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BEIRUT: HETEROTOPIAS AND GEOGRAPHICAL PATHS ALONG THE DEMARCATIION LINES (1840-1990)

1. The heterotopia

The word heterotopia is composed by two Greek terms: *etero*, other, and *tópos*, place, and it describes any space that is completely different from the surrounding places. These spaces have the characteristic to be in contact with all the other places, but in a way that creates short circuits because they interrupt, neutralize or subvert the relations between the adjacent dimensions¹.

Who shaped this concept was the French philosopher Michel Foucault and, although the heterotopia has the same fleetingness of both utopia and dystopia (negative utopia), it appears as a concrete and real space. Heterotopias are totally different from utopias (from the Greek word *ou tópos*, literally no-place), which do not exist in reality, but in the imagination only. The philosopher writes that there are some «contre-emplacements, sortes d'utopies effectivement réalisées dans lesquelles les emplacements réels, tous les autres emplacements réels que l'on peut trouver à l'intérieur de la culture sont à la fois représentés, contestés et inversés, des sortes de lieux qui sont hors de tous les lieux, bien que pourtant ils soient effectivement localisables» (Foucault, 1984).

The research of heterotopias is based on a specific science that Foucault names heterotopology, which is characterized by different basic axioms. First, there are no human groups that did not create their own heterotopias (of crisis or deviation ones); second, in the history, a community could use a heterotopia in a different way and with a different function (the cemetery), could erase it and build up new one. Third, «[...], L'hétérotopie a le pouvoir de juxtaposer en un seul lieu réel plusieurs espaces, plusieurs emplacements qui sont en eux-mêmes incompatibles» (Foucault, 1984), like the cinema, the theatre, the garden and its representation on the carpet. Fourth, there is a temporal connection, through the concept of heterochrony: the heterotopia functions in a condition of absolute breaking with the traditional time that, at the contrary, rules the people lives (museums and libraries but also trade fairs

¹ The mirror can perhaps be considered the clearest example of heterotopia. It has the characteristic of let us appear where we are not and to reflect us, as pictures, on its surface. In this way, we can see ourselves in a place although we stay in another space. Another lucid example can be the cemetery, which put us in contact with whom is not anymore in the place where we visit him/her.

and holiday-villages). Fifth, heterotopias function by an opening/closure system that isolates them from the neighbouring space (barracks, prisons, private hospitals, Scandinavian saunas and the *ḥammām*) but let the dimensions communicate at the same time.

Finally, it is a place that contests all the other spaces. This opposition can take place in two different ways: by creating an illusion that reports the rest of the surrounding reality as an illusion in itself (the ship); or by other so perfect, clean, tidy and extremely organized real places that the contiguous space appears chaotic, dirty and unorganized (as it was happening in the colonies or in the puritan societies).

In conclusion, being the heterotopia a space of rupture and protest, it may contain the potential to describe the diversity that characterises different spaces in Beirut, before, during and after the Civil War (1975-1990). These places are to be found along the demarcation lines (*ḵbuṭūt al-tamāss*) that, for fifteen years, divided the city in two urban stumps fighting each other, «the East and the West».

Creation of the demarcation line (1840-1975)

Ma la città non dice il suo passato, lo contiene come le linee d'una mano, scritto negli spigoli delle vie, nelle griglie delle finestre, negli scorrimano delle scale, delle antenne dei parafulmini, nelle aste delle bandiere, ogni segmento rigato a sua volta di graffi, seghettature, intagli, svirgole (Calvino, 1993, p. 11).

After the violent confrontations between Druzes and Christian Maronites in 1841, in the internal heights of Mount Lebanon², the Ottoman authorities, with the Western approval, instituted on 1 January 1843 a Druze Kaymakamate³ and another one for the Maronites (Salibi, 2004, pp. 62-64).

Regarding the border between the two new administrative divisions, we know that «En effet, la première ligne de démarcation que le Liban a connue est celle qui sépare le *caïmacamat* druze du *caïmacamat* maronite. Bien évidemment, cette ligne, qui suit déjà – à peu de choses près – le tracé de la route de Damas, était censée séparer les deux communautés rivales dans le contrôle de l'espace rural.

² Mount Lebanon (Jabal Lubnān) is the name of one of the six governorates (*muhāfazāt*, singular *muhāfaẓa*) of Lebanon. The others are: Bayrūt, al-Janūb, al-Shamāl, al-Biqāʿ, and al-Nabaṭiyya. Each governorate is divided into districts or provinces (*aqḍiyya*, singular *qaḍāʾ*).

³ From the Arab words *qā'immaqām* (*kaymakam*), that refer to the administrative division chief, within the Ottoman Empire. About the origins of the Kaymakamate (*qā'immaqāmiyya*) see also Traboulsi (2012), pp. 24-40, regarding the history and pp. 261-262 for vocabulary accuracy. Furthermore, Kassir defines it as an «Ottoman system of sectarian power-sharing (from the Franco-Turkish term *caïmacamat*)» (Kassir, 2010, p. 586). See also the Treccani Thesaurus on-line, edited by Carlo Alfonso Nallino: [http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/caimacam_\(Enciclopedia-Italiana\)/](http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/caimacam_(Enciclopedia-Italiana)/)

Loin de constituer une solution pour mettre fin aux combats et aux massacres, cette division est apparue, aux yeux de nombre de commentateurs, comme une institutionnalisation de la guerre civile, celle-ci ne pouvant cesser qu'avec l'abolition de cette ligne de démarcation» (Beyhum, 1994, p. 277).

