

## Competing iconographies in Jerusalem's Old City

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The Old City of Jerusalem is at the core of an ongoing visual struggle between two sets of iconographies, with the Palestinian and Israeli sides trying to assert by this mean their claim to the City, both on a private and a public level, with diasporic and tourists as their target audience. This struggle has led to the appearance of a specific visual culture of the Old City, with visitors being entangled in this struggle.

At the same time, this specific target has had a very strong influence on the choice of images, which are designed to fit its tastes and demands in a global cultural context.

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### Introduction

Welcoming millions of visitors annually ("Yaakov"), Jerusalem has seen the development of a particular touristic iconography, both publicly and privately. This iconography is aimed at helping tourists find their way around the city, but it also serves other purposes, namely asserting a person's legitimacy in the city and building a narrative for this legitimacy. Under tourism, we understand the phenomenon of short-term migration for leisure or cultural purposes, and the system of actors, practices and spaces created for the accommodation of these visitors away from home (Ceriani-Sebregondi 10). This article is more focused on the iconography that sustains these practices, the one which is created to guide the tourists, and the one which offers them an image of what they have come to visit. Although this iconography can be rather neutral, particularly when it is aimed at religious pilgrims, it coexists with a more identity iconography, albeit also touristic, that is linked to the Israeli and the Palestinian narratives. Based on field research conducted through participatory observation in the museums and touristic shops of Jerusalem in 2010 and 2014, this study focuses on this second type of iconography and intends to understand how it is used to assert these narratives amongst its target audi-

ence, foreign visitors. Tourists and visitors are offered a wide array of Israeli and Palestinian symbols and objects of identity, which they can, in turn, bring back home and be bearers of these narratives themselves. In this way, visitors to Jerusalem become “entangled” in this narrative through the iconographic choices they make while shopping in the Old City (Gell 16). This will lead us use a homogenized frame in order to focus on images and products which demonstrate, in the most visible way, their identity content. We will consequently pay less attention to iconographies in which this aspect is more ambiguous or can be linked to multiple narratives (the association would depend on the place of purchase and on the possible intention of the buyer, such as Dead Sea products, photos of Jerusalem’s landscape, or images simply labelled “Holy Land”, which can be interpreted to support none or either narrative).

It is present on city banners and road signs, but mostly appears on much more intimate objects, such as lighters, T-shirts, key chains, kitchen gloves, etc. so that the buyers become the bearers of a particular narrative as they use the items throughout their daily lives. This iconography is to be linked with the political and memorial geography of the Old City

(Halbwachs .11), elements which the visitors have in mind when visiting the Old City, and they are being invited to take part in a particular memory (Cohen-Hattab “Zionism” 67; Brin “Politically-oriented tourism” 215; Stein “National itineraries” 107). This is to be understood through the question of diasporic tourism (Kelner *Tours that bind* 191.; Coles and Dallen *Tourism* 215) and transnational mobilization through images (Tarrow and Della Porta *Transnational Activism* 203.; Doerr et al “Visual Analysis” 13) in which visitors are conceived as potential supporters of one national claim on the city or the other.

At the same time, this political iconography in a touristic place is to be analyzed in light of the creation of a new visual image of Jerusalem, one that is deeply linked to these competing narratives when taken as a comprehensive phenomenon. As this iconography is conspicuously present, it questions the visual culture of the Middle East and its evolution (Gruber and Haugbolle 9). As it has been addressed toward a global audience, it has absorbed and transformed symbols from all over the world, and has turned these symbols into parts of the existing narratives, which consequently, questions the evolution of culture in a postcolonial world (Appadurai 89.). This visual and militant culture is

transformed by its target audience. As a result, this iconography can be interpreted as creating a new visual identity for the Old City, one that is centered on competing narratives within the visual culture of a particular form of war tourism (Butler and Sunkul 132, 143, Debbie 91).

