

PERFORMANCES OF LATE OTTOMAN MODERNITY: CULTURE, ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE ACTIVITIES IN PRE-WORLD WAR I JAFFA

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Abstract | This article discusses governance processes relating to imperial Ottoman culture, entertainment, and leisure in the port city of Jaffa in Ottoman Palestine before World War I as “performances of late Ottoman modernity” perceived and reported by the publishers of the Arab newspaper *Filastin*. It highlights how cultural initiatives considered “modern” were organized by various civil society actors, non-governmental organizations, and social societies, and explores the agendas and perceptions that informed their activities to promote modern middle-class urban cultural life. Two locations in Jaffa, Bustrus Street and Manshiyya Beach, serve as the main examples to illustrate the general rules for “managing culture” in a modern Arab provincial town. The article explores whether these cultural practices were specific to Jaffa, expressions of imperial Ottoman culture, or a reflection of global trends. The main body of sources analyzed is articles from Jaffa’s leading Arabic newspaper *Filastin* published between 1911 and 1914, combined with research literature on the Jaffa-Tel-Aviv region during the late Ottoman period, historical maps, and photographs. The newspaper articles are viewed as testimonies of local perceptions of Jaffa’s cultural and leisure life, conditioned by the distinct modernist mindset characteristic of *Filastin*’s discourse.

INTRODUCTION

This article discusses governance processes related to culture, entertainment, and leisure in the port city of Jaffa in Ottoman Palestine before World War I as “performances of late Ottoman modernity.” It highlights how cultural initiatives considered “modern” were organized by various civil society actors and non-governmental and civil society organizations, and explores the agendas and perceptions that informed their activities to create modern middle-class urban cultural life.

“Governance,” as defined by Marc Hufty, refers to “processes of interaction and decision making” that respond to collective problems and lead to the “creation, reinforcement

or reproduction of social norms and institutions” in a society.¹ An analysis of governance, he argues, should identify the actors, social norms, problems, processes, and nodal points related to it. Urban governance is understood in a general sense to include all the patterns of social coordination and processes of managing a city.² These analytical parameters have guided the current exploration of Jaffa’s

1 Marc Hufty, “Investigating Policy Processes: The Governance Analytical Framework (GAF),” in Urs Wiesmann, Hans Hurni et al. (eds.), *Research for Sustainable Development: Foundations, Experiences, and Perspectives* (Bern: Geographica Bernensia, 2011), p. 405.

2 Marc Bevir, “Governance as Theory, Practice and Dilemma,” in Marc Bevir (ed.), *The SAGE Handbook of Governance* (London: SAGE, 2011), p. 1.



sector of public culture, entertainment, and leisure.³

The sources discuss a range of civil society actors that emerged from the rising middle classes of all confessions in Jaffa and aimed to reform public culture. Doctors, teachers, journalists, traders, landowners, entrepreneurs, and community representatives were organized in social societies and had access to the political elites. Despite their different ethno-confessional backgrounds and political agendas, they shared *social norms* that are best described as a “modernist mindset” inspired by the global zeitgeist of modernity.⁴ Living in a world connected through globalization dynamics, their mindset was tremendously influenced by Eurocentric standards of modernity but, at the same time, was also shaped by Jaffa’s own conditions.

Modernity in the Middle East, as Christopher Bayly, Liat Kozma, Johann Buessow, and others have argued, should be explored from a “globalization perspective” and not as “Westernization.”⁵ 19th-century modernity produced a “standard set” of cultural, political, and religious concepts that were articulated in Europe and spread more or less around the globe. However, as Volker Schmidt has noted, the notion of a “convergence of concepts” with local inclinations that produces “varieties of modernity” may be more pertinent.⁶ In a comprehensive

overview of the socio-spatial making of Bilad al-Sham from the 19th until the middle of the 20th century as an “urban patchwork region,” Cyrus Schayegh applied a “transpatialization perspective” of intertwined processes of globalization, state formation *and* urbanization, since, he says, the making of the modern Middle East cannot solely be grasped through the spectacle of globalization.⁷

However, this contribution to “performances of modernity” in Jaffa’s pre-World War I cultural life does not explore the topic as a form of “Westernization” or alternatively from the globalization perspective, but rather starts from the premise that globalization, urbanization, Eurocentric modernization, the Arab Nahda, and post-revolutionary Ottoman liberalization discourses were all linked to its dynamics. Inspired by Ilan Pappé’s article “Whose Modernity?,” it inquires into what modernity meant to the *local* actors and how it *changed* their lives in real terms.⁸

To better understand the civil society actors in Jaffa’s evolving cultural sector before World War I, I define the shared “modernist mindset” that expresses Ottoman post-revolutionary modernity in Palestine. An analysis of *Filastin* shows that, consistent with intellectual thought during the Nahda and the Tanzimat, it included the imperative of “reform and modernization” (*islah*), an element that dominated local debates and was imposed on all aspects of

3 Hufty defines four criteria for the observation of governance processes: 1. a realistic, non-normative observation of facts; 2. an interdisciplinary approach, considering governance as a “bridge concept;” 3. a reflexive integration of the problems and tools defined by the authors into the study since they are never completely neutral; and 4. a comparison of governance processes in different places or periods. See Hufty, “Investigating Policy Processes,” pp. 403-407.

4 For a discussion of modernity and modernization as analytical categories, see Johann Buessow, *Hamidian Palestine: Politics and Society in the District of Jerusalem, 1872-1908* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 10-12.

5 Christopher Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World 1780-1914: Global Connections and Comparisons* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Liat Kozma, Cyrus Schayegh and Avner Wishnitzer (eds.), *A Global Middle East: Mobility, Materiality and Culture in the Modern Age, 1880-1940* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); and Johann Buessow, “Re-Imagining Islam in the Period of the First Modern Globalization: Muhammad ‘Abduh and his Theology of Unity,” in Kozma, Schayegh and Wishnitzer (eds.), *A Global Middle East*, pp. 273-320.

6 For associations between globalization and modernity, see Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*; on the “convergence” versus the uniformity of modernity concepts,

see pp. 9-19. For a comparative study on the impact of global modernity from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean in a connecting world of empires, see Leila Fawaz and Christopher Bayly (eds.), *Modernity and Culture: From the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). Through its focus on cultural transformation and economics, this volume explores how peoples in the Middle East and South Asia “appropriated, adapted or resisted” European modernity; see especially pp. 1-27. On expressions of the “first modern globalization” in the Middle East, see Kozma, Schayegh and Wishnitzer, *Global Middle East*, pp. 1-15. Regarding Muhammad ‘Abduh’s *Theology of Unity* (1897), Buessow points out that a “Protestant template for religion” was transmitted to Arab thinkers through European publications. See Buessow, “Re-Imagining Islam.” On various modernities, see Volker Schmidt, “Multiple Modernities or Varieties of Modernity?,” *Current Sociology* 54 (2006), pp. 77-97.

7 Cyrus Schayegh, *The Middle East and the Making of the Modern World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2017), pp. 35-91.

8 Ilan Pappé, “Whose Modernity?,” in Ilan Pappé (ed.), *The Modern Middle East* (London: Routledge, 2005), pp. 1-13.

life.⁹ Ottoman “unity” (*ittihad*) was the political, non-negotiable vision in the face of the increasing crisis of the central state and thus “Ottoman patriotism” (*al-wataniyya al-uthmaniyya*) was championed, just as there was a strong notion of the Palestinian public as “citizens” (*muwat-inun*).¹⁰

The *problem* defined by Arab intellectuals in Ottoman Palestine was the “decline” (*inhatat*) and “backwardness” (*takhalluf*) of the “Orientals” (*al-sharqiyyin*) as compared with Europe, a motif often cited in *Filastin* to complain about the state of infrastructure, agriculture, and education.¹¹ The permanent comparison with the industrialized West frustrated them, and the state of “Oriental backwardness” was seen as a syndrome of “social ills” (*amrad ijtimaiyya*).¹² It was this frustration that motivated Jaffa’s civil society actors and social societies to create *social norms* and the establishment of a public culture considered “progressive” (*mutaqaddim*) and accessible to the town’s

middle classes. The *agenda* was to make cultural norms compatible with the “spirit of the new age” (*ruh al-‘asr al-jadid*), a central slogan in *Filastin* and a synonym for modernity.

This “new age” was the post-revolutionary Young Turk era that ended the so-called “despotism” (*istibdad*) of Sultan Abdülhamid. The “spirit” addressed was the reinstalled Ottoman Constitution of 1876, which granted equal citizen rights.¹³ The lifting of press censorship (1908) stimulated Arab journalism, thus enabling a new culture of political debate, protest, and petitioning known as “the new freedom” (*al-hurriyya al-jadida*).¹⁴ Journalists portrayed themselves as the “mouthpiece” (*lisan*) of “public opinion” (*al-ra’y al-‘amm*), and civil society actors justified any sort of engagement by claiming it was for “the public good” (*an-nafa‘ al-‘amm*) or “the common interest” (*al-maslaha al-amma*). In Jaffa, social organizations adopted these slogans to reshape the cultural sector to be in step with “the spirit of the age.” Most of the city’s urban development was driven by these societies, whose considerable resources from membership fees, donations on the part of notables, and, to a great extent, charity events, filled their coffers.

Filastin documented *processes* of urban governance in Jaffa in its many reports on

9 In this context, see Ulrike Freitag’s study of Arabic thought on modernity during the *Tanzimat*, and the terminology ascribed to modernization processes by the terms *islah* (reform), *hadara*, *madaniyya*, *tamaddun* (civilization), and *taqaddum* or *taraqqin* (progress, growth). Ulrike Freitag, “Arabische Visionen von Modernität im 19. und frühen 20. Jahrhundert: Die Aneignung von Universalien oder die Übernahme fremder Konzepte?,” in Jörg Barberowski, Hartmut Kaelble and Jürgen Schriever (eds.), *Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder. Repräsentation sozialer Ordnungen im Wandel* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2008), pp. 89-117.

10 In my dissertation on ethno-confessional relations in pre-World War I Palestine, I analyzed *Filastin* as a medium for public debate and its role as the “educator of the nation.” The above-mentioned components were the key pillars of a mindset disseminated by a range of authors in *Filastin* from 1911 to 1914, and are reflected in the newspaper’s terminology. For *Filastin*’s structure, content focus, central agendas, terminology, rhetoric, and images, see Evelin Dierauff, *Translating Late Ottoman Modernity in Palestine. Debates on Ethno-Confessional Relations and Identity in the Arab Palestinian Newspaper Filastin (1911-1914)* (Göttingen: VR unipress, 2020), pp. 57-114.

11 One writer, a Christian from Beit Jala, defined Palestine as the “most oppressed country” (*azlam buqa‘ al-ard*) with a corrupt society whose “decline is at the lowest point” (*munhatta ila hadid al-saghra*). *Filastin*, 27 March 1912, issue 123/3/4. Palestinian migrants living in America often expressed their disappointment when comparing Western urban modernity with the state of hygiene, education, and infrastructure in “my homeland Palestine” (*watani Filastin*). *Filastin*, 19 April 1913, issue 231/3/1-3.

