

## *Original Paper*

# Boundaries of Jerusalem

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## 1. Introduction

Jerusalem is an old city, one of the oldest in the world, which still functioned as a city. Its roots go back to around the 18<sup>th</sup> century B.C. From then onward, with only two pauses, each one for about 60 years, the city lived, sometimes flourishing, have a population of 100,000 people and more, sometimes became a small town of less than 10,000 people, sometimes was capital of strong kingdoms, sometimes only a local center, but always functioned like a town. This is partly because Jerusalem has a unique character—It is the only city in the world that is conceder to be a Holy city for Jews, Christians and Moslems. This brought severe disputes between these three religious, which exists during the last 1700 years and far from resolve.

The city of Jerusalem was always in the center of the regime governed the area. Only for some years in biblical time, it was located near a political boundary. Only once in its long history, in the years 1229-1241 Jerusalem was divided for 12 years between the crusader's kingdom and the Moslem empire. From 1241 till 1917, Jerusalem was part of great Moslem empires, those of Saladin, the Mameluk Empire, and from 1517 till 1917, under the Ottoman Empire. Arabs, Moslems and Christians, other Christians from all over the world, Jews and others, all came to live in the Holy City of Jerusalem, surrounded by wall built by the Ottoman sultan Suleiman the Magnificent in the mid—16<sup>th</sup> century. During the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, new arrivals to Jerusalem, built their suburbs beyond the city's wall and Jerusalem became the largest city in Palestine, inhabitant mostly by Jews, which from 1870 onward were more than half of Jerusalem population, which, in 1914, were about 85,000.

## 2. Historical Background

The dispute about Jerusalem, even though its roots are in the ancient history events, was, for many years in a low profile, partly because of the mighty Ottoman empire of the 15-17<sup>th</sup> centuries, partly, as the Ottoman Empire became weaker, the European major regime, each presented different view of Christian believes (Britain for the Protestants, French for the Catholics and Russia for the eastern

Orthodox Church), no one let the others occupied the Holy Land. Thus, till 1914, there was no Christian or Jewish rule over Jerusalem.

World War one brought great changes to the Middle East as a whole; the Holy Land in particular, all influenced the fate of Jerusalem.

As the Ottoman Empire choose the side of the Central powers (Imperial Germany and the Austro-Hungary Empire) France and Britain, which wanted to have a hold in the Middle East after the war, had an agreement, signed in 1916, The Sykes-Picot Agreement, dealing with the territorial division of the Middle East, in case the Ottoman Empire would collapse. In this Agreement, the Area of Central Palestine, included Jerusalem, had to be ruled by international regime, in which Britain, France, Russia, Italy and a representative of the Arabs would be partner. This was agreed upon as by that regime, the three Christian sects, Catholic, Protestants and Orthodox, would be protected by the powerful nations and the rights of the Moslem would also be looked for.