In their actions, the two communities were driven by the instinctive aims of defence of themselves and of their identity belongings, intensifying in this way the features of dominion and territorial separation. In Mount Lebanon, the Druze and Maronite communities started fighting due to endlessness territorial disputes. Far away from being this one the main reason for those divisions, the new political kinds of space and economic organization, introduced by the Ottomans and the Westerns, created new community relations, by exacerbating earlier tensions (Salibi, 2004, pp. 47-52).

Both sides of this primigenial demarcation line did not show an absolute homogeneity in the demographic composition: a big number of Christians was living in the city of Dayr al-Qamar (nowadays the traditional Druze stronghold, in region of the Shūf Mountains) or vice versa there were Druzes in the region of Matn (majority Maronite district). The administrative borders' institutional and political legalization created separated entities. The aim of reducing the sectarian clashes failed and those fights even increased and witnessed the British intervention on the Druze side and the French, that defended the Maronite community; yet, backing Druzes Orthodox Russians, Catholic Austrians, Prussians and Italians were also part of the game (*ibidem*, p. 55).

Between 1861 and 1915, the Mutesarrifate (a further Ottoman administrative division (*mutasarrifiyya*, in Arabic) of Mount Lebanon was created: it was enjoying more autonomy and it absorbed several more provinces compared to the double Kaymakamate: the region of Zahla in the East, parts of the regions of Hirmil and of the Mediterranean coastline (Traboulsi, 2012, pp. 41-43; **fig. 1**).

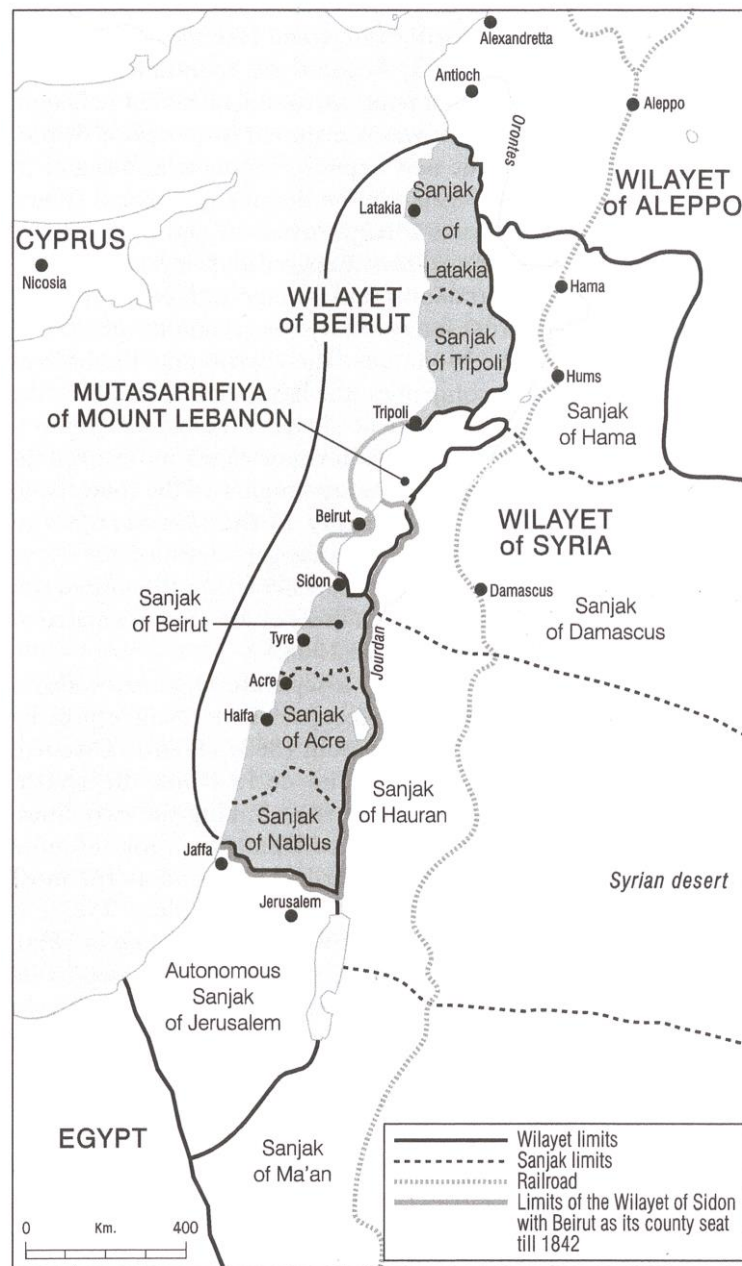


Fig. 1 Mutesarrifate of Mount Lebanon (1861-1915) Source: Traboulsi (2012, p. 53)

These years, when Lebanon was changing under the push of the recent Ottoman reforms (*Tanzīmāt*, 1839-1856) and, moreover, under a greater Western influence, witnessed the Damascus street' construction, that was the first stretch of an (un)imagined future demarcation line: «The beginning of the 1860s represented a turning point, when public works and private enterprise combined to redirect the course of urbanism in Beirut. The initial impetus was given by the start of construction on the Damascus road in January 1859» (Kassir, 2010, p. 135).