12 *Filastin*, 19 July 1911, issue 52/3/1-2. See also a letter by Khalil al-Sakakini (1878-1953), a prominent Palestinian Orthodox teacher, intellectual and political activist from Jerusalem, who compared “the Oriental” to a “sick man, babbling into his mattress” (*marid yatamalmal fi farashihi*) *Filastin*, 16 April 1913, issue 230/3/2.

13 See Bulos Shahadeh, later publisher of *Mirat al-Sharq* in Jerusalem (1919), elaborating on the frequently cited dichotomy between the age of “despotism” versus “liberty, Constitution, brotherhood and equality” (*hurriyya, dustur, ikha‘, musawat*). In *Filastin*, 15 July 1911, issue 51/2/3-3/4.

14 Michelle Campos writes about the “sacralization” of the notion of liberty in the Ottoman press and among the Palestinian elites. See Michelle Campos, *Ottoman Brothers: Muslims Christians and Jews in Early Twentieth Century Palestine* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), pp. 20-58. Yuval Ben-Bassat has explored the culture of protest in late Ottoman Palestine through petitions sent to Istanbul by Arab villagers, Zionist settlers, and Bedouin tribes. See Yuval Ben-Bassat, *Petitioning the Sultan: Justice and Protest in Late Ottoman Palestine* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013); and idem “Bedouin Petitions from Late Ottoman Palestine: Evaluating the Effects of Sedentarization,” *JESHO* 58 (2015), pp. 135-162. Campos notes that Arab journalists during the post-revolutionary period exercised their freedom to protest as “proud Palestinian Arab Ottomans” without seeing the contradiction between criticizing the government and considering themselves to be Ottoman. See Michelle Campos, “The Ottoman Sickness and Its Doctors: Imperial Loyalty in Palestine on the Eve of World War I,” in Hans-Lukas Kieser, Kerem Öktem and Maurus Reinkowsky (eds.), *World War I and the End of the Ottomans: From the Balkan Wars to the Armenian Genocide* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015), p. 92.

activities in the fields of culture, entertainment, and leisure, coordinated by a range of non-governmental organizations or individuals. For example, communal societies organized movie screenings and bazaars to collect money for educational and charitable purposes, intellectual circles and youth associations organized modern Arabic drama and music events, hosting famous Egyptian actors or musicians from Europe, and Jaffa's sports club held public athletics competitions or organized lectures on topics in the natural sciences for the educated social classes. The social norms and the mindset that lay behind these activities are revealed through *Filastin*; however, many details about the practical features of cultural management (event coordination, artists' networks, etc.) unfortunately remain unclear.

What can be gleaned from *Filastin* is that cultural activities in Jaffa tended to take place in the cafés and bars on Bustrus Street. New facilities for leisure and recreation were also installed at Manshiyya Beach, thus making these two locations the physical *nodal points* of Jaffa's cultural life and leisure activities.

This phenomenon of global modernity was associated with the organization of the urban middle classes into interest groups, which led to the politicization of these societies in Europe and the Middle East. The trend towards middle-class engagement increased after the Young Turk Revolution in the urban centers of the Empire, although the history of social organizations and societies in the Middle East and Ottoman Palestine still needs to be explored. Keith Watenpaugh's survey of Aleppo's middle classes from 1908 to 1946, whom he defines as "architects of community" has shed light on this issue.¹⁵ Michelle Campos has explored Palestine's Freemasonry as a "social club." The first lodge was founded in Jerusalem (1873) followed by the Temple of Solomon in Jaffa (1891), which was renamed l'Aurore (Dawn) in 1904, or Barkai in Hebrew and Sha-faq in Arabic.¹⁶ Abigail Jacobson has analyzed the relief efforts in wartime Jerusalem orga-

nized by the local branch of the Red Crescent Society (founded in 1915), the Armenians, the Ashkenazi-Sephardi societies, the joint American-Jewish and Zionist organizations, and the American Colony.¹⁷ Buessow has investigated the infrastructure of the public sphere in the District of Jerusalem, including printing presses and literary circles.¹⁸

Ruth Kark has investigated the European-Jewish role in Jaffa's cultural sector, but did not examine Arab Palestinian initiatives.¹⁹ Muhammad Salim al-Tarawina's survey of Shari'a records (*sijill*) provides detailed information on Jaffa's demographic and social developments and its economic, legal, and educational institutions but without an analytical approach.²⁰ The involvement of the women of Jaffa in charity, the patronage of the poor, and early feminism have been explored by Salim Tamari in the memoirs of Adele Shamat 'Azar (1886-1968), the co-founder of Jaffa's Orthodox Women's Association for the Support of Orphans Girls (1910) and a leading figure in early "Arab Orthodox feminism."²¹ The autobiography of Jerusalem's storyteller Jawhariyya, edited by Tamari, provides insights into Palestinian folk culture and entertainment venues in Jerusalem's Old City.²²

17 Abigail Jacobson, *From Empire to Empire: Jerusalem between Ottoman and British Rule* (New York, Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011), pp. 22-52.

18 Johann Buessow, *Hamidian Palestine*, pp. 435-509.

19 Ruth Kark, *Jaffa: A City in Evolution, 1799-1917* (Jerusalem: Yad Ben-Zvi, Magnes Press, 1990).

20 See the list of Jaffa's schools in Muhammad Salim al-Tarawina, *Qada' Yafa fi l-ahd al-uthmani: Dirasa idariyya iqtisadiyya ijtimaiyya, 1281-1333h/1864-1914m* [The Sub-district of Jaffa during the Ottoman Period: An Administrative, Economic, and Social Study, 1281-1333/1864-1914] (Amman: Jordan Ministry of Culture, 2000), pp. 478-497 [in Arabic].

21 Salim Tamari writes that 'Azar exhibited a "feminist consciousness before the term was utilized." His work, based on an unpublished manuscript covering 1912-1948 and written by 'Azar during the 1960s, charts the evolution of Palestinian women's associations into political activism in the 1930/40s, which gradually subordinated their work to the national cause. See Salim Tamari, "Adele Azar: Public Charity and Early Feminism," *Jerusalem Quarterly Journal* 74 (2018), pp. 104-119. See also Islah Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989," in Jamal Nassar and Roger Heacock (eds.), *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads* (New York: Praeger, 1990), pp. 104-119.

22 Jawhariyyeh presents a lively description of daily, inter-communal life during "Jerusalem's Ottoman modernity." See Salim Tamari, "Jerusalem's Ottoman Modernity: The Times and Lives of Wasif Jawhariyyeh," *Jerusalem*

15 Keith Watenpaugh, *Being Modern in the Middle East: Revolution, Nationalism, Colonialism, and the Arab Middle Class* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006).

16 Michelle Campos, "Freemasonry in Ottoman Palestine," *Jerusalem Quarterly Journal* 22/23 (2005), pp. 37-62.

This article is thus the first to provide an in-depth exploration of Jaffa's organized public culture, entertainment, and leisure within the paradigm of late Ottoman modernity of Palestine and its "various modernities." Jaffa's "local modernity," the modernity of a provincial Arab Levantine port city at the beginning of the 20th century, was represented in its coffeehouse culture and its music, theater and film performances on the stages on Bustrus Street, which looked to Egypt as the emerging center of Arab art, thus reflecting Jaffa's efforts to support "Arab modernity" and the Nahda. Jaffa's "Ottoman modernity" emerged from its ceremonial culture and public demonstrations of Ottomanism by local elites. Ideas of "global modernity" were reflected in the local debate on the industrialization of Jaffa's infrastructure, agriculture, and economy. In the field of education, Jaffa's actors were influenced by "Western modernity," as inspired by British or American models, a topic that is beyond the scope of the present study and cannot be discussed in detail here. In short, modernity in Jaffa was a hybrid, as was urban culture in the "global Middle East."

Below, I outline the historical factors and local conditions behind the emergence of Jaffa's social organizations and cultural sector. I then identify key civil society actors and arenas in Jaffa's cultural sector, and look more closely at Bustrus Street and Manshiyya Beach, two nodal points of culture, entertainment, and leisure, to demonstrate through articles in *Filastin* how culture in pre-World War I Jaffa took the form of "collective action."

HISTORICAL FACTORS AND LOCAL CONDITIONS

Jaffa's urban expansion as of the latter half of the 19th century was fostered by its geographic location, economic potential, and rise as a center of the subdistrict (Ar.: *qada*) in 1871/72, which led to the emergence of various Ottoman institutions there.²³ Although Jaffa was a

Quarterly Journal 9 (2000), pp. 5-27; and Wasif Jawhariyya, *The Storyteller of Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Wasif Jawhariyyeh, 1904-1948* (Northampton, MA: Olive Branch Press, 2014).

23 Jaffa was the seat of the Sharia court (*al-mahkama al-shariyya*), a civil court (*mahkama nizamiyya*), the commercial court (*mahkama tijariyya*) for the Jerusalem Dis-

trict, and the district council (*majlis idara*). The municipality (*majlis baladi*), police force, and the gendarmerie of the subdistrict-governor (*qaïmaqam*) were located there, and a military base was situated in the vicinity. Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 44-45.

minor town, its port was the most important between Alexandria and Beirut, which made it the gateway to Palestine. Jaffa became the center of transportation and communication in the *mutasarriyya* (district) of Jerusalem, and was linked to Jerusalem, the administrative capital and spiritual center of Palestine, by road, the railway (1892) and telegraph lines (1864), which created the "Jaffa-Jerusalem interurban axis."²⁴ The cultivation of monocultures as cash crops and in particular the thriving citrus industry turned Jaffa into an agricultural agglomeration²⁵ and made it a hub of international trade and tourism as of the 1860s.²⁶ This attracted labor and migration from all over the Middle East, North Africa, Asia Minor, and Europe. Egyptian Muslims started coming to Jaffa in the 1830s, Jews from Morocco and Tunisia are recorded as of the 1840s, German Protestants in the 1860s, and Ashkenazi Jews from Europe as of the 1880s. They all turned Jaffa into a "city of many nations" on a par with Beirut.²⁷ Between the early 19th century and the eve of World War I, Jaffa's population exploded twentyfold,

trict, and the district council (*majlis idara*). The municipality (*majlis baladi*), police force, and the gendarmerie of the subdistrict-governor (*qaïmaqam*) were located there, and a military base was situated in the vicinity. Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 44-45.

24 Schayegh, *Middle East*, pp. 80-81.

25 On Jaffa's agriculture and the citrus industry, see Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 220-242. Other flourishing businesses were soap factories and water wheels that drove presses, grain mills, and machines. Around 1909, 36 olive presses and 12 sesame presses were located in the *qada*, and 22 grain mills were operating along the Yarkon River. Tarawina, *Qada' Yafa*, pp. 314-316.

26 For Jaffa's trade, import, and export numbers, see Marwan Buheiry, "The Agricultural Exports of Southern Palestine, 1885-1914," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 10/4 (1981); Charles Issawi, "The Trade of Jaffa, 1825-1914," in Hisham Nashabe (ed.), *Studia Palaestina: Studies in Honour of Constantine K. Zurayk* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1988); Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 277-278; and Tarawina, *Qada' Yafa*, pp. 393-421.