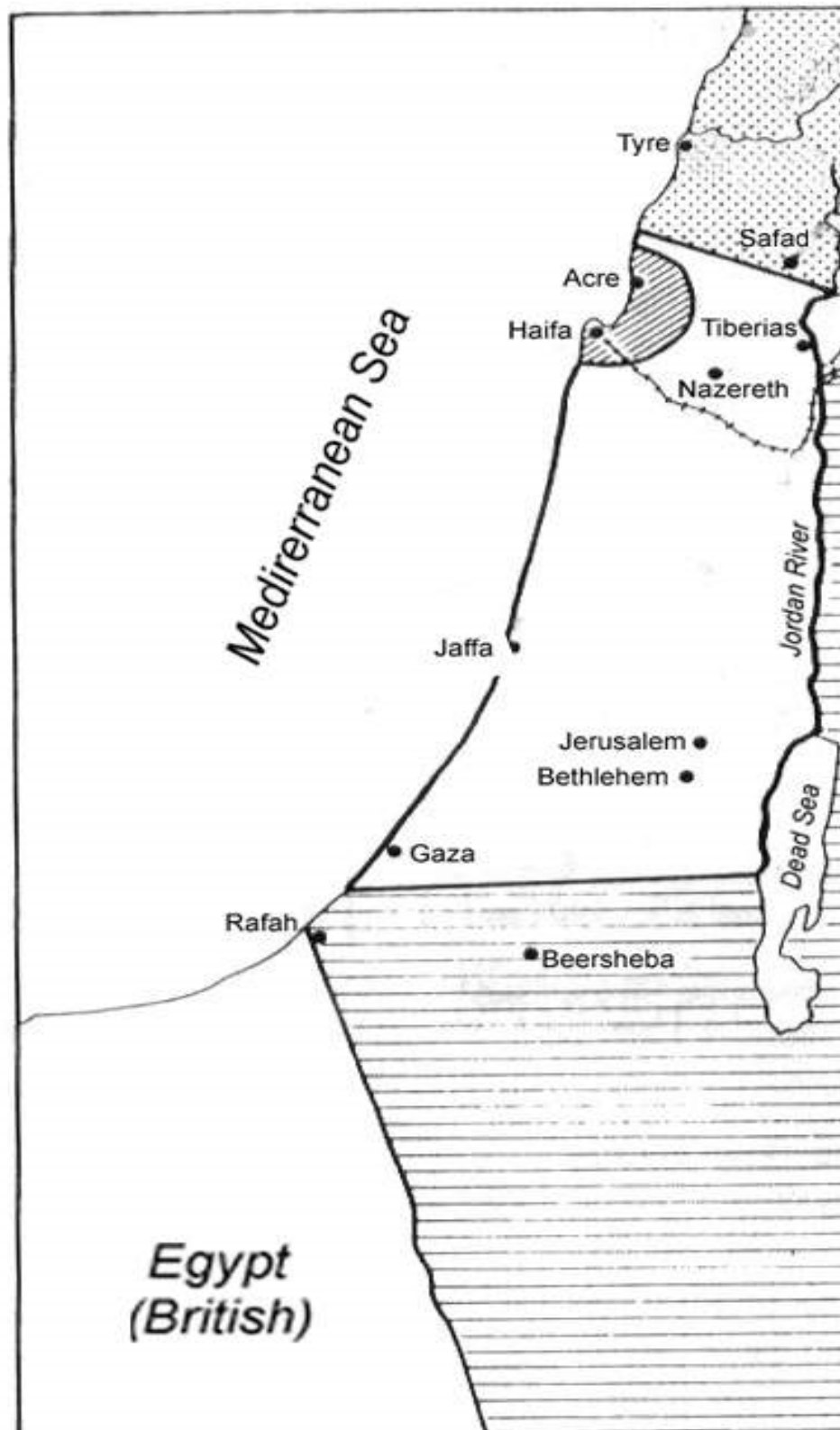


Figure 1. The Sykes—Picot Agreement—1916

At that time, the Jewish connection to Jerusalem was not taken into consideration. Later on, in

November 2, 1917, the British Government issued a declaration, “The Balfour Declaration” which promised the Jews to help them to establish a “Jewish National Homeland” in Palestine.

As it happens, some days later, the British Empire army, under General Allenby, occupied Jerusalem in December 9, 1917, placed it under British military regime.

World War one ended in November 11, 1918, with the victory of Britain, France and United States over Germany and it allays. A Peace Convention gathers in order to establish a new order for the world took place in Paris during 1919-1920. One of its decisions was to establish a mandate regime for those areas and people, which were under the defeated countries (mainly Germany and the Ottoman Empire), in order to lead them to independence. Thus, Britain got the Mandate for Palestine, mainly to fulfill the Balfour Declaration, which was “His Majesty’s government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country”.

