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MAIN SECTION

Water as Source of Conflict and as a Vehicle for Peace

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ABSTRACT

Water accessibility in Israel and the Palestinian Territories is part of the politics in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and contributes to the feeling of mistrust and misunderstanding between Israelis and Palestinians. This article explores the implications of access to water. It proposes an architectural design for a Temple of Water as a catalyst for dialogue and understanding between Israelis and Palestinians in the water-stressed region of Hebron on the southern West Bank. It aims to create a water space for social and communal practices as a vehicle for social interaction. Opportunities for peaceful coexistence are needed in conflict areas. The Temple of Water makes a statement about water's power, meaning and influence. The research highlights the potential of spatial planning and design to promote either conflict or peaceful coexistence. Key specifications for architectural projects in water-stressed and conflict-ridden spaces have been defined with a theoretical framework concerning the value and implications of water in Israel and Palestine. The research takes a step towards understanding the power, meaning and influence that water can have through its physical embodiment in an architectural artefact.

KEYWORDS

Water Management; Israeli-Palestinian Conflict; Water Conflict; Architecture of Water.

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Introduction

Water has long been at the center of communal activities. The physical embodiment of the relationship humans have with water—including structures for gathering or distributing drinking water and spaces for washing and cleaning—has been at the center of people's lives around the world. Architectures of water—infrastructure, buildings or monuments—are part of society. They serve as physical artifacts with spiritual associations and memories linked to important events.[1] They have become part of culture, politics, and economics. Because life depends on water, water management can be the source of conflict.[2] Faulty infrastructure, (territorial) management, politics, geography and climate change are important factors that can exacerbate water scarcity and its problems of unequal distribution. These factors can lead to mistrust, misunderstanding and antagonism between different groups of consumers in a region.

As a Dutch graduate student at the Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, I became aware of the importance of water as a dividing issue in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict after a visit to Israel and the Palestinian Territories in 2016. I had no ties with Israelis or Palestinians, but as an outsider I forged my view of the conflict and water management through an investigation that included reviewing relevant literature, mapping, visiting the region and engaging in informal conversations with Israelis and Palestinians. The research taught me the importance of territorial water management—the management of water defined by territory—and importance of the physical representation of water planning and design as part of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

After this initial investigation, I wanted to explore the issue further through research by design, advancing a possible architectural intervention in order to explore the symbolic, cultural and political implications of a modern Water Temple, a physical structure that embodies the issues I wished to address. From an architectural perspective, I explored the possibilities for bringing Israelis and Palestinians together with water. In opposition to the architecture of conflict—consisting of segregating barriers and bypasses—I defined a positive approach towards desegregation and normalization of Israeli-Palestinian society, while providing an equal distribution and sufficient supply of water to Israelis and Palestinians.

Water is one of the issues that is hotly debated among the population groups in Israel and Palestine, as demonstrated in the award-winning book, *Atlas of the Conflict: Israel-Palestine*, by Israeli author and

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1. Rohit Jigyasu, "Reinforcing the Link between Water and Heritage in Order to Build Disaster Resilient Societies," in *Water & Heritage: Material, Conceptual and Spiritual Connections*, ed. Willems, Willem J. H. and Van Schaik, Henk P. J. (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015), 261.

2. David Newman, "Shared Spaces - Separate Spaces: the Israel-Palestine Peace Process," *GeoJournal* 39, no. 4 (1996): 368.

map-maker Malkit Shoshan.[3] Because of biased territorial water management and substandard water infrastructure, Palestinians have limited access to water, with a daily per capita consumption at 73 liters in the West Bank, while the per capita daily consumption in Israel is 242 liters.[4] Two separate authorities in Israel and the Palestinian Territories provide the Israeli and Palestinian peoples with water. The Israeli Water Authority (IWA) and the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) are responsible for providing water to their respective populations through the Israeli and Palestinian water infrastructure. A Joint Water Committee (JWC) was founded to oversee common water resources and manage the water infrastructure of the West Bank.[5] The infrastructure under the responsibility of the PWA is outdated and is not connected to all Palestinian communities: only 55% of Palestinian localities are connected to piped water supply systems.[6]

This research draws on a theoretical framework dealing with the value and implications of water for water-stressed regions, and scholarship regarding pathways to normalization and peace in conflict areas. The social and political implications of water are recognized by UNESCO associates in the 2015 book *Water and Heritage*[7] and in a 1994 article by American economists Berck and Lipow[8]. The book *Water and Heritage* reveals the importance of water and water systems for many aspects of people's lives throughout history. To further explore the value of water, this paper draws on the ideas of American journalist Cooley[9] and American scientist Gleick.[10] Their works demonstrate why water is so often a source of conflict. Various sociologists, economists, planners, engineers and geographers—including American economist Ostrom,[11] British political

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3. Malkit Shoshan and Joost Grootens, *Atlas of the Conflict: Israel-Palestine* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2010).

