial powers, in Turkey this 'administered amnesia' was self inflicted by its Republican leaders. "The founders of the new regime decided that in order to build a new identity for the new nation, they first had to erase the Ottoman legacy."\(^7\) This was enhanced by the reform movements that aimed to modernize Turkey, spearheaded by the founder of the modern Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. While reforms such as the abolishment of the Ottoman Sultanate and the Islamic Caliphate, as well as the implementation of the Latin alphabet succeeded in creating a modern secular state, they also created a barrier between the new social-engineered Turkish identity and the traditional ways of living that had been established over centuries. "Erasing everyday habits and memories of the immediate past allowed the Turkish government to establish itself as the founder of a new era, although it was a direct inheritor of the six-hundred-year old Ottoman Empire."\(^4\)

\(^7\) Esra Özyürek, *The politics of public memory in Turkey*, (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 2007) p. 3.
\(^4\) Ibid. p. 4.
Outside of Western Europe and North America, modernization was a process implemented either by colonial powers or authoritarian nation-states and the experience was far away from the gradual societal transformation that resulted in modernism as a result of the industrial revolution in the 'west.' Rather, in the Middle East, "to its contemporaries modernism was an expression of the desire of 'other cultures' to contest their 'otherness' and to claim subjectivity in making their own history."75 In Turkey, this transformation happened with the Kemalist reforms that established a secular democracy with residents writing in a Latin script, wearing modern clothing and hats and going picnicking in the newly established parks.

The new modern Turkey, led by the most influential and beloved politicians, allowed the emergence of new hope and optimism among the war ravaged people, whether they were displaced from their homes or had been living in Anatolia for centuries. Therefore, the social

engineering that took place in Turkey was more popular than in many other countries that were forced to modernize.\textsuperscript{76} In his \textit{Nutuk}, Atatürk states: "Ne mutlu Turk'üm diyene!" ("How happy is he who can say 'I am a Turk!'"). This demonstrates the new aspiration of the Turkish Republic to distance itself from the multi-ethnic Ottoman Empire into a country that centered around one nation and one ethnicity. Therefore, the country ended the 20\textsuperscript{th} century very different than what it had been at the end of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century. Today, children growing up in Turkey are unaware that their grandparents shared this land with people of several different faiths and with people who acknowledged their identity as a matter of course.

\textbf{Mardin and World Heritage}

Mardin is one of the few places in Turkey that the diversity of people was preserved to a certain extent despite the conflicts with non-Muslim/non-'Turkish' subjects and despite the displacement of large groups of people that took place at the beginning of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century. The major non-Muslim group that continues its existence in the city is the Syriac population perhaps due to the importance of the city for their religion in addition to an important but smaller Yezidi population.

For 640 years, the Deyrulzafaran Monastery was the residence of the Patriarchate of the Syriac Church until 1932. The Deyrulzafaran Monastery was constructed in the 5\textsuperscript{th} c. CE and after alterations and extensions; it reached its current shape in the 18\textsuperscript{th} c. CE. The monastery continues to be a significant holy place for the Syriac population that has been dispersed over the world.\textsuperscript{77} The funding for the Monastery’s operations comes from a waqf (religious endowment), that was established in 1871. The waqf was started with six storefronts in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century but expanded with transfers of other property. Despite the nationalization of the religious Islamic waqfs in Turkey, this waqf continues to support the monastery as it was

\textsuperscript{76} ibid. p. 11.
renewed in 1936 with a new waqf document.

Mardin continued to be a small provincial town despite its significant religious role and its spectacular urban-scape. Starting in the 1980s and until a few years back, this region was considered an unsafe place to travel due to the conflict between the Turkish Army and the PKK, a Kurdish separatist group that Turkey considers a terrorist organization. However, with the capture of Abdullah Öcalan, leader of the PKK in 1999, the region became more stable. The tension in the region, however, remains as the claims to a Kurdish state in southeastern Turkey and northern Iraq continue.

In 2009, the Turkish Ministry of Culture stated that Gaziantep, Sanliurfa and Mardin can become focal points in the faith and culture tourism worldwide. However, to capitalize on this fully, he stated that Turks 'need not to have the mines underground and the traitors above ground,' referring to the land mines left behind from various conflicts in the region and the separatists groups who would like to see the creation of a Kurdish State in the region. The Minister of Culture's concerns with the difficulties in developing tourism in this conflicted region are obvious in this statement.

Despite this politically challenging situation in the region, Mardin was placed on the tentative list to become a World Heritage Site for Turkey as a cultural landscape. The description of this cultural landscape was provided as such:

Mardin is a city in a rocky region in southeastern Anatolia. The city is mainly medieval in origin and is situated on the slopes of a rocky hill, crowned by a fortress built on its citadel. This barren stone region around Diyarbakir and Mardin stretches as far as Sanliurfa and Gaziantep. The city as a whole with its traditional stone, religious and vernacular architecture and its terraced urban pattern is the best preserved example of Anatolian soil. Deyrulzafaran Monastery is one of the living religious center of Syrian Jacobites in Mardin, an impressive architectural complex in the Mesopotamian plain.78

The Turkish Ministry of Culture sent a nomination file for the inscription of Mardin to ICOMOS in 2002. However, this initial nomination file did not include the significant Deyrulzafaran Monastery, which is four kilometers outside of the city. In addition, it was not accompanied by a management plan. Taking these deficiencies into consideration, the Ministry withdrew the nomination file. Therefore, the nomination for Mardin was not examined in the 27th session of the World Heritage Committee in 2003. A new dossier, however, is under preparation. A group of volunteer architects under the guidance of Kenan Mortan, a professor at Mimar Sinan University in Istanbul, is preparing an architectural survey of the city. As the description from the tentative list indicates, the Deyrulzafaran Monastery is an important focal point of the new claim to World Heritage.

Mardin’s historic fabric is also under protection by Turkish laws in the form of urban preservation districts and individual designations. However, as mentioned above, Turkey is extremely rich in cultural heritage ranging from the Neolithic town of Çatalhöyük to Byzantine Churches and to Ottoman Palaces. Therefore, scarce resources allocated for preservation are either stretched too thin, or concentrated in one area at the expense of others. Enforcement is usually lacking in many areas against looting or vandalism. The tradition of philanthropy that helped shape the preservation efforts in the United States is just emerging in Turkey. Therefore, the responsibility falls on the shoulders of the national government. The international attention that comes as a result of the World Heritage status is actually very important for Mardin and focuses the national resources on the city. Additionally, it brings the newly emerging philanthropic efforts in heritage to Mardin, such as the newly established museum by the Sabancı Family.

A private local publication, *Mardin Life*, has been performing several online surveys. A few of them are of interest. For example, as part of a new initiative, Mardin got a new logo that depicts a minaret and a dome. The readers of the online magazine were asked to comment on the relevance of the logo. A total of 255 votes were recorded and only 15% of the votes approve of the new logo. Another survey inquired about the primary problems in the city of Mardin with the following results: Infrastructure (17%), transportation (%8), education (16%), health (9%), parking (9%), trash collection (12%), irregular development (11%), Mardinspor (soccer team) (9%), Mardin Castle (9%).

While the survey results have to be taken into consideration with a grain of salt, the equal importance given to the Mardin Castle and health and transportation issues shows that participants are aware of the great impact of their heritage. The higher percentage received for the 'irregular' development is also telling that for many (259 participants) the type of development occurring in the city is troublesome. The local press is also dominated with stories of restoration projects or opening of new hotels, showing that heritage tourism is seen as a major aspect of today's Mardin.

With the decline in the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish Army and with an intensive local marketing campaign that heavily utilizes the possible World Heritage status, tourism has been on the rise in Mardin. In a 2008 article, the Mayor of Mardin, Mehmet Kılıçlar, stated that the city welcomed over 600,000 tourists during the year of 2007 and that they were expecting to exceed a million visitors in 2008. He also stated that the main challenge has been increasing the number of beds for accommodation. The 1,600 bed-capacity in the city has been insufficient to accommodate the tourism boom that is being experienced in Mardin. The opening of 3 hotels, two of which are boutique hotels, were expected to help

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83 ibid.
the shortage.\textsuperscript{84} Considering that in 2002, Mardin recorded only about 50,000 tourists, the jump to over a million tourists is a significant one that will have drastic effects on the city.\textsuperscript{85}

The first observable effect of this increase in tourism associated with World Heritage status, has been the skyrocketing of real estate prices. One could once buy a historic stone house in Mardin for 20,000 Turkish Liras. This is not the case anymore. According to several newspaper articles, these houses appreciated in value 100 fold and now they are generally valued at 2,000,000 Turkish Liras. The main reason given was the increase in faith tourism that attracts people to Mardin. The diversity of the people living in the city, including Turks, Kurds, Armenians, Syriacs and Yezidis, is stated as the main draw to the city.\textsuperscript{86} While the attraction of the city may be related to faith for some, it seems that most domestic tourists visit the city because it is the new popular place in Turkey.

\textbf{Analysis}

At a first glance, the heightened status of diverse heritage, through the medium of becoming a World Heritage City, seems to have done much good for increasing the visibility of different groups in Mardin. The diversity is openly cherished and the amicable relationships among different people are emphasized. The city is fondly called "Mardin: City of Peace." The official website of the Mardin Mayor’s Office proudly advertises the existence of ten historic monasteries and churches in the city of Mardin.\textsuperscript{87}

The new status of Mardin as a tolerant multi-religion, multi-ethnic city has led to the city being the venue for the first Kurdish Language and Literature Program, at Artuklu University.

\textsuperscript{86} Seyhmues Edis, "Mardin’de Ev Fiyatlari Milyon Dolari Buldu Haberi | Sektörel Haberler | sektörel haber, sektör habер, sektör haberler, yapı haber, yapı haberleri, inşaat haber, inşaat haberleri, emlak haber, emlak haberleri, yapi, inşaat, emlak, sektör, proje, proje haberleri, mimari proje haberleri," Zaman Gazetesi 2010.
in Mardin. The university is also a new addition to Mardin, founded only two years ago. The construction of the university is still ongoing, but it is interesting to note that the campus will include a mosque, a Syriac chapel and a Yezidi temple. University Rector Serdar Bedii Omay also mentioned that they are gearing up to apply for the creation of a Syriac language program. In a tour of the Deyrulzafaran Monastery in 2000, before the World Heritage efforts started and the region was still politically challenged, monks at the monastery voiced their concerns about the loss of Syriac speaking population in the area. This new possibility of language education may give a boost to this community that has been marginalized for the duration of the Republic.

The new initiatives in Mardin could also be related to Turkey's bid for becoming a full member of the European Union. As Turkey tries to gain full membership to the European Union, the government is trying to prove its religious and ethnic tolerance. In this effort, Mardin may be becoming the poster child of Turkey in the country's bid for EU membership. Whatever
the reason, the selection of Mardin as the locale for the new university that is to teach these formerly banned languages are a step in the direction that would allow the survival of the ethnic and religious minorities in the region. It may also spark objective scholarly attention to formerly unstudied aspects of life that have been existent in Mardin and elsewhere in southeastern Turkey.

Additionally, the city's new elevated status attracted a new non-governmental family-foundation sponsored museum to the city. The Sakip Sabancı City Museum "aims to display and promote the urban formation and culture of life in the city of Mardin, while the Dilek Sabancı Art Gallery aspires to establish a modern and contemporary art platform in Mardin, through temporary exhibitions." In its first three months, the museum welcomed over 30,000 visitors. It is located in a historic building that was constructed in 1889 as army barracks. Sarkis Elyas Lole, an architect of Armenian descent, oversaw the building's construction, again emphasizing the importance of religious and ethnic groups in the formation of city's built environment.89

While these are efforts worthy of praise, there is also room for caution in the way that Mardin approaches becoming a World Heritage City. First of all, Mardin is freely called a 'museum city.' This approach may hinder the long term sustainability of the city. Cities are places where people live and interact with each other and with their built environment. Therefore, the 'museum city' approach may undermine the dynamisms that resulted in this significant cultural landscape. Rather than managing the change, the effort seems to be to restore buildings to their former state in order to showcase them to the world. As the old city center is becoming more and more as a tourist attraction and a 'museum,' the urban sprawl in the form of apartment developments has already taken its effect on the outskirts of the city.

In addition, the increase in the real estate prices is concerning as it is resulting in a very fast

89 ibid.
rate of gentrification that will probably either force or encourage the local residents to leave the city. Again, resulting in a city devoid of the dynamic and diverse population that is making this a special place. If the local population moves out of the city, part of the draw to the city will be lost with that withdrawal. The stone houses of the city are being transformed in to boutique hotels, bed and breakfasts and get-aways for Istanbul socialites. All of these will ultimately lead to a transient population that does not have a long term stake in the well being of the city.