A civil administration was established in Palestine, Jerusalem serving as the site of the High Commissioner and his departments. During the period of the British mandate, Jerusalem grew to be a city with about 160,000 people (also at the same time the Jewish suburb of Tel Aviv grew to be a city with about 230,000 people), about 100,000 of them where Jews, about 45,000 Arab Moslems and about 15,000 Christians. As the struggle between Jews and the Arabs intensified during the years of British rule, and came to an overall “Arab Revolt” in 1936-1939, a British Royal Commission established in late 1936 “ To ascertain the underlying causes of the disturbances which broke out in Palestine in the middle of April; to enquire into the manner in which the Mandate for Palestine is being implemented in relation to the obligations of the Mandatory towards the Arabs and the Jews respectively; and to ascertain whether, upon a proper construction of the terms of the Mandate, either the Arabs or the Jews have any legitimate grievances on account of the way in which the Mandate has been or is being implemented; and if the Commission is satisfied that any such grievances are well-founded, to make recommendation; for their removal and for the prevention of their recurrence.”

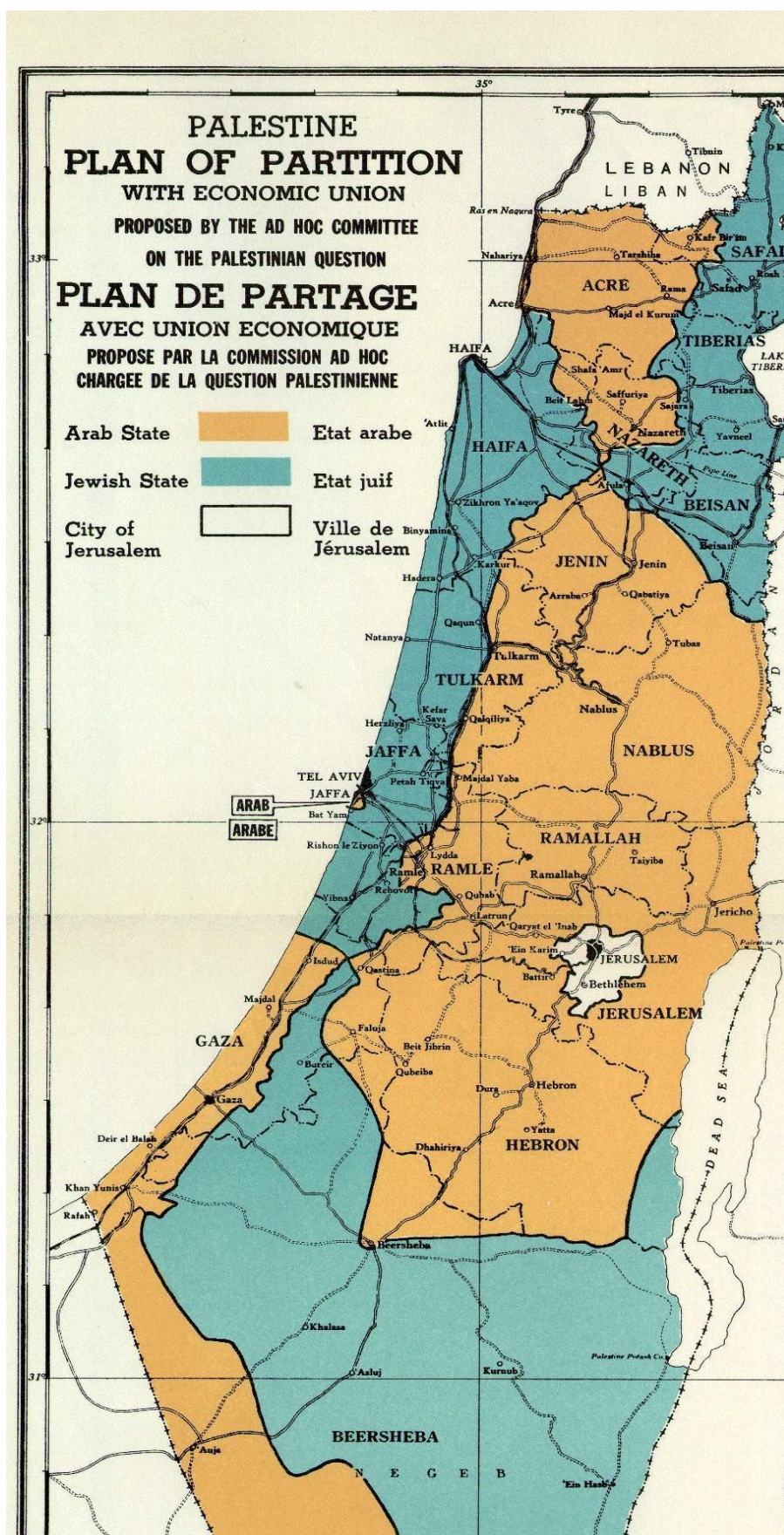
The recommendations of the Royal commission were to finish the British Mandate of Palestine, To divide it between the Jews and the Arabs, establish an independent Jewish state in the part left for the Jews, annexing the whole area devoted to the Arabs to Trans Jordan, and, leave Jerusalem, and a corridor between the Mediterranean post of Jaffa and Jerusalem, in the hand of Britain. Thus Jerusalem was to be “separated” from Future Palestine, to be in Christian British hands.