To address these questions, we will study this iconography first on the Israeli and then on the Palestinian side and will examine both the public and private levels. Then, we will study the transformation of the visual identity of the Old City through the integration of these iconographies in a global cultural context.

#### **Israeli iconography and the diaspora: a biblical, Oriental, and military identity**

The most obvious features of public iconography in Jerusalem are the signs and banners that guide the visitors. As such, they are part of a policy of Israelization of the Old City (Nassar 5., Bar and Rubin 775), a policy that places a particular emphasis on archeology and the on the imposition of an Israeli historical narrative about Old City places (el-Haj 130 and 163), especially in the Jewish Quarter and in the City of David (Ricca 25, Pullan and Gwiazda 10). From an iconographic point of view, this Israelization is done through the choice of images that should symbolize the various sites of Jerusalem and blends

together biblical and historical references into a narrative that sustains the Israeli claim and is directed, in particular, towards diasporic tourists, guests who want to visit places that have been identified through biblical archeology, which focuses on the search for historical proofs of the Bible, as being biblical sites (Ben-Yehuda et al 299, Finkelstein and Silberman 4).

These references accompany visitors along their way through the City as soon as they are welcomed by the tourist office of Jerusalem at the Jaffa Gate. Its symbol portrays two characters carrying a large grape on a stick, this being a reference to the entrance of the Hebrews into the Holy Land (Numbers 13). As visitors, they follow the steps of Jerusalem's mythical topography (Halbwachs 11), a topography that has been marked by an Israeli iconography that reinterprets the traditional pilgrimage roads. The same mix of references appears next to the Dung Gate with its symbol of the City of David. While most of this site is more modern, an ancient harp, a reference to King David, is printed onto the flashlight that each visitor receives as a memento.

Within the City, tourists are invited to visit the Davidson Center, the Archeological Park, the Damascus Gate and the Ancient Quarries of Jerusalem, each signaled by

banners bearing a particular character. For the Davidson Center, the character is a Herodian stone worker; an Ottoman character was chosen for the Archeological Park; a Roman legionary represents the Damascus Gate; and a Hebrew royal figure was selected for the Ancient Quarries. The stone worker is an allusion to the building of the Second Temple, about which much of the Davidson Center's exposition is devoted to, and the Roman legionary alludes to the fact that at the Damascus Gate, one can also visit the remains of the Roman gate. The royal figure hints at the water drops in the quarries that are called "Zedekiah's tears", while the quarry is also said to have been used to build the First Temple. The Ottoman character stands for all of Jerusalem, but most particularly, the ramparts built under Soleiman I.

Each of these characters strengthens the Israeli narrative, which uses biblical archeology to identify places where biblical narratives could have occurred. Zedekiah and the First Temple resort to invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1, Finkelstein 27) and strengthen the link between present-day Israel and the Ancient Kingdom in the model of imagined communities (Anderson 2006). This narrative is fostered by the Herodian sculptor who rebuilds the Temple after

the First Exile. The Roman legionary, in the attire of the Flavian dynasty, is reminiscent of the fall of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman legions in 70 AD, and of the diaspora, as the history of the Jewish Revolt by Josephus has been deeply appropriated by the Israeli narrative (Ben-Yehuda 247, 71, Weingrod 228) and thereby transforms the visual identity of the gate. The Ottoman character erases the Palestinian narrative of the city, especially the whole of the Middle Ages and incorporates this entire period into the domination of the Ottomans (which are conceived of as a foreign power). From the First Temple to present day Israel, iconography appears to be a powerful tool for the Israelization of the city and for linking its past to its present. The images give a sense of reality to the Israeli narrative, and transform the mythical topography of the Holy Land (Boytner, Dodd and Parker 142, Silberman 487).

