the idea of transferring non-Jewish citizens to other countries was part of the Zionist agenda since the emergence of Zionism in the late 19th century. An array of Zionist leaders and activists expressed such sentiments in various contexts at the time. Esber cites, for example, the writings of Theodore Herzl: "Theodor Herzl, the founder of the political Zionism and the World Zionist Organization, wrote in his diary in June 1895 that it would be necessary to remove the non-Jews from the Jewish state, recording his plans to displace the indigenous population and expropriate private property" (p. 81). Esber summarizes the period of the civil war (from the UN partition resolution on 29 November 1947 to the declaration of the establishment of the Israeli state in mid-May 1948) as follows:

> Random acts of violence by Arabs and Jews followed the November 1947 UN resolution supporting the partition of Palestine and quickly escalated into full-blown civil war. The six months of intercomunal violence initiated and shaped the removal of the Palestinian population. During the civil war period, Zionist Jewish military organizations forced more than 400,000 Palestinian Arab inhabitants from their homes in about 225 villages, towns, and cities in Palestine (p. 22).

Indeed, she highlights what other historians and writers have already emphasized: the connection between the Zionist political goal of establishing a state in Palestine and the idea of transferring the region's non-Jewish residents elsewhere.

The author's focus on this historical period may represent an attempt to respond to an Israeli-Zionist narrative of the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem. This narrative marks the arrival of the regular Arab armies as the beginning of the war, which resulted in the evacuation of major Palestinian urban centers and hundreds of villages, and ultimately the Palestinian refugee problem. Esber's book, however, seeks to prove that the refugee problem was largely created during the civil war (before the Arab armies arrived and the British retreated). This claim is supported by a long list of interviews and documents shedding new light on these events. In arguing this point, the author is notably successful.

RON E. HASSNER, *War on Sacred Grounds* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2009). Pp. 248. $29.95 cloth.

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Ron E. Hassner seeks to analyze conflict over "sacred space," that is, important religious sites claimed by more than one faith. In some ways, Hassner makes an obvious argument: contested religious sites invariably invite conflict between the competing sides, and the more important the site and the more it is seen by the faithful to be vulnerable to acts of sacrilege by the other side, the more likely it is that conflict will ensue. Conversely, contested religious sites that are of low importance and that the faithful do not see to be especially vulnerable can be peacefully shared between religious groups.

Hassner draws most extensively from the case of Jerusalem (especially the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif) and that of Ayodhya in India. In addition to these primary cases, Hassner includes examples from a wide array of sacred sites associated with many different religious traditions. Hassner's mastery of the topic and his geographical and cultural breadth are particularly impressive for such a young scholar.

Hassner makes two major claims to the political science community about sacred space and conflict over it. First, he attempts to bring religion back into a central place in the study

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of politics. Hassner bemoans what he claims is social scientists' lack of seriousness in their general treatment of religion, indicating that they view religion as essentially epiphenomenal. Second, he argues that conflict over sacred space is such a distinctive form of violence that it should be treated as its own independent category and not as a subset of other forms of violence. Neither of these two arguments is particularly well developed in the book, and one senses that perhaps they are meant to be provocative. I would welcome a fuller treatment of these arguments as a future journal article.

One of Hassner's more nuanced arguments is far more powerful: cases exist in which management of sacred sites has successfully mitigated conflict. Hassner clearly wants to suggest a path toward real-world conflict resolution, particularly with an eye toward Jerusalem. Indeed, he points to Israel's handling of the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif from 1967 to 1986, as well as the nimble Saudi response to the capture of the Great Mosque in Mecca by heavily armed extremists in 1979, as examples of successful sacred site conflict resolution strategies by states.

The key problem overcome in the rare successful cases of conflict resolution over sacred sites is that of indivisibility. With important and vulnerable contested sacred sites in particular, each side views the site to be wholly theirs, something that cannot be divided as can land in a nationalist dispute, for example. It is one thing to do land swaps between Israel and Palestine as part of a peace negotiation; it is quite a different matter to try to split the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif. The faithful of both sides will not allow it.

Hassner aims to determine how something seen as indivisible (and critically important) can be made divisible; or more to the point, how to change the terms of the debate to get around the indivisibility problem. He argues that there are two key ingredients required for this to happen: political leaders who have an interest in reaching an agreement and religious leaders who can shape and reshape the meaning of the sacred space. Essential to this argument is the idea that sacred space is socially constructed. This latter point provides Hassner the opportunity to engage in fascinating historical accounts of how religious leaders have periodically remade the contours of sacred spaces—not out of whole cloth, of course, but by significantly altering their meaning. Hassner revisits Yochanan ben Zakkai's radical altering of Judaism after 70 A.D. from a temple-based, animal sacrifice-driven priesthood to a decentralized rabbinical Judaism focused on prayer. The loss of Jerusalem provided the opportunity, indeed necessity, to remake the nature of the faith. Similarly, the Christian Crusaders' loss of Jerusalem allowed Pope Boniface VIII the opportunity in 1300 to essentially substitute Rome for Jerusalem, forever changing the notion of sacred space in Catholic history.

Hassner is optimistic that, with the confluence of political leaders seeking accommodation and credible religious leaders who are able to redefine and reshape the meaning of sacred space to allow for resolution, knotty and often nasty conflicts over sacred sites can be resolved. He admits, though, that such a confluence is rare.

It is unfortunate that this very smart book has a number of minor mistakes that were not caught in the fact-checking process. For example, Israel did not annex East Jerusalem in 1967 (as Abba Eban was at pains to explain at the United Nations); the Israel–Jordan peace treaty was concluded in 1994, not 1993; Osama bin Laden's 1996 declaration of war was not presented as a fatwa, as his 1998 joint statement was; and Salafism is not unique to Wahhabi Islam. Such errors can give one pause on other empirical claims.

This book would be a useful addition to courses on conflict resolution, religious violence, and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict (from which many examples are drawn). I also recommend it more generally as a thought-provoking book that is well written and informative.

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