4. B'Tselem, *The Gap in Water Consumption between Palestinians and Israelis*. Accessed February 18, 2019. https://www.btselem.org/gap-water-consumption-between-palestinians-and-israelis.

5. As part of the 1995 Oslo II accord, the Israeli Water Authority (IWA) of Israel controls water resources in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The Palestinian Water Authority (PWA) is responsible for the water network and infrastructure to Palestinians. The 1995 Oslo II accord agrees on the division of groundwater that the IWA must deliver to the PWA. The PWA depends on the water supply from the IWA. The Joint Water Committee (JWC) was founded in 1995 to oversee resources and manage water infrastructure of the West Bank. The JWC has an equal number of representatives from both Israel as the Palestinian Territories. Agreements and decisions have to be reached by consensus; Swedish Senior Water Resources Management Specialist at the World Bank Anders Jägerskog argued that the asymmetrical power between the parties gives Israel the upper hand with regards to implementation of agreements.

6. Bader A. A. A. Zahra, "Water Crisis in Palestine," *Desalination* 136, no 1–3 (2001): p.97.

7. Willem Willems and Henk Van Schaik, eds., *Water & Heritage: Material, Conceptual and Spiritual Connections* (Leiden: Sidestone Press, 2015).

8. Peter Berck and Jonathan Lipow, "Real and Ideal Water Rights: The Prospects for Water-Rights Reform in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank," *Resource and Energy Economics* 16, no. 4 (1994) 287-301.

9. John K. Cooley, "The War over Water," *Foreign Policy* 54 (1984) 3-26.

10. Peter H. Gleick, "Water and Conflict: Fresh Water Resources and International Security," *International Security* 18, no. 1 (1993): 79-112.

11. Elinor Ostrom, *Governing the Commons. The Evolution of Institutions for Collective Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

geographer Newman,[12] Palestinian sociologist Mi'Ari,[13] American geographer Curti[14] and British academic Larkin[15]—have argued for the importance of interdependent management of water resources and the need for interaction between different stakeholders, and governance level, to achieve normalization in conflict areas. Here, the physical environment of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be analyzed through the perspectives of *In Statu Quo,*[16] a 2018 book that discusses the social and political connotations of spaces of conflict in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

The first section explains the implicit value of water to society, politics and economics. The second section focuses on the implicit and explicit valuation of water and how valuation might differ across cultural contexts. The third section describes how spatial planning and the design of water and water systems may contribute to normalization and peace. The paper concludes with a proposal for an architectural intervention for water-stressed Palestinian Territories. The proposed Temple of Water restores water as a vehicle for social and communal practices for Israelis and Palestinians in the water-stressed region of Hebron on the southern West Bank.

Implications of Water in Israel and Palestine

Laws and regulations of the Ottoman Empire once controlled land ownership and water consumption in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. The Ottoman laws define water use entitlements—and indirectly entitlements to land ownership.[17] Land that is not actively tilled and water that is not consumed can be legally expropriated, meaning that lower water consumption can lead to loss of land ownership and any water rights associated with that land.[18] Not surprisingly, the planning and design of water has deeply influenced relations between Israelis and Palestinians. In 1964 the Israeli water company Mekorot was founded during the so-called Zionist hydraulic mission era. At the time, Zionists and British Mandate authorities built the National Water Carrier (NWC) that transported water from the Sea of Galilee in the north of the country southward to the other parts of Israel, including the arid Negev Desert. As water was extracted from the Sea of Galilee—a freshwater lake and important source of the Jordan River—the water flow in the Jordan River decreased, reducing the availability of water in the West Bank. This led to the 1967 Arab-Israeli

12. Newman, "Shared Spaces," 363-375.

13. Mahmoud Mi'Ari, "Attitudes of Palestinians Toward Normalization with Israel," *Journal of Peace Research.* 36, no. 3 (1999): 339-348.

14. Giorgio H. Curti, "From a Wall of Bodies to a Body of Walls: Politics of Affect | Politics of Memory | Politics of War," *Emotion, Space and Society* 1, no. 2 (2008): 106-118.

15. Craig Larkin, "Remaking Beirut: Contesting Memory, Space, and the Urban Imaginary of Lebanese Youth," *City & Community* 9, no. 4 (2010): 414-442.

16. Ifat Finkelman, et al. eds., *In Statu Quo: Structures of Negotiation* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2018).

17. Berck and Lipow, "Real and Ideal Water Rights," 293.

18. Ibid.

war—also known as the War over Water,[19] culminating with the "Six-Day War" of 1967. The situation has changed little since. Hydrologists working with Palestinians have called the current water management system in Israel and the Palestinian Territories "Hydro-Apartheid".[20]

Water can be a source of conflict, if it provides a source of economic and political strength, so that ensuring access to water justifies going to war.[21] To avoid losing economic and political strength, Israel seeks resources to ward against water scarcity. The importance of agriculture for land ownership and food security drives the country to innovate in water supply. Desalination plants provide fresh water from the Mediterranean Sea. Desalination plants are economically expensive, however, in relation to standard and traditional water sources like aquifers, lakes and rivers.[22] In addition, desalination plants consume a lot of energy and damage the sea's biodiversity.[23] For Palestinians, desalination plants are unaffordable without support and aid from external parties.