27 For a comparison of Beirut and Jaffa, see Schayegh, *Middle East*, pp. 74-76. On 19th-century migration from Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Circassia, Chechnya, and Bosnia into the region, see David Grossman, *Rural Arab Demography and Early Jewish Settlement in Palestine: Distribution and Population Density during the Late Ottoman and Early Mandate Periods* (New Brunswick, NY: Transaction, 2011), pp. 43-77. On migration from other regions of Palestine to Jaffa, see Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 158-159. On local receptions of Jewish and Maghrebi immigration into the *Qada'* based on *Filastin*, see Evelin Dierauff, "Global Migration into Late Ottoman Jaffa as reflected in the Arab-Palestinian Newspaper *Filastin* (1911-1913)," in Kozma, Schayegh and Wishnitzer (eds.), *A Global Middle East*, pp. 165-174.

integrating 50,000 inhabitants of various ethnicities and confessions.²⁸ Beside the Muslim (Hanafi) majority, there were Greek Orthodox, Catholic, Maronite, Armenian, Catholic, and Protestant Christians, along with Sephardi and Ashkenazi Jews. Each community had its places of worship and religious foundations (*waqf*, pl. *awqaf*), bought and sold real estate, oversaw educational institutions, and set up social services. In 1917, representatives of more than 25 nations resided in Jaffa and each one had its own delegate (*mukhtar*) to the authorities who dealt with the interests of his group.²⁹ Around 1895, these communities operated a total of 21 schools as well as numerous medical and philanthropic institutions.³⁰ Furthermore, the bulk of the international Zionist institutions in Ottoman Palestine were concentrated in the town, including the London-based Anglo-Palestine Bank (1903), the Jewish National Fund (1907), and the Palestine Office (1907), and the building of the New Yishuv was coordinated from Jaffa.³¹

The sectarian communities spurred polycentric development, transforming Jaffa into a “town of several centers.” The original and geographic center was the Old City with the port at the seashore (see Figure 5). South of the Old City, there was ‘Ajami, a large mixed modern middle-class neighborhood inhabited by Christians of various denominations, merging southwards with al-Jabaliyya.³² Outside of the Old City on the road leading northeast to Nablus, Jaffa’s modern commercial center took shape on Howard/Bustrus Street as of the 1870s. A little further down that road, the German Colony was built up in 1869 by the

Templar Society, composed of pietistic Protestants from the German Black Forest, where they maintained a German hospital and other institutions.³³



Figure 5: Aerial Photograph of Jaffa in 1917. Note the Old City and the harbor in the center and the beginnings of the ‘Ajami neighborhood south of the harbor. On the other side, the road leads to the northeast (towards Nablus) with Bustrus Street, which is intersected by Jamal Paşa Boulevard (constructed during World War I), and somewhat farther along to the German Colony (note the church tower in the picture). Gustav Dalman, *Hundert deutsche Fliegerbilder aus Palästina* (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1925), p. 77.

North of the Old City, the Manshiyya quarter stretched along the coast, constituting a large mixed neighborhood with an Arab Muslim majority and smaller Christian and Jewish communities.³⁴ Starting in the 1880s, Manshiyya began to merge northeast with the new Jewish neighborhoods of Neve Tzedek, Neve Shalom, Mahane Yehuda, etc. Further northeast of Manshiyya, there was Tel-Aviv, founded by the Ahuzat Bayit Society (1909) as the first “Hebrew City,” a magnet for Jewish immigration.³⁵ In

28 Jerusalem’s population before World War I is estimated to have been roughly 80,000 inhabitants and had grown eightfold since the early 19th century while Jaffa’s spatial expansion from 0.1 square km in 1841/42 to 1.4 square km in 1917/18 outpaced Jerusalem’s growth twofold from 0.6 to 3.8 square km within the same period. See Schayegh, *Middle East*, p. 75.

29 On Jaffa’s various nations and ethnicities, see Kark, *Jaffa*, p. 158; and Tarawina, *Qada’ Yafa*, pp. 460-461.

30 Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 172, 284.

31 For the coordination of Zionist settlement in Palestine, see Zvi Shilony, *Ideology and Settlement: The Jewish National Fund, 1897-1914* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1998).

32 ‘Ajami was possibly founded by Lebanese Maronites as suggested on the website *Maronites of the Holy Land*, which is now unfortunately no longer accessible. <https://now.mmedia.me/lb/en/reportsfeatures/546588-maronites-of-the-holy-land> (last accessed on 6 June 2017).

33 The Germans established Sarona in 1871, Walhalla (1888), and Wilhelma (1902) northeast of Jaffa. For the history of German settlement in the *qada’*, see Alex Carmel, *Die Siedlungen der württembergischen Templer in Palästina 1868-1918: Ihre lokalpolitischen und internationalen Probleme* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1973), pp. 25-79. See also Manfred Haering, Horst Blaich and Helmut Glenk, *From Desert Sands to Golden Oranges: The History of the German Templar Settlement of Sarona in Palestine 1871-1947* (Ringwood East, Victoria: Trafford, 2005), pp. 43, 49; Tarawina, *Qada’ Yafa*, pp. 129-130.

34 Note that Manshiyya started out as an Egyptian colony of agricultural workers in Irshid, later the southern part of Manshiyya. See Michael Dumper, “Jaffa,” in Michael Dumper and Bruce Stanley (eds.), *Cities of the Middle East and North Africa: A Historical Encyclopedia* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO, 2007), p. 201.

35 Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 100-104, 107, 118-134. See also the maps of Jaffa’s Jewish neighborhoods on pp. 112-116.

short, pre-World War I Jaffa was a town of plural centers, as is also clear from the aerial photographs of the region, and especially the map of Jaffa-Tel-Aviv from 1923 by F. Palmer (see Figures 6, 7 and 8 below).



Figure 6: The Jaffa–Tel-Aviv region in 1917. Note the Old City and the harbor in the center, 'Ajami and Jabaliyya to the south, Manshiyya and Tel-Aviv to the north. Dalman, *Hundert deutsche Fliegerbilder*, p. 77.

The top priority for Jaffa's landowners, traders and intellectuals was the modernization of Jaffa's infrastructure, street network, and agriculture, since the prosperity of the city depended heavily on international trade. The modernization of the port in particular was a central topic in local politics because, despite the rise in steam ship traffic, Jaffa did not have a deep-water port.³⁶ The local elite also put pressure on officials to provide better security by deploying government forces and installing electric streetlights, which was enthusiastically welcomed in 1912.³⁷ Despite the strong presence of government institutions, most of the urban and regional development was driven by civil society actors, and was in fact encouraged by the authorities. The governors saw Jaffa as a showcase for progress in the District and they undertook extended trips to inspect Jaffa's schools as well as its nearby colonies, which had become major drivers of the sub-district's economic growth, such as the agricultural school of Mikve Yisra'el, founded by the French-Jewish Alliance Israélite Universelle, the winery of the Zionist settlement at Rishon le-Zion,³⁸ the Hebrew Gymnasium of Tel-Aviv, the Templar School of Wilhelma, and other institutions.³⁹

36 *Filastin*, 6 January 1912, issue 101/1/4-5.

37 766 steamships and 1,065 sail boats passed through Jaffa's port in 1911. *Filastin*, 7 August 1912, issue 160/1/3-2/1.

38 *Filastin*, 17 August 1912, issue 163/1/3-4.

39 *Filastin*, 11 June 1913, issue 244/3/2-3.

ACTORS AND ARENAS OF PUBLIC CULTURE

Jaffa's main actors in cultural reforms were a number of societies connected to the Muslim, Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant communities. *Filastin* gave the most space to the initiatives of the Muslim Society for Piety and Welfare (Jam'iyyat al-Birr wa-l-Ihsan), the Greek Orthodox Welfare Association (al-Jam'iyya al-Khayriyya li-l-Rum Urthudhuks), the Orthodox Women's Association for the Support of Orphan Girls (Jam'iyyat al-Sayyidat al-Urthudhuksiyya li-'Add al-Yatimat) and the Israelite Women's Association (Jam'iyyat al-Sayyidat al-Isra'iliyya). A range of Zionist institutions contributed to Jaffa's public culture. The Hebrew Gymnasium in Tel-Aviv, for example, presented Hebrew and Yiddish theater. There were also inter-confessional platforms consisting of Jaffa's middle classes of all faiths: the local branch of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), the Freemasonry Lodge, and the conservative Society for the Prevention of Drugs (Jam'iyyat al-Imtina' 'an al-Musakkirat) discussed how to preserve morality *and* implement progressive patriotism at the same time.⁴⁰ The internationally mixed platforms included the Jaffa's Sports Club (al-Muntada al-Riyadi) and the Christian Mar Mansur Association (Jam'iyyat Mar Mansur). The "new youth" (*al-nash'i'a al-jadida*) was the main target of local reform activists and founding schools was at the top of the agenda of Jaffa's societies.⁴¹ Efforts to spearhead the modernization of education were led by the Orthodox community. Jaffa's Orthodox Women's Association for the Support of Orphan Girls, headed by Su'ada Tamari, was among the first Palestinian associations devoted to the education of girls.⁴² According to *Filastin*, it filled a "vacuum" (*faragh*) in education and the newspaper printed lengthy speeches by a member, Lady Fadwa, an outspoken feminist

40 One of its leading members was Sulayman at-Tajji, a prominent Sheikh, who was an anti-Zionist and a wealthy land owner with influence in the Jaffa-Ramla region. *Filastin*, 5 June 1912, issue 142/3/3.

41 On the role of the "new youth" in Palestine during the Young Turk Rule, see Johann Buessow, "Children of the Revolution: Youth in Palestinian Public Life, 1908-14," in Yuval Ben-Bassat and Eyal Ginio (eds.), *Late Ottoman Palestine: The Period of Young Turk Rule* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 55-78.

42 Tamari, "Adele Azar," p. 116.



Figure 7: General View of Jaffa's Port and the Old City from the Sea at the End of the 19th Century (Courtesy of the American Colony).

Source: National Photo Collection of Israel (Photography Dept. Government Press Office)

who promoted the role of women in social development.⁴³

On the other hand, Jaffa's social societies tended not to provide platforms for popular culture that did not fit the criteria of being "modern" and "progressive;" this is clear from *Filastin*. In the local news section, almost nothing is reported on popular culture or celebrations that included dancing or drinking. Information on alcohol consumption in some coffee shops or at Manshiyya Beach at night can only be gleaned between the lines, in reports of occasional brawls in the alleys of Jaffa or even gunfights that left people dead or wounded.⁴⁴ *Filastin's* bias against popular culture was particularly obvious when, in 1912, the editors thanked Jaffa's police department for banning "female dancers" (*raqisat*) in cafés and public places, who provoked "evil incidents" (*al-hawadith al-mukhilla*).⁴⁵

Jaffa's societies devoted much of their efforts to philanthropic work. It was this burgeoning sector of "charity projects" (*mashari' khayriyya, a'mal ihsan*), as it was called in *Filastin*, that organized concerts, bazaars, plays, or movies to collect money for schools, orphans, and the military. For these events, Jaffa's schools such

43 *Filastin*, 15 February 1913, issue 213/3/5; and 19 February 1913, issue 214/3/2-4/3.

44 *Filastin*, 23 September 1913, issue 273/2/5-3/1.

45 *Filastin*, 29 June 1912, issue 149/3/4.