### Figure 2. The British Royal Commission Plan 1937

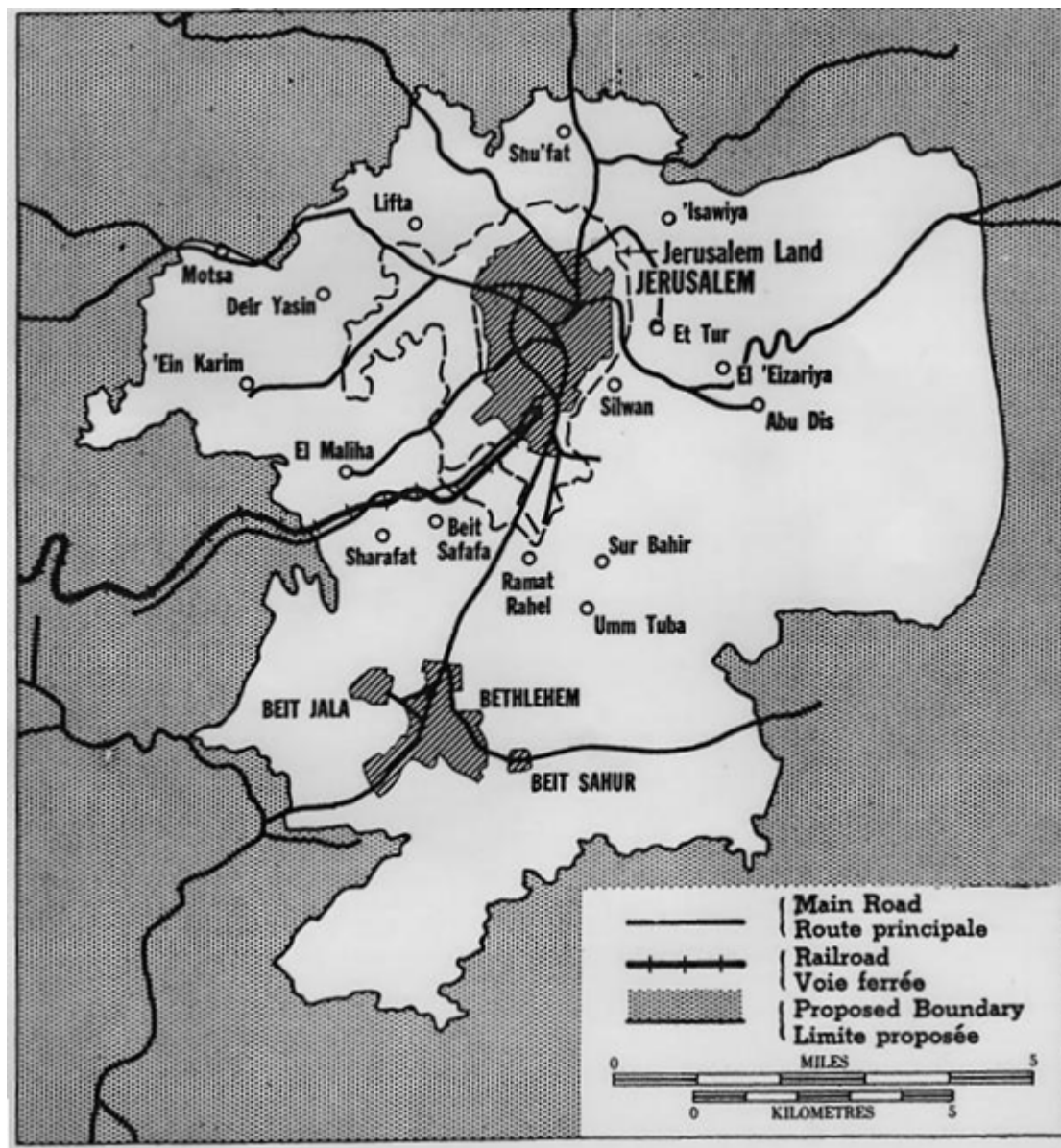
The Jews accepted the idea of dividing Palestine, but asked for different boundaries, including having Jewish Jerusalem in the future Jewish State. The Arabs rejected the whole idea. The British Government, which did not want to retreat from Palestine, arranged another commission, which showed that the division of Palestine was impossible to implement, and the whole idea was faded up. Anyhow, the idea about the uniqueness future of Jerusalem still remained in mind and came back ten years later, in 1947, when Britain decided to bring back the mandate of Palestine to the United Nations. The end of British rule was done due to the decision of an international organization - the United Nations, concerning the way to solve the dispute between the Arabs and the Jews in Palestine. Resolution 181 of the UN General Assembly, adopted on 29 November 1947 declared the partition of Palestine between a Jewish state and an Arab State. Anyhow, According to that resolution, Jerusalem and the area surrounding it, including the city of Bethlehem, the towns of Beit Sahour and Beit Jalla, and the area inside a line running from the villages of Sur Bahir, Abu Dis and El Azariya in the east, to Isawiyya and Shu'afat in the north, then to Lifta, Deir Yassin and the Jewish independent neighborhoods of Beit Vagan, Kiryat Moshe and Beit Hakerem, and the Arab villages Malha in the west to Beit Tzafafa in the south, will be arranged as Corpus Separetum (Separated body). The area was to become an international area, ruled by a high commissioner appointed by the UN, due to the presence of the holy places of Christianity (therefore included in Bethlehem in this area), Judaism and Islam in this area. As such it could not be govern by one of the countries that were supposed to be established in Palestine. The whole area, which was about 125 sq. km., about 1% of the area of British Palestine, inhabited by approximately 200,000 people (about 20 % of the inhabitants of Palestine at that time), half Jewish and half Arab, was to be demilitarized and neutral. Police, consisting of persons recruited in former Palestine, was to be established in order maintain order in the city. The residents of this area were to receive citizenship of Jerusalem, except those who choose to accept the citizenship of the Jewish or the Arab states which will be established in Palestine.





**Figure 3. The UN Partition Plan, November 29, 1947**

This decision is the only United Nations' decision concerning the future regime of Jerusalem and many see this decision as a based to what should be existed in Jerusalem. One of the direct consequences of this decision is the special situation of Jerusalem which serves as the capital of Israel but no embassy is located in Jerusalem. This, in part, is due to the unclear international status of the city and its surroundings.