Economically, Palestinians do not have the ability to invest in water innovation and they depend on the agreements on water supply by the Israeli Water Authority as stated in the 1995 Oslo II Accord. Since then, the Palestinian society and its demand for water have grown and the water infrastructure further degraded. It is unclear whether Israel meets the Accord's requirements regarding water supply or not. Palestinians believe that they are continually denied access to water and that this denial prevents them from developing their economy.[24] Besides the economic aspects of denied access to water, water has become a source of mistrust and localized conflict in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Mistrust and misunderstanding have kept Israelis and Palestinians from being able to coexist peacefully. This situation, if not controlled, may continue in the long term. Cooley writes that "long after oil runs out, water is likely to cause wars, cement peace, and make and break empires and alliances in the region, as it has for thousands of years."[25]

Equality and Cooperation

To achieve stability, democracy and peaceful coexistence, it is important

19. John K. Cooley, "The War over Water," 3.

20. Randy Schrum, *The Hydro-Apartheid of Palestinian Communities in Israel*, Accessed November 15, 2018, https://anydisaster.com/hydro-apartheid-palestinian-communities-israel.

21. Peter H. Gleick, "Water and Conflict," 84.

22. Eran Feitelson and Gad Rosenthal, "Desalination, Space and Power: The Ramifications of Israel's Changing Water Geography," *Geoforum* 43, no. 2 (2012): 274.

23. Fred Kuepper, "The Impacts of Relying on Desalination for Water," *Scientific American*, Accessed March 16, 2019. https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-impacts-of-relying-on-desalination/.

24. Jennifer Najjar, "Water: A Potential Vehicle For Peace?", *University of Denver Water Law Review* (2019). Accessed November 15, 2018, http://duwaterlawreview.com/water-a-potential-vehicle-for-peace-2/.

25. Cooley, "The War over Water," 3.

to take into account the planning and design of water in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. After studying the attitudes of Israelis and Palestinians about normalization, Mi'Ari concludes that a large group of both Israelis and Palestinians are supportive of normalization.[26] Israelis generally support normalization with Palestinians, before or even without solving the main issues of the conflict. Initially, Palestinian academics and activists were against normalization. According to their ideas, normalization could only take place between two equal parties. Since the 1993 Oslo Accords however, their ideas have changed and they tend to support normalization with Israelis. Specifically, Palestinian merchants and farmers who work and trade with Israelis tend to support normalization more than people who stay within their own communities. Some Israelis and Palestinians meet in safe environments and gain economically from their contact. Everyday interaction between people and economic cooperation towards peace seems to encourage normalization between Israelis and Palestinians.[27]

Attempts to create spaces that promote neutrality and equality have been part of the post-conflict rehabilitations of many cities and societies. After decades of religious and political conflict in Beirut (Lebanon), the divided city arguably became the world's largest laboratory for post-war reconstruction.[28] Projects were built to connect locals and tourists via the creation of neutral spaces that bring together different groups of people.[29] Yet, the projects failed to provide accessible and dynamic meeting places, because of their intended neutrality. In other words, the projects realized in Beirut lack the power to attract people and to engage them.[30] Planners and designers should avoid neutrality in their designs as they may leave people unable to identify with their projects. Similarly, in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, invisible layers of water-related infrastructure such as underground water structures are difficult for people to identify with.

To reduce mistrust, misunderstanding and antagonism it is important to facilitate everyday interaction and economic cooperation between different social groups, rather than build physical objects that separate them. Territorial management and policies create soft borders that are as effective as walls, as they create inequality among citizens—or the impression thereof. Cooperation and inter-dependencies can reduce conflict between rivals. Inter-dependency encourages different people to keep themselves from being in conflict with their 'partners'. Elinor Ostrom supports the idea of interdependent management of natural resources—in which different entities are considered equal, have equal access to a common-pool resource and are dependent on each other's extractions

26. Mi'Ari, "Attitudes of Palestinians," 339-348.

27. Ibid., 339.

28. Larkin, "Remaking Beirut," 415-418.

29. Ibid., 428.

30. Ibid., 428.

from that resource—to avoid conflict. According to Ostrom, different parties can benefit equally from common-pool resources (CPR) following her design principles for CPR management as conflict resolution.[31]

Coexistence through the Architecture of Water

This section presents a possible intervention in spatial planning and design of water and water systems as physical structures to promote normalization and peace between Israelis and Palestinians. The proposed architectural design aims to influence conflict situations and aims to promote peaceful coexistence, stability and democracy through the architecture of water.