This mix of archeology and biblical references is also prevalent in the souvenir shops that offer visitors a wide variety of posters and models, together with ritual objects to be used at home (*mezuzahs*, candlesticks, Sabbath tablecloth etc) and are decorated with such iconography. Among these, the representations of the Second Temple are common. The image is designed according to biblical accounts

and archeological evidence and thereby creates a virtual representation of Jerusalem that is supported by archeology and that fits the Israeli narrative better than the actual Old City. This virtual image serves the construction of the community between Israel and the diaspora, the image being more relevant in this regard than the actual remains, and it creates a common identity around that image (Edensor 135, 103) through diasporic tourism (Holmes 192).

Through ritual objects, diasporic visitors are invited to Israelize their Jewish lives (Collins-Kreiner and Olsen 279). These objects are made in Jerusalem or are made with Dead Sea stone, or olive wood grown in Israel, and they bear views of the Old City, the Jerusalem coat of arms, the Lion of Judah, the Wailing Wall, or the Tomb of Absalom, all elements that are key to the identification of Israel as the heir to the ancient Jewish kingdoms that built these structures. Further relevant are the symbols that appear on official emblems, with mentions of "Israel", "Sion", or "Jerusalem" in Hebrew. They also feature another virtual iconography, that of the replica of the original menorah that dominates the stairs above the Wailing Wall, which thereby participates in the virtualization of the City around models that are archeologically precise and recreate the

Holy Land according to an identity narrative (Long 165).

This recreation is not devoid of exoticism, as the Israel pictured on these objects is also deeply oriental. This is linked to the construction of Israel as an Oriental land alongside its archeological and biblical references (Khazzoom 489, Kalmar, Davidson and Penslar 80, Peleg 75). Objects often feature paintings of Israel that present its cities as Oriental villages with domes and white houses, creating an identity landscape (Thiesse 189, Sgard 23) that is evocative of the ancient Israel and of the Middle Eastern identity of the country. This is in fact an Orientalized version of the country that fits visitors' demands, which are visually derived from the Palestinian landscape of the 30's (which has been appropriated by the Israeli narrative) and which is coherent with the sale of reproductions of touristic posters of the 30's that feature such landscapes. This has led also to the adoption of ceramic paintings presented as a "traditional" Israeli crafts, something that is considered to be more Oriental and that better fits the visitors' tastes. This Orientalization of Israel has also led to the adoption of the camel as a national symbol on T-shirts, fridge magnets, postcards, etc, as a manifestation of the Oriental flavor that visitors seek when visiting Israel (Bendix 131).

Nevertheless, the most popular iconography on the Israeli side is linked to the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), particularly on T-shirts, but also on all forms of intimate objects such as kippahs, lighters and necklaces, anything but those objects that would appear disrespectful (for example, ashtrays). It is a common sight in the Old City to come across visitors wearing IDF T-shirts, or bearing the emblem of the police, the Air Force, or the Paratroopers. When not in uniform, Israelis do not wear such symbols, and this iconography appears to be specifically targeted at the touristic audience. It is most particularly aimed at the diasporic visitors, who can also buy a wide array of products labeled as being "similar to the ones in use in the IDF". Tsahal is perceived as being at the core of the Israeli identity (Ben-Amos 103, 201), and the wearing of such shirts creates participation in that community (Cohen 2013, pp 97 Helman 305) and assigns the visitor to a particular side within the narrative conflict. It is a way to manifest one's sense of belonging and solidarity with Israel (Habib 139, Lev Ari and Mittelberg 86, Kelner 191), and could even be perceived as a symbol for the diaspora itself.

### Palestinian iconography of resistance for a local and global audience

The Palestinian narrative cannot benefit from an official iconography as the Israeli one does, but, within the political frame imposed onto the Old City, it is nevertheless very much present. If the Palestinian Authority lacks the possibility to officially present its national narrative, it nevertheless appears through private initiatives in interstitial spaces. For lack of banners, Palestinian graffiti and advertisements are common and act in the same manner, as markers of national property, and show the Palestinian flag or praise the resistance and glorify the spirit of Saladin. Since the *Haram-ech-Cherif* itself cannot be appropriated in a Palestinian perspective, due to the Holy Places regulations, in the same way other pilgrimages have been portrayed in Palestine (Aubin-Boltanski 131), this iconography is to be found on the ramparts that surround it. This appears as an iconographic counter-virtualization, and these images are linked to the Palestinian narrative and to the campaigns of Saladin, the liberator of the city from Crusader rule, around which the Ottoman ramparts are reinterpreted (Khalili 90).