Figure 8: Map of Jaffa-Tel-Aviv in 1923. Drawn by F. Palmer as part of his report on the provision of harbor facilities for Palestine and the possible train connection with the harbor. Accessed from the website Historic Cities: http://historic-cities.huji.ac.il/israel/jaffa/maps/palmer_1923_jaffa_a_b.jpg

as the Tabitha Mission School for girls (founded by the Scottish Presbyterian Miss Walker Arnott in 1863), the French Frères School, and the House of the Islamic Sciences School (Madrasat Dar al-'Ulum al-Islamiyya) under the aegis of the Muslim Society for Piety and Welfare served as venues. Charity in service of the "homeland" was intertwined with Jaffa's "ceremonial culture" and demonstrations of Ottomanism by the town's elites. Patriotic donation campaigns and "aid funds" (*ianat*) in support of the Ottoman troops considerably shaped Jaffa's inter-confessional relations during the post-revolutionary era. During the Tripoli War (1911) and the Balkan Wars (1912-13), an inter-confessional committee (*lajna*) coordinated the deliveries of aid funds to Istanbul.⁴⁶ The town's intellectuals organized literary evenings in cafés to raise money,⁴⁷ Jaffa's youth collected medicine as donations from pharmacies, and the 'Isas coordinated the collection of clothes.⁴⁸ The local news published lists of donors and

46 Members were Hafiz Bek al-Sa'id, Sheikh Darwish al-Dajjani, Ya'qub Abu l-Huda, Jirji Kassab, Ilyas Jallad, Boris Rabbinoiwitsch, David Mizrahi, and Yusuf al-'Isa. *Filastin*, 9 October 1912, issue 178/3/4-5.

47 *Filastin*, 25 December 1912, issue 200/3; 28 December 1912, issue 201/3/4; 4 January 1913, issue 203/3/3 and 17 January 1913, issue 103/3/3.

48 *Filastin*, 20 November 1912, issue 190/2/5-3/1.

the amounts given, and there was considerable pressure on Jaffa's elites ("effendiyya") to become active by giving patriotic aid.⁴⁹

In general, the number of social societies increased exponentially during the Young Turk era. It was fashionable for the local elites to occupy honorary posts in associations, and it was understood to be the duty of influential individuals to serve the "greater good." In 1913, Yusuf al-Isa noted that "societies of societies" had appeared which claimed to "serve the poor" (*likhidmat al-faqir*) by adopting "certain slogans and uniforms." But in reality, he complained, most of them were mainly interested in filling their coffers.⁵⁰ At times, there was criticism that the uses of these donations was not made transparent to the public and that some associations behaved more like "trading companies" than charities.⁵¹ The local population became somewhat reluctant to attend Jaffa's various charity events since they were faced with constant pressure to donate.⁵²

BUSTRUS STREET AS A NODAL POINT OF MODERN CULTURE

Jaffa's Bustrus Street, the main shopping thoroughfare and modern commercial center in the town, with its cosmopolitan pulse, was a *nodal point* for performances of public culture. Situated outside the Old City next to the Muslim cemetery on the road leading to Nablus (see Figure 9), Bustrus Street connected the town center to Jaffa's German Colony and was divided in two sections. The first part started at the Clock Tower Square and was named after Iskandar 'Awad (Howard in English), the dragoman of Thomas Cook's travel agency in Jaffa; the second part was named after Najib Bustrus, both of whom had properties there. In *Filastin*, the whole area is referred to as the Bustrus Market (Suq Bustrus). The owners of Howard/Bustrus Street were the Lebanese Greek Orthodox Sursuq family, large-scale absentee land-

owners in Palestine who developed the street from 1886 onwards.⁵³ Clusters of buildings were constructed there from 1902 onwards, designed by the Jewish builder Morris Sheinberg, with shops on the ground floor and apartments on the upper floors. By the beginning of the 20th century, most buildings were leased to Ashkenazi Jews and some to Arab Christians.⁵⁴ Bustrus Street provided all the services re-

53 Iskandar 'Awad was a Maronite from Beirut and operated as Cook's agent for tourism to Jerusalem from Beirut and Jaffa. In 1887, he built the Howard Hotel in the Howard section of the street. Alfred Sursuq's sister, who was married to Najib Bustrus, from another wealthy Lebanese Christian family of merchants, inherited the se-

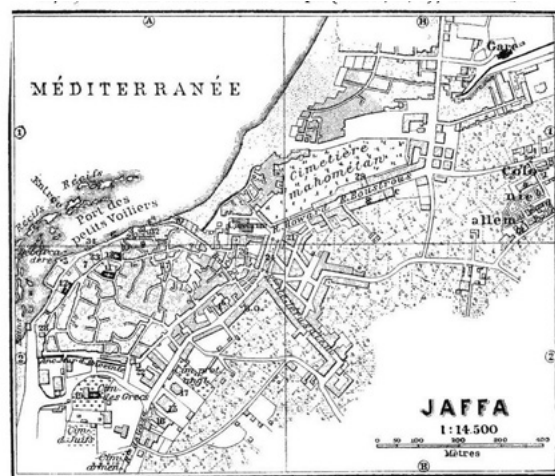


Figure 9: Map of Central Jaffa. Reproduced from Karl Baedeker, *Palestine and Syria with the Chief Routes through Mesopotamia and Babylonia: Handbook for Travelers* (Leipzig: Karl Baedeker, 1906), p. 121. Note the two sections of Howard/Bustrus Street situated outside the Old City and alongside the Muslim cemetery.

cond part of the street, named after her husband. I am grateful to Samuel Giler, a specialist in Old Jaffa's geography, who identified many sites from the late Ottoman period, gave me a detailed tour and explained the history of changing ownerships in Old Jaffa. He informed me that the Howard complex was donated as a Maronite *waqf* after 'Awad died in 1904 and remains a *waqf* to this day. For information on 'Awad, see Moshe Sharon, *Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicarum Palaestinae (CIAP)*, vol. 6 (Leiden: Brill, 2016), pp. 122-131. See also the website Palestine Remembered: <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Jaffa/Jaffa> (last accessed 20 November 2017).

54 See Samuel Giler, "Rehov ha-Yehudim shel Yafo: 'al toldot rehov Havard Bustrus-Raziel [The Street of the Jews in Jaffa: The History of Howard-Bustrus-Raziel Street]," *Cathedra* 157 (Fall 2015) [in Hebrew], pp. 53-76. At the beginning of the century, many shops were also leased to Jews in the Monastery Market (Suq al-Dayr), an area owned by the Greek Orthodox Church, one of the largest owners of property and real estate in Jaffa. See Kark, *Jaffa*, pp. 260-262.

49 At the top was the prominent Sephardi Jew Shimon Moyal with 25 francs. See *Filastin*, 2 November 1912, issue 185/3/5; 6 November 1912, issue 186/3/5-6, and 23 November 1912 issue 191/3/3-4.

50 *Filastin*, 9 April 1913, issue 228/1/1-4.

51 *Ibid.*

52 *Filastin*, 1 February 1913, issue 209/3/4.



Figure 10: The 'Isas' House on 'Ajami Street. A floor was rented out to the Zionist Anglo Palestine Bank from 1903 to 1922/23. Photograph from the Mandate period (courtesy of Samuel Giler).

Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

quired for a modern city: printing presses, postal services, foreign banks, inns, tourist agencies, doctors, pharmacies. Apart from the Howard Hotel, there was the famous Palestine Hotel, a complex owned by the Jewish hotelier Kaminitz, who also operated inns in Jerusalem, Jericho, and Hebron.⁵⁵ There were also the German Bank and Zionist institutions, such as the Palestine Office and the Rishon le-Zion winery shop. Around the corner were the Clock Tower Square, the police station, the Ottoman Government House (*dar al-hukuma*), and the court. All this made Bustrus Street the perfect area for the 'Isas to have their editorial office. They lived in a prestigious house on the road to 'Aja-

55 Rupert Chapman, Shimon Gibson and Yoni Shapira, *Tourists, Travellers and Hotels in 19th-Century Jerusalem: On Mark Twain and Charles Warren at the Mediterranean Hotel* (Leeds, UK: Maney, 2013), p. 84.

mi, where they also rented space to the Anglo Palestine Bank, a Zionist institution (see Figure 10), but the center of their world was Bustrus Street. From there, they maintained social networks, gathered news from the police and the government and pursued their journalistic endeavor.

Bustrus Street also had an entertainment infrastructure consisting of cafés and bars that were a key part of the “coffeehouse culture” of a provincial Arab Levantine city and represented Jaffa’s “local modernity.”⁵⁶ The coffeehouse was a particularly “Muslim institution” of “Arab origin” and, in the words of Ralph Hattox, a “tavern without wine,” which had a much greater impact on urban society than a tavern since taverns in the Muslim context were linked to delinquent activity.⁵⁷ As a space in between the “private” and the “public,” and traditionally an exclusively male space frequented by men during the day and at night – occasionally in their pajamas – the coffeehouse could temporarily host newly arrived immigrants, travelers, or the homeless.⁵⁸ There, different social classes mingled for socializing, networking, business, politics, and entertainment. Men spent hours in games (backgammon, chess), listened to storytellers and musicians, and enjoyed dramatic entertainment, such as puppet shows, shadow plays, tumblers, and jugglers. Thus, the rise of the coffeehouse in the Middle East is intertwined with the emergence of an urban bourgeoisie in early modernity, public leisure spheres, and new forms of performative arts.⁵⁹

56 Coffee reached Istanbul in the 16th century, and the coffeehouse enjoyed “phenomenal success” in Arab cities. A survey listed 1,654 coffeehouses in Istanbul in the 1790s and 2,500 during the 1840s. Cengiz Kırılı, “Coffeehouses: Leisure and Sociability in Ottoman Istanbul,” in Peter Borsay and Jan Hein Furnée (eds.), *Leisure Cultures in Urban Europe, c. 1700-1870: A Transnational Perspective* (Manchester: Man University Press, 2017), pp. 161-162.

57 Sources indicate that in early 16th-century Yemen, Sufis used to drink coffee in a shared ceremony before the *dhikr*, and coffee and the coffeehouse as a “package” was introduced to Istanbul by two Syrians around 1555. See Ralph Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses: The Origins of a Social Beverage in the Medieval Near East* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), pp. 63-65, 73. For the culture of preparing coffee, see pp. 63-71.

58 Kırılı, “Coffeehouses,” p. 171.

59 For the various social functions of Istanbul’s coffeehouses, see Kırılı, “Coffeehouses,” pp. 161-181. For social life in coffeehouses, see Hattox, *Coffee and Coffeehouses*, pp. 72-80. For the dynamics between the rising bourgeois-



Figure 11: The Entrance to Bustrus Street. Photograph from the 1920s, taken from the Howard section of the street, and the same site photographed in 2018. Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

In Jaffa's Arab cafés, alcohol was not served. Performances on Bustrus Street were open to women, and some plays or movies explicitly addressed families. There is evidence from *Filastin* that theater and live music mostly took place in a sort of modern café called the New Bar, situated next to the National Pharmacy (al-Saydaliyya al-Wataniyya) that was run by a Jew named Musa Alikolov on Bustrus Street, since it had a spacious hall suitable for these events.⁶⁰ A popular place for movies was a small hall suitable for screenings called Abu Shakush ("The One with the Hammer"), also

sie, new performing arts, and the history of coffeehouses in Istanbul, see Cemal Kafadar, "How Dark is the History of the Night, how Black is the Story of Coffee, how Bitter the Tale of Love: The changing Measure of Leisure and Pleasure in Early Modern Istanbul," in Arzu Öztürkmen and Evelyn Vitz (eds.), *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2014), pp. 243-269.