My proposal is for a Temple of Water, which introduces water as social and communal practice for Israelis and Palestinians in the water-stressed region of Hebron (West Bank). The Temple of Water project focuses on

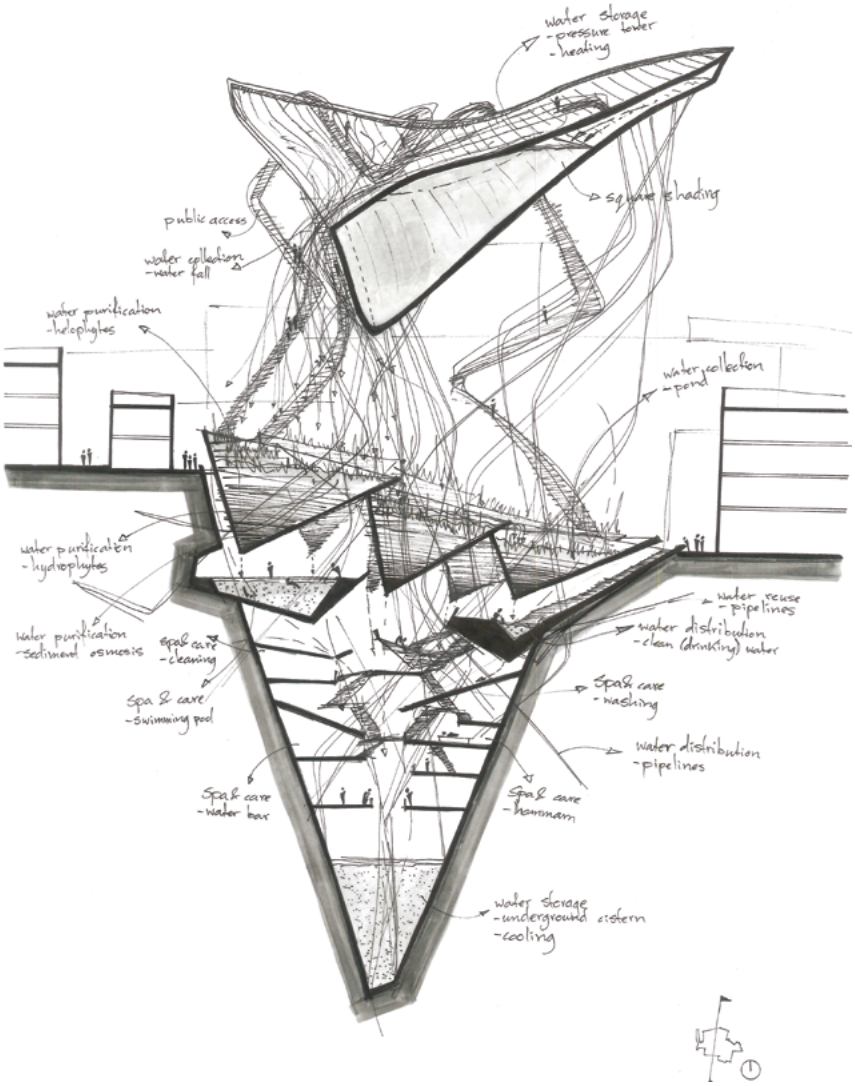

FIG. 1 Temple of Water design sketch by author.

31. Ostrom, *Governing the Commons*.

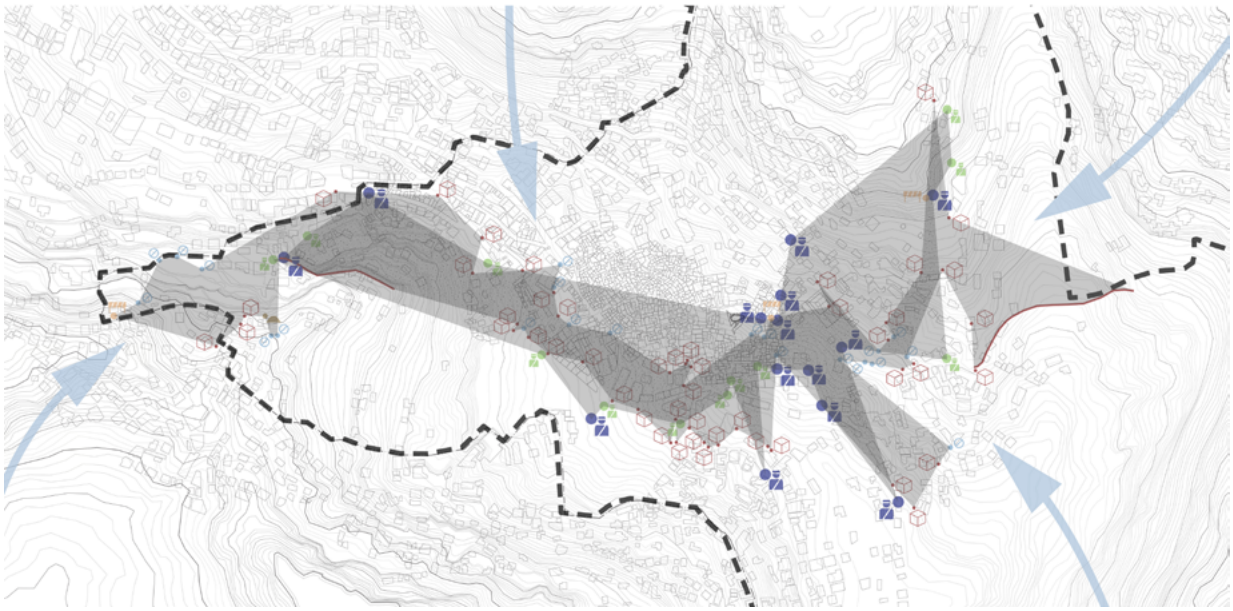

FIG. 2 Map of Hebron checkpoints and barriers. Dashed line: border H1/H2. Dark grey area: theoretical walled area. Map by author