**Figure 4. Jerusalem in the UN Partition Resolution—November 29, 1947**

UN resolution remains essentially a document written on paper and not in the field. Arab countries and the Arab population of Palestine rejected the decision and launched a war against the Jewish



community in Palestine. This war, called by the Israelis “War of Independence” and by the Arabs—”The Naq’ba” (the disaster), led to many changes in the status and condition of Jerusalem.

During the war, the Israeli military force occupied and hold many parts of western Jerusalem but not the Old City of Jerusalem and the eastern part of the city, which . Were occupied by the Jordanian Arab Legion. Israeli troops managed to break through a corridor from the coastal plain to Jerusalem connecting the city to the rest of the area hold by Israel after the war ended.

.In November 1948 a ceasefire line were established in Jerusalem, according to the position of the Israeli and Jordanian armies at that time. As the exact position of the army units was not so clear, some small “No Man’s Land’s” were established which were supposed to be under the sovereignty of no party. Further, the British High Commissioner resident, used during the war by the Red Cross, later became the residence of the headquarter of United Nations in the area, was declare a “demilitarized Zone” divided into Israeli demilitarized Zone, Jordanian demilitarized Zone and United Nation demilitarized zone, which included the building itself and small yard around it. Another area, MountScopus, which was left in Jewish hands, but without direct connection to Jewish Jerusalem, was also declared “a demilitarized zone”. Attached to it was a small parcel of “no man’s land” which divided between MountScopus and the Hospital in the German hospice on MountScopus, which was held by Jordan as a demilitarized zone.



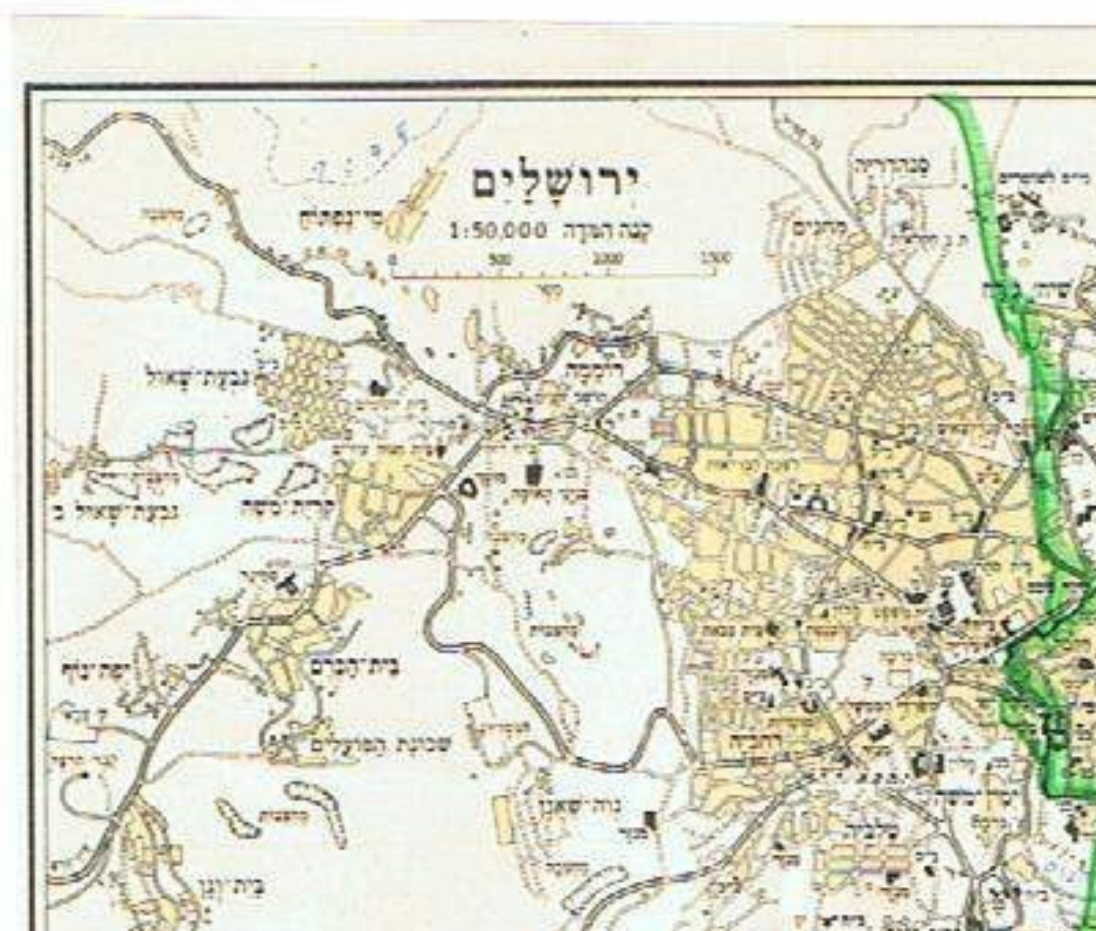
**Figure 5. Jerusalem in the Armistic Agreement 1949**

