RESEARCH IN LANDSCAPE AND ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN

CONTEMPORARY URBAN LANDSCAPES OF THE MIDDLE EAST

EDITED BY
MOHAMMAD GHARIPOUR

ROUTLEDGE

Contemporary Urban Landscapes of the Middle East

The role of urban landscape projects in the cities of the Middle East has grown in prominence since the mid-twentieth century, with a gradual shift in emphasis from the private sphere to projects with an increasingly more public function. The contemporary landscape projects, either designed as public plazas or public parks, have played a significant role in transferring the modern Middle Eastern cities to a new era and also in transforming to a newly shaped social culture in which the public has a voice. This book considers what ties these projects to their cultural and political context and what regional and local design elements and concepts have been used in their development.

Mohammad Gharipour is Associate Professor at the School of Architecture and Planning at Morgan State University in Baltimore, USA. He obtained his master's in architecture from the University of Tehran and his Ph.D. in architecture and landscape history at Georgia Institute of Technology, USA. He has received several fellowships and awards and published six books including *Persian Gardens and Pavilions: Reflections in History, Poetry and the Arts*. He is the founding editor of the *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*.

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4 Inventing the seashore

The Tel Aviv-Jaffa promenade

Elissa Rosenberg

In 2013, the Green Forum, an umbrella organization of forty environmental groups in Tel Aviv, circulated a petition opposing the renovation of the city's seaside promenade. The plan proposed to connect the promenade with the beach below using sections of bleacher seating in place of the existing retaining wall, in order to improve access to the beach and provide new gathering spaces facing the sea. The architects' goal was to create "a place to develop a new beach culture that doesn't exist today in in the city."[1] The plan was opposed because of its encroachment on the beach and its potential environmental damage (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1 The first phase of renovations to the Lahat Promenade were completed in 2013. and included new seating, shade structures and paving. (Photo by Aviad Bar Ness, courtesy of Mayslits Kassif Architects.)

The protection of the beach is one of many issues that environmental groups are battling in Israel in the face of intense development pressures in a densely populated country with diminishing open space. Environmental advocacy is a relatively recent phenomenon that has been gaining momentum. But the promenade controversy has stirred up familiar tropes. Its portrayal by the press as a battle of concrete versus sand recalls images that have characterized the planning debate of Tel Aviv's seashore since its earliest years. The contrasting narratives symbolized by these images not only relate to environment issues, but also by extension to the privatization associated with development. "Natural" has been conflated with "public" in the popular imagination. By adding more pavement (and wood), the new plan was perceived to strengthen private commercial interests on the beach and limit public access. Historically, the sandy beach of Tel Aviv has not only been viewed as a natural resource, but also as a democratic urban ground to which every resident – and visitor – has a basic right.

Tel Aviv was the site of Israel's first planned public beach and promenade, and it remains a paradigm for Israeli seaside urbanism.[2] The city first developed inland, with its "back to the sea,"[3] and reached the shoreline only gradually over the course of its expansion. Tel Aviv's relationship to the sea has always been full of contradictions. The seashore has been the site of conflicting pressures and opposing visions since the city was first established. Though marginal and neglected for many years, the beach now plays a central role in defining the city's identity and its secular, relaxed leisure culture. Mediating between the city and the sea, the promenade, or "*tayelet*," has become a significant public space for residents and tourists alike.

This chapter examines the design, use, and meaning of the promenade as a public open space in light of the complex historical relationship of the city to its seashore, and as result of the more recent effects of Tel Aviv's globalized metropolitan culture. The planning of the seashore is discussed in terms of the increasing urbanization of nature that has occurred in the context of changing planning frameworks. It will consider how, in the ongoing process of inventing itself as a city from its founding in 1909, Tel Aviv has invented – and reinvented – its seashore as the site of a changing leisure culture that has shaped the character of the city.

The founding of Tel Aviv and the Geddes plan

The mythic narrative of Tel Aviv's birth, a recurrent theme that has been engrained in the Israeli cultural imagination through visual art and literature as well as popular culture, portrays the city as emerging from a sandy *tabula rasa*. This narrative is more ideologically driven than historically accurate. Tel Aviv developed as a suburb of Jaffa, an ancient harbor city that was a thriving commercial center during the late Ottoman period. It was described at that time as a "city full of life and prosperity surrounded on all sides by orange and lemon groves and trees."[4] With the rapid growth

of the Jewish population in Jaffa in the late 19th century, the first Jewish neighborhoods, as well as new Muslim and Christian neighborhoods, began to be built outside the city walls.[5]

The traditional historiography of Tel Aviv marks the city's founding only in 1909, with the construction of the neighborhood of Ahuzat Bayit; the goal was to found a modern Jewish urban neighborhood in which the new Hebrew culture could develop. The narrative of "the city of the sands"[6] gave a mythic quality to the city's founding, signaling the radical newness and utopian aspirations of the Zionist project. This image not only elides the complex relationships that existed between the new Jewish neighborhoods and the Arab city of Jaffa, but it also erases its former fertile and varied landscapes. Maps and narrative descriptions of the time reference the luxuriant gardens and productive landscapes of groves, orchards, and vineyards that surrounded the city of Jaffa, and on which sections of Tel Aviv were to be built.[7] Thus, the founding myth of the city of Tel Aviv ex nihilo served to disengage it from Jaffa and its maritime identity, and from its own physical landscape context, in which the sea was a dominant presence.[8]

In contrast, everyday life in the emerging city of Tel Aviv reflected a different relationship to the sea. The early neighborhoods did not front the seashore; nonetheless, the beach became a popular focus of Tel Aviv leisure culture. The city has a subtropical Mediterranean climate, with short mild winters; long, hot, humid summers; and no rain for half the year. Before urban parks existed in Tel Aviv, the beach was one of the few outdoor spaces to provide respite from the stifling heat. In 1921, the British Mandate government formally granted Tel Aviv autonomy as a municipal jurisdiction, and one of the early initiatives of the new municipality was to grant concessions to bathing establishments as a source of revenue.[9] Hot and cold bathhouses were established, and cafes, clubs, and small hotels began to line the beach.[10]

In 1922, a luxurious Odessa-style seaside restaurant called the Galei Aviv Casino, designed by well-known architect Yehuda Megidovitch, opened on the beach at the foot of Allenby Street (formerly called the Derekh HaYam or the "Sea Road"). Allenby was realigned to connect with the beach. The three-story building included a winter garden and rooftop cafe that attracted the city's intelligentsia and public figures. Public transportation was also provided from this time, making the beach accessible to residents of Jaffa and southern Tel Aviv, and people would take to the street, walking to the seashore "row by row, or in groups or couples, along Allenby Street, which was long and full of life."[11] By 1924 there were some forty hotels by the beach. According to accounts from 1929, a thousand bathers used the beach daily, and several thousands came on Saturdays.[12] At that time,

> One could enjoy food, drink and dancing in one of the numerous cafes, buy corn, soft drinks and ice cream from the seashore peddlers, play different sports, bathe and swim, hire a deck chair or just walk along the beach.[13]

Figure 4.2 The Tel Aviv shoreline in 1932, with the casino at the foot of Allenby Street. (Courtesy of Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, DC.)