The Sublime Porte collapse, with the end of the First World War and the institutionalization of the French mandate in Lebanon (and Syria) from 1920 to 1943, caused the transition from the Ottoman city to the *ville française*. By creating the Greater Lebanon, as a separated territorial unit from Syria, Beirut became the capital of the new born Lebanese Republic: the old demarcation line started moving from the mountains to the capital, emerging as a functional diversity opposing city and mountain (Davie M., 1994, p. 5; **fig. 2**).



Fig. 2 Greater Lebanon (1920) and Mutesarrifat Source: Traboulsi (2012, p. 43)

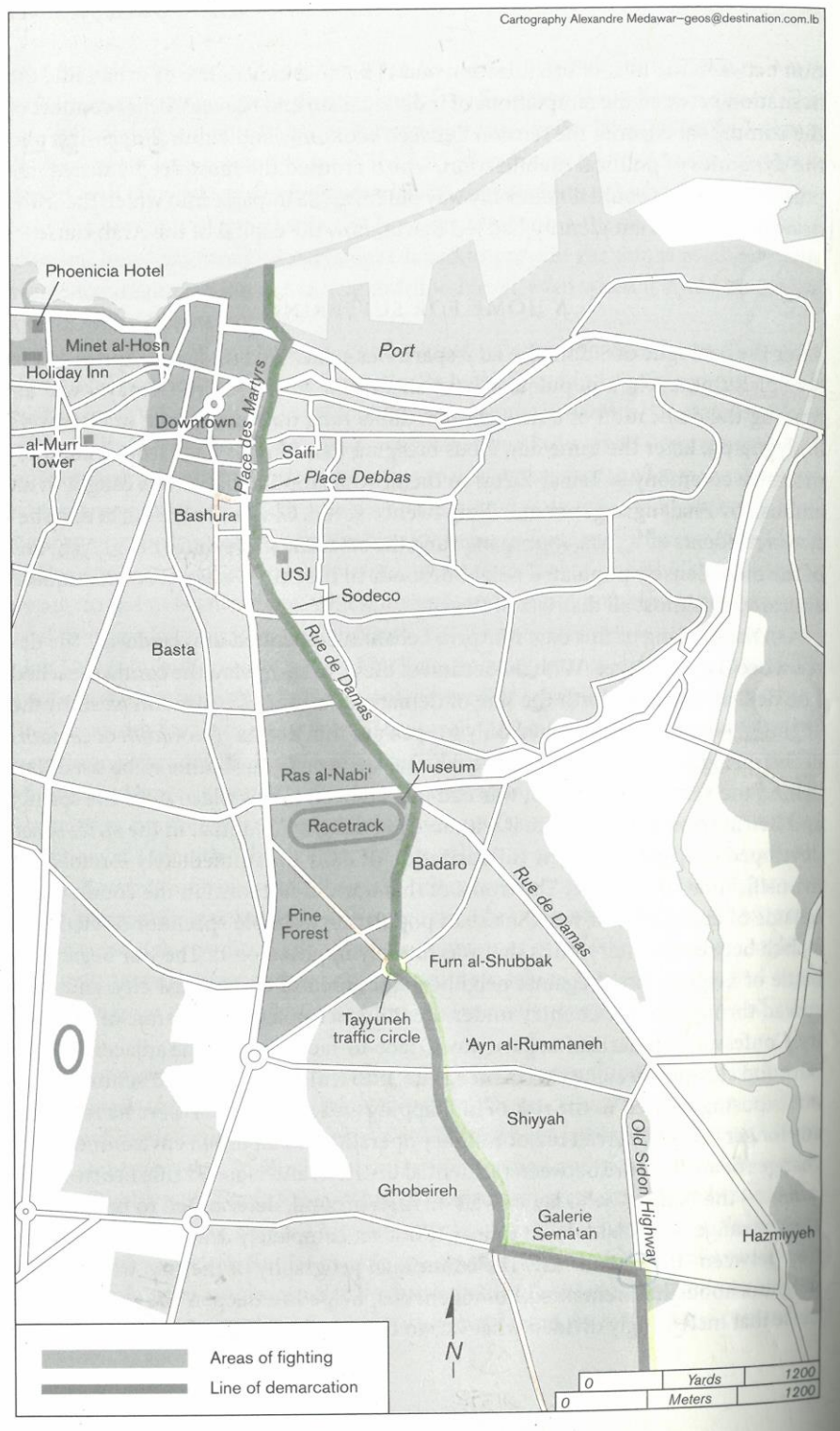
Khatt al-tamāss (the demarcation line) then, was precisely localized in two streets: «La ligne de démarcation de Beyrouth suit topographiquement deux rues de Beyrouth: celle de Damas dans la partie municipale de la ville, celle de l'ancienne route de Saïda dans la partie banlieusarde. [...] Il n'est donc pas faux de dire que cette division de la guerre trouve son pendant dans l'avant-guerre» (Beyhum, 1993, p. 45).