Saladin himself is rather common on Palestinian commercial banners in the Old City with an iconography inspired by

the film renditions of his rule, particularly Youssef Chahine's *Al Nasser Salah-ed-Din* (Aigle 189, Mayeur-Jaouen 91), which portrays the sultan as a national hero. The image of Saladin and his troops advancing towards Jerusalem is also a popular feature on T-shirts or on posters that are sold on the Palestinian side of the Old City. Nevertheless, this image appears limited to such products, as other objects would appear disrespectful.

Since the Israeli authorities forbid the appearance of martyr posters or militant groups' logos, the Palestinian iconography revolves around a few political, religious, and identity symbols that appear on all kinds of supporting objects, but here again, the objects matter in the sense that the political statement made should not interfere with the necessary respect that should be given to a religious symbol. In that sense, symbols that bear a sacred meaning, such as the Dome of the Rock, and al Aqsa Mosque (Vale 391), which are often accompanied with Koranic verses, appear commonly as posters, embroideries, paintings and mosaics that are intended to be displayed in the home as both national and religious symbols, or they also appear on keychains that are intended to be used as personal amulets. The *nazar* is used in the same manner, but less on T-shirts, con-

trary to the Israeli side, where non-Jewish religious monuments are considered landmarks and appear more frequently on touristic clothing.

Apart from the Holy Places, these symbols also encompass the map of Palestine as it was before 1948, where it is often combined with the Palestinian flag, the *keffiyeh* (Swedenburg "Keffiyeh" 63), portraits of Yasser Arafat, and drawings of Handala (Najjar 255, Halevy 2009). These images evolve from the Palestinian national iconography into a touristic context (Le Troquer and Nammari 201). The *keffiyeh*, which has been identified as the primary symbol of the Palestinian struggle since the 30s, is linked to the Palestinian rural identity (Sanbar 50, Khalidi 89), and, through its use by Yasser Arafat, has become particularly important in this regard (Sayigh 151). Handala is also very common, and Naji el-Ali's cartoon has represented the Palestinian refugees for decades and has also been widely used among leftist organizations that support the Palestinian cause. Symbols of Palestinian suffering putting an emphasis on pathos, such as images of mothers and children weeping, are also common and are linked to the particular visual culture of the Middle East, especially in Turkey (Haugbolle and Gruber 103), but these images seem to be limited to books, pos-

ters and CD covers in religious bookstores which may interest militant Muslim visitors, but their scope remains limited, due to the Israeli regulations and their lack of appeal for other tourists. Moreover, the symbols offered to buyers differ according to the places where they are sold, with portraits of Yasser Arafat being more concentrated around the Damascus Gate and the *Haram-ech-Cherif*, along the lines of religious iconography, in shops targeting a local audience. Shops aimed at a more global audience tend to prefer Handala and the national flag.

These images are often combined, especially as olive wood, from which many decorative objects and key chains are made, is used as a national signifier (Abufarha 343) of the Palestinian rural identity but also as a symbol of peace. In the same manner, images displaying an identity Palestinian landscape are often painted on ceramic. It is the same ceramic as the one in Israeli shops, but it is interpreted in a different sense as here the focus is on the original (pre 1948) Palestinian landscape (Thiesse 189, Sgard 23). The case is the same for floral ceramic painting, similarly presented as bearing the national identity in both Palestinian and Israeli shops. In each case, it is the context and sometimes the political symbol associated with the painting that

places it in its own narrative, each one claiming authenticity. At the same time, both of these narratives are faced with a particular iconographic competition over these paintings in the Armenian quarter. Ceramic painting here is presented as a traditional Armenian craft was imported in Jerusalem after the 1915 genocide. Armenian ceramic shops in Jerusalem link this particular iconography to their own narrative, displaying next to their products photos and posters that depict the Armenian genocide, thereby drawing attention their ill-recognized agenda (Oron 351) through this iconographic competition.