the crucial nature of the relationship between water and architecture in spaces of conflict. The intervention can be generalized to other water-stressed and conflict-strained regions of the world. **[Fig.1]**

The city of Hebron is a key site in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. It lies in the south of the West Bank and it is one of the oldest continuously inhabited places in the world. It includes Abraham's burial place, which is located in the Old City of Hebron, and known as Cave of Patriarchs (Me'arat ha-Makhpela) by Jews and as Ibrahimi Mosque (al-Haram al-Ibrahimi) by Muslims. It is an important site for followers of Judaism, Christianity and Islam: the three monotheistic religions. Both Jews and Muslims use the building religiously, but in different spaces of the building.[32] **[Fig.2]**

Although Hebron (or Al-Khalil in Arabic) was once a place where Jews and Muslims peacefully coexisted, the city is now divided into two areas, "Area H1"—which is under full control of the Palestinian Authority (PA)—and "Area H2"—which is under full control of the Israeli military (IDF).[33] The division of Hebron into areas H1 and H2 is a consequence of politics following conflict between Muslims and Jews such as attacks and murders.[34]

There is no continuous wall in Hebron, but soldier-controlled checkpoints, sections of walls and other barriers work together as one continuous space, which I call the theoretical wall of Hebron. The area within this

32. Eyal Weizman, "Scenography," in *In Statu Quo: Structures of Negotiation*, edited by Ifat Finkelman et al. (Berlin: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2018), 185-230.

33. Müller, Patrick, *Occupation in Hebron*. (The Alternative Information Center: Jerusalem, 2004), 39-41.

34. After the massacre of 29 Muslims at prayer in the Cave of Patriarchs by Israeli Baruch Goldstein in 1994, peace talks for Hebron started. The Hebron Agreement followed in 1997, which left the city divided in two sectors: H1 and H2. In accordance with the Hebron Protocol, H1 came under full control of the Palestinian Authority and H2 came under full control of the Israeli military.

FIG. 3 Checkpoint in Hebron—example of the physical embodiment of the H1/H2 border. Photo by author.

theoretical wall includes parts of the Old City and the Cave of Patriarchs in area H2. Neither Israelis nor Palestinians are allowed to cross certain areas and checkpoints. Israeli soldiers patrol a deserted area with armored trucks—indicated in dark grey in figure 2. As shown on the map, the actual location of checkpoints and other barriers do not necessarily correspond with the exact location of the drawn borders.

Hebron has been described as a microcosm of the Israeli occupation.[35] Some people view the situation of Hebron as the most badly impacted area of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, second only to the Gaza Strip. **[Fig.3]**

Among cities and villages on the West Bank, the need for water is greatest in Bethlehem, Hebron and Yatta.[36] The United Nations have recognized that "The Hebron Area is actually in need of 25,000 cubic meters [of water] every day"[37]. Palestinian families are known to have been left without water for over 40 days, and the scarcity and poor availability of water for Palestinians is physically visible throughout the city, where one can see water tanks on roof tops, in contrast to the pitched roofs of Israelis in the nearby settlement, where rain water is allowed to flow directly into the ground.

It is in this context that the Temple of Water is designed as an architecture of water: the physical embodiment that is defined by the properties of water. Simultaneously, the Temple of Water responds to water scarcity and the unequal distribution of water to different social groups in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Designed to take into account the different social implications of water, the project aims to revive the divided Old City

35. Walters, Derk, "Nooit Was Het Zo Erg in Hebron, Microkosmos van de Bezetting," in *NRC Handelsblad* (2016). Accessed November 15, 2018, https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2016/01/12/zo-erg-was-het-nooit-in-hebron-1579725-a1168766.

36. Najjar "Water: A Potential Vehicle For Peace?"

37. United Nations, *Water Resources of the Occupied Palestinian Territory* (New York, 1992).

FIG. 4 Temple of Water design location & water distribution diagram by author.