In his analysis, the Lebanese sociologist is aware of the risks that this electoral districts' administrative division could have caused, and that these formal demarcations would have had, as a consequence, the creation of majority Muslim neighbourhoods and other Christian ones. Furthermore, it is important to notice that, in the peripheries, the area of Shiyyāḥ was divided into two separate municipalities (*baladiyyāt*): one was mostly inhabited by Christians (with the contiguous neighbourhoods of Shiyyāḥ e 'Ayn al- Rummāna, mainly Maronites), while the other by Shiites (the region of Ghubayrī, close to the Palestinian camps; **fig. 3**).

Moreover, considered from a demographic point of view, «[...] ces lignes ne sont pas, avant-guerre, des lieux de démarcation absolue: 4 à 10% de la population d'Achrafieh, "Est", était musulmane, près de 30 à 40% de la population de l'Ouest était chrétienne» (*ibidem*, p. 46)⁴.

In closing, the twenty years before the war were characterized by important and deep changes on the social and economic level: the ongoing students' protests and workers' demonstrations, the radicalization of ancient political rivalries, the weapons influx in a country that was proud of being considered as «Middle Eastern Switzerland», for business, good life and the luxury that part of the Lebanese people were enjoying (Salibi, 2005, pp. 39-55). Everyone was, therefore, forgetting the Palestinian camps' misery and the segregation, with the consequent formation of armed factions inside, as well as the degraded peripheries-ghettos in the majority Shiite Southern suburbs, close to the refugees' camps.

⁴ The sociologist gives the example of the street that characterizes the Archbishop's palace surroundings in the Muslim neighbourhood of Ra's al-Nab'a, where the Christian element is dominant. At the contrary, in the city Eastern Christian sector, the Muslim neighbourhood of Baydūn is an exception, with its mosque of the same name.



3. The demarcation line during the war (1975-1990)

Lo specchio ora accresce il valore delle cose, ora lo nega.

Non tutto quel che sembra valere sopra lo specchio resiste se specchiato.
Le due città gemelle non sono uguali, perché nulla di ciò che esiste o avviene a Valdrada è simmetrico: a ogni viso e gesto rispondono dallo specchio un viso o un gesto inverso punto per punto.
Le due Valdrade vivono l'una per l'altra, guardandosi negli occhi di continuo, ma non si amano (Calvino, 1993, p. 52).

Today, it is not difficult to track down the (old) demarcation line route. Until now, its streets still show the clashes' markings: riddled black destroyed buildings, ghostly carcasses where the winds pass through and blow throughout the big wall holes. Their balconies are invaded by weeds (**figg. 4-5**).



Fig. 4 Demarcation Line, downtown. Source: photo of the author (2011)

‘Ayn al-Rummāna, a demarcation line adjacent Christian neighbourhood in the Eastern peripheries, witnessed the two events that marked the beginning of the war. On Sunday the 13th of April 1975, some people opened fire, during a new Maronite church consecration ceremony attended also by Pierre al-Jumayyl, leader of the Christian Phalangist right-wing nationalist party (*al-Katā'ib*). One of his bodyguards and two Phalangists were killed in the attack for which were considered responsible

some armed Palestinians groups, backed by the National Movement, that was following a totally adverse political line from the Phalangist party.



Fig. 5 Demarcation Line, *rue de Saïda* (Sidon road) Source: photo of the author (2011)

The reaction was immediate: during the same day, in the same neighbourhood, the Phalangists ambushed a bus with Palestinian passengers, coming from the Shātīlā camp (in the West) and proceeding toward the Tall al-Za‘tar camp (in the Eastern suburbs). The attack resulted in twenty seven Palestinian victims. It is said that the only one that wasn’t killed was the driver of that bus that, in the coming years, would have become for all *būṣṭa ‘Ayn al-Rummāna*, turning in this way, in the collective unconscious, into the symbol of the beginning of the civil war (**fig. 6**).



Fig. 6 Beirut and its suburbs Source: Salibi (2005, p. 100)

The first two years of the war were pivotal: the Green Line was created between 1975 and 1976. This name, in its most immediate visual impact, seems to portray the greenery that covered *khaṭṭ al-tamāss* streets. Ailanthus trees and castor-oil plants substituted the lilacs and the palms that once decorated the *burj* (the pre-war crawling centre of Beirut, a space of gathering for the different religious and ethnic communities) and that were all cut: «[...] Beirut is already a city of sand. On the ground, the stones and the asphalt, wrecked during the fighting,, are covered by a green mantle; this is the real Green Line, grown up, during the clashes, by drinking the destroyed pipeline spilled water»⁵ (Fregonese e Minca, 2004, pp. 116-117). A demarcation line eye-witness describes it as:

«*Ḥawājiz turabiyya* (checkpoints made by earth piles) e *akyās raml* (sand sacks). The soil formed almost mountains, because the piles were very high, and the sand sacks were used by the militia-men standing behind them. There were not trees as before but from the ground the weeds started to appear. Carcasses of buses and cars were thrown in that amalgam. This happened especially in the centre-ville, where once there were *aswāq Bayrūt* (Beirut markets): the piles were totally covered by the grass»⁶.

⁵ English translation has been done by the author. The original version is in Italian.

⁶ The author interviewed A., Arabic teacher, in her house in the Ḥadath neighbourhood, on 18 February 2011.

Only during the next autumn, people started talking about war, before only expressions like *ḥamādīth* o *aḥdāth* were used: «the events» that went through the streets of the city, absorbing them in a dimension that will have militarized the daily life until 1990 at least.