In line with this iconography, Palestinian shops also offer a wide range of images based on the traditional embroideries of Palestinian dresses, which, when reinterpreted in a national sense, play a role in women's clothing that is rather parallel to that of the *keffiyeh* for men (Khalidi 14, Allenby). These embroideries appear on dresses, but also on different cloth objects (purses, bags...), and they particularly appear on posters displaying pictures of women wearing these embroideries, with the origin of each dress also carefully mentioned. These embroideries, reinterpreted to fit both local needs and global taste, are markers of the Palestinian national identity that are linked to its

strong relation to the land (Swedenburg "The Palestinian peasant" 22, Bardenstein 148, Abufarha 352).

Part of these products are aimed at a local audience, who, as Palestinians of Jerusalem and the West Bank, want to assert their national identity, especially when it comes to intimate objects such as keychains and lighters. At the same time, this iconography is also aimed at Jewish and Israeli tourists who visit the Arab quarters of the Old City, where products are cheaper than on the Israeli side. To answer the demands of these customers, Palestinian iconography can appear side by side with the Israeli one. This entails a complex relationship with the Israeli visitors, considered as adversaries, neighbors, and customers at the same time. Palestinian shops play on the orientalist stereotypes of authenticity and exoticism for marketing purposes and make a statement of political existence (Stein "National itineraries" 105, Tamari and LeVine 77) through the various images they sell.

Beyond this local audience, these products are aimed at militant visitors who, by wearing these dresses made in the colors of the *keffiyeh* and the Palestinian flag, or T-shirts with Handala, take sides within the narrative conflict and assert their solidarity with the Palestinians. Through iconography, these objects are a symbol of trans-

national mobilization in favor of Palestinians, and mirrors the visitors who claim adhesion to the Israeli narrative (A. Cohen 109). In that regard, iconography is a way of voluntarily entangling oneself in the conflict (Gell 16) and thereby transforming a touristic activity into a political statement of affiliation with a national cause. Nevertheless, this type of touristic militancy transforms the products themselves, as they are tailored to fit particular needs and cultural references, and in doing so, create a new kind of cultural iconographic product.

### **Transforming conflictual iconography in a global cultural context**

The competition between Israeli and Palestinian iconographies in the Old City is more complex than frontal opposition. Both iconographical sets have been transformed and have evolved through the touristic context in which they are bought, leading to the creation of a new visual identity for Jerusalem that is centered on global cultural references, and a form of war tourism.

This appears through the transformation of the iconography, which draws a bridge between local references and more a global imagery. This is most obvious when it comes to T-shirts made on demand. Both on the Palestinian and the Israeli side,

visitors can buy shirts with the logo of various famous international sport teams or local ones, the first having clearly influenced the designs of the local teams' logos. The same goes for fake local universities shirts, which are modeled after their American counterparts. In the same manner, it is possible to buy T-shirts bearing a (fake) logo for "Planet Hollywood", "Hard Rock Cafe" Jerusalem, or "Harley-Davidson", sometimes mixed with the Israeli or Palestinian national colors, or the tourist's name written in Hebrew or in Arabic. This is linked to a global consumer culture (Stenger 42, Bryman 57) that is keen to look for a local meaning in its consuming experience but one that also fits its global references. This hints at a global mainstream culture that local sellers must comply with in order to earn their living and to "entangle" consumers in their narrative competition (Martel 251, Al Sayyad 34, Mignolo 91).