We must also not ignore that this region has been unstable for a long time and the issues that caused these conflicts are not yet resolved. Therefore, it is possible that the conflicts that made this a region an unsafe place to travel just ten years ago may come back. For the few who traveled in the region as outsiders before the improvements in the security situation, the transportation involved several security checks, special permissions and the like. If the conflicts flare up once more, the tourism that is to sustain Mardin would also halt very quickly. Therefore, resulting in a severe decline in the city’s now upward trend.

Moreover, the ethnic and religious diversity of the city seems to be exploited as a tourist attraction. Mardin is presented as the 'other' in the modern Turkish Republic. Its representation in TV series such as Sıla presents Mardin as being different from the rest of the 'modern' republic. As Ussama Makdisi elaborates in his article, Ottoman Orientalism, the 19th century Ottoman Empire found its own 'orient', its own 'other' in the lands dominated by Arabs. It seems that modern day Turkey also finds its orient within its borders, again in Mardin. However, rather than celebrating the diversity of the city, the tourism efforts exploit the cultural and historic richness of Mardin.

Lastly, 'the Armenian Issue' is glaringly absent from official documents that provide information on Mardin. While the Turkish government sources acknowledge that massacres occurred on

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the outskirts of Mardin, this period is usually skipped over in informationals. This region, which has been the stage of conflicts both at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, is being presented as the 'City of Peace and Tolerance,' and discourse on the negative memories is completely omitted. Perhaps, Mardin could extend the tolerance and take the center stage in a new dialogue with Armenia and Armenians on the resolution of the 'Armenian Issue.'
4. ALEPPO

Aleppo is one of the oldest and most influential cities in the Middle East. Its long history of occupation at the juncture of a variety of civilizations since ancient times resulted in a diverse heritage. While conflicts occurred historically between different groups, the last days of the Ottoman Empire marked the beginning of acceleration in these conflicts. The conflicts between Jewish and Muslim groups seem to have been a result of the rise of nationalism and Zionism and the formation of Israel. Today, while Aleppo is profiting from an extensive rehabilitation campaign, the question of what to do with Jewish heritage seems to be absent from the discourse.

Figure 7: Location of Aleppo. Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection. University of Texas.
There are several important factors in Aleppo’s success as a continuously occupied city since antiquity. It is located in the northwestern part of current day Syria near a small river called Quwayk that descends from the Taurus Mountains of Anatolia. This river provides a steady source of water for the city. The area is also suitable for growing wheat, figs, grapes and olives and pistachios. The rocky outcrop provided a defensible position in the Syrian plain. Contributing to the defensible location, fertile lands and available water, was the location of the city in the middle point between the Mediterranean and the River Euphrates. This strategic position helped the city emerge as an important trading center.

Figure 8: Aleppo Citadel. Source: http://creativesyria.com.

The exact time of Aleppo's founding eludes archaeologists. Cuneiform tablets found at nearby archaeological sites mention Aleppo as early as the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE. The name of the town also originates from these texts, which mention a temple to the storm god at a location called Khalab.94 The first planned urban development of Aleppo (then named Beroea) happened during the Hellenistic era when the Seleucid Dynasty ruled Syria.95 While the town's prestigious status as a major trading center seems to have declined during the Hellenistic Era, it continued to be a viable urban center. In Late Antiquity, the city was endowed with a basilica next to the Hellenistic agora. This agora was transformed into the forum during Roma Era. Later, the same location was converted into a cemetery associated with the Christian Basilica. While one of the oldest synagogues is found in the nearby archaeological site of Duro Europos from the 3rd century, while the first evidence of a synagogue actually in Aleppo itself is from the Late Antique period.96

Muslims gained control of the city in 637 when Khalid ibn al-Walid peacefully conquered it. As it was a peaceful transfer of power, the city did not witness looting or destruction. Aleppo did not change substantially all at once to become an Islamic city. Rather, the process took some four hundred years. By 715, the Muslim population had grown to a substantial degree and necessitated a larger congregational mosque. The location of this mosque was chosen as the former Hellenistic Agora, Roman Forum, and the cemetery of the Byzantine basilica. "In this way, the former site of political activity and the sacred place of Christianity were replaced with a building symbolizing the new political and religious power."97 As Aleppo was in the border zone between the Byzantine Empire and the Islamic Caliphate, it was subject to attacks. In 962, the city was burnt by the Byzantine Emperor Nicephorus Phocas. When the city was re-
conquered by the Muslims, it happened by force. As the city was forcefully taken from the Byzantine Empire, the former arrangement that respected the city’s established institutions was not under effect anymore. Therefore, during this time period, many of the churches in the city were converted to mosques.

During the Ayyubid rule, major architectural projects were undertaken in Aleppo. The Citadel also underwent major reconstruction and development as a new palace complex. As the rocky outcrop was used as a quarry for building materials, the cone shaped iconic shape of the citadel is the product of this era. The city also started to specialize around suqs, an important next step in the development of mercantile Aleppo. Also, on a neighborhood level, the cul-de-sac system that is associated with Islamic cities took hold in Aleppo during this time period.

The city was attacked by the Mongols in 1260. During the Mongol attacks most of the city’s population was killed and this attack resulted in a severe decline in the city’s fortune. However, Aleppo came back once again under the Mamluk rule in the 15th century. It emerged both as a spiritual center as well as a major exporter of a variety of goods such as pistachios and silk.

In 1516, Aleppo became part of the Ottoman Empire. This is the period that Aleppo’s position as a major metropolis in northern Syria was firmly established. The Ottomans continued to invest in the built environment of the city by constructing several important mosques, suqs and khans. Aleppo stayed under Ottoman control for four centuries. Therefore, much of what defines Aleppo today was shaped during this long occupation. As Jean-Claude David puts it "Diversity of identities was a constituent element of the [Ottoman] Empire: co-existence was on an organized basis, and inclinations to openness and to exchange were generally

98 ibid.
99 Joan Busquets, Aleppo.
100 Neglia, Aleppo: Processi di Formazione della Città Medievale Islamica.
101 Joan Busquets, Aleppo.
102 ibid.
favoured."103 More than many other cities in the Ottoman Empire, Aleppo was identified as a multi-cultural city characterized by tolerance. This elevated level of tolerance that dominated the city also contributed to its success as an important stop on major trade routes. Aleppo acted as a gateway between the east and the west, where western products were distributed to the east through Aleppo and vice versa.104 Tolerance was an important requirement and a result of this highly commercial city that must have hosted people from all walks of life.

After World War I, the French gained administrative power over the Syrian portion of the former Ottoman Empire. The French Mandate lasted until 1946. During this time period, a city planning department emerged in Aleppo, the Service D’Urbanisme. The First master plans of the city that aimed to control the growth of the city were drawn around this time. These plans were highly influenced by the modernist and urban renewal ideas that were emerging in the west. Since the city was growing rapidly at this time, these planning efforts resulted in French influenced neighborhoods that were connected to the Old City by large boulevards.105

Following its independence after WWII and a period of political strife, Syria united with Egypt in 1958. This union lasted only three years and by 1961, The Syrian Arab Republic was reestablished. Hafiz al-Asad, a member of the Socialist Ba’th Party and of the minority Alawite sect, gained control of the county. In the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Syria lost the Golan Heights to Israel and since then, this area has been a source of contention between the two nations. Following the death of President al-Asad, his son, Bashar al-Asad, became the president by popular referendum in 2000 and he was reelected in 2007.106

104 ibid. p.331.
105 Joan Busquets, Aleppo.
**Jewish Heritage in Syria**

The conflict between Israel and Syria resulted in challenges in the management of Jewish heritage in Syria. Jewish sources claim a presence in Aleppo since the days of King David. With the official acceptance of Christianity by the Roman Empire after the reign of Constantine, Romans placed restrictions on the Jewish population. These restrictions were lifted with the Arab invasions of Syria in the 7th century. From this time until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire in the beginning of the 20th century, Jews in Syria were self governed under the Ottoman system that allowed them privileges to handle their own internal affairs. During this period, Aleppo received waves of Jewish immigrants. Perhaps the largest one took place during the reign of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella in Spain. This migration wave was caused by an edict expelling Jewish people from Christian Spain in 1492. Jews had to leave Spain or had to convert to Christianity.\(^\text{107}\)


*Figure 9: Jews of Aleppo. Source: http://mideastimage.com.*
Ottoman Turks had conquered Syria in 1516, and they welcomed the Jewish people of Spain, known as Sephardim into Syria. The influx of this new population revived the economy of the region and thus resulted in the construction of many new synagogues that were Ottoman in form but Jewish in ornamentation and detail. With the influx of this new population, the great synagogue of Aleppo, which is also known as the Yellow Synagogue, could not accommodate all the Jews. Therefore, a new wing where the Sephardim prayed was added. While there were initially disputes between the Sephardi and the former Jewish population, the relationships calmed down after a while. The Jewish population initially lived in Harat al-Yahud, or the Jewish Quarter, until the 20th century. During the early years of the century, Jews spread through the city according to their socio-economic standing, middle-class Jews started moving to the Darej Sahah and the Bab al-Faraage neighborhoods while the upper middle-class moved to the 'French' neighborhood of Jamaliyeh. According to the Jewish Encyclopedia published between 1901 and 1906, "there are said to be about 10,000 Jews in Aleppo, each of whom must pay a poll-tax. Besides the various primary schools, where Hebrew and Arabic are taught, there is a boys' school, founded by the Alliance Israélite Universelle in 1869, with 250 pupils, of whom 96 pay for tuition. There is also a school for girls, with 195 pupils, of whom 79 pay. The latter was founded in 1889."
The tumultuous days at the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the requirement for Jews to do military service resulted in the first wave of western migration from Syria to other countries, mainly to America, Egypt and England. During World War I, many Jewish families in Aleppo were separated from each other as males were sent away to avoid military service.

By the end of World War I, there were still over 6,000 Jews in Aleppo.\textsuperscript{113}

At the conclusion of World War I, the French took control of the Syrian portion of the former Ottoman Empire. Under the French Mandate, the Jewish population increased to 7,500 people.\textsuperscript{114} European Jews, who migrated to Syria during the Mandate Period, were exempt from taxes and this created economic difficulties for the local Jewish population and resulted in a new wave of migration. This group of Jewish people settled mainly in the United States, specifically in Brooklyn and New Jersey.

The independence of Syria after WWII did not herald good news for the local Jewish population. During the Ottoman Empire, the Jews were largely left to govern themselves. Only with the rise of Zionism in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the Muslim-Jewish relationships became frayed. But, pogroms and other direct actions against Jewish people did not take place until the conflicts surrounding the formation of the State of Israel. A series of pogroms took place in 1947 that targeted both Jewish people and Jewish heritage including synagogues and shops: "About 150 buildings, 50 shops and offices, ten synagogues and five schools were damaged; 160 old Torah scrolls from the Bahsîta synagogue were burned. The leaders of the community preserved the famous \textit{Keter Aram Zova}. Thanks to their efforts most of the scroll arrived in Israel."\textsuperscript{115} In 1947, there were an estimated 10,000 Jews in Aleppo. About 6,000 of them fled the city, many of them crossing the borders of Lebanon or Turkey to either settle in those countries or move onto others. "Four schools of the Alliance Israélite Universelle were closed by the government in 1950, and thereafter most of the children studied at a religious elementary school (\textit{talmud torah}). As the community dwindled, this school was also closed, and some Jewish children studied at Christian schools."\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{113} Ashtor et al., \textit{Aleppo}, p. 613-617.
\textsuperscript{114} ibid.
\textsuperscript{115} ibid.
\textsuperscript{116} ibid.
After the establishment of the State of Israel, the Jews of Syria were stripped from their rights to own property or travel outside of Syria as a family. Between the 1950s and 1990s, Jewish people in Aleppo and elsewhere in Syria lived in fear under close surveillance.\textsuperscript{117} Only after the 1990s, following the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference and with the intervention of the United States, Jewish families were granted rights to travel outside of Syria.\textsuperscript{118, 119} Even then, they were only granted tourist visas to the United States preventing them from working there legally until 2000, when a change in legislation enabled them to petition for work visas in the United States.\textsuperscript{120}

In 1995, amidst hopes for peace between Syria and Israel, a study was sponsored by World Monuments Fund to document the state of Syrian Synagogues. In addition to the positive political atmosphere, the latest immigration wave of Jewish people from Syria in the 1990s left their holy places unattended and unprotected. Their mass migration to the United States must have brought attention to the possible fate of these holy sites. The documentation work was perceived as a first step in the preservation of the Jewish heritage in Syria. A series of synagogues were photographed by Robert Lyons. When the peace process stalled, the documentation undertaken by Robert Lyons became the sole result of this larger project. These photographs were then incorporated in an exhibit in the United States that opened in 2005.