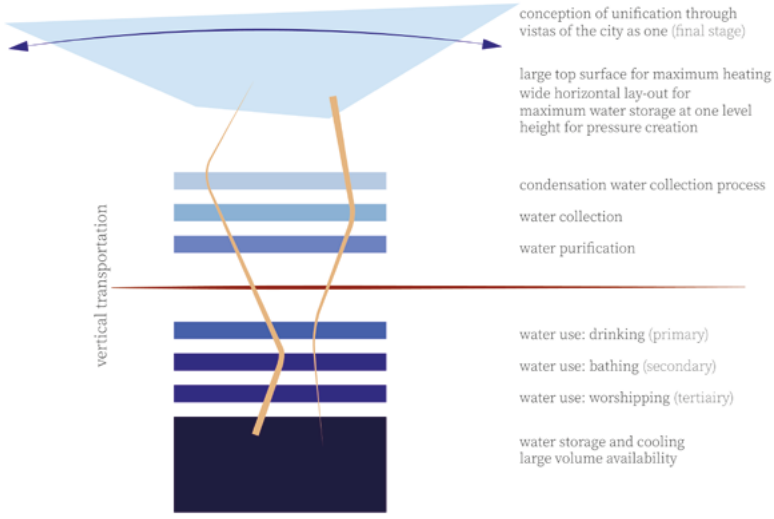

FIG. 5 Concept of section Temple of Water by author.

area and to re-establish everyday interaction and connections between Israelis and Palestinians. The Temple of Water aims to encourage frequent trans-boundary movement in order to counteract the idea that borders are needed. The building is designed as a space for action, interaction and reconciliation, following the assumption that a building is more than a mere structure. It is a place where events are shaped, as underscored by British Israeli architect Eyal Weizman in *In Statu Quo*:

> Buildings are thus not just passive elements, receptive sensors on which events are registered. Nor are they just the scenes of a crime, the locations in which violence takes place. Rather, built environments are composite assemblies of structures, spaces, infrastructure, services, and technologies with the capacity to act and interact with their surroundings and shape events around them.[38]

38. Weizman, "Scenography," 187.

The Temple of Water is located adjacent to a checkpoint and various other static barriers. Both Israelis and Palestinians are allowed to be here, although not at every hour of the day—depending on prevailing conditions. [Figs. 4-5]

The Temple of Water is intended to be an important infrastructure in the city of Hebron. The Temple accommodates water harvesting, water storage, water distribution and use of water in the vertical organization of the building. As rain falls, water is collected and purified at the ground level. Underground visitors can use the water, and the surplus is stored and cooled at the bottom. Different spaces provide different uses by different people. A portion of water is pumped upwards to be heated by the sun, and to create pressure on the underground piping and tubing towards the houses of the inhabitants of Hebron in a way that follows the engineering principles of historical and present-day water towers. At the same time, the design emphasizes the sharing of a common water resource, managed cooperatively, for all people of the city. The Temple's aim is to provide the Hebronites with sufficient water to meet the minimum standard for

FIG. 6 Temple of Water overview of underground platforms. Model and photo by author.

water consumption set by the World Health Organization (WHO). Water is harvested and stored efficiently and is equally distributed to all people of Hebron through an underground infrastructure. The Temple purifies wastewater that is collected from the houses, also via underground infrastructure. Its underground storage serves as a buffer in times of drought.[Fig.6]

The building is open to all and accommodates inspiring, diverse flows of people. The Temple provides space for new habitual practices to develop around water, in which different social groups can find a place to meet. The Temple encourages people to appreciate water and to respect its importance. Collective memories are often associated with spaces of which water is an essential element and help in maintaining social networks.[39] The Temple should become part of the city's heritage where a social network with and between the different social groups of Hebron can emerge. [Fig.7]

The Temple of Water connects to Israeli and Palestinian Hebronites by corresponding with their communal history and traditions. To attract both Israelis and Palestinians, the design refrains from the use of colors or symbols with any political connotation. The region of Israel and the Palestinian Territories have a long tradition of building with limestone. The Temple is designed completely in limestone to connect to the people and to fit within the existing context. The building's floor plan is inspired by the character *ma*, which stands for *water* in the Phoenician language—the language that existed before the appearance of the great monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The ancient character for water is brought back in the Temple of Water to connect to all the people in the region, while expressing the importance of water as the source of life.