The Armistice Agreement signed between Israel and the Kingdom of Transjordan in April 1949 adopted those lines and further provides that the railroad between the coastal plain and Jerusalem will remain entirely under Israeli sovereignty and consequently some of the buildings of the Arab village of Bait Tzafafh were annexed to the areas of Israeli Jerusalem and its inhabitants became citizens of Israel.

The Armistice Agreement ended the war, but the status of Jerusalem was not clear, since the United Nations resolution put all the territory of Jerusalem in its hands and actually Israel and the Kingdom of Transjordan each occupied parts of Jerusalem. This left Jerusalem in a state of military regime, as the Israeli government was not quick to declare Jerusalem as part of the country and certainly not run it as a capital city. Thus the Israeli government located in Tel Aviv and from there it conducted the young state of Israel.

In December 1949 it became known that the UN is going to conduct a comprehensive discussion regarding the status of Jerusalem, and as such Israel feared that a decision is reached will fix the sovereignty of the United Nations in all of Jerusalem. Israeli Government and Parliament adopted a resolution stating that Jerusalem is an integral part of the State of Israel and its eternal Capital. This decision remains in existence today.

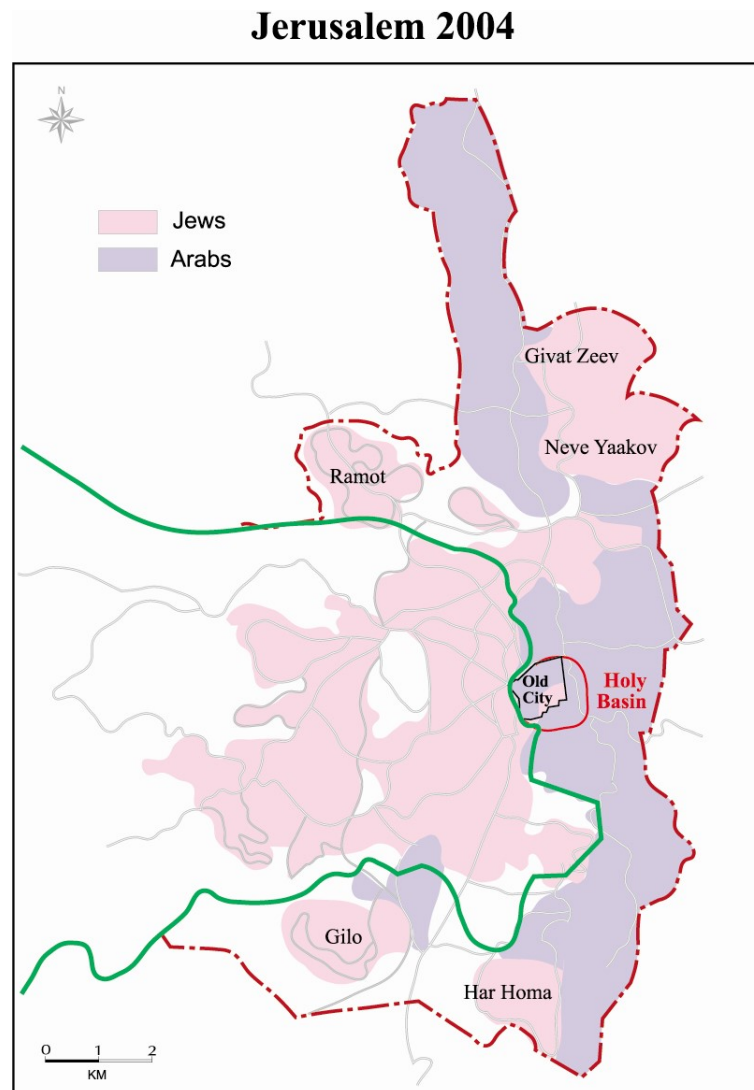
For 19 years, between 1949 and 1967, Jerusalem was divided between Israel which declared it its Capital, and Jordan, which annexed the area of what was later known as “The West Bank” (of the Jordan River) including the Old City of Jerusalem and the entire eastern part of the city, which Jordan occupied during the 1948 war.