Larry Luxner, details the reactions towards Jews, Jewish Heritage, Israel and Zionism in a 2007 article based on his recent trip to Aleppo. According to his observations, while there is a general good will towards Jewish people, on the other hand Israel and its Zionist policies are disliked. Mahmoud Sharif, a local tour guide stated that:

\textsuperscript{117} Luxner, Larry, 2007, “People of "the book" just like us....” Middle East no. 381: 56-59. EBSCO   MegaFILE, EBSCOhost (accessed April 3, 2010.)
\textsuperscript{118} Gruber, Silenced Sacred Spaces: Selected Photographs of Syrian Synagogues by Robert Lyon.
\textsuperscript{119} Sarina Roffé, The Jews of Aleppo.
\textsuperscript{120} ibid.
Israel is one thing, and Jews are something else. We respect the Jewish religion and consider it one of God's religions, but we don't accept Israel." He continued, "the problem is not with the people of Israel, but with the government. Israel uses heavy weapons against children. They've forced Palestinians from their land. The Palestinians have a miserable life, and many [refugee] families in Syria still think of their villages there. If you ask them about Palestine, they will cry.121

This good will towards the Jewish people extends to their holy places to some degree. A sign in front of the abandoned Joab Ben Zeruiah synagogue sternly warns against dumping trash "in front of this holy place of worship." But, the Jewish quarter and its residences are now replaced with multi-story apartment buildings and the people currently living in one of the oldest and most prosperous Jewish communities do not know much about this heritage:

Hebrew gravestones, partially obscured by weeds and garbage, occupy a plot of land adjacent to the historic Joab Ben Zeruiah synagogue, whose stone archways and grand interior walls hint to a prosperous and lively Jewish past.

The shul, in continuous use for over 1,600 years, now sits deserted. And the families living in nearby apartments have no clue that the ancient building in their midst once housed the most influential center of Torah learning in the Middle East. 122

The Decreased Jewish population and the state of political affairs between Israel and Syria make the preservation of the Jewish religious heritage in Syria and Aleppo challenging.123 The few remaining Jews in Aleppo are under government protection. The state guards the remaining synagogues and arrests anyone who attacks Jews. "By the middle of 2001, Rabbi Hudar Shahada Kabariti estimated that 150 Jews were living in Damascus, 30 in Haleb and 20 in Kamashili. Every two or three months, a rabbi visits from Istanbul, Turkey, to oversee preparation of kosher meat, which residents freeze and use until his next visit. Two synagogues remain open in Damascus."124

122 ibid.
123 Gruber, Silenced Sacred Spaces:Selected Photographs of Syrian Synagogues by Robert Lyon.
Thus, Aleppo’s once vibrant Jewish life is at an end. Their architectural legacy still exists in the city in the remaining religious buildings. But, these places are abandoned and not accessible to the public. What to do with them is a major problem that is not only specific to Aleppo or Syria. Jewish heritage suffers in many places around the world. Many Jewish sites have been abandoned or are facing delayed maintenance due to the immigration of Jews to Israel or to other countries that present more favorable conditions for them.

Preserving a religious heritage when the congregations that made those places viable are gone is a difficult proposition. It is a shared problem among religious groups as many churches, synagogues and mosques have lost their once vibrant communities due to a variety of reasons. These reasons range from a decline in religious life, secularization of formerly theocratic societies or out migration of their congregations. The Jewish heritage has been witness to this last fact. This has resulted in initiatives such as the World Monuments Funds Jewish Heritage Program. "WMF’s Jewish Heritage Program was launched in 1988 to draw attention to Jewish cultural heritage under threat as a result of the Jewish Diaspora and the inability of smaller communities to care for their sacred and secular sites."125

These types of initiatives also give a way for the Jewish Diaspora to be tangentially involved in the preservation of their heritage and give them a voice in the fate of the places that were once home to them. However, the political situations usually make undertaking significant and prominent projects difficult. Moreover, there is always the question of what will happen to these places after the restoration projects are over when viable congregations are absent. Involvement of the diasporal communities is also highly dependent on the financial resources of the diaspora. While the Jewish diaspora is well established, many others are struggling to adapt to new cultures and usually do not have the resources to contribute to the preservation of their own heritage.

**Christian Heritage in Aleppo**

While the Jewish heritage in Aleppo is threatened, the Christian population and their heritage is faring much better despite a history of violence against Christians in the city. The majority of Christians lived in the neighborhood of Judayda, that was established during the last century of the Mamluk rule, but it gained its full meaning under the Ottomans during the 16th century.\textsuperscript{126} After a relatively peaceful coexistence that characterized Ottoman cities and especially Aleppo, the balance was tilted with the decline in the Ottoman Empire and with the interventions of western powers on behalf of special groups, mainly specific Christian communities allowing them to be exempt from military service or taxation. In November 1850, the Christian population of the city was attacked by the Muslims and in the skirmishes several Christian churches in addition to many houses and businesses were destroyed. According to the firsthand account of Hanna Houri, an Aleppine businessmen, the reason for the conflict was "the jealousy entertained by the Mohammedans against the Christians, who are exempt from the conscription which has lately been exacted from the city by our Lord the Sultan. (Christians are not accepted in the Turkish army.)"\textsuperscript{127} The skirmishes were quickly overwhelmed by the Ottoman army. According to The Times; "1800 rebels fell in the struggle...All property of the rebels will be devoted by the authorities to indemnify the Christians for their losses...and to rebuild the three churches which were burnt. The Sultan, who always leans towards indulgent measures, has been compelled on this occasion to do violence to his feelings, and to show by severe repression that those who, through their fanaticism, wish, by organizing vast conspiracies, to intimidate him and make him abandon his principles of religious tolerance will never succeed."\textsuperscript{128}

\textsuperscript{126} David, *Aleppo: From the Ottoman Metropolis to the Syrian City*, p.333.  
\textsuperscript{127} Burkhard Barker, "The Massacre Of Christians At Aleppo." *The Times*, Nov 26, 1850 1850, sec. Issue 20656; col E, p. 5.  
\textsuperscript{128} "The Massacre At Aleppo." *The Times*, Dec 05, 1850 1850, sec. Issue 20664; col F, p. 5.
Despite the historical conflicts, today Christians and Muslims are coexisting peacefully in Aleppo. While the numbers of Christians have decreased in the past decades due to emigration of young people to other countries that promise political security and prosperity, the Syrian Christians still constitute 10% of the Syrian population. Grégoire III Laham, Malkite Patriarch of Antioch, states that Syria has the best conditions for Christians in the Middle East. "Here in Syria the government treats the churches as it treats the mosques. We are exempt from the payment of electricity and other utilities. Last year, a presidential decree approved by Parliament established that the Catholics may follow their own legal rules on issues that involve individual rights like those of marriage and inheritance"\(^\text{129}\)

While the Syrian government has been tolerant of the expression of Christian faith, the growing sentiments for fundamentalist Islam in the Middle East, perhaps exacerbated by the United States' occupation of Iraq, is making the Syrian Christians nervous. Their fears

were substantiated as a large group of Christians migrated to Syria from Iraq to escape the persecutions against Christians there after the US invasion of Iraq.\footnote{130 “Syria’s Christian churches face political, religious challenges [Archive] - Armenian Diaspora News Forum,” [cited 2010]. Available from http://www.armeniandiaspora.com/forum/archive/index.php/t-12212.html.}

**International Organizations at Work in Aleppo**

International intervention is nothing new in Aleppo. Starting with the French Mandate period, the planning of the city depended on foreign experts. These early plans were usually inspired by urban renewal ideas and destroyed large portions of the Old City by opening wide thoroughfares that cut the historic fabric into fragments and isolated the historic neighborhoods. Additionally, the new developments violated the social norms by encouraging high rise development, which encroached into the privacy of residences causing flight from the areas adjacent to high rise developments.

The result of these drastic plans was a grassroots effort to halt them. A group of conservationists led by Adli Qudsi, with support from the Department of Antiquities and French geographer Jean Claude David, managed to list much of Old Aleppo as a national monument with the Syrian Ministry of Culture. However, the initiators of the grassroots preservation efforts were not successful in their attempts to convince the local government, which immediately appealed the decision. As the city officials could not be convinced, UNESCO was invited to give opinion on the urban issues of Aleppo. UNESCO, therefore, commissioned a team of experts that ultimately supported the conservationists’ recommendation. As a result, the Old City was kept on the national register that brought restrictions for further demolition.\footnote{131 Lieza H. Vincent and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Dept. of Urban Studies and Planning, *When home becomes world heritage : the case of Aleppo, Syria*, 2004), p. 61.}

The grassroots efforts to stop the development plans started a new trajectory for Aleppo: "from an undervalued and marginalized position to one of prominence as a symbol of Syrian heritage."\footnote{132 ibid.}
Aleppo was included in the World Heritage List in 1986. The significance of the city is stated as:

Located at the crossroads of several trade routes from the 2nd millennium B.C., Aleppo was ruled successively by the Hittites, Assyrians, Arabs, Mongols, Mamelukes and Ottomans. The 13th-century citadel, 12th-century Great Mosque and various 17th-century madrasas, palaces, caravanserais and hammams all form part of the city’s cohesive, unique urban fabric, now threatened by overpopulation.

In a report submitted to the World Heritage Center, it is mentioned that "Alep est célèbre par ses mosquées et ses églises. Elle est considérée parmi les plus grandes villes islamiques en raison du grand nombre de mosquées de madrasas et d'autres monuments qu'elle possède."\(^{133}\)\(^{134}\) The significance given to Christian and Islamic heritage but the lack of any mention of a once flourishing Jewish heritage corroborates that this heritage is becoming more and more invisible.

With the inscription of the city on the World Heritage List, the international interest in Aleppo increased dramatically. As the World Monuments Fund was sponsoring the documentation of the Jewish synagogues in mid-1990s, another international project in Aleppo was gearing up by the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. This initiative was started with the request for assistance from the Syrian Directorate of Antiquities and Museums in 1991 to come up with strategies to conserve and reuse some of the citadel sites in Syria. Ultimately three citadels were selected: the Citadels of Aleppo, Masyaf and the Castle of Salah al-Din. The work at the citadel of Aleppo involved the conservation of several key architectural features including the Ayyubid Palace. According to the Aga Khan Islamic Cities Programme, their goal was to create good examples of conservation and to train craftsmen. Additionally, improvements geared towards the tourism industry were undertaken including visitor centers, guidebooks

\(^{133}\) (Aleppo is famous for its mosques and churches. It is considered to be among the largest Islamic cities because of the great number of mosques, madrasas and other monuments.)

and the establishment of site management guidelines.\textsuperscript{135} For example, a new guidebook was recently published that provides a history of the Aleppo Citadel and information on individual monuments that are of interest to tourists.

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ), a federally owned German institution also became involved in Aleppo in the early 1990s. Alarmed by the long term neglect of the built environment of Aleppo, the emigration of half of its population, and the increased poverty of the remaining residents, GTZ started a project that aimed to revitalize Aleppo. As one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities of the world and a World Heritage Site, the project aimed to stop the decay in the Old City of Aleppo and engender a new dynamism to the city. With projects ranging from providing micro-loans for residential renovations to improving the water and sanitation systems of the city, GTZ’s project is comprehensive. GTZ also tries to create a pathway for sustainable tourism in Aleppo and establish local mechanisms that can further the project after the withdrawal of the German agency.\textsuperscript{136}

Increasing the public participation in decision making mechanisms has also been an important component of the GTZ project. According to GTZ reports, the inhabitants of the old city now enthusiastically contribute their own suggestions for improvement.\textsuperscript{137} This local involvement is an important step in the values based preservation practice and enables the residents of Aleppo to participate in the decision making mechanism in regards to heritage management. In order to accomplish this goal, the GTZ periodically holds meetings to collect ideas from the residents of the city.

While the urban conservation efforts undertaken by GTZ were part of a larger urban rehabilitation model that aims to address issues such as transportation systems and


\textsuperscript{137} ibid.
environmental problems, it manages to keep heritage management at the center. Therefore, while taking care of day to day challenges of residents such as providing for health centers and trying to improve the air quality of the city, it also takes advantage of and revitalizes the historic fabric of the city.

In the last decade, the population of Aleppo started in a positive trajectory again after 50 years of decline. Considering that between 1945 and 1995, Aleppo had lost half of its population, this positive trend is an important success for Aleppo. While it may be difficult to determine the exact reason for the change, it seems likely that the interventions in the management of the historic environment and increased tourism (and the economic activity created by it) play an important role.