⁶⁰ *Filastin*, 18 June 1912, issue 146, supplement 4.



Figure 12: Billboard at the Entrance to Café al-Zarifa outside Bustrus Market. The café was overlooking the little park on Jaffa's Clock Tower Square, which was built in 1897 to commemorate the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm to the Holy Land.

Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

in Bustrus Street.⁶¹ Plays and movies were presented in the Café al-Ballur, "Crystal Café" (address unknown), or the Café al-Zarifa (Figure 10), which *Filastin* sometimes spelled Zarafa (meaning "Café of Grace") or Café al-Zarafiyya, situated near the Clock Tower.⁶² Artistic performances also took place at a café in 'Ajami,⁶³ and Café Lebanon, a café on Manshiyya Street in the Jewish neighborhood of Neve Shalom.⁶⁴ There, another coffeehouse, Manshiyya's Garden (Junaynat Manshiyya) served alcohol, obviously illegally, and sold coffee at overly high prices.⁶⁵

⁶¹ *Filastin*, 15 January 1913, issue 204/3/4. It is unclear which functions were hosted there since performances were mostly announced as "at Abu Shakush's" (*mahall* Abu Shakush). According to Samuel Giler, Abu Shakush was not a professional theater in late Ottoman times. A property deed dated 1926, found by Samuel Giler, indicates that, by the early Mandate period, the Abu Shakush Café was owned by the brothers George and Patides Joannidas, who moved it from Bustrus to Jamal Pasha Boulevard, today Jerusalem Boulevard.

⁶² A photograph contributed by Samuel Giler shows the location of Café al-Zarifa. See also *Filastin*, 25 December 1912, issue 200/3/3. For events held at Café al-Ballur, see *Filastin*, 22 February 1913, issue 215/3/4-5; 5 March 1913, issue 218/3/4-5; and 12 March 1913, issue 220/3/5.

⁶³ Name and address unknown. See *Filastin*, 9 November 1912, issue 187/3/3.

⁶⁴ *Filastin*, 16 September 1911, issue 69/2/1f.

⁶⁵ According to the editors, coffee sold at cafés was only supposed to cost one *matlik* (Turk.: *metalik*); however, this café sold it for two *matlik*. *Filastin*, 7 August 1912, issue 160/3/3.

In the local news, the 'Isas increasingly supported entertainment on Bustrus Street as of 1913 and regularly encouraged *Filastin's* readers to attend literature readings, music, plays, and movies catering to various audiences.⁶⁶ The trends in modern entertainment and leisure grew in Middle Eastern cities and symbolized urban modernity for the 'Isas. One of the most popular was the "cinematograph," the film projector, considered an agent of modernity in itself. The benefits of watching "the moving pictures" (*al-suwar al-mutaharrika*) were expounded in *Filastin* several times.⁶⁷ The titles of the movies screened are not mentioned in these reports. However, since Arab cinema emerged in the 1930s and the first homegrown productions were shot in Egypt in the 1920s, audiences most likely watched European movies or documentaries on discoveries and technical inventions at Abu Shakush.⁶⁸ Yusuf al-'Isa promoted the introduction of film projectors in schools as a medium for progressive education and argued that it was the "most successful method of teaching by visual means" (*anjah tariqa li-l-ta'lim al-nazari*) because it depicted innovations of the industrialized world.⁶⁹ The editors regularly urged their readers to go to movies in the Abu Shakush hall, which attracted middle-class families that could pay the moderate cost of a ticket;⁷⁰ for instance, when in May 1912, the Greek Orthodox Welfare Association organized a public film festival (*hafla sinama-*

tugrafiyya 'umumiyya) to collect money for its new school, it borrowed the "cinematograph."⁷¹

MODERN ARAB THEATER

In Jaffa, there were also modest attempts at modern Arab drama. *Filastin* enthusiastically announced that Jaffa's youth (*al-shubban*) had been engaged as amateur actors. Jaffa, on the fringes of Egypt as a prestigious cultural center, leaned strongly towards Egyptian drama. Entertainment involving mimicry and gestures performed in coffeehouses, festivals, or public places had existed in the Arab lands since pre-modern times. The popularity of farces in Egypt is widely documented,⁷² and Jerusalem's Old City inhabitants enjoyed shadow plays (*khayal al-zill*) during Ramadan nights.⁷³ "Arab drama" in the modern sense emerged in the latter half of the 19th century in the form of adaptations of European plays, interpreted and directed by a number of Syrian and Lebanese immigrants in Cairo and Alexandria. Egypt was the leader in the production of Arab drama and, as of the 1920s, Arab cinema. Apart from adaptations of European classics such as Molière's *L'Avare*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Othello* and Casimir Delavigne's *Louis XI*, the pioneers of modern Arab theater borrowed themes from Islamic history (Salah al-

66 For articles on these events, see *Filastin*, 1 May 1912, issue 132/3/2; 5 June 1912, issue 142/3/3; 15 January 1913, issue 204/3/4; 22 January 1913, issue 206/3/4; 1 February 1913, issue 209/3/4; 5 March 1913, issue 218/3/4; 8 March 1913, issue 219/3/4; 12 March 1913, issue 220/3/5; 5 April 1913, issue 227/3/4-5; 5 April 1913, issue 227/3/3-4; 2 July 1913, issue 250/3/2-3; 5 July 1913, issue 251/3/5; 12 July 1913, issue 253/3/3; 16 July 1913: issue 254/1/1-4; 16 July 1913, issue 254/3/2-4; 19 July 1913, issue 255/1/1-2; 19 July 1913, issue 255/2/5; 1 October 1913, issue 276/3/2.

67 *Filastin*, 13 March 1912, issue 119, 1/1-3

68 The first Arab production was a short film, *The Clerk* (al-Bashkatib), shot by Muhammad Bayyumi in 1922. The Egyptian actor Yusuf Wahba opened the first small studio in 1930. See Viola Shafik, *Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 70.

69 Here, 'Isa was inspired by a campaign in France for the use of projectors in schools. *Filastin*, 13 March 1912, issue 119, 1/1-3.

70 Tickets were sold for one *riyal*, four *bashalik* or two *bashalik* (Turk.: *beşlik*). See *Filastin*, 8 March 1913, issue 219/3/3.

71 *Filastin*, 25 May 1912, issue 139/3/3.

72 Traditional modes of performance in Islamic countries were the Shi'ite "passion play" (*tāziya*) and the recitation of classical Arab literature, such as the *Maqama*. During the Ottoman period, some theater genres became popular in the Arab East, especially shadow plays (*khayal al-zill*, or *karakuz* from Turkish), a form of puppet theater known since the 13th century. As of the beginning of the 19th century, the popular "comic scene" (*fasl mudhik*) was performed in public places by theater troupes in Egypt. See Shafik, *Arab Cinema*, pp. 67-68 and Mohamed Khozai, *The Development of Early Arabic Drama (1847-1900)* (London, New York: Longman, 1984), pp. 19-30. On shadow plays in the Turkish context and various Arab countries, see Jacob Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theater and Cinema* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1958), pp. 9-47. For the beginnings of modern Arab theater in Egypt and Syria and the increase in theater troupes in Khedival Egypt, see *ibid*, pp. 49-55, 56-66, 67-74. Another classic is Muhammad Mustafa Badawi, *Modern Arabic Drama in Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

73 Jawhariyya described entertaining performances featuring the cinematograph, the "wonder box" (*sunduq al-ajab*) and the storytellers in Jerusalem that he attended. Tamari, "Jerusalem's Ottoman Modernity," pp. 77-79, 133-135.

Din, Muhammad 'Ali Paşa, etc.) or traditional folk tales such as the *Thousand and One Nights* (*Alf Layla wa-Layla*) and *The Sleeper and the Awake* (*al-Na'im wa-l-Yaqzan*) and integrated Arabic rhymed prose (*saġ*) into their plays. By including a musical accompaniment, they created the "Arab operetta."⁷⁴ Palestinian theater created its first genuine drama, modeled after plays produced in Egypt, during the Mandate.⁷⁵

Arab theater was performed by males only. For example, in 1913, young Jaffa men acted in a play called *Samuel* (*Riwayat Samwil*) at the Crystal Café, and the profits were donated to the Muslim Society for Piety and Welfare and the military.⁷⁶ The shows were packed. *Filastin* complimented the actors' artistic "creativity" (*ijada*) and the perfection of their costumes and the 'Isas appealed to "lovers of this fine art" (*muhibbi hadha al-fann al-jamil*) to attend.⁷⁷ Obviously, there was also a Committee for Cultural-Economic Theater (*Lajnat al-Tamthil al-Ada-bi al-Iqtisadi*), mentioned only once in 1913, when it performed the tale of Muhammad 'Ali Paşa the Great for charity at the Crystal Café, and *The Miser and the Trustworthy* (*al-Shahih wa-l-Wafa' al-Sahih*), which was read aloud by a local narrator (*rawi*), Salih Shaqir.⁷⁸

However, when shows were dilettante,

74 The pioneers of modern Arab drama were the Lebanese Maronite Marun al-Naqqash, the Jewish Egyptian journalist Ya'qub Sannu', and the Syrian Khalil al-Qabbani. In 1848, the first modern Arab drama was presented by Naqqash in Beirut. To his play *The Miser* (*al-Bakhil*), an adaption of Molière's *L'Avare*, Naqqash borrowed figures and plots from the *Thousand and One Nights*. See Khozai, *Development of Early Arabic Drama*, p. 75; Shafik, *Arab Cinema*, p. 69. Ya'qub Sannu', editor of the satirical magazine *Abu Nazzara* ("The One with the Glasses"), was known for his polemicist talents and was called the "Egyptian Molière." See Khozai, *Development of Early Arabic Drama*, pp. 128-129; about Qabbani, see *ibid.*, pp. 80-122.

75 Palestinian professional theater first emerged during the 1930s with the al-Jawzi Troupe (*Firqat al-Jawzi*), founded by Nasri al-Jawzi and the writings of Jamil al-Bahri. Jawzi was born in 1908 to a notable Jerusalem and Gazan family. He broadcast his dramatic texts live from the Palestine Broadcasting Station from 1936. Bahri, publisher of the journal *al-Zahra* in Haifa, used to omit female roles in translated plays for the lack of actresses and integrated Arabic poetry. Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theater*, p. 102f, and Reuven Snir, "Palestinian Theatre: Historical Development and Contemporary Distinctive Identity," *Contemporary Theatre Review* 3/2 (1995), pp. 32-33.

76 *Filastin*, 5 March 1913, issue 218/3/4-5; 8 March 1913, issue 219/3/4; 12 March 1913, issue 220/3/5.

77 *Filastin*, 12 March 1913, issue 220/3/5.

78 *Filastin*, 22 February 1913, issue 215/3/4-5.