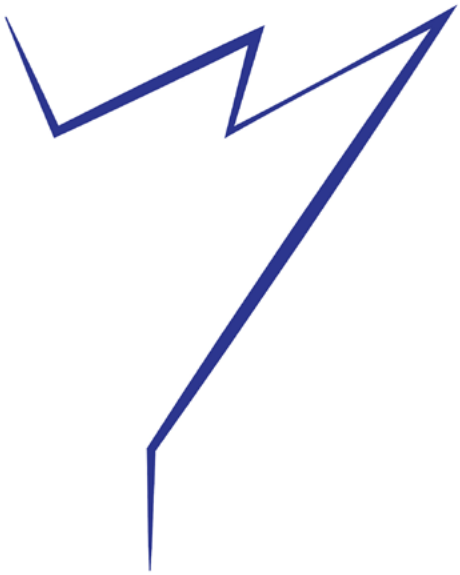

FIG. 7 'Ma character.' Diagram by author

39. Jigyasu, "Reinforcing the Link," 261.

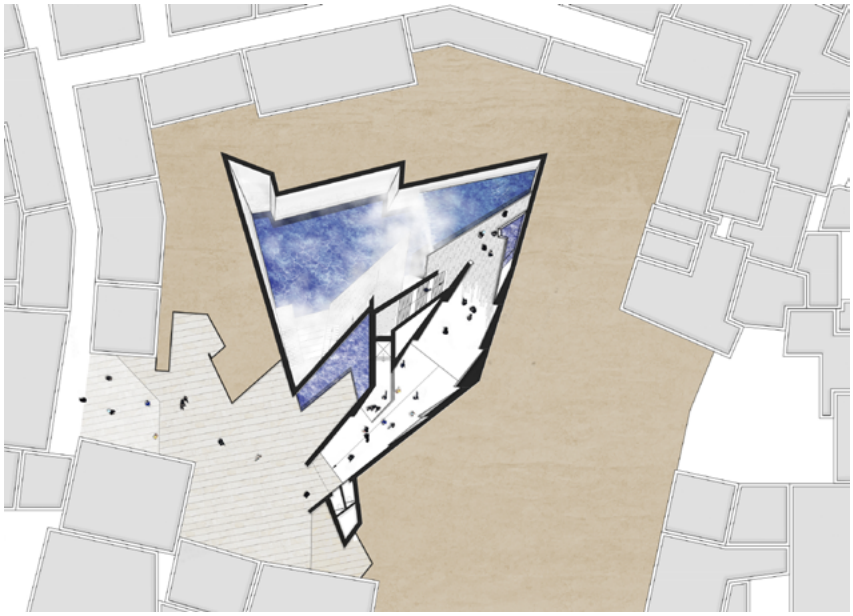

FIG. 8 Floor plan underground: level -1. Plan by author.

The shape provides a continuous source of unpredictability and mysteriousness. People enter the Temple at the start of a long hallway, which leads them underground to the unexpected. The fragmentation in the shape defines three levels of water use—to drink, to bathe, and to relax or use spiritually. The activities take place in shared spaces that allow people to gather together closely or stand at a distance to observe each other. A continuous sound of water drops dripping from the water-filtering ceiling and the sound of a continuous flow of water from the underground waterfall immerses the visitors in the architecture of water. [Figs. 8-9]

The upper underground level (*level -1*, figure 8) at the end of a hallway gives an overview of the underground part of the temple and it is the level where water is available to drink. People can descend to the second underground level (*level -2*) to bathe. The lowest level (*level -3*) can be used as a hammam, a theater, and as a place to sit and worship. The space opens up towards the water and the upper floor levels. In the temple, people are able to experience different facets of water such as sound, humidity, effects on light, and temperature. An elevator connects the underground part of the Temple with the water reservation tower that rises high up in the air. From this location, people can see Hebron as a whole. The elevation allows people to see every part of the city without any obstructions of their sight by political movement barriers. The sight of the city brings people closer to the idea of a city without barriers, where experiences and memories can be made at any place in the city.

The routing through the building is designed with one wide connecting route from the top to the lowest level of the building. People will have to pass each other, but they will have enough space to pass at a comfortable distance. [Fig.10]

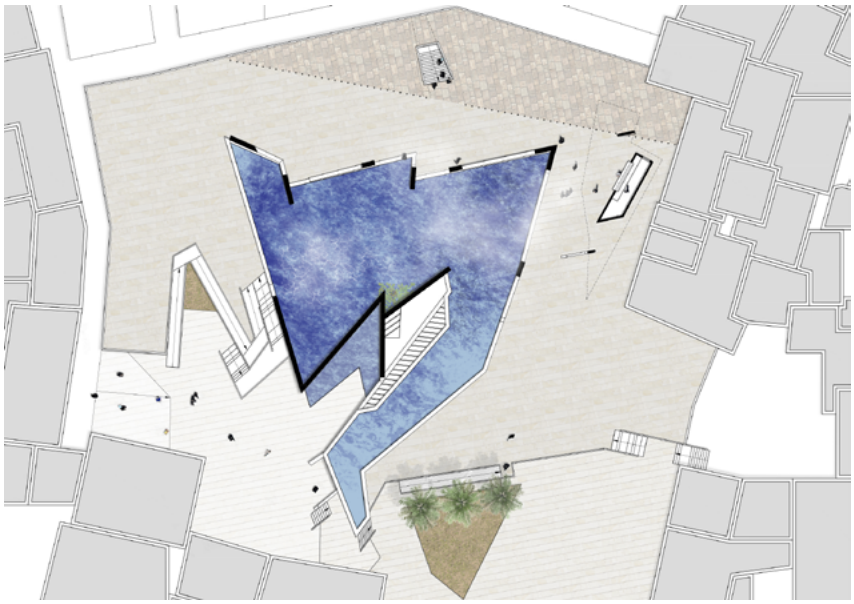

FIG. 9 Floor plan ground floor. Plan by author

The design underscores water's importance by demonstrating the qualities of water through architecture and the provision of a space where people can worship water. The design addresses the problems of territorial water management by being the place where all people from any location can come to use water, while providing a platform for social cohesion and de-segregation through everyday interaction. The Temple counteracts the segregating architecture of walls and checkpoints and demonstrates the possibilities of a space without embodiments and restrictions of (inter) national boundaries. Referring to different architectural and engineering structures that exist or have existed in different cultures around the world, the Temple of Water reintroduces the necessity and importance of water systems as part of the socio-cultural context in the current era, connecting to the surrounding and its community through its materials and in language. The design represents a positive response to the fragile, complex and complicated Israeli-Palestinian situation. The Temple of Water promotes peace and stability through a modern view of water as the center of society, where connections can be created and re-established, and where new habits and practices around water can develop. [Fig.11]