**Analysis**

One of the main influences of the World Heritage status seems to come from the fact that it helped attract international organizations such as the GTZ, the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and the World Monuments Fund to the city. Of course, the other 'positive' impact of the status is the increased tourist numbers and economic benefits associated with the tourism industry. While World Heritage status did not seem to have helped the Jewish heritage in Aleppo, it affected the heritage conservation in the city in many, perhaps indirect ways.

For example, a result of the international involvement in Aleppo was an increase in the standards of the planning profession in the city as well as in Syria. This was possible through the new infusion of technology, introduction of new socioeconomic programs, and professional training that came with the involvement of highly regarded international organizations. Even with these international organizations at the scene, the heritage of the absent Jewish-'other' is still an unresolved issue.
Increased tourism is another important factor. Recent improvements in politics between Syria and the United States and the easing of the visa requirements between Turkey and Syria also result in a dramatic increase in tourist numbers to this World Heritage City. In September 2009, tourist numbers were more than one third higher than the numbers a year earlier. And Aleppo's unique blend of Ottoman, Jewish, Christian, French and Armenian influences makes this a more attractive place for visitors. According to a New York Times article, "Bright-green domed mosques rub shoulders with Armenian cathedrals, Maronite churches and even a synagogue. Its setting amid rolling plains dotted with olive groves and the ruins of dead cities calls to mind a scene out of 'One Thousand and One Nights'."\(^{138}\) While attracting tourist interest may not be the only or the most idealistic reason for preserving the diverse heritage in a city, it shows that diversity is part of what makes Aleppo an attraction.

The built environment of the city also has been changing in the last decade as a reaction to increased tourism. "Before, you had the government-run hotel on the square, and that was it," said Thomas Pritzkat, project manager of the Aleppo Urban Development Project. "Now people are buying up old homes and transforming them into hotels and restaurants."\(^{139}\)

While tourism and international aid is making the city more prosperous, the issue of Jewish heritage seems to have been overlooked. It is important to state that the historical conflicts that targeted the heritage as well as the Jewish and Christian communities in Syria are not directly influenced by religion. Rather, their source lies in regional politics. The tolerance of Christians and Christian heritage in the 20th century despite the hostilities against them in the 19th support this conclusion. As a group, they were not attacked due to their religion, but because they were exempted from military service due to their special status in the Ottoman Empire as a group. Additionally, the general good will towards the Jewish population before the political conflicts between various political entities in the 20th century is a good indication


\(^{139}\) ibid.
of this trend. This good will is evident in the generally large numbers of the Jewish population that was present in Aleppo. Today, this number has decreased from thousands to a few and is facing extinction in a land where the Jewish people have lived for centuries.

Efforts to include the public in decision making have also been a positive step for heritage management in Aleppo. However, most of the Jewish population has left Syria due to political ill-will. It is, therefore impossible for them to participate in the local decision making mechanisms. The issue of diasporal involvement in the management of cultural resources is a politically challenging one. As people leave a land, they are inevitably stripped from their right to participate in the civic matters that may affect their own heritage. World Heritage has not yet been successful in creating mechanisms that would allow this to happen when political empathy between ruling and diasporal groups is absent.
5. JERUSALEM

Jerusalem could easily be considered as the quintessential conflict city of the 20th century. The city encompasses sacred sites for three major monotheistic religions and it is also the focus of the current conflict between Israel and Palestine. Therefore, the city looms large with the conflicts that surround its built environment. While conflicts have occurred in the city throughout its history, with the 20th century, the conflicts in the city seem to have taken a new turn. In a simplistic way, we could generalize that the pre-20th century conflicts took place among different sects of the same faith. On the other hand, the 20th century conflicts spread out to become conflicts between different faiths.

Figure 11: Location of Jerusalem. Source: Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection. University of Texas.
The origins of the city date back to the time of King David. After being elected as the king for all Israeli tribes, he is said to have moved his capital to the current day location of Jerusalem and settled on the slopes of Mount Moriah. He also supposedly purchased the top of the mountain for a temple. However, the temple was not completed during his lifetime. Rather, it is associated with his son, Solomon's reign.140

The Temple of Solomon was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 BCE. After the Achamaenid King, Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon, he granted Jews permission to return to Jerusalem. Under Darius I’s reign, the Temple was rebuilt albeit at a more modest scale. In the 4th century, Alexander the Great gained control of the area. After his death, his generals split his conquests. While Jerusalem was under the control of the Ptolemies in the beginning, it was in the liminal zone between the lands of the Ptolemies and Seleucids. After repeated attacks, the Seleucid dynasty managed to capture the city. Following the Hellenistic era, Rome started to intervene in the affairs of Jerusalem. Caesar appointed Herod to administer the city. Herod, a master builder himself, enlarged the area where the Second Temple was located resulting in a much larger Temple Mount. After an uprising, Romans destroyed the city and its second temple in 70 CE. Only remnants of this temple are the western retaining wall that came to be known as the Wailing Wall, holiest site of Judaism.141

Later, the city became a Roman military camp adapted to the ruins of the Herodian Jerusalem. The city was transformed into a Christian city with the reign of Constantine in the first half of the fourth century.142 In the early seventh century, Jerusalem had emerged as a Christian Holy City with two prominent themes: commemoration of a holy history centering on the Passion of Christ and the expectation of the last days. During this time, Jewish people were

141 ibid.
not allowed to live in Jerusalem, but were able to come once a year to lament the destruction of the Temple.\textsuperscript{143}

Around 637 CE, the Greek patriarch of the city surrendered Jerusalem to the Islamic forces.\textsuperscript{144} While there are many versions of the surrender of Jerusalem to the Muslims, the oldest sources state that a capitulation was arranged between the city and Khalid b. Thabit al-Fahmi. According to the capitulation, the open country would belong to the Muslims while the city and its residents would be left untouched as long as they paid the tribute asked by the Muslims.

Due to the capitulation, Muslims could not take over the structures occupied at the time of the conquest. Therefore, the Dome of the Rock, the iconic Muslim structure, was built on the site of the formerly destroyed Jewish Temple across the valley from the important Church of Holy Apostles. It is suggested that the Dome of the Rock was built as a symbol of Muslim rule over a Christian city that was accomplished by reactivating a ruined Jewish holy site.\textsuperscript{145} Just south of the Dome of the Rock, the Aqsa Mosque was built during the reign of Abd al-Malik. This hypostyle congregational mosque would come to be known as one of the holiest mosques in the Muslim world and along with the Dome of the Rock, it plays a central role in the 20\textsuperscript{th} century conflicts in Jerusalem.

Al Aqsa Mosque, Dome of the Rock and some later Islamic monuments form the Haram al-Sharif compound, one of the most holy sites in Islam immediately following Mecca and Medina, the birth places of Islam. This sacred area is built directly on the Wailing Wall, remnants of the destroyed Jewish Temple, holiest site of Judaism. The juxtaposition of these important sacred sites lies at the bottom of many heritage related conflicts in Jerusalem; it is also the characteristic that makes Jerusalem such a special place. For this reason, this chapter's main focus is on the Haram al-Sharif and its periphery despite the examination of several other

\textsuperscript{143} ibid.
\textsuperscript{144} ibid.
\textsuperscript{145} ibid.
conflict areas.

The Muslim rule was on hold in Jerusalem for two centuries when the Kingdom of Jerusalem was established in the city after the First Crusade. During this period, the Dome of the Rock was converted into a church by the Augustinian Monastic Order. Baldwin I, the ruler of the Christian kingdom, converted Al-Aqsa mosque into his own palace. During the Kingdom of Jerusalem, all non-Christian forms of worship and permanent settlement of non-Christians were forbidden in Jerusalem. In 1187, Saladdin, a Muslim ruler, took over Jerusalem but allowed the Crusaders to stay. Following the Muslim recapture of the city, Muslim institutions were reinstated while the Church of the Holy Sepulcre was left to the Christians. According to Oleg Grabar, the Muslim attitude towards the city was different than the Christian model: "It was entirely in the spirit of early Islam that it incorporated the Jewish and Christian notions of the holiness of Jerusalem and made the area of the ancient Jewish Temple into a Muslim place of worship."  

**Ottoman Rule**

After a brief recapture of the city by the Christians, the city was sacked by Mongols twice in the 13th century. This brought the population of the town to less than 2,000 people. The city remained in flux until the Ottomans absorbed the city and its surroundings in 1517. While Jerusalem remained a provincial town, it benefited from Ottoman patronage due to its important religious role.

Ottoman Rule in Jerusalem as elsewhere depended on the *millet* system, which was an extension of the *dhimmi* system that praised religious tolerance for other faiths of 'the book.'

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Millet usually denotes to "religious community, community of the same confession or the same rite" and had certain implications under the Ottomans. When used in the legal books of the Ottoman Empire, it refers to non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire (Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Roman Catholic Christians as well as Jews). This system allowed different groups to co-exist and self-govern themselves as long as they paid their taxes to the Ottoman government.

Despite the millet system, Ottoman government intervened in the interior affairs of religious groups when controversies could not be resolved. The disputes around the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are one of the main contestation stories in Jerusalem that had to be addressed.
by the Ottoman government. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre was built during the reign of Constantine, the founder of the Byzantine Empire and who accepted Christianity as an official state religion. The fourth century building enshrined the most holy sites of Christianity: the Calvary and the Tomb of Christ. In subsequent generations, the building underwent a series of changes that resulted in its current day eclectic form. During the Ottoman rule of Jerusalem, various Christian parties quarreled over the control of the building. The major stakeholders, Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholics and the Armenians, divided up the building. However, they never came to an agreement on how to manage the whole site. The disagreements were to such a degree, the keys to the building had to be given to a Muslim family in order to avoid further conflicts between different Christian sects.148

This situation was simply not sustainable and Ottoman authorities had to come up with a more lasting solution. In the firman (decrees) of 1757 and 1852, a series of ritualistic arrangements were laid out for specific Christian Holy Sites in Jerusalem that were being contested by different Christian groups. These sites included the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Convent of Dayr al-Sultan, the Sanctuary of Ascension, the Tomb of Virgin Mary, the Church of Nativity, the Milk Grotto and the Shepherd's Field.149 This arrangement, called the Status Quo, caused some interesting challenges in the management of the Church of Holy Sepulchre. Portions of the building were assigned to specific groups according to the divisions in effect at the time of the firman. The changes to the common areas would necessitate unanimous approval. This arrangement limited the scope of what can be done in the building severely. Perhaps the most famous, or infamous, reminder of the Status Quo is the ladder in an upper window of the building's southern facade. This ladder can be repaired but it cannot be taken away as it was on the building when the firman was issued. Robert Ousterhout observes that "in addition, there continued to be contested areas within the building that cannot be cleaned,

because cleaning implies ownership."150 Thus, while the arrangements effectively quelled the disputes, it also presented new perhaps unanticipated challenges in the management of the building.

**British Mandate**

Ultimately, at the end of the First World War, Ottomans had to give up Jerusalem. According to the Armistices of October 1918 and January 1919, the territory of Palestine was not to be given back to the 'Turks.' Perhaps to avoid Arab independence, Palestine was placed under the British Mandate. This decision was sealed with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, as it relates to "certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire, [which] have reached a state of development... their existence as separate nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone."151 A draft mandate was presented to the newly established League of Nations by Britain in 1922 for Palestine. The mandate document included the Belfour Declaration in its Preamble that provided for a Jewish national home in Palestine with "safeguards to 'non-Jewish communities'".152

The Belfour Declaration marked the end of an era in Jerusalem. As Sami Hadawi tells in the tale of his childhood in Jerusalem, the relationships before the Balfour Declaration were amicable among different religious groups. He describes communal outings to a variety of religious sites. "Moslem, Christian and Jew alike took part in the Moslem pilgrimage to the tomb of the prophet Moses." Or describes how they all "flocked to the Valley to take part in the Jewish celebrations at the tomb of Sadik Shameon," or "picknicked in the gardens around the tomb of the Holy Virgin Mary, near Gethsamane, where the Christian community spent a day and

152 ibid. p. 45.
a night rejoicing.” 153 While we need to take the reminiscences of the past with caution, as one tends to over romanticize a past that is beyond reach, the image Hadawi paints is a much happier one than the conflict ridden Jerusalem we came to know today.