4. War heterotopias

So in 1975 I'm seven years old and I'm in primary school at the Dames de Nazareth. After 13 April I will never see my school again, which is in a district named after it – *al-Nasra*. It is in one of the most explosive neighbourhoods of Beirut, right near *tarik al-cham*, rue de Damas, which has become the demarcation line between West Beirut, *Gharbieh*, and East Beirut, *Charkieh*, where we live. The division of Beirut is now well established. The entire downtown area (the Bo rj, Bab Idriss, the souks, place Debbas and place de l'Etoile) has become a gigantic no-man's land, completely destroyed, where only militiamen and snipers venture (Ziadé, 2012).

In this new city, made of neighbourhoods turned into military forts, the public transportation lines were stopping close to *khaṭṭ al-tamās*: «I remember that during the war the school-bus was not passing by our neighbourhood. Its streets, close to the demarcation line, were considered very dangerous. The bus was stopping every morning at 6.30, and every afternoon at 15.30 in front of Ward. The ice-cream seller was located at the boundaries of the region: beyond it the driver was not venturing, and it was transformed in a bus stop»⁷ (Abirached, 2010, p. 11).

Yet, during the past decades, as we read in some touristic guides written before the war, bus lines and tramways were continuously crossing the city, from east to west, and vice versa. Before the war, for example, there was the bus line n.1 that from 'Ayn al-Rummāna (east) was going to the Corniche (west), until the military bath (*al-ḥammām al-'askarī*); moreover, the line 2 from the far eastern region of Dawra was going to the western periphery, in al-'Ūzā'ī neighbourhood (Tourist's Lebanon Companion, end of the 60s-beginning of the 70s, p. 40). Among the tramways, once going from the east to the west, line 1 was leaving Beirut river (*nahr Bayrūt*) and reaching the Muslim majority quarter of Baṣṭa; while line 2 from the Christian majority district of Furn al-Shubbāk was going until the American University in Bliss Street (Les Guides Bleus, 1956, p. 52).

This public transportation system stopped existing during the war, when the street entrances started to be denied o allowed only by the request of demonstrate the sectarian origins through the identity cards. While the central areas were emptied of their own inhabitants, to be substituted by fighters and snipers, few entrances were left opened.

⁷ English translation has been done by the author. The original version is in Italian.

During the so-called «Two Years War» from 1975 to 1976⁸, the Beirut area control was implemented with certain specific characteristics by numerous militias. The urban dimension used to have some polarizations which were surrounding the inner ideological hard cores («rings»), as described by M.F. Davie. The urban military equipments, like barracks, offices, and buildings, were located inside these internal circles. The external rings (covering a surface of about one hundred metres from the hard cores) can be considered like a protective belt or like a first defence line for the inner military citadel, throughout check-points' barricades and speed bumps. The neighbourhoods collocated in this areas were evicted from any kind of political and ideological opposition, and they were covered with posters⁹ and flags; regarding the barracks, they were painted with the same colours of the local militia, and covered by their chiefs and martyrs (*shuhadā'*) images. The military offices were generally located in the first floors of the buildings; additionally, they were protected by sand sacks and concrete cubes, and decorated with graffiti.

The controlled area could reach the extension of two or three hundred metres, with strict surveillance and patrolling: «[...] L'auréole nous apparaît ainsi comme une partie du territoire que nous appelons “quartier milicien”, équivalent à l'optimum de l'extension spatiale du message et du quadrillage possible par chaque faction» (Davie M. F., 1992, p. 48).

Furthermore, from both sides, there were some interstitial spaces appearing like amorphous territories because they did not have a specific identity: they were characterized by the chromatic vacuum and by the absence of visual messages. These were the internal streets and alleys connecting the militia neighbourhoods, therefore considered as common ground for both sides.

Far away from being safe and peaceful places, these spaces of connection were friction and overlapping faults, where the fighters were showing off their unity and strength, during their parades, funerals, marches, anniversaries and celebrations. Somehow, this was a public and dual space, civilian and military at the same time.

The Lebanese civil war was not really fought outside Beirut, nor in the far countryside. Yet, it touched the most violent peaks in the city centre (*al-burj*), which was disintegrated and wrecked. It became a war between contiguous neighbourhoods and adjacent streets, places where the daily fighting was absorbed in a wider process aiming to the sectarian polarization and homogenization. The trade centre lost its specific function of a public space for gathering and meeting for the different

⁸ *Ḥarb al-Sanāṭayn* in Arabic, or War of the Hotels, *Ḥarb al-Fanādiq*. For a more detailed analysis about these first war years, see Fregonese (2009), pp. 313-316.

⁹ For a deeper study about war posters see Maasri (2009).

communities. By then, the war infiltrated the very heart of Beirut and the fighting groups were consolidating their power by an ideological and confessional territory homogenization, while before the same areas were characterized by a varied composition.

«[...] The very first observation, at an elementary level, is that new place-names have appeared and have been adopted by general public, the media and by researches and which were not in use in prewar days. The most well-known are undoubtedly “East Beirut” and “West Beirut”, two opposing spatial units, conveniently separated by the “Green Line”. “Beirut”, the place-name, is no longer used without an indication of its position *vis à vis* the Line» (M. F. Davie, 1993, p. 1).