Conclusion

Research on the implications and value of water and water systems shows the importance of cautious design. Water is the source of life, and its systems facilitate social connections. The political and economic strength of a country depends on water, it can be a source of conflict and even war, as it has been already in Israel and the Palestinian Territories. Agreements can lead to clarity, but might also lead to mistrust and misun-

FIG. 10 Temple of Water underground interior visualization by author.

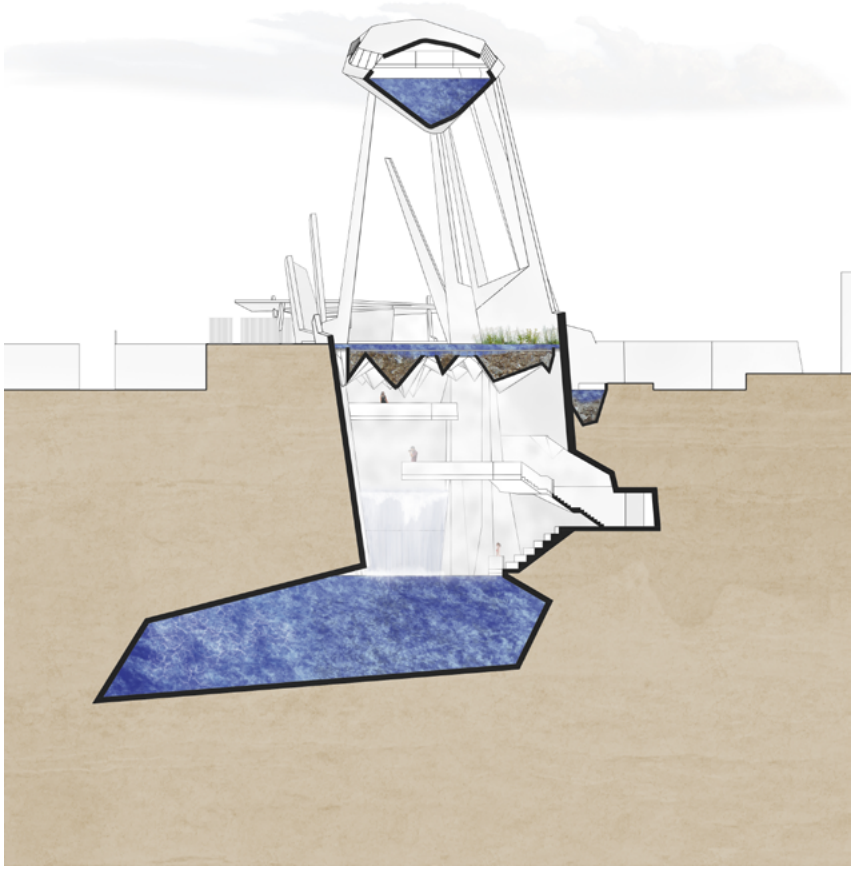

FIG. 11 Temple of Water section by author.

derstanding as systems and societies change over time. It is important to design water and water systems in conjunction with a vision of the future of a city or community.

Normalization and peace in the case of Israel and the Palestinian Territories depend on many factors, including politics, social interaction, water management, and the planning and design of physical space, where people can meet and interact and feel connected to the space and to one another. Physical barriers in space block movement and interaction, and sustain and perpetuate conflicts. Planners and designers must be aware of the possible consequences of their designs for the city and its society. Interdependent relations and democratic management positively contribute to an efficient and egalitarian use of resources.

The Temple of Water is proposed to stimulate everyday interaction between different social groups through a communal need—water. In the specific case of Hebron, the Temple is identifiable by Israelis and Palestinian visitors through its materials, but remains mysterious and unpredictable through its unexpected sequence of spaces and spatial characteristics. The Temple of Water offers a modern view of water as the center of society. Building on the heritage of water, the building restores water as a vehicle for social practices. The Temple provides space to facilitate everyday interaction and connections between Israelis and Palestinians, letting communities grow towards stability, democracy and peaceful coexistence.

Klaas de Jong is a Dutch architect. After his studies in architecture at TU Delft and SCI-Arc, he graduated from TU Delft with a master thesis on the role of architecture in water-stressed conflict regions, 2018. Currently he is based in New York City at Studio Libeskind.

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