Filastin did not mince its words. In July 1913, the Muslim Society for Piety and Welfare organized a literary night to support its new school at Manshiyya, the House of Islamic Sciences, where there was good attendance. However, the performance was embarrassing. The 'Isas concluded that there was "much to do" on the local art scene and described the play as a sequence of "inconsistent scenes" in terrible language, interrupted by boring speeches by Jaffa's literati and the teacher Mustafa Majdi whose "rhetorical abilities" the 'Isas sarcastically wrote, they had "admired" several times previously. Majdi loved to recite Arab poetry and composed anthems that were sung by his pupils and sounded like "the hymns of Satan" (*anshudat al-shaytan*), the 'Isas wrote, and advised the Society to look for a better director and not to put on art events like "ceremonies for the distribution of school awards" (*haflat tawzi' jawa'iz madrasiyya*).⁷⁹

Apart from local amateur initiatives, well-established Arab artists performed on the stages of Bustrus Street. Although the organizations that invited them cannot be identified, Egyptian artists are known to have toured Jaffa and their productions attracted attention. In 1913, these included for instance the well-known Alexandrian troupe the 'Atallah Brothers, Salim and Amin. *Filastin* applauded them as "the troupe of contemporary theater" (*jawq al-tamthil al-'asri*), that "gloriously works for the sake of art and literature" (*al-'amil al-majd fi khidmat al-fann wa-l-adab*).⁸⁰ It was even more effusive when in July 1913, actor Jurj (George) Abyad (1880-1959) and lead singer Salama Hijazi (1855-1917) performed at the New Bar; an event covered at length in *Filastin*. Abyad was a Lebanese Syriac Christian who started his career in Alexandria and Cairo and was sent by the Khedive 'Abbas Hilmi to Paris to study acting and drama. Upon his return to Egypt in 1910, he established his own troupe with his uncle, Sheikh Hijazi, and the 'Ukasha Brothers. Although translated adaptations of European drama were part of his

79 *Filastin*, 2 July 1913, issue 250/3/2-3.

80 *Filastin*, 1 January 1913, issue 202/3/5; 15 January 1913, issue 204/3/4; and 22 January 1913, issue 206/3/4. Amin Atallah (1880-?) also acted in the first Egyptian movie *The Clerk* (*al-Bashkatib*) in 1922. Shafik, *Arab Cinema*, p. 70; and the Alex Cinema website https://www.bibalex.org/alexcinema/actors/Amine_attallah.html (last accessed 14 February 2019).

stable repertoire, Abyad encouraged writers to create dramatic texts about Arab history. He took a keen interest in décor and costumes, and adopted a slightly exaggerated style in his plays, which corresponded to the tastes of his audiences.⁸¹ As a child, Hijazi recited the Qur'an and sang at family festivities, became a star singer and was called the "Caruso of the East" in the Egyptian press. At the beginning of the 20th century, both were well known, and after World War I, became icons of Arab drama.⁸²

Abyad and Hijazi had been to Jerusalem in 1908;⁸³ but to have them in Jaffa was a sensation for the local intellectual scene. Their show in the New Bar in the popular style of an Arabic operetta was announced in *Filastin* in an article entitled "Who would have thought?" (*man kana yazunn*).⁸⁴ When the steamship carrying the troupe reached the harbor, Abyad, Hijazi and 'Abdallah 'Ukasha were received by an excited crowd. Despite the heat, downtown was crowded with visitors who came to see them, among them literati from Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Gaza and Nablus.⁸⁵ Unfortunately, the local management of this event left much to be desired: the seating was "disorganized" and some guards and the audience were unruly.⁸⁶ Vandals tore down the stage curtain and Abyad had to halt the performance. Meanwhile, Sheikh Hijazi, who had fallen sick, was dragged out of bed by a group of visitors and forced on

the stage, where he was made to sing. For the 'Isas, it was a disaster, and Jaffa's intellectuals were deeply ashamed. The next day, a delegation approached Abyad and apologized. Abyad forgave them and, when he performed again, the audience was "enchanted," *Filastin* wrote.⁸⁷

These performances were also a magnet for notables from Jerusalem. On the anniversary of the Constitution (*id al-dustur*), Abyad's group performed a version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* in the presence of the governor and the Ottoman elites (*arkan al-hukuma*). The hall was packed and Hijazi fascinated all with his voice.⁸⁸ *Filastin* stressed his contributions to modern drama. In fact, the "renaissance of the Arab theater" (*nahdat al-tamthil al-'arabi*) was due in great part to the Sheikh, who was called the "pillar of Arab theater" (*'imad al-tamthil al-'arabi*), 'Isa said.⁸⁹ There are also examples of European groups performing single shows in Jaffa; for instance, on the initiative of the local Sports Club, a French theater group performed at the New Bar in 1913, *Filastin* reported.⁹⁰ However, the perception of European art in pre-World War I Palestine remains a topic for further investigation.

BODY CULTURE AND SPORTS

Another growing trend in pre-World War I Jaffa was physical exercise, although professional sports only emerged in Palestine during the British Mandate, as has been shown by Issam Khalidi. Sports were seen a "key component of social development" and an expression of national culture in Palestine that went hand in hand with Zionist-Arab confrontations during the Mandate.⁹¹ In 1924, Jaffa's Orthodox Club set up a football team that became highly popular and played matches against the Jaffa's Islamic Sports Club team, founded in 1926.⁹² The

81 Sabry Hafez, "Abyad, Jūrj," in *Encyclopaedia of Islam THREE*. Abyad returned to Egypt in 1910 with a French troupe that performed plays such as *Louis XVII* and *Tartuffe* in Cairo and Alexandria. In 1912, he formed his own troupe, which performed *King Oedipus*, *Othello*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and others (last accessed 6 August 2019) http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_ei3_COM_26298. See also the Alex Cinema website https://www.bibalex.org/alexcinema/actors/George_Abyad.html (last accessed 12 February 2019).

82 This was further developed by Yusuf Wahba's popular musical style. For classical Arab theater in Egypt's post-war years, see Landau, *Studies in the Arab Theater*, pp. 75-91.

83 According to Jawhariyya, major Husayn al-Husayni brought Abyad and Hijazi to Jerusalem in 1908 and set up "the largest tent in the country," rented from the Franciscan monastery. Tamari, "Jerusalem's Ottoman Modernity," pp. 72-73.

84 *Filastin*, 2 July 1913, issue 250/3/5; and 5 July 1913, issue 251/3/5.

85 *Filastin*, 12 July 1913, issue 253/3/3.

86 *Filastin*, 16 July 1913, issue 254/1/1-4. See also 'Isa on the unorganized arrival of Abyad in Jaffa under "One of the Diseases of the East" (*Min adwa' al-sharq*) in *Filastin*, 12 July 1913, issue 253/3/3.

87 *Filastin*, 16 July 1913, issue 254/3/2-4.

88 *Filastin*, 19 July 1913, issue 255/2/5.

89 *Filastin*, 19 July 1913, issue 255/1/1-2.

90 *Filastin*, 5 April 1913, issue 227/3/3-4.

91 In 1948, Palestine had 65 sports clubs, most of which belonged to the Arab Palestine Sports Federation (APSF). Issam Khalidi, "Sports and Aspirations: Football in Palestine, 1900-1948," *Jerusalem Quarterly Journal* 58 (2014), p. 75; idem, "Body and Ideology: Early Athletics in Palestine (1900-1948)," *Jerusalem Quarterly Journal* 27 (2006), p. 44.

92 Khalidi, "Sports and Aspirations," pp. 76-77.

development of football in the Middle East was sparked by ideals of Western modernity but also corresponded to the spirit of the awakening of Arab national thought. In 1907, the al-Ahli Club was founded in Cairo as a football team for Egyptian high school students, and its president, the leader of the Nationalist Party (*Al-Wafd*) Saad Zaghloul, made it a bastion of “anti-monarchical republicanism” in Egypt.⁹³ Football also became popular in pre-World War I Palestine. It was played in the alleys of Jaffa, Haifa, and Jerusalem with improvised leather balls filled with old clothes and was introduced in foreign schools. There is evidence that in 1902, Khalil Totah, the director of the Friends School in Ramallah, rented a field for football games.⁹⁴ In 1908, the first two football teams were set up in Jerusalem by the Christian schools of St. George (*Madrasat al-Mutran*) and Garden of Knowledge (*Madrasat Rawdat al-Ma'arif*) as platforms for trans-regional matches⁹⁵ and, in 1911, Palestinian and European elites established the first sports club in Jerusalem's Batma Alley in the Old City.⁹⁶

In an editorial on a football match held in December 1911 at St. George's School between locals and English diplomats, Yusuf al-Isa claimed that Palestinian parents had finally acknowledged that “sports in schools is necessary” and demanded the athletic education of their children to foster their physical “agility” (*khiffat al-haraka*) and “strengthen their muscles” (*taqwiyat al-adalat*). The “new youth” (*al-nashi'a al-jadida*) preferred to dress in the “European fashion” (*al-zayy al-ifranji*), boldly wearing shorts while exercising.⁹⁷

New concepts of physical vitality became fashionable and were inspired by European

chauvinist images of masculinity. The “old” traditions were rejected, as propagated the press of the Young Turk era, and youthfulness became an important value among Arab urban elites,⁹⁸ which contrasted with the Middle Eastern tradition of honoring the elderly. The era when it was enough “to be proud of one's ancestors and content with the reputation of one's name and honor” was over, 'Isa stressed. This can no longer “represent the values needed for the enterprises of this age: the age of hard work,” he said. Rather, this age required men “to have broad shoulders and be able to compete, to move elegantly and be competitive, to be strongly built and be persistent when confronting the battlefield of fate.”⁹⁹

In line with this spirit, Jaffa's “young intellectuals” (*al-shubban al-udaba*) founded a “new sports club” (*nadi jadid li-l-riyada*) in 1911. The flyers they distributed in town called for members and volunteers.¹⁰⁰ The local educated elites, often Arab Christians and foreigners tended to join, since “good morals and manners” were defined as a prerequisite for membership. The Sports Club provided training in several kinds of sports and invited lecturers, such as Professor Krivatch, a Jewish teacher at the Hebrew Gymnasium, whose talk in French on “aviation” was much appreciated by the audience, *Filastin* reported in 1913.¹⁰¹ The Club also organized fun activities, and not everything was taken too seriously. Apart from track races and similar competitions, the members demonstrated games of skill to audiences, and even conducted “animal races” (*sibaq al-hayawanat*) with trained rats, rabbits, and dogs for public entertainment.¹⁰² The other “disciplines” included gambling and alcohol consumption, which ran counter to the statutes of the club, an author complained in *Filastin*. He blamed this phenomenon on the influence of its foreign members, thus mak-

93 James Dorsey, “Soccer: Moulding the Middle East and North Africa,” *RSIS Working Paper Series* 286 (2015), p. 4.

94 Khalil Totah and Thomas Ricks (eds.), *Turbulent Times in Palestine: Diaries of Khalil Totah, 1886-1955* (Ramallah: Institute for Palestine Studies and Passia, 2009), cited in Khalidi, “Sports and Aspirations,” p. 86, fn. 1, without page.

95 In 1912, *Filastin* reported the visit of a football team of students from Beirut to Jerusalem, where they played against the Jewish boys of the School of the Young Jerusalemites (*Madrasat Shubban al-Qudsiyyin*) and then against the St. George School team. See *Filastin*, 13 April 1912, issue 127/3/2.