Despite the popularity of bathing, swimming areas were limited. The Tel Aviv sand beach was a short, narrow strip between the Arab neighborhood of Manshiya to the south and Mahlul to the north, an area of temporary housing located on a sandstone (*kurkar*) bluff. Industrial uses, including a tannery and silk factory, were also located along the shore in this area.[14]

The city experienced rapid growth following the transfer of Palestine to British rule after the First World War. Its population more than tripled between 1922 and 1932, from 12,392 to 52,240.[15] Existing neighborhoods were eventually linked together as lands continued to be purchased, and the city expanded to the north and to the west toward the sea. Recurrent outbreaks of violence between Arabs and Jews in 1921 and 1929 triggered the migration of thousands of Jaffa Jews to Tel Aviv.[16] The transformation of Tel Aviv from an ad hoc collection of neighborhoods to an emerging city with coherent spatial conception occurred in 1925 when Patrick Geddes, the renowned Scottish planner, was hired by the Tel Aviv municipality to create a plan for expansion of the city for a projected population of 100,000. Geddes produced a report outlining the planning principles that would structure the city's physical form and provide the basis for new civic culture. Geddes's urban vision was shaped by Garden City concepts; but unlike the idealized Garden City planning of Ebenezer Howard, Geddes's regionalist approach was more nuanced and responsive to existing conditions, adapting to the
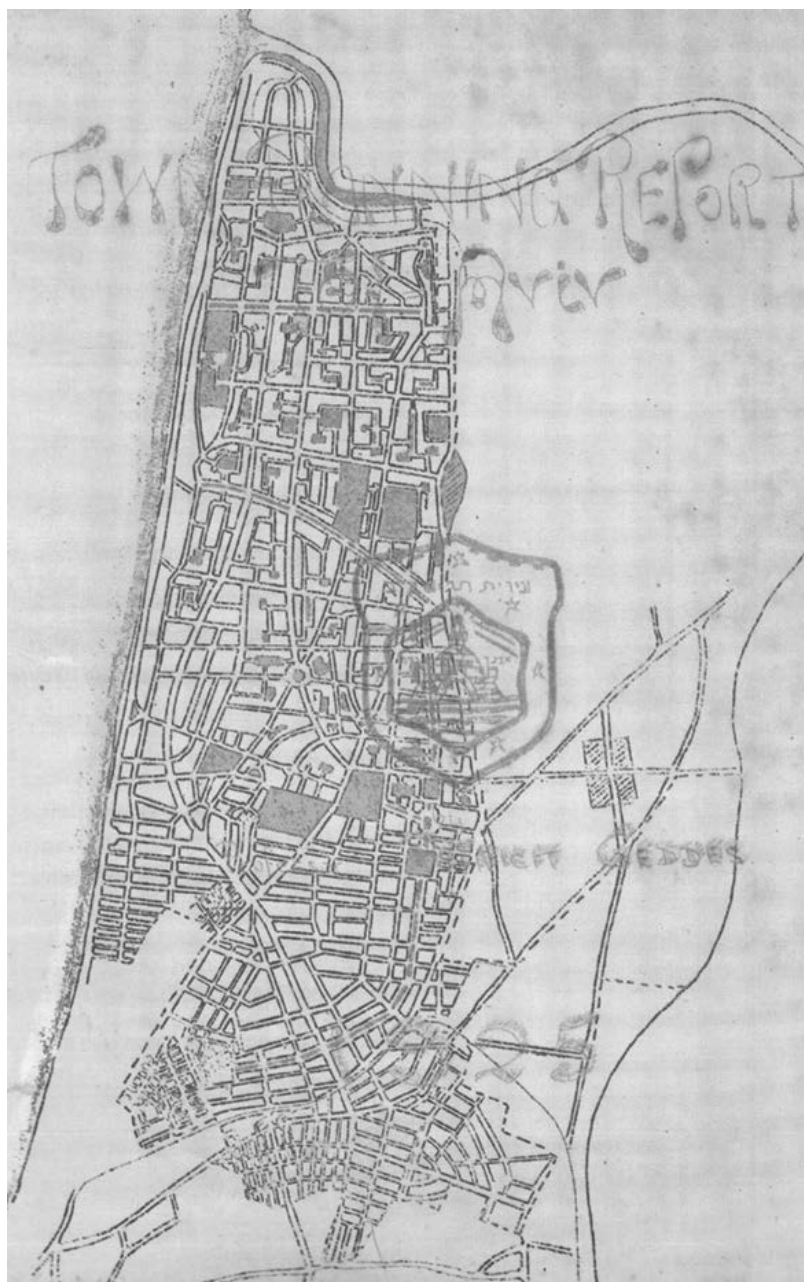
Figure 4.3 Geddes Plan, 1926. (Courtesy of Tel Aviv Municipal Archive.)

topography and natural features, the complex patchwork of existing roads and new Jewish neighborhoods, and to the existing fabric of Jaffa. The plan created an infrastructure for urban expansion, addressing circulation, block types, parcels, and the creation of a "central city feature," an acropolis-like cultural center located on one of the topographic high points of the region. His distinctive urban block was based on a hierarchical irregular grid that was inflected to the topography and existing road pattern. Primary streets (the wider "mainways") were distinguished from the interior streets (the slower residential "homeways"). Each block was arranged around central open spaces that contained community facilities. Within these blocks, the scale and configuration of the individual parcel was established, modeled on the image of a "garden village"; buildings were to be freestanding, two-story buildings with front yards and vegetable gardens in the rear.[17]

Despite Geddes' attunement to Tel Aviv's physical landscape setting, the seashore was not a central feature of his plan, neither as generator of the city street system nor as a significant public amenity. He had proposed that the city expand northward along the Mediterranean coast to the Auje (now Yarkon) River rather than inland to the east; yet the city plan was not oriented toward this increasingly long coastal edge. Only a limited number of east-west mainways connected the city fabric to the sea. In 1935, the national poet and local resident, Chaim Nahman Bialik, would critically observe of Tel Aviv: "There are no long, straight streets, prospects, that extend to great length to give a sense of urban grandeur. In particular, hiding the view of the sea from several streets was a mistake from the beginning."[18]