Objects and iconography are thus transformed to fit this global taste and its understanding of the competition. On the Israeli side, this appears in relation to the appropriation of the camel as an identity animal: some representations are made to look "traditional and local" (sewn with glass beads and Bedouin-looking ornaments), following the process of an invented tradition (Hobsbawm and

Ranger 1) Others are inspired by the global cigarette brand's character, Joe Camel (Calfée 168). The same appears on the Palestinian side with the use of Che Guevara's portrait, associating the global icon (Maguet 153, Kunzle 17) with the Palestinian colors, or carving his likeness onto olive wood in order to link him to the local Palestinian cause. Both iconographical narratives aim at resolving the tension between the contradictory visitors' demands of local authenticity and his or her global references, which then results in the creation of new hybrid iconographies.

This hybridization can be problematic from a narrative point of view as it blurs the solidarity relationship built around one or the other iconography. While the act of buying such iconography can be militant, it is nevertheless also a touristic experience. This can be seen, for example, with the *keffiyeh*. As much as it is a symbol of the Palestinian struggle, the *keffiyeh* and its related iconography can also simply be worn as fashion statement (Swedenburg "Keffiyeh" 64, Ferrero-Regis 4), which in turn considerably lowers its militant significance. This is revealed in the proliferation of *keffiyehs* of different colors in Palestinian shops, or by its use in other garments in a movement that is both intended to keep the Palestinian symbol

relevant and to fit the global fashion demand of tourists, a tension which is paralleled by the pashmina scarves worn by Palestinian women. These have become internationally fashionable, and their local use has to be reconciled with the fact that they became globally trendy.

Various figures have also been reinterpreted locally in this way, from superheroes to cartoon characters, but the main movement seems to be the importation of global characters and references into the local narrative in order to fit the audience's wishes, rather than the contrary. This appears, for example, with Superman T-shirts that have been transformed into "Super-Jew" shirts with the orthodox attire completing the super-hero logo (Fink 108). "Hello Kitty" can also be reinterpreted in a local way with the addition of a pun or a feature considered to be typically Israeli or Palestinian. The styles and turn-overs follow political events and global cultural trends. During the beginning of the 90s, T-shirts representing the Israeli and Palestinian flags together with the word "peace" (in Hebrew, Arabic and English) were a common sight (Fink 106), while during Mahmud Ahmadinejad's presidency, a popular design listed all the powers which failed to destroy the Jews, beginning with the Pharaoh of the Exodus and Haman (from the Book of Esther) and

ending with the Islamic Republic, hinting at its final failure.

Beyond this transformation, this iconography can also be interpreted as self-reflexive, as it questions the relationship that visitors build with the places they are visiting. Since 9/11 a design representing an F-16 launching a missile with the sentence "America don't worry, Israel is behind you" is widely seen. This joke about military power and the supposed influence of Israel on America is also a way of making fun of the Americanization of Israel (Rebhun and Waxman 65, Diamond 335) as is demonstrated by the evolution of iconography itself. At the same time, it is a means of mocking the touristic fascination with Israeli elite troops and their adulation of the IDF.

This type of mockery is also present on the Palestinian side with T-shirts bearing the face of Homer Simpson dressed as Che Guevara with the sentence "Hasta la ultima cerveza siempre", a pun on the slogan "hasta la victoria siempre", this time making fun of the touristic interpretation of the Palestinian struggle through romantic Cuban references (Chaliand 39). These types of jokes can be interpreted as a sign of resilience in the ongoing conflict, but at the same time, the F-16 and Homer Simpson belong to the local interpretation of a global visual culture, and are jokes on

something which is already an interpretation of the local situation. This self-reflection can be seen as the appearance of a new visual culture that roots itself in the touristic, militant and diasporic view of the Middle East, with visitors coming in search of the romanticism of the Palestinian cause or of a militaristic Israel.