From these brief historical records – that are not expected to be complete, given the extreme complexity of the Lebanese war events and the labyrinth of internal and external actors operating in them – the heterotopical value of specific space comes to light: the passages and the interstitial neighbourhoods (that can be considered as «war heterotopias»), *al-būṣṭa* (**fig. 7**) and the several war-survivor partly destroyed buildings.





Fig. 7 *Bosta 'Ayn er-Rummene* Source: photo of the author (2011)

A series of interviews with Lebanese citizens allowed to deepen the specific crossing mechanisms (*ma'bar*) and their heterotopical dimensions.

1. «Walking through the streets in the district of Ḥadath was extremely dangerous: that region was never quiet. We spend the days in the safe corners (*al-ṣawāyā*) of the house: the bombings were starting early, around five in the afternoon and were continuing during the all day, until the night and the next early morning. My husband was an Arabic teacher in the «western region» (*al-miṭṭaqa al-gharbiyya*) of Shuwayfāt, in the Shuwayfāt Public School, located along the Sidon road (*tariq Ṣaydā*). Forced to give lessons by the circumstances, he was going every day throughout that road arriving to the west through the passage (*bab*, door in Arabic), when it was passable. The crossing (*ma'bar*) was taking place through some entrance-doors (*abwāb al-dukbūl*), but it was not common to walk around in the region [...] Mostly, we were spending our days inside the house. We closed all the windows with the cement, so the only entrance was the main door: We were like chickens in the henhouse (*kunnā ka al-dajāj fī al-kebum*), without light»¹⁰.

¹⁰ Interview with A., quoted before.

2. «My grandfather, Muḥammad Ghandūr, the Ghandūr factory founder (sweet products), started his activity in 1856 in the *sūq* (market) Abū Nāṣir, inside *madīnat al-aswāq* (nowadays downtown), by selling candles and different types of sweets. The first factory was founded in Shiyyāḥ (in the same ground where today there is the Beirut Mall). Before, in that field there were the agricultural activities ruled by the Khalīl family. After, we bought that plot for only one hundred golden liras. The region was close to the city centre, and to the old road to Damascus (*ṭarīq al-Shām*) as well: a very strategic location and for a very low price. During the Civil War, the factory was alternatively opening and closing, and continued to employ, as usual, both Christian and Muslim workers. Before the war there were not *ḵbutūt al-tamāss*. During 1987-1989, I started working in the Shuwayfāt plant, in the region that after would have become the demarcation line extension, opposite Kafar Shīmā. To reach the factory it was necessary to cross the line. There were two important passages: one was located in the National Museum (*al-mathaf*) region, and the other one close to the port (*al-marfa*), a mafia-run labyrinth. First, we had to arrive to the museum and to enter the close hippodrome (*sibāq al-ḵbayl*), protected by the trees and with our feet in nylon bags, not to litter our shoes with the soil. Once outside, we were meeting the Christian drivers with whom we previously agreed to drive us to Kafar Shīmā (East). Vice versa, the Muslim drivers took people to the western sector. I was going to the factory three or four times per week, and the workers were often sleeping inside the plant, due to the danger (*al-ḵbutūra*) related to the line crossing and moving around»¹¹.

3. «Every time that they were shooting, the whole *ḵbatṭ al-tamāss* was burning and lightening up. I used to walk on the edge of the wall trying to avoid going to work during the most intensive fighting phases. I was a student in the ‘Amaliyya School, along the dividing line between the district of Ḥārat al-Hurayk e Burj al-Barājina, which are today located in the Shiite periphery. Then, I decided to work at night, in a copy centre that was situated «on the other side», in the Christian neighbourhood of ‘Ayn al-Rummāna. The crossing was related to the risk to be visible to the snipers (*al-qannāsa*)»¹².

¹¹ Interview with the manager ‘Amir S. Ghandūr, on 30 March 2011, in his office inside Siran Tower, in the Western district of al-Qurayṭam.

¹² Interview with ‘Alī Mismār, professor of Scenic Design, in the Academy of Art, on 2 March 2011, in the Lebanese University campus, located in the periphery districts of Ḥadath/Laylakī.

The demarcation line (to be thought as a large neighbourhoods' belt) reflected, in its different parts, the diverse ideological belongings hosted inside. While the war created different urban complexities, the line flowed between the western and eastern dimensions, and appeared as a continuous line of barracks, military check points, and fortresses connected each other by a hodgepodge of barriers, with open passages to the external.

The heterotopological reasoning can be applied to the interstitial neighbourhoods. They were not controlled by any militia in particular; therefore, they presented opposite and incompatible overlapping dimensions like the different political ideologies insisting on the same ground. Seen from an historical and geographical point of view, this overlap took the aspect of skirmishes, military parades, processions, and funerals from both of the fighting sides, trying to display features of strength, number, organization, and discipline. Although they were revenged territories, they were not permanently owned by any of them. From here comes the heterotopical juxtaposition.

Moreover, they were spaces where the numerous parties' symbols, posters, graffiti, militias acronyms, sacred pictures, billposting, flags, and the religious and political leaders' portraits were in competition, with the aim of ideologically mark those territories. Again, it is important to underline the territorial markers heterotopical overlap.

In the end, the Foucaultian entry/exit mechanisms' dimensions underline that fact that there was a precise motivation to enter inside the interstitial zones, accessible and impenetrable at the same time.