Geddes recognized the sea's climatic effect on the city and oriented streets and buildings to allow sea breezes to penetrate the urban fabric.[19] Except for this environmental strategy, his recommendations for the shore remained site-specific and local, minimally intervening in existing conditions and land uses. These included a proposal for an urban square surrounded by shops – a "good wide Public place"[20] to be located at "Casino Place" at the foot of Allenby Street, where a thriving cafe culture already existed. He proposed to create a nature preserve on the site of the Muslim cemetery located on a cliff overlooking the sea north of the beach. Brief mention is also made to the development of a "Sea-shore Drive" that Geddes predicted would some day run along the shore from Jaffa all the way to the Auje River alongside existing industrial uses.[21] This idea was not fully developed; it was not tied into the urban circulation system or to the bathing culture that already existed on the beach.

Geddes's report provided the basis for a physical plan that was developed by the City of Tel Aviv's technical department and approved in 1926 by the city council and by the planning board of the British Mandate in 1927. The plan's street and block structure was implemented as the infrastructure for the expanding city. By the 1930s the population had tripled again with the influx of immigrants prior to the Second World War. Because of increased housing demand, the plan was later amended in 1938 to provide higher density. The garden village houses of the original plan were replaced with freestanding four-story apartments set within the Geddesian parcel, which

were eventually designed by European trained émigré architects in the international style.[22] Although his plan was not fully realized, the city's basic structure developed as a result of Geddes's vision, establishing the unique scale and vitality of the Tel Aviv street and its role as the center of urban social life.[23] But the character of the seashore was left to future planners to develop.

Inventing the beach: the first promenade

Improving the seashore had become a municipal priority by the early 1930s, a period of increasing economic growth and relative prosperity. Public advocates and planners had high ambitions for the seashore, imagining it as the basis of European-inspired leisure culture – a Tel Aviv "Riviera."[24] European seaside resorts had originated the mid-18th century along the North, Baltic, and Mediterranean Seas, founded as commercial ventures that shaped a new form of seaside urbanism.[25] Resorts promoted the health benefits of the sea air and salt water, and typically incorporated musical and theatrical entertainment, casinos, dancing, parties, and a variety of curiosities such as zoos and aquariums. The promenade was its iconic centerpiece; walking along the shore was key feature of the seaside holiday, allowing the visitor to take in the sea air and gaze at the spectacle of the sea. It is to these well-known European exemplars – of Nice and Naples, as well as Odessa, the birthplace of many of the cultural elite and city founders – that Tel Aviv planners looked in their desire to transform Tel Aviv into a Mediterranean resort city.

From the beginning there was a fundamental tension between private interests and the public claim to the seashore. The seashore was perceived as "a natural gift," a basic public resource which every resident was entitled to use: "the secret of (the seashore's) allure lay in the residents' sense that together they all owned the beach."[26] In Tel Aviv's early period before the existence of municipal parks, the beach functioned as the city's main recreational open space. In his call to improve the seashore in the early 1930s, Chaim Nahman Bialik emphasized its public recreational role, citing the lack of public parks: "Since we don't have boulevards . . . or parks yet, where will we go?"[27] In 1933, the city launched a competition for a seashore plan. The competition brief underscored the public role of the beach, which was especially important "in the absence of squares, parks and other adequate public spaces."[28]

None of the competition schemes won, however, and instead Mayor Dizengoff commissioned French engineer and developer Claude Gruenblatt to develop a large-scale reclamation project.[29] The Gruenblatt Scheme, as it was known, proposed the reclamation of 350,000 square meters of land from the sea for the speculative development of a tourist center, promoted as a source of revenue for the city. The proposal included hotels, recreational amenities and residential buildings, focused on a central public garden, and bounded by a new promenade twenty-five meters wide. The project, which was approved by the municipality and the British Mandate government in

1936, immediately sparked an emotional public debate over the future character of Tel Aviv's seashore. The Gruenblatt Scheme was opposed on the grounds that it would deny public access to the sea, destroy the city's natural beach, and block the sea breezes.[30] Citizens organized a protest and submitted a petition against the plan. Given the lack of a culture of public participation in the planning process, this citizens' protest was unprecedented and attests to the intensity of popular sentiment for the seashore.[31] Gruenblatt's plan was never implemented, yet it set the terms for a debate that continues to polarize the planning of the seashore to this day, pitting development against preservation and private commercial interests against the right to public access.

The first promenade was built following this controversy, based on the plan of city engineer Ya'akov Ben Sira (Shiffman) for "the improvement of the seashore" in 1939–1940. Unlike Gruenblatt's proposal, the plan by Ben Sira envisioned the beach as a public space. But, according to Ben Sira, in order to thrive as a public urban space, the spontaneous qualities of the beach must be ordered and controlled.[32] The plan addressed "the need for the separation between the city and the beach by an engineered structure that would serve as a frame for the city."[33] The promenade was meant to instill a sense of decorum by creating a clear boundary between the city with its social codes and the permissive zone of beach culture. Along with separating the city and the beach, the plan was to bring order through a zoning approach that separated the various beach activities. The beach was not viewed as a single, monolithic space. The "water, sand and sun" were treated as discrete zones, each associated with distinct and usually conflicting activities, cultures, and codes (Figure 4.2).[34]

The functional separation of the activities of swimming, sunbathing, and walking implicitly suggested the separation of the distinct social groups that were associated with each realm. Ben Sira proposed to relocate the bathhouses and other structures that had filled the beach in order to provide more space for bathers and open up views of the sea. A new public space was created based on the newly constructed sea view that came into being as a result of clearing the beach. At the same time, as Azaryahu and Golan noted, "The decision to avoid construction on the beach area reinforced the special status of the beach as a sphere of nature. The promenade was thus the interface between 'nature' and 'civilization.'"[35]

The first promenade was an artifact of this binary conception of city and nature, but by spatializing the boundary between the city and sea the promenade participated in both realms, supporting an urbane seaside culture of walkers. From this landscaped space of planting and seating, one could watch the sunset and experience the sea without having to touch the sand. Its design language, consisting of formal rows of trees and benches, highlighted its sense of urbanity. The formal language of the promenade continued in London Park, where a series of paved terraces joined the promenade with the urban street above.[36] The invention of the promenade as a mechanism of

separation effectively preserved the radical difference between the city and the beach, intensifying the experience of beach as an open untouched space of nature, while allowing for a new form of leisure culture to take hold (Figures 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6).