96 Khalidi, “Body and Ideology,” p. 45.

97 *Filastin*, 16 December 1911, issue 95/1/3.

98 Compare with Buessow, “Children of the Revolution,” pp. 55-78.

99 “Bal yutlab min al-insan an yakun fihī 'arid al-akṭaf li-yuzahim rashiḡ al-harakat li-yusabiq qawī l-bunya li-yuthabir 'ala marakat al-zaman.” *Filastin*, 16 December 1911, issue 95/1/3.

100 *Filastin*, 1 November 1911, issue 82/3/5.

101 *Filastin*, 15 November 1913, under the label of *al-Akḥbar*, issue 495/3/3.

102 *Filastin*, 21 May 1913, issue 238/3/4-5; 24 May 1913, issue 239/3/5.

ing it clear that the Sports Club was a hotbed for clashes between Arabs and Europeans.¹⁰³ *Filastin*'s authors encouraged the Club's local members to remain authentic and show the Europeans "how progressive you are in everything you do."¹⁰⁴



Figure 13: Jabaliyya Beach around 1918. Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

JAFFA'S BEACHES AS A NODAL POINT FOR LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT

A well-trained body was considered a sign of modern civilization, and simultaneously people discovered the value of outdoor sports. By the beginning of the 20th century, Manshiyya Beach was another nodal point for Jaffa's modern culture. In 1912, thanks to donations by local and foreign elites, Jaffa's "young educated intellectuals" (*al-shubban al-udaba' al-muta'allimin*) built a sports field at the beach which combined the "natural beauty" of the open space with an "artistic design" (*tartibihi al-fanni*). *Filastin* praised the initiative as another facet of Jaffa's modernity.¹⁰⁵ However, Jaffa's beaches had been discovered by the population for leisure and entertainment well before that. Because Jaffa did not have a municipal park, apart from a small spot with a few trees in front of the Government House in the Clock Tower Square (see Figure 12), the beach was much frequented for recreation, and was the "only pleasure nature has created for the city," *Filastin* wrote. Thus, one could not dare to extend "the hand of reform," 'Isa said; that is, to build on it.¹⁰⁶ Jaffa's beach was accessible to all social strata and was a multifunctional space where different classes and cultures mingled to relax and exercise, go for evening strolls, play games, have

family picnics, or engage in drinking, drugs, or erotic adventures after sunset.

Little is known about these manifestations of Jaffa's modernity. There are only a few scattered reports on Jaffa's beach life in *Filastin*. Nevertheless, they show that the beach was used for leisure-time activities well before the establishment of the Tel-Aviv seashore. Start-



Figure 14: Irshid Beach around the Turn of the 20th Century. Both Arab and Jewish visitors frequented this beach. Note the swings in the playground at the shore. Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

ing in the Tanzimat era, there were several areas set aside for bathing on the shore. As of the turn of the 20th century, there was public bathing at Jabaliyya Beach, south of the Old City (see Figure 13). North of the Old City, there were four beaches in use, stretching along the seashore of Manshiyya (marked by red crosses in the map in Figure 15). The first was situated near the military compound, the Kishle. It was the so-called "Arab beach," according to the record of Samuel Giler, and of which I do not have a picture. The second beach was at the southern part of Manshiyya, at the Irshid section, and it was a "mixed" beach. It was frequented by local Muslim, Christian, and Jewish families and, during the summer, it had a rudimentary playground with swings, as reported in the Hebrew newspaper *Havatselet* in 1896 (see Figure 14).¹⁰⁷

The third beach was situated near the homes of Neve Shalom and frequented by religious Jews from Jerusalem who came to the seaside during the holidays and preferred to keep to themselves. The fourth was Yefe Nof beach with Feingold's Bella Vista Hotel (see Figures 15, 16 and 17). All of these are referred

103 *Filastin*, 8 March 1913, issue 219/1/1-3.

104 *Filastin*, 12 March 1913, issue 220/1/3-5.

105 *Filastin*, 7 August 1912, issue 160/1/3-2/1.

106 *Ibid.*

107 *Havatselet*, June 12, 1896, page 6. I thank Samuel Giler for referring me to this information.



Figure 15: Beaches of Late Ottoman Jaffa. Red Xs by Samuel Giler mark beaches that were in use during the early 20th century. Depicted are Jabaliyya beach to the south (lower left-hand corner) and the four beaches that stretched along Manshiyya to the north 1. “Arab beach” near the military compound, the Kishle, 2. “Mixed beach” at the Irshid section, 3. Orthodox Jewish beach near Neve Shalom, 4. Yefe Nof beach with the Bella Vista Hotel. Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

to here as “Manshiyya Beach” in line with the terminology in *Filastin*. The Jewish sections of the beach had more infrastructure with hotels, coffeehouses, and bars, especially the section at the Bella Vista Hotel. The beach at Irshid and at Yefe Nof were “secular” beaches, with inns and bars that permitted alcohol, and were frequented by the Arab population as well. Erotic adventures could be pursued on the fringes of Irshid: there was a brothel, the famous Russia Hotel, run by a Jewish madam with prostitutes from various countries, which was visited by Jaffa’s males of all nations and denominations.¹⁰⁸ A few reports in *Filastin* indicate that the intermingling of people at the beach sometimes led to conflict. Jaffa’s males enjoyed the beaches’ shady nightlife in the Jewish sections, which offended the morals of others since it was associated with alcohol consumption. Letters in *Filastin* complained about the degeneration of Jaffa’s youth who were seen in the bars and “raffish nightclubs” (*mahallat khala’a*

¹⁰⁸ I thank Samuel Giler who indicated the location of the Russia Hotel.



Figure 16: The Bella Vista Hotel. Postcard produced by Vester & Co., Jerusalem.

Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.



Figure 17: The Manshiyya-Neve Shalom-Yefe Nof Seashore. Photograph dated 1918. Legend: 1: Hotel Bella Vista; 2: Feingold’s apartments for rent; 3: Hadassah Hospital; 4: Yefe Nof houses; 5: the Jewish Shaarei Zion Hospital; 6: the Shmerling House; 7: Abu Nabbut Mosque; 8: Shulamit Hotel for Orthodox Jews. Source: Private archive of Samuel Giler.

fi l-layl).¹⁰⁹ Battalions of foreign soldiers tended to congregate at the beach and were feared by the locals since they “rampaged.” *Filastin* reported that one particular battalion harassed people taking evening strolls at the shore and beat them with rods and railings ripped out of the verandas of coffeehouses.¹¹⁰

In contrast, the interest in the new outdoor

¹⁰⁹ *Filastin*, 3 August 1912, issue 159/1/1-4. This article was part of the column entitled *Letters of a Farmer* by the Zionist settler Menashe Meirovitch from Rishon le Zion, who published anonymously in *Filastin* for more than 18 months since his reform discourse was compatible with the editor’s modernist agenda.

¹¹⁰ It is unclear whether this took place at Irshid or in the Jewish sections; *Filastin* simply refers to it as Manshiyya Beach. Afterwards, people complained to the *Qaimaqam* about the battalion until it was transferred to Haifa. *Filastin*, 18 June 1912, issue 146, supplement 2-3; and 29 June 1912, issue 149/3/2-3.

health culture was symbolized by the new sports field at the beach that was constructed in 1912, as mentioned above. Samuel Giler suggests that it was located at Jabaliyya Beach since at Irshid there was not much available space at the shore. It was a modern installation that would, as the 'Isas hoped, prevent Arab youngsters from frequenting the nightclubs since "every educated person knows that a healthy mind lives in a healthy body" (*kull adib ya 'rif anna al-'aql al-sahih fi al-jism al-sahih*).¹¹¹

CONCLUSION

This article has explored local expressions of Jaffa's modern culture, entertainment, and leisure before World War I as "performances of late Ottoman modernity" and discussed the actors, problems, norms, processes, and nodal points linked to it, as suggested by Hufty. The active role of Jaffa's civil society actors and social societies in this development was highlighted. As in the charity and education sectors, community organizations from various sectors were the most dynamic players in Jaffa's cultural life: among these were the Muslim Society for Piety and Welfare, the Orthodox Welfare Association and the Orthodox Women's Association for the Support of Orphan Girls, as well as mixed social platforms such as Jaffa's Sports Club, Zionist institutions such as the Hebrew Gymnasium, and loosely organized intellectual circles, which were simply termed the "young literati" in *Filastin*.

What motivated these players to engage in "modern culture" was the local perception of Palestinian "backwardness." Their agenda was to disseminate new social norms and educate local society in line with what was subsumed in *Filastin* as "the spirit of the age" – a distinct post-revolutionary local Ottoman form of modernity that promoted modernization, Ottoman patriotism, active citizenry, and discourses on liberalization. The cultural activities organized by these players often went hand in hand with public manifestations of Ottomanism and were promoted by *Filastin* as "progressive." As was highlighted, philanthropic projects were often sponsored by Jaffa's social societies and charities in support of education,

the poor, or the military. Organized by the communities, these put considerable pressure on Jaffa's population to donate for various purposes. Distinct arenas were defined in which modernity in pre-World War I Jaffa presented itself as "local," "Arab," "imperial Ottoman," "Western," or "global." International immigration made Jaffa a "city of many nations" and the communities shaped polycentric structures with Jabaliyya, Ajami, the Old City, Manshiyya, and especially the Jewish suburbs and Tel-Aviv serving as distinct centers.

Bustrus Street and Manshiyya Beach were identified as nodal points of modern culture, which enjoyed wide popularity among local middle-class families. Entertainment of various types took place in the cafés on Bustrus Street and increased after 1913, as suggested by *Filastin's* local news section. This seems to have been part of a general trend in Middle Eastern cities and, for the 'Isas, performances and leisure activities were an expression of urban modernity. Semi-professional amateur enterprises in Arab drama productions taking place at the New Bar reflected local efforts in favor of "Arab modernity" in Jaffa, although the identity of the organizers, the artistic networks, and the practical aspects of the event coordination remain unclear from the sources. The events also reveal a strong orientation towards Egypt as the emerging center of Arab art, as seen through the enthusiastic reception of prestigious artists from Cairo and Alexandria in Jaffa such as the 'Atallah Brothers, the 'Ukasha Brothers, George Abyad, and Sheikh Hijazi.

The founding of the local Sports Club and the building of a sports field at the beach marked the beginnings of a new body culture in Jaffa, which was inspired by the infatuation with Western images of physical vitality, youthfulness, and masculinity. However, the pressure of Westernization that was felt by local Arab elites also prompted internal conflicts about the cultural morals imposed on the Club's members. Simultaneously, the value of Jaffa's natural environment for leisure-time activities came to be appreciated at the end of the 19th century. Manshiyya Beach in particular served as a multifunctional space for a range of interests: sports, relaxation, and games, as well as exercising in the open air, but also a variety of more reprehensible activities. Jaffa's seashore

¹¹¹ *Filastin*, 7 August 1912, issue 160/1/3-2/1.

became a place for a lively beach life where Jaffa's various social classes and nations mingled, well before the establishment of the Tel-Aviv promenade.

Overall, the role of social societies in late Ottoman Palestine and the Arab East as agents of modern culture, facilitating sports and an

emerging "body culture," artistic performances, and new leisure-time activities, needs further exploration and specifically in comparison to other cities of Bilad al-Sham to shed more light on the social and cultural history of the modern Middle East.