Furthermore, reasoning on the base of the third principle (the heterotopy capacity of juxtaposing, in the same concrete space, different and incompatible places), it seems that the port, the hippodrome, the Ring¹³ and the National Museum have a heterotopical range: they were the osmotic gates between the two regions of Beirut, if we consider them as two antithetic dimensions: east and west¹⁴. At the same time, these passages nearly determined particular entry/exit rituals (fifth heterotopological principle), because the crossing was related to a valid motivation that justified the enormous risk, or because of an obligation: like the necessity to go to work (A. husband to the school,

¹³ The Ring refers to a road-ring that connects the east and the west sides of Beirut. During the war, it was extremely risky to cross it, due to presence of snipers: «The bridge had been dubbed the 'ring', though no one really knew why. Perhaps because during the war years it had been the scene of extremely violent fighting. It connected the eastern Christian side of Beirut to the western Muslim side of the capital. [...] Every Saturday Moussa would take me to see Ghada, who lived on the other side of the demarcation line. [...] 'Faster, Moussa, faster!' [...] The pedal to the floor, Moussa curses his car and exhorts it to go faster, as a jockey whips his mount nearing the finish line. Spurred on by the impact of the projectile, the Plymouth takes off. The wind engulfs my face. 'If I can feel it, that means I'm still alive'. A third shot. But it's too late. I open my eyes. A barricade topped by a red flag – we have arrived» (Najjar, 2006, pp. 23, 25, 27).

¹⁴ Up to date, in the vocabulary of many of those lived the Civil War in Lebanon (as civilians or militiamen) we can find expressions like *Gharbiyya* (referred to West Beirut) e *Sharqiyya* (East Beirut). From a conversation on 19 July 2014 with the old Mr G., in the Christian area of al-Jummayza.

‘Amir Ghandūr to the factory, and ‘Alī Mismār to the copy centre). In the case the justification for the crossing was absent, the militiamen were denying it (by stopping or kidnapping the crossers) or by the positioned in the highest buildings snipers that were killing them.

We can also consider as heterotopias/eterochronies those edifices that the author calls «urban scares» and that, until nowadays, do interrupt the city tissue linearity. They are the Barakat Building (situated in the very limit between east and west, from where the snipers, benefiting from its balustrade-shape, operated without any disturbance) in Sodeco square (another crossing point); Saint Vincent Church (inside the trees grown up together with small marshes); the ex-cinema and commercial centre The Dome (known as well as The Egg or The Bubble); the two very famous hotels Holiday Inn and Burj al-Murr; the Saint George Syriac church, still without its roof; the Sam‘ān Gallery; the palace of the merchant Bishāra al-Khūrī; the Greater Theatre in downtown; and many other post-war urban spaces in Beirut. In these buildings it happens «[...] une sorte d'accumulation perpétuelle et indéfinie du temps dans un lieu qui ne bougerait pas» (Foucault, 1984). They are associated by the fact of being situated along *khatt al-tamāss*, and the investigation of their heterotopicity will be done in a future research.

Al-būṣṭa, the bus that was transporting Palestians and that was ambushed on April 1975, is to be considered as a war «artefact»: it comes to be a bordeaux Fargo, with number plate 95303. Covered with dust and spider-nets, it appears like a riddle carcass exposed to rust. Blue and green in the front, with its thin black wheel, it has a flat tyre, flaccid on the ground, as in that day (**fig. 7**).

«It was lying down abandoned on a uncultivated field, surrounded by weeds and exposed to negligence, in Southern Lebanon, in the region of Nabaṭiyya. Before seeing it, I had only planned to observe it, take pictures and study it for my serigraphies. Yet, when it revealed in front of me, I immediately thought that I should have done something. In 1976 I left the country. I came back in 1994 and the first thing I did has been to go in my old school, (the Patriarchate School, *al-madrasat al-baṭrakiyya*¹⁵, in Arabic), connected with the bishopric, in the neighbourhood of Zuqāq al-Balāṭ. It was a well-known and prestigious Christian institute. I come from a Muslim family of intellectuals, free of religious commitments. My first wish was to go back there to discover if the school-bus, which I was taking daily, was still there. I found it and I took pictures incredulous: a small Ford school-bus. Its image started to overlap with *būṣṭa ‘Ayn al-Rummāna*, which I found in 2009. Now, there were two overlapping buses in my labyrinthic memories» (**fig. 8**).

¹⁵ From the Baṭrakiyya sector inside Zuqāq al-Balāṭ district, whose name is due to the presence of the Greek Catholic (melkite) Patriarchate seat, and its school.



Fig. 8 *Bosta Ayn er-Rummene with scuolabus* Source: Houssam Bokeili, My School Bus, 2010

Photographer and artist Ḥusām Buqayl¹⁶ spoke about his experience in front of *al-būṣṭa* at the Umam¹⁷ cultural and research centre, in Ḥārat al-Hurayk (South-East Shiite suburbs), where the bus was preserved. The fact that *al-būṣṭa* has lived in oblivion for many years, has developed a dimension that is eterochronic (the time accumulated infinitely, although it now belongs to the contemporaneity, as a place where the bus can be visited and photographed), and heterotopic at the same time, because the bus was going throughout the first part of the demarcation line, developed after the Phalangists' attack. Therefore, it was bordering neighbouring and antithetical spaces.