Figure 4.4 View of the new promenade, 1941. (Photo by Zoltan Kluger, courtesy of JNF Photo Archive.)

Figure 4.5 Early view of the promenade. (Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, DC)

Engineering the seashore: traffic, sewage, and sand

The beach underwent a long period of decline beginning in the 1950s. The government declared a ban on swimming in the Tel Aviv beaches in 1950 due to the contamination of the water.[37] Tel Aviv's new sewerage system included six new sewage outfalls that released the city's untreated sewage into the sea.[38] With the closing of the beaches the promenade became increasingly marginalized and neglected. The decline of the seashore had become a municipal issue by the late 1950s, and large-scale planning efforts were directed toward its revitalization. The election of the Labor Party to municipal government promoted new alliances between the national Labor government and municipal agencies, creating a new structure of state-municipal development corporations charged with project-oriented urban redevelopment.[39]

The Tel Aviv planning discourse of the 1960s was influenced by both worldwide trends and local ideology. During this period Tel Aviv, like many Western cities, experienced negative growth, losing population to its expanding first-ring suburbs. This trend was reinforced by the national planning policy of "population dispersal," established in Aryeh Sharon's 1954 National Plan, the goal of which was to distribute the population in order to attract settlement to the periphery.[40] This dispersed pattern, along with the growth of car ownership, made traffic engineering a key issue that began to dominate the planning discourse. Urban renewal, based on the wholesale clearing of neighborhoods, was adopted as an urban panacea.

This policy served a political agenda that neatly aligned with private commercial interests.[41] It was also consistent with the traffic engineering approach that introduced wide arterial roads to the existing urban fabric. The clearing of the two shoreline neighborhoods that had bounded the promenade until now – the former Arab neighborhood of Manshiya to the south and Mahlul, the Mizrahi immigrant neighborhood to the north – provided new opportunities for large-scale land assembly, suggesting new programs and scales of development. A new central business district was planned to replace the cleared neighborhood of Manshiya aimed at uniting Tel Aviv with Jaffa.[42]

If until now planners approached the seashore as a self-contained area along the city's margins, by the 1960s it was now seen in its larger physical context, playing a role in achieving wider urban and ideological goals. In contrast with Ben Sira's conception of the promenade as a means of separating the city and the sea, the seashore was now imagined as the monumentalized centerpiece of ambitious urban megaprojects and multilane roads that erased the existing urban fabric and created it anew. Not all of these plans were realized, although they shaped the urban vision that would influence the eventual redevelopment of the seashore promenade, its adjacent tourist-based development, and a six-lane road along the shoreline.[43]

Fundamental to the revival of the seashore was the engineering of its two primary elements: water and sand. The development of the seashore was enabled by two new infrastructural systems. The first was the decades-long installation of a new city-wide sanitary sewer system that diverted city waste to a new treatment plant located south of the city. By 1965 the first two segments of a new trunk line had been completed, allowing the removal of two outfalls at the sea. The seawater was pronounced "clean" and the beaches were reopened that year.[44] The full system was not fully on line until 1982.[45] The second significant public works project concerned the systematic widening of the sand beaches via the construction of eight breakwaters during the 1970s.[46] This promoted the accretion of sand that effectively widened the shoreline to a strip averaging eighty meters wide. This reclaimed land not only added depth to the beach; it also provided the minimum dimensions required to widen the promenade and add a six-lane shore road.

In 1968 a joint state-municipal development corporation (Atarim) was established to develop tourism in Tel Aviv and "bring life back to the seashore."[47] By this time tourism was already taking hold, as evidenced by the fact that leading international chains began to build high-rise hotels along the seashore. Private recreational facilities were built, including a marina and a swimming pool.[48] Atarim was charged with coordinating the planning of the seashore, as well as providing the public infrastructure of roads, parks, and beach services in order to attract private investment along a 4.3-kilometer strip from Jaffa to the Yarkon River. Its stated mission purported to balance the needs of residents with the provision of tourist facilities, based on projections of one million annual tourists per year by 1980.[49] The goal was to leverage private investment for the development of public facilities. A team of four Tel Aviv architectural offices was hired to produce an overall plan, headed by the office of Ya'akov Rechter.[50] The centerpiece of the plan was the design of a new promenade to connect these new amenities and give the seashore a new identity. The old structure was demolished and the first segment of the new wider promenade opened in August 1982, followed by the second phase in 1984, which was later named the Lahat Promenade after Mayor Lahat, who guided its development (Figure 4.7).

The new promenade established a coherent identity along its length through its distinctive paving pattern, reminiscent of Burle-Marx's Copacabana Beach in Rio, and its curvilinear form, which offset it from the city street grid. The railing was removed and replaced with low planters along its edge, creating stronger visual spatial continuity with the beach. Access to the beach occurred at the stairways and ramps located at regular intervals, aligned with existing city streets. The streets terminated in public overlooks set on the roofs of the cafes that were located at each entrance, accessed from the beach level below the promenade. In contrast with the first promenade's rhetoric of separation, the Lahat Promenade was based on a vision in which the beach was an integral part of the city and its infrastructure. An

Figure 4.6 Robert Capa, "The Promenade, Tel Aviv Beach," 1948. (Collection of
the Tel Aviv Museum of Art. Photo: Elad Sarig)

analogous large-scale process of development and reconstruction was being
applied to both the city and the sea.

The character of the seashore had been substantially changed. With the
completion of the promenade, the beach once again became a public desti-
nation and a lively center of activity for local residents after many years of
unsanitary conditions and public neglect. The small-scale businesses, bars,
and restaurants that had lined the street next to the promenade were gradu-
ally replaced by a row of hotels, and high-speed traffic now filled the newly
widened road adjacent to the promenade. The foundation was laid for a
growing international tourist industry focused on the beach.