When the Ottoman forces left the city in defeat, Ronald Storrs became the governor of Jerusalem in 1917. The city was in a dire condition without any provisions and the only available water supply was contaminated. However, among all these logistical difficulties, Storrs did not neglect to take steps for the preservation of the city. In a talk that he gave to the Overseas Club and Patriotic League, he stated that: "Travelers... would pass the ancient walls, whose stones were hewn from the quarries of Solomon, and climb the Mount of Olives, from whose summit they could look over the city, of which, though its towers, pinnacles and minarets wore the work of more recent ages, the general appearance was, and he hoped would be allowed to remain, very much what it was 2000 years ago." 154 To pursue his vision for Jerusalem, Storrs published a proclamation that forbid the demolition, alteration, construction or repair of any building in the city of Jerusalem without a proper written permission from the Military Governor. 155 He also mandated the use of Jerusalem stone in construction and forbade the use of stucco, corrugated iron and red tiles. Stucco and corrugated iron were considered Western imports and red tiles were becoming a symbol of the Zionist movement. Arthur Ruppin, a Zionist administrator from the Jewish National Fund, had stated that the red tile roofs were a symbol of Jewish civility in comparison to the 'huts of baked clay' that belonged to the Arabs. Therefore, in Storrs' Jerusalem, neither tile roofs nor stucco had a place. Moreover, Storrs blocked any modern improvements to the city as in his mind these improvements would undermine the heritage of the city. 156

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155 ibid.
156 ibid.
Beyond limiting the advances of modernity, Storrs also founded the Pro-Jerusalem Society that aimed to restore Old Jerusalem. The members of the society were an ethnic and religious mixture of prominent citizens of Jerusalem, including the Grand Mufti, most powerful member of the Muslim community, the patriarchs of the Orthodox and Latin Churches, the head of the Armenian Convent in Jerusalem and the head of the Jewish community and Storrs himself. These individuals only had one shared goal, the physical well-being of the city and they seemed to have worked well together.\textsuperscript{157}

While the funding for the Pro-Jerusalem Society's activities was extremely limited, they managed to raise funds to undertake some very important work. The Dome of the Rock was restored under the supervision of Ernest Richmond, the advisor architect of the Waqf.\textsuperscript{158} Artisans were brought from Turkey to craft the tiles as the original tiles were added to the building during the Ottoman Era and were of Turkish craftsmanship. The tile makers also provided the tile street signs that adorned the city. Moreover, the Society restored parts of the Ottoman walls of the city.

According to their vision, the Pro-Jerusalem Society also removed some of the 'modern' improvements to the city that were implemented during the last decade of the Ottoman Rule. A contested example of this erasure happened with actions taken to remove the Clock Tower that was placed near the Jaffa Gate. Clock towers were seen as a symbol of modernization in the late Ottoman Empire and many were built in cities such as Istanbul and Izmir. The clock tower near the Jaffa Gate was of a white stone rather than the traditional Jerusalem stone. Irish archaeologist R. A. S. Macalister complained that the Jaffa Gate "has been utterly

\textsuperscript{157} ibid.

\textsuperscript{158} According to Encyclopedia of Islam, a Waqf is "in Islamic law, the act of founding a charitable trust, and, hence the trust itself...The essential elements are that a person, with the intention of committing a pious deed, declares part of his or her property to be henceforth unalienable and designates persons or public utilities as beneficiaries of its yields."
spoilt by the erection above of an ultra-hideous clock tower, which is a perfect eyesore."159 Thus, the Pro-Jerusalem society started their move on the clock tower. The Palestine Annual mentions that "as however, the inhabitants of Jerusalem were naturally averse from the loss of their clock, the tower will be reerected in a simple more suitable form in front of the Post Office in Allenby Square."160

Figure 13: The Wailing Wall. 1904 Detail. Source: Bauernfeind, Gustav. Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.

160 ibid.
Storrs' idealization of the city of Jerusalem was a spiritual one, however it was not from a particular Christian view and he did not seek to impose a Christian character to the city. According to Annabel Wharton, "he supposed that a common concern with the preservation of the city would establish a communal ground for the belligerent ethnic groups of Jerusalem Arabs, Christians, and Jews. His expectations were frustrated. All parties involved cared passionately for Jerusalem, but their Jerusalems were not the same." Storrs' governorship of the city came to an end with the antagonisms that had started at the end of the 1920s. The desire to create a peaceful multi-ethnic state had failed.161

An important conflict arose around the Western (Wailing) Wall or al-Buraq in 1929. This wall is holy to both Muslim and Jewish populations. Muslims believe that the prophet Mohammed tied his horse Buraq to this wall during his holy ascent to heaven. Jewish people believe that the wall contains parts of their Holy Temple that was destroyed. Moreover, the wall is part of the platform holding the Haram al-Sharif. To complicate matters further, the pavement in front of the wall is owned by the Abu Madyan Sufi Waqf. During the Ottoman rule, Jews were allowed to pray in front of the wall but were not allowed to affix any religious paraphernalia to the wall and generally good will was displayed by both parties. However, the situation deteriorated during the British Mandate. While the British authorities were obliged to preserve the formerly established arrangements in the area surrounding the wall, the influx of Jewish people to Jerusalem created difficulties. Now much greater numbers of Jewish people were praying around the wall and the talks of purchasing the pavement created alarm in the Muslim circles. The tipping point was reached when a screen was erected to separate the male and female Jews praying at the Wall. According the former arrangements, no religious equipment was allowed in the area, and the new screen violated this established order. The reaction from the Muslim side was to start large scale Sufi prayers in front of the wall. In the end, the situation became a test of which religious community had a more prominent presence in Jerusalem. In August

161 Wharton, Jerusalem Remade, p. 39.
1929, riots started, 100 Jewish people were killed and Jewish settlements were attacked. British authorities acted to suppress the riots and the previous status quo was reestablished.  

The conflict between various factions in Palestine intensified during the 1930s. Starting in 1936, Arabs started rioting in the city and protesting against Jewish immigration to Palestine. In 1936, Peel Commission was formed to investigate and generate possible solutions to the conflict in Palestine as a reaction to the Arab riots. In the end, the committee members recommended the partition of Palestine. According to the Peel Commission Report:

The Partition of Palestine is subject to the overriding necessity of keeping the sanctity of Jerusalem and Bethlehem inviolate and of ensuring free and safe access to them for all the world. That, in the fullest sense of the mandatory phrase, is "a sacred trust of civilization"--a trust on behalf not merely of the peoples of Palestine but of multitudes in other lands to whom those places, one or both, are Holy Places...

The protection of the Holy Places is a permanent trust, unique in its character and purpose, and not contemplated by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations. In order to avoid misunderstanding, it might frankly be stated that this trust will only terminate if and when the League of Nations and the United States desire it to do so, and that, while it would be the trustee's duty to promote the well-being and development of the local population concerned, it is not intended that in course of time they should stand by themselves as a wholly self-governing community.

Guarantees as to the rights of the Holy Places and free access thereto... as to transit across the mandated area, and as to non-discrimination in fiscal, economic and other matters should be maintained in accordance with the principles of the Mandate System. But the policy of the Balfour Declaration would not apply; and no question would arise of balancing Arab against Jewish claims or vice versa. All the inhabitants of the territory would stand on an equal footing. The only official language would be that of the Mandatory Administration. Good and just government without regard for sectional interests would be its basic principle...

The Mandatory should similarly be charged with the protection of religious endowments and of such buildings, monuments and places in the Arab and Jewish States as are sacred to the Jews and the Arabs respectively....

This is the first report suggesting the partition of Palestine and suggests a population

162 Dumper, *The politics of sacred space: the old city of Jerusalem in the Middle East conflict*, p. 77-78.
exchange. As quoted above, Holy Places in Jerusalem as well as other sites such as Nazareth, Sea of Galilee, Bethlehem and other religious sites would be administered by a newly formed mandate to allow equal access to these places. However, the partition plans were rejected. With the start of the World War II, the international focus shifted to other areas. And the Holocaust of Jewish people in Nazi Europe would come to play an important role in the future of Palestine and Jerusalem. The atrocities against the Jewish people altered the balance of sympathies and resulted in perhaps a different outcome for Palestine that favored a Jewish state.

1948-1967

United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181 directed the termination of the British Mandate and withdrawal of British armed forces in 1947 following the end of the WWII. According to the Resolution:

Independent Arab and Jewish States and the Special International Regime for the City of Jerusalem, set forth in Part III of this Plan, shall come into existence in Palestine two months after the evacuation of the armed forces of the mandatory Power has been completed but in any case not later than 1 October 1948. The boundaries of the Arab State, the Jewish State, and the City of Jerusalem shall be as described in Parts II and III below.

Therefore, the Resolution effectively divided the territory formerly governed by the British Mandate into three distinct entities. As discussed above, access to Holy Sites has already been a reason for conflicts in the city; therefore provisions were made in order to avoid such occurrences in the future:

Existing rights in respect of Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall not be denied or impaired. In so far as Holy Places are concerned, the liberty of access, visit, and transit shall be guaranteed, in conformity with existing rights, to all residents and citizens of the other State and of the City of Jerusalem, as well as to aliens, without distinction as to nationality, subject to requirements of national security, public order and decorum. Similarly, freedom of worship shall be guaranteed in conformity with existing rights, subject to the maintenance of public order and decorum.
Holy Places and religious buildings or sites shall be preserved. No act shall be permitted which may in any way impair their sacred character. If at any time it appears to the Government that any particular Holy Place, religious, building or site is in need of urgent repair, the Government may call upon the community or communities concerned to carry out such repair. The Government may carry it out itself at the expense of the community or community concerned if no action is taken within a reasonable time.\footnote{United Nations, \textit{United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181}, trans. United Nations General Assembly, 1947), 128 Plenary Meeting. \url{http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/un/res181.htm}.}

However, with the announcement of the founding of Israel, Arab League attacked Israel, starting a series of events that resulted in the division of Jerusalem. The eastern portions of the city, including the Old City was taken by Jordan, while the western portions were under the control of Israel. During this time, Israelis were excluded from their most holy site: the Wailing Wall on the periphery of the Haram al-Sharif.

\section*{1967 Onwards Until Oslo}

After the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, Israel took over East Jerusalem and the Old City that used to be governed by Jordan. General Moshe Dayan, the Israeli Chief of Staff broadcasted on the day they captured Jerusalem:

\begin{quote}
We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel. We have returned to the most sacred of our Holy Places, never to part from it again. To our Arab neighbors we stretch out, again at this hour—and with added emphasis—the hand of peace. And to our Christian and Moslem fellow citizens we solemnly promise religious freedom and rights. We came to Jerusalem not to possess ourselves of the Holy Places of others, or to interfere with the members of other faiths, but to safeguard the City's integrity and to live in it with others in unity.\footnote{Quoted in Dumper, \textit{The politics of sacred space : the old city of Jerusalem in the Middle East conflict}, p. 17.}
\end{quote}

However, in reality, this was not to be. The destruction of the Magharibi Quarter is a good example of Israeli action when it was desirable for political gain. The Magharibi Quarter, or the Moroccan Quarter, was an area right in front of the Western (Wailing) Wall (al-Buraq). It was mainly occupied by people of North African descent as the area was endowed during the Ayyubid period for the benefit of Moroccan pilgrims. On June 11, 1967, Israelis ordered the
residents of the quarter to vacate their houses. Immediately after, the Israeli army destroyed the quarter with the aid of explosives and then proceeded to clear the rubble with bulldozers. The result was an open plaza in front of the Wailing Wall, where the Jewish people could now congregate and pray. To the Muslims, the destruction of their homes and the ancient mosques of Buraq and Afdali meant something different and sinister that belied the declaration of General Moshe Dayan.\textsuperscript{166} Some scholars also consider the destruction of the Magharib Quarter, which dislocated 6,000 people, as the first step in the systematic "demographic purge aimed at 'Judaizing' the city and 'de-Arabizing' it."\textsuperscript{167} The Israelis justified the destruction as such:

The move was the settling of an historic account with those who had harassed the Jewish people over the centuries, restricting it and humiliating it at its holiest place, as well as with those who had prevented access to the wall for nineteen years. The displaced inhabitants of the Mugrabi Quarter were not personally to blame, but it was their fate to be additional victims of the Arab-Israeli conflict.\textsuperscript{168}

The conflicts surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem continued during the 1970s and 80s. 1980s also marked the inscription of the Old City and Its Walls on the World Heritage List and World Heritage in Danger List. (See below.) On October 8, 1990, another violent conflict centering on the Haram al-Sherif or the Temple Mount shook the tenuous balance in Jerusalem. Temple Mount Faithful, an orthodox Jewish group who aims to build the third Temple, was perceived to be threatening a takeover of the Haram al-Sharif. According to Muslim accounts, the Temple Mount Faithful tried to enter the compound in order to lay a corner stone for a new temple. This resulted in a panic amongst the Muslims in the city. Muslims were called to defend the Haram al-Sharif through the loud speakers in mosques. Large numbers of them gathered in the Haram and started hurling rocks at the Jewish people praying at the Wailing Wall. The violent intervention of the Israeli police resulted in the deaths of several Arabs. The accounts of what took place differ according to the source. Muslims claim that they only started throwing rocks after the Israeli police

\textsuperscript{166} ibid. p. 79.
\textsuperscript{167} Samman, Cities of God and nationalism : Mecca, Jerusalem, and Rome as contested world cities, p. 2.
\textsuperscript{168} Quoted in Dumper, The politics of sacred space : the old city of Jerusalem in the Middle East conflict, p. 79.
attacked them with tear gas and rubber bullets. The police stated that Palestinians started three assaults at the same time towards Israelis before the police took counter action.\textsuperscript{169}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{Dome_of_the_Rock.jpg}
\caption{Dome of the Rock. Source: Fine Arts Library Image Collection, University of Pennsylvania.}
\end{figure}

In a report from an official Israeli commission states:

The assembly of Muslims on the Temple Mount on Oct 8, 1990, deviated from the intended purpose of the place and from the norms that a holy site obliges. Thousands of Muslims were convened by religious leaders and by others, and they did not come to this place meant only for prayers with the intention of praying... As for the explanation given – that the goal of the assembly was to defend the Temple Mount from a small group of the Temple Mount Faithful who wanted to lay a cornerstone of the Third Temple – nothing about it warrants the legality of such an assembly. Furthermore, the state alone has responsibility for the maintenance of public order...\textsuperscript{170}

Nonetheless, the events show the political and ideological role played by the holy sites of the Haram al-Sharif and the symbolic role that these sites have on the minds of both Jews and Muslims. Therefore, actions in and around this area have a potential to be inflammatory that can lead to longer and much more spread conflicts between groups.