¹⁶ The author has interviewed the Lebanese artist. Born in Beirut in 1956, at the age of nine years old he went to Switzerland. After the graduation at the High School of Performing Arts in Vavey, he obtained a second degree at the Ecole Boule in Paris and a certificate in Stereotomy; in addition to that, he improved his talent as a sculptor in Chatre. The interview has been done on May 1st 2011, in the frame of his ex position *A bus and its replicas-Un bus et ses doubles-bosta wa asbbabiba*. Opened on 8th April 2011, it attracted a unexpected number of visitors, both Lebanese and foreigners:
<http://www.umam-dr.org/projectInfo.php?fromTab=pastProjects&projectId=143>

¹⁷ Umam Documentation & Research is a NGO from 2005. For a detailed information about its activities in Lebanon, see its website: <http://umam-dr.org/aboutUs.php?location=aboutUs>

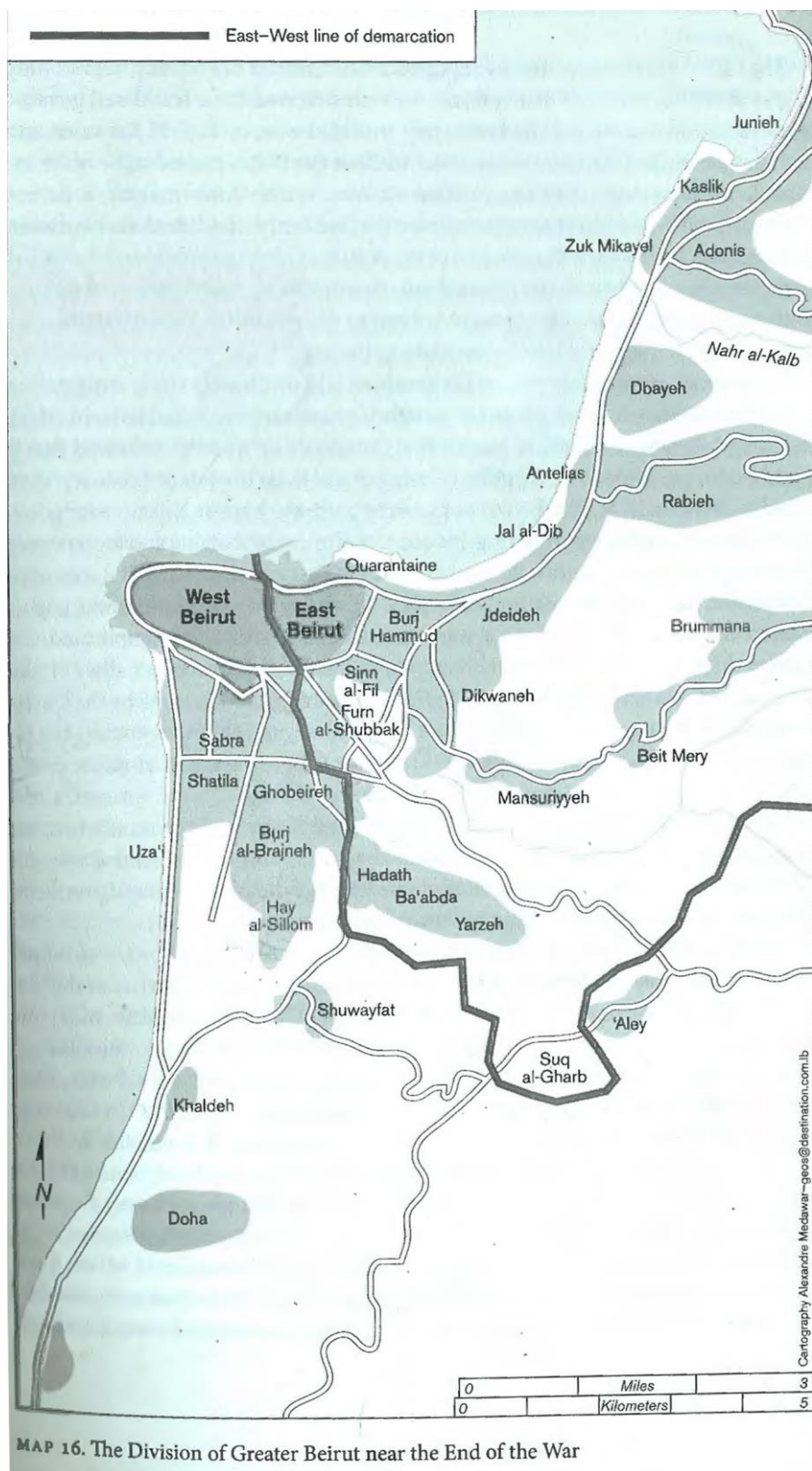


Fig. 9 Demarcation Line, outside Beirut Source: Kassir (2010, p. 513)

For the next fifteen years after 'Ayn al-Rummāna events, those demarcation lines have been spaces of rubbing, juxtaposition and contestation; they are to be considered, as a result of the Foucaultian scheme analyzed above, as heterotopic (**fig. 9**). This dimensions they have – between conflict and osmosis, norm and exception, opening and closing – influence(d) and contaminate(d) every moving (as *al-būṣṭa*) or (fixed) war artefact located on them.

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