Despite intensive private development, the beach preserved its public
character. Atarim maintained a delicate balance between its dual mission of
promoting tourism through attracting private investment and upholding the
public right to the beach. For Rechter, these goals were not in conflict but

Figure 4.7 Lahat Promenade designed by Rechter Architects – aerial view. (Courtesy
of Haratapuz hagadol blog – Tel Aviv blog)

rather mutually supportive. He claimed that "towers on the beach are a good
thing, and the commercial activity and tourist activity along the beach is some-
thing that many cities are proud of."[51] Interestingly, he cited the examples
of Monaco and Nice, models that had been continually evoked by Tel Aviv
planners since the 1930s.[52] Atarim took the position that the hotels needed
the additional height in order to minimize their footprint, so that views to
the sea and the circulation of air could be preserved between the buildings.[53]
Access to the beach remained free; Atarim proposed removing the fencing that
blocked public access and argued against charging flat entrance fees unless
they were based on specific services: "People should be free to use services as
they wish, and if someone just wants to sit on the sand – that's their right."[54]

Figure 4.8 Giv'at Ha'aliya beach in Jaffa, designed by Giler-Lederman Architects as grassed terraces to accommodate families and small group activities. (Courtesy of Albatross)

The growth of tourism and the increasing commercialization of the beach did not erode the basic public right to the sand. The beach evolved into an active recreational space; in addition to swimming, sunbathing, and surfing, it became a magnet for pickup sports such as volleyball and paddleball. Regular meetings of folk dancers, drummers, prayer services, yoga practitioners, and a variety of other groups created new traditions and informal communities associated with the beach and promenade. The beach supported a number of subcultures and identities, with separate beaches assigned to religious Jews (offering an alternating schedule of gender-separated swimming), gays, and even dog owners. The design of the Jaffa section of the promenade adapted to local social patterns; taking advantage of the natural topography, the promenade was organized into grass terraces to form outdoor rooms that accommodated the gatherings of large extended families, typical to Jaffa culture (Figure 4.8).[55] A pluralistic public culture had evolved on the beach, perhaps more so than in any other public space in the city.

From beach to waterfront: globalization, locality, and connectivity

Since 2000, the Lahat Promenade has expanded to the north and south, linking Tel Aviv with Jaffa and its neighboring towns. A series of new developments along its length have added a new dimension to the promenade, affecting its urban role and its performance as a public space. The promenade has expanded beyond the beach to create a continuous urban waterfront. It

is no longer characterized by the singular gesture and strong urban identity of the Lahat Promenade that was closely tied to the beach. The large-scale urban operations of the 1960s and 1970s, including the reconstruction of urban neighborhoods and the engineering of the beach, have been replaced by a more project-based approach. The extension of the promenade to the north and south now connects new projects on sites of deindustrialized public works, including the decommissioned port of Jaffa to the south and the port of Tel Aviv to the north, as well as the formerly inaccessible waterfront edge surrounding the Reading power plant. The redevelopment of these areas follows global patterns of waterfront development and has added a new post-industrial character to the promenade.

During the 1980s the outward flow of Tel Aviv's population to the suburbs was reversed, and young singles and middle-class families began to return to the center city. This new interest in urban living, which mirrored global trends, provided the impetus for a wave of renovation and the eventual gentrification of many of Tel Aviv's historic neighborhoods. The 1985 Tel Aviv master plan (known as the Mazor Plan) reflected and supported these trends by recognizing the significance of the city's quality of life, historic architecture, and cultural capital. This approach to urban revitalization was more modest than in previous decades and was based on enhancing the existing urban fabric and preserving architectural resources as opposed to wholesale urban renewal–style redevelopment. This interest in preservation, which first emerged as early as the 1960s, was now fully developed as a revitalization strategy. During this period, in an effort to continue to attract the middle class, the city encouraged development projects that enhanced the quality of life, including luxury high-rise residential towers as well as new forms of leisure spaces.[56]

Recent developments along the shore reflect these demographic and cultural shifts, as well as larger global trends. With the advent of deep-water container port technologies in the 1960s, traditional urban ports became obsolete.[57] New uses were sought for these derelict urban sites, resulting in a worldwide wave of waterfront redevelopment. Places of production were converted into places of consumption, creating new commercial leisure centers that shared a common set of formulas.[58] Ports have been ideal sites for creating a unique brand of postmodern consumer culture. Their large-span industrial architecture has been exploited to "merchandise history,"[59] to cultivate niche markets and offer flexible space for cultural and commercial facilities. The postmodern waterfront is thus characterized by a basic paradox: it draws upon local history and unique architecture to create place identity, while adhering to a generic globalized pattern common to waterfront redevelopment worldwide.[60]

The Tel Aviv port, located just north of the central beach, operated until 1965 when a container port opened in Ashdod. In 2003 the port facility and the adjacent former Levant Fairgrounds were redesigned as a commercial and leisure center based on the waterfront model.[61] Cafes now line the

enclosed basin, and the historic hangar buildings have been redesigned as upscale restaurants, shops, galleries, performance spaces, and a farmer's market. An extensive undulating wooden deck was built along the sea-wall, which has become a haven for cyclists and skateboarders (Figure 4.9). The Jaffa port has emulated the extraordinary success of the Tel Aviv port, with the reuse of hangars as galleries, shops, and restaurants set within the historic port area.

These two port projects are a product of increasing globalization of architectural production. But as sociologist Uri Ram has argued, rather than viewing globalization as a force that creates universal cultural uniformity and erases local difference, it is more accurately understood as a two-way street in which local culture provides an opposing vector to the homogenizing forces of globalization. In his words, local culture "suspends, refines or diffuses the intakes from globalization so that tradition and local cultures do not dissolve; they rather ingest global flows and reshape them in the digestion."[62] Ram's argument offers a framework for understanding the hybridity of the new leisure culture at the ports as local variants of the global water-front phenomenon, even if its local idiom tends to reflect a symbolic expression of social reality and not its deeper structural relationships.[63]

The architecture of the Jaffa Port renovation offers a local reinterpretation of the postmodern waterfront typology through the lens of the site's layered history. Memory and history were the generators of the design of the promenade at this section, which was conceived in response to the discovery of the destroyed Ottoman city wall,[64] as well as the later historical

Figure 4.9 Renovation of the Tel Aviv port and promenade by Mayslits Kassif, Architects. (Photo by Adi Brande)

layer represented by British port architecture of the 1930s, reflected in the industrial detailing and choice of materials.[65] The port's former use as an active fishing harbor is also accommodated in the design of the new sea wall, which provides places for fishing in order to retain the harbor's original local character and function. The fishing economy, however, has a fragile coexistence with the globalized consumer culture of the waterfront. Despite the port's unique historic setting, the sense of locality has become, in Ram's terms, more symbolic than structural.

The Tel Baruch section of the promenade near the Reading power plant (2009) is another example of a postindustrial reuse.[66] Here, the sense of locality is invoked through the design of the landscape (Figure 4.10). This section extends the promenade to the north of the port through the formerly fenced, inaccessible land of the Israeli Electric Company, setting it within a naturalistic park planted with low, nonirrigated coastal vegetation. As in many derelict industrial sites, the lack of access over a long period had the effect of preserving the site's unique ecology and allowing volunteer species to flourish amid the original *kurkar* rock formations. Against the looming backdrop of the electric plant, a 1930s icon of modernist industrial architecture, this section of the promenade was designed to amplify its local shoreline qualities by restoring the native Mediterranean coastal environment, which has been all but erased elsewhere along the promenade.