Despite the decline in the political status of the Muslim community in Jerusalem and loss of territory in general after the Arab-Israeli War in 1967, some positive developments especially in the restoration and renovation of historic monuments took place. Some of the successes can be attributed to the Awqaf Administration (awqaf being the plural of waqf, the religious charitable endowments). The current structure of the Awqaf Administration was established in 1966. A director-general oversees the Awqaf Administration in Jerusalem but directly responsible to the Ministry of Waqfs in Amman, Jordan. The Awqaf Administration owns a large portion of the properties in the Old City of Jerusalem, up to 67% of the Old City if the Haram al-Sharif complex is included in the calculations. (Haram is approximately 17% of the Old City.) According to Israeli scholar Yitzhak Reiter, who studied in the Awqaf Administration archives in the mid-1980s, the Awqaf Administration is responsible from assets including but not limited to almost 400 shops, a number of hotels, several school buildings and the central bus station and the shops surrounding it.171

In addition to a series of new constructions that aimed to revitalize the business in the Old City, Waqf Administration also embarked on an extensive renovation campaign. During which, the Awqaf Administration offices in the Madras 'Umariyya, several mosques, shops and residences, were renovated. These building campaigns were partially supported by the establishment of a Jordanian development council that guaranteed loans. Also, international architectural studies that were undertaken by British School of Archaeology and other institutions fueled a series of preservation projects in the Old City of Jerusalem. A Department of Islamic Archaeology was created under the Awqaf Administration. Their decision to include

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171 ibid. p. 87.
buildings in the restoration process depended on three factors. First, the building had to have historical significance. Second, the deterioration of the building had to be severe. Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, the buildings were under danger of confiscation by the Israelis.\footnote{ibid. p. 91.}

Through this program, many important Islamic monuments were restored. However, the restorations were expensive. When in 1988, Jordanian ties were ceased with the West Bank, severe budget cuts occurred. Jordan continues to support the operations of the Awqaf Administration, but the support is at a much lower level awaiting the resolution of the Middle East conflict. Nonetheless, Amman's continued sponsorship of heritage in Jerusalem also adds another party that needs to be involved in the negotiations on heritage.

In September 1993, Israel and Palestine Liberation Organization signed the Oslo Declaration of Principles. In the Oslo proceedings, for the first time, Jerusalem became a negotiable issue. According to the Oslo formula, Israeli military was to withdraw from West Bank and Jericho, transfer the power to a Palestinian authority and within a 5 year transitional period, Palestinians would gain self-government. Jerusalem was to be settled at the final stage of the permanent status negotiations. After the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the process slowed down. The next Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Barak, continued to hold onto the former protocol that Jerusalem should not be divided again. 8 years after Oslo, in 2000, Yasser Arafat and Ehud Barak met at Camp David for negotiations that were mediated by Bill Clinton. The Camp David proceedings in 2000 marked a new trend when Israel officially participated in conversations on the sovereignty of Jerusalem. Soon the negotiations centered around the Old City and more specifically on the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount. "In the words of Prime Minister Barak's adviser on Jerusalem at the time, the Camp David summit 'became a 'Jerusalem summit', perhaps even a 'Temple Mount summit.'"\footnote{Cecilia Albin and PASSIA., The Conflict over Jerusalem: some Palestinian responses to concepts of dispute resolution, (East Jerusalem: PASSIA, Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, 1990) p. 4-5.}

While Barak proved to be amenable to discussion on the sovereignty of the Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, Yasser
Arafat declined any negotiations. Therefore, the summit at Camp David collapsed around the issue of jurisdiction over the site, which proves the importance attached to these places. Considering Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount's importance as one of the most sacred places on earth, the elevated status of conflicts is understandable as both parties consider the site as one of their holiest and are not willing to compromise their stake.

In the new millennium, The Al Aqsa Intifada and the spark for the increased Palestinian-Israeli violence centered on the Haram Al-Sharif compound as well. Following the collapse of the Camp David proceedings, Ariel Sharon visited the Haram complex surrounded by a heavy security cordon and declared that the site would remain under Israeli control perpetually. Sharon's visit and declaration were highly provocative to the Muslims. According to a New York Times article: "Mr. Sharon's tour was meant to assert Israeli sovereignty over the Temple Mount, but the vast security operation organized for the visit suggested that he had anything but free access to the compound, which is effectively run by Islamic officials." While the origins of the Al Aqsa Intifada is disputed, the fact that the igniter event for the heightened conflict took place at the Haram al-Sharif complex goes a long way to support the conviction that Haram al-Sharif is the most sensitive place in the Middle East.

With these incidents in mind, Israeli authorities have been very sensitive about allowing access to the Haram al-Sharif by non-Muslims. On an encounter in 2005, a group of 50 right wing Israelis, called Revava, tried to enter the Haram. Thousands of police officers gathered in order to avoid violence similar to the previous incidents. The Revava had called for a rally earlier in the week, but the government stated that it would be inflammatory and refused to give them permission. As a precaution, police tried to block Jews and Muslims younger than 40 years of age to approach the holy site. However, they were not very successful to block the Muslim youth from spending the night at the Al-Aqsa Mosque in order to defend it. Gideon

174 ibid. p. 5.
Ezra, the Israeli public security minister stated that "I think it is the most sensitive place in the Middle East, and we'll do everything we can to prevent a provocation."\(^{176}\)

These incidents are only excerpts from the role that the Holy Sites of Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount, Wailing Wall/al-Buraq play in the Middle East conflict. The elevated political importance of these holy places must be taken into consideration in any preservation effort. These sites, by being holy to multiple groups, can ideally function as a platform for unity. However, the opposite occurs in Jerusalem and the sovereignty issues turn these places in to a stage for the conflict.

**A Current Controversy**

In 2010, while this paper was in preparation, another controversy surrounding the sacred sites in Jerusalem erupted. A Museum of Tolerance was conceptualized by the Simon Wiesenthal Center. The Center for Human Dignity/Museum of Tolerance Jerusalem was going to be a branch of the Los Angeles Museum of Tolerance and was going to be designed by Frank Gehry. However, the site chosen for the museum happened to be an important Muslim site, the Mamilla Cemetery. The cemetery had been in continuous use for several centuries until 1948, when ownership of Palestinian properties was transferred to the Israeli authorities. The site has been long threatened, and parts of it have been used as a parking lot, but this new development sparked additional controversy among the interested parties.\(^{177}\)

Since the ground breaking in 2004, the criticism of the museum has been vivid. After a brief hiatus in the construction, the Israeli Supreme Court cleared the continuation of the construction project. As a last resort, the Palestinians petitioned the United Nations to


stop the construction of the museum. On the other side of the argument, the Rabbi Hier Marvin, dean of the Wiesenthal Center, stated that the site was already used as a parking lot before and the Palestinians had no objection in parking their cars here. He also stated that there are no more Muslim graves at the site as they have been re-interred at another Muslim cemetery. (When the excavation accompanying the construction took place according to Israeli law in 2004, 250 skeletons were exhumed, some of them dating back to the 11th c. CE.) Therefore, the project is continuously being contested both in the news media as well as in the court systems. Recently, the architect Frank Gehry also withdrew from the project, officially stating that this was related with the economic situation and the other commitments of his firm. Gehry stated that his withdrawal was not influenced by the political issues surrounding the museum.

The World Heritage Status for Jerusalem

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan nominated the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls for inscription on the World Heritage List in 1980. The advisory board evaluation from 1981 pointed out some of the issues with the nature of the nomination. First of all, the committee was concerned with the limited nature of the area proposed for World Heritage delineated by the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem. In the committee's opinion, the walls excluded several important monuments and archaeological sites that are essential to the preservation of the city in a holistic manner. These included the Quarries of Solomon, so-called Tomb of the Kings, the Mount of Olives, the pool of Siloan, tombs of the Judges and the site of the Gethsemane. Additionally, the committee was concerned with the exclusion of monuments pre-dating Constantine's era. This caused the exclusion of monuments such as the Jebusite

180 Kershner, Museum Creates New Jerusalem Divide.
walls, the walls of the city of David, or the vestiges of Hellenistic Jerusalem.\textsuperscript{181}

While the advisory board's recommendations could be easily undertaken and were honored in an updated nomination filed by Jordan, there were far more serious conflicts surrounding the nomination of Jerusalem resulting in the first extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee. According to the World Heritage Convention, only the country having jurisdiction over a site can nominate it to the World Heritage List. But, Jerusalem's contested status at the time made this complicated. The Jordanian representative aimed to clarify that this nomination was not meant for any political claims but solely for the preservation of the Old City of Jerusalem and its recognition:

"I ask you to consider this nomination in the spirit of the unique value of Jerusalem. I ask you to stay within your competence. \textit{Jordan is not using this Committee or your deliberations as a vehicle for political claims}. We realize and you should realize that the status of Jerusalem cannot be decided in your Committee. It is up to other international organs to decide on this very complicated issue. I appeal to you for the sake of humanity and its heritage, to stay within your competence, and accept the Jordanian request for the inclusion of the Old City of Jerusalem and its Walls on the World Heritage List." [emphasis added]\textsuperscript{182}

While most of the delegates did not have any reservations on the capacity of Jordan to present this nomination, some delegates expressed concern despite the statement of the Jordanian representative. These delegates, including the representatives of the United States and Australia, questioned the legal right of Jordan to make the nomination and were concerned about the political situation surrounding the Old City of Jerusalem. For example, the Australian delegation, who absented themselves from casting a vote, expressed full appreciation for the value of Jerusalem, but made the following statement: "Delegations will be aware that Australia regards the status of Jerusalem as undetermined and the question of sovereignty as unresolved and to be a matter which should be resolved in the context of an overall


settlement of the Middle East question. We do not recognize any claims to sovereignty over Old Jerusalem as a basis for action under the Convention." While the Australian concerns were stated mildly, the United States delegation outright considered the direction taken by the Committee ‘wrong’:

In the view of my delegation, the World Heritage Committee has just taken a major step in the wrong direction. The approval of this nomination is a failure to adhere to the articles and provisions of the World Heritage Convention, specifically, those articles which provide that the nominating state submit only those sites which are "situated in its territory", which require that the consent of "the state concerned" be obtained, and which require that the nominating state provide an effective plan for the protection and management of the site. This Committee has taken an impermissible action and now must abide by the ensuing unfortunate consequences.

These consequences are the intrusion of an element of politization to the World Heritage Committee. Politization may be inevitable to a certain degree in any international institution, but it is our task to attempt to limit, not expand, this problem. The introduction of Middle East politics into this Committee cannot but be to the detriment of the World Heritage Committee and its proud achievements to date.

The U.S. delegation regrets the result of this extraordinary session and asks that the record reveal our full disassociation from its outcome.

This statement from the United States delegation raises some questions that are difficult to answer. Were they really concerned for the politization of the World Heritage? As it is evident from this thesis, heritage is and has always been a source for conflicts and thus closely associated with politics. If the nomination was presented by the Israeli government at this time, would the approach of the United States be different considering the close relationships between the United States and Israel?

Also, the notes from this first extraordinary session mention that:"in a town like the old city of Jerusalem, it is difficult to select a group of monuments, even as a cross-section. Historical periods, significant monuments, manifestations of civilization, art and culture and religious sites are so closely interwoven that a partial inventory runs the risk of appearing partisan."