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A NEWSPAPER AS A SOURCE AND INSTIGATOR OF URBAN PUBLIC DEBATES

This chapter is based on articles published in the Arab Palestinian newspaper *Filastin* (“Palestine”) between July 1911 and August 1914 (a total of 288 issues). The newspaper was founded in Jaffa in January 1911 by the cousins ‘Isa Dawud al-‘Isa (1878–1950) and Yusuf al-‘Isa (1870/74–1948), Arab Palestinians of Greek Orthodox confession, as a bi-weekly publication until the Ottoman authorities shut it down in November 1914 as part of wartime censorship measures (for the front page of *Filastin* and its editor, see Figures 1 and 2). *Filastin* resumed publication in 1921 and became one of the most influential periodicals in Mandatory Palestine. The ‘Isas initially started the paper to actively support the “Orthodox Renaissance” (*al-nahda al-urthudhuksiyya*) in Palestine. In general, the newspaper promoted ideas of modernization, Ottomanism and the tenants of the Young Turk Revolution. From 1913 onward, the impact of Zionist immigration on the District of Jerusalem became a major topic.

Filastin has so far mainly been read as a source on Palestinian nationalism and anti-Zionism, but it was also a forum for



Figure 2: ‘Isa al-‘Isa, Director and Co-editor of *Filastin*. Undated photograph (Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs).



Figure 1: Front Page of *Filastin*. Dated 20 April 1912.

public and controversial debates on many issues. Through letters to the editor and numerous guest articles, *Filastin* functioned as a “communication channel” between the publishers and their readership and despite its unnegotiable stand on Ottoman unity until 1914, it was a vital platform for protests against the government. Its overall call for “reform” and “progress” pervaded virtually all the articles it published, which in many ways echoed the reformist discourse of the Arab Nahda, the cultural reform movement that arose in Egypt and Bilad al-Sham during the mid-19th century.

In my work on Palestinian press debates dealing with intercommunal relations

during the late Ottoman period, I sampled close to 2,000 articles from *Filastin* in which the modernization of education was a central concern. Jaffa's economic and urban development was another major topic covered in the local news (*akhbar mahalliyya*).

Filastin is also an under-researched source on public culture in late Ottoman Palestine. I located more than 200 reports on cultural issues, and more than 90 on the activities of social civil society organizations. For examples of *Filastin's* illustrated advertisements printed on the back page which were a prime source of income for its publishers, see Figures 3 and 4. While issues of *Filastin* were hard to locate until recently, an almost complete set of issues from between 1911 and 1948 is now available online at the Jara'id, Arabic Newspaper Archive of Ottoman and Mandatory Palestine website,

hosted at the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem: <https://www.nli.org.il/en/discover/newspapers/jrayed>.



Figure 3: Advertisement for the Danish Beer Brand Tuborg in *Filastin*.

إعلان

الاستاذ الشهير الدكتور بروني والي
تطبق قدامنا على كل التشريح مع كافة ما
يحتاجه من تركيبات وخصص اصنع
الاسنان الدائمة المستدامة على اختلاف
انواعها وقد صار وكفي يشمل هذه
الاستحضارات الجديدة خدمة زبائني
والتي تقدر اعظم برهان

لبن فقط يا تشيرت وحتى الان لم
يكن احد يطبخه الايمان من الراسل
عما يزول لسعادة الاسنان وراحته
بجانب الطرق الاميركية الجديدة التي
تتميز بالصلابة والشفافية والاروفا
والتي تقدر اعظم برهان

عيسى حلي
صليبية ومستودع احذية
تأسست سنة 1818
تقع بالجملة وبالفرق ياسار شياودة
محل لتفانيق
وقلائم الجديري دائما جديدة
مياه معدنية
احسن رضعات وحلوات قوية جديدة وارد بلاد الانكليز موجودة دائما عندنا
مستودع زجاج فارغ وقلبان للمبيدات
ملاحظة
لاننا ان هذا لتصل يشرب فيه زيت السمك فعدنا منه احسن جنس
زويجي جديد مستعمل بلا رائحة ولا ملذ

الشيء شذوحت فيمضون نصف اسم
والذين فوق العشرة شذوات بقفون
رسا كمالا

إعلان

للدكتور بروني



وغيره العادة بالاسنان خضرات
زبائني الكرام لجميع العلاجات واحسن
الطرائق لمداواة الاسنان وحفظها وللذين
انزعوا اسنانهم الاستعاضة جنسها
بالاصطناع التي تصنع الطبيعية عملا
وورقة حديدي لان استغنى من غير ان
امير كاجنج الاكوان والآدوية المستعملة
لهذه الغاية مع كية وافر من اجل
واقوى الاسنان الاميركية وهي من
الذبح الجديد المصطنع بحسب تمايلات

من اهل مروج اهل العالمة
تأنيب ان تشكك في كل بلد مشرة
ذكيو مبرهن عمدة للإدارة اهلنا وتقرية
موارد العمل تشكك اسواقنا واهلنا لما حق
نعم وتزيد ونحن نعلم ان تقدم جميع شربنا
ما نعلمنا من نفس الهبة وزيادة في ذلك
حسنة في الله من مالي دخلنا الصديق
الجمع الاحياش
تأنيب - كل كل راع او مبرهن في
فلسطين ياتي الى هذه الجبلية ان يأخذ على
نفسه المسؤولية الروحية ويؤتم برؤيته
احسن فيام وينظر من العمة التي هو
رئيسها الطبيعي ان تصادف في كثير من الشئون
واما - يجب ان يقدم المبلغ اجابا دائما
في كل سنة واصطلاحه م رعاة ونواب العالمة
في بلاد فلسطين بمقدور التقدمين الذين
تتمتعهم اجتمع من مصلحتها في فلسطين وذلك
لتنفيذ في شئون العالمة الروحية والآدوية
وقوية الرباط بين البلاد
غالب - الجبلية لان من الادارة والسياسة
حتى اليوم اجتمع بكل المسؤولية المادية
نعمنا لا ترى لاذن من كفا على كل شدة
حسنة وتزيب الحسابات التي تجربا على عمدة
روحية وتقدم ميزانيتها اسواقا في الجمع
القطر القصب اذنا خاصة من اعطاه
المشورين - وهذه الجبلية تضمن فوق ذلك
مع التقدمين حسابات امين صندوق الجمع
الكثيرة وبعد الانتهاء منها يتف الجميع كجم
على دقائق الحسابات وتوزع الميزانيات في
كل اعضائه

الجمع الكلي البروتستانتي

أشيرة في احد العاداة الماضية الى التمام
الجمع الكلي البروتستانتي في زمام الله
تجيب الربا ما اريداه من نجاح اعماله
تذكر شيئا من احوال هذه العالمة الفالفة
وموصلة لنهرها من الطوائف المسيحية ولا
سوا الارثوذكسية منها
سنة 76 سنة قادم لاول فلسطين ميشرون
من قبل جمعية «كنترش ميشرون موماني»
في لوزدا ذلكت بعض منا معهم طوائف
بروتستانتية في اكنة الادارة وكانت الجمعية
المستندون تقدم شروعاتها الروحية وتقوم
بمختلفها واشترت في ذلك حتى تزايدت
تقويتها وجمع معظمتها في حالة تنسجع ميا
الغار نورا ما يفتقر ونهيا وكاتبها وقد
رأت الجمعية مؤشرا انه قد كان الوقت هذه
الطوائف ان تبدأ في اخذ في من المسؤولية
والاستقلال والقدرة في ذلك الذي ان تصحيح
كلاهما على اذنة شيوخهم با تزويج والمواصلة
بنفسها ولذا عقدت ملتقى وعشرون
اطاعت اعدادية وهي البها وراة ونوابها
هذه العالمة في البلاد ومرسلو الجمعية وضع
قوانين ومن ثلثيات تحفظ كتابها وتكفل
نهرها وادبها وكاتبها من السيرة في طريق
المسؤولية والاستقلال شيئا بعد شيئا اكلها
وقدمت هذه الاجابيات الاولى عن
وضع قانون اساسي يشبه من الاجالين
وتنقل شيئا ما بين الرعايا الانكليز وبين
رعاة ونواب هذه العالمة الرعية وتنص
هذا القانون تأسس جميع كسبي على بنوايه
جميع هذه الطائفة التابعة لجمعية المذكورة
في فلسطين
والى الرعاة الات حلاله بعض المواد
الجوهرية التي وردت في القانون المذكور
اولا - ان الجمعية تقدم لجميع هذه
سروية معلومة كالجمعية للفقراء على رعاها
وكاتبها وكاتبها تقدم من تلك الهبة في كل
سنة 8 ليرات انكليزية وهذا الخدم يستمر
حتى تنهي الجمعية شيئا شيئا وتنتهي بذلك
الجمع مسؤولا عن ايجاد ما يقوم بتفاته

دقيق نستله مع الحليب

هو الدقيق الركب من اجود
الواد الاولية وعلى احسن
الطريق الصحية فلا
يختلف جلده على مرور
الايام
وهذا الدقيق الذي
يساعد على نمو الاطفال با
فيه من القوة وحسن
الغذاء ويكسبهم طاقة
قائمة ويجعلهم ارب بانوا
نورا هادئا مشتا بكفبه
يشترت ان تكون جميعات
الطب في العالم جمع قد
اوصت باستعماله
يوجد هذا الدقيق دائما
في جميع الصيدليات والمستودعات الكبيرة وعلاوة الامتال الخ



حليب نستله

هو حليب اليز السامي السامح عن
الجنس مراعي سر يسرا ومضانا اليه
كيفية من السكر المائل
بما يدل على تفوق هذا الحليب على
غيره طعمه اللذيذ واستعماله السوي
ومفوضيته الكبيرة منذ نصف قرن
يوجد هذا الحليب في كل عتازن
العالم الكبيرة في عتازن العالم



شكولاته نستله

في شكولاته حليب نستله التي يفضل على كل
شكولاته في تركيا وفي غيرها من البلاد
ظهر هذه الشكولاته تقيذ سببها للارواد
الصغار ولما لانهم وهي عدا عن تلك مفذية
نافعة ويكي لشبابها بحسب جنسها انها من
صنع اصحاب «دقيق نستله مع الحليب»
وقد اعد اصحاب فاريرة «شكولاته نستله» جوائز للذين
اما المسابقات فمضون حليا واما قاسيل ككيب الحصول على هذه الجوائز فيفضلها المشقي في كل ما كيت شكولاته وقد توزع
قسم كبير من هذه الجوائز في سوريا ومصر وجميع البلاد العثمانية

لوكدرة المنظر المحبيل

رام الله - فلسطين
لصاحبها شكوري شيه

تفتح لوكدرة المنظر الجبل ابراهيم
انبول المصطوفين الكرام من اول شهر
حزيران القادم - وقد قامت في هذا
العام باصلاحات هامة استكمالا لاجرة
من يشرفها وقد جعلت الاسنان كما ياتي
لتفتيش واحد
للكرام واحد والبالاات
اما الارواد الذين لا ينجون بحرم

Figure 4: Filastin Advertisements. The back page of Filastin was used for advertisements by local and international companies; for instance here, for powdered milk made by the Swiss company Nestlé.