In addition to the phenomenon of Tel Aviv's postmodern waterfront, two further themes are related to the promenade's expanded role: first, its metropolitan scale and the associated discourse of connectivity; and second, the promenade's infrastructural role as a space of movement. The promenade has been reshaped by a metropolitan conception that defines it as a regional connector. Originally designed to be experienced from east to west, in a sequence from the city to the sea, the promenade is now a linear system that is experienced along its north-south length. Current plans call for the extension of the promenade to the north and south to form a continuous fourteen-kilometer urban edge that will eventually link neighboring cities Herzliya to the north to Bat Yam in the south. This new scale is a function of a recent metropolitan discourse that emphasizes the value of connectivity and shared regional resources. It also reflects a new physical reality in which sprawling urban growth has effectively blurred the boundaries between Tel Aviv and its adjacent communities.

The expanded scale is also a result of the changing speed of movement along it. The culture of the leisurely stroll that gave rise to the promenade has been supplanted by a sports culture of jogging and cycling that has animated it in new ways. This transformation has created a new open space typology of linear parks that has been proliferating worldwide on postindustrial sites such as abandoned rail lines and viaducts, canals, and other disused transportation corridors.[67] The park's linear form and metropolitan scale encourages it to operate as flexible infrastructure. Landscape designer Diana Balmori observed the new adaptable urban potential

Figure 4.10 Coastal plantings along the Tel Baruch Promenade near the Reading Power Plant designed by Braudo Maoz, Landscape Architects. (Photo by Oyoyoy CC BY-SA 3.0, courtesy of Wikimedia Commons)

of the linear greenway, as distinct from the traditional urban park, whose length and linear form allowed it to cut through multiple urban neighborhoods making it more accessible as well as more socially and functionally diverse.[68] The contemporary Tel Aviv promenade has come to assume multiple identities and functions in accordance with its varied local site conditions, while forging a new form of connectivity along the city's edge that was never successfully achieved within the urban fabric itself. The city's goal of creating a continuous, uninterrupted path along the shoreline has had a significant impact in promoting more socially diverse use of its open spaces, particularly evident in the flow of movement between Tel Aviv and Jaffa. The promenade has become a shared space between Arab and Jewish communities based on movement and the informal social mixing it promotes.

Conclusions

The interstitial nature of the urban seashore, caught between the city and sea, points to an inherent tension in the historic meaning of this space. The binary conception of city and nature, a legacy of modernism, had been a potent force shaping its meaning. The struggles over the planning of Tel Aviv's promenade reflect competing claims on the seashore: on the one

hand, as a space that plays a strategic role in the urban plan; on the other hand, as the city's "other," a natural space that remains separate from the city, outside the norms and everyday routines of urban life, subject to natural forces and processes.

The deeply held sense of the public ownership of this natural resource helped to establish a populist, democratic public culture on the seashore, which was effectively Tel Aviv's first public open space. The Tel Aviv promenade was first conceived in the 1930s as a mediating element that provided an interface between the city and the beach. This simple zoning conception of the promenade as a separator between urban social codes and beach culture changed with advent of the urban megaproject – characteristic of urban renewal of the 1960s in Israel and beyond – that was couched in the ambitious rhetoric of uniting Tel Aviv and Jaffa. The Lahat Promenade was the product of the large-scale planning of this period that sought to integrate the seashore into a larger urban vision. It depended on a new scale of operation that included regionally scaled engineering systems to treat Tel Aviv-Jaffa's greatly increased sanitary waste, and a system of breakwaters to nourish and widen the beaches.

Over the last twenty years, a new discourse of connectivity, articulated in the context of a metropolitan vision, gave the promenade a new infrastructural role as a space of movement. The promenade developed into a continuous linear system for walkers, joggers, and cyclists – no longer solely associated with the beach, but rather with a more varied set of conditions along the shoreline that include the postindustrial commercial centers in the former ports of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. The expansion of the promenade into a metropolitan waterfront has created a new hybrid leisure culture, reflecting globalized patterns, while expressing locality through a return to local history and indigenous coastal vegetation. The changing design and planning of the Tel Aviv promenade continues to reframe and reinvent the seashore and its meaning for the social life of the city.

Notes

1 Architect Ganit Mayslits, of the office Mayslits-Kassif Architects, for the renovation project is quoted by Noam Dvir, "The Beach Returns to Tel Aviv," *Haaretz*, March 17, 2010, http://www.mouse.co.il/CM.articles_item,1042,209,47055,.aspx.
2 In 1933, the British architect Clifford Holliday planned a seaside promenade for the city of Netanya, north of Tel Aviv, which was designed, along with the "King's Park," named for King George VI, by landscape architect Shlomo Oren-Weinberg. The park opened in 1937.
3 This phrase has gained currency in Tel Aviv historiography, deriving from art historian Gideon Ofrat's analysis of Israeli painting. See Gideon Ofrat, *Back Turned to the Sea* (Tel Aviv: Omanut Israel, 1990) [in Hebrew]. For this theme in Israeli poetry, see Hanan Hever, "They Shall Dwell by the Haven of the Sea: Israeli Poetry, 1950–60," *Mediterranean Historical Review* 17 (2002): 49–64. See also Sigal Barnir and Yael Moria-Klain, eds., *Back to the Sea: Israeli Pavilion, The 9th International Architecture Exhibition Venice* (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 2004). The Israeli song about Tel Aviv by Meir Ariel, "With Its Back to the Sea," further popularized this idea.

4 Eli Schiller, 1981, quoted in Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 77.

5 The first neighborhood was Neve Tzedek, built in 1887, followed by Neve Shalom, Mahane Yehuda, Achva, Ohel Moshe, Mahane Yosef, and Mahane Israel. For a history of Tel Aviv see Yaakov Shavit and Gideon Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv (1909–1939)* (Ramot: Tel Aviv University Press, 2001) [in Hebrew]; Maoz Azaryahu, *Tel Aviv, Mythography of a City* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2007); Nathan Marom, *City of Concept: Planning Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv: Babel, 2009) [in Hebrew]; and Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography: Jaffa, Tel Aviv, and the Struggle for Palestine, 1880–1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

6 This is the term that Mayor Dizengoff used in the 1930s to describe the mythic beginnings of the city.

7 A parallel can be seen in the European settlers' ahistorical perception of the New World landscape as fundamentally empty – a "raw nature, a cultural vacancy untouched by history waiting to be filled by migrating Europeans." See Leo Marx, "The American Ideology of Space," in *Denatured Visions: Landscape and Culture in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Stuart Wrede and William Howard Adams (New York: MOMA, 1991), 62–78, 63.