183 ibid.
184 ibid.
Following this, the Committee recommended the addition of several Jewish monuments to the list including the Walls of Herod on the periphery of the Haram al-Sharif known as the Wailing Wall, the Stables of Solomon, the Ramban Synagogue (14th c. CE), The Ben Zakkai Synagogue (1606), The Synagogue of Elijah the Prophet (1615) and the Stamboulli Synagogue (1740). These additions to the list of monuments suggest the dearth of Jewish monuments included on the suggested list by Jordan. While the Christian monuments, such as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre were included, the exclusion of important Jewish monuments was an important statement. It is significant that the World Heritage Committee intervened to change this deficiency albeit as a suggestion. Therefore, through diplomacy the World Heritage Committee has the power to act as a balancing factor in conflict societies.

A year later, in 1982, Jordan requested Jerusalem to be placed on the World Heritage in Danger List and the city has been on that list ever since. As justification for this listing, the Jordanian Representation raised the issue of the destruction of monuments of the Old City of Jerusalem due to "urban development plans, deterioration of monuments due to lack of maintenance and responsible management, as well as of the disastrous impact of tourism on the protection of the monuments." The Jordanians, in keeping with their stated desire not to politicize the issue, intentionally refrained from emphasizing the political significance of the city as a reason for its preservation.

**Analysis**

The conflicts cited above are only a minute representation of the contestations of heritage in Jerusalem. For the purposes of this thesis, it is also the test case for institutionalized world heritage management under the World Heritage Convention. Among all these conflicts, the built environment has a central role because people are emotionally attached to these

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185 ibid.

holy places. These places became identity making mechanisms for all parties. Therefore, it is important to understand the role of the international heritage preservation and management movement and its efficiency. Jerusalem is one of those rare places where international intervention happens at regular intervals due to the contested status of the city and its sacredness to a large percentage of the world’s population. Probably more than anywhere else, we see an international stakeholder community that tries to assert its voice on what happens to heritage in Jerusalem.

The significance of Jerusalem perhaps goes beyond most other World Heritage Sites around the world. Therefore, the involvement of UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee is also elevated. The Director-General of UNESCO recently stated that "The stakes are considerable, not only for the cultural heritage of the Old City but also for advancing the cause of dialogue among peoples and civilizations. It is my sincere hope that UNESCO will be able to reaffirm that the cultural heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem is indeed a shared value and that its safeguarding is a cause around which the parties concerned are willing to cooperate, with the full support of the international community."\(^{187}\) Thus, the interventions by the World Heritage Committee in Jerusalem can provide us with insights on the degree of intervention possible through the existing conventions.

In 2007, new development plans to rebuild the ramp to the Mugharabi Gate of Haram al-Sharif and the excavations associated with the work caused concern and it is a good example to evaluate how UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee are involved with the matters of heritage in Jerusalem. In February 2007, the Director-General of UNESCO stated his concern over the new developments undertaken by the Israeli government. His main concern originated from not receiving the plans for the new access ramp to Haram al-Sharif from the Western Wall Plaza despite a personal letter to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. (The clearing of this plaza

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by eliminating the Mugharabi Quarter was discussed above.) He voiced his concern by stating that "the distinctive character of the Old City of Jerusalem derives, in particular, from the close relationship between the historical and religious buildings and the peoples living with them". The Director-General added that "interfering with the delicate balance among the symbols of the three monotheistic religions would entail running the risk of undermining the respect for sacred beliefs." He appealed to "all people of good will to cease any action that could lead to tensions, whose magnitude cannot be foreseen at this time. The wisest course would be to suspend any action that could endanger the spirit of mutual respect until such time as the will to dialogue prevails once again."188

Later, in March, the Director-General decided to send a mission to Jerusalem to assess the situation in the Old City. A group of experts was sent to Jerusalem led by the Director of the World Heritage Centre, Francesco Bandarin. The Director-General mentioned that such a mission "could also be a means of helping to alleviate tensions and restore a climate of confidence favourable to the dialogue that we all wish for."189

The committee's report summarizes the situation and provides recommendations on how to proceed. As background information, the report clarifies that this access point through the Mugharabi Gate was only used by visitors and all the access points for the Muslims were from other entrances to the Haram. The observers commend the high quality professional work undertaken by the Israeli authorities and state that there is no threat to the structural integrity of the Haram al-Sharif monuments through the excavation work being undertaken. However, they criticize the state of uncertainty for the plans of the new ramp.

The Israeli Antiquities Authority is responsible for the archaeological work. They have stated

that they had full authority and jurisdiction over the excavations. The observers were also concerned that the Israeli authorities did not attempt to consult the Waqf Administration before or during this process. The Waqf Administration is responsible for the Haram al-Sharif in addition to large holdings in the Old City. The Waqf considers the excavations illegal since they consider the Old City as an occupied territory and not under Israeli sovereignty. In addition, they are worried that the excavations will destroy the last vestiges of the Mugharabi Quarter and remove the remains of the Ayyubid and Mamluk periods. The Waqf asked UNESCO to intervene in order to stop the work. They also stated that they would be open to consultations that involved additional parties such as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the World Heritage Committee.

In their final recommendations, the mission stated that Israel should be asked to comply with the regulations of the World Heritage Sites in regards to all work within the borders of the designated area. Moreover, it is suggested that the Israeli government should finalize the plans and aim to restore the former pathway rather than replacing it with a new one. The committee states that Israel should be asked to start a consultation process with all concerned parties including the Waqf Administration and the Jordanian government according to peace agreements in effect. Perhaps the most interesting part of the report is in the area of cooperation among different parties, where it states that a "framework could be envisaged. UNESCO could offer technical assistance and act as a facilitator in this process."

The facilitator role that the World Heritage Committee was willing to play for developments involving the access point to the Haram al-Sharif is not the only example of its kind. In another case, the World Heritage Committee intervened to help cooperation between the Israeli officials and the Arab parties about a conservation lab. In its report on the process, the World Heritage Committee detailed their involvement: "The pending issue of the release of the equipment for the Islamic manuscripts conservation centre in al-Ashrafiya Madrasa,

within the Haram al-Sharif, was finally solved thanks to the cooperation of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Jordanian authorities which accepted to bear the cost of the storage fees at the port of Ashdod in order to release the equipment. The latter was delivered to the Haram al-Sharif and work is expected to start shortly." Another item raised in this the report is even more interesting because it brings another party to the table, Saudi Arabia. According to this item, the project to improve the Islamic Museum of al-Haram al-Sharif was pending for the approval of Saudi Arabia.191

UNESCO supports the preservation efforts in ways beyond facilitation and observation. A good example of this work is evident in the Action Plan for Safeguarding the Cultural Heritage of the Old City of Jerusalem. In a September 2008 report of the UNESCO Executive Board, steps taken for the implementation on the Action Plan were explained. Accordingly, the first phase of initiatives included the establishment of a conservation training school and a World Heritage education program that would target teenagers under the leadership the Italian government. The report also talks about the restoration of the Saint John Prodromos Church with funding arrangements from Cyprus. As it can be seen in the implementation of the Action Plan, the World Heritage Committee is acting as an intermediary to provide funding as well as expertise from various international sources.192

Thus, UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee are involved in the preservation of the Old City of Jerusalem in meaningful ways. Additionally, it is important to note the facilitator role they are willing to play among parties that are in conflict with each other. While we have to acknowledge that Jerusalem has a heightened importance due to the reasons explained in this section such as its importance to three major monotheistic religions and its role in the Middle East Conflict, the interventions of the World Heritage Committee may point to a model

192 ibid.
for other conflicted World Heritage Cities. While the level of conflict in Jerusalem is beyond what can be simply resolved through good heritage management strategies, heritage can play a socially responsible role in opening a platform to debate challenging issues.
6. CONCLUSION

As the crossroads of three continents, the Middle East has always been home to a population of widely diverse religious beliefs and ethnic identities. Since the seventh century CE, most of this area has been ruled by Islamic states, which established systems of political control that encouraged stability within their imperial borders. Throughout this time period and in its last expression under the Ottoman Empire, people of non-Muslim faiths, especially monotheistic ones, held a degree of autonomy despite being dependent on and subservient to the Muslim power holders. While this may not be an ideal situation from the perspective of the post-Enlightenment ideal of self-determination, the system did function to preserve the architectural legacies of these group.

During the 20th century, however, the Middle East became a region afflicted by major conflicts grounded in competing social identities. In a policy brief for the Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation argues that:

"Ethnic" and "sectarian" conflicts are not caused by ethnicity or religion. Such conflicts occur when a country's "social contract" comes under pressure from both internal and external forces. When the global economy pressures governments to engage in rapid political and economic reform, ethnic and sectarian entrepreneurs mobilize constituencies around ethnic or religious differences in an attempt to grab or restore positions of power and wealth. Avoiding future episodes of "ethnic and sectarian conflict" requires early warning systems and intervention in societies undergoing rapid and destabilizing economic and political transitions.

The conflicts involving the built heritage of this region can be examined within this framework. Perhaps the earliest stages of modern heritage-related conflict, as we understand it in the Middle East, began with the 19th century reform movements that aimed to modernize (and westernize) the Ottoman Empire. These reform movements caused the breaking of the 'social contract' that was established over multiple centuries. In addition, the foreign interventions on behalf of certain groups, and concessions given to them raised their standing in the Ottoman
society above others and contributed to the further fragmentation of social contracts.

The rise of nationalism and western colonialism resulted in the establishment of nation-states or foreign mandates in the Middle East. These foreign mandates would later become independent nation-states following the end of World War II. The social contracts that protected the cultural and architectural heritage of different groups were broken during these transitions. This is a phenomenon that is continuing to happen in many parts of the world with the new advances of technology and changes in lifestyle. Understanding the dynamics of heritage conflicts should be able to help us come up with the most sensible solutions for culturally and politically sensitive preservation of cultural heritage. This way, we can move beyond our preconceptions about the reasons for conflicts and come up with creative ways to deal with them.

What is and what could be the role of World Heritage within the context of conflict as examined in the Middle East? Could World Heritage be a response to the conflicts centering around heritage? As it is implemented today, World Heritage is highly dependent on nationalistic agendas. Only countries with sovereignty over a site or city can nominate that place to be inscribed on the World Heritage List. The management of these sites are also under the jurisdiction of these governments. Therefore, the attitudes towards heritage in these countries determine the way in which World Heritage operates. Within this framework, some stories are automatically censored while others are made prominent.

The effects of this type of a system based on sovereignty are observable in the case studies. In Aleppo, World Heritage is a conduit to access international organizations such as the GTZ and the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The work of these international organizations has greatly benefited the preservation efforts in Aleppo. However, either through the national agendas or lack of interest, the sites that are associated with the diasporal Syrian-Jewish community are not interpreted and their heritage faces an uncertain future. In Mardin, World Heritage
is acting very much as a branding mechanism, tourism generator and a demonstration of
tolerance associated with Turkey's bid to join the European Union. However, it is not emerging
as a mechanism to uncover the stories of a troubled past. In Jerusalem, World Heritage status
is itself a source of conflict, but it is also a way to facilitate between differing parties. Jerusalem
is the only World Heritage Site that was inscribed by a state-party without acknowledged
sovereignty, perhaps demonstrating that World Heritage can move beyond its current limits.

One of the main debates about World Heritage concerns the dynamics between 'local' and
'universal' heritage. This dilemma adds another dimension to heritage conflicts. How do
these concepts of locality and universality interact in the Middle East? As we have seen, most
heritage can be significant to more than one group, or to a group that is not living in proximity
to the built heritage. We have also seen heritage claimed by several groups that are 'local'
but separated by the politics of nation-states. These situations confuse the dynamic between
the local and the universal further, as what is 'local' cannot be easily defined in the Middle
Eastern context. Therefore, perhaps World Heritage and its critics need to move away from
the dichotomy of 'local' versus 'universal' and look at the World Heritage concepts from a
different perspective. Heritage is not a clear cut concept, therefore it should not be evaluated
and treated as a simplistic idea of dualities. Instead, perhaps we need to approach it as a
concept with many dimensions. Therefore, its handling requires a certain level of flexibility.