**Figure 6. Israeli Jerusalem—1949—1967**

In June 1967, as part of another round of war between the Arab countries and Israel, the whole “West Bank” including east Jerusalem was occupied by the Israeli army. Short time after the cease-fire, the Israeli Government enlarged the municipal area of western Jerusalem as to include the Old City, eastern Jerusalem and some Arab villages around it. Thus Israel in fact annexed the whole area of Jerusalem, an act, which became legal after approved in 1980 by the Israeli Parliament. The annexation was never adopted by any country in the world but Israel conducted the whole area as part of its legal sovereign

area.



**Figure 7. The expansion of Jerusalem after the 1967 war - Green—the pre 1967 line, Red—the present line**

In 2006 as to combat Palestinian suicide attacks, Israel built a high wall separated Jerusalem from the entire Palestinian areas, allowed only Palestinian permit holders to enter Jerusalem.

### 3. Present Situation

Peace negotiation between Israel and the Palestinian authority have been ongoing for the last 25 years. The future of Jerusalem is one of the major issues in those talks. The Palestinian insists on returning to the pre 1967 war lines, which divided Jerusalem, in order to establish their Capital city in it. The Israelis insists that Jerusalem should be united city, under Israeli regime. Although some Israelis are

willing to accept that the Arab areas of Jerusalem would be under Palestinian rule, the problem of the Old City of Jerusalem. Especially the question of the Temple Mount, which is holy for the Jews and the Moslems, seems too difficult to overcome. Up to now, more than 50 plans for ruling Jerusalem were suggested, including establishing “Holy Basin” which will include the Old city and some religious area beyond it, ruled by representatives of the three faiths, but up to now, no any solution was adapted.

#### 4. Conclusions

It thus appears that the definition of Jerusalem’s status and function is the result of religious and national concepts, international and local decisions, and construction that annexes territory to the city but sometimes avoids it. Some argue that the real Jerusalem is only the one inside the walls—The Old City, and all the rest are neighborhoods built over the last hundred years, and only administrative decisions have determined that they will be part of Jerusalem, thus sloppiness and administrative decisions can be changed. Thus, the western neighborhoods of Jerusalem were not included in Jerusalem during the Mandate period, and thus the nearby local community of Mevasseret Zion, which is adjacent to Jerusalem, is not part of the city, and further areas in the west were added to the city.

It seems, therefore, that the boundaries of Jerusalem have changed considerably over the last 150 years. Sometimes the change is due to the expansion of the built-up area and sometimes due to planning and political needs. In any case, the authority to determine the territory of the city was exclusive in the hands of the central government, which ruled the area at the time.

So where is Jerusalem - it seems that it depends on the reader’s position, and everyone has his own Jerusalem, which he demands for himself and is not willing to share with the other.

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