8 Many scholars have taken issue with this founding myth. See Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*, 75–83, 121–151, 154–158, for a critique of the myth of Tel Aviv's "miraculous birth from the sands," which he claims is central to the city's identity and self perception as a new city and center of the renewal of Hebrew culture, separate from Jaffa.

9 Maoz Azaryahu and Arnon Golan, "Contested Beachscapes: Planning and Debating Tel Aviv's Seashore in the 1930s," *Urban History* 34 (2007): 278–295.

10 Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv (1909–1939)*, 37.

11 Maoz Azaryahu, "Cultural History Outlines of the Tel Aviv Seafront: 1918–48," *Horizons in Geography* 53 (2001): 97 [in Hebrew].

12 Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv (1909–1939)*, 39.

13 Anat Helman, "European Jews in the Levant Heat: Climate and Culture in 1920s and 1930s Tel Aviv," *Journal of Israeli History* 22, no. 1 (2003): 81.

14 Mayor Dizengoff initially envisioned the seashore as an industrial zone, and a silk factory and tannery were built, which are referred to in Geddes's report. Only later did Geddes recommend the development of the beach as a leisure area, recognizing its tourist potential. Quoted in Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv (1909–1939)*, 40.

15 Gideon Biger and Elie Schiller, "The Geography of Tel Aviv," *Ariel* 48–49 (1989): 19 [in Hebrew].

16 See Mark LeVine, *Overthrowing Geography*, for a detailed history of these events and their effect on the development of Tel Aviv.

17 For a discussion of the Geddes plan, see Nathan Marom, *City of Concept*; Neil Payton, "The Machine in the Garden City: Patrick Geddes' Plan for Tel Aviv," *Planning Perspectives* 10 (1995): 359–381; Volker Welter, "The 1925 Master Plan for Tel Aviv by Patrick Geddes," in *Tel-Aviv, the First Century: Visions, Designs and Actualities*, ed. Maoz Azaryahu and S. Ilan Troen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 300–326; and Yodan Rofe and H. Schwartz, "Vision, Implementation and Evolution of Patrick Geddes' Urban Block in Tel Aviv," in *Regional Architecture in the Mediterranean Area*, ed. Alessandro Bucci and Luigi Mollo (Florence: Alinea Editrice, 2010), 483–491.

18 Chaim Nahman Bialik, *Yediyot Iryat Tel Aviv* (June 8–9, 1934), quoted in Yael Moriah and Sigal Barnir, *In the Public Realm: A Tribute to Avraham Karavan* (Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv Museum, 2003), 96. [in Hebrew].

19 Patrick Geddes, *Town-Planning Report, Jaffa and Tel Aviv* (Tel Aviv Historical Archive, 1925), 21. While Geddes's prescient climatic approach is often praised, Marom notes that his approach contradicts current thinking; he sought to maximize the north-south orientation of the streets in order to maximize east and west exposures of the building façades. Today, the conventional wisdom is to maximize east-west street orientation to allow the penetration of breezes from the sea. Marom, *City of Concept*, 59.

20 Geddes, *Town-Planning Report*, 18.

21 See Iris Graicer, cited in Rachel Kallus, "Patrick Geddes and the Evolution of Housing Types in Tel Aviv," *Planning Perspectives* 12 (1997): 294, who speculates that Geddes's acceptance the industrial uses along the seashore was influenced by Meir Dizengoff, Tel Aviv's mayor and Geddes's client, who favored industry over recreation.

22 This became the typical Tel Aviv apartment building, retaining the front setback garden, and a small private garden in the rear. For a discussion of Tel Aviv housing in relationship to the Geddes plan, see Kallus, "Patrick Geddes and the Evolution of Housing Types in Tel Aviv," 281–320.

23 For an analysis of the street as the locus of public life as opposed to the urban square in the Geddes plan, see Rofe and Schwartz, "Vision, Implementation and Evolution of Patrick Geddes' Urban Block in Tel Aviv," 489.

24 See for example, Moshe Roitman (Amiaz), "On the Question of the Beach in Tel Aviv," *Yediot Iryat Tel Aviv* 1, no. 2 (1937): 46–47, Tel Aviv Municipal Archive [in Hebrew].

25 For a discussion of European resort development and the promenade, see Franck Debié, "Une Forme Urbaine du Premier Âge Touristique: Les Promenades Littorals," *Mappemonde* 93, no. 1 (1993): 32–37 [in French], http://www.mgm.fr/ PUB/Mappemonde/M193/PROMENAD.pdf; and Alain Corbin, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World, 1750–1840* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

26 Azaryahu, "Cultural History Outlines of the Tel Aviv Seafront" 100.

27 Bialik quoted in ibid., 102.

28 The competition brief stated: "Today the seashore is used as a place of rest and relaxation, outings, sport and leisure for the city's residents and for many visitors. In the absence of squares, parks and other adequate public spaces, the beach has double significance." Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, vol. I, 40. The beach was the only large public leisure area in the city until the Levant Fair opened in 1934 and included an amusement area. During the 1930s, two large municipal parks were planned: Meir Park and Independence Park. A competition for the first urban square also took place in 1934, which was won and built by architect Genia Aurbach.

29 See Maoz Azaryahu and Arnon Golan, "Contested Beachscapes: Planning and Debating Tel Aviv's Seashore in the 1930s," *Urban History* 34 (2007): 278–295; and Tali Hatuka and Rachel Kallus, "Mediation Between State, City, and Citizens: Architecture along the Tel Aviv Shoreline," *Journal of Architectural and Planning Research* 24 (2007): 23–41.

30 Azaryahu and Golan, "Contested Beachscapes," 289. See also Hatuka and Kallus, "Mediation Between State, City, and Citizens," for a discussion of this proposal.

31 Azaryahu and Golan, "Contested Beachscapes."

32 Ya'akov Ben Sira (Shiffman), "Plan for the Improvement of the Tel Aviv Seashore," *Yediot Iryat Tel Aviv* 6–7 (1938–39): 150, Tel Aviv Municipal Archive (Hebrew).

33 Ibid.

34 Roitman, "On the Question of the Beach in Tel Aviv," 46–47.

35 Azaryahu and Golan, "Contested Beachscapes," 293.

36 London Park was designed by the city gardener Avraham Karavan and opened in 1942. Its formal design was uncharacteristic of his work, which included numerous parks in Tel Aviv. The park was named for the Londoners who had lived through the Blitz during WWII.