Thus, this iconography can be seen as the result of the touristic visual culture that is present on both sides of the narrative competition and that is rooted in the war experience of Jerusalem (by now engrained enough to create its own iconography that makes fun of the situation). In parallel, and not contradictory to diasporic and militant tourism, visiting the Old City of Jerusalem can be interpreted as a kind of war tourism, with visitors coming to a contested place to be witnesses of this contestation while looking for an iconography that is the iconography of conflict. For Israelis, this can mean a visit to the ancient battlefields (Brandt 20, Ryan 17), particularly around the Hurva Synagogue and the Museum of the Old Yichuv, which commemorate the 1948 War (Bar and Rubin 775), and their adjacent shops. But for other visitors, coming to Jerusalem can also be coming to a place that is marked by conflict, and a place that has harbored bitter fighting, but that is still relatively safe for them to

experience first-hand (Butler and Suntikul 132, 143, Ryan pp.153 Lisle 91).

As tourists, they visit places that still bear bullet holes (the Zion Gate); they pass by an UNRWA flag (near the Dung Gate); they cross paths with soldiers; they may witness people being searched or demonstrations, etc. And as visitors, they are also looking for an iconography that reflects this experience. So, there is a secondary meaning to the military and militant iconography, beyond their narrative dispute; it is a meaning by which it answers the demand for a touristic iconography that fits the visitors' experience of a conflicted place, and that is expressed with references that fit these visitors' expectations. In this regard, making fun of Che Guevara or Israeli military power is not intended to be disrespectful towards the conflictual narratives at stake. It is a way to transform the iconography so that it fits this dark and war-driven tourism (Lennon and Foley 99, 129.), something often already obtained through a visit to Jerusalem during the Yad Vashem museum (E. Cohen 193), where visitors can buy an iconography similar to the one described above. Due to the length of the conflict in Jerusalem, and to the global attention directed towards it, an iconography has appeared that has made use of this conflict in order to turn it into a visual identity, a kind of

visual war folklore that is the product of both local competing narratives and militant touristic globalization. The conflict has shaped the iconography of the city to the point that it has become part of its visual identity and something that visitors expect to experience.

### Conclusion

The touristic iconography in Jerusalem is a multi-layered phenomenon. It can be neutral, or it can demonstrate a religious identity, particularly in the case of Christian iconography, which is particularly visible around the Holy Sepulcher, and which, usually (apart from some Palestinian Christian shops and the pro-Israeli Christ Church near the Jaffa Gate) does not involve a claim on the Old City but instead only focuses on its religious heritage. It showcases the conflict between the Israeli and Palestinian narratives, but it would be a mistake to consider this the end of the visual identity of the Old City. The Israelization of the City through the design of banners and touristic institutions is quite obvious, as is the Palestinian way of contesting this Israelization by displaying an iconography of resistance. At the same time, both narratives are expressed through an iconography that adapts the local visual culture to the image that visitors expect to see. This competition

between mirror narratives has reached the point of appropriating the same designs and materials that both narratives consider to be authentically their own. In both cases, iconography appears as a means to virtualize the actual Old City in order to make it better fit the national narrative, thereby transforming the way the City is seen. At the same time, this iconography, through the touristic phenomenon, deeply interrogates the narratives at stake. It has been deeply transformed, in order to fit the demand for some particular aspects of the narratives, which in turn have been visually transformed by this demand. In this case, identity narratives are a particularly specular phenomenon that develops through the look of others (Luque 65, Todorova 101) and that adapts its visual presentation for the sake of their appreciation.

The global references that are used in the iconography present in Jerusalem, combined with local elements, have transformed these narratives (Appadurai 178) to the point that the visual identity of a city in conflict has become a conflictual visual identity that is linked to new ways of expressing feelings on a global scale (Appadurai 15.) and that positions itself between local politics, global culture and means of consumption. A hybrid visual culture of war has been created through

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the touristic market. This is symbolized by one of the most popular T-shirts on sale in Jerusalem, both on the Palestinian and on the Israeli side: above the sentence "Peace in the Middle East?" are three characters laughing hardily. The absence of peace is now an image for sale.

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