What shape can this flexibility take? The idea of utilizing conflict for positive outcomes has
been emerging as one of the most sensitive approaches to heritage management. Could it be
possible to conceptualize an International Coalition of Sites of Conscience type of approach for
World Heritage in conflict? The International Coalition of Sites of Conscience is "a worldwide
network of 'Sites of Conscience' – historic sites specifically dedicated to remembering past
struggles for justice and addressing their contemporary legacies." This takes us back to the
argument from the beginning of this thesis that in our contemporary society, people who are
dealing with conflicts need to learn how to utilize them for positive societal outcomes and go beyond simply deescalating them.\textsuperscript{193} The Sites of Conscience model might work exceptionally well in the Middle Eastern context as it embraces open dialogue. Utilizing the negative energy that emerged around significant sites in the Middle East to create positive outcomes may be the only option for preserving these places in a socially conscious manner. However, there are several challenges to this approach. The first and foremost challenge is the recognition of these places as sites of conscience or sites of conflict. The national governments that are now in charge of these places may not be willing to list their sites as 'sites of conscience' or 'conflict' as World Heritage is often used as a tool to augment national pride. Moreover, freedom of speech can be impaired in many countries around the Middle East. This could make honest conversations about conflicted places difficult. Because of these difficulties, moving to a totally new framework may not be feasible.

On the other hand, World Heritage is generally considered to be a benefit in Middle Eastern countries for making places more attractive and more visible for economic or political purposes and it is an already established tool. As highlighted in this thesis, until the transformations that took place in the 19\textsuperscript{th} century, the Middle East used to be a more ethnically and religiously mixed region as evident in the vestiges of architectural heritage that have been inherited by our contemporary society. Could some parallels be drawn between the pluralism of the Ottoman era and the pluralism of World Heritage? While the Ottoman Era pluralism did not have the philosophical underpinnings of World Heritage and was mainly concerned with keeping the status quo and utilizing diversity in very pragmatic terms, in our contemporary society the pluralism of World Heritage is as close as we can come to a similar mechanism that could foster the preservation of diverse heritage. However, within the current framework of World Heritage, with its dependency on the national context, it is hard to implement such an agenda. With certain changes to its philosophy and application, World Heritage can re-

\textsuperscript{193} Otomar J. Bartos and Paul Ernest Wehr, \textit{Using conflict theory}, (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002.)

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emerge as a viable mechanism for dealing with issues of conflict. As the World Heritage Convention was amended to include clauses on management plans or cultural landscapes, dealing with diversity and conflict of heritage can also become a component of being a World Heritage Site.

Since this may be one of the only tools that is at our disposal, some suggestions for dealing with the heritage of conflict societies can be developed directly from the observations of issues and trends identified above. World Heritage,

• should take a more active role in mediating among conflicting entities. However, the mediation process should not be only open to state parties. Therefore, people in minority or diasporal groups can appeal for intervention on behalf of what they see are important stories and places.

• should be more vigilant in making sure that the heritage of the 'other' is not omitted from nominations. This could potentially be accomplished by having a public participation process. As we must acknowledge that many groups are still oppressed around the world, accommodations should be made for anonymous contributions to this process as well. We must, in addition, acknowledge that some groups will not have the necessary resources or will to make such appeals. A research-oriented mechanism that would examine the history of a nominated site and identify invisible stories could go a long way in guiding more equal representation. Some stories may only become visible over time, and the World Heritage should allow for the inclusion of these emergent stories even after inscription.

• should create a platform that would enable the involvement of diasporal communities. As a result of migration patterns and population exchanges, many historic places are left without viable communities. However, these communities continue to care for
these places deeply. Dialogue between the diasporal communities and state-parties is key in order to acknowledge and accommodate such a process. In the increasingly global world, there must be a place for participation of dispersed communities.

Thus, it may be possible to contemplate a more 'useful' World Heritage for the Middle East and other places suffering from similar conflicts. In this scheme, the World Heritage would continue to serve in its traditional functions as a branding mechanism and a source of pride for heritage. In addition, it would more and more involve itself in conflict situations as a facilitator and promoter of open conversation that moves beyond the traditional delimitations of nation-states and identity cards.
An Alternative to World Heritage Implementation

Diagram showing the flow of processes:

1. **State-party or NGO** initiate nomination process for tentative list
2. **Contact WHC** for initial review of eligibility
3. **Initial Evaluation**
4. **WHC Initiates Public Comment and Research**
5. **Independent WHC Research on the Nominated Site**
6. **Public Participation and Comment**
7. **WHC Decision on Inscription**
8. **Inscription on the World Heritage List**
9. **Periodic Evaluation**
10. **Open for Public Comments**
11. **Changes Deemed Necessary by WHC**
12. **WHC Decision on Inscription**
13. **Inscription of Property on World Heritage List**
14. **Amendments to the Inscription/Management Plan**
15. **Compliance**
16. **END**

Diagram continues with additional steps involving stakeholders and national governments.
# 7. BRIEF TIME LINE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37 BCE</td>
<td>Herod the Great confirmed as King of Judaea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 BCE</td>
<td>c. 4; Approximate date of the birth of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>c. 27; Jesus is baptized and begins ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>c. 30; Crucifixion and death of Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>Roman army under Titus captures Jerusalem and destroys Jewish Temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>132</td>
<td>c. 132-135; Jewish Rebellion in Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>622</td>
<td>16 July 622; Muhammad forced to flee Mecca for Medina; Becomes basis for Islamic tradition of the hijra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>630</td>
<td>Muhammad returns to Mecca with the Koran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>632</td>
<td>7 June 632; Muhammad dies; Abu Bakr becomes caliph in Medina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>634</td>
<td>23 August 634; Abu Bakr dies; Umar becomes caliph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>636</td>
<td>15 August 636; Battle of Yarmuk; Islamic forces under Khalid ibn al-Walid conquer Syria and Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>637</td>
<td>Islamic armies invade Mesopotamia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>638</td>
<td>Islamic forces capture Jerusalem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>641</td>
<td>Founding of Fostat (Cairo) in Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>644</td>
<td>7 November 644; Caliph Umar assassinated; Uthman becomes caliph</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>661</td>
<td>Caliph Ali assassinated; Muawiya moves capital to Damascus and founds Umayyad Dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>670</td>
<td>Kallikinos invents Greek fire in Constantinople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>678</td>
<td>Umayyad forces forced to lift siege of Constantinople after decisive naval defeat at the battle of Syllaeum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>692</td>
<td>Dome of the Rock is completed by Caliph Abdel-Malik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>695</td>
<td>First Islamic coins minted in Damascus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701</td>
<td>Arab sailors visit Moluccas and Indonesia for the first time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>710</td>
<td>Islamic forces conquer Tangiers; Caliphate controls entire North African coast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>750</td>
<td>Abu al-Abbas as-Saffah overthrows Umayyad Caliphate and establishes Abbasid Dynasty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>762</td>
<td>Caliphate moved to Baghdad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>820</td>
<td>Islamic law school established in Medina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>837</td>
<td>Carrier pigeon services established in Arab lands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>909</td>
<td>Said ibn Hussein establishes Fatimid caliphate in Tunis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>969</td>
<td>Fatimids conquer Egypt and move capital to Cairo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1040</td>
<td>Seljuk Turks conquer territories in Persia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1048</td>
<td>Seljuk Turks sack Erzurum; Maintain presence in Anatolia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1050</td>
<td>Tughril Beg conquers Isfahan and establishes Seljuk capital there</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1090</td>
<td>Yusuf ibn Tasfin founds Almoravid Dynasty in Granada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1092</td>
<td>Sultan Malik Shah dies; Seljuk empire collapses into civil war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1099</td>
<td>Godfrey of Bouillon founds Kingdom of Jerusalem from crusader conquests in Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1145</td>
<td>Pope Eugene III proclaims Second Crusade to recapture Crusader Kingdom of Edessa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1169</td>
<td>Saladin becomes vizir of Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1171</td>
<td>Last Fatimid caliph of Egypt dies leaving Saladin as effective ruler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1175</td>
<td>Saladin recognized as sultan of Egypt and Syria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1183</td>
<td>Saladin captures Aleppo; Moves his capital to Damascus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1193</td>
<td>4 March 1193 Saladin dies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1324</td>
<td>Ghazi Orhan succeeds Osman I as Ottoman sultan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1331</td>
<td>Ottoman Turks capture Nicaea, the last remaining Byzantine territory in Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1453</td>
<td>29 May 1453 Ottomans Conquer Constantinople</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1501</td>
<td>Safavid dynasty rules Iran (1501 - 1722)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1796</td>
<td>Qajar dynasty rules Iran (1796 - 1925)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1822</td>
<td>Jean-François Champollion announces the deciphering of the Rosetta stone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1881 - 1882 First wave of Zionist immigration (aliyah) into Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>Theodore Herzl writes Der Judenstaat (The Jewish State)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1897</td>
<td>First Zionist Congress starts program to resettle Jewish people in Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1904</td>
<td>1904 - 1914 Second wave of Jewish immigration into Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1908</td>
<td>3 July 1908 Young Turk Revolution of 1908 attempts to reform government institutions of the Ottoman Empire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1910</td>
<td>1910 First Jewish kibbutz -- Kibbutz Degania -- is founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1916</td>
<td>1916 British forces invade Mesopotamia (Iraq)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1917</td>
<td>2 November 1917 The Balfour Declaration expresses official British support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>1918 World War I ends; Allies carve up the Middle East; Britain takes control of Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>25 April 1920 Mesopotamia becomes a British mandated territory under Article 22 of the League of Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>1921 Reza Khan siezes power during a military coup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>1922 Kuwait-Saudi border negotiated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>1924 Oil exploration begins in Oman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>15 December 1925 Reza Kahn establishes the Pahlavi dynasty in Iran and institutes a policy of modernization, secularization, and anti-communism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>1932 Iraq becomes an independent country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>1936 - 1939 Arabs revolt across Palestine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939</td>
<td>1939 British issues paper promising an independent Arab state in Palestine within ten years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>1941 Reza Shah abdicates; his son Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi becomes ruler</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1943</td>
<td>22 November 1943 Lebanon Becomes Independent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1945</td>
<td>1945 Turkey joins the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>UN takes over Palestinian issue from Britain. UN votes to divide 1947 Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state; Jerusalem is to be an international city.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1948 | 14 May 1948 First Arab-Israeli Wars begins.  
14 May 1948 Britain mandate of Palestine ends.  
15 May 1948 The State of Israel is officially created; David Ben Gurion becomes first Prime Minister. |
| 1949 | 1949 Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria sign armistice agreement with Israel |
| 1952 | 1952 Turkey becomes a member of NATO |
| 1956 | 1956 Gamal Abdel-Nasser Becomes President of Egypt  
26 July 1956 Egypt Nationalizes Suez Canal |
| 1969 | 1969 Yasser Arafat becomes head of the Palestine Liberation Organization |
| 1970 | 1970 Hafez al-Assad becomes President of Syria  
28 September 1970 President Gamal Abdel-Nasser Dies, Anwar Sadat becomes president of Egypt |
<p>| 1973 | 1973 Iraq joins Arab coalition against Israel during the October War |
| 1974 | 1974 Turkey starts occupying northern Cyprus to prevent Greek takeover of island |
| 1975 | April 1975 Civil war breaks out in Lebanon |
| 1976 | January 1976 Syrian army enters Lebanon |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1978</td>
<td>March 1978 Israeli troops invade Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27 October 1978 Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin named winners of the Nobel Peace Prize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1979</td>
<td>January 1979 Shah of Iran flees country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 April 1979 Iran declared an Islamic republic by Ayatollah Khomeini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16 July 1979 Saddam Hussein Becomes President of Iraq</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 November 1979 Iranian Militants Seize U.S. Embassy in Tehran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1980</td>
<td>September 1980 Iran-Iraq War begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 June 1981 Israel Bombs Iraqi Nuclear Reactor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 July 1981 Israeli troops bomb the PLO headquarters in Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 October 1981 Anwar Sadat assassinated; Mohamed Hosni Mubarak becomes president of Egypt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>1982 Yasser Arafat and PLO leadership exiled to Tunis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 June 1982 Israel invades Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13 June 1982 Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Saud Becomes King of Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>1986 Sultan Qaboos University founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>1987 Palestinian uprising 'Intifada' breaks out in Gaza strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17 March 1987 Iraqi Exocet missile hits American Destroyer USS Stark; 37 crewmen are killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1988</td>
<td>3 July 1988 The USS Vincennes shoots down Iranian Airbus Flight #655; 290 civilians are killed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>August 1988 Iran-Iraq War ends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>2 August 1990 Iraq invades Kuwait, beginning the Persian Gulf War</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>26 February 1991 Kuwait Liberated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Yasser Arafat returns to Palestinian soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>November 1994 Iraq formally accepts the UN-demarcated border with Kuwait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>24 November 1998 Emile Lahud Becomes President of Lebanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>7 February 1999 King Hussein of Jordan Dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>16 May 2000 Ahmet Necdet Sezer Becomes President of Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10 June 2000 Syrian President Hafez al-Assad Dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>7 November 2002 U.N. Security Council passes resolution demanding that Iraq disarm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>20 March 2003 United States and allied forces invade Iraq in Operation Iraqi Freedom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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