37 Yaron Balslev, "The Pollution and Purification of Tel Aviv Sea Shore, 1909–1982," *Horizons in Geography* 78 (2012): 112.

38 On the creation of a joint sewage plan for Tel Aviv and Jaffa, see Nahum Karlinsky, "Jaffa and Tel Aviv before 1948: The Underground Story," in *Tel Aviv, The First Century: Visions, Designs, Actualities*, ed. Maoz Azaryahu and Ilan Troen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 138–164; and Balslev, "The Pollution and Purification of Tel Aviv Sea Shore."

39 Other projects included Atarim Square, a large elevated commercial center built along the seashore on the site of the razed neighborhood of Mahlul. The city also promoted preservation-oriented tourist development during the 1960s, with the historic restoration of the old quarter of Jaffa as an artists' quarter of studios, shops, and restaurants coordinated by the Jaffa Development Company.

40 For a discussion of the Sharon Plan, see for example Ilan Troen, "The Transformation of Zionist Planning Policy: From Rural Settlements to an Urban Network," *Planning Perspectives* 3 (1988): 3–23.

41 See Nathan Marom, *City of Concept*, 257–299, for a detailed analysis of the Tel Aviv 1964–1968 master planning process, led by architect Tsion Hashimshoni, and the increasing influence of private interests during this period.

42 The City Center was the subject of an international competition held in 1962 for a large mixed-use mega-project for Manshiya, formerly a northern neighborhood of Jaffa that was conquered during the War of Independence. After a long period of neglect, the neighborhood was slated for demolition and reconceived as a new central business district that would link the recently merged cities of Tel Aviv and Jaffa. The competition process, its political agenda, and an analysis of the winning schemes are reviewed by Taly Hatuka and Rachel Kallus, "Loose Ends: The Role of Architecture in Constructing Urban Borders in Tel Aviv-Jaffa since the 1920s," *Planning Perspectives*, 21 (2006): 23–44; Zvi Elhyani, "Seafront Holdings," in *Back to the Sea. Israeli Pavilion, The 9th International Architecture Exhibition Venice*, ed. Yael Moriah-Klain and Sigal Barnir (Jerusalem: Keter Press, 2004), 104–117; and Nathan Marom, *City of Concept*, who discusses the project as a real-estate bonanza, dubbing it "Moneyshiah." For a discussion of the project's ideological role, see Alona Nitzan-Shiftan, "The Architecture of the Hyphen: The Urban Unification of Jaffa and Tel Aviv as a National Metaphor," in *Tel-Aviv, the First Century: Visions, Designs and Actualities*, ed. Maoz Azaryahu and S. Ilan Troen (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), 373–405.

43 Only several office towers were realized as part of the Manshiya project and the plan was highly criticized by the former city engineer, Ya'akov Ben Sira (Shiffman), Tsion Hashimshoni, and others. The central business district was later redesignated further east near the Ayalon highway. Marom, *City of Concept*, 315–318.

44 Balslev notes that this was far from the case, as untreated sewage was still flowing into the sea in the southern portion of the beach, where the third phase of the system was still to be installed. The festive reopening of the Tel Aviv beaches, he suggests, was politically motivated as it occurred during an election year. See Balslev, "The Pollution and Purification of Tel Aviv Sea Shore," 117.

45 Ibid., 118. Until the tertiary treatment plant was completed in 1982, the waste was piped to a primary treatment plant nearby in Reading that then flowed to the sea.

46 The breakwaters were developed following the recommendations of Italian plan-ner Luigi Piccinato, who was commissioned in 1963 to prepare a plan for the Tel Aviv seashore. An experimental breakwater was first installed in 1970, and following its success, seven additional breakwaters were built along the shore from north Tel Aviv to Manshiya over the next ten years. Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, vol. III, 100.

47 Atarim meeting minutes, "A New Shoreline for Tel Aviv," *Tel Aviv Municipal Archive*, 1974 [in Hebrew], 1.

48 The first six- to nine-story hotels began to appear in the early 1950s. In 1965 the Hilton was built, and additional hotels were built along the beach in the 1970s in the former area of Mahlul. The marina was built in 1970 south of the break-water. Shavit and Biger, *The History of Tel Aviv*, vol. III, 100.

49 Ibid., 6.

50 These were Nadler, Nadler and Bickson; Niv and Reifer. A. Yasky and Y. Rech-ter, who led the team.

51 Doron Rosenblum, "The Tel Aviv Shoreline: A New Look," *Davar*, February 19, 1971.

52 Ibid.

53 Danka Harnish, "Tel Aviv Could Lose the Sea," *Davar*, April 9, 1971.

54 Atarim meeting minutes, *Tel Aviv Municipal Archive* 75/31–32, October 15, 1982.

55 This section of the promenade in the Ajami neighborhood is called Giv'at Ha'aliayah and opened in 1993. It was designed by architects Giler-Lederman.

56 Marom, *City of Concept*, 329–341.

57 See Glen Norcliffe, Keith Bassett, and Tony Hoare, "The Emergence of Post-modernism on the Urban Waterfront: Geographical Perspectives on Changing Relationships," *Journal of Transport Geography* 4 (1996): 123–134.

58 Ibid.

59 See Christine Boyer, "Cities for Sale: Merchandising History at South Street Sea-port," in *Variations on a Theme Park*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992), 181–204.

60 Norcliffe et al., "The Emergence of Postmodernism on the Urban Waterfront."

61 The winners of the Tel Aviv Port competition were architects Mayslits Kassif with Galia Yavin.

62 Uri Ram, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 197.

63 Ibid., 199.

64 The promenade section "City Walls" was designed 2001–2003 by architects Eitan Eden and Eyal Ziv for the Atarim Corporation. In the end, the Ottoman wall could not be restored, and it was represented metaphorically as a marking in the paving. Personal communication, Eitan Eden, 2008. See also Hatuka and Kallus, *Loose Ends*.

65 The pavers, for example were carefully chosen to emulate those used in British railroad stations of the period. Personal communication, Eitan Eden, 2008.

66 This portion of the promenade was designed by landscape architects Braudo-Maoz.

67 See Amita Sinha, "Slow Landscapes of Elevated Linear Parks: Bloomingdale Trail in Chicago," *Studies in the History of Gardens & Designed Landscapes: An International Quarterly* 34 (2014): 113–122.

68 Diana Balmori, "Park Redefinitions," in *The Once and Future Park*, ed. Debo-rah Karasov (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1